



Lucian and His Roman Voices

Cultural Exchanges and Conflicts in the Late
Roman Empire

Eleni Bozia

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Lucian and His Roman Voices

Lucian and His Roman Voices examines cultural exchanges, political propaganda, and religious conflicts in the Late Roman Empire through the eyes of Lucian, his contemporary Roman authors, and Christian Apologists. Offering a multifaceted analysis of the Lucianic corpus, this book explores how Lucian, a Syrian who wrote in Greek and who became a Roman citizen, was affected by the socio-political climate of his time, reacted to it, and “corresponded” with the Roman intelligentsia. In the process, this unique volume raises questions such as: What did the title “Roman citizen” mean to native Romans and to others? How were language and literature politicized, and how did they become a means of social propaganda? This study reveals Lucian’s recondite historical and authorial personas, construing his literary activity as a means of depicting the vignettes of second-century reality from the viewpoint of the Romans, the Greeks, the pagans, the Christians, the citizens of the Roman Empire.

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**Στη γιαγιά μου, Βασιλική,
και στο σύζυγό μου, Άγγελο,
με ευγνωμοσύνη.**

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1 Introduction

APPRECIATIONS OF THE SECOND SOPHISTIC

This book examines cultural exchanges, political propaganda, foreign identity politics, and religious conflicts in the late Roman Empire from the perspective of Lucian, Juvenal, Aulus Gellius, and the first Christian Apologists. Ethnicity and identity, social segregation or social miscegenation, the tendentious nomenclature “Roman citizen,” and religious (in)fallibility are pivotal issues that suggest a multifarious world such as the late Roman Empire. My intention in this book is to compare the Lucianic corpus with the works of earlier and contemporary Roman authors and the Christian Apologists in an attempt to delineate a vignette of the second-century social, historical, religious, and literary ferments through the eyes of the *literati* of the Empire, the native Roman citizens, the *nouveaux* Roman citizens, the pagans, and the Christians. I also examine the reception of Lucian and the Second Sophistic in Byzantine and European literature and contend that there are discernible elemental similarities, suggesting modulated reappropriations of the Second Sophistic Lucianic shibboleth. The conceptual identity of this study is not to contextualize Lucian; *au contraire*, the primary goal is to bring Lucianic content to the foreground and establish that he worked within the scope and boundaries of the Second Sophistic, literarily and chronologically, but was not defined by them. Instead he created his own world, which, when carefully examined, can be read as a metalanguage for the Second Sophistic and the Greco-Roman political and intellectual realities. Although it is beyond the scope of the present study, I believe that a cursory presentation of the period will further clarify my choice to work with Lucian as well as the selection of *comparanda*.

Over the past decades scholarly attention has turned to the Second Sophistic, the Greek identity, the Roman citizenship, the unavoidable socio-political ferments, and the alleged literary subterfuge of those Greeks and pro-Greeks who try to appropriate a self in a Roman world. Sophists have been examined as historical figures, political entities, rhetoricians, and lastly as the *literati* of the Empire; during that time Plutarch, Dio Chrysostom, Appian, Arrian, Aelius Aristides, Lucian, Pausanias, Galen, Philostratus, and

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Cassius Dio started figuring in treatises on language, ethnicity, identity, and literary appropriation of socio-political preeminence. Scholars on the period have long quoted van Groningen's derogatory appraisal of second-century literature in 1965, and for a while they used it as a disclaimer for any perspectival failure to appreciate this idiosyncratically distinctive literary phenomenon. However, when we examine closely van Groningen's description, we realize that he unequivocally pinpointed, albeit derisively, the three premier denominators of second-century literature, namely archaizing, religious rationale, and Roman influence. His lecture put it as follows, "Reading the bulk of second-century literature one is not transported into a real world, but into a sham one, in a museum of fossils."¹ He described what we now consider literary achievements as attempts of the second-century Greek to "juggle with motifs and words"² and explained this decadence as the result of religion and Roman overpowering of the Greek spirit and culture. Since then scholars have attempted to reconsider the aforementioned evaluations.³

