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Philostratus, Perceptions of Foreign Ethnicity, and Severan Cultural Geography

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Philostratus, Perceptions of Foreign Ethnicity, and Severan Cultural Geography

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Philostratus, Perceptions of Foreign Ethnicity,

and Severan Cultural Geography

by

Christopher Stephen Bingley

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2019

Professor David Daniel Phillips, Chair

During the first two centuries C.E., provincial Greek elites reacted to their new status as denizens of the Roman Empire in part with the literature they produced, often grouped under the heading of the Second Sophistic. The tail end of this period, in which a new dynasty of emperors ruled and underwent a crisis of legitimacy (193-235 C.E.), was markedly different in the identity of the imperial family and as a result the composition of Greek literature. This distinction, however, has not been part of the scholarly approach to the study of this period's literature, which instead focuses on the traits that it shares with earlier sophistic literature. During this later period, the debate over what constituted proper "Romanness" acquired renewed cultural importance especially because of the Severan imperial family's outsider status, Syrian and African background, and decree of universal citizenship in 212 C.E. As an intimate of the imperial family and prominent Greek intellectual in Rome, Philostratus witnessed these changes firsthand. By

reading the diverse works of Philostratus together, I argue that the corpus reacts to contemporary cultural change by portraying foreign identity as disruptively ambiguous. My analysis illuminates the distinctive features of this period, including the cultural status of Greece and Hellenism, the incorporation of outsiders, and the nature of Roman identity in times of political change, if not outright crisis.

The dissertation of Christopher Stephen Bingley is approved.

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Thank you to my friends, family, colleagues, and teachers, all of whom have offered guidance and support in seeing this dissertation completed.

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INTRODUCTION

Lucius Flavius Philostratus (c.170s-late 240s C.E.)[1] lived during what is commonly considered a period of resurgence in Greek literature. Philostratus himself coined the term "Second Sophistic" in his *Lives of the Sophists* (Βίοι Σοφιστῶν/*Vitae Sophistarum*, henceforth *VS*) to describe a period of intellectual activity that was distinct from but also a continuation of classical Greek rhetoric and sophistry.[2] The first through early third centuries C.E. indeed witnessed a resurgence in Greek writing, rhetoric, and education. In contrast to cultural trends of the classical Greek world, however, Second Sophistic Hellenism manifested in the cultural production of Greek-speaking Roman citizens. Their literary output simultaneously looked to the classical Greek past as worthy of praise and to the Roman present; Rome was often a source of ambivalence for Greek imperial literature as these authors sought to understand the empire and their place in it.

The Philostratean corpus ought to be studied through this dual lens. Yet, particularly because he casts himself as the endpoint of this Greek intellectual tradition, scholarship has tended to discuss Philostratus as the final figure of the Second Sophistic. As a result, Philostratus' corpus is framed as continuous with the Greek literature of the century prior, with emphasis placed on its various classicizing or "sophistic" features, and the content of Philostratus' works is often inadequately situated within its particular historical context. Scholars have variously examined Philostratus' works as looking backward in the way that they fit into

[1] The *Suda* states that Philostratus flourished during the reign of the emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) and died during the reign of Philip the Arab (244-249). *Suda* s.v. Φιλόστρατος, φ 421 Adler.

[2] See below and the Chapter 1 section, "The Classical Ideal: Sophists and Foreign Despots," for the differences between the First and Second Sophistics in Philostratus' imagining. In this dissertation, I use the term "classical" to denote how Philostratus and other imperial Greek writers use the ancient Greek past to distinguish it from more recent imperial history, a definition that does not always overlap with the Classical Period of Greek history as it is conventionally considered (480-323 B.C.E.).

long-standing literary traditions or represent the past. This scholarly emphasis comes at the expense of attention to the more immediate socio-political environment in which Philostratus wrote. Too often, scholars have studied Philostratus in a historical vacuum, and the resulting conclusions tend to overlook differences in context between Philostratus at the beginning of the third century and earlier authors of the Second Sophistic.

As a corrective to this excessive focus on Philostratus' place within the so-called Second Sophistic, this dissertation draws connections between the corpus and its contemporary cultural and political worlds. I argue that Philostratus was a product of a period that differed in important respects from the preceding two centuries. Specifically, the Severan dynasty (193-235 C.E.) brought profound cultural change not only in the identity of the imperial family itself but also in the policies and ideologies of the Roman administration.[3] The Philostratean corpus reflects and reacts to a number of the important cultural developments of the early third century. Both the direct and indirect influences of the Severan context on the corpus suggest new avenues for its analysis.

This dissertation illuminates some of the connections between Severan culture and the content of Philostratus' work, in particular highlighting the heightened significance of ethnic and cultural identity. Politics at the imperial center created a culture of discontent and uncertainty. The identity of the imperial family – ethnically Phoenician, African, and Syrian – as well as its fascination with Hellenic and Near Eastern cultures provided a new and distinct context for the composition of Philostratus' works. The power exercised by Syrian women within the imperial

[3] See Anthony R. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London: Routledge, 2002), for how the African identity of Severus, a native of Leptis Magna in North Africa, influenced some of his policies. See Michael Grant, *The Severans: The Changed Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 1996); Clare Rowan, *Under Divine Auspices: Divine Ideology and the Visualisation of Imperial Power in the Severan Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), for an overview of this period and the major historiographical issues.

family during this period may have been especially influential in shaping Philostratus' geographical conceptions of the Severan Roman Empire and the place of Greece – particularly Athens – within it.[4] Furthermore, Caracalla's edict of 212 extending Roman citizenship to every free man across the empire contributed to a crisis over cultural identities.

These features of the Severan period, moreover, have influenced the ways in which its literature has been interpreted. Scholars such as Maud Gleason and Adam Kemezis have focused on historical works written in Greek under the Severan regime and how they reflect anxieties about political change.[5] Building on this scholarly interest in how Severan politics affected contemporary literature, this dissertation explores the identity of the Severan family as well as wider cultural trends at this time. In this way, the Philostratean corpus illuminates not only contemporary feelings about the imperial regime but also about ethnic and cultural identities. Overall, the works of Philostratus represent the changing nature of ethnic identity in the wake of Severan policy and the dynasty's administration.

This dissertation, therefore, focuses broadly on the category of "foreignness" in its analysis of the Philostratean corpus. I argue that Philostratus' presentation of foreignness and the ways in which he formulates ethnic and cultural identities reflect their Severan context of production. First, Philostratus uses constructions of foreignness to comment on the Roman Empire and Greek culture's place within it. Throughout the corpus, foreign identity is set in opposition to Greek and Roman identities. This interplay of identities allows Philostratus to establish and to thematize the problematic nature of foreign identity, including the spectrum of

[4] See Barbara Levick, *Julia Domna: Syrian Empress* (London: Routledge, 2007), 145-63, for an overview of the Syrian women's roles during the later Severan dynasty. Cf. Julie Langford, *Maternal Megalomania: Julia Domna and the Imperial Politics of Motherhood* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 84-112.

[5] Maud Gleason, "Identity Theft: Doubles and Masquerades in Cassius Dio's Contemporary History," *Classical Antiquity* 30 (2011): 33-86; Adam Kemezis, *Greek Narratives of the Roman Empire Under the Severans: Cassius Dio, Philostratus and Herodian* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

foreigners' ability to participate in mainstream culture. The ambiguous and shifting cultural allegiance of foreigners reflects a broader change in third-century identities.

Second, the Philostratean corpus portrays and suggests the distinctive features of the author's immediate context by relating it to different versions of the past. Through direct and indirect comparisons between the past and the present, the Severan context retains special influence on how the sophist depicts ethnic and cultural identities. Most significantly, Philostratus shows that the cultural trends of the classical past as well as the first two centuries C.E. contrast significantly with the ambiguous nature of contemporary Severan culture. Primarily because of his varied representation of foreign influence across the corpus, Philostratus suggests that the nature of ethnic identity in the Severan empire is unstable and uncertain. This complex representation of contemporary ethnicity suggests the uncertainty around particular Severan political events and broader issues of identity.

In sum, Philostratus' own presentation of foreignness and his perception of living in changing times offer important avenues whereby to approach his writings as well as the Severan context more generally. My analysis of the corpus sheds light both on Philostratus' context of composition and on the status and perception of foreigners across the Roman world. The category of foreignness emerges as a means to interrogate the unique features of this period, including the cultural status of Greece and Hellenism, the incorporation of outsiders, and the nature of Roman identity in times of political change, if not outright crisis.

In this introduction, I first lay out how Second Sophistic literature has been broadly studied and how this approach has affected Philostratean scholarship. Scholars have often leaned too heavily on Philostratus' own definition of "sophistic" literature to study what was in fact an evolving and historically specific cultural phenomenon. For in addition to the idea of reclaiming

an idealized classical Greece, these texts offer direct and indirect reactions to the Roman state. I propose applying this sort of analysis more fully to the works of Philostratus. By reading the sophist's works within their context of composition under the Roman state directed by the Severans, I show that in addition to the texts' classicizing tendencies, they also directly and indirectly react to contemporary cultural change.

Next, I introduce the primary theoretical framework with which I interrogate the discourse of ethnic identity in the literature of the Severan period. The nature of ethnic identity in the early third century was in many ways no different from the early Roman period, but the advent of the Severan dynasty transforms the way in which formulaic expressions of race and ethnicity can be understood. My analysis will show that Philostratus' presentation of foreign ethnicity reflects the unstable nature of identity during the Severan period.

I then discuss scholarship on Philostratus' corpus more specifically. Scholarship on Severan literature involves situating texts in their contemporary realities, in which the personal experience of authors influences the portrayal of the present. For this dissertation, I embrace a more robustly historicizing approach to Philostratus. Born in Athens and often referred to by his moniker "the Athenian,"[6] Philostratus makes significant use in his writings of his presence in Rome, his knowledge and interactions with the Severan imperial regime, and his experience of "foreigners" and "foreignness." All of these factors informed his intellectual concerns and his literary output. Philostratus frames his own sophistry as well as that of his contemporaries as a means to participate in Greek culture. But he also shows apprehension toward foreigners in Rome, whether they are members of the intellectual elite, like him, or part of the imperial regime. Finally, I outline the dissertation's main claims and chapter organization.

[6] *SIG*^{3} 878, an inscription from Olympia, calls Philostratus ὁ Ἀθηναῖος. See Graham Anderson, *Philostratus: Biography and Belles Lettres in the Third Century A.D.* (London: Routledge, 1986), 3 n. 6.

I. Greek Imperial Literature: The Second Sophistic & the Image of Rome

Scholarship has both embraced and stretched the limits of Philostratus' conception of the Second Sophistic. Some scholars have used Philostratus, primarily the *VS*, to understand the nature of sophistry and other Greek intellectual activity during the first two centuries C.E. that the author describes. Reacting against this somewhat limited treatment of sophistry, scholars in the 1980s and 1990s began to trace changes in Greek culture apart from those in rhetoric and literature, showing an overarching trend of "resistance" to the Roman state. More recent scholarship, primarily that of Tim Whitmarsh, adds nuance to Greek cultural production by complicating the relationship between the categories "Greek" and "Roman." Because Severan culture must also be viewed through a similarly complicated prism of identities, I embrace this scholarly trend in order to analyze categories of identity and to offer a more historical analysis of the corpus' contemporary context.

The *VS* has been used to great effect as a source for accessing sophistic activity during the first two centuries C.E. Overall, the Romanized context of the Mediterranean prompted a renewed emphasis on Greek *paideia*. In many cases, the resurgence in Greek rhetoric, philosophy, and literature was a means for Greeks under the Roman regime to recover the glory of their classical past. In the first and second centuries C.E., Greek authors articulated their identity with reverence for the classical Greek past and an often-veiled critique of Roman culture and administration.[7] Thus, in his classic study, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece* (1858), J. W. Donaldson (continuing K. O. Müller's *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur bis*

[7] E.g., Pausanias, a geographer and author of the *Description of Greece* (Ἑλλάδος περιήγησις), wrestled with the presence of Rome in the physical landscape of the Greek mainland as he sets out to record his travels there. Throughout this work, Pausanias shows a preference for the classical past, but intermixes these older elements with those associated with the emperor Hadrian and his monumental building programs. In this way, Pausanias grapples with what he views as Roman interference with the Greek world. See K. W. Arafat, *Pausanias' Greece: Ancient Artists and Roman Rulers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jaś Elsner, "Pausanias: A Greek Pilgrim in the Roman World," *Past & Present* 135 (1992): 3-29.

auf das Zeitalter Alexanders (1841)), characterizes the first and second centuries as a period of resurgence in Greek rhetoric due to the patronage of Roman emperors. The reign of Hadrian and his partiality for Athens especially ushered in a new period of Greek rhetoric and philosophy.[8] Donaldson begins his discussion of this period with the orator Dio Chrysostom (c. 40-115 C.E.) but ultimately frames this section around Philostratus' *VS*.[9]

More recent scholarship, most notably that of Glen Bowersock, has followed suit in treating sophistry as a distinct category of intellectual activity.[10] Graham Anderson describes sophistic activity as a cornerstone of Greek culture during this period, drawing connections between various Greek writers and across genres.[11] Though avoiding a strict chronology, Anderson tends to embrace the scheme presented by Philostratus, who draws direct links between the "first" and "second" sophistics.[12] D. A. Russell also uses Philostratus as a source of anecdotal evidence for the various activities of Greek declaimers, setting out to answer the question of what constituted the actual activity of rhetors.[13] Finally, Ewen Bowie has defined the phenomenon broadly, showing that the archaizing Atticisms of Second Sophistic literature

[8] K. O. Müller and J. W. Donaldson, *A History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, Vol. III (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1858), 141-45.

[9] Ibid., 145.

[10] Glen Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

[11] Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2005). See also Christopher P. Jones, "The Survival of the Sophists," in *East and West: Papers in Ancient History Presented to Glen W. Bowersock*, ed. T. Corey Brennan and Harriet I. Flower (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Department of the Classics, 2008), 113-25.

[12] Some scholarship is more cautious in articulating this type of continuity. See, e.g., Daniel Richter, *Cosmopolis: Imagining Community in Late Classical Athens and the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), who situates the literature of the Second Sophistic as overall the work of constructing identity. For Richter, it is important to look at the context of these works when evaluating them, and why in particular they link themselves to the Greek intellectuals of fifth- and fourth-century B.C.E. Greece. For both contexts, he argues for the presence of similar cosmopolitan thought about establishing a cohesive *oikoumenê*.

[13] Donald Andrew Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 74-86.

extended beyond linguistic traits to the literature's content, including subject-matter, dramatic date, and theme.[14]

Yet, other scholarship argues for the strong influence of Rome on imperial Greek literature, showing that sophists did not necessarily work in isolation. So, while Russell argues that Greek declamation in the first and second centuries was not concerned with contemporary events, often instead looking back to the classical past for its subject-matter, the role of Rome has been reconsidered in other scholarship on the Second Sophistic. Simon Swain's work typifies scholarship that examines how Second Sophistic literature frames itself in relation to Rome.[15] In his evaluation of several texts written in Greek during this time, Swain discusses their construction and maintenance of "Greekness." What all sophistic texts superficially share is the purism of the Greek language and reference to the classical past; Swain, however, shows that with these texts – particularly those of educators – resistance was a sophistic cultural trend.

Another trend in scholarship has pushed back on this characterization of Second Sophistic literature, exemplified most notably by the work of Tim Whitmarsh. He shows that reactions to Rome are not an easy way to group these sources together, and the problem with Swain's strategy in particular "is that literary texts are not themselves necessarily univocal."[16] Instead, sophistic texts construct "Greek" and "education" (*paideia*) in different ways, although all relate identity and status to a venerable past. Whitmarsh problematizes the concept of Rome in the Greek imagination on a power-culture polarity, in which Greek "culture" (literature,

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[14] See, e.g., Ewen Bowie, "Greeks and their Past in the Second Sophistic," *Past & Present* 46 (1970): 3-41. See also Russell, 106-28, who discusses how Greek declamation's classical subject-matter and setting could comment on the present but was in general "escapism" (109).

[15] Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism, and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford University Press, 1996).

[16] Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire: The Politics of Imitation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 3.

Hellenic identity) was forever at odds with Roman "power" (politics, the imperial household). Ultimately, however, he argues that "Hellenism embodied in paideutic culture was not a reflex reaction to the oppression of an indigenous group by a foreign oppressor, but was a shifting terrain over which identities were created, contested, denied, impugned, crushed, reaffirmed."[17] Greek elites participated in both imperial politics and local cultural life, and it is important to recognize *why* they might wish to set these activities in opposition.

The image of Rome remains prominent in the study of the Second Sophistic, but the relationship between Rome and Greece is clearly dynamic. While Romanization and Hellenization have been central to the study of this period as Roman imperial elites interacted with local Greek notables, these trends have been complicated and questioned in recent scholarship. For example, Greg Woolf shows that in the provinces, Romanization was not uniform nor was it always imposed from above. According to Woolf, local elites in the provinces, specifically Greece and Gaul, embraced elements of "Roman" lifestyle for their own benefit.[18] Others have similarly cast the relationship between Romanization and Hellenization as fluid, especially for how it affected Romans and Greeks alike.[19]

Such studies warn that Roman interaction with Greece, especially with local elites, was not a top-down relationship. Clifford Ando characterizes this interaction as one in which "[m]uch agency was exercised by provincials, whose private institutions came to echo the patterns of

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[17] Ibid., 23.

[18] Greg Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek: Culture, Identity and the Civilizing Process in the Roman East," in *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 40 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 116-43; Greg Woolf, *Becoming Roman: The Origins of Provincial Civilization in Gaul* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[19] See esp. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Rome's Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). And for an opposing top-down view of the same period, see Antony J. Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

social and structural differentiation that received normative if not originary articulation in public documents of the empire and its constituent communities."[20] Furthermore, Laura Nasrallah uses a similar theoretical frame to expand the limits of the Second Sophistic.[21] She places provincial Christian authors of the second century within their Roman and Greek cultural contexts to show how they embodied hybrid identities. More broadly, Nasrallah points to the way in which authors could articulate multivalent identities in the Roman world. Rather than treating regions or identities monolithically, Nasrallah highlights the often-competing identities of these Christian apologists writing within the Greek Second Sophistic, something not adequately addressed in scholarship for many Second Sophistic authors.

Recent work on the Second Sophistic, therefore, has distanced itself from solely using Philostratus as a frame to study Greek sophistry and imperial literature. Scholars like Whitmarsh and Nasrallah have shown that what Philostratus claims are the most important aspects of Greek sophistry, such as its classicizing elements and reactions to Rome, are not exclusively what characterized Greek intellectual activity during this period. Philostratus himself, however, is still often treated as emblematic of these literary trends, resulting in a heavy scholarly emphasis on the classicizing features and reaction to Rome in the corpus. By contrast, by pushing the claims of Whitmarsh and Nasrallah into a slightly later period, I argue that the works of Philostratus can be discussed more productively when included in the category of "Severan literature."

[20] Clifford Ando, "Imperial Identities," in *Local Knowledge and Microidentities in the Imperial Greek World*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 45. For an in-depth discussion, see the longer monograph, Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

[21] Laura Salah Nasrallah, *Christian Responses to Roman Art and Architecture: The Second-Century Church Amid the Spaces of Empire* (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

II. Philostratus and Severan Literary Culture

a. Severan Literature

This dissertation embraces Philostratus' corpus as specifically Severan in style and content. The Severan period marks a major change in the imperial regime, and scholarship has focused on how the new political and cultural circumstances may have affected Greek literature produced in this period. Because of major political change, scholars have paid special attention to situating imperial literature within each author's historical reality. My analysis of the corpus touches upon the specific issues of ethnicity and the characterization of the Other and how they might relate to their contemporary cultural context. This dissertation shows that the political instability and the changing circumstances of the Severan period often had a direct bearing on how the sophist portrays ethnicity and foreignness.

The scholarly conception of "Severan literature" embraces a similar analytical approach; overall, the political context of its production has given this literature certain characteristics distinct from that of the preceding period. Tim Whitmarsh has downplayed the imperial influence on literary production during this period, emphasizing instead the impact of Christianity as well as the trend toward the creation of "large-scale, synthetic works that attempt to capture and define intellectual traditions."[22] By contrast, scholars like Maud Gleason and Adam Kemezis show that political circumstances had a direct influence on the content of literature during this period. I find their arguments compelling. Gleason has convincingly shown that Dio Cassius' contemporary history of political instability reveals an acute sense of instability in identity, especially for the empire's senatorial elite. Dio's personal observation of *damnatio* and usurpation throws all semblance of social status into disarray:

[22] Tim Whitmarsh, "Prose Literature and the Severan Dynasty," in *Severan Culture,* ed. Simon Swain et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 50.

> [T]he disguises, disappearances, and hermeneutical puzzles in Dio's contemporary history constitute a response to the precariousness of social privilege and personal identity in Dio's period, an instability to which the mutilated portraits of the empire's most privileged individuals bear tangible witness.[23]

The "miniature narratives" of Dio's anecdotes are based largely on his own observations and popular rumors. The importance of identity for the empire's political elite, and the ability for identity to be falsified, come across in Dio's own personal *seeing* and *hearing* in the constructed narrative.

Adam Kemezis takes a similar approach to the historical works of Dio Cassius, Herodian, and Philostratus' *VS* and *Life of Apollonius* (Τὰ ἐς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον/*Vita Apollonii*, henceforth *VA*).[24] He shows that the narrative worlds constructed in these texts function as a mirror to and commentary on the contemporary political reality. Therefore, external reality influences but does not determine the content of these narratives. Kemezis further argues that the instability of imperial succession is precisely the reason that history-writing returned to prominence during this period. By looking at several different authors, Kemezis illuminates the multiple ways in which Greek identity could be articulated in the political and cultural contexts of the early third century. These historians recognized the profound political and social change of their contemporary world, something often conveyed in the narrative worlds of their works.

Scholars have traced the distinctive features of "Severan literature" in other large works written in Greek during this period. This scholarship has emphasized in particular how these works conceive of their historical realities in terms of ethnicity. Athenaeus composed *The Learned Banqueters* (Δειπνοσοφισταί) sometime after 200 C.E. Though this work has largely

[23] Maud Gleason, "Identity Theft," 37.

[24] Adam Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*; Tønnes Bekker-Nielsen, "Herodian on Greek and Roman Failings," in *Roman Rule in Greek and Latin Writing: Double Vision*, ed. Jesper Majbom Madsen et al. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 224-45.

been utilized for its quotations from otherwise lost ancient works, recent scholarship has attempted to look beyond the apparent heterogenous structure of the text. For Christian Jacob, Athenaeus' Egyptian origin but Roman compositional context mark the limits of *The Learned Banqueters*' cultural space, in which Egypt "represents an emotional and intellectual horizon that underlies the work as a whole."[25] Apart from Athenaeus' own ethnic identities, the contemporary context is suggested in the work's "mix of reality and fiction, of history and fantasy, and the care taken to confuse the issues and to play with coincidences[.]"[26]

Part of the same intellectual circle at Rome, the Italian sophist Claudius Aelianus composed numerous works in Greek including the *Varia Historia* (Ποικίλη Ἱστορία), *On the Character of Animals* (Περὶ Ζῴων Ἰδιότητος, commonly referred to by its Latin title, *De Natura Animalium*) and an invective against the emperor Elagabalus entitled *Indictment of the Little Woman* (Κατηγορία τοῦ Γύννιδος). Aelian has also been the subject of recent scholarship that attempts to position his work as a mirror for its historical and cultural realities. Steven Smith uses the stories of Egypt and India in *Animals* to illuminate the Severan cultural context, in which there was an intense interest in Egyptian religion and culture in the city of Rome. The emperors themselves were often heavily associated with Egyptian cults and practices. Smith makes links between Aelian's stories of India and Severan reverence for Alexander the Great as well as public spectacle in the city of Rome. Overall, the ethnic characterizations in Aelian speak to a contemporary fascination with otherness, especially the Severan imperial family's own interest in Egypt and India.[27]

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[25] Christian Jacob, *The Web of Athenaeus*, trans. Arietta Papaconstantinou (London: Center for Hellenic Studies, 2013), 11.

[26] Ibid., 25.

[27] Steven D. Smith, *Man and Animal in Severan Rome: The Literary Imagination of Claudius Aelianus* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2014), 147-78.

Among the most significant features of Severan literature, therefore, is an intensive focus on the notion of foreign identity. I build on this line of scholarship by analyzing Philostratus' own experiences of Severan Rome in conjunction with his characterization of foreignness. The preoccupation of the corpus with foreignness reflects its context of composition under the Severans. Precisely because of Philostratus' own experiences in Rome, and apparent firsthand knowledge of the Severan regime, his characterization of foreignness gains new significance.

b. Ethnic Identity in the Severan World

The theme of ethnic identity is a consistent preoccupation across the Philostratean corpus, one that I consider key to understanding Philostratus as both a thinker and as a social actor. In general, Philostratus uses Hellenism to articulate a definite mode of proper sophistic behavior that is often set in opposition to foreign identity. By interpreting the relationship between Hellenic and foreign identities through the category of ethnicity, I show that the corpus embraces different modes of articulating cultural difference. In some cases, ethnicity is a geographic identity, while at other times it reflects an individual's proper knowledge or intellectual background. "Ethnicity" therefore functions as a suitable catch-all category for reading across genre and authorial intent in the corpus.

Philostratus' conception of Greekness is fraught with tensions. Philostratus views Greek cultural knowledge as constituting attributes that can be learned. In that respect, Greek identity is largely performative. At the same time, ethnicity as a marker of descent remained important for many Greeks of the Second Sophistic, including Philostratus. But scholars have attempted to reach a compromise between what they see as competing or redundant categories of identity.[28] A

[28] E.g., Richter, *Cosmopolis*, focuses on cosmopolitanism, a discourse of communal identity that made claims about both ethnicity and culture.

broader term such as "cultural identity" importantly includes what sophists saw as the contemporary institutions that bound them together, often separate from notions of descent.[29] I follow C. P. Jones who rightly points out that imperial sophists had complex and multi-layered identities, of which "Hellenic" was just one at their disposal.[30]

One must also be cautious about considering "Greek" a national identity in the modern sense.[31] While ethnic and cultural identities can be tied directly to nationalism,[32] Benedict Anderson's problematization of "nation" is more useful to this dissertation. Anderson describes a nation as an imagined community, in which its members will probably never meet one another but hold some sort of affinity. For the ancient world in particular, Anderson holds that the sacredness of language was one such bonding cultural root. Church Latin and Qur'anic Arabic allowed for vast religious communities to form before the advent of modern nationalism, much as Greek Atticisms predominated in Second Sophistic literature to create a network of shared identity.[33] The maintenance of Greek linguistic purity therefore becomes more complicated in

[29] Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 35, uses this term because "it implies social aggregation through shared institutions, values, and preoccupations, rather than through lineage."

[30] Christopher P. Jones, "Multiple Identities in the Age of the Second Sophistic," in *Paideia: The World of the Second Sophistic*, ed. Barbara E. Borg (New York: De Gruyter, 2004), 13-21.

[31] See Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990); Anthony D. Smith, "The Problem of National Identity: Ancient, Medieval and Modern?," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 17 (1994): 375-99, who argues that nation formation and representation can be found in ancient, medieval, and modern contexts.

[32] See Richard Jenkins, *Rethinking Ethnicity: Arguments and Explorations* (London: Sage, 1997), 147-68.

[33] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso Books, 1983), 13ff. See also Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 145-46. Herodotus expresses a similar understanding of Greek identity, putting in the mouth of the Athenians a request to the Spartan envoys to resist Xerxes because of the "Greek community of blood and language, temples and sacrifices, and our common customs / αὖτις δὲ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν ἐὸν ὅμαιμόν τε καὶ ὁμόγλωσσον καὶ θεῶν ἱδρύματά τε κοινὰ καὶ θυσίαι ἤθεά τε ὁμότροπα" (8.144.2).

the imperial period as Atticizing denotes an alliance to classical Greece and not necessarily a geographic identity.[34]

Despite this scholarly hesitance, this dissertation also grapples with non-Greek identity in a geographic sense, since the corpus often frames geographic outsiders as ambiguously dangerous to Greekness. The web of (non-)Greek and (non-)Roman identities and their relation to one another in the Philostratean corpus is thus the primary concern of this dissertation. Similar issues have been raised for other corpora composed during the imperial period. Authors such as Apuleius and Lucian use their places of origin, the provinces of Numidia and Syria respectively, as just a single part of their multi-layered identities.[35] These competing regional identities show the complicated discourse over defining proper Romanness and Greekness in the period before Philostratus. I incorporate a similar model, but as discussed above, the Severan context gives additional weight to these issues. For example, foreign labels often resonate with the issue of the imperial family's outsider status, an issue explored more fully in the following chapters. I focus in particular on the provincial origin of Septimius Severus and that of Julia Domna's family.[36] Syria emerges as a complex region in the corpus, as do North Africa and Egypt more generally.[37]

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[34] See Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 135-38, for the generally unclear relationship between Atticism and *koinê* during this period, who claims, "In fact, it seems to me that the Atticists' anxiety about linguistic purity was a function of a general lack of consensus about what Atticism actually was" (137). Cf. Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 21, on literary Atticism as a unifying cultural force for Greek elites.

[35] See S. J. Harrison, *Apuleius: A Latin Sophist* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Gerald Sandy, *The Greek World of Apuleius: Apuleius and the Second Sophistic* (Leiden: Brill, 1997); David L. Stone, "Identity and Identification in Apuleius' *Apology*, *Florida*, and *Metamorphoses*," in *Apuleius and Africa*, ed. Benjamin Todd Lee et al. (London: Routledge, 2014), 154-73; Simo Parpola, "National and Ethnic Identity in the Neo-Assyrian Empire and Assyrian Identity in Post-Empire Times," *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 18 (2004): 21; Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 147-52.

[36] For a general overview of the Severans and their Syrian/African identities, see Erich Kettenhofen, *Die syrischen Augustae in der historischen Überlieferung* (Bonn: Habelt, 1979); Birley, *Septimius Severus*; Levick, *Julia Domna*.

[37] Warwick Ball, *Rome in the East: The Transformation of An Empire* (2nd edition) (London: Routledge, 2016), 456-68, views Julia Domna's family in Rome as a sort of "Syrianizing" influence in the city. Similarly, Ball views

III. The Philostratean Corpus

Scholars have examined each of the works of Philostratus through different lenses, primarily because of their various genres and subject matter.[38] As outlined above, the biographical works of Philostratus, the *VS* and the *VA*, have here been put in the context of both the Second Sophistic and the Severan period. The content of the sophist's other works, however, is often treated in ahistorical terms. Attention is given to their formal and thematic affinities to classical literature and other works of the Second Sophistic, but little effort has been expended in placing them in their specific historical contexts. By contrast, I demonstrate that these works engage with the distinctive styles and concerns of the Severan age, especially in their abiding concern with the issue of ethnic identity.

Scholars have used the biographical works of Philostratus to examine sophistic activity during the second century C.E. as well as the career of their author. The *VS* records the activity of several dozen named sophists from the classical period up to the early third century C.E. The Athenian orator and statesman Aeschines (389-314 B.C.E.), according to Philostratus, created the so-called "Second Sophistic" (*VS* 1.18). Book 2 concentrates on the later sophists of the Roman period and has been used to discuss sophistic activity in this period.[39] In addition, scholars have read the *VS* alongside the *VA* to look at the career and agenda of Philostratus as well as sophists more generally within the Roman world.

Leptis Magna as a Roman city, but one that was also "eastern" in character (468-83). See Nathanael J. Andrade, *Syrian Identity in the Greco-Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), for wider cultural trends around Syrian identity.

[38] See Jaś Elsner, "A Protean Corpus," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3-18.

[39] See Anderson, *Philostratus*; Alain Billault, *L'univers de Philostrate* (Brussels: Latomus, 2000).

The *VA* recounts the life and travels of the first-century teacher and sage Apollonius. An apologetic work in eight books that attempts to discount Apollonius' reputation as a wizard, the *VA* treats its subject as a philosopher and sophist. Philostratus portrays Apollonius as a paragon of Greek culture, but also, much like the sophists of the *VS*, as interacting with and confronting several Roman officials, including Nero, Vespasian, and Domitian. The travels of Apollonius take him through Greece and Asia Minor, as well as among the Indian sages (Books 2 and 3) and the Ethiopian gymnosophists (Book 6). The *VA* also locates Philostratus as part of the imperial court since the author tells the reader that Julia Domna commissioned this work and provided him with the memoirs of Damis of Nineveh, a disciple and student of Apollonius (1.2).[40]

In addition to these two major biographical works, several other lesser works can be attributed to the same Severan author. I follow Ludo de Lannoy's delineation of the output of the three known Philostrati, treating the *VS*, the *VA*, the *Erotic Letters*, the *Gymnasticus*, the (first) *Imagines*, and the dialogues the *Heroikos* and the *Nero* as works of the same author.[41]

The *Erotic Letters* consist of seventy-three letters in total, the majority addressed to anonymous boys and women and seventeen to named sophists and Roman authorities. The elements of one letter addressed to Julia Domna (*Ep*. 73) situate Philostratus as part of the empress's literary circle.[42] The direct reference to Plutarch in this letter, whom Philostratus

[40] For the treatment of the single text *VA*, see Adam Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 150-95 (and discussion above) and Roshan Abraham, "Magic and Religious Authority in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*" (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 2009), who treats the *VA* in total and argues for reading the text as the rise of the "pagan holy man." By contrast, Thomas Schirren, *Philosophos Bios: die antike Philosophenbiographie als symbolische Form: Studien zur Vita Apollonii des Philostrat* (Heidelberg: Bibliothek Der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, 2005), argues for an ironic reading of the *VA*. See also Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (eds.), *Theios Sophistes, Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii (Leiden: Brill, 2009).

[41] Ludo de Lannoy, "Le problème des Philostrate (état de la question)," *ANRW* 2.34.3 (1997): 2362-449.

[42] Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 226.

addresses as if he were alive, is a literary conceit borrowed from Plato's *Phaedrus*.[43] Scholars have focused on these classicizing elements of the *Letters* in order to show how they create links with the sophistic past. Simon Goldhill describes this aspect as "a conversation across the generations which makes Philostratus the present embodiment of that tradition of Greek excellence."[44] The letters of Philostratus function overall as a manual for self-expression within the tradition of Greek culture and, as put by Goldhill, "contribute to our understanding of what it is to be a *pepaideumenos* in imperial culture."[45] Just as scholars use the *VS* to position Philostratus as the end of a distinct literary trend, here too scholarship tends to use the *Letters* to cast Philostratus as an embodiment of these sophistic trends.

The *Heroikos* records a conversation at a shrine dedicated to the Homeric hero Protesilaos in Elaious on the European side of the Hellespont. The dialogue's two interlocutors – a Thracian vinedresser and a Phoenician merchant – discuss the ongoing importance of worshiping the Homeric heroes. Through information revealed to him by the hero Protesilaos, the first Greek warrior to die at Troy, the vinedresser narrates several stories of the Trojan campaign. As an authority on the events of the war, Protesilaos offers an expansion and critique of Homer, including most notably stories concerning the heroes Palamedes and Achilles. The Phoenician is at first skeptical of the existence of these heroes but is offered proof by the

[43] Graham Anderson, "Putting Pressure on Plutarch: Philostratus Epistle 73," *Classical Philology* 72 (1977): 43-45; Robert Penella, "Philostratus' Letter to Julia Domna," *Hermes* 107 (1979): 161-68. In fact, reverential reference to Plutarch was often meant to draw attention to a philosopher or sophist's ability, see, e.g., Apul. *Met*. 1.2; C.P. Jones, *Plutarch and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 11-12, for how claiming descent from Plutarch could garner respect.

[44] Simon Goldhill, "Constructing Identity in Philostratus' *Love Letters*," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 305.

[45] Ibid. See also Patricia A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) and Andrew Walker, "Eros and the Eye in the Love-Letters of Philostratus," *Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society* 38 (1992), 132-48, for scholarly arguments about aesthetics in these letters.

vinedresser's stories as well as the posthumous activity of Protesilaos and several other heroes of the Trojan War.

Scholars disagree about when this dialogue is meant to be set, but the classicizing elements of the dialogue's content have retained attention.[46] Many have argued that the text's critique of Homer and use of Plato in particular show the classicizing tendencies common to the literature of the Second Sophistic.[47] And other work makes connections between this dialogue and Philostratus' emphasis on sophistic activity in the *VS*. For example, Owen Hodkinson connects the *Heroikos* to the debates over the relative merits of philosophy and rhetoric present in Philostratus' other works. Through a close reading that links the *Heroikos* to Plato's *Phaedrus*, Hodkinson shows that Philostratus connects present-day sophist-heroes to the classical past, just as he does in the *VS*.[48] In this way, scholars separate the dialogue from its context of composition and characterize it as fundamentally looking backward to the classical past.

In general, much of the scholarly discussion treats the rest of the corpus in a similar way. As a result, the dialogues and letters in particular have been treated as emblematic of the classicizing elements that have come to represent the literature of the Second Sophistic. These elements, however, are often in tension with the contemporary setting in which the works were

[46] See, e.g., *Philostratus'* Heroikos*: Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century C.E.*, ed. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Jennifer K. Brenson Maclean (Leiden: Brill, 2004), which is representative of scholarship on this text's advocacy for contemporary hero worship and its relationship to Christianity. See also Tim Whitmarsh, "Performing Heroics: Language, Landscape and Identity in Philostratus' *Heroicus*," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 205-29, who argues that the *Heroikos* is centrally about "elite Greek identity and the pleasures of reading."

[47] See, e.g., Jeffrey Rusten, "Living in the Past: Allusive Narratives and Elusive Authorities in the World of the *Heroikos*," in *Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century C.E.*, ed. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Jennifer K. Brenson Maclean (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 143-58; Lawrence Kim, *Homer Between History and Fiction in Imperial Greek Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 175-215, shows how the dialogue both participates in and interrogates the Homeric critical tradition.

[48] Owen Hodkinson, *Authority and Tradition in Philostratus' 'Heroikos'* (Lecce: Pensa Multimedia, 2011).

composed, which adds new layers of meaning to their content.[49] Such scholarship suggests that certain political and cultural circumstances may have indirectly influenced the content of these works.

This dissertation incorporates this scholarly approach and shows that Philostratus' contemporary Severan setting influences the way in which all his works can be analyzed. I show that Philostratus' characterization of ethnic and cultural identities is often the result of his cultural and political circumstance. The shifting cultural landscape of the Severan period has a bearing on the content of the Philostratean corpus, particularly in the sophist's characterization of ethnic identities.

IV. Dissertation Organization

This dissertation begins by interrogating Philostratus' historical context in terms of how he portrays the distant and recent past in relation to the present. After establishing the Severan historical context, I connect it to the portrayal of foreignness across the corpus, going through the works in succession and discussing how each grapples with the issue of foreign identity. Finally, I interrogate the status of the city of Athens across the corpus in order to show how these issues of foreignness manifest in a specific motif.

The first chapter, "Philostratus the Roman Sophist," situates Philostratus in his contemporary context by articulating his conception of Roman rule. This chapter discusses the

[49] See, e.g., M. Rahim Shayegan, "Philostratus's *Heroikos* and the Ideation of Late Severan Policy toward Arsacid and Sasanian Iran," in *Philostratus'* Heroikos*: Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century C.E.*, ed. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken and Jennifer K. Brenson Maclean (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 285-315, who discusses the relationship of Syria and Near East to the political and cultural context of Philostratus' writing, and Ellen Bradshaw Aitken, "Why a Phoenician? A Proposal for the Historical Occasion for the *Heroikos*," in ibid., 267-84, who poses the question of why there is a Phoenician interlocutor in this dialogue, and suggests that this text dates from the reign of Alexander Severus, and that the political climate/conflicts influence the merchant's ability to situate himself as pious Hellene or dangerous foreigner.

sophist's biographical works, the *VS* and the *VA*. In both of these works, Philostratus frames Roman rule as unstable particularly in its inability to live up to its classical model, which depicts sophists as able to influence the actions of rulers and these same rulers respecting sophistic wisdom. This narrative of Roman history leads into a discussion of Philostratus' contemporary context, which is ambiguous in the allegiance of Roman rulers to Hellenic/sophistic culture, a quality that informs the portrayal of foreigners in the following chapters.

In the second chapter, "The Portrayal of Foreignness in the *Letters* and *Heroikos*," I discuss the *Erotic Letters*. I read across the entire corpus of letters in order to show that those of a more "erotic" nature share some of the same preoccupations about foreignness as those that are more "historical." In particular, I link the letter addressed to Caracalla, whose own foreign status is attacked in other contemporary sources, to these foreign motifs. In the *Heroikos*, Philostratus portrays a similar apprehension about people from the Near East, but especially powerful foreign women. I argue that this portrayal in part comments upon the role of the women in the Severan family who were known for orchestrating the reign of the boy emperor Elagabalus.

In the third chapter, "The Nature of Foreign Identity in the *Life of Apollonius* and *Lives of the Sophists*," I dive more fully into the *VA* and interrogate its representation of foreign ethnicity. This work was commissioned by the empress Julia Domna herself, and in addition to its discussion of Roman dynastic history, describes the travels of Apollonius around the Mediterranean and beyond. Among other groups, he visits the Indian sages and the Ethiopian gymnosophists. I show that these episodes, Apollonius' journey to Spain, and the portrayal of his pupils, including Damis the Syrian, build upon the arguments of the previous chapter. In this case, foreign intrusion in the cities of the empire represents a deviation from correct

philosophical wisdom, an ailment that can only be cured by the presence of Apollonius, who is portrayed without a precise ethnic identity.

The final chapter, "Athens in Philostratean Geography," deals with the characterization of Athens across the corpus. Prior scholarship has interpreted this city as a hub of Greekness in the works of Philostratus, but I consider how this portrayal feeds into the conception of foreign ethnicity. In my rendering, Athens functions in the corpus both to make foreignness obsolete and to draw attention to its problematic nature. This complex and varied portrayal of the city across the corpus, and the different versions of Hellenism it represents, shows that third-century ethnicity and other identity categories were fundamentally shifting.

Overall, my analysis illuminates a strong preoccupation with foreign identity across the corpus. This common theme betrays the cultural context in which the corpus was composed, often represented by the actions and identity of the Severan regime. My historical analysis of Philostratus as a Severan author more precisely illuminates the nature of his work, which can be read alongside contemporary cultural and sociopolitical events. The corpus both reacts to and reflects the new state of affairs in the empire as ethnic and cultural identities were being reexamined.

CHAPTER 1: PHILOSTRATUS THE ROMAN SOPHIST

Roman imperial history not only functions as a backdrop to Philostratus' biographies but also allows the author to situate himself in relation to the recent past. In the *VS* and the *VA*, Philostratus describes and comments upon the sophistic past with an eye toward his own social and cultural present. In his descriptions of both the first-century sage Apollonius and the Greeks of the Second Sophistic, Philostratus portrays an intellectual group that often interacts with royal dynasts and Roman rulers. The positive relationship between sophist or philosopher and ruler, in which the former often served as a productive advisor, was a hallmark of ancient Greek thought.[1] Some scholars attribute a similar frame to Philostratus' biographies, making claims that these two works serve primarily to glorify Greek sophistry and that any discussion of dynasts is secondary to this aim. For example, of both the *VS* and the *VA*, Adam Kemezis describes the sophists and Apollonius "as historical figures of Greek culture who ostensibly live outside of Roman dynastic history."[2] By this reckoning, Apollonius functions as a hero during times of tyranny, especially under the Flavians, but his actions are largely ineffectual for Roman history. The sophists of the *VS* similarly live in a non-dynastic narrative world in which there are Roman emperors, but no dynasties.[3]

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[1] E.g., though it is ultimately not productive, the relationship between Solon and Croesus (Hdt. 1.29-33). See Elizabeth Rawson, "Roman Rulers and the Philosophic Adviser," in *Philosophia Togata: Essays on Philosophy and Roman Society*, ed. Miriam T. Griffin and Jonathan Barnes (Oxford University Press, 1989), 233-57, for how the relationship between Greek philosopher and Roman ruler appears in the late Republic and early Empire. See also 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), 136-145, 194-230; Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 227-38.

[2] Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 199.

[3] See ibid., 218-26. Other scholars frame these works similarly; see, e.g., Anderson, *Philostratus*, 23-42. Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 399, notes that "the *Lives* in many ways simply present a relationship between Greek culture and power rather than Greek culture and specifically Roman power." These scholars thus overall do not trace the differences between the Severan and pre-Severans as an historical shift in the text as I do in this chapter.

Kemezis notes, however, that Philostratus' representation of the Severan period is superficially different from those of earlier periods and suggests that the change creeping into the *VS* is larger than the eccentricities of a single emperor like Caracalla. In this chapter, I pursue this suggestion further in order to investigate Philostratus' changing representation of different moments of imperial history. While Kemezis sees sophistic acts of mimesis as part of the Lives' goals of showing consistency in sophistic culture from the fifth century B.C.E. up until Philostratus' own lifetime, I will argue that, by covering a large historical time frame and offering comparisons between past events and more recent ones, Philostratus represents periods of Roman dynasties – rule under the Flavians, the Antonines, and the Severans – as fundamentally different from one another.

This chapter is structured around the characterization of relations between sophists and rulers in the *VS* and *VA* in order to highlight the stark differences between different historical periods. The structure of the *VS* lends itself to this sort of analysis; Philostratus' episodic narrative jumps from the fourth century B.C.E., skips over the Augustan period, and picks up again in the Flavian and Antonine periods. The moments or periods on which the author chooses to focus serve to reinforce his overall claims about proper rulership. Focusing primarily on the *VS*, but supplementing my analysis with material from the *VA*, I show that the historical arc that characterizes Philostratus' representation of the past is organized so as to highlight the unstable circumstances of Roman rule generally and that of the Severans specifically. My goal is not to create a composite imperial history from the various works of Philostratus. Rather, Philostratus' differing treatment of imperial dynasties functions as a secondary thread throughout the sophist's corpus that represents historical periods as different in different ways. While I acknowledge the

scholarly hesitance to compare Philostratus' works, I do not collapse them into one another.[4] Instead, I will show that, across his works, Philostratus highlights the failures and successes of Roman rule by directly and indirectly comparing the Roman emperors to a model of rulership based on precedent from classical Greece.

First, I compare Philostratus' characterization of the classical and recent Roman pasts. As spelled out in the Introduction, I use the term "classical" to explain how Philostratus portrays the Greek past as distinct from the imperial present, a definition that does not always overlap with the Classical Period of Greek history (480-323 B.C.E.). In this chapter, "classical" broadly refers to the period of the Second Sophistic's founder Aeschines (389-314 B.C.E.) and his contemporaries in the *VS*. According to Philostratus, the earliest members of the Second Sophistic interact with various foreign rulers, including prominently the Macedonian king Philip II (r. 356-339 B.C.E.), often successfully influencing their actions. I view these foundational interactions as an idealized relationship between classical rulers and sophists that informs the reader's understanding of Philostratus' representation of the subsequent periods. The Roman emperors of these later periods are variously allies or antagonists to sophists and the version of Greek culture that they represent. Philostratus presents those emperors who respect Greek culture and demonstrate other admirable qualities as virtuous and those who misunderstand Greek sophistry or fail to reward sophistic merit as unjust. In both the *VS* and the *VA*, Philostratus represents the Flavian regime as a disruptive break in relations between rulers and sophists.

[4] See Introduction. Scholarship for the most part has focused on one or two works of Philostratus and has rarely looked at the corpus as a whole, the exceptions being the monographs of Graham Anderson, Alain Billault, and Graeme Miles. See also Jaś Elsner, "A Protean Corpus," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3-18.

While Vespasian productively listens to the advice of Apollonius, his son Domitian's stark reversal of this behavior makes this period wholly antithetical to the ideals of the classical past.[5]

Following this disruption, Philostratus presents the Antonine emperors of the second century C.E. as, by and large, benevolent toward sophists, indeed as restorers of the classical ideal of relations between rulers and sophists. Most fully embodied by Marcus Aurelius, the philhellenism of the Antonine emperors manifests itself in their respect for sophistic wisdom and their travels outside of Rome to witness and praise sophistic performance. At the same time, the sophists of this period often fail to achieve a wholly positive relationship with the ruler by taking their perceived influence too far. In many cases, sophists act as if they wield power over or enjoy a special intimacy with an emperor, thereby overstepping a formal line between sophist and ruler. In these episodes, the relationship breaks down when sophists become angry with emperors. Kemezis also acknowledges that the script that both sophists and emperors follow breaks down occasionally in the *VS* but argues that such blunders do not detract from the overall glorification of sophists.[6] Antonine emperors, however, are rarely those at fault, instead showing admirable restraint from punishing these sophists. Philostratus often directly contrasts these episodes with similar ones from the classical past, showing that, despite the considerable merits of the Antonine emperors, the nature of Roman rule has fundamentally altered the nature of relations between sophists and rulers. And because matters were far from ideal even under the philhellenic Antonines, contemporary sophist-ruler relations are thrown into further uncertainty.

[5] Cf. Adam Kemezis, "Flavian Greek Literature," in *A Companion to the Flavian Age of Imperial Rome*, ed. Andrew Zissos (Hoboken, N.J.: John Wiley & Sons), 450-68, who argues that the new politics of the Flavian period explains the emergence of Second Sophistic literature, though not necessarily its content.

[6] Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 216-17.

In interpreting these episodes, I incorporate Tim Whitmarsh's argument concerning the pseudo-Lucianic dialogue *Nero* and apply them to the *VS* and *VA*.[7] Whitmarsh argues that this text is structured around the poles of tyranny and Greekness represented in the figure of the emperor who straddles the all too thin line between benevolence and despotism. In the dialogue, the Greek Musonius describes Nero's intention to cut the isthmus as "better than Greek" (1), language which, according to Whitmarsh, suggests that Nero's largesse and philhellenic act are categorically "*not* Greek." And in essence, Nero's philhellenism is a way to mask his domination of Greece.[8] Whitmarsh goes on to show how the dialogue complexly frames this act as tyrannical; as one of the (superficially) philosophically inclined emperors, Nero is still grouped with other tyrants like Vespasian and Domitian who are opposed to philosophy.[9]

This carefully calibrated critique of Nero, particularly in his relationship to Greece and its philosophers as represented by Musonius in the text, amplifies Philostratus' descriptions of tenuous alliances between sophists and emperors throughout the Roman past. I apply these insights to Philostratus' representation of his own direct experience of the Severan regime, under which relations between sophists and rulers become even more troubled. Political instability and

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[7] See Tim Whitmarsh, "Greek and Roman in Dialogue: The Pseudo-Lucianic *Nero*," *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 119 (1999): 143, who highlights the reasons that this dialogue ought to be attributed to Philostratus. In addition to the commonalities brought up by Whitmarsh, Philostratus groups Nero's matricide as similar to those of Orestes and Alcmaeon (*Nero* 10) in his other works (*VA* 4.38; *VS* 1.2.3). And Nero's downfall is attributed to Vindex (*VA* 5.33, 7.4; cf. *Nero* 5), whom Apollonius claims to have helped against Nero (*VA* 5.35).

[8] Whitmarsh, "*Nero*," 146. For the cutting of the isthmus, and Nero's role, see Paus. 2.1.5; *VA* 4.24, 5.7, 5.19; *VS* 2.6.7-8.

[9] Despite the attempts of imperial authors to delineate the realms of philosophy and sophistry, members of both groups often had common intellectual pursuits and civic responsibilities. Jeroen Lauwers, "Systems of Sophistry and Philosophy: The Case of the Second Sophistic," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 107 (2013): 340-5, explains that Philostratus does not create a strict divide between philosophers and sophists in the *VS*, instead seeing philosophers during the period of the First Sophistic as possessing a common eloquence and thus deserving to be called sophists (*VS* 1.6). Lauwers views the interaction between philosophy and sophistry as much more dynamic than does Harry Sidebottom, "Philostratus and the Symbolic Roles of Sophist and Philosopher," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 69-99, who treats them as relatively stable categories, but importantly points out the separateness in how they were treated by the Roman imperial administration (96-97).

uncertainty underlie the interactions between sophists and the Severan emperors. These rulers too are viewed in light of the historical past, but Philostratus describes himself as witness to the events in question. This first-hand experience serves to heighten the uncertainty of events around the Severan regime.

Having established this historical arc in the works of Philostratus, this chapter then investigates Philostratus' views of contemporary Rome. Several of the encounters that Philostratus records regarding sophists and rulers in his own time bear superficial similarities to episodes under the Antonines. But I argue that Philostratus sees a strong divide between his own period and the preceding one. Philostratus in several ways aims to differentiate these two periods, in fact going so far as to skip over the notoriously "bad" emperor Commodus in order to cast the reign of Septimius Severus as a decline from the Antonine period. The indirect comparison of Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla to the Antonines further emphasizes the demarcation between this period and the one before it. Much as Philostratus compares earlier Roman emperors to their classical predecessors, here he uses the recent past to articulate a shift in contemporary ruler-sophist relations. The Severans not only cannot live up to their classical predecessors but they lack any resemblance to the Antonine emperors. Unlike that of the Antonines, the Severan allegiance to Hellenic culture is dangerously ambiguous.[10]

Because this chapter traces events into the contemporary world of Philostratus, it makes several claims about how the political and social atmosphere may have influenced the content of Philostratus' corpus. Apart from descriptions of actual episodes that Philostratus witnessed himself, wider cultural and political circumstances no doubt influenced the perspective of these

[10] Severus actively worked against such a division between his reign and that of his predecessors. See, e.g., David Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay: AD 180-395*, 2nd edition (London: Routledge, 2014), 107-9, for Severus' likely use of divine messages and portents to legitimize his reign as well as the restoration of Commodus' reign through a self-adoption into the Antonine family.

two texts. This chapter therefore discusses how the sophist positions himself in relation to Roman authority, both as a sophist possessing substantial contact with the imperial family and as a prominent Greek intellectual in Severan Rome. The events of Philostratus' own life surely inform some of his views toward Roman authority; these views may also resonate with other features characteristic of Severan literature, including the impetus to compose history during times of immense political and dynastic change.[11]

Finally, as discussed in the Introduction, though they sometimes cover the same historical periods, the *VA* and *VS* have different motives and focuses. While the *VA* focuses on the journeys of Apollonius in and outside of the Roman Empire, the *VS* offers biographies of various sophists as well as an evaluation of their rhetorical skills. This chapter makes no claims about a consistent authorial agenda across these two works but rather looks at each in turn and how it approaches the subject of Roman history. For the Flavian period in particular, I use both the *VA* and *VS* to draw attention to the similar portrayals of Domitian as an unfit ruler. Domitian is a tyrannical ruler in each work, but the nature of sophistic interaction with this emperor is often markedly different.[12] In general, Apollonius is more willing to engage with emperors and wields strong influence over them much as the classical sophists of the *VS* does. Though the figure of Apollonius should be treated as an outlier in his ability to address tyranny head-on, I see the *VA* as complementary to the *VS* in its representation of a dysfunctional imperial Roman administration, especially under Domitian. Proper rulership in both texts hinges on the emperor's necessary respect for Hellenic wisdom.

