

Gellius *the Satirist*

ROMAN CULTURAL
AUTHORITY IN *ATTIC NIGHTS*



WYTSE KEULEN

BRILL

Gellius the Satirist

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Gellius the Satirist

Roman Cultural Authority in *Attic Nights*

By
Wytse Keulen



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Für Thomas

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PREFACE

The research for this monograph was largely carried out at the University of Groningen, in the context of a research project belonging to the Innovational Research Incentives Scheme ('Veni'), financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). The title of this project was *A Latin Sophistic? Constructions of the Intellectual in Antonine Rome*. The original idea behind the title, suggested to me by Prof. Ruurd Nauta (Groningen), was to study the three Latin authors of the Antonine period, Fronto, Aulus Gellius, and Apuleius, against the background of the so-called Second Sophistic, and to investigate whether they represented together a Latin cultural phenomenon as a counterpart to the contemporary Greek sophistic movement.

Although I always kept the original point of departure at the back of my mind, I gradually narrowed my focus down to placing Gellius' *Attic Nights* in a synchronic (Second Sophistic) and diachronic context (Roman intellectual traditions). I felt that this was an important stage that had to be dealt with in detail first, before being able to look at the larger picture of the three Antonine authors in combination. Yet, although this book is mainly on Gellius and his self-presentation as a Roman intellectual, it also deals with the numerous connections and parallels with Fronto and Apuleius, which firmly anchor Gellius and his work in second century Latin culture.

Most of the final version of this book was written during a most pleasant and fruitful stay at Oxford (Corpus Christi College) in 2007, where the excellent libraries formed an ideal context for contextualising Gellius. I would like to express special thanks to Prof. Stephen Harrison, who always made time to read my drafts and to discuss various aspects of content and style. My gratitude also goes to other colleagues with whom I was able to share my thoughts: Dr. Leofranc Holford-Strevens, Dr. Amiel Vardi, Dr. Teresa Morgan, and Dr. Jaap-Jan Flinterman. None of this is to imply any agreement on the contents of this book, for which I alone am responsible.

I wish to thank my parents for their love and support. Finally, I owe Thomas Weck my deepest gratitude for his love and his patience with me and my dedication to my work.

INTRODUCTION

This contextualised reading of the *Noctes Atticae* will present an image of the author Aulus Gellius that will probably differ from the image most people have of him nowadays. Gellius' reputation seems to have fossilised into that of an unoriginal compiler of information from other authors, a culturally unbiased preserver of a Graeco-Roman cultural heritage, even a classical philologist *avant la lettre*. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, this image was even more negative.¹ In the light of the history of classical scholarship, it seems understandable that we have become deaf to the powerful, witty, satirical, and above all authoritative voice that Gellius made heard in the Roman world of his age.² The traditional positivistic approach in Latin studies, which has been reluctant for a long time to move beyond detailed philological and textual analysis, has transformed Gellius into something of an exemplary caricature of its own tendency to study texts outside their contexts.

However, following the example of Hellenic studies, which have fruitfully combined a cultural-historical, contextualising approach with sound philology for several decades already, Latin studies have now embarked upon new projects, involving the interpretation of literary texts in their cultural, sociological, and geographical context.³ Now the

¹ For a prejudiced view on Gellius see e.g. Fritz Taeger's book on *Charisma* (vol. 2, 538), a quality he evidently failed to recognise in Gellius: "Das persönliche Credo verschwindet bei dem Römer fast völlig hinter dem pedantisch gesammelten Stoff, den er sich nur noch zu einem kleinen Teil durch selbständige Arbeit zu eigen gemacht hatte. An Fabelgeschichten aller Art fehlt es nicht, ..." For more positive assessments of Gellius see Holford-Strevens 2003, 331 f. with nn. 15–16; Cavazza 2004, 66: "Gellius, despite some scholars' opinion to the contrary, is an independent thinker".

² Scholars have been reluctant to associate Gellius with humour and satire; cf. e.g. Coffey 1989, 156: "The satire *Nescis quid uesper serus uehat* (You don't know what the late evening may bring) is described as a most elegant work (*lepidissimus liber*) by Aulus Gellius, whose zeal as a collector of literary antique often surpassed his critical acumen." Recent publications begin to recognise Gellius' humorous qualities and ironic strategies, see e.g. Swain 2004, 35–36; Vardi 2004, 160, 177; Keulen 2004.

³ For new approaches to Latin literature see e.g. Bloomer 1997; Habinek 1998; Nauta 2002; Edwards-Woolf (edd.) 2003; Citroni (ed.) 2003.

gap between Latin and Greek scholarly approaches is beginning to narrow, the time seems ripe for a project to interpret Gellius and his readers in their cultural, social, and political context, integrating them into the debate on the time and space of a fascinating era, a debate which seems to have been dominated until now by a predilection for the Greek cultural phenomena also known as the ‘Second Sophistic’.

The close association between Gellius’ satirical qualities and his self-fashioning as a Roman cultural authority, as we shall see, fits into the mentality of his time. The intellectual culture of Antonine society was strongly antagonistic and competitive, employing a discourse of praise and blame to negotiate and debate positions in the cultural and intellectual hierarchy.⁴ This is well illustrated by Philostratus’ *Lives of the sophists*, a Greek portrayal of the intellectual world of the Roman Empire, which partly focuses on the same period and on the same people that are represented or alluded to in Gellius’ work (Herodes Atticus; the dispute between Favorinus and Polemo). The literary communication between the Philostratean sophists moves around the polarities of praise and blame, and teachers are not only praised, but also mocked and satirised, in the spirit of Old Comedy.⁵ Polemics and satire also play a major role in the Latin intellectual discourse of the second century, which we see reflected in Gellius’ frequent mockery of the *grammatici* (‘schoolmasters’), but also in Apuleius’ invectives against his opponents in the *Apology*.⁶

The present study does not adopt the traditional view that Gellius’ anecdotes reflect his personal feelings of affection and admiration for his masters Favorinus, Fronto, and Herodes Atticus. Rather, it views Gellius’ literary techniques of biographical representation in

⁴ For the discourse of praise (ἐπαίνεσις, *laus*) and blame (ψόγος, *uituperatio*), belonging to epideictic rhetoric, cf. Aristoteles, *Rhetorica*, 1358b en 1366a–1367b. Other terms for praise are ἐγκώμια and ἔπαινοι. On *encomium* and *psogos* as standard topics of the rhetorical curriculum (*progymnasmata*) in the Roman Empire see Anderson 1993, 50f.

⁵ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 27 p. 617, where Proclus of Naucratis composed a lampoon (λοιδορημῶν) against all who were teaching at Athens; one of his targets, Hippodromus, did not respond with a similar λοιδορησμός, as was expected, but with a praise (ἔπαινος) of fair-speaking. The term λοιδορησμός (cf. λοιδορία) recalls Old Comedy, the ‘father’ of political satire; for the relation between Old Comedy and the traditional invective against sophists cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 15 p. 499. For the discourse of praise and blame as a strategy of intellectual self-fashioning in imperial literature cf. also Dio Chrys. *orat.* 33, delivered at Tarsus; he places his λοιδορία of the Tarsians’ immoral behaviour in the tradition of Old Comedy (which he finds too flattering, 33, 9) and the iambic poet Archilochus (33, 11f.).

⁶ See McCreight 1990.

similar terms to those employed in Philostratus, using ἡθοποιία ('character representation') as a strategy of praise and blame. Like Philostratus, Gellius does not portray intellectuals to write biographies in their own right, but uses 'biography' to praise or blame the moral and cultural characteristics embodied by those intellectuals, in the spirit of both Theophrastus' *Characters* and Plutarch's moral sketches (*Moralia*) and *Parallel Lives*. However, the ideological and cultural framework for Gellius' discourse of praise and blame does not represent a Hellenic or philhellenic bias, but a thoroughly Roman outlook, which reflects both the ideological traditions of Latin literature and the perspective of the dominant culture in Antonine Rome. In other words, Gellius does not belong to a Greek 'Second Sophistic' or some Latin counterpart of it, but presents a Roman authoritative vision on the cultural phenomena of his age, viewing his cultural rivals through a satirical lens, which strongly resembles Lucian's writings.

Gellius' discourse of praise and blame is sophisticated and allusive, and relies on a 'fully switched-on' audience, which was familiar with the political context that forms a *condicio sine qua non* for a deeper understanding of his literary strategies. His *Noctes Atticae* can be compared with the contemporary *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius as a multi-levelled text entailing a subtle hermeneutic process, in which the author invites an 'attentive reader' to construct deeper meanings from a shared background of experience and learning. At times, Gellius' satire is open and direct, especially when boastful schoolmasters or other pseudo-intellectuals are the target of exposure. In other cases, however, he warmly praises former masters such as Favorinus (12, 1, 24; 14, 1, 32; 16, 3, 1), but this praise becomes ambiguous if we read it in the context of the controversial reputation and conflicts of these celebrities. Gellius did not always expect his audience to take his praise at face value. Depending on the political context, an imperial audience would recognise cases where ostensible praise could have the effect of its opposite.⁷

Paradoxically, to a certain extent it seems Gellius' own fault that the image that many people have of him today is that of an uncritical admirer of the celebrities of his age, or an industrious collector of antiquities and innocuous philological minutiae. As we shall see in Part One, this image is a literary construction, which forms part of Gellius' own satirical self-fashioning. Gellius' consciously chosen literary role of

⁷ On the instability of the 'praise/blame axis' in Latin imperial literature see Bartsch 1994, 169–175; see also Nauta 2002, 414.

follower (*sectator*) of prominent intellectuals is one of the literary techniques adopted by him to articulate his own authority. The same goes for the modest and self-ironising expressions and images that he uses of his own intellectual activities, such as the nocturnal toils of writing at lamplight, or diminutive expressions that apparently play down the importance of his authority. In effect, Gellius does not ridicule or deflate himself *literally* by such expressions, but self-consciously employs repertoires of seriocomic and ‘playful’ self-presentation from the past (Menippean Satire) and the present (Fronto’s teaching), in order to construct a recognisable role of authority.

Using an approach that combines cultural theory, related to the notion of authority, with a contextualisation of Gellius’ work in the contemporary dynamics of second century literary culture, it is the aim of this book to make readers of the *Attic Nights* more sensible to Gellius’ satirical voice, and to open their eyes to some of the subtle literary strategies that he uses to present himself as a figure of authority.⁸ We can discern in *Noctes Atticae* a complex of strategies whereby the voice of Gellius as author on the one hand strips himself of authority, by ‘diminishing his own presence’, and on the other hand recreates that authority. Whereas he self-consciously expresses his authority in the *Praefatio*, in the rest of the *Noctes Atticae* authority is not always advertised explicitly—in fact, Gellius repeatedly mocks and derides those who do advertise themselves as authorities, such as the writer Apion or various boastful grammarians and other professionals and experts.⁹ True authority arises within *Noctes Atticae* in a subtle way, revealing itself to us in a process of close reading.

Cultural theory, especially theory of authority (the Weberian notions of charismatic, traditional and rational authority) but also socio-cultural studies (Bourdieu), will help to bring out Gellius’ role as cultural authority, which was not a static role, but a dynamic one. He did not derive his authority from being a diligent preserver of a classical heritage per se. Bourdieu and Passeron (1990, 10f.) point out that classical theories of culture (e.g. Durkheim) tend to sever cultural reproduction from its

⁸ Vardi 2004, 181 points to Gellius’ indebtedness to Roman traditions (e.g. the dialogue form in Cicero’s *De Oratore*) in his literary techniques of representing intellectual authority: “... we have come to understand the dramatic setting, characterization, and plots of Gellius’ chapters also as narrative techniques devised to serve him in delivering his message.” For a contemporary parallel compare Apuleius, who also wrote dialogues featuring his own learned friends (cf. *flor.* 18, 39–43).

⁹ See Vardi 2001, 42 with nn. 7–8, citing as examples Gell. 1, 10; 7, 15; 9, 15; 15, 30.

function of social reproduction, as if various cultural authorities collaborated harmoniously in reproducing a cultural capital conceived of as the jointly owned property of the whole ‘society’. This traditional perspective on how culture works possibly added to the stereotypical image of Gellius’ way of operating as a cultural authority. Instead, Bourdieu and Passeron argue that cultural reproduction has a social reproduction function: since the symbolic value of cultural activities represents social value, the allocation of cultural authority reflects power relations within a society.

In the *Attic Nights*, this socio-dynamic aspect of culture is reflected in competitive dialogues between Roman cultural authorities and those who prefer to express themselves in terms of Hellenic culture (e.g. 2, 21; 2, 26; 19, 9).¹⁰ Apparently, there were various competing ‘groups’ within Antonine society, each with their own cultural preferences. This is confirmed by the picture of the rivalry among Carthaginian audiences given by Apuleius, who presents sections of the population favouring Latin presentations and Greek ones, and also by Philostratus’ portrayal of intellectual life in Rome, where he distinguishes between students of Greek and those who study ‘the other language’.¹¹ As Rebecca Preston (2001) argues, the fact that Plutarch compares Greek and Roman lives indicates that people in the Roman empire did not simply share a unified ‘Graeco-Roman’ culture, but experienced essential differences and contrasts between Greek and Roman cultural identity.

Along these lines, Gellius’ Roman ‘festival of learning’ can be seen as a participation in a dynamic interaction between rivalling cultural options in the Antonine age.¹² In contrast with Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*, Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* can be read as a manifesto of ‘reading Roman culture under the Roman Empire’. This politico-cultural context sheds light on Gellius’ polemic with other miscellanies, especially the Greek ones (Praef. 11), but also on the imperial connotations of the title. For Gellius, whose *Noctes Atticae* represents the cultural outlook of the ruling

¹⁰ See Gamberale 1996, 63.

¹¹ Cf. Apul. *prol. Socr.* 111–113 and see Opeku 1993, 41; Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 10 p. 589 ὅποσοι τὴν ἑτέραν γλῶτταν ἐπαιδεύοντο ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ, ‘those who were studying the other language at Rome’ (see Opeku 1993, 36 with n. 13).

¹² Compare Zanker 1995, 251–252, who distinguishes ‘public’ (sophistic declamation) and ‘private’ manifestations (symptotic miscellanies) of the ‘backward-looking rituals of the cult of learning’, but, curiously enough, he seems to connect the competition for status and influence and for the emperor’s favour only with ‘the leading sophists’.

class, Greece is Rome too.¹³ In Gellius' world, Roman culture ranges widely across the Empire—and the Saturnalia are celebrated in Athens. In Gellius' time, to 'go Greek' was a way of expressing yourself as a Roman.¹⁴ However, to fashion your identity as Hellenic in all aspects could mean putting your authority at stake.¹⁵ For Gellius, Roman cultural authority also implies the intrinsic authority of Roman culture.¹⁶

In this respect, Gellius follows an ideological tradition of underlining the autonomy of Latin identity that goes back to Cicero. Thomas Habinek (1994) has highlighted the ideological role of cultural authority in Cicero's dialogues, which functioned to strengthen the social cohesion within the Roman cultural elite, in a time of crisis when other intellectuals threatened aristocratic authority by quietism (e.g. Lucretius), or specialisation (e.g. the professional poets of the neoteric circle), or resigned philhellenism (e.g. Brutus).¹⁷ We can see Gellius' cultural project in a very similar light.

As Citroni points out (2003a, 166), the claim to specificity, to a distinctiveness possessed by Roman culture, and the attribution of a value to this distinctiveness, is a consciousness of identity and of the value of this identity. Gellius gives voice to this consciousness by his frequent discussions of and references to the Roman authors of the distant past (the *ueteres*). As a rule, the authority of such writers as Cato the Elder, Ennius, Plautus, and Quadrigarius, is represented as supreme.¹⁸ Gellius was not a cultural relativist whose broad interest in Greek and Roman antiquities merely reflected the rich bilingual and bicultural spectrum

¹³ Contrast Athenaeus and Philostratus (*vit. soph.*), who use Rome as the setting for displays of *Greek* erudition. Compare Habinek 1998, 67 on "the open and obvious expropriation of the cultural capital of colonized Greece" in Cicero's works.

¹⁴ See Wallace-Hadrill 1998.

¹⁵ Favorinus alludes to his loss of prestige in Rome due to his thoroughly Hellenic self-fashioning in his *Corinthian Oration*, 25; cf. Gell. 13, 25, 4 (cf. 2, 26, 7).

¹⁶ Cf. Brownlee-Gumbrecht 1995, ix f., defining cultural authority as "the ways in which a given culture both conceives of and represents its own authority, positively or negatively." Cf. also Ray 2001, x: "Yet the rule of culture is a historical phenomenon in all of its dimensions, not merely as a category of analysis, or signifier of social identity, but also as an ethic of self-realisation, a model of moral progress, a form of authority, and a set of institutions"; "culture is too invested with conflicting values and meanings to be simply 'understood'". Thus, in Ray's view, the question "what is culture" is related to the question of authority.

¹⁷ See also Habinek 1998, 66–68.

¹⁸ Yet, acknowledging particular cases in which a Greek work is evidently of higher quality than its Roman counterpart does not contradict but validates Roman cultural authority; cf. e.g. Gellius' comparison of Caecilius and Menander, in favour of the latter (2, 23). Cf. Citroni 2003, 167.

of Antonine cultural life. The cultural perspective that sets the ideological agenda behind the *Noctes Atticae* is fundamentally Roman, conventionally characterised by an ambivalent interaction with Greek culture.¹⁹

With the quotation of Ennius' satire on 'the deceiver deceived' (18, 2, 7), made in a programmatic chapter on intellectual entertainment in a Saturnalian context, Gellius seems to show in a nutshell what he is aiming at in *Noctes Atticae* as a whole, preparing his Roman audience to 'resist' Greek culture by making them participate in it in an appropriate, Roman way, with a healthy ironical distance. A similar example is offered by another Saturnalian chapter in this book, where the cynic Diogenes beats a Platonic dialectician at his own game by reversing the paradox of the 'not-someone' against him (18, 13, 8).²⁰ Since Cynics are a paradigm of mistrust of dialectical subtleties, and in this respect of great influence on Roman thinking, Diogenes' clever behaviour in Gellius' chapter seems to embody what Gellius wishes to teach Romans. Romans should not lose themselves in studying logic (13, 8, 2; 16, 8, 16–17), but they should know how to see through the opponent's deceptive argumentation.²¹

Thus, cultural authority in Gellius' *Attic Nights* can be viewed as an empowering strategy, training Romans to 'go Greek' and be Roman at the same time, and, if the occasion arises, to beat 'the Greeks' at their own game.²² Behind Gellius' work we may observe a Roman cultural programme, which has, on the one hand, a strongly educational nature, and on the other hand stimulates reflection about cultural identity and literary canons, and about values and competences that mark out a true intellectual aristocracy.²³

Gellius did not work in isolation: his Roman cultural project should be placed in the dynamic and antagonistic context of the Antonine cul-

¹⁹ See Narducci 2003 on one of the most striking complexities about Roman identity, the twofold reaction towards Greek culture in terms of a constant appropriation and a recurrent antagonism.

²⁰ See Garcea 2003, 91–92.

²¹ Significantly, Gellius mocks his rival Pliny the Elder for failing to observe a fallacious argument (9, 16); see Garcea 2003, 96 on the convertible argument there (ἀντιστρέφον; cf. 5, 11).

²² See Whitmarsh 1998 on 'reading power', arguing that "the power of sophisticated reading provided by *paideia* played a fundamental role in the negotiation of Roman power" (213).

²³ On the Roman cultural-ideological agenda behind the *Noctes* see also Morgan 2004, 199–200; 204–205.

tural and political elite, a context in which authoritative figures like Fronto, Apuleius and Gellius, sharing a distinguished Latin literary education, fashioned themselves as Roman intellectuals against cultural rivals. Gellius pays homage to the influential role of Fronto in this Latin movement, representing his charismatic authority in a number of chapters on Latin learning. Scholars have been curiously reluctant to recognise the impact of Latin cultural authority in the Antonine age, probably due to personal preferences or to a long-standing biased tradition in classical scholarship ranking Greek culture as ‘primary’ and ‘original’ above Roman culture as ‘secondary’ and ‘imitative’. Thus, Simon Swain (2004, 17) is sceptical about a Latin movement, but acknowledges a ‘linguistic nationalism’ that Gellius shared with the contemporary Roman writers Fronto and Apuleius.²⁴

Yet, it seems unfair to take the comparison between the far-reaching influence of second-century Atticism and the archaising taste of the contemporary Latin writers as a criterion for measuring the sovereignty of a cultural movement. This is like comparing apples and pears. Of course, Swain is right in stating that on a *linguistic* level the Latin movement did not have implications like that of the contemporary Atticists, at least not implications that we can observe today. Yet, it was not Gellius’ or Fronto’s aim to reintroduce Cato or Ennius as models of spoken language.²⁵ The impetus behind their cultural project and their concern with purity of language is associated with political processes of elite formation and scrutiny of authority. Although Swain himself repeatedly stresses in his contribution to a recent volume on Gellius that political realities should be kept in mind (2004, 20; 35), his deflating picture of Latin intellectuals who are fond of doing philological research in libraries does no justice to the context of power relations in which we should view Gellius’ claims to cultural authority.²⁶

²⁴ “We might do better to see these second-century authors as linguistic nationalists whose aim it was to reinvigorate Latin as a language that was capable of change and innovation but also rightly proud of its ancient pedigree”.

²⁵ For a comparison between second century Atticism and contemporary Latin archaism see the Appendix II, ‘Archaism and Atticism’ in Holford-Strevens 2003, 354–363.

²⁶ According to Swain, the Latin movement “looks more like the personal tastes of a limited group of intellectuals dedicated to grammatical and exegetical researches” (2004, 17). For a similar view on Fronto, representing him as teaching philological niceties in the villa of Maecenas, see Holford-Strevens 2003, 6–7. For a political approach see Desideri 1978, 6–16.

Somehow, there is a persistent tendency to exclude Roman intellectuals from current perceptions of the dynamic interplay between *paideia* and politics,²⁷ as if only declaiming Greek sophists were participating in an imperial network of power and culture.²⁸ As Saller 1982, 190 rightly points out (contra Millar 1977, 9), in the second century Latin-speaking intellectuals rather than Greek were most successful in channelling benefits to their protégés and native cities:

even in the Severan period, as far as we can tell, provincials from the Latin-speaking part of the Empire still were far more successful in securing procuratorships. [...] While the descriptions of the Greek sophists' successes by Philostratus may attract more attention, it seems that the personal relationships described on the banal African stones may be more representative of the personal networks which extended from the emperor to the provinces, drawing new families into the imperial aristocracy.

As we shall see, Fronto played a key role in this imperial network of power, writing letters of recommendation for political and intellectual protégés like Postumius Festus. It is not a coincidence that Gellius introduces Fronto and Postumius Festus together in a scene on the Palatine, waiting to pay the emperor their respects (19, 13).²⁹

Gellius himself as author also participates in the imperial 'arena', where cultural battles are related to negotiations of authority and power. The foremost example is the *Praefatio*, where he engages in polemic with rival miscellanists, marking off his superior position. Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* can be read as a claim to legitimate cultural authority, establishing an educational programme of Roman culture that proves its own superior 'market value', and enhances the status of its author within the imperial elite.³⁰

²⁷ On the crucial importance of education and literary culture (*paideia*) in political realities see e.g. Bowersock 1969; Saller 1982, 190; Gleason 1995, 159–168; Schmitz 1997.

²⁸ For Gellius' Roman elitist view on *paideia* (*humanitas*) cf. *Noctes Atticae* 13, 17.

²⁹ For the keen interest that Fronto took in his fellow Africans see Holford-Strevens 2003, 13 f. (with n. 11), who argues in favour of the possibility that Gellius himself originated from an African *colonia* (cf. 8, 13 tit.). For scepticism see Vössing 1997, 13 f. n. 14.

³⁰ Compare Thomas Schmitz's observations on contemporary Greek claims to legitimate authority (1997, 195): "nur derjenige, der die legitime rhetorische Bildung erworben hat oder zu erwerben unternimmt, ist im vollen Sinne des Wortes ein Ἕλλην. Gerade die hier analysierten Bemühungen um Identitätsstiftung bilden somit ein Beispiel für eine kohärente Strategie im Sinne des Bourdieuschen Habitus: indem die Eliten die legitime Kultur verbreiten und ihre Weltsicht propagieren, erhöhen sie zugleich ihren eigenen sozialen Status."

As we shall see, Gellius invites the reader to compare various examples of authority, contrasting cultural activities related to writing and reading with forms of oral culture. In contrast with the Philostratean perception of the second century as an age where the main key to success was the mastery of oral extempore performance in Greek—a perception which strongly influences modern views of this age—Gellius presents a perspective in which the key to success is the knowledge of the texts that matter: the Roman texts from the Republican past. Gellius' admiration for the Roman past makes his work authoritative for his own time, engaging the reader in a dialogue with recent and less recent authorities to establish an authoritative written paradigm for contemporary society. The success of his performance is based on writing, reading, and interpreting texts.

By placing them in their politico-cultural context, we shall observe that the Gellian debates on philological minutiae and inquiries into etymology and meaning of words, despite their image of marginality, turn out to be central activities in Antonine political discourse. Current views on Fronto's and Gellius' philological studies as apolitical forms of elite diversion are a result of an over-literal interpretation of the negative connotations attributed to 'exercise through writing' in ancient political satire. As we can see in Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists*, both 'nocturnal writing by lamplight' and 'oral improvisation' were used as traditional topics of intellectual satire, which go back to the discourse of political rivalry in classical Athens.³¹ The caricaturing of such activ-

³¹ The polarisation between 'improvised speech' and 'extensive written preparation' was especially tangible in the antagonism between Demosthenes and his rivals, in particular Aeschines. For the satire of those who prepared their speech through writing (cf. λογογράφος as a term of abuse) see Hesk 2000, 209–210 with n. 26. Demosthenes had the reputation of a bad improviser, and was satirised by his rivals as 'stinking of nocturnal lamp oil' (Plut. *Demosth.* 7, 3; 8; 11); see Ober 1989, 178. Vice versa, those who prepared their speaking through writing would satirise unprepared performers; cf. Aelius Aristides' sneer in Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 9 p. 583 τήμερον ... πρόβαλε καὶ αὐθιον ἀκροῶ· οὐ γὰρ ἐσμέν τῶν ἐμούντων, ἀλλὰ τῶν ἀκριβούντων ..., 'propose the theme today ... and tomorrow come and hear me, for I am one of those who do not vomit their speeches but try to make them perfect'. Significantly, Philostratus (*vit. soph.* 1, 21 pp. 514–515) defends the sophist Scopelian against the smear campaign directed against his virtuoso improvisation and energised performance. For the importance of oral improvisation (αὐτοσχεδιάζειν) in Philostratus' construction of sophistic identity and his paradigmatic use of Aeschines see Kindstrand 1982, 86f. with n. 63; Rothe 1988, 51f.; Civiletti 2002, 450. Eunapius (*vit. philos.* 454) disparagingly describes Philostratus' work in terms of 'spitting' (παρέπτυσσε βίους), in contrast with his own accurately written work (ἀκριβῶς ἀνέγραψεν). For an echo of the satirical discourse against sophistic performance ('vomiting', 'spitting') in Gellius cf. *Noctes Atticae* 2, 22, 25f.

ities points to their instrumental function in a political continuum of intellectual battles and rivalry, also in imperial times.

If we place Gellius' satirical self-fashioning through 'lucubrations' and 'minutiae' outside this context, and interpret his ironic self-mockery too literally, the resulting image is the familiar one of the industrious, uninspiring collector of innocuous details. However, such a view is arbitrary, and conditioned by a biased perception of cultural hierarchy in the ancient world. The opposite position, viz. to see 'writing authors' like Fronto and Gellius as authoritative and powerful, and improvising oral performers (Greek sophists) as ridiculous, word-vomiting buffoons, is equally possible and defensible, and can be sustained with evidence from Fronto's correspondence and Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* (cf. 17, 21, 1 *sophista ille ἀπαίδευτος*), but somehow this view has not persisted in today's canonical thinking.³²

In terms of authority, it is not adequate to see Gellius as an apolitical anecdotalist, who introduced famous political figures into his scenes merely to enliven his Latin erudition. Intellectuals like Fronto, Herodes Atticus, and Favorinus had operated at the centre of imperial power, and this has undeniable implications for their role in *Noctes Atticae* and for Gellius' claims to authority. It would be forced to read *Noctes Atticae* only through a political lens, to see it exclusively as a coded statement

³² Roman Emperors sometimes disliked sophistic performances; see Bowie 1982, 33; Flinterman 1995, 39 and cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 5 p. 570f.; 2, 30 p. 622f. Marcus Aurelius mocks a panegyric performance by Greek sophists in *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 11, 2 (p. 31,2f.): *encomiographos istic audimus, Graecos scilicet sed miros mortales, ut ego, qui a Graeca litteratura tantum abssum quantum a terra Graecia mons Caelius meus abest, tamen me sperem illis comparatum etiam Theopompum aequiparare posse; nam hunc audio apud Graecos disertissimum natum esse. Igitur paene me opicum animantem ad Graecam scripturam perpulerunt homines, ut Caecilius ait, 'incolumi inscientia', 'We have been listening to panegyrist here, Greeks, of course, but wondrous creatures, so much so that I, who am as far removed from Greek literature as is my native Caelian hill from the land of Greece, could nevertheless hope, matched with them, to be able to rival even Theopompus, the most eloquent, as I hear, of all the Greeks. So I, who am all but a breathing barbarian, have been impelled to write in Greek by men, as Caecilius says, of unimpaired ignorance.' Marcus ironically presents himself as 'bad at Greek', and 'unwilling to learn it' (*perpulerunt*), and labels himself *opicus*, recalling Cato's (*ad fil. fig.* 1) censure of Greek arrogance (in calling the early Romans *barbari* and *Opikoi*). Marcus implies that the Greek panegyrist's performance constrained him to show his own talents in Greek, which, compared to them, ranked him among famous rhetoricians like Theopompus. With a Roman sense of satire, Marcus self-consciously adopts the name that the Greeks once gave to his rude forefathers (*opicus*; cf. Gell. 2, 21, 4), but at the same time he fashions himself as truly gifted Roman intellectual, being more articulate in Greek than Greeks. Compare Marcus' criticism of the sophist Polemo in *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 10, 1 (p. 29,19f.); for the contrast with the rosy picture of their relation in Philostratus see Swain 1996, 398; van den Hout 1999, 77f.; Civiletti 2002, 498f.; Holford-Strevens 2003, 277 with n. 74.*

on power relations. Yet, it would be equally forced to ignore or underestimate the political context in which Gellius' scenes and vignettes gain historical depth and literary effectiveness. Gellius both confirms and limits the range and extent of the authority of other intellectuals featuring in *Noctes Atticae*, including Fronto. This too makes part of a subtle process of self-authorisation, a strategy of positioning himself as the legitimate cultural authority in relation to other competitors for authority in the Antonine intellectual world.

As Bowersock (1969) has shown, celebrated intellectuals of imperial times were not only competing for public recognition (social status), but also for the favour of the emperor, who would award them higher and higher public office. Unfortunately, we do not have much information regarding Gellius' actual *cursus honorum* and rank. Gellius never addresses the emperor explicitly, unlike Pliny the Elder or Fronto. Yet, as we will observe in more detail in Part Three and in the Conclusion, we can view Gellius' self-fashioning as a cultural authority in a similar material context of competition for imperial favour.

A text becomes interesting by the questions that we ask of it. It has been my choice in this study to present a reading of *Noctes Atticae* in the context of its time and against a Roman cultural background, asking the kind of questions that have already successfully illuminated other (Greek) texts of the same era. Some of these questions seem very much inspired by issues of today, such as the quest for cultural identity, and the relation between power and education. Yet, these important questions help to tease out meanings from Gellius' text, which was produced by a society with a cultural dynamics that strongly appeals to our present time. In my approach, *Noctes Atticae* emerges as a text which should not be understood at face value, but as a sophisticated multi-levelled text with a crucial role for the actively interpreting and contextualising reader. As I hope to show, this is not an anachronistic approach, but can be contextualised itself in the mentality of the Antonine literary community, with its taste for solving riddles and sympotic questions and its propensity for scrutinising authority.

The book contains eleven chapters, which have been organised in three Parts. These three Parts reflect three main aspects that can be observed in Gellius' literary representation of authority, a 'constructional', a 'rhetorical', and an 'ideological' aspect. Generally, all three aspects will be more or less obvious in the discussion throughout the chapters. Part One (*Constructing Authority: Gellius' Roman Cultural Pro-*

gramme) especially focuses on Gellius' self-fashioning as a Roman author, who actively participates in and contributes to a Latin cultural tradition, both from a diachronic (Cicero, Quintilian, Tacitus) and a synchronic perspective (Fronto's circle). Constructing various roles, such as the authorial role of the Roman educationalist (especially in the *Praefatio*), or the narrative role of his younger self as an audience of intellectual performances, Gellius uses repertoires and resources from Latin literature (e.g. Menippean Satire in the spirit of Varro; dialogues in the vein of Cicero and Tacitus) to create an authoritative and legitimate Roman perception of the cultural world of his own age.³³ In this sense, Gellius' Roman cultural programme is a 'construction', fashioned by a conscious and selective elaboration of a cultural legacy, which Gellius appropriates for his own purposes.³⁴

Yet, cultural programmes and authoritative views of the world are not only culturally informed 'constructions'. There were bodily facts and actual experiences, reflected accordingly in 'textual' perceptions on the one hand, and in the collective memory on the other hand. These were: voice, gestures, and physical characteristics and oddities (physiognomy), which made lasting impressions on the emotional and sensory faculties of both Greeks and Romans. In Part Two (*Playing with Reputations: 'Rehabilitation' as Political Satire*), we shall see that these lasting impressions form the matrix within which Gellius' rhetorical strategies work. Relying on the Antonine audience's ability to recognise the satirical allusions to controversial events and subversive or abnormal phenomena, Gellius actively engages his reader in an 'investigational rhetoric' that invites him to acknowledge where true authority lies. A central figure in Part Two is the famous hermaphrodite Favorinus, who makes frequent appearance in *Noctes Atticae* as one of Gellius' teachers.

Part Three (*Gellius' Ideological Authority: the Charisma of Antiquitas in a Sophistic Context*), will further explore the dynamic and complex interaction between Gellius' literary construction of cultural authority and the material, physical context in which he operates and to which he responds. It will particularly focus on Gellius' ideological authority in the light of a tradition of intellectuals who advise or teach men in power (Plutarch, Fronto), or dedicate their work to the Roman Emperor (Pliny

³³ See Bourdieu 1991, 236–237 on “the legitimate mode of perception” as an important stake in the struggle for symbolic power.

³⁴ For the notion of ‘cultural heritage’ as a consciously elaborated construction see Moatti 2003.

the Elder). Introducing significant contrasts between Greece and Rome, between orality and writing, and between unreliable and reliable examples of authority into his anecdotes, Gellius subtly refreshes his reader's memory of the recent and less recent past, drawing the attention to the distinctive value of the Latin texts that form the basis of his Roman cultural platform.

PART ONE

CONSTRUCTING AUTHORITY:
GELLIUS' ROMAN CULTURAL PROGRAMME

legendo autem et scribendo uitam procudito

'but through reading and writing you have to fashion your life'

Varro, *Menippean Satires*, 55¹

(Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον, 'Sweet Oil in the Lentil Soup')

CHAPTER ONE

GELLIUS THE ROMAN EDUCATIONALIST

The Praefatio: Protocols of Authority

The chapter in which Gellius most explicitly formulates his authority is the *Praefatio*, in which he presents himself in his role of author, and elucidates his cultural and educational programme to the reader. In this *Praefatio*, he refers to two central activities from which he—and, *mutatis mutandis*, also his readers, who are encouraged to follow his example—derives his authority. The first one is the activity of reading, studying, memorising and excerpting texts (Praef. 2–4; 12). The second activity consists of the vivid debates and discussions with ‘rival followers of the same Muse’ (Praef. 19 *eiusdem Musae aemulos*), by which Gellius claims by implication to have (im)proved himself as an authority.

These two activities and their related competences—knowledge of the authors that matter (*auctoritates*) and the ability to prevail in debate—are programmatic in a double sense, both as (potential) sources of authority within Gellius’ cultural-educational programme and as a frame of reference for the understanding of how authority works in the following chapters of *Noctes Atticae*. Significantly, Gellius describes the protocols of authority both in terms of work and in terms of play (Praef. 19 *uoluptates ... labores*).

The first activity is the one with which Gellius brings himself most clearly into the spotlight in the *Praefatio*, namely as someone who spends hours in libraries to read and excerpt texts in order to create a kind of literary storehouse (*penus litterarum*, Praef. 2) as an aid to his memory, whenever he might need to remember an important word or fact. This activity also forms the origin of the work’s title: during long winter nights spent on a country estate in Attica, Gellius brought together all these notes and excerpts and composed the present work in twenty books (Praef. 4), to which he gave the appropriate title *Noctes Atticae*.¹

¹ On the title see Vardi 1993.

The *Praefatio* suggests that there was a long period of frequent studying and writing before the actual composition of *Noctes Atticae*.² Given the traditional Roman attitude of ambiguity towards the role of culture in society, Gellius carefully negotiates his role as Roman cultural authority. He emphasises that he only worked during the moments of free time (*otium*) that his busy life (*negotium*) allowed (12); moreover, he seems to play down the substance of his notes by terms that refer to their brevity and lack of arrangement.³ Yet, when we read between the lines of his affected modesty in the *Praefatio*, we see a clear emphasis on the long-term and structural nature of his cultural activities; this structural solidity of his intellectual toils endorses his unmistakable claim to durable cultural authority. Gellius' life of writing is presented as a *modus vivendi*, but also as a *condicio sine qua non* for the attaining of long-term authority.⁴ His emphasis on his own 'nocturnal studies', plus his self-presentation in the role of his younger self as student in various captivating chapters of *Noctes Atticae*, express the conditions for acquiring the authority inherent in his long-term educational project for the Roman reader.

The 'haphazard order' (*ordo rerum fortuitus*) in the *Noctes Atticae* reflects the dynamics of Gellius' 'authority-lending' activity of the work in the library, one of the activities that make him an authoritative example for his readers.⁵ Moreover, the variety and lack of order are also *expressing authority* in conjunction with the 'playfulness' of the work. As we have seen above, to view the notion of authority merely as 'serious business' would result in a one-sided picture. Gellius' authority has two faces, one of work and one of play. He describes the writing activity ('activity number one') which generates his literary output as 'playful' (praef. 4 *commentationes hasce ludere ac facere exorsi sumus*). Closely related to play are notions of pleasure and relaxation (Praef. 1), which are realised through his artful and varied prose (aesthetics), and which coincide with his emphasis on the *otium* as the appropriate time for such studies. The

² Cf. Praef. 2 *antea in excerpendo*, 'previously, in collecting the material'; 3 *in illis annotationibus pristinis*, 'those former brief jottings'; 12 *ipse quidem uoluentis transeundisque multis admodum uoluminibus per omnia semper negotiorum interualla in quibus furari otium potui exercitus defessus sum*, 'I myself ... did it is true busy and even weary myself in unrolling and running through many a scroll, working without cease in all the intervals of business whenever I could steal the leisure'.

³ Praef. 2 *usi autem sumus ordine rerum fortuito, quem antea in excerpendo feceramus; ... indistincte atque promisce annotabam; 3 breuiter et indigeste et incondite*.

⁴ On long-term authority see Williams ²1995, 225; Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 31–32.

⁵ In a similar vein Astarita 1993, 31; Vardi 2004, 173.

ludic and aesthetic activities are not possible without the toil, and the other way round.⁶ Significantly, the ability to play and to appreciate play is also a yardstick to measure the authority of readers and their readings of Gellius' *Noctes*.⁷

The image used by Gellius for his writing activities is that of the 'burning of the midnight oil', or 'lucubrations'. This image, originally used by Roman writers in a wider sense of agricultural toils,⁸ hence became a specific expression for intellectual toils. Gellius, who occasionally presents his studies and their results in agricultural terms,⁹ uses the diminutive *lucubrationculae* by metonymy for his own *Noctes Atticae* (Praef. 14):¹⁰

Ab his igitur, si cui forte nonnumquam tempus uoluptasque erit lucubrationculas istas cognoscere, petitum impetratumque uolumus, ut in legendo quae pridem scierint non aspernentur quasi nota inuulgataque.

Of those then, if such there be, who may perhaps sometimes have leisure and inclination to acquaint themselves with these lucubrations, I should like to ask and be granted the favour, that in reading of matters which they have known for a long time they shall not scorn them as commonplace and trite.

On the one hand, Gellius' choice of the diminutive *lucubrationcula* reveals an affinity with upper class tutoring in a contemporary context—it is probably no coincidence that the diminutive is first attested in a letter by Marcus Aurelius to his teacher in Latin rhetoric, the famous orator Fronto, who is also one of the intellectual celebrities appearing

⁶ Compare Mazzotta (1986, 12) on Boccaccio's *Decameron*: "Because esthetics—and more precisely, literature—spuriously connives with and exceeds the other categories of the practical arts, it cannot be defined, to speak rigorously, within theoretical, abstract boundaries. [...] the elusiveness and permanent displacement that the metaphor of play governing the *Decameron* engenders. [...] Because Boccaccio in the *Decameron* trenchantly argues that the quality of literature is to be always resistant to formulaic pronouncements, he solicits not theoretical systems but the practice of reading, and thereby he seduces us into conversation".

⁷ Cf. 16 *delectatio in otio atque in ludo liberalior*; 19 *qui in lectitando, percontando, scribendo, commentando, numquam uoluptates ... ceperunt, ... alia sibi oblectamenta quaerant*; 20 *ut ea ne attingat neue adeat profestum et profanum uolgus a ludo musico diuersum*.

⁸ Cf. e.g. Cato *agr.* 37, 3; Varro *Men.* 573; Colum. 11, 2, 12; Plin. *nat.* 18, 43; see *ThLL* s.v. *lucubratio*, 1745, 1f.

⁹ Cf. Praef. 13 *primitias et quasi libamenta*; cf. also 16 *sed eius seminis generisque sint ex quo facile adolescant aut ingenia hominum uegetiora...*

¹⁰ For Gellius' use of the image cf. also Praef. 19 and 13, 31, 10, discussed below (p. 76 n. 27). Cf. Plin. *nat.* praef. 24, where he mentions *Lucubrationes* as a possible title of a miscellaneous work, chosen by the wittiest (*facetissimi*) Roman authors he knows.

in the *Noctes Atticae*. This letter, composed in praise of wakefulness and against sleep, testifies to the playful nature of Frontoian teaching (Aur. *Fronto epist.* 1, 4, 1 [p. 5, 21 f.]):

sed cupio hac sua accusatione offensus paulisper a me abscedat et lucubrationum aliquam tandem facultatem tribuat,...

but my hope is that he may be huffed at my indictment of him and leave me for a little space, and give me a chance at last of burning some midnight oil.¹¹

Thus, the image reveals a contemporary dimension in Gellius' cultural programme, pointing to connections and affinities with a context of 'imperial teaching' which may illuminate his 'playful efforts' to educate his readers.

On the other hand, through the image of the study pursued by lamplight, Gellius connects his educational programme with Greek and Roman literary traditions. First, it is symbolic of his literary identity as a Roman satirist, in the tradition of Varro's Menippeans. Gellius' self-conscious use of the image is a homage to his Menippean pedigree, linking the playfulness of 'dallying with nocturnal trifles' to his admired predecessor Varro.¹² As Relihan (1993, 59) observes, writing Menippean satire can be a topic of Menippean satire itself, and we can see Gellius' self-referentiality through the image of the nocturnal toils in the light of the same tradition. Elsewhere, as we will see, Gellius indicates his programmatic debt to the 'Menippean Varro' through an allusion to *Tò ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον* ('Sweet Oil in the Lentil Soup'), a proverbial title from the Menippeans.

Moreover, we can view Gellius' use of the image in a tradition of oratorical training going back to Demosthenes. Quintilian uses the image to demonstrate that a concentrated preparation by writing in the private seclusion of the study is vital to a successful public performance of the future Roman orator (*inst.* 10, 3, 25–26):

¹¹ See Pepe 1957, 64 ad loc. In another letter to Fronto, M. Aurelius writes about his duties in the imperial court and about the prospect of seeing his master again: *Fronto epist.* 2, 18, 1 (p. 35, 5f.) *equidem uelim istam noctem, quae sequitur, quam breuissimam esse. tanti est minus lucubrare, ut te maturius uideam*, 'Oh, that this coming night might be the shortest known! So important it is to burn less night oil that I may the sooner see you'. On the *lucubratio* see Van den Hout 1999, 93; at 141 he points out that Marcus usually studies *uespera*, after supper.

¹² Cf. Varro *Men.* 219 (from the *Gloria*) *tum denique, omnis cum lucerna combusta est / in lucubrando oliuitasque consumpta est*, 'then, finally, when all the lamp is burned in midnight study, and all the oil is spent'.

Demosthenes melius, qui se in locum ex quo nulla exaudiri uox et ex quo nihil prospici posset recondebat, ne aliud agere mentem cogerent oculi. Ideoque lucubrantes silentium noctis et clusum cubiculum et lumen unum uelut tectos maxime teneat. [...] Obstat enim diligentiae scribendi etiam fatigatio, et abunde si uacet lucis spatia sufficiunt: occupatos in noctem necessitas agit. Est tamen lucubratio, quotiens ad eam integri ac refecti uenimus, optimum secreti genus.

Demosthenes had a better idea: he used to hide away in a place where no sound could be heard and no prospect seen, for fear that his eye might force his mind to wander. So, when we work by lamplight, let the silence of the night, the closed room, and the single lamp keep us on our toes. [...] Fatigue is another great obstacle to accurate writing. If one has leisure, the daylight is quite long enough; it is necessity that forces busy people to use the night. All the same, working by lamplight, when we come to it fresh and rested, gives the best kind of privacy.

In the light of this rhetorical tradition, Gellius' metonymical use of 'lucubrationculae' for his own literary work (Praef. 14), seen in combination with a similar expression for the required activity of his readers (19),¹³ points to one of the crucial aims of his educational programme, the improvement of his readers' linguistic and rhetorical skills in Latin (Praef. 16 *oratio sollertior aut sermo incorruptior* 'their eloquence more effective, their diction purer'). This didactic aim is not only to be achieved by reading *Noctes Atticae*, but is also related to the protreptic nature of Gellius' work, which encourages further study and reading of texts and authors that matter (Praef. 12, 16–18). At the same time, the emphasis on nocturnal studies points out that Gellius counts himself and his intended readers among the *occupati* mentioned by Quintilian, busy Roman citizens who are forced by necessity to use the night for their study (cf. Praef. 1; 12 *iam uitae negotiis occupatos*). Marcus Aurelius, too, refers to *lucubrationcula* as the time for study in a letter in which he pictures himself as busy in the court during daytime (see above).¹⁴

¹³ Cf. Praef. 19 *erit autem id longe optimum, ut qui in lectitando, percontando, scribendo, commentando, numquam uoluptates, numquam labores ceperunt, nullas hoc genus uigilias uigilarunt ... abeant a 'Noctibus' his procul*, 'for those, however, who have never found pleasure nor busied themselves in reading, inquiring, and taking notes, who have never spent wakeful nights in such employments ... for such men it will be best to hold wholly aloof from these 'Nights' ...'.

¹⁴ On the needs of 'busy people' see Vardi 2004, 167 with n. 28, pointing out the use of the topos in addresses to the emperor (Hor. *epist.* 2, 1, 1–4). For Marcus as *negotiis occupatus* cf. Fronto, *de eloq.* 5, 1 p. 151,6f. *ut qui plurimis negotiis aut agendis occupatus sis aut actis defessus*. Cf. Apuleius' relation to the proconsul Claudius Maximus, the *uirum seuerum et totius prouinciae negotiis occupatum* (*apol.* 25, 3).

In a similar spirit as Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* inculcates Roman values through *exempla*.¹⁵ Thus, his educational programme is inscribed in a tradition of Roman oratorical training. In Bourdieuan terms, Gellius' 'teaching' consists of a process of continuous inculcation, resulting in a lasting *habitus*, a pattern of behaviour that conforms with the internalised values and principles transmitted in his cultural programme.¹⁶ A central aspect of this behaviour is the action of reading and studying a shared corpus of texts. As we have seen above, this activity is a crucial source of authority in Gellius' work. The *modus vivendi* which lies at the root of his own long-term authority is also the *modus vivendi* which he encourages his readers to develop. Gellius' cultural programme provides guidance in issues of identity, or, more precisely, the question what it meant to be a Roman citizen in his day. Gellius claims that his teaching offers the key to obtaining the knowledge that was essential for an educated Roman citizen:

12 quae aut ingenia prompta expeditaque ad honestae eruditionis cupidinem utiliumque artium contemplationem ... ducerent aut homines aliis iam uitae negotiis occupatos a turpi certe agrestique rerum atque uerborum imperitia uindicarent.

which might lead active and alert minds to a desire for independent learning and to the study of the useful arts, or would save those who are already fully occupied with the other duties of life from an ignorance of words and things which is assuredly shameful and boorish.

13 primitias quasdam et quasi libamenta ingenuarum artium dedimus, quae uirum ciuilitate eruditum neque audisse umquam neque attingisse, si non inutile, at quidem certe indecorum est.

