

The Life of Apollonios of Tyana

Flavius Philostratus

Introduction: A curious feature of the long line of philosophers who claimed descent from Pythagoras of Samos (c. 560—490 B.C.) is the persistent report that many of them, Pythagoras included, possessed more-than-human wisdom. This reputation was certainly enhanced by the few secretive Pythagorean brotherhoods or monasteries which kept themselves under a perpetual blanket of silence, so that hardly anything firsthand became known of their practices. What little information we have today has come from outsiders, and in later times during the Roman Empire, these tended to be romanticists whose reliability was rarely taken seriously.

One of the most famous in this succession of Pythagorean philosophers was a man named Apollonios, of the Greek city of Tyana in the Province of Cappadocia, in what is today eastern Turkey. Although he lived in the second half of the first century A.D., we have little direct information about Apollonios, except for this biography by Philostratus of Lemnos, written much later, i.e., around A.D. 218.

The reason for his writing is noteworthy in itself. When the emperor Caracalla was on his way to capture the territories to the East, he stopped at Tyana to pay tribute to "the divine Apollonios," even donating the funds to build a temple to him there. And Caracalla's mother, Julia Domna, commissioned one of the professional writers in her entourage to publish a fitting account of Apollonios' life.

This conjunction of events suggests that the title of Philostratus' work might best be translated: "*In Honor of Apollonios of Tyana*," for the entire account from beginning to end consists of carefully constructed praise, using every device known to this well-trained writer. In other words, just as Caracalla's architects built a shrine for Apollonios out of marble, one of his court rhetoricians built a temple out of words—for the same purpose, i.e., to celebrate Apollonios' God-like nature and inspire reverence for him. Thus, Philostratus' narrative is a virtual catalogue of every rhetorical device known to the professional sophistic writers of that time: sudden supernatural omens, minidiálogos on the favorite topics of the day, colorful bits of archeological lore, plenty of magic, rapid action scenes, amazing descriptions of fabled, far-off lands, occasional touches of naughty eroticism, and a whole series of favorite "philosophical" scenes: the Philosopher lectures his disciples on being willing to die for truth; the Philosopher is abandoned by his cowardly disciples; the Philosopher confronts the tyrant; the brave Philosopher is alone in prison unafraid; the Philosopher victoriously defends himself in the court, and so on. On the other hand, Philostratus included enough accurate historical details

to give his writing the ring of genuine truth. But mixed in with the real people and places are all sorts of imaginary "official" letters, inscriptions, decrees, and edicts, the whole bound together by an "eyewitness" diary. Finally, to give it the proper supernatural flavor, he has included numerous miraculous and supernatural occurrences: dreams, pre-vision, teleportation, exorcism and finally, vanishing from earth only to reappear later from Heaven to convince a doubting disciple of the soul's immortality.

Guiding Philostratus at each point in constructing his narrative was the reputation of Apollonios as a divine/human Savior God. This understanding of him comes out most clearly in the great speech supposedly composed by Apollonios for his self-defense during his trial before the emperor Domitian. Actually written by none other than Philostratus, it is a beautiful example of an *encomium* on Apollonios' life.¹ Forming the high point of Philostratus' whole narrative, it is the moment when Apollonios at last reveals his true supernatural colors:

"It is thought that the order (*kosmos*) which is dependent upon God the Creator includes all things in Heaven, in the sea, and on the land, in which there is equal participation of men—but according to Fortune. Then there is also another order (*kosmos*) dependent upon the good man which does not transgress the limits of Wisdom; and you yourself, O King, say that it needs a man formed like a God (*theō eikasmēnos*). . . . Now I have been thought worthy of much honor in each of the cities which needed me (because I) performed such things as healing the sick, making more holy those being initiated into the Mysteries or offering sacrifice, rooting out pride (*hybris*), and strengthening their laws" (VIII. 7.7). In short, "I do all things for the salvation of men" (VIII. 7.10).

This and many other passages reveals the fact that Philostratus wished to portray Apollonios in the divine/human Savior of the human-race conception, which we can also see in Philo of Alexandria's portrayal of Moses, or, for that matter, in many of the early Christian portrayals of Jesus Christ. Obviously Philostratus was not alone in this view of Apollonios, if we may judge from the circumstances which brought his writing into being.

There is evidence that veneration of Apollonios as a Savior God continued long after Caracalla and Philostratus. About a hundred years later, the provincial governor of Bithynia wrote a tract lambasting the Christians' Jesus and his followers while praising Apollonios and his followers, which moved the Church Father Eusebius to write a scathing reply (*Against Hierocles*). During the fourth century when the Emperor Julian the Apostate tried to reinstitute pagan worship, after the Empire had become officially Christian, one of the sophists at his court named Eunapius wrote a book, called *The Lives of the Philosophers*, in which he described Apollonios as someone

1. On the meaning of *encomium*, see pp. 250-52.

"who was not merely a philosopher but somewhere between the Gods and man. For he was a follower of the Pythagorean doctrine and he did much to publish to the world the more divine and effective character of that philosophy. But Philostratus of Lemnos completed a full account of Apollonios, though after he had written a life (*bios*) of Apollonios he should have called it 'The Visit of God to Men'" (*Lives of the Philosophers* 500).