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[11] Harry Sidebottom, "Severan Historiography: Evidence, Patterns and Arguments," in *Severan Culture*, ed. Simon Swain et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 72.

[12] Though tyranny in the strict definition disappears from the Greek political landscape, Philostratus like other writers uses the term to interrogate both the benefits and failings of one-man rule. See Sara Forsdyke, "The Uses and Abuses of Tyranny," in *A Companion to Greek And Roman Political Thought*, ed. Ryan K. Balot (West Sussex, U. K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 231-46; Andrew Erskine, "Hellenistic Monarchy and Roman Political Invective," *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991): 106-20.

I. The Classical Ideal: Sophists and Foreign Despots

Philostratus characterizes the Greek intellectuals of the fourth century B.C.E. as undertaking activity that is both educative and political; notable sophists not only have many student disciples, but they also hold prominent political or religious appointments that allow them to interact directly with foreign rulers. Prior to the foundation of the Second Sophistic by Aeschines, Philostratus discusses two different groups: philosopher-sophists and members of the First Sophistic. As conceived of by Philostratus, this newer sophistic movement moved away from discussing philosophical and mythological matters to a focus on the stock problems of rich and poor as well as princes and tyrants, themes that history can illuminate (*VS* 1.3.2).[13] Thus, in the way that the First Sophistic relates to the discipline of philosophy, so the Second does to history.[14]

The large historical gap that follows Aeschines' career in the *VS* has been variously explained, including as a lacuna or as Philostratus' intention to blur past and present sophistic careers.[15] Aeschines' rhetorical skill, however, in performing improvised declamation in the "divine style" (θείως) characterizes those sophists that come after him, even if temporally distant.[16] Despite the differences between these various early sophistic groups as presented by Philostratus, sophists of the fourth century interact positively with despotic leaders, a group I treat broadly as "classical sophists" (*VS* 1.1-44). The interaction of these sophists with Philip of

[13] ἡ δὲ μετ' ἐκείνην, ἣν οὐχὶ νέαν, ἀρχαία γάρ, δευτέραν δὲ μᾶλλον προσρητέον, τοὺς πένητας ὑπετυπώσατο καὶ τοὺς πλουσίους καὶ τοὺς ἀριστέας καὶ τοὺς τυράννους καὶ τὰς εἰςὄνομα ὑποθέσεις, ἐφ' ἃς ἡ ἱστορία ἄγει.

[14] Dominique Côté, "Les deux sophistiques de Philostrate," *Rhetorica* 24 (2006): 6, sets up this parallelism between the Sophistics in subject-matter and rhetorical style.

[15] See Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 203 n. 19.

[16] See Côté, "Les deux sophistiques," 14-18, who proposes this interpretation of Philostratus' scheme. Cf. Anderson, *Philostratus*, 11, who sees this scheme as "absurd" and "out of joint."

Macedon in particular tie them together thematically, with Aeschines as the exemplar of how a sophist may interact productively with a foreign despot.

As the Second Sophistic's founder, Aeschines has an important status in the *VS*, and his formation of relationships with foreign rulers influences the interpretation of sophistic activity in the rest of the text. Both the positive influence that Aeschines asserts over rulers and those foreign rulers' respect for his sophistic talent characterize these relationships. Philostratus draws attention to these positive relationships by emphasizing certain historical details about Aeschines' exile from Athens. Most sources record that Aeschines departed Athens because of a failed case against Demosthenes and Ctesiphon in 336 and went on to teach at Rhodes.[17] Philostratus, however, adds that Aeschines in his voluntary exile first intended to find refuge with Alexander (*VS* 1.42.8).[18] These machinations with the king show that Aeschines was a presumed confidant of the Macedonians, and of foreign royalty more generally. Philostratus mentions that according to some, Aeschines, after exile, delighted (ᾐσαι) king Mausolus of Caria with his improvised speech (*VS* 1.4.1). This details of Aeschines' life come early in the *VS* when Philostratus discusses the origin of improvised speech but appears to take place during the sophist's exile. If that is indeed the case, Philostratus confuses the chronology in order to place Aeschines in Caria.[19] Thus, in Philostratus' imagining, Aeschines' scheming with foreign kings

[17] Plut. *Dem*. 24.2-3; Quint. 12.10.19; *Suda* s.v. Αἰσχίνης, α 347-48 Adler.

[18] Cf. Plutarch, who reports that Aeschines went to Ephesus with Alexander until the king's death, then proceeded to Rhodes (*Mor*. 840 D-E).

[19] Mausolus died in 353 B.C.E. Cf. *VS* 1.3.3, which describes Aeschines' exile as spent in Rhodes and Caria. Mausolus is a potential further contrast between Demosthenes and Aeschines, since Demosthenes blames the king for the outbreak of the Social War in 357 (Dem. 15.3). See Simon Hornblower, *Mausolus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 206-11.

in exile makes his theoretically positive relationships with royalty into a hallmark of his sophistic career.[20]

Aeschines' appeal to Alexander is perhaps an extension of the sophist's relationship with Philip II, who looms large in the early part of the *VS*. And it is the relationship between Philip and Aeschines that sets the precedent for other sophists and their interactions with foreign despots. For instance, his relationship with Philip defines Aeschines' political career in Athens and his opposition to his rival Demosthenes. Factional strife in Athens pits one group friendly to Philip, led by Aeschines, against another friendly to the Persian king, led by Demosthenes (*VS* 1.42.1).[21] Philostratus in several instances goes on to use Philip as the cornerstone of this factional rivalry that characterizes Aeschines' sophistic career.[22]

In this early period of the *VS*, Philostratus uses Philip as the most prominent example of sophists' ability to influence foreign rulers. Several sophists interact with Philip and all influence the foreign king to act on behalf of Greece.[23] For example, in addition to Aeschines, Leon of Byzantium exerts a productive influence over Philip. Meeting Philip outside the walls of Byzantium, Leon is able to convince the king not to invade the city (*VS* 1.8.1):

> Φιλίππῳ μὲν γὰρ στρατεύοντι ἐπὶ Βυζαντίους προαπαντήσας "εἰπέ μοι, ὦ Φίλιππε," ἔφη "τί παθὼν πολέμου ἄρχεις;" τοῦ δὲ εἰπόντος "ἡ πατρὶς ἡ σὴ καλλίστη πόλεων οὖσα ὑπηγάγετό με ἐρᾶν αὐτῆς καὶ διὰ τοῦτο ἐπὶ θύρας τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ παιδικῶν ἥκω," ὑπολαβὼν ὁ Λέων "οὐ φοιτῶσιν" ἔφη "μετὰ ξιφῶν ἐπὶ τὰς τῶν παιδικῶν θύρας οἱ ἄξιοι τοῦ ἀντερᾶσθαι, οὐ γὰρ πολεμικῶν ὀργάνων,

[20] Philostratus portrays contemporary philosophers similarly as several students of Socrates find positive reception in the court of Dionysius II of Sicily (*VA* 1.35.1).

[21] The money that Philip is said to have sent to Aeschines' faction is meant to subdue the power of Athens but only so that Philip could invade Asia (*VS* 1.42.1).

[22] The differentiation between Demosthenes and Aeschines in regard to Philip occurs elsewhere in the *VS*, including in the life of Polemo (c. 90-144 C.E.), who argues a declamation on Demosthenes "in which he advises that [the Athenians] flee on their triremes at the approach of Philip, though Aeschines had ratified a law that anyone who mentioned the war should be put to death" (*VS* 1.78.4).

[23] See Introduction and esp. Russell, *Greek Declamation*, 74-86, for the nature of Greek declamatory performance during the period of the Second Sophistic.

> ἀλλὰ μουσικῶν οἱ ἐρῶντες δέονται.” καὶ ἠλευθέρου τὸ Βυζάντιον Δημοσθένους μὲν πολλὰ πρὸς Ἀθηναίους εἰπόντος, Λέοντος δὲ ὀλίγα πρὸς αὐτὸν Φίλιππον.
>
> When Philip came with an army against the Byzantines, Leon went out to meet him and said, “Tell me, Philip, what has brought you to begin a war?” And when he replied, “Your homeland, the most beautiful of cities, seduced me into loving her, and this is why I have come to my darling’s doors,” Leon one-upped him, saying, “They come not with swords to their darling’s doors those who are worthy of requited love. For lovers do not need the tools of war but of music.” And Byzantium was freed, after Demosthenes had delivered many speeches before the Athenians, but Leon had said only a few words to Philip himself.[24]

Philip at first expresses a strong philhellenism, personifying the city of Byzantium as his lover.[25] After Philip utters this riddle, Leon retorts with his own riddle that mirrors the king’s philhellenism, hoping to persuade Philip to spare the city from military violence. Philip’s siege of Byzantium continued through the winter of 340-339 B.C.E., and he retreated only after a series of blunders and failure to breach the city’s walls.[26] Philostratus’ account, however, emphasizes Leon’s power to dissuade Philip, which is compounded by his positive reception in Athens and specific contrast with Demosthenes (1.8.2-3). As in his dispute with Aeschines, Demosthenes is a foil to members of the Second Sophistic partly because of his inability to interact positively with Philip.

Philostratus narrates other episodes in which sophists influence Philip via correspondence to act on behalf of Greece. Among these, Philostratus mentions the letters of Isocrates in which the sophist, though he shunned political life, attempted to reconcile (διωρθοῦτο) Philip with the Athenians and to make war on the Persians (1.40.2). Philostratus, however, does not include the details of these letters, in which Isocrates recommends the same advice to Philip over several

[24] All translations in this dissertation are my own unless otherwise noted.

[25] See Victoria Wohl, *Love Among the Ruins: The Erotics of Democracy in Classical Athens* (Princeton University Press, 2002), 30-72, for a similar eroticization of the city, in this case Athens in Pericles’ funeral oration (Thuc. 2.35-46).

[26] Plut. *Phoc*. 14.

years, showing that the king at least in the matter of Athens did not heed the advice of Isocrates. Philostratus instead places them among the other accomplishments of the corpus of Isocrates, thus implying that Isocrates had some success in influencing the king.[27]

Through these interactions with Philip in the *VS*, sophists establish two cornerstones of productive sophistic engagement with rulers. First, sophists perceive that they have the ability to influence a foreign despot directly or indirectly (usually through a short correspondence outlined by Philostratus). Second, the ruler confirms this perception by acting in the manner that the sophist recommends. It is both the perceived influence and the follow-through on the part of Philip in particular that defines the ideal relationship between classical sophists and rulers.[28] The affability of rulers in this ideal relationship especially goes on to frame the interaction of rulers and sophists in the later part of the *VS*.[29]

A ruler's respect for sophistic talent and performance, which Philostratus hints at in the narrative of Aeschines' travels abroad, becomes a distinctive feature of the Roman period. Roman rulers not only follow the advice of sophists but also notably respect sophistic talent and performance. Roman emperors are virtuous because of this ability to respect sophists and Greek culture and thus live up to the classical precedent that Philostratus sets out early in the *VS.* Especially for the Antonine period, Philostratus describes a continuity between classical rulers

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[27] The letters of Isocrates addressed to Philip (Isoc. *Ep.* 2-3) show that the sophist's advice to Philip was consistent over several years, recommending the same reconciliation even after the Athenian defeat at Chaeronea (338 B.C.E.). When Philip had seemingly followed his advice to attack the Persians, Isocrates distances himself from any direct influence over the king (cf. 2.11, 2.18, and 3.3). Similarly, Dias of Ephesus (otherwise unattested) persuades Philip to attack Asia (ἐπὶ τὴν Ἀσίαν στρατεύειν ἔπεισε), rather than Greece, and compels the Greeks to join the expedition, arguing that they will endure slavery abroad in order to secure freedom at home (*VS* 1.9).

[28] Dio Chrysostom similarly portrays Philip as a good student, claiming that he was the best Macedonian king because of his education under Lysis, a student of Pythagoras, at Thebes (*Or.* 49.4-5). See Rawson, "Roman Rulers," 233.

[29] Cf. *VA* 7.1-3, in which Philostratus contrasts Apollonius with 4th- and 5th-century B.C.E. philosophers unproductively accosting tyrants. See esp. Diogenes' reproach of Philip, ineffective because it came too late (7.3.2). Apollonius, however, does not resort to senseless speeches (οὔτ' ἐς ἀνοήτους ὑπαχθεὶς λόγους) against the formidable tyrant Domitian (7.3.3).

and Roman emperors by making direct links between both groups in the text. As a result, he judges emperors on their ability to live up to and expand on the virtues of past rulers. Through their interactions with sophists, Roman emperors function as analogous figures to classical rulers like Philip. Philostratus' characterization of the imperial dynasty of the second century C.E. builds upon a conception of how virtuous leaders ought to respect sophists as champions of Greek wisdom. But before this period, Philostratus in both the *VS* and *VA* discusses the Flavian dynasty, showing that tyrannical rulership functioned contrary to the classical ideals of ruler-sophist relations.

II. Roman Tyrants: A Flavian Disruption

Following the classical period, sophists function as representatives of Greek culture and Hellenic wisdom in the Roman world, and each emperor's acknowledgement or scorn for this wisdom contributes to his positive or negative portrayal in the works of Philostratus. In both the *VS* and *VA*, Philostratus reveals how Roman emperors of the first century C.E., most notably Domitian, fail to live up to their classical predecessors in proper respect for both sophists and Greek culture. Despite the positive portrayals of Vespasian and Nerva in the *VA* in particular, the figure of Domitian proves too opposed to the ideal model of ruler-sophist relations. Apollonius in the *VA* is an exemplar of the sophistic ability to influence emperors, but the tide of examples from the *VS* in contradiction to this representation makes him an outlier.[30] Philostratus thus represents this early imperial period overall as one of disruption in proper rulership as relationships between Greek sophists and emperors deteriorate beyond repair.

[30] For the interpretation of Apollonius as a sophist, see Introduction. See also Alain Billault, "Les Choix Narratifs de Philostrate dans la Vie d'Apollonios de Tyane," in *Theios Sophistes*, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 1-20, who explains how Philostratus augments the genre of biography with the *VA*; Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, focuses on Apollonius as teacher and imperial advisor.

I first consider the role of the emperors in the *VA*. Overall, Philostratus represents Apollonius as a wise counselor to the emperors, and those who respect his wisdom, namely Vespasian and the future emperor Nerva, as virtuous. These relationships are much like those of the early sophists that Philostratus describes in the *VS*. Domitian, however, represents a break in this model of rulership in his disrespect for Hellenism and sophistic ability. In the *VA*, Apollonius fights against this tendency of the emperor. But his actions, read alongside additional evidence from the *VS* in which Philostratus describes some of the same events, draw attention to the nature of this improper rule. Instead of invoking classical precedents, Philostratus occasionally compares Domitian to Nero, another notable "bad" emperor. And sophists in the *VS* shrink from engaging with the tyrannical emperor out of fear, actions in direct contrast to the boldness of classical sophists.

Apollonius clearly represents the ideal model of ruler-sophist relations in his strong influence over Vespasian and positive relationship with the future emperor Nerva. Apollonius openly prefers these emperors, but Philostratus draws special attention to the ability of Apollonius to influence their actions and imperial politics more generally. For example, Apollonius is accused of performing a sacrifice in the countryside on behalf of Nerva, which the Roman authorities consider an act of illegal magic (*VA* 7.20). This accusation, however, is only of superficial importance and actually puts Apollonius at the center of Roman political events.[31] In fact, the Roman government's accusation shows its recognition of Apollonius' ability to influence those events, an element found throughout the *VA*.

[31] Roshan Abraham, "Magic and Religious Authority," 139.

The recognition of Apollonius' power to influence imperial politics appears throughout the *VA* in his direct influence over the sitting emperor.[32] For Vespasian in particular, Apollonius acts as a persuasive counselor whose views the emperor openly accepts. In a somewhat stock constitutional debate, Apollonius speaks before Vespasian about how to execute his new imperial power properly, persuading the emperor to embrace monarchy once his rivals for power were eliminated (5.32).[33] When the emperor asks Apollonius how to rule as a monarch, Apollonius describes himself as a teacher and Vespasian as a student, as he replies, "You ask of me something that cannot be taught; for kingship is the greatest of human achievements, but cannot be taught. I will however explain to you the things, which if you do them, you would be acting soundly" (5.36).[34] Though Apollonius here begins by claiming that the root problem with kingship is that it cannot be taught, his educative relationship with the emperor frames how such a relationship ideally functions.

Much as in the classical precedent of Aeschines' ability to entertain foreign kings, Apollonius both exerts influence over and at the same time delights the emperor. Continuing on from the debate speech above, Apollonius lists further conditions for an emperor's successful reign; it is Vespasian's own qualities that will guarantee success, including a respect for the law, avoiding vice, and an overall temperance. Apollonius even suggests here that threatening to deny

[32] See Steven Jackson, "Apollonius and the Emperors," *Hermathena* 137 (1984): 25-32, for an overview of Apollonius' interactions with emperors and his ability to influence political events, including the murder of Domitian.

[33] Compare the locus classicus: the constitutional debate in Herodotus (3.80-82), in which the conspirators consider which sort of government to adopt after the death of Cambyses. Like Apollonius, Darius speaks last in favor of monarchy and advocates for rule by the best man. While Darius argues that both democracy and oligarchy will eventually result in monarchy, Apollonius adds, "For just as one man distinguished in virtue transforms a democracy to appear like the rule of the individual best man, so the government of one man, when it provides everyone a share in the government, is rule by the people" (ὥσπερ γὰρ εἷς ἀρετῇ προὔχων μεθίστησι τὴν δημοκρατίαν ἐς τὸ ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς τοῦ ἀρίστου ἀρχὴν φαίνεσθαι, οὕτως ἡ ἑνὸς ἀρχὴ πάντα ἐς τὸ ξυμφέρον τοῦ κοινοῦ προορῶσα δῆμός ἐστιν) (*VA* 5.35).

[34] οὐ διδακτά με' ἔφη 'ἐρωτᾷς· βασιλεία γὰρ μέγιστον μὲν τῶν κατ' ἀνθρώπους, ἀδίδακτον δέ. ὁπόσα δ' οὖν μοι δοκεῖς πράττων ὑγιῶς ἂν πρᾶξαι, καὶ δὴ φράσω.

succession to his sons is a reasonable way for Vespasian to control them. Vespasian gladly receives these suggestions and is even said to enjoy Apollonius speaking of every sort of thing, including descriptions of past history and his visits abroad (5.38).

This positive portrayal of interactions between sophists and Roman rulers breaks down in the reign of Domitian, which acts as an interruption to the positive relationships between Apollonius and the emperors on either side of Domitian's reign. Domitian's tyrannical tendencies in particular contrast with Vespasian's benevolence toward and respect for Apollonius. Still, Apollonius attempts to influence Domitian through direct engagement with the emperor in a number of episodes from the *VA*. Most prominently, Apollonius is charged and put on trial in Rome in Books 7 and 8 of the *VA*. His defense speech before the emperor spells out several of the text's views on correct rulership by contrasting Domitian to the "good" emperor examples of Vespasian and Nerva.[35]

First, Domitian's reign is dysfunctional since he is unlike any other Roman leader before or after him. These other emperors are not only not as cruel but also heed the advice of someone wise like Apollonius. And Domitian appears to recognize this conventional role for Apollonius. For example, during Apollonius' trial, Domitian sees to it that Apollonius will not have the power to influence him. Apollonius is denied the opportunity to make any preparations for his speech and is in fact silent for much of the proceedings.[36] Though this denial is an indirect

[35] This attitude toward Nerva is clearly written in hindsight. He has not yet become emperor in the narrative but by the time of the Severans is remembered positively. E.g., Dio Cass. 68.1-4. Cf. *VA* 8.27-28, in which once Nerva has finally achieved the throne, Apollonius denies the emperor's request to appear before him but instead sends a letter suggesting that Nerva's reign will be short. Similarly, Apollonius promises Titus not himself but the philosophic teacher Demetrius the Cynic as an advisor (*VA* 6.29-34). See Rawson, "Roman Rulers," 249.

[36] During the trial preliminaries, Apollonius fights against imperial authority silently by ignoring the presence of Domitian (*VA* 8.4). Apollonius is not allowed to bring anything into the courtroom, including any objects or papers (8.3), and as a result he is only allowed to answer the questions posed by Domitian (8.5). His prepared speech goes unspoken, and Apollonius is acquitted mainly due to the audience's approving response. Philostratus, however, praising its style, records the speech in full (8.6).

acknowledgement by the regime of Apollonius' influential power, the scene begins to point to the dysfunction and change that Domitian's reign has brought about, since Apollonius is clearly given a platform to voice his opinions to the sitting emperor elsewhere in the text.[37]

The content of Apollonius' final speech addresses the proper relationship that a philosopher or sophist like Apollonius ought to have with a virtuous ruler. Philostratus allows Apollonius to take back some of the power previously denied him in the courtroom by having the sage review his previous positive relationships with other rulers. In his speech, Apollonius highlights the intimacy he enjoyed with Domitian's father Vespasian, quoting a letter in which the former emperor praises him for his poverty (8.7.11).[38] And Apollonius similarly invokes Nerva for his goodwill toward him, saying that "just like young men with their own fathers or teachers, in my presence he always speaks respectfully, and he also blushes" (8.7.31). Apollonius sees his relationship with Nerva as the ideal one between sophist and ruler; Nerva does not mock or ridicule Apollonius, and in fact treats him as he would a teacher or father.[39] The future emperor's ability to blush also contrasts him with tyrannical rulers because he can clearly show shame.[40] Nerva's acquiescence to the teachings of Apollonius makes their relationship similar to

[37] Cf. Suet. *Dom*. 10-14 on the emperor's increasing cruelty and paranoia about dissidents.

[38] I follow Jones' division of Apollonius' defense speech (2005).

[39] Likewise, Apollonius in prison invokes a similar teacher/student relationship when he laments that his mission to teach the emperor is foolish if Domitian will not accept the truth, which is the very thing that Domitian views as worthy of imprisonment (7.36). Cf. Plato, *Republic*, Book 6, who characterizes truth as the ultimate goal of the philosopher, something not found among tyrants (Book 8).

[40] Domitian's own famous ruddy complexion both hid his shame (Suet. *Dom*. 18.1-2; Tac. *Agr*. 45.2) and was a sign of the emperor's youthful beauty (Stat. *Sil*. 4.2.38-56). Cf. Procop. *Arc*. 8.12-21, 13.2, in which Justinian is likened to Domitian for his inability to blush and apparent shamelessness. See Carlin A. Barton, "The Roman Blush: The Delicate Matter of Self-Control," in *Constructions of the Classical Body*, ed. James I. Porter (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 212-34.

those of Philip and classical sophists in the *VS*, whose successful requests and recommendations demonstrated that power ought to lie with a sophistic teacher.[41]

In addition to these representations of Domitian as different from his predecessor and successor, Philostratus further contrasts Domitian with Nero in order to mark out this period as unique in its dysfunction. Nero in particular was regarded as a "bad" emperor in antiquity. And in the *VA*, though his presence is relegated to only a few episodes, similarly contemptible traits appear. For instance, Apollonius likens Nero to an animal for his cruelty and matricide (4.38), mentions his scandalous singing exploits (4.42), and is himself charged with impiety against Nero when a plague falls upon the city of Rome that gives the emperor a hoarse voice (4.43-4).[42] Philostratus' account of Nero, however, does not include any direct interaction between Apollonius and the emperor like what we see with the sage and Domitian. Instead, Apollonius later contrasts Nero and Domitian, describing the latter as foregoing singing and music because of their effeminate weakening and taking pleasure in hardened ferocity and the suffering of others (7.4).[43] This comparison skips over the violence of Nero's reign by making light of that emperor's fascination with spectacle, thus making the violence and dysfunction under Domitian stand out.

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[41] Apollonius also earlier praises Nerva directly before Domitian (*VA* 7.33): "I know that Nerva is the most temperate and mildest of men, most loyal to you and a good governor (Νερούαν σωφρονέστατον ἀνθρώπων οἶδα καὶ πρᾳότατον καὶ σοὶ ἐπιτηδειότατον καὶ ἄρχοντα μὲν ἀγαθόν), but so cautious toward pretension that he fears acquiring power (τὰς τιμὰς δεδιέναι)." This comment suggests a leader the opposite of Domitian – loyal and not extravagant – and serves to enrage Domitian further.

[42] The charge of matricide is attested in Dio Cass. 61.12-3, Tac. *Ann*. 14.3-4, Suet. *Ner*. 34.1. The emperor's love of spectacle, culminating in his participation in Greek contests, is part of his characterization as an artist and showman in ancient sources. See esp. Tac. *Ann*. 16.4, Suet. *Ner*. 23, Dio Cass. 62.8.4-9.1. The plague is possibly the same referred to by Tacitus in 66 C.E. (*Ann*. 16.13.1-2). See Anthony A. Barrett et al. (eds.), *The Emperor Nero: A Guide to the Ancient Sources* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016).

[43] The oppositional pair of hardness/softness goes along with other sexuality binaries including activity/passivity. See, e.g., Holt Parker, "The Teratogenic Grid," in *Roman Sexualities*, ed. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 47-65; Maud Gleason, *Making Men*: *Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

Besides these characterizations of Domitian as distinctly dysfunctional, Philostratus puts in the mouth of Apollonius the key features that have changed between ruler and sophist under this emperor. Apollonius explains that these changes are present in the career and personal traits of his rival, the philosopher Euphrates of Tyre. Though expelled from Rome at some point in his career and known to have returned to the city in 98, Euphrates is apparently still in the city at this point in Philostratus' narrative.[44] According to Apollonius, Euphrates, who had brought the charges against the sage in Domitian's court, fawns over power and pursues any person from whom he can acquire wealth (8.7.34).[45] In turn, Euphrates uses his money to undermine true philosophers like Apollonius. By contrast, Apollonius claims to have never accepted gifts from those either seeking or having power, including the emperors, and is therefore not beholden to anyone for his honor.

Philostratus describes Apollonius' charges against Euphrates as a symptom of Domitian's dysfunctional reign. In the final contrast between himself and Euphrates, Apollonius spells out their differing relationships to the emperor (8.7.46). He says directly to Domitian, "[Euphrates] considers you a despot, but I regard you as a ruler (καὶ ὁ μέν σε ἡγεῖται δεσπότην, ἐγὼ δ' ἄρχοντα). He gives you a sword to use against me, but I give you rational argument (λόγον)." The inherent dysfunction in Domitian's rule lies in his role as a δεσπότης, a term that Philostratus and others use to denote the symbolic master/slave relationship between a ruler and his people.[46] Domitian acts like a master of the people, overstepping his role as ruler to become a

[44] Plin. *Ep.* 1.10 for Euphrates' presence in Syria and Rome.

[45] The rivalry between Euphrates and Apollonius is also attested in the *VS* (1.14.1).

[46] See, e.g., *VA* 3.31, 4.20, 4.40. In tune with his characterization throughout the *VA*, Vespasian is cast as a benevolent slave-holder (5.36). In another instance, Apollonius counsels a young man attacked by Domitian to be his own master, rather than a figurative slave of the emperor (7.42). Elsewhere in his defense speech, Apollonius likens himself to one whose actions can help a δεσπότης rule more effectively: "Beekeepers remove diseases from the bees so that the master does not lose his hive (ὡς μὴ ἀπόλοιτο τῷ δεσπότῃ τὸ σμῆνος). So also when I put an

tyrant of the people. In his role as a tyrant, only those less virtuous, like Euphrates, can thrive and gain power. As a result, the traditional advisory role for a sophist, embodied in Apollonius' efforts to advise Domitian in the text, becomes obsolete under a dysfunctional despotic regime.

These interactions with Domitian show how one sophist might approach a tyrannical emperor. Much like the classical sophists of the *VS*, Apollonius attempts to influence the various emperors with his speech and is especially successful with the benevolent Vespasian and acquiescent Nerva. But the circumstances that Apollonius lays out concerning the nature of Domitian's rule – namely its dysfunctional and cruel ruler and the resulting relationship he has with debased intellectuals like Euphrates – mark this period as distinct from the reigns that bookend it. True to his nature, Apollonius still attempts to influence the emperor, but he is unsuccessful and even blamed for his presumed authority.

In the *VS*, Philostratus treats the reign of Domitian as a similar sort of disruption. Yet, unlike the wise sage Apollonius, sophists in this work tend to operate at a distance from Domitian, and Philostratus no longer emphasizes their direct interaction as a way to secure reputation or demonstrate influence over the ruler. A handful of episodes that appear in both the *VA* and the *VS* draw attention to this sort of dysfunction during the reign of Domitian and to the way that characterization represents a decline from the ideal sophist-ruler relations of the classical period in the early part of the *VS*, as discussed above. Though both works approach the narration of these episodes from Domitian's reign differently, they both represent his reign as one of outstanding dysfunctional rule.

Philostratus highlights the dysfunction of Domitian's reign by emphasizing the merits of sophists and their distance from the emperor's bad behavior. For example, the sophist Scopelian

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end to civic misconduct, I corrected the cities on your behalf" (8.7.20). Cf. Hdt. 7.35.2 for Xerxes as δεσπότης because of his treatment of the Hellespont as a slave.

is sent on an embassy to Domitian on behalf of the province of Asia. Philostratus records this episode in both the *VS* and the *VA*. In the *VS*, the circumstances of his interaction with the emperor indirectly contrast him with classical sophists and their own interactions with foreign regents. Though successful in his embassy, Scopelian is put at a distance from the emperor, who, unlike Philip, does not appear in the events where he is involved (*VS* 1.56).

As a result of this absence from the narrative of the successful embassy, Philostratus minimizes any potential positive role for the emperor. Philostratus does not name the emperor Domitian here, but he instead puts emphasis on Scopelian and his oratorical skills. Philostratus notes that it is actually through Scopelian's speech that the sophist wins his great reputation, saying that "the oration [on behalf of the vines] is among the most celebrated" (ὁ γὰρ λόγος ἐν τοῖς θαυμασιωτάτοις) and along with his new reputation, won "such things that are usually given at an imperial court" (ἃ νομίζεται παρὰ βασιλεῖ) (1.56.4). This final detail inverts an ideal relationship between sophist and ruler, instead giving the sophist the ability to win imperial prizes without the presence of the emperor. Philostratus thus does not give the sophist's ability to influence the problematic emperor any space in the text.

The *VA* recounts this same episode concerning Scopelian's embassy when Apollonius visits the Ionians; though different in its details, this episode lays out a similar moment of disruption in imperial rule by focusing on the emperor's cruel nature and the distance put between sophists and the emperor.[47] According to Philostratus, Domitian issued laws for the province of Asia that forbad castrating men and planting vines. The exact reasoning for Domitian's eunuch law is unknown but Philostratus appears to view this notorious legislation as

[47] The link between Apollonius, Scopelian, and Domitian is clear; in the *VS*, Philostratus states that Apollonius ranked Scopelian among men to be admired (καὶ Ἀπολλώνιος δὲ ὁ Τυανεὺς … τὸν Σκοπελιανὸν ἐν θαυμασίοις τάττει) (*VS* 1.58.4). Philostratus also records a letter from Apollonius to Scopelian (*VA* 1.23-24).

just as problematic as the restriction on growing vines in Asia.[48] Upon learning about these laws from the Ionians, Apollonius responds, "These edicts do not matter to me, since maybe I alone among men do not need genitals or wine. But this marvelous fellow does not realize that he is sparing humans while he castrates the earth (λέληθε δὲ ὁ θαυμασιώτατος τῶν μὲν ἀνθρώπων φειδόμενος, τὴν δὲ γῆν εὐνουχίζων) (6.42). Encouraged by Apollonius' words, the Ionians decide to send the embassy to the emperor to repeal the law concerning the vines. In tune with the characterization of Apollonius elsewhere in the *VA*, Philostratus gives his witticism precedence and even chooses not to narrate the embassy's outcome. So, as with Domitian's portrayal in the *VS*, praise for the sophist erases the presence of the emperor from the episode, pointing to a similarly dysfunctional relationship between sophist and emperor.[49]

Philostratus uses Dio of Prusa in the *VS* in a similar way to Scopelian in order to comment upon the reign of Domitian, drawing further attention to its dysfunctional sophist-ruler relations. Philostratus first comments that Dio, like Scopelian, lived at the same time as Apollonius (*VS* 1.14.1). But in the *VS* and *VA*, Dio and Apollonius react differently to Domitian's "reign of terror" in Rome (93-96 C.E.).[50] First, Apollonius, as in the discussion above, confronts Domitian at a time when philosophers were being driven from the city (*VA* 7.4.2-3):

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[48] The castration edict was enacted in 82 or 83 C.E., while the vine law is from the early 90s. Suet. *Dom*. 7; Dig. 48.8.6. See O. F. Robinson, *The Criminal Law of Ancient Rome* (London: Duckworth, 1995), 51-53; Walter Stevenson, "The Rise of Eunuchs in Greco-Roman Antiquity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 5 (1995): 499-507, for attitudes to eunuchs in imperial literature and how these were often tied to the figure of Domitian.

[49] Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 215 n. 48, notes that this episode demonstrates the overall neutral characterization of Domitian in the *VS*, a "rather awkward figure" to put into any grand scheme of sophist-ruler relations in this work.

[50] Juv. 4; Plin. *Pan*.; Suet. *Dom*. 10-17; Tac. *Ag*. 2-3, 44. Brian Jones, *The Emperor Domitian* (London: Routledge, 1992) and Pat Southern, *Domitian: Tragic Tyrant* (London: Routledge, 1997) reflect the rehabilitative history of recent Domitian scholarship that attempts to read through the bias of these sources concerning the latter part of Domitian's reign.

> The senate thus had its most distinguished members hacked away (ἠκρωτηριάσθη). Philosophy was so intimidated that some giving up all pretense escaped to the Celts in the west, while others escaped to the deserts of Libya and Scythia, and still others were convinced to give speeches supporting the emperor's crimes.
> …
> In this way, [Apollonius] turned the younger men that the senate possessed against Domitian, as well as whatever intelligence he perceived among the senators. He went about the provinces and taught the governors that the power of tyrants was ephemeral, and that they were overthrown especially because they appeared to be terrifying.

The wide scattering of the philosophers across the empire is a result of the violence Domitian carries out in the city of Rome. By contrast, Apollonius' own vague wanderings in the provinces are not made out of fear but in order to appeal to the senators against the "tyrant" emperor. In order to persuade the senators, Apollonius goes on to list famous tryannicides, including the Athenian "tyrant-slayers" Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the expulsion of the Thirty Tyrants from Athens, and the killing of the Roman King Tarquin by Brutus (7.4.3). This sort of connection between Greek and Roman *exempla* was frequent in Roman political thought,[51] but here Philostratus makes clear Apollonius' equation of Domitian with a tyrant.

While Apollonius leaves Rome in order to resist Domitian actively, Dio departs Rome through his fear of tyrants. This contrast in coping with Domitian's reign draws attention to the dysfunction of this period in a different way. At the same time as the passage above, Dio of Prusa flees Rome to live among the Getae (*VS* 1.14.2):

> His visit to the Getic tribes I should not call exile, since he had not been ordered to go into exile, nor was it simply a trip abroad, since he disappeared, stealing himself away from everyone's eyes and ears, and conducting himself in different ways in different lands, through fear of the tyrants in the city [Rome] (δέει τῶν κατὰ τὴν πόλιν τυραννίδων), by whom all philosophy was being persecuted.

[51] See Francisco Pina Polo, "The Tyrant Must Die: Preventive Tyrannicide in Roman Political Thought," in *Repúblicas y Ciudadanos: Modelos de Participación Cívica en el Mundo Antiguo*, ed. Francisco Marco Simón et al. (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2006), 71-102, for the use of the Athenian tyrannicides as *exempla* in Republican Rome, particularly in artistic representations and the work of Cicero.

Dio's presence outside Rome may invoke the notion of exile as a means for philosophical initiation in the first century.[52] But the emphasis on the fear (δέος) of Rome's unnamed tyrants, likely including Domitian, contrasts sharply with sophistic appeals to authority in the classical period and that of Apollonius' approach to the same frightening situation at Rome. In fact, sophists in the *VS* tend to attack tyrants only after they have been removed from power, a stark contrast to Apollonius' skill at addressing tyranny head-on.[53]

Thus, in the *VS,* only after Domitian has died do sophists refer to him as a tyrannical emperor. Dio condemns Domitian when he no longer fears repercussions and feels that he can speak freely following the emperor's death. Philostratus relates that when he was in hiding, Dio used to wander through the Roman military camps disguised as a beggar. Only after Domitian's death, and when the troops are about to mutiny, Dio takes off his rags to reveal himself. In this Odyssean moment, before the troops, "he issued a strong accusation against the tyrant" (ἐπὶ μὲν τὴν κατηγορίαν τοῦ τυράννου πολὺς ἔπνευσεν) (*VS* 1.14.4). Dio's accusatory speech draws attention to the fear that was characteristic of Domitian's reign, but also to how different it was from previous moments in the *VS* when sophists had special influence and intimacy with rulers.

In this way, both the *VA* and the *VS* point to Domitian's reign as a dysfunctional tyranny and their differing details are only superficial. In fact, in both cases, Philostratus presents Domitian as a tyrant who departs from previous models of rulership, contrasting his reign with classical precedents and those of earlier Roman emperors. In the *VA*, Apollonius is given the power to circumvent the change that Domitian's reign represents, which is testimony to his

[52] Tim Whitmarsh, "'Greece is the World': Exile and Identity in the Second Sophistic," in *Being Greek under Rome: Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*, ed. Simon Goldhill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 269-305. See Chapter 3 for more on the nature of exile in the works of Philostratus.

[53] Cf. Agricola, whose willingness to voice his anger, even if it offended, rather than remain silent (Tac. *Ag*. 22.4) contrasts with the tyrant Domitian's duplicity (e.g., Tac. *Ag*. 39.1).

singularity as a sage and his ability to influence rulers.[54] But he is largely unsuccessful in his attempts to persuade Domitian to act in certain ways, a trait of the emperor given additional weight by Apollonius' contrasting relationships with Vespasian, Nerva, and to some extent, even Nero. And, as seen, according to the *VS*, the classical period witnessed a largely benevolent ruler-sophist relationship in which sophists could often positively influence the actions of these rulers. But Philostratus contrasts this past with the Roman period largely through the figure of Domitian, whom sophists distance themselves from out of fear or necessity. As a result, and in contrast to their classical predecessors, sophists no longer exert a positive influence over the ruler.

III. Philhellenic and Antonine Emperors

Philostratus characterizes the shift from the Flavian to the Antonine emperors as one of increasing goodwill between sophists and rulers following the reign of Domitian. In the *VS*, Philostratus makes more direct references to classical precedents to describe the acts of emperors. Philostratus likens both emperors and sophists to their classical predecessors and praises the Antonines in particular for showing interest in sophistic art and oratorical ability. This philhellenism is a hallmark of the period, and the rewards that emperors bestow upon Greek elites for their abilities is well-documented. As David Potter observes of the wide variety of sophists in the *VS*, "If Aspasius or Aelian or Favorinus could become sophists, and if emperors could be shown to be respectful of their learning, desiring them to perform, rewarding them with chairs or critical posts in government, then Philostratus' point that rhetoric was king and that it

[54] The unique response of Apollonius also shows how the *VA* functions as an encomium for him. See esp. Flinterman, *Power, Paideia & Pythagoreanism*.

defined the nexus of culture and power must be true."[55] As described by Philostratus, matters in the second century are therefore closer to the classical ideal of sophist-ruler relations in the virtuous emperor's respect for sophistic culture.

Yet, curiously, presumably because the emperors show such obvious benevolence, sophists often take their influence and intimacy too far. Sophists become angry with emperors or treat them in a way that shows less respect than befits the emperors. As a result, Philostratus praises the emperors for their restraint in punishing sophists. Adam Kemezis notes that "Philostratus is more anxious in his later work [the *VS*] to preserve the separation between the Greek cultural sphere and that of high-level Roman politics."[56] The direct interaction between sophists and emperors in this latter part of the *VS*, however, points to a certain fragility in such a separation. When relations break down, there are potentially negative consequences for sophists. But emperors, especially Marcus Aurelius, are the ones who show more "sophistic" qualities befitting Hellenic ideals and are thus able to maintain proper decorum with sophists. While such a characterization does indeed serve to portray philhellenic emperors positively, it is a stark reversal from the way relations ought to function ideally. In the case of sophistic blunders, Philostratus shows how, though the Antonine period was close to the classical model of sophist-ruler relations, it failed to live up to those ideals. As will be seen, this characterization of the second century points ahead to the uncertain and dangerously ambiguous treatment of Greek intellectual activity under the Severans.

Philostratus clearly separates the Antonine period from that of the Flavians by drawing contrasts between Domitian and later emperors in the *VS*. For example, Dio of Prusa, who as discussed above fled Rome during Domitian's reign, is said to have had a wholly different

[55] Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, 178.

[56] Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 219.

relationship with his successor Trajan. In what is perhaps an invention of Philostratus, the emperor Trajan marvels at the sophist's Greek speech, even though he cannot understand it.[57] Dio's favor with Trajan is attested elsewhere, especially in his orations *On Kingship* (*Or.* 1-4) addressed to the emperor.[58] Though Philostratus' anecdote about Trajan and Dio is comical, the author builds upon the emperor's earnest respect for sophistic talent by describing a similar quality in the emperors that follow. The author's use of classical precedent to highlight these positive relationships, however, complicates the portrayal of the Antonine period in the *VS*.

Instead of drawing direct connections between the two periods, an obvious act of praise for the second-century sophists under discussion, Philostratus refers to the classical past to highlight unusual differences. In one such instance, Herodes breaks down in speech before the emperor (*VS* 2.18.7). Philostratus here directly refers to an episode involving Demosthenes, who similarly broke down before Philip. In the case of Demosthenes, Philostratus portrays Demosthenes as impudent in demanding honors from the Athenians despite his personal failure before Philip and the failure of the embassy to recover the city Amphipolis (taken by Philip in 357 B.C.E.).[59] By contrast, Herodes desires to be famous (ὀνομαστός) so much so that he contemplates suicide by drowning himself in the Danube when he fails before the emperor, a clear sign of his commitment to genuine sophistic accomplishment. In a similar classical comparison, Philostratus compares Marcus to Alexander the Great in order to draw attention to

[57] Alongside Dio in his triumphal chariot, Trajan remarks, "I do not understand what you are saying, but I love you as I love myself" (τί μὲν λέγεις, οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ σε ὡς ἐμαυτόν (*VS* 1.14.5). Trajan clearly knew Greek since Trajan quotes Homer in a letter (Dio Cass. 68.3). Whether Philostratus himself read Latin is unclear, though he does have praise for the bilingualism of the Italian sophist Aelian (*VS* 2.88). Philostratus' praise could refer to Aelian's speaking and/or writing ability. See Chapter 4 for more discussion of Aelian's identity.

[58] See esp. *Or.* 3.2.

[59] Cf. Aeschin. 2.34-35, in which the details of Demosthenes' breakdown make his failure even more spectacular: after Demosthenes at first is unable to speak, Philip encourages him to recover and continue speaking, but he fails a second time.

the merits of the emperor's reign. According to one contemporary sophist, however, Marcus' enthusiasm is beyond even Alexander's philosophical pursuits.[60] This direct comparison to Alexander makes Marcus' reign in part an extension of those of his classical predecessors.[61]

Yet, these classical comparisons only hint at how sophist-ruler relations function during the Antonine period. While the reader appears to witness an improvement following the Flavian period in the figure of the emperor, as we will see, Philostratus sets imperial philhellenism in contrast to the mistakes and failures of contemporary sophists. As in the episode about Herodes' desire for suicide, Philostratus draws a distinction in sophistic character between classical and Antonine. And it is this role of the sophist and not the emperor that marks this period as different from the classical. In this way, though emperors admire sophists and Greek culture, oftentimes sophists do not deserve this praise and recognition. Philostratus thus shows emperors acting more "sophistically" than sophists themselves in order to characterize the imperfect nature of ruler-sophist relations at this time.

In many cases from this part of the *VS*, the positive relationship between Antonine emperors and sophists – in which sophists productively influence Roman rulers – hinges on the emperor's respect for sophistic ability and their granting of honors to those sophists. Though Philostratus frames this relationship as positive, it is markedly different from classical precedents; instead of sophists influencing rulers to act, rulers hold the power in these relationships. And Hadrian is the archetypical philhellenic ruler of this period in the *VS* because

[60] A certain Lucius, trained in philosophy by Musonius of Tyre, is known for his quips and advice for the sophist Herodes. In Rome, upon learning that Marcus intends to visit and learn from Sextus the Boeotian philosopher, Lucius exclaims: "O Zeus! The emperor of the Romans is already growing old, but he hangs a tablet from his neck and goes before his teacher, while my Emperor Alexander died at thirty-two years old" (*VS* 2.11.2). Cf. Dio Cass. 71.1.

[61] Alexander and Marcus' common title βασιλεύς in the text may also show how the Roman emperor builds upon classical precedent. See Stephen A. Stertz, "Marcus Aurelius as Ideal Emperor in Late-Antique Greek Thought," *The Classical World* 70 (1977): 433-39, for the common positive attributes of Marcus, including his connections to Alexander.

of his readiness to honor Greek sophists. Philostratus says of Hadrian in the life of Marcus of Byzantium, "The Emperor Hadrian admired him as well when he came on an embassy on behalf of Byzantium. Of the Emperors in the past, he was the most accustomed to give praise (ἐπιτηδειότατος τῶν πάλαι βασιλέων γενόμενος ἀρετὰς αὐξῆσαι)" (*VS* 1.68.2). And Hadrian's beneficence appears throughout the *VS*; among other episodes, he appoints Dionysus of Miletus as a satrap (1.61.1), he gives money to the city of Smyrna after Polemo convinces him to do so (1.70.3), and he puts Atticus the father of Herodes in charge of the water-supply in Troy despite the protests of others (2.4.1-2).[62]

Philostratus similarly portrays Hadrian in the *Heroikos* as the ideal philhellenic emperor when the Vinedresser recounts his visit to Ajax's tomb at Troy (*Her*. 8.1):

> Listen now, my friend. I had a grandfather who knew many things you do not believe. He used to say that the tomb of Ajax was destroyed by the sea near which it lies, and that bones appeared in it of a person eleven cubits tall. He also said that upon his arrival at Troy the emperor Hadrian embraced and kissed some of the bones, wrapped them up, and restored the present tomb of Ajax.

When this dialogue is meant to be set is discussed more in the next chapter, but from this passage it is clear that the recorded conversation must occur in Philostratus' present. Hadrian is remembered positively as he restores the bones of Ajax, an act set in contrast to Ajax's later attack on those Trojans who defile his tomb (*Her*. 18.2-6). Hadrian's restoration of past monuments is well-attested in other sources;[63] his overall respect for Greek culture and interest in classical myth appear to correspond to Hadrian's portrayal in the *VS*.

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[62] See Anthony J. Spawforth and Susan Walker, "The World of the Panhellenion I. Athens and Eleusis," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 78-104, Antony J. Spawforth, *Augustan Cultural Revolution*, 233-70, and Mary T. Boatwright, *Hadrian and the Cities of the Roman Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), for Hadrian's philhellenism and its effects across the empire during his reign.

[63] See Grossardt, Vol. 2, 387, who places this moment within the larger restoration program of Hadrian, including at the tomb of Alcibiades in Melisse (Ath. 14.474ff.) and Pompey in Pelusium (Dio Cass. 69.11.1, HA *Hadr*. 14.4).

Like Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius gives due recognition to sophistic talent; descriptions of him honoring sophists and attending their speeches form the majority of the positive imperial interactions within the *VS*. For example, visiting Smyrna, Marcus is impressed with the careful deliberation of Aristeides' speech (*VS* 2.35.2-4), and is even moved to tears when reading the sophist's lament for the destruction caused by several earthquakes in Smyrna (2.35.1). As a result, Marcus consents to the rebuilding of the city.[64] Elsewhere, Marcus appoints sophists to important positions, the chairs of rhetoric in Athens and Rome being the most distinguished. For example, the emperor appoints Theodotus to the chair in Athens and to receive a salary. According to Philostratus, this appointment in itself is not special since not all those who attain the chair are worthy of mention (καὶ οὐ τοῦτό πω λόγου ἄξιον, οὐδὲ γὰρ πάντες οἱ ἐπιβατεύοντες τοῦ θρόνου τούτου λόγου ἄξιοι), but Marcus picked Theodotus for his reputation (τὸν δὲ ἄνδρα τοῦτον ἀπὸ τῆς περὶ αὐτὸν δόξης αὐτὸς ἐπέκρινε) as a premier orator (2.20.1-2).[65] Philostratus thus focuses on Marcus and his preeminence among the Antonines for his recognition of sophistic talent.

The admirable traits of emperors also appear in their ability to recognize more subtle elements of sophistic culture. For example, the sophist Alexander "the Clay-Plato" (Πηλοπλάτων) is known for his beauty and takes part in an embassy on behalf of the city of Seleucia. Rumors spread, however, that he fabricates his youthful appearance (ὡς νεότητα ἐπιποιοῦντα τῷ εἴδει) (2.25.1). When he appears before the emperor, he believes that Antoninus is not paying attention, and chastises him (2.25):

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[64] Though not without the explanation by Philostratus that Marcus may not have consented to do so on his own, but royal minds are spurred on by eloquence and good advice (2.35.7).

[65] Others recognized by Marcus include Alexander the Clay-Plato, whom he appoints Imperial Secretary of the Greeks (2.26.2), Hermogenes of Tarsus whose skill he recognizes at a young age and upon whom he bestows gifts (2.30.1), and Adrian of Tyre whose skill he wishes to witness in Athens upon his initiation into the Mysteries (2.40.1-3).

> "Pay attention to me, Caesar," he said ("πρόσεχέ μοι," ἔφη "Καῖσαρ"). The Emperor, who was very irritated with him for using an overly bold presumptuousness (ὡς θρασυτέρᾳ τῇ ἐπιστροφῇ χρησάμενον), retorted: "I am paying attention, and I am familiar with you. You are the one who is always arranging his hair, cleaning his teeth, and polishing his nails, and always smells of myrrh."

By invoking the widespread rumor about Alexander's self-beautification, Antoninus attacks him in sophistic terms, calling attention to his suspect masculinity. If Alexander is more concerned with his appearance than with the content of his speeches, he will have failed as a sophist.[66] In this episode, Philostratus shows how different circumstances are from earlier periods in which emperors ideally learned sophistic traits through the instruction of sophists. If emperors by themselves are able to recognize sophistic talent and understand other markers of sophistic culture, the failure of contemporary sophists to do the same in the *VS* is all the more telling.

Sophists fail to measure up to their classical predecessors in a number of episodes from the *VS*; they tend to either break down in performing before or fail to communicate with an emperor. These sophists not only fail to influence emperors as their classical predecessors did but their failures allow Philostratus to give praise to the emperors instead. As with Alexander the Clay-Plato, who grows angry with Antoninus, other sophists become unreasonably angry with the emperors. In these episodes, when sophists presume too much intimacy, emperors must reestablish the boundary between sophist and emperor. In one such instance, Herodes complains in a letter about not hearing from Marcus as frequently as he had grown accustomed. The emperor replies, "Do not be angry with me because of this, but if I have annoyed you or am continuing to do so, demand reparation from me in the temple of Athena in your city at the time of the Mysteries" (2.15.5). Philostratus describes the emperor's apology as "generous"

[66] For scholarship on notions of masculinity and sophistry, see, e.g., Maud Gleason, *Making Men*, and Tim Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic*. *Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics, No. 35* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 32-40, who argues that masculinity, in addition to elite status and Greekness, was a primary marker of sophistic identity.

(φιλάνθρωπος) yet "firm" (ἐρρωμένη) (2.15.6). Marcus is the ideal supporter of Greek sophistic talent and that he is able to recognize it in Herodes is itself praiseworthy.[67] The reversal here is clear; Philostratus juxtaposes improper sophistic anger with virtuous imperial restraint, traits that are clearly unexpected for both parties at this point in the text.

Philostratus uses similar episodes to build upon this characterization of the philhellenic emperor by contrasting imperial restraint with sophistic presumption and anger. Emperors, therefore, in this part of the *VS* display sophistic traits of restraint more often than the sophists do and are praised for doing so. For instance, Favorinus quarrels with Hadrian over performing his public duties as a high priest. Favorinus is finally convinced to do so in a dream, but describes his life as one of paradoxes, including that "though he had a disagreement with the Emperor Hadrian, he did not suffer punishment (οὐδὲν ἔπαθεν)" (1.16.2). But for Philostratus, that Favorinus was still alive was actually a credit to Hadrian. And in the classical maxims that Philostratus invokes here, the emperor is superior to the sophist, apparently because of his power over life and death.[68] Hadrian does not give in to this anger to punish, but Philostratus idealizes the emperor for his mild treatment of a troublesome sophist. Philostratus may at first commend Favorinus but, as in other episodes, shows how the restrained ruler is the truly virtuous party, a message that possibly looks ahead to the actions of the Severan dynasty.

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[67] Since the emperor uses such apologetic language with the sophist, Philostratus argues that Marcus did not exile Herodes and that the sophist was even worthy (ἄξιος) of such a response from the emperor (*VS* 2.15.6). That Philostratus needs to revise the story of Herodes' supposed exile, however, shows that sophists pushing the limits of their intimacy with the emperor can clearly backfire.

[68] τουτὶ δὲ Ἀδριανοῦ ἔπαινος εἴη ἂν μᾶλλον, εἰ βασιλεὺς ὢν ἀπὸ τοῦ ἴσου διεφέρετο πρὸς ὃν ἐξῆν ἀποκτεῖναι. βασιλεὺς δὲ κρείττων, 'ὅτε χώσεται ἀνδρὶ χέρηι,' ἢν ὀργῆς κρατῇ καὶ 'θυμὸς δὲ μέγας ἐστὶ διοτρεφέων βασιλήων,' ἢν λογισμῷ κολάζηται. βέλτιον δὲ ταῦτα ταῖς τῶν ποιητῶν δόξαις προσγράφειν τοὺς εὖ τιθεμένους τὰ τῶν βασιλέων ἤθη. "But this should be credited rather to Hadrian, seeing that, though he was Emperor, he disagreed on equal terms with one whom it was within his power to put to death. For a king/emperor is really superior, 'When he is angry with a lesser man,' if he controls his anger and 'Mighty is the anger of Zeus-nurtured kings,' if it be kept in check by reason. Those who endeavor to guide and amend the characteristics of kings/emperors would do well to add this saying to the sentiments expressed by the poets" (*VS* 1.16.3). The first maxim is possibly a reference to Dem. 18.205.

