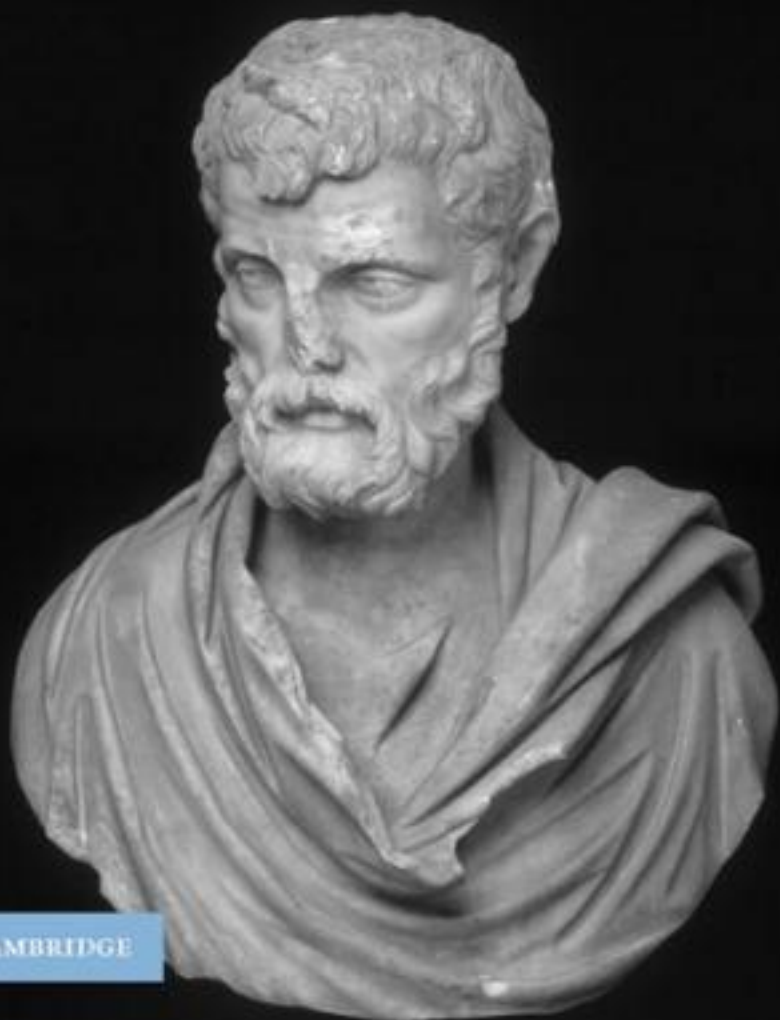


GREEK  
CULTURE  
IN THE  
ROMAN  
WORLD

# Philostratus

Edited by  
Ewen Bowie and Jas' Elsner



CAMBRIDGE

## PHILOSTRATUS

This is the first volume of collected papers to be devoted to the work of Philostratus, the great essayist, biographer and historian of Greek culture in the Roman world, and the most scintillating writer of Greek prose in the third century AD. The contributions cover his remarkable range, from hagiographic fiction to historical dialogue, from pictorial description to love letters, and from prescriptions for gymnastics to the lives of the sophists. The quality of his writing and the concerns within his purview – religion, aesthetics, athletics and education – make Philostratus' writings among the most important documents for understanding Greek culture in the Roman world, and guide us in exploring the maturity of Hellenic cultural identity in the context of the rise of Christianity. Few studies have been devoted to this neglected figure, and this collection will therefore be of great value to scholars and students of imperial Greek literature and art.

EWEN BOWIE was E. P. Warren Praelector in Classics at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, 1965–2007, and has written extensively on the Greek culture of the Roman empire.

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## GREEK CULTURE IN THE ROMAN WORLD

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The Greek culture of the Roman Empire offers a rich field of study. Extraordinary insights can be gained into processes of multicultural contact and exchange, political and ideological conflict, and the creativity of a changing, polyglot empire. During this period, many fundamental elements of Western society were being set in place: from the rise of Christianity, to an influential system of education, to long-lived artistic canons. This series is the first to focus on the response of Greek culture to its Roman imperial setting as a significant phenomenon in its own right. To this end, it will publish original and innovative research in the art, archaeology, epigraphy, history, philosophy, religion, and literature of the empire, with an emphasis on Greek material.

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## *Preface*

*Philostratus* needs no apology. There is now widespread agreement on the outstanding nature of the Philostratean corpus, as both exemplary literary masterpieces in a range of genres, in their own right, and as throwing fundamental light on a series of key historical and cultural themes in the imperial experience of Greeks in the Roman world. Yet no volume of this kind exists; indeed there are still only two monographs that treat the author and his corpus of writings as a whole.<sup>1</sup> The project was born in the fertile and welcoming environment of the Corpus Christi College Centre for the Study of Greek and Roman Antiquity, for whose Wednesday Classical seminar and programme of one-day Saturday conferences many of the contributions collected here were first commissioned. The editors would like to thank warmly all those involved: our Corpus colleagues, who have included – in the time between the birth of this project and its completion – Ursula Coope, Philip Hardie, Stephen Harrison, James Howard-Johnston, Ted Kaizer, John Ma, Neil McLynn, Robin Osborne, Christopher Taylor, Tim Whitmarsh and Michael Winterbottom; all our vocal audiences; and all our contributors. We are grateful, too, to the team at Cambridge University Press, led by Michael Sharp, for producing the book and to the Press' anonymous readers for their comments. Particular thanks are due to Bert Smith for his help in finding photographs.

EWEN BOWIE  
JAŚ ELSNER

<sup>1</sup> Anderson (1986) and Billault (2000).

I

*Introductory*



## CHAPTER I

### *A Protean corpus*

*Jaś Elsner*

In the kind of grand generalisation possible only when a great poet is self-confident enough of his own powers to pronounce on the career of a still greater poet, T. S. Eliot once wrote of Shakespeare:

What is the 'whole man' is not simply his greatest and maturest achievement, but the whole pattern formed by the sequence of plays; so that we may say confidently that the full meaning of any one of the plays is not in itself alone, but in that play in the order in which it was written, in relation to all of Shakespeare's other plays, earlier and later: we must know all of Shakespeare's work in order to know any of it.<sup>1</sup>

This claim for the totality of an author's work to be taken as the key to its individual elements (surely as true of Virgil, the poet whom Eliot made his archetype of the 'classic',<sup>2</sup> as of Shakespeare) is particularly interesting in the case of writers whose works seem to exhibit a fundamental self-consciousness about their own relations with each other. Of course, with ancient authors we can never be sure we possess the totality of their works. In the case of Philostratus, we cannot even be sure that many of the works we attribute to him were certainly by him, though we can be sure that we do not have all the works actually written by him.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, despite Eliot's strictures about reading all the works in their order of writing, we do not certainly know the sequence of Philostratean composition. But in the case of Philostratus, his self-consciousness about genre, interrelations within the written corpus and an almost obsessive concern for variety are perhaps more intense than in any other comparable writer. Arguably, however much we may get out of any one of his texts (which is the challenge for most of the contributions collected in this volume), the supreme interest of

<sup>1</sup> From 'John Ford' (1932), in Eliot (1932) 170–80, p. 170.

<sup>2</sup> See 'What is a Classic?' (1944), in Kermode (1975) 115–31.

<sup>3</sup> See Bowie, chapter 2 in this volume.

Philostratus' writing lies in a glance at what Eliot called the 'whole man' (which might be said to be the synoptic aim of this volume as a whole).

First, then, my evidence. Like the apparition of Proteus, the 'Egyptian god . . . versatile in wisdom, ever changing his form and defying capture',<sup>4</sup> who appears to Apollonius of Tyana's mother in *VA* I.4 (see below) and announces that he is to be incarnated as her son, Philostratus as writer rarely appears in the same genre twice. And he hardly uses a genre without exacting a piece of transformative panache upon it that leaves it simultaneously traditional and vibrantly innovative. The Philostratean corpus, as it survives, comprises the following texts: *Lives of the sophists* (*VS*), *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (*VA*), *Heroicus*, *Imagines*, *Letters*, *Gymnasticus* (all more or less likely to be the work of our author) as well as *Nero*, a dialogue transmitted with the manuscripts of Lucian, and two rhetorical 'discourses' (*dialexeis*) one or both of which may be by him. I have no intention of entering the critical maelstrom of precise attribution and dating in respect of these works: suffice it to say that most authorities currently go for a broad view that incorporates the majority of these into the corpus as written by one man.<sup>5</sup> If the authorship is in the final analysis uncertain, the relative datings are still more so – but I find at least plausible a sketch of Philostratus' career which puts what most consider to be his earlier work (*Gymnasticus*, *Letters*, the *dialexeis*) in his period at the Severan court in Rome before the death of Julia Domna in AD 217, and his later works (especially *VA* and *VS*, probably in that order)<sup>6</sup> in his time at Athens after her decease,<sup>7</sup> with *Heroicus* perhaps written early in the reign of Severus Alexander (emperor 222–35),<sup>8</sup> and *Imagines* a movable feast in that it is undatable, even roughly, on internal or external evidence.

<sup>4</sup> ὁ Αἰγύπτιος θεός. ὅστις μὲν δὴ τὴν σοφίαν ὁ Πρωτεύς ἐγένετο . . . ὡς ποικίλος τε ἦν καὶ ἄλλοτε ἄλλος καὶ κρείττων τοῦ ἄλῶναι . . . Apollonius is the perfect sophist, the divinest of divine men. On Apollonius and Proteus, see Flinterman (1995) 52–3. Note that the Suda attributes a text entitled *Proteus* (or *Proteus the Cynic* or *the Sophist*) to a Philostratus (Bowersock (1969) 3; Whitmarsh (2001) 228, n.184) and that Heliodorus compares his sage Calasiris with Proteus in *Aethiopica* 2.24.4. In *Imagines* 2.17.11–12 Philostratus has Proteus appear in his description of the islands as a decision maker.

<sup>5</sup> See the discussions by Bowie in chapter 2 in this volume; de Lannoy (1997); Flinterman (1995) 5–14; Anderson (1986) 291–6; Bowersock (1969) 2–4. Specifically on *Nero*, see de Lannoy (1997) 2,389–2,404 and Whitmarsh (1999) 143–4, 156–8, 160 for a date of composition after the *Constitutio Antoniniana* of 211.

<sup>6</sup> For reference to *VA* as earlier than *VS*, see *VS* 570 (77.6 in Kayser's Teubner), but much of the composition of both works may have been simultaneous, see Bowie (1978) 1,169–70. For *VA* as commissioned originally by Julia Domna (perhaps more a rhetorical self-valorisation than a factual claim?), see *VA* 1.3. On the 'circle' of Julia Domna, see e.g. Bowersock (1969) 101–7; Brent (1995) 237–48; Hemelrijk (1999) 122–6; Whitmarsh (2007) 31–4.

<sup>7</sup> Basically, I follow Billault (2000) 28–31.

<sup>8</sup> See esp. Jones (2001) 142–3; Aitken and Maclean (2004) xx.

This catalogue of works offers a systematic resistance to generic repetition. True, *Heroicus* and *Nero* are both dialogues – but the former is contemporary, set roughly at the time of its composition in the first third of the third century,<sup>9</sup> while the latter is set in AD 68 at the end of Nero's reign (his death is announced at the close of the piece, *Nero* 11) probably on the Aegean island of Gyara to which one of the interlocutors, the Stoic Musonius Rufus, had been banished.<sup>10</sup> *Heroicus* belongs to the broadly philosophical genre of dialogue associated with Plato and popular among Second Sophistic writers like Plutarch and Lucian,<sup>11</sup> while *Nero* (if it is by our Philostratus) is a historical fantasy (a typical sophistic exercise in this respect). Both concern issues of identity, but in *Nero* this is a matter of the cultural politics of Greece under Rome,<sup>12</sup> whereas in *Heroicus* it is about the relationship of Greeks (and others, notably a Phoenician stranger clothed in Ionic dress which has come to be regarded as local in Phoenicia, *Her.* 1) to the living sacred past of Greece.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, *VS* and *VA* are both works of biographical history.<sup>14</sup> But *VA*, in eight books, is one of the longest biographies known to antiquity (virtually a prose epic or a hagiographic novel), and is quite exceptional in its concentration on a holy man active about 150 years before the time of writing.<sup>15</sup> *VS*, by contrast, is exceptional in the shortness of its numerous biographies (told in what might be called long chapters rather than whole books), which together constitute the cultural history of an era named by us 'the Second Sophistic', following Philostratus' own characterisation of a prevalent literary and rhetorical style (*VS* 481: 2.25–7 Kayser). Only Herodes Atticus has a large biography in *VS*. Indeed, he is the pivotal figure who straddles the two books of *VS* (as well as attaining the Consulship in Rome and hence straddling the political worlds of Greece and Italy); he appears in relation to Polemo (*VS* 536–9) and gives the funerary oration for Secundus (*VS* 544) in book 1, while his own biography opens book 2.

<sup>9</sup> See Jones (2001) 143–4. <sup>10</sup> See Whitmarsh (1999) 142 and (2001a) 152–5.

<sup>11</sup> See Mantero (1966) 145–68; Rossi (1997) 20–4; Maclean and Aitken (2001) xl–xli.

<sup>12</sup> See esp. Whitmarsh (1999).

<sup>13</sup> See Whitmarsh, chapter 10 in this volume; for a summary of critical positions, see Maclean and Aitken (2001) lxxvi–lxxxvii and the essays collected by Aitken and Maclean (2004). On the usefulness of *Her.* for the history of late antique religion, see Rutherford, chapter 11 in this volume on pilgrimage; Betz (1996) (= Betz (2004a)); Pache (2001); Hershbell (2004); Maclean (2004); Skedros (2004).

<sup>14</sup> On biography in Roman antiquity, see Swain (1997) with bibliography.

<sup>15</sup> There is, as a result of this exceptional length and other factors, a significant debate on the genre of *VA*. Its title in Greek (τὰ ἐς τὸν Τριαννέα Ἀπολλωνίων), its eight-book structure, its scale and its use of paradoxography all recall the ancient novel rather than biography as such, beginning with the tradition of Xenophon's eight-book *Cyropaedia*. See esp. Bowie (1978) 1,665 and Bowie (1994) 187, 189–96.

*Letters* and *Imagines* are, like *VS*, collections of shorter prose pieces, neither as thematically unified as *VS*. *Letters* is a brilliant example of rhetorical *variatio*, most in the highly restricted frame of erotic epistles in prose, purporting to be from the male voice of a lover (of both boys and women) to a variety of mainly unnamed recipients.<sup>16</sup> The fact that the arrangement of the individual letters in the different manuscript traditions is wildly erratic (creating nightmares for the modern editor) means that we have no clear authorial order: the very flexibility of the arrangement is itself a signal for the kind of text this is by contrast with the other works in the corpus (although one might assume there was a clear original order, rather than a variety of versions, at the time of publication).<sup>17</sup> *Imagines* extracts from the tradition of rhetorical practice and literary fiction the specific trope of the *ecphrasis* of art and collects together in two books a series of model examples that purport to describe the paintings in a gallery at Naples.<sup>18</sup> *Gymnasticus*, by contrast with the other Philostratan texts, takes the form of a technical treatise but combines this with a defence of the paedagogic skills of the athletic trainer – thus mingling two genres, the treatise and the apology, much favoured in the Second Sophistic.<sup>19</sup> Even more than the multiform corpus of Lucian, this group of texts seems a systematic exercise in parading exemplary pieces, each in a different genre and each with an innovative take on the genre it espouses.

If we move from the different texts' generic differentiation from each other to examine their particular affiliations to the traditions of genre on which they draw, several of Philostratus' works – especially *Imagines*, *VA* and *VS* – were to prove highly influential. While the business of arranging a cluster of short essays around a unifying theme is shared with *Letters* (the majority of which are amatory), *Imagines* was surely the first prose text to elevate the trope of *ecphrasis* to being the co-ordinating structural device and thematic focus of an entire literary work.<sup>20</sup> It is a mark of the brilliance of Philostratus' shape-changing in the matter of genre that he inaugurated a series of imitations in the generic form espoused by more than one of his texts. *Imagines* was emulated by a second Philostratus, whose book claims that he was the grandson of our author and refers explicitly

<sup>16</sup> See Rosenmeyer (2001a) esp. 322–38 and Goldhill, chapter 13 in this volume.

<sup>17</sup> On the textual tradition, see Benner and Fobes (1949) 387–413 and Raio (1992) and (1997).

<sup>18</sup> For an account of the *ecphrasis* of art as an ancient literary topos and Philostratus' innovative transformation of it, see Elsner (2002) esp. 13–15.

<sup>19</sup> See König, chapter 12 in this volume, with bibliography. König (2005) 301–44 and König (2007).

<sup>20</sup> Posidippus' collection of epigrams from the third century BC uses *ecphrasis* as such a framing focus for a number of grouped poems, with sections dedicated to poems on stones, on tomb-monuments, on temple dedications and on statues.

to the model of his grandfather's descriptions (Philostratus the Younger, *Imagines*, proem 2), and by the book of *ecphraseis* of statues transmitted under the name of Callistratus.<sup>21</sup> *VS* is explicitly signalled as a model by Eunapius (AD 346–c. 414) whose *Lives of the philosophers and sophists* takes up the succession roughly where Philostratus leaves off towards the end of the Severan age (Eunapius, *VP* 455). *VA*, as an epic hagiography of a non-Christian holy man, not only required extensive refutation in Christian late antiquity (notably in Eusebius' *Contra Hieroclem*) but was translated into Latin more than once by both Christians and pagans (Sidonius Apollinaris, *epist.* 8.3.1) and was ultimately a model for the extensive genre of Christian hagiography (starting with Eusebius' four-volume *Life of Constantine*).<sup>22</sup>

The versatility and variety of the texts within the corpus in relation to each other, and their originality as models for later imitations (which surely constituted the apogee of success in the art of sophistic education), needs to be seen in relation to each text's specific re-workings of the genres in which it is embedded and against which it is constructed. In the case of ancient biographical writing, for instance, both *VA* and *VS* challenge – in radically different ways – the one-book-for-a-life norm of Plutarch's *Parallel lives* or Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*. The *VA* extends the form to vast proportions in a kind of semi-fictional panegyric to a holy man that is at the same time an apology or defense of Philostratus' hero against charges of being a mere magician.<sup>23</sup> In many respects the transformation of a traditional biography into so long a work (including the ways its readership is envisaged) is conducted by means of borrowing tropes and patterns from ancient fictional romance – for instance, the paradoxographies of travel.<sup>24</sup> Yet *VA* is also an extended rhetorical eulogy – a typical piece of sophistic encomium but unique and revolutionary in length – characterised by remarkable repeated use of the *topos* of

<sup>21</sup> See Bertrand (1882) for an account of this heritage leading into Byzantium, Webb (1992) and now the essays in Constantini *et al.* (2006).

<sup>22</sup> For some remarks on Eusebius' *VC* in relation to Philostratus' *VA*, see Cameron (1997) 164–5.

<sup>23</sup> On *VA* as an apology, see Swain (1999). On the holy man in general in the period, see Fowden (1982); Anderson (1994); Francis (1995) 83–129. On the Christian holy man, Brown (1971) is still essential, modified by Brown (1995) 57–78, with discussion by Cameron (1999). On the historical Apollonius, see esp. Bowie (1978); on *VA* as biography, see Anderson (1986) 121–39 and Swain (1996) 381–96; on religious rhetoric in *VA*, see Henderson (2003); on the text's negotiation of sophistry and divinity, see Sfameni Gasparro (2007); on magic, see Ogden (2007a) 462–8; on the late antique reception of *VA*, see Dzielska (1986) 153–83 and now Jones (2006).

<sup>24</sup> On *VA* as *vie romancée* or biographical novel, see Reardon (1971) 189 ('presque un roman'); Hägg (1983) 115–17; Billault (1991); Bowie (1994) 187–96. On paradoxography, see Rommel (1923) 1–59. On travel, see Elsner (1997).



*synkrisis*, whereby its hero is compared favourably with other ancient heroes across the genres of Greek culture from history via mythology to religion and philosophy.<sup>25</sup> Rhetorically, it takes a set of school-boys' exercises (in the technique of *synkrisis*, as *Imagines* takes *ecphrasis*) and turns them to dazzling effect on an exceptionally extended canvas to sustain its mix of apology, praise and protreptic.

The *VS* draws on such models as Suetonius' *De Viris Illustribus*, a now largely lost series of lives of over 100 cultural figures (poets, philosophers, orators, historians and so forth) presented in four or five books, of which the section on teachers of grammar and rhetoric (*De Grammaticis et Rhetoribus*) survives.<sup>26</sup> But in focusing on sophists as heroic subjects,<sup>27</sup> Philostratus turned the genre into a cultural history of what he deemed especially important about his own period. It is a defense of the sophists as purveyors of rhetoric and education, in which philosophy must be included (e.g. *VS* 479, 1.1–3 Kayser; *VS* 480, 2.1–2 Kayser, to cite the opening sentences of the proem and the first book) and a formulation of Greek culture that was clearly in some respects self-serving, since it told the story of a tradition leading up to and including Philostratus himself,<sup>28</sup> and contained certain not always oblique critiques of some of Philostratus' most illustrious and literary predecessors – notably Dio Chrysostom.<sup>29</sup> The text is elegant in avoiding too much autobiography or self-promotion,<sup>30</sup> but nonetheless proclaims the family's role in the profession by discussing Philostratus' relative and namesake, Philostratus of Lemnos, in its concluding paragraph:

of Philostratus of Lemnos and his ability in the law courts, in political harangues, in writing treatises, in declamation and lastly of his talent for speaking extempore, it is not for me to write. (*VS* 628)<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> For instance Alexander (on whom see Anderson (1986) 203, 216, 220 and Elsner (1997) 30, n.49), Odysseus and Pythagoras (on whom see, respectively, Flinterman and Van Dijk (chapters 8 and 9) in this volume).

<sup>26</sup> See Kaster (1995) xxi–xxix.

<sup>27</sup> See Whitmarsh (2001a) 188–90 for the rhetorical *agon* as Homeric *aristeia*.

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Swain (1996) 98–9, 396–400; also Bowersock (2002) 158: 'It is all too easy to fault Philostratus for promoting the likes of himself through his *Lives of the sophists*.'

<sup>29</sup> See Brancacci (1985) 63–110 and Whitmarsh (2001) 225–44 for Philostratus on Dio in both *VA* and *VS*.

<sup>30</sup> For a Second Sophistic defence of praising oneself in passing, see Aelius Aristides *Concerning a Remark in Passing* (*Or.* 28) with the discussion of Rutherford (1995).

<sup>31</sup> Further on Philostratus of Lemnos and his talent for extempore oration and declamation, see *VS* 617, 623, 628. For discussion of Philostratus' own self-portrait in relation to *VA*, see Billault (1993) 271–8.

In modern times *VS* has proven so dominant a model for conceptualising the Second Sophistic<sup>32</sup> that it has probably caused an over-emphasis on the rhetorical and political aspects of the movement against such issues as cultural antiquarianism and religious revival which are addressed variously in *Gymnasticus*, *Heroicus* and *VA*.<sup>33</sup>

*Letters* picks on an established genre in antiquity (with a particular Second Sophistic efflorescence in the works of Alciphron and Aelian)<sup>34</sup> but, as we might expect, Philostratus subjects the genre to both a probing self-reflection and to typical innovation.<sup>35</sup> In particular, as in *Imagines*, *Heroicus*, *VS* and *VA*, Philostratus introduces aspects from other rhetorical genres. In the case of *Letters*, dialogue, drama and encomium not only enlarge the scope of epistolarity in general, but might be argued to demolish its specific form and imaginary structure as the single voice of one participant in a relationship to others. Most are amatory,<sup>36</sup> written in the voice of a male lover (which may or may not be Philostratus' own, like the voice of the sophistic interpreter of the paintings in *Imagines*)<sup>37</sup> but the consistency of that voice is fractured in several ways. First the writer speaks not to a single beloved from letter to letter, but to many – both women and boys. Second, he occasionally interpellates the imagined response of his recipient, breaking the illusion of the letter as a literary form. For example (in *Letter* 28, to a woman):

Let us settle the matter by a bargain: Let us both stay here, or let us go off there together. You don't agree to this; well then, let me tell you . . .

Effectively, by performing an imaginary dialogue in the lover's mind, Philostratus stages the subjectivity and self-absorption of his speaker in a medium which 'should' present itself as one of communication: what we get is not a clear picture of the other to whom a letter ought to speak but a range of Sophistic performances cast in, undermined by and undermining of the epistolary genre.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Especially in the key works of Bowersock (1969); Brunt (1994); Schmitz (1997).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Reardon (1971) 185–98; Anderson (1986) 285.

<sup>34</sup> For a handy and up-to-date introduction to the genre, see Trapp (2003) 1–45. On Greek fictional letters, see Costa (2002) xi–xx and Rosenmeyer (2001a) 255–321, and further on Alciphron, Rosenmeyer (2001b) and Schmitz (2004).

<sup>35</sup> See Rosenmeyer (2001a) 325 on playing with the rules of letter-writing and 330–2 on 'epistolarity undermined'.

<sup>36</sup> On the special interest of *Letters* in visuality, see Walker (1992) and (on *Letter* 26) Morales (2004) 23–7, and on the special interest of *Imagines* in the amatory, see Mathieu-Castellani (2006). For more general accounts of the close correlation of the visual and the amatory in the Roman imperial culture, see Goldhill (2001b) and Bartsch (2006) 57–114.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Webb (1992) 24–7. <sup>38</sup> Cf. Rosenmeyer (2001a) 326–32, 337–8.

*Imagines* takes the rhetorical trope of *ecphrasis*, which was a kind of hyperbolic literary turn of vivid description within a larger text in an ancient tradition reaching back to Homer and had a specific rhetorical set of prescriptions (at least in its prose form) in the *progymnasmata* or ancient rhetorical handbooks.<sup>39</sup> While the *ecphrasis* of works of art had been spectacularly performed in prose by no less a sophistic exemplar than Lucian and by the novelists,<sup>40</sup> Philostratus made of it a prose literary genre in its own right. In doing so and in concentrating on the evocation of art rather than the other kinds of description included within ancient *ecphrasis*, Philostratus focuses the genre around the visual arts in terms that have come (perhaps excessively) to dominate all modern discussion of *ecphrasis*.<sup>41</sup> Again, as in the implicitly over-rhetorical definition of the 'Second Sophistic' we have acquired through concentrating on the portraits of sophists as orators in *VS*, so Philostratus' implicit definition of *ecphrasis* as exclusively art-centred has come to formulate the field for modern scholars. At fault here, ultimately, is a literalist reading of the Philostratean texts which takes them as expressing documentary truths, rather than creatively playing with and against all kinds of cultural presumptions – not only subverting the expectations generated by their own literary genres but also taking surprising positions in the wide variety of themes they address. Philostratus himself, in *Imagines*, having set up his descriptions as works of art, is then able to play brilliantly upon all the other available tropes of *ecphrasis* – from mythical narrative to landscape, from personification to still life – framing these as if they were the subjects of his paintings. This is coupled with the rhetorical bravado of presenting as paintings described within *ecphrasis* the kinds of text – epic, bucolic, tragic – that would normally have contained *ecphrasis* as brief intervals within them. The question of whether his descriptions evoke real things (like the *Marsh* at 1.9, the *Bosporus* at 1.12–13, or the *Islands* at 2.17) or paintings of them – which is to say real things already fictionalised as art and represented at one remove – is made to resonate with typically ingenious playfulness against the problem of whether the paintings in his gallery ever really existed at all.<sup>42</sup> This is itself a commentary on whether the *phantasia* – or

<sup>39</sup> For the range of *ecphrasis*, see Elsner (2002). On the trope within the *progymnasmata* and its ancient meanings, see Webb (1999). For translation of the *progymnasmata*, see now Kennedy (2003).

<sup>40</sup> On Lucian and *ecphrasis*, see esp. Maffei (1994) and Borg (2004b). On the novel, see e.g. Bartsch (1989) for Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius; Zeitlin (1990) for Longus; Morales (2004) for Achilles Tatius.

<sup>41</sup> Webb (1999) 7–11.

<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, Philostratus never offers us a painting within a painting in *Imagines* – all the works of art within the pictures described by the text are sculptures: see Abbondanza (2001). On *Imagines* as a fictional text, see Webb (2006).

vivid visualisation – evoked by the sophist can replace or even outdo in the hearer's or reader's mind the actual impression of a real gallery, a real painting, a real landscape seen directly. The fact that 'truth' and 'wisdom' – which might be said to be reality and its correct discernment – are words that occur in the first sentence of the proem signals these pre-occupations.<sup>43</sup> Effectively, the very notion of description – the technical topos out of which Philostratus has constructed this text – becomes in a deep way its thematic focus. For description is the transformation of the real and material (whether landscape, still life, or picture) into words which in some ways are a false or deceptive rendition of the represented, but in others may reveal the visualisation of what is depicted more directly or effectively perhaps than seeing the real thing itself. The arrangement of the descriptions – both for the sake of variation and also in emulation of the structuring of short poems into literary collections – implicitly elevates a minor rhetorical trope into a miniature art-form in its own right.<sup>44</sup>

The use of genre to turn its characteristic concerns into the theme of the text is a particular feature of Philostratus' corpus. *Heroicus* combines a philosophical–religious dialogue (set in a contemporary *locus amoenus* where vinedressing is philosophy, *Her.* 2.6), with ephrastic visualisations in the vinegrower's descriptions of heroes and their images (such as Protesilaus (10–11), the statue of Hector (19.3–4), as well as Nestor (26.13–14), Sthenelus and Diomedes (27.13), Philoctetes (28.14) and so forth).<sup>45</sup> This leads to a vibrant evocation of a contemporary Homeric world where the heroes live set in the Greece of Philostratus' own time.<sup>46</sup> The philosophic expectations of dialogue, translated in part as sophistic performance, take a Platonic ideal normally located in the antiquarian past and make it vibrantly present as a highly cultured version of religious experience.<sup>47</sup> Likewise, the move to a religiously valid present or recent past within the world of the Roman empire – steeped in the literary culture of the deep past – when embodied in the biographic genre's heroic focus on Apollonius, allows a narrative of religious revival to unfold through the text's often fictional embroidery of a charismatic individual's personal history.<sup>48</sup> The theme of time is one of the specific interests of the corpus as a whole – especially the dramatic

<sup>43</sup> For the play of these themes and other key wider concerns of the Second Sophistic in *Imagines*, see Graziani (2006) and Quet (2006).

<sup>44</sup> On the Hellenistic practice of creating collections and anthologies out of miniature poems, see Gutzwiller (1998) 15–46, 227–322.

<sup>45</sup> On the vividness of these accounts, see Zeitlin (2001) 255–62.

<sup>46</sup> For this as the refutation and correction of Homer, see Mestre (2004).

<sup>47</sup> As Whitmarsh remarks in chapter 10 in this volume, the text in part makes its attempt to create new meanings a key theme of its own literary performance.

<sup>48</sup> On time in *VA*, see van Dijk (2000).

experience of the past within the present, whether through *phantasia* evoked by religious epiphany (as in *Heroicus* and *VA*, where Apollonius is several times presented as an object of wonder, of pilgrimage and ultimately as a god),<sup>49</sup> by described paintings (on mythical and historical subjects, as in *Imagines*), by rhetorical performances (which include not just speeches in texts such as *VA* and *VS*, but the works of the Philostratean corpus themselves).<sup>50</sup> Here Philostratus partakes of (but also helps to formulate our view of) a major element of Second Sophistic discourse generally whereby all kinds of works (from antiquarian to religious, from literature with high pretensions to relatively more utilitarian texts, like Pausanias' *Description of Greece*) seek to reflect upon the past and bring its presence to mind as vivid and lived experience in the present.<sup>51</sup>

For a writer who has come to be defined as the historian of the Second Sophistic, the question of the relationship of his texts with the realities they purport to portray is interestingly subtle and varied. As one of antiquity's most scintillating practitioners of *ecphrasis*, Philostratus is acutely aware of the battle between art and text (a topic classically thematised in Dio Chrysostom's twelfth Oration on the competition between Homer and Phidias in correctly representing Zeus, esp. 12.44–84).<sup>52</sup> In *Imagines*, this is a battle where the text always wins over the images – their reality and the responses to them are entirely dependent on Philostratus' descriptions. Likewise, in *Letters*, the reality of all the epistolary relationships staged by the text appears entirely fictional (with the exception of the letter to Julia Domna?), entirely embedded in the text's own rhetorical performance. But, by contrast, in *Heroicus*, the reader is never vouchsafed the vision of Protesilaus and the other heroes although the vinedresser is never questioned as the *sophos* with access to divine communion and the Phoenician is persuaded of his special access. Here, we might say (as Ian Rutherford comes close to arguing in the case of the pilgrimage to Achilles, in chapter 11 in this volume) that the text is again performing a fictive conceit upon its readers. But one might argue that *Heroicus* rather portrays itself as failing to offer the full reality of divine vision which pilgrimage and a proper way of life, like the vinedresser's, would supply: the text as rhetorical device, as text, is here secondary and never adequate to the divine experience which one must undergo in order truly to know it. In *VA*, likewise, one might ask

<sup>49</sup> On *VA*, see Elsner (1997) 27–8, 31–2.

<sup>50</sup> In addition to van Dijk (2000) on *VA*, see Schmitz (1999) 87–92.

<sup>51</sup> The classic account remains Bowie (1970).

<sup>52</sup> On Dio's twelfth Oration, see Watson (1988) 71–95; Sharrock (1996) 103–4; Zeitlin (2001) 220–2; Betz (2004b).

whether all Apollonius' holiness is just the product of Philostratus' superior literary skills, sheltering behind the figure of Damis as a kind of pretence at autoptic access to a largely imaginary reality. But the intent of the text, like that of *Heroicus*, seems to point the other way: Apollonius must be a real holy man to merit a hagiography of the type produced by Philostratus – it would be quite as outrageous to vest his holiness entirely in Philostratus' rhetoric as it would be to maintain that all the divine visions of *Heroicus* are no more than a piece of fictional bravura. This range of positions in the various works in relation to the purported reality they represent is of course specially charged in *VS*, which poses as a kind of history. Yet to distinguish history from embroidery, reality from rhetoric – especially in the context of a discussion of the sophistic masters of the (con)fusion of these themes and in the work of a performer whose very attempt to sum up the entire sophistic places him above and beyond his subjects as the supreme sophist – is precisely the problem.

Philostratus' considerable inventiveness and versatility in the matter of genre is not unique in the prose of the Second Sophistic. Clearly, Lucian of Samosata – who flourished a generation before Philostratus, in the middle and later second century AD – wrote in a variety of genres including dialogues, satirical essays, periegesis, moral diatribe and literary fiction. Plutarch, too – perhaps with less literary panache – displays a variety of genres and themes. Like Philostratus, Lucian ranges across the thematic scope of Second Sophistic culture from very specifically literary and linguistic concerns via a marked interest in the visual arts to a deep engagement with issues of cultural identity and religion. Other writers in this period, too, pushed against the boundaries and limits of specific genres. Arrian of Nicomedia (c. AD 85–160), for example, the senator, imperial legate and historian, composed a *periplus*, or voyage around the coast, of the Black Sea for Hadrian in the 130s. This text – drawing on such classical models as Xenophon's *Anabasis* – combines aspects of first-person travelogue and periegesis with the classic bald enumeration of places and distances along the way that is typical of ancient itineraries, and with the epistolary form and second-person address of a letter from the author to Hadrian.<sup>53</sup> In this last respect, the *periplus* belongs to that specific epistolary subset of panegyric in which an author addresses the emperor as if on sufficiently equal terms to write directly (and hence flatters by avoiding too much flattery, as well as flattering himself by advertising the elevation of his

<sup>53</sup> See the editions of the *Periplus Ponti Euxini* by G. Marengi (Naples, 1958); A. Silberman (Paris, 1995) and A. Liddle (Bristol, 2003); also Stadter (1980) 32–41.

acquaintance – like Xenophon in the *Anabasis*, one might add). This model of epistolary address to an emperor is well known from the works of Pliny the Younger and Fronto as well as Pollux, who begins each book of his *Onomasticon* with a letter to Commodus, and is represented in the works of Philostratus by *Letter 73* to the empress Julia Domna (although being of the circle of an empress, and demonstrating this by flaunting an imperial addressee, as both Pollux and Philostratus do, is not quite the same as being the addressee of the emperor himself).<sup>54</sup> This kind of subversion of genre distinctions through the incorporation of literary forms belonging to other genres (for instance, the mixing of itinerary with epistle) may be said to prepare the way for Philostratus' enterprise. Such openness to play with genre boundaries (on the part of readers as much as writers) is clearly an essential prerequisite for Philostratus' consistent expansion, subversion, or rethinking of a chosen literary form in strikingly creative ways.

The particular distinctiveness of Philostratus in relation to the other major writers of the Second Sophistic lies perhaps in his self-conscious sense of being at its end. In a brilliant series of literary performances he effectively caps and kills the tradition. He explodes letter-writing, re-invents *ecphrasis*, takes *Homerkritik* into areas of mystic revelation from which it could hardly recover, encyclopaedises and hence effectively signs off the entire Second Sophistic to date in the *VS*. The sense of self-conscious participation in and yet mastery over the tradition is most acute in *VS* – where, after all, Philostratus reframes the entire sophistic in his own terms, capping or reducing centuries of brilliant declamation into his own anecdotes and paraphrases. It may be no coincidence that he knows and comments on his sophistic literary rivals. Dio of Prusa – truly a sophist who made claim to advise kings – is turned in both *VA* and *VS* into little more than a competent jobsworth.<sup>55</sup> Lucian is entirely ignored. Chariton – the novelist one presumes, and perhaps by association all the ancient novels – is dismissed in a letter as brief as the genre of the novel is long:

To Chariton

You think that the Greeks will remember your works when you are dead; but those who are nobodies while they exist, what will they be when they exist not?

*Letter 66*

Plutarch, at the end of *Letter 73*, is snubbed in a wonderfully enigmatic request to the empress to pass on a message to the long-dead writer:

<sup>54</sup> On *Letter 73*, see the commentary by Costa (2002) 158–61, with bibliography.

<sup>55</sup> See Whitmarsh (2001a) 181–246.

Please urge Plutarch, boldest of the Greeks, not to take offence at the sophists and not to quarrel with Gorgias. If you do not succeed in persuading him, at least you know, such is your wisdom (σοφία) and cleverness (μητις), what name to apply to a man of that sort; I could tell you, but I can't.

After Philostratus, there would never again be so brilliant a literary performer of his type – and after him a number of genres of literary performance (*ecphrasis*, hagiography, philosophical biography) would no longer be the same.

Yet for all its variation, one might argue that the Philostratean corpus as a whole has a systematic and repeated set of themes whose focus is the study of *sophia* in its various forms and widest sense as understood in the Second Sophistic.<sup>56</sup> *Sophia* is the first word of *Gymnasticus*, where the concept is glossed as philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, music, geometry, astronomy, military strategy, medicine, painting, modelling, the making of statues, engraving in stone and metal – and, of course, gymnastics or athletics (261.1–4 Kayser).<sup>57</sup> In a strikingly parallel passage, the opening paragraph of the proem to *Imagines*, Philostratus declares that to belittle painting is to show injustice to truth (ἀλήθεια) and to wisdom (σοφία) (*Imag.* 1, proem 1, 294.1 Kayser). There, too, we find the list of the arts – modelling, imitation in bronze, carving in marble and ivory, gem cutting, as well as painting (294.2 Kayser).<sup>58</sup> *VS* opens with the attempt to equate sophistry with philosophy both in the proem where sophists are presented as philosophers (480 Kayser) and in the opening of the first book where the ancient art of sophistry is seen as rhetoric doing the work of philosophy (494 Kayser). *VA* rises beyond these human heights to open with the divine Pythagoras – no mere man but a reincarnation of the Trojan Euphorbus and a personal friend of the gods (*VA* 1.1, 1–2 Kayser). Apollonius, himself introduced in chapter 2 as 'more divine still than Pythagoras', is emphatically a man who pursues wisdom (ἀληθινὴ σοφία, *VA* 1.2, 2 Kayser) despite the fact that people know of him for his wizardry. *Heroicus* opens with the meeting of the vinedresser and the Phoenician stranger, but by 2.6 (130 Kayser) the

<sup>56</sup> Anderson (1986) 284 oddly dismisses these thematic overlaps as 'baroque and rococo variations on the same group of themes', while at the same time (correctly) noting that Philostratus returns repeatedly 'to what we might call one of the central themes of the sophistic: the *pepaideumenos* of the present encounters the heroes of the past – on equal terms'.

<sup>57</sup> The terms used to gloss σοφία are φιλοσοφῆσαι, εἰπεῖν σὺν τέχνῃ, ποιητικῇ τε ἀφασθαι καὶ μουσικῇ καὶ γεωμετρίας, καὶ . . . ἀστρονομίας, τὸ κοσμήσαι στρατιάν, ἱατρικὴ πᾶσα, ζωγραφία, πλάσσει, ἀγαλμάτων εἶδη, κοῖλοι λίθοι, κοῖλος σίδηρος and γυμναστική.

<sup>58</sup> Here σοφία comprises ζωγραφία and πλαστικῇ πολλὰ εἶδη, which is glossed by αὐτὸ τὸ πλάττειν, ἢ ἐν τῷ χαλκῷ μίμησις, οἱ ξέοντες τὴν λυγδίην ἢ τὴν Παρίαν λίθον καὶ ὁ ἐλέφας, ἢ γλυφικὴ πλαστικὴ . . .



activity of vinedressing in this text – carried out according to the divine instructions of Protesilaus – is equated with ‘living the philosophical life’ (φιλοσοφεῖς) and by 4.10 (133 Kayser) with wisdom itself (σοφία) and the vinedresser’s acquisition of wisdom (σοφώτερος ἑμαυτοῦ γίνομαι).<sup>59</sup> The gathering of olives and grapes has effectively become a figure for harvesting ‘divine and unpolluted wisdom’ (σοφίαν θεῖαν τε καὶ ἀκήρατον).

By *sophia*, Philostratus clearly has in mind a wide remit and potentially a non-normative one, since he is so keen to argue a case for the inclusion of such diverse themes within the terminology of ‘wisdom’. In honour of a Platonic model,<sup>60</sup> he clearly emphasises skills (τέχναι),<sup>61</sup> but the remit of *sophia* across the corpus moves from the mastery of the specific array of rhetorical, practical and artistic trainings of the openings of *Gymnasticus* and *Imagines* via command in the arena of philosophic education and sophistic disputation in *VS* to the divine and divinely given wisdom invoked in *VA* and *Heroicus*. Effectively all these avenues of *sophia* lead from the complex culture of education.<sup>62</sup> Philostratus’ texts are concerned with *paideia* in its widest sense and with *sophia* as the true mastery of *paideia* to the extent that one can rise to the level of teaching the wisdom one has acquired. Again, whether one thinks of the explicit mission of educational reform in the teaching of athletics (in *Gymnasticus*) or the conduct of religion and ritual (in *VA*), of the models of master-educators enacted by the sophistic heroes of *VS* or the speaker in *Imagines*, or of the teachers in holiness exemplified in different ways by both the vinedresser in *Heroicus* and by Apollonius of Tyana, or of the direct lessons in aesthetic appreciation offered by *Imagines* and the more oblique lessons in matters such as love and its rhetoric which might be drawn from *Letters* or in politics that one might learn from *VS*, the corpus shares with much other Second Sophistic writing a fundamental focus upon a series of questions as to what is best in Hellenic culture, but has a particular interest in how these issues might be most effectively conveyed to the young through education. The interest in the past evidenced throughout the corpus (and here *Nero*, whose subject is a bad emperor obsessed with Greece, might figure as a negative exemplum

<sup>59</sup> The backdrop of vinedressing is hardly selected at random by Philostratus. The image was a standard one for the fruition of education (hopefully into wisdom): see Morgan (1998) 262. One wonders to what extent Dionysiac connotations are significant in this setting.

<sup>60</sup> If Gorgias was the father of the sophists (*VS* 492) and at any rate the inventor of extempore speech (*VS* 481–2), then according to *Letter* 73, Plato was not his opponent: ‘he was as far removed from envy as emulation is from jealousy.’ Rather, ‘Plato adopts the literary forms of the sophists; he does not let himself be beaten by Gorgias at Gorgias’ own tricks’.

<sup>61</sup> On the parody of τέχνη in Lucian’s *Parasite*, see Nesselrath (1985) 123–239.

<sup>62</sup> On *paideia* in the Second Sophistic, see Morgan (1998) 190–273; Whitmarsh (2001a) 90–130 and 181–246 (for the relations of sophist and emperor); Connolly (2001); Borg (2004a).

of how the Philhellene should *not* behave, cf. Antony in Plutarch's *Life of Antony*)<sup>63</sup> belongs to this thematic as being the basis of an ancient and yet living Hellenism, which it is the mission of Philostratus to pass on. The interest in the visual arts, encompassing not only great art from the past but also the quality of *phantasia* whose vivid evocation can give rise to newly creative art worthy of the past even in the present, is likewise part of this equation in being both the product of *paideia* and its vehicle.<sup>64</sup> The insistence on Hellenism – whether 'cultural', 'political', philosophical, or holy – as variously asserted in the different texts, is likewise a central guarantor of the antiquity and purity of the project, as it is again in other authors of the Second Sophistic.

It is not my intention here to limit the richness and diversity of the Philostratean corpus by arguing for a single thematic underlying all the texts. But it may be fair to assume that the agenda governing the careful and brilliant literary production of such a range of works in different genres but with close thematic alignments may be more fundamental, even dare one say it, more intentional, than simply the result of dilettantism or the appeal of *belles-lettres*.<sup>65</sup> Taken together, these texts mount a plea and a programme for education in the great tradition. It is an education in a cultural humanism that rests on the canon of Greek classics but extends beyond rhetoric and philosophy to art and athletics, as well as carrying a salvific religious message about a Hellenism where the dead heroes live again and mortal philosophers of recent times may become divine men. The corpus of texts is more than a convenient illustration of the range of sophistic interests,<sup>66</sup> it is a programme for what Greek culture in the Roman world might be – perhaps even, in its visionary way, for what Philostratus believed Greek culture actually was. One problem with an artificially narrow definition of the Second Sophistic in terms of rhetorical culture and the activities of sophists has historically been an over-reliance on the declamatory model offered by *VS*.<sup>67</sup> But if we extend our scope, in addition, to the visual antiquarianisms of *Imagines* and sections of *VA*, to the religious revivalism and seriousness of *VA* and *Heroicus*, to the

<sup>63</sup> See especially the *Comparison of Demetrius and Antony*. Note also that Plutarch ends his *Life* by specifically telling us that Nero was fifth in descent from Antony, 87.4.

<sup>64</sup> For art, in addition to *Imagines* and *VA* (on which see Platt, chapter 7 in this volume and Birmelin (1933)), see *Letters* 5, 7, 33, 34 and *Gymnasticus* 1, 25, 36. For *phantasia*, see *VA* 6.19 with Schweitzer (1934); Pollitt (1974) 52–4, 201–5; Watson (1988) 59–95; Rousselle (2001) 393–9.

<sup>65</sup> Anderson (1986) uses *belles-lettres* to characterise the Philostratean corpus in his title and again at 283 and 287.

<sup>66</sup> So Anderson (1986) 13, also *OCD* (3rd edn.), s.v. 'Philostrati', p. 1171.

<sup>67</sup> One thinks especially of Bowersock (1969) and Brunt (1994). See now Whitmarsh (2001a) 17–20.

living culture of athletic expertise and ascetic restraint (in matters of sex and diet especially) in implicit relation to competitive participation in the panhellenic festivals, in *Gymnasticus*, never forgetting the learned and allusive means by which these topics are presented, then it might be that the corpus as a whole offers an extraordinarily acute picture of the richness and full cultural range of imperial Hellenism as a phenomenon.

## CHAPTER 2

### *Philostratus: the life of a sophist*

*Ewen Bowie*

#### PHILOSTRATUS IN HIS TIME

The Philostratus who is the subject of this book was a member of an Athenian family in which the name continued to be used over several generations. Our Philostratus, usually called 'the Second' by modern scholars,<sup>1</sup> is said by the tenth-century AD Byzantine lexicon known as the Suda to have been the son of a man whose name was Philostratus Verus. The family seems to have had property on Lemnos, an island to which Philostratus refers in two anecdotes.<sup>2</sup> He was probably born ca. AD 170.<sup>3</sup> We know from his *Lives of the sophists* that he was a pupil of Proclus of Naucratis,<sup>4</sup> but it seems likely that he also studied with Damianus of Ephesus, Hippodromus of Thessaly and Antipater of Hierapolis. In many ways Philostratus' career was similar to that of many of his subjects in these *Lives*. The Suda entry credits him with declamations (μελέται) and with a sophistic career in Athens and Rome: in this, he resembled several sophists we know to have been active in both Athens and Rome, though in some cases (e.g. Philagrus of Cilicia and Hadrianus of Tyre, discussed below) this career pattern was a consequence of their first holding a chair in Athens and then moving to that in Rome – Philostratus himself, on the other hand, seems never to have held a chair in either city. Like many of his sophists, however, Philostratus probably also did hold high office in the city he regarded as his own, Athens: if he is the L. Flavius Philostratus of the deme Steiria (on the coast of Attica just north of modern Porto Rafti) attested in three

<sup>1</sup> For the biographies of the Philostrati and the problems of attributing transmitted and attested (but lost) works to each see especially Münscher (1907); Anderson (1986); Flinterman (1995); De Lannoy (1997); Billault (2000).

<sup>2</sup> VA 6.27, VS 1.21.515–16. The crediting of the anecdote about a satyr in VA 6.27 to one of Philostratus' own 'contemporaries' (τῶν ἐμᾶστοῦ τινὰ ἰσηλικῶν), whose mother (he claimed) was visited by a satyr, has suggested to some that the information goes back to his childhood, but even if the story relates to the childhood of the 'contemporary' it does not firmly establish Philostratus' own presence on the island at the time.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Avotins (1978).   <sup>4</sup> VS 2.21.602.

inscriptions<sup>5</sup> he was 'hoplite general' (στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ (τῶν) ὀπλων) between AD 200/1 and AD 210/11<sup>6</sup>: by this period the office had nothing to do with weaponry or warfare, but was a magistracy especially involved with securing the city's food supplies. Philostratus was also one of the *prytaneis* (i.e. representatives in the city's government) of his tribe (*phyle*) Pandionis, one of the tribes whose name went back as far as the late sixth-century BC Alcmaeonid politician Cleisthenes.<sup>7</sup> Our Philostratus is also probably the sophist Flavius Philostratus honoured by Athens with a statue at Olympia.<sup>8</sup>

If the Suda is correct to write that he was active as a sophist in Rome, this is likely to have been ca. AD 203–7. It will probably have been then that Philostratus was introduced (perhaps before the end of AD 207)<sup>9</sup> to the court of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna and to Julia Domna's coterie of γεωμέτραι (mathematicians) and philosophers.<sup>10</sup> He seems to have followed the imperial court when it left Rome: certainly he was present when, late in AD 212 or early in AD 213, the sophist Heliodorus 'the Arab' pleaded on behalf of his country<sup>11</sup> before Caracalla in Gaul; perhaps he was also with it for the imperial visit to Tyana and Antioch in AD 215.<sup>12</sup> In the course of this career which may have combined some local politics in Athens with sophistic activity on the 'world' stage Philostratus had married and had fathered at least two sons: an inscription for a statue at Erythrae in Ionia (on the mainland opposite the island of Chios, conveniently placed for visits to the great sophistic centre, Smyrna) honours L. Flavius Capitolinus, son of the sophist Flavius Philostratus,<sup>13</sup> and shows that the wife of our Philostratus was called Aurelia Melirine, while another son and further relatives were senators. Its erection makes it very probable that the family owned land at Erythrae.<sup>14</sup>

The Athens in which Philostratus grew up (even if he probably spent some time on family estates on Lemnos), and in which he received at least some of his rhetorical education, was a city in which sophistic rhetoric was

<sup>5</sup> Traill (1971) nos. 13 and 14, *IG II<sup>2</sup> 1803*, Agora xv 447.4 and 448.4 and cf. Traill (1971) 323–5.

<sup>6</sup> Follet (1976) 101–2; Puech (2002) 377–8 no. 200. The most recent collection of the epigraphic evidence is in Byrne (2003) 262 Flavius no. 152.

<sup>7</sup> Traill (1982) 231–3 no. 34 = *SFG* xxxii.194.3, cf. Puech (2002) and Byrne (2003) cited in n. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 878 = *Inscriptionen von Olympia* no. 476: Φλ.Φιλόστρατον Ἀθηναῖον τὸν σοφιστὴν ἡ λαμπροτάτη πατρίς, cf. *IG II<sup>2</sup> 3667*. Cf. *IK* 1.63 from Erythrae.

<sup>9</sup> For the chronology cf. Flinterman (1995) 19–22.

<sup>10</sup> Philostr. *VA* 1.3. The most attractive sequence is: tenure of hoplite generalship ca. AD 203/4, move to Rome ca. AD 205.

<sup>11</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.32.625–6, using the term πατρίς: we do not know Heliodorus' city, nor whether this embassy related to a single city or a whole province.

<sup>12</sup> Cassius Dio 77.18.4. <sup>13</sup> *IK* 1.63 = *IErythrae* 63 = *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 879, cf. Puech (2002) 377–8 no. 200.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Philostr. *epist* 45.

omnipresent in live performances and through the medium of circulated texts, and in which recently published books in other literary genres can be presumed to have been attracting attention – and, in some cases, perhaps, generating literary debate.

Since no later than the last decades of the first century AD eminent rhetors from other cities had seen Athens as an appropriate location either to give epideictic performances as a visitor (of the sophists commemorated in Philostratus' *Lives* the earliest for whom he attests this is Scopelianus, known to be active ca. AD 90–115)<sup>15</sup> or even to settle – as it seems Isaeus did, to judge from descendants resident in Athens.<sup>16</sup> One of Isaeus' pupils, Hordeonius Lollianus, also left his own city Ephesus (itself no mean sophistic centre)<sup>17</sup> for Athens; there he must have acquired citizenship, since he held a magistracy (στρατηγὸς ἐπὶ (τῶν) ὀπλῶν), a post held by Philostratus himself some seventy years later, as noted above, and a priesthood which we can date to AD 142/3.<sup>18</sup> We cannot tell whether his career in teaching or in city politics came first – or, indeed, ran in parallel – but we know that his pupils included some who were later distinguished sophists themselves (e.g. Theodotus of Athens and Philagrus of Cilicia).<sup>19</sup> For the history of rhetoric Lollianus' greatest claim to fame is that he was the first sophist to hold the city chair of rhetoric at Athens – established, it would therefore seem, in the 130s or 140s, and a mark of the importance that Athenians attached to the role of their education industry, by then rivalling those of the great cities of the province Asia, Ephesus and Smyrna. Philostratus reports, and presumably had himself seen, two statues erected in Lollianus' honour, 'one in the *agora*, the other in the small grove that he is said to have planted himself'. The base of one of these, erected by his pupils, has survived (probably the base of that in the *agora*), with an elegiac epigram praising both his declamation and his forensic speeches.<sup>20</sup> Some of these works were available to be read in the AD 180s by the lexicographer Phrynichus, who three times criticises Lollianus' faults of Attic Greek mercilessly,<sup>21</sup> and later by Philostratus, who commends his direct style, citing two examples of his rhetorical fireworks. His handbooks (τέχναι), which touched on *stasis* theory, were still used in the fifth century.

<sup>15</sup> VS 2.1.521. <sup>16</sup> IG II–III<sup>2</sup> 3632.7, 3709.6, cf. Oliver (1949) 243f.

<sup>17</sup> Lollianus retained influence, family and presumably property in Ephesus: his daughter Hordeonia Pulchra was honoured by a statue, IK xiii 984.

<sup>18</sup> IG II–III<sup>2</sup> 1764B. <sup>19</sup> VS 2.2 and 8.

<sup>20</sup> VS 1.23.526–7; IG II–III<sup>2</sup> 4211 (= Kaibel, *Epigrammata Graeca* 877). Byrne (2003) 300 takes the findspot of this statue base (the Acropolis) as counting against its statue's identity with either mentioned by Philostratus.

<sup>21</sup> Phrynichus *Erologia* 8, 147, 159 Rutherford.

In the decades between the establishment of the civic chair and Philostratus' childhood the prominence of rhetoric in Athens and of Athens in the sophistic world continued to grow. Philostratus is probably right to give pride of place in his account of these years to the hugely rich and influential Herodes Atticus. Herodes seems to have combined a life of declaiming and teaching with participation in city politics and the holding of Roman offices, culminating in the consulate of AD 142/3. Philostratus gives a vivid sketch of one of his paedagogic tools that was probably unique: Herodes allowed an inner circle of his top ten pupils – called the Little Water-Clock (*Clepsydrium*) – to stay on after his own public epideictic performance and dine with him while (timed by a water-clock) he presented a full exposition of one hundred lines of poetry. Discussion to which all ten might contribute then continued during post-prandial drinking.<sup>22</sup>

The many sophists vying for business were themselves competitive and encouraged rivalry among their pupils. Herodes' pupils, whose ringleader seems to have been Amphilches of Chalcis,<sup>23</sup> gratuitously provoked a quarrel with Philagrus of Cilicia when he started lecturing in Athens, and were delighted to expose one of his supposedly *ex tempore* performances as in fact prepared.<sup>24</sup> This incident presumably belongs in the 160s, shortly before Philostratus' birth: it is likely that it was in the 170s that Philagrus was rescued from the unwelcoming and critical Athenian public – which might have included the acerbic Lucian<sup>25</sup> – to take up an appointment to the Greek chair of rhetoric in Rome. It was not only on Philostratus or his informants that Philagrus made an impression: a dream that Philagrus once had, predicting his inability to declaim, is noted by the writer on dream-interpretation, Artemidorus.<sup>26</sup>

Philagrus might have stayed in Athens had there been a chair free to which he could be appointed. In the mid 170s the emperor Marcus established in Athens chairs of the major philosophical schools and also a second chair of rhetoric to be remunerated at a higher rate than the civic chair, with an annual salary of 10,000 rather than the latter's 6,000 drachmae. Competition for this chair must have exacerbated that already manifest among sophists for pupils, prominence and for the civic chair. Marcus allowed Herodes to appoint to the philosophic chairs, but did not risk giving him the choice of that of rhetoric, and indeed appointed one

<sup>22</sup> VS 2.10.585–6.

<sup>23</sup> An epitaph for Amphilches' son by Amphilches survives, *Syll.*<sup>1</sup> 1240, cf. Bowie (1989) 235–6.

<sup>24</sup> VS 2.8.579.

<sup>25</sup> A good case for seeing Philagrus as Lucian's target in his *Lexiphanes* is made by Jones (1972).

<sup>26</sup> 4.1, 242, 11–13 Pack.

of Herodes' former pupils who by now had joined his political enemies, Iulius Theodorus of the deme Melite.<sup>27</sup> Theodorus held the chair only for two years before dying in his fifties. Marcus then appointed, on the basis of his reputation alone, another of Herodes' pupils, Hadrianus of Tyre. This appointment took place at some date not long before Marcus' visit to Athens in AD 176 to be initiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, a visit which gave him the opportunity actually to hear Hadrianus for the first time. Philostratus' very vivid account of Hadrianus' dazzling performances – among them delivery of a funeral oration for Herodes when he died ca. AD 177/8<sup>28</sup> – and ostentatious self-presentation must be credited to what he had heard from his elders rather than seen or heard himself as a child. But the over-heated atmosphere of sophistic competition may well have made some impression on him, too. Hadrianus' pupils would escort him home after his lectures and they had their slaves beat up a supporter of his rival Chrestus of Byzantium who kept insulting their hero: when the man died thirty days later Hadrianus faced a charge of murder and was tried by the legate of Achaëa.<sup>29</sup>

When Hadrianus was promoted to what was regarded (and described by Philostratus) as the 'higher' chair in Rome, early in the AD 180s, it was not Chrestus who succeeded him, despite his having at one stage 100 pupils and despite an Athenian embassy to Commodus requesting his appointment, but the man we know best as a lexicographer, Hadrianus' pupil Pollux (in Greek Polydeuces) of Naucratis.<sup>30</sup> Pollux cannot have held the chair long – like Theodotus, he died in his fifties (according to Philostratus, he was fifty-eight)<sup>31</sup> – and he was succeeded by Pausanias of Caesarea Mazaca in Cappadocia.

These must have been the names that dominated discussion of sophistic rhetoric in Philostratus' teens, along with those of others who either held only the civic chair – for example, Apollonius of Athens, a pupil of Hadrianus of Tyre – or who failed to achieve a chair at all – Protemy of Naucratis and Rufus of Perinthus, both pupils of Herodes, the latter well enough established in international society to be elected archon of the Panhellenion,<sup>32</sup> or Apollonius and Proclus of Naucratis.

Among these sophists only Proclus of Naucratis was certainly one of Philostratus' own teachers. He had come to Athens as a young man to

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Byrne (2003) 311–2 Iulius no. 48, *PIR* I 599, *JG* II–III<sup>2</sup> 3813 (to himself), 3616 (to his homonymous son, an ephebe ca. AD 160, 2094.39), 4087 (to his daughter Iulia Cephisodora). Theodotus' wife Aelia Cephisodora was the niece of another of Herodes' enemies, Claudius Demonstratus.

<sup>28</sup> *VS* 2.10.586; for the date cf. Foller (1976) 267, Tobin (1997). <sup>29</sup> *VS* 2.10.587–8.

<sup>30</sup> *VS* 2.11.591, 12.593. <sup>31</sup> *VS* 2.12.593. <sup>32</sup> *VS* 2.17.597.



attend the lectures of Hadrianus of Tyre, and later returned to settle there. We learn that he taught in one of his two Athenian houses (he also had two others, in the Piraeus and at Eleusis): there, for a once-for-all fee of 100 drachmae, his pupils had access to both his lectures and his private library. 'To prevent us hissing and making jokes at one another, as tends to happen in sophists' lectures, we were asked to go in all together, and when we had gone in we would sit down with boys (παῖδες) and their minders in the middle, and the young men (μειράκια) by themselves.'<sup>33</sup> Philostratus' phraseology does not make it clear whether he himself was in the category of boys or young men.

The detail and enthusiasm of Philostratus' discussion of Hippodromus of Thessaly might also suggest he was formally taught by him. Note especially the phraseology of the story how, when Proclus composed an invective against all teachers at Athens including Hippodromus, 'we thought we would hear a speech that aimed to echo what had been said, but he [sc. Hippodromus] said nothing common but delivered an encomium of good language'.<sup>34</sup> Even if Philostratus was never a pupil, it is virtually certain that he heard Hippodromus perform in Athens, where he was already prominent some time before succeeding Heraclides of Lycia in the imperial chair, probably ca. AD 209.<sup>35</sup> We get a further indication that Philostratus was close to Hippodromus when he credits him with helpful advice to his nephew, Philostratus 'the Lemnian', when he was to deliver an *ex tempore* epideictic speech at Olympia: indeed, Hippodromus postponed his own performance until the close of the festival so as not to compete with his own pupil.<sup>36</sup> Philostratus commends Hippodromus' reactions in a number of incidents, and he does not implicate him in the pressure-group formed by supporters of Apollonius of Naucratis to force Heraclides of Lycia to leave the Athenian chair for a successful private practice in Smyrna.

But by the time of this sophistic in-fighting Philostratus must himself already have been teaching – first (presumably) in Athens, then in Rome. When he moved to the capital is uncertain, but his report of a declamatory contest in Rome between Apollonius of Athens and Heraclides of Lycia when the latter was on an embassy to Septimius Severus, probably in AD 202 or 203, is perhaps briefer than might be expected if he were there at the time.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, as suggested above, he should still have been in

<sup>33</sup> VS 2.21.604. As Jás Elsner has pointed out to me, this model of a sophist lecturing to παῖδες amid μειράκια is precisely the frame Philostratus sets up in the poem of the *Imagines* and enacts in various of the descriptions therein (e.g. 1.3). See Elsner (1995) 17–9, Anderson (1986) 265 (on the phenomenon repeated in individual descriptions).

<sup>34</sup> VS 2.27.618. <sup>35</sup> He held it for four years, VS 2.27.618. <sup>36</sup> VS 2.27.617. <sup>37</sup> VS 2.20.601.

Athens ca. AD 205 to hold the office of hoplite general. So movement to Rome and attachment to the imperial court should belong in or after AD 205 or 206. But it might be wrong to imagine his spending uninterrupted years in Rome. Many of the Greek and Roman elite travelled frequently: Philostratus may not have wished to neglect his friends, his intellectual connections and his (doubtless) substantial properties in Athens and Lemnos. So although he was there late in AD 212 or early in 213 when the sophist Heliodorus 'the Arab' pleaded before Caracalla in Gaul,<sup>38</sup> his account of Philiscus having to defend his claim to professorial immunity in person before the emperor in Rome, in the winter of AD 212, is not marked by the same first-person expression. His remarks about the sophistic quarrel between Aspasius and Philostratus of Lemnos gaining strength in Ionia and about his friendship with the Athenian Nicagoras and the Phoenician Apsines (who taught in Athens) point rather to his spending much, perhaps most, of his time in Athens and Ionia in the 220s and 230s.

#### GENRE

The sophistic world in which Philostratus moved in his teen and adult years (the years between AD 180 and 240) was one which produced much literature over and above the declamations (*μελέται*) and less formal talks (*διαλέξεις*) or 'tasters' (*προλαλίσαι*) that were the staple of epideictic performances. Philostratus himself is one of our chief witnesses to sophists' activity in other genres.

Historiography was not uncommon. Philostratus mentions a work 'On the Goths' (*Γετικά*) by Dio of Prusa, which he relates to his exile among the Getae and classifies as a 'history' (*ιστορία*).<sup>39</sup> He also commends, particularly for its display of language and – if the text is correct – of contemplative reflection (*θεωρία*), a history (*ιστορία*) by Antiochus of Aegeae<sup>40</sup> and elsewhere compares the qualities of Antipater of Hierapolis in declaiming and writing history (*ξυγγράψαι*) unfavourably with his distinction as a letter-writer.<sup>41</sup> From Phrynichus we happen to know that Polemo wrote history.<sup>42</sup> But there was certainly much more.

Poetry, too, was often composed. Although Philostratus attests the composition of poetry only for Nicetes of Smyrna (tragedy) and Scopelianus of Clazomenae (credited with all sorts of poetry, among them both tragedy and epic),<sup>43</sup> epigraphy adds other cases of sophist-poets, notably Herodes

<sup>38</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.32.625–6. <sup>39</sup> *VS* 1.7.487, cf. *FGrH* 707. <sup>40</sup> *VS* 2.4.570, cf. *PIRA* 730, *FGrH* 747.

<sup>41</sup> *VS* 2.24.607. <sup>42</sup> 271 Lobeck. <sup>43</sup> *VS* 1.21.518.

Atticus and Aelian of Praeneste, and provides some poetry by Aristides of Hadrianoutherae to supplement what he cites in his *Sacred Tales*.<sup>44</sup>

A third literary genre that seems to have attracted sophists was epistolography. Philostratus knows a number of letters written by Herodes Atticus to a man whose name may be Varus (the text is uncertain): this might even suggest that a collection of his own letters was published by Herodes.<sup>45</sup> Philostratus' commendation of Flavius Antipater of Hierapolis and condemnation of Aspasius of Ravenna in connection with their tenure of the office *ab epistulis graecis* seems to hint at more epistolography than that generated by official duties alone.<sup>46</sup> Aelian of Praeneste wrote *Rustic letters* (ἀγροικικαὶ ἐπιστολαί) of which a slim collection (twenty letters) survives.

Finally we must consider the extraordinary oeuvre of Lucian. Born around AD 120 into a family from Samosata on the Commagenian stretch of the river Euphrates, Lucian acquired a good tertiary Greek education in rhetoric and philosophy – we don't know where: perhaps in Ionia?<sup>47</sup> – and seems to have embarked on the career of an epideictic sophist that attracted so many others. Despite some claimed success in this career – perhaps only in western provinces<sup>48</sup> – Lucian developed a form of rhetorical entertainment very different from the standard sophistic declamations, μελέται. As in the case of many sophistic displays, his main performance was sometimes preceded by a taster, a προλαλιά, thematically linked to the main course, but that main course was a satirical romp, often satirising the sophists and philosophers who performed in the same theatres and *odeia* as Lucian, and not infrequently in dialogue form. It is impossible to be sure which of Lucian's surviving works were initially presented orally, and if so on how many different occasions. What we have was clearly suited to circulation in the form of a written text for reading, and some works may never have been intended for oral delivery at all. But that some *were* seems clear from the προλαλιά, and it is very likely that Lucian's diverse oral performances will have provoked thought in a young sophist seeking – as Philostratus surely was – to establish himself as generically innovative. This makes it surprising that nowhere in any of Philostratus' works is Lucian mentioned (though by an ironic twist of *fortuna* one of the shorter works now reckoned by many to be by Philostratus, the dialogue *Nero*, has been transmitted as part of the Lucianic corpus).

<sup>44</sup> See Bowie (1989). <sup>45</sup> VS 1.25.537. <sup>46</sup> VS 2.24.607, 33.628.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Luc., *Twice accused* 27. <sup>48</sup> Luc., *Apology* 15.

Lucian's biographic treatments of contemporary figures who had achieved a dubious eminence in Greek cultural life, whether blandly laudatory, as in *Demonax*, or devastatingly denigratory, as in *Alexander* and *Peregrinus*, were among the few models that can have been available for Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists*, and showed how such a *Life* of a latter-day cultural icon could be elaborated at some length (*Alexander* is twenty-nine pages in the Oxford text, *Peregrinus* eighteen, *Demonax* twelve), even where the subject may be entirely fictitious (as I suspect *Demonax* to be). Lucian's adaptations of Platonic dialogue settings in *Toxaris* and *Friends of fabrication* (*Philopseudeis*)<sup>49</sup> to frame highly self-conscious narrative fictions (even, perhaps, meta-fictions) play games with the status of narrator and reader and the nature of Greek fiction that recur in quite similar forms in Philostratus' *Heroicus*, and other features of that work (including research into Homeric problems with the aid of a privileged source) are also anticipated in Lucian's *True (hi)stories*. In his *On the house* (*de domo*, περὶ τοῦ οἴκου) and *Representations* (*Imagines*, εἰκόνας) Lucian also played with a self-standing art-form developed from the age-old literary game of precisely and evocatively describing a work of art – a game in which sophists will have been trained at an early stage as they were taken through the wider-ranging exercise of 'description', *ecphrasis*. Admittedly other writers had also deployed this trope – notably hellenistic epigram, starting with Poseidippos – and Aelius Aristides made some use of it in such virtuoso display speeches as those *On the well in the temple of Asclepius* (39 Keil) and *On the Aegean sea* (44 Keil). But Lucian's approach to this type of *ecphrasis* is one which can be argued to have had more influence on Philostratus. Finally it might be thought that the interweaving of literary models and religious concerns of *Apollonius* and *Heroicus* were in some ways anticipated by Lucian in his work *On the Syrian goddess*. Overall the points of contact between Lucian's variegated oeuvre and that of Philostratus are so striking that one is tempted to attribute the biographer's silence on Lucian to his sense that he was too uncomfortably close to give a reader free rein to admire Philostratus' own originality.

Lucian's *Toxaris* and *Friends of fabrication* (*Philopseudeis*) and his two-book *True (hi)stories* also seem to explore issues arising from another innovative literary genre, the novel. By the middle of the first century AD, and perhaps much earlier,<sup>50</sup> Greek readers had been able to read prose fiction narratives of the adventures of a teenage boy–girl couple dragged by malign fortune around both Greek and exotic, non-Greek parts of the near East,

<sup>49</sup> On *Philopseudeis*, see most recently Ogden (2007a). <sup>50</sup> Bowie (2002).

sometimes separated from each other and often facing sensational ordeals. Lucian's works just mentioned show that he knew such narratives and imply that his readers could be expected to, and Lucian himself very probably wrote a variant form of fiction, the *Metamorphoses* that gave Apuleius the framework for his work of the same name. The writers of these novels show good knowledge of rhetoric and may in some cases actually have been practising sophists. Our earliest writer of a novel to survive complete, Chariton, claims to have been the secretary of a *rhetor*,<sup>51</sup> and it is hard to resist identifying him with the Chariton to whom Philostratus addressed an ostensibly vituperative letter:

To Chariton

You think that the Greeks will remember your writings when you are dead. But those who are nobodies when they are alive, what could they possibly be when they are not alive?<sup>52</sup>

This text demonstrates not that Philostratus and his readers had little or no knowledge of the novels, but that that they were familiar enough for the brief reference to Chariton to make sense, and the idea of an eight-book, chiefly fictional work on the travels and ordeals of an admirable individual named in its title, *On Apollonius of Tyana*, will have come easier to a Philostratus who knew Chariton's and Achilles Tatius' eight-book novels than to one who did not.<sup>53</sup> The decision to build a prose book around expressions of sexual desire, *ἔρως*, as Philostratus did in his collection of (chiefly) love letters, might also be thought to relate in some way to the centrality of desire in the novels, but as much, and perhaps more, influence on his project might be argued for erotic epigram, a genre well represented in anthologies of epigrams and successfully attempted by two poets in the early imperial period, Rufinus and Strato.<sup>54</sup>

Novels and epigram have taken us into the penumbra of the literary genres exploited by sophists before Philostratus. There were several other genres on offer – e.g. didactic hexameter epic – that are not known to have been attempted by sophists but to which Philostratus might in principle have turned his literary hand. As it is his most-substantial and most-read works have been *Lives of the sophists* and *On Apollonius of Tyana*, the former a collection of biographies, the latter a hybrid of which biography is the dominant parent. Philostratus may well have been working on these

<sup>51</sup> Chariton, *Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.1.1.

<sup>52</sup> μεμνησεσθαι τῶν σῶν λόγων οἶσι τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἑπιδιδάν τελευτήσης· οἱ δὲ μὴδὲν ὄντες ὁπότε εἰσίν, τίνες ἂν εἴεν ὁπότε οὐκ εἰσίν; Philostratus, *Letter* 66.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Bowie (1994) 187–94. <sup>54</sup> Cf. Bowie (1990) 56–8.

two books simultaneously: there is too little evidence to allow a plausible chronology of the other works, with the possible exception of *Heroicus*.

(1) *On Apollonius of Tyana* (τὰ ἐς τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον Τυανέα), in eight books, can be inferred to have been finished after Julia Domna's death in AD 217 from the fact that, though she commissioned it, Philostratus does not dedicate it to her, and that she is referred to by verbs in imperfect tenses.<sup>55</sup> It seems also to have been finished before his completion of *Lives of the sophists*, since this work cross-refers to *On Apollonius*,<sup>56</sup> giving a date no later than AD 242/3 (see below). Philostratus played down the role of Apollonius as a magician and wonder-worker (μᾶγος and γόνς) and stressed his links with the divine in his capacity as a neo-Pythagorean sage who traversed the Roman empire (and even reached Parthia, India and Ethiopia), admonishing individuals and cities, reviving traditional Greek cults and resisting oppression by the Roman 'tyrants' Nero and Domitian. Philostratus presents him as being accompanied by an interlocutor-figure, Damis of Nineveh, whose role to some extent recalls that of interlocutors of the Platonic Socrates. Damis was probably invented to be a foil to Apollonius and to allow citation of his 'diaries' to give Philostratus' account more authority than its predecessors. The eight-book structure of *On Apollonius* is among several features that bring it closer to the novels than to earlier examples of biography.

(2) *Lives of the sophists* (βίοι σοφιστῶν) has a very different flavour. The Gordian to whom it is dedicated has often been thought to be to Gordian I when he was proconsul of Africa in AD 237/8.<sup>57</sup> Recently, however, Jones has advanced persuasive arguments for its dedicatee being the young Gordian III and its date AD 242/3.<sup>58</sup> Its subject is more central to contemporary Greek society and it is more typical of Greek writing of the period in the version of Hellenic cultural identity that it parades. Its two books comprise fifty-nine biographies: the majority of these (forty-one, to be precise) are of prominent Greek sophists of the imperial period, starting with Nicetes of Smyrna under Nero and continuing down to Philostratus' own coevals, a sequence for which he coined the terms 'New' or 'Second Sophistic'. The former designation was to be ephemeral, the latter to endure, to be revived in the nineteenth century and to be widely and often very loosely applied (sometimes to phenomena quite unrelated to Philostratus' sophists) in

<sup>55</sup> Philostr. *VA* 1.3.    <sup>56</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.5.570.

<sup>57</sup> Philostr. *VS* pref. 480 with Avotins (1978) 242–7.    <sup>58</sup> Jones (2002).

the twentieth.<sup>59</sup> The lives of these 'new' sophists, dominated by the much longer accounts of Polemo and Herodes at the end of book 1 and the beginning of book 2 respectively (1.25, 2.1), are preceded by eight lives of philosophers whose presentation also earned them the title 'sophist' (1.1–8), ending with Dio of Prusa and Favorinus, then ten lives of the classical sophists (from Gorgias to Aeschines, 1.9–18) whose authority Philostratus harnesses for his 'Second Sophistic'. Philostratus used both his subjects' published works (chiefly declamations) and oral tradition gathered from sophists he himself had heard. His reliability has been questioned,<sup>60</sup> but controls often support his version,<sup>61</sup> and *Lives of the sophists* is an invaluable, albeit tendentious, Greek cultural history of the period.

In addition to these two biographic works which are unambiguously attributable to this Philostratus there are a further five, in quite different prose genres, which are very probably his, and two more (one prose, one verse) which could well be.

- (3) *On athletics* (Γυμναστικός), a historical and protreptic account of Greek athletics, with special reference to the Olympic games, has a strong claim to be by this Philostratus. It fits his persistent concern with Hellenic values and identity and with the prestige of Greek city elites, and linguistic parallels support this attribution.<sup>62</sup> That the athlete Aurelius Helix is at his peak (c. 46) suggests that its composition falls after his second Olympic victory, which was either in AD 213<sup>63</sup> or AD 217,<sup>64</sup> and that it is probably after his double victory in the Capitoline games at Rome in 219.<sup>65</sup>
- (4) *On heroes* (Ἡρωϊκός, *Heroicus*) is also increasingly accepted as being a work of our Philostratus 'the Second'.<sup>66</sup> It takes the form of a dialogue in which an unnamed Phoenician sailor, delayed by winds on the Thracian Chersonese, learns of a vintner's encounter with the ghosts of heroes of the Trojan war. This is a variant on the popular game (earlier played by the author claiming to be Dictys of Crete, and by Dio of Prusa in his eleventh Oration), of 'correcting' Homer and other archaic poets. Its account of Achilles' singing even allows the author to try his own hand at poetry.<sup>67</sup> The same theme is treated briefly in

<sup>59</sup> For pertinent observations see Whitmarsh (2001a) 41–5. <sup>60</sup> Jones (1974).

<sup>61</sup> Swain (1991). <sup>62</sup> Jüthner (1902), Münscher (1907) 496–7. <sup>63</sup> Münscher (1907) 497–8, 553–4.

<sup>64</sup> Jüthner (1909) 87–9. <sup>65</sup> Cassius Dio 79.10.2–3.

<sup>66</sup> Münscher (1907) 495–7, however, argues for ascription of *Heroicus* and *Imagines* (I) to Philostratus 'the Third'.

<sup>67</sup> 53.10, 55.3, cf. Bowie (1989) 221–3 and (1994) 183–7.

*On Apollonius of Tyana*, but it is disputed which is the earlier.<sup>68</sup> Reference to the second Olympic victory of Helix puts *Heroicus* after AD 213 (cf. above on *Gymnasticus*).

- (5) 'Paintings' (εἰκόνες, *Imagines*), consists of forty-eight descriptions of paintings of chiefly mythological subjects divided into two books. They are presented by the work's narrator as expositions of paintings in a gallery in a suburb of Naples, addressed to his host's ten-year-old but unnamed son. Menander Rhetor,<sup>69</sup> writing in the late third century, was probably right to assign these to the same Philostratus as *Heroicus* – i.e. Philostratus 'the Second' – but the difference of genre complicates any assessment.
- (6) The second of two transmitted *Lectures* (διαλέξεις), presumably among those διαλέξεις ascribed to Philostratus 'the Second' by the Suda, discusses the old topic of nature and culture. It shares a geographical reference with *On Apollonius of Tyana*,<sup>70</sup> and it is likely to be by Philostratus 'the Second'.
- (7) Of seventy-three letters transmitted as a collection, fifty-eight love letters, all but three of whose young male or female addressees are unnamed, are probably among the *Erotic letters* (ἐπιστολαὶ ἐρωτικαί) ascribed to Philostratus 'the Second' by the Suda. Of the non-erotic letters in the collection which have named addressees (41–3; 45; 49; 52; 65–73) at least nine (65–73) are very probably also by our Philostratus 'the Second', above all those to Julia Domna (*Letter* 73) and Cresidemus (*Letter* 68, cf. *Lives of the sophists* 2.1.552).
- (8) The dialogue *Nero*, transmitted in the Lucianic corpus and ascribed by the Suda to a younger Philostratus, usually now termed Philostratus 'the Third'. This Philostratus was born in 187/8 or 191/2, was a pupil of Hippodromos at the age of twenty-two,<sup>71</sup> received immunity from Caracalla after declaiming brilliantly at twenty-four<sup>72</sup> and was arguably (if the Suda is emended) nephew of our Philostratus 'the Second'. However *Nero* has been persuasively claimed by modern scholars for Philostratus 'the Second'.<sup>73</sup> In the dialogue, the philosopher Musonius Rufus and a character called Menecrates, perhaps named after a family friend of Philostratus, discuss Nero's failed attempt to cut through the isthmus of Corinth. The subject moves to Nero's tour of Greece before the work ends with news of his death.

<sup>68</sup> Solmsen (1941) 129–34.

<sup>69</sup> Menander περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν 2.390.2–3 Spengel (= p. 116 Russell and Wilson (1981)).

<sup>70</sup> With *Dialexis* II.2 cf. *Apollonius* 4.34. <sup>71</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.27.617.

<sup>72</sup> Philostr. *VS* 2.30.623. <sup>73</sup> Most recently by Whitmarsh (1999) 143–4.



- (9) An epigram on a statue of Telephos in the Planudean Anthology (*Anth. Plan.* 110) resembles *Heroicus* 23.24ff., and since the Suda ascribes epigrams to Philostratus 'the Second' it has been thought that he is a likely author.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>74</sup> Follet (1964) demonstrates two other epigrams to be later compositions.

## CHAPTER 3

# *Culture and nature in Philostratus*

*Simon Swain*

### CULTURE AND NATURE

Philostratus is one of the most versatile and comprehensive of the Second Sophistic writers. In his own literary and political activity he seems to sum up the culture of the period he himself has named for us. Yet if we pause for a moment and stand back from what is familiar to his readers, we might learn to view him as a man who does not take his world for granted, does not simply describe it, but rather is deeply concerned with reform in the face of threats to its traditions and identity. It may indeed be suggested that the very range of Philostratus' literary output should be assessed in this way. Of the other Second Sophistic intellectuals whose work survives to us, only Dio of Prusa truly comes close to Philostratus in the breadth of his output – political/moral speeches, art-historical analyses, literary criticism, a fascination with sport, fears for traditional religion, the use of fiction as a vehicle for moral and philosophical comment. The variety of material Dio covers has something to do with his need to touch on all areas of Hellenic life, and this need itself is due to a deep feeling that something has gone wrong – and that Roman power is partly to blame. I suggest in this chapter that in broad terms Philostratus shares Dio's concern about what Hellenic culture is and where it is going, and that we can see this right across the spectrum of his writings.

Of course, the political conditions of the empire in Philostratus' day were quite different from those that had caused problems for Dio. In Dio's time few from the Greek East were Roman citizens, and very few indeed were senators. By the time of Philostratus' mature years 99 per cent of the free inhabitants of the whole empire were Roman citizens thanks to the law of Caracalla known as the *Constitutio Antoniniana*. It is quite legitimate to interpret this extraordinary act of 212 as the outcome of a deliberate

I should like to thank the editors for their comments, and Donald Russell for his advice on the translation of *Dialexis* 2.

cosmopolitanism by the emperor Caracalla and his advisors (and presumably his father, Septimius Severus, who had died in the previous year). The contemporary historian Cassius Dio condemned it as a disastrous, short-sighted bid to extend to all the taxes which Roman citizens had to pay.<sup>1</sup> But Cassius Dio carries the same old-world cultural baggage as his (probable) ancestor Dio of Prusa, and was conservative in both his idea of a superior Hellenism and in his belief that *his* Roman citizenship was too valuable to be shared with the *canaille*. To confirm the authenticity of the policy and to hear a welcome of one law for all the empire's citizens, we may turn to the greatest of the Severan jurists, Ulpian of Tyre, who wrote most of his monumental output during the reign of Caracalla.<sup>2</sup> The Severans were a different sort of royal family – the first without connections to Italy and therefore (despite being imbued with Latin and Greek) without the automatic cultural and political reflexes of their predecessors. This is surely of relevance to the extension of Roman citizenship. The law of 212 shows a new attitude towards the political life of the Roman world which marks the start of a gradual evolution away from the traditional civic-political structures of the city state with its local landholding nobilities and takes us forward to the more mobile world of late antiquity. This beginning is what Ulpian fully appreciated in his acceptance of a universal law which guarantees freedom, equality and dignity.<sup>3</sup> If we bear this historical background in mind, we see that Philostratus' apparently cosy world of Hellenic sophists, divinities and images is likely to have been more problematic than the literary games of his texts could ever indicate.

I shall argue in the following pages that Philostratus was aware of change in his world and that one of his responses to this was to bring forward a more exclusive model of Hellenic culture than had been accepted before and to present this as the natural culture of his elite peers. I shall do this by looking, albeit briefly, both at major works – *Lives of the sophists*, *On Apollonius*, *Heroicus*, *Gymnasticus*, *Imagines* – and at a short and relatively unknown piece – *Dialexis* 2 – where a mannered and very sophistic paradox may be read in the light of these concerns. I begin with *Lives of the sophists*.

On one level the cultural assumptions of *Lives* appear most orthodox: elite solidarity based on the practices of elite rhetoricians. Yet by privileging the idea of the 'sophist' and by illustrating the social and political successes of his sophists as much as their mastery of rhetoric, the text is liable to lead us astray since it extends the term to make it a label fit for any member of the

<sup>1</sup> 77.9.5; specifically the 5 per cent inheritance tax, one of the main sources of veterans' pensions through the *aerarium militare*.

<sup>2</sup> Honoré (2002) chs. 7–9.    <sup>3</sup> Honoré (2002) 24–5, 84–6.

educated upper classes. Something that was highly constructed and artificial is projected as a natural goal to which everyone (including the work's imperial dedicatee) will aspire. In reality, sophists were a very restricted group,<sup>4</sup> and it is to a large extent due to the disarming playfulness of *Lives* that scholars have been led to over-estimate their role.<sup>5</sup> Yet Philostratus is fairly clear if we listen to him. He wants his sophists to be tied to the intellectual heroes of old, of the 'First Sophistic'. This is an out-and-out 'Hellenist' project, and it is significant that for the first time in a pagan Greek text the word 'Hellene' appears to be used so very frequently in a cultural-ideological sense rather than a descriptive-ethnic one, and bears the meaning of an adherent of Hellenic culture and tradition rather than simply a 'Greek'.<sup>6</sup>

This non-ethnic sense of 'Hellene' goes back, of course, to classical times. The divorce between ethnicity and culture really began in the Hellenistic world, and continued under Rome. Ethnicity remained important to the imagination and certainly had real political and social consequences. It is seen most clearly in the desire of some Second Sophistic authors to locate a 'pure Greek' type, a desire with which Philostratus is familiar.<sup>7</sup> The claims of many eastern cities in the Hellenistic and Roman periods to kinship with the leading centres of Old Greece show the importance of such a belief, which was certainly approved of by Romans for their own cultural and political objectives.<sup>8</sup> In discussing false claims, the philosopher Epictetus exposes the problem of Greekness by asking, 'Why are you impersonating Greeks when *you* are a Jew?' (*Discourses* 2.9.19),<sup>9</sup> since the Jews of all people

<sup>4</sup> Schmitz (1997).

<sup>5</sup> See Bowie (1982) on one aspect of this.

<sup>6</sup> (Beginning with Nicetes) *Lives* 511, 515, 518, 524, 527, 536, 550, 551, 554, 557, 564, 567, 571, 574, 587, 588, 589, 591, 594, 598, 600, 605, 609, 613, 616, 617, 618, 623. There is often no clear boundary in these passages between the meaning 'student of higher Greek culture, specifically language/literature/rhetoric' and the unmarked meaning 'Greek'. But that in itself is significant. On Hellene as an 'adjectif... valorisant' in the *Lives*, cf. Follet (1991).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Soranus, *Gynaecology* 2.44.2 on the importance of 'pure Greeks' (καθαρώς Ἑλληνίδες) as nurses; Dio, *Or.* 48.8 on the Prusians παιδεία διαφέροντας καὶ φύσει καὶ τῷ ὄντι καθαρώς ὄντας Ἕλληνας; Aristides, *Or.* 24.23 on the Rhodians as καθαρώς ὄντας Ἕλληνας, and esp. Polemon on the 'pure Greek' type, which has been diluted by Roman immigration into Old Greece, *Physiognomy* ch. 35 (Leiden recension, Swain (2007) 197–200). Philostratus clearly alludes to Polemon's phraecology at *Lives* 531 when he describes his pupils as a 'pure Greece'.

<sup>8</sup> The most familiar aspect of this is Hadrian's Panhellenion. Debate continues about how far the Greeks wanted an organisation promoting connections with Old Greece and how far Hadrian thought it was good for them (see e.g. Spawforth 1999). In reality, classicism offered legitimisation for conservative regimes and therefore suited both Rome and local aristocracies. But the patchy take-up of membership of the Panhellenion shows clearly that many major cities felt that in this at least Hadrian (whose philhellenism was warmly welcomed) had gone too far.

<sup>9</sup> Retaining the MSS reading ὅτι ὑποκρίνηται Ἰουδαῖος ὢν Ἕλληνας; On this passage, see Stern (1974) 543.

had no wish to actually claim to be Greek. As often, Christian authors provide an up-to-date view of what 'Hellene' meant, for in these writers it signals adherence to a set of religious/philosophical and cultural/social practices which were opposed to Christianity and the Christian way of life. Apologists like Origen in *Against Celsus* argue that these practices are both absurd and exclusive of the majority of the population. But it was precisely this exclusivity that Philostratus welcomed.<sup>10</sup> In *Lives* he underscores and reinforces it by identifying 'Hellene' closely with sophistic activity.<sup>11</sup> Consequently, to read *Lives of the sophists* as a description of Second Sophistic society and its rhetoric, and not (also) as Philostratus' prescription of how that society should look, is rather inadequate.

On *Apollonius* is a truly extraordinary work in this regard, for here Philostratus takes the opportunity to call for reform of the religious and moral experiences of Greek culture by highlighting the activities of a semi-fictional and long-dead philosopher-cum-holy man. Hellenic culture is once more taken as superior, though the specific point of view is the wisdom of Hellenic philosophy on the one hand (specifically in relation to Romans, Indians, Egyptians and others) and the degeneracy of some of the Greeks contemporary with Apollonius on the other.<sup>12</sup> Apollonius must in reality have been a marginal if perhaps embarrassing critic of the comfortable establishment of his own era (the first century AD); like most philosophers, we may suppose he was a member of the elite and hence allowed to criticise.<sup>13</sup> His reinvention as a central reformer of Greek culture

<sup>10</sup> We should not exclude the influence of Christian usage on his thinking. Barnes (1998) 79 observes that the use of 'Hellene' to mean 'anyone at all hostile to Christianity' occurs first in Porphyry's *Against the Christians*. Porphyry understood Philostratus very well by comparing the resurrected Apollonius of Philostratus with Jesus (fr. 63 von Harnack), and we shall see below that there is enough in Philostratus' *Apollonius* to make it evident that Philostratus was aware of Christianity and its arguments. If that is right, the sense of 'Hellene' in the *Lives* should reflect a culture where Christianity was firmly on the agenda. The date of composition of *Lives* in the late 230s or early 240s (Jones 2002) brings it very close in time to *Against Celsus*, to the reign of the pro-Christian Philip (244–9; Eusebius, *Ecc. Hist.* 6.34, 36.3 letter of Origen to Philip and his wife), during which Philostratus died, and indeed to the first major 'state' persecution of Christians by the emperor Decius (249–51).

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Pollux, *Onomasticon* 4.20, where 'Hellene' is one of a number of terms of praise for public speakers (rhetors, i.e. politicians, cf. 4.16) and therefore without an ethnic sense. But for Pollux 'sophist' is an ambiguous word, 4.47–51, and others labelled as sophists by Philostratus (esp. Aelius Aristides) rejected it firmly.

<sup>12</sup> In general see Flinterman (1995); Swain (1996) 385–95.

<sup>13</sup> See the edition of Apollonius' *Letters*, many of which are likely to be genuine, by Penella (1979). The suggestion of Jones (2006) 63 that Apollonius was the respectable Roman citizen L. Pompeius Apollonius of Ephesus who wrote politely to the proconsul (and friend of Plutarch) Mestrius Florus about the Ephesian mysteries (*SIG* 820 = [*IEph* 213]) is not as wayward as it might seem, since the explicit anti-Roman remarks in *Letters* are no worse than those uttered by Roman citizens like Dio, Lucian, or Polemon. However, Apollonius is a common name. Despite Apollonius of

has nothing to do with his own time and everything to do with that of Philostratus. I have argued elsewhere that the apparent triviality of so much of the work, including its very 'sophistic' parade of knowledge, has made it difficult for us to see the serious purpose behind it.<sup>14</sup>

Philostratus tells his readers that he was asked to write about Apollonius by the empress Julia Domna. The work was finished some time after her suicide in 217 and therefore most probably under the emperor Severus Alexander (223–35), the son of her niece Julia Mamaea. Philostratus' aims are surely in part to be explained by the cultural and religious interests of Alexander. He was a very young emperor and the influence of his mother on him is well known. Julia Mamaea had overt Christian leanings. She was 'a most pious woman' (i.e. a Christian) according to Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* 6.21.3–4, who records that she<sup>15</sup> summoned by military escort no less a figure than Origen and heard from him 'about the fame of the Lord and the excellence of the Divine Teaching'. Even more interesting is the fragment of a letter to Julia Mamaea by bishop Hippolytus of Rome explaining the symbolism of Exodus 25:10 'thou shalt make an ark of the covenant from acacia wood.'<sup>16</sup> The existence of this letter should incline us to accept the statement of the Augustan History that 'according to a contemporary writer' Alexander worshipped Christ and Abraham beside Orpheus and Apollonius in his private chapel (*Alex.* 29.2). He was sympathetic to Christians: he charged the Christian intellectual Julius Africanus (a celebrated correspondent of Origen) with the establishment of a library in the Pantheon (of all places), and Africanus dedicated to him the first non-theological work penned by a Christian author, the miscellanist encyclopedia called 'Girdles'.<sup>17</sup>

As a courtier of the Severans (or at least of Julia Domna) Philostratus could hardly have been ignorant of these developments. He took Apollonius to his aid. The appeal of Apollonius to the imperial family is attested (additionally) by Julia Domna's son, Caracalla, who had set up a prominent shrine to him in 214/15 (Cassius Dio 77.18.4). Apollonius had plainly become a figure of veneration by the start of the third century. His ability to heal, to resurrect and to exorcise demons and vampires confirms the

Tyana's presence in Ephesus (cf. Cassius Dio 67.18) and his interest in religion, the identification is more guesswork than conjecture (as Jones (2006) hopes).

<sup>14</sup> Swain (1999). <sup>15</sup> Not Julia Domna, as Civiletti (2002) 648, n. 9 assumes.

<sup>16</sup> Septuagint version. See Achelis (1897a) 253, (1897b) 189–93; further Richard (1963) 79–80 for ?another letter to Mamaea. Cf. above, n. 10 for Origen's letter to the emperor Philip.

<sup>17</sup> *Kestoi* (in allusion to Aphrodite's Girdle); ed. Vieillefond (1970), Pantheon: fr. V, ll. 53–4 (pp. 291–2, cf. pp. 21–2). Origen and Africanus: e.g. Trapp (2007) 487.

emergence of subreligious practices into the mainstream.<sup>18</sup> The economic pull of such cults should always be borne in mind as a spur to their development: Apollonius the healer and prophet was evidently the product of careful marketing by the local elite of Tyana. For the educated he had the additional advantage of his association with the semi-legendary inventor of philosophy, Pythagoras. Pythagoras had become a figure of major importance in contemporary pagan intellectual circles on account not only of the unimpeachable antiquity of his wisdom,<sup>19</sup> but also – and perhaps particularly – because of the seductive package of esoteric religious experience and moralising instruction offered by the so-called ‘Pythagorean life’ which Apollonius adopted and purveyed. Here were all the ingredients of a successful cult appealing to both mass and elite.

The story and the success of Apollonius gave Philostratus the chance to ground Hellenic culture in antiquity (Pythagoras); and by placing the reform of Hellenism in the first century, the opportunity to imply that it was not impossible to restore contemporary Hellenism in the third century to good shape. Moreover Apollonius’ semi-mystical religion was presented as an entirely natural goal of Greek culture – though it was far more demanding and exclusive than anything that had gone before, as Philostratus knew perfectly well. His notion of reform is a sort of retreat to an exclusive Hellenism, and this is something which is increasingly the hallmark of intellectual pagan Greek culture from now on and which strongly affects pagan and Christian relations in late antiquity. It is no coincidence that the Apollonius Philostratus constructed was used by zealous pagans to combat Christianity and that Eusebius, the last of the Apologists, took Philostratus’ book very seriously indeed.<sup>20</sup>

*Heroicus* offers good parallels to *Apollonius*. Most scholars who have worked on this text have concluded that it advocates or describes a revival of hero cults in the contemporary world. One analysis even suggests that Achilles’ battle against the Amazons at the end of the work is a rallying call for Roman operations against the newly resurgent Persians. This is to stray into the realms of the fantastic.<sup>21</sup> Much of the work is in fact *Homerkritik* – but of what kind? The main interlocutor, the ex-urban vinedresser, regales a Phoenician stranger with ample corrections of and supplements to the *Odyssey* and *Iliad*. He has heard these from the hero Protesilaus, who appears

<sup>18</sup> Note Cassius Dio’s disdain: ‘he was an out and out charlatan and magician’ (67.18.4).

<sup>19</sup> See esp. Philostratus’ contemporary Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and opinions of the eminent philosophers* 1.4, 12. In general, see Dillon (1996) esp. ch. 7; and Swain (1999) and Boys-Stones (2001) on the function of antique wisdom and its use by pagans and Christians.

<sup>20</sup> Eusebius, *Against Hierocles*, with Barnes (1981) 164–7. Cf. above, n. 10 on Porphyry.

<sup>21</sup> Maclean and Aitken (2001).

to him personally. Most of this material consists of a list of heroes and their deeds which have been ignored or poorly recorded by the poet (so it is asserted). There is in fact only a little information on contemporary cults (e.g. chs. 53 on Lemnian rites, 54–57 on Achilles and the White Island). The moralising and reforming zeal of *Apollonius* is not explicit here. Yet, although *Heroicus* is tied into the well-established tradition of re-examining and criticising Homer,<sup>22</sup> the stress on the religious vitality of some of the ancient heroes, and especially Protesilaus, shifts it from the arena of simple literary criticism. There is a sense that if we move out of the city along with the vinedresser, we too shall re-discover a religious domain that is missing from our lives.<sup>23</sup> There is certainly an attempt to pass this off as a natural aim. The *Homerkritik*, which might seem to us to mark the project as artificial, assists this process as a familiar practice among Philostratus' educated peers.

*Gymnasticus* offers more explicit comparative material on the relationship between human practice and nature. Again, there is a strong call for a restoration of ancient standards and an over-riding assumption that (in this case) sport in the gymnasium is an Hellenic activity central to Hellenic education and society. But unlike the works considered so far, the role of nature here is overt as a constant and a point of reference for human activity. Philostratus will 'speak in defence of Nature' (262.5–6).<sup>24</sup> It is bad training that has 'robbed Nature of her own strength' (262.17–18). A natural disposition to wrestle, box, or run is a prerequisite for gymnastics – just as metal working depends on the existence of iron and copper, the basis of agriculture is earth and its produce, and sailing presupposes the existence of the sea. Gymnastic activity is 'most closely related to, and is part of, man's nature' (270.14–15). The trainer must make an 'evaluation of the [athlete's] nature' before he sets to work (274.17). There is a rational and irrefutable system (*logos*) for analysing the body, which is to examine its (natural) *krāsis* or 'temperament'. This is a 'current' development from medicine, which Philostratus does not altogether approve of, for while medicine is helpful, its dietary advice is 'too soft' and this lack of rigour is associated with various aspects of the decline of modern gymnastics (283.29 ff., esp. 283–5).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> For a good contemporary example of *Homerkritik*, see Africanus, *Keisoi* XVIII = *PGM* XXIII (cf. Viciellfond (1970) 30–9, 279–81) for a spell of Odysseus which either Homer 'passed over in silence' (a motif of Homer criticism) or his editors suppressed.

<sup>23</sup> The contention of Grossardt (2006) that Philostratus reveals himself in *Heroicus* as a closet Epicurean flies in the face of objections he himself lists.

<sup>24</sup> References are to Kayser's 1871 edition, pp. 261–93.

<sup>25</sup> See König (2005), ch. 7 on possible criticism of Galen in these remarks.



Essentially *Gymnasticus* is a call to rebalance human skill and nature and to harness natural potential to human endeavour, for in ancient times gymnastics 'simply trained [natural] strength' (284.21). Nature comes first, and human activity builds on its offerings. The call to reform reminds us of *Apollonius* and *Heroicus*. As with religion in those works, athletics is intrinsically Hellenic and its ancient Hellenic purity needs rescuing and protecting. But in *Gymnasticus*, Nature as model is made explicit.

Comparable ideas are expressed in *Imagines*, to which I now turn. In this work Philostratus is purporting to describe some sixty-four paintings located in an art gallery near Naples. The deeply conservative programme seen in his other writings is here expressed as an obsession with naturalism. The specific claim that human art must imitate Nature parallels *Gymnasticus*. 'Painters who do not paint [details] corresponding [with each other] do not keep to reality' (2.1.3 F. = 340.26 K.).<sup>26</sup> The painting of Narcissus is so realistic (τιμῶσα . . . τῇν ἀλήθειαν) that it fools a passing bee ('or are we fooled into thinking the bee must exist?', 1.22.2 = 326.30 ff.). The work called *Hunters* induces total suspension of disbelief (1.28.2 = 333.21 ff.). All in all, the *analogia* of the real world is fully preserved in the paintings Philostratus has selected (1.4.2 = 299.28 ff.), and the essence of each real detail is carefully executed (1.12.5 = 313.23). It is just as Nature ordained (1.9.1 = 307.4). Very many of these *études tableaux* are of mythological figures. One of the key assumptions of the work, which is voiced at the start of the Preface, is that painting records 'the deeds and the appearances' of the Greek heroes every bit as well as poetry. In several of the descriptions Philostratus offers alternatives to the received poetic versions, especially Homer's (2.3, 7, 23, 24, 30). There are thus good parallels with *Heroicus*, too.<sup>27</sup> The explicitly educational framework of interpreting the paintings for the young son of Philostratus' host before a group of noble youths gives a purpose to this review of Greek mythology and culture (1 Pref. 4–5 = 295.13–296.5). It is at least proof to anyone listening that Hellenic culture, as corrected by Philostratus, is vital and relevant.

The exegesis of a painting is an exercise found in the schools.<sup>28</sup> There is no need to doubt that Philostratus did deliver set-piece *logoi* on real or imaginary pictures.<sup>29</sup> But the choice of subject material here is highly

<sup>26</sup> References are to Fairbank's 1931 Loeb and Kayser's 1871 edition, pp. 294–389.

<sup>27</sup> Note also the details of the cult of Heracles at Lindos at 2.24 (378.9 ff.).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Luc., *Calumnia*, *Imagines*; Libanius, *Ekphrasis graphēs* (ed. Foerster VIII: 465–8); Procopius of Gaza, *Ekphrasis Eikōnos* (ed. Friedländer). Philostratus' mid-second-century predecessor, Nicostrotus, may have been the first to write *Imagines* (Suda v 404).

<sup>29</sup> Note his epigram on a painting of Telephus in the Planudean Appendix to the *Greek Anthology* no. 110. See Nisbet (2007).

prescriptive. An obvious and close parallel is offered by Vitruvius' famous remarks on what painting used to be like before it abandoned realism and went to the bad (*De arch.* 7.5.2–4). Formerly it had handled landscapes, ports, promontories, coasts, rivers, fountains, straits, groves, mountains, cattle, shepherds, gods, stories of Troy and of Ulysses, all 'ex veris rebus exempla'. It is most unlikely that this outburst is Vitruvius' own, since pretty well everything in his book is acknowledged to be based on Greek sources. If that is true of this passage, Philostratus will be working within the same tradition that influenced Vitruvius. But an author of Philostratus' quality does what he wants, and we can see that he deals with art in *Imagines* in the same way as he deals with religion in *Apollonius* and *Heroicus*. On the basis of an evidently restricted group of paintings (which is passed off as representative: 'someone had collected them on the basis of real knowledge', οὐκ ἀμαθῶς τις συνελέξατο, 1 Pref. 4 = 295.25–26), he generalises about Painting's dependence on naturalism. What he likes is its regard for 'proportion' (*symmetria*), which is its own form of 'reason' (*logos*). These correspond to Vitruvius' *ratio* and *auctoritas* (7.5.4). But Philostratus clinches the argument by suggesting that Nature behaves in exactly the same way as the painter. If, he says, you are being clever, you will observe as precursors of painting all the forms painted by the Seasons (*Hōrai*) on the earth and the shapes which appear in the sky; otherwise you will at least admit that imitation is 'most closely related to Nature' (1 Pref. 1 = 294.1–11). This seasonal art of Nature is the subject of the last painting described in the collection, that of the *Hōrai* themselves (2.34). In a mirror of the Preface Philostratus turns the description into a sort of epilogue – 'herewith the produce of Painting' (2.34.3 = 389.13)<sup>30</sup> – and he himself becomes fused with the painter who in the picture is caught up in the Seasons' dance in order to indicate that he must paint/write (*graphein*) 'with grace' (*syn hōraî*).<sup>31</sup>

These themes are pertinent to discussion of a little-known work of Philostratus which may perhaps have served to introduce one of the pictorial descriptions that became *Imagines*. This is the second of the so-called *Dialexeis* or *Discourses* (258.30–260.30).<sup>32</sup> Since it illustrates the sophist at work, it seems worthwhile to offer an English version before making a

<sup>30</sup> Taking τῆς γραφῆς at 2.34.15 (= 389.13) as having a general reference.

<sup>31</sup> On the possibility that Philostratus has been influenced by the use of Seasons as thematic bookends in the contemporary art of mosaics and sarcophagi, see Elsner (2000).

<sup>32</sup> The other surviving *dialexis* (*Dialexis* 1) is a disquisition on epistolary style and seems to be by Philostratus' nephew, Philostratus of Lemnos (cf. *Lives of the sophists* 628). *Dialexis* 2 is translated from Kayser's 1871 text, which is reprinted in the appendix (pp. 356–7); section divisions are mine. Giner Soria (1995) is a useful study paying attention to rhetorical and linguistic features.

few comments on its argument that *nomos* ('law', 'convention', 'custom' – essentially human society) and *physis* ('nature' or the 'process of nature') collaborate in all things and follow the same logic.

## DIALEXIS 2

[258.30] (1) Those who contrast *Nomos* and *Nature* claim they are opposites in the same way as black and white [259.1], thin and thick, sweet and sour, or hot and cold. They claim the productions of *Nature* are living creatures, stars, rivers, forests, plains, headlands, straits, and in a word anything beyond *Art* (*technē*); while the productions of *Nomos* are city walls, docks, a ship, a shield, crops, and all the work of our hands. They say *Nature's* things are incorruptible for all time: the sea remains the same size, the land retains its boundaries, the sky is as it was, the stars and seasons keep to their cycles; and that as for *Nature's* living creatures, those that are born are themselves destroyed, while the perpetual power to give birth maintains for *Nature* her Principle (*logos*) of Inviolability. (2) They say that the productions of *Nomos* are subject to destruction and capture. For walls and shrines may be [259.15] captured or destroyed by time, and it is clear that a well-built house will not stand forever, that a built ship is not secure (for the sea is not secure for men), and that all workmanship in wood or metal produces perishable goods through *Nomos*. They say that *Nomos* could have crafted no ensouled creature, no star, no sky, nor anything else so wondrous and great; whereas *Nature* in many ways takes on the guises of *Nomos*. (3) For *Nature* can fortify places with walls safer than those that are built, it can open up ivy-clad caverns more delightful than houses, and can somehow make a rock grow into a natural statue of a *Satyr* or a *Pan*. *Nature* can make mountains and peaks look like living things (like the Snake of Lemnos or the Lion of Crete or the Bull's Skull of Chios). [259.30] It can imitate *Nomos* and sculpt even the clouds into the shapes of living creatures – for those who look at them seem to see wolves, leopards, centaurs, [260.1] and chariots; and not even the circle of the moon is without meaning, but imprinted upon it is a face of the kind we see in an ineffable painting. (4) For me, however, *Nomos* and *Nature* not only do not appear opposites, but are most closely related, alike, and coextensive. *Nomos* must be accessible to *Nature* and *Nature* to *Nomos*. We call one the beginning and the other its successor: let *Nature* be allotted the role of beginner, *Nomos* that of follower. For *Nomos* could never have built a wall or armed its defenders had *Nature* not given men hands, nor would *Nature* have shown us any activities had arts not been practised. *Nature* gave *Nomos* sea, sky, stars; *Nomos* gave *Nature* farming, seafaring, astronomy, and allowed names to be bestowed on the seasons; as for silver, [260.15] gold, adamant, and pearl, rarities like these *Nature* discovered, but *Nomos* honoured. (5) You could turn your gaze on the affairs of men to see something similar. *Nature* created man to be thinking, rational, well endowed in every way; *Nomos* educates, equips, shoes, and clothes him, for he is sent to it naked by *Nature*. *Nomos* establishes for men prizes for virtue, as if honouring *Nature*. And let us not deny *Nomos* the

Principle (*logos*) of Immortality, for if its products are perishable, this (principle) makes them immortal, and its name is Art. (6) An island broken off from a continent, a continent joined up with an island, Peneius tumbling down from Olympus: these are not the works of Nature or of Nomos. Rather, it is something midway between them, which we call 'correspondence' (*symbebēkos*), and this makes Nomos resemble Nature and Nature [260.30] be transformed into Nomos.

The Suda (φ 421) reports that Philostratus wrote *dialexeis*, and this implies that he had published a collection of them. Such 'discourses' were in fact regular parts of a sophistic performance. Mostly they formed, as Russell puts it, 'a polite introduction . . . to a performance of declamation'. Russell points out that the style of a *dialexis* was quiet, even in the hands of performers who delivered them as an end in themselves (like Lucian). This is true of *Dialexis* 2. They were generally given in a sitting position, which necessarily limited the theatricality associated with the full-blown declamation that followed. The cultured and disarming tone of a 'discourse' was matched by its content: 'history, poetry, art-history; a fanciful comparison; and a hint of the versatility expected of the declaimer' – this is the stuff of a *dialexis*.<sup>33</sup> *Dialexis* 2 seems to be a unique survivor from Philostratus' collection, which doubtless grew from his own teaching and performance and was then published to advertise or confirm his powers as a composer of high quality.