I have presented the first fruits, so to say, and a kind of foretaste of the liberal arts; and never to have heard of these, or come into contact with them, is at any rate improper, if not harmful, for an educated member of polite society (tr. after Holford-Strevens 2003, 37).

In Bourdieu's theory of authority, the legitimacy of pedagogical authority is safeguarded by symbolic 'rewards' and 'punishments', that result

¹⁵ As in Quintilian and in other rhetorical teachers (see Reinhardt-Winterbottom 2006, xxvi), Gellius' educational programme goes beyond linguistic and rhetorical skills and includes the inculcation of moral values (this is rightly emphasised by Morgan 2004).

¹⁶ See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 31. For the use of the term *habitus* for cultural activity related to Greek identity in the second century see Schmitz 1997, 29f.; 195 (see also above, p. 9 n. 30).

from accepting or rejecting this authority.¹⁷ Along similar lines, it seems that Gellius ensures and strengthens his authority in the *Praefatio* by articulating certain ‘rewards’ and ‘punishments’ for the reader, which suggests that it is up to the reader to accept or reject the key to social recognition offered to him in the form of the *Noctes*. Rejecting Gellius’ authority implies the punishment of public rejection, of not being recognised as a *uir civiliter eruditus*.

Many anecdotes of cultured encounters in the *Noctes* give a blueprint of this process of social recognition or rejection in the form of scenes that illustrate successful and unsuccessful intellectual performance. The programmatic statement in the *Praefatio* anticipates this by pointing out that the ‘punishment’ of not knowing the facts from *Noctes Atticae* is an ignorance that is shameful, boorish (*Praef.* 12), unbecoming, even harmful for a *uir civiliter eruditus* (13). Moreover, the ‘punishment’ of reading not *Noctes Atticae* but the encyclopaedic collections of Greek rivals is a languishing of the mind:

11 *quibus in legendis ante animus senio et taedio languebit quam unum alterumue reppererit quod sit aut uoluptati legere aut cultui legisse aut usui meminisse.*

The perusal of such collections will exhaust the mind through weariness and disgust, before it finds one or two notes which it is a pleasure to read, or inspiring to have read, or helpful to remember.

By implication, Gellius claims that his *Noctes* has precisely those qualities. The salutary rewards of reading his compendium are formulated more explicitly in *Praef.* 16:

...eius seminis generisque ... ex quo facile adolescant aut ingenia hominum uegetiora aut memoria adminiculationi aut oratio sollertior aut sermo incorruptior aut delectatio in otio atque in ludo liberalior.

... of such seed and quality ... from which men’s minds generally grow more vigorous, their memory more trustworthy, their eloquence more effective, their diction purer, or the pleasures of their hours of leisure and recreation more refined.¹⁸

Along these lines, the *Praefatio* can be read as Gellius’ self-authorising strategy as a Roman educationalist, aiming to convince the reader that only *Noctes Atticae* can nurture the skills that are vital to Roman elite identity.

¹⁷ See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 27f. (see also p. 21).

¹⁸ Cf. also a few lines above *ad alendum studium ... ad oblectandum fouendumque animum* (‘to inspire study ... to divert and stimulate the mind’).

The Roman life of learning: Gellius versus 'the Greeks'

In the *Praefatio*, Gellius marks his superior position as a cultural-educational authority towards other Roman and Greek writers of miscellanies, both predecessors and contemporaries, whose titles he scorns in Praef. 6–9. His main polemical target seem to be Greek intellectual activity (11 *eorum maxime Graeci*), although he includes both Roman and Greek authors in his list. Yet, on a different level, Gellius employs the contrast between 'Roman' and 'Greek' to enhance his own authority. Even some Roman miscellanists turn out to be 'Greek': for Gellius, the Παντοδαπή Ἱστορία (Praef. 8) by the Roman philhellene Favorinus was obviously a 'Greek' work.¹⁹ A different case is Ἐγχειρίδια (Praef. 7), which is possibly a sneer at the ἐγχειρίδιά ('handbooks') of the Athenian *uir consularis* Herodes Atticus (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 565), in which he collected 'antique erudition' (τὴν ἀρχαίαν πολυμαθειαν).

With a fine touch of irony, Gellius states that he had not the same purpose (*consilium*) as many of his colleagues (11 *ne consilium quidem ... idem mihi, quod plerisque illis, fuit*), thereby actually implying that these authors had no *consilium* at all, since they indiscriminately swept together all the information they found, aiming at quantity instead of quality. With a programmatic quotation of Heracleitus, Gellius affirms his position as an educationalist towards his rivals (12): πολυμαθὴν νόον οὐ διδάσκει, 'much learning does not make your mind know something'.²⁰ Only *Noctes Atticae* has a true *consilium*, a rational purpose that makes the utility of Gellius' work superior to others.²¹ Limitation is strength: in contrast with the πολυμαθὴν of his rivals, the conscious selectivity of Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* makes its programme legitimate and

¹⁹ In his role of writer, Gellius saw Favorinus as a rival authority (see below, part II, pp. 170–174), in similar terms as he viewed Pliny the Elder, whose *Naturalis Historia* he quotes just before the Παντοδαπή Ἱστορία. On Gellius' mockery of Pliny the Elder see Keulen 2004, 238–241. Elsewhere, Gellius disparages him by putting him on a par with Greek 'trash' (cf. 9, 4; see p. 202). Other Greek titles mentioned by Gellius likewise refer to works by Roman writers, such as the Πανδέκται (Praef. 7; see Vardi 2004, 161), indicating a work by Cicero's freedman Tiro, an intellectual of questionable authority for Gellius (cf. 6, 3, 8–9; 13, 9).

²⁰ Heracl. DK 22 B. 40. See below, Part II, p. 173f., for the implications of this programmatic dictum for Gellius' satire of Favorinus' πολυμαθὴν.

²¹ The sense of *consilium* in Praef. 11 is associated with the notion of the 'yardstick' expressed by *linea* in the same context; on expressions for 'norm', 'yardstick' (*linea*, *amussis*, etc.) in Gellius and Apuleius see Keulen 2006, 176–177 with nn. 38–39.

effective in terms of authority.²² Gellius' self-authorising statement can be viewed in a tradition of Roman assertions of cultural autonomy, demonstrating Roman improvement in relation to Greek accomplishments in terms of selectivity: Romans select those things that are pertinent.²³

As I have pointed out in the Introduction, we should place Gellius' project in a contemporary context of competition for authority, where there were various cultural options. One could stress in particular the difference between those who were conspicuous philhellenes—such as Favorinus in Gellius' *Noctes* (cf. 2, 26, 7; 13, 25, 4) or the wealthy host Larensis in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae*—and those who chose to fashion their identity in Roman and Romanocentric terms, such as Fronto and Gellius.²⁴ This context puts Gellius' polemical attitude and his claim to superior cultural authority in a clear contemporary perspective. Gellius indeed “wants his own experience as it is reflected in his book to serve as a model of a life devoted to learning” (Vardi 2004, 173), but there is a deeper cultural motivation behind this, arising in an arena of competing cultural prescriptions.

Against the background of the popularity and wide diffusion of Greek language and learning in the second century A.D.,²⁵ we can see the *Noctes* as a proposition of a Roman model of a life of learning that improves on Greek and Roman alternatives and predecessors. Moreover, Gellius' work offers an alternative set of ideas that stimulate reflection on the question of cultural patronage, and the question of what

²² See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 27 on the effectiveness and legitimacy of pedagogic activity due to limitations on its content and mode of imposition. According to Vardi 2004, 169, “what Gellius attempts to do is to yoke even the selectivity characteristic of ancient miscellanies to his cultural programme”. Yet, in my view this way of putting it undeservedly belittles the sincerity of Gellius' programmatic aims, by speaking of an ‘attempt’ and by suggesting that the selectivity was simply imposed to him by the genre. Gellius chose the genre, not the other way round.

²³ See Citroni 2003a, 165; cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 1, 1, 1 *quae quidem digna statuissent*.

²⁴ Favorinus' praising remark to Fronto is speaking volumes (2, 26, 20) *absque te ... uno forsitan lingua profecto Graeca longe anteisset*, ‘where it not for you, and perhaps for you alone, the Greek language would surely have come out far ahead’; see Levi 1996, 230. Swain 2004, 40 rightly surmises that the Roman Claudius Aelian (early third cent. A.D.) would have excited the scorn of Gellius by his bold claims for his choice of language (Atticizing Greek) and his ability to sustain it.

²⁵ See Braund 2000, 19: “at the end of the second century AD, particularly for the likes of Larensis, the city of Rome is much more than Roman. [...] Rome stands at the head of a world wherein most texts and histories of scholarly interest are Greek or in Greek. [...] For the contemporary Rome of Larensis, the language of cultured gentlemen was as much Greek as Latin, perhaps more so.”

defines a good patron. Fronto, who was a well-known patron for many members of the Roman elite, including his students,²⁶ can be compared with Larensis in Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistae* (dated about a decade later than the *Noctes*), who was likewise a wealthy Roman featuring as a model of being a 'good Roman patron', and who had Athenaeus himself among his clients.²⁷ Whereas Athenaeus stages his 'ideal Roman' as a conspicuous philhellene, Gellius' Roman cultural programme is a protreptic to use the Latin rather than the Greek library,²⁸ and stages Fronto as one of its spokesmen. We could see Athenaeus' Larensis as a 'Hellenic counterpart' to the Gellian Fronto, particularly through their respective programmatic allusions to the 'Menippean' Varro. Moreover, on the level of cultural authority, we can also view Larensis in terms of rivalry with Gellius himself.

With a telling remark, Larensis (*Deipnosophistae*, 4, 160c) criticises those 'Latin grammarians' whose knowledge of Greek literature is so deficient that they credit Varro with being the source of the proverb *Tò ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον* ('Sweet Oil in the Lentil Soup'):²⁹

Κλέαρχος δὲ ὁ ἀπὸ τοῦ περιπάτου ἐν τοῖς Περὶ Παραομιῶν ὡς παρομιᾶν ἀναγράφει τὸ "ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον", ἧς ἐμνηται καὶ ὁ ἐμὸς προπάτωρ Οὐάργων ὁ Μενίππειος ἐπικαλούμενος· καὶ οἱ πολλοὶ τῶν γραμματικῶν τῶν Ῥωμαϊκῶν οὐχ ὀμλήσαντες πολλοῖς Ἑλληνικοῖς ποιηταῖς καὶ συγγραφεῦσιν οὐκ ἴσασιν ὅθεν εἴληφεν ὁ Οὐάργων τὸ ἰαμβεῖον.

Clearchus of the Peripatetic school in his *On Proverbs* (frg. 83 Wehrli) records "Perfume in the lentil soup" as a proverb, and my ancestor Varro, nicknamed the Menippean, mentions it too. Most Roman grammarians, being unacquainted with many Greek poets and prose-authors, do not know Varro's source for the line.

²⁶ See Saller 1982, 136–138; 163–164. The scenes in the *Noctes Atticae* show a Fronto who treated his visitors—including Gellius—as if they were pupils; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 136f. One of Fronto's protégés known from his correspondence (Postumius Festus) turns up in an anecdote in the *Noctes* (19, 13).

²⁷ Like Fronto, Larensis was closely connected to the imperial court; he was the *procurator patrimonii* of emperor Commodus, and having been 'placed in charge of temples and sacrifices' by Marcus Aurelius, he was *pontifex minor* during Commodus' reign (see Hekster 2002, 184).

²⁸ The library of the host Larensis, although he is Roman and calls Varro his 'ancestor' (see below), is described as a Greek library, specialised in old Greek books; Athenaeus never alludes to the Latin part of the library, which reflects the politico-cultural agenda behind his work. See Jacob 2000, 88f. Gellius' cultural prescriptions, by contrast, not only commended the Roman *ueteres*, but also included Greek reading, yet as part of a Roman cultural programme.

²⁹ Larensis had just quoted two comic fragments with the proverb: Strattis' *Phoenician Women* frg. 47 and Sopater *Raising the Dead* frg. 13.

Although Athenaeus does not mention Gellius explicitly, his polemic remark can be read as an philhellene's disparagement of Roman literary culture as embodied by Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*, which puts this proverb to programmatic use in chapter 13, 29. The quotation of Varro—one of only three Latin quotations in the whole of the *Deipnosophistae*, and the only one of Varro—gains a particular importance if we view it in the light of a cultural polemic between powerful patrons of Greek versus Roman libraries.³⁰ Given the pioneering role played by Varro in the process of Roman adaptation of Greek scholarship, it is significant that Larensis completely silences this role, although he calls Varro 'my ancestor'.³¹

By contrast, Gellius frequently pays homage to Varro's principal role as a Roman cultural authority, a role also celebrated in Cicero's tribute to Varro in the *Academica* for 'bringing home' the Romans and letting themselves know for the first time.³² For Gellius as writer of the *Noctes Atticae*, Varro's paradigmatic status as a writer of *commentarii* goes beyond Latin usage and Roman cultural identity, and seems to include a pragmatic function in a political context. With the example of Varro as 'political adviser', Gellius illustrates that knowledge of the Roman cultural heritage has an immediate impact on one's position in society.³³ Gellius' Roman life of learning, then, vindicates a 'Varronian' authority in a contemporary political context, establishing the superiority of the 'Roman library' to other alternative models of learning, and presenting Fronto as a paradigm of the good Roman patron.

³⁰ See Gamberale 1996 on 'cultural confrontations' in the Antonine age, who points out that the use of Latin texts by Greek authors is still a neglected area in research (p. 58 f.; cf. 60 n. 20 on the passages in Athenaeus and Gellius discussed here). On the competitive nature of the *Deipnosophistae* see Braund 2000, 9, 15, 18. For another striking similarity between Athenaeus and Gellius which may point at Athenaeus' knowledge of the *Noctes Atticae* see Part III, p. 224 n. 28 (both misquote Plato in a similar way).

³¹ See Jacob 2000, 548 n. 70.

³² Cf. *ac.* 1, 9 *nam nos in nostra urbe peregrinantis errantisque tamquam hospites tui libri quasi domum duxerunt, ut possemus aliquando qui et ubi essemus agnoscere*. See Fowler 2000, 205; Fuhrmann 1987, 144 f. On Varro's constructive role in keeping the Roman cultural heritage alive see Romano 2003. For Varro's important role in the foundation of Asinius Pollio's library see Part III, p. 245 n. 24. For Gellius' attitude towards Varro, whom he cites as a leading authority on a variety of subjects see Holford-Strevens 2003, 158–160 and cf. 4, 9, 1; 4, 16, 1; 19, 14, 1.

³³ Cf. 14, 7, 1: when Pompeius became consul, he asked Varro to write a treatise (*commentarius*) for him on the rules in the Senate. See Fuhrmann 1987, 145.

Vindicating elite authority: Gellius against the grammatici

Besides Greek and Roman rivals, the politico-cultural polemic in the *Noctes* and its *Praefatio* has other targets as well, and reinforces Gellius' claim to cultural authority. The most conspicuous group of cultural rivals attacked by him is formed by the *grammatici*, 'schoolmasters'.³⁴ Since grammarians "could provide students with the resources to engage in the aristocratic discourse of their day" (McNelis 2002, 67), they exercised a considerable degree of influence on the social fabric of the early Roman empire.³⁵ To a considerable extent, the historical memory and literary culture that were central to Roman elite identity were transmitted within the schoolroom, with a crucial role for the *grammaticus* as 'guardian of culture'. To a Roman educationalist like Gellius, this group of 'professionals' represented a threat to elite education and culture. Their teaching was felt to infringe upon the Roman elite monopoly on knowledge, a monopoly which we see reflected in the cultural programme of the *Noctes Atticae*.

It is this undesirable influence that comes under Gellius' scrutiny, and more than once under his attack.³⁶ As a Roman educationalist, he repeatedly questions and undermines the grammarians' authority based on the explanation and preservation of the Roman literary canon, the shared body of texts by which the Roman elite articulated its own identity. Throughout the *Noctes*, Gellius attacks the boasted authority of various *grammatici*, both in entertaining anecdotes in which their false pretensions are unmasked—by Gellius or one of his teachers—and in chapters in which he disagrees with grammatical treatises, such as those written by Verrius Flaccus.

The polemic with the 'professional teachers' is already foreshadowed in the *Praefatio*, where Gellius expresses his hope that what he offers in his *Noctes* is entirely different from the hackneyed material taught in the schools (15 *et satis hoc blandum est non esse haec neque in scholis decantata neque in commentariis protrita*, 'in fact, I am sufficiently flattered if these

³⁴ On the position of *grammatici* as 'guardians of language', especially in later antiquity, see Kaster 1988. On Gellius' polemical attitude towards 'professional teachers' and school teaching see Vardi 2001; Gamberale 1995, esp. 261 f. For the role of *grammatici* in Athenaeus and Gellius see Horster (forthcoming).

³⁵ See also Atherton 1998, 224.

³⁶ Not all *grammatici* scrutinised by Gellius become object of his attack; for a positive example cf. 18, 4, 1 (Sulpicius Apollinaris, although Gellius never refers to him as a *grammaticus*; see below, p. 75 n. 26).

subjects have not been repeated over and over again in the schools and become the common stock of miscellanies’).³⁷ In terms of pedagogic authority, Gellius wishes to see his project as a necessary impulse for the inculcation of true Roman values, an impulse that scorns the routinised and corrupt practices of ‘regular education’.³⁸

This does not mean that *Noctes Atticae* offers a new curriculum that is to replace the old curriculum of the schools. Although Gellius establishes his authority as educational in nature, he does not present or call himself a teacher, and with good reasons, as Teresa Morgan (2004, 189) points out: “to define yourself as a professional was to segregate oneself from the majority of the upper class”.³⁹ Neither Gellius’ teaching nor that of the *grammatici* are in fact institutionalised forms of education in the modern sense of the term.⁴⁰ Yet, given the continuous tradition and the homogeneous mode of inculcation in their teaching, the *grammatici* represent a more or less standardized and ritualised form of education, which for Gellius represents a corrupting influence on the genuine concepts and standards that are central to Roman elite identity.

The exposure of professional teachers in *Noctes Atticae* has a famous paradigm in Socrates’ exposure of the claims to authority of sophists in Plato,⁴¹ a paradigm which Gellius subtly invokes on several occasions,

³⁷ The expression *decantata* refers to the habit of pupils to repeat in a singing tone after the example given by the master; cf. Sen. *epist.* 24, 6 *decantatae ... in omnibus scholis fabulae*; OLD s.v. 1 ‘to recite through in a singing tone, chant’ (usu. in a disparaging sense), b. (transf.) ‘to reel off, repeat’. For a similar image cf. Apul. *met.* 1, 1, 4 *nullo magistro praeunte* (see GCA 2007, 83 ad loc.). For the image of *protrita* (‘trite’) in a similar polemical context cf. 18, 4, 6 (the claim to authority of a would-be expert in Sallust) *priscorum ... uerborum medullas ... perspicere ... soleo, non istorum quae proculcata uulgo et protrita sunt*. For the disparagement of material from school teaching cf. also Gell. 4, 1, 1 *scholica quaedam nugalia*. As Amiel Vardi points out to me, the term *commentarii*, which is also used by Gellius with regard to his *Noctes* or other similar works (see below), may here refer both to trite school-material and to what can be found in any miscellany.

³⁸ See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 58 on school culture as ‘routinized culture’, often condemned by prophets or other intellectual ‘creators’.

³⁹ For the low reputation of teachers under the early empire see also Atherton 1998, 219f.; 243 with n. 74.

⁴⁰ See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 56: “Durkheim is justified in regarding the medieval university as the first true Educational System in the West, since the advent of juridically sanctioned validation of the results of inculcation (the diploma), Durkheim’s decisive criterion, here joins the continuity of inculcation and the homogeneity of the mode of inculcation.” On the absence of public regulation for literate education in antiquity see Atherton 1998, 222f. with 29; 243 n. 74.

⁴¹ Cf. Protagoras’ bold statement in Plat. *Prot.* 317b ὁμολογῶ τε σοφιστὴς εἶναι καὶ παιδεύειν ἀνθρώπους. By explicitly proclaiming their educative practice as such, without invoking an authorising institution or background, sophists simultaneously raised

inviting us to see *grammatici* as the sophists of his day. Sophists charged for tuition, which is often referred to in a disparaging way in Plato (e.g. *Prot.* 310d). Their professionalism revealed their low social origin, as they were evidently not independently wealthy. Gellius alludes to this paradigm in 13, 31, 13, where a cornered pseudo-expert in Varro tries to escape the situation by claiming *talía ego gratis non doceo* ('I do not give such instruction for nothing'); Gellius introduced this would-be professional as someone who 'tried to *sell himself*' (13, 31, 1 *laudabat uenditabatque se*).⁴²

Gellius' position as a cultural authority in relation to the teaching of *grammatici* is complex and paradoxical. On the one hand, he deliberately places himself outside their routinized and professionalized educational tradition, giving himself an independent critical position. His Roman cultural programme is indebted to other traditions. In his reflections on higher education, Gellius derives authority from a cultural and moral tradition greater and longer than *Noctes Atticae*, which is the literary tradition of famous Romans writing about education, such as Cicero (especially *De Oratore*), Tacitus (*Dialogus de Oratoribus*), Quintilian, and Pliny the Younger.⁴³ Moreover, by presenting himself at the outset of his work as a Roman father who writes for the education of his sons (*Praef.* 1), he claims a deeply traditional kind of Roman authority that looks back to Cato the Elder.⁴⁴

On the other hand, by designating his own work with the term *commentarii*, which can have several meanings, among them 'scholarly treatise' on a specific issue, or 'a commentary' (see Vardi 2004, 162f.), Gellius invites us to view his work in similar terms as compositions

the question of the legitimacy of their authority (see Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 62; 213 n. 13).

⁴² Cf. 18, 4, 1 *uenditatore[m] Sallustianae lectionis*, and see Vardi 2001, 49 on social prejudice against grammarians in the *Noctes Atticae*. For an explicit association between a *grammaticus* and boastful sophists cf. 18, 6, 1 *Aelius Melissus in nostra memoria fuit Romae summi quidem loci inter grammaticos id temporis; sed maiore in litteris erat iactantia et σοφιστεία quam opera*, 'within my memory Aelius Melissus held the highest rank among the grammarians of his day at Rome; but in literary criticism he showed greater boastfulness and sophistry than real merit'. For the Socratic paradigm of exposing false claims to authority cf. 4, 1 tit.; 18, 4, 1 (Keulen 2004, 228f.) and see further below.

⁴³ See Vardi 2004, 181; Morgan 2004, 189–190.

⁴⁴ See Morgan 2004, 189f.; Zanker 1995, 254 points out how Cato's example (cf. Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 20, 4) reflects the traditional ideal of the Roman *paterfamilias*, which is also visible on a child's sarcophagus from about 150 AD, where we see a father engaged in the education of his adolescent son.

of a grammatical nature and/ or by grammarians (cf. Praef. 15 *in commentariis protrita*). Just as *grammatici* do, Gellius engages with the explanation and elucidation of literary texts; in fact, as we have observed above, he manifests himself as their rival in the field, using grammatical learning to express cultural authority and to affirm elite status. On the surface, then, Gellius appears to claim a rational kind of authority, an authority that is founded in a methodical, scientific approach of texts, acknowledged in a legitimate tradition of commentaries and lexicographical studies.⁴⁵

Yet, this is merely on the surface. As Holford-Strevens (2003, 178) observes, “*auctoritas* is the highest principle in Gellius’ eye; neither *ratio* nor *consuetudo* can take its place.” This is elaborated in an entertaining anecdote in 15, 9, where the confrontation between Gellius and a *grammaticus* vividly illustrates the contrast between two radically different views on authority in explaining Latin. In this scene, a *semidoctus grammaticus* (‘half-educated grammarian’, 15, 9, 6) challenges Gellius to leave his authoritative examples (*auctoritates*) aside—in this case, Gellius had quoted Cato the Elder—and to give him a *reason* (*rationem*) that explained why one should use *frons* in the masculine gender.⁴⁶ Given the associations between *grammatici* and the sophists of classical Athens, Gellius playfully presents himself here in the role of a pupil outwitting his teacher/sophist with his own weapons (cf. 5, 10, 16).⁴⁷ He invents a rule (15, 9, 11 *fnitionem fictam*) which he admits is a false reason (*rationem falsam*), but a reason that his master will not be able to refute as false.⁴⁸

The witty exposure scene concludes with unmasking this professional teacher as unable to perform the activity that is a source of true authority in Gellius’ view, the hunting up of words (cf. 15, 9, 11 *ad indagandum uocabulum*) from the authors that matter (*auctoritates*), i.e. the *ueteres*, those

⁴⁵ On ‘rational authority’ as distinguished from traditional and charismatic authority see Weber 1978, 954.

⁴⁶ Similarly 5, 21, 7.

⁴⁷ In 5, 10, Gellius represents the sophist Protagoras as a master of fallacious argumentation, who even uses his cleverly devised sophisms against his own pupil Euathlus, but finds himself refuted by him in the end. In the subsequent chapter, Favorinus teaches Gellius to recognise defective sophisms, which do not form a real opposition and are therefore not truly reversible. On a possible influence of Favorinus’ Scepticism on Gellius’ strategy in 15, 9 see Beall 2004, 212 n. 31. On Gellius’ interaction with Favorinus’ authority see further Part II.

⁴⁸ Cf. 15, 9, 7 *mi magister* with 5, 10, 13 *magister sapientissime*; for the form of address (*mi*) *magister* usually employed at the opening of the knock-out question which exposes the teacher’s ignorance see Vardi 2001, 48 with n. 43.

authors who preserve the uncorrupted language in use before Augustus.⁴⁹ These authors represent Gellius' canon. Those who question the authority of these authors become of questionable authority themselves in the *Noctes* (cf. e.g. 6, 11, 3; 13, 29, 2). To the 'rational authority' represented by *grammatici*, who derive their name and authority from a set of linguistic norms and rules called *ars grammatica*,⁵⁰ Gellius seems to oppose a kind of authority in *Noctes Atticae* that blends traditional authority, resting on a belief in precedents handed down from the past, with charismatic authority, resting on devotion to the exemplary or extraordinary value of certain artistic manifestations.⁵¹

Imagery of education: breastfeeding and pure Latinity

Behind the contempt of Roman educationalists like Gellius for grammarians is a deeper concern for the education of children, and the fear that their impressionable souls are exposed to the contaminating, corrupting linguistic and moral influence of social inferiors. Gellius' anecdotes in which grammarians are exposed express this concern in one particular way. Yet, he uses other ways as well, and the following will illustrate one particularly captivating example.

Ancient educationalists, including Gellius, emphasise the importance of mothers to the correct development of the young. In *Noctes Atticae* 12, 1, Gellius gives a Latin rendering of Favorinus' discourse on breastfeeding, urging a Roman grandmother to have her daughter suckle the baby, instead of a wetnurse. Zanker (1995, 254) compares this notion to a visual representation on a child's sarcophagus of about 150 A.D., showing a bourgeois household with the mother herself quieting her

⁴⁹ Cf. Gell. 13, 6, 4, and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 174 with n. 10. Cf. also 19, 8, 15 (Fronto is speaking) *e cohorte illa dumtaxat antiquiore uel oratorum aliquis uel poetarum, id est classicus adsiduusque aliquis scriptor, non proletarius*.

⁵⁰ See Atherton 1998, 217: "grammarians ... could find the source of their superiority in the mastery of language [...] they may have been unique—were certainly distinctive—in supporting these claims by appeal to their professional concern with linguistic correctness: in particular, with the construction and the application of *rules*."

⁵¹ On charismatic authority see e.g. Weber 1978, vol. 1, 241 f. (charismatic authority as sharply opposed to rational authority); vol. 2, 1116 (charismatic belief not only in heroic figures but also in certain artistic or ethical manifestations). Sometimes charismatic and traditional authority are fused, see Weber 1978, vol. 2, 1122: "both charisma and tradition rest on a sense of loyalty and obligation which always has a religious aura".

infant; Zanker views this in the contemporary context of nostalgia for the proud traditions of Rome's past.⁵²

A similar sense of nostalgia nurtures the Roman cultural programme that underlies the *Noctes Atticae*. Behind Gellius' quotation of Favorinus' warnings against an unsuitable person's milk we may recognise his programmatic concern about the wrong kind of education, especially by those who have inferior qualities by origin.⁵³ Chapter 12, 1 ingeniously reworks educational imagery: 'milk' and 'suckling' are metaphors for 'education' and 'learning',⁵⁴ and more specifically, teachers of children were sometimes compared by others or themselves to nurses.⁵⁵ The emphasis on the importance of the nurse's disposition and the milk's quality in forming character (*'in moribus inolescendis'*) invites us to read this chapter as a reflection on education, not only in a physical, but also in a moral and mental sense.

In the Gellian chapter, Favorinus solemnly calls milk *fontem illum sanctissimum corporis, generis humani educatorem* ('that sacred fount of the body, the nourisher of mankind', 12, 1, 8).⁵⁶ The phrase *fons sanctissimus* recalls imagery for poetry and eloquence.⁵⁷ The element of 'educator of mankind' recalls the Frontonian notion of *eloquentia*—especially the

⁵² On the other side of the sarcophagus, we see the father instructing his now adolescent son, which echoes Gellius' self-presentation in his *Praefatio*; see above, n. 44.

⁵³ The social prejudice against grammarians (see above) and their corrupting influence on 'true Romans' seems reflected in Gell. 12, 1, 17; cf. Ps. Plutarch's *On the Education of Children*, 3D. This treatise (3C) adds the objection of insincere goodwill, since foster-mothers and nursemaids love *for pay* (note the parallel with the *grammatici*).

⁵⁴ Cf. Cic. *Tusc.* 3, 2 *ut paene cum lacte nutricis errorem suxisse uideamur*; Quint. *inst.* 1, 1, 21; see *ThLL* s.v. *lac* 817, 70f. 'indicat initium eruditionis'.

⁵⁵ See Atherton 1998, 227f., and cf. Quint. *inst.* 2, 4, 5 *quin ipsis doctoribus hoc esse curae uelim, ut teneras adhuc mentes more nutricum mollius alant, et satiari uelut quodam iucundioris disciplinae lacte patiantur*, 'indeed, I should like the teachers themselves to take trouble to nourish the tender minds gently like nurses and let them have the fill of their milk, as it were, of pleasanter learning'; Auson. 8, 67–76 Green (on his own teaching experience), esp. 67f. *multos lactantibus annis/ ipse alui* 'I myself nurtured many 'children' from their milk-drinking years'; Sidon. *carm.* 23, 204f. One could add Fronto, *epist. ad Anton. imp.* 1, 5, 3 (p. 93,8f.), where Fronto puts his love for his pupil on a par with the love of the *nutrix* for the child and of teachers (*litteratores*) for their pupils.

⁵⁶ Cf. Fronto, *epist. ad Anton. imp.* 1, 2, 8 (90,3f.) *omnia enim remedia atque omnis medelae fouendis infantium faucibus in lacte sunt sitae*, 'for all remedies and curatives for throat affections in children are centred in milk'.

⁵⁷ The combination *fons sanctus* alludes to the spring of the Muses in Verg. *georg.* 2, 175 *sanctos ausus recludere fontis*; see Nisbet-Hubbard on Hor. *carm.* 1, 26, 6 *fontibus integris*, pointing out that the uncontaminated spring is a Callimachean motif; cf. Call. *Hymn.* 2, 108–112, where the trickling stream from the pure and sacred fountain stands for

emperor's *eloquentia*—as being vital for the whole of mankind.⁵⁸ Moreover, the chapter reminds us of the nostalgia for the pure eloquence of ancient times voiced by Messalla in Tacitus' *Dialogus*, and remarks in Cicero and Quintilian on the beneficial influence of Roman women on eloquence.⁵⁹ Favorinus' concern for the purity of the milk and his anxiety that the nobility of the newborn child will be corrupted by degenerate nourishment reflects the programmatic concern for a pure, incorrupt speech in Gellius' work (Praef. 16 *sermo incorruptior*).⁶⁰ The association between a mother's nurturing and the purity of eloquence in our chapter is also meaningful in the epithets *pudica* (12, 1, 19 *pudicarum mulierum*) and *integer* (12, 1, 5 *integram matrem*)—both adjectives reflect stylistic imagery that was meaningful in the teachings of Fronto.⁶¹

For Gellius, exemplary teaching goes hand in hand with imbibing the pure, uncontaminated language of exemplary authors.⁶² Opposed to this is the image of linguistic corruption transferred to the bad teach-

Callimachus' own poetry (see F. Williams ad loc.); see also Russell on Quint. *inst.* 10, 1, 78 (on Lysias) *puro ... fonti*.

⁵⁸ Cf. Fronto *de eloqu.* 2, 12 p. 140, 13 f. *eloquentiam humano generi excicari mediocre facinus putas?* 'to cut eloquence out of the human race—do you think that a trivial crime?'; *epist. ad Ver.* 2, 9 p. 122, 11 f. *si uerum imperatorum generis humani quaeritis, eloquentia uestra imperat* (m² in marg. f. *uerus imperator generis humani eloquentia est*).

⁵⁹ Cf. Tac. *dial.* 28, 4 *pridem suus cuique filius, ex casta parente natus, non in cella emptae nutricis, sed gremio ac sinu matris educabatur* (cf. Germ. 20, 1 *sua quemque mater uberibus alit, nec ancillis ac nutricibus delegantur*). On the influential role of Roman mothers on their children's eloquence cf. Quint. *inst.* 1, 1, 6; cf. Cic. *Brut.* 211 (on the eloquence of the Gracchi and their mother) *apparet filios non tam in gremio educatos quam in sermone matris*. In Cic. *de orat.* 3, 45, the orator L. Licinius Crassus' comment on the pure eloquence of Laelia, which reminds him of Plautus and Naevius, alludes to the topos that women in particular preserved the purity of speech of ancient times (*facilius enim mulieres incorruptam antiquitatem conseruant*; cf. Plat. *Crat.* 418C αἱ γυναῖκες αἰπερ μάλιστα τὴν ἀρχαίαν φωνὴν σῶζουσι).

⁶⁰ Cf. 12, 1, 17 *nobilitatem istam ... insituo degenerique alimento lactis alieni corrumpere* (cf. 12, 1, 3 *ex familia nobiliore*); 12, 1, 18 *infantem ... pernicioso contagio infici*.

⁶¹ Cf. Gell. 6, 14, 11 *cum caste pudiceque ornatur, fit illustrius*; 19, 8, 3 (Fronto on Caesar) *sermonis praeter alios suae aetatis castissimi*; Fronto, *epist. ad Ver.* 2, 10 p. 123, 5 f. (on emperors and eloquence) *Augustum ... saeculi residua elegantia et Latinae linguae etiamtum integro lepore potius quam dicendi ubertate praeditum puto* (significantly, this is the first instance quoted in ThLL s.v. *integer* 2076, 71 f. with reference to language); cf. Gell. 7, 13, 11 *uerbis propriis atque integris*; Cic. *Brut.* 132 *incorrupta ... Latini sermonis integritas*.

⁶² Cf. 13, 6, 4 (see n. 49) *qui ante diui Augusti aetatem pure atque integre locuti sunt*; 9, 13, 4 (on Quadrigarius) *Q. Claudius ... purissime atque inlustrissime simplicique et incompta orationis antiquae suauitate descripsit*; 15, 1, 4 (Ilianus on Q.) *sincerissimi scriptoris* (cf. 13, 29, 2 [Fronto on Q.] *uir modesti atque puri ac prope cotidiani sermonis*; cf. Fronto, *de eloqu.* 1, 2 p. 134, 2, and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 251); 12, 10, 4 (paraphrasing Varro) *alterum ... recenti nouitate fictum, alterum antiqua origine incorruptum*.

ing of so-called professionals (cf. 13, 31, 9 *corrupte*; 19, 10, 11 *contaminari*). A significant politico-cultural message of the *Noctes Atticae* is that it is Gellius, and not his rivals, who has the legitimate claim to pedagogic authority. Reading Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* shows Roman citizens the way toward exemplary education, providing them, as it were, the entrée to the intellectual aristocracy of Antonine Rome. As we will see in the following chapter, Gellius represents himself in this aspect of his teaching as influenced by Fronto, by whose charismatic authority and pure language he was spellbound as a young man.⁶³ And yet, even Fronto's authority is not unassailable in Gellius.

⁶³ Cf. 19, 8, 1 *sermonibus... eius purissimis ... fruebar*, 'I enjoyed his pure conversations'. For the Frontonian dimension in Gellius' programmatic concern for a *sermo incorruptior* (Praef. 16) cf. Fronto, *Laudes fumi et pulueris* 5, p. 214, 24f. (m² in marg. c) *modo dulce illud incorruptum sit et pudicum*, *Tusculanum et Ionicum, id est Catonis et Herodoti*; see Van den Hout 1999, 492 ad loc. for parallels with (*in-*)*corruptus* for eloquence.

CHAPTER TWO

MEMORY AND AUTHORITY

Commentarii and chreiai: the utility of commemoration

In imperial literature, we see that remembrance as the central aim of literary projects is not limited to the genre of history, but cuts across traditional generic distinctions.¹ Controlling and preserving memory are also crucial to *Noctes Atticae* (cf. Praef. 2 *subsidium memoriae*). Training the reader's memory is an important aspect of Gellius' cultural-educational programme.² Moreover, in his *commentarii*—a translation of the Greek ἀπομνημονεύματα or ὑπομνήματα³—Gellius vindicates authority through his own preservation of memory, giving a meaning to the past that was useful for the present. This authority not only lies in deciding *what* or *whom* to remember, but also *how* this fact or person should be remembered. As we will see, his 'playful exercises in memory' (cf. 10, 25), point to this central aspect of his enterprise: through the writing of *commentarii*, Gellius aimed to exercise cultural authority through the control of memory in an imperial context,⁴ emending and transforming the collective memory of the recent past to underpin his own authoritative role in the present and future.

In this chapter, we shall look at Gellius' use of the power of memory in his literary representations of authority. The images and concepts used for these representations turn out to be rooted in memorable Roman traditions, exemplified by Frontonian teaching and satirical writings (Menippean Satire). As a running thread, we shall see a meaningful development from 'marginality' to 'centrality': trivial details,

¹ See Gowing 2005, 9–10.

² Cf. Praef. 16 *memoria adminiculator*, a 'more serviceable memory' (Beall 2004, 215).

³ See Vardi 2004, 162f.; Gowing 2005, 89. On Gellius' use of ἀπομνημονεύματα-traditions see Pausch 2004, 76; 154 with n. 42; 167f.; 228.

⁴ Leofranc Holford-Strevens draws my attention to the parallel between Gellius' *commentarii* and those of Caesar (*commentarii bellorum Gallici et civilis*), who ostensibly wrote mere notes for a historian to work up, in reality an authoritative account on which no-one would dare improve.

philological niceties and minutiae turn out to be transmitters of memory and vehicles of authority, expressing values and standards that are central to Gellius' imperial literary project.

A playful and useful form to employ and manipulate memory was the *chreia*,⁵ an anecdote featuring a historical personality who was for some reason 'worthy of remembrance'.⁶ For Gellius, the *chreia* was particularly useful to establish his own authority by means of 'controlling memory'. In his remembrance of Fronto, he both acknowledges and satirises his former master's authority. On the surface, Gellius' *chreiai* featuring Fronto can be read as a tribute to his leading role in a larger 'Latin cultural movement', but on closer reading they turn out to pit Gellius' own authority against Fronto's. As we shall see, he subtly claims to have a better connection to the admired Republican past than Fronto, or, in other words, he contests Fronto's canonical authority—it is implied that Gellius' judgment (*iudicium*) on authoritative writers from the past is to be followed, not Fronto's.

Gellius' *commemoratio* of Fronto is a means of establishing authority by subtly controlling and manipulating a rival authority's reputation by the means of literature. His 'personal recollections' in the literary form of the *Noctes Atticae* thus can be viewed as a step towards a shift in the collective memory as well.⁷ His representation of this icon of the recent past has a great deal to do with his own self-advertisement—most likely, he had particularly those in mind as his audience, who were most interested in the memory of Fronto's authority: those who were in power in Antonine Rome. By his manipulation of Fronto's image in a context full of references to Roman power (19, 13), Gellius subtly puts himself on the map as a cultural authority, knowing that there were powerful persons who needed to use this map for guidance.

⁵ As Holford-Strevens (2003, 41) points out, "the very name of *χρεία* given by the Greeks to pithy quotations from great men, such as he [Gellius] abounds in, testifies to their utility."

⁶ For the *chreia* as a *commemoratio orationis alicuius uel facti uel utriusque simul* cf. Prisc. *Praeex.* 3; Lausberg §1117; in 13, 29 and in many other chapters Gellius develops the *chreia* into a longer story or anecdote, extending it into a *ἀπομνημόνευμα* (*commemoratio*); Lausberg §1120. In Gell. 18, 7, 4, Favorinus makes an ironical remark relating to the 'memorability' of quotations of famous persons in a *chreia* context, denying this memorability to his opponent in that *chreia* (Domitius Insanus) for his lack of a 'canonical' reputation.

⁷ See Gowing 2005, 15 n. 47 on group memory (collective memory) as in fact being composed of or determined by individual members of the group (Romans, the *ciuitas*, *res publica*).

The historical Fronto was probably aware of his rival's literary endeavours, and does not refer to him in a very favourable way as appears from a letter to Claudius Julianus, *epist. ad amic.* 1, 19 (p. 182,5f.), in which he seems to suggest that "Gellius was making a nuisance of himself in his quest for Frontonian writings to publish, whether as such or in his own work" (Holford-Strevens 2003, 139):

non agnoui ista mea ab Gellio pessime quaeri ...

I did not realise that those letters of mine were searched for by Gellius with the most malicious intentions...⁸

The instability of Fronto's charismatic authority

Gellius commemorates Fronto's charismatic authority in five chapters of the *Noctes Atticae*. Although the homage to his authority implies that he himself bears some *uestigia* of Fronto's '*secta*', this should not be misunderstood as being a servile follower of a 'school' or completely agreeing with the teaching as known from Fronto's letters.⁹ Generally we can observe that the choice of a *secta* or being someone's *sectator* in *Noctes Atticae* is not an eternal obligation to a fixed set of rules, but a lively and dynamic process that is always open to change and deviation, and ruled by independent scrutiny and judgement, while admitting forms of irony and satire.¹⁰

This concords with what sociological theorists have observed about the unstable, fluctuating nature of charismatic authority. Charisma being a *shared* experience, charismatic authority always goes hand in hand with a process of group formation. Yet, the interdependent relation between the charismatic leader and his group is a dynamic one, characterised by an uneasy alternation between individual authority and group membership.¹¹ This makes the status of the charismatic

⁸ *Pessime* may point to Gellius' satirical purposes behind his research of Fronto's correspondence; see *ThLL* s.v. *malus* (*male*) 239, 23f. 'animo adverso, hostiliter, maligne'.

⁹ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 135–138, esp. 136: 'his judgment is influenced, but not governed, by Fronto'; cf. also 356: 'neither Gellius nor Apuleius is a mere clone'; Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 64: 'within a literary movement which is generally considered to be homogeneous, one can record a variety of positions'.

¹⁰ Cf. Holford-Strevens 2003, 138 "as an obscure young man, no doubt Gellius had known his place; but when he came to write, Fronto became a character for him to manipulate as he saw fit".

¹¹ See Falco 2000, 1, who points out that the connection between charisma and

leader unstable, and subject to scrutiny from the ‘group’ (Falco 2000, 8). The constant demands for ‘proofs’ of charisma (Weber 1978, 2: 1114) lead inevitably to disappointments, and the accumulation of such disappointments gradually allows followers to recognise the limits of their leader’s extraordinariness, even to the point, in some cases, of appropriating it (see Smith 1992, 182).

This theoretical background sheds some light on the representations of authority in the *Noctes Atticae* in general, and of Fronto in particular. Gellius represents himself as part of a ‘group experience’, picturing himself as one of the many intellectuals who visited the admired orator (19, 8, 1):¹²

adulescentulus Romae ... quando erat a magistris auditionibusque otium, ad Frontonem Cornelium pergebam sermonibusque eius purissimis bonarumque doctrinarum plenius fruebar,

when I was a young man at Rome ... I often paid a visit to Cornelius Fronto, when I had leisure from my masters and my lectures, and enjoyed his pure conversations, which abounded besides in excellent information.

Gellius represents Fronto in a ‘recognisable’ way as an authority on old Latin writers, such as people must have known him by reputation. Gellius portrays him as the charismatic authority that he must have been, surrounded by an audience, including Gellius himself, praising and admiring his literary taste (13, 29, 5):

ea nos omnia quae Fronto dixit, cum ita ut par erat, non adprobantes tantum, sed admirantes quoque audiremus,

when we, as was fitting, had expressed, not only approval, but admiration of all this we had heard from Fronto, ...¹³

Evidently, Gellius felt attracted by Fronto’s charismatic authority: the *otium* setting and the independence from ‘regular teaching’ (19, 8, 1 *a magistris auditionibusque otium*) concord with the ambitions of his own cultural programme. In the spirit of Fronto’s teaching, Gellius aimed

group formation simultaneously involves a central paradox: emphasis on the autonomy of an individual charismatic leader destroys the group ideal (compare the somewhat ‘eccentric’ nature of Favorinus’ authority in *Noctes Atticae*), and, conversely, emphasis on a group ideal tends to destroy the individuality of the human being at the group’s core.

¹² Cf. Holford-Strevens 2003, 136: “there is always a considerable company”.

¹³ For similar scenes in which Fronto’s charismatic authority is vividly pictured cf. 2, 26, 20–21; 19, 10, 10 *At enim Fronto iam uoce atque uultu intentiore*, ‘but Fronto, raising his voice and with a more earnest expression ...’.

to contest the norms and values taught by ‘fossilised’ categories of educational authority (*grammatici*), and to give a new impulse to Latin in its broadest sense by setting new standards in the use of literary *exempla* from the Roman past.¹⁴

Gellius’ tribute to Fronto’s charismatic authority is relevant with regard to the Frontonian dimension of his own teaching, but he also uses Fronto’s reputation as a foil in order to articulate his own independent judgment as a cultural authority. This can be illustrated with chapter 19, 8, where he pays homage to the influence of Fronto’s teaching, with reference to Fronto’s protreptic role in the search for rare words.¹⁵ Significantly, in that chapter Gellius also emulates Fronto’s authority by finding the unexpected singular *quadriga* in Varro—this simultaneously implies that he knew this authoritative writer better than Fronto did, and underlines a shift in authority in Gellius’ favour.¹⁶

Gellius uses a sophisticated literary strategy to represent the fluctuation of Fronto’s charismatic authority. His portrayals of him reflect forms of ‘satire on the intellectual’ that resemble contemporary literary fashion. For example, in the entrance scene in 19, 10, 1, Gellius pictures Fronto as lying on a kind of low couch that evokes associations with the comic stage (*offendimus eum cubantem in scimpodio Graeciensi*) and with caricatures of the intellectual: the element of the *scimpodium* particularly recalls Socrates in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (254).¹⁷ In the same section, Gellius satirically alludes to Fronto’s notorious gout (cf. also 2, 26, 1 and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 137 with n. 39).

This comic entrance scene is strikingly similar to a contemporary satirical passage where another young intellectual ‘upstart in society’

¹⁴ See Falco 2000, 15 f. on charismatic authority aiming at a change of attitude; while pointing at the elements of dissent and subversion inherent in any charismatic operation, Falco criticises Weber’s original notion that charisma *disrupts* social order, quoting Eisenstadt’s more flexible view that “a crucial aspect of the charismatic personality or group is not only the possession of some extraordinary, exhilarating qualities, but also the ability, through these qualities, to reorder and reorganize both the symbolic and the cognitive order” (1968, xl). On Fronto’s appeal as a ‘linguistic nationalist’ see Swain 2004, 17, 35. See also the previous chapter on the Frontonian dimension of Gellius’ didactic ideal of a *sermo incorruptior*.

¹⁵ 19, 8, 16 *sed ut nobis studium lectitandi in quarendis rarioribus uerbis exerceret*, ‘but to rouse in us an interest in reading for the purpose of hunting down rare words’.

¹⁶ Fronto had asked the intellectuals visiting him at home to find examples of *quadriga* singular or *harenae* plural in an authoritative ancient writer (19, 8, 15); see Holford-Strevens 2003, 136. This chapter will be discussed in further detail in Part III, p. 209 f.

¹⁷ Cf. Plat. *Prot.* 310C, where Socrates lies on a σζίμπους when Hippocrates visits him.

meets a powerful patron, who is also an odd type of intellectual: in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, Lucius enters the house of the wealthy Milo, and finds him lying on a *grabattulus*, which is a similar piece of comic furniture as the σκίμπους.¹⁸ Moreover, we can see a similar duality in the self-presentation of Gellius and Lucius, with a satirical disjunction between two roles: one role represents their 'younger self', the 'actor' in the narrative, who is impressed with the authority and power of the patron, and the other is the role of the author/narrator, who has a different, satirical perspective on the same person.¹⁹

Gellius' satirical portrayal of Fronto can be linked to his strategy to expose the inadequacy of Fronto's authority, an inadequacy which is especially evident in his judgments on the Latin canon. Gellius' contesting interaction with Fronto's authority is most vividly pictured in Fronto's last appearance in the *Noctes*, in a scene staged on a prominent location featuring prominent persons: together with Sulpicius Apollinaris and Festus Postumius,²⁰ Fronto is waiting to pay the emperor his respects (19, 13).