Near the beginning of the fifth century A.D., we find another reference to Apollonios in the *Scriptores Historiae Augustae*. In this curious mélange of fact and fiction concerning the Roman emperors, we read that the Emperor Severus Alexander (ruled 222-235) kept in his private palace chapel several statues of the deified emperors, and certain other "holy souls," including Apollonios of Tyana, Jesus Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus! (*Severus Alexander* xxix.2). Further on in this work, in the account of the Emperor Aurelian (ruled 270-275), this is recorded:

We must not omit one event that enhances the fame of a venerated man. For it is said that Aurelian did indeed speak and truly think of destroying the city of Tyana, but Apollonios of Tyana, a sage of the greatest renown and authority, a philosopher of former days, the true friend of the Gods, and himself even to be regarded as a supernatural being, as Aurelian was withdrawing to his tent, suddenly appeared to him in the form in which he is usually portrayed and spoke to him as follows, using Latin in order that he might be understood: "Aurelian, if you wish to conquer, there is no reason to plan the death of my fellow citizens. Aurelian, if you wish to rule, abstain from the blood of the innocent. Aurelian, act with mercy if you wish to live." Aurelian recognized the countenance of the venerated philosopher and, in fact, he had seen his portrait in many a temple. And so, at once stricken with terror, he promised him a portrait and statues and a temple and returned to his better self. This incident I have learned from trustworthy men and read over again in the books in the Ulpian Library and I have been the more ready to believe it because of the reverence in which Apollonios is held. For who among men has ever been more venerated, more revered, more famous, or more holy than that very man? He brought back the dead to life, he said and did many things beyond the power of ordinary men. If any one should wish to learn these facts, let him read the Greek books which have been composed concerning his life (by Philostratus). I myself, furthermore, if the length of my life shall permit and the plan meet with his favor, will (put into Latin) the deeds of this great man, even though it be briefly, not because his achievements need the tribute of my discourse but in order that these wondrous things may be proclaimed by the voice of every man (*Deified Aurelian* XXIV, trans. D. Magie, Loeb ed.).

Philostratus' work has often been compared to the Greek and Roman novels of his day, and with good reason. As Elizabeth Haight observed, "[Philostratus wrote] with full knowledge of Xenophon's romantic biography of Cyrus the

Great as the ideal ruler, of the Greek novels of war and adventure, of the Greek love romances . . . and of the Christian *Acts* with a saint for a hero. [In view of all these possibilities] Philostratus chose to present a *theios anēr*, a divine sage, a Pythagorean philosopher, as the center of his story. To make the life of his hero interesting and to promulgate his philosophy, he used every device of the Greek and Latin novels of the second and third centuries. And the credulity, the discourses, the aspirations of his characters belong as much to the whole first three centuries of the Empire as [just] to the age of the Severi [when he wrote]. Philostratus has written out of the restless cravings of that time another romance to help men escape from the burden of their fears to life's fairer possibilities."²

1.1. It is said that Pythagoras consulted with the Gods and learned from them how they are pleased by men and how they are angered, from which he later taught about Nature. Others, he said, only made guesses about the supernatural and gave out contradictory opinions concerning it, whereas Apollo agreed to come and counsel with him as he really is, but that Athena did not so grant or the Muses or other Gods of whom the appearances and names men do not yet know. So whatever Pythagoras would disclose, his disciples considered as law and honored him as one who came from Zeus (*ek Dios hēkōn*). And he ordered them to keep silent about the supernatural (*ho theios*), for he told them many divine and incredible secrets which it were scarcely possible to keep unless they first learn that even being silent is speech (*logos*).

Moreover they say that the great Empedocles of Acragas trod the same path of wisdom, when he said, "Farewell! Now I am unto you an immortal God—no longer mortal"³ . . . There are many other histories of those who philosophized according to Pythagoras' manner which are not pertinent to my present task. Rather I am eager to proceed with the narrative (*logos*) I have set myself to complete.

1.2. For the practice of Apollonios was akin to theirs, indeed more supernatural (*theiōteros*) than Pythagoras was his attainment of wisdom and overpowering of tyrants. But since he lived neither in well-known ancient times nor in our own days, men do not yet know of the true Wisdom that he cultivated in a philosophical and healthy way. Instead now this and now that is praised of the man, while others, since he associated with Babylonian magi and Indian Brahmins and Egyptian wise men, consider him a sorcerer and accuse him of seeming to be wise through trickery, since they understand poorly. For Empedocles and Pythagoras himself and Democritus associated with such

2. E.H. Haight, *More Essays on Greek Romances* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1945), p. 111f.

3. For the whole quote, see above p. 7.

soothsayers and uttered many supernatural truths without being lured into the forbidden art. Plato also traveled to Egypt and mixed in with his own teachings many things said by the prophets and priests there, like a painter who adds colors to his sketch, but he was not thought to be addicted to magic even though he was resented for his wisdom more than all men.

Neither should Apollonios' frequent presentiments and foreknowings be suspected as that kind of wisdom, or then even Socrates will be suspected because of the things he would foretell due to his supernatural aide (*daimōn*), and Anaxagoras too because of the things he used to prophesy. For who does not know of the time when Anaxagoras was at the Olympic Games during the dry season and he came into the stadium with a sheepskin on, thus predicting rain, which it soon did, or of the time he foretold that a certain house would fall down and it did? Or what of his predictions that day would turn into night and that stones would fall out of the sky around Aegospotami—foretelling truly? Yet the same people who attribute these feats to Anaxagoras' wisdom deny that Apollonios' foreknowledge came from the same wisdom and claim that he did these things as if by magical tricks. Therefore, I feel I ought to do something about the widespread ignorance of Apollonios by accurately relating the times when he said or did something and the kinds of wisdom as a result of which he succeeded in being considered both supernatural and a divine being (*daimonios te kai theios*).

I have collected some of my source material from cities where he was revered, other material from temples whose rituals at that time were in a state of ruin and were reformed by him, other stories from things people said about him, and the rest from his own letters, for he corresponded with kings, sophists, philosophers, the citizens of Elis and Delphi, with Indians and Egyptians concerning the Gods, customs, morals, and laws—in whatever way someone might be sinning he straightened him out. But the more accurate source material I gathered in the following way.

