Apollonius of Tyana:

A Holy Man of Late Antiquity

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Chapter One

Apollonius of Tyana According to Philostratus[1]

I. The Life of Apollonius

"Apollonius was born at Tyana, a city in the south of Cappadocia, somewhen in the early years of the Christian era,"[2] recounts G. R. S. Mead. According to Philostratus of Athens, author of the only *Life of Apollonius* and on whom this account of his life will be based, the Egyptian god Proteus appeared to the mother of Apollonius before his birth and informed her that her son would be of him.[3] Having looked back on Apollonius' life from the end, this legend becomes justified to Philostratus. The basic attributes of Proteus are also ascribed to Apollonius, thus making the connection feasible. Proteus was connected heavily with the sea and, according to Homer, one of his many abilities was to foretell the future. Another interesting fact about him is that he is often attributed

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[1] Quotation Note: for this chapter and others, when Philostratus is quoted directly from the *Life of Apollonius,* I will not indicate each occasion with "As Philostratus notes" or "According to Philostratus." Because of the large number of quotes from the *Life of Apollonius,* such interrupters would be distracting. Any quote describing Apollonius or his life and travels that has no other author introduction can be assumed to be from Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius.*

[2] G. R. S. Mead, *Apollonius of Tyana: The Philosopher-Reformer of the First Century A.D.* (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1901), 65.

[3] Philostratus of Athens, *The Life of Apollonius: Volume I.* Translated by F. C. Conybeare, Loeb Classical Library edition edited by T. E. Page and W. H. D. Rouse (New York: MacMillan, 1912)

with healing and the curing of diseases. Both of these aspects are given to Apollonius as this unfolding chapter will elucidate. There are other mysterious omens that were purportedly made known to his parents around the time of his birth, hinting at, as was common in ancient times, a child of unusual birth. "The people of the country say that just at the moment of his birth, a thunderbolt seemed about to fall on the earth and then rose up into the air and disappeared aloft."[4] Arguments ensued as to whether the boy was a son of Zeus, as suggested by the dramatic lightning bolt, but a nearby sage was certain of his relation to Apollo. Such stories range far and wide.

From an early age Apollonius demonstrated "great strength of memory and power of application,"[5] so his parents wanted his education to challenge him. He was finally placed in school in Aegae where he studied in the temple of Asclepius. At that location his education included studying the great philosophers of the time, including Plato, Epicurus, and Pythagoras, to which the latter he closely adhered himself. Early indications of Apollonius' harsh asceticism are seen in his denunciation of "a flesh diet....and of wine."[6] According to Philostratus, his reason against meat was its un-cleanliness and against wine was its tendencies to "[endanger] the mental balance"[7] of a man. Several stories recount Apollonius' uncanny connection with the supernatural. He is credited with having made predictions and given advice that was always correct and many times confirmed by the appearance of the gods in the dreams of others.

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[4] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 15.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid., 19, 21.

[7] Ibid., 21.

Not only did Apollonius give wisdom to and help strangers and friends, but also his family. Philostratus recounted that at the death of Apollonius' father, his brother proceeded to squander his inheritance. When this was brought to Apollonius' attention, he rushed back to his hometown and confronted his brother in an effort to reform him. It is noteworthy that Apollonius was three years younger than his twenty-three year old brother: quite a move for one so young. The brother began to change his life, and Apollonius parted with a portion of his own inheritance to aid his brother.

An absolutely fascinating period of Apollonius' life was his years in silence. "He began to hold his tongue from a sense of duty, and kept absolute silence, though his eyes and his mind were taking note of many a thing, and though most things were being stored in his memory....[and] he practiced silence for five whole years."[8] Doing things like remaining silent for an extended period of time earned him a reputation as a wise and patient person from whom to seek advice. His teaching and oratory style were humble, yet authoritative. "His sentences were short and crisp, and his words were telling and closely fitted to the things he spoke of, and his words had a ring about them as of the dooms delivered by a sceptred king."[9] The root of his adherence to this code of silence is in a practice that was held strictly by all followers of Pythagoras. Holding the tongue came with many benefits, but the core belief was that man's words many times led to his own harm. As Apollonius learned, watching and listening, instead of talking, can be very beneficial. Apollonius' adherence to Pythagorean practices will be dealt with later in this chapter.

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[8] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 37.

[9] Ibid., 49.

Apollonius is well known for his travels, most of which focused on exposing himself to other religions and philosophies. Philostratus recounts that "he formed the scheme of an extensive voyage, and had in mind the Indian race and the sages there, who are called Brahmans and Hyrcanians....he made a great deal of the Magi, who lived in Babylon and Susa."[10] Unfortunately not all of his followers possessed the same desire for travel. In the beginning, his journey took him to Nineveh where "Damis, a native of Nineveh joined him as a pupil...[and] became the companion of his wanderings abroad and his fellow traveler and associate in all wisdom, and who has preserved to us many particulars of the sage."[11] Beginning in Nineveh, Apollonius was worshiped as a demigod for the claims that he made. Philostratus tells the reader that at this point Damis began to record many details of Apollonius' journeys.

Apollonius' journey to India was not random or without cause. The lure of India for Greek philosophers was undeniable, because the philosophy of Greece was tied very closely with the wisdom of the Indian sages. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan observes that "the presence of a large body of Indian troops in the Persian army in Greece in 480 B.C. shows how far west the Indian connections were carried."[12] As tradition depicts, the growth of the Persian Empire gave them a connection that had been lost. The intellectual tradition to which the Greeks held so dearly was not originally their own. As Daniélou and Hurry explain: "Alexandria was one of the major centers for exchanges between India and the Western world, not only of a commercial kind, but also artistic,

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[10] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 51.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1990), 150.

philosophical, and scientific. Clement of Alexandria did not hesitate to say that 'the Greeks had stolen their philosophy from the Barbarians.'"[13] Another aspect of this that Daniélou and Hurry highlight that would have most likely shocked Apollonius is that "almost all philosophical or mathematical doctrines attributed to Pythagoras were current in India at the time, in a much more developed form."[14] Not only did Pythagorean thinking have roots in India, but others philosophies also. Sailendra Nath Sen writes the following:

> There is a striking similarity between the doctrine of the one in the Upanishads and the philosophy of the Eleatics, and between the theory of Thales, the father of Greek philosophy, that everything originated from water and the *Vedic* idea of the primeval water out of which the Universe was evolved. Even in the fifth century B.C., Indian philosophers travelled to the west and acquired such proficiency in Greek language and philosophy as to be able to enter into philosophical disputations with eminent scholars like Socrates.[15]

The above quote leads into the stories of Indian sages in connection with the Greek philosophers. The first story I will recount is that of the above-mentioned 'Socrates and the Indian.' In the *Preparation for the Gospel* Eusebius, writing in about 313, quotes Aristoxenes' telling of the encounter between Socrates and a wise man from India. At one point in the conversation, the Indian inquires of Socrates his intent in studying philosophy. Socrates' response was that he was "studying human life."[16] According to Aristoxenes the Indian "laughed at him, and said that no one could

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[13] Alain Daniélou and Kenneth Hurry, *A Brief History of India* (Rochester: Inner Traditions International, 2003), 91.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Sailendra Nath Sen, *Ancient Indian History and Civilization* (New Delhi: New Age International, 1999), 505.

[16] Eusebius of Cesarea, tr. E. H. Gifford, *Preparation for the Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1903), XI.3.

comprehend things human, if he were ignorant of things divine."[17] In trying to connect the dots between Greece and India, scholars who study Plato's philosophies have often associated his ideas with Indian counterparts. There is not a story as was with Socrates or a specific encounter to reference, but some elements that are similar are the way Plato and Indian Sages view humans, their concepts of the soul, and their travels toward the Good.[18] The journey for Apollonius was more than a geographical one. It was a quest for deep philosophical origins and wisdom. Both Philostratus' account and the accounts in the above paragraph, demonstrate that tradition held strong connection between the two groups.

On the journey to India, Damis recorded many details. It was written that Apollonius and Damis came across the mountain to which Zeus had once chained the Titan god Prometheus as punishment. According to the myth, Prometheus was a Titan, and thus an inveterate enemy of the Olympians, Zeus included. Zeus led a war against the Titans in an attempt to overthrow his maniacal father, Kronos. Prometheus thought it unfair that humans were refused the benefit of fire. He stole from the hearth of Zeus the fire that would bring humans light and warmth. This enraged Zeus and the above punishment was invoked. It was also in India that Apollonius learned of new legends and myths of Dionysus, or at least the Indian version of him.

Throughout his Indian journeys, Apollonius encountered various animals that were not indigenous to his home—leopards, elephants, a seal, and others. He saw nature as a good example of how people should interact with each other. The ways that the

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[17] Eusebius, *PE* XI.3.

[18] Y. Masih, *A Critical History of Western Philosophy* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2002), 81.

animals interacted really spoke to him. One situation that shows Apollonius' authority occurs with the Indian king. The king had been speaking through a translator with Apollonius for the entirety of his stay. After getting to know him, the King revealed that he spoke Greek. He told Apollonius "you have won my affection, and as soon as I saw that you take pleasure in my society, and I was unable to keep myself concealed."[19] Later in the conversation, the Indian king told Apollonius that "I regard you as my superior, for wisdom has more of the kingly quality about it."[20] So much respect he felt towards Apollonius that he wrote him a letter to carry to another king endorsing him and his wisdom. He referred to him as "Apollonius, wisest of men."[21]

Some of Apollonius' religious leanings emerge during his time in India. Philostratus recounts that he would "devote this hour to the sun, for I must needs offer up to him my accustomed prayer."[22] He gives no name to this sun god, but he frequently referred to the common Greek gods throughout Philostratus' work. The worship of a solar being was not uncommon at this time. The Egyptians had been invested in worship of a sun god for thousands of years. In the New Kingdom of Egyptian history, Amenhotep III attempted to convert all of Egypt from practicing the polytheism of their ancestors to solar monotheism. As could be imagined, this did not go well and was over turned at his death. But even in societies where monotheism of any kind was uncommon, worship of the sun or a deity associated with it was widespread. So, Apollonius'

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[19] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 187.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid., 227

[22] Ibid., 217.

behavior was not the first example of this nor did it spark a new wave of solar monotheism.

On their departure from India, Damis and Apollonius stopped to admire the plains of the Ganges River. Philostratus described this: "After crossing the top of the mountain, they say they saw a smooth plain seamed with cuts and ditches full of water, whilst others were straight....they say that this soil is the best in India....the whole soil of the plain is black and fertile of everything."[23] Damis and Apollonius went on to describe the vines and grains that were so much more fertile even than those on the Nile. Also included were descriptions of exotic fruits and colorful flowers.

Almost out of India, they encountered the Castle of the Sages. The king was supreme in India, but he consulted the sages on matters of utmost importance. On approaching the sages, a messenger greeted them in Greek and hailed them as both wise and welcome. Apollonius was eager to accompany them because sages "at once had a Pythagorean ring."[24] Carved into the rocks leading up to the castle were images from Greek mythology—Pan and Heracles to name a few. "And they say that they came upon statues of the Gods, and they were not nearly so astonished at finding Indian or Egyptian Gods as they were by finding the most ancient of the Greek Gods, a statue of Athene Polias and of Apollo of Delos and of Dionysus of Limnae...and others of similar age."[25] While with these sages or Brahmans, Apollonius was shown their wisdom. They told him information of his own family and his travels and of his companion Damis. After

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[23] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 241.

[24] Ibid., 253.

[25] Ibid., 257.

they had done this, "Apollonius was astounded."[26] The sages offered to share their wisdom and began a process in which Apollonius was educated according to their ways and customs and most importantly their wisdom.

The sages began to share their stories. They adhered to basic Pythagorean philosophy and traced their personal histories, those to which Indians adhered, from slightly altered versions of Greek history as recounted by Homer. They compared Achilles with their Indian version of the hero. Their Achilles was more constructive and less prone to follow bouts of anger than the Greek Achilles. The Indian hero took joy in rebuilding cities, not burning and tearing them down. "Surely it is better to prove yourself a good man by liberating your country than to bring slavery upon a city, and that too in behalf of a woman who probably was never carried off even against her will."[27] That story, and others in the same tradition, demonstrated that the common source of the stories was present yet far removed.

The subject of reincarnation came up in the Indian myths that the sages recount. At the end describing these myths, one of them inquired of Apollonius concerning his former life and his memories of it. Apollonius was less than eager to share, but one of the sages declared that he knew what Apollonius was and shared it with the others. Having nothing to hide, Apollonius proceeded to recount his life as the pilot of an Egyptian sea vessel, including the tale of the Phoenician pirates.

The subject of the elements arose with the sages. They told Apollonius that there are not four—earth, air, fire, and water—but five. Apollonius was amazed when it was

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[26] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 263.

[27] Ibid., 273.

revealed the ether is the last element "which we must regard as the stuff of which gods are made; for just as all mortal creatures inhale air, so do immortal and divine natures inhale the ether."[28] This spilled into the sages' claim that the universe is a living creature that is both male and female. "For by commerce with itself if fulfills both the role of father and mother in bringing forth living creatures."[29] As Philostratus' account continues, Apollonius' philosophical views began to emerge through the pen of Philostratus, and it becomes clear that his views were being shaped by his travels.

