

## REVIEW

PHILOSTRATUS' *APOLLONIUS*:  
A NEW TEUBNER

Boter, Gerard, ed., *Flavius Philostratus. Vita Apollonii Tyanei*. Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Berlin: De Gruyter, 2022. Pp. lxiii + 322. Hardback, €79.95. ISBN 978-3-11021-882-4.

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (*VA*) is a work that has been studied from a range of different perspectives. It has long been an important text in debates about the 'divine man' (*theios anēr*),<sup>1</sup> which debates were themselves in a sense the heir of the ancient comparisons of Apollonius and Jesus.<sup>2</sup> The *Life* is at once the longest surviving ancient biography and a quasi-novelistic text, which employs and varies tropes familiar in the prose fictions contemporary with it. It has consequently attracted the attention of scholars both of ancient biography and of the ancient novel. It has also been, along with the other works in the *Corpus Philostrateum*, a key text in discussions of Hellenism under the Roman Empire.<sup>3</sup> The appearance of a new and more dependable text of this intriguing work is warmly to be welcomed. Indeed, among those of us with a long interest in the *Life of Apollonius*, Boter's text has been anticipated for the many years which its creation required, and its arrival is a cause for excitement.

Prior to the appearance of Boter's edition, readers of the *VA* had been dependent, directly or indirectly, on the editions of Kayser.<sup>4</sup> Boter takes a positive view of Kayser's work, demonstrating how, despite the many disparaging judgements which it still attracts, his work did substantially advance knowledge of the *VA*.<sup>5</sup> More recently, the interim edition in Jones' Loeb text

<sup>1</sup> On the role of Apollonius in this discussion see Koskeniemi (1998). For the term (among much else), see du Toit (1997) and the important, though dated, study of Bieler (1935–6).

<sup>2</sup> On this debate see Elsner (2009).

<sup>3</sup> See for instance, among recent discussions, Whitmarsh (2001) 225–43; Kemezis (2014) 150–95.

<sup>4</sup> Kayser (1844), (1870).

<sup>5</sup> Boter refutes Jones' suggestion that Kayser did no further work on the text after 1844: xvii–xviii.

gathered some improvements and conjectures since Kayser's edition.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, a new collation of all of the relevant manuscripts is more than usually welcome. It is, of course, impossible in a review of an edition to go through all that is different from previous texts, so I shall discuss some general choices which inform the edition as a whole, and a few illustrative examples which have seemed to me especially interesting in my own road-testing of the volume.

It is rare to have a Latin *Praefatio* which is both informative and wittily written, but that we certainly do have in this volume. In the usual manner, the introduction begins with an account of the manuscripts. Here, Boter summarises his earlier work on the textual transmission.<sup>7</sup> The twenty-nine surviving manuscripts which contain part or (almost) all of the *VA* divide, as Boter informs us, into two families.<sup>8</sup> Boter's manuscripts A and S (*Parisinus gr.* 1801 and *Laurentianus Conventi Soppressi* 155 respectively) are the sole witnesses of the first family, and all others belong to the second. The texts which were read by Photius and the compilers of the *Souda* also belonged to this group. Manuscript A was Kayser's preferred manuscript, which he described in Horatian terms as *velut inter ignes luna minores*.<sup>9</sup>

Boter's following section on the indirect tradition (*De auctoribus veteribus Vitam Apollonii Tyanei laudantibus*) focusses on Eusebius of Caesarea's *Contra Hieroclem*,<sup>10</sup> Photius, and the *Souda* (xii–xv). Following brief accounts of earlier editions<sup>11</sup> and studies relevant to the establishment of the text of the *Life of Apollonius*,<sup>12</sup> Boter gives a succinct and insightful account of Philostratus' Greek, noting especially the tendency of earlier editors and scholars proposing emendations to introduce classical forms (both syntactically and morphologically) in place of those which the manuscripts attest that Philostratus and his contemporaries employed.<sup>13</sup> The new edition corrects these faults, which were evident in Kayser's widely used text. Naturally, Boter has also included his own conjectures and considered those of earlier scholars (xxiv–xxv). The

<sup>6</sup> Jones (2005).

<sup>7</sup> Boter (2009), (2014), (2020).

