Ancient Christian literature, like any literature, was not composed in a vacuum. Its authors and audiences were steeped in the culture that surrounded them, and they would have been familiar with an array of different genres from both oral and written media. Being able to recognize genre would have helped them to appreciate and understand the literature they encountered, but many of the genres they knew are relatively unfamiliar to us moderns. Therefore, in order to better understand the gospels and how they would have been read and received in their own cultural and historical moments, it is important that we situate them within their literary context.

As you now know, one dominant proposal is that the gospels are a type of Greco-Roman biography—but as you also know, this generic category may not always be a perfect fit. So, for this essay, you will evaluate the appropriateness of assigning the gospels to the genre of Greco-Roman biography by reading the Gospel of John alongside Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, the biography of a philosopher, teacher, and miracle worker who lived at around the same time as Jesus (the assigned excerpts of which you’ll find below). Because it is more obvious how the Gospels of Mark and Luke might be considered biographies, and because the Gospel of John has quite a different take on Jesus than the synoptic gospels do, it should make an especially interesting test case!

First, spend approximately 1 page highlighting the relevant characteristics of the genre of Greco-Roman biography, with specific reference to what you’ve observed in *The Life of Apollonius*. (To cite this text, simply refer to the page number on this very PDF.)

Next, spend 2-3 pages comparing the Gospel of John to the Greco-Roman biography in general, noting in particular any comparisons to *The Life of Apollonius*. Note also what about the Gospel of John might not fit the category or may suggest that John is “playing with” or readapting the genre.

Finally, spend your remaining 1-2 pages drawing conclusions about the comparative work you’ve just done. Do you think that, when all is said and done, the gospels may appropriately be considered a type of Greco-Roman biography? Why or why not? Is that designation useful for appreciating the gospel? For example, does it make you read it in a different way? Did the points at which John deviated from the gospel genre strike you as more significant or meaningful because they did *not* conform to the expectations that genre sets? As usual, you don’t necessarily have to address all of these questions—they’re just suggestions to get you thinking and reflecting.

You are not required to do any outside research for this assignment, and if you are only using the materials I’ve assigned, you do not need to include a works cited page. If you feel that your own argument would benefit from citing the secondary literature we’ve read, you are free to do so, as long as it doesn’t distract from your own analysis.
PHILOSTRATUS, THE LIFE OF APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

Excerpts from Book I:

The votaries of Pythagoras of Samos have this story to tell of him, that he was not an Ionian at all, but that, once on a time in Troy, he had been Euphorbus, and that he had come to life after death, but had died as the songs of Homer relate. And they say that he declined to wear apparel made from dead animal products and, to guard his purity, abstained from all flesh diet, and from the offering of animals in sacrifice. For that he would not stain the altars with blood; nay, rather the honey-cake and frankincense and the hymn of praise, these they say were the offerings made to the Gods by this man, who realized that they welcome such tribute more than they do the hecatombs and the knife laid upon the sacrificial basket.

For they say that he had of a certainty social intercourse with the gods, and learnt from them the conditions under which they take pleasure in men or are disgusted, and on this intercourse he based his account of nature. For he said that, whereas other men only make conjectures about divinity and make guesses that contradict one another concerning it, - in his own case he said that Apollo had come to him acknowledging that he was the god in person; and that Athena and the Muses and other gods, whose forms and names men did not yet know, had also consorted with him though without making such acknowledgment.

…

For quite akin to theirs was the ideal which Apollonius pursued, and more divinely than Pythagoras he wooed wisdom and soared above tyrants; and he lived in times not long gone by nor quite of our own day, yet men know him not because of the true wisdom, which he practiced as sage and sanely; but one man singles out one feature for praise in him and another another; while some, because he had interviews with the wizards of Babylon and with the Brahmans of India, and with the nude ascetics of Egypt, put him down as a wizard, and spread the calumny that he was a sage of an illegitimate kind, judging of him ill. For Empedocles and Pythagoras himself and Democritus consorted with wizards and uttered many supernatural truths, yet never stooped to the black art; and Plato went to Egypt and mingled with his own discourses much of what he heard from the prophets and priests there; and though, like a painter, he laid his own colors on to their rough sketches, yet he never passed for a wizard, although envied above all mankind for his wisdom.

For the circumstance that Apollonius foresaw and foreknew so many things does not in the least justify us in imputing to him this kind of [black] wisdom; we might as well accuse Socrates of the same, because, thanks to his familiar spirit, he knew things beforehand, and we might also accuse Anaxagoras because of the many things which he foretold. And indeed who does not know the story of how Anaxagoras at Olympia in a season when least rain falls came forward wearing a fleece into the stadium, by way of predicting rain, and of how he foretold the fall of the house - and truly, for it did fall; and of how he said that day would be turned into night, and stones would be discharged from heaven round Aegospotami, and of how his predictions were fulfilled? Now these feats are set down to the wisdom of Anaxagoras by the
same people who would rob Apollonius of the credit of having predicted things by dint of wisdom, and say that he achieved these results by art of wizardry.

It seems to me then that I ought not to condone or acquiesce in the general ignorance, but write a true account of the man, detailing the exact times at which he said or did this or that, as also the habits and temper of wisdom by means of which he succeeded in being considered a supernatural and divine being.

And I have gathered my information partly from the many cities where he was loved, and partly from the temples whose long-neglected and decayed rites he restored, and partly from the accounts left of him by others and partly from his own letters. For he addressed these to kings, sophists, philosophers, to men of Elis, of Delphi, to Indians, and Ethiopians; and in his letters he dealt with the subjects of the gods, of customs, of moral principles, of laws, and in all these departments he corrected the errors into which men had fallen. But the more precise details which I have collected are as follows.

…

Apollonius' home, then, was Tyana, a Greek city amidst a population of Cappadocians. His father was of the same name, and the family descended from the first settlers. It excelled in wealth the surrounding families, though the district is a rich one.

To his mother, just before he was born, there came an apparition of Proteus, who changes his form so much in Homer, in the guise of an Egyptian demon. She was in no way frightened, but asked him what sort of child she would bear. And he answered: "Myself."

"And who are you?" she asked.

"Proteus," answered he, "the god of Egypt."

