

# SHORTER CONTRIBUTIONS

## PHILOSTRATUS' *HEROIKOS* AND ITS SETTING IN REALITY\*

**Abstract:** This paper discusses the background in reality of the *Heroikos* (*Dialogue concerning Heroes*), which is ascribed to Philostratus of Athens, and is mainly devoted to the hero Protesilaos. After a summary of the work, the paper considers it from four aspects. The *time of writing* falls after 217 (the second victory at Olympia of the athlete Helix of Phoenicia); there may be a reference to events in Thessaly under the emperor Alexander Severus (222-235). If the author is the well-known Philostratus, then such a date also implies a *dramatic date* in the author's own time. This is corroborated by two series of references which appear to run from the comparatively recent past to the present. One of these concerns bones of heroes, while the other concerns athletes to whom the hero Protesilaos had given advice in the form of oracles. The *geographical setting* of the dialogue is Elaious in the Thracian Chersonese. The evidence for the cult of Protesilaos on the territory of Elaious comes from literature, notably Herodotus, from coins of the time of Commodus, and from modern observations, notably a vivid account given by Heinrich Schliemann. While Philostratus' description of the cult-place at Elaious appears very accurate, his account of the Island of Achilles in the Pontus is less so. Finally, the paper considers the *Heroikos* in the context of contemporary belief about heroes and their powers. Another work probably by the same author, the *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, is adduced to assess the credulity of readers in Philostratus' time and later. Documents and literature of the imperial period show that even dead contemporaries could be regarded as heroes, who were still influential even from beyond the grave. The references to Protesilaos in literature (Pausanias, Lucian) strongly suggest that he was regarded as issuing oracles in the form of dreams, and this too accords with beliefs about heroes both in the Hellenistic period and in the Roman.

As recently as 1987, the dialogue *Heroikos* (*On the Heroes*), usually attributed to Philostratus 'the Athenian' or 'the Younger', was 'more often dismissed than discussed'. Since then the situation has changed. An Italian translation with short commentary and a German commentary have recently appeared, and further publications are expected.<sup>1</sup> Yet many aspects of the work continue to remain problematic. In the early twentieth century, some scholars held that it reflected the visit of Caracalla to Ilium in 214, and was essentially a piece of court literature written to celebrate the visit and to please the emperor. Others have held that it is merely a sophistic show-piece with only the barest connection to real life. Teresa Mantero, in what is still the best overall study of the work, did not contradict the political view, but also held that Philostratus intended to revive the cult of heroes. Robin Lane Fox has recently argued that the *Heroikos* has no relation to Caracalla; rather, it represents what educated readers were 'prepared to enjoy without altogether believing' about possible encounters between living persons and the Homeric heroes.<sup>2</sup>

In the present paper, I have not tried to solve all these problems. Rather, I wish to consider the *Heroikos*' relationship to reality, construing 'reality' broadly as the social and historical background against which a reader of Philostratus' time might have read it. For this purpose, I have first (1) briefly summarized the work, and thereafter I have divided the discussion into four sections, as follows: (2) the time of writing; (3) the dramatic date; (4) the geographical setting; (5) the work's relation to current beliefs about heroes. I have not entered into the question of its literary affinities or its place in literary history, except insofar as such questions impinge on those mentioned above.

\* I am very grateful to Glen Bowersock for his comments, to audiences in Cambridge (England), Harvard and Pisa, and to the anonymous referees for *JHS*. I am also grateful to the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Paris, for permission to reproduce the map shown as PLATE 1a. (All references to the *Heroikos* will be to the edition of L. de Lannoy (1977), reprinted in Rossi (1997)).

<sup>1</sup> The phrase cited is from Lane Fox (1987) 144. Italian translation: Rossi (1997). German commentary: Beschoner (1999). Peter Grossardt (Fribourg) is preparing a new translation and commentary in German, and a conference on the *Heroikos* was held in May, 2001 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

<sup>2</sup> Court literature: Huhn and Bethe (1917). Show-piece: Nilsson (1967-74) 2.563-4. Revival of hero-cult: Mantero (1966). Lane Fox: (1987) 144-8.

## I. SUMMARY

The speakers of the dialogue are a Phoenician merchant 'from the region of Tyre and Sidon' (1.1) and a vine-grower (*ampelourgos*) from Elaious in the Thracian Chersonese.<sup>3</sup> This man now makes his living in the country, though originally he was a well-educated townsman ruined by the dishonesty of his family's slaves (4.6–10). The merchant for his part is on a westward voyage from Egypt and Phoenicia. After putting in at Elaious, he had a dream in which he was reading Homer's 'catalogue of the Achaeans' in the second book of the *Iliad*, and then found himself inviting all these heroes aboard his ship. Now, therefore, fearing that the dream portended ill, and also seeking a favourable sign for the continuation of his voyage, he has come ashore and had a chance encounter with the vine-grower (6.3-6). He in turn claims to be the man to satisfy the other's doubts, since he has frequent meetings with the hero Protesilaos in person. The Phoenician is incredulous, and the dialogue begins with a preliminary conversation about the reality of heroes and giants. After that, the vine-grower relates what he has heard from Protesilaos. This narrative, a kind of gallery of the Achaean and Trojan warriors, is the main part of the work. It includes some not mentioned by Homer, such as Palamedes, but ends with the central figure of the *Iliad*, Achilles. The vine-grower not only describes that hero's appearance, but also expounds how he still lives and receives cult on an island in the Black Sea; this section thus forms a pendant to the description of Elaious, the cult-site of Protesilaos (54-7). At the end of the dialogue, as night begins to fall, the Phoenician declares himself convinced, and the vine-grower urges him either to set sail on the next day, or to return and hear more. The Phoenician opts to do the latter, and the dialogue ends.