1.3. There was a man named Damis, not unwise, who used to live in the ancient city of Nineveh. Having joined Apollonios in order to learn philosophy, he kept a record of his journey and says he himself shared it, as well as his opinions (*gnōmai*) and arguments (*logoi*) and whatever he said in the nature of prophecy (*prognosis*). A relative of Damis later brought the notebooks of these as yet unknown memoirs (*hypomnēmata*) to the knowledge of the Empress Julia. Now I happen to be a member of the circle around her—for she indeed welcomes and approves of all the rhetorical exercises—and she commanded me to rewrite these discourses (*diatribē*) and to be careful in the narrative (*apaggelia*) of them for it was narrated by the Ninevite clearly enough but not very well. I have also read the book of Maximus of Aigai which described all the doings of Apollonios at Aigai, and, finally, I am in possession of a *Testament* (*diathēkē*) written by Apollonios himself.

From these sources it is possible to learn how divinely inspired his philosophy was. But do not pay any attention to Molragenes who wrote a four-part book against Apollonios, since he was ignorant of many things concerning the man. As I said, therefore, I have gathered these scattered sources and taken some care in combining them together. But let the work be to the honor of the man about whom it is written, and for the benefit of those who love learning, for indeed they might learn something here that they do not yet know.

There are many noteworthy features to this preface. First, notice the succession of philosophers back to the divine Pythagoras, who "came from Zeus." Second, observe the defensive tone Philostratus adopts when he comes to Apollonios. His narrative will prove that Apollonios was *not* a swindler or a fake. Finally, notice to what lengths Philostratus goes to assure the reader of the high accuracy of his account. This is the sort of thing educated readers would expect. Now Philostratus is ready to proceed with the first main event: the birth of Apollonios. The reference to Homer is to the *Odyssey* IV.417-18.

I.4. The home of Apollonios then was Tyana, a Greek city in the land of the Cappadocians. His father had the same name and he came from an old family of the original settlers, richer than others there even though it is a generally wealthy country. While his mother was pregnant with him the shadowy figure of an Egyptian God appeared to her, namely Proteus, who can change his form at will according to Homer. She, not frightened at all, asked him to whom she would give birth. "Me," he said. "But who are you?" she asked. "Proteus," he replied, "the Egyptian God." Why should I describe the wisdom of Proteus to those of you who have heard the poets, how changeable he was and always different and difficult to catch, both knowing and it seems fore-knowing all things? But keep this thought of Proteus in your mind, especially when, as the story (*ho logos*) progresses, it shows Apollonios foreknowing even more than Proteus and superior to the many perilous straits and hardships he encountered, especially in the very moment he seemed to be trapped.

I.5. It is said that Apollonios was born in a meadow near the temple which was recently dedicated to him there. And the manner in which he was born should not be left unknown for when the hour of birth had drawn nigh to his mother, a vision came telling her to go to this meadow and pick some flowers. Well, she had no sooner arrived when she fell asleep lying in the grass, while her maidservants wandered over the meadow picking flowers. Then some swans which dwelt in the meadow came and formed a ring around her while she slept and as is their custom suddenly flapped their wings and honked all at once, for there was a light breeze blowing across the meadow. She jumped up because of the sound and gave birth, for any sudden panic will cause birth to take place even before its time. The inhabitants of that area say that at the

same time she was giving birth a bolt of lightning seemed to strike the earth and then bounce back upward into the air where it vanished. By this sign the Gods, I believe, revealed and foretold that Apollonios would become superior to all things earthly, even drawing near to the Gods and soon.

I.6. Now they say that there is near Tyana a water of oaths to Zeus, a fountain they call Unquenchable (*Asbamaion*) where the water rises up cold but it bubbles like a boiling cauldron. This water is favorable and sweet to those who keep their oaths, but Justice is at hand for those who have sworn falsely, for it actually attacks eyes and hands and feet, and they are instantly stricken by swelling of the body and emaciation and they are unable to go away being held right there next to the fountain groaning and confessing the false oaths they have sworn. Now the local people say that Apollonios is a son of this Zeus, although the man calls himself the son of his father Apollonios.

I.7. When he grew old enough to learn letters, he was already demonstrating a good memory and power of concentration. Moreover, he could speak pure Attic Greek for he was not influenced by the speech of the Cappadocians. Moreover, all eyes were constantly turned toward him and he was admired by the hour.

Now when he was fourteen years old, his father took him to Tarsus to Euthydemus the Phoenician. This Euthydemus was a good rhetorician and began to teach him. Apollonios liked his teacher well enough, but he began to find the character of the city disgusting and not helpful for philosophical interests, for more than anywhere else the people of Tarsus craved luxurious living and joke about everything and constantly shout insults at each other. They are as worried about fancy clothes as the Athenians about wisdom. The river Kydnus runs through their city and they sit along its banks like a lot of chattering waterbirds, which is why Apollonios once wrote to them in a letter, "Stop getting drunk on water."

Thus, after asking his father, Apollonios changed to another teacher at Aigai, a town nearby, where it was peaceful as befits the study of philosophy and where he found a more highminded atmosphere. There was even a temple there to Asklepios, where Asklepios himself is manifested to men.

Next, Philostratus will proceed to the customary "precocious brilliance" motif (cf. the similar theme in Philo's *Life of Moses*, pp. 254-56, and Luke 2:41-52).

The various philosophical schools of thought are named in order to emphasize the breadth of Apollonios' youthful education. On the other hand, we should not overlook the fact that these are all *Greek* philosophical positions. This is only the first of many hints that this entire writing will have to do primarily with the dissemination of Greek thought, Greek morals, and Greek wisdom through the efforts of Apollonios. In other words, "Greekness" is here presented as a kind of religion, "good news," if you will. In fact, it is called just that a few sections later, see p. 216.

