New Test. Stud. (2018), 64, pp. 343–361. © Cambridge University Press, 2018
doi:10.1017/S0028688518000073

Literary Eyewitnesses: The Appeal to an Eyewitness in John and Contemporaneous Literature

M. DAVID LITWA
Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry, Locked Bag 4115, Fitzroy MDC, Victoria 3065, Australia. Email: david.litwa@acu.edu.au

This essay supports the thesis that the Beloved Disciple is a purely literary character employed as a literary device of authentication recognisable during the late first and early second centuries CE. As evidence, three works are thoroughly compared with the Fourth Gospel in regard to their eyewitness appeals: Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (a biography), the *Wonders beyond Thule* by Antonius Diogenes (a historiographical novel) and the *Diary of the Trojan War* (a revisionary history) attributed to Dictys of Crete. All three works are roughly contemporaneous with the Fourth Gospel and offer important insights into the sophisticated use of an eyewitness as a literary character to guarantee the (spiritual and moral) truth of a narrative.

Keywords: John, Fourth Gospel, Beloved Disciple, eyewitness, literary conventions, history, fiction, myth, Dictys of Crete, Antonius Diogenes, Philostratus

1. Introduction

Is the Beloved Disciple in John's Gospel a historical eyewitness or a literary device?[1] One way of tackling this question is to examine the context of the eyewitness authentication device in the literature of the time period. We will then be in a position to see whether or not texts that use the device throw light on the eyewitness appeal in the Fourth Gospel. In this essay, we treat three works that have not

1 R. Bauckham opts for the former position (*Jesus and the Eyewitnesses: The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006) 319–57). His arguments have been criticised by J. Schröter, 'The Gospels as Eyewitness Testimony? A Critical Examination of Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*', *JSNT* 31 (2008) 195–209; D. Catchpole, 'On Proving Too Much: Critical Hesitations about Richard Bauckham's *Jesus and the Eyewitnesses*', *JSHJ* 6 (2008) 169–81; J. C. S. Redman, 'How Accurate are Eyewitnesses? Bauckham and the Eyewitnesses in the Light of Psychological Research', *JBL* 129 (2010) 177–97.

yet been sufficiently compared with John in regard to eyewitness appeals: Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (a biography), the *Wonders beyond Thule* by Antonius Diogenes (a historiographical novel)[2] and the *Diary of the Trojan War* (a revisionary history) attributed to Dictys of Crete. The *Diary* may slightly predate the composition of John, the *Wonders* are roughly contemporaneous, and the *Life of Apollonius* postdates John by a little over a century. All three works, however, are informed by a Hellenistic literary culture which blended the conventions of fiction and history in often surprising ways.[3]

First we offer some preliminary remarks on the cultural value placed upon eyewitness testimony in ancient Greek culture. In Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus praises Demodocus for singing the events of the Trojan War 'as if you were present yourself' (ὥς τέ που ἢ αὐτὸς παρεών).[4] Demodocus was in fact not present, a point which Odysseus well knows. Still, by means of his vivid presentation, Demodocus could make it *seem* as if he was an eyewitness or had heard from one who was. Thus even Homer knew that if one was not an eyewitness, skilful literary art could produce an 'eyewitness effect'.

Whether or not one was a historical eyewitness, the appeal to eyewitness knowledge had the effect of increasing the plausibility of one's account. The historian Polybius approved a saying of the philosopher Heraclitus: 'The eyes are truer and more accurate witnesses (μάρτυρες) than the ears.'[5] In his *Histories*, Herodotus features one of his characters similarly saying: 'people trust their ears less than their eyes'.[6] The historian Philo (early second century CE) started his history with the words: 'The ears are more untrustworthy than the eyes, thus I write what I have seen (γράφω τοίνυν ἃ εἶδον).'[7]

In the ancient world, people listened to books read aloud. Yet learning by ear, Polybius observed, did not qualify one to write history. A true historian, he urged, should go to the site of an event and interview eyewitnesses with critical judgement. Critical judgement is important since not all eyewitnesses told or remembered the (whole) truth.[8] The greater the events, the greater the biases in reporting them.

It was widely thought that, if possible, the historian himself ought to be an eyewitness. The fourth-century BCE universal historian Ephorus insisted: 'if it were

2 Scholars who classify this work as a romance do not, in my view, take sufficient account of its presentation as historical discourse.

3 G. Bowersock, *Fiction as History: Nero to Julian* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 1–29; K. Ní Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction with Lucian: Fakes, Freaks and Hyperreality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014) 261–77.

4 Homer, *Odyssey* 8.487–91. All translations in this article are my own.

5 Polybius, *Histories* 12.27.1.

6 Herodotus, *Histories* 1.8.2.

7 Quoted by Lucian, *How to Write History* 29.

8 Polybius, *Histories* 12.28.4–10.

possible for us to be present (παρεῖναι) at all events, this would be better by far for experiential knowledge (διαφέρειν πολὺ τῶν ἐμπειριῶν)'.[9] In the mid-second century, Lucian wrote that ideally a historian should be 'present and an eyewitness' (παρόντα καὶ ἐφορῶντα).[10]

Historians who lived through the events that they described took pains to make their personal experience plain. The Athenian historian Thucydides, who wrote a history of the Peloponnesian War, claimed to have lived through the thirty-year conflict. When the war started, Thucydides affirmed, he was already an adult. Initially, he was a general in the war until – after failing to defend a city from capture – he was exiled for twenty years. Exile, if personally arduous, proved beneficial for the historian, since he gained the leisure to gather information precisely. As a non-combatant, Thucydides could interview witnesses from both sides, from whom he gained a more balanced perspective.[11]

The historian Josephus made even more forceful claims to being an eyewitness. The subject of his first history was the Jewish War (66–73 CE). In the early phases of the war, Josephus was appointed general in an effort to defend the Galilee. Yet the Romans made short work of Josephus' forces. After losing his men, Josephus himself was captured and imprisoned. Yet his detainment proved advantageous for his later profession as a historian. With the war in full swing, Josephus could suddenly observe it from the opposing side. Travelling round with the Roman army, he became an eyewitness of events he would otherwise have missed. Based upon his status as an eyewitness (αὐτόπτης), Josephus marketed his credibility and launched attacks upon his critics.[12]

2. The Beloved Disciple

Although no canonical evangelist claims to be an eyewitness, one of them indicates that he bases his material directly on an identifiable eyewitness characterised in his story.[13] We refer to the author of the Fourth Gospel. Late in his narrative, the author introduces a figure he refers to as 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'. This figure, who appears nowhere else in gospel literature, is portrayed as one of Jesus' most intimate companions. At the Last Supper, the Beloved Disciple rests his head upon Jesus' breast (ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ, John 13.23). This posture represents a privileged, intimate relationship, which mirrors Jesus' own relationship with his Father (εἰς τὸν κόλπον, John 1.18).