After a four-month stay with the sages, Apollonius departed. He and Damis sailed back to Mesopotamia. Along the way, they briefly encountered some other peoples, most of them seafarers whose myths incorporated the ocean and its wonders. "And when they had sailed as far as the mouth of the Euphrates, they say that they sailed up by it to Babylon....They then came afresh to Nineveh...[and then] they sailed to Cyprus and landed at Paphos."[30]

Many were awaiting Apollonius on his return. Everyone "followed him, one admiring his wisdom, another his beauty, another his way of life, another his bearing, some of them everything alike about him."[31] People were ready to meet his every need. In various cities, people had made requests for him to visit, questioned him for advice, and asked about religious dedications. He encouraged the Ephesians to pursue philosophy alone "rather than [devoting themselves] with idleness and arrogance such as

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[28] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 309.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid., 345.

[31] Ibid., 349.

he found around him there."[32] He encouraged the citizens of Smyrna to "take pride rather in themselves than in the beauty of their city...for although they had the most beautiful of cities under the sun...it was more pleasing for the city to be crowned with men than with porticos and pictures."[33]

One rather fascinating detour that Apollonius took as he toured Greece was to the graves of the fallen Achaeans. There he "delivered himself of many speeches over them, and he offered many sacrifices of a bloodless and pure kind."[34] The type of sacrifice of which Apollonius was in adamant support was that of a bloodless nature, a topic that will be covered later. As the night drew on, Apollonius sent his men away and spent the night on the burial mound of Achilles. The details of the night were left out of Philostratus' account, but upon returning to the ship in the morning, Apollonius told a certain crewmember that Achilles had forbade him to associate with this particular individual. It came to light that the crewman was of Trojan descent, even a descendant of Priam. Apparently, Achilles was slow to release a grudge, even towards those distantly related to his enemies. Later at the urging of Damis, Apollonius revealed the contents of his interview with Achilles' ghost. Achilles asked a favor of Apollonius and in return, Apollonius could ask him any five questions about the Trojan War. Achilles answered these questions before he returned to the grave.

In Athens, as in Ephesus, Apollonius spoke with the people on a wide variety of subjects, as well as correcting them on various behaviors. In one example, Philostratus

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[32] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 351.

[33] Ibid., 357.

[34] Ibid., 367.

described what they were doing during the feast of Dionysus as "dancing lascivious jigs to the rondos of a flute, and in the midst of the solemn and sacred music of Orpheus striking attitudes as the Hours, or as nymphs or as bacchants."[35] He renounced their shameful behavior as demeaning to the sacred feast. On another occasion, he criticized the gore of their gladiatorial events. He also called into question the lives that Spartan men lived, those of heightened commitment to the military and little time for their families.

It was shortly after these accounts and Apollonius' return to Greece from India that Philostratus delves into some of the miraculous healings, which he credits to Apollonius. He first cured a boy who was possessed by an evil spirit. "The boy does not even retain his own voice, but speaks in a deep hollow tone...and he looks at you with other eyes rather than with his own."[36] Also, a man who had been made lame from a lion attack and a man whose eyes had been removed were healed of their respective injuries.

On his journey to Rome, Apollonius learned of the welcome that philosophers are receiving in Rome. Nero had just imprisoned Musonius of Babylon, who was a philosopher and "a man only second to Apollonius"[37] who had been imprisoned for his practices. Apparently, Nero "was opposed to philosophy, because he suspected its devotees of being addicted to magic and of being diviners in disguise."[38] So as Apollonius was nearing Rome he was urged to bypass it for fear of persecution by Nero.

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[35] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 393.

[36] Ibid., 315.

[37] Ibid., 431.

[38] Ibid.

Apollonius decided to go to Rome despite Nero, but a large group of his followers abandoned him in fear.

In Rome, Apollonius impressed a consul who awarded him a position in a temple to teach people his reforms in sacrificing. A humorous account occurred when Apollonius was in such a temple and a crisis occurred in which the people were filling the temples of Rome. Nero had a sore throat and was hard at breath. Apollonius was a little frustrated at the foolishness of the people flooding the gods with requests for Nero's healing. Unfortunately, this fell on the wrong ears and resulted in Apollonius' arrest. Apollonius' discussion with his arrester proved his own wit and resulted in the accused releasing him, stating, "You may go wherever you choose, for you are too powerful to be controlled by me."[39] Also while in Rome, Apollonius raised a girl from the dead. She was about to be married, but died before the ceremony. He spoke some simple words over her and she arose as if from a sleep.

Apollonius' reason for leaving Rome was Nero's ban on all philosophers in the city. So, Apollonius "turned his steps to the Western regions of the earth"[40] and onto the Iberian Peninsula. It is here that references to Heracles emerge. Apollonius passed through the pillars of Heracles, the name given to the stones that marked the Strait of Gibraltar. There was also mention of visiting a temple of Heracles and seeing inscriptions of his many labors.

While traveling through Europe, there came a rumor to Apollonius and his travelers that nearby there was a woman who had given birth to a child with three heads.

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[39] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 457.

[40] Ibid., 463.

It had one body, but three separate necks and heads. Apollonius was skeptical. "But [he] said: 'Go, O Damis, and look if the child is really made up as they say.'"[41] Damis returned with reports that the child was a male and did indeed have three heads. Apollonius predicted that this omen signified three emperors of Rome who would argue and vie for power amongst themselves with not one emerging as victor. According to Philostratus' commentary, the three leaders were Galba, Vitellius, and Otho: "For Galba died in Rome itself, just after he grasped the crown, and Vitellius died after only dreaming of the crown, and Otho died in Western Galatia...And the whole episode was past and over within a single year."[42] History recounts that Apollonius' prediction was true.

His trip to Egypt is worth recounting. While traveling around southern Greece on the way to Egypt, he tried to catch transport with a merchant ship. He discovered that the man was carrying images of Greek gods to export and sell. Apollonius criticized him heavily for his "trafficking of the gods."[43] His words were especially harsh: "as for feeding on the god themselves as you do, without ever being surfeited on this diet, that is a horrible commerce and one, I should say, savoring of unmanliness, even if you have no misgivings of your own about the consequences."[44] Of course, he took another ship instead.

As can be seen throughout the work, Apollonius was not afraid to rebuke those going against what he saw as right. He was a man of strong convictions. Having arrived

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[41] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 491.

[42] Ibid., 491.

[43] Ibid.., 507.

[44] Ibid.

in Rhodes, he came upon a man building a luxurious house. Apollonius inquired of the man concerning the money spent towards his education versus the house. The man responded that he had spent nothing on education and a fare sum on the house. Apollonius then convinced him that unless he is an educated man, his money would have no worth. His parting words were "my good boy, it seems to me that it is not you that own the house, but the house that owns you."

An especially unusual story that combines Apollonius' compassion, insight, and apparent prophetic knowledge came up whilst he and Damis were travelling in Egypt. They had befriended a man named Timasion with whom they were travelling. Having come upon a man wandering aimlessly, Apollonius inquired as to his situation. Timasion informed them that he had committed an act of involuntary manslaughter and his punishment was temporary banishment until the philosophers in the wilderness had cleansed him. They were informed that this man had been in the wilderness for seven months. Apollonius declared that the philosophers were cruel to leave him in his state for so long, and then revealed that the wandering man was actually one of royal lineage. Apollonius continued with the story of this man's ancestry much to the amazement of Timasion. This man was being held in the wilderness for more than the crime of involuntary manslaughter that he committed. Timasion is described as "astounded"[45] when he asked "Stranger, who are you?"[46] Apollonius' reply was as follows:

> He whom you shall find among these...philosophers. But as it is not allowed me by my religion to address one who is stained with blood, I would ask you, my good boy [Damis], to encourage [Timasion], and tell him that he will at once be purged of guilt, if he will come to the place

[45] Philostratus of Athens, *The Life of Apollonius: Volume II* (New York: MacMillan, 1912), 19.

[46] Ibid.

> where I am lodging.' And when the man in question came in, Apollonius went through the rites over him which Empedocles and Pythagoras prescribe for the purification of such offences, and told him to return him, for he was pure of guilt.[47]

This quote shows Apollonius' compassion and his strict adherence to his religion.

After his purification of the man, he found the philosophers who were supposed to purify him, known as the naked sages, and began to listen to them. They attacked much of what he believes, but one thing I want to highlight is their attack on the Indian philosophies. Apollonius allowed their leader as much time as he wanted to rant about the shortcomings of the Brahman ideals. When he finished Apollonius launched into a rather impressive defense. He began with a lengthy oration of his Pythagorean lifestyle, much of which will be recounted later in this chapter. From there he progressed into his defense of the Indian philosophies. He told them that their present condition of nakedness and commitment to their area in Ethiopia was a result of their trying to cover up their background, which was heavily influenced by Indian philosophy. "This is why you have resolved to worship the gods in the Egyptian rather than in your own fashion, and why you have set yourselves to disseminate unflattering stories of the Indians, as if maligning them you did not foul your own nest."[48] He continued to point out their erroneous logic: "And in this respect, you have not yet altered your tone for the better; for only today you have given here an exhibition of your propensities for abuse and satire, pretending that the Indians are no better employed than in startling people and in pandering to their eyes and ears."[49] Apollonius was obviously passionate in his defense

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[47] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 19-20.

[48] Ibid., 49-50.

[49] Ibid., 50.

of the Indian people and of their philosophies, to which he himself was indebted. His defense was so effective and complete that Philostratus wrote: "the Egyptians were so impressed by Apollonius' words, that Thespesion [the originator of the argument], in spite of the blackness of his complexion, visibly blushed, while the rest of them seemed in some way stunned by the vigorous and fluent discourse which they listened to."[50]

The youngest of these philosophers named Nilus "leapt up from the ground...in admiration"[51] and sought immediately more detail concerning Apollonius' experiences and wisdom. At this urging a new round of discussion and arguing ensued and resulted in Nilus pleading with Apollonius to allow him to follow him and Damis on their journey. Apollonius advised him to stay and offer his newfound wisdom to his fellow philosophers, but he encouraged him not to be an annoyance to them lest this give them disdain for his philosophy. Before Apollonius departed, he and Thespesion discussed a wide array of subjects from the harsh characteristics of the Egyptian gods to the Spartan practice of whipping boys to teach them strength. So varied in subject were their talks.

From these interactions, Apollonius then continued his journey. He desired to see the source of the Nile. His guide, Timasion, and his new pupil, Nilus led him there. On their way Damis, through the ink of Philostratus, described the cataracts and the people that they met. The sound of the cataracts was so loud that Damis urged Apollonius not to progress on account of his safety. Apollonius ignored the plea. Their journey continued and their descriptions were grandiose:

> Peaks there overhung the Nile, at the most eight stades in height; but the eminence faces the mountains, namely a beetling brow of rocks

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[50] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 59.

[51] Ibid.

> mysteriously cut away, as if in a quarry, and the fountains of the Nile cling to the edge of the mountain, till they overbalance and fall onto the rocky eminence, from which they pour into the Nile as an expanse of whitening billows.[52]

Not only did the African lands hold sway philosophically over Apollonius, but he was also captivated by the spectacular natural wonders.

The *Life of Apollonius* shifts from Egypt to recounting the sack of Jerusalem by the not-yet-emperor Titus. When offered laurels for his siege and conquest, Titus refused and said that it was not he who had destroyed the city, but that he was the arm and hand of a divine being. Apollonius was quite pleased with this and wrote to him exclaiming that "whereas you have refused to be proclaimed for success in war and for shedding the blood of your enemies, I myself assign to you the crown of temperance and moderation."[53] Titus, quite thrilled by this, responded, "I will not forget your kindness; for although I have captured Jerusalem, you have captured me."[54] This is an excellent example of Apollonius' hatred of the celebration of death or killing. When Titus did ascend to power in Rome, he remembered Apollonius, and Apollonius became a type of advisor in wisdom to him. He asked Apollonius "O man of Tyana...can you give me any precepts as to how to rule and exercise the authority of a sovereign?" Apollonius offered his own wisdom, and at the request of Titus, Apollonius revealed Titus' future. Titus was to die by manner of the sea. Titus, according to Damis, died later from a poisoned fish given to him to eat by his brother who was jealous for power. History affirms the mysterious situation of the death of Titus and the takeover by Domitian.

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[52] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 105.

[53] Ibid., 113.

[54] Ibid.

Philostratus next wrote that Apollonius' continuing journeys slowed considerably and he spent longer time in each location compared to his early journeys which were short and numerous. For much of the rest of the *Life of Apollonius'* Book VI, the author contents himself with telling various and unconnected events concerning Apollonius. There was one story where Apollonius confronted a young man who had set his will upon marrying a statue of Aphrodite. Apollonius' thoughts, quite tame, were that the "conduct [was] absurd."[55] Apollonius continued to lecture him about how he needed to marry a human, because humans are supposed to marry humans. He says:

> I know this much about loving and being loved: gods fall in love with gods, and human beings with human beings, and animals with animals, and in a word like with like, and they have true issue of their own kind; but when two beings of different kinds contract a union, there is no true marriage or love.[56]

Thus, he ended that confrontation well.

The penultimate book of the *Life of Apollonius* is Philostratus' defense of Apollonius from the "accusations and writs of information"[57] that were against him during the reign of Domitian. Because Apollonius did not attack Nero's criticism of him by confronting Nero directly, Philostratus wrote that some people held that against him. In light of the fact that "Nero…led the life of a female harpist or flautist," confronting him was no real task, but Domitian, whom Philostratus describes as "vigorous in body….[and] took pleasure in the sufferings of others and in any lamentations they uttered,"[58] was not one to be met with lightly. Apollonius was called by Domitian to

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[55] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 137.

[56] Ibid., 137.