Apart from Hadrian, other emperors like Marcus show more varying degrees of restraint in dealing with the misbehavior of sophists. Caught up in an apparent conspiracy against Marcus,[69] Herodes becomes angry during his tribunal, launching insults directly at the emperor and his family (2.14.10):

> And he did not even use figured speech in his oration,[70] even though it might have seemed that a man who had been trained in this kind of oratory would have been able to control his own anger. But with a verbose and unguarded tongue he continued his attack and said: "This is what I get for showing hospitality to Lucius [Verus], though it was you who sent him to me! This is how you make judgements, renouncing me by showing favor to a woman and a three-year-old child!"[71]

Trained in figured speech, Herodes should have used it before the emperor but is instead overcome with anger. Yet, Marcus does not react or change his expression listening to the sophist, and Philostratus claims that we must consider the emperor's actions in the trial as part of his pursuit of knowledge/philosophy (ἡμεῖς δὲ τῶν ἐπιδήλως τῷ Μάρκῳ φιλοσοφηθέντων καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν δίκην ταύτην ἡγώμεθα). Philostratus thus commends Marcus in the text for his sophist-like restraint, which shows the leeway that a sophist like Herodes could potentially have with an emperor. But Herodes' influence only has a partial effect; Marcus shifts his anger to the freedmen of Herodes, on whom he imposes a punishment that he describes "as mild as possible" (τὴν ὀργὴν ὁ Μάρκος ἐς τοὺς ἀπελευθέρους ἔτρεψε κολάσει χρησάμενος ὡς οἷόν τε ἐπιεικεῖ)

[69] The Quintilii accuse Herodes of acting like a tyrant to the Athenians. Herodes in turn accuses the Quintilii of conspiring against him, but they make an appeal to Marcus (2.13.5-14.5). The emperor does not immediately acquit Herodes, suspecting that he might be part of the conspiracy in which Lucius Verus was implicated (2.14.5-9). See Dio Cassius 71.1-2.

[70] σχηματίζειν τὸν λόγον or "covert allusion" was the ability to compose a speech with veiled meaning. See the glossary in *VS* (Wright, 570). Cf. Frederick Ahl, "The Art of Safe Criticism in Greece and Rome," *The American Journal of Philology* 105 (1984): 201-3, on this passage.

[71] Marcus' wife Faustina and daughter had previously convinced the emperor to take in the Quintilii.

(2.14.13).[72] Of these men, only Alcimedon is spared, the prior loss of his children being punishment enough. Because Marcus cannot fully hold back his anger, this episode shows the partial efficacy of sophistic advice during this period, in contrast to the classical model in which sophists held much more sway.

In addition to the possibility of direct punishment, other episodes show how sophists could quickly fall out of favor because of their mistakes before Roman authority figures. Philostratus describes the sophist Polemo as being in the good graces of Trajan and Hadrian. When he disrespects Antoninus Pius by expelling the future emperor from his house in Smyrna, however, Polemo's reputation with the imperial family is in danger. Antoninus, however, later jokes about these events when he hosts Polemo in Rome as emperor (1.71.7-8). Like those episodes above, this one similarly draws out the positive traits of the Roman ruler, since Antoninus is described as "mild" (πρᾶος) in contrast to the "arrogant" Polemo (ὑπέρφρων).[73] This juxtaposition shows that Antoninus' leniency, like that of other emperors, serves to draw attention to sophistic failure during this period.[74] The divide between sophist and emperor is compounded by describing the dispute as one between an emperor (βασιλεύς) and a mere man (ἀνήρ), a divide that Philostratus implies Polemo does not recognize. This episode demonstrates that imperial favor toward sophists like Polemo is potentially in danger if sophists cannot behave correctly. Therefore, because of sophists' bad behavior, Antonine ruler-sophist relations are more unstable than their classical precedents.

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[72] Cf. *VS* 1.47.1-3, in which Philostratus deliberately contrasts Nerva's calm with the anger of Nicetes of Smyrna at the consul Rufus.

[73] "Let this suffice to show how mild an Emperor could be, and how arrogant a mere man (Ἐχέτω μοι [καὶ] ταῦτα δήλωσιν βασιλέως τε πρᾴου καὶ ἀνδρὸς ὑπέρφρονος). For in truth Polemo was so arrogant that he conversed with cities as his inferiors, with rulers not as superior (δυνασταῖς δὲ ἀπὸ τοῦ μὴ ὑφειμένου), and the gods as his equals" (1.72.1).

[74] In a similar run-in with this emperor at about the same time, Herodes supposedly struck Antoninus on Mount Ida, though Philostratus claims this never took place (*VS* 2.8.1-2).

Philostratus' characterization of the period immediately before the Severan regime is less definite than the discussion above outlines but does suggest a discontinuity between the Antonine and Severan dynasties. The *VS* features little of the reign of Commodus (r. 177-192), who is only mentioned at two key points in the text. In one, Pollux of Naucratis wins the chair of rhetoric at Athens since he charms Commodus with his declamations (2.47.7). And a lengthier episode involves the teacher of Pollux, Adrian of Tyre. Commodus appoints Adrian as Imperial Secretary, to which Adrian reacts favorably despite being on his deathbed (2.42.1):

> When he fell ill at Rome and was actually dying, Commodus, making excuses that he had not done so sooner, made him Imperial Secretary (ἐπιστολεύς). [Adrian] then invoked the Muses, as he was accustomed, reverently saluted the Emperor's rescript (προσκυνήσας δὲ τὰς βασιλείους δέλτους), and breathed out his soul over it, thus making his funeral shroud with this honor. He was around eighty years old when he died and was so famous that many actually believed that he was a magician (γόης).

Philostratus continues by arguing against this claim of magic via his earlier discussion of Dionysius of Miletus. This sophist was similarly accused of practicing magic, and Philostratus proves that Dionysius did not teach his students the Chaldean arts since he would not have wanted to endanger his reputation (1.60.1-6). As with Apollonius in the *VA*, the accusation of magic could be used to attack sophistic reputation and suggest one's possible threat to the imperial regime.[75] But the treatment of magic in these sources shows their differing goals in representing the Roman emperors. For while the magical arts of Apollonius are seen as a threat to Domitian's reign in the *VA*, nothing is similarly said of Commodus' rule here, suggesting a less contentious relationship between emperor and sophist. Though a callous act by the emperor, the appointment of Adrian as Imperial Secretary is in line with the positive treatment of sophists

[75] See Abraham, "Magic and Religious Authority," 12ff. for how the use of magic by Apollonius puts him beyond being merely a sophist as a "holy man" in Philostratus' work. See Anderson, *Philostratus*, 121-33, for the dichotomy between the "sophist" and "holy man" personas of Apollonius. Cf. Adam Kemezis, "Politics and the Fictional Narrator in Philostratus' *Apollonius*," *Classical Antiquity* 33 (2014): 87 n. 89. Magic and theurgy play a major role in the *VS* of Eunapius (e.g., Maximus of Ephesus is charged with magic under the emperor Valens).

by the previous Antonines. Especially when one reads this act of the emperor alongside the more genuine appointment of Pollux, Commodus' reign shows little sign of dysfunctional rule. In contrast to the senatorial anxieties of someone like Dio Cassius in Rome under the reign of Commodus, Philostratus presents the period as a continuation of Antonine respect for sophistic ability.[76] As a result, despite the somewhat unstable nature of Antonine sophist-ruler relations, Philostratus draws a clear contrast between their rule and that of the Severans.[77]

IV. Philostratus in Severan Rome

As discussed in the Introduction, recent scholarship has focused on how the new political and cultural circumstances may have affected Greek literature produced under the Severans. Because of major political change during this period, scholars have paid special attention to situating imperial literature within an author's historical reality.[78] For Philostratus in particular, the Severan regime offers a lens through which his work can be interpreted. In particular, his presence in Severan Rome affected his portrayal of this period, especially in the cases when he records events that he observed firsthand. I build on the argument of the previous sections to show that Philostratus portrays the events which he observed or directly participated in as

[76] Cf. Gleason, "Identity Theft," 48-52, in which Dio describes a widening gap between appearances and reality during the reign of Commodus. I intend to show that Philostratus' own anxieties are present in the subsequent Severan period, when he himself was present in Rome.

[77] This characterization of Commodus contrasts with other Severan historiography, in which Commodus is strongly differentiated from his father Marcus Aurelius. Cf. Herodian, Book 1. For discussion, see Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 180. By contrast, in Book 3 of Herodian, Olivier Hekster, "Potestà imperiale: l'imperatore al comando nel terzo libro di Erodiano," in *Erodiano tra crisi e trasformazione*, ed. Alessandro Galimberti (Milano: Vita e Pensiero, 2017), 111-17, sees a more favorable portrayal of Commodus inheriting rule than Caracalla (though he concludes that no one can live up to the reign of Marcus). Severus, however, adopts himself into the Antonine family, stressing continuity with the previous regime. See also Olivier Hekster, *Emperors and Ancestors: Roman Rulers and the Constraints of Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 209-17, and Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, 109ff.

[78] Sidebottom, "Severan Historiography," 72-73, discusses the impetus for writing history during 1) a high number of civil and foreign wars and 2) changes of dynasty, among other factors.

markedly different from his narrative of earlier periods, including the classical and recent Roman pasts.

The uncertainty about imperial power in the recent past betrays Philostratus' misgivings about the relatively unstable political situation of his present. Since Hadrian is the most disposed of those emperors "in the past" (πάλαι) (*VS* 1.68.2, see above) to foster merit toward sophists, Philostratus lays the foundations for how he conceives of his present as distinct from the Roman past in terms of imperial behavior. This historical divide emerges in several ways. For one, the sophist's own persona begins to intrude in the latter parts of the *VS*, and we begin to see his direct experience of the imperial regime appear in this work as well as in the *Letters*.

But Philostratus' portrayal of his present is even more ambiguous when it comes to how the relationship between Greeks, specifically intellectual sophists, and Roman authorities should function. His portrayal of the Antonine past shows sophist-ruler relations as ostensibly positive in how emperors act toward sophists, but also as a period of disruption through several episodes of sophistic failure. Philostratus extends the instability of Roman ruler-sophist relations into the Severan period and his own present. In contrast to the Antonines, however, the Severan emperors are less clear in their allegiance to Hellenic culture through the honoring of sophists. A sense of uncertainty and apprehension instead surrounds the acts of these emperors, in which case nothing about sophist-ruler relations is as definitive as it has been in the past. As a curative to this instability, Philostratus emphasizes his influence and those of his sophist associates to make the imperial regime more classically-minded. Unlike the Antonine period in which imperial acts were clearly praiseworthy, this period manifests an instability and potential crisis, and Philostratus' descriptions reflect the ambiguous state of politics.

The *Suda* records the life of Philostratus and how he travels from Athens to Rome.[79] The works of Philostratus likewise locate and position the author in Rome for an important period in his sophistic career. While in Rome, he describes himself in a variety of ways as a close associate of the Severan family. Based mostly on evidence from the *VS*, we can date Philostratus' birth ca. 170. Before coming to Rome in ca. 203-207, Philostratus probably spent his youth largely in Athens and Lemnos. Though not continuously in Rome during the 210s, Philostratus did follow the travelling imperial court before finding himself in Ionia and Athens again during the 220s and 230s.[80] His direct experience of the Severan regime, therefore, influences Philostratus' narrative at several key points in the *VS*.

In particular, the reign of Septimius Severus (193-211 C.E.) is the backdrop for several anecdotes about imperial interaction with sophists in the *VS*, and though they appear similar to those of the Antonine period, Philostratus creates an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear around them. For instance, Heracleides is said to have broken down in an extempore speech before the emperor. Yet, unlike in sophistic failures from earlier in the *VS*, Heracleides is overcome with fear before the emperor. Intimidated and afraid of the court and bodyguard (αὐλὴν καὶ δορυφόρους δείσαντα) (2.75.1), Heracleides actually had an appropriate response according to Philostratus (2.75.2): "A single listener with an arrogant expression, delayed applause, or even unusual clapping can frustrate an extempore speaker."[81] Philostratus thus presents Heracleides' mistake as a technical one since the presence of Heracleides' rival Antipater must have caused the speaker much consternation. The sophist's fear, however, is unparalleled in any prior

[79] *Suda* s.v. Φιλόστρατος, φ 421 Adler.

[80] See Ewen Bowie, "Philostratus: the Life of a Sophist," in *Philostratus*, ed. Ewen Bowie and Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 19-25. The *Suda* says that Philostratus flourished during the reign of the emperor Septimius Severus (193-211) and died during the reign of Philip the Arab (244-49).

[81] ἐκκρούει γὰρ σχεδίου λόγου καὶ ἀκροατὴς σεμνῷ προσώπῳ καὶ βραδὺς ἔπαινος καὶ τὸ μὴ κροτεῖσθαι συνήθως

sophistic blunders before the Antonines. Instead, as seen above, fear plays a dominant role in sophists' motives for distancing themselves from Domitian earlier in the *VS*. The uncertainty here over whether Severus is more like Domitian or the Antonines is unresolved in the text and also appears in the episodes recounting the patronage of the emperor.[82]

Severus' patronage of sophists is fundamentally different from that of the Antonines because we witness the emperor often taking a direct hand in the social advancement of sophists. For example, Antipater's advancement to Imperial Secretary is not the result of any recognition of sophistic skill but rather focused on the emperor's own prestige. Philostratus reports that Antipater composed an historical account of Severus' reign and his appointment is a direct result of this composition (2.65.2): "He composed an historical account of the achievements of the Emperor Severus (ἐς ἱστορίαν ἔλαβε τὰ Σεβήρου τοῦ βασιλέως ἔργα), by whom he was appointed Imperial Secretary, a post in which he was brilliantly successful." Antipater later tries to arrange a marriage between his daughter and Hermocrates, an arrangement that Severus personally oversees, forcing the reluctant sophist to marry.[83]

Both of these episodes speak to the emperor's new active role in Roman society, as envisioned by Philostratus. Severus is known to have actively promoted the legitimacy of his reign and we can understand his actions recorded in the *VS* as perhaps part of that aim. But Philostratus also portrays Severus as fundamentally different from his predecessors earlier in the *VS*. First, the nature of the emperor's patronage appears to have changed since direct praise of

[82] Severus notoriously extended membership in the imperial guard to those outside Italy. Cf. Dio Cass. 74.2.5; Herod. 2.13. Arguing against Lukas De Blois, Jussi Rantala suggests that Dio may have invoked an old *topos* viewing Italy as place of "true Romans," even though Italy was arguably in decline at this point. See Jussi Rantala, *The* Ludi Saeculares *of Septimius Severus: The Ideologies of a New Roman Empire* (London: Routledge, 2017), 153-4.

[83] "[Hermocrates] did not yield until the Emperor Severus summoned him to the East and gave him the girl [in marriage]." This marriage, however, does not last: "[Hermocrates] dissolved the marriage after a short time, believing that she had neither a pleasant appearance nor a favorable character" (2.70.2).

the emperor himself is a new way to gain prestige in the *VS*. Antipater's *The Deeds of the Emperor Severus* shows that what was once independent imperial praise for Greek declamation is now directly tied to social advancement.[84] And Hermocrates' acquiescence to the emperor's demands points to another novel element of this regime, since sophists must quietly bow to the demands of the emperor instead of making any sort of appeal. Though the marriage is unsuccessful, Hermocrates' consent to the emperor's demands even after making demands of his own, speaks to a new and unsteady relationship between sophist and ruler.[85] The sophist's acquiescence is a far cry from those of the stubborn and unruly sophists of the Antonine period.

Philostratus may have witnessed some of these episodes involving the Severans firsthand (or at least heard about them from firsthand observers), an element that compounds the anxiety that they create.[86] The confusion that the Severan regime causes is only addressed by the figure of Philostratus himself, who can see the long trajectory of rulers that have brought the Roman Empire to this unstable political moment. In the court of Caracalla in 213, Philostratus describes a speech of Heliodorus that he himself witnessed. Unwillingly summoned to defend a case, Heliodorus is physically dragged before the emperor. But after he arrives, Heliodorus looks boldly (θαρραλέον) at Caracalla saying that he speaks alone against the command of the emperor

[84] As with the composition of imperial panegyric, this sort of relationship may have been the result of several factors characteristic of the Severan period, including the change in dynasty but also Severus' encouragement of history writing. See Sidebottom, "Severan Historiography," 72.

[85] Philostratus explains that Hermocrates received gifts from the emperor for his declamation. Severus even acquiesced to the sophist's trivial request for frankincense, at which the emperor blushes (*VS* 2.71). Strategic marriages between imperial family members and Roman elites or foreign dynasts were common (see, e.g., Caracalla discussion in Chapter 3), but this interference with the marriage of others is not as well-attested. See Susan Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the time of Ulpian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991); Suzanne Dixon, *The Roman Family* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1992), 61-97, for Roman marriage in general.

[86] In the latter part of the *VS,* Philostratus often inserts himself as a firsthand observer or recorder. For instance, he mentions his own teachers Proclus of Naucratis (2.59.1) and Damianus of Ephesus (2.64.1-2), the latter of whom in his old age gave up some oratory but still welcomed students. Philostratus also mentions his interview (ξυνουσίαν) with Damianus, followed by a second and third, to gather information about this sophist's life (ibid.).

(2.91.2). The emperor jumps up and says that Heliodorus is "an innovation that has appeared only in my own time" (τῶν ἐμαυτοῦ καιρῶν εὕρημα)." Philostratus thus frames the entire episode as novel in terms of sophistic speech as well as in the confusing actions of the emperor. Philostratus is confused about the novelty of what he sees, describing how when the emperor raised his hand and shook his cloak, he and his fellow sophists did not know whether to laugh at the emperor making a joke. Instead, inexplicably, Caracalla awards Heliodorus the equestrian rank, an act that Philostratus ascribes to Fortune showing her power through such confusing events (διὰ τῶν οὕτω παραλόγων).[87] This sort of first-person perplexity continues to influence Philostratus' descriptions of the Severan regime.

Despite these novelties in imperial rule, Philostratus continues to make comparisons between classical and Severan sophist-ruler relations. But unlike what he does with earlier episodes, Philostratus often uses these classical references in order to reinforce the ambiguity and uncertainty of Severan rule. For example, Septimius Severus requests that the speech *Against Leptines* by Demosthenes be performed by the sophist Apollonius of Athens (2.57.2). Philostratus here may reference the provincial origin of Severus in Leptis Magna and his outsider status in Rome, a novel element of Severan rule that Philostratus alludes to through a classical reference.[88] The uncertainty about whether the emperor's request refers to Demosthenes or suggests the foreign origin of Severus forces the reader to grapple with the ambiguity of the emperor's allegiance to Greek culture. Similarly, following the exchange between Caracalla and Heliodorus above, the sophist performs for Caracalla a declamation about Demosthenes'

[87] Cf. Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 224, on this episode.

[88] See Chapter 2 for a discussion on the Severans as outsiders. In contrast to sophists in particular, Julie Langford, "Speaking out of Turn(us): Subverting Severan Constructions of Ethnicity, Masculinity and Felicitas," *Ancient World* 39 (2008), 127, states, "In a period where sophists and their followers claimed special training to expose poseurs through markers in physiognomy, mores or accent, Severus was readily identifiable as a provincial."

breakdown in front of Philip (2.91.4). The ideal circumstances of the classical period, in which Philip excuses Demosthenes' breakdown, are earlier replicated in part by Marcus.[89] But, as seen above, Philostratus makes Caracalla's own reaction more ambiguously dangerous through his confusing speech and unexpected promotion of Heliodorus. Heliodorus' career follows such an unexpected trajectory that Philostratus reports that this sophist is exiled from Rome (though Philostratus does not state the charge) only *after* Caracalla's death (2.91.6).

Caracalla's ambiguous allegiance to sophists tends to characterize each of his appearances in the *VS*. In one such instance, Caracalla deems the appearance and style of the speaker Philiscus offensive. Summoned by the Heordaean Macedonians to perform public services in their city, Philiscus refuses and must defend himself in Rome. During Philiscus' speech, Philostratus describes Caracalla as hostile (ἀποστραφείς) toward the sophist and says that he "kept silencing him (ἐπεστόμιζεν) throughout the whole speech, both by expressing his own opinions during the other's allotted time (διείρων ἑαυτὸν τοῦ ὕδατος), and by snapping questions at him (καὶ ἐρωτήσεις ἐν στενὰς ποιούμενος)" (*VS* 2.87.4). The emperor mocks the sophist's effeminate hair and decides the case in favor of the other side. Immediately following this decision, Philiscus retorts, "You have given me exemption from public services (λειτουργιῶν ἀτέλειαν) by giving me the chair at Athens," to which the emperor angrily responds, "Neither you nor any other teacher is exempt! Never would I, for the sake of a few miserable speeches (μικρὰ καὶ δύστηνα λογάρια), deprive the cities of men who ought to perform public services" (2.87.5). Yet, surprisingly, Philostratus of Lemnos is immediately

[89] Cf. *VS* 1.18.7.

granted an exemption from public service by the emperor as a reward for his declamation (ibid.).[90]

Many elements of this episode invoke those of earlier run-ins between sophists and the Antonine emperors, in particular the sophist's anger, Favorinus' appeal for exemption from public service (1.16.2-3), and the mockery of Alexander the Clay-Plato's effeminacy (2.24-5). But, despite the superficial similarities between these episodes and that of Caracalla and Philiscus, Caracalla's actions represent a deteriorated relationship between emperor and sophist on the part of the emperor. As discussed above, Favorinus is eventually persuaded to take up the priesthood but Philostratus focuses on praising Hadrian's restraint in the matter. In the case of Caracalla and Philiscus, however, the emperor angrily addresses the sophist and even uses public service as a punishment. Philostratus of Lemnos is subsequently rewarded for his sophistic abilities, an event that draws attention to the fickleness of Caracalla's alliances and the instability of his relationship to worthy Greek sophists. With this subtle evocation of earlier episodes of imperial restraint, the narrative makes Caracalla's actions representative of a contemporary uncertainty, especially in clear contrast to the events of the recent past.[91]

Overall, these descriptions of Severan rule look back to the recent and classical pasts either through direct reference or implied similarities. In most cases, however, these references serve to reinforce the picture of the deteriorated relationship between sophists and Severan

[90] Probably both the son-in-law and (great-?)nephew of our Philostratus, the Lemnian Philostratus has been erroneously credited with writing the first *Imagines*, but was the author of a letter to the imperial secretary Antipater. See below.

[91] The "few miserable speeches" (*VS* 2.87.5) are also an echo of Demosthenes' *On the False Embassy*, in which the orator berates Aeschines for his duplicitous nature. He describes Aeschines as offering one version of himself on the embassy to Philip and another to the people of Athens to whom he gives miserable speeches. This reference to events outside the *VS* may be another subtle technique to position the contemporary events in juxtaposition to classical precedent: οὐ λέγειν εἴσω τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἔχοντ᾽, Αἰσχίνη, δεῖ, οὔ, ἀλλὰ πρεσβεύειν εἴσω τὴν χεῖρ᾽ ἔχοντα. σὺ δ᾽ ἐκεῖ προτείνας καὶ ὑποσχὼν καὶ καταισχύνας τούτους ἐνθάδε σεμνολογεῖ, καὶ **λογάρια δύστηνα** μελετήσας καὶ φωνασκήσας οὐκ οἴει δίκην δώσειν τηλικούτων καὶ τοσούτων ἀδικημάτων (Dem. 19.255).

rulers, primarily Severus and Caracalla. Philostratus portrays the interactions between sophists and emperors as more ambiguous in terms of the emperors' allegiance to Hellenic culture and respect for sophistic talent. This dangerous ambiguity is certainly a result of Philostratus' own befuddlement at witnessing these events at the imperial court. Philostratus' firsthand knowledge drives the narrative of the later part of the *VS*. When read alongside some of the *Letters*, the *VS* clearly shows Philostratus portraying himself as a means of fixing this broken relationship with imperial authority in the form of his own intellectual activity at Rome.

Philostratus' firsthand knowledge of the imperial regime in the *VS* highlights his claim to intimacy with the Severan family and his membership in an intellectual circle overseen by the empress Julia Domna. Whitmarsh cautions against imagining any official court in the "salon" style. Instead, Philostratus' descriptions of an intellectual "circle" are more figurative and suggest his personal claim of holding an especial intimacy with the Severans, including Julia.[92] Kendra Eshleman builds upon this claim by showing how Philostratus positions himself as part of a special intellectual lineage in the *VS*. By highlighting certain sophistic students and teachers, Philostratus includes himself in a tradition that reached its height a generation earlier, under the Antonines.[93] According to Eshleman, the *VS* is "a masterful attempt by Philostratus to define and legitimate his own position by conjuring up a world in which he fits, and to convince readers to accept this construction as unquestionably self-evident."[94]

I would add, however, that Philostratus' place in Severan Rome should be understood in light of his accounts of problematic rulers and their role in shaping this intellectual circle at

[92] Whitmarsh, "Prose Literature," 31-34.

[93] Kendra Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals in the Roman Empire: Sophists, Philosophers, and Christians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 125-48.

[94] Ibid., 148.

Rome. In the *VS*, Philostratus deems certain sophists, like Heliodorus,[95] to be part of the circle simply for their brilliance. But he gives other sophists membership explicitly or implicitly through their common association with the imperial family. Philiscus shortly before his run-in with Caracalla is said to have "attached himself closely to Julia's circle of mathematicians [astrologers] and philosophers and obtained from her with the Emperor's [Caracalla's] consent the chair [of rhetoric] at Athens" (*VS* 2.87.2). According to Philostratus, there is a direct line between inclusion in Julia's circle and imperial prestige. But as seen, Severan emperors reverse the attitude of the well-disposed imperial apparatus in order to punish sophists like Philiscus, who must still acquiesce to imperial authority and perform public service.[96]

Membership in Julia's circle implies a certain influence over the imperial family, but only Philostratus allows himself to assert that influence productively. As Imperial Secretary and tutor to the Severan family, Antipater appears to hold a special status as part of Julia's circle in the *VS* (2.65). After his narration of Antipater's death by voluntary fasting (καρτερία), however, Philostratus reveals that Antipater's high influence within the imperial family may have crossed the line with the emperor Caracalla (2.66.2):

> For he had been appointed as teacher to the sons of Severus and we used to call him "Tutor of the Gods" when we applauded his lectures (θεῶν διδάσκαλον ἐκαλοῦμεν αὐτὸν ἐν τοῖς ἐπαίνοις τῆς ἀκροάσεως). When the younger of the two was put to death on the charge that he was plotting against his brother, he wrote a letter to the elder brother that contained a monody and a dirge (μονῳδίαν ἐπέχουσαν καὶ θρῆνον), lamenting that he now had only one eye instead of two and only one hand, and that those whom he had taught to take up arms for one another had now, he heard, taken them up against one another. We must not doubt that the Emperor was greatly angered by these remarks (ὑφ' ὧν παροξυνθῆναι τὸν βασιλέα μὴ ἀπιστῶμεν), for they would have indeed angered even a private person (καὶ γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἰδιώτην ταῦτα παρώξυνε) who wanted to uncover an apparent plot against himself.

[95] μηδὲ Ἡλιόδωρος ἀπαξιούσθω σοφιστῶν κύκου παράδοξον ἀγώνισμα τύχης γενόμενος (*VS* 2.91.1).

[96] An interesting parallel appears in the story of Philostratus the Egyptian who is said to have studied philosophy with Queen Cleopatra and still was called a sophist. Philostratus the author also points out that Cleopatra considered the love of learning a sensuous pleasure (ᾗ καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ φιλολογεῖν τρυφὴν εἶχεν) (*VS* 1.11).

As with tyrannical emperors earlier in the *VS*, Antipater's criticism is carried out at a distance. By both sending a letter and using veiled language, Antipater indirectly attacks the emperor for the murder of his brother Geta. As with the praiseworthy restraint of the Antonines, Philostratus in the text ostensibly justifies and forgives Caracalla's angry reaction to this letter. But the episode is not so straightforward; other factors contribute to representing the Severan period as one of uncertainty and instability. Philostratus points to Antipater's transgression as a culmination of his fall from prominence in which he was relieved of his position as consul and governor of Bithynia.[97] The manner of Antipater's death is therefore the final misfortune to befall the sophist and likely a direct result of the emperor's anger. Membership in the intellectual circle and fickle imperial favor are therefore clearly no guarantees of safety for sophists at this time.

By stating that "we must not doubt" (μὴ ἀπιστῶμεν) that Caracalla was angered by Antipater's remarks (2.66.2), Philostratus assumes that Caracalla's reaction will be angry and makes no claims about whether it actually occurred. This assumption is in sharp contrast to those instances of imperial restraint earlier in the *VS*, in which Philostratus often assumes the opposite about emperors, actively praising imperial restraint. For example, Philostratus admires Marcus' ability to hide his anger during the trial of Herodes (2.14.12): "As listening to the defense speeches, he was greatly pained (ἤλγησεν), though without showing it (ἀφανῶς), by many things that he heard." Hadrian also restrains his anger, even though he had the right to be upset with Favorinus: "He disagreed on equal terms with one whom it was within his power to put to death"

[97] The reasoning given by Philostratus is that "he showed himself too ready to use the sword" (δόξας δὲ ἑτοιμότερον χρῆσθαι τῷ ξίφει) while governing (*VS* 2.66.1). Antipater's penchant for violence is left unexplained, but Bithynia was an important region in the civil war between Severus and Pescennius Niger (Herod. 3.2.9) and may have continued as a potential site of unrest. See also Vitalij M. Zubar, "The North Pontic Area and Septimius Severus," *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 2.2 (1995): 182-95.

(1.16.3). In addition, Philostratus distances Caracalla from these virtuous emperors by linking him to the average private citizen (ἰδιώτην), something done to the sophists in these earlier moments from the *VS*.[98] Due to this somewhat unclear reversal in the nature of imperial virtue, Philostratus shows that even for sophists with purported influence over the Severans, their ability to interact positively with the emperors is still uncertain.

Philostratus' letters to the imperial family function similarly to those of Antipater but imply a more positive relationship with the imperial family. A letter of Philostratus not only uses veiled language to attack Caracalla but asserts a presumed influence over the emperor (*Ep*. 72). This letter will be discussed more in the next chapter, but Philostratus is similar to Antipater in his chastisement of the emperor. Though the letter must have been sent during Caracalla's lifetime, Whitmarsh sees little evidence for Philostratus being an intimate of the emperor.[99] But as in the case of Antipater, the choice to write a letter may add needed distance between Philostratus and his addressee, in which case he is more able to offer criticism.[100] In any case, the letter represents the influence that Philostratus claims to have over the Severan family, a fact that builds upon his first-hand knowledge of the Severan regime in both the latter part of the *VS* and the letter to Julia Domna.

In this example from the *Letters*, Philostratus presents himself as having an influence

[98] E.g., the occasional contrast between the emperor (βασιλεύς) and a man (ἀνήρ). Cf. *VS* 1.72.1.

[99] Tim Whitmarsh, "Prose Literature," 35. See also Jaap-Jan Flinterman, "De Sofist, de Keizerin en de Concubine: Philostratus' Brief aan Julia Domna," *Lampas* 30 (1997): 86, who takes this letter to show Philostratus exaggerating his influence over the emperor.

[100] See Owen Hodkinson, "Better than Speech: Some Advantages of the Letter in the Second Sophistic," in *Ancient Letters: Classical and Late Antique Epistolography*, ed. Ruth Morello and A. D. Morrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 288-95.

over the Severans as a confidant of the empress Julia Domna.[101] At the end of the letter, Philostratus traces a genealogy of sophistic imitation, starting with Pericles and Plato and finishing with Plutarch (*Ep*. 73):

> πεῖθε δὴ καὶ σύ, ὦ βασίλεα, τὸν θαρσαλεώτερον τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Πλούταρχον μὴ ἄχθεσθαι τοῖς σοφισταῖς μηδὲ ἐς διαβολὰς καθίστασθαι τοῦ Γοργίου. εἰ δὲ οὐ πείθεις, σὺ μέν, οἷα σου σοφία καὶ μῆτις, οἶσθα τί χρὴ ὄνομα θέστάι τῷ τοιῷδε· ἐγὼ δὲ εἰπεῖν ἔχων οὐκ ἔχω.
>
> Then you do too, your majesty, please urge Plutarch, boldest of the Greeks, not to take offense at the sophists and not to create enmity with Gorgias. If you do not succeed in persuading [Plutarch], at least you know, such is your wisdom and cleverness, what name to apply to a man of that sort; I could tell you, but I can't.

As he does in the *VS*, Gorgias appears here because of his praiseworthy influence on Greek rhetoric. This influence, however, extends from the classical past into Philostratus' present as the author creates a lineage of imitation that passes through Plutarch (46-120 C.E.). Graham Anderson argues that the treatment of Plutarch as if he were still alive is a literary conceit borrowed from two episodes in Plato's *Phaedrus* in which the deceased Pericles speaks to Socrates and Phaedrus (269a-c) and Phaedrus is instructed to communicate with the deceased Lysias, Homer, and Solon (278b-c).[102] In this way, according to Anderson, Philostratus again emphasizes the importance of Plato, who in the letter admires the style of Gorgias. Philostratus, however, plays coy with the empress as he defers to her judgement of Plutarch's literary merit in the long line of Greek sophistic heroes he has crafted.

Philostratus' creation of a sophistic lineage and his request of the empress reflect the uncertainty of the Severan age, a characterization that is similar to what we have observed in the

[101] See Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 226. As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, Philostratus also positions himself in the circle of the empress and claims Julia Domna as inspiration for composing the *VA* (1.3).

[102] Anderson, "Putting Pressure on Plutarch," 43-45. Cf. Penella, "Philostratus' Letter to Julia Domna"; Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet, "Philostratus, Plutarch, Gorgias and the End of Plato's *Phaedrus*," *Classical Quarterly* 62 (2012): 436-39.

VS. Philostratus calls upon Julia Domna because of his respect for her learnedness as well as her powerful position. But the ending of the letter suggests that Philostratus also shares in the esoteric knowledge of which name to give Plutarch.[103] In this way, Philostratus understands the merits of Plutarch and other past literary figures as they relate to his own historical moment, something in this letter that Simon Goldhill describes as "a conversation across the generations which makes Philostratus the present embodiment of that tradition of Greek excellence."[104] Yet, Philostratus' refusal to name Plutarch in writing creates some uncertainty in Julia's ability to participate in the letter's sophistic game. The reader can rest assured, however, that Philostratus knows Plutarch's, as well as any other sophist's, merit. Much as the historical structure of the *VS* aims to illuminate the past virtues of Roman emperors, primarily those of the Antonines, Philostratus here differentiates his own historical moment from the glorious Greek and Roman pasts. The final sentence suggests that in the Severan period, imperial representatives like Julia Domna cannot necessarily be relied upon to evaluate sophistic merit. Only Philostratus' knowledge and guidance can serve to counteract this shift from the past.

In the final chapters of the *VS*, Philostratus similarly argues for his preeminence among the later Severans as a proponent of Hellenic culture by describing the acts of his close associates. These sophists and their reactions to the rule of the later Severans Elagabalus and Severus Alexander reflect a further shift in the historical portrayal of the Severan dynasty. Through two short episodes, Philostratus lessens the ambiguity of these emperors' reigns, showing Elagabalus to be more clearly tyrannical and Severus Alexander to be closer to the virtuous imperial ruler who respects sophistic culture. Philostratus, however, does not consider this shift crucial to his historical narrative, and by the end of the *VS*, refocuses his attention on

[103] See Demoen and Praet, "Philostratus, Plutarch, Gorgias," 438-39, for a discussion of this name's possibilities.

[104] Goldhill, "Constructing Identity," 305.

the rule of the more dangerously ambiguous Severan emperors Septimius Severus and Caracalla.[105]

First, Philostratus likens Elagabalus to the Roman tyrants of the past who were clearly dangerous and were therefore only attacked upon their deaths. In Philostratus' life of the sophist Aelian, Philostratus of Lemnos asks about Aelian's work entitled "Gynnis" ("Womanish Man"), a lost work that was written about Elagabalus after his death in 222 C.E. Aelian responds, "I call him this name, the tyrant who has just been killed (καλῶ γὰρ οὕτω ἄρτι καθῃ<ρη>μένον τύραννον), since by every sort of depravity he disgraced the Roman Empire" (ἐπειδὴ ἀσελγείᾳ πάσῃ τὰ Ῥωμαίων ᾔσχυνε) (*VS* 2.89). Philostratus of Lemnos retorts that he would be amazed if Aelian had attacked a living tyrant, "for he said that while it is the role of a real man to rebuke a living tyrant, anyone can attack him after he is dead and buried" (εἶναι γὰρ δὴ τὸ μὲν ζῶντα τύραννον ἐπικόπτειν ἀνδρός, τὸ δὲ ἐπεμβαίνειν κειμένῳ παντός). As seen in examples like Dio's criticism of Domitian earlier in the *VS*, some sophists do choose to attack Roman tyrants but do so at a distance or after the tyrant has died. The advice of Philostratus of Lemnos suggests that the Severan regime has made such practices concerning tyrants obsolete up to this point. But in contrast to an episode like Antipater's punishment for attacking Caracalla, who acts as an ambiguous tyrant, Elagabalus' rule though tyrannical is unambiguously so. The Lemnian Philostratus, therefore, can not only explain Aelian's silence during the reign of Elagabalus but also be less critical of it because of Elagabalus' clearly tyrannical behavior.

Second, Philostratus' oblique portrayal of Severus Alexander, through a quarrel between Philostratus of Lemnos and Aspasius, suggests a favorable stance toward this emperor's reception of sophistic advice. Aspasius is said to have travelled widely and followed Severus

[105] See Anderson, *Philostratus*, 7; Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 85-89 on the later Severans. The *HA* is also in line with this sort of differentiation between the two emperors.

Alexander's train around the empire (2.93.1).[106] When Aspasius is subsequently appointed Imperial Secretary at Rome, Philostratus of Lemnos composes a work directed at Aspasius. In this work about how to write letters, Philostratus of Lemnos claims Aspasius' usual style is "more argumentative than is suitable" (ἀγωνιστικώτερον τοῦ δέοντος) and "in unclear language" (οὐ σαφῶς), qualities that are not suitable for someone writing an emperor's letters (2.94): "For an Emperor when he writes a letter should not use rhetorical syllogisms or dialectical proofs (οὐ δεῖ ἐνθυμημάτων οὐδ' ἐπιχειρημάτων), but only his own opinions; moreover he should not be obscure (ἀσαφείας), since he is the voice of laws, and clarity is the interpreter of the law" (ἐπειδὴ νόμους φθέγγεται, σαφήνεια δὲ ἑρμηνεὺς νόμου). Since this advice concerns the emperor's proper relationship to the law, it is therefore also meant for Severus Alexander, and the Lemnian Philostratus dispenses it under the guise of critiquing Aspasius. Thus, though indirect, the dispensing of advice here brings us back nearly full circle to those classical sophists and their productive ability to influence rulers.

Despite the presence of these short episodes that occur after Philostratus himself was in Rome, in the final moments of the *VS*, he re-emphasizes not only his own role as a representative of Hellenic culture but also his connection to the city of Rome. Philostratus ends the life of Aspasius by saying that this sophist is still alive and teaching in Rome at the time he is composing the *VS*, suggesting Philostratus' own presence there or connection to those in Rome (2.95). And Philostratus ends the *VS* by enumerating his sophist friends about whom he will not have time to write. As Philostratus the author says, the Lemnian Philostratus' skill in the law courts as well as in declamation and extempore speech ought not to be included here; the same is true of the sophists Nicagoras and Apsines, "for I would be distrusted for favoring them, since I

[106] Cf. *Suda* s.v. Ἀσπάσιος, α 4205 Adler. See Malcolm Heath, "Apsines and Pseudo-Apsines," *American Journal of Philology* 119 (1998): 100 n. 31.

had a friendship (φιλία) with them" (2.96). Philostratus therefore uses the end of the *VS* to re-emphasize the city of Rome and his own connection to those still in the city who were practicing sophistry.

These final statements, as well as the work's dedication,[107] put the composition of the *VS* at a date after the reign of the Severans. Yet, the final portion of the *VS* by and large focuses on the period when Philostratus himself was in Rome and attached to the imperial court (*VS* 2.55-96). With this focus, as well as the emphasis on Rome in the final lines of the *VS*, Philostratus stresses his connection to those sophists at Rome as well as his own role in the happenings of the imperial court while he was still in the city. As a result, Philostratus uses the final part of the *VS* to telescope in on his own time at Rome in the 200s-210s when his direct observation of the imperial court contributes to a sense of crisis and confusion in the narrative during the reigns of Septimius Severus and Caracalla.

V. Conclusion

The Severan period marked not only a change in dynasty but also a shift in the operation of imperial politics. Philostratus, through his firsthand experience in Severan Rome, contrasts what he sees in the present with the classical Greek and imperial Roman pasts. Although Philostratus addresses the matter in different ways in different works, in each he is quite consistent in his reactions to the changing circumstances of the new imperial dynasty. The *VS* is structured as a long historical account that highlights changes in the relationship between

[107] "[Dedicated by] Flavius Philostratus to the most illustrious Antonius Gordianus, consul" (τῷ λαμπροτάτῳ ὑπάτῳ Ἀντωνίῳ Γορδιανῷ Φλάυιος Φιλόστρατος) (*VS* 1.pref). There is no scholarly consensus on which Gordian this dedication refers to or whether Gordian had ascended the throne at the time of dedication, since it addresses him as "consul" (ὕπατος). At the very least, the *VS* must have been composed 230-38 C.E. See Ivars Avotins, "The Date and the Recipient of the 'Vitae Sophistarum' of Philostratus," *Hermes* 106 (1978): 242-47; Timothy D. Barnes, "Philostratus and Gordian," *Latomus* 27 (1968): 581-97.

sophists and rulers, both classical and Roman. The *VA* supports his characterization of Domitian's reign as one of tyrannical rulership in which the emperor rejects sophistic ability through fear and cruelty. The letter to Julia Domna also contributes to showing the Severan period as unstable through the lens of Philostratus' own experiences of the Severan dynasty.

All these works, however, complicate the division between the categories of "classical Greek" and "Roman." This complication appears in the unstable demarcation between the Roman imperial past and the Severan period. While both Philip and some Roman emperors embody virtues of restraint, intellectualism, and philhellenism, the Severan emperors are less clear in their allegiance to Hellenic culture and sophistic ability. Thus, Philostratus conceives of a spectrum of good and bad rulers, and not necessarily a divide between Roman and Greek. The Antonines are the closest to the classical ideal of rulership, but the Severan emperors show that imperial virtue can no longer be relied upon. Due in part to Philostratus inserting himself into his narration of the Severan period, he casts it as less idealized and more uncertain. It is therefore indeterminable where the Severans, especially Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla, fall on the spectrum of good and bad rulers. Indeed, their outsider status in part lends itself to this characterization. The discourse of ethnicity and its relationship to Severan politics is explored more fully in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2: THE PORTRAYAL OF FOREIGNNES IN THE *LETTERS* AND *HEROIKOS*

> Surely this is the most populous city of the East! What a wilderness of people! what a jumble of all ranks and ages! what a multiplicity of sects and nations! what a variety of costumes! what a Babel of languages! what a screaming of beasts! what a tinkling of instruments! what a parcel of philosophers!
>
> – Edgar Allen Poe, "Four Beasts in One: The Homo-Cameleopard" (1836)

The majority of the seventy-three *Erotic Letters* of Philostratus are addressed to anonymous boys and women, with others to named sophists and Roman authorities. As discussed in the previous chapter, the elements of one letter addressed to Julia Domna (*Ep*. 73) situate Philostratus as part of the empress's literary circle.[1] Another letter to her son Caracalla (*Ep*. 72) subtly attacks the emperor for unfit rulership. In addition to these direct contacts with the Severan family and the classicizing elements of the *Letters*,[2] however, this corpus foregrounds foreignness as an important category in the sophist's construction of an erotic persona. Much like how Poe portrays a teeming Hellenistic Antioch, the narrator of the *Letters* contributes to feelings of both bustle and anxiety that the presence of foreigners created in a city. Philostratus the narrator of the *Letters* laments his status as a foreigner and expresses apprehension at the foreign status of others, often describing himself as "foreign" (ξένος) and in many ways embodies contemporary opinions about foreignness in Severan Rome. These letters reflect the uncertain origin and complicated legal status of migrants to Rome, many of whom achieved Roman citizenship while some were ostracized by native Romans who viewed them with suspicion.

Alongside the *Erotic Letters*, this chapter analyzes the dialogue *Heroikos*, in which Philostratus also portrays foreign identity as potentially dangerous. As discussed more below,

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[1] See discussion above and Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 226.

[2] See Simon Goldhill, "Constructing Identity," 305, who describes the letters as a manual for self-expression within the tradition of Greek culture. See also Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 322-38, and Andrew Walker, "Eros and the Eye."

scholars disagree about when this dialogue was meant to be set, but the classicizing elements of the dialogue's content have received considerable scholarly attention.[3] Some have linked this work to the political climate of the early third century.[4] Others regard the Phoenician merchant interlocutor in particular as one such possible dangerous foreigner.[5] In my discussion, I draw on Peter Grossardt's commentary, which argues against reading this text as a form of religious propaganda. Instead, the acts of the Homeric heroes in the dialogue function as a commentary on not only classical but also contemporary history. I incorporate Grossardt's main arguments but take his interpretation a step further. Within my historiographic framework, I show that, along with the *Letters*, Philostratus' Severan setting has ramifications for the interpretation of foreignness in the *Heroikos*.

This chapter therefore draws connections between the portrayal of foreigners in these works and their compositional contexts in the Severan period. I tie the foreign anxiety of each text to current political and cultural circumstances in several ways, all associated with the Severan dynasty. First, the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, which extended citizenship to free men across the empire in 212, confused the previous distinction between the categories of citizen and non-citizen as well as Roman and non-Roman. Scholars have been hesitant to apply a consistent identity to the narrator of the letters, claiming instead that Philostratus plays with the classical genre in different ways in different letters. But Philostratus' slippage between casting himself as "Roman" and as "foreign" in the letters – and sometimes even in the same letter (e.g., *Ep*. 8) – reflects a consistent anxiety. This confusion and ambivalence about what constituted Romanness

[3] See, e.g., *Philostratus'* Heroikos*: Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century C.E.*, ed. Aitken and Maclean; Whitmarsh, "Performing Heroics."

[4] See, e.g., Shayegan, "Philostratus's *Heroikos*," who discusses the relationship of Syria and the Near East to the political and cultural contexts of Philostratus' writing.

[5] See Aitken, "Why a Phoenician?."

appears in the *Letters*' complicated portrayal of foreigners, their separation from home, and the confusion over their own merit and legal status. And a similar ambiguity appears in the *Heroikos* in the form of the Syrian Phoenician merchant.[6] This interlocutor represents the ambiguous danger of foreigners in the Roman world with his uncertain origin and unclear allegiance to Hellenic culture and Greek cult. Overall, I argue that this consistent anxiety across both texts is in part a result of the Severan context in which these works were composed.[7]

Second, the contemporary historical narratives of this period written by Dio Cassius and Herodian speak of a foreign intrusion into the city of Rome, in which outside and foreign influence was a common characteristic of living under the Severan regime. Philostratus' works fall into a tradition of Greek and Roman writers expressing apprehension about foreign outsiders because of their ambiguous identity and the potential danger they pose to civic life. I will argue, however, that the Philostratean corpus implicates both Caracalla and the Syrian women of the imperial family in this "intrusion" and contributes to their portrayal as dangerous foreigners in Rome. Philostratus' veiled criticism of the Severans may be a result of the risks associated with attacking the ruling imperial family. As discussed in the previous chapter, tyrants often clamped down on elite detractors and critical literature. Philostratus' use of coded language as well as his choice of genre point to his subversive attitude, an aspect that scholars have discussed in regard to other contemporary and later imperial authors.[8] Philostratus' elite status and presence in the

[6] See Elsner, "A Protean Corpus," 6, 12-13, for a discussion of the interrelatedness of these two texts.

[7] See Chapter 1 for the scholarly discussion about the order of composition for the Philostratean corpus. In general, the *Letters* are believed to have been written in the 190s-210s and the *Heroikos* sometime later.

[8] See Anthony Kaldellis, "How Perilous Was It to Write Political History in Late Antiquity?," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 1 (2017): 38-64, who discusses historical works from the Severan period through the seventh century and argues that historical writing about a current regime was often more complicated than simply support or silence. See also Edward J. Watts, "Introduction: Freedom of Speech and Self-Censorship in the Roman Empire," in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, tome 92 (2014): 157-66, and accompanying articles.

imperial court at Rome, much like Dio Cassius' membership in the senatorial elite, often impacts his ability to offer criticism of Severan culture and politics. Both the imagery in the letter addressed to Caracalla and the portrayal of women in the *Heroikos*, however, suggest an apprehension about the foreign status of the Severan family and as a result its ability to rule properly.

I. Citizens and Foreigners in the Severan World

Foreigners in Rome constituted various ethnic and regional groups. David Noy shows that with the large number of different groups in Rome, attitudes to these foreigners varied. For instance, one such positive depiction is that of Athenaeus, who writes that numerous cities could be "found" in the hub of Rome, a city that gathered peoples and cultures from across its vast empire.[9] Still other imperial writers, Noy argues, contributed to large-scale xenophobia in the city, especially in times of crisis.[10] The several groups that were objects of contempt in Rome included those of *peregrinus* status, free provincials who were not Roman citizens. But the *peregrini* were just one foreign group that was targeted, occasionally resulting in expulsion from the city; Noy explains that "the common feature of all the expulsions is that the targets were perceived as foreign."[11] A person's ties to those outside Rome, however ambiguous, caused all manner of concern for native Romans, extending from subdued anxiety to outright paranoia and fear.[12] During Philostratus' lifetime these attitudes were in many ways no different from those of

[9] Ath. 1.20.

[10] David Noy, *Foreigners at Rome: Citizens and Strangers* (Classical Press of Wales, 2000), 31-48.

[11] Ibid., 46. Cf. J. V. P. D. Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 102-13.

[12] In addition to Noy's predominantly literary study, see Kristina Killgrove and Janet Montgomery, "All Roads Lead to Rome: Exploring Human Migration to the Eternal City through Biochemistry of Skeletons from Two Imperial-

earlier periods and encompassed broadly positive and negative representations of non-Roman foreigners.

The *Constitutio Antoniniana*, however, complicates the perceived divide between citizens and foreigners at this time. Issued in 212 by the emperor Caracalla, this edict extended citizenship to all free adult men of the Roman Empire and gave all free women the same rights as Roman women citizens. Contemporary reactions to it varied, but in our literary sources, authors hostile to the emperor often tie the edict to Caracalla's own nefarious motivation for issuing it.[13] In addition, the papyrological evidence for the edict suggests that the extension of citizenship may have been religiously influenced with language invoking the favor of the gods through the emperor's all-encompassing piety.[14]

But the small amount of contemporary evidence makes it difficult for us to assess the impact that the edict had on various populations across the empire. In terms of the protection Roman law afforded citizens, Clifford Ando argues that in general regional particularism began to decline after 212.[15] The goal of Roman authorities in expanding citizenship was "to induce

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era Cemeteries (1st-3rd c. AD)," *PLOS One* 11 (2016), who use anthropological migration theory and bioarchaeological data to discuss the geographic and social mobility of the lower classes, especially slaves in the Roman Empire. For the city of Rome in particular as a zone of interaction between immigrants and native Romans, see Ryan Russell Abrecht, "My Neighbor the Barbarian: Immigrant Neighborhoods in Classical Athens, Imperial Rome, and Tang Chang'an" (PhD diss., University of California at Santa Barbara, 2014), who uses borderlands theory within the imperial capital itself, showing not only that many probable immigrants in Rome's Trans Tiberim district had ties to the eastern Mediterranean but that cultural exchange and interaction with other groups outside this neighborhood is well-attested.

[13] Dio Cassius (78.9) and Ulpian (*Dig*. 1.5.17), the two contemporary references to the edict, suggest that Caracalla was motivated by financial gain. See Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 385 n. 275, who questions this presumption, and looks at the epigraphic evidence for the edict.

[14] In the badly damaged papyrus of the edict, Caracalla expresses his wish to bring new worshippers to the gods with the expansion of citizenship. This desire was possibly tied to Syrian/Semitic solar worship. See Irfan Shahid, *Rome and the Arabs: A Prolegomenon to the Study of Byzantium and the Arabs* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1984), 35 n. 9. See also Potter, *The Roman Empire at* Bay, 139-40, who argues that with the edict, the emperor and state effectively became synonymous, the fortune of one tied directly to the other.

[15] Clifford Ando, *Imperial Rome AD 193 to 284: The Critical Century* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 76-99.

individuals to identify shared concerns with widely disparate, polyglot participants in their political reality, purely on the basis of their common citizenship."[16] Elite citizens around the empire now had access to Roman law in addition to their local laws. But Ando also suggests that the extension of citizenship engendered an identity crisis among certain elite, previously "non-Roman," individuals. A newly introduced naming scheme, in which citizens continued to use their native names alongside new Roman ones, generated ambivalence about the juxtaposition of such identities.[17]

After the citizenship edict was issued in 212, relations with Romans changed for those who had once been foreigners. Jane Gardner contrasts the consistent treatment of the *peregrinus* as a "pretend-Roman" in public law with changes in his treatment in matters of private law. Before 212, a *peregrinus* was given limited access to *ius comercii* and entirely denied *conubium*, excluding certain legal relations between *peregrini* and Romans. But the edict changed this exclusion. "Becoming Roman citizens … would not only affect for [the *peregrini*] existing dealings with Romans which were open to foreigners, but would allow them to enter into personal and property relations which were not previously open to them."[18] But the *peregrini* did not cease to exist because of these changes. Several sources suggest that *peregrini* pretending to

[16] Ando, *Imperial Ideology*, 11. Cf. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 13ff., who holds that the sacredness of language was one such bonding cultural root for ancient imagined communities.

[17] See Ando, *Critical Century*, 94-95, and Adrian Nicholas Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford University Press, 1980), 386-88, on the consequences of the edict and the papyrological evidence for the increased (but not universal) use of Aurelius as the name for ex-peregrines of all classes. See Myles Lavan, "The Spread of Roman Citizenship, 14-212 CE: Quantification in the Face of High Uncertainty," *Past & Present* 230 (2016): 3-46, for evidence of the spread of citizenship before Caracalla's edict. Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, *The Making of a Christian Empire: Lactantius & Rome* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 49-52, ties the citizenship edict to other Severan efforts toward religious unity, in which now citizen Christians were legally obligated to participate in Roman cult. See also François Jacques and John Scheid, *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire. 44 av. J.-C- 260 ap. J.-C.* Tome 1: *Les structures de l'empire romain* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 279-86, for further discussion of citizenship in the periods before and after the edict.

