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B. F. HARRIS

# Apollonius of Tyana: Fact and Fiction *

Apollonius, the religious expert celebrated in Philostratus' *Life*, was without doubt an historical figure: he lived from about A.D. 40-110 and was thus contemporary with Plutarch and Dio of Prusa. The ordinary student of the Empire, if he has heard of him at all, will probably remember the passage in Dio Cassius when the murder of the Emperor Domitian is being described. Dio relates that, at the very hour the assassin struck in Rome, 'a certain Apollonius, a Tyanean . . . mounted upon a high stone at Ephesus, or somewhere else, and summoning the people, spoke the words "Bravo, Stephanus! Well done! Strike the foul murderer! Struck! Wounded! Killed!" This really did happen, even if you choose to disbelieve it ten thousand times.'[1]

We are already in an atmosphere of historical vagueness with this incident, and of controversy, which is symbolic of the ancient evidence about Apollonius. His posthumous reputation was impressive. Hadrian possessed a collection of his Letters,[2] Julia Domna, the wife of Septimius Severus, authorized an official record of his life,[3] Caracalla paid for a shrine erected in his honour at Tyana,[4] and Severus Alexander is credibly reported to have worshipped before Apollonius' statue in his private chapel, beside the shrines of Alexander the Great, Orpheus, Abraham, and Christ.[5] Yet, if we look for first-century evidence of the man, there is nothing in Seneca or Tacitus or Pliny or even Plutarch, the most likely source—only a possible hint in Dio of Prusa.[6] Then, coming to mid-second century, nothing in Pausanias or Aelius Aristides: not till Lucian have we any explicit reference, and this significantly is hostile. In his life of *Alexander the False Prophet* he tells us Alexander's teacher was a Tyanean, 'one of the circle of the notorious Apollonius, who was familiar with all his mummery'.[7] Dio Cassius makes a second reference to him, in connection with Caracalla, as

* The text of a paper read to the Classics Section of the eleventh Congress of the Australasian Universities Language & Literature Association, Sydney, in August 1967.

1. *Epit.* lxvii. 17, 18.
2. Philost. *Vit. Ap.* viii. 20.
3. Ibid., i. 3.
4. Ibid., viii. 31.
5. Lampridius, *Vit. Alex. Sev.* 29.
6. *Or.* xxxv. 3, 4.
7. 5 fin.

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'Apollonius the Cappadocian, an arrant magician and sorcerer'.[8] This judgment is also typical of the later Christian writers. St John Chrysostom imagines an objector who is comparing Apollonius with Christ. 'But the man of Tyana . . . he also was brilliantly successful.' 'Where and when?' answers St John. 'In a small part of the world and for a short time: he was soon extinguished and abolished, leaving behind no church, no people.'[9]

This *damnatio memoriae* by the Christians did not go without a challenge from pagan writers; Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus, Sidonius Apollinaris, all picture him as a godlike philosopher, a Pythagorean of blameless life—but this is after an interval of centuries. When we move back closer to Apollonius, we are left with Philostratus as virtually our only source of information. This was the sophist commissioned by Julia Domna to write in Apollonius' honour, who published his work shortly after A.D. 217, and it is clear that one of his main aims was rehabilitation—to raise Apollonius' reputation from that of mere sorcerer to a true *theios anēr* and philosopher.

Briefly, the Apollonius we are offered by Philostratus is this. He was marked out for super-human accomplishments by the portents at his birth, and after early training in Tarsus resorted to Aegae, a centre of the Asclepius cult, in which he remained expert throughout his life. But beyond this, Pythagoras became his passion and he embraced the Pythagorean rule of life, abstaining from meat and wine, letting his hair grow long, wearing a linen garment, and living in the temple. Soon he had renounced marriage, disposed of his patrimony and taken a vow of five years' silence: and already in the reign of Nero he had won renown in the Greek provinces. He was partly a popular lecturer and adviser at the Asclepieia, partly a visitor to temples of all cults as a kind of one-man liturgical commission.[10] His spoken style was authoritative and in the oracular manner, and his diction Attic and uncomplicated. A long section is then devoted to Apollonius' journey to India, via Babylon, Susa and the Caucasus: here our author includes generous material on geography, myth, and on scientific subjects, but the central motif is the encounter with the Brahmans who worship the Sun, and with whom Apollonius discourses on philosophy, mainly Pythagorean in topic.