Only a few years later in 1969, Bowersock set out to "place the sophistic movement as a whole within the history of the Roman Empire."⁴ He provided an account of the sophists' biographies and related their (re)actions to the circumstances that the Roman emperors had formulated. Some might say that this is a practical approach to the logistics of their lives, the privileges they enjoyed, the tasks they undertook, their relationships with their cities, their prestige, and their professional frictions.⁵ Bowersock undeniably established the foundation required for any lapidary and profound examination of those sophists' literary endeavors. Gradually, reconsiderations of the Second Sophistic began to surface in academic publishing. The existential diversity of this period that encompasses literary finesse with lucid political self-consciousness (both with the modern meaning of politics and the Aristotelian "citizenship") and transcends the traditional boundaries of literature by encroaching upon the very foundation of contemporary society and culture comes into the foreground along with the representatives of this phenomenon that has known no predecessor. The following decades see a resurgence of publications exploring bilingualism, *Hellenismos* and *latinitas*, denominations of Greeks at the time (*Graecus*, *Graeculus*, *graecari*),⁶ and of course the sentimental evaluation of second-century literature as tendering a national past through a literary present.⁷ Anderson's *Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire*⁸ brings the aforementioned parameters together. He acknowledges and then examines the multifaceted characters of the sophists—their political stance as well as their explorations of literature, language, and oratory—even though some arid devaluations of the literature of the period may require further (re)consideration; occasionally, he seems to have failed to appreciate the innovative repurposing of archaism and the authorial artifices of the sophists, quantifying them as lacking merit.

Reflections on the period become all the more frequent, focused, and convergent on language, ethnicity, identity, and the *literati*. Sophists begin

to be treated primarily as authorial figures and secondly with respect to their political status. The diversified quantity of the written material, ranging from oratorical speeches, novels, and philosophical treatises to geographical accounts, medical volumes, and histories—and their variegated nature, the espousal of different stylistic models, the rebirth of Atticism, and the underlying social issues—render the Second Sophistic literature unique. Swain's *Hellenism and Empire*⁹ discusses the parameters in what he calls “the Greek World” and considers the duality in the lives of the sophists, the dual ethnicity and the Janus-like endeavors, namely the political career and the contemporaneous literary activity that either bears political success or is occasionally subsumed under political ambitions. Whitmarsh, on the other hand, favors more the idea of political prowess of literature and, in a comprehensive yet all-encompassing-of-the-period statement, argues that “the image of the Greeks as disenfranchised purveyors of education was produced by conquering Romans as a technique of control, but re-made by Greeks into a creative force, ‘metaphorized’ into a set of resources . . . Literary ingenuity is one primary means of negotiating the imperialism of language and thought.”¹⁰ The same exploration of political (re)positioning concomitant with literary activity is explored in Goldhill's collection of essays.¹¹ Also, Gleason,¹² Schmitz,¹³ and Whitmarsh¹⁴ among others discuss the aforementioned parameters that create the so-called Second Sophistic, while they also provide an ambit that defines it.

How are we to define the phenomenon (as it has been called by many) of the Second Sophistic? The safest route, albeit one not always objectively quantifiable, is to examine and evaluate written testimonies—i.e., the works of the sophists themselves. Any attempt reveals one thing: that authors either consciously, responding to the exigencies of their era, or unwittingly, exploring the wealth of previous Greek literature, manage to create a literary genre, a new amalgamated genre filtered and promoted through language, an autarchic and nonpartisan literary shibboleth, through which they discuss and explore their present. Another tantalizing question that arises is the following: When the reality we have to deal with involves the coexistence of multiple realities—the Roman reality, the Hellenic reality, the Roman citizenship, and the Hellenic identity—how does one cross-examine the sources? Thus far, scholarship has focused on general discursive evaluations of this *epoque*, or minute examinations of different authors who, regardless of their geographical point of origin, wrote in Greek (a clear sign of *Hellenismos* in a Roman world). Notwithstanding the perils of attempting to demarcate the intentions of the orators of this period and of anachronistically assigning them modern roles, I believe that they all managed to politicize and democratize literature, using it as a means of political propaganda and political advancement and of being attuned to the concerns of their contemporary *polites*. Starting from the very obvious parallels that are to be drawn from Plutarch's *Vitae*,¹⁵ *Quaestiones Romanae*, and *Quaestiones Graecae* to his *Praecepta Gerendae Reipublicae*,¹⁶ the Boeotian with