[18] Jane F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (London: Routledge, 1993), 187. Cf. Balsdon, 82-96.

be citizens in Rome was an ongoing problem.[19] Thus, though the edict in many ways aimed to erase legal distinctions among various social groups, many ethnic, religious, and civic differences undoubtedly remained.[20] As will be discussed more below, Philostratus' works in many ways reflect the cultural and legal ambivalence about foreign identity that the edict represented.

Outside Rome, provincials viewed themselves as embodying multiple and competing identities, yet the extension of citizenship in other ways erased identities. A. N. Sherwin-White claims that with the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, Caracalla "stripped citizenship of any specific content."[21] Markers like service to the state through military service or claims to Latin and Greek culture no longer held sway. Instead, "[t]he unifying element that held together the very diverse constituents of the empire was their common interest in Rome, and Caracalla's edict identified the whole population of the empire with Rome."[22] Richard Hingley similarly shows that the spread of citizenship as a marker of "Roman" identity culminated in the edict, though in 212 "citizenship [was] less of a privilege than it had been."[23] In essence, citizenship became much

[19] Noy, 24 n. 66.

[20] The papyrus of the edict explicitly forbids citizenship to the *dediticii*. This group (the *dediticii peregrini*) constituted foreigners surrendered in war during the Republic, but in the third century were a group of freedmen stigmatized because of torture, branding, or having fought in the arena. See A. H. M. Jones, "The *Dediticii* and the *Constitutio Antoniniana*," in *Studies in Roman Government and Law,* ed. A. H. M. Jones (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1968), 129-40; Ralph W. Mathisen, "*Peregrini*, *Barbari*, and *Cives Romani*: Concepts of Citizenship and the Legal Identity of Barbarians in the Later Roman Empire," *The American Historical Review* 111 (2006): 1011-40, highlights the shifting definition of *peregrinus* as well as their continued presence in our sources after 212 (1020-21); Peter Garnsey, "Roman Citizenship and Roman Law in the Late Empire," in *Approaching Late Antiquity*, ed. Simon Swain and Mark Edwards (Oxford University Press, 2004), 140-45.

[21] Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*, 287.

[22] Ibid., 283.

[23] Richard Hingley, *Globalizing Roman Culture: Unity, Diversity and Empire* (London: Routledge, 2005), 57.

like other identities during this period in that one could activate it for different situational contexts.[24]

Yet the Severans did not necessarily intend universal or equal treatment for the provincial regions of the empire. Sherwin-White argues that Septimius Severus laid the groundwork for the citizenship edict, especially with the extension of rights to the Greek-speaking provinces. Among these, Severus appears to have begun bestowing special treatment upon Egypt by encouraging municipal life in the province. Sherwin-White explains that the introduction of urban councils, especially the Council of Alexandria, actively inspired loyalty to the Roman state.[25] What Severus' acts also show is a concern and general fascination with Egyptian culture that increased during the Severan period. Imperial policy directed at the province was coupled with the appearance of Egyptian religion and people in the city of Rome itself.

Material evidence also points to a prevalent fascination with Egyptian culture during the reigns of Severus and Caracalla. Various portraiture arguably portrays Severus as the Egyptian god Serapis, to whom Caracalla was likewise devoted.[26] Caracalla made a visit to Egypt in 215 and Egyptian cults had a substantial presence in the city of Rome, as it is reported that Caracalla

[24] See Éric Rebillard, *Christians and Their Many Identities in Late Antiquity, North Africa, 200–450 CE* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2012), who argues that multiple identities for Christians during this period could be "activated" depending on the situation. Most Christians' identities at this time were situational and a form of lateral categorization, in which group membership was activated by various contexts.

[25] Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship*, 277-79.

[26] See Alexia Petsalis-Diomidis, "Landscape, Transformation, and Divine Epiphany," in *Severan Culture*, ed. Jaś Elsner et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 250-89, who suggests that there was a blurring of divine and human in portraiture in this period, specifically between Severus and Serapis. See Rowan, *Under Divine Auspices*, 32-109, for the influence of Severus' hometown Leptis Magna on Severan family portraiture. Cf. Drora Baharal, *Victory of Propaganda: The Dynastic Aspect of the Imperial Propaganda of the Severi: the Literary and Archaeological Evidence AD 193-235* (Oxford: Tempvs Reparatvm, 1996), 84-91, for Severus' attempts to have his portraiture appear similar to that of Jupiter, among other deities. By contrast, Olivier Hekster, "Severus – Antonine Emperor or the First Severan?," in *Portraits - 500 Years of Roman Portrait Coins*, ed. A. Pangerl (Staatliche Münzsammlung München, 2017), 355-64, debunks the Serapic interpretation of Septimius Severus' portrait types on coinage, which made more claims to continuity with the Antonine emperors.

built a temple for the goddess Isis near the Colosseum.[27] Invoking these events, various coinage portrayed Caracalla as the conqueror of Egypt and sometimes displayed Isis as well.[28]

This sort of foreign fascination negatively implicated the Severan family, who were occasionally labeled as outsiders in the city of Rome. As will be seen, Caracalla's fascination with Egypt and visit to Alexandria in particular resonate with the content of Philostratus' letter addressed to the emperor. But other contemporary sources are more overt in their criticism of the Severan family, whose presence in the city hostile sources link to the idea of foreign and outsider influence in Rome. Dio describes the spectacles for the tenth anniversary of Severus' reign and Caracalla's wedding in 203 as "partly in royal and partly in barbaric style" (τὰ μὲν βασιλικῶς τὰ δὲ βαρβαρικῶς), something that perplexes the historian and other spectators (77.1). Caracalla was viewed as having a similar dual identity, and contemporary sources often describe the emperor's questionable behavior as a result of his outsider status. Caracalla is first ridiculed for his choice to restore the exiles upon becoming sole emperor, an act that perhaps returned many criminals and enemies of his father Severus to Rome.[29] In addition, utilizing tropes of outwardly foreign behavior, Dio describes Caracalla as clearly foreign in dress and appearance (79.3.3). The emperor's self-fashioned dress had origins in Gaul, and Caracalla redesigned it for himself.[30] Dio describes the emperor wearing this dress while abroad in Syria and Mesopotamia, where it is similarly out of place. This clear lack of success at fitting in typifies many of the emperor's

[27] See, e.g., HA *Car*. 9.10-11, which describes the emperor as having renewed interest in the cults of Isis in Rome, a charge also directed at both Commodus and Pescennius Niger in (HA *Com*. 9.4-6; Pesc. Nig. 6.9).

[28] Smith, *Man and Animal*, 164; Michael Grant, *The Severans: The Roman Empire Transformed* (London: Routledge, 2013), 78.

[29] Dio 78.3.3; HA *Car*. 2.9-3.; Herod. 4.5.2-5. According to Potter, *The Roman Empire at Bay*, 137, the exiles were perhaps a mixture of those who had committed genuine crimes and those with a hatred for Severus. Caracalla's directive may have therefore been a repudiation of Severus' policies.

[30] Aurel. Vict. *De Caes.* 21; HA *Sev*. 21.11, *Car.* 9.7.

exploits abroad. Dio's characterization of Caracalla compounds not only the emperor's mental instability and thus inability to rule but also his outsider status.[31]

In a similar portrayal, Herodian recounts Caracalla's travels abroad, making the emperor's outsider status a consistent part of his identity. Caracalla shows an inappropriate interest in local populations, wanting to blend in through the observance of local practices or via an exemplum like Alexander the Great who similarly adopted Persian dress and customs in his conquest. Adam Kemezis links the spatial portrayal of Caracalla to several other emperors who cannot function properly after changing locations in Herodian: "In [the cases of Commodus and Caracalla] the move leads the emperor further down the path of self-destruction, and allows for retreat from duty and reality into self-absorption and, ultimately, fantasy."[32] These descriptions are tied to the play-acting narrative of Herodian's Caracalla. In Germany, Caracalla wears German clothing and a blonde wig in the German style (4.7.3). In an effort to model both Alexander and Achilles, he dons local dress in Macedonia (4.8.2) and, at Troy, shears his head in a mock funeral for Patroclus (4.8.5). In these moments, the costumes that the emperor wears show how he wishes to fit in wherever he visits.

Caracalla's devotion to Alexander also included physical representations of the emperor. One coin type, a gold medallion produced during Caracalla's sole reign as emperor (212-17), shows the emperor on the obverse carrying a shield. But instead of this shield depicting the head of Medusa, the typical feature for this type, it shows a long-haired youth representing Alexander. Other coinage shows Alexander on the shield acting out various feats that highlight the virtues of

[31] Similarly, Caracalla's accumulation of other cognomens – based on his many military campaigns in various regions – was actually a source of ridicule because it betrayed his truly violent nature (culminating in the murder of his brother Geta). See HA *Car.* 10.5-6.

[32] Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 250.

the king. Several of these types originated in mints in the eastern empire. The initiative taken by these cities in representing Caracalla alongside Alexander shows their knowledge of Caracalla's emulation but also expresses their loyalty to the emperor. The coins might also reflect the influence of the emperor's eastern military campaign against the Parthians (215-17), which was in turn a further emulation of Alexander's wars, discussed more below.[33]

Despite the emperor's efforts, contemporary sources describe Caracalla as ultimately unsuccessful in his emulation of historical and mythological figures. Specifically, Caracalla's occasional status as a dangerous and non-Roman outsider detracted from his efforts at emulating Alexander, a quality hinted at in Philostratus' letter addressed to the emperor. More generally, the characterization of foreigners in Philostratus reflects contemporary concerns about their status in Rome. The citizenship edict engendered a culture in which outsiders were similarly viewed with suspicion but intensified the ambiguity of their status. Caracalla's own ambiguous identity and behavior further reinforced a sense of intruding foreigners in Rome, and the Afro-Syrian identity of the emperor's family further heightened this anxiety.

II. The Figure of the Foreigner in Philostratus

Though not always commenting directly on his contemporary context, Philostratus' letters contribute to our understanding of how foreigners were conceived of in Severan Rome. Building upon the discussion above, I show that the content of the *Letters* mirrors the treatment and ambiguous status of foreigners during this period. Through the figure of the foreigner, Philostratus draws attention to the separateness of foreigners from proper Roman citizens and foreigners' ability to be from multiple homelands. The narrator's desire for "barbaric" love

[33] See Karsten Dahmen, *The Legend of Alexander the Great on Greek and Roman Coins* (London: Routledge, 2007), 34-35.

further compounds the unclear cultural allegiances of foreigners in the letters. Thus, despite the classical imagery that Philostratus uses to formulate his erotic persona, these letters reflect ideas prevalent in his contemporary world.

Some scholars have suggested that the classical tropes and imagery of the *Letters* distance them from their Roman context. Patricia Rosenmeyer argues that, in comparison to the epistolographers Alciphron and Aelian, "Philostratus never reveals his national origins or present location."[34] In Rosenmeyer's view, the letters' narrator is dissociated from any historical identity, recalling the classical tendencies in other sophistic literature. And in regard to some descriptions of foreignness in the letters, Philostratus clearly uses classical motifs of eastern otherness, specifically that of the Persians (*Ep.* 7):

> Ὅτι πένης εἰμί, ἀτιμότερός σοι δοκῶ· καὶ μὴν καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ Ἔρως γυμνός ἐστι καὶ αἱ Χάριτες καὶ οἱ ἀστέρες. ὁρῶ δὲ ἐγὼ τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς δορὰν θηρίου περιβεβλημένον καὶ τὰ πολλὰ χαμαὶ καθεύδοντα, τὸν δὲ Ἀπόλλωνα καὶ ὑψηλῷ ζώσματι ἢ δισκεύοντα ἢ τοξεύοντα ἢ τρέχοντα, οἱ δὲ Περσῶν βασιλεῖς τρυφῶσι καὶ μετέωροι κάθηνται τῷ πολλῷ χρυσίῳ περιβαλλόμενοι· τοιγαροῦν ἔπασχον κακῶς ὑπὸ τῶν πενήτων Ἑλλήνων νικώμενοι.
>
> Since I am poor I seem to you of less value; and yet even Eros himself is naked, and so are the Graces and the stars. And in paintings I see even Herakles wrapped in a wild beast's hide and sleeping, for the most part, on the ground; and Apollo with a simple loin-cloth, throwing the discus, shooting the bow, or running; whereas the kings of the Persians live delicately (τρυφῶσι) and are seated on high, using reverence as a pretext for their wealth of gold – and so it was that they fared badly, conquered by the poor Greeks.

Philostratus bases his description of the Persians here on classical models of soft and effeminate eastern peoples.[35]

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[34] Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 336.

[35] See, inter alia, Hdt. 1.126, 1.135, 1.155-56, 9.122; Aesch. *Pers*.; Xen. *Cyrop*. 8.8.16-19. See Pierre Briant, "History and Ideology: The Greeks and 'Persian Decadence,'" in *Greeks and Barbarians*, ed. Thomas Harrison, trans. Antonia Nevill (Edinburgh University Press, 2002), 193-210; Benjamin Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 371-80. See Erich Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton University Press, 2011), 9-52, for how the portrayal of Persians in Herodotus and Aeschylus is more complicated than a simple contrast with Greek values. Negative views are often coupled with praise and other kinship/political links.

Yet despite a lack of historic and geographic positioning in letters like this one, Philostratus elsewhere does locate himself at Rome or identify himself as Roman. In one such letter, the narrator recounts observing young boys running through the city (*Ep.* 55):

> Ὄντως τὰ ῥόδα Ἔρωτος φυτά, καὶ γὰρ νέα, ὡς ἐκεῖνος, καὶ ὑγρά, ὡς αὐτὸς ὁ Ἔρως, καὶ χρυσοκομοῦσιν ἄμφω καὶ τἆλλ᾽ αὐτοῖς ὅμοια· τὰ ῥόδα τὴν ἄκανθαν ἀντὶ βελῶν ἔχει, τὸ πυρρὸν ἀντὶ δᾴδων, τοῖς φύλλοις ἐπτέρωται, χρόνον δὲ οὔτε Ἔρως οὐδὲ ῥόδα οἶδεν, ἐχθρὸς γὰρ ὁ θεὸς καὶ τῇ κάλλους ὀπώρᾳ καὶ τῇ ῥόδων ἐπιδημίᾳ. εἶδον ἐν Ῥώμῃ τοὺς ἀνθοφόρους τρέχοντας καὶ τῷ τάχει μαρτυρουμένους τὸ ἄπιστον τῆς ἀκμῆς, ὁ γὰρ δρόμος διδασκαλία χρήσεως· εἰ δὲ μελλήσαις, ἀπελήλυθε. μαραίνεται καὶ γυνὴ μετὰ ῥόδων, ἂν βραδύνῃ. μὴ μέλλε, ὦ καλή· συμπαίζωμεν. στεφανωσόμεθα τοῖς ῥόδοις· συνδράμωμεν.
>
> Roses truly are the flowers of Eros. For like him, they are young; and like Eros himself, they are tender. Both have golden hair and they are similar in other ways as well. Roses have thorns for arrows, a red hue for torches, and they are winged with petals. Neither Eros nor roses know time, for this god is hostile to the ripening of beauty and the persistence of roses. I saw at Rome the flowery boys running and by their speed indicating how precarious the flowering of beauty is; for their running teaches that one's prime should be enjoyed. If you hesitate, it's gone. A woman wastes away with roses, if she loiters. Don't hesitate, my beauty. Let's play together. We will crown ourselves in roses; let us run away together.

The letter's description of "flowery" boys (τοὺς ἀνθοφόρους) perhaps alludes to the *Floralia* festival (*Ludi Florales*), held in Rome for six days from late April to early May,[36] but is more likely an extension of the narrator's fondness for the attractive bloom of youth. For example, an epigram of Meleager uses the same label "flowery" (ἀνθοφόρος) to equate a list of boys with flowers.[37] In much the same way that Meleager lists the boys he knows in the city of Tyre, Philostratus here uses the city of Rome as a setting for his erotic desire. In a theme common to

[36] The Floralia were held in honor of the Italian goddess Flora, and, after 173 B.C.E., consisted of annual theatrical performances and circus games. These festivities were known for their lewdness, with ire especially directed at the performed mimes and farces. See Juv. 6.249ff.; Val. Max. Maximus 2.10.8; H. H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), 110-11. The term ἀνθοφόρος is also used as a title for a priestess of Demeter and Kore on Thasos, *IG* 12(8).526.

[37] *Anth. Gr.* 12.256.

the letters, Philostratus here transposes Greek perceptions of love and beauty to the contemporary world in which the Roman Empire is made part of the sophist's erotic geography.

In *Letter* 8, the narrator similarly locates himself at Rome by calling himself a Roman but also a foreigner (ξένος), an apparent tension that remains unresolved in the letter. Though unclearly foreign or Roman, the narrator lists the merits of foreign elements around the Mediterranean as a way to prove his worthiness as a lover to his boy addressee. According to the narrator, no distinction exists between the beauty of a foreigner and a citizen, and in fact all sorts of things are foreign: "Foreign is Asclepios to the Athenians and Zeus to us (καὶ ὁ Ζεὺς ἡμῶν) and the Nile to the Egyptians and the sun to all" (*Ep*. 8). Though associated primarily with the sanctuary at Epidaurus, Asclepios is said to have been introduced to Athens in the fifth century B.C.E., and the remote origin of the Nile River was a concern for many ancient authors.[38] Interpreted similarly to these foreign elements, Zeus' foreign nature makes the "us" in Philostratus' letter presumably refer to the Romans,[39] though the narrator lists the Romans again as the letter continues: "Foreign too is the soul to the body and the nightingale to the spring and the swallow to the house and Ganymede to the heavens and the kingfisher to the cliff and the elephant to the Romans and the phoenix bird to the Indians." By invoking classical motifs alongside references to Rome, the narrator here, as in other letters, attempts to find some solace in the classical world for contemporary concerns. But it remains unclear in this letter whether the narrator belongs to any, none, or all of the groups listed in the letter. The uncertainty of the narrator's identity perhaps mirrored many of the experiences of foreigners in the Roman world.

[38] See Bronwen L. Wickkiser, *Asklepios, Medicine, and the Politics of Healing in Fifth-Century Greece: Between Craft and Cult* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), for the politics of Asclepius' introduction in fifth-century Athens; see, e.g., Sen. *Nat*. *Quaest*. 6 for the expedition sent by Nero in 60 C.E. to explore the origin of the Nile. Cf. Hdt. 2.19-31; Hor. *C*. 4.14.45-46; Luc. 10.231-400.

[39] See Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 337, who describes this "us" at the very least as "non-Athenian."

Foreign identity was similarly ambiguous according to various legal and geographic factors, including one's origin.[40]

Multiplicity is a common element to foreignness in the letters, and the ability to be from several places adds an ambiguous element to one's foreign identity. Philostratus says of his own origin that, although he is a Lemnian, he counts Imbros as his homeland (ἐγὼ γὰρ Λήμνιος ὢν πατρίδα ἐμαυτοῦ καὶ τὴν Ἴμβρον ἡγοῦμαι). He goes on to say, "with goodwill I link myself to both islands and the islands to one another and myself" (συνάπτων εὐνοίᾳ καὶ τὰς νήσους ἀλλήλαις καὶ ἐμαυτὸν ἀμφοτέραις) (*Ep*. 70). The duality of Philostratus' identity hinges on the historical association between these two islands, but also reinforces the idea that people could attach themselves to multiple homelands.[41] In fact, the addressees of this letter, the otherwise unknown Kleophon and Gaius, compound the problematic duality in play. The juxtaposition between common Greek and Roman names, and the binary they represent, is surely intentional.

Letter 5 similarly expresses the narrator's unsteady civic and ethnic allegiances. The narrator questions a boy, insisting that he must know the correct Greek way to inflict pleasurable pain on his lover (*Ep*. 5):

> Πόθεν εἶ, μειράκιον, εἰπέ, ὅθ' οὕτως ἀτέγκτως ἔχεις πρὸς ἔρωτα. ἐκ Σπάρτης ἐρεῖς; οὐκ εἶδες οὖν Ὑάκινθον, οὐδ' ἐστεφανώσω τοῦ τραύματος; ἀλλ' ἐκ θεσσαλίας; οὐκ ἐδίδαξεν οὖν σε οὐδ' ὁ Φθιώθς Ἀχιλλεύς; ἀλλὰ Ἀθήνηθεν; τὸν Ἁρμόδιον οὖν καὶ Ἀριστογείτονα οὐ παρῆλθες; ἀλλὰ ἀπ' Ἰωνίας; καὶ τί τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης ἁβρότερον, ὅπου Βράγχοι καὶ Κλάροι οἱ Ἀπόλλωνος καλοί; ἀλλ' ἐκ Κρήτης, ὅπου πλεῖστος ὁ Ἔρως ὁ τὰς ἑκατὸν πόλεις περιπολῶν; Σκύθης μοι δοκεῖς καὶ βάρβαρος ἀπ' ἐκείνου τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ τῶν ἀξένων θυμάτων. ἔξεστιν

[40] E.g., Laurens Tacoma, *Moving Romans: Migration to Rome in the Principate* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 211-14, using a group of Syrian and Egyptian immigrant inscriptions in Rome, shows that geographic pride was clear, but ethnic labels of origin were often general regions or major centers rather than specific locations.

[41] Both were Athenian cleruchies during the Classical period. See Alfonso Moreno, "'The Attic Neighbour': The Cleruchy in the Athenian Empire," in *Interpreting the Athenian Empire*, ed. John Ma et al. (London: Duckworth, 2009), 211-21. See Chapter 1 for discussion of what we know about Philostratus' origins at Lemnos. Cf. Apul. *Met*. 1, in which the narrator uses Mt. Hymettos, the Isthmus of Corinth, and Mt. Taenaros as his primary identifiers, all key places in the narrative that follows.

> οὖν σοι τὸν πάτριον τιμῆσαι νόμον. εἰ δὲ σώζειν οὐ θέλεις, λάβε τὸ ξίφος· οὐ παραιτοῦμαι, μὴ φοβηθῇς· ἐπιθυμῶ κἂν τραύματος.
>
> Where are you from, boy, tell me, since you are so invulnerable to love. Will you say from Sparta? Did you not then see Hyacinthus or crown yourself with his wound? Or from Thessaly? Did not Phthian Achilles then teach you? Or from Athens? Did you not then pass by Harmodius and Aristogeiton? Or from Ionia? What is more splendid than that land, where the Branchuses and Claruses, beloveds of Apollo, are from? Or from Crete, where Eros who prowls about the hundred cities is greatest? You seem to me to be a Skythian and a barbarian, from that altar and those terrible rites. You can then honor your ancestral custom. If you are unwilling to save me, take this sword. I'm not begging; don't fear that. I'm desirous for even a wound.

The narrator questions the boy's origins, making links between regions of Greece, some of their famous young male beloveds, and examples of those who have inflicted or received wounds there. The narrator's list of mytho-historical examples of violence, including several *erōmenoi* of Apollo, a possible reference to Paris' wounding of Achilles, and the "tyrant-slayers" Harmodius and Aristogeiton, shows his desire for suffering. In each case, the violent relationships of the Greek world demonstrate the correct manner by which lovers can inflict enjoyable pain. But the narrator's frustration at the boy's obstinacy leads him to believe that the boy must be from outside Greece. The geography of his questions, therefore, drifts away from Greek examples, culminating in the practice of human sacrifice and locating the boy's homeland in Skythia.

Since the boy shows no pain of love, Philostratus the lover clearly sets the pederastic cities of Greece in opposition to barbaric Skythia. The "terrible rites" that the letter refers to make these claims of masochistic love clearer. In the *VA*, Philostratus describes the Skythian ritual of sprinkling an altar with human blood. At this point in the narrative, Apollonius connects this practice to that of the Spartans, who also participate in the scourging of the youth but avoid any loss of life; there, too, the Skythians are referred to as "barbaric."[42] The narrator of *Letter* 5

[42] *VA* 6.20. This connection may have classical precedents. George Hinge, "Scythian and Spartan Analogies in Herodotos' Representation: Rites of Initiation and Kinship Groups," in *The Cauldron of Ariantas: Studies*

also appears to have the similarities between Spartan and Skythian cultural practices in mind since he begins his questioning with Sparta. Though the boy would ideally be from a Hellenic city, by the nature of the corpus, we receive no definite response or conclusion about his identity.[43] The narrator uses the well-known trope of barbaric Skythia to describe the boy's unknown origin.[44] His slippage between desiring "barbaric" and "Greek" love creates an uncertainty about the narrator's civic allegiance. But the narrator's masochistic desire to be wounded and to experience pleasurable pain is so extreme that only a Skythian can satisfy it.

In a letter addressed to a woman, the narrator questions his addressee about her origins and similarly uses foreign geography to draw out his extreme erotic desire. Beginning again at Sparta, the narrator expands outward to various locations in Greece, including Corinth, Boeotia, Elis, Thespiae, and Attica, touching upon mythic romances that occurred in these cities and regions. The addressee's presumed lack of knowledge about these myths leads Philostratus to expand his questioning outward to "barbarian" regions, including the land of the Amazons ("the

Presented to A.N. Ščeglov on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday, ed. Pia Guldager Bilde et al. (Aarhus University Press, 2003), 55-74, among other ritual and mythological parallels between Scythia and Sparta, connects the Scythian liminality ritual to aspects of the Spartan *agôgê* in Herodotus.

[43] See Thomas A. Schmitz, "The Rhetoric of Desire in Philostratus's *Letters*," *Arethusa* 50 (2017): 257-82, who discusses the nature of isolation in the corpus. When reading across letters, the lack of results for the narrator's pleas suggest his longing for continuity.

[44] The use of Skythians as a cultural foil is widely attested in Greek and Roman literature, with views ranging from admiration for their nomadic natural lifestyle to skepticism for their barbarism (e.g., Eur. *IT*). Herodotus presents the Skythians as a mirror for both Greek and Persian culture, showing that as nomads the Skythians were a product of their harsh environment and climate. See François Hartog, *The Mirror of Herodotus: the Representation of the Other in the Writing of History*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), esp. 61-111. See also Andreas Gerstacker, Anne Kuhnert, et al. (eds.), *Skythen in der lateinischen Literatur. Eine Quellensammlung. Beiträge zur Altertumskunde 334* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2015). In terms of material representations, Margarita Gleba, "You Are What You Wear: Scythian Costume as Identity," *Dressing the Past* 3 (2008): 14-17, argues that what scholars usually deem Skythian costume in Classical Greek art – weapons and a tall pointed cap – is the dress for a variety of Asian peoples. Skythians were therefore visually portrayed as different, but whether these representations were based on direct observation of Skythians cannot be conclusively known.

women of Thermodon"), Thrace, and Sidon. The narrator's conclusion frames his desire as so extreme that he is willing to put his life in danger by loving a barbarian (*Ep*. 47):

> ἔοικα εὑρηκέναι σε, εἰ μὴ κακός εἰμι καὶ φαῦλος φυσιογνωμονεῖν· Δαναός σοι πατὴρ καὶ χεὶρ ἐκείνη καὶ λῆμα φονικόν· ἀλλὰ κἀκείνων τις τῶν ἀνδροφόνων παρθένων νεανίσκου φιλοῦντος ἐφείσατο. οὐχ ἱκετεύω σε, οὐ δακρύω, πλήρωσον τὸ δρᾶμα, ἵνα μου ψαύσῃς κἂν ξίφει.
>
> I think I have discovered who you are, unless I'm a terrible and careless physiognomist. Your father was Danaüs, and here is that hand of yours and that homicidal spirit. But one of these murderous girls spared her youthful husband. I don't beseech you; I don't cry; finish the play so that you may touch me, even with a sword.

In concluding that his addressee is a Danaid, one of the daughters of Danaüs who murdered their husbands, Philostratus settles upon an identity for his addressee not only foreign but dangerous and deadly. Though only one of the Danaids, Hypermnestra, refrained from killing her husband, the narrator is still willing to play the odds and risk having sex with her.[45] By calling his addressee a barbarian, but still choosing her despite this origin, the narrator uses foreign and barbarian exempla to portray his desire as beyond measure. Philostratus' willingness to sacrifice Greekness in exchange for his addressee's barbaric love uses classical tropes to complicate his ideas of what constitutes appropriate "Greek" love. As with the boy in *Letter* 5, the narrator expresses a similar insistence on being wounded, penetrated, and even killed by his addressee. In both letters, a lover's foreign origin is a means whereby to articulate an extreme desire that undermines one's cultural allegiance to Greece.

This association between non-Hellenic identity and the lack of proper knowledge also appears in the *Heroikos*. The Syrian Phoenician merchant of this dialogue is described as

[45] Aesch. *Supp*. is the most extensive surviving account of this myth, detailing the Danaids' pursuit by the sons of Aegyptus and their reception in Argos. For Hypermnestra, see Hor. *C*. 3.11; Ov. *Ep*. *Sapph*. 14.

"foreign," and, much in the same way as the Skythian addressee, is the object of a confused questioning (*Her*. 1.1):

> **Vinedresser**. Stranger, are you an Ionian, or where are you from? (Ἴων ὁ ξένος ἢ πόθεν;)
> **Phoenician**. I am a Phoenician, Vinedresser, one of those who live near Sidon and Tyre.
> **V**. But what about the Ionic fashion of your dress?
> **Ph**. It is now the local dress also for those of us from Phoenicia.

The Phoenician is first cast as foreign by his dress and origin, and the incongruity between his behavior and appearance confuses the Vinedresser.[46] Because one's origin created expectations about behavior and appearance, the Vinedresser consistently inquires of the Phoenician in order to pinpoint his ethnic and civic allegiances. The Vinedresser's concerns are shown to be legitimate since the reader later learns that the merchant has been travelling not only from Phoenicia but also from Egypt (6.3). In addition, the Vinedresser's reluctance to receive outsiders – he boasts that he allows no outsider to enter his farmstead, including any beast (θηρίον) or extortionist (συκοφάντης) (4.4) – suggests that the potential dangers of a visitor's outsider status are the primary concern of the Vinedresser. The Phoenician's origin therefore remains troublesome and is a clear means by which he is figured as foreign in the dialogue.

In addition to contrasting foreign and Hellenic identities, Philostratus' descriptions of foreigners clearly resonate with the complicated status of the foreign-born in the Roman world. The *peregrini* cannot easily be mapped on to the Greek label ξένος, but their (mis)treatment rests upon the idea of their differentiation from proper citizens, a trait that Philostratus demonstrates and complicates in the *Letters*. For example, Philostratus suggests that foreigners are almost invisible to local citizens (*Ep*. 8): "Better is the foreign lover, inasmuch as, being unknown, he is

[46] The Vinedresser's own past suggests a similar opinion about appearance and identity since he gives up a life in the city for farming based on Protesilaos' advice to "change your dress" (μεταμφίασαι) (*Her*. 4.8).

unsuspected, and, going unobserved, he is less likely to be noticed" (ἀμείνων καὶ ἐραστὴς ὁ ξένος, ὅσῳ καὶ ἀνύποπτος τῇ ἀγνωσίᾳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ λαθεῖν ἀφανέστερος). This characterization suggests a figurative separation between citizens and foreigners in a city. For, while a foreigner's ability to move through society unsuspected makes him or her a better choice as a lover, it points to a conceptual difference in how citizens and foreigners are treated.

In addition, much like foreigners who were viewed with suspicion due to their unclear status after the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, foreigners in several letters are directly contrasted with citizens. Another letter in this mode describes the irrelevance of political borders (*Ep.* 28):

> A beautiful woman should make up her list of lovers on the basis of character, not of birth; for a foreigner (ξένος) can prove to be a good person, and a citizen (πολίτης) a base one – according to how much good sense he has. … What are countries (αἱ πατρίδες) other than worthless areas measured out by low-minded lawgivers who circumscribe their own possessions with boundaries and gates, in order that we may restrict our goodwill by hesitating to go beyond the small area marked out by a love of country? And yet truly I too am love's host and you are beauty's (καὶ μὴν κἀγω τοῦ ἔρωτος ξένος καὶ σὺ τοῦ κάλλους), for we did not journey to them but they came to us, and we have gladly received them, as sailors do the stars. Now if the fact that I am foreign does not stand between me and love, do not let it hinder you from finding lovers.

Philostratus' direct contrast between foreigners and citizens extends the notion of political foreignness to being an outsider in a more personal sense; the lovers are described as both being foreigners – from one another as well as from love and beauty. According to the narrator, the fluidity and penetrability of political borders makes the labels of foreign and citizen irrelevant in terms of erotic desire. Rosenmeyer suggests from this letter that Philostratus may view himself as a citizen of the world throughout the entire letter collection.[47] Yet the narrator's use of citizenship as a way to justify his adequacy as a foreign lover expresses similar concerns about

[47] Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions*, 337.

the legal and social relationships between foreigners and Roman citizens during the time of the letters' composition.

This tension between one's foreign identity and citizenship may also influence Philostratus' descriptions of displaced foreigners. Exile served as punishment for elite citizens but also impacted members of disparaged foreign groups in Rome. In one letter, the narrator describes himself as an "exile" (φυγάς) and pushed out of his own country (*Ep*. 39):

> Won't you allow an exile even to write? (Μηδὲ γράφειν φυγάδα ἀνέξῃ;) [Then] do not assent to lovers breathing, nor to what else is in their nature. Do not chase me from your doors, as fortune has from my country, nor reproach the spontaneous event, conspicuous by its illogical force. (μή με διώξῃς τῶν θυρῶν, ὡς τῆς πατρίδος ἡ τύχη, μηδὲ ὀνειδίσῃς πρᾶγμα αὐτόματον οὗ τὸ λαμπὸν ἐν τῷ ἀλόγῳ τῆς δυνάμεως) Aristeides went into exile (ἔφευγε), but he returned. And Xenophon as well, but not justly so. Themistocles also went into exile, but he was honored even among barbarians. And Alcibiades, but he fortified Athens; and Demosthenes, but the reason was envy. The sea is also an exile, since it is compelled by the sun; the sun is as well, when night overtakes it. Autumn is also an exile when winter comes, and winter departs when spring chases it away. Even the Athenians received Demeter when she was an exile, Dionysus when he was moving about, and the wandering children of Heracles. At that time the Athenians set up the altar of Compassion as a thirteenth god. And they poured libations to it, not of wine and milk, but tears and reverence for the suppliants. You must also erect an altar and pity the man who is suffering, so that I may not be twice-exiled, deprived of my country (μὴ δὶς γένωμαι φυγὰς καὶ τῆς πατρίδος στερηθείς), and lose my love for you. For if you pity me, I will be restored [from exile].

The relationship between the exiled narrator's objects of desire – the addressee and his homeland – becomes blurred in his pleas. Separation from his beloved makes the narrator lament the loss of his country (πατρίς). He therefore for comfort turns to exiles from classical Greek history and myth who fared better either amongst barbarians or in their ability to return home. Through these examples, Philostratus creates a divide between exiles and those accepted into the city in order to draw attention to the narrator's ambiguous status; whether the narrator himself will be restored from exile remains uncertain by the end of the letter. This letter emphasizes the importance of

returning home from exile, contributing to a discourse of exile that articulated an imagined community outside the metropolis.[48]

In the *Heroikos*, Homer is described as an itinerant traveler and in some ways mirrors the status of this exile narrator. According to the Vinedresser, after the events of the Trojan War, Homer travelled through Greece, including to Ithaca where he encountered the ghost of Odysseus (*Her*. 43.10-16).[49] After this digression, the Phoenician wonders whether the Vinedresser has ever asked his informant the hero Protesilaos about Homer's homeland (πατρίς) or from which people the poet came (44.1).[50] The Vinedresser answers (44.2-4):

> Protesilaos says that he knows them. Because Homer omitted them in order that the excellent cities might make him their own citizen (ἵνα αἱ σπουδαῖαι τῶν πόλεων πολίτην αὐτὸν σφῶν αὐτῶν ποιοῖντο), and perhaps also because the decree of the Fates for Homer was that he seem to be without a city (ἄπολις). … For all cities ally themselves with him, and all peoples, and they would also plead their case about him against one another, when they enter themselves in the public register with Homer as a citizen (προστίθενται μὲν γὰρ αὐτῷ πᾶσαι μὲν πόλεις, πάντα δὲ ἔθνη, καὶ δικάσαιντο δ' ἂν περὶ αὐτοῦ πρὸς ἀλλήλας, ἐγγράφουσαι τῷ Ὁμήρῳ ἑαυτὰς οἷον πολίτῃ).

As with his other knowledge about the heroes of the Trojan War, the Vinedresser relies on the authority of the Greek hero Protesilaos, who in the dialogue is a confidant of Homer. Protesialos' answer via the Vinedresser is unlike other Greek imperial literature that tackles the question of Homer's origin. Lucian for instance proposes several possibilities for Homer's origin but describes him as a Babylonian and later a hostage (*homeros*) of the Greeks (*VH* 2.20). Unlike

[48] See Elena Isayev, *Migration, Mobility and Place in Ancient Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), for how the imagined community of Rome became more bounded through a discourse of exile, particularly in the writings of Polybius (229-66), Cicero, and Livy (395-418).

[49] Homer's travels to collect information for his work are common to other Homeric biographies. Peter Grossardt (ed.), *Einführung, Übersetzung und Kommentar zum Heroikos von Flavius Philostrat*, Vol. 2 (Basel: Schwabe, 2006), 658, claims, "Das Motiv der Reise Homers durch Griechenland und der Sammlung relevanter Information in den einzelnen Städten ist wie die Erörterung von Geburtsort und Geburtzeit ein Standardelement der Homer-Biographien."

[50] Πατρίδα δὲ Ὁμήρου, ὦ ἀμπελουργέ, καὶ τίνων ἐγένετο, ἤρου ποτὲ τὸν Πρωτεσίλεων;

Lucian, however, Philostratus does not offer a solution to the problem of Homer's origin. Stoddart describes this approach as "einen eigenständigen spielerischen Ausweg aus dem Dilemma."[51] Much like the exile in Philostratus' letters, Homer is without a home in a city (ἄπολις), a term commonly used to describe exiles or those banished from their homes.[52] Though ostensibly praiseworthy, Homer's claims to citizenship among all Greek cities and peoples (ἔθνη) portrays a person without a firm geographic hub. Exile in this way blurs ethnic and political identities since Homer can align himself with multiple homelands, an element common to foreign identity in the letters.

Finally, the goal of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* for universalism and its consequences throughout the empire have important repercussions for interpreting *Letter* 8's list of "foreign" items, which demonstrates the ability of foreign peoples and goods to enter the city of Rome as well as to travel around the Mediterranean and beyond. In addition to the items from *Letter* 8 discussed above, this letter continues by listing "foreign" elements in various cities, including Rome (*Ep*. 8):

> ξένα καὶ τὰ γράμματα, ἐκ Φοινίκης γὰρ ἦλθε, καὶ Σηρῶν ὑφαὶ καὶ μάγων θεολογία, οἷς πᾶσιν ἥδιον χρώμεθα ἢ τοῖς ἐγχωρίοις, ὅτι τῶν μὲν σπάνιον τὸ ἐπίκτητον, τῶν δὲ ὀλίγωρον τὸ οἰκεῖον
>
> Foreign too are the letters of the alphabet, for they came from Phoenicia, and the woven fabrics of the Seres and the divine science of the magi. We use all these more gladly than our native goods, for the former, being imported, are considered rare, whereas the latter, since they are already ours, are considered cheap.

The people and goods in this catalog are made foreign by their ability to cross great physical and symbolic divides. The narrator first focuses on locations apart from his own, pointing out

[51] Grossardt, Vol. 2, 662.

[52] For example, the banished Spartan Demaratus (Hdt. 7.104.2). Themistocles is also called this during the capture and occupation of Athens (Hdt. 8.61.1). Cf. Luc. *Hist. Conscr*. 41, who describes the ideal historian as ἄπολις, detached from his or her own context and commitments.

unexpected elements in various cultures. But the final elements that the narrator points out are free from being foreign to any specific people. The universal foreignness of the alphabet and the fabrics of the Seres erases the narrator's own place and status; if everything is foreign to the narrator, his physical location no longer matters. Similarly, if we accept the claim that his location may be Rome, the Greek topoi of foreignness – most notably the Phoenician alphabet – are transposed onto contemporary concerns about the ability of foreign people and ideas to move widely through the Mediterranean, and in particular into the city of Rome. Philostratus' letters therefore hint at some of the lived realities of foreign persons in Rome. As discussed in the previous section, the treatment of foreigners varied widely, but Philostratus shows that foreigners often held an ambiguous status since the acts of the Severan regime could erase any certainty about their legal or cultural status.

III. Writing to the Emperor: Caracalla's Troublesome Identity

> "After the great review is over, we shall fly away to warm countries far from hence, where there are mountains and forests. To Egypt, where we shall see three-cornered houses built of stone, with pointed tops that reach nearly to the clouds. They are called Pyramids, and are older than a stork could imagine."
>
> – Hans Christian Andersen, "The Storks" (1838)

As discussed in the previous chapter, Philostratus' reactions to the Romans are complicated and not entirely consistent across his various works. As a result, the letters to named sophists and imperial authorities tend to be used to locate the sophist historically, unlike those letters of a more erotic nature.[53] But I argue that the letter addressed to the emperor Caracalla has much in common with the themes of the erotic letters discussed above. In Hans Christian Andersen's short story, a mother stork consoles her children by distracting them with stories

[53] See, esp. Goldhill, "Constructing Identity."

about flying south to Egypt. The association between storks, the region of Egypt, and the bird's characterization as an admirable rearer of offspring is likewise found in Greek and Roman literature and may be significant to understanding some of the imagery in Philostratus' letter to the emperor. Though short and cryptic, this letter evidently attacks the emperor (*Ep*. 72):

> Οἱ πελαργοὶ τὰς πεπορθημένας πόλεις οὐκ ἐσπέτονται κακῶν πεπαυμένων ἠχὼ φεύγοντες, σὺ δὲ οἰκίαν οἰκεῖς, ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπόρθησας καὶ θεοῖς τοῖς ἐν αὐτῇ θύεις, ὥσπερ οὐκ οὖσιν, ἢ οὖσι μέν, ἐκλελησμένοις δέ, ὅτι καὶ τὰ ἐκείνων ἔχεις.
>
> Storks do not fly into cities that have been destroyed, instead shunning the echo of evils once they have ceased. But you dwell in a house that you yourself destroyed; and you sacrifice to gods that inhabit it as if they did not exist, or as if they exist but have forgotten that you have taken their property.

Philostratus chastises the emperor for unfit rulership, but because of the letter's brevity, the details about Caracalla's improper devotion to the gods and to the Severan family are unclear.[54] Yet Caracalla's relationship to a contemporary discourse about foreignness extends beyond the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, since his own foreign status is often a point of contention in our sources. As discussed in the previous chapter, overt attacks on the emperor were dangerous under ambiguously threatening rulers like Caracalla. Philostratus' use here of cryptic language as well as the genre of a letter allows the author to criticize a sitting emperor without necessarily suffering punishment for doing so. I will therefore show that this letter can in many ways be part of that negative discourse about the emperor's foreign status and of the association between the Severans and non-Roman influence in the city.

As discussed above, the intrusion of foreign elements into Rome is a common concern of this period, and Dio's contemporary history echoes these sentiments. Dio's senatorial viewpoint often expresses disbelief at the problematic elements of Severus' reign. In his descriptions of the

[54] Jaap-Jan Flinterman, "De Sofist," 86, interprets this letter as Philostratus claiming probably exaggerated influence over the emperor, as sophists do in the *VS*.

celebrations for the tenth year of the reign of the emperor in 203 as well as the various spectacles of Caracalla's wedding, the historian tends to portray the Severan family as outsiders in Rome (77.1):

> ἐποιήθησαν δὲ καὶ οἱ γάμοι τοῦ τε Ἀντωνίνου τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Σεουήρου καὶ τῆς Πλαυτίλλης τῆς τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ θυγατρός: καὶ τοσαῦτα τῇ θυγατρὶ οὗτος ἔδωκεν ὅσα καὶ πεντήκοντα γυναιξὶ βασιλίσσαις ἤρκεσεν ἄν. εἴδομεν δὲ αὐτὰ διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς ἐς τὸ παλάτιον κομιζόμενα. εἱστιάθημεν δὲ ἐν ταὐτῷ ἅμα, τὰ μὲν βασιλικῶς τὰ δὲ βαρβαρικῶς, ἐφθά τε πάντα ὅσα νομίζεται, καὶ ὠμὰ ζῶντά τε ἄλλα λαβόντες. ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ θέαι τηνικαῦτα παντοδαπαὶ ἐπί τε τῇ ἀνακομιδῇ τοῦ Σεουήρου καὶ ἐπὶ τῇ δεκετηρίδι αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐπὶ ταῖς νίκαις. ἐν ταύταις ταῖς θέαις καὶ σύες τοῦ Πλαυτιανοῦ ἑξήκοντα ἄγριοι ἐπάλαισαν ἀλλήλοις ὑπὸ παραγγέλματος, ἐσφάγησαν δὲ ἄλλα τε πολλὰ θηρία καὶ ἐλέφας καὶ κορακότας: τὸ δὲ ζῷον τοῦτο Ἰνδικόν τέ ἐστι, καὶ τότε πρῶτον ἐς τὴν Ῥώμην, ὅσα καὶ ἐγὼ ἐπίσταμαι, ἐσήχθη, ἔχει δὲ χροιὰν μὲν λεαίνης τίγριδι μεμιγμένης, εἶδος δὲ ἐκείνων τε καὶ κυνὸς καὶ ἀλώπεκος ἰδίως πως συγκεκραμένον.
>
> The nuptials of Antoninus, the son of Severus, and Plautilla, Plautianus' daughter, were also celebrated at this time; and Plautianus gave as much for his daughter's dowry as would have sufficed for fifty women of royal rank. We saw the gifts as they were being carried through the Forum to the palace. And we were all entertained together at a banquet, partly in royal and partly in barbaric style, receiving not only all the customary cooked foods but also uncooked meat and other animals still alive.[55] At this time there occurred, too, all sorts of spectacles in honor of Severus' return, the completion of his first ten years of power, and his victories. At these spectacles sixty wild boars of Plautianus fought together at a signal, and among many other wild beasts that were slain were an elephant and a corocotta. This last animal is an Indian species, and was then introduced into Rome for the first time, so far as I am aware. It has the color of a lioness and tiger combined, and the general appearance of those animals, as also of a dog and fox, curiously blended.

The praetorian prefect Plautianus had assisted in Severus' rise to power in 193 and was also presumably from Leptis Magna (Herod. 3.10.6). His close relationship with Severus therefore compounds the descriptions here of the festivities that were "partly in royal and partly in barbaric style" (τὰ μὲν βασιλικῶς τὰ δὲ βαρβαρικῶς), as do the presence of various wild and foreign

[55] Cf. HA *Sev*. 19.8 for the modesty of Severus' diet, with the emperor occasionally not eating meat.

animals, including the corocotta.[56] Dio's claim that this animal has never been seen in Rome may be slightly disingenuous since other sources claim some knowledge of the corocotta.[57] But these sources also strongly associate the corocotta, and the similarly bizarre hyena, with foreign regions like Africa and India.[58] Like the festive proceedings, the corocotta in Dio's account combines disparate elements: a lioness and tiger or a dog and a fox, creatures somewhat similar but distinctly different. This creature's nature reflects contemporary views toward Caracalla himself – foreign in location and in appearance, a curious blending of known features from around the known world, but nevertheless still dangerously foreign and out of place.[59]

Caracalla's fascination with foreign regions compounds his dual identity, a trait Philostratus perhaps alludes to in his letter to the emperor. As discussed above, the Severan family's fascination with Egyptian culture is well-attested. Both this foreign fascination and the general perception of the Severans as non-Roman outsiders come across in several details of the letter. As seen above in another letter of Philostratus, storks are likened to Indian religious practice. In *Letter* 8, the Indians await the phoenix, but those "who are first to see the stork actually prostrate themselves before it" (τὸν δὲ πελαργὸν οἱ πρῶτον θεασάμενοι καὶ προσκυνοῦσι). Greeks and Roman writers variously held the phoenix as a cornerstone of

[56] See Andrew G. Scott, "Cassius Dio on Septimius Severus' *decennalia* and *ludi saeculares*," *Histos* 11 (2017): 154-61, for Dio's conflation of these two festivals here and how the narrative's orientation around Plautianus draws attention to the instability of the Severan house.

[57] In direct contrast to Dio's account, Antoninus Pius is said to have brought this animal to Rome (HA *Ant. Pius* 10.9).

[58] Pliny describes this animal as a hybrid between a dog and a wolf or between a hyena and a lion (*HN* 8.107). Strabo similarly states that this animal is a mix of dog and wolf (16.4.16). It is elsewhere variously linked to the hyena and its ability to mimic human speech (Porph. *Abst*. 3.4, Ael. *NA* 7.22). In his correspondence with Marcus, Fronto likens himself to a hyena (*Ep*. 21), in a letter bearing other allusions to his African roots and full of sexual undertones. See Amy Richlin, *Marcus Aurelius in Love* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006), 90-93.

[59] Kaldellis, "How Perilous Was It to Write Political History," 52-53, argues that Dio's criticism of Septimius Severus is a result of his work's composition after the emperor's death in 211, and that of the later Severans a result of his semi-retirement and location outside Rome in Bithynia.

Egyptian religious practice but also documented its journey to and return from further east.[60] And the letter's subtle insult of Indian worshipers, who would mistake the stork for the phoenix, compounds the foreign nature of storks in this corpus.

The Italian sophist Aelian, a contemporary of Philostratus, likewise uses storks to discuss Egyptian religious practice in his work the *De Natura Animalium* (10.16):

> 'Η ὗς καὶ τῶν ἰδίων τέκνων ὑπὸ τῆς λαιμαργίας ἀφειδῶς ἔχει, καὶ μέντοι καὶ ἀνθρώπου σώματι ἐντυχοῦσα οὐκ ἀπέχεται, ἀλλ᾽ ἐσθίει. ταύτῃ τοι καὶ ἐμίσησαν Αἰγύπτιοι τὸ ζῷον ὡς μυσαρὸν καὶ πάμβορον. φιλοῦσι δὲ οἱ φρόνιμοι καὶ τῶν ἀλόγων τὰ πραότερα καὶ φειδοῦς ἅμα καὶ εὐσεβείας μετειληχότα προτιμᾶν. Αἰγύπτιοι γοῦν τοὺς πελαργοὺς καὶ προσκυνοῦσιν, ἐπεὶ τοὺς πατέρας γηροκομοῦσιν καὶ ἄγουσι διὰ τιμῆς. οἱ αὐτοὶ δὲ Αἰγύπτιοι καὶ χηναλώπεκας καὶ ἔποπας τιμῶσιν, ἐπεὶ οἱ μὲν φιλότεκνοι αὐτῶν, οἱ δὲ πρὸς τοὺς γειναμένους εὐσεβεῖς.
>
> The pig in sheer gluttony does not spare even its own young; moreover if it comes across a man's body it does not refrain from eating it. That is why the Egyptians detest the animal as polluted and omnivorous. And sober men are accustomed to prefer those animals which are of a gentler nature and have some sense of restraint and reverence. At any rate the Egyptians actually prostrate themselves before storks, because they tend and respect their parents in old age; and these same Egyptians pay honor to geese and hoopoes, because the former are fond of their offspring, and the latter show reverence to their parents.

Aelian distinguishes between those who worship gluttonous animals like pigs and those who worship ones like storks and other birds who display admirable restraint. Those like the Egyptians, who are able to distinguish between both groups, in effect mirror these animals' positive traits. By showing correct reverence to these animals, the worshiper also values traits like those of the stork who cares for its parents. Aelian elsewhere discusses the stork caring for

[60] Inter alia, Herodotus (2.73-75) identifies the Egyptian Bennu bird with the phoenix, which lived in Arabia and visited Egypt once every 500 years upon the death of its father. Aelian (*NA* 6.58) marvels at the phoenix's ability to calculate 500 years accurately, something the Egyptian priests could not even do. And Philostratus adds that the phoenix was in India in between its returns to Egypt (*VA* 3.49). The poem of the Christian apologist Lactantius, *De Ave Phoenice*, gives a detailed account in which the Egyptians joyfully greet the bird having come from Arabia and India. The phoenix likewise lends its name to the region of Syria/Phoenicia (ll. 65-71). Tac. *Ann*. 6.28; Plin. *Nat*. 10.2; Dio Cass. 58.27.1, give further details about the migratory pattern and record an appearance of the phoenix in 34/36 C.E.

its young and being able to recognize their houses when migrating home (3.23).[61] This association of storks with familial respect as well as Egyptian religious practice may suggest that Philostratus in *Letter* 72 means to disparage, by contrast, Caracalla's impious acts against his own family.[62]

The storks' association with foreign regions furthermore hints at a recognition of Caracalla's own fascination with these regions. This fascination led Caracalla to visit these regions, and in contemporary sources, these travels exacerbate the emperor's confused identity. In various regions, the emperor is seen to play-act as local heroes in order to fit in but is disparaged by locals and Romans alike for doing so. Caracalla's unclear ethnic allegiance is thus a frequent point of ridicule in hostile sources. But the emperor's dangerous status comes across most prominently in his visit to and subsequent destruction of Alexandria, which may be one of the "destroyed cities" in Philostratus' letter. According to Dio's record of the event, several details reinforce the emperor's portrayal as embodying an unclear ethnic identity and cultural allegiance.

The emperor's devotion to Egypt was clear to Dio Cassius in his contemporary history, yet his description of Caracalla's visit to Alexandria in 215 casts him as out of place both ethnically and spatially. According to Dio, despite the emperor's devotion to Alexander, Caracalla destroys the city because of the citizens' disrespect toward the emperor (78.22.1). In

[61] Here too Aelian records an anecdote of Alexander of Myndus that elderly storks who travel to the islands of Ocean are given human form for their filial piety (3.23). See Smith, *Man and Animal*, 129, who explains that Aelian does not see a strict divide between "myth" and "truth" but assesses the reliability of Alexander of Myndus as a source on his own terms.