Well, I need hardly explain to readers of the poets the quality of Proteus and his reputation as regards wisdom; how versatile he was, and for ever changing his form, and defying capture, and how he had a reputation of knowing both past and future. And we must bear Proteus in mind all the more, when my advancing story shows its hero to have been more of a prophet than Proteus, and to have triumphed over many difficulties and dangers in the moment when they beset him most closely.

Now he is said to have been born in a meadow, hard by which there has been now erected a sumptuous temple to him; and let us not pass by the manner of his birth. For just as the hour of his birth was approaching, his mother was warned in a dream to walk out into the meadow and pluck the flowers; and in due course she came there and her maids attended to the flowers, scattering themselves over the meadow, while she fell asleep lying on the grass.

Thereupon the swans who fed in the meadow set up a dance around her as she slept, and lifting their wings, as they are wont to do, cried out aloud all at once, for there was somewhat of a breeze blowing in the meadow. She then leaped up at the sound of their song and bore her child, for any sudden fright is apt to bring on a premature delivery.

But the people of the country say that just at the moment of the birth, a thunderbolt seemed about to fall to earth and then rose up into the air and disappeared aloft; and the gods thereby indicated, I think, the great distinction to which the sage was to attain, and hinted in advance how he should transcend all things upon earth and approach the gods, and signified all the things that he would achieve.
Now there is near Tyana a well sacred to Zeus, the god of paths, so they say, and they call it the well of Asbama. Here a spring rises cold, but bubbles up like a boiling cauldron. This water is favorable and sweet to those who keep their paths, but to perjurers it brings hot-footed justice; for it attacks their eyes and hands and feet, and they fall the prey of dropsy and wasting disease; and they are not even able to go away, but are held on the spot and bemoan themselves at the edge of the spring, acknowledging their perjuries.

The people of the country, then, say that Apollonius was the son of this Zeus, but the sage called himself the son of Apollonius.

On reaching the age when children are taught their letters, he showed great strength of memory and power of application; and his tongue affected the Attic dialect, nor was his accent corrupted by the race he lived among. All eyes were turned upon him, for he was, moreover, conspicuous for his beauty. When he reached his fourteenth year, his father brought him to Tarsus, to Euthydemus the teacher from Phoenicia.

Now Euthydemus was a good rhetor, and began his education; but, though he was attached to his teacher, he found the atmosphere of the city harsh and strange and little conducive to the philosophic life, for nowhere are men more addicted than here to luxury; jesters and full of insolence are they all; and they attend more to their fine linen than the Athenians did to wisdom; and a stream called the Cydnus runs through their city, along the banks of which they sit like so many water-fowl. Hence the words which Apollonius addresses to them in his letter:

"Be done with getting drunk upon your water."

He therefore transferred his teacher, with his father's consent, to the town of Aegae, which was close by, where he found a peace congenial to one who would be a philosopher, and a more serious school of study and a temple of Asclepius, where that god reveals himself in person to men.

Now Euxenus realized that he was attached to a lofty ideal, and asked him at what point he would begin it. Apollonius answered: "At the point at which physicians begin, for they, by purging the bowels of their patients prevent some from being ill at all, and heal others."

And having said this he declined to live upon a flesh diet, on the ground that it was unclean, and also that it made the mind gross; so he partook only of dried fruits and vegetables, for he said that all the fruits of the earth are clean. And of wine he said that it was a clean drink because it is yielded to men by so well-domesticated a plant as the vine; but he declared that it endangered the mental balance and system and darkened, as with mud, the ether which is in the soul.

After then having thus purged his interior, he took to walking without shoes by way of adornment and clad himself in linen raiment, declining to wear any animal product; and he let his hair grow long and lived in the Temple. And the people round about the Temple were struck with admiration for him, and the god Asclepius one day said to the priest that he was delighted to have Apollonius as witness of his cures of the sick; and such was his reputation that the Cilicians themselves and the people all around flocked to Aegae to visit him. Hence the Cilician proverb: "Whither runnest thou? Is it to see the stripling?"
Such was the saying that arose about him, and it gained the distinction of becoming a proverb.

Now it is well that I should not pass over what happened in the Temple, while relating the life of a man who was held in esteem even by the gods. For an Assyrian stripling came to Asclepius, and though he was sick, yet he lived the life of luxury, and being continually drunk, I will not say he lived, rather he was ever dying. He suffered then from dropsy, and finding his pleasure in drunkenness took no care to dry up his malady. On this account then Asclepius took no care of him, and did not visit him even in a dream.

The youth grumbled at this, and thereupon the god, standing over him, said, "If you were to consult Apollonius you would be easier."

He therefore went to Apollonius, and said: "What is there in your wisdom that I can profit by? for Asclepius bids me consult you."

And he replied: "I can advise you of what, under the circumstances, will be most valuable to you; for I suppose you want to get well."

"Yes, by Zeus," answered the other, "I want the health which Asclepius promises, but never gives."

"Hush," said the other, "for he gives to those who desire it, but you do things that irritate and aggravate your disease, for you give yourself up to luxury, and you accumulate delicate viands upon your water-logged and worn-out stomach, and as it were, choke water with a flood of mud."

This was a clearer response, in my opinion, than Heraclitus, in his wisdom, gave. For he said when he was visited by this affection that what he needed was someone to substitute a drought for a rainy weather, a very unintelligible remark, it appears to me, and by no means clear; but the sage restored the youth to health by a clear interpretation of the wise saw.

...
I am all that you have left. If therefore I do anything wrong, please advise me and cure me of my faults; and in turn if you yourself do anything wrong, suffer me to teach you better."

And so he reduced his brother to a reasonable state of mind, just as we break in skittish and unruly horses by stroking and patting them; and he reformed him from his faults, numerous as they were, for he was the slave of play and of wine, and he serenaded courtesans and was vain of his hair, which he dressed up and dyed, strutting about like an arrogant dandy.

So when all was well between him and his brother, he at once turned his attention to his other relatives, and conciliated such of them as were in want by bestowing on them the rest of his property, leaving only a trifle to himself; for he said that Anaxagoras of Clazomenae kept his philosophy for cattle rather than for men when he abandoned his fields to flocks and goats, and that Crates of Thebes, when he threw his money into the sea benefited neither man nor beast.

These years of silence he spent partly in Pamphylia and partly in Cilicia; and though his paths lay through such effeminate races as these, he never spoke nor was even induced to murmur.

