Attitudes towards Provincial Intellectuals in the Roman Empire

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Inhabitants of the provinces made a substantial contribution to the intellectual and artistic life under Roman rule, as might be expected in an Empire well-integrated in the sphere of administration, military control, law, taxation, economics and, to some extent, culturally. The degree to which provincial intellectuals were integrated or felt themselves to be integrated in the upper class of the Empire as a whole and at the centre is less clear. It may be instructive to investigate the writings of provincial intellectuals in order to see to what extent they saw themselves as accepted by and integrated into cosmopolitan society in Rome and other major cities of the Empire. It is not unlikely that any results of such an investigation tell us something about social relationships between the urban elites in central cities such as Rome, Athens and Alexandria and those in the provinces. Generally speaking, provincial intellectuals came from the locally distinguished families, notable and wealthy in their cities, all over the Greek East.[1] To be considered for this purpose are all types of works preserved: philosophy, poetry, literary prose, scientific writings, including medical treatises, notably the works commonly known as 'the second sophistic.'

First, we should note that the number of distinguished authors from the provinces, particularly those in the eastern part of the Empire was quite substantial, even if the works of relatively few of them have been preserved. Obviously there were major authors from Syria, some of them to be discussed below, from cities such as Apamea (Posidonius), Damascus (Nicolaus), Emesa, and Samosata (Lucian). It will not surprise either that cities such as Tyre[2] and Berytus, with its famous Law schools,[3] and Naucratis[4] produced significant authors. This is less obvious for several Palestinian cities, such as Ascalon,[5] Gaza,[6] Acco,[7] Scythopolis,[8] Neapolis,[9] Caesarea

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1 G.W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists and the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969), 21-25.

2 Tyre: the Platonist Maximus; Heraclitus, fellow-student of Antiochus of Ascalon who settled in Alexandria: John Glucker, *Antiochus and the Late Academy* (Göttingen 1978); Tyre or Berytus: Glucker, p.142-3, Calvisius or Calvenus Taurus, private tutor, active in Athens, taught Platonic philosophy (second century AD). Paul of Tyre, orator in the reign of Hadrian: Suda *P* 809, cf. A. Birley, *Hadrian: the restless emperor* (London 1995), 227f.; F. Millar, *The Roman Near East* (Cambridge, Mass. 1999), 289. Hadrian of Tyre, teacher of Proclus of Naucratis, friend of Flavius Boethus and acquaintance of Galen. He held the chair of rhetoric in Athens and died *ab epistulis Graecis* of Commodus: Philostratus, *VS* 2.585; cf. Joseph Geiger, 'Notes on the Second Sophistic in Palestine', *Illinois Classical Studies* 9 (1994), 221-30.

3 Linda Jones Hall, *Roman Berytus: Beirut in Late Antiquity* (London 2004).

4 Athenaeus, author of the *Deipnosophists* (2nd-3rd century) and Proclus of Naucratis, pupil of Hadrian of Tyre and teacher of Philostratus: see: A. Wasserstein, 'Rabban Gamaliel and Proclus the Philosopher (Mishna Aboda Zara 3.4)', *Zion* 45 (1980), 257-67 (Heb.).

5 Philosophers of the Late Academy: Antiochus and his brother Aristus, an acquaintance of Brutus, cf. Glucker, 25-6. Euenus, a poet of the first century BC: Joseph Geiger, 'Euenus of Ascalon', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 11 (1991/92), 114-22; Julian of Ascalon, a fifth-century architect who wrote on metrology: Geiger, 'Julian of Ascalon', *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 112 (1992), 31-43; for the Byzantine period, note also Ulpian the Sophist, Zosimus and Eutocius, the mathematician. Cf. Geiger, 'Greek Intellectuals from Ascalon', *Cathedra* 60 (1991), 5-16 (Hebrew).

6 Gaza flowered as a centre for rhetorical and literary studies towards the end of the fifth century, with Procopius and his pupil Choricius as central figures, see Carol Glucker, *The City of Gaza in the Roman and Byzantine Periods* (Oxford, 1987), 51-3.

7 Acco produced at least one distinguished person: the consular Flavius Boethus, governor of Palestine, 162-6, known from the works of Galen as a scholar and philosopher with an interest in medicine, cf. M. E. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule* (Second ed., Leiden 1981], 552; *PIR*^{2} F229; W. Eck, D. Isac, and I. Piso, 'Militärdiplom aus der Provinz Dacia Proloissensis', *ZPE* 100

on the Sea[10] which Apollonius of Tyana, or another author using his name, praises for its 'Greek manners' and for showing them by setting up 'public inscriptions.'[11] The province of Arabia also had its fair share of well-known figures.[12] Over a considerable period a remarkable number came from Gadara, a city of Judaea – Palaestina, immediately east of the Jordan.[13] Some of these will be discussed more extensively below.[14]

It is important here to note that the inhabitants of these cities themselves attached great importance to being 'Hellenic,' as is clear, for instance, from an inscription from Scythopolis (Beth Shean) on an altar dedicated to an Emperor who is probably Marcus Aurelius (161-180). The city is there described as 'one of the Hellenic cities in Coele-Syria.'[15] There is even an inscription from from Dhunaybeh (Danaba) in Trachonitis in Southern Syria which mentions: 'The Hellenes in Danaba …'.[16] This indicates the existence of a social group there that sees itself as Hellenic and separate from the non-Hellenic environment. The discovery of such a text at this location is not coincidence, for it is one of the sites where Herod planted military colonies to

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(1994), 582-85; C.M. Lehmann and K.G. Holum, *The Greek and Latin Inscriptions of Caesarea Maritima* (Boston, Mass., 2000), no.30, p.60. He was a friend of Hadrian of Tyre: above, n.00.

[8] A city 'rather out of the way' according to Ammianus19.12.8. However, the Stoic philosopher Basilides, teacher of Marcus Aurelius, was a native from Scythopolis: Geiger, *Illinois Classical Studies* 9 (1994), 222.

[9] Two orators: Andromachus, son of Zonas or Sabinus who taught in Nicomedia in the reign of Diocletian: Suda *A* 2185; and Siricius, a pupil of his: Suda *G* 475; cf. Geiger, op.cit., 227; Malcolm Heath, 'Theon and the history of the progymnasmata', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 43 (2002/3), 129-60, at 132..

[10] Two fourth-century orators: Geiger, *Illinois Classical Studies* 9(1994), 228-9, Acacius, a rival of Libanius, and Thespesius. Then there are the fifth-century grammarian Priscio and the orator Orion and, most famous, the historian Procopius.

[11] Apollonius of Tyana, *Ep*. 11, which may not be genuine. For the inscriptions, see Lehmann and Holum, above, n.00

[12] Geiger, *Illinois Classical Studies* 9 (1994), 225-6: Heliodorus of Arabia, a well known sophist in the time of Septimius Severus; Genethlius of Petra, active in Athens in the third century, rival of Callinicus of Petra (Suda *K*231); Epiphanius, son of Ulpian, of Petra (?), sophist, and orator who taught in Petra and in Athens in the fourth century (Suda *E*2741).); Diophantus the Arabian, pupil of Julian and teacher of Libanius; Gessius from Petra, 'iatrosophist', in the fifth century, pupil of the Jew Domnus; the orator Gaudentius 'from Nabataea'.

[13] Joseph Geiger, 'Athens in Syria: Greek Intellectuals in Gadara', *Cathedra* 35 (1985), 3-16 (Heb.); *Illinois Classical Studies* 9 (1994), 223.