<sup>8</sup> Boter (2022) viii.

<sup>9</sup> Boter (2022) viii.

<sup>10</sup> In keeping with the recent scholarly consensus, Boter treats the *Contra Hieroclem* as a genuine work of Eusebius.

<sup>11</sup> Boter (2022) xv–xix.

<sup>12</sup> Boter (2022) xix–xx.

<sup>13</sup> Boter (2022) xx–xxiv. As Boter notes, Schmid's account (1893) of Philostratus' Greek in *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern* over a century ago remains unequalled. Boter sums up his approach in the accompanying monograph, *Critical Notes*: 'Thus one might say that I apply the so-called "principle of charity" with regard to Philostratus' syntax: as long as it seems to be possible to make sense of the syntax I have accepted the transmitted text' (Boter (2023) 20).

full arguments for these emendations are presented in a separate volume, *Critical Notes on Philostratus' Life of Apollonius of Tyana*.<sup>14</sup>

The chapter divisions of Boter's text, like those of earlier editions, go back to Olearius' edition of 1709.<sup>15</sup> The question of what to do with the subsections of chapters, however, presents slightly more difficulty. The recent Loeb by C. P. Jones follows in large part the section divisions which Westermann produced for the longer chapters, but not always.<sup>16</sup> Boter's edition in turn largely follows the subsections of Jones, but on occasion differs where he deems this not to correspond to the structure of the text itself.<sup>17</sup>

The *Praefatio* concludes with some important remarks on the various *apparatus* (that is, the *apparatus fontium*, *testimoniorum*, and *criticus*). The *apparatus fontium*, as Boter says, must invariably be incomplete. This is certainly the case, given how densely intertextual Philostratus' writing, in the *Life of Apollonius* and elsewhere in his corpus, tends to be. The *apparatus criticus* is deliberately inclusive, as Boter tells us, for three reasons. Many of the conjectures by earlier scholars are not easily accessible (e.g., notes made in the margins of editions). On other occasions, the conjectures indicate passages which have been held suspect in earlier scholarship. Finally, this *apparatus* indicates where various conjectures of the past have left a problem unsolved.<sup>18</sup>

A further valuable feature of Boter's introduction is a detailed bibliography of recent and older work on the *VA*, including of course, but not at all limited to, textual matters.<sup>19</sup> This in itself is a valuable resource, especially given the marked increase in Philostratean scholarship in the last few decades. Lastly, as is customary, a *conspectus siglorum* completes the introductory matter.<sup>20</sup>

Before moving to some specific examples, it is worth noting that the work is given the title, ΕΙΣ ΤΟΝ ΤΥΑΝΕΑ ΑΠΟΛΛΩΝΙΟΝ, for which Boter has argued convincingly several years ago in an article in the *Journal of Hellenic Studies*.<sup>21</sup>

Turning then, by way of example, to some passages of interest. When Apollonius and his companions cross the 'Caucasus' they encounter an Empusa, a generalised female spirit of malicious nature who had long been present in Greek folklore (2.4).<sup>22</sup> In keeping with his policy of including the

<sup>14</sup> Boter (2023).

<sup>15</sup> Olearius (1709).

<sup>16</sup> Jones (2005).

<sup>17</sup> Boter (2022) xxv.

<sup>18</sup> Boter (2022) xxviii.

<sup>19</sup> Boter (2022) xxx–lv.

<sup>20</sup> Boter (2022) lvi–lxiii.

<sup>21</sup> Boter (2015).

<sup>22</sup> Her first literary appearance is in Aristophanes' *Frogs* 285–305.