Apollonius returns to Greece in the full tide of his career, and performs an astonishing range of feats—prophecies and visions, exorcisms and healings, miraculous signs, political and moral reforms. This prepares us for the first visit to Rome, when Philostratus introduces the theme of philosophic opposition to tyranny. Nero has recently expelled the Stoic Musonius Rufus, but Apollonius, who has boldly advanced with his few remaining disciples, is not martyred as we might have expected. He is granted a kind of temple licence by the

8. lxxvii. 18.4.
9. *De Laudibus S. Pauli Apostoli. Hom.* iv., Vol. ii, p. 493.
10. E.g. at Antioch (i.16), Gades (v.4f.), Alexandria (v.24.5).



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11. vii. 32.
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14. i. 2.

consul Telesinus, and is actually acquitted by Tigellinus after a secret hearing of the charges against him. The scene then moves to Spain, where Apollonius prophesies the rising of Vindex, and so to Egypt where a notable discussion is staged between Vespasian, who is about to assume power, and the three sages, Euphrates, Dio, and Apollonius. Egypt however is only the prelude to the Ethiopian journey of Book VI, with Apollonius' destination the home of the Gymnosophists. As in India, there follow long discourses, in this case with Thespesion, who has a certain disdain for Greek wisdom. Another itinerary in Greek lands now leads to the climax of Books VII and VIII—Apollonius' final challenge to the tyranny of Domitian. At first this consists of rallying provincial governors and senators in their opposition, particularly Nerva and his friends, but soon we move to the personal confrontation with the tyrant, which, in its elaboration, clearly resembles the last events in the life of Christ in the Gospels. In the *dramatis personae*, the kindly Prefect Traianus is set against the angry Domitian, and at the first hearing of the four charges Apollonius so awes the Emperor with his majestic look that Domitian cries out to Trajan, 'Aelianus, you have brought a *daemon* before me!"[11] In the final trial Philostratus gives his dramatic sense full rein, with the oblique thrusts of the prosecutor and the effortless replies of the sage; Domitian acquits him in favour of a private interview, and within a moment Apollonius has vanished from the astonished court. The close of the Book concludes with a lengthy *apologia* Apollonius had prepared but never uttered, and some final travels culminating in the famous outburst at Ephesus when the tyrant is murdered. For Philostratus the sage's death is shrouded in mystery, but he does vouch for a visionary appearance to his disciples at Tyana to assure them about immortality.

Such is the account, composed a century after Apollonius' death, and our ability to interpret Philostratus is clearly the main issue. Fortunately we are in a good position from both internal and external evidence. In the first place, the author tells us about his materials and method of writing. His main source was the memoirs of Damis, intimate companion of the sage, which came into the possession of Julia Domna.[12] These were called 'Ecphatnismata' ('Scraps from the manger') and were very full, so that Philostratus used only what he thought memorable.[13] For the early career he used a certain Maximus of Aegae, and beyond this drew on a large collection of Apollonius' letters and on his testament for the outlines of his philosophy.[14] He also gathered material from cities and particularly temples. One source, the 'Life of Apollonius' in four volumes by Moeragenes, he mentions only for the purpose of rejecting it. This of course arouses suspicion, and I accept Phillimore's conclusion from evidence in Lucian and Origen that 'it is

11. vii. 32.
12. i. 3-4.
13. vi. 35.
14. i. 2.

a case of *odium philosophicum*. Moeragenes' point of view was not pious towards Julia's candidate for apotheosis, but sceptical, Lucianic, Epicurean.'[15] Philostratus, however, professes to write a true and accurate narrative. What were his criteria? His own words are to be noted carefully: 'may this work redound to the honour of Apollonius and be of use to the curious'. These aims have obviously determined his choice of material.