[57] Ibid., 147.

[58] Ibid., 155.

defend his relationship with Nerva, who was reported as to have been saying disrespectful things about a statue of the emperor. Apollonius was warned that Domitian would banish him as he had done other philosophers. He was also told that any ill that came against Apollonius indirectly would come upon the followers and lovers of Apollonius for being deprived of his wisdom. Apollonius then, in his usually lengthy method, criticized his friends for discouraging him in such a way.

Upon arriving in Rome, Apollonius was put in prison "where captives were not bound"[59] and he had to wait "until...the Emperor shall have leisure, for he [desired] to talk to [him] privately before taking any steps."[60] After much waiting, Apollonius and Domitian shared each other's company. Domitian was reviled by Apollonius' dress (forbidden clothing in Rome) and they began their verbal tête-à-tête. Domitian asked Apollonius' opinion of Nerva, who, he believed, was planning against him. Apollonius described Nerva and his company as kind, but rather sluggish and dull. This enraged Domitian who responded as follows.

> Then you mean to say that I am guilty of slander in their cases, since you assert that they are only good men, only sluggish, whom I have ascertained to be the vilest of mankind and usurpers of my throne. For I can imagine that they too, if I put the question to them about you, would in turn deny that you were a wizard and a hot-head, and a braggart and a miser, and that you looked down on the laws.[61]

This tirade went on accusing Apollonius of consorting and planning with Nerva against him, the slathering babble of one paranoid of receiving the same fate that he cast upon his brother. When he was finished, Apollonius, who had remained quiet, responded

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[59] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 209.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., 243.

that Domitian was being completely unfair and was unfit to judge him because of the obvious prejudice he held against the persons involved. Domitian then imprisoned him, shackled him, and shaved off his beard and hair, daring him to free himself with his powers. After being persecuted, he was verbally maligned in the prison and by those outside. Damis visited him and was rather distraught. Apollonius consoled him and insisted that he was already free.

> And with these words he took his leg out of the fetters and remarked to Damis: 'Here is proof positive to you of my freedom, so cheer up.' Damis says that it was then for the first time that he really and truly understood the nature of Apollonius, to wit that it was divine and superhuman, for without any sacrifice...and without a single prayer, without even a word, he quietly laughed at the fetters, and then inserted his leg in them afresh, and behaved like a prisoner once more.[62]

Soon word came that Apollonius was to be moved into the unfettered prison.

The final chapter of the *Life of Apollonius* begins with the court hearing of Apollonius. The superstition of the Emperor and of those men ushering him in was absurd. They forced him to enter naked lest any of his amulets, clothing, or papers aid his wizardry. As the court proceeded, Apollonius was set with various questions concerning his actions. He answered them calmly and with reason. After having finished with this, and having seen the audience's favorable bearing to Apollonius, Domitian acquitted him of the charges. Apollonius quickly left and the audience was puzzled that Domitian allowed him to leave so freely.

Philostratus recounts that Apollonius was then whisked away supernaturally to where Damis and a companion were. He appeared to them in a cave and Demetrius, the companion of Damis, reacted in astonishment and grief, for he supposed it was the ghost

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[62] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 257.

of Apollonius. To this, Apollonius "stretched out his hand and said, 'Take hold of me, and if I evade you, then I am indeed a ghost come to you from the realm of Persephone....But if I resist your touch, then you shall persuade Damis that I am both alive and that I have not abandoned my body.'"[63] They were incredulous of Apollonius' account of having been in court that very day and yet be at that time so far from Rome.

From the cave of the nymphs, Apollonius and his faithful Damis went back to Greece. Upon his arrival rumors began to spread that the sage was alive and well and in Olympia. "People came from Elis, and Sparta, and from Corinth away at the limits of the Isthmus; and the Athenians too....Moreover there were people from Megera...as well as many from Boetia and from Argos, and all the leading people from Phocis and Thessaly."[64] While there, he was so honored that he was given money for his travels directly from the treasury of the temple of Zeus.

While in Greece, a very unusual event occurred for Apollonius. Through a vision, Apollonius saw Domitian assassinated with a dagger. "Just at the moment when it all happened in the palace at Rome...he dropped his voice, as if he were terrified...like one who between his words caught glimpses of something foreign to his subject."[65] His audience was rather in awe when he at once broke out with "Smite the tyrant, smite him....take heart, gentlemen, for the tyrant has been slain this day."[66] Some thought Apollonius to have gone mad, others hoped he was right. News quickly affirmed the sage's claims. Nerva, who took over the empire at the death of Domitian, asked for

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[63] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 361.

[64] Ibid., 371.

[65] Ibid., 393.

[66] Ibid.

Apollonius to be in his council, but Apollonius tactfully declined. At this point, Philostratus rather abruptly informs the reader that Damis' account of the life of Apollonius ended here.

Philostratus writes that tales of the end of Apollonius' life range far and wide. Some claim that he reached an age ranging from seventy to over one-hundred. Other stories claim that he rose into heaven or disappeared from this world while in a temple. The story that Philostratus leaves us with is Apollonius' post-mortem teaching. A youth of Greece who sought the wisdom of Apollonius prayed to him for revelation. While with friends, Apollonius used this young man as a vessel and spoke to them. Philostratus recounts, "here we have a clear utterance of Apollonius, established like an oracular tripod, to convince us of the mysteries of the soul, to the end that cheerfully, and with due knowledge of our own true nature, we may pursue our way to the goal appointed by the fates."[67] These words describe the last recounted words of Apollonius of Tyana.

II. *The Dating and Present Scholarly Views of the* Life of Apollonius

Philostratus' dates fall between the end of the second century A.D. and the first half of the third century. His writings are dated easily because of the events that he describes.[68] The events of his early life even make their way into the *Life of Apollonius.*[69]

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[67] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 405.

[68] cf. Graham Anderson, *Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century A.D.* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

[69] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 111.

There is one issue with the dating of Philostratus. Because there were other writers with the same name, some of them related to him, issues have risen. As recounted by Anderson, and as mentioned by MacLean and Aitken in their introduction to Philostratus' *On Heroes*[70], there was a misleading or confusing entry in the Byzantine *Suidae Lexicon* concerning Philostratus and his writings. The disagreement was over some other texts that are credited to Philostratus and they have no bearing on this thesis. There was never an issue concerning the legitimacy of Philostratus as the author of *The Life of Apollonius.*[71]

The Life of Apollonius was written at the request of the Roman Empress Julia Domna, a subject that will be analyzed in greater detail in the second chapter. With this knowledge, it is clear that the work was written in the first few decades of the third century.

Much of modern scholarship deals less with the historical validity of Philostratus' work and more with its effect in the years following. As chapter three will discuss, the figure of Apollonius was used as ammunition for the anti-Christian factions who were desperately trying to align themselves with Apollonius, and thus with the traditions of Rome, in an effort to legitimize themselves against the still rather young cult of Christianity.

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[70] cf. Philostratus the Athenian, and Jennifer MacLean and Ellen Aitken, trans., *On Heroes* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), xlvi.

[71] cf. Jaap-Jan Flinterman, *Power,* Paideia, *& Pythagoreanism: Greek Identity, Conceptions of the Relationship Between Philosophers and Monarchs and Political Ideas in Philostratus'* Life of Apollonius (Amsterdam: Gieben, 1995).

Another avenue that has been taken in modern scholarship concerning Apollonius and the work of Philostratus is the validity of Damis. Damis is credited with giving his story, written on tablets, to Julia Domna, who then gave them to Philostratus to use as primary sources in his writing of the *Life of Apollonius.*[72] In the 1970s and '80s the debate over the historicity of Damis was revised. James Francis summarizes it well in his 1998 journal article on the subject: "[E. L.] Bowie presents [the *Life of Apollonius*] as 'novelistic' or 'fictional'"[73] and believes that it was merely pleasant Sophist literature. Bowie's opposition, Graham Anderson, "goes to extremes to argue in favor of historicity—even to the point of identifying Damis from later Arabic sources."[74] As Francis skillfully summarizes, this debate has been waged since the early twentieth century.

> Both Bowie and Anderson inherit a wealth of scholarship with regard to their positions, as they themselves acknowledge. The highlights of the history of scholarship can be summarized as follows. E. Meyer (1917) first called the historicity of Damis and the [*Life of Apollonius*] into question as a correction to R. Reitzenstein (1906). This view, with some exceptions, dominated until F. Grosso (1954) endeavored to rehabilitate the [*Life of Apollonius*] as a historical source. Bowie (1978) refuted Grosso's arguments as having no formal validity and reasserted Meyer's position. This in turn prompted Anderson (1986) to argue against Bowie and to assume a position generally similar to that of Grosso.[75]

As can be deduced from the above quote, beginning with the 1906 writings of Reitzenstein up through the late twentieth century, this discussion has been argued

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[72] James A. Francis, "Truthful Fiction: New Questions to Old Answers on Philostratus' 'Life of Apollonius'," *The American Journal of Philology,* 119, no. 3 (Autumn 1998), 420.

[73] Ibid., 422.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid.

thoroughly without a consensus having been reached. The scholarship of these arguments confirms that without new primary information, the true nature of Damis and his writings will never be resolved. This paper is in no way trying to make a decision about the historical validity of either Damis or Apollonius, but is leading to the fact that Apollonius can be described as a holy man of Late Antiquity.

III. The Genre of Hagiography

The Life of Apollonius of Tyana by Philostratus does not stand alone. It is a piece of a larger collection of works that fits into the study of holy men and women, hagiography. By definition, it is a study of saints. Most religious groups have hagiographies of those that they hold in high esteem as being holy and deserving of worship, veneration, or other positive religious attention. Within this genre, a work must contain an outline of the early life of the holy man or woman, accounts of travels with examples of personal philosophies, and something about the legacy of his life. Lynda Coon defines hagiography as "an exulted discourse that has formulated the literary representation of saints in popular and elite imagination during the two millennia of Christian history."[76] Of course to broaden Coon's definition, it would be necessary to remove the time frame and Christian parameters, but it would seem that Philostratus'

[76] Lynda Coon, *Sacred Fictions: Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997), 1.

work fits rather nicely with this definition. I want to examine the two obvious sub-categories within the genre of hagiography. To begin, I will examine the pagan sub-category, which of course includes *The Life of Apollonius*. Also included will be brief analyses of Porphyry's *Life of Plotinus* and Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras.* A few examples that I offer in comparison and in contrast to the pagan *Lives* are their Christian counterparts, Cyprian and Antony. I will examine the major themes and processes in which these hagiographies proceed.

Pagan hagiography is very similar to its Christian counterpart. Instead of beings who base their lives following the Christian life outlined in the bible, the subjects of pagan hagiographies meet their guidelines as holy persons outside of the bible, a topic that will be examined deeper in chapter four. Coon also writes that "the classical Greek *hagios* or Latin *sanctus* ('holy one') refers to a 'quality possessed by things or persons that could approach divinity.'"[77] Instead of limiting their holy people to those who have interacted with Yahweh or having been influenced by Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit, they are, in the simplest of terms, individuals who have had miraculous happenings credited to their lives and have made some sort of spiritual impact. They are of course referred to as 'holy'.

Two versions of the *Life of Pythagoras* will be examined as examples of pagan hagiography. The authors are Porphyry and Iamblichus. I will now give a basic outline of Pythagoras' life according to Porphyry and Iamblichus and how it is laid out, and then compare a few aspects of the two different works. Because the entirety of these works is extant, the similarities with Philostratus' work can be studied.

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[77] Coon, 2.

Porphyry began with a very historical outline of the birth and ancestry of Pythagoras.[78] He quoted many ancient writers, including Nichomacus, Diogenes, Eudoxes, and Lycus, to name a few. There are passing descriptions of Pythagoras' early education in Miletus, as well as his travels visiting the Egyptians, Arabians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews. Porphyry wrote of what Pythagoras learned from each group, for example, language and wisdom from the Egyptians or the interpretation of dreams from the Hebrews. Pythagoras was presented as having an early thirst for knowledge. Very similar to the work of Philostratus, Porphyry carefully recounted the Pythagoras' vast travels and how he was shaped and changed through them. Porphyry described how he attracted his first crowds in Italy and formed schools and built relationships with cities that laid the early groundwork for his teachings. Another similarity to that of Philostratus is Porphyry's occasional recounting of an odd parable concerning Pythagoras. For example, a story was presented where Pythagoras suggests to a farmer not to feed beans to his oxen for health reasons, and when the farmer protests, Pythagoras whispers to the animals and they cease their bean eating. This anecdote and others are reminiscent of those included in the *Life of Apollonius*.

Even though Porphyry was less inclined than Iamblichus to include many supernatural signs and wonders, he recounted a few divine instances that include predicting pieces of the future or being the beneficiary of favorable omens. There were lots of references made to traditional Greco-Roman traditions and practices. It seems

[78] cf. Porphyry of Tyre, and Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, trans., *Life of Pythagoras* (Alpine, N.J.: Platonist Press, 1919)

likely that Porphyry was including such things at a time when traditional Greco-Roman traditions were struggling for preeminence over Christianity.