Philosophizing together with him were Platonists, Chrysippists, and Aristotelians. He also attended to the arguments of Epicurus for not even them did he overlook. But those of Pythagoras he understood with a certain indescribable wisdom. His teacher in the Pythagorean doctrines was not very good, however, nor did he live philosophically but instead constantly gave in to his gluttony as well as to the sexual urge, forming his life according to Epicurus. He was Euxenos from Herakleia in Pontos and he knew the doctrines of Pythagoras the way birds learn things from men, for birds can say "Hello!" and "Good luck!" and "God bless you!" and such like, not understanding what they are saying nor with any feeling of concern for men, but simply because of their trained tongues. Apollonios, however, just as young eagles fly beside their parents while their feathers are soft and are cared for by them in flight, later on are able to mount up, flying above their parents, especially if they notice them greedily skimming along at ground level on the scent of a victim, so also Apollonios remained by Euxenos while he was a child and was led by him through the steps of argument. But when he had advanced to the age of sixteen, he eagerly rushed onward toward a life like Pythagoras, being given "wings" for it by Something Greater. Not that he ceased loving Euxenos, but he asked his father to give him a place outside the town where there were delicate gardens and fountains. "You live there in your way," he said to Euxenos, "but I will live according to the way of Pythagoras."

1.8. Euxenos realized that Apollonios was set on a lofty ambition and he asked him how he was going to start out. "The way doctors do," Apollonios replied; "by cleaning out the intestines, they enable some not to get sick and they heal others." Having said this, he stopped eating food made from animals, arguing that meat was dirty and coarsened the mind. Instead he used to eat dried fruits and fresh vegetables, arguing that whatever the earth herself gives is clean. And he said that although wine is a clean drink, coming to men from so cultivated a plant, nevertheless we should not drink it since it causes the mind to riot by darkening the ether (*aithēr*) in the soul. When he had finished cleaning out his intestines in this fashion he took to going barefoot as his "high fashion" and also put on linen clothing, abstaining from clothing made out of the hair or skin of animals. Moreover he let his hair grow long and began living in the temple of Asklepios. Those who lived near the temple were astonished at all this and even the God Asklepios once told the priest how happy he was that Apollonios was a witness of his miraculous healing of the sick at the temple. People from all over Cilicia and elsewhere gathered at Aigai upon hearing stories of him, and the Cilician saying, "Where are you running to? To see the boy?" began to circulate, even becoming known as a proverb.

Philostratus now tells two stories which demonstrate Apollonios' uncanny ability to detect false oaths (cf. I.6 above). Then he produces a dialogue supposedly revealing the depth of Apollonios' wisdom at this period.

1.11. He used to philosophize as follows about not exceeding moderation in the matter of sacrifice and temple gifts. Once when many were gathered at the temple not long after the rejection of the wicked Cilician nobleman, he began putting questions to the priest.

"Well, then," he said, "are the Gods just?"

"Indeed, by all means most just," answered the priest.

"Really? And intelligent?"

"Who is more intelligent than the Gods?" the latter replied.

"And do they know the affairs of mankind, or are they ignorant of them?" continued Apollonios.

"But that is especially where the Gods have the advantage over men," the priest answered, "for men, because of weakness, do not even know their own affairs while the Gods are granted knowledge both of ours and their own."

"All excellently said, O Priest, and most true. Since, therefore, they know all things, it seems to me that one who comes before the Gods with a good conscience about his life should pray the following prayer: 'O Gods! Give to me what you owe me!' For good things are owed to holy people, are they not, O Priest, but to those who are wicked the opposite. And the Gods do well when they find someone healthy and abstaining from wickedness to send him on, crowned not with crowns of gold, to be sure, but all good things. But if they see people spotted with sin and ruined, they will abandon them to Justice (*dikē*) so much do they detest them, particularly since they dare to invade temples in an impure state."

And at once turning his eyes toward the statue of Asklepios he said, "O Asklepios, Thy philosophy is unspoken and natural to Thyself in not allowing wicked people to come here even though they offer Thee all the wealth of India and Sardinia. For they do not intend to honor Heaven (*to theion*) by offering and dedicating these gifts but to bribe Justice, which ye Gods will never allow, being perfectly righteous." Many such things as this Apollonios used to philosophize in this temple while he was still a young man.

I.12. The following story (*diatribē*) deals with his life at the temple in Aigai. The Cilicians were being ruled by an arrogant man who was also evil in the ways of love, and when word came to this man of the beauty of Apollonios he dropped the business he was doing—which was conducting a lawsuit in Tarsus—and dashed off to Aigai saying that he was sick and had need of Asklepios. Approaching Apollonios who was walking alone he said, "Introduce me to the God." But he replied, "And why do you need an introduction if you are good (*chrēstos*)? For the Gods welcome earnest men even without introductions." "By God that is true, O Apollonios," said the other, "but the God has made you his friend, and not yet me." "Well, as for me," said Apollonios, "noble goodness has been my introduction, being observed by me as much as is possible for a young man, so that I am both the servant and companion of Asklepios. If you also are concerned for noble goodness,

advance confidently before the God and pray for what you wish." "By God I will," said the other, "if I can pray to you first!" "And what," said he, "would you pray to me?" "Only what must be asked for of the beautiful, namely, we pray them to share in their beauty and not to begrudge their youthful charm." As he was saying this, he affected an effeminate, moist-eyed manner, even undulating his body like the notorious pervert that he was. Apollonios glared at him angrily and said, "You are insane, you filthy scum!" When the governor heard this he not only became enraged but even threatened to cut off his head. Apollonios just laughed, shouting, "O fateful Friday!" naming the third day after that one. And sure enough on that Friday public executioners killed that arrogant man on the highway for conspiring against Rome with Archelaus, the king of Cappadocia. This and many such things are written by Maximus of Aigai, who was so well regarded as an orator that he was considered worthy of writing the imperial letters.