[62] Smith, *Man and Animal*, 147-78, collects material evidence that shows the Severan family's interest in Egyptian and Indian culture and links it to this work of Aelian. In this way, Aelian's work has additional meaning especially for the reign of Caracalla when an intense contemporary interest in Egyptian culture and religion appeared in the city of Rome. Smith traces an increasing interest in Egyptian cults, including Isis and Serapis, as well as imperial visits to Egypt.

the confused slaughter that follows, both citizens and foreigners are killed: "Together with the citizens there perished also many outsiders, and not a few of those who had accompanied Antoninus were slain with the rest through ignorance of their identity" (78.23.1).[63] Maud Gleason argues that Dio's description of the slaughter expresses his own anxieties about the instability of senatorial status: "His description of the massacre he never saw resembles a paranoid thought experiment about what happens when elite status fails to protect. What if the emperor ordered a massacre and no one knew, or cared, who we were?"[64] But Dio also includes Caracalla in this confusion over identity. The emperor attempts to show devotion to the Egyptian god Serapis, issuing orders from his temple, and even has the remaining foreigners expelled from the city, seemingly blaming them for the disastrous slaughter. But Caracalla's maltreatment of the Alexandrians earns him the epithet the "Ausonian beast" (ὁ Αὐσόνιος θήρ), which effectively casts the emperor as a violent Italian outsider in Egypt.[65]

Herodian uses Caracalla's visit to Alexandria in 215 to mock his devotion to Alexander, saying that this devotion was an "excuse" (πρόφασις) to visit and that the emperor "pretended" (προσεποιεῖτο) to want to honor and worship Alexander (4.8.6-7). According to Herodian, the Alexandrians' subsequent mocking of Caracalla's devotion to Alexander and Achilles is the reason for his destruction of the city (4.9.3). Caracalla, in these narratives, invokes both Achilles and Alexander as a means to justify his actions. But Caracalla's fascination with Alexander, in

[63] συναπώλοντο δ᾽ οὖν αὐτοῖς καὶ τῶν ξένων πολλοί, καὶ συχνοί γε τῶν μετὰ τοῦ Ἀντωνίνου ἐλθόντων ἀγνοίᾳ συνδιεφθάρησαν.

[64] Gleason, "Identity Theft," 65.

[65] This name references a supposed oracle concerning Caracalla from Pergamum (78.16.8). In both cases, Dio describes Caracalla as delighted by the name. See M. James Moscovich, "Ausonia: The Context of Cassius Dio 'fr. 2.1,'" *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 49 (2000): 378-81, for where specifically in Italy Dio may have meant Ausonia to be, based on a fragment perhaps from Book 1 or 7.

particular the latter's conquest of India and Persia, also contributes to the troublesome identity of the emperor.

Caracalla clearly viewed his fascination with Egypt and other eastern regions as part of his emulation of Alexander.[66] Much as in Alexander's own complicated treatment of conquered peoples, Caracalla was accused of imitation of and overt friendliness to the Parthians during his eastern campaign.[67] According to Herodian, Caracalla sent a letter to the Parthian ruler Artabanus V in which the emperor proposed merging the two empires. A marriage between Caracalla and the king's daughter would be mutually beneficial and produce a single invincible power (ποιήσειν ἀρχὴν ἀνανταγώνιστον) (4.10.2). It is unclear how seriously we should take this anecdote, since the proposal is a clear ruse on the part of the emperor.[68] But the Parthian king's alleged response speaks to the ongoing portrayal of Caracalla as a potentially dangerous foreigner himself (4.10.5):

> τοιούτοις αὐτοῦ γράμμασιν ἐντυχὼν ὁ Παρθυαῖος τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἀντέλεγε, φάσκων οὐχ ἁρμόζειν Ῥωμαίῳ γάμον βάρβαρον. τίνα γὰρ ἔσεσθαι συμφωνίαν ἐν αὐτοῖς, μήτε τῆς ἀλλήλων φωνῆς συνιεῖσιν, ἔν τε διαίτῃ καὶ σκευῇ διαφέρουσιν ἀλλήλων; εἶναι δὲ παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις εὐπατρίδας πολλούς, ὧν τινὸς ἐπιλέξασθαι δύναιτ᾽ ἂν θυγατέρα, παρά τε αὐτῷ Ἀρσακίδας· καὶ μὴ δεῖν μηδέτερον γένος νοθεύεσθαι.
>
> At first the Parthian king did not approve of the proposals in Caracalla's letters, saying that it was not proper for a barbarian to marry a Roman. What accord could there be when they did not understand each other's language and differed so

[66] Roman writers also coupled India and Egypt together as similarly foreign regions. See, e.g., *VA* 6.1. Phiroze Vasunia, *The Gift of the Nile: Hellenizing Egypt from Aeschylus to Alexander* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 248-88, discusses the various links made between Egypt and India in Alexander's campaign. For how this link played out in the academy, see Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization, Vol. 1: The Fabrication of Ancient Greece 1785-1985* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 224-80, in which ancient Egypt as a center of civilization was downplayed in favor of places like India; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers relied on the linguistic link between Sanskrit and European languages to further European dominance.

[67] See Grant Parker, *The Making of Roman India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 179, on the following passage.

[68] See Dio Cass. 79.1.1, who makes Caracalla's actions questionable but not as nearly as reprehensible as Herodian does.

> radically in diet and dress? Surely, the king said, there are many distinguished Romans, one of whose daughters he could marry, just as for him there were the Arsacids [the Parthian dynasty]. And neither race should be contaminated/ bastardized.

Caracalla's un-Roman fascination culminates in this proposal and the warning from a self-described "barbarian" not to neglect actual Romans more suitable for marriage. The emperor has apparently not considered language, diet, and dress – as seen, typical markers of foreign difference – as hindrances to the proposed union. Caracalla purposefully subverts the purity of the γένος that Artabanus maintains as crucial to the identity of both groups. In addition to language, Artabanus uses diet and dress to express the inappropriateness of this union between different groups. But Caracalla's neglect of such concerns is in line with his portrayal elsewhere; embodying a dangerously ambiguous ethnicity, Caracalla contradicts any clear group distinctions by proposing this marriage and behaving as ethnically erratic elsewhere. Much like that of foreigners in the works of Philostratus, the emperor's unstable identity in Herodian is dangerous, in this case to Roman political stability.

A reader could therefore reasonably take the imagery used to attack Caracalla in Philostratus' letter to be invoking the emperor's own foreign exploits and identities.. The "destroyed city" suggests the destruction of Alexandria, used by contemporary authors to disparage the emperor and mark him as an outsider. Both the stork imagery and the implied incorrect religious devotion resonate with Caracalla's overzealous enthusiasm for non-Roman regions and adoption of foreign religious practices, including those from Egypt, outside the letter. Lastly, the references to Caracalla's own house show that the emperor adopted these practices to the detriment of his own family and contrary to traditional Roman values.

But the Severan family's own identity adds a new layer of meaning to these attacks against the emperor. According to Dio, Caracalla's own confused identity is a result of his

troublesome lineage. Dio ties the lewd acts of Caracalla, his desire for bloodshed in the arena, and his confused identity in Rome and abroad to the emperor's three ethnicities (78.6):

> ὅτι τρισὶν ἔθνεσιν ὁ Ἀντωνῖνος προσήκων ἦν, καὶ τῶν μὲν ἀγαθῶν αὐτῶν οὐδὲν τὸ παράπαν τὰ δὲ δὴ κακὰ πάντα συλλαβὼν ἐκτήσατο, τῆς μὲν Γαλατίας τὸ κοῦφον καὶ τὸ δειλὸν καὶ τὸ θρασύ, τῆς Ἀφρικῆς τὸ τραχὺ καὶ ἄγριον, τῆς Συρίας, ὅθεν πρὸς μητρὸς ἦν, τὸ πανοῦργον.
>
> Antoninus belonged to three races; and he possessed none of their virtues at all, but combined in himself all their vices; the fickleness, cowardice, and recklessness of Gaul were his, the harshness and cruelty of Africa, and the craftiness of Syria, whence he was sprung on his mother's side.

Dio continues this characterization of Caracalla by describing the emperor's decision to force the gladiator Bato to fight three men in succession on the same day, resulting in the gladiator's death. Caracalla therefore blends the negative traits of his family background into his own terrible excesses. Elsewhere, Dio attacks Caracalla as "crafty" (πανοῦργον), which the author claims is a common trait of both the Syrians and the emperor's mother Julia Domna (78.10).[69] Dio therefore links the presence of Syrians and their negative attributes in Rome to the empress and her family. Despite Caracalla's physical presence in Rome, his mother's Syrian origin still negatively affects him there, as does his own birth in Gaul. Like the narrator of Philostratus' letters, the emperor finds himself out of place geographically but still embodying the (potentially dangerous) traits of his homeland. And as will be shown, these peoples of the eastern empire are the object of especial anxiety in Philostratus' dialogue the *Heroikos*.

IV. Syrians and Eastern Women in the *Heroikos*

One common attack against the Severans is Caracalla's descent through Julia Domna and its links to Syria. From this characterization, the Syrian women of the imperial household are

[69] On Syrian stereotypes in Greco-Roman texts, see Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 335-50.

drawn into the negative portrayal of foreigners. Building upon the literary tradition hostile toward these women as well as the direct references to the region of Syria in Philostratus' dialogue, I show that the *Heroikos* embodies trends of Severan literature in which the juxtaposition of femininity and dangerous foreignness took on new meaning.

Some scholarship has linked Achilles' exploits in the *Heroikos* to the political circumstances of the period. M. Rahim Shayegan connects Achilles in this dialogue to the emperor Severus Alexander (r. 222-35). He argues that the utilization of Alexander the Great in the emperor's imperial propaganda and policy is mirrored in Philostratus' repurposing of Achilles as Greece's defender, rather than the traditional aggressor against the Trojans.[70] By contrast, I propose that because this violence is carried out against foreign women in particular (Amazons and Trojans), this text foregrounds contemporary political circumstances in which Syrian ("foreign") women held much power in the city of Rome.[71] Focusing more on the reign of Elagabalus (r. 218-22) rather than that of Severus Alexander and his exploits in the East, I argue that the dialogue serves more as a veiled warning against than a celebration of the imperial regime.

Other scholars have similarly linked these parts of the *Heroikos* to the women of the Severan family. Ellen Bradshaw Aitken suggests that the large number of good and bad foreigners in the dialogue reflects their ambiguous status. In particular, the contrast between the Phoenician interlocutor who participates in Greek cult as well as negative representations of feminitity like the Amazons and the Trojan girl "may well serve to highlight attempts by the

[70] Shayegan, "Philostratus's *Heroikos*."

[71] See Levick, *Julia Domna*, 145-63, for an overview of the Syrian women's roles during the reigns of Elagabalus and Severus Alexander. See Julie Langford, *Maternal Megalomania*, 84-112, for Julia's relationship with the Senate and the propaganda surrounding the empress including coinage and mass-produced portraiture.

Phoenician women of the Severan dynasty to present themselves as authentically 'Greek' by engaging in practices proper to the cult and culture of the Hellenic heroes."[72] Benjamin McCloskey uses the figure of Achilles to reject such a positive association with foreignness and raises the possibility of associating the Severan women with the Amazons. In this way, women who come from the East and dominate men are viewed negatively, much like the Syrian women of the imperial family.[73]

McCloskey's argument, however, focuses on a theoretical dramatic date of the Vinedresser's stories in which Achilles responds to the encroachment of Rome in Greece in the second century B.C.E.[74] The contemporary resonance of these stories therefore requires further discussion. I build upon both McCloskey and Aitken's readings in order to show that the dialogue's foreign apprehension is directed specifically at women from the contemporary Near East. In my interpretation, both Greece *and* Rome need defending from this region. For, in addition to those episodes featuring Achilles, other descriptions in the *Heroikos* point to anxieties about peoples around the Black Sea and in the regions of Asia Minor and Syria. Coupled with the generally ambivalent views toward foreignness outlined in the sections above, the portrayal of these groups in the *Heroikos* complicates contemporary views of the Severan family.

The Syrian women of the imperial family – Julia Maesa and her daughters Julia Soaemias and Julia Mamaea – brought about the appointment of Elagabalus as emperor in 218.[75] During

[72] Aitken, "Why a Phoenician?," 279.

[73] Benjamin McCloskey, "Achilles' Brutish Hellenism: Greek Identity in the *Herōikos*," *Classical Philology* 112 (2017): 81.

[74] The date 164 B.C.E. is based on the mention of Leonidas of Rhodes and his victory at the Olympics that year (*Her*. 56.11). See Grossardt, Vol. 2, 755-57, for the tension between this supposed date and the contemporary echoes that it must have had (specifically Antiochos' death and that of Caracalla in 217).

[75] See Levick, *Julia Domna*, 148, for how the role of women in putting Elagabalus on the throne was downplayed by Dio, but emphasized by Herodian; Kettenhofen, *Die syrischen Augustae*, 23-28. See also Andrade, *Syrian Identity*,

his reign and on into that of his cousin and successor Severus Alexander, these women continued to hold real if de facto power. Though contemporary sources disagree on their exact roles, they no doubt influenced perceptions of the emperors and their actions. Many viewed their power in Rome as that of dangerous non-Romans, since contemporary sources focus on Syria as the source of the improper nature of Elagabalus' reign.[76] Several of the episodes of the *Heroikos* may play upon these contemporary feelings about unfit emperors but tie them more directly to foreign feminine power.

Aside from the Phoenician interlocutor and his ambiguous status participating in Greek cult, other instances in the *Heroikos* single out the Syrian region as problematically foreign. In describing the cult of Hektor at Troy, the Vinedresser narrates how an Assyrian youth insulted the Trojan hero and later died as punishment for his transgression (*Her.* 19.3-7). After insulting Hektor's accomplishments and the likeness of his cult statue, the youth is driven off the road by a flood. Hektor appears and commands the river in a barbaric tongue (βαρβάρῳ τῇ φωνῇ) (19.6). The Phoenician's response to this story clarifies any ambiguity about Hektor's barbarous actions (19.8-9):

> Οὔτε τὸν Αἴαντα χρὴ θαυμάζειν, ἀμπελουργέ, καρτερήσαντα τὰ ἐκ τῶν ποιμένων, οὔτε τὸν Ἕκτορα ἡγεῖσθαι βάρβαρον μὴ ἀνασχόμενον τὰ ἐκ τοῦ μειρακίου· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ καὶ ξυγγνώμη ἴσως, οἳ Τρῶες ὄντες, ἔτι καὶ πονήρως ἐχόντων σφίσι τῶν προβάτων, ἐπεπήδων τῷ τάφῳ· μειρακίῳ δὲ Ἀσσυρίῳ πομπεύοντι ἐς τὸν τοῦ Ἰλίου ἥρω τίς συγγνώμη; οὐ γὰρ δὴ Ἀσσυρίοις ποτὲ καὶ Τρωσὶ πόλεμος ἐγένετο, οὐδὲ τὰς ἀγέλας σφων ὁ Ἕκτωρ ἐπόρθησεν, ὥσπερ τὰς τῶν Τρώων ὁ Αἴας.

314-24, for how Syrians used Roman/Greek signs to articulate their identity during this period. On the one hand, e.g., this trend opened up the possibility for prominent Syrians to participate in the imperial system; on the other, Elagabalus attempted to do this, and was ultimately unsuccessful, by introducing Syrian religion into Rome.

[76] See Martijn Icks, *The Crimes of Elagabalus: The Life and Legacy of Rome's Decadent Boy Emperor* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012), 92-122, who describes this as an "Oriental" characterization in both Herodian and Dio Cassius, since both authors focus on the "foreign" aspects of Elagabalus' character. See Michael Sommer, "Elagabal: Wege zur Konstruktion eines 'schlechten' Kaisers," *Scripta Classica Israelica* 23 (2004): 100-110, who similarly sees the "foreign" portrayal in Herodian, but a more tyrant-like emperor in Dio.

> Vinedresser, it is not necessary to admire Ajax enduring the outrages of the shepherds or to consider Hektor a barbarian because he was not patient with the actions of the youth. While it is perhaps forgivable that the shepherds, who were Trojans, assaulted the tomb after their sheep had fared badly, what forgiveness is there for the Assyrian youth who mocked the hero of Ilion? After all, there was never any war between the Assyrians and the Trojans, nor did Hektor ravage the Assyrians' herds as Ajax did those of the Trojans.

The Phoenician draws a distinction between Hektor's punishment of the Assyrian youth and that of Ajax who kills sheep near his tomb at Troy (18.3).[77] There was no reason for the Assyrian to be so hostile toward the Trojan hero, an idea given additional weight since it comes from the Phoenician. The contemporary resonance of this episode is clear; the Assyrian youth is likely from the Roman province of Syria,[78] and the reader learns that his death happened just the previous year (πέρυσι) (18.6). It is all the more telling that the Phoenician sees the death of the Assyrian as just, since he no doubt has some ethnic affinity with him.[79] Though perhaps the clearest, the Assyrian is just one example of problematic eastern foreigners in the text.

Trojans and their Roman descendants, however, are not a source of foreign apprehension in the *Heroikos* since the Vinedresser praises both Hektor and Aeneas. The Vinedresser connects Hektor to the hero Aeneas, a Trojan well-regarded in the Roman imagination (*Her*. 38). "Aeneas, although inferior to Hektor as a fighter, surpassed the Trojans in intelligence and was considered worthy of the same honors as Hektor" (Αἰνείαν δὲ μάχεσθαι μὲν τούτου ἧττον, συνέσει δὲ περιεῖναι τῶν Τρώων, ἀξιοῦσθαι δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν Ἕκτορι) (38.1). And "while the Achaeans called Hektor the hand of the Trojans, they called Aeneas the mind" (ἐκάλουν δὲ οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ τὸν μὲν Ἕκτορα χεῖρα τῶν Τρώων, τὸν δὲ Αἰνείαν νοῦν) (38.2). McCloskey connects Achilles' violence

[77] Cf. Hom. *Il*. 1.159ff. in which Achilles claims to have no quarrel with the Trojans because they never ran off his cattle or horses. The idea of vicarious guilt was often tied to especially valuable property in Homeric Greece.

[78] See Grossardt, Vol. 2, 451.

[79] An idea that seems in line with Aitken's argument, but goes unexplored when she brings in this episode ("Why a Phoenician?," 274).

against the last descendant of Priam (*Her*. 56.1-10) to the Trojans' mythological association with Rome, but forgoes discussing this section about Aeneas.[80] Yet Philostratus appears to have the later Roman tradition in mind. Aeneas is intelligent and level-headed, but importantly "he knew well the intentions of the gods, which had been fated for him once Troy had been captured" (τὰ δὲ τῶν θεῶν εὖ εἰδέναι, ἃ δὴ ἐπέπρωτο αὐτῷ Τροίας ἁλούσης) (38.1).[81]

As opposed to Romans/Trojans in the text, therefore, powerful women of the Near East emerge as a more troublesome group, based on the description of Achilles' exploits in the dialogue. The Vinedresser retells the stories of Achilles' subjugation of several women, including the last descendant of Priam (*Her.* 56.6-10) and the Amazons (*Her.* 56.11-57.17). In the first instance, Achilles tricks a merchant on the island of Leukê into assisting him to obtain this descendant of Priam, a "Trojan slave" (δούλη Ἰλιάς) (56.7). After the merchant is rewarded and departs, "they had not yet gone a stade away from the island when the girl's wailing struck them, because Achilles was pulling her apart and tearing her limb from limb" (διασπωμένου αὐτὴν τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως καὶ μελιστὶ ξαίνοντος) (56.10). McCloskey downplays the "revenge" motive for Achilles' killing the Trojan girl. By this argument, Achilles' stated motive when asked by the merchant suggests that the Trojan's genealogy is her crime; since she is linked to Rome, Achilles takes "revenge for Rome's conquest of Greece."[82]

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[80] McCloskey, "Achilles' Brutish Hellenism," 74.

[81] See Nicholas Horsfall, "The Aeneas-Legend from Homer to Vergil," in *Roman Myth and Mythography*, ed. Jan N. Bremmer and Nicholas M. Horsfall (University of London, Institute of Classical Studies: 1987), 12-24; Jacques Poucet, "La diffusion de la légende d'Enée en Italie centrale et ses rapports avec celle de Romulus," *Études Classiques* 57 (1989): 227-54. Grossardt, Vol. 2, 636, disagrees and maintains that this refers to an alternative prophecy from Greek epic about Aeneas who was fated to leave before the fall of Troy with his descendants. But the version of Aeneas presented here does not make his Roman connections outside the realm of possibility.

[82] McCloskey, "Achilles' Brutish Hellenism," 74.

I propose an alternative reading that links this episode more firmly to the conquest of the Amazons and other foreign women in the dialogue. In the case of the Trojan slave, Achilles' motives are in tune with his relation to Trojans elsewhere in the text. The Roman association of this Trojan should not be overstated. As seen, the Vinedresser praises Aeneas, the figure most closely associated with Rome in the text. Thus, in my reading, Achilles bears no specific ill-will to Rome but rather to eastern peoples and the powerful women among them.[83]

The Vinedresser narrates several exploits from the life and afterlife of Achilles in a significant portion of the text (*Her*. 44.5-55.6), the latter part of which serves to contextualize Achilles' later violent behavior. Following the events of Achilles' life and a critique of those narrated in the *Iliad*, the Vinedresser discusses the hero's death in the Thymbraion of Apollo. Homer knew of this death (Ὅμηρος ἐπιγινώσκει) but you will only hear of it from other poets (ποιητῶν ἀκούεις) (51.1-2). What follows therefore is unique to Philostratus, particularly the mutual love between the Greek Achilles and the Trojan Polyxena.[84] According to the Vinedresser, these two first saw each other at the ransom of Hektor to which Priam had brought Polyxena "since she was the youngest of those Hekabê had born for him. And younger children always used to assist their fathers' step" (νεωτάτην οὖσαν ὧν ἡ Ἑκάβη αὐτῷ ἔτεκεν, ἐθεράπευον δὲ ἀεὶ τὸ βάδισμα τῶν πατέρων οἱ νεώτεροι τῶν παίδων) (51.4). Polyxena is of the same lineage as the Trojan descendant whom Achilles later violently kills. The nature of Polyxena's death, however, adds new insight into Achilles' motivations to act violently later.

[83] Cf. *VA* 4.11-12 in which Apollonius at Troy must dismiss a Trojan descendant by order of Achilles.

[84] A unique feature that Grossardt, Vol. 2, 701, mentions: "Die gewählte Formel drückt aus, dass nun die Berichtigung der Tradition durch den Winzer folgt, also, von unserem Standpunkt her gesehen, die mythologische Neurung durch Philostrat. Diese besteht darin, dass im *Heroikos* nicht nur Achilleus die Polyxene liebt, sondern auch die Troerin den Griechen."

The Vinedresser describes Achilles' and Polyxena's love as mutual, and Achilles' failure, therefore, to exert his power over the Trojan woman shows that his sudden death is unresolved. According to the Vinedresser, Achilles restrained himself from abducting the girl, even though "she was under his power" (μήτε ἀφελέσθαι τὴν κόρην ἐφ' ἑαυτῷ οὖσαν) (51.5). Instead, Priam promised her in marriage, but as in other versions of this story, Achilles' death at the hands of Paris – and the ruse which leads him to the temple of Apollo – ends any possibility of marriage. The Vinedresser adds (51.6):

> ἐπεὶ δὲ ἀπέθανε γυμνὸς ἐν τοῖς περὶ τούτων ὅρκοις, λέγεται ἡ Πολυξένη φευγουσῶν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ τῶν Τρωάδων καὶ τῶν Τρώων ἐσκεδασμένων (οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸ πτῶμα τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἀδεῶς ἤνεγκαν) αὐτομολίᾳ χρήσασθαι καὶ φυγεῖν ἐς τὸ Ἑλληνικόν, ἀναχθεῖσά τε τῷ Ἀγαμέμνονι ζῆν μὲν ἐν κομιδῇ λαμπρᾷ τε καὶ σώφρονι καθάπερ ἐν πατρὸς οἰκίᾳ, τριταίου δὲ ἤδη κειμένου τοῦ νεκροῦ δραμεῖν ἐπὶ τὸ σῆμα ἐν νυκτὶ ξίφει τε αὐτὴν ἐπικλῖναι πολλὰ εἰποῦσαν ἐλεεινὰ καὶ γαμικά, ὅτε δὴ καὶ δεῖσθαι τοῦ Ἀχιλλέως ἐραστήν τε μεῖναι καὶ ἀγαγέσθαι αὐτὴν μὴ ψευσάμενον τὸν γάμον.
>
> After [Achilles] died unarmed, uttering oaths about these matters, Polyxena is said to have deserted and fled to the Hellenic army, as the Trojan women were fleeing from the sanctuary and the Trojan men were scattered (for they fearfully carried away Achilles' corpse). Polyxena was brought to Agamemnon to live in his excellent and discreet care, just as in the house of her father. But when Achilles' body had already been buried for three days, she ran to the tomb at night and leaned upon a sword while speaking many words of pity and marriage. At this time she also asked Achilles to remain her lover and to take her in marriage lest their marriage be proved false.

Polyxena's death is described as a "sacrifice" (θυσία) (51.1) and other versions of this story make this element more explicit, since the Greeks put Polyxena to death on Achilles' tomb at the hero's request.[85] But according to the Vinedresser, Polyxena clearly kills herself out of devotion

[85] See, e.g., Eur. *Hec.* 35-44, 220-24, 534-40; Eur. *Tro*. 39-40; Hyg. *Fab.* 110. See Peter Grossardt, "How to Become a Poet? Homer and Apollonius Visit the Mound of Achilles," in *Theois Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 84-86, for how Polyxena's characterization expands on many of her Euripidean qualities, while her suicide is still an invention of Philostratus. See also *VA* 4.6.14.

to the arranged marriage. She is so devoted to Achilles that an arrangement with Agamemnon, in which that hero would serve as a replacement for both Achilles and her father, is unsuitable.

Several elements of this story link Polyxena to the violent death of the Trojan descendant. Achilles tells the merchant about events at Troy (διηγεῖσθαι δὲ τὰ ἐν τῇ Τροίᾳ) (56.6), events that the reader has just heard, and no doubt include the story of Polyxena. Love is the reason assumed by the merchant for Achilles' request for the Trojan slave girl (56.8), whom he chooses because of her lineage (56.7). The secretive nature of Achilles' killing also mirrors that of Polyxena's nighttime suicide at the hero's tomb. But it is the agency by which Polyxena dies by her own hand that leads Achilles to reassert his power over the descendant of Priam later in the text.

This reassertion of Hellenic power over foreign women serves to make Achilles' encounters with the Trojans complete. Achilles controls the events up until his death; he hopes to make the Greeks leave Troy with a marriage to Polyxena (51.3) and he, not Priam, initiates the arrangement (51.5).[86] But Achilles begins to lose control over himself and the situation as soon as Priam delays the marriage. This loss of control culminates in Polyxena taking her own life, actions that take place after Achilles' death and that he can no longer influence. Because Polyxena shows agency in her suicide, she is punished via another Trojan "wife" of Achilles. The restraint that Achilles shows with Polyxena reverses itself, and this later killing is more suitable to the Greek hero. Achilles can reassert his power over the Trojans, but especially over Trojan women.

Such an act of revenge and violence reflects the treatment and subjugation of other women in the *Heroikos*. The Mysians, occupying a region east of Troy, are recognized for their similarly powerful foreign women. As told by the Vinedresser, the Achaeans first plundered the

[86] See Grossardt, Vol. 2, 704, for how this is a slight variation from later versions of this episode. Cf. *Her*. 47.4.

Mysian territory before approaching Troy. This war with the Mysians is meant to rival the more famous ten-year war at Troy (*Her.* 23). The Mysians and Skythians under the command of Têlephos for some time repulsed the Achaeans and many of their warriors gained glory fighting against the Greek heroes. Hiera, the wife of Têlephos, was leader of the cavalry, and the Mysian women even fought on horseback, "just as the Amazons do" (ὥσπερ Ἀμαζόνες) (23.26). Protesilaos describes Hiera as more beautiful than Helen, even though Homer showed a preference for the latter (23.28-9). Aitken sees Hiera's overall positive portrayal as a striking contrast to other foreign women in the dialogue.[87] But any message directed toward the Syrian women of the imperial family in Hiera's portrayal is difficult to discern, though Aitken tentatively suggests that Hiera's martial prowess may reflect well on these imperial women.[88]

The details of the battle in which Hiera takes part, however, indicate otherwise. Nireus is said to have killed her since the very young men who had not yet won honor drew up against the Mysian women (τὸ γὰρ μειρακιῶδες τοῦ στρατοῦ καὶ οὔπω εὐδόκιμον πρὸς αὐτὰς ἔταξαν). And once Hiera is killed, the other Mysian women cry out, scaring their horses and scattering (23.27). Other sources do not emphasize the youth of Nireus but often place him second to Achilles in terms of beauty. Homer concurs with this characterization but describes him as weak (ἀλαπαδνός), which Philostratus may build upon, making Nireus young in this passage.[89] And though the Greeks do not despoil her corpse (23.29), their reverence only builds upon the Vinedresser's description of her beauty that immediately precedes this moment. All in all, the

[87] Aitken, "Why a Phoenician?," 279-80.

[88] Ibid., 280 n. 41.

[89] Hom. *Il.* 2.671-75; see *VA* 3.19.2 and *Ep*. 57. See also Grossardt, Vol. 2, 484.

emphasis on Nireus' unsuitable youth and the Mysian women's quick flight from the battle detract from any positive portrayal of Hiera's military ability.

The Amazons are another group of warrior women who suffer defeat in the dialogue. As mentioned above, McCloskey interprets Achilles' anger at these women who dominate men as a restoration of both the patriarchy and the natural order for the defense of Greece. He argues that the Vinedresser's description of the Amazonian way of life (57.2-6) is "broadly conventional" except for Philostratus' etymology of the Amazons' name, which comes from their children being reared on the milk of mares, not women.[90] After this description, merchants arrive in the land of the Amazons and are made effeminate and passive by their time there (52.7-11). They help the Amazons build ships and tell them of the wealthy shrine at Leukê, which the women invade (52.12-17). That their horses, once the source of their masculine power, end up devouring the Amazons is suitable to Achilles' punishment of these women (57.15).[91]

Yet the overt comparison between the Amazons and the Mysians above (23.26) complicates the portrayal of both groups. The similarities in how they fight and their ultimate defeats are obvious: both rely on their cavalry to attack a Greek hero, but their horses are spooked by the conflict, in one case by the Mysians themselves (23.27) and the other by Achilles (57.15). But both groups have similar relationships with young men and sons in the dialogue. As with Hiera's diminished portrayal through her defeat by the youth Nireus, the Amazons also have a complicated relationship with young men in their refusal to keep sons born to them. In fact, the male children are left at the borders of the country to be claimed, not by their actual fathers but by any man who had intercourse with the Amazons, and are made slaves (57.4).

[90] McCloskey, "Achilles' Brutish Hellenism," 78.

[91] Ibid., 75-82.

These stories may resonate with views toward the emperor Elagabalus and the relationship between him, his mother Julia Soaemias, and his grandmother Julia Maesa.

Despite Nireus' success in battle, any praise is undeserved because of his youth and lack of fighting ability. Similarly, contemporary accounts speak of the active role that the Syrian women initially had in controlling the affairs of Elagabalus on account of his youth: "for he was young in years and lacking in education and administrative experience" (αὐτὸς γὰρ ἦν νέος τε τὴν ἡλικίαν, πραγμάτων τε καὶ παιδείας ἄπειρος) (Herod. 5.5.1).[92] But Elagabalus became increasingly difficult to control during his reign. Herodian describes the emperor's unwillingness to listen to Julia Maesa's plea that he wear Roman dress (5.5.5-6), a recalcitrance that culminated in Julia's belief that he needed to be replaced (5.7). In the *Heroikos*, though the male children of the Amazons are taken by some men, they are made slaves. The uncertain paternity of these children in the dialogue echoes Elagabalus' own attempt to define himself through Caracalla, who he claimed was his father.[93] This claim was no doubt part of Elagabalus' attempt to legitimatize his reign, and those advocating for Elagabalus to be emperor insisted on his resemblance to Caracalla (Dio 79.32.3; Herod. 5.4.4). The dialogue's assertion that these children are made slaves by men who are not their fathers signifies that boys who are born of strong Near Eastern women have no claim to a legitimate paternity.[94]

The *Heroikos* in many ways therefore ties the episodes of the Mysians and the Amazons together. But both these episodes take place at different historical moments in the text. The

[92] These women also had other real powers, such as being made part of the Senate. See HA *Elag*. 4.3; HA *M. Aur*. 49.6.

[93] See Icks, *The Crimes of Elagabalus*, 11-12; Andrew G. Scott, "The Legitimization of Elagabalus and Cassius Dio's Account of the Reign of Macrinus," *Journal of Ancient History* 1 (2013): 242-53.

[94] Though often attributed to Strabo, this detail is in fact unique to the dialogue's depiction of the Amazons. Strabo's account of the Gargarians accepting the male children of the Amazons is more positive: "each Gargarian to whom a child is brought adopts the child as his own, regarding the child as his son because of his uncertainty" (11.5.1).

Mysians attack the Greeks shortly before the start of the Trojan War proper, and Achilles' defense of Leukê is evidently some time later since the hero has already died and blessed a shrine on the island. As mentioned above, some scholars have suggested that this latter episode occurred sometime in the second century B.C.E. The Vinedresser's knowledge of these events, however, influences any attempt to pinpoint a precise date for them. For information about events at Leukê, as with other matters, Protesilaos is the official source. He tells (λέγει) the Vinedresser about its initial creation and inhabitation by Achilles and Helen (54.2 ff.). But the source of subsequent information, specifically about the birds that live on the island, is seemingly anonymous (φασιν) (54.9). Only later does the Vinedresser mention that those who sail by the island have told him directly of its attributes (56.4): "many of those who sail out from the Pontus sail to me and relate these matters" (πολλοὶ δὲ καὶ τῶν ἐκπλεόντων τοῦ Πόντου προσπλέουσί τέ μοι καὶ ἀπαγγέλλουσι ταῦτα). Though they are not allowed to live on the island, "those anchoring there [at the island] say that they hear the trampling of horses and the echo of weapons and shouts like those called out in war" (φασὶ δ' οἱ προσορμισάμενοι καὶ κτύπου ἀκούειν ἵππων καὶ ἤχου ὅπλων καὶ βοῆς οἷον ἐν πολέμῳ ἀναφθέγγονται) (56.2).

This description suggests that the violence on Leukê is nearly constant, and that it has continued up to the Vinedresser's own time. Perhaps the Amazon invasion is just one of many battles in which Achilles had to defend his shrine. The Vinedresser purposefully corrects the tradition that this conflict occurred at Troy (56.11). By moving this event to a later date and describing the reports of travelers, the Vinedresser makes Achilles' violence contemporary. And in fact, the final moments of the dialogue suggest the same ongoing violence in the future. The Phoenician merchant requests more stories, including those of the Aiakidai and "their courts of justice and places of punishment" (καὶ τὰ τούτων δικαστήριά τε καὶ δικαιωτήρια) (58.3). The

Aiakidai usually refers to Achilles and Ajax, but the institutions that follow their name are perhaps a reference to Plato (*Phaedrus* 249a).[95] In Plato, one chooses between these institutions in the afterlife, an idea supported here by the Phoenician's request for stories about the rivers of the underworld.[96]

The final moments of the dialogue, therefore, reinforce the constant nature of Achilles' violence, since it continues even into the afterlife. One can assume that because of the repeated nature of his defense of Leukê, Achilles must deal with the ever-present threat of invading foreigners, implying that the contemporary world is also not safe from foreign invasion. This account shows clear apprehension toward powerful foreign women since the violence is often aimed in the same direction, namely against foreign women, including the Trojan slave girl and the Amazons. Coupled with negative if stereotypical views of Syrians in the dialogue, these scenes show that Rome is no longer the motive for Achilles' violence. Instead, eastern peoples, including powerful foreign women, are the threat. The negative response to the Syrian women of the imperial family in Rome clearly resonates with this narrative. The constant and contemporary defense that both Greece and Troy/Rome must put up against powerful foreign women insinuates a defense against the imperial family whom hostile sources similarly regard as outsiders.

V. Conclusion

The apprehension about foreignness in the *Letters* and *Heroikos*, embodied in the identity and anxieties of the letters' narrator and the portrayal of dangerous foreigners from the Near East, resonates with cultural changes in the Severan period. In the *Letters*, the narrator

[95] Grossardt, Vol. 2, 771.

[96] τοὺς δὲ Κωκυτούς τε καὶ Πυριφλεγέθοντας καὶ τὴν Ἀχερουσιάδα καὶ τὰ τοιαῦτα τῶν ποταμῶν τε καὶ τῶν λιμνῶν ὀνόματα (*Her*. 58.3).

Philostratus laments the status of foreigners in the city and contrasts their state with the benefits of citizenship. Philostratus' occasional slippage between casting himself as "Roman" and as "foreign" in the letters not only tends to reflect the varied treatment and status of the *peregrini* in the Roman world but also links these portrayals to events in Severan Rome. The *Constitutio Antoniniana*, while offering the benefits of citizenship to all across the empire, also gave foreigners an uncertain legal and social status. A similar ambiguity is reflected in the depictions of foreigners in the letters.

The foreign motif of the letters also echoes other contemporary issues, including the ethnic identity of the Severan family. It is clear that Severan authors occasionally and overtly tie the imperial regime to negative outsider and foreign influence; the works of Philostratus often resonate with these characterizations. In addition to their provincial origin, members of the Severan family linked themselves to various locales outside Rome, especially Syria, north Africa and Egypt, and India. Caracalla's fascination with these regions resonates with the imagery in the cryptic letter addressed to the emperor. Philostratus reuses some of the same elements from the other erotic letters in order to craft a veiled critique of the emperor's actions in Egypt and elsewhere outside Rome. Caracalla's own uncertain ethnicity adds to his characterization as a dangerous foreign interloper.

The *Heroikos* in turn centers on the Near East as a potentially dangerous foreign region, primarily because of the strong women who populate it. By making subtle links to the women of the imperial family, Philostratus shows that Hellenic and Roman culture must be protected from negative foreign influence. The dialogue therefore does not constitute an outright threat but rather a cautionary commentary on foreign rule in Greece and Rome. The text's concentration on

the Near East, and on Syria in particular, continues in the other works of Philostratus, as discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3: THE NATURE OF FOREIGN IDENTITY IN THE *LIFE OF APOLLONIUS* AND THE *LIVES OF THE SOPHISTS*

In the *VA*, the eponymous sage travels to numerous cities within the Roman Empire, pointing out incorrect practices and deviations from Hellenic culture in each region. Apollonius' journey exemplifies the literary topos of travel in the Roman world in which an individual undergoes a pilgrimage in order to acquire self-knowledge.[1] The *VA* expands on this typical travel narrative by portraying Apollonius as a teacher, which Jaś Elsner characterizes as Apollonius himself becoming a site of pilgrimage in the text. According to Elsner, Apollonius acts both as a prophet who confronts different wrongheaded individuals around the empire and as a guide for the author and reader as potential disciples.[2] Building upon this characterization, Roshan Abraham argues that the *VA* re-centers wisdom in India, where Apollonius encounters the Hellenic-like philosophy of the Brahmins, conceiving of Greece and Rome as new cultural peripheries. In this way, Apollonius uses philosophy confirmed by the Brahmins of India to instruct the various peoples of the Roman Empire.[3]

This scholarly depiction, however, largely overlooks the content of Apollonius' teaching for his various disciples and students. While Apollonius may embody the personal benefits of travel, he often recommends the opposite, instructing communities to turn inward and deriding those that fail to do so for allowing foreign influence within their borders. My analysis builds upon the scholarly characterization of Apollonius to show that his travels often concern the use

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[1] For an overview of this topic, see Lionel Casson, *Travel in the Ancient World* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1974); Part II of Ian Rutherford and Jaś Elsner (eds.), *Pilgrimage in Graeco-Roman & Early Christian Antiquity: Seeing the Gods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. Marco Galli, "Pilgrimage as Elite Habitus: Educated Pilgrims in Sacred Landscape During the Second Sophistic," in ibid., 253-90.

[2] Jaś Elsner, "Hagiographic Geography: Travel and Allegory in the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 117 (1997): 22-37.

[3] Roshan Abraham, "The Geography of Culture in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*," *The Classical Journal* 109 (2014): 465-80.

of Hellenism to root out incorrect "foreign" practices in the cities of the empire. I embrace Elsner's characterization of Apollonius as the true center of the *VA* but extend this depiction into the realm of the text's shifting geography. As opposed to a clear centering of wisdom in India, my geographic scheme centers Apollonius himself by including the account of his travels in the western empire and in Egypt. I therefore do not discount the purpose of the episodes in India, but I largely view these as a confirmation of Apollonius' own Hellenism, rather than a centering of the text in that region. Thus, though the geographic context for the sage's teachings constantly changes, Apollonius remains singularly able to address the problem of foreignness across the empire. As the arbiter of Hellenic knowledge, Apollonius in his steady role as a guide counters the nature of foreign identity in the Roman world, which was frequently changeable and shifting.[4]

In this chapter, I first address the nature of foreign intrusion in several regions of the empire in a geographic scheme that demonstrates the unique nature of Apollonius not simply as a site of pilgrimage but also as the remedy for various forms of foreign intrusion. Following the trajectory of Apollonius' travels through India, Greece, Spain, and Egypt, I show that the nature of this intrusion, and thus the sort of insularity that Apollonius recommends, differs depending on the sage's location. Intrusive foreign elements are recalibrated as dangerous or beneficial wherever Apollonius is located. Apollonius thus does not recommend a single formula for addressing foreignness, but rather fits each region into a spectrum between insularity and cosmopolitanism. In Greece, foreign dangers come from the Near East, and Sparta in particular is seen to have fallen from its classical ideal of cultural insularity. By contrast, Spanish cities misunderstand their appropriation of a problematic Greek culture that has been stained by Near

[4] See "Citizens and Foreigners in the Severan World" section in Chapter 2.

Eastern and Roman elements. And the Egyptian gymnosophists are reprimanded for completely closing themselves off from the wisdom of the outside world.

Building upon this geographic scheme, I turn to persons associated with some of the foreign regions in the text. Individuals too must rid themselves of negative foreign influence and abandon their problematic geographic origins. For, in addition to the negative foreign elements that plague the communities of the empire, problematic foreign identities and their cultural baggage burden the sage's itinerant disciples. Much like the sophists of the *VS* whom Philostratus portrays travelling to different cities in order to gain and to impart sophistic skill, these disciples carry themselves around the empire to attain wisdom like that of their teacher Apollonius. Undoubtedly in order to praise Apollonius, Philostratus presents his disciples as conventional students. The author limits their abilities, however, in a curious way; only by leaving behind their cities of origin and joining the sage on his journeys can they attain philosophical wisdom.

I examine the careers of two of Apollonius' students in order to illuminate this common progression. Apollonius instructs his students in philosophy by having them accompany him on his travels and forsake their geographic origins. In my reading, these students, as with the various communities across the empire, must look to Apollonius and not to any geographic region such as India for philosophical wisdom; the sage again acts as the sole cure for dangerous foreign elements, underscoring his unique role in the text. Particularly because of his itinerant lifestyle and miracle-working in the text Apollonius is able to transcend normal geographic limitations, suggesting the absence of any definite geographic identity.[5] Though his students do not attain the

[5] E.g., Apollonius' vision of Domitian's assassination in Rome while he is in Ephesus (8.25-27). See Gert-Jan Van Dijk, "Present in Past and Future: The Relativity of Time in the *Life of Apollonius*," in *Ultima Aetas: Time, Tense and Transience in the Ancient World*, ed. Caroline Kroon and Daan den Hengst (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2000), 41-59.

same sort of abilities, by learning from the gifted Apollonius they are able to curb their problematic foreign origins to become more like the sage.

The relationship between Apollonius and his students, and the ways in which his teachings attempt to curb problematic foreign influence, are expressed prominently in the characterization of Damis the Syrian. As the main source for Philostratus' biography, Damis appears throughout the *VA*. My aim, however, is not to analyze the role of Damis' memoirs in the creation of Philostratus' persona as an historian nor to debate the existence of his memoirs.[6] This chapter's final section instead assesses the characterization of Damis, showing that he embodies traits of foreigners seen elsewhere in the text and in the Philostratean corpus. Damis is a worthy disciple who is nevertheless limited by his Syrian origins in Nineveh. Through Damis' role as a philosophical interlocutor for Apollonius, Philostratus consistently portrays the Syrian's abilities as secondary to those of Apollonius. This characterization is never an overt attack on the disciple but rather a subtle disparagement of Damis' foreign origin and his corresponding inability to master Hellenic philosophy.

I argue that, as with the characterization of Syrians and peoples of the Near East in the rest of the Philostratean corpus, their portrayal here reflects a general contemporary apprehension about foreigners that often implicates the Severan family. In addition to the characterization of Damis, Philostratus portrays Syria as politically tumultuous and culturally unaligned with Hellenism. The overall portrayal of Syrian identity as problematically foreign builds upon the previous chapter's discussion of Julia Domna's descendants and their management of the imperial household in the later Severan period. Philostratus clearly links

[6] The existence of Damis as a historical figure is still debated. See Anderson, *Philostratus*, 155-73, who equates the Philostratean Damis with a Dini found in a medieval Persian text. Cf. M. J. Edwards, "Damis the Epicurean," *Classical Quarterly* 41 (1991): 563-66.

Damis to Julia Domna, stating that she originally acquired his memoirs (*VA* 1.3).[7] Though this endorsement of Philostratus suggests his approval of the empress, the characterization of Damis and other Syrians complicates this idea; the text by design praises Apollonius to the detriment of Syrian figures such as Damis. In the *VA*, Syrian identity clashes with proper Hellenism, an opposition analogous to the understanding voiced in contemporary accounts of the relationship of other Severans such as Caracalla and Elagabalus to Roman culture.

In this chapter, I also incorporate evidence from the *VS* to underscore particular details of foreign geography in the *VA*. Though the prominent role of Athens in both texts will be discussed more in the next chapter, sophists in the *VS* continually travel in order to impart and gain sophistic skill. The Near East in particular emerges as a secondary hub of sophistic activity as the Ionian schools in Smyrna and Ephesus gain prominence in the first and second centuries C.E. In these representative episodes of sophistic education in the *VS*, it is clear that some of the same issues in the *VA* – including the dangers and merits of foreign intrusion as well as the problematic foreign roots of students – are also present in the *VS*.[8]

I. Foreign Influence in Imperial Communities

As some scholars propose, Apollonius discovers that the Indians have already received parts of Hellenic culture and wisdom, yet the Greeks are unaware of Indian philosophy.[9] This

[7] Whether the *VA*'s dedication was meant to show endorsement of the living empress or constitutes proof that the work was composed after her death in 217 is unclear. Cf. *VS* 2.24.2 for the supposed composition of the *VA* prior to the *VS*. The status of Julia Domna and Damis as literary fictions here in the text is discussed more below.

[8] See Adam Kemezis, "Narrative of Cultural Geography in Philostratus' *Lives of the Sophists*," in *Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and Its Times - Regards sur la Seconde Sophistique et son époque*, ed. Thomas Schmidt and Pascale Fleury (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 3-22, who argues that the geographic center of sophistic activity shifts in the structure of the *VS* from Athens to Ionia and back to Athens again, with Rome as a secondary hub by the end of the narrative.

[9] Abraham, "Geography of Culture," esp. 468-74.

depiction correctly highlights the problems plaguing Greece but forgoes incorporating the sage's other travels in the *VA*. To re-center the text in India and to marginalize Greece and Rome omits the discussion of Apollonius' journeys to Spain and to Egypt, regions that do not easily fit into an India-centered geographic scheme. In my view, India is rather the most enlightened of the various locales that the sage visits. By contrast, Philostratus casts other regions as variously devoted to a corrupted Hellenic culture, an aspect that must be corrected by Apollonius for each to be brought into his cultural fold. The state of this corruption hinges upon a region's excess, or sometimes lack, of foreign influence.

The geographic scheme I present here incorporates the several regions that appear in the text in order to show the common problem of foreign intrusion and exclusion. Though Philostratus represents each city and region as variously barbarous in its straying from Hellenic and classical ideals, this "foreign" characterization is not simply a matter of distance from any geographic center. Because foreign elements have no consistent geographic origin in the text, their intrusion is an empire-wide problem that is ambiguous in the threat or benefit it poses. In this section, I investigate four major regions where Philostratus presents elements of foreign intrusion: Greece, Spain, Egypt, and borderlands. In each location, foreign intrusion is recalibrated as coming from a different geographic region. As a result, Apollonius recommends different levels of insularity and cosmopolitanism for the people of that region. Overall, the differing allegiances to Hellenic culture shown by regions in both the east and the west demonstrate the constantly shifting geography of Hellenism in the *VA*.

a. Greece

Upon his return from India, Apollonius travels through the cities of Greece, seeing that various cities have failed to live up to the tenets of Hellenism. These parts of the Greek world have been plagued by negative foreign elements that only Apollonius can properly recognize and confront. In Sparta in particular, his advice hinges upon stereotypical views of eastern luxury as well as discouraging local Greeks from travel and trade. His advice also makes use of sophistic antiquarianism as Apollonius argues that because of foreign influence, the cities of Greece have drifted from their classical prominence. In the *VS*, the potential dangers of foreign travel emerge in Greece and Asia Minor, but because sophistic students are primarily the ones travelling in this text, travel is framed as less problematic and even beneficial.

According to Apollonius, insular and land-based activity is best for the city of Sparta, an idea that has its roots in classical idealism and historical precedent. In a discussion with the gymnosophists, Apollonius emphasizes that, for Sparta in particular, it is the highest disgrace to seek out these foreign elements. The gymnosophist Thespesion asks, if the Spartans adopted the foreign practice of the scourging of the youth from the Skythians, why they do not sacrifice humans as well. Apollonius replies (6.20.3):

> "ὅτι" εἶπεν "οὐδενὶ Ἑλλήνων πρὸς τρόπου βάρβαρα ἐξασκεῖν ἤθη." … χρὴ γὰρ ξυνιέναι τοῦ ἀνδρός, καὶ ὅτι τὸ μὴ ἐνδιατρίβειν ἐᾶν τοὺς ξένους οὐκ ἀμιξίας αὐτῷ νοῦν εἶχεν, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ὑγιαίνειν τὰς ἐπιτηδεύσεις, μὴ ἐνομιλούντων τῇ Σπάρτῃ τῶν ἔξωθεν."
>
> Because it is not fitting for any of the Greeks to adopt barbaric customs. … But one must understand the man [Lycurgus], and that his prohibition of foreigners settling and staying in Sparta was not because of a desire for purity, but because of his intention to maintain the city's institutions by preventing outsiders from interfering in the affairs of Sparta.

Though Apollonius bases his reasoning on classical precedent in Sparta,[10] he applies the Spartans' xenophobic reasoning to Greece as a whole: it is not right for any Greek to adopt the practices of barbarians. These sentiments about Greece and Sparta are confirmed earlier in the text when Apollonius witnesses several instances of foreign influence in Greek cities that has corrupted the behavior of various locals.

Apollonius' characterization of Greek insularity therefore goes beyond philosophical idealism, since his travels in the Peloponnese reveal actual foreign influence in and around the city of Sparta. "When Apollonius was going up to Olympia, Spartan ambassadors came to meet him in order to welcome him, but there was nothing Spartan in their appearance; they were daintier than Lydians and full of luxury" (ἀνιόντι τῷ Ἀπολλωνίῳ ἐς Ὀλυμπίαν ἐνέτυχον Λακεδαιμονίων πρέσβεις ὑπὲρ ξυνουσίας, Λακωνικὸν δὲ οὐδὲν περὶ αὐτοὺς ἐφαίνετο, ἀλλ᾽ ἁβρότερον Λυδῶν εἶχον καὶ συβάριδος μεστοὶ ἦσαν). Apollonius also observes that these men have shaved legs and oiled hair (ἄνδρας λείους τὰ σκέλη, λιπαροὺς τὰς κόμας) with no beards but soft clothing (καὶ μηδὲ γενείοις χρωμένους, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὴν ἐσθῆτα μαλακούς) (4.27). Philostratus depicts the appearance of these Spartans as foreign by comparing them to stereotypical effeminate easterners.[11] Yet what begins as a critique of the Spartans' appearance escalates into a cultural critique of the city. This incident spurs Apollonius to petition the Spartan ephors, who in response institute various reforms that revive the palaestra in Sparta and make the

[10] Sources tie the Spartan expulsion of aliens (ξενηλασία) to the sumptuary legislation and monetary reforms of Lycurgan Sparta and the goals of cultural and political isolation (e.g., inter alia, Hdt. 1.65.2; Plut. *Lyc*. 9.3-4, 27.3-4; Agis 10.1-6. Cf. Xen. *Const*. *Lac*. 14.4), while some Athenian sources largely deride the practice (e.g., Thuc. 2.39.1; Aristoph. *Birds* 1010-20). This expulsion was an ad hoc response to public problems, such as the perceived threat of foreigners to the economy. See Thomas J. Figueira, "Xenelasia and Social Control in Classical Sparta," *Classical Quarterly* 53 (2003): 44-74; Stefan Rebenich, "Fremdfeindlichkeit in Sparta? Uberlegungen zur Tradition der spartanischen Xenelasie," *Klio* 80 (1998): 336-59.

[11] By comparison, Apollonius applauds the wealth of Lydian gold adorning the Delphic shrine. He argues that this was done so that the Greeks could witness the wealth of the barbarians and stop stealing from one another (*VA* 6.11.15). Cf. Hdt. 1.51-52.

city look like its ancient self again (καὶ ἐγένετο ἡ Λακεδαίμων ἑαυτῇ ὁμοία) (ibid.). The comparison of the Spartans to the Lydians and the subsequent remaking of Sparta into its classical ideal shows that the negative circumstances in which Apollonius finds the region have foreign undertones.[12] In the eyes of the sage, the Spartans have become characteristically un-Greek and more foreign by their disregard for the institutions of *paedeia*, such as the palaestra.[13]

By contrast, in the *VS*, Philostratus frames foreign migration into Greek cities as potentially beneficial. In the life of Heracleides of Lycia, a conspiracy compels the sophist to leave his chair position in Athens and found a new school in Smyrna. There Heracleides draws students from the surrounding regions, something that will benefit the city (2.74.2):

> νεότητα μὲν οὖν Ἰωνικήν τε καὶ Λύδιον καὶ τὴν ἐκ Φρυγῶν καὶ Καρίας ξυνδραμεῖν ἐς Ἰωνίαν κατὰ ξυνουσίαν τοῦ ἀνδρὸς οὔπω μέγα, ἐπειδὴ ἀγχίθυρος ἁπάσαις ἡ Σμύρνα, ὁ δὲ ἦγε μὲν καὶ τὸ ἐκ τῆς Εὐρώπης Ἑλληνικόν, ἦγε δὲ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς ἑῴας νέους, πολλοὺς δὲ ἦγεν Αἰγυπτίων οὐκ ἀνηκόους αὐτοῦ ὄντας, ἐπειδὴ Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ Ναυκρατίτῃ κατὰ Αἴγυπτον περὶ σοφίας ἤρισεν. … πόλις ἐς ξένους πολλοὺς ἐπεστραμμένη ἄλλως τε καὶ σοφίας ἐρῶντας σωφρόνως μὲν βουλεύσει, σωφρόνως δὲ ἐκκλησιάσει φυλαττομένη δήπου τὸ ἐν πολλοῖς τε καὶ σπουδαίοις κακὴ ἁλίσκεσθαι, ἱερῶν τε ἐπιμελήσεται καὶ γυμνασίων καὶ κρηνῶν καὶ στοῶν, ἵνα ἀποχρῶσα τῷ ὁμίλῳ φαίνοιτο.
>
> That the youth of Ionia, Lydia, Phrygia, and Caria converged on Ionia to associate with him is not itself a big deal, since Smyrna neighbors all these places. But he even drew there the Hellenes from Europe, he drew the young people from the East, and he drew many from Egypt who were already aware of him, because in Egypt he had vied with Ptolemy of Naucratis in wisdom. … A city that is overly frequented by foreigners, especially if they are lovers of wisdom, is tempered in its councils, and tempered in its assemblies, because it guards against being convicted of wrongdoing in the presence of these many excellent people. It will maintain its temples, gymnasia, fountains, and stoa, so that it appears to satisfy the needs of that group.