## II. THE TIME OF WRITING

The essential evidence comes in a discussion of athletes seeking the advice of Protesilaos (14.4-15.10). The last to be named is a boxer and pancratiast called Helix, who is known from several sources other than the *Heroikos*.<sup>4</sup> When he asked the hero how many times he was fated to win at the Olympics, he received the answer, 'Twice, unless you wish to do so thrice.' The Phoenician, well informed about a champion from his own region, correctly interprets this 'oracle':

(Helix) already had one victory, when he won at wrestling in the men's category after advancing from the boys' [literally, 'a man from among the boys', ἀνὴρ ἐκ παιδῶν].<sup>5</sup> He stripped for the subsequent Olympiad in both wrestling and the pancration. The Eleians became indignant at this, and wanted to shut him out of both events by inventing Olympian charges against him, but reluctantly crowned him for the pancration.

Cassius Dio tells virtually the same story in the context of a portent received by the emperor Elagabalus in Rome, probably in 219, the year of his arrival there (80.10.2). At the Capitolia, the great athletic festival held every four years, Helix won in both wrestling and the pancration; on the usual cycle this should have fallen in 218, but may have been delayed because of the emperor's absence.<sup>6</sup> Dio asserts that the Eleians denied Helix a double victory at his second

<sup>3</sup> Not in Troy, as assumed by Lane Fox (1987) 144-8; cf. Bowie (1970) 30, 'a vintner on the Trojan plain is interviewed by the narrator [!] from the city'.

<sup>4</sup> On Helix, *PIR*<sup>2</sup> A 1520; Jones (1998) 295-6.

<sup>5</sup> On athletes who passed from one age-category to another in the course of a single contest such as the Olympia, Robert (1940-65) 7.112-13. Note especially Julius Africanus *apud* Euseb. *Chron.* (ed. Schoene (1875)

200) on an athlete at Olympia who was 'excluded from the boys' boxing..., advanced to the men's [category], and defeated all in turn'; cf. Moretti (1957) 68-9, no.88.

<sup>6</sup> There is a good discussion of the Capitolia in Friedländer (1921-3) 2.150-1, 4.276-80. The year 219 is favoured by Münscher (1907) 497, and many others; Moretti (1957) 171 no.915, followed by Jones (1998) 295, argued for 218.

Olympiad out of fear that he might win the prestigious title of 'eighth after Heracles'. This was given to those few athletes who had won in wrestling and the pancration at a single Olympic contest.<sup>7</sup>

Unlike Dio, Philostratus says nothing of Helix' success in Rome, and Karl Münscher inferred that he must have written before it had occurred. Convinced that the work was connected with Caracalla's visit to Ilium in 214, Münscher also placed Helix' first Olympic victory in 209, the second in 213. Julius Jüthner replied that Philostratus was not obliged to mention Helix' success at Rome, and that a 'heavy' athlete was unlikely to have enjoyed a long career. His two Olympic victories, therefore, fell more probably in 213 and 217, and 217 will be the *terminus post quem* of the *Heroikos*.<sup>8</sup>

A slightly later *terminus post* might be suggested by a passage near the end of the work.<sup>9</sup> This involves some illegality that the Thessalians had committed in connection with the production of purple; in consequence, they were now reduced to extreme poverty, even selling the tombs of their ancestors (53.22-3). Georges Radet brought this passage into connection with one in the *Historia Augusta* which credits Alexander Severus (222-235) with an interest in purple-production; in addition, an inscription of Corinth, dated to the same reign, mentions a 'procurator of the purple-account' for Thessaly.<sup>10</sup> Further evidence may one day turn up to explain Philostratus' reference, but at present it seems too obscure to be of help. Nonetheless, a date under Alexander would fit what is known of the chronology of the best known of the Philostrati, the author of the *Life of Apollonius* and the *Lives of the Sophists*. The *Life of Apollonius* has a *terminus post* of 217, the year of Julia Domna's death, and it is earlier than the *Lives of the Sophists*, which was probably written in the 230s.<sup>11</sup>

### III. THE 'DRAMATIC' DATE

If the Younger Philostratus did write the *Heroikos*, then the dramatic date must be roughly 'the present'; that is, he does not differentiate that date from the time of composition and of first publication. That might seem surprising, not simply because of the air of fantasy that seems to permeate the work, but also because of its interlocutors. The Phoenician sailor might seem to have wandered from the world of archaic Greece, and the virtuous rustic from romances such as Dio Chrysostom's *Euboean* (*Or.* 7) or Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*. Nonetheless, the cities of the Phoenician coast maintained extensive trade in the Mediterranean in the imperial period; an inscription from Puteoli dated to 176 CE shows that the principal Phoenician city, Tyre, still had a *statio* or trading-post both there and in Rome, and grave-inscriptions from the city show a strong and diversified economy in the later Roman Empire.<sup>12</sup>