It is not surprising that in several instances where it is possible to check, Philostratus reveals that rhetoric matters more than history. On certain matters connected with the emperors he was obliged to be accurate, e.g. Nero's moves against the philosophers, Vespasian at Alexandria, Titus after the fall of Jerusalem, the plots against Domitian. But in two clear instances he makes false historical allusions at a dramatic moment in the narrative—namely the execution of the governor of Cilicia by Tiberius in A.D. 17, and the earthquake on Crete after which a new island appeared off the northern coast, which is post-dated by twenty years.[16] What Philostratus has written then is a 'philosophical and historical romance',[17] and it will be convenient first to touch on the circumstances of writing, on which we are well informed, and then to refer to other works of the same general period which help us to understand what truth there is in it and how it has taken this literary form.

Philostratus the Athenian (second of the four of this name) was born late in the reign of M. Aurelius and first came to prominence under Septimius Severus, the African whose military prowess was matched by literary and religious inclinations. His choice of the illustrious Syrian, Julia Domna, as his second wife was a mark of Septimius' interest in astrology, for she was daughter of the high-priest of the Sun in the temple at Emesa. Julia's arrival in Rome may be taken as the beginning of a forty-year period in which 'Syrianism', as it is called, was the leading force in intellectual life at Rome. Philostratus now entered the remarkable literary circle the Empress gathered about her: it included Galen, Diogenes Laertius, the naturalists Aelian and Oppian, the lawyers Ulpian, Papinian and Paul, and Athenaeus whose symposium about the group's discussions is extant. But Philostratus was its chief literary ornament, and the *Life of Apollonius* its best literary product. Julia, having obtained Damis' memoirs, commissioned the sophist 'to transcribe them and also to improve their style', for she had a definite goal—to employ the historical figure of Apollonius, who embodied the best of Greek religion, as she thought, with the wisdom also of the East and Egypt, in order to create a new ideal of syncretism. This masterful woman wanted the waters of the Orontes to flow in full flood into the Tiber, and Philostratus was brought into a programme

15. *Philostratus: Apollonius of Tyana*, vol. I, pp. xxiv-v.

16. This is an example of the technique of authentication discussed by R. Syme in his lecture 'Historical fiction in late Imperial Rome' delivered to the eleventh A.U.L.L.A. Congress.

17. Phillimore, op. cit., xviii.



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18. Ibid., lxxvi.

19. See Croiset, A. and M., *H* earlier periods Guthrie, W. K.

20. See Guthrie, W. K. C., op. *Pythagoreanism*, pp. 301ff.

21. viii. 16.

22. iii. 41.

in which literature was to serve the interests of philosophy and religion.

The religious programme followed a spectacular course through the efforts of the four Juliae, those 'magnificent Semitic adventuresses' as they have been called. The young Elagabalus went far beyond a syncretistic ideal when he attempted to install the Syrian Sun-god in Rome as supreme deity, with all the fanaticism and depravity which came in his train; it is not surprising that Severus Alexander, on his accession, quickly returned the god to his home and under the benevolent influence of Julia Mamaea advocated the new syncretism already noted. The inclusion of Abraham and Christ in Alexander's scheme reminds us that in this resurgence of paganism there was a desire to absorb Christianity. The polemic of Celsus, written about A.D. 180, is our best evidence of this, with the worship of one god (Pure Reason) which is advocated, and the recognition of all national religions as genuine but secondary manifestations. It is safe to conclude, then, of Philostratus' work, that it was meant to sketch out an inclusive creed. Only the Christians are not named, a deliberate omission; yet there are verbal echoes of the Gospels,[18] and, as already remarked, a strong resemblance between the themes of Christ in Jerusalem and Apollonius in Rome.