9 Polybius, *Histories* 12.27.7.

10 Lucian, *How to Write History* 47.

11 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 5.26.5.

12 Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.55–6.

13 By contrast, the author of Luke's appeal to αὐτόπται (1.2) remains vague.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688518000073 Published online by Cambridge University Press

The personal intimacy shared between Jesus and the Beloved Disciple only deepens as the story rises to its climax. When Jesus hangs on the cross, he entrusts the Beloved Disciple with the care of his mother (John 19.25–7). Thus the Beloved Disciple is effectively Jesus' kin. This same disciple is the first male follower to reach the empty tomb. When he steps inside, he is the first to believe in the resurrection (thus showing more insight than Peter). Finally, the Beloved Disciple, though literally in the same boat as Peter, is the first to recognise the resurrected Jesus in Galilee (John 20.8; 21.7). As the story winds down, the reader is evidently meant to suppose that this disciple is the most spiritually mature, insightful and trustworthy of Jesus' followers.

Although the Beloved Disciple is never named, it is clear that he functions to authenticate the contents of the Fourth Gospel. He validates them precisely because he is represented as a trustworthy eyewitness.[14] Presumably, he represents the chief link in the chain of transmission. One does not need to speculate about the identity of the Beloved Disciple to realise his function: to validate beyond doubt the Fourth Gospel's distinctive presentation of Jesus.[15]

To understand the Beloved Disciple as eyewitness in the Gospel of John, we compare other eyewitness claims in contemporaneous literature. This literature indicates that the appeal to an eyewitness was a recognisable historiographical convention. It helped to make a story appear historical. Historical discourse was culturally valued in the ancient world and coded as 'true'. Thus writers seeking to attain plausibility used the tropes of historical discourse, including the appeal to an eyewitness.

The truth or falsity of the appeal was not always evident. In the mid-second century CE, Lucian complained against many historians who falsely declared that they had seen the events that they described.[16] In his *True History*, he exposed this device in the historian Ctesias, 'who wrote a history of the land of India and its characteristics, which [despite his contrary claim] he had neither seen himself nor heard about from anyone else who was telling the truth'.[17] From Lucian we gather that the claim to be an eyewitness as an authenticating device was centuries old (Ctesias lived in the fifth century BCE) and prevalent as a convention not long after John was written. Yet we do not need to lean solely

14 I. Dunderberg, *The Beloved Disciple in Conflict* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 166–75, 201–2.

15 For identifying the Beloved Disciple, see J. H. Charlesworth, *The Beloved Disciple: Whose Witness Validates the Gospel of John?* (Valley Forge: Trinity, 1995).

16 Lucian, *How to Write History* 29.

17 Lucian, *True History* 1.3. Compare Photius, *Library* codex 72 (49b39–50a4)): 'Ctesias, writing as a fabulist, says that he writes the plainest truth, adding that he writes what he himself saw (αὐτὸς ἰδὼν γράφει) and learned from those who saw.' See further N. Holzberg, 'Novel-like Works of Extended Prose Fiction II', *The Novel in the Ancient World* (ed. G. Schmeling; Leiden: Brill, 1996) 619–54, at 629–33.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688518000073 Published online by Cambridge University Press

upon Lucian. There are surviving 'historical' narratives claiming to be written by eyewitnesses roughly contemporary with John.

3. Dictys

The first narrative that we will explore is ascribed to Dictys of Crete. This Dictys is the putative author of a historical work called the *Diary of the Trojan War*. In it, he presents himself as both a historian and an eyewitness of Greece's most famous campaign.

Dictys reports that he went to Troy in the train of the most renowned generals of Crete (namely, Idomeneus and Meriones). He came for the express purpose of compiling a history of the war. Throughout the work, Dictys presents himself as a model historian. He refers to his own credibility as an eyewitness and claims to have questioned other eyewitnesses. At the beginning of his work, he attests:

> In their company [namely, of Idomeneus and Meriones] I recorded with great care the prior events that took place at Troy which were known by Odysseus. At the remaining events which took place afterwards I was present myself (*ipse interfui*) and will expound them as truthfully (*verissime*) as I can.[18]

The goal of strict accuracy via autopsy is associated with the Thucydidean tradition of history.[19] Dictys, in short, presents himself as the strictest kind of historian (though technically he lived long before the genre of history was invented!). His history is written almost entirely in the third person. Yet towards the end of the work, Dictys breaks in with first-person discourse:

> I, Dictys of Knossos, companion of Idomeneus, have inscribed these matters in that idiom which I could best follow and understand among the very different types of speech … I have handed on with full knowledge (*cuncta sciens*) and for the most part from memory gained by experience (*perpessusque magna ex parte memoriae*) what happened in the war between Greeks and barbarians.[20]

To bolster his appeal to memory, Dictys frequently refers to 'us', 'our men' or 'our commander', to give a sense that he participated in the events.[21] He uses the rhetoric and methods of historical narration to distinguish between versions of a story and to provide the most reliable account. He strives to present himself as an impartial witness who faithfully records what other eyewitnesses were saying.

Upon returning home, Dictys finished his history. When he died and was buried, wooden tablets inscribed with his work were laid in his tomb. Centuries

18 [Dictys], *Diary* 1.13.

19 Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War* 1.22.

20 [Dictys], *Diary* 5.17.

21 [Dictys], *Diary* 2.32; 3.14 ('our commander'); 2.37 ('our men'); 2.38 ('our commanders').