Apollonios' father dies and Apollonios goes home to settle his estate. He ends up giving away his share to relatives, since he had little need of money. At this point Philostratus also informs us that Apollonios decided never to have anything to do with sex either.

1.13. . . . Although Pythagoras was commended for saying that a man ought not to have sexual intercourse with any woman except his own wife, Apollonios said that this principle was intended for others by Pythagoras, but that he would neither marry nor ever participate in sexual pleasures. In this way he surpassed even Sophocles who said that he had escaped an uncontrollable and cruel master only when he had reached old age. But Apollonios through virtue and prudence was never overcome by lust even in his youth. Although he was still young, he controlled his bodily passion and completely mastered its mad craving.

Apollonios next enters on the customary Pythagorean vow of total silence for five years. Nevertheless, says Philostratus, his eyes and gestures were so eloquent that they alone sufficed to make his meaning clear, and he tells a story to illustrate this.

1.15. Now he spent some of the period of silence in Pamphylia and some of it in Cilicia, and even though he walked about among such luxury-loving peoples as these, he never spoke nor was induced even to mutter. Whenever he chanced upon a city filled with bitter wrangling, for there were many that used to bicker about their frivolous entertainments, he would step forward and show himself and, by expressing through his facial expression or with his hand the punishment about to strike them, he would instantly stop all disorder and they would fall silent as if at the Mysteries.

Of course, it isn't much to restrain people who are beginning to quarrel about dancers and horses, for those who are arguing about such things become embarrassed and get themselves under control and quickly come to their senses if they so much as see a genuine man. But a city in the grip of famine is not easy to communicate with in patient and persuasive speech in order to end the anger. However, for Apollonios even his silence was sufficient for those in such condition.

For instance, he once came to Aspendus in Pamphylia—this city is built on the river Eurymedon, the third largest of those there—where pea-vines were on sale and the people were eating them and anything else they could scavenge for food because the powerful men had shut up the grain and were holding it in order to sell it outside the country. A mob filled with people of all ages had seized the mayor and were just about to burn him alive even though he was clinging to the statues of the Emperors. At that time these statues were more feared and offered better safety from reprisals than even the statue of Zeus at Olympia, for there was a statue of Tiberius, of whom they say that a man was believed to commit treason against him simply because he hit his own slave while the latter happened to be carrying a silver drachma in his pocket with Tiberius' image upon it!

Anyway, Apollonios went up to the mayor and asked him by a hand sign what this was all about. He said that *he* had done nothing wrong but was being ill-treated along with the people, and that if he did not succeed in explaining the problem he would die with the people. Thereupon Apollonios turned to those standing there and beckoned that they must listen. They not only fell silent out of astonishment at him, but also laid their torches on altars that were there. Regaining his confidence, the mayor said, "Such-and-such and so-and-so"—naming many names—"are the real causes of the famine now upon us, for they have taken away the grain and are keeping it in different parts of the country." The citizens of Aspendus began to urge each other to go out to their estates, but Apollonios shook his head not to do this, but rather to summon those at fault and to obtain the grain from them with their consent.

When they arrive a little later, he all but breaks out in speech against them, so much does he suffer from the tears of the people—for children and women had gathered, and the elderly were groaning as if they would die of hunger at any moment. But honoring his doctrine of silence he writes the punishment down on a clay tablet and gives it to the mayor to read aloud. This was the punishment: "Apollonios to the corn merchants of Aspendus: The earth is mother of us all for she is just. But you are unjust since you have made her mother to you yourselves alone. If you will not cease, I will not permit you to stand on her." They were so terrified by these words that they filled the market place with grain and the city came alive again.

After the vow of silence was completed, he journeyed to "the great city of Antioch" (about 50 km. southeast of Cilicia). While there, Philostratus gives us this description of a "typical day" in Apollonios' life there.

I.16. At the rising of the sun, he would perform certain rites by himself while he explained only to those who had trained in silence for four years. The after these things, at a suitable time if the city were Greek and the sacred ritual familiar, calling the priests together, he would philosophize concerning the Gods and set them straight if, perchance, they had deviated from the accepted ritual ordinances. But if the customary rituals were barbarian and strange, known only in that place, then Apollonios would investigate those who had established them and on what occasions they had been established and, upon ascertaining these things, he would seek to find ways in which he might improve them or suggest something wiser. Then he would hunt up his associates and command them to ask questions about anything they wanted to, for he said that philosophers needed at earliest sunrise to commune directly with the Gods, later to talk about the Gods, and after this to pass the time examining human affairs. After speaking with his companions and having enough of such fellowship, he would stand and spend the rest of the time talking to the crowd, not before noon but whenever possible right at the midpoint of the day. And when he felt he had carried on sufficient dialogue, he would have himself smeared with oil, given a massage and throw himself into cold water calling the warm public baths "man's old age."

A little after this, Philostratus gives the following description of Apollonios as a public speaker.

I.17. He would not give out a narrow, subtle discussion, nor talk on and on, nor did anyone hear him use the question-and-answer method like Socrates, as if he were ignorant, nor instruct his pupils like the Peripatetics. Rather, as if delivering divine truth, he would say when discussing, "I know . . ." and "It seems to me . . ." and "Where are you going?" and "It is necessary to know that . . ." And his sayings were short and hard as steel, authoritative words that went straight to the point. Indeed, his words sounded as if they were the ordinances of a king.

Once a heckler asked him why *he* never asked about anything. "Because," said he, "when I was a little boy I asked questions, but now I must not ask but teach what I have found out." "How, then, O Apollonios, will the wise man (*sophos*) speak?" he asked again. "Like a lawgiver," he said, "whatever the lawgiver has convinced himself about he must give as commandments to the people." This is the way he seriously discoursed while in Antioch, and he converted even the most vulgar people to himself.