Whenever, however, he came on a city engaged in civil conflict (and many were divided into fractions over spectacles of a low kind), he would advance and show himself, and by indicating part of his intended rebuke by manual gesture or by look on his face, he would put an end to all the disorder, and people hushed their voices, as if they were engaged in the mysteries.

Well, it is not so very difficult to restrain those who have started a quarrel about dances and horses, for those who are rioting about such matters, if they turn their eyes to a real man, blush and check themselves and easily recover their senses; but a city hard pressed by famine is not so tractable, nor so easily brought to a better mood by persuasive words and its passion quelled. But in the case of Apollonius, mere silence on his part was enough for those so affected.

Anyhow, when he came to Aspendus in Pamphylia (and this city is built on the river Eurymedon, lesser only than two others about there), he found vetches on sale in the market, and the citizens were feeding upon this and on anything else they could get; for the rich men had shut up all the grain and were holding it up for export from the country.

Consequently an excited crowd of all ages had set upon the governor, and were lighting a fire to burn him alive, although he was clinging to the statues of the Emperor, which were more dreaded at that time and more inviolable than the Zeus in Olympia; for they were statues of Tiberius, in whose reign a master is said to have been held guilty of impiety, merely because he struck his own slave when he had on his person a silver drachma coined with the image of Tiberius.

Apollonius then went up to the governor and with a sign of his hand asked him what was the matter; and he answered that he had done no wrong, but was indeed being wronged quite as much as the populace; but, he said, if he could not get a hearing, he would perish along with the populace.

Apollonius then turned to the bystanders, and beckoned to them that they must listen; and they not only held their tongues from wonderment at him, but they laid the brands they had kindled on the altars which were there.
The governor then plucked up courage and said: "This man and that man," and he named several, "are to blame for the famine which has arisen; for they have taken away the grain and are keeping it, one in one part of the country and another in another." The inhabitants of Aspendus thereupon passed the word to one another to make for these men's estates, but Apollonius signed with his head, that they should do no such thing, but rather summon those who were to blame and obtain the grain from them with their consent.

And when, after a little time the guilty parties arrived, he very nearly broke out in speech against them, so much was he affected by the tears of the crowd; for the children and women had all flocked together, and the old men were groaning and moaning as if they were on the point of dying by hunger. However, he respected his vow of silence and wrote on a writing board his indictment of the offenders and handed it to the governor to read out aloud; and his indictment ran as follows:

Apollonius to the grain dealers of Aspendus. The earth is mother of us all, for she is just; but you, because you are unjust have pretended that she is your mother alone; and if you do not stop, I will not permit you to remain upon her.

They were so terrified by these words, that they filled the market-place with grain and the city revived.

The literary style which he cultivated was not dithyrambic or tumid and swollen with poetical words, nor again was it far-fetched and full of affected Atticisms; for he thought that an excessive degree of Atticising was unpleasant. Neither did he indulge in subtleties, nor spin out his discourses; nor did anyone ever hear him dissembling to an ironical way, nor addressing to his audience methodical arguments; but when he conversed he would assume an oracular manner and use the expressions, "I know," or "It is my opinion," or, "Where are you drifting to?" or, "You must know."

And his sentences where short and crisp, and his words were telling and closely fitted to the things he spoke of, and his words had a ring about them as of the dooms delivered by a sceptred king. And when a certain quibbler asked him, why he asked himself no questions, he replied: "Because I asked questions when I was a stripling; and it is not my business to ask questions now, but to teach people what I have discovered."

"How then," the other asked him afresh, "O Apollonius, should the sage converse?"

"Like a law-giver," he replied, "for it is the duty of the law-giver to deliver to the many the instructions of whose truth he has persuaded himself."

This was the line he pursued during his stay in Antioch, and he converted to himself the most unrefined people.

And they say that they have heard from the natives that 780 of the Eretrians were captured, not of course all of them fighting men; for there was a certain number of women and old men among them; and there was, I imagine, a certain number of children too, for the greater portion of the population of Eretria had fled to Caphereus and to the loftiest peaks of Euboea.
But anyhow the men who were brought up numbered about 400, and there were ten women perhaps; but the rest, who had started from Ionia and Lydia, perished as they were marching up. And they managed to open a quarry on the hill; and as some of them understood the art of cutting stone, they built temples in the Greek style and a market-place large enough for their purpose; and they dedicated various altars, two to Darius, and one to Xerxes, and several to Daridaeus. But up to the time of Daridaeus, 88 years after their capture, they continued to write in the manner of the Greeks, and what is more, their ancient graves are inscribed with the legend: "So and so, the son of so and so." And though the letters are Greek, they said that they never yet had seen the like.

And there were ships engraved on the tombstones, to show that the various individuals had lived in Euboea, and engaged either in seafaring trade, or in that of purple, as sailors or as dyers; and they say that they read an Elegiac inscription written over the sepulcher of some sailors and seafarers, which ran thus:

Here, we who once sailed over the deep-flowing billows of the Aegaean Sea are lying in the midst of the plain of Ecbatana.
Farewell, once-famed fatherland of Eretria, farewell Athens,
Ye neighbor of Euboea, farewell thou darling sea.

Well, Damis says that Apollonius restored the tombs that had gone to ruin and closed them up, and that he poured out libations and made offering to their inmates, all that religion demands, except that he did not slay or sacrifice any victim; then after weeping and in an access of emotion, he delivered himself of the following apostrophe in their midst: "Ye Eretrians, who by the lot of fortune have been brought hither, ye, even if ye are far from your own land, have at least received burial; but those who cast you hither perished unburied round the shores of your island ten years after yourself; for the gods brought about this calamity in the Hollows of Euboea."

But of this later on. When then he arrived at Babylon, the satrap in command the great gates, having learnt that he had come to see the country, held out a golden image of the king, which everyone must kiss before he is allowed to enter the city. Now an ambassador coming from the Roman Emperor has not this ceremony imposed upon him, but anyone who comes from the barbarians or just to look at the country, is arrested with dishonor unless he has first paid his respect to this image. Such are the silly duties committed to satraps among the barbarians. When therefore Apollonius saw the image, he said: "Who is that?"

And on being told that it was the king, he said: "This king whom you worship would acquire a great boon, if I merely recommended him as seeming honorable and good to me."