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simple clarity introduces the Greeks to the Romans and vice versa, admitting all the while to the ever-present necessity for ethnic coexistence.¹⁷ Jones comprehensively acknowledges this duality in Plutarch's world, especially in the *Moralia*.¹⁸ Schmidt makes this comparison more intriguing as he also considers the parallel Greek versus barbarian.¹⁹ Presenting examples of flawed governance that affect the Greeks in *Sulla*, *Sertorius*, and *Antonius*,²⁰ as well as favorable accounts of *Cimon* and occasionally of *Lucullus*, Plutarch provides a live account of everyday life in a context of historicity. His religious works, such as *De Superstitione*, as well as statements regarding divine providence (*Philopoemen* 17.2 "with the help of the divine spirit") clearly mirror contemporary concerns regarding the divine and ponder on the foundation of the Roman rule.²¹ Does that mean, however, that Plutarch has a set stance towards Romans and Greeks, and, if that is so, how can we argue in favor of the democratization of literature? Some of his works such as *Bellone an Pace clariores fuerint Athenienses* and *De Fortuna Romanorum*²² are more attuned to people's considerations, opinions, and concerns as they come to pose reasonable questions about the Roman Empire, the Greek past, and the Greco-Roman present and bring the fluidity of the times to the foreground.

Dio of Prusa, also known as Chrysostom, personifies the politicization of literature²³: a politician by nature, a rhetorician by training, and an ever-shifting persona by necessity and according to the calling of his times. As Jones elucidates, Dio conveniently conceives each speech to secure the *captatio benevolentiae* of his audience.²⁴ He occasionally supports Rome, albeit never in an eulogistic manner, and provides accounts of his historical reality(ies). When it comes to literature and the *polis*, Dio does not forgo his advantage to deliver speeches to different audiences. As Swain rightly observes, there is no way to confirm whether he delivered the same *Orations on Kingship* to Trajan and to his Greek audience.²⁵ We encounter the same political machinations and literary obfuscation when we read *Oration xli* and then reread it and juxtapose it with *xiii*; the former aligning with Aelius Aristides's *To Rome*, the latter a mouthpiece of Cato, Petronius, Juvenal, and numerous others who castigate Roman licentious conduct.²⁶ Thus far it would not be unreasonable to conclude that Plutarch and Dio brandish the merits of literature in non-literary spheres and rethink citizenship and the Roman Empire in literary contexts.

Aelius Aristides's archaistic verbosity, literary mannerisms, and rhetorical machinations in the service of politics earned him popularity amidst his contemporaries and posterity. When reading his encomiastic *To Rome*, one wonders whether he uses literature to promote his politics, or vice versa.²⁷ Scholarly views on Aelius for the most part have reached a consensus: Admittedly he expresses pro-Roman sentiments, although we should be mindful of the fact that there may always be an unattested dissension between authorial and historical personas. Also, Pernot recently reevaluated Aristides's relationship with Rome and posed unsettling questions regarding