[14] Strabo 16.2.30 (759) mentions Philodemus, the Epicurean, and Meleager, and Menippus, the satirist, and Theodorus the rhetorician. Theodorus was teacher of Tiberius: G. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World 300 BC – AD 300* (Princeton 1972), 340-41. His son was a senator: Bowersock, *Greek Sophists*, 28, n.6. Apsines 'the Phoenician' (VS 2.628), is possibly, but not certainly identical with the Athenian rhetor of that name (third century): M. Heath, 'Apsines and pseudo-Apsines', *AJP* 119 (1998), 89-111. The cynic critic of religion Oenomaus (second century): Jürgen Hammerstaedt, *Die Orakelkritik des Kynikers Oenomaus* (Frankfurt 1988). For the mathematician Philo: T.L. Heath, *A History of Greek Mathematics* 1 (Oxford 1922), 226; Geiger, 224.

[15] G. Foerster and Y. Tsafrir, 'Nysa-Scythopolis -- A New Inscription and the Titles of the City on its Coins', *Israel Numismatic Journal* 9 (1986-7), 53-8.: τῶν κατὰ Κοίλην Συρίαν Ἑλληνίδων πόλεων .

[16] M. Sartre, in *L'epigrafia del villaggio*. Actes du VII[e] colloque international Borghesi à l'occasion du cinquantenaire d' *Epigraphica* (Forli, 27-30 septembre 1990), A. Calbi *et al.* (edd.) (Faenza 1993), 133-5; *IGLS* 15.228; *AE* 1993.1636: Οἱ ἐν Δαναβοις Ἕλληνες Μηνοφίλῳ εὐνοίας ἕνεκεν. .

secure the region between the Galilee and the poorly controlled region of Trachonitis.[17]

The authors considered in the present paper came also from a wide variety of provincial cities in various parts of the Empire: besides those already mentioned in the Near East there is Madaurus in Africa Proconsularis, Arelate in Gaul, Tarsus in Cilicia, Cirta in Numidia. We shall see whether their provincial origin plays a role anywhere in the extant works of these authors and, if so, whether any common trait can be found in the manner in which they view themselves, their place in wider Roman society and in their attitudes towards other provincials. I shall not discuss texts in languages other than Greek and Latin. Furthermore I shall exclude from systematic discussion two authors who might seem obvious candidates: Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus. They are writing explicitly as Jews and do not fully identify with the intellectual environment of the integrated Roman Empire.

We may start with Posidonius who came from the Syrian city of Apamea on the Orontes (c. 135-c.51 BC). His work has not survived, but a fairly large number of direct quotations by later authors are available for consideration. Interesting for our inquiry is a passage in which he tells of the cities in Syria and how luxurious they were, writing as follows: 'The people in the cities, at any rate, because of the great plenty which their land afforded, (were relieved) of any distress regarding the necessaries of life; hence they held many gatherings at which they feasted continually, using the gymnasia as if they were baths, anointing themselves with expensive oil and perfumes, and living in the "bonds" – for so they called the commons where the diners met – as though they were their private houses, and putting in the greater part of the day there in filling their bellies – there, in the midst of wines and foods so abundant that they even carried a great deal home with them besides – and in delighting their ears with sounds from a loud-twanging tortoise-shell (i.e. a lyre), so that their towns rang from end to end with such noises.'[18]

As mentioned, Posidonius himself was born in the Syrian city of Apamea, but he was trained in Athens and settled in Rhodes. The text above is quoted by Athenaeus of Naucratis in Egypt (c.200 AD), following a passage about Lucullus who, after his victories in the East, was the first to live extravagantly. The beginning of decadence is a familiar theme in Roman historiography.[19] Baths as a symptom of luxurious

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[17] Cf. M. Sartre, *D'Alexandre à Zénobie: Histoire du Levant antique iv^e siècle av. J.-C. – iii^e siècle ap. J.-C.* (Paris, 2001), pp.514 ; 750-51.

[18] F62a, Kidd, Athenaeus 12.527E-F

Ποσειδώνιος δ' ἐκκαιδεκάτῃ Ἱστοριῶν περὶ τῶν κατὰ τὴν ΣΥΡΙΑΝ πόλεων λέγων ὡς ἐτρύφων γράφει καὶ ταῦτα· "τῶν γοῦν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν ἀνθρώπων διὰ τὴν εὐβοσίαν τῆς χώρας ἀπὸ τῆς περὶ τὰ ἀναγκαῖα κακοπαθείας συνόδους νεμόντων πλείονας, ἐν αἷς εὐωχοῦντο συνεχῶς, τοῖς μὲν γυμνασίοις ὡς βαλανείοις χρώμενοι, ἀλειφόμενοι [δ] ἐλαίῳ πολυτελεῖ καὶ μύροις· τοῖς δὲ γραμματείοις—οὕτως γὰρ ἐκάλουν τὰ κοινὰ τῶν συνδείπνων—ὡς οἰκητηρίοις ἐνδιαιτώμενοι, [καὶ] τὸ πλεῖον τῆς ἡμέρας γαστριζόμενοι ἐν αὐτοῖς οἴνοις καὶ βρώμασιν, ὥστε καὶ προσαποφέρειν πολλὰ καὶ καταυλουμένους πρὸς χελωνίδος πολυκρότου ψόφον, ὥστε τὰς πόλεις ὅλας τοιούτοις κελάδοις συνηχεῖσθαι."
See also F62b (Kidd), Athenaeus 5.210E-F.

[19] See my *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton 2004), chapter 5. For Sallust it began with Sulla's eastern campaigns. The Elder Pliny, living more than a century afterwards, went further back in the past and saw the conquest of Asia Minor in 189 BC as the start of Roman decline and decadence.

decadence are a common topic in Roman literature. Elsewhere Posidonius notes the sturdy simplicity of the early inhabitants of Italy, also a popular theme: '…Even those who were very well off for a livelihood, trained their sons in drinking water, mostly, and in eating whatever they happened to have. And often, he tells us, a father or mother would ask a son whether he preferred to make his dinner of pears or walnuts, and after eating some of these he was satisfied and went to bed. …'[20] Besides being an economic reality, it obviously was a popular commonplace. Scipio Africanus, criticized in his own times for extravagant living,[21] was centuries afterwards praised for his sobriety.[22]

Posidonius does not identify himself as a Syrian. His negative view of Syrians and Syria echoes the usual stereotypes of weak, decadent easterners found in Greece and Rome, just as his positive views of Italians echo their own chauvinist views of their own ancestors. Apparently he fully identifies with the familiar prejudices of the imperial elite and prefers not to insist on his own origins in Syria.

Posidonius does not mention himself at all in this passage. By contrast, the next author to be mentioned here places himself at the centre. Meleager of Gadara, living in roughly the same age, second – first century BC, came from a city already mentioned for its remarkable contribution to Greek culture over the centuries. Among his extant works is a short Greek autobiographical poem in the form of an epitaph:

'Island Tyre was my nurse, and Gadara, an Attic fatherland which lies among Assyrians (sc. Syrians) gave birth to me. From Eucrates I sprung, Meleager, who first by the help of the Muses ran abreast of the Graces of Menippus. What wonder if I am a Syrian? Stranger, we all inhabit one fatherland, one world. Once Chaos gave birth to all mortals…'[23]

Meleager emphasizes the point by saying "an Attic fatherland among Syrians – Gadara" rather than "an Attic fatherland in Syrian Gadara" He also makes it clear that he competed with the elegant work of his fellow Gadarene, Menippus. Meleager is called 'the cynic' by Athenaeus[24] and the claim that all men are equal and compatriots, fits this description. However, it is undeniable that there is an apologetic and defensive element in the poem. He emphasizes that his fatherland is 'Attic' but apparently that is only part of his identity. He is a Syrian, he says, but that should not affect his credentials, for all men have one common *patris,* namely the kosmos.