The themes of the piece remind us of *Imagines*, especially the assertion that 'Nomos and Nature . . . are most closely related, alike, and coextensive' (§4 = 260.4–5). There are obvious parallels with the language of *Imagines*' Preface and the realist assumptions there of what Nature's art produces (§1 = 259.3–4 'living things, stars, rivers, forests, plains, headlands, straits' and so on). Thus statues are made from living rock just like those (it seems) in the picture of Narcissus (§2 = 259.26–27; *Imag.* 1.23.2 = 326.17–18) – though the argument is not identical at this point, since art (*technē*) has shaped these statues, and human skill and Nature co-operate. In the same way 'the shapes which appear in the sky' in *Imagines*' Preface come about in *Dialexis* 2 κατὰ τὸν Νόμον (§3 = 259.30). Again, in *Imagines* Earth provides walls for Amphion's Thebes (1.10.3 = 309.25–26); in *Dialexis* 2 Nature's walls are bestowed in the guise of Nomos (§2 = 259.23–4). The comments on the co-operative relationship of Nomos and Nature in *Dialexis* 2 §§4–5 recall those in *Gymnasticus* about (human) metal working

<sup>33</sup> Russell (1983) 77–9 (including examples from *Lives of the sophists*). Menander Rhetor 2.4, the classic ancient discussion of the 'talk' (pp. 114 ff. ed. Russell and Wilson = 388.16 ff. Spengel), cites Philostratus ('author of the *Heroicus* and the *Imagines*', 390.1–2 Sp., cf. 411.29–32) as a model of style.

and (natural) materials, agriculture and earth, sailing and sea, gymnastics and the natural human body (270.11–15). Islands and mainlands (§6) recall part of the long *ecphrasis* of *Islands* at *Imagines* 2.17.<sup>34</sup> 'Peneius tumbling down from Olympus' should remind us of *Imagines* 2.14 (= 360.1–27), where, however, the river is not made to flow through the mountains by men (as is implied in *Dialexis* 2) but by Poseidon. Mountains and peaks looking like living things (§3 = 259.27–28) recall the peaks which tear their cheeks for Hippolytus at *Imagines* 2.4.3 (= 345.14–16).<sup>35</sup>

The opposition of *nomos* and *physis* with which Philostratus begins *Dialexis* 2 rests, of course, on the sophists' debates of fifth-century Athens and takes his readers back to their school days. They would be expected to know (e.g.) their *Gorgias* (as Philostratus certainly did<sup>36</sup>) where the sophist Callicles notoriously argues that Nature provides a justification for basing one's actions on naked power, instinct and appetite. They would also perhaps have been reminded of some famous counter-arguments in Plato and Aristotle. The planning and intelligence of Nature in *Timaeus* (a work which was widely read in this period<sup>37</sup>) and the like operations of *Nomos* and *Physis* in *Laws* book 10 (888E ff.) offered strong hints, while for more philosophically alert readers there were very good parallels in Aristotle's defence of teleology at *Physics* 2.8, where the resemblance between Art (*technē*) and Nature is the foundation of his purposeful Nature (198b.10–199b32). It may even be that Philostratus' phrase 'which we call "correspondence"' (ὃ καλεῖται συμβεβηκός) is remembered from Aristotle's concept of accidentals (κατὰ τὸ συμβεβηκός), though the meaning is different. Beyond Plato and Aristotle, Philostratus no doubt expected his readers to be vaguely familiar with the Stoics' *logos* of Nature.<sup>38</sup> Thus does the sophist show his education.

But there is more to say which takes us to the heart of what Philostratus is about. In *Gymnasticus*, *Imagines* and *Dialexis* 2, Philostratus pursues the idea that human skills and practices must follow Nature. Thus the idea of 'correspondence' (τὰ συμβαίνοντα) between the Realist Painter and his subject in *Imagines* (cf. 2.1.3 = 340.26) is closely paralleled in *Dialexis* 2 in the relationship of *Nomos* and Nature; indeed, the same verb *syμβαίνειν* is used to emphasise the thought at the end of the piece (§6 = 260.28–29).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. §5 'An island broken off from a continent' with 2.17.4 'one island . . . broken in the middle'.

<sup>35</sup> For the example of the Lion of Crete, cf. *Apollonius* 4.34 where it is mentioned and provided with an aetiology in the course of Apollonius' visit to the shrine of Asclepius there.

<sup>36</sup> *Lives of the sophists* 495, 497 (quotation of *Gorg.* 467b), *Letter* 73.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Apollonius* 6.22. A study of its readership is a desideratum.

<sup>38</sup> E.g. Chrysippus fr. 1181.4 (*SVF* II, p. 339) τὸν τῆς φύσεως λόγον.

Again, *Dialexis* 2 makes it plain that human endeavours are secondary (§4 = 260.7; cf. *Imagines*' Preface, *Gymnasticus*). To argue that Nature underpins all human practice is to adopt an intrinsically conservative position, denying the validity of change by basing oneself on what is unchangeable and immemorial. It hardly needs to be pointed out that this Nature is Hellenic ('the Snake of Lemnos or the Lion of Crete or the Bull's Skull of Chios', 'Peneius tumbling down from Olympus', etc.). The message in *Gymnasticus*, too, is that we must return to an original Hellenic care of the body which does not deviate from Nature. *Imagines* praises the ability to represent ancient Greek stories as Nature would approve. *Lives of the sophists*, *Apollonius* and *Heroicus* show a comparable mentality in assuming or advocating a purer (and ancient) Hellenism. The idea that the distant past gave current Hellenic society its authority is a core element of the Second Sophistic in general. But Philostratus makes a particularly intense investment in the discourse. He uses it to naturalise his own social and political ideas. He sensed that change was on the cards – and he wanted to stop it. Hence in *Lives*, *Apollonius* and *Heroicus* he defines an exclusive and constructed model of Hellenic culture and he advocates it on the basis of its ancientness and religiousness. *Dialexis* 2, though it is a short occasional piece, neatly expresses its author's deeply held belief in the need to re-establish the antiquity of his world.

Philostratus was not alone in feeling the need to re-evaluate his cultural inheritance, and we may look at this from one particular angle. A major trend in the literary and scientific culture of the later second and early third century is the production of commentaries and compendia. Such works were not new to this period and we should therefore be cautious in the way we interpret this phenomenon.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, there is a major new factor in this age which might encourage us to see behind this codification of Greek culture a perceived need to gather and define Hellenism. The new factor is of course Christianity and the production for the first time of an array of high-quality works by Christian authors. The Christian effort itself was also directed at regulating orthodoxy by defining heresy (Irenaeus, *On the detection and refutation of the knowledge falsely so called*, Hippolytus, *Refutation of all heresies*), laying down norms of conduct (Clement, *Paedagogus*) and establishing the text and content of Scripture (Clement, Hippolytus, Origen). Origen's massive series of commentaries reinforces a recently established consensus of what Christianity was. We have seen in this chapter that the imperial court was familiar with several Christian intellectuals. Galen, who died about 216, discusses and questions the basis

<sup>39</sup> Trapp (2007) 484–5.

of Christianity on a number of occasions.<sup>40</sup> It would be difficult to imagine that the silence of Philostratus and other pagans means ignorance of Christianity, especially in the reigns of Alexander and Philip. With regard to Philostratus, in particular, this chapter has attempted a broad assessment of his advocacy of conservative reform of Greek culture. His literary versatility provides us with a sufficient range of works to be able to see his firm commitment to re-examining priorities. Although Greek culture in the period of the high Roman empire is remarkably stable, Christianity progressively and inexorably exposed its weak points and its presence grew stronger and stronger in Philostratus' lifetime. That he was led to address some of the problems of 'Greekness' cannot be a coincidence. Thus, if we pay attention carefully, the literary Philostratus emerges as a commentator on his times, utterly different from an overt moralist like Plutarch a century-and-a-quarter before, but in his own way no less interesting and no less important.

<sup>40</sup> Walzer (1949).

*Lives of the sophists*





## CHAPTER 4

# *Narrator and audience in Philostratus'* *Lives of the sophists*

*Thomas Schmitz*

Indubitably, Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* is a text more often scanned for information than read for pleasure. We are grateful for the factual details and the juicy anecdotes about the orators of the Second Sophistic, but we tend to neglect the narrative frame in which this information is embedded. When we do try to grasp the text as a meaningful whole, we find that it is not easy to describe its tone and style: is Philostratus the somewhat flippant, yet basically serious historiographer of a cultural movement? Does his main interest lie in passing on gossip about orators he has known and admired, throwing in a couple of classical predecessors for good measure? Or is he merely trying to be entertaining, with little regard for historical accuracy (and is the entire movement more or less a figment of his imagination)? Is the confusion most readers will feel after reading some of *Lives* due to Philostratus' incompetence in ordering and structuring his material, or to an authorial strategy? And if the latter, can we describe the ways in which Philostratus achieves his effect, can we speculate why he chose to present the Second Sophistic in this light? My chapter will try to answer some of these questions. It sets out to analyse the role of the narrator in Philostratus' work. I will argue that by creating a specific persona for his narrator, Philostratus bolsters his claims to authority and enhances his credibility. His account of sophistic rhetoric aims to impress his readers with the knowledge and the perspective of an insider, and it will become evident that the reader's confusion and helplessness can be described as results of this authorial voice.

It will immediately be clear that by asking these questions and applying this methodology, I am not attempting to uncover hitherto unknown psychological insights about the historical Philostratus (whoever he may have been and how many authors by that name may have existed<sup>1</sup>). Instead,

<sup>1</sup> See the classical treatment of Solmsen (1941); more recent attempts to solve this thorny question can be found in Rothe (1989) 1–5, Flinterman (1995) 5–14 and de Lannoy (1997).

I am attempting to describe the ways in which his text creates and organises a first-person stance. This narrative voice is most familiar to readers of fictional texts, but even a historical narrative or a scholarly work will create such a projection of its writer in which certain aspects will be highlighted, others neglected or suppressed.<sup>2</sup> Even if we provisionally accept that *Lives of the sophists* is a non-fictional text, it should be obvious that its authorial voice has a peculiar tone and style. Since Philostratus' account is given in the first person, his narrator is at the same time the implied author, 'an ideal, literary, created version of the real man', as W. C. Booth has it.<sup>3</sup> This implied author, then, must not be confused with the historical person Philostratus, but neither should it be completely dissociated from him. Fortunately, we are no longer in the heyday of literary criticism when the 'death of the author' seemed the only way of liberating readers. As we will see, in setting up his implied author, Philostratus creates an image of himself which may or may not be entirely truthful (this can no longer be verified and is beyond the scope of literary analysis) but, in doing so, he is constantly using material from his life. One particularly clear example will suffice. In his account of Alexander of Seleucia's life, Philostratus rejects as incredible the story that Apollonius of Tyana fell in love with Alexander's mother, and he refers explicitly to his earlier work (*VS* 2.5.1.570<sup>4</sup>): τοῦτο μὲν δὴ ὁπόσοις τρόποις ἀπίθανον, εἰρηται σαφῶς ἐν τοῖς ἐς Ἀπολλώνιον 'In my work on Apollonius I have stated clearly on how many grounds this story is incredible.' There, Philostratus had emphasised that, during his entire lifetime, Apollonius had never succumbed to erotic passion.<sup>5</sup> This reference, then, is not a fictional detail about an implied author; instead, it connects the narrator to the historical Philostratus.

In analysing the role of this narrator, I will be particularly interested in the relationship between him and his audience. *Lives of the sophists* is dedicated to one of the Gordians,<sup>6</sup> and a letter at the beginning of

<sup>2</sup> This has been acknowledged even by critics who argue that our reading of a text should be determined by its author's intention; see, e.g., Hirsch (1967) 242–3.

<sup>3</sup> Booth (1983) 75. Genette (1983) 94–100 has raised some objections against Booth's concept, but this debate will not concern us here.

<sup>4</sup> In quoting *Lives of the sophists*, I follow the text of Kayser's edition (Leipzig 1871); the translation is W. C. Wright's Loeb edition (Cambridge, MA 1921), adapted where necessary. The text is quoted by book, chapter and paragraph number as in Kayser and with the page numbers of the Olearius edition, which is found in most modern editions and translations. The passage quoted above is duly noted by Solmsen (1941) 129 as proof that the authors of *Lives of the sophists* and of *Life of Apollonius* are identical.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. *VA* 1.13.6.42.

<sup>6</sup> Exactly to which Gordian it is dedicated is still a matter of debate. The general consensus has been that it was Gordian I, cf. Avotins (1978), but Jones (2002) has suggested that it may have been Gordian III.

the work claims that it was written for his entertainment (*VS* pr. 479–80): τοὺς φιλοσοφήσαντας ἐν δόξῃ τοῦ σοφιστεῦσαι καὶ τοὺς οὕτω κυρίως προσρηθέντας σοφιστὰς ἐς δύο βιβλία ἀνέγραψά σοι . . . τὸ δὲ φρόντισμα τοῦτο, ἄριστε ἀνθυπάτων, καὶ τὰ ἄχθη σοι κουφιεῖ τῆς γνώμης . . . 'I have written for you in two books an account of certain men who, though they pursued philosophy, ranked as sophists, and also of the sophists properly so called . . . This essay of mine, best of proconsuls, will help to lighten the weight of cares on your mind . . . ' However, it is obvious that Philostratus did not think of Gordian as his only reader; his book was certainly meant for a wider audience. What kind of public did Philostratus envisage when he wrote his work? I am aware that we have no way of obtaining knowledge about the actual readership in Philostratus' time (we cannot even be certain that Gordian read the book dedicated to him; in fact, I would assume he did not). Like the implied author, this readership is a function of the text; 'the writer's audience is always a fiction', as W. J. Ong has reminded us in a well-known article.<sup>7</sup> Thus, every writer will fine-tune the image of her or his implied author according to her or his view of the (implied) audience. To describe this process of adjustment, some critics have used the image of a covenant or a pact between author and audience.<sup>8</sup> The parts of literary texts where the working of this pact will be most visible are first-person statements; this is where its expectations, rules, interests and limitations are made explicit. This chapter will thus analyse some of these privileged passages in order to establish what kind of persona Philostratus envisages for his implied author. It will try to tease out a few details about the author's pact with his public: what can we learn about the audience Philostratus had in mind?

A number of these first-person statements are rather banal: in explicit cross-references within the work, the author may say 'as I have said' or 'I have written'.<sup>9</sup> A related, though somewhat less anodyne case can be described as belonging to the same category of authorial intrusions: we find the implied author intervening to ease or emphasise transitions from one topic to the next. Let us start with an example that, by its very atypicality, will serve to highlight Philostratus' usual practice. After his lengthy account of the life of Herodes Atticus, Philostratus begins his treatment of

<sup>7</sup> Ong (1975).

<sup>8</sup> This approach has been most influential for autobiographical and other first-person narratives; the ground-breaking work is Lejeune (1975), cf. Cohn (1999). For a general theory, see the hints in Taha (1997). Booth (1988) 125–53 is concerned with the ethical implications of this pact.

<sup>9</sup> To give just two examples, chosen at random: 1.22.1.522 Ἰσίου δὲ ἀκροατῆς γενόμενος . . . ὡς ἔφη ν '[Dionysus of Miletus] was a pupil of Isacus, as I have said'; 2.9.2.583 οὐκ ἔγραψα τὴν μελετηθεῖσαν ὑπόθεσιν . . . 'I have not given the theme of his declamation . . . '

Theodotus with the words (2.2.566) Ἐπὶ τὸν σοφιστὴν Θεόδοτον καλεῖ με ὁ λόγος 'my narrative calls me to consider the sophist Theodotus'. In itself, this transition is not striking: every author who is not merely writing at random, but following a premeditated plan, is being called to the next subject on his list by the thread of his argument. It is only when we realise the exceptionality of the sentence that Philostratus' usual style of transition is brought into relief.<sup>10</sup> The passage quoted above is particular because it is the argument (λόγος), not the implied author, who is acting. In general, Philostratus is less self-effacing; his interventions in the narrative are much more robust: time and again, he uses the first person to indicate that he will proceed to describe something, or will prove an assumption wrong. A particularly clear example can be found in the introduction to the life of Marcus of Byzantium. Here, the implied author emphasises his own activity by beginning his account thus:

οὐδὲ τὸν Βυζάντιον σοφιστὴν παραλείψω Μάρκον, ὑπὲρ οὗ κἂν ἐπιπλήξαιμι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, εἰ τοιόσδε γενόμενος, ὅποιον δηλώσω, μήπω τυγχάνοι τῆς αὐτοῦ δόξης.

Nor must I omit to speak of Marcus of Byzantium, on whose behalf I will bring this reproach against the Greeks, that though he was as talented as I shall show, he does not as yet receive the honour that he deserves. (1.24.1.527)

Three occurrences of verb forms in the first person within two lines create the image of a quite vigorous and assertive author. He is positive as to the effectiveness of his actions: he will not exclude Marcus from his narrative; he will demonstrate what kind of an orator he was. Here is a narrator who keeps things on a tight rein and who has sure control of all aspects of his narrative. Although this aspect is most obvious in the passage quoted above, it can be found time and again in *Lives of the sophists*.<sup>11</sup> So we can conclude that this is certainly one part of the pact between author and audience: he offers competent, reliable guidance, and the firm manner by which he indicates what he is doing should be understood as a strategy to inspire confidence.

Moreover, these numerous interventions of the implied author could be interpreted as mimicking the voice of the live performer.<sup>12</sup> The Second

<sup>10</sup> Another example may be found at 2.23.1.605 ἄγει με ὁ λόγος ἐπ' ἄνδρα ἐλλογιμώτατον Δαμιανόν 'my narrative leads me to a man who became most illustrious, Damianus'.

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., VS 1.21.1.514 ὑπὲρ Σκοπελίου τοῦ σοφιστοῦ διαλέξομαι 'I will now speak of the sophist Scopelian'; 1.25.7.537 δηλώσω δὲ καὶ γὰρ 'I will relate'; 1.25.9.540 ἀναγράψω 'I will write down'; 2.1.14.564 ἐρμηνεύσω 'I will describe'; 2.26.2.613 ἐγὼ δηλώσω 'as I shall show'.

<sup>12</sup> I owe this suggestion to S. J. Harrison. Rothe (1989) 35–6 appears to make a similar suggestion when she compares the *Lives of the sophists* to the genre of the λαλιά as defined by Menander Rhetor.

Sophistic was a phenomenon marked by secondary orality: although the Hellenised elite in the second and third centuries AD was a highly literate culture,<sup>13</sup> the performances of sophists with their emphasis on the spoken word and live extemporisation created an artificial situation in which literacy was hidden from view. Rhetorical handbooks taught when and how orators should pretend to be improvising (when they had really prepared their speeches in advance and in writing).<sup>14</sup> It is thus not surprising that Philostratus' narrator should in his turn be imitating an oral performance. While an oral speech would present its author in the flesh, Philostratus had to use textual markers to achieve this presence; his powerful and often emotional interventions should be seen in this context. We can profitably compare the effect of a similar imitation of orality in early Greek poetry: as Scodel has convincingly shown, textual signals of 'spontaneity' and 'improvisation' produce the illusion of an 'authentic voice' of the poet and of 'pseudo-intimacy' with the public.<sup>15</sup> This device, then, had a venerable pedigree in Greek literature, and it can be seen to serve similar purposes in the Second Sophistic as it did in archaic poetry.<sup>16</sup>

A similar effect of authority and trustworthiness is produced by the implied author's attempts to prove his expertise. It is certainly true, as Anderson has said in his book on Philostratus, that the (implied) author is anything but a pedant: 'he will not supply information or explanation as such, when a rhetorical conceit or a dazzling anecdote will do.'<sup>17</sup> As we have seen, he says as much in the Preface when he claims that his work is meant to 'lighten the weight of cares' on the dedicatee's mind. However, we should not therefore infer that the author renounces all claims to scholarship. A recurrent feature in *Lives of the sophists* is polemical attacks on unnamed other authors who got their facts wrong. Thus, Philostratus corrects mistaken assumptions concerning Polemo's place of birth (1.25.1.530): Πολέμων δὲ ὁ σοφιστῆς οὐθ', ὥς οἱ πολλοὶ δοκοῦσι, Σμυρναῖος, οὐθ', ὥς τινες, ἐκ Φρυγῶν, ἀλλὰ ἤνεγκεν αὐτὸν Λαοδίχεια ἢ ἐν Καρίᾳ 'Polemo the sophist was neither a native of Smyrna, as is commonly supposed,

<sup>13</sup> This description holds true even if Harris (1989) is right about fairly low rates of literacy in the Greek and Roman world.

<sup>14</sup> See Schmitz (1997) 121. <sup>15</sup> Scodel (1996).

<sup>16</sup> It is difficult to guess whether an actual live performance of *Lives of the sophists* (or of parts of it) ever took place. More recent scholarship has envisaged the possibility that even extended narratives such as Lucian's *True stories* could have been recited; see Georgiadou and Larmour (1995). There seems to be no reason why this should not be true for Philostratus, but I do not see any arguments that could support or refute this hypothesis.

<sup>17</sup> Anderson (1986) 99.

nor from Phrygia as some say, but he was born at Laodicea in Caria.<sup>18</sup> Such polemical references to erroneous accounts are typical for the work of Alexandrian scholars,<sup>19</sup> and Philostratus is certainly trying to place his implied author in this scholarly tradition. He repeatedly emphasises that his account is by far the best-informed and most truthful:

αἱ δὲ αἰτίαι, δι' ἃς ὁ πατήρ ἐξ ἡμέρου τε καὶ πράου χαλεπὸς αὐτῷ ἐγένετο, λέγονται μὲν ἐπὶ πολλὰ, καὶ γὰρ ἡ δεῖνα καὶ ἡ δεῖνα καὶ πλείους, ἀλλ' ἐγὼ τὴν ἀληθεστάτην δηλώσω.

The reasons why his father, after being kind and indulgent to him, treated him harshly, are told in many different versions, for they allege now this reason, now that, then more than one, but I shall relate the truest version. (1.21.4.516)

ὡς μὲν οἱ πολλοὶ φασὶ . . . ἡ δὲ ἀληθεσττέρα αἰτία ἦδε.

As most people assert . . . but the following reason is nearer the truth. (1.25.559)

We can thus see that the narrator in *Lives of the sophists* certainly means to be entertaining and lively, yet at the same time, he wants to be perceived as serious and knowledgeable. Readers are made to feel that they have found the perfect guide in the puzzling maze of the Second Sophistic.

Moreover, the author is careful to point out how he obtained his professional knowledge. It has often been observed that *Lives of the sophists* can be compared to oral history, and this is certainly right – to an extent. Philostratus is often careful to mention his sources explicitly. This has triggered an interesting, though speculative and somewhat frustrating, discussion. Given that the number of active sophists was fairly restricted, given that feelings of competition and jealousy were ubiquitous with these conceited performers, given that closely woven networks of friendships and student–teacher relationships existed, scholars have tried to reconstruct to which of these circles and schools of sophists Philostratus belonged, which

<sup>18</sup> Similar claims to knowing better than other writers can be found, e.g., at 2.1.8.554 οἱ δὲ ποιοῦμενοι κατηγορίαν τῶν Ἡρώδου χειρῶν ὡς ἐπενεχθισίον Ἀντωνίνῳ ἐν τῇ Ἰδῇ τῷ ὄρει . . . ἡγνοηκέναι μοι δοκοῦσι τὸν Δημοστράτου πρὸς τὸν Ἡρώδην ἀγῶνα . . . 'those who accuse Herodes of having lifted his hand against Antoninus on Mount Ida . . . were, in my opinion, unaware of the action brought by Demostrates against Herodes . . .'

<sup>19</sup> A random example: *Life of Sophocles* 1 Σοφοκλῆς τὸ μὲν γένος ἦν Ἀθηναῖος, υἱὸς δὲ Σοφίλλου, ὃς οὔτε, ὡς Ἀριστόξενός φησι, τέκτων ἢ χαλκεὺς ἦν, οὔτε, ὡς Ἰστρὸς, μαχαίροποιὸς τὴν ἐργασίαν, τυχὸν δὲ ἐκέκτητο δούλους χαλκεῖς ἢ τέκτονας. 'Sophocles was an Athenian by birth. He was the son of Sophillus who was not a carpenter in spite of what Aristoxenus tells us nor a bronze-smith, nor a sword-maker by trade in spite of what Ister tells us. As it happened, his father owned slaves who were bronze-smiths and carpenters' (trans. Lefkowitz (1981) 160). The connection between Philostratus and the Alexandrian scholars had already been made by Leo (1901) 258: 'Philostratus has transformed the grammatical βίος into a form of rhetoric.'

friendships and enmities he inherited from his teachers and fellow-students.<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, our evidence is not quite sufficient to arrive at definitive conclusions. Moreover, we have to take into account that Philostratus did not include these details for the use of future scholars; instead, they serve a precise function in their context: they help characterise the implied author as somebody who is privy to all the tricks of the trade and who has privileged access to restricted knowledge.

References to these informants can take several forms. Philostratus may merely mention that he has heard a particular fact from 'older men' (2.3.567 and 2.8.2.579: τῶν πρεσβυτέρων ἤκουον). Or he can be somewhat more specific and ascribe knowledge of details to 'my teachers' (2.10.1.585 ὡς γὰρ τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ διδασκάλων ἤκουον, ἀφίκετο μὲν ἐς αὐτὰς κατὰ Ἡρώδην. 'For, as I used to hear from my own teachers, he [Hadrian the sophist] came to Athens in the time of Herodes.') Or he may even name the specific person to whom he owes his knowledge. Three individuals are thus mentioned in *Lives of the sophists*: for us, Aristaeus (1.22.4.524) and Ctesidemus of Athens (2.1.6.552) are mere names about whom we know nothing. Damianus of Ephesus receives his own notice (2.23.605–6) and was a well-known benefactor in Ephesus.<sup>21</sup> He was Philostratus' informant for several anecdotes (2.9.2.582 and 2.9.3.583). Our author mentions that 'when students were attracted to Ephesus by his renown he still allowed them access to himself, and so it was that he honored me also with one interview, then with a second and a third' (2.23.4.606 τοῖς γοῦν κατὰ κλέος αὐτοῦ φοιτῶσιν ἐς τὴν Ἐφεσον παρέχων ἑαυτὸν ἀνέθηκε καί μοι τινα ξυνουσίαν πρῶτην τε καὶ δευτέραν καὶ τρίτην). This is certainly an interesting biographical piece of information, for we may infer that Philostratus very likely never was a formal student of Damianus.<sup>22</sup> But we must not forget the function of this remark in its context: it emphasises how close the implied author was to Damianus. This is more than an indication of his source, it emphasises the implied author's familiarity with his subject. This is even more perceptible in the case of Proclus. In his description of the sophist's exploits, we sense his pride when he refers to this famous man as his teacher (2.21.1.602): ἀναγράψω καὶ Πρόκλον τὸν Ναυκρατίτην εἰδῶς εὖ τὸν ἄνδρα, καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ τῶν ἐμῶν διδασκάλων εἰς οὗτος. 'I will proceed to record the life of Proclus of Naucratis also, for I knew the man well, indeed he was one of my own teachers.' This is an obvious hint

<sup>20</sup> See Anderson (1986) 83, cf. Schubert (1995); the most systematic attempt to analyse the structure of these sophistic circles can be found in Naechster (1908).

<sup>21</sup> See *PIR*: F 253 and Mratschek-Halfmann (1993) 393–4; Schulte (1994) 184–6; Puech (2002) 190–200.

<sup>22</sup> Pace Anderson (1986) 4; Rothe (1989) 92; see Solmsen (1941) 126.



that the implied author should be regarded as a perfectly trained sophist whose judgement is trustworthy because he took classes with the most renowned masters.

This notion is confirmed by another passage. In it we readers see, as it were, a portrait of the author as a young man, amid his fellow-students. Here, the beloved teacher is criticised for indecorous behaviour towards his colleagues (2.27.3.617):

Πρόκλου δὲ τοῦ Ναυκρατίτου πομπείαν οὐ πρεσβυτικὴν ξυνθέντος ἐπὶ πάντας τοὺς παιδεύοντας Ἀθήνησι καὶ τὸν Ἰππόδρομον ἐγκαταλέξαντος τῷ λοιδορησμῷ τούτῳ ἡμεῖς μὲν ὥόμεθα λόγου ἀκροάσασθαι πρὸς τὴν τῶν εἰρημένων ἢ ὡς ξυγκειμένου, ὁ δὲ οὐδὲν εἰπὼν φλαῦρον ἔπαινον εὐφημίας διεξῆλθεν.

When Proclus of Naucratis composed a coarse satire, unworthy of an old man, against all who were teaching at Athens, and included Hippodromus in this lampoon, we expected to hear from him a speech that would be a sort of echo of what had been said about him. But he uttered nothing that was mean, but recited an encomium on fair-speaking.

This dramatic little scene is very effective in bringing the bizarre world of the sophists back to life: we can almost see the assembly of students, feel their suspense and watch their admiration for Hippodromus' generous restraint (which was highly unusual in those circles where one-upmanship was the most prominent trait). Many passages in *Lives of the sophists* provide vivid pictures of similar scenes: students were supposed to be their master's claque; they would attend his rivals' performances in order to disturb them, or they would applaud their master's friends. Philostratus' cameo appearance in this scene is reminiscent of Hitchcock's movies, but it is more than a mere flourish: it serves the precise function of demonstrating that the implied author is part of the world he describes, that he looks at it from the inside. Accordingly, his readers will be ready to believe him when he asserts that he had privileged access to documents which warrant the truth of what he relates (2.1.12.562):

ἐπιγράφουσι δὲ ἔνιοι καὶ φυγὴν οὐ φυγόντι καὶ φασιν αὐτὸν οἰκῆσαι τὸ ἐν τῇ Ἠπείρῳ Ἰλρικόν, ὃ καὶ πολλοῖσι αὐτόν, ὡς εἴη δίκαια ἐπιτηδεῖα τῷ σώματι. ὁ δὲ Ἡρώδης ᾤκησε μὲν τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο νοσήσας ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ θύσας ἐκβατήρια τῆς νόσου, φυγεῖν δὲ οὔτε προσετάχθη οὔτε ἔτλη. καὶ μάρτυρα τοῦ λόγου τούτου ποιήσομαι τὸν θεσπέσιον Μάρκον. . . θαυμάσιον δὲ ἦθος ἐγκαταμίξας τοῖς γράμμασιν ἐπέστειλε πρὸς τὸν Ἡρώδη, ὃν ἐγὼ τὰ ξυντείνοντα ἐς τὸν παρόντα μοι λόγον ἐξελὼν τῆς ἐπιστολῆς δηλώσω.

Some place on record the exile of Herodes, though exiled he was not, and they say that he lived at Oricum in Epirus and that he in fact founded the city in order that it might be a residence suited to his constitution. But though Herodes did actually live in this place and fell ill there, and offered sacrifices in return for his recovery from sickness, still he was never condemned to exile nor did he suffer this penalty. And as a witness to the truth of this statement I will employ the divine Marcus . . . The Emperor wrote to Herodes, tempering what he wrote with an admirable urbanity, and from this letter I will extract all that bears on my present narrative, and publish it.

Again, we see that the implied author criticises other accounts, and he is careful to point out that his sources are superior. '[T]he divine Marcus' himself is called upon as a witness of Philostratus' account; the author possesses the document in question and quotes from it. The narrator of *Lives of the sophists*, then, makes absolutely clear that he is an expert who can vouch for the quality and the accuracy of his information. He has spent his professional life as a disciple and companion of famous sophists. This strategy of creating an aura of familiarity also helps explain the somewhat abrupt ending of the work. After giving an account of Aspasia, the author declares that several other sophists will not be mentioned in his account (2.33.4.628):

περὶ δὲ Φιλοστράτου Λημνίου . . . καὶ περὶ Νικαγόρου τοῦ Ἀθηναίου, ὃς καὶ τοῦ Ἐλευσινίου ἱεροῦ κήρυξ ἐστέφθη, καὶ Ἀψίνης ὁ Φοῖνιξ ἐφ' ὅσον προὔβη μνήμης τε καὶ ἀκριβείας, οὐκ ἐμὲ δεῖ γράφειν, καὶ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἀπιστηθεῖν ὡς χαρισάμενος, ἐπειδὴ φίλια μοι πρὸς αὐτοὺς ἦν.

But of Philostratus of Lemnos . . . it is not for me to write. Nay, nor must I write about Nicagoras of Athens, who was appointed herald of the temple at Eleusis; nor of Apsines the Phoenician and his great achievements of memory and precision. For I should be distrusted as favouring them unduly, since they were connected with me by the tie of friendship.

This reference to friendship should be seen as climactic. It demonstrates how closely our author is connected to the stars of the Second Sophistic: he is actually one of those great performers himself, and when he writes about them, he does so on a par.

This is a consistent trait that we can discover in the entire work: the narrator is at home in the world of the sophists, he is even one of them. I will try to spell out what this means by taking a closer look at several aspects of the implied author's persona. We have barely begun reading *Lives of the sophists* when we come upon the first quotation of a classical poet. At the end of the dedicatory letter, Philostratus highlights that his book 'will help to lighten the weight of cares on your mind', and he compares this effect

to the soothing drugs that Helen offers to her guests in the *Odyssey*.<sup>23</sup> Just a few pages later, Philostratus relates a dramatic scene from the life of Dio Chrysostom. When Domitian was emperor, he had to go into hiding and spent much time in military camps (1.7.2.488)<sup>24</sup>:

τοὺς στρατιώτας ὁρῶν ἐς νεώτερα ὀρμῶντας ἐπὶ Δομετιανῷ ἀπεσφαγμένῳ οὐκ ἐφείσατο ἀταξίαν ἰδὼν ἐκραγεῖσαν, ἀλλὰ γυμνὸς ἀναπηδήσας ἐπὶ βωμὸν ὑψηλὸν ἤρξατο τοῦ λόγου ὧδε: 'αὐτὰρ ὁ γυμνώθη βρακέων πολύμητις Ὀδυσσεύς, καὶ εἰπὼν ταῦτα καὶ δηλώσας ἑαυτὸν, ὅτι μὴ πτωχός, μηδὲ ὄν ᾤοντο, Δίῳ δὲ εἶη ὁ σοφός, ἐπὶ μὲν τὴν κατηγορίαν τοῦ τυράννου πολὺς ἐπνευσεν . . .

after the assassination of Domitian, when he saw that the troops were beginning to mutiny, he could not contain himself at the sight of the disorder that had broken out, but stripped off his rags, leaped on to a high altar, and began his harangue with the verse 'Then Odysseus of many counsels stripped him of his rags', and having said this and thus revealed that he was no beggar, nor what they believed him to be, but Dio the sage, he delivered a spirited and energetic indictment of the tyrant . . .

This anecdote shows Dio making adroit use of a famous quotation: like Odysseus in front of the suitors (*Odyssey* 22.1), Dio at long last casts away his disguise and reveals who he really is. At a decisive moment, he displays the mastery of the true πεπαιδευμένος who finds an appropriate allusion to classical literature even in a moment of extreme tension and agitation. By the clever use of this quotation and by the power of his words, Dio is finally able to quell the soldiers' rebellion.

Just one page later, we see the implied author himself making good use of Homeric quotations. He reports that Favorinus had quarrelled with the emperor Hadrian without suffering any harm (1.8.2.489):

τοῦτ' ὁ Ἀδριανοῦ ἐπαινος εἶη ἂν μᾶλλον, εἰ βασιλεὺς ὢν ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἰσού διεφέρετο πρὸς ὃν ἐξῆν ἀποκτείνειν. βασιλεὺς δὲ κρείττων, 'ὅτε χῶσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρη, ἦν ὀργῆς κρατῆ, καὶ 'θυμὸς δὲ μέγας ἐστὶ διοτρεφέων βασιλῶν', ἦν λογισμῷ κολάζεται. βέλτιον δὲ ταῦτα ταῖς τῶν ποιητῶν δόξαις προσγράφειν τοὺς εὐ τιθεμένους τὰ τῶν βασιλέων ἦθη.

But this must rather be set down to the credit of Hadrian, seeing that, though he was Emperor, he disagreed on terms of equality with one whom it was in his power

<sup>23</sup> 4.220–6: 'Then Helen, daughter of Zeus, took other counsel. Straightway she cast into the wine of which they were drinking a drug to quiet all pain and strife, and bring forgetfulness of every ill. Whoso should drink this down, when it is mingled in the bowl, would not in the course of that day let a tear fall down over his cheeks, no, not though his mother and father should lie there dead, or though before his face men should slay with the sword his brother or dear son, and his own eyes beheld it' (tr. S. Butler).

<sup>24</sup> On this scene and Dio's use of an Odyssean persona, see Moles (1978) 97.

to put to death. For a prince is really superior if he controls his anger 'When he is wrath with a lesser man', and 'Mighty is the anger of Zeus-nurtured kings,' if only it be kept in check by reason. Those who endeavour to guide and amend the morals of princes would do well to add this saying to the sentiments expressed by the poets.

It is certainly not a coincidence that these Homeric quotations can all be found within the very first pages of *Lives of the sophists*. By demonstrating early in his work that he has the same competence as his subjects in using poetical quotations, the implied author is establishing his credentials as sophist.

As we have already seen, the implied author is rather contentious. Time and again, he argues with people who proffer interpretations different from his own. This is another feature that should be understood as highlighting the sophistic competence of the narrator. Those misinterpretations can be explained only by the fact that their authors are not as well versed in the ropes of the trade as our narrator: they either ignore the subtleties of style or fail to understand the historical situation of the topic of the declamation in question. Out of the numerous passages,<sup>25</sup> I will quote just one particularly combative example (1.22.3.524):

οἱ δὲ ἀνατιθέντες Διονυσίῳ τὸν Ἀράσπαν τὸν τῆς Πανθείας ἐρῶντα ἀνήκοι μὲν τῶν τοῦ Διονυσίου ρυθμῶν, ἀνήκοι δὲ τῆς ἄλλης ἐρμηνείας, ἅπειροι δὲ τῆς τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων τέχνης.

Those who ascribe to Dionysius the piece called *Araspes the Lover of Panthea*, are ignorant not only of his rhythms but of his whole style of eloquence, and moreover they know nothing of the art of ratiocination.

We know about the particular importance of long and acrimonious discussions that were a usual part of most sophistic performances.<sup>26</sup> Holding one's own in these debates was considered a necessary prerequisite for a career as a sophist, and Philostratus himself explicitly says so<sup>27</sup> (1.8.3.491):

<sup>25</sup> Cf. 1.24.1.528 they 'fail to observe the style of his speech, they fail to observe the truth, and are most dishonest men'; 2.1.14.565 they 'are not aware, I think, that the same thing happened to Demosthenes also'; 2.15.2.596 they 'do not understand . . . let me ward off from him an unfair and maliciously manufactured accusation'.

<sup>26</sup> See Schmitz (1997) 123–7.

<sup>27</sup> We may again note the shrewd allusion to classical poetry, this time to Hesiod, *Works and days* 25–6 'And potter is angry with potter, and craftsman with craftsman, and beggar is jealous of beggar. and minstrel of minstrel' καὶ κεραμεὺς κεραμεὶ κοτῆει καὶ τέκτονι τέκτων, | καὶ πτωχὸς πτωχῷ φθονεῖ καὶ δοιδὸς δοιδῶ.

τοῖς μὲν οὖν σοφιστὴν τὸν Φαβωρίνον καλοῦσιν ἀπέχρη ἐς ἀπόδειξιν καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ διενεχθῆναι αὐτὸν σοφιστῇ, τὸ γὰρ φιλότιμον, οὐ ἐμνήσθη, ἐπὶ τοὺς ἀντιτέχνους φοιτᾷ.

When people called Favorinus a sophist, the mere fact that he had quarreled with a sophist was evidence enough; for that spirit of rivalry of which I spoke is always directed against one's competitors in the same craft.

It could thus be said that Philostratus' contentiousness is another quality that he shares with the sophists he describes. Like them, he is willing to debate on all the finer points of language, style and history; like them, he leaves his audience in no doubt that he masters his subject matter and that anybody who would be foolish enough to question his authority can only be an impostor.

Moreover, our author demonstrates not only intellectual control of his subject, but also an intense emotional involvement with what he describes. This was visible in *VS* 1.24.1.527 (quoted above, p. 52), where the author was willing to 'chide' (ἐπιπλήξαιμι) the Greeks for failing to acknowledge the worth of Marcus of Byzantium. Other passages could be adduced to prove this point. Several times, we find the author defending his sophists against slander of all sorts, as in 2.15.2.596 on Ptolemy of Naucratis: ταῦτά μοι ἀπολελογήσθω ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς παραιτουμένω αὐτὸν ἀδίκου καὶ πεπτανουργημένης αἰτίας 'so much let me say in defence of Ptolemy, that I may ward off from him an unfair and maliciously manufactured accusation'.<sup>28</sup> But he may also criticise sophists if they fail to live up to the high standards of the profession. Thus, he refuses to include a number of men into his biographical account because he deems them unworthy of the name of 'sophist' (2.23.1.605): ἐξηρήσθων Σώτηροί τε καὶ Σῶσοι καὶ Νικανδροί καὶ Φαῖδροι Κῦροί τε καὶ Φύλακες, ἀθύρματα γὰρ τῶν Ἑλλήνων μᾶλλον οὗτοι προσρηθεῖεν ἢ σοφισταὶ λόγου ἄξιοι. 'let me omit from [my narrative] such persons as Soter, Sosus, Nicander, Phaedrus, Cyrus and Phylax, since these men would more properly be called the playthings of the Greeks than sophists worthy of mention.'

This is especially perceptible in the case of Critias, whom the narrator calls 'the greatest criminal of all who are notorious for crime' (1.16.2.501: κάκιστος ἀνθρώπων ἔμοιγε φαίνεται ξυμπάντων, ὧν ἐπὶ κακίᾳ ὄνομα). This indignation about a man who had died more than half a millennium before does not only demonstrate how close the members of the Second

<sup>28</sup> Cf. 2.20.3.602, on Apollonius of Athens: παρεθέμην δὲ ταῦτα οὐ παραιτούμενος αὐτὸν τῶν ἀκολάστων ρυθμῶν, ἀλλὰ διδάσκων, ὅτι μὴδὲ τοὺς σωφρονεστέρους ρυθμοὺς ἡγνῶει. 'I have not quoted this passage in order to excuse him [Apollonius of Athens] for his licence in the use of rhythms, but to show that he also knew how to use the more sober sort.'

Sophistic felt to the world of classical Athens, it should also be understood as a textual strategy highlighting the implied author's involvement with his subject matter: he is not a remote and aloof observer of facts; instead, he engages passionately with what he narrates because he is part of it. And this is indeed a quality that can be found throughout *Lives of the sophists*: the narrator shows his own fervent association with the sophists and their profession, and he invites his readers to become as involved as he is himself. This is emphasised in a formula that recurs several times in *VS* and can almost be called a mannerism: the first-person subjunctive ἡγώμεθα 'let us consider'.<sup>29</sup> This could of course be understood as a use of the plural for the singular;<sup>30</sup> the word would then be a somewhat convoluted way of saying 'I think'. However, some passages seem to indicate that ἡγώμεθα is more than merely a polite circumlocution. Philostratus uses the form in his praise of Herodes Atticus (2.1.1.547):

ἄριστα δὲ ἀνθρώπων πλοῦτῳ ἐχρήσατο. τοῦτ' ἔτι μὴ τῶν εὐμεταχειρίστων ἡγώμεθα, ἀλλὰ τῶν παγχαλέπων τε καὶ δυσκόλων, οἱ γὰρ πλοῦτῳ μεθύοντες ὕβριν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἐπαντλοῦσιν.

No man employed his wealth to better purpose. And this we must not reckon a thing easy to achieve, but very difficult and arduous. For men who are intoxicated with wealth are wont to let loose a flood of insults on their fellow-men.

When the narrator explains why the good use that Herodes made of his wealth must not be considered a trivial achievement, he gives reasons for this judgement by employing the causal particle γάρ 'for'. This seems to indicate that he is not merely expressing his own belief, but actually inviting his audience to share it. Hence, the jussive subjunctive should be understood as possessing its full rhetorical force; it is not a self-exhortation of the narrator, but rather addressed to his readers.<sup>31</sup> We thus see an implied author who is not attempting to give the impression of being an objective and detached observer; he rather pleads for his readership to adopt a point of view similar to his own, to become as emotionally involved in the world of the sophists as he is himself.

<sup>29</sup> See 1.7.1.487; 1.9.1.492; 1.15.3.500; 1.17.4.506; 2.1.1.547; 2.1.11.561; 2.1.13.563; 2.9.3.583; 2.21.1.603. We may compare the use of μὴ ἀπιστώμεν 'let us trust' at 2.24.2.607 and 2.26.6.615.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Kühner and Gerth 1.83–4.

<sup>31</sup> The same can be observed in, e.g., the story about an incriminatory letter that the sophist Antipater wrote to the emperor Caracalla. The narrator closes with a note explaining why this letter caused the emperor's anger, and again we find the jussive subjunctive inviting his audience to share his convictions, again we find the causal γάρ giving reasons for his judgement (2.24.2.607): ὅφ' ὧν παροξυνθῆναι τὸν βασιλέα μὴ ἀπιστώμεν... 'We may well believe that the Emperor was greatly incensed by this, and indeed these remarks would have incensed even a private person...'

This seems to me to be at the core of the pact between the implied author and the readership. All authors want us, at least for the limited time of our reading their work, to see the world through their eyes, to share their outlook on the events and characters in their texts.<sup>32</sup> Yet an author cannot take it for granted that this wish will be fulfilled; he or she has to make sure that readers will follow this invitation. We can now proceed to analyse the ways in which Philostratus tries to achieve this effect. I will begin by quoting an anecdote about Alexander 'Clay-Plato' (2.5.3.571–2): on a visit to Athens, this sophist made a declamation. Herodes Atticus had promised to attend with his students, but he was late for the performance, and Alexander had to begin his declamation. It was inevitable that Herodes should arrive when Alexander was in the midst of his speech. Alexander then performed one of those dazzling feats that were the hallmark of sophistic extemporisation: he began another declamation on the same topic, a new variation on the same theme, and he succeeded brilliantly in this difficult task: 'those who were hearing them for the second time could not feel that he was repeating himself.' After the performance, Herodes' students discuss what they have just witnessed:

διαλυθείσης δὲ τῆς ἀκροάσεως καλέσας ὁ Ἡρώδης τῶν ἑαυτοῦ γνωρίμων τοὺς ἐν ἐπιδόσει ἡρώτα, ποῖός τις αὐτοῖς ὁ σοφιστὴς φαίνοιτο, σκέπτου δὲ τοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς Κορίνθου τὸν μὲν πηλὸν εὐρηκέναι φήσαντος, τὸν δὲ Πλάτωνα ζητεῖν, ἐπικόπτων αὐτὸν ὁ Ἡρώδης 'τουτί' ἔφη 'πρὸς μηδένα εἴπης ἕτερον, σεαυτὸν γάρ' ἔφη 'διαβαλεῖς ὡς ἀμαθῶς κρίνοντα, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἔπου μᾶλλον ἡγουμένῳ αὐτὸν Σκοπελιανὸν νήφοντα.'

When the declamation was over, Herodes called together the more advanced of his own pupils and asked them what was their opinion of the sophist; and when Sceptus of Corinth said that he had found the clay but had still to find the Plato, Herodes cut him short, and said: 'Do not talk like that to anyone else, for', said he, 'you will incriminate yourself as an illiterate critic but rather follow me in my view of him as a sober Scopelian.'

This retort is interesting because it demonstrates that by applying wrong criteria in our judgements, we pass a judgement on ourselves; we disqualify ourselves and betray that we are 'illiterate critics' ἀμαθῶς κρίνοντες. This is of course one of the worst insults that could be addressed to a person aspiring to belong to the cultured elite in an age that valued education, παιδεία, so highly. Herodes' disparagement of his student is certainly meant as a lesson for Philostratus' readers as well. It agrees perfectly with the passages quoted above (p. 59) in which Philostratus contradicted other

<sup>32</sup> See Booth (1988).

scholars and suggested that their wrong ideas about stylistic and linguistic details had to be ascribed to a lack of understanding and experience. It is certainly not a coincidence that in one of those passages, Philostratus uses a phrase for condemnation which is very similar to the expression he had employed to censure Critias: critics who commit such mistakes are 'most dishonest men' (1.24.1.528: ἀδικώτατοι ἀνθρώπων; cf. 1.16.2.501: Critias was 'the greatest criminal of all' κάκιστος ἀνθρώπων). How we feel about the value of sophistic performances defines our moral and human value.

I would contend that this is an important aspect of the pact between implied author and audience. As we have seen, the narrator is careful to set up his credentials as an accomplished judge and critic; we can be in no doubt as to his competence. Therefore, it is our task to prove that we are able to live up to his high standards of παιδεία. While we are invited to observe and evaluate the great performers of the Second Sophistic, we should feel that at the same time, we are being scrutinised ourselves. Another revealing anecdote in *Lives of the sophists* shows that this attitude was not unusual. Here is what Philostratus tells us about Polemo's first appearance in the heartland of Hellenic παιδεία (1.25.4.535):

Ἀθηναίοις μὲν γὰρ ἐπιδεικνύμενος αὐτοσχεδίου λόγους, ὅτε καὶ πρῶτον Ἀθήναζε ἀφίκετο, οὐκ ἐς ἐγκώμια κατέστησεν ἑαυτὸν τοῦ ἁπλοῦς, τοσούτων ὄντων, ἃ τις ὑπὲρ Ἀθηναίων ἂν εἴποι, οὐδ' ὑπὲρ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ δόξης ἐμακρηγόρησε, καίτοι καὶ τῆς τοιαύτης ἰδέας ὠφελοῦσης τοὺς σοφιστὰς ἐν ταῖς ἐπιδείξεσιν, ἀλλ' εὖ γινώσκων, ὅτι τὰς Ἀθηναίων φύσεις ἐπικόπτειν χρή μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπαίρειν διελέχθη ὧδε· 'φασὶν ὑμᾶς, ὦ Ἀθηναῖοι, σοφοὺς εἶναι ἀκροατὰς λόγων· εἴσομαι.'

For instance, when he gave a display to the Athenians of extempore speeches on first coming to Athens, he did not condescend to utter an encomium on the city, though there were so many things that one might say in honour of the Athenians; nor did he make a long oration about his own renown, although this style of speech is likely to win favour for sophists in their public declamations. But since he well knew that the natural disposition of the Athenians needs to be held in check rather than encouraged to greater pride, this was his introductory speech: 'Men say, Athenians, that as an audience you are accomplished judges of oratory. I shall soon find out.'

Philostratus is explicit about the intention of Polemo's introductory remark: he meant to intimidate the Athenians, to 'put them down' (ἐπικόπτειν). Polemo was so certain of his own value, so assured of the quality of his style, that any criticism of his speeches could reflect only on the critics themselves; hence the curious reversal of roles of observer and observed. Looking at somebody can involve complicated questions of



power and authority,<sup>33</sup> and Polemo's performance is a case in point. While it is true that the probing gaze can degrade its object, it is also a sign of superior power if somebody does not even deign to acknowledge the fact that she or he is being looked at. Undoubtedly, a sophist like Polemo put himself in a position of vulnerability when he allowed the public to scrutinise and judge his mastery of παιδεία when he extemporised his declamations. Yet Polemo's cocky self-assurance shows that his viewers were under observation themselves. Their attitude and comportment will indicate who and what they are,<sup>34</sup> if they can claim to meet the sophist on a par. This must be explained by the strong communal nature of the culture that the sophists' performances represented: both the audience and the great masters accepted and believed that the declamation embodied a privileged moment. It epitomised Greek identity in a world where this identity had to be produced with great care.<sup>35</sup> It was this knowledge of common values and concurrence that allowed Polemo to make his outrageous remark: at least theoretically, every member of the audience had to live up to the same standards, and failing to do so could produce shame and embarrassment. Criticising at the wrong place for the wrong reason might bring disrepute.

I would contend that readers of *Lives of the sophists* are in an analogous situation. Like Polemo, the implied author seems to threaten us with turning the tables: our judgement of the sophists' style will make evident whether we can aspire to the title of 'cultured people', πεπαιδευμένοι. This may help explain one particularity of Philostratus' account that has long puzzled readers. It is striking that the narrator is quite opinionated about the sophists' merits and mistakes, yet he never tells us explicitly what constitutes the quality of a sophist; as Anderson has rightly complained: 'Philostratus' criteria are difficult to break down.'<sup>36</sup> It may be the case that Philostratus had well-defined principles for bestowing praise and blame, but he never bothers to explain. I would argue that this apparent arbitrariness should not be attributed to a failure on the author's part, it is rather a strategy to make readers understand that they are put to the test. If we fail to follow suit, if we disagree with these unverifiable judgements, we have

<sup>33</sup> As has most profitably been explored in the field of gender studies, at first in the visual arts, as in Berger (1972), but also in literature, as in Newman (1990). Most of these studies take their cues from psychoanalytical work on the gaze such as Freud's or Lacan's, see Wright (1998) 181–6.

<sup>34</sup> This social element is a general feature of judgements of taste: our predilections and dislikes are not only (at least in part) influenced by our social rank, they also serve as powerful markers of class and group adherence, as has most carefully and convincingly been argued by the late P. Bourdieu; see esp. Bourdieu (1979).

<sup>35</sup> This point is developed at length in Schmitz (1997); for Greek cultural identity in the Roman empire, cf. the essays collected in Goldhill (2001a).

<sup>36</sup> Anderson (1986) 79; cf. Rothe (1989) 33.

to wonder whether we are not uneducated critics. Thus, we find ourselves cast in the role of apprentices of a great master: we have to accept his words at face value and cannot hope to appraise them.

This is again a trait that can be explained by the general character of second-century παιδεία. As I have tried to show elsewhere,<sup>37</sup> there was a consistent expectation that being a truly cultivated person was somehow part of one's innermost being and character; it could not be acquired by learning. Philostratus' lack of explicitness about the criteria of his judgements should be read as a signal that his views about style belong to the realm of 'natural' taste. If readers were to blame the narrator for not providing reasons, they would disqualify themselves by demonstrating that they do not possess this innate refinement. It would be accurate, then, to describe the implied author's strategy of winning his readers' concurrence as one of intimidation: for fear of betraying our ignorance and poor judgement, we dare not doubt or contradict the awe-inspiring narrator's judgement.

To claim that Philostratus presents the narrator of *Lives of the sophists* as a sophist is by no means a new discovery.<sup>38</sup> What I have tried to do in these pages is tease out some of the implications this entails. The persona of Philostratus' implied author commands the respect and the confidence of his readers, and he persuades them to share his outlook on sophistic declamations. If the account sometimes appears to be muddled or inconsistent, this should not be attributed to the writer's incompetence; instead, it is another aspect of the authorial strategy to impress and intimidate his readership. Moreover, we have seen that the pact between narrator and implied audience in *Lives of the sophists* depends to a high degree on shared values and perspectives. Philostratus wrote with a certain readership in mind, and this readership obviously does not consist of Western scholars of the twenty-first century. In order to work, his textual strategies presuppose that we generally accept and venerate his standards of stylistic appropriateness and Greek cultural identity (however, they do not presuppose detailed knowledge of the rules and laws of this culture). But once the public subscribes to these values, it is likely to be browbeaten into trusting the narrator's point of view and ascribing the lack of clear criteria to its own shortcomings.

Did Philostratus' actual readership (or even audience<sup>39</sup>) fall into this trap? Did his text successfully muster its public's concurrence? These are,

<sup>37</sup> Schmitz (1997) 136–59.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., the title of ch. 5 in Anderson (1986): 'The Sophist on Sophists.'

<sup>39</sup> See above, n. 16.

of course, questions that are impossible to answer in any definitive way, but we can at least speculate on the basis of our observations. It should be clear that all depends on the public's acceptance of shared standards – once people refuse to play the sophists' game, Philostratus' narrator will appear to be a freak, not a master: like Nabokov's Pnin, he will discover that all his specialised knowledge is worthless in changed social and cultural surroundings. One could argue that Philostratus' text is aware of this situation. A number of his sophistic vignettes shows even the greatest masters unable to work their spell on hostile or inattentive audiences: Heraclides of Lycia suffers the disaster most dreaded by a sophistic performer, he breaks down in the midst of his declamation 'because he was abashed by the court and the Imperial bodyguard' (2.26.3.614: φασιν αὐτὸν σχεδίου λόγου ἐκπνεῖν αὐλήν καὶ δορυφόρους δείσαντα). And the narrator explains that this is a danger to which the best sophists are most prone:

τουτὶ δὲ ἀγοραῖος μὲν τις παθὼν κἄν αἰτίαν λάβοι, τὸ γὰρ τῶν ἀγοραίων ἔθνος ἰταμοὶ καὶ θρασεῖς, σοφιστῆς δὲ ξυσπουδάζων μειρακίοις τὸ πολὺ τῆς ἡμέρας πῶς ἂν ἀντίσχοι ἐκπλήξει; ἐκκρούει γὰρ σχεδίου λόγου καὶ ἀκροατῆς σεμνῶ πρόσωπῳ καὶ βραδὺς ἔπαινος καὶ τὸ μὴ κροτεῖσθαι συνήθως, εἰ δὲ καὶ φθόνου ὑποκαθημένον ἑαυτὸν αἰσθοῖτο . . . , ᾗττον δὲ εὐρήσει, αἱ γὰρ τοιαῖδε ὑποαῖαι γνώμης ἀχλὺς καὶ δεσμὰ γλώττης.

Now if this misfortune were to happen to a forensic orator, he might well be criticised; for forensic orators as a tribe are audacious and self-confident; but a sophist spends the greater part of his day in teaching mere boys, and how should he resist being easily flustered? For an extempore speaker is disconcerted by a single hearer whose features have a supercilious expression, or by tardy applause, or by not being clapped in the way to which he is accustomed; but if in addition he is aware that malice is lying in wait for him . . . , his ideas will not flow so easily, for suspicions of that sort cloud the mind and tie the tongue.

In a similar way, our implied author's whole project might fall if his readers decided not to play along. We could just shrug off the narrator's threats that one wrong judgement would suffice to demonstrate our incompetence and thus undermine his authority; we could decide that linguistic questions and historical allusions are not for us, anyway, and then go and read some more interesting stuff.

Moreover, even members of the readership who subscribe to the values of παιδεία and belong to the cultured elite might escape the influence of the narrator's rhetoric. They could decide that they know better than he does, that his verdicts on style and language are just wrong – the manifold and often contradicting rules of Atticist usage gave ample margin for conflicting

opinions about these matters.<sup>40</sup> They might even conclude that the implied author did not withhold his criteria because he was absolutely certain of them and wanted to put his audience to the test, but because he was an impostor and his brazenness was an attempt to hide his ignorance. This is again a possibility that Philostratus' text seems to intimate when it presents some of its subjects as clever tricksters rather than accomplished authorities. Philostratus' narrator is free to admit that being a sophist could occasionally demand some chutzpah, and he seems to admire a certain 'cleverness with which [they were] wont to dazzle [their] hearers' (1.25.7.537, on Polemo: σοφίαν, ἣ ἐς τὴν ἐκπληξιν ἐχρήσατο). Yet he is also aware that this sort of behaviour can be used to cover up deficiencies in knowledge. Thus, he disapproves when Philagrus resorts to effrontery to hush up a mistake he had committed (2.8.1.578):

ἐκφύλου δὲ αὐτὸν ῥήματος ὡς ἐν ὀργῇ διαφυγόντος λαβόμενος ὁ Ἀμφικλῆς, καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἐτύγχανε τῶν Ἡρώδου γνωρίμων τὴν πρώτην φερόμενος, 'παρὰ τίνι τῶν ἐλλογίμων' ἔφη 'τοῦτο εἴρηται,' καὶ ὁς 'παρὰ Φιλάγρῳ' ἔφη.

An outlandish word escaped him in the heat of his anger, and Amphicles pounced on it, for he was in fact the most distinguished of the pupils of Herodes, and asked: 'In what classic is that word to be found?' 'In Philagrus', was the answer.

Other ancient documents besides Philostratus' account suggest that the social prestige of sophistic declamations attracted quite a few charlatans who were either unable or unwilling to spend much effort on mastering the finer details of Atticist oratory and tried to delude the crowds with a few ready-made 'Attic' phrases. It is especially Lucian in his satiric writings (such as *A professor of public speaking*, *The sham sophist* or *The mistaken critic*) who gives a vivid account of these machinations, and we have no reason to doubt that this was a social reality, not a rhetorical topos.

Philostratus' narrator finds himself in a particularly vulnerable position. Even if we leave aside the question whether his account would be declaimed orally and thus fall into the same category as a sophistic performance, it seems clear that Philostratus' work derives its interest and authority from these actual performances. By making the heroes of the Second Sophistic (instead of the great personalities of Greek history) his main characters, the narrator could be described as bringing the sophistic game to perfection, as claiming to be the summit of the entire sophistic movement starting with ancestors like Gorgias and Aeschines. His project could be described as 'secondary sophistic'; like Lucian, he is a 'sophist's sophist', to

<sup>40</sup> See Schmitz (1997) 126–7.

use Anderson's felicitous term.<sup>41</sup> This derivative nature of his work raises the stakes for the implied author: if a sophist's performance failed, this could be attributed to a number of reasons, and the performer could move on and be successful in another city, in front of a different audience, on another occasion. If Philostratus' implied author fails, his entire text will fall. His persona sits uneasily between the acknowledged master and the humbug, and it could be argued that by leaving its readers in the dark as to his criteria, the text makes us constantly wonder whether we should trust this man or decry him.

I would argue that it is impossible to fix the text's intent: is Philostratus trying to present a masterly narrator whose awe-inspiring authority should impress and intimidate his readers, or is he depicting an 'unreliable narrator' whose cunning and shamelessness cannot hide the fact that he is incompetent? Is the text (relatively) stable, or does it deconstruct its own principles? Again, the fact that it is impossible to decide this alternative should not be attributed to carelessness on Philostratus' side; instead, it is an integral part of the way the implied author structures his account and conceals his hand. We can imagine that we have revealed his deceit and thus claim to be his superiors, or we can succumb to his authority, but we will never be on a par with him. This could again be described as a re-enactment of sophistic performances, where the same tension between success and failure could always be felt, and where the authority of Greek culture was being renewed all the time. Like a declamation, Philostratus' text is an ongoing process, not a stable entity. This 'sophistic' quality may help explain why so many modern readers find it bewildering.

<sup>41</sup> Anderson (1982)

## CHAPTER 5

# *Philostratus and the symbolic roles of the sophist and philosopher\**

Harry Sidebottom

## INTRODUCTION

In the Greek cultural renaissance of the first three centuries AD, usually termed the Second Sophistic, the two leading intellectual roles were that of sophist and philosopher. There seems to be a modern consensus that in that age a man could combine the roles:<sup>1</sup> that he could present himself as a sophistic-philosopher or a philosophic-sophist.<sup>2</sup> Some ancient evidence can be seen as supporting this view. Above all Philostratus, in *Lives of the sophists*, says that he has written not only of the sophists proper but also of some philosophers who, because of their eloquence, were ranked as sophists (VS 479; 484). Plutarch in *Symptotic questions* wrote 'when I gave a dinner party in Chaeronea, for Diogenianus of Pergamum, there was some discussion on types of entertainment, and we had considerable difficulty in beating off the attack of a long-bearded sophist of the Stoic persuasion (σοφιστὴν ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς), who brought up Plato's indictment of people who listen to flute-girls over their wine because they are unable to entertain themselves by conversation' (*Mor.* 710b).

This chapter argues that the modern view is in some senses correct, but in others misconceived. Sophists and philosophers tended to come from the same class, have much the same education, could teach each other and performed broadly the same functions (although, as we shall see, some functions were considered more typical of one role than the other). Philosophers could exhibit oratorical skills and sophists deploy philosophical acumen. That all this, however, did not add up to a position where the two roles could be combined becomes clear when their

\* In this chapter, Lucian's works are abbreviated thus: *Nigrinus* = *Nigr.*; *Demonax* = *Demon.*; *Philosophies for sale* = *Vit. Auct.*; *The fisherman* = *Pisc.*; *Peregrinus* = *Pereg.*; *The runaway* = *Fug.*; *The eunuch* = *Eun.*; *Double indictment* = *Bis acc.*

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Bowersock (1969) 11–15. Multiplication of references would be tedious; see Hahn (1989) esp. 46–53; 86–99 for an unorthodox view.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Gleason (1995), 131.

self-presentation, especially in terms of non-verbal communication, as seen in the synoptic version of literature such as Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* and *On Apollonius*, the works of Lucian and the discourses of Epictetus mediated via Arrian, is analysed using the methodology of symbolism adopted (and adapted) from cultural anthropology.

The self-presentation of each role was constructed via a nexus of symbols which were in conscious contrast to the other. While the boundaries could be transgressed or blurred, such strategies involved risks. A brief examination of portrait sculpture shows that the intellectual self-presentation in marble of the Greek elite, although subtly different from that in life or literature, does not vitiate the separateness of the roles. No one could present himself unambiguously as both sophist and philosopher because the separate and opposed symbolic roles had been created by the Greek elite to represent itself, its ideals and their inherent tensions. The roles of sophist and philosopher played out and thus ameliorated tensions between Greek elite ideas of rustic virtue and urban civilisation, and between Greek *paideia* and Roman power.

#### SOPHIST, RHETOR AND PHILOSOPHER

No word has a hidden essence which is its 'meaning'. What words signify can be seen only by a study of their relationship with their near synonyms and opposites: in the case of sophist, the most problematic and fluid of the intellectual labels of the Second Sophistic, with rhetor and philosopher.<sup>3</sup>

First we can remove one aspect of the word sophist by thinking of its 'literal' (in the sense of etymological) meaning. 'Sophist' as a prudent man of knowledge persists. Diogenes Laertius is aware that σοφός and σοφιστής were once synonymous,<sup>4</sup> and the 'seven sages' of antiquity were normally known as 'sophists'.<sup>5</sup> Consideration of the 'literal' meanings will get us no further.

Rhetors during the early empire were first and foremost teachers of eloquence, sometimes to a destined practical end (law or politics). They could also be declaimers or forensic orators.<sup>6</sup> As such, the role of rhetor can be combined with that of sophist. Dionysius of Miletus is found on an

<sup>3</sup> Some definitions of sophist are in: Stanton (1973) 308; Bowie (1974) 169 and (1982) 39; Swain (1996) 97–100.

<sup>4</sup> 1.2; cf. Apollonius' joke at *VA* 4.29.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. Plut. *Mor.* 385de; Dio *Or.* 10.26; Stanton (1973) 352, n. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Jones (1978) 9; Bowie (1982) 39.

inscription as 'rhetor and sophist'.<sup>7</sup> They could be not merely linked but assumed to be the same thing. The emperor Pius can be seen using them interchangeably, both as teachers.<sup>8</sup> The implication is that the 'meaning' of both words is the same, it is the 'value' which differs. The functions of the two types are much the same, the differences not being in the taking of fees or modern notions of professionalism.

Philostratus claimed that among the ancients the title of sophist went to rhetors of surpassing eloquence (*VS* 484). Probably towards the end of the second century AD the hostile witness Sextus Empiricus tells us that sophists have studied rhetoric to the utmost point.<sup>9</sup> It was presumptuous of the teenager Hermogenes to call himself a rhetor. Presumably it would have been worse if he had called himself a sophist, even though others did (Philostr. *VS* 577). The distinction seems to be one of virtuosity.

The guests of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* include one Alceidus of Alexandria, a musician, and one Amoebus, a harp-player and singer. These men need not be included in the dinner because they could speak fluently on their subject.<sup>10</sup> Instead they are 'sophists' because of the virtuosity with which they practise their art. The notion that virtuosity leads to *sophia* is said to go back to Homer.<sup>11</sup> In Hesiod, Linus, a singer, is versed in all kinds of *sophia* (fr. 306 Merkelbach and West). Sophists, then, can be seen as rhetors especially skilled in their art.

Philosophers had from Plato on attacked sophists. The age of the Second Sophistic was no exception. Plutarch, for example, condemned them.<sup>12</sup> Rhetors could also be sneered at (e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 59f), yet usually in connection with sophists.<sup>13</sup> For one could combine rhetor and philosopher: one T. Flavius Glaucus was thus vaunted.<sup>14</sup> Thus although sophists can be seen as a subgroup of rhetors, distinguished by their art, they cannot, outside Philostratus' work, be combined with philosophers in the way that rhetors can without acquiring derogatory overtones, although a sophist can be a 'good thing to be' elsewhere.<sup>15</sup> When sophist and philosopher are brought into proximity the semantic motivation comes from the latter and the former becomes downgraded. Plutarch, in the passage quoted above, when calling the long-bearded man from the Stoa a sophist did not indicate that

<sup>7</sup> *IK* XVII.1 [*Ieph* VII.1], no. 3047; also Hordeonius Lollianus of Ephesus on *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4211.

<sup>8</sup> *Dig.* 27.1.6.2; cf. Philostr. *VS* 614, where sophists spend most of their time teaching boys.

<sup>9</sup> *Adv. Math.* 2.18; he goes on to say that they are mute in public scrutiny!

<sup>10</sup> Thus Bowersock (1969) 15. <sup>11</sup> Guthrie (1969) 27.

<sup>12</sup> Stanton (1973) 353. <sup>13</sup> Plut. *Mor.* 100d; 131a; 543ef.

<sup>14</sup> Oliver (1949) 246-8; cf. Bowie (1989). Epictetus objected to men trying to be both, *IV*.15.12.

<sup>15</sup> Philostr. *VS* 532; 605; *FD* iii.4, no. 474; *IK* XV (*Ieph* V), no. 1548; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3813; see above, n. 7.



he was both philosopher and sophist, but that Plutarch considered him a charlatan philosopher.

#### SOPHIST AND PHILOSOPHER OVERLAPS

No intellectual could claim without risking ridicule to be both sophist and philosopher, but their social background, the education system and the general intellectual background ensured that in significant ways many were. The vast majority of sophists and philosophers were from the urban elite of the Greek world (the Cynics being an exception).<sup>16</sup> A male elite child went to school at the age of seven or so, then to a *grammaticus* at about eleven, and lastly to a rhetor at fifteen, where he might stay until twenty or older.<sup>17</sup> Under the rhetor one studied oratory. It was after school that, if one was going to, one should turn to philosophy. Galen deplored those who tried to master philosophy without proper schooling (XIX.9 Kühn). Fronto was right to say that philosophy does not ignore rhetoric (*On eloquence* I.18 = II.70 Haines). The educational system ensured that almost all, except some Cynics, who came to philosophy had been trained in oratory. To deny any skill with words was, as we will see, one of the symbols of a philosopher, but in practice most were highly skilled. Some even went to the schools of sophists (e.g. Philostr. *VS* 591). Equally given the dominance of philosophy, and especially – for the literate – Stoic philosophy, in the thought world of the early empire, it need come as no surprise if a man exhibiting all the symbols of a sophist can produce passages of a philosophical appearance.<sup>18</sup> The usefulness for an orator of philosophical maxims was recognised (e.g. Dio, *Or.* 18.7), and some sophists went to be pupils of philosophers (e.g. Philostr. *VS* 536).

Aelius Aristides outlined what he considered were the functions of the sophist (although rejecting the name for himself) by attacking what he claimed philosophers did not do: adorn festivals, honour the gods, advise citizens, comfort the distressed, settle civic discord and educate the young.<sup>19</sup> Aristides attempted to fulfil all those functions. *Panathenaic oration* (*Or.* 1) shows him adorning a festival. In the prose-hymns he honours the gods (*Or.* 37–46). *Oration* 24 shows him advising a city against *stasis*, and *Oration* 31 shows him comforting the distressed on the death of one of his pupils.

<sup>16</sup> Bowie (1982) 30 with app. I 54–5.

<sup>17</sup> On education, see Marrou (1965); Bonner (1977); Morgan (1998).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. MacMullen (1966) 46–94. <sup>19</sup> *Or.* 3.672 Lenz and Behr; Bowersock (1969) 11.

The briefest glance at the works of Dio Chrysostom shows that he, as a philosopher, tried to fulfil all the functions which Aristides accused philosophers of ignoring. In *Oration* 12 he attempts to adorn a festival and honour the gods. *Oration* 30 shows Dio comforting the bereaved father of a young man whom he had educated. *Orations* 31–35 offer advice to cities, and *Orations* 38–41 attempt to induce *homonoia* where before there was *stasis*.

The functions of the two roles overlapped. Some functions seem to have been seen as equally the province of either role (e.g. advising cities, or settling civic discord), although the strategies employed to achieve them could vary (e.g. in educating the young). As the philosopher was thought to deal with general issues, while the sophist dealt with specific ones (Dio, *Or.* 22; Philostr. *VS* 481) the strategies employed could always be considered to vary. But some functions were seen as primarily the prerogative of one of the roles. Although philosophers did give lectures, their role was seen by society as one of 'Socratic dialogue'.<sup>20</sup> Thus advice to individuals, including consolation, could be seen as primarily a philosophic activity, while declaiming would be considered as primarily a sophistic activity. Philosophers did, in their own eyes at least, adorn festivals by making speeches at them. But such speeches were exterior to the structure of festivals. At some festivals the speeches of orators were part of the 'official programme'.<sup>21</sup> Adorning festivals could be seen as primarily sophistic activity.

#### SYMBOLISM

So far, the modern view of the sophist and philosopher appears to have much validity. The vast majority of sophists and philosophers (many Cynics being exceptions) had a shared social and intellectual background, much the same education, operated in a nuanced overlap of functions and possessed certain transferable skills. But when we turn to their self-presentation within the symbolic roles created by Greek society, the modern view fails.

Many ancient historians rely on a realist epistemology. Society is seen as no more than a collection of individuals, and the ultimate test of validity is an individual's conscious inner belief. Society as an entity is regarded as primary for anthropology, as it has been more recently for modern history.<sup>22</sup> Now influenced by analytical anthropology, especially by the

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Hahn (1989) 67–77.

<sup>21</sup> Philostr. *VS* 533; Price (1984b) 90.

<sup>22</sup> Burke (1980) 529.

work of Clifford Geertz,<sup>23</sup> ancient historians have begun to use techniques, and above all symbolism, for studying society as a whole.<sup>24</sup>

There is, however, a danger here of falling into what can be called the 'Golden Bough syndrome'. Just as classicists were getting into J. G. Frazer's monumental work, anthropologists were turning against it.<sup>25</sup> Some 'interdisciplinary time lag' is inevitable. As students of the ancient world began to use Geertz, anthropologists began to attack Geertz's work.<sup>26</sup> One level of attack is as a researcher. For example in Geertz's book *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (1980), he has been accused of 'backward extrapolation' and viewing his subject through a 'fog' of colonialism.<sup>27</sup> This, of course, is of little importance to students of the ancient world. But it is linked to conceptual attacks.<sup>28</sup> Geertz has been seen to marginalise power and force:<sup>29</sup> in his analyses government always ends up by attraction rather than compulsion.

Despite these attacks, Geertz's work can still provide inspirational models for us, provided that we do not leave power and force out of our account. This chapter argues that the symbolic roles of sophist and philosopher were created partly in response to the power of the Roman empire and the force which underpinned it. The subjects of this chapter did not leave it out of account. Favorinus is said to have told friends who criticised him for giving way to Hadrian on a point of language, 'you give me bad advice, my friends, in not allowing me to believe that the man who has thirty legions is more learned than everybody else' (*SHA. Had.* 15.13).

In symbolic analyses culture is seen as 'an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols' (Geertz (1973) 89). Symbols are 'tangible formulations of notions' – or, put another way, 'extrinsic sources of information' (*ibid.* 91–2). Sets of symbols, often embedded in ritual or ceremonial, evoke sets of dispositions in individuals, which can result in actions (*ibid.* 91–123). Symbolic knowledge takes over when semantic

<sup>23</sup> See Geertz (1973), (1977), (1980); also Douglas (1973), (1975); Sperber (1975), (1979) Moore (1978).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. Gordon (1980); Price (1980), (1984a), (1984b); Wallace-Hadrill (1982), (2008); Millar (1984); Gleason (1995).

<sup>25</sup> Cf. Kirk (1974) 15–16; Humphreys (1978) 1–2.

<sup>26</sup> As a non-anthropologist, one can suspect that Geertz's irreverent attitude towards the greats of anthropology might have contributed to the backlash. His engaging outlook can be found most clearly in *Works and Lives* (1988), which, of course, post-dates the attacks.

<sup>27</sup> Nordholt (1981); Christie (1986).

<sup>28</sup> E.g. Asad (1983). Geertz, unsurprisingly, has defended himself (1995), (2000). For largely positive assessments of Geertz, see Ortner (1999) and Inglis (2000).

<sup>29</sup> This seems to be a common enough failing in anthropology. Witness anthropologists' almost complete non-engagement with Huxley-High's *Primitive Warfare* (1949 [1971]), on which see Keegan (1993) 89–92. or Kelsey's account of the difficulties encountered when putting forward research proposals to study the anthropology of warfare (1996) vii–x.

(or analytic) and encyclopaedic (or synthetic) knowledge fail (Price (1984a) 8). Symbols cause evocation when rational criteria fail, when one cannot or does not want to (for whatever reason) fully understand something (Moore (1978) 7–8).

Symbolism is as real as 'inner belief, and there is no reason to privilege the latter. The virtue of this sort of view of what are usually called 'mental traits' or, if the Cartesianism is unavowed, 'psychological forces' (both unobjectionable enough terms in themselves) is that it gets them out of any dim and inaccessible realm of private sensation into that same well-lit world of observables in which reside the brittleness of glass, the inflammability of paper, and . . . the dampness of England.'<sup>30</sup>

To put it all in other words, the words of Fergus Millar, 'if we do look, we can only see what is there to see' ((1984) 39). 'In looking at rituals, cults, public expression of gratitude, the erection of statues, and all those other visible forms of symbolism, we should not ask what people really felt, because we do not know (and in almost all cases cannot in principal know)' (*ibid.* 39–40). Instead, we should study 'the logic of their public actions, and of their words, artefacts and building'.<sup>31</sup>

A man could not claim to be both sophist and philosopher. The symbols of the two were mutually exclusive, being defined in contrast to each other. The symbolic representation of each role was constructed not only in terms of characteristic statements (Millar's 'words'), but also via characteristic appearance, gestures and behaviour (Millar's 'public actions'). The latter constitute forms of non-verbal communication. In the nineteenth century some aspects of non-verbal communication in the ancient world such as dress and gesture were studied.<sup>32</sup> But in the twentieth century these fields were largely ignored until the 1980s when, under the (direct or indirect) influence of anthropology, scholarship again focused on them.<sup>33</sup>

#### SYMBOLIC ROLE OF THE SOPHIST

The symbolic role of the sophist can be reconstructed from the biographies of the sophists by Philostratus, and Lucian's satire on false sophists who

<sup>30</sup> Geertz (1973) 95–6; cf. Lateiner (1995) 8.

<sup>31</sup> Millar (1984) 39–40. This approach allows us to avoid a literalist understanding of others' statements, while equally avoiding a reinterpetative one, Moore (1978) 12–13. 'For when an avowal is "meant", it does not nevertheless follow that it has a fully determinate meaning or meanings', *ibid.* 14.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. Hope (1812 [1962]); Sirl (1890).

<sup>33</sup> E.g. Lateiner (1987), (1995); Maier-Eichhorn (1989); Bremmer (1991); Graf (1991); Aldrete (1999); Böhme-Schönberger (1999); Croom (2000). An often-cited source of inspiration is Marcel Mauss' famous lecture of 1934 on 'Techniques of the Body' (1973).

wished to reap the rewards of being a sophist without putting up with the hard work necessary to become one: the *Rhetorum praeceptor*. The latter has often been seen as a specific attack on an individual sophist, usually identified as Pollux of Naucratis, the author of the extant *Onomasticon*.<sup>34</sup> This may well be true. But the work proceeds as a general attack upon a recognisable type until the very end (section 24 out of 26) when the focus is suddenly narrowed to an individual (Pollux, someone else, or an invented paradigm of awfulness?). As C. P. Jones has said, Lucian treats the Teacher as the representative of a whole class.<sup>35</sup> That the main thrust of Lucian's satire is directed against a general type shows that we are dealing with symbols constructed by society, not merely the individual predilections of Philostratus' subjects, or even the interests of Philostratus alone.<sup>36</sup>

Sophists were much concerned with appearance. When Alexander the 'Clay-Plato' came before the Athenians they 'thought his appearance and costume so exquisite that before he spoke a word a low buzz of approval went round as a tribute to his perfect elegance' (Philostr. *VS* 572). The dress of the sophist tended to be colourful, ostentatious and expensive.<sup>37</sup> Lucian gives satirical advice on the topic: 'let your clothing be gaily-coloured, or else white, a fabric of Tarentine manufacture, so that your body will show through; and wear either high Attic sandals of the kind that women wear, with many slits, or else Sicyonian boots, trimmed with strips of white felt' (*Rh. pr.* 15). The elaborate hairstyles of sophists were remarked on.<sup>38</sup> A sophist's beard was notably well cared for and curled.<sup>39</sup> The sophist could be fastidiously clean and wear perfume.<sup>40</sup> Some sophists practised depilation.<sup>41</sup> Hippodromus, defending the sophists of his day, compared them to peacocks.<sup>42</sup> The symbolic role of the sophist called for a display of outward beauty. 'Hermocrates was aided by the beauty of his personal appearance, and he was indeed possessed of great charm and looked like a statue with the bloom of early youth' (Philostr. *VS* 612). 'It is true that

<sup>34</sup> E.g. Jones (1986) 107–8.

<sup>35</sup> Jones (1986) 106; cf. Anderson (1976) 68–71, the teacher is Pollux but the picture is deliberately vague; and Hall (1981) 273–8, the teacher is Pollux but the description draws on details from other sophists.

<sup>36</sup> The evidence of Philostratus and Lucian, of course, can be paralleled in other writers such as Dio Chrysostom on sophists, Sidebottom (1990) 23–5. It is worth pointing out that literary mentions of non-verbal communication will only ever give us a synoptic version of a very complex reality, cf. Lateiner (1987) 84.

<sup>37</sup> Philostr. *VS* 587; 600–1; 623; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 16; cf. Epict. 3.3.35.

<sup>38</sup> Philostr. *VS* 571; 623; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 11; 12. <sup>39</sup> Philostr. *VS* 570; cf. Luc. *Rh. pr.* 23.

<sup>40</sup> Philostr. *VS* 570; 571, clean; Philostr. *VS* 571; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 11, perfume.

<sup>41</sup> Philostr. *VS* 536; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 23.

<sup>42</sup> Philostr. *VS* 617; cf. 577 on Hermogenes 'moulting' when his skills left him; also cf. Luc. *Nigr.* 13.

Alexander had a godlike appearance, and was conspicuous for his beauty and charm. For his beard was curly and of moderate length, his eyes large and melting, his nose well shaped, his teeth very white, his fingers long and slender, and well fitted to hold the reins of eloquence' (Philostr. *VS* 570; cf. *Luc. Rh. pr.* 20).

Characteristic patterns of behaviour were symbols of the sophist. In keeping with their statements expressing their own worth (see below), sophists should speak only in a spatial setting worthy of them. A temple was acceptable (Philostr. *VS* 583; 618), as were a theatre (*ibid.* 571; 579), an assembly (*ibid.* 519), a *bouleuterion* (*ibid.* 579), or any setting for an imperial audience.<sup>43</sup> Philostratus, however, chides a sophist called Aurelius with being 'the sort of person who would declaim even in low wine shops while the drinking was going on' (Philostr. *VS* 627).

Characteristic facial expressions, gestures and vocal effects were also interpreted as symbols of a sophist. In general the face of the sophist tended to be cheerful and confident,<sup>44</sup> not unserious,<sup>45</sup> with a steady, fixed, or keen gaze,<sup>46</sup> although varied according to the theme of his declamation.<sup>47</sup> The gestures of a sophist were extravagant.<sup>48</sup>

Before declaiming, a sophist might withdraw from the sight of his audience to meditate on his theme (Philostr. *VS* 519; 537), or he might do so in full view (Philostr. *VS* 572; 619). Such melodramatic inaction would have been a tense time. It might never stop. There was a real danger of sophists breaking down when speaking (Philostr. *VS* 565; 580; 614). At this juncture the sophist would hope his face radiated the looked-for cheerful, serious intensity. There was a strong possibility it might not, and the sophist might begin to sweat profusely (Philostr. *VS* 541). At the start

<sup>43</sup> Philostr. *VS* 625, military headquarters; *ibid.* 623, courtroom. Philostratus mentions that both Gorgias and Hippias spoke at Olympia, *VS* 493; 495–6, the latter also from the altar at Delphi. In the Second Sophistic he points to Herodes and Hippodromus at Olympia, *VS* 556; 617.

<sup>44</sup> Philostr. *VS* 519; 537; 572; 618; *Luc. Rh. pr.* 12. Philagrus was notable for looking gloomy, as Demosthenes was said to have done, *VS* 580–1.

<sup>45</sup> Philostr. *VS* 528. <sup>46</sup> Philostr. *VS* 528; 533; 583; 619. <sup>47</sup> Philostr. *VS* 574.

<sup>48</sup> For the Second Sophistic we lack a source comparable to Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, which has been used brilliantly by Aldrete (1999) to analyse the meanings of the gestures employed by first-century AD Latin orators. It would be unwise to transfer his findings to Greek sophists of the first three centuries AD. The same gestures sometimes do occur, but they tend to have different meanings. For example stamping the ground showed agitation for a Latin orator (Aldrete (1999) 15; citing *Cic. Brutus* 278), but when Polemo did it Philostratus compares it to horses in Homer (e.g. *Il.* 6.507) who are exhibiting confidence and strength. Again swaying from side to side evokes driving off flies or standing in a rocking boat (Aldrete (1999) 68; citing *Cic. Brutus* 216–17) or the levity and arrogance of barbarians (Philostr. *VS* 520). Also thigh-slapping (Aldrete (1999) 13; cf. Philostr. *VS* 519; *Luc. Rh. pr.* 19). It is noteworthy that Quintilian was opposed to the use of Greek gestures, Graf (1991) 51.

of his declamation or at a subsequent point the sophist might leap to his feet (Philostr. *VS* 537; 572; 619). During the performance he might stride about,<sup>49</sup> sway from side to side (Philostr. *VS* 520), stamp his feet (*ibid.* 537), slap his thigh (*ibid.*, 519; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 19), and toss his head about (Philostr. *VS* 529; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 12). All gestures were intended to be fitting to the sophist's theme (cf. Aldrete (1999) 17). There seem to have been two strategies for the end of the performance: sweating heavily to show the effort expended (Luc. *Rh. pr.* 20), or smiling calmly to show that it had not been an effort at all (Philostr. *VS* 537).

We should assume that sophists' non-verbal communication by gesture was readily interpretable by their contemporaries. Philostratus said that Polemo stood next to Dionysius 'like a wrestler' (*VS* 525–6), and cowered before Timocrates 'like a boy before his teacher' (*VS* 536). Gestures mattered to sophists. Polemo expelled an actor from the Olympic games at Smyrna for 'a solecism of his hand' (*VS* 541–2).

The way a sophist used his voice was important. The effect aimed for was melodious and rhythmic (Philostr. *VS* 589). Scopelian compared himself to a nightingale, a not uncommon comparison for a sophist (Philostr. *VS* 516; cf. 589). Some sophists of the 'Asianist' persuasion went as far as singing,<sup>50</sup> although an 'Atticist' could object.<sup>51</sup>

The characteristic behaviour which symbolised a sophist extended through his lifestyle. The sophists came from the urban elite of the empire.<sup>52</sup> For members of that class there were strong social pressures to conspicuously advertise their wealth, and above all to give benefactions.<sup>53</sup> The sophists, although at times able to claim immunities thanks to their calling (see below), can thus be seen as merely fulfilling their role as members of the urban elite when they give benefactions and advertise their wealth.<sup>54</sup> But they seem to have paraded their wealth with an extreme flamboyance which, even if it did not go beyond the norm, was intended to mark them as among the richest and most successful of the elite. The homes of at least some sophists were ostentatious. Philiscus had two houses in Athens as well as one at the Piraeus and one at Eleusis, all full of imported luxuries (Philostr. *VS* 603; cf. 606). On Regilla's death, Herodes used Lesbian marble to turn his entire house black, although he is said to have abandoned this when teased by one Lucius (Philostr. *VS* 556–7). When travelling,

<sup>49</sup> Philostr. *VS* 623; cf. 587; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 11; 19; 20. <sup>50</sup> Philostr. *VS* 589; 620; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 15; 19.

<sup>51</sup> Philostr. *VS* 513; see the classic works of Schmid (1887–97) on Atticism and Wilamowitz-Moellendorf (1900) on Asianism; and now Swain, (1996) 21–7, on Roman origins of the terms of debate.

<sup>52</sup> See Bowie (1982). <sup>53</sup> E.g. Jones (1978) 20. <sup>54</sup> Bowersock (1969) 27–8.

sophists could go beyond the bounds of ostentation thought by some to be suitable:

Though Polemo excited the disapproval of many, because when he travelled he was followed by a long train of baggage animals and many horses, many slaves and many different brands of dogs for various kinds of hunting, while he himself would ride in a chariot from Phrygia or Gaul, with silver-mounted bridles, by all this he acquired glory for Smyrna. (Philostr. *VS* 534; cf. 587; 603).

The large retinues which followed the sophists point to an explanation of their keener than usual impulse to ostentatious advertisement of their wealth. As well as slaves (Philostr. *VS* 603) and attendants (Luc. *Rh. pr.* 15), the retinues consisted of fee-paying pupils (Philostr. *VS* 591). The numbers of pupils, their often distant origins, their high-class status and their wealth were sources of pride to the sophist.<sup>55</sup> Large numbers of noisy pupils exalted a sophist.<sup>56</sup> While a good sophist would remit fees to poor young men of talent,<sup>57</sup> would lose fees by refusing to teach hopeless cases (Philostr. *VS* 591), and would generally be easy to deal with about fees (Philostr. *VS* 600), the fees charged were usually high.<sup>58</sup> There was an expectation that the career of a sophist should be richly rewarded.<sup>59</sup> Polemo refused to take 150,000 drachmae offered him as a 'lecture fee' by Herodes. When Herodes added another 100,000 drachmae 'Polemo took the money without the least hesitation, as though he were receiving only what was his due' (Philostr. *VS* 538).

The symbolic representation of the sophist was also constructed in characteristic statements. Sophists made high intellectual claims for themselves. Philostratus admitted that it was a profession which could encourage arrogance (*VS* 616); and, while self-praise could win sophists renown,<sup>60</sup> avoidance of it could also be considered a good thing (*ibid.*). Sophists claimed for themselves knowledge,<sup>61</sup> skill with words<sup>62</sup> and the ability to impart true education.<sup>63</sup> Their self-proclaimed virtuosity allowed the sophists to demand attention and to openly court admiration.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Philostr. *VS* 518; 520; 526; 531; 562; 613.

<sup>56</sup> Philostr. *VS* 583; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 21, noisy; Philostr. *VS* 567-8, exalt.

<sup>57</sup> Philostr. *VS* 519; 527; 605-6. <sup>58</sup> Philostr. *VS* 521; 533; 535; 604; 615; cf. 525; 574; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 9.

<sup>59</sup> Philostr. *VS* 589; 611; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 2; 6. <sup>60</sup> Philostr. *VS* 535; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 21.

<sup>61</sup> Philostr. *VS* 535; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 13; so had 'ancient sophists', Philostr. *VS* 480.

<sup>62</sup> Philostr. *VS* 563; 564; 586-7; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 13.

<sup>63</sup> Philostr. *VS* 617. Philosophers also claimed the ability to impart true education (see below). The evocation caused by such a statement would be shaped by the other elements of the symbolic representation which a sophist or philosopher presented.

<sup>64</sup> Attention: Philostr. *VS* 571; 578; admiration: Philostr. *VS* 617; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 1; 6; 13; 25; cf. Philostr. *VS* 525; 564; 578.



An audience's reaction to the symbolic representation could be favourable. After the death of the sophist Hadrian some Athenians 'would try to imitate his accent, others his walk, or the elegance of his attire' (Philostr. *VS* 587). Pliny the Younger was greatly impressed by Isaeus. His speech was deeply implanted by delivery, expression, appearance and gestures (*Ep.* 2.3.9). We have already seen Philostratus' description (*VS* 572) of the effect the appearance of Alexander the 'Clay-Plato' had on the Athenians. It was not always so with every audience.

The listeners had a far from passive role in the ritual of a sophist's declamation. They could be asked for the theme or an opinion (Philostr. *VS* 572). They might make gestures of approval: nod amiably (*ibid.* 540), raise a hand and shake back the folds of their cloak (*ibid.* 626), shout and applaud (*ibid.* 582-3). But they might react in negative ways: assume a supercilious expression and withhold accustomed applause (Philostr. *VS* 614), interject (*ibid.* 540; 571; 623) or join in (*ibid.* 579), hiss and jeer (*ibid.* 604), fall asleep (*ibid.* 578), or try to leave (Luc. *Rh. pr.* 19). Lucian gives guidance on how to behave badly in an audience: arrive late,<sup>65</sup> utter ill-timed praise when everyone else is silent, don't make gestures of assent, don't rise (or at least only once or twice), and wear a faint smile to show you are dissatisfied (*Rh. pr.* 22). Unsurprisingly sophists might ensure they had pupils, friends, or even debtors in the audience (Philostr. *VS* 540; 582-3; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 20).

An excessive parading of the symbols of the sophist could evoke a negative response: 'effeminate'.<sup>66</sup> When Alexander the 'Clay-Plato' appeared before Pius he overdid the claim for attention. To his shout 'pay attention to me, Caesar', the emperor replied 'I am paying attention, and I know you well. You are the fellow who is always arranging his hair, cleaning his teeth and polishing his nails, and always smells of perfume' (Philostr. *VS* 571; cf. 622-3; Luc. *Rh. pr.* 11; 23). It took different levels of symbolism to provoke the response 'effeminate' in different audiences, but the danger was ever-present. The sophist Isaeus played down the symbolic garb in the nexus of symbols which constructed the image 'sophist' (Philostr. *VS* 513). It was a dangerous tactic, for costume was an important symbol without

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Herodes wearing travel clothes to show his late arrival is not an act of disrespect to Alexander, Philostr. *VS* 572.

<sup>66</sup> See Gleason (1995). This chapter does not engage closely with Gleason's work. While we are looking at roughly the same sets of symbols, if with emphasis on different sources, for Gleason they construct self-presentation in terms of masculinity, for me they do so in terms of the roles of sophist and philosopher, urbane and rustic, and Greek and Roman. The two analyses are not incompatible.

which the other symbols of the sophist were liable to provoke unlooked-for responses.

The sophist Hippodromus the Thessalian was somewhat rustic in appearance (Philostr. *VS* 618–19, from which the following anecdote is drawn). When he had travelled to Smyrna he came to a temple, outside which were attendants and slaves holding satchels of books. Hippodromus assumed someone of importance was holding their school inside. When Hippodromus went in, Megistias, the sophist whose school it was, mistook him for a parent or attendant. Asked what he wanted Hippodromus requested an exchange of garments, 'for he was wearing a travelling cloak, while Megistias wore a gown suitable for public speaking', and then announced that he was going to declaim. Megistias thought him mad, but then, seeing his intelligent look, changed clothes with him. After Megistias had suggested a theme, Hippodromus sat for a moment on the lecturer's chair then leapt to his feet. Megistias again thought he was insane, 'that these signs of proficiency were mere delirium', but when Hippodromus had got into the theme Megistias recognised him as a sophist.

The anecdote shows the importance of dress in the nexus of symbols of the sophist. Lacking the right dress, Hippodromus is not recognised for what he is, while the symbol of the keen glance reassures, other perfectly acceptable symbols (the implicit claim to skill in announcing that he will declaim, and the leaping from the chair) evoke the response that Hippodromus is insane. It is significant that even the unconventional sophist recognised the suitability of presenting as complete a set of sophistic symbols as possible, and wished to change costume. It was Megistias' judgement of Hippodromus' virtuosity which finally won the visiting sophist recognition. The criterion for an individual's conscious decision to award a man the title of sophist was always an estimate of virtuosity. But, as the anecdote shows, it was recognised that the symbolic representation of a man shaped that decision. Philostratus dismissed some men usually held to be sophists from his account because they were not worthy of the name (*VS* 605). Yet when discussing Apollonius of Athens he stated 'in beauty of enunciation he fell short of Heracleides . . . but in dignity, magnificence, and in his attire he showed himself superior to many of his predecessors' (*VS* 600–1).

It also was recognised that the evocations caused by the symbolic representation of the sophist could replace a judgement on virtuosity as the validation of the status of sophist. Philostratus said of Marcus of Byzantium 'his beard and hair were always unkempt, and hence most people thought that he looked too boorish to be a learned man. And this was the impression

that Polemo had'.<sup>67</sup> Polemo changed his mind when he encountered the skill of Marcus. A man would hold that it was always other people, and usually the masses, who judged by symbolic representation alone and thus opened the door to the 'false sophists' mocked by Lucian. 'The rank and file are already struck dumb with admiration of your appearance, your diction, your gait, your pacing back and forth, your intoning, your sandals . . . when they see your sweat and your labouring breath they cannot fail to believe that you are a terrible opponent in debate' (Luc. *Rh. pr.* 20).

#### SOPHIST AND PHILOSOPHER OPPOSITION

The symbols of the sophist and philosopher were constructed in contrast to each other. Aristocles of Pergamon started his career as a Peripatetic philosopher and then became a sophist. 'Now, as long as he was a student of philosophy he was slovenly in appearance, unkempt and squalid in his dress, but now [when he became a sophist] he began to be fastidious, discarded his slovenly ways, and admitted into his house all the pleasures that are afforded by the lyre, the flute, and the singing voice, as though they had come begging to his doors' (Philostr. *VS* 567). The philosopher Timocrates, who was very hirsute, attacked the sophist Scopelian for his depilation, and the youth of Smyrna took sides (Philostr. *VS* 536). In one of his discourses Epictetus, who characterises himself as 'somehow or other condemned to wear a grey beard and rough cloak' and to be approached as a philosopher (3.1.24), is visited by a student of rhetoric whose hair is elaborately dressed and appearance highly embellished (3.1.1). Epictetus imagines the youth complaining, when he had come to his senses, that Epictetus 'could at least have set my hair right, he could have stripped me of my ornaments, he could have stopped me plucking my hairs' (Epict. 3.1.14).

#### SYMBOLIC ROLE OF THE PHILOSOPHER

The symbolic representation of the philosopher can be reconstructed using the Discourses of Epictetus as mediated to us by Arrian, *On Apollonius* by Philostratus, and some of Lucian's works (*Nigrinus*;<sup>68</sup> *Demonax*;

<sup>67</sup> *VS* 529. It is nice to note, with Gleason (1995) 48, Polemo's failure here as a physiognomist.

<sup>68</sup> That *Nigrinus* may have been a real Roman philosopher (Hall (1981) 157-64; Jones (1986) 25; Swain (1996) 316) does not vitiate the use of this work in a reconstruction of the symbolism of the Greek philosopher, since Lucian presents him in terms of Greek culture.

*Philosophies for sale; The Fisherman; Peregrinus; Runaway slaves; The eunuch; Double indictment*).<sup>69</sup>

The blurring of the boundaries between the schools of philosophy under the empire is often exaggerated by modern scholars.<sup>70</sup> Apollonius of Tyana is said to have made his choice from the distinct philosophies on offer (Philostr. *VA* 6.11). Lucian described it as normal to hear the numerous sects arguing (*Eun.* 3). Distinctions continued, and were considered important. The distinctions were reflected in variations within the construction of the representation of the philosopher, and inferences were drawn from the variations (e.g. Luc. *Demon.* 5). A problem could thus be proposed in the use of Epictetus' evidence. Epictetus was a Stoic who wrote about the Cynic philosopher.<sup>71</sup> But the problem is more apparent than real. The Stoics claimed the Cynic fathers as antecedents in order to link themselves to Socrates (Zeno—Crates—Diogenes—Antisthenes—Socrates), and thus had a vested interest in harmonising Cynic teaching (to which they were in fact indebted) with their own.<sup>72</sup> A Stoic could thus admire a 'cynic ideal' (suitably bowdlerised to fit Stoicism), while disliking contemporary Cynics.<sup>73</sup> Thus when Epictetus talks of the symbolism suitable for an 'ideal Cynic' it can be taken to be acceptable for a Stoic, but when he talks of 'false Cynics' he is referring to the degenerate contemporary Cynics.<sup>74</sup>

Doubts might also be raised about the use of Philostratus' historical novel about Apollonius to reconstruct the reality of the symbolic role of the philosopher in general. Philostratus, however, attempted to give philosophical respectability to his wonder-working hero. The more prosaic details of the philosopher's life had to ring true in order that his audience's acceptance of the *magus*-like elements could be facilitated. The picture of the philosopher which was put forward thus was not only one acceptable to the sophist Philostratus, but also intended to be acceptable to the audience's preconceptions about a philosopher.

"Come then, Epictetus, shave off your beard". If I am a philosopher, I answer, "I will not shave it off" (Epict. 1.11.29). The symbolic representation of the philosopher, like that of the sophist, was constructed in terms of characteristic appearance, behaviour and statements. The historian Herodian criticised the emperor Macrinus (5.2.3). As part of his imitation of Marcus Aurelius he wasted his time cultivating his beard, walking at a slow

<sup>69</sup> For a somewhat different picture of the role of the philosopher, see Hahn (1989).

<sup>70</sup> On this, see Hahn (1989) 109–18.

<sup>71</sup> Brunt (1977) offers an accessible introduction to Epictetus, Bonhöffer (1996) provides a philosophical analysis.

<sup>72</sup> Moles (1983) 104. <sup>73</sup> Dudley (1937) 198. <sup>74</sup> Cf. Moles (1983) 122–3.

pace and speaking slowly, laboriously and inaudibly. A beard, usually a long beard, was a symbol of a philosopher of any school.<sup>75</sup> Uncoiffed hair was another, usually it was left to grow long (Epict. 3.1.42; 4.8.5; 34). Long hair was *de rigueur* for a Cynic or a Pythagorean (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 2; Philostr. *VA* 1.8; 32; 7.34), but Stoics were known to have their hair cropped (Luc. *Fug.* 27; *Vit. Auct.* 20; *Bis acc.* 20; Juv. 2.14–15). Philosophers emphatically did not approve of depilation.<sup>76</sup>

The dress of the good philosopher was plain, although Platonists and followers of the school of Cyrene could be mocked for colourful clothing.<sup>77</sup> The symbolic garb of the philosopher was a rough cloak distinctively worn on its own: usually a τριβών or τριβώνιον,<sup>78</sup> occasionally the ἱμάτιον,<sup>79</sup> or the ἔξομῖς.<sup>80</sup> The cloak was very important in the self-presentation of the philosopher. Apollonius asked a young philosopher what he owned of the magnificent preparations for his wedding. The answer was just his τριβώνιον. Which was just as well, for all the rest were phantasies conjured up by the vampire the young man was about to marry.<sup>81</sup>

The cloak was generally considered the dress of the philosopher, not of the Cynic alone,<sup>82</sup> although the latter was a possible evocation (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 8; Juv. 13.122). A Pythagorean would wear a τριβώνιον (Philostr. *VA* 2.20) of linen (*ibid.* 1.8; 32), but would accept other linen robes (*ibid.* 2.40). A Pythagorean should wear shoes of bark (*ibid.* 6.11), or no shoes at all (*ibid.* 1.8). A staff could be thought of as the 'staff of Diogenes' (Epict. 3.22.57) and thus be a specifically Cynic symbol,<sup>83</sup> but it seems to have been appropriate to symbolise 'a philosopher' as well as 'a Cynic'.<sup>84</sup> Similarly a wallet could be called 'the wallet of Crates' (Luc. *Fug.* 20; *Vit. Auct.* 7) and be a Cynic symbol,<sup>85</sup> yet could be sported by a Stoic (Luc. *Fug.* 27) and be considered part of the garb of philosophers in general.<sup>86</sup> Cynics were considered to go to extremes in appearance and to be dirty.<sup>87</sup> Others did not approve. Lucian considered it a good thing that the moderate Cynic

<sup>75</sup> Epict. 1.16.9–14; 2.23.21; Luc. *Eun.* 8; *Demon.* 13; *Pisc.* 11; 12; 31; 37; 41; 42; 46; Philostr. *VA* 7.34. On the appearance of philosophers, cf. Hahn (1989) 33–9.

<sup>76</sup> Epict. 3.1.27–35; 42; 22.10; Philostr. *VA* 4.27; cf. Luc. *Fug.* 33; *Demon.* 50; Juv. 2.11–12.

<sup>77</sup> Luc. *Nigr.* 26–7, plain; *Pisc.* 49–50, Platonists; *Vit. Auct.* 12, Cyrenaics.

<sup>78</sup> Epict. 3.1.24; 22.47; 4.8.5; 34; Luc. *Fug.* 14; 27; *Bis acc.* 1.6; *Pisc.* 11.

<sup>79</sup> Epict. 1.29.22; Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 15. <sup>80</sup> Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 7; cf. Philostr. *VA* 3.15.

<sup>81</sup> Philostr. *VA* 4.25; cf. Epict. 3.22.47, on τριβώνιον as a sole material possession.

<sup>82</sup> Thus von Arnim (1898) 435–6; Kindstrand (1978) 380; contra Jones (1978) 301.

<sup>83</sup> Epict. 3.22.10; 50; Luc. *Peregr.* 15; *Vit. Auct.* 7; *Pisc.* 44; cf. *Pisc.* 1.24.

<sup>84</sup> Luc. *Fug.* 14, speaking of all philosophers, before going on to single out Cynics; cf. *Pisc.* 1; 42; *Bis acc.* 6.

<sup>85</sup> Epict. 3.22.10; Luc. *Peregr.* 15; 36; cf. *Pisc.* 44–5.

<sup>86</sup> Luc. *Fug.* 14; *Bis acc.* 6; *Pisc.* 1; 42; Philostr. *VA* 6.11.

<sup>87</sup> Extremes: Luc. *Demon.* 19; *Peregr.* 36; *Vit. Auct.* 8. Dirt: Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 7; *Peregr.* 15; 36; cf. *Vit. Auct.* 1, where all philosophers need a wash.

Demonax put on a clean cloak to go to his trial (*Demon.* 11). Epictetus accepted that the 'ideal Cynic' would be mistaken for a beggar, but he ought not to be dirty, 'even his squalor ought to be cleanly and attractive' (3.22.89). A philosopher should not drive the multitude from philosophy by being dirty (Epict. 4.11.1–36; esp. 22).

Characteristic patterns of behaviour were also part of the symbolism of a philosopher (Luc. *Fug.* 4). He should exercise control in food and drink,<sup>88</sup> although this, obviously, would not apply to an Epicurean (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 19). A Pythagorean should abstain from meat and wine (Philostr. *VA* 1.8; 32; Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 6).

The good philosopher had an earnest face, but it was kindly, and he did not parade asceticism (Luc. *Nigr.* 26–7; *Demon.* 6; 9; cf. Epict. *Ench.* 47.1). Nigrinus scorned those who thought that they could train philosophers with cold baths, whips and knives (Luc. *Nigr.* 27). The philosopher's countenance and walk should be composed.<sup>89</sup> Philosophers were accused of being abusive (Luc. *Fug.* 14). They were considered to look solemn (Luc. *Pisc.* 12), sour (*ibid.* 37), gloomy (*ibid.*; *Bis acc.* 11), or proud (Epict. 3.8.24–6; Luc. *Nigr.* 5.). Stoics were accused of being miserable, taciturn and importuning (Luc. *Bis acc.* 20; *Vit. Auct.* 20; Juv. 2.8–9; 14–15). Pythagoreans were known to go in for times of silence (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 3; cf. *Demon.* 14). When Apollonius did, 'he would maintain a conversation by the expression of his eyes, by gestures of his hand, and nodding his head' (Philostr. *VA* 1.14). Cynics were often said to parade their asceticism, and to be sullen, abusive and shouting (Luc. *Pereg.* 3; 17; 18; *Vit. Auct.* 7; 10; 11; Epict. 3.22.10; 50). They also could be said to be ostentatiously silent (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 10). Not altogether surprisingly, the good philosopher had to be prepared to be despised, reviled and beaten up (Epict. 3.15.2; 21.5; 22.53–9; 100; *Ench.* 22; Luc. *Pisc.* 27; *Demon.* 16).

The philosopher should shun admiration and glory,<sup>90</sup> and not seek crowds (Epict. 3.23.19; 27). The Cynics were an exception in openly attempting to attract crowds by ostentatious and anti-social means,<sup>91</sup> thus laying themselves open to a charge of a love of notoriety (Luc. *Peregr.* 1; 20; 22). Philosophers should not take fees (Epict. 4.1.139; Luc. *Nigr.* 25; *Fug.* 14; *Eun.* 3; *Pisc.* 12; 34; 35–6; 41; 46; Philostr. *VA* 2.39; 8.21) or material gifts (Philostr. *VA* 1.40; 5.38; 8.7.11–12), although Stoics were said (not without

<sup>88</sup> Epict. 3.15.10; 4.8.10; *Ench.* 29.6; Luc. *Nigr.* 24; 26–7; *Pisc.* 24.

<sup>89</sup> Epict. 4.8.17; Her. 5.3.2; cf. Bremmer (1991) 18–20, who argues that a slow walk was a Greek elite ideal from classical Athens to late antiquity.

<sup>90</sup> Epict. 1.27.1–4; 26–9; 3.23.19; 24; 4.8.24; Luc. *Demon.* 48; cf. *Pisc.* 31.

<sup>91</sup> Attracting crowds: Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 10; Moles (1981) 108–9. Anti-social means: Epict. 3.23.80; Luc. *Peregr.* 6; 17; *Vit. Auct.* 10.

reason) to justify it philosophically (Luc. *Vit. Auct.* 24), Peripatetics to justify wealth (Luc. *Eun.* 3) and Cynics to beg (Epict. 3.22.10).

The dissonance between philosophers' claims to do people good, yet to know nothing (see below), as well as the contrast with the image of the sophist, led to an ambiguity in their attitude to pupils. While it was accepted that philosophers did have pupils (Philostr. *VA* 8.12; Luc. *Nigr.* 28), large numbers, especially if wanted for the sake of reputation, the philosopher should claim to avoid (Epict. 4.8.24; Luc. *Demon.* 31).

The philosopher should concern himself with improving his audience, not giving an impression of beautiful-sounding speech.<sup>92</sup> Excessive Atticism should be avoided (Philostr. *VA* 1.17). Display oratory also should be avoided, and philosophers who 'sang' were considered the worst of all (Epict. 3.23.33–8; Luc. *Nigr.* 25).

The good philosopher was not trying to give his audience pleasure. Lucian describes the effect of listening to Nigrinus: confusion, giddiness, sweating, stumbling, voice failing and bursting into tears, for philosophy is like a wound (Luc. *Nigr.* 35; cf. 37). Epictetus thought that a philosopher's audience ought to leave in pain (3.23.30).

The symbolic representation of the philosopher was partly constructed by characteristic, usually self-deprecating, statements (or the avoidance of the opposite, i.e. statements of his own worth). The philosopher should not proclaim himself as such,<sup>93</sup> nor should he vaunt his knowledge,<sup>94</sup> or his skill with words.<sup>95</sup> The philosopher, however, should claim for himself commitment to freedom and free speech.<sup>96</sup>

The evocative power of the symbolism of the philosopher was recognised. A philosopher should be judged as such not by the symbols he parades but by his devotion to philosophy (Epict. 4.8.5–12). Yet there was an expectation that a philosopher should possess the appropriate symbols. Apollonius put on a *τριβώνιον* to philosophise (Philostr. *VA* 8.19; cf. 4.20). Epictetus tells us (4.8.19) that when Euphrates first took up philosophy and lived with philosophers people wondered why he did not have the externals of a philosopher. It was held to be easy for fake philosophers to take on the externals (Luc. *Fug.* 4, 14; *Peregr.* 24; *Pisc.* 31). Having 'stolen' the symbols (Philostr. *VA* 2.29) and 'disguised' themselves (Epict. 2.19.28), they

<sup>92</sup> Epict. 2.1.34–6; 17.34–6; 3.23.1–38 esp. 33–8; Philostr. *VA* 8.6.

<sup>93</sup> Epict. 3.21.23; 4.1.113; *Ench.* 46.1; Luc. *Nigr.* 24; cf. *Pisc.* 41.

<sup>94</sup> Epict. 3.21.7; 23.26; *Ench.* 46.2; 49. Apollonius can because he has already asked all possible questions, Philostr. *VA* 1.17.

<sup>95</sup> Epict. 3.23.23. <sup>96</sup> Luc. *Demon.* 3; 50; *Vit. Auct.* 8; *Peregr.* 18; Philostr. *VA* 7.1–2.

appeared plausible as philosophers (Luc. *Fug.* 13). It was not easy to tell true philosophers from false (Luc. *Fug.* 15). An Egyptian waterman judges Apollonius and his pupils to be philosophers because of their cloaks and books (Philostr. *VA* 6.3). He, of course, is right. But fakes could be more convincing than the real thing (Luc. *Pisc.* 42). There were thought to be a lot of them. Lucian wrote 'it would be easier for a man to fall over in a boat without hitting a plank than for your eye to miss a philosopher wherever it looks' (*Bis acc.* 6). People judged a man to be a philosopher on external symbolism alone (Epict. 4.8.10). So effective was the symbolic representation believed to be in gaining the status of philosopher for fakes, that it was thought they were bringing true philosophers into disrepute (Epict. 4.8.5-14; Luc. *Pisc.* 32), and leading the masses to despise philosophy altogether (Luc. *Fug.* 21; *Pisc.* 31).

In many ways, fake Cynics were the biggest threat of all.<sup>97</sup> Because cynicism stressed divine or innate education, not conventional *paideia*, it was thought easier for members of the non-elite to pass themselves off as real philosophers in this sect. They posed a threat to the social order, as the non-elite won fame and wealth (Luc. *Fug.* 12-17; 28; 33), and a sexual threat to the elite as 'fake Cynics' stole their women (Luc. *Fug.* 18; 30-3) and pretty boys (Luc. *Peregr.* 43).