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688518000073 Published online by Cambridge University Press

later, these tablets were rediscovered when the historian's grave was opened in the thirteenth year of the Roman emperor Nero (66 CE). Local shepherds unearthed a sealed tin box which they thought contained hidden treasure. They pried it open, but were disappointed when they found only wooden tablets inscribed with a strange script. They delivered the tablets to a local magistrate, who brought the work to the attention of the emperor. Nero commissioned a Greek translation of the text and lodged it in his library. Such, at any rate, is the cover story provided by the document's prologue.

Whether or not Nero was involved in the work's dissemination, the *Diary* was a real document originally composed in Greek. It was translated into Latin in the third or fourth century CE, and cited by several Greek historians as genuine. For instance, the chronographer John Malalas (about 491–578 CE) called the author 'the most wise Dictys of Crete', who 'truthfully sketched the things written beforehand (τὰ προγεγραμμένα) and all the rest of the military accomplishments of the Greeks at Troy … He accurately saw the events of the war and inscribed them since he was there (παρών) in those times with the Greeks.'[22]

By virtue of his reputation as an eyewitness, Dictys secured authority to explain matters that had been left open in Homer's epics. Homer, though a great poet, never claimed the authority of being an eyewitness. In fact, he was thought to have lived some 400 years after the war.[23] Thus how the poet derived his information was subject to perennial dispute. Part of Homer's account was putatively obtained from divine revelation (for instance, the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* book 2). Yet the bulk of the information was legendary material sung by poets across many generations. Dictys, by contrast, required neither the Muses nor human tradition to compose his work. He had seen the events themselves, a fact that lent him great authority.

Dictys never criticised Homer openly. Yet by virtue of his eyewitness authority, he could on many occasions subtly contradict and correct the poet. Another Trojan War revisionist, 'Dares the Phrygian' (second century CE), challenged Homer more directly. Impersonating the historian Cornelius Nepos (about 110–25 BCE), 'Dares' exhorts the reader to accept his eyewitness account over Homer's derivative report. Homer, he says, was not only lacking eyewitness status, he was even put on trial for insanity![24]

Dictys is more subtle. He presents himself as so sober a historian that Homer is made to look unreliable by comparison. The Cretan suppresses the mention of divine agents. Thus there is no scheming of the gods behind the scenes, and no climactic battle of deities played out on Trojan soil (as in *Iliad* book 20).

22 Malalas, *Chronography* 5.10–11 in *BNJ* 49 T2a. Other important Dictys testimonia are surveyed by P. Gainsford, 'Diktys of Crete', *Cambridge Classical Journal* 58 (2012) 58–87, at 65–74.

23 Dio Chrysostom, *Oration* 11.92; Philostratus, *Heroicus* 43.7.

24 [Dares], *De excidio Troiae historia*, prologue, lines 13–16.

Homer's Cyclops Polyphemus is turned into a prideful Sicilian potentate angry at Odysseus for abducting his daughter. Whereas Homer spiced up his epics with fantastic elements (including a talking river and weeping horses), Dictys' account is an unadorned military journal in plain prose. Accordingly, it became one of 'the most authoritative accounts of what happened at Troy' even up until the Enlightenment.[25]

The only problem with this whole scenario is that, in the view of all scholars working today, Dictys of Crete did not exist. He is entirely the creation of an author who wrote the *Diary* presumably in the first century CE (a papyrus from the early second century survives). This author portrayed Dictys as an eyewitness, but Dictys himself (never mentioned in Homer) is a purely literary character previously unknown. The real sources for the *Diary* were the Homeric epics, which the author of the *Diary* attempted, in various ways, to revise and historicise.

There is a saying of Epimenides quoted in the letter to Titus: 'Cretans are always liars' (Tit 1.12). The Christian author of the letter affirms the stereotype: 'That testimony is true!' The Cretans had a reputation as weavers of tall tales by the first century CE. Whether or not the ancients realised it, 'Dictys of Crete', or rather the person who forged the *Diary of the Trojan War*, was a literary artist posing as an eyewitness to make vivid and valuable historical fiction seem like history.

Yet 'Dictys' was not alone. Many other revisionist accounts of the Trojan War circulated in antiquity under the names of so-called eyewitnesses. They include the previously mentioned 'Dares of Phrygia', as well as 'Sisyphus of Cos', 'Pheidalius of Corinth', 'Antipatrus the Acanthian', 'Corinnus of Ilium' and 'Cephalus of Gergithion'. All these names appear to be invented.[26] Still, the clear details of their accounts, the stories about how their writings were found and especially their eyewitness claims served to authenticate their accounts for generations of readers.[27]

25 Gainsford, 'Diktys', 58.

26 H. J. Marblestone, 'Dictys Cretensis: A Study of the *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* as a Cretan Pseudepigraphon' (Ph.D. diss., Brandeis University, 1969) 377.

27 On Dictys, see further S. Merkle, *Die Ephemeris belli Troiani des Diktys von Kreta* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1989), esp. 56–62; *idem*, 'Telling the True Story of the Trojan War: The Eyewitness account of Dictys of Crete', *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (ed. J. Tatum; Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins, 1994) 183–96; *idem*, 'Truth and Nothing but the Truth: Dictys and Dares', *Novel in the Ancient World*, 563–80; *idem*, 'News from the Past: Dictys and Dares on the Trojan War', *Latin Fiction: The Latin Novel in Context* (ed. H. Hofmann; London: Routledge, 1999) 155–66; N. Horsfall, 'Dictys's Ephemeris and the Parody of Scholarship', *Illinois Classical Studies* 33–4 (2008–9) 41–63.