[12] See Paul Cartledge and Antony Spawforth, *Hellenistic and Roman Sparta: A Tale of Two Cities* (London: Routledge, 1992), 85-195, for the state of local institutions and practices in Roman Sparta.

[13] See Thomas F. Scanlon, "*Gymnikê paideia*: Greek Athletics and the Construction of Culture," *Classical Bulletin* 74 (1998): 149-50, for how participation in athletics formed one part of Greek *paideia*.

The appeal of Smyrna to students supports the scholarly contention that this city may have been the true intellectual center of sophistry (as opposed to Rome or Athens) during the time of Heracleides.[14] What is more striking is the characterization of the presence of foreigners who benefit the city's existing institutions and whom Philostratus calls "a brilliant throng" (ὁμίλου λαμπροῦ). Philostratus continues by stating that presence of foreigners will contribute to the beautification of the city and increase sea trade, both further benefits to the city (2.74.3). This positive rendering of how foreigners can be productive members of a citizenry is occasionally subverted in the *VS* when Philostratus praises a sedentary lifestyle. For instance, the sophist Aelian boasts about never having journeyed outside Italy or travelled on a ship, a trait that earned him praise because it is in line with Roman values (2.90). These apparently contrastive opinions about foreign migration show that, as with the *VA*, the *VS* is equally concerned with the benefits and pitfalls of cultural insularity.

In addition to addressing foreign influence in a city, Apollonius' advice concerns the dangers of Spartan travel outside of the city. When Apollonius arrives in Sparta, he chastises a local youth's desire to be a sailor, asking him whether there is a more miserable group than merchants and seafarers (κακοδαιμονέστερὸν τί ἐρεῖς ἔθνος) (4.32.2). The term *ethnos* here connotes a similar problem to that of the effeminate Spartans above. In each case, the Spartan men in question have forsaken their ethnic identity for a less secure one that signifies making foreign connections outside the Peloponnese. Apollonius further attacks the merchant class for its nefarious dealings and associations (ibid.): "First of all, they sail around looking for a market that's in trouble; they mingle with agents and hucksters" (πρῶτον μὲν περινοστοῦσι, ζητοῦντες ἀγορὰν κακῶς πράττουσαν, εἶτα προξένοις καὶ καπήλοις ἀναμιχθέντες), and they act "with no

[14] See Ilaria Romeo, "The Panhellenion and Ethnic Identity in Hadrianic Greece," *Classical Philology* 97 (2002): 36, for the postulation that Smyrna was the actual vibrant cultural center of the early second century C.E.

regard for the gods" (ἀθεώτατα). The act of travel, the detrimental associations it involves, and the quest for profit it represents all make the merchant class repugnant. Apollonius ends by singling out Spartans and stating that if the race of seafarers did not behave in this way, it is still a disgrace for a Spartan to do so (4.32.3).[15]

According to Philostratean geography, therefore, Greek travel is intellectually unproductive when it is done for nefarious reasons. The travels of Dionysius of Miletus show that this sophist engages with a similar characterization of travel in the *VS*. Having been awarded the position of satrap "over distinguished peoples" (Ἀδριανὸς γὰρ σατράπην μὲν αὐτὸν ἀπέφηνεν οὐκ ἀφανῶν ἐθνῶν) (*VS* 1.61.1), Dionysius travels throughout the provinces.[16] Philostratus claims that "he visited many cities and was well acquainted with many peoples, but he never faced the charge of wantonness or of being a charlatan, since he had the most self-control and was the most conscientious person" (πόλεις καὶ πλείστοις ἐνομιλήσας ἔθνεσιν οὔτε ἐρωτικήν ποτε αἰτίαν ἔλαβεν οὔτε ἀλαζόνα ὑπὸ τοῦ σωφρονέστατός τε φαίνεσθαι καὶ ἐφεστηκώς) (1.61.2). As with the Spartans in the *VA*, Philostratus implies that travel can cause immorality if carried out for the wrong reasons, or in this case, by a person less virtuous than Dionysius. Because the sophist has already garnered prestige from the emperor and had his sophistic ability recognized, Philostratus

[15] Yet Apollonius admits that in a past life he was the pilot of an Egyptian vessel, a role he calls "disreputable" (ἄδοξον) but also "deplorable" (καταβεβλημένον) (3.23.2). He claims, however, to have successfully avoided a life of crime offered by some Phoenician pirates (3.24). This chastisement of the Spartan youth fits into the traditional ban on precious metal coinage in Sparta. See Plut. *Lyc*. 9.1-2; Xen. *Const*. *Lac*. 7, the latter of which connects this ban to discouraging the pursuit of wealth, including as a sailor.

[16] An inscription at Ephesus confirms that Dionysius was made imperial procurator multiple times. Josef Keil, "Vertreter der zweiten Sophistik in Ephesos," *JÖIA* 40 (1953): 5-7 (= *IK* 17.1 3047).

frames his travel as similar in intent to that of Apollonius who imparts his wisdom to various cities.[17]

In Greece, and in Sparta in particular, Philostratus uses classical models of foreign exclusion to draw attention to the problems of travel into and out of Greece. Apollonius clearly recommends insularity for Greek cities unless foreign influence encourages sophistic study or a commitment to philosophy. This characterization of Greece is crucial to understanding what Apollonius recommends to the cities in the western empire, where he finds locals turning to this corrupted Greek culture as a model.

b. Spain

The motif of foreign influence continues in the cities of the western provinces in Book 5 of the *VA*, but these episodes are less overtly problematic. Unlike the corrupting nature of foreign intrusion in Greece, its appearance in the west is more ambiguous in the threat it poses to proper Hellenic culture. In Spain, Apollonius encounters differing levels of devotion to Hellenism in the form of local praise for Greek institutions. But as seen above, Philostratus has hitherto presented numerous anecdotes about the improper culture and rituals of the Greeks that Apollonius has to correct. The configuration of these anecdotes depicts the west grappling with the foreign intrusion of problematic Greek cultural elements. Apollonius also witnesses the local misunderstanding of proper Hellenism in several instances, thus showing that, unlike the positive reception of Hellenic culture in India, Spain is more ambiguous in its allegiance to proper Hellenism.

[17] Apollonius' praise of men (like himself) who travel the world and therefore resemble the divine (4.7) clearly contrasts with his characterization of the Spartans. See Elsner, "Hagiographic Geography," 31, and the discussion of Egypt below.

Philostratus depicts Gadeira and the surrounding cities of Spain as isolated and at the edge of Europe, traits superficially similar to India's extreme distance from the Greek world.[18] Philostratus begins Book 5 by passing over the discussion of the Pillars of Heracles to describe the twin promontories of Libya and Europe (5.1):

> καὶ τὴν μὲν τῆς Λιβύης ἄκραν, ὄνομα δὲ αὐτῇ Ἄβιννα, λέοντες ὑπερνέμονται περὶ τὰς ὀφρῦς τῶν ὀρῶν, ἃ ἔσω ὑπερφαίνεται, ξυνάπτουσαν πρὸς Γαιτούλους καὶ Τίγγας ἄμφω θηριώδη καὶ Λιβυκὰ ἔθνη, παρατείνει δὲ ἐσπλέοντι τὸν Ὠκεανὸν μέχρι μὲν τῶν ἐκβολῶν τοῦ Σάληκος ἐννακόσια στάδια, τὸ δὲ ἐντεῦθεν οὐκ ἂν ξυμβάλοι τις ὁπόσα, μετὰ γὰρ τὸν ποταμὸν τοῦτον ἄβιος ἡ Λιβύη καὶ οὐκέτι ἄνθρωποι. τὸ δὲ τῆς Εὐρώπης ἀκρωτήριον, ὃ καλεῖται Κάλπις, δεξιὰ μὲν ἐπέχει τοῦ ἔσπλου, σταδίων ἑξακοσίων μῆκος, λήγει δὲ ἐς τὰ ἀρχαῖα Γάδειρα.
>
> On the Libyan promontory, which is named Abinna, lions range the ridges of the mountains that appear in the interior. It connects to the Gaetuli and the Tingae, both of which are savage African peoples, and for someone sailing into the Ocean it stretches for 900 stades as far as the mouth of the Salex. Someone could not figure out the distance after that, since after this river Libya has no living thing and humans are not found. The European promontory, which is called Calpis, is on the right of the strait, with a length of 600 stades, and ends at Old Gadeira.

The twinning of Libya and Europe here demonstrates the unique and extreme location of these Spanish cities. But Philostratus chooses not to praise Spain's cultural isolation, instead emphasizing its proximity to barbarous African groups. The two named "savage" (θηριώδη) peoples as well as the lions represent the wild and untamed nature of this neighboring region, which is only sixty stades from the city of Gadeira. Thus, unlike India's praiseworthy isolation, Gadeira's proximity to the African continent blurs the divide between barbarian and Hellenic culture in this far-flung region.

In Philostratus' characterization, Gadeira is a city that on the surface appears Hellenic. The people are said to have embraced Hellenic culture (καὶ μὴν καὶ Ἑλληνικοὺς εἶναί φασι τὰ

[18] The strange transition between night and day associates Gadeira with the end of the day, and therefore the end of the world (5.3). Philostratus also comments upon the mysterious workings of the tides in the Celtic region, something he himself has witnessed, associating the region with the land of the dead (5.2).

Γάδειρα, καὶ παιδεύεσθαι τὸν ἡμεδαπὸν τρόπον) and respect the Athenians most of all (5.4).[19] In this city, one can view sanctuaries dedicated to both the Egyptian and Theban Heracles as well as sacred trees associated with other figures of Greek myth (5.5.1). Philostratus even compares the adjacent region of Baetica in its bounty of crops to Attica during the time of the Mysteries (5.6).[20] But the presence of the belt of Telamonian Teucer in a sanctuary puzzles Damis, who can find no verifiable reason for its presence there, and the local priests cannot explain the pillars with a script that is neither Egyptian nor Indian (5.5.2). This confusion about the presence of foreign objects points to the Spaniards' actual ignorance of Hellenic culture, to which they claim devotion.

Gadeira's position "at the end of Europe" (Τὰ δὲ Γάδειρα κεῖται μὲν κατὰ τὸ τῆς Εὐρώπης τέρμα) (5.4), therefore, shows that its confusion over certain Hellenic cultural elements fits into a scheme in which the geography of Hellenism is tested and rearranged in the text. In contrast to the portrayal of India's isolation, it is Spain's contacts with Greece that hinder its reception of proper Hellenism. For instance, Gadeira understands the report of Nero's Olympic victories, but the other cities are confused by what this news means (5.8):

> Ἀφικομένου δέ τινος ἐς Γάδειρα μετὰ ταῦτα τῶν τοὺς ταχεῖς διαθεόντων δρόμους, καὶ κελεύοντος εὐαγγέλια θύειν τρισολυμπιονίκην Νέρωνα ἄδοντας, τὰ μὲν Γάδειρα ξυνίει τῆς νίκης καὶ ὅτι ἐν Ἀρκαδίᾳ τις εἴη ἀγὼν εὐδόκιμος, ἐπειδή, ὡς εἶπον, ἐς τὰ Ἑλλήνων σπεύδουσιν, αἱ δὲ πόλεις αἱ πρόσοικοι τοῖς Γαδείροις οὔτε ἐγίγνωσκον ὅ τι εἴη τὰ Ὀλύμπια, οὐδ᾽ ὅ τι ἀγωνία ἢ ἀγών, οὐδὲ ἐφ᾽ ὅτῳ θύουσιν, ἀλλ᾽ ἀπήγοντο ἐς γελοίους δόξας, πολέμου νίκην ἡγούμενοι ταῦτα καὶ ὅτι ὁ Νέρων ᾠρήκοι τινὰς ἀνθρώπους Ὀλυμπίους· οὐδὲ γὰρ τραγῳδίας ποτὲ ἢ κιθαρῳδίας θεαταὶ ἐγεγόνεσαν.

[19] Gadeira consciously mirrors Athens in its religious devotion (ἐπειδὴ φιλοθύτας τοὺς Ἀθηναίους εἶδεν) (4.19), and Philostratus describes the inhabitants of Gadeira as excessive in their religious zeal (περιττοὶ δέ εἰσι τὰ θεῖα) (5.4). Cf. Hdt. 2.37 for a similar statement about the Egyptians being religious to excess.

[20] The Mysteries were divided between two annual rituals: the Lesser Mysteries held in the month of Anthesterion (February-March), involving the initial purification ceremony, and the Greater Mysteries at Eleusis in the month of Boedromion (September-October).

> Later, when a swift runner arrived in Gadeira and delivered the good news that they were to perform sacrifices to celebrate Nero's triple Olympic victory, the Gadeirans understood what the victory meant and that there was a famous competition in Arcadia, since, as I said, they are eager for Greek culture. But the cities neighboring Gadeira were not aware of what the Olympics were or even what a competition or a game was, or why they were sacrificing. Instead, they believed absurd things, thinking that this was a victory in war, and that Nero had captured some people called Olympians. In fact, they had never seen a tragedy or a lyre concert.

The Gadeirans' immediate understanding of the emperor's Olympic performance seemingly re-emphasizes their respect for Hellenic culture. The city's supposed understanding of Greek culture and athletic competition, however, is not, in fact, praiseworthy because of the text's presentation elsewhere of Apollonius' experiences with Nero and Olympia. First, as discussed in Chapter 1, Nero holds an ambiguous tyrannical role in the Philostratean corpus, and his exploits in Greece obscure his true allegiance to Hellenism. Similarly, Philostratus presents Apollonius discussing the nature of Nero's performances immediately before Gadeira receives this news (5.7.2-3). Among other concerns, Apollonius chastises Nero for having moved the Olympics up a year, forsaking his role as emperor in order to perform roles in Greek myth, and likens Nero's symbolic destruction of Greece to Xerxes setting it on fire (καταπιμπράντα).[21] Apollonius suggests that all of these things are clearly deplorable to the Greeks who witness them, but this reaction is certainly not the case for the Spanish cities who praise the emperor's exploits because of their erroneous respect for Greek culture (ἐς τὰ Ἑλλήνων σπεύδουσιν).

[21] Philostratus also likens Nero's attempt to cut the isthmus to Xerxes' bridging of the Hellespont (Hdt. 7.33-57). Xerxes completed the project and made the journey across, both of which the emperor will fail to do at the isthmus (5.7.4). Cf. *VS* 2.7.1, in which Herodes Atticus refuses to attempt to cut the isthmus in order to not be like Nero, remarking that "the cutting of the isthmus requires Poseidon and not merely a man" (δοκεῖ γάρ μοι τὸ ῥῆξαι τὸν Ἰσθμὸν Ποσειδῶνος δεῖσθαι ἢ ἀνδρός). Philostratus builds upon a motif of environmental transgression and the natural order in Greek literature. For Herodotus, e.g., in addition to Xerxes, the Cnidians attempt to construct a canal, which is thwarted by the gods (1.174). Deborah Boedeker, "Protesilaos and the End of Herodotus' 'Histories,'" *Classical Antiquity* 7 (1988): 38, suggests that Artayctes' crimes against the sacred agricultural land (9.116.3) may be reason for his punishment. And environmental transgression is often linked to barbarity. For the Athenians' punishment of Artayctes, the Greeks in turn may be undergoing a "barbarization" at the end of the *Histories*. See Christopher Pelling, "East is East and West is West – Or Are They? National Stereotypes in Herodotus," *Histos* 1 (1997): 61.

Second, Apollonius' own travels to Olympia show that the games remain vibrant but that there are clear indications of cultural decline. In particular, the respect for the chief deity Zeus is confused by the local Greeks. In Apollonius' first visit to Olympia, he praises the statue of Zeus as well as the rites conducted by the Eleians (4.28-29). When a man plans to deliver an encomium for Zeus, however, Apollonius questions his oratorical abilities, concluding that if the man cannot write a speech in praise of his own father, he certainly cannot for the father of the gods (4.30).[22] Later, when he returns to Olympia, Apollonius chastises an Athenian youth who says that Athena was well-disposed to the emperor (8.16). According to Apollonius, this assertion does not show proper respect to Athena's father Zeus. In both cases, Apollonius questions the religious knowledge of those at Olympia, who are not quite correct in their attitudes toward worshipping Zeus. Philostratus shows, therefore, that Spain's respect for Nero and the Olympian games is misplaced since it represents a similarly corrupted understanding of proper devotion to the Olympian deity.

Outside of Gadeira, the confusion of other Spanish cities over Nero's exploits reflects a further deviation from proper Hellenism. The episode of a travelling tragic actor compounds this confusion in the text. Similar to the blasphemy of Nero's performances among the Greek cities but on a smaller scale, an unskilled tragic actor increases his wealth by taking advantage of the goodwill being expressed toward the emperor and the ignorance of the cities that have never heard a tragedy (5.9):

> Τοὺς γοῦν οἰκοῦντας τὰ Ἴσπολα, πόλις δὲ κἀκείνη Βαιτική, φησὶν ὁ Δάμις παθεῖν τι πρὸς τραγῳδίας ὑποκριτήν, οὗ κἀμὲ ἄξιον ἐπιμνησθῆναι· θυουσῶν γὰρ τῶν πόλεων θαμὰ ἐπὶ ταῖς νίκαις, ἐπειδὴ καὶ αἱ Πυθικαὶ ἤδη ἀπηγγέλλοντο, τραγῳδίας ὑποκριτὴς τῶν οὐκ ἀξιουμένων ἀνταγωνίζεσθαι τῷ Νέρωνι ἐπῆει τὰς ἑσπερίους πόλεις ἀγείρων, καὶ τῇ τέχνῃ χρώμενος ηὐδοκίμει παρὰ τοῖς ἧττον βαρβάροις,

[22] That Apollonius mockingly suggests that the man should write speeches of praise for the dead (4.30.2) implies a similar opinion about the peculiarity of the Gadeiran worship of death (τὸν θάνατον μόνοι ἀνθρώπων παιωνίζονται) (5.4).

> πρῶτον μὲν δι᾽ αὐτὸ τὸ ἥκειν παρ᾽ ἀνθρώπους, οἳ μήπω τραγῳδίας ἤκουσαν, εἶτ᾽ ἐπειδὴ τὰς Νέρωνος μελῳδίας ἀκριβοῦν ἔφασκε.
>
> Παρελθὼν δὲ ἐς τὰ Ἴσπολα φοβερὸς μὲν αὐτοῖς ἐφαίνετο καὶ ὂν ἐσιώπα χρόνον ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς, καὶ ὁρῶντες οἱ ἄνθρωποι βαδίζοντα μὲν αὐτὸν μέγα, κεχηνότα δὲ τοσοῦτον, ἐφεστῶτα δὲ ὀκρίβασιν οὕτως ὑψηλοῖς τερατώδη τε τὰ περὶ αὐτὸν ἐσθήματα, οὐκ ἄφοβοι ἦσαν τοῦ σχήματος, ἐπεὶ δὲ ἐξάρας τὴν φωνὴν γεγωνὸν ἐφθέγξατο, φυγῇ οἱ πλεῖστοι ᾤχοντο, ὥσπερ ὑπὸ δαίμονος ἐμβοηθέντες. τοιαῦτα μὲν τὰ ἤθη τῶν ταύτῃ βαρβάρων καὶ οὕτως ἀρχαῖα.
>
> Damis says that the natives of Hispola [possibly modern-day Seville], another city in Baetica, suffered at the hands of a tragic actor in a way that I too must mention. The cities were sacrificing often on account of [Nero's] victories, since news of the Pythian ones were now arriving. A tragic actor who had been thought unworthy to compete with Nero was scrounging for money throughout the western cities. He was well-regarded for his display of skill among the less barbarous, chiefly because he visited people who had never heard a tragedy, and also because he claimed to have perfected Nero's songs.
>
> But when he reached Hispola, he seemed terrifying to them even when he kept silent on the stage. And when the people saw him walking about with a big stride and gaping widely, standing in such high boots, and dressed in repulsive clothing, they already felt some fear at his appearance. But when he swelled up and uttered a booming sound, most of them went running off as if a spirit had shouted at them. Such are the ways of the barbarians here, and so antiquated.

Though the singer is well-received amongst the cities that are less barbarous (παρὰ τοῖς ἧττον βαρβάροις), the singer's disturbing performance frightens the people of Hispola. This tendency to barbarism, magnified by the machinations of the tragic actor, contrasts with Apollonius' earlier assertion that the Greeks would undoubtedly reprove Nero for his tragic performances (5.7.2-3). Yet, there is no evidence of the Greeks doing so since the announcements for Nero's victories continue to arrive in Spain. In contrast to the implied failures of Greece to reprove Nero, Hispola's barbarism actually allows the city to forsake the degenerate tragic singer, an obvious stand-in for the emperor. Matters are apparently so topsy-turvy that the barbaric

tendencies of Hispola are eclipsed by the people's antiquated identity (τὰ ἤθη … οὕτως ἀρχαῖα), a quality lacking in the cities of Greece that have drifted from their own classical ideal.[23]

The cities of Spain experience a foreign intrusion similar to the one warned against elsewhere in the text. In these episodes, however, foreign elements appear to originate in Greece. The devotion of Gadeira in particular to Greece is problematic because, as with that of other Spanish cities, it is based on a misunderstanding of Hellenic culture. Therefore, though less overt than the advice Apollonius offers to the Greeks, Philostratus depicts an ongoing problem of foreign intrusion, the elements of which come from Greece and Rome in the form of Nero and other corrupted cultural elements. In this case, a city's apparent barbarism is valuable because of its antiquated nature, a sophistic ideal seen in other praiseworthily insular cities.

c. Borderlands

Foreign elements also appear in borderland regions, including on the way to India and in Greece, and have the potential to detract from the Hellenic wisdom of the area's inhabitants. Episodes involving supernatural creatures in Greece, India, and Ethiopia serve as hyperbolic venues for the power of Apollonius' wisdom. But Philostratus also underscores the foreign nature of these creatures since each episode occurs in a borderland region where foreign elements can more easily intrude.[24] Because these foreign intrusions are also common to such disparate regions as Greece and India, the text portrays them as a large-scale threat to Apollonius' Hellenism.

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[23] See, e.g., Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past," 3-41, for archaism and antiquarianism in sophistic writing.

[24] This is perhaps because identity is more tenuous in these areas. Borderlands theory often treats these zones as contested space, implying the intermingling and mixing of various ethnic, cultural, religious, et al. identities. See Lars Rodseth and Bradley J. Parker, "Introduction: Theoretical Considerations in the Study of Frontiers," in *Untaming the Frontier in Anthropology, Archaeology, and History*, ed. Bradley J. Parker and Lars Rodseth (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2005), esp. 9-13.

Two separate episodes concerning vampires depict their violent and deceptive nature. In the Caucasus, Apollonius and his group encounter one of these creatures (ἔμπουσα) (2.4); it changes from one form to another and even sometimes disappears completely before Apollonius recognizes what it is (ξυνῆκεν).[25] Apollonius reproaches the creature (ἐλοιδορεῖτο) and instructs his comrades to do the same so that the vampire is driven off shrieking. Later, upon his return to Greece, Apollonius and his disciples encounter a similar creature in Corinth. Menippus of Lycia, a student of the Cynic philosopher Demetrius, is said to have fallen in love with a woman there who was actually a phantom (φάσμα) (4.25.1). On account of his good looks and penchant for love as opposed to philosophy, Menippus falls in with the woman. Only Apollonius recognizes that this woman is actually a vampire and not any other sort of threat: "So that you may understand what I'm saying, the wonderful bride is one of the vampires (ἡ χρηστὴ νύμφη μία τῶν ἐμπουσῶν ἐστιν), which the majority believe are sirens or werewolves (λαμίας τε καὶ μορμολυκεῖα). Vampires feel love and have sex, but they especially love human flesh. And they use sex to entrap men whom they would want to feast upon" (4.25.4).[26] At the wedding on the following day, Apollonius confronts the woman as the food and festivities disappear, thus forcing the vampire to confess her true nature and plan to fatten up Menippus in order to consume his blood (4.25.5).[27]

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[25] "Vampire" (ἔμπουσα) is the best translation here because of the creatures' common abilities to shape-shift and drink blood. Aristoph. *Frogs* 288-294 notes the creature's shapeshifting from an animal into the form of a woman. Dem. 18.130 alludes to this idea by using the term to insult Aeschines' mother for her doing and submitting to anything (ἐκ τοῦ πάντα ποιεῖν καὶ πάσχειν δηλονότι ταύτης τῆς ἐπωνυμίας τυχοῦσαν). The *Suda* s.v. Ἔμπουσα, ε 1049 Adler, offers a confused etymology of the term based on some of these sources, and also associates the creature with the goddess Hekatê. Cf. Aristoph. fr. 515 for Hekatê being called Ἔμπουσα and Eur. *Hel*. 569 for her sending ghosts from the underworld.

[26] Philostratus states that he is correcting the general story with which everyone is familiar, namely "that [Apollonius] once seized upon a siren in Corinth" (ὅτι ἕλοι ποτὲ ἐν Κορίνθῳ λάμιαν) (4.25.6), the prime reason for the author's elaboration here.

[27] In his defense speech, Apollonius expands this episode to include several young men under the influence of the vampire and claims that he prayed to Heracles for aid (8.29). See Graham Anderson, "Folklore Versus Fakelore:

The details of both episodes draw attention to the creatures' foreign nature. In the first, shortly before they encounter the creature or even cross the Indus River, the travelers see men "who were already black" (ἀνθρώπους … οὓς ἤδη μελαίνεσθαι) (2.4), a sign that they are close to reaching India proper.[28] The vampire in Corinth is "a foreign woman" (γυναίου ξένου) and then more specifically "a Phoenician who resided in a suburb of Corinth" (Φοίνισσα δὲ εἶναι καὶ οἰκεῖν ἐν προαστείῳ τῆς Κορίνθου) (4.25.2).[29] By Philostratus' reckoning, these creatures are clearly foreign in appearance and manner but are able to blend in because of their shape-shifting abilities. The vampire in Corinth furthermore chooses to mock philosophers as a collective group in front of Apollonius: "And she even jeered at philosophers for being perpetual fools" (καί που καὶ ἀπέσκωπτε τοὺς φιλοσόφους, ὡς ἀεὶ ληροῦντας) (4.25.5). This chastisement of philosophy and the fact that only the learned Apollonius can recognize these creatures sets them in clear opposition to Hellenism.[30]

Philostratus portrays both the Caucasus, synonymous with the Hindu Kush between Babylonia and India, and Corinth, between Attica and the Peloponnese, as problematic border zones that function in the text as entry ports where foreign interlopers may appear. The continued

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Some Problems in the Life of Apollonius," in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. by Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 220-21 and Alex Scobie, "Some Folktales in Graeco-Roman and Far Eastern Sources," *Philologus* 121 (1977): 7-10, for how this episode fits into the realm of folklore in the *VA*, in which Philostratus' corrective influence might demonstrate some factual basis to the incident. For the (likely) later reception of Philostratus in Goethe's *Die Braut von Corinth* (1798) and Keats' *Lamia* (1820), see Nick Groom, *The Vampire: A New History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 100, 123-25.

[28] Several Greek and Roman authors considered Indians to be as black as the Ethiopians. E.g., Hdt. 3.101.1-2; Ach. Tat. 3.9.2; Arr. *Ind*. 1.2, 6.9; Ov. *Ars* 1.53. Cf. Frank Snowden, *Blacks in Antiquity: Ethiopians in the Greco-Roman Experience* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1970), esp. 1-14.

[29] Graeme Miles, "Hippolytus, the Lamia, and the Eunuch: Celibacy and Narrative Strategy in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*," *Classical Philology* 112 (2017): 210-14, fits this episode into Apollonius' regimen of celibacy. Cf. D. Chr. 5 on the Libyan origin of the vampire (λάμια), who he says beguiles men through the promise of sex.

[30] See Thomas Schirren, *Philosophos Bios*, 218-21, who interprets the Corinthian episode as a philosophical allegory.

presence of these foreign creatures has significant repercussions for the inhabitants of borderlands as these episodes imply their inability to participate in Hellenic philosophy. Though the inhabitants beyond the Caucasus will be seen to be more philosophically inclined, after the vampire flees, Damis and Apollonius here enter into a discussion about the ascent of the soul, concluding that mountaineering is not a means of reaching the divine (2.5).[31] In Corinth, Menippus is unable to be a suitable student to Demetrius, since despite his proclivity for philosophy, his erotic desires subvert his studies (τὴν μὲν γὰρ ἄλλην φιλοσοφίαν ἔρρωτο, τῶν δὲ ἐρωτικῶν ἥττητο) (4.25.3). Foreign intrusion is therefore not conducive to and even hinders philosophical studies in these borderland regions, a problem that Apollonius sets out to correct by vanquishing the supernatural creatures that live there.

Though the threat is not explicitly characterized as "foreign," as are those above, supernatural interlopers reappear in the borderland region of Ethiopia later in the *VA*. During Apollonius' return journey from the Cataracts of the Nile to lower Egypt, Apollonius gets rid of a satyr that has been terrorizing the women of a small Ethiopian village. Because this village is between two major geographic centers in the text, the episode clearly occurs at a geographic periphery in the sage's travels.[32] Philostratus draws attention to this quality by calling the dispatch of the satyr "a show on Apollonius' side-trip" (παρόδου ἔργον) (6.27.4).[33] The author

[31] See Philippe Hanus, "La vie d'Apollonios de Tyane: d'une géographie réelle à une géographie mythique," in *Inde, Grèce ancienne: Regards croisés en anthropologie de l'espace*, ed. Jean-Claude Carriere et al. (Paris: Annales Littéraires de l'Université de Besançon, 1995), 90, who views the Caucasus as a place of divine inspiration for the sage, but more importantly as a dividing wall or screen before he and his disciples reach the new world of India.

[32] Apollonius wishes to explore the source of the Nile when his time with the gymnosophists ends, eventually reaching the third cataract (*VA* 6.22-26). Cf. Hdt. 2.19-31, Hor. *Od*. 4.14.45-46, Luc. 10.231-400.

[33] The problem of the satyr is again framed as best confronted by proper knowledge; as with the vampires, the satyr is at first a nebulous φάσμα before Apollonius correctly identifies the problem, and the incompetent gymnosophists are said to have been unable to address the issue for nine months (6.27.1-2). The reader witnesses Apollonius' correct knowledge in action since the sage uses the myth of Midas to prove that he has to get the satyr drunk in order to foil him (6.27.2-3).

also states that the existence of satyrs must not be disbelieved since a similar story was reported during his own youth on Lemnos (ibid.), an intriguing location for this anecdote. As Anderson suggests, "Philostratus' occasional reminiscences of Lemnos serve as a point of reference for unnatural events: there and not Athens is where he is likely to have experienced the lore of the countryside."[34] The island's frontier location, therefore, aligns this anecdote with the others featuring supernatural creatures at borderlands. These strange episodes draw special attention to the text's ongoing representation of foreignness, showing that foreign influence is widespread and that ill-defined border regions may be more susceptible to its disruptive nature.

d. Egypt

The region of Egypt, where Apollonius visits the gymnosophists and explores the sources of the Nile, also fits into the text's portrayal of foreign intrusion. Ambiguously located south of Thebes near Ethiopia (6.4), the gymnosophists are perhaps largely an invention of Philostratus, who uses them to have Apollonius reject Cynic teachings.[35] Apollonius' rejection of Egyptian teachings also hinges upon their own complicated relationship to Greek and Indian teachings in the text. There is clear historical evidence for Indians in Egypt, suggesting their potential influence on the lifestyle choice of the gymnosophists as well as the asceticism of early

[34] Anderson, "Folklore Versus Fakelore," 220. See also Wannes Gyselinck and Kristoffel Demoen, "Author and Narrator: Fiction and Metafiction in Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*," in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 118-19, who call this episode "teasingly ambiguous" in its resemblance to a miniature satyr play.

[35] Cf. *VS* 1.7, 2.26.1, for additional references to the gymnosophists placing them as far back as the fourth century B.C.E. Philostratus' representation perhaps influenced their portrayal in Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*. See Patrick Robiano, "Les Gymnosophistes éthiopiens chez Philostrate et chez Héliodore," *Revue des Études Anciennes* 94 (1992): 413-38.

Christians.[36] Apollonius, however, directly chastises the gymnosophists for not respecting Indian culture.[37] Philostratus instead describes the gymnosophists and other Egyptians as choosing to align themselves with a corrupted Greek culture. Much like Spain's problematic cultural isolation, the gymnosophists identify with a corrupted Greek culture but compound this misguided outlook by actively rejecting Indian teachings. Instead of advocating cultural isolation for the gymnosophists, Apollonius therefore recommends openness; he claims that they have shut themselves off from the correct form of Hellenism, especially the sage's own teachings.

Philostratus uses superficial similarities between Egypt and Greece to create general links between the two regions. For instance, in describing the gymnosophists' choice to live outdoors, the author points out that the accommodation built for visitors is roughly the same length as the portico at Elis in which athletes await competition (6.6.2). The gymnosophists wear as much clothing as sunbathers in Athens (γυμνοὺς δὲ ἐστάλθαι κατὰ ταὐτὰ τοῖς εἰληθεροῦσιν Ἀθήνησι) (6.6.1).[38] Yet other links are more complex in how they reflect Egypt's cultural and geographic status in the text; for one, the use of animal statuary in the temples of the gymnosophists strays from their correct anthropomorphic form in Greece (6.19).[39] These subtle distinctions begin to show the Egyptians' unclear grasp of Hellenism in their religious and cultural practices.

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[36] D. Chr. 32.40 comments that he observes Indians and Bactrians among his audience at Alexandria. The Christian theologian Clement of Alexandria (c. 202) shows knowledge of Indian teachings, including the worship of Buddha (*Stromata* 1.15).

[37] See Roshan Abraham, "The Biography of a *Pagan* Saint: Apollonius of Tyana," in *Religion: Narrating Religion*, ed. Sara Iles Johnston (Farmington Hills, Mich.: Macmillan Reference, 2017), 227-42, who uses this element to re-center Hellenic wisdom in India, describing that region in the *VA* as "a place that holds more ancient, and therefore more divine, wisdom than other Greek philosophers learned from magoi or Egyptian priests" (236).

[38] Van Dijk, "Present in Past and Future," 49, views comparisons to Greece similar to these as places sharing in the classical heritage of the past (e.g. the Indian sages live on a rock similar in size to the Acropolis (3.13)).

[39] See Graeme Miles, "Reforming the Eyes: Interpreters and Interpretation in the *Vita Apollonii*," in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 152-55, for how this episode fits into Apollonius' discussion of *phantasia* in the text.

Despite these generally positive connections between Greece and Egypt, Philostratus triangulates Greece, Egypt, and India in order to show both the benefits and the detriments of cultural insularity. Philostratus disparages the Egyptians for looking to Greece and not to Apollonius or India for philosophical inspiration. For example, the Egyptian gymnosophist Thespesion uses the Greek landscape to map out the philosophical world, using the real and symbolic differences between the Olympic and Pythian games. Hearing of Apollonius' travels there, Thespesion uses these differences to claim that the land of the gymnosophists is like Olympia (6.10.2):

> [φασιν] καὶ τὴν μὲν Πυθὼ τοὺς ἐς αὐτὴν ἥκοντας αὐλῷ τε παραπέμπειν καὶ ᾠδαῖς καὶ ψάλσει, κωμῳδίας τε καὶ τραγῳδίας ἀξιοῦν, εἶτα τὴν ἀγωνίαν παρέχειν τὴν γυμνὴν ὀψὲ τούτων, τὴν δὲ Ὀλυμπίαν τὰ μὲν τοιαῦτα ἐξελεῖν ὡς ἀνάρμοστα καὶ οὐ χρηστὰ ἐκεῖ, παρέχεσθαι δὲ τοῖς ἐς αὐτὴν ἰοῦσιν ἀθλητὰς γυμνούς, Ἡρακλέους ταῦτα ξυνθέντος. τοῦτο ἡγοῦ παρὰ τὴν Ἰνδῶν σοφίαν τὰ ἐνταῦθα· οἱ μὲν γάρ, ὥσπερ ἐς τὴν Πυθὼ καλοῦντες, ποικίλαις δημαγωγοῦσιν ἴυγξιν, ἡμεῖς δέ, ὥσπερ ἐν Ὀλυμπίᾳ, γυμνοί.
>
> They say too that Delphi conveys its visitors with pipes, songs, and the sound of the cithara, and honors them with comedy and tragedy, and then after a while presents the competition carried out in the nude. But Olympia avoids such conduct as inappropriate and improper there, and presents its visitors with only naked athletes, since this was established by Heracles. You may consider it the same here in our land, compared to the philosophy of the Indians. For they, as if inviting you to Delphi, win you over with various charms, but we are naked, just like those in Olympia.

According to Thespesion, the differences between the Olympic and Pythian games correspond to the differences between the Egyptian gymnosophists and the Indian sages. He goes on to explain that Egyptian land produces nothing frivolous, and that the gymnosophists sleep directly on the ground (ibid.). The gymnosophist creates a positive link between Egyptian ascetic practices and athletic competition at Olympia.[40] He does so at the expense of Indian philosophy, which is

[40] Cf. *VA* 5.43, in which Apollonius compares the training for the Greek games to the teaching of his own disciples, specifically letting go those who have not been sufficiently trained. James A. Arieti, "Nudity in Greek Athletics," *Classical World* 68 (1975): 431-36, argues that nudity was an opportunity for an athlete to demonstrate his

described as flamboyant and coddling. But, as with the Spanish cities discussed above, the portrayal of other Egyptians in the text shows their appropriation but misunderstanding of Greek culture and athletics.[41]

This Egyptian misunderstanding even degenerates into outright hostility toward Greece and India. When in India, Apollonius learns how the Egyptians truly feel toward the Greeks, despite the respect the gymnosophists profess in Book 6. In an earlier anecdote, the Egyptians during their visits to India are said to disparage the Greeks as "depraved, mongrels, entirely without law, tellers of tall-tales and marvels, and a poor group, but they don't make this an honorable trait, instead using it as an excuse to steal" (ἀλλ᾽ ὑβριστάς τε καὶ ξυγκλύδας, καὶ ἀναρχίαν πᾶσαν, καὶ μυθολόγους, καὶ τερατολόγους, καὶ πένητας μέν, ἐνδεικνυμένους δὲ τοῦτο οὐχ ὡς σεμνόν, ἀλλ᾽ ὑπὲρ ξυγγνώμης τοῦ κλέπτειν) (3.32.1). The secretive nature of the Egyptians' attack compounds its impropriety. Thus, compared with the opinion of Thespesion, who praises but actually misunderstands Greek culture, these remarks about the Greeks more clearly reflect the improper cultural insularity of the Egyptians.[42]

Moreover, the gymnosophists attack and refuse to receive Indian wisdom from both Apollonius and the Indians themselves. To demonstrate the error of the gymnosophists, Apollonius uses a nautical metaphor for his transporting knowledge from India as a special cargo for those receptive to it (6.12.2). In this case, the travel imagery demonstrates that an acquaintance with foreign knowledge can be productive. The Egyptians, however, have shut

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sophrosyne. See Zahra Newby, *Greek Athletics in the Roman World: Victory and Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 25 n. 26, 216 n. 48, for the continuation of nude athletics in the Roman period.

[41] E.g., Apollonius finds fault with the violence that chariot racing incites in the Alexandrian spectators of chariot racing, calling it worse than the destruction of Troy by a single horse. He contrasts this violence with the fact that no one has ever died over the wrestling, boxing, and pankration athletes at Olympia (οὐδεὶς ὑπὲρ ἀθλητῶν ἀπέθανεν) (5.26.1-2).

[42] Cf. Hdt. 2.91.

themselves off from beneficial foreign elements, including the recommendations of the sage himself. The reader also learns that the gymnosophists have refused to honor Indian wisdom even before the arrival of Apollonius. According to the new disciple Nilus, his father journeyed to India and returned with philosophic wisdom, spurring the youth to join the gymnosophists, who routinely disparaged the Indians (6.16.3). The gymnosophists therefore represent a group that has become excessively insular, refusing to accept even beneficial foreign contact.

The changing advice of Apollonius reflects the spectrum on which foreign influence can be either detrimental or productive in the *VA*. For the gymnosophists, Apollonius draws special attention to the benefits of associating with foreign peoples. At the end of his stay in Egypt, Apollonius intends to impart the wisdom of his travels elsewhere. In the remainder of the *VA*, Apollonius will return to the cities of Greece, Ionia, and Italy. The purpose of these travels, according to the sage, is to continue his educational mission (6.18):

> "Because the Indians taught me as much of their wisdom as I thought it proper for me to know, I have remembered my teachers and I go about teaching what I heard from them. And you [the gymnosophists] too would profit, if you send me away with knowledge of your wisdom; for I would not cease going about giving your teachings to the Greeks and writing to the Indians (οὐ γὰρ ἂν παυσαίμην Ἕλλησί τε διὼν τὰ ὑμέτερα καὶ Ἰνδοῖς γράφων)."

Apollonius' final remarks to the gymnosophists represent a hierarchy of knowledge in the regions of the empire. Though he will report his Egyptian findings to the Greeks in person, Apollonius has no plans to return to India, instead writing to them. Through this differing treatment of the regions, Apollonius appears to regard Egypt's (and Greece's) philosophical wisdom as less than that of India. Occupying the lowest tier of philosophical merit, the gymnosophists therefore most of all must be culturally open to experience ameliorative foreign contact.

It is clear that although foreign intrusion is a common issue in Apollonius' travels, the sage recommends different strategies of acceptance and resistance. Borderland regions are the most susceptible to these detrimental foreign elements and to the threat they pose to Hellenic culture. But in the cities of Greece and Spain, Philostratus reframes what constitutes foreign intrusion, showing that in Greece stereotypical Near Eastern elements have intruded, while in Spain, Greek culture is portrayed as problematically foreign. When these episodes are compared to anecdotes from the *VS*, Philostratus depicts different strategies for grappling with foreign intrusion. In fact, there are many benefits when those foreigners entering a city represent the tenets of Hellenic *paideia*, as Apollonius in Egypt and sophistic students in Smyrna both do. This role of Apollonius as the center of philosophical knowledge hinges upon his acquiring and teaching new disciples, discussed in the next section.

II. The Geography of Apollonius' Disciples

Apollonius is able to gain new student-disciples as he travels through many different cities of the empire. Unlike those people whose deviation from philosophical practice Apollonius critiques, his disciples hold a special role as his closest confidants. Philostratus shows that Apollonius can influence these students through philosophical dialogue and other educative practices. Through the course of much of the text, the reader witnesses a development of the disciples' wisdom and abilities as their education mirrors the sage's own early learning. In this way, Apollonius comes full circle from a young student to a teacher casting his students in his own image.[43]

[43] See Erkki Koskenniemi, "The Philostratean Apollonius as a Teacher," in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praeg (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 323-25, for Apollonius' early education in Book 1 of the *VA*.

Little is said of many of Apollonius' disciples in the *VA*, but their relationship to Apollonius is evident when the sage incorporates new students into his travelling group. Apollonius' teaching builds upon the text's re-centering of geography around Apollonius. Because of the negative foreign intrusion and deviation from Hellenic wisdom in many regions, as discussed above, several students can only learn from Apollonius outside these places. Thus, in contrast to those cities that allow negative foreign elements to intrude, effectively mirroring the dangerous borderlands elsewhere in the text, students become less "foreign" in their identities through travel with Apollonius. When these students choose to join the sage, Apollonius can then instruct them outside of their original (corruptible) geographic context.

This section focuses on the disciples Menippus, the Corinthian youth and former pupil of Demetrius, and Nilus the Egyptian who becomes disenchanted with the Ethiopian gymnosophists. Among several others, these two disciples serve as case studies in which the reader witnesses the positive education of new students by Apollonius. Each disciple's knowledge increases as the narrative progresses. They are able to shed their problematic geographic origins by becoming closer to Apollonius who holds no inhibiting geographic identity in the text. Apollonius' journeys are the source of his knowledge as he learns from the Indians. But his itinerant identity exemplifies his life as a teacher, since he is able to move between places easily (and even be in different places at the same time) in order to impart his knowledge.

Finally, as discussed in the next section, the narrative of these students contrasts with that of Apollonius' first proper disciple Damis. Apollonius positively educates many disciples in the narrative; they are therefore able to escape the problems of their geographic origins. The education of Damis, however, is left ambiguously incomplete. I argue that this ambiguity arises

from Damis' geographic origin in Syria, an inescapable ethnic trait that Philostratus often treats stereotypically in his characterization of Syrians in the text.

Following the expulsion of the vampire from Corinth, Menippus becomes an itinerant follower of Apollonius, and his education depicts how the disciple gains wisdom through philosophical discussion with the sage. In a series of episodes, the sage effectively addresses the corruptive influence of the vampire through several philosophical exchanges with Menippus. Early in his education, Menippus clearly still requires the intervention of Apollonius in philosophical matters. At a moment when Apollonius is threatened by Nero's power and many of his followers depart, Menippus chooses to stay. For this act Apollonius praises Menippus and a few others, saying of the man not giving into fear, "let him be called a philosopher by me, and I will teach him everything I know" (φιλόσοφος ὑπ᾽ ἐμοῦ προσειρήσεται, καὶ διδάξομαι αὐτόν, ὁπόσα οἶδα) (4.38.1). Menippus is clearly one of the chosen few and has been marked out by Apollonius for especial status as a student.

The teacher and student importantly carry out this education at a distance from Greece, showing that Menippus only needs to be in the proximity of Apollonius to improve his knowledge. Menippus' education changes as he travels with Apollonius in the narrative, becoming more enlightened as they travel away from Corinth. The reader witnesses some of Apollonius' teaching of Menippus particularly when he prevents his student from becoming irritated at the people's devotion to Nero (4.44.1): "Indeed, Menippus was irritated by these matters, but Apollonius brought him to his senses and restrained him, telling him to let the gods rejoice in the mimes of buffoons" (ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸν Μένιππον παροξυνόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν τοιούτων ἐσωφρόνιζέ τε καὶ κατεῖχε, ξυγγιγνώσκειν κελεύων τοῖς θεοῖς εἰ μίμοις γελοίων χαίρουσιν). This active intervention of Apollonius characterizes the early education of Menippus when they are

both in Rome. Later, Philostratus allows Menippus to voice his opinion more strongly, having him participate in philosophical discussions. These include the discussion of Nero's exploits in Greece when the group is in Spain (5.7) and whether mythology is conducive to philosophy while they are on Mount Etna (5.14).

While in Alexandria and before Apollonius sets out for the gymnosophists, the sage recognizes Menippus for his positive progression in philosophy. In assembling the group that will travel south, Apollonius sends a few away because they are not ready for the journey. Regarding Menippus, however, "because he was already an articulate speaker and employed a powerful frankness, Apollonius left him behind to keep a watch on Euphrates" (ἐπειδὴ τῶν διαλεγομένων ἤδη ἐτύγχανε καὶ παρρησίᾳ χρῆσθαι δεινὸς ἦν, κατέλιπεν αὐτόθι ἔφεδρον τῷ Εὐφράτῃ) (5.43.1). Though others are left behind with Menippus, he is singled out for his recently developed oratorical abilities. Menippus has seemingly taken over Apollonius' role in the ongoing dispute with Euphrates, now delegated to the student.[44] And upon his return from Ethiopia, Apollonius turns over the daily lectures against Euphrates to Menippus (6.28).

Though sparse in its details, Menippus' characterization suggests some trajectory in his philosophical education by Apollonius. During his early learning, Menippus is rebuked by the sage but later participates in several prolonged discussions before being allowed to take Apollonius' place in a philosophical debate. It is also important that this progression takes place over the course of several books in the *VA*. Menippus becomes more adept at philosophy the more he spends time with Apollonius. As Apollonius' purpose in his journey changes from

[44] Just as Apollonius chooses to quit Alexandria and the ongoing dispute with Euphrates, Philostratus also chooses to spend no more time discussing this antagonistic philosopher: "But I must leave these things [Apollonius' charges against Euphrates] alone, for it is not my intention to attack this man, but to record the life of Apollonius for those who are not yet acquainted with it" (ἐμοὶ δὲ ἀφεκτέα τοῦ ἀνδρός, οὐ γὰρ ἐκεῖνον διαβαλεῖν προὐθέμην, ἀλλὰ παραδοῦναι τὸν Ἀπολλωνίου βίον τοῖς μήπω εἰδόσι) (5.39).

learning from the Indians to teaching others around the empire, so too does that of Menippus. Thus, in Egypt, before Apollonius departs for Ethiopia to find out that he has nothing to learn from the gymnosophists, Menippus' studies appear to have come to an end as well. He no longer has to follow Apollonius, but can remain in Alexandria, occupying an educative role similar to that of Apollonius.

Apollonius therefore becomes the geographic location on which philosophical wisdom is centered in the text.[45] As Apollonius famously says of himself, "for a wise man Greece is everywhere" (σοφῷ ἀνδρὶ Ἑλλὰς πάντα) (1.35.2), suggesting that the tenets of Hellenism follow him rather than his seeking them out. His identity, therefore, free from the constraints of a consistent geographic origin and ethnicity, becomes the antidote for the threatening foreign elements in the text. When the Egyptian Nilus becomes a new disciple, Apollonius' presence confirms everything that the youth had heard about the merits of India (6.12). As Apollonius expounds his teachings, Nilus discusses his initial interest in India based on the journeys of his father (6.15-17). Yet now that Apollonius is in his presence, he no longer needs to journey there. Nilus says to Apollonius (6.16.4),

> Ἐμὲ δὲ νέον ἔτι, ὡς ὁρᾷς, ὄντα κατέλεξαν ἐς τὸ αὐτῶν κοινόν, δείσαντες, οἶμαι, μὴ ἀποπηδήσας αὐτῶν πλεύσαιμι ἐς τὴν Ἐρυθράν, ὥσπερ ποτὲ ὁ πατήρ. ὃ μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς οὐκ ἂν παρῆκα· προῆλθον γὰρ ἂν καὶ μέχρι τοῦ ὄχθου τῶν σοφῶν, εἰ μή σέ τις ἐνταῦθα θεῶν ἔστειλεν ἐμοὶ ἀρωγόν, ὡς μήτε τὴν Ἐρυθρὰν πλεύσας μήτε πρὸς τοὺς Κολπίτας παραβαλόμενος σοφίας Ἰνδικῆς γευσαίμην.
>
> [The gymnosophists] recruited me into their group when I was still young, as you see. They feared, I think, that I would have forsaken them and sailed to the Red Sea, just as my father once did. By the gods, I would not have given up on this. I would have made it as far as the hill of the wise men, unless one of the gods sent you here to be my aid, so that I would not have to sail to the Red Sea nor come to the inhabitants of the Gulf in order to get a taste of Indian wisdom.

[45] Elsner, "Hagiographic Geography," 27-28, sees a similar characterization in Apollonius as a site of pilgrimage at certain points in the text. But his argument does not address the disciples of Apollonius, instead focusing on Apollonius' semi-divine status in certain cities.

Nilus uses Apollonius and his Indian wisdom as substitutes for travelling to India. Because of Apollonius' own journey to India, wisdom has re-centered around the sage, rather than still remaining in India. Instead, Apollonius disrupts the regular means of acquiring esoteric knowledge through travel by encountering new disciples who attach themselves to him.

Apollonius' teaching continues in place of traditional travel for education. Philostratus describes the sage's encounter with an Arcadian youth who had been sent to Rome in order to receive his education. This pursuit of a Roman education is contrasted with a traditional Hellenic one, which the Arcadian has had to give up (ὄντα γάρ με Ἀρκάδα ἐκ Μεσσήνης οὐ τὰ Ἑλλήνων ἐπαίδευσεν, ἀλλ᾽ ἐνταῦθα ἔστειλε μαθησόμενον ἤθη νομικά) (7.42.2). Because of his presence in Rome and his attractive looks, the Arcadian has become the object of the emperor Domitian's lust. Yet after his discussion with Apollonius, the youth is said to have sailed to Malea praised by both Domitian and the Arcadians for his firmness (θαυμασθὲν δὲ τῆς ῥώμης) (7.42.6).

The story of the Arcadian implies that the youth returned to the Peloponnese in order to receive a proper education, but as discussed above, Philostratus portrays Greece as overflowing with foreign influence and improper Hellenism. The youth, now possessing numerous markers of Romanness, contributes to this foreign intrusion. Though he is praised by the Arcadians, he is also praised by the tyrant Domitian, a truly non-Hellenic figure in the text. Furthermore, the term ῥώμη is a trait is praised by the Arcadians but is also a play on words that points to the youth's difficulties in Rome (7.42.6). Philostratus elsewhere depicts the Arcadians as particularly susceptible to foreign corruption. In his defense speech against the charge of sacrificing an Arcadian youth on behalf of Nerva (7.35, 8.7.36 ff.), clearly linked to this anecdote,[46] Apollonius

[46] In addition to his remarks about the youth's appearance as unlike that of a slave, Apollonius discusses the purported youth's elite background and family (8.7.36). See James Rives, "Human Sacrifice among Pagans and Christians," *Journal of Roman Studies* 85 (1995): 79, for how the political concern here is for whom Apollonius sacrificed, not any charge over being a magician (γόης).

characterizes Arcadians as a paradoxical people compared to other Greeks. They are the most freedom-loving but import the most slaves (8.7.38); in this way, they resemble the city of Rome, which imports slaves from several different barbarous regions (8.7.37). Arcadia's rustic status as a place less wise than other parts of Greece is confirmed by the Arcadians' resemblance to Romans and their praise for the return of the youth. Albeit in a more convoluted way, the youth's return to Arcadia contributes to the further depreciation of that region by foreign elements.