I.18. Now after these things the plan occurred to him to make a longer journey, for he wanted to visit the Indian people and the wise men among them who are called Brahmans and Hyrcanians. He said that every young man ought to travel and seek foreign lands. An additional benefit would be the Magi of Babylon and Susa, for he would also learn their ideas on the way.

So he made his decision known to his followers, who were seven in number. But they all began trying to convince him to do other things so that he might somehow be drawn away from this intention. "I have been led by the advice of the Gods," he replied, "and have revealed my decision. I was testing you to see if you had the strength to do whatever I did. But since it is obvious you are too faint-hearted, stay well and philosophize," he said. "As for me there must be journeys. May Wisdom and my Guardian Spirit lead me!"

After saying that he departed from Antioch with the two servants whom he had inherited, one who could write quickly and the other elegantly.

We are here introduced to the first of several occasions when the disciples around Apollonios prove to be recalcitrant, cowardly and thick-headed. In fact, one suspects that this is actually a narrative trick by Philostratus to make Apollonios' bravery and determination stand out all the more sharply.

At any rate, Apollonios turns eastward toward India. This great journey Apollonios makes in stages. He first travels northeast to pick up the great trade routes, eventually coming to the ancient city of Nineveh. There he finds Damis who decides to join him on his trek as his disciple. It is Damis' notebooks that Philostratus allegedly is relying upon for most of his material. The first city they come to is the fabulous city of Babylon. However, Apollonios is not very impressed. Furthermore, as it turns out, it is the Babylonians who rejoice at the "good news" that a Greek sage has appeared.

I.27. As soon as he arrived at Babylon the official in charge of the great city gates learned that he had come for the sake of knowledge (*hyper historias*). He held out a golden statue of the king, which, if anyone does not bow down before it, he is not allowed to enter. Now this was not necessary for an emissary from the Roman Emperor, but anyone coming from one of the barbarian nations or just to learn about the country was disgracefully arrested if he did not first worship the statue. Such indeed are the ridiculous duties barbarians give their officials.

Now when Apollonios sees the statue, "Who," he says, "is that?" When he hears that it is the king, he says, "This man whom you worship will acquire a great reputation if he should be praised by me for being noble and good." And so saying he walks through the gates. The official is astonished at him and begins to follow and, taking hold of Apollonios' hand he—through an interpreter—asks him his name, his family, what profession he followed and his purpose for visiting. Writing all this down in a book along with a description of his clothing and appearance, he orders him to wait there (I.28) while he runs off to men whom they call "The King's Ears." Describing Apollonios he says that he neither desires to worship the king's statue nor seems to be anything like a human. They command Apollonios to come honorably and without doing anything violent. When he is present the eldest begins to question him as to why he would despise the king.

"I have not despised him," said Apollonios, "yet!"

"You might despise him?" asks the other.

"I certainly will," says Apollonios, "if, when I meet him, I find him to be neither noble nor good!"

"Indeed! And what gifts do you bring him?" When he mentioned Courage and Righteousness and other such Virtues, "Because," asks the other, "he does not have them?"

"Certainly not!" says Apollonios, "but so that he learns to use them, should he have them."

"But surely by using them," says the other, "he gained back the kingdom which you see after it was lost to him and restored this his house—something neither simple nor easy."

"And how many years have passed since he regained his power?"

"We are beginning the third year," says he, "some two months already." At this, Apollonios says, with his customary determination to uphold his own view, "Mr. Bodyguard, or whatever it is proper to call you, Darius, the father of Cyrus and Artaxerxes, ruled these domains for sixty years, I believe, and when he suspected that the end of his life was near, it is said he sacrificed to Righteousness, saying, 'O Mistress, or whomever you may be, as if he had long since desired Righteousness and even yet did not know her nor considered that he possessed her, for he educated his sons in such ignorance of her that they battled against each other, and the one was wounded while the other killed by his brother. But now you already consider this king to be equal, even though he does not know how to sit on the royal throne and you think he combines all virtues and you praise him, although it is you who would benefit, not I, if he were to become better.'"

At this the barbarian glanced at his neighbor and said, "What luck! One of the Gods leads this man here, for when a good man associates with a good man, he will make our king better, more moderate and gentler. I can see it in his appearance." And so they ran to spread the good news (*euangelion*) to all that a man was standing at the gates of the king who was wise and Greek and a good advisor.

Apollonios stays with the King of Babylon more than a year, which provides Philostratus with the opportunity to work in all sorts of anecdotes, including numerous rather pedestrian philosophical dialogues. The following are typical.

I.38. Once when the king showed him the tunnel which crossed under the Euphrates, he asked, "What do you think of this marvel?" Apollonios made light of the wonderful construction saying, "It would be a marvel, O King, if you walked on foot through a river as deep and impassable as this one is." And when the king pointed out the walls of Ecbatana and said they were a dwelling place of the Gods, he replied, "For the Gods it is not a dwelling

place at all. Whether of true men, I do not know; the Spartans have no walls of any kind around the city where they dwell."

Another time after the king had decided a certain lawsuit between some villages and was boasting to Apollonios that he had carefully listened to the lawsuit for two whole days, Apollonios remarked, "You certainly are slow to find out what is just." Once, as vast amounts of tax money were pouring in from his subjects, the king opened his treasure room and showed Apollonios the money, tempting him to desire wealth. But he was not impressed with anything he saw, saying, "To you, O King, this is money. To me, garbage." "What then is the best use I may make of it?" he asked. "By spending it," he said, "for you are King."