4. Deinias

We turn to a second writer who used the eyewitness authentication device. Antonius Diogenes (writing during the reign of Domitian or in its wake) wrote a work called the *Wonders beyond Thule*.[28] Unfortunately this 24-book composition does not survive. Thus scholars must depend upon a summary of the Patriarch Photius (810–91 CE) and scant papyrus fragments.[29]

According to Photius, Antonius' claimed source was a document inscribed on cypress-wood tablets. This document was buried in the funerary urn of a certain Deinias. This Deinias himself played a decisive role in the narrative of the *Wonders*. He is the main narrator of the story, which he relates to an Arcadian ambassador named Cymbas. By his own testimony, Deinias set out on a journey for the sake of historical inquiry (κατὰ ζήτησιν ἱστορίας). He claims to be an eyewitness of some rather fantastic events, or at least to have heard them from eyewitnesses.[30]

At the end of his life, Deinias was buried in the city of Tyre. After the Greeks under Alexander the Great sacked Tyre in 332 BCE, the tablets were discovered in Deinias' tomb.[31] One of Alexander's officials, a man called Balagros, wrote about the discovery to his wife Phila.[32] This letter, which provided precise details concerning the tomb inscriptions, was integrated into another letter that came to serve as a preface to the whole work.[33]

As in the case of Dictys, modern readers suspect that the 'discovery' of ancient tablets written by an eyewitness is a literary device. Yet what is important for our purposes is not the historicity of the eyewitness claim, but the claim itself as a well-known literary convention. Readers of Antonius' work (ancient and modern) would classify much of it as fabulous. (One of the main characters, Dercyllis, dies but is nightly resurrected.)[34] All the same, Antonius' 'eyewitness' Deinias allowed him to tell the story as if it happened in the past.

This 'as if' was apparently taken quite seriously. Antonius went to great lengths to provide layers of authentication for his work. First of all, he spoke of many

28 Bowersock situates the work in the reign of Domitian (*Fiction*, 37). J. R. Morgan opts for a slightly later date ('Lucian's *True Histories* and the *Wonders beyond Thule* of Antonius Diogenes', *ClQ* 35 (1985) 475–90, at 490). E. L. Bowie assigns it to the decade after 98 CE ('The Chronology of the Earlier Greek Novels', *Ancient Narrative* 2 (2002) 47–63, at 58–60).

29 An English translation of the summary and papyri can be found in S. A. Stephens and J. J. Winkler, eds., *Ancient Greek Novels: The Fragments. Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 101–57.

30 Photius, *Library* codex 166 (109a13–14; 109b7–10).

31 Photius, *Library* codex 166 (111a30).

32 Both names are attested elsewhere (Arrian, *Anabasis* 2.12.2; Diodorus of Sicily, *Library of History* 18.22; 19.59.3), though they are not said to be husband and wife.

33 Photius, *Library* codex 166 (109a6–b31).

34 Photius, *Library* codex 166 (110b24–5).

historical persons and places. He included letters from real and reputable persons (including Balagros and Phila). He even confessed that, though many of his tales might seem unbelievable, he depended on the testimony of more ancient writers (ἀρχαιοτέρων μαρτυρίας). Apparently these writers referred to earlier historians and ethnographers. Antonius even placed the names of these authorities at the head of each volume so that his testimony (μαρτυρία) would be confirmed at the outset.[35]

To some ancient readers at least, parts of Antonius' story sounded enough like history to be used as a historical source. The philosopher Porphyry, no naive literary critic, used Antonius' work as a source for his biography of Pythagoras. He even claimed that Antonius was precise or accurate regarding Pythagoras (τὰ κατὰ τὸν φιλόσοφον ἀκριβῶς διελθόντος).[36] From Antonius, for instance, come the interesting details that Pythagoras learned dream divination from the Hebrews and was directly taught by Zaratus (apparently Zarathustra).[37] Today these details seem incredible (Zarathustra is now thought to have lived much earlier than Pythagoras). Yet it must always be recalled that plausibility often has much to do with what people who are invested in a particular hero *want* or *need* to believe. To some readers – Porphyry not least among them – Antonius' stories could not be dismissed as mere fables. They were true enough to inform a serious biography.[38]

5. Damis

A final writer we will discuss used the eyewitness authentication device with daring skill. We refer to Philostratus, famous rhetor and prolific writer of the early third century. Probably shortly after 217 CE, Philostratus published his *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, a sage and holy man who flourished between the reigns of Nero and Domitian.

Philostratus was not the first person to write a biography of Apollonius. He mentions two previous attempts, one by a man called Maximus (Apollonius' Cilician countryman), and the other by Moeragenes, who Philostratus claimed was 'undeserving of attention' (οὐ γὰρ … προσεκτέον).[39] Philostratus rejected Moeragenes because, though he wrote a four-book biography of Apollonius, he

35 Photius, *Library* codex 166 (111a35–40). See further Mheallaigh, *Reading Fiction*, 11–16, 144–70. I disagree with Mheallaigh (ibid., 112–14) that Antonius' cover letter is designed to advertise the work as fiction.

36 Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 10, 32. Compare Photius, *Library* codex 166 (109a29–110b15).

37 Porphyry, *Life of Pythagoras* 11–12. Chapters 32–6, 44 also go back to Antonius.

38 For Antonius Diogenes, see further J. R. Morgan, 'Readers Writing Readers, and Writers Reading Writers: Reflections of Antonius Diogenes', *Readers and Writers in the Ancient Novel* (ed. M. Paschalis, S. Panayotakis and G. Schmeling; Gröningen: Barkhuis, 2009) 127–41.

39 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.3.1–2.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0028688518000073 Published online by Cambridge University Press

was ignorant of many things. Moeragenes was ignorant, Philostratus claims, because he lacked the best sources.

In this way, Moeragenes' work becomes a foil for Philostratus' own project. By his own report, Philostratus had a superior source – one composed by an eyewitness. This eyewitness was reputedly a close disciple of Apollonius whose name was Damis. Damis wrote notebooks (ὑπομνήματα) in a rough style. The empress Julia Domna, who was given the notebooks, asked Philostratus to rewrite them (μεταγράψαι) in order to improve their style. This project to rewrite Damis resulted in the writing of the *Life of Apollonius* itself. The Damis document is thus portrayed as the key source for Philostratus' entire biography.

Who was this Damis? Philostratus portrays him as a man from Old Ninos (Hierapolis in Syria) who became Apollonius' companion and fellow philosopher.[40] At his first encounter with Apollonius, Damis intuited the significance of his teacher. He offered to be Apollonius' tour guide and interpreter as he travelled towards Babylon. When Apollonius informed him that he knew all languages and human thoughts, Damis addressed Apollonius as a divine being (προσηύξατο, compare John 1.49, where Nathanael addresses Jesus: 'Rabbi, you are the son of God!'). From that point on, Damis travelled around with Apollonius as his constant companion.[41]

We are informed by Philostratus that Damis remembered everything he learned from Apollonius – over a fifty-year period – and exhaustively recorded what Apollonius said and did.[42] Damis is portrayed, in short, as the ideal eyewitness. He is ideal, furthermore, in not leaving his memories unrecorded. Damis himself composed and preserved dozens if not hundreds of tablets (δέλται) containing Apollonius' deeds and sayings. When Damis passed away, his notebooks were preserved among his kin.