many conjectures on the text in his *apparatus criticus*, Boter mentions here the reading of one of the correctors in E that gives *ἐμπεσούσης* (clearly an error) in place of *ἐμπούσης*. This is evidently a mere misunderstanding leading to a mistaken attempt at correction. The end of this phrase, however, is more troublesome. Like her predecessor in Aristophanes' *Frogs*, this Empusa changes into various forms, which Philostratus leaves undefined: *τὸ δεῖνα γιγνομένη καὶ τὸ δεῖνα αὖ καὶ οὐδὲν εἶναι*. These last three words appear both awkwardly phrased and not entirely apposite: if we are to envisage the Empusa vanishing, why phrase it in quite this way? The phrase has struck various scholars similarly, and Boter's apparatus records three conjectures: Reiske<sup>2</sup>: *οὐδὲν ἐν εἶναι*; Jackson: *οὐδὲν ἔμεινε*; and Rijksbaron *οὐδὲ μείναι* or *οὐδὲν μείναι* (p. 42). A reference to the mutability of the Empusa works much better than a clumsily phrased description of her disappearance. On the other hand, as Boter argues in *Critical Notes*, justifying his retention of the manuscript reading, the phrase *οὐδὲν εἶναι* may well have several meanings at once: 'it did not remain the same', 'it came to be nothing', and 'it was nothing' (i.e., it did not really exist). As Boter observes, this suits Philostratus' elusive style (as too, in a different way, does the abrupt shift to the infinitive). The treatment of this phrase is also, I would add, a good example of the value of *Critical Notes* alongside the new edition, where the full arguments involved in the choice are of a length and type which do not easily reduce into an *apparatus criticus*.

When Apollonius reaches Taxila, we are given a brief description of the city (2.23), before we hear of Apollonius' meeting with the king, Phraotes. Here the manuscripts vary between opposite meanings: according to A the streets of Taxila are constructed *εὐτάκτως τε καὶ Ἀττικῶς*, according to E and F they are *ἀτάκτως τε καὶ Ἀττικῶς*. Like, for instance, Jones before him, Boter has chosen the orderly streets (*εὐτάκτως*). As he remarks in *Critical Notes* the opposite would hardly suit the tone of praise of all things related to Taxila and its king in this part of the text. It is also, as he goes on to observe, true to the archaeological evidence for Taxila, where parts at least of the city were laid out according to a rectangular plan.<sup>23</sup> Boter has also followed the suggestion of Van Wulfften Palthe and deleted *τε καὶ Ἀττικῶς*, on the grounds that *Ἀττικῶς* has entered the text as a variant reading of *εὐτάκτως* immediately before. It is, indeed, difficult to see what the meaning would be of describing these streets as 'Attic'. All of this, it seems to me, gives a better text.

At the conclusion of 2.32, the virtuous king of Taxila, Phraotes, finishes telling Apollonius the story of how he came into power, and assures him that he asked that the usurper, who has just been ousted, 'should not die in such a way' (*ἐμοῦ παραιτουμένου μὴ τοιῶδε τρόπῳ ἀποθανεῖν αὐτόν* (2.32.2)). So far, so good. But what exactly was that manner of death? Here the manuscripts and

<sup>23</sup> Boter (2023) 74–5.

conjectures give plenty of scope for confusion. The manuscripts offer three variants: all read τὸν δὲ ἔσω (or εἶσω) κηφήνα περὶ τὸ τεῖχος, but vary in the verb completing the phrase: εἶρξαν or ἤρξαν. This looks simple enough: just two variant aorist forms for ἔργω or εἴργω. There is, however, the incorrect rough breathing on both forms. The notion of ‘walling in’ the ‘drone’ makes good literal and metaphoric sense. In addition to that troubling rough breathing, however, the phrase περὶ τὸ τεῖχος fits poorly with the rest of the sentence. Clearly something has gone awry. In Boter’s text, Pierson’s conjecture of εἶλξαν<sup>24</sup> has been adopted. This makes sense both of the corrupt verb and the reference to the city walls: rather than walling in the usurper to die, on this reading, his enemies have dragged him around the city walls, like Achilles dragging Hector. The *apparatus criticus* records other conjectures, each of which attempts to make sense of this sentence on the assumption that it describes the ‘walling in’ rather than the ‘dragging around’ of the fallen ruler. Reiske suggests τὸν δὲ ἔσω κηφήνα περιστάντες τὸ τεῖχος εἶρξαν, filling a possible lacuna with (by way of example) ζῶντα ὑποτύφειν (or κατακάειν) ἀπειλοῦντες.<sup>25</sup> Alternatively, though staying with the theme of walling in (which Kayser also chose) Scheibe suggested τὸν δὲ ἔσω κηφήνα περιτειχισάμενοι εἶρξαν or τὸν δὲ ἔσω κηφήνα περὶ <χώσαντες> τὸ τεῖχος εἶρξαν.<sup>26</sup> Taking a different tack again, Westermann suggested<sup>27</sup> τὸν δ’ ἔσω κηφήνα περὶ τὸ τεῖχος ἤγγξαν, which is ingenious, though it is difficult to picture how the crowd is to ‘strangle him around the walls’. Schenkl proposed,<sup>28</sup> *exempli gratia*, καπνιοῦντες to fill a lacuna after κηφήνα (i.e., τὸν δὲ ἔσω κηφήνα <...> τὸ τεῖχος εἶρξαν), thus developing the metaphor of the ‘drone’. Already in the various editions of his text, Kayser understandably changed his mind about this difficult sentence. In his *apparatus criticus* he suggested περὶ δὲ τὸν ἔσω κηφήνα τὸ τεῖχος εἶρξαν, then made the minor change of περὶ to πέριξ in his *addenda*. In his second edition he further emended to τὸν δὲ ἔσω κηφήνα πέριξ τὸ τεῖχος ἔκλησαν. In both cases, in other words, Kayser saw the text as in some way describing the walling in of the usurper.