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[20] F267 (Kidd), Athenaeus 6.109: πρότερον δὲ οὕτως ὀλιγοδεεῖς ἦσαν οἱ τὴν Ἰταλίαν κατοικοῦντες ὥστε καὶ καθ' ἡμᾶς ἔτι, φησὶν ὁ Ποσειδώνιος, οἱ σφόδρα εὐκαιρούμενοι τοῖς βίοις ἦγον τοὺς υἱοὺς ὕδωρ μὲν ὡς τὸ πολὺ πίνοντας, ἐσθίοντας δ' ὅ τι ἂν τύχῃ. καὶ πολλάκις, φησίν, πατὴρ ἢ μήτηρ υἱὸν ἠρώτα πότερον ἀπίους ἢ κάρυα βούλεται δειπνῆσαι, καὶ τούτων τι φαγὼν ἠρκεῖτο καὶ ἐκοιμᾶτο.

[21] Plutarch, *Cato Maior* 3.5-7.

[22] Athenaeus 6. 105; Seneca, *Ep.* 86.4ff.

[23] *The Greek Anthology: Hellenistic Epigrams*, edited by A.S.F. Gow and D.L. Page (Cambridge, 1965), 1, p.216, no.2 (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.417): Νᾶσος ἐμὰ θρέπτειρα Τύρος· πάτρα δέ με τεκνοῖ / Ἀτθὶς ἐν Ἀσσυρίοις ναιομένα Γαδάρα· / Εὐκράτεω δ᾽ ἔβλαστον ὁ σὺν Μούσαις Μελέαγρος / πρῶτα Μενιππείοις συντροχάσας Χάρισιν. / εἰ δὲ Σύρος, τί τὸ θαῦμα; μίαν, ξένε, πατρίδα κόσμον / ναίομεν, ἓν θνατοὺς πάντας ἔτικτε Χάος… /. For the reading Γαδάρα see Gow and Page, 2.607.

[24] 11.107.12 and the passage cited also below: 4.45.33.

There is a second, similar and related poem: '…Tyre of the godlike boys and Gadara's holy earth made me a man; lovely Kos of the Meropes took care of me in my old age. So if you are a Syrian, Salaam! If you are a Phoenician, Naidios! If you are Greek, Chaire! And do you say the same [to me].'[25]

Here again Meleager is defiantly cosmopolitan. Yet he identifies himself as being from Gadara. I am not sure why the earth there is called holy; perhaps simply because it was his fatherland?[26]

A final engaging point is transmitted again by Athenaeus,[27] where Meleager is cited indirectly as claiming that Homer was a Syrian by birth and therefore depicted as abstaining from fish as customary in Syria, even though the Hellespont was full of fish.[28]

Meleager's tone is quite different from Posidonius: he clearly identifies his background and claims that it does not prevent him from being genuinely Hellenic.

At this point a brief discussion of terminology is unavoidable, because it is historically and socially relevant. Meleager calls himself a Syrian, but also mentions a Phoenician, speaking his own language. The reference to a Phoenician is interesting for both Apsines and Menippus of Gadara, Meleager's city, are at least once called 'Phoenician.'[29] It is not clear to me why this ethnic indication would be applied to the citizens of a city east of the river Jordan, well beyond the region usually associated with Phoenicia. Although there is a record of Phoenician settlements in some towns in Palestine, we do not know there was such an establishment at Gadara. Also, those settlements are called 'Sidonian', not Phoenician.[30] There can be no connection with the name of the Roman province of Syria-Phoenice, for that is an innovation of the end of the second century AD.

For several of the texts here discussed it will be interesting that both in Latin and, more particularly in Greek, no distinction in terminology is made between a 'people' and a 'province'. This is clear from the use of the Greek term *ethnos.* Thus an undated grave inscription mentions a *beneficiarius* of the governor κατὰ ἐθνὸς Φοινίκων.[31] The context shows unambiguously that this refers to the 'province of

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[25] *The Greek Anthology*, 1, p.217, no. 4 (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.419): …ὸν θεόπαις ἤνδρωσε Τύρος Γαδάρων θ᾽ ἱερὰ χθών, / Κῶς δ᾽ ἐρατὴ Μερόπων πρέσβυν ἐγηροτρόφει. / ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν Σύρος ἐσσί, σαλάμ· εἰ δ᾽ οὖν σύ γε Φοῖνιξ, / ναίδιος· εἰ δ᾽ Ἕλλην, χαῖρε· τὸ δ᾽ αὐτὸ φράσον.

[26] Cf. Joseph Geiger, 'Language, Culture and Identity in Ancient Palestine' in: Erik N. Ostenfeld (ed.), *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks: Studies in Cultural Interaction* (Aarhus 2002), 233-46, at 233-4.

[27] Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae* 4.45.35, citing Parmeniscus, the grammarian, *The Cynics' Symposium.*

[28] τὸν Ὅμηρον Σύρον ὄντα τὸ γένος κατὰ τὰ πάτρια ἰχθύων ἀπεχομένους. Also: 2.50.19; Plutarch, *Quaestiones convivales* 730C. (where the point that Homer would have been Syrian himself is missing).

[29] Philostratus, *VS* 2.628: Ἀψίνης ὁ Φοῖνιξ ; Diogenes Laertius 6.98: Menippus was Φοίνικα τὸ γένος.

[30] B. Isaac, 'A Seleucid Inscription from Jamnia-on-the-Sea', in Isaac, *The Near East under Roman Rule* (Leiden, 1997), 3-20: Sidonians are found in Jamnia-on-the-Sea, Shekhem (Nablus), and Marissa (Maresha).

[31] P. Le Bas – H. Waddington, *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Grèce et en Asie Mineure,* 3 (Paris, 1970), 2432, from Nedjan in the southern part of Trachonitis

Syria Phoenice' not to 'the people of the Phoenicians.' Tacitus refers to 'an official who was Roman governor of Egypt which was his own *natio*.'[32] The point of this piece of information for us is that a Roman province could be called a *natio*. It might indicate that Tacitus still considered the Egyptians a people under Roman rule, but it is more likely that the term is used here as an alternative to *provincia*, just as the term *ethnos Phoinikon* was seen to indicate the province of Syria Phoenice. In this connection we may note that Jerome says of Malchus that he was *Syrus natione et lingua*, 'a Syrian by *natio* and language.'[33] Malchus spoke Syriac rather than Greek, that is not surprising, but in what sense was Syria his *natio*? If there was a Syriac language, this may have made the Syrians a nation or a people, but it is more likely that the term indicates that Syria was his province of origin. Again it may be noted that the *Historia Augusta* speaks of "Pal<a>estini" when referring in general to the inhabitants of the province of Syria Palaestina.[34] Finally we should consider a third-fourth century reference to Iamblichus, author of a work the *Babyloniaca*:[35]

'This Iamblichus was a Syrian by origin on both his father's and his mother's side, a Syrian not in the sense of the Greeks who have settled in Syria, but of the native ones (*autochthones*), familiar with the Syrian language and living by their customs.'