Just as in 4, 1 and in 20, 1, Gellius uses the Palatine and the impending *salutatio* of the emperor as a setting for a scene of contesting cultural authority, with himself in the role of silent observer. Just as in those two other scenes, there is a winner and a loser, and in the present case the loser is clearly Fronto.

¹⁸ Apul. *Met.* 1, 22, 6 *intuli me eumque accumbentem exiguo admodum grabattulo et commodum cenare incipientem inuenio*, 'I betook myself inside and found him reclining on a rather tiny cot and just starting to have dinner' (see *GCA* 2007, 397). For satire on the intellectual as a shared interest of Gellius and Apuleius see Keulen 2004.

¹⁹ Contrast Lucius' modest and inhibited behaviour towards Milo as a character in the narrative (*Met.* 1, 23, 3; 1, 26, 2) with his uninhibited use of satire as narrator in designating Milo as a *rancidus senex* (1, 26, 7). In a future publication I hope to make a comparative investigation of Gellius' and Apuleius' shared literary strategies, regarding the 'satirical' use of first person narrative, including a the role of the 'younger self'.

²⁰ M. Postumius Festus was a bilingual orator (Gamberale 1996, 67), who was the suffect consul of 160 and designated proconsul of Asia; in *ad amic.* 2, 11, 1 (p. 199, 15f.) Fronto recommended his fellow-African as one of the excellent candidates for replacing him as *patronus* of Cirta; see Saller 1982, 163f. on Fronto's *commendationes*, which show his role as a patron in a network reaching both the highest aristocratic circle in Rome and local aristocracies in Africa (see p. 9). Lollianus Avitus, another distinguished patron of learning in Rome (cf. Apul. *apol.* 24, 1; 94, 3; 95, 6; see Champlin 1980, 31f.), secured entry for the future emperor Pertinax into the classes of Sulpicius Apollinaris in the early 140s (Opeku 1993, 38 n. 21). Gellius emphasises Apollinaris' connections with Roman power in 7, 6, 12 and 13, 18, 2, where he figures as the authority consulted by Erucius Clarus, who was City prefect and twice consul. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 153 (with lit.); Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 41.

Whereas his charismatic authority is overtly celebrated in his first appearance (cf. 2, 26, 20 *Fauorinus scientiam rerum uberem uerborumque eius elegantiam exosculatus*, ‘Favorinus, enchanted with his [Fronto’s] exhaustive knowledge of the subject and his elegant diction’), in the chapter with his last performance it is not Fronto but someone else in his stead whose charismatic authority becomes the object of admiration, the famous Sulpicius Apollinaris (19, 13, 5, a nameless *grammaticus* is speaking):

si piaculum ... non committitur, praesente Apollinare, quid de uoce ulla Graeca Latinaue sentiam dicere, audeo tibi, Feste, quaerenti respondere...,

if I am not committing sacrilege in giving my opinion of any Greek or Latin word in the presence of Apollinaris, I venture to reply to your inquiry, Festus, that ...²¹

The implicit target of the chapter’s satire is Fronto’s unreservedly positive appraisal of the mime-writer Laberius,²² the only author from the *ueteres* who could hardly claim *auctoritas* in Gellius’ view.²³ Gellius represents Fronto in a dialogue in which he ironically makes him share his own reservations about Laberius’ lexicon, questioning the Latinity of the word *nanus*. He makes sure that he does not cause Fronto in this chapter to utter the name of Laberius, who was the first author to use *nanus*. In another chapter, however (16, 7), in which Gellius lists several licentious and bold neologisms coined by Laberius, he explicitly mentions *nanus* as a word for ‘dwarf’ introduced by him in the mime *Anna Peranna* (16, 7, 10).

Not unlike the scenes in which he makes Fronto the mouthpiece of his own admiration for Quadrigarius and Varro (13, 29; 19, 8), Gellius manipulates Fronto’s portrayal in chapter 19, 13 to serve his own

²¹ The use of the term *piaculum*, ‘sacrilege’ is striking; compare above, p. 32 n. 51 for the religious connotations attached to charismatic authority.

²² In the programmatic letter 4, 3 quoted above, Fronto commends Laberius as one of the *ueteres scriptores* who have ‘surrendered themselves to that toil, pursuit, and hazard of seeking out words with especial diligence’, 4, 3, 2 p. (56,18f.). Cf. also *epist. ad M. Caes.* 1, 7, 3 (p. 15,6f.) *uerum est profecto quod ait noster Laberius, ad amorem iniciendum delenimenta esse deleramenta, beneficia autem ueneficia*, ‘true, surely, is what our Laberius says, that in inspiring love charms are but harms and the *foison* of gifts *poison*’; Marcus Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 11, 1 (p. 30,20f.) *quod ait Laberius de amore, suo modo καὶ ἐπὶ ἰδίᾳ μούσῃ*, ‘...’, ‘as Laberius, after his own manner and in his own peculiar style, says of love, ...’; *de orat.* 2 (p. 154,1f.) *ut Laberius ait, ‘dictabolaria’*. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 356 with n. 12.

²³ Cf. 3, 12 (tit. and 2); 11, 15, 1; 16, 7; Holford-Strevens 2003, 179; Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 54–63.

agenda. In contrast with the other four chapters, this fifth and last appearance of Fronto in the *Noctes* does not show him ‘in command’ but in doubt, asking support from another authority in Latin, Sulpicius Apollinaris, to confirm his suspicion that *nanus* is a *sordidum ... uerbum et barbarum* (‘a vulgar and barbarous word’, 19, 13, 2). Apollinaris’ answer to a certain extent confirms Fronto’s suspicion, for he explicitly concedes that *nanus* is ‘frequent in the language of the ignorant vulgar’ (19, 13, 3 *est quidem ... hoc... in consuetudine imperiti uulgi frequens*).²⁴

Yet, Apollinaris elegantly uses Fronto’s query as an opportunity to question his reputation as a canonical authority in a double way.²⁵ On the one hand, he explicitly turns the blame on Fronto himself for not having canonised the word *nanus*—which, Apollinaris lectures, is not barbarian but of Greek origin—into respectable Latin usage. On the other hand, Apollinaris implicitly attacks Fronto for the canonical support that he *did* give to Laberius, the creator of low and vulgar neologisms that *did* find their way to the *usus linguae Latinae*:

fuisset autem uerbum hoc a te ciuitate donatum aut in Latinam coloniam deductum, si tu eo uti dignatus fores, essetque id inpendio probabilius, quam quae a Laberio ignobilia nimis et sordentia in usum linguae Latinae intromissa sunt.

But this word would have been given citizenship by you, or established in a Latin colony, if you had deigned to use it, and it would be very much more acceptable than the low and vulgar words which Laberius introduced in the Latin language.

In his negative assessment of Laberius’ lexicon, Apollinaris becomes the mouthpiece of Gellius’ viewpoint as a canonical authority (19, 13, 3).²⁶ Of course, Apollinaris cannot and does not blame Fronto literally and directly for allowing Latin usage to be defiled by the vulgar words

²⁴ With *imperiti uulgi*, which is an ambiguous expression in *Noctes Atticae* (it does not only mean ‘the common herd’), Apollinaris (and behind him, Gellius) may suggest that the word is used by writers from Augustus onward, as opposed to the commendable *ueteres* from the pre-Augustan age; cf. 18, 4, 10 and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 174f. with n. 15. Indeed, *nanus* for people is attested in Propertius (never quoted by Gellius), Juvenal (never quoted by Gellius), and Suetonius (only quoted twice by Gellius, who uses him merely as a source of fact, not as an authority on language); see Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 51–52.

²⁵ Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 50 speak of a “praise of Fronto by Apollinaris”; contrast Swain 2004, 36 “this is not much of a compliment”.

²⁶ For Gellius’ blame of Laberius’ lexicon (see also above, n. 23) cf. especially 16, 7 tit. *quod Laberius uerba pleraque licentius petulantiusque finxit; et quod multis item uerbis utitur, de quibus, an sint Latina, quaeri solet*, ‘that Laberius formed many words rather freely and boldly, and that he even uses numerous words whose Latinity is often questioned’.

coined by Laberius.²⁷ Yet, by explicitly connecting Fronto's canonical authority in one breath with the undesired infiltration of words from a writer notoriously supported by this very authority, Apollinaris' polite reply to Fronto's question turns out to contain a sting that will not have missed its effect.²⁸ Even though the alleged infiltration in literary Latin by Laberius' lexicon is not quite justified,²⁹ its unfairness underlines the polemical intention behind the Gellian chapter.

It is significant that the last words addressed to Fronto in the *Noctes Atticae* contain a criticism of his use of his authority in Latin, and it may be a characteristic element of the chapter that Fronto holds his tongue for the rest of the scene—this contrasts with Favorinus, another famous cultural authority staged by Gellius in a scene of contest on the Palatine, who yet after his 'defeat' expresses praise and approval to his opponent (20, 1, 55; cf. also 2, 26, 20–21).

Apollinaris' acknowledgement of Fronto's influential role points to the imperial context in which Fronto had exercised his authority in matters of Latin language. It is this authority, to be achieved in the same context, which is at stake in Gellius' literary remembrance of Fronto. Through his literary representation of Fronto's fluctuating authority, Gellius establishes himself in the *Noctes* as the true canonical authority who offers reliable judgment and guidance concerning propriety and impropriety in Latin usage: since studying Laberius would lead to stylistic impropriety (cf. 16, 7), how could Fronto claim the *iudicium* for which he is apparently admired in 13, 29?

Without being overtly polemical, Gellius in the *Attic Nights* shows some points of fundamental disagreement with Fronto regarding au-

²⁷ Note the term *intromissa*, connoting the irreversible introduction of something with a negative impact; cf. Gell. 1, 13, 4 *exemplum* ... *intromissum* (of an unwanted precedent); *ThLL* s.v. *intromitto* 82, 10f.

²⁸ Significantly, Gellius praises Apollinaris' use of Socratic irony in 18, 4, 1 *iactatorem quempiam et uenditorem Sallustianae lectionis inrisit inluditque genere illo facetissimae dissimulationis, qua Socrates ad sophistas utebatur*, '... made fun of a boastful fellow who was parading his reading of Sallust, and turned him into ridicule with that kind of witty irony which Socrates used against the sophists'. By contrast, Gellius also (implicitly) compares Fronto with Socrates, but with the satirical version known from the *Clouds* (see above, p. 41). Read in the light of chapter 19, 13, Gellius' description of Apollinaris as *uir in memoria nostra praeter alios doctus* (18, 4, 1) adds an uncomplimentary element to his *commemoratio* of Fronto.

²⁹ See Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 55–63, who demonstrate that most Laberian words criticised as vulgar by Gellius are hapax legomena or occur only in technical texts, or in literary works whose language deliberately draws on folk idiom (Lucil., Varro *Men.*, Hor. *serm.* and *epist.*, Pers., Petron., Mart.).

thors that are commendable or not; another example is his attitude towards Vergil.³⁰ Ironically, Gellius' subtle use of *dissimulatio* as a literary strategy to articulate his position in relation to Fronto's authority is reminiscent of Frontonian teaching: in a letter to Marcus (*epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 16, 2, p. 48,5f.), Fronto urges him to take Socrates as an example, who did not attack or chide openly, but cunningly employed the courteous and friendly language of Socratic εἰρωνεία.³¹

Playful authority (1): Menippean lists and imperial memory

Gellius often refers to his own work in a self-disparaging kind of way, using, for example, diminutives that suggest marginality and insignificance, such as the *lucubrationculae* (Praef. 14); other examples are *minutae istae admonitiones et paucillulae* (16), *delectatiunculae* (23), *disputatiuncula* (1, 3, 30), or *adnotatiunculae* (17, 21, 50; 19, 7, 12). With a conscious use of self-irony,³² Gellius describes his own work in similar terms as he would use to detract his cultural enemies, especially grammarians.³³ He even stages opponents who scorn his philological activities (6, 17, 3 *quin potius ... haec mittis nugalia*.) with exactly the same term that he himself uses to discard his opponents' intellectual products as insignificant and worthless, *nugalia* (1, 2, 6; 3, 16, 16; 4, 1, 1).³⁴

³⁰ Gellius makes Fronto quote Vergil, but the real Fronto in his correspondence completely ignores Vergil; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 209; A. Garcea, 'Gellio, il bilinguismo greco-latino e i nomi dei colori', in: R. Oniga (ed.), *Il plurilinguismo nella tradizione letteraria latina*, Roma 2003, 194–195 (non vidi). Moreover, Gellius' view on Cicero's care in the choice of words is far more positive than Fronto's view; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 135.

³¹ Gellius expects his readers to 'see through' his *dissimulatio*; compare the use of *dissimulatio* in Cicero's *De Oratore* as a form of modest self-presentation that is to be unmasked by others (see Leeman-Pinkster, vol. I, p. 83f.). For *dissimulatio* meaning to say something whereas you intend something different cf. Cic. *de orat.* 2, 269; see Garcea 1998, 388 with n. 46.

³² By a 'conscious use of self-irony', I mean that Gellius did not *really* intend to lower himself to the level of his rivals; I view his display of modesty and self-disparagement as conscious forms of mock self-deprecation, which are meant to be taken *ironically*, and, in the end, serve to establish *authority*.

³³ For diminutives disparaging the philological activities of Gellius' opponents cf. 5, 21, 4 *aderat ... reprehensor audaculus uerborum, qui ... habebat ... nonnullas disciplinae grammaticae inauditiunculas*, 'there was present a very audacious critic of language, who ... had some trifling instruction in the art of grammar'. Cf. '*auditiuncula*' in Sidonius Apollinaris' mild criticism of the young man in 13, 20, 5.

³⁴ Cf. 15, 30, 2 *argutissimas nugae*, the would-be knowledge displayed by an *opsimathes* ('a late-comer in learning'), an anecdote that discourages his readers from postponing

In what follows, I will focus especially on the connections of Gellius' 'modest' self-presentation with Menippean Satire and with his participation in the circle of Fronto. It will highlight his establishment of authority in terms of a complex response to the authority of Fronto. In a very subtle way, Gellius' small-scale self-presentation, including his emphasis on memorising 'trifles', reveals itself as a sophisticated form of self-advertisement intended to be acknowledged on a large scale, i.e. in the highest imperial circle.

Yet, the link between 'tiny details' and a large-scale cultural significance is not always explicitly or emphatically made in *Noctes Atticae*.³⁵ This is appropriately illustrated by a chapter in which Gellius employs a playful self-irony with the liability to charges of silliness and triviality regarding his intellectual activities (10, 25). In this chapter, Gellius represents himself as a character who occupies himself with one of the most important things in the *Noctes*: words.

The anecdote pictures Gellius as a mature Roman citizen undertaking a journey in a carriage; with a subtle sense of humour he intends to avoid his mind becoming a prey to other *ineptiae*, 'trifles', by recalling the names of weapons and boats from the early writers (10, 25, 1):

uocabula ... libitum forte nobis est sedentibus in reda conquirere, ne quid aliarum ineptiarum uacantem stupentemque animum occuparet,

... when I was riding in a carriage, to keep my mind from being dull and unoccupied and a prey to other trifles, it chanced to occur to me to recall the names ...³⁶

Gellius uses the term *ineptiae* with reference to an occupation that puts a central aim of his educational programme into practice, the exercise of the memory (Praef. 16 *memoria adminiculatio*). The silly things that occupy his mind in the carriage illustrate the kind of activity that

literary studies to a later age. On the terminology see Garcea 1998, 384f. Another opponent of Gellius' scrupulous philological investigations accusing him of foolish and trifling pursuits is Domitius Insanus (18, 7), who will be discussed in more detail below, pp. 138–154.

³⁵ Exceptions are e.g. 4, 1, 18–19; 11, 3, 1. See Swain 2004, 33.

³⁶ Franz Skutsch proposed to read *malarum ineptiarum* (o has *aliarum*), which would make the irony even stronger: instead of a frank statement that what Gellius is doing in the carriage can also be considered a kind of *ineptiae*, Skutsch's reading would create an ironical pose of seriousness, given that other people were likely to deem listing names of weapons and boats '*ineptiae*'. A similar irony would result if *aliarum* is intended in the Greek fashion, 'other things, that is trivialities' (I thank Leo Franc Holford-Strevens for pointing out this interpretation).

he wishes his readers to pursue, and it is an activity that forms the basis of his own writings (Praef. 2 *subsidium memoriae*). Thus, with the word *ineptiae* he employs a programmatic term that suggests a sense of modesty or even irony with regard to the nature of his own work. This recalls a Roman literary usage in the same vein as *nugae* or similar terms that ironically present a literary work or an intellectual enterprise in terms of a youthful, unserious, ridiculous, or unnecessary effort.³⁷

The tone of self-parody and the serio-comic listing of words describing weapons and boats may in particular recall Menippean Satire. As Relihan (1993, 54–59) argues, the ‘Menippean’ nature of Gellius’ appreciation of comic lists can be illustrated with 6, 16, 4–5, where he takes such a list from Varro’s Menippeans. Moreover, the self-parodic presentation of a pedantic intellectual is an additional feature which Gellius recognised in and borrowed from Varro’s Menippeans. The use of self-mockery in Menippean Satire (see Relihan 1993, 28–30) can be illustrated with *Men.* 256, where Varro as narrator comically refers to himself as *libellio*, ‘litterateur’, or *Men.* 59, where the pedantic narrator wants to write only one little book (*libellum*).

It seems very likely that the Menippean ‘genre’ served as a model for Gellius in his use of ‘mock self-deprecation’ as a Roman literary technique of establishing authority. We have already observed Gellius’ debt to Varro’s ‘dallying with nocturnal trifles’ (*Men.* 219). The Menippean dimension of the self-ironic *ineptiae* may be illustrated by Gell. 13, 31, a ‘Menippean’ chapter in more than one sense, in which Gellius terms his philological inquiry of a Varronian expression a *res leuicula*, ‘a trivial matter’ (13, 31, 15).³⁸ Inspired by Varro’s Menippeans, he adopts satiric, protreptic, and didactic poses, and simultaneously parodies those who preach matters dear to their heart, including himself (Relihan 1993, 71 f.).

³⁷ See the examples in *ThLL* s.v. *ineptia(e)* 1299, 80 ff. ‘per ironiam et modestiam dicta’, from Cic. *de orat.* 1, 111 onward. Poets use it as a self-referential term for their literary work (cf. *nugae*), Catull. 14, 24; Mart. 11, 1, 14; Auson 1, 4 [471 S.], 5. Suetonius reports that the grammarian C. Melissus composed *libellos Ineptiarum, qui nunc locorum inscribuntur*, ‘little books of Follies—they have the title Jokes nowadays’; according to Kaster ad loc., the titles indicate that the work was a collection of witticisms, frivolous sayings, and silly stories, but he also cites Little’s view that the work comprised *Kuriositäten* of a more general nature, which would make the parallel with Gellius’ work stronger. Cf. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 12, 3 (p. 66,5 f.) *conceditur ludere aliquid et ineptire* (cf. 66,4 *remissius ... et liberalius fabulandi*).

³⁸ Gellius’ modesty contrasts with the ἀλαζονεία of the braggart expert in Varro in that scene, who blows up the issue (*non ... paruum rem quaeris*, 13, 31, 13).

In a Menippean vein, then, Gellius represents himself in 10, 25 as engaging with ‘frivolous topics’ to avoid frivolity. We see him busy in a similar exercise in 11, 3, which contains an explicit comment on the interplay between marginality and centrality in his cultural programme:

quando ab arbitriis negotiisque otium est et motandi corporis gratia aut spatiamur aut uectamur, quaerere nonnumquam apud memet ipsum soleo res eiusmodi paruas quidem minutasque et hominibus non bene eruditis aspernabiles, sed ad ueterum scripta penitus noscenda et ad scientiam linguae Latinae cumprimis necessarias...

when I have leisure from legal business, and walk or ride for the sake of bodily exercise, I have the habit sometimes of silently meditating upon questions that are trifling indeed and insignificant, even negligible in the eyes of the uneducated, but are nevertheless highly necessary for a thorough understanding of the early writers and a knowledge of the Latin language.

Both these chapters, then, can be read as programmatic reflections of Gellius’ work as a whole. When we place Gellius’ memory-exercise in the carriage in the context of his cultural-educational programme, its playfulness turns out to express something of vital importance.

As memory-training was important at all levels of Roman education (Quintilian calls it the ‘treasury of eloquence’, *inst.* 11, 2, 1), Gellius’ frequent references to memory are in no sense an empty cliché. The chapter in which he rehearses lists of words for weaponry and vessels from early Roman writers illustrates a double benefit of his educational programme: enriching one’s language with the knowledge of remarkable old words through the study of the *ueteres*, but also the exercise of the memory through learning words by heart, in order to have disposal of the right word at the right time (cf. Praef. 16 *memoria adminiculatio*). The importance of memory is doubly emphasised by three stages of remembrance: 1. Gellius’ earlier careful memorising of the *ueteres*. 2. in the carriage, in which he lists all the words he recalls from earlier studies of ancient authors. 3. at the moment of writing the chapter, in which he remembers exactly which words he had recalled, and now writes them down.

For Romans, the ability to remember single words was not an aim in itself, but had a usefulness *related to certain contexts*.³⁹ Quintilian teaches

³⁹ As Beall (2004, 216) points out, Gellius “reflects the ancient belief that words, deeply planted in the memory, have the power to change attitudes and conduct” (cf. 13, 28, 2; 12, 4, 3).

that remembering a word or a symbol can trigger other memories (cf. *inst.* 11, 2, 30 *ex alia memoria uenit alia*, ‘one memory leads to another’), and remembering a single word can be a cue to put our memory back on track (11, 2, 19). Gellius’ anecdote on remembering names during a journey in a carriage recalls various aspect of Roman education in memory, such as the advice to link memory to a journey or a walk (*inst.* 11, 2, 21), in order to fix the *memoranda* to sites (*loca*) taken from reality.

Quintilian gives two examples of triggering the memory of a larger theme by the cue of a single word or symbol, and these two examples coincide with the two groups of words remembered by Gellius: the one is warfare, corresponding with his list of weapons, and the other is navigation, corresponding with his list of boats.⁴⁰ Gellius’ individual recollection of single words relating to warfare and navigation invites the reader to see a larger context, a collective memory which gives a deeper meaning to the list of words which he wished to share with his readers.

This draws attention to the ideological connotations of taxonomy and listing, which have been illuminated in the Elder Pliny by Sorcha Carey.⁴¹ For Roman writers like Pliny and Gellius, the pursuit of knowledge was not a neutral activity of collecting objective facts, but “a field charged with political significance, representing a vehicle for demonstrating an emperor’s power” (Murphy 2004, 212). By listing words according to the two classifications of warfare and navigation, every single word is defined by its relationship to imperial conquest. Thus, Gellius’ apparently unassuming list becomes a stratagem of articulating Roman power, in which the repeated and numerous Latin words for weapons and boats from all over the Empire (Gaul, Thrace, Germany) triumphantly assert Roman supremacy.

Thus, his supposedly silly inventory of weapons and boats becomes a powerful evocation of empire and emperor, in which the Latinisation

⁴⁰ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 11, 2, 19–20 *sit autem signum nauigationis ut ancora, militiae ut aliquid ex armis*, ‘let us suppose a symbol of navigation, such as an anchor, or of warfare, such as a weapon’; 11, 2, 29 *eo quoque adhuc remedio utatur, ut ipsae notae (hoc enim est ex illa arte non inutile) aptentur ad eos qui excidunt sensus, ancora, ut supra proposui, si de naue dicendum est, spiculum si de proelio*, ‘let him use the further device (which is quite a useful contribution to the Art of Memory!) of suiting his marks to the ideas which he is liable to forget—an anchor, as I suggested, if he has to speak about a ship, or a javelin if it is about a battle’. Cf. also Rhet. Her. 3, 33ff. on remembering words; see Gowing 2005, 16 n. 51.

⁴¹ See especially Carey 2003, 33–34; 179–180. For the cultural significance of lists see also Rives (forthcoming) on Apuleius’ Apology; cf. *RE* XX, 2 s.v. *Pinax* (3: literarisch), 1409–1482 (O. Regenbogen).

of words for foreign weapons and boats reflects Roman conquest and possession. As in Pliny's 'strategies of encyclopaedism', Gellius' tactic of producing apparently innocent, or even 'silly' catalogues turns out to be a self-empowering authorial strategy, as the very process of cataloguing itself is associated with conquest and power (cf. Carey 2003, 34). Being silly and serious at the same time, the 'Menippean' list in 10, 25 shows in miniature how the entertaining chapters of the *Noctes Atticae* can be read as Gellius' powerful strategies to vindicate cultural authority in an imperial context.

Playful authority (2): Frontonian trifles and imperial education

There are various ways of looking at Gellius' way of presenting his work in terms of 'trifle matters'. In general, his modest self-presentation can be compared with similar strategies of self-fashioning in Fronto and Apuleius, who likewise use forms of modesty as an authorising strategy that suggests a shift from *marginality* to *centrality*. This strategy can be viewed as belonging to a larger phenomenon in the literary culture of Antonine Rome, i.e. the interplay between marginality and centrality in descriptions of literary activities in a context of contesting authority. Fronto, Gellius, and Apuleius have much in common in their protocols of establishing authority by apparently diminishing it, and by playfully persuading the reader to perceive in small and trivial details—even in silly and indecent 'Milesian' stories—a deeper value or general utility.⁴²

The 'marginal' forms of self-referentiality in Gellius' work can be seen in the light of the place of culture in society as perceived by

⁴² Cf. Fronto *laud. fum.* 2, p. 215,8f. *plerique legentium forsan rem de titulo contemptant: nihil serium potuisse fieri de fumo et puluere. tu pro tuo excellenti ingenio profecto existimabis lusa sit opera ista an locata*, 'the majority of readers may perhaps from the heading *despise* the subject, on the ground that *nothing serious* could be made of smoke and dust. You, with your excellent abilities, will soon see whether my labour is lost or well laid out.'; *de fer. Als.* 3, 8 (p. 231,13) ... *illa nugalia* ... 'Laudem Fumi et pulueris'... 'those *trifles* of mine, 'The Praise of Smoke and Dust''. For Apuleius' ostentatious display of modesty cf. *flor.* 17, 2 *quantulumcunque ingenium meum iam pridem pro captu suo hominibus notus est* ... 'for even my small talent has too long been too well-known to people, to its own extent ...'; cf. also 18, 12–18. Cf. also the discourse of modesty in *Met.* 1, 1, 1 *at ego tibi sermone isto Milesio uarias fabulas conseram ... modo si papyrus Aegyptiam argutia Nilotici calami inscriptam non spreueris inspicere*... 'come, let me join various tales for you in this Milesian conversation ... at least if you will not *disdain* to take a look at Egyptian pages written with the cleverness of a Nilotic pen ...'

Romans: Gellius associates the cultural activities related to his work with leisure time, *otium*. Moreover, an important part of *Noctes Atticae* is concerned with language, explaining grammatical, lexical or other aspects of words. Philological activities of this kind were traditionally an object of criticism, as they were viewed by some people as redundant, specialist pursuits that were not in the interest of the state. In classical Athens, it was especially the sophists who were scorned because of their inquiries into grammatical subtleties.⁴³ In Plato's *Laches* 197D, Laches' response to Prodicus' niceties on the distinctions between words that are apparently synonymous probably represents a more general view on such studies:

καὶ γὰρ πρόκειται, ὦ Σώκρατες, σοφιστῇ τὰ τοιαῦτα μᾶλλον κομψεύεσθαι ἢ ἀνδρὶ ὃν ἡ πόλις ἀξιοῖ αὐτῆς προϊστάναί.

Yes, for it is more suitable, Socrates, for a sophist to make a show of such refinements than for a man whom the State thinks worthy to govern her.

The passage can serve as a paradigm for the way some Romans in Gellius' day may have thought about philological inquiries.⁴⁴ Given this background, it is significant that Gellius represents himself in his pursuit of 'small things' as an admirer of the famous person who educated the one who was destined to govern the State: Fronto, teacher of Marcus Aurelius.

An investigation of Gellius' list of words for boats and weapons (10, 25) reveals that his '*ineptiae*' are not only the marginal activity of an individual citizen, but also refer to something bigger going on in Roman contemporary culture, a movement in which Gellius participated and

⁴³ Cf. Aristophanes, *Clouds*, 638 and 658f. with Dover ad loc.; for ironic references to Protagoras' fascination with correct diction cf. Plat. *Crat.* 391C (cf. also *Phaedr.* 276C); see Baxter 1992, 147–151 (on Protagoras) and 151–156 (on Prodicus). Sedley 2003, 77 points out that the sophists' activities mocked by Socrates were probably the current intellectual fashion. Diogenes Laertius' (9, 52) account of Protagoras' achievements link it to a context of eristic and verbal quibbling (see Baxter 1992, 149 n. 194). Protagoras' obsession with the gender of words (he criticised Homer for using *μήν* in the feminine in *Il.* 1, 1; cf. Aristot. *soph. el.* 14, p. 173b17) can be seen as a paradigm for the grammarian's obsession with the gender of Latin nouns in Gell. 15, 9. See above p. 29f. on Gellius' modelling of the grammarians' characterisation after the paradigm of the sophists in classical Athens.

⁴⁴ Cf. 5, 21, 2, where Gellius takes pains to introduce his friend as 'a man of serious scholarship and devoted to the duties of life, and not at all meticulous in the use of words' (*est enim doctrina homo seria et ad uitae officia deuincta ac nihil de uerbis laborante*); cf. also 5, 21, 6 *quia nunc mihi a magis seriis rebus otium est*, 'since I now have leisure from more serious affairs'.

aimed to establish authority. The marginality of remembering words from ancient writers brings us to the centrality of rhetorical education of the imperial elite, in which Fronto played a key role. Both in the interplay between marginality and centrality and in the aims of his teaching, Gellius reveals a significant affinity with Fronto's rhetorical teaching.⁴⁵ An apt illustration of this affinity is a letter from Fronto to Marcus Aurelius (*ad Antonin.* 1, 2, 5, p. 88,18f.), in which he praises the Emperor's eloquence in elegant poetical phraseology:

quamquam non semper ex summis opibus ad eloquentiam uelificaris, tamen sipharis et remis te tenuisse iter, atque ut primum uela pandere necessitas impulit, omnis eloquentiae studiosos ut lembos et celocas facile praeteruehi.

that although you have not always set every sail in pursuit of eloquence, yet you have held on your course with topsails and with oars, and as soon as ever necessity has forced you to spread all your canvas, you are easily distancing all devotees of eloquence like so many pinnacles and yachts.

Fronto praises Marcus' eloquence by comparing it to a large sailing-ship; by contrast, his rivals in eloquence are compared to small boats, for which Fronto uses two terms that also occur in Gellius' list (10, 25, 5), *lembus* and *celox*. Both are words from early authors favoured by Fronto and Gellius, such as Plautus and Turpilus.⁴⁶ In the second century, the noun *celox* also reappears in a fragment from Apuleius' *De Re Publica*, in a proverbial saying on the art of government, which can be compared with the sailing imagery for the emperor's eloquence in Fronto.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Cf. Fronto, *epist. ad Anton. imp.* 1, 2, 2 p. 87,21 *cum in orationibus uestris uestigia nostrae sectae animaduerto*, 'when in speeches of either of you I detect marks of my *secta*'. Fronto describes his teaching in terms of a *secta* (a second hand paraphrases '*facundiae suae*'), which means he was a figure of authority surrounded by *sectatores*—this partly corresponds with the way Gellius represents Fronto in the *Noctes Atticae*, with Gellius being one of his 'followers'—although he does not use the word *sectator* or equivalent terms in describing his relation to Fronto. We should not take the idea of a *secta* too literally, or be misled by Sidonius Apollinaris' term *Frontoniani* (see *OCD* s.v.); Fronto was not the founder of an archaistic 'school' (Portalupi); see Van den Hout 1999, 227f.; nor was Gellius' judgment blindly following Fronto's; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 135–136 with nn. 29–30; 356 with n. 10.

⁴⁶ Before Fronto and Gellius, *lembus* is attested in Plaut., Turpil., Acc., Sisenna, Verg., Liv., Plin. *nat.*, Frontin. *strat.*; *celox* is attested in Enn., Plaut., Turpil., Cael., Varro *Men.*, Liv.

⁴⁷ See Apul. frg. 13 (Fulg. *exp. serm. antiq.* 44) *qui celocem regere nequit, onerariam petit*; see Harrison 2000, 25; Otto, *Sprichwörter*, p. 79. Compare the nautical imagery used

It seems that Fronto had stored a similar kind of list in his mind as Gellius, a list of words for ships collected from the admired ancient writers, which could be used to adorn the language with a surprising element, provided that it was chosen at the appropriate moment for the appropriate occasion. Fronto refers to this caveat in the same letter, praising Marcus for his careful word choice, which he calls the hallmark of a first-rate orator.⁴⁸ He appropriately praises the emperor's *uerborum lumina* ('sparks of words') by putting into practice what he had taught the emperor himself, a teaching which likewise influenced Gellius and his cultural programme. Viewed in the light of Fronto's letter, Gellius' 'small trivialities' gain a much more important dimension, a dimension that even touches upon imperial politics and the competitive role of eloquence in the communication between members of the imperial elite.

Fronto describes in more detail the use of *insperata atque inopinata uerba* ('unlooked-for and unexpected words') in an earlier letter to Marcus (*epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 3 p. 56,6f.), a famous letter that is generally viewed as a programme for Fronto's teaching. This letter likewise illustrates the programmatic affinities between Gellius and Fronto. Fronto lists ancient authors who were masters in the art of choosing words with great care and continuous zeal, such as Cato, Plautus, Ennius, Accius, Caecilius and Laberius, but also Sisenna, who excelled in erotic language (*in lasciuiis*) and Lucilius, who distinguished himself in words from technical language. By contrast, Fronto concludes that Cicero, although he is called the 'head and source of Roman eloquence' (*qui caput atque fons Romanae facundiae cluet*) falls short in this respect (4, 3, 3 p. 57,8f.):

of Antoninus' rule in Fronto, test. 19 p. 267,4f. For the close association between eloquence and (military) rule cf. Fronto *epist. ad Ver.* 2, 20 (p. 128,17f.) and 22 (p. 129,17f.). For the image of *uela pandere* for eloquence cf. Quint. *inst.* 6, 1, 52. Oratory, government and steering a ship ('the ship of state') are combined in the imagery used in Cic. *de orat.* 1, 38 *praeclara gubernatrice ciuitatum eloquentia* (cf. 1, 46 *oratorem a gubernaculis ciuitatum*).

⁴⁸ 1, 2, 7 p. 89, 19f. *praecipue autem gaudeo te uerba non obuia arripere, sed optima quaerere. hoc enim distat summus orator a mediocribus, quod ceteri facile contenti sunt uerbis bonis, summus orator non est bonis contentus, si sint ulla meliora*, 'but above all I am glad that you do not snatch up the first words that occur to you, but seek out the best. For this is the distinction between a first-rate orator and ordinary ones, that the others are readily content with good words, while the first-rate orator is not content with words merely good if better are to be obtained'.

Verum is mihi uidetur a quaerendis scrupulosius uerbis procul afuisse uel magnitudine animi uel fuga laboris uel fiducia non quaerenti etiam sibi, quae uix aliis quaerentibus subuenirent, praesti adfutura. Itaque conperisse uideor, ut qui eius scripta omnia studiosissime lectitarim, cetera eum genera uerborum copiosissime uberrimeque tractasse [...], quom tamen in omnibus eius orationibus paucissima admodum reperias insperata atque inopinata uerba, quae nonnisi cum studio atque cura atque uigilantia atque multa ueterum carminum memoria indagantur.

But he seems to me to have been far from disposed to search out words with especial care, whether from greatness of mind, or to escape toil, or from the assurance that what others can scarcely find with careful search would be at his call without the need of searching. And so, from a most attentive perusal of all his writings, I think I have ascertained that he has with the utmost copiousness and opulence handled all other kinds of words [...], and yet in all his speeches you will find very few words indeed that are unexpected and unlooked for, such as not to be hunted out save with study and care and watchfulness and the treasuring up of old poems in the memory.

Fronto's emphasis on *studium*, *cura* and *uigilantia* calls to mind the *labores* and *lucubrationes* from Gellius' *Praefatio*, which we have discussed in the first chapter as one of the activities represented as a source of authority in Gellius' cultural programme.⁴⁹ Marcus, who is the composer of a 'praise of wakefulness and against sleep' (*epist.* 1, 4, 1, p. 5,21f.), receives praise from Fronto in the present letter for his *cura* and *industria* 'in digging deep for words and fitting them to the required meaning' (4, 3, 3 p. 57,23f. *ut uerbum ex alto eruas et ad significandum adcommodes*).

This praise contains in a nutshell two aspects of Fronto's teaching which also lie at the core of Gellius' educational programme, and which illuminate a number of anecdotes in the *Noctes Atticae*: the importance of knowing ancient authors—*multa ueterum carminum memoria* points to the crucial role of memory, also embraced by Gellius—and the ability to use them in the appropriate way (cf. Gell. 11, 7).⁵⁰

There is, however, another particular remark in Fronto's letter that throws light on Gellius' 'self-depreciatory' attitude, presenting as 'minute' or even 'disreputable' what turns out to have a significant cultural

⁴⁹ Cf. Praef. 19 *qui ... nullas hoc genus uigilias uigilarunt ... abeant a 'Noctibus' his procul*. For *uigilantia* in a context of study cf. Plin. *epist.* 3, 5, 8 *erat ... incredibile studium, summa uigilantia. lucubrare ... incipiebat ... statim a nocte multa*, 'he combined ... amazing powers of concentration with the capacity to manage with the minimum of sleep; he began to work by lamplight, rising half-way through the night.'

⁵⁰ See Garcea-Lomanto 2004, 43 on the general agreement between Fronto and Gellius in their literary doctrine.

momentum (cf. e.g. Gell. 10, 25, 1; 11, 3, 1). Preparing Marcus for criticism on tiny linguistic details, Fronto jokingly admits that no-one has the right to correct Marcus given his high station—as opposed to people like Fronto, who are just the ‘slaves’ of those who can judge the elegance and taste of whomever they hear speak (4, 3, 6, p. 58,22f.):

nos uero, qui doctorum auribus seruituti seruiendae nosmet dedimus, necesse est tenuia quoque ista et minuta summa cum cura persequemur.

we, however, who have dedicated ourselves in dutiful service to the ears of the cultured must needs with the utmost care study these nice distinctions and minutiae.

In accordance with the statement that these studies involve ‘subtle’ and ‘slight’ matters (*tenuia ... et minuta*), Fronto insists that they should be pursued with scrupulous and utmost care (*scrupulosa et anxia cura*; cf. 4, 3, 3 [p. 57,19] *a quaerendis scrupulosius uerbis*). He appropriately names Cicero’s *magnitudo animi* as a likely reason why the orator was not interested in such *tenuia et minuta*, suggesting a difference in status between a lofty, elevated character and lesser, ‘down-to earth’ pursuits.⁵¹ Likewise, Fronto’s remark on *tenuia et minuta* as the appropriate task of those who are ‘slaves’ of cultivated ears suggests a similar contrast with the high position and wealth of Marcus. Thus, the discourse of self-deprecation points to a context of imperial hierarchy, and turns out to characterise the communication of the intellectual with the emperor.⁵²

Although Fronto tactically praises Marcus for his zeal in choosing words in this letter, it seems as if he subtly hints at a possible unwillingness of his pupil to spend much effort in such detailed studies (*tenuia ... et minuta*), an unwillingness which is more evident in other passages

⁵¹ For *tenuis* used of linguistic study cf. Quint. *inst.* 1, 4, 5 *qui hanc artem ut tenuem atque ieiunam cauillantur* (cf. 1, 4, 7 *hanc ... rerum tenuitatem*). Fronto seems to play with various meanings of *tenuis*, cf. *OLD* s.v. 9 ‘having little importance, trivial, slight’, 10 ‘inconsiderable in respect of wealth, etc. humble, poor’, 11 ‘fine in matters of sense, understanding etc., subtle’. For the second sense cf. Fronto, *epist. ad Ver.* 2, 17 p. 126,14f. *de sublimioribus magnifice, de tenuioribus palam dicere*.

⁵² For modest terms referring to Fronto’s teaching cf. also *de orat.* 1 p. 153,4 *pauca subnectam, fortasse inepta, iniqua, nam rusus faxo magistrum me experire*. See Curtius 1948, 92 on ‘affektierte Bescheidenheit’ in communication with the emperor (cf. Hor. *epist.* 2, 1, 258; Plin. *epist.* 10, 1); Valerius Maximus calls himself in his Preface *mea paruitas* in the dedication to Tiberius. Velleius Paterculus calls himself *mea mediocritas* in a military context where the focus is on his position in the hierarchy towards Augustus; Gellius uses the same phrase to refer to himself in 14, 2, 25. See below, p. 197 on parallels between the Prefaces of Pliny the Elder and Gellius regarding topics that are associated with the emperor as addressee.

from their correspondence.⁵³ In a telling passage from the *De Eloquentia* (2, 6 [p. 138,8f.]), Fronto points out to the busy emperor that for those in power, effective rule and authoritative government come down to words alone:

omnia ista profecto uerbis sunt ac litteris agenda. Non excoles igitur id quod tibi totiens tantisque in rebus uideas magno usui futurum? An nihil referre arbitraris, qualibus uerbis agas, quae non nisi uerbis agi possunt?

all these must assuredly be done by speech and writing: will you then not cultivate an art, which you see must be of great use to you so often and in matters of such moment? Or do you imagine that it makes no difference with what words you bring about what can only be brought about with words?

Fronto's rhetorical strategies in persuading Marcus Aurelius to study *tenuia et minuta* in order to achieve 'great things' places the discourse on the interplay between marginality and centrality in the very middle of imperial elite education. The parallels with Fronto invite us to view Gellius' programmatic concern with authority and his use of the marginality-centrality interplay in that same imperial context. Gellius reflects the terms belonging to the 'marginality' discourse in several passages of the *Noctes Atticae*,⁵⁴ but pays special homage to the Fronto-nian background of his programmatic aim of studying 'minutiae' in two chapters that feature Fronto himself:

13, 29, 6 *Hoc iudicium Frontonis, etiam in paruis minutisque uocabulis, non praetermittendum putaui, ne nos forte fugeret lateretque subtilior huiusmodi uerborum consideratio.*

This judgment of Fronto's, though relating to trifling and unimportant words, I thought I ought not to pass by, lest the somewhat subtle distinction between words of this kind should escape us.

⁵³ Cf. especially Fronto, *de eloq.* 1, 3 p. 134,7 *sed haec exempla fortasse contemnās*; 1, 4 p. 134,18f. *dic sodes hoc mihi: utrumne, tametsi sine ullo labore ac studio meo uerba mihi elegantiora ultro occurrerent, spernenda censes ac repudianda an cum labore quidem et studio inuestigare uerba elegantia prohibes...* 'tell me then, pray, whether in your opinion the choicest words must be disdained and rejected, even if they come to me of their own accord, without any toil and pursuit of mine? or, while forbidding the searching out of choice words with toil and eagerness ...'.

⁵⁴ Cf. Praef. 13 *quod erunt autem in his commentariis pauca quaedam scrupulosa et anxia ...*; 16 *minutae istae admonitiones et pauillulae*; 11, 3, 1 *res eiusmodi paruas quidem minutasque et hominibus non bene eruditis aspernabiles*; 13, 31, 15 *quid significet caninum prandium, rem leuiculam, diu et anxie quaesiuius*; 18, 15 tit. *quod M. Varro in herois uersibus obseruauerit rem nimis anxiae et curiosae obseruationis*. Compare the *lector scrupulosus* addressed by Apuleius (*Met.* 9, 30, 1).

19, 8, 2 *ueluti fuit illa quodam die sermocinatio illius, leui quidem de re, sed a Latinae tamen linguae studio non abhorrens...*

an example is the following little talk of his, held one day on a trivial subject, it is true, but yet not without importance for the study of the Latin language ...

With these programmatic remarks, Gellius presents his own teaching not only in the light of Fronto's authority, but he also relates the presentation of 'small trivial matters' to Fronto's teaching, which was a protreptic to study ancient authors addressed to members of the imperial court, especially Marcus Aurelius. Thus, the apparently apologising *etiam in paruis minutisque uocabulis* turns out to be a statement of authority, an authority that Gellius wishes to place on a par with that of Fronto, the teacher of *tenuia* and *minuta*.

'Gellius Menippeus': emulating Fronto as arbiter of taste

In *Noctes Atticae* 13, 29, a passage from Claudius Quadrigarius' *Annals* is read in which the historian describes a multitude gathering at the Capitol with the words *cum mortalibus multis* ('with many mortals'). One of the intellectuals present, introduced as 'a man not without learning' (*cuidam haut sane uiro indocto*), finds fault with the expression *mortalibus multis* instead of *hominibus multis* ('many people'), stating that in work of history this word choice was 'foolish and frigid, and savoured too much of poetry' (13, 29, 2 *inepte frigideque ... nimisque id poetice*).

Fronto apparently responds in a calm and friendly manner, but he leaves no doubt that he immediately exposes the man's inferior taste.⁵⁵ Since the man does not appreciate the *auctoritas* of one of Fronto's—read: Gellius'—favourite writers, he evidently lacks *iudicium*, which is a key-word of this chapter. The Gellian Fronto describes his own *iudicium* in a sentence that refers to his love of early authors, and in particular for Quadrigarius (13, 29, 3). However, from Fronto's correspondence it does not appear that Quadrigarius was one of his favourite authors. Gellius in fact "presents his own learning in the great man's name" (Holford-Strevens 2003, 138): judging from the writings of Fronto and Gellius, it is rather Gellius who admires Quadrigarius and Varro (13, 29, 5).

⁵⁵ Note the subtle blow in 13, 29, 2 *aliarum homo rerum iudicii elegantissimi*, 'a man of most refined taste in other matters'.

The scene ends with a kind of *praeteritio*,⁵⁶ in which Gellius refers to the ‘marginality-centrality’ topic, thus highlighting the Frontonian background of his use of that topic. Indirectly, the *praeteritio* programmatically refers to all the chapters of *the Noctes Atticae* where Gellius pursues a teaching in ‘just trifling words’, where *iudicium* in choosing those words is of crucial importance (13, 29, 6):

Hoc iudicium Frontonis, etiam in parvis minutisque uocabulis, non praetermittendum putavi, ne nos forte fugeret lateretque subtilior huiusmodi uerborum consideratio.

This judgment of Fronto’s, though relating to trifling and unimportant words, I thought I ought not to pass by, lest the somewhat subtle distinction between words of this kind should escape us.

In the scene of chapter 13, 29, the central issue is *iudicium* in using words from ancient writers, and Gellius makes Fronto back up his statement with the proverbial title of a book from Varro’s Menippeans, Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον (‘Sweet oil in the lentil soup’). This book had the telling subtitle περὶ εὐκαιρίας (‘On appropriateness’), which is not mentioned explicitly by Fronto here, but probably did not require mentioning. In both his own writings and in the Gellian chapter, Fronto indeed emphasises the importance of ‘appropriateness’ in using words and expressions from ancient writers: they should only be used when the context and the sense require them.

In Gell. 13, 29, 5, Fronto’s warning that choice words should not be used with indiscretion corresponds with Fronto’s remark on *ineptia* in his programmatic letter 4, 3:

magnum in ea re periculum est, ne minus apte aut parum dilucide aut non satis decore, ut a semidocto, conlocetur,

there lies a great danger in the enterprise lest the word be applied unsuitably or with a want of clearness or a lack of refinement, as by the man of half-knowledge.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ For *non praetermittendum putavi* (13, 29, 6) cf. 4, 1, 20 *praeterea de penu adscribendum hoc etiam putavi*. The use of this form of ‘*praeteritio*’ (cf. Lausberg 882) suits the general tendency in Gellius to present things as unimportant in order to underline their importance. Cf. also 6, 17, 6–8 *mittamus ... praetermittamus*. Moreover, it likewise alludes to Frontonian teaching (Holford-Strevens 2003, 124 with n. 125), cf. *epist. ad Anton.* 1, 2, 11–12. Evidently, *praeteritio* is one of the rhetorical figures (σχήματα) that Marcus Aurelius used in a speech in the Senate, for which Fronto praises him (1, 2, 6 p. 89,4 *ita orationem tuam figurasti, quam figuram Graeci παρόλινον appellant, ut praetereundo tamen diceres et dicendo tamen praeterires*).

⁵⁷ For *minus apte* cf. Gell. 13, 29, 2 *inepte ... ineptum*, referring to the allegedly inappropriate use of *mortalibus multis* instead of *hominibus multis* by Quadrigarius. For *apte* as a

Fronto's warning to Marcus not to become a *semidoctus*—especially in the choice and arrangement of words—a warning which he prominently places at the opening of his letter,⁵⁸ highlights a number of chapters in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* in which such *semidocti* are unmasked. Gellius as satirist uses the adjective *semidoctus*, as could be expected, to expose *grammatici*.⁵⁹ As has been observed by scholars, Fronto's programmatic letter particularly forms an illuminating background for *Noctes Atticae* 11, 7, a warning chapter in which Gellius demonstrates how ὀψιμαθία ('late-gotten learning') can lead to an inappropriate parading of knowledge of ancient words, which become even more embarrassing as they take place in situations of Roman public life, for example in court.⁶⁰

Thus, the subtle but crucial distinction between appropriate and inappropriate use of words from the admired *ueteres* is presented in 13, 29 as an aspect of Gellius' cultural programme that can be viewed in the light of Frontonian teaching. If we place Gellius' educational programme in the same context as Fronto's letters, as we have done above, his warning tone regarding those who are too busy to imbibe culture (cf. Praef. 19–20), or begin their literary studies too late, largely overlaps with Fronto's protreptic concerns with a busy Marcus, whom he has to persuade to pursue 'small trifles' in order to achieve great things. It seems that Gellius' programmatic concerns are largely parallel to those of the man who once taught the future emperor.