And with these words he passed through the gate. But the satrap was astonished, and followed him, and taking hold of his hand, he asked him through an interpreter his name and his family and what was his profession and why he came thither; and he wrote down the answers in a book and also a description of his dress and appearance, and ordered him to wait there.
But he himself ran off to the persons whom they are pleased to call "Ears of the King", and described Apollonius to them, after first telling them both that he refused to do homage and that he was not the least like other men. They bade him bring him along, and show him respect without using any violence; and when he came the head of the department asked him what induced him to flout the king, and he answered: "I have not yet flouted him."
"But would you flout him?" was the next question.
"Why, of course I will," said Apollonius, "if on making his acquaintance I find him to be neither honorable nor good."
"Well, and what presents do you bring for him?"
Apollonius answered afresh that he brought courage and justice and so forth. "Do you mean," said the other, "to imply that the king lacks these qualities?"
"No, indeed," he answered, "but I would fain teach him to practice them, in case he possesses them."
"And surely it was by practicing these qualities," said the other, "that he has recovered the kingdom, which you behold, after he had lost it, and has restored his house, - no light task this nor easy."
"And how many years is it since he recovered his kingdom?"
"This is the third year since," answered the other, "which year began about two months ago."

Apollonius, then as was his custom, upheld his opinion and went on: "O bodyguard, or whatever I ought to call you, Darius the father of Cyrus and Artaxerxes was master of these royal domains, I think, for sixty years, and he is said, when he felt that his end was at hand, to have offered a sacrifice to Justice and to have addressed her thus: 'O lady mistress, or whosoever thou art.' This shows that he had long loved justice and desired her, but as yet knew her not, nor deemed that he had won her; he brought up his two sons so foolishly that they took up arms against one another, and one was wounded and the other killed by his fellow. Well, here is a king perhaps who does not even know how to keep his seat on the throne, and you would have me believe that he combines already all virtues, and you extol him, though, if he does turn out fairly good, it is you and not I that will gain thereby".

The barbarian then glanced at his neighbor and said: "Here is a windfall! 'tis one of the gods who has brought this man here; for as one good man associating with another improves him, so he will much improve our king, and render him more temperate and gracious; for these qualities are conspicuous in this man."

They accordingly ran into the palace and told everybody the good news, that there stood at the king's gates a man who was wise and a Hellene, and a good counselor.

Excerpts from Book VIII:

Let us now repair to the law court to listen to the sage pleading his cause; for it is already sunrise and the doors are thrown open to admit the celebrities. And the companions of the Emperor say that he had taken no food today, because, I imagine, he was so absorbed in examining the documents of the case. For they say he was holding in his hands a roll of writing of some sort, sometimes reading it with anger, and sometimes more calmly. And we must needs
figure him as one who was angry with the law for having invented such things as courts of justice.

But Apollonius, as we meet him in this conjuncture seems to regard the trial as a dialectical discussion, rather than as a race to be run for his life; and this we may infer from the way he behaved before he entered the court. For on his way thither he asked the secretary who was conducting him, where they were going; and when the latter answered that he was leading him to the court, he said: "Whom am I going to plead against?"

"Why," said the other, "against the accuser of course, and the Emperor will be judge."

"And," said Apollonius, "who is going to judge between myself and the Emperor? For I shall prove that he is wronging philosophy."

"And what concern," said the other, "has the Emperor for philosophy, even if he does happen to be wrong?"

"Nay, but philosophy," said Apollonius, "is much concerned about the Emperor, that he should govern as he should."

The secretary commanded this sentiment, for indeed he was already favorably disposed to Apollonius, as he proved from the very beginning. "And how long will your pleading last by the water-clock's reckoning? For I must know this before the trial begins."

"If," said Apollonius, "I am allowed to plead as long as the necessities of the suit require me to, the whole of the Tiber might tun through the meter before I should have done; but if I am only to answer the questions put to me, then it depends on the cross-examiner how long I shall be making my answers."

"You have cultivated," remarked the other, "contrary talents when you thus engage to talk about one and the same matter both with brevity and with prolixity."

"They are not contrary talents," said Apollonius, "but resemble each other. And moreover there is a mean composed between the two, which I should not myself allege to be a third, but a first requisite for a pleader; and for my own part I am sure that silence constitutes a fourth excellence much required in a law-court."

"Anyhow," said the other, "it will do you no good nor anyone who stands in great peril."

"And yet," said Apollonius, "it was of great service to Socrates of Athens, when he was prosecuted."

"And what good did it do him," said the other, "seeing that he died just because he would say nothing?"

"He did not die," said Apollonius, "though the Athenians thought he did."

This was how he prepared himself to confront the despot's maneuvers; and as he waited before the court another secretary came up and said: "Man of Tyana, you must enter the court with nothing on you."

"Are we then to take a bath," said Apollonius, "or to plead?"

"The rule," said the other, "does not apply to dress, but the Emperor only forbids you to bring in here either amulet, or book, or any papers of any kind."

"And not even a cane," said Apollonius, "for the back of the idiots who gave him such advice as this?"

Whereat the accuser burst into shouts: "O my Emperor," he said, "this wizard threatens to beat me, for it was I who gave you this advice."
"Then," said Apollonius, "it is you who are a wizard rather than myself; for you say that
you have persuaded the Emperor of my being that which so far I have failed to persuade him that
I am not."

While the accuser was indulging in this abuse, one of the freedmen of Euphrates was at
his side, whom the latter was said to have sent from Ionia with news of what Apollonius had
there said in his conversations, and also with a sum of money which was presented to the
accuser.

Such were the preliminary skirmishes which preceded the trial, but the conduct of the
trial itself was as follows: The court was fitted up as if for an audience listening to a panegyrical
discourse; and all the illustrious men of the city were present at the trial, because the Emperor
was intent upon proving before as many people as possible that Apollonius was an accomplice of
Nerva and his friends.

Apollonius, however, ignored the Emperor's presence so completely as not even to glance
at him; and when his accuser upbraided him for want of respect, and bade him turn his eyes upon
the god of all mankind, Apollonius raised his eyes to the ceiling, bu way of giving a hint that he
was looking up to Zeus, and that he regarded the recipient of such profane flattery as worse than
he who administered it.

Whereupon the accuser began to bellow and spoke somewhat as follows: "'Tis time, my
sovereign, to apportion the water, for if you allow him to talk as long as he chooses, he will
choke us. Moreover I have a roll here which contains the heads of the charges against him, and to
these he must answer, so let him defend himself against them one by one."