Iamblichus set up his subject and work in a similar way to Philostratus. He began chronologically with the overall importance of Pythagoras and then delved into his early youth. Like Apollonius, though half of a millennium before, Pythagoras spent many years traveling, beginning with Egypt: "After gaining all he could from the Phoenician mysteries, he found that they had originated from the sacred rites of Egypt...this led him to hope that in Egypt itself he might find monuments...still more genuine, beautiful, and divine."[79] Iamblichus recounted that like Apollonius, Pythagoras "frequented all the temples with the greatest diligence, and most studious research, during which time he won the esteem and admiration of all the priests and prophets with which he associated."[80]

Some differences between the works of Porphyry and Iamblichus are in their different views of the man. Porphyry attempted to describe a man who was historical and credible, someone that he looked up to greatly. Iamblichus also looked up to him, but his desire was not in attaining factual history but in honoring the tradition of Pythagoras. As a result, Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* contains vastly more references to supernatural and miraculous acts by Pythagoras. It appears that Porphyry believed that Pythagoras was an influential teacher and philosopher who traveled and committed extraordinary acts, and he synthesized the traditions and historicity of Pythagoras in his work.

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[79] Iamblichus, and Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, trans., *Life of Pythagoras* (Alpine, N.J.: Platonist Press, 1919), 7.

[80] Ibid., 9.

Iamblichus argued well for the tradition and virtues of Pythagoras and focused less on proving the factual nature of each event described.

Both versions of the *Life of Pythagoras* outlined a person who had earlier and further lasting influence than Apollonius. It was Pythagoras who influenced Plato to a degree with ideas of the Republic, and of course, he was the biggest influence in Apollonius' life. He also left behind a great number of followers, the Pythagoreans, who wrote down and expounded upon his philosophies.

In contrast to pagan hagiography, I will now discuss Christian hagiography. Coon writes that "the often allegorical lives (*vitae*) of the saints were recited by priests during mass, read by literate audiences, and depicted in art for illiterate Christians."[81] These accounts gave the people a connection to their spiritual heritage and allowed them a more spiritual perspective on their lives. "The biblical lives of Elijah, Elisha, John the Baptist, Christ, and the apostles form the charismatic prototypes for the sacred biographies of the Christian saints."[82] So similar are they to their pagan characters that the Greek translation of the Hebrew bible uses *hagios* and *hagioi*, the term that the pagans used to describe their holy beings, to describe the angels and also prophets. In fact, "the gospel of Mark (6.20) portrays John the Baptist as 'righteous and holy.'"[83] The comparisons go on, for example, Jesus is acknowledged as the "'holy one of God.'"[84] Unfortunately, because of the nature of hagiographical accounts being usually full of miraculous events, there are many scholars who doubt their historicity. Coon gives early examples from

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[81] Coon, 1.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Ibid., 2.

[84] Ibid., 3.

"Eighteenth-century intellectuals, such as David Hume and Edward Gibbon, [who] condemned saints' lives to the murky would of popular polytheism and credulity."[85]

The boundaries of Christian hagiography are far reaching.

> Saints, as superhuman mortals, were venerated locally or even universally as martyrs, confessors, ascetics, pastoral administrators, and cloistered servants of God. While ordinary Christians were God's foster children, the saints were the Creator's special friends. Hagiographers recorded the manifestations of the Holy Spirit to these friends of God who acted as intermediaries between the divine and the temporary. The ability of saints to exist simultaneously in both worlds empowered them to work miracles and to serve as arbitrators for Christian communities in imitation of their biblical predecessors.[86]

This quote demonstrates that even when trying to create a nice and tidy box around a specific definition of hagiography, there are aspects that break the rules and push the boundaries. My descriptions and definitions are not intended to be comprehensive.

Having given brief comparisons of two pagan hagiographies, I will now turn to two Christian *Lives.* They are the *Life of Cyprian* and the *Life of Antony.* Cyprian was a Carthaginian Christian bishop, and he is grouped as an Ante-Nicene church father because of his existence before the organization of the Council of Nicaea. Antony was a third and fourth century Egyptian Christian who moved away from civilization into the desert to live a life of strict asceticism.

The writer of the *Life of Cyprian* concerning his good deeds writes that:

> It would be tedious to go through individual circumstances, it would be laborious to enumerate all his doings. For the proof of his good works I think that this one thing is enough, that by the judgment of God and the

[85] Coon, 5.

[86] Ibid, 1.

> favor of the people he was chosen to the office of the priesthood...while still...a novice.[87]

Compared to the accounts of Apollonius and others to which I referred, the *Life of Cyprian* is much shorter and less detail oriented. This work is believed to have been written by Cyprian's companion Pontius, known as Pontius the Deacon or Pontius of Carthage. It focuses on more general thoughts and opinions of Cyprian than on direct events. It does describe the trials that he faced concerning baptisms and heretics. His exile because of refusal to make pagan sacrifices ends in his proclamation of God. Because of that, he was executed as a martyr. His biographer records his death in beautiful language. "His passion being thus accomplished, it resulted that Cyprian, who had been an example to all good men, was also the first who in Africa imbued his priestly crown with blood of martyrdom....But yet I must triumph in his victory....Much and excessively I exult at his glory."[88] But, despite the lack of detail to the degree of Philostratus, the *Life of Cyprian* gives us enough information about his life to fit him into the definition of a saint and this his biography into the genre of Christian hagiography.

Antony was responsible for originating the tradition of eremitic monasticism. This is the opposite of Pachomius' cenobitic monasticism, which became very popular in the manifestation of monasteries in the Middle Ages. The *Life of Antony* was written by the Alexandrian bishop Athanasius. He set up Antony's life in a very similar way to Philostratus' writing of Apollonius. Because this work is extant, it can be analyzed effectively. Athanasius told of his early life and upbringing. He writes of his early

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[87] Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1903), 269.

[88] Roberts and Donaldson, 274.

desires of asceticism: "And again he went into the church, hearing the Lord say in the Gospel, 'be not anxious for the morrow,' he could stay no longer, but went out and gave those things also to the poor."[89] While he was in the desert, the devil tempted him with many desirable things. This drove him further in to being committed to Jesus. According to Athanasius "Antony having learned from the scriptures that the devices of the devil are many, zealously continued the discipline [of asceticism]."[90]

Like Apollonius, Antony combated spirits and traveled in the area promoting his ideas. He spent twenty years in almost complete solitude before preaching his asceticism to others. "And thus it happened in the end that cells arose even in the mountains, and the desert was colonized by monks, who came forth from their own people, and enrolled themselves for the citizenship in the heavens,"[91] records Athanasius. After his ideas on spiritual living were established, Antony "returned alone to his own cell, increased his discipline, and sighed daily as he thought of the mansions of heaven, having his desire fixed on them, and pondering over the shortness of man's life."[92]

Athanasius continued to recount story after story of Antony's visions, casting out of evil spirits, debating philosophies, defending his faith against heretics, the explaining of his beliefs, and many other accounts. Though he desired a martyr's death, Antony passed away due to sickness. His body was buried in a secret place and his garments

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[89] Athanasius of Alexandria, "Life of St. Antony" from P. Schaff and H. Wace, eds., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Vol IV: St. Athanasius Select Works and Letters* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890), accessed 15 March 2011, Google e-book: 9.

[90] Ibid., 13.

[91] Ibid., 21.

[92] Ibid., 45-46.

divided among those close to him, including the author of his biography, Athanasius. He ends writing that "even if this account is small compared with his merit, still from this reflect how great Antony, the man of God, was."[93]

Having examined two examples of Christian hagiography and two of pagan hagiography, I hope to have placed Philostratus' work within the framework of the genre. Even though I analyzed the genre in two sub-sections, the similarities between Christian and pagan hagiographies are very important. In chapter four, I will discuss Apollonius as a pagan holy man and Jesus as a Christian holy man. Through these two men, I will show both the similarities and differences between the two types of holy men.

IV. The Teachings of Apollonius of Tyana

Two beings to whom Apollonius developed an early devotion are the deity Asclepius and the philosopher Pythagoras. While in Egypt debating with their philosophers known as the naked sages, Damis records him defending his belief in Pythagoras as follows:

> I discerned a certain sublimity in the discipline of Pythagoras, and how a certain secret wisdom enabled him to know, not only who he was himself, but also who he had been; and I saw that he approached the altars in purity, and suffered not his belly to be polluted by partaking in the flesh of animals; and that he kept his whole body pure of all garments woven of dead animal refuse; and that he was the first of mankind to restrain his tongue.... I also saw that his philosophical system was in other respects oracular and true. So I ran to embrace his teachings.[94]

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[93] Athanasius of Alexandria, 85-86.

[94] Philostratus, *Vol II.*, 39.

This shows Apollonius' obvious admiration of the Pythagoreans.

His Pythagorean beliefs were further developed and affirmed as Philostratus writes, "Apollonius receives from the Brahmins a full, complete, and literal confirmation of the doctrines of Pythagoras."[95] The body imprisons the soul, so the only way to make the soul as free as possible is to adhere to strict asceticism. "Apollonius and his followers, like Pythagoras and his followers, constitute a regular order of pagan monks."[96] He followed the physical requirements of appearance that the Pythagoreans held. Albert Réville writes that "[he was] clothed in a linen tunic, barefooted, with long hair, and abstaining from meat and wine."[97] Pythagoreans promoted a period of silence in their initiates. The initiates were a part of the Pythagorean society, which was "modeled on the mystical cult-society, to which admission was gained by initiation—that is purification followed by the revelation of truth. To the Pythagorean, 'purification' partly consisted in the observance of ascetic rules of abstinence from certain kinds of food and dress."[98] As mentioned earlier, Apollonius upheld this standard in his own life. Because of the belief in the transmigration of the soul, he abstained from meat. The transmigration of the soul is a concept that Pythagoras propagated and Plato after him. Walter Burkett describes it as follows: "[It] presupposes that in the living being, man as animal, there is an individual constant something, an ego that preserves its identity by

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[95] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 26.

[96] Ibid., 44.

[97] Albert Réville, *Apollonius of Tyana: The Pagan Christ of the Third Century* (London: Hotten, 1866), 20.

[98] F. M. Cornford "Mysticism and Science in the Pythagorean Tradition," *The Classical Quarterly*, vol. 16, no. 3/4 (Jul-Oct 1922), pp. 139-140.

force of its own essence independent of the body which passes away."[99] At death, the force is separated from the body but soon it is returned to earth in another form. According to this concept, one's actions in life will affect the form to which they return in the next life. The goal is to gain the supreme amount of wisdom in life as to ascend with the gods upon death, thus completing the transmigration of the soul.

Apollonius' theology of this comes in Philostratus' work. A letter that he recounts says this about Apollonius' theology: "I carry the argument...that good men have in their composition something of God."[100] Therefore, the ultimate goal is to, as Plato would have explained, control that part that is not of God in order to attain communion with God. The writer of the letter goes even farther to claim that Apollonius is a type of savior for the people. "Now you need a man to administer and care for the universe of such souls, a god sent down by wisdom. For he is able to wean them from the lusts and passions, which they rush to satisfy with instincts too fierce for ordinary society, and from their avarice."[101] He then goes on to describe how Apollonius had saved several villages, Ephesus being the prime example, from a plague that would have wiped them out. As to whether Apollonius himself would have completely agreed with this, Philostratus does not tell us.

In reference to part of Apollonius' devotion to Asclepius, he was very free in his condemnation of the use of blood sacrifices as sinful, avoidance of which was also a Pythagorean tradition. Apollonius is very clear on this subject:

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[99] Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion: Archaic and Classical* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), 300.

[100] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 315.

[101] Ibid., 317.

> I never sacrificed blood, I do not sacrifice it now, I never touch it, not even if it be shed upon an altar; for this was the rule of Pythagoras and likewise of his disciples, and in Egypt also of the Naked Sages, and of the sages in India, from whom these principles of wisdom were derived by Pythagoras and his school.[102]

Maya D'Aoust and Adam Parfrey write that "[he] became known as a great healer when he spent time in the Asclepian temple of Aegae."[103] In that temple, where he stayed for a time, he is credited with many healings. "Among Apollonius' credits are raising the dead, exorcising a devil afflicting a boy... and curing a blind man and a man with a withered hand."[104] Wherever he traveled "the subjects of his teaching were the precepts of true wisdom, the respect due to the gods, the true mode of worshipping them, and the necessity of returning to those rites of more ancient times which had either fallen into disuse or been strangely altered."[105]

In regards to his teachings of wisdom, while in Ephesus he advocated a return to the wisdom found in philosophy. Réville's commentary on Apollonius describes that Apollonius' major belief concerning spiritual beings (or being) "consists of a kind of pantheism clothed in polytheistic forms, which does not seek to destroy individual responsibility by absorbing it into the great ALL, but on the contrary evinces a very decided monotheistic tendency."[106] He believes that all of the gods are just representations and manifestations of the attributes of one superior being. He also

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[102] Philostratus, *Vol. II*, 339.

[103] Maya D'Aoust and Adam Parfrey, *The Secret Source: The Law of Attraction is One of the Seven Hermetic Laws, Here are the Other Six* (Los Angeles: Process Media, 2007), 66.

[104] Ibid., 66.

[105] Réville., 21.

[106] Ibid., 41-42.

believes that men are connected to the greater being. Again Réville: "Death and birth are alike only in appearance. There is alternation between the visible and tangible of nature and the invisible and intangible of essence, but in reality nothing is created or destroyed."[107] Apollonius' view of the superior being affected all of his other views.

With this in mind, his travels to so many different temples and priesthoods make much more sense. He does not believe in the superiority of one god over another. Thus, he wants to rid the temples and cults of beliefs and customs that have crept in without true support. An example from Réville, "Venus must become the goddess of pure love, free from all carnal lust."[108] Interesting exceptions to this are gods who represent the sun. Even though the Brahmins worship the sun, it is more likely that Apollonius sees the sun as the closest thing to the superior being, but not the actual superior being.