Two prominent elements in the account of Apollonius' teaching, Pythagoras and Asclepius, deserve comment at this point. Both of these appear genuine. There is a slender thread of neo-Pythagorean writings extant with which Apollonius in general accords.[19] Philostratus sets forth this theme consistently; he begins with a portrait of Pythagoras himself, and once his young sage has embraced the Pythagorean rule there are numerous opportunities to expound the teaching. The discussions with Brahmans and Gymnosophists are artificial in flavour, but cover such themes as pre-existence and immortality, the body-soul dichotomy, divination and foreknowledge, metamorphosis. One doctrine above all others Apollonius seems to have preached in temple reform, that blood sacrifices were abhorrent to the gods: instead, he instructed priests and lay people in efficacious prayer as the most important element in ritual. It is curious that Philostratus makes no mention of using the *Life of Pythagoras* Apollonius himself wrote. There is good evidence that it was later used by the neo-Platonist Iamblichus,[20] and Diogenes Laertius also mentions the work.[21] What is mentioned by our author is the book *On Sacrifice*, said to be in wide circulation.[22]

The Asclepius motif has already been noted, and there is ample testimony elsewhere to the prominence of this cult in the early Empire, particularly in the eastern provinces. Pergamum possessed the most famous Asclepieion, and a first-class commentary exists on the cult

18. Ibid., lxxvi.

19. See Croiset, A. and M., *Hist. de la littérature grecque*, V, pp. 407ff., and for earlier periods Guthrie, W. K. C., *Hist. of Greek Philosophy*, I, pp. 161ff.

20. See Guthrie, W. K. C., op. cit., pp. 119ff.; Vogel, J. de, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism*, pp. 301ff.

21. viii. 16.

22. iii. 41.

and Apollonius' relation to it, namely the *Sacred Discourses* of Aelius Aristides written in the late second century. Here is recorded the experience of a chronic but very voluble invalid at Pergamum, who mirrors a whole society in such medical resorts. Festugière has written an excellent study of the *Discourses* and I quote his summary:

> If one takes into consideration all these facts—(i) the unconditional faith in the god, (ii) the ancient and common practice of dream interpretation, (iii) this rather special society of impressionable patients, living in the constant expectation of some medical order more paradoxical than those that had gone before, and (iv) the personnel of the temple accustomed to this clientele of neuropaths and well-versed in the interpretation of dreams . . . Aristides' case seems less extraordinary[23]

and so does the work of Apollonius as a skilled interpreter of the god. It is worth remembering that a definitive work on dreams, the *Onirocriticon* of Artemidorus, appeared at the same period as Philostratus, and that another member of his circle, Aelian the naturalist, wrote two books in defence of miracles and revelations.

There remains the question of what other extant works of a similar genre can throw any light on Philostratus. Here we are in a reasonable position, I think, with both pagan and Christian writers.

First there is Lucian, the sceptic and satirist, who was born about the time of Apollonius' death and wrote about fifty years before Philostratus. Two pieces are relevant. First, his *True Story* which is a parody on the writings of poets, historians and philosophers 'who composed many marvellous and mythical tales' (2). The two Lucian singles out are Ctesias with his book on India, which is described as full of fantasy, and (much later) a certain Iambulus whose tale of 'lands in the Great Sea' he admits is 'not unpleasing' (to these we may add Antonius Diogenes' book of uncertain date, *On the marvels beyond Thule*). A sketch of Iambulus' story is preserved in Diodorus (ii. 55-60). He is captured as a young man in Arabia, then kidnapped by Ethiopians who put him and his companion to good use by launching them into the Indian Ocean in a small boat as a kind of propitiatory offering, to sail south and perhaps reach the Happy Islands. There follows a pleasant tale of the islanders and their Utopian life. Iambulus is finally rejected as unfit for their society, shipwrecked in India and returns to Greece via Persia. Lucian accordingly begins his parody with the landing of a party of fifty on a remote island, the first of many, and reserves his most amusing descriptions for the Islands of the Blest, thickly populated with all the characters of Greek legend and history his imagination can conjure up.

