

Eusebius as Reader of Philostratus and Hierocles

Apologetics, Interpretation and Authority

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<p>1. Philost. VA 1.2.1</p>	<p>οὐπω οἱ ἄνθρωποι γινώσκουσιν ἀπὸ τῆς ἀληθινῆς σοφίας, ἣν φιλοσόφως τε καὶ ὑγιῶς ἐπήσκησεν, ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν τό, ὁ δὲ τὸ ἐπαινεῖ τοῦ ἀνδρός, οἱ δέ, ἐπειδὴ μάγοις Βαβυλωνίων καὶ Ἰνδῶν Βραχμάσι καὶ τοῖς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ Γυμνοῖς συνεγένετο, μάγον ἡγοῦνται αὐτὸν καὶ διαβάλλουσιν ὡς βιαίως σοφόν, κακῶς γινώσκοντες·</p>	<p>People still do not recognize [Apollonius] for his genuine wisdom, which he cultivated in a philosophical, wholesome way. Rather they either praise one or other aspect of the man or, since he spent time with the Magi of Babylon and the Brachmans of Indian and the Naked Ones in Egypt, they suppose he was a <i>magos</i> and assail his philosophy as sorcery.</p>
<p>2. Eusebius Hier. 1.2</p>	<p>μόνα δὲ εἰκότως νυνὶ τὰ περὶ τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον ἐποψόμεθα, ἐπεὶ καὶ μόνῳ παρὰ τοὺς πῶποτε καθ' ἡμῶν γεγραφότας ἐξαίρετος νῦν τούτῳ γέγονεν ἡ τοῦδε πρὸς τὸν ἡμέτερον σωτήρα παράθεσις τε καὶ σύγκρισις.</p>	<p>Our business is only to examine the part about Apollonius, since here, for the first time in all that has been written against us we see this figure specifically set beside and compared with Our Savior.</p>
<p>3. Lact. Inst. 5.2.12-17</p>	<p>alius eandem materiam mordacius scripsit, qui erat tunc unus e numero iudicum et qui auctor in primis faciendae persecutionis fuit, quo scelere non contentus etiam scriptis eos quos adflixerat insecutus est. composuit enim libellos duos, non contra Christianos, ne inimice insectari videretur, sed ad Christianos, ut humane ac benigne consulere putaretur. in quibus ita falsitatem scripturae sacrae arguere conatus est, tamquam sibi esset tota contraria. nam quaedam capita, quae repugnare sibi videbantur, exposuit adeo multa, adeo intima enumerans, ut aliquando ex eadem disciplina esse videbatur.</p>	<p>The second [of two pagan apologists, i.e. Hierocles] made a more telling version of the same argument. He was then one of the judges, and took a leading role in carrying out persecutions. Not content with that crime, he then attacked in writing those whom he had brought to ruin. So he wrote two books, not "against the Christians," since he didn't want it to look like a hostile attack, but "to the Christians," so people would think he was offering polite and kindly advice. In these he tried to prove the holy scriptures false on the grounds that they entirely contradicted themselves. He brought out certain passages that appeared to be odds with each other. He listed so many of them, and in such detail, that he seemed to have once been a follower of their teachings.</p>