V. The Legacy of Apollonius of Tyana

The legacy of Apollonius is a unique one. His life did not produce any immediate groups of protégés or disciples. In fact, much of Apollonius' life was reignited as ammunition against the rising sect of Christianity. Campbell writes that "Philostratus wrote the *Life* about A.D. 216; and in 305, Hierocles...published a critical examination [titled *Lover of Truth* and it will be discussed in a later chapter,] of Christianity in which

[107] Thomas Wittaker, *Apollonius of Tyana and Other Essays* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1906), 5.

[108] Réville, 42.

he opposed the Apollonian to the Christian miracles;"[109] because Hierocles sparked such a heated debate over the deity of Jesus, "it soon became...necessary for every Catholic saint or doctor of the fourth and fifth centuries to have an opinion about Apollonius of Tyana."[110] Hierocles made Apollonius a subject of popular culture again. Cults devoted to him emerged, statues bearing his image were commissioned, and a strong love of the past was reawakened in many.[111] Now concerning the things that Apollonius did, many of his critics, including Eusebius and Lactantius, give him credit as a philosopher or magician[112] but refuse to recognize his deity. Eusebius wrote a lengthy response to Hierocles that is still extant and will be examined in chapter three. Lactantius not so subtly refers to Hierocles in the fifth book of the *Divine Institutes* as one who "claimed to be a spokesperson for philosophy, but he was so wicked in his ways, this professor of self control, that he glowed with greed no less than with lust."[113] Lactantius responded to Apollonius via Hierocles' claims in the same section of book five.

Apollonius was also used as a way for the Romans, who were seeing their religious culture be threatened significantly by Christianity, to preserve their heritage. One such person was Virius Nicomachus Flavianus. According to María Dzielska, "he

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[109] F. W. Groves Campbell, *Apollonius of Tyana: A Study of His Life and Times* (London: Grant Richards, 1908), 11.

[110] Ibid., 12.

[111] María Dzielska, and Piotr PienKowski, trans., *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1986), 157.

[112] Campbell, 12.

[113] Lactantius, and Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, ed., *Lactantius: Divine Institutes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 2003), 284.

either translated Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* into Latin or adopted it, and joined the Emperor Eugenius when he launched his attack against the Christian Emperor Theodosius the Great."[114] The use of Apollonius as fodder for the defense of paganism did not proceed without opposition. Dzielska continues that "[late fourth century Christian writer and saint] John Chrysostom did not deny that Apollonius once used to impress people, but at the same time he stressed that both his teachings and followers were quickly forgotten."[115] One rather interesting use of Apollonius was as a mascot. Many educated Romans in the late fourth century minted medallions, referred to as contorniates, that bore the portrait of Apollonius. Dzielska again weighs in on the subject: "A. Alföldi, who was studied the contorniates for a long time, came to the conclusion that they were minted by outstanding Roman families of senators as an expression of antichristian propaganda in order to recall symbols and figures of the past."[116] There are some scholars who deny Alföldi's analysis in favor of a less intentional use for the medallions—prizes at festivals for example.

I have now covered the basics of Apollonius' life and travels, Philostratus' work in the genre of hagiography, and the legacy of Apollonius, and will now proceed to chapter two where I will discuss Philostratus himself and his writing of the *Life of Apollonius.*

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[114] Dzielska, 170.

[115] Ibid., 165.

[116] Ibid., 173.

Chapter Two

Background of Philostratus and His Writing

I. The Purpose of Writing the Life of Apollonius *of Tyana*

G. R. S. Mead writes that "Flavius Philostratus, the writer of the only Life of Apollonius which has come down to us, was a distinguished [man] of letters who lived in the last quarter of the second and the first half of the third century."[117] He was very close with the imperial family, or at least the wife of Emperor Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, during his life. Edward Gibbon described Julia Domna as "[possessing], even in an advanced age, the attractions of beauty, and [being] united to a lively imagination, a firmness of mind, and strength of judgment, seldom bestowed on her sex."[118] She was very active in the artistic community and had an insatiable desire for knowledge. Mead also includes that "she was the patroness of every art, and the friend of every man of genius."[119] Domna was Syrian by birth and "she would reign as empress for twenty-four years, first with her husband and then with her unmarried son,"[120] according to Jasper Burns. Her father was a priest of the Syrian sun god, and "her father's high position in

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[117] Mead, 53.

[118] Ibid., 54.

[119] Ibid., 55.

[120] Jasper Burns, *Great Women of Imperial Rome: Mothers and Wives of Caesars* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 181.

the temple of Elagbal brought the family wealth and social prominence."[121] Her marriage to Septimius Severus was not without trial. Desiring a good position in the new government that followed the death of emperor Comodus, Severus was shocked at the assassination of the most likely candidate. Acting quickly, Severus use his military might to assert himself.

Being married to the emperor of Rome afforded Domna many luxuries to feed her desire for knowledge. Living in Rome gave her an opportunity to exercise her skills as a philanthropic restorer. With a city-wide fire in the recent past, Domna took advantage of the ability to rebuild. Burns writes that "she took personal responsibility for restoring the Temple of Vesta, which had been destroyed by the fire....[and] in the frenetic early years of Severus' reign, Julia's power and influence rivaled or exceeded those of any previous empress."[122] She traveled with her husband, designed coins, and generally furthered the position of the empress specifically and women in general. Again Burns includes that "Julia's influence on her husband's policies might explain Severus' decision to break with tradition and allow legionary soldiers to marry and live with their wives and children. Previously the soldiers' women were considered concubines and neither they [nor] their children had legal status."[123]

Barbara Levick writes that:

> "One thing that Domna was certainly responsible for was encouraging Philostratus...to compose his work on the first century thaumaturge and sage Apollonius of Tyana....This work...is the tangible relic of Domna's intellectual preoccupations....The composition of Philostratus' *Life of*

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[121] Burns, 181-182.

[122] Ibid., 188.

[123] Ibid.

> *Apollonius* did not begin until after Severus' death, but Domna's interest in the sage may have persisted over a number of years."[124]

Her reasons for choosing him are uncertain. She possessed manuscripts that bore information about Apollonius and these would serve as useful in compiling a biographical sketch. According to Joseph L. Rife, "an anonymous middleman, some relative of Damis," [125] delivered these manuscripts or tablets to the Empress. James A. Francis writes the following on the subject:

> Philostratus asserts that Damis kept a record of Apollonius' ideas, discourses, and prophecies and that a descendant of Damis' family presented these to Julia Domna. The empress, in turn, gave these 'tablets' (*deltoi*) to Philistratus with the command that he recast them in more appropriate literary style.[126]

Not only did he utilize these manuscripts but he also traveled extensively gathering information about Apollonius. Mead writes that:

> [He] traveled into the most parts of the 'world' and everywhere met with 'inspired sayings' of Apollonius, and that he was especially well acquainted with the temple dedicated to the memory of our philosopher of Tyana...whose priests...had got together as much information as they could concerning Apollonius.[127]

Unfortunately, because no specific method was used for notating source material in a work, it is impossible to detect when and where Philostratus utilizes the above-mentioned sources and when he adds his own knowledge to spice up the material a little. Scholars also argue that Philostratus was not the most appropriate candidate because of

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[124] Barbara Levick, *Julia Domna: Syrian Princess* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 419.

[125] Joseph L. Rife, "Greek Fiction" in David S. Potter, *A Companion to the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2010), 458.

[126] James A. Francis, "New Questions to Old Answers on Philostratus' 'Life of Apollonius.' *The American Journal of Philology* 119 no. 3 (Autumn 1998): 420.

[127] Mead, 58.

his lack of intimacy with Pythagorean or other forms of philosophy. Regardless, it was to Philostratus that the role of writing Apollonius' life story was handed. There has been scholarship written about the legitimacy of Philostratus' work. My first chapter mentioned Bowie's suggestion that Philostratus fabricated the person of Damis in order to tell this highly hyperbolic account of Apollonius. Francis shows that "Bowie presents [*The Life of Apollonius*] as 'novelistic' or 'fictional' and thereby concludes that Philostratus intended his work to be merely an entertaining piece of sophistic literature, not meant to be taken seriously, and certainly not to been taken as history."[128] Anderson's already-mentioned retort was published later and therefore challenged Bowie's thesis in favor of a historical Damis. These two examples are evidence that as in many fields of historical research, there are differing opinions as to the authenticity or accuracy of ancient documents. Unfortunately, without other documents to prove definitively, these arguments are presented as two sides of a controversy that cannot fully be resolved without outside evidence from manuscripts yet unknown.

Concerning Philostratus' life, there is little known. According to Wilmer Cave Wright, "[he] was born about 170, perhaps in Lemnos."[129] It is believed that because of his sophist connections, he was brought into Julia Domna's courts and that he traveled with her and possibly her husband, the emperor, also. It was not until after her death that his epic work on Apollonius was finally published. He spent much of this time in Tyre after having left Antioch. Wright adds that "his wife was named Aurelia Melitine"[130] and

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[128] Francis, 422.

[129] Philostratus the Athenian and Eunapius and Wilmer Cave Wright, trans., *Philostratus and Eunapius: The Lives of the Sophists* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), ix-x.

[130] Wright, xi.

it can be deduced that Philostratus' family carried senatorial rank "which was no doubt bestowed upon Philostratus during his [connection] with the court."[131] It is known that he lived until the 240s, towards the end of the rule of Philip the Arab.

II. Philostratus' Sources

In writing the *Life of Apollonius* Philostratus utilized five major areas of scholarship.[132] The first three were the writings of Maximus of Aegae, Damis, and Moeragenes. He also consulted many residents of the towns and lands to which Apollonius was reported to have visited. Finally, he read through the many letters that Apollonius had written in an attempt to tie all of his accounts together. Concerning Maximus of Aegae, little is known. His accounts are based on personal research and accounts from Aegae, the town in which Apollonius was known for being in the temple of Asclepius. An interesting fact about Moeragenes is that Philostratus actually was in opposition to much of the style in which he recounted Apollonius and his deeds. Maaike Zimmerman says that "He [Philostratus] does not want his public to pay any attention to Moeragenes, who composed four books about Apollonius, and yet was ignorant of many of the circumstances of his life'."[133] Zimmerman goes on to say that Philostratus was unsatisfied with the fact that Moeragenes represents Apollonius "as a philosopher *and* a

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[131] Wright, xi.

[132] Rife, 458.

[133] Maaike Zimmerman, "'Wither Runnest Thou': The Conception of Saintliness in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*" in Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, ed., The Invention of Saintliness (London: Routledge, 2002), 86.

magician."[134] He, as did many of Apollonius' followers, wanted to portray him as a true Pythagorean, even as a new Pythagoras.

Damis needs little introduction. He was the follower and closest disciple of Apollonius and recorded his every act while with him. The legitimacy of Damis is one of the largest arguments in Apollonian scholarship. Bowie, among others, has a theory about this. Dzielska writes that "[Bowie] assumes that [the name Damis] could have been derived from the name Flavius Damianus, a well-known sophist of Ephesus of the second century."[135] Apparently, Damianus was the teacher of Philostratus and so this theory makes sense. Also, remember that Anderson claims to have found record of a historical Damis. Whether Damis was a creation of Philostratus or not will never be resolved without other ancient sources coming to light. What can be argued rather effectively is the lack of historical method used by Philostratus.

There are numerous issues with timing and events that do not line up with other reliable accounts. Glen Bowersock is caustic towards presenting anything other than historical truth as historical truth: "With works of imaginative literature, there is nothing more ruinous for historical understanding than genre theory or a mindless search for antecedents, origins, or distant parallels."[136] According to Dzielska "Bowersock, and especially Bowie, demonstrated to what extant Philostratus was unconcerned with history in his work."[137] Dzielska leans in the direction of using Philostratus' writing with caution

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[134] Zimmerman, 86.

[135] Dzielska, 28.

[136] Glen W. Bowersock, *Fact as Fiction: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 14-15

[137] Dzielska, 29.

and not completely discrediting it. Edwards argues for the historical existence of Damis and his part in the source material for Philostratus' work.[138] His article deals with the possibility of Damis having been an Epicurean, and so his time is not solely devoted to authenticating Damis. But, while working through Philostratus' omission of Damis' philosophy, he borrows heavily from Anderson's arguments for Damis. He uses a mention of him as an Epicurean in Origen's *Contra Celsum* and a passage from Lucian's *Zeus the Tradegian* in order to argue for Damis' possible philosophical leanings. His concluding thoughts are jumbled and, as said previously, lean on Anderson, whose arguments are best summarized by Francis below.

> On present evidence he [Philostratus] may have been as much at the mercy of his sources as of his rhetorical talents. The briefer and more enigmatic such sources were, the more scope he had for error as well as rhetorical expansion (auxesis). In spite of the discrepancies, it is still perfectly possible that he did set out to harmonize a rather jejune main account with letters and local tradition. The slimmer such an account [i.e., the original "Damis source"] and the vaguer its geographical and historical frame of reference, the easier it would have been to make false connections in good faith. If Philostratus was really setting out to forge, could he not have done better than the Life as it stands?[139]

As Anderson stands, if Philostratus was really attempting a fictional account, he did it rather poorly.

The personal accounts of the common people that Philostratus received varied from town to town. He relied heavily on oral traditions and since the accounts were already a few generations removed, their veracity is doubtable. Philostratus writes that "I have gathered my information partly from the many cities where [Apollonius] was

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[138] M. J. Edwards, "Damis the Epicurean," *The Classical Quarterly* 41 no 2 (1991): 563-566.