Damis' notebooks secured Philostratus' supreme advantage. Previous biographers of Apollonius, Philostratus claimed, did not possess these writings. Thus the reliability and completeness of their accounts was called into question. Philostratus, however, claimed to have been given the notebooks by the Roman empress Julia Domna herself.[43] Philostratus was writing about a hundred years after Apollonius died. Nevertheless, his use of Damis' notebooks allowed him to advertise his accuracy like no biographer before him. Philostratus succeeded, at any rate, in composing a more vivid, detailed and history-like account of Apollonius. His relative success may be gauged by the fact that his biography of Apollonius was the only one to survive.

40 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.3.1.
41 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.19.2; cf. 3.43.
42 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.19.3.
43 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 1.3.1.

Philostratus appealed to the eyewitness tradition of Damis about forty times in his eight-book biography. The appeal apparently worked. Eighty years after Philostratus wrote, the reliability of his account was said to be guaranteed 'by Damis the philosopher who lived constantly with him'.[44]

The problem is once again that most scholars do not believe that Damis actually existed.[45] As a character in the story, he appears most frequently in the sections concerning Apollonius' travels to Babylon and India. This material contains fantastic elements and historical inaccuracies unlikely for an eyewitness to attest.[46] Furthermore, Damis' interests (for instance, artwork and natural history) suspiciously resemble the interests of Philostratus himself. Finally, we know that Philostratus (or an imitator) concocted an anonymous eyewitness in another of his works (the *Heroicus*), namely the vinedresser who claims to have communed with the hero Protesilaos.[47]

Most scholars conclude that Damis' notebooks were either a creation of Philostratus himself or a previously composed document that he employed. In the latter case, Damis' notebooks may have been put together by Neopythagorean devotees of Apollonius.[48] In the former case, Philostratus himself invented the notebooks to validate his biography.

Choosing between these two options requires care. The idea of outright invention is bold, though not impossible. Philostratus probably knew Dictys' *Diary*. Philostratus could have used the same technique of creative invention to authenticate the new and vivid details of his biography. On the other hand, the fact that Philostratus represented himself as engaged in source-critical decisions with regard to the notebooks gives the impression that he dealt with an unwieldy document whose contents were not entirely agreeable to him. Philostratus at

44 Eusebius, *Against Hierocles* 2.24–32.

45 E. Meyer attacked the historicity of Damis in a lengthy article ('Apollonios von Tyana und die Biographie des Philostratos', *Hermes* 52 (1917) 371–424). His views were advanced by M. Dzielska, *Apollonius of Tyana in Legend and History* (Rome: L'Erma, 1986) 19; E. Bowie, 'Philostratus: Writer of Fiction', *Greek Fiction: The Greek Novel in Context* (ed. J. R. Morgan and R. Stoneman; London: Routledge, 1994) 181–99. G. Anderson's qualified defence of Damis' historicity (*Philostratus: Biography and Belles-Lettres in the Third Century* AD (London: Routledge, 1986) 165) was refuted by M. Edwards, 'Damis the Epicurean', *ClQ* 41 (1991) 563–66.

46 C. P. Jones, 'Apollonius of Tyana's Passage to India', *GRBS* 42 (2001) 185–99.

47 See the essays edited by E. B. Aitken and J. K. Berenson Maclean, *Philostratus's Heroikos*: *Religion and Cultural Identity in the Third Century* CE (Atlanta: SBL, 2004), esp. that of J. Rusten, 'Living the Past: Allusive Narratives and Elusive Authorities in the World of the *Heroikos*', 143–58, at 143–7.

48 W. Speyer, 'Zur Bild des Apollonius von Tyana bei Heiden und Christen', *JAC* 17 (1974) 47–63, at 50; J.-J. Flintermann, *Power, Paideia, and Pythagoreanism: Greek Identity, Conceptions of the Relationship between Philosophers and Monarchs and Political Ideas in Philostratus' Life of Apollonius* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1995) 81.

least posed as feeling obliged to follow Damis even when he seemed naive and prolix.[49] Sometimes Philostratus' own tendencies seemed to have conflicted with Damis. For instance, Philostratus was not favourable to the image of Apollonius as an astrologer. Yet he still reports the testimony of Damis who confirms (with Moeragenes) that Apollonius wrote a book on astrology and dialogued on the subject.[50] Finally, Philostratus occasionally claims that he omitted material from Damis.[51] Tentatively we may conclude that the Damis source was a previous document that Philostratus adapted.

For Philostratus to rely so heavily on the Damis source was risky, since the nature of the material did not always inspire faith. For instance, Damis described several miracles (including a resurrection) performed by Apollonius that sceptics could have carped at. Damis also included long speeches and dialogues of Apollonius that resemble transcript reports. How exactly these speeches were remembered and recorded is left open. Accuracy is presumably only guaranteed if Damis recorded the speeches from memory soon after they were given. By portraying Damis as a character in the story, Philostratus leads the reader to imagine that Damis recorded the speeches when they were fresh in his mind. Philostratus also made an effort to show how, even if Damis was not present at a speech, he could still reliably report it.[52]

Thus Damis is not only Philostratus' main source, he also functions as a trusted character in the story. Although somewhat obtuse at first, Damis repeatedly proves that he is reliable enough to serve as Apollonius' most intimate disciple, fellow philosopher and envoy. When Damis is used as a source, then, his accrued trustworthiness as a character serves to authenticate his written testimony as a whole.

Thus two narrating voices join to guarantee the plausibility of the biography. The authenticating eyewitness is the star-struck, garrulous Damis. The narrator, whom we can call Philostratus, depicts himself as an elite, cosmopolitan sophisticate who knows multiple sources and exercises critical judgement as to what is best to include in the biography.[53] With these two voices combined, the eyewitness report rewritten by the erudite biographer attained maximum cogency.

49 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 3.45. See further T. G. Knoles, 'Literary Technique and Theme in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*' (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1981) 25–62.

50 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 3.41.1.