Philostratus' concern to anchor the dramatic date in current time is suggested by two passages, in both of which a series of references advances from past time to the present. One of these series concerns the discovery of heroic bones. The first set of bones to be mentioned belonged to Telamonian Ajax, and were uncovered in the reign of Hadrian, when the action of the sea broke open Ajax' tomb in the Troad. The vine-grower learned of this event from his grandfather (8.1). This is one of several points of contact between the *Heroikos* and Pausanias' *Description of Greece*, probably completed in the 170s. One of the Periegete's informants had

<sup>7</sup> On this kind of computation, Robert (1980) 428; for an athlete similarly cheated in 153 BCE: Schoene (1875) 218; Moretti (1957) 164-5 nos. 861-2.

<sup>8</sup> Münscher (1907) 497-8, 505-8; against, Jüthner (1909) 87-8; so also Lane Fox (1987) 144, 'almost certainly after 217 and perhaps many years after'. It remains odd that Protesilaos promised Helix a third victory at the Olympia 'if he wished', if in fact he was deprived of it by trickery.

<sup>9</sup> For the following argument, see Radet (1925).

<sup>10</sup> Radet (1925), citing *Hist. Aug. Alex. Sev.* 40.6, *ILS* 1575.

<sup>11</sup> The *Vita Ap.* after Julia's death: *Vita Ap.* 1.3. Before the *Sophists*: *Vit. Soph.* 77.6 K. The *Sophists* probably between 231 and 238: de Lannoy (1997) 2387-8.

<sup>12</sup> *OGIS* 595, on which see now Sosin (1999). Grave-inscriptions: Rey-Coquais (1977), especially 154-60. On Phoenicians in the Greek world, see also Vattioni (1987-8).

entered this same tomb when it was broken open by the sea, and saw the corpse within (1.35.4-5).<sup>13</sup>

The Phoenician, however, is unimpressed by a report at second hand and so far in the past, so that the vine-grower makes only brief mention of cases known from early Greek history, and proceeds to some 'from our time' (ἐφ' ἡμῶν, 8.4). The first of these involves a certain 'Aryades, whom some called Ethiopian and others Indian'; his gigantic skeleton was exposed 'not long ago' in Syria when the bank of the river Orontes was 'split' (οὐ πάλαι... σχισθεῖσα, 8.5). This may be another point of contact with Pausanias, since he mentions a Roman emperor who diverted the river Orontes into a newly dug canal; when the old bed had gone dry, it revealed a body which Apollo of Claros identified as an Indian called Orontes, the eponym of the river (Paus. 8.29.3-4).<sup>14</sup> Of the vine-grower's next discoveries of gigantic bones, the first occurred not yet fifty years ago, while the last occurred shortly before the time of the dialogue (8.6-12), but none of these seems to be attested elsewhere.

The other series of references concerns athletes who had consulted Protesilaos. The vine-grower mentions the first of these only by his nickname, a Cilician pancratiast in the time of 'our fathers' (14.4).<sup>15</sup> The next three are boxers, a certain Ploutarchos and his opponent, the Egyptian Hermeias, and another Egyptian called Eudaemon (15.4-7). These four are unknown, though the vine-grower speaks of Eudaemon as still active. The last is Helix of Phoenicia, who (as we have seen) was also active at the dramatic date.

#### IV. THE GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The dialogue is clearly enough located at the city of Elaious in the Thracian Chersonese, or more precisely on its territory, and in the immediate proximity of several monuments of Protesilaos. Elaious is attested in many literary sources, from Herodotus to Procopius, and these show that it had been founded in the sixth century BCE, and still existed in the reign of Justinian. Its site is generally agreed to be at the village of Eski Hissarlik, where there is now a Turkish memorial to the fallen of the First World War. The ancient city stood on an acropolis that dominates the Bay of Morto, just within the entrance to the Dardanelles.<sup>16</sup> The first mention of Protesilaos as a local hero goes back to Herodotus' account of the Persian Artayktes (9.116-20). He mentions a tomb (*taphos*) of the hero within a sacred enclosure (*temenos*), and rich offerings of money, clothing, and the like in the same place. These must have been in some secure, roofed building, and this is probably the *adyton* that Herodotus mentions just below. This was used by the Persian Artayktes, who had gained possession of the sanctuary, when he 'sowed and harvested the enclosure... and lay with women in the *adyton*' (9.116.3). After the King's defeat, Artayktes met a condign fate at the hands of the Athenians.<sup>17</sup>

Philostratus' account of the cult-place involves several elements. He mentions first the hero's grave, 'this great mound on the left' (κολωνὸς μέγας οὐτοσὶ ὁ ἐν ἀριστέραι, 9.1). Also nearby is the sanctuary (*hieron*), barely visible after its despoliation by 'the Mede' (9.5); this seems to imply that all architectural elements on the site had disappeared, *temenos*-walls and *adyton* alike. There was still, however, a cult-image (*agalma*): 'The image here stands on a ship, for the base is in the shape of a ship's prow, and he is portrayed as the ship's captain. But the corrosion of

<sup>13</sup> On the chronology of the *Periegesis*, Habicht (1985) 9-11, and now Knoepfler (1999). On the site of the tomb of Ajax at In Tepe in the Troad, Cook (1973) 88-9.