#### PHILOSOPHERS AND SOPHISTS IN PORTRAIT SCULPTURE

The evidence of portrait sculpture is seldom employed in discussions of intellectual self-presentation in the Second Sophistic.<sup>98</sup> The work of R. R. R. Smith has shown that we should not interpret private portrait sculpture of this period by the 'biographical fallacy'. We should avoid the sort of reasoning whereby if a sculpture looks a bit like a sophist to us it must be of a sophist, or if the subject of a sculpture is known to us to have been a philosopher we automatically interpret its iconography as philosophic.<sup>99</sup> Again, Smith has shown that we should not limit our interpretation to the 'Period Face', as expounded by Paul Zanker. We should not just arrange private portraits in a linear sequence because of their similarities to the portraits of emperors.<sup>100</sup> Instead we are dealing with issues of cultural choice in self-presentation.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. Hahn (1989) 172-81.

<sup>98</sup> E.g. Hahn (1989) makes no mention of it. There are useful surveys of relevant material in Walker (1991); Zanker (1995) and Smith (1998).

<sup>99</sup> Smith (1998) esp. 60-1. <sup>100</sup> Smith (1998) 58-9.



The most popular self-presentation in portrait sculpture for the Greek elite in the period of the Second Sophistic is that of the Greek *himation* and tunic. This comes in two styles: the 'Coan' style, where the *himation* is slung low across the body (figure 5.1), and the so-called 'Aeschines' (or 'Arm-sling') style, where the right arm is wrapped in the cloak (figure 5.2). The latter comes to be the dominant style.<sup>101</sup> Among other minority choices (in a toga, or a cuirass) is the *himation* and no tunic (figures 5.3 and 5.4). From what has been said above, in the Second Sophistic the *himation* and no tunic probably would have evoked 'philosopher' or 'philosophic ideals' not just 'intellectual'. Which, of course, need not mean that the subject was a philosopher. This is shown by philosophers and philosophic iconography appearing on children's sarcophagi in this period.<sup>102</sup>

While we can recognise a philosopher type in the portrait sculpture of the Second Sophistic, if we remove the 'biographical fallacy',<sup>103</sup> the same cannot be said of the sophist. This does not undermine either the importance of the figure of the sophist in the Second Sophistic, or the importance of the symbolic contrast between sophist and philosopher. Though the imagery of the philosopher was popular in other places (e.g. sarcophagi), the philosopher type was a minority choice in portrait sculpture. It also tended to be 'watered down', being mainly confined to busts not full-length statues. The philosopher type, of course, was a pre-existing type, going back, at least, to the third century BC.<sup>104</sup> Despite similarities to the past (see below), the symbolic role of the sophist was new in the Second Sophistic. But the sophists wanted to be seen as playing an old cultural role.<sup>105</sup> Thus possible reasons emerge for the lack of a sophist type choice in Greek elite self-presentation in portrait sculpture. To make a new type would shatter the link to the past. Self-styling as a sophist worked in reality and in literature, but it might look odd in art: evoking the effeminate, or the bizarre. Pre-existing portrait types fitted the sophist fairly closely. The image of a sophist was a member of the Greek urban elite taken to an extreme, and the self-presentation of sophists was mutable.<sup>106</sup> Thus the *himation* and tunic (especially with books?) was close enough to the sophist to negate the need for a new form to represent sophists and sophistic ideals.

<sup>101</sup> Smith (1998) 66. <sup>102</sup> Ewald (1999).

<sup>103</sup> E.g. figure 5.1 has been identified as the sophist Damianus by Inan and Rosenbaum (1968), no. 151.

<sup>104</sup> Zanker (1995) esp. 90–133.

<sup>105</sup> See Philostratus' attempts to link the 'Ancient' and 'Second' Sophistics in VS 480–4; 490–513 esp. 507; 510–11.

<sup>106</sup> Isacus played down the symbols, while Alexander 'Clay-Plato' played them up.



Figure 5.1 A statue from the East Baths at Ephesus of c. AD 150, possibly of Vedius Antoninus



Figure 5.2 A statue from the front of the *bouleuterion* at Aphrodisias of c. AD 200 of L. Claudius Diogenes Domestinus.



Figure 5.3 A statue from Gortyn of c. AD 150–200

That links to the past in marble self-styling were more important than contemporary flamboyance is borne out by portraits of Herodes Atticus (figure 5.5). Two methodological problems must be kept in mind. First is the general problem we have deciding when hair in sculpture is artful or unartful. Lucian talks of the apparent disorder of hair being enhanced by art (*Pisc.* 12). Second is the specific circumstance that Herodes is the only sophist of the Second Sophistic for whom we have a certain portrait, and he may not be typical. It seems from Philostratus' biography that Herodes did not play up non-verbal communication in his self-presentation.<sup>107</sup> Herodes wears a *himation* and tunic. His lined brow and down-turned head recall

<sup>107</sup> Herodes has been used above in the 'symbolic role of the sophist' only for his house. It could be that Philostratus has chosen to leave out Herodes' symbolic self-presentation as a sophist to concentrate on other, and for Philostratus' view of Herodes more important, things.



Figure 5.3 (cont.)

portrait types of Demosthenes.<sup>108</sup> His hair and beard recall portraits of Lysias and Aeschines.<sup>109</sup> Aeschines could be claimed as the founder of the Second Sophistic (Philostr. *VS* 507). When Herodes was called one of the ten Attic orators, he replied: 'at any rate I am better than Andocides' (Philostr. *VS* 564–5). In marble self-styling Herodes chose to play up his links to the ancient sophistic rather than his place in the second.

#### THE CREATION OF THE SYMBOLIC ROLES OF THE SOPHIST AND PHILOSOPHER BY THE GREEK ELITE

As the functions of the sophist and philosopher broadly overlapped, it raises the question why Greek society in the first three centuries AD created two

<sup>108</sup> Demosthenes was considered to have looked gloomy in contrast to the sophists of the Second Sophistic, Philostr. *VS* 508.

<sup>109</sup> Smith (1998) 78–9.



Figure 5.4 A statue from Cyrene, second century AD

distinct roles. Looked at from another angle, what gave these intellectuals the confidence to behave as they did? What gave them the self-confidence to act as mediators between rich and poor in cities, between cities and outside institutions (other cities and rulers), between man and the gods, between the living and the dead, or to pass on the values of society? Whence came the prestige which induced others to accept them as mediators? In short, where did the roles acquire the necessary symbolic capital?

{a}

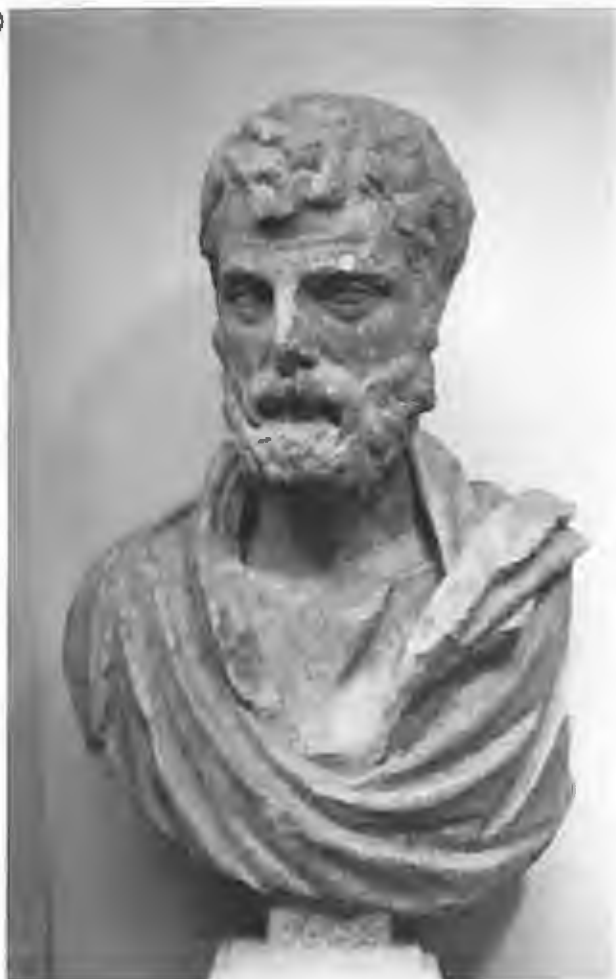


Figure 5.5a A portrait bust of Herodes Atticus, mid-second century AD, from Cephisia, Athens

The two images can be seen to represent two contrasted ideals of society. The image of the sophist was the ultimate in what was *asteios*, literally 'urban' but by extension 'fine', 'refined', 'good' in general, recalling but going beyond our 'urbane'.<sup>110</sup> The rituals of being a sophist placed him

<sup>110</sup> MacMullen (1974) 58. Philostratus often calls the sayings of sophists 'urbane', VS 511; 521; 526; 541; 564; 611; 614; cf. 535.

(b)



Figure 5.5b A portrait bust of Herodes Atticus, mid-second century AD, from Probalinthus near Marathon

firmly in the context of the city: at a civic building, surrounded by a crowd, flaunting his wealth, power and education. When he travelled, his huge retinue took the town into the country as he moved from city to city. The exceptions prove the rule; it was remarkable to find a sophist who looked faintly rustic.<sup>111</sup> The symbolism of the sophist stood for the ideal of life in a city, a 'civilised' life in general.

If the image of the sophist represented the ultimate insider, a member of the urban elite only more so, the philosopher evoked the outsider. The philosopher could be mistaken for a beggar, and beggars, although present

<sup>111</sup> Philostr. *VS* 529, Marcus; 599, Onomarchus 'like Marcus'; 618, Hippodromus.



in large numbers in all cities, were seen as rootless strangers (e.g. Philostr. *VA* 4.10). Uncoiffed hair and beard marked the philosopher as free from artificial social niceties, free to adorn the inner man not the outer, living a life according to nature.<sup>112</sup> They pointed to Homeric heroes (e.g. Dio, *Or.* 36.17), or to the rustics from whom true philosophy could be gained (e.g. Dio, *Or.* 30.25), men of antique virtue, living close to the gods, as yet uncorrupted by the effects of civilised life. The rustic/primitive constituted a real, intellectual and emotional ideal, but not a practical goal. No second-century AD philosopher wanted to go and live in a cave.

The sophist and the philosopher representing, and to some extent diffusing, the tensions between Greek elite ideals of the urban and rustic life can go some way to explaining the construction of the two contrasted symbolic roles. But it cannot explain when the roles were constructed. There is no reason to think that ideas of rustic and urban living were more problematic in the first three centuries AD than, say, they had been in the last three centuries BC. Various other, not mutually exclusive, possible explanations can be offered.

While the analysis of the symbolic representation of the sophist and philosopher offered above is synchronic, the model of two constructed sets of symbols should not be seen as static. The influence of famous individuals could always change or reinforce the symbolism.<sup>113</sup> The career of the famous convert from sophist to philosopher, Dio Chrysostom, may have hardened the contrast between the two sets of symbols.<sup>114</sup>

Two other factors which seem to have contributed were inspired, quite unintentionally, by Rome. General trends in society shaped individuals' uses of, and responses to, the symbolism. The image of the sophist and that of the philosopher were each the negative to the other's photograph. A change in the status of one would affect the other. If a group is defined in large part by contrast from another group, it is important that the other group be of a comparable status in order to make the contrast worthwhile: i.e. there would be little benefit to be had from a contrast with an obscure or low-status group – if obscure, the point of the contrast may not be apparent, and if low status the contrast would not serve to gain any symbolic capital. The rise of philosophy under the Flavians, to some extent attributable to its acting as a source of moral underpinning for Roman elite individuals

<sup>112</sup> E.g. Epict. 1.16.9–21; cf. Barthes (1973) 47–9.

<sup>113</sup> E.g. Athenians copying the accent, walk and clothes of the sophist Hadrian, Philostr. *VS* 587.

<sup>114</sup> The father of Dio's late pupil Charidemus is made by Dio to say that his son imitated Dio's taciturnity and gait, Dio, *Or.* 30.4. The conversion of Dio is controversial, Sidebottom (1990) 1–53.

whose links with the Republic were diminishing,<sup>115</sup> would paradoxically have increased the status of sophists. Equally the rise of sophists under the empire, partly to be attributed to the efficiency of rhetoric in getting Greek elite individuals preferment in the empire, would have aided the rise of philosophers.

The separateness of the roles also was encapsulated in Roman legislation, which in turn would cause a hardening of the division. Under the second triumvirate teachers, sophists and doctors had been given immunities.<sup>116</sup> Vespasian ruled in favour of doctors, rhetors and teachers.<sup>117</sup> Philosophers, it seems, were not exempt. Hadrian gave or re-affirmed Nerva's or Trajan's wide immunities to, among others, rhetors and philosophers (*Dig.* 27.1.6.8). Pius limited the numbers who could claim it, and in doing so removed philosophers (*ibid.*, 27.1.6.2). To ask for exemption proved that one could not be a philosopher.<sup>118</sup>

Vespasian set up chairs of Greek and Latin rhetoric at Rome.<sup>119</sup> Marcus set up chairs at Athens: one of rhetoric, and four (Platonist, Peripatetic, Epicurean and Stoic) of philosophy.<sup>120</sup> The philosophers received 60,000 sesterces per annum (*Tat. Adv. Gr.* 19), the rhetors 40,000 (*Philostr. VS* 566). These posts were both cause and effect of the differentiation of the categories.

The symbolic capital of the roles ultimately came from Greek *paideia* and the Greek past. As we have seen, the philosopher of the Second Sophistic saw himself in direct succession from the philosophers of classical Greece. His role was believed to have been created then. His symbolism pointed even further back to Homeric heroes. In reality, the sophists of the Second Sophistic were a new phenomenon. Philostratus, however, was at pains to construct a direct link, despite the lack of evidence, between the new breed of sophists of the Second Sophistic and those of the First (*VS* 481). In this, it appears he was not unusual. Dio Chrysostom also subscribed to the notion that they were as one, 'voicing the same criticisms and using the same terminology of both'.<sup>121</sup> The

<sup>115</sup> MacMullen (1966) esp. 46–94; Brunt (1975) 7–39.

<sup>116</sup> *IEph* VII.2 4101: see now *SEG* XXXI 952.

<sup>117</sup> *CD* 53.60 = *Zon.* 10.30; McCrum-Woodhead, no. 458.

<sup>118</sup> *Dig.* 27.1.6.7; cf. *Philostr. VS* 490. On the complex problems of immunities and cultural figures, see Bowersock (1969) 30–41; Griffin (1971) 279–80; Hadot (1984) 221–30; Hahn (1989) 100–8; Millar (1992) 491–506. For the current argument it matters only that sophists and philosophers were distinguished from each other.

<sup>119</sup> *Suet., Vesp.* 18; Millar (1992) 502–3. <sup>120</sup> Marrou (1965) 436.

<sup>121</sup> Moles (1978) 89.

symbols of the roles were exclusively rooted in the Greek past, most obviously in their clothing.<sup>122</sup>

As representatives of ideas about urban and rural life, and the Greek past and *paideia* general within Greek elite society, philosophers and sophists could stand outside the boundaries of a particular city. Any city could call on them to mediate, and they could offer to help any city. At a different level, an individual sophist or philosopher could advance his capacity to advise a specific city because he was not from that city and was thus likely to be impartial. A sophist who was an outsider in the sense of not being a citizen of the city he advised would, however, as a sophist remain a representative of the ideal of the ultimate insider of city life. As a philosopher addressing his own city, and thus in a sense an insider, he would remain as a philosopher a representative of the ideal of the outsider.<sup>123</sup> In the sophist and philosopher the Greeks had created powerful roles of a supra-*polis* nature.

Apart from the gods there was only one other truly important supra-*polis* power: the Roman empire. In Lucian's possibly fictionalised account the good and the great of the Roman world turn to Demonax for advice (e.g. *Demon.* 50). In what most would consider an account at a level of more certain historical reality, they do the same with Epictetus (e.g. *Epict.* 3.4). In the view of the Greeks their philosophers advised good Roman emperors, and confronted and confounded bad ones.<sup>124</sup> The sophist Polemo famously treated cities as his inferiors, emperors as not his superiors and the gods as his equals, as well as throwing a Roman governor out of his house (*Philostr.* *VS* 534–5.). In the philosopher and the sophist Greek elite culture had created supra-*polis* symbolic roles, and drawing on its core values had invested them with enough symbolic capital to operate on a level with Roman power.

An analysis on these lines fits well with modern scholarship which relates the cultural phenomenon of the Second Sophistic to the realities of power.<sup>125</sup> It fits well with the view, first proposed by Ewen Bowie, that the Second Sophistic was largely caused by the distressing contrast between

<sup>122</sup> There are thus dangers within the ancient evidence for a student of either sophistic of perceiving it through the distorting lens of the other. Hippias' self-embroidered cloak (Plato, *Hipp. Minor* 368bc) may have a superficial similarity to the finery of an Alexander 'Clay-Plato', but to contemporaries of each they signified very different things. Hippias' cloak stood for the sophist of the First Sophistic as 'renaissance man': a man who knew all could teach all and could do all, including make his own clothes. The finery of Alexander stood for the sophist of the Second Sophistic: a man whose virtuosity with words brought him huge rewards.

<sup>123</sup> Cf. the rather different conclusions, based on Dio Chrysostom, of Hahn (1989) 156–71.

<sup>124</sup> Sidebottom (1996) 453–6. <sup>125</sup> Swain (1996); Schmitz (1997).

the Greek elite's social and economic prosperity at home and its political dependence abroad.<sup>126</sup>

A Greek intellectual pulling on the philosopher's cloak or the finery of a sophist, and thus tapping into vital ideas about the Greek past and *paideia*, was turning his back on the Roman toga (to which most were entitled), and asserting that his primary identity was not Roman or Graeco-Roman, but Greek.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Bowie (1974); Swain (1996); very briefly Sidebottom (1998) 2.824–6.

<sup>127</sup> On this line, the survival under the Roman empire of other groups' traditional clothing, much evidence for which was collected by Böhme-Schönberger (1999), raises the sort of questions about clothing and identity often discussed by anthropologists, e.g. Tarlo (1997). Space here also precludes a discussion of the questions raised by Latin intellectuals taking on the symbols of Greek intellectuals. What was a 'Latin sophist?' (Harrison (2000)).

*The deaths of the sophists: Philostratean biography  
and elite funerary practices\**

Joseph L. Rife

Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* (VS) has long been recognised as a major source for the intellectual life of the Greek world under Roman rule.<sup>1</sup> It is also of prime importance for the social history of the eastern cities. In his gallery of portraits comprising the 'Second Sophistic' (1.481) from Nicetes of Smyrna in the late first century to Aspasia of Ravenna in the early third, Philostratus outlines each subject's training, personal and professional relationships, accomplishments and rhetorical skills. The discontinuous events and impressions in VS reveal piece by piece the broader social structure of the urban centres of Greece and Asia Minor during the era. This structure was a shifting network of relationships defined by hierarchical status, group affiliation and ideology that influenced behaviour and circumscribed identity on the levels of the civic community, the region and the empire.

The social identity of the sophists has been a matter of debate. Philostratus presents a group of intellectual celebrities who embodied the literary tastes of their day while enjoying exceptional access to political power. In his classic study, Bowersock argued that the sophists were promoted to equestrian and senatorial posts, granted immunities, and allowed access to the emperor because of their education and rhetorical prowess.<sup>2</sup> Bowie responded that, apart from those appointed as Greek correspondents (*ab epistulis graecis*), the men who achieved the uppermost echelons did so

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<sup>1</sup> The bibliography is extensive: e.g. Schmid (1887–97) IV: 1–576; Reardon (1971) 115–18; Russell (1983); Anderson (1986) 23–120, (1989), (1993); Gleason (1995); Swain (1996) 396–400; Schmitz (1997); Billault (2000) 72–82; Korenjak (2000); Whitmarsh (2001a) 188–90, 238–44; Civatelli (2002).

<sup>2</sup> Bowersock (1969); cf. Rohde (1974 [1914]) 310–23; Reardon (1971) 115, n. 58.

foremost as wealthy and influential Greek aristocrats, not as practising sophists.<sup>3</sup> Brunt further asserted that the supposed renaissance in Greek oratory never happened, and that Philostratus' Second Sophistic was an 'illusion', a 'fallacy', a 'bubble'.<sup>4</sup> This dialogue raises two fundamental questions: what was the social identity of the sophists, and how accurate was Philostratus' image of that identity?

This study will examine the social world of the sophists and their modes of self-presentation through the lens of funerary practices. It will also evaluate the limitations of Philostratus' portrait of sophistic burial by setting his biographies against the archaeological record. His sophists, I argue, comprised a professional subclass of a broader, more diverse educated elite, and often they did not reach (or even approach) the pinnacles of power. Like their elite contemporaries, they expressed a coherent social identity through materials, spaces, behaviour and language. Philostratus' concentration on an idiosyncratic collection of personalities masks the uniformity of their identities with non-sophists and distorts the representation of their relative status.<sup>5</sup>

#### A SOCIAL HISTORY OF DEATH AND BURIAL IN THE SECOND SOPHISTIC

As in most cultures, death in the Greek cities of the empire was an opportunity for the negotiation of social structure.<sup>6</sup> The ordered behaviours at the end of a life, the treatment of the corpse and the commemoration of the dead were influenced by relations and boundaries within the community. The funeral was a moment when the living expressed, contested, or erased the deceased's identity. Apart from accidental or catastrophic circumstances, the shape of funerary ritual was dually determined by the express wishes of the deceased and by the expectations and emotional needs of the mourners. The identity of the deceased could survive in collective memory through periodic celebrations or permanent installations.

<sup>3</sup> Bowie (1982); cf. Flinterman (1995) 34–5; Arafat (1996) 200; Schmitz (1997) 50–63.

<sup>4</sup> Brunt (1994).

<sup>5</sup> Philostratus' portrait of death in his other major biographical project, *Life of Apollonius* (8.30), is beyond the scope of the present study. The earthly end of the semi-divine Cappadocian sage and thaumaturge contradicts the model for elite death outlined in VS and prefigures a new paradigm of transcendent death that would pervade Christian experience.

<sup>6</sup> Morris (1992) 1–30, McHugh (1999) 12–17 and Parker Pearson (1999) 1–20 are useful introductions to the anthropological and archaeological theory underpinning this discussion.

The study of death and burial is a potentially fruitful approach to understanding Greek urban society during the empire because the region and period furnish abundant sources.<sup>7</sup> Thousands of graves have been excavated in Greece and Asia Minor, but methodological sophistication and comprehensive publication have been sorely lacking. On the other hand, the traditional emphasis on monumental architecture in classical archaeology has fostered the careful documentation of several prominent tombs of known aristocrats. Myriad epitaphs attest to both the thriving epigraphic industry and the desire to communicate identity in monumental writing. Numerous authors portray funerals or address the social significance of death, and a few, such as Lucian and the novelists, employ death as a recurrent theme.

This mortuary evidence can be located within a social world that is well known from a voluminous textual record. The cities were dominated by a bouletic class of old, wealthy families in a constant struggle for distinctions. They occupied the civic and religious posts and exercised unusual economic, social and political influence in local and supra-local relationships. In return for the considerable benefits of their prestige, such as honours, immunities and appointments, the elite were obliged to support the community with benefactions of all kinds (public buildings, cash disbursements, provision of luxury goods). The ideal elite persona was marked by a good education, a deep appreciation for classical culture and the espousal of certain moral virtues, such as piety and self-control.

The urban aristocrat expressed his position in society through various channels. His comportment, dress, speech and possessions could serve as external symbols of his wealth, kinship, offices and aesthetic and moral orientation. He was known as the owner of city and country houses with slaves, and he was portrayed in statues lining the streets and markets. The various elements of his identity were also expressed through funerary practices. Physical remains, inscriptions and literature relating to burial can elucidate the relative importance of such factors in constructing the identity of a particular segment of society. They can also reveal what modes of identification were chosen, and how susceptible these were to creative variation.

<sup>7</sup> Rife (1999) is a first attempt to write a social history of death in Greek society under the empire. The papers in Pearce *et al.* (2000) represent advances in the socio-historical and contextual study of burial in the Roman provinces, though they mostly cover the West.

## FUNERARY EPISODES IN PHILOSTRATEAN BIOGRAPHY

*VS* vividly depicts death and burial among what will emerge as a professional subset of the urban elite.<sup>8</sup> Eleven of the forty-one biographies whose subjects represent the 'Second Sophistic' describe a specific burial locale and/or associated funerary activities.<sup>9</sup> Although sparse in detail, these episodes usually include the age at death and the site of interment, sometimes the interment's form, rarely the nature of the funeral. Except for unusual cases, such as Herodes and Polemo, the biographer did not record the full ritual process of burial, which his readers could easily imagine from their own experience.

Philostratus included these scenes not to flaunt his local knowledge, as one commentator has suggested,<sup>10</sup> but because they were integral to his biographical programme. Ancient biographies often related the ultimate acts, burial preferences, or final words of the subject to encapsulate his personality.<sup>11</sup> Unlike Plutarch's *Parallel lives*, which portrayed the moral character of historical figures, *VS* focused on the professional and intellectual accomplishments of relatively recent or contemporary sophists, an approach closer to that of Diogenes Laertius or Suetonius' *On grammarians and rhetoricians*.<sup>12</sup> In accordance with this programme, Philostratus' funerary scenes recorded the background, status, education, or achievements of sophists as components of their public image. There is, however, no thematic linkage between death scenes in separate *Lives*, such as Pelling has shown for Plutarch.<sup>13</sup>

The wide variation in the length and detail of such scenes, which mirrors the overall irregularity of *VS*, brings to question the author's sources and

<sup>8</sup> A universal definition for the sophists as a professional group is difficult to establish because the usage of *sophistēs* and *rhētōr* was somewhat fluid. It seems clear that the sophists' primary activities were oratorical performance and instruction. For the evolving discussion on the meaning of these distinctions, see Bowersock (1969) 11–14; Jones (1974) 12–14; Swain (1991) 159–62; Brunt (1994) 30–3, 48–50; Puech (2002) 10–15.

<sup>9</sup> *VS* 1.526 (Dionysius of Miletus), 1.543–4 (Polemo), 1.545 (Secundus of Athens), 1.556 (Regilla, wife of Herodes), 1.558 (Panathenais and Elpinice, daughters of Herodes), 2.565–6 (Herodes Atticus), 2.597 (Euodius of Smyrna and his son), 2.602 (Apollonius of Athens), 2.604 (Phoenix of Thessaly), 2.606 (Damianus of Ephesus), 2.612 (Hermocrates of Phocaea), 2.615 (Heracleides of Lycia), 2.623 (Philiscus of Thessaly). I have used the Teubner text edited by C. L. Kayser (1871). All translations are my own.

<sup>10</sup> Rothe (1989) 195 *ad VS* 2.602 (Apollonius of Athens).

<sup>11</sup> Cf., e.g., Edwards (2000a) 56–61 on Porphyry's account of Plotinus' death (*v. Plot.* 2.23–30).

<sup>12</sup> On the biographical form of *VS*, see Leo (1901) 254–9; Reardon (1971) 187–9; Jones (1974) 11; Anderson (1986) 25–6; Rothe (1989) 34–6; Swain (1991) 150–2; Cox Miller (2000) 219–20.

<sup>13</sup> Pelling (1997).



his account's reliability. Philostratus was himself a sophist<sup>14</sup> who wrote for an audience of similar education and social conditions. While this does not rule out the possibility of inaccuracy in his reporting, it does mean that his representation of events had to be plausible. His two basic methods of research were autopsy and interview.<sup>15</sup> As an Athenian resident he surely visited many of the graves he recorded at Athens, and he must have spent considerable time in the other major cities, Ephesus and Smyrna, where he notes graves.<sup>16</sup> His experience as a traveller is apparent when he mentions notable landmarks near graves, or on which side of the street they occur. As with Pausanias, the evocation of a living landscape made readers feel as though they could go and see for themselves. Philostratus also consulted intellectuals, such as the elderly Aristaeus, cited as a chief informant (1.524). In the process of gathering oral reports, he often found alternative versions of events in local traditions or personal variants. Some had developed from historical facts in the sophist's career, while others were fabrications with a realistic veneer. These competing stories merely differ on age at death or place of burial,<sup>17</sup> but in Polemo's case they preserve equally credible accounts. Sometimes his research did not turn up information on a sophist's death, or he decided not to include it, so he merely noted it or abruptly concluded the *Life*.<sup>18</sup>

In sum, while his portraits are inconsistently organised and often include anecdotal material, Philostratus collected data by surveying first-hand sources. The funerary scenes in *VS* furnish a reliable basis for tracing a general picture of the sophists' world.<sup>19</sup> Since this picture was neither complete nor uniformly focused, it will be worthwhile to evaluate which details Philostratus included, and how he presented them. This can be achieved by comparing specific physical and topographical details in the funerary scenes to the copious archaeological record of Greece and Asia Minor. Such a comparison can test the scenes' accuracy and precision, which in turn

<sup>14</sup> On Philostratus' career, see Flinterman (1995) 15–28.

<sup>15</sup> On Philostratus' methods, see Anderson (1986) 24–5 and Swain (1991). The only documentary sources he seems to have used to write the funerary episodes were inscriptions, such as Herodes' epitaph (*VS* 2.566).

<sup>16</sup> His placement of the ancestral tombs of Polemo in the eastern cemetery of Laodicea ad Lycum (*VS* 1.543–4) indicates specific topographic knowledge, but it is uncertain whether he travelled there. The colourful story of Polemo's last words might well have been in wide circulation (see p. 125).

<sup>17</sup> *VS* 2.570; 2.576; 2.581; 2.585; 2.599; 2.612.

<sup>18</sup> *VS* 1.512; 1.514; 1.521; 1.527; 1.529–30; 2.567; 2.569; 2.577; 2.578; 2.590; 2.592; 2.593; 2.594; 2.595; 2.596; 2.598; 2.600; 2.604; 2.607; 2.620; 2.621; 2.625. The last two sophists, Heliodorus and Aspasius, were living at Rome when Philostratus wrote *VS*.

<sup>19</sup> For positive assessments of Philostratus' historical value, see Jones (1974); Swain (1991); Campanile (1999); Billault (2000) 82–5; *contra* Brunt (1994) 25: 'Much of his information consists of anecdotes whose reliability is suspect.'

can expose authorial tendencies. Furthermore, the archaeological evidence supplements *VS* by filling out the spatial and material setting of sophistic death and thus situating the practices of one group within the larger context of the Greek cities.<sup>20</sup>

#### THE DEATHS OF THE SOPHISTS

The most informative passages concerning the deaths of the sophists relate the burials of Apollonius, Secundus, Phoenix, Philiscus and Herodes at Athens, Dionysius at Ephesus and Polemo at Smyrna or Laodicea ad Lycum. I will discuss all of these burials except Herodes', because his unique case requires separate, extended treatment.<sup>21</sup> My examination of the textual and material evidence for each event will address how separate components of funerary activities (rituals, behaviours, location, form) communicated particular attributes in a sophistic identity (wealth, lineage, civic and religious roles, intellectual life, moral character).

#### *Two Athenian sophists with Eleusinian connections: Apollonius and Secundus*

Apollonius was buried 'in the suburb' (ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ) of Athens along the Sacred Way to Eleusis called the 'Sacred Fig' (ἱερὰ Συκῆ, *VS* 2.602). Pausanias (1.37.2) placed this landmark between the city-wall and the Kephisos river at the deme Lakiadai. Here Demeter gave a fig-tree to Phytalus in gratitude for his hospitality during her wanderings after Persephone's abduction.<sup>22</sup> Philostratus noted that it was also a station in the procession of the sacred objects from the Pompeion at Eleusis to the Eleusinion in Athens during the Greater Mysteries. There Pausanias saw a shrine of Demeter and Persephone, where Athena and Poseidon were also worshipped, and the grave of Phytalus adorned with an epigram. An inventory and account inscribed by the board of *epistatai* at Eleusis in 408/7 BC recorded the provision of 'rooftiling' (κέραμος) to the Sacred Fig (*IG* I<sup>3</sup> 386.163–4), perhaps to protect the tree or cover a gabled temple.<sup>23</sup> Over time, this building was surrounded by a long succession of roadside graves. In addition to the grave of Phytalus, Pausanias saw the tombs of several

<sup>20</sup> The significance of the death-scenes in *VS* has been addressed but not fully explored by Anderson (1986) 70–1 and Civateletti (2002) *pasim esp.* 602–3, n. 8.

<sup>21</sup> The burial of Herodes in his Panathenaic Stadium has been the subject of much study: Tobin (1993), (1997) 177–85; Welch (1998) 136–45; Galli (2002) 18–24; Rife (2008).

<sup>22</sup> Paus. 1.37.2; Athen. 74D; Eustath. *ad Hom. Od.* 24.341. <sup>23</sup> Cavanaugh (1996) 194.

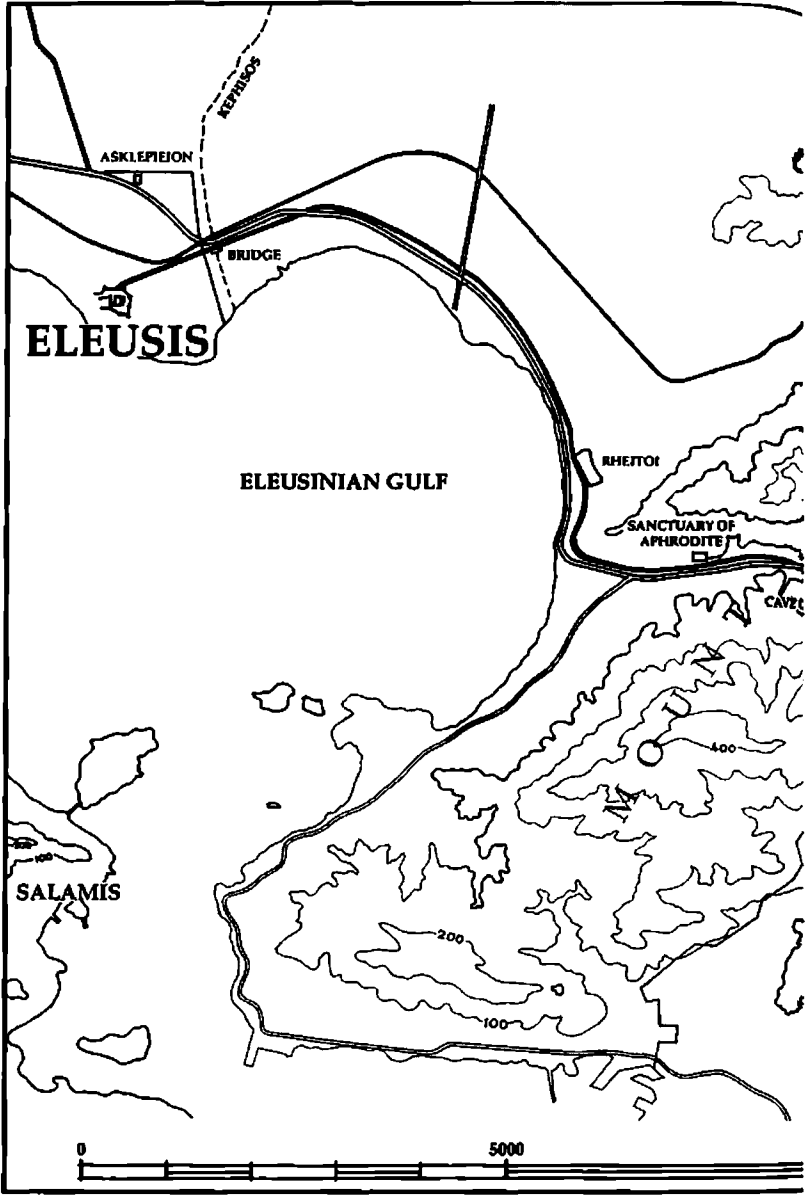
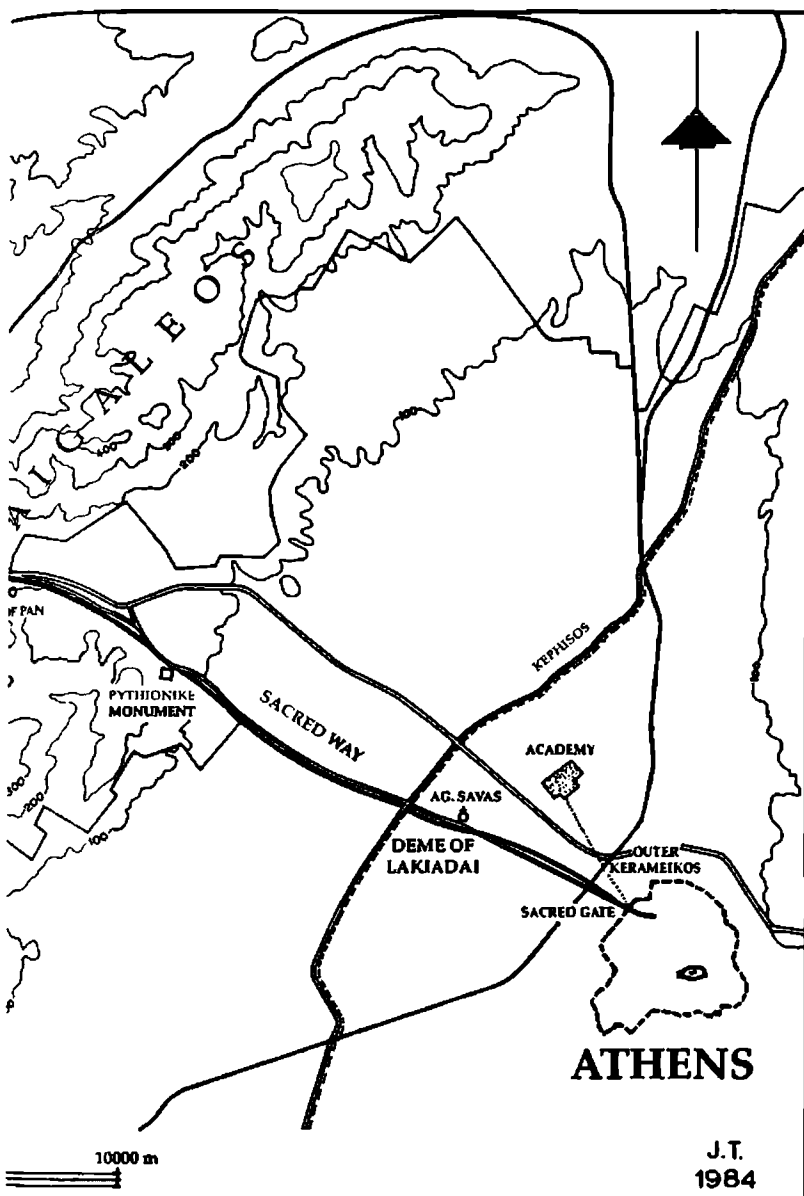


Figure 6.1 Athens and its western environs



notable persons from the past, including Cephisodorus, along the stretch up to the Kephisos (1.36.3–37.2).

While none of these specific locales or monuments has been found, the region's topography can be broadly reconstructed (figure 6.1). Lakiadai and the Sacred Fig were situated 2–3 km out from the ancient city wall in the area where the Botanical Gardens and the Agricultural University of Athens are now situated. It has been proposed that the church of Aghios Savas in the industrial district along the modern Iera Odos 0.75 km east of Odos Kefisou was erected on the site of the Sacred Fig.<sup>24</sup> Several ancient stones, including a small-scale architrave in fine marble and a Classical funerary stele, were built into the south outside wall apparently during the Middle to Late Byzantine era. Whether the church stands over the ancient shrine is uncertain, but if not it must be in the general vicinity. Excavations along the Sacred Way between the Kerameikos and Mount Aigaleos have revealed numerous graves from the classical to Roman eras, including unimpressive cists, elaborate monuments and sarcophagi of Hellenistic and early Roman date east of the Kephisos.<sup>25</sup> These discoveries match Pausanias' impression of a dense series of graves.

Consideration of Apollonius' career reveals many motives for the choice of this site. The sophist in *VS* is most likely C. Casianus Apollonius of Steiria, known from Attic inscriptions. The biography related that he was a prominent orator who had served as ambassador to Septimius Severus and held the municipal chair, the hoplite generalship and the eponymous archonship (2.600–1). The last two offices, the most illustrious in Roman Athens, are attested epigraphically for Casianus Apollonius in the years 188/9 (Meritt and Traill (1974) 297–300, nos. 416, 418–19) and ca. 204 (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2199.7).<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, both *VS* (2.600–1) and an inscription (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3811) record that the elderly sophist Apollonius served as *hierophantes*, the chief official in the Eleusinian Mysteries and most revered of Athenian priests. Casianus Apollonius had been ephebe in 161/2 (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 2085.2–3),

<sup>24</sup> Judeich (1931) 411, n. 5; Mylonas (1961) 246; Papachatzis (1974) 465 n. 1–466, n. 21.

<sup>25</sup> Travlos (1971) 302 and (1988) 179 cite reports on early investigations of the Sacred Way. For more recent Greek excavations, see the reports in the *Χρονικά* of the *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*, Kapetanakis (1973) and Karagiorga-Stathakopoulou (1988) 90–3.

<sup>26</sup> The identification of C. Casianus Apollonius of Steiria with the sophist Apollonius was argued by Graindor (1922) 215–17, following M. Neubauer and A. Dumont, and is now accepted by Clinton (2004) 47–50. Follet (1976) 271–2 instead identifies the hierophant with P. Aelius Dionysius named in *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3688; Puech (2002) 100–16, nos. 21–24 identifies the sophist and hierophant Apollonius with P. Aelius Apollonius named in *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3688 and 3764.

and Apollonius the sophist died at the age of seventy-five (2.601), so he held the priesthood in the second decade of the third century.<sup>27</sup>

Burial at the Sacred Fig commemorated several elements in Apollonius' social persona. If the identification of Casianus Apollonius with Apollonius the sophist is correct, it is noteworthy that he was not interred at his home in or near the coastal deme of Steiria. As a prominent citizen and sophist, he preferred a conspicuous locale alongside the most travelled route into and out of Athens on the west. The extramural site would have necessitated a long funeral procession from the city. Moreover, interment in the public cemetery affiliated him with the interests of the larger community of Athens, both past and present. While it is uncertain where his grave was in relation to the ancient sites noted by Pausanias, it might have been adjacent to the graves of famous men. This would have associated Apollonius with these classical figures whom he had evoked in his sophistic career. Finally, the situation near the Sacred Fig must have expressed Apollonius' connection with the Eleusinian Sanctuary. Philostratus records only that Apollonius was buried in the area called the 'Sacred Fig', without specifying how close he was to the grave of Phytalus and the shrine of Demeter and Persephone. But the connection between burial and sacred topography was on the biographer's mind, because he explicitly identified the place as a station in the ritual procession.

Another prominent local sophist with Eleusinian connections, Secundus, was buried 'before Eleusis' (πρὸς τῇ Ἐλευσίνι) on the right side of the road to Megara (VS 1.545). Two roads from Eleusis apparently converged and headed northwest to Megara, one exiting the circuit wall to the west of the main settlement, acropolis and sanctuary, and another beginning at the monumental arch that adorned the forecourt of the Propylaea in Roman times (figure 6.2). Excavation along this route ca. 575 m northwest of the circuit has revealed a vast cemetery used from the prehistoric to the Roman eras. Most of the graves are middle-late Helladic or classical, and the few Roman graves are simple tile-covered or unprotected cists.<sup>28</sup> It seems likely, however, that elaborate tombs were erected during the empire in more conspicuous areas not yet excavated, especially the road-side immediately outside the circuit to its west and north. Constructed

<sup>27</sup> Clinton (1974) 40–2, no. 29 and (2004) 50, on an inscription from the Library of Pantainos in the southeastern corner of the Athenian Agora (Agora I 7483, cited at Camp (1992) 196) naming the hierophant Casianus Apollonius. Several orators held Eleusinian priesthoods during this era: e.g., M. Iunius Nicagoras was *hierokeryx* in the 230s (VS 2.628; *IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3814; Clinton (1974) 80–1, no. 11).

<sup>28</sup> Mylonas (1961) 185–6, (1975) II: 299, κατάλογος Λ, plates 195α, 254α–β, 334β (Roman graves).



Figure 6.2 Eleusis during the Roman empire

tombs have been found in the cemetery toward Athens, and one tomb in the vicinity produced the splendidly carved sarcophagus of the late second century showing the Calydonian boar-hunt now on display at the Eleusis Museum (no. 5243).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Mylonas (1931-2), (1961) 185-6, 204-5, figure 82; Travlos (1988) 178, figure 242.

Secundus is more obscure than Apollonius. Philostratus' chief datum is that he was the Athenian sophist who taught Herodes Atticus (1.544), which points to his high social and intellectual prestige.<sup>30</sup> The argument that this sophist was the 'silent philosopher' whose encounter with Hadrian was retold in the romanticising dialogue of unknown authorship<sup>31</sup> has no secure basis. Both sophist and philosopher lived at Athens under Hadrian, but numerous Secundi appear in local inscriptions of Roman date. Moreover, the two qualities that distinguish the philosopher, his adherence to Cynicism and Pythagoreanism, and his silence, are absent in the *Life*, and the latter is hard to reconcile with the sophist's rhetorical pursuits.<sup>32</sup> There is, however, epigraphic testimony for one or more Secundi linked to Eleusis. A list of financial contributions from the Athenian Agora named Iulius, the well-known *hierophantēs* of the late 160s–190s,<sup>33</sup> as the son or younger relative of a Iulius Secundus (Meritt (1960) 29–32, no. 37, line 9 = *SEG* XIX 172.9).<sup>34</sup> Moreover, a statue dedicated at Eleusis in ca. 200 honoured a Secundus who was a Eumolpid (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3659 = *SEG* XXXIV 191). While these attestations are too late to identify Philostratus' sophist, they might well name one or more members of the same family.<sup>35</sup>

Secundus' membership of the Eumolpid clan would explain the proximity of his burial to the Sanctuary.<sup>36</sup> Otherwise, like Apollonius, an active sophist would have preferred burial closer to Athens. Secundus' funeral must have been a grand affair, because Herodes himself delivered a tearful oration over his *maestro* (*VS* 1.544).<sup>37</sup> Herodes was no stranger to Eleusis: he erected statues there to his children (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 3551, 3608), to Asklepios (*SEG* I 55), to Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4779), and to his wife Regilla (*IG* II<sup>2</sup> 4072), whose 'personal adornment' (κόσμος) he

<sup>30</sup> *Suda* s.v. Σεκοῦνδος (Σ 189) repeats the basic information in *VS* as transmitted through Hesychius of Miletus, but adds that he wrote 'rhetorical exercises' (μελέται ρητορικαί).

<sup>31</sup> Bowersock (1969) 21, 92, 118–19; cf. Anderson (1989) 185; Puech (2002) 449; Civiletti (2002) 502, n. 2.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Perry (1964) 2–4. *LGPN* II 395 s.v. Σεκοῦνδος lists thirty-nine instances of the name in Attic inscriptions of the first to third centuries AD.

<sup>33</sup> Clinton (1974) 38–9, no. 25; Follet (1976) 257–9.

<sup>34</sup> Follet (1976) 257 considers the relationship familial; Clinton (1974) 128 is not persuaded.

<sup>35</sup> The parentage of Secundus recorded by Philostratus would not necessarily contradict his Eumolpid descent or the acquisition of Roman citizenship during the Julio-Claudian era implied by the name Iulius Secundus. Philostratus wrote that Secundus was called 'Wooden Peg' (Ἐπίουρος) because he was the son of a 'carpenter' (τέκτων) or a man named 'Carpenter' (Τέκτων). Bowersock (1969) 21 supports the literal interpretation that Secundus had banausic roots, but Bowie (1982) 54 reads the word as the father's cognomen.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Raubitschek (1966) 249; Follet (1976) 257.

<sup>37</sup> Raubitschek (1966) 248–9, no. 10 conjectures that a fragmentary statue base from central Athens is a dedication by Herodes to his teacher Secundus, but the identification of the honorand is insecure; cf. Ameling (1983) II: 175–6, no. 183; Puech (2002) 450; Civiletti (2002) 502–3, n. 3.



dedicated to the goddess (VS 2.556).<sup>38</sup> While it is uncertain whether Secundus' funeral began in Athens and proceeded to Eleusis or took place entirely at Eleusis, the respected teacher must have been buried before a large crowd in a prominent locale, where his grave would be visible to those travelling between Eleusis and Megara.

*Two Thessalian sophists buried at Athens: Phoenix and Philiscus*

Two Thessalians residing at Athens, Phoenix and Philiscus, were interred along the suburban road to the Academy (VS 2.604, 2.623). This route ran northwest out of the Dipylon Gate and the Kerameikos roughly 1.5 km to the precinct of the Academy through the area called the Outer Kerameikos or the 'Public Tomb' (Δημόσιον Σῆμα; figure 6.1). By the early fifth century BC, prominent citizens and war dead were interred here and eulogised in an annual ceremony headed by the polemarch. When Pausanias walked to the Academy, he first passed the shrine of Artemis Calliste and Ariste ca. 250 m outside the Eriai Gate and then saw the graves of several prominent historical figures, including Thrasybulus, Pericles, Chabrias, Phormio, the Tyrannicides and Cleisthenes (1.29.3–16). Intensive excavations here since 1863 have concentrated on the cemetery immediately outside the circuit, but frequent exploration in the Outer Kerameikos has revealed that graves of classical to Roman date extended without interruption all the way to the Academy. Not unlike those flanking the Sacred Way, the scale and elaboration of these graves varied widely, from unadorned cists to lavish monuments. Some parts of this cemetery were gradually buried under deep sediment, and the monuments were slowly dismantled for re-use in other buildings.<sup>39</sup> But the area remained in use for burial at least through the early third century, when Philiscus was interred there.

VS and inscriptions attest to the origins and careers of the two sophists. The short biography of Phoenix relates that he was a Thessalian and pupil of the Cilician Philagrus. The sophist T. Flavius Phoenix is named in two inscriptions from Delphi, one on a statue base dedicated to him by his students and one on a statue base he dedicated with his brother, the sophist Phylax, to their father, Alexander of Hypara, also a sophist.<sup>40</sup> Apparently

<sup>38</sup> Tobin (1997) 200–9.

<sup>39</sup> Travlos (1971) 44, 300–2, figures 417, 419–20, summarises the early investigations near the Academy and in the Outer Kerameikos. For Greek excavations in the northwest suburbs and alongside the road to the Academy, see the reports in the *Χρονικά* of the *Αρχαιολογικόν Δελτίον*.

<sup>40</sup> On the first inscription, see de la Coste-Messelière (1925) 82, no. 9 and Puech (2002) 384–5, no. 204; on the second inscription, see Pouilloux (1967), Jones (1972) 265–7 and Puech (2002) 44–5, no. 3.

rhetoric ran in his family, which was based in Hypata but well connected across the region. According to Philostratus, Philiscus held the imperial chair at Athens, appeared before Caracalla to defend his liturgical immunity and joined the circle of Julia Domna. He was descended on his mother's side from the Eordaeon Macedones, who inhabited the highlands west of Mount Bermion; his father's family originated somewhere in Thessaly, the home of his older kinsman, the sophist Hippodromus of Larissa (*VS* 2.591, 2.615–16, 2.621–3). An inscription from Delphi identifies Philiscus as the holder of an administrative post in Thessaly.<sup>41</sup> Like Phoenix, Philiscus' family also achieved regional prominence. According to an inscription from Aedepeus on northern Euboea, one of the third-century descendants of Hippodromus, M. Aurelius Olympiodorus, married Flavia Philina, a daughter of a leading family from Boeotian Thespieae.<sup>42</sup>

The choice of the Public Tomb for the two sophists' burial reflected both their individual prestige and their attachment to Athens and its classical heritage. They deserved interment in the state cemetery, a high civic honour, because of their professional success, political achievements and social status. Moreover, they selected this site over distant familial homes—Hypata, at least, was a provincial backwater. Philostratus wrote that Philiscus even preferred interment in the Outer Kerameikos to interment on his own 'pleasant estate at Athens' (Ἀθήνησι χωρίον οὐκ ἀγδές).<sup>43</sup> Presumably the two sophists were motivated by the high visibility the route to the Academy afforded their graves. The importance of the site as the resting place of so many great Athenians from the classical past must also have been an attraction for men who devoted their lives to creative engagement with classical literature. Indeed, the greatest of all classical speeches, Pericles' funeral oration at the Public Tomb in 431/0 as recreated by Thucydides (2.34), was a favourite oratorical model. Philostratus was thinking of this very speech when he described Philiscus' grave: he quoted from it in his explanation that the polemarch presides over the funeral games 'in honour of the buried dead from wars' (ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐκ τῶν πολέμων θαντομένοις, Thuc. 2.35.1).<sup>44</sup> It is tempting to imagine that, in recognition of both his sophistic career and the setting of his burial, the funeral oration for Philiscus also quoted from Thucydides.

<sup>41</sup> Flacelière (1949) 473–5, no. 11; Rothe (1989) 266; Puech (2002) 376–7, no. 199.

<sup>42</sup> Koumanoudes (1967) 143–4, plate 53B. On the relationship between Hippodromus and the Thespian family, see Jones (1970) 238–9; cf. Müller (1968). Rothe (1989) 249 misconstrues the testimony.

<sup>43</sup> Flacelière (1949) 473–5, no. 11 emends the text of the Delphic dedication to Philiscus so that it identifies his home as the intramural deme Melite in western Athens.

<sup>44</sup> Philostratus also quotes from it when describing Dionysius' burial at Ephesus (1.526) and adapts a phrase from it when describing Hermocrates' burial in Lycia (2.615).

*Dionysius of Miletus and intramural burial at Ephesus*

Philostratus recounted with effulgence the burial of Dionysius of Miletus at Ephesus in ca. 140:

The entire earth is the grave for famous men, but the tomb of Dionysius is in the most famous city Ephesus, for he was buried in the agora in the most important part of Ephesus, where he passed away, though earlier in life he taught on Lesbos. (1.526)<sup>45</sup>

Ti. Claudius Flavianus Dionysius was a renowned orator whom Hadrian appointed procurator, adlected to the equestrian order and granted free meals at the Museum.<sup>46</sup> His biographer explicitly linked his renown to the prominence of his 'tomb' (σῆμα), borrowing a rhetorical commonplace from Pericles' funeral oration (Thuc. 2.43.3) to underscore the importance of the burial locale.<sup>47</sup>

Dionysius' interment at Ephesus rather than at his birthplace, Miletus, cannot be explained by the mere fact that he died there. The bodies of aristocrats could be brought home even over great distances. For instance, the colleagues of Euodius pondered embalming his corpse for transport from Rome back to his native Smyrna (2.597). Moreover, the dead Dionysius could have returned home as a member of the local elite. A statue base erected in 125/6 to Hadrian at Miletus names Dionysius and a brother as archons (*IMilet* 334.13–16).<sup>48</sup> Although it is unknown whether Dionysius himself chose to be buried at Ephesus, it seems likely that, in the absence of explicit directions, family or friends would have returned his body to his Milesian ancestors. On the other hand, a decision to remain in Ephesus would have reflected the sophists' tendency to shift their base to major cultural centres from lesser cities, as had the Thessalians at Athens.

Excavations in 1967 uncovered the grave of Dionysius in the central area of the ancient city (figures 6.3–6.4).<sup>49</sup> It was a large sarcophagus (2.67 m

<sup>45</sup> ἀνδρῶν μὲν οὖν ἐπιφανῶν πᾶσα γῆ τάφος, Διονυσίῳ δὲ σῆμα ἐν τῇ ἐπιφανεστάτῃ Ἐφέσῳ, τέθαπται γὰρ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς Ἐφέσου, ἐν ᾗ κατεβίω παιδεύσας τὸν πρῶτον βίον ἐν τῇ Λέσβῳ. I follow the reading of W. C. Wright in the Loeb edition (1921) and LSJ s.v. κύριος II; Engelmann (1995) 86 reads κατὰ τὸ κυριώτατον as a parenthesis.

<sup>46</sup> VS 1.524. On his career, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup> D 105 and Bowersock (1969) 51–3. Philostratus' favourable picture of the relations between Hadrian and Dionysius is at odds with the account of Cass. Dio (Xiph.) 69.3 that Hadrian tried to destroy the sophist's career by promoting rivalry. The nature of his burial clearly shows that Dionysius' career came to a successful end (Bowie (1997) 7–8).

<sup>47</sup> Philostratus adapted the same phrase to describe the Lycian burial of Heracleides (τάφος μὲν αὐτοῦ Λυκία λέγεται, VS 2.615).

<sup>48</sup> Knackfuss (1924) 312, no. 231 (A. Rehm); Jones (1980) 374. This inscription refutes the ancient claim that Dionysius came from unremarkable parentage (VS 2.521).

<sup>49</sup> Eichler (1969) 136–7; Atalay (1978–80) 53–8, figures 12–20; Vettors (1978) 199, figure 3, plate III; Jobst (1983) 162–3, 203, 211, figures 6–8, Beilage I.

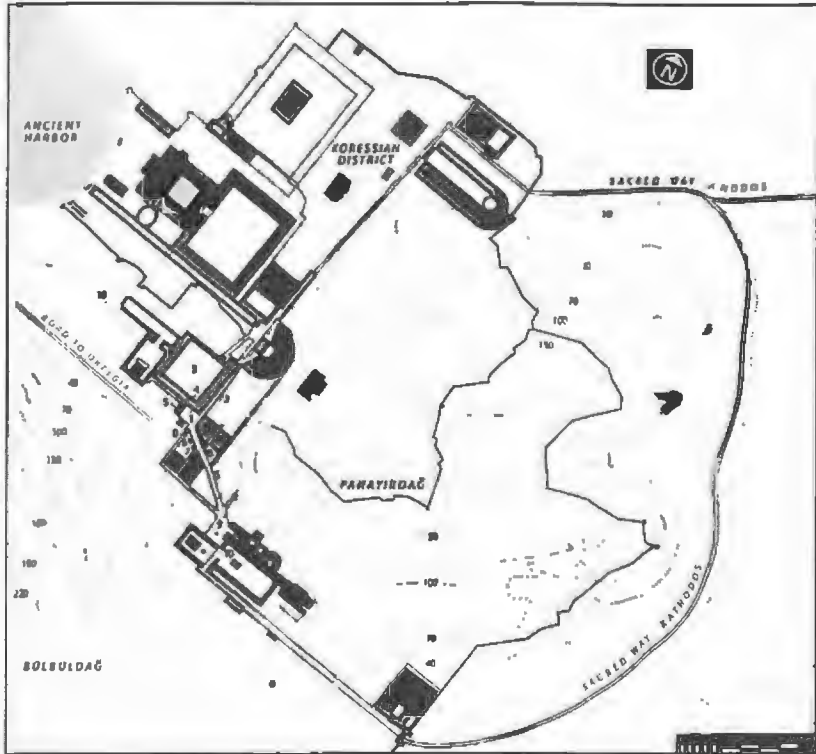


Figure 6.3 Ephesus during the Roman empire. 1 Sarcophagus of Ti. Claudius Flavianus Dionysius 2 Marble Street 3 Tetragonos Agora 4 South Gate 5 Library of Ti. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus 6 Heroön of Androclus 7 Octagon/Tomb of Arsinoë IV 8 Sarcophagus of Ti. Claudius Aristion (?) 9 Tomb of C. Memmius 10 Tomb of C. Sextrilius Pollio

long  $\times$  1.15 m wide  $\times$  1.11 m high) cut from local limestone. The simple base displayed schematic garlands separated by small disks, and the cover was slightly raised with short acroteria. The simple inscription on the front named the 'orator' (ὁρῆτωρ, *IEph* 426). Inside was a lead coffin containing poorly preserved bones. The sarcophagus was situated in a chamber beneath a late antique staircase descending from the Marble Street past the Doric colonnade in the upper floor of the Tetragonos Agora, ca. 8.5 m east of its South Gate. Excavations in 1906 had already uncovered a statue base for Dionysius built into a late antique wall near the southeast corner of the Agora (*IEph* 3047).<sup>50</sup> The inscribed base and the sarcophagus were found not far apart, but their original relationship, if any, is unknown.

<sup>50</sup> Keil (1953) 5–7, no. 1; Jones (1980) 373–4; Puech (2002) 229–31, no. 98.



Figure 6.4 Sarcophagus of T. Flavius Dionysius at Ephesus, ca. AD 140, not in position as discovered, view from southeast

Evidently the sophist's grave was not strictly within the agora, as Philostratus had written. The excavators probably found the sarcophagus at or very near its original location, because a stone of such enormous weight would not have been moved far, if at all.<sup>51</sup> There are two explanations for the discrepancy between the biographical account and the archaeological evidence. First, Philostratus was simply incorrect or imprecise.<sup>52</sup> This seems unlikely, because he knew the city, and the grave's location would have been memorable. Second, the toponym *Agora* designated both the quadrangular enclosure and the peripheral structures outside its gates. This seems more likely.<sup>53</sup>

The choice of location for the burial recalled the area's significance. An inscription from the South Gate documents an 'audience-hall' (αὐδιστώριον) between the Marble Street and the Library of Celsus (*IEph* 3009). Engelmann has argued that this was used not only by the governor but also by sophists and philosophers. Therefore it was an appropriate spot

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Eichler (1969) 136–7; *contra* Atalay (1978–80) 57. Engelmann (1995) 87 further observes that, if the sarcophagus had been moved, it would have been opened and the lead plundered.

<sup>52</sup> Eichler (1969) 137; *BullÉp* 1971, no. 574; Jones (1974) 15.

<sup>53</sup> *RE Suppl.* XII 1633 s.v. Ephesos (W. Alzinger); Jobst (1983) 163.



Figure 6.5 Library of Celsus at Ephesus (ca. AD 120), South Gate of Tetragnos Agora to right, view from southeast

for the sarcophagus of the famous sophist Dionysius.<sup>54</sup> The grave was also located at the heart of the city near the Triodos, the Sacred Way's intersection with the processional route to Ortygia. Although intramural burial was usually avoided in the classical world, the Ephesians honoured numerous prominent individuals in this manner during the Late Hellenistic and imperial eras. This revived an ancient tradition from the first generations of the settlement, for archaic and classical burials have been found in the area of the Embolos.<sup>55</sup> Just west of Dionysius' sarcophagus was the incomparable Library of Celsus, completed ca. 120, at once the ultimate benefaction and the final resting-place of Ti. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus, former consul (92) and governor of Asia (106).<sup>56</sup> It was a rectangular hall with bookshelves and a vault for his sarcophagus, while the façade displayed two stories of interlocking distyle aediculae which framed allegorical figures, family portraits and bilingual career inscriptions (figure 6.5).<sup>57</sup> Thür has shown that a row of important funerary monuments was located southeast

<sup>54</sup> Engelmann (1995), (1997) 87; cf. Eichler (1969) 137, *BullÉp* 1971, no. 574, Cormack (2004) 45.

<sup>55</sup> Jobst (1983) 171–8; Knibbe and Langmann (1993) 52–3, 9–15; Scherrer (2001) 59–60.

<sup>56</sup> On his career, see Halfmann (1979) 111–12, no. 16.

<sup>57</sup> Wilberg *et al.* (1953) is the final publication of the excavations in 1903–4; Hueber and Strocka (1975) report on anastylosis in the 1970s.

of the Library along the lower Embolos (figure 6.3).<sup>58</sup> The first, erected in the late second century BC, was probably the *heroön* of Androclus, the Ionian founder of the settlement (cf. Paus. 7.2.6) (see p. 115). Next to this was an impressive tomb with a square podium, an octagonal stylobate, a Corinthian colonnade and a pyramidal roof over the burial chamber. It apparently contained Arsinoë IV, the younger sister of Cleopatra VII who had sought asylum at the Artemision but was assassinated at the behest of M. Antonius in 41 BC.<sup>59</sup> A sarcophagus also found in this row might well have belonged to the great Ephesian benefactor Ti. Claudius Aristion, who died ca. 120.<sup>60</sup> Other graves located further east along the Embolos strengthen the impression that the heart of Roman Ephesus was a cemetery for the city's prominent residents both past and present (figure 6.3).<sup>61</sup>

Only in a general sense was Philostratus right to call the site of Dionysius' burial the 'the most important part of Ephesus' (τὸ κυριώτατον τῆς Ἐφέσου). He was laid to rest in the city's cultural centre near the library and the auditorium. Dionysius also joined the exclusive company of those historical and contemporary Ephesians remembered in one synchronous vision by those who traversed the Sacred Way and saw their intramural graves. But the relative importance of Dionysius' grave among the great buildings at the Triodos and within the long gallery of funerary architecture and sculptural imagery was limited by its ordinary form and remote location. The elementary, unfinished sarcophagus belongs to a common local type that was far less extravagant than many on the market.<sup>62</sup> The lack of intricate or customised ornament would have distinguished the sophist from pre-eminent members of the community, like Celsus, whose sarcophagus had richly carved garlands, *erötes* and rosettes.<sup>63</sup> Furthermore, Dionysius' sarcophagus seems to have been placed in a chamber with no architectural elaboration in a transitional space between grander public venues. It was dwarfed in scale, visibility and complexity by the Library

<sup>58</sup> Thür (1990), (1995a), (1995b) 92–4, n. 364, (1995d).

<sup>59</sup> Jos. A/15.89; App. BC 5.9.34; Dio Cass. 43.19.2. <sup>60</sup> Thür (1995d) 184–7, figures 5, 14, (1997).

<sup>61</sup> Thür (1997) 69–75; Scherrer (2001) 77, figures 3–10. C. Memmius, Sulla's grandson, was interred in a monument at the east end of the Embolos. Nearby, at the west end of the State Agora, was the tomb of C. Sextilius Pollio, benefactor of the Royal Stoa and the Marnas aqueduct. The epitaph of Mithradates, freedman of M. Vipsanius Agrippa and co-sponsor of the South Gate of the Tetragonos Agora in 3/2 BC, was found re-used as pavement near the Theatre (*IEph* 851).

<sup>62</sup> Koch and Sichtermann (1982) 492–3, figure 13 surveys unfinished Ephesian sarcophagi; this example belongs to Gruppe 2b.

<sup>63</sup> Wilberg *et al.* (1953) 43–6, figures 87–94 (M. Theuer) on Celsus' sarcophagus; Thür (1995c) has several more examples. The displaced sarcophagus attributed to Aristion was similar to Dionysius' sarcophagus (Thür (1997) 55–63), but it had probably occupied a conspicuous monument along the Embolos (Thür (1997) 151–6).

of Celsus, which commemorated several dimensions of the deceased persona: his twin Greek and Roman professional spheres, his intelligence and education, his wealth and his magnanimity toward his adoptive city.<sup>64</sup> The situation of Dionysius' grave marked his elite status as an Ephesian sophist, but the limits of this status are evident when the archaeological remains are viewed alongside the encomiastic biography.

### *The many burials of Polemo*

The portrait of the death and burial of Polemo in ca. 144, the longest in *VS*, includes many details that are not found in the shorter funerary episodes:

There is no tomb for [Polemo] in Smyrna, though there are said to be many. For some say that he was buried in the garden of the Temple of Excellence. Others say that he was buried not far from this place at the sea, and there is a small temple with a statue of Polemo in it, dressed as he was when he performed the sacred rites on the trireme, and under the statue they say the man lies. Others say that he was buried in the courtyard of his house under the bronze statues. But none of these accounts is true, for if he died in Smyrna, there is not one of the marvelous temples of that city in which he would have been deemed unworthy to lie. But another version is more true, namely, that he lies at Laodicea beside the Syrian Gate, where in fact are the graves of his ancestors. He was buried still alive, for so he had directed his dearest. When he was lying in the tomb, he exhorted those who were shutting the grave 'Close it, close it, may the sun not see me silent!' And to his friends lamenting him he called out 'Give me a body and I will declaim!' (1.543-4)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Smith (1998) 73-5. Cormack (2004) 45, 46 gives a more positive reading of Dionysius' grave that treats the Library of Celsus as a scenic backdrop. This does not account for the relatively remote placement and simple form of the sophist's burial.

<sup>65</sup> τάφος δὲ αὐτῷ κατὰ τὴν Σμύρναν οὐδεὶς, εἰ καὶ πλείους λέγονται· οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ κήπῳ τοῦ τῆς Ἀρετῆς ἱεροῦ ταφῆναι αὐτόν, οἱ δὲ οὐ πόρρω τούτου ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ, νεῶς δὲ τις ἐστὶ βραχὺς καὶ ἀγαλμα ἐν αὐτῷ Πολέμωνος ἐσταλμένον, ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς τριήρους ὠργιάζεν, ὑφ' ᾧ κεῖσθαι τὸν ἄνδρα, οἱ δὲ ἐν τῇ τῆς οἰκίας αὐλῇ ὑπὸ τοῖς χαλκοῖς ἀνδριᾶσιν. ἐστὶ δὲ οὐδὲν τούτων ἀληθές, εἰ γὰρ ἐτελευτα κατὰ τὴν Σμύρναν, οὐδενὸς ἂν τῶν θαυμασιῶν παρ' αὐτοῖς ἱερῶν ἀπηξιῶθη τὸ μὴ οὐκ ἐν αὐτῷ κεῖσθαι. ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνα ἀληθέστερα, κεῖσθαι μὲν αὐτὸν ἐν τῇ Λαοδικεῇ παρὰ τὰς Συρίας πύλας, οὐ δὲ καὶ τῶν προγόνων αὐτοῦ θῆκαι, ταφῆναι δὲ αὐτὸν ζῶντα ἔτι, τοῦτ' ἂν τοῖς φιλάτοις ἐπισκῆψαι, κείμενόν τε ἐν τῷ σήματι παρακελεύεσθαι τοῖς συγκλείουσι τὸν τάφον ἔπαγε, ἔπαγε, μὴ γὰρ ἴδοι με σιωπῶντα ἥλιος.' πρὸς δὲ τοὺς οἰκειοὺς ὀλοφυρομένους αὐτὸν ἀνεβόησε· 'δότε μοι σώμα καὶ μελετήσομαι.' I agree with Civiletti (2002) 501-2, n. 92 that the imperative ἔπαγε (or ἔπειγε, as Cobet and Wright) does not mean 'hurry' (LSJ s.v. ἔπαγω 2c or s.v. ἔπειγω IV) but rather 'put in place [the door]' (LSJ s.v. ἔπαγω 7, e.g., Pollux 10.25; cf. LSJ s.v. ἔπαγω II.7, e.g., Prentice (1922) 188-9, no. 1175, line 7: ὁ ἐπαξάμενος τὸν λίθον: lintel block at Brād, northern Syria, early third century AD). It is the action of closing the grave, not the speed with which it is done, that will prevent the sun from shining on a silent sophist. If the door, probably a stone slab, were not properly set into place to create a tight seal, light would filter into the chamber and onto the corpse.



M. Antonius Polemo, one of the most renowned and influential sophists, held several civic and religious posts at Smyrna and enjoyed close relations with Hadrian. He was invited to deliver the inaugural address at the Olympieion in Athens in 131/2, and he garnered imperial benefactions for Smyrna (e.g., *ISmyrna* 697.35–6).<sup>66</sup> Philostratus recorded four traditions concerning the form and location of his grave. These versions presumably survived at Smyrna and Laodicea ad Lycum because they were credible models for how a man of Polemo's personality and career might be buried. As such, they exemplify a range of options before a Greek aristocrat as he considered how to represent himself in death. While it is impossible to prove which episode is most accurate – Philostratus endorsed the last one – all four are interesting as examples of what could be believed about Polemo's end.

The first three accounts locate his grave in Smyrna, his home throughout his professional career. None is sufficiently specific for identification with a region or monument in modern Izmir.<sup>67</sup> However, all refer to mortuary forms and burial locales well known in the region's archaeology. The first identifies a type epigraphically attested, the 'funerary garden' (κήπος, κηπίον, κηποτάφιον, κηπότηφος). The typical plan consisted of a precinct enclosing a garden or grove and a monumental tomb.<sup>68</sup> The frequent association between gardens and burials in ancient cities

<sup>66</sup> On his career, see *RE* XXI 1320–1357 s.v. Polemo 10 (W. Stegemann) and Gleason (1995) 21–9; on the Philostratean biography, see Campanile (1999).

<sup>67</sup> The dense sprawl of the modern city inhibits the exploration of the ancient one below. *PECS* s.v. Smyrna (E. Akurgal) is a general account of the archaeological remains. Fontrier (1907) 117, plate VII proposed with little justification that the 'Temple of Arete and Polemo's grave were in the 'quartier turc' of southwest Smyrna, where excavations for 'l'hôpital civil' had uncovered early modern burials and a Roman sarcophagus.

<sup>68</sup> E.g., *IKios* 83 (τὸ μνημεῖον σὺν τῷ περιωρισμένῳ [κήπῳ; Cius, Bithynia]; *TAM* V 939 (κήποι; Thyatira, Lydia); *MAMA* IV 171 (monumental funerary complex with μνημεῖον and κήποι; Apollonia, Phrygia, late first century BC–early first century AD); Sterrett (1888) 171–2, no. 280 (ἡρώων and παρὰδεισος; near Vasada, Pisidia). 424, no. 621 (κηπότηπος; Ilyas, Pisidia); *MAMA* I 437 (burial site consisting of σοφοί, τάφος, στέγνον, δένδρα; Appola, Phrygia); Rosenbaum (1967) 59–61, figure 35, plate XX (funerary precinct with temple-tomb and cisterns, possibly a garden; Iotape, Cilicia); Karagöz *et al.* (1986) (similar; Pergamon, mid second century AD). The form is attested in Egypt and Syria as well: e.g., *BGU* 5.1210 ([κη]π[οτάφια; Theadelphia, 150 AD?]; Kayser (1994) 97–106, no. 25 (κηπότηφον; Alexandria, third century?); Pallad., *Hist. Laus.* 19–20, *PG* 34.1051D–1052 A (Macarius of Alexandria (mid–late fourth century) visits a Pharaonic κηποτάφιον or παρὰδεισος, which is a monument and grove within a precinct); *GVI* 1484 (burial ὑπὸ δένδρεσι; Souada, Batanaea, second century). Cormack (2004) 31, 120–1 discusses the evidence from Roman Asia Minor; see also Kubińska (1968) 142–7, including texts from Greece. The extensive evidence for similar forms (*ῥεποταφία, hortii, hortuli*) in the Western empire is sometimes identified with Greek immigrants, e.g., *IGUR* 2.836 ([μνη]μεῖον κηπότηφον; Via Tusculana, Rome, late first–second century?); see generally Toynbee (1971) 94–100 and Jashemski (1979) 141–53. Most temple-tombs or funerary precincts in Roman Asia Minor (see n. 71) were probably adorned with trees and gardens.

might be related symbolically to a concept of death as a process of regeneration, or rebirth into a paradise; it was also a natural consequence of the distribution of land-use in expansive suburban districts.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, burials such as Polemo's within gardens expressed wealth and an appreciation for rustic serenity. In addition, his funerary garden was associated with a shrine of Ἀρετή, or excellence personified. The existence of her cult in western Asia Minor is attested in Imperial inscriptions. She was depicted as a heavily draped and hooded woman among the statues adorning the Library of Celsus: 'Wisdom' (Σοφία), 'Excellence' (Ἀρετή), 'Thought' (Ἐννοία) and 'Knowledge' (Ἐπιστήμη). Furthermore, 'excellence' was frequently invoked in the honorific language of public dedications and epitaphs from the Asian cities.<sup>70</sup> It was natural for an aristocrat and learned man such as Polemo to embrace this cultural ideal of intellectual and moral virtue in his mortuary self-presentation.

The second account concerning Polemo's burial underscores his exceptional status and cult activities. This tomb is a 'small temple' (νεὸς βραχύς), a conventional Greek type with a prostyle plan, often a pronaos, and a gabled roof. Hellenistic Asia Minor had a long tradition of temple-tombs, and numerous such buildings of local aristocrats during the empire have been found across the region.<sup>71</sup> The form was adapted from sacred architecture to serve the heroised dead, and therefore it was commonly called a *heroön*. The monument also furnished an architectural context for the display of sculpted decoration and commemorative inscriptions that could communicate the social status and affiliations of the deceased.

<sup>69</sup> On death and regeneration, see Bloch and Parry (1982). Several eastern cities had famous suburban gardens associated with cemeteries, including the Academy at Athens, the Kraneion at Corinth (Paus. 2.4.4), and the Necropolis at Alexandria (Str. 17.1.10 (795)). Purcell (1987a) and (1987b) discuss gardens in the civic and rural landscape generally, including the topographic and economic status of Roman funerary gardens between the civic sphere and the countryside.

<sup>70</sup> *LIMC* II, i, 581–582, s.v. Arete I. See, e.g., Petzl (1992) (funerary relief, Lydian Philadelphia, early first century AD); *IGR* 4.914, Nollé (1982) 267–73 (dedication to Q. Veranius Philagrus, priest of Arete, Cibyra, early first century AD); Fränkel (1895) 232, no. 310 (altar, Pergamum, first half second century). Library of Celsus: Wilberg *et al.* (1953) 47–57, figures 95–100 (F. Eichler); *IEph* 5104–7; Smith (1998) 74–5. The occurrences of Ἀρετή in dedications and epitaphs from Roman Asia Minor are too numerous to cite.

<sup>71</sup> The following is a representative sample: Naumann (1973–4) (Aezani); Cormack (1996) (Ariassus); Hallett and Coulton (1993) 41–63, figures 2–6, plates I–VI (Balbura); Keil (1930) 7–12, figures 2–4 (Ephesus); Coulton (1982) (Oenoanda); Petersen and von Luschan (1889) 76–132, figures 53–6, 63; Kokkinia (2000) 3–4 (Rhodiapolis); Benndorf and Niemann (1884) 78, plate 22; Dardaine and Longepierre (1985) 228–32, figures 9–11, plate IV.3–4 (Sidyma); Heberdey and Wilberg (1900) 205–7; Lanckoroński (1893) 56, 92–4, figures 43–6, plate 8 (Termessus). Fedak (1990) 18–24 surveys the sepulchral type in Hellenistic and Early Roman Asia Minor; Berns (2004) and Cormack (2004) are full studies of monuments of the Roman era.

This temple was located at the sea, presumably not far from the port, so that it was plainly visible to travellers near shore. Several instances of seaside tombs are known in ancient literature and archaeology, such as the so-called Tomb of Themistocles at the Peiraeus, the *tempietto* on the headland of Sikinos and Hıdırlık Kulesi, the circular tomb near the harbour of Pamphylian Attaleia. The conspicuous situation of coastal graves, which became landmarks, advertised the unusual status of the deceased within the civic community.<sup>72</sup> The temple-tomb of Polemo also displayed a statue of him 'dressed as he was when he performed the sacred rites on the trireme' (ἑσταλμένον, ὡς ἐπὶ τῆς τριήρους ὠργιάζεν). This implies a life-sized figure wearing a *himation* and the crown of priestly office.<sup>73</sup> Smyrna had bestowed on Polemo the priesthood of Dionysus, entitling him and his family to ride on a sacred trireme from the harbour to the agora during the City Dionysia (*VS* 1.531). This wine-festival recapitulated the mythical victory of the Smyranean devotees of Dionysus against a marine invasion from Chios (Ael. Arist. *Or.* 17.5 Keil, 21.4 Keil). The image of Polemo in an honorary office not only advertised his exceptional prestige at Smyrna but also represented him as a central participant in the recreation of the city's mythical past.<sup>74</sup>

The third site for Polemo's burial was his house. The biographer had already called it the 'best at Smyrna' (ἄριστη τῶν κατὰ τὴν Σμύρναν), noting that Antoninus Pius had stayed there when he was governor of Asia in 135–6 (1.534). The description of interment under bronze statuary in his 'courtyard' (αὐλή) suggests that the central area of the house, which was often colonnaded, was transformed into a funerary precinct. The site was not unlike that chosen by Dio Chrysostom for his wife and son, a portico with a library annex at Prusa (Pliny *ep.* 10.81.2, 6–7).<sup>75</sup> Bronze was an expensive alternative to marble. The statues served not only a decorative but also a commemorative purpose. In elaborate tombs, like the Library of Celsus or the Philopappus Monument at Athens, such

<sup>72</sup> Plut. *Them.* 32.5 citing Diod. *Perieg.*, *FGrH* 373 F 35; Paus. 1.1.2; Wallace (1972), Garland (1987) 147–8, 216–17 nn. ('Tomb of Themistocles'); Frantz *et al.* (1969) (Sikinos); Stupperich (1991) (Attaleia). In Chariton's novel, Callirhoe's tomb was situated near the Syracusan coastline (1.6.5), while her lover Chaereas' tomb was located near the harbour at Miletus (4.1.5).

<sup>73</sup> Smith (1998) illustrates many such portraits of the second century from Ephesus, Aphrodisias and Pompeiopolis: Cormack (2004) 63–77 surveys funerary sculpture in Roman Asia Minor. Gleason (1995) 23–4 proposes that Polemo was granted the right to ride the trireme because he was priest in the Imperial cult. If so, he would have worn a gold crown displaying busts of the emperors.

<sup>74</sup> Smyrna had also granted Polemo the ceremonial presidency (ἀγωνοθεσία) of their Olympic Games founded by Hadrian, which permitted him to enforce appropriate behaviour (*VS* 1.535; 1.541–2). Gleason wrote: 'In this office he could display himself as a prominent defender of Hellenic high culture' (1995) 22).

<sup>75</sup> See Sherwin-White (1966) 675–6 *ad loc.* on the form of the building and Jones (1978) 111–14 on the historical circumstances of its construction.

statues depicted the deceased's personal qualities, lineage, civic offices and public honours.<sup>76</sup> Furthermore, there is abundant testimony for the burial of urban aristocrats, including sophists, on the estates that dominated the eastern provincial landscape. Herodes wished to be interred on his ancestral estate at Marathon (VS 565), while Damianus was buried at one of his suburban homes at Ephesus (VS 6.606). Philostratus wrote that Philiscus was not buried on his estate (VS 2.623), implying that one might expect him to be buried there. Archaeological survey in Greece has discovered numerous examples of monumental tombs, often large and sumptuous, which were probably once located on country estates.<sup>77</sup> Philostratus does not specify whether Polemo's house was urban, suburban, or rural. In any case, elite burial on private property reflects a concern to secure lasting control over real assets and the expectation that the property, and therefore the maintenance of the grave, would remain in the family.

Philostratus concluded plausibly that Polemo was buried not at Smyrna but at his birthplace, Laodicea ad Lycum in the borderlands of eastern Caria and western Phrygia. He was interred among his ancestral 'graves' (θήκαι) in the extramural burial ground along the eastern road into and out of the city at the Syrian Gate. Although much of the ancient city, including its eastern cemetery, remains unexcavated, the approximate location of the Syrian Gate in the eastern circuit is evident (figure 6.6).<sup>78</sup> Among the sparse standing remains in the area, the only identifiable form is a large octagonal edifice. By late antiquity this shape was used in building churches, baptisteries and especially *martyria*, which were not uncommonly situated in long-standing peripheral cemeteries. The building at Laodicea might well have been a *martyrium* among older graves, resembling the great *martyrium* of St Philip that overlooked the northern cemetery at nearby Phrygian Hierapolis.<sup>79</sup> It would have been a late addition to a burial ground that contained many roadside monuments, including the tombs of Polemo's ancestors.

The sophist's preference for burial in his home city, Laodicea, rather than his adoptive one, Smyrna, contrasted with that of Phoenix, Philiscus and Dionysius, all of whom left their ancestral roots for larger cultural and political arenas. Although Smyrna had been Polemo's professional home, Laodicea offered high visibility in death as a populous hub and

<sup>76</sup> Wilberg *et al.* (1953) 47–60, figures 95–103 (Library of Celsus); Kleiner (1983) 81–95, plates XIV–XXVI (Philopappos Monument).

<sup>77</sup> Alcock (1993) 67–70. One good example is the *hypogaeum* in the Berbari valley in the northeastern Peloponnese (Wells and Runnels (1996) 295, figure 10 (SM 13), 336–40).

<sup>78</sup> Ramsay (1895) 44 and Bean (1971) 25; both recounted the story of Polemo's entombment but searched in vain for remains of the cemetery outside the Syrian Gate.

<sup>79</sup> Sperti (2000) 94–5, figures 57–8, tables 13, 22 (octagon, Laodicea); Verzone (1960), D'Andria (2001) 112–13, figures 4–3 no. 8, 4–25, 4–26 (St Philip, Hierapolis).

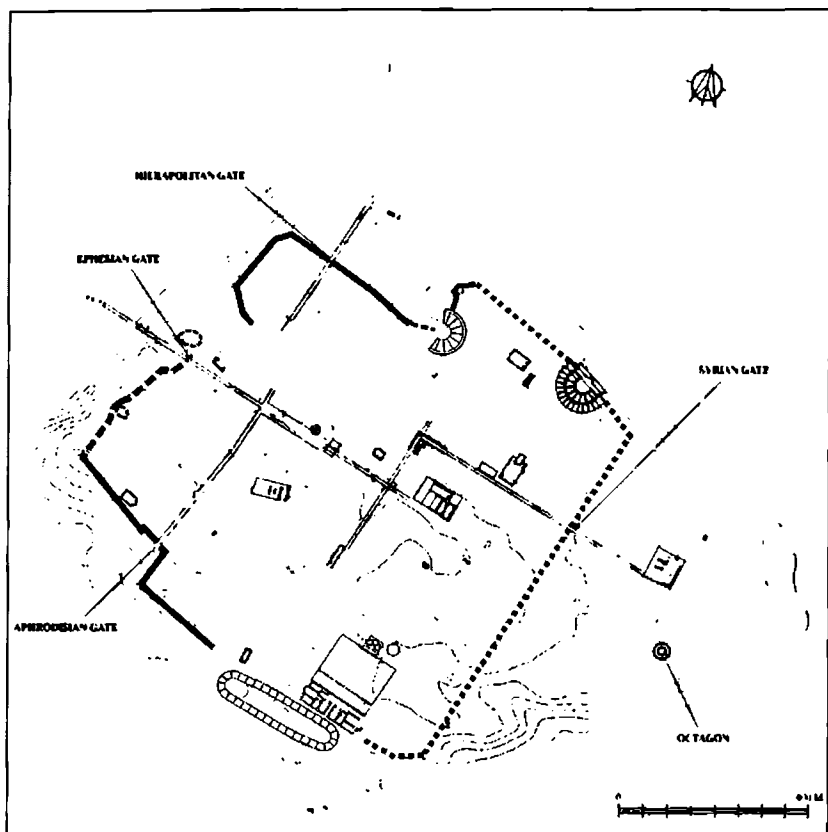


Figure 6.6 Laodicea ad Lycum during the Roman empire

thriving centre for textile production on a major overland route. More importantly, by selecting the ancestral burial site at Laodicea, Polemo would have identified himself as a member of a distinguished local family, the Zenonidai. He was the great-grandson of Polemo I, the king of Pontus whom M. Antonius thrice promoted between 40 and 33 BC, and the great-great-grandson of the eminent orator Zeno, who had led the defence of Laodicea against the Parthians.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Philostratus had previously stressed the importance of Laodicea and the prominence of Polemo's family (1.530). Later, he portrayed Polemo's great-grandson, the famous and powerful sophist Hermocrates of Phocaea (VS 2.608–12). On Polemo's illustrious lineage, see Bowersock (1965) 51–4, 143–4; on his son, the sophist Attalus, see Jones (1980) 374–7. Another descendant named Polemo resided at Smyrna during the third century, where he served as *neokoros* during the arrest and martyrdom of Pionius (*martyr. s. Pion.* 3–5, 7–10, 15).

The remarkable account of Polemo's death is probably founded on historical fact.<sup>81</sup> Although still in his fifties, the great sophist chose to entomb and starve himself in order to relieve his excruciating rheumatism.<sup>82</sup> Intense physical suffering was a respectable motivation for suicide in Greco-Roman society, and starvation was a common method, particularly among intellectuals and aristocrats.<sup>83</sup> Chronic arthritis (1.543) would have been especially debilitating for a celebrity of legendary arrogance and excessive ostentation (1.535–7)<sup>84</sup> whose oratory employed vigorous movements (1.537). But Philostratus did not dwell on either Polemo's physical condition or the events surrounding his burial. There could not have been any ordinary funeral and lamentation if the body was not just breathing but even declaiming. The narrative implies the presence of relatives and friends at a constructed tomb (σῆμα) with a chamber and a heavy door that could be shut, like a standard family vault.

The episode instead showcases the rhetorical and performative genius of Polemo. At the centre are his terse words, which would have been preserved by associates or students as 'sayings of the wise man' (ἀποφθέγματα τοῦ σοφοῦ). As he was buried alive, he cried out 'Close it, close it, may the sun not see me silent!' (ἔπαγε, ἔπαγε, μὴ γὰρ ἴδοι με σιωπῶντα ἥλιος), and 'Give me a body and I will declaim!' (δότε μοι σῶμα καὶ μελετήσομαι).<sup>85</sup> The first statement asserts his undying devotion to his craft, for orators could achieve greatness only by endless practice to hone their skills. He plays the noble artist dying with pen in hand, so to speak, not unlike Sophocles, who was said to have expired during or after reciting *Antigone*.<sup>86</sup> The second statement, in which Polemo claims the unending greatness of his declamatory art, should be understood in a larger professional context.<sup>87</sup>

<sup>81</sup> Iuttner (1898) 36 and Reader (1996) 19–20 accept the scene's historicity; Campanile (1999) 305–11 is an excellent commentary.

<sup>82</sup> *Suda* s.v. Πολέμων (Π 1889): 'He died at fifty-six years of age, having put himself in the tomb and starved himself to death because he was afflicted by arthritis' (ἐτελεύτησε δὲ ἔξ καὶ πεντήκοντα ἐνιαυτῶν, ἑαυτὸν ἐν τῷ τάφῳ ἐμβάλων καὶ ἀποκαρτερήσας διὰ τὸ συνέχεσθαι τῇ ἀρθρίτιδι νόσῳ).

<sup>83</sup> See among others van Hooff (1990) 33–9, 41–7, 123–6; Campanile (1999) 306–7, nn. 143, 145–6 addresses Polemo's suicide.

<sup>84</sup> Russell (1983) 81; Gleason (1995) 25–8.

<sup>85</sup> *Suda* s.v. Πολέμων (Π 1889) is a slightly different version: 'Give me another body and I will get on board it' (δότε μοι ἕτερον σῶμα καὶ μετεμβήσομαι).

<sup>86</sup> Satyrus, *FHG* 3.162, ap. v. *Soph.* 14 (*TGrFIV*).

<sup>87</sup> Campanile (1999) 310–13. The phrase seems connected to the aphorism of Archimedes: 'Give me a place to stand and I will move the earth' (δός μοι ποῦ στῶ καὶ κινῶ τὴν γῆν). However, since those words are attested only in Late Roman and Byzantine sources (Pappus *Syn.* 8.1060.1–4, Simplic. *in Ph.* 10.1110.5, J. Tzet. *Chil.* 2.130; cf. Plut. *Marc.* 14.7), it is unclear whether Polemo borrowed from Archimedes or later writers on Archimedes knew the *sententiae Polemonis*.

The exclamation seems to echo the words of Patroclus when he dons Achilles' arms (*Il.* 16.40–1),<sup>88</sup> which Polemo had once quoted when he replaced the elderly Scopelian on an embassy for Smyrna (1.521, 1.536). At the time of his death, Polemo was scheduled to participate in another embassy but died before the journey to Rome. In order to satisfy the requests of Smyrna, Antoninus Pius required that the syndics produce a speech of Polemo. When they did so, presumably using either a piece he had drafted or one they composed in his style, they claimed that the sophist 'had come back to life' (ἀναβεβιωκέναι, 1.539–40). Polemo did not emulate Scopelian in relinquishing his post to a healthier colleague. Rather, defiant on the threshold of death, he demanded a new body, for there could be no oratorical substitute.

His final words also carry poignancy in the specific funerary context related by Philostratus. The proximity of the focal word σῶμα to the mortuary term σῆμα calls to mind the Pythagorean *dictum* σῶμα σῆμα.<sup>89</sup> The replacement of the first word with the second in the exclamation would produce 'Give me a tomb and I will declaim' (δότε μοι σῆμα καὶ μελετήσομαι). This alternative statement points to Polemo's self-consciousness regarding his unorthodox role as funeral orator at his own tomb. He thus strives to transcend his mortal condition through oratory, using epigrammatic phrases and wordplay even before his own mourners. The tone of the whole episode teeters between despair and absurdity. Either way, Polemo's theatre of the moribund would have been a fitting end to an extraordinary career.<sup>90</sup>

#### FUNERARY PRACTICE AND ELITE SOCIAL IDENTITY

The deaths of the sophists in *VS* reveal how a professional subset of the urban elite in provincial Greek cities used funerary practices to create and preserve a particular social identity. Separate elements in their persona were communicated through the material and contextual dimensions of mortuary behaviour. The scale, complexity and visibility of graves were directly proportional to the social status of the deceased, in large part because they correlated with expenditure of time, energy and resources. Philostratus never referred to the dead as wealthy or described their tombs

<sup>88</sup> 'Give me your arms to be fitted on my shoulders, if the Trojans, taking me for you, might hold off from war' (δός δέ μοι ὤμοισιν τὰ σά τεύχεα θωρηχθῆναι, αἶ κ' ἐμὲ σοὶ ἴσκοντες ἀπὸσχωνται πολέμοιο/Τρώες).

<sup>89</sup> Pl. *Crat.* 400 c, *Gorg.* 493a.

<sup>90</sup> Connolly (2001) 75–7 views Polemo's final acts, a 'shocking fusion of melodramatic theatricality and deadly seriousness', as a prime instance of the 'aesthetic of performative excess' that distinguished sophistic practice.

as 'lofty' (ὕψηλός), 'large' (μέγας), 'enormous' (παμμεγέθης), 'costly' (πολυτελής), or 'grandiose' (μεγαλοπρεπής), common adjectives for aristocratic funerals and tombs both real and imaginary in imperial Greek literature.<sup>91</sup> He does, however, record that the impressive tombs attributed to Polemo at Smyrna were elaborate constructions at prominent locales. The same isomorphism of quantity or form and status would have characterised the large attendance and conspicuous performance of the funerals of Apollonius, Secundus and Polemo. The biographer does not describe the graves of Phoenix, Philiscus and Dionysius, noting only the importance of their location. One must wonder if the Athenian tombs of the Thessalians were as ordinary in design as the Ephesian sarcophagus of Dionysius.

The sophists also expressed local affiliations through burial form and location. The interments of Apollonius and Secundus commemorated their Eleusinian connections, and Philiscus' tenure in the imperial chair might have drawn him to the Kerameikos. In one version of Polemo's tomb, he was portrayed as a priest in a Smyrnaean festival. The fact that separate versions of Polemo's burial placed him in different cities shows the dual nature of elite identity on the local and supra-local levels. Many sophists had international careers but ultimately were buried in their home cities, like Polemo (1.543–4).<sup>92</sup> Professional ambition, however, often drew them away from their homes to centres with greater political, economic, or cultural opportunities.<sup>93</sup> Phoenix, Philiscus and Dionysius could gain more by remaining in Athens and Ephesus than they might lose by returning to their ancestral homes. Burial among the ancient graves in the Outer Kerameikos and along the Embolos effectively co-opted a new ancestry for the deceased that was traced not through private genealogy but through civic history.

Another important factor in the mortuary self-presentation of the sophists was their cultural achievement, which entailed an education in classical literature, the practice of classicising language and rhetorical forms and participation in a code of personal and moral conduct. The shrine of Excellence in Polemo's supposed funerary garden at Smyrna symbolised his moral and intellectual virtue. Dionysius' interment near the Ephesian auditorium might have commemorated his professional activities. The most frequent demonstration of *paideia* in the funerary episodes was the

<sup>91</sup> E.g., Char. 1.6.1, 1.6.5, 2.5.10, 4.1.5–6, 5.1.1, 8.8.3; Xen. Eph. 3.9.1, 5.15.3–4; Plut. *Cons. ad ux.* 608 F; Luc. *Cutupl.* 9, *D. mort.* 29.1–2, *Hist. conscr.* 26, *Men.* 17, *Nav.* 40.

<sup>92</sup> In several biographies. Philostratus does not specify the location of the sophist's grave but reports that he was interred 'in his native land' (οἶκοι): 2.570, 2.577, 2.585, 2.598, 2.599, 2.606, 2.607, 2.620, 2.621.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. Bowersock (1969) 18–19.



re-invention of the classical landscape. Apollonius, Philiscus, Phoenix and Dionysius were interred in cemeteries with rich mythical and historical associations highlighted by Philostratus. Such topographic antiquarianism legitimated elite identity in urban society. In choosing a burial locale, these sophists adopted the past as a vibrant medium for identification and a source of power in the present.

Comparison of the funerary episodes in *VS* to the archaeological record of Greece and Asia Minor has revealed that Philostratus' sophists resemble the broader urban aristocracy. The cemeteries along the roads to Eleusis and the Academy contained the graves of both elite and non-elite Athenians during the Roman era. Many of them were not sophists, but surely they knew the historical significance of the landscape. Dionysius is the only known sophist among the many bodies that occupied hallowed ground inside Ephesus, including Celsus, who chose as his tomb a library to promote *paideia*. Each version of Polemo's tomb fits the mould of aristocratic commemoration, while none overtly displays classicising features of design or situation. The sophistic persona does not emerge until the bizarre episode of his entombment. His true distinction was virtuoso performance, not wealth and property, offices and honours, or ancestral prestige.

Considerable social diversity among the sophists is also evident in the funerary episodes and the physical remains. Philostratus differentiates between them on the basis of oratorical skill, intellectual pedigree, personal connections and reputation, but these discrepancies are viewed within his homogeneous picture of a class of cultural luminaries. It seems, however, that they represent several aristocratic substrata in imperial Greek society. Polemo occupied the highest rank, along with Herodes Atticus; the breadth of influence of Secundus and Phoenix was more local. The compiled evidence of inscribed dedications and epitaphs is now showing that, outside of Philostratus' selective gallery of sophistic portraits, professional orators with various social identities served communities both large and small.<sup>94</sup> The biographer's tendency to aggrandise the status of his subjects is apparent in his momentary panegyric to Dionysius. The relative importance of sophists in the social structure of provincial cities is perhaps nowhere so palpable as in the stark juxtaposition of his limestone sarcophagus, bare and hidden, to the magnificent library.

<sup>94</sup> Puech (2002). Jones (2003) 131–3 discusses a fascinating new inscription from Trebenna in eastern Lycia probably dating to the late third century that records the concerns of a local orator to maintain the *ῥήσος* which he received from his father, to protect it from violation and to regulate the funerary cult.

*On Apollonius*



# *Virtual visions: Phantasia and the perception of the divine in The Life of Apollonius of Tyana*

Verity Platt

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*<sup>1</sup> performs many impressive feats in its representation of the Greek sage as a paradigmatic *theios anēr*.<sup>2</sup> In its encyclopaedic range, the text manages to penetrate the geographical limits of the known world, to cover radically different approaches to religious practice, philosophical enquiry and systems of government, and even to traverse time and rewrite Greek literary history. It is a text that absorbs, appropriates and represents virtually every aspect of the intellectual culture of its time, all to further Philostratus' promotion of Apollonius as the Hellene *extraordinaire*, demonstrating his all-encompassing wisdom, his ability to embrace and master the familiar and the foreign, the practical and the intellectual, the human and the divine.<sup>3</sup> Working towards this end, the narrative repeatedly plays with the *topoi* of Greek literary tradition, allowing Apollonius to subvert and surpass his models in terms of *paideia*, *sophia* and piety, while demonstrating Philostratus' own skills in outstripping the literary achievements of his predecessors.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, *VA*. All translations are from F. C. Conybeare's Loeb edition (2001), first published in 1912.

<sup>2</sup> In using the phrase *theios anēr*, I allude to Ludwig Bieler's 1935–6 study of holy men in late antiquity; see also Du Toit (1997). On Philostratus as the archetypal holy man, see Talbert (1978) 1,619–51; Gallagher (1982) 1–26; Anderson (1986) 227–40; Corrington (1986) 1–43; Phillips (1986) 2677–2773; Koskenniemi (1994), 1–66; Flinterman (1995) 60–6.

<sup>3</sup> Froma Zeitlin comments that 'Philostratus' portrait of the sage . . . is also a prime illustration of Greek self-identity at work in the promotion of a Philhellenism in its many aspects, among which are *paideia*, philosophical wisdom, devotion to learning, love of freedom and defence of ethical values' (Zeitlin (2001) 248).

<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the author clearly states his agenda at the beginning of book 7, where, relating 'the feats of wise men in the presence of tyrants' (7.1) he writes, 'It is incumbent upon me to criticise these examples, not in order to show that they were not as remarkable as they are universally famous, but only to show that they fall short of the exploits of Apollonius, in spite of their being the best of their kind' (7.2).

Key to this pattern of appropriation and transcendence is the text's use of visual images.<sup>5</sup> As the ultimate representative and safeguard of Greek religious tradition, it is essential that Apollonius should justify and promote the worship and artistic representation of anthropomorphised gods. As Dio's Olympian Oration demonstrates, images such as the Zeus of Phidias were regarded as central to Hellenic cultural and religious identity. As paradigmatic holy man, and yet archetypal philosopher, Philostratus' Apollonius has to find a way of reconciling popular religious practice and sophisticated intellectual enquiry in a manner that will both validate Hellenic tradition and demonstrate his own status as an all-embracing symbol of Greek religious and philosophical achievement.<sup>6</sup> Thus throughout *VA*, Philostratus presents us with examples of the viewing of religious images that problematise perception and representation of the divine. Apollonius is cast as a pedagogic guide, or *exēgētēs*, leading a series of Socratic-style discussions. As the narrative progresses these move towards a specific elucidation of the way in which the pious and thoughtful viewer can apprehend traditional anthropomorphic images.

This gradual delineation of Apollonius' theory of representation is structured according to *VA*'s narrative framework of travel.<sup>7</sup> The performance of pilgrimage, the visiting of shrines and the viewing of sacred images are all intrinsic to Philostratus' hagiographical agenda, while contributing to the novelistic and paradoxographical qualities of the text. Thus the various images that the sage and his followers both view and discuss during their adventures are often presented as the conventional subjects of exotic travel narratives, while simultaneously reflecting and advancing the Hellenic philosophical and religious concerns threaded through the work as a whole.<sup>8</sup> As Apollonius points out to his follower Damis in Babylon, 'A wise man finds Hellas everywhere',<sup>9</sup> and, as is typical of literary encounters with the 'Other', the exotic details of foreign climes are ultimately subordinated to the text's exploration and promotion of its own cultural framework.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Whitmarsh (2001a) 273, who elegantly sums up Second Sophistic attitudes to Hellenism with the comment that 'Self-definition in the present involves both the appropriation and the transcendence of the paradigms of the past'.

<sup>6</sup> See Francis (1995) 126: 'Apollonius does not look forward to Byzantine saints as much as he recapitulates classical philosophers and heroes, a point reinforced by his consistent action on behalf of established norms and values.'

<sup>7</sup> See Elsner (1997) 24: Philostratus' travel narrative can be read as an allegory for 'the spiritual journey of Apollonius as paradigmatic holy man'.

<sup>8</sup> For Philostratus' own attitudes to Hellenism, see Swain (1999) and Follet (1991).

<sup>9</sup> 1.34: σοφῶς ἀνδρὶ Ἑλλὰς πάντα.

<sup>10</sup> For the translation of foreign practices and attitudes into the thought-structure and conceptual framework of Greco-Roman culture in the imperial period, see Elsner (2001) 128: 'The discourse

Travel, pilgrimage, the viewing of sacred images and the attainment of *sophia* all come together in the Greek notion of *theōria*. As well as a term used to describe state pilgrimages to religious festivals in Greece, the concept of *theōria* can also apply to the individual pilgrim who visits foreign lands in search of knowledge and wisdom, often of a religious nature.<sup>11</sup> It involves the notion of autopsy – ‘seeing for oneself’ – and the idea of coming into contact with a foreign ‘Other’, often a deity in the form of his or her image. The concept of *theōria* is also, crucially, where religion and philosophy meet, incorporating the desire to view the divine with the process of intellectual enquiry. This dual significance is explored in an article on the use of the term in Platonic philosophy by Andrea Nightingale, in which she argues, quoting from the *Republic*, that ‘the philosopher . . . is a new kind of *theōros*: a man who travels to the metaphysical realm to see the sacred sights in that region. The goal of philosophy, as Socrates claims, is to engage in the “*theōria* of all being.”’<sup>12</sup> Nightingale entitles her work ‘Wandering and Wondering’, a highly appropriate description, one might say, for Apollonius himself, incorporating as it does the practices of journeying, seeing, thinking and revering. Throughout *VA*, the concept of *theōria* as a religious process is intertwined with Apollonius’ intellectual journey – his acquisition and demonstration of *sophia*. We shall see that theoric experience as presented by Philostratus repeatedly brings together the quest for wisdom and the perception of divinity through the mediatory functions of sacred and allegorical images.

Following the work of Ella Birmelin in the 1930s, three key passages have been traditionally regarded as significant for our understanding of Philostratus’ use of art in *VA*.<sup>13</sup> The first takes place in book 2.22, where Apollonius explains the imagery on the metalwork reliefs in Taxila to Damis, their representation of Alexander’s defeat of the Indian king Porus leading to a discussion about the nature of *mimēsis*. Here, Apollonius defines the relationship between the artist’s linear representation of objects in painting, and the viewer’s perception of each representation as the

provided by [the] Greek model is inevitably the Hellenocentric labelling of the Other as weird and foreign through the wonder tales of the naïve or faux-naïve traveller.’

<sup>11</sup> See Koller (1957); Rausch (1982); Rutherford (1995, 2000, 2001).

<sup>12</sup> Nightingale (2001) 36 (*Republic* 486D); see also Nightingale (2004). Rutherford (2001) 47, comments that ‘an intellectual component is built into the notion of *theōria*, which also has the sense “philosophical contemplation,” and it can be argued that there was a conceptual link between the two . . . Philosophers seem to exploit the idea of pilgrimage as a journey culminating in *theōria* as a symbol for the path of reasoning, consisting of dialectic and culminating in rational enlightenment’ (also Rutherford (2000) 140–2).

<sup>13</sup> See Birmelin (1933); Schweitzer (1934) 286–300. On images in the *VA* see also Rousselle (2001) 393–99.

'thing itself' (rather than the representation), so emphasising the dynamic relationship that must take place between image and viewer. He explicitly states that *mimēsis* is not just an element of the artist's skill, but that 'those who look at works of painting and drawing require a mimetic faculty'; in order to appreciate and respond appropriately to an image they must first conceive in their minds an *eidōlon* (εἰδωλον) or *eikōn* (εἰκών) of the thing represented. The description of the metal reliefs here looks back to the epic ecphrastic tradition (particularly Homer's shield of Achilles), creating a complex web of images and words in which it is the viewer/reader's power to form an abstract idea of the image in his mind (ἀναλάβοι τι ἐς τὸν νοῦν) that enables him to 'view intelligently' (μὴ ἀνοήτως ὀρῶσιν).

The second key passage takes on not epic but epideictic rhetoric, alluding to Dio Chrysostom's twelfth Oration (the 'Olympian') in its discussion of the relative merits of the Zeus of Homer and the Zeus of Phidias (4.7). Like Dio, Apollonius here promotes the literary representation of the god, 'an ideal presence imagined everywhere in heaven', over the chryselephantine statue at Olympia, which is 'only to be seen upon earth'. The final, and most overtly polemical, passage moves from epideictic to philosophy, forming part of Apollonius' extensive Socratic-style debate with Thespesion, the spokesman of the Naked Sages (or 'Gymnosophists') of Ethiopia in 6.19. Here the sage promotes Greek systems of anthropomorphic representation over the Egyptian practice of theriomorphism (the worship of gods in the form of animals), and presents his theory of *phantasia* ('viewing with imagination') as a solution to the epistemological problems raised by the concept of art as *mimēsis* ('imitation').

Each of these episodes tackles the cognitive issues at stake in the creation and viewing of images, setting Hellenic modes of naturalistic, anthropomorphic representation against the ecphrastic powers of literature, on the one hand, and the visual systems of foreign cultures, on the other. The presentation and discussion of images within *VA* can, in fact, be read as a microcosm of the text as a whole, in which Philostratus appropriates and transforms a multiplicity of literary genres as part of his ever-shifting, Protean enterprise. Images thus form a literary battleground in which the author and his subject demonstrate their ability to surpass their predecessors in both sophistic skill and revelatory insight. Accordingly, the passages of *Kunsttheorie* identified by Birmelin are not the only episodes relevant to our subject. Philostratus' choice of genre (predominantly biographical/novelistic) and Apollonius' pedagogical pose means that the power and significance of images are also expressed through scenes of *paideia* (as in

the Taxila episode), and key occasions of dramatic viewing positioned throughout the text. In this sense, *VA* can be compared to the ancient novel, where scenes of viewing are often connected with the acquisition of crucial knowledge and the characters' journey from ignorance to 'enlightenment'.<sup>14</sup> That Philostratus was supremely aware of the relationship between viewing and *paideia* is demonstrated by the fact that the progression from ignorance to knowledge through the act of looking at paintings plays such an important part in the pedagogic structuring of the *Imagines*.<sup>15</sup> In *VA*, the roles of teacher and pupil are re-cast in an explicitly sacred context, so that Apollonius, as *exēgētēs*, uses images to communicate his religious and philosophical teachings to his companions. Our experience, as readers, is carefully controlled as we, along with Damis *et al.*, are put in the role of uneducated viewer; to view through the *ecphrasis* scattered throughout the text is a process of education and initiation by which we will gain access to higher truths through an allegorical combination of narrative and description, comparable to the religious and philosophical ideals explored through the ecphrastic *pinax* presented in the *Tabula of Cebes*.<sup>16</sup>

In order to demonstrate this element of *VA*, I will explore the third section of *Kunsttheorie* outlined by Birmelin – the Ethiopian debate – which forms part of a sequence of episodes in which Apollonius and his companions view or discuss works of art, and reveals much about Apollonius' attitude towards religious representations. Book 6 repeatedly presents us with images, or references to images which, in keeping with the religious focus of *VA*, are concerned with both the perception and representation of the divine, and the attainment of wisdom through philosophical enquiry. These *exempla* repeatedly explore the relationship between vision and knowledge, relating the theoretic viewing experiences of Apollonius' travels in foreign lands to his intellectual quest to acquire and demonstrate *sophia*.

<sup>14</sup> E.g. the related statues of Diana, Actaeon and Isis in Apuleius' *Golden Ass* and the painting of Andromeda that plays such an important role in the plot of Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. That this is a common novelistic trope is demonstrated by the *ecphrasis* that frame both Daphnis and Chloe and Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe and Clitophon*. See Bartsch (1989) 26–31, 42–44 and Zeitlin (1990) 417–64.

<sup>15</sup> See Elsner (1995) 28–39.

<sup>16</sup> On the *pepaideutic* qualities of the *Tabula of Cebes* and its relationship to the reader, see Elsner (1995) 39–46 esp. 43: 'The key to salvation is viewing and correctly understanding what one has looked at. Such understanding is of course not different from the act of *exegesis* itself. The very act of reading the *Tabula* and of following the interpretation as it leads us deeper into the mystery of the picture is itself an initiation into the true path.'



## THE MIS-VIEWING OF MEMNON

I met a traveller from an antique land  
 Who said: 'Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
 Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,  
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, . . .'

(Shelley, *Ozymandias*)

The first image with which we are confronted as we enter Ethiopia is the colossus of Memnon at Thebes (6.4). Famed for the eerie 'twanging' sound it emitted at dawn, the statue and its partner were a popular attraction on the Egyptian pilgrimage circuit, survivors of the great temple of Amenhotep III, fifteenth-century BC ruler of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Memnon's colossus was a *thauma*, a marvel combining the sacred, the ancient, the mysterious and the pseudo-scientific – perfect subject matter for paradoxography. Indeed, Pausanias tells us that the colossus 'made me marvel (θαυμάσαι) more than anything else'.<sup>17</sup> He goes on to explain,

This statue is broken in two by Cambyses, and at the present day from head to middle it is thrown down; but the rest is seated, and every day at the rising of the sun it makes a noise, and the sound one could best liken to that of a harp or lyre when a string has been broken.<sup>18</sup>

The sonic phenomenon recorded by Pausanias was a paradoxically fortuitous result of the image's desecration, for once the upper part of the statue had been destroyed, the thermal strength of the rising sun, warming and expanding the stone of the statue's base, came into contact with the cool channels of air running through the crevices of the statue's interior, so producing a mysterious sound effect which many chose to interpret as an epiphanic animation of the image. Once the statue was repaired, possibly under the orders of Septimius Severus after his visit to Egypt in AD 199, this collision of hot and cold could not take place, and Memnon was silenced.<sup>19</sup> Unsurprisingly, the colossus became a focus of *theōria* for generations of Greek and Roman pilgrims, who recorded their experiences on its legs and base, often with the simple formula ἤκουσα Μέμνονος,

<sup>17</sup> 1.42.3

<sup>18</sup> Other literary references to the colossus of Memnon are Strabo 17.1.46 (the earliest extant classical reference to the statue); Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.61 (the visit of Germanicus); Plin. *NH* 36.58 (*Memnonis statuæ dicatus, quem cotidiano solis ortu contactum radiis crepare tradunt*); Luc. *Toxaris* 12; *Philopseudes* 8.