different aspects of this encomium.²⁸ In this direction, Said argues that the *Panathenaic Oration* is “an attempt to give historical legitimacy to the status of Athens under Roman rule.”²⁹ Nonetheless, Aristides advanced in the Roman socio-political hierarchy and enjoyed fame in his homeland as well. A proponent of the old religion and inveterate divine practices, he writes his *Sacred Tales* wary of his fragile physical condition³⁰ and celebrates the provision of the gods against the backdrop of contemporary religious reality, all the while expounding his views on Rome.³¹ His orations to certain cities constitute a harmonious convergence of political and religious realities. *Oration xxvii*, for instance, is meant to celebrate the dedication of the temple in Cyzicus to the cult of Hadrian, while Aristides’s unbridled rhetorical dexterity turns it into an imperial eulogy.³² In the *Smyrnaean orations* (*Orr. xvii–xxi*),³³ and *Oration xxiii (To the Cities, on Concord)* and *Oration xxiv (To the Rhodians, On Concord)* among others, Aelius discusses political issues of topical and imperial administration.³⁴ The presentation of intertwined administrative issues and the acceptance of Roman authority and provincial sub-authority, contrary to Plutarch and Dio, indicate that not all Second Sophistic orators use literature to create an intellectual reality parallel to the Roman historical reality, contriving to emulate Roman political prowess. Aristides provides us with a more historical account of this *epoque* and uses his position to sensitize his audiences to the actuality of their times.

Variations in the Second Sophistic can be noted, not only with regards to the socio-political stance of the authors, but also in relation to their choice of literary genre. Pausanias, the geographer; the novelists, namely Chariton, Xenophon, Longus, Tatius, and Heliodorus (albeit a bit later); and historians, such as Arrian, Appian, and Cassius Dio, all have an (op)position against/regarding Rome, Hellenism, Greek *paideia*, and Roman authority.³⁵ However, the scope of the current introduction is to reintroduce Lucian by syncretizing him with contemporary authors engaging in similar careers and rhetorical pursuits, effectuating political advancement, and expressly historicizing and politicizing their works; therefore, any lengthy immersion into the literary endeavors of the novelists and the historians, albeit enlightening regarding Second Sophistic, may in return prove reductive when it comes to Lucian.

Paganism and Christianity: Religion, Philosophy, or Propaganda

Thus far I have focused on the identity and socio-political issues characteristic of the second century CE that are the provenance of the Second Sophistic literature and that inevitably percolated through it. Politicized literature and rhetorized politics cognizant of and contingent upon each other monopolize the scene of this *epoque*. Another socially precarious area, indicative of the perspectival multifocality of this era and concomitant with the political and cultural variegations, is the *status quo* (albeit almost an oxymoron at the

time) of religion. The inveterate Roman religion, Judaism, Mithraism, and the emerging Christianity amidst other Eastern cults, as well as the several philosophical groups, namely the Stoics, the Cynics, the Epicureans, and later the Neoplatonists in the third century CE, create a polymorphous spiritual *actualité*.³⁶ Occasional political instability, as was the case under the reign of Nero; Eastern cults that introduce elements of occultism; Jewish long-lasting yet somewhat separational attitude; Christian redefinition of monotheism and divinity, along with the belief in resurrection; and the so-called “imperial cult” (part of the established Roman religion), adherence to which may accreditate citizenship and piety, create a sphere of opaqueness around divinity, religion, and spirituality, transcending existential concerns and civic-political life in the Empire.

De Labriolle, in *La Réaction Païenne*, provides an account explicatory of the actions and reactions of pagans towards philosophical concerns and explains the involvement of Christianity into this reality of inquisitiveness. He gradually constructs the identity of each philosophical group and then presents its common points of reference with Christianity only to conclude on the latter’s differential relationship with every religious and philosophical group. Even though one may establish certain similarities with Cynicism, such as attempts through abstinence to reinforce the individuals’ spirit, still Cynics do not condemn carnal pleasure (*si le cynisme recommandait une certain ascèse, c’ était uniquement afin d’aider l’individu à réduire ses appétits . . . il ne condamnait nullement le plaisir charnel*).³⁷