51 E.g. *Life of Apollonius* 6.10.1; 7.28.1.

52 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 3.27.1. See further G. Anderson, 'Philostratus on Apollonius of Tyana: The Unpredictable on the Unfathomable', *The Novel in the Ancient World*, 613–18, at 615–16.

53 T. J. G. Whitmarsh, 'Philostratus', *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, vol. I (ed. I. de Jong, R. Nünlist and A. Bowie; Leiden: Brill, 2004) 423–40, at 428. See further W. Gyselinck and K. Demoen, 'Fiction and Metafiction in Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*', *Theios Sophistes: Essays on Flavius Philostratus'*

6. Comparison with John

First of all, we observe that introducing an eyewitness was a standard historiographical convention used to authenticate revisionary works that otherwise might have been questioned for their novelty in form and content. That the author of John knew and used this convention is not implausible. If he knew the Synoptic Gospels (as seems likely to many), he may have used the eyewitness convention to outperform his perceived competitors. The eyewitness authentication device was a way for him to demonstrate that his gospel was superior even though it introduced novel elements in both content and structure. At the end of the gospel, the Beloved Disciple's testimony presumably confirms the entire literary product (John 21.24).[54]

This retrospective verification provided by the testimony is key. There are other vivid details in John that give the impression of historical reminiscence. John the Baptist baptised at Aenon near Salim (John 3.23), the lame man lies for thirty-eight years at the pool of Beth-zatha (5.3–5), the slave whose ear was cut off was named Malchus (18.10), Peter stood at a charcoal fire outside Annas' house during Jesus' trial (18.18). Paul N. Anderson notes: 'John has more archaeological, topographical, sensory-empirical, personal knowledge and first-hand information than all of the other gospels combined.'[55]

The reader is led to think that the vividness of the details and speeches is rooted in the narrative presentation of an eyewitness who could guarantee their accuracy. This point is true even though some of the details do not seem to have eyewitness verification, such as Jesus' conversation with the woman by the well (John 4). Philostratus tells us explicitly that Apollonius informed Damis of his private conversations, thus enabling Damis to record them. Perhaps the same point is implied in John (that Jesus told the Beloved Disciple about his private talks). Philostratus and the author of John skilfully leave such matters up to the intuition of the reader.

Vita Apollonii (ed. K. Demoen and D. Praet; Mnemosyne Supplements 305; Leiden: Brill, 2009) 95–128, at 101–5.

54 If the Beloved disciple is identified with the anonymous disciple in John 1.35–40, then his discipleship status 'from the beginning' (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, John 15.27) is confirmed.

55 P. N. Anderson, *The Fourth Gospel and the Quest for Jesus: Modern Foundations Reconsidered* (LNTS 321; London: T&T Clark, 2006) 4–5. This is not an indication of historicity. As Horsfall notes, 'the more varied, complex and specific the details of the text and its survival, the more they proclaim their falsity' ('Dictys's Ephemeris', 45). The following authors seem unaware of this point: R. Bauckham, *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple: Narrative, History, and Theology in the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2007) 93–112; J. H. Charlesworth, 'The Historical Jesus in the Fourth Gospel: A Paradigm Shift?', *JSHJ* 8 (2010) 3–46.

Like Damis and Deinias, the Beloved Disciple also appears as a character in the story for which he is the source. This is an expert means of authentication, since the character in the story establishes a rapport with the reader and gradually builds his own sense of trustworthiness. Depicting the trustworthiness of the eyewitness was vital, for the eyewitness served as the main authority for the presentation of the hero.

The trust of the eyewitness is built in part through the characterisation of his relationship with the master. Damis, for instance, is Apollonius' closest disciple who sticks by him and even suffers arrest in Rome. To Damis, Apollonius reveals the secret of his divine identity.[56] A basic similarity can be detected in John. Although Jesus loves all his disciples, the Beloved Disciple is the most intimate. Unlike Jesus' other followers, the Beloved Disciple does not abandon Jesus after he is arrested. Rather, he follows Jesus into the courtyard of his enemy (John 18.15). Presumably it was even more dangerous to stand at the foot of the cross (John 19.26).

In the crucifixion scene, apparently the same disciple's testimony is recalled: 'He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true, and he knows that he tells the truth' (John 19.35). Regardless of the marvel about which this disciple testifies (that blood and water were strained out separately from Jesus' side), the disciple's accrued trustworthiness throughout the narrative was thought to guarantee his testimony as a putatively external witness. Indeed, Damis, Deinias and the Beloved Disciple all narrate fantastic events, including resurrections. Yet the fantastic can seem historical if it is guaranteed by the eyewitness authentication device.[57]

The Beloved Disciple, moreover, never speaks in the first person. His testimony, though intimate, is put in the third person when retold by the main narrator. The same technique is used for the Damis memoirs. Damis' testimony is almost always introduced with the words 'Damis says' or the like. Dictys also uses third-person discourse except at the beginning and end of his *Diary*. Evidently, the testimony offered in the third person created a distance that fostered a sense of impartiality and objectivity.

The reader is not exactly sure when the Beloved Disciple provided his testimony. It is some period in the past, about events even further in the past. The past, even the recent past, accumulated authority. When Philostratus wrote, Apollonius had been dead for over a hundred years. Damis too had died, but not his testimony. In the case of the Beloved Disciple, the reader gains the

56 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 8.13.2.

57 Josephus uses the same technique in *Jewish War* 6.297–8: 'There appeared a daimonic apparition, passing belief (μεῖζον πίστεως). What I will relate, I think, would be deemed a fairy tale were it not reported by eyewitnesses (παρὰ τοῖς θεασαμένοις) … Before sunset throughout the whole country chariots appeared in the air as well as armed battalions hurtling through the clouds and surrounding the cities.'

impression that he had recently perished – otherwise, there would have been no felt need to correct the interpretation of Jesus' saying, 'If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you?' (John 21.22). Jesus did not come within the first one or two generations of his departure. The Beloved Disciple lingered long, but did not live to see the parousia. It seems to be implied, then, that the Beloved Disciple attained an advanced age.