The Emperor approved of this plan of procedure and ordered Apollonius to make his
defense according to the informer's advice; however, he dropped out other accusations, as not
worth discussion, and confined himself to four questions which he thought were embarrassing
and difficult to answer. "What induces you, he said, "Apollonius, to dress yourself differently
from everybody else, and to wear this peculiar and singular garb?"

"Because," said Apollonius, "the earth which feeds me also clothes me, and I do not like
to bother the poor animals."

The emperor next asked the question: "Why is it that men call you a god?"
"Because," answered Apollonius, "every man that is thought to be good, is honored by
the title of god." I have shown in my narrative of India how this tenet passed into our hero's
philosophy.

The third question related to the plague in Ephesus: "What motivated," he said, "or
suggested your prediction to the Ephesians that they would suffer from a plague?"
"I used," he said, "O my sovereign, a lighter diet than others, and so I was the first to be
sensible of the danger; and if you like, I will enumerate the causes of pestilences."

But the Emperor, fearful, I imagine, lest Apollonius should reckon among the causes of
such epidemics his own wrong-doing, and his incestuous marriage, and his other misdemeanors,
replied: "Oh, I do not want any such answers as that."

And when he came to the fourth question which related to Nerva and his friends, instead
of hurrying straight on to it, he allowed a certain interval to elapse, and after long reflection, and
with the air of one who felt dizzy, he put his question in a way which surprised them all; for they
expected him to throw off all disguise and blunt out the names of the persons in question without
any reserve, complaining loudly and bitterly of the sacrifice; but instead of putting the question
in this way, he beat about the bush, and said: "Tell me, you went out of your house on a certain
day, and you traveled into the country, and sacrificed the boy - I would like to know for whom?"
And Apollonius as if he were rebuking a child replied: "Good words, I beseech you; for I did
leave my house, I was in the country; and if this was so, then I offered sacrifice: and if I offered
it, then I ate of it. But let these assertions be proved by trustworthy witnesses."

Such a reply on the part of the sage aroused louder applause than beseemed the court of
an Emperor; and the latter deeming the audience to have borne witness in favor of the accused,
and also not a little impressed himself by the answers he had received, for they were both firm
and sensible, said: "I acquit you of the charges; but you must remain here until we have had a
private interview."

Thereat Apollonius was much encouraged and said: "I thank you indeed, my sovereign,
but I would fain tell you that by reason of these miscreants your cities are in ruin, and the islands
full of exiles, and the mainland of lamentations, and your armies of cowardice, and the Senate of
suspicion. Accord me also, if you will, opportunity to speak; but if not, then send someone to
take my body, for my soul you cannot take. Nay, you cannot take even my body, For thou shalt
not slay me, since -I tell thee- I am not mortal."

And with these words he vanished from the court, which was the best thing he could do
under the circumstances, for the Emperor clearly intended not to question him sincerely about
the case, but about all sorts of irrelevant matters. For he took great credit to himself for not
having put Apollonius to death, nor was the latter anxious to be drawn into such discussions.

And he thought that he would best effect his end if he left no one in ignorance of his true
nature, but allowed it to be known to all to be such that he had it in him never to be taken
prisoner against his own will. Moreover he had no longer any cause for anxiety about his friends;
for as the despot had not the courage to ask any questions about them, how could he possibly put
them to death with any color of justice upon charges for which no evidence had been presented
in court?

Such was the account of the proceedings of the trial which I found. But inasmuch as he
had composed an oration which he would have delivered by the clock in defense of himself, only
the tyrant confined him to the questions which I have enumerated, I have determined to publish
this oration also. For I am well aware, indeed, that those who highly esteem the style of buffoons
will find fault in it, as being less chaste and severe in its style than they consider it should be, and
as too bombastic in language and tone.

However, when I consider that Apollonius was a sage, it seems to me that he would have
unworthy concealed his true character if he had merely studied symmetry of endings, and
antithesis, clicking his tongue as if it had been a castanet. For these tricks suit the genius of
rhetoricians, though they are not necessary even to them. For forensic art, if it be too obvious, is
apt to betray him who resorts to it as anxious to impose upon the judges; whereas if it is well
concealed, it is likely to carry off a favorable verdict; for true cleverness consists in concealing
from the judges the very cleverness of the pleader.

But when a wise man is defending his cause -and I need not say that a wise man will not
arraign another for faults which he has the will and strength to rebuke- he requires quite another
style than that of the hacks of the law-court; and though his oration must be well-prepared, it
must not seem to be so, and it should possess a certain evalation almost amounting to scorn, and
he must take care in speaking not to throw himself on the pity of the judges. For how can he
appeal to the pity of others who would not condescend to solicit anything? Such an oration will
my hero's seem to those who shall diligently study both myself and him; for it was composed by
him in the following manner:

"My prince, we are at issue with one another concerning matters of grave moment; for
you run such a risk as never autocrat did before you, that namely of being thought to be animated
by a wholly unjust hatred of philosophy; while I am exposed to a worse peril than was ever
Socrates at Athens, for though the accusers taxed him in their indictment with introducing new
beliefs about demons, they never went so far as to call him or think him a demon.

Since, however, so grave a peril besets us both, I will not hesitate to tender you the advice
of whose excellence I am myself convinced. For since the accuser has plunged us into this
struggle, the many have been led to form a false opinion of both myself and of you. They have
come to imagine that you will listen only to the counsels of anger, with the result that you will
even put me to death, whatever death means, and that I in turn shall try to evade this tribunal in
some of the ways there are -and they were, my prince, myriad- of escaping from it.

Though rumors have reached my ears, I have not contracted any prejudice against you,
nor have I done you the injury of supposing you will hear my cause otherwise than in accordance
with the strictest principles of equity; for in conformity with the laws I submit myself to their
pronouncement.

And I would advise you also to do the same; for justice demands that you should neither
prejudge the case, nor take your seat on the bench with your mind made up to the belief that I
have done you any wrong. If you were told that the Armenian, the Babylonian and other foreign
potentates were about to inflict some disaster on you, which must lead to the loss of your empire,
you would, I am sure, laugh outright; although they have hosts of cavalry, all kinds of archers, a
gold bearing soil and, as I know full well, a teeming population. And yet you distrust a
philosopher, naked of means of offense, and are ready to believe he is a menace to the autocrat of
the Romans - all this on the mere word of an Egyptian sycophant.