[139] Francis, 430.

loved, and partly from the temples whose long-neglected and delayed rites he restored, and partly from the accounts left of him by others and partly from his own letters."[140]

The last body of information that Philostratus consulted was the collection of Apollonian letters. He frequently quotes from them in the *Life of Apollonius*. Zimmerman writes that "Indeed, an epistolary collection was already circulating under the name of the Tyanean in the second century. Some of the letters in this collection have been recognized as authentic letters, while others have been part of a fictional collection,"[141] that he goes on to say is a testimony of the widespread fame of the sage during this time.

In contemporary Apollonian scholarship, it is clear that Philostratus' account is not without error. However, having read the primary sources and discussed the opposing ideas proposed by Anderson and Bowie, we are left, as Francis succinctly puts it, with a dilemma. "Once again, we are left to choose between failed literature or bad history, between Philostratus the deliberate liar and Philostratus the unintending purveyor of deceit."[142]

I will now leave the era of Philostratus and move into the fourth century. In chapter three, I will examine the use of Apollonius by supporters of traditional Roman paganism as ammunition against the competitive and burgeoning cult of Christianity. The historical figure of Apollonius will be traded for an incomplete version of him that is used only to forward the agenda of paganism.

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[140] Philostratus, *Vol I*, 9.

[141] Zimmerman, 79-80.

[142] Francis, 430.

Chapter Three

Eusebius of Caesarea's *Reply to Hierocles*

I. Sossianus Hierocles and the Lover of Truth

Sossianus Hierocles was a Roman proconsul during the reign of Diocletian.[143] Simmons writes that "he was successively governor of the province in which Palmyra was located (*c.* 297), *vicarius* probably of the diocese of Oriens, *praeses* of Bithynia (303), and prefect of Egypt (310-311)."[144] Though his legacy stands today, details about his life are absent in ancient writings. Barnes writes that "[he] was a known foe of the Christians when, as a member of the imperial *consilium* in early 303, he urged Diocletian toward a policy of persecution."[145] It is my belief, as informed by Simmons, that Hierocles and Porphyry were both at the council attempting to convince the emperor to legislate against the Christians. I believe, as does Simmons, that it is very likely that Diocletian would have relied on their wisdom to devise a formal revitalization of traditional pagan traditions. According to Dzielska, "this sophist and Platonizing philosopher published an anti-Christian treatise, called in short *A Friend of Truth* [a document that will be referred to in this paper as *Lover of Truth*]. Based on Philostratus'

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[143] Wittaker, 1.

[144] Michael Bland Simmons, "Graeco-Roman Philosophical Opposition" in Philip Francis Esler, *The Early Christian World: Volume 2* (London: Routledge, 2000), 131.

[145] Timothy David Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge: Harvard, 1981), 22.

stories it was the most formidable attack, after Celsus' and Porphyry's works, against the young Christian religion."[146]

Once again, Dzielska writes that "Hierocles'...work attacking Christianity was probably published twice: first in 302 A.D., just before the persecutions, it was circulated mainly in Syria and Palestine; secondly in Nicomedia."[147] What angered the Christians most was Hierocles' method of attack. Hierocles described himself as a Lover of Truth. As transcribed by the early Christian writer Lactantius, he mocked them by writing "to the Christians" not "against the Christians."[148] Barnes remarks that he claimed to give them "sound advice" and to be careful of the Bible, which was wholly false and self-contradictory.[149] Votaw wrote that "Hierocles was doubtless influenced by racial, pagan, and intellectual prejudice against Jesus, the Gospels, and the Christians."[150] It was not his urging for persecution or his patronizing writings against the validity of Christianity that elicited responses from Eusebius and Lactantius, but it was his direct comparison of the historical Apollonius of Tyana with the Christian Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth. In the introduction to the 2003 edition of Lactantius' *Divine Institutes,* Bowen writes that "Lactantius refers to a tract called *Lover of Truth* which contained these criticisms."[151]

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[146] Dzielska, 153.

[147] Ibid., 154.

[148] Lactantius, and Anthony Bowen and Peter Garnsey, ed., *Lactantius: Divine Institutes* (Liverpool: Liverpool University, 2003), 291.

[149] Barnes, 165.

[150] Clyde Weber Votaw, *The Gospels and Contemporary Biographies in the Greco-Roman World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1970), 72.

[151] Lactantius, 2.

Unfortunately, Hierocles' work (*Lover of Truth*) only exists in fragments from the writing of both Eusebius and Lactantius. Because of this, I will use their response to Hierocles and attempt to shed light on what Hierocles claimed concerning Apollonius and Jesus.

Throughout the fifth book of the *Divine Institutes,* Lactantius attributed Hierocles' claims to sheer imagination. He is airy in his references to Hierocles as "the fellow" or "our fellow."[152] As transcribed below, Lactantius quotes a great snippet of *Lover of Truth*:

> 'I am not saying Apollonius was not considered a god because he refused to be', says our fellow; 'I say it to reveal our own greater wisdom in not instantly attaching to miraculous deeds a belief in their doer's divinity. You people, [Christians] by contrast, have believed on a god by flimsy showings.' [Lactantius' personal response:] You are so unacquainted with the wisdom of God! No wonder you understand nothing of what you have read, when even the Jews, long practiced in reading the prophets and entrusted with God's sacred mystery, did not understand what they were reading.[153]

Lactantius is discarding Hierocles' arguments because he does not possess wisdom, and thus, is incapable of understanding Christianity.

Lactantius continues to bite into Hierocles' argument. He rather snidely remarks that "we do not believe in him as God 'because he did miracles'"[154] for, he explains, if so, then he would be no more than a magician, as were the thoughts of his contemporary critics, and Hierocles also. Lactantius leaned on the Jewish prophecies from the Hebrew Bible, the "testimonies of the prophets,"[155] about Jesus that were all fulfilled. Hierocles' labeling his work as *Lover of Truth* made Lactantius angry. "After unloading himself

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[152] Lactantius, 287.

[153] Ibid., 288.

[154] Ibid.

[155] Ibid., 288.

like that with the delusions of his ignorance, in his efforts to wipe out truth altogether he then had the nerve to label those wicked and God-hating books of his 'Truth Loving.'"[156]

II. Eusebius' Comparison of Jesus Christ and Apollonius of Tyana

The title of Eusebius' work is *The Treatise of Eusebius, Son of Pamphilus, Against the Life of Apollonius of Tyana Written by Philostratus, Occasioned by the Parallel Drawn by Hierocles Between Him and Christ*, henceforth *Contra Hieroclem.* So, it can be deduced that the thesis of Eusebius' argument is against Apollonius primarily and Hierocles by extension. Even though it is Hierocles' work that spurred Eusebius to put pen to paper, he dismisses him by stating that "to all intents and purposes [Hierocles' arguments] have...been upset and exposed beforehand in a work which in as many as eight books Origen composed against the book which Celsus wrote...entitled "True Reason".[157] Instead of rewriting what has already been defended, Eusebius goes down another road:

> I will therefore ask you for the present to confine your attention to the comparison of Jesus Christ with Apollonius which is found in this treatise called "The Lover of Truth"....Because Hierocles, of all the writers whoever attacked us, stands alone in selecting Apollonius...for the purposes of comparison and contrast with our Savior.[158]

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[156] Lactantius, 288-289.

[157] Eusebius of Caesarea, "Treatise of Eusebius the Son of Pamphilus, Against the Life of Apollonius of Tyana Written by Philostratus, Occasioned by the Parallel Drawn by Hierocles Between Him and Christ," in Philostratus of Athens, *The Life of Apollonius: Volume II* (New York: MacMillan, 1912), 485-487.

[158] Eusebius, 487.

It was Hierocles' audacious originality that elicited a response from Eusebius.

The first argument of Hierocles that Eusebius attacks is the deity of Christ. Hierocles, in *Lover of Truth,* claims that the miracles of Jesus as compared with those of Apollonius are not sufficient cause for deification. Hierocles, as recounted by Eusebius, writes that "For whereas we reckon [Apollonius] who wrought such feats not a god, but only a man pleasing to the gods, [Christians] on the strength of a few miracles proclaim their Jesus a god."[159] Hierocles also hijacks the deity of Christ by claiming that "the tales of Jesus have been vamped up by Peter and Paul and a few others of the kind,—men who were liars and devoid of education and wizards,"[160] and he continues by arguing that those who recounted the life of Apollonius, primarily Damis and Philostratus, "lived constantly with him"[161] and were "men of highest education."[162] Thus begins the defense of Jesus by Eusebius. Keeping the previous chapter of this paper in mind, it is clear that Hierocles did little or no research concerning the validity of Philostratus' work, or else his vituperant attitude may have been more mellow. It also tends to suggest that Hierocles cared little for Apollonius beyond his use to him against the Christians. But I digress and now resume Eusebius' response.

The deity of Apollonius is called into question. Eusebius ponders the nature of a divine being like Apollonius and inquires of the "effects wrought by his divinity enduring

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[159] Eusebius, *CH,* 489.

[160] Ibid.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid.

today."[163] He challenges that if Apollonius was indeed divine, then what is his legacy? He left few followers and disciples and their growth and spread is not comparable to that of the disciples of Jesus. He also mocks Apollonius in humorous terms referring to him as the "supreme philosopher"[164] and the "darling of heaven."[165] In recounting some of the intellectual prowess and knowledge of languages that Apollonius held, Eusebius grants this to him begrudgingly. (Though he later questions the fact that Philostratus claims that Apollonius knew all languages, yet while in India he had the need for a translator to speak with the Indian Brahmans). Another question is brought up. Why did Apollonius need formal education and why is he described as having learned quickly and progressed in an adept way if he was indeed divine? Eusebius raises these questions, but writes that he believes these stories to be highly hyperbolic in nature but based in some authenticity, an argument that in chapter two is demonstrated to have weight in contemporary scholarship. Eusebius continues: "I am however quite ready to accept all that is probably and has an air of truth about it, even though such details may be somewhat exaggerated and highly-colored out of compliment to a good man."[166] Eusebius can understand these things, but what he has a problem with is his divinity—"All this and the like is merely human."[167]

Eusebius' defense of the divinity of Jesus Christ is very simple. To quote Eusebius: "If then we may be permitted to contrast the reckless and easy credulity which

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[163] Eusebius, *CH*, 503.

[164] Ibid., 523.

[165] Ibid.

[166] Ibid., 515-517.

[167] Ibid., 517-519.

[Hierocles] goes out of his way to accuse [Christians] of...let us ask at once, not which of them was more divine nor in what capacity one worked more wondrous and numerous miracles than the other."[168] It was not the miracles performed that Christians believe made Jesus divine. It was not the fact that he healed the sick, restored sight to the blind, made the lame to walk, raised the dead, and performed many other miracles that he is considered to the Christians to be the one true God. Eusebius mentions that "our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ was the only man of whom it was prophesized, thanks to their divine inspiration, by Hebrew sages who lived far back thousands of years ago, that he should once come among mankind."[169] He also states that Christ was not considered divine because of "the fact that he converted to his own scheme of divine teaching so many people; nor that he formed a group of genuine and really sincere disciples"[170] of whom it can be said that they were willing to die for Jesus' cause. These things did not make him divine. The fact that his name was responsible for the casting out of "sundry troublesome and evil demons which beset men's bodies and souls"[171] also does not account for his divinity. After Eusebius has gone through all of the reasons that Hierocles believed Christ to be divine as false, he proceeds to prove it through his exodus through Philostratus' account. "To look for such results [as mentioned above] in the case of Apollonius, or even to ask about them, is absurd,"[172] writes Eusebius. To conclude the

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[168] Eusebius, *CH*, 491.

[169] Ibid., 491-493.

[170] Ibid., 493.

[171] Ibid.

[172] Ibid.

Contra Hieroclem, he gives much evidence as to what does not make Christ divine, and thus what makes Apollonius incomparable to him.

An interesting point that neither Hierocles (that we know of from the very limited texts) nor Eusebius made is the vast number of similarities that Jesus and Apollonius share. From the beginning of Philostratus' work, Apollonius is predicted as being the son of a god. The birth of Jesus of Nazareth, according to the canonical gospels, was predicted as being the result of the supernatural union of God and humanity. Their lives as wandering teachers are another area of similarity, although Apollonius' geographical area of travel is vastly larger than that of Jesus. Throughout their lives the accounts of their miraculous works range from prophetic insight, to physical healing, and supernatural transportation. Chapter one referred to a story of when Apollonius raised a young bride from the dead by speaking a few words over her. In the gospel of Mark a similar story is told about Jesus. "Taking her by the hand [Jesus] said to her, 'Talitha cumi,' which means 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' And immediately the girl got up and began walking...and they were immediately over come with amazement."[173] When Apollonius supernaturally appeared to Damis and Demetrius in the cave of the nymphs they doubted his existence. He told them to take hold of him for proof. When Jesus appeared to his closest disciples after his death, one of them, Thomas, doubted his existence. Jesus told him to touch his wounds as proof of his physical existence. After the return of Apollonius from Rome, as with Jesus from the dead, word spread quickly about them both. As their lives do contain so many similarities, it would be fruitless to draw attention to them all. My goal was to highlight some to show the similarity of the

[173] Mark 5:41-42 (ESV)

accounts of their lives. There could by many reasons as to why Hierocles and Eusebius did not highlight the similarities between Jesus and Apollonius. It is likely that Hierocles did compare them in some way, but because his work is not extant, one cannot be sure. As for Eusebius' reasons, though he might have used them to demonstrate the lack of originality in the account of Apollonius, most likely he wanted to distance Jesus from Apollonius as much as possible.