<sup>14</sup> I have argued elsewhere (Jones (2000)), following Merkelbach and Stauber (1996) 40 no.23, that this emperor is Lucius Verus.

<sup>15</sup> Jüthner (1909) 259 suggests an identification with the Cilician wrestler Maron mentioned by Philostratus at *Gymn.* 36; Peter Grossardt will discuss this person elsewhere.

<sup>16</sup> Map in Demangel (1926) facing p.2, whence Waiblinger (1978) 844 (here PLATE 1b). Excellent discussion in Isaac (1976) 192-4; Waiblinger (1978); see further Loukopoulou (1989) 35, 68.

<sup>17</sup> On this episode and its function in Herodotus' narrative, Boedeker (1988). The term *adyton* implies that access was limited to cult personnel, not that it was totally inaccessible: Stengel, *RE* 1.441.

time and, for that matter, the effect of people anointing it or attaching their vows to it have altered its appearance' (9.6). Philostratus is corroborated by coin-types of Elaious that appear only in the reign of Commodus (180–192). These show Protesilaos' image standing on its curious prow-shaped altar.<sup>18</sup>

Even without Philostratus' testimony, it is clear that the sanctuary lay on the territory of Elaious, and not in the city itself. Thucydides refers to an Athenian ship which beached, or ran aground, 'opposite the sanctuary of Protesilaos' (κατὰ τὸ ἱερόν τοῦ Πρωτεσιλάου, 8.102.3). Similarly, the Elder Pliny enumerates in order 'the promontory of Chersonesus, Mastousia, opposite Sigeum ... the shrine (*delubrum*) of Protesilaos, and at the extreme tip of Chersonesus the town of Elaious, which is called Aëolian' (*NH* 4.11.49).<sup>19</sup> Though Philostratus is the only author to refer to a mound, his evidence has customarily been accepted, and the mound has been identified with one some five hundred metres from the present shore of Morto Bay. This attracted the attention of Schliemann, and was excavated by French soldiers after the First World War.<sup>20</sup> Schliemann accompanies his account with a vivid and romantic engraving, and moreover describes the surroundings in words that graphically illustrate Philostratus' text.<sup>21</sup>

The tumulus of Protesilaos lies near the further end of the small but beautiful valley of exuberant fertility, which extends between Seddul Bahr and Elaëus [sic]. This sepulchre... is not less than 126 metres in diameter. It is now only 10 m[etres] high, but as it is under cultivation, and has probably been tilled for thousands of years, it must originally have been much higher. In order to facilitate its cultivation, its west, south, and east sides have been transformed into three terraces, sustained by masonry, and planted with vines, almond-trees, and pomegranate-trees. The top and the northern slope are sown with barley, and also planted with vines, olive-trees, pomegranate-trees, and some beautiful elms, which last vividly called to my recollection the dialogue in Philostratus between an ἄμπελουργός (vine-dresser) and a Phoenician captain, in which the former speaks of the elm-trees planted round the tomb of Protesilaos by the Nymphs, of which he says that the branches turned towards Troy blossomed earlier, but that they also shed their leaves quickly and withered before the time [sic] ... This tumulus is now called 'Kara Agatch Tepeh', which means, 'hill planted with black trees'.

Philostratus seems more vague when he describes the island of Achilles near the end of the *Heroikos*. By his account, its name is *Leuke*, 'White', and it is a favourite mooring-place for sailors 'sailing out of the Pontus' (54.6, cf. 56.4); at the same time it is 'towards the inhospitable side' and 'towards Maiotis', or the Sea of Azov (54.2-3). Arrian in his *Circumnavigation of the Black Sea*, apparently describing the same island, also names it *Leuke*, and asserts that it contained a temple of Achilles. His account, naturally more precise than Philostratus', allows it to be identified with the modern 'Snake-Island' (*Phidonisi, Serpilor*). This 'lies 45 km NE of the Danube delta out in the Black Sea, [and is] that sea's only non-off-shore island'. In recent years, Ukrainian archaeologists have rediscovered the remains of the temple of Achilles there, and have found anchor-stocks as late as the third century CE, the century of Philostratus. It has also been argued that the Portland Vase shows the marriage of Achilles and Helen on this island, just as it is described by Philostratus. However, he appears to be wrong in placing it 'towards Maeotis', and he has greatly exaggerated its size.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>18</sup> These are enumerated by Robert (1951) 75, observing that Schliemann found an example at Ilium; to his references add Babelon (1951) Pl. I no.9; *LIMC* 7.2 (1994) 430 no.11.

<sup>19</sup> However, Pliny's reference to a shrine suggests either that his information was out of date, or that a cult building had vanished between the time of his source and of Philostratus.

<sup>20</sup> Schliemann (1884) 254-62, with fine engraving,

255 (here PLATE 2); Demangel (1926).