Other aspects of Christianity that surface through the exigency for self-definition and due to its juncture with the socio-cultural, religious, and of course literary realities are its communication with Hellenism and classical culture, the reasons that instigated its repudiation and consequent persecutions, and its occasional appropriation (due to social exigencies) of Roman *mores*. The comprehensive appreciation of the second century as an era when ethnicity and identity issues figure most prominently, as I discussed earlier, is twofold: it includes sophists-orators who either discuss religion *per se* or else religion exists as a subtext that is meant to complement discussions on the differentiation between Greco-Roman culture and Easterners as well as dedication of temples and imperial deification. Also, it involves Christian Apologetics who promote their religion and define themselves against the backdrop of traditional religion as well as Greco-Roman identity and classical culture.

Goldhill successfully presents the identity conundrum of pagans and Christians and their espousal of classical culture by discussing Synesius as a deliberative agent of Christianity, all the while admitting to familiarity with and acceptance of pagan philosophy and culture.³⁸ Elsner discusses Greco-Roman and Syrian identity on the basis of Lucian’s *De Syria Dea*,³⁹ and, although I will elaborate on that in chapter 4, it becomes evident that through Lucian’s “cultural translation” (as Elsner puts it)⁴⁰ the coexistence of variegated cultural and religious realities creates a matrix of intertwined

self and religious definitions. Dodds⁴¹ and Wilken⁴² attempt a negative definition of Christianity by resorting to the pagan perspectives and discussing, as Dodds puts it, “aspects of religious experience.” In an age of *Romanitas* and *Hellenismos*, the new tenet needs to establish itself in relation to the established realities: philosophical schools, divine system, and civic order. The edited volume of Edwards, Goodman, and Price;⁴³ Rhee;⁴⁴ and Humphries⁴⁵ among others explore those parameters from the perspective of the Apologists; Hellenism, rhetoric, and loyalty to the Roman Empire filtered through the Apologetic writings.

Finally, the last perspectival promontory in the scholarly examination of Christianity is its consideration as a religion, a not-well-received religion for that matter. Cumont establishes the life of oriental religions, as he calls them, in the Empire. He examines aspects of their worship and places Christianity in the same chronological and spiritual framework.⁴⁶ Subsequently, Ferguson’s volume on persecutions explores the cultural and occasionally legal constituents that instituted Christian illegitimacy and prompted their social and religious disavowal.⁴⁷

Lucian’s case is unique in our appreciation of that reality; he makes Greeks and Romans “the other” in *De Syria Dea*. Without presenting Christianity (except for the brief references in *Peregrinus* and *Alexander*), he also makes traditional worship “the other” in *Juppiter Confutatus*, *Juppiter Tragoedus*, *Deorum Concilium*, and *De Sacrificiis*, rendering his writings parables not of inveterate traditionalism or of new dogmas but of an all-encompassing apprehension of the socio-political, philosophical, and religious relativism, and this makes his account without a doubt one of the most lapidary and representative vignettes of the second-century religious reality.

The Reception of the Second Sophistic

The last chapter of this study examines not the reception of Lucian, but the reception of the Lucianic second-century *Zeitgeist* as I presented it throughout the first chapters, namely the parasites, the fluctuating social parameters, and the religious ferments within the context of the ever-changing Byzantine and European *status quo*. I show that Lucian’s politicization of literature and his sensitization to current issues of concern infiltrated through and resulted in a similar nuancing in Byzantine and European literature. Subsequently, through my analysis it will become clear that Lucian formulated his own shibboleth of second-century reality, and it is this reality that survives in multifarious configurations in later authors. Lucian’s authorial activity bears a twofold significance. First, the topics he discusses do not simply interest his contemporaries, but are usually diachronic issues of concern; political profligacy, idiosyncratic character types (such as parasites), issues of nationality and identity, and religious ferments constitute formative parameters of every reality regardless of the century or the country. Whether it is twelfth-century Byzantine-Christian existential questions filtered through

contemporary philoclassicist tendencies, or the sixteenth-century English Humanistic spirit expressing contumacy or simply exploring types of governance, or even seventeenth-century France where King Louis XIV created his personal circle of parasites, Lucian's perspectival contributions and considerations seem current. Second, Lucian's literary techniques (satiric travelogues, quasi-philosophical treatises, apologies), innovative, occasionally facetious, but always artful, provide all authors with a repository of modes of rhetorical finesse that prove to be transcultural and transliterary. The preponderance of an examination of his reception is unquestionable.