<sup>19</sup> See Bowersock (1984) 31–2, who suggests that the colossus was repaired by Zenobia and her son in the late third century AD.

or *audi Memnonem*.<sup>20</sup> The colossus was even the focus of three imperial visits, including one by Hadrian and Sabina that was detained for three days because, intriguingly, Memnon chose to remain silent.<sup>21</sup>

Memnon is thus an appropriate focus for Philostratus' Apollonius, whose paradigmatic status means that he must surpass every theoretic model in his journeys to exotic sacred destinations.<sup>22</sup> Fittingly, the colossus stands both at the beginning of book 6, and close to the border between Egypt and Ethiopia, so acting as a textual marker of the transition into the mysterious world that was later exploited as a paradoxographical backdrop by Heliodorus.<sup>23</sup> Within the structure of *VA* as a whole, Ethiopia forms a southern counterpart to the eastern limit of the known world marked by the Indian episode. Memnon was, after all, the paradigmatic Ethiopian, a symbol of otherness, and yet, through his presence in the *Iliad*, he forms a Homeric link to the world of Achilles and the Greek heroic past explored by Apollonius in book 4. The statue's role as an indication of transition hints that Memnon also has a programmatic function, indicating the way in which religious images will be central to the subsequent narrative. Philostratus writes:

They went on to the sacred enclosure of Memnon, of whom Damis gives the following account . . .

Now this statue, he says, was turned towards the sunrise, and was that of a youth still unbearded; and it was made of black stone, and the two feet were joined together after the style in which statues were made in the time of Daedalus; and the arms of the figure were perpendicular to the seat pressing upon it, for though the figure was still sitting it was represented in the very act and impulse of rising up. We hear much of this attitude of the statue, and of the expression of its eyes, and of how the lips seemed about to speak; but they say that they had no opportunity of admiring (θαυμάσαι) these effects until they saw them realised; for when the sun's rays fell upon the statue, and this happened exactly at dawn, they could not restrain their admiration; for the lips spoke immediately the sun's rays touched

<sup>20</sup> On the Memnon inscriptions, 107 in Latin and Greek, dating from the first to the third centuries AD, see Bernard (1960), no. 30 (G 24), 93–6. See also Kaibel (1878), nos. 987–1014.

<sup>21</sup> For the visits of Hadrian and Septimius Severus, see Bowersock (1984); for Germanicus (who, appropriately for a Philhellenic pilgrim on the Egyptian *thaumata* trail, dressed as a Greek), see Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.61. That Memnon was almost a cliché on the Greek tourist trail is suggested by his appearance in Lucian's comic dialogues *Toxaris* and *Philopseudes*, where the trip is just one of many for an over-curious pilgrim and gullible idiot, respectively.

<sup>22</sup> For Apollonius' 'orgy of temple-visiting' elsewhere in *VA*, see Elsner (1997) 22–8.

<sup>23</sup> On similarities between *VA* and *Aethiopica*, see Rohde (1974 [1914]) 466–73, Maillon's introduction to the Budé Heliodorus (1934) vol. 1, 86 and Anderson (1986) 230–1. On paradoxography and the negotiation of Hellenism in *Aithiopica*, see Whitmarsh (1998) 93–124, and in the ancient novel in general, Morales (1995) 39–50. On attitudes to Ethiopia in the Greco-Roman world, see Romm (1992) 45–81.

them, and the eyes seemed to stand out and gleam against the light as do those of men who love to bask in the sun. Then they say they understood that the figure was of one in the act of rising and making obeisance to the Sun, in the way those do who worship the powers above standing erect. (VA 6.4)

Here we have a situation almost unique in classical studies – a literary account of the viewing of an image, which survives together with the image itself, as well as inscriptional evidence of the actual viewing of the statue by Greco-Roman contemporaries. The narrative of religious revelation actually bears a certain resemblance to the ‘real’ epiphanic experiences inscribed on the colossus.<sup>24</sup> One Petronius Secundus, prefect of Egypt, recorded his experience in AD 92 with the address, ‘You spoke’ (φθέγξαι), followed by a Homeric paraphrase describing the statue as ἀκτεῖσιν βαλλόμενος πυρίναις, ‘struck by the fiery rays of the sun’,<sup>25</sup> just as Damis speaks of the statue’s utterance (φθέγγασθαι) ‘at the striking of the sun’ (προσβαλούσης . . . τῆς ἀκτίνος).<sup>26</sup>

Philostratus’ account also bears similarities to the Greek inscription on the Temple of Mandulis at Talmis, also dated to the third century AD, famously discussed by A. D. Nock.<sup>27</sup> Here a pilgrim also describes the manifestation of a divine being in the form of light, and refers to an artistic representation of a deity within a shrine, recounting a dream vision of the god Helios that anticipates, or mirrors, the effect produced by the rays of the rising sun streaming into the dark temple.<sup>28</sup> In both texts – inscription and biography – the pilgrims begin in ignorance, unclear as to how they should view the sacred image; there follows an epiphanic viewing experience during the statue’s virtual ‘animation’ by the light of the rising sun, resulting in a revelation about the identity and function of the image and the deity it represents. The pilgrims subsequently perform ritual actions, guided by the priests of the cult. This movement from

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the literary qualities of the Memnon epigrams ascribed to Sabina’s consort Julia Balbilla and others, see Bowie (1990) 61–6 and a brief note by West (1977) 120.

<sup>25</sup> *Odyssey* 19.441. Bernard (1960) no. 13, a Greek couplet inserted into a longer Latin inscription. The literary pretensions of many of these testimonies are exemplified by one pilgrim’s inscription, which proclaims, ‘I will make mention of you in my books’ (Bernard (1960) no. 22, dated to AD 122/3).

<sup>26</sup> Compare the inscriptional evidence from the Temple of Seti I at Abydos (known as the Memnonion), discussed by Rutherford (2000) 140, where a group of visitors recorded that each of them ‘viewed’ (ἑθεήσατο).

<sup>27</sup> Nock (1934 [1972]).

<sup>28</sup> The narration of this epiphanic experience continues, ‘I had a vision, and rested, for you granted my prayer and showed yourself to me . . . washing yourself in the waters of immortality, you appear again. You came at the right time, making a rising towards your enclosure, bringing breath to your *xoanon* and the temple and great power.’

ignorance to wisdom is also implied by an inscription behind the left foot of Memnon's statue, which reads,

[Α]ὔδήεντά σε, Μέμνον, ἐγὼ Παιῶ | ν ὁ Σιδήτης  
τὸ πρὶν ἐπυνθα | νόμην, νῦν δὲ παρών ἔμαθον.

I, Paion of Side, who previously enquired about your speaking,  
Memnon, have now experienced it right here.<sup>29</sup>

Paion's movement from enquiry to experience (from ἐπυνθανόμην to ἔμαθον) figures precisely the process of *theōria* – religious investigation and the desire for proximity to god, followed by the acquisition of knowledge through the act of going to see (or, in this case, to hear). It is not, perhaps, surprising that in the fourth century Jerome was moved to claim, after Eusebius, that the colossus of Memnon had been silenced at the birth of Christ.<sup>30</sup> For the fame of the image's eerily numinous power spread throughout the ancient world, constructing it as a paradigmatic focus of the theoric urge to experience the mysteries of the divine.

However, despite the fact that Damis' account of the Memnon phenomenon bears a certain similarity to 'real' records of the statue's effect upon its viewers, certain details do not add up. Pausanias claims that the colossus was 'broken in two', and that the upper part was 'thrown down' on the ground (rather in the manner of Shelley's *Ozymandias*). Yet in Damis' account, Memnon's dawn cry is presented not as a twang emerging from the bowels of the colossus, but as an utterance which comes from his very lips, while the light of the sun is caught and reflected by the statue's eyes. Yet if the colossus' upper half was lying in ruins on the ground, the lips and eyes cannot have been visible. Even if the statue's torso and head had been restored by the time that Philostratus was writing, they cannot have been while Apollonius was alive (i.e. earlier than Pausanias), and the account is still contradictory; there was never a time at which the statue both uttered a cry at dawn, *and* had a visible torso and head, for we are told by later sources that once the image was repaired, it ceased to make a sound. There are still further errors in Damis' account: he tells us that the statue was black, whereas it is in fact made of yellow-grey quartzite sandstone, and that 'the arms of the figure were perpendicular to the seat pressing upon it, for though the figure was still sitting it was represented in the very act and impulse of rising up'. In fact, as one can still see today, the arms rest

<sup>29</sup> Bernard (1960), no. 12, dated to AD 89–91. On Paion's career as a professional poet, see Bowie (1990) 66.

<sup>30</sup> Bowersock (1984) 24. Jerome (Eusebius) *Chron.* ed. Helm, 17. Bowersock adds that a ninth-century manuscript in Merton College, Oxford, adds *cuius status usque ad adventum Christi sole oriente vocem dare dicebatur*.

upon the knees of the statue rather than down by its sides, and rather than appearing to be in the process of standing up, the colossus seems firmly rooted to its throne. Moreover, Damis mentions only one figure, whereas the singing statue was, and still is, accompanied by an identical, silent figure.

So how are we to interpret this anomaly? Bowersock has argued that since Damis' account as reported in *VA* is so erroneous, 'Philostratus can never have seen the colossus of Memnon or spoken to anyone who did, nor have read an account from someone who had seen it. So much for Damis.'<sup>31</sup> So much for Damis indeed; as Flinterman has put it, 'Rivers of ink have flowed over the poor Syrian and his scrapbook',<sup>32</sup> and it is now generally accepted that the 'Scraps from the manger' (ἐκφατνίσματα) that Philostratus attributes to his source are in fact a fictional 'plausibility-enhancing device'.<sup>33</sup> At key points within the text, Philostratus seems deliberately to problematise the unreliability of his source, so drawing attention to the fictional aspects of his biography; he even comments during the Indian episode that 'It would be profitable neither to believe nor disbelieve everything' (3.45). It seems significant that the awkward Memnon passage is introduced with the phrase, 'Damis gives the following account' (περὶ δὲ τοῦ Μένωνος τὰδε ἀναγράφει Δάμις), and written entirely in reported speech.

But why should Philostratus wish to highlight the fictional nature of his text in relation to the colossus of Memnon? As mentioned above, most of the viewing episodes within *VA* are led by Apollonius in the role of *exēgētes*. At Olympia, for example, the sage acts as an *Imagines*-style pedagogue, explaining the style and iconography of an archaic *kouros* statue of the athlete Milo to viewers within the sanctuary.<sup>34</sup> So why is it that, rather than giving us a scenario in which Apollonius explains the Memnon phenomenon to his confused followers, demonstrating his knowledge of religious arcana and pious attitude towards ancient cults and Homeric heroes, Philostratus' narrative parades a *mis*-viewing of the colossus, ostentatiously attributed to an unreliable source? Indeed, Apollonius is

<sup>31</sup> Bowersock (1984) 28. <sup>32</sup> Flinterman (1995) 79.

<sup>33</sup> Whitmarsh (2001a) 229. For summaries of the state of the Damis debate see Bowie (1978) 1,652–99; Anderson (1986) 169, n. 1; Koskenniemi (1991) 9–15; Flinterman (1995) 79–88. For Damis as a fictional device, see Meyer (1917) 371–424; Bowie (1978); Raynor (1984) 222–6; Francis (1995) 83–9; Whitmarsh (2002) 227–9. For Philostratus' possible use of a pseudepigraphic text from the second/third century AD, see Speyer (1974) 48–53; Goulet (1981) 176–8. For Damis as a historical figure, see Phillimore (1912); Grosso (1954) 333–532.

<sup>34</sup> *VA* 4.28. See Rousselle (2001) 395–6, who points out that Apollonius' analysis of the Milo statue is also erroneous, for although Milo competed at Olympia between 532 and 516, Apollonius' description of the statue conforms to the Daedalic style, which is dated to the seventh century BC.

not mentioned at all, but fades into the background while Philostratus concentrates on Damis' attempt to describe the image and its effect.

This shift in the narrative's treatment of works of art, in addition to Damis' apparent errors, raises the question of how images are to be viewed. The emphasis on epiphany, cult practice and religious knowledge focuses the question still further: how should we look at *sacred* images? Without Apollonius to guide us, we as readers are put into the same position as the confused and ignorant Damis. Yet the self-consciously contrived nature of the text itself suggests that there may be clues hidden within Damis' account, and that the 'mistakes' he makes may actually have a certain import for the way in which we, as readers, experience the Memnon phenomenon.

Nock compares the Mandaulis vision to the statue of Serapis in his temple at Alexandria, where the sun's first rays supposedly touched the cult image on the lips, so that, according to the Christian writer Rufinus, 'Serapis seemed to be greeted by the sun with a kiss'.<sup>35</sup> If we take this into account, perhaps we could read Philostratus' narrative as a conflation of the sonic phenomenon of the Memnon statue with the visual effect produced by Serapis, as if to present his readers with a synthesised, archetypal experience of an 'Egyptian statue greeting the dawn'. It forms a sophisticated blend of Egyptian *exempla* which fits seamlessly into the religious *Realien* against which Apollonius' travels have been set. Like the cult of Achilles described in *Heroicus*, the Memnon passage is ostensibly a convincing account of religious practice constructed very carefully in order to serve a particular purpose within the text as a whole. Such an ambivalent relationship to 'reality' characterises *VA* in general, which is on one hand a historiographical work deeply embedded in Greek religious and cultural practices, and on the other, a highly contrived piece of imaginative biography in which fictional elements are frequently employed in order to access a deeper 'truth'.

In contrast to the ubiquitous statement of the inscriptional evidence ('I heard'), Philostratus' passage emphasises the statue's *visual* impact. Damis describes in detail Memnon's posture and repeatedly emphasises the act of viewing, commenting, 'We hear much of this attitude of the statue, and of the expression of the eyes, and of how the lips seemed about to speak'. In short, he constructs an elaborate *ecphrasis* that draws us into the epiphanic experience narrated in the text, so that the dominant impression with which the reader is left is not one of sound but of light. Yet this visual

<sup>35</sup> Nock (1934 [1972]) 77; Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* 11.23.

experience, epiphanic and potentially programmatic, is of an image that *does not exist* in the form in which it is described.

Continuing the theme of visual animation, the shift in the statue's posture, by which Memnon's arms are described as being down by his sides, instead of resting on his knees, accords with the image's posture as one in the act of worship, about to rise up in prayer. This dynamic shift imbues the image with an incipient movement, enhancing its epiphanic qualities.<sup>36</sup> The description of Memnon as a celebrant simultaneously links the statue's function to that of the viewers themselves, as worshippers of the Sun. Infused with the spirit and power of the divinised hero himself, the statue does not only speak; he also *sees*. The process of revelation is thus transmitted from the light of the Sun, via the eyes of the image, which 'gleam against the light', to the eyes of those who view the image; *theōria* is successfully achieved through the visual interaction of god, statue and pilgrim.

The process of *theōria* is completed by a sacrifice 'to the Sun of Ethiopia and to Memnon of the Dawn', followed by an exegetical conversation with the priests of the cult who, Damis tells us, 'explained that the one name was derived from the words signifying "to burn and be warm", αἴθειν τε καὶ θάλλπειν, and the other from his mother [Eos]'. This etymological and genealogical information emphasises the statue's relationship to Memnon the divinity, a numinous being associated with light, so reinforcing the epiphanic revelation facilitated by the viewing of the statue. Despite the fact that we are viewing a marker of 'otherness' created by an ancient, foreign culture and located at the entrance to the mysterious land of Ethiopia, the *aition* that acts as a final proof of the image's religious significance is constructed according to *Greek* words and Homeric myth.<sup>37</sup> The revelation that the pilgrims experience as *vision* is ultimately explained through *language* and the Hellenic literary tradition. In this sense, the episode is paradigmatic of the viewing and discussion of images that takes place throughout *VA*. Although the acquisition of philosophical knowledge and religious understanding is repeatedly presented as a visual experience, such *sophia* is ultimately communicated through texts – both the literary heritage (Homeric, Platonic) through which Apollonius constructs his pose

<sup>36</sup> Damis' comment is also, perhaps, an allusion to Phidias' statue of Zeus which, if its epiphanic potential were fulfilled and it had the power to stand up, would have smashed through the roof of the temple itself (Strabo 8.3.30).

<sup>37</sup> Compare *VA* 6.27, in which Apollonius exorcises the spirit of a satyr through his knowledge of a myth about Midas, so using Greek lore to explain the supernatural.

as the ultimate Hellene, and the polemical intertextuality of the *Life* as a whole.

Damis' viewing of Memnon is thus a highly creative response to the statue, imaginatively supplementing the incomplete figure with visual details that enhance the epiphanic and religious qualities of the viewing process. This does not necessarily annul Damis' value as a narrative voice, but to a certain extent demonstrates the degree to which he has absorbed the teachings of Apollonius himself. When discussing the Porus reliefs in 2.22, Apollonius had stressed the role of *mimēsis* as a creative process required not just of the artist in his creation of a naturalistic image, but also of the viewer, for in order to appreciate and respond appropriately to an image, he must first conceive in his mind an *eidōlon* or *eikōn* of the thing represented. This is, in effect, what Damis presents us with in his *ecphrasis* of Memnon. It is as if he has fully internalised the lesson given to him in Taxila, to the extent that he no longer sees what the image itself presents in physical terms, but, perhaps rather a little too enthusiastically, presents his *mental* picture of the statue. Indeed, he goes so far as to incorporate into his viewing experience Apollonius' application of mimetic theory in 2.22 to the representation of racial characteristics:

If we drew one of these Indians with a pencil without colour, yet he would appear, for his flat nose, and his stiff curling locks and prominent jaw, and a certain gleam about his eyes (ἡ περὶ τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς οἷον ἐκπληξίς), would give a black look to the picture and depict an Indian to those who view intelligently (τοῖς γε μὴ ἀνοήτως ὁρῶσιν).

We have already noted how Damis explicitly, and erroneously, mentions that the statue of Memnon was made 'of black stone', and that when the sun's rays struck at Dawn, 'the eyes seemed to stand out and gleam against the light as do those of men who love to bask in the sun'. Is Damis here transferring Apollonius' *ecphrasis* of the Indian 'other' to his own *ecphrasis* of the Ethiopian 'other', trying a little too hard to please his teacher, to be one of 'those who view intelligently'?

The Memnon passage in *VA* communicates the *desire to see*, the pilgrim's urge to encounter the divine through the mediating powers of sacred images. Yet Philostratus' text deliberately destabilises its own narrative in order to focus attention on the complex combination of influences at work when we do view an image. The epiphanic qualities of the Memnon experience arise not simply from the viewing of the colossus itself, but are also a product of internalised mental concepts, related to language, myth and our perceptions of the physical world around us. The visual



experience becomes yet more complex when it is subsequently narrated in verbal form; as Philostratus repeatedly reminds us in the *Imagines*, an *ecphrasis* can only *ever* be of an image that does not exist.<sup>38</sup> The important element in both the viewing and reading process is the intellectual engagement of the viewer/reader's mind. The *theōria* achieved by Damis and Apollonius' followers, while prompted by a visual image, can be truly experienced only as a mental phenomenon, where visual experience is supplemented by a deeper religious and philosophical understanding. It is not surprising, then, that the Memnon passage finishes with a Greek etymology, for this seemingly sophistic twisting of Ethiopian cult back to Hellenic linguistic concerns demonstrates precisely the intellectual processes that are required, in Apollonius' philosophy, for the attainment of true *sophia*. As he comments in book 4, the Zeus of Phidias is only 'to be seen' (φαίνεσθαι), whereas the Zeus of Homer 'is imagined' (ὑπνοεῖσθαι). It is the process of visualisation involving the faculty of the *mind* that is superior. In this sense, both the Phidias–Homer debate and Damis' 'mis-viewing' of Memnon highlight the problematic issues involved in looking at religious images according to notions of *mimēsis*; while Apollonius' mimetic theory may be appropriate for looking at the historical narrative reliefs at Taxila, the concept of 'imitation', which relies on the viewer's acquaintance with a visible prototype, is useless when it comes to representing and viewing gods. That Damis is required to 'mis-view' Memnon in order to gain his theoric experience implies that we need something *else* in order to view correctly the anthropomorphic images of traditional Greek religion. It is this dilemma that Apollonius subsequently addresses in his conversation with the Gymnosophists.

#### THROUGH PHILOSOPHY TO VISION: THE ALLEGORY OF PRODICUS

Leaving the *temenos* of Memnon, Apollonius and his followers travel to the hill beyond the Nile where the community of Naked Philosophers is centred. They immediately encounter problems, due to a slanderous envoy sent by Apollonius' rival Euphrates, accusing him of intellectual arrogance, the promotion of Indian philosophy over other doctrines and the practice of false magic (6.7). Apollonius' subsequent debate with the Gymnosophists' leader Thespesion is accordingly presented as an *apologia* in which he justifies his philosophical choices by stressing the importance

<sup>38</sup> See Elsner (1995) 28, who comments that 'These descriptions were not seen as dependent on prior images (as a modern art historian's description would be): they were independent and self-sufficient works of rhetorical art in their own right'.

of Brahman precepts, while setting them in the context of Hellenic structures of thought (so demonstrating his superior knowledge and wisdom).<sup>39</sup> The Ethiopian episode thus presents a form of philosophical and religious *apologia*, which anticipates and balances Apollonius' more political apologetic before Domitian in books 7–8.<sup>40</sup>

Thespesion criticises Apollonius' adoption of Indian doctrine by contrasting the Gymnosophists' own, apparently simple theosophy with the elaborate complexities of the Brahmins' approach. Yet throughout his extended debate with the sage, Thespesion continually appeals to the traditions of Greek religion and philosophy in order to support his arguments in favour of Ethiopian wisdom. Again, the attractions of the foreign and exotic are explored only as part of *VA*'s discourse on Hellenism. Apollonius' sophistic skill as the ultimate Hellene allows him to appropriate the Greek *exempla* Thespesion employs and to re-present them in order to justify and promote his own teachings. Ultimately, Apollonius' influence not just as a representative of traditional religious values but also as one who tells us *how* to think and worship, so improving upon those traditions, is demonstrated by his justification of Greek anthropomorphism through the doctrine of *phantasia* in 6.19. By formulating a way to view the divine that unites the intellectual and the sacred, Apollonius presents the ultimate model of *theōria* and completes his self-presentation not as a *magos*, but as a man of *sophia* and piety.

While the colossus of Memnon anticipates the religious aspect of the *phantasia* debate, Thespesion presents us with an image that anticipates its philosophical aspect. In contrasting the philosophical systems of Ethiopia and India in 6.10, the Gymnosophist uses the allegory, attributed to the fifth-century BC sophist Prodicus, of Heracles' choice between Virtue and Vice, saying, 'Now figure yourself, Apollonius, as standing between Indian wisdom on one side, and our own humble wisdom on the other'.

<sup>39</sup> The apologetic character of *VA* in general has been discussed by Swain (1999), in relation to Apollonius' troubled confrontations with imperial power (in the Nero episode in 4.35–47, his persecution by Domitian in 7.1–34 and imaginary defence speech in 8.1–10). The passage in 6.11 forms a 'lengthy technical *apologia* for philosophy as a spiritual system of personal living, and this amounts to a serious defence of fundamentals' (158). We might also see Apollonius' refutation of the charges of magic (γοητεία) and absorption of Eastern wisdom into a Greek world-view as part of a strategy of conspicuous philhellenism in the face of the rapid growth of Christianity.

<sup>40</sup> However, while the Ethiopian section may be designed to justify Apollonius' religious and philosophical doctrines, it is by no means apologetic in tone. While Thespesion may seek to cast Apollonius in the role of plaintiff, the sage subverts his attempts and once more presents himself as a pedagogue or *exēgētēs*, no longer learning, as he did from the Brahmins, but demonstrating and confirming his pre-eminence. Indeed, he proclaims, 'For I come here not to ask your advice about how to live . . . I shall not hesitate as it were to make you the auditors of my life and teach you (διδάσκων) that I rightly chose this life of mine, than which no better one has ever suggested itself to me' (6.11).

Following Xenophon's association of the Choice of Heracles with Socrates in his *Memorabilia* (2.1.21–34), classical authors had frequently exploited the allegory's presentation of abstract ideas through personification.<sup>41</sup> But, unsurprisingly, the tradition undergoes a certain modification here, which is significant for Philostratus' presentation of Apollonius. Thespesion introduces the passage with the words, 'You have seen in painted narratives (εἶδες ἐν ζωγραφίας λόγοις) the representation of Hercules by Prodicus'. This immediately raises a problem: just as Damis' account of the colossus of Memnon was ultimately of a non-existent image, so Thespesion's account of the Prodicus allegory erroneously presents the scene not as a philosophical parable, but as a *painting*. Yet despite the popularity of the allegory in literature, there exist no extant references to an actual visual representation of the Choice of Heracles in the ancient world.<sup>42</sup> If there was a famous painting of the scene in antiquity, then all traces of it have been lost.<sup>43</sup>

That Philostratus was familiar with the allegory in its literary form is demonstrated by two references to Prodicus in *Lives of the sophists*, where on both occasions it is presented as a textually transmitted myth.<sup>44</sup> But it fits Philostratus' creative presentation of images in *VA* as a whole that such a painting never existed at all. Indeed, the problematic nature of the image is alluded to by Thespesion's phrase ἐν ζωγραφίας λόγοις, literally 'in the words of painting'. The oxymoron perfectly captures the problematic

<sup>41</sup> Joel (1893–1901); Alpers (1912); Panofsky (1930); Nestle (1936). Alpers compares the allegory to the Persians' choice of democracy, oligarchy or monarchy in Herodotus 3.80ff., and to the struggle between the personified *Dikaios* and *Adikos Logos* in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.

<sup>42</sup> Maximus of Tyre refers to Prodicus' allegory in Oration 14 and adapts the choice of 'Virtue and Vice' to 'Friend and Flatterer', but although he gives an ephrastic description of the two women's clothing, he does not refer to an actual image, only to Prodicus' text. For imitation and adaptation of the allegory, see Philo. *Sacr.* 20–44; *De merc. mer.* 2–4; Ovid, *Amores* 3.1; *Tabula of Cebe*, 5–7, 9–10, 15–22; Dio, *Or.* 1.64–84; Silius, *Pun.* 15.18–128; Luc. *Somn.* 6–16; Galen, *Protr.* 2–5; Themistius, *Or.* 22.2801–282c. See also Joly (1956); Snell (1967) 70–98.

<sup>43</sup> Panofsky's extensive study of *Hercules am Scheideweg* in later Western art can offer as an antique model only a relief of Heracles with two of the Hesperides (Panofsky (1930), plate 45, figure 66, Hesperides Relief, Villa Albani, Rome).

<sup>44</sup> VS 1.482–3 (Loeb translation): 'Prodicus of Ceos had composed a certain pleasant fable, in which Vice and Virtue came to Heracles in the shape of women, one of them dressed in seductive and many-coloured attire, the other with no care for effect; and to Heracles, who was still young, Vice offered idleness and sensuous pleasures, while Virtue offered squalor and toil on toil. For this story Prodicus wrote a rather long epilogue, and he toured the cities and gave recitations of the story in public, for hire, and charmed them after the manner of Orpheus and Thamyris.' In 496, we find again, 'Even Xenophon did not disdain to relate the fable of Prodicus (τὸν τοῦ Προδίκου λόγον)', with its emphasis on the *verbal* nature of the tale. This is emphasised still further in Philostratus' comment, 'As for the language of Prodicus, why should I describe its characteristics, when Xenophon has given so complete a sketch of it?'

relationship between image and text, and anticipates the imaginary *ephrasis* that follows, in which Thespesion adapts the Prodician image into a highly elaborate orgy of description distinctly different from Xenophon's more restrained text.<sup>45</sup>

By turning Prodicus' fable into a *painting*, Philostratus turns allegory into art in a manner that echoes allegorical *ephraseis* such as the *Tabula of Cebes* and Lucian's *Calumny*, while emphasising the importance of vision for VA's presentation of philosophical practice. Yet it is surely provocative that this most Hellenic of allegories, composed by an Attic sophist, placed in the mouth of Xenophon's Socrates and then extensively employed by Cynic thinkers, is employed by an Ethiopian sage in order to contrast two distinctly *un-Greek* philosophical systems. Apollonius responds by shifting the allegorical forms to his own espousal of Pythagorean doctrine, appropriating and re-casting the *exemplum* in such a way that it once more refers firmly to Greek structures of thought, while presenting his own philosophy as an all-embracing union of vision and knowledge supported by the notion of *theōria* – the acquisition of understanding through the process of 'going to see'.<sup>46</sup> Apollonius repeatedly associates his espousal of Pythagorean intellectual enquiry with the process of viewing, claiming, 'I discerned (κατιδών) a certain sublimity in the discipline of Pythagoras', then, 'Philosophy marshalled before me her various points of view, investing them with the adornment proper to each, and she *commanded me to look* upon them (ἐκέλευσεν ἐς αὐτὰς βλέπειν) and make a sound choice'. Finally, he tells us, 'I beheld the ineffable form of wisdom (εἶδον σοφίας εἶδος ἄρρητον) which long ago conquered the soul of Pythagoras'. Significantly, this is ἄρρητον, *beyond* words, a term that justifies the need for allegory and the importance of visual experience for the communication of wisdom. This crucial link between vision and knowledge is expressed by the personification of Pythagoreanism herself, who promises Apollonius,

<sup>45</sup> 6.10: 'Vice is adorned with gold and necklaces and with purple raiment, and her cheeks are painted and her hair delicately plaited and her eyes underlined with henna; and she also wears golden slippers, for she is pictured strutting about in these; but Virtue in the picture resembles a woman worn out with toil, with a pinched look; and she has chosen for her adornment rough squalor, and she goes without shoes and in the plainest of raiment, and she would have appeared naked if she had not much regard for feminine decency.'

<sup>46</sup> See Rutherford (2000), 141, where he discusses a Hellenistic Athenian inscription (IG II<sup>2</sup> 886) about a young man from Pergamon who came as a θεωρός to Athens and stayed there to study philosophy; 'Here, then θεωρία in the ritual sense is a frame for θεωρία in the philosophical sense.'

When you are pure I will grant you the faculty of foreknowledge and I shall fill your eyes with light so that you will distinguish a god and recognise a hero, and detect and put to shame the shadowy *phantasmata* which disguise themselves in the form of men.<sup>47</sup>

Here recognition (προγινώσκειν) is explicitly associated with the eyes (τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς). Philosophy's claim 'I will fill your eyes with light (ἀκτίνος)' echoes Memnon's gleaming eyes upon seeing the rising sun, and so links this relationship between vision and knowledge with the previous narrative of image-induced revelation. The epiphanic insight (the ability to see the divine) gained through true philosophy raises Apollonius to the status of a Memnon-like figure himself through the transforming powers of *sophia*. Like the *daimon* figure of Protesilaus in *Heroicus*, he is able to see clearly the different levels of divine existence, to perceive the gods themselves and to occupy a liminal space between the mortal and divine. It is a crucial stage on Apollonius' passage to god-like status as the text progresses, culminating in his own status as an object of *theōria* in book 8, when 'All flocked to see him from the whole of Greece, . . . and the attitude of Hellas towards him came near to that of worship' (8.15).

Through these repeated demonstrations of *sophia*, Apollonius manages to surpass every model incorporated by Thespesion's allegory. It is significant that in Xenophon's account of Prodicus' text, Virtue says to Heracles, 'If you want the favour of the gods, you must worship the gods: . . . if you are fain to win the admiration of all Hellas for virtue, you must strive to do good to Hellas . . .' (2.1.28). Through the course of *VA*, Apollonius achieves all this, and more. Accordingly, he appropriates and surpasses even Socrates. As the allegory implies, the true model for the sage is, in fact, Heracles, paradigmatic benefactor of Greece and, ultimately, a God himself. Anton-Hermann Chroust has demonstrated that Xenophon's portrayal of Socrates owes much to theories laid down by the Cynic philosopher Antisthenes, who developed Heracles' role as a model for philosophical *ponos*.<sup>48</sup> This philosophical syncretism, then, allows Apollonius not only to surpass the stature of Socrates, but also to appropriate and exceed the *sophia* of the Cynic school, with its negative attitude to oracles, cult practices and religious metaphysics. For Apollonius presents himself as Heracles, the embodiment of Cynic heroism, while standing for the traditional religious values to which the Cynics were opposed. The fact that he finds a superior

<sup>47</sup> Καθάρῳ δὲ ὄντι σοὶ καὶ προγινώσκειν δώσω, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς οὕτω τι ἐμπλήσω ἀκτίνος, ὥς διαγινώσκειν μὲν θεόν, γινώσκειν δὲ ἥρωα, σκιοειδῆ δ' ἐλεγεῖν φαντάσματα, ὅτε ψεύδοιντο εἰδὴ ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>48</sup> Chroust (1957) 101–34. See also Alpers (1912) 8 and Büttiger (1829).

philosophical model in the personification of Pythagoreanism reminds us that in fact, the Prodicus allegory is highly appropriate for Apollonius because it actually has its roots in Pythagorean doctrine itself. For Pythagoras compared the human path in life to the letter Y, where the adolescent has to choose between the paths of the philosophical and non-philosophical life.<sup>49</sup> So, just as Apollonius incorporates and re-presents all his philosophical predecessors, so Philostratus demonstrates his superior mastery of his sources by placing an Athenian *exemplum* in the mouth of an Ethiopian, problematically turning a text into a painting, extensively elaborating its visual detail and, ultimately, restoring the image to its rightful founder through the agency of the new benefactor of Hellas, Apollonius himself.

#### DEUS EX MACHINA: PHANTASIA AND THE IMAGINATIVE PERCEPTION OF GOD

Apollonius' re-presentation of the Prodicus allegory links philosophy's revelatory potential to Apollonius' power to perceive divinity itself. Indeed, the relationship between vision and divine knowledge is hinted at by the person of Thespesion, whose name recalls that of Thespisios, the hero of Plutarch's myth of the soul in the *De sera numinis vindicta*, which is itself modelled upon Plato's Myth of Er in the *Republic*.<sup>50</sup> These multiple allusions to philosophical allegory encourage us to associate the viewing of images within the text to the theoric quest that directs the process of philosophical enquiry (indeed, Plato calls the philosopher's vision of the 'forms' in the *Republic* a 'divine *theōria*' (517d)). The different models of *theōria* presented to us in the viewing of Memnon and the Choice of Heracles anticipate the theoric viewing that is finally presented to us in Apollonius' discussion of the nature of anthropomorphism with Thespesion in 6.19 where, after criticising the 'absurd and grotesque' practice of Egyptian theriomorphism, Apollonius is forced to defend Hellenic traditions of representation:

Thespesion, resenting these remarks, said, 'And your own images, how are they fashioned?' 'In the way,' he replied, 'in which it is best and most reverent to construct images of the gods.' 'I suppose you allude,' said the other, 'to the statue of Zeus in Olympia and to the image of Athena and to that of the Knidian goddess

<sup>49</sup> De Ruyt (1931). See also Guthrie (1987) 158, figure 12, a picture from Geoffrey Tory's *Champfleur* (1529), in which an ornamented Y figure is accompanied by a verse ascribed to one 'Maximinus' with the Xenophon-inspired words: 'The Pythagoric Letter two ways spread, | Shows the two paths in which Man's life is led. | The right hand track to sacred Virtue tends, | Tho' steep and rough at first, in rest it ends; | The other broad and smooth, but from its Crown | On rocks the Traveller is tumbled down . . .'

<sup>50</sup> I am grateful to Ewen Bowie for drawing my attention to this parallel. See also Du Toit (1997).

and to that of the Argive goddess and to other images equally beautiful and full of charm.' 'Not only to these,' replied Apollonius, 'but without exception I maintain, that whereas in other lands statuary has scrupulously observed decency and fitness, you rather make ridicule of the gods than really believe in them.' 'Your artists, then, like Phidias,' said the other, 'and like Praxiteles, went up, I suppose, to heaven and took a copy of the forms of the gods, and then reproduced these by their art, or was there any other influence which presided over and guided their moulding?' 'There was,' said Apollonius, 'and an influence pregnant with wisdom and genius.' 'What was that?' said the other, 'for I do not think you can adduce any except imitation.'

'Imagination (φαντασία),' said Apollonius, 'wrought these works, a wiser and subtler artist by far than imitation; for imitation (μίμησις) can only create as its handiwork what it has seen, but imagination equally what it has not seen, for it will conceive of its ideal with reference to the reality, and imitation is often baffled by terror, but imagination by nothing; for it marches undismayed to the goal which it has itself laid down.'

When you entertain a notion of Zeus (δεῖ δέ που Διὸς μὲν ἐνθυμηθέντα εἶδος) you must, I suppose, envisage him along with heaven and seasons and stars, as Phidias in his day endeavoured to do, and if you would fashion an image of Athena you must image in your mind (ἐννοεῖν) armies and cunning and handicrafts, and how she leapt out of Zeus himself. But if you make a hawk or an owl or a wolf or a dog, and put it in your temples instead of Hermes or Athena or Apollo, your animals and your birds may be esteemed and of much price as likenesses, but the gods will be very much lowered in their dignity.

What does Apollonius' formulation of *phantasia* actually do here? As with the Prodicus allegory, Thespision takes Greek visual *exempla* (here the most famous anthropomorphic images in Hellenic tradition – the Phidian Zeus and Athena, and Praxiteles' Argive Hera and Knidian Aphrodite – in order to question Apollonius' teachings. Again, Apollonius takes an idea from Greek philosophy and re-packages it, in order to justify and promote his cause. But whereas Prodicus took the sage back through Cynic philosophy to the tenets of Pythagoreanism, Philostratus' use of the term *phantasia* here (which we may translate as 'imagination' or 'intuitive insight'<sup>51</sup>) refers the reader, via Stoic epistemological theory, to the Platonic debate about the nature of *mimēsis*.<sup>52</sup> As with the Taxila episode, it is in the context of a cultural 'Other' that Philostratus' readers are encouraged to enter into a very Hellenic debate about the nature of representation.

<sup>51</sup> Pollitt (1974) 53: 'The word implies not simply fabricating something in the mind but actually "seeing" something that is not perceptible to the senses.'

<sup>52</sup> For *phantasia*'s role in Stoic epistemological theory, see Frede (1983) 65–93; Ioppolo (1990) 433–49. For a general study of *phantasia* in the ancient world, see Watson (1988). For a glance at the use of *phantasia* in Second Sophistic literature, see Goldhill (2001a) 168–70, 176–9.

Thespiesion's *reductio ad absurdum* of the practice of anthropomorphism tackles head-on the problematic assumption at its heart: that numinous inhabitants of the supernatural realm are actually visible in the form of men. Yet Apollonius, who, as a Pythagorean philosopher *extraordinaire*, can 'distinguish a god and recognise a hero', is also an ambassador for, and ultimate representative of, Hellenic cult practice. It is essential, then, that he defend anthropomorphic representation in a manner that marries rigorous philosophical enquiry with religious tradition. The concept of *phantasia* is thus presented as a kind of *deus ex machina*, a term which ostentatiously states its philosophical lineage, while simultaneously incorporating the less rigorous, more ambiguous notion of 'imagination'. Watson has demonstrated in his study of *phantasia* that there is a significant shift in the Second Sophistic from the Stoic/middle Platonic use of the term as part of complex theorising about the relationship between vision and knowledge, to the later, Philostratean appropriation of *phantasia* as a term for the aesthetic imagination.<sup>53</sup> Yet *phantasia*'s philosophical significance, as an explanation for man's cognitive assent to visual impressions (*phantasia logikē*, or *kataleptikē*), inserts two crucial ideas into Philostratus' text. Firstly, it incorporates the Stoic concept of *phantasiai* as active components within a direct chain of images that leave an impression upon the soul.<sup>54</sup> If our perception of God is constructed through *phantasia* then, it is implied, it can be directly related to an actual epiphanic vision of the divine. Secondly, *phantasia*'s role within the epistemological process of clear, rational assent to objective facts emphasises the importance of the viewer/thinker's active participation, or intellectual engagement with, the relevant subject.<sup>55</sup> This, of course, reaffirms Apollonius' theory of intelligent, creative viewing, while alluding to the literary *topos* employed by writers such as Cicero, Quintilian and Dio, in which Phidias' perception of Zeus is presented as a 'vision of beauty' (*species pulchritudinis*) residing in the mind of the artist.<sup>56</sup> Together, the concept of a chain of images related to an existing source, and the intellectual process of rational assent to vision, support the idea that it is possible, via an anthropomorphic image, to perceive the divine.

<sup>53</sup> See Watson (1988), ch. 4, 'The Transformation of *Phantasia*', 59–95.

<sup>54</sup> The best-known image for the effect of *phantasia kataleptikē* upon the soul is Zeno's example of the impression (*typosis*) left upon wax by a seal-ring (see DL 6.46 and SE *Adv. Math.* 7.247, 252). As Frede comments, 'Cognitive impressions, then, are the criterion of truth in the sense that their truth guarantees the truth of whatever can be known by human beings' (Frede (1983) 82).

<sup>55</sup> See Ioppolo (1990) 436–7, who quotes Diogenes Laertius 7.51–2: 'Some sensory presentations (*phantasiai*) arise from what is and are accompanied by yielding and assent . . . It is by perception . . . that we get cognition of conclusions reached through demonstration, such as the gods' existence and their providence.'

<sup>56</sup> Cicero, *Or.* 8–9; Quintilian, *Inst. Or.* 12.10.9.



*Phantasia* is thus presented as the ultimate form of *theōria* – the power of the mind itself to visualise and communicate with god.

Apollonius' argument, then, absorbs the ideas about *mimēsis* advanced within the secular context of the Taxila episode (the concept of 'viewing with intelligence', through a mental *eidōlon* of the thing represented), and reformulates them in relation to the religious image. It is crucial for the numinous concept of sacred experience presented in *VA*, and its promotion of pagan cult practice as a living, dynamic phenomenon, that the gods be perceivable through the Hellenic doctrines of *paideia* and *sophia* that imbue the text. Philostratus is here in the position of defender and proselytiser of a pagan universalism that is deeply concerned with the traditions of the past, yet also stresses the reality of religious experience in the present. The concept of *phantasia*, which marries philosophy with the potential for epiphanic vision, enables him to put the language of the philosophers at the service of traditional religion, positing a model for communication with the divine that combines the act of religious viewing with the rational faculties of the human mind.<sup>57</sup>

This is, in effect, a dynamic reformulation of the relationship between god, image and viewer advanced in the Homer–Phidias debate in both Dio's Olympian Oration, and book 4 of *VA*. Dio's Phidias constructs his vision of Zeus through a process of imaginative viewing akin to the concept of *phantasia* advanced in *VA*, his use of the term *dianoia* (74) actually anticipating the language used by Philostratus. Yet this mental image is ultimately attributed to the verbal description of Zeus presented by Homer, setting the power of textual description to represent the divine above the visual impact of images themselves. However, Apollonius' *deus ex machina* manages to reconcile this paradigmatic opposition between the gods of image and text in such a way that it presents a solution to the *Olympian* debate. For the concept of *phantasia*, here appropriated as an alternative to the shortcomings of visual *mimēsis*, also incorporates a *verbal* dimension (through its key role in Stoic theories of language). Whereas the god of Phidias could only, according to his earlier formulation 'be seen' (φαίνεσθαι), the concept of *phantasia* means that Phidias' cult statues

<sup>57</sup> *Phantasia* had already been appropriated in a religious context by Plutarch: in his dialogue *On the oracles at Delphi no longer given in verse*, the priest Theon (whose name may also be alluded to by Philostratus' Thespiesion) offers a justification of prophetic vision that parallels Apollonius' concept of epiphanic viewing, arguing that oracles are the verbal communication of visual *phantasiai* transmitted directly to the Pythia by god (*Moralia* 397bc). See also Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.54.3, where it is claimed that Thespiodos at Claros gave oracles on the basis of what consultants had 'conceived in their minds'; also Iamblichus, *Myst.* 3.11, claims that, at Claros and Didyma, the god placed images in the mind of the prophet.

can also be 'imaged in the mind' (ἐννοεῖν), recalling the Zeus of Homer who could, according to Apollonius in 4.10, 'be imagined (ὑπονοεῖσθαι) everywhere in heaven'.<sup>58</sup> Thus *phantasia* finally raises the Phidian image to equal status with Homeric text, for through the faculty of imagination, Zeus *can* be seen and imagined everywhere. Apollonius shows that text and image can ultimately work together in a reformulation of Dio's twelfth Oration, in which media are no longer in competition, but can mutually inform each other, so enabling the reader/viewer to formulate his or her personal vision of the divine.<sup>59</sup>

The formulation of *phantasia* as a creative, theological enterprise also solves the problematic *ecphraseis* of Damis and Thespion. For, in both cases, the idea of 'viewing with imagination' explains the complex synthesis of elements that leads the narrators to elaborate upon the images they describe and to create, as it were, impossible visual experiences. Just as the worshipper of the Phidian Athena must view the image with knowledge of the myths and attributes that construct her anthropomorphic *persona*, so Damis viewed the colossus of Memnon according to his knowledge of the hero-god's racial origin and relationship to the sun. In both cases, the epiphanic confrontation with divinity facilitated by the image is also due to the application of the viewer's mental processes.<sup>60</sup> This combination of influences working upon our visualisation of the divine transcends the demand for a visible prototype made by the notion of *mimēsis*, and justifies the practice of anthropomorphic representation by shifting it from a simple notion of naturalism to a more complex synthesis of elements including the linguistic, the mythic and the cosmic. Understood according to the Apollonian formulation of *phantasia*, visual images need no longer be unreliable, incomplete *mimēmata* that appeal to the lower part of the soul, to imagination rather than reason (in Plato's formulation), but

<sup>58</sup> Note that Dio's statement (not followed up in the twelfth Oration) that men's notions of the gods have been influenced by poets, lawgivers, artists and, perhaps most importantly, 'the philosopher, the one who by means of reason interprets and proclaims the divine nature most truly, perhaps, and most perfectly' (47). Indeed, Dio actually terms the philosopher an *exēgētēs*, precisely the role which Apollonius fulfils with regard to religious practice, and particularly sacred images, throughout the VA.

<sup>59</sup> Indeed, the 'Younger' Philostratus uses the very concept of *phantasia* to emphasise the similarity, rather than the antipathy, between art and text in the proem to his *Imagines*, where in a discussion on the nature of *symmetria* in art, he states that 'To one who examines this question critically, however it will be clear that the art of painting has a certain kinship with poetry and that there is a certain element of imagination (*phantasia*) which is common to both', proem 6.

<sup>60</sup> As Froma Zeitlin has pointed out, *phantasia* 'shifted attention from the mimetic faculty and technical excellence in the production of images to the valorisation of a kind of interior vision' (Zeitlin (2001) 219).

imagination is raised to the level of reason itself; the two work together in order to construct a visualisation that is no longer of a shadow in the cave, but a direct confrontation with divinity itself.<sup>61</sup>

Thus, Apollonius offers a final solution to our earlier question of how we are meant to look at sacred images, uniting the visual and the intellectual in order to justify the traditional system of Hellenic anthropomorphism, while also opening the door to more complex philosophical explorations of the means by which divinity can be apprehended. His formulation of *phantasia* is not a particularly sophisticated presentation of the highly complex epistemological issues raised by the term, but then *VA* is not a purely philosophical text, despite the Socratic pose frequently adopted by its protagonist. Rather, it employs certain philosophical elements, in specific contexts, in order to construct an all-encompassing image of its hero, just as it also employs historiographical and novelistic elements. The adoption of *phantasia* in this passage forms a conclusion to the series of episodes in which images are viewed and discussed, allowing Apollonius to promote a concept taken from Stoic and Middle Platonic epistemology in order to solve the Platonic suspicion of mimetic art in such a way that he can justify and promote the contemplation of the divine through traditional Greek practices of anthropomorphic representation. In doing so, he unites intellectual and religious concerns in a model of theoric viewing that draws for its inspiration upon the very cult images that are central to Hellenic cultural and religious identity, while providing a pedagogical commentary on the ways in which such images can be 'viewed with intelligence'. Apollonius reformulates the ways in which we think about art, in order to re-present and re-animate the key images of the Hellenic gods to their pious viewers. The notion of *phantasia* means, moreover, that these structures of viewing can be transmitted through texts themselves: by embracing both the visual and the linguistic, *phantasia* overcomes the limits of the *ecphrasis* presented to us throughout the text and allows *VA* to perform the very act of *theōria* that suffuses Philostratus' narrative. It allows us, as readers, to visualise not just the gods of Hellas, but also Apollonius himself, so that we, like the people of Greece and Alexandria, can 'gaze upon *him* as if he were a god' (5.24).

<sup>61</sup> It is, perhaps, no surprise that subsequent tales about Apollonius claimed that he created talismans for the cities of Antioch and Constantinople. He was concerned with the dynamic power of images to express religious truths. See Potter (1994) 34; the tale is related by the Antiochene chronographer John Malalas, *Chron.* 263–4.

## CHAPTER 8

# 'The ancestor of my wisdom': Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism in *Life of Apollonius*\*

Jaap-Jan Flinterman

## INTRODUCTION

The dramatic climax of the encomiastic and heavily fictionalised biography of Apollonius of Tyana, commonly known as *Life of Apollonius*,<sup>1</sup> is a confrontation between the protagonist and the tyrannical emperor Domitian. In a lengthy oration allegedly prepared for the imperial courtroom, Philostratus makes Apollonius refer to Pythagoras as 'ancestor of my wisdom';<sup>2</sup> he is made to use the same phrase to express his philosophical allegiance when seeking a nocturnal interview with Achilles at the hero's tomb.<sup>3</sup> In the former case, the appeal to Pythagoras serves to explain the peculiarities of Apollonius' way of life; in the latter, to establish his belief in immortality. Given that the protagonist of *Life* repeatedly employs a genealogical metaphor to proclaim his Pythagoreanism, it seems only logical that its first chapter, rather than listing Apollonius' forefathers, discloses his philosophical pedigree by presenting a concise portrait of Pythagoras as drawn by his followers (1.1). Indeed, when in the opening sentence of the second chapter Apollonius himself is introduced, kinship terminology is used to indicate his adherence to the convictions and practices of Pythagoras. At this point,

\* In preparing this chapter I have profited from discussions with Gert-Jan van Dijk and especially with Annelies Cazemier, whose graduation thesis on inconsistencies in Philostratus' defence of Apollonius against the accusation of magic (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, 2002) I supervised. I am very much indebted to Ewen Bowie and Jás Elsner for many helpful suggestions and for correcting my English.

<sup>1</sup> I see no harm in sticking to the traditional designation, if only for the sake of convenience. The best translation of the title, Τὰ ἐς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον, is probably *On Apollonius of Tyane*; the preposition ἐς does not necessarily imply an encomiastic slant, as has been demonstrated by Jones (2005) 3. Philostratus himself claims that his aim is παραδοῦναι τὸν τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου βίον, see VA 5.39 and cf. Swain (1996) 385: 'a handy biographical avowal'. Bowie (1978) 1.665 has pointed out that the title and scale of the work are reminiscent of the romantic novel; in a more recent discussion, he concludes that contemporary readers may well have taken the work as a 'laudatory biography', see Bowie (1994) 193. As for the scale, the parallels with Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* (on which see, among others, Anderson (1986) 231–2) and especially with the Alexander histories, pointed out in Bowie (1994) 187 (with 197, n. 10) and 195, seem to me to be more illuminating than the parallel with the novel.

<sup>2</sup> VA 8.7.14: πρόγονον τῆς ἑμαυτοῦ σοφίας. <sup>3</sup> VA 4.16: σοφίας ἐμῆς πρόγονος.

however, the hierarchical relationship implied in the notion of ancestry is superseded by the equality of status implied by 'brotherhood', only to be immediately inverted by the claim that Apollonius proved himself superior to his spiritual forefather.<sup>4</sup> The reader is thus prepared for making the acquaintance of someone who was more than just a dedicated follower of the Pythagorean way of life and a faithful adherent of Pythagorean tenets: Apollonius is introduced as the equal or even the superior of the founding-father of Pythagoreanism.

The appeal to Pythagoras, announced by the author in the opening chapters of *Life*, is taken up in the oration allegedly prepared by the protagonist for his trial. The professed aim of this apology<sup>5</sup> is to defend Apollonius against the accusation that he is a sorcerer (*goēs*). This motif, too, is heralded in the opening chapters, where the author justifies his intention of unfolding the truth about Apollonius by referring to the ignorance of the general public and, in particular, to the mistaken opinion that the Tyanean sage had been a magician (*magos*) rather than a genuine philosopher (1.2). Philostratus can hardly have failed to realise that the task that he set himself was not at all an easy one. When, in the late second century, Apollonius first emerges in our literary tradition, he is portrayed as a notorious meddler in supernatural affairs,<sup>6</sup> an assessment shared by Philostratus' contemporary, the historian Cassius Dio (77.18.4). A good case has been made for the hypothesis that a pre-Philostratean tradition, represented by the lost *Memorabilia Apollonii* of Moeragenes and by two letters ascribed to Apollonius, had combined in Apollonius the roles of philosopher and magician under the aegis of Pythagoreanism.<sup>7</sup> The appeal to Pythagoras was not in fact very helpful from an apologetic point of view. In the Pythagoras legend, 'the oldest available layer of the tradition on Pythagoras',<sup>8</sup> the Crotonian sage was credited with a number of supernatural accomplishments and characteristics.<sup>9</sup> For Pythagoras' followers, such miraculous feats hinted at the master's superhuman nature, but they could also be adduced as evidence of sorcery, and indeed were so in the Hellenistic and early imperial periods, at least by some.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>4</sup> VA 1.2: ἀδελφὰ γὰρ τοῦτοις ἐπιτηδεύσαντα Ἀπολλώνιον, καὶ θεϊότερον ἢ ὁ Πυθαγόρας τῇ σοφίᾳ προσελθόντα τυραννίδων τε ὑπεράραντα, ...

<sup>5</sup> Hereafter, referred to as 'the Apology'. <sup>6</sup> Luc. *Alex.* 5.

<sup>7</sup> See Bowie (1978) 1,673–4 and Raynor (1984), discussing Origenes, *Cels.* 6.41 = *FGrHist* 1067 T 3; *Epp. Apoll.* 16 and 17; cf. Flinterman (1995) 69–70 and 72–3; Francis (1995) 94–5.

<sup>8</sup> Burkert (1972) 137. <sup>9</sup> Burkert (1972) 136–47; cf. below, nn. 93–96.

<sup>10</sup> Timon of Phlius, quoted by Plu. *Num.* 8.9 and DL 8.36 (= fr. 57 Di Marco = *Supplementum Hellenisticum* 831); Luc. *Gall.* 4: γοητό φασι καὶ τερατοουργὸν ἄνθρωπον (sc. τὸν Πυθαγόραν); see also Iamb. *VP* 216, a passage whose apologetic tendency is rightly stressed by Bieler (1935–6) 86 with n. 38; cf. Staab (2002) 412: πολλοὺ τε ἔδει γόητα νομίζειν Πυθαγόραν τὸν ταῦτα παιδεύοντα (sc. τὸν Ἀβαριν), ὃς γε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐθαύμαζεν ὡς ἄν θεὸν ὑπερφῶς.

In sum, clearing a latter-day Pythagoras from the suspicion of sorcery was a daunting task, and one may even wonder how seriously Philostratus' professed apologetic intention should be taken.<sup>11</sup> It is perhaps not too adventurous to read the story about the visit of the archetypal sorcerer Proteus to Apollonius' mother during her pregnancy as an acknowledgement on the author's part that his was a hopeless task.<sup>12</sup> Still, *Life* does display an unresolved tension between the apologetic and the encomiastic.<sup>13</sup> The aim of this chapter is to explore how this tension affects Philostratus' portrayal of Apollonius as a Pythagorean. In particular, it will deal with the presentation of the protagonist's supernatural faculties and of his ontological status. Admittedly, these topics have hardly suffered from under-exposure in studies of *Life*. Nevertheless, there is good reason for returning once more to this aspect of Philostratus' Apollonius, who has been and is often adduced as a prime example of the miracle working 'divine man'. In recent publications this concept has been subjected to severe criticism, one scholar going as far as branding it 'a fabrication of New Testament scholarship'.<sup>14</sup> While much of this criticism is to the point, the dynamics of scholarly polemic may result in one-dimensional readings and strained interpretations. David Du Toit, for example, has argued that *Life* does not portray Apollonius as a superhuman being.<sup>15</sup> In questioning Du Toit's conclusions, the distinction between apology and encomium in *Life* will turn out to be productive. However, as Apollonius' supernatural abilities are closely connected with his Pythagorean asceticism in Philostratus' account, we must first examine the hero's way of life.

#### THE PYTHAGOREAN LIFE

Philostratus' Apollonius organises his life in accordance with precepts supposedly set by Pythagoras. The author rapidly makes it clear that his hero's way of life was uncompromisingly Pythagorean. In the miniature portrait of Pythagoras that constitutes the opening chapter of *Life* (1.1), the founder of the sect is credited with abstinence from all animal products, both for clothing and for food, and with total rejection of animal sacrifice; this picture of his ascetic lifestyle is rounded off with a reference to the practice

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Bowie (1978) 1,666: 'his aim was most plausibly that of a professional writer, to produce a well-rounded and entertaining piece of literature, rather than to further a propagandist interpretation of Apollonius as a Pythagorean sage.'

<sup>12</sup> *VA* 1.4; cf. Flinterman (1995) 52, and see also below, n. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Anderson (1986) 139: 'Philostratus was caught between two stools: he had to prove that Apollonius was not a γόνις, consistent with being no ordinary mortal; he had therefore to invest his sage only with "rational" miracles.' See also Dzielska (1986) 91-4; Koskenniemi (1991) 60.

<sup>14</sup> Edwards (2000a) xiv, with n. 22. <sup>15</sup> Du Toit (1997) 282-320 and (1999) 158 and 165-6.

of silence among his followers. At the age of sixteen, Apollonius decides to adopt this way of life. Not only does he abstain from animal products, he also renounces wine and lets his hair grow long (1.8). When he has reached manhood, he decides to abjure sex as well (1.13); in maintaining celibacy, he may have been helped by his preference for cold baths (1.16), although it should be conceded that Philostratus does not make a connection between the two. Of course, Apollonius also observes the five-year period of silence required from aspiring Pythagoreans (1.14).

In a conversation with the Parthian king Vardanes (1.32), in a debate with the Ethiopian ascetic Thespiesion (6.11.2–7) and in the Apology (8.7.13–18), Philostratus' Apollonius expounds and justifies his way of life. Sometimes the legitimation takes the form of a reference to Hellenic traditions. In the Apology, he appeals to Spartan custom to defend his hairstyle,<sup>16</sup> and he accepts the linen offered him by the Indian king Phraotes, 'because it resembles a philosopher's cloak of the old-fashioned, genuine Attic kind'.<sup>17</sup> More frequently, however, he presents his lifestyle as the fulfilment of demands made by Pythagoras himself and, therefore, consistent with his choice of the Pythagorean way of life. For Philostratus' contemporaries interested in the history of philosophy, these may well have been disputable claims. The strict vegetarianism and rejection of animal sacrifice that can be found throughout *Life* are a case in point.<sup>18</sup> The evidence for Pythagoras' vegetarianism and attitude towards animal sacrifice was far from unequivocal.<sup>19</sup> In the fourth century BC, Aristoxenus had explicitly polemicised against the belief that Pythagoras had been a vegetarian; the relevant fragments have been preserved in the works of imperial authors such as Aulus Gellius, Athenaeus and Diogenes Laertius.<sup>20</sup> The attribution to Pythagoras of a ban on woollen clothing and his alleged preference for linen did not escape challenge, either.<sup>21</sup> Aristoxenus had an agenda of his own and should not be considered an impartial witness to ancient Pythagoreanism.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>16</sup> VA 8.7.17; cf. *Epp. Apoll.* 8, where the wearing of long hair is presented as characteristic of Greeks as opposed to barbarians.

<sup>17</sup> VA 2.40: ἐπειδὴ τοῖσιν τριβῶνι τῶν ἀρχαίων τε καὶ πάνυ Ἀττικῶν. It is, of course, in line with the vigorous defence of Hellenism in the *Life* that both author and protagonist call Pythagoras a Samian, see VA 1.1, 1.32, 8.7.14. Traditions according to which Pythagoras was of non-Greek extraction, on which see Swain (1999) 166, n. 21 and Bollansée's discussion of DL 8.1 in his commentary on *FGrHist* 1026 F23, are never mentioned.

<sup>18</sup> See on vegetarianism in the Apollonius tradition Haussleiter (1935) 299–308; Taggart (1972) 115–21 and 123–8.

<sup>19</sup> For full discussions of Pythagorean vegetarianism, see Haussleiter (1935) 97–157; Burkert (1972) 180–3; Sfameni Gasparro (1987) 107–34.

<sup>20</sup> Gel. 4.11.6–7 = Aristoxen. fr. 25 Wehrli; Ath. 10.418f = fr. 28 Wehrli; DL 8.20 = fr. 29a Wehrli.

<sup>21</sup> DL 8.19, apparently an attempt to refute a widely held belief. <sup>22</sup> Burkert (1972) 198.

However, even the *acusmata*, 'the oldest form of transmission of the teachings of Pythagoras',<sup>23</sup> are less than straightforward on the issues of abstinence from meat and animal sacrifice.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, among the educated public at large the association of Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism with strict vegetarianism seems to have been particularly strong under the early empire, witness Ovid, Seneca, Plutarch, Juvenal, Lucian and Apuleius.<sup>25</sup> This is admitted even by Aulus Gellius (4.11.1), who came up with Aristoxenus in order to refute what threatened to become the *communis opinio*. Philostratus' portrayal of both Pythagoras and Apollonius as consistent vegetarians is clearly in line with current notions of the Pythagorean way of life during the first centuries AD, and the same is true of the attribution of a predilection for bloodless offerings to the archaic sage and his first-century imitator. Vegetarianism and rejection of animal sacrifice can also be found in the letters ascribed to Apollonius.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to his diet and clothing habits, Philostratus' Apollonius presents the practice of letting his hair grow long as going back to the teachings of Pythagoras himself (1.32). No doubt in the early imperial period long hair was considered a distinguishing characteristic of Pythagorean philosophers.<sup>27</sup> According to Sosicrates, however, who in the second century BC wrote a *Succession of philosophers*, the first figure claiming to be a Pythagorean and wearing long hair had been Diodorus of Aspendus, in the fourth century BC; earlier Pythagoreans had been more conformist in their hairstyle. We owe this information to Philostratus' near-contemporary Athenaeus.<sup>28</sup> Together with Diogenes Laertius, the *Deipnosophistae* is also our main source for a number of fragments from Middle Comedy in which ascetic *Pythagoristai* are portrayed as teetotallers; another peculiarity of these followers of Pythagoras is their positive refusal to wash themselves, whereas the *acusmata* contain a ban on using *public* baths only.<sup>29</sup> According to Philostratus' Apollonius, one of the demands made of him by the personification of 'the mysterious form of philosophy which once

<sup>23</sup> Burkert (1972) 166.

<sup>24</sup> Arist. fr. 194 (= Gell. 4.11.11; DL 8.19; Porph. VP 45) and 195 Rose (= DL 8.34; Porph. VP 34 and 43; Iamb. VP 84 and 109).

<sup>25</sup> Ov. Met. 15.72-142 and 453-78; Sen. Ep. 108.17; Juv. 15.173; Plu. De esu carniū, Mor. 993 A; Luc. Gall. 4; Apul. Apol. 56.2.

<sup>26</sup> Epp. Apoll. 8, 27 and 43.

<sup>27</sup> Luc. Philops. 29 and 32 (Arignotus); Alciph. 3.19.4 (Archibius); cf. Hahn (1989) 37-8. Long locks are also treasured by the author of Epp. Apoll. 8.

<sup>28</sup> Ath. 4.163e-64a; cf. Burkert (1972) 202 and FGrHist 1026 F 26, with Bollansée's commentary.

<sup>29</sup> For temperance see, e.g., Alex. fr. 220-1 Kock = Ath. 4.161b-c; Aristophon fr. 13 Kock = DL 8.38; for abstinence from bathing: Alex. fr. 197 Kock = Ath. 4.161d; Aristophon fr. 13 Kock = DL 8.38; cf. Burkert (1972) 198-201. *Acusma* on public baths: Iamb. VP 83.



also conquered Pythagoras' is to forget wine.<sup>30</sup> The biographical tradition on Pythagoras, however, vacillated between abstinence and moderation,<sup>31</sup> and in this respect the protagonist of *Life* is a match for the *Pythagoristai* of Middle Comedy. The same is not true of his bathing habits. The author of the letters ascribed to Apollonius may absolutely refuse to take a bath, the daily schedule of the protagonist of *Life* does include a cold dip.<sup>32</sup> As James Francis has pointed out, in *Life* 'ascetical rigor is always carefully balanced by concern for humanity and society'.<sup>33</sup> Of course this does not stop Philostratus' Apollonius from condemning the devotion of his contemporaries to bathing facilities offering hot water (1.16).

Silence had been considered a Pythagorean idiosyncrasy already in the fourth century BC,<sup>34</sup> and according to Timaeus of Tauromenium aspiring Pythagoreans had to practise silence during a period of five years before being admitted to their master's inner circle.<sup>35</sup> In the opening chapter of *Life*, Philostratus explains the training in silence as a necessary preparation for initiation to Pythagoras' wisdom, which was rooted in personal communication with the gods and, therefore, held in secrecy (1.1); Apollonius explicitly mentions Pythagoras as the inventor of this rule of silence (6.11.3). The secrecy of certain central doctrines among the early Pythagoreans is confirmed by Aristotle and Aristoxenus,<sup>36</sup> and the connection made by Philostratus between the practice of silence and the esoteric character of Pythagoras' wisdom is highly plausible.<sup>37</sup> A similar connection is suggested by the fact that the protagonist of *Life* reveals certain rites only to those who have practised silence for four years (1.16). As is to be expected, Philostratus' Apollonius himself keeps silent, if not without difficulties, for the full five years (1.14–15). To this period belongs the story of Apollonius' intervention during a riot in Aspendus, caused by a grain shortage (1.15).<sup>38</sup> As the sage is unable to speak out, he gives the speculators responsible for the famine a piece of his mind in writing, warning them that he will not allow them to

<sup>30</sup> *VA* 6.11.5: σοφίας εἰδος ἀρρητον, οὐ καὶ Πυθαγόρας ποτὲ ἡτήθη.

<sup>31</sup> Abstinence: *DS* 10.7.2; *Iamb.* *VP* 69, 107 and 188. Moderation: *DL* 8.9 and 19; *Iamb.* *VP* 97–8.

<sup>32</sup> *Epp. Apoll.* 8 and 43; *VA* 1.16. Cf. Penella (1979) 27: 'An Apollonius who absolutely refused to bathe might have seemed too uncouth to Philostratus.'

<sup>33</sup> Francis (1995) 98. In this connection, it is also noteworthy that the protagonist of *Life* differs from the author of *Epp. Apoll.* 10 and 34 (on which see Penella's commentary) in not abandoning public speaking.

<sup>34</sup> *Isoc. Or.* 11.29; *Alex. fr.* 197 Kock = *Ath.* 4.161d.

<sup>35</sup> *Timae.*, *FGrHist* 566 F 13b = *DL* 8.10; cf. *Iamb.* *VP* 72.

<sup>36</sup> *Aristox.* *fr.* 43 Wehrli = *DL* 8.15; *Arist. fr.* 192 Rose = *Iamb.* *VP* 31; cf. *Porph.* *VP* 19 and *Iamb.* *VP* 104 and 226–7.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Burkert (1972) 178–9.

<sup>38</sup> For discussion of this story, see Flinterman (1995) 111–12; Raeymakers (2000).

remain on earth, if they persist in monopolising her favours. Interestingly, an Antiochene tradition preserved in Malalas' *Chronographia* (10.51 Thurn) has Apollonius resort to writing in order to prophesy multiple earthquakes although not constrained by a vow of silence.<sup>39</sup> The possibility that Philostratus added the Pythagorean spell of silence to an existing tradition about Apollonius should be reckoned with. In the letters ascribed to Apollonius, silence is presented as an ideal, but not an ideal necessarily practised for a prolonged period.<sup>40</sup> Although in the early imperial period silence was considered a distinguishing Pythagorean habit,<sup>41</sup> we may wonder whether *Life* is not stressing its hero's uniqueness by making him something of an over-achiever.<sup>42</sup>

The precepts followed by Philostratus' Apollonius that have passed in review so far are clearly rooted in earlier Pythagorean tradition. Complete sexual abstinence is, however, more problematic. In fact, Philostratus has his hero insist that in this respect he is going beyond the precepts of Pythagoras himself, who had demanded monogamy rather than celibacy.<sup>43</sup> This concurs with the information given by Iamblichus, who reports that Pythagoras had admonished the Crotoniates to confine their sexual attentions to their wives.<sup>44</sup> According to the third-century BC Peripatetic philosopher Hieronymus of Rhodes, moreover, Pythagoras had seen in Hades how those who had refused to have intercourse with their wives were punished, while one of the *acusmata* is a command to beget children.<sup>45</sup> Nevertheless, a negative attitude towards the sexual act itself is also found in the Pythagorean tradition. Both Diodorus Siculus and Diogenes Laertius quote Pythagoras answering the question, when one should have intercourse: 'When you want to lose self-control.'<sup>46</sup> Elsewhere, Diogenes even seems to attribute complete celibacy to Pythagoras.<sup>47</sup> The opinion that the Pythagoreans practise sexual abstinence is both mentioned and contradicted by Philostratus' older contemporary, Clement of Alexandria.<sup>48</sup> Clement's phrasing offers no ground for the assumption that this was an issue debated exclusively among Christians, and his information may be

<sup>39</sup> As was noticed by Miller (1892) 583.

<sup>40</sup> The author of *Epp. Apoll.* 8 responds to the reproach that he is rather uncommunicative with the statement that he cannot be completely silent – apparently a preferable line of conduct; see also *Epp. Apoll.* 92 and 93.

<sup>41</sup> Plu. *Num.* 8.11; Ath. 7.308c–d; Luc. *Gall.* 4; *Vit. Auct.* 3. <sup>42</sup> Cf. Anderson (1986) 136.

<sup>43</sup> *VA* 1.13. Alluding to Pl. *Resp.* 329b–d, Philostratus points out that Apollonius also surpassed Sophocles, who did not escape from the 'mad and cruel master' until he reached old age.

<sup>44</sup> Iamb. *VP* 48, 50 and 132. <sup>45</sup> Hieronymus fr. 42 Wehrli = DL 8.25; Iamb. *VP* 86.

<sup>46</sup> DS 10.9.4 (ὅτι Πυθαγόραν φασιν ὑπὸ τινος ἐρωτηθέντα πότε χρηστίου ἀποδοῖσθαι εἰπεῖν, ὅταν ἑαυτοῦ θέλης ἡττων γενέσθαι); DL 8.9; cf. Dodds (1951) 154 and 175, n. 122.

<sup>47</sup> DL 8.19; cf. Burkert (1972) 178, n. 94. <sup>48</sup> Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 3.24.1.

taken as an indication that in the first centuries AD sexual abstinence was considered an ideal by at least some Pythagoreans. Their inclination to celibacy may have been the outcome of a process of thinking through to its logical conclusion the idea that intercourse is a degrading and debilitating activity. Idealised pictures of exotic sages may also have had an impact on behaviour. Through Alexander's campaigns, the Greek world had become acquainted with Indian 'philosophers'. One of the first Greek reports of a meeting with these figures, by Onesicritus, already points out a similarity between Indian and Pythagorean practice – vegetarianism –<sup>49</sup> and Megasthenes correctly reports that Indian ascetics practised sexual abstinence.<sup>50</sup> It seems quite feasible that people considering themselves Pythagoreans drew inspiration from the habits attributed to such far-away kindred souls, who had turned what was theoretically desirable into actual practice. Celibacy would not have been the grimmest Indian example to be imitated in the early imperial period.<sup>51</sup>

Although the question whether strict vegetarianism was integral to the Pythagorean tradition was discussed by early imperial intellectuals with an interest in the history of philosophy, the rigorous asceticism practised by Philostratus' Apollonius is in line with conceptions of the Pythagorean way of life which had a wide currency in the first centuries AD. Most of the ascetic habits attributed to his protagonist can also be found in the non-Philostratean tradition – letters ascribed to Apollonius – and even celibacy may have been an ideal among self-styled Pythagoreans of the early imperial era. What is certain is that the author of *Life* highlights the singularity of his main character's ascetic achievement: he seizes upon Apollonius' alleged sexual abstinence to emphasise its uniqueness. On the other hand, the protagonist's asceticism is tempered by the demands made of him as a public figure. At this point, we may discern the impact of the apologetic programme of *Life*. The encomiastic emphasis on the singularity of the protagonist's asceticism is apparent from the presentation of his choice of the Pythagorean life as an independent one: despite the Epicurean lifestyle

<sup>49</sup> *FGHHist* 134 F 17 = Str. 15.1.65; on Onesicritus' report, cf. Hansen (1965) 355–8; Bosworth (1998) 184–90. In the first century BC at the latest, observations such as Onesicritus' had given rise to the theory that Pythagoras had been taught by Brahmins, see Alexander Polyhistor. *FGHHist* 273 F 94 = Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.70.1; Apul. *Fl.* 15; cf. Sedlar (1980) 31–2. Note that while few scholars will be prepared to accept that Pythagoras personally travelled to India, Kahn (2001) 19 defends the proposition (quoting in support a letter from Burkert) that the doctrine of transmigration came to the Greek world from India via the Achaemenid empire.

<sup>50</sup> *FGHHist* 715 F 33 = Str. 15.1.59–60; cf. Timmer (1930) 89 and 99.

<sup>51</sup> On the death of Calanus as the model for the self-immolation of Peregrinus Proteus, see Luc. *Peregr.* 25, with Jones (1986) 126; Bosworth (1998) 174–9 esp. 177–8.

of Euxenus of Heraclea Pontica, who taught him the Pythagorean tenets,<sup>52</sup> young Apollonius followed his vocation towards the life of Pythagoras, 'to which some higher power gave him wings'.<sup>53</sup> It is time to explore what else 'some higher power' had in store for the protagonist of Philostratus' *Life*.

#### PURITY AND PRECOGNITION

On several occasions, Philostratus' Apollonius lists the rewards that Pythagoreanism holds for those who follow its way of life. These culminate in privileged knowledge of, and communication with, the divine world. According to his followers, Pythagoras maintained that he owed his knowledge of the wishes and nature of divinity to divine revelations, whereas the opinions of ordinary mortals are based on guesswork and, therefore, mutually conflicting (1.1).<sup>54</sup> Pythagoras is said to have claimed personal association with the gods, first among them Apollo, who came to him and revealed his identity. The other divinities with whom Pythagoras allegedly consorted but who, unlike Apollo, kept their identity hidden, are Athena, the Muses, 'and other gods whose forms and names are as yet unknown to men'.<sup>55</sup> For ordinary mortals this suitably enigmatic passage poses several problems which call for some conjectural solutions. Apparently, Philostratus does not want to take even indirect responsibility for the view, attributed to Pythagoras' followers in the biographical tradition and well known among early imperial authors, that their master *was* (Hyperborean) Apollo.<sup>56</sup> This hesitation may have been motivated by various considerations: reluctance to identify a mortal with a god, but also the realisation that his enterprise to make Apollonius outdo Pythagoras (1.2) would be over-ambitious if the latter was in fact Apollo. Of the other divinities mentioned, the Muses are relatively unproblematic in a Pythagorean context.<sup>57</sup> Their alleged association with Pythagoras may well refer to the

<sup>52</sup> The characterisation of Euxenus has been interpreted as an allusion to Heraclides Ponticus, see Lévy (1926) 137–8, n. 7; Swain (1999) 180, n. 77.

<sup>53</sup> *VA* 1.7: ὤρμησεν ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ Πυθαγόρου βίον, περὶ ᾧ ἐπ' αὐτὸν ὑπὸ τινος κρείττονος. Cf. Taggart (1972) 109–10 and 128.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. *Epp. Apoll.* 52, where γνώσιν θεῶν οὐ δόξαν is mentioned as one of the benefits of Pythagorean philosophy. Both Philostratus and the epistolographer echo Platonic terminology, see, e.g., *Resp.* 477a–b; *Tim.* 29b–c.

<sup>55</sup> *VA* 1.1: ἐαυτῷ δὲ τὸν τε Ἀπόλλω ἤκειν ὁμολογοῦντα, ὡς αὐτὸς εἴη, ξυνεῖναι δὲ καὶ μὴ ὁμολογοῦντας τὴν Ἀθηνᾶν καὶ τὰς Μούσας καὶ θεοὺς ἑτέρους, ὧν τὰ εἶδη καὶ τὰ δυνάμια εὐπω τοὺς ἀνθρώπους γινώσκειν.

<sup>56</sup> Arist. fr. 191 Rose = Ael. *VH* 2.26; DL 8.11; Porph. *VP* 28; Iamb. *VP* 30, 91, 135, 140; see also Luc. *DMort* 6 (20).3 and *Vit. auct.* 6, and cf. Burkert (1972) 141 with n. 117.

<sup>57</sup> See esp. Boyancé (1936) 233–47.

latter's unique ability to discern the 'music of the spheres'.<sup>58</sup> This reading would also explain why the Muses are incognito: Philostratus may have had in mind the account according to which not the Muses but the Sirens are responsible for this cosmic music, an account found in Plato's myth of Er in the *Republic* and discussed at Plutarch's table.<sup>59</sup> More surprising is the role of Athena. *Life* seems to be unique in postulating a special relationship between Pythagoras and this goddess. Perhaps, the local pride of an Athenian sophist can be detected in this curious contention; the reference to 'unknown gods' may be taken as hinting at an Athenian context, too.<sup>60</sup> However, a supplementary interpretation of Athena's incognito presence in this context should be taken into consideration. *Life* was commissioned by Julia Domna (1.3), who in the imperial cult at Athens had been identified or associated with Athena Polias.<sup>61</sup> By introducing the goddess as a companion of the ancestor of Apollonius' wisdom, Philostratus may have intended to pay a posthumous compliment to the Severan empress who had been his patroness for more than a decade.<sup>62</sup>

How do the advantages of the Pythagorean way of life as set out by the protagonist relate to this miniature portrait of Pythagoras? In the conversation with Vardanes, Apollonius tells the Parthian king that Pythagoras has taught him to be aware of the gods, no matter whether they are seen or not, and to converse with them.<sup>63</sup> In the same context, he mentions his prognostic abilities. Debating with Thespesion, Apollonius introduces a female personification of Pythagorean philosophy who, he claims, promised him the gift of foreknowledge, as well as the faculty to distinguish gods, to know heroes and to unmask phantoms who have disguised themselves in

<sup>58</sup> Porph. *VP* 30–1; Iamb. *VP* 65–6; cf. Burkert (1972) 350–7 esp. 351, nn. 3 and 357: 'the tradition that he personally heard the heavenly music surely preserves something of truth.'

<sup>59</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 617b; Plu. *Quaest. conv.* 9.14.5–6 esp. 745f; cf. Iamb. *VP* 82 for the *acusma* that the oracle at Delphi is τετρακτύς: ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἡ ἁρμονία, ἐν ἣ αἱ Σειρήνες.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. *VA* 6.3: Ἀθήνησιν, οὗ καὶ ἀγνώστων θεῶν ὁμῶν βασιλεῖς ἴδρυνται. See Bowie (1978) 1,679: 'Many details in Philostratus assume an Athenian audience or point of reference.' On the cult of 'unknown gods', see Van der Horst (1989).

<sup>61</sup> *Agora* XVI 341 with Oliver (1940); for a recent discussion and bibliography, see Levick (2007) 130 with 204, nn. 32–35.

<sup>62</sup> On the years spent by Philostratus at the Severan court, see Flinterman (1995) 19–26; de Lannoy (1997) 2,386–7; on Julia Domna's cultural patronage, see Hemelrijk (1999) 122–8. *VA* was completed after the empress' death in 217 and probably not earlier than 222, see Flinterman (1995) 25–6 (pointing out that in *VA* 1.3 Julia Domna is spoken of in the imperfect tense) and 221 (taking *VA* 3.28 as an allusion to Flagabulus and crediting Philostratus with a healthy instinct for self-preservation).

<sup>63</sup> *VA* 1.32: σοφία δὲ ἐμοὶ Πυθαγόρου Σαμίτου ἀνδρός, ὃς θεούς τε θεραπεύειν ὤδε (i.e. with bloodless sacrifice) με ἐδιδάξατο, καὶ ξυνιέναι σφῶν ὁρωμένων τε καὶ οὐχ ὁρωμένων, φοιτᾶν τε ἐς διάλεξιν θεῶν.

human form.<sup>64</sup> In the Apology, Apollonius adds that Pythagoras, owing to his way of life, knew his previous incarnations, first among them the Trojan Euphorbus (8.7.14). Here, the protagonist repeats a piece of information from the opening chapter of *Life*.<sup>65</sup> Pythagoras' alleged claim that he had been Euphorbus is an integral part of the biographical tradition, well known among early-imperial authors.<sup>66</sup> Apparently, the story served to prove the doctrine of metempsychosis, as well as to underline the exceptional character of Pythagoras' wisdom. As will be discussed in the next section, Philostratus' Apollonius also remembers a former incarnation of his soul (3.23–4).

But how are these advantages of the Pythagorean way of life brought about? Both in the debate with Thespesion and in the Apology it is suggested that privileged knowledge of the supernatural world and the faculty of foreknowledge result from the purity acquired by those who follow the Pythagorean way of life.<sup>67</sup> During a discussion about divination (*mantikē*), the Indian sage Iarchas tells Apollonius that the latter owes his grasp of the future to the unblemished condition of his soul, which has in it a surplus of *aithēr* (3.42). *Aithēr* is, as he has earlier explained to his Greek guest, the fifth element, to which the gods owe their existence and which is inhaled by all that is immortal and divine (3.34).<sup>68</sup> Already as a sixteen-year-old, Apollonius adduces this supposedly Indian lore to motivate his abstinence from wine, 'which darkens the *aithēr* in the soul'.<sup>69</sup> In the Apology, Apollonius explains that his light diet keeps his senses in a mysterious state of

<sup>64</sup> VA 6.11.6: καθάρῳ δὲ ὄντι σοὶ καὶ προγιγνώσκειν δώσω, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς οὕτω τι ἐμπλήσω ἀκτίνος, ὥς διαγιγνώσκειν μὲν θεόν, γιγνώσκειν δὲ ἥρωα, σκιοπεδῇ δ' ἐλέγχειν φαντάσματα, δτε ψεύδονται εἶδη ἀνθρώπων.

<sup>65</sup> VA 1.1; cf. 3.19 and 6.11.3.

<sup>66</sup> See, among others, Heraclid. Pont. fr. 89 Wehrli = DL 8.4; Dicaearch. fr. 36 Wehrli, Clearch. fr. 10 Wehrli = Gel. 4.11.14; cf. *FGrHist* 1106 F 1 (Eubulides); Porph. VP 26–7 and 45; Iamb. VP 63; Luc. Gall. 4; Max. Tyr. 10.2; for further evidence and discussion, see Burkert (1972) 138–42.

<sup>67</sup> VA 6.11.6 (quoted above, n. 64) and 8.7.14: ἀπέλαυσέ γε τοῦ καθάρους εἶναι πολλὰ μὲν, πρῶτον δὲ τὸ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ ψυχῆς αἰσθεσθαι. Cf. Haussleiter (1935) 308–10.

<sup>68</sup> For an analysis of the philosophical content of VA 3.34–5, see Swain (1999) 187, n. 97. On ether as the fifth element, see Moraux (1963), discussing VA 3.34 and 42 at 1,236 and 1,251. As a cosmological theory, this is Aristotelian doctrine, as was noted by Hufner (1934) 63. Whether the same is true of its application to the composition of the soul, as is maintained by Cicero (*Tusc.* 1.10.22 and 1.26.65–27.66; *Ac.* 1.7.26), is controversial, see the discussion in Moraux (1963) 1,213–31 and, for a different view, Bos (2003) 258–303. Moraux (1963) 1,193–4 maintains that the first to combine speculation on the heavenly origin of the soul with the tenet of a fifth element was Heraclides Ponticus (fr. 98–9 Wehrli). For ether as the fifth element in Pythagorean writings from the Hellenistic period see [Ocell.] *De univ. nat.* 134, 3–4 Thesleff and [Philol.] *De an.* 150, 20 Thesleff, both using the Aristotelian etymology ἀπὸ τοῦ θείου αἰ (Cael. 270b21) to designate the supralunar part of the kosmos; cf. Moraux (1963) 1,236.

<sup>69</sup> VA 1.8: διαβολοῦντα τὸν ἐν τῇ ψυχῇ αἰθέρα.

clarity (*aithria*), which allows him beforehand to discern coming events.<sup>70</sup> A similar connection between Pythagorean asceticism and 'clairvoyance' is suggested by the claims that abstinence from wine and sleeping under linen are conducive to prophetic dreams (2.37; 8.7.16). While Apollonius' Indian tutor has no qualms about discussing foreknowledge under the heading of *mantikē* (3.42), the protagonist himself is non-committal on *mantikē* in the Apology (8.7.10) and professes that he owes his knowledge of the future to the gods, who 'reveal their intentions to holy and wise men, even if they do not practise divination'.<sup>71</sup> When interrogated by Tigellinus, he denies being a *mantis* (4.44), and advises Nero's *praefectus praetorio* to attribute a prediction of his 'to wisdom which god reveals to wise men' rather than to divination.<sup>72</sup> The author similarly attributes his hero's faculty of foreknowledge to divine inspiration, i.e. to what the gods revealed to him.<sup>73</sup>

If the prognostic abilities of Philostratus' Apollonius are linked with the purity acquired by the Pythagorean life, neglect of its requirements will result in the loss of the faculty of foreknowledge. In the Apology Apollonius points out that if the accusation that he had sacrificed an Arcadian boy for mantic purposes were true, the voice of the *daimonion* would have deserted him as being polluted.<sup>74</sup> This passage is the keystone of the argument made by David Du Toit for his thesis that throughout *Life* Apollonius is presented as a man who lives under the surveillance of a 'Begleitdämon', a personal superhuman attendant.<sup>75</sup> According to this concept, distilled by Du Toit from Plutarch's dialogue *De genio Socratis*,<sup>76</sup> at every incarnation a soul is assigned a new *daimōn* of its own (*Mor.* 585f). Such *daimones* are souls that have been released from the succession of incarnations (593d). While in the case of ordinary human beings, the *daimōn* leaves the soul to its own devices, a soul on the brink of its release is admonished by its *daimōn* and, if compliant, saved; if not, it is deserted

<sup>70</sup> VA 8.7.27: τοῦτό μοι, ὦ βασιλεῦ, τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἐν αἰθρίᾳ τινὶ ἀπορρήτῳ φυλάττει, κοῦκ ἔξ ὁλερὸν περὶ αὐτὰς οὐδὲν εἶναι, διορᾶν τε, ὥσπερ ἐν κατόπτρῳ αὐγῇ πάντα γιγνόμενά τε καὶ ἐσόμενα. Cf. 8.5: 'λεπτοτέρα,' εἶπεν, 'ὦ βασιλεῦ, διαίτη χρώμενος πρῶτος τοῦ δεινοῦ ἡσθόμεν'.

<sup>71</sup> VA 8.7.30: ὅτι τὰς αὐτῶν βουλὰς οἱ θεοὶ τοῖς ὁσίοις τε καὶ σοφοῖς ἀνδράσι καὶ μὴ μαντευομένοις φαίνουσι.

<sup>72</sup> VA 4.44: τοῦτο δὲ μὴ μαντικῇ προστίθει, σοφία δὲ μᾶλλον, ἣν θεὸς φαίνει σοφοῖς ἀνδράσιν. Note that in *Epp. Apoll.* 8 the speaker admits that he practises μαντική, and that in *Epp. Apoll.* 52 πᾶσα θεία μαντική is listed among the rewards of the Pythagorean philosophy.

<sup>73</sup> VA 5.12: ὅτι μὲν γὰρ τὰ τοιαῦτα δαιμονία κινήσει προεγίνωσκε ... προεγίνωσκε ... ἐξ ὧν οἱ θεοὶ ἔφαινον.

<sup>74</sup> VA 8.7.30: ἐφ' οἷς ἀπέλιπεν ἄν με καὶ ἡ τοῦ δαιμονίου ὁμῆ μὴ καθαρὸν ὄντα.

<sup>75</sup> Du Toit (1999); cf. Du Toit (1997) 302–9. <sup>76</sup> Du Toit (1999) 153–7.

and abandoned to its unenviable fate (593f–594a). Socrates' *daimonion* is explained along similar lines: the Athenian philosopher's intelligence, his *nous*, was pure and passionless and, therefore, extraordinarily receptive to the voiceless messages of his *daimōn* (588d–e). Du Toit interprets the passages on Apollonius' prognostic abilities in the light of the ideas voiced by Plutarch's characters: Philostratus' Apollonius owes his foreknowledge to a personal superhuman attendant, whose guidance is conditional on the purity of his soul and whose voice does not desert him as long as he remains true to his choice of the Pythagorean way of life.<sup>77</sup>

While Du Toit has made a good case for the presence of the notion of a 'Begleitdämon' in *Life*, his exposition of Philostratus' explanation of Apollonius' gift of foreknowledge leaves some problems. The first is that he assumes that the *daimonion* mentioned in *VA* 8.7.30 is the medium by which the gods reveal their intentions to Apollonius.<sup>78</sup> This assumption, which is essential for the consistency of the Philostratean account as reconstructed by Du Toit, finds no direct confirmation in the text. One could just as well argue that there is an unresolved tension in *Life* between the notion of a 'guardian spirit' on the one hand and the personal association with the gods claimed for Pythagoras (1.1) and Apollonius (1.32) on the other. The same tension is, incidentally, present in Plutarch's *De genio Socratis*. Are the privileged few with whom divinity (*to theion*) communicates personally and who are not dependent on divination (593d), identical with the souls that, with the god's permission, receive assistance from their *daimōn* (593f–594a)? The question urges itself on the reader but is left unanswered.<sup>79</sup> Plutarch juxtaposes the notions without committing himself. In the case of Philostratus' Apollonius, the ambiguity could be eliminated by interpreting the *daimonion* in *VA* 8.7.30 as 'the divinity',<sup>80</sup> thus removing the main prop of Du Toit's argument. However, Du Toit's correct observation that Socrates is a model for the protagonist of *Life*<sup>81</sup> strongly militates against such a solution, and it seems preferable to accept that consistency is not a conspicuous virtue of the Philostratean account of Apollonius' prognostic abilities.<sup>82</sup> The appeal of this option is considerably

<sup>77</sup> Du Toit (1999) 157–61. In addition to *VA* 8.7.30 (ἡ τοῦ δαιμονίου ὁμῆς), Du Toit (1999) 151–2 refers to 1.18: ἐμοὶ δὲ βασιστέρᾳ, οἱ σοφία τε καὶ δαίμων με ἔχει. Du Toit's reading is supported by C.P. Jones' translation of these passages in Jones (2005). Ammianus Marcellinus 21.14.5 includes Apollonius among those great men whose undefiled souls were protected and initiated into higher truths by their *genius familiaris*.

<sup>78</sup> Du Toit (1999) 161. <sup>79</sup> Cf. Corlu (1970) 77–80; Brenk (1986) 2, 125.

<sup>80</sup> For this interpretation, see Puiggali (1983) 118; cf., however, Du Toit (1999) 152, n. 16.

<sup>81</sup> Du Toit (1999) 152–3 with n. 17; cf. Lenz (1964) 98; Döring (1979) 138–9.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Perzke (1970) 173: 'Wie mann diese Fähigkeit erlangt, wird nicht einheitlich erklärt.'



enhanced when we take a closer look at the way in which Philostratus' Apollonius receives intimations about future events. As we have observed, both during his trial and in the *Apology* the protagonist of *Life* claims that his ascetic lifestyle keeps his senses in a superb condition and allows him 'to discern everything that is and will be'.<sup>83</sup> This explanation of Apollonius' 'clairvoyance' not only strikingly differs from Plutarch's theory, according to which *daimones* communicate with the intellect (*nous*) of the privileged few without resort to the senses of their addressees (588e); the superior sensory capacity adduced by Apollonius before Domitian also fits in uneasily with the divine or 'demonic' inspiration claimed elsewhere in *Life* by or for the protagonist. Two – or, rather, three – notions are juxtaposed without an attempt at synthesis.

In sum, rather than the clear-cut conception perceived by Du Toit, the Philostratean account of Apollonius' faculty of foreknowledge seems to be a combination of sometimes conflicting notions. This may be at least partly due to the fact that the author of *Life* was interested to only a limited extent in the finer points of philosophical discourse. However, the inconsistencies in his account traced so far can be plausibly linked to his attempts to defend his hero against the accusation of having been a magician. In the second chapter of *Life*, where this apologetic programme is set out, the author insists that such allegations find no confirmation in Apollonius' gift of foreknowledge. Otherwise, he claims, Socrates would fall under the same suspicion for the information that he received from his *daimonion* (1.2). In the *Apology* (8.7.26), the protagonist himself appeals to Socrates' *daimonion* in order to rebut the charge of sorcery. The apologetic strategy of both author and protagonist amounts to claiming for Apollonius the respect owed to Socrates. Accordingly, the Tyanean's prognostic abilities have to be explained along similar lines as those of his illustrious predecessor. It is, therefore, no surprise that Philostratus' Apollonius brings up 'the voice of the *daimonion*' in his *Apology* (8.7.30).

However, the appeal to a Socrates-like *daimonion* could backfire: as is suggested by a passage from Apuleius' *Apology* and confirmed by Tertullian, the malevolent could construe Socrates' *daimonion* as a magician's superhuman assistant, a *daimōn paredros*.<sup>84</sup> That must be at least part of the reason why both the author, in the second chapter of *Life* (1.2), and the protagonist, in the *Apology* (8.7.26), resort to the additional stratagem of lumping together Socrates and the Ionian philosophers Thales and

<sup>83</sup> *VIA* 8.5 and 8.7.27, quoted above, n. 70.

<sup>84</sup> *Apul. Apol.* 27.3; *Tert. An.* 1.4–5; *Apol.* 22.1; see also *Min. Fel. Oct.* 26.9, and cf. Graf (1997) 107–17.

Anaxagoras, thus obscuring the difference between foreknowledge owing to divine or 'demonic' inspiration, on the one hand, and predictions based on an understanding of the workings of nature, on the other.<sup>85</sup> This is disingenuous rather than naive. Apuleius carefully distinguishes philosophers who investigate the mechanisms ruling the physical world from those with a marked interest in the workings of divine providence. The former category is exemplified by, among others, Anaxagoras.<sup>86</sup> Cicero mentions a prediction of Thales as an example of those *auguria* that do not result from divine inspiration but from human reasoning,<sup>87</sup> and Philostratus' Apollonius himself, in a different context, contrasts the percipience of the pure and undefiled soul with the observations of celestial phenomena made by Thales and Anaxagoras.<sup>88</sup>

Several scholars have observed that the explanation of Apollonius' prognostic abilities in physical terms, and especially their reduction to a special form of sense-perception, has a remarkably rational character.<sup>89</sup> It may be suggested that this rationalising tendency is best understood in connection with the apologetic comparison between the Tyanean's faculty of foreknowledge and the predictions of the Ionian philosophers. Admittedly, the link between food taboos and divination is integral to the Pythagorean tradition. According to Iamblichus, Pythagoras advised to beware of food that impeded divination (*mantike*) or was detrimental to the purity of the soul; he specifically warned against fare that muddled the purity of the soul with regard to visions in dreams.<sup>90</sup> One could add that visual perception of the supernatural is not foreign to the Pythagorean tradition.<sup>91</sup> But the appeal by Philostratus' Apollonius to the clarity surrounding his sensory system seems curiously reductionist when compared to the claim of privileged access to the divine made elsewhere, and it is certainly no coincidence that this account of Apollonius' visionary gift is presented in the Apology.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>85</sup> For the predictions ascribed to Thales in *VA* 1.2 and 8.7.26, see Arist. *Pol.* 1259a6–19; Cic. *Div.* 1.49.111–12; DL 1.26 = Hieronymus fr. 39 Wehrli, and cf. Belloni (1980) 143; for Anaxagoras, Plin. *Nat.* 2.149; Plu. *Lys.* 12; DL 2.10.

<sup>86</sup> Apul. *Apol.* 27.1–2. <sup>87</sup> Cic. *Div.* 1.49.111: *auguria non divini impetus sed rationis humanae.*

<sup>88</sup> *VA* 2.5; cf. *Ner.* 4, where Thales is labelled σοφώτατός τε καὶ φυσικώτατος.

<sup>89</sup> Francis (1995) 127–8; Du Toit (1999) 160–1 n. 46.

<sup>90</sup> Iamb. *VP* 106–7; cf. Cic. *Div.* 2.58.119; DL 8.24, and see Haussleiter (1935) 127–8; Kingsley (1995) 284–6.

<sup>91</sup> Apul. *Soc.* 20 = Arist. fr. 193.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. Götsching (1889) 41: 'Die ganze Apologie erscheint mehr oder weniger als eine systematische Depotenzenierung dessen, was in dem übrigen Werke über das gewöhnliche Menschenmass hinausgeht ist.'

## A LATTER-DAY PYTHAGORAS

Pythagoras is credited in the tradition with several feats of precognition and clairvoyance. Thus he tells bystanders that a ship entering the harbour of Metapontum contains a corpse,<sup>91</sup> he predicts an earthquake and he prophesies the wreck of a ship sailing with a favourable wind.<sup>92</sup> These prophecies are linked with other supernatural feats and characteristics such as the notorious golden thigh.<sup>93</sup> Taken together, they hint at the superhuman nature attributed to Pythagoras by his followers:<sup>94</sup> the identification with Hyperborean Apollo belongs to the same context. As we have noticed above, Philostratus does not repeat this piece of information, even though it was well known during the early empire.<sup>95</sup> In general, the portrayal of Pythagoras in *Life* is understandably reticent regarding miraculous feats that could be adduced as evidence of sorcery. Rather than suggesting Pythagoras' superhuman nature, Philostratus stresses privileged communication with the divine. Even this, one might add, was not without risks from an apologetic point of view: after all, a definition of magic could include being on conversational terms with immortal gods.<sup>96</sup>

In remaining silent about Pythagoras' superhuman status, *Life* differs from one of the letters attributed to Apollonius, where it is held that Pythagoras belonged to the class of *daimones*.<sup>97</sup> Does Philostratus display a similar reticence regarding the ontological status of the protagonist? Du Toit has answered this question with an unequivocal 'yes'.<sup>98</sup> Du Toit's study challenges the widely held hypothesis that the Christology of early Christianity should be understood against the background of a Hellenistic conception of the 'divine man' (*theios anēr*). This hypothesis, which has been an important influence in the study of the history of religions of the first centuries AD in general and of early Christianity in particular, was from its infancy in the work of Richard Reitzenstein linked with the idea that figures such as Apollonius should be understood as exemplifying

<sup>91</sup> Arist. fr. 191 Rose = Apollon. *Mir.* 6; Iamb. *VP* 142; Porph. *VP* 28.

<sup>92</sup> Iamb. *VP* 136. The source for the attribution of these predictions to Pythagoras is the *Tripous* by Andron of Ephesus; see Eus. *PE* 10.3.6 and cf. Burkert (1972) 144 with n. 130.

<sup>93</sup> Arist. fr. 191 Rose = Apoll. *Mir.* 6; Plu. *Num.* 8.8; Ael. *VH* 2.26 and 4.17; DL 8.11; Iamb. *VP* 140. On the significance of the golden thigh, see Burkert (1972) 159–60; Bollansée's commentary on *FGrHist* 1026 F 24, 269–70.

<sup>94</sup> See Lévy (1926) 11–12; Burkert (1972) 136–47; Macris (2003) 265–70.

<sup>95</sup> See above, n. 56. Note, however, that at the end of *VA* 1.1, Empedocles' claim to divinity is adduced as evidence for his affinity to Pythagoras.

<sup>96</sup> Apul. *Apol.* 26.6: *communio loquendi cum deis immortalibus*; cf. Abt (1908) 44–50 (aptly paraphrasing Apuleius' wording as 'auf du und du mit den Göttern sein'); Graf (1997) 94–5, 100–4 and 228–9.

<sup>97</sup> *Epp. Apoll.* 50: ἐν γένει δαιμόνων καὶ ὁ σοφώτατος Πυθαγόρας ἦν. Penella (1979) 116 points out that καὶ can be taken to imply 'as well as myself'.

<sup>98</sup> Du Toit (1997) 276–320.

a 'general conception of the *theios anthrōpos*, according to which such a divine man on the basis of a superior nature and personal sanctity unites in himself the most profound knowledge and prophetic and thaumaturgic power'.<sup>101</sup> In the early 1980s, the 'divine man' hypothesis was systematically expounded by Hans Dieter Betz;<sup>102</sup> during the 1990s, it came increasingly under attack.<sup>103</sup> Du Toit's criticism is, however, by far the most devastating to date. Its strength results from its clear focus on semantics: in order to track down the meaning of the 'divine man' terminology, Du Toit systematically explores the cases in imperial Greek literature where the adjectives *theios*, *daimonios* and *thespesios* are applied to human referents.<sup>104</sup> His conclusion is that these adjectives almost invariably denote the authority of such referents as founders and guarantors of a philosophical tradition or their moral excellence rather than their ontological status; indeed, in those cases where human beings are actually divinised and worshipped as gods, the divine man terminology is, Du Toit maintains, conspicuously absent.<sup>105</sup>

The repercussions of Du Toit's findings are far-reaching. At the very least, they effectively undercut the assumptions underlying much scholarly usage,<sup>106</sup> and they should certainly be taken as a salutary warning against the interpretation of passages employing the 'divine man' terminology as unambiguous statements regarding the ontological status of the referents. However, as Du Toit himself admits,<sup>107</sup> they do not affect the possibility of the existence of an ancient conception of a human being whose supernatural powers attest his superhuman status. In fact, as we have noticed above, such a conception was available in the Hellenistic period and the first centuries AD in the Pythagoras legend; according to Aristotle, an esoteric doctrine of the Pythagoreans was that there are three kinds of rational beings: gods, men and those like Pythagoras.<sup>108</sup> Of the non-Philostratean traditions surrounding Apollonius, at least one of the letters credits him with the reputation of a superhuman being.<sup>109</sup> Does *Life* show traces of a similar categorisation?

<sup>101</sup> Reitzenstein (1927) 26: 'Eine allgemeine Vorstellung von dem *θεῖος ἄνθρωπος* . . . nach welcher ein solcher Gottmensch auf Grund einer höheren Natur und persönlicher Heiligkeit in sich tiefstes Erkennen, Seher- und Wunderkraft verbindet.' For *forschungsgeschichtliche surveys*, see Koskenniemi (1994) 64–100; Du Toit (1997) 2–39.

<sup>102</sup> Betz (1983). <sup>103</sup> See esp. Koskenniemi (1994), with Flinterman (1996).

<sup>104</sup> See for this *Aufgabestellung* Du Toit (1997) 59–60. <sup>105</sup> Du Toit (1997) 401–2.

<sup>106</sup> This includes Flinterman (1995) 62 with n. 20. <sup>107</sup> Du Toit (1997) 406 n. 26.

<sup>108</sup> Arist. fr. 192 Rose (= Lamb. VP 31): τοῦ λογικοῦ ζώου τὸ μὲν ἐστὶ θεός, τὸ δὲ ἄνθρωπος· τὸ δὲ οὐκ οὐκ Πυθαγόρας. Cf. above, nn. 8–10 and 93–6, and see Du Toit (1997) 223–4. For brief discussion of Du Toit's handling of traditions concerning Pythagoras see Macris (2003) 269–70, n. 119.

<sup>109</sup> *Epp. Apoll.* 44: με τῶν ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων ἰσοῦσθαι ἡγουμένω, τινῶν δὲ καὶ θεῶν. See for the possible implication of *Epp. Apoll.* 50 Penella's comment, quoted above, n. 99.

This is certainly what one would expect given the fact that the main character is credited with a number of miraculous feats which are strongly reminiscent of elements of the Pythagoras legend.<sup>110</sup> When we are told that Apollonius was at one and the same moment in Smyrna and Ephesus, the parallel with Pythagoras, who was simultaneously present in two cities in Magna Graecia,<sup>111</sup> is explicitly mentioned (4.10). After having been acquitted by Domitian, Apollonius vanishes from the imperial courtroom before noon and turns up in Dicaearchia (i.e. Puteoli) around dusk.<sup>112</sup> Apollonius' disappearance recalls the report how Pythagoras after the outbreak of civil strife in Croton left for Metapontum without being seen by anyone,<sup>113</sup> while the miraculous speed of his journey equals the achievements of the *aithrobatēs* Abaris, whose arrow was confiscated by Pythagoras.<sup>114</sup> Before vanishing from Domitian's courtroom, the Philostratan Apollonius quotes *Iliad* 22.13, where Apollo snarls at Achilles: 'You will not kill me, for I am not fated to die.' An allusion to the same passage from the *Iliad* can be found in Iamblichus' description of the confrontation between Pythagoras and Phalaris of Acragas: Pythagoras knew that he was not doomed to die by Phalaris' hand.<sup>115</sup> Pythagoras was said to have predicted that a ship sailing

<sup>110</sup> See, among others, Lévy (1926) 130–7; Taggart (1972) 107–13; Knoles (1981) 267–8; and now Staab (2007), which came to my attention too late to be taken into account. I find the arguments for the hypothesis that Philostratus embellished his portrait of the Tyanean sage with elements borrowed from a *Life of Pythagoras* by Apollonius (of Tyanas?) tenuous, see Flinterman (1995) 77–9 and 167–8 and cf. below, n. 115; Staab (2002) 228–37 is also sceptical. On the Apollonian *Life of Pythagoras*, cf. Radicke's introduction to *FGH Hist* 1064, 150–1.

<sup>111</sup> Croton and Metapontum according to Ael. *VH* 2.26 = Arist. fr. 191; cf. Ael. *VH* 4.17 and Apollon. *Mir.* 6; Tauromenium and Metapontum according to Porphyry (*VP* 27 and 29) and Iamblichus (*VP* 134 and 136), Thurii and Metapontum according to Philostratus; cf. Burkert (1972) 141 with n. 118.

<sup>112</sup> *VA* 8.5 (ἡφανίσθη τοῦ δικαστηρίου), 8 (ἀπῆλθε τοῦ δικαστηρίου δαιμόνιον τε καὶ οὐ ῥᾶδιον εἰπεῖν τρόπον) and 10 (πρὸ μεσημβρίας μὲν ἀπῆλθε τοῦ δικαστηρίου, περὶ δὲ ἔλην δ' ἐν Δικαιαρχίᾳ ἐφάνη).

<sup>113</sup> Arist. fr. 191 Rose = Apollon. *Mir.* 6; cf. Lévy (1926) 12, n. 7; Burkert (1972) 143. This element from the Pythagoras legend was overlooked in Flinterman (1995) 170.

<sup>114</sup> Iamb. *VP* 136 and 140–1; on the origin (possibly Aristotelian) and meaning of this material see Lévy (1926) 13–19; Burkert (1972) 143. In *VA* 7.10 Abaris is mentioned in connection with Apollonius' four-day journey from Asia to Italy: a remarkably smooth crossing, but hardly a superhuman achievement.

<sup>115</sup> Philostr. *VA* 8.5 and 8; Iamb. *VP* 217. It has been assumed that Philostratus here makes Apollonius quote a line from the *Iliad* to which Apollonius himself, in his *Life of Pythagoras*, had made Pythagoras refer before Phalaris. This assumption underlies the attribution of Iamblichus' *VP* 215–22 to Apollonius. The most recent defence of this line of reasoning can be found in Hinz (2001) 87–9 with n. 268; cf. Burkert (1972) 100 with n. 13. Hinz adds, however, that the fact that the confrontation between Pythagoras and Phalaris is not attested before the second century AD 'der Ungunst der Überlieferung zuzuschreiben ist' (p. 91). If that is accepted, it is hardly necessary to assume that Philostratus (or one of his predecessors) depended precisely on Apollonius' *Life of Pythagoras* (rather than on any other version of the confrontation between Pythagoras and Phalaris) for a quotation from the *Iliad* which is particularly appropriate in a Pythagorean context, because

with favourable wind would sink;<sup>116</sup> Apollonius improves on this feat by performing it twice.<sup>117</sup> Like Pythagoras, Apollonius is able to communicate with animals.<sup>118</sup> Like Pythagoras, he knows a previous incarnation of his soul and is able to diagnose the former incarnations of other beings, human and animal alike.<sup>119</sup> He visits the cave on Mount Ida on Crete, as Pythagoras did.<sup>120</sup> He also descends into the oracular cave of Trophonius at Lebadea and emerges after seven days with a book containing the doctrines of Pythagoras (8.19–20). The ritual at Lebadea is a ‘journey into the underworld’;<sup>121</sup> a *katabasis*, a descent into Hades, is part and parcel of the Pythagoras legend too.<sup>122</sup>

It is true, as Du Toit points out,<sup>123</sup> that regarding a man as a god and cultic veneration of human beings are frequently criticised in *Life*. The protagonist declines divine honours (4.31) and corrects those who believe that he is a *daimōn* (7.32). But apart from the fact that he is not fully consistent in doing so,<sup>124</sup> a reading that does not take into account the impressions conveyed by characters other than the protagonist, even when subsequently contradicted, lacks sophistication. Inhabitants of Tyana and the surrounding area called Apollonius a son of Zeus, the guardian of oaths, worshipped at a well near the Tyanean’s native city (1.6). Philostratus’ addition that Apollonius called himself a son of Apollonius may be taken as an admonition to the reader to accept that the truth about Apollonius allows diverging wordings rather than as a dismissal of a local tale carefully moulded by the author – even though it is indicated that the latter’s preference differs from the one attributed to Apollonius’ fellow countrymen. Besides, the author does not distance himself from a couple of stories about the miraculous portents that surrounded Apollonius’ birth. During her pregnancy his mother was visited by an apparition of an Egyptian divinity, who revealed himself as Proteus and declared that he was the

it amounts to identification with Apollo. And once this assumption is dropped, the basis for the attribution of Iamblichus’ *VP* 215–22 to Apollonius is gone as well. On Iamblichus’ *VP* 215–22, cf. now Staab (2002) 411–20. For a survey of scholarly debate on the sources of *VP*, see Lurje (2002) 237, n. 42; Staab (2002) 217–37 is a more recent contribution.

<sup>116</sup> See above, n. 94. <sup>117</sup> *VA* 5.18 and 7.41; cf. Lévy (1926) 134.

<sup>118</sup> Pythagoras: *Plu. Num.* 8.8; *Ael. VH* 4.17; Iamb. *VP* 142. Apollonius: *VA* 1.20, 4.3, 5.42, 6.43; cf. Lévy (1926) 13; Burkert (1972) 142 and 162 n. 231.

<sup>119</sup> Pythagoras: see in addition to the passages referred to above, n. 66, *DL* 8.36 = *DK* 21B7 (*Xenophanes*); *Ael. VH* 4.17; Iamb. *VP* 143. Apollonius: *VA* 3.23–4, 5.42 and 6.43.

<sup>120</sup> *VA* 4.34; *DL* 8.3; *Porph. VP* 17; cf. Delatte (1922) 153; Burkert (1972) 152 with n. 176.

<sup>121</sup> Burkert (1972) 154.

<sup>122</sup> See esp. *DL* 8.41 = *FGH* 1026 F 24, with Bollansée’s commentary and Burkert (1972) 155–9.

<sup>123</sup> Du Toit (1997) 294–5.

<sup>124</sup> See *VA* 1.19; cf. *VA* 4.44. It is also noteworthy that in *VA* 4.31 Apollonius is said to have declined divine honours in order to avoid giving offence (ὥς μὴ φθονοῖτο): the correctness of the view underlying the idea of paying him divine honours is not questioned.

child to which she would give birth (1.4).<sup>125</sup> We may grant Du Toit that this story *can* be harmonised with the conception of a 'Begleirdämon'.<sup>126</sup> Still, his interpretation presupposes complete identity between a mortal's soul and its supernatural assistant, and an assistant of unusually high status at that. Porphyry's story about the personal *daimōn* of Plotinus who, when conjured up, turned out to be a god, comes to mind.<sup>127</sup> Apollonius' birth itself is strikingly similar to the birth of his divine eponym.<sup>128</sup>

While the reactions of characters in *Life* confronted with the protagonist and the stories about the portents accompanying his birth may be taken as suggesting Apollonius' superhuman status, there is one passage where a more unequivocal statement is put in the mouth of Damis, Apollonius' disciple and lifelong companion. The reader is told that Damis recognised that his master's nature was 'divine and superhuman', when Apollonius freed his leg from its fetters in Domitian's dungeon.<sup>129</sup> Du Toit argues that casting off the shackle is a symbolic act, meant to demonstrate the correctness of Apollonius' earlier prediction that he will be set free the very same day. Damis' characterisation of Apollonius' *physis* as *theios* should be interpreted as, again, referring to Apollonius' superior virtue and wisdom, qualities to which the sage owns his prognostic abilities.<sup>130</sup> This reading surely strains the passage as well as its direct context: the attack on sorcery in the following chapter (7.39) is hardly concerned with (magical) divination. The conclusion that in this case Apollonius *is* credited with a superhuman ontological status on the basis of his thaumaturgic power seems inescapable.<sup>131</sup> It is important to point out that this case is not covered by the apologetic efforts of the author and the protagonist, which focus on the latter's predictions.