The Indian and Ethiopian episodes of Philostratus, we may judge, lie more than halfway in the direction of such tales as those of Iambulus, and I do not consider them historical. Phillimore pictures

23. Festugière, A.-J., *Personal Religion among the Greeks*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1954, p. 103.



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our author as keeping constantly before him the tastes of Julia Domna and her circle—the love of encyclopaedias, the curiosity about foreign countries, the tradition of Pythagoras' links with the Brahmans, and Democritus' travels to Babylonia and Egypt. All this is worked up in true sophistic manner:

> there must be much Hellenizing: plenty of history, rhetorically sauced, plenty of archaeology. Apollonius (who was probably of Hittite or Amorite stock) must be made all that is most Greek, an Atticist without pedantry, donnish yet modish.[24]

A similar travel-romance appeared probably not many years after Philostratus, the *Aethiopica* of Heliodorus. The erotic theme is central here—the love of Theagenes and Chariclea—and the novel's chief claim to distinction lies in its dramatic and romantic qualities. However, its setting in Ethiopia and Egypt provides parallels with the *Apollonius*, especially in its religious content. Here are the Gymnosophists again, converted to the bloodless sacrifices Apollonius would have approved of: the Sun-god is also supreme, and astrology and sorcery are freely practised at the vulgar level, although sorcery is distinguished sharply from *theurgia*. All of these illustrate the same predilections as Philostratus.[25]

Of more direct value to the interpretation of Apollonius himself is Lucian's *Alexander of Abonuteichus*. J. A. Froude wrote: 'Apollonius we see through a cloud of illusion. Alexander we are able to look at with the eyes of the cleverest man who was alive on this planet in the second century',[26] but some care must be exercised in the comparison. Lucian is writing bitter satire here, the exposure of a complete charlatan: he wants to clear out the filth of years from the Augean stable of sorcery and confidence tricks, with the particular aim, he tells us, of rehabilitating the Epicureans who were Alexander's most formidable enemies.[27] The story is to us astonishing, revealing the credulity of the common people of this age, particularly on the edge of the civilized world in Paphlagonia and Cappadocia. Alexander was obviously a clever man, to turn his cult with its oracle into such a profitable business, and no doubt his numerous agents through the Empire were much more concerned with their own earnings than with the scandalous pretensions of their managing director.[28] There are interesting side-lights: the adherence of Rutilianus (later a Roman consul), the proclamation at the mystery rites against the profane Christians and

24. Op. cit., p. lxxiii. As examples of the technique of authentication the inscriptions at ii. 9 (Dionysus) and 12 (Alexander) may be cited.

25. A good summary of the parallels is that of Maillon in the Preface to the Budé ed. of *Aethiopica*. He points out that the counterpart of Apollonius in this story is Calasiris, priest of Isis and also an expert on other rites, a kind of lecturer in comparative religion.

26. 'A Cagliostro of the Second Century' in *Short Studies on Great Subjects*, vol. IV, pp. 433ff.

27. 24, 38, 47, 61.

28. 24, 51.

Epicureans, and the reluctance of the governor of Bithynia and Pontus, for political and economic reasons, to support Lucian in his bid to prosecute the prophet.

It is significant for us that Lucian gives some prominence to the Pythagoras and Asclepius themes. Alexander claimed to be a worthy successor of Pythagoras, and Lucian of course protests. But Asclepius was at the heart of the cult. The prophet's pet serpent becomes Glycon, the incarnation of the god, and many of the inquiries at the oracle were of a medical kind. And Alexander had more than oracular replies to help: he sold expensive medicines.