The advanced age of the eyewitness was a perceived advantage. Age in antiquity demanded respect. An eyewitness old and full of days was presumed to be full of memories. In the frame story of the *Wonders beyond Thule*, the ambassador Cymbas meets Deinias and tries to coax him back to his Arcadian homeland. Deinias demurs because of his great age. Indeed, Deinias' tomb inscription reveals that he died over a hundred years old. It is at this advanced age that Deinias relates his story.

The advanced age of the Beloved Disciple (assumed to be a historical contemporary of Jesus) has traditionally determined the date of the gospel. He could not have been much older than 95 when he transmitted his material, so the gospel is often dated to the vicinity of 95–100 CE. Such an advanced age pushes the limits of plausibility given ancient life expectancies. Yet a nearly 100-year-old eyewitness is acceptable – even ideal – in the kind of historicising fiction exemplified by the *Wonders* and the Fourth Gospel. On the doorstep of death, both Deinias and the Beloved Disciple passed on their stories.[58]

Strikingly, Damis, Dictys, Deinias and the Beloved Disciple all wrote down their testimony. The penultimate sentence of John reads: 'This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written (γράψας) them' (John 21.24). Here it is made explicit that the Beloved Disciple did not transmit his information solely by word of mouth. He wrote down (presumably a draft of) his testimony which was then rewritten as the final version of the gospel. Or so the reader imagines (since if the Beloved Disciple is presumably dead, he cannot be the voice of the main narrator).[59] As in the case of Philostratus, it is difficult to determine whether the author of John actually had a previous document written by an eyewitness or only gave the *impression* that he had such a document.[60] In both cases,

58 Although we do not know their ages, presumably Dictys and Damis were also elderly when they completed their works.

59 Bauckham is correct that the Beloved Disciple is portrayed as the ideal author (*Testimony*, 73–93). Yet he (wrongly) extends 'author' to mean not just source but composer of the finished product (*Eyewitnesses*, 358–411). The narrator, speaking as narrator, distinguishes himself from the Beloved Disciple ('we know that his witness is true', John 21.24). See further A. T. Lincoln, 'Beloved Disciple as Eyewitness and the Fourth Gospel as Eyewitness', *JSNT* 85 (2002) 3–26, at 16.

60 See further M. D. C. Larsen, 'Accidental Publication, Unfinished Texts and the Traditional Goals of New Testament Textual Criticism', *JSNT* 39 (2017) 362–87.

at any rate, there is an editorial act of rewriting (μεταγράψαι) a pre-existing eyewitness report.

By representing the original testimony as a document in stable form, the perception of its accuracy was increased for the community of readers. The eyewitness' testimony was not lost or allowed to degrade through the vagaries of oral transmission. Of course, the original draft of the eyewitness' testimony was lost in the case of Damis and the Beloved Disciple; thus its original wording could not be verified. Yet this may have been the intent of the authentication device. A past eyewitness is generated whose testimony is deliberately put beyond empirical verification.

As is the case in the *Life of Apollonius*, there are two metanarratives concerning the composition of John. The main narrator (who sometimes speaks for a community) composes the surviving account. Yet interventions towards the end of the book lead the reader retrospectively to realise that the main narrator is in fact rewriting a story previously written by the Beloved Disciple. The two levels of narration, as in the *Life of Apollonius*, serve to authenticate the biography as a whole. The main narrator accepts the testimony of the Beloved Disciple and seeks to persuade the reader to accept the same (rewritten) testimony.

Damis, Dictys and Deinias are obviously not anonymous, but the Beloved Disciple remains unnamed. An unnamed eyewitness is not unheard of in literature. In his *Heroicus*, Philostratus (or Philostratus the Younger) preserved the anonymity of his eyewitness, who was a devotee of the hero Protesilaos. Some have speculated that in John the anonymity of the Beloved Disciple better enables readers to identify with him (through an act of identification, they become, as it were, the ideal disciple).[61]

Yet there is another, more practical, reason for not naming the eyewitness. The anonymity of the eyewitness is another technique to prevent invalidation. If the reader knows the name of the eyewitness, the eyewitness can more easily be revealed as a literary device. One of the reasons that scholars today doubt the existence of Damis and Dictys is because they are names elsewhere unattested. By leaving an eyewitness without a name, however, the eyewitness is in a sense neither attested nor unattested. It is impossible to prove that an anonymous eyewitness did not exist on the grounds that his name is unattested elsewhere. The anonymous eyewitness does not have an identity beyond the fact of being an eyewitness. In short, the eyewitness in John is unverifiable (and therefore, to a certain degree, unfalsifiable as well). For an author who values religious belief, unverifiability is not a weakness but a strength, since unverifiability demands the response of faith. 'Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed' (John 20.29).

Nevertheless, there is a major difference between the Fourth Gospel and the other eyewitness narratives compared here. The Gospel of John lacks a story of

61 See e.g. Lincoln, 'Beloved Disciple', 23. Further sources in Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 394 n. 16.

discovering the eyewitness' written source and its dissemination promoted by a ruler. Generating such a story may have increased the plausibility of our three comparanda, but it would not have helped the author of John. In John, first of all, the testimony of the eyewitness was never lost, so it did not need to be rediscovered. In the late first century, moreover, it would have been implausible for an account of Jesus to receive the support of Roman rulers, in part since these rulers put him to death.[62] The very novelty of the Christian movement(s) precluded the need for elaborate documentary authentication.[63]

7. Conclusion

Despite important differences in the eyewitness appeal, there are basic similarities that the Fourth Gospel shares with the roughly contemporaneous literature discussed here. These similarities do not necessarily prove that the eyewitness in John is a literary device. Nevertheless, the similarities force the critical reader to reflect on why scholars even today argue strongly for the historicity of the Beloved Disciple and his testimony while easily discounting the historicity of similar eyewitness claims in contemporary literature.[64]

In an ancient bookshop, there was no label indicating which works were histories and which were more like historical novels. Authors of all genres used devices of authentication to validate works that included elements of both history (a representation of what was thought to have happened) and fiction. In a sense, all history is fiction (*fictio* meaning 'fashioning' or 'formation'), insofar as it is a representation of what is *imagined* to have happened. Yet one does not need to succumb to radical scepticism to see that in both the past and present, history and fiction blend in sometimes mysterious ways. As a result, even texts that *read* like history are not necessarily historical. Even when truth seems to be based upon first-hand observation, such 'observation' can still be a literary convention.