This text then refers to two categories of Syrians: Greek (speaking) immigrant settlers and locals who know Syriac and have Syrian customs. Iamblichus is a Syrian by birth, but not a Syrian Greek by origin. The distinction he makes is both cultural-linguistic and a matter of origin. Even though he himself is a successfully Hellenized Syrian he still regards being Hellenic and being Syrian in language and culture as historically and inextricably linked with origin. A Syrian by origin will always remain a Syrian, whether he acquires Hellenic culture or not. To return to Meleager's self-description as a Syrian from an Attic fatherland: this is clearly a complex notion, which may have been less obviously right to part of his readers than he would have wished.

Proceeding in roughly chronological order we come to Dio Chrysostom (c. 40/50 – after 110 AD). We change to another literary genre, it should be noted. While Posidonius wrote scholarly prose and Meleager poetry, we now come to public oratory. Dio, a native of Prusa, addresses the citizens of Tarsus and asks what would be the impression of a person from the sound of their voices from a distance: 'And would anyone call you [sc. the citizens of Tarsus] colonists from Argos, as you claim to be, or more likely colonists of those abominable Aradians ? Would he call you

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[32] Tacitus, *Historiae* 1.11: *regebat tum Tiberius Alexander, eiusdem nationis*. The phrase indicates that Alexander himself came from Egypt where he was governor.

[33] Jerome, *vita Malchi* 42 (*PL* xxiii 54).

[34] SHA *Niger* 7,9. The passage contains a spurious statement, but that is not important here. Also: SHA *Severus*14.6 and 17.1; cf. the comments in M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* 2 (Jerusalem 1980), pp. 623-5.

[35] Photius *Bibliotheca* (marginal note): Οὗτος ὁ Ἰάμβλιχος Σύρος ἦν γένος πατρόθεν καὶ μητρόθεν, Σύρος δὲ οὐχὶ τῶν ἐπωκότων τὴν Συρίαν Ἑλλήνων, ἀλλὰ τῶν αὐτοχθόνων, γλῶσσαν δὲ σύραν εἰδὼς.R. Henry (ed. and trans.), *Photius, Bibliothèque* II (Paris 1960), p.40, n.1 for the Greek text of the note. Cf. Fergus Millar, *The Roman Near East: 31 BC – AD 337* (Cambridge, MA 1993), 491.

Greeks, or the most licentious of Phoenicians?'[36] It is to be noted that Tarsus in Cilicia was an old Ionian colony, by the time when Dio visited it definitely venerable and certainly Hellenic in culture, at least since the second century BC. Strabo, writing not very long before Dio, claims that the people of Tarsus 'have surpassed Athens, Alexandria, or any other place that can be named' in their devotion to philosophy.[37] By contrast Prusa in Cilicia was established (in place of the older settlement named Kios) by Prusias I in 202 BCE, so it is a cheeky assessment of Dio, to say the least. This, however, may be regarded as no more than traditional rivalry between Anatolian cities. It is the comparison of Tarsus with the equally Hellenized Arados that is striking.[38] Apparently, the worst that a person from Prusa could say to the inhabitants of Tarsus is that they were 'Phoenician colonists'. The point that interests us is to what extent the attitude of a provincial great man towards a provincial community not his own could be condescending and hostile.

A similar phenomenon may be found a century later in the work of Ptolemy of Alexandria (c.146-c.170) in his *Tetrabiblos*, the work in which he attempted to adapt horoscopic astrology to the Aristotelian natural philosophy of his day.[39] Here we are faced with yet another type of text: scientific prose. It is fascinating to see how this work repeats the usual stereotypes concerning various peoples of the Roman Empire, basing them very firmly on astrological analysis. Thus northern peoples, especially those of western Europe are 'independent, liberty-loving, fond of arms, industrious, very warlike, with qualities of leadership, cleanly, and magnanimous ... but without passion for women and they look down upon the pleasures of love, but are better satisfied with … men.[40] Gaul, Britain, Germany and Bastrania are … fierce, more headstrong and bestial.[41]

However, men from the western Mediterranean are clearly superior and destined to rule: 'Italy, Apulia, Cisalpine Gaul and Sicily … are more masterful, benevolent and co-operative.' The same is true for Greece and its neighbours: '[The peoples in] the parts of this quarter which are situated about the centre of the inhabited world, Thrace, Macedonia, Illyria, Hellas, Archaia, Crete, and likewise the Cyclades, and the coastal regions of Asia Minor and Cyprus …. have qualities of leadership and are noble and independent, because of Mars; they are liberty-loving and self-governing, democratic and framers of law, through Jupiter..'[42]

When he comes to the peoples of the Near East, neighbours or in the vicinity of his own province of Egypt, the tone changes drastically: 'Idumaea, Coele Syria, Judaea, Phoenicia, Chaldaea, Orchinia, and Arabia Felix … more gifted in trade and

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[36] *Or.* 33. : καὶ πότερον ὑμᾶς Ἀργείων ἀποίκους, ὡς λέγετε, φήσει τις ἢ μᾶλλον ἐκείνων Ἀραδίων; καὶ πότερον Ἕλληνας ἢ Φοινίκων τοὺς ἀσελγεστάτους; Cf. C.P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978), 71-82.

[37] Strabo 14.13-15 (673-5).

[38] Strabo describes Aradus as a prosperous city, acting with prudence and industry in maritime affairs: Strabo 16.2.14 (754). For the city see: H. Seyrig, 'Arados et Baetocaece', *Syria* 29 (1951), 191-220; J.-P. Rey-Coquais, *Arados et sa Pérée aux époques grecque, romaine et Byzantine* (Paris 1974); for its legends on its origins : 250-1.

[39] Cf. K.E. Müller, *Geschichte der antiken Ethnographie* 2 (1980), 172-3; B. Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity* (Princeton, 2004), 99-101.

[40] Ptolemy, *Tetrabiblos*, 2.3.13.4-8.

[41] 2.3.14.1-3.

[42] 2.3.17.1-20.1.

exchange; they are more unscrupulous, despicable cowards, treacherous, servile, and in general fickle … Of these, again, the inhabitants of Coele Syria, Idumaea, and Judaea are … in general bold, godless, and scheming.' [43]

All this repeats in general terms the usual stereotypes for those peoples. The only true exception is the description of Ptolemy's native Egypt: 2.3.49.1-50.1 'Lower Egypt: thoughtful and intelligent and facile in all things, especially in the search for wisdom and religion; they are magicians and performers of secret mysteries and in general skilled in mathematics.' This is entirely different from the usual complex of negative stereotypes found about Egypt throughout antiquity: the Egyptians are fraudulent, promiscuous, greedy, fickle, rebellious, etc. etc.[44] It is in itself interesting to see the flexibility of astrology as applied to ethnography, but that is not the issue of the present paper. The point to be considered here is the obvious indication of ill-will and hostility that could exist between neighbouring peoples and provinces of what undoubtedly was a reasonably well-integrated empire at the height of its power. Ptolemy is chauvinist regarding his own provincial background, but aggressively negative about neighbouring peoples and provinces and those farther away. We must realize that these assessments are voiced by one of the most prominent scientists and authors of his time. Whether similar sentiments would be uttered in pubs and the markets we cannot know. However, here we are investigating the attitudes of provincial intellectuals and there is no doubt that Ptolemy the Geographer, like Dio Chrysostom, belonged to this category.