Starting with Highet's *Classical Tradition*⁴⁸ and Bolgar's *The Classical Tradition and its Beneficiaries*,⁴⁹ it does not take long to find Lucian. Highet gives a list of Lucian's fifteenth- and sixteenth-century translations in Italian, English, and German and throughout his study establishes Lucian's influence on fiction, satire, and moral treatises.⁵⁰ Bolgar provides a catalog of Lucian's manuscripts that quantifies the range of his memory and explains his reception. He then explores his continued popularity in the Byzantine Empire and mainly elaborates on Erasmus' perception of and inspiration by him. Robinson⁵¹ expands the points of reference and, after his account of Lucian's reception in Byzantium and Italy, excogitates the latter's percolation through theater, satiric works, and fictional travelogues in Northern Europe. He then turns his focus to Erasmus and Fielding, two major Renaissance Humanists, and revives Lucian through them. Furthermore, Lucian's literary fecundity attracted the interest of Humanists in the early Renaissance. Marsh explores his *Nachleben* in Italy, France, and England.⁵² He evaluates Lucian's revival of topics and his authorial techniques in the Quattrocento and then discusses the *Dialogi Mortuorum*, *Dialogi Deorum*, the mock encomia, and his fictional narrative and describes how they found their way into European literature. Maffei studies Lucian from a different perspective, that of the visual arts, and offers a distinctive focus on his reception.⁵³ She discusses *ekphrasis* and Roman art against the backdrop of *Imagines*, *Herodotus*, and *Heraclides* and includes artifacts and paintings that resemble Lucian's *ekphrases* from *Somnium*, *Zeuxis* and *Calumniæ non temere credendum*. Baumbach analyzes Lucian's popularity in sixteenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century Germany and his subsequent falling into obscurity, being deemed a mere imitator.⁵⁴ Finally, Ligota and Panizza⁵⁵ in their edited volume examine Lucian's reception of earlier literature, as is the case of *Quomodo Historia conscribenda sit*,⁵⁶ and then the reception of Lucian, in the case of Kepler, the astronomer who considers Lucian as a philosopher and ludic fictional writer,⁵⁷ and Wieland, who, as Deitz very perceptively notices, historicizes Lucian and identifies similarities between the second century's reality and his own.⁵⁸ Also, Massing studies the revival of Lucianic stories, such as the story of Abauchas and Gyndanes in *Toxaris* and the calumny of Apelles narrated in *Calumniæ non temere credendum* by fifteenth- through seventeenth-century painters.⁵⁹ The popularity of Lucian does not need to be established any further. Authors of fictional literature,⁶⁰

including science fiction; playwrights, such as Ben Johnson,⁶¹ and poets, such as Goethe (*Der Zauberlehrling, Faust*),⁶² among many, attest to the sophist's enthusiastic reception.⁶³