Eventually, Apollonios and Damis set off for India with the king's blessing. Book II opens with some strange geographical information. In fact, most of Philostratus' geographical references are quite inaccurate. By "Caucasus" mountains he might be referring to the mountain range lying along the east side of the Tigris River, called the Zagros Mountains. These mountains he had to pass over on his way to India. The real Caucasus Mountains are far to the north and lie on an east-west line between the Black Sea and the Caspian.

II.4. As they were passing over the Caucasus Mountains, they say they saw men eight feet tall, who were black, and others, when they crossed the Indus River, who were ten feet tall. But during the journey to the river they saw the following thing worth telling. They were going along at night by the light of the moon, when suddenly the ghost of a hobgoblin rushed upon them, changing from one horrible shape into another and even becoming invisible. But Apollonios recognized what it was and he shouted curses at the goblin and commanded those with him to do the same, for this is the remedy for such an attack, and the ghost took to flight in the shape of a bird, as spectres often do.

II.5. (The next day) as they were crossing over the very highest peak of the mountain range and going slowly since it was so steep, Apollonios began to discuss the following with Damis:

"Tell me," he said, "where were we yesterday?"

"On the flatlands," Damis replied.

"And today, O Damis, where are we?"

"In the Caucasus Mountains," he said, "unless I have completely forgotten myself!"

"Were you down rather low, yesterday?" he asked again.

"That," said the other, "is not worth asking! For yesterday we were traveling down through the hollow of the earth, but today we are up next to Heaven."

"Are you sure then, O Damis," he said, "that yesterday the journey was low but today it is high?"

"Certainly," said the other, "unless I'm crazy."

"How do you think the roads differ from each other," asked Apollonios "or what is better to you today than yesterday?"

"Well, yesterday I was walking where there were many people," said he, "but today, where there are few."

"What?" replied Apollonios, "Is it not possible, Damis, by turning aside from the thoroughfares in a city to walk where there are few people?"

"That's not what I said," he replied. "Yesterday we journeyed through villages and people, but today we have climbed up into a somewhat empty and sacred region, for you heard the guide say the barbarians consider it the home of their Gods," and as he said this, he gazed up at the peak of the mountain.

But Apollonios brought him to what he had been driving at from the beginning: "Can you tell me, Damis, what sort of communion with the supernatural there is if you walk close to Heaven?"

"None," he said.

"And yet surely you should now, having stood upon a mechanism so high and divine as this mountain, with new clarity expound teachings concerning Heaven and the sun and the moon, which you probably think you can touch with a pole standing this close to them!"

"What I knew yesterday about the supernatural," Damis replied, "I also know today. A new thought concerning it still has not hit me."

"Then, Damis," he answered, "you must still be low down, and have received nothing from the height, but you are as far from Heaven as you were yesterday. Thus what I asked you in the beginning was reasonable after all, only you thought it was a foolish question."

"Well, I certainly thought, Apollonios, that I would be wiser when I went down from this mountain, because I've heard that Anaxagoras of Klazmenion examined things in Heaven from Mount Mimas in Ionia and Thales the Milesian from Mount Mykale near his home, and they say some use Mount Pangaïos for an observatory and others Mount Athos. But I myself, having now gone up on a height greater than all of these, am going down nothing wiser."

"Nor were they," said Apollonios, "for such vistas display a brighter Heaven and bigger stars and the sun rising out of the night, things already known to shepherds and goatherds. But in what way God cares for the human race and in what way he rejoices to be served by it, what true virtue is and what righteousness and moderation are, Athos will not show to those who climb it, nor the Olympus esteemed by the poets, unless the soul itself discerns them. And if it, pure and uncorrupted, can 'touch' these things, I would say it soars up much higher than this old Caucasus peak!"

From this point on, until Apollonios and his companions arrive at the imperial Indian city of Taxila, "the greatest city in India," and King Phraotes (a successor

of King Porus who had fought Alexander the Great), Philostratus' narrative begins to read like the *National Geographic Magazine* as he describes the interesting regions and strange animals they encountered. Such "travelogues" were just as popular in Greco-Roman times as in our own and Philostratus plays this favorite theme to the hilt.

Before long, Apollonios arrives at another large mountain reputed to be the shrine of the Indian version of the Greek God Dionysos, and this allows Philostratus to discuss the conflicting claims made regarding the two Dionysoses, the Indian and the Greek. Then they finally reach the Indus River and see herds of elephants. A small boy riding an elephant provides Apollonios with an illustration for a tirade against slavery. Philostratus then offers some information of his own, and inserts a little treatise on different kinds of elephants, their uses in warfare, their incredible longevity, types of tusks, and how affectionate they are toward their young. This leads to a whole series of anecdotes telling of fierce animals' instinctive tender care for their young. Then Philostratus begins to describe the Indus River (about one kilometer wide where they cross), its periodic flooding, its similarities to the Nile, speculates as to why both India and Egypt (thought to be on the two edges of the earth) are peopled by dark-skinned races, and so on.

They finally arrive at Taxila, the royal city, "about the size of Nineveh," where they are welcomed by the king, Phraotes. Apollonios' first interest is in the monuments to the famous battle between Alexander the Great and the earlier Indian king, Porus. Alexander had defeated Porus, but found him such a gallant opponent that he returned his kingdom to him as a tribute to his bravery. When news of this astonishing gesture reached the Greek homeland, it caused widespread comment and resulted in a general curiosity about this Indian king for whom Alexander had shown such admiration. Thus, Philostratus pauses to recount a string of anecdotes about Porus revealing his character and wit.

II.21. My story (*ho logos*) will not let me pass by in silence what they write about this Porus. Once when Alexander was about to cross the Indus River and attack him and some were advising Porus to make allies of certain kings on his eastern boundary beyond the Hyphasis and the Ganges Rivers, saying that Alexander would never attack a coalition of all the Indians drawn up against him, Porus replied, "If the loyalty of my people is such that I cannot be saved without allies, then it were better that I should not rule!"