Now Lucian, as already remarked, was hostile to Apollonius because he thought Alexander was the direct product of his school of wizardry at Tyana; and in all probability he had previously read the critical account of Moeragenes. But his judgment could be clouded here. Apollonius was certainly an Asclepian expert, which required as much imagination and psychic sympathy as medical knowledge; but he was also entirely innocent of such commercialized trickery as Alexander's. In the *apologia* of Book VIII he is made to distinguish between divination, some types of which he clearly allowed, and sorcery, which Philostratus repudiates on his behalf.[29]

In conclusion, the relevance of Christian writings must not be overlooked. These widely diverge, with the scepticism of an historian and theologian on one hand and the credulity of much popular Christianity on the other. With regard to the latter, it is in the apocryphal literature of the early Church that we find parallels to Philostratus which are perhaps closer than those in extant pagan literature, particularly the so-called *Acts of the Apostles* dating to the second and third centuries. These are heterogeneous works, intended to supplement the canonical writings as material for edification or polemics, and they contain much legend. German scholars have explored this field most fully; F. Pfister followed the work of Reitzenstein (*Hellenistische Wundererzählungen*, 1926) and tried to establish a definite genre in relation to other Greek literature of the Empire.[30] More detailed results have been gained by R. Söder, who determined five principal themes of the apocryphal Acts: (1) the travel-theme; (2) the aretalogy; (3) the teratological element; (4) the persuasive; (5) the erotic.[31] It would be wrong to claim that these works actually derive from the Hellenistic novel, or later aretalogies and travel romances, because their different purpose must be borne in mind; it was to entertain and edify the common people, not the literary élite as with Philostratus or Heliodorus. But both certainly come from the same cultural background, and there are remarkable parallels.

To take an example, *The Acts of Paul*. This is ascribed to a presbyter in Asia Minor late in the second century, who wanted to

29. viii. 7.
30. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, 2, pp. 163ff.
31. *Die apokryphen Apostelgeschichten*, 1932.



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32. iv. 10.
33. Hennecke, E., *New Testament Apoc*
*The Acts of Thomas*, 1962.
34. *Contra Hier.* 1.
35. Ibid., 42, fin.

honour the apostle by collecting and elaborating the legends current about him. Early in the (fragmentary) text comes the tale of Paul and the maiden Thecla at Iconium. Thecla is condemned to be burned for her faith, and sees Paul in a vision as present with her: many marvels follow—the fire cannot consume her, nor can the wild beasts devour her later in Antioch. It is Paul who is blamed for all this thaumaturgy: 'Away with the sorcerer!' the crowds cried. Then at Ephesus Paul, himself condemned, converses with a lion in the arena. These motifs remind us of the talking animals in Philostratus, and the slaying of the demon in human guise at Ephesus.[32]

An even better parallel is the *Acts of Thomas*, which G. Bornkamm has described as 'the Christian-Gnostic variety of the Hellenistic-Oriental romance . . . .'[33] He lists as leading elements the journey of the hero into a foreign wonder-land (Persia and India), the linking of the story with historical figures, the description of fantastic works of power, the partiality for erotic scenes, and the stylistic methods of the Greek novel. There are admixtures of Greek material (such as the Orphic account of the places of punishment in hell) and close parallels with Philostratus, such as the exorcism of lascivious demons who are tormenting noble women. It is curious that these *Acts* circulated chiefly in the Syrian churches and were poorly known in Greek- and Latin-speaking areas.

With the historian Eusebius, finally, we are in a different world, and although he wrote at a period later than the general scope of this paper, his treatise bearing directly on the *Apollonius* must be reckoned with. The circumstances are important. Hierocles, the bitter opponent of Christians, had composed the *Philalethes* or 'Lover of Truth' (A.D. 303) in which he compared Apollonius favourably with Christ: he mocked at the 'easy credulity' of the Christians. Part of the refutation, Eusebius says, had in effect already been carried out by Origen in his reply (extant) to the Platonist Celsus, whose *Alethes Logos* came late in the second century.[34] But Eusebius took nothing for granted in his critique of the Apollonius offered by Philostratus. His work has an objective, almost modern tone: Philostratus is described as 'wheeling Apollonius on to the stage in all his finery'.[35] He is charged with producing a completely unconvincing hero. Apollonius possibly had philosophical claims: why then attach to him all the legends of sorcery? Eusebius comes close to allowing the charge of sorcery against him.