The geographic scheme of Apollonius' teaching is in line with the episodes of foreign intrusion discussed above. His knowledge about foreignness is linked to a special ability to have no firm geographic identity, an aspect of his character apparent in several instances in the text. When Damis describes his knowledge of several languages, Apollonius replies that he knows all human languages ("μὴ θαυμάσῃς," εἶπεν "εἰ πάσας οἶδα φωνὰς ἀνθρώπων") (1.19.2). Upon reaching Babylon, Apollonius similarly describes his ability to traverse the entire world: "Then [the satrap] asked him who he was going about the land of the king. And he replied, 'the whole world is mine, and I am entitled to pass through it'" (Πάλιν ἤρετο, ὅστις ὢν ἐσφοιτᾷ τὴν βασιλέως χώραν, ὁ δὲ "ἐμὴ" ἔφη "πᾶσα ἡ γῆ, καὶ ἀνεῖταί μοι δι᾽ αὐτῆς πορεύεσθαι") (1.21.2). This characterization of Apollonius portrays him as a sort of "citizen of the world."[47] But this ability to manipulate geographic space also has much to do with his miracle-working in the text.

The semi-divine nature of Apollonius builds upon his characterization as a super-sophist (Chapter 1); the hagiographic aspects of the text strengthen his sophistic abilities, in this case his ability to educate others. Gert-Jan Van Dijk argues that the sage's supernatural abilities are evidenced in the erasure of time at some points in the narrative;[48] despite this focus on the

[47] See Hanus, "La vie d'Apollonios de Tyane," 87 n. 14, for discussion of this specific characterization.

[48] Van Dijk, "Present in Past and Future," 56-57.

temporal aspect of miracle-working, Apollonius' power over physical and geographic space also contributes to his teaching prowess. In the final chapters of the *VA*, Philostratus records three versions of Apollonius' death (8.28-30). The epiphany of the sage at his shrine in Tyana tentatively confirms the representation of Apollonius as a semi-divine figure.[49] In addition, Apollonius' oracular pronouncement to the youth at Tyana draws attention to Apollonius' teaching and its ability to overcome geographic constraints. Philostratus remarks of his own research for the *VA* that he has travelled most of the world (ἐπελθὼν πλείστην, καίτοι τῆς γῆς, ὁπόση ἐστίν) and has seen no tomb for Apollonius (8.31.3). But he has recorded supernatural accounts of him everywhere (λόγοις δὲ πανταχοῦ δαιμονίοις) (ibid.). Apollonius therefore even after dying can manifest anywhere in the world. No physical edifice including his own shrine can limit him in death, a supernatural ability critical to the education of his students while still alive.[50]

Apollonius' teaching and incorporation of new disciples follows a geographic scheme that attempts to do away with negative foreign influence. Disciples only learn from the sage by being taken out of their original geographic contexts, a task that Apollonius is singularly equipped to do. Because of his lack of a firm geographic identity and supernatural control of geographic space, Apollonius can impart philosophical wisdom to his students. As they accompany him on his travels, the students vary in their receptivity to Apollonius' teachings, but the most positive examples follow a trajectory in which they escape any corrupting foreign influence. In this way, they become more like Apollonius in their own philosophical abilities. Yet one student whose

[49] See Jaap-Jan Flinterman, "Apollonius' Ascension," in *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'* Vita Apollonii, ed. Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 225-48.

[50] See Schirren, *Philosophos Bios*, 309-12, on the specifics of Apollonius' pronouncement about the immortality of the soul.

abilities remain ambiguous by the end of the text is Apollonius' first and most loyal student, Damis the Syrian.

III. Damis the Syrian

> How was it that he did not think it right to emulate the Brahmins, even though he was eager to join in philosophical discussion with them apart from Damis and thought it necessary to conceal what he was doing from his only companion?
>
> - Eusebius, *Contra Hieroclem* 25.1

Damis of Nineveh is introduced early in the *VA* as the main source for Philostratus' narrative. According to the author, he was given the memoirs of Damis by the empress Julia Domna, who is said to have received them from a descendant of Damis (1.3).[51] Philostratus here may allude to Julia's connection to another elite family from the eastern empire since Nineveh was in the province of Mesopotamia, near modern-day Mosul, Iraq.[52] Scholars have debated the nature and existence of Damis' memoirs, with some positing that the memoirs are largely a literary fiction used by Philostratus to affirm his authority as a skilled historian. Others have pushed back on this idea; Graham Anderson, for example, shows that Philostratus uses the memoirs in a consistent way in the *VA* and that his complicated use of different sources must reflect their actual existence.[53]

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[51] The Severans' interest in Apollonius existed outside the text and was connected to the Severans' affinity for non-Roman cultures and religions. Severus Alexander is said to have possessed a statue of Apollonius in his household shrine, alongside Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus (HA *Sev*. *Alex*. 29). Philostratus also reports that Caracalla built a shrine dedicated to Apollonius in Tyana (*VA* 8.20). Cf. Dio Cass. 78.18.4. See discussion in previous chapter about Severan imperial ideology.

[52] See Julian E. Reade, "Greco-Parthian Nineveh," *Iraq* 60 (1998): 65-83; Peter W. Haider, "Tradition and Change in the Beliefs at Assur, Nineveh and Nisibis between 300 BC and AD 300, " in *The Variety of Local Religious Life in the Near East in the Hellenistic and Roman Periods*, ed. Ted Kaizer (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 201-4, for the civic life of Nineveh in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

[53] Anderson, *Philostratus*, 155-73. Anderson's main interlocutor is Ewen Bowie, "Apollonius of Tyana: Tradition and Reality," *ANRW* 2.16.2 (1978): 1652-99, who argues against the historicity of Damis. See James A. Francis, "Truthful Fiction: New Questions to Old Answers on Philostratus' 'Life of Apollonius,'" *The American Journal of Philology* 119 (1998): 422 n. 10, for further discussion.

Scholars have therefore used Damis as a means to evaluate Philostratus' historical methodology but have largely ignored his ethnic identity. Emblematic of this interpretative frame, Adam Kemezis uses the figure of Damis to investigate the narrative structure of the *VA*.[54] In his rendering, the text's supposed authority is put at odds with how the narrator Philostratus treats Damis throughout the rest of the text. The constant contrast between Damis and the *VA* narrator draws attention to the historical method of the narrator and to the ways in which the text is a product of Severan imperial intervention. Kemezis claims that, as with other Greek sources, Philostratus' silence regarding Julia's Syrian heritage reflects her inclusion among the Hellenes.[55] Damis via Julia – and her desire for syncretism between Hellenism and Near Eastern cultures – is therefore crucial to Philostratus the author's negotiation with an imperial representative for control of the Hellenic past.

I argue that the characterization of Damis, primarily his role as a devout yet imperfect student of Apollonius, builds upon the problematic nature of foreign identity in the text. Alongside instances of "Damis says" in the text when Philostratus is using him as a source, Damis also figures as a character and active disciple of Apollonius. Damis occupies the role of Apollonius' perpetual interlocutor, allowing Philostratus to demonstrate the sage's philosophy through dialogic scenes. Unlike that of the other disciples of Apollonius, Damis' Hellenic education remains ambiguously incomplete by the end of the *VA* because of the negative foreign influence of his Syrian roots. The figure of Damis therefore not only accentuates Philostratus' skills as an historian,[56] but also subtly disparages Syrians and the Syrian roots of the imperial

[54] Adam Kemezis, "Roman Politics and the Fictional Narrator in Philostratus' *Apollonius*."

[55] Ibid., 92-93.

[56] Anderson, *Philostratus*, 155-73, is most concerned with reconciling Damis as a source with the narrative content of the *VA*, proving the existence of his memoirs in some form. The embellishment of Damis' account that

family. I show that Damis functions as a subversive figure who embodies traits of foreign and specifically Syrian representations elsewhere in the Philostratean corpus.

The *VA* represents the region of Syria as politically tumultuous and un-Hellenic. As with the other cities of the empire that Apollonius visits, Syria is the object of the sage's corrective philosophical wisdom. In an early episode, Apollonius recommends to the Parthian king a peaceful policy toward Rome despite the efforts of the Syrian governor to convince Parthia to go to war (1.38.2).[57] Later, Philostratus describes the nefarious acts of the governor of Syria who aims to throw the assembly of citizens into disorder until he is corrected by Apollonius (6.38). Philostratus also focuses on the uncultured status of Antioch, exemplified among other anecdotes in the description of devotees of a temple of Apollo as "semi-barbarous and unrefined" (ἀνθρώπους ἡμιβαρβάρους καὶ ἀμούσους) (1.16.2).[58] These tentative political and cultural alliances between Syria and the west resemble the ambiguous engagement of Syrian individuals with Hellenic learning.

In his depiction of Syrian individuals, Philostratus both endorses and subverts common stereotypes, some of which relate to eastern luxury. An early anecdote uses some Syrian tropes

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Philostratus must have undertaken, as shown by Anderson, is my springboard for investigating his characterization in the *VA*.

[57] The Syrian governorship in the first century was a point of diplomatic contact between Rome and Parthia, though intermittent violence did break out between the two superpowers. See Brian Campbell, "War and Diplomacy: Rome and Parthia, 31 BC – AD 235," in *War and Society in the Roman World*, ed. John Rich and Graham Shipley (London: Routledge, 1993), 213-40; Kevin Butcher, *Roman Syria and the Near East* (Los Angeles: Getty Publications, 2003), 32-44. According to Philostratus, the governor of Syria had written to the king claiming that the Romans now control two villages that had long been held by the Parthian king. Apollonius suggests that these small villages are not worth going to war over, seeing that even some large matters are not worth war. Seleucus VI Epiphanes Nicator (r. 96-94 B.C.E.), being in control of the northern part of the Syrian kingdom that bordered the Roman province of Cilicia (founded in 102 B.C.E.), is a possibility for Syrian king who gave away these villages to the Romans. App. *Syr*. 69; J. *AJ* 13.366-68.

[58] Here Apollonius also addresses Ladon the mythical father of Daphne, commenting that though he was once a Greek and Arcadian, he has transformed into a barbarian (καὶ σὺ τῷ δόξαι βάρβαρος ἐξ Ἕλληνός τε καὶ Ἀρκάδος) (1.16.2). Antioch as unruly and uncultured is echoed later in the text (καὶ τῆς Ἀντιοχείας συνήθως ὑβριζούσης καὶ μηδὲν τῶν Ἑλληνικῶν ἐσπουδακυίας) (3.58).

to portray the correctness of Apollonius' teaching. In Aegae, a Syrian youth entreats the god Asclepius at the temple in order to cure his sickness. Philostratus records that the youth's lifestyle prevents him from getting help from the god, saying that the he was continuously drunk (ἐν πότοις ἔζη) and "from a desire for drink neglected a dry diet" (μέθῃ χαῖρον αὐχμοῦ ἠμέλει) (1.9.1). This episode may echo that of the Syrian's disrespect for the temple of Hektor in Troy (*Her*. 19.5-7) since both of these foreign interlopers are reprimanded for their uncouth actions.

Similar stereotypes of Syrians also appear in the *VS*, in which Philostratus shows how several sophists use sophistic education to overcome their foreign origins. In the case of Isaeus the Syrian, Philostratus shows that this sophist's early life is riddled with excess (1.48.1):

> Ἰσαῖος δὲ ὁ σοφιστὴς ὁ Ἀσσύριος τὸν μὲν ἐν μειρακίῳ χρόνον ἡδοναῖς ἐδεδώκει, γαστρός τε γὰρ καὶ φιλοποσίας ἥττητο καὶ λεπτὰ ἠμπίσχετο καὶ θαμὰ ἤρα καὶ ἀπαρακαλύπτως ἐκώμαζεν ἐς δὲ ἄνδρας ἥκων οὕτω τι μετέβαλεν, ὡς ἕτερος ἐξ ἑτέρου νομισθῆναι, τὸ μὲν γὰρ φιλόγελων ἐπιπολάζειν αὐτῷ δοκοῦν ἀφεῖλε καὶ προσώπου καὶ γνώμης.
>
> Isaeus, the Assyrian sophist, had devoted the time of his youth to self-indulgence, for he capitulated to gluttony and to a love of drinking, possessed fine things, was often in love, and openly made revelry. But when he reached manhood he changed himself so much that he was considered a different person, for he discarded from his appearance and his disposition his love of foolishness that used to be blatantly obvious.

When he is older, Isaeus forsakes this extravagant lifestyle, giving up the pleasures of theater, clothing, and women (ibid.).[59] Similarly, in the life of Antiochus of Aegae, Philostratus implies that the sophist can correct his foreign origin through education. Antiochus is at first the pupil of Dardanus the Syrian before travelling to Ephesus (2.22-23), and Philostratus admires his devotion to Asclepius as well as his awareness of his own temper. Philostratus remarks that Antiochus is from such a distinguished family that even now his descendants are made consuls (οὕτω τι εὐπατρίδην, ὡς νῦν ἔτι τὸ ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ γένος ὑπάτους εἶναι) (2.22.1). This remark stresses

[59] Cf. Juv. 3.24; Plin. *Ep*. 2.3, for Isaeus in Rome.

not only Antiochus' elite status but also the possibility of Syrians being brought into the Greco-Roman cultural fold.

Philostratus uses Damis to both reinforce and undermine these representations of Syrians. At least in the case of material from the *VA*, the reader is clearly meant to compare the Assyrian youth in Aegea to Damis, who is introduced shortly after this episode as another uncultured Syrian.[60] Philostratus provides a considerable amount of anecdotal evidence for Damis' training since he is Apollonius' first and longest-serving follower. Damis' education under Apollonius follows many of the conventions outlined above concerning the sage's other disciples; early in his education, Damis' wisdom and learning are constantly compared to those of Apollonius. For example, when he first meets Apollonius, he claims to have knowledge of several barbarian languages because of his own travels. Apollonius retorts that he also knows them but that he has not had to learn them (1.19.1). This complicated portrayal of Damis' linguistic knowledge also influences how Philostratus regards Damis' memoirs. Philostratus describes their (Greek) language as merely "suitable" (ξυμμέτρως) since Damis had been educated among barbarians (1.19.2); Philostratus therefore implies the writer's moderate but by no means spectacular ability to compose Greek prose. When he mentions these memoirs as his chief source for writing the *VA*, Philostratus echoes this same sentiment, stating that the memoirs are written clearly but without skill (τῷ γὰρ Νινίῳ σαφῶς μέν, οὐ μὴν δεξιῶς γε ἀπηγγέλλετο) (1.3.1). Greek language as a pillar of cultural identity is clear in this critique of Damis' writing and even of other local dialects.[61] Philostratus employs the same strategy of critiquing language skill to illuminate

[60] Naturally, Philostratus uses a different source for the early period before Apollonius meets Damis. He states that for the events of Aegae he relied on the work of Maximus of Aegeae (1.3.2), an otherwise unknown writer.

[61] See Balsdon, *Romans and Aliens*, 145, on Damis' linguistic abilities. Cf. *VA* 6.36.1, in which Apollonius chastises an uneducated young man who is training birds to speak like humans do: "You speak the worst possible Greek and teach your birds to speak incomprehensibly" (εἶτα καὶ τῷ κάκιστα Ἑλλήνων αὐτὸς διαλεγόμενος μαθητὰς αὐτοὺς ποιεῖσθαι ἀφωνίας).

sophistic and philosophic ability in the *VS*.[62] Language is therefore one element that Philostratus uses to articulate Damis' unclear accomplishments in Hellenic wisdom.

Apollonius' teaching aims in part to correct Damis' negative Syrian ethnicity and the traits attached to it. As outlined above, Philostratus juxtaposes the insularity of Apollonius' itinerant circle and the dangers of foreign intrusion outside this circle. The same re-centering of education around Apollonius lessens the importance of Damis' travels to learn several languages, a fact about his early education that Damis himself acknowledges. When he is questioned by the Indian sages, Damis replies that Apollonius' teachings have given him the ability of foresight as well as brought him closer to obtaining Hellenism, saying (3.43):

> καὶ ξυγγενόμενος αὐτῷ σοφὸς μὲν ᾠήθην δόξειν ἐξ ἰδιώτου τε καὶ ἀσόφου, πεπαιδευμένος δὲ ἐκ βαρβάρου, ἑπόμενος δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ ξυσπουδάζων ὄψεσθαι μὲν Ἰνδούς, ὄψεσθαι δὲ ὑμᾶς, Ἕλλησί τε ἐπιμίξειν Ἕλλην ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ γενόμενος.
>
> And after associating with him, I thought I would seem to be a wise man and no longer ignorant and unintelligent, since I was educated among barbarians. And I thought that following him and endeavoring to see the Indians, and see you, I would associate with the Greeks and become a Hellene because of him.

This erasure of foreign identity is at the heart of Apollonius' educational system, and Damis equates learning from the sage with the pursuit of knowledge through travel. Scholars have generally focused on the characterization here of finding Hellenism among the Indians, but Damis' pronouncement draws attention to Apollonius the teacher.[63] Journeys with Apollonius therefore unexpectedly serve to counteract the accumulation of geographic identities and instead

[62] Herodes attacks the poor Greek of Proteus the Cynic philosopher, who Philostratus says spoke with "semi-barbarous speech" (ἡμιβαρβάρῳ γλώττῃ) (*VS* 2.17.2). Cf. Luc. Peregr. for Lucian's account of the self-immolation of Peregrinus Proteus. Philostratus also acknowledges that "Aelian was a Roman, but he Atticized as correctly as the Athenians in the interior of Attica" (*VS* 2.88), a reference to either his speaking or writing abilities (or both).

[63] See esp. Kendra Eshleman, "Indian Travel and Cultural Self-Location in the *Life of Apollonius* and the *Acts of Thomas*," in *Journeys in the Roman East: Imagined and Real*, ed. Maren R. Niehoff (Tübingen, Germany: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 183-201; Janet Downie, "Palamedes and the Wisdom of India in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*," *Mouseion* 3.13 (2016): 65-83.

erase them. The danger of holding multiple foreign markers is remedied by becoming more like Apollonius; Damis endeavors to hold no firm geographic identity by exploiting the cosmopolitan nature of Hellenism.[64]

Yet while other disciples are able to address their problematic origins through education and their association with Apollonius, the results of Damis' education are more ambiguous. In particular, his intellectual sparring with Apollonius throughout the *VA* shows his education in action.[65] But the reader also observes that Damis misinterprets situations and thinks contrary to Apollonius in several episodes, betraying his lack of learning compared to that of the sage. In Damis' early education, Apollonius must correct his student's misunderstanding. For example, Damis misinterprets a dream of Apollonius when they are in Cissia travelling toward Babylon. Apollonius knows that Damis will interpret the dream unfavorably, a response that clearly shows that he is not a philosopher yet ("σὺ μὲν οὔπω φιλοσοφεῖς," εἶπεν "εἰ δέδιας ταῦτα") (1.23.2). Apollonius goes on to explain to Damis how he has interpreted the dream favorably and correctly.[66]

In addition to the direct explanations offered by Apollonius, the education of Damis often occurs simply through action in the text. For example, Damis and Apollonius debate over whether a eunuch can fall in love (1.33). When a eunuch's lust for the Parthian king's concubine is exposed, Apollonius' belief is confirmed, at which the sage only directs a knowing glance toward Damis (1.37).[67] This unspoken exchange between student and master is mirrored

[64] See Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 177-206.

[65] E.g., 2.5 (on mountaineering), 2.7 (on abstinence), 2.11 (on horsemanship), 5.7 (Apollonius agrees with Damis that, though ultimately unsuccessful, Nero's cutting of isthmus at Corinth is a magnificent endeavor).

[66] The details of the dream concern the presence of the Eretrians in Ionia, whom Apollonius must help. Cf. Hdt. 6.119.

[67] Cf. Ter. *Eu*. 665; Arr. *Epict*. *Diss*. 2.20.19; D. Chr. 4.35ff.

elsewhere: Apollonius keeps glancing at Damis when he learns favorable teachings from the Indians (2.26), and Damis blushes at the absurdity of his own argument compared to Apollonius' (2.22). The continued education of Damis, however, is more ambiguous in its results since in these instances the Syrian is not allowed to speak, a clear sign of achievement among Damis' co-disciples when they debate with Apollonius.

As he accompanies Apollonius, Damis achieves an unclear level of knowledge, an aspect that is present until his departure from the narrative. For example, when Apollonius visits India, Damis is given varying access to local knowledge that puts him secondary to Apollonius. Damis is at first restricted from participating in the conversations that Apollonius conducts with the Indian sages, instead staying in the village apart from the conversation (3.27.1). Sometime later Damis is finally admitted to the conversation because the Indians consider that he too is worthy of their secrets (τῶν δεῦρο ἀπορρήτων ἀξιοῦμεν) (3.34.1), participating in the conversation that follows (3.34-45). This aspect of Damis' initiation into Indian knowledge mirrors Apollonius' teaching in other parts of the narrative. Apollonius is usually the one who begins a philosophical discussion by asking a question, with his students then joining in.[68]

Damis is also able to take on this role of teacher in the narrative, an undertaking that would usually demonstrate learning progression in the text. Damis productively converses with the Egyptian guide Timasion, explaining to the youth why he and Apollonius' circle praise his worship of Aphrodite (6.3). The hierarchy is clear here as Damis is able to advise the new disciples successfully in the text. The private discussion between Damis and Timasion that follows is important because it is one of the few moments in the text not to feature Apollonius (6.9). One may reasonably interpret Damis' questioning of Timasion as a mirror for Apollonius'

[68] Koskenniemi, "The Philostratean Apollonius as a Teacher," 328.

own teaching. In this moment, Damis even learns about the gymnosophists and the plot of Thrasybulus to foil Apollonius before the sage does. But by the end of the narrative, Philostratus downplays any progress that Damis seems to have made in philosophical discussion in these episodes.

Though Damis' early education is similar to those of Apollonius' other disciples, its completion is ambiguously incomplete by the time of his departure from the narrative. Apollonius takes center stage in Books 7 and 8, leaving his oldest disciple in the dark about his plans to attack and escape the emperor Domitian. When an initial warrant is issued for his arrest, Apollonius does not even tell Damis about his plans to travel to Rome (ὁ δὲ οὐδὲ τῷ Δάμιδι τὸν ἑαυτοῦ νοῦν ἐκφήνας) (7.10.1). At this point, Damis' secondary status is solidified in the text as Demetrius likens him to Iolaus compared to Apollonius' Heracles (7.10.2). In conversation with Demetrius, Damis laments that he does not know why they sail to Italy and that any warning he might give to Apollonius would be ignored (7.13). Here too Damis uses several metaphors to describe his relationship to Apollonius, likening himself to a jealous lover (ἀντεραστής) and a porter for a distinguished soldier (σκευοφόρῳ γὰρ εἴκασμαι στρατιώτου γενναίου) (7.13.1-2). This continued secondary status points to the merits of Damis' devotion to Apollonius but also suggests the incomplete nature of his education, even at this late point in the text.

According to Apollonius, Damis' reaction here is a result of his Syrian ethnicity, an element that influences the interpretation of Damis' incomplete education. Apollonius says, "We must pardon Damis for speaking cautiously about our present circumstances, for he is a Syrian and has lived at the borders of the Medes, where they prostrate themselves before tyrants, and he does not ruminate on any lofty ideas about freedom" (Δάμιδι μὲν ὑπὲρ τῶν παρόντων εὐλαβῶς διειλεγμένῳ ξυγγνώμην" ἔφη "προσήκει ἔχειν, Ἀσσύριος γὰρ ὢν καὶ Μήδοις προσοικήσας, οὗ τὰς

τυραννίδας προσκυνοῦσιν, οὐδὲν ὑπὲρ ἐλευθερίας ἐνθυμεῖται μέγα) (7.14.1). Benjamin Isaac fits Apollonius' sentiment into Greek classical tropes from the fourth century B.C.E. directed at Syria, claiming that "[t]he criticism here is not aimed against language or the general level of culture, but against the slavish nature attributed to the Syrians."[69] Isaac focuses on Damis' opinion of tyrants and his unwillingness to die on behalf of philosophy, unlike that of Apollonius. Yet read in conjunction with the rest of Damis' education, this characterization illuminates the important cultural differences between Syrians and Hellenes. Damis cannot escape the negative traits associated with his homeland, leading to the incomplete nature of his education and inability to gain philosophical knowledge.

It is clear that the education of Damis remains incomplete in part because of his problematic geographic origin. There are some indications that Damis achieves crucial levels of understanding in the final parts of the text. For instance, when Apollonius escapes Rome without suffering any punishment for his crimes, Damis finally acknowledges Apollonius' divine status (8.13).[70] Damis' final moments in the text similarly imply the completion of his studies under Apollonius because the sage decides to send him away. When Apollonius decides to send Damis back to Rome with a letter to Nerva, the sage knows that he will die soon and not see Damis again (8.28):

> αὐτὸς μὲν δὴ παθεῖν τι ἀπιὼν αὐτοῦ φησιν οὐδὲ εἰδὼς τὰ μέλλοντα, τὸν δ᾽ εὖ εἰδότα μηδὲν μέν οἱ εἰπεῖν, ὥσπερ εἰώθασιν οἱ μηκέτ᾽ ἀλλήλους ὀψόμενοι, τοσοῦτον αὐτῷ περιεῖναι τοῦ πεπεῖσθαι, ὅτι ἀεὶ ἔσται, παρεγγυῆσαι δὲ ὧδε· "ὦ Δάμι, κἂν ἐπὶ σεαυτοῦ φιλοσοφῇς, ἐμὲ ὅρα."
>
> Damis said that he was somewhat pained to leave though he did not know what would happen. But Apollonius, who knew full well, did not say anything to him, as people who will never see one another again are accustomed to do. He trusted

[69] Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 346.

[70] See Elsner, "Hagiographic Geography," 27-28, for Apollonius' divine status and role as site of pilgrimage in Book 8.

> so much that he would live forever that he only pledged to him: "Damis, even if you have to philosophize by yourself, keep looking to me."

As with the earlier departures of accomplished students like Menippus, Apollonius chooses to send Damis away when he plans his own death. But as the reader has witnessed in other moments when Damis is restricted from acquiring knowledge, Apollonius does not share his true intentions with Damis, leaving his student in the dark. In fact, Damis is not truly sent away on his own since Apollonius stresses that he must still look to him for philosophical guidance. Much as Apollonius continues to teach the youth in the temple in Tyana after his death, the sage here instructs Damis to look to him so that he will not practice philosophy alone. Damis' departure from the text suggests an inability for the Syrian student to graduate to a higher level of understanding.

Damis' departure represents both a change in the narrative's authority and the subtle disparagement of this student's philosophical achievements. Philostratus reports that Damis' memoirs end with his departure to Rome and that he does not record the death of Apollonius. Though Graham Anderson uses this shift to Philostratus as the text's authority to suggest the likelihood of Damis' memoirs existing in some form, Damis' disappearance also points to stereotypes about the abilities of Syrians in the text. Philostratus has Apollonius limit the knowledge and abilities of Damis by subverting any progress in his philosophical education. Damis therefore emerges as a competent if imperfect disciple of Apollonius. This characterization in part relates to Damis' Syrian origins, which both influence his prominent multicultural knowledge and language ability early in the text and disparage the lack of abilities as he departs from the narrative. Thus, this portrayal of Damis and its major differences from those of other disciples of Apollonius significantly hinges upon Syrian and foreign stereotypes present in the Philostratean corpus.

IV. Conclusion

Philostratus uses the geography of Apollonius' travels to draw attention to the universal issue of foreign presence in the cities of the Roman Empire. The sage's teachings are consistently concerned with addressing this problem, with Apollonius recommending that cities either exclude dangerous foreign influence or adopt beneficial foreign practices. This preoccupation extends to the sage's students who must overcome their inhibitive foreign origins in order to participate in Hellenic education and culture. Damis is emblematic of the extent to which a foreigner can participate in Hellenism. His origin in Syria and the ambiguous results of his education clearly show that Hellenic education is set in opposition to Near Eastern foreignness. In this way, Syria fits into a geographic scheme of problematic foreign influence, with Philostratus referencing stereotypical Syrian traits but also the region's political conflicts with Rome. This cultural differentiation between east and west shows that the approval of the Severan regime in the *VA* and other Philostratean texts must be re-examined. As with Caracalla and Elagabalus in the previous chapters, the Severan regime's less Hellenic, and therefore more nefarious, elements are framed as embodying Philostratus' portrayal of negative foreign influence. Only through the corrective education of a philosopher like Apollonius, or better still a sophist like Philostratus, can these elements begin to be addressed.

CHAPTER 4: ATHENS IN PHILOSTRATEAN GEOGRAPHY

Having attained the chair of rhetoric at Athens, the sophist Hadrian of Tyre quipped, "Once again letters have come from Phoenicia" (πάλιν ἐκ Φοινίκης γράμματα) (*VS* 2.38.1). This witty remark refers to the historical connections between these two regions, since the Greeks adapted their alphabet from that of the Phoenicians. But it also speaks to new educational and cultural interconnections during the imperial period. As discussed above, the sophist Hadrian's foreign origin and ability to move throughout the Mediterranean reflects the travels of other elite Romans at this time. But the "othering" of these foreigners in the works of Philostratus reflects the author's complex characterization of foreigner sophists and their ability to participate in the various iterations of Hellenism. Hadrian's reception is one of several episodes in which cultural outsiders are able to overcome their foreign origins and participate in Hellenic culture at Athens. At the same time, some foreign outsiders are barred from attaining distinction in Athens, and Philostratus shows that the city is a site of ongoing cultural conflict. Thus, although Athens retains its importance throughout the entirety of Philostratus' corpus of writings, the symbolic role that the city plays within his discourse of Hellenism shifts from work to work.

Philostratus' portrayal of Athens demonstrates the various ways in which the city can be used as a symbolic tool of Greekness. In some cases, Philostratus is formulaic in his presentation of Athens, stressing the city's declining cultural status. This trope of Greek imperial literature utilized an idealized version of the city to promote Hellenic culture in contrast to the decline of Athenian political power in the first two centuries C.E. Yet, in other instances, Philostratus stresses that both classical and contemporary Athens are often ignorant of proper Hellenism. For, in addition to reverence for Athens' classical prominence and ability to incorporate outsiders, the city is often the site of cultural conflict and uncertain sophistic achievement. This apparent

inconsistency demonstrates the complexity of Philostratus' presentation of Hellenic/Athenian culture across his corpus as well as some of the novel characteristics of Severan literature more broadly.

Athens is an important site through which Philostratus considers issues of Hellenic identity precisely because of the tensions between the city's successes and failures as an engine of Greek identity. I follow the insights of scholarship that has discovered similar complexity in the portrayal of Athens by other Greek writers of the imperial period. In particular, Katarzyna Jazdzewska has argued that writers such as Dio Chrysostom and Plutarch reject the idea of Athenian cultural preeminence and past greatness and instead use the failures of Athens as cautionary tales.[1] Athenian failures in the works of Philostratus similarly demonstrate a multifaceted version of the city. Across the corpus, Athens is plagued with negative foreign intrusion in addition to overt and frequently ambiguous sophistic achievement. This duality draws attention to the complex and often contradictory image of Athens in the corpus and the city's cultural status in the Severan period.[2]

The complex image of Athens in the Philostratean corpus results from the sharply differentiated depictions of the city in each of the works. I begin with the *VS*, which showcases both sophists and others entering the city and learning Hellenic culture there. But I argue that participating in Hellenism involves more than the acquisition and mastery of the Attic dialect. In an effort to historicize this concept, I will show that Atticism is an umbrella term in the corpus for a variety of cultural domains including religion, politics, and citizenship. In particular, I use

[1] Katarzyna Jazdzewska, "Do Not Follow the Athenians! The Example of Athens in Dio Chrysostom's Orations," *Classical Philology* 110 (2015): 252-68.

[2] Cf. Aaron Walter Wenzel, "Pots of Honey and Dead Philosophers: The Ideal of Athens in the Roman Empire," (PhD diss., The Ohio State University, 2009), 84-152, who argues that the *VA* and *VS* both offer ambivalent and conflicted views of Athens in Philostratus' largely universalizing view of Hellenism.

the hero Ajax's reception in Athens in the *Heroikos* to show how the portrayal of this "foreigner" being Atticized is mirrored in the careers of many sophists of the *VS*.

But because Atticism centers on a particular region, its geographic character is also crucial to understanding its function in the Philostratean corpus. The author's presentation of both Athens and the area immediately outside the city creates a nebulous divide between urban and rural identities, further complicating the depiction of this region's cultural activity. I argue that the concept of Atticism denotes one way to bridge this divide and allow rural Attic residents, as well as other more clearly foreign persons, to participate in Hellenism in the city proper.

In each of Philostratus' works, Athens is a site of cultural success and conflict, reflecting the persistent duality of its symbolic role. In the *VA*, the city is both the site of and content for Apollonius' educational mission. At the same time, however, the sage reprimands the citizens for their failure to live up to classical Athenian precedent. In a series of important anecdotes, Apollonius makes accusations that concern the problem of foreign influence. Though this issue appears in other cities, the failures of Athens are complicated by the representation of the city elsewhere in the text. Outside of the city, Apollonius refers to classical motifs – including philosophy, anti-tyranny, and drama – in order to educate the communities he visits. In the case of the *VA*, contrasting versions of the city appear in the same text, drawing special attention to the city's complex symbolic importance.

Philostratus similarly portrays contemporary Athens as a site of both cultural achievement and misdeeds. In the *VS*, the city possesses the ability to accept outsiders into its cultural fold, and sophistic achievement at this time is largely characterized by one's ability to achieve the chair of rhetoric. Despite these happenings in the city, scholarship has focused on other geographic hubs of sophistry during this period, with Athens in Book Two of the *VS*

becoming secondary to Ionia where the students of Herodes dominate sophistry.[3] I critique this one-sided assessment of sophistic culture by reexamining Philostratus' portrayal of contemporary Athens and focusing on its cultural complexity. For, according to Philostratus, despite their sophistic achievement in the city, the sophists of Athens are often at odds with one another. I will show that in the *VS*, along with several of the *Letters* addressed to the contemporaneous sophist Epictetus, Philostratus cautions against the misguided praise that the Athenians afford sophists. The limited geography of Philostratus' portrayal of contemporary Athens here contrasts with the symbolic use of the city elsewhere in the corpus. Because the author focuses on insular issues, he draws attention to the importance of Athens as a seat of Hellenism while also questioning that status through its corrupted culture.

Finally, I argue that the corpus is characteristically Severan in the way in which Philostratus conceives of the city's geography. Though not entirely new to this period, the Hellenocentric projects that entwine Greek culture with the Roman imperial center gain a "particular urgency" by the Severan period.[4] Various writers acknowledge the preponderance of these sorts of literary prose projects in Severan Rome. For products of this literary culture such as the Philostratean corpus, Athens is a consistent and important focal point, and Severan authors treat the city in a comparably nuanced way.

I. Athens in Greek Imperial and Severan Literature

Philostratus' portrayal of Athens shares several traits with that of earlier Greek writers of the imperial period. The city's classical status is a particular point of pride for authors of the

[3] Kemezis, "Narrative of Cultural Geography."

[4] Whitmarsh, "Prose Literature," 43.

Second Sophistic, even while also provoking ambivalence in them. These representations of the city are often linked to Rome's entanglement with Athens and Greek culture more broadly. As the administration of philhellenic emperors shaped cultural life in Athens and elsewhere, Greek writers often picked up on the special status of the city.[5] But in the Severan period, although emperors continued to be interested in Hellenic culture, there is less evidence of policies specifically directed at the city of Athens. Severan prose literature therefore displays and complicates earlier literary trends, representing a changed political and cultural landscape. The portrayal of Athens becomes more complex with the expanding geography of Hellenism and the shifting identities of those writing in Greek. The city even more than in the previous period is placed on the imperial stage where it must vie with Rome and other new cultural centers.

Athens in the imperial period holds a special place for Roman writers as well as for the imperial administration. Scholarly studies have thus examined Greek culture in the Roman period with a unidirectional focus, examining Greece's changing status for "philhellenic" emperors like Augustus and Hadrian. Antony Spawforth exemplifies this primarily "Roman" view of the Greek world.[6] During the principate, Augustus sought to redefine Hellenism, so that the greatness of the Greek past, and especially the prominence of Athens, were to be preserved, but within a Roman imperial framework. Spawforth shows that this relationship was not equal: as the disseminator of imperial ideology, Augustus imposed a characteristically Roman view of Greekness. The emperor Hadrian continues this trend of philhellenism, considering Athens the cradle of Greek civilization and offering many benefactions to the city, including the

[5] Bowie, "Greeks and Their Past," 28-35; Woolf, "Becoming Roman, Staying Greek," 130-35; Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 65-100.

[6] Spawforth, *Greece and the Augustan Cultural Revolution*.

construction of various buildings.[7] Hadrian's arguably largest contribution to the Greek world was the creation of the Panhellenion, a league of Greek cities, with Athens as its capital.[8]

Throughout this period, Second Sophistic writers praise past Athenian culture. Plutarch devotes several of his *Parallel Lives* to prominent Athenians from the mythohistorical past, and Pausanias begins his geography of the Greek mainland with Athens, showing its preeminent position in his cultural imagination.[9] Scholars have linked this conception of Athens to the city's classical status as authors both directly and indirectly engage with an historical image of the city.[10] For example, Dio Chrysostom uses Athens as a model of degeneration for several contemporary cities.[11] In a similar reference to the preeminent past, Daniel Richter shows that Aelius Aristides' *Roman Oration* and *Panathenaicus* play with the idea of Athenian cultural purity in the contemporary Roman context, a classical problem similar to Isocrates' attempt "to accommodate the exceptional otherness of Athens in the context of an oration whose central conceit is the cause of Greek unity."[12] Athens, therefore, functioned in the Greek imagination in a multifaceted way during this period, even while its status largely continued to be viewed through the lens of the city's preeminent past.

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[7] Dio Cass. 69.16.1-2. Boatwright, *Hadrian*, 144-71.

[8] See Spawforth and Walker, "The World of the Panhellenion I." Cf. Anna S. Benjamin, "The Altars of Hadrian in Athens and Hadrian's Panhellenic Program," *Hesperia: The Journal of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens* 32 (1963): 57-86, on the nature of the imperial cult in Athens at this time.

[9] See William Hutton*, Describing Greece: Language and Literature in the* Periegesis *of Pausanias* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). Cf. Johanna Akujärvi, *Researcher, Traveller, Narrator: Studies in Pausanias'* Periegesis (Lund, Sweden: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 2005), 182-92, who argues that Pausanias treats Athens as just one of many important places in Greece.

[10] See Introduction for my use of "classical" in this and the previous chapters to denote Philostratus' often shifting conception of a preeminent Greek past that is not necessarily consistent with the Classical period of Greek history (480-323 B.C.E.).

[11] Jazdzewska, "Do Not Follow the Athenians!," 254ff.

[12] Daniel Richter, *"*Cosmopolitanism," in *The Oxford Handbook to the Second Sophistic*, ed. Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 89, on Isocrates' *Panegyricus* (Isoc. 4).

In many ways, the relationship between Athens and the Roman imperial apparatus remained unchanged into the Severan period. On the imperial stage, Septimius Severus wished to continue in the mode of the philhellenic Antonines that came before him. Yet, Severus is said to have felt slighted by the Athenians and took his anger out on the city (HA *Sev*. 3.7):

> Next, he visited Athens in order to continue his studies and perform religious rites, and also because of the city's public works and ancient monuments. But because he suffered certain injustices from the Athenians, he became their enemy. And later when he was emperor, he got his revenge by restricting their rights.[13]

This curtailing of rights apparently did not come to fruition since Julia Domna was able to prevent the emperor from carrying out his aggressive policies. Julia's positive reception in the city is clear in the various titles and attributes given to her, including her association with Hera and Athena.[14] Thus, while Athens' status as a cultural center apparently fades in the eyes of the imperial administration, it continues in less overt ways, such as Caracalla's choice to elevate an Athenian family to senatorial status and Severus Alexander's attainment of Athenian citizenship.[15] As discussed in the previous chapters, Severan policies toward the eastern empire broadly constituted benevolence and cultural curiosity, which no doubt included Greece and Athens. And there is evidence of Athens' ongoing cultural activity in the post-Severan empire despite the invasions of the Herulii.[16]

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[13] post hoc Athenas petiit studiorum sacrorumque causa et operum ac vetustatum. ubi cum iniurias quasdam ab Atheniensibus pertulisset, inimicus his factus minuendo eorum privilegia iam imperator se ultus est.

[14] For Julia Domna's positive reception in Athens, see Levick, *Julia Domna*, 49 n. 91, who details the sacrifices on the empress' behalf as well as her identification with Hera ("the new Roman Hera") but also with Athena in the city (130 n. 32).

[15] See James H. Oliver, "Roman Emperors and Athens," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 30 (1981): 422-23.

[16] For later third-century Athens, see Erikki Sironen, "Life and Administration of Late Roman Attica in Light of Public Inscriptions," in *Post-Herulian Athens*, ed. Paavo Castrén (Helsinki: Papers and Monographs of the Finish Institute at Athens, Vol. 1: 1994), 15-62, who argues for a period of restoration in Athens after 267. Cf. Laurence Foschia, "The Preservation, Restoration and Re(construction) of Pagan Cult Places in Late Antiquity, with Particular Attention to Mainland Greece," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 2 (2009): 209-33, for the imperial policy that was concerned with the preservation of "pagan" structures until at least 382.

Severan prose literature uses the image of Athens in ways similar to earlier Greek authors but also expands upon and complicates these representations. Trends seen in this earlier tradition reach their climax under the Severans, including the image of Athens as a seat of Hellenism in counterbalance to the city of Rome. Authors therefore represent interactions between the cities of Athens and Rome as more nuanced than in earlier sources. For example, Athenaeus triangulates the cultural geography of his work the *Deipnosophistae* around the poles of Athens, Egypt, and Rome.[17] Thus, the tradition of classical symposia is put in a Roman context, arguably articulating an ambiguous laudation of Roman power.[18] The place of Aelian's works in the Greek tradition is similarly complicated by the author's own cultural background which counterintuitively casts the author's Hellenism as dependent upon his location in Rome.[19] This complexity affects the author's descriptions of Athens and the surrounding countryside. Arguably inserting himself into the Greek epistolary tradition, Aelian complicates classical representations of Attica in his *Rustic Letters*. Though scholars group these letters within other trends of Second Sophistic literature,[20] they also underscore the idea that true *paideia* is located in the Attic countryside, a motif picked up in the works of Philostratus.

This complexity regarding the cultural status of Athens is characteristic of Philostratus' portrayal of the city. While Philostratus does incorporate tropes common to earlier literature that stress the city's relationship to a classical model, his representation of the city includes elements common to other Severan literature. Both Athens' geographic position as one of several cultural centers in the Mediterranean and the division between urban and rural identities in Attica are

[17] Jacob, *The Web of Athenaeus*, 11. For linguistic Atticism in Athenaeus, see ibid., 91-94.

[18] Whitmarsh, "Prose Literature," 47-48.

[19] Ibid., 48-49.

[20] See, e.g., Smith, *Man and Animal*, 45.

common contemporary literary tropes. By portraying the city in a myriad of often-competing ways, Philostratus embraces new Severan literary trends regarding the cultural status of Athens. In addition, the continued vibrancy of the city's culture lent itself to its ongoing use as a literary motif in the early third century.

II. The Geographic Space of Atticism

Atticism is a notion common to the Philostratean corpus in which the use of antiquated Atticizing speech indicates sophistic or philosophical talent.[21] In the *VS*, Philostratus often contrasts a sophist's use of Attic language with more ornate speech, and in the *VA* Apollonius is famous for using moderate Attic language. This representation hinges upon claims for the purity of a classical Attic dialect.[22] But Philostratus begins to complicate this notion by showing that the intricacy and ornateness of incorrect Atticizing reflect a barbarism, and the regions outside of Attica become the source of cultural corruption. Across the corpus, Atticism fits into a geographic scheme in which both sophists, who employ Atticism to showcase their oratorical abilities, and figures such as Ajax in the *Heroikos* admirably Atticize in Athens. As a result, Philostratus draws special attention to the ways in which outsiders can learn Greek cultural practices in Attica.

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[21] Philostratus' own Atticism has largely been viewed as part of the Attic revival of the Second Sophistic. See Wilhelm Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern von Dionysius von Halikarnass bis auf den zweiten Phiostratus,* Vol. 4 (Stuttgart, 1896). Cf. Lawrence Kim, "Atticism and Asianism," in *The Oxford Handbook to the Second Sophistic*, ed. Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 51-53, who argues that Philostratus takes a nuanced approach to Atticism in his prose, not necessarily disavowing *koinê* or poetic forms, while still adopting complicated Attic features meant to convey "simplicity."

[22] See Richter, *Cosmopolis*, 135-38, for the generally unclear relationship between Atticism and *koinê* during this period, who claims, "In fact, it seems to me that the Atticists' anxiety about linguistic purity was a function of a general lack of consensus about what Atticism actually was" (137). Cf. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 21, on literary Atticism as a unifying cultural force for Greek elites.

I will show that the ability to Atticize is not purely one of linguistic ability but also the means to participate in Hellenic culture in Attica. Philostratus situates this region in a complex geography of those variously aligned to Hellenism. In this sense, Attic achievement especially occurs in the region of Attica and specifically in the city of Athens. Foreign individuals are able to overcome their outsider status and to participate in both Greek language and culture in the city. Several sophists from abroad as well as the hero Ajax are able to Atticize properly in Athens, a feat that Philostratus frames as "foreigners" circumventing their outsider status. The city of Athens, however, is only one hub of Greekness in this sense since Philostratus shows that the countryside is often the true site of authentic Hellenic identity. The author's stress on an urban-rural divide demonstrates that formal education in the city can only go so far in helping students attain authentic Hellenic knowledge. While his scheme at first glance allows foreigners to participate in Hellenism, perhaps only the rustics of Attica can genuinely do so.

In the *VS* and the *VA*, to Atticize effectively means to perform sophistic exercises with a moderate style of speech. According to Philostratus, Apollonius has a style that was "not overly Attic" (ὑπεραττικίζουσαν) since such a flamboyant style was "distasteful" (ἀηδὲς) (*VA* 1.17). A moderate amount of Atticism is suitable, while excess is inappropriate. Philostratus similarly opines about sophists possessing various degrees of Atticism in the *VS*. Pollux of Naucratis is said to be well-trained in Atticism but unable to Atticize better than average when making a declamation (διορῶντι δὲ τὸ ἐν ταῖς μελέταις εἶδος οὐδὲν βέλτιον ἑτέρου ἠττίκισεν) (2.47.1). Similarly, Aristocles of Pergamum had an Attic way of speaking that was actually "more suited to dialectic than to formal argument" (διαλέγεσθαι δὲ ἐπιτηδεία μᾶλλον ἢ ἀγωνίζεσθαι) (2.21.4).[23] Finally, Athenodorus is educated in the Thracian city Aenus by the Greek sophists

[23] For Philostratus' presentation of the differences between sophistry and philosophy, see Chapter 1, "Philostratus the Roman Sophist," n. 9.

Aristocles and Chrestus, earning a strong reputation there. As a result, Philostratus remarks that he both Atticized and spoke loquaciously (ὅθεν ἀπ' ἀμφοῖν ἐκράθη τὴν γλῶτταν ἀττικίζων τε κἀκ περιβολῆς ἑρμηνεύων) (2.49.1). This uncommon combination of a simplistic and pure Attic with a more flamboyant style (often termed "Asiatic" by Roman authors) is praiseworthy.[24] But Athenodorus' skill at using these disparate types of rhetoric also points to the geographic component of Atticism in the Philostratean corpus.

Athenodorus' ability to obtain proper Atticism from Greek sophists abroad shows the civilizing force of their geographic origin, specifically Athens. In a similar framework to the portrayal of Hellenism's reception across the Mediterranean discussed in the previous chapter, Atticism is often set in contrast to a general barbarism. For instance, Critias Atticizes in moderation, while vulgarity (ἀπειρόκαλον) in the same speech is actually "barbaric" (*VS* 1.38.2). The contrast between Attica and barbaric regions shows the importance of Athens in this geographic scheme. Some sophists are able to harness the power of being in Athens in order to improve their Atticism. For example, in the life of Herodes Atticus, Agathion narrates his early education in Attica (*VS* 2.7.7):

> καὶ ὁ Ἀγαθίων "ἡ μεσογεία" ἔφη "τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἀγαθὸν διδασκαλεῖον ἀνδρὶ βουλομένῳ διαλέγεσθαι, οἱ μὲν γὰρ ἐν τῷ ἄστει Ἀθηναῖοι μισθοῦ δεχόμενοι Θρᾴκια καὶ Ποντικὰ μειράκια καὶ ἐξ ἄλλων ἐθνῶν βαρβάρων ξυνερρυηκότα παραφθείρονται παρ' αὐτῶν τὴν φωνὴν μᾶλλον ἢ ξυμβάλλονταί τι αὐτοῖς ἐς εὐγλωττίαν, ἡ μεσογεία δὲ ἄμικτος βαρβάροις οὖσα ὑγιαίνει αὐτοῖς ἡ φωνὴ καὶ ἡ γλῶττα τὴν ἄκραν Ἀτθίδα ἀποψάλλει."
>
> Agathion said, "The interior of Attica educated me, a good school for a man who wishes to practice dialectic. For the Athenians in the city welcome as hired service the young men streaming in from Thrace and the Pontus and from other barbarian races. They therefore degrade their own speech more than they can contribute to improving the fluency of these young men. But the interior is not contaminated by barbarians, and their language remains vibrant and their dialect sounds like a pristine form of Attic."

[24] See Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 43-64, for examples of Atticizing language purism in Second Sophistic authors apart from Philostratus (Favorinus, Lucian, and Galen).

Agathion claims that Athens has been corrupted by foreignness, specifically in terms of barbaric linguistic influence, yet the nearby interior of Attica has not undergone any language change.

One interpretation of Agathion's journey from Attica to Athens is to agree with the sophist's characterization of a barbarized Athens. Attica's pristine dialect is referred to elsewhere in the *VS* as Philostratus conflates Attica and Athens, commenting that "[the Italian sophist] Aelian was a Roman, but he Atticized as well as the Athenians in the interior [of Attica]" (Αἰλιανὸς δὲ Ῥωμαῖος μὲν ἦν, ἠττίκιζε δέ, ὥσπερ οἱ ἐν τῇ μεσογείᾳ Ἀθηναῖοι) (2.88). The differentiation between Athens and Attica is therefore minute but still crucial to the creation of an authentic Hellenism in the countryside. Likewise, Dio Chrysostom in his *Euboicus* claims that his knowledge comes from those in the "middle of Greece" (*Or*. 7.1). Though Dio is obtaining authority from a literary tradition of rustic narratives, he is also drawing his audience's attention to his own experience of exile and that of the poor.[25] Thus, Hellenic authority and purity have their origins in the countryside, counterbalancing the barbaric corruption of the city.

Yet, another reading of Agathion's achievements in Athens is to dispute his characterization of the dynamics between city and country. In this sense, Athens has the potential to correct barbaric influence, and Agathion's own education in the city actually suggests this process. Herodes' description of Agathion, formally referred to as the "Heracles of Herodes," at first appears to assign him admirable sophistic abilities. Herodes focuses on Agathion's face, commenting that among other positive traits, he has shining eyes and long hair. Apart from these, Agathion possesses physical features that give him heroic qualities, including his great height and calves suited to a good gait (2.7.1-6). Philostratus furthermore reports that some speculate

[25] Claire Rachel Jackson, "Dio Chrysostom," in *The Oxford Handbook to the Second Sophistic*, ed. Daniel S. Richter and William A. Johnson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 221.

whether Agathion is immortal; Agathion claims descent from the hero Marathon, a correction of stories about his autochthonous origin in Boeotia. This focus on the sophist's splendid physiognomy points to his virtuous characteristics and heroic qualities, emphasizing the commendable anti-barbarism of his sophistry.[26]

Upon closer inspection, Agathion's description draws upon common physiognomic traits of foreign identity and otherness. First, Agathion is distinguished from Herodes because of the former's rustic origin, with scholars contrasting Agathion's education with that of his teacher. For instance, Tim Whitmarsh argues that Agathion's education is rustic and local compared to Herodes' cosmopolitan *paideia*.[27] Simon Swain similarly states that the companionship of Agathion and Herodes bridges not only differences in educational backgrounds but also in language ability: "Herodes' conversion of his Heracles into an Attic superman is connected to the greatest compliment of all – to Herodes' Greek. The perfect speech of Heracles mirrors Herodes' own and his desire to let everyone know it."[28] In this rendering of Agathion as a praiseworthy companion of Herodes, he becomes a means for Philostratus to praise the educative power of Herodes.

Second, Agathion's cultural differentiation from Herodes also appears in some key elements of his physical description, hinting at his foreign identity and subtly undermining the purity of his physique. Herodes likens Agathion's extraordinary height to that of a Celt (2.7.1), a

[26] See Graeme Miles, *Philostratus: Interpreters and Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2018), 131-32. Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 79-81, equates Agathion with Sostratus in Lucian's *Demonax* where the author focuses on philosophical and physical prowess, turning him into a heroic figure in the text. Dominique Côté, "L'Héraclès d'Hérode: héroïsme et philosophie dans la sophistique de Philostrate," in *Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and Its Times – Regards sur la Seconde Sophistique et son époque*, ed. Thomas Schmidt and Pascale Fleury (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 36-61, argues that Agathion, like Apollonius, combines traits of sophistry, philosophy, and heroism to combat barbarism.

[27] Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature*, 105-8.

[28] Swain, *Hellenism and Empire*, 81.

people of whom Roman authors hold complicated opinions.[29] According to Herodes, the sophist's eyes betray his impulsiveness (τι ἦθος ὁρμῆς), an admirable trait in other sophists' extemporaneous speech.[30] But this trait could refer to his foreign identity, as the sophist Polemo describes the brilliance of Celts' eyes as a sign of their shamelessness, something that Agathion's own shining eyes may suggest (2.7.2). Other physical traits betray Agathion's rustic origin such as his tunic made of wolf-skins; since he reportedly fought these and other animals, this clothing points to his rural background (2.7.3). And as a result, the sophist clearly has many scars, which accentuate his prior lifestyle oriented around work.[31] These marks on his body represent flaws in the façade of Agathion's otherwise pure physique and act as a way to contrast him with more traditional and urban sophists in the *VS*.[32]

In this reading then, Agathion's education in Athens shows how the sophist is able to overcome his rural origin, a foreign characterization in the text. Despite the sophist's claims to the contrary, rural Hellenism is not necessarily the pinnacle of cultural achievement. Agathion's own journey from the country to the city lends itself to this characterization. For Agathion and several other sophists, Athens is a corrective to their foreignness, transforming negative foreign (and often rural) traits into sophistic merit. The different potential readings of the dynamics

[29] For stereotypes about Celts, and their inclusion in Polemo's treatise on physiognomy, see Isaac, *Racism*, 156-57. David Rankin, "The Celts through Classical Eyes," in *The Celtic World*, ed. Miranda J. Green (London: Routledge, 1995), 21-33, shows the Roman view of the Celts as a coherent culture. See *VA* 5.2-3, for Philostratus' geography of this region based on his firsthand experience there. Cf. *VA* 7.4 for the Celts' association with philosophers who fled there during Domitian's reign. Dio Cassius is amazed at the Celtic queen Boudicca's extreme height (62.2.3).