Never did you here such tales from Athena, whom you allege to be your guardian spirit,
unless indeed, great Heavens!, their flattering and falsely accusing others has so increased the
influence of these miscreants, that you would pretend that whereas in insignificant matters, such
as sore eyes, and avoidance of fevers and inflammation of the bowels, the Gods are your apt
advisers, manipulating and healing you after the manner of physicians of anyone of these
maladies you may be suffering from, they, nevertheless, in matters which imperil your throne and
your life, give you no counsel either as to the persons you should guard against or as to the
weapons you should employ against them, but, instead of coming to your aid, leave you to the
tender mercies of false accusers, whom you regard as the Aegis of Athena or the hand of Zeus,
just because they assert that they understand your welfare better even than do the gods, and that
they watch over you in the hours of their waking and sleeping, if indeed these wretches can sleep
after pouring out such wicked lies and compiling ever and anon whole *Iliads* such as this one.

That they should keep horses and roll theatrically into the forum in chariots drawn by
snowy teams, that they should gorge themselves off dishes of silver and gold, parade favorites
that cost them two or three myriad sesterces, that they should go on committing adultery as long
as they are not found out and then and not before, marry the victims of their lusts when they are
captured red-handed, that their splendid successes should be hailed with applause, as often as some
philosopher or consul, absolutely innocent, falls into their toils and is put to death by yourself -
all this I am willing to concede to the license of these accursed wretches and to their brazen indifference to the public eye and to law; but that they should give themselves the airs of superhuman beings and presume to know better than the gods, I cannot approve or allow; and the mere rumor of it fills me with horror. And if you allow such things to be, they will perhaps accuse even yourself of offending against established religion.

I know that my tone is rather that of a censor than that of a defendant; if so, you must pardon me for thus speaking up in behalf of the laws, with the recognition of whose authority by yourself stands and falls that of your own.

Who then will be my advocate while I am defending myself? For if I called upon Zeus to help me, under whom I am conscious of having passed my life, they will accuse me of being a wizard and of bringing heaven down to earth. Let us then appeal in this matter to one whom I deny to be dead, although the many assert it, I mean your own father, who held me in the same esteem in which you behold him; for he made you, and was in turn made by me. He, my prince, shall assist my defense, because he knows my character much better than yourself; for he came to Egypt before he was raised to the throne, as much to converse with me about the Empire as to sacrifice to the gods of Egypt.

And when he found me with my long hair and dressed as I am at this moment, he did not ask me a single question about my costume, because he considered that everything about me was well; but he admitted that he had come thither on my account, and after commending me and saying to me things which he would have said to no one else, and having heard from me what he would have heard from no one else, he departed.

I most confirmed him in his aspirations for the throne, when others had already sought to dissuade him, - in no unfriendly spirit, I admit, though you anyhow can not agree with them; for those who tried to persuade him not to assume the reins of Empire were assuredly on their way to deprive you of the succession to him by which you now hold.

But by my advice he did not hold himself unworthy, he said, of the kingdom which lay within his grasp and of making you the heirs thereto; and he fully acknowledged the entire wisdom of my advice, and he was raised himself to the pinnacle of greatness, as in turn he raised yourselves. Now if he had looked upon me as a wizard, he would never have taken me into his confidence, for he did not come and say such things as this to me: Compel the Fates or compel Zeus to appoint me tyrant, or to work miracles and portents in my behalf, and show me the sun rising in the west and setting at the point where he rises. For I should not have thought him a fit person for empire in he had either considered me as an adept in such art, or resorted to such tricks in pursuit of a crown which it behoved him to win by his virtues alone.

More than this my conversation with him was held publicly in a temple, and wizards do not affect temples of the gods as their places of reunion; for such places are inimical to those who deal in magic, and they cloak their art under the cover of night and every sort of darkness, so as to preclude their dupes from the use of their eyes and ears.

It is true that he also had a private conversation with me, but there were present at it beside myself Euphrates and Dion, one of them my bitter enemy, but the other my firmest friend; for may never come a time when I shall not reckon Dion among my friends. Now I ask you, who would begin to talk wizardry in the presence of wise men or of men anyhow laying claim to wisdom? And who would not be equally on his guard both among friends and among enemies of betraying his villainy?
And moreover our conversation on that occasion was directed against wizards; for you surely will not suppose that your own father when he was aspiring to the throne set more confidence in wizards than in himself, or that he got me to put pressure upon heaven, that he might obtain his object, when, on the contrary, he was confident of winning the crown before ever he came to Egypt; and subsequently he had more important matters to talk over with me, namely the laws and the just acquisition of wealth, and how the gods ought to be worshipped, and what blessings they have in store for those monarchs who govern their people in accordance with the laws.

These are the subjects which he desired to learn about, and they are all the direct opposite of wizardry; for if they count for anything at all, there will be an end of the black art.

And there is another point, my prince, which merits your attention. The various arts known to mankind, in spite of the differences of their functions and achievements, are yet all concerned to make money, some earning less, some earning more, and some just enough to live upon; and not only the base mechanic arts, but of the rest those which are esteemed liberal arts as well as those which only border upon being liberal, and true philosophy is the only exception. And by liberal arts I mean poetry, music, astronomy, the art of the sophist and of the orator, the merely forensic kinds excepted; and by the arts which border upon liberal I mean those of the painter, modeler, sculptor, navigator, agriculturist, in case the latter waits upon the seasons; for these arts are not very inferior to the liberal professions.

And on the other hand, my prince, there are the pseudo-liberal arts of jugglers, which I would not have you confuse with divination, for this is highly esteemed, if it be genuine and tell the truth, though whether it is an art, I am not sure. But I anyhow affirm wizards to be professors of a pseudo-liberal art, for they have got men to believe that the unreal is real, and to distrust the real as unreal, and I attribute all such efforts to the imaginative fancy of the dupes; for the cleverness of this art is relative to the folly of the persons who are deceived by them, and who offer the sacrifices they prescribe; and its professors are given up wholly to filthy lucre, for all their parade of skill is devised by them in hope of gain, and they try to persuade people who are passionately attached to something or another that they are capable of getting everything for them.