The criticism is detailed, proceeding book by book, with frequent accusations of internal contradiction in the portrait of Apollonius as godlike and yet human. Many of the acts of thaumaturgy are rejected as inherently unlikely—not that Eusebius disbelieves *daemones*. In fact,

32. iv. 10.
33. Hennecke, E., *New Testament Apocrypha*, II, p. 428 (tr. Wilson); cf. KHjn, A. F. J., *The Acts of Thomas*, 1962.
34. *Contra Hier.* 1.
35. Ibid., 42, fin.

the only explanation he can offer for the tradition of miracles is that Apollonius was aided by the ministry of evil spirits. Eusebius allows the link with Asclepius and the five years' silence, but goes too far in rejecting the Pythagoreanism. Some Christian apologetics occur—the doctrine of Providence as against the fatalism of Apollonius, the possibility of a genuine incarnation of God—but there is no extended comparison between Apollonius and Christ. This is a work of judicious appraisal, and far more convincing than some modern books on Apollonius, e.g. that by the theosophist G. R. S. Mead, who considered him the greatest philosopher of his day.[36]

Eusebius has brought us back to the main issue of who Apollonius really was, and this means an exercise in 'demythologizing'. I have tried to indicate the sort of controls that are needed. First, a recognition of the literary conventions of this genre—what we can learn from parallels of approximately the same type and period; second, a study of the demythologizing already attempted—directly by Eusebius and indirectly by Lucian; third, our knowledge from other sources of the philosophical and religious attitudes of the early Empire.

My own reconstruction is briefly this. Apollonius was an itinerant sage who followed the Pythagorean Rule. He does not seem to have been the typical sophist, from his concentration on temple worship and his uncharacteristic lecturing style. Of the ritual of the numerous cults he encountered, he regarded himself as both student and reformer, attempting to purify rites by excising their unspiritual elements. He was also familiar to the devotees of Asclepius as an accomplished interpreter of dreams and medical adviser. There seems no reason to deny that he was ever in Rome, but his challenges to Nero and Domitian are apocryphal; and I regard the Indian and Ethiopian journeys as only an imaginative way of showing that he knew, at a superficial level, the wisdom of the East and of Egypt. Apollonius probably did incline to monotheism, but Philostratus has built this up into a full-scale devotion to the Sun-god. He practised exorcisms and claimed miraculous healings and the gift of prophecy, and out of this grew the Damis cycle of legends. His notoriety was evidently sufficient to draw the fire, I suspect, of the same 'atheists', i.e. Epicureans and Christians, mentioned by Lucian in connexion with Alexander, and also to arouse the enmity of Euphrates (whom he met in Alexandria) and the written refutation of Moeragenes. These attacks are a recurring theme through Philostratus' book. Apollonius himself clearly believed in *daemones*, in astrology and divination of some kinds, but I allow part of Philostratus' defence—that he did not subscribe to the crass belief in potency (*dynamis*) associated with all the Black Art of this period (see for instance the rebuke against the magical use of small images in v. 20, which strikes one as genuine).

All this adds up to a certain reputation in the eastern provinces, but we may surely argue *ex silentio*, in the case of all the writers before

36. Mead, G. R. S., *Apollonius of Tyana*, 1901.

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Lucian, that Apollonius cannot have enjoyed anything like the fame Philostratus and Julia Domna would have us believe. His posthumous fortunes, when he was first selected as a worthy symbol of a new syncretism and later exalted as the pagan champion against Christ, were none of his choosing. They form a curious chapter in the literary and religious history of those times.

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