[30] See, e.g., *VS* 1.23.2 (Gorgias), 1.42.8 (Aeschines), 1.57.2 (young Herodes).

[31] Agathion's thick neck is said to come from work rather than diet (καὶ εὐτραφῶς ἔχοντα τοῦ αὐχένος, τουτὶ δὲ ἐκ πόνων ἥκειν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ σίτου) (2.7.2).

[32] Agathion does exhibit some cosmopolitan traits, primarily being well-traveled like other sophists in the *VS*. He reveals to Herodes that he has journeyed to the oracle in Delphi and to Mount Parnassus to listen to musical competitions and performances of tragedy (2.7.8).

between city and country demonstrate the complexity of Philostratus' geography. The uncertainty over the location of true Hellenism is further compounded by the geography of Ajax's reception in Athens in the *Heroikos*.

In the dialogue, Ajax is able to Atticize productively and thus participate in Athenian cultural institutions despite his status as an outsider. In his discussion of Ajax's life, the Vinedresser recounts that the hero once visited the city of Athens (35.9):

> ἤκουσα τοῦ Πρωτεσίλεω, ξένε, κἀκεῖνα περὶ τοῦ ἥρω τούτου, ὡς ἄρα ἐκόμα ποταμῷ Ἰλισσῷ τῷ Ἀθήνησι, καὶ ἠγάπων αὐτὸν οἱ ἐν Τροίᾳ Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ ἡγεμόνα ἡγοῦντο καὶ ὅ τι εἴποι ἔπραττον, ἠττίκιζέ τε ἄτε, οἶμαι, Σαλαμῖνα οἰκῶν, ἣν Ἀθηναῖοι δῆμον πεποίηνται, παῖδά τε αὐτῷ γενόμενον, ὃν Εὐρυσάκην οἱ Ἀχαιοὶ ἐκάλουν, τήν τε ἄλλην ἔτρεφε τροφὴν ἣν Ἀθηναῖοι ἐπαινοῦσι καὶ ὅτε Ἀθήνησιν οἱ παῖδες ἐν μηνὶ ἀνθεστηριῶνι στεφανοῦνται τῶν ἀνθέων, τρίτῳ ἀπὸ γενεᾶς ἔτει, κρατῆράς τε τοὺς ἐκεῖθεν ἐστήσατο καὶ ἔθυσεν ὅσα Ἀθηναίοις ἐν νόμῳ· μεμνῆσθαι δὲ καὶ αὐτὸν ἔφασκε τουτωνὶ τῶν Διονυσίων κατὰ Θησέα.
>
> My guest, I heard the following about this hero from Protesilaos: that he cut his locks at the river Ilissos in Athens, and that the Athenians in Troy adored him, considered him their leader, and did whatever he said. I believe he spoke Attic/aligned himself with Athens (ἠττίκιζέ) because he resided in Salamis, which the Athenians had made a deme, and when he had a child, whom the Athenians called Eurusakês, he fed him with some food that the Athenians recommended. And when the children in Athens were crowned with flowers in the month of Anthesterion, in the third year of his son's life, he set up kraters from there [Athens] and made sacrifices according to Athenian custom. [Protesilaos] said that he also observed the festival of Dionysus just as Theseus had done.

Ajax's positive reception in Athens reflects the hero's strong alliance to Hellenism. As discussed in the previous chapter, Philostratus presents a complex characterization of the Greek heroes, especially Achilles, that variously aligns them with the defense of Hellenism. But Philostratus contrasts them with foreigners who are more clearly culturally opposed to Hellenism. Ajax's alliance to Hellenism is clearer than that of other characters in the dialogue and the details of this passage show how a cultural outsider can participate in Athenian culture.

In his commentary, Grossardt suggests that Ajax's decision to side with Athens in this passage does not imply a political or ideological connotation of the word ἠττίκιζέ ("Atticize").[33] Yet, Ajax's actions in Athens demonstrate a devotion to Hellenism that includes new cultural elements in addition to language use. While the cutting of Ajax's locks reflects the text's Homeric undertones by echoing Achilles' ritualist mourning (*Il*. 23.140-153), it also hints at the ritual practice of Athenian boys reaching adolescence and cutting their hair as part of the Apaturia festival.[34] Likewise, Ajax is able to participate in the Anthesteria, a festival that is oriented around a drinking contest.[35] The hero's providing of kraters is a suitably important role in the festivities. The god of wine Dionysus is an important figure in myths about this festival, and the Vinedresser uses the god's own festival to equate Ajax with Theseus, the legendary founder of Athens.[36]

In this positive portrayal of the hero, Philostratus again shows the potential for outsiders to participate in Athenian culture under the umbrella term of Atticism. Philostratus clearly picks up on this characterization of Ajax in other sources which demonstrate the hero's outsider status through his associations with Salamis and other nearby cities. Philostratus invokes the Homeric association between Ajax and Athens but anachronizes the city's dominance over Salamis. In this regard, the Vinedresser continues the dialogue's aim of correcting Homer; he possibly responds to the Catalogue of Ships in which Menestheus is said to be commander of the

[33] Grossardt, Vol. 2, 622.

[34] *Suda* s.v. Κουρεώτης, κ 2179 Adler.

[35] See Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 237-42.

[36] Grossardt, Vol. 2, 623, points out that this is another error on the part of the Vinedresser since Theseus was not associated with the Anthesteria or Dionysia, but only the foundation of the Panathenaea.

Athenians (*Il*. 2.546-556)[37] and Ajax from Salamis is subordinated to the Athenian army (2.557-58).[38] Ajax's positive reception in Athens in the *Heroikos* thus solves Homer's ambiguity about the city's true commander.

In addition, the worship of Ajax in Athens may date back to the classical period.[39] Pausanias shows the possible resurgence of hero worship in the second century C.E., reporting that he observed a temple devoted to Ajax in the agora on Salamis. Though in ruins by the second century C.E., this temple still contained an ebony statue of the hero (1.35.3). Likewise, the Athenians worship both Ajax and Eurusakês in the city (ibid.).[40] Sources furthermore link Ajax to the city of Athens through his various connections to Athena. For instance, according to Pausanias, the Megarians worship Athena "of Ajax" (1.42.4).[41] And unlike the other eponymous heroes of the Athenian tribes, Ajax holds the unique position of an outsider.[42] According to Herodotus, during Kleisthenes' naming of Athenian tribes, the lawgiver "added [Ajax], who, though he was a foreigner, had been a neighbor and an ally" (τοῦτον δὲ ἅτε ἀστυγείτονα καὶ

[37] Cf. Hdt. 7.161; Aeschin. 3.185.

[38] Αἴας δ᾽ ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος ἄγεν δυοκαίδεκα νῆας, / στῆσε δ᾽ ἄγων ἵν᾽ Ἀθηναίων ἵσταντο φάλαγγες. Line 558 is contested in the manuscript tradition, since many sources claim that it was inserted by Peisistratus (Strab. 9.1.10) or Solon (Plut. *Sol*. 10.1-5; Diog. Laert. 1.48) to retroject Athenian control of Salamis into the Bronze Age. See Walter Leaf, ed., *Homer: The Iliad. Volume 1: Books 1-12* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 91-92; Barbara Graziosi, *Inventing Homer: The Early Reception of Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 228-32. Megara's claims to Salamis pre-date its status as a deme of Athens under Solon or Peisistratus in the 6th century B.C.E. See Grossardt, Vol. 2, 621-2; Carolyn Higbie, "The Bones of a Hero, the Ashes of a Politician: Athens, Salamis, and the Usable Past," *Classical Antiquity* 16 (1997): 278-307, for how later written sources understood and argued about the conflict between Athens and Megara over Salamis.

[39] See Brun Currie, "Sophocles and Hero Cult," in *A Companion to Sophocles*, ed. Kirk Ormand (West Sussex, UK: Wiley Blackwell, 2012), 331-48, for how Sophocles' *Ajax* perhaps portrays the foundation of a hero cult in the city.

[40] Cf. Hdt. 8.64.

[41] Emily Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*. *Bulletin Supplement 57* (London: University of London Institute of Classical Studies, 1989), 82 n. 12, refers to some inscriptions to Athenian Aianteion from the second century B.C.E.

[42] In addition to Hippothon in Eleusis. See Emily Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 80ff.

σύμμαχον, ξεῖνον ἐόντα προσέθετο) (Hdt. 5.66.2).[43] A corroborating story reports that Athens' control of Salamis was contingent upon Ajax's sons Philaios and Eurusakês obtaining Athenian citizenship.[44]

Ajax's ability to participate in Athenian cultural institutions in the *Heroikos* is therefore all the more remarkable because of his status as a sort of outsider. The hero's origin in Salamis mirrors that of other outsiders like the sophist Agathion who are able to come to Athens and participate in Hellenic culture there. Through this episode and the several others from the *VS*, Philostratus shows that Atticism is a category of Greek culture that extends beyond language use to hold a geographic component. The complexity of these journeys, however, comes from the limited geography of each. Both Agathion and Ajax are associated with cities or the countryside nearby Athens. But since Philostratus frames these episodes similarly in kind to those of more clearly foreign individuals entering Athens, the corpus is unclear in the geography of an authentic Hellenism. What remains consistent is the symbolic importance of Athens in these episodes, especially in its ability to incorporate all sorts of outsiders.

III. Apollonius' Athenian Education

The portrayal of Athens in the *VA* adds to the symbolic importance of the city in the Philostratean corpus. In the geographic scheme presented in the previous chapter, Athens holds a special place in the imagination of various peoples across the empire. For instance, the Gadeirans in Spain afford Athens the most respect of all the cities in Greece (5.4), and the Egyptian

[43] See Kearns, *The Heroes of Attica*, 82 n. 13.

[44] Plut. *Sol*. 10.2; Paus. 1.35.2. Cf. *Ep.* 8 in which Athens is included for its reception of foreigners, in this case the god Asclepius. *Ep*. 39 notes that the Athenians rightly received Aristides, Xenophon, Alcibiades, and Demosthenes returning from exile, as well as the gods Demeter, Dionysus, and Heracles.

gymnosophists use Athens to represent different tenets of Hellenism. Yet, as argued above, this devotion to Athenian culture is misguided due to the text's portrayal of the contemporary city. Apollonius' own visit to Athens reveals how the city's Hellenic culture has declined from its classical heyday. As I discussed in the previous chapter, Apollonius' admonishment of Sparta in part hinges upon an idealized Spartan culture that the sage views as in decline. Likewise, the text's presentation of Athens uses an historical version of the city to reprimand contemporary Athenian citizens.

But despite this critique of the city during Apollonius' visit, Athens holds a dual role in the text because it also figures in the sage's teaching of classical precedent. Apollonius employs classical exempla including the corruption of tyranny, Socratic philosophy, and the tradition of Athenian tragedy in order to disparage contemporary Athens and its corrupted Hellenic culture. The teaching of Apollonius in this way is a means of interrogating Philostratus' views on the city of Athens in imperial geography. In many ways, Apollonius' visit contrasts with Nero's disastrous tour of Greece, including a stop in Athens (5.7). While Nero is able to exploit the faults of the Athenians to validate his exploits as a tragic actor (as discussed in the previous chapter), Apollonius chastises the Athenians for some of these same faults, including their zeal for religion and spectacle.

Apollonius' exploits in Athens (4.17-22) incorporate several tropes common to the sage's correction of improper Hellenism in other sections of the *VA*. Upon his arrival in the Phalerum harbor, Apollonius is celebrated by a group of young people (4.17), suggesting the positive reception he will experience in the city itself. There Philostratus portrays the sage winning over the citizens through his persuasive teaching. Yet, the content of Apollonius' teaching suggests that the nature of Hellenic culture in this city is largely the opposite of what the sage expects.

Apollonius contrasts modern and classical Athens both directly and implicitly in order to disparage the city's decline from an idealized version.

Apollonius first corrects the apparent fervor for religious activity in Athens, implying that citizens perform religious acts without adequate knowledge. In contrast to Athens' reputation as a religiously devout city in the text,[45] as well as the citizens' zeal for sacrifice (ἐπειδὴ φιλοθύτας τοὺς Ἀθηναίους εἶδεν), Apollonius delivers a speech on how to perform correct sacrifices, libations, and prayers (4.19). This religious advice builds upon Apollonius' being prevented from participating in the festivities at Eleusis. During the Epidauria, a festival held in honor of the god Asclepius, Apollonius distracts the worshipers and is forbidden from participating, with the hierophant (ἱεροφάντης), the chief priest of the Eleusinian cult,[46] "saying he would never initiate a cheat/sorcerer (γόης), or open up Eleusis to a man who was impure in divine matters" (μὴ γὰρ ἄν ποτε μυῆσαι γόητα, μηδὲ τὴν Ἐλευσῖνα ἀνοῖξαι ἀνθρώπῳ μὴ καθαρῷ τὰ δαιμόνια) (4.18.1). Apollonius in turn argues that he knows more about the rites in question than the priest, promising to return four years later to be initiated (4.18.2), a promise he fulfills later in the narrative during his tour of Greek shrines (5.19).

Apollonius next addresses some problems of foreign intrusion and anti-Hellenism similar to those discussed in the previous chapter. When Apollonius reprimands a troublesome youth, he attacks him for unfit religious devotion. Philostratus draws attention to the problems of the youth's flagrant behavior by acknowledging his origin in Corcyra and his descent from Alcinous of Phaeacia, finally explaining his actions as a result of demonic possession (4.20.1-2).[47] The

[45] E.g., *VA* 5.4.

[46] Chosen from the clan of the Eumolpidai at Eleusis and serving for life, the hierophant ("the displayer of sacred things") importantly had the power at the outset of the rites to turn away any he deemed impure.

[47] For the precinct of Alcinous in Corcyra, see Thuc. 3.70.4. Cf. Thuc. 1.25 for the identification of Phaeacian Skheria with Corcyra.

extreme elements of the possession draw attention to the troublesome nature of the youth's behavior but also Apollonius' knowledge of Athenian culture. Apollonius expels the demon, which guarantees its departure by moving a statue in the Royal Stoa (στοά βασίλειος) (4.20.2-3).[48] This reference to the chief architectural element of the Athenian Agora doubles down on the high stakes of this story's physical context, with Philostratus suggesting that nefarious elements have infiltrated the seat of Athenian politics and government.

Apollonius' claims to Athenian cultural knowledge show his complicated relationship to Hellenism in the city. He simultaneously attacks traditional Athenian institutions and invokes classical precedent as a corrective. In this way, the image of classical Athens serves as a mechanism for reprimanding contemporary Athenians as well as teaching those outside Athens about proper Hellenism. One major category that illustrates this duality is Athenian tragedy and popular performance in the city. Instead of observing the performance of tragedy at the city Dionysia, Apollonius witnesses Bacchant-like dancing and effeminate dress (4.21.1): "Where do your saffron-colored, purple, and red clothes come from? [The Attic deme] Acharnae did not adorn itself in this way, nor did [the Attic deme] Colonus send out its cavalry like this" (Κροκωτοὶ δὲ ὑμῖν καὶ ἁλουργία καὶ κοκκοβαφία τοιαύτη πόθεν; οὐδὲ γὰρ αἱ Ἀχαρναί γε ὧδε ἐστέλλοντο, οὐδὲ ὁ Κολωνὸς ὧδε ἵππευε). Apollonius refers to two famous demes of Attica that have a reputation for strong warriors, contrasting them with the contemporary extravagance he witnesses. Modern scholarship has linked the content of dramatic and comedic performances with the idea of transgression, a cornerstone of the Dionysia.[49] Apollonius, however, refuses to associate tragic performance with any reversal of cultural norms. In this way, the sage invokes an

[48] See Paus. 1.3.1, for a description of this area in Athens.

[49] See esp. Simon Goldhill, "The Great Dionysia and Civic Ideology," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 107 (1987): 58-76.

invented classical model of Athenian culture and tragic performance centered on masculine stereotypes.[50]

Apollonius critiques Athenian effeminacy by linking it to wild emotion, physical weakness, and ethnic identity. His attack on the Dionysia continues with an invocation of historical and mythological exempla, primarily from the Persian Wars and the Persians' second invasion of Greece in 480/79 B.C.E. For instance, Apollonius commands the Athenians to stop disgracing the heroes of Salamis and other famous Greek warriors ("παύσασθε" εἶπεν "ἐξορχούμενοι τοὺς Σαλαμινίους καὶ πολλοὺς ἑτέρους κειμένους ἀγαθοὺς ἄνδρας") (4.21.1), stating that their enemy Artemisia was the antithesis of effeminacy (4.21.2). Apollonius feels it necessary to deem the Athenians "daintier" (ἁβρότεροι) than the wives of Xerxes (ibid.) and warns the Athenians not to turn the deity Boreas into a woman (4.21.3).[51] Apollonius compounds the effeminization of the Athenians by remarking that even foreign women are more masculine than the Greeks, thus invoking the classical Athenian *ethnos* in order to attack the contemporary city.

These sorts of references to historical exempla climax in Apollonius' attack on gladiatorial combat in Athens, which reflects concerns similar to those above. By embracing gladiatorial battles and forsaking tragic performance, the Athenians have chosen the incorrect form of performance for a Hellenic way of life. First, the city's devotion to gladiatorial combat reflects its irreligious behavior as Apollonius accuses the Athenians of performing improper

[50] Apollonius is elsewhere concerned with embracing an ascetic lifestyle and renouncing adornment, such as when the demon-possessed youth is convinced to give up his ornate clothing for a more basic style and philosopher's cloak (τρίβων) (4.20.3).

[51] This is a possible reference to the Athenian invocation of Boreas against the Persians (Hdt. 7.189). The classical exempla continue as Apollonius contrasts the warrior worship of the heroine Agraulos on the Acropolis with the feminine dress of men in Euripides' *Bacchae* (4.21.2). By contrast, in India, Apollonius praises the ancient Athenians for standing up to Xerxes' audacity (3.31).

human sacrifice and libations of blood; he expresses surprise that Athena has not already left the Acropolis and implores Dionysus to leave the city (4.22.2). Next, his chastisement suggests a corruption of the city's political system; Apollonius refuses to enter the assembly because it is "full of gore" (λύθρου μεστόν) (4.22.1). The changing nature of performance in the city draws a strong distinction between classical Athenian tragedy and contemporary Roman influence, since Philostratus comments that Athens has as much zeal for violence as the Roman colony Corinth (4.22.1).[52]

For Apollonius, therefore, contemporary Athens is at odds with an idealized historical version of the city where citizens were manly warriors who respected the city's cultural institutions. Outside Athens, Apollonius similarly invokes classical Athenian precedent to teach various peoples of the empire. In these instances, however, classical and contemporary Athens are collapsed into a single entity. Even when historical exempla are invoked, Apollonius still invokes an Athens that is a steadfast ally to correct Hellenic culture. For example, Apollonius rebukes a sailor who will not carry sacred images along with the sage and his followers (5.20.2):

> "Καὶ μήν, ὦ βέλτιστε," εἶπε "δοκεῖς γάρ μοί τις Ἀθηναῖος εἶναι, τὰς ναῦς, αἷς ἐπὶ τοὺς βαρβάρους ἐχρήσασθε, καίτοι ναυτικῆς ἀταξίας ἐμπεπλησμένας ἐνέβαινον οἱ θεοὶ ξὺν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐκ ᾤοντο ὑφ᾽ ὑμῶν χραίνεσθαι, σὺ δὲ ἀμαθῶς οὕτως ἀπωθῇ τῆς νεὼς φιλοσόφους ἄνδρας, οἷς μάλιστα οἱ θεοὶ χαίρουσι, καὶ ταῦτα ἐμπορίαν τοὺς θεοὺς πεποιημένος;
>
> "Still, my dear friend," [Apollonius] said, "you seem to me to be an Athenian, and the ships that you used against the barbarians, even though they were full of disorderly sailors, the gods boarded with you. And they did not feel that you defiled them. Yet, are you so stupidly keeping philosophers off your ship, men whom the gods especially approve of, but selling the gods as merchandise?"

[52] In addition, Apollonius often invokes the Athenian tragedians Sophocles (1.13, 4.38, 7.31, 8.7.25) and Euripides (2.14, 4.21, 7.5, 7.15) in his teaching. Apollonius likens the Indians imparting knowledge to him to Aeschylus' tragic innovations for the Athenians.

Apollonius refers to the preeminence of the Athenian navy during the Second Persian War (480/79 B.C.E.) and its dominance during the subsequent period. In addition, though the Athenians were "disorderly" they still had divine guidance in the form of cult statues aboard their ships.[53] Apollonius contrasts these devout if unruly sailors with the Athenian merchant who treats the images of gods like the wares of Hyrcanians and of the Scythians (τὰς δημιουργίας ἐποιοῦντο, σὺ δ᾽ ὥσπερ τὰ Ὑρκανικά τε καὶ Σκυθικά) (ibid.), a clearly impious act according to the sage. Apollonius in this way uses the Athenian sailor as a stand-in for contemporary Athenian culture, showing the demotion of Athenian wares and culture to a foreign status through classical exempla.

In a similar use of Athenian history, Philostratus often invokes the noble exempla of resistance to tyranny with the figures of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. In one such instance, the sophist Dio recommends to the future emperor Vespasian that, in order to gain power, he let the Roman people choose which government to adopt (5.34.3):

> κἂν μὲν αἱρῶνται δημοκρατίαν, ξυγχώρει· τουτὶ γάρ σοι πολλῶν μὲν τυραννίδων, πολλῶν δὲ Ὀλυμπιάδων μεῖζον καὶ πανταχοῦ μὲν γεγράψῃ τῆς πόλεως, πανταχοῦ δὲ ἑστήξεις χαλκοῦς, ἡμῖν δ᾽ ἀφορμὰς παραδώσεις λόγων, αἷς οὔτε Ἁρμόδιος οὔτε Ἀριστογείτων παραβεβλήσεταί τις.
>
> "If they choose democracy, give it to them. For this will turn out better for you than many tyrannies and many Olympic victories. Your name will be inscribed everywhere in the city, and bronze statues of you will be erected all over. You will give occasion to speeches in which neither Harmodius nor Aristogeiton will be as good as you."

In order to appeal to the Roman people, Vespasian must utilize the imagery of anti-tyranny, exemplified in the actions of these ancient Athenians. The attractiveness of this anti-tyrant exemplum for Romans appears elsewhere in the text. During the tyranny of Domitian,

[53] See Carrie Elizabeth Atkins, "More than a Hull: Religious Ritual on Board the Ancient Ship" (Master's thesis, Texas A&M University, 2009), esp. 83-108, who uses shipwreck data and literary accounts to distinguish between cultic activity/objects and statues as cargo aboard Roman and Greek vessels.

Apollonius makes a similar appeal to the various Roman governors (7.4.3): "And he also told them about the Panathenaic festival in Attica, at which Harmodius and Aristogeiton are celebrated in song." Apollonius continues by referring to the Thirty Tyrants in Athens and linking these Greek exempla to Roman ones, ending with Brutus and the expulsion of the last Roman king Tarquin: "He also reminded them of the ancestral history of the Romans, and how they had been a democracy in the past, after violently driving out the tyrants" (ibid.).[54]

This link between Athenian and Roman exempla, as well as its particular appeal to Romans, points to the universality of the Athenian message of anti-tyranny. Yet, this rhetoric also emphasizes the importance of an idealized classical Athens in the articulation of Apollonius' Hellenism. In this way, as above, Apollonius' contemporary Athens does not measure up to classical anti-tyrannical ideals. When Apollonius chastises an Athenian youth at Olympia who claims that the goddess Athena is well-disposed to the emperor, Apollonius again invokes the anti-tyrant imagery of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. He claims that despite this noble example, Athens must now be "conferring on tyrants the privilege of being elected to govern them" (8.16). The city's decline from its classical ideal mirrors some of the criticisms Apollonius makes about contemporary Athens.[55]

Apollonius also invokes classical Athenian figures such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristides for their ability to speak the truth while suffering persecution in the city. The intertextuality of these allusions to classical figures is sometimes obvious and at other times up to the reader to

[54] διῄει δὲ αὐτοῖς καὶ τὰ Παναθήναια τὰ Ἀττικά, ἐφ᾽ οἷς Ἁρμόδιός τε καὶ Ἀριστογείτων ᾄδονται, καὶ τὸ ἀπὸ Φυλῆς ἔργον, ὃ καὶ τριάκοντα ὁμοῦ τυράννους εἶλε, καὶ τὰ Ῥωμαίων δὲ αὐτῶν διῄει πάτρια, ὡς κἀκεῖνοι δῆμος τὸ ἀρχαῖον ὄντες τὰς τυραννίδας ἐώθουν ὅπλοις.

[55] Cf. *Ep*. 5 for a similar use of the anti-tyranny Athenian exempla alongside others from Greek mythology.

identify.[56] Some of the more explicit references involve the content of Apollonius' teaching. For example, in a debate between Apollonius and the gymnosophist Thespesion, Athenian philosophers feature as exempla for what constitutes the just man. Thespesion says that because Socrates was just and suffered injustice, "one might believe that justice does not even prosper among humankind" (οὐδ᾽ εὐτυχεῖν ἡ δικαιοσύνη δόξει παρὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις) (6.21.4). Thespesion further claims that the statesman Aristides was even sent into exile because of his justice, since his equitable taxation was a form of just legislation (6.21.5) and clearly similar to the legislation of Solon or Lycurgus (6.21.6), all of which Apollonius agrees are correct statements (6.22.1).[57]

But the association of Apollonius with these figures also turns on their shared persecution in Athens. While Apollonius' struggle to impart philosophy is an empire-wide problem, he uses these historical figures in Athens as a microcosm for some of the same issues of reception. For example, as with the praise for Aristides above, this statesman's ostracism in Athens is overtly linked to the rebuke of Apollonius by a Roman tribune (7.21). Similarly, Apollonius' defense speech clearly mirrors that of Socrates, whom Apollonius invokes at its outset (8.7.1):

> Ὁ μὲν ἀγὼν ὑπὲρ μεγάλων σοί τε, ὦ βασιλεῦ, κἀμοί· σύ τε γὰρ κινδυνεύεις ὑπὲρ ὧν μήποτε αὐτοκράτωρ, εἰ πρὸς φιλοσοφίαν οὐδεμιᾷ δίκῃ διαβεβλῆσθαι δόξεις, ἐγώ τε ὑπὲρ ὧν μηδὲ Σωκράτης ποτὲ Ἀθήνησιν, ὃν οἱ γραψάμενοι τὴν γραφὴν καινοῦν μὲν τὰ δαιμόνια ἡγοῦντο, δαίμονα δὲ οὔτε ἐκάλουν οὔτε ᾤοντο.
>
> You and I, Emperor, are fighting over important matters. You are running a risk that no emperor has ever done before: appearing to be an enemy of philosophy for no reason. I am running one that not even Socrates had at Athens, since those who prosecuted him thought that he was a spiritual innovator. But they neither called him a spirit nor thought that he was one.

[56] Gyselinck and Demoen, "Author and Narrator," 114 and n. 50, discuss how the intertextuality of Apollonius and allusions to Socrates, Pythagoras, et al. not only put Apollonius into a rich literary tradition but also draw attention to the literariness of the text.

[57] See 4.36.2 and discussion below for how Plato appears in Apollonius' teaching.

In the speech, Apollonius plays upon the Athenian ignorance of Socrates' true nature and philosophy. Their rejection comes from a misunderstanding of the spiritual nature of Socrates, which also appears later in the speech. Apollonius refers to the charges of being a sorcerer with mysterious powers by referring to a similar charge against Socrates (8.7.26): "What then will Socrates say in defense of what he said he learned from his guardian spirit?" (τί οὖν ἐνταῦθα ἐρεῖ Σωκράτης ὑπὲρ ὧν ἔφασκε τοῦ δαιμονίου μανθάνειν;).[58] As with the pre-Socratic philosophers Thales and Anaxagoras also mentioned here, Socrates was not charged with sorcery even though he could predict the future (ἐπειδὴ προγιγνώσκουσι) (ibid.). And elsewhere Apollonius counters the idea that Socrates believed in animalistic gods, clearly underlining similar concerns about the religious nature of the philosopher (6.19.5).[59]

Apollonius uses the example of Plato similarly to show the erroneous reception of proper philosophy in Athens. Elsewhere in his discussion with Thespesion of the gymnosophists, Apollonius mentions that the Athenians ignored his philosophical way of life (6.11.8):

> Ἀθηναίοις μὲν οὖν οὐ πάνυ προσήκων ἐφαίνετό μοι ὅδε ὁ λόγος, τὸν γὰρ Πλάτωνος λόγον, ὃν θεσπεσίως ἐκεῖ καὶ πανσόφως ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς ἀνεφθέγξατο, αὐτοὶ διέβαλλον ἐναντίας ταύτῃ καὶ οὐκ ἀληθεῖς δόξας ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς προσέμενοι, ἔδει δὲ σκοπεῖν, τίς μὲν εἴη πόλις, ποῖον δὲ ἀνδρῶν ἔθνος, παρ᾽ οἷς οὐχ ὁ μέν τὸ ὁ δὲ τό, πᾶσα δὲ ἡλικία ταὐτὸν ὑπὲρ ψυχῆς φθέγγοιτο.
>
> I thought that this [Pythagorean] doctrine was not at all suitable for the Athenians, since they criticized the doctrine of the soul that Plato presented with divine inspiration and intelligence. The views they expressed about the soul were antithetical to his and not true. I needed to find out what sort of city, and what sort of race of men, there could be for which there was one idea here and another there, but all ages expressed the same opinion about the soul.

[58] Cf. *VA* 4.46.4-5, for the two brief letters of Apollonius to Musonius regarding Socrates' defense; 7.11.2, on the comparison between the charges against Socrates and those against Apollonius, according to Demetrius.

[59] Cf. *VA* 1.2.2, where Philostratus links Apollonius' reputation to that of Socrates because of the latter's foreknowledge granted by his guardian spirit; *VA* 8.2.2, for Apollonius' claim that Socrates never died even though the Athenians thought he did ("οὐκ ἀπέθανεν," ἔφη "Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ ᾤοντο"), a clear reference to the sage's theory about the immortality of the soul. See Chapter 3, n. 47-48.

Apollonius claims that, much as the Athenians ignored Plato's teachings regarding the soul, the city also rejected his philosophy.[60] Because the Athenians failed to accept Plato's teachings, Apollonius reconsiders whether he can convince them of his own. The slippage between classical and contemporary Athens makes its apparent hostility toward philosophical ideas ahistorical. This negative portrayal of the city continues in the appearance of Plato later in the same conversation in which "they also had a philosophical discussion about the soul, how it was immortal, and about nature, nearly resembling Plato's ideas [in his *Timaeus*]" (6.22).[61] The implicit contrast between the gymnosophists and the Athenians in their reception of Plato's, and therefore Apollonius', philosophy accentuates the questionable state of both classical and Athens in the *VA*.[62]

Apollonius' attacks on Athens include overt comparisons to an idealized classical Athens where citizens were manly warriors uncorrupted by outside, including Roman, influence. But, by apparent contrast, Apollonius references historical figures from Athens in order to suggest the city's problematic relationship to correct philosophy and proper Hellenism. Apart from the appeal of Harmodius and Aristogeiton to a Roman audience, the connections to Plato and Socrates are clearly meant to liken Apollonius' philosophy to the preeminent philosopher's own teachings. But the persecution that each suffered, specifically at the hands of the Athenians, draws attention to the questionable state of classical Athenian politics and culture. These Athenian exempla serve not only to promote Apollonius' philosophical agenda but also disparage contemporary Athens compared to its classical preeminence.

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[60] Cf. Diog. Laert. 3.37, for contemporary reactions to Plato's work *On the Soul* (*Phaedo*).

[61] φιλοσοφήσαντες δὲ καὶ περὶ ψυχῆς, ὡς ἀθάνατος εἴη, καὶ περὶ φύσεως παραπλήσια ταῖς Πλάτωνος [ἐν Τιμαίῳ] δόξαις

[62] Cf. *VA* 1.2.1 for the discussion of Plato in Egypt where he picked up local ideas for his own philosophy.

The city's duality in the *VA* is in line with its complex portrayal elsewhere in the corpus. Philostratus couples Athenian failures with cultural achievements, including its empire-wide appeal and application. The ability for Athenian culture to appear across the empire, despite the failings of both the ancient and the modern city, speaks to its important yet complicated symbolic status in the corpus. This geographic preeminence seemingly contrasts with the limited geographic scope discussed in the previous section. But while these two versions of Athenian geography concern Hellenism on various scales outside the city, the following section grapples with some of the same issues within the confines of the city proper.

IV. Severan Athens

Mirroring the emphasis that Philostratus places upon Rome in the final moments of the *VS*, Athens also figures prominently in the author's geographical thinking of his contemporary world. In the anecdotes about Athens from the *VS*, Philostratus emphasizes the importance of the chair of rhetoric, a sign of sophistic prestige in the text. As with the discussion of Severan Rome in Chapter 1, Philostratus draws attention to the sophists whom he personally knows and is affiliated with.[63] Yet, in contrast to the rest of the corpus discussed above, Philostratus more clearly praises these sophists who perform and compose well in Athens. Sophistic merit is rewarded with chair appointments, and Philostratus shows that those who fail to measure up to this ideal ultimately fail in the city. In a similar way, several of the *Letters* addressed to the sophist Epictetus demonstrate similar concerns about unwarranted praise in Athens.

In these two works, therefore, Philostratus portrays contemporary Athens as culturally preeminent on a micro scale, perhaps reflecting the continued vibrancy of intellectual life in the

[63] See Eshleman, *The Social World of Intellectuals*, 125-48, for Philostratus' creation of and inclusion of himself in a tradition of sophistic education.

city.[64] Yet, compared to the portrayal of Athens elsewhere in the corpus, the city here is a consistent site of insular cultural conflict. Though some sophists are able to achieve distinction in the city, it is not a certainty for those participating in such activity. Because of the complex portrayal of Athens' cultural prominence in the corpus, Philostratus stresses caution and restraint for sophists and other participants in Athenian culture. Read in conjunction with the characteristically Severan elements of the corpus outlined in Chapter 1, similar anxieties about contemporary Greek culture appear in Philostratus' rendering of the city.

Philostratus outlines a few positive traits of contemporary Athens. Several sophists are able to achieve the chair of rhetoric in the city due to their skills and achievements; many of these same sophists are said to have lengthy careers in the city. For example, along with the chair of rhetoric, Apollonius of Athens served as an ambassador for the city, eponymous archon, food controller, and late in life hierophant of the Eleusinian Mysteries, duties that Philostratus says the Athenians held to be the most important (ἔν τε λειτουργίαις, ἃς μεγίστας Ἀθηναῖοι νομίζουσι) (2.56). Philostratus comments that this Apollonius (2.58.4) as well as Apollonius of Naucratis (2.55.4) both lived into their seventies after long careers in Athens. Hippodromus the Thessalian likewise holds the chair of rhetoric for four years, though he retires at his wife's insistence (2.82.1), and Philiscus is awarded the chair by Caracalla (2.87.4-5), as discussed in Chapter 1.

This esteem for contemporary Athenian sophists also appears in the city's cultural connections to other regions. As with some of the other hubs of sophistic activity, Athens attracts students from outside its borders, a trait that continues into the early third century. Antipater from Hierapolis in Phrygia attends the lectures of Zeno in Athens (2.24.1) and a certain young man is recognized by Hippodromus for coming from Ionia to Athens in order to praise

[64] Edward J. Watts, *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 26-38, shows the continuing influence of wealthy teachers in the city in the early third century.

Heracleides (2.81.4). The career of Philostratus' own teacher Proclus especially demonstrates the status of Athens in this geographic scheme. Proclus comes to Athens in order to escape the problems plaguing Naucratis in Egypt (2.59.1):

> Πρόκλος τοίνυν ἦν μὲν τῶν οὐκ ἀφανῶν κατ᾽ Αἴγυπτον, στασιάζουσαν δὲ ἰδὼν τὴν Ναύκρατιν καὶ παρὰ τὰ ἤθη πολιτεύοντας τὴν Ἀθήνῃσιν ἡσυχίαν ἠσπάσατο καὶ ὑπεκπλεύσας ἐκεῖ ἔζη πολλὰ μὲν ἀγαγὼν χρήματα, πολλοὺς δὲ οἰκέτας καὶ τὴν ἄλλην κατασκευὴν μεγαλοπρεπῶς κεκοσμημένην.
>
> Proclus therefore was esteemed in Egypt, but since he saw that Naucratis was full of factional strife and that political system was administered abnormally, he welcomed the peace of Athens. He sailed away secretly to the city and spent his life there. He brought with him a large amount of money, many slaves, and assorted goods that were elaborate and magnificently made.

Proclus' dislike for the problems in Naucratis draws attention to the merits of Athens. Unlike the political tumult of the Egyptian city, Athens is praised for its stability. Proclus is able to enjoy a relatively comfortable life in Greece, using his wealth to help Athenian citizens and purchasing four houses in Attica (2.60.1). Much like the gymnosophists of the *VA* who revere Athenian culture, this Egyptian's career in the city links the two major cultural centers.[65] The *VS* pushes these sorts of connections to Athens into Philostratus' present.

Other sophists, however, are prevented from achieving the same sort of distinction during this period in Athens. Several quarrels and rivalries appear in the text between sophists vying for the chair of rhetoric. Philostratus remarks that Apollonius of Naucratis formed a rivalry with Heracleides who held the chair in Athens (2.55.1). This latter sophist is in turn forced out of the chair due to a conspiracy against him, finally leaving the city to teach in Smyrna (2.74.1). In a similarly contentious episode, Proclus of Naucratis composes a satire aimed at all the sophists teaching in Athens, including Hippodromus who refuses to respond with the same malice

[65] Philostratus also stresses consistent financial connections, as Proclus is said to receive various goods from Egypt in Athens, including incense, ivory, myrrh, papyrus, and books (2.60.1).

(2.81.2). These rivalries suggest that the city's political and educational concerns are as unstable as in other representations of the city in the corpus. Even Proclus, the embodiment of a successful and wealthy sophist in Athens, is said to be unable to influence his recalcitrant son and hands control of his estate over to his mistress (παλλακή) (2.60.2).

Thus, not all sophists are able to carry out distinguished careers in the city, with scandals and rivalries appearing in several lives. Philostratus suggests that the chair in Athens was riddled with these sorts of issues in a rivalry between Aspasius and Philostratus of Lemnos that begins in Rome. Philostratus explains that the quarrel travels to Ionia creating another between the sophists Cassianus and Aurelius (2.93.3):

> ἦν δὲ αὐτοῖν ὁ μὲν Αὐρήλιος οἷος καὶ ἐν καπηλείοις μελετᾶν πρὸς τὸν ἐκεῖ οἶνον, ὁ δ᾽ οἷος θρασύνεσθαι μὲν ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀθήνῃσι θρόνον διὰ καιρούς, οἷς ἀπεχρήσατο, παιδεῦσαι δὲ μηδένα, πλὴν Περίγητος τοῦ Λυδοῦ.
>
> Of these two men Aurelius was the sort of person who would declaim even in taverns where people were drinking; while [Cassianus] was the sort who made a bold bid for the chair at Athens through the opportunities which he had, even though he had taught no one except Periges the Lydian.

It is not impudence or insolence that prevents Cassianus from aspiring to the chair in Athens, an ambiguous trait in the *VS*.[66] Only his lack of having a large group of students hinders his prospects at achieving the chair. Philostratus therefore shows that a somewhat corrupted sophistic activity pervades Athens during this period. Rivalries and quarrels beset groups of sophists, and though many are able to carry out long careers in the city, even these sophists often possess less-than-admirable character traits.

[66] Pericles is able to overtake Python's "insolent and powerful speaking" (θρασυνόμενον καὶ πολὺν ῥέοντα) (*VS* 1.4.1). Cf. Dem. 18.136; *VA* 7.37. Nicetes must deal with a similarly insolent tax-collector in court (τελώνου δὲ θρασυναμένου ποτὲ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐν δικαστηρίῳ) (*VS* 1.46.2).

Similar caution is imparted to Athenian sophists in Philostratus' letters. The letters to Epictetus, perhaps a rival sophist, particularly concern praise and the relationship between this individual and the people of Athens. One letter suggests that a sophist must only earn warranted praise (*Ep*. 42):

> Εἰ κρότῳ ἀνοήτῳ χαίρεις, καὶ τοὺς πελαργούς, ἐπειδὰν παριόντας ἡμᾶς κροτῶσιν, ἡγοῦ δῆμον τοσούτῳ σωφρονέστερον τοῦ Ἀθηναίων ὅσῳ μηδὲ αἰτοῦσι μηδὲν ὑπὲρ τοῦ κροτεῖν.
>
> If you enjoy unintelligent applause, then you should consider the storks – when they clap at us [with their beaks] as we pass them by – as a more reasonable people than the Athenians, since the storks do not request anything for their clapping.

Though this letter seemingly reflects well on the Athenians – the Athenian audience does in fact require something substantial to clap for – their comparison to the mindless clapping storks reflects a misguided appreciation for sophistic performance. Coupled with another letter addressed to Epictetus, Philostratus implies that Athenian praise might be excessive: "Fear a people with whom you have much power" (Φοβοῦ δῆμον παρ᾽ ᾧ πολλὰ δύνασαι) (*Ep*. 65). Recalling the politically tumultuous Athens discussed above, this letter warns against a *dêmos* with exorbitant power. Furthermore, the mixture of fear and politics mirrors the portrayal of the Severan period, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Finally, Philostratus uses another letter to Epictetus to demonstrate that contemporary Athens is a place of misapplied sophistic praise. In this letter, Philostratus uses religious imagery to attack Epictetus' pride (*Ep*. 69):

> Οἱ τελούμενοι τῇ Ῥέᾳ μαίνονται πληγέντες τὰ ὦτα κτύποις ὀργάνων. ἀλλ᾽ ἐκεῖνα μὲν κυμβάλων καὶ αὐλῶν ἔργα, σὲ δὲ οὕτως ἐκπλήττουσιν Ἀθηναῖοι κροτοῦντες ὡς ἐκλανθάνεσθαι τίς εἶ καὶ τίνων γέγονας.
>
> Those who are initiated in the rites of Rhea are driven mad, struck by the banging of the instruments. That noise is the result of cymbals and flutes, but the

> Athenians strike you with their applause in such a way that it's as if you completely forget who you are as well as your ancestry.

While Philostratus clearly reprimands Epictetus for losing himself in the din of applause, much like the noise of religious ceremonies,[67] his characterization sheds light on the nature of Athenian praise. In contrast to the admirably restrained sophists elsewhere in the corpus, the Athenians here praise Epictetus despite his intoxication with their applause. In a similarly negative moment from the *VS*, Philostratus refers to inappropriate Athenian pride. The sophist Polemo refuses to perform an encomium of Athens, knowing that "the nature of the Athenians must be restrained rather than be exalted" (ὅτι τὰς Ἀθηναίων φύσεις ἐπικόπτειν χρὴ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπαίρειν) (*VS* 1.72.2). Athenian praise for sophistic performance is therefore often misguided and suggests the unstable nature of Athenian preeminence across the corpus.

As in the *VS*, the contemporary Athens of the *Letters* demonstrates the potential for sophistic friction and political chaos. Because some sophists openly vie with one another, and others are clearly chastised for their vices, infighting and insular issues plague the city. Compared to other representations of the city outlined above, these issues largely concern cultural conflict within the city itself. Though Severan literature is especially cognizant of imperial geography arranged around the hub of Rome, Philostratus in his portrayal of Athens rearranges this geography.[68] By underscoring the small scale of these episodes and thus disregarding imperial geography, Philostratus shows the complicated symbolic role of the city. Athens not only fails compared to an idealized version of the city but also is the seat of Hellenism because of the large array of cultural activity there.

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[67] Cf. Luc. *Nigr*. 37, for the rites of Rhea described as having similarly intoxicating music.

[68] Cf. Kemezis, *Greek Narratives*, 212-14.

V. Conclusion

The symbolic role of Athens changes throughout imperial Greek literature, but its importance remains consistent. The Philostratean corpus represents some of the Severan elements of this literary motif by portraying an Athens that is variously aligned with Hellenism. As with the relationship between Severan culture and the issue of foreign identity, Athens has a multifaceted role in its alliance to Hellenism and Greek culture. Philostratus shows the city incorporating outsiders into its cultural fold, an apparent solution to the problem of foreigners outlined in the previous chapters. But the cultural activity within the city suggests its complicated relationship to an idealized classical Athens. Apollonius' chastisement of the unphilosophical citizens alongside corrupt political and sophistic activity shows the strained portrayal of Athens in the corpus; while many can practice Hellenism there successfully, often these Athenians are not the ideal followers of Hellenism. Sophists bicker and feud with one another while others attain distinction even though lacking sophistic merit. The problems witnessed across the empire occur in Athens as an important seat of Hellenism, showing that there is no consistent solution to the tension between Greek identity and the novel elements of the Severan period.

Athens, therefore, serves as a microcosm for many of the cultural and geographic concerns of the entire corpus. This literary portrayal of Athens is variously Severan in character as the city is both directly and indirectly set at odds with the imperial center at Rome. Philostratus explores this critical issue throughout the corpus by showing that Athens is a multifaceted symbol of various versions of Hellenism.

CONCLUSION

The category of foreignness is critical to interpreting the cultural and political events of the Severan period. As I have shown, the Philostratean corpus and its multifaceted portrayal of foreign identity illuminates many of the specifically Severan elements of this period, such as the imperial family's origin in Syria and North Africa and its problematic outsider status, as well as the extension of citizenship in the *Constitutio Antoniniana* and the resulting crises over foreign identity. Reflecting the varied treatment of foreigners before and after the edict, the corpus treats foreignness as an empire-wide problem because of the ambiguous cultural allegiance that it represents. I have shown how Philostratus, as a prominent Greek intellectual in Rome, variously grappled with these issues and used the motif of foreign intrusion to comment indirectly upon contemporary political events under the Severan dynasty, including the uncertain alliance of the Severans with the tenets of Hellenism as well as Caracalla's ethnicity and exploits outside Rome. Though a self-described intimate of the Severans and a member of Julia Domna's intellectual circle, Philostratus offers a veiled critique of cultural changes often instigated or represented by the Severans themselves.

As a balanced historical and literary study, this dissertation has reinterpreted the Philostratean corpus by reading across genre and making links between the author's different works. My analysis in part gives voice to the uncertainties about cultural change across the corpus, even though Philostratus depicts foreignness differently in each work. In his biographical works, Philostratus is able to historicize his concern with foreignness. I have shown that Philostratus views different periods of history as distinct because of their varying relation to Hellenism. In the *VS*, sophistic talent is measured by the ability of Greek intellectuals to influence rulers. In the distant past, the relationship between sophists and rulers such as Philip II

of Macedon was a productive one. Following a disruption under the Flavians, the reception of Hellenism by the Antonine emperors, as well as by the imperial communities of the *VA*, demonstrates the way in which Greek intellectuals can articulate and teach the correct version of Hellenism. Despite some setbacks in their efforts, both Apollonius and the sophists of the second century demonstrate the persistence of a productive Hellenic education in an imperial context.

Across the corpus, however, foreign intrusion degrades these processes as foreign identity is set in opposition to correct Greek cultural practices, with the contemporary Severan period often implicated in this deterioration. In the *VS*, the Severan emperors are more ambiguously aligned with Hellenism, a trait that, as I have demonstrated, is connected to their perceived foreignness. Philostratus portrays both Septimius Severus and Caracalla as ambiguous in their reception of sophists in the *VS*, a portrayal that lines up with contemporary invective directed at the Severans casting them as dangerous outsiders. In addition, the letters addressed to Julia Domna and Caracalla betray similar attitudes about the Severans' ambiguous cultural allegiance. Both figures must be instructed by Philostratus because of their apparent cultural or intellectual failings, and the letter to Caracalla in particular uses foreign imagery to reprimand the emperor's own fascination with non-Roman cultures in Egypt and elsewhere.

Other works in the corpus speak to this apprehension about foreigners and the Severans more indirectly. In the *VA*, the students of Apollonius, including Damis the Syrian, must shed their foreignness in order to receive proper instruction. Philostratus shows that the perils of foreign identity can be avoided with correct intellectual guidance but that it is an especially difficult process for Syrians. The *Heroikos* focuses a similar apprehension on the Near East, putting this region in cultural opposition to both Greece and Rome through its portrayal of Syrians and foreign women. In the dialogue's narration of the mythical past, both Trojans and

Greeks must deal with problematic foreigners, an issue that Philostratus implies continues in the contemporary world. And the *Letters* present the erotics of foreign identity as the narrator confronts his own outsider status as well as that of his addressees. Through the persona of a foreign narrator, Philostratus laments his own foreignness and inability to love properly. In addition, the narrator questions the motivations and origins of foreign addressees, choosing to take the risk of coupling with them. In these minor works, therefore, Philostratus is able to play with genre, employing the classicizing tendencies of other sophistic literature while still participating in a generalized discourse around contemporary foreignness.

Philostratus' varied approach to the issues of foreignness and Hellenism across several genres shows that he does not have a unitary response to the cultural trends of the Severan period. Yet, common themes emerge across the corpus, including the apprehension about the ambiguous cultural and civic allegiances of foreigners, the localization of foreign anxiety in the Near East, and the prominent motif of Athens as a site of cultural negotiation. Philostratus portrays foreign intrusion as a substantial issue in major cities, a pattern that implicates his own imperial context and contemporary issues about citizenship. I hope to have shown that these themes also resonate with the negative perception of the Severan family and its relationship to issues of citizenship and foreign identity. The Severan family's own outsider status and ethnic identity influence their negative portrayal in other sources, such as Dio Cassius' and Herodian's contemporary histories. By comparing these accounts with the corpus, it is clear that Philostratus' presentation of foreignness must have been at least partly influenced by events occurring at the imperial center. Though Philostratus directly refers to his contemporary context only occasionally, I have shown that his complex treatment of foreign identity implicates the Severans and their outsider status similarly to other contemporary texts.

Race and ethnicity have been particularly useful analytical categories for understanding cultural change during this period. Rather than considering the Severans solely under the catch-all labels of "outsider" or "provincial," my examination of ethnic identity illuminates the special role this analytical category plays in the corpus. Analyzing Philostratus' discourse around foreign ethnicity has repercussions for understanding his compositional context.[1] I hope to have shown that this discourse resonates with the distinct features of contemporary Severan culture, especially the extension of citizenship in the *Constitutio Antoniniana* and how it engendered a foreign identity crisis. Tracing large cultural shifts along ethnic lines has also gained renewed focus in Late Antique and Medieval studies, a scholarly trend to which this dissertation contributes through its analysis of the changes of the early third century.[2] In many ways, Christian apologists build upon this discourse of ethnicity, employing ethnic argumentation to articulate a new socio-religious identity in the following period.[3] Philostratus, therefore, plays a part in this Hellenic cultural trend that gains steam before the period of Late Antiquity.

This dissertation has examined the varying discourse of foreignness across the corpus, and I have drawn especial attention to the Near East as a specific site of concern. The multi-faceted and complex identities in this region (Syrian, Phoenician, et al.) are often presented as a

[1] The analysis of ethnic argumentation continues into studies of corpora in periods of cultural change after Philostratus. E.g., Aaron Johnson, *Religion and Identity in Porphyry of Tyre: The Limits of Hellenism in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 286ff., discusses Porphyry's views of Hellenic identity as an ethnic category and how the author's particularism is influenced by the imperial context; Ari Finkelstein, *The Specter of the Jews: Emperor Julian and the Rhetoric of Ethnicity in Syrian Antioch* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2018), argues that Julian utilizes an ethnic argumentation to formulate Hellenic identity in relation to Jewish and Christian as ethnic identities.

[2] See, e.g., Geraldine Heng, *The Invention of Race in the European Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), who argues that race as an analytical category can be applied to the medieval world, demonstrating that hierarchies of difference were created and utilized to cast peoples as fundamentally different from one another, something premodernist scholars have not been wont to do in the study of race theory.

[3] Aaron Johnson, *Ethnicity and Argument in Eusebius'* Praeparatio Evangelica (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

monolith in the corpus, a feature of Philostratus' writing that reflects his outsider perspective. My analysis of this sort of perspective complements scholarship on the social history of Syria.[4] Thus, I hope to have placed the Philostratean corpus in a broader scholarly discussion about claims to and disputes over colonial and ethnic identities, especially those associated with the Near East, in the Greco-Roman and Late Antique worlds.[5]

In addition to the historiographic significance of my analysis of the corpus, my methodology challenges the scholarly tendency to place Philostratus in his own "Second Sophistic." Building upon other scholarly works on Severan literature, I have shown that the corpus can be productively analyzed through a literary-historical analysis that stresses the importance of the compositional context. Thus, my analysis is also a counterbalance to a field dominated by Second Sophistic scholars dealing chiefly with material from the second century. By connecting the corpus to the historical and literary trends of the early third century, I have shown that the concerns of Philostratus' works are similar to those of Aelian, Dio Cassius, and Herodian, who also react to the contemporary Severan context.

The Philostratean corpus is a linchpin in understanding the cultural transformation of the Roman Empire. As an elite Greek intellectual in the imperial court, Philostratus offers only a small and partial view of cultural events that affected diverse communities across the empire. But the incorporation of foreigners at every level of society would remain an important issue into

[4] E.g., Andrade, *Syrian Identity*.

[5] Josephine Crawley Quinn, *In Search of the Phoenicians* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2018), building upon an analysis of Severan claims to and utilization of Phoenician descent (148-52), shows that other regions, including Africa and northern Europe, claimed Phoenicia as a fictive colonial identity (153-200).

the third century and beyond.[6] For this period in particular, then, the literary output of Philostratus offers a unique and important vantage point for these cultural processes.

[6] Jacques and Scheid, *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire. 44 av. J.-C- 260 ap. J.-C.*, 279-86; Mathisen, "*Peregrini*, *Barbari*, and *Cives Romani*," 1020ff.

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