Yet, Gellius' homage to Fronto's authority, including the allusion to the marginality-centrality topic and his modest self-presentation, introduces a shift of emphasis to the Varronian, or even Menippean roots of Gellius' intellectual outlook. Gellius modifies the setting enlivened by Fronto's authority by a programmatic reference to Varro's Menip-

term of stylistic criticism related to the Varronian proverb in Gell. 13, 29, 5 see below, n. 65.

⁵⁸ Cf. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 3, 1 *omnium artium, ut ego arbitror, imperitum et indoctum omnino esse praestat quam semiperitum ac semidoctum*... 'in all arts I take it, total inexperience and ignorance are preferable to a semi-experience and a half-knowledge'.

⁵⁹ Cf. 15, 9, 6 *at ille semidoctus grammaticus*; 1, 7, 17 *ut uulgus semidoctum putat*; 16, 7, 13 *non genere feminino, ut isti nouiciū semidocti* (probably of *grammatici*); see Holford-Strevens 2003, 174 n. 11.

⁶⁰ For the connections between Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 3 and Gell. 11, 7 see Astarita 1993, 61–62; Holford-Strevens 2003, 222–225. For inappropriate use of archaic words see also Gell. 1, 10; for another example of ὀψιμαθία cf. 15, 30. For correct use of Latin as a test of authority in a court setting cf. 1, 22. On the figure of the pedant (*semidoctus*, ὀψιμαθής) in second-century intellectual life see Schmitz 1997, 146–152.

peans.⁶¹ Important here is Gellius' use of the *chreia*, an instructive anecdote which proves the wisdom of a proverbial saying to be a useful truth in a wider-ranging sense—in Gellius' case, the *chreia* could serve his programmatic concern for utility.

For Gellius, in the present *chreia* it was particularly useful to place the Menippean title τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον on the lips of the famous Fronto.⁶² It makes the portrayal of Fronto double-edged. On the one hand, his canonical reputation and his teaching served as a concrete authoritative support for the validity of Varro's proverbial saying. Gellius' *chreia* commemorates Fronto as authority on ancient writers, a 'living example' of the judgment in words that in Gellius' cultural programme singles out the true Roman intellectual. On the other hand, by making him quote Varronian wisdom, Gellius immortalises Fronto as an arbiter of taste, but implicitly lays claim to greater fame, since Varro is more to his and less to the 'real' Fronto's taste. As a result, the reader is invited to judge Fronto's judgment too.

As we have observed, the proverb τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον is (most probably) the title of one of the books from Varro's *Menippean Satires* (frg. 549–551 Astbury), with as subtitle περὶ εὐκαιρίας ('On appropriateness'). The title and the subtitle speak about congruity, doing the thing that the occasion or the moment requires: putting sweet, expensive perfume on lentils is incongruous and inappropriate. The Latin counterpart of εὐκαιρία is *opportunitas*; Gellius seems to transfer this notion, which is elsewhere used in a philosophical context,⁶³ to a stylistic level, following the example of Varro himself.⁶⁴ It seems that Fronto is talking about

⁶¹ The book with the proverbial title seems to have been regarded as a Menippean book *par excellence*; cf. Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 4, 160c), who quotes the same proverb with a reference to Varro's nickname 'The Menippean'. In Latin grammatical texts, Varro was sometimes referred to as *Menippeus*, cf. e.g. Char. *gramm.* I, 188, 8; Diom. 371, 26 (see Coffey 1989, 256 n. 38; more examples in Relihan 1993, 222 f. n. 2). Probus on Verg. *eccl.* 6, 31 explains that Varro was called *Menippeus* because of the intellectual connection (*a societate ingenii*) with his example Menippus.

⁶² For another example in which Gellius makes Fronto refer to the *auctoritas* of Varro cf. 19, 10, 10 "Itane ... magister, dehoneſtum tibi deculpatumque hoc uerbum uidetur, quo et M. Cato et M. Varro et pleraque aetas ſuperior ut neceſſario et Latino uſi ſunt?" "Master, does this word ſeem to you ſo degraded and utterly faulty, when even Marcus Cato and Marcus Varro, and the early writers in general, have uſed it as neceſſary and as good Latin?"

⁶³ See Cèbe, vol. 13, p. 2048f.; Coffey 1989, 155 "... a ſecond title that is philoſophically eſoteric, περὶ εὐκαιρίας ('On the proper occaſion for virtue'), a technical term of Stoicism".

⁶⁴ See Cèbe, vol. 13, 2048 with n. 5: "dans cette ſatire, l'écrivain blâmait donc bien l'inadaptation du ſtyle au ſujet", quoting L. Dechamps, 'L'attitude de Varron face à la

εὐκαιρία / *opportunitas* in a stylistic sense, appropriateness in the choice of words, which is fully dependent upon circumstances, upon who is speaking, in what kind of situation, and with what kind of person (depending on rank, status, power etc.).⁶⁵

The Varronian fragments transmitted under the title Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύθον illustrate such a stylistic interpretation of the proverb, and hence shed light on the programmatic concern in Gellius' work with the appropriate use of words from ancient writers, and the taste that is a *conditio sine qua non* for assessing this appropriateness. Fragment 551 provides an illuminating commentary on Gellius' cultural-educational programme as a whole, including its 'Frontonian' dimension:

legendo autem et scribendo uitam procudito

'but through reading and writing you have to fashion your life'

Varro's moral-didactic message here is that cultivating literature means guarding yourself against ἀκαιρία, which coincides with the lack of taste, tact, and judgment that makes *semidocti* and 'latecomers in learning' lose their face in numerous chapters in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*.

A lack of stylistic moderation seems to be the topic of fragment 550, where this excessiveness is referred to in terms of someone's 'puerility' (*tu quidem ut facias censeo, quoniam tu quoque adhuc adolescentiaris*, 'I advise you in any case to do it, because you too still behave in a youthful manner').⁶⁶ Here Varro probably alludes to the notion of 'puerility of style', which was not only condemned in ancient rhetoric,⁶⁷ but also formed a topic of criticism in the stylistic debates of Roman satire,

rhétorique dans les Satires Ménippées', in: *Mélanges B. Riposati*, vol. I, Rieti 1979, 156 (non vidi).

⁶⁵ For Fronto's reference to εὐκαιρία in Gell. 13, 29, 5 cf. Ps. Dion. Hal. *ars* 10 (p. 366,12f.) τὸν καιρὸν μὴ προσπιθέντα; see Schmitz 1997, 151. On καιρός and εὐκαιρία see Norden, *Kleine Schriften*, 43, who discusses Varro's satire, and compares Gellius' 'version' of the Varronian εὐκαιρία—i.e. 'de λόγου εὐκαιρία'—with e.g. Aristot. *Rhet.* 3, 7, 8 τὸ δ' εὐκαιρῶς ἢ μὴ εὐκαιρῶς χρῆσθαι κοινὸν ἀπαντῶν τῶν εἰδῶν ἐστίν, 'the opportune or inopportune use of these devices applies to all species of rhetoric' (on propriety in style—style should be used in proportion with the subject matter); cf. also Dion. Hal. *de comp. verb.* 12. Roman rhetoric speaks of *aptum*, cf. Cic. *de orat.* 3, 210–212 (cf. also 3, 37) or *decorum* (πρέπον), cf. *orat.* 70. Cf. also Quint. *inst.* 1, 5, 1; 1, 1, 1; 11, 3, 30.

⁶⁶ Perhaps this refers to inappropriate talking (some read *taceas* for *facias*). Cf. the *loquax conuiuium* in Apul. *met.* 1, 26, recalling Varro *Men.* 336 *nec loquaces ... conuiuias nec mutos legere oportet* (Gell. 13, 11, 3).

⁶⁷ Cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4, 23, 32; Ps. Long. *de subl.* 3, 4 τὸ μειρακῶδες; Norden, *Kleine Schriften*, 97 also compares Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 8 (on the sophist Philagrus); Phot. *Bibl.* 65 νεανική ἀπειροκαλία (on the style of Theophylactus), and Phot. *Bibl.* 65 [27a], criticising

especially Lucilius. Gellius adds himself to the company of the Roman satirists in sharing their concern for stylistic propriety in Latin, confirming his programmatic connection with Roman Satire not only through the prominent use of the Varronian proverb in 13, 29, 5, put in the mouth of Fronto, but also through his quotation of Lucilius' witty attack on 'puerile' stylistic excess in 18, 8.⁶⁸

The Varronian fragment 549, although it allows several interpretations, seems to scorn someone who has become devoid of taste as a result of his excessive lifestyle (gluttony), or is unable to appreciate the taste of the costly fish due to his age or bad health—the point seems to be, given the title Τὸ ἐπὶ τῇ φακῇ μύρον, that it does not make sense to offer someone choice food if he lacks the taste to appreciate it (cf. 'Pearls before Swine'). This is a telling comment on the type of intellectual subtly mocked by Fronto in Gell. 13, 29, 2, who lacks the *iudicium* to recognise the value of a great Roman writer like Quadrigarius.⁶⁹

Thus, the quotations from Varro's Menippeans and Lucilius' satires point to a larger moral-didactic concern behind the *Noctes Atticae*. Supported by the authority of these Roman satirists, Gellius scorns the inept and childish use of stylistic ornaments or choice words manifested by those who lack taste, *apirocali*.⁷⁰ In his satirical exposures of gram-

the puerility and excessiveness of style of bishop Gelasius, although he did add an apology for his ἀκαρολογία to his writings.

⁶⁸ Cf. 18, 8 tit. 'Ὁμοιοτέλευτα et ὁμοιόπτωτα *atque alia id genus, quae ornamenta orationis putantur, inepta esse et puerilia Lucilii quoque uersibus declarari*, 'that ὁμοιοτέλευτα, ὁμοιόπτωτα, and other devices of the kind which are considered ornaments of style, are silly and puerile, is indicated among other places, in some verses of Lucilius'. 18, 8, 1 'Ὁμοιοτέλευτα et ἰσοκατάληκτα et πάρισα et ὁμοιόπτωτα *ceteraque huiusmodi scitamenta, quae isti apirocali, qui se Isocratis uideri uolunt, in conlocandis uerbis immodice faciunt et rancide, quam sint insubida et inertia et puerilia, facetissime hercle significat in quinto saturarum Lucilius*, 'Lucilius in the fifth book of his satires shows, and indeed most wittily, how silly, useless, and puerile are 'rhyming words', 'words of the same sound', 'words exactly balanced', or 'words of the same case', and other niceties of that kind which those foolish pedants who wish to appear to followers of Isocrates use in their compositions without moderation or taste.' For *rancide* as a stylistic term from Roman satire, used by Gellius and Apuleius see Holford-Strevens 2003, 61 n. 78; GCA 2007, 472–474.

⁶⁹ Varro *Men.* 549 *nec multinummus piscis ex salo captus, / helops neque ostrea illa magna ꞑcaptaꞑ / quiuit palatum suscitare*, 'nor the expensive fish, the helops caught in the sea, nor that famous big ... could stimulate his palate'. Compare the contrast in Apul. *Met.* between 'fish-loving' gourmand Lucius and the tasteless old man Milo, who does not serve fish but merely talk at his dinner table (1, 24–26).

⁷⁰ For the *apirocalus* (ἀπειρόκαλος) cf. also 11, 7, 7; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 224 with n. 138, pointing out that this term of critical disapprobation is also used of ill-judged Atticizing at Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 16 p. 503.

marians who are *semidocti* and latecomers in learning we can hear the voice of Gellius as a satirist, who critically responds to the deterioration of standards in contemporary society. He employs (Menippean) satire to present *Noctes Atticae* as the true source of canonical authority, a literary storehouse preserving the ‘small things’ that lead to ‘great things’.

Gellius’ ‘Menippean’ concern with *εὐκαιρία* and *ἀκαιρία* firmly places his work in the literary discourse of his age—think for example of the Prologue to Apuleius’ *Metamorphoses*, in which the speaker apologises beforehand for offending his audience’s ears through the inappropriate, exaggerated nature of his rhetoric.⁷¹ With a similar sense of self-irony, Gellius represents himself as a young student with a ‘puerile’ interest in (Greek) rhetorical ornamentation in 17, 20, 4, which earns him the nickname *rhetoriscus* (‘young rhetorician’) in class.⁷² Both Lucius, called *scholasticus* in *Met.* 2, 10, 2, and Gellius in the role of his younger self (‘*rhetoriscus*’) are represented, in a way, as enthusiastic but immature students (cf. Gell. 15, 9, 7), which is also reflected on a stylistic level.⁷³ Gellius and Apuleius employ similar forms of fictionalised ‘autobiography’, representing a former ‘I’-figure who embodies controversial intellectual tendencies (e.g. infatuation with rhetoric or with charismatic authority figures) which belong to the topics of contemporary moral and intellectual satire.

Thus, the shorter and longer ‘autobiographical’ *chreiai* and anecdotes from *Noctes Atticae* can be viewed as part of a larger pattern of embedding ‘truth’ in ‘fiction’ in contemporary literature, where fictional or fictionalised narrative is employed to express a satirical response to the cultural issues and sensitivities of the age.⁷⁴ The Menippean element of

⁷¹ Apul. *Met.* 1, 1, 4–6. For the advice to apologise in anticipation for every stylistic exaggeration or daring innovation see Aristot. *Rhet.* 3, 7, 9 ἄκος δ’ ἐπὶ πάσῃ ὑπερβολῇ τὸ θρυλούμενον· δεῖ γὰρ αὐτὸν αὐτῷ προεπιλήπτειν· δοκεῖ γὰρ ἀληθὲς εἶναι, ἐπεὶ οὐ λανθάνει γε ὃ ποιεῖ τὸν λέγοντα; Quint. *inst.* 8, 3, 37. See for another example above, n. 67.

⁷² For the contemporary fashion, alluded to by Taurus’ remark, of Roman students to frequent Greek schools of rhetoric in Greece see Gamberale 1996, 63.

⁷³ Russell on Ps. Longin. *subl.* 3, 4 τὸ δὲ μειρακιῶδες compares the similar derogatory sense of *scholasticus* (cf. Philod. *rhet.* 2, 265 Sudhaus) on a stylistic level. Making the impression of a *scholasticus* is speaking like someone who reveals his inexperience with the everyday, practical world of the forum by an excessive use of the elevated diction cultivated in the schools (see Kaster on Suet. *gramm.* 30, 2, on Albucius Silus, who made strained efforts to avoid this impression by speaking *sordide*).

⁷⁴ Gellius’ *Attic Nights* can be seen in the same light as other imperial texts that use ‘truth embedded in fiction’ for the purpose of telling a greater truth; compare Francis 1998 on Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius*.

Gellius' fictionalised anecdotes invite the reader to question the intellectual pretensions of its protagonists, including those of celebrities like Fronto. Gellius represents Fronto's charismatic authority as unstable, showing a development from success to failure, a development that is closely connected to Fronto's literary *iudicium* on the authoritative writers from the past.

Against this background, we can view Gellius' self-effacing role of the young *sectator* who applauds his role-model's teaching as part of his satirical strategy, as a form of *dissimulatio* that turns out to mock and criticise in a subtle way, without attacking openly. In the next chapter, we will see how this ironical self-presentation makes part of a pattern of role-reversals, which implicitly invite the reader to recognise true authority in the pupil as opposed to the master.

CHAPTER THREE

SATURNALIAN LICENCE AND SOCRATIC IRONY

Legitimate space for jest: Gellius as sectator

As we have seen in the previous chapter, Gellius' mock-modest or ironic self-deprecation can be viewed in the light of a subtle rhetorical strategy (*dissimulatio*), used by him to establish himself as cultural authority in an imperial context. In a similar fashion, the present section will focus on his choice to present himself in two roles: on the one hand as the young Gellius, *sectator* of famous intellectuals in both Rome and Greece, and on the other as Aulus Gellius in his role of *auctor*, writer of the *Noctes Atticae*. Underlying this strategy is a movement from 'marginality' to 'centrality' that is similar to the one we have observed above, illustrated by the interplay between 'trivial' details and themes of a larger cultural significance.

In the dynamics of his dual self-presentation, we may observe a shift in authority that resembles the process in his remembrance of Fronto by means of *chreiai* that both acknowledged and satirised his authority. Throughout the *Noctes*, he employs his scrutiny of intellectual performance to demonstrate where true authority lies. Remembering his student days, he has composed a number of set-pieces of satirical exposure in which humour and erudition join forces to instruct the reader in the spirit of Gellius' cultural programme. Whereas previous scholarship focused on the question whether these vignettes convey accurate (auto-)biographical information, it seems more adequate to investigate them as a form of literary self-fashioning, which employs recognisable roles and repertoires, including a degree of fictionality.¹ As we have seen, Gellius and Apuleius (in the *Metamorphoses*) move on common ground in creating an imaginary world where the vicissitudes of a young intellectual are cast in the form of a first person narrative;

¹ On the fictionality inherent in the literary role of the person who reproduces conversations at which he was present see Mayer on Tac. *dial.* 1, 2 *quos ... iuuenis admodum audiui*.

both construct a role of a ‘younger self’ that reflects aspects of the Antonine intellectual life.

The two roles adopted by Gellius in the *Noctes* seem clearly demarcated by the period of time of about 30–40 years between his days as a student, in the 140s, and the time of the general distribution of the *Noctes* (around 180). This demarcation creates a functional disjunction between himself as a mature Roman citizen and his younger self—the role of the *adulescens* as the observer of famous intellectuals, in the tradition of Tacitus’ *Dialogus de Oratoribus*.² The difference in age entails one in status and character, and this enables Gellius as an author to project onto the role of his younger self an unrestrained zeal for culture, such as an established Roman citizen should be careful to display in a world that ranked the *negotia* of public life above everything. Gellius stages himself in the role of student, characterised by an adolescent enthusiasm for intellectual activities that for Gellius as an author may be open to criticism.

Thus, he stereotypes himself in his role of *sectator* as a youthful pursuer of rhetorical and stylistic brilliance (17, 20, 4 *rhetorice*) or as an over-enthusiastic Academic disputer (15, 9).³ Moreover, he represents himself as being under the spell of charismatic intellectuals like Favorinus (e.g. 16, 3, 1) and Herodes Atticus (e.g. 1, 2, 1), who both attracted many followers, but made themselves highly controversial at the same time by their immoderate intellectual and political ambitions.

By this ‘politics of stereotyping’, Gellius creates a legitimate space within his Roman literary world, where in a kind of exploration of the boundaries of elite Roman identity, staged in an educational setting, a degree of allowance is made for cultural exuberance. For example, Gellius shows that in his student days he relished sophisms (*sophismata*)

² For the *adulescens* as *sectator* cf. Tac. *dial.* 2, 1 *quos ego ... non modo in iudiciis studiose audiebam, sed domi quoque et in publico assectabar mira studiorum cupiditate et quodam ardore iuuenili*, ‘being passionately fond of rhetorical studies, and fixed with youthful enthusiasm, I made a practice not only of listening attentively to their pleadings in court, but also of attaching myself to them at their homes and attending them out of doors’.

³ For the connection between being an *adulescens* and unbridled intellectual performance cf. 9, 15, 4 *introit adulescens et praefatur arrogantius et elatius quam aetatem eius decebat*; cf. also the Stoic *adulescens* in 1, 2. For positive examples cf. 5, 10, 5; 19, 9, 1. Gellius refers to himself as *adulescens* in 7, 6, 12; 13, 18, 3 (both as *sectator* of Sidonius Apollinaris; cf. *adulescentuli* in 18, 4, 1) and in 14, 2, 1; cf. 20, 10, 2 (a famous *grammaticus* addresses Gellius) *tum ille me despiciens: ‘aut erras’, inquit, ‘adulescens, aut ludis’*, ‘but he, looking scornfully at me, said: ‘either you are making a mistake, youngster, or you are jesting’.

as an intellectual pastime with his Roman fellow students, during the Saturnalia in Athens (18, 2; 18, 13; cf. 7, 13, 2 and 7; 16, 2, 10). In his role of author, however, Gellius warns that by pursuing too much the subtleties of logic a *discendi uoluptas insatiabilis* (16, 8, 16) can be kindled, which brings the risk of growing old among the ‘rocks of the Sirens’.

Moreover, the marginal role of the young, playful intellectual allows Gellius to play another literary role, that of the ‘jester’, whose critical and witty observations of various intellectuals serve his ‘authorising humour’.⁴ In the spirit of the *chreia*-tradition about philosophers and wise men that we also see exemplified in Lucian, especially the *Demonax*, Gellius incorporates a Cynic mode of ‘serious jesting’ in his anecdotes that possibly show an indebtedness to Varro’s Menippean Satires, which he twice calls ‘Cynic satires’ (2, 18, 7; 13, 31, 1).⁵ Yet, as Marache has argued (1953, 90–93),⁶ Gellius’ use of the diatribe and the *chreia* is also indebted to other writers who worked in the tradition of the Cynic diatribe, such as Epictetus (cf. *Noctes Atticae* 17, 19, 4), Plutarch, Musonius, and Favorinus.

That Cynic jest forms an integral part of the programme of Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*, including the title and his functional role as young student, is suggested in 18, 13, where Gellius-*auctor* concludes his recollections of symposiastic revelling in sophisms during the Saturnalia in Athens with a *chreia* about Diogenes refuting a sophism.⁷ The setting of the Saturnalia, combined with the *convivium* as typical site of verbal licence and experiment,⁸ additionally underlines the programmatic

⁴ For Cynic wit as a form of ‘authorising humour’ see Bracht Branham 1994. Bracht Branham (34) points out that ancient critics were fully aware of the importance of the rhetoric of humour, citing Demetrius for the technique of introducing humour in an otherwise non-comic context (*On Style* 134–135) and for his observations on the complexity of effect in Cynic *chreiai* (259–261), employing a wit which is forceful through the point made in its hidden meaning (ἡ κευθομένη ἔμφασις). Demetrius compares the whole ‘genre’ (εἶδος) of Cynic discourse to a dog that wags its tail and bites at the same time (261); it produces laughter (γέλᾳται), astonishment (θαυμάζεται), and has a gentle bite (ὑποδάκνει, 260).

⁵ Strabo (16, 2, 29 Radt) applied the term σπουδογέλοιος, ‘seriocomic performer’, to Menippus; see above, p. 61 n. 61 on Varro’s nickname *Menippeus*.

⁶ See also Pausch 2004, 154 with n. 39.

⁷ On the Saturnalia as a context for ‘jokes’ (*ioci*) see Nauta 2002, 166–172.

⁸ On the *convivium* as a site of licence, humour, and experiment see Gowers 1993, 24–32. D’Arms 1990 points out the tension between two contrasting aspects of the symposium, on the one hand the relaxation of social barriers and the liberty to speak one’s mind, and on the other hand the confirmation of hierarchical structures; see

nature of Cynic wit in this chapter with regard to the *Noctes Atticae* as a whole.⁹ Miscellaneous works that are comparable to *Noctes Atticae* often have ‘convivial’ titles, such as Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*;¹⁰ in Gellius’ case, his ‘nights spent in *Attica*’ may contain a secondary allusion to the Saturnalian context of his ‘Cynic’/‘Menippean’ wit. On a symbolical or metaliterary level, the topics of *Noctes Atticae* can be seen as Gellius’ ‘contributions’ (*symbolae*), and ‘sweetmeats’ (τραγημάτια) for a ‘Saturnalian dinner’ (cf. 7, 13, 12).¹¹

‘Cynic’ humour is not an isolated technique of wit in the *Noctes Atticae*, and is not only present when Cynic philosophers or *conuiuia* are explicitly mentioned. Gellius’ ‘rhetoric of humour’ unfolds itself as a complex strategy that combines the pointed anecdote (*chreia*) and verbal licence (*parrhesia*) of Cynic jest with the subtle, indirect humour and exposure in a dialogue (*sermones*) belonging to Socratic irony (*dissimulatio*).¹² Moreover, it also includes other satirical ‘modes’, such as that of Aristophanic comedy (cf. Praef. 21) and Roman verse satire (Lucilius).

As we will see, Gellius’ satirical scenes contain various levels of exposure at the same time: at one level, there are the patent victims of mockery, who are usually anonymous grammarians or other fictional boastful pseudo-intellectuals, and appear as caricatural buffoon-like figures. At another level, a subtle strategy of sophisticated mockery is employed, which alludes in a more implicit way to the reputations of famous intellectuals like Fronto, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus, who stood higher in the social hierarchy than Gellius.

also Nauta 2002, 173–174. For slander and ridicule during the symposium cf. Plutarch, *quaestiones conuiuiales* (2, 1, 4, *Mor.* 631c).

⁹ Cf. Demetr. *de elocut.* 170 for the context of feasts and carousals for the κυνικός τρόπος, the ‘Cynic manner’. Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 14, 629f.) mentions Menippus as the writer of a *Symposium*, alluding to a largely lost Cynic symposium tradition (see Anderson 2000, 318).

¹⁰ Compare the titles referring to food in Gellius’ *Praefatio* (6 Ἀμαλθείας Κέρας, 8 Πάγκαρον; see Gowers 1993, 111 with n. 9).

¹¹ The ingredients of the dinner during the Saturnalia (18, 2) sum up the programme of the *Noctes Atticae*: ‘an obscure saying of some early poet, amusing rather than perplexing; some point in ancient history; the correction of some tenet of philosophy which was commonly misinterpreted; the solution of some sophistical catch; the investigation of a rare and unusual word, or of an obscure use of the tense of a verb of plain meaning’.

¹² ‘Socratic’ and ‘Cynic’ modes often go hand in hand and sometimes are hard to distinguish; compare the frequent references to Socrates in Lucian’s *Demonax*; Gellius combines references to Socratic dialogue and Cynic satire in a chapter on the reputations of philosophers who had been slaves in the past (2, 18).

Scrutinising Socratic exposure

Gellius' rhetoric of humour goes hand in hand with the scrutiny of authority. For Gellius, becoming the *sectator* of an intellectual did not merely mean passing a selection to become member of his *secta* or *diatriba*,¹³ but also an active process on the pupil's part of selecting a master who could meet his approval.¹⁴ Hence, we can view *Noctes Atticae* as the literary result of a process that begins with the search for good teachers. Of particular importance in Gellius' scrutiny of his teachers are those qualities which in the programmatic context of the *Noctes Atticae* are a source of authority. Eventually, these are the qualities embodied by Gellius himself in his role of *auctor*, who gives his readers the supreme educational *exemplum* by his sophisticated self-presentation. As we have observed above, (Socratic) irony and self-irony are such important qualities. Socratic irony not only unmasks sham authority in others: by its faculty to assess authority in others it is indicative of its own authority. Given the interrelatedness of Gellius-*sectator* and -*auctor*, we will investigate how the young Gellius' interest in forms of irony and satire affects his authorial strategies of articulating authority.

He explicitly connects his scrutiny of possible teachers as an *adulescentulus* with the assessment of this important quality in 18, 4, 1:

Cf. 18, 4, 1 *Cum iam adulescentuli Romae praetextam et puerilem togam mutassemus magistrosque tunc nobis nosmet ipsi exploratiores quaereremus, in Sandaliario forte apud librarios fuimus, cum ibi in multorum hominum coetu Apollinaris Sulpicius, uir in memoria nostra praeter alios doctus, iactatorem quempiam et uenditorem Sallustianae lectionis inrisit inluditque genere illo facetissimae dissimulationis, qua Socrates ad sophistas utebatur.*

When I was already a young man at Rome, having laid aside the purple-bordered toga of boyhood, and was on my account seeking masters of deeper knowledge, I happened to be with the booksellers in Shoemakers' Street at the time when Sulpicius Apollinaris, the most learned man of all within my memory, in the presence of a large gathering made fun of a boastful fellow who was parading his reading of Sallust, and turned him into ridicule with that kind of most witty irony which Socrates used against the sophists.

¹³ Cf. 17, 20, 4 *recens in diatribam acceptum*.

¹⁴ Compare the contrast drawn by Taurus between Pythagoras' procedure of selecting pupils in the past and the situation of the present, in which new students of philosophy 'even lay down the law as to how they are to be taught philosophy' (1, 9, 8 *legem ... dant*). As in 17, 20, Taurus seems to allude to the confident attitude of Roman students like Gellius (cf. 7, 10, 5).

The chapter illustrates the Gellian agenda behind Apollinaris' Socratic irony by its connection of humour and exposure (cf. 18, 4, 1 *inrisit inlusitque*; cf. 18, 4, 9 *plane inludi*) with programmatic teaching on the meaning of words.¹⁵ The faking of a certain hierarchy (or the lack of it), while concealing a true hierarchy between the interlocutors,¹⁶ is an important aspect of the humorous potential of *dissimulatio*. Apollinaris puts this aspect into practice by pretending to admire the learning of the self-advertising expert.¹⁷

The ironic strategy to conceal the true hierarchy between the two speakers is at the same time a way to draw attention to it, and opens up possibilities for further comedy and ridicule, which is indicated by the superlative *facetissimae* that governs *dissimulationis* (18, 4, 1)—significantly, Gellius uses the superlative elsewhere twice of the comic poet Aristophanes (1, 15, 19; 13, 25, 7) and once (as adverb) of the satirist Lucilius (18, 8, 1), both in contexts of exposure and derision. Apollinaris—and behind him, Gellius—*auctor*—fully exploits this humorous potential by making a fool of the would-be Sallustian scholar in a discussion of words denoting fools, focused on the phrase *incertum, stolidior an uanior* from Sallust, far from randomly chosen by Apollinaris. Through his vivid depiction of the man's physiognomic characteristics in his reply to Apollinaris, Gellius already exposes him to the reader as a fool from the comic stage (18, 4, 6 *tum ille rictu oris labearumque ductu contemni a se ostendens et rem de qua quaeretur et hominem ipsum qui quaereret*, 'then the other, showing by a grin and a grimace that he despised both the subject of the inquiry and the questioner himself').¹⁸

Apollinaris' *facetissima dissimulatio* adds a further dimension to the comedy, in the spirit of the series of verbal insults from Aristophanes, the *facetissimus poeta*.¹⁹ Within the context of this exposure-scene, the

¹⁵ Significantly, Quintilian discusses *dissimulatio* in the context of methods of arousing laughter; cf. *inst.* 6, 3, 85 *plurimus autem circa simulationem et dissimulationem risus est*, 'Simulation and Dissimulation, however, are the greatest sources of laughter'.

¹⁶ See Garcea 1998, 388f. on the *ostentative Gleichstellung des Gesprächspartners*, where Socrates feigns ignorance and the desire to learn something from his interlocutor, placing himself, as if, on his level, whereas in the unstated hierarchy Socrates is the superior authority.

¹⁷ Cf. 18, 4, 2 *amplecti uenerarique se doctrinas illius dicens*, 'pretending to embrace and venerate his learning'.

¹⁸ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 11, 3, 80–81 on the contemptuous nature of showing contempt and derision with the lips (and the nose); compare the depiction of the sceptical travelling companion in Apul. *met.* 1, 2, 5 and see GCA 2007, 107 ad loc.

¹⁹ Cf. 1, 15, 19 *huiusmodi autem loquacitatem uerborumque turbam magnitudine inani uastam*

elaborate list of synonyms of *uanus* and *stolidus* (18, 4, 10)—some of which are called less appropriate semantically, but are nonetheless included to add to the verbal force—seems to point to the type embodied by this boastful Sallustian scholar.²⁰ The phrase *leuia inaniaque pro grauibus et ueris astutissime componentes* ('those who cleverly devised light and empty statements in the guise of true and earnest ones') sounds as direct mockery of this would-be scholar's self-important pose.²¹ Hence, Apollinaris' learned lexical list, reproduced by Gellius, gains on a different level the connotations of a powerful verbal cannonade that scores the *iactator uanus et stolidus* of this chapter, who in the meantime has left the stage. Moreover, the list of insults includes two Greek words that recall Aristophanic verbal abuse, one of them a typical insult of rivals.²²

Thus, studying Sallustian language becomes concomitant with scrutinising and exposing a sham Sallustian scholar, illustrating the reciprocal connection between learning and satire in Gellius' cultural programme. Socratic exposure, comic insult and Latin lexical teaching become mutually functional, as the fool of the scene is 'visualised' as a character type who represents the semantic range of *stolidus* and *uanus* in a living form.²³ Moreover, the chapter reflects how satirical modes

*facetissimus poeta Aristophanes insignibus uocabulis denotauit in his uersibus: Ἀνθρώπον ἀγριο-
πόον, αὐθαδέστομον, / ἔχοντ' ἀχάλινον, ἀκρατές, ἀπύλωτον στόμα, / Ἀπεριλάλητον,
κομποφακελορρήμονα, 'finally, loquacity of this kind and a disorderly mass of empty
grandiloquence is scored with striking epithets by Aristophanes, wittiest of poets, in the
following lines: 'A stubborn-creating, stubborn-pulling fellow, / uncurbed, unfettered,
uncontrolled of speech, / unperiphrastic, bombastiloquent'.*

²⁰ 18, 4, 10 *Nos autem postea ex Apollinari didicimus, 'uanos' proprie dici, non ut uulgus diceret, desipientis aut hebetes aut ineptos, sed, ut ueterum doctissimi dixissent, mendaces et infidos et leuia inaniaque pro grauibus et ueris astutissime componentes; 'stolidos' autem uocari non tam stultos et excordes quam taetros et molestos et inlepidos, quos Graeci μοχθηροὺς καὶ φορτικοὺς dicerent, 'but we afterwards learned from Apollinaris that the term uani was properly applied, not as in common parlance to those who were foolish or dull or silly, but, as the most learned of the ancients had used them, to liars, deceivers, and those who cleverly devised light and empty statements in the guise of true and earnest ones. But that those were called stolidi who were not so much foolish and witless as austere, churlish and disagreeable, such men as the Greeks called μοχθηροί, 'ugly fellows', and φορτικοί, 'common', or 'vulgar folk'.*

²¹ For *pro* 'in the guise of' (contrast Rolfe: 'in place of') see OLD 9c.

²² For μοχθηρός ('rogue') as an Aristophanic term of abuse see Olson on *Ach.* 165f.; cf. *Ran.* 1011; *Plout.* 1003; φορτικός ('lowbrow') is the usual term of contempt used by a comic poet of his rivals (cf. *Vesp.* 66); see Dover on *Nub.* 524. See also above (p. 50f.) on comic lists as an articulation of power.

²³ For a different combination of teaching on words and the use of visualisation through a comic type (the *miser*) compare Gavius Bassus' etymological explanation of

of exposure (Socratic irony, Aristophanic comedy) point to a Roman context of intellectual rivalry, in which none of the participants shuns mockery of the other. But whereas the would-be scholar shows his contempt in a contemptuous way, through his distorted facial expression, Apollinaris—and behind him, Gellius-*auctor*—establish their authority by the sophisticated way of a *facetissima dissimulatio* (cf. 7, 11, 1).

However, there is more to it. The Sallustian word pair *stolidus* and *uanus* not only generally point to a Roman context of intellectual rivalry, but also to a particular intellectual's reputation. Unlike the Sallustian scholar in the Gellian chapter, this person is not anonymous: *stolidus* and *uanus* appear at the beginning of the *De orationibus* of Fronto, in a self-ironical reference to his own teaching (*de orat.* 1, p. 153.5f.):

neque ignoras omnem hanc magistrorum <manum> uanam propemodum et stolidam esse: parum eloquentiae e(t) sapientiae nihil.

and you are aware that all this company of masters is more or less futile and fatuous—little enough of eloquence and wisdom nought!

Fronto, who was an admirer of Sallust's style, appropriately mocked his own role as a teacher with a sentence coloured by Sallustian quotations.²⁴ Bearing in mind that in this Gellian chapter the central role is played by Sulpicius Apollinaris, whose authority Gellius favourably pits against Fronto's in 19, 13, it is attractive to see in Apollinaris' use of these Sallustian terms of abuse an oblique jibe at Fronto's reputation as a teacher. On the level of the author, we can compare other instances where Gellius admits forms of satire in his representation of Fronto's authority (see p. 41). In the present Gellian chapter, the original Frontonian self-irony expressed through the Sallustian words *stolidus* and *uanus* is transformed into an instrument of satirical exposure of sham authority. Without attacking him openly, Gellius implicates Fronto's authority in his satire by listing synonyms of two of his favourite words that turn out to be terms of abuse of a rival, in the spirit of Aristo-

parcus mocked by Favorinus in Gell. 3, 19 (contrast Gellius' praise of Bassus' etymology of *persona* in 5, 7).

²⁴ For Fronto's taste for Sallustian words and quotations in his correspondence see Holford-Strevens 2003, 134, 252; 259 n. 84; Gellius also quotes him frequently (248), speaks approvingly of his coinages (4, 15, 1) and defends his style against critics in 10, 26, 1 (but not in 2, 27; cf. 4, 15, 1). Van den Hout 1999, 358 rightly points out that Fronto with *uanam et stolidam* mocks himself, not philosophers or Seneca. The phrase '*parum eloquentiae e(t) sapientiae nihil*' refers to Sall. *Catil.* 5, 4 *satís eloquentiae, sapientiae parum*, which Gellius quotes in a chapter on empty locquacity (1, 15, 18).

phanic invective: ‘a liar, a deceiver, an impostor, a disagreeable fellow, a rogue, a boor ...’²⁵

In this chapter not only the Sallustian pseudo-expert is put to the test, but on a different level also Sulpicius Apollinaris himself as a possible candidate for the young Gellius, who is in search of *magistros ... exploratiores*. In chapter 19, 13, Gellius credits Apollinaris with the role of ‘charismatic authority’, who can call Fronto’s famous canonical authority into question; moreover, several times in the *Noctes*, Apollinaris is represented as participating in a Roman network of powerful people (see p. 42 n. 20). Significantly, Gellius represents himself in this chapter as having become Apollinaris’ pupil (18, 4, 10 *nos autem postea ex Apollinari didicimus*), and at the end of the chapter as an independent researcher, who integrates the learning originating from Apollinaris’ teaching in his *Attic Nights* (18, 4, 11; cf. 8, 14).

Thus, within the skilfully composed structure of one chapter, Gellius-author shows how the role of Gellius-*sectator*—the *adulescentulus* scrutinising Apollinaris’ *facetissima dissimulatio*—embodies a process of acquiring the intellectual skills that form the core of the pedagogical programme of Gellius-*auctor*, skills that include the satirical exposure of intellectual pretensions. More than once, we see that the ‘unstated hierarchy’ in Gellius’ chapters is different from the apparent, social hierarchy; in the spirit of his master Apollinaris, Gellius as author feigns admiration for intellectual celebrities, but on a different level establishes his own superior cultural authority.

Gellius’ chapters featuring Sulpicius Apollinaris generally evoke the image of the *adulescens* approving of the authority of this *grammaticus*. In two other chapters, where Gellius has become an adult or speaks in his voice of *auctor*, he expresses some disagreement with him (2, 16; 12, 13),²⁶ by which he asserts his independence as a cultural authority. In other cases, however, the young Gellius’ attitude towards *grammatici* is far less respectful. As a recurrent pattern, we see how Gellius overturns the master-pupil hierarchy and reveals where true authority lies.

²⁵ Although we do not have any other testimony to confirm this, it appears that Fronto’s *De orationibus* was already available when Gellius wrote this chapter, possibly as a result of his own research. For the malicious intention (*pessime*) with which Gellius appears to have been grubbing around for Fronto’s writings see above, p. 39 n. 8.

²⁶ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 85f. Although Apollinaris was a *grammaticus*, Gellius avoids referring to him by that word except by implication in 7, 6, 12 (Holford-Strevens 2003, 172). Most of Gellius’ explicit references to himself as ‘*adulescens*’ occur in chapters where he is Apollinaris’ *sectator* (cf. n. 3 above).

Instructive role-reversals: obnoxius (6, 17)

A good example of the way Gellius makes symbolic reversals in an imagined master-pupil relationship functional in his own educational programme is chapter 6, 17, in which a *grammaticus* mocks the young Gellius for pursuing trifles (*nugalia*) because of his inquiry into the sense and origin of the word *obnoxius* (see above, p. 46). The *grammaticus* retorts that it is pointless to investigate the self-evident meaning of this word, making a sarcastical remark (6, 17, 3) that obliquely undermines the programme of the *Noctes Atticae* by dismissing the necessity of nocturnal studies in the library.²⁷

Likewise, the teacher's poor excuse of being 'too busy' to answer Gellius' questions (6, 17, 12), recalls the type of man that Gellius excludes in his *Praefatio* (19) as unsuitable for his cultural programme: (qui) *intemperiarum negotiorumque pleni sunt, abeant a Noctibus his procul*, 'who ... are full of the turmoil of business affairs, let them hold wholly aloof from these *Nights*', is reflected in the teacher's description as 'a grammarian who was full of insolence and ignorance' (6, 17 tit. *grammatico insolentiarum et imperitiarum pleno*). Along these lines, Gellius' satirical exposure of this man as a fool (6, 17, 4 *homine stulto*; 6, 17, 12 *nebulo*) recalls his use of Aristophanic verse at the end of the *Praefatio* to emphasise his own 'ritual of exclusion', aimed against those he thinks unfit to participate in the cultural elite projected by his *Noctes Atticae*.

In this chapter we can observe a reciprocity in the accusations of ignorance and the mockery of intellectual approaches. The teacher, considered a nitwit by Gellius, associates Gellius' question with ignorance, since the meaning of *obnoxius* is evident to all (6, 17, 3):

Quis adeo tam linguae Latinae ignarus est, quin sciat eum dici 'obnoxium' cui quid ab eo, cui esse 'obnoxius' dicitur incommodari et noceri potest et qui habeat aliquem noxae, id est culpaе suae, consciū,

who, pray, is so ignorant of the Latin tongue as not to know that one is called *obnoxius* who can be inconvenienced or injured by another, to

²⁷ 6, 17, 2 *Obscuram ... sane rem quaeris multaque prorsus uigilia indagandam*, 'truly a difficult question is this that you ask, one demanding very many sleepless nights of investigation' (cf. Praef. 10; 19). For similar allusions to Gellius' programme by opponents which expose their lack of authority cf. 13, 31, 10, where the *grammaticus* tries to save his face when ridiculed for badly reciting a satire of Varro: *uides ... oculos meos aegros adsiduisque lucubrationibus prope iam perditos*, 'you see that my eyes are weak and almost ruined by constant night work'; cf. 19, 10, 14 with Praef. 19–21.

whom he is said to be *obnoxius*, and who has someone conscious of his noxa, that is to say, of his guilt...

Gellius is clearly upset by the teacher's contempt for his inquiry, an emotional reaction which suits an *adulescens*,²⁸ but he decides to establish his authority in this discussion through the strategy of Socratic irony (6, 17, 4):

Tum uero ego permotus agendum iam oblique ut cum homine stulto existimaui et 'cetera', inquam, 'uir doctissime, remotiora grauioraque si discere et scire debuero, quando mihi usus uenerit, tum quaeram ex te atque discam ...'

then indeed I was upset, but thinking that I should dissemble my strategy, since I was dealing with a fool, I said: 'If, most learned sir, I need to learn and to know other things that are more abstruse and more important, when the occasion arises I shall inquire and learn them from you ...'

Gellius pretends to go along with the grammarian's mockery of the insignificance of his question (6, 17, 2 *inludens leuitatem quaeestionis*—another allusion to the 'marginal' programme of the *Noctes*), apparently confirming the other's authority as a teacher of less trifling and more 'important' things (*remotiora grauioraque*).²⁹ As Garcea demonstrates in his multidimensional approach of the Socratic dialogue in the *Noctes Atticae* (1998, 386), Gellius' use of irony, indicated by *agendum iam oblique*,³⁰ manifests itself in an emphatic confirmation of a hierarchy—Gellius poses as the ignorant one who *learns* (using forms of *discere*, *scire*, *nescire*, *ignorare*),³¹ and represents the *grammaticus* as the one who *teaches*—while

²⁸ Cf. 15, 9, 7 *his eius uerbis, ut tum ferebat aetas, irritatio*; 17, 3, 3 *tum ille prorsus irritatus* (sc. *adulescens*). For irritated masters cf. 10, 19, 2 (Taurus), 19, 9, 8 (Iulianus); 16, 6, 11 (an anonymous *grammaticus*, irritated by Gellius' questions).

²⁹ Cf. 13, 31, 15, where Gellius' programmatic reference to his own research (*rem leuiculam*) contrasts with the conceited tone of the *grammaticus* (13, 31, 13 *non ... paruam rem quaeris*). The self-important expert on Sallust had similar claims (18, 4, 6).

³⁰ Cf. the Frontonian letter on Socratic irony, *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 16, 2 p. 48,7f. *eone usus genere dicendi, in quo nihil est oblicum, nihil interdum dissimulatum?* 'did he cultivate a style in which there was nothing crooked, nothing at times dissembled?' (cf. also p. 48,10f. *quando autem aperta arte congressus est?*, 'when did he meet them without masking his batteries?'). For *oblique agere* see *ThLL* s.v. *oblique* 103, 84f.; after the Gellius-passages (first instance) *ThLL* quotes Iul. Vict. *rhet.* 22 p. 435, 19; Claud. Don. *Aen.* 3, 320 p. 311, 16.

³¹ Also on the level of Gellius-*auctor* addressing the reader, his asseveration—reinforced by *hercle*—that his younger self did not make his inquiry of the schoolmaster in order to test him (6, 17, 1 *non hercle experiundum uel temptandi gratia*), but from a genuine intention to learn something (*sed dicendi magis studio et cupidine*), can be taken ironically. Cf. 16, 6, 1 *quispiam linguae Latinae litterator... experiundum sese uulgo dabat. Imus ad eum nos quoque*

at the same time, this emphasis implies a reversed hierarchy, in which Gellius turns out to have a superior position.

How does Gellius-*sectator* relate to Gellius-*auctor*? At first sight, *sectator* and *auctor* pursue similar goals: Gellius' mockery of the schoolmaster runs parallel with the author's challenge of the worn-out and schematic methods of the schools (cf. Praef. 16 *in scholis decantata ... in commentariis protrita*), which is illustrated here by the etymologising explanation of *obnoxius* attacked by the young Gellius.³² Yet, as we will see, Gellius employs the scene with his 'younger self' to stimulate his reader to reflect on deeper moral and political issues, which reflect the ideological perspective of his Roman cultural programme.

There is something peculiar with the definition of *obnoxius*. Read in isolation, the schoolmaster's explanation seems to force together two different etymological interpretations of *obnoxius* into one sentence. On the one hand, it relates *obnoxius* to *noceri*, 'being harmed',³³ and on the other hand to *noxae*, glossed by *culpa*, 'guilt'. As a result, the explanation seems to describe two uses of *obnoxius*, a passive one and an active one. The definition conjures up a gloomy picture of an unequal relation between two persons, who respectively illustrate the passive and the active aspect of *obnoxius*. The person who is *obnoxius* to the other illustrates a passive use, through the harm (*noceri*) he may suffer by the other, to whom he is *obnoxius*. But he has this other person 'conscious of his guilt' (*noxae, id est culpae suae, conscium*), which suggests by implication that this other person is *obnoxius* as well, in the active sense of a treacherous person, someone who is *nocens* and aware of his guilt.³⁴ One cannot help thinking about someone abusing his power at the cost of his dependent, which makes the definition sound quite subversive.

oblectamenti gratia, 'a dabbler in the Latin language ... was offering himself generally to be tested. I also went to him for the sake of amusement'. According to Garcea 1998, 378 n. 18, *hercle* in 6, 17, 1 expresses 'sincerità'. However, the emotional force of (*non*) *hercle* can also be put to ironic use; e.g. in the light of Gellius' sharp criticism in 7, 6, 5 *sed Hyginus nimis hercle ineptus fuit*, the use of *non hercle* in 1, 21, 2 *Hyginus autem, non hercle ignobilis grammaticus* gains an ironic undertone.

³² For etymological interpretation as an object of mockery in the *Noctes Atticae* cf. 3, 19.

³³ For the unusual passive, which makes *nocere* appear transitive, cf. *OLD* s.v. 2a; *GCA* 2007, 222 on Apul. *Met.* 1, 10, 1 *nocerentur*.

³⁴ In the teacher's definition (6, 17, 3 *qui habeat aliquem noxae, id est culpae suae, conscium*), the *qui* refers back to the person who is *obnoxius* in the passive sense, so that the *other person (aliquis)* who abuses his power is *noxae suae conscius*, 'conscious of his guilt'; cf. Rhet. Her. 2, 29 *nocens, conscius sui peccati*; see *ThLL* s.v. *consci* 373, 17f.

The young Gellius confirms the second, alternative interpretation of *obnoxius* by referring back to it in 6, 17, 8 '*culpaе suae conscius*'. Yet, he refutes the negative colour of the interpretation with the Vergilian example of the moon's indebtedness to the sun's light (*georg.* 1, 396): how can a source of light be harmful to the one who receives it? His following retort in 6, 17, 9 likewise rehabilitates the 'active' person from the grammarian's definition, who supposedly harms the other who is dependent on him. Again, Gellius denies the negative impact of this 'dominant' role in a relation of dependence (*cura enim prodesse aruis solet, non nocere*).