The author of *Life* avoids taking responsibility for unequivocal statements regarding the superhuman nature of his hero. Instead, he refers for such affirmations to Tyanean locals and Damis, thus creating a certain distance between himself and these potentially offensive appraisals. Whether this should be taken as an indication of the reality of the traditions on Apollonius referred to in such contexts or, on the contrary, as a device to

<sup>125</sup> Cf. above, n. 12. <sup>126</sup> Du Toit (1997) 308–9; Du Toit (1999) 161–1.

<sup>127</sup> Porphy. *Plot.* 10; cf. Brisson (1992) 468–72.

<sup>128</sup> For the swans in *VA* 1.5 see Call. *Del.* 249–54; cf. Billault (2000) 113.

<sup>129</sup> *VA* 7.38: τότε πρῶτον ὁ Δάμις φησὶν ἀκριβῶς ξυνεῖναι τῆς Ἀπολλωνίου φύσεως, ὅτι θεία τε εἴη καὶ κρείττων ἀνθρώπου. Cf. 8.13.

<sup>130</sup> Du Toit (1997) 309–12.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Van Uytanghe (1993) 178 n. 191: 'Apollonius . . . doit son pouvoir miraculeux expressément à sa propre nature divine.' For a critical discussion of Du Toit's approach in general and of his reading of *VA* 7.38 in particular see Zeller (2001) esp. 59–60.

lend credibility to references to fictional sources, is a question which does not allow a definite answer.<sup>132</sup> To make matters worse, Philostratus may even have ascribed existing stories about and evaluations of Apollonius to fictional sources. However, scepticism about the existence of some of the sources mentioned by Philostratus does not entail rejection of the very likely supposition that Apollonius was considered a Pythagorean before Philostratus.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, stories such as Apollonius' demonstration of his ability to understand the language of birds (4.3) and his visit to the oracle of Trophonius (8.19–20) were very probably based on local traditions.<sup>134</sup> This implies that already in pre-Philostratean traditions he had begun to display a certain resemblance to the 'ancestor of his wisdom', and it would be surprising if this process of transference of elements from the Pythagoras legend would have left assessments of his ontological status unaffected. It is highly probable that the attribution of a superhuman nature to Apollonius, found in at least one of the letters,<sup>135</sup> antedates Philostratus. In spite of an observable reticence on this issue on the part of the author, *Life* at least once unambiguously credits its protagonist with a divine nature. Apparently, Philostratus was willing to present a multilayered truth about Apollonius, even if it jeopardised the apotheotic programme unfolded in the introductory chapters and expanded in the speech he allegedly prepared for his trial before Domitian.

<sup>132</sup> I have argued the first position with regard to 'Damis' in Flinterman (1995) 85; for the alternative see Sidebottom (1999) 34.

<sup>133</sup> See the convincing arguments adduced by Bowie (1978) 1,671–3 and 1,691–2.

<sup>134</sup> On VA 4.3, see Bowie (1978) 1,687 and Radicke's commentary on *FGrHist* 1064 T 3 (= Porph. *Abst.* 3.3.6); on VA 8.19–20, see Bowie (1978) 1,672–3.

<sup>135</sup> *Epp. Apoll.* 44 (quoted above, n. 109).



## CHAPTER 9

# *The Odyssey of Apollonius: an intertextual paradigm\**

Gert-Jan van Dijk

An intertextual reading of *Life of Apollonius* reveals that the adventures of Odysseus are remarkably well represented in the biography of the Tyanean sage. Apollonius goes through all books of the *Apologoi* and visits islands even more remote. The references to the vicissitudes of this mythological superman are not only numerous but also, and more importantly, consistent: when they are combined they will be seen to form an overall picture.

In this chapter I will analyse the forms and functions of the Odysseus paradigm within *Life of Apollonius*. Philostratus seems to have modelled the philosophically oriented travels of the sage from Tyana upon the wanderings of the man from Ithaca. Time and again Apollonius is shown to be similar, indeed superior, to Odysseus, in various respects. In this way the sage's feats are given an epic dimension, which has implications for the other characters as well; thus Apollonius' disciples correspond to Odysseus' companions.

Attention will be paid to playful incongruities, the multifunctionality of intertextuality, the interplay of fiction and reality, the distribution of the Homeric references and the use of other mythological paradigms, especially that of Heracles.<sup>1</sup> The theme will also be put into the broader context of the eternal 'Ulysses theme', Homer allegorisation, the contemporaneous novel and the Second Sophistic.

\* A preliminary version of this chapter, whose prehistory goes back to 'Achilles en Odysseus in het Imperium Romanum. Intertextuele verwijzingen naar *Ilias* en *Odyssee* in de *Vita Apollonii* van Philostratus', read at the First Dutch Hellenists' Day (Groningen University, 14 January 2000) on the invitation of Annette Harder, was presented in Oxford at the Corpus Christi Classical seminar. I benefited from some astute observations by members of the audience, especially Christopher Pelling and John Henderson.

<sup>1</sup> A study of the numerous intertextual references to the feats performed by this other mythological superman will be relegated to another occasion, since it proved to be too Herculean a task to combine the ordeals experienced by the sons of Zeus and Laertes in a talk that was supposed to stay within reasonable limits.

This chapter may be read as a mythological counterpart of chapter 8 by my colleague Jaap-Jan Flinterman, who considers various aspects of the relation between Apollonius and his philosophical role models, Pythagoras and Socrates.<sup>2</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

*Life of Apollonius* tells the story of an exemplary man. The subject of the biography is good and just, and may therefore even be called 'divine'. He is shown to help weak citizens and to oppose powerful tyrants. If we all behaved like him, the world would be different.

Yet in *Life*, other heroes do also occur. Great men from the literary and mythological past of Greece are adduced throughout the work.<sup>3</sup> These generally serve as models for the present.<sup>4</sup> They are worthy of imitation, even if for the average mortal they are out of reach. Thus, in a way, they seem to embody the Second Sophistic,<sup>5</sup> in which a renaissance of the glorious past contributed to preserving the cultural identity of the Greek community subjected to the rule of the Roman empire.

Among the many fictional and historical characters referred to in *Life*, Odysseus especially merits closer investigation. Like Apollonius as presented by Philostratus,<sup>6</sup> Odysseus is a model traveller. The references to the travels and adventures of this legendary man are not only numerous but also, and more importantly, consistent. When they are combined they will be seen to form an overall picture, which I would like to call a paradigm.

The very use of this device might seem to be intertextual, for the oldest example of its occurrence in Greek literature is the so-called Atreidae paradigm in the *Odyssey*,<sup>7</sup> where the fate of Agamemnon is repeatedly used as a foil to the homecoming of Odysseus. Various aspects of the Agamemnon's *nostos* are used at different stages in the narrative of Odysseus'

<sup>2</sup> A recurrent pattern is that Apollonius often surpasses his models by performing their achievements twice. In tracing the footsteps of Odysseus and Pythagoras we try to illustrate the intricacy of the literary texture of Philostratus' scenes from a philosophical life, as well as the difficulties involved in disentangling it.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Anderson (1986) 235: 'Apollonius performs the labours of Heracles, the voyages of Odysseus, ... the trial of Socrates, and the transmigrations of Pythagoras, all in one. ... And of course he bypasses his predecessors in every department.'

<sup>4</sup> See for non-linear aspects of the relationship between past, present and future Van Dijk (2000); cf. Anderson (1993) 101–32: 'Hellenic Past, Graeco-Roman present.'

<sup>5</sup> For an understanding of which see Swain (1996).

<sup>6</sup> For an allegorical interpretation of Apollonius' travels, see Elsner (1997).

<sup>7</sup> See Heubeck (1988–92) I 16–17, with n. 45, referring to D'Arms and Hulley (1946); Hommel (1958); Hölischer (1967).

return home. In the *Telemachy*, the inactive son of Odysseus is reminded of the energetic Orestes who stood up to avenge the honour of his father, whereas in the *Nekyia* the ghost of Agamemnon drives home to Odysseus the contrast between Clytaemnestra and Penelope.

In this chapter I will analyse the forms and functions of the Odysseus paradigm within *Life of Apollonius*. Questions asked include: How are readers of Philostratus' biography – more or less clearly – referred to Homer's epic? In what respect(s) are the new and old contexts of the Odyssean passages quoted or alluded to (the so-called text and intertext)<sup>8</sup> comparable, and in what do they differ? And – last, but not least – what implications does this intertextuality have for our understanding of Philostratus' portrait of Apollonius?

A discussion of the successive stages – ten in total – of the *Odyssey* of Apollonius may be useful in interpreting other aspects of Philostratus' *Life*.

#### I LOTUS-EATERS (PHILOSTR. VA 1.40 ~ OD. 9.82–104)

The first Odyssean adventure from Homer's *Apologoi* to appear in *Life of Apollonius* is the Lotophagi. When staying in Babylon for quite a time – one year and four months already, to be precise – Apollonius definitely wants to go on to India, the ultimate goal of his journey to the east. He expresses his impatience by reminding Damis of the Lotus-eaters, who forgot their homes after consuming the narcotic lotus; likewise they are staying far too long, although they did not eat anything at all.

Apollonius may be a vegetarian, he is not of course on hunger-strike: he thus metaphorically, and hence effectively, points out that their prolonged stay at the court of King Vardanes is, philosophically speaking, a mere waste of time.<sup>9</sup>

Formally, the intertext is referred to only – but sufficiently – by the explicit mention of the Lotophagi (τοῖς Λωτοφάγοις). Odysseus *cum suis* and his ships, however, are also, if implicitly, present (οἱ μὲν . . . προσπλεύσαντες), whereas with ἀπήγοντο τῶν οἰκείων ὑπὸ τοῦ βρώματος Philostratus seems to paraphrase the Homeric τις λωτοῖο φαγὼν νόστοιο λάθεται.

The intertextual reference to the Lotus-eaters is adduced as a rhetorical example (cf. the particle γάρ), which has the function of persuasion: Odysseus' men are and did not want to go away any more; we did not eat,

<sup>8</sup> Juxtaposed in the appendix on p. 195 to facilitate the comparison.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Philostr. VA 1.18: 'σοὶ ταῦτα,' ἔφη, 'ὦ βασιλεῦ, χρήματα, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἄχυρα' . . . '

so should go.<sup>10</sup> This implies that Odysseus corresponds to Apollonius, the former's companions to the latter's retinue – which by now is only small<sup>11</sup> (οἱ μὲν . . . ἡμεῖς δὲ . . . ), and the sweet lotus to the palace riches, both temptations which are resisted: Odysseus abstained from the fruit, whereas the king's attempts to impress Apollonius with his wealth had remained futile (1.38). The adventure alluded to is appropriate: the Lotophagi and Babylon are the first real adventures in the journeys of the two heroes.<sup>12</sup>

Apart from these correspondences there are also important structural differences: Odysseus came by sea (προσπλεύσαντες) and was bound for home; Apollonius is travelling by land and has just left his native country.

Regrettably enough, the epic argument appears not to be very effective: Damis observes that they will have to stay for another four months, following the previous interpretation of an omen by Apollonius himself. The latter had indeed recently pointed out that a lioness with eight young lion cubs within it, all killed in a hunt, signified a stay of one year and eight months. This passage, in its turn, is based on the omen about the snake who devoured eight young sparrows and the mother bird, which was interpreted by Calchas in the *Iliad* to bear upon the nine years of fighting before Troy.<sup>13</sup> Thus the smart pupil hoists his master with his own intertextual petard.

## 2 CYCLOPS (PHILOSTR. VA 4.36, 7.28 ~ OD.9)

Odysseus sailed away from the Lotus-eaters only to visit the land of the Cyclopes – out of the frying pan into the fire, one might say. Apollonius, too, meets Polyphemus; what is more, he faces him twice.<sup>14</sup> Apollonius indeed surpasses all possible – mythological, philosophical and historical – models. Both times the fierce giant is represented by a bad Roman emperor, first Nero (in book 4), later Domitian (in book 7).<sup>15</sup> Odysseus is again the sage's *alter ego*, and the former's companions represent the latter's disciples. In both cases the epic parallel serves to emphasise that Apollonius

<sup>10</sup> Philostratus usually has Apollonius himself, unlike novel protagonists, choose where and when to go; see Billault (2000) 108–10.

<sup>11</sup> Damis and two attendants (a shorthand writer and a calligraphist: Philostr. VA 1.18–19).

<sup>12</sup> Not counting the Ciconians and Nineveh, respectively.

<sup>13</sup> Philostr. VA 1.22 ~ Il. 2.303–30.

<sup>14</sup> A different use of the Cyclops motif occurs in Philostr. VA 6.11 ~ Od. 9.106–11.

<sup>15</sup> For the use of Polyphemus and Odysseus as a trope of imperial dining imagery and hence as a kind of imperial self-representation among first-century emperors including both Nero and Domitian, see, e.g., Carey (2002).

is determined to see the emperor in spite, but fully aware, of the risks and dangers involved.

The two instances of the Cyclops motif in *Life of Apollonius* are, however, more than mere repetitions. They differ as to their form, context, application and function. To begin with the contexts: in the first case Apollonius, after his return from India and a successful tour through Greece, is on his way to Rome together with thirty-four companions; in the second one he is in jail, and accompanied only by Damis. Moreover, the applications of the Cyclops parallel are different in the two instances. In book 4 the example is applied by Philolaus to Apollonius, in book 7 by Apollonius to himself in front of an emissary of Aelianus. This entails in its turn a functional difference. Philolaus, himself a fugitive, tries to frighten Apollonius off from seeing Nero – in vain, of course;<sup>16</sup> whereas Apollonius explains to Aelianus' emissary why he is not afraid of Domitian.

We should also pay attention to subtle differences in the formal aspects. In both cases readers are referred to Homer's epic by a mention of its protagonist (τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ, Ὀδυσσεύς).<sup>17</sup> The passage alluded to is specified by giving the kind (ὁ Κύκλωψ, twice) or name (τοῦ Πολυφήμου) of his antagonist. The most conspicuous details of the story – the latter's cannibalism and the former's narrow escape – are also given, if in an interestingly different, more or less direct, way: in the story itself or in its context. In book 7 Apollonius insinuates that there was something special about the diet of *Polyphemus* (οἷα σιτεῖται) but adds that *Odysseus* managed to escape from the cave (ἀπῆλθε τοῦ ἄντρου), which is of course a striking image for his prison. Three books and several decades before, however, Philolaus warns Apollonius that it is *Nero* who will devour *him* alive (Νέρων σε ὦμὸν φάγοι), whereupon the sage retorts that the it is the *emperor* who is blind (τοῦτον . . . ἐκτετυφλώσθαι); therefore he can safely beard the lion in his den. The crude gastronomic metaphor is continued in the context: two chapters later Apollonius shows himself to be aware that Nero devoured his mother.<sup>18</sup> Again the text is closer to the intertext than one might think: Nero does not really *eat* his men, but the number of Apollonius' disciples *is* drastically reduced, from thirty-four to eight; these twenty-six men (many compared to the unhappy few who

<sup>16</sup> Likewise Apollonius definitely wants to see Achilles, in spite of the warnings of his companions (4), and continues to Rome to meet Domitian, although Demetrius had tried to deter him from doing so (Philostr. *VA* 7.12, 14).

<sup>17</sup> Likewise the *Iliad* may be intertextually referred to by some expression containing the name of Troy (e.g. Philostr. *VA* 1.1, 7.32, 7.36 ἐν Τροίᾳ; 3.19 Τροία; 4.11 ἐς τὴν Ἰλιάδα (!); 4.16 ἐν τῷ Ἰλίῳ).

<sup>18</sup> 4.38 λαφύσσει, ἐδαισάντο, τῆς βορᾶς.

blunted Polyphemus' appetite) were cowardly and ran away after Philolaus' warnings.

In the first instance, Philolaus calls the Cyclops *ὠμὸν θέαμα*. Conybeare (1912) translates as 'a cruel monster', but the Greek has the connotation of the horrible *sight* of his eating *raw* meat. In the second instance Aelianus' emissary describes the terrifying outward appearance of the emperor with *ἡ δ' ὀφρὺς ἐπὶ κείται τῷ τοῦ ὀφθαλμοῦ ἥθει*. Conybeare (*ibid.*) renders 'his eyebrows overhang the sockets of his eyes'; again this may be correct, but the translation twice neglects the singular which may be seen to point to Polyphemus.<sup>19</sup>

In both instances there is one major difference between the text and the intertext: Apollonius did not incur the wrath of the gods when escaping from Domitian – on the contrary, he is put on a par with them throughout the work, whatever the (ontological or moral) status of a θεῖος ἀνὴρ.<sup>20</sup> In this case Apollonius miraculously disappears right under the emperor's eyes after quoting the verse by means of which in the *Iliad* Apollo (Apollonius' eponym) indicated to Achilles that he was too powerful for him.<sup>21</sup>

### 3 AEOLUS (PHILOSTR. VA 3.14, 7.14 ~ OD. 10.19–27)

Rowing away from the Cyclops, Odysseus reached the island of Aeolus. Apollonius, too, calls in here. He even nearly does so twice, as in Homer.

The episode occurs in book 3, in India, *before* Apollonius enters the Cyclops' cave (Rome, that is). It seems just to be mentioned in passing: the Brahmins possess two jars,<sup>22</sup> one filled with the rains, one with the winds, the latter of which is compared with the bag of Aeolus: when opened a little bit, a seasonable breeze refreshes the country. The passage seems to be merely descriptive and, by implication, the intertextual reference purely ornamental. On closer inspection, however, there is more to it: the context strongly suggests not only that the jar is comparable to the bag, but that Apollonius' stay with Iarchas has parallels with Odysseus' visit to Aeolus.

To begin with, it is true that the sages allegedly live in a castle on a hill, whose elevated position may be interpreted to symbolise their high spiritual

<sup>19</sup> This chapter was written before the arrival of C.P. Jones' Loeb translation of *VA* (Jones ed. 2005). Jones corrects the imprecisions I have mentioned here in Conybeare.

<sup>20</sup> See for this concept Bieler (1935–6); Taggart (1972) 99ff.; Anderson (1994); Du Toit (1997); Flinterman, chapter 8 in this volume.

<sup>21</sup> οὐ μὲν με κτενέεις, ἐπεὶ οὐ τοι μὀρσιμὸς εἰμι (Philostr. *VA* 8.5, 8.8 ~ *Il.* 22.13).

<sup>22</sup> A tacit reference to *Il.* 24.527sq (referred to Pl. *R.* 2.18, 379a; Plu. *Aud. poet.* 5, *Cons. Ap.* 7, *Exil.* 5, *Mor.* 24AB, 105CD, 600CD, respectively); possibly fabulised in not-H. 1 and 115 Rodríguez Adrados – Van Dijk (2002), on which see MacLeod (1982) 133.

level. However, their geographical – or, rather, continental – situation is somewhat closer to Aeolus' than it might seem to be, since in Homer the latter's island, too, is surrounded by a wall and rises from the sea like a rock.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the contact between host and guest is far better than in the case (or rather, cave) of Polyphemus. Iarchas entertains Apollonius in a friendly way, as Aeolus does Odysseus, and both couples have a lively conversation.<sup>24</sup> There are differences. Odysseus stayed only one month, Apollonius four; also, it was Aeolus who asked the questions, whereas Iarchas just replies.<sup>25</sup> Last, but not least, both Aeolus and Iarchas are close to the gods: the former is said to be their friend, the latter even states that the Brahmins are good and therefore gods.<sup>26</sup>

The parallels suggested here are made explicit in the second occurrence of the Aeolus motif four books later in *Life*. Again (as with the Cyclops) it differs in several respects from the first. By then, Apollonius is again on his way to Rome to engage in the confrontation with Domitian. In Dicaearchia he meets his pupil Demetrius, who (like Philolaus) tries to deter him from continuing on his way and confronting the emperor. Apollonius explains that he must continue: he cannot go back to Iarchas, because the latter would chase him away from his hill as Aeolus did Odysseus from his island. Apollonius therefore leaves Demetrius where he is and proceeds to Rome with Damis.

The reference to Homer's text is far clearer than in the first instance. Both main characters are mentioned, whereas the indefinite time adjunct ποτε refers to a mythical past.<sup>27</sup> In addition, there are many verbal parallels between the epic and the biography.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, there is a transition in the intertextual use of Aeolus' gift, from literal to metaphorical. In the first instance, the winds were just what they are – winds (whether contained in a bag or a jar; whether blowing at sea or refreshing the earth). In the second instance, they symbolise the draught of friendship the Indians allowed Apollonius to take from a magic cup.<sup>29</sup>

In both cases structural differences – or, rather, inversions – of the motif are to be observed: Odysseus was given the bag when leaving Aeolus,

<sup>23</sup> *Od.* 10.3–4 πᾶσαν δὲ τέ μιν [sc. νῆσον] πέρι τεῖχος | χάλκεον ἄρρηκτον, λισσὴ δ' ἀναδέδρομε πέτρῃ.

<sup>24</sup> *Od.* 10.14–16 μῆνα δὲ πάντα φίλει με καὶ ἐξέρεινεν ἕκαστα | . . . | καὶ μὲν ἐγὼ πάντα κατὰ μοῖραν κατέλεξα.

<sup>25</sup> Philostr. *VA* 3.18 'ἐρώτα,' ἔφη [sc. Ἰάρχας], 'ὅ τι βούλει . . .'; 3.50 μηνῶν τεττάρων ἐκεῖ διατρίψαντι.

<sup>26</sup> *Od.* 10.2 φίλος ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι – Philostr. *VA* 3.18 θεοῦς . . . , ὅτι . . . ἀγαθοὶ ἔσμεν ἄνθρωποι.

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Van Dijk (2000), n. 89.

<sup>28</sup> See the words underlined and italicised under (3-cd) in the appendix. It is unclear whether or not this indicates that Philostratus had a text of Homer at hand when he wrote *Life of Apollonius*.

<sup>29</sup> Philostr. *VA* 3.25, 3.32 ἡ Ταντάλου φιλοτησία πινέσθω; 3.51 εἰ μὴ μάτην ἔπιον τοῦ Ταντάλου.

whereas Apollonius finds the jar when visiting Iarchas. And Odysseus had to return when his companions imprudently ruined the beneficial gift, whereas Apollonius can go on since he is prudent enough to keep the present in mind.

4 HADES (PHILOSTR. VA 4.16, 6.32 ~ OD. II. 25, 35-7, 134-6)

The cup Apollonius drank from belongs to a statue of Tantalus who, according to Iarchas, was a good man because he shared with mankind the nectar given to him by the gods. Descriptions by the poets of his cruel punishment in Hades are utterly unjust. Iarchas does not specify the poets criticised but probably targets Homer, the poet *par excellence*, as well as Pindar,<sup>30</sup> for he previously adduces the (reverse) example of Minos, who in the *Nekyia*, too, is combined with Tantalus.<sup>31</sup>

However this may be, and more importantly in this connection, Apollonius, too, contacts the Underworld, again in the wake of Odysseus. Like Homer's hero, he has a conversation with the ghost of Achilles. This time, however, he openly distances himself from his mythological model. He states that he did *not* dig a ditch in the ground nor slaughter sheep – which is of course taboo in Pythagorean vegetarianism – but just prayed.<sup>32</sup>

As in the previous episode, the passage referred to is clearly indicated by an explicit mention of both characters and striking verbal parallels.<sup>33</sup> Again there are playful inversions of the adventure intertextually alluded to. First, Apollonius is visiting the Achilleum in the Troas, on his way from India to Greece and Rome, whereas Odysseus met Achilles far away from Troy, on (but not beyond)<sup>34</sup> the Oceanus – in the very centre of the epic world, that is, instead of at its outer end (wherever that might be). Second, the roles of interviewer and interlocutor have – as in the case of Iarchas – again been reversed: in Homer, Odysseus tried to satisfy Achilles' curiosity, whereas in *Life* it is Apollonius who is allowed to ask questions,<sup>35</sup> five to be precise, all answered by the Philostratean Peleid.

The theme and presentation of the conversation, however, do seem to be reminiscent of its epic version. As to the theme, in *Life of Apollonius* the dead Achilles accuses Homer of deliberately distorting the truth: he

<sup>30</sup> The theft of the nectar as well as the impending rock are from Pi. O. 1.

<sup>31</sup> Philostr. VA 3.25, 11.568-71 Minos, 572-5 Orion, 576-81 Tityos, 582-92 Tantalus. The latter passage is explicitly, and again critically, referred to later on (VA 4.25); Minos, too, recurs (VA 8.7.16).

<sup>32</sup> Odysseus, however, did pray, too: Od. 11.46 ἐπέυχασθαι δὲ θεοῖσιν, | ἰφθίμῳ τ' Ἀΐδῃ καὶ Περσεφονείῃ.

<sup>33</sup> See the words underlined and italicised under (4ab) in the appendix.

<sup>34</sup> See Heubeck (1988-92), II 78. <sup>35</sup> Cf. Swain (1999) 193.



attests that Helen was not in Troy at all, whereas Palamedes was far greater than Odysseus. In itself these are stock rhetorical themes (*topoi*) as old as Stesichorus, Gorgias and Herodotus,<sup>36</sup> and very familiar in Philostratus himself;<sup>37</sup> witness *Heroicus*, but we should not forget that in the *Nekyia*, too, Achilles is seen to reject the heroic, i.e. Iliadic, ideal.<sup>38</sup>

The presentation of the conversation, too, corresponds strikingly. It is Apollonius' only Odyssean adventure which is told not by the primary narrator but by the protagonist, in a lengthy flashback, sailing on the Aegean from Lesbos to Athens, just as Homer has the hero sing himself what happened after he left Troy. Here the role of Damis, who implores Apollonius to recount his story in the name of his fellow companions, is comparable to that of Alcinous, who tactfully asked Odysseus to continue his *Apologoi* on behalf of the enchanted Phaeacians (at precisely the point where Odysseus had broken off just before the entrance of Achilles). With polite modesty, both narrators grant the wishes of their respective audiences.<sup>39</sup>

The major difference seems to be the absence of Teiresias, who according to Homer was the ultimate goal of Odysseus' journey to Hades. Philostratus' silence on the subject is, however, far from absolute, for two books later the seer does appear to have a voice in *Life of Apollonius* (4c) – see the appendix on pp. 197–8. Even literally so: Apollonius (who in the meantime has crossed the Mediterranean from Spain to Egypt) predicts to Titus, the future emperor of Rome, that his death will come from the sea, just as Teiresias foretold the death of Odysseus. So again, as with Aeolus, the two instances of one motif are complementary.

The interesting aspect of the passage under consideration is not so much the clairvoyance as such, for the mantic qualities of Apollonius are evident throughout *Life*.<sup>40</sup> Nor does the epic parallel come as a complete surprise, because the sage had already been intertextually identified before with prophets from both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (Proteus and Calchas).<sup>41</sup> What is remarkable, however, is – once again – the reversal of roles: Apollonius addressing, instead of impersonating, so to speak, Odysseus, who

<sup>36</sup> Stesich. *Παλινωδία*, PMG 192 *ap.* Pl. *Phdr.* 243 A; Gorg. *Hel. Pal.* (fr. 82B11(a) Diels-Kranz); Hdt. 2.117–19; cf. D.Chr. *Or.* 11. See Stanford (1954) 146–58: 'Ulysses and the Discrediting of Homer'. Swain (1999) 178, however, sees the Achilles episode merely as an example of the 'sophistic décor'.

<sup>37</sup> For Homer revisionism in Philostratus, see Billault (2000) 130–4.

<sup>38</sup> *Od.* 11. 489–91: βουλοίμην κ' ἑπάρουρος ἔων θητεύεμες ἄλλω, | ἄνδρι παρ' ἀκλήρῳ, ὥ μὴ βίοςτος πολὺς εἴη, | ἥ πᾶσιν νεκέσσει καταφθιμένοισιν ἀνάσσειν.

<sup>39</sup> Philostr. *VA* 4.16 εἰ μὴ ἀλαζονεύεσθαι . . . δόξω, πάντα εἰρήσεται. *Od.* 11.380–381 εἰ δ' ἔτ' ἀκουέμεναι γε λίλαίεαι, οὐκ ἂν ἐγὼ γε | τοῦτων σοι φθονέοιμι καὶ οἰκτρότερ' ἄλλ' ἀγορεύσαι.

<sup>40</sup> Van Dijk (2000) section 3.1: 'The prescience of the future.'

<sup>41</sup> Proteus: Philostr. *VA* 1.4 ~ *Od.* 4. 455–8, 388–90; Calchas: Philostr. *VA* 1.22 ~ *Il.* 2. 303–10.

has already often been seen (and, I foretell, will be yet again more than once) to be his heroic *alter ego*. This may be interpreted to indicate the close spiritual proximity between Apollonius and Titus, who, following his adoptive father Vespasian's footsteps, and quite unlike Nero and Domitian, had previously invited the philosopher to come to Tarsus to give him advice, which sufficiently characterises him as a good emperor.<sup>42</sup>

Curious, too, is the interpretation by Damis, Apollonius' faithful disciple (whose disputed historicity I think this is not the occasion to discuss),<sup>43</sup> of his master's oracle, which is a *vaticinium ex eventu*: Titus was to die from eating fish (sea-fish, of course), which allegedly came true two years later thanks to his brother Domitian. This, however, is not in accordance with the Emperor's biography by Suetonius.<sup>44</sup>

What is more, Philostratus probably realised that Teiresias rather hinted at Odysseus' peaceful death *far from* the sea, that is, out of reach of Poseidon, who became his eternal enemy when he blinded Polyphemus. This is perhaps why Philostratus attributes the explanation, in itself as old as the epic cycle,<sup>45</sup> to Damis, instead of speaking on his own (or Apollonius') account.

#### 5 SIRENS (PHILOSTR. VA 6.11 ~ OD. 12.39-40)

Apollonius' next two Odyssean adventures – the Sirens and Charybdis – are only mentioned in passing, which on closer consideration appears to reflect their limited contribution.

The Sirens are adduced by Apollonius in a lengthy speech against Thespesion during his stay with the Gymnosophists,<sup>46</sup> who live beyond the border between Egypt and Ethiopia, to describe metaphorically the charm of the adornment of Apollo's temple in Delphi. The positive evaluation of the destructive songsters from the *Odyssey* might at first sight perhaps cause some surprise, but is less difficult to understand as soon as one realises that Odysseus, too, preferred not to miss their acoustic temptation.

<sup>42</sup> See Knoles (1981) 231-7: 'Advice to Rulers'; Koskeniemi (1991) 31-6: 'Die VA und die Herrscher'; Flinterman (1995), ch. 4.3.

<sup>43</sup> See Miller (1907); Mesk (1919); Taggart (1972) 68-77; Flinterman (1995) 67-89; Radcliffe (1999) 162-79.

<sup>44</sup> Suet. *Tit.* 9.3. But cf. D. C. 66.26.2; Hdn. 4.5.6 (suggestion of cooperation); Aur. Vict. *Car.* 10.5 (poison).

<sup>45</sup> Stanford (1954) 87-8.

<sup>46</sup> On the (generally negative) presentation of the Naked Sages, see Robiano (1992); Billault (2000) 123-4.

In this case the connection with Apollonius is rather implicit, if not far-fetched: the metaphor of the Sirens serves to demonstrate the incorrectness of Thespesion's previous description of the temple of Apollo,<sup>47</sup> the god to which Apollonius by his very name etymologically belongs: the sanctuary is far more beautiful than he thinks.

#### 6 CHARYBDIS (PHILOSTR. VA 5.11 ~ OD. 12.260-1)

In the *Odyssey* Charybdis occurs in the same book and immediately after the Sirens; in *Life of Apollonius*, however, one book before.

Travelling from Spain towards Egypt Apollonius passes through the Strait of Messina,<sup>48</sup> near 'the dangerous Charybdis'. Thus, he literally sails in the wake of Odysseus.<sup>49</sup> The geographical use of this mythological name by then admittedly already had a long tradition, but the epic connection was never lost.<sup>50</sup> In Philostratus there is no explicit reference to Homer's text, but the adjective χαλεπήν might be a paraphrase of, or in any (especially the accusative) case neatly corresponds to, the two epithets of Χάρυβδι in book 12: δεινήν and ὀλοήν.<sup>51</sup>

In a way Apollonius is even braver than Odysseus, in that the latter on the advice of Circe<sup>52</sup> preferred Scylla to Charybdis, whereas the former does not avoid the greatest danger – the alternative is not even mentioned!<sup>53</sup>

However this may be, the narrow escape of Odysseus seems to be of only secondary importance here, since Apollonius calls in at Syracuse and at Catania discusses Mount Etna.<sup>54</sup> Appearances, however, are deceptive, and the motif does recur seven chapters later. When leaving for Greece Apollonius embarks on a Sicilian ship. During a stop at Leucas – which, as a geographical matter of fact, is not that far away from (and has in modern times even been identified with)<sup>55</sup> Ithaca – he urges all passengers to continue on another vessel. Those who take his advice safely reach Greece, whereas those who do not founder. This may have shocked the

<sup>47</sup> Philostr. VA 6.10. Cf. on Thespesion's disrespectfulness, see Swain (1999) 189.

<sup>48</sup> The Strait is also mentioned (but without Charybdis) in Philostr. VA 7.41.

<sup>49</sup> Charybdis is also mentioned in Philostr. VA 1.34 (Plato).

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Th. 4.24.5 ἐστὶ δὲ ὁ πορθμὸς ἡ μεταξύ Ῥηγίου θάλασσης καὶ Μεσσήνης, ἥπερ βραχυτάτον Σικελία τῆς ἡπείρου ἀπέχει καὶ ἐστὶν ἡ Χάρυβδις κληθεῖσα τοῦτα, ἥ Ὀδυσσεὺς λέγεται διαπλεῦσαι.

<sup>51</sup> δεινήν 260, 430; ὀλοήν 113, 428 (both going with Χάρυβδι).

<sup>52</sup> Od. 12.108–10 ἀλλὰ μάλα Σκύλλης σκοπέλῳ πεπληγμένος ὦκα | νῆα παρὲς ἐλάαν, ἐπεὶ ἡ πολὺ φέρτερόν ἐστιν | ἐξ ἐτάρους ἐν νηὶ ποθήμεναι ἢ ἅμα πάντας.

<sup>53</sup> Although Scyllaeum is opposite Messina.

<sup>54</sup> And *ap. Phot. Bibl.* 241 (333b16–21, 329a 23–7); see the discussion in Van Dijk (1997) 58–9 (G42).

<sup>55</sup> E.g. by Dörpfeld, see S. West in Heubeck (1988–92) I 63.

passengers on both ships, but it should not surprise the readers of the two texts, neither those of *Life of Apollonius* nor those of the *Odyssey*, in view of the sage's astonishing clairvoyance in predicting natural catastrophes<sup>56</sup> on the one hand and the epic hero's shipwreck after his companions ate the herd of Helios on the other. Of course neither Apollonius nor his disciples did anything wrong – he just taught philosophy, and true Pythagoreans would not harm a fly<sup>57</sup> – but the ancients did identify Homer's Thrinacia with Sicily, which they also called Trinacria!<sup>58</sup>

7 CALYPSO (PHILOSTR. VA 7.10, 7.41, 8.11 ~ OD. 1.49–50, 5.157–8)

The shipwreck after leaving Thrinacia was the last adventure told by Odysseus in his *Apologoi*. The three islands which form the background of the subsequent, and decisive, episodes in the epic – Ogygia, Scheria and Ithaca – also exist in *Life of Apollonius*. An important difference is that the three women who were believed to inhabit them and passionately tried to entertain some sort of intimate relationship<sup>59</sup> with Odysseus – Calypso<sup>60</sup>, Nausicaa<sup>61</sup> and Penelope – have no direct or active counterpart in Philostratus' prose text. It might be remarked in passing here that, among other things, the general absence – or, if present, negative evaluation<sup>62</sup> – of love themes from the romanticised biography of Apollonius distinguishes it from the contemporaneous so-called erotic novel.<sup>63</sup> But this is neither the

<sup>56</sup> Apollonius also predicts a plague in Ephesus (Philostr. VA 4.4, 8.5, 8.7.9; cf. Eus. *Hierocl* 23) as well as earthquakes in Smyrna, Miletus, Chios, Samos (4.6), and Antioch (6.38); Van Dijk (2000), n. 72.

<sup>57</sup> Philostr. VA 5.18 ἐμφιλοσοφίας . . . τῇ Σικελίᾳ. For an example, cf. the critical discussion of 'the poets' in 5.14.

<sup>58</sup> *Od.* 11.107 Θρινაკίη νῆσω; Th. 6.2.2 Σικανία . . . ἡ νῆσος . . . πρότερον Τρινακρία καλεομένη, Str. 6.2.1 Σικελία . . . Τρινακρία μὲν πρότερον, Θρινακίς δ' ὕστερον προσσηγορεύθη. The power of Helios is acknowledged throughout the work; cf. Reardon (1971) 267–8; Knoles (1981) 240–6; Swain (1999) 189. The passage could also be interpreted as a reference to the life of Pythagoras as a variation of a novelistic *topos*, or as a miracle story about a holy man. Cf. Flinterman, chapter 8 in this volume, Billault (2000) 111 and the texts assembled in Cotter (1999) 142–8 (145–6 Philostr. VA), respectively.

<sup>59</sup> A psychological explanation of Odysseus' popularity with women is given by Stanford (1954) 65.

<sup>60</sup> Demetrius, however, does embrace (περιβαλὼν) Apollonius subsequently to the latter's adducing Calypso.

<sup>61</sup> Billault (2000) 113 interestingly compares the dream of his mother in Philostr. VA 1.4 of walking to the meadow just before the birth of Apollonius to the dream of Nausicaa in *Od.* 6.255sq of going to the beach just before the arrival of Odysseus.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. e.g. the story of Menippus and the Lamia in Philostr. VA 4.25; in general, see Billault (2000) 106–8.

<sup>63</sup> Reardon (1971) 186; Lo Cascio (1974); Bowersock (1994) 97; Bowie (1994); Anderson (1996) 613–15.

time nor the occasion to expound on genre questions.<sup>64</sup> So let us return to Odysseus.

After his final shipwreck, Odysseus was fortunate enough to find himself for quite a long time on Ogygia. The blessed island also occurs in *Life of Apollonius*, or rather in that of Demetrius and Damis, his two most faithful disciples,<sup>65</sup> when they do *not* share the adventures of their master. The motif occurs three times (that is, even more than the Cyclops (2ac)). In each case Demetrius is connected with Calypso, whether or not together with Damis, by Apollonius himself or by the primary narrator. What is relevant here is that again, as in the case of Titus (4c), persons close and dear to Apollonius are identified with – metaphorically represented by – Odysseus.

The three passages under consideration (7acf) belong closely together. The first one comes immediately before, the second half-way through, and the third one immediately after, the confrontation of Apollonius with Domitian. Thus the final and decisive clash between a superhuman philosopher and an exceptionally bad emperor, which constitutes the climax of *Life of Apollonius*, occupying the greater part of its last two books, is emphasised and demarcated by an intertextual ring composition.<sup>66</sup>

This implies, of course, that the contexts of the three passages differ, Apollonius first again being on his way to Rome, then awaiting trial, and finally having just disappeared from court. The structural correspondences of the Homeric intertextuality in all three passages, however, are far more important than these differences on the surface level.

And even topographically the three passages are just one. All three times Demetrius (and Damis) happen(s) to be in, or are ordered to go to, Dicaearchia, in *Magna Graecia*, overlooking the sea which was in antiquity believed to encircle Calypso's island. Homeric fiction and geographic reality unite again – as with Charybdis near Messina (6a).<sup>67</sup> In addition, the arms of Calypso are a felicitous metaphor for the prosperity of *Italia felix*.<sup>68</sup>

What two of the three instances of the Calypso motif have in common is that Demetrius and Damis are, or are to be, temporarily isolated from Apollonius and do not take part in the story. Philosophically speaking Demetrius and Damis are temporarily offstage, in the background, and

<sup>64</sup> For an introductory overview, see, e.g., Holzberg (1986) 25–6 and Bernabé Pajares (1992) 32–5.

<sup>65</sup> Apollonius assigns Demetrius as a tutor to Titus in Philostr. VA 6.31. Damis to Nerva ib. 8.28.

<sup>66</sup> Swain (1999) 179 observes that the episode is also set apart by the final words of the last chapter of book 6.

<sup>67</sup> This may be said to be typical of *Life* in general, as has been driven home by Francis (1998).

<sup>68</sup> Alluded to in a letter ascribed to Philostratus, see Penella (1979).

inactive, as Odysseus was heroically. Both the epic hero and the philosopher's disciples are reintroduced into the narrative by a visitor, which is to say that Apollonius' role is implicitly compared to that of Hermes, a θεῖος ἀνὴρ to the intermediary between gods and men, in that he visits, and thereby reintroduces, the outsiders in the narrative. As always, Apollonius is superior, acting on his own accord instead of waiting for Athena (7a).<sup>69</sup> In the third instance this motif is inverted, Apollonius recommending Damis to travel in the direction of Calypso's island instead of redeeming him thence.

The passages do differ in other respects, formally and functionally. Formally, the first passage is more explicit than the second. Both mention the lady (Καλυψοῖ/-ώ), but the former explicitly adds both the man and his home (Ὀδυσσεύς, Ἰθάκησιον), whereas the Homeric reminiscences in the latter are more implicit, although its fictitiousness is indicated (τὰ . . . μυθεύματα).

These formal aspects indicate that the three passages have a different intertextual function, too. Apollonius first uses the Calypso motif to criticise Demetrius for forsaking his philosophical mission instead of entering Rome and facing Domitian, and then proposes it as a place of safety, whereas the primary narrator alludes to the Calypso episode to illustrate the sadness of the two disciples in the absence of their master.

#### 8 LEUCOTHEA (PHILOSTR. VA 7.22 ~ OD. 5.343-52)

When Odysseus was finally allowed to leave Ogygia his plight had not yet come to an end; on the contrary, Poseidon again had him founder. However, Leucothea came to his rescue; her magic veil prevented him from drowning. This episode is alluded to when Apollonius is about to meet Domitian, that is – to put it intertextually – Odysseus is about to meet Polyphemus.

The epic passage is applied to Apollonius by Damis now that his master is in prison and seems to be in real danger. He tries to comfort him that they will soon receive divine assistance. Apollonius, however, disapproves of the applicability of the metaphor. The wise should never be afraid, and least of all of Nero. Apollonius is so self-confident that he even sends Damis away to Demetrius, who is staying in Dicaearchia (with Calypso, as we have seen above (7)).

<sup>69</sup> Demetrius, however, does thank the gods after having been addressed by Apollonius (ὡς θεοί).

Formally the intertextual reference is explicitly marked in different ways, by both the use of proper names and on the lexical level. Again the name of Odysseus (τῷ Ὀδυσσεΐ) stands for the poem of which he is the protagonist. The explicit mention of the goddess (τὴν Λευκοθέαν) makes the identification of the passage alluded to very easy, as her name is a ἀπαξ λεγομένη in Homer. In addition, the indefinite time adjunct ποτε indicates that the story is to be situated in an age-old, epic past; on top of that several verbal parallels interconnect both (inter)texts.<sup>70</sup>

The passage adduced is very appropriate in this context, since Apollonius and Damis had just applied another episode from the *Odyssey* to their present situation: they will comfort their fellow prisoners with a pep-talk as Helen stilled the pains of her guests with Egyptian drugs. Since this is known from Menelaus' *nostos* in the last book of the *Telemachy* we may conclude that *delta* does precede *epsilon* in Philostratus' intertextual alphabet!

#### 9 PHAEACIANS (PHILOSTR. VA 4.20 ~ OD. 7–8)

Thanks to Leucothea Odysseus safely, if exhausted, reached Scheria. Apollonius, too, briefly visits the Phaeacians – or, rather, vice versa, for an inhabitant of this island comes to see the sage when he is in Athens on his way from India to Rome in book 4. This is a fine example of the potential playfulness of Philostratean intertextuality, adding one inversion to another.

When Apollonius is lecturing on libations a youth from Corcyra happens to be among the audience. The boy traces his pedigree to Alcinous but shows utter disrespect for the religious theme of the conversation and generally behaves so unworthily of his allegedly noble lineage that readers might wonder why Philostratus stresses the Homeric connection in such a conspicuous way, using four proper names and underlining the close relationship<sup>71</sup> between the epic host and guest, since all this seems to be irrelevant in its new context.

On closer inspection, however, there does again appear to be a connection. Apollonius immediately recognises that the boy is possessed by a demon, which he exorcises<sup>72</sup> by merely gazing at him, whereupon the youth becomes tranquil and a disciple of the sage. The spontaneous conversion of the young Corcyraean throws another light upon the enigmatic reference to

<sup>70</sup> See the words underlined under (8ab) in the appendix.

<sup>71</sup> ξένον: Odysseus is addressed with ξέν' by both Arete and Alcinous.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. the texts assembled in Cotter (1999) part II (83–9 Philostr. VA).

the *Phaeacis* at the beginning of the chapter: just like Odysseus, Apollonius may be said to bring about a remarkable personal metamorphosis.

Obviously, the essential difference (inversion, I would say) is that Odysseus reveals his own, and Apollonius another's, identity. There are, however, two additional echo effects which somehow corroborate the interpretation which is suggested here: the symposiac subject of the initial discussion by Apollonius on the one hand and the final adoption of a philosophical way of life by the boy on the other are subtle reminiscences of – or, to put it differently, find their intertextual prefigurations in – respectively, the banquet and the hospitality offered by Alcinous to his at first still anonymous guest.

IO ITHACA (PHILOSTR. VA 8.11–12, 1.14 ~ OD. 13.102–12, 20.18)

Apollonius does not need any Phaeacians to bring him home; he reaches Ithaca entirely on his own. Still his sudden disappearance from Domitian's court is hardly less miraculous than Odysseus' automatic ship (some sort of hovercraft *avant la lettre*). In a way he even travels far more quickly, since Calypso is mentioned in the sentence discussed above (7c) preceding the present allusion to his homeland. So in Philostratus, intertextually speaking, Ithaca comes immediately after Ogygia.<sup>73</sup>

In *Life*, however, the island is shrouded in mystery. There is no proper name to identify the place of Apollonius' arrival. Yet there is no uncertainty as to its mythographical location, for he reappears in a Nymphaeum – that is, just where the Phaeacians left Odysseus. The ever-flowing water will undoubtedly convince any remaining intertextual Thomas.<sup>74</sup>

The obvious question to be asked is: what *is* the allegory of Ithaca in the *Odyssey* of Apollonius? It could be interpreted to symbolise the fulfilment of his mission: after having travelled through the *Imperium Romanum*, having gone further than Alexander<sup>75</sup> in the East and having reached the Pillars of Hercules in the West, he has brilliantly stood the ultimate test, proving himself to be superior to the mightiest man on earth, the Emperor of Rome.<sup>76</sup>

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Swain (1999) 191, on the 'Odyssean landscape'.

<sup>74</sup> Apparently, Porphyry was not the first to allegorise the *Cave of the nymphs* from a philosophical point of view.

<sup>75</sup> On the parallelism of Apollonius with, and his superiority over, Alexander in *Life*, see Elsner (1997) 30 with n. 49.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Philostr. VA 7.15 ἐπιθείασαι οἱ ὑπὲρ οὗ κινδυνεύει καὶ φιλοσοφία αὐτῇ, ὑπὲρ ἧς καρτερεῖ ταῦτα (confrontation with Domitian as a dangerous adventure, in the name of Philosophy).



In addition, the hero is now close to the end of his earthly *bios*, and therefore the biographer to the end of his biography,<sup>77</sup> which is to be read less than twenty chapters later.

In the *Odyssey*, on the contrary, twelve books were yet to follow. This was especially due to the suitors, who are conspicuously absent here. They are, however, implicitly present in an earlier occurrence of the Ithaca motif (10c). There we see that Apollonius had successfully endured their opposition already in his youth when he was still living in his native Tyana.

The two instances are complementary; when combined they underline the structural importance of the homecoming, and thereby of the wanderings, of Odysseus as a paradigm in *Life of Apollonius*, intertextually demarcating the work by a Homeric ring composition in the opening and closing books (just as the Calypso motif has been seen (7ac) to frame the Domitian episode).<sup>78</sup>

Again there is no proper name to identify the intertext which, however, is unnecessary since the intertext itself is present. A sudden piece of poetry within Philostratus' prose functions as *pars pro toto*: the quotation of a dactylic hemistich<sup>79</sup> directs the reader's attention to the hexametric poem from which it was taken: the *Odyssey*.

The young Apollonius, who as a neo-Pythagorean<sup>80</sup> is voluntarily keeping a five years' spell of silence, appears to think the very words in which Odysseus silently voiced his self-constraint when the time to reveal his identity and regain his possessions and position had not yet come. Apollonius finds himself in a comparable situation, now that he has to wait for the completion of his philosophical education.

Both men are impatient, Odysseus to kill the suitors, Apollonius to fight human vices. The philosopher's moral crusade is implicitly (or, rather, tacitly) put on a par with the epic hero's μνηστροφονία. It is true that the sage fights a peaceful battle – he has already even been seen to refrain from slaughtering a sheep to conjure up the ghost of Achilles (4a) – but the points of his *apophthegmata* are no less sharp than Odysseus' arrows. Apollonius' unique intellectual strength is his *bios*.

<sup>77</sup> And the present writer to the end of his chapter.

<sup>78</sup> A yet more precise, and hence important, structural ring composition is the theme of the immortality of the soul in the opening and closing chapters of the work (Philostr. VA 1.1, 8.31); cf. ἀναβίωη ἀποθανών and ἀθάνατος ψυχή, respectively.

<sup>79</sup> Kayser (1870–1) also includes τε καὶ γὰρ ὅτι in the quotation, wrongly so as is clear from both text and metre.

<sup>80</sup> See Flinterman's chapter 8 in this volume; (Knoles) 1981: 259–63.

Apart from the absence of Penelope, which has been explained above (7),<sup>81</sup> there is a major difference – or, again, rather an inversion: the wanderings of Odysseus had finally come to an end, whereas Apollonius is only about to embark upon his travel around the world.

An interesting correspondence, however, is that Odysseus, too, was speaking to himself. The obvious deduction is that Philostratus had read the *Odyssey*, but the intertextual implication is that Apollonius can read Odysseus' mind.<sup>82</sup>

### CONCLUSION

We started with the observation that the adventures of Odysseus are remarkably well represented in *Life of Apollonius*. The sage meets Lotus-eaters, Polyphemos, Aeolus, Hades, Sirens and, passing by Thrinacia, Charybdis, Ogygia and Scheria, finally reaches Ithaca. Apollonius goes through all books of the *Apologoi*.

On the formal level, the intertext may be identified in various ways. The work (the *Odyssey*) is often – but not always – explicitly referred to by a mention of its protagonist (i.e. Odysseus), whereas the particular adventure is identified by referring to, or naming, his antagonist (e.g. the Cyclops/Polyphemos), but the intertextuality can also be more implicit (e.g. indicated by a quotation).

Correspondences tend to be underlined<sup>83</sup> by verbal parallels. In addition, paraphrases may occur, as well as intrusions of elements from the epic in the context (Cyclops 1).

We have seen that the differences are legion. First, the order of Odysseus' adventures differs. Second, Ciconians, Laestrygonians, Circe and Scylla are absent. Third, and far more importantly, relevant aspects are explicitly or implicitly turned upside down. Philostratus states *expressis verbis* that Apollonius did *not* dig a ditch or kill a sheep, and the sage is seen to meet the ghost of Achilles in the Troad, not by Oceanus. But these incongruities do not falsify the hypothesis of a paradigm. They are creative inversions which show the playfulness – emulating rather than imitating – of intertextuality in general and of the literary craft of Philostratus in particular. Thus it is

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Philostr. *VA* 1.13 αὐτὸς δὲ μήτ' ἂν γῆμαι μήτ' ἂν ἐς ὀμίλιν ἀφικέσθαι ποτὲ ἀφροδισίων [*sc* ἔφη].

<sup>82</sup> A discussion of the intertextual references to other Odyssean characters (notably to Telemachus), to other Homeric references (in particular to the *Iliad*) and to other paradigmatic heroes (namely to Hercules and Alexander) is relegated to another occasion, if only for practical reasons.

<sup>83</sup> Literally so in the appendix.

Alcinous who pays a visit to Apollonius, and the latter does *not* return to Aeolus.

The correspondences and consistencies are decisive. Apollonius, or a person very close to him (Titus, Demetrius, Damis), is shown – whether by himself (Cyclops 2), by the primary (Charybdis) or secondary (Damis: Leucothea) narrator, or by a minor character (Philolaus: Cyclops 1) – to be similar to Odysseus, in various respects.

The adventures alluded to are often very appropriate in their new contexts: Vardanes' riches are like Lotus-flowers, and Domitian's jail is the cave of Polyphemus.

At the same time, Apollonius is superior to Odysseus. He does not need divine (Leucothea's) or superhuman (Phaeacians') assistance to overcome opposition and reach his goal. He does not avoid the greatest danger (Charybdis); on the contrary, he seeks it twice (Cyclops).

The metaphorical equation of the respective protagonists cannot but have implications for the other characters as well. Apollonius' disciples correspond to Odysseus' companions, and his host can be an ogre (Nero/Domitian ~ Polyphemus) or close to the gods (Iarchas ~ Aeolus).

Intertextuality is multifunctional.<sup>84</sup> The allusions to the *Odyssey* may serve to persuade (Lotophagi, Ithaca 2) or dissuade (Cyclops 1), explain (Cyclops 2), illustrate (Aeolus 2, Calypso 2, Sirens), criticise (Calypso 1), or reassure (Leucothea).

Fiction and reality often interplay. Charybdis is Messina, Scheria Corcyra, Ogygia near *Magna Graecia*.

The Homeric references are carefully planned. Episodes twice alluded to complement each other: we twice meet Apollonius in both Hades and on Ithaca, but hear Teiresias and see the suitors only once. Twin or triple motifs may also structurally demarcate important episodes (Domitian; Calypso) or even the work as a whole (Ithaca).

We may conclude by saying that the Homeric intertextuality provides the text with a deeper, highly original layer. In a way (and on his way) Apollonius does lose some of his companions to the Cyclops, and his ship to Charybdis.

The various Odyssean instances have a long-distance, cumulative effect. This is especially clear in the Domitian episode, where Apollonius is explicitly said to visit the cave of Polyphemus, leaves Demetrius with Calypso since he cannot go back to Aeolus, sends Damis also to Calypso

<sup>84</sup> Cf. Van Dijk (1997) esp. 376–80.

because he needs no Leucothea, and finally, and miraculously, reaches the Nymphaeum.

When taken together – that is, interpreted as a paradigm – they give the sage's feats and wanderings an epic dimension. The mission of *Life of Apollonius* is a philosophical *tour de force* which can be compared to, indeed surpasses, the heroic *nostos* of Odysseus, the prototypically cunning traveller.

Thus Philostratus, going far beyond the more traditional interpretation<sup>85</sup> of the versatile wanderer *par excellence* as a protonovelistic, protosophistic figure, has created a very sophisticated contribution to the eternal Ulysses theme.<sup>86</sup>

# APPENDIX: TEXTS, INTERTEXTS, AND CONTEXTS

## KEY

<u>Λωτοφάγοις - Λωτοφάγοισιν</u> (underlined)	exact verbal parallel
<i>ἀρνῶν-μῆλα</i> (italicized)	synonym or paraphrase
<b>τῷ Ὀδυσσεΐ</b> (bold)	indication of source

## (1a) PHILOSTR. VA I.39

‘ἄγε, ὦ Δάμι,’ ἔφη, ‘ἐς Ἰνδοῦς ἴωμεν. οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοῖς Λωτοφάγοις προσπλεύσαντες ἀπήγοντο τῶν οἰκείων ἡθῶν ὑπὸ τοῦ βρώματος, ἡμεῖς δὲ μὴ γευόμενοι τινος τῶν ἐνταῦθα καθήμεθα πλείω χρόνον τοῦ εἰκότος τε καὶ συμμέτρου.’

## (1b) OD. 9.91–7

- 91 οἱ δ' αἴψ' οἰχόμενοι μίγεν ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισιν  
οὐδ' ἄρα Λωτοφάγοι μήδονθ' ἐτάροισιν ὄλεθρον  
ἡμετέροις, ἀλλὰ σφι δόσαν λωτοῖο πάσασθαι.  
τῶν δ' ὅς τις λωτοῖο φάγοι μελιηδέα καρπὸν,  
95 οὐκέτ' ἀπαγγεῖλαι πάλιν ἤθελεν οὐδὲ νέεσθαι,  
ἀλλ' αὐτοῦ βούλοντο μετ' ἀνδράσι Λωτοφάγοισι  
λωτὸν ἐρεπτόμενοι μενέμεν νόστου τε λαθέσθαι.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Anderson (1993) 75–8.

<sup>86</sup> Completely absent, however, from Stanford (1954).

## (2a) PHILOSTR. VA 4.36

‘νή Δί,’ εἶπεν ὁ Φιλόλαος, ‘εἶγε μετὰ τοῦ ἀκινδύνου γίγνοιτο, εἰ δὲ ἀπόλοιο ἀναχθεῖς καὶ Νέρων σε ὦμόν φάγοι μηδὲν ἰδόντα ὧν πράττει, ἐπὶ πολλῶ ἔσται σοι τὸ ἐντυχεῖν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐπὶ πλείονι ἢ τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ ἐγένετο, ὁπότε παρὰ τὸν Κύκλωπα ἦλθεν, ἀπώλεσε γὰρ πολλοὺς τῶν ἐταίρων ποθήσας ἰδεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ἡττηθεὶς ἀτόπου καὶ ὤμοῦ θεάματος.’ ὁ δὲ Ἀπολλώνιος, ‘οἶει γάρ,’ ἔφη, ‘τοῦτον ἦττον ἐκτετυφλῶσθαι τοῦ Κύκλωπος, εἰ τοιαῦτα ἐργάζεται;’ καὶ ὁ Φιλόλαος ‘πραττέτω μὲν,’ εἶπεν, ‘ὅ τι βούλεται, σὺ δὲ ἀλλὰ τούτους σῶζε.’

## (2b) OD. 9.224–30

- 224      ἐνθ’ ἐμὲ μὲν πρώτισθ’ ἔταροι λίσσοντο ἔπεσσι  
 225      τυρῶν αἰνυμένους ἰέναι πάλιν, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα  
           καρπαλίμως ἐπὶ νῆα θοὴν ἐρίφους τε καὶ ἄρνας  
           σηκῶν ἐξελάσαντας ἐπιπλεῖν ἄλμυρὸν ὕδωρ·  
           ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ οὐ πιθόμην, ἥ τ’ ἂν πολὺ κέρδιον ἦεν,  
           ὄφρ’ αὐτόν [τὸν Κύκλωπα] τε ἴδοιμι, καὶ εἴ μοι ξείνια δοίη.  
 230      οὐδ’ ἄρ’ ἔμελλ’ ἐτάροισι φανεὶς ἐρατεινὸς ἔσεσθαι.

## (2c) PHILOSTR. VA 7.28

καὶ ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος, ‘Ὀδυσσεὺς μέντοι,’ ἔφη, ‘παριῶν ἐς τὸ τοῦ Πολυφήμου ἄντρον, καὶ μήτε ὅπόσος ἐστὶ προακηκοὺς πρότερον, μηδ’ οἷς σιτεῖται, μηδ’ ὡς βροντᾷ ἢ φωνῇ, ἐθάρρησέ τε αὐτόν καίτοι ἐν ἀρχῇ δέισας, καὶ ἀπῆλθε τοῦ ἄντρου ἀνὴρ δόξας, ἐμοὶ δὲ ἐξελθεῖν αὐταρκες ἑμαυτόν τε σῶσαντα καὶ τοὺς ἐταίρους, ὑπὲρ ὧν κινδυνεύω.’

## (2d) OD. 9.218 (SQQ)

- 218      ἐλθόντες δ’ εἰς ἄντρον [*sc.* Πολυφήμου] ἐθηεύμεσθα ἕκαστα·

## (3a) PHILOSTR. VA 3.14

καὶ διττῷ ἑωρακέναι φασὶ πύθω λίθου μέλανος ὄμβρων τε καὶ ἀνέμων ὄντε. ὁ μὲν δὴ τῶν ὄμβρων, εἰ αὐχμῶ ἢ Ἰνδικῇ πιέζοιτο, ἀνοιχθεὶς νεφέλας ἀναπέμπει καὶ ὑγραίνει τὴν γῆν πᾶσαν, εἰ δὲ ὄμβροι πλεονεκτοῖεν, ἴσχει αὐτοὺς ξυγκλειόμενος, ὁ δὲ τῶν ἀνέμων πύθος ταυτόν, οἶμαι, τῷ τοῦ Αἰόλου ἀσκήῳ πράττει, παρανοιγνύντες γὰρ τὸν πύθον ἕνα τῶν ἀνέμων ἀνιάσιν ἐμπνεῖν ὥρα, κάντεῦθεν ἢ γῇ ἔρρωται.

(3b) OD. 10.19-26

- 19 δῶκε [*sc.* Αἴολος] δέ μ' ἐκδείρας ἄσκον βοὸς ἐννεώροιο,  
 20 ἔνθα δὲ βυκτάων ἀνέμων ποίησε Κρονίων,  
 κεῖνον γὰρ ταμίην ἀνέμων κατέδησε κέλευθα·  
 ἦ μὲν παυμέναι ἦ δ' ὀρνύμεν ὃν κ' ἐθέλησι.  
 νηὶ δ' ἐνὶ γλαφυρῇ κατέδει μέρμιθι φαεινῇ  
 ἀργυρέῃ, ἵνα μή τι παραπνεύσει' ὀλίγον περ·  
 25 αὐτὰρ ἐμοὶ πνοιῇν Ζεφύρου προέηκεν ἄηται,  
 ὄφρα φέροι νῆας τε καὶ αὐτούς' . . .

(3c) PHILOSTR. VA 7.14

ὁ δὲ Ἰάρχας οὐδὲ ἐρήσεται οὐδὲν ἦκοντα, ἀλλ' ὥσπερ ὁ Αἰολός ποτε τὸν Ὀδυσσέα κακῶς χρησάμενον τῷ τῆς εὐπλοίας δώρῳ ἄτιμον ἐκέλευσε χωρεῖν τῆς νήσου, κάμῃ δῆπου ἀπελᾶ ποῦ ὄχθου, κακὸν εἰπὼν ἐς τὸ Ταντάλειον γεγενῆσθαι πῶμα, βούλονται γὰρ τὸν ἐς αὐτὸ κύψαντα καὶ κινδύνων κοινωνεῖν τοῖς φίλοις.

(3d) OD. 10.72

[ΑΙΟΛΟΣ:] Ἔρρ' ἐκ νήσου θᾶσσον, ἐλέγχιστε ζώνοντων·

(4a) PHILOSTR. VA 4.16

‘ἀλλ’ οὐχὶ βόθρον,’ εἶπεν, ‘Ὀδυσσεὺς ὀρυζάμενος, οὐδὲ ἀρνῶν αἵματι ψυχαγωγῆσας, ἐς διάλεξιν τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἦλθον, ἀλλ’ εὐξάμενος, ὅποσα τοῖς ἥρωσιν Ἰνδοὶ φασιν εὐχεσθαι . . .

(4b) OD. 11.25, 35-7

βόθρον ὀρυξ' ὅσπον τε πυγούσιον ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα,

(...)

. . . , τὰ δὲ μῆλα λαβὼν ἀπεδειροτόμησα  
 ἐς βόθρον, ῥέε δ' αἶμα κελαϊνεφές· αἱ δ' ἀγέροντο  
ψυχαὶ ὑπὲξ Ἑρέβους νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων.

(4c) PHILOSTR. VA 6.32

‘ἀποθανοῦμαι δέ,’ εἶπε, ‘τίνα τρόπον;’ ὃν γε, ἔφη, ‘Ὀδυσσεὺς λέγεται, φασὶ γὰρ κάκείνῳ τὸν θάνατον ἐκ θαλάττης ἐλθεῖν.’ ταῦτα ὁ Δάμις

ὧδε ἐρμηνεύει· φυλάττεσθαι μὲν αὐτὸν τὴν αἰχμὴν τῆς τρυγόνος, ἥ τὸν Ὀδυσσέα βεβλήσθαι φασί, δυοῖν δὲ ἐτοῖν μετὰ τὸν πατέρα τὴν ἀρχὴν κατασχόντα ὑπὸ τοῦ θαλαττίου λαγῶ ἀποθανεῖν, τὸν δὲ ἰχθὺν τοῦτον παρέχεσθαι χυμούς ἀπορρήτους ὑπὲρ πάντα τὰ ἐν τῇ θαλάττῃ καὶ γῇ ἀνδροφόνῳ, καὶ Νέρωνα μὲν ἐσποιῆσαι τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ὄψοις τὸν λαγὼν τοῦτον ἐπὶ τοὺς πολεμιωτάτους, Δομετιανὸν δὲ ἐπὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν Τίτον, οὐ τὸ ξὺν ἀδελφῷ ἄρχειν δεινὸν ἡγούμενον, ἀλλὰ τὸ ξὺν πρῶν τε καὶ χρηστῷ.

## (4d) OD. II.134–6

- 134 [ΤΕΙΡΕΣΙΑΣ:] . . . θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ άλός αὐτῶ  
 135 ἀβληχρὸς μάλᾱ τοῖος ἐλεύσεται, ὅς κέ σε πέφνη  
γῆρα ὑπο λιπαρῶ ἀρημένον . . .

## (5a) PHILOSTR. VA 6.II

. . . ὁ δ', οἶμαι, μικρὰ ταῦτα ἡγούμενος καὶ τῆς ἑαυτοῦ σοφίας ἥττω, καὶ ἄλλου ἐδεθήθην νεῶ καὶ ἄλλου καὶ μεγάλων ἤδη καὶ ἑκατομπέδων, ἐνὸς δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ χρυσᾶς ἱγυγας ἀνάψαι λέγεται Σειρήνων τινὰ ἐπεχούσας πειθῶ, ξυνελέξατό τε τὰ εὐδοκιμώτατα τῶν ἀναθημάτων ἐς τὴν Πυθῶ κόσμου ἕνεκα . . .

## (5b) OD. 12.39–40

- 39 Σειρήνας μὲν πρῶτον ἀφίξειαι, αἶ ῥά τε πάντας  
 40 ἀνθρώπους θέλγουσιν, ὅτις σφέας εἰσαφίκηται.

## (6a) PHILOSTR. VA 5.II

φλεγμαινόντων δὲ τῶν περὶ τὴν ἐσπέραν, τρέπονται τὸ ἐντεῦθεν ἐπὶ Λιβύην καὶ Τυρρηνοὺς, καὶ τὰ μὲν περὶ βυζήθωντες, τὰ δὲ ἐπὶ πλοίων πορευόμενοι κατίσχουσιν ἐν Σικελίᾳ, οὗ τὸ Λιλύβαιον. παραπλεύσαντες δὲ ἐπὶ Μεσσήνην τε καὶ πορθμόν, ἔνθα ὁ Τυρρηνὸς Ἀδρία ξυμβάλλων χαλεπὴν ἐργάζονται τὴν Χάρυβδιν . . .

## (6b) OD. 12.260–I

- 260 αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πέτρας φύγομεν δεινὴν τε Χάρυβδιν  
 Σκύλλην τ' . . .

## (6c) PHILOSTR. VA 5.18

ἀλύπου δὲ τοῦ πλοῦ γενομένου κατασχών ἐς Λευκάδα, 'ἀποβῶμεν,'  
 ἔφη, 'τῆς νεῶς ταύτης, οὐ γὰρ λῶον αὐτῇ ἐς Ἀχαίαν πλεῦσαι.' προσέ-  
 χοντος δὲ οὐδενὸς τῷ λόγῳ πλήν τῶν γιγνωσκόντων τὸν ἄνδρα,  
 αὐτὸς μὲν ἐπὶ Λευκαδίας νεῶς ὁμοῦ τοῖς βουλομένοις συμπελεῖν ἐς  
 Λέχαιον κατέσχευεν, ἡ δὲ ναῦς ἡ Συρακουσία κατέδου ἐσπλεύουσα τὸν  
 Κρισαῖον κόλπον.

## (6d) OD. 12.403-19

- 403 Ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ τὴν νῆσον ἐλείπομεν, οὐδέ τις ἄλλη  
 φαίνεται γαῖαν, ἀλλ' οὐρανὸς ἡδὲ θάλασσα,  
 405 δὴ τότε κυανέην νεφέλην ἔστησε Κρονίων  
 νηὸς ὕπερ γλαφυρῆς, ἥχλυσε δὲ πόντος ὑπ' αὐτῆς.  
 ἡ δ' ἔθει οὐ μάλα πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον· αἶψα γὰρ ἦλθε  
 κεκληγῶς Ζέφυρος, μεγάλη σὺν λαίλαπι θύων,  
 ἱστοῦ δὲ προτόνους ἔρρηξ' ἀνέμοιο θύελλα  
 410 ἀμφοτέρους ἱστὸς δ' ὀπίσω πέσεν, ὅπλα τε πάντα  
 εἰς ἄντλον κατέχυνθ'· ὁ δ' ἄρα πρύμνῃ ἐνὶ νηϊ  
 πληῆξε κυβερνήτῳ κεφαλὴν, σὺν δ' ὅστέ' ἄραξε  
 πάντ' ἄμυδις κεφαλῆς· ὁ δ' ἄρ' ἀρνευτῆρι ἑοικῶς  
 κάππεσ' ἀπ' ἰκριόφιν, λίπε δ' ὅστέα θυμὸς ἀγῆνωρ.  
 415 Ζεὺς δ' ἄμυδις βρόντησε καὶ ἔμβαλε νηϊ κεραυνόν·  
 ἡ δ' ἐλελίχθη πᾶσα Διὸς πληγεῖσα κεραυνῷ,  
 ἐν δὲ θεεῖον πληῆτο· πέσον δ' ἐκ νηὸς ἐταῖροι.  
 οἱ δὲ κορώνησιν ἴκελοι περὶ νῆα μέλαιναν  
 κύμασιν ἐμφορέοντο, θεὸς δ' ἀποαίνυτο νόστον.

## (7a) PHILOSTR. VA 7.10

. . . ἀφῆκεν ἐς τὸ Σικελῶν καὶ Ἰταλῶν ἔθνος ἅμα ἐσπέρα. τυχῶν δὲ  
 οὐρίου πνεύματος καὶ τινος εὐροίας ὑποδραμούσης τὸ πέλαγος  
 ἀφίκετο ἐς Δικαιοαρχίαν πεμπταῖος. Δημητρίῳ δὲ ἐντυχῶν, ὃς ἐδόκει  
 θαρσαλεώτατος τῶν φιλοσόφων, ἐπεὶ μὴ πολὺ ἀπὸ τῆς Πρώμης διηᾶτο,  
 ξυνίει μὲν αὐτοῦ ἐξεστηκότος τῷ τυράννῳ, διατριβῆς δὲ ἕνεκα, 'εἴληφά  
 σε,' εἶπε, 'τρυφῶντα καὶ τῆς εὐδαίμονος Ἰταλίας, εἰ δὴ εὐδαίμων, τὸ  
 μακαριώτατον οἰκοῦντα, ἐν ᾧ λέγεται καὶ Ὀδυσσεὺς Καλυψοῖ ξυνῶν  
ἐκλαθέσθαι καπνοῦ ἰθακησίου καὶ οἴκου.'



## (7b) OD. 1.55-9

- 55 τοῦ θυγάτηρ [sc. Καλυψώ] δύστηνον ὀδυρόμενον κατερύκει,  
αἰεὶ δὲ μαλακοῖσι καὶ αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισι  
θέλγει, ὅπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται· αὐτὰρ Ὀδυσσεύς,  
ἴμενος καὶ καπνὸν ἀποθρώσκοντα νοῆσαι  
ῆς γαίης, θανέειν ἰμείρεται.

## (7d) PHILOSTR. VA 8.11

ἐτύγχανε μὲν δὴ ὁ Δάμις τῆς προτεραίας ἀφιγμένος καὶ τῷ Δημητρίῳ  
ξυγγεγονώς ὑπὲρ τῶν πρὸ τῆς δίκης, ὁ δ' εὐλαβέστερον ἢ τὸν  
ὑπὲρ Ἀπολλωνίου ἀκροώμενον εἰκὸς διατεθεῖς ἦν ὑφ' ᾧ ἤκουσε,  
καὶ πάλιν τῆς ὑστεραίας ὑπὲρ τῶν αὐτῶν ἡρώτα, ξυναλύων αὐτῷ  
παρὰ τὴν θάλατταν, ἐν ᾗ τὰ περὶ τὴν Καλυψῶ μυθεύματα· ἀπεγίγν-  
ωσκον μὲν γὰρ ὥς οὐχ ἤξοντος, ἐπειδὴ τὰ τῆς τυραννίδος χαλεπὰ  
ἦν πᾶσι, τὰ δ' ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ προσταττόμενα ἐτίμων διὰ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ  
ἀνδρός.

## (7d) OD. 49-50

- 49 δυσμόρῳ, ὃς δὴ δηθὰ φίλων ἄπο πῆματα πάσχει  
50 νήσω ἐν ἀμφιρύτῃ, ὅθι τ' ὀμφαλὸς ἐστι θαλάσσης.

## (7e) OD. 5.157-8

- 157 δάκρυσι καὶ στοναχῇσι καὶ ἄλγεσι θυμὸν ἐρέχθων  
πόντον ἐπ' ἀτρύγετον δερκέσκετο δάκρυα λείβων.

## (7f) PHILOSTR. VA 7.41

## (8a) PHILOSTR. VA 7.22

‘οὐκ ἀπιστῶ,’ ἔφη, ‘καὶ τὴν Λευκοθέαν ποτὲ κρήδεμνον τῷ Ὀδυσσεῖ  
δοῦναι μετὰ τὴν ναῦν, ἣς ἐκπεσὼν ἀνεμέτρει ταῖς ἑαυτοῦ χερσὶ τὸ  
πέλαγος· καὶ γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐς ἀμήχανά τε καὶ φοβερά ἐμβεβηκότων, θεῶν  
τις ὑπερέχει, οἶμαι, χεῖρα, ὥς μὴ ἐκπέσοιμεν σωτηρίας πάσης.’

## (8b) OD. 5.343-52

- 343 [ΛΕΥΚΟΘΕΗ:]  
εἴματα ταῦτ' ἀποδὺς σχεδίην ἀνέμοισι φέρεσθαι  
κάλλιπ', ἀτὰρ χείρεσσι νέων ἐπιμαίεο νόστου

- 345 γαίης Φαιήκων, ὅθι τοι μοῖρ' ἔστιν ἀλύξαι.  
τῇ δέ, τόδε κρήδεμνον ὑπὸ στέρνοιο τάνυσσαι  
ἄμβροτον· οὐδέ τί τοι παθέειν δέος οὐδ' ἀπολέσθαι.  
...  
351 ὥς ἄρα φωνήσασα θεὰ κρήδεμνον ἔδωκεν,  
αὐτὴ δ' ἅψ ἐς πόντον ἐδύσετο κυμαίνοντα

(9a) PHILOSTR. VA 4.20

παρέτυχε μὲν τῷ λόγῳ μειράκιον τῶν ἄβρων οὕτως ἀσελγὲς νομιζόμενον, ὥς γενέσθαι ποτὲ καὶ ἁμαξῶν ἄσμα, πατρὶς δὲ αὐτῷ Κέρκυρα ἦν καὶ ἐς Ἀλκίνουν ἀνέφερε τὸν ξένον τοῦ Ὀδυσσεῶς τὸν Φαίακα

(9b) OD. 7-8

(10a) PHILOSTR. VA 8.11-12

(11) ἀπειπόντες οὖν ἐκάθηντο ἐς τὸ νύμφαιον, ἐν ᾧ ὁ πίθος, λευκοῦ δ' οὗτός ἐστι λίθου ξυνέχων πηγὴν ὕδατος οὗθ' ὑπερβάλλουσιν τοῦ στομίου οὗτ', εἴ τις ἀπαντλοίῃ, ὑποδιδούσαν. (12) ἀνολοφυραμένου δὲ τοῦ Δάμιδος, καὶ τε καὶ τοιοῦτον εἰπόντος, 'ἄρ' ὀψόμεθά ποτε, ὦ θεοί, τὸν καλὸν τε καὶ ἀγαθὸν ἑταῖρον; ἀκούσας ὁ Ἀπολλώνιος, καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ἐφесτώς ἦδη τῷ νυμφαίῳ ἐτύγχανεν, 'ὄψεσθε,' εἶπε, 'μᾶλλον δὲ ἔωράκατε.'

(10b) OD. 13.102-12

- 102 αὐτὰρ ἐπὶ κρατὸς λιμένος τανύφυλλος ἑλαίῃ,  
ἀγχόθι δ' αὐτῆς ἄντρον ἐπήρατον ἠεροειδές,  
ἱρὸν νυμφάων αἷ νηιάδες καλέονται.  
105 ἐν δὲ κρητῆρές τε καὶ ἀμφιφορῆς ἕασιν  
λαίνοι· ἔνθα δ' ἔπειτα τιθαιβώσσουσιν μέλισσαι.  
ἐν δ' ἴστοι λίθιοι περιμήκεες, ἔνθα τε νύμφαι  
φάρε' ὑφαίνουσιν ἀλιπόρφυρα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι·  
ἐν δ' ὑδατ' ἀεκάοντα. δύω δὲ τέ οἱ θύραι εἰσίν,  
110 αἱ μὲν πρὸς Βορέαο καταιβαταὶ ἀνθρώποισιν,  
αἱ δ' αὖ πρὸς Νότου εἰσὶ θεώτεραι· οὐδέ τι κείνῳ  
ἄνδρες ἐσέρχονται, ἀλλ' ἀθανάτων ὁδός ἐστιν.

(10c) PHILOSTR. VA 1.14

τοῦτον ἐπιπονώτατον αὐτῷ φησι γενέσθαι τὸν βίον ὅλων πέντε ἔτων ἀσκηθέντα, πολλὰ μὲν γὰρ εἰπεῖν ἔχοντα μὴ εἰπεῖν, πολλὰ δὲ

πρὸς ὀργὴν ἀκούσαντα μὴ ἀκοῦσαι, πολλοῖς δ' ἐπιπλῆξαι προαχθέντα ‘τέτλαθι δὴ κραδίη’ τε καὶ γλῶττα πρὸς ἑαυτὸν φάναι, λόγων προσκρουόντων αὐτῷ παριέναι τὰς ἐλέγξεις τότε.

(10d) OD 20.18

- 18 ‘τέτλαθι δὴ, κραδίη· καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο ποτ’ ἔτλης,  
 ἤματι τῷ ὅτε μοι μένος ἄσχετος ἦσθιε Κύκλωψ  
 ἰφθίμους ἑτάρους· σὺ δ’ ἐτόλμας, ὄφρα σε μῆτις  
 ἐξάγαγ’ ἐξ ἀντροῦ διόμενον θανέεσθαι.’

IV

*Heroicus*



*Performing heroics: language, landscape and identity in Philostratus' Heroicus\**

Tim Whitmarsh

Lucius Flavius Philostratus is in danger of becoming fashionable, for the first time in some 1,500 years. How quickly the pendulum swings: even in 1985, Bowersock could claim that his writing is 'inadequate, even injudicious';<sup>1</sup> while in 1996, Robert Wardy referred to him as a 'second- (or third-) rate . . . mediocrity'.<sup>2</sup>

Judgements of literary quality are, of course, as transitory as the intellectual fashions that underpin them, and it is perhaps unsurprising to see one generation's whipping boy reclaimed as the neglected genius of the next. Yet in Philostratus' case it is the extent of the swing that is arresting: this erstwhile mediocrity is now routinely claimed as both a brilliant writer with a sophisticated aesthetic sensibility, and as *the* central figure for the cultural history of his time.

The two faces of the new Philostratanism have tended, it is true, to peer in different directions: in general, critics of literary aesthetics have found their champion in *Pictures* and *Letters*,<sup>3</sup> while cultural historians have interested themselves more in the philosophical and sophistical cock-fighting of *On Apollonius of Tyana* and *Lives of the sophists*.<sup>4</sup> One text where the two gazes might meet is, however, the long dialogue *On heroes (Heroicus)*, which is centrally about (I shall argue) both elite Greek identity and the

\* Versions of this chapter have been delivered at the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Harvard. I am grateful to interlocutors at all three for their comments. I have also learned much from as yet unpublished studies by doctoral Philostrates, particularly Owen Hodkinson, Graeme Miles and Hannah Mossman. Translations are based on Maclean and Aitken (2001), with occasional differences of interpretation, and the text is de Lannoy's.

<sup>1</sup> Bowersock (1989 [1985]) 95. This perspective is nothing new on his part: in *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire*, he famously and influentially began by dismissing the 'quality' of all of the Greek texts of the second and third centuries (Bowersock 1969: 1).

<sup>2</sup> Wardy (1996) 6.

<sup>3</sup> See esp. Blanchard (1986); Walker (1992); Bryson (1994); Elsner (2000).

<sup>4</sup> See esp. Bowie (1978), (1994); Anderson (1986); Koskenniemi (1991); Follet (1991); Flinterman (1995); Gleason (1995) 145–7; Swain (1996) 381–95, (1999); Elsner (1997); Billault (2000); Whitmarsh (2001a) 188–90, 226–44, (2004a), (2007); König (2005) 315–37, (2007).

pleasures of reading. Nowhere is the Philostratean revolution more evident than here. In the mid-1990s (when I first happened upon it), it was easily accessible only through the Teubner texts of de Lannoy (1977) and Kayser (1871). The deficiency must have struck many: since then, it has been translated with commentary into modern Greek, Spanish, Italian, German (twice), English (twice, although one remains unpublished) and Polish.<sup>5</sup> A text that was once consigned to the footnotes of scholarship on religion (particularly as a supposed revival of hero cult in the imperial period)<sup>6</sup> and sophistic *Homerkritik*<sup>7</sup> has been reclaimed as a work of intrinsic literary and historical interest.<sup>8</sup>

There is, however, much left to be done in terms of unpacking this brilliant and provocative work. This chapter<sup>9</sup> offers a contribution to its further reclamation, and indeed to the merging of cultural–historical and literary approaches to our author. My central argument is, indeed, that *Heroicus*' self-reflexive literary sophistication is inseparable from the issues of identity that are tested throughout, and vice versa. The first part of the chapter introduces the interpretative issues; the second explores questions of identity and the third literary strategy; the fourth part ties the themes together.

#### MAKING SENSE OF *HEROICUS*

##### I

How do we read *Heroicus*? As an expression of religious piety, or as a sophistic *jeu*? Readers in search of the meaning of a text usually try to reconstruct an underlying intention. Few scholars, of course, are comfortable with the romantic idea of literature as an expression of authorial consciousness, but in truth the cognitive process of reading almost always involves hypothesising some kind of intelligent design in the text, a unifying principle or set of principles (whether we attribute these to an author or, in the modish language of much modern criticism, to 'the text'). As Stanley Fish puts it,

<sup>5</sup> Greek: Mandilaras (1995, *non vidit*); Spanish: Mestre (1996, *non vidit*); Italian: Rossi (1997); German: Beschoner (1999), Grossardt (2006); English: Maclean and Aitken (2001); Polish: Szarmach (2003, *non vidit*). The (excellent) unpublished English translation is that of Jeffrey Rusten.

<sup>6</sup> See esp. Mantero (1966), who offers a book-length study of the philosophical and religious background; for recent discussions, see also Jones (2000), (2001); Whitmarsh (2001a) 103–5.

<sup>7</sup> Huhn and Bethe (1917); Anderson (1986) 241–57; Bowersock (1994) 68; Merkle (1994) 193–4; Beschoner (1999) 219–31; Billault (2000) 126–38; Maclean and Aitken (2001) lx–lxxvi; Zeitlin (2001) 255–66; Grossardt (2006) 1.55–120 esp. 99–102.

<sup>8</sup> Culminating in a set of essays: Aitken and Maclean (2004).

<sup>9</sup> The second part of which is an extended version of Whitmarsh (2004b).

'the efforts of readers are always efforts to discern and therefore to realize (in the sense of becoming) an author's intention'.<sup>10</sup> Like Fish, I take this 'intention' not as a presence latent in the text, but as a (necessary) confabulation generated by the reading process: 'a succession of decisions made by readers about an author's intention'.<sup>11</sup>

*Heroicus* is a dialogue, lacking any meta-commentary in the voice of a narrator. There is, then, no authoritative guide to literary 'meaning'. Consequently, any attempt to read the text must begin with the two interlocutors, and the relationship between them. Let us recap the situation. *Heroicus* reports a discussion set on the Thracian Chersonese between a Phoenician sailor, whose ship has been beached by lack of wind, and a local vinegrower. During the course of the discussion, the vinegrower lets slip that he is in regular discussion with the epiphanically reanimated hero Protesilaus (Philostratus Atticises the name to Protesileōs), who in periodic encounters corrects the prevailing (i.e. Homeric) view of the events in the Trojan war. The particular problem, we are told, is that Homer was bought off by the villainous Odysseus; and the story of the true hero, Palamedes, and his murder by the former was repressed by Homer.<sup>12</sup> In the first instance, the Phoenician is understandably sceptical: 'By Athena!' he exclaims, 'I do not believe you!' (ἀπιστῶ, νῆ τῇν Ἀθηνᾶν, 3.1; cf. 7.9, 7.11–8.2). (An appropriate invocation of the goddess who exchanges lies with Odysseus when he first touches down on Ithaca.) By the conclusion, though, he has decided that there is more to the vinegrower's tales than Chersonesian lies: 'I believe you!' (πείθομαι σοι), he comments in the conspicuous position of the final line of the text (58.6; cf. 16.6, 44.5). The Phoenician's passage from scepticism to belief, then, constructs him, provisionally at least, as one 'implied reader' of the text. *Heroicus* thus might be taken as a λόγος προτροπτικός,<sup>13</sup> that is to say a dialogue aiming to exhort the reader by dramatising the conversion of an interlocutor to the position of the speaker. In this connection, the dialogue has been interpreted as proselytising particularly for the revivalism of hero-cult, whether narrowly that apparently sponsored by Caracalla (211–17)<sup>14</sup> or the more general movement in the second and third centuries.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Fish (1976) 475. <sup>11</sup> Fish (1976) 476.

<sup>12</sup> For the central opposition between these two figures, see Rossi (1997) 28–32.

<sup>13</sup> See Maclean and Aitken (2001) lxxx–lxxxi for this interpretation; also Beschorner (1999) 167–8.

<sup>14</sup> Huhn and Bethe (1917) 613–14; Eitrem (1929) 1–5; Mantero (1966) 13–14; Bowersock (1989) 98; Merkle (1994) 193; Beschorner (1999) 235–40. See *contra* Grossardt (2006) 1.34–46; Whitmarsh (2007) 35–8.

<sup>15</sup> See esp. Jones (2001) 146–8.



There is a perhaps even a general resemblance between the Phoenician's embrace of 'belief' in the cult and Christian conversion narrative. It is not impossible that Philostratus may have come into contact with Christianity through figures like Julius Africanus (author of a secular miscellany as well as doctrinal works), who successfully served as an ambassador to Severus Alexander – or even that emperor himself, who (we are told, however implausibly) kept effigies of Abraham and Jesus Christ (as well as Apollonius of Tyana) in his *lararium*.<sup>16</sup> If, as has been claimed,<sup>17</sup> *Heroicus* is a variety of 'conversion dialogue', then we may be entitled to take the Phoenician's 'belief' at the end as powerfully normative.

The resemblances between discourses of belief in *Heroicus* and in Christian literature are, however, pretty superficial: as we shall see presently, Philostratus draws much more from historiographical discourse. What is more, no dialogue – even 'conversion' dialogue – creates meaning unequivocally.<sup>18</sup> Whereas, for example, oratory or an Aristotelian essay seeks to create meaning authoritatively by minimising dissenting voices, dialogue emphasises, dramatically, the relations between individual positions.

This can be quickly exemplified by a glance towards Platonic dialogue, clearly an important hypotextual resource for *Heroicus*.<sup>19</sup> In most Platonic dialogue, Socrates is of course the figure of pedagogical authority. But this does not mean that readers are required to accept his words at face value. In the *Symposium*, he is presented as engagingly eccentric; in the *Crito*, the position he argues for seems terrifyingly authoritarian. Conversely, a truculent interlocutor may have a more defensible position than Socrates acknowledges (e.g. Thrasymachus), or an assenting interlocutor (e.g. Crito, Ion, or Euthyphro) can seem too hasty in his acquiescence. Indeed, Numenius of Apamea (second-century AD) argues that Euthyphro is portrayed by Plato 'in the guise of the Athenians: a foolish braggart, and as poor a theologian as you could find' (ἐν . . . τῷ σχήματι τῶν Ἀθηναίων . . . ὄντα ἄνδρα ἀλαζόνα καὶ κοάλεμον εἴ τις ἄλλος θεολογεῖ κακῶς, fr. 23). This kind of strategy for reading Platonic dialogue, articulated a generation before Philostratus, requires readers not to submit to Socrates but to

<sup>16</sup> *SHA Alex. Sev.* 29.2 = *FGH* 1064 T5. See Eitrem (1929) 8–9 for πίστις as religious 'faith'. For wider discussion of religious themes, see especially Mantero (1966); Massenzio (1997); Nagy (2001).

<sup>17</sup> Schäublin (1985).

<sup>18</sup> See further Whitmarsh (1999) 155–8, with further references; also Grossardt (2006) 1.47–8.

<sup>19</sup> The presence of the reported views of a figure of supernatural authority evokes the figure of Diotima in Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*; and the idealised pastoral setting closely tracks the canonical *locus amoenus* of the *Phaedrus* (Trapp (1990) 171 for a full discussion). Gill (2001) provides a powerful assessment of critical responses to dialogic elements in Plato. Generally on Platonic themes in *Heroicus*, see Grossardt (2006), 44, 111, 117 (and repeatedly throughout the commentary), although there is unexpectedly little on the dialogue form *per se*.

negotiate for themselves a position between acquiescence and rejection. To read philosophical dialogue – or, better, to read dialogue philosophically – is not merely to identify with subject positions, but also to interpret the nods and winks that undercut or circumscribe the authority of individual characters.

We should question, then, any assumption that the Phoenician's 'conversion' to belief provides the only possible model of response to the vinegrower's story. The relational aspect of dialogue invites a plurality of responses, and asks each reader to find a place for herself somewhere upon the scale between scepticism and acceptance; or, even, to consider more laterally what might be at stake in crediting these extraordinary tales. To take this text as a straightforward expression of religious adherence is, then, naive.

2

What does the Phoenician mean when he proclaims that 'I believe you'? We have already mentioned a superficial similarity to Christian conversion narrative. The primary hypotexts, however, lie in the Greek historiographical tradition. The contrast developed between the Phoenician's scepticism and the vinegrower's belief activates a specifically Herodotean play with the value of travel and autopsy. This is most visibly worked out in the passage where the vinegrower convinces his interlocutor of the existence of giants on the basis of giant bone-finds:<sup>20</sup>

**Vinegrower:** But do not yet regard as credible (πιστόν) what I have said, stranger, until you sail to the island of Cos, where the bones of earth-born men are on show, the original Meropes so they say; and until you see the bones of Hyllus, son of Heracles, in Phrygia [list of big bone-finds] . . .

**Phoenician:** I congratulate you on your research (ιστορίας), vinegrower. I was ignorant of such great bones, and out of ignorance I disbelieved (ἠπίστων). (8.14, 18)

In this crucial sequence, where the Phoenician begins to articulate his 'conversion' for the first time, what clinches the case for the vinegrower is the latter's claim to personal experience. In this interchange, the two have played the roles of Herodotus and Thucydides: the Phoenician has assumed a Thucydides-like position of disbelieving 'mythology' (μυθολογίαν, 7.9), on the grounds that it is based on tralatitious rather than experiential

<sup>20</sup> Rusten (2004) discusses Philostratus' possible sources, noting that a generation before Philostratus Pausanias, too, shows an interest in giant bones.

knowledge (8.3);<sup>21</sup> the vinegrower, however, advises, a Herodotean suspension of disbelief of apparently miraculous phenomena (cf. θαῦμα at 8.13) until a personal judgement can be reached.<sup>22</sup> The Phoenician's congratulation of his new friend on his 'research' (ἱστορίας) underscores the latter's victory in the contest for historiographical voices.

The preference for a Herodotean idiom is perhaps unsurprising in the context, given the prominent placement of this very cult-site of Protesilaus in the closing chapters of *Histories* (9.114–22),<sup>23</sup> a passage that is later alluded to directly in *Heroicus* (9.5, on which see below). But in another passage, *Histories* are specifically problematised as a source for wonders. 'Well, if I were mythologically inclined, I would have described the seven-cubit-long corpse of Orestes, which the Spartans found in Tegea', the vinegrower proclaims (8.3), alluding to the celebrated Herodotean passage (1.66–8).<sup>24</sup> In this instance, Herodotus has evidently become a less than infallible guide to credible reportage.

*Heroicus'* language of *pistis*, then, is not narrowly religious: the account of the epiphanically revealed 'truth' of the Trojan war may represent the meat of the vinegrower's case, but it is carefully framed with rationalist, historiographical markers. Nor, indeed, is Heroican belief straightforwardly coercive: the Herodotean case demonstrates precisely the difficulty of placing absolute confidence in one single authority. This in turn problematises any attempt to read *Heroicus* as religious propaganda, in that it raises the question of who (the vinegrower? Philostratus?) we are to believe; all the more so in view of the long history of ludic or semi-ludic revisions of Trojan narratives (the so-called *Schwindelliteratur* tradition), reaching back from Dictys and Dares, Ptolemy Chennus and Dio's eleventh Oration, through the Hellenistic authors Iambulus, Hegesianax, Dionysius Scytobrachion and Euhemerus, to the fifth-century sophists Hippias and Gorgias.<sup>25</sup>

That *Heroicus* does not embody any coherent belief system – *der Glaube der Hellenen* – does not, however, mean that the dialogue is simply

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Thuc. 1.22.4 for the programmatic rejection of the mythical (τὸ μυθώδες). 7.10's sneering at specifically childish mythology, however, alludes to Plato (*Leg.* 887d; Grossardt (2006) 2.385).

<sup>22</sup> Cf. especially Periander's conduct in the programmatic story of Arion and the dolphin: initial scepticism (ἀπιστία) is replaced when he engages in research (ἱστορέεσθαι) into the truth of the matter (1.24.7). See further the narrator at 4.96.1: 'I do not disbelieve or overly believe in this' (ἐγὼ δὲ περὶ μὲν τούτου . . . οὐτε ἀπιστέω οὐτε ὧν πιστεύω τι λίην . . .). 'Herodotus is the prototype of the historian who always marvels' (Momigliano (1975) 25). De Lannoy's index entry under θαῦμα is error-strewn.

<sup>23</sup> On this passage, see Boedeker (1988); Nagy (1990) 268–73. Like the *Histories*, *Heroicus* (53.17–54.1; also 56.6–11) concludes with a hero avenging insults, viz. Achilles (Anderson (1986) 247).

<sup>24</sup> For Herodotus as μυθολόγος, see also Arist. *GA* 756b (Grossardt (2006) 2.389–90).

<sup>25</sup> See Grossardt (2006) 1.55–74, with further literature; also Whitmarsh (forthcoming).

'sophistic' (as Wilamowitz-Moellendorff and others have claimed).<sup>26</sup> As we have seen, pluralism and relativity are constituent features of dialogue in general. *Heroicus* is a catacomb of multiple hermeneutical alleys and vaults. This is not to claim that interpretation is infinitely open – on the contrary, it is trammelled in certain fundamental ways – but that the text *makes an issue of* interpretation. My central contention in this chapter is that this text is not an inert expression of Greek religious piety; rather it fully engages its readers in the play of meaning, challenging them to revise their own sense of selfhood. Heroics are 'performed' through the act of reading, not megaphonically proclaimed in the act of writing. In the pursuit of such a 'performative' interpretation, I shall focus less upon the better-known sections that engage in Homeric revisionism, and more on the framing and structure of the text as a whole, considering what sort of demands – intellectual demands, but also *self*-investments, commitments of identity – it claims from its readers.

#### LANDSCAPE, LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

##### I

Let us begin our exploration of Heroican identity by thinking about the geographical setting.<sup>27</sup> Within the vast expanse of the Roman empire, geography is always a marked discourse, whether appropriating alien territory and rendering it amenable to imperialising knowledge,<sup>28</sup> or idealising an impossibly primitive countryside as a counterpart to the ambiguous sophistication of modern urban life.<sup>29</sup> *Heroicus* intersects with a tradition of texts, originating in Hellenistic pastoral, that strategically relocate the centres of Hellenism away from the traditional, grand urban and religious centres to rural backwaters.<sup>30</sup> Dio's seventh Oration, *Euboicus*, is a case in point. This text (discussed in *Lives of the sophists*, and important for *Heroicus*, as we shall see) begins by siting the tale 'in practically the middle of Greece' (ἐν μέσῃ σχεδὸν τῇ Ἑλλάδι, Dio Chr. 7.1), a marker of cultural

<sup>26</sup> Wilamowitz-Moellendorff (1956), 2.514; Anderson (1986), 241–57 also plays up the sophistical aspects.

<sup>27</sup> Jones (2001) discusses *realia*. The cultural importance of physical setting to *Heroicus* is stressed by Martin (2002) 156–8.

<sup>28</sup> Momigliano (1975) 65–6 and esp. Nicolet (1991).

<sup>29</sup> Whitmarsh (2001a) 100–8, with further references.

<sup>30</sup> Mantero (1966), 45–7 on 'motivi nazionalistici'. I argue below that Philostratus' use of the language of 'sweetness' has pastoral resonances.

centrality that underscores the normative, moralising narrative.<sup>31</sup> These hunters of Euboea are 'true' Greeks, preserving their traditions through innocence of city traditions: the 'centre' has been paradoxically shifted away from the usual claimants (Athens, Olympia, Delphi) to rural Euboea. In another passage with important implications for *Heroicus*, Philostratus himself in *Lives of the sophists* discusses at one point a certain Agathion, who decries the corrupted, 'barbaric' speech to be found in the centre of Athens, whereas 'the interior of Attica is pure of barbarians, and hence its language remains uncorrupted and its dialect sounds the purest strain of Attis' (ἡ μεσογεία δὲ ἀμικτος βαρβάρους οὔσα ὑγιαίνει αὐτοῖς ἡ φωνή καὶ ἡ γλῶττα τὴν ἄκραν Ἀτθίδα ἀποψάλλει, VS 553).<sup>32</sup> Once again, the relocation from mainstream urban centre to a rustic context (which in this account is a 'centre' of a different kind: the *mesogeia*, or 'middle land') is constructed as a search for Hellenic purity.

The Heroican landscape is a place of divinity and eroticised beauty. When the two speakers relocate to another spot to exchange stories (an obvious reworking of the Platonic cliché),<sup>33</sup> the Phoenician comments that the fragrance from the flowers is 'sweet' (ἡδύ, 3.3), a word that powerfully invokes the landscape of Hellenistic pastoral.<sup>34</sup> The vinegrower replies 'What do you mean sweet? It's divine!' (τί λέγεις ἡδύ; θεῖον, 3.4). This phrasing positions *Heroicus*, in meta-literary terms, as hyper-pastoral, possessed of qualities that exceed mere 'sweetness'. This hyperbolic description of the cultic landscape is amplified by the heavy use of superlatives: the cult-site is, according to the Phoenician, 'the part of the land that is sweetest and divine' (τὸ μέρος τοῦ ἀγροῦ . . . ἡδιστόν τε . . . καὶ θεῖον, 5.2; cf. ἡδιστα, ἀλυπτότατα, ὑπερμήκη, 5.2–3). The language of divinity is used to describe a site that transcends 'normal' description; or, better, it marks the failure of received language, including (self-reflexively) that of the pastoral literary tradition, to represent a space that lies (just) beyond the reader's imagination.

<sup>31</sup> For this point, see Trapp (1995) 164–5; also Moles (1995) 177–80.

<sup>32</sup> A more complex story, however, than is often assumed: I attempt to unpack it at Whitmarsh (2001a) 105–8.

<sup>33</sup> *Phaedrus* 227 a–30e; see Trapp (1990), 171, with copious contemporary parallels. Grossardt (2006) reads the passages discussed in this paragraph in predominantly Platonic terms, neglecting the pastoral effects.

<sup>34</sup> Thanks primarily to its programmatic placement at the start of Theocritus 1: see Hunter (1999) 70 on Theocritus and (1981) 92–7 on later theorisations of ἡδονή and its close ally, γλυκύτης. A significant parallel to Philostratus' usage comes at Ach. Tat. 1.2.3 (another reworking of the *Phaedrus*, Trapp (1990) 171): 'a place like this is altogether sweet and appropriate for erotic stories' (πάντως δὲ ὁ τοιοῦτος τόπος ἡδὺς καὶ μῦθων ἁγίος ἐρωτικῶν). Martin (2002) compares Achilles' and Philostratus' narrative settings.

In a characteristically Philostratean meta-textual gesture, the beauty of topography is connected with the beauty of language and knowledge. The vinegrower's rural labour is cast as a form of philosophy (2.5–6), contrasting with the ruinous urban philosophy which he undertook earlier in his life (4.6). Literary culture and viticulture are metaphorically interlinked: *il faut cultiver son jardin*. Conversely, the land embodies intellectual values. The fertility of the soil ('there is no stinting', φθόνος οὐδείς, 2.3; 'everything on the land teems for me', βρύει μοι τὰ ἐν ἀγρῷ πάντα, 4.10) is matched by the abundance of Protesilaus' wisdom ('he has wisdom to spare', περίεστι . . . καὶ σοφίας αὐτῷ, 4.10). On hearing of the intellectual fertility of this space, the Phoenician responds with a praise of this site, on the grounds that 'you do not only cultivate olives and grapes in it, but you also harvest divine and pure wisdom' (μὴ μόνον ἐλάσας καὶ βότρυς ἐν αὐτῷ τρυγᾷς, ἀλλὰ καὶ σοφίαν δρέπη θείαν τε καὶ ἀκήρατον, 4.11). The transferability of metaphors from Protesilaus' landscape to his knowledge signals that his *paideia* partakes of identically fructose qualities.

The land also seems itself to assume the mythical, storied aspect of Protesilaus himself. A later, ecphrastic description of Protesilaus employs markedly vegetal imagery: 'he teems with luxuriant down, and his fragrance is sweeter than autumn myrtles' (ἀβρῶι ἰούλῳ βρύει καὶ ἀπόζει αὐτοῦ ἥδιον ἢ τὸ μετόπωρον τῶν μύρτων, 10.2).<sup>35</sup> The verb βρύειν ('to teem') has already been used of the vegetal abundance of the cult-site (4.10, quoted above), and 'sweet' (ἥδύς) is, as we have seen, a key marker of pastoral landscape. In this divine, super-pastoral space, the hero's eroticised presence inhabits the very soil of the land.

There are also man-made features in this landscape.<sup>36</sup> The monumental cult-site is described in quasi-periegetic terms, familiar to modern readers from Pausanias:

καταλείπεται δὲ αὐτοῦ ὄρας ὥς ὀλίγα. τότε δέ, οἶμαι, χαρίεν τε ἦν καὶ οὐ μικρόν, ὥς ἐστι τοῖς θεμελίοις ξυμβαλέσθαι. τὸ δὲ ἄγαλμα τοῦτο βέβηκε μὲν ἐπὶ νεώς, τὸ γὰρ τῆς βάσεως σχῆμα πρῶρα, ἱδρυται δὲ ναύαρχος. περιτρίψας δὲ αὐτὸ ὁ χρόνος καὶ νῆ Δι' οἱ ἀλείφοντές τε καὶ ἐπισφραγιζόμενοι τὰς εὐχὰς ἐξηλλάχασιν τοῦ εἶδους. ἐμοὶ δὲ οὐδὲν τοῦτο· αὐτῷ γὰρ ξύνειμι καὶ αὐτὸν βλέπω καὶ οὐδὲν ἂν μοι γένοιτο ἄγαλμα ἐκείνου ἥδιον.

<sup>35</sup> This is not evidence that Protesilaus was 'originally' a vegetal god (so Mantero 1966 113–19; cf. Boedeker 1988 37–8), but part of an ongoing association between the hero and the land (see below). Maclean and Aitken (2001) 'he has a full, splendid beard' makes too much of an adult of the hero.

<sup>36</sup> See also 9.1–3 for the miraculous trees facing Troy (cf. the Phoenician's response: θαυμάζειν ἔχων οὐ τεθαύμακα, 9.4, which seems to mean 'though I might marvel, I do not' – rather than 'I am not surprised that I continue to marvel', so Maclean and Aitken (2001)).

You see how little of the sanctuary is left. But back then it was lovely and not small, as can be made out from its foundations, This cult-statue stood upon a ship, since its base has the shape of a prow, and he is set there as the ship's captain.<sup>37</sup> Time has worn it away and, by Zeus, those who anoint it and seal their vows here have changed its shape. But this means nothing to me, for I spend time with and see the hero himself, and no statue could be more pleasant than him. (9.5–7)

As so often in Pausanias, a sanctuary is a *lieu de mémoire* (in this case, a cult-site famous from the end of Herodotus) overhung by the fear of forgetting. Experiencing the site is to engage reflexively with a cultural tradition perceived as age-old. Herodotus employs similarly 'sublime' tropes to those identified in Pausanias by James Porter: 'Sublimity in its most startling form', he writes, 'is to be found in the wondrous and the miraculous, and above all in what lies beyond reach in the present'.<sup>38</sup> This ancient cult-site, suffused with ancient, indescribable divinity, is awesomely sublime, a decayed relic of a once-great past and at once reanimated by a living presence. Unlike in Pausanias, however, the frailty of the man-made monument is supplemented, for the vinegrower, by the experience of the epiphanic hero himself. Human art, however venerable, is not the embodiment of Greek culture, but a weak substitute for it.

## 2

This place of beauty and 'sweetness' is also imaged as Hellenic. In literary terms, it is constructed from a series of pastoral elements borrowed from central texts of the Hellenic heritage: in particular the *locus* both *amoenus* and *classicus*, the *Phaedrus*, bulks large.<sup>39</sup> There are, however, more direct markers of Hellenism. The nightingales, the vinegrower claims, 'Atticise' here (ἐναττικίζουσιν, 5.4). It is worth taking some time to draw out the subtleties of this claim. In line with the general emphasis upon pastoral pleasure in *Heroicus*, the song of this typically mournful, elegiac bird is transformed into something sweeter: the Phoenician responds that from what he has heard, they do not 'lament' (θρηνεῖν), they merely sing here. Yet in drawing attention to the usual expectation that nightingales

<sup>37</sup> Taking ἵδμεναι as passive with most translators, *contra* Maclean and Aitken (2001): 'the ship's captain dedicated it.'

<sup>38</sup> Porter (2001) 71–2. The similarities between the literary effects of Protesilaan narrative and the Longinian sublime are already adverted to by Mantero (1966) 153–7. Philostratus may have read Pausanias (Rusten (2004)).

<sup>39</sup> See Trapp (1990) 171; Grossardt (2006) esp. *ad* 3.3, 3.4, 5.3, 5.5. Forthcoming work by Owen Hodgkinson, based on Hodgkinson (2003), demonstrates the full extent of the Phaedran reference in *Heroicus*.

lament, the Phoenician's words (combined with the reference to 'Atticism')<sup>40</sup> hint at the tragic narrative of the Athenian Procne, who suffered violent rape at the hands of the Thracian tyrant, Tereus (most famously in Sophocles' play of that name). As so often in the Greek tradition, cultured Hellenism – here distilled into Atticism, by synecdoche – is defined by opposition to brutal barbarism.

The subtle allusion to Procne's rape by a Thracian develops a motif found in an earlier episode in *Heroicus*, where the vinegrower reports the attempts by one of the local potentates (οἱ δυνατοί), the suggestively named Xeínis ('Foreigner'), to acquire the cult-site. Protesilaus, we are told, blinded him (4.2). Although an apparently Greek Chersonesite, Xeínis occupies the negative position in a series of overlapping polarities: urban–rural, wealthy–peasant, outsider–insider. The cult-site of Protesilaus is a constructed as a space protected from incursion by quasi-tyrannical 'foreigners'. This theme of the sacred protection of Greek space from barbarian aggression is reactivated near the end of the text, where the Amazons are repulsed from the holy island of Leuce, and attacked and then consumed by their own horses (57) – perhaps another 'Thracian' echo, to the flesh-eating horses of Diomedes.<sup>41</sup>

Most importantly of all, the setting alludes to Herodotus' narrative of the Persian wars, the paradigmatic exploration of relations between Greek and barbarian. At one point, the vinegrower points to the temple where the Mede committed *hybris* in the times of our fathers, 'in response to which they say the salt-fish actually came to life' (ἐφ' ᾧ καὶ τὸ τάρικος ἀναβιδῶναι φασί, 9.5). The allusion (signalled by 'they say' – a 'hyper-Alexandrian' footnote)<sup>42</sup> is to the end of Herodotus' text, where Xerxes' governor Artabaktes deviously gains permission to ransack Protesilaus' temple by describing the latter to his master simply as 'a Greek who attacked your territory and justly died for it' (ἄνδρὸς Ἑλλήνου... ὃς ἐπὶ γῆν τῇν σὴν στρατεύσάμενος δίκης κυρήσας ἀπέθανε, Hdt. 9.116.3; cf. 7.33). The horrible irony is that Artabaktes employs this pretext to effect a transgressive incursion himself, into the sacred space of the temple – and is subjected to divine vengeance, including the salt-fish (*tarikhos*) coming to life (a prognostication of

<sup>40</sup> Grossardt (2006) 369 notes additionally both that nightingales are associated with the grove of the Eumenides at Colonus (and, as Ewen Bowie reminds me, the cult-site of Protesilaus is set on a κολωνός, 9.1); and that women often sing like nightingales in Attic tragedy.

<sup>41</sup> The older sources are conveniently assembled by Kurtz (1975). The central importance of Leuce to *Heroicus* is stressed by Mossman (2006).

<sup>42</sup> 'Hyper-Alexandrian', in that 'they say' phrases are characteristic of Herodotus himself, used in a different sense (i.e. referring to oral tradition rather than literary text). For the well-known phrase 'Alexandrian footnote', see Hinds (1998) 2.



the reanimation of the 'corpse' (also *tarikhos*) of Protesilaus) as a result. Geographical boundaries in Herodotus are often protected by supernatural powers.<sup>43</sup> Philostratus' knowing echo of Herodotean narrative, the paradigmatic exploration of the the cultural-political-sacral-cosmic ramifications of military invasion, serves once again to reinforce the construction of Protesilaus as the protector of this enclosed, Hellenic space.

These issues also remind us, however, that identity is most insistently defined where it is most at risk; cultural boundaries can be imagined only at the point of their transgression. This space described in *Heroicus* is not, in fact, unequivocally Greek. For all these themes of barbarians invading Greek space, the Chersonese is where the Greeks themselves began their incursions into the East at the time of the Trojan war. Situated at the juncture between East and West, this space is the meeting point for both a Greek vinegrower and a Phoenician sailor. The difference in cultural background between the two, indeed, is manipulated in the course of the dialogue, as the Phoenician protests that the vinegrower is favouring the Greeks (19.1–2; 19.8), and the latter teases the former for his partiality towards the Trojans (20.1). If this landscape is – or can be constructed as – hyper-Hellenic, it is also a boundary, a site of negotiation and problematisation.

This sense of liminality is figured in Protesilaus himself, who died just as he alighted on barbarian soil, at the exact point where the Hellenic meets the non-Hellenic; as his name suggests, he was the 'first' (*prōtos*) of the Greek 'host' (*laos*) to set foot in barbarian land. Indeed, Protesilaus is arguably the in-between figure *par excellence*. He left just after marriage; Homer refers to the 'half-built house' (δόμος ἡμιτελής, *Il.* 2.701; cf. *Cat.* 68.74–5) he began with his wife. Philostratus underlines his liminal status, in terms of religion (he is semi-divine: 7.3, 16.4) and age (he is an ephebe: 10.2).