We now return to Syria, to an author roughly contemporary with Ptolemy the Geographer, namely Lucian of Samosata, born c. 120, a prolific author of Greek prose who came from Samosata on the Euphrates, the old capital of Commagene, one of the kingdoms that were annexed to the province of Syria. Lucian, a prolific author of satirical prose frequently refers to Syrians among Greeks and to Greeks in Rome and allows us a glimpse of the tensions engendered by the presence of persons of different ethnic and geographic origin in Greece and Rome. It is often difficult to interpret satirical literature properly because we may not be sufficiently familiar with the social context and common ground among the intended readers.[45] There are, however, passages in the work of Lucian that strongly suggest specific attitudes of interest for the present paper.

Lucian is being accused of abusing philosophy by all great philosophers of the past while Philosophy acts as judge. Lucian addresses them: 'I am a Syrian, Philosophy, from the banks of the Euphrates. But what of that? I know that some of my opponents here are just as barbarian as I: but in their manners and culture they are not like men of Soli or Cyprus or Babylon or Stagira. Yet as far as you are concerned it

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[43] 2.3.31-32.

[44] Isaac, *The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity*, 352-70.

[45] The literature is very extensive: Niall Rudd, *Themes in Roman Satire* (London 1986), chapter 1; William S. Anderson, *Essays on Roman Satire* (Princeton, 1982) viii; John Henderson, *Writing down Rome: Satire, Comedy, and other Offences in Latin Poetry* (Oxford 1999); Kirk Freudenburg, *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Satire* (Cambridge, 2005); Daniel M. Hooley, *Roman Satire.* (Oxford, 2007). For Lucian: Jennifer Hall, *Lucian's Satire* (New York, 1981); C.P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge, Mass. 1986); Graham Anderson, *The Second Sophistic: A Cultural Phenomenon in the Roman Empire* (London 1993); Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire: Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World AD 50-250* (Oxford, 1996), 298-329 and esp. 298-308.

would make no difference even if a man's speech were foreign, if only his way of thinking were manifestly right and just.'[46]
The argument made in this passage is a familiar cosmopolitan, cynic point, denying the essential difference between human beings throughout the inhabited world.[47] More specifically, for present purposes, Lucian's tone is apologetic: even though he is a Syrian barbarian and speaks Greek with a foreign accent, his judgement can be right and his morals correct.

Next we should consider a passage from 'The Double Indictment' which has a different emphasis on a related theme: a Syrian, who moves to a Greek environment, gives up his non-Greek life-style and acquires Hellenic culture.[48] This text seems to contain elements of an autobiographic dialogue or at least of a scene taken from real life. The speaker here is Oratory, accusing her husband who is clearly Lucian himself, a Syrian, before a court of justice. The present passage describes the state in which Oratory first found Lucian.

'When this man was a mere boy, gentlemen of the jury, still speaking with a foreign accent [or: a foreign language] and I might almost say wearing a caftan in the Assyrian [sc. Syrian] style, I found him still wandering about in Ionia, not knowing what to do with himself; so I took him in hand and gave him an education. As it seemed to me that he was an apt pupil and paid strict attention to me – for he was subservient to me in those days and paid court to me and admired none but me – I turned my back upon all the others who were suing for my hand, although they were rich and good-looking and of splendid ancestry, and plighted myself to this ingratiate, who was poor and insignificant and young, bringing him a considerable dowry consisting in many marvellous speeches. Then, after we were married, I got him irregularly registered among my own clansmen and made him a citizen, so that those who had failed to secure my hand in marriage choked with envy.'

Barbarian φωνὴ could mean either Aramaic or Syrian or provincial, accented Greek.[49] I think it means the latter because Lucian usually uses '*glossa'* for 'language.' The tone of the accusation is here that clothing, culture and accent go together as well as poverty. However, once the Syrian has acquired Hellenic culture and is accepted as a member of respectable society, his true character shows itself: he

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[46] *Reviviscentes sive Piscator* 19.6 (*The Fisherman*) [344]: Σύρος, ὦ Φιλοσοφία, τῶν Ἐπευφρατιδίων. ἀλλὰ τί τοῦτο; καὶ γὰρ τούτων τινὰς οἶδα τῶν ἀντιδίκων μου οὐχ ἧττον ἐμοῦ βαρβάρους τὸ γένος· ὁ τρόπος δὲ καὶ ἡ παιδεία οὐ κατὰ Σολέας ἢ Κυπρίους ἢ Βαβυλωνίους ἢ Σταγειρίτας. καίτοι πρός γε σὲ οὐδὲν ἂν ἔλαττον γένοιτο οὐδ᾽ εἰ τὴν φωνὴν βάρβαρος εἴη τις, εἴπερ ἡ γνώμη ὀρθὴ καὶ δικαία φαίνοιτο οὖσα.

[47] The choice of Soli, Cyprus, Babylon and Stagira is incomprehensible to me.

[48] *Bis Accusatus* 27 (*The Double Indictment*): Ἐγὼ γάρ, ὦ ἄνδρες δικασταί, τουτονὶ κομιδῇ μειράκιον ὄντα, βάρβαρον ἔτι τὴν φωνὴν καὶ μονονουχὶ κάνδυν ἐνδεδυκότα εἰς τὸν Ἀσσύριον τρόπον, περὶ τὴν Ἰωνίαν εὑροῦσα πλαζόμενον ἔτι καὶ ὅ τι χρήσαιτο ἑαυτῷ οὐκ εἰδότα παραλαβοῦσα ἐπαίδευσα. καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἐδόκει μοι εὐμαθὴς εἶναι καὶ ἀτενὲς ὁρᾶν εἰς ἐμέ—ὑπέπτησσε γὰρ τότε καὶ ἐθεράπευεν καὶ μόνην ἐθαύμαζεν—ἀπολιποῦσα τοὺς ἄλλους ὁπόσοι ἐμνήστευόν με πλούσιοι καὶ καλοὶ καὶ λαμπροὶ τὰ προγονικά, τῷ ἀχαρίστῳ τούτῳ ἐμαυτὴν ἐνεγγύησα πένητι καὶ ἀφανεῖ καὶ νέῳ προῖκα οὐ μικρὰν ἐπενεγκαμένη πολλοὺς καὶ θαυμασίους λόγους. εἶτα ἀγαγοῦσα αὐτὸν εἰς τοὺς φυλέτας τοὺς ἐμοὺς παρενέγραψα καὶ ἀστὸν ἀπέφηνα, ὥστε τοὺς διαμαρτόντας τῆς ἐγγύης ἀποπνίγεσθαι.

[49] See J.L. Lightfoot, *Lucian On the Syrian Goddess* (Oxford 2003), 205 with note 554 for references.

is an ungrateful profiteer. In other words: culture can be acquired, but character is basic and a Syrian has a bad character. A barbarian character will show, whatever the Hellenic veneer. Obviously this is not necessarily Lucian's own opinion of Syrians in Greek society. This accusation is actually ascribed to 'Oratory' and it is satire, a genre notoriously difficult to interpret because it makes fun of foibles known to the collective insiders. However, this passage may plausibly be interpreted as a satirical rendering of the stereotypes current among Greek rhetoricians against the easterners among them.