To sum up: the teacher's definition of *obnoxius* contains in fact two interpretations of the word, each of them referring to one of two parties in an unequal relationship, a 'dependent' one who 'suffers harm' (*noceri*) and a 'dominating' one 'who is conscious of his *noxa*'; although Gellius refutes some particularly negative implications of this interpretation, his refutation confirms its passive-active duality.

Elsewhere, Gellius demonstrates his interest in adjectives used both actively and passively (9, 12), and the present chapter illustrates this interest in a particular way. According to *ThLL* s.v. *obnoxius* 129, 31, the active sense of *obnoxius* occurs first in Fronto, in a letter in praise of Marcus' conciliatory virtues.³⁵ An interesting possibility suggested by Cavazza (2004, 81) is that Gellius-*auctor* even invented the etymologising explanation himself.³⁶ Its usefulness for his moral-didactic aims can be shown on several levels. On the level of the author's polemic with grammatical teaching, the invention creates possibilities for a caricatural representation of a rival methodology, which matches the caricatural depiction of the rival himself.³⁷ On this level, the young Gellius' quotations of *exempla* serve to expose the proposed definition's inadequacy, paving the way for the author to point to the word's manifold content (cf. 6, 17, 13 *in uerbo tam multiplici*). Yet, on a different level, we may sus-

³⁵ Cf. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 1, 3 p. 54,9f. *inuidia perniciosum inter homines malum maximeque internecium, sibi aliisque pariter obnoxium*, 'envy among men is a deadly evil and more fatal than any, a curse to enviers and envied alike'. For disagreement see Van den Hout 1999, 145 ad loc. *ThLL* expresses some caution regarding this use by printing a question mark.

³⁶ For Gellius' use of invention in philological discussions cf. 15, 9, 11 *atque ita hominem nulli rei ad indagandum uocabulum, quo rescinderet finitionem fictam, dimisimus*, 'and thus we sent off this worthless fellow to hunt up a word with which to break down the rule which I had made'.

³⁷ Cf. 6, 17, 5 *satis ridicule*; 6, 17, 6 *insolentis hominis inscitiam*; 6, 17, 11 *oscitans et alucinanti similis* (cf. 4, 20, 8); 6, 17, 12 *nebulo*.

pect a manipulating presence of Gellius-*auctor* behind his younger self's arguments and examples, and as he may be the inventor of the definition in the first place, readers should be on their guard for authorial *dissimulatio* as well.

While pretending gratitude to the *grammaticus* for teaching him that he was just as ignorant of the true meaning of *obnoxius* as Plautus, Gellius implies that his stupid teacher failed to acknowledge the *auctoritas* of this important writer (6, 17, 4 *homo linguae atque elegantiae in uerbis Latinae princeps*). With his first Plautine *exemplum*, *Stich.* 497 *perii ... plane, non obnoxie*, Gellius proves his teacher wrong by—rightly—pointing out that *obnoxie* ('submissively', 'deviously') is the opposite of *plane* ('openly').³⁸ The Plautine opposition between *plane* and *obnoxie* referred to by Gellius reflects the overall emphasis on the contrast between 'free' and 'unfree' behaviour in this chapter, but also draws attention to Gellius' own strategy of *agendum oblique* (note the parallelism *oblique—obnoxie*) instead of arguing in an open, straightforward way ('*plane*', '*aperte*').

Then, in a *praeteritio*, Gellius pretends to gloss over a Sallustian passage (6, 17, 7–8) that would equally prove his opponent wrong, but that passage at least partly confirms the interpretation given by the *nebulo*, in which the *obnoxius* can be harmed by the one to whom he is *obnoxius* (*Cat.* 23, 3 *minari etiam ferro, ni sibi obnoxia foret*, 'also to threaten her with her sword, if she would not submit herself to his will'). By glossing over something allegedly unimportant, Gellius subtly points the finger to something important: as a matter of fact, the adjective *obnoxius* has a noteworthy presence in Sallust's *Catilina*, illustrating a range of harmful relations of dependence, varying from the financial to the political via the sexual.³⁹

³⁸ I disagree with the note in *ThLL* s.v. 129, 35f. that Gellius 'opponit falso'. Since the speaker is a parasite, it makes sense to take *obnoxie* as 'in a submissive way', as in *Liv.* 3, 39, 1 *magis oboedienter ... quam obnoxie* (the only other occurrence of the adverb). *Plane* in *Stich.* 497, then, plays on its double meaning: on the one hand, the parasite says 'I am utterly lost!', on the other hand, *plane* refers back to 485 *ita plane loquar*, 'now for some plain speech' (cf. *iuero apertiore magis uia*), which contrasted the parasite's outspokenness with his earlier devious, implicit tactics of procuring himself a dinner invitation (which had proved no effect). The pun on *plane* entails the opposition with *obnoxie*: 'I am utterly lost—well, at least I am done for in a *straightforward* way, not in a *submissive, oblique* way (i.e. in the vein of a fawning parasite)'. The interpretation of *obnoxie* in the Plautine passage is disputed (Fennell: 'through no fault of my own'; Petersmann: 'nicht ohne Energie'; Nixon: 'without one obligation').

³⁹ See Vretska on Sall. *Cat.* 14, 6 *dum illos obnoxios fidosque sibi faceret* ('schuldhaften Unterwürfigkeit'); cf. also 20, 7 (political); 23, 3 (sexual); 48, 5 (financial); 52, 21

The burlesque of the schoolmaster and the ‘unreliable’ characterisation of Gellius-*sectator* enable Gellius-*auctor* to pursue his own protreptic aims, leading to a careful study of *exempla* with the word *obnoxius*, in the spirit of his cultural programme.⁴⁰ Etymology plays an ambiguous role here. As Cavazza (2004, 81) points out, Gellius states his interest to discuss the etymology (*origo*) of *obnoxius* three times,⁴¹ but never gives an *explicit* account of it. Apparently, the chapter only treats etymology by exemplifying an inadequate use of it as an anti-model of teaching, designed to contrast with Gellius’ programme of studying *auctoritates*.

Yet, there is more to it. As Gellius-*auctor* in 6, 17, 12 invites his addressee (‘*quis*’) to focus not only on the word’s *origo*, but also on its *significatio*, he seems to draw attention to a specific interplay of etymology and meaning in his *exempla*. In the last section, he surprisingly re-establishes the *grammaticus*’ authority by conceding (6, 17, 13 *quidem*) that his definition actually observed one particular usage of the word *obnoxius*, which agrees with the sense found in a passage from Caecilius’ *Chrysium* (*com.* 23):

*quamquam ego mercede huc conductus tua
aduenio, ne tibi me esse ob eam rem obnoxium
reare; audibis male, si maledicis mihi.*

Although I come to you attracted by your pay,
Don’t think that I for that am subject to your will
If you speak ill of me, you’ll hear a like reply.

Obnoxium in this passage illustrates the ‘passive’ use, but *tibi* addresses the person who could be termed *obnoxius* in an active sense. The passage has a striking parallel in Plautus’ *Poenulus*:⁴² as in Plautus, the speaker warns another character not to consider him as being at his

(a figurative, moral use). Vretska points out that the word is still a *vox media* in Plautus, but then gains increasingly negative connotations.

⁴⁰ Cf. 6, 17, 2 *rem ... multa ... prorsus uigilia indagandam*, ‘a question demanding very many sleepless nights of investigation’; 6, 17, 12 *non originem solam uerbi istius, sed significationem quoque eius uarietatemque recensere*, ‘to investigate not only the origin of this word, but also its variety of meaning’.

⁴¹ Cf. 6, 17 *tit. deque eius origine*; 6, 17, 1 *quaeque eius uocabuli origo ac ratio esset*; 6, 17, 12 *non originem solam uerbi istius*.

⁴² Cf. Plaut. *Poen.* 518f. (the poor counsellors to the rich Agorastocles) *nec tibi nos obnoxii sumus istuc, quid tu ames aut oderis* (cf. Grimal ‘est-ce-que nous sommes à tes ordres, pour servir tes haines ou tes amours?’); cf. 520f. *nos te nihili pendimus. ne tuo nos amori seruos esse addictos censeas*. See *ThLL* s.v. *obnoxius* 126,25f.

mercy (*obnoxius*),⁴³ in spite of his inferiority in wealth and status, and not to attack his dignity, as he is ready to retort the insult.

Illuminated by the unfavourable connotations of *noxa* and *nocere* from the teacher's definition, the Caecilian lines quoted by Gellius-*auctor* turn out to be a negative counterpart to the previous example (6, 17, 12), from Plautus' *Asinaria* (282f.). There, *obnoxii* depicts asymmetrical relations in a favourable way, supported by *deuincti*, which suggests an etymological explanation of *obnoxius* with *ob* + *necto*, *nexus*, for the sake of the parallelism *vincire*—*nectere* (Cavazza 2004, 81). The difference in status between servants and patron is counterbalanced by the latter's obligations towards his inferiors, created through rendered services:

*maximas opimitates gaudio effertissimas
suis eris ille una mecum pariet, gnatoque et patri
adeo ut aetatem ambo ambobus nobis sint obnoxii
nostro deuincti beneficio.*

he'll be my partner in hatching the biggest, joy-stuffedest jubilee
that ever was for his masters, son and father both, yes,
for life they both shall be in debt to both of us
by our services fast bound.

This contrasting pair of *exempla* of good and bad forms of human dependency is preceded by another *exemplum* that can be read in a similar 'moral' light, taken from Ennius' *Phoenix*:⁴⁴

*sed uirum uera uirtute uiuere †animatum adiecit†
fortiterque †innoxium uocare† aduersum aduersarios
ea libertas est, qui pectus purum et firmum gestitat,
†aliae† res obnoxiosae nocte in obscura latent*

This is the last *exemplum* cited by Gellius-*sectator* before his opponent runs off. Although it does not feature the word *obnoxius*, it includes two etymologically related words, *innoxius* (if we may trust the transmission), which is the exact opposite of *obnoxius*, and *obnoxiosus*. In spite of the textual corruptions, the picture emerging from the Ennian fragment is that of the successful and fairly ruling leader, who is 'without guilt' (*innoxius*) and who embodies *libertas*, as opposed to the *res obnoxiosae*, who, as Jocelyn argues, represent those 'whose minds are unfree, i.e. men with a bad

⁴³ See *OLD* s.v. *obnoxius* 2 'at the mercy of, under the domination of, subservient to'. Sall. *Cat.* 23, 3, glossed over by Gellius in 6, 17, 7–8, has a similar sense of *obnoxius*, though in a sexual context. *OLD* cites the Caecilian fragment sub 1 'indebted', but this seems rather the sense in the lines from Plaut. *Asin.* (282f.) cited in Gell. 6, 17, 12.

⁴⁴ Enn. *scaen.* 300–304 (= 254–257 Jocelyn). The text is quoted according to Jocelyn.

conscience'. Thus, *obnoxiosus* appears a synonym of *obnoxius* = '*noxae suae conscius*', but also illustrates the idea of dependence and lack of freedom.

In contrast with the teacher's 'subversive' definition, in the Ennian fragment the ones who are dependent also have guilt, whereas the man with *uera uirtus* is free and without guilt, and, by implication, will not harm those who are dependent on him. As with the Vergilian passages quoted in 6, 17, 8–9, Gellius seems to point out to the *grammaticus* that someone who is *obnoxius* in a passive sense is not always harmed by the one on whom he is dependent. Just as the Vergilian words *radiis obnoxia* (*georg.* 1, 396) and *obnoxia curae* (2, 438) illustrate dependence on *salutary* sources (cf. 6, 17, 9 *prodesse* ... *non nocere*) like the sun or human care, the Ennian quotation points to a salutary leader without *noxa* (*innoxius*).⁴⁵

A key-word here is *libertas*. In the light of a passage from Euripides' *Hippolytus*, adduced by Jocelyn for its strikingly similar thoughts, the Ennian *libertas* seems to reflect on 'true freedom' as a moral quality that is crucial for the reputation of a man of virtue (Eur. *Hippol.* 421–430):

...ἀλλ' ἐλεύθεροι
παρορησία θάλλοντες οἰκοῖεν πόλιν
 κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν, μητρὸς οὔνεκ' εὐκλεεῖς.
 δουλοῖ γὰρ ἄνδρα, κὰν θρασὺπλαγχνός τις ᾗ,
 ὅταν Ξυνειδῇ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακά.
 μόνον δὲ τοῦτό φασ' ἀμιλλᾶσθαι βίῳ,
 γνώμην δικαίαν κάγαθήν, ὅτῳ παρῇ.
 κακοὺς δὲ θνητῶν ἐξέφην' ... χρόνος.
 ...but rather that they may live in glorious Athens
 as free men, free of speech and flourishing, enjoying
 good repute where their mother is concerned. For it
 enslaves even a bold-hearted man when he is conscious
of sins committed by his mother or father.
 One thing only, they say, competes in value with life,
 the possession of a heart blameless and good.
 But as for the base among mortals, they are exposed,
 late or soon, by Time ...

⁴⁵ Another telling Gellian passage that can be read as a 'rehabilitation' of the term *obnoxius* as a salutary form of dependence applies it to the political subjection of colonies to the laws and institutions of Rome, cf. 16, 13, 9 *quae tamen condicio, cum sit magis obnoxia et minus libera, potior tamen et praestabilior existimatur propter amplitudinem maiestatemque populi Romani*, 'this condition (viz. of the colonies), although it is more exposed to control and less free, is nevertheless thought preferable and superior because of the greatness and majesty of the Roman people'.

The Euripidean passage focuses on *παρρησία*, the right to speak one's own mind, as an essential aspect of the reputation and dignity of a free man. Contrasting freedom of speech with consciousness of sin (*ἔσυνειδῆ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακά*), the passage connects true aristocracy with moral blamelessness and independent judgment (cf. *innoxius, libertas*). Those, by contrast, who lack the freedom to speak their own minds by a crippling sense of shame or guilt (cf. '*res obnoxiosae*') are no better than slaves.⁴⁶

Gellius, who elsewhere comments on Ennius as a translator of Euripides,⁴⁷ may have had this passage in the back of his mind as he quoted the lines from Ennius' *Phoenix*. In the interpretation of *obnoxius* as '*noxae, id est culpaе suae conscium*' (6, 17, 2; 6, 17, 8) we may hear an echo of the Euripidean *ἔσυνειδῆ μητρὸς ἢ πατρὸς κακά*. Given the Ennian opposition between *libertas* and *res obnoxiosae*, illuminated by the Euripidean opposition between freedom of speech and consciousness of guilt, does Gellius' discussion of *obnoxius* hint at a connection between being *obnoxius* and the inability to speak one's own mind?

Such a connection seems indeed suggested by the last *exemplum*, the Caecilian fragment, where the speaker asserts his self-respect by telling his superior that he is not *obnoxius* to him, simultaneously claiming the right to use verbal licence to retort any attacks on his dignity. This *exemplum*, however, may be read as an illustration of freedom of speech degenerated into impertinence (*audibis male, si maledicis mihi*). As we have observed, this is the only case which, according to Gellius, agrees with the schoolmaster's definition, in which both parties of an asymmetrical relationship are *obnoxius* in a negative sense. It creates a counter-example to all foregoing examples, in particular to the Ennian fragment, which praises the virtues of the *innoxius*,⁴⁸ and the lines from Plautus' *Asinaria*, where those in power are *obnoxii* in a positive sense ('obliged') to those who faithfully render them service.

Thus, Gellius' chapter on *obnoxius* eventually turns out to focus on etymology indeed, but not as an aim in itself. Staging his younger self as a scheming pupil in a scene of ironic role-reversals, Gellius-

⁴⁶ See Mastronarde on Eur. *Phoen.* 391–395; Konstan 1997, 104.

⁴⁷ Cf. Gell. 11, 4; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 203f.

⁴⁸ Cf. Lucian. *Peregr.* 18, where Peregrinus' 'frank and excessive freedom' (*παρρησίαν καὶ τὴν ἄγαν ἐλευθερίαν*) is contrasted with the mild and gentle attitude of Antoninus Pius, who tolerates the philosopher's verbal abuse. Cf. Konstan 1994, 93f. on appropriate frankness which a good ruler will accept as the good counsel of a friend.

auctor manipulates etymological exegesis to add a moral and ideological dimension to his own teaching. This is not to suggest that we should reconstruct one particular opinion or moral advice from Gellius' quotations. Gellius' programme is a protreptic of dynamic reflection, exploring aspects of identity and culture, rather than a consistent set of authorial beliefs to be imposed on the reader in a straightforward way.

And yet, Gellius' programme has a clear cultural and moral bias, with an undercurrent of ideological and cultural preferences: in the tradition of Roman education, the didactic function of its *exempla* includes moral exhortation. Through a '*si quis*' clause (6, 17, 12) that points to the authority of his cultural programme,⁴⁹ Gellius persuades his reader ('*quis*') to investigate the *origo* and the *significatio* of a word by reading authoritative *exempla*, and to reread these *exempla* in a moral, even political light. Gellius shows that the *uarietas* of one word provides contrasting *exempla* of a powerful man's character and behaviour towards his dependents,⁵⁰ and that there are various alternatives to the gloomy and one-sided picture of harm, guilt, and verbal abuse suggested by the *nebulo*'s definition and the only passage that confirms it.⁵¹ Gellius' teaching seems to reinforce and consolidate existing social structures, defending asymmetrical relationships from the irreverent attacks of subversive elements in society.

The 'inversion of roles' that we see on the level of communication between Gellius-*sectator* and his master is matched on the level of another asymmetrical relationship, the one between Gellius-*auctor* and his intended reader. Just as Gellius-*sectator* turns out to 'teach his teacher', Gellius-*auctor* shows his reader that he has an authority that his reader lacks. Between the lines of a chapter that shows a whole

⁴⁹ Gellius elsewhere uses such '*si quis*' clauses to describe conditions and prescriptions that define accurate reading and correct understanding in terms of his cultural programme; cf. 2, 30, 6; 11, 3, 4; 12, 3, 4; 17, 2, 11; 17, 13, 10. Sometimes the '*si quis*'-clauses include repercussions if the '*quis*' does not live up to these conditions: he will make a fool of himself (cf. the *nebulo*), cf. 13, 26, 2 *si quis* ... *non aberit quin rideatur*, or is not to be taken seriously as an intellectual in the first place, cf. 17, 2, 10 *si quis aurem habeat non sordidam nec proculcatam*; 18, 5, 7 *si quis modo non inscite ineptique argutior sit*. Through such clauses, Gellius establishes his 'charismatic' authority in the same spirit as his 'ritualistic' statement on the exclusive nature of his intended audience (Praef. 20f.).

⁵⁰ The reference to '*quis*' (6, 7, 12) may recall the *aliquem* from the teacher's definition (6, 17, 3), referring to the dominant party in an asymmetrical relationship between two *obnoxii*.

⁵¹ For Gellius pointing to the *uarietas* of a word cf. e.g. 11, 3, 3-4; 17, 13, 10.

range between ‘arguing indirectly’ (*agendum oblique*) and ‘inappropriate outspokenness’, we may read a self-referential comment on the author’s own ‘freedom of speech’ by means of his literary work, employing an appropriate way of ‘speaking his own mind’. This implied reference to Gellius’ role as cultural authority is in the spirit of the *Noctes Atticae*, where ‘marginality’ frequently functions as a programmatic reference to ‘centrality’. Gellius invites his reader by implication to act differently than the *nebulo*, who had mocked Gellius’ authority and was hence exposed for his *inscitia*. By contrast, accepting Gellius’ cultural authority and doing the research (*indagare*, *recensere*) that the *grammaticus* had ridiculed as pointless (6, 17, 2) will save the reader from *inscitia*,⁵² and provide him with the key to true education.

On one level, the chapter can be read as Gellius’ strategy to assert his authority against his intellectual rivals, personified by the *grammaticus*. Gellius’ rereading of Roman literary *exempla* from the past, set off against a rival’s inadequate teaching, serves a purpose of self-authorisation in the present. The chapter illustrates in its own specific way how Gellius in his *Noctes Atticae* goes beyond the ‘trodden paths’ of grammatical teaching, as he ingeniously interconnects irony, satire, anecdotal narrative, philological teaching, and moral education to put his Roman cultural programme into effect. The focus on the word *obnoxius* becomes a channel for reflections on the implications of free and unfree behaviour in the context of power relations.

Yet, on a different level the chapter also points to a likely *context* in which Gellius aspired to establish cultural authority, supported by the ‘uerbum insperatum’ *obnoxius* from Fronto’s letter on Marcus’ pacifying leadership. By making role-inversion in asymmetrical relations one of its basic principles, the anecdote points to the author’s claim to the role of cultural authority in an imperial context, where those in power were obliged (*obnoxii*, *deuincti*) to others, who were inferior in status, for cultural guidance.⁵³

⁵² For the association between the lack of free speech allowed by those in power and *inscitia* cf. Eur. *Phoen.* 393 τὰς τῶν κρατούντων ἀμαθίας φέρειν χρεών, ‘one has to endure the stupidities of those who rule’, with Mastronarde ad loc.: ‘the pejorative tinge of ἀμαθής/ ἀμαθία derives from the implied (rationalistic and optimistic) belief that ignorance is culpable and could have been cured by effort’.

⁵³ For the emperor as an implied reader of *Noctes Atticae* see Part III. I do not wish to imply that the *Noctes Atticae* were *exclusively* intended for the imperial court or only for the emperor himself: the ‘imperial dimension’ of Gellius’ work can also be viewed as part of his self-fashioning in Antonine intellectual society, serving to underline his authority in a wider elite Roman readership.

The definition of penus (4, 1) and Gellius' authoritative platform

Another example of Socratic humour witnessed by Gellius-*sektor*, which proves to be indicative of values and cultural prescriptions of the author's literary work, is the performance in chapter 4, 1 of his master Favorinus. Throughout the *Noctes Atticae*, Favorinus' wide-ranging intellectual qualities are praised, such as his impressive knowledge, his divine memory (13, 25, 5), his Academic inquisitiveness (20, 1, 9), and his fascinating eloquence (12, 1, 24; 14, 1, 32; 16, 3, 1). Yet, we will also see that Gellius makes allusions to Favorinus' controversial reputation and his characteristic intellectual outlook to underline his own authority, integrating satirical thrusts in the vein of Lucian's *Demonax* into his 'authorising humour' (see Part II). As we have observed above, Gellius' satire unfolds at two different levels: at one level, we see a blatant form of mockery of a fictional character (a *grammaticus*), who is exposed as a nitwit and a boastful fool; at another level, we see the 'exposer exposed' in a more subtle and sophisticated way, with more respect for the butt of the satire, being a historical person who was superior in rank to Gellius.

Just as in Sulpicius Apollinaris, Gellius also acknowledged a 'Socratic' eminence in Favorinus,⁵⁴ and used it for his *Noctes* (4, 1 tit.):

Sermo quidam Fauorini philosophi cum grammatico iactantior factus in Socraticum modum; atque ibi in sermone dictum quibus uerbis 'penus' a Q. Scaeuola definita sit; quodque eadem definitio culpata reprehensaque est.

A discourse of the philosopher Favorinus carried on in the Socratic manner with an over-boastful grammarian; and in that discourse we are told how Quintus Scaevola defined *penus*, and that this same definition has been criticised and rejected.

In this scene, one of the three taking place on the Palatine before the *salutatio* of the emperor, Favorinus and Gellius meet a boastful grammarian, who discourses on the gender and the declension of the word *penus*. Favorinus corners the schoolteacher by asking for a definition of *penus*, mocking his interlocutor for merely presenting a list of examples that illustrate the various things to which the word can refer. Favorinus' Socratic performance alludes to a passage in Plato's *Theaetetus* (146c–147c). In that passage, focused on the central question 'what is knowl-

⁵⁴ See Beall 2004, 210f.

edge', Socrates is not content with a mere list of examples of all kinds of knowledge, but wants a single unitary definition to capture the essence of the issue. Viewed in the light of the Platonic matrix of 'Socrates exposing sophists', Gellius draws attention to Favorinus' philosophical authority. So, at first sight, it looks as if Gellius makes Favorinus the 'champion' of this chapter.

Can we view Favorinus in his Socratic role as a role model for Gellius, in the same way as Sulpicius Apollinaris? A particular quality that Gellius-*sectator* appreciated in Favorinus' display of authority may have been his sense of humour,⁵⁵ which comes to the fore in his reply to the grammarian's lesson on declension and gender of *penus* (4, 1, 5):

*quid enim refert mea eiusque quicum loquor, quo genere 'penum' dicam aut in quas extremas litteras declinem, si modo id non nimis barbare fecerim.*⁵⁶

for what difference does it make to me and the one with whom I am speaking in what gender I use *penus*, or with what endings I inflect it, as long as I do not do this too barbarously?

We can read in Favorinus' avowed disinterest in the gender of a noun that was well-known for its generic ambiguity (cf. Don. *gramm.* 2, 5 p. 620,8 *nomina incerti generis inter masculinum et femininum, ut ... 'penus'*) a satirical allusion to his own famous hermaphroditism. The frequent repetition of the word *penus*, just one letter away from *penis*, put on the lips of a man whose unmanly genitals made him an object of public scorn, adds to the satire. As we will see in Part II, Gellius makes Favorinus also elsewhere refer in a subtle way to his physical defectiveness. There is, however, another aspect of self-satire in the present remark.

At the end of the chapter, Gellius reflects this statement and another one that likewise emphasises the general utility of learning (4, 1, 18) by praising Favorinus' ability to guide conversations from 'insignificant and trivial topics' (4, 1, 19 *a rebus paruis et frigidis*) to a higher educational level (*ad ea quae magis utile esset audire ac discere*). Within the Platonic matrix, we may read in the *res paruae* another allusion to the *Theaetetus* (148c, on the question 'what is knowledge') *σμικρόν τι οἶε εἶναι ἐξευρεῖν*; 'do you think it's a small matter to seek it out?' (cf. 145d *μικρόν δέ τι ἀποροῶ*, 'I have one tiny little difficulty'). In the frame of Gellius'

⁵⁵ See Beall 2001, 102. Cf. Polemo, *Physiogn.* A20 Hoyland (see Hoyland 2007, 379 with n. 158) 'despite his form he would poke fun at everything'.

⁵⁶ So C; see Holford-Strevens 1993, 294–295.

cultural programme, Gellius' praise indirectly points to his own aim of useful learning, and his ability as a writer to present 'dull' (*frigidis*) things in a charming way.⁵⁷

At one level, Gellius uses Favorinus as a mouthpiece for his own programme, and agrees with him on the uselessness of discussing *res paruae et frigidae* like gender and declension as an aim in itself. At first sight, the *res paruae et frigidae* seem to point to interests of the sophist-like figure of the *grammaticus*, dabbling in *testimonia* and *exempla* (cf. 4, 1, 4). However, Favorinus' overt philological interests in this chapter and elsewhere belie his own statement,⁵⁸ which may point to a certain self-irony on his part in 4, 1, 5, a self-irony through the denial of the 'trivialities' he was actually pursuing. Favorinus' false disclaimer regarding his interest in matters of gender and declension also indicates some self-irony on the level of Gellius-*auctor*, who indeed takes interest in the 'marginal' niceties of accident in some of his chapters (4, 16; 6, 9; 9, 14). Viewed in this way, Favorinus' and Gellius' self-irony run parallel as authorising forms of humour in a chapter that exposes the sham authority of the boasting *grammaticus*, who is truly pursuing useless and 'frigid' topics.⁵⁹

Yet, the negotiation of authority in this chapter is brought into a fuller perspective if we view it also in the light of a Roman matrix of higher education, including Roman ambiguous feelings towards the technicalities and over-subtleties of philosophical and rhetorical classifications. Favorinus' emphasis on calling a thing by the appropriate word (*ne rem cotidiani usus ... alia quam oportet uoce appellem*) and his challenging of the teacher to give an exact definition of *penus* recall an important part of 'invention' in Roman rhetoric, the status of definition (*status de-*

⁵⁷ Demetr. *elocut.* 134 Πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τὰ μὲν πράγματα ἀτερπῆ ἔστι φύσει καὶ στυγνά, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ λέγοντος γίνεται ἡλαρά. 'often subjects which are naturally unattractive and sombre acquire a lighter tone from the writer's skill'. See above, n. 4 and below p. 138.

⁵⁸ Compare Favorinus' interest in etymology in 4, 1, 17, also evident in 3, 19; 8, 2; Macr. *Sat.* 3, 18, 13. Moreover, as Holford-Strevens (2003, 124) observes, at 4, 1, 15 Favorinus "tosses in the variant readings at *Aen.* 1, 703, to show how well the philosopher knows the grammarian's business". Compare Domitius Insanus' diatribe against Favorinus' (and, as is implied, Gellius') philological interests, 18, 7, 3 *nulla ... prorsus bonae salutis spes reliqua est, cum uos quoque, philosophorum inlustrissimi, nihil iam aliud quam uerba auctoritatesque uerborum cordi habetis*, 'There is absolutely no hope left of anything good, when even you distinguished philosophers care for nothing save words and the authority for words.'

⁵⁹ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 4, 1, 77 *frigida et puerilis est in scholis affectatio*.

finitionis, ὁροῖς).⁶⁰ By centering the discussion on the word *penus*, Gellius recalls in particular the Quintilianic discussion of the importance of ‘Definition’ for the future Roman orator, which mentions *penus* as an example of a familiar word that occasionally needs to be explained (*inst.* 7, 3, 13):

opus est aliquando finitione obscurioribus et ignotioribus uerbis: quid sit clarigatio, erectum citum, interim notis nominibus: quid sit penus, quid litus.

On occasion, Definitions are needed to explain obscure or unknown words (what is meant by *clarigatio*, *erectum citum*), or sometimes even familiar words (what is meant by *penus*, *litus*).

Yet, beyond the mentioning of *penus*, Gellius also recalls other aspects of the Quintilian discussion, and employs them to establish his own authority in the tradition of Roman educational thinking. On the one hand, the Gellian chapter reflects Quintilian’s emphasis on the agonistic context of debates on definition, in which each of the two opponents establishes his own definition while destroying his adversary’s definition (*inst.* 7, 3, 19; 22–23). Gellius brings this into practice by overruling Favorinus’ definition and concluding the chapter with his own grasp of the facts (see below). On the other hand, Gellius assumes a position of Roman ambiguity towards the practice of using Definition as an argumentative trick to ensnare the respondent in a dialogue, an ambiguity that pays homage to Quintilian’s reservations expressed in the immediate context of his reference to *penus* (*inst.* 7, 3, 14):

quibusdam ne placuit quidem omnino subtilis haec et ad morem dialecticorum formata conclusio, ut in disputationibus potius arguta uerborum cauillatrix quam in oratoris officio multum allatura momenti.

Some indeed entirely reject this subtle form of argument, modelled as it is on the methods of dialectic, and regard it as acute verbal sophistry for use in debate rather than as likely to be a significant contribution to the business of the orator.

Viewed in this light, Favorinus’ emphatic request for a Definition in this debate turns out to allude to a controversial aspect of his reputation, that of the glib Academic philosopher who excels in cunning dialectic arguments but is not in touch with reality (for another satirical allusion to this aspect of Favorinus cf. Gell. 20, 1, 21). Quintilian connects this

⁶⁰ See Leeman-Pinkster-Rabbie on Cic. *de orat.* 2, 104 *aut quid uocetur*; cf. especially *de orat.* 2, 107–109; Quint. *inst.* 7, 3.

‘slavery to words’ (viz. pinning down the discussion to the definition of one word) with the ‘habits of philosophers’ (*inst.* 7, 3, 16 *ex philosophorum ducta*), but he also recalls Antonius’ critical view of Definition in Cicero’s *De oratore*, which impugns it as a kind of arguing that ‘savours of the schools and of exercises that are little more than childish’.⁶¹

Given the negative associations that Romans traditionally felt between a predilection for definitions and the ‘*doctrina puerilis*’ of school-teachers or the ‘Academic disputations’ of philosophers, it is significant that Gellius stages a schoolteacher and an Academic philosopher in a quarrel over the definition of *penus*. Elsewhere, as we have seen above, he exposes *grammatici* for their inadequate definitions—this one does not even know the elementary theory of Definition, related to Genus and Species (Gell. 4, 1, 9; cf. Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 3), and is therefore exposed as a nitwit in his own field. By staging a dialogue between two teachers in which the authority of both is undermined, Gellius allows himself to show at the end of the chapter that he is the only one who is in touch with reality, and able to demonstrate ‘the actual facts’ (cf. Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 15 *ipsi rei*). His independent attitude and critical distance towards the verbal quibbles of the *grammaticus* and the Academic philosopher Favorinus also has affinities with the typical attitude of the Cynic, who loathed dialectical subtleties and preferred to stick to plainly evident facts.⁶²

Thus, in this multi-levelled set-piece of satirical exposure, the last word belongs to Gellius, who improves on his master by giving both examples and definitions of *penus* found in legal commentaries (4, 1, 20f.).⁶³ By demonstrating what *penus* really is, he impugns Favorinus’

⁶¹ Cf. Cic. *de orat.* 2, 109 *doctrinam redolet exercitationemque paene puerilem*; Leeman-Pinkster-Rabbie argue that *puerilem* can also be connected with *doctrinam*, ‘Es waren eben die Schulmeister, die solche peinlich genauen Definitionen vorschrieben’.

⁶² Although Romans were ambivalent about Cynics, some of their notions were advantageous in a Roman educational/moralistic context; see Griffin 1996, 204. In Gellius’ time, the Cynic paradigm was very popular; cf. Lucian. *Demonax*; Apul. *apol.* 22. Galen (e.g. *de caus. procat.* 9, 116–120) uses Diogenes as a mouthpiece for his tirade against dialecticians and contrivers of sophisms, because Diogenes always sticks to ‘evident things’, as opposed to philosophers who juggle with fallacious argumentations (see Hankinson 1998, 230f.); cf. Gell. 18, 7, 4. In 18, 13, 8, Gellius presents a different view of Diogenes, which seems paradigmatic of Gellius’ own Roman attitude in the *Noctes*: he lets Diogenes outwit his opponent in his own sophistic trickery (cf. 18, 2, 7, Ennius on ‘the deceiver deceived’).

⁶³ Compare the ‘middle way’ recommended by Quintilian in *inst.* 7, 3, 17, to set out both the facts and be very cautious with setting up a secure definition. Note that the legal expert Servius Sulpicius, mentioned by Gellius in 4, 1, 20, also occurs in

definition of *penus*, including his etymological explanation.⁶⁴ Whereas Favorinus casts doubt on the wisdom of old Roman masters of the law like Q. Mucius Scaevola for failing to give an accurate definition of *penus*,⁶⁵ Gellius offers a different view, demonstrating how Roman jurists like Masurius Sabinus were rightly cautious in giving definitions, since exceptions always have to be allowed for, given the complexity of reality.⁶⁶ He proves Favorinus' position both false and incomplete, quoting Roman authorities to prove that *penus* does include food and drink, but even more than that.⁶⁷ Moreover, Gellius' teaching recalls other chapters, in which he exhorts the reader to study the *uarietas* of a word, and not only etymology (cf. 6, 17, 12), in order to attain a deeper, more useful learning.⁶⁸ The ending of a chapter with a quotation that plays the decisive role is characteristic of Gellian diatribe, as has been pointed out by Marache (1953, 86).

In the tradition of Quintilian, Gellius' discussion of various legal aspects of *penus* reflects his educational concerns with knowledge that is essential for the *uir civiliter eruditus*—it can be compared with other Gellian chapters in which knowledge of ancient Roman texts, legal and non-legal, is paramount to a successful performance in public contexts such as the court.⁶⁹ It is likely that the first impulses to the Roman linguistic and antiquarian erudition that is so central to Gellius' cultural

Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 18, but there is an example from Cicero (*Philipp.* 9, 7, where S. is killed by Antony) that illustrates the stating of the facts before moving to a definition (sic!).

⁶⁴ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 19 *in eo 'quid sit' duplex opus est: nam et nostra confirmanda est et aduersae partis destruenda finitio*, 'in determining "what something is", there are two tasks to perform: we must both establish our own Definition and destroy our opponent's.' For etymology as a useful but rare resource of establishing and refuting a definition see Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 25.

⁶⁵ Cf. tit. *culpata reprehensaque est*; 4, 1, 16 *Sed ut faciam te aequiore animo ut sis, ne illi quidem ueteres iuris magistri, qui 'sapientes' appellati sunt, definisse satis recte existimantur, quid sit 'penus'*, 'but to make you feel easier in mind, let me say that not even those old masters of the law who were called 'wise men' are thought to have defined *penus* with sufficient accuracy'.

⁶⁶ Masurius Sabinus (working under Tiberius) is Gellius' second-favourite jurist and the most recent quoted by him; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 298f.

⁶⁷ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 7, 3, 23 *ea duobus generibus evertitur, si aut falsa est aut parum plena*, 'now there are two ways of demolishing a definition: it may either be false or not complete'.

⁶⁸ Cf. Quintilian's plea for a 'wider, varied treatment' (*inst.* 7, 3, 16 *latiore uarioque tractatu*) in a speech instead of sticking to the definition of one word.

⁶⁹ Cf. 1, 22; 11, 7; 13, 13; 16, 10; 20, 10.

programme had been given by jurists or those who were interested in legal matters.⁷⁰ As Schiavone (2003, 61–79) demonstrates, juridical learning traditionally had a crucial position in forming the Roman citizen and the aristocratic elite, and in many ways contributed to the construction of civic and intellectual identity. Thus, Gellius' 'last word' concords with larger patterns of establishing authority in the *Noctes*, showing how the 'marginal' philological activity of his cultural programme gains centrality in a context of maintaining Roman elite identity. Also, it concords with other chapters in which Gellius 'teaches his teacher' Favorinus,⁷¹ or concludes his representation of Favorinus' teaching with demonstrations of his own intellectual authority acquired through independent research.⁷²

Eventually, Gellius is the only one to claim authority in this chapter, substantiated by *his* grasp of Roman legal texts. His platform turns out to be the authoritative one. It is not the platform of philosophy—this one is claimed by his master Favorinus (4, 1, 18 *cum philosophiae me dedissem*). Nor is it the platform of the *grammaticus iactantior*, who represents the trodden paths of 'established' school education (*scholica quaedam nugalia*), but is beaten by Favorinus in his own game. It is the platform of the *Noctes Atticae*, guiding the reader to the texts that matter and inviting them to 'scrutinise authorities' (both intellectuals and their output) in order to acquire authority in a Roman imperial context.⁷³ By staging the discussion on the definition of *penus* in a framework that recalls the Socratic question of 'what is knowledge', Gellius points his readers to the deeper educational value of his own cultural programme: it is not a coincidence that Gellius also uses the word *penus* in the *Praefatio* (2) to refer to his own collected notes, which form the 'literary storehouse' from which his *Noctes Atticae* originated. Thus, Gellius playfully reminds his reader in chapter 4, 1, staged on

⁷⁰ See Fuhrmann 1987, 142 with n. 45, quoting the 'legal' explanations of the word *penus* in Gellius as an example.

⁷¹ Cf. 18, 7, for which see below; 8, 2.

⁷² Cf. 2, 22, 28f.; 16, 3, 6f.

⁷³ Beall 2004, 213, in a discussion of Gellius' relation to (sceptical) philosophy, calls the *Noctes Atticae* 'platform-independent' and 'unimpressive as an example of diatribe'. In the same section, however, Beall admirably demonstrates how Gellius distinguishes himself "from the dogmatic and self-confident 'experts' he so frequently derides" and draws his readers into a process of further inquiry and questioning of authority. 'Independent platform' (always with recourse to the Roman *ueteres*), in my view, would do more justice to Gellius' educational programme.

the Palatine shortly before greeting the emperor, that true authority lies both in the knowledge of single facts and in the perception of the general essence they represent, giving them a key to explore this authority through the word *penus*.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ Hijmans (1994, 1747f. with n. 135) observes a comparable link between philological detail (the search for the appropriate expression; cf. Gell. 4, 1, 18) and a larger ideological context in Apuleius, whose interest in verbal art forms part of his philosophical programme.

PART TWO

PLAYING WITH REPUTATIONS:
'REHABILITATION' AS POLITICAL SATIRE

CHAPTER FOUR

FAVORINUS AS A ‘COMIC AUTHORITY FIGURE’

The chreia and the rhetoric of humour

As we have observed in chapter two, Gellius makes optimal use of the humorous resources of the *chreia*, a short, memorable anecdote featuring a famous intellectual, in which a particular point of a general moral and/or educational value is made in a ‘seriocomic’ way. This chapter focuses further on Gellius’ self-authorising use of this ‘rhetoric of humour’, with special attention to his representations of the Academic philosopher Favorinus. One specifically advantageous feature of the *chreia* for Gellius’ authorising strategies is the technique of implicit allusion to controversial aspects of a famous person’s reputation. This feature forms part of the *chreia*’s general logical structure, inviting the audience to perform an act of ‘mental collaboration’ by bridging a logical gap. For instance, the reader is expected to grasp the wit of the anecdote by making a connection between two divergent frames of reference, or by filling in the steps of the joke that the author deliberately left implicit.¹ In this respect, the *chreia* can make use of the form of the enthymeme, a rhetorical syllogism in which one proposition is left out: as in understanding a joke, the reader gets the point of the *chreia* by recognising and interpreting what is implicit in the anecdote (Bracht Branham 1994, 44).

In a famous example of this argumentative technique from Lucian’s *Demonax* (12), the Cynic philosopher Demonax ridicules Favorinus’ affected use of the voice as feminine (γυναικεῖον). When Favorinus returns the ridicule by asking Demonax what grounds entitle *him* (implying: being an uncultured Cynic) to pursue philosophy, the latter’s retort is: “balls” (ὄρχεις).² The audience of the *chreia* (in this case the reader of Lucian) is invited to unravel the wit by supplying a well-known fact

¹ On the argumentative resources of the *chreia* and Lucian’s use of them in the *Demonax* see Bracht Branham 1994.

² Translated in the Loeb as “those you lack”.

about Favorinus, his unmanliness, which was a result of being born without testicles and made his voice sound like a woman's. Favorinus' physical eccentricity was an important part of his 'public image', as appears from the physiognomical descriptions made by one of his arch-rivals, the sophist Polemo, and from passages in Philostratus and Lucian that testify to the use of Favorinus' eunuch-like appearance in contemporary polemical satire.³

The satirical allusion to Favorinus' unmanliness and effeminate voice in the *chreia* in Lucian's *Demonax* is not an end in itself (although readers are of course allowed to enjoy the joke for its own sake), but makes part of a larger rhetorical strategy. As a general pattern, *Demonax* plays the role of the 'joker', making one-liners through allusive puns and word play, in order to unmask the pretensions of people who are in some sense *poseurs*. Paradoxically, *Demonax* becomes a figure of authority by presenting himself as a 'comic' figure without any trace of self-conceit (ἀλαζονεία). Thus, Lucian establishes the authority of a 'marginal' figure like *Demonax* by pitting him against 'established' authorities like Favorinus. In the seriocomic tradition of *chreiai* featuring Diogenes, the humorous anecdotes about *Demonax* have a provocative function, raising questions on issues of a deeper importance or of a general utility; in his verbal exchange with Favorinus, the underlying moral issue is the nature of true philosophical authority ('what are the characteristics that makes someone a true philosopher?').

Gellius is not *Demonax*, and his chapters reveal a relation with Favorinus' authority that is far more complex and subtle. Gellius' representations of Favorinus are double-edged. On a certain level, they can be read as a 'counter-balancing' response to the negative 'image' of Favorinus in the contemporary world, 'rehabilitating' Favorinus' reputation as *philosophus* and as teacher from charges made by his enemies (most notably Polemo, Epictetus, and Galen), who aimed to undermine his authority as a philosopher and as a teacher. Gellius represents him-

³ See Gleason 1995, 7 n. 26; 45–48. Cf. Polemo, *physiogn.* A20 Hoyland (= T V Amato-Julien) 'like the eunuch who is not a eunuch but who was born without testicles'; B3 Hoyland 'no one is more perfect in evil than those who are born without testicles'; cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 489 ὁξυχηγὲς γὰρ ἠκούετο καὶ λεπτὸν καὶ ἐπίτονον, ὥσπερ ἡ φύσις τοὺς εὐνούχους ἤρμoxεν (= T I Amato-Julien); 1, 25 p. 541 ἀστείότατα ὁ Πολέμων "καὶ πᾶσα" ἔφη "γρᾶνς" τὸ εὐνουχῶδες αὐτοῦ διασκώπτων (= T XIII Amato-Julien); Lucian. *Eun.* 7 καὶ τινὰς καὶ αὐτὸς ἀπεμνημόνευε λόγους καὶ πρὸς ἐκείνον ὑπὸ τε Στωϊκῶν καὶ Κυνικῶν μάλιστα εἰρημένους πρὸς τὸ γελοιότερον ἐπὶ τῷ ἀτελεῖ τοῦ σώματος (= T XIV Amato-Julien).

self as Favorinus' *sectator*, and praises his diverse intellectual abilities, such as his vast erudition, his charming eloquence, and his great memory. On the other hand, as we have seen above in the discussion of 4, 1, Gellius invites his readers to view Favorinus from various frames of references, moving between a Platonic matrix, which proves Favorinus' Socratic eminence as an 'exposer of sophists', and a Roman one, which exposes him as an 'inferior authority' compared to Gellius. Along these lines, the *Noctes Atticae* feature Favorinus as an ambiguous type of intellectual. The chapters where we see him perform should not be read in a straight way, as sources of erudition enlivened by the presence of Favorinus as Gellius' mouthpiece. Gellius time and again challenges the reader to pit Favorinus' authority against various other authorities, and to scrutinise his performance from various frames of reference. One of these frames of reference is Favorinus' ill repute, which Gellius supposes his readers to have in the back of their minds.

Thus, we can observe a complexity of effect in Gellius' technique of representing Favorinus, blending a sensitivity to Favorinus' charismatic authority with elements of diatribe that allude to his ambiguous reputation in 'real life'. The ambiguity of Gellius' literary remembrance of Favorinus is concomitant with the plurality of roles in which Gellius presents himself, appearing on the one hand as his *sectator*, and on the other hand as a fellow—even rival—writer of a work of miscellaneous knowledge (cf. 14, 6). The complexity of effect fits in with the dynamics of Gellius' Roman cultural programme, which negotiates Roman cultural authority in a process of interaction with the authority of 'others'. In every chapter, he invites his reader to 'scrutinise the authorities' (cf. Praef. 18 *auctoritates hominum pensitent, ... quos ... secuti sumus*), and find out where true authority lies through a process of careful and in depth reading.

Possibly as a result of a too rosy or a too one-sided view on Gellius as 'admiring pupil', some allusions to Favorinus' notorious reputation have not had the attention they deserve. In the spirit of Apollinaris' *facetissima dissimulatio* (cf. 18, 4), Gellius introduces Favorinus in scenes that combine philological teaching with slanderous allusions to his tainted reputation. The provocative nature of these allusions serves to raise questions of authority, recalling the *chreia*-style as in Lucian's *Demonax*. Integrating it into his Roman cultural programme, Gellius uses this sophisticated 'rhetoric of humour' to remind the reader in a subtle way of his own authority. We should not misread the allusions in the *Noctes Atticae* to Favorinus' 'bad press' by putting them on a

par with Gellius' hostile attacks on the *grammatici*: Favorinus receives a 'special treatment'. It is striking that Gellius repeatedly makes Favorinus collaborate in the satire that undermines his own authority, or even puts the allusions to Favorinus' bad reputation on his own lips. Yet, on the other hand, the political context in which we should view Gellius' self-fashioning as a cultural authority adds to his representations of Favorinus a strong dimension of political satire.

Favorinus and Socrates: ambiguous physiognomies

Favorinus' subtle allusions to his own physicality and bad reputation can be seen as part of Gellius' playful representation of his master as a 'Roman Socrates'. The Academic philosopher Favorinus admired Socrates for various reasons,⁴ and Gellius reflects this admiration in a way that serves his own agenda. Appearing in the *Noctes Atticae* as a kind of 'jester-hero', Favorinus does his own reputation proud, but also that of his 'role-model' Socrates—both were famous for their use of humour and satire.⁵ Moreover, they were both famous for their physical defects.⁶ As we have briefly observed in Part I and shall see in more detail in the present chapter, Favorinus seems ironically self-conscious of his own strange physicality and of his notorious reputation in the *Noctes Atticae*. In this ironic self-consciousness he resembles Socrates too.

In his *Corinthian Oration* (35), Favorinus compared himself to Socrates as a victim of slander. This may also recall the slander that they both suffered as a result of physiognomical 'readings' of their bodies. Comparable to Polemo's analysis of Favorinus' appearance, Socrates'

⁴ For the evidence in Favorinus' fragments of his admiration of Socrates as a philosopher see Ioppolo 1993, 212 n. 110. Moreover, Favorinus also admired Socrates' rhetorical qualities: according to his Παντοδαπή Ἱστορία, Socrates and his pupil Aeschines were the first to teach rhetoric (Diog. Laërt. *Vit.* 2, 20 καὶ γὰρ πρῶτος, ὥς φησι Φαβωρίνος ἐν Παντοδαπῇ ἱστορίᾳ, μετὰ τοῦ μαθητοῦ Αἰσχίνου ῥητορεύειν ἐδίδαξε').