<p>4a. Lact. Inst. 5.3.7-10, 16</p>	<p>idem cum facta eius mirabilia destrueret nec tamen negaret, voluit ostendere Apollonium vel paria vel etiam maiora fecisse. mirum quod Apuleium praetermisit, cuius solent et multa et mira memorari. cur igitur, o delirum caput, nemo Apollonium pro deo colit? nisi forte tu solus, illo scilicet deo dignus, cum quo te in sempiternum verus deus puniet. si magus Christus, quia mirabilia fecit peritior utique Apollonius qui ut describis cum Domitianus eum punire vellet, repente in iudicio non comparuit quam ille qui et comprehensus est et cruci adfixus. at enim ex hoc ipso fortasse insolentiam Christi voluit arguere, quod deum se constituerit, ut ille verecundior fuisse videatur, qui cum maiora faceret, ut hic putat, tamen id sibi non adrogaverit. [...] 'non' inquit 'hoc dico, idcirco Apollonium non haberi deum, quia noluerit, sed ut appareat nos sapientiores esse qui mirabilibus factis non statim fidem divinitatis adiunximus, quam vos, qui ob exigua portenta deum credidistis.</p>	<p>Then [Hierocles], while he was tearing down [Jesus'] miracles without actually saying they hadn't happened, also wanted to show that Apollonius had done as much or better. I'm surprised he left out Apuleius, whose many miracles are so often related. Why, then, you deluded fool, does nobody worship Apollonius as a god? Except maybe you, he's certainly the right sort of god for you, and the real god will punish both of you for eternity. And if Christ was a <i>magus</i> because he did miracles, then certainly Apollonius must have been a more skilled one, since, as you tell it, when Domitian wanted to punish him, suddenly he was nowhere to be found in the courtroom, whereas Jesus was caught and nailed to a cross. Maybe, though, he wants to assert that Christ is being outrageous by setting himself up as god, so it will seem Apollonius was more modest since although, as Hierocles would have it, he did greater deeds, still he did not claim that for himself. [arguments why it is absurd to think anyone would not want to be considered immortal] "My point is not," says Hierocles, "that we should not consider Apollonius a god because he didn't want it, but rather so it will be evident that we, who do not immediately turn every miracle into evidence of divinity, are wiser than you, who believe someone is a god based on the smallest uncanny occurrence."</p>

<p>4b. Eusebius Hier. 2.1</p>	<p>Θαυμάζει γοῦν καὶ ἀποδέχεται θεία τινὶ καὶ ἀρρήτω σοφίᾳ, οὐχὶ δὲ γοητείας σοφίσμασι τεθναυματουργηκέναι φάσκων αὐτὸν καὶ ταῦτα ἀληθῶς οὕτως ἔχειν ὡς ἔτυχε, πιστεύων καὶ ἀναποδείκτως ἀπισχυρίζομενος. ἄκουε δ' οὖν, ἅ φησιν αὐταῖς συλλαβαῖς· "ἄνω δὲ καὶ κάτω θρυλοῦσι σεμνύνοντες τὸν Ἰησοῦν ὡς τυφλοῖς ἀναβλέψαι παρασχόντα καὶ τινα τοιαῦτα δράσαντα θαυμάσια." εἰτά τινα μεταξὺ εἰπὼν ἐπιλέγει· "ἐπισκεψόμεθα γε μὴν, ὄσω βέλτιον καὶ συνετώτερον ἡμεῖς ἐκδεχόμεθα τὰ τοιαῦτα καὶ ἦν περὶ τῶν ἐναρέτων ἀνδρῶν ἔχομεν γνώμην."</p>	<p>Indeed he expresses wonder and approval, saying that [Apollonius] did wonders "by some divine and inexpressible wisdom and not by the charlatan tricks of a sophist." He believes and doggedly affirms without any proof that somehow that was just how it really happened. Listen to what he says, word for word: "They cry up and down, exalting how Jesus restored sight to the blind and did marvels of that kind." And then after a bit he continues "So let us then examine how much better and shrewder we are in understanding such things and what our ideas are about men of outstanding virtue."</p>