The third and last passage associated with well-to-do Syrians in Greek society is taken from 'The Ignorant Book-Collector.'[50] Lucian asks why this unlettered rich man collects books.[51] Perhaps it is only to display his wealth. 'Come now, as far as I know — and I too am a Syrian — if you had not smuggled yourself into that old man's will with all speed, you would be starving to death by now, and would be putting up your books at auction!' The implication of the words 'I too am a Syrian' is that the other man behaves like a typical Syrian. He was an ignorant pauper who got rich thanks to dishonest machinations and used his money to build up a façade of intellectuality. Again, this is satire and can plausibly be interpreted as representing a humorous imitation of Greek prejudice concerning Syrians. The three passages from Lucian cited here are concerned with varying situations. What they have in common is the view that Syrians cannot be genuine Greek, intellectual gentlemen. They have to defend themselves against prejudice because of their foreign accents or are seen as profiteers or frauds.

In the works of Lucian there are other Syrian immigrants too, who do not move in circles of wealth and intellectuality. They are poor immigrants who make a living as quacks, thus in *Podagra*:

'We Syrians are, Damascus men by birth, / But forced by hunger and by poverty, / We wander far afield o'er land and sea, / We have an ointment here, our fathers' gift / With which we comfort woes of sufferers.'[52] A somewhat related figure appears in the *Philopseudes* 16.4-5: He is a Syrian from Palestine, not a specific person, but a familiar type, apparently, someone who exorcizes spirits for a large fee, and it is clearly suggested that men like this one are quacks who demand a stiff fee for their service.

'Everyone knows about the Syrian from Palestine, the adept in [exorcising spirits], how many he takes in hand who fall down in the light of the moon and roll their eyes and fill their mouths with foam; nevertheless, he restores them to health and sends them away normal in mind, delivering them from their straits for a large fee.'[53]

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[50] *adversus Indoctum* 19.20-20.1 (*The Ignorant Book-Collector*) [342]: καὶ μὴν ὅσα γε κἀμὲ Σύρον ὄντα εἰδέναι, εἰ μὴ σαυτὸν φέρων ταῖς τοῦ γέροντος ἐκείνου διαθήκαις παρενέγραψας, ἀπωλώλεις ἂν ὑπὸ λιμοῦ ἤδη καὶ ἀγορὰν προὐτίθεις τῶν βιβλίων.

[51] The Loeb edition, vol. 1, by A.M. Harmon, 1953, adds by way of clarification: 'he may or may not have been of Semitic stock.'

[52] *Podagra* 265 [345]: Σύροι μέν ἐσμεν, ἐκ Δαμασκοῦ τῷ γένει, / λιμῷ δὲ πολλῷ καὶ πενίᾳ κρατούμενοι / γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν ἐφέπομεν πλανώμενοι· / ἔχομεν δὲ χρῖσμα πατροδώρητον τόδε, / ἐν ᾧ παρηγοροῦμεν ἀλγούντων πόνους..

[53] ἀλλὰ πάντες ἴσασι τὸν Σύρον τὸν ἐκ τῆς Παλαιστίνης, τὸν ἐπὶ τούτῳ σοφιστήν, ὅσους παραλαβὼν καταπίπτοντας πρὸς τὴν σελήνην καὶ τὼ ὀφθαλμὼ διαστρέφοντας καὶ ἀφροῦ

The essence again is that it is typical of him as a Syrian from Palestine, that he is a quack, exploiting superstition and credulity for gain. These passages in Lucian's work related to Syrians all show subtle differences, but what they have in common is a suggestion that the dominant stereotype for them is that of dishonesty and it does not seem farfetched to detect an apologetic tone in these passages. We should remember here, that being 'Syrian' is not a straightforward issue, as we saw above. It can denote origin from the province of Syria, but is unavoidably part of a more complex package. There is little doubt that Lucian's audience was a general, Greek-reading intellectual part of the population while he focused in these cases on the position of Syrians in the provinces.[54]

There is, however, another relationship which also must have played a significant role in his life, namely that of the position of Greeks in the city of Rome. In the following passage in *On Hirelings*, Lucian Greek in culture, from Samosata in Syria, satirizes the local, Roman response to the presence of Greeks in the society of contemporary Rome:

'That was still left for us in addition to our other afflictions, to play second fiddle to men who have just come into the household, and it is only these Greeks who have the freedom of the city of Rome. And yet, why is it that they are preferred to us? Is it not true that they think they confer a tremendous benefit by turning phrases?'[55]

The speaker here is a fictional character, a local Roman who feels he is being pushed aside in Roman society by Greeks with their smooth talk. In another passage of the same work, 40, there is a suggestion that there was an automatic presumption that every Greek is less reliable than any local Roman.[56]

If we compare the attitudes which Lucian attributes to his fictional characters, as they appear in these passages, then it will be clear that they do not resemble the position taken by Posidonius in his scholarly work, where he does not identify himself as a Syrian and took his distance. Meleager's on the other hand clearly identifies his background, but claims that it does not prevent him from being genuinely Hellenic while, at the same time defending the view that all men are born equal and should be judged on the basis of intrinsic merit, not origin or ancestry. Lucian, writing satire,

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πιμπλαμένους τὸ στόμα ὅμως ἀνίστησι καὶ ἀποπέμπει ἀρτίους τὴν γνώμην, ἐπὶ μισθῷ μεγάλῳ ἀπαλλάξας τῶν δεινῶν. . There is a good deal of discussion regarding the identity of this man as to whether he is Jewish, non Jewish or Christian: M. Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors on Jews and Judaism* vol.2 (Jerusalem, 1980), no. 372, p.221; Isaac, *Invention of Racism*, 347 and n.101.

[54] *Alexander* 48.19: Speaking of Marcus's war with the Marcomanni and Quadi, Lucian refers to the enemy as οἱ βάρβαροι, to the Roman troops "ours" (αὐτίκα δὲ τὸ μέγιστον τραῦμα τοῖς ἡμετέροις ἐγένετο,). Some scholars regard this as significant. It is hard to imagine Lucian using the third person in this case. Cf. *Hist. conscr.* 29.5: 'Nobody would dare attack us – we have beaten everybody already.'

[55] *De mercede conductis* 17 (*On Hirelings*) : Τοῦτο ἡμῖν πρὸς τοῖς ἄλλοις δεινοῖς ἐλείπετο, καὶ τῶν ἄρτι εἰσεληλυθότων εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν δευτέρους εἶναι, καὶ μόνοις τοῖς Ἕλλησι τούτοις ἀνέῳκται ἡ Ῥωμαίων πόλις· καίτοι τί ἐστιν ἐφ' ὅτῳ προτιμῶνται ἡμῶν; οὐ ῥημάτια δύστηνα λέγοντες οἰονταί τι παμμέγεθες ὠφελεῖν.

[56] I have not included any passages from *De Dea Syria* attributed to Lucian. While this is an extremely interesting text the difficulties involved in understanding it are such that they preclude useful discussion here. See J.L. Lightfoot, *Lucian On the Syrian Goddess* (Oxford 2003). Personally I do not believe the work is by Lucian. In Lucian's satire there are always at least two parties involved.

seems to imply that there always remained a social barrier that could not be overcome.