⁵ For Favorinus' notorious taste for jesting cf. Polemo, *physiogn.* A20 Hoyland (see Hoyland 2007, 379 with n. 158) 'despite his form he would poke fun at everything'. According to Marache 1953, 92, Favorinus himself may have been a prime source of influence on Gellius' use of satirical diatribe. The Apuleian Socrates (cf. *Met.* 1, 7, 4) seems an 'extreme', caricatural reflection of the 'real' Socrates' reputation as a jester; cf. Plat. *Symp.* 221D–E on Socrates' likeness to Silens and Satyrs; Cic. *nat. deor.* 1, 93 on Socrates as the *scurra* of Athens (cf. Min. Fel. 38, 5); see Keulen 2003, 110f.

⁶ For Socrates' notorious ugliness cf. Xen. *Symp.* 4, 19; 5, 5–7; Plat. *Theat.* 143c7–9; 209b10–c2; *Symp.* 215a4–217a2; see Vogt 1999, 78f.; 83f.

physiognomy was interpreted by a foreign seer called Zopyrus as that of a womanizer and a fool.⁷ Regarding Socrates' erotic interests, Holford-Strevens (2003, 104 with n. 34) points to Favorinus' similar inclinations (cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* I, 8 p. 489), a shared interest which may be illustrated by Favorinus' lost work *On Socrates and his Art of Love*.⁸

In the anecdotes about his physiognomy, Socrates admits the vices, but also retorts that he would only become like this in reality, if he did not try to conquer his libidinous nature by philosophical *askesis*.⁹ As Rossetti (1980) plausibly argues, the probable origin of the story of Socrates' and Zopyrus' encounter is a Socratic λόγος προτρεπτικός by Phaedo of Elis.¹⁰ Interestingly, Gellius mentions this Phaedo as a 'distinguished philosopher, whose very tasteful discourses on Socrates are in circulation' (2, 18, 5 *philosophus inlustris ... sermonesque eius de Socrate admodum elegantes leguntur*). Although this does not prove that Gellius had read Phaedo's *Zopyrus*, it is unlikely that Gellius was not aware of the popular story about the physiognomical 'evidence' of Socrates' vice.¹¹ Given the widespread nature of the anecdote throughout antiquity, but especially in physiognomic writings and compilations and epitomes partly going back to Polemo,¹² Rossetti (1980, 190) plausibly suggests that Polemo had written a version of the story of Zopyrus and Socrates too, and had known its origin, the *Zopyrus* by Phaedo of Elis. Apparently, the anecdote elicited a fundamental debate on the relation between body and mind, and the question whether the one mirrored the other, a debate which was particularly vivid in Gellius' time.¹³ As

⁷ Cf. Cic. *Fat.* 10; *Tusc.* 4, 80; Alex. *Aphrod. fat.* 6 with Zierl 1995, 162 ad loc. More testimonies are listed by Rossetti 1980; Vogt 1999, 114–116; Boys-Stones 2007, 27. Bollók 1996, 9 compares Socrates' story with the duality between the negative physiognomic characteristics and the internal sanctity of the apostle Paul (cf. the description of Paul's appearance in *The Acts of Paul and Thecla* 3).

⁸ Cf. *GCA* 2007, 200 on *Met.* 1, 8, 1 where the Apuleian character called Socrates is addicted to *uoluptatem Veneriam*.

⁹ R. Foerster, *Scriptores Physiognomici* Vol. I, Leipzig 1898, VIII–XIII compares Ps.-Plut. *On Askesis* vers. syr. fol. 179 (see *RhM* 27 [1872], 527), where Demosthenes is paired with Socrates as an example of conquering many things through labour.

¹⁰ Cf. Diog. Laert. 2, 105, who attributes a dialogue *Zopyrus* to Phaedo. Earlier, Diogenes related the anecdote of Zopyrus and Socrates (2, 45).

¹¹ The same story is alluded to by Gellius' contemporary Maximus of Tyre in his *Oration on the True Beauty of Speech* (25), to illustrate his distrust of the power of vision for finding out the true character of the soul (25, 3).

¹² Some versions introduce Hippocrates instead of Socrates, and a foreign seer with a different name than Zopyrus, but the outline of the story and its protreptic function is identical.

¹³ Half a century after Gellius, Origenes names Zopyrus in one breath with Polemo

Boys-Stones (2007, 27–32) points out, the evidence suggests that Phaedo considered physiognomy as a reliable diagnosis of innate, irrational character, and that this non-rational character (desires, lust) was *not* susceptible to training or rehabilitation. Possibly, Gellius invites us to identify Phaedo's opinion with Polemo's view on Favorinus.¹⁴ It is significant that Gellius mentions Phaedo at the beginning of a chapter with programmatic figures of satire and diatribe (Menippus, Varro, Diogenes), and that he ends the chapter with one of Favorinus' enemies, Epictetus (2, 18, 10; see below). Moreover, the humorous allusions to Socrates' libidinous—in this case pederastic—nature in the same chapter are hard to ignore.¹⁵

Gellius' use of Favorinus as a 'comic authority figure' should be seen against the background of the contemporary intellectual discourse on the body-mind problem as outlined above, and can be illustrated by Favorinus' striking parallels with Socrates as a 'protreptic' authority who is simultaneously comically ambiguous and notoriously suspicious as a result of his physiognomy.¹⁶ The most significant implications, in my opinion, of the connections between Favorinus and Socrates as objects of the physiognomical gaze are related to the reader's activity of 'scrutinising authority' in the *Noctes Atticae*. This scrutinising goes

as typical representatives of physiognomic science, who in his view wrongly profess the knowledge that all bodies conform to the habits of their souls (*contra Celsum*, 1, 33 = Frg. 19 in Rossetti 1980, 190).

¹⁴ Holford-Strevens (2003, 268f.) similarly interprets Gellius' discussion of the rivalry between Plato and Xenophon as got up by their respective fan-clubs (14, 3) as a reflection of the rivalry between Favorinus and Polemo so explained by Philostratus.

¹⁵ The chapter presents Phaedo as a prostitute slave-boy (2, 18, 3 *a lenone domino puer ad merendum coactus*), in whom Socrates takes a particular interest, urging his intimate friend Cebes (*hortante Socrate*) to buy him (*emisse*) in order to introduce him into the '*cohors illa Socratica*' (cf. *ThLL* s.v. *emo* 514,51f. on buying 'amor venalis'). Gellius alludes here to the joke about 'procuring' pupils for Socrates in Xen. *Symp.* 4, 62; for Socrates as a lover of boys cf. Plat. *Charm.* 153D–155D. See Dover 1978, 156f. on the free use of the *erastes*—*eromenos* terminology (both literal and figurative) in the context of the Socratic circle. For satire on Socrates as pederast cf. Lucian. *vit. auct.* 15.

¹⁶ Significantly, Favorinus pays tribute to Socrates' role as a paradigm of physical self-control and askesis in Gell. 2, 1, a chapter that emphasises the disjunction of mind and body (2, 1, 2 *immobilis ... tamquam quodam secessu mentis atque animi facto a corpore*, 'motionless ... as if his mind and soul had been, as it were, withdrawn from his body'), and makes Socrates seem like a statue. Favorinus refers to his reputation as a protreptic authority in his Corinthian speech (8), according to which the Corinthians have allegedly placed his statue in the library for its power to stimulate the youth to follow his example (see Amato-Julien 2005, 420–423 ad loc.). See Elsner 2007, 207 for a discussion of possible statue types for Favorinus' Corinthian statue.

beyond a visual analysis of someone's face as the mirror of irrational character, including desires and vices. It also involves the assessment of discipline and training, in short, of the benefits and usefulness of education. If someone cannot better his irrational nature by training and discipline, how can he be an educational paradigm, and what purpose does his *askesis* serve?

Although Socrates does not contradict Zopyrus' physiognomical analysis—he admits to be libidinous—he claims to avoid letting this evil nature interfere with his life, pointing to his free self-disposition, and the ability to fashion himself through temperance and self-discipline. Thus, Socrates emerges as a paradoxical figure, where appearance and essence contradict each other: self-restraint and contempt of exterior values lie hidden within an outer shell that suggests lustfulness.¹⁷ In the spirit of Plato, perceiving someone's true character does not depend from vision but from 'intellectual sight'.¹⁸ Phaedo of Elis, on the other hand, approached physiognomy in a similar way to Polemo. Thus, there are various competing 'modes' by which controversial characters like Socrates and Favorinus can be measured and judged: a 'visual' mode, related to physiognomy, and a 'philosophical' or 'intellectual' mode, in the spirit of the Platonic dialogue.

We can view this plurality of criteria as an indication of Gellius' ambiguous attitude towards physiognomy, an attitude which reflects the complexity of the contemporary debate on measures and standards against which the intellectual aristocracy should be measured. On the one hand, both Gellius and Apuleius illustrate an 'effective' physiognomical method of recognising true philosophical qualities: both write anecdotes about 'physiognomical recruitment', which are situated in a context of a distant past associated with the origins of philosophy.¹⁹ On the other hand, in the tradition of the Platonic dialogue, Gellius and Apuleius make sparing use of visual details to depict their protagonists.

¹⁷ Cf. Plat. *Symp.* 216c–e and see Vogt 1999, 79f.

¹⁸ Cf. Plat. *Symp.* 219a 'Remember, the intellectual sight begins to be keen when the visual is entering on its wane.'

¹⁹ In 1, 9, Gellius describes the function of physiognomic analysis as an 'admissions test' for the community of the philosopher Pythagoras; Apuleius testifies to the same belief in physiognomy as an instrument of selection and configuration of a philosophical elite. In his story about the origins of Plato in *De Platone et eius dogmate* (1, 1), Apuleius relates that Socrates, before accepting Plato as a student, acknowledged his future pupil's *ingenium* by judging his looks (*quem ubi adspexit ille ingeniumque intimum de exteriori conspiciatus est facie*). See Keulen 2006, 170. Cf. below, p. 211.

Apparently, we are supposed to discern and to judge their characters by what they *say*, not by what they look like.²⁰

It is up to the reader to enter a complex process of ‘judging’ Favorinus’ character in *Noctes Atticae*, scrutinising his authority from various frames of reference. On the one hand, he will put Favorinus as a philosopher and teacher on a par with Socrates as a protreptic figure, who places free self-disposition and training above natural disposition. In the light of the Socratic paradigm, the reader is invited to perceive the Gellian Favorinus as a role-model for Gellius’ cultural programme. This could be seen as a ‘strategy of rehabilitation’, just as Socrates had been rehabilitated by his pupils Plato and Xenophon. On the other hand, however, the reader will scrutinise Gellius’ portrayal of Favorinus in the light of the ‘evidence’ about his life and morals, and recognise congruities and incongruities with Gellius’ Roman cultural outlook. Through subtle allusions to Favorinus’ controversial image, the reader is challenged to take his own position in the question whether Favorinus’ authority is truly protreptic and representative of the values of the *Noctes Atticae*. With the physiognomical outlook of Phaedo of Elis and Polemo at the back of his mind, the Gellian reader may interpret the allusions to Favorinus’ vices as ‘proofs’ of his innate immorality, which cannot be changed by any training. Moreover, the reader is invited to assess Favorinus’ training itself as a source of authority. As it turns out, neither Socrates nor Favorinus prove to be unassailable role-models in the ideological framework of *Noctes Atticae*.

Socratic self-exposure

Since Favorinus like Socrates was a notorious victim of slander, his attitude in the *Noctes Atticae* may be inspired by Socrates’ response to the verbal abuse and invective directed at him in contemporary political satire (Ps.-Plut. *de lib. educ.* 14, *Mor.* 10C–D):

Ἀριστοφάνους δέ, ὅτε τὰς Νεφέλας ἐξέφερε, παντοίως πᾶσαν ὕβριν αὐτοῦ κατασκεδαννύντος, καὶ τινος τῶν παρόντων “κᾶτα τοιαῦτ’ ἀνακωμωδοῦντος οὐκ ἀγανακτεῖς” εἰπόντος “ὦ Σώκρατες;” “μὰ Δί’ οὐκ ἔγωγ’,” ἔφησεν “ὥς γὰρ ἐν συμποσίῳ μέγῳ τῷ θεάτρῳ σκώπτομαι.”

²⁰ Cf. Gell. 13, 20, 3 *adulescens* ..., *quod ex eius sermonibus coniectare potui, non abhorrens a litteris*. Cf. Apul. *Flor.* 2, 1 and see Holford-Strevens 1997, 96 on Gellius as ‘non-visual portraitist’.

And when Aristophanes brought out the *Clouds*, and heaped all manner of abuse upon Socrates in every possible way, one of those who had been present said to Socrates, 'Are you not indignant, Socrates, that he used you as he did in the play?' 'No indeed,' he replied, 'when they ridicule me in the theatre I feel as if I were at a big party of good friends'.

Favorinus' (self-)identification with Socrates as an eloquent philosopher who was ironically self-conscious of his defective physique and slandered reputation appears to valorise him as comic authority figure in the *Noctes Atticae* to a certain extent.²¹ Yet, while the associations between Favorinus and Socrates run indeed like a leitmotif through Gellius' work, they also include aspects of Socrates' reputation that were ambiguous or even questionable from a Roman cultural perspective. Thus, Gellius uses his master's role-model Socrates also to expose weak aspects of Favorinus' authority.

Gellius' 'festival of learning' has a great deal in common with the 'big party of good friends' indicated by Socrates in the passage quoted above with reference to Aristophanic comedy. We have already observed that the Cynic humour (κυνικός τρόπος) of the *chreia* was viewed by Demetrius (*On Style*, 170) as a form of sympotic culture. In the *chreiai* of the *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius subtly engages in appropriate forms of slander and satire that combine a κυνικός τρόπος with an Aristophanic *facetissima dissimulatio*, challenging the reader to fill in the gaps of his jokes from his knowledge of notorious reputations, and to decipher an enthymeme by recognising a hidden point. It is probably not a coincidence that one of the sympotic diversions mentioned by Gellius in 7, 13—one of the chapters that illustrate Gellius' cultural programme on a micro-scale—is the posing and solving of ἐνθυμημάτια.²² Favorinus' reputation offered a rich potential of material for Gellius' rhetoric of humour. Gellius shows inventiveness in his employment of Favorinus as a 'comic authority figure' in the spirit of Socrates, who draws attention to his own notoriety.²³

²¹ Cf. Epict. *Diss.* 4, 8, 23, where Socrates is described as glad that he was not annoyed at not being recognised as a philosopher by people as a result of the way he looked.

²² Gell. 7, 13, 4 *quaerebantur autem non grauia nec reuerenda, sed ἐνθυμημάτια quaedam lepida et minuta et florentem uino animum lacessantia, quale hoc ferme est subtilitatis ludicrae, quod dicam*, 'The topics, however, were neither weighty nor serious, but certain neat but trifling ἐνθυμημάτια or 'problems', which would pique a mind enlivened with wine; for instance, the examples of playful subtlety which I shall quote.'

²³ On Apuleius' use of Socrates as a figure of satirical self-exposure, combining

Moreover, there is a strong parallel between Aristophanes and Gellius in the politicised nature of their texts, employing comic thrusts at the personalities and reputations of their time to articulate their position in the contemporary debate.²⁴ In what follows, I will give some examples to illustrate how Gellius in his ‘play with reputations’ employs the reader’s presupposed awareness of the notorious controversies around Favorinus, and how he presents Favorinus as ‘self-exposer’ regarding his own ill repute.

Gellius’ politics of rehabilitation

A good example of Gellius’ satirical play with reputations is the fierce controversy between Epictetus and Favorinus, which Gellius evokes in a humorous way already in the first book. As Barigazzi (1991, 92) on Galen’s *On the best way of teaching* (*Opt. doct.* 1, 2) suggests,²⁵ the slave of Plutarch staged by Gellius (1, 26, 4–9) in a witty anecdote—in the context of a discussion with his master Taurus on anger—is very likely to be Plutarch’s slave Onesimus, presented by Favorinus in his *Against Epictetus* as a polemicist against Epictetus—evidently, Favorinus had not found Epictetus, a former slave, a worthy interlocutor for his friend and master Plutarch. Gellius must have had this incident in mind as he mentioned Epictetus at the end of a list of philosophers who were former slaves; he gives this mention a specific prominence

Aristophanic and Cynic views on Socrates as an unconventional philosopher who conspicuously draws attention to his own unconventionality, see Keulen 2003.

²⁴ Aristophanes was already viewed as a politico-satirical author in antiquity; see Csapo 2000, 116.

²⁵ Favorinus’ enemy Galen is an important witness of the conflict between Favorinus and Epictetus; he evidently took side with the latter. In his vehement criticism of Favorinus’ sceptical teaching (*Opt. doct.* 1, 2, probably written between 162–166 A.D., when Galen stayed in Rome), he not only quotes Favorinus’ essay *Plutarch*, but also his *Against Epictetus*, which points to the fiery debate between Academics (Plutarch, Favorinus) and Stoics. Galen’s negative attitude towards Favorinus and Academic scepticism was similar to that of Epictetus, and he even wrote an *On Behalf of Epictetus against Favorinus* (which did not come down to us). Epictetus accused the Sceptics of incoherence, and argues that they are self-refuting, since they are committed to urging that one should know that nothing should be known, they ask to be believed that nothing is to be believed, and they teach that nothing can be taught (Epictetus, *Discourses* 2, 20, 3–5; Hankinson 1995, 145 compares this passage to Galen. *Opt. doct.* 5, 1). As Hankinson points out (1995, 146), “Epictetus played Cato to Favorinus’s Carneades”, denouncing the morally deleterious influence of Scepticism (*Discourses* 2, 20, 34f.).

by paradoxically emphasising its lack of necessity, since, according to Gellius, the memory of the fact that also Epictetus was a slave was too fresh in the memory of his readers to need to be committed to writing.²⁶

This is a telling comment for more than one reason. Evidently, the battle between Favorinus and Epictetus was still vividly present in the collective memory of Gellius' day. The fact that Epictetus' status as a slave was not *oblitteratum* draws attention to the *litterae* in which this was put forward, and which have not been 'erased yet'.²⁷ It is difficult not to think of Favorinus' essay, which must have been circulating among Gellius' audience. Possibly, Gellius' readers would also be reminded of the name of Galen, which Gellius never mentions, just as Polemo's name. Moreover, this elliptical strategy draws our attention to the fact that Gellius in some cases may choose to omit the mention of certain persons and things, which are so fresh in his readers' memory that they will spontaneously supply the information that Gellius tactically avoids giving in writing. Such omissions, at the same time, can become subtle insinuations from Gellius' part. It is significant that the remark about Epictetus occurs in a chapter that mentions various names to which Gellius' use of satire and diatribe is programmatically indebted: Menippus and Varro as the writer of Menippean/Cynic satires (2, 18, 7), Diogenes the Cynic (2, 18, 9), and the already mentioned Phaedo of Elis (2, 18, 1–5).

In chapter 17, 19 Gellius makes Favorinus quote an invective of Epictetus against those philosophers who discredit their intellectual pursuits by a thoroughly corrupt character. In the light of the vehement polemic between Epictetus and Favorinus, the reader is invited to detect in this diatribe a coded slander of Favorinus himself—a significant cue to interpret the chapter in terms of Cynic diatribe is the

²⁶ Cf. 2, 18, 10 *De Epicteto autem philosopho nobili, quod is quoque servus fuit recentior est memoria quam ut scribi quasi oblitteratum debuerit.*

²⁷ The combination of *scribi* and *oblitteratum* suggests an etymological play with *oblitterare*, evoking the notion of literally erasing *litterae*; for *oblitterare* used of erasing *litterae* cf. 9, 14, 2 *corruptos autem quosdam libros repperi, in quibus 'faciei' scriptum est illo, quod ante scriptum erat, oblitterato*; Plin. nat. 35, 69 *haec (sc. tabula) ibi ter fulmine ambusta neque oblitterata hoc ipso miraculum auget*; see ThLL s.v. *oblittero* 105.77. For the play with *oblitterare*—*litterae*, *litteratus* etc. cf. Gell. 11, 18, 4 *eius igitur leges... non decreto iussoque, set tacito inlitteratoque Atheniensium consensu oblitteratae sunt*; Apul. apol. 4 *continuatio etiam litterati laboris ... colorem oblitterat.*

word κυνικώτερον (17, 19, 4). Indeed, Epictetus' invective reveals striking parallels with Favorinus' reputation of wickedness and lack of self-restraint. Gellius' emphatically repeated references to Favorinus as the one whom he heard quoting Epictetus underline the irony of the 'insinuating omissions' (17, 19, 1 *Fauorinum ego audiui dicere...* 17, 19, 5 *quod ex eodem Fauorino audiui...*), and reflect a pattern throughout the *Noctes* as indicated above, presenting Favorinus as a 'self-exposing' character.

Another example of 'self-exposure' related to battles with rivals is Gellius' chapter on empty loquacity (1, 15), in which he represents Favorinus quoting lines from Euripides' *Bacchae* in reference to foolish and immoderate chatterers (1, 15, 17). Some of his opponents had stereotyped Favorinus as a blabbermouth, a stereotype that passed judgment on both the man and his style.²⁸ Moreover, his arch-enemy Galen, who attacked Favorinus as a representative of Academic Scepticism, had ridiculed his philosophical teaching as ἀδολεσχία and λή-ρος ('idle talk and nonsense', *Optima doctr.* 3, 3).²⁹ By making Favorinus interpret the Euripidean lines as attacking both immoral and unbridled forms of speech, Gellius subtly draws our attention to Favorinus' own reputation as a blabbermouth who went astray (cf. 1, 15, 17 *non ... tantum ... impia aut illicita ... sed uel maxime ... stulta et inmodica*). Gellius' subsequent quotation of the verbal attack on chatterers made by the 'facetissimus poeta' Aristophanes may point to the Aristophanic nature of his own chapter,³⁰ along the same lines as the *facetissima dissimulatio* that indirectly ridicules Fronto's authority in 18, 4. As in that chapter, a Sallustian quotation supports the mockery—here (1, 15, 18), the phrase '*satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum*' (*Cat.* 5, 4) subtly points the finger at Favorinus' 'sophistic' image, being a successful rhetorical performer,

²⁸ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 25 p. 541 *λάλον χοῦμα* (= T XIII Amato-Julien): Favorinus is branded as a chatterbox by the philosopher Timocrates in a conversation with his pupil Polemo. In the public opinion manipulated by his enemies, Favorinus' style was branded as effeminate (cf. Lucian, *Demonax* 12 [= T XLVII Amato-Julien] *ὥς ἐν γέλωτι ποιοῖτο τὰς ὁμιλίας αὐτοῦ καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ἐν αὐταῖς μελῶν τὸ ἐπιτεκλασμένον σφόδρα ὥς ἀγεννὲς καὶ γυναικεῖον*).

²⁹ The term ἀδολεσχίης, 'prater, idle talker', is used 'especially of reputed sophists' (LSJ), cf. Plat. *Theat.* 195b; *Polit.* 488e; as a term of abuse for Socrates, Eupolis 386 K.-A.

³⁰ According to Holford-Strevens 2003, 115 n. 83, the Aristophanic quotation is Gellius' 'postscript', whereas he sees Favorinus as the source of the quotations from Euripides, Eupolis (§12) and Epicharmus (§15).

but of questionable philosophical status. The link with Favorinus is reinforced by the mentioning of his teacher M. Valerius Probus, who is also quoted in another chapter that features Favorinus and focuses on a Sallustian quotation (3, 1), at which we will look in more detail below.

Along these lines, such chapters are indicative of Favorinus' role of a 'comic authority figure', who teaches through oblique references to his own imperfections. Rather than as a Cynic, who would explicitly expose his own physicality and attack his opponents in a 'rough' way (cf. Demonax's style, termed *τραχύτερον*), Favorinus appears 'Socratic' in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* through his subtle self-revealing allusions and his gentle treatment of opponents. Through his role of a Socrates who exposes intellectuals of dubious quality like the *ueterator* (3, 1) or the conceited grammarian (4, 1), Favorinus on a certain level seems to be 'rehabilitated' from the defamation that had undermined his philosophical authority.

For example, in chapter 4, 1 Favorinus' performance in *Socraticum modum* suggests that he is the 'winner' of the discussion, whereas the boastful *grammaticus* is the loser. The description of the voice of the cornered schoolmaster by means of the terms *mollis* and *demissa* (4, 1, 13) is significant in the context of Favorinus' reputation: the terms connote effeminacy and degradation,³¹ and the combination only occurs in one other passage in Gellius, where it characterises the effeminate and meek voice of the Roman orator Hortensius (1, 5), who was attacked for his effeminate behaviour and attire by the conservative Roman Torquatus. As we will see below, that chapter about Hortensius and Demosthenes invites comparison with the attacks Favorinus himself suffered for his unmanly nature. In the present case, however (4, 1, 13), such Favorinian characteristics are humorously transferred to the conspicuous loser of the scene. In a similar 'politics of rehabilitation', Gellius assures us that Favorinus did not steer conversations from trivialities to worthwhile subjects for the sake of showing off (4, 1, 19 *non per ostentationem*; cf. 14, 1, 2). On the surface, this puts Favorinus in a favourable contrast with the *grammaticus*, who is overtly boastful (4, 1 tit. *iactantiore*; 4, 1, 1 *ostentabat*). Yet, Gellius' denial obviously alludes to Favorinus' sophistic

³¹ Cf. Gell. 1, 11, 15 *demissam iacentemque orationem*; see OLD s.v. *demissus* 4b; ThLL s.v. *demitto* (*demissus*) 494, 26f.; OLD s.v. *mollis* 15; cf. Cic. *de orat.* 3, 41 *mollis uox et muliebris*; more examples in ThLL s.v. *mollis* 1378, 32f., cf. e.g. *Physiogn. Lat.* 78 Repath *qui acutam et mollem habent uocem, effeminati sunt*.

reputation—as his powerful rhetorical display had undoubtedly played a role in the undermining of his philosophical reputation in Antonine society, Gellius’ emphatic negation of Favorinus’ show rhetoric simultaneously points the finger at a weak spot.³²

Favorinus as ‘comic authority figure’ also recalls another famous ugly personality, the fabulist Aesop (cf. Gell. 2, 29, 1). In Philostratus’ *Life of Apollonius* (5, 14, 2), after Menippus’ criticism that Aesop’s tales are nothing more than ‘frogs, ... donkeys and nonsense (λήροι) for old women and children to chew on’ (cf. Gell. 18, 7, 3), Apollonius replies that he considers Aesop’s fables ‘more conducive to philosophy’ than the myths told by the poets, because he uses ‘humble subjects to teach great lessons’, ἀπὸ σικκρῶν πραγμάτων διδάσκει μεγάλα (cf. Gell. 4, 1, 19). Graverini 2007, 120f. discusses the Philostratean passage as exemplary for the combination of *utile* and *dulce* in correlation with the idea of fiction. In Gellius, we find a synthesis of the ‘Apollonian’ and the ‘Menippean’ perspective on Favorinus, but the ‘Apollonian’ serves as a vehicle for the ‘Menippean’.

Thus, Gellius’ ‘politics of rehabilitation’ explores both the positive and the negative aspects of Favorinus’ reputation, allowing him the role of the ‘winner’ in debates with intellectuals of less calibre, and depicting him as a person with a strong charisma and a powerful sense of humour. Favorinus’ ambiguous physical presence gives the Gellian *chreiai* ‘legs’, and makes them memorable and thought-provoking on issues of true authority. Yet, Favorinus’ function as a ‘comic authority figure’ is double-edged, forming part of Gellius’ complex rhetoric of humour that includes ‘Aristophanic’ and ‘Menippean’ satire.³³ Whereas Favorinus’ comic self-awareness in the *Noctes Atticae* appears to protect him from the notorious slander and allegations made against him, this ‘rehabilitation’ eventually takes place on the surface only. Within Gellius’ cultural programme, the lively portrayals of this controversial

³² Philostratus (*vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 492) speaks of Favorinus’ φιλοτιμία, ‘ambition’ (cf. Gleason 1995, 129; “showing off”), and calls sophistic oratory an art whose practitioners are prone to the vices of conceit and boastfulness (*vit. soph.* 2, 27 p. 616 τὴν τέχνην φίλαντόν τε καὶ ἀλαζόνα). For vainglory and showing off as indictments of ‘pseudo-philosophers’ cf. Lucian. *Demonax* 48 Μάλιστα δὲ ἐπολέμει τοῖς οὐ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν φιλοσοφοῦσιν; ‘Above all, he [Demonax] made war on those who cultivate philosophy in the spirit of vainglory and not in the spirit of truth’.

³³ On the double-edged role of Favorinus’ authority, which may reflect the traditional ambiguous relation between Roman identity and Greek culture, see also below, p. 155f. (cf. Feeney 1998, 50–52; Wray 2001, 206f.).

personality also entail a satirical exposure of his notoriously ambiguous authority, an exposure which serves to make Gellius' own authoritative voice heard.³⁴

³⁴ Compare the observations of Goldhill (1995, 16) on the public staging in the law court, like the comic theatre, of the 'political violence of laughter' in the citizens' contests of status. With the example of Aeschines' speech in *Timarchum* (also used by Gellius as a paradigm for Favorinus' controversial image, see below, chapter five), Goldhill illustrates how "the speaker in the public forums of debate where men contest utilises both the aggression of the laughter of derision and the complicity of such laughter to manipulate an audience's perception of the standing, the social positioning, of the antagonists." By his unwitting doubles entendres about his own sexual behaviour (he was accused of having been a male prostitute), the politician Timarchus reduced the audiences in the Assembly (Aesch. in *Tim.* 80) and in the council of the Areopagus (81–85) to uproarious laughter.

CHAPTER FIVE

EXPOSING HIS OWN INFAMY: AVARICE AND UNMANLINESS

An example of Gellius' allusive strategy regarding Favorinus' reputation that to my knowledge has not yet been fully brought to light is formed by two controversial notions that are reminiscent of Favorinus' reputation: effeminacy and avarice. In several chapters of the *Noctes* featuring Favorinus, we can observe a significant interconnection of these two vices, running like a thread through Gellian discussions of Latin words and phrases. Probably not by coincidence, they are particularly visible in the first and the last chapter of book three (3, 1; 3, 19), and form a significant frame of reference in the opening chapter of the next book (4, 1). As we have seen above in the introduction, Gellius often gives Favorinus a significant role in revealing aspects of his own infamy or ambiguous reputation through allusions and double entendres in the *Noctes Atticae*, and we see him doing this in these chapters as well.

The 'double bind' of Roman manhood

First, we will discuss Favorinus' alleged effeminacy and avarice as crucial aspects of his reputation, employed by Gellius in the context of his Roman cultural programme. As we have seen, Polemo is the main source for the allegations concerning Favorinus' unmanly nature and behaviour. Avoiding direct mention of Polemo's slanderous representations of Favorinus, Gellius uses in one of the first chapters of his *Noctes* (1, 5) the abuse of Demosthenes by Aeschines in the *Against Timarchus* (§131) as a kind of 'coded paradigm' to illustrate the attacks suffered by Favorinus and his self-conscious response to them.¹ Although he quotes his speech, Gellius does not mention Aeschines' name in 1, 5, which reminds us of Gellius' complete silencing of Polemo's name in the *Noctes* (1, 5, 1):

¹ For the chapter's connection with the feud between Favorinus and Polemo see Holford-Strevens 2003, 104.

Demosthenen traditum est uestitu ceteroque cultu corporis nitido uenustoque nimisque accurato fuisse. Et hinc ei τὰ κομψὰ illa χλανίσκια et μαλακοὶ χιτωνίσκοι et ab aemulis aduersariisque probro data, hinc etiam turpibus indignisque in eum uerbis non temperatum, quin parum uir et ore quoque polluto diceretur.

It is said that Demosthenes in his dress and other personal habits was excessively spruce, elegant and studied. It was for this reason that he was taunted by his rivals and opponents with his “exquisite, pretty mantles” and “soft, pretty tunics”; for that reason, too, that they did not refrain from applying to him foul and shameful epithets, alleging that he was no man enough and even guilty of unnatural vice.

Rolfe’s translation of *ore polluto*, ‘guilty of unnatural vice’, does not render the ambiguity of the Latin phrase, which on the one hand insinuates that Demosthenes defiled his mouth by illicit sexual intercourse,² and on the other hand implies that this allegedly effeminate man spoke in a debased, effeminate manner.³ As Holford-Strevens (2003, 238 with n. 72) points out, Gellius took the allegation that Demosthenes was *parum uir et ore quoque polluto* probably from a different speech of Aeschines, where he alleges that Demosthenes was ‘a *cinaedus* abaft and afore’ (2, 88 κίναιδον αὐτὸν προσειπὼν καὶ μὴ καθαρεύοντα τῷ σώματι μηδ’ ὅθεν τὴν φωνὴν ἀφίησιν). Especially the last words of the quotation seems to have interested Gellius, for the circumlocution “the part from where he lets his voice hear” draws attention to both the foul activities of the mouth and the kind of voice produced by such an organ (*ore polluto*).⁴

Through the allusion to Aeschines’ insinuations, reminding us of the sarcastical remarks which Aeschines and Demosthenes made of each other’s voices,⁵ Gellius subtly draws attention to Polemo’s insinuations

² Cf. *OLD* s.v. *os* 1b; s.v. *polluo* 4.

³ Cf. *OLD* s.v. *os* 4b, ‘quality of utterance’, ‘eloquence’ (cf. Gell. 19, 9, 2 *Antonius Iulianus rhetor* ... *Hispano ore florentisque homo facundiae*); s.v. *pollutus* b ‘(of style) debased, corrupt’, cf. Fronto *de orat.* 9 p. 157,6–7, in the context of his discussion of the effeminate style of Seneca (by the way, Fronto mentions an anonymous *Gallicanus declamator* in 11, who may be Favorinus) *dicas fortasse: ‘Quid in orationibus meis nouicium, quid crispulum, quid fuscum, quid purpurisso litum aut tumidum aut pollutum?’*

⁴ More precisely, *ore* reflects ὅθεν τὴν φωνὴν ἀφίησιν, whereas *polluto* reflects μὴ καθαρεύοντα.

⁵ Whereas Demosthenes had a weak voice, Aeschines had a loud voice, often mentioned by Demosthenes, usually in a sarcastic way. Demosthenes sometimes compares Aeschines’ loud voice with his own weak voice; cf. Dem. 19, 216 μηδὲ γε εἰ καλὸν καὶ μέγα οὗτος φθέγγεται, μηδ’ εἰ φαῦλον ἐγώ’. See MacDowell 2000, 351 on Dem. 19, 337–340.

about Favorinus' feminine voice, which are equally connected to allegations of illicit sexual intercourse, both passive and active.⁶

By putting Demosthenes on a par with the Roman orator Hortensius, who was equally stereotyped as effeminate (see above, p. 109), Gellius adds a Roman dimension to the chapter, showing that the competitive performance of manhood, in which such slanderous accusations of effeminacy originate, becomes even more complex when it occurs in a *Roman* context.⁷ Male self-performance at Rome was defined by what David Wray calls 'the double bind of manhood': on the one hand, the norms for masculine behaviour were dictated by the traditional Roman *mos maiorum*, or *prisca uirtus* ('old time manliness'), on the other hand, competition for manhood was connected with a 'cosmopolitan' competition for prestige, to be acquired through mastery of Hellenic culture. In his vignette of the confrontation between Hortensius and Torquatus, Gellius gives a lively representation of these paradoxical 'pulls' that defined the manly self-presentation of any Roman aristocrat who possessed Hellenic high culture. Moreover, Gellius also gives an entertaining representation of the agonistic arena of Roman intellectual life, where rivals were each other's judges, and where no Roman, in the words of Wray (2001, 206f.), "could be certain of being sufficiently cultivated without exposing himself to accusations of effeminacy, or of being sufficiently rough-hewn without incurring the charge of rusticity".

Just as the polemic between Polemo and Favorinus,⁸ the conflict between Torquatus and Hortensius is marked by a polarity between extreme paradigms, which originate in the opponents' mutual repre-

⁶ Polemo, *physiogn.* A20 Hoyland (= T V Amato-Julien) 'he had a voice resembling the voice of women'; *Physiogn. Lat.* 40 Repath (= T VI Amato-Julien) *uocem femineam, uerba muliebria, membra et articulos omnes sine uigore, laxos et dissolutos. Hunc dicit impatientia libidinum quae turpia sunt omnia passum esse et egisse quae passus est.* For the effeminate voice cf. also Lucian. *Eum.* 7 λεπτόν τι καὶ γυναικεῖον ἐμφθεγξάμενος, ἰὸ τὸ φώνημα γυναικεῖος.

⁷ Cf. 1, 5, 3 *sed cum L. Torquatus, subagresti homo ingenio et infestiuo, grauius acerbiusque apud consilium iudicum, cum de causa Sullae quaereretur, non iam histrionem eum esse diceret, sed gesticulariam Dionysiamque eum notissimae saltatriculae nomine appellaret, tum uoce molli atque demissa Hortensius "Dionysia," inquit, "Dionysia malo equidem esse quam quod tu, Torquate, ἄμουσος, ἀναφρόδιτος, ἀπροσδιόνυσος"*, 'Once, however, during the trial of Sulla, Lucius Torquatus (a person of rather uncouth and inelegant manners) began, during the jurors' deliberation, to insult Hortensius in a more deep and bitter tone, saying that he was not just a stage actor but a mime actor, and calling him "Dionysia" (the name of a dancing girl). At this, Hortensius answered in a soft, meek voice: "Dionysia indeed, Torquatus, I would rather be Dionysia than be what you are: no friend of the Muses, of Aphrodite, of Dionysus."' Translation after Wray 2001, 210.

⁸ See Gleason 1995, 74–76 (on 'Paradigms Rough and Smooth').

sentations. Significantly, Gellius' own representation of *both* litigants is influenced by the stereotypes derived from the debate itself. For example, Torquatus is stereotyped by Gellius as *subagresti homo ingenio et infestius*, which reflects Hortensius' insinuation that Torquatus was ἀμουσος, ἀναφρόδιτος, ἀπροσδιόνυσος.⁹ Gellius also represents Hortensius in a stereotypical way: by the effeminate vocal performance of his retort to Torquatus, Hortensius confirms the charges while defending himself against them (not denying them). His soft and meek voice, phrased in terms which, as we have observed above, connote effeminacy and degradation, seems to be part of a rhetorical strategy of answering the charge of effeminacy by impersonating the feminine.¹⁰

This strategy resembles the self-awareness of Favorinus in the *Noctes Atticae*, who repeatedly draws attention to notorious aspects of his own public image, using a type of self-satirical humour which seems to have contributed to his special charisma. Gellius' acknowledgement of this strategy of 'humour as the best self-defence' fits the pattern of apparent 'rehabilitation' that we can observe in his representations of Favorinus. As Gellius emphasises elsewhere (12, 12), a crucial aspect of Roman male self-presentation was humour and wit, employed to tackle the enemy's accusations and charges.¹¹ This rhetorical technique may also be reflected in Gellius' own self-fashioning, especially when he shows an ironical awareness of the 'low' reputation of his own intellectual activities.

Holford-Strevens (2003, 104 n. 32) observes that Hortensius' riposte to Torquatus "is such as Favorinus might have made to Polemo, had

⁹ Holford-Strevens 2003, 208 n. 62 points out that Gellius' representation of Torquatus contradicts Cic. *Brut.* 265. It may reflect Polemo's ambiguous reputation at the imperial court: the young Marcus Aurelius, for example, found Polemo's declamations too 'workaday' (*epist. M. Caes.* 2, 10, 1). See Holford-Strevens 2003, 277 with n. 74, pointing to the completely different picture of the relationship between Marcus and Polemo given by Philostratus. See Introduction, p. 11 n. 32.

¹⁰ See Wray 2001, 211 with n. 119, comparing Cic. *de orat.* 2, 277 (in the section on the use of humour in oratory).

¹¹ Cf. 12, 12, 1 *haec quoque disciplina rhetorica est callide et cum astu res criminosas citra periculum confiteri, ut, si obiectum sit turpe aliquid, quod negari non queat, responsione ioculari eludas et rem facias risu magis dignam quam crimine, sicut fecisse Ciceronem scriptum est, cum id, quod infitiri non poterat, urbano facetoque dicto diluit*, 'this is also a part of rhetorical training, cunningly and cleverly to admit charges not attended with danger, so that if something base is thrown up to you which cannot be denied, you may turn it off by a jocular reply, making the thing seem deserving of laughter rather than censure. This we read that Cicero did, when by a witty and clever remark he put aside what could not be denied.' Cf. Corbeil 2002, 207 on Caesar's retort to charges of effeminacy by embracing them.

the latter repeated his allegations to his face". In his view, Hortensius is clearly the winner against Torquatus, which means that we may be expected to take Favorinus' side against Polemo. Yet, the implications of the Gellian *exemplum* reach beyond the immediate question of winners and losers, stimulating further reflection on models of manly behaviour. As to any Roman intellectual who fashioned himself as an authority in the cultural world of his time, issues of Roman masculine identity and performance must have been of profound interest to Gellius, who seems to challenge his reader to investigate the norms and boundaries that defined such qualities. To stimulate this process, Gellius presents them in 1, 5 with two conflicting forms of behaviour, which are neither absolute models of Roman masculine performance, but rather represent two extremes of a schale. By showing his sensitivity to the influential authority of philhellenic intellectuals like Favorinus and to the criticism that their performance provoked, Gellius presents himself as a cosmopolitan Roman of his time. Although he generally represents Republican Rome as a model of behaviour for the Rome of his own days, Gellius nevertheless indicates a distance between past and present regarding the appreciation of elegant refinement.¹²

In Gellius' cultural programme, the 'double bind' of Roman *prisca uirtus* and Hellenic *paideia* is reflected in the idea(l) of the *homo ciuilitate eruditus*, who should not be ἄμωσος,¹³ but should not be effeminate either: chapter 1, 5 leaves room for making fun of both boorish rusticity and effeminacy. An elegant Roman intellectual of the Antonine age should develop his identity without becoming too much of a boorish Torquatus or of an effeminate mime actor. It should be stressed that Gellius elsewhere clearly opts for the traditional Roman norm of masculinity (cf. 6, 12, 3 and 3, 5). The satirical allusions to the notorious reputation of elegant intellectuals like Favorinus invite the Roman reader to reflect critically on his own position regarding deeper issues of cultural identity and authority. Was an effeminate philhellene with a controversial (sexual) reputation, notwithstanding his comic self-awareness, to be admired and followed as a model of behaviour in the contemporary arena of Roman masculine performance?

¹² Whereas *elegans* was a negative notion with the ancients (11, 2, 3 *qui nimis lecto amoenoque cultu uictique esset*), nowadays it is rather used *de amoeniore ingenio* ("a more refined nature") or *ingenii elegantia* ("refinement of character"). For the distance felt by Gellius between the age of the *ueteres* and his own day see Holford-Strevens 2003, 180–181.

¹³ Cf. Praef. 20 *ut ea ne attingat neue adeat profestum et profanum uulgus, a ludo musico diuersum*; 1, 5, 3 ἄμωσος; 1, 9, 8 ἄμωσοι.

Avarice as disloyalty towards the state

Gellius invites similar questions by using another controversial aspect of Favorinus' reputation. Although we have no specific testimony that speaks explicitly of Favorinus' avarice, there are several reasons to consider it likely that his refusal to accept the expensive duty of the high-priesthood (ἀρχιερωσύνη) of his home region contributed a great deal to his public disgrace and to the emperor Hadrian's anger.¹⁴ In Roman legal thinking, a philosopher who is actively teaching may be liberated from guardianships, but is not free from the duty to contribute financial funding, since true philosophers should spurn money—if their avarice prevents them from doing so, they prove themselves unworthy of their profession.¹⁵ For Gellius, avarice is a form of disloyalty towards the state. In his cultural programme, ethical behaviour is largely measured in terms of taking public responsibilities. Gellius subtly alludes to Favorinus' failure to do so and to the exile which possibly resulted from this failure: in the same chapter where Favorinus preaches that friends of quarrelling parties should take sides, Gellius approves of people taking their share of responsibility for the state and cites Solon's law about it, which punishes those who fail to do so with exile (2, 12, 1 *exul extorrisque esto*).¹⁶

There are several indications that Favorinus was very well off. Before he fell into disgrace, Hadrian bestowed upon him the title of *eques*, which since Augustus was a privilege for those who possessed a for-

¹⁴ According to Puech 2002, 27, Favorinus' appeal to immunity from liturgies was unfounded, since he did not teach in his home town; on sophists' liturgies see also Puech 2002, 439–442.

¹⁵ Hahn 1989, 106 quotes *dig.* 50, 5, 8, 4 *philosophis, qui se frequentes atque utiles per eandem studiorum sectam contententibus praebent, tutelas, item munera sordida corporalia emitti placuit, non ea, quae sumptibus expediuntur: etenim uere philosophantes pecuniam contemnunt, cuius retinendae cupidine fictam adseuerationem detegunt*, 'it was decided that philosophers, who show themselves to be available and useful for those who are seeking to follow that course of study, are exempted from tutelages and likewise from demeaning personal munera, but not from those which involve expenditure; for true philosophers despise money and by a desire to retain it reveal that their profession is feigned.' (tr. A. Watson). The law is from the time of Septimius Severus, but rests on a prescript of Hadrian's successor Antoninus Pius; it is very likely that Hadrian thought along the same lines regarding Favorinus. On Favorinus' and other cases of reluctance see Bowersock 1969, 34f.

¹⁶ On Gellius' emphasis on the importance of taking part in public life in see Morgan 2004, 203; on Favorinus' exile see Holford-Strevens 2003, 102. On Favorinus' appreciation of Solon's law in 2, 12, 5 see Holford-Strevens 2003, 113f.

tune of at least 400,000 sesterces.¹⁷ Favorinus probably came from a very wealthy family. Not only could he afford to travel extensively all over the Roman Empire and to study in Rome, but he also owned a Roman villa with an impressive library, containing his complete collection of books. He bequeathed these possessions, including a slave named Αὐτολήκυθος, to his pupil Herodes Atticus (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 490), another extremely wealthy intellectual immortalised in Gellius' pages.¹⁸ An important additional indication of Favorinus' wealth, observed by Marres (1853, 11), is the very appointment of the above-mentioned high-priesthood: this public duty was not only a matter that brought immense prestige, but also one that entailed considerable financial investment.¹⁹ Favorinus attempted to justify his refusal by claiming that his status as a philosopher (ἐπειδὴ ἐφιλοσόφει) exonerated him from such public duties, a claim which was repudiated by Hadrian.

Although Philostratus is silent about Favorinus' underlying motivations for refusing to accept the expensive honour of the high-priesthood, it is not unlikely that 'avarice' was one of the targets of invective in the ensuing public outrage against Favorinus, who had evidently failed as an εὐεργέτης in the public eye.²⁰ A subtle indication of this may be read in Philostratus' mentioning of Αὐτολήκυθος, the name of the slave Favorinus bequeathed to the millionaire Herodes Atticus. This word, unattested elsewhere as a proper name, recalls a term from the comic theatre for the type of the avaricious or poor man, who cannot afford a slave and hence is obliged to carry his own oil flask; in imperial literature, it also becomes an invective term for 'flatterer'.²¹ The irony of the slave's name points to the fact that his owner was evidently wealthy enough to afford him. The name's connotations of comic impersonation and insincere attitudes, reinforced by the associ-

¹⁷ See Amato-Julien (edd., comm.) 2005, 14 n. 41.

¹⁸ According to Dillon 2002, 37, Herodes Atticus in his role of wealthy patron supported philosophers like Taurus financially with gifts; he argues that Favorinus was in receipt of gifts both from such patrons as Herodes and even from his friend (later foe) Hadrian himself.

¹⁹ See Amato-Julien (edd., comm.) 2005, 21–22 n. 70, who illustrate the financial responsibility of the ἀρχιερεὺς with the example of a road between Arles and Marseilles, which the local high-priest had constructed on his expense (CIL XII 647); see also Holford-Strevens 2003, 101f.

²⁰ On the importance of evergetism in relations of 'community patronage' see Nauta 2002, 387–388.

²¹ See Amato-Julien (edd., comm.) 2005, 18 n. 52; cf. Antiphan. 17 K.-A.; for the connotation of 'flatterer', 'parasite' cf. Plut. *Quomodo adul.* 3 (*Mor.* 50C).

ations of λήκυθος with rhetorical bombast and affected speaking (see LSJ s.v.), reflect Philostratus' ironical play with Favorinus' sophistic reputation, including the insincerity of his claim to philosophical authority, which he first used to reject a public duty, and then to justify his change of mind in the face of power. Moreover, as Holford-Strevens observes,²² the name Αὐτολήκυθος also has sexual implications, alluding to Favorinus' sexual debauchery in the passive role: in the light of Demosthenes 54, 14–17 and Lucian *Lexiphanes* 10, where αὐτολήκυθος indicates large endowment, the name of Favorinus' slave appears to mean that he was well-hung, which invites the reader to make inferences about the way he served his master.²³

Philology as a vehicle of satire (3, 1; 3, 19)

At the outset of the third book of the *Noctes Atticae* (3, 1, 2), Gellius makes Favorinus immediately draw attention to his own immoral reputation in a discussion in which 'avarice' plays a key role. During a walk (3, 1, 1 *ambulabamus*) in the court of a public baths,²⁴ Favorinus has a friend read a Sallustian quotation (*Cat.* 11, 3) that connects avarice with effeminacy in body and mind:

Auaritia pecuniae studium habet, quam nemo sapiens concupiuit; ea quasi uenenis malis inbuta corpus animumque uirilem effeminat, semper infinita et insatiabilis est, neque copia neque inopia minuitur.