...
Now Damis had arrived the day before and had talked with Demetrius about the preliminaries of the trial; and the account filled the latter, when he listened to it, with more apprehension than you might expect of a listener when Apollonius was in question. The next day also he asked him afresh about the same particulars, as he wandered with him along the edge of the sea, which figures in the fables told about Calypso; for they were almost in despair of their master coming to them, because the tyrant's hand was hard upon all; yet out of respect for Apollonius' character they obeyed his instructions.

Discouraged, then, they sat down in the chamber of the nymphs, where there is the cistern of white marble, which contains a spring of water which neither overflows its edges, nor recedes, even if water be drawn for it. They were talking about the quality of the water in no very serious manner; and presently, owing to the anxiety they felt about the sage, brought back their conversation to the circumstances which preceded the trial.

Damis' grief had just broken out afresh, and he had made some such exclamation as the following: "Shall we ever behold, O ye gods, our noble and good companion?" when Apollonius, who had heard him -for as a matter of fact he was already present in the chamber of the nymphs- answered: "Ye shall see him, nay, ye have already seen him."

"Alive?" said Demetrius, "For if you are dead, we have anyhow never ceased to lament you."

Hereupon Apollonius stretched out his hand and said: "Take hold of me, and if I evade you, then I am indeed a ghost come to you from the realm of Persephone, such as the gods of the underworld reveal to those who are dejected with much mourning. But if I resist your touch, then you shall persuade Damis also that I am both alive and that I have not abandoned my body."

They were no longer able to disbelieve, but rose up and threw themselves on his neck and kissed him, and asked him about his defense. For while Demetrius was of opinion that he had not even made his defense -for he expected him to be destroyed without any wrong being proved against him- Damis thought that he had made his defense, but perhaps more quickly than was expected; for he never dreamed that he had made it only that day.

But Apollonius said: "I have made my defense, gentlemen, and have gained my cause; and my defense took place this very day not so long ago, for it lasted on even to midday."

"How then," said Demetrius, "have you accomplished so long a journey in so small a fraction of the day?"

And Apollonius replied: "Imagine what you will, flying ram or wings of wax excepted, so long as you ascribe it to the intervention of a divine escort."

"Well," said Demetrius, "I have always thought that your actions and words were providently cared for by some god, to whom you owe your present preservation, nevertheless pray tell us about the defense you made, what it consisted of and what the accusation had to say against you, and about the temper of the judge, and what questions he put, and what he allowed to pass of your pleas and what not - tell us at once in order that I may tell everything in turn to Telesinus, for he will never leave off asking me about your affairs; for about fifteen days back he was drinking with me in Antium, when he fell asleep at table, and just as the middle cup in honor of the good genius was being passed round he dreamed a dream; and he saw a fire spreading like a sea over the land, and it enveloped some men, and caught up others as they fled; for it flowed..."
along, he said, exactly like water, but you alone suffered not the fate of the rest, but swam clean through it as it divided to let you through. And in honor of the gods who inspire such happy presages he poured out a libation in consequence of this dream, and he bade me be of good cheer on your account."

And Apollonius said: "I am not surprised at Telesinus dreaming about me, for in his vigils, I assure he, he long ago occupied his mind about me; but as regards the trial, you shall learn everything, but not in this place; for it is already evening and it is time for us to proceed to the town; and it is pleasant too to talk as you go along the road, for conversation assists you on your way like an escort.

Let us then start and discuss your questions as we go along, and I will certainly tell you of today's events in the court. For both of you known the circumstances which preceded the trial, the one of you because he was present, and the other because I am sure, by Zeus, he has not heard it once only, but again and again, if I know you well, my Demetrius. But I will relate to you what you do not know yet, beginning with my being summoned into the Emperor's presence, into which I was ushered naked."

And he proceeded to detail to them his own words, and above all at the end of them the citation: "For thou shalt not kill me," and he told them exactly how he vanished from the seat of judgment.

...
"But," said the other, "what material, Apollonius, can a thing which is incorporeal be composed of?"

"A most important material," replied Apollonius, "and most varied in character; for there are sacred groves in it, and race-courses and, of course, a theater, and tribes of men, some of them from neighboring countries, and others from over the borders, and even from across the sea. Moreover," he added, "many arts go to make up such a festival, and many designs, and much true genius, both of poets, and of civil counselors, and of those who deliver harangues on philosophic topics, and contests between naked athletes, and contests of musicians, as is the custom in the Pythian festival."

"It seems to me," said the other, "O Apollonius, that the festival is not only something corporeal, but is made up of more wonderful material than are cities; for there is summoned together into one community on such occasions the best of the best, and the most celebrated of the celebrated."

"Then," said Apollonius, "O Isagoras, are we to consider the people we meet there in the same light as some people regard walls and ships, or do you need some other opinion of the festival?"

"The opinion," answered the other, "which we have formulated, is quite adequate and complete, O man of Tyana, and we had better adhere to it."

"And yet," said the other, "it is neither adequate nor complete to one who considers about is as I do; for it appears to me that ships are in need of men and men of ships, and that men would never have thought about the sea at all if they had not had a ship; and men are kept safe by walls and walls by men; and in the same way I consider a festival to be not only the meeting of human beings, but also the place itself in which they have to meet, and the more so, because walls and ships would never have come into being, unless there had been men's hands to build them, while these places, so far forth as they are deprived of their natural and original characteristics, are by the hands of men spoiled; for it was owing to their natural advantages that they were held worthy of being made their meeting-places; for though the gymnasia and porticoes and fountains and houses have been all created by human art, just like the walls and the ships, yet this river Alpheus with the hippodrome and the stadium and the groves, existed, I suppose, before men came here, the one providing water for drinking and for the bath, and the second a broad plain for the horses to race in, and the third provided just the space required for the athletes to raise the dust in as they run along in their races, namely a valley a stadium in length, and the groves supplied wreaths for the winners and served the athletes who were runners as a place to practice in. For I imagine that Heracles considered these facts, and because he admired the natural advantages of Olympia, he found the place worthy of the festival and games which are still held here."

…

Now the cavern in Lebadea is dedicated to Trophonius, the son of Apollo, and it can only be entered by those who resort thither in order to get an oracle, and it is not visible in the temple, but lies a little above it on a mound; and it is shut in by iron spits which surround it, and you descend into it as it were sitting down and being drawn down. Those who enter it are clad in white raiment, and are escorted thither with honey-cakes in their hands to appease the reptiles
which assail them as they descend. But the earth brings them to the surface again, in some cases close by, but in other cases a long way off; for they are sent up to the surface beyond Locri and beyond Phocis, but most of them about the borders of Boeotia.