At this point I will transition into explaining Apollonius and Jesus Christ as ancient holy men.

Chapter Four

The "Holy Man" of Late Antiquity

This chapter will discuss two types of holy men. They are the pagan holy man and the Christian holy man. There are many similarities, but their few distinct differences lie in the fact that Christian holy men model their lives solely on one figure, Jesus of Nazareth. This chapter will outline what being a pagan and Christian holy man of antiquity looked like. The definition of and guidelines for a holy man will be drawn from Peter Brown and Garth Fowden. Brown defines a holy man as one who "gained power of the demons, and so over the disease, the bad weather, the manifest disorders of a material world ruled by demons."[174] Fowden's basic definition is "a spiritual father and a man of supernatural powers, possessed of penetrating insight into [the] thoughts of others, and able to work miracles, summon spirits, and even soar aloft into the air and be transfigured with light when he prayed to the gods."[175] After having defined in detail the two types, Apollonius of Tyana will be tested against the definition of the pagan holy man and Jesus Christ of Nazareth as a Christian holy man.

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[174] Peter Brown, "The Rise and Function of the Holy Man in Late Antiquity," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 61 (1971): 81.

[175] Garth Fowden, "The Pagan Holy Man in Late Antique Society" *The Journal of Hellenic Studies,* 102 (1982): 37.

I. Pagan Holy Men of Antiquity

I will now expound on Brown and Fowden's definitions of holy men as well as give historical examples to support these. This section will explore the holy man's use of theurgy, the various jobs that they performed frequently, their geographical context, state of wandering, level of education, and place in society. Pagan holy men can be found in history as early as Pythagoras and further back, up into the early centuries of Christianity. In the pagan world, holy men were considered to be of divine status. Their status was passed down to them while they were disciples under another holy man. Plato was considered the metaphysical father of holy men and Pythagoras the practical father.[176] Garth Fowden writes that:

> The concept of the 'holy race', implying a greater exclusiveness than the idea of succession, also enjoyed some currency:...[as seen] in one of the fragments preserved by Photios from Damaskios' *Vita Isidori*: 'the holy race lived apart, leading the blissful life which is pleasing to the gods devoted to philosophy and worship of the divine beings.'[177]

So, as Fowden has indicated, they were considered to be divine and to possess divine knowledge. As he points out, these men did not only use their intellectual prowess and divinity, those thoughts handed down from Plato, to be holy men, but their personal conduct was of utmost importance, which had its roots in Pythagorean devotion. Fowden also points out that Iamblichus is an example of one who was "a spiritual father and a man of supernatural powers, possessed of penetrating insight into [the] thoughts of others, and able to work miracles, summon spirits, and even soar aloft into the air and be

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[176] Fowden, 38.

[177] Ibid., 34.

transfigured with light when he prayed to the gods."[178] But this is not all that Iamblichus was. "That Iamblichus was also a more serious philosopher in the more traditional sense is evident from his surviving writings, and especially from the fragments of his commentaries."[179] Being both spiritually and temporally minded, Iamblichus demonstrated the balance that was desired in the pagan holy man.

One distinctive feature of the pagan holy man was the use of theurgy.[180] Theurgy is the attempt to gain oneness with the gods through a series of rituals and rites. Fowden writes that "the resulting state of divine possession, the culmination of the theurgic process, was among the most distinctive characteristics of the pagan holy man."[181] Theurgy needs some explanation. It is Platonic and Neo-Platonic in origin and practice. A very basic explanation comes from Dodds[182] and Anton. According to some of the basic Platonic and Neo-Platonic theology that I have elementarily explained in earlier chapters, everything emanated from the One in ontological emanations. The goal of theurgy is to climb back up that ladder of emanations to reconnect and have fellowship with the One, with the divine. Proclus, a fifth century Neo-Platonist, defines theurgy as "a power higher than all human wisdom, embracing the blessings of divination, and purifying the powers of initiation, and in a word, all the operations of divine

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[178] Fowden, 37.

[179] Ibid.

[180] Ibid., 38.

[181] Ibid.

[182] cf. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951).

possession."[183] One thing that Neo-Platonists, Iamblichus in particular, were very adamant about was that theurgy did not involve magic. According to Anton, Iamblichus tried hard to keep the balance between philosophy and religion. Anton also writes that even though Iamblichus was a proponent of theurgy, he "still went to considerable lengths in order 'to offer a rational justification even of theurgic ritual.'"[184] Some of his arguments in defense of theurgy being magic-free include a clear definition of magic. Again Anton writes that "magic aims at dealing with the physical powers of the universe, but is unable to affect spiritual communion with the gods, and hence it distorts law and harmony in order to accomplish the perverse use of natural forces."[185] So how did Iamblichus suggest that fellowship with the divine was attained? According to him:

> Indeed what, then, would hinder those who are theoretical philosophers from enjoying a theurgic union with the gods? But the situation is not so: it is the accomplishment of acts not to be divulged and beyond all conception, and the power of the unutterable symbols, understood solely by the gods, which establishes theurgic union.[186]

Anton explains these acts as referring to mastery over "stones, herbs, perfumes and sacred animals, for physical objects are related to the gods in either of three ways: ethereally, aerially, aquatically."[187] Once one has attained theurgy, the soul of that being

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[183] John P. Anton, "Theorgia-Demiourgia: A Controversial Issue in Hellenistic Thought and Religion" in Richard T. Wallis, ed., *Neoplatonism and Gnosticism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 17.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Iamblichus, *On the Mysteries.* Emma C. Clarke, John M. Dillon, and Jackson P. Hershbell, trans. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2003), 115.

[187] Ibid., 18.

can communicate and understand on a level much higher that a common, mortal mind. The levels of divine attainment differ between these ancient philosophers. What I hope to have communicated by this was a very elementary explanation of theurgy. Even though Apollonius was centuries gone by the time Iamblichus wrestled with these issues, the practice of theurgy was a core requirement for the ancient pagan holy man. During the time of Apollonius, even before theurgy was called thus, he had union with the gods, power over the earth, and communicated at a higher level. Just because he was alive before the formal practice of theurgy came about, does not discount him from having practiced the basic elements of theurgy.

Other evidences of the extension of this divinity were the things over which the pagan holy man had control. I will now unpack Brown's definition of a holy man and give examples. As quoted above, Brown describes a holy man as one who "gained power over the demons, and so over the diseases, the bad weather, the manifest disorders of a material world ruled by demons."[188] Also, says Brown, "a holy man is a man of power"[189] who helps the needy people of the area. Many times people could come from far to experience the healing power of a holy man. Healing was another job that holy men fulfilled. Especially in small villages, being this healer brought stability to communities often wracked by superstition and fear.[190] In contrast to being a beacon of healing, the holy man also held power of cursing. Attributed to Jacob of Nisibis, as taken from Theodoret's *Historia Religiousa* (quoted here from Brown), are many curses

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[188] Brown, 81.

[189] Ibid., 87.

[190] Ibid., 89.

including "[cursing] a Persian judge who had given an unjust judgment, so that a boulder exploded beside him."[191] Exorcism was also a job that holy men did. Brown again writes that "by exorcism, the holy man asserts the authority of his god over the demonic in the possessed."[192] Another very important qualification of being a pagan holy man was to have disciples; in Fowden's opinion this was their primary function.[193] From the perspective of a potential disciple, the choosing of a person to follow was a very important one. It may take years for a seeker of knowledge and truth to find the one man to follow. As a holy man, one could have as little as a handful or as many as hundreds of followers, but not all of them would be dedicated disciples. Fowden again writes that "as among the Pythagoreans, so among the followers of the Neo-Platonic sages, there were to be distinguished intimate disciples, and less committed 'listeners.'"[194]

Fowden gives some very specific geographical contexts for these pagan holy men. Peter Brown would not necessarily disagree, but he may caution against the broad nature of Fowden's geographical context. Where Brown would focus on Syria and the ancient near east, Fowden takes the broader approach that includes Rome, Athens, Asia Minor, Alexandria, and the area in close context with these cities. Part of Brown's conservative geography is because he considers Syria the origin of these holy men,[195] where Fowden, I believe, is covering a more broadly-traveled geography of these holy men, instead of limiting the geography to their origins.

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[191] Brown, 88.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Fowden, 39.

[194] Ibid., 39.

[195] Brown, 82.

One often-considered minor attribute of the pagan holy man is his state of wandering, not aimlessly, but generally from place to place, with the intent of imparting knowledge. Generally, this wandering resulted in the planting of philosophical or religious seeds from which adherence to the teaching and followers of the holy man would grow. The attribute of wandering is not found in all holy men, but can be identified in most of them.

In ancient education, very few progressed beyond the basic studies into the more rigorous (and expensive) fields of rhetoric, and more importantly for holy men, philosophy. Fowden writes that it required "leisure and money"[196] to be an intimate disciple of a holy man. One had to be able to be free from work to devote themselves fully to their master. Fowden observes that "most holy men certainly do seem to have come from prosperous backgrounds."[197] The great Neo-Platonist Porphyry[198] split people into groups of manual workers and those of intellectual affairs, and Eunapius writes that it is an "exceptional and noteworthy phenomenon"[199] to have an intellectual person who originated in poverty, and Fowden whole heartedly agrees with this. He writes that "the holy man's public *persona* was articulated primarily through the exercising of the functions and duties imposed on him by his social background."[200]

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[196] Fowden, 48.

[197] Ibid.

[198] cf. Porphyry, *On Abstinence from Animal Food.* Thomas Taylor, trans. (Whitefish, Montana: Kessinger, 2006).

[199] Fowden, 48-49.

[200] Ibid., 50.

Even though the holy man had a place in and derived his status from society, the duties of a holy man often made him a pariah in society. Brown writes that "in Roman society the holy man was deliberately not human. He was the 'stranger' *par excellence.*"[201] Because pagan holy men were bound first and foremost to the gods, sometimes their involvement in cults went against what the people were practicing. If the holy men were going to be an extension of divinity and be involved in the religious activities of the people, especially when the people were erroneously or irreverently conducting cultic practices, the holy men became the marginalized enemy. Fowden writes that "the Pythagorean tradition laid great emphasis on the sage's duty both to honor the gods himself, and to ensure that the public cults were conducted in a fit and becoming manner."[202] Changes in society and "spiritual narrowness" can be explained by seemingly socially disconnected holy men.[203] Christians eventually became unable to bear pagan hostility and began to marginalize them. This led to isolation and temporary withdrawal from society becoming more common, but one could not say by any means that this was the origin of societal withdrawal for pagan holy men.

One thing that really led to the holy man's marginalization was his call not to be involved in society. He had divine and eternal paths to follow, and if no one else wished to follow it, he still had to walk his path. Fowden writes, "Plotinus…took it for granted that the true philosopher would be uninterested in worldly affairs, authority, possessions…., [and] attitudes such as these were common among Plotinus'

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[201] Brown, 91.

[202] Fowden, 52.

[203] Ibid., 55.

successors."[204] Another thing that was cautioned against was intellectual pride. Themistios described several Neo-Platonists as such: "Their stubbornness is so great that they themselves believe, and firmly maintain to others, that whoever they praise is deserving of praise, while the praise given by those elegant and extravagant men [the rhetors] is underserved and unseemly."[205]

To be a pagan holy man was to find a balance between many things. One had to be involved in society, in manners of monitoring cultic rites and rituals, and educating his disciples. However, he also had to be able to be different and outside of the society. If he was divine, he would not and could not act as a member of the world. He had to seclude himself at times for teaching, communicating with the gods, and meditation. As noted above, such continual seclusion could breed hubris. A pagan holy man had to be intellectual and yet humble at the same time. Though the characteristics and requirements for an ancient pagan holy man seem rather varied and open, there were few who walked this path

II. The Christian Holy Man

The position and definition of the Christian holy man is very different in theory from the pagan holy man but rather similar in practice. Brown describes the Christian holy man as having a difficult and weighty job to accomplish: "The holy man carried the

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[204] Fowden, 54.

[205] Ibid., 56.

burden of making such a distant God relevant to the particularity of human needs. In his person, the acute ambivalence of a Christian God was summed up in a manageable and approachable form."[206] Now whether Brown took Jesus of Nazareth's claim of being the son of the so-called inapproachable God or not, it is still likely that Jews and Christians alike saw God that way. The Christian holy man can be divided into two sub-categories. The first is a more formal holy person, one usually either an apostle or disciple of Jesus or a later church writer or leader after the Apostolic Age had ended, and the second includes those to whom the unofficial call that Jesus put on the lives of all of his followers applies; the directive of the second group especially is to be holy and set apart from the world.[207] The Christian holy man developed long after the position of pagan holy men had been established. In the early days of Christianity the holy men were those who had walked with Christ and those who were essential in spreading his message for the first time. These include the disciples of Christ, *sans* Judas, and others like the missionary Paul and his companion Luke, the doctor. As earlier stated, in later centuries it applied to those who were bishops, teachers, and writers in the name of Christ and Christianity. David Levine, who is clearly influenced by Brown and Fowden, writes of the importance of holy men in early Christianity.

> This figure both participates in and influences central spiritual developments such as: the expansion of the early Byzantine church; the encounter of the pagan countryside with this new religious force. He personifies the holy, and is presented as aspiring to *Imitatio Christi*. The holy man was not only a spiritual or religious phenomenon, but also a social figure that exerted communal and political influence within the geographical area in which he functioned....'Healing, good advice...arbitration, plainspeaking, cursing and intersession, on behalf of

[206] Brown, 97.