The liminality of the Chersonese invokes the interpretative crisis that Dan Selden has named 'syllepsis':<sup>44</sup> like the peninsula, the text is equiposed between East and West, and can be approached from either side. Indeed, in a sense it *must* be approached as an outsider. The protected space of the cult-site, and the protected knowledge of Protesilean revelations, inevitably construct the reader as an interloper, an invader into this privileged space. Despite the welter of more or less familiar literary reference-points, the

<sup>43</sup> Romm (1998) 77–93; also Boedeker (1988) 42 and esp. 45: 'As a hero buried at the entrance to the Hellespont, and one not fated to survive a hostile crossing between the continents, Protesilaus colors Herodotus' logos about the Persian invasion of Europe. His vengeance against Artayktes suggests a broader justice directed against the entire armada . . .'

<sup>44</sup> Selden (1994).

central 'revelations' of the text are, by definition, anti-canonical, predicated as they are on an idiosyncratic, exclusive and wholly 'private' modality of knowledge-gathering: the *ξυνουσία* (direct, epiphanic encounter) with a deity.<sup>45</sup> Many of Philostratus' readers might think of themselves as true Greeks, but when it comes to the anti-canonical, protected 'truths' of this text they are no better informed than the Phoenician. Although *Heroicus* parades the culturally iconic status of pastoral landscape, then, any reader's sense of cultural self – insider or outsider? resident or invader? – is inevitably engaged and challenged as she approaches this text.

## 3

If *Heroicus* is a dialogic or sylleptic text at the level of cultural identity, it raises parallel questions at the level of social class. As is well known, the distinction between elite and non-elite is conventionally articulated in the literature of the period through the polarity of 'the educated' (*pepaideumenoi*) and the 'rustic' (*agroikoi*).<sup>46</sup> I wish to turn now to consider how this quasi-pastoral text implicates and interrogates the reader's implied self-construction as an urban sophisticate in its dialogic exploration of identity.

The first sections of the text (1–5) establish the rural setting, and this is at first blush constructed as an idealised golden age offset against the decadence of the *polis* (a strong theme in the literature of the age: Dio Chrysostom's *Euboean Oration* is only the most prominent example).<sup>47</sup> The Phoenicians represent, paradigmatically, the vices of the city. The vinegrower is quick to note the sailor's extravagant dress, commenting that 'Ionic Sybaris has captivated all Phoenicia at once; and there, I imagine, you could be prosecuted for *not* living luxuriously' (Σύβαρις Ἰωνικὴ τὴν Φοινίκην κατέσχευεν ὁμοῦ πᾶσαν, καὶ γραφὴν ἐκεῖ ἂν τις, οἶμαι, φύγοι μὴ τρυφῶν, 1.1 – a clever inversion of Solon's prohibition of luxury).<sup>48</sup> He proceeds to observe that Phoenicians 'have earned a negative reputation' (διαβέβλησθε) for being 'nibbling money-grubbers' (φιλοχρήματοί τε καὶ τρωῦνται, 1.3). This allusion to the Phoenicians' 'negative reputation' constitutes another Alexandrian footnote: Homer uses the rare word 'nibblers' (τρωῦνται) of the Phoenicians in the *Odyssey* (15.416; cf. 14.289),

<sup>45</sup> See Mantero (1966) 64–8, interpreting the focus on *synousia* 'straight', as evidence of the text's religious dimension; and now Zeitlin (2001), 255–66, a rich demonstration of the central and immediate role of visibility to the communion between man and hero.

<sup>46</sup> See in general Swain (1996) 113–14; Whitmarsh (2001) 100–1. This polarity is, of course, central to Longus' *Daphnis & Chloe*: on the self-conscious play between naiveté and knowingness in that text, see esp. Hunter (1983) 45, 59; Zeitlin (1990) 430–6.

<sup>47</sup> Hunter (1983) 119, n. 29. <sup>48</sup> Grossardt (2006) 349.

while Plato refers to the 'money-grubbing' (φιλοχρήματων) aspect of the Phoenicians in the *Republic* (436a).

Commerce and its absence become the central focus of the ethical polarisation of Phoenician and vinegrower. The former, apparently piqued by the charge laid against his people, asks whether the vinegrower is not himself affected by any commercial pressures, or whether instead he buries his wine in the ground like Maron (another Odyssean reference: *Od.* 9.196–211, although Homer has no mention of burying the wine). The vinegrower counters with an equally Homeric *riposte*: Cyclopes, he says, have no need for money, but farmers do, in order to make a livelihood and in order to hire labour (1.5–7). Even so, he himself does not deal with merchants, nor 'do I even know what a drachma is' (οὐδὲ τὴν δραχμὴν ὁ τι ἐστὶ γινώσκω, 1.7), an assertion that clearly has more to it than meets the eye (and to which we shall return below). The attack on mercantilism reinforces the paradigmatic status of the two interlocutors, the Phoenician embodying urban commerce and the rural vinegrower the uncomplicated generosity of the land. The Phoenician's response styles the vinegrower's barter economy as a Hesiodic golden age: 'That is a golden market-place that you are talking of, belonging more to heroes than gods' (χρυσὴν ἀγορὰν λέγεις . . . καὶ ἡρώων μᾶλλον ἢ ἀνθρώπων, 2.1).<sup>49</sup> The countryside is, then, constructed as a place of freedom from mercantile values: indeed, it is even metaphysically defended against commercial appropriation, as Xenis the now-blind Chersonesian has discovered (4.2, discussed above).

But does the vinegrower really embody rural values? Let us return to his claim that he does not know what a drachma is (3.2), an assertion the force of which seems to depend, metaleptically, upon the very knowledge it denies. Pastoral innocence conventionally precludes such self-consciousness; the generic contract between author and reader stipulates that characters should be unaware of their own innocence.<sup>50</sup> What is more, the vinegrower speaks in sophisticated Attic, brandishing optatives and deictic iotas with a flourish. At one level, this is part of the standard texture of the Roman Greek countryside: the peasants in Dio Chrysostom's *Euboean Oration*, for example, puncture the surface of Lysianic naivety with such showy words as

<sup>49</sup> The vinegrower conflates Hesiod's golden race (*Op.* 109–19) with the heroic (156–73). A further allusion to the Hesiodic golden age comes with φθόνος οὐδεὶς (2.3, discussed below): cf. *Op.* 117–18 καρπὸν δ' ἔφερον ζείδωρος ἀρουρα/πολλὸν τε καὶ ἄφθονον. See further Grossardt (2006) 2.354, 356.

<sup>50</sup> Not that such self-awareness is unparalleled in the tradition. When, for example, Virgil's Corydon tells himself 'you are a rustic, Corydon' (*rusticus es, Corydon*, *Ecl.* 2.56), this is not only a Theocritean allusion (*Theocr.* 11.72, with DuQuesnay (1979) 56–8); it also represents an urban perspective upon rusticity.

ἀμηγέπη ('somehow or other').<sup>51</sup> Philostratus' vinegrower is, however, on any terms an extreme case: not only is his Greek sharp and faultless, but also, as we have seen, right from the start he trades more or less recondite allusions (particularly Homeric) with the Phoenician sailor.

In *Heroicus*, the tradition of eloquent peasants is given a self-conscious spin. In what I take as a knowing play upon this *topos*, he makes the Phoenician sailor ask the eminently reasonable question, 'How come your speech is so educated? You do not seem to me to be uneducated' (τὴν . . . φωνὴν . . . πῶς ἐπαιδεύθης; οὐ γὰρ μοι τῶν ἀπαιδευτῶν φαίνει, 4.5). Herodes Atticus asks an almost identical question of Agathion, the autochthon from Marathon, in *Lives of the sophists* (VS 553).<sup>52</sup> But whereas Agathion responds that the countryside is the best source of education, the vinegrower of *Heroicus* turns out to be an impersonator of a rustic: he spent the first part of his life 'in the city' (ἐν ἄστει), 'being educated and philosophising' (διδασκάλοις χρώμενοι καὶ φιλοσοφούντες, 4.6); eventually, his fortunes sank so low that he consulted Protesilaus in desperation, who advised him 'change your clothes' (μεταμφίασαι, 4.9). The vinegrower presently understood that this was a suggestion to change his 'style' of life (τὸ τοῦ βίου σχῆμα, 4.19). So the vinegrower is in fact a transvestite, whose peasant dress belies his urban background. Despite the metaphorical nature of the hero's command, it is literally his physical aspect that has misled the Phoenician – just as the vinegrower initially mistook *him* for an Ionian. Appearances can be deceptive – a lesson for both the Phoenician and for the reader, who may have been misled into believing that this is a conventionally 'unrealistic' account of Atticising peasants.

#### AESTHETICS

##### I

What I hope to have shown so far is that *Heroicus* engages its readers' investment in urban elite Greek identity dynamically, provoking and teasing them, introducing counter-currents and tensions that enrich the construction of a Hellenic ideal. I want to turn now to consider in greater detail how Philostratus presents his text to the reader. What is most striking, initially, is the erotic lure of narrative. Pastoral settings, from the *Phaedrus* onward, are imagined as places for exchanging pleasurable narrative, and *Heroicus* is no exception: the eroticism of the landscape seeps into the

<sup>51</sup> Russell (1992) 116 on this term, 'a conspicuous Atticism'. <sup>52</sup> Whitmarsh (2001) 106.

Trojan tales told by the vinegrower, too. Stories, like plots of land, are 'sweet' (ἡδύς, 25.18). The Heroican rewriting of the *Iliad* becomes a love-story: Protesilaus, whose five lines in the *Iliad* have already been converted into an erotic epyllion by Catullus (poem 68), represents the beautiful young lover, whose tragic, premature death separates him from his new wife Laodamia. The vinegrower alludes to the reciprocity and heat of their desire: 'he desires her, and is in turn desired: their relationship is as hot as those of newlyweds' (ἐρᾷ. . . καὶ ἐρᾶται, καὶ διάκεινται πρὸς ἀλλήλους ὥσπερ οἱ θερμοὶ τῶν νυμφίων, 11.1). If this evokes the 'sexual symmetry' of the young lovers of the Greek novels,<sup>53</sup> the match can never be exact. Laodamia and Protesilaus may be 'like' young lovers, but that tell-tale ὥσπερ also insists that they are *not* novelistic characters. An uncanny eroticism: long-dead heroes, ten cubits high, playing the roles of Chaereas and Callirrhoe. Semi-divinity adds an element of (pleasurable?) risk, even perversity, to this erotic fantasy.

The issue of the coverability of Protesilaus is also an important one for the reader, too. Can we see him? Can we touch him? How real does he become for us? The vinegrower's reaction to seeing him lounging is conspicuously erotic: 'if I catch him at leisure – wow, what sexy, lovely eyes!' (εἰ δὲ ἀναιμένου τύχοιμεν, φεῦ τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, ὡς ἐπαφρόδιτοί τε καὶ φιλικοὶ φαίνονται, 10.2). The word here rendered 'at leisure' (from ἀνίημι) perhaps carries undertones of remission of codes of sexual propriety.<sup>54</sup> These seductive invitations to fantasise about the desirable ephebe are presently redoubled. 'It is sweetest to encounter him when he is naked: he is compact and light, like herms (*hermōn*) set up at racetracks' (γυμνῷ δὲ ἐντυχεῖν ἡδιστον· εὐπαγῆς γὰρ καὶ κοῦφος, ὥσπερ οἱ δρομικοὶ τῶν ἑρμῶν, 10.4). Once again, there is the use of the language of 'sweetness', as a metapoetical marker: the vinegrower's pleasure at beholding the ephebe's gorgeous body stimulates, and figures, the reader's pleasurable imaginings of the sight. Now, the comparison of a beautiful body to a statue is reasonably common in erotic discourse,<sup>55</sup> but it is the choice of the word *hermēs* that is most striking about this sentence. The most definitive feature of a herm is the absence of limbs. Compact and light they may be, but

<sup>53</sup> Mantero (1966) 212–15. For the novels' construction of sexual reciprocity, Konstan (1994) is still fundamental.

<sup>54</sup> LSJ s.v. 11.8 for ἀναιμένος = 'dissolute'. In principle, ἀναιμένου could also mean 'undressed', from ἀνέννυμι, but the particular compound of ἐννυμι is not otherwise attested to my knowledge; and the vinegrower comes on to describe the sight of him naked (10.4).

<sup>55</sup> Jax (1936). As Roland Barthes explains it, beauty is marked by its ineffable qualities that overflow beyond language, indescribable except by reference to other signifiers (art, divinity, or pleonastically to beauty itself). See Barthes (1990) 33–4; cf. 114.

they are not obvious *comparanda* for an athletic male body. The second definitive feature is the erect phallus.<sup>56</sup> There is no reference, here or elsewhere, to Protesilaus' penis. The herm simile, however, invites the reader to fantasise. Indeed, as soon as we have begun thinking about penises, we might start wondering what precisely the phrase 'compact and light' (εὐπαγής . . . καὶ κοῦφος) might mean. Protesilaus' penis is not 'there' in the text; but its invisibility is more than just an absence, it is an invitation to imagine. It is *sous rasure*, visible in its evanescence, a present absence. This is description as strip-tease, the 'staging of an appearance-as-disappearance';<sup>57</sup> Philostratus' is flirting with his reader's erotically charged desire to visualise.

## 2

What of the Phoenician's responses to the vinegrower, *qua* internal narratee? Complementing the vinegrower's eroticised descriptions, he is driven by desire ('I desire to hear . . .', ποθῶ μαθεῖν 7.1; 'one who desires', ποθοῦντι, 23.2).<sup>58</sup> He is, indeed (as the vinegrower characterises him) a 'lover of listening' (φιλήκοος, 48.2). He takes in every emotional twist and turn: 'Tears have come upon me' (δεδάκρυκα, 20.3); 'I am burdened' (ἄχθομαι, 40.1). He is entirely rapt. When the vinegrower encourages him to pay attention, he replies: 'Pay attention?! The beasts did not even gape at Orpheus as much as I, when I listen to you, prick up my ears and rouse my mind . . .' (προσέχων λέγεις; οὐδὲ τὰ θηρία ἐς τὸν Ὀρφέα οὕτως ἐκεχῆναι ἄδοντα ὡς ἐγὼ σου ἀκούων τά τε ὥτα ἱστημι καὶ τὸν νοῦν ἐργήγορα . . ., 23.2). Later, he compares himself to a consumer of the lotus flower, so transported is he by the account (43.1). Clearly, at one level these reactions exalt the account that the vinegrower – and Philostratus – transmit. Yet his reactions are not unambiguous markers of the way the reader is 'supposed' to respond. As we saw earlier, dialogue characteristically suspends any authoritative judgement over the discourse it represents. Like Cnemon, the equally rapacious listener in Heliodorus' *Charicleia and Theagenes*,<sup>59</sup> as much as he hams his role as appetitive listener, he

<sup>56</sup> Modern scholars, for sure, refer to the Roman-influenced portraits in the shape of a square bust – which lack the phallus – as 'portrait herms' type, but I am unaware of any evidence that Greeks themselves called this kind of statue a 'herm'. What is more, the vinegrower's reference to racetracks suggests the traditional ithyphallic style. Plu. *An seni* 797e shows that imperial writers could still associate the word 'herm' with penile erection.

<sup>57</sup> Barthes (1975) 10. <sup>58</sup> Also βούλομαι at 2.11; 3.1.

<sup>59</sup> For Cnemon's desire to be a 'spectator' of the narrative, see Hld. 3.1.1, 3.1.2 (building on Thuc. 3.38.4: εἰώθατε θεαταὶ λόγων γίγνεσθαι). For Cnemon as a negative model for reader response,

also problematises it for Philostratus' readers. If we come to the text as sophisticated Greek readers, can we really identify with him?

In particular, we might be troubled by the Phoenician's naive (?) approach to narrative as sensual experience. He imagines the sound of battle: 'The "din" of horses and men now "strikes my ears"' ('ἴππων... ἥδη δὲ με καὶ ἀνδρῶν ἀμφὶ κτύπος οὐατα βάλλει', 25.18 ~ *Il.* 10.535). He is lured (again like Cnemon)<sup>60</sup> into imaginary visualisation: 'I have seen the young man' (εἶδον τὸν νεανίαν), he replies in response to the description of Protesilaus (10.5). Later, he asks: 'May I please see Palamedes too, as I saw Nestor, Diomedes and Sthenelus...?' (ἔστι καὶ τὸν Παλαμήδη ἰδεῖν, ἀμπελουργέ, καθάπερ καὶ τὸν Νέστορα εἶδον καὶ τὸν Διομήδη καὶ τὸν Σθένηλον... , 33.38). This paradigm of reading-as-*phantasia* – more fully discussed below – rests upon the theoretical discourse of rhetorical *enargeia*, whereby vivid language is charged with the task of transcending the gulf between *mimēsis* and reality.<sup>61</sup>

As befits a text that always ups the interpretative stakes, the Phoenician is not content with seeing alone. He also imagines Protesilaus' tangibility: 'do you embrace him when he arrives, or does he elude you in the fashion of smoke, as he does the poets?' (περιβάλλεις δὲ ἦκοντα ἢ διαφεύγει σε καπνοῦ δίκην, ὥσπερ τοὺς ποιητάς, 11.2).<sup>62</sup> The vinegrower replies that he can indeed touch Protesilaus: 'he likes being embraced, and he allows me to kiss him and have my fill of his neck' (χαίρει περιβάλλοντι καὶ συγχωρεῖ φιλεῖν τε αὐτὸν καὶ τῆς δέρης ἐμπορεῖσθαι γε, 11.2).

Protesilaus, then, even manifests himself to the human touch. Like the Phoenician, however, we readers can only imagine what it is to feel his body. The frustration is amplified by the suggestively imprecise language.

see esp. Winkler (1982) 140–6; Morgan (1989). That there is a relationship between Heliodorus and Philostratus is long established, but which way the influence flows depends upon whether we date Heliodorus later (as most scholars) or earlier. Has the Phoenician Heliodorus made his appetitive listener an Athenian in revenge for the Athenian Philostratus' negative depiction of his fellow Phoenician? Or is it the other way around?

<sup>60</sup> *Hld.* 3.4.7: 'I thought I could see them, although they are absent' (θεωρεῖν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἀπόντας ὡρήθην). See Whitmarsh (2002), with further literature.

<sup>61</sup> Now a huge field. See esp. Zanker (1981); Webb (1997a), (1997b), (1999); and the essays in *Ramus* 2002 and *CPh* 2007. For Philostratean *enargeia*, see esp. Blanchard (1986); Bryson (1994); Elsner (2000); Zeitlin (2001) 255–62, this last specifically on fantasies of visual presentation in *Heroicus*.

<sup>62</sup> The reference is to *Iliad* 23.100, where Patroclus' ghost eludes Achilles' grasp 'like smoke' (ἥντε καπνός). Other examples of this *topos* at *Lucr. DRN* 3.456; *Verg. Georg.* 4.499–500; *Aen.* 5.740; cf. also the insubstantiality of ghosts at *Hom. Od.* 11.207–8; *Verg. Aen.* 6.702. Normally, we might expect this reference to be 'footnoted' with a phrase like 'as the poets say' (perhaps ὥσπερ οἱ ποιηταί). What the Phoenician actually asks, however, is whether Protesilaus eludes his interlocutor *as he eludes the poets*. The sentence thus becomes a self-conscious meditation upon the difficulty not just of reading but also of representing the hero. Grossardt (2006) 2.413 detects a coded attack on Euripides' *Protesilaus*.

Although kissing and embracing are compatible with polite greeting, it does sound – particularly given the pervasive air of eroticism – as though the ephebic Protesilaus is playing the passive role in pederastic courtship: the vinegrower seems to initiate the pursuit, while Protesilaus ‘allows’ him to indulge in some minor petting. The final phrase, however, is difficult. The neck is conventionally a sexually privileged part;<sup>63</sup> what does it mean to ‘have one’s fill of’ it? Some translators have imagined the vinegrower throwing his arms around the hero’s neck – rather like the willing *erōmenos* of an Attic vase-painting – but nothing in the Greek suggests that.<sup>64</sup> Rather, the precise nature of the activity has been suppressed, leaving readers once again to fill in the gaps. The particle *ye* also demands comment. At one level, it simply means ‘yes’, in response to the Phoenician’s question (although postponed to a strikingly late position in the sentence).<sup>65</sup> It can also, however, suggest *limited* agreement, hence the common translation ‘at any rate’. (Q: ‘Does the editor like seafood?’ A: ‘Lobster, at any rate.’) This interpretation suggests that the vinegrower agrees that Protesilaus likes to be hugged, but only lets him go so far. Even the vinegrower, then, yearns for more. For the reader, however, the elliptical, euphemistic language stimulates even more desire, a desire not only to fondle this ‘light, compact’ body, but also before that to penetrate the obscure veils of language. In this case, a trap is laid for the reader: we too are invited to imagine, along with the Phoenician, what the hero’s body feels like.

## 3

In a discussion of Platonic dialogue, David Halperin writes of the ‘erotics of narrativity’, the tempting of the reader’s desire to foreclose the gap between text and reality, to see through textual representation to ‘what really happened’.<sup>66</sup> A similar phenomenon arises in *Heroicus*; except that here we have not so much the erotics of narrativity as the erotics of *description*. The Phoenician has a mild interest in story-telling, but is keener to visualise the actors in luscious detail.

At one point, the Phoenician’s preference for description over narrative is thematised explicitly. The vinegrower breaks off, and says ‘these digressions are thought by some, stranger, to be idle chatter and nonsense,

<sup>63</sup> E.g. Hom. *Il.* 3.396; Sappho 94.16 L-P.

<sup>64</sup> Rossi (1997), ‘getti le braccia al collo’; Maclean and Aitken (2001), ‘cling to his neck’. By contrast, Beschorner (1999) and Grossardt (2006) accurately render the sense of ‘satisfying oneself with’.

<sup>65</sup> Denniston (1950) 133–4. <sup>66</sup> Halperin (1992).



for those who do not lead a life of leisure' (τὰς ἐκβολὰς τῶν λόγων ἀδολεσχίας ἔνιοι, ξένη, ἡγοῦνται καὶ λῆρον πρὸς τοὺς μὴ σχολῆν ἄγοντας, 53.2).<sup>67</sup> The model for this episode is the narrative *intermezzo* at *Odyssey* 11.328–84, with a subtle reversal of roles: Odysseus breaks off from narrating to think about his ship (11.330–2), while the vinegrower encourages the Phoenician to think of his. Like the spellbound Phaeacians (*Od.* 11.334), however, the Phoenician is not in any mood to give up now:

Who now cares about the ship and everything in it? The cargo of the soul is to me sweeter and more profitable. Let us consider narrative digressions not as nonsense but as the surplus profit derived from this commerce.

ἐρρώσθω λοιπὸν ἡ ναῦς καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ· τὰ γὰρ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀγώγιμα ἡδίων τέ μοι καὶ κερδαλέωτερα, τὰς δὲ ἐκβολὰς τῶν λόγων μὴ λῆρον ἀλλ' ἐπικέρδειαν ἡγώμεθα τῆς ἐμπορίας ταύτης. (53.3)

The Phoenician here translates the Odyssean exploration of narrative digressivism into the idiom of sea-faring and mercantilism (an idiom he employs frequently in *Heroicus*).<sup>68</sup> Deviation turns out to be a marked metaphor: description bears the same relation to narrative as the Chersonese does to a commercial journey: both are detours offering their own pleasures. And as in a comparable passage in Heliodorus' *Charicleia and Theagenes*,<sup>69</sup> the threat to break off is rescinded. The Phoenician's words approach a theorisation of erotic reading: counterposed to the teleology of 'commercial' reading, the pleasures of divagation and engaged fantasy offer their own rewards and profit. As in Achilles Tatius and Heliodorus, linear plot is intersected and arrested by rich and seductive description.<sup>70</sup>

The Phoenician is not the only listener in *Heroicus* seduced by description: Achilles and Helen, we are told, fell for each other after death solely on the basis of report. Normally, the vinegrower observes, desire (τοῦ ἐρᾶν) lies in the eyes (ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς, 54.4; the implicit pun on τὸ ἐρᾶν and τὸ ὀρᾶν is familiar Philostratean territory).<sup>71</sup> These lovers, however, were aroused to mutual desire 'by discovering their ears as the genesis of physical desire'

<sup>67</sup> The intricacies of this passage are teased out in a forthcoming paper by Hannah Mossman. The Phoenician's propensity towards leading the vinegrower to digressions is also illustrated at 20.1 (cf. τὴν ἐκβολὴν τοῦ λόγου).

<sup>68</sup> The frequent collocations of sailing and narrative is discussed by Grossardt (2006) 130, although I am unconvinced by his arguments for an Epicurean underlay. To his list of passages (6.3–7, 14.2, 14.4, 23.3, 55.6) add 34.3–4; 58.6.

<sup>69</sup> Hld. 3.4.1–3.5.2: see esp. Hardie (1998), with p. 22 on the Odyssean prototype.

<sup>70</sup> See Rommel (1923) for the sources of Achilles' and Heliodorus' digressions; Bartsch (1989) argues that digressions are (or are expected to be) relevant to the plot; Morales (2004) sees them as repositories for *outré* sexual fantasy.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. esp. *Ep.* 52, with Walker (1992) 132–3 for further parallels.

(γένεσιν ἡμέρου σώματος ὥτα εὐρόντες, 54.4). The description hints at an inversion of Candaules' famous words to Gyges in Herodotus 1: the Lydian king tells his servant not to take his word for his wife's great beauty, but to see for himself, since the ears (ὥτα) are more untrustworthy than the eyes (Hdt. 1.8.2). The figure in Herodotus, the great traveller and *hístōr*, privileges autopsy; Philostratus' character, by contrast, sets visual experience in competition with the seductive power of literary representation. This is clearly a meta-textual moment: as we have seen throughout, throughout *Heroicus*, language and description are connected with the stimulation of readerly desire.<sup>72</sup>

This passage also serves as an implicit commentary on the text's *Homer-kritik*, where questions over direct testimony and secondary representation are very much in play. Protesilaus offers an account of the Trojan war that bypasses Homer's *parti pris* version (the poet having been bought off by Odysseus). Like the pseudo-diaries of Dictys and Dares (and their Hellenistic avatars, particularly Hegesianax), *Heroicus* offers us a (supposedly) more accurate version delivered by one who was there. Unlike Dictys and Dares, however, Protesilaus died before the war began; and so his version remains at one remove from the 'reality' it purports to describe. As much as Philostratus seeks to cancel the mediating role of the Homeric text by substituting direct experience, he also reminds his readers that his version remains resolutely textual and mimetic. For everyone involved in the long chain of Philostratean transmission – we readers, the Phoenician, the vine-grower, Protesilaus himself – it has indeed been the ears rather than the eyes that have been seduced.

## 4

This interplay between textual report and autoptic viewing also permeates the vinegrower's descriptions more generally. The physiognomical descriptions that dominate the text are brilliantly ecphrastic, providing a high level of pictorial detail – reminding us, if we needed reminding, that

<sup>72</sup> For parallels see Grossardt (2006) 739. The most suggestive occurs at Achilles Tatius' *Leucippe & Clitophon* 2.13.1: the young profligate (ἄσωτος... καὶ πολυτελής) Callisthenes is held to have become 'a lover by hearsay' (ἐξ ἀκοῆς ἐραστής). Achilles' narrator associates this (rather hypocritically) with moral deviancy: 'the wantonness of the licentious is so great that even with their ears they wallow in erotic pleasure, and they suffer through mere words the effects which wounded eyes usually administer to the soul' (τοσαύτη γὰρ τοῖς ἀκολάστοις ὕβρις, ὥς καὶ τοῖς ὤσιν εἰς ἐρωτά τρυφᾶν καὶ ταῦτα πάσχειν ἀπὸ ῥημάτων ἂν τῇ ψυχῇ διακονοῦσι τρωθέντες ὀφθαλμοί, 2.13.1). In associating aural eroticism with ἀκολασία and ὕβρις, Achilles playfully stigmatises any appetitive response on the part of the reader.

Philostratus himself (always assuming the two Philostrati are the same) composed a series of *Imagines*, descriptions of paintings in a Neapolitan gallery.<sup>73</sup> When the Phoenician puts in a request for his heroes, he asks, for example, 'can I see Palamedes?' (ἔστι καὶ τὸν Παλαμήδη ἰδεῖν . . . , 33.38) or 'will you show him, vinegrower, and sketch in his appearance?' (ἢ καὶ δείξεις αὐτόν, ἀμπελουργέ, καὶ ἀναγράψεις ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους; 48.1). The use of iconic language here (ἀναγράφειν, translated as 'sketch in')<sup>74</sup> redoubles the textualising play.

As well as painting, statuary is also used as a resource for visualisation. We have already seen Protesilaus compared to the herms of runners, and there are three other instances of comparisons to 'statues' (ἀγάλματα, 10.3; 10.5; 42.3). Art is the paradigm of beauty: Neoptolemus is physically lesser than his father 'to the degree that the handsome are lesser than their statues' (τοσοῦτον ὅσον τῶν ἀγαλμάτων οἱ καλοὶ λείπονται, 52.2). For readers of Lucian, this technique recalls the satirist's *Imagines*, where Lycinus describes the emperor's mistress to Polystratus (who is just as erotically enthralled as the Phoenician here) by comparing her to the body-parts of different statues.<sup>75</sup> Philostratus does not dismember his statues as Lucian does, nor does he name any specific artworks. But although loose comparisons with statues are very much part of the package of erotic description in the period (analogies can be found in Aristaenetos and the novels),<sup>76</sup> these are not simply throwaway *topoi*, but part of a complex and provocative thematic that runs through the entire text. At times, statues serve as paradigms for description: on one occasion, ἀγάλμα is even used as a hear-synonym for 'description' (26.13: 'I can also give you an *agalma* of Nestor'). On other occasions, it is the inertness of statues that is brought to the fore, their inability to match the animated vitality of real subjects. Hector, for example, is said to be 'sweeter' (ἡδίω) – a key word in the aesthetics of *Heroicus*, as we have seen – and bigger than his statue (37.5). Unlike humans who worship only statues and intimations (ἀγάλματα . . . καὶ ὑπονοίας) of the gods, heroes have open dealings with them (7.3). In a passage that we have already considered, the cult-statue of Protesilaus is ruined and delapidated (9.6), but the vinegrower says that he does not care, for he meets with (ξύνειμι) the hero in person, he sees him (αὐτὸν βλέπω), and he is sweeter (ἡδιον) to him than any statue (9.7).

<sup>73</sup> Mantero (1966) 69–70; Rossi (1997) 23.

<sup>74</sup> ἀναγράφειν also in this sense at 27.13; 47.2; also διαγράφειν at 10.1; 48.12.

<sup>75</sup> In turn modelled on the celebrated story of Zeuxis' painting of Helen (Dion. Hal. fr. 6): see Korus (1981) 53; Maffei (1986) 155–6.

<sup>76</sup> Jax (1936) 47.

In these passages, statues are seen as feeble, second-order versions of 'the real'. At other times they seem to strive after vitality, straining, like the Laocoon group in Lessing's celebrated discussion, at the leash of static artwork (*die Grenzen der Malerei*).<sup>77</sup> The statue of Hector has peculiarly life-like properties: it is, the vinegrower tells us, 'so lifelike (*empnour*) that it draws the viewer to touch it' (ἔστι δ' οὕτω τι ἔμπνουν ὥς τὸν θεατὴν ἐπισπᾶσθαι θιγεῖν, 19.3). ἔμπνους is used by the novelists of statues in a deliberately paradoxical way, marking girls who look like 'living statues'.<sup>78</sup> Hector's statue is equally paradoxical, partaking of both inert matter and the vitality and exuberance of heroic stuff. The boundary between art and life is here threatened, but perhaps not yet transgressed. What follows, however, is remarkable. Like the statue of Orpheus in Arrian's account of Alexander's expedition (*Anab.* 1.11.2),<sup>79</sup> this one sweats, particularly when excited by cult-worship (19.4); and when a Syrian lad came and mocked it, even claiming it represented Achilles and not Hector, he came to a horrid, watery end when Hector later drowned him (19.5–7).

Philostratus' treatment of statuary is complex and variegated, but what abides throughout is an intense interest in the question of how life-like these representations are. This questioning of the power of mimetic arts to approximate to, capture, or even create reality links to a characteristically Philostratean meta-discursivity. Plastic and literary description alike are means of making present (in a partial, transitory and provisional way) what is absent. The issue of the physicality of the objects of description is a concern that pervades *Heroicus*, and not just in terms of the alluring, attractive notion of actually touching herm-like heroes: the heroes are also terrible, vengeful figures who can, even now, wreak havoc upon those whom they choose to visit. We have already considered Hector's vengeance upon the youth who abused his statue; equally tangibly 'real' is Achilles' violent response to the Thessalians who did not keep up his cult (53.22). The heroes' physical presence is an ongoing concern.

#### CONCLUSIONS

One of the many themes of *Heroicus* is the idea that the landscape is even now – despite the passing of time, our hyper-modern scepticism and sophistication and diverse points of entry into the Greek tradition –

<sup>77</sup> Lessing (1962) subtitle.

<sup>78</sup> Hld. 1.7.2 (αὐτὸ ἔμπνουν . . . τὸ ἀγαλμα); cf. Aristaenet. 1.1 (ἔμπνυχος τῆς Ἀφροδίτης εἰκόν).

<sup>79</sup> Cf. Bosworth (1980) 97 with further references; also Mantero (1966) 134–6.

inhabited by traditional, heroic energies.<sup>80</sup> Homeric Greece maintains a physical reality in the present. The mythical heroes of the past are not simply the stuff of tales told to children by their nurses, as the Phoenician puts it in his early, sceptical phase (7.10; 8.2); heroes inhabit, and share potency with, the landscape of their cult-sites. The Achaeans, for example, embraced Achilles' tomb 'thinking they were embracing Achilles' (τὸν Ἀχιλλέα φοντο περιβάλλειν, 51.13). Enormous footprints (ἵχνη), traces of Protesilaus' presence, are left in the soil of the cult-site (13.2–3). These marks have a semiotic, almost graphematic quality, like the 'spoor' (στίβη) of her brother that Electra tracks (cf. ἵχνοσκοποῦσα) in Aeschylus' *Choephoroe*.<sup>81</sup> The past is legible in the text of the landscape. But it is deeply significant that Protesilaus' footsteps are said to be not always visible: when the hero runs too fast to leave a trace, the ground is *asēmos*, literally 'without a sign/signifier' (13.3). If we are right about the self-reflexivity of this text, then this episode can be read as a meditation upon the process of reading as reinscribing, *reincorporating*, the plenitude of the past, even as it evanesces.

Reading, imagining, re-viewing, can serve as a (circumscribed, imperfect) traversal of the boundaries that separate past from present. '[W]hatever the style of viewing', comments Froma Zeitlin, 'real or imaginary, the eyes, as no other faculty, give life and credence to vivid recollections of the past and the preoccupations of a shared cultural heritage'.<sup>82</sup> When the Phoenician asks, prompted by a passing remark of the vinegrower's, when the heroes 'were seen' (ὥφθησαν) on the plain of Troy, the vinegrower replies by correcting his interlocutor's tense:

They *are* seen, I said, they *are still* seen by cowherds and shepherds on the plain. They are great and divine, and sometimes their appearance spells trouble for the land.

ὀρῶνται, ἔφην, ὀρῶνται ἔτι βουκόλοις τε τοῖς ἐν τῷ πεδίῳ καὶ νομεῦσι· μεγάλοι καὶ θεοὶ, καὶ θεῶνται ἔστιν ὅτε ἐπὶ κακῷ τῆς γῆς. (18.2)

The word 'still', repeated twice, marks the crucial juncture between traditional narrative and actuality. Philostratus' vinegrower adopts the voice of Herodotean archaeology, as mediated through Hellenistic aetiology, recording the visible traces of the past.<sup>83</sup> In Philostratus' account, however,

<sup>80</sup> Eitrem (1929) 38–42.

<sup>81</sup> Aesch. *Cho.* 228: see esp. Goldhill (1984) 128–9. <sup>82</sup> Zeitlin (2001) 263.

<sup>83</sup> The persistence of cultural tradition is signalled in Herodotus by such expressions as 'even up to my day' (ἔτι ἕξ ἐμέ, 1.52), which occurs some fifty times (depending on what is counted) in Herodotus: there is a quick survey of the issues at Cobet (2002) 397. The more familiar phrase 'even now' (ἔτι

and exceptionally, a mystical power grants the heroes of the past a capacity to transcend the etiolating effects of time, to retain across the ages an existential plenitude. And yet there is a palpable tension here: the present is inhabited by the past, but *only just*, and with a certain strain or surprise ('still' carries a concessive force: *even so, nevertheless* . . .)

*Heroicus* dramatises not simply the ongoing valency of the Greek cultural tradition, but also the pleasures and challenges of recreating it through the imagination. It engages its readers in a creative, dynamic, but ultimately impossible task: the construction of identity by re-embodying the past, spectral and elusive though it remains. The seductive pleasures of the text are at once its frustrations: the strategy of generating teasing glimpses of the past, behind the veils of both time and narrative representation, is predicated on an unresolved (and irresolvable) play between absence and presence, between oblivion and memory, between death and vitality. *Heroicus* can thus be read as a cultural parable, an articulation of the ambiguous position of third-century Greeks in relation to their cultural traditions. The narrative time of the encounter is the autumn (3.2; 10.2; 11.9),<sup>84</sup> the season serving as a pregnant metaphor for the self-diagnosed posterity of Philostratus' world. In the context of Roman Greek culture, this knowingly 'späte Herbstflor der Beredtsamkeit',<sup>85</sup> the past is sublime, powerfully meaningful and self-present, but at the same time elusive and distant. It is this delicate equipoise that we negotiate every time we read *Heroicus*.

καὶ νῦν and similar) – used by Philostratus at *Her.* 33.28 – is not directly paralleled in Herodotus, but common in the periegetic tradition (esp. Pausanias: Åkujärvi (2005) 69–77).

<sup>84</sup> Just as Protesilaus smells 'sweeter than autumn myrtles' (ἀπόδει αὐτοῦ ἥδιον ἢ τὸ μετόπωρον τῶν μύρτων, 10.2).

<sup>85</sup> Rohde (1876) 291.

## CHAPTER 11

# *Black sails to Achilles: the Thessalian pilgrimage in Philostratus' Heroicus\**

Ian Rutherford

## INTRODUCTION

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* reflects contemporary interest in pilgrimage, narrating Apollonius' perpetual pilgrimage in search of intellectual and religious enlightenment.<sup>1</sup> One pilgrimage that is particularly interesting from the point of view of Greek culture is to the Achilleion in the Troad (book 3), where Achilles appears to Apollonius during the night complaining that the Thessalians were neglecting honours that were due to him, and that the Greeks, starting with Homer, have also failed to honour the hero Palamedes. Apollonius subsequently tried to set things right. The theme of Achilles and the cult of heroes features much more centrally in a second work by Philostratus, *Heroicus*, and here too it is associated with pilgrimage, albeit pilgrimage of a different type. In this chapter I will examine the theme of pilgrimage to the Achilleion from the point of view of religious history.

*Heroicus* is a dialogue between a vinegrower and a Phoenician trader, who has an interest in the *Iliad*.<sup>2</sup> It takes place in the Chersonese, near the *heroön* of Protesilaus at Elaious (modern Egeabat, in the North Dardanelles, opposite Çanakkale). The dramatic date is apparently in the time of Philostratus himself. The vinegrower tells the Phoenician about heroes, relating what his informant Protesilaus had told him from first-hand experience, in many cases revising what Homer tells us. The choice of the hero Protesilaus as an authority for Greek tradition could be explained by the pivotal position of his shrine on the main route from Europe to Asia.

\* Thanks to Jaś Elsner, Lucy Grig, Owen Hodkinson and Professor Brian Rose. A version of this chapter was given at Corpus Christi College, Oxford in December 2000. The chapter was started while I was receiving funding from the AHRB for work on *theōria*, and finished while I was a Tyrus Fellow at the University of Cincinnati in May 2003. I would like to dedicate it to the memory of James Irvine, 1965–2003, with whom I discussed heroic ritual on many occasions.

<sup>1</sup> Elsner (1997).

<sup>2</sup> On *Heroicus*, the best guide is now Maclean and Airken (2001) and Anderson (1986) 241–58. I also profited from Hodkinson (2004).

This was a route the Persians tried to control, as we learn from the end of Herodotus' *Histories*, where a much fiercer Protesilaus takes a terrible vengeance on the Persians.<sup>3</sup> Much later it was a route that Alexander the Great took, moving in the opposite direction, and Caracalla, of whom more later.

In his account of heroes the vinegrower mentions several cases where a heroic cult is visited by pilgrims. Protesilaus himself is visited by people suffering from love-sickness, as befits his own status as an erotic hero.<sup>4</sup> The vinegrower also mentions an otherwise unknown *heroön* of Palamedes (47.18–9) on the South coast of the Troad, cultivated by cities in the coastal areas, and the tomb of Ajax, which was visited by the Emperor Hadrian (18.17–21). But above all there is Achilles, best of the Achaeans, whose tomb in the Troad used to be venerated by a regular pilgrimage sent by the cities of Thessaly, while the living hero simultaneously receives visitors in his home in the White Island.

#### THEŌRIA TO ACHILLES

The tomb of Achilles, the Achilleion, was identified in Greco-Roman times with a hill (*kolōnos* in Greek) situated on the West coast of the Troad. There are several ancient *tumuli* in this area, and there has been a long debate among archaeologists about which was identified as the Achilleion in the Greco-Roman period.<sup>5</sup> It was probably South of Sigeum, if the tomb was close to the place called Achilleion mentioned by Herodotus in his account of the conflict over Sigeum, and that would place it in the region of Beşik Bay (which is incidentally where Agamemnon's fleet would have camped, if it camped anywhere).<sup>6</sup> The view of the most recent Cincinnati–Tübingen excavations is that the site could have been Beşik-Sivritepe, a little inland, which seems to have been artificially enlarged in the Hellenistic period, as if to produce a tourist attraction.<sup>7</sup> It is thus about fifty miles South or South-South-West of Elaious, where *Heroicus* takes place.<sup>8</sup>

According to *Heroicus* a sacred delegation went every year from Thessaly to the Achilleion. Here is a translation of the passage.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> On Protesilaus in Herodotus, more recent studies include Boedeker (1988) and Dewald (1997).

<sup>4</sup> Lyne (1998). <sup>5</sup> Cook (1974) 177–9 and plate 18b, gives a good idea of this confusion.

<sup>6</sup> Hdt. 5.94. <sup>7</sup> Korfmann (1988); Rose (1999) 61–3; Rose (2000) 65–6.

<sup>8</sup> The Achilleion has figured in scholarship on Simonides' recently discovered Plataea poem: Schachter (1998) has suggested that it was performed there when the Spartan general Pausanias was briefly at Sigeum in 470 BC.

<sup>9</sup> I am indebted to the translation in Maclean and Aitken (2001).



## A PROEM: OTHER RITES

67 . . . The rites that the Corinthians perform for Melicertes . . . and those they perform for the children of Medeia whom they killed to avenge Glaucus resemble a dirge that is mystical (*telestikos*) and inspired (*entheos*). Medeia's children they try to appease, and Melicertes they honour with a hymn.

Because of the deed done to the men of Lemnos by the women as the result of Aphrodite, Lemnos is purified every year and all fires on it are quenched for nine days. A theoris-ship brings fire from Delos, and if it arrives before the rites (*enagismata*), it is not allowed to be put into harbour anywhere on Lemnos, but remains at sea off the headlands, until it is permitted to sail in. At that time, I believe, they invoke the secret gods of the earth, and they keep the fire pure at sea. But when the theoris-ship sails in and they distribute the fire for daily use and particularly for crafts of the forge, they begin a new life from that point.

## B THE RITUAL

The Thessalian honours that came regularly from Thessaly to Achilles were imposed on the Thessalians by the oracle of Dodona. For the oracle ordered that the Thessalians should sail to Troy and sacrifice every year to Achilles, making offerings to him both as a god and also as befits a hero. Originally the rite went like this: a ship from Thessaly with black sails raised sailed to Troy, carrying twice seven *theoroi*, and two bulls, one white and one black, both tame, as well as wood from Mt Pelion, so they would need nothing from the city [of Troy]. And they brought fire from Thessaly and drew libations and water from the River Spercheius. This was why the Thessalians were the first to use crowns of amaranth for funerals, so that, even if the winds should delay the ship, the crowns would not rot or grow old. During the night they had to sit at anchor and, before reaching land, sing the following hymn in honour of Thetis from the ship:

68       Blue Thetis, Pelian Thetis  
           Who bore Achilles, a great son.  
           His mortal nature  
           fell to the lot of Troy; but Pontus holds  
           the part of him that he drew from your immortal race.  
           Come to this high hill  
           to the offerings of Achilles,  
           Come without tears in the company of Thessaly,  
           Blue Thetis, Pelian Thetis.

After the hymn, they come to the tomb, and a shield is sounded as in war. Then, while running in rhythm,<sup>10</sup> they joined in a cry of *alala*, calling on Achilles. Then, garlanding the top of the hill and digging ditches on it, they

<sup>10</sup> *δρόμοις δὲ ἑρπυθισμένοις*; contrast Maclean and Aitken (2001) 159: 'with rhythmic rapid delivery.'

slaughtered the black bull as one would in honour of a dead hero, and invited Patroclus to the dinner, as a favour to Achilles. After performing the sacrifice, they went back to the ship, and, after sacrificing the other bull on the shore again in honour of Achilles, they make first offerings of barley from a basket and of the entrails for that sacrifice (this sacrifice being in honour of a god) and around dawn they sail off, taking the victim with them, to avoid feasting on enemy soil.

#### C THE HISTORY

This ancient rite, stranger, they say was abolished by the tyrants who they say ruled Thessaly after the Aiakidai, and so was neglected by Thessaly. Some of the cities sent it, others did not, some said that they would send it next year, others dropped the practice.

- 69 When the earth was oppressed by a drought and the oracle ordered that they should honour Achilles as was right, they removed the divine honours, interpreting 'as was right' this way, and sacrificed to him as a dead hero, sacrificing ordinary victims, until the expedition of Xerxes to Greece, in which the Thessalians medized and gave up their offerings to Achilles, at the time when the ship sailed from Aegina to Salamis bringing the family of the Aiakidai to help the Greek allies. But later Alexander the son of Philip enslaved Thessaly, dedicated Phthia to Achilles, and while campaigning against Darius made Achilles in Troy an ally. And at this time the Thessalians visited Achilles and drove the cavalry which Alexander had brought from Thessaly around his tomb, then attacked each other as if engaging in a cavalry skirmish, and went home, after making prayers and sacrificing, and called on him together with Balius and Xanthus to help against Darius, shouting from horseback. When Darius was defeated and Alexander was in India, the Thessalians reduced the offerings, and sent a black lamb. But since the offerings did not reach Troy, or if they did, did so in broad daylight and in an inappropriate manner, Achilles grew wrathful.

#### D THE PUNISHMENT

If I were to go through everything he inflicted, this account would be self-indulgently long. But four years ago Protesilaus met me there and said he had come from the Black Sea; he said he had found a ship and sailed to Achilles disguised as a stranger, and that he frequently did this. When I said that he had showed himself a loyal friend to Achilles, he said: 'But I just had a quarrel with him. I realised that he was angry with the Thessalians over their offerings, and I said 'show mercy, Achilles, for my sake', but he refused, and said that he would give them some misfortune from the sea. I am afraid that this terrible and implacable man has devised something for them with the help of Thetis.'

- 70 When I heard this from Protesilaus, I thought that he meant that the land of Thessaly would be afflicted with rust or fog, to the detriment of the crop,

since these are threats to fertile land which come from the sea. I also thought that some of the Thessalian cities would be inundated, like Boura and Helice and Atalante near Locris (for they say that the one sank into the sea, while the other broke apart). But Achilles and Theris had a different mode of calamity in store for the Thessalians. Because the prices attached to the shell-fish from which men extract purple were very great, the Thessalians were accused of illegal activities with respect to this dye. Whether it is true, I do not know. So a fine was imposed on them which forced some to sell their land, others their homes; of their slaves, some have run away, others have been sold, and they do not even pay funeral honours to their parents, since they have sold their tombs. So let us regard this as the evil that Achilles threatened to give the Thessalians from the sea.

Originally the ship, equipped with black sails, carried fourteen *theōroi*, who took with them wood, fire, libations and water, as well as two bulls, one white, one black. They wore wreathes of *amaranthos*. The whole *theōria* was a common enterprise shared between a number of Thessalian cities (cf. 69.1). The participants arrived by night, sang a hymn to Achilles, which began by invoking Theris, and approached the hill, where they took part in races and communal invocations of Achilles. After that they put wreaths, presumably the wreaths of *amaranthos*, on top of the hill (almost as if it was a massive head) and dug trenches on it. Then they sacrificed the black bull (possibly burning it whole as a holocaust?), and went back to the shore, where they sacrificed the white bull (no longer wearing those crowns of *amaranthos*?). Come dawn, they took the dead victim on the ship, and consumed it there – eating on the land was apparently something to be avoided.<sup>11</sup>

The aim was to carry out a double rite, a sacrifice or *thusia* to Achilles as a god, and an offering or *enagisma* to Achilles as a hero. By *thusia* here, Philostratus means a sacrifice of the conventional type where the animal is killed, cooked and divided between the participants for consumption, with the exception of a few parts (especially the tail) which were symbolically given to the god by being consumed on the altar and directed upwards in the form of smoke. An *enagisma*, on the other hand, is different, the

<sup>11</sup> There is a type of cultic requirement that is quite often found where the cult prohibits moving the meat from the sanctuary before consuming it (see Scullion (1994)), but there is no parallel for a victim being moved wholesale from the place of sacrifice before consumption, as far as I know. Myerhoff (1974) wrote an account of a pilgrimage made by the Huichol Indians to a sacred zone known as Wirikuta to gather a magic mushroom, peyote, and it is considered dangerous to stay too long; when they left, they ran. The function of this pilgrimage was at least partly to be a *rite de passage* for young people ('*primeros*').

animal is burned whole in the process normally referred to as a holocaust, and the direction of the offering is downwards.<sup>12</sup>

While the Achilleion, his heroic address, is the site of Achilles' tomb, his true home, where he lives as a god, was on the White Island in the Black Sea.<sup>13</sup> The vinegrower's narration of Achilles' domicile on the White Island immediately follows the section on the Thessalian offerings, and one part of it, an ill-fated invasion by the Amazons, forms the climax of the work. Since the Phoenician is on his way into the Black Sea, he might be expected to have a special interest in this. The White Island was imagined as a real location in the Crimea, where traders could meet with the divine Achilles (though they do not stay the night (72.2)), in the manner of Golden Age encounters between gods and men.<sup>14</sup> As in the case of the Achilleion, contact with Achilles on the White Island may be articulated though the practice of sacrifice, but in this case victims approach the altar spontaneously, another Golden-Age feature (74.8). There is also a dark side: one trader complied with Achilles' request to bring him a girl from Ilion (74-5), but as the trader left, he heard screams from the latter-day Polyxena.

To return to the comparatively real world of the Thessalian pilgrimage: Philostratus also gives us an unusual amount of information about its diachronic development. We learn that the practice was stopped by the tyrants who ruled Thessaly after the Aeacidæ, which suggests that the Aeacidæ started it. The Aeacidæ here are perhaps meant to be understood as the descendants of Polydora, daughter of Peleus, rather than of Achilles and his son Neoptolemus, who was usually associated with Molossia in the North-West.<sup>15</sup> The identity of the tyrants is a mystery; perhaps Philostratus meant Aleuas, who established the Thessalian federation in the sixth century BC. Anyway, having ended the pilgrimage, the tyrants had subsequently to restart it, when a divinely sent plague ensued, but the revived tradition was deficient in so far as it omitted the white bull, an innovation suggesting that Achilles no longer deserved divine honours.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> On the practice and terminology of 'chthonic' sacrifice, see now Ekroth (2002), an excellent monograph which does not, however, raise the issue of the reliability of literary sources such as *Heroicus*.

<sup>13</sup> On Achilles as god, see Hommel (1980).

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Arrian, *Periplus of the Black Sea*, referred to in Petsalis-Diomidis (2001) 179. On the temple of Achilles in the White Island, see now Rusyaeva (2003).

<sup>15</sup> Polydora: Homer, *Il.* 16.173ff.; cf., Heliodorus, *Aith.* 2.34.

<sup>16</sup> Rader (1925) tries to explore the historical background. He is troubled by the fact that there were no tyrants in Thessaly, and he suggests that Philostratus might be thinking of the Aleuadæ of Larissa, who were not strictly tyrants. Notice also that Eurylochus, the Thessalian commander responsible for the destruction of Krisa, was called 'younger Achilles' by Euphronion, fr. 80; Helly (1995) 41.

This diminished pilgrimage then continued until it came to an end again after the Persian war, apparently because there was a perceived conflict between the Greek sympathies of the Aeacidae and the medising Thessalians. After an intermission during the fifth and fourth centuries the pilgrimage resumed under Alexander the Great, who conquered Thessaly and devoted Phthia to Achilles. In this period, the Thessalians held a major celebration at the tomb of Achilles. Other sources tell us that Alexander himself honoured Achilles in the Troad at the outset of his campaign,<sup>17</sup> and it is possible that Philostratus is thinking of that here, since there was a Thessalian contingent in Alexander's army; indeed, that was the first major operation by Thessalian troops in Asia in recorded history, and at any rate since the Trojan war.<sup>18</sup> Anyway, the Thessalians continue the pilgrimage after Alexander though the offering is now merely a black lamb, and there are lots of problems: not all the cities contribute; they perform the rite by day rather than by night; and sometimes it does not arrive at all.

		Honours	Victims	
Phase 1	Aeacidae	god + hero	2 bulls	
Phase 2	Tyrants 1	break 1		
Phase 3	Tyrants 2	hero	1 bull (?)	<i>reduced performance 1</i>
Phase 4	Post-Persian war	break 2		(Aeacidae are estranged from Thessaly)
Phase 5	Alexander			<i>symbolic resumption 1</i> Achilles reappropriated by Thessaly
Phase 6	Post-Alexander	hero	1 lamb	<i>reduced performance 2</i>
Phase X	Post-Apollonius?			<i>resumption as in phase 1?</i>
Phase Y	Caracalla?			<i>symbolic resumption 2?</i>

Here the account ends, with no reference to the Roman period. Protesilaus claims that Achilles is so angry that he threatened to harm Thessaly, specifying that the destruction would come from the sea.<sup>19</sup> The vinegrower thinks that this threat may correspond to a recent calamity connected with the trade in purple dye extracted from sea-shells.<sup>20</sup> Anyway, there's no sign

<sup>17</sup> Arrian, *Anabasis* 1.12. <sup>18</sup> Westlake (1969) 222.

<sup>19</sup> Compare the account of the death of the Emperor Titus in *VA* 6.32.

<sup>20</sup> The note of Maclean and Aitken (2001) 163, summarises scholarship on this difficult point.

that the present-day Thessalians have mended their ways and renewed their pilgrimage.

So Philostratus' pilgrimage tradition not only links two disparate geographical locations, but it also links different times, the mythical past and the present or recent historical past. It thus gives us a more-or-less continuous link between the time of the Trojan war and the present, transforming the mythical past into a sort of eternal present.

The Achilleion also figures in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*. Showing great bravery, Apollonius spent the night on top of the *kolōrzos*, where Achilles manifests himself (something that does not happen in *Heroicus*), and threatens to show his famous wrath, if the Thessalian rituals are not restarted. And he also informs him that Palamedes was a very important hero – Homer, he claims, omitted him from the *Iliad* only in deference to Odysseus – and urges Apollonius to re-establish the cult of Palamedes. (Notice how the *Odyssey* is being criticised at exactly the moment when Apollonius is, as it were, taking the part of Odysseus).<sup>21</sup> Apollonius is represented as duly carrying out Achilles' instructions. He sets up a statue of Palamedes on the South coast of the Troad, opposite Lesbos and, when in Greece sometime afterwards, he goes and visits the Amphictyonic council, and tells the Thessalians to re-establish the sacrifice, which they agree to do. (Notice that this complicates the chronological model a little, adding one stage.) The chronological relationship between *Heroicus* and *Life of Apollonius* is not known for sure, but one gets a very strong impression that *Heroicus* develops themes that were first worked out in *Life of Apollonius*, as Solmsen argued.<sup>22</sup>

What was Philostratus' purpose in including such an extensive account of the Achilleion? The original motivation, in *Life of Apollonius*, was to give Apollonius cultural authority on the Greek past and on Greek religion, with the message that mainland Greeks should honour their past more. As for the more detailed treatment in the *Heroicus*, we should perhaps think of Caracalla's visit to the Achilleion in AD 213. To judge from the accounts in Dio and in Herodian, this was typical symbolic pilgrimage by a Roman emperor, with a few differences.<sup>23</sup> Dio's account is comparatively restrained: Caracalla performed *enagismata* there and organised contests; both those elements come up in Philostratus' account, which was probably written a few years after the death of Caracalla in

<sup>21</sup> See Van Dijk, chapter 9 in this volume. Palamedes, incidentally, also crops up in *Life* (VA 3.22) when Apollonius meets an Indian boy who is thought to be a reincarnation of Palamedes.

<sup>22</sup> Solmsen (1940).

<sup>23</sup> Herodian 4.8; Dio 77.16.7. On these see: Halfmann (1986); Holum (1990).

AD 217.<sup>24</sup> Herodian's version is more colourful: Caracalla made offerings of crowns and flowers; he assumed the identity of Alexander, and imitated Achilles; a freedman of Caracalla's, Festus, happened to die while they were in the Troad, and Caracalla cremated the body, as Achilles cremated Patroclus. I find it difficult to believe that there could be no relation between Caracalla's visit – the most significant pilgrimage to the Achilleion since Alexander – and Philostratus' Thessalian *theōria* – the most colourful literary treatment of the Achilleion ever. But what could the relation be? Maybe it is just that there was significant interest in the Achilleion at the imperial court in this period, or maybe Caracalla's visit stimulated Philostratus' creative imagination. Alternatively, perhaps Philostratus' account of the Thessalian pilgrimage presupposes knowledge of Caracalla's visit on the part of the reader, who is meant to supply the information that due honour has been paid to Achilles recently, not by the Thessalians, but by an Alexander-imitating Caracalla. In that case, Philostratus would be implicitly placing Caracalla's pilgrimage in a continuous tradition that goes right back to the Trojan war, and in which Caracalla's visit forms a high point, as had Alexander's 550 years before. But this move is made very obliquely, without reference to Caracalla's pilgrimage, as indeed there is none to Alexander's. But the point is clear: Caracalla is a truer worshipper of Achilles than his own race, the Thessalians, who neglect the proper rites.

#### THE TRADITIONS OF GREEK PILGRIMAGE

My main interest in this section of the *Heroicus* is in its relation to the traditions of Greek pilgrimage. Regular, normative pilgrimage, usually known as *theōria*, seems to have happened all over the Greek world and at all periods.<sup>25</sup> It is perfectly normal for a *polis* to send a delegation to a sacred place, usually carrying a sacrificial offering; one thinks, for example, of the regular Athenian *theōriai* to Delos in the fifth and fourth centuries BC.<sup>26</sup> And this sort of pilgrimage was still going on in the time of Philostratus – for example, in the area of the oracle of Apollo at Claros.<sup>27</sup>

No *theōria* to the Achilleion from Thessaly or anywhere else is attested in epigraphical or historical sources,<sup>28</sup> but the idea is not in itself implausible. In the Hellenistic period the Thessalian Federation sent sea-borne *theōriai*

<sup>24</sup> On the date, see now Jones (2001); Maclean and Airken (2001) xlv. <sup>25</sup> Rutherford (2002).

<sup>26</sup> This practice is often expressed by the Greek verb ἀπαγγεῖν. <sup>27</sup> Lane Fox (1986).

<sup>28</sup> Helly (2006) 195 and 201, has suggested that a Hellenistic decree from Larissa in Thessaly in honour of two citizens of Alexandria Troas may reflect Thessalian gratitude for the co-operation of Alexandria in the performance of rites at the Achilleion.

across the North Aegean to Samothrace and Lesbos.<sup>29</sup> Pindar's Sixth Paean is *prima facie* evidence that in the fifth century the *polis* of Aegina sent a *theōria* to Delphi in the context of the Theoxenia festival where it honoured the cult of Achilles' son Neoptolemus.<sup>30</sup> Kent Rigsby has suggested that in the third century BC the island of Cos sent *theōriai* to Thessaly where they visited both Itonos (for Athene Itonia) and also a place called 'Argos', which could be interpreted as Pelasgian Argos, the homeland of Achilles.<sup>31</sup> Thessaly, it might be suggested, has a special place in the Coan imagination, not only as the traditional mother-country of the island, and also as the homeland of Achilles, the best of the Achaeans and the ideal of Greek manhood.

The Thessalian pilgrimage has many features in common with pilgrimage traditions we know of from elsewhere. For example, oracles really did motivate pilgrimages: an inscription from Hierapolis in Phrygia reproduces an oracle in which Clarian Apollo tells them how to rid themselves of a plague and instructs them to send a regular delegation to Claros as a thank offering; and a similar one from Cyzicus records how Ammon instructed the inhabitants there to send a delegation to Claros.<sup>32</sup> And the performance of hymns was an established part of *theōria*.<sup>33</sup> Again, the Thessalian pilgrimage is broken off and renewed, and that was perceived as happening to real pilgrimage traditions as well; for example, a Hellenistic inscription records a decision by the island of Ceos to revive a Delian *theōria* which has fallen into neglect.<sup>34</sup> Finally, the implied structure in which a number of politically affiliated cities co-operate in a common religious ritual has many parallels: one thinks of the Plataean Daedala festival, for example, responsibility for which was shared between cities belonging to the Boeotian Federation.<sup>35</sup>

Other features of it are less conventional, however. The first of these is the chthonic tone of the ritual, above all the black sails. These, like the fourteen participants, seem to reflect the myth of Theseus and the Athenian tribute to Minos, a myth that was commemorated and to some extent re-enacted by Athenian *theōria* to Delos, which was imagined to travel in the very same ship that Theseus had used. The black sails of Theseus' expedition were doubly ill-omened, both because they reflected the fate

<sup>29</sup> Mytilene: *IGSuppl.* 12, n. 3; Labarre (1996), n. 14, p. 273; Samothrace: Pounder and Dimitrova (2003); possibly also Claros: Picard (1922) 346.

<sup>30</sup> Rutherford (2001). <sup>31</sup> Rigsby (2004).

<sup>32</sup> Merkelbach and Schwertheim (1983); Peek (1984); Merkelbach and Stauber (1996), n. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Rutherford (2004). <sup>34</sup> *Inscriptiones Deliacae*, n. 2539; Bruneau (1970) 141–2.

<sup>35</sup> Daedala: Schachter (1981–94), vol. 1, 245–250; Dillon (1997) 135–8. See now Knoepfler (2001), who suggests that the fourteen logs involved come from seven 'divisions', not from cities.



that awaited the young Athenians in Crete, and also because by forgetting to replace the black sail with a white sail, Theseus inadvertently brought about his (mortal) father's suicide.<sup>36</sup> Philostratus has taken details that belong to the myth and projected them onto an image of recent ritual practice. The result is a strange and oxymoronic clash of categories. The mood of *theōria* is usually represented as one of civic celebration (indeed, the word *theōria* can mean 'festival'), quite the opposite of the Thessalians' sombre pilgrimage.<sup>37</sup>

Secondly, in general, the destination of real *theōroi* was a sanctuary and, since a sanctuary is usually controlled by another *polis*, *theōria* can be thought of as a relationship involving co-operation between two political institutions, requiring the initiative of one and the consent of the other.<sup>38</sup> Occasionally the relationship is strained – as, for example, when an Athenian *theōria* arriving in Dodona with offerings (a new face and a dress for the statue of Dione) was rebuffed by the local authorities.<sup>39</sup> What is unusual about the Thessalian pilgrimage is that it is to a remote location, and it is clandestine. The consent of the local authorities is neither sought nor obtained, and the Thessalians take everything with them, so that 'they would need nothing from the city [of Troy]'. The closest parallels to this would seem to be the following:

1. Philostratus himself seems to want to compare it with another *theōria* from Delos to Lemnos, which (according to him) shares with the Thessalian rite at least the fact that in both cases the ship anchors off shore (a practice which seems to reflect a concern to keep separate 'chthonic' and 'non-chthonic' zones), but in this case the ritual practice seems to involve co-operation with the local authorities.<sup>40</sup>
2. Sometimes regular offerings were sent to remote locations. For example, the Athenian Aiantis *phulē* used to send a thank offering, a *puthokhrēstos thusia*, to Mount Helicon in honour of the so-called Sphragitid Nymphs in order to commemorate the battle of Plataea; Plutarch attributes this information to the Attidographer Cleidemus (fourth century BC).<sup>41</sup> No host *polis* is mentioned, with respect either to co-operation or with respect to avoiding contact.

<sup>36</sup> Plutarch, *Thes.* 17.

<sup>37</sup> For the contrast, see E. *Supp.* 97; S. *OT* 1491. The ultimate model for the oxymoron might be Aeschylus, *Septem* 857, where Charon's barque is described as a μελάγκροκον θεωρίδα ('*theōris*-ship with a black sail'); on dystopic *theōria*, see further Rutherford (1995).

<sup>38</sup> See Sourvinou-Inwood (1990) on *theōria* involving contact between two cities.

<sup>39</sup> Hyperides, *Eux.* 36. <sup>40</sup> On the *theōria* to Delos, see Wilhelm (1939).

<sup>41</sup> *FGHist* 323F22; Parker (1996) 103–4; Larson (2001) s.v.

3. Pausanias (9.17.4–5) describes an unusual ritual from Thebes in which a party of men from Tithorea in Phocis attempted to scrape off earth from the tomb of Amphion and Zethus at Thebes, in order to transport it home, while the Thebans tried to prevent them; contestation between visitors and hosts is thus part of the ritual.<sup>42</sup> This is perhaps the closest parallel to the Thessalian pilgrimage, the more so since the focus of the ritual is a heroic cult.

The two features of the *theōria* that seem anomalous – the chthonic quality and the secrecy – might perhaps make sense if think of the Thessalian ritual as articulating a sort of tribal *rite de passage*. It is well established that certain forms of adolescent initiation involve a period of segregation in ‘wild space’ from ordinary life and that this period may be imagined as analogous to a period of death, preceding a symbolic rebirth. Both these features are attested for ancient Greece.<sup>43</sup> Another factor that fits this analysis is that the Thessalians carry water from the River Spercheius, since it was to the Spercheius that Achilles, in a typically initiatory gesture, vowed his hair in *Iliad* 23 (144–51).<sup>44</sup> And it would be possible to argue that one of the reasons that choruses and other groups of young people are often at the centre of *theōria* is that it is articulating precisely this sort of structure, though in a less explicit way.<sup>45</sup> In the case of the Athenian *theōria* to Delos, for example, it is primarily on the level of the accompanying myth (that of Theseus and the *Dis Hepta*) that *rite de passage* comes into play. This approach almost works for Philostratus’ Thessalians, but not quite, because he never tells us that the participants were young people.

#### RITUAL AND REALITY

It remains to consider the question of the historical reality of Philostratus’ Thessalian *theōria*. On the face of it, it looks fictional. Philostratus himself implies it was not happening at the time when the dialogue was supposed to be taking place, since he has Achilles himself complain about this. And

<sup>42</sup> Pausanias cites as his authority an oracle of Bacis warning the Thebans of the threat from Tithorea, which raises suspicion that the ritual is no more than that, a threat rather than a cultic reality.

<sup>43</sup> Van Gennep (1960); Vidal-Nacquet (1986).

<sup>44</sup> A passage recalled by Philostratus, *VA* 4.16, in his account of the meeting between Apollonius and Achilles. On rivers and hair-offerings, see Antimachus of Colophon fr. 163 Matthews (= fr. 128 Wyss) with Matthews (1996) 368–70. Herodotus, 7.198.2, locates Spercheius among the Aenianes. On hair-offerings and initiation, see Leirao (2004).

<sup>45</sup> See Rutherford (2005).

one could perhaps argue that Philostratus has invented the rite precisely so that Achilles, whose wrath is his defining feature, has something to be wrathful at.

And then there is the question of the plausibility of the cultic details. Although many other details of Greek religion in Philostratus seem to be based on real practice (such as Apollonius' visit to the cult of Trophonius), nevertheless there is reason to think that some of the rites mentioned in the *Heroicus* are not authentic. Take, for example, the passage where the Greeks commemorate the death of Locrian Ajax by building a pyre on his ship, holding an all-night vigil around the ship, and then letting the burning ship go adrift as the sun rises (p. 40, 15). Nothing like this is attested from the Greek world (if anything, it resembles a Viking ritual), and it has been suggested that it might be inspired by the use of ships in Isiac *ploiaphesia* rite.<sup>46</sup> To turn back to the Thessalian *theōria*, we have already pointed out that several elements are very unusual, judged against *theōria* as we know it from other sources: the absence of contact with a host city, and the chthonic atmosphere, which seems to reflect the myth of Theseus and the *Dis Hepta*. But there is more.

First, the sequence of chthonic and non-chthonic ('Olympian') sacrifices to Achilles. Historians of religion differ on how to analyse them. Some associate the chthonic with the marked category of heroes and other deities of the chthonic sphere and the non-chthonic with all other deities (the classic text is Herodotus' description of sacrifices to the two aspects of Heracles at *Hist.* 2.44). Others see the difference as simply one of function, so that, in principle, any form of sacrifice can be made to any deity; so in a Coan sacred law from the Hellenistic period, (Sokolowski II 151A), Zeus Polieus is honoured with a small and preliminary chthonic offering on the evening of the 19th of a month and by a normal sacrifice on the 20th.<sup>47</sup> And possibly there is an element of truth in both of these approaches. Against this background certain anomalies in Philostratus' account stand out. The sequence of two sacrifices to Achilles resembles the sequence of two sacrifices to Zeus Polieus in the Coan text, except that on Cos the second sacrifice takes place in broad daylight, whereas Philostratus has them both take place during the night; and except that whereas on Cos the

<sup>46</sup> Huhn and Bethe (1917). Incidentally, Philostratus seems to have a thing about boats. In *VA* it is revealed that Apollonius believed he had been the captain of an Egyptian ship in a previous life (3.23), and elsewhere Apollonius explains that the cosmos is like a vast ship (3.35).

<sup>47</sup> Olympian and chthonian: Ekroth (2002); Scullion (1994); Burkert (1966) 104, n. 36.

chthonic sacrifice is a small, preliminary offering, at the Achilleion it is a whole ox.<sup>48</sup>

Philostratus' interest here is the combination of chthonic and non-chthonic religion, as we see from the parallel rites that he mentions from Corinth and Lemnos. The Lemnian rite (arguably a playful *sphragis*, in view of Philostratus' own Lemnian origins) is connected with the notion of chthonic Lemnian fire which has a long history in Greek religion and literature.<sup>49</sup> My guess is that he has constructed this account because he wants a ritual that reflects the double nature of Achilles as described in the Hymn to Thetis; it therefore contains two equivalent offerings: a black bull to the mortal Achilles and a white bull to the immortal one, both performed at night. In a real sacrifice, the first offering would have been a smaller preliminary one, and the main sacrifice would have been performed at daybreak.

Secondly, the *theōroi* wear crowns that are described as *amarantinos*, which seems to be an adjective from *amaranton*, literally 'unwithered', a type of plant, which gives us the modern genus 'amaranthus'. Whatever the identity of the ancient plant, one may reasonably assume that it was thought to be slow to wither. It is not much mentioned in ancient sources, though Pliny says people make wreaths out of it because it can be revived after it seems to have died by pouring water on it, and Dioscurides says that people make wreaths out of it for statues.<sup>50</sup> The explanation that the vinegrower gives for the use of such plants is that these crowns will not wilt if the pilgrimage is delayed. You would have thought a better explanation is that the plant's unwitherability somehow symbolises the notional immortality of the hero. Crowns of amaranth occur nowhere else in the whole of Greek tradition, with the exception of Paul's *Epistle to Peter* 1.5.4:<sup>51</sup>

And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

'That fadeth not away' is the translator's interpretation of *amarantinos*. This feature becomes a *topos* in descriptions of martyrdoms, and occasionally in Christian epitaphs. Perhaps '*amarantinos*' really just means 'unfading', and

<sup>48</sup> Compare *LCSG* 151c, 8–10, where two sacrifices to Heracles in different locations follow in close succession, one a chthonic sacrifice which is a lamb, and the other a normal sacrifice, which is a *bous*.

<sup>49</sup> Burkert (1970) and Martin (1987). <sup>50</sup> Pliny, *NH* 21.8.47; Dioscurides, *De materia medica* 4.57.

<sup>51</sup> Discussed in Baus (1948); not mentioned in Blech (1982).

has lost any link to the plant, but it is also possible there is some common background here.

It is worth noting that both elements singled out here relate to immortality. One might wonder if this reflects some third-century neopythagorean/theurgic doctrine about the survival of the soul. Notice what the vinegrower says when the Phoenician asks him how come Protesilaus knows so much when he died before the war took place (p. 7):

This is foolish of you, stranger. For divine and blessed souls the beginning of life is purification from the body. Knowledge of the gods, whose companions they are, comes to these souls not by worshipping statues and representations (*hyponoiāi*), but through open contact with them. And they see the human condition free of physical disease, at which time they become filled with mantic wisdom, and prophecy raves in them.

Heroes are normally considered as more dead than alive, living a dark and dank existence, but here they live the life of gods, like Platonic souls. So maybe the emphasis on divine sacrifice in Philostratus' description is a modified rite to suit the new modified picture of a hero.

The shape of the sacrifices in the Troad is most likely fictional, then, and the possibility presents itself that the Thessalian *theōria* as a whole should probably be seen as a literary invention. It would be a literary fiction with several clear models, and just as we can talk of intertextuality in the case of relations between texts, so I would suggest we use the term 'interritual' and 'interrituality' to describe the relation between different Greek rituals (whether or not the ritual in question is a literary construct).<sup>52</sup> The more important models are probably the Lemnian Rite (which Philostratus mentions, and which could itself be a literary fiction) as well as the myth of Theseus and the Athenian tribute that formed the aetiology for the Athenian pilgrimage to Delos (which he does not mention). Another model might be the rite of the Locrian Maidens, in which the state of Locris pays a tribute to Troy in compensation for the crime of Locrian Ajax, the tribute consisting of a group of maidens who have to serve in the temple of Athene. In some versions they stay in Ilion all their lives, in other versions they return after a year, dodging attempts by the Trojans to make them stay. Like the Thessalian pilgrimage, the rite of the Locrian Maidens is supposed to go right back to the Trojan war, linking Aeolian Greece with the Troad; and like it the Locrian tribute fell into abeyance and was restarted when there was a plague. The historical reality of this rite is strongly suggested,

<sup>52</sup> When I had already largely completed this text, I discovered that Professor Angelos Chaniotis was also using the term 'interritual', though in a different sense.

for the mid second century BC at least, by an inscription from Naryca in Locris.<sup>53</sup>

To sum up, the following points have been established:

- 1 The Thessalian *theōria* is anomalous (chthonic mood, secret and without liaison with host city) judged against what we know from earlier sources.
- 2 The sequence of two sacrifices is also anomalous.
- 3 Philostratus may have been influenced by certain 'interrituals', especially the myth of Theseus and the *Dis Hepta*.
- 4 *Heroicus* itself states that the *theōria* was not going on at the time the dialogue is set. The inference, on the basis of these four points, that the *theōria* to the Achilleion as a whole is a literary fiction without basis in ritual reality might seem tempting, but it would not be legitimate. After all, we know that the Achilleion really was a popular attraction, at least from the time of Alexander; and we know that Greek states really did send sacred delegations to remote sanctuaries to perform sacrifices. It remains possible that, at least at certain periods, Thessalian cities sent a communal delegation to the Achilleion.

#### ANOTHER AIAKID THEŌRIA

By way of conclusion, I want to consider another account of a *theōria* by a Second Sophistic writer. In his novel *Aithiopika*, Heliodorus of Emesa describes in a sweeping *ecphrasis* a grand *theōria* to Delphi in honour of Achilles' son Neoptolemus sent by the Aenianes. The leader of the *theōria* was the hero of the novel Theagenes, himself an Aeacid by way of a genealogical detail already mentioned in the *Iliad*: his ancestor was Menesthios, king of the 'Enianes', the son of Achilles' sister Polydora who married the River Spercheios (16.174–6). Following a literary tradition that goes back centuries, the *theōria* provides the narrative frame for the first meeting between lovers.<sup>54</sup> The novel also describes the end of the tradition: the comrades of Theagenes go on the rampage (in partial re-enactment of Neoptolemus' own *theōria*) and Delphi bans them from future visits.

The Aenianes, the people of Aenis, known to Homer as Enianes, were a group with a rich, if obscure, past. In historical times they lived on the Malian Gulf, along the Spercheius River, close to Anthela, the cult centre

<sup>53</sup> Graf. 1978; *IG IX.1.706*. Another quasi-fictional narrative that he may have known is the thirty-year pilgrimage to the island of Kronos described in Plutarch's *De Facie in orbe lunae* 941a–941c; see Cherniss and Hembold (1968) 20–3.

<sup>54</sup> Lovers meet at *theōria*: Callimachus, fr. 75 drawing on Xenomedes of Ceos; 'Stesichorus', *PMG* 278; Eurip., *Hipp.* 25; Plut., *Alex.* 2.2; Achilles Tatius, 2.15.

of the Delphic Amphictyony, of which they were a member. This area was of great significance in Greek tradition, arguably the one to which the toponym 'Hellas' originally applied.<sup>55</sup> Before they arrived at the Malian Gulf, the Aenianes were believed to have undertaken a long migration, from their original home, in the 'Dorion Plain' in Thessaly, via Molossia in North-West Greece, and Cirrha in the area of Delphi. According to Plutarch they still sent a regular sacred delegation to Cassiopaea where they had once lived.<sup>56</sup>

It has been noticed that the Aenianian *theōria* in the *Aithiopika* stands in a clear intertextual relationship with Philostratus' Thessalian *theōria*. Just as in *Heroicus* Thessaly sends a *theōria* to honour Achilles, so in the *Aithiopika* one Thessalian state, Aenis, sends a *theōria* to honour the son of Achilles.<sup>57</sup> Heliodorus' Aenianians also perform both a *thusia* and an *enagismos* though, following normal custom, they do it for two different deities: *thusia* for Apollo and *enagismos* for Neoptolemus; just as Philostratus includes a diachronic narrative which explains why the Thessalian pilgrimage no longer takes place, so Heliodorus' narrative explains why the Aenianians no longer send a pilgrimage to Delphi. And the hymn that Heliodorus' Aenianians sing shows similarities to the hymn in *Heroicus*.<sup>58</sup>

The date of Heliodorus' novel is uncertain, but it seems likely to have been composed at least a little after Philostratus',<sup>59</sup> and if that is right, then it would follow that Heliodorus has borrowed from *Heroicus* the image of a grand *theōria* in honour of an Aeacid from the general area of Thessaly, and by combining this with the 'lovers-meet-on-a-pilgrimage' *topos* has constructed the rich and multilayered narrative of the Delphi episode. We can make a good guess about why he chose the *Heroicus* as a model. Philostratus presents Achilles as an icon of the Greek heroic past, and a benchmark for the aspirations of Greek culture. For Apollonius of Tyana, the lapsed pilgrimage to the Achilleion thus becomes a symbol of how the Greeks had let their traditions slide. This was precisely the background that Heliodorus desired for his hero, to create the image of an authentic and unspoilt strand of Greek ethnicity which would balance Charicleia's

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Hall (2002) 151–2 and 169. <sup>56</sup> *Qu. Gr.* 26, 297bd.

<sup>57</sup> Morgan (1989a) notes that the description of Theagenes in the *Aithiopika* shows similarities to the description of Achilles in *Heroicus*. Morgan (1989b) 408, n. 75.

<sup>58</sup> Both start with an invocation of Thetis, and in both the first line is identical to the last. Bowie 1989 228–9 has a good discussion of the relationship between the two poems. The Aenianian poem, as Ewen Bowie pointed out to me, is in stichic pentameters, a feature which recalls the dedicatory epigram from Aenis attributed to Heracles, preserved in Ps. Aristotle, *On marvellous things heard* c. 133, 843b15–844a5 (see Huxley (1967)). On the poem, see also Hilton (2003).

<sup>59</sup> Bowie (1989); Bowie in OCD s.v. Heliodorus; Lightfoot (1988).

thoroughly un-Greek, but equally noble, pedigree. But where Philostratus wrote rather vaguely about 'Thessalians', Heliodorus chose for his hero's homeland the highly specific but highly obscure territory of Aenis: partly, perhaps, just as a good way of showing off his learning and his control of the backwaters of Greek ethnography, partly – as Tim Whitmarsh has argued – because he wants to create a disconcerting contrast between the nobility of his hero and his obscure homeland.<sup>60</sup>

Here, as in the case of the *theōria* to Achilles, the issue of historicity arises. If the Heliodorus' Aenianes are to be explained as a literary response to, and a sophisticated development of, themes in *Heroicus*, then perhaps we should not look for any real religious traditions behind them. On the other hand, we know that Aenis had a religious connection with Delphi by virtue of its membership of the Amphictyony and that the idea that the Aenianian aristocracy were descended from an Aeacid mother could be traced to Homer. And we have also to take account of the independently attested tradition that the Aenianes had once lived in North-West Greece, in the area of Molossia and Cassiopaea:<sup>61</sup> since Molossia is also where Neoptolemus is supposed to have lived after his return from Troy, it seems likely that, whether or not the Aenianes had ever lived in the West, the tradition that they did is related in some way to their perceived interest in Neoptolemus. This would be reason to refrain from jumping to the conclusion that Heliodorus' Aenianian *theōria* is wholly invented.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Whitmarsh (1998).

<sup>61</sup> *Qu. Gr.* 13 (293f.: Molossia) and *Qu. Gr.* 26 (297b–d: Cassiopiaia); discussed in Halliday (1928), *s. v.*; Woodbury (1979); Robertson (1980); Sakellariou (1990).

<sup>62</sup> That Heliodorus' Aenianes reflect history is argued by Woodbury (1979) and Suarez de la Torre (1997).





*Gymnasticus*



# *Training athletes and interpreting the past in Philostratus' *Gymnasticus**

Jason König

## INTRODUCTION: PHILOSTRATUS' *GYMNASTICUS* AND THE ATHLETICS OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The human body, and especially the male, athletic body, was an object of specialised care in the Roman empire (as it had been for hundreds of years before), care which was masked by competition between rival specialisms. On the one hand, educational experts of many sorts wielded their influence over the bodies of young men of the elite in the *gymnasion*, teaching them how to perform in competition, and how to carry themselves in life. On the other, medical men taught the best ways of caring for the body, for the achievement of physical, and sometimes philosophical, well-being. Philostratus' *Gymnasticus* – a defence of the art of the athletic trainer – is as near as we get to a full instruction book for specialists in the first, athletic, type of care.<sup>1</sup> It is also interested, however, in constructing a discipline which to some extent unifies these two spheres, combining athletic and physiological expertise. In this sense it is in line with the use of the word *gymnastēs* (trainer), as far back as Plato, to describe men whose knowledge of bodies was on a more theoretical, medical plane than the *paidotribai* who did most of the practical instruction in the *gymnasion*.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a longer discussion of *Gymnasticus*, see König (2005) 301–44; some of the material in this chapter is adapted from there, see also König (2007b). I assume, following de Lannoy (1997), esp. 2, 104–110 (and also Flinterman (1995) 5–14 and others), that the author of *Gymnasticus* is the same as the author of *Lives of the sophists* (VS), *Life of Apollonius* (VA) and *Nero*, and probably also of *Heroicus* and the first *Imagines*. The repeated interest in athletic subject matter which all of these works share (see de Lannoy (1997) 2, 407–8), is one convincing argument for common authorship (or at the very least for deliberate correspondence between the work of different authors, especially between *Gymnasticus* and *Heroicus*, whose subject matter is often strikingly close). Certainty about that is impossible, however, and I have therefore aimed for a reading of *Gymnasticus* which is valid independently of any precise connections with other Philostratean texts, which I will discuss towards the end of this chapter. The precise date of *Gymnasticus* is unclear, but it is likely to have been written in the AD 220s or 230s; for a summary of debate, see de Lannoy (1997) 2, 405–7; Müller (1995) 317.

<sup>2</sup> See Jüthner (1909) 3–8.

Philostratus also makes a bolder connection, I will argue, in juxtaposing analysis of the human body with analysis of developments in athletic history as they are reflected in contemporary institutions and rituals. Both topics are subjected similarly to his searching and entertaining interpretative gaze. He attempts a rehabilitation of the art of the *gymnastēs* against the criticisms of men like Galen, the dominating voice of second-century AD medicine. That rehabilitation is founded on the idea that *gymnastikē* (the art of training) can compete with the most prestigious intellectual disciplines; that it requires, in its most developed form, precisely the skills of logical analysis and ingenious presentation which are central to rhetorical expertise, and central to gaining and displaying understanding of one's own culture and heritage. Analysing the athletic body, seeing beneath the surface of it, requires – at least in the world of the Philostratean training-ground – many of the same techniques as analysing the Greek past, through the traces it leaves in the present.

Philostratus' ingenious re-imagining of the art of athletic training in *Gymnasticus* can reveal a great deal about the controversies surrounding educational practice in the Roman empire. Traditional Greek culture, and the elite, Hellenic identity which was so closely founded upon it in this period, were constantly contested, despite the impression of stability and self-evident legitimacy which so many individuals attached to their own interpretations of these things.<sup>3</sup> The dominance of rhetoric and philosophy as the most important elements of elite education was far from secure, despite the contrary impression we often receive from surviving literary and rhetorical texts from the period.<sup>4</sup> For example, Galen's vitriolic attacks on athletic trainers, who fall so far short of his own discipline of philosophical medicine, seem at first sight a world away from the extravagant praise given to athletes and their educators in the many thousands of inscriptions which

<sup>3</sup> For examples of work on this period which emphasise that see, among other examples, Goldhill (2001); Whitmarsh (2001a); König (2005) 8–20. Gleason (1995) is particularly good at revealing the ways in which Polemo and Favorinus constantly struggle against negative representations through their competition for the same prestigious cultural position.

<sup>4</sup> Both Gleason (1995) (e.g. 159) and Schmitz (1997) (e.g. 108–12 in his discussion of elite competition in schools and festivals) seem to me to under-estimate the extent to which physical education and competition still mattered for the elite of the Greek East. In particular, the prominence of physiognomy in *Gymnasticus* serves as a reminder that the skills which underpinned Polemo's sophistic persona, as Gleason presents it, were themselves open to applications in which Polemo would have shown little interest; my emphasis on athletic education, I hope, also broadens Gleason's focus on the way in which identity was experienced and performed in a highly physical way through shaping and display of the body.

survive from all over the Greek East.<sup>5</sup> Both of these positions, however, represent (equally confident but diametrically opposed) reactions to the same institutional heritage. Philostratus, in turn, contests and rewrites the Galenic vision of cultural ideals and disciplinary hierarchies, although he does so in a relatively conciliatory way which makes it clear that his own vision is founded on many of the same principles as Galen's, in much the same way as Galen himself constantly sifts through and rewrites his philosophical and medical heritage.

*Gymnasticus* thus participates in contests over proper interpretation of the Hellenic heritage, via controversies about what is the best way to care for the male body. Such controversies required individuals to engage in the process of transforming and refashioning the traditions of the Greek past, while at the same time signalling their close attachment to those traditions. Philostratus, I will argue, is unusually self-conscious about the process of reshaping and reinterpreting tradition. Often, for example, he seems to be offering a variety of explanations for individual problems and puzzles in order to prompt his readers to participate in interpretation, to respond with their own speculations, in a way which implies that there is no single correct or authoritative explanation for many of the features of the athletic tradition he discusses. In the process, he also implies that these ingenious skills of argumentation can be learned. At the same time, however, that vision is in tension with a sense that these are restricted skills, just as Galen's medical skills, for all his interest in prompting the qualified reader to self-learning,<sup>6</sup> are available in full only to those readers who can meet his very stringent demands. The ignorant majority is vehemently excluded. In *Gymnasticus*, that restriction is signalled not least by the fact that there is very little sense of the athlete himself being empowered to self-analysis within the scheme Philostratus sets up. The athletic body is always a passive one, the object of analysis rather than the active subject. There is little mention of the athlete speaking or responding. Philostratus himself, and his ideal trainer, in contrast with the many who follow those modern, degenerate forms of the art which Philostratus sets out to correct, are the only ones who can do the job, who can see how the method he teaches can be applied to everything, to the physical body as much as to the traces of history. Analysis of athletes is the first step in transformation of them, just as analysis of the past can transform it, recreate it for the

<sup>5</sup> See Robert (1984) for a synoptic picture of epigraphical evidence for athletic festivals within the Roman empire, along with the huge number of more specific studies elsewhere in his work; cf. van Nijf (2001); König (2005); Newby (2005).

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., *Thrasyloulos* 4.

present. Philostratus himself draws attention to those processes and to that similarity. In doing so, he also portrays those transformative skills of *paideia* as ones which bestow great authority, over individuals as over the past.<sup>7</sup>

Philostratus is also, however, constantly aware of the danger of using these techniques of Hellenic analysis wrongly, irresponsibly, or superficially. In that, he is in line with a tendency among many of the Greek writers of the first–third centuries AD to be interested in the difficulties and challenges of maintaining a constant Hellenic front, of living up to the standards of their Hellenic heritage. The concept of his own project as something which delves into the central places of Greek culture resurfaces repeatedly. For example, he takes Olympia, the original and most prestigious gathering place for the Greek world, as his main source for athletic history, and on several occasions compares his ideal trainers with the *hell-ānodikai*, the Olympic arbiters of Greek identity.<sup>8</sup> This Hellenic heritage is to be interpreted flexibly, but always responsibly. The true *gymnastēs*, for Philostratus, must keep in training.

The invitation to compare historical and physiognomical analysis is signalled immediately in the text's structuring.<sup>9</sup> The opening of the work (paragraphs 1–2) asserts the prestigious position held by the trainer's art (*gymnastikē*) within the hierarchy of professional skills. We might expect, following on from this, an involved analysis of those categories, and a robust presentation of the technical complexities on which *gymnastikē* relies. Philostratus, however, launches at once (paragraphs 3–19) into a long account of the origins of the various athletic events, which for the most part have no close connection with techniques of training. Only then does the figure of the trainer return to the limelight. The rest of the work (paragraphs 20–58) focuses on the skills required by the *gymnastēs*, presenting famous examples of encouragement given by trainers to their athletes, and illustrating – often very entertainingly – some of the techniques of physiognomical analysis required for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of aspiring competitors. The initial foray into athletic history looks at first sight like

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Billault (1993) 156–7 and 161 on the conspicuous and authoritative position of the author within the text.

<sup>8</sup> *Gymnasticus* 18 (discussed further below), 25 and 54. A specific interest in the boundaries of Hellenism is also consistent with his concerns in other works, as I will argue further below: see, e.g., Swain (1996) 380–400; Swain (1999) on *VA* and Hellenism within the early third century AD; Whitmarsh (1999) on *Nero*.

<sup>9</sup> Philostratus' *Gymnasticus* is cited from Jüthner (1909), who also provides the most detailed available commentary (for less detailed comment, see Coretta (1995)). I have used Jüthner's numbering of the text, but have combined that with page and line numbers from volume 2 of Kayser (1870–1), where that has seemed necessary for clarity.

an own goal for Philostratus, a move which is only likely to increase the suspicion that we are dealing with a discipline which cannot hold its own against Galen's heavyweight philosophical medicine. Many modern commentators on *Gymnasticus* have certainly felt that to be the case, no doubt influenced by a tendency to under-value athletic 'antiquarianism', without acknowledging the prestige attached to the project of anchoring contemporary festival life within a long historical framework. I want to suggest here, by contrast, that Philostratus' juxtaposition of the physical and the historical is a deliberate and bold attempt to give *gymnastike* a central space within the contours of contemporary *paideia*, as something which draws on and exemplifies processes on which all educated men must rely. It also suggests, perhaps more importantly, that Philostratus' own transformative skills of cultural analysis have a kind of universal application, signalled by their capacity to inspire a discipline whose value is far from self-evident, a discipline which in the world of the second and third centuries AD attracted widespread devotion, but nevertheless still hovered on the edges of social and intellectual prestige.

My aim is thus partly to suggest that *Gymnasticus* is a work of much greater sophistication than has usually been acknowledged. It has often been criticised as a 'sophistic' text, a playful reworking of a traditional 'textbook' topic, linked with rhetorical traditions of adoxography, the exercise of defending activities which cannot easily be defended.<sup>10</sup> Certainly this kind of exercise is one which resurfaces frequently in the literature of this period. However, it is usually very far from being a sterile, purely 'rhetorical' exercise. Lucian's *De Saltatione* and *De Parasito* are good examples, defences of pantomime dancing and parasitism, respectively.<sup>11</sup> Both of these works are entertainingly paradoxical, but Lucian also uses them, characteristically, to challenge the assumptions which govern conventional hierarchies of the sort on which Galen and others rely, reflecting humorously on the internal contradictions of classical tradition. How are we to judge the respectability of any single discipline? Can we really trust what the self-proclaimed cultural arbiters of Hellenism tell us, when we discover that conventional techniques of rhetorical praise can be applied so fluently to conventionally derided arts like these?

*Gymnasticus* has also been denigrated as an incoherent, 'encyclopedic' piece of writing.<sup>12</sup> Even Alain Billault, who attempts a rehabilitation of *Gymnasticus*, seems unable to escape from a terminology of

<sup>10</sup> See, e.g., Jüthner (1909) 97–107; Anderson (1986) 269; Müller (1995) 328.

<sup>11</sup> Jüthner (1909) 98–100 discusses resemblances between *Gymnasticus* and Lucian's *De Saltatione*.

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., Reardon (1971) 195–8.



'encyclopaedism'.<sup>13</sup> Such assessments suffer from under-estimating the central importance to contemporary culture of the institution Philostratus describes. They also suffer, I will argue, from a misunderstanding of the fundamentally rhetorical character of much ancient scientific writing, and of the prestigious role played by creative compilation of knowledge within imperial literature.<sup>14</sup> More specifically, all of them fail to show that there are very strong thematic links between the many different sections of the work. The elements of ingenuity which resurface throughout *Gymnasticus*, and which others have seen as signs of the author's lack of serious investment in the things he defends, are in fact an important part of his justification of it, and the humour of the work plays a very deliberate role, as a central element in the sophisticated styles of analysis and display Philostratus illustrates for us.

Where *Gymnasticus* has received more attention is from scholars interested in reconstructing the realities of ancient athletic practice. Many of these studies have been reluctant, however, to situate the athletic activity of the Roman empire within its wider cultural context, and have failed to take account of the rhetorical strategies of this particular work.<sup>15</sup> This is not to say that *Gymnasticus* has no value for reconstructions of athletic practice; rather that its value will be limited if one does not take into account the way in which Philostratus' work, along with other literary representations of athletic activity in this period, carries with it much wider agendas than the 'faithful' reflection of what actually happened in the gymnasium and the stadium. Many scholars have agonised about whether *Gymnasticus* is meant to be 'useful', whether it is addressed to 'real' athletic trainers, but if we take the work on its own terms that question is bound to seem less important. Clearly it is not meant simply as a systematic manual of instruction (as may be the case with the wrestling manual which survives

<sup>13</sup> Esp. Billault (1993) 161–2.

<sup>14</sup> See esp. König and Whitmarsh (2007) on the compilatory texts of the Roman empire; also Barton (1994) esp. 133–68 on Galen in the context of Roman empire medical writing; she emphasises, among other things, the high value attached to signalling one's participation in elite literary culture within 'scientific' writing (143–7); cf. *ibid.* 95–131 (also Gleason (1995) esp. 21–54) on physiognomical analysis, which occupies a great deal of space within *Gymnasticus*. More generally, see Lloyd (1996), who uses comparative evidence, among other things, to throw into relief the agonistic nature of ancient Greek scientific writing, although he also emphasises in 1–19, and throughout, the need for constant qualification of that broad characterisation.

<sup>15</sup> So much so that the only translations of this text into English (in athletic sourcebooks by Robinson (1955) 212–32 and Sweet (1987) 212–30) are incomplete: Robinson even omits the opening paragraph of the work. *Gymnasticus* has often been mined for evidence with no acknowledgement of its wider purpose. Golden (1998) 48–50 recognises its limitations as a reliable source, but does not attempt a coherent exposition of it. Harris (1972) gives up in exasperation, and accuses Philostratus of including material which is 'silly' (24) and 'feeble' (33); cf. Harris (1964) 26.

in one first- or second-century AD papyrus fragment),<sup>16</sup> but in a sense that is exactly the point, since the cultured trainer (*gymnastēs*), for Philostratus, must be able to see very far beyond the technical details of the more lowly athletics teacher (*paidotribēs*).

It is ultimately difficult, in other words, to know how much of the technical detail of this work corresponded with actual practice (although much of what Philostratus says can be confirmed or contradicted through other sources), or how much 'personal' experience Philostratus had of athletics, and answering those questions will not be my main concern here. I will focus instead on the wider aims and effects of *Gymnasticus*, and on the variety of ways in which this text explores and asserts the broad cultural significance of the activities and skills and stories it presents. Philostratus offers us – with the humour and ingenuity which his own rhetorical skills demand – a paradoxical picture of the trainer as a figure who stands as an iconic representative not only of Greek civic, agonistic practice, but also of Greek *paideia*. As such, the Philostratean *gymnastēs* is quite deliberately at one remove from commonly perceived realities, quite deliberately offered to us as a figure who embodies surprising depths and surprising connections.

#### PHILOSTRATUS AND GALEN

Several of Galen's many works are primarily concerned with the criticism of athletic trainers. I discuss them here partly to illustrate some of the currents of criticism which run through Greek literary tradition, and to which Philostratus is responding.<sup>17</sup> Galen aligns himself with Hippocrates,

<sup>16</sup> *P. Oxy.* 3.466; see Jüthner (1909) 26–30; Poliakoff (1986) 161–72; Poliakoff (1987) 51–3.

<sup>17</sup> For an account of some of the traditions of Greek athletic writing to which Philostratus responds, see Jüthner (1909) 3–131, who focuses especially on medical, philosophical and historiographical works. Müller (1995) esp. 296–330, and König (2005) discuss some of the most important imperial literary texts on athletics, with their highly varied valuations of athletic activity. For a programmatically ambivalent representation of athletics from roughly the same period, which draws on many of the same classical sources, see Lucian's *Anacharsis*, discussed by Branham (1989) 81–104 and König (2005) 80–66. Branham analyses well the way in which Lucian humorously juxtaposes the positive and negative assessments of athletics which are enshrined in Greek tradition, although he under-emphasises the degree to which this work acts as a comment on contemporary athletic practice. Many writers from the first and second centuries are interested in exploring the significance of the relationship between Greek traditions of criticism and approval on the one hand, and stereotypically Roman opinions about athletics on the other (e.g. about the uselessness of athletics for warfare, the association of athletics with Greek effeminacy): see König (2005) 205–12. There is no particular sign that Philostratus has stereotypically Roman opinions specifically in mind in *Gymnasticus*, but his interest in (for example) the link between military and athletic activity may owe something to their prominence in texts from the previous century: see, among many other examples, Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 40, Juv. 3.68, Luc. 7.270–2, all of which exploit but also question stereotypes of Roman anti-athletic sentiment (cf. Rawson (1992) 4–7).

Plato and Euripides, for example, all of whom famously attack athletics, although it is clear that Galen's appropriation of their opinions is often distorting and opportunistic. I also quote Galen, however, because it is possible that Philostratus has his work specifically in mind at many stages in *Gymnasticus*, and that he envisages his own text as an answer to Galen's attacks. There are few precise verbal parallels, but repeated similarities of argument, I will suggest, make a deliberate connection highly likely.<sup>18</sup>

The most sustained criticisms of athletics in the work of Galen come in his *Protrepticus* (*Exhortation to study the arts*)<sup>19</sup> and in his *Thrasyloulos* (*On whether healthiness is a part of medicine or gymnastics*).<sup>20</sup> In both, he is worried about the prestige of athletics, and the challenge it might pose to his own profession of philosophical medicine, separating himself off from fraudulent practitioners of the fake *technē* (art) of *gymnastikē*. The first half of *Protrepticus* is taken up with praise of the followers of Hermes, those who devote themselves to the true *technai* (arts) the best of which, of course, is medicine (*iatrikē*). In the second half, Galen deals by contrast with the false *technai*, representing athletic training, with extraordinary vehemence, as the most dangerous threat to modern youth, and drawing on classical sources to emphasise its lack of usefulness, and the way in which it drags man to the level of an animal, depriving him of the use of reason.<sup>21</sup>

*Thrasyloulos*, a more technical work, involves a complex categorisation of the different *technai*, whereby Galen demonstrates that *gymnastikē* occupies only the tiniest subdivision of the art of *iatrikē*. He represents the trainers as profoundly uneducated, even, sometimes, as profoundly un-Greek. In the closing paragraphs of the work, for example, he describes the absurd intervention of an athletic trainer in public debate, an incident introduced by denunciation of the whole profession. He emphasises the fact that the trainers' claim to represent Hellenic tradition, which they make so stridently, as we hear elsewhere, is only a cover for dangerous ignorance and barbarism:

<sup>18</sup> In this, I argue for a more direct link than Jüthner (1909) 118–20, who claims that Philostratus' knowledge of medical texts is probably not direct, but rather mediated through the treatises of trainers (see below, n. 58 for a different interpretation of one of his main pieces of evidence). Brophy and Brophy (1989) point to a number of signs that Philostratus is parodying Galen closely, although the parallels they identify are often less conclusive than they seem to think, and they certainly go too far in assuming that Galen and Philostratus were 'friendly rivals at court' (157).

<sup>19</sup> K1.1–39. Galen's *Protrepticus* is cited from Boudon (2000), his *Thrasyloulos* from Marquardt, Müller and Helmreich (1884–93). Quotations from both texts are also numbered by volume and page number from Kühn (1821–33) [= K], where that has seemed necessary for clarity. For English translation of both texts, see Singer (1997).

<sup>20</sup> K5.806–98. <sup>21</sup> See Boudon (2000) 2–42 for introductory analysis of *Protrepticus*.

Nevertheless the most unfortunate of them, all the ones who have never won anything, immediately start to call themselves trainers, and then they begin screeching, just like pigs, in a discordant and barbarous voice. (*Thrasymboulos* 46 [K5.894])<sup>22</sup>

Despite Galen's insistent disparagement of athletic training, however, he does find positive uses for physical exercise elsewhere, most notably (and humorously) in his work *On exercise with the small ball*.<sup>23</sup> Even the most anti-athletic and vehemently philosophical of authors, it seems, is interested in finding ways of appropriating physical training to his own expertise. In this, he actually has a great deal in common with Philostratus, in the sense that both of them reshape athletics in order to make it compatible with other techniques which they value highly. They also share an interest in seeing beneath the surface of the body, getting to the truth behind superficial appearance.<sup>24</sup> Galen portrays his own medical skill as the embodiment of physical training and analysis in its most refined form, a kind of philosophical, elevated equivalent of the debased skills of the trainer, especially in *Protrepticus*, where athletic vices are systematically contrasted with the virtues the good *technai* bring. Moreover, as Rebecca Flemming has suggested, Galen's medical knowledge is represented as an essentially masculine expertise, and the active readers he envisages are male readers.<sup>25</sup> That may be one additional reason why the false manliness of athletes and their trainers plays such a central role in Galen's self-representation, as a counter-image to his own professional skills.

Philostratus is clearly writing with many of the same traditions and sources as Galen in mind, although interpreting them very differently. I will focus here especially on their divergent interpretations of Plato, and on the similarities and differences between their categorisations of the different arts, with reference especially to two passages (*Gymnasticus* 1–2 and 14–15) which play a conspicuous role in structuring Philostratus' argument. One of Philostratus' characteristic strategies is to sidestep Galenic criticisms by emphasising the fact that they share many of the same assumptions, but that Galen and/or others have simply misapplied them.

<sup>22</sup> ἀλλ' ὁμως οἱ τοῦτων ἀτυχέστατοι καὶ μηδεπώποτε νικήσαντες ἐξαίφνης ἑαυτοὺς ὀνομάζουσι γυμναστές, εἰτ' οἷμαι καὶ κεκράγασι· οὐδὲν ἥττον τῶν συνῶν ἐκμελεῖ καὶ βαρβάρῳ φωνῇ.

<sup>23</sup> K5.899–910; cf. *De Sanitate Tuenda* book 2 [K6.81–163] for a long account of the medical usefulness of gymnastic exercises. Galen's work, this text especially, was among the strongest influences on the growth in sporting activity which took place in England within the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: see Brailsford (1969) 15, 18, 165.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Galen's *On prognosis* [K14.599–673], with Barton (1994) esp. 133–43, and the commentary of Nutton (1979); cf. Gleason (1995) esp. 21–54, on Polemo's physiognomical gaze.

<sup>25</sup> See Flemming (2000) esp. 285–7.

*Gymnasticus* opens with the claim that *gymnastikē* is a form of *sophia* (wisdom) equal to any. The passage recalls Galen's *Protrepticus*, and constitutes a very blunt challenge to Galen's categorisation there of good and bad *technai*, including many of the skills Galen had identified as worthy of admiration in *Protrepticus* 5 and 14. The closing paragraph of that work (or at least as much of it as survives)<sup>26</sup> gives us the following classification:

Given that there is a distinction between two different types of art (*technē*) – some of them are rational and highly respected, whereas others are contemptible, and centred around bodily labour, in other words the ones we refer to as banausic or manual – it is better to take up one of the first category . . . In the first category are medicine, rhetoric, music, geometry, arithmetic, logic, astronomy, grammar and law; and you can also add sculpting and drawing if you wish. (*Protrepticus* 14)<sup>27</sup>

The best of all, Galen tells us finally, is medicine. Athletic training, meanwhile, has already been ejected from the categorisation altogether, counted along with acrobatics and tight-rope walking as a bad art (κακοτεχνία) (*Protrepticus* 9).

Philostratus begins his work in similar vein, identifying a number of *sophiai*. He generously includes *iatrikē*, as if he is trying to avoid the impression of disagreeing with Galen outright, but nevertheless conspicuously lists it as separate from philosophy:

Let us consider the following things as examples of wisdom – things like poetry and speaking artfully and undertaking poetry and music and geometry (ποιητικῆς τε ἀσπασθαι καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ γεωμετρίας), and even astronomy, as long as you don't overdo it (ὀπόση μὴ περιττή), and also the art of organizing armies, and even things like the following (καὶ ἔτι τὰ τοιαῦτα): the whole of medicine and painting and modelling, and all types of sculpting and gem-cutting and metal-engraving. (*Gymnasticus* 1 [261.1–7])<sup>28</sup>

The exclusion of astronomy in its more extreme forms advertises the caution and discrimination with which Philostratus has compiled his list. It also introduces immediately the idea that disciplines which make the grade

<sup>26</sup> See Boudon (2000) 146 on the incomplete nature of the surviving text.

<sup>27</sup> Ἀλλὰ διττῆς οὐσῆς διαφορᾶς τῆς πρώτης ἐν ταῖς τέχναις – ἐνταῖς μὲν γὰρ αὐτῶν λογικαὶ τ' εἰσι καὶ σεμναί, τινὲς δ' εὐκαταφρόνητοι καὶ διὰ τῶν τοῦ σώματος πόνων, ὧς δὴ βαναύσους τε καὶ χειρωνακτικὰς ὀνομάζουσιν – ἀμεινον ἂν εἴη τοῦ προτέρου γένους τῶν τεχνῶν μετέρχεσθαι τινα. . . εἰσι δ' ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου γένους ἱατρικὴ τε καὶ ῥητορικὴ καὶ μουσικὴ, γεωμετρία τε καὶ ἀριθμητικὴ καὶ λογιστικὴ, καὶ ἀστρονομία καὶ γραμματικὴ καὶ νομικὴ. πρόσθε δ', εἰ βούλει, ταύταις πλάστικὴν τε καὶ γραφικὴν. . .

<sup>28</sup> Σοφίαν ἡγώμεθα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα μὲν ὅσον φιλοσοφῆσαι καὶ εἰπεῖν ξὺν τέχνῃ παιητικῆς τε ἀσπασθαι καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ γεωμετρίας καὶ νῆ Δί' ἀστρονομίας, ὀπόση μὴ περιττή, σοφία δὲ καὶ τὸ κοσμησάι στρατιάν καὶ ἔτι τὰ τοιαῦτα: ἱατρικὴ πᾶσα καὶ ζωγραφία καὶ πλάσται καὶ ἀγαλμάτων εἶδη καὶ κοῖλοι λίθοι καὶ κοῖλος σίδηρος.

in their ideal form will not always be acceptable when they are misapplied, as he suggests *gymnastikē* has been in its degenerate modern incarnations. He includes the arts of painting and sculpting in a more comprehensive form than Galen does, and thus signals a readiness to expand the canon of *technai* beyond Galen's narrow conception. He imitates Galen's grudging tone in his list of these more doubtful arts, signalled by the word ἔτι ('even things like the following'), but ironically includes medicine among them.

Philostratus then lists a number of manual trades (βόναυσοι), which cannot be dignified with the name of *sophia*, before finally categorising *gymnastikē*:

I consider *gymnastikē* a form of *sophia*, and one which is inferior to none of the other arts (*technai*), so much so that treatises (ὑπομνήματα) have been composed on the subject for the benefit of those who may wish to take up training. (1 [261.13–15])<sup>29</sup>

The word 'treatises' (ὑπομνήματα) is often applied to the kind of technical works Galen himself produced in such huge numbers. The phrase also reminds us of the many athletic treatises which seem to have preceded Philostratus' own.<sup>30</sup> Philostratus attempts to set *Gymnasticus* within a long tradition of philosophically respectable composition, while also perhaps reminding us (if we apply the meaning 'monuments' or 'memorials') of the role his own work plays in commemorating and preserving the traditions of the past.

Philostratus also anchors his treatise in philosophical precedent in this opening passage, not least by his use of the phrase ποιητικῆς τε ἀψασθαι καὶ μουσικῆς καὶ γεωμετρίας, which recalls the language of Plato's *Republic* book 3 (411c). There, Socrates advocates a balanced education, saying that a man who toils hard at athletics and eats luxuriously and takes no notice of music and philosophy (μουσικῆς δὲ καὶ φιλοσοφίας μὴ ἀπαιτῆται) at first becomes very fit and proud, but later loses all his love of knowledge. The reference signals Philostratus' knowledge of Plato, and hints at an alignment of Philostratus' own opinions with Plato's. More specifically, it reinforces Philostratus' insistence that he is not condoning the practice of athletics to excess, and that he is not under any obligation to defend those who practise athletics wrongly – immoderately and unphilosophically. This book of the *Republic*, along with other Platonic passages, had been appropriated opportunistically by Galen as a central plank of his own criticism of athletic

<sup>29</sup> περὶ δὲ γυμναστικῆς, σοφίαν λέγομεν οὐδεμιᾶς ἐλάττω τέχνης, ὥστε εἰς ὑπομνήματα ξυνθεῖναι τοῖς βουλομένοις γυμνάζειν.

<sup>30</sup> See Jüthner (1909) 116–18.

training.<sup>31</sup> Philostratus seems to be correcting Galen's misinterpretation of Plato here, pointing out that Plato does not even come close to condemning athletics outright. He sidesteps many of the criticisms of Galen and others, through the implication that any problems associated with *gymnastikē* are due simply to (un-Platonic) misuse of it by modern practitioners. Each of these writers, then, appropriates Platonic opinion to validate his own agenda.<sup>32</sup>

There is, of course, a great deal of other evidence which backs up Philostratus' claims for training as a prestigious activity, and one which may have been much closer to medicine in content and social status than Galen is willing to admit.<sup>33</sup> Trainers were often well paid and publicly honoured, both individually and within inscriptions primarily focused on praising athletes.<sup>34</sup> There is evidence for trainers playing prominent roles in public life, and holding high positions within powerful athletic guilds, where they must often have benefited from well-developed rhetorical skills.<sup>35</sup> Trainers could also draw on philosophical justifications of their profession.<sup>36</sup> More generally speaking there is a great deal of epigraphical evidence – quite apart from the indications we find in literary texts such as Philostratus' own – that literary or philosophical learning and athletic interests were

<sup>31</sup> For example at *Thrasyloulos* 36 [Ks.874–6], where he quotes Pl. *R.* 3.407b–c and 410b, obscuring their full contexts, as examples of philosophical condemnation of training; cf. *Thrasyloulos* 47 [Ks.898]; *On good condition* K4.753.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Müller (1995) 324–6 on other Platonic allusions in *Gymnasticus*.

<sup>33</sup> For a longer discussion of the prestige of training in the Roman period, see König (2005) 301–15.