Another time when someone announced to him that Alexander had captured Darius the Persian king, he remarked, "Darius may have been king, but he wasn't a man!"

When the elephant groom had decked out the elephant upon which he was about to do battle, he said, "This one, O King, will carry you." Whereupon Porus replied, "I, rather, will carry him—if I still am the man I used to be!"

Advised that he should make sacrifices to the Indus River so that it would not accept the Macedonian rafts nor be easily crossed by Alexander, Porus said, "It is not right for those who can use arms to rely on magical curses."

After the battle when he seemed even to Alexander to be divine and beyond human nature, one of his relatives said, "If you had paid homage to him when he crossed over, O Porus, you would not have been defeated in battle nor so many Indians killed or yourself wounded." "But I heard that Alexander cherished honor above all," said Porus, "and I realized that if I abased myself, he would consider me a slave, whereas if I fought him, a king. And I thought his esteem worth more than his pity, nor was I deceived, for by representing myself such as Alexander saw, I both lost and gained everything in one day."

Such are the things they tell of this Indian, and they say he was the handsomest of all the Indians and taller than anyone since the Trojan men, but that he was quite young when he fought Alexander.

When Apollonios finally meets King Phraotes, he is surprised to find him living as ascetically as a Pythagorean philosopher despite his great wealth. They soon become close friends, as Phraotes tells Apollonios how young Indian boys are made into philosophers, while Apollonios helps him solve a difficult legal dispute. Following a very unphilosophical, enormous banquet, and an interminable debate concerning the effects of heavy drinking on the art of divination, King Phraotes sends Apollonios on his way toward the Brahmin sages living not far away.

This gives Philostratus the opportunity to resume his "travelogue," and so the reader hears about the great river Hyphasis. Many marvelous sights are to be seen along its banks: unicorns, cinnamon groves, pepper trees tended by trained apes, corn growing twenty feet high, fields of enormous beans, sesame, and millet, as well as other unnamed exotic fruits "sweeter than all the others the seasons bring." But most exciting of all was a dragon hunt that our travelers happened to see. Philostratus briefly digresses to inform the reader of the numerous varieties of dragons in India. For example, there is the small black marsh dragon not more than sixty feet long. Then there are the plains dragons, silvery, and "as fast as the swiftest river." But the real monsters were the mountain dragons. They had golden scales, eyes of fiery stone, bushy beards, could spit fire and made a horrible, brassy, clashing noise when they burrowed under the earth. This beast is so fearsome everything stays clear of it, although there are fabulous riches and magic charms inside its head for those who catch it. Thus the Indians have devised a secret method of capturing it, says Philostratus, and he proceeds to describe it.

III.8. They sew golden letters on a scarlet cloth and place it in front of its hole after placing a sleep-charm upon the letters so that they will overcome the irresistible eyes of the dragon. And they chant many forbidden mysteries over the letters which will cause it to stretch its neck out of its hole and sleep poised over the letters. Then the Indians fall upon the dragon lying there, striking its neck with axes, and when they have cut off its head, they ravage it for the stones inside, for they say hidden inside the heads of the mountain dragons are stones in the shape of flowers flashing forth every color in the

rainbow and having a mystical force like the ring they say Gyges had which could make him invisible. But frequently it catches the Indian with his axe and secret art and carries him back into his burrow, all but shaking the mountain down. These are also said to live in the mountains around the Red Sea and they say they hear them hissing terribly and going down to the water and far out into the deep. How long these beasts live is impossible to know and unbelievable if I did say. This is what I know about dragons.

After traveling about a week, Apollonios and Damis reach the "heart of India" and the sacred mountain whereon the sages live, which the latter regarded as the "navel of the land"—i.e., the exact center. The travelers were met on the road by the sages' personal envoy, a youth who was "the blackest Indian of all" (III.11), who invites Apollonios up to the palace of the sages, asking the other to wait below.

The days following are spent learning about the fabulous qualities of the mountain, e.g., automatic robot tripods serving different dishes at meal time, large stone jars containing rain or winds and clouds which the sages release when the farmers need them, the mysterious weapons the sages have with which to defend their mountain fortress, and so forth. Just as marvelous is the daily life and religious ritual of the eighteen sages. Apollonios is astonished, for example, to find statues not only of Indian and Egyptian Gods but also of the older Greek Gods, Athena Polias and Apollo of Delos. He is gratified to see that the main part of their worship was devoted to the sun, to which they sang praises at noon and at midnight while suspended in midair several feet off the ground. Naturally there were no bloody sacrifices of any sort. Each day began with exercises followed by rubbing with a heat-producing ointment, and then a dip in a cold pool. After this, the rest of the day was passed in philosophical debate, settling the disputes of kings who came for advice, and healing the sick and afflicted.

Such well-thumbed philosophical topics as "knowing oneself," the nature of the soul, transmigration of souls, of what the cosmos was composed, whether there is more land or water on the earth, and so on, are related by Philostratus. The general tenor of these discussions is indicated below.

III.18. Thereupon he asked another question, namely, whom did they think themselves to be? "Gods," came the answer. When he asked why, the reply was, "Because we are good men." This answer seemed to Apollonios to be so full of sound education that he said it later about himself in his defense before the Emperor Domitian.

Philostratus periodically interrupts the philosophical discussions in order to liven things up. He first has a local king appear who exaggeratedly slanders the Greeks. Naturally Apollonios leaps to the defense and in the ensuing argument, the king is easily defeated and then reduced to tears. Of course, the whole thing is artificial, for Philostratus is just shrewdly playing upon his readers' prejudices.