<sup>21</sup> Schliemann (1884) 256-7.

<sup>22</sup> Arrian: *Peripl.* 21-3, with the commentary of Silberman (1995) 59-62. Inscriptions: Latyshev (1916) nos.325-6. Recent excavations: Hind (1993) 91, whence the quotation in the text; Treister (1994) 9-11. Portland Vase: Hind (1995). A reader for *JHS* suggests that Philostratus thinks of the island as 'towards Maiotis' from the point of view of sailors coasting the Danube delta.

The choice of Protesilaos' sanctuary as the setting for his dialogue is clearly connected with his subject-matter, and may be compared with Plutarch's use of Delphi for certain of his dialogues such as *On the E at Delphi*. Even closer is another work of Plutarch, the dialogue *On Love (Amatorius)*, which takes place at Thespieae in Boeotia, or more precisely at the sanctuary of the Muses on Thespian territory.<sup>23</sup> The central topic of the dialogue being married love, the setting is closely tied to the subject, as it is in Philostratus.

#### V. THE SETTING OF BELIEF

Those who have written about the *Heroikos* have often been concerned to measure it against contemporary belief, in particular against belief in the existence of heroes and their posthumous activity. Though 'belief' is a potentially misleading term, being more appropriate to Christianity than to paganism, it may still serve to bring out those aspects of the work that interest modern readers most.

Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* can provide a preliminary *comparandum*. Apollonius certainly received cult from Caracalla, who founded a sanctuary (*hieron*) in his honour at Tyana, and there is ample evidence in literature and inscriptions for the belief in his posthumous existence and power.<sup>24</sup> Philostratus' account of him seems to the modern eye closer to fiction than fact; particular suspicion has fastened on the 'Assyrian' Damis, the follower of the sage whose papers, containing a hitherto unknown fund of information, came providentially into the author's hands. In the early fourth century, the historicity of Apollonius became an issue between Christians and their opponents. An anti-Christian official under Diocletian, Sossianus Hierocles, wrote a tract to show that pagans had not accepted Apollonius as more than a 'divine man', despite his wondrous deeds, while Eusebius of Caesarea replied with a double set of arguments, both of which served his purpose: Philostratus freely invented many of Apollonius' miracles, and those which he had not invented proved his hero to be a magician in league with demons. While Hierocles' work is now known only from hostile quotations, he seems to have accepted Philostratus' account in its entirety, and even Eusebius evinces no doubt about the authenticity of Philostratus' sources, not even Damis.<sup>25</sup>

In the rest of this paper I will examine the *Heroikos* in the light of contemporary belief about heroes. Though we think of the archaic and classical periods of Greece as the heyday of heroes, in fact they continued to attract interest, and often to receive cult, down to late antiquity.<sup>26</sup> Heroes are notoriously difficult to classify, but for our purposes we may observe two categories: those celebrated in classical Greek literature, above all Homer, and ones newly created out of the recently dead. Brasidas at Amphipolis is an instance of the latter kind (Thuc. 5.11), and by imperial times such civic heroization had become widespread. Thus Athens and Sparta honour the young Statilius Lamprias of Epidaurus as a hero; Sosia Polla, who had probably died during her husband's year as proconsul of Asia, is a 'heroine'. In 242, the citizens of Arcesine on Amorgos honoured a certain Aurelius Octavius as a hero, 'the fairest crown of his family, a holy and decent man (*hieros kai euprepês anêr*)'. This decree, perhaps the last extant one known from a Greek city, is only slightly later in date than the *Heroikos*.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Mor.* 748e - 771e. On the site of the Mouseion, Roux (1954).

<sup>24</sup> Caracalla and Apollonius: Cass. Dio 77.8.14. There is a large literature on this cult: Jones (1980) 193-4; Dzielska (1986) 51-84.

<sup>25</sup> Accessible text in Conybeare (1912) 484-605. On Eusebius' riposte, Barnes (1981) 164-7.

<sup>26</sup> Julian, *Ep.* 79 Bidez-Cumont, on a furtive cult of

Hector at Ilium c. 355; note also the fourth- or fifth-century inscription from Megara concerning the heroes of the Persian Wars: *IG* vii.53 = Page, *FGE* 'Simonides' xvi.

<sup>27</sup> Lamprias: *IG* iv<sup>2</sup>.82, 85. Polla: *IGR* iv.779-80 (Apamea); J. and L. Robert (1977) 418 no.489. Octavius: *IG* xii.7, 53 = *Syll.*<sup>3</sup> 889.

The thinking behind such heroization is rarely easy for us to reconstruct, since we usually depend on literary works operating within a special frame of reference (though a work may be literary, and yet correspond to 'ordinary' belief).<sup>28</sup> Yet Aelius Aristides' funerary oration for his young pupil Eteoneus, though highly traditional, would have defeated its purpose of consoling Eteoneus' family and citizens if it had borne no relation to what they actually believed. 'Neither Cocytus nor Acheron have taken him, nor will a tomb receive and hide him, but renowned and ageless he now roams for ever as a hero' (31.15 Keil). So also 'Menander' when giving advice for composing a funeral oration, suggests the following: 'I feel convinced that he who has gone dwells in the Elysian fields, where dwell Rhadamanthus and Menelaus, and the son of Peleus and Thetis, and Memnon... Let us therefore sing his praises as a hero' (414.16-26, trans. Russell-Wilson).