<sup>34</sup> See Golden (1998) 83–4 on the Pindaric tradition of praising athletic trainers; 160 on high rewards for trainers (although he draws on Classical evidence only). See Robert (1974) for examples of trainers honoured in inscriptions, one of which uses the word *technē* for the activity of the *epistatēs* (another word for trainer) (519–20); for trainers honoured with athletes, see *ibid.* 520–3, and Robert (1937) 139; cf. Perpillou-Thomas (1995) 232 for trainers (described most often as *alciptēs*, but in one case as *gymnastēs*) named with athletes in Egyptian papyri; for trainers involved in honouring athletes, see Robert (1974) 525–7 and Robert (1968) 406–7; on epitaphs for trainers, see Bernard (1960), Tacuber (1993); on training funded by the city, see Robert (1967) 27–32.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., van Nijf (1997) 59, n. 144 on the tomb of a *bouleutēs* who also describes himself as a *paidotribēs* (although van Nijf is keen to point out that the man is probably only a 'marginal' councillor, and therefore not of strikingly high social status); for an *alciptēs* representing a guild in negotiations with M. Antonius, see Robert (1949) 122 on *PLond.* 137, translated in Müller (1991) 167; cf. Robert (1967) 28–32 for a Hellenistic decree, mentioned also in n. 34, which records a trainer speaking in a city assembly, asking for money to train a star pupil. The example of speeches to athletes recorded in the rhetorical treatises of Pseudo-Dionysius suggests one specific context which may have required rhetorical expertise, although these speeches are not said to be the province of trainers specifically: Ps-Dionysius' *Ars Rhetorica*, speeches 1 and 7 (probably written in the fourth or fifth century AD; translated with notes by Russell and Wilson (1981) 362–81).

<sup>36</sup> E.g. *Ar. Pol.* 1338b offers explicit, though cautious, approval of the *gymnastēs* and the *paidotribēs* as important contributors to the education of the young.

often represented as compatible with each other, and equally important for the construction of a male, upper-class identity.<sup>37</sup>

Often, moreover, trainers and doctors were directly associated with each other. There were famous examples of men who had combined both careers, not least Herodicus of Megara, who influenced Galen's hero Hippocrates.<sup>38</sup> Doctors were also linked with trainers and with festival culture in the day-to-day city life of the Greek East, as we glimpse it through the epigraphical record. We hear, for example, of doctors lecturing in *gymnasia*,<sup>39</sup> or listed among the instructors honoured in end-of-year ephebic lists,<sup>40</sup> and attending in an official capacity at public festivals.<sup>42</sup> Louis Robert gives an example of an inscription from Lydia, set up in honour of a young man who has died. It contains a long list of the young man's admirers, including, towards the end, a doctor and a trainer:

Ἀντωνεῖνος ὁ ἐπιστάτης, Τατιανὸς ὁ ἰατρός τὸν μαθητὴν (ἐτίμησαν).<sup>43</sup>

Antoninus the trainer and Tatianos the doctor honour their pupil.

This juxtaposition does not necessarily imply equality between these two instructors, but it does conjure up an idealised commemorative image of shared responsibility for a bright pupil, as if his education had attained a degree of completeness through the combination of their complementary disciplines.

Still others are honoured for funding local festivals. Heraclitus of Rhodiapolis, for example, was a prolific medical writer of the second century AD. One surviving inscription, from a statue base set up in his home town, praises him in language closely reminiscent of the inscribed boasts of athletes and musicians. He is honoured, for example, as:

<sup>37</sup> See, e.g., Hall and Milner (1994) 26–30; van Nijf (1999) 183–4, 188–93.

<sup>38</sup> See, e.g., Jüthner (1909) 9–16; Harris (1964) 178; however, Pl. R. 3.406a–b is very critical of Herodicus' combination of the two professions; for other examples of the harmonisation of medicine and philosophy within philosophical texts, see Pl. Cr. 47a–b; Ar. EN 10.9.15 (1180b).

<sup>39</sup> See Robert (1946) 36; Marrou (1965) 281; Kleijwegt (1991) 155–6.

<sup>40</sup> For doctors on ephebic lists, see Jüthner (1909) 4, who refers to IG III 1199, line 36 and 120; line 38; cf. Oliver (1942), no. 37 (pp. 71–4), line 48 for a late third-century Athenian ephebe list; van Nijf (1997) 185 (on IPriene 111, 112 and 118) for doctors and trainers listed with athletes and ephebes on an inscription commemorating the benefaction of festival banquets; Robert (1967) 31, n. 3 on IPriene 111, lines 175–6.

<sup>41</sup> For examples of doctors, many of them very distinguished, involved with athletic guilds, see Forbes (1955) 249; cf. Robert (1950) 25–7 (for the title ἀρχίατρος τοῦ σύμπαντος ξυστοῦ, with lots of examples of doctors and trainers working together).

<sup>42</sup> See Cohen-Haft (1956) 23, n. 71; cf. Robert (1978) on a Hellenistic inscription honouring a doctor who cured *theōroi* sent to Cos for a festival.

<sup>43</sup> Robert (1974) 525–7.



the first of all time (πρῶτον ἀπ' αἰῶνος) to be a doctor and writer, and author of works of both medicine and philosophy . . .<sup>44</sup>

The phrase 'first of all time' (πρῶτον ἀπ' αἰῶνος) is used regularly by agonistic victors, to separate their own achievements from those of their predecessors. The inscription lists the games he has funded in honour of Asclepius in parallel with his medical benefactions, which include free service as a doctor, and donation of his works to the library of his home town and of several others. Heraclitus is very far from the ignorant, false practitioners of debased medicine with whom Galen contrasts his own expertise, in fact he is represented in terms which are closely reminiscent of Galen's own self-portrayal, as one who combines philosophy and medicine. There is evidence, too, for doctors taking part in public contests – for example, in inscriptions which record medical contests at the Great Asclepieia at Ephesus.<sup>45</sup> Evidence like this illustrates the way in which doctors were closely involved with agonistic institutions which lay at the heart of ancient city life, and the way in which they – like men from many other professions – were fundamentally affected by the ideology of competitive self-presentation which ancient athletics both reflected and perpetuated. No doubt this, too, goes some way towards explaining the important role athletic trainers play within Galen's presentation of his own medical ideals. Galen separates himself vigorously from the brash self-promotion of the athletic trainers, but in many ways he also shares their concern with competition, proclaiming his own victory over his rivals in a contest which is much more elevated than the degraded spectacle they devote themselves to. He participates in competitive processes, while also distancing himself from them.

The separation Galen posits between the two professions is thus a highly tendentious one. Of course, none of this evidence necessarily contradicts his criticism of athletics. In a sense, it is precisely this prestigious valuation of training, along with its ability to masquerade successfully as a pseudo-medical art, which worries him. Neither would it be right to suggest that Philostratus' text offers us an unproblematic reflection of the prestige of athletic training, since his vision of *gymnastikē* is a very personal one, based as it is so firmly on rhetorical ingenuity and historical learning.<sup>46</sup>

<sup>44</sup> πρῶτον ἀπ' αἰῶνος ἰατρὸν καὶ συγγραφεὴ καὶ ποιητὴν ἔργων ἱατρικῆς καὶ φιλοσοφίας. . . (TAM II.910, lines 12–14). I am grateful to Ewen Bowie for drawing my attention to this inscription.

<sup>45</sup> E.g. *I Eph.* 1160–71 and 4101 (discussed by Keil (1905) and Barton (1994) 223, n. 73).

<sup>46</sup> This impression is in line with the fact that the term *gymnastēs* is rarely found in inscriptions (*paidorribēs*, *aleiptēs* and *epistatēs* are the usual terms), and seems to have been a category used most often in philosophical writing; cf. above, n. 2, on distinctions between the *gymnastēs* and the *paidorribēs*.

He distances himself from many forms of actual contemporary practice through his deprecation of athletic decline, aligning himself rather with an idealised vision of the profession, just as Galen idealises in ignoring the close real-life links between the two disciplines. What this evidence can give us is an indication of the kinds of contexts Philostratus has in mind when he asks us to imagine training as a *technē* capable of occupying a prestigious position within Greek society and education, benefiting from rhetorical expertise and able to hold its own beside the medical profession; and when he asks us to imagine the art of medicine actually interfering with *gymnastikē* and contributing to its decline.

The opening of *Gymnasticus*, with its vigorous proclamation of a positive view of the athletic trainer's work, is followed immediately by a section of athletic history, to which I will return on p. 267. After that, in 14–15, before focusing on the figure of the trainer in more detail, Philostratus returns again to the problem of how the *technē* of *gymnastikē* should be categorised. This section responds closely to Galen's complex categorisations in *Thrasymboulos*, in particular to Galen's argument that the art of the trainer is only one tiny subdivision of the overarching *technē* of the doctor.<sup>47</sup> Philostratus tells us, for example:

How then should one understand *gymnastikē*? How else should one think of it than as a form of wisdom composed of medicine and of the art of the *paidotribēs*, being more perfect than the latter, and a part of the former? (*Gymnasticus* 14 [268.30–269.1])<sup>48</sup>

Ancient scientific writers often responded to what they saw as faulty categorisation by setting up even more complex schemes, and claiming greater precision for their own work, and *Thrasymboulos* exemplifies that tendency well.<sup>49</sup> Philostratus himself engages in similar complexity at other points in *Gymnasticus*, especially in his detailed physiognomical advice. Here, however, he takes the opposite approach, sidestepping Galen's philosophical complexities and arguing for a common-sense view of training as a *technē* which takes elements from both the art of the *paidotribēs* and the art of the

<sup>47</sup> Galen's argument in *Thrasymboulos* is developed at great length and not conveniently summarised at any point, but relies most importantly on the claim that all activities associated with care of the body – and thus having the same final aim – must be the province of a single overriding *technē* (that is the *technē* of *iatrikē*, which is the art of care for the body); see, for example, *Thrasymboulos* 44 [K5.891]: 'And yet we saw that healthiness is one part of this art of care for the body, and is in turn divided into four parts, and that gymnastics is a part of one of these parts' (ἀλλὰ ταύτης τῆς περὶ τὸ σῶμα θεραπευτικῆς ἡ ὑγιεινὴ μῦριον ἦν καὶ ταύτης τετραχῇ τεμνομένης ἐνὸς τῶν μορίων ἡ γυμναστικὴ μῦριον).

<sup>48</sup> Τί οὖν χρὴ περὶ γυμναστικῆς γινώσκειν; τί δ' ἄλλο ἢ σοφίαν αὐτὴν ἡγεῖσθαι συγκατεμένην μὲν ἐξ ἱατρικῆς τε καὶ παιδοτριβικῆς, οὐσαν δὲ τῆς μὲν τελεωτέραν, τῆς δὲ μῦριον.

<sup>49</sup> See esp. Barton (1994) 152 and 224–5, n. 101 on Galen and the works of athletic trainers.

doctor, and can claim a distinctive identity even if it is subordinate to the medical art, as Galen argues.

There are also points where Philostratus explicitly criticises and parodies medical writing, most conspicuously in chapter 44, where he complains about the way in which medicine has been a vehicle for luxury. He ridicules the way in which doctors classify different types of fish, with the implication that such classifications have been used mainly to achieve greater gastronomic satisfaction – to get hold of the best-tasting fish – rather than for the purpose of guaranteeing good health (although in many ways this technique of classification seems worryingly close to what Philostratus recommends, a problem I will discuss in more detail in the next section). Philostratus' parody is reminiscent of the style of Galen's dietary texts, for example his work *On the power of foods*, book 3 [K6.554–659]. Philostratus surely has established techniques of medical writing in mind here, even if he is not referring to Galen specifically.<sup>50</sup> Medicine is shown to be responsible for exactly the kind of vices which Galen and others have blamed *gymnastikē* for introducing.

In the same passage he criticises medicine for bringing the habit of 'flattery' – *kolakeutikē* – into training. Philostratus here gestures towards Plato's *Gorgias* (especially 464b–466a) where Socrates uses the image of the 'flattering' *technai* of cosmetic and pastry-baking, which imitate and contaminate the useful arts of *gymnastikē* and medicine, respectively, in just the same way as oratory and sophistry flatter and contaminate political activity. Galen had twisted the imagery of the *Gorgias* to criticise athletics as a false, 'flattering' *technē* in *Thrasymboulos* 45 [K5.891–4]. Philostratus reverses his interpretation, categorising *gymnastikē* as a useful art, as Plato had done, and at the same time demoting medicine to the position of a flattering art. Philostratus in fact suggests that medicine has been inextricably swallowed up by cooking, which in the *Gorgias* is the flattering art which threatens the true medical *technē*. Through this allusion he not only invokes Plato's authority for his portrayal of athletics as a respectable *technē*, but also signals his own knowledge of the *Gorgias*, and thus also his awareness of the dangers of false argument which are a central concern of that work. This effect is in line with his insistence throughout *Gymnasticus* that the trainer must use words rationally and responsibly.

I have argued, then, that Philostratus firmly rejects Galenic categorisations of *gymnastikē*, reversing Galen's 'misuse' of Plato, and that he may

<sup>50</sup> Brophy and Brophy (1989) 161–4 are perhaps too confident in claiming to have detected precise echoes of Galen's own work in this passage of *Gymnasticus*.

well be doing so with Galen's work specifically in mind. He also emphasises through parody the difficulties of distinguishing between reliable and unreliable physiological knowledge, suggesting that medicine can go astray as easily as *gymnastikē* can, in order to break down Galen's distinctions between the athlete and the trainer.

#### INTERPRETING THE PAST IN *GYMNASTICUS*

What kind of positive picture does Philostratus offer to replace Galen's portrayal of philosophical medicine as the only valid basis for bodily training?

Clearly the rooting of contemporary athletic custom in long tradition is important for Philostratus, and one implication of the text's long sections of athletic history may be that he expects the ideal trainer to have some historical knowledge of the development of the discipline, although that is not stated explicitly at any stage. His statements about recent athletic decline also suggest a certain amount of admiration for the athletes and trainers of the past. None of that means, however, that his interest in training is a nostalgically antiquarian one. Rather, I will argue, he sets out a vision of present-day *gymnastikē* as something which is capable of continually reshaping the traditions of the past in a dynamic and inventive way, as many of his contemporaries of course also do in their presentations of the Greek cultural heritage more generally.<sup>51</sup>

At the beginning of *Gymnasticus*, for example, immediately after his categorisation of *gymnastikē* as a *sophia*, Philostratus proclaims the ancient glory of the art of training, listing heroic and classical examples of great athletes, but he then explains that that art has degenerated:

Present-day *gymnastikē* has so much changed the condition of athletes that the majority (τοὺς πολλοὺς) are irritated even by lovers of athletics.

But my aim is to teach the causes of this degeneration, and to contribute (ξυμβάλεσθαι) for trainers and their subjects alike everything I know, and to defend nature, which has gained a bad reputation . . . (*Gymnasticus* 1–2 [261.21–262.6])<sup>52</sup>

The phrase τοὺς πολλοὺς (the majority) conspicuously ignores the huge popular admiration for athletic spectacle in this period, and in doing so ingeniously hints at an equation between anti-athletic philosophical writers

<sup>51</sup> For this point see, among many others, Whitmarsh (2001a).

<sup>52</sup> ἡ δὲ νῦν καθεστηκυῖα μεταβέβληκεν οὕτω τὰ τῶν ἀθλητῶν, ὥς καὶ τοῖς φιλογυμναστοῦσι τοὺς πολλοὺς ἄχθεσθαι. δοκεῖ δὲ μοι διδάξαι μὲν τὰς αἰτίας, δι' ἃς ὑποδέδωκε ταῦτα, ξυμβάλεσθαι δὲ γυμναζουσί τε καὶ γυμναζομένοις, ὅποσα οἶδα, ἀπολογήσασθαι τε ὑπὲρ τῆς φύσεως ἀκούσης κακῶς. . .

like Galen, whose opinions carry great weight within literary tradition, and the ignorant masses, setting up Philostratus' own version of learned *gymnastikē* as a refined, sophisticated activity.

He goes on to explain that the physical specimens nature produces, among men as among animals and plants and minerals, are in no way inferior to those of the past, only less well trained.<sup>53</sup> In the light of this proclamation of decline, *Gymnasticus* has sometimes been taken (with Galen's work) as evidence for the idea that athletics declined after the classical period because of the influence of professionalisation.<sup>54</sup> Even now, despite the fact that this wider scheme of athletic degeneration – from golden-age amateurism to professionalised corruption – has been widely discredited,<sup>55</sup> it has not generally been recognised that *Gymnasticus* is very far from being nostalgic. This vision of deterioration does not necessarily imply that Philostratus takes a despairing view of the gymnastic profession. He embraces this picture partly because it allows him to dodge the most commonly made criticisms of athletics, by representing them as valid only for degenerate forms of training which no serious *gymnastēs* would treat with any respect. The forward-looking nature of the text is made immediately apparent by the fact that this opening passage presents itself as a contribution to athletic revival, as does Philostratus' final statement of intent at the end of 54:

following these principles we will show that *gymnastikē* is a form of *sophia*, and we will strengthen the athletes, and the stadia will regain their youth (ἀνηβήσει) through good training practices. (54 [291.17–19])<sup>56</sup>

The word ἀνηβήσει implies a link between Philostratus' own treatment of his subject – *gymnastikē* – and the trainer's treatment of his – the young athlete – both of which are to (re)gain youthful vigour.

On closer inspection, moreover, it becomes clear that Philostratus' attitude to the heroic past is highly ambivalent. In 43–4, for example, in the middle of his discussion of physiognomical principles, he gives a long account of the athletic and military prowess of the ancient heroes, before returning to the topic of decline. At first sight his admiration of these warrior-heroes seems to be at its most explicit here. The opening sentence

<sup>53</sup> As Weiler (1981) recognises, Philostratus' model of decline here is an unconventional one.

<sup>54</sup> E.g. by Gardiner (1930) 115–16.

<sup>55</sup> See, e.g., Golden (1998) 20–1 and 141–2, drawing on Young (1985).

<sup>56</sup> οἱς ἐπόμενοι σοφίαν τε γυμναστικήν ἐνδειξόμεθα καὶ τοὺς ἀθλητὰς ἐπιβρώσωμεν καὶ ἀνηβήσει τὰ στάδια ὑπὸ τοῦ εὖ γυμνάζειν.

of 43, however, throws doubt on that assumption by foregrounding the lack of any scientific basis for heroic training:

That is all I wish to say about the mixture of humours as modern *gymnastikē* describes them. The old *gymnastikē* did not even recognise these mixtures, but trained only strength. By *gymnastikē* the men of the past meant any exercise whatsoever. Some trained themselves by carrying weights which were hard to lift, some by competing for speed with horses and hares, others by straightening or bending pieces of wrought iron, while some yoked themselves with powerful, wagon-drawing oxen, and others wrestled bulls and even lions by the throat. (43 [284.19–27])<sup>57</sup>

This immediately follows a long discussion of the benefits for the trainer of understanding the theory of humours, which is represented as so basic as to be entirely uncontroversial:

As far as the topic of bodily proportions is concerned, and the question of whether one kind is best, or another kind, there are some slight disagreements among those who have not examined the matter rationally. But as far as the mixture of the humours is concerned, it has never been disputed, nor would it ever be disputed, that the best type of mixture is the warm and moist one. (42 [283.29–284.2])<sup>58</sup>

His emphasis on the fact that the heroes trained only for strength, rather than for competition (echoed in his dismissive reference to the strength-based exercises of the Spartans at the very end of the work),<sup>59</sup> and without the benefit of even the most basic scientific principles, thus problematises the status of the heroic way of life as a direct model for the Greek athletic culture of the present.

The past cannot be imitated incautiously, then. Instead, Philostratus emphasises the need to interpret it flexibly, with the needs of the present in mind. For one thing, *gymnastikē* is represented as a *technē* which has always

<sup>57</sup> Ταῦτα εἰρήσθω μοι περὶ κράσεως ἐκ τῆς νῦν γυμναστικῆς, ὥς ἡ ἀρχαία γε οὐδὲ ἐγίνωσκε κρᾶσιν, ἀλλὰ μόνην τὴν ἰσχὴν ἐγύμναζεν. γυμναστικὴν δὲ οἱ παλαιοὶ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ ὀτιοῦν γυμνάζεσθαι· ἐγυμνάζοντο δὲ οἱ μὲν ἀχθὴ φέροντες οὐκ εὐφορα, οἱ δ' ὑπὲρ τάχους ἀμιλλώμενοι πρὸς ἵππους καὶ πτόκας, οἱ δ' ὀρθοῦντές τε καὶ κάμπτοντες σιδηρὸν ἐληλαμένον εἰς παχὺ, οἱ δὲ βουσί συνευγυμνοὶ καρτεροῖς τε καὶ ἀμαξέουσιν, οἱ δὲ ταύρους ἀπαυχενίζοντες οἱ δ' αὐτοὺς λέοντας.

<sup>58</sup> Περί μὲν δὴ σώματος ἀναλογίας καὶ εἴτε ὁ τοιόσδε βελτίων, εἴτε ὁ τοιόσδε, εἰσὶ πού καὶ λεπταὶ ἀντιλογίαι παρὰ τοῖς μὴ ἐν λόγῳ διεσκεμμένοις ταῦτα, περὶ δὲ κράσεων, ὅπόσαι εἰσὶν, οὔτε ἀντιερίηται πω οὔτε ἀντιλεχθεῖη ὅν τὸ μὴ οὐκ ἀρίστην κράσεων τὴν θερμὴν τε καὶ ὑγρὰν εἶναι. Jüthner (1909) 118–20 takes this as evidence for Philostratus' ignorance of Galen whose own work prominently contradicts Philostratus' claim, but his argument seems to me highly inconclusive, and it seems just as likely, given the close correspondence with Galen's interests elsewhere in *Gymnasticus*, that Philostratus is here deliberately disregarding, perhaps even mocking, his conclusions. Certainly ignorance of this particular principle of Galen cannot be taken as proof of Philostratus' ignorance of his work more widely.

<sup>59</sup> *Gymnasticus* 58; cf. below, n. 70.

been keen to look to the future, as a catalyst for progress beyond heroic practices. At the end of his account of the different Olympic events, for example, he tells us that it is the art of the athletic trainer which has been responsible for the development of modern festival culture:

These things were not introduced into the festivals all at once, but rather were discovered and refined one at a time by *gymnastikē*. (12 [267.6–8])<sup>60</sup>

The text also shows a repeated interest in speculating about the precise origin of these events and customs. Between 3 and 13, for example, Philostratus discusses the origins of the pentathlon, the *dolichos*, the *stadion*, the *diaulos*, the hoplite race and all three combat events, focusing especially on religious and military explanations. In doing so, he seems to be constantly aware of the possibility of multiple explanations for these phenomena, and also of the possibility that this variety of explanations may be partly the consequence of the self-representation of the various cities which make them. In 7 [263.32–264.11], for example, he tells us that the Eleans include the hoplite race in the Olympic programme in order to commemorate the arrival of an armed hoplite from the field of battle during the festival, with news of victory in the war with Dyme. He also tells us, however, that he has heard similar stories told by the inhabitants of a number of different cities with reference to their own wars. Finally he gives his own explanation, suggesting that the hoplite race is included, at the end of festivals, to signal a return to war after truce. One of the effects of offering more than one explanation is presumably to invite the reader to judge the matter for herself. The techniques of ingenious, often multiple, explanation held an important place within scientific and religious analysis, and also within literary records of learned and entertaining conversation, within the Greek culture of the Roman empire and before.<sup>61</sup> Philostratus seems to

<sup>60</sup> Παρελθεῖν δὲ ταῦτα οὐκ ὁμοῦ πάντα ἐς τοὺς ἀγῶνας, ἐπ' ἄλλω δὲ ἄλλο εὗρισκόμενον τε ὑπὸ τῆς γυμναστικῆς καὶ ἀποτελούμενον. Cf. *Gymnasticus* 13 [268.24–27]: 'these things would not have been introduced and become popular amongst the Eleans and the rest of the Greeks if *gymnastikē* had not improved them and refined them' (ταῦτα οὐκ ἂν μοι δοκεῖ καθ' ἐν οὕτωςι παρελθεῖν εἰς ἀγῶνας οὐδ' ἂν σπουδασθῆναι ποτε Ἕλλησι καὶ Ἑλλήσι πᾶσιν, εἰ μὴ γυμναστικὴ ἐπεδίδου καὶ ἦσκει αὐτά). The gymnastic imagery of ἦσκει characteristically equates the day-to-day skills of training with the more theoretical and – presumably – rhetorical skills required to develop the discipline as a whole.

<sup>61</sup> See, e.g., Barton (1994) on scientific explanation: e.g. 14, on the agonistic context of scientific analysis in the Roman empire: 'it seems that (in my period at least) the *ἀγών*, far from narrowing down the options in any direction, encourages the proliferation of answers to questions'; and 172 on 'the way the principle of noncontradiction loses its privilege to the ideal of completeness' in ancient scientific writing; cf. Feeney (1998), 115–36 esp. 127–31, on analysis of Roman religious ritual, although he is wrong to confine this tendency to Roman culture (129), and his distinction between the multiple style of explanation of Plutarch's *Roman questions* and the more unitary explanations of

value such techniques highly in this work; in fact he draws attention quite self-consciously to their usefulness.

His analysis of customs connected specifically with athletic trainers has a similar focus, in paragraph 18 most strikingly so. There, Philostratus sets out to explain why the coach at Olympia must carry a strigil. He offers two explanations, both of which, as often, he seems equally satisfied with. The first is that it reminds the athlete to care for his body properly by using oil. As an alternative, however, he tells the story of a trainer who killed an under-performing athlete with a sharpened strigil, and explains that the strigil is therefore a symbol of the trainer's power, and a reminder to the athlete always to exert himself. He says, remarkably, of the second explanation:

And I agree with the story; for it is better for it to be believed than not. Indeed let the strigil be a sword against bad athletes, and may the trainer have some authority above that of the *hellanodikēs* in Olympia. (18 [271.19–22])<sup>62</sup>

This is Philostratus' clearest statement of the principle that the criterion for judging whether or not a story is to be accepted may not be its accuracy, but rather its usefulness. He also hints at the idea that any retelling of the past will necessarily involve recreation of it, shaped by the needs of the present. His reference to the *hellanodikēs*, as I suggested earlier, reinforces the impression that the trainer will ideally play an archetypally Hellenic role. It may even be a more important role, with its duty of moral guardianship, than the superficial judgments about ancestry for which the Olympic officials are responsible.<sup>63</sup>

Some of these themes are continued, finally, in the stories of paragraphs 20–24, where we are presented with famous examples of advice and encouragement given to athletes by their trainers, all of which foreground the way in which the telling of stories and the right use of words can provide inspiration. For example, we hear that the boxer Glaukos was inspired (20) when his coach reminded him of the way in which he had straightened

his *Greek questions* ignores the fact that Plutarch often treats Greek tradition with varied explanation elsewhere. Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales*, for example, illustrates the potentially important role of multiple explanation within both scientific and religious analysis, at least as they are to be performed in the context of playful sympotic conversation: see, e.g., König (2007a); and Hardie (1992), esp. 4.751–61 on interpretative pluralism in the *Quaestiones Convivales* in the context of Plutarch's treatment of myth.

<sup>62</sup> καὶ συγχωρῶ τῷ λόγῳ· βέλτιον γὰρ πιστεύεσθαι ἢ ἀπιστεῖσθαι. ξίφος μὲν δὴ ἐπὶ τοῖς πονηροῦς τῶν ἀθλητῶν στήλγῃς ἔστω καὶ ἐχέτω δὴ τι ὑπὲρ τὸν ἑλληνοδίκην ὁ γυμναστής ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ.

<sup>63</sup> This point is made much more forcefully at *Gymnasticus* 25, where we hear that the *hellanodikēs* judges ancestry, but the *gymnastēs* must judge moral character.



a ploughshare in his youth with his bare hands. Similarly Promachos was spurred on to victory when his trainer discovered that he was in love, and invented a note of encouragement from his beloved:

... a note (λόγον) which was not true, but very valuable to one in love. (22 [272.21–2])<sup>64</sup>

These stories between them again seem to recommend a flexible, improvisatory attitude to retellings of the past.

What relevance does all of this have, however, to the apparently more technical details of the second half of *Gymnasticus*? For one thing, Philostratus' historical style of analysis is shown to be in many ways very close to that of his ideal trainer; in fact the stories in 20–24 in themselves point towards that conclusion, since here we begin to get a more specific illustration of how an athletic trainer, like Philostratus himself, may benefit from using words effectively and ingeniously. Often, moreover, we find gymnastic language used of Philostratus' own strategies in *Gymnasticus*, or rhetorical language used for the skills of the *gymnastēs*, in ways which strengthen the connection between them. In 20, for example, Philostratus introduces these stories as follows:

Of the many things which trainers have communicated to help their athletes (ξυμβάλλοντο τοῖς ἀθληταῖς), either by rebukes or threats or by their ingenuity (σοφισάμενοι) – and there are many such things, more than can be expressed – let us put down those which are held in more esteem (τὰ ἐλλογιμώτερα). (20 [271.31–272.2])<sup>65</sup>

The word σοφισάμενοι suggests crafty or tricky speech, but also the practice of a *sophia* or *technē*, precisely the category in which Philostratus has been so careful to locate *gymnastikē*, and perhaps also with overtones of rhetorical, 'sophistic' skill. The word ξυμβάλλοντο echoes Philostratus' claim in his second paragraph that he will

contribute (ξυμβάλλεσθαι) for trainers and their subjects alike everything I know.<sup>66</sup>

Both of these words imply parallels between Philostratus' task and that of the trainer.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> λόγον οὐκ ἀληθῆ, πλείστου δὲ ἄξιον τῷ ἔρῳντι.

<sup>65</sup> ὅποσα δὲ γυμνασται ξυμβάλλοντο ἀθληταῖς ἢ παρακελευσάμενοι τι ἢ ἐπιπλήξαντες ἢ ἀπειλήσαντες ἢ σοφισάμενοι, πολλὰ μὲν ταῦτα καὶ πλείω λόγου, λεγέσθω δὲ τὰ ἐλλογιμώτερα.

<sup>66</sup> Quoted above, n. 65.

<sup>67</sup> See Flinterman (1995) 29–32 on the value Philostratus attaches to sophistic rhetoric in *V3*; he rejects the arguments of Brancacci (1986), who claims that Philostratus dissociates himself from popular, sophistic rhetoric.

There are many other examples of this effect within the text. Some of the most prominent of them come, like the one quoted above, at the point of transition between the historical half of *Gymnasticus* and its more technical material. In 25–6, for example, Philostratus introduces the turn to physiognomy, which will dominate the rest of the work, as follows:

Since a crowd of such examples comes pouring over us, and I am mixing ancient and modern stories together, let us have a look at the trainer himself (σκεψώμεθα τὸν γυμναστήν αὐτόν), to see what sort of man will supervise the athlete, and what sort of knowledge he must have. Let the trainer be neither garrulous, nor untrained in speech (ἀγύμναστος τὴν γλῶτταν), so that the effectiveness of his speech may not be lessened by talkativeness, nor his actions appear unsophisticated (ἀγροικότερον) through being performed without correct speech (μὴ ξὺν λόγῳ δρώμενον) . . . (25 [273.15–21])<sup>68</sup>

Training requires action which is governed by rational principles (ξὺν λόγῳ δρώμενον), and perhaps even by words – the ability to talk well – in a more concrete sense. The development of the powers of reasoning and persuasive speech is itself equated with athletic training by the word ἀγύμναστος, as if the two are inextricably connected with each other. Philostratus' desire to look at the trainer recalls the processes of inspecting potential athletes, and he thus sets himself up as a trainer to the *gymnastēs*, with the authority to supervise and judge, just as the *gymnastēs* is able to supervise and judge between potential athletes. The process of rational consideration (σκεψώμεθα) is equated as before with processes which are essential to the workings of physical education. Both Philostratus and the ideal trainer, it seems, share the capacity of being able to see beneath the surface of things, to extract the truth from surface appearance, a requirement which often similarly preoccupies Galen in his medical writing, as I have suggested.

This effect is reinforced by what we find in the following paragraph, where Philostratus similarly announces his intention to inspect (metaphorically) the many different types of athlete:

At the close of these remarks, we should not get the impression that the topic of exercises is coming next, but the person to take the exercises is to strip now and submit to an examination of his natural qualifications, that is, what they are, and of what use. (26 [274.15–18])<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐπιβρεῖ τῶν τοιούτων ὄχλος ἐγκαταμινύντων ἡμῶν παλαῖσις νέα, σκεψώμεθα τὸν γυμναστήν αὐτόν, ὅποιός τις ὦν καὶ ὅποσα εἰδῶς τῷ ἀθλητῇ ἐφεισθήξει. ἔστω δὲ ὁ γυμναστής μήτε ἀδολεσχής, μήτε ἀγύμναστος τὴν γλῶτταν, ὥς μήτε τὸ ἐνεργὸν τῆς τέχνης ἐκλύοιτο ὑπὸ τῆς ἀδολεσχίας, μήτε ἀγροικότερον φαίνοιτο μὴ ξὺν λόγῳ δρώμενον.

<sup>69</sup> Τοῦτων ὠδὲ μοι εἰρημένων μὴ τὸ γυμνάζειν ἡγώμεθα ἐπεσεῖν τοῖς ἀλλὰ τὸ ἀποδύσαι τὸν γυμναζόμενον καὶ εἰς δοκιμασίαν καταστήσαι τῆς φύσεως, ὅτι τε σύγκειται καὶ πρὸς ὁ.

Philostratus himself strips his imaginary athletes. The order the trainer must impose on his work, beginning from analysis of his subject, coincides, by this metaphor, with Philostratus' own ordering of his text.

In what follows we hear first of all (27–30) about the way in which the state of the athlete's parents at conception affects his appearance and his performance; and then (31–41) about the differences of physical appearance between different types of athletes. Finally, after discussion of the best combination of humours (42), and the analysis of decline from heroic athletics which I have mentioned already, and which I will return to shortly (43–7), there is a series of paragraphs focused on specific techniques and problems: the dangers and cures of over-indulgence and anxiety (48–54); the use of jumping weights (55); dust (56); punch bags (57); and sun-bathing (58).<sup>70</sup> All of this material broadly speaking shares the concern with origins, and with getting to the truth behind surface appearance, which I have pointed to elsewhere in the text. In particular, it seems significant that establishing the 'origin' of each athlete is presented as the first task for the trainer (28), just as Philostratus himself began his treatise on athletic training by reference to its origins and developments.

This section as a whole relies on rhetorical techniques of argument, which are used for detailed categorisation of athletes by physical appearance, but must also, as Philostratus sometimes emphasises, be applied flexibly, according to the individual circumstances of each case. Often his examples threaten to spill over into humour and absurdity. For Philostratus, it seems, the art of the trainer must always make room for inventive and entertaining speech. The problem that presents us with is that it is sometimes hard to see where to draw the line between plausible, morally useful improvisation and frivolous invention. Partly, no doubt, that problem comes for modern readers from lack of familiarity with the idiom of ancient science. I will also argue, however, that it is a problem which this text in particular poses for us quite conspicuously, although without ever offering an unequivocal solution.

In order to illustrate some of these general points I take just one example of Philostratus' instructions – that is, the claim that athletes born to old parents will resemble old people:

<sup>70</sup> It has often been assumed, e.g. by Harris (1964) 26 and Golden (1998) 49, that the dialogue is unfinished, but the final mention of the Spartan whipping ceremony (*Gymnasticus* 58) maybe points in the other direction. It shifts the discussion from specific instruction back to the wider theme of acknowledging diversity within contemporary Hellenism and education. It may even be a deliberate echo of Lucian's *Anacharsis* (38–40), which similarly closes with consideration of the implications of the Spartan custom for more conventional athletics.

I have shown what kind of children good stock and youthful parentage will produce; what is produced by parents more advanced in years can be detected in the following way: the skin of such persons is soft, the collar bones shaped like ladles, and the veins are prominent as in people who have worked hard, their hips are poorly built, and the muscular system is weak... nor are they able to do any lifting but require pauses for rest, and they are exhausted by their efforts out of proportion to their achievements. (29 [276.4–16])<sup>71</sup>

The reasoning here is typical of the passages surrounding it, and of other medical and physiognomical writing, from both the Roman empire and before, in the sense that it uses surface similarities to interpret physical signs as indicators of inner reality,<sup>72</sup> arguing from what is superficially likely, much as Philostratus does in his discussion of athletic custom. It is also, however, very hard to know whether this idea – that children of old parents will look like old people – is to be taken seriously. The impression of absurd humour is hard to suppress. Presumably this is the kind of argument which has worried so many of the modern scholars who have written about *Gymnasticus*, and led to the assumption that the work is somehow 'frivolous'.

One answer to the problem is that 'entertainment' was in many ways compatible with the techniques of ancient science, which grew out of the need for speaking persuasively and engagingly in specific contexts. However, the text itself also seems interested in exploring the boundaries of acceptable ingenuity. Through explicitly characterising certain forms of analysis as unsuitable, Philostratus suggests that there are ways of drawing a line between acceptable humour, which adds rhetorical force through entertainment, and unacceptable absurdities, which deserve only the laughter of mockery. *Gymnasticus* tends to represent rhetorical manipulation which is applied for immoral ends, or else too rigidly, without adaptation to individual circumstances, as the main problem. At the same time it enacts the difficulty of making this kind of distinction in practice, between good and bad forms of analysis. If the seriousness or otherwise of the example quoted above is – like many others in the text – hard to judge, that may in part be a deliberately destabilising effect.

To illustrate Philostratus' rejection of unacceptable uses of reason, I return to his criticism of medicine for its contribution to the degeneration

<sup>71</sup> Ἡ μὲν οὖν γενναία σπορὰ καὶ νεᾶνις ὁποῖους ἀνήσει δεδήλωκα, ἡ δὲ ἐκ προηκόντων ὥδε ἐλεγκτέα: λεπτόν μὲν τοῖς τὸ δέρμα, καθαῶδεις δὲ αἱ κλεῖδες, ὑπανεστηκυῖαι δὲ αἱ φλέβες καθάπερ τοῖς πεποννηκόσι, καὶ ἰσχύον τοῖς ἀναρμον καὶ τὰ μνώδη ἀσθενῇ. . . οὐδὲ ἐπιτήδειοι ἄραι οὐδέν, ἀλλὰ ἀνοχῶν δέονται· ἀναλίσκονται δὲ καὶ πόνοις ὑπὲρ τὰ πονηθέντα.

<sup>72</sup> See Barton (1994) 95–131 on the rhetorical language on which physiognomic study is based; cf. examples in Gleason (1995), esp. 21–54.

of modern training in 43–44. One particular sign of medically inspired degeneracy is said to be the habit of distinguishing between different types of fish, and also different types of pig flesh, as harmful or beneficial according to where they have come from:

unlawfully, they stuffed themselves with fish, deciding on the nature of the fish from their habitat in the sea: saying that those from swampy places are fat; the soft ones come from near cliffs, fleshy ones from the deep sea; that seaweed produces thin ones and other kinds of sea-moss produce a tasteless kind. (44 [285.25–30])<sup>73</sup>

Clearly one of the problems with this process is the way in which it introduces luxurious fussiness into athletic diets, not to mention unheroic fish-eating habits. Philostratus' mockery also seems to be directed specifically at the kinds of arguments these people use, as well as mocking the aims they are used to achieve, and it is striking, and at first sight perhaps worrying, that the forms of analysis he mocks are in many ways close to those he has been recommending in previous paragraphs, in particular the technique of linking outward appearance and inner nature with origins. Perhaps the thing which worries him here is the application of categories which are excessively rigid. If that is the case it would imply that one of the things the *gymnastēs* must always avoid is over-schematisation. Hence Philostratus' parodic version of medical categorisations of fish is strikingly brief, in contrast with his own exhaustive account of physiognomical signs.

That reading seems to me to be reinforced by his denigration of the tetrad system of training, which comes soon afterwards, whereby athletes are exercised on a dangerously inflexible four-day cycle:

in this way they do all their training harmoniously, and thus, rotating these tetrads, they deprive *gymnastikē* of the ability to understand the bare athlete (τὸ ξυνιέναι τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ τοῦ γυμνοῦ). (47 [288.3–6])<sup>74</sup>

This final phrase ingeniously equates understanding of the naked athlete with sensitivity to the specificity of each individual case – in other words the ability, again, to look beneath the surface, to see the naked truth of each 'subject'. Later, in 54, Philostratus mocks the absurdity of the tetrad system by the story of the wrestler Gerenus, whose trainer, following this scheme, forced him to undertake heavy exercise despite the fact that he

<sup>73</sup> ἰχθύων παρανομωτάτης βρώσεως ἐμποροῦσα καὶ φυσιολογοῦσα τοὺς ἰχθῦς ἀπὸ τῶν τῆς θαλάσσης δῆμων – ὡς παχεῖς μὲν οἱ ἐξ ἰλῦων, ἀπαλοὶ δὲ οἱ ἐκ πετρῶν, κρεώδεις δὲ οἱ πελάγιοι, λεπτοὺς τε βόσκουσι θαλῖαι, τὰ φυκία δὲ ἐξιτήλους - . . .

<sup>74</sup> καὶ τὴν τοιάνδε ἰδέαν πᾶσαν ἀρμονικῶς γυμνάζοντες καὶ τὰς τετράδας ταύτας ὧδε ἀνακυλόντες ἀφαιρούνται τὴν ἐπιστήμην τὸ ξυνιέναι τοῦ ἀθλητοῦ τοῦ γυμνοῦ.

was hungover from celebration of his Olympic victory, and so drove him to his death. Modern trainers, we hear, make similar mistakes in training young boys as if they were men (46).

It is often hard, perhaps deliberately so, to judge the degree of humour or seriousness in many of Philostratus' specific examples. This difficulty dramatises the constant challenge the trainer faces to maintain the integrity of his art, to avoid slipping into degenerate forms of analysis. Philostratus does, however, hint at a number of principles which might allow us to decide when inventive interpretations will be unacceptable. In particular, he foregrounds the absurdities which arise from applying interpretative schemes which are driven by immoral or luxurious motives; or else schemes which are excessively rigid (much as Polemo had stressed the importance of examining the whole subject physiognomically, rather than just fixing on one symptom).<sup>75</sup> He teaches a technique of arguing and of reasoning, rather than a clear set of instructions. He represents athletic analysis not as a fixed repertoire of activities, but as a flexible process which can reshape the material it inherits with the future as well as the past always in mind.

#### ATHLETICS IN PHILOSTRATUS

I have argued that Philostratus presents a vision of athletic training as a sophisticated *technē* by equating athletic training with his own ingenious but also powerfully perceptive and entertaining analytical skills. At the same time, he warns against the danger that it might easily be contaminated, if these skills are applied too rigidly, without careful consideration of context, or as an excuse for luxury.

My final point is that this vision of athletics as something which requires and invites interpretation, like the heritage of the Greek past more generally, is backed up by the picture we find in the other works usually ascribed to Philostratus. These close similarities seem to me to reinforce the assumption of common authorship. They also suggest, in turn, strong reasons for seeing *Gymnasticus* as part of a wider project of questioning exactly how Hellenic tradition should be treated in the present day.

My starting point here is *Heroicus*. Like *Gymnasticus*, with which it shares many strikingly similar passages,<sup>76</sup> this text presents its readers with a whole selection of prodigiously strong and war-like heroic

<sup>75</sup> See Gleason (1995) 33–6.

<sup>76</sup> See de Lannoy (1997) 2.407–9, who deals with a number of parallels other than those discussed below.

athletes. Instead of distancing them from the techniques of modern training, however, as he does in *Gymnasticus*, Philostratus chooses to describe them in great physical detail, which the long passages of physiognomical advice in *Gymnasticus* might help us to interpret. He also repeatedly compares the different heroes in terms of their athletic as well as military prowess. At one point, for example, we hear a long description of Palamedes, which includes the observation that he was halfway between a heavy athlete and a light athlete in physique, when seen naked.<sup>77</sup> This is reminiscent of the tendency to categorise athletes as light or heavy, to different degrees, throughout *Gymnasticus*. More specifically, it is reminiscent of the characterisation of the ideal pentathlete in *Gymnasticus* 31 as half-way between the two. Philostratus thus brings Homer humorously up to date, although it is never quite clear who is responsible for this modernisation. Were all the Greek heroes sophisticated followers of the art of *gymnastikē*?<sup>78</sup> Or is it only Protesilaus, looking back with the benefit of what he has learned from modern science?<sup>79</sup> Or is the vinedresser himself – the character who tells the story within the dialogue – wholly responsible for refashioning the words of Protesilaus and/or of Homer, in telling the story to an interlocutor who seems to have trouble finding the balance between gullibility and scepticism? One way of dealing with the strangeness of the past is to reshape it ingeniously, to make it fit in with the modern world, as Philostratus has done here, but the degree of authenticity of that reshaping will always be hard to identify.

There are similar effects in *Imagines*, which are full of detailed descriptions of beautiful, male athletic bodies, which Philostratus takes as promising starting points for rhetorical display. Often the *ecphrasis* which such bodies prompt echo the physiognomical language of *Gymnasticus* and *Heroicus*.<sup>80</sup> In *Imagines* 2.2, for example, we are given a glimpse of Achilles as a child undergoing his education at the hands of Cheiron. His athletic potential is as yet unfulfilled, but unmistakable to the practised eye:

<sup>77</sup> *Her.* p. 183. *Heroicus* here is referred to by page number from volume 2 of Kayser (1870–1), which also forms the basis for one of the sets of numbering in the more recent edition by de Lannoy (1977). For other athletic material, see, for example, *Her.* 141–2, for a description of Protesilaus, admittable for his physical beauty and athletic prowess; *Her.* 167 on Nestor's ears disfigured by wrestling, and on Antilochus' superiority to Nestor in running; and *Her.* 204 on Patroclus' athletic neck.

<sup>78</sup> See Anderson (1986) 244, 246; cf. Schmitz (1997) 143–6 on Homeric heroes portrayed as sophists in sophistic texts. By contrast, we hear that the athletic knowledge of the Trojans was underdeveloped (*Her.* 168).

<sup>79</sup> He regularly gives advice to the athletic champions of the present day (*Her.* 146–7).

<sup>80</sup> For examples other than those mentioned below, see *Imagines* 1.24.3, 1.28.8, 2.6, 2.19, 2.21 and 2.32. The second *Imagines*, usually not ascribed to the same author as the first *Imagines* and *Gymnasticus*, contains very little athletic description.

For the boy's leg is straight and his arms come down to his knees; for such arms are excellent assistants in running . . . (*Imagines* 2.2.2)<sup>81</sup>

In 2.7.5 the dead Antilochus, whose potential will now never be realised, but acts instead as a spur to the grief of the Achaeans, is described in similar terms:

His leg is slender and his body proportioned for running with ease . . .<sup>82</sup>

One of the things *Imagines* sets out to show, as much recent scholarship has suggested, is the way in which all viewing requires interpretation.<sup>83</sup> Viewing of art, and of the athletic body as portrayed in art, thus draws, in *Imagines*, on many of the techniques of interpretation Philostratus recommends for the athletic trainer.

These two works, then, bring the athletics of the past into the modern world. In *VS*, by contrast, Philostratus takes a rather different tack, at least in his description of the companion of Herodes Atticus, Agathion (*VS* 552–4), where he emphasises instead the difficulty of harmonising heroic past and Roman empire present. Agathion, also known as Heracles, was renowned, Philostratus tells us, for his great size and strength, for his perfect Attic speech and for his imitation of the lifestyle of the ancient heroes of Greece, which involved, among other things, wrestling with animals, like the heroes of *Gymnasticus* 43. The interest in Agathion's physical appearance – his solidly built neck, his chest, which is well formed and slim, his legs, which are bowed slightly outwards, making it easier for him to stand firm – has a great deal in common with the detailed attention to such things in the categorisation of athletes best suited to the different events in *Gymnasticus* 31–42, where the shape of the legs and chest and neck, among other things, occupies a great deal of attention. Despite his heroic athleticism, however, Agathion seems to have a highly ambiguous relationship with other elements of traditional culture. In particular he shows a Cynic suspicion of the athletic competition to which he should be perfectly suited:

'Even more do I laugh at them when I see men struggling with one another in the pankration, and boxing, running, wrestling, and winning crowns for all this. Let the athlete who is a runner receive a crown for running faster than a deer or

<sup>81</sup> εὐθεῖα μὲν γὰρ ἡ κνήμη τῷ παιδί, ἐς γόνα διὰ χεῖρες – ἀγαθαὶ γὰρ δὴ αὐτὰι πομπαὶ τοῦ δρόμου. . .

<sup>82</sup> κοῦφος ἡ κνήμη καὶ τὸ σῶμα σύμμετρον ἐς βασιτώνην τοῦ δρόμου. . .

<sup>83</sup> See, e.g., Blanchard (1986); Elsner (1995) 21–48.



a horse, and let him who trains for a weightier contest be crowned for wrestling with a bull or a bear, a thing which I do every day . . . ' (VS 554)<sup>84</sup>

Agathion seems to be included here partly to draw attention to the fact that the Greek past, and more specifically the Greek athletic past, cannot be unproblematically applicable in the present without some reinterpretation, a conclusion which brings with it difficult problems about how far those reinterpretations should go, very much in line with the concerns of *Gymnasticus* outlined above.<sup>85</sup> Broadly speaking this is a difficulty which the sophists of the VS must grapple with constantly, as living and highly public embodiments of the links between present and past. More specifically, it is a particularly pointed problem in the context of so controversial a character as Herodes Atticus, whose Roman Hellenism attracted a great deal of suspicion, and who is represented as an ambiguous figure within Philostratus' version of second-century Greek culture.

My final example comes from VA, which consistently and similarly explores the processes by which the Greek heritage is reinterpreted for the present. In book 4, Philostratus describes a visit made by Apollonius to the Olympic festival. On the way there, we are told, he is met by a group of Spartan envoys who ask him to visit their city (4.27). Apollonius is so shocked by their effeminate appearance that he sends a letter of complaint to the ephors, and in response the Spartans decide to go back to the old way of doing things (ἐς τὸ ἀρχαῖόν τε καθισταμένους πάντα), with successful results:

The consequence was that the wrestling grounds regained their youth (ἀνήβησαν), and the contests and the common meals were restored, and Lacedaemon became once more like herself (ἐαυτῇ ὁμοία).<sup>86</sup>

This anecdote displays sentiments which are strikingly similar to many of those we find in *Gymnasticus*,<sup>87</sup> in particular in Apollonius' concern to arrest degeneration of educational traditions, which is consistent with his interest in correcting correct religious ritual throughout VA.<sup>88</sup> The unusual word ἀνήβησαν echoes *Gymnasticus* 54, quoted above. Simone Follet discusses Philostratus' conception of Hellenism as the ability to manipulate a set of

<sup>84</sup> ἐκείνων, ἔφη, καταγελῶ μᾶλλον ὁρῶν τοὺς ἀνθρώπους διαγωνιζομένους ἀλλήλοις παγκράτιον καὶ πυγμὴν καὶ δρόμον καὶ πάλην καὶ στεφανουμένους ὑπὲρ τούτου· στεφανούσθω δὲ ὁ μὲν βρομικὸς ἀθλητὴς ἑλαφον παρελθὼν ἢ ἵππον, ὁ δὲ τὰ βαρύτερα ἀσκῶν ταύρω συμπλακεῖς ἢ ἄρκτω, ὃ ἐγὼ ὁσημέραι πράττω . . .

<sup>85</sup> Cf. Swain (1996) 79–83 on the ambiguities of Agathion's hyper-Atticism.

<sup>86</sup> . . . ὅθεν παλαίστραι τε ἀνήβησαν καὶ σπουδαί, καὶ τὰ φιλιτῖα ἐπανῆλθε, καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ Λακεδαιμῶν ἐαυτῇ ὁμοία.

<sup>87</sup> As Bowie (1978) 1,680 points out. <sup>88</sup> See Elsner (1997) esp. 26–7.

common themes and images, and traditional language; she also points out, however, his insistence on going beyond such things in order to achieve a morally good way of life.<sup>89</sup> The demands of Apollonius here fit in with her scheme well, with their insistence on learned and precise knowledge of the past, which must sometimes be manipulated in an original way, as we shall see more clearly below, but which must nevertheless always keep in sight moral considerations. That emphasis is clear particularly if we compare this passage with the *Letters* preserved under the name of Apollonius, on which Philostratus draws.<sup>90</sup> They emphasise moral condemnation of luxury, whereas *VA* tends to *combine* moral concerns with an interest in the ingenious display of *paideia*, and in outward adherence to Greek tradition. Here the speed of the Spartan recovery suggests an optimistic attitude to the possibility of rescuing degenerate Hellenic culture (much more so than the *Letters*),<sup>91</sup> although the phrase ἐαυτῇ ὁμοίᾳ characteristically leaves some doubt about the depth and moral effectiveness of the cure, as if to warn us against assuming that outward adherence is in itself sufficient.

Later we hear about Apollonius' comments in Olympia, in particular about his ingenious reinterpretation of a statue of the athlete Milo (4.28), which supplements received wisdom with an explanation based on Apollonius' own knowledge of traditional ritual and art history.<sup>92</sup> And finally he compliments the Eleans intriguingly on their running of the festival, praising them for the care and accuracy of their organisation:

'Whether they are wise (σοφούς)', he said, 'I do not know, but I am sure that they are sophists (σοφιστάς)'. (4.29)<sup>93</sup>

The word σοφιστάς not only connotes 'skill', but also equates the Eleans with the representatives of rhetorical culture to whom Philostratus devotes so much attention in *VS*, and thus once again suggests a link between athletics and learned interpretation and performance of tradition. It also sounds, however, as though Philostratus is holding back from full approval,

<sup>89</sup> Follert (1991) esp. 212.

<sup>90</sup> This incident draws closely on *Letters* 42a and 63 (see Penella (1979) 52–3 and 111 on *Ep.* 42a; 72–3 and 122–3 on *Ep.* 63). Flintermann (1995) 89–100 illustrates the way in which *VA* concentrates on moral stricture less firmly than *Letters*; Bowie (1991) 203–4 argues that *Letters* are an early second-century parody of 'lunatic' philosophical moralising; cf. Swain (1996) 395–6.

<sup>91</sup> Sparta is, of course, far from typical of Hellenic culture at large, but this anecdote is consistent with Philostratus' interest in the diversity of Hellenism, often illustrated precisely through discussion of Sparta: cf. above, n. 70, and *VA* 6.20.

<sup>92</sup> This has a great deal in common with the speculative aetiologising of *Gymnasticus*; Apollonius (or Philostratus) here puts greater emphasis on knowledge and interpretation of religious and sculptural tradition than on moralising, philosophical speechmaking – in contrast, for example, with Dio Chrysostom's Olympic twelfth Oration (*Or.* 12). Cf. Fowler (1996) 58–61 on viewing in *VA*.

<sup>93</sup> εἰ μὲν σοφούς, ἔφη, οὐκ οἶδα, σοφιστάς μὲντοι.

in expressing his uncertainty about their *sophia*, as if being sophists is not the most important thing of all.<sup>94</sup> Preoccupation with tradition, it seems, must never be divorced from philosophy. In this sense, the story has a great deal in common with the positive valuation of rhetorical skills in *Gymnasticus*, but also with the warnings that text presents us with about the dangers of using rhetoric irresponsibly and luxuriously.

### CONCLUSION

I have argued, then, that Philostratus' *Gymnasticus* is a text which participates very self-consciously in processes of debating educational practice. Images of universal Hellenic education, projected confidently within so many literary and epigraphical texts in this period, were always to some extent a papering-over of varied opinion. Philostratus' work is no exception, navigating as it does through a great range of competing claims about the right way to educate. I have tried to give some idea of the controversial intellectual background to *Gymnasticus*, on the one hand through discussion of Galen, who constructs a medical *technē* capable of exercising the body with philosophical principles always in mind, and in turn denigrates the physical education associated with athletic trainers; and on the other hand through discussion of the rather different picture which emerges from more positive inscriptional representations of athletic activity. Philostratus finds ways of reconciling Galenic requirements for intellectual rigour with perspectives which see the trainer as a valued representative of a long and prestigious heritage. Philostratus draws on many of the same philosophical authorities as Galen, but repeatedly interprets them differently. He also sidesteps the negative opinions of athletics which are enshrined within Hellenic literary tradition, by claiming that the ideal *gymnastikē* he portrays here is very different from its degenerate, modern descendants.

The work as a whole, I have argued, is thus very much more complex and coherent than has usually been recognised. Particularly significant, I have suggested, is the link between the historical analysis of the first half and the physiognomical analysis of the second, which sets up *gymnastikē* as a discipline parallel with Philostratus' own analytical skills. Philostratus seems to be aware of the way in which envisaging the body and caring for it may often be closely related to other forms of intellectual and social activity. As so often in this period, thinking about the proper way to do athletics is

<sup>94</sup> See Swain (1996) 97–100 on the variety of meanings, many of them uncomplimentary, attached to the word 'sophist'.

made part of a wider project of thinking about what elite Hellenic cultural accomplishment ideally involves.

The text is self-conscious about the fact that this kind of interpretation (of the body, as of traditional culture) always involves reinterpretation and reshaping. In that sense, *Gymnasticus* has much in common with Philostratus' other works. It advertises Philostratus' own ingenious, often humorous, ability to refashion the art of *gymnastikē*, which is equivalent to the trainer's interpretation and refashioning of his charges. That analytical ability is one which bestows great authority, and is open only to a restricted field. Philostratus signals this restriction by the fact that the athlete is rarely represented as an active partner in gymnastic interpretation. At the same time, as we saw with reference to his scorn of medical categorisations of fish, he is keen to foreground the risk of falling into techniques of interpretation which have a superficial resemblance to those which he recommends, but which ultimately fall down because they are directed towards immoral goals. In other cases, as for the inflexible modern tetrad system, interpretation is ridiculed for excessive rigidity, which fails to acknowledge that *paideia* is a never-completed process, rather than a clearly defined and simply applicable set of principles. The skills of the *gymnastēs*, like Philostratus' own, are thus prestigious ones, but they also require constant attention if they are to maintain their integrity.

Questions about how 'useful' this text is thus seem to me to be of limited value, unless we acknowledge the fact that it aims at a much wider conception of athletic training than modern sports historians have tended to assume. *Gymnasticus* is anchored in the realities of contemporary *gymnasion* practice, but it also deliberately goes beyond those realities, combining the practical skill of athletic training with interpretative techniques of much broader value. The true *gymnastēs*, by Philostratus' standards, can offer training on a much higher level than the lowly *paidotribēs* ever could. Philostratean *gymnastikē* has space for both moral instruction and entertainment, with all the interpretative licence which those aims potentially require. Philostratus' athletic trainer, like Philostratus himself, is thus a representative of Hellenic tradition in the broadest sense, constantly concerned with mediating between the heritage of the Greek past and the realities of the Greek present.



*Letters*



*Constructing identity in Philostratus' Love Letters\**

Simon Goldhill

In the context of the fine recent work on the theory of epistolarity and on letter-writing in practice, Philostratus' collection of seventy-three letters constitutes an extraordinary limit case for the coherence of the very idea of the letter. On the rare occasions when Philostratus' *Letters* are mentioned by contemporary scholarship, it is usually to dismiss them as a minor and frankly trivial example of the genre of fictional letter-writing, which flourished in the Greek culture of the Roman empire. But such sniffy judgements quite downplay the sheer oddity of this collection. If you approach these texts either from the founding text of modern literary letter-writing, namely, Richardson's *Clarissa*, or from the extensive classical tradition of collections of fictional letters and of letters within other literary works, it is a baffling experience. Philostratus goes as far as is possible in rejecting not only the formal aspects of letter-writing – from greetings to signatures – but also the familiar literary strategies of the letter collection (whether we take Cicero or Pliny or Seneca or Alciphron as our model). The most insistent question provoked by these texts is 'what on earth are they for?', 'what do they do?'. To try to find the performative value of Philostratus' *Letters* in the literary and cultural world of the Second Sophistic is the aim of this chapter.

Since *Letters* are the least well known of Philostratus' output, it is sensible to lay out the basic facts first, though there is plenty of controversy about them. Along with almost all modern scholars, I agree that *Letters* are the work of the Philostratus who also wrote *On Apollonius of Tyana*, *Lives of the sophists*, *Heroicus*, *Gymnasticus*, and *Imagines*.<sup>1</sup> This sets him in the circle around Julia Domna, wife of the Emperor Severus (who ruled 193–211). He was writing his remarkably varied corpus probably in the first decades of

\* Thanks to the editors and to Patricia Rosenmeyer for their generous and helpful comments on a first draft of this chapter.

<sup>1</sup> On the question of the corpus of Philostratus, see the Introductory part I in this volume and Anderson (1986).



the third century. The manuscript tradition of *Letters* is as confused as any in the ancient world.<sup>2</sup> There are several traditions, which have different selections of letters in them. There are some twenty letters which appear in some manuscripts in a shorter form than in others – prompting some critics to talk of a later revision by the author (or another hand). Some manuscripts add addressees to some letters; others have none. The order of the letters is different in different manuscripts. There are eighteen letters to which names of addressees are attached with some security. The vast majority, even when there is an addressee indicated, have no more than the anonymous heading ‘to a boy’ or ‘to a woman’, or the equivalent. All this makes it very hard to talk at all of ‘the collection’, as if it were a poetry book or an organised sequence like Cicero’s *Letters* – although each manuscript is, by default, a collection of letters. Yet, as we will see, this sense of fragmentation and confusion is not just because of the vagaries of the transmission. It also reflects an essential aspect of these letters.

Consider, for example, how letters have proved a fruitful topic for the study of narrative and, in particular, the narrative of the novel.<sup>3</sup> Richardson’s *Clarissa* is a novel whose narrative is wholly the circulation of letters. The letter is a site of revelation and also a means – and object – of exchange. As such, it embodies two central roles of narrative itself. Stories are given and received, and act as a means of telling the listener about the speaker. In *Clarissa*, letters have all the charge of a personal, intimate, private expression – promising access to the inner life of the writer, in an era where the combination of religion and the new psychology of the Enlightenment together give a considerable authority to such a confessional mode. Yet the writing, sending, control and misplacement of letters also form an integral element in the unfolding story-line, as letters play an instrumental role in the power – and gender – struggles of the novel.

In the Greek novels – as in many modern works, too – the letter *within* the narrative is a favourite device, that allows for special revelation, plot-twists of misplaced communications and the promise of secret – or falsely constructed – truths (a role enacted since Euripides’ *Hippolytus* at least<sup>4</sup>). Cicero’s *Letters* have a special place in the documentary archive of the

<sup>2</sup> The easiest place to find details and bibliography is the introduction to the Loeb edition of Benner and Fobes (1949).

<sup>3</sup> On epistolarity, see Johnson (1980) 110–46; Kauffman (1986); Derrida (1987); Goldsmith (1989); Kauffman (1992); Cook (1996); on *Clarissa*, see Castle (1982); Eagleton (1982); Gillis (1984); Favret (1993); Watson (1994).

<sup>4</sup> Scholars argue whether the ‘bitter signs’ sent with Bellerophon in the *Iliad* constitute the ‘first’ such destructive letter: see Rosenmeyer (2001a) for a statement of such a case. Nothing in my argument depends on where you place the origin of this long tradition.

Roman republic: they have repeatedly prompted readers to produce *the* narrative of his exile, his political career, his relationships – as if the letter were a transparent or at least especially privileged access to the truth of the great man's thought and life.<sup>5</sup> They certainly make up an engrossing demonstration of the rhetorical construction of an orator's self-presentation, now from outside the courtroom and Senate. Even Seneca's philosophical letters demand a reading that seeks a coherent system of thought – and demand also an inward, reflective scrutiny for which the letter is a particularly suitable vehicle. In Greek and Latin writing, as in the modern novel, letters, individually or in sequence or framed by a wider story, seem a particular type of revelatory narrative whose exchange and reading becomes a significant model of the construction and reception of meaning. There is even a 'novel in letters' – *Chion of Heracleia* – which tells of a young man's assassination of the tyrant Clearchus through his letters to friends, the tyrant himself and Plato.<sup>6</sup> Letters are good for doing narrative.

Yet Philostratus' letters seem to resist any such reading. These letters as a collection make no attempt to produce a narrative tale. There are scarcely any names. There is a writer – an 'ego' – but he has almost no markers of characterisation – and what markers there are, are often stridently contradictory. The 'dramatic situation' demonstrates little consistency across different letters. No one to my knowledge has ever attempted to produce the 'story of Philostratus' love affairs' from these letters, though that hunt for biographical narrative has so often been a standard move for sequences of poems like that of Catullus, or for the first-person prose works of even a writer as self-masking as Lucian. Even individual letters of Philostratus have few signs of development, narrative interest, or plot line. The same letter is addressed to different figures in different manuscripts. These are erotic letters without a Love Story. The letters can be read in any order: any juxtaposition will make a difference, of course, and there are letters on similar themes – roses, eyes, feet – which may invite at least superficial connection (and who can read without striving to connect?).<sup>7</sup> But there is no loss of comprehension, no cross-referencing missed by dipping in and out of the collection – except, as we will see, the very sense of anthology and contradiction. These letters are discrete moments. It's not hard to appreciate why the manuscript tradition could look like it does.

<sup>5</sup> See Beard (2002) and Hutchinson (1998).

<sup>6</sup> For discussion and bibliography, see Rosenmeyer (2001a) 234–54.

<sup>7</sup> See Rosenmeyer (2001a) 322–38, the only useful general discussion of the letters; and Walker (1992) on looking.

The oddity of Philostratus is most tellingly evident, however, when we put him in the context of the contemporary intellectual output of the Second Sophistic.<sup>8</sup> Most English-speaking readers encounter Philostratus' *Letters* first in Francis Fobes' *Loeb* edition, which reasonably sets him together with Alciphron's and Aelian's *Letters*. (The dates and provenance of Alciphron are uncertain, but most would be happy to place him as an older contemporary of Philostratus. Aelian is given a pen-portrait by Philostratus in *Lives of the sophists* and was probably a slightly older contemporary. Little said here will depend on any precise interrelated dates or intertextual connections between the three.) Alciphron offers four books of *Letters of fishermen, farmers, parasites and courtesans*; Aelian produces one book of *Letters of farmers*. In each of these collections, we are asked to read – to overhear – an exchange between men or women who are fundamentally different from the projected audience of sophisticated and cultured Greek-educated gentlemen of the empire. The writers and recipients of the letters are largely if fuzzily located in the period of Menandrian comedy – that is, in an imaginary world of around the fourth century BC populated by familiar stock characters in restricted social settings, centred on the bourgeois household, where the city emerges as a contrasting frame for the rural expectations of farmers and fishermen or as a stage on which the comfortably off play out their erotic or culinary intrigues. Some letters, especially those of courtesans, utilise historical characters – although they are also characters instantly familiar and marked by an easy stereotyping (the world's best-known whore, the world's greatest sculptor and so on). Taking a cue from Menander, the scenes of Alciphron and Aelian do not have the political edge of Virgil's *Eclogues* or the philosophical exemplarity of Dio's pastoral interludes, or the intellectual sharpness of Lucian's street-wise satire.

With Alciphron and Aelian the *pleasure* of reading the letters comes from the light wit and easy projection of watching the characters, as they try to deal with a world which we know to be more complex, and which we see in one-sided and carefully fragmentary vignettes. Each letter – or sometimes pairs or sequences of letters – offers a little portrait of a crisis point – often trivial – in the daily life of figures who are other to the reader. With the fishermen and farmers, the vista of rural life is made humorous or touching or quaint by the reader's amused distance from it. *Letters of parasites* have a sharper view of social exchange in the Empire, where

<sup>8</sup> For the general context, see for discussion and extensive further bibliography, e.g., Bowersock (1969); Bowie (1970); Anderson (1989); Flinterman (1995); Swain (1996); Goldhill (ed.) (2001); Whitmarsh (2001a).

client–patron relations are an everyday expression of the complex and hierarchical power relations of Roman authority. Looking at such potentially difficult interactions through the eyes of the marginal, self-interested and often buffoonish parasites produces the humour here. With *Letters of courtesans*, there is the added lustre of prurience, and the added distance of a more systematic historical frame. Erotic humour, together with the promise of revealing the secret feelings of the Courtesan – ever a male fantasy – are joined with some more intricate and extended narrative sequences. All the letters provide testimony of the rhetoric school's twin loves of the artfully constructed, suggestive narrative vignette, and *ethopoieia*, 'the representation of character', through the miniaturist portrait.

A single example will have to be enough to make that very general description more vivid and to provide a useful contrast for Philostratus. Letters 2–5 of *Letters of courtesans* all feature the *hetaira* Bacchis along with some of the best-known figures of fourth-century BC scandal. I will be looking at Letter 5, but let us first briefly consider how it is led into by Letters 2, 3 and 4.

Letter 2 is addressed to Bacchis by Glycera, another courtesan, who worries because her lover Menander (the playwright) is visiting Bacchis' neck of the woods. She is suspicious that the combination of Menander's sex-drive (he is *daimoniōs erōtikos*, 'amazingly into Eros') and Bacchis' irresistible charms (she could melt the most gloomy and glowering of men, *skuthrōpotatos*) will prove too much. She begs forgiveness for her 'professional woman's jealousy' but begs her to keep her hands off. Gossipy, revealing, sexy and about celebrities – this letter, like a modern newspaper column, encourages an easy prurience in its readers.

In Letter 3, Bacchis herself writes politely to the orator Hypereides who has successfully defended the famous *hetaira*, Phryne, in court against a charge of impiety. He has won the gratitude of courtesans everywhere, and if only he would publish his speech, they would erect a gold statue to him. Part of the fun here is imagining how unsuitable it would be for an honorific statue of a distinguished male orator to be funded by a collection of courtesans (especially a distinguished orator who has such a role in the history of rhetoric). *Hetairai* were often artistic models – Phryne herself was the model for Praxiteles' Aphrodite of Knidos – perhaps the most celebrated sexy statue of ancient Greece. And they might have a statue of themselves erected.<sup>9</sup> But they weren't the patrons of arts quite like this, nor

<sup>9</sup> Phryne's statue was made in gold by Praxiteles, funded by her neighbours and dedicated at Delphi, according to Athenaeus xiii 591b.

given to organised, formal celebrations of male citizens.<sup>10</sup> (It's no counter-example that Herodotus tells the exotic story of Rhodopis, a prostitute who reportedly funded a pyramid in Egypt.<sup>11</sup>) The historical background of Hypereides' defence is well known, but barely alluded to here. The letter playfully enjoys its behind-the-scenes look at grand classical history.

*Letter 4* is a more intimate and raunchy letter from Bacchis to Phryne herself, congratulating her on her escape from court and on her new lover, her lawyer Hypereides. Bacchis knows that Euthias – her prosecutor, who had been motivated by sexual jealousy – still wants to be her lover, and she begs Phryne not to give in and thus give 'all us courtesans' a bad name. She ends with a neat mixture of rhetorical theory and an engaging recollection of the most famous moment of Phryne's trial – the baring of her breasts to the jury, who, awe-struck, let her off: 'don't believe people who tell you that the orator would have been useless without the display of your breasts', she declares, 'What his rhetoric provided was the Perfect Moment (*kairos*) for that very thing'. *Kairos* – 'timing' – is a watch-word of rhetorical theory, rhetorically manipulated by the courtesan here to defend Hypereides' skill. This letter and *Letter 3* lead directly into *Letter 5*, which is also concerned with the aftermath of this famous trial.

It's written by Bacchis to Myrrhine, another *hetaira*, who *was* sleeping with Hypereides but has now left him for Euthias – whom we met in the previous letter as the prosecutor of Phryne. Athenaeus tells us that Myrrhine was the 'most expensive' of courtesans who was set up by Hypereides in Athens although he was still in love with Phryne, a story that emerged during the trial, and so the dramatic setting of this letter must be after *Letters 3* and *4*<sup>12</sup>:

#### *Bacchis to Myrrhine*

By Mistress Aphrodite, I pray you never have the fortune to get a better lover, but may Euthias whom you cling to now, be your life's mate. Poor stupid woman, destroying yourself with such a monster! Perhaps you trust in your beauty? Yes, of *course* he will love Myrrhine – a man who spurned Phryne! It looks like you want to needle Hypereides because he is paying you less attention now. Euthias has got the courtesan he deserves, and you've got the lover who suits you. Ask him for something – it'll be like you've set fire to a naval base or become a dangerous revolutionary. You should know this: to everyone of us who favours a more benevolent Aphrodite, you are a public enemy!

<sup>10</sup> Phryne was said (Ath. xiii 591d) to have promised to rebuild the walls of Thebes if the citizens would put up an inscription, 'Alexander demolished: Phryne the courtesan rebuilt'. There is no indication this scandalous offer was accepted, but the anecdote must lurk behind this letter's promise.

<sup>11</sup> See Kurke (1999) 220–46. <sup>12</sup> Ath. xiii 590d–591c.

Bacchis vitriolically attacks Myrrhine for giving in to the hated Euthias – and for not seeing that he is a monster, a man who would see any request as a wild or violent outrage (that is the definition, for the *hetaira*, of a monster: the equivalent term of praise, as in the last line, is ‘benevolent’, *philanthrōpos*; ‘giving’ is a crucial area of anxiety in the erotic and financial negotiations with a *hetaira*). The terms in which Euthias’ outrage are imagined are archetypal rhetorical shibboleths of the classical city – attacking the naval dockyards or overthrowing the constitution. This letter is typical of the Atticising look to the past which so dominates the writing of the Second Sophistic. The details of the row are sharply hinted at – but the reader needs to fill in the gaps, to project and complete the story with her own erotic expectations and historical knowledge. The letter gives a snapshot of one side of an erotic intrigue involving familiar, named characters from the scandalous literature of the fourth century; but it gives an insider tale, made more titillating by being courtesan to courtesan. It’s basic to the titillation, and to the reader’s amused distance, that this is a third-person narrative that we are overhearing, as it were. The vignette of historical fiction invites the reader to engage in its imaginary scene. This is a letter with a narrative, which also prompts the reader to explore and expand the narrative for herself.

By way of contrast, here is Philostratus’ *Letter 2*, which – and this certainly emphasises the contrast – is one of the shorter letters in the collection:

I have sent you a garland of roses, not because I honour you (though I do that too!). It is to do a favour for the roses, so that they may not wither.

It is immediately obvious how different this letter is (which is partly why it is selected as my first example). It is a first-person letter, but there is no indication in it of the author, except the fact that he is male, as the participle *timōn*, ‘honour[ing]’ indicates. Some manuscripts add ‘to a woman’ as an addressee, some ‘to a boy’. That is, not even the gender, let alone the name or character of the recipient, is indicated. As for a juicy story, there are only the first words, ‘I have sent’ some roses. There is no subject position for the recipient, no imagined reception or response. There is certainly no historical knowledge presupposed, and there is no recognition of any circumstantial details of time or place. Unlike the Alciphron letter, it does not require the reader to expand and explore a narrative through titillating gaps. The poem is solipsistic in its focus on the writer’s conceit of how his own gift-giving is to be most beautifully imaged. It is hard to see what makes this a letter, rather than a lyric poem, say.

Many letters *do* imagine more of an exchange, in that they are drafted in response to an imagined stimulus. Here's the beginning of *Letter 4*, addressed to a male:

You blame me because I did not send you roses. But it was not because I am mean-spirited or a chap who doesn't know about desire (*anerastos*). I saw that you are red-haired and garlanded with your own roses and have no need of flowers from others. Homer did not arrange a garland on the head of red-haired Meleager, since this would have been fire on fire and a twin torch on that torch . . .

This is one of very many letters about roses as gifts – an anthology, in all senses. *Letter 21* changes the gender of the addressee from male to female and begins 'You have red hair and ask for roses. But . . .'. *Letter 4* does presuppose a stimulus from outside 'You blame me . . .', but the whole letter is again a commentary on the writer's response. From the conceit of the colour clash of red on red, he moves to a familiar literary strategy of finding a Homeric parallel and extending it by a sophisticated and allusive gloss. The letter leads the reader not into an imagined erotic scenario, but into the musing of cultivated glossing of literary reflection. Cultured self-expression. Red-haired Meleager is not portrayed with a garland in Homer, not just because of the colour, but because Meleager had a unique fate. His mother had a brand of wood, which, if burned, would destroy Meleager (and she does indeed burn it). So the 'fire' of the roses' colour leads to the 'brand' unique to Meleager. The rose on Meleager's red head would image the fire that will burn the brand and his body.

The letter ends with a piece of mythological antiquarianism: there is a story which Cyprians and Phoenicians tell that the rose's colour was from the blood of Aphrodite who pricked herself on its thorns:

Let us not be garlanded with blood! Let us flee from a flower that does not spare even Aphrodite!

The rejection of the rose has its mythic justification (just as the repeated gift of the rose does; the anthology of variation always trumps any consistency of position: this is one way in which erotic self-expression is necessarily formed through *paideia*). But the 'you' of the first line has joined the 'I' of the letter to make finally a 'we'. Yet it is hard to find a letter which has any more developed or developing sense of a relationship or exchange than this rather weak exhortation to togetherness. So when Philostratus – or the 'ego' of the letter – sees a boy, it seems he will open a conversation (*Letter 5*): 'From what land are you? Tell me, boy, since you are so untouched by desire.' But the letter goes on to imagine a string of potential answers: 'Will

you say from Sparta? Then don't you know about Hyacinth . . . Perhaps you're from Thessaly? Did not Achilles teach you . . . ? From Athens?' and so on. It doesn't really matter where the boy is from. Any answer will do for the *copia* of the orator who will have a mythic model for any occasion. Like the whole collection, this letter is an anthology of potential responses from the store of education of the cultured observer. (The list of mythic tales finds a ready and extended parallel in Philostratus' *Imagines*.) What the orator wants, however, is 'a wound', the metaphorical sign and symptom of the poetic lover<sup>13</sup> – it is the orator's response and his feelings wholly that are presented. These are expressions of *erōs*, but they rarely seem to invite an answer. In a classical Greek context – though not in the novel and other writing of the empire – *eros* is normally and normatively asymmetrical, but this is an extreme version of one-way desire. The letter traces not so much a Love Story as a series of potential remarks to an unknown and unspeaking lover. If the letter is the icon of narrative as exchange, these letters seem to return each potential act of exchange to a dramatisation of the conceits of writing.

Occasionally, there is a more developed relationship adumbrated. *Letters* 36 and 37 are the first examples we have in Western erotic narrative of a foot-fetishist. 'Do not ever wear shoes', begins *Letter* 36. Complete nakedness, he continues, is not as important as the absolute requirement of bare feet: 'Keep your feet ready for those who desire to kiss them!' It concludes with 'Walk softly and leave a trace of yourself – you are destined to give even the earth the pleasure of your beauty'. The very soil is to be pleased by a naked foot. *Letter* 18 gives similar, though even more ecstatic, advice now to a boy instead of a woman: 'The dust will welcome your tread as it would grass, and we will all kiss your footprints. O harmony of dearest feet! O new flowers! O shoots from earth! O kiss cast on the ground!' *Letter* 37 ends with an equally ecstatic address to the woman's feet: 'O unbound feet! O free beauty! Thrice happy and blessed am I, if you will walk all over me!' Although at least some form of exchange is imagined in each of these letters, it is again remarkably limited. The object of desire is not named, described, allowed any imagined words or response. All that matters is that his or her feet are naked for kissing and for walking on the writer.

It is letters like these that prompt this remarkable judgement from Francis Fobes, the editor of the Loeb edition of Philostratus: 'Many of the letters are written with a strange, brooding spirit that almost cloaks the occasional grotesqueries – so long as one reads to oneself and sympathetically – but

<sup>13</sup> See most famously Callimachus *Ep.* 43 Pfeiffer = 13 Gow-Page.



utterly fails to cloak the grotesqueries when one reads to someone else.<sup>14</sup> I think that this is a brilliant insight into the performative value of Philostratus' *Letters*. The 'strange and brooding spirit' captures well enough both the oddness and the solipsistic obsessiveness of the writing, but, above all, it is the sense of *failure of exchange* that Fobes is concerned about. These are Letters which he recommends should be read *by yourself* and with 'sympathy' – a correspondence of feeling. But these are *not* Letters to be sent: you are not to read them to a friend or a lover. *That* sort of correspondence would be grotesque, suggests Fobes.

This goes to the heart of the issue of the performativity of Philostratus' *Letters*. With Alciphron and Aelian, we saw how the exchange between named characters, specified and objectified by its historical contextualisation, allowed the reader to maintain a position of distance – while the narrative gaps encouraged an engagement as the reader fills in the story and the characterisation, and from that dynamic of engagement and distance came both pleasure and humour. The form of the letter collection took its authority – an authority playfully handled – from the examples of letters circulated under the name of historical celebrities (and for us the paradigms are the Latin authors Cicero, Pliny and Seneca, though Philostratus would have turned first to the letters of Apollonius of Tyana or of Plato, I expect). The sense of insider knowledge is integral to the power of the letter collection. Philostratus' collection of erotic letters, however, is the *only* example we have of fictional, *anonymous* letters, anonymous for the sender and usually for the receiver, too. This changes the reader contract – the dynamic between reader and letter. The 'ego' lacks the markers that produce distance, objectification, context. The collection as a whole and many of the individual letters resist narrativisation – the reader is not encouraged, as was the case with Alciphron, to expand the fragmentary narrative from a specific historical context. What insider knowledge is proffered? *Letters* may rely on erotic stereotypes, and play many variations on themes of these erotic stereotypes (like the gift of roses); but there is little sense of any developing relationship or active exchange between the 'ego' of the letter and the recipient of the letter. Where Alciphron's letters triangulated desire between Bacchis, Glycera and Menander, or between Bacchis, Hypereides, Myrrhine, Phryne and Euthias, here it is the desiring subject that receives the obsessive focus. The 'sympathetic reading' which Fobes imagines is a personal, individual, moment of the expression of emotion. Reading (as) the 'ego' of these letters is more like reading a lyric poem than a letter.

<sup>14</sup> Benner and Fobes (1949) 393.

This may give some insight into how these letters function. I suggest that these letters produce a sort of handbook or manual for the desiring subject. They aim to produce for the reader an anthology of rhetorical self-positionings. They teach you how to speak the role of the educated lover, the *erastēs pepaideumenos* – how to avoid being *anerastos*, 'not knowing about desire', as I translated it on p. 294 above. *Letters* are designed to be absorbed by the reader as paradigms not so much of Love Stories or of other crises (as with Alciphron), but of self-expression. They each dwell on an aestheticised moment of desire (as do many lyric poems, of course). They are to help you express yourself as a Greek lover. The ready display of a circumscribed mythology from Greek tradition, and the variety of strategies for self-expression within the time-honoured tropology of *erōs*, are expressed in the elegant Atticisation of this literary language, to create a pose, a self-presentation of the man who knows how to do desire in a Greek way. The anthology of moments is there to be chosen from, dipped into, referred back to, used and re-used. The very anthologising is part of *Letters'* functioning as an education into the gestures of a lover's self-representation: the variety and fragmentation integral to this type of anthology offer shards of erotic expressivity. These letters acculturate the reader to a privileged articulation of the Greek self under the sway of Eros.

This seems to me to be one way in which Philostratus' *Letters* may relate closely to the Greek intellectual environment in the empire at this period – when, as many critics have discussed, both the intricate relation of contemporary Greeks to the classical past, and the performance of self-presentation in political and social environments, are equally engrossing and mutually interrelated concerns.<sup>15</sup> It also helps us specify a little more precisely how difficult it is to fit these letters snugly into the traditions of classical literary production. Compare, for example, Ovid's *Heroides* as erotic letters, or Seneca's philosophical *Epistles* as an instructive manual. The *Heroides* are letters which indirectly and wittily play games with an *ars amatoria*, but the historical contextualisation of the characters also allows for the distance and intellectual gamesmanship of a type even more sophisticated than Alciphron's historical vignettes, just as Ovid's narrative techniques engage the reader in a quite different manner from Philostratus' brief vignettes. Seneca's philosophical epistles are undoubtedly instructive and set out to educate the reader into a philosophical system. They are committed, however, to a logic of consistent argumentation, and aim to

<sup>15</sup> See the works cited in n. 8, and Gleason (1995); Alcock *et al.* (2001); Goldhill (2002) 60–107, 246–93.

persuade the reader as a surrogate recipient of the letters. The dynamic of exchange seems quite different from Philostratus' *Letters*. Philostratus has his own particular take on the letter, it would seem, as a genre.

Let me take one final look at this acculturation into the educated self-expression of a lover through one of the longer letters. It is a highly sophisticated piece, which shows well how a particular form of *paideia* is integral to the pose of the lover. My example is *Letter 13*, addressed to a boy. It begins with a plea:

A beauty, if he is wild, is a fire; if gentle, a shining light. So don't burn me; but please save me. Hold the Altar of Pity in your soul, and gain a firm friend by a transient gift, and thus outrun time – which alone casts down beauties, just as democrats cast down tyrants.

This is an elegant bricolage of poetical imagery and cultural reference (whose very generality is marked by the opening 'A beauty', *ho kalos*, the archetypal generalising descriptive term). Love is a 'fire' (*pur*) which can burn excruciatingly, but the speaker hopes for a 'shining light' (*phōs*), which in poetry is often a metaphor for a 'saviour' and which thus helps prompt the hope to be saved (*sōze*). The Altar of Pity (which also pops up in *Letter 39*) was in Athens, which exemplar of democracy gives a specific rhetorical context for the political simile of casting down tyrants, a rather grand comparison for what time does to beauty. All this frames the carefully coded request. A firm friendship, that aim of philosophy and moralising poetry alike, is offered in return for an *ōkumoros dōrea*, a 'transient gift'. *Ōkumoros* is the term applied first to Achilles and then to all those heroes of the state who died young.<sup>16</sup> It makes a link – a persuasive connection – between the fading of beauty and the briefness of the pleasure requested; but its very grandness as a term self-consciously adds an ironically heroic note to his plea for what is after all a sexual favour.

This plea immediately is given justification:

For I fear – I will speak my mind – that while you delay and hesitate, your beard may arise and cloud the grace of your face, as the build-up of clouds hides the sun.

The speaker's worry is that the boy's beard will grow while he prevaricates! The trouble with telling a boy to 'outrun time' is that even the telling wastes precious moments, as the water-clock keeps dripping on the inevitable journey towards maturity. There are very many Hellenistic epigrams which

<sup>16</sup> *Il* 18. 95 is the *locus classicus*; for the epitaphic use see, e.g., *Anth. Pal* 7. 334, 373, 608, 624, 644; also of women 7.348, 486; and in a more ludic vein, 7.700. Philostratus also uses the term of a rose in *Ep.* 4.

obsessively play in a similar ludic way with the concern of the onset of hair and (thus) loss of *charis*, the 'grace' of a beauty's face.<sup>17</sup> What looks like a rather overheated witticism here, however, turns to a sudden and vivid dramatisation:

Why should I fear what I can already see? The down is creeping, the cheeks are bristling, the whole face is flowering. Aaargh! In the delay we have grown old, you because you did not wish to guess what I wanted earlier, I because I shrank to ask.

We are close here to Fobes' sense of the grotesque as the speaker looks on in horror as the boy's face sprouts before his eyes. Again, the literary modelling is taken from the world of Hellenistic epigram, with its love of baroque and paradoxical twists on the thematics of desire – and it also recalls for us at least Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and its witty defamiliarisation of the myths of transformation. (The vividness of the description also links neatly to Philostratus' *Imagines*, where the exclamatory recognition of such visual surprise is a commonplace.) The delay from the beginning of the letter has been too long: the hairs have started to appear. It looks like the 'if only', a lover's disappointment. Except – of course – there is still the smallest window of opportunity for the lover:

So before Spring wholly departs and Winter sets in, give yourself, by Eros, and by this beard, by which I will have to swear tomorrow.

It turns out that it is now or never: tomorrow the beard will have come and it will be by that beard rather than by Desire that the lover will have to swear. (*Letter* 15, however, shows how that swearing 'by a beard' itself can be made into a love letter, as the lover's rhetoric takes yet another pose.) The whole argument of *Letter* 13 has thus been designed to make the lover's request as insistent and pressing as possible. *This* is the perfect and final moment for giving in . . .

*Letter* 13 dramatises a seduction scene as if it were unfolding before our eyes, though it gives again only the response of the lover, as he seeks to find the plea to make the boy give in. A letter is by definition an exchange of deferred gratification, but here the letter's very time of narration is thematised both as the delay which frustrates the lover, *and* as the inevitable aging which threatens the ephemeral moment of beauty's perfection. The letter's vividness of instant description is both a plea to 'capture the moment' and a sign of the letter's own paradoxical impossibility. The sophistication of its argument is matched by the bricolage of poetry's metaphors and

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., *Greek Anthology* xii 12, 13, 25, 26, 27, 30, 31, 33, 35, 39 (and so on).

tropes for its self-expression. The self-aware dramatisation of the scene of seduction through writing is more reminiscent of Ovid, say, and the *Amores* in particular, than it is of the prose epistolary tradition. We might almost say that Philostratus' *Letters* recapture for prose the privileged expression of the erotic tradition of lyric and elegiac poetry.

We have no evidence of how ancient readers treated Philostratus' *Letters*, but there is one celebrated writer who seems to me to use Philostratus' collection in exactly the way I have been outlining – not to become Greek, but to find an aestheticised (self-)expression of *eros*. This is Ben Jonson, the Elizabethan poet and playwright. Here is his famous poem, entitled 'Song: To Celia':

Drink to me, only with thine eyes,  
And I will pledge with mine;  
Or leave a kiss but in the cup,  
And I'll not look for wine.  
The thirst that from the soul doth rise  
Doth ask a drink divine:  
But might I of Jove's nectar sup,  
I would not change for thine.  
I sent thee late a rosy wreath,  
Not so much honouring thee  
As giving it a hope that there  
It could not wither'd be.  
But thou thereon didst only breathe,  
And send'st it back to me;  
Since when it grows, and smells, I swear,  
Not of itself, but thee!

The third quatrain, 'I sent thee late a rosy wreath', should be instantly recognisable as a close rendition of *Letter* 2, with which I began my discussion: 'I have sent you a garland of roses', as my translation began (p. 293). This whole poem, however, is a cento of Philostratean letters.<sup>18</sup> The first stanza is a supple translation from *Letter* 33. This letter begins with an elaborate conceit which asserts that a glass cup gets its liquid shimmers from the lover's eyes, but even so such vessels are soulless and without movement in comparison. Therefore, 'set the cups down and let them lie, especially from fear of their fragility. Drink to me only with your eyes. This

<sup>18</sup> Jonson may have made use of Bonfini's 1606 Latin version of the *Letters*. In the Renaissance editions, the letters he most obviously uses are numbered as 23, 24, 25 and 30, 31. For the history of Jonson's text see Burrows' commentary in the forthcoming complete edition of Jonson to be published by Cambridge University Press under the general editorship of David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson.

is what Zeus tasted when he appointed his beautiful wine-bearer! And if you want, do not waste the wine, but fill the cup with water only and then bring it to your lips and fill it with kisses and give it to those who beg for it. For nobody is so unknowing about desire (*anerastos*) to long for the gift of Dionysus after the vines of Aphrodite.' Jonson's famous first line is a close translation, while the rest of the stanza reworks Philostratus' more wordy conceit (while dropping Philostratus' typical nods to simple Greek mythological exempla, and the cultural specificity of mixing water with wine). Zeus will make an appearance as 'Jove' in line 7 – though it is interesting that while the manuscript of the poem there reads 'Love's', all editors print 'Jove's', presumably recognising the continuation of Philostratus' image of Zeus' drinking with Ganymede into the second stanza.<sup>19</sup>

The second stanza ('The thirst . . .') seems to manipulate the previous letter (*Letter* 32): 'First of all, when I see you, I am thirsty, and, against my will, I stand, holding back even my cup. I do not bring it to my lips; I know I am drinking you.' This is the least directly indebted by far of Jonson's stanzas. The fourth stanza ('But thou thereon . . .') follows *Letter* 46, addressed to a boy who slept on his lover's gift of roses: 'If you want to do your friend a favour, send back the remainder of them to me: for they smell no longer of roses only but of you too.' In this lyric poem, then, each quatrain takes off from a Philostratean letter, absorbing and rewriting the conceits into Jonson's self-presentation as lover.

In this re-use of Philostratus' erotic *Letters* to produce an aestheticised moment of lyric poetry, Jonson is an exemplary reader of Philostratus, I suggest. The ease with which the letters become a lyric poem, a song, is telling. (It is not something that readily happens to other classical letters.) It may not be by chance that Elizabethan court culture is itself obsessed with the rhetoric of self-presentation, and especially with the rhetorical performance of the lover<sup>20</sup>: it is a literary – and erotic – culture especially receptive to Philostratus' particularity. Jonson, as Fobes suggests one should, has sympathetically read Philostratus, and refashioned it into a personal moment of lyric expression. These are not letters for sending, but for helping the reader express a 'correspondence of feeling'.

So far I have been concentrating on the letters without names which are specifically connected with *Eros*. But there are several letters which do have addressees named, very few of which also concern *erōs*. The only letter to name a beloved is *Letter* 62. But even here it is only in a quotation. This

<sup>19</sup> The error is merely scribal – misreading the majuscule 'I' as the minuscule 'l'.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Greenblatt (1980); Barrell (1988) 18–43; Berry (1989).

letter imagines that the lover has sent his beloved an apple, not an apple of discord (*eris*) like the one which started the Trojan war, but an apple of love (*erōs*), like the famous inscribed apple in the story of Akontios and Kudippe. This apple will have an inscription on it, “Euippe, I love you” – to which a reply is requested “And I you”. This is, thus, also one of the odd letters which imagines any form of reply. The name immediately provokes a possibility of further exchange – although even here it is only imagined, and in the form of a well-known story from myth and Hellenistic literature. The whole business may indeed be suggested by the fact that the name ‘Euippe’ is only two letters away from ‘Kudippe’. But the majority of named addressees are rather more famous. There are letters to well-known philosophers, actors, writers and even one to the emperor’s wife, Julia Domna. It is these which I wish to consider briefly by way of conclusion to this chapter.

Although the occasional letter to a named person concerns *erōs*, most have quite other subjects. This also complicates any sense of a collection we might have for Philostratus’ *Letters*. The named letters are included under the general heading ‘Erotic Letters’ but are barely connected to them. Most of these letters are addressed to people with very famous names, though we are rarely sure if the person addressed is that famous figure or someone else of the same name: the material in each letter is too general to make identification clear. So one Chariton receives this (*Letter 66*):

Do you think that the Greeks will remember your words when you are dead? A person who is nothing when he is, what will he be when he is nothing?

The letter puns insultingly on the Greek idiom of ‘being a nobody’/‘not existing’ (*mēden einai*). It promises oblivion for the *logoi* of this man. Is it the novelist Chariton? Or another writer of the same name? The insult is applicable to anyone who writes with an eye on posterity.

Consider the three letters to Epictetus. It is usually assumed that this Epictetus is a rival sophist or some other such performer who loves the applause of his crowd in Athens, rather than the famous Stoic philosopher. *Letter 65* is a one-liner: ‘Fear a people with whom you are very powerful.’ *Letters 42* and *69* are both on the dangers of loving applause. *Letter 42* is another single sentence: ‘If you like stupid clapping, you should think storks, who clap their wings when we pass, a more reasonable assembly than the Athenians, since the storks don’t ask for anything in return.’ *Letter 69* stretches to two sentences, but has one insulting idea: ‘The initiates of Rhea go mad, deafened by the din of instruments. That’s from cymbals and oboes, but the Athenians so knock you out of your senses with their

applause that you forget who you are and of whom you are born.' Each of these letters offers an insult to someone who loves performance's successes. They are – like the erotic letters on roses, say – variations on a theme, a resource for a rhetorician's phrase book. In this way, the letters with named addressees demonstrate a similar functioning to the unnamed letters. It is certainly impossible to put together a picture of the networking of empire or of a philosophy or practice of personal politics from these letters, as it is from the letters of Cicero, Pliny, Libanius, Synesius and so on.

One of the most interesting letters, however, is the letter addressed to Julia Domna (*Letter* 73). It is the longest in the collection, and is concerned with literary culture. It begins in the classical city of the fourth century BC, with a long, periodic sentence of a type rarely seen in the collection:

No, the divine Plato did not *malign* the sophists, even though some firmly hold that he did; rather he was competitive (*philotimōs*) with them, since they went around bewitching small and great cities like Orpheus or Thamyras: he was as far from maligning them as competition (*philotimia*) is from jealousy (*phthonos*): for jealousy nourishes mean natures, but competition stimulates the brilliant, and a man maligns what he cannot obtain for himself, but is competitive towards what he can arrange better or no worse himself.

This opening is very different in tone and content from the Erotic Letters, though certainly reminiscent of the other works of Philostratus, especially *Lives of the sophists*. It is a paradigmatic piece of Second Sophistic self-presentation (as well as an introduction to the literary discussion to follow). The opening phrase sets us in the middle of a literary discussion. Plato is called 'divine', a term that immediately and self-consciously marks the long tradition of Platonism and the author's relation to it. The author takes up a polemical and even paradoxical position on Plato, which is a classic sophistic gesture in itself: Plato didn't really resent or malign the sophists. This is marked as a surprising position explicitly by pointing out that some people are strongly of the opposite opinion (which is indeed easy to imagine, granted what Plato writes about the sophists). This apparently counter-intuitive reading is defended by a typical rhetorical generalisation about *ēthos* and the correct vocabulary of judgement. Plato could be called 'competitive' but not 'envious'. *Philotimia* is one of the catch-words of the rhetorical explanation of behaviour – the pursuit of honour and position is an ever-present motive in the agonistic world of Greek culture. This *philotimia* (which Plato might not have held up as a simple good for himself, I suspect) is because of the sophists' power to 'bewitch' (*thelgein*) the cities of Greece. *Thelgein* is the *mot juste* for the deceptive power of



rhetoric – which Plato deplored and used – and for the power of incantatory poetry (hence the mythological parallels with Orpheus and Thamyras).<sup>21</sup> This rhetoric of Philostratus displays his elegant *paideia* with every strategy, and invites complicity with its self-positioning. We are to enjoy watching the *pepaideumenos* critic at work.

Plato, continues Philostratus, adopted the strategies of the sophists and in particular was keen not to let Gorgias be more Gorgianic than himself (*to heautou ameinon gorgiazein*). He also echoes Protagoras and Hippias. Although many writers imitated particular individuals, Gorgias had an amazing number of brilliant followers. Gorgias is gradually emerging from this build-up as the hero of the letter. In Thessaly, the very name for rhetoric was ‘to do a Gorgias’ – *gorgiazein*. When Gorgias spoke at Olympia against the barbarians, the ‘whole of Greece’ was won over. Aspasia was said to have sharpened Pericles’ tongue against a Gorgianic whetstone. Critias, Thucydides, Aeschines are all explained to be disciples in elements of their style. This last is addressed more specifically to the empress:

Aeschines, too, whom you recently discussed as curtailing his dialogues not without certainty, did not hesitate to be Gorgianic (*gorgiazein*) in his piece about Thargelia.

Philostratus refers to the empress’ own literary critical exercise with an ingratiating nod, before moving on to praise how Gorgias’ technical development of the ‘sudden break’ – *apostasis* – and ‘swift transition’ – *prosbolē* – are evidently influential even among tragic poets. This encomium of Gorgias through a swift history of classical writing leads to a surprising conclusion:

So, your majesty, you too persuade Plutarch, the boldest of the Greeks, not be annoyed by the sophists and not to slander Gorgias. If you don’t persuade him, you do know – such is your wisdom and intelligence – what name to apply to a man like that. I could tell you, but I can’t.

This appears to refer to Plutarch, author of *Lives* and *Moralia*, who does indeed attack the Sophists in his writings. But Plutarch had been dead for over a century. The personalised appeal to the empress, as literary critic supreme, to have a word with him, can’t be taken at face value. It would be easy to see it as just a mannered expression of literary judgement, which combines praise of the empress for her intelligence with a courtier’s coy refusal to speak out his own negative feeling in too gross a manner in order to defend the sophists against an authoritative judgement of one of his own great predecessors. This has, after all, been a letter also about ‘competition’,

<sup>21</sup> See Walsh (1984); Goldhill (1991) 64–6.

'envy' and 'influence', and this final address makes vivid such feelings in the same context of the long Greek literary tradition with which the letter opened. But I think there is something else happening here than merely a rather mannered piece of literary criticism.

Philostratus here is representing himself not only as close to the empress, at the centre of the power system of the contemporary empire (like a Seneca or Pliny); he is also constructing a particular view of how tradition works in and through him. He begins with Plato and offers us a potted history of Gorgias' influence on classical rhetoric, philosophy, history and poetry. This turn back to the First Sophistic, and in particular this celebration of Gorgias as the founding-father of rhetoric, are typical of the Second Sophistic, of course, with its obsession with the classical past; but the active linking of the empress and Plutarch, great cultural authority of a former generation, draws the lines between that past and now into an ongoing intellectual correspondence. There is a conversation across the generations which makes Philostratus the present embodiment of that tradition of Greek excellence. (*Lives of the sophists* also brings its history up to today, and circulates it in the easily exchanged form of anecdotes to bring its particular view of the intellectual past into the contemporary cultural world.) This letter is fashioning the *paideia* of Philostratus at the centre of the empire and at the apex of Greek tradition.

This letter should be read next to the introduction to *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, which is also set under the patronage of Julia Domna, and to *Lives of the sophists* with its construction of a critical intellectual tradition. As such, it forms a bridge between *Letters* and the main works of Philostratus' corpus. But in one way at least it also acts as a suitable culmination to the collection of *Letters*. I have suggested that the *Erotic Letters* provide a manual for self-expression as a Greek lover within the tropology of classical *eros*. This final letter, however different from those letters in subject matter and style, is also a rhetorical expression of self-position within the tradition of Greek culture. It shows Philostratus in performance, as the letters offer a stage and a script. All these letters thus contribute to our understanding of what it is to be a *pepaideumenos* in empire culture.



VII

*Imagines*



*Colour in Philostratus' Imagines\***Sandrine Dubel*

While Lucian who, along with the two Philostrati, gives the best descriptions of paintings in the imperial period, recognised the importance of colour in painting in his *Portraits* (*Portraits* 7), he elsewhere asserts that 'the precise mixture of colours and their felicitous application, as well as the appropriate use of shadow' depends entirely on the judgement of professional painters, and not on the discourse of a well-informed connoisseur (*Zeuxis* 5). In fact, outside the tradition of the artisan inherited from ancient epic, where the different materials are also chromatic indicators, notations of colour are particularly rare in ancient *ecphrasis*. Philostratus the Younger limits his palette to rare indications in descriptions of the clothes worn by one or two of his heroes, a ball, or someone's head of hair, his most notable description in this domain being one of a representation of Achilles' shield (*Imagines* 10, *Pyrrhus*).

In contrast with this tradition of pictorial *ecphrasis*, his grandfather's *Imagines* already define painting exclusively in terms of colour in the preface: ζωγραφία δὲ ξυμβέβληται . . . ἐκ χρωμάτων, 'painting is imitation by the use of colours' (Preface 2);<sup>1</sup> at no point in the collection does he discuss the use of line or drawing,<sup>2</sup> which appear in several places as an

\* This chapter originated in the seminar 'Painting in the ancient world: texts and contexts', organised by Agnès Rouveret (université Paris X/INHA): see now Rouveret (2006b).

<sup>1</sup> All English translations of Philostratus come from Fairbanks (1931).

<sup>2</sup> Philostratus even twists the traditional periphrasis χρώμα καὶ σχῆμα (or γραμμὴ or γράμμα) at two points. In the first instance, he substitutes the hand for the line as an oxymoron of intellectual activity: 'But the Cupids that work with the saw surpass all conception (ἐννοία) and all skill (σοφία) of hand and colours' (1.16.2). In so doing, he frees painting from all hints of the artisanal (cf. Maffei (1991)) in order to reaffirm its participation in σοφία and λόγος (cf. Preface, 1ff.). Speaking later of Narcissus, he says: 'As for you, however . . . it is no painting that has deceived you, nor are you engrossed (προστέτης, in its dual sense) in a thing of pigments or wax; but you do not realise that the water represents you (ἐκτυπῶσαν σὲ τὸ ὕδωρ) exactly as you are when you gaze upon it, nor do you see through the artifice of the pool' (1.23.3). This reformulation of γραφή with these materials forms an antithesis (an artificial one: the reflection in the water is obviously painted) with

entirely separate field of interest. Such is the entrance of colour into the ancient discussion on painting.

Consequently, Philostratus' gallery is both an exceptional document for art historians<sup>3</sup> and a sort of laboratory for the study of the Greek vocabulary for colour;<sup>4</sup> however, even if his palette indicates a certain pictorial taste – that of an age as much as that of an individual – it reveals first and foremost a literary choice: the colours attributed to the painter by the sophist are perhaps most revealing with regard to his own aesthetic system.

That colour is not a perpetual concern for Philostratus can be seen in the fact that certain paintings in *Imagines* lack colour descriptions entirely, while others are particularly colourful – a diversity of treatment which doubtless arises from the aesthetic of variety in which the work as a whole is conceived. In the same way, when he presents a selection of different pictorial genres (εἶδη ζωγραφίας ἀπαγγέλλομεν, Preface 3),<sup>5</sup> Philostratus chooses different chromatic effects with an eye to avoiding repetition, something which perhaps helps to explain the increasing rarity of colours as we progress through book 2.<sup>6</sup> Many of the descriptions occupy a place in the middle of the scale between the extremes of silence about colour and polychromy, offering only a single spot of colour in what is often a marginal detail: the red of the Satyrs' cheeks (1.21.2), the crimson or golden tunic worn by Dionysus (1.15.2) or Midas (1.22.2), the colour of the bull sacrificed by Palaemon (2.16.3) and so forth. These

the water's inconsistency. Philostratus the Younger, however, returns to a definition based purely on drawing: γραφικὴ ... ἃ λέγειν οἱ ποιηταὶ ἔχουσι, ταῦτ' ἐν τῷ γράμματι σημαίνουσα, 'painting... indicating in the lines of the figures what the poets are able to describe in words' (Preface 6).

<sup>3</sup> The debate surrounding the existence of his Neapolitan gallery is now obsolete: the 'paintings' in Philostratus' gallery are at least convincing and reflect the aesthetic demands of his day: cf. very suggestively Rouveret 2006a, also Ghedini (2000), Abbondanza (2001). He also makes clear in the Preface that these descriptions are to be read in the absence of the actual paintings, for which they act as a substitute; for the rhetoric of *enargeia* in *Imagines* cf. Webb (2006).

<sup>4</sup> The question of the perception and designation of colours in Greek poses numerous problems: we know that very different adjectives can be associated with the same object, while the same term can qualify objects whose colour appears to us unrelated, to the extent that it becomes difficult sometimes to determine to what extent a word actually denotes a colour. To this must be added the relatively limited palette evoked by our texts, in which the colour green is notoriously under-represented, something which led German philologists, following on from Goethe's work, to pose the question of whether the Greeks were not colour blind. Cf. the excellent bibliographical surveys of Irwin (1974), James (1996), ch. 3 and recently Villard (2002), Rouveret (2006b). Since this chapter was written important work on classical Greek painting in Macedonia has changed our understanding of Greek artists' colouring, esp. Brécoulaki (2006b), Descamps (2007).

<sup>5</sup> These do not constitute the determining factor for the presence or absence of colour in a description: the first still-life has five colour references (1.31) while the second has none (2.26). Of the larger compositions, we find no colours mentioned in *Andrians* (1.25) and only one in *A Marsh* (1.9), while *Cupids* (1.6), *Hunters* (1.28) and *Bosporus* (1.12–13) are all very rich in colour words.

<sup>6</sup> Between ten and fifteen descriptions lack any mention of colour (depending on the status one gives elements such as fire and blood), five in book 1 (3, 5, 14, 25) and the rest in the last third of book 2.

spots of colour often serve to highlight an unusual stroke or motif which compliments the painter's *inventio*: the swans 'with the golden bridles' which the Erotes ride in *A Marsh* (1.9.3), the hare held on a lead 'with a purple [ribbon]' at the end of the *Islands* (2.17.14), or the pleasure offered by a facial complexion which runs against the heroic canon, such as that of the Ethiopian shepherds, 'charming with their strange colouring' (ἡδεῖς ἐν τῷ τοῦ χρώματος ἀτόπῳ, 1.29.3). Generally characterised by their brilliance,<sup>7</sup> these rare notations attract the reader's attention as a spot of colour does that of a painting's viewer, producing an effect of *enargeia* which gives the illusion that one is in the presence of the painting: the description here imitates 'the manner in which an image makes one see something' perfectly.<sup>8</sup>

Philostratus' uses of colour appear at times to be more literary than pictorial. Elements connected with the sea, for instance, are qualified by γλαυκός, κυάνεος or ἀλιπόρφυρος, all already associated with this sphere by Homer: the city of Oropos is depicted allegorically as a youth surrounded by 'grey-eyed women who represent the seas' (ἐν γλαυκοῖς γυναικίαις – τὰ δέ ἐστι Θάλατται, 1.27.3); Poseidon, when he liberates the plain of Thessaly from the floods 'is painted not dark blue nor yet as a god of the sea but as a god of the mainland' (γέγραπται οὐ κυάνεος οὐδὲ θαλάττιος ἀλλ' ἡπειρώτης, 2.14.2); Achilles' chlamys, 'sea-purple' and 'dark blue' (ἀλιπόρφυρος and κυανῇ), is 'probably' (οἶμαι) a gift from his mother, the Nereid Theris (2.2.2).

Sometimes, as with Andromeda's whiteness in Ethiopia (1.29.3), the colours are obviously called for by the story. Occasionally, they may actually serve to imply natural colouring – as with μέλι χλωρόν ('honey-yellow', 1.31.4) in the first *Xenia*.<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere, however, colour works to make a direct literary quotation, as in the description of Menoeceus which presents the hero as like 'the 'honey-coloured' youth whom the son of Ariston praises' (μελιχρόων, 1.4.3 = Plato *Republic* 474d). In the same way, the adjective ὑακίνθινος appears in a representation of Hyacinthus: 'Read the flower' (ἀνάγνωθι τὴν ὑακίνθον 1.24.1), we are told as the *ecphrasis* opens, only to

<sup>7</sup> The colours that recur most often in the gallery are: gold (c. 25 occurrences) and the brilliant yellows, ξανθός, πυρρός and ἡλιώδης (c. 16 occurrences); white, λευκός (c. 20 occurrences); crimsons and purples, φοινικός, ἀλουργίς, πορφυροῦν, ἀλιπόρφυρος or κόκκος (c. 16 occurrences); followed by black, μέλας (c. 15 occurrences, most often contrasted with white, as we shall see later). The other colours – namely, χαροπός, γλαυκός, ἐρυθρός and κυάνεος – appear only a few times. On the importance of light in Greek colour, see James (1996), *passim*.

<sup>8</sup> Graziani (1995) ix.

<sup>9</sup> This is a poetic cliché (Irwin (1974) 56–62). It is almost certainly the only occurrence of the adjective in *Imagines* as a colour term; elsewhere, associated with πότιμος, it describes a spring ('fresh and good to drink', 1.6.7) and defines the pine sprays that crown Olympus in order to give him a refreshing coolness (1.21.2: on the connotations of the adjective in association with trees, see Irwin (1974) 42–52).



find that 'the painting tells us that the youth's hair is 'hyacinthine'' (λέγει δὲ ἡ γραφή καὶ ὑακινθίνην εἶναι τῷ μαιρακίῳ τὴν κόμην, 1.24.1). But this Homerism (*Od.* 4.230–1, with reference to Odysseus) describes the hair of the flower nymphs just as naturally (αἱ Ἀνθοῦσαι τὰς χαίτας ἐκπεφύκασιν ὑακινθίνους ὁμοίως ἄνθεσιν, 'the flower nymphs have hair that resembles hyacinth flowers', 2.11.3) and passes as a borrowing from Xenophon in the description of Abradatas' bloody arms (2.9.3; cf. *Cyropaedia* 6.4.2: λόφος ὑακινθινοβαφής). The designation of the colours here draws more on literature than painting because these colours are effectively more 'literary' than pictorial.<sup>10</sup>

Here again, one wonders whether the sophist is not more keen to evoke the literary connotations of these words than the exact visual nuances they provide on the canvas. These sparse chromatic touches also stand for the feeling, connotation, or symbol of which they are the vehicle, something not surprising in a work which systematically emphasises the interpretation and decipherment of images.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, when the sophist comments on a choice made by the painter, it is to note certain elementary colours – gold, white, black – which carry an allegorical sense and can therefore be translated immediately into language. In the representation of Plutus 'golden because of the substance in which he has been made manifest' (χρυσοῦ ἀπὸ τῆς ὕλης ἐν ᾗ ἐφάνη, 2.27.4), or that of 'the golden cloud which serves, I fancy, as a canopy for the gods' (χρυσοῦν γέγραπται νέφος ὑφ' ᾧ οἶμαι σκηνοῦσι, 2.21.6) to the attentive viewer ('who must not look carelessly but deduce', μὴ ἄργῶς ἴδης ἀλλὰ . . . ὑπὸνόει, 2.21.6), the constant invitation to interpret underlines just how much Philostratus' interest is directed towards the colours' signification rather than their nature.<sup>12</sup>

Even when isolated, these notes on colour often constitute an element in the composition of the description of the painting, first of all on an initial, superficial level. The evocation of Glaucus opens with the whiteness of the foamy rings of his beard and closes with the crimson brilliance of his tail, all neatly framed and contrasted (2.16.5).<sup>13</sup> The symbolic opposition of Oinomaus' and Pelops' chariots as black and white (1.17.2) exploits colour

<sup>10</sup> One may mention as well the peculiar use of the adjective χαροπός, an amber-like colour applied to the sea (1.8.2), and a unique example in prose according to Maxwell-Stuart (1981). The expression no doubt arises from a recollection of the χαροπὸ κύματ' dear to the Hellenistic poets. In the same way, the association of olive trees with the colour γλαυκός (2.6.1) had been a cliché since Bacchylides.