<p>4c. Eusebius Hier. 2.2</p>	<p>εἰτα καταλέγει ἀπὸ πρώτου ἀρξάμενος τὰ παράδοξα, μεθ' ἧ καὶ ἐπιλέγει ταῦτα κατὰ λέξιν· "τίνος οὖν ἔνεκα τούτων ἐμνήσθην; ἴν' ἐξῆ συγκρίναι τὴν ἡμετέραν ἀκριβῆ καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ κρίσιν καὶ τὴν τῶν Χριστιανῶν κουφότητα, εἶπερ ἡμεῖς μὲν τὸν τὰ τοιαῦτα πεποιηκότα οὐ θεόν, ἀλλὰ θεοῖς κεχαρισμένον ἄνδρα ἡγοῦμεθα, οἱ δὲ δι' ὀλίγας τερατείας τινὰς τὸν Ἰησοῦν θεὸν ἀναγορεύουσι."</p>	<p>[Hierocles] then recounts [Apollonius'] marvels starting from the beginning, after which he adds the following, in his own words: "Why have I brought up these things? So that one may compare our careful and steady judgement in each instance with the Christians' empty-headedness, given that when someone has done such things, we think of him not as a god, but a man pleasing to the gods. They, on the other hand, proclaim Jesus a god because of a few fairy stories."</p>
<p>5a. Euseb. Hier. 4.1-3</p>	<p>Εἰ δὴ οὖν ἄξιον τὴν ἐπικατηγορουμένην ἡμῶν εὐχέρειάν τε καὶ κουφότητα καὶ τὴν τοῦ Φιλαλήθους ἀκριβῆ καὶ βεβαίαν ἐφ' ἐκάστῳ παραθεῖναι κρίσιν, φέρε διαπυθόμεθα, οὐχ ὅστις θεϊότερος γέγονει. οὐδ' ὅποιος θαυμασιώτερά τε καὶ πλείω διεπράξατο παράδοξα, οὐδ' ὡς μόνος παρὰ τοῖς ἀνέκαθεν πρὸ μυρίων ὄσων <ἐτῶν> γενομένοις Ἑβραίων σοφοῖς ὁ σωτὴρ ἡμῶν καὶ κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς ἤξειν εἰς ἀνθρώπους κατὰ θείαν ἐπίνοιαν προπεφήτετο, [...] ταῦτα γὰρ περὶ τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον ζητεῖν μὴ καὶ τὸ ἐρωτᾶν ἀνόητον· μόνην δὲ ἐπισκεψόμεθα τὴν τοῦ Φιλοστράτου γραφὴν, δι' ἧς εὐθουοῦμεν, ὡς οὐχ ὅτι γε ἐν φιλοσόφοις, ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἐν ἐπιεικέσι καὶ μετρίοις ἀνδράσιν ἄξιον ἐγκρίνειν, οὐχ ὅπως τῷ σωτῆρι ἡμῶν Χριστῷ παρατιθέναι τὸν Ἀπολλώνιον ὅσον ἐπὶ τῇ γραφῇ τοῦ παρὰ τῷ Φιλαλήθει παιδεύσεως μὲν ἐπὶ πλεῖστον ἦκοντος, τὸ δ' ἀληθὲς μὴ τιμῶντος συγγραφέως.</p>	<p>If I can be so bold as to compare the "gullibility" and "empty-headedness" with which we are charged with the "careful and steady judgement in each instance" of our truth-loving author, let us examine not who was the more divine, nor which one did the more remarkable and numerous miracles, nor how it was only our Savior and Lord Jesus Christ whose coming among humanity was prophesied through divine inspiration so many thousands of years ago by the wise men of the Jews nor [various other instances of Jesus' unique significance] To look for such things in Apollonius' case, or even to ask about them, would be senseless. Let us only consider the writings of Philostratus, from which we can on the contrary establish that he does not deserve to be counted as a decent or moral man, never mind a philosopher. There is no way this Apollonius can be compared with our Savior Christ, to judge from the work of this writer whom the "truth-loving author" says attained much learning but who has no regard for truth.</p>