There is much to recommend the reading (Pierson’s) which Boter has adopted. The intervention required is minimal and the corruption plausibly explained. As Boter observes in *Critical Notes*, the usurper is already locked up at this point, so we do not need to be told that again. Furthermore, the brutality of this means of killing him is more likely to have caused Phraotes’

<sup>24</sup> Pierson (1830) 124.

<sup>25</sup> Reiske’s conjectures are collected in Schenkl (1893). For this passage see Schenkl (1893) 123–4.

<sup>26</sup> Scheibe (1847) 432.

<sup>27</sup> Westermann (1894).

<sup>28</sup> Schenkl (1892) 124.

protests.<sup>29</sup> I would add that the Homeric touch of the dragging of the body is entirely in keeping with the many allusions to and echoes of the Homeric epics in the *Vita Apollonii* (and indeed in other texts of the *Corpus Philostrateum*).

A little later in Apollonius' Indian travels (3.13), a textual difficulty is solved by an old conjecture (Scaliger's, also favoured by Valckenaer).<sup>30</sup> At this point Apollonius has reached the mound of the Brahmins, where he sees the vestiges of Dionysus' and Heracles' unsuccessful assault on this sanctuary. The Pans (who by this point in antiquity can appear in the plural) were ordered into the attack because of a particular skill. It is here that the issue arises. The three manuscript witnesses for this part of the text (A E and F) state that the Pans are *πρὸς τὸν σεισμόν ἱκανούς*. This seems peculiar reasoning, as there is no evident threat of earthquakes (despite the other remarkable powers of the Brahmins), and in the event the Pans are struck by the Brahmins' thunderbolts (*ἐμβροντηθέντας*), thus leaving their impressions on the stone of the mound. Scaliger's solution (*πρὸς τὸ σιμόν ἱκανούς*) is both palaeographically plausible and improves the sense: in this up-hill fight the goatly legs of the Pans will be useful, even if in the event they prove no match for the invincible Brahmins.

It is, of course, impossible to fully review the thousands of textual choices made and problems presented in a book of this scale. Consequently, my discussion has been a not very methodical selection of some of the textual issues and improvements which caught my eye in working with Boter's edition in recent months. Careful readers of the new edition will, of course, find their own. Boter's work has been many years in the making and has repaid the wait. His judgements are invariably sensible and informed, and tentative when necessary. The fullness of the *apparatus criticus* is to be commended, and is an enormous advance on Kayser's old text on which we were previously, directly or indirectly, dependent. With Stefec's edition of the *Lives of the Sophists*,<sup>31</sup> De Lannoy's *Heroicus*,<sup>32</sup> and now Boter's *Life of Apollonius*, readers and scholars of Philostratus are now well equipped, at least in regards to these three, central texts of the corpus.

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<sup>29</sup> Boter (2023) 83.

<sup>30</sup> Scaliger's conjecture comes from his notes in the copy of the Aldine edition in the Leiden University Library. Valckenaer's notes are published in Schenkl (1892).

<sup>31</sup> Stefec (2016).

<sup>32</sup> De Lannoy (1977).

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