Another rough contemporary of Lucian was Fronto, who belonged to quite a different social class (c.95-166). Fronto is from an Italian family in North Africa, in Cirta, Numidia. His reputation as a Latin orator is second only to that of Cicero. In a letter, written in Greek in 143 to Domitia Lucilla, the Emperor Antoninus' mother, Fronto apologizes for any possible infelicities in his Attic and adds that Anacharsis is also said to have been imperfect in Greek, 'but he was praised for his meaning and his thoughts. I will compare myself, then, with Anacharsis, not, by heaven, in wisdom, but as being like him a barbarian. For he was a Scythian of the nomad Scythians … and …I am a Libyan of the Libyan nomads.'[57] Fronto identifies himself as a rustic provincial even though he is clearly a very superior one and he certainly does not mean he has anything to do with nomads. That is an affectation, a little pre-emptive strike. We may note that Lucian also compares himself with Anacharsis.[58] Here too the comparison is immediately qualified by what seems to be false modesty.[59]

Another provincial intellectual from North Africa to be mentioned briefly is Apuleius, best known through his Golden Ass (Metamorphoses). He came from Madaurus, a Roman colony in Numidia where his father was a *duumvir*. Apuleius was wealthy, studied in Carthage, Athens and Rome. His *Apologia* is a speech in defence of himself against an accusation that he indulged in magic practices.

'Concerning my fatherland, as you have shown on the basis of my own writings, it lies on the very border of Numidia and Gaetulia. I have in fact declared in my public declarations made in the presence of the honourable Lollianus Avitus that I am half Numidian and half Gaetulian. However, I do not see what there is in this for me to be ashamed of, any more than there was for the Elder Cyrus, being of mixed origin, half Mede and half Persian. After all it is not where a man was born but his way of life that should be considered, nor in what region, but how he lives his life. … Have we not seen that in all periods and among all peoples different characters occur, while some appear more remarkable for their stupidity or their cleverness? The wise Anacharsis was born among the extremely foolish Scythians, among the intelligent Athenians, the silly Meletides. And yet I have not spoken out of shame for my country, even if we were still the town of Syphax [i.e. still belonged to the kingdom of the late King Syphax]. After the latter's defeat we found ourselves under the authority of king Masinissa by the grant of the Roman people. Later our city was re-founded by the establishment of veteran soldiers and we are now a most splendid colony. In this

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[57] *Epist. Graecae* 1.10 1.10 Naber 239-42 (trans. C.R. Haines, Loeb): εἴ τι τῶν ὀνομάτων ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς ταύταις εἴη ἄκυρον ἢ βάρβαρον ἢ ἄλλως ἀδόκιμον ἢ μὴ πάνυ Ἀττικόν, ἀλλὰ ... τοῦ ὀνόματος σ᾽ ἀξιῶ τήν γε διάνοιαν σκοπεῖν αὐτὴν καθ᾽ αὑτήν· οἶσθα γὰρ ὅτι ἐν αὐτοῖς ὀνόμασιν καὶ αὐτῇ διαλέκτῳ διατρίβω. καὶ γὰρ τὸν Σκύθην ἐκεῖνον τὸν Ἀνάχαρσιν οὐ πάνυ τι ἀττικίσαι φασίν, ἐπαινεθῆναι δ᾽ ἐκ τῆς διανοίας καὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων. παραβαλῶ δὴ ἐμαυτὸν Ἀναχάρσιδι οὐ μὰ Δία κατὰ τὴν σοφίαν ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὸ βάρβαρος ὁμοίως εἶναι. ἦν γὰρ ὁ μὲν Σκύθης τῶν νομάδων Σκυθῶν,

[58] In various fictional letters attributed to him Anacharsis appears as a spokesman for a Cynic theme – the importance of judging people by inner worth and not by external trappings. E.g. C.D.N. Costa, *Greek Fictional Letters: A Selection with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford 2001), 69, where the emphasis is placed on the unimportance of accent and idiomatic purity of spoken Greek.

[59] Lucian, *Scytha* 9.6ff

colony my father reached the rank of *duumvir* after passing through all the ranks of the municipal administration.. His status in the city, ever since I was a member of the council, I maintain without demeaning it, with equal honour and respect, I hope.'

Here too we encounter presumptuous comparisons: this time with Cyrus, but also, for the third time, with Anacharsis. He returns to the argument encountered in Meleager, going back to Antiphon that it does not really matter where you are born. It is important how you live, what culture you have, how you behave. Yet he does not deny the truth of stereotypes. He merely asserts that there are exceptions everywhere. He also seems to feel a mixed origin is problematic, a common attitude in antiquity,[60] but here too he asserts that there are exceptions: clever individuals among stupid people and the reverse. A third point at issue is the character of his native city of Madaurus. It is, apparently, felt necessary to point out the difference between a notable from a Roman citizen colony and a provincial native from among the rural subject peoples.[61] While much of the *Apologia* is very aggressive where he is on the attack, here he speaks as one who is on the defence.

We remain in North Africa, to consider the background of the Emperor Septimius Severus. In the reign of Domitian, Statius addresses the grandfather of the future Emperor:

'Did Leptis that loses itself in the distant Syrtes beget you? … Who would not think that my sweet Septimius had crawled an infant on all the hills of Rome? … Neither your speech nor your dress is Punic, yours is no stranger's mind: Italian are you, Italian! Indeed in our city and among the knights of Rome, Libya has sons who would adorn her.'[62]

Ostensibly this pays Septimius Severus a compliment by declaring him indistinguishable from a genuine Roman. At the same time, however, it shows the condescension towards a man who was a provincial and yet was regarded as respectable by Romans in Rome. Obviously, most foreigners were less successfully adapted to Roman society and not all representatives of the Roman elite were as tolerant (and as proud of it) as Statius. When all is said and done, Septimius still does not really belong.

According to the Historia Augusta his grandson, the Emperor Septimius Severus, was ashamed of his sister from Leptis because she could scarcely speak Latin. The Emperor himself, however, was drilled in the Latin and Greek literatures as a child, according to the same source.[63]

The point regarding the sister must have been pure invention – as one may expect from this particular source; the one regarding the emperor's schooling was

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[60] Isaac, *The Invention of Racism*, 90, 118-121, 126, 136, 144.

[61] He had only partial success. The online Wikipedia without hesitation calls Apuleius 'a thoroughly Romanized Berber', referring to the entry 'Berbers' in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, (2004) vol.3, p.569: where it solemnly says: 'The best known of them were the Roman author Apuleius, the Roman emperor Septimius Severus, and St. Augustine'

[62] Statius, *Silvae* 4.5.29-48: tene in remotis Syrtibus avia / Leptis creavit? … / quis non in omni vertice Romuli / reptasse dulcem Septimium putet? … non sermo Poenus, non habitus tibi, externa non mens: Italus, Italus. / sunt Vrbe Romanisque turmis / qui Libyam deceant alumni

[63] SHA *Severus* 17.7; 1.4.

undoubtedly true. The essence for us here his that the Historia Augusta still represents and writes for an audience among the imperial upper class that maintained the old attitudes towards provincial elites. It may be noted that the non-Roman background associated with the three North Africans cited here differs: Fronto from Cirta in Numidia declares himself to be a 'Libyan nomad'; Apuleius from Madaurus in Numidia claims to be half a Numidian and half a Gaetulian (Berber) nomad. The Septimii Severi, from Leptis (in modern Libya) are, by contrast, associated with a Punic background. It was quite a common view in antiquity was that nomads represented a far lower level of civilization than non-Greek and non-Roman urban society, for it was assumed that nomads in fact represented a totally unstructured form of society, in social, political and economic respect.