Families had honoured their deceased members with sacrifice from early times, though it is not until the early Hellenistic period that they call such persons 'heroes' or 'heroines'.<sup>29</sup> A notable example of about 200 BCE is the funerary foundation of Epicteta of Thera, a city which seems to have had a particular tendency to treat its dead in this way.<sup>30</sup> In the imperial period, especially in Asia Minor, the dead are often called 'heroes' and their tombs 'heroa'. Occasionally, the real feeling that lies behind such usages emerges from the chance discovery of documents. When Epicrates of Nacrason sets aside property for the tomb of his son and other family members, he does so 'not only in accord with affectionate feeling towards my child, but because the hero often visited me in dreams, signs and visions'.<sup>31</sup>

Though many authors mention Protesilaos' tomb at Elaious, the first evidence for him as a source of oracles comes from the third quarter or so of the second century, just when coins of the city show him on his peculiar altar.<sup>32</sup> Pausanias mentions him together with Amphiaraios at Oropos and Trophonios at Lebadeia as 'persons who were once men, but have the honours of gods among the Greeks, and have whole cities dedicated to them' (1.34.2); since Amphiaraios and Trophonios were famous for their oracles, the same may be inferred of Protesilaos. Similarly, when Lucian gives a list of impostors usurping the oracular role of Apollo, it ends with 'Hector in Ilium and Protesilaos in the Chersonese' (*Deor. Conc.* 12).

Philostratus credits his hero with several kinds of superhuman knowledge. His knowledge of the heroes of the Trojan War of course comes from his earthly lifetime, though he has supplemented it by conversing with them in the after-life. He also knows the past history of visitors to his sanctuary, and drives away the impious. Thus on one occasion a married man visited the shrine in the company of his unfaithful wife and her seducer. The husband went to sleep there at midday, and the hero 'stood over him' (*ephistatai*, a frequent term for dream-visitations)<sup>33</sup> and warned him that the two were plotting against his life (16.3-4). But his chief activity was to advise his suppliants in matters of their profession or of everyday life. Hence his advice to the vine-grower to change his way of life and take up viticulture (4.9) and his 'oracles' issued to athletes (15.3, 10); but he also gave medical advice over minor illnesses such as quartan fever (malaria), and over affairs of the heart (16.1-2). Since Philostratus talks of the sanctuary as ruined, and makes no mention of priests or prophets, the hero presumably gave his advice in the way he did to the cuckolded husband, in dreams.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Observe Parker (1996) 136: 'We must reject as an explanation any "two-tier" hypothesis, whereby the authors of the Funeral Speeches, resolutely intellectual, ignore the more religious emotions of their simpler auditors.'

<sup>29</sup> The earliest case seems to be Antigonus of Cnidus (Blümel (1992) no.301) about 275.

<sup>30</sup> Foundation of Epicteta: *IG* xii.3.330; Ritti (1981) no.31; cf. F. Deneken in Roscher, *Lex.* 2.2530-2, and now Wittenburg (1990). On 'heroization' in Thera, Deneken

2548; Robert (1944) 40-4 = (1969-90) 3.1406-10.

<sup>31</sup> Herrmann and Polatkan (1969) 10, lines 33-5; cf. J. and L. Robert (1970) 440.

<sup>32</sup> Above, n.18.

<sup>33</sup> Bibliography in Robert (1940-65) 11/12, 544 n.5.

<sup>34</sup> On prophetic and advisory dreams in antiquity, the literature is enormous: there is much useful material in Frenschkowski (1998). On dedications made *kat'onar*, van Straten (1976).

In most cases, suppliants probably came to venerate the hero's statue, told him their needs in prayer, and then received his answer either on the site itself or in Elaious; if their prayers were answered, they would later give thanks by plastering the statue with votives. A Hellenistic historian, Nymphodorus of Syracuse, mentions a similar procedure on Chios. Here the citizens set up a *herôon* on their territory for a certain Drimakos, in his lifetime the leader of a band of run-away slaves. 'They say', continues the historian, 'that he appears to many of the Chiotes in their dreams and warns them when their slaves are plotting; and those who receive his visitations sacrifice to him, coming to the place where his *herôon* is'.<sup>35</sup>

Such commonplace questions as Protesilaos' consultants put to him had by now become the common business even of the major oracles, as Plutarch complains (*de Pyth. orac.* 408 b-c). Nonetheless, the second century is an especially fertile period both for the revival of older oracles, such as those of Claros and Didyma, and for the creation of new ones. The most notorious example is Alexander of Abonuteichus and his oracle of the new snake-god, Glycon, which came into existence approximately in the reign of Antoninus Pius. About the same time, the millionaire Opramoas of Rhodiapolis helped to revive the ancient shrine of Apollo of Patara. Writing in the late 170s, the Christian Athenagoras mentions two recently deceased pagans as issuing oracles, the Cynic Peregrinus in Parium and a certain Neryllinus in Alexandria Troas.<sup>36</sup> The clustering of these cults in the region of the Homeric Troy (Alexandria Troas, Parium, Elaious, Thasos) is probably not accidental. This appears to have constituted a zone of Iliadic piety, in which local rivalries combined with the reverence accorded to Homer in fostering this creation of new oracles.