<sup>11</sup> Elsner (1995) 23–39.

<sup>12</sup> See also the allegorical description of the sanctuary of Amphiaraus, with Truth clad in white and Dream in black and white (1.27.3).

<sup>13</sup> The text frequently gives a touch of colour at the beginning or end of a portrait: 1.21.2 (Olympus), 7.2 (Memnon), 24.1 (Hyacinth) and 2.8.5 (Criteis) are the most striking examples.

at the beginning of the description to present a visual image of the antithesis which is its structure.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, colour often occupies a strategic position in the descriptions, at the opening or closing of the *ecphrasis* itself or of the development dedicated to the image proper after a general presentation of its subject. The best example of this creation of a 'frame' for a painting is, emblematically, the first description in the gallery. In *Scamander*, the sophist asks his audience to look away from the image first of all (σὺ δὲ ἀπὸ βλεψὼν αὐτῶν, 1.1.1) in order to 'look' at its source, the Homeric text, so as to understand the subject represented (ἡ γραφή . . . φησι, 1.1.1) – that is to say, the description of the representation proper, which culminates in the extraordinary colours of the fire: καὶ τὸ ἄνθος τοῦ πυρὸς οὐ ξανθὸν οὐδὲ τῇ εἰθισμένῃ ὄψει, ἀλλὰ χρυσοειδὲς καὶ ἡλιῶδες. ταῦτα οὐκέτι Ὀμήρου, 'the flames of the fire are not ruddy nor yet of the usual appearance, but they shine like gold and sunbeams. In this Homer is no longer followed' (1.1.2). The *ecphrasis* ends with a striking detail (as do most in the collection), the tone of which Philostratus works out as though it were an epigram; most importantly, as we are brought back to the proper sphere of painting (ταῦτα οὐκέτι Ὀμήρου, 'in this Homer is no longer followed'), colour becomes an indication of 'pictoriality', fixing a (fictional) limit between that which stems from the sophist's discourse and that which belongs to the painter. The description of *The Gyraean Rocks* demonstrates this process on a smaller scale: (ὁ μὲν δὴ λόγος<sup>15</sup> τῆς γραφῆς οὗτος, τόδε δ' ἐναργές· λευκὴ μὲν ὑπὸ κυμάτων ἡ θάλαττα, 'Such is the story of the painting, but what is shown to the eye is this: the sea is whitened by the waves' (2.13.2). The colour here has the same transitional function between the general exposé of the story of Locrian Ajax and the 'entrance to the painting', but the painter's work is introduced in a way appropriate to the orator, as of evidence (τόδε δ' ἐναργές) of his capacity to transform the listening public into a viewing one. The entrance to the painting is an entrance in words, the colour here serving as a visual effect which is very much like

<sup>14</sup> The same type of contrast presents the same type of opposition at 2.7 (Antiochus and Memnon) and 2.21 (Heracles and Antaeus).

<sup>15</sup> Compare *Cassandra*, where λόγος gives way to drama immediately followed by mention of the gleam of the torches, surpassed by the brilliance of the golden craters: καὶ εἰ μὲν ὡς δράμα ἐξετάζομεν ταῦτα, τετραγῶδηται μεγάλα ἐν μικρῷ, εἰ δ' ὡς γραφήν, πλείω ἐν αὐτοῖς ὄψει. σκόπει γάρ . . . 'If we examine the scene as a drama my boy, a great tragedy has been enacted in a brief space of time, but if as a painting, you will see more in it than a drama. For look . . .' (2.10.1–2), with Elsner (2007a) 329–35. Or *Amphiarus*: οὗτοι μὲν οὖν ἐτέρου λόγου, κέλεύει δὲ ἡ γραφή βλέπειν ἐς μόνον Ἀμφιάρεον φεύγοντα . . . καὶ οἱ ἵπποι λευκοί . . . 'Now those figures belong to another story, but the painting bids you look at Amphiaras alone as he flees . . . His horses are white . . .' (1.27.2).

self-praise of the sophist's evocative powers.<sup>16</sup> What is more, the numerous references to the viewer or to the material nature of the image which accompany the appearance of a colour – always at a strategic moment in the description – work in the same way: ὄρα τὰ τοῦ ζωγράφου, 'look at the painter's work', immediately followed by a mention of Menoeceus' colour (1.4.3), and βλέπε πρὸς τὴν γραφὴν ἤδη κατόψει γὰρ αὐτὰ καὶ δρώμενα, 'now look at the painting and you will see just this going on', after a development of various techniques for fishing tuna and, by way of introduction, a commentary on the colour of fishes (1, 13, 9),<sup>17</sup> etc. This manner of marking the painter's territory through the notation of colour is a literary translation into sophistic rhetoric of the definition of pictorial art given in the preface to *Imagines*.

Contrasted with these sparse if powerful references to colour, we find some *ecphraseis* in *Imagines* noteworthy for their polychromy, essentially the two large *genre* paintings, *Cupids*, a composition thoroughly marked by variety (1.6), and *Hunters* (1.28), as well as two works which draw on fable for their subjects and focus on the female, *Rhodogune* (2.5) and *Pantheia* (2.9). A rich palette is also present, to a lesser extent, in a historical scene, that of Themistocles at Susa, dominated by the barbarian taste for gold (2.31).<sup>18</sup> Applied to certain elements of the décor (*Cupids*, *Themistocles*) and, particularly, to clothes, arms, horses and their harness, as well as the female face, colour appears as an ornament. This aesthetic could perhaps be extended to all the paintings in the gallery: we will see that Philostratus, even if he visibly likes multicoloured objects, from horses to ships to fabrics, also enjoys accumulating points of colour around a single object. He tells us this in the Preface, when he says that the *Hōrai* are nature's painters: θεῶν τὸ εὔρημα διὰ τε τὰ ἐν γῇ εἶδη, ὅποσα τοὺς λειμῶνας αἱ Ὠραι γράφουσι, 'the invention of [painting] belongs to the gods – witness on earth all the designs which the Seasons paint on the meadows' (Preface, 1). A symbol of nature's diversity, the meadow covered with its ἄνθη ('flowers', but also 'brilliant colours', in painting as in rhetoric or poetry) is traditionally the emblematic motif of artistic *poikilia*,<sup>19</sup> as the repeated motif of flowered clothing underlines. The *Hōrai* themselves wrap

<sup>16</sup> For a different take on this passage and its framing function, see Elsner (2007a) 335.

<sup>17</sup> On this last passage (and generally on the gaze in *Imagines*), see Elsner (2004) 167–8.

<sup>18</sup> The aesthetic of these representations is decidedly oriental, even in *Hunters* – where the scene has no specific location and the temple of Artemis at 1.28.6 might imply a Hellenic context – which, after Gallic enamels, offers at length Median and Phoenician crimsons (1.28.3–4). Variegation is linked with exoticism.

<sup>19</sup> Compare, e.g., Luc. *De Domo* 9 (for the paintings which decorate the hall) and 11 (in the description of the peacock, another sophistic image of *poikilia*).

the baby Hermes in swaddling clothes where 'they sprinkle over him the most beautiful flowers' (1.26.2).<sup>20</sup> Elsewhere, the sophist enjoys himself decorating the grass with embroidered flowers: 'in the grass (ἐν τῇ πόρῃ) lie [the Cupids'] brodered mantles, and countless are the colours thereof (μυρία δὲ αὐτῶν τὰ ἄνθη)' (1.6.2). Apropos of young maidens celebrating Aphrodite: λειμών τε ὁ περὶ τὰς ἐσθῆτας καὶ τὰ ἐν αὐταῖς χρώματα, ὥς ἄλλο ἄλλω ἐπιπρέπει, δαιμονίως ἐκμεμίμηται, 'the flowered decoration of their garments, and the colours used on them – are represented with wonderful truth' (2.1.3). This praise follows immediately on from the description of the pleasure the maidens take in trampling the grass, cool with dew (2.1.3), a challenge for the painter.<sup>21</sup>

The chromatic expression of this aesthetic of variety is itself varied. Contrasts are its most visible manifestation – those between gold and crimson,<sup>22</sup> light and dark,<sup>23</sup> or, most often, white and black<sup>24</sup> – and can be played out even at the level of the gallery itself: in this way we find the brilliant fire of Scamander (1.1) opposed to the effects of a night-time scene in *Comus* (1.2). The description which best symbolises this aesthetic of *poikilia* is, undoubtedly, that of *Female Centaurs* (2.3), which closes with a veritable manifesto: 'How beautiful the female centaurs are, even where they are horses; for some grow out of white (λευκαί) mares, others are attached to chestnut (ξανθαί) mares; and the coats of others are dappled (ποικίλλει), but they glisten (ἀποστίλβει) like those of horses that are well cared for. There is also a white female centaur that grows out of a black mare (ἐκπέφυκε καὶ μελαίνης ἵππου λευκὴ κενταυρίς), and the very opposition of the colours helps to produce the united beauty

<sup>20</sup> On the importance and multiple significations of the *Hērās* in the collection, see Elsner (2000).

<sup>21</sup> His praise of the representation of two insects is explicit at 2.12.1: 'I suppose that you are surprised (θαυμά σοι εἶναι) that these bees are painted with such detail (οὕτω γλίσχρως γεγραμμένως), for the proboscis is clearly to be seen, and feet and wings and the colour of their garb are as they should be (οὐκ ὅτακτοῦσιν), since the painting gives them the many hues with which nature endows them (ἴσα τῇ φύσει διαποικιλλούσης αὐτὰ τῆς γραφῆς).' This entomologist's precision in the account of the bees contrasts with the mythical subject of the painting, the birth of Pindar, as the following expression of surprise (θαύμα) underlines: 'Why, then, are these clever things (σοφαί) not in their hives?' (2.12.1), the adjective, σοφαί referring as much to the referent, the 'skilful workers' posed on the poet's lips, as to the representation itself (they are so skilfully figured that one would think that they are real and really are resting on the painting, as in the description of Narcissus at 1.23.2). He has the same praise for the minute precision of the spider in *Looms*: 'Beautiful are these efforts of the painter: he has wrought the spider in so painstaking a fashion, and has marked its spots with such fidelity to nature . . . (καλὰ καὶ ταῦτα τὰ τοῦ ζωγράφου: τὸ γὰρ οὕτω γλίσχρως ἀράχνην τε αὐτὴν διαπονήσαι καὶ στίξαι κατὰ τὴν φύσιν, 2.28.3). See also 2.1.3.

<sup>22</sup> E.g. 1.19.4 (a ship); 1.28.4 (a harness); 2.5.3 (a shield and carnation).

<sup>23</sup> E.g. 1.2.4 (ξανθοῖς καὶ κυανοῖς χρώμασιν); cf. also the multiplicity of materials and colours describing Amphion's lyre (1.10.2).

<sup>24</sup> E.g. 1.16.4 (a heifer); 1.28.4 (a horse); 2.3.2 (female centaurs); 2.5.2 (a horse).

of the whole (τὰ ἐναντιώτατα τῶν χρωμάτων εἰς τὴν τοῦ κάλλους συνθήκην ὁμολογεῖ) (2.3.2). The choice of a hybrid creature emphasises the ornamental value of colour – its artifice – but we may note that this emblematic figure of the art of combination<sup>25</sup> (rhetorical as well as pictorial: the term συνθήκη belongs to both spheres) is itself the object of an antithetical treatment. This celebration of the paradoxical beauty of the most strongly contrasting colours follows on from a description of Chiron which praises the work of the painter (ἀγαθοῦ οἶμαι ζωγράφου) for the invisible transition between the man's and horse's bodies (διαφεύγειν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, 2.2.4).<sup>26</sup>

Elsewhere, the sophist plays on the nuances within a chromatic range, associating blood and wine, crimson and blood, blood and the hyacinth, two different whites,<sup>27</sup> or golds and brilliant yellows, as in the enumeration in the Preface, 'painting knows ξανθὴν καὶ πυρσὴν καὶ ἡλιώσαν' hair', where he associates a rare and poetic adjective with two canonic ones.<sup>28</sup> In the end, enlightened connoisseur that he is, Philostratus is particularly sensitive to the effects produced by the juxtaposition of these colours and their reflection on one another. Thus, he describes the manner in which the gold of Amydone's pitcher reflects in the water and lights up her complexion in terms which recall that of the painters: λευκὰν ὑπὸ φύσεως οὖσαν ὁ χρυσὸς περιστρίβει κεράσας τὴν αὐγὴν τῷ ὕδατι, 'her natural pallor is illuminated by the gold of the pitcher, as its brightness is reflected in the water', the verb κεράννυμι playing simultaneously on the technical sense of mixing colours<sup>29</sup> and fusing metals. Elsewhere, it is crimson which heightens whiteness (2.5.3; 2.18.4) or serves to emphasise the brilliance of gold. καταλάμπω, προσβάλλω (φῶς), στρίβω, αὐγάζω, φαίνω, ἀνθέω, ἀστράπτω and their composites (προσ-, περι-, ὑπο-), are the verbs which turn up again and again in this game of contamination, an aesthetic of combinations always in search of brilliance and always taken from the viewer's point of view.

<sup>25</sup> For a reading of *Imagines* as an exploration of the harmony of contrasts, see Graziani (1995) xviiff.

<sup>26</sup> Contrasted with these female centaurs is Lucian's *Zeuxis*, another elaborate eulogy on the invisible join between the bodies, but from which all mention of colour is absent. These variations on the centaur are perfect illustrations of the two possible treatments of pictorial polychromy mentioned by Pliny, the *τόνος* and the *ἀρμογή* (*HN* 35.29). On the relationship of terms used in art and literary criticism, see Maffei (1994) xxixff.

<sup>27</sup> E.g., respectively: 2.10.1; 2.5.1; 1.24.1 and 2.9.3; 2.8.5, etc.

<sup>28</sup> This pattern is repeated at 1.6.2; see also 1.1.2; 2.5.4; 2.10.2, etc.

<sup>29</sup> 1.8 The same is the case with Memnon's complexion: 'You would not say that Memnon's skin is really black, for the pure black of it shows a trace of ruddiness' (οὐδ' ὅν μέλανα φαίης τὸν Μήμονα: τὸ γὰρ ἀκράτως ἐν αὐτῷ μέλαν ὑποφαίνει τι ἄνθους, 1.7.2).

Along with these associations of various colours, Philostratus likes to highlight colours in the process of changing: the other aspect of *poikilia* in *Imagines* is that of iridescence, something always associated with the play of light, which suggests change – that is to say, introduces movement and temporality<sup>30</sup> – and emphasises colour's ability to animate the image. This is particularly noticeable in the series of rainbow-coloured clothes: while Pasiphaë's tunic, 'divinely resplendent and more beautiful than any rainbow,' is qualified by a simple hyperbolic oratorical formula (ὕπερ πᾶσαν ἶριν, 1.16.4), the sophist provides a collection of precise colours ranging from dark to light in the process of changing (ἐξαλλάττω) for Achilles' chlamys – 'sea-purple with red glints shading into dark blue' (ἑλιπόρφυρος καὶ πυραυγῆς ἐξαλλάττουσα τοῦ κυανῆ εἶναι, 2.2.2). With Amphion's chlamys, this unstable polychromy begins to get out of hand, as it 'does not remain the same (μένει) but changes (τρέπεται) and takes on all the hues of the rainbow (κατὰ τὴν ἶριν μεταυθεῖ)' (1.10.3). It becomes a challenge to human understanding in the description of Athena's arms: 'As for the material of her panoply, no one could guess it; for as many as are the colours of the rainbow, which changes its light now to one hue and now to another (τῆς ἰριδος χρώματα παραλλαττούσης εἰς ἄλλοτε ἄλλο φῶς), so many are the colours of her armour' (2.27.2). The use of the comparison suggests a pictorial effect which escapes descriptive explication (as it also escapes the painter's abilities); we are face to face with the rhetoric of the inexpressible. One notes that, when an object becomes thus animated, it is connected with the divine: Amphion's chlamys 'may' (τάχα) be a gift from Hermes, that of Achilles is 'doubtless' (οἶμαι) a gift from Thetis – variations on the epic motif of the divine production of the object described, which are a supreme compliment to the painter.

However, although itself an object of delight, the colour also depends explicitly on *paideia*. Besides a few doxographical developments marginally related to painting,<sup>31</sup> of particular interest are those moments when Philostratus states what one should or should not admire in a painting, defining

<sup>30</sup> For the fundamental association between brilliance and movement since Homer, see Irwin (1974) 213ff.

<sup>31</sup> A κίρσειδης ('awny-looking?') portico decorating a house on the Bosphorus provokes a digression on the origin of the marble's colour drawn from the realm of natural history, the rare, technical adjective acting as an implicit homage to the colours obtained by the painter (1.12.2). In *Hunters*, three learned remarks in a row create a crescendo effect which highlights the central figure: on the technique of obtaining enamels, on the association of Median crimson (κόκκος) and gold, and on Phoenician crimson, which should be preferred above all others and the exact nuance of which the sophist tries to give without ever commenting on the manner in which it is rendered in the painting (1.28.3 and 4) – it is less the painter's σοφία which is being celebrated than the sophist's encyclopedic knowledge.

thereby the rules governing the praise of art for the use of the young men whom he is educating.

The Preface reminds us clearly that art is a cultural object, the sophist taking the opportunity to present us his credentials in the subject: he trained alongside Aristodemos of Caria, who was his host for four years and was a 'historian' of painting who was at the same time a painter himself, one whose style can be recognised as 'in the technique of Eumelus but much more charming' (Preface 3). It follows that art is, naturally, also an object of education: Philostratus claims to be composing 'addresses from which they may learn to interpret paintings and to appreciate what is esteemed in them' (ὁμιλίας . . . ἄφ' ὧν ἐρμηνεύσουσι τε καὶ τοῦ δοκίμου ἐπιμελήσονται, Preface 3). This is all about teaching his young public how to *decipher* an image (that is to say, identify its subject: art is a cultural object because it is a vehicle for myth, and the gallery presents itself as a sort of epitome of fable) and *describe* the essence of the painting as much as it is about the young creating their own *style* (taking into account the multiple meanings of the verb ἐπιμελήσονται), in keeping with the Second Sophistic's insistence that a beautiful object inspire the *pepaideumenos* to praise it.<sup>32</sup>

To illustrate Philostratus' talents as an art critic, I choose two examples,<sup>33</sup> one concerning a specific pictorial technique and the other treating, at greater length, a full-blown mimetic theory.

In his evocation of the Bosphorus, the sophist describes the way in which colour represents depth: 'in the bright gleam of the sea the colours of the fish vary (ἐν γλαυκῷ τῷ τῆς θαλάττης ἄνθει τὰ τῶν ἰχθύων χρώματα): those near the surface seem to be black (μέλανες δοκοῦσι), those just below are not so black, those lower still begin to elude the sense of sight (παραφεύδονται τὴν ὄψιν), then they seem shadowy (σκιώδεις), and finally they look just like the water (ὕδαροι ὑπονοῆσαι)' (1.13.9). This technique of superimposing colours in order to represent transparent objects (ἐπιπόλασις), with its distinction between ἄνθος and χρώμα, evokes the famous (and problematic) distinction between *colores floridi* and *colores austeri* which recurs throughout the ancient discourse on painting.<sup>34</sup> However, the effect interests Philostratus only in relation to its reception:

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Preface 4 and 5 (ἐγὼ μὲν ἀπ' ἐμαυτοῦ ὥμην δεῖν ἐπαίνειν τὰς γραφάς), and also: Luc. *De Domo*, 1ff.; Longus, *Daphnis and Chloe*, Preface 4–5; Philostratus the Younger, Preface 7. By this time, θαυμάζειν (to wonder) had become a near-synonym of ἐπαίνειν (to praise) – cf. Pernot (1993) 117 and 282–4.

<sup>33</sup> I leave aside the series of remarks concerning the working of shade, the rendering of volume and the modeling of bodies (1.2.3; 23.4; 2.20.2; 32.4).

<sup>34</sup> Pliny, *HN* 35.30 (on this difficult question, see in particular appendix 2 in J.-M. Croisille's edition of Pliny (1985), Rouveret (1989) 255ff and Brécoulaki (2006a) and (2006b) 433 ff. The term χρώμα

'Now look (βλέπε) at the painting . . . : the look-out gazes (βλέπει) at the sea . . . to get the number (ἐς τὴν τοῦ ἀριθμοῦ σύλληψιν), in the bright gleam of the sea . . . ; as the vision penetrates deeper and deeper its power of discerning objects in the water is blunted (ἡ ὄψις ἀμβλύνεται διακριβοῦν).' The sophist's audience is, as it were, thrown into the image in the look-out's position, eyes fixed on the water (πεπηγένοι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς, 1.13.8) in order to estimate the number of tuna fish; the viewer's gaze is juxtaposed with that of the fisherman in the space of the referent.<sup>35</sup>

Elsewhere, Philostratus insists, on the contrary, on painting's surpassing the materiality of colour and on the limits of what we can call iconic imitation (where the colours of paintings imitate the colours of the world, cf. Preface 2). By this means he demonstrates his power of suggestion and illustrates the capacity of colour to attract the attention not only of the eyes, but also of the other senses – that is to say, to strengthen resemblance. He suggests this power as early as the proem when he passes brusquely from the painter's use of colours (ζωγραφία ξυμβέβληται ἐκ χρωμάτων: colour is placed on the same level as marble, bronze, or ivory, which define the different genres of sculpture) to the representation of passions ('[it recognises] the look, now of the man who is mad, now of the man who is sorrowing or rejoicing', Preface 2), following the line of Socrates and Parrhasios' discussion of painting in Xenophon's *Memorabilia* (3.10).<sup>36</sup>

It is almost at the beginning of *Imagines* that the question of ἀλήθεια in painting is best posed, in relation to the crown of roses that closes the portrait of Comus: 'The crown of roses should be praised, not so much for its truth of representation (ἀπὸ τοῦ εἶδους) – since it is no difficult achievement (οὐ μέγας ὁ ἄθλος), for instance with yellow and dark blue pigments (ξανθοῖς καὶ κυανοῖς, εἰ τύχοι, χρώμασιν), to imitate the semblance of flowers (ἀπομιμεῖσθαι τὰς τῶν ἀνθέων εἰκόνας)<sup>37</sup> – but one must praise the tender and delicate quality of the crown. I praise, too, the dewy look of the roses, and assert that they are painted fragrance and all' (1.2.4). The redundancy of the formula (he doesn't represent the flower, but its image) establishes the essential difference between reality

is often associated in *Imagines* with opaque colours, e.g., when applied to blood (1.24.1; 2.7.5; 9.3), or opposed to the transparency of water (2.8.3).

<sup>35</sup> For the gaze itself as the subject of this description, see Elsner (2004) 167–8 and n. 27 on the fisherman in *exphrasis*.

<sup>36</sup> For the suggestion that this passage (and others in *Imagines*), with its swift move from emotion to eye colour, is indebted to Polemo's *Physiognomics*, see Elsner (2007b) 222–3.

<sup>37</sup> In the same way, at the opening of book 2, the sophist praises the cleverness of the picture (σοφία τῆς γραφῆς) which represented precious stones 'not with colours but by light (οὐκ ἐκ τῶν χρωμάτων ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ φωτός)' (2.1.2). On the motif of σοφία, see Maffei 1991, also Michel 1974.



and representation: it contrasts the convincing image – perceived as an image – with the illusion of reality.<sup>38</sup> Despite the ease with which the painter represents the visual (εἶδος) and the tour de force (ἄθλος) of a mimesis capable of capturing non-visible, and therefore non-pictorial, qualities, it is ultimately words that give the painting its synaesthetic power, as is suggested by the juxtaposition at the end of ‘say’ and ‘paint’ (φημί, γεγράφθαι); the sophist has the final word.

Apparently, Philostratus never questions the effectiveness of his words; and he never presents the painter’s colours as resisting his language. Imitating the colours of the world with painted colours equates, in the sophist’s sphere of rhetorical speech, the art of naming the colour with perfect mastery (something perhaps made easier by the double rhetorical and pictorial sense of χρώμα). Philostratus’ gallery does not chime with typical Second Sophistic discussions on the terminology of colour (such as that in which Fronto and Favorinus are engaged in Aulus Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*, 2.26), or the distinctions between the perception of colour and its conventional expression in poetry and painting (as in Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 13.603c–604b, citing a fragment of Ion of Chios). Neither does it lead, as in Lucian’s *De Domo*, to a series of ‘naked’ *ecphraseis*, to use the terms which the orator Logos applies when describing the paintings which his audience can see: ‘Consider both my difficulty and my daring in creating so many images without colours, figures, or frames (ἄνευ χρωμάτων καὶ σχημάτων καὶ τόπου): a painting done with words is a naked painting (ψιλὴ γὰρ τις ἢ γραφὴ τῶν λόγων)’ (*De Domo* 21).

This celebration of colour in *Imagines* contrasts oddly with the thoughts on painting attributed by Philostratus to Apollonius of Tyana, which emphasise line rather than colour (*Life of Apollonius of Tyana* 2.20 and 22). The discussion begins, oddly enough, not with a painting, but with a series of bronze panels, treated as though they were paintings (cf. the reference to the shield of Achilles in 22). Consequently, the description focuses on the coloured material (ξυντετήκασιν αἱ ὕλαι ὥσπερ χρώματα, 20) rather than on the subject represented, which is summarised in one sentence. As it happens, the panels of the temple at Taxila reflect Damis’ definition of painting, that is, a mixture of colours with a mimetic end: τὰ χρώματα συγκεράννυσιν ὅποσα ἐστὶ . . . ὑπερ μιμήσεως (2.22) – one thinks of the

<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the still-life which closes book 1 illustrates a successful imitation in painting with apples and pears: ‘You will say that their redness has not been put on from outside (ἐπιβεβλήσθαι, a technical term for the application of colour in painting), but has bloomed from within (ἐνδον ὑπηνήκεναι)’ (1.31.2). ‘The colour of the fruit no longer seems to be that in the painting, but that of real fruit. On *synaesthesia* in *Imagines* see Manieri (1999).

preface of *Imagines*. But the divine Apollonius will correct this definition as he progressively purges painting of colour. First of all, he presents a classic outline of the history of art, which makes it evolve from monochromy to tetrachromy to polychromy (ἐν χρώμα ἤρκεσε τοῖς ἀρχαιοτέροις τῶν γραφέων, καὶ προιοῦσα τεττάρων, εἴτα πλειόνων ἤψατο, 2.22).<sup>39</sup> He next considers line without colour as if it were painting (γραμμὴν καὶ τὸ ἄνευ χρώματος), using the remarkable example of a drawing with white lines<sup>40</sup> capable of representing, in a fine oxymoron, a black Indian: καὶν τούτων τινὰ τῶν Ἰνδῶν λευκῇ τῇ γραμμῇ γράψωμεν, μέλας δὴ πτοῦ δόξει. The line's power of suggestion replaces that of colour (μελαίνει τὰ ὀρώμενα). Having completely discarded the question of imitation in painting, Apollonius appeals to the intellectual mimetic faculties which every viewer possesses – or, to put things somewhat schematically, μίμησις is under-valued by comparison with φαντασία; in *Imagines*, however, the sophist–painter, naturally, highlights the success of the *mimēsis*.

The two works do not contradict each other, but are expressions of two different aesthetic theories; the historical outline of painting offered by the austere Apollonius corresponds to a philosophical and moral conception which generally leads to the condemnation of colour for its powers of illusion (a topic already raised in Plato), or, associated with luxury, as a sign of moral degeneration (Pliny). The celebration of colour in *Imagines*, on the other hand, arises from the aesthetic of sophistic *epideixis*: colour is the ornament of painting, which is itself the ornament of the gallery (ἡνθει γραφαῖς ἐνηρμοσμένων αὐτῇ πινάκων, Preface 4), itself again served by the orator's brilliant and florid (ἀνθηρός) discourse.

<sup>39</sup> The clearest expression of this is Pliny *HN* 35.15–16.

<sup>40</sup> This is either a white line drawn against a dark background or a silhouette drawn on a white support. cf. Rouveret (1989) 17 and Büchel (1933) 163ff.

*Absorption and erudition in Philostratus' Imagines\**

Zahra Newby

Among the works which have come down to us under the name of Philostratus are the two books of *Imagines*, a collection of rhetorical descriptions or *ecphraseis* of the paintings which, the narrator tells us, decorated the porticoes of a villa in Naples.<sup>1</sup> According to the Suda, the writer of this first set of *Imagines* was no other than the author of *Lives of the sophists* and *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.<sup>2</sup> While there are a number of problems with the Suda's description of the Philostrati and the works assigned to them, most modern scholars agree in assigning this work to the man who also wrote the biographies, *Heroicus* and, probably, *Gymnasticus*.<sup>3</sup> Another set of *Imagines* was later written by a second Philostratus, who claimed to be the grandson of the first. My focus in this chapter, however, will be on the first set of *Imagines*.<sup>4</sup>

Much of the scholarship on this work has revolved around the question of whether or not Philostratus was describing real paintings, most forcefully argued by Lehmann-Hartleben (1941).<sup>5</sup> More recently, attention has turned instead to the status of the work as a rhetorical text and Philostratus as an ecphrasist.<sup>6</sup> In many ways, *Imagines* can be seen as an example of a sophistic

\* This chapter has been much improved by the comments and questions of Ewen Bowie, Jaś Elsner, Dave Fredrick and Michael Trapp on various previous versions. I am most grateful to them all.

<sup>1</sup> Philostr. *Imag.* proem 4.

<sup>2</sup> Suda, s.v. Φιλόστρωτος 421–3 though this mentions four rather than two books of *Imagines*.

<sup>3</sup> For discussion of the works attributed to the Philostrati, see Bowersock (1969) 2–4; Anderson (1986) 291–6; de Lannoy (1997); Billault (2000) 5–7.

<sup>4</sup> The two authors are usually distinguished as the Elder Philostratus and the Younger Philostratus. Throughout this chapter, the work of the Elder Philostratus will simply be referred to as *Imagines*. Translations follow those of A. Fairbanks in the Loeb edition of 1931, occasionally modified. On the problems of incorporating the Younger Philostratus into the family tree, see the discussions cited above, n. 3.

<sup>5</sup> Lehmann-Hartleben (1941), discussed by Bryson (1994). See also Boeder (1996) 138–48, who argues that the reality of the paintings lies within the text itself, and M. E. Blanchard (1986) on the way the text manipulates this double reference to text and image.

<sup>6</sup> Webb (1992), (2006). More generally on ecphrasis, see Palm (1965–6) 166–7; James and Webb (1991); Bartsch (1989) 3–39; Webb (1999); Elsner (2002a), (2002b).

showpiece – a vehicle to reveal the author's intellectual credentials, his detailed knowledge of Greek myth and literature and the ingenuity with which he can weave these into his account of a Neapolitan picture gallery. Yet through taking painting as its subject matter, *Imagines* also provides us with reflections and suggestions about the relationship between words and images and about the proper way in which to view art.<sup>7</sup> My focus here will be on the strategies for viewing art presented within this work. Through an examination of both the ways in which Philostratus uses texts in his expositions of the paintings, and of his responses to the naturalism of the painted images, I will argue that one key feature of his approach to art is a continual movement between absorption in the world of the image and a detached intellectual viewing which seeks to constrain the power of the visual through subjection to textual or verbal explanations.

First, however, we should explore a little further the context in which these discourses are said to have been produced. This is explained in the proem to the work, where the narrator tells us that they took place during a visit to Naples, a city noted for its Greek enthusiasm for speeches, *logoi*. Our narrator says that he was unwilling to offer any addresses, *meletai*, in public, yet was continually pestered by groups of youths who kept arriving at the house where he was staying. This house contained an impressive collection of paintings which he had already examined and which the host's son was eager to have explained to him. Finally the narrator gives in, agreeing to make a discourse (*epideixis*) about the images when the young men arrive. To any reader of *Lives of the sophists* the situation is a familiar one – a man is attended by a group of youths, eager to hear him speak, a man who can give *epideixeis* and *meletai* – he must be a sophist! Philostratus here sets himself up as the expert; these 'narrations of paintings' will be 'instructions to the young, from which they will interpret and pay attention to what is worthy' (though whether in the paintings or the discourse itself is left somewhat unclear).<sup>8</sup> These descriptions, given by a famous sophist to would-be pupils, are thus suggested as having a two-fold educative purpose, indicating both the right way to view and understand paintings, and also suggesting the variety of ways in which visual images, like other material, can be used for sophistic declamations. These two

<sup>7</sup> On the latter, see Elsner (1995) 23–49. More recent discussions include Elsner (2000) and Leach (2000).

<sup>8</sup> *Imag.*, proem 3. The verb ἐμπνεύω is used specifically in relation to the paintings at proem 4, but here it and τοῦ δοκίμου seem to be more ambivalent, as noted by Ruth Webb, 'Philostratus' *Eikones* as Text,' a lecture given at the Institute of Classical Studies, London, 27 April 1999; also noted by McCombie (2002) 152.

aims correspond neatly to the needs of the speaker's audience. For the boy, to whom these interpretations are primarily addressed, the main interest is in the explanation and interpretation of the pictures themselves. The youths, however, seem interested in hearing any discourse the speaker may choose to give. Their main concern, then, is with sophistic rhetoric rather than painting in particular. On the level of the written text too, a similar duality can be seen. While on the one hand this is a collection of *ecphraseis* of individual images, on a wider scale it is also an example of how this material can be used to produce a highly polished and sophisticated piece of writing.<sup>9</sup>

At the very start of the work, however, the focus is clearly put onto painting. Here, Philostratus starts by proclaiming

Whoever scorns painting is unjust to truth (*alētheian*) and is unjust to wisdom (*sophian*), as much as is bestowed on the poets – for both alike transmit the deeds and looks of the heroes – and he does not praise symmetry, by which art (*technē*) partakes of reason (*logou*).<sup>10</sup>

The most immediate reason for this declaration is to assert the subject of the work and defend its importance, just as at the start of *Gymnasticus* the author lists the activities counted as *sophia* – including philosophy, rhetoric, poetry, music and painting – and asserts that gymnastics, too, has a right to be included among them.<sup>11</sup>

Yet the declaration also highlights and proclaims a connection between words and images. Thus, as Maffei has shown, it gives a new twist to the notion of a connection between painting and poetry, famously encapsulated in both Horace's '*ut pictura poesis*' and Simonides' maxim, 'painting is silent poetry and poetry talking painting' which, we hear from Plutarch, was much quoted in Roman times.<sup>12</sup> Here the connection between the two seems to lie in a common share of *sophia*, and in the fact that they both represent the deeds and forms of heroes – a statement which is fulfilled in the rest of the work with its overwhelming concentration on mythological images, and the frequent use made of poetic sources when interpreting them. The linkage made between poetry and painting at the start of the work thus prepares the ground for the frequent use of Homer, Euripides, Pindar and others when discussing the images; yet, as we will

<sup>9</sup> On the staging of the text, see Webb (2006) esp. 116–17 on the self-representation of the narrator.

<sup>10</sup> *Imag.* Preface 1.   <sup>11</sup> Philostr. *Gym.* 1 (261K).

<sup>12</sup> Hor. *Art P.* 361; Plut. *Mor.* 17f–18a. See Maffei (1991).

see, the relationship between the two is not always a straightforward one of complex image and explanatory text.<sup>13</sup>

The poem also implicitly questions what painterly *sophia* might be. Here Philostratus links together truth, wisdom and symmetry, and it seems that one of the ways in which art possesses *sophia* is precisely in its technical skill – a view which goes back to Aristotle, where we find famous artists like Pheidias and Polycleitus credited with *sophia* on the basis of their overwhelming technical abilities, although this is only a partial *sophia* and thus not equivalent to that of the philosophers.<sup>14</sup> The technical attributes of painting are further outlined in the poem when Philostratus tells us that it reproduces light and shade and allows one to recognise the look of a man who rejoices, grieves, or is mad.<sup>15</sup> He then goes on to describe painting's ability to represent shining eyes and black, blue and grey eyes. While this is tied in to a discussion of the use of colour in painting, it is significant that eyes are the subject here. There may, in fact, be a link here with contemporary interest in the science of physiognomics, which sought to determine the characters of men from their external appearance. This was certainly a matter of interest in the second century AD, when the sophist Polemo produced a treatise on physiognomics which was heavily biased towards study of the eyes.<sup>16</sup> For Philostratus, the ability of painting to depict emotion is an aspect of its superiority, a way in which painting '*sophizetai*', 'contrives', more than the other visual arts. The use of this particular verb, and the similarity between Philostratus and Polemo's use of the eyes to divine character or emotional traits, may be significant here. Indeed, this is surely a pun. Our sophist Philostratus allows painting itself a share in sophistry. Elsewhere, too, the appearance of the words *sophia* and *sophisma* may be important, suggesting parallels between the potential of painting and the skills of our sophistic speaker.

So, the poem both raises the issue of what the *sophia* of painting consists of, and presents a couple of answers. These will be supplemented by other indications throughout the text to suggest that painterly *sophia* is not only a matter of technical skill, closely related to the power of mimetic images to deceive their viewers, but also involves the painter's own intellectual

<sup>13</sup> For references to Homer, Euripides *et al.* see the *index locorum* in the edition by Benndorf and Schenkel (1893) 130–9.

<sup>14</sup> Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 6.7.1, discussed by Maffei (1991) 598f. She sees Philostratus as asserting for the visual arts a higher kind of *sophia* than this very skill-based one.

<sup>15</sup> *Imag.*, poem 2.

<sup>16</sup> See Barton (1994) 95–131 esp. 102f. and Gleason (1995) 21–54. The younger Philostratus also suggests that the good painter is a physiognomist – able to read men's characters from their appearance: Philostratus the Younger, *Imag.*, poem 3.

powers to introduce cleverness into his images. Yet I think we can also see a contrast set up in the text between the *sophia* of an image and the *thauma*, sense of wonder, it evokes in its viewers.

Let us start, as Philostratus does, with *Scamander*, the first *ecphrasis* in the collection and therefore likely to serve a programmatic function:

Ἐγὼς, ὦ παῖ, ταῦτα Ὅμηρου ὄντα ἢ οὐ πρόποτε ἔγνωκας δηλαδή θαῦμα ἡγούμενος, ὅπως δῆποτε ἔζη τό πῦρ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι; συμβάλλωμεν οὖν ὁ τι νοεῖ, σὺ δὲ ἀπόβλεψον αὐτῶν, ὅσον ἐκεῖνα ἰδεῖν, ἀφ' ὧν ἡ γραφή.

Have you realised, child, that these matters are from Homer, or have you failed to realise this clearly, being carried away with wonder at how on earth fire can be living in water? So let us consider what it means; and you, turn away from these things to look at those from which the picture comes.<sup>17</sup>

As has been noticed before, it is significant that here, at the very start of his *ecphraseis*, Philostratus tells the boy to look away from the image and instead look at the text on which it is based, here a passage in Homer's *Iliad*.<sup>18</sup> Yet it has not usually been noticed that this is suggested as a direct corrective to the boy's *thauma*, wonder, provoked by the unexpected sight of fire in water. The boy does not seem to have realised that the image is based on Homer, precisely because he has been caught in awe at its visual effects. This amazed and uneducated viewing of the painting (the boy's failure of education is well expressed by the words οὐ πρόποτε ἔγνωκας) is set in firm opposition to a knowledgeable reading which would have immediately recognised the parallels to Homer. The dichotomy expressed here between the uneducated boy and the knowledgeable sophist is strongly reminiscent of Lucian's account of the dangers and lures of visual beauty in the *De Domo*.<sup>19</sup> That text is framed as a debate over whether or not speaking in a beautifully decorated hall is beneficial to the orator. The first speaker argues that the sight of visual beauty spurs the educated man on, through the desire λόγῳ ἀμείψασθαι τὴν θέαν, 'to equal the sight with words'.<sup>20</sup> The second speaker, on the other hand, suggests that such an enterprise is dangerous. Quoting Herodotus, he argues that the eyes are more powerful than the ears, and that the orator runs the risk of losing the attention of his audience who are distracted by the visual delights around them.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Imag.* I.I.I.

<sup>18</sup> See Elsner (1995) 29–30. Like him, I take ἀπόβλεψον αὐτῶν to mean 'look away from these things' rather than 'look at those things' as Bartsch (1989) 20, n. 9 does, especially since he tells the boy to look back, ὅρα δὲ πάλιν, a little later. See also Palm (1965–6) 164 and Boeder (1996) 151–2.

<sup>19</sup> For discussions of this text see Thomas (1994) 162–82; Goldhill (2001b) 160–7; Newby (2002b).

<sup>20</sup> Luc. *De Domo* 2. <sup>21</sup> Luc. *De Domo* 20.

Tied in with this worry is a division between the educated and the uneducated viewer. The first speaker declares that whereas the uneducated, *idiōtai*, are lost in wonder at the images, unable to verbalise a response, the educated man would never stand simply staring at visual beauty and leave it mute and voiceless, but would rather speak.<sup>22</sup> According to him, *thauma* is the characteristic of the uneducated viewer, trapped by the visual delights which rob him of his voice.<sup>23</sup> The educated response to such a *thauma* is to control the image with words. While the second speaker expresses less confidence in the power of words over images, he too uses a similar strategy later in the work in desperation at the fact that all his audience are looking at the paintings on the walls rather than listening to him.<sup>24</sup> He declares that he will describe these paintings, a description which, I would argue, turns out to be an exercise in the use of words to constrain images by the imposition of intellectual thematic interpretations.<sup>25</sup> While there are a number of differences in the ways Lucian and Philostratus treat the images they describe, both seem to share the view that visual images can exert a powerful aesthetic effect on their viewers, inducing a state of *thauma* which can be overcome only by recourse to verbal or textual strategies. Rhetorical *ecphrasis* (for which, of course, education is necessary) is here presented as a way to control this powerful visual beauty.

When we consider the use of the word *thauma* in *Images* to describe the (uneducated) boy's response, and Philostratus' self-proclaimed goal to teach him how to interpret images, it seems entirely appropriate that his first lesson should encourage the boy to resist visual lures by looking instead at the greatest of Greek texts, Homer's *Iliad*. The use of a text to interpret a visual image also seems in line with the proem's assertion of a link between painting and poetry – but, as we shall see, this connection is by no means straightforward.

Philostratus goes on to paraphrase Homer's text, and to point out how the image visualises the Homeric verses, showing the battlements of Troy and the fire creeping along the banks of the river.<sup>26</sup> Yet he then shows how the painting differs from Homer: 'the river is not painted with long hair, because it has been burned off, nor is Hephaestus lame since he is

<sup>22</sup> Luc. *De Domo* 1–2.

<sup>23</sup> Luc. *De Domo* 1 denies the idea that an educated man would go away after θαυμάσας μόνον, 'wondering only', at visual beauty – unlike the *idiōtes* whose mute wonder is described in the following paragraph. For a discussion of the representation of *thauma* in this text, see Newby (2002b) 128–9.

<sup>24</sup> Luc. *De Domo* 21. <sup>25</sup> For a fuller account see Newby (2002a) 118–24.

<sup>26</sup> *Imag.* 1.1, compare *Il.* 16.100, 21.337.



shown running.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, we might already have been wondering at the comparison since in the battle scene in the *Iliad* the river is called Xanthus, whereas here Philostratus calls the river Scamander, and when ξανθόν is used in this description it is in relation to the flames of the fire instead.<sup>28</sup>

So in this one piece Philostratus both advises the search for a text to interpret the image and prevent one being distracted by its visual effects, but also undermines this by playing with the details of the text he has chosen. A similar use of texts, especially Homer, occurs elsewhere. In 1.8, we start with Poseidon's journey over the sea, as recounted in *Iliad* 13.27f., where sea-monsters accompany Poseidon as he rides his chariot over the waves. But there the comparison ends. In Homer, says Philostratus, I suppose you imagine the horses as land horses, for Homer describes them as 'bronze-hoofed' and 'wing-swift', whereas here they are hippocamps, more similar to dolphins. Whereas in Homer Poseidon is angry, here he is joyful and in love. Indeed, he is engaged in an erotic pursuit of Amynone. The distinction between the scene in Homer and that in the painting is explicitly contrasted through the repeated use of 'ἐκεῖ . . . ἐνταῦθα'.<sup>29</sup> When one considers the image which Philostratus has described – a joyful-looking Poseidon riding in a chariot pulled by hippocamps, in amorous pursuit of Amynone – one wonders where he found the need for Homer's Poseidon, all bronze-hoofed horses, angry countenance and mind full of war.

Another example occurs in 2.7. This starts with a rather implausible and revealing reading of the motivations behind *Iliad* 18 in which Antilochus, the son of Nestor, brings news of Patroclus' death to Achilles, at the order of Menelaus. While the details cohere well enough with the *Iliad*, in the description of Antilochus as the youngest of the Greeks and awarded half a talent of gold by Achilles in Patroclus' funeral games, the interpretation put upon them is somewhat surprising.<sup>30</sup> We are told that Menelaus sent Antilochus with the news as a consolation because Achilles loved him (as proved, we hear, from the gift of gold and Antilochus' youth) and would thus be diverted from his grief by the boy's beauty.<sup>31</sup> This interpretation finds little support in Homer's account, which stresses instead Achilles' overwhelming grief at the news of Patroclus' death.<sup>32</sup> Indeed the words

<sup>27</sup> *Imag.* 1.1.2.

<sup>28</sup> *Imag.* 1.1.2. The river is called Scamander at *Il.* 21.305, but in Hera's commands to Hephaestus he is consistently called Xanthus, e.g. *Il.* 21.332, 337. While Philostratus' account accords with *Il.* 20.74 in addressing the river by its non-divine name, the appearance of its divine name in the description of the flames engulfing it also helps to draw attention to the discrepancies between the textual and visual scenes. On Philostratus' manipulation of Homer's account here, see Blanchard (1978).

<sup>29</sup> *Imag.* 1.8.1. <sup>30</sup> See *Il.* 15.569; 23.796. <sup>31</sup> *Imag.* 2.7.1. <sup>32</sup> *Il.* 18.1f.

Philostratus himself uses, that Menelaus contrived this (σοφισαμένου τοῦ Μενέλεω) as a consolation for Achilles, perhaps characterise better Philostratus' own actions, a clever reinterpretation of a Homeric episode. Here, too, we might see a reinterpretation of the events according to the sophist's own concerns, as a man who elsewhere himself shows a keen interest in youthful male beauty.<sup>33</sup>

Be that as it may, when we read further into the description we find that in fact the painting is not concerned with Antilochus bringing news of Patroclus' death at all, but rather shows a scene of the mourning of Antilochus' death at the hands of the Ethiopian Memnon, whose own death we have already seen in 1.7. Philostratus tells us αὗται μὲν οὖν Ὀμήρου γραφαί, τὸ δὲ τοῦ ζωγράφου δρᾶμα, 'these are the paintings of Homer, but this is the drama of the painter'. While Homer's text is conflated with the painted image and, conversely, the painting itself is a drama, a poetic text, the two actually have precious little to do with one another. By this point, one cannot help but wonder whether the close relationship between poets and painters extolled in the proem really exists.

Of course, there are other examples where the images adhere much more closely to a poetic text. One example is the painting of Bacchantes tearing to pieces the body of Pentheus.<sup>34</sup> We are told that the painting shows events on Mount Cithaeron, and the earth exudes wine, nectar and milk, just as in Euripides' *Bacchae*.<sup>35</sup> Pentheus is shaken off a tree and appears to the Bacchantes in the form of a lion, which they tear to pieces with bare hands. As in Euripides' play, his mother takes a dominant role, grieving later when she realises what she has done.<sup>36</sup> Yet in this description Philostratus nowhere mentions the name of Euripides but leaves it to his audience to recognise the parallels. It is when he starts with the name of the poet, always Homer, the poet we were urged to look towards in the first description, that we find the images deviating most from the textual account. In this way, Philostratus seems both to support textual strategies of reading, interpreting and controlling images, and to undermine them, here by applying them to images which just will not fit.<sup>37</sup> In part, we can see this as a response to the tradition of contrasting the works of artists and poets, as we find, for example, in Dio, twelfth Oration. There, Pheidias'

<sup>33</sup> On Philostratus as a lover of male beauty, see *Imag.* 1.4, 1.21, 1.28, all discussed below. Compare also other examples where erotic motivations are attributed to the figures, e.g. at 1.10 (Hermes in love with Amphiion) and 1.28 (the hunters in love with the youth).

<sup>34</sup> *Imag.* 1.18. <sup>35</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 142–3. <sup>36</sup> Eur. *Bacch.* 1107–52, 1280f.

<sup>37</sup> A similar thing is probably occurring in *Comus*, 1.2, which modern readers/viewers have interpreted as an image of Hymenaeus and where Philostratus himself draws attention to the difficulties of comprehending the image. See Lesky (1940); Elsner (2000) 261–2.

statue of Zeus at Olympia is first described in terms of how it relates to Homer's description of the god, and then said to surpass it by representing a Zeus of blessings rather than anger.<sup>38</sup>

As well as investigating the relationship between word and image, a theme which also runs through works such as those of Lucian and the novelist Longus, Philostratus may also be commenting on a contemporary tendency to ascribe to even the most unlikely images a source in a Homeric text. One example of this tendency can be seen in Pausanias' description of the Chest of Cypselus in the Heraeum at Olympia, a cedar-wood chest decorated with ivory and gold figures in which Cypselus, tyrant of Corinth, was said to have been hidden as a baby.<sup>39</sup> Pausanias tells us that most of the figures on the chest are inscribed, identifying the mythological scenes depicted. Where inscriptions are lacking, Pausanias gives his own interpretation, sometimes based on iconographical details, such as the interpretation of a man shooting at a many-headed dragon as Heracles and the hydra,<sup>40</sup> and at others based on his own preconceptions, as when he says it is inconceivable that Cypselus' Corinthian ancestor would have omitted to include any scenes of Corinthian history.<sup>41</sup>

When he comes to the top register of images there are no inscriptions to guide him, so Pausanias describes the images and gives his own interpretations, at times helped by local guides.<sup>42</sup> An image of a man and woman in a cave he takes to be Odysseus and Circe, since the women in front of the grotto are engaged in the very activities Homer describes in the *Odyssey* (10.348f.); while a procession of winged horses and women in chariots, one receiving weapons, is interpreted as the new armour Thetis collects for Achilles from Hephaestus after Patroclus' death. Another shows Nausicaa and her servant, and a fourth Heracles.<sup>43</sup> So, three of these unidentified images are interpreted as Homeric scenes. Yet Anthony Snodgrass (1998) has argued that Pausanias' interpretations are severely flawed and that the images were probably not Homeric scenes.<sup>44</sup> While much of Snodgrass' book argues against the more recent obsession with finding Homeric inspiration behind visual images, this particular example strongly suggests that

<sup>38</sup> Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.62–79. See Russell (1992) 197–211; Sharrock (1996) 103–4.

<sup>39</sup> Paus. 5.17.5–19.10. Pausanias' description of the Heraeum is discussed by Arafat (1995). For a reconstruction of the chest, based on Pausanias' account, see von Herberg and von Massow (1916), figure 25.

<sup>40</sup> Paus. 5.17.11.

<sup>41</sup> Paus. 5.18.7; a comment suggestive of the importance of local histories at the time Pausanias is writing.

<sup>42</sup> See Snodgrass (1998) 109–16; (2001). <sup>43</sup> Paus. 5.19.7–9.

<sup>44</sup> Snodgrass (1998) 114; also (2001) 130–4.

it was a tendency shared by Roman viewers, as embodied here by Pausanias and his guides.

So, while a typical viewer, faced with a confusing image, hastens to find a text, preferably poetic, Philostratus also shows the capacity for the image to deviate from this text and impose its own interpretation on the events described. In *Scamander* his search for a text was prompted by the boy's *thauma*, the tongue-tying effects of which can also be seen in Lucian. This same word, and its related verb, *thaumazō*, crop up elsewhere in the descriptions. Philostratus' usual response to it is to explain what it is which causes this amazement.<sup>45</sup>

At times, this means explaining the myth which lies behind otherwise confusing scenes. So in 1.6.1 Philostratus tells the boy not to wonder at the number of Erotes since they are the sons of the Nymphs, thus correcting his belief that there was only one Eros, the son of Aphrodite, and in 1.9.3 we are told that it is no *thauma* that swans are being ridden by Erotes since these gods are eager to play and hold chariot races on the birds. In 1.14.3 we learn that it is not necessary to wonder that plants are shown growing in the middle of fire since earth crowns fire in honour of Dionysus – an explanation of a miraculous event which is similar to the fire-in-water *thauma* of 1.1, though here the text chosen to explain it is not from Homer, but is Philostratus' own retelling of the myth.

This same use of *thauma* to suggest an apparently impossible phenomenon occurs in 1.19.4 where we are told that Dionysus' ship, adorned with ivy and clusters of grapes, is a *thauma*, but even more wonderful, *thumasiōtera*, is the fountain of wine pouring out of it. Here, however, rather than telling us not to wonder, and explaining the phenomenon, Philostratus instead encourages us to indulge our delight in it, by pointing out an even more wonderful aspect of the image. In 2.17, we get the suggestion of a multiplicity of responses to a *thauma*. So, we are told that 'we may consider the neighbouring island to be a marvel, since fire burns underneath it all'.<sup>46</sup> Here again, as in 1.19, at first we seem to be encouraged to indulge our taste for the marvellous, likening the viewing of the image to the wonders which are encountered during travelling – as, indeed, the start of the description suggests, with its invitation to speak about the islands as if on a ship sailing among them.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>45</sup> For another account of Philostratus' use of *thauma*, see Leach (2000) 246–8.

<sup>46</sup> *Imag.* 2.17.5.

<sup>47</sup> *Imag.* 2.17.1. On fictional travelogues and their treatment of *thaumata*, see Romm (1992) 172–214. On travel and *thaumata* in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonios of Tyana*, see Elsner (1997) esp. 28f. and n. 37.

*Thauma* here serves as a way into the wonderland of the image, a doorway to an absorption in which we seem, at first, encouraged to indulge. Soon, however, the exegete again raises his head: 'to the one who wishes to philosophise about such things', we are told, the effect is due to a mixture of bitumen, sulphur, sea and wind, but 'the painting follows the account of the poets, and paints in a myth to the island', thus showing it as a bond placed on a giant to hold him down.<sup>48</sup> Here, then, we are given two explanations of the volcanic wonder, one ascribed to philosophers, and the other a mythical one presented by poets and painters.<sup>49</sup> The same grouping of poets and painters against 'wise men' (here *sophoi* rather than philosophers) also occurs in 1.11 where the painting shows the myth of Phaethon. There Philostratus states that the story of Phaethon, who fell from his father, Helios', chariot, is interpreted by τοῖς σοφοῖς, 'the wise', as suggesting an excess of the fiery element in nature; but for ποιηταῖς δὲ καὶ ζωγράφοις, 'poets and painters', it is simply a matter of horses and a chariot. This apparent simplicity of images is, however, belied, when paintings, too, are shown indulging in the same sort of sophistic intellectualising elsewhere, as for example in *Imagines* 1.9, discussed below.

When the word *thauma* occurs in book 1, then, Philostratus tends to refer to marvellous aspects of the image which, being illogical (fire in water, fire on earth, or ships pouring out wine) need explanation. Indeed, all his *ecphraseis* can be read like this, as attempts to make sense of confusing images for the untutored child.<sup>50</sup> In the second book, however, there seems to be a shift instead to push the viewer gently towards the feature of the painting which truly deserves praise. So, in 2.2.4, when describing the painting of Achilles and Chiron, Philostratus tells us that it is not a *thauma* to join a horse's body to a man's, but that to do this in a way that smooths over the join and escapes the eyes of one seeking the point where man becomes horse is the mark of 'a truly good painter'.<sup>51</sup> The suggestion here is that we should not gawp at the unusual aspects of the image, but should rather appreciate the skill with which they are achieved, a skill which, incidentally, is framed in terms of its ability to deceive the viewer.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup> *Imag.* 2.17.5.

<sup>49</sup> The same division between philosophical and mythological interpretations of the volcano Erna also appears in Philostr. *VA* 5.14-7.

<sup>50</sup> See Maffei (1991) 613f. on the contrast between the 'occhio ingenuo e occhio colto' (p. 614).

<sup>51</sup> *Imag.* 2.2.4, θαῦμα οὐδέν, contrasted with ἀγαθοῦ ζωγράφου. See Blanchard (1986) 141-4 and Abbondanza (1996) on this piece.

<sup>52</sup> *Imag.* 2.2.4, διαφεύγειν τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς. See also the discussion below.

This indication of painterly skill is more explicit in 2.20, a description of a painting showing Heracles and Atlas, who is bent under the weight of the heavens. Philostratus tells us that the chiaroscuro effect on Heracles' body is not worthy of wonder, θαυμάζειν ἄξιον, for it is easy to shade figures who are standing straight or lying down and this accuracy is not wise, τὸ ἀκριβοῦν ταῦτα οὐπω σοφόν. Instead, the shading on Atlas' body shows much more *sophia* because of the technical difficulties of producing it.<sup>53</sup> Here the viewer's *thauma* is explained as a result of painterly technique, and is redirected to the aspect most deserving of this wonder. The *sophia* of the painting thus lies in its technical skill, which is closely related to its ability to convince its viewers by its realism, drawing them into the world depicted. Yet by explaining in detail the way this *sophia* operates, Philostratus also limits its aesthetic powers to amaze and entice its viewers through the weapons of intellect and erudition.

This linkage of technical skill and deception is explicitly stated of the related word, *sophisma*, 'cleverness, device'. In 1.4 Philostratus explains that the *sophisma* of the painter lies in the sense of perspective with which he depicts the walls of Thebes, of which he comments 'for it is necessary to beguile the eyes', δεῖ γὰρ κλέπτεσθαι τοὺς ὀφθαλμούς.<sup>54</sup> In 1.10 he refers to τῆς λύρας τὸ σόφισμα, 'the clever device of the lyre', as being invented by Hermes. Here we may interpret *sophisma* as suggesting the inventiveness and technical skill with which the lyre is made, but we also find later that this is the lyre which, when played by Amphion, has the power to summon together the stones to wall Thebes, a truly beguiling effect.

The beguiling and deceptive effects of an artistic *sophisma* are also made explicit in 1.16, where Pasiphae, in love with the bull who will eventually father the Minotaur, begs Daedalus σοφίσασθαι τινα πειθῶ τοῦ θηρίου, 'to contrive some persuasion/lure for the beast'.<sup>55</sup> His response was to build a wooden cow for Pasiphae to hide inside. Daedalus' *sophisma* here is an artistic product so naturalistic that it will fool the bull into mating with it. We might also note that Daedalus' Attic appearance and dress is stressed in this piece. We are told that he ἄττικίζει, 'Atticises', or is of the Attic type, regarding his face and dress. While on one level this word simply refers to his physical appearance, within the highly sophisticated and allusive context of Philostratus' prose it surely also has a dual meaning. Like the words *sophia* and *sophisma*, it acts as a pun, alluding to the verbal Atticism which was a chief characteristic of Second Sophistic writers and orators.<sup>56</sup> Here our artist Atticises, just as does Philostratus himself. The visual arts

<sup>53</sup> *Imag.* 2.20.2. <sup>54</sup> *Imag.* 1.4.2. <sup>55</sup> *Imag.* 1.16.1. <sup>56</sup> *Imag.* 1.16.1. See Swain (1996) 17–64.

are described in terms of the verbal ones, further confusing the line between visual and verbal representation.<sup>57</sup>

The erotic potential of an artistic *sophisma* appears elsewhere in the description of Narcissus, a piece abundant with meditations on the dangers and lures of naturalistic art, as others have shown.<sup>58</sup> At 1.23.3 Philostratus directly addresses Narcissus as he gazes into the pool. He tells him, 'no painting has deceived you, nor are you absorbed in paints or wax, but you do not realise that the water models you as you are, nor do you question the artifice (*sophisma*) of the pool'.<sup>59</sup> The choice of vocabulary here is very significant. The word I have translated as 'absorbed' is προστέτηκας, the perfect form (with passive meaning) of προστήκομαι, 'I cling to/melt into'. Narcissus' absorption in his reflection is described in terms of an artistic product, though in fact it is not paints and wax which he is melted into (though on one level, of course, he is – a painted boy absorbed in his painted reflection), but rather the pool. It is the water which deceives him, since he does not ἐλέγχει, 'question/refute' (with strong philosophical overtones) the *sophisma* of the pool. Narcissus' failure is thus one of education. He lacks the intellectual and philosophical training to see through nature's sophistry – ideas highly redolent of Plato's attacks on mimesis. Part of Philostratus' didactic function is to teach strategies to avoid this absorption, to avoid literally becoming part of the painted or modelled world. Yet at the same time Philostratus himself is already involved and absorbed, addressing Narcissus in the second person singular, from within the picture frame.

The significance of this passage for its statement about the lures of naturalistic art has been shown before, as have the ways in which throughout *Imagines* Philostratus moves between a stance external to the image, explaining its technique or literary sources, and one within the image, calling on us to help catch Menoeceus' blood or to speak quietly lest we wake the sleeping Stryx.<sup>60</sup> These moments of complete absorption in the painted image are often marked in the text by a command, ἰδοῦ!, 'Look!'.<sup>61</sup> Yet, I think there is more behind these moments of visual absorption than is at first apparent. As we have seen, Philostratus' usual response to visual wonder, a wonder which, in Lucian's *De Domo* at least, has the power to deprive men of their verbal powers, is to explain and articulate. The visual's mystique is laid bare by his intellectual explanations, whether these are taken from literature or appear in the form of an excursus on the techniques and

<sup>57</sup> This is a major theme throughout the work, as shown by Philostratus' preference for the ambiguous term *graphē* over *eikōn*. See Boeder (1996) 150.

<sup>58</sup> See Bann (1989) esp. 108–114 and Elsner (1996). <sup>59</sup> *Imag.* 1.23.3.

<sup>60</sup> *Imag.* 1.4.4, 1.22.1. See Elsner (1995) 23–39. <sup>61</sup> See Bryson (1994) esp. 267f.

difficulties of painting shadows. Yet when Philostratus tells us to 'Look!' his verbal strategies seem to have deserted him. This is made explicit in his description of Rhodogune in 2.5.5. At the boy's request, it appears, Philostratus describes the appearance of the figure, starting with her position, as if praying, and then moving onto her hair and face. When he reaches her lips, however, he stops. They are φιλήσαι μὲν ἥδιστον, ἀπαγγεῖλαι δὲ οὐ ῥάδιον, 'most pleasurable to kiss, but not easy to report'. He then tells the boy ἃ δὲ ἀπόχρη σοι μαθεῖν ὅρα, 'what you need to learn, you can see'.<sup>62</sup> In the face of Rhodogune's beauty, Philostratus seems initially to be at a loss – he can certainly imagine kissing her lips, but describing them? Better that the boy should look for himself. But then he pulls himself together. Indeed, they are full of colour and well proportioned, perhaps they even speak Greek . . .

A number of things seem to be going on here. One significant fact is that it is Rhodogune's erotic beauty which distracts Philostratus from his usual exegetic pose, leading him to suggest that he cannot verbalise this particular sight. But when we do look closely, what happens? We hear her speaking, in Greek! Given that Rhodogune was a Persian, fighting Armenians, it seems remarkably unlikely that she would be speaking Greek, even if we could get through the picture's surface into her reality. Does she speak Greek here because we have earlier learned that she has been made famous in song wherever there are Greeks, that is, in Greek poetry?<sup>63</sup> If so, the painting speaks with the words of poetry, as suggested elsewhere. But it could also be that the effect of this close looking takes us into a fantasy world where everything is Greek, even when we might not expect it to be – a fantasy world similar, perhaps, to that presented to us in some of the Greek novels, which also show the appropriation of non-Greek figures such as Ninus and Semiramis.<sup>64</sup>

It is Rhodogune's erotic beauty which leads to this close looking and the immersion into the painted world, where we can hear the words she speaks. In other places, too, where we enter the picture's surface, erotics play a part. We have already looked at the episode of Menoeceus' death where Philostratus urges us to join in holding out a fold of cloth to catch the boy's blood. Yet this response comes after a detailed description of the

<sup>62</sup> *Imag.* 2.5.5. Note, however, that in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* the two young lovers singularly fail to learn their sexual lessons from watching nature, or even hearing the words of Philetas, but ultimately require the direct tuition of another, Lycanion. See Winkler (1990) 101–26.

<sup>63</sup> *Imag.* 2.5.1.

<sup>64</sup> On the Ninus novel, see Stephens and Winkler (1995) 23–71. Another example would be the Ethiopian heroine of Heliod. *Aeth.*



youth's beauty – he is athletic, with honey coloured skin, deep-chested, hips and thighs both in proportion, strong shoulders and neck, and long hair. It is no surprise that his soul is reluctant to leave, for 'souls also have a love for beautiful bodies and are loath to leave them'.<sup>65</sup> While the ecphrasis had started as a detached observation of the image, explaining the painter's artifice in his depiction of the city walls, by the end the ecphrastist and his audience are caught within the image. Like Menoeceus' own soul we, too, are enticed by his physical beauty, lingering as the blood pours out of him, with all boundaries between image and reality forgotten.

These movements by the ecphrastist into and out of the picture frame can be explored in detail in the paintings described as *Imagines* 1.20–25. This is a series of paintings of beautiful youths, including that of Narcissus, where the temptations of absorption are again clearly felt. The first is an image of Olympus, sleeping after his flute playing. Philostratus starts by identifying the place – Celaenae he decides, from the springs and cave. Here we are still outside the image, interpreting its iconography. Then we focus on the image of Olympus, 'more drinkable' than the stream itself, a description which points to his erotic beauty. A band of Satyrs are themselves gazing at him with love, desiring to kiss the boy. Indeed, one of them, ὁ σοφώτατος, the wisest, eats the tongue from the flute and declares that he can taste Olympus' breath.<sup>66</sup> By the end of the description, then, we have entered the picture plane, lured in by Olympus' beauty, we can even hear the Satyr's words.

The next image, also of Olympus, continues this imaginative contact with the painted world. Here Philostratus himself addresses Olympus in the second person, τίνι αὐλεῖς Ὀλυμπε; 'for whom do you play the flute, Olympus?'.<sup>67</sup> He goes on to ask why the boy is gazing at a pool of water, for if he is interested in (his own) beauty, Philostratus can praise it much better with his words – a comment which can also be read as a defence of Philostratus' own ecphrastic project in *Imagines*, where we can see the beauty of the painted world only through our ecphrastist's words. He goes on to describe the boy, his gaze, face, hair and crown, all in the second person. Even when Philostratus adopts his intellectual, exegetic persona to explain the technical distortion which occurs with images reflected in water, at the end of the piece, it is all still addressed to Olympus. Olympus here seems to take the place of the boy and youths who are accompanying Philostratus on his tour of the gallery, and the description ends without our narrator escaping the painted surface.

<sup>65</sup> *Imag.* 1.4.4.    <sup>66</sup> *Imag.* 1.20.2. Discussed by Elsner (2000) 263, n. 40.    <sup>67</sup> *Imag.* 1.21.1.

In the following piece Philostratus is still in the painted world, along with his audience. He begins in hushed tones:

καθεύδει ὁ Σάτυρος, καὶ ὑφειμένη τῇ φωνῇ περὶ αὐτοῦ λέγωμεν, μὴ ἐξεγείρηται καὶ διαλύσῃ τὰ ὁρώμενα.

The Satyr is sleeping, and let us speak about him with a lowered voice lest he wakes and dissolves the sight.<sup>68</sup>

Here Philostratus is still the exegete, about to speak about the image before them, but this sight is not painted but real, susceptible to disturbance and dissolution. But then we move out of the painted world, when Philostratus tells us about the nature of Satyrs and refers to the one here as 'painted', γέγραπται.<sup>69</sup> These three pieces thus show the entrance of our exegete into the painted world, lured by a beautiful boy, and his escape again through a generalisation about the nature of satyrs and their iconography. It is notable here that while lured into the painted world, Philostratus keeps certain of his external erudite characteristics, expounding the techniques of visual illusionism to painted and 'real' audience alike.

In the image of Narcissus, Philostratus starts outside the image, recognising it as a painting of a painting, and describing the cave in which Narcissus is shown. So, in the first part of the *ecphrasis*, Philostratus starts by giving us an intellectual, detached account of the image. He makes it clear that he is looking at a painting – for example in the use of the words *graphē* and *gegraptai*.<sup>70</sup> A little later he tells us that statues are represented, *ta agalmata*, and we get some interpretation of the image: the statues have been mutilated by children and the pool is in some way connected to Dionysus. We are especially told to admire the realism of the image. Philostratus tells us that the painting honours truth (*alētheia*) and drops dew from the flowers on which a bee settles. But then he stops, admitting that he does not know whether this is a real or a painted bee, 'but I do not know whether it is a bee deceived by the painting, or whether we are deceived by thinking it is real'.<sup>71</sup> As others have noticed, Philostratus here rewrites the anecdote of the contest between the painters Zeuxis and Parrhasius.<sup>72</sup> This told how Zeuxis painted grapes so realistically that he deceived the birds, who flew up to them, but how Parrhasius then deceived Zeuxis by painting a curtain so realistic that Zeuxis demanded he draw it up and reveal his picture. 'Let it pass', Philostratus says, though not without undermining our faith in our exegete's ability to stay detached from the image, to see

<sup>68</sup> *Imag.* 1.22.1. <sup>69</sup> *Imag.* 1.22.2. <sup>70</sup> *Imag.* 1.23.1–2. <sup>71</sup> *Imag.* 1.23.2.

<sup>72</sup> Told in Plin. *HN* 35.65. See Elsner (1996) 253 and Boeder (1996) 157 on the comparison.

through its deceptions. Indeed, in what follows we realise that Philostratus has leapt from an external viewing, describing a painting, to an internal one, describing the events as if happening before his own eyes.

Immediately after his doubts about the bee, addressed to his external audience, Philostratus suddenly says σὲ μέντοι, μαιράκιον, 'you, however, youth'. It is significant that at first we do not really know who this 'youth' he is addressing is. It could, on first reading, be one of the youths who is listening to this series of *ecphraseis*, described in the poem as *meirakia*, just as in other passages Philostratus addresses the *país*, the boy, his host's son.<sup>73</sup> But the next few words gradually make it clear:

You, however, youth, no painting has deceived you, nor are you absorbed in paints or wax, but you do not realise that the water models you as you are, nor do you question the artifice of the pool.<sup>74</sup>

By the time we reach the word 'water' in the middle of the sentence, we realise that he is addressing Narcissus. Narcissus' failure to see through the *sophisma* of the pool, however, is directly parallel to Philostratus' own failure to see through the deception of the bee. Led in by this deceptive device, unable to determine reality from the painted image, Philostratus here directly addresses the painted image, as if it is a real boy who can hear him. Even when, a few lines later, he turns to his external audience of youths and says of Narcissus, 'but he does not hear us', it is not because he is a painted image – as we might think – but because he is completely absorbed in the pool. It is notable here that it is the realism of the image, leading to Philostratus' verbalised inability to tell a real bee from a painted one, which directly leads onto his treating the painted Narcissus like a real youth. After this address to the boy, however, he then withdraws again, commenting to, we assume, his external audience (us, or the youths who attend him) that the boy does not hear, and then withdraws even more by saying 'let us ourselves tell how it is painted', acknowledging that it is just a painting after all.

He follows this with a description of the youth – he is standing erect, with one foot over the other, leaning on a spear. His right hand is on his hip, to support him and to make the *schema*, shape or form, where the hips are pushed outwards.<sup>75</sup> Narcissus' posture is thus given an artistic motivation. That Philostratus has a statuary pose in mind here is suggested by other passages in *Imagines* where he also describes such poses, for example in 1.24, where his account of the posture of someone throwing the discus is a very

<sup>73</sup> As in *Imag.* 1.1.1. <sup>74</sup> *Imag.* 1.23.3. The Greek in this passage is discussed above.

<sup>75</sup> *Imag.* 1.23.4.

close description of Myron's *Discobolus*, or in 1.5 where the painting of the Nile covered with personifications of the cubits is similar to extant statues like one in the Vatican.<sup>76</sup> After this description of his pose, Philostratus goes on to describe the shadowing of the figure and gives us a brief account of his eyes – surely those of a man in love. We then get an enthusiastic account of the youth's hair, including a flight of fantasy about what it would look like if blown by the wind during hunting. He ends with an account of the two identical Narcissi, the one in the pool, the other outside.

So during the course of this one description, we see Philostratus moving from an external exegetic pose, via deception by a naturalistic image (the flower and the bee) to an absorbed interaction with the figure in the image, and then out again, via a detailed description likening the youth to a work of art, standing in a statuary pose. The focal points for both his absorption into and extrication from the image are centred around art-works – the naturalism of the bee and flower, and the statue-like figure of Narcissus himself.

By the time we have read most of the first book of *Imagines*, we are used to this movement in and out of the picture frame, and Philostratus' exhortations to hear the words spoken or sung, or to smell the apples and roses.<sup>77</sup> When we get to *Hunters*, 1.28, then, it comes as no surprise that Philostratus plunges into the imaged world, urging the Hunters not to run past, and describing the boar they are hunting. Indeed, he suggests that in fact they are not hunting the boar, but the beauty of a youth, whom they long to touch, brushing up against him. But then he abruptly breaks the illusion:

ὅσον ἔπαθον· ἐξήχθην ὑπὸ τῆς γραφῆς μὴ γεγράφθαι δοκῶν αὐτούς, εἶναι δὲ καὶ κινεῖσθαι καὶ ἐρᾶν.

Such a thing I have suffered! I have been carried away by the image into thinking these are not painted but living and moving and loving.<sup>78</sup>

He then turns to the boy, rebuking him for not drawing attention to the mistake and suggesting that he, too, must have been deluded, 'unable to escape the deceit (*apatē*) and the stupefaction/sleep (*hypnos*), within it'.<sup>79</sup> In fact, we might defend his audience by pointing out that until this point Philostratus' readiness to enter the painted surface suggests that absorption in the image is just as valid a response as an intellectual one. Here, however, he shows the visual image luring its viewers into its own world, so that they

<sup>76</sup> On this, see Abbondanza (2001).

<sup>77</sup> E.g. *Imag.* 1.6.1 (the smell of apples), 1.9.4 (the song of the swans), 1.10.1 (Amphion's song).

<sup>78</sup> *Imag.* 1.28.2.      <sup>79</sup> *Imag.* 1.28.2.

are powerless to resist the deceit. It is precisely this type of stupefaction and wonder that Philostratus tries to dispel elsewhere with his learned explanations of what lies behind the visual features, but when it comes to erotic images, particularly of beautiful youths (they are always *meirakia*, teenage boys, like the ones who come to hear Philostratus' *meletai*) even he cannot resist their lures.

The merging of art and reality in these images is further confused by the fact that while Philostratus engages with the painted figures as if they are real, inside the painted world the beautiful youth is himself likened to a work of art. So, at the end of *Hunters*, the youths stand around in astonishment, looking at the lad οἷον γραφέν, 'as if he were a picture'. Their astonishment at the beauty and heroism of the youth is directly linked with the experience of viewing a painting.<sup>80</sup>

Philostratus' *Imagines* is a long, complex and highly sophisticated text, from which we cannot expect one unified and coherent message. It is full of suggestions about the interrelation of words and images, explaining – and, indeed, painting – these images in words, and setting itself inside a wider framework of ideas about *ecphrasis*, *enargeia* and visual and verbal representation. Yet within this complex of ideas, there does seem to be a discernible message about the lures of visual art. At times Philostratus seeks to contain the wonder evoked by visual effects, often highly naturalistic ones, and instead imposes his own version of what is to be esteemed in the painting. One example is in his description of the painting *A marsh*, 1.9, where the aspects of the painting evoking his students' admiration are clearly marked. So, as we have already seen, we are told that it is not a *thauma* that the swans are ridden by Erotes.<sup>81</sup> Here he highlights an illogical or unexpected aspect of the painting, explaining it as being due to the playful nature of these divinities. Further on, Philostratus again controls our viewing. While we might wish to praise the painting of the goats skipping about, or the sheep, or the playing of the pipes, we are told that this would be to praise a small thing, pertaining only to *mimēsis*, and would not praise the painting's *sophia*, which is the most important feature of the image.<sup>82</sup>

Whereas elsewhere the *sophia* and *sophisma* of an image does indeed lie in its mimetic effects, here we are told that the *sophia* lies rather in the bridge of date-palms which the painter has contrived by planting palms of different sexes either side of the river. The male date-palm yearns for the female, throwing itself down over the water in an effort to reach the other

<sup>80</sup> *Imag.* 1.28.8.    <sup>81</sup> *Imag.* 1.9.3.    <sup>82</sup> *Imag.* 1.9.5.

tree, and thus serving as a bridge.<sup>83</sup> Yet here, too, we can read the male date-palm as emblematic of the naturalistic viewer. At the sight of its mate it strives to reach across the barrier between them, the river, to embrace it. The tree's failure to connect with its mate parallels that of the absorbed viewer, lured in by erotic naturalism and always seeking to get beyond the barrier of the painted surface. The only response to such a desire, which leaves us, like Narcissus and the date-palm, lusting after something eternally out of reach, is to impose our own type of *sophia*, controlling the image's power to seduce with the verbal weapons of erudition.<sup>84</sup>

At the start of *Imagines* we are told that it is *sophia* which links painting and poetry. This proves to be true in a number of intriguing ways. Both painters and writers are credited with the same sort of cleverness and wisdom. The painter's use of perspective, Daedalus' wooden cow and Menelaus' decision to send Antilochus to report Patroclus' death are all described as *sophismata* – surely a significant term when used by someone of the name of Philostratus!<sup>85</sup> The *sophia* of the painter of *A Marsh* is the date-palm bridge – yet through drawing our attention to it, Philostratus also reveals his own *sophia*, as a viewer who appreciates the cleverness of the image.<sup>86</sup> Yet a painter's *sophia* also lies in his technical abilities to deceive and entice the viewer, by the use of light and shade to represent a stooping figure, or by the entrance it provides into the painted world, as in 2.29, for example, where the *sophia* of the painting of Antigone lies in its representation of faint moonlight and of Antigone, about to cry out loud, but checking herself lest she be caught.<sup>87</sup>

In response to the enticing naturalism of the image, the viewer exerts his own erudition, undermining mimetic or wonderful effects by explaining them. Yet at other times he allows himself to be overcome by the image's power, lured in by images of erotic beauty, he is content simply to stand and stare – at Rhodogune's lips or, like the other hunters, at the youth, as pretty as a picture.<sup>88</sup> We see the balance continually shifting between the power of the image to entice and of words to control. Abandon oneself to the erotic lures of a fantasy world of Greek myth and beauty? Or use the image to display one's own education and *sophia*? Absorption or erudition? That is

<sup>83</sup> *Imag.* 1.9.6.

<sup>84</sup> For an alternative (but complementary) reading of this frustrated desire see the psychoanalytical account in Elsner (2004) esp. 166–8 and 175–6.

<sup>85</sup> *Imag.* 1.14, 1.16, 2.7.

<sup>86</sup> See Maffei (1991) 619 on this, and Philostratus' need to create an intellectual, literary painter.

<sup>87</sup> *Imag.* 2.29.3. This entrance into Antigone's state of mind recalls the poem where painting allows access to individual emotions.

<sup>88</sup> *Imag.* 2.5.5, 1.28.8.

the dilemma posed by these visual images to their educated viewers. Yet of course the two lures of fantasy and *paideia* are also intrinsically interlinked – you cannot enter fully into the world of mythological heroes unless you know your Homer, Pindar, or Euripides, and the very fact that Philostratus can imagine himself there catching Menoeceus' blood shows his complete immersion in all aspects of Greek culture. Thus *Imagines* can also be seen as indicative of the educated elite's relationship with Greek culture as a whole, and not just their approach to painted images. The tensions I have suggested here, between the desire to succumb to the naturalistic fantasy world of the image, and to use the painting as a springboard for the display of erudition parallels, I would suggest, a more widespread desire both to escape into a fantasy Greek past but also to use one's knowledge of Greek culture as a source of public prestige in the Roman present.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> For a selection of views on the elite's use of Greek culture during this period, see Bowie (1970); Swain (1996); Schmitz (1997); Goldhill (2001a).

*Philostratus and the Narcissus of Caravaggio*

Stephen Bann

Some years ago, in a study concerned with 'Visual Representation and the Western Tradition', I made the suggestion that Caravaggio's celebrated painting, traditionally entitled 'Narcissus', was specifically related to the text of the same name in the elder Philostratus' *Imagines*.<sup>1</sup> I was not aware at the time if this point had been made before, in general or particular terms. Nor do I know if it has been subsequently accepted or challenged. I am taking the occasion of this chapter as a pretext for looking more carefully at the original, precise proposition that I made, not just with the aim of reaffirming or questioning its validity, but using it as a test case of what might be involved in asserting such a connection between a classical text and a Renaissance painting. This issue forms, of course, a subset of the more general question of the relationship between word and image, which has produced an immense amount of critical writing the past few years. But the historical dimension of the relationship that I shall be examining makes the matter rather more difficult to resolve, and by the same token extremely fascinating to contemplate.

I should make the preliminary point that, while I was initially planning this chapter, I happened to come across a relevant source with an Oxford connection: Malcolm Bull's article in the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* on 'Poussin's 'Loves of the Goddesses'' (Bull 2001). To put the point briefly, Bull argues that a significant set of Poussin's early works indicates clear knowledge of Jean Puget de la Serre's *Les Amours des Déeses* of 1626.<sup>2</sup> Without following the impressive detail of the argument, I should say that it relies on the fact that a number of iconographic details in the paintings are present in precisely the same combinations as they exhibit in Puget de la Serre's text. However it is given additional weight by the aesthetic point that this group of paintings by Poussin, in particular, has an identifiably common character in both style and in atmosphere. An incidental aspect

<sup>1</sup> See Bann (1989) 133.    <sup>2</sup> Bull (2001).



of the case is the fact that Poussin himself makes frequent references to the French translation of *Imagines* by Blaise de Vigenère, which appeared first in 1578. Bull also notes in passing that both of the paintings by Poussin which concern Narcissus, *Echo and Narcissus* (Louvre) and *The Infant Bacchus entrusted to the Nymphs* (Fogg Museum, Harvard), incontestably use Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as their privileged source.

Bull's article on Poussin, and the confident argument that it sustains, seem like a safe harbour from which I start out on my own quest, apprehensive of achieving anything like the same degree of persuasiveness in my own hypothesis. As has been re-stated many times, and from differing points of view, Poussin is radically different from his near-contemporary Caravaggio. If we want to see the evidence that Poussin read and used the writings of Philostratus, we have only to take the case of his *Andrians* in the Louvre. The subject is so obscure that it could only have been lifted from the mysterious *ecphrasis* in book 1 of *Imagines*. Moreover, if we want to know more about Poussin's view of the correspondence between text and image, we have only to consult his well-known letter on *Manna*, ably analysed by Louis Marin (1982). The transparent clarity of Poussin's project is well summed up by the injunction to his patron Chantelou: 'read the story and the painting to find out if each thing is appropriate to the subject'.<sup>3</sup> And much the same applies if we direct our attention to the *Echo and Narcissus* in the Louvre. Much has been written about this outstanding painting, and the suggestion that it incorporates the Christian iconography of the Deposition is only one strand in its complex signification. But the fact that it reflects a careful study of the whole 'story' of Narcissus, as it is recounted in the *Metamorphoses*, and that, as a result, it breaks with the established tradition of presenting the young huntsman at the moment of his initial entrancement with the self-image, is hardly open to doubt.

None of these near-certainties can be found to apply to Caravaggio's *Narcissus* (figure 16.1). There has been, in the first place, some doubt over the very attribution of the work to Caravaggio. But this was effectively laid to rest, and I shall therefore begin by ruling it out of court. More importantly – once we have determined that there is an author to take responsibility for this and other debated works – there is the huge and probably now unanswerable question of their contemporary reception. If Poussin brilliantly succeeds in setting the terms for our understanding of his sophisticated use of classical antiquity, the historical Caravaggio (who left no such testament) has been overwhelmed by a tide of wild biographical

<sup>3</sup> Marin (1982) 11.



Figure 16.1 Attributed to Michelangelo Merisi, called Caravaggio (1571–1610), *Narcissus*, probably painted between 1595 and 1599; oil on canvas. Palazzo Barberini, Rome

speculation that continues to complicate our responses. The authoritative catalogue of the show, *The Age of Caravaggio* (Metropolitan Museum, 1985), bears witness in its very title to the devout intention of re-historicising the artist. Indeed the article on 'Caravaggio Today' in that same publication timidly opines that the 'homosexual orientation attributed to [Caravaggio's

patron] Del Monte in the literature of the 1960s and 1970s now appears in a different light'.<sup>4</sup> But the light continues to be intermittently lurid. In that same article, Mina Gregori writes of the collection of works such as *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* that their 'creation was possible encouraged by the descriptions of ancient writers', before partially retracting the likelihood of such learned reference and alleging 'the artist's wish to personify himself as a classical divinity'.<sup>5</sup> In a similar manner, another contributor to the same catalogue draws attention to the stark contrast between Howard Hibbard's interpretation of these genre pictures as 'the expression of an egocentric, aggressive, yet highly vulnerable and insecure homosexual', and those proffered by other scholars whose motive seems to have been to get so far away from such obtrusive intentionalist readings as to court incredulity, interpreting the fruit-bearing boy as a symbol of the Resurrected Christ, and the famous Ambrosiana still life as a *Vanitas*.<sup>6</sup>

This endemic disturbance in Caravaggio studies has not disappeared over the last fifteen years.<sup>7</sup> One might say that it is in the very nature of the works themselves that some such conflict should be generated. If we consider *Supper at Emmaus* (National Gallery, London), we may have little alternative to seeing it both as a religious work and as a painting that incorporates self-advertising feats of illusionism. I am almost convinced by the argument that here, as in the Ambrosiana *Still Life*, the presence of dark pock-marks on the fruit is an indication that Caravaggio wanted to invoke the mythic precedent of Zeuxis and the grapes, by putting in our minds the conceit that the birds might have erroneously pecked at them. Perhaps Caravaggio was here laying claim to the classical notion of illusion as an agonistic exchange between artists in front of their public, in which superior skill consisted in going one step further than the competitor (or spectator) was willing to countenance. But this is not to deny that the *Emmaus* calls for a further level of interpretation, in which the reappearance of Christ in his earthly form, and the consequent incredulity of the disciples, plays the major role; we can then absorb within the general array of Counter-Reformation representational strategies what may be a *mise-en-abîme* of classical illusionism.

<sup>4</sup> Gregori (1985) 31.    <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 32.    <sup>6</sup> See Spear (1985) 25.

<sup>7</sup> This is not, of course, to say that no progress has been made. Perhaps the most judicious comment on the development of Caravaggio scholarship is that published in 1987 by the philosopher David Carrier, who reminds us of the basic hermeneutic issues involved: 'Every writer about Caravaggio is engaged in an act of synthesis, and though the seicento commentators use codes which seem alien to us, how we understand the relation between their accounts and ours depends upon a complex act of interpretation.' See Carrier (1987) 73.

For the purposes of this chapter, however, I am doing something much more restricted in scope. I have implied that it is difficult, in interpreting Caravaggio's paintings, not to swing between extremes – from rabid intentionalism to vapid iconography. As far as I know, there is only one substantial study that endeavours to pursue single-mindedly the issue of the 'classical elements' in Caravaggio's work as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Orr's thesis takes seriously, although it does not finally endorse, the view that Caravaggio 'set up and followed a Plinian program', and it draws specific attention to the connection with Philostratus, comparing the latter's descriptions of 'Xenia' with some of the early genre pictures mentioned here previously. Orr presents an incontrovertible case for the popularity of discussions about the achievement of the legendary painters Zeuxis and Apelles among the rhetoricians and theoreticians of the Renaissance. But she says little of specific interest about the so-called *Narcissus*, which I must now turn to consider.

In my early references to Poussin, I suggested that his *Echo and Narcissus* opts for the final metamorphosis scene of the Ovidian myth and, by the same token, has little or nothing to do with Philostratus, or indeed with the striking reappearance of Philostratus and Ovid conjoined, so to speak, which occurs in Alberti's treatise, *De pictura*: 'For this reason, I say among my friends that Narcissus who was changed into a flower, according to the poets, was the inventor of painting. Since painting is already the flower of every art, the story of Narcissus is most to the point. What else can you call painting but a similar embracing with art of what is presented on the surface of the water in the fountain.'<sup>9</sup> I am going to argue that Caravaggio's *Narcissus* betrays, or rather advertises, its adhesion to the text of Philostratus (as opposed to the modern reference in Alberti) principally by the uncanny precision with which it picks up the classical author's concluding description of the young huntsman's hair arrangement. The Loeb translation (*Imag.* 1.23.5) puts it like this: 'For it is very abundant and of a golden hue; and some of it clings to the neck, some is parted by the ears, some tumbles over the forehead, and some falls in ripples to the beard.'<sup>10</sup> To show that I am mindful of philological nuances, and also of the historical problem of what Caravaggio and the Cardinal del Monte might have used as their text of Philostratus, I will quote the same passage from Stephanus Niger's translation, published in Milan in 1521: 'Ipsa enim densa et aequae atque aurea existente: partim quidem collum ad

<sup>8</sup> See Orr (1982). <sup>9</sup> Quoted in Bann (1989) 105–6. <sup>10</sup> Fairbanks (1931) 93.

se trahit: partim vero ab auribus secernitur: pars in fronte agitat: pars barbae adfluit."<sup>11</sup>

There is a potential problem here with the last of those descriptive details. Caravaggio does not appear to reproduce the last of them – 'falls in ripples to the beard' or 'barbae adfluit'. I am, however, relaxed about discarding this difficulty, partly for aesthetic reasons. I cannot see how, in visual terms, the additional load of beard and hair flowing into it would have avoided making Narcissus look like a satyr instead of a beautiful young huntsman. Ewen Bowie assures me, moreover, that there is no reason to suppose from the Greek text that a full beard would have been implied. In any event, Caravaggio has clearly reproduced three of the four effects specified by Philostratus in sedulous detail – hair clinging to the neck, hair parted by the ear and hair unruly over the forehead. And, as far as I can determine, there is no other representation of Narcissus, prior or indeed subsequent, that adopts this protocol. I except a couple of works from the present day by the French painter Pierre Buraglio, one of which is in my collection, since these are explicitly 'After Caravaggio'. One might indeed ask at this point if the Caravaggio could be said to be 'After Philostratus' in the same sense as the Buraglio, with its strategy of translating the late-Renaissance painting into a post-Matisse vocabulary of graphic signs, is 'After Caravaggio'. The answer is that such a gesture of affiliation inevitably carries its own freight of complex cultural meanings, specific to the age in which it was made. What must now follow is a more careful scrutiny of the scene of self-reflection that Caravaggio, invoking Philostratus, has purposefully set up.

The first relevant point to be made is that there is not just one classical *ecphrasis* on Narcissus – the one to which reference has already been made – but also a second one, Callistratus' 'On a Statue of Narcissus', which was customarily associated with it. In Blaise de Vigenère's French translation of 1578, indeed, the *ecphraseis* of Callistratus are assimilated to 'La Suite de Philostrate'. In Callistratus' description, incidentally, the Parian marble statue is vested with what the Loeb translation calls 'gilded hair' (ἐπικρύσοις), and the French of Vigenère maintains the apparent paradox while making clear to us at the same time that this is not the precisely arranged coiffure described by Philostratus: 'Il resplandissoit d'une

<sup>11</sup> Philostratus, *Imagines*, trans. Stephanus Niger (Milan, 1521) xvi. I do not claim that this was necessarily the translation to which Caravaggio had access, directly or indirectly. However the review of translations that he might have used is clearly important if any close scrutiny of the fit between text and image is to be made credible. Will Stenhouse has helpfully suggested to me that the antiquarian Marzio Milesio, who wrote verse in praise of Caravaggio, would have included Philostratus among his interests, and might have informed Caravaggio about the Latin – or, indeed, the Greek – text.

chevelure dorée entourant sa face, dont les tresses, le long du col, s'alloient espandre sur les épaules."<sup>12</sup> For our purposes, this addition of a statue of Narcissus to the reckoning might appear to be no more than a confusing and unnecessary supplement. But it is important to take it into account, even as it might apply to the consideration of Caravaggio. This is because it brings out the inherent difficulty – one might almost say impossibility – in staging the representation of Philostratus' *ecphrasis* in the first place.

The problem resides in the very formula with which Philostratus opens his 'Narcissus', as it is translated in the Loeb edition by Fairbanks: 'The pool paints Narcissus, and the painting represents both the pool and the whole story of Narcissus.'<sup>13</sup> This reference to 'the whole story' is an understandable gloss, but the original Greek is perhaps not so explicit, and the Latin version of Stephanus Niger – which I am assuming to have been quite possibly the version known to the Del Monte circle – is certainly open to interpretation: 'Fons quidem Narcissum refert: pictura vero et fontem et Narcissi omnia.'<sup>14</sup> What this might mean, and could plausibly have been interpreted as meaning, is that the painting represents not the 'story' of Narcissus (whatever that might imply), but literally 'all' of Narcissus – i.e. his full figure, as opposed to the aspect of him which is reflected in the pool, and can be seen, in the form of a reflection, in the painting.

This distinction does, however, immediately bring with it another, more serious problem, and one which has had its direct legacy in the many representations of Narcissus that follow Caravaggio and Poussin right up to the nineteenth century and beyond. To put it this way, are we to suppose that Narcissus as described by Philostratus is in a standing, or a kneeling or crouching position? Incidentally, both Alciatus, in his illustration to an emblem of Narcissus, and Tintoretto, in his painting now in the Galleria Colonna, have Narcissus kneeling beside the pond.<sup>15</sup> But there is no reason to suppose that they were trying to be attentive to Philostratus. The Loeb edition, perhaps confusingly for our purposes, illustrates Philostratus' *ecphrasis* with a line drawing of a Pompeian wall painting in which Narcissus sits on a rock, leaning on his left hand, and the spatial situation of the reflecting water is somewhat incoherent. It also specifies, according to Fairbanks' translation: 'A youth just returned from the hunt stands over a

<sup>12</sup> *La Suite de Philostrate* (1602). <sup>13</sup> Fairbanks (1931) 89.

<sup>14</sup> Philostratus, Niger xvi. I should acknowledge that Ewen Bowie does not believe that the original Greek would bear this extended meaning. However it is a question here rather of what Caravaggio, and his circle, would have made of the text that they were acquainted with, most probably in its Latin form. It seems at least possible that the painter would have been taken with the interpretation 'all [the body]' rather than 'all [the story]' of Narcissus.

<sup>15</sup> For illustrations of these works, see Bann (1989) 129, 130.

pool.' This point about posture is also picked up later in the *ecphrasis*: 'The youth, standing erect, is at rest.' The precise description which then follows has been shown to illustrate a specific sculptural type, and is compared in the Loeb notes to the attitude of Oenomaus in the east pediment of the temple of Zeus at Olympia.

As my own concern is not with what Philostratus might have been concerned to evoke in the minds of a contemporary audience, but with Caravaggio and his contemporaries, I can assume by contrast that the *ecphrasis* provided a stimulus – indeed, a challenge – to the post-Renaissance artist, rather than simply confirming the existence of sculptural typologies. And here I should point out that the opening section of Philostratus' text seems in fact rather more open to interpretation than the later sections which have just been quoted. At the outset, Philostratus does not stress that the Narcissus figure is, as Loeb has it, 'standing erect' (ὀρθόν, 1.2.34); he uses the Greek word ἐφέστηκε (1.23.5), for which the Loeb translation 'stands over' could easily be replaced by a similar, but less precise term like 'leans over'. The Latin of Stephanus Niger has 'imminet', which can mean both 'hang down over', 'leans over' and 'be eager for', a combination of physical and psychological notations that fits the scenography which Caravaggio has chosen to paint rather well.

Of course, this does not mean that we need not hunt among sculptural types for the posture that Caravaggio selects. We are certainly authorised in thinking that he would have been concerned to invest the image of Narcissus with a recognisable connection to classical sculptural models, as well as to the authority of Philostratus. The suggestion was made in 1974 that the ancient bronze statue of the *Spinario*, in the Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome, would have been a model well known to him, since a replica was listed in the inventory of Cardinal del Monte's possessions.<sup>16</sup> I am more struck with the close similarity between Caravaggio's Narcissus, and the *Cupid* now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (once thought to be by Michelangelo but now relegated to the status of a minor classical work) which even more strikingly than the *Spinario* brings out the prominence of the left knee as the fulcrum of the body's dynamic tension.<sup>17</sup> In relation to both of these, however, I should stress the difference between the close-cropped coiffure of the two youthful figures, and the elaborate system

<sup>16</sup> *Caravaggio* (1985) 265. The comparison was made by Marini (1974).

<sup>17</sup> This work has had a chequered history. At the time when it entered the Victoria & Albert Museum, it was believed to have been a commission executed by Michelangelo for Signor Jacopo Galli, and its provenance was the Gigli-Campana collection. It would be worth investigating whether Caravaggio could have had access to it. See Black (1875) 184.

that Philostratus describes and Caravaggio reproduces. In the Tintoretto, and indeed the Poussin at the Fogg, it is this generic hair style that Narcissus sports which is another proof of the singularity of the project that Caravaggio set for himself.

The question of sculptural typology, related as it is to the precise posture of the Narcissus figure, does however give rise to a further issue, which perhaps takes us closer to the heart of Caravaggio's achievement. We must assume that the posture of Narcissus admiring his own reflection, however it is described in the *ecphraseis* of the elder Philostratus and in Callistratus, would have taken on a very specific meaning for the post-Renaissance artist. By that date, the prevailing cultural assumption, at least in Roman circles, would have been that represented space would fulfil the conditions of correct perspectival recession from a single viewpoint.

I am, however, wary of making this assumption in a universalising fashion. In other words, I am not assuming that every seventeenth-century readers of these texts would have tried to work out if it was visually possible to configure the spatial relationships in the way that these *ecphraseis* appeared to stipulate. It is noteworthy, for example, that Blaise de Vigenère does not consider the issue of how it is possible to arrange for the spectator's point of view a marble Narcissus who is both standing up and simultaneously contemplating himself in a pond. He envisages the problem as being one of reconstructing the entire milieu that Callistratus describes. 'Que si on pouvoit arriver à le contrefaire réellement comme il est icy desseigné de paroles, je croirois que peu de tels ornemens de lieux de plaisance se fussent mettre à exécution qui fussent plus beaux à l'oeil ny delectables ...'<sup>18</sup> In other words, what is envisaged is a garden feature, accessible through a travelling viewpoint, where Callistratus' conceit of a marble Narcissus in a woodland setting could be explored in terms of real space. The reflection in the water that is so evocatively described by the Greek author could thus be observed from innumerable different angles. This is a very different matter from the inventive, but bizarre assignment taken on by the American sculptor Richard James Wyatt in the nineteenth century, when fidelity to Callistratus' description has resulted in a posture which has to combine the act of standing – up to a point – with the act of contemplating the reflection. The contortion is pitiful to behold. Yet even in this work, though in a different fashion from Philostratus interpreted by Caravaggio, the hair plays a crucial role in mediating the ecphrastic description, which

<sup>18</sup> *La Suite de Philostrate* 140.



reads: 'It was shining with gilded hair, of which the locks encircled the forehead in a curve and hung free down the neck to the back.'<sup>19</sup>

My argument is that it would have been possible, though not obligatory, in the early modern period, to interpret a classical *ecphrasis* as involving a potential problem in anchoring the point of view. We know, of course, that many seventeenth-century painters vaunted their skill in combining the depiction of reflecting surfaces internal to the represented scene with the logic of a monocular point of view. And we know that the regrettable tendency of some art-historians to play down this technical element, purely in the interests of a nebulous creativity, is open to precise and irrefutable counter-demonstration. I am thinking principally of the cogent arguments of Philip Stedman, who has demonstrated through modelling successive scenographies in real space how tenuous are the claims that Vermeer preferred to take 'artistic' liberties with such matters.<sup>20</sup> I would make a similar point about Velazquez's *Rokeby Venus*. It has been argued that the relation of the viewer to the reflected face of the goddess is an impossible one. But I have witnessed a conclusive demonstration that the position of the mirrored head in no way fudges what could be a real spatial relationship between the viewer's eye, the goddess and her reflection.

As far as the scene described in Philostratus' 'Narcissus' goes, however, it should be said that the problem lies in the reflection being both in front of the principal subject, and a horizontal plane lying below him. Early-Renaissance representations of the scene did not particularly focus on the portrayal of the reflection: Tintoretto, for example, has Narcissus reaching down into the pond, and thereby (as Ovid underlines) spoiling his own impression of reciprocity. The beautiful reflected image has already departed by this point, and there is no prospect of recalling it. Poussin's *Echo and Narcissus* is again placed after the crisis of self-recognition, and the body has withdrawn from the stream, just as it has in the case of the dead Narcissus appearing in the Fogg painting, *The Infant Bacchus Entrusted to the Nymphs*. The seventeenth-century Italian painter Giacinto Gimignani, thought to be the author of a little-known *Narcissus* in the Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA, might, however, have learned from the latter work that to show both Narcissus and his reflection from a spatially plausible angle necessitates a very high viewpoint (figure 16.2). In this case, the reflected face will be seen more frontally – as it were – than it appears on the averted head of the subject. Gimignani follows the Ovidian myth,

<sup>19</sup> Fairbanks (1931) 391. The *Narcissus* of Richard James Wyatt is in the collection of the Smart Art Gallery, University of Chicago.

<sup>20</sup> See Stedman (2000).



Figure 16.2 Attributed to Giacinto Gimignani (1606–81), *Narcissus with Echo and Two Nymphs*; oil on canvas. Mead Art Museum, Amherst, MA.

of course, and as she is one of the rare early women painters to have tackled it, it is interesting to note that much of the psychological tension has been transferred from the main subject to the three female participants, two of them probably nymphs who had tried in vain to attract Narcissus' attention, and the third the transmogrified Echo. Narcissus' hunting dog almost steals the scene, however, in his petrified posture of attention.

Caravaggio gives us none of this. There are no Ovidian supporting actors. Even the sacred cave that Philostratus so evocatively describes has to be taken for granted. But what is particularly striking is the almost perfect reciprocity between Narcissus and his reflection. In any close-up view of an object and its reflection on a horizontal surface, the aspect of the reflected object is bound to be different from the aspect of the object itself, since the two angles are significantly different from any one point of view. Here, however, it is as if the body and its reflection occupied the same plane,

and this plane is closely parallel to the picture plane. Of course, this is not perceived solely through our perception of the head and its reflection, but through the close cropping of the image by the frame and the consequent effect of bilateral symmetry. What then might be the point of this elaborate and unique version of the Narcissus myth in the form of a painting? I will try to reply briefly to this final question.

In the first place, I would reaffirm that the capillary code, which I discussed earlier, is an unequivocal sign that this is a work that seeks to establish a connection to Philostratus. In a general sense, this would be because of the interest taken in the legendary painters and paintings of classical antiquity within the circle of the Cardinal del Monte. The young Caravaggio could have assumed that, in this circle, the reference to *Imagines*, as well as to myths regarding Zeuxis and Apelles, would have aroused a cultivated interest. But, if this is the case, why does Caravaggio so pointedly exclude so many of the features mentioned by Philostratus, to the point where no one could be persuaded that any Roman painting might have resembled this one?

The point is surely that, in the absence of any concrete knowledge of Greek or Roman painting, reference to classical precedents did not have to work in a merely repetitive fashion. The relation of *Boy with a Basket of Fruit* to the description of 'Xenia' is not a direct one either, and even if we discount the classical provenance of the basket that juts out of the picture plane in the *Supper at Emmaus*, there is still a discordance of sorts to be explained. In the *Narcissus*, however, it is by contrast the remarkable unity of effect that needs to be explained, if possible with reference to what Caravaggio might have discovered in the text of Philostratus.

Here I feel that the answer may lie in a particularly fascinating passage in the text, which seems to epitomise the mood of frozen contemplation that the painting makes visible. If I do not use the word 'absorption' in this context, it is not to deny the application of this term to Caravaggio's *Narcissus*, in precisely the same way as Michael Fried has applied it in a series of major works beginning with *Absorption and Theatricality*, and currently continuing with studies of the work of Caravaggio.<sup>21</sup> Philostratus' commentary, which I quote here as my conclusion, may thus provide a foreraste of the proposition that Caravaggio would find compelling, not merely as a authoritative message from classical antiquity, but as an incentive to developing his own, distinctively modern concept of pictorial

<sup>21</sup> See in particular Fried (1980).

engagement. At this precise point, pure specularity yields to the insistence of the body, and we can foresee a new, active role for the spectator:

As for you, however, Narcissus, it is no painting that has deceived you, nor are you engrossed in a thing of pigments and wax; but you do not realize that the water represents you exactly as you are when you gaze upon it, nor do you see through the artifice of the pool, though to do so you have only to nod your head or change your expression or slightly move your hand, instead of standing in the same attitude; but acting as though you had met a companion, you wait for some move on his part. Do you then expect the pool to enter into conversation with you? Nay, this youth does not hear anything we say, but he is immersed, eyes and ears alike, in the water and we must interpret the painting for ourselves.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Fairbanks (1931) 91.

## Appendix: Dialexis 2

The text is reproduced from C. L. Kayser, *Flavii Philostrati opera* 2 (Leipzig 1871) 258–60. Section divisions are in accordance with the English translation by Simon Swain in chapter 3 (pp. 42–3).

[258.30] (1) Οἱ τὸν νόμον τῇ φύσει ἀνθομοιοῦντες ἀντικεῖσθαι μὲν ταῦτά φασιν ἀλλήλοις, καθάπερ τὸ λευκὸν [259.1] τῷ μέλανι καὶ τὸ μανὸν τῷ πυκνῷ καὶ τὸ μελιχρὸν τῷ πικρῷ καὶ τὸ ψυχρὸν τῷ θάλπουντι, εἶναι δὲ φύσεως μὲν ἔργα ζῶα καὶ ἄστροα καὶ ποταμούς καὶ ἴδας καὶ πεδία καὶ ἰσθμούς καὶ πορθμούς καὶ καθάπαξ τὸ ὑπὲρ τέχνην, νόμον δὲ ἔργα τεῖχη καὶ νεώσοικοι καὶ ναῦς καὶ ἄσπτις καὶ λήια καὶ πᾶν τὸ ὑπὸ χεῖρα, καὶ τὰ μὲν τῆς φύσεως ἄφθαρτα εἶναι τὸν αἰεὶ χρόνον, τὴν τε θάλατταν μένειν, ὁπόση ἐγένετο, καὶ τὴν γῆν, ὁπόση ὠρίσθη, καὶ τὸν αἰθέρα, ὡς ἔφυ, ἄστροα τε καὶ ὥρας, ὡς ἐκείνων κύκλος, καὶ τὸ ἐπὶ ζῶα δὲ αὐτῆς ἦκον φθείρεσθαι μὲν αὐτὰ τὰ τικτόμενα, τὸ δὲ αἰεὶ τίκτον παρέχειν τῇ φύσει τὸν τοῦ ἀκηράτου λόγον, (2) τὰ δὲ τοῦ νόμου φθαρτά τε εἶναι καὶ <χρόνω> ἁλωτά, τεῖχη τε γὰρ καὶ ἱερὰ τὰ μὲν [259.15] ἀλίσκεσθαι, τὰ δὲ φθείρεσθαι σὺν χρόνω, οἰκίαν δὲ τὴν εὖ κατεσκευασμένην δηλὸν εἶναι, ὅτι οὐκ αἰεὶ ἐστήξει καὶ τὸ ναυπηγηθὲν οὐκ εἶναι βέβαιον ὅτι μὴδ' ἡ θάλαττα βεβαία ἀνθρώποις, τεκτονικὴν τε καὶ χαλκευτικὴν πᾶσαν φθαρτά ἐργάζεσθαι τῷ νόμῳ, καὶ τὸν μὲν νόμον οὐκ ἂν δημιουργῆσαι ζῶον ἔμψυχον οὐδέν, οὐδ' ἄστρον, οὐδ' αἰθέρα, οὐδ' ἄλλο τι τῶν ὧδε θεσπεσίων καὶ μεγάλων, τὴν φύσιν δὲ ὁμοιοῦσθαι πολλαχοῦ τοῖς τοῦ νόμου εἵδεσι, (3) χωρία τε γὰρ ὄχυροῦν τείχεσιν ἀσφαλεστέροις τῶν ποιηθέντων ἀντρα τε κισσηρεφῇ κατανοιγνύναι ἡδῶ οἴκων καὶ που καὶ ἀγαλμα διδόναι πέτρᾳ συμφυῆς σατυρικόν τι ἢ Πανὶ ὁμοιον, ὄρη τε καὶ σκοπιάς ὁμοιοῦν ζωοῖς, οἶον {τῆς} αὐτῆς ὁ ἐν Λήμνῳ δράκων καὶ ὁ ἐν Κρήτῃ λέων καὶ ἡ βούκρανος ἡ πρὸς Χίῳ, [259.30] ἀγαλματοποιούσης τε κατὰ τὸν νόμον καὶ τὰς νεφέλας ἐς εἶδη ζῶων ἀγούσης· βλέπαντι γοῦν ἐς αὐτὰς λύκοις τε ὁμοιοῦνται καὶ παρδάλεσι καὶ κενταύροις [260.1] καὶ ἄρμασι, καὶ οὐδὲ ὁ κύκλος

τῆς σελήνης ἄσημος, ἀλλὰ κἀκείνῳ τι ἐντετύπωται πρόσωπον οἷον γραφῆς ἀρρήτου· (4) ἐμοὶ δὲ νόμος καὶ φύσις οὐ μόνον οὐκ ἐναντίω φαίνεσθον, ἀλλὰ καὶ συγγενεστάτῳ καὶ ὁμοίῳ καὶ διήκοντε ἀλλήλοιν· νόμος τε γὰρ παριτητέος ἐς φύσιν καὶ φύσις ἐς νόμον καὶ καλοῦμεν αὐτοῖν τὸ μὲν ἀρχήν, τὸ δ' ἐπόμενον, κεκληρώσθω δὲ ἀρχὴν μὲν φύσις, νόμος δὲ τὸ ἔπεσθαι, οὔτε γὰρ ἂν νόμος ἐτειχοποίησεν ἢ ὑπὲρ τείχους ὦπλισεν, εἰ μὴ φύσις ἔδωκεν ἀνθρώπῳ χεῖρας, οὔτ' ἂν ἡ φύσις <τι> τῶν ἐνεργούντων ἔδειξεν, εἰ μὴ τέχναι ἐνομίσθησαν, ἔδωκε τε φύσις μὲν νόμῳ θάλατταν αἰθέρα ἄστρα, νόμος δὲ αὖ φύσει γεωργίαν ναυτιλίαν ἀστρονομίαν καὶ ὀνόματα κεῖσθαι ταῖς ὥραις, ἄργυρόν τε καὶ [260.15] χρυσὸν καὶ ἀδάμαντα καὶ μάργαρον καὶ τὰ ὧδε σπανιστὰ φύσις μὲν εὔρε, νόμος δ' ἐτίμησε. (5) περιωπτήσας δ' ἂν καὶ τὰ ἀνθρώπου ὁμοίως ἔχοντα· φύσις μὲν ἐννοῦν δημιουργεῖ τὸν ἀνθρώπου καὶ λογικὸν καὶ εὐφυᾶ πάντα, νόμος δὲ παιδεύει καὶ ὀπλίζει καὶ ὑποδεῖ καὶ ἀμφιέν- νυσιν, ἐπειδὴ γυμνὸς αὐτῷ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως πέμπεται, προτίθησι δὲ ὁ νόμος καὶ ἀρετῆς ἄλλα ἀνθρώποις, οἷον τιμῶν τὴν φύσιν. καὶ μὴ τὸν νόμον ἀφαιρώμεθα τὸν τοῦ ἀθανάτου λόγον, καὶ γὰρ εἰ καὶ φθαρτὰ ἐργάζεται, ἀλλ' ἀθάνατά γε αὐτὰ ποιεῖ, ὄνομα δὲ αὐτῷ τέχνη. (6) ἡπείρου δὲ ἀπορραγεῖσα νῆσος καὶ νήσῳ ξυμβαλοῦσα ἡπειρος καὶ Πηνειὸς Ὀλύμπου διεκπεσὼν οὐ φύσεως ταῦτα οὐδὲ νόμου ἔργα· ἔστι τι ἀμφοῖν μέσον, ὃ καλεῖται συμβεβηκός, ὅφ' οὗ ὁ νόμος ὁμοιοῦται φύσει καὶ φύσις [260.30] μεταβάλλει ἐς νόμον.

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