It seems that the author of John wanted his text to be read as history (namely, an account of what happened in the past). Yet there were certain obstacles he had to overcome. His departure from the Synoptics was radical, and he included

62 Later Christian authors told stories about Jesus' positive relations to kings and emperors (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.13; 2.2.2–6; Tertullian, *Apology* 5.2).

63 Christians later employed the book-discovery convention to good effect: Sozomen, *Ecclesiastical History* 7.19.10–12 (the finding of the Apocalypse of Paul); Cedrenus, *Compendium of History* 385.2 (discovery of the ἰδιόγραφον of Matthew in Barnabas' grave).

64 E.g. Bauckham, *Eyewitnesses*, 409. For other arguments that the Beloved Disciple is a fictional device, see J. Kügler, *Der Jünger, den Jesus liebte: Literarische, theologische und historischen Untersuchungen zu einer Schlüsselgestalt johanneischer Theologie und Geschichte. Mit einem Exkurs über die Brotrede in Joh 6* (Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1988) 478–88; Lincoln, 'Beloved Disciple', 3–26, esp. 18–19. See further Charlesworth, *Beloved Disciple*, 134–8.

elements that were both fantastical and unattested elsewhere (the healing of the man born blind, the resurrection of Lazarus, the added resurrection appearance of Jesus, and so on). Sensing this vulnerability, the fourth evangelist introduced his – previously unheard of – star witness, the Beloved Disciple. The Beloved Disciple was, in all likelihood, a literary device employed to back the truth claims of the Fourth Gospel. It was a convention that has convinced readers both ancient and modern that John's Gospel is reliable because it is historical. Whether or not it is historical, in whole or in part, must be decided on other grounds.

Raymond Brown argued that the Beloved Disciple as literary device would involve deceit, since the author of the Fourth Gospel 'reports distress in the community over the Beloved Disciple's death'.[65] Yet no 'distress' is actually recorded. The text does not even explicitly say that the disciple died. Even if it is implied, nothing prevents literary characters from dying.[66]

Brown may have been correct, however, that introducing a literary eyewitness involves deceit. Yet this point, even if accepted, is not an argument that the fourth evangelist would *not* have created a purely literary eyewitness. Bart Ehrman's *Forgery and Counterforgery*, though controversial in some respects, has demonstrated that Christian authors felt little inhibition about employing deceit in the cause of truth.[67]

We know that contemporaneous biographies readily mixed fact with fiction, especially when the fiction had some profound moral or spiritual payoff.[68] There is a reflection on this very point in the *Life of Apollonius.* In a disquisition with Damis, Apollonius remarks that he finds the fables (μύθοι) of Aesop more philosophical than heroic tales. The reason is that Aesop provided moral instruction that benefits the listener. Aesop, says Apollonius, loved truth more than the poets. The latter forced their tales to seem plausible, yet Aesop announced a story with the earmarks of fiction. In this way, he told the truth precisely in not undertaking to tell it (μὴ περὶ ἀληθινῶν ἐρεῖν ἀληθεύει). Apollonius sums up his reasoning: 'The poet who tells his tale leaves it to the sound-minded reader to test

65 R. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist, 1979) 31.

66 Dunderberg, *Beloved Disciple*, 124.

67 B. Ehrman, *Forgery and Counterforgery: The Use of Literary Deceit in Early Christian Polemics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), especially 529–48. Though he criticises Ehrman, A. D. Baum agrees with him on this point ('Content and Form: Authorship Attribution and Pseudonymity in Ancient Speeches, Letters, Lectures, and Translations – a Rejoinder to Bart Ehrman', *JBL* 136 (2017) 381–403, at 381–2).

68 See further C. B. R. Pelling, 'Truth and Fiction in Plutarch's *Lives*', *Antonine Literature* (ed. D. A. Russell; Oxford: Clarendon, 1990) 19–52; J. A. Francis, 'Truthful Fiction: New Questions to Old Answers on Philostratus' "Life of Apollonius"', *AJP* 119 (1998) 419–41.

whether it happened. Yet the one who tells a tall tale while adding instruction, like Aesop, shows that he uses the untruth for the benefit of the hearer.'[69]

In the case of John, the perceived benefit to the reader is even more substantial. The character of the Beloved Disciple may be literary, but the faith that he inspires is real. 'These things are written that you may believe' (John 20.31). Presumably, this is why the Beloved Disciple was written too: to confirm the faith of those who had it and to inspire faith in those who did not. What precisely does the Beloved Disciple help one to believe? For the Christian author, it is a message that gives no mere temporal benefit or slight moral improvement. It is a message that gives life. In itself, a lie does not give life, though it may open up the possibility for it.

To conclude: there is a difference between a lie and fiction. Fiction involves some perception on the part of the reader that truth is being told without a necessary reference to what happened. Augustine observed: 'Not everyone who tells an untruth wishes to deceive.'[70] If the author of John intended to fool his audience by claiming that the Beloved Disciple is historical, he evidently lied. Yet if the authenticating eyewitness was a literary device recognisable at the time, then the author of John was doing something different.[71] He wrote a book that he believed was true – historically but especially spiritually – and used a literary device to support that truth. In so doing, he wrote an account that was like many works of his time. These works held together myth and history, truth and fiction in creative tension for the profound pleasure and life-changing benefit of their readers.

69 Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 5.15.3.

70 Augustine, *Soliloquies* 2.9.16.

71 Bauckham claims that readers 'would not have deliberately colluded in such rhetorical fabrication' (*Testimony*, 20), but he gives no reason why. As the apocryphal Acts literature shows, Christians regularly used fiction in the cause of truth. Although Bauckham often appeals to historiographical conventions, he seems unaware of the scholarship on rhetorically customary mendacity in *all* forms of ancient history. See for instance T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics: Three Studies in Greco-Roman Literature* (Leicester: Rowman and Littlefield, 1979); A. J. Woodman, *Rhetoric in Classical Historiography: Four Studies* (London: Croom Helm, 1988); M. Grant, *Greek and Roman Historians: Information and Misinformation* (London: Routledge, 1995) 61–99; and esp. the essays in C. Gill and T. P. Wiseman, eds., *Lies and Fiction in the Ancient World* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993).