Accordingly Apollonius entered the shrine and said: "I wish to descend into the cave in the interests of philosophy."

But the priests opposed him and though they told the multitude that they would never allow a wizard like him to examine and test the shrine, they pretended to the sage himself that there were forbidden days and days unclean for consulting. So on that day he delivered a discourse at the springs of Hercyne, about the origin and conduct of the shrine; for it is the only oracle which gives responses through the person himself who consults it.

And when the evening approached, he went to the mouth of the cave with his train of youthful followers, and having pulled up four of the obelisks, which constitute a bar to the passage, he went down below ground wearing his philosopher's mantle, having dressed himself as if he were going to deliver an address upon philosophy - a step which the god Trophonius so thoroughly approved of, that he appeared to the priests and not only rebuked them for the reception they had given Apollonius, but enjoined them all to follow him to Aulis, for he said it was there that he would come to surface in such a marvelous fashion as no man before.

And in fact he emerged after seven days, a longer period than it had taken anyone of those who until then had entered the oracle, and he had with him a volume thoroughly in keeping with the questions he had asked: for had gone down saying: "What, O Trophonius, do you consider the most complete and purest philosophy?" And the volume contained the tenets of Pythagoras, a good proof this, that the oracle was in agreement with this form of wisdom.

The memoirs then of Apollonius of Tyana which Damis the Assyrian composed, end with the above story; for with regard to the manner in which he died, if he did actually die, there are many stories, though, Damis has repeated none.

But as for myself I ought not to omit even this, for my story should, I think, have its natural ending. Neither has Damis told us anything about the age of our hero; but there are some who say that he was eighty, others that he was over ninety, others again who say that his age far exceeded a hundred. He was fresh in all his body and upright, when he died, and more agreeable to look at than in his youth. For there is a certain beauty even in wrinkles, which was especially conspicuous in his case, as is clear from the likenesses of him which are preserved in the temple at Tyana, and from accounts which praise the old age of Apollonius more than was once praised the youth of Alcibiades.

Now there are some who relate that he died in Ephesus, tended by two maid servants; for the freedmen of whom I spoke at the beginning of my story were already dead. One of these maids he emancipated, and was blamed by the other one for not conferring the same privilege upon her, but Apollonius told her that it was better for her to remain the other's slave, for that would be the beginning of her well-being.

Accordingly after his death this one continued to be the slave of the other, who for some insignificant reason sold her to a merchant, from whom she was purchased. Her new master,
although she was not good-looking, nevertheless fell in love with her; and being a fairly rich
man, made her his legal wife and had legitimate children with her.

Others again say that he died in Lindus, where he entered the temple of Athena and
disappeared within it. Others again say that he died in Crete in a much more remarkable manner
than the people of Lindus relate. For they say that he continued to live in Crete, where he became
a greater center of admiration than ever before, and that he came to the temple of Dictynna late at
night. Now this temple is guarded by dogs, whose duty it is to watch over the wealth deposited in
it, and the Cretans claim that they are as good as bears or any other animals equally fierce. None
the less, when he came, instead of barking, they approached him and fawned upon him, as they
would not have done even with people they knew familiarly.

The guardians of the shrine arrested him in consequence, and threw him in bonds as a
wizard and a robber, accusing him of having thrown to the dogs some charmed morsel. But about
midnight he loosened his bonds, and after calling those who had bound him, in order that they
might witness the spectacle, he ran to the doors of the temple, which opened wide to receive him;
and when he had passed within, they closed afresh, as they had been shut, and there was heard a
chorus of maidens singing from within the temple, and their song was this. "Hasten thou from
earth, hasten thou to Heaven, hasten." In other words: "Do thou go upwards from earth."

And even after his death, he continued to preach that the soul is immortal; but although
he taught this account of it to be correct, he discouraged men from meddling in such high
subjects.

For there came to Tyana a youth who did not shrink from acrimonious discussions, and
would not accept truth in argument. Now Apollonius had already passed away from among men,
but people still wondered at his passing, and no one ventured to dispute that he was immortal.
This being so, the discussions were mainly about the soul, for a band of youth were there
passionately addicted to wisdom. The young man in question, however, would on no account
allow the tenet of immortality of the soul, and said: "I myself, gentlemen, have done nothing now
for over nine months but pray to Apollonius that he would reveal to me the truth about the soul;
but he is so utterly dead that he will not appear to me in response to my entreaties, nor give me
any reason to consider him immortal."

Such were the young man's words on that occasion, but on the fifth day following, after
discussing the same subject, he fell asleep where he was talking with them, and of the young
men who were studying with him, some were reading books, and others were industriously
drawing geometrical figures on the ground, when on a sudden, like one possessed, he leapt up
still in a half sleep, streaming with perspiration, and cried out: "I believe thee."

And, when those who were present asked him what was the matter; "Do you not see," said he, "Apollonius the sage, how that he is present with us and is listening to our discussion,
and is reciting wondrous verses about the soul?"

"But where is he?" the others asked, "For we cannot see him anywhere, although we
would rather do so than possess all the blessings of mankind."

And the youth replied: "It would seem that he is come to converse with myself alone
concerning the tenets which I would not believe. Listen therefore to the inspired argument which
he is delivering:

The soul is immortal, and 'tis no possession of thine own, but of Providence,
And after the body is wasted away, like a swift horse freed from its traces,
It lightly leaps forward and mingles itself with the light air, 
loathing the spell of harsh and painful servitude which it has endured. 
But for thee, what use is there in this? Some day, when thou art no more, thou shalt believe it. 
So why, as long as thou art among living beings, dost thou explore these mysteries?"
Here we have a clear utterance of Apollonius, established like an oracular tripod, to convince us 
of the mysteries of the soul, to the end that cheerfully, and with due knowledge of our own true 
nature, we may pursue our way to the goal appointed by the Fates.

With any tomb, however, or cenotaph of the sage I never met, that I know of, although I 
have traversed most of the earth, and have listened everywhere to stories of his divine quality. 
And his shrine in Tyana is singled out and honored with royal officers: for neither have the 
Emperors denied to him the honors of which they themselves were held worthy.