Lucian as a Choice

Considering the aforementioned attempts to define Second Sophistic literature and correlate it with contemporary realities, how would one perceive Lucian, and why would he be the obvious choice for a comparative evaluation of this era? The idea behind this study is to objectify our interpretations of this *epoque* by conducting a parallel evaluation of Greek-speaking and Roman-speaking authors. Lucian is not only an Easterner, who adopted Hellenic identity and Roman citizenship and therefore abides by all the parameters that would quantify him a representative of the Second Sophistic, but he also creates miniature vignettes of this historical reality in each one of his works. Instead of promoting Rome, as Aelius Aristides does, or favoring and/or chastising it, as Dio does, Lucian forces Romans, Greeks, and other foreigners, such as Scythians and Syrians, to enter into a dialogue and a subsequent exchange of ideas and of cultural (mis)apprehensions about one another. The choice of Juvenal and Aulus Gellius, even though I will elaborate on my intentions in the respective chapters, is contemporaneity, the distinctive similarity in topics, as well as all three authors' ability to discuss their own nation and "the other." When reading the Lucianic corpus, another issue at hand that has not been profoundly discussed is possible indications of religious reconsiderations prompted by the newly emerging Christian sect. As I argue in chapter 4, Lucian does not simply discuss religion, but forces his audience to rethink paganism and its practices and inadvertently enters into a stimulating consideration of Christianity. Finally, chapter 5 is meant to be read as the revival of the Second Sophistic in Byzantium and Europe. The choice of European authors is based on the degree of comparability with Lucian with respect to the following parameters: testimonies that they had read Lucian and their own politicization of literature and theology retrospectively in accordance with the spirit of the second century CE.

My examination of Lucian does not wish to redefine the literature of the Second Sophistic. Instead, continuing the discussion on Lucian that Jones initiated in 1986, I purport to show that Lucian is the personification of the Second Sophistic *Zeitgeist*, purveyor of the traditional constituents of *Hellenismos* and *Romanitas* and of creative redefinitions at the same time, and hope to open the interpretative possibilities of his works.

LUCIAN'S LIFE AND WORK

To construe Lucian's societal perspicacity and appreciate his cultural multifocality, one needs to be cognizant of his life and his career in the Empire.⁶⁴

He was born between 115 and 125 CE at Samosata in the kingdom of Commagene, which became part of the Empire in 72 CE. Commagene had Syrian roots; in fact Lucian calls himself Syrian or Assyrian⁶⁵ and says that before his Greek education he was “barbarian in speech.”⁶⁶ We do not know anything about his early years. Only in *Somnium* does he describe his choice of profession.⁶⁷ He says that he was training to become a sculptor when Culture along with Craft appeared to him in a dream and presented their allurements. Lucian then chose Culture and became an orator. The literary motif he uses is classic: Prodicus’s myth of the choice of Heracles is the obvious precedent.⁶⁸ Veneration of the past, which among other things included the revival of Attic Greek, was part of Lucian’s education. He actually emphasizes his attraction to the purity of Atticism in two of his works, *Lexiphanes* and *Pseudologista*. Also, in *Bis Accusatus* 27 Rhetoric personified states that she made Lucian her husband.

Very rarely does he give information about his social and familial environments.⁶⁹ He says that he was accompanied by his father and family from Cappadocia to Pontus and (as Lycinos) he mentions a young son.⁷⁰ He also claims as acquaintances Sisenna Rutilianus⁷¹ and the governor of Cappadocia.⁷² It was very late in his life when he accepted the position of the secretariat of the Roman Prefect of Egypt,⁷³ and this is probably when he wrote *Apologia*, the apology for *De Mercede Conductis*. We do not have any more information about his life or his career. He may have died in Egypt. The Suda records about his death that he was torn to pieces by dogs on account of his blasphemy.⁷⁴