Thus it may be argued that even a sophisticated reader of Philostratus might have been ready to believe, not merely that Protesilaos issued oracles, but that he appeared to especially faithful devotees, and gave them privileged information from beyond the grave. A loving father like Epicrates of Nacrason obeyed his son when 'the hero' appeared to him and urged him to set aside property in his memory. Shortly before his immolation, Peregrinus Proteus sent 'angels of death' (*necrangeloi*) to numerous cities, which no doubt included his native Parium (*Luc. Peregr.* 41); within some ten years of his death, as Athenagoras shows, he was already effecting cures from beyond the grave. We need not suppose that Philostratus wrote with the motive of supplanting the Homeric account of the Trojan War: but he may well have hoped to promote belief in the powers of Protesilaos.

CHRISTOPHER P. JONES  
*Harvard University*

<sup>35</sup> Athen. 6.265c – 266e = Jacoby, *FGrHist* 572 F4.

<sup>36</sup> On oracular activity in this period, Robert (1980) 402-5, especially 402 n.38 on Opramoas; Lane Fox

(1987) 200-61; on Peregrinus and Neryllinus, Athenag. *Leg.* 26.3-4, on which Jones (1985).

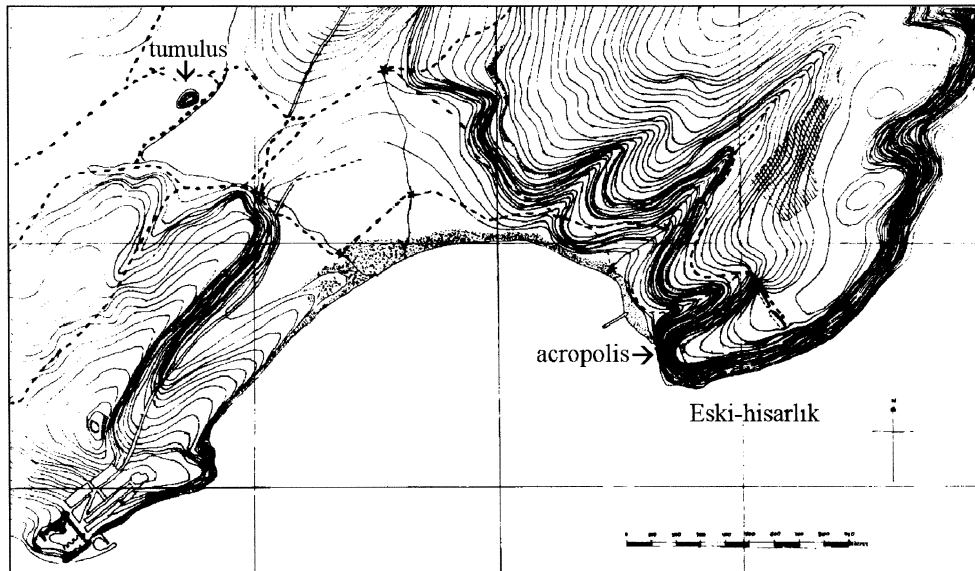
#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Babelon, J. (1951) 'Protésilas à Scioné', *Rev.Num.*, 5th ser. 13, 1-13
- Barnes, T.D. (1981) *Eusebius and Constantine* (Cambridge, MA and London)
- Beschorner, A. (1999) *Helden und Heroen, Homer und Caracalla: Übersetzung, Kommentar und Interpretationen zum Heroikos des Flavios Philostratos* (Bari)
- Blümel, W. (1992) *Die Inschriften von Knidos I (Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 41, Bonn)*
- Boedeker, D. (1988) 'Protesilaos and the End of Herodotos' *Histories*', *Class. Ant.* 7, 30-48
- Bowie, E.L. (1970) 'Greeks and their past in the Second Sophistic', *Past & Present* 46, 3-41
- Conybeare, F.C. (ed.) (1912) *Philostratus: The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (Cambridge, MA and London)
- Cook, J.M. (1973) *The Troad: An Archaeological and Topographical Study* (Oxford)
- Demangel, R. (1926) *Le tumulus dit de Protésilas* (Paris)