Avarice implies a strong desire for money, which no wise man covets; steeped as it were with noxious poisons, it renders the most manly body and soul effeminate; it is ever unbounded and insatiable, nor can either plenty nor want make it less.

In this company, marked by the presence in the flesh of someone who was reputed for his unmanly body and lack of public generosity, the

²² See the Addenda in the paperback edition (2005), p. 438, on Holford-Strevens 2003, 100 n. 14. For the combined accusation of active and passive sexual debauchery see also *GCA* 2007, 257 on Apul. *Met.* 1, 12, 4 (on the comic character named Socrates).

²³ Thus, the name can be read in terms of a 'demonstrative' enthymeme, a rhetorical pun that 'proves' certain aspects about Favorinus for those in the audience who 'knew the facts' about his life. On the enthymeme see further below, p. 135ff.

²⁴ Cf. 3, 1, 1 *apud balneas fstitias* in *area subcalido sole cum Fauorino philosopho ambulabamus*, 'we were walking with the philosopher Favorinus in the court of ...? baths'. Both Marshall and Rolfe follow Lipsius' emendation *balneas Titias* for *stitias* (R), an emendation which was meant (impossibly) to mean the *thermae Titianae*. For *balneae* in the sense of 'public bathing establishment, baths' (*OLD* s.v. 1) cf. Gell. 10, 3, 3.

passage from Sallust becomes a potential commentary on Favorinus' negative image. The provocative nature of the Sallustian quotation as a potential indicator of Favorinus' ill repute becomes even more pointed as Favorinus himself is represented as the main instigator of the provocation. He is the one who wishes this particular passage to be read aloud, and he is also the one who draws particular attention to the question of how avarice has an effeminating effect on the *body* (3, 1, 3 *corpus*).²⁵ He asks this question directly of Gellius, underlining the relation of the issue to his own physical presence by an act of non-verbal communication: he makes eye-contact with him (3, 1, 3 *tum Favorinus me aspiciens ... inquit*).²⁶

Gellius points to his awareness of the quotation's double meaning by picturing his respectful hesitation (*cunctabundus*) to address his master on a topic that involves accusations of effeminacy and immorality, and by showing his relief that Favorinus himself comes up with this very delicate question (3, 1, 4f.). Gellius' self-restraint reveals that he was familiar with Favorinus' reputation, which stands in sharp contrast with the impudence of the *grammaticus* in chapter 4, 1, who dares to confront Favorinus with questions on words of 'ambiguous gender' while looking the reputed hermaphrodite in the face (*aspiciens ad Fauorinum*), using expressions that unwittingly allude to his unmanliness (*uariis generibus ... non uirili genere ... sed neutro*), although he was not even quite aware yet of the nature of the person he was looking at (4, 1, 2 *quamquam ei nondum etiam satis notus esset*).²⁷

The loaded meaning of the Sallustian quotation in 3, 1, 2, however, is not limited to unmanliness alone. The main emphasis is on avarice as its principal cause.²⁸ The additional comment that excludes a true

²⁵ Holford-Strevens (2003, 103) suggests that Favorinus, being secure in his place as a πεπαιδευμένος amongst a male élite, made such remarks on purpose, depriving his opponents of the chance to mock him for his physical oddities.

²⁶ For the use of *aspiciens*, *aspicit* etc. in Gellius as a non-verbal form of communication that establishes a relation between two interlocutors or 'sets the scene' for a dialogue, see Garcea 1998, 382f.

²⁷ Cf. *OLD* s.v. *notus* 2c 'known as regards his or its essential nature'. Gellius plays with the ambiguity of *notus*, suggesting on a different level that it was impudent of this anonymous schoolmaster to make eye-contact with Favorinus, without being sufficiently (*satis*) acquainted yet with this celebrity (*OLD* s.v. *notus* 1).

²⁸ In addition, the phrase *uenenis malis inbuta* (3, 1, 2) contains a possible jibe at Favorinus' alleged magical practices; cf. Polemo, *physiogn.* A20 Hoyland (= T V Amato-Julien) 'he was also a deceitful magician [...] he would collect kinds of fatal poisons'; *Physiogn.* Lat. 40 Repath (= T VI Amato-Julien) *nam et letiferum uenenum dicebatur clanculo uenditare*.

sapiens from such an immoral desire for money (*quam nemo sapiens concupiuit*) reinforces the attacks on Favorinus' reluctance to spend money on expensive public duties, which discredited his philosophical authority (*sapientia*) in the public eye. The sneer at Favorinus as a dubious *sapiens* wrapped up in a Sallustian quotation recalls the passage mentioned above (1, 15, 18), where '*satis eloquentiae, sapientiae parum*' provides an illuminating comment on Favorinus' reputation of empty grandiloquence. Favorinus' present claim that he seems to understand quite well how avarice has this effeminating effect on the *soul*, as opposed to the body, acknowledges a certain experience of the effects of avarice (*uideor ferme assequi*).²⁹ The chapter ends with Favorinus' loaded words *criminitus est*, interpreting the Sallustian statement in terms of an indictment of both avarice and effeminacy, and hinting at Favorinus' feelings of protest against an unfair charge (*plus quam oportuit*).

In the last chapter of the third book (3, 19), we see a similar connection of the themes of avarice and unmanliness in a *chreia* in which Favorinus himself likewise features as the main instigator of provocative questions relating to his own controversial identity. It is one of the chapters in the *Attic Nights* where a philological topic is discussed as a form of dinner entertainment. Gellius tells of Favorinus' habit of having a slave (possibly Αὐτολήκκυθος?) standing by his table, and reading a text from Greek or Latin literature. At one occasion when Gellius is present, the slave reads from an etymological treatise of the *grammaticus* Gavius Bassus; the passage that elicits an immediate and elaborate response from Favorinus is the discussion of the word *parcus*, 'stingy', 'parsimonious' (cf. 3, 1, 12 *parcum*). The Gellian chapter consists for the most part of Favorinus' refutation of Bassus' etymology and his proposal of alternatives.

In view of other chapters associating Favorinus with avarice and greed (3, 1; also 9, 8), Favorinus' response seems to confirm the impression that Gellius supposes his readers to read in the word *parcus* a witty reference to Favorinus himself. Along these lines, the various proposed etymological explanations of *parcus* invite a reading that puts Favorinus' reputation into the spotlight.³⁰ As we have seen in chapter three

²⁹ The ambiguity of the phrase *uideor ferme assequi* also allows a reading that contains an additional allusion to Favorinus' alleged avarice: 'for what it means what this statement says about the fact that avarice also renders the manly *soul* effeminate, I usually seem to bring this into practice'.

³⁰ Being *parcus* points to the ancient virtue of *parsimonia*, the frugality which the early Romans, as Gellius emphasises elsewhere (2, 24), observed in terms of public duty: this

(pp. 72–75) and in chapter four (p. 99), Gellius' use of a *facetissima dissimulatio* (cf. 18, 4, 1) includes the employment of philological exegesis as an Aristophanic instrument of verbal abuse. In this respect, Favorinus' clearcut contrast between 'made-up' explanations like the one of Bassus (*confabricatus*; *res commenticias*) and those which are 'simpler and nearer the truth' (*simplicius ueriusque*) can be read as his comments on charges and allegations regarding his own life, rejecting some as false, and accepting others as 'nearer to the truth'.

Gavius Bassus' explanation of *parcus* conjures up the comic type of the miser from comedy; elsewhere, Gellius actually quotes the title *Parcus* as that of an Atellane farce by Pacuvius (17, 2, 8):³¹

3, 19, 2 ... *sicut in arca omnia reconduntur eiusque custodia seruantur et continentur, ita homo tenax paruoque contentus omnia custodita et recondita habet, sicuti arca. Quam ob causam 'parcus' quasi 'pararcus' est nominatus.*

... for just as all valuables are put away in a strong-box and preserved and kept under its protection, just so a man who is close-fisted and content with little keeps all his property guarded and stored away, as in a strong-box. For that reason he is called *parcus*, as if it were *par arcus*.

Favorinus rejects Bassus' interpretation of the word as contrived and laboured, criticising him for not explaining the word in detail (*confabricatus ... magis est ... quam enarrauit*). Favorinus then puts his own standards for explaining a word into practice, by using a method of interpretation that aptly invokes forceful associations with someone who was very much present in the audience's mind—his very own self. Thus, the Gellian chapter becomes an illustration of explaining a word in a vividly compelling, detailed way (*originem uocabuli enarrare*) by putting celebrities from 'real life' to an effective use. The chapter relates correct explanation to realism: explaining something in accordance with the truth (*probabilius*; *simplicius ueriusque*) means that everybody can see it before his eyes. Elsewhere, Gellius uses the adverb *enarrate*, which is attested in no other writer, to refer to a style of writing that is explicit and detailed (10, 1, 7; 13, 12, 5). In his *enarratio* of the word *parcus*, Gellius makes Favorinus use the *euidencia* of his own reputation; at the same time, the word *parcus* illuminates various aspects of this reputation itself.

invites inferences about the ironical contrast with Favorinus' 'frugality'. For the satirical use of *parsimonia* for someone who is rather *auarus* cf. Apul. *Met.* 1, 24, 1 *parsimoniam ratiocinans* with *GCA* 2007, 422–424.

³¹ The description also strikingly resembles the satirical portrayal of the miser Milo as described by the old woman in Apul. *Met.* 1, 21, 5–6; see *GCA* 2007, 380 ad loc.

Favorinus' response to Gavius Bassus' etymology consists of two parts, which respectively allude to the avarice and the unmanliness that also figured jointly in the allusions to his reputation in chapter 3, 1. First, Favorinus ironically suggests that he invents another explanation in the contrived manner of Bassus (*nam si licet res dicere commenticias*)—yet, with the word *probabilius* he indicates that this invention is 'more plausible' than Bassus':

3, 19, 4 '*parcum*' ob eam causam dictum, quod pecuniam consumi atque impendi arceat et prohibeat, quasi '*pecuniarcus*' ...

... a man is called *parcus* for the reason that he forbids and prevents the spending of money, as if he were *pecuniarcus* ...

When read as a self-referential comment, this interpretation of *parcus* is indeed 'more plausible' than Bassus', in the sense that it is more in accordance with the reputation of Favorinus as a miser. He was not parsimonious in the positive sense of 'content with little' (*paruo contentus*), but as someone who was *supposed* to spend money on public duties, but prevented this (*arceat et prohibeat*) by refusing the duties imposed on him. The allusions to Favorinus' liturgy are sustained by the phrase *pecuniam consumi atque impendi*. The verb *impendere* connotes the expenditure of money for a specific purpose, and is especially used in combination with *sumptus*, which means 'expenditure', but also 'liability' (*OLD* s.v. *sumptus* 2). Gellius uses *impendere* also in 2, 24, 7, in the context of public expenditures of the leading citizens of Rome for dinners on various festal days. Whereas in that chapter it was the sumptuary laws which prohibited lavish expenditure on Roman religious occasions, in this context it is one of the leading citizens himself who prevents his money from being expended on a religious duty. Along the same lines, *pecuniam consumere* is an expression used of public expenditure on festal occasions,³² and hence is appropriately used here to support the allusion to Favorinus' avarice.

Yet, Favorinus implicitly rejects this interpretation by presenting a second one, introducing it as if he proposes to get to the bottom of the matter (3, 19, 5):

Quin potius ... quod simplicius ueriusque est, id dicimus? 'Parcus' enim neque ab arca neque ab arcendo, sed ab eo, quod est 'parum' et 'paruum', denominatus est.

³² See the examples in *OLD* s.v. 5b; cf. CIL I 1635, 7 *ex ea pecunia quod eos ... in ludos ... consumere oportuit*; Liv. 40, 44, 10 *de pecunia finitur ne maior ludorum causa consumeretur quam quanta Fulvio Nobilitiori ... ludos facienti decreta esset*.

Why not rather ... adopt an explanation which is simpler and nearer the truth? for *parcus* is derived neither from *arca* nor from *arceo*, but from that which is 'too little' (*parum*) and 'small' (*paruum*).

Getting to the bottom of the etymology of *parcus* means simultaneously getting to the bottom of Favorinus' ambiguous reputation. As the opening chapter of book three did, the closing chapter likewise inventively exploits connections between the topic of avarice and that of unmanliness. By explaining the noun *parcus* with a periphrastic clause containing a neuter (!) pronoun (*paruum*) and an indeclinable word (*parum*) that both indicate deficiency, Favorinus subtly points to the physical defect that made him an object of public derision: his unmanly genitals.

With a kind of euphemistical ellipse, Romans sometimes preferred to use neuter pronouns of the penis instead of a specific noun (cf. Catull. 67, 27 *neruosius illud*); Favorinus' periphrastic neuter phrase '*id, quod est paruum*' points to this euphemistic use.³³ Like its synonym *pusillus*, the adjective *paruus* is attested as an expression for small genital endowment.³⁴ Moreover, the word *parum* adds to the insinuations of unmanliness. It recalls a specific use of *parum* to expose someone for not being 'man enough':³⁵

Mart. 2, 36, 4 *nolo uirum nimium ... nolo parum*.

'I don't want too much of a man, Pannychus, and I don't want too little'

Quint. inst. 5, 19, 4 *fortasse corpus uulsum, fractum incessum, uestem muliebrem dixerit mollis et parum uiri signa ...*

'and one could perhaps say that to have the body hair plucked, to walk with a mincing gait, or to wear clothes like a woman were signs of an effeminate and unmanly character'

In the programmatic chapter discussed above (1, 5), which invites comparison with the feud between Favorinus and Polemo, Gellius exem-

³³ For the euphemistic use see Adams 1981, 125; Adams 1982, 62.

³⁴ Cf. Priap. 80, 6 (Tydeus) *ingenio pugnax, corpore paruus erat* (alluding to Hom. *Il.* 5, 801 *μυροῦς μὲν ἦν δέμας, ἀλλὰ μαχητὴς*)—like in the Gellian passage, the use of *paruus* in this Priapean poem on impotence illustrates the Romans' constant preoccupation with the size of the male genitalia (on which see Adams 1982, 78). For *paruus* used of the penis cf. also Catull. 28, 12 *nihilo minore uerpa / fartis estis*, 'you have been filled with no less a poker'. Compare the syn. *pusillus*, Apul. *met.* 5, 9, 8 *maritum ... quouis puero pusilliore*, with GCA 2004, 171 ad loc.

³⁵ See *ThLL* s.v. *paruus* (*parum*) 573, 25f. Cf. also Gell. 19, 12, 2 *laccessitus a quodam Stoico, tamquam minus sapienter et parum uiriliter dolorem ferret ex morte pueri, quem amauerat* (on Herodes Atticus).

plifies this use of *parum* in his description of Aeschines' abuse of his arch-rival Demosthenes as an effeminate and immoral person:

1, 5, 1 *hinc ... ab aemulis aduersariisque probro data, hinc etiam turpibus indignisque in eum uerbis non temperatum, quin parum uir et ore quoque polluto diceretur.*

... it was for this reason that he was taunted by his rivals and opponents ...; for that reason, too, that they did not refrain from applying to him foul and shameful epithets, alleging that he was no man enough and even guilty of unnatural vice.

Thus, Favorinus concludes the chapter and rounds off Book Three of the *Noctes* by presenting a neat inversion of the topic that had opened the same book: whereas in the initial chapter he had discussed avarice as a possible cause of physical unmanliness, in the closing chapter he introduces the opposite idea, explaining the etymological cause of a word for an avaricious man (*parcus*) with words denoting a physical lack of manliness (*paruus*, *parum*).

Ambiguous gender (penus), ambiguous amicus (4, 1)

The clever interconnection of the topics of 'avarice' and 'unmanliness' that marked the opening and closure of book 3 is continued at the opening of the next book, the chapter where Favorinus desires a definition of the word *penus*. Having in mind the foregoing interplay between two frames of reference, the 'philological discussions' on the one hand, and the allusive play with Favorinus' reputation on the other, the reader is prepared to examine this opening chapter in a similar way, recognising Gellius' multi-levelled strategy in bringing out the ambiguous nature of Favorinus' authority. Although neither avarice nor unmanliness is thematised explicitly in 4, 1, both topics are present in an implicit way as telling aspects of Favorinus' reputation, which both delight and guide the well-informed reader in his scrutiny of the various forms of authority represented in this chapter.

When the *grammaticus* fails to give an adequate definition of *penus*, Favorinus tries to reassure him by stating that not even 'those old masters of the law who were called wise men' (4, 1, 16 *ne illi quidem ueteres iuris magistri, qui 'sapientes' appellati sunt*) appeared to have been able to do so. Although there is a lacuna in the text, the transmitted part of 4, 1, 17 seems to indicate that Favorinus' fundamental disagreement with Quintus Scaevola concerns the latter's opinion that *penus* refers to arti-

cles used for eating and drinking and similar uses. Instead, Favorinus proposes a different interpretation of *penus*, based on the etymological link with *penitus*:

Nam quae ad edendum bibendumque in dies singulos prandii aut cenae causa parantur, 'penus' non sunt; sed ea potius, quae huiusce generis longae usionis gratia contrahuntur et reconduntur, ex eo, quod non in promptu est, sed intus et penitus habeatur, 'penus' dicta est.

For articles which are prepared for eating and drinking day by day, for luncheon or dinner, are not *penus*; but rather the articles of that kind which are collected and stored up for use during a long period are called *penus*, because they are not ready at hand, but are kept in the innermost part of the house.

Favorinus' definition clearly conceives *penus* in terms of accumulation and long-term storage, as opposed to Scaevola's definition, which emphasised daily consumption and keeping ready at hand for short-term use. We have here a clear opposition between spending and saving. A key word in Favorinus' definition of *penus* is *reconduntur*, which links it with the portrayal of the avaricious man (3, 19, 2):

... sicut in arca omnia reconduntur eiusque custodia servantur et continentur, ita homo tenax paruoque contentus omnia custodita et recondita habet, sicuti arca.

... for just as all valuables are put away in a strong-box and preserved and kept under its protection, just so a man who is close-fisted and content with little keeps all his property guarded and hidden away, as in a strong-box.

Thus, with the previous self-referential chapter in mind, a reader of Favorinus' definition of *penus* is invited to see again a self-referential aspect in his description of possessions that are stored up in a safe place deep inside the house. At the same time, he may read in Favorinus' dismissal of other interpretations of *penus* a neat reflection of his refusal to make his own '*penus*' available for short-term usage and consumption, recalling Favorinus' rejection of the expensive honour of the highpriesthood in his home region.

Accordingly, Gellius' implicit refutation of Favorinus' definition, replacing it with an interpretation of *penus* that introduces a *dominus* who stores things for short-term use (cf. 4, 1, 21), can be read as a political comment on wrong and right use of one's possessions. Gellius not only rehabilitates Scaevola's interpretation of *penus* as articles for eating and drinking, but also adds references to frankincense and votive candles (4, 1, 20 *thus quoque et cereos in penu esse*) because 'they were provided

for practically the same purpose'. In view of the use of frankincense and wax tapers in religious ceremony, Gellius' allusion to a prominent aristocrat's duty to finance banquets, processions and other ceremonial activities is hard to ignore. The emphasis on trade (*comparatum*, *promercialia*) and on use (*usuaria*, *usu*) suggests the opposite of the stingy man who keeps his possessions for himself, storing them unused deep inside his house (*penitus*). Moreover, the term *usuaria* (4, 1, 23) indicates goods that may be used by someone other than the owner, but not exploited for profit (see *OLD* s.v.). Finally, the conclusion of the chapter, which defines *penus* only by the *promercialia* and *usuaria* that are sufficient for a year's needs (*usu annuo*), supports the allusions to Favorinus' refusal to put his wealth at the disposal of the needs related to the highpriesthood, since the office of the provincial ἀρχιερεὺς was annual.³⁶

What is more, as in the previous book, the issue of avarice is cleverly connected with the issue of unmanliness, and thus employed in a context of judging authority. As we have briefly observed in chapter three (p. 88), the generic ambiguity of nouns like *penus* and *mundus* (*muliebris*), foregrounded by the unwitting *grammaticus* (cf. 4, 1, 3 *non uirili genere ... sed neutro*), can be also read as an allusion to Favorinus' sexual ambiguity. Moreover, the word *penus* is too close to the word *penis* to exclude the possibility of reading a sexual innuendo in Favorinus' remark on the last letters of the word *penus*:

4, 1, 5 *quid enim refert mea eiusque quicum loquor, ... in quas extremas litteras declinem, si modo id non nimis barbare fecerim?*

For what difference does it make to me and to the one with whom I am speaking with what final letters I inflect it, provided I do not do this too barbarously?³⁷

Along the same lines, the sexual undertone of the association *penus*/*penis* creates a kind of counterpoint to the immediately following remark, where Favorinus apparently indicates what he *does* find important to know:

4, 1, 6 *sed hoc plane indigeo discere, quid sit 'penus' et qua fini id uocabulum dicatur, ne rem cotidiani usus, tamquam qui in uenalibus Latine loqui coeptant, alia quam oportet uoce appellem.*

³⁶ See *RE* s.v. ἀρχιερεὺς [Brandis], 475.

³⁷ In a similar way, the expression *qua fini id uocabulum dicatur* (4, 1, 6) is ambiguous, meaning 'how far this word may be employed', but also redirecting the attention to the proximity of *penus* to *penis*, as '*finis*' is also a usual expression to denote the ending (the ultimate syllable or letter) of a single word. See *ThLL* s.v. *finis* 793, 34–40.

But this is clearly what I want to learn, what '*penus*' is and to what end the noun is used, so that I may not call a thing in everyday use by the wrong name, as those who begin to speak their Latin in the slave-market.

On the level of the philosophical discussion, Favorinus expresses his desire to learn something that goes beyond the declension and gender of a noun, and moves the discussion towards a definition of the word *penus*. Yet, in the light of the Favorinian patterns of 'self-exposure' in the *Noctes*, the allusions to his physical defections and dubious reputation continue. The sentence begins with the phrase '*sed hoc plane indigeo*', which hints at the blatant lack for which he was ridiculed by Demonax: 'but I obviously do not have this'—as the sentence continues, *indigeo* turns out to be construed with the infinitive *discere*, an unusual construction, nowhere attested before this passage in Gellius.³⁸ By the sheer repetition of the phrase '*quid sit penus*' put on Favorinus' lips throughout the chapter, it is hard to avoid the impression that Gellius on a certain level plays with Favorinus' lack of familiarity with the body part that defines the male sex.³⁹ Favorinus not only lacks knowledge of *penus*, he evidently lacks a penis.

Moreover, Favorinus' remark in 4, 1, 6 continues the atmosphere of Plautine comedy already introduced by terms like *blatiret* (see Swain 2004, 33) and *amabo* (4, 1, 4). Here, we have a likely allusion to a significant passage from the *Pseudolus*, used by ancient grammarians as a testimony of the exceptional use of *penus* in the masculine (*Pseud.* 178) and the neuter gender (*Pseud.* 228).⁴⁰ Given its paradigmatic nature for the deviant gender of *penus*, it is probable that the Plautine passage was one of the testimonia 'bawled out' by the *grammaticus* in Gell. 4, 1, 4 *atque horum omnium et testimoniis et exemplis constrepebat*. In the light of the allusion to the *Pseudolus*, Favorinus' comparison of his ignorance of *penus* to the Latin skills of "those who are for sale" can be read as an allusion to his own infamous erotic reputation, which is closely intertwined with his connections with Roman power. In the Plautine passage in question, the pimp Ballio bullies his female slaves, who are his 'stock in trade', warning them to provide him in a sufficient

³⁸ See *ThLL* s.v. *indigeo* 1175, 63; after Gellius, who uses it only here, the construction is only attested in Chr. authors.

³⁹ 4, 1, 6 *quid sit 'penus'*; 4, 1, 8 '*penus* est?'; 4, 1, 9 *an ista, quae dixi, 'penus' appelletur; ... quid sit 'penus'*'; 4, 1, 12 *quid sit 'penus'...*, *non ... aliquid ex penu*; 4, 1, 14 "*scire,*" *inquit ridens iam Favorinus, "quid 'penus' sit, non ex nostra magis est philosophia quam ex grammatica tua"*; 4, 1, 16 *quid sit penus*; 4, 1, 17 *ad demonstrandam penum*.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Char. gramm.* p. 94, 21f.; see *ThLL* s.v. *penus* 1122, 66f.

manner with '*penus annuos*' (178), the household store of food for a year, through their erotic services to a clientèle of corn-dealers, butchers, and oil merchants. Ballio repeats his warning to the slave-girl Phoenicium, whose clients belong to the upper class of the city, telling her to bring him '*omne ... penus*' from her friends' estates.

The allusion to the Plautine use of *penus* as a term for income through erotic services by slaves (cf. *in uenilibus*) is reinforced by Favorinus' reference to *penus* as something of 'everyday use' (*cotidiani usus*).⁴¹ This may hint at the notorious erotic services provided by eunuchs in general (see Kay on Mart. 11, 81) and to Favorinus' own 'use' in upper class Roman circles in particular. Gellius alludes to this 'use' of Favorinus in a different context with a clearly erotic undertone, when he relates how hermaphrodites, once considered as portents, are now held *in deliciis* (9, 4, 16), pointing to their present-day employment as sources of sexual pleasure (see Hallett 1997, 267).⁴² The erotic nature of the delightful company of admired sophists is more explicit in various passages in Philostratus, who describes Herodes Atticus' longing for 'the honey of Favorinus' lips' (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 490).⁴³ Here, the implicit association between Favorinus and courtesans by means of the Plautine allusion may be substantiated by another passage from the *Attic Nights* with veiled references to Favorinus' immoral reputation, where Favorinus takes particular delight in Plautine words for prostitutes and their vices.⁴⁴

In the present Gellian chapter, the setting of the scene on the Palatine at the moment before the *salutatio* of the emperor provides a significant frame for Favorinus' implied identification with courtesans. As Ellen Oliensis has pointed out in her essay on 'The Erotics of *Amicitia*', Romans perceived social and sexual subordination in very similar terms. The parallels between sexual and clientary hierarchies

⁴¹ For the erotic connotation of *usus* see Adams 1982, 189.

⁴² Cf. Gell. 7, 8, 6 *in deliciis ... ab eo usurpatam*. To be '*in deliciis*' is a sexual euphemism that is comparable to *utor*, *usus*, *usura* etc.; see Adams 1982, 196–198.

⁴³ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 105 with n. 37. Interestingly, in Philostratus *vit. soph.* 2, 23 p. 605, Damian of Ephesus represents his attendance of his teachers Aristides and Hadrian of Tyre as 'delights' (παιδικὰ) for which he was much more eager to spend money than for beautiful boys or girls, as some do (πολλῷ ἥδιον ἐς τοιαῦτα δαπανᾶν παιδικὰ ἢ ἐς καλοὺς τε καὶ καλὰς).

⁴⁴ Cf. Gell. 3, 3, 6 (Favorinus) *delectatus faceta uerborum antiquitate, meretricum uitia atque deformitates significantium*, 'delighted with the wit of the archaic words that describe the ugly defects of harlots'. In that passage, the self-referential nature to Favorinus' reputation is reinforced by the allusion to 'old women'.

become especially explicit in denouncements of ‘corrupt’ forms of *amicitia*, where the debased client, visibly present in the throng at his patron’s door, is viewed as selling his services like a courtesan for the sake of immediate material gratification rather than the immaterial and spiritual benefits of a lasting friendship.⁴⁵

Gellius, too, was aware of the link between *amicitia* and *amor*, and of the inferences that could be made about his relationship with Favorinus as portrayed in the *Noctes Atticae*. Holford-Strevens (2003, 105–107) observes that Gellius seems to have Favorinus’ sexual reputation in mind when he uses the phrase *de amore amicitiae* in 8, 6 tit., employing a glossed citation of Cic. *Tusc.* 4, 70, where philosophers’ *amor amicitiae* is dismissed as a cover for pederasty with citizen youths. According to Holford-Strevens, whose interpretation puts Gellius’ personal relations with his beloved master in the foreground, Gellius employed the phrase *amor amicitiae* to refute the likely suspicion that the ambiguous philosopher’s intimacy with his pupil had the nature of a pederastic relationship. Holford-Strevens (106 with n. 43) points out that Gellius was not censorious about pederasty in itself (cf. e.g. 6, 8, 3; 19, 12, 2), but could not avoid notifying his readers lest they should take his boasted intimacy with Favorinus *in malam partem*.

In the present study, however, Gellius’ literary account of his relations with Favorinus—whether they reflect authentic personal experience or form part of Gellius’ fiction or a mixture of the two—is viewed in the context of strategies to articulate cultural authority, rather than as autobiographical reflections expressing the author’s personal feelings about his tutors or about their inclinations. As we have seen above with regard to Fronto, Gellius on the one hand depicts himself as being under the spell of his masters’ charismatic authority, but on the other hand establishes his own authority by creating an ironical distance towards such famous intellectuals through forms of satire. As we can see on Philostratus’ pages, the phenomenon of pupils mocking (former) masters was not unusual in the intellectual life of the second century.⁴⁶ Along these lines, Gellius’ use of the phrase *amor amicitiae* can be

⁴⁵ See Oliensis 1997, 154f. (with lit.), esp. 155: “the obsequium of a freeborn client can always be maliciously misconstrued as a readiness to perform any service, including sexual service.”

⁴⁶ For the composition of satire against teachers as a form of literary communication between intellectuals cf. *vit. soph.* 2, 27 p. 617. The satire of Scopelian’s exaggerated performance (cf. 1, 21 p. 514 καλίζειν, p. 520 τοῦ σκώμματος) was initiated by the faction around Polemo, who was Scopelian’s pupil but left his master (cf. 1, 25 p. 536). Cf. also

interpreted as a satirical hint at the erotic nature of Favorinus' delightful company, while simultaneously saving Gellius' own reputation as a Roman intellectual through the allusion to Cic. *Tusc.* 4, 70.⁴⁷

In chapter 4, 1, the public setting of *amicitia* may invite the reader to see a 'malicious' element in Gellius' representation of Favorinus that serves his own political agenda, suggesting that Favorinus is not the true client and reliable friend for whom the eminent patron in question, the emperor himself, is waiting.⁴⁸ The setting of imperial *salutatio* may recall a diatribe of Favorinus' enemy Epictetus, in which he scorns those who jostle each other in front of the gates of the imperial palace in their ambitious pursuit of imperial honours.⁴⁹ Thus, chapter 4, 1 places Favorinus' sexual identity in the context of his relations with Roman power, subjecting its implied associations with flattery and greed to the reader's scrutiny of cultural authority. The implied associations in 4, 1 between slaves, eunuchs, and questions of 'usefulness' related to physical defects are continued in an amusing way by the ensuing chapter, treating eunuchs (4, 2, 6f.; 4, 2, 14) in the context of legal discussions on the purchase of slaves, who suffer from some disease or defect or are under condemnation for some offence (4, 2, 1).

Moreover, it also appears that Favorinus had offered his sexual services to the wife of a Roman consul, which led to an accusation of adultery, of which he seems to have acquitted himself by referring to his eunuch status (cf. Lucian. *Eun.* 10).⁵⁰ This accusation forms an amusing

1, 26 p. 544 (Secundus the Athenian mocked by his pupil Herodes Atticus); compare Herodes' attitude towards Scopelian, whose improvisational techniques he used to admire and imitate (1, 21 p. 521), but whom he associates elsewhere with a 'drunk' rhetorical style (2, 5 p. 573).

⁴⁷ See above, p. 102 n. 15, on Gellius' satirical allusions to Socrates' pederastic interests in 2, 18, 1–5.

⁴⁸ On the discourse of *amicitia* to describe the (assymetrical) relation between the intellectual/poet and his patron in the Early Empire (the words *cliens* and *patronus* were avoided) see Nauta 2002, 14–18; 23.

⁴⁹ Cf. Epict. *Diss.* 4, 7, 19–24; Flinterman 2004, 361 points out that in this diatribe against the freedom of fear of tyrants, the speaker doubtless thinks in particular of the fear of the autocratic power of Roman emperors. Favorinus' reputed attitude as an intellectual in the face of power (cf. Hist. Aug. *Hadr.* 15, 12 = T IX Amato-Julien) can be explained as flattery in the light of Plut. *Quomodo adul.* 16 (*Mor.* 58e–f); see Flinterman 2004, 374.

⁵⁰ For the accusation cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 489 θερμὸς δὲ οὕτω τις ἦν τὰ ἐρωτικά, ὥς καὶ μοιχοῦ λαβεῖν αἰτίαν ἐξ ἀνδρὸς ὑπάτου, 'yet, he was so ardent in love that he was actually charged with adultery by a man of consular rank'. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 101: "If Lucian's Bagoas, as seems probable, is in this respect Favorinus in disguise, he was caught in the act but achieved acquittal by pleading that

background to another Gellian representation of Favorinus in the middle of the public space of Rome, in Trajan's forum, where we see him discussing the meaning of the loaded word *manubiae* ('spoils'),⁵¹ while waiting for his friend the consul who is busy in court (13, 25, 2).

Thus, a word that is notorious for its ambiguous gender (*penus*) becomes the index of the paradox created by a man's ambiguous sexuality, defying sexual categories, social hierarchies and moral boundaries with sexual acts that run counter to the deficient nature of his genitals. The paradox of being a eunuch but still having had to face an accusation of adultery is one of the three paradoxes with which Favorinus used to sum up his own life (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8, p. 489). Not surprisingly, Gellius exploits the subtext of Favorinus' sexual anomaly in this chapter as a means to underline his own authority. Within the discourse of *amicitia*, evoked by the presence of both Gellius and Favorinus on the Palatine before the *salutatio* of the emperor, the chapter invites us to scrutinise where true cultural authority lies, but at the same time it draws our attention to the question who is the more reliable *amicus*.

Gellius' programmatic comment that Favorinus thus used to lead conversations 'from small and cold things to those which are more useful to listen to and to learn' (4, 1, 19 *a rebus paruis et frigidis ad ea quae magis utile esset audire ac discere*) continues the sexual innuendo. Sustained by the allusion to unmanliness in the word *paruus* (cf. 3, 19, 5), the *res parvae et frigidae* allude to the impotent coldness that reflects the lack of authority of a eunuch-philosopher,⁵² contrasted with 'more potent' (*magis utile*)

his condition made the crime impossible; he thus exploited not only the court's medical ignorance, but the ambiguities of his identity, a whole man in the act and a eunuch in the denial."

⁵¹ The term *manubiae* is similarly ambiguous as *penus*: on the one hand, it connotes the positive sense of 'prize-money', used in the interest and to the glory of the Roman Imperium (financing the monuments in Trajan's forum), on the other hand, it is metaphorically used in the negative sense of '*praeda*', indicating illegitimate profit from e.g. avarice (cf. Val. Max. 7, 6, 3 *auaro ... manubiis sordium suarum frui non licuit*); Favorinus mentions the negative use of *manubiae* in the sense of *praeda* with reservations at the beginning (13, 25, 4) and end of the discussion (13, 25, 31). For the negative sense of *praeda*, associated with robbery (*latrocinium*) and the abuse of official power at the cost of Roman citizens, cf. *ThLL* s.v. 524, 42f. ('de latrocinio') and 525, 9f. (on the abuse of official power).

⁵² For *frigidus* in a sexual sense ('segnis ad amorem') see *ThLL* s.v. 1329, 73–82; cf. Hier. in *Matth.* 19, 12 (eunuchi) *frigidioris naturae sunt*. Contrast Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 489 θερμός.

learning.⁵³ In a similar vein as Favorinus' references to *probabilis*, *simplicius*, and *uerius* in 3, 19, Gellius' apparent compliment that Favorinus' teaching was not 'lugged in from outside' (*allata extrinsecus*) but 'naturally produced and understood from within' (4, 1, 19 *indidem nata acceptaque*) can be read as a tongue-in-cheek observation on the physical aspects of Favorinus' life and personality, which form such an authentic and rich source of comic authority.⁵⁴ Being 'cold' as a eunuch and 'hot' as an adulterer at the same time, Favorinus is the ideal personality for Gellius to use in presenting potentially dull and trivial things in an interesting and appealing way, a literary skill that ancient theorists perceived in terms of 'cold that can heat and heat that can cool' (Demetr. *elocut.* 134).

⁵³ For *utilis* as 'potent' see Adams 1982, 46; cf. Mart. 11, 81, 3 *uiribus hic, operi non est hic utilis annis*, 'the one is no good for the job because of his equipment [sc. being a eunuch], the other because of his years' (see Kay ad loc.); Priap. 73, 4 *utilis haec ... erit* (cf. 73, 3 *inutile lignum*); 80, 5 *utilior Tydeus*. Cf. Gell. 4, 2, 15 (presumably a hint at the eunuch mentioned earlier in 4, 2, 6 and 4, 2, 14) *cuius ... obest quo ipse minus aptus sit*, 'or any defect which impairs his usefulness' (for the erotic use of *aptus* cf. Mart. 14, 23).

⁵⁴ For *indidem* in the sense of 'intrinsecus' see *ThLL* s.v. 1165, 36f.

CHAPTER SIX

DEMONSTRATION AND REFUTATION: 'INVESTIGATIONAL RHETORIC'

Authorising humour: enthymeme and antithesis

This section will go into more detail regarding Gellius' use of the logical structures of the enthymeme, which actively engage the reader of his anecdotes in a 'rhetoric of humour'. It should be kept in mind that Gellius does not write forensic speeches in favour of or against a person, or intends to prove or disprove one particular crime. Hence, it would be a fallacy to assume that Gellius intends to persuade his audience of one specific opinion, as an orator would try to prove himself right and his opponent wrong. Yet, within the context of his entertaining narrative anecdotes (*chreiai*), Gellius' use of the enthymeme does have a persuasive force with a certain political and ideological bias, challenging his audience to reflect on the credit of a celebrity like Favorinus in the light of stated and unstated probabilities concerning his life and deeds. Using the enthymeme as a means of communicating with his Roman reader, Gellius expects this fully-prepared audience to engage with him in a kind of 'investigatory rhetoric', which considers whether certain actions or words are inconsistent with the rest of someone's conduct, or indicate depravity by running counter to moral or legal principles or by some kind of self-contradiction or inconsistency.¹

Generally speaking, ancient rhetorical theory distinguished two types of enthymeme: one type that proves something from agreed premisses (the demonstrative enthymeme), and one type that refutes the opponent ('proves him wrong') by a reasoning from incompatibles or contraries (the refutative enthymeme).² To take an example from Lucian's

¹ In the *Rhetoric to Alexander* 10 (1430a 23 f.), the enthymeme is viewed in this manner as part of the 'investigatory species of oratory' (cf. 5, 1427b12).

² For the two types cf. Aristot. *Rhet.* 2, 22, 14 (1396b23 f.); Quint. *inst.* 5, 10, 2; 5, 14, 4. Quintilian (*inst.* 5, 10, 2) points to the confusion in the use of terms like enthymeme and epicheirema in rhetorical theory; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4, 25, where the reasoning from incompatibles is called '*contrarium*'.

Demonax again (cf. p. 97): reading *Demonax*'s retort that his 'balls' (12 ὄρχεις) entitle him to call himself a philosopher, the reader is able to perform both types of enthymeme. On the one hand, the remark 'proves' something from agreed premisses, one of which has to be filled in by the reader: this is the premiss that Favorinus was born without testicles, which is not denied by him in the *chreia*. Performing the logic of the demonstrative enthymeme, the reader will conclude that *Demonax* has proven his point that Favorinus' voice was feminine (γυναικεῖον) and has persuasively demonstrated his masculinity as opposed to Favorinus' unmanliness. Yet, the reader is enabled to unravel a refutative enthymeme as well, since *Demonax*'s retort also destroys Favorinus' claim to philosophical authority, an authority he apparently denied to *Demonax*. By working out *Demonax*'s implied argument that the lack of testicles is incompatible with the right to call oneself a philosopher, the reader will be able to recognise *Demonax*'s refutation of Favorinus' philosophical claims, and, what is more, he will draw his own conclusions regarding Favorinus' authority on the basis of the probabilities presented by the *chreia*. This humorous rhetorical strategy simultaneously serves to prove and to strengthen *Demonax*'s own authority, as a contemporary pattern (2 κανόν) by which men can shape themselves (αὐτοὺς ὁυθμίζειν).

Mutatis mutandis, Gellius uses the same rhetorical strategies to establish his own authority in the *Noctes Atticae*. The tension between the 'agreed premisses' and the 'incompatibles' is crucial in Gellius' double-edged representation of Favorinus. On various levels, the reader is challenged to perform demonstrative and refutative forms of enthymeme. As we have observed, Gellius on the one hand gives Favorinus a significant role in drawing attention to important aspects of his reputation, like his unmanliness, which points to a certain 'agreement' on the premisses that 'prove' these aspects to be accurate. On the other hand, Favorinus demonstrates a certain resistance to some premisses that affect his reputation, like the causal relation between avarice and physical effeminacy (3, 1, 3), or the validity of severe indictments of avarice (3, 1, 14)—the 'reader-investigator' is challenged to prove him wrong by reasoning from incompatibles, and finds, for example, in 3, 19 a witty inversion of the causal relation between avarice and unmanliness, proposed by Favorinus himself.

As in Lucian's *Demonax*, the reader of Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* is invited to consider whether the facts bear out Favorinus' self-presentation as a philosophical authority—in the role of a Socrates exposing sophists,

Favorinus mocks an ‘*in litteris ueterator*’ in 3, 1, an etymologist in 3, 19 (*eluserit*), and a boastful *grammaticus* in 4, 1 (*in Socraticum modum*). Yet, Gellius enables the reader to perform an ‘investigatory rhetoric’, and thus ‘solve’ forms of refutative enthymeme that destroy Favorinus’ argument and undermine his authority as a *sapiens*. We have seen an example of this in chapter 4, 1, where Gellius’ explanation of *penus* simultaneously destroys Favorinus’ definition. As in Lucian’s *Demonax*, ‘demonstrative’ and ‘refutative’ forms of enthymeme often go hand in hand in Gellius, for Favorinus’ definition of *penus* is not only destroyed by Gellius’ alternative, but also turns out to be indicative of his own ill repute related to avarice. In a similar way, a sophisticated Roman reader may on the one hand judge that on a linguistic level Favorinus’ etymological explanation of *parcus* with *paruus* or *parum* is nonsense,³ and therefore question his claims to intellectual authority (refutative enthymeme). On the other hand, on the level of the agreed premisses regarding Favorinus’ body, his interpretation turns out to ‘prove’ something about his reputed lack of manliness (demonstrative enthymeme).

In this chapter, I would like to illustrate Gellius’ use of the enthymeme in his rhetoric of humour in more detail, and to pay attention to its close association with his use of antithesis, which is not only a stylistic embellishment, but also a rhetorical figure, and as such comparable to the ‘enthymeme based on contraries’ (the ‘refutative’ kind). Quintilian points out that some even restrict the term ‘enthymeme’ to this kind (*inst.* 5, 10, 2; 5, 14, 2). According to Aristotle (*Rhet.* 3, 9, 8 [1410a]), antithesis gives an effect of pleasure, because opposites are easy to recognise and antithesis resembles a form of reasoning that brings about refutation from opposite conclusions.⁴ The parallel between antithesis and ‘refutative’ enthymeme is also evident in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, where *contentio* (4, 21) and *contrarium* (4, 25) are treated close to each other as figures of speech.

One of the examples of antithesis (*contentio*) quoted in that treatise (*in re frigidissima cales, in feruentissima friget*, ‘in a situation requiring all your

³ Cf. Prisc. *gramm.* II 136, 17 *probo probus ... parco parcus*, the explanation that is still valid today (see *ThLL* s.v. *parcus* 341, 16f.).

⁴ In a similar way, Aristotle had pointed out in *Rhet.* 2, 23, 30 (1400b) that the refutative enthymeme was better liked by the audience than the demonstrative one, because the refutative enthymeme is a ‘bringing together of opposites in a brief form’. In *Rhet.* 3, 10 (the section on ‘wit’; see Russell-Winterbottom 1972, 150–155), Aristotle treats enthymeme and antithetical statement as aspects of ‘urbanities and well-liked expressions’ (τὰ ἀστεία καὶ τὰ εὐδοκμοῦντα), simultaneously emphasising the learning that takes place in the mind through such expressions.

coolness, you are on fire, in one requiring all your ardour, you are cool') recalls the passage of Demetrius' *On Style* quoted earlier (p. 89 n. 57) that commented on a writer's ability to present unattractive material in an attractive way, which is a form of antithesis in its own right. In the light of that passage, Gellius' skills in antithesis gain a programmatic dimension related to his work as a whole:

Demetr. *elocut.* 134 Πολλάκις δὲ καὶ τὰ μὲν πράγματα ἀτερπῇ ἐστὶ φύσει καὶ στυγνὰ, ὑπὸ δὲ τοῦ λέγοντος γίνεται ἱλαρὰ.

often subjects which are naturally unattractive and sombre acquire a lighter tone from the writer's skill

135 Αὕτη δέ ἐστι καὶ ἡ δυνατωτάτη χάρις, καὶ μάλιστα ἐν τῷ λέγοντι.

'this is, indeed, the most effective charm, and one which most depends on the writer' ...

... ὁ δ' ὥσπερ ἐνδείκνυται, ὅτι καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων παίζειν ἔστιν, ὥσπερ καὶ ὑπὸ θερμοῦ ψύχεσθαι, θερμαίνεσθαι δὲ ὑπὸ τῶν ψυχροῶν.

the writer virtually gives a demonstration that even with such unpromising material jokes are possible, just as heat can cool and cold can heat.

As we have seen above (p. 134), Gellius' comment on Favorinus' ability to lead ordinary things from 'trivial and cold topics' (4, 1, 19 *a rebus paruis et frigidis*) to a level of general utility alludes to this antithesis as a 'proof' of the ability to make the trivial and dull interesting and engaging, although Gellius leaves the exact opposite of *frigidus* and *parvus* to be filled in by the reader.

Exposing demagogy and deception: Gellius on contio (18, 7)

A chapter that excellently illustrates Gellius' pluriform use of antithesis as part of a larger rhetoric of humour, including refutative and demonstrative forms of enthymeme, is 18, 7, the hilarious encounter of the philosopher Favorinus, accompanied by his pupil Gellius, with the *grammaticus* Domitius Insanus. When Favorinus by coincidence meets this learned man, nicknamed 'the Madman' (*Insanus*) because of his irritable character, he shares a philological problem with him, asking whether *contiones* in Latin would correctly render *δημηγορίας* in Greek.⁵

⁵ The question itself is a form of Socratic irony in the sense of 'feigned ignorance',

His specific doubt—a state of mind by which he identifies himself as a Sceptical philosopher—concerns the fact whether *contio* is used by the *ueteres* in the sense of the (words of the) speech itself.⁶ Domitius' infuriated answer (18, 7, 3) is in itself a form of antithesis (*contentio*) as explained by Rhet. Her. 4, 21:

Nulla ... prorsus bonae salutis spes reliqua est, cum uos quoque, philosophorum inlustrissimi, nihil iam aliud quam uerba auctoritatesque uerborum cordi habetis. [...] Ego enim grammaticus uitae iam atque morum disciplinas quaero, uos philosophi mera estis, ut M. Cato ait, 'mortalia'; glosaria namque colligitis et lexicidia, res taetras et inanes et friuolas, tamquam mulierum uoces praeficarum.

There is absolutely no hope left of anything good, when even you distinguished philosophers care for nothing save words and the authority for words. [...] For I, a grammarian, am inquiring into the conduct of life and manners, while you philosophers are nothing but *mortalia*, or 'winding sheets', as Marcus Cato says, for you collect glossaries and word lists, filthy, foolish, trifling things, like the dirges of female hired mourners.

At first sight, the antithesis put in the mouth of Domitius Insanus serves the grammarian's purpose to refute Favorinus' claim to philosophical authority: although being a *philosophus*, Favorinus does not have anything better to do than asking questions about silly philological details, whereas he, Domitius, proves to be the truly authoritative philosopher, because he occupies himself with the moral questions that Favorinus evidently neglects.⁷

For the 'investigating reader', however, Domitius the Madman forms part of an antithesis himself, as he claims to be a philosopher while being a grammarian. Thus, the reader is invited to refute Domitius' own claims to authority, and to unmask him as just as boastful a *grammaticus* as his other colleagues in the *Noctes* who mock Gellius' philological inquiries (cf. 6, 17, 3; 15, 9, 6). The inappropriateness of Domitius'

for in the light of Favorinus' knowledge of Cicero (cf. 13, 25, 4) he must have been perfectly aware that *contio* was the most adequate translation of *δημιγογία*.

⁶ 18, 7, 2 *dubito* quippe et requiro an ueterum eorum qui electius locuti sunt pro uerbis et oratione dixerit quis 'contionem', 'for I am in doubt and should be glad to be informed whether any of the men of old who spoke with special elegance used *contio* of words and of a speech'. For the programmatic doubt of Academic Scepticism cf. 11, 5, 6; 20, 1, 9; significantly, Favorinus praises Gellius' *religio cunctationis* in 14, 2, 12.

⁷ Domitius' diatribe recalls a passage from Epictetus, in which he disqualifies those opponents as philosophers, who only seem to be interested in judging his diction and style (3, 9, 14); see Schmitz 1997, 87.