Lucian most probably began a career in forensic oratory, as he indicates in *Piscator* 25 and *Bis Accusatus* 32. In the former work he claims that he eventually grew tired of forensic oratory; he wished to occupy himself with philosophy instead, but the low quality of contemporary philosophers forced him to undertake satiric dialogue. In *Hermotimus*, on the other hand, he expresses having an affection for philosophy since he was twenty-five. In *Bis Accusatus*, he recounts a different story; it is disappointment that dictated the change in his career at the age of forty. It is later that he pursued the life of sophisticated orator and traveled to Asia Minor, Athens, Rome, and Gaul, where he probably gained popularity and social recognition through his rhetorical endeavors. More specifically, in *Heracles*, *Herodotus*, *De Electro*, *Zeuxis*, and *Dionysus* he attempts to win his audience’s *benevolentia* and thus guarantee his reception by urging them to abolish ethnic stereotypes and not reject him solely on account of his nationality. To the same end, *Toxaris*, *Anacharsis*, and *Scytha* promote acceptance of otherness and ethnic communication between Greeks, Romans, and other Eastern nations. Around that time he wrote a number of works on philosophers, namely *Nigrinus*, *Demonax*, *Cynicus*, *Hermotimus*, and even *Peregrinus*. Concerning his career change, Suda says that he turned to authorship as a result of his failure in the courts. Other writings, including *Dialogi Deorum*, *Dialogi Marini*, *Juppiter Confutatus*, *Juppiter Tragoedus*, *Deorum Concilium*, and

De Sacrificiis, are literary amalgams of cynicism, satire, and Platonic and Socratic dialogue meant to discuss religion. Cynicism also infiltrates *Dialogi Mortuorum*, *Menippus*, and *Charon*. Finally, several of his works, namely *De Mercede Conductis*, *De Parasito*, *Nigrinus*, and *Apologia*, present the elusive relationship between Romans and Greeks.

Dating Lucian's works is problematic. The works that we can place chronologically with some certainty are the ones written after 161 CE, the accession of Marcus Aurelius, and the war that later broke out in Armenia. Lucian was in the entourage of Lucius Verus, who was sent to the front and traveled by way of Italy, Greece, and along the south coast of Asia Minor until he reached Antioch. Lucian wrote *Imagines* and *Pro Imaginibus* for Verus's mistress, Pantheia of Smyrna. It is at that time that he probably also visited his native city and delivered *Somnium* and *Patriae Encomium*. For reasons that we are not in a position to know, he did not remain in the entourage of the Emperor, but undertook the return journey to the West. When he was in the province of Cappadocia in the city of Abonoteichus, he encountered Alexander, the false prophet, who became the target of his satire in the homonymous work. Later, at the Olympic games of 165, he saw Peregrinus, against whom he launched an acrimonious attack. Based on this work, scholars have also argued that Lucian appears ignorant of Christianity. From *Demonax*, *Bis Accusatus* (27), *Electrum* (2), *Herodotus* (5), *Nigrinus* (passim), we also learn that he frequently traveled to Athens and Rome. Other travels brought him to Macedonia, either to Thessalonika or Beroea.⁷⁵

Later in his life, at the time of the second Parthian war, he wrote *Quomodo Historia conscribenda sit* in which he disapproves of verisimilitudinous historiography. As a matter of fact, he satirizes such authors as Ctesias, Iambulos, even Homer, who wrote stories about monsters on sea and on earth, man-eating nations, and other fictional events and creatures. In this spirit, in *Verae Historiae* he promises his readers that he can give them a story that will be the mother of all stories and that the only truth is that he is lying (καὶν ἔν γὰρ δὴ τοῦτο ἀληθεύσω λέγων ὅτι ψεύδομαι, 1.4). Concerning this work, Jones suggests that it "is in part a disguised encomium of the emperor's victories" and that it was probably written in 166, when Verus brought his army back from the East. He does not make any reference, however, to the plague that Verus's army brought from the East, except cursorily in *Alexander* 36 and only with the intent of deprecating the false prophet.⁷⁶

The treatment he received after his death is interesting, as Lucian proves to be as elusive for the authors of later generations as he was during his lifetime. Alciphron, a second-century-CE author, wrote the *Letters of the Courtesans*, which clearly resemble Lucian's *Dialogi Meretricium*. His *Letter to Lucian*, however, indicates that Alciphron probably borrowed from Lucian. Philostratus (third CE) did not include Lucian in his list of sophists. Libanius (fourth CE) attacked Lucian and Aristophanes, but he also borrowed from the former in *Oratio XXV* on slavery. Lactantius (third to fourth CE) talked