[207] This is referring to the Christian layperson.

> individuals of the whole communities'; were all part of the holy man's activities.[208]

As Levine demonstrates, the Christian holy man had similar attributes as compared to the pagan holy man.

From the death of Jesus, as depicted by early Christians, his followers possessed supernatural powers imbued to them by the Holy Spirit of the Christian God. The disciples of Christ were sent out by him to perform miracles. Unlike the pagan holy men, the Christians did not receive their power from their patron gods but from Jesus himself or his Holy Spirit.[209] Jesus sent out his closest disciples to perform miracles. As noted in the gospel of Luke, "He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal."[210] After Jesus had ascended into heaven, the book of Acts shares more examples like the one above. Peter, arguably the closest disciple of Jesus, speaks to a lame man in Jerusalem and says to him, "I have no silver and gold, but what I do have I give to you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk."[211] According to Acts the man was healed. Another account from Acts including Peter tells that people "carried out the sick into the streets and laid them on cots and mats, [in order] that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered

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[208] David Levine, "Holy Men and Rabbis in Talmudic Antiquity" in Joshua Schwartz and Marcel Poorthuis, *Saints and Role Models in Judaism and Christianity* (The Netherlands: Catholic Theological University of Utrecht Press, 2004), 46.

[209] cf. Matthew 10:1, Luke 24:49.

[210] Luke 9:1-2.

[211] Acts 3:6.

from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed."[212]

Saul of Tarsus, later known as the Apostle Paul, the second founder of Christianity, also has many miraculous and supernatural events attributed to him. Not only was he involved with healing many physical ailments and removing malicious spirits, but he himself was bitten by a poisonous snake on the island of Malta. Luke records that "[the locals] were waiting for him to swell up or suddenly fall down dead. But when they had waited a long time and saw no misfortune come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god."[213] On that same island, Paul went and healed the fevered and dysentery-ridden father of the magistrate Publius. "And when this had take place, the rest of the people on the island who had diseases also came and were cured."[214] The results of these miracles were the same: faith in Jesus and conversion to Christianity.

Jesus, the founder of Christianity, set the example of having disciples. He chose twelve men and poured his thoughts, acts, and beliefs into their lives. Paul had disciples, and his disciples had disciples. Because emulating Christ was the goal of every Christian, the leaders all took on varying numbers of disciples or protégées. As with the pagans, it was important to pass on one's beliefs, experiences and wisdom to another generation. The major difference between Christian disciples and pagan disciples was their societal positions. Fowden's opinion, having been briefly mentioned earlier, is the following:

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[212] Acts 5:15-16.

[213] Acts 28:6.

[214] Acts 28:9.

> To become one of the intimate disciples of a holy man...required not just dedication, but leisure and financial security....Porphyry pointed distinguished the lover of wisdom...from all those whose calling involved them in manual labor or the world of affairs; and Eunapios makes clear that he regards any intellectual from a genuinely poor background as an exceptional and noteworthy phenomenon.[215]

The exact opposite is generally the case in Christian disciples. Especially early on, almost all of the disciples and apostles were very limited in their material possessions and usually relied on charities from their respective Christian followers and on monies earned by the minor trades that each possessed. This stems from the teachings of Jesus that dictate a life of humility, both contemplative and material. He called his followers to forsake what they have (possessions) and what they are doing (societal positions) to follow him. The gospel of Matthew records Jesus' words on the subject: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself...and follow me....What would it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul?"[216] Jesus saw material possessions as a hindrance and temptation; pagan holy men and philosophers saw them as necessary to being able to live a life of contemplation and discussion. Jesus and his disciples were about spreading their beliefs to all, and the pagans only to the intellectual elite.

The state of wandering, as with the pagans, does not apply to all Christian holy men, but certainly to many of the early ones. Jesus set the example for his followers by spending the last three years of his life wandering the villages and towns of ancient Israel, teaching about the kingdom of God. His disciples were largely responsible for spreading the message of Jesus in the same fashion: wandering and teaching. Most famous for this is Paul, who devoted his post-conversion life to traveling all across the Roman Empire

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[215] Fowden, 48-49.

[216] Matt. 16:24, 26.

with the stories of Jesus and the theologies that developed as a result of his life. Part of Paul's legacy is the large collection of letters that he wrote to the Christian communities far and wide that he had encountered on his journeys.

Education among Christian holy men is generally categorized in two historical phases. The earliest holy men, excluding Paul, were uneducated but relied on the spirit of Jesus to give them insight. The later Christian writers and leaders were usually very educated and well spoken.[217] Many primary source accounts from the first few centuries come from the well-educated Christian leaders. Education is one issue that Jesus did not explicitly deal with, so it makes sense that the Christian holy men that came after him would differ in their levels of educational experience. As the opposition to Christianity became more academic, second century and later church leaders deemed it necessary to be educated in order to be able to spread and defend the words and message of Jesus effectively.

Like the education standards among Christian holy men, the status of societal outcast was usually dictated by the regional political and religious fervor of the time. During the time of Jesus, he was very much a societal outcast. Many of his own people sought to take his life for a variety of reasons. The gospel of Mark records that "the chief priests and scribes were seeking how to arrest him by stealth and kill him."[218] Earlier in the same book, another plot is described: "And the chief priest and the scribes heard [Jesus criticism of their selling good in the temple] and were seeking a way to destroy

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[217] Examples are people like Eusebius and Lactantius, early church leaders from whom I quoted heavily in previous chapters.

[218] Mark 14:1.

him."[219] Whether people were protecting their religious traditions or they just disliked what Jesus said, many were in strong opposition to him. This included pre-conversion Paul whose primary goal was to eliminate all people claiming to follow Jesus. The canonical book of Acts describes his actions: "But Saul (Paul) was ravaging the church, entering house after house, he dragged off men and women and committed them to prison."[220] After Paul converted he, like Jesus, was a societal outcast in many places that he went. He was flogged and stoned many times, imprisoned on numerous occasions, and his life most likely ended with Nero's order of execution by decapitation. In the era of Constantine, Christianity held a high place in the societal norm. To be Christian did not put one in the same position of outcast that it did to Paul and many other early Christians. There were always people who took offense at and disliked Christianity, but the condition of societal outcast does not apply to all Christian holy men.

To summarize the two types of holy men, the Christian holy man tries to imitate Christ in whatever manner possible, and the pagan holy man is following the dictates of his religious order, deity of devotion, and teacher. Because pagan holy men were often extreme in their beliefs, it often led to them being a pariah to many. Because of the place that Christianity held during and after the time of Constantine's fictional Edict of Milan, Christian holy men were better equipped to combat their enemies.

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[219] Mark 11:18.

[220] Acts 8:3.

III. Apollonius as a Holy Man

Now that both the pagan and Christian holy man have been discussed and defined, it must be examined as to whether Apollonius and Jesus fit into their respective categories. Based on chapter one, drawing from Philostratus' account, Apollonius of Tyana fits the definition of a pagan holy man very well. He demonstrates the characteristics and traits as listed above based on the research and scholarship of Peter Brown and Garth Fowden. His supernatural powers were evident throughout the account of his life. From raising people from the dead, to transporting over large distances in a moment's time, to communicating with the deceased, and lifting his limbs out of hefty chains, Apollonius is recorded as having performed many supernatural acts and miracles. Both his close disciple Damis and the people from the towns he visited, all agree that he had supernatural power and used it for the betterment of others. As for taking disciples, the most faithful that he had was Damis from Nineveh. According to Philostratus, as explained through numerous examples in the first chapter of this paper, Damis not only accompanied Apollonius, but he is responsible for recording all of the speeches, travels, encounters, supernatural acts, and generally all that Apollonius accomplished. There were others who followed Apollonius, but none of them had the same impact and level of commitment as Damis.

As to the education of Apollonius, Philostratus describes his early life and his time in school at the temple of Asclepius. Apparently, Apollonius was rather intellectual even from a young age because his parents moved him around looking for a better education that challenged him. Chapter One recounted that Apollonius possessed "great

strength of memory and power of application."[221] As one reads the *Life of Apollonius* it is clear that his wisdom had its roots in a source more divine than temple school, possible in his paternal gifts given to him by the god Proteus. His knowledge of language and his mastery of communication were astounding. Also, his knowledge of literature was amazing and was aptly demonstrated in a scene when Apollonius met and talked with the spirit of Achilles. Apollonius' knowledge of the *Iliad* and its complicated history is revealed. The status that really brings Apollonius out from the hoards of religious fanatics was his ability and desire to teach but not condemn. He condemned actions but he taught people. He traveled all over the continent of Asia teaching and listening. Most encounters that he had involving people with whom he disagreed with began with Apollonius listening earnestly to his opposition's beliefs. He would then slowly deliver a compelling oration that always made all opposing arguments seem like foolishness. From the towns of Tyana and Ephesus to the lands of Egypt and India, Apollonius was well traveled and patiently and gracefully spoke his truths wherever he went, even when the emperor of Rome threatened his life.

IV. Jesus Christ as a Holy Man

I would now like to outline how Jesus of Nazareth fits into the category of a Christian holy man. There is only one attribute of a Christian holy man that could be argued as contrary to him and that is education. Even though the book of Luke describes

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[221] Philostratus, *Vol. I*, 15.

Jesus as very inquisitive and full of knowledge, there is no information as to where Jesus' received any education, though it is assumed that with his position of a rabbi he had some education. As to his supernatural powers, accounts of his life are full of them. He raised the dead,[222] caused the blind to see,[223] the deaf to hear,[224] the lame to walk,[225] the injured to be well, lepers to be clean,[226] and the possessed to be free.[227] He brought happiness and healing wherever he went. He filled minds with his words, hearts with his compassion, and stomachs with his provision. Claiming to be the son of the Most High God, supernatural powers came naturally to him. He is reported to have walked on water,[228] controlled weather,[229] and defeated Satan in a war of words during temptation and in death as a sacrifice. [230]

His legacy was continued by his doggedly devoted disciples. The number that he chose was twelve and he spent every waking hour with them.[231] All of the parables that he told to the masses he explained in detail to them.[232] He challenged them to use the

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[222] Luke 7:11-17.

[223] John 9:1-7.

[224] Mark 7:32-36.

[225] Matt. 15:30-31.

[226] Matt.., 8:2-3.

[227] Mark 1:23-27.

[228] Matt. 14:22-33.

[229] Mark 4:35-41.

[230] Matt. 4:1-11

[231] Matt. 10:1-4.

[232] Matt. 13: 18-23.

supernatural powers that came with faith in him.[233] He trained them to be the future leaders of his fledgling movement.[234] The most important thing that he did for their development was to lead them by example.[235] He did not ask them to do anything that he had not done or would not do. After his death, they led the cult of Christianity and spread it all across the Roman world.

His teaching life was as a wanderer. As the previous section in this chapter said, Jesus spent the three years of his life prior to his execution as a wandering teacher. He taught and performed miracles in each of the towns to which he came. His legacy is the teachings that he left as recorded by his disciples. Concerning his education, he had little formal education. As previously mentioned, it is assumed that he was trained as a rabbi, and as tradition depicts, Jesus was the son of God and thus needed no training. He is depicted as knowing and understanding all, which ultimately developed into the formal doctrine of the trinity, which states that Jesus is of the same substance as his father, the Most High God, and so he not only knew all but was involved in creating all.

V. Conclusions

One thing that I am not endeavoring to do in this paper is to prove or disprove Apollonius or Jesus as historical figures. That has been hashed out for centuries among

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[233] Luke 10:17-20.

[234] Matt. 28:19-20.

[235] Matt. 20:22.

much more learned and experienced scholars than I. The lengthy nature of chapter one is due to the need for the reader to comprehend the scope Apollonius' life as told by Philostratus. Having written so much about his travels, acts, and words I can much more smoothly move into the fourth chapter which deals with the thesis of this paper: Apollonius was indeed a holy man of Late Antiquity. The standards by which I measure this were not of my own deduction but by those laid out by Brown and Fowden. Having arrived at the conclusion that Apollonius was indeed a holy man makes his life so much more important. He was among the first pagan holy men to live during and after Jesus and the beginning of Christianity. His arguments, unlike many after him, did not lean toward the underlying goal of defeating the arguments of Christianity.

Apollonius' life was pure and unadulterated. Because of his pure adherence to traditional paganism, he was lifted up, arguably with biased goals, as the paragon of Roman virtue and tradition. Chapter three elucidated Apollonius' role in an argument that was not his own. Even Eusebius, who abhorred Hierocles' vaunting comparison of Jesus and Apollonius, did not discredit Apollonius' life or value. Knowing the deep and crucial differences between pagan and Christian holy men, it seems foolish that Hierocles would exalt Apollonius in comparison with Jesus (or any other Christian holy man for that matter). Both were operating on such vastly different presuppositions with incomparable agendas that such comparison was of little point. It demonstrated that traditional pagan Romans that were grasping on anything that they could take hold of in order to stay afloat in the torrent of Christianity that was sweeping the empire. Based on Philostratus biography, Apollonius' life reflected his ideals and philosophical principles. Unfortunately, Apollonius was pulled down from his unadulterated position of purity and

honor to be debased as fodder in an ugly war of words. Despite the third century tarnishing of his reputation, I hope that I have been able to bring the true Apollonius of Philostratus to the forefront and to have solidified his categorization as a pagan holy man of Late Antiquity.

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