‘antithetical’ behaviour can be illustrated by a poem from the Greek Anthology (11, 305), which in itself exemplifies antithesis (*contentio*):⁸

Τέκνον ἀναδείης, ἀμαθέστατε, θρέμμα μοῖρης,
εἰπέ, τί βρενθύη μηδὲν ἐπιστάμενος;
ἐν μὲν γραμματικοῖς ὁ πλατωνικός· ἄν δὲ Πλάτωνος
δόγματα τις ζητῇ, γραμματικός σὺ πάλιν.
ἐξ ἑτέρου φεύγεις ἐπὶ θάτερον· οὔτε δὲ τέχνην
οἶσθα γραμματικὴν, οὔτε πλατωνικός εἶ.

Child of shamelessness, most ignorant of men, nursling of folly,
tell why do you hold your head high, knowing nothing?
Among the grammarians you are the Platonist, and if anyone inquires
as to Plato’s doctrines you are again a grammarian.
From one thing you take refuge in another, and you neither know
the Art of Grammar nor are a Platonist.

As we have observed above, Gellius engages his reader in a kind of ‘investigatory rhetoric’, which considers whether certain actions or words are inconsistent with the rest of someone’s conduct. In the case of Domitius Insanus, his dismissal of the philological activities of Favorinus and Gellius (*uos philosophi*) is belied by his parading of words that betray a similar kind of scrupulous word-hunting,⁹ such as the word *praefica*, the type of word that is found in archaic writers and deemed worthy of explanation by diligent commentators, scholiasts, and compilers of glossaries.¹⁰ Moreover, while attacking the concern for *auctoritates* (‘authoritative writers’), Domitius quotes one of the most important *auctoritates* from the *Noctes Atticae* to underline his own diatribe, viz. Cato the Elder.

Yet, on a different level, the reader may recognise in Domitius’ diatribe against trivial philological activities some satirical allusions to Favorinus’ ill repute (‘demonstrative enthymeme’). As Holford-Strevens

⁸ The poem is mentioned by H. Caplan in a note on Rhet. Her. 4, 21 (Loeb-edition); see also Schmitz 1997, 88 n. 71.

⁹ On Domitius’ ‘self-betrayal in parading strange words’ see Holford-Strevens 2003, 151 n. 33, who cites the Graecisms *glosaria* and *lexidia* as other examples of Domitius’ taste for far-fetched words.

¹⁰ Cf. frg. Non. p. 67, 10 *a muliere neniam cantari solitam ad tibias et fides ...; haec mulier uocitata olim praefica usque ad Poenicum bellum*. Cf. Non. p. 145, 25 *nenia, ineptum ... carmen, quod a conducta muliere, quae praefica diceretur, is, quibus propinqui non essent, mortuis exhiberetur*. p. 66, 27 *praeficae dicebantur apud ueteres, quae adhiberi solent funeri, mercede conductae, ut et flerent et fortia facta laudarent*. Gloss. *praefica*: ἡ πρὸ τῆς κλίνης ἐν τῇ ἐκφορᾷ κοπτομένη, θρηνηφῶδως ἐπ’ ἐκφορᾷ.

notes (2003, 151 n. 33), the *res taetras et inanes et friuolas, tamquam mulierum uoces praeificarum* are a periphrasis of *n(a)eniae*, which literally mean ‘dirges’, and in a transferred sense ‘silly things’, ‘rubbish’.¹¹ The *praeifica* is the professional female vocalist who sings the *neniae*, and accusing Favorinus of using *uoces praeificarum* comes down more or less to comparing him with a woman singing dirges. Moreover, *nenia* can mean ‘magical formulas’, sometimes uttered by old women,¹² which is an interesting connotation in the light of Favorinus’ reputed magical practices. The image of the *praeifica* singing *neniae* alludes to the notorious stereotypes from contemporary gossip regarding the voice of Favorinus. In a fragment of Plautus (*Friv. fig. 7 superabo ... omnis argutando praeificas*), the word *praeifica* is used as a paradigm of female chatter (cf. *argutor* = ‘to prattle’), which was a famous comparandum for Favorinus’ manner of speaking.¹³ Moreover, the element of ‘song’ alludes to Favorinus’ notorious ‘singing performance’.¹⁴ The metaphor of the *praeifica* also expresses ethical aspects: Plautus used it as an illustration for a kind of eloquence that lacks *uirtus*, literally ‘manhood’, and hence becomes an anti-model for civic behaviour (*Truc. 494f.*):

¹¹ See *OLD* s.v. *neniae* 5; Gowers 1993, 60; for the etymology see A.R. Dyck on Cic. *leg. 2*, 62 (he compares νινῆατος, a Phrygian tune for the flute). Gellius does not mention *neniae* but *mortualia*; cf. *OLD* s.v. ‘Things pertaining to the dead, spec. a. funeral dirges (proverbial for their silliness).’ Cf. Plaut. *Asin. 808 haec non sunt nugae, non enim mortualia*.

¹² Cf. Ov. *ars 2*, 102 *mixta ... cum magicis naenia Marsa*; *fast. 6*, 142 *naenia ... in uolucres Marsa figurat anus*.

¹³ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph. 1*, 25 p. 541 (T XIII Amato-Julien) Τιμοκράτους δὲ τοῦ φιλοσόφου πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰπόντος, ὥς ἄλλον χρῆμα ὁ Φαβωρίνος γένοιτο, ἀστεϊότατα ὁ Πολέμων “καὶ πᾶσα” ἔφη “γραῦς” τὸ εὐνουχῶδες αὐτοῦ διασκώπτων, ‘when Timocrates the philosopher remarked to him that Favorinus had become a chatterbox, Polemo said wittily: “an old woman in all respects”, thus making fun of him for being like a eunuch’. See also above, p. 98 n. 3. For a veiled reference to Favorinus’ feminine voice cf. Gell. 16, 3, 1 *fandi dulcissimus*; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 103: “on observing that the phrase is lifted from Vergil’s description of the nymph Cymodocea (*Aen. 10*, 225) we can hardly miss the by-meaning”. Cf. Verg. *Aen. 10*, 225 *fandi doctissima Cymodocea*, and see the Addenda (2005), p. 438 on Holford-Strevens 2003, 103: “whereas the nymph is praised for what was more often a masculine quality, the philosopher is commended for a mainly female merit”.

¹⁴ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph. 1*, 8 p. 492 on Favorinus’ sung epilogues. The ‘singing delivery’ was a target of criticism in the contemporary debate, which associated it with effeminacy; cf. Dio Chrys. *or. 32*, 68 (cf. also 33, 60 and see Gleason 1995, 68); Ael. Arist. *or. 34*, 47 (Gleason 1995, 124; Korenjak 2000, 143); cf. 34, 48 (= T LXII Amato-Julien). Cf. the satire in Lucianus’ *rhet. praec. 15 μέλος ἀναίσχυντον*, ‘a shameless singing delivery’; 19 ‘intone everything and turn it into song’ (Gleason 1995, 127); even Philostratus criticises it in 2, 28 p. 60 (Varus van Laodicea); cf. 1, 20 p. 513 (Dionysus of Milete). See further Korenjak 2000, 37 n. 99; Holford-Strevens 2003, 100 n. 11.

*facile sibi facunditatem uirtus argutam inuenit,
sine uirtute argutum ciuem mihi habeam pro praefica,
quae alios conlaudat, eapse sese uero non potest.*

Valour easily finds for itself a fluent eloquence;
without valour, for my own part, I should esteem an eloquent citizen
as a hired mourner,
who praises other people, but can't do the same for herself.

Being a grammarian himself, and speaking to at least two persons (Favorinus and Gellius) who admired Plautus, Domitius could not have overlooked the significant undertones of this expression, directed against a personality who was so famously associated with literally lacking the quality of a *uir*. Gellius' reader was certainly not supposed to overlook these connotations, which reminded him of the 'shared premisses' regarding Favorinus' eunuch-like appearance and his questionable behaviour in the political context of a citizen's duties towards the state, recalling that Favorinus' eloquence was undoubtedly regarded by many as a flattering eloquence without *uirtus*.

What is more, Domitius' diatribe, including the word *praefica*, has further significant connotations, which affect both Favorinus' status as a teacher and his intellectual outlook, apparently shared by his pupil Gellius (Domitius seems to address them together in 18, 7, 3 as '*uos philosophi*'). Being the principal mourner, who 'calls the tune' for others who have to lament with her (cf. Clod. *gramm.* 8 *quae praeficeretur ancillis, quem ad modum lamentarentur, praefica est dicta*), the *praefica* is transformed in this context into a satirical image for the paradigmatic role of Favorinus as a teacher in the world of the *Noctes Atticae*. According to this image, Favorinus takes the lead in singing *neniae*, which stand for the intellectual trifles and 'things without honour' that constitute the learning of the *Noctes*; thus, the image of the *praefica/neniae* also 'fits in' with a general pattern of self-irony and self-satire in Gellius' work regarding the 'trivial pursuits' ('*nugalia*') of his own cultural programme.

Gellius as author makes Favorinus take immediate revenge upon Domitius' attack, not through a direct verbal assault according to the 'κυνικὸς τρόπος', but in a subtle, Socratic kind of way. Favorinus' gentle and mild behaviour forms an antithesis by itself with the irascible nature of his opponent. After they have left Domitius, Favorinus draws Gellius' attention to the fact that this man evidently suffers from μελαγχολία, the melancholy that the ancients associated especially with an impulsive temperament and with insanity, and considered as a disease

from which especially great thinkers suffered—a reason for Favorinus to observe some truth in it (18, 7, 4).¹⁵

Favorinus' use of the term *μελαγχολία* and of other Greek expressions such as *ἐπισημαίνεσθαι*, 'to display the symptoms'—note the 'code-switching', marking the use of technical, i.e. medical language¹⁶—exemplifies the use of medical language to disparage others, to make their (philosophical) aberrance 'visible'. Favorinus' predilection for using (Greek) medical terms may be connected with his Academic Scepticism,¹⁷ and possibly alludes to an important controversy in which he was implicated, his dispute with the physician Galen. It is possible that the reference to *μελαγχολία* originates from the medical writer Erasistratus.¹⁸ Given the polemical subtext of the present passage, it is significant that Galen vehemently attacked Erasistratus throughout his works, and put his followers on a par with Sceptical thinkers (Academics and Pyrrhonists) like Favorinus (cf. *On the Natural Faculties* 2, 9; *On Antecedent Causes* 13, 162),¹⁹ denouncing their sceptical attitude as 'stupidity'. Favorinus' present judgment on Domitius Insanus' insight (cf. *ueritates ... dicere*) alludes to an important 'stone of offence' that Favorinus presented in Galen's eyes, namely his inconsistency in evaluating the reliability of observations made by insane people.²⁰ Thus, Favorinus' medical observation on Domitius Insanus' perceptive faculty reminds the reader again of the instability of Favorinus' authority in the contemporary intellectual debate.

¹⁵ According to Aristotle (*Problems*, book 30), all those who have become outstanding philosophers appeared *melancholikai* (he mentions Empedocles, Socrates, and Plato as examples). It was a well-known observation in antiquity; cf. e.g. Cic. *Tusc.* 1, 80 and see Gamberale 1995, 251.

¹⁶ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 151 n. 35 on the conjecture *ἐπισημαίνεσθαι* and n. 33 on the code-switching; on the latter see also Swain 2004, 37 n. 121, who does not see a 'technical' aspect in Favorinus' code-switching in 18, 7, 4, but suggests that it just illustrates Favorinus' personal readiness to code-switch. Cf., however, 16, 3, 2 *cum ... multaque ad medicos, qui tum forte istic erant, ualitudinis eius gratia oratione Graeca dixisset*.

¹⁷ For medical diagnosis as a mode of thinking for Sceptics ('der Skeptiker als Arzt') see Luchner 2004, 109–126.

¹⁸ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 303 with n. 66, who allows equal probability for a philosophical source, given the echo of Aristot. *Probl.* 30, 1.

¹⁹ Gellius alludes to this association in 16, 3, 10 *ἄπορον δὲ καὶ δεόμενον ἐπισκέψεως*.

²⁰ Cf. Galen, *Opt. doctr.* 2, 1–2 (p. 95 Barigazzi 1991); see Ioppolo 1993, 204. The target of Galen's attack is Favorinus' inconsistency regarding his cognitive theory, since Favorinus admits that there is a difference in reliability between what is observed by insane people and those who are healthy of mind, whereas as an Academic Sceptic he is generally of the opinion that a healthy mind is not more reliable than an insane mind, because perception offers no epistemological basis whatsoever.

As is well known, Favorinus himself had also suffered from attacks through ‘medical terms of abuse’, attacks that reverberate in Domitius’ diatribe. Thus, Favorinus’ retort not only takes revenge by returning medical insinuations to the sender, it also disguises an accusation of insanity in an apparent compliment (18, 7, 4 *non parvis nec abiectis ingeniiis accidere, ἀλλὰ εἶναι σχεδόν τι τὸ πάθος τοῦτο ἡρωϊκόν et ueritates plerumque fortiter dicere*, ‘it does not afflict small or contemptible minds, but it is in a way a kind of heroic affliction and its victims often speak the truth boldly’). Favorinus elaborates on the ‘compliment’ by comparing the quality of Domitius’ diatribe with the sayings of the Cynic philosophers *par excellence* (18, 7, 4):

Vel ipsum hoc quale existimatis quod nunc de philosophis dixit? Nonne, si id Antisthenes aut Diogenes dixisset, dignum memoria uisum esset?

For example, what do you think of this which he just said of philosophers? If Antisthenes or Diogenes had said it, would it not have seemed worthy of remembrance?

The compliment is double-edged, for in spite of the acumen that Favorinus observes in Domitius’ words, at the same time he denies him the authority that ‘canonical’ Cynics like Diogenes and Antisthenes evidently did possess, and which made their *chreiai* memorable.²¹ Favorinus’ Socratic irony as a contrasting response to Domitius’ anger turns out to reveal a certain amount of disdain—if Domitius still had been present, it would probably have infuriated him even more.²²

Thus, the reader may enjoy the amusing interaction between two antithetical modes of undermining someone else’s authority, the ‘κυνικὸς τρόπος’ of the ‘would-be’ Cynic Domitius Insanus, and the hauteur of Favorinus’ Socratic irony. On a different level, the reader of this chapter continues his own ‘diagnostic’ activity, and is guided by Gellius as author in the ‘investigation’ of the ‘symptoms’ and of other evidence that leads to the acknowledgement of true authority.

This investigation is organised around the question posed by Favorinus at the beginning of the chapter, whether *contio* was an accurate translation for δημηγορία. In an ironically unobtrusive way, Gellius

²¹ On Favorinus’ interest in Diogenes see Gamberale 1995, 251.

²² Cf. Aristot. *Rhet.* 2, 2, 24 (1379b) καταφρονητικόν γὰρ ἡ εἰρωνεία, ‘for irony shows contempt’. On the hauteur of Socratic irony see also Bracht Branham 1994, 39. Compare Favorinus’ disdainful tone to the *grammaticus* in 4, 1, 4 *quicquid est nomen tibi, ‘whatever your name is’*.

exposes the insignificance of Domitius' authority to the reader, for example by casually mentioning the fact that the book sent by Domitius to Favorinus concerning his burning question was written by Verrius Flaccus (*Verri, opinor, Flacci erat*, 'I think it was one by Verrius Flaccus')—one of the writers whom Gellius elsewhere holds in particularly low esteem.²³

Gellius' unobtrusive tactics of establishing his own authority is also visible in his self-presentation as student in this anecdote: in the first part of the scene, he remains the silent listener in the background, but in the latter part he emerges as the only one who possesses the cultural expertise that leads to the key solution of this *chreia*. Only Gellius is capable of mentioning the relevant *exempla* that illustrate the meanings of the word *contio* (18, 7, 8). These *exempla* are evidently lacking in the book of Verrius Flaccus, and Favorinus insistently asks Gellius for them (18, 7, 9 *quod potissimum petebat*), since he wishes to know whether the word *contio* could also be used in a neutral way, for the words of the speech or the speech itself. By adducing the required material from the authoritative writers (in this case Cicero), Gellius-*sectator* proves to be the most adroit in a crucial aspect of the teaching of Gellius-*auctor* in his *Noctes Atticae*: explaining the meanings of words and finding the pertinent examples from the *auctoritates* that illustrate those meanings. Ironically, Gellius seems to live up to Domitius' criticism: *nihil iam aliud quam uerba auctoritatesque uerborum cordi habetis*.

However, in his mastery of the subtleties of Socratic irony and the biting satire of the 'κυνικός τρόπος', Gellius again proves to be the superior authority in this chapter. As we have seen in the discussion of *obnoxius* and other examples, philological exegesis can become an instrument of authorial manipulation in *Noctes Atticae*, employed to provoke reflections in the reader on moral and political issues. Here, Gellius' treatment of the *exempla* that illustrate *contio* likewise invites the reader to pursue his 'investigational rhetoric' ('demonstrative enthymeme'), and to continue recognising allusions to the authority of the ambiguous philosopher who was in doubt on the word *contio* in the first place (18, 7, 2 *dubito quippe*).

Favorinus' particular doubt, leading to his most insistent question (18, 7, 2; 18, 7, 9), whether *contio* can mean 'just' the speech, is a particular target of Gellius' irony, for Gellius places the word in the significant

²³ Cf. Gell. 17, 6, 4; see Beall 2004, 212 n. 35.

context of other terms that all have a whole range of meanings, but are especially related to the political atmosphere of government and jurisdiction as a context in which speeches are held. By putting *contio* on a par with terms like *senatus*, *ciuitas*, *tribus*, and *decuriae*, terms that can have a local meaning (a particular place), a juridical or political meaning (concerning political authority of jurisdiction), or a meaning related to a large body of people, Gellius invites his reader to reflect on the plurality of meanings of the word *contio*, of which he mentions three. Ironically, the examples mentioned by Gellius to illustrate these three meanings evoke undeniable associations with the political career of Favorinus such as we know it from the ‘gossipy’ account in Philostratus.

The quotations provide glimpses of Roman public life in the late Republic, a time with striking similarities with the period of rivalry between the sophists Favorinus and Polemo. Public life in both periods was marked by individualistic competition for office, glory, and subsequent reputation and influence, and someone’s family background, style, and personal conduct were viewed as crucial factors for success—the arbiters of success and failure being the large crowds gathering as audiences to the speeches delivered by ambitious political rivals.²⁴ As Simon Swain (2007a, 2) points out, ‘it is illegitimate to separate the intellectual, virtuoso activity of men of Polemon’s class from their activities as financial and political benefactors of the communities where they held property and citizenship’—as is well-known, Favorinus’ and Polemo’s long-running dispute was closely connected with the competing interests of the two leading Greek cities represented by them, Ephesus and Smyrna.²⁵

²⁴ See Millar 1998, 95 on the time of Cicero’s *contiones*. On the φιλοτιμία of Favorinus and Polemo and the important role of the crowd as audience see Schmitz 1997, 125–127; 214–220; on the sophist as ‘embodiment of power’ see p. 213. On the importance of the crowd for successful performances of sophists see also Hahn 1989, 48. Philosophers who performed for large crowds like Dio Chrysostomus and Favorinus were criticised, because the ‘demagogical’ aspect of their ‘show-oratory’ was considered ‘unphilosophical’ (Hahn 1989, 111)—this probably accounts for their later inclusion in Philostratus’ special category of philosophers who had the reputation of being a ‘sophist’. They preferred to see themselves as philosophers (see Swain 2007b, 128). Cf. Brunt 1994, 49.

²⁵ Cf. Philostratus, *vit. soph.* 1, 8 pp. 490–491 and see Bowersock 1969, 90f.; Swain 2007b, 156–157. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 99 n. 6 and 268–269 for possible reflections of Favorinus’ and Polemo’s feud in Gellius. See p. 152.

(1) To illustrate the first meaning of *contio*, ‘tribunal’,²⁶ Gellius quotes a passage from Cicero’s *Contra contionem Q. Metelli*:

“*Escendi ... in contionem; concursus est populi factus*”

‘I mounted the tribunal (*contionem*); the people gathered’

Apparently, the quotation illustrates a material sense of *contio*, but the latter part recalls the gathering of great throngs of people such as Favorinus was used to see at his performances in Rome (Philostratus, *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 491):

Διαλεγόμενου δὲ αὐτοῦ κατὰ τὴν Ῥώμην μεστὰ ἦν σπουδῆς πάντα, καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ ὅσοι τῆς Ἑλλήνων φωνῆς ἀξύνετοι ἦσαν, οὐδὲ τούτοις ἀφ’ ἡδονῆς ἢ ἀκρόασις ἦν, ἀλλὰ κακείνους ἔθελγε τῇ τε ἡχῇ τοῦ φθέγματος καὶ τῷ σημαίνοντι τοῦ βλέμματος καὶ τῷ ὀνυμῷ τῆς γλώττης.

When he delivered discourses in Rome, the interest in them was universal, so much so that even those in the audience who did not understand the Greek language shared in the pleasure that he gave; for he fascinated even them by the tones of his voice, by his expressive glance and the rhythm of his speech.

The success of Favorinus’ speeches in Rome as described by Philostratus reflects the tumultuous applause in Rome for Favorinus declaiming in Greek as witnessed by Gellius (9, 8, 3; cf. 14, 1, 1; 32). The strong attraction of Greek rhetoric on Romans, a frequent topic in the *Lives of the Sophists*, echoes the fascination that the young Gellius felt for Favorinus’ eloquence.²⁷

Moreover, Philostratus’ pictures of the throngs of Romans eagerly running through the streets of Rome and pushing each other out of the way to hear Favorinus or Hadrian of Tyre (*vit. soph.* 2, 10 p. 589) perform, resemble the Gellian vignette of Demosthenes’ ‘conversion’ to Callistratus—one of the so-called *δημαγωγοί* (‘demagogues’)—as a teacher in 3, 13, itself a mirror of Gellius’ becoming *sectator* of the charismatic Favorinus.²⁸ Significantly, Demosthenes heard Callistratus perform in *contione populi* (3, 13 tit.). Gellius’ and Demosthenes’ shared

²⁶ *Contio* in the sense of ‘tribunal’ draws attention to the visibility of the speaker, who, in Rome, stood on a higher position than the crowd of listeners, thanks to a raised platform; see Corbeill 2002, 200 (with n. 66).

²⁷ Cf. 16, 3, 1 *quasi ex lingua prorsum eius capti prosequeremur; ita sermonibus usquequaque amoenissimis demulcebat*, ‘as if actually taken prisoner by his eloquence; to such a degree did he constantly delight me with his most agreeable discourse’.

²⁸ Cf. 3, 13, 2 *cum ... compluris ... populos concurrentes uideret, ... cognoscit ... currere eos auditum Callistratum*; 3, 13, 4 *properantium studio*; 3, 13, 4–5 *ita motus et demultus et captus est, ut Callistratum iam inde sectari coeperit*. See Pausch 2004, 192 with n. 248 on the idea

fascination for a master who was able to gather great throngs of people with his charisma draws attention to the uneasy relation between διδασκαλία ('teaching', 'instruction') and the notion of δημαγωγία, being more or less equivalent to ψυχαγωγία, 'winning the people's souls', 'persuasion'.²⁹

(2) The crucial role of the orator's ability to 'charm the ears' of the audience is reflected in the example that Gellius adduces to illustrate the second meaning of *contio*, that of the people gathered in the assembly. Gellius again quotes from Cicero, this time from the *Orator* (168):

"Contiones saepe clamare uidi, cum apte uerba cecidissent. Etenim expectant aures, ut uerbis conligetur sententia"

'I have often observed audiences (*contiones*) cry out, when words ended in a proper rhythm; for the ears expect the thought to be expressed in harmonious words.'

Through this quotation, Gellius alludes to two aspects of Favorinus which contributed to his fame but also made him part of a controversial cultural phenomenon: his rhythmical style, by which he enchanted his audience (καὶ τῷ ἑνθιμῷ τῆς γλώττης), and the loud applause and shouting by which the gathered crowds expressed their acclaim, reactions to which Gellius claims to have been witness himself (cf. 9, 8, 3 *inter ingentes omnium clamores*). Gellius' readers may have recognised in this veiled allusion to Favorinus' reputation as a performer a significant reference to a broader contemporary fashion, formed by virtuous philosophical performers who put large crowds into raptures and had a great influence on the young, and hence formed a point of concern in moral-pedagogical discussions of Gellius' time, including Gellius' own work (5, 1, 1, quoting Musonius):

cum philosophus ... hortatur, monet, suadet, obiurgat aliudue quid disciplinarum disserit, tum qui audiunt si de summo et soluto pectore obuias uulgatasque laudes effutiant, si clamitant etiam, si gestiunt, si uocum eius festiuitatibus, si modulis uerborum, si quibusdam quasi frequentamentis orationis mouentur, exagitantur et gestiunt, tum scias et qui dicit et qui audiunt frustra esse neque illi philosophum loqui, sed tibicinem canere.

of conversion (ἐπιστροφή) behind this vignette. On charismatic authority and group formation see above, chapter two, p 39f.

²⁹ Cf. 3, 13, 3 *quos illi δημαγωγούς appellant*. Rhetoric is called a ψυχαγωγία by Plato, *Phaedr.* 261a. Cf. Hor. *ars* 99f. *dulcia sunt/ et quocumque uolent animum auditoris agunto*, with Brink ad loc.

when a philosopher ... is uttering words of encouragement, of warning, of persuasion, or of rebuke, or is discussing any other philosophical theme, then if his hearers utter trite and commonplace expressions of praise without reflection or restraint, if they shout too, if they gesticulate, if they are stirred and swayed and impassioned by the charm of his utterance, by the rhythm of his words, and by certain musical notes, as it were, then you may know that speaker and hearer are wasting their time, and that they are not hearing a philosopher's lecture, but an aulos-player's recital.

As Beall (2001, 101) observes, the Favorinian style of this passage invites comparison with the epideictic performances for which Favorinus was famous, especially his sing-song epilogues which his supporters called 'the ode' (cf. *tibicinem canere*). Favorinus' enemy Epictetus expressed himself in similar terms in his scorn of pseudo-philosophers who fawn over a senator in their audience (3, 23, 13) and hope that their speeches will impress the audience (3, 23, 19). Moreover, Epictetus' diatribe also contains a lesson for the Roman students who visited his school at Nicopolis: just as Musonius, Epictetus condemns the attitude of students who only enjoy the beauty of the language and fail to learn its internal moral message.³⁰

Another educational authority to whom Gellius makes frequent reference, viz. Plutarch, likewise in his treatise *On Listening to Lectures* criticised loud acclaim for philosophical lectures, pointing to the risks and responsibilities of the individual listener, and warning that the impact of the speaker's intense performance combined with the excitement of the crowd could sweep inexperienced young listeners away on the current (*Mor.* 41C).³¹ Through his quotation of Cicero's use of *contiones* in the sense of 'shouting audiences', in a context of a *chreia* where Favorinus' authority as a philosopher is explicitly questioned, Gellius invites the 'investigating' reader to reflect upon his own critical role as listener to lectures and sophistic performances—and as reader of this chapter—

³⁰ Epictetus scorns students who only want to exchange mutual flatterings for their writings (2, 17, 35–40); see Hoffer (1999, 134 n. 34). On Epictetus see also above, p. 139 n. 7.

³¹ On Plutarch's discussion of the impact of performance on the audience in *De audiendo* see Gleason 1995, xxiii; Korenjak 2000, 170–194. Plutarch associates this kind of performances with sophists, who use words to obfuscate thought, since they are interested only in entertainment. Moreover, in his *On inoffensive self-praise* (*Mor.* 543E–F), Plutarch mentions as an example of *offensive* self-praise the habit of rhetorical sophists to accept loud praises at their displays like "how divine!" and "spoken like a god!".

and to avoid wasting his time and degrading himself to being a mere listener to an *aulos*-player (cf. 5, 1, 1).

A careful 'reader-investigator' might have recognised the connection between Domitius' initial criticism of Favorinus as a philosopher who merely cares for words (18, 7, 3) and the veiled allusions in the Ciceronian quotations to a similar phenomenon from the contemporary world, pointing at an eloquent performer whose authority is degraded by his demagogic performance—both Favorinus and this 'performer' are just juggling with words, without a deeper learning taking place. Such a reader may be invited to pursue the logic of the 'refutative enthymeme', as the evidence alluded to in this chapter seems to work towards a refutation of Favorinus' authority. This evidence becomes even stronger in view of the following.

(3) In addition to the allusions to the above-mentioned aspects of Favorinus' reputation, Gellius introduces a third controversial aspect to the reader through his discussion of the third meaning of *contio*, that of the speech itself (18, 7, 9):

id autem quod potissimum expetebat, 'contionem' esse dictam pro uerbis et oratione, docui titulo Tulliani libri, qui a M. Cicerone inscriptus est Contra Contionem M. Metelli, quo nihil profecto significatur aliud quam ipsa quae a Metello dicta est oratio.

but that which he especially desired, an example of *contio* used for words and of a speech, I pointed out in the title of a book by Cicero, which he had called *In Reply to the Address of Quintus Metellus*; for there *Contionem* surely means nothing else than the speech itself which was delivered by Metellus.

Here, the ironies accumulate. First, Gellius innocently mentions the title of Cicero's speech in full, as if he were quoting it for the first time, whereas the same speech had provided him with the first quotation to illustrate *contio*, cited a few lines above (18, 7, 7). The elaborate repetition of its title draws attention to the importance of this Ciceronian speech, which stresses its own polemical nature already by the title's first word, *Contra* (adding a possible pun: *contra contionem*). A 'neutral' or 'uncompromising' meaning of *contio* as desired by Favorinus seems to be ruled out in the light of the Ciceronian examples adduced in this chapter, which makes Gellius' concluding remark '*quo nihil profecto significatur aliud quam ipsa ... oratio*' sound quite ironical.

The choice of this Ciceronian *exemplum* speaks volumes if placed in the light of Favorinus' political rivalry with Polemo. The learned reader

notices that the most important fact is left unmentioned but speaks for itself: this *contio* was the vehement assault by Quintus Caecilius Metellus Nepos, tribune-elect and Pompey's agent, on Cicero, his sworn enemy.³² Since entering office as tribune on 10 December 63 B.C., Metellus Nepos had demonstrated hostility to Cicero and his handling of the Catiline crisis. He had launched a campaign against Cicero, with as its climax his hostile *contio* on 3 Jan. 62, in which he deprived Cicero of the power to address an assembly.³³

Thus, the word *contio* not merely means 'oratio', but evokes vivid associations with demagoguery and the power of rhetoric to bring political opponents into disrepute with the Roman people. Gellius' repeated quotation of Cicero's counter-attack on Metellus' attempt at political murder reinforces the word's associations with political rivalry and the use of rhetoric to make and break careers. In this respect, Cicero's counterblast did not yield to Metellus' *contio* in any way. Metellus Nepos' brother, Metellus Celer, who was on good terms with Cicero, complained to him about the vehement attack on his brother (Cic. *fam.* 5, 1, 1), but Cicero tried to exonerate himself by explaining that he defended himself against an *impetus crudelissimus* and an *iniuria*.³⁴ In his biography of Cicero, Plutarch alludes to this speech as a characteristic example of his way of attacking enemies by means of biting sarcasm and below-the-belt humour. Plutarch points out how Cicero's cutting remarks, which he calls 'indiscriminate attacks for the sake of raising a laugh' (τὸ δ' οἷς ἔτυχε προσκρούειν ἔνεκα τοῦ γελοίου), amassed him much hatred (27, 1). Plutarch illustrates this attitude with Cicero's insinuations about the low moral reputation of both Metellus Nepos and his mother (26, 9).³⁵

³² Cf. Cic. *Att.* 3, 12, 1 *quae ista est eodem tribuno plebis et inimico consule designato?*; Dio Cass. 39, 6, 3 ὅτε Νέπωσ ὁ ὑπάτος ἀπ' οἰκείας τινὸς ἔξθρας τὸν Κικέρωνα μισῶν, 'Nepos, the consul, who had a private grudge against Cicero'.

³³ Cic. *fam.* 5, 2, 7 *contionis habendae potestate priuauit*. Cf. Plut. *Cicero* 23, 1–2 οὐκ εἶωον δημιγορεῖν αὐτόν, 'they would not allow Cicero to harangue the people'. Dio Cassius represents Metellus Nepos as a demagogue who violently denounced not only Cicero but the whole senate before the populace (37, 42, 2 ἐν τῷ ὄμιλῳ).

³⁴ Cic. *fam.* 5, 2, 6 *si uero meam salutem contra illius impetum in me crudelissimum defenderim, satis habeas nihil me etiam tecum de tui fratris iniuria conqueri, quem ego cum comperissem omnem sui tribunatus conatum in meam perniciem parare atque meditari*.

³⁵ Cf. Plut. *Cicero* 23, 9 Μετέλλου δὲ Νέπωτος ἐν διαφορᾷ τινι πολλάκις λέγοντος "τίς σοῦ πατήρ ἐστιν ὦ Κικέρων", "σοὶ αὐτήν", ἔφη, "τὴν ἀπόκρισιν ἢ μήτηρ χαλεπωτέραν πεποιήκην". ἐδόκει δ' ἀκόλαστος ἢ μήτηρ εἶναι τοῦ Νέπωτος, αὐτὸς δὲ τις εὐμετάβολος, 'when in some dispute Metellus Nepos said repeatedly "Who is your father, Cicero?",

To Favorinus and to Gellius' readers who were aware of Favorinus' reputation, the emphatically repeated quotation of Cicero's *Contionem Q. Metelli* by Gellius must have been an unmistakable reminder of the invectives that resulted from the long-running dispute between Favorinus and Polemo, invectives that became especially vehement in Rome, and which even Philostratus deemed reprehensible (*vit. soph.* 1, 8 pp. 490–491):

Ἡ δὲ γενομένη πρὸς τὸν Πολέμωνα τῷ Φαβωρίῳ διαφορὰ ἤρξατο μὲν ἐν Ἰωνίᾳ προσθεμένων αὐτῷ τῶν Ἑφesiῶν, ἐπεὶ τὸν Πολέμωνα ἡ Σμύρνα ἐθαύμαζεν, ἐπέδωκε δὲ ἐν τῇ Ῥώμῃ, ὕπατοι γὰρ καὶ παῖδες ὑπάτων οἱ μὲν τὸν ἐπαινοῦντες, οἱ δὲ τόν, ἤρξαν αὐτοῖς φιλοτιμίας, ἡ πολὺν ἐκκαίει φθόνον καὶ σοφοῖς ἀνδράσιν. συγγνωστοὶ μὲν οὖν τῆς φιλοτιμίας, τῆς ἀνθρωπείας φύσεως τὸ φιλότιμον ἀγῆρων ἡγουμένης, μεμπτέοι δὲ τῶν λόγων, οὓς ἐπ' ἀλλήλους ξυνέθεσαν, ἀσελγῆς γὰρ λοιδορία, κἂν ἀληθὴς τύχη, οὐκ ἀφίησιν αἰσχύνῃς οὐδὲ τὸν ὑπὲρ τοιούτων εἰπόντα.

The quarrel that arose between Polemo and Favorinus began in Ionia, where the Ephesians favoured Favorinus, while Smyrna admired Polemo; and it became more bitter in Rome; for there consulars and sons of consulars by applauding either one or the other started between them a rivalry such as kindles the keenest envy and malice even in the hearts of wise men. However they may be forgiven for that rivalry, since human nature holds that the love of glory never grows old; but they are to be blamed for the speeches that they composed assailing one another; for personal abuse is brutal, and even if it be true, that does not acquit of disgrace even the man who speaks about such things.

This personal background puts Favorinus' emphatic interest in the word *contio* as a translation for *δημηγορία* in a (self-)ironical perspective, as *δημηγορία* is a Greek term for public speaking which does not lack charged or downright negative connotations related to the bombast and sensationalism of popular oratory, notably of sophists such as Favorinus himself.³⁶ Moreover, the word *contio* is very similar to *cantio* ('song', but also 'incantation'), which recalls Favorinus' singing voice

he said: "your mother has made that question more difficult for you than for me". Nepos' mother was thought to be dissolute and Nepos himself a volatile sort.' For Plutarch's use of indecent anecdotes from Cicero see Walcot 1998, 181.

³⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v. *δημηγορέω* II 'to make popular speeches, use clap-trap'; s.v. *δημηγορία* II 'popular oratory', 'claptrap'. In analogy with *δημηγορία* ('a speech in the public assembly'), the Latin *contio* ('speech at a public meeting') has a derivative noun which can have negative connotations, *contionator*, 'agitator, demagogue' (cf. Cic. *Catil.* 4, 9); cf. Gr. *δημήγορος*, 'popular orator', usually in a negative sense (cf. Plat. *Gorg.* 520b, where Socrates pairs them with sophists).

and the allusion to this voice in the chants of the *praefica* (see above).³⁷ The present scene with Gellius and his master, the ‘sophist’ Favorinus, especially recalls another passage from Plato’s *Theaetetus* (162d), in a context where Socrates tells Theaetetus that he, being young, is too easily moved and influenced by the ensnaring qualities of *δημιγορία*. By contrast, Gellius, as elsewhere, proves his independent judgment, and teaches his ‘Socrates’ a lesson on *contio*. This role-reversal invites the reader to acknowledge where true authority lies.³⁸

By its associations with means of manipulating public opinion, the word *contio* gains strongly political connotations and elicits deeper questions about appropriate and inappropriate use of oratorical power. It stands for the kind of popular appeal that can become the instrument for fighting personal, rancorous battles. In other writers, *contio* is used for seditious speeches with negative political consequences,³⁹ or in the context of the bad influence of eloquence on the state.⁴⁰ In Gellius, the *contio* as a site of political invective is reflected in the use of *contiones* in his description of Aeschines’ polemics against his political enemies in the Athenian assembly.⁴¹ Moreover, as a typical orator who holds speeches in the *contio*, Gellius mentions the *popularis* Gaius Gracchus (cf. 1, 11, 12 *Graccho contionanti*)—according to Gellius, the function of his notorious ‘oratorical pipe’ (*tibiae contionariae*) was not to restrain or animate his delivery, as other sources alleged, but to *restrain and calm* the exuberant energy of the orator’s delivery.⁴² In Gellius’ view, Gracchus’ popular oratory was obviously a force which needed to be held

³⁷ Cf. Cic. *leg.* 2, 62 *honoratorum uirorum laudes in contione memorentur easque etiam cantus ad tibicinem prosequatur, cui nomen neniae, quo uocabulo etiam apud Graecos cantus lugubres nominantur.*

³⁸ In 2, 22 and 16, 3, for example, Gellius asserts the seductive power of his master’s oratorical skills, but ensuingly establishes himself in response to this as an independent authority, who knows his way in the library. Leofranc Holford-Strevens points out to me that in Latin matters Gellius’ superior knowledge is openly acknowledged (cf. 8, 2).

³⁹ Cic. *Att.* 4, 3, 4 (nov. 57 B.C.) *contiones turbulentae Metelli, temerariae Appi, furiosissimae Publi.*

⁴⁰ Cf. Quint. *decl.* 268, 19 *ciuitatum status scimus ab oratoribus esse conuersos: siue illam Atheniensium ciuitatem, quondam late principem, intueri placeat, accisas eius uires animaduertemus uitio contionantium; siue populi Romani statum excutere uouerimus, nonne grauissimas seditiones, nonne turbidissimas contiones quisque habuit?*

⁴¹ Gell. 18, 3, 1 *Aeschines, uel acerrimus prudentissimusque oratorum, qui apud contiones Atheniensium floruerunt, in oratione illa saeva criminosaque et uirulenta, qua Timarchum de inpuclitia grauiter insigniterque accusabat.* For the polemics between Aeschines and Demosthenes as a mirror for the battle between Polemo and Favorinus see pp. 113–115.

⁴² Gell. 1, 11, 13 *ad reprimendum sedandumque inpetus uocis eius efferuescentes* (cf. Cic. *de orat.* 2, 88); cf. 1, 11, 14 *naturalis illa ... uehementia.*

in check. We may compare this with his chapter on his teacher of rhetoric Titus Castricius, who warns his students in class not to let their judgment be confused by the charming flow and rhythm of a sentence from a speech by the same Gracchus (11, 13, 5)—a lesson containing a significant message for Gellius' reader, and recalling the earlier lesson by Musonius (discussed above) on the risks of being carried away by rhetorical enticements without active inquiry and assessment of the content (5, 1, 1).⁴³

In a way, Gellius' concluding observation that in the Ciceronian title the word *contio* 'only' means the speech itself (18, 7, 9) reflects on a micro-level the ironical play with the programmatic engagement with 'mere' trivial word-studies on the level of the *Noctes Atticae* as a whole. In the eyes of a careful 'investigating reader', this engagement goes beyond 'marginal' philological niceties—thus, such a reader is able to refute the satirical observation made by Domitius Insanus (18, 7, 3 *nihil iam aliud quam uerba auctoritatesque uerborum cordi habetis*) as far as Gellius' cultural programme is concerned.

Through his complex 'rhetoric of humour', Gellius enables the 'investigating reader' to observe how he on the one hand 'rehabilitates' Favorinus in the Socratic role of the 'jester-hero', who pokes fun at his detractor Domitius Insanus, but on the other hand destabilises Favorinus' authority, by responding to his inquiry about *contio* with a cluster of examples that ironically allude to his own controversial political conduct. Moreover, exploiting the possibilities of the *chreia* to the full, Gellius teaches the reader a deeper lesson about the process of cognition and teaching itself, and makes him aware of his responsible role as reader in a contemporary context, as an active 'investigator' and assessor of *uerba* and *auctoritates*.

⁴³ Cf. Gell. 11, 13, 10 *utī cauereis ne uos facile praestringeret modulatus aliqui currentis facundiae sonitus atque ut uim ipsam rerum uirtutemque uerborum prius pensitaretis*, 'in order that you might be on your guard lest the rhythmic sound of any flowing eloquence should easily dazzle you, and that you might first balance the actual weight of the substance against the high quality of the diction'.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FAVORINUS' CONTROVERSIAL AUTHORITY

Favorinus' programmatic role

This chapter aims to highlight Favorinus' double-edged programmatic role throughout the *Noctes Atticae*, both as a teacher whose intellectual outlook (Academic Scepticism) and playful erudition are of influence on Gellius' cultural programme, and as the embodiment of an inadequate, unstable, even subversive kind of authority, against which Gellius pits the solid authority of his own Roman platform.

In many ways, Gellius' relationship with Favorinus reflects the paradoxes and ambiguities of the Roman attitude towards education and culture in general, and towards Greek culture in particular. As Feeney (1998, 50–52) points out, Roman identity is always constructed in a continuous dialogue with Greek culture, negotiating authentic 'Roman-ness' by way of difference from and similarity to 'Greekness'. Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* shows aspects of this dialogue in a context of Antonine culture, and Gellius' representation of his teacher, the Hellenophile Favorinus, gives us a close-up of this dialogue with the captivating details of personal recollection.

Favorinus' programmatic role in this literary enterprise goes hand in hand with Gellius' tactical 'politics of rehabilitation', an intricate response to Favorinus' bad press, employed as a double authorial strategy. On the one hand, he integrates Favorinus as a didactic authority into his youthful world of playful learning; on the other hand, he exposes him as an inadequate authority in the light of his Roman cultural programme.

There is a striking parallel between the 'bad reputation' of Favorinus and the low esteem of the 'trivial' cultural pursuits in which the young Gellius engages, a parallel which is comically reflected in the chapter with Domitius Insanus (18, 7). We should see this low esteem in the wider context of Favorinus' sophistic image: being called a σοφιστής was not a compliment for a philosopher. Favorinus was chided as a 'sophist' by Polemo and by Galen, who associates Favorinus and

the other ‘new Academics’ with sophists.¹ This process of labelling the philosopher Favorinus as a sophist was later acknowledged by Philostratus, who categorised Favorinus, together with his Academic predecessor Carneades of Athens, among eight ‘philosophers with the reputation of a sophist’.

Gellius seems aware of this controversial label by emphatically calling Favorinus *philosophus* throughout the *Noctes*, implying that he was not a sophist.² Yet, this emphasis may also be slightly ironical. Whereas Gellius’ self-portrayal includes the role of Favorinus’ young *sektor*, it also includes a process of ‘emancipation’, representing Gellius as an independent cultural authority. Favorinus’ ambiguous authority is central to Gellius’ representation of Antonine culture, a representation that reflects a Roman ideological perspective, including a certain sense of suspicion towards *philosophi*.

Gellius’ complex ‘politics of rehabilitation’, oscillating between including and excluding Favorinus’ authority, may be illustrated by his description of Favorinus’ interest in the ‘paradoxical encomium’, a genre which apparently was not highly regarded in the contemporary cultural world.

Things without honour: the paradox of praising a sophist

Favorinus’ negative label as a ‘sophist’ was connected with various activities that could be branded as ‘sophistic’. One of these activities was his taste for the παράδοξον ἐγκώμιον, the paradoxical encomium for ‘things without honour’, for example the praise of fever mentioned by Gellius (17, 12, 3).³ Whereas this genre is praised as typically ‘sophis-

¹ Cf. Polemo A20 Hoyland (see Swain 2007b, 128); Galen, *Opt. doctr.* 3, 4; 4, 1. Cf. also Dio Cassius, *Roman Hist.* 69, 3, 4 τὸν Φαουωρίνον τὸν Γαλάτην τὸν τε Διονύσιον τὸν Μιλήσιον τοὺς σοφιστάς.

² See Holford-Strevens 1997, 188 with n. 1, who rightly points out that the word σοφιστής is pejorative for Gellius; cf. Gellius’ use of the notion in scorning the grammarian Aelius Melissus in 18, 6, 1 *sed maiore in litteris erat iactantia et σοφιστεία quam opera*; cf. 17, 21, 1 *sophista ille ἀπαίδευτος*. Cf. Stanton 1973; Brunt 1994.

³ See Burgess 1902, 157–166 on the παράδοξον ἐγκώμιον. Examples: praise of Ther-sites (who would normally be object of *uituperatio*), e.g. Polyb. 12, 26; Gellius 17, 12, 2; see Pease 1926, 37 n. 2; praise of/defense of Helena (Gorgias, Isocrates); the accusation of Socrates (Polycrates); the *uituperatio* of Penelope (mentioned by Polybius 12, 26b, who calls this kind of literary *tours de force* ‘paradoxical’, πρὸς τὰς παραδόξους ἐπιχειρήσεις). See Pease 1926, 37–38.

tic' by Philostratus, in accordance with his ideological agenda,⁴ Gellius speaks of 'ignoble subjects', *infames materiae*, to which his friend Favorinus liked to descend (17, 12, 1 *et noster Favorinus oppido quam libens in eas materias se deiciebat*). The terms used by Gellius are far from appreciative, indicating the 'low' status of such intellectual pursuits. Especially the word *infames* (ἄδοξοι ὑποθέσεις) seems symbolic of Favorinus' personal loss of reputation (*fama*, φήμη, δόξα, ἀξίωμα) in a broader sense, a loss thematised by himself in his *Corinthian Oration*.⁵ Moreover, in the context of *Noctes Atticae*, the word *infamis* connects Favorinus to the foppishness (*munditia*) of Demosthenes, which is called *infamis* in 1, 5 tit., and invites us to see a connection between effeminacy and loss of reputation.

However, to come to Favorinus' rescue in his pursuit of low 'sophistic culture', Gellius assures us that the *ueteres* too took up these ἄδοξοι ὑποθέσεις, not only sophists (17, 12, 1 *non sophistae solum*, a clear allusion—or is it a jibe?—to/at Favorinus' reputation), but also philosophers. To have him secure his status as a philosopher, not a sophist, Gellius even makes his master quote Plato as a witness for his eulogy of fever (17, 12, 3). Thus, Gellius lets Favorinus 'restore' his authority by his self-positioning in a philosophical tradition.⁶

Gellius emphasises both the 'oral' aspect of extempore exercise in Favorinus' engagement in 'things without honour' (17, 12 *exercendi gratia*;

⁴ Cf. *vit. soph.* 1, 7 p. 487 (on Dio Chrysostomus); 2, 26 p. 615 (on Heraclides van Lycia). Philostratus' attitude towards the genre appears a bit defensive, as if he anticipates criticism of these 'trifles' (we can compare this to his emphatic affirmation that 'sophist' is *not* a term of abuse, p. 483 οὐχ ὡς ὄνειδος δέ, whereas some of the people he calls 'sophists' certainly thought otherwise; see Swain 2007b, 128). These forms of literary entertainment had indeed been the object of criticism for a long time past; cf. Isocrates, *Helen*. 1–13 (who places the origin of this kind of compositions with the sophists Gorgias and Protagoras), and, closer to Gellius' and Philostratus' time, Lucian. *Charid.* 14. See Burgess 1902, 159.

⁵ Cf. 25 τὸν δὲ [προστάτην] πρὸς τὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων καὶ τούτων ἔνεκα καὶ τὴν οὐσίαν καὶ τὸ πολιτικὸν ἀξίωμα καὶ πάνθ' ἀπλῶς προϊέμενον, 'he inclines toward the Greek and to that end is sacrificing both his property and his political standing'. The speaking statue describes Favorinus as a paradigm of winning renown (τὸ δοκεῖν) through culture: 'for the Greeks, so that the natives of that land may have an example before them to show that culture is no whit inferior to birth with respect to renown' (27 Ἑλλήσι μὲν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι τῆς Ἑλλάδος παράδειγμα ὡς οὐδὲν τὸ παιδευθῆναι τοῦ φῦναι πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν διαφέρει). At the end of the speech, Favorinus represents himself as