<p>5b. Euseb. Hier. 5</p>	<p>Ἄλλος μὲν οὖν ὁμόσε χωρῶν αὐτόθεν διέβαλλεν ἂν βλασφημῶν ὡς ἐχθρὸν αὐτῷ καὶ πολέμιον τὸν καθ' οὗ τὸν λόγον ἐποιεῖτο, ἐγὼ δέ, ἑταῖρε, σοφὸν τινα τὰ ἀνθρώπινα τὸν Τυανέα γεγονέναι ἡγοῦμην καὶ ἔτι γε <τῆς> αὐτῆς ἔχεσθαι διανοίας ἐκὼν εἶναι βουλοίμην καὶ σοὶ τὴν αὐτὸς ἔμαυτοῦ περὶ αὐτοῦ δόξαν ἐκθεῖην ἂν ἐρωτῶντι· φιλοσόφων μὲν ὅτω τις βούλοιο καταλέγειν τὸν ἄνδρα πέρα μηδὲν διανοχλῶν ταῖς περὶ αὐτοῦ μυθολογίαις, μὴ φθονεῖν, εἰ δ' ὑπερπηδᾷν τοὺς ὄρους καὶ φιλοσοφίας ὑπέρετρα φρονεῖν εἴτε τις Δάμις Ἀσσύριος, εἴτε Φιλόστρατος, εἴτε τις συγγραφεὺς ἢ λογογράφος θρασύνοιτο λόγῳ μὲν ἐκτρεπόμενος γοητεῖαν, ἔργοις δὲ πλεόν ἢ ῥήμασιν ἐπιφορτίζων τὸν ἄνδρα προσωπεῖου δίκην τὴν Πυθαγόρειον ἐπιμορφαζόμενος ἀγωγὴν, οἰχίσηται μὲν ἡμῖν ὁ φιλόσοφος, ὄνος δ' ἀντὶ τοῦ λέοντος ἐπικρυπτόμενος δέρρει σοφιστῆς τις ὡς ἀληθῶς ἀγείρων κατὰ τὰς πόλεις αὐτό τε τοῦτο γόης ἀτεχνῶς ἀντὶ φιλοσόφου φωραθήσεται.</p>	<p>Another writer engaged in the same quarrel might have attacked straightaway, laying into the man he was speaking against as his hated enemy. I, however, my friend, have always thought of the Tyanean as a wise man in human terms, and I would be happy to remain of that view and if you asked me, I would deliver my opinion of him thus: If someone wants to rank the man alongside whatever philosopher, and doesn't then go on to bother me with silly stories about about him, I have no problem with that. But if some Assyrian Damis, or Philostratus, or any other author or storyteller thinks they can cross the line and set their sights beyond philosophy? They claim they're not talking about charlatany, but they give the man such a load of doings and sayings, dressing him in the Pythagorean discipline like a theater-mask. Then for me there's no more philosopher, just a donkey hiding in a lion's skin. We find out he's really just a sophist begging from town to town, nothing in the world but a charlatan, no philosopher at all.</p>
<p>6. Euseb. Hier. 9</p>	<p>οὐκοῦν ἐν θεοῖς ἡμῖν διὰ τούτων ἀναγεγράφθω ὁ ἄνθρωπος καὶ ὁ φθόνος ἀπέστω τῆς τῶν φωνῶν ἀπασῶν αὐτοφουοῦς καὶ αὐτοδιδάκτου συνέσεως, τί δῆτα οὖν ἐς διδασκάλου ἄγει αὐτὸν καὶ τὸν μηδεμίαν φωνὴν μεμαθηκότα διαβάλλει ὡς ἂν ἐξ ἀσκήσεως καὶ μελέτης, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἐκ φύσεως Ἀττικὸν γενόμενον τὴν γλῶτταν;</p>	<p>All right, then, let's consider the man a god on that basis and not begrudge him this spontaneous and untaught understanding of every language that exists. So why then does [Philostratus] send him to a schoolmaster and traduce someone who never learned any language by saying that it was by discipline and practice rather than by nature that his speech was Attic?</p>

7. Euseb. Hier. 35.1-2	ἐπιστήσαι δ' ἄξιον δι' ὅλης τῆς πραγματείας, ὡς ὅτι κἀν ἀληθεύειν δοθῆ τῷ συγγραφεῖ τὰ παράδοξα, συνεργεῖα δαίμονος ἕκαστον αὐτῷ διαπερᾶσθαι τούτων σαφῶς δεῖκνυται. [...] τοῦτο δὲ παρίστησι σαφές τὸ μὴ δι' ὅλου καὶ περὶ πάντων τὴν πρόγνωσιν αὐτὸν ἀποσώζειν, ἀπορεῖν δὲ ἐν πλείστοις καὶ πυνθάνεσθαι δι' ἄγνοιαν, ὅπερ οὐκ ἂν, εἰ θείας ἀρετῆς μετῆν αὐτῷ, πεπόνθοι.	One should realize, though, that through this whole story [of the run-up to Ap.'s trial], even if one accepts that the author is telling the truth about the miracles, he makes it clear that all of them were done with the assistance of demons. [examples of demonic-seeming actions]. This is clear from the way he does not have clairvoyance the whole time and about everything, but is often at a loss and asks things out of ignorance, which would never have happened if he enjoyed divine powers.