- Dzielska, M. (1986) *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Rome)
- Frenschkowski, M. (1998) 'Traum und Traumdeutung im Matthäusevangelium', *Jahrb. Ant. Christ.* 41, 5-47
- Friedländer, L. (1921-3) *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms* (9th and 10th edns, Leipzig)
- Habicht, C. (1985) *Pausanias' Guide to Ancient Greece* (Sather Classical Lectures 50, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London)
- Herrmann, P. and K.Z. Polatkan (1969) *Das Testament des Epikrates und andere neue Inschriften aus dem Museum von Manisa* (Sitz. Akad. Wiss. Wien 265.I, Vienna)
- Hind, J.G.F. (1993) 'Archaeology of the Greek and barbarian peoples around the Black Sea 1983-1992', *Arch. Rep.* 39, 82-112
- (1995) 'The Portland Vase: new clues towards old solutions', *JHS* 115, 153-5
- Huhn, F. and E. Bethe (1917) 'Philostrats Heroikos und Diktys', *Hermes* 53, 613-24
- Isaac, B. (1976) *The Greek Settlements in Thrace until the Macedonian Conquest* (Leiden)
- Jones, C.P. (1980) 'An epigram on Apollonius of Tyana', *JHS* 100, 190-4
- (1985) 'Neryllinus', *CP* 80, 40-5
- (1998) 'The pancratiasts Helix and Alexander on an Ostian mosaic', *Journ. Rom. Arch.* 11, 293-8
- (2000) 'The emperor and the giant', *CP* 95, 476-81
- Jüthner, J. (1909) *Philostratus über Gymnastik* (Leipzig and Berlin)
- Knoepfler, D. (1999) 'Pausanias à Rome en l'an 148?', *REG* 112, 485-509
- Lane Fox, R. (1987) *Pagans and Christians* (New York)
- Lannoy, L. de (1977) *Flavius Philostratus: Heroicus* (Leipzig)
- (1997) 'Le problème des Philostrate (état de la question)', *Aufstieg und Niedergang* ii 34.3 (Berlin and New York) 2362-449
- Latyshev, B. (1916) *Inscriptiones antiquae Orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini* 1 (2nd edn, St. Petersburg)
- Loukopoulou, L.D. (1966) *Contribution à l'Histoire de la Thrace propontique durant la Période archaïque* (Athens)
- Mantero, T. (1966) *Ricerche sull' Heroikos di Filostrato* (Genoa)
- Merkelbach, R. and J. Stauber (1996) 'Die Orakel des Apollon von Klaros', *Epigraphica Anatolica* 27, 1-53
- Moretti, L. (1957) *Olympionikai: I Vincitori negli antichi agoni olimpici* (Atti Accad. Lincei, Memorie, Serie 8, vol. 8.2, Rome)
- Münscher, K. (1907) 'Die Philostrate', *Philologus* Suppl. 10.4 (Leipzig)
- Nilsson, M.P. (1967-74) *Geschichte der griechischen Religion* (3rd edn, Munich)
- Parker, R. (1996) *Athenian Religion: A History* (Oxford)
- Radet, G. (1925) 'Notes sur l'Histoire d'Alexandre II: Les théores thessaliens au tombeau d'Achille', *REA* 27, 81-93
- Rey-Coquais, J.-P. (1977) *Inscriptions grecques et latines découvertes dans les Fouilles de Tyr I: Inscriptions de la Nécropole* (Bull. Mus. Beyrouth 29, Paris)
- Ritti, T. (1981) *Iscrizioni e rilievi greci nel Museo Maffeiano di Verona* (Rome)
- Robert, J. and L. (1970) 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 83, 362-488
- (1977) 'Bulletin épigraphique', *REG* 90, 314-448
- Robert, L. (1940-65) *Hellenica: Recueil d'épigraphie, de numismatique et d'antiquités grecques* (Paris)
- (1944) 'Hellenica', *Rev. Phil.* 18 (1944) 5-56 = Robert (1969-90) 3.1371-422
- (1951) *Études de numismatique grecque* (Paris)
- (1966) 'Inscriptions d'Aphrodisias: première partie', *Ant. Class.* 35, 377-432 = Robert (1969-90) 6.1-56
- (1969-90) *Opera Minora Selecta* (Amsterdam)
- (1980) *A travers l'Asie Mineure* (Bibl. Éc. fr. d'Athènes et de Rome 139, Paris)
- Rossi, V. (1997) *Filostrato: Eroico* (Venice)
- Roux, G. (1954) 'Le Val des Muses et les Musées chez les auteurs anciens', *BCH* 78, 22-48
- Schliemann, H. (1884) *Troja: Results of the Latest Researches and Discoveries* (London)
- Schoene, A. (ed.) (1875) *Eusebi Chronicorum Liber Prior* (Berlin)
- Silberman, A. (1995) *Arrien: Périple du Pont-Euxin* (Paris)
- Sosin, J. (1999) 'Tyrian stationarii at Puteoli', *Tyche* 14, 275-84
- Straten, F.T. van (1976) 'Daikrates' dream: a votive relief from Kos, and some other kat'onar dedications', *Babesch* 51, 1-38
- Treister, M.Y. (1994) 'Archaeological news from the northern Pontic region', *Ancient Civilizations from Scythia to Siberia* 1.3-39
- Vattioni, Fr. (1987-8) 'Fenici, Siri e Arabi emigrati in area greca', *Ann. Ist. Univ. Or. Napoli (AION)* 9-10, 91-124
- Waiblinger, A. (1978) 'La ville grecque d'Éléonte en Chersonèse de Thrace et sa nécropole', *CRAI*, 843-57
- Wittenburg, A. (1990) *Il Testamento di Epikteta* (Trieste)

PHILOSTRATUS' *HEROIKOS*



(a) The territory of Elaious and the so-called tumulus of Protesilaos (Demangel (1926) fig.3).

By permission of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris



(b) Tumulus of Protesilaos on the Thracian Chersonese opposite the Plain of Troy (Schliemann (1884) 255).