The Historia Augusta also has something to say about the Emperor Severus Alexander, who came from Arca Caesarea in Syria: 'He wished it to be thought that he derived his descent from the Roman people, for he was ashamed at being called a Syrian, particularly because, on a certain festival, the people of Antioch and of Egypt and Alexandria had angered him with jibes, as they are wont to do, calling him both a Syrian *archisynagogus* and a high priest.'[64]

Whatever the meaning of a Syrian *archisynagogus* and a high priest could supposedly be, it was not intended or interpreted as a compliment, as suggested by the source.[65] The emphasis here is on the Syrian, non-Roman background of the Emperor. Since this particular biography is one of the most fanciful of the series, all we should learn from it, is that the author and his intended readers would find the idea natural – and even funny – for a Syrian Emperor to be ashamed of his origins, vaguely associated with Judaism and, perhaps, various unspecified eastern cults.

Favorinus from Arles, pupil of Dio Chrysostom and friend of many of the important men of his time including Fronto, mentioned above, was a prominent sophist and philosopher who lived in the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus. He came from Latin speaking Arelate in Gaul, but made his name as a Greek orator and philosopher.[66] According to Philostratus '…he used to say in the ambiguous style of an oracle, that there were in the story of his life these three paradoxes: Though he was a Gaul he led the life of a Hellene; a eunuch he had been tried for adultery; he had quarrelled with an Emperor and was still alive. … '[67]

In the Corinthian oration plausibly attributed to him Favorinus says as follows:

'Indeed it seems that he (sc. Favorinus) has been equipped by the gods for this express purpose – for the Greeks, so that the natives of that land may have an example before

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[64] SHA *Severus Alexander* 28.7: volebat videri originem de Romanorum gente trahere, quia eum pudebat Syrum dici, maxime quod quodam tempore festo, ut solent, Antiochenses, Agyptii, Alexandrini lacessiverant conviciolis, et Syrum archisynagogum eum vocantes et archiereum. See also 44.3 and 64.3.

[65] See the comments in Stern, *Greek and Latin Authors*, 2, no.521, p.630.

[66] A. Barigazzi, *Favorino di Arelate: Opere* (Florence 1966); E. Amato (ed.) and Y. Julien (trans.), *Favorine d'Arles, Oevres I. Introduction général - Témoignages - Discours aux Corinthiens - Sur la Fortune*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres (2005) ; Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire : Language, Classicism and Power in the Greek World, AD 50-250* (Oxford 1996), 46-7.

[67] Philostratus, *VS* 1.8 (489): ὅθεν ὡς παράδοξα ἐπεχρησμῴδει τῷ ἑαυτοῦ βίῳ τρία ταῦτα· Γαλάτης ὢν ἑλληνίζειν, εὐνοῦχος ὢν μοιχείας κρίνεσθαι, βασιλεῖ διαφέρεσθαι καὶ ζῆν.

them to show that culture is no whit inferior to birth with respect to renown; for Romans, so that not even those who are wrapped up in their own self-esteem may disregard culture with respect to real esteem; for Celts, so that no one even of the barbarians may despair of attaining the culture of Greece when he looks upon this man.'[68]

Being a native of Arelate in Gallia Narbonensis, a significant city and a Roman veteran colony, Favorinus ought not to have felt inferior in any way, but for a man from Gaul to be accepted as an equal in Greek circles was, apparently, a difficult feat. In the lines quoted from what are, apparently, his own words, it is clear that he feels a need to impress on his audience that culture knows no boundaries and is more essential than birth, an assertion directed both at Greeks from Greece who should not feel that they have a monopoly on Greek culture and at Romans who tend to regard themselves as superior. In his oration Favorinus describes himself as a Roman of equestrian rank, as he was.

It is surprising, however, to see that Favorinus also implies that he somehow belongs to the Celts and barbarians. It would not occur to any modern visitor to Arles to think of the ancient remains still standing in the city as representing those of a Celtic town. Arelate had been firmly Roman for more than two centuries when Favorinus spoke. However, this echoes the apparently disingenuous references to North African nomads in the writings of Fronto and Apuleius, cited above. In the case of Favorinus there is at least a hint that this was not an affectation, for Philostratus himself says that 'he came from the Gauls of the West'[69] and cites Favorinus who asserted that 'he, Favorinus, was a Gaul leading the life of a Hellene'.[70] Here again we should remember that the term 'Gaul' could and did indicate a person from the province of Gallia, but also an ethnic Gaul, a Celt and that, even in the second century, raised associations with a lower cultural and social level.

We may mention, in this connection, the assertion of Josephus that his enemy Apion merely claimed to be an Alexandrian, while he was in reality born in the Great Oasis in Upper Egypt and therefore 'more Egyptian than them all.' Given this false claim, says Josephus, he thus 'admitted the ignominy of his people.'[71] The situation is not fully comparable, but this is at least yet another instance where native, provincial

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[68] Ps. Dio Chrysostom, *Corinthian Oration* 37.27 (convincingly attributed to Favorinus): ἐπ᾽ αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτο καὶ ἐδόκει ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν οἷον ἐξεπίτηδες κατεσκευάσθαι, Ἕλλησι μέν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι τῆς Ἑλλάδος παράδειγμα ὡς οὐδὲν τὸ παιδευθῆναι τοῦ φῦναι πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν διαφέρει· Ῥωμαίοις δέ, ἵνα μηδ᾽ οἱ τὸ ἴδιον ἀξίωμα περιβεβλημένοι τὸ παιδεύεσθαι πρὸς τὸ ἀξίωμα παρορῶσι· Κελτοῖς δέ, ἵνα μηδὲ τῶν βαρβάρων μηδεὶς ἀπογιγνώσκῃ τῆς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείας, βλέπων εἰς τοῦτον.

[69] Philostratus, *VS* 1.8 (489): ἦν μὲν γὰρ τῶν ἑσπερίων Γαλατῶν οὗτος,

[70] Γαλάτης ὢν ἑλληνίζειν. Andreas Hofeneder, ‚Favorinus von Arleate und die keltische Religion,' *Keltische Forschungen* 1 (2006), 29-58, has argued that Favorinus is identical with the 'Celtic philosopher' explaining the image of Ogmios in Lucianus, *Hercules.*

[71] Josephus, *Contra Apionem* 2.29: αὐτὸς γὰρ περὶ αὐτοῦ τοὐναντίον ἐψεύδετο καὶ γεγενημένος ἐν Ὀάσει τῆς Αἰγύπτου πάντων Αἰγυπτίων πρῶτος ὤν, ὡς ἂν εἴποι τις, τὴν μὲν ἀληθῆ πατρίδα καὶ τὸ γένος ἐξωμόσατο, Ἀλεξανδρεὺς δὲ εἶναι καταψευδόμενος ὁμολογεῖ τὴν μοχθηρίαν τοῦ γένους.

origin is applied to someone of indubitably Greek or Roman culture and interpreted in a negative sense.[72]

To sum up: the modest selection of authors cited in this paper show various responses to the social situation in which provincial authors found themselves as citizens of the Roman Empire. We are far removed here from the sphere of armed rebellion, small-scale resistance to the authorities, or internecine fighting. All authors were successful in their own sphere and, hence, their works have been preserved at least in part. Even so it cannot be denied that the coexistence that was there engendered complex social situations and tensions of various sorts that should not be ignored.

[72] Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae* 19.9 describes an altercation between Greeks and a Latin rhetorician from Spain. There is no point in discussing this here because the real subject of dispute is the merit of Latin as compared with Greek poetry. Even so the Greeks accuse the man from Spain of being tamquam prorsus barbarum et agrestem, qui ortus terra Hispania foret.