8a. Euseb. Hier. 20	ταῦτα Ἱεροκλεῖ τὰ ἀνωτάτω καὶ καθόλου δικαστήρια πεπιστευμένῳ μετὰ πολλῆς ἀνετάσεως ἀληθῆ καὶ πιστὰ εἶναι δοκεῖ καὶ ἡμῶν μὲν εὐχέρεια καὶ κουφότης πλείστη ὅση κατέγνωσται παρ' αὐτῷ, αὐτὸς δὲ τοιαῦτα Φίλοστράτῳ πιστευῶν αὐτοῖς δὴ ῥήμασι σεμνύνεται λέγων "ἐπισκενωμέθα γε μὴν, ὅσῳ βέλτιον καὶ συνετώτερον ἡμεῖς ἐκδεχόμεθα τὰ τοιαῦτα, καὶ ἦν περὶ τῶν ἐναρέτων ἀνδρῶν ἔχομεν γνώμην."	And Hierocles, entrusted as he is with high and far-reaching judicial powers, after holding a great inquest, finds these things true and trustworthy. For all that he accuses us of so much gullibility and empty-headedness, he credits such accounts from Philostratus and talks them up thus: "So let us then examine how much better and shrewder we are in understanding such things and what our ideas are about men of outstanding virtue."
8b. Euseb. Hier. 24	πολλὰ ἀγαθὰ γένοιτο πραγμάτων ἡμᾶς ἀπολύσαντι τῷ συγγραφεῖ· δῆλα γάρ, ὡς ἀληθῆ καὶ ταῦτα, ὅτε βροντὰς καὶ ἀνέμους ἐν πίθοις τρίποδάς τε ἐκ λίθου φοιτῶντας αὐτομάτως καὶ οἰνοχόους ἀπὸ χαλκοῦ περιελαύνειν ἐν κύκλῳ τὰς κύλικας προιστορήσας διὰ τῆς περὶ τούτων ὡς ἀληθῶν ἀφηγήσεως καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπάντων ἐξέφηνέ τε καὶ διήλεγξε τὴν μυθολογίαν.	Hurrah for the historian who has made our job so much easier! It's clear now how true all of this must be, since when he's told us about thunder and wind in jars, and stone tripods moving by themselves, and bronze wine-servers passing the cups around, and made out that all this and the rest is true, he makes plain and indeed proves what a load of silly stories it all is.
9. Euseb. Hier. 48.2	ταυτὶ μὲν οὖν ταύτη· εἰ δ' ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐν φιλοσόφων διατριβαῖς ἄξιοιεν ἐτι καταλέγειν τινὲς τὸν ἄνδρα, λελέξεται, ὡς ἄρα εἰ ἀποκαθήρειαν τῆς ἐξωθεν λύμης, ἀτὰρ καὶ τῆς ἀπὸ τῆσδε τῆς γραφῆς ἐπεισκευκλουμένης αὐτῷ σκευῆς, φθόνος πᾶς αὐτοῖς ἐκποδῶν ἂν εἴη, ὄρους δ' εἰ ἀληθείας προῖων τις ὑπὲρ φιλοσόφους ἐκθειάζειν αὐτὸν πειρῶτο, λάθοι ἂν αὐτῷ γόητος ἀτεχνῶς διαβολὴν ἐπεντρίβων, ὡς ταυτὶ τὰ συγγράμματα σοφιστικῶς ἀναπεπλασμένα οὐδὲν πλὴν ἐλέγχου καὶ δεινῆς τάνδρὸς διαβολῆς παρὰ τοῖς νοῦν ἔχουσιν ἔμοιγε δοκεῖ περιέχειν.	That's all there is to say about that. If after all this someone still wants to list him in the philosophical schools, let this be said: if they will purify him of the stain others have put on him, and strip off the costume this book has dressed him up in, they're welcome to do so. But if someone goes beyond the truth and tries to make him out something more than a philosopher, he will certainly, without knowing it, load on him another accusation of being a charlatan. Thus in my opinion these sophistically contrived writings do nothing but expose the man and provide a formidable indictment of him in the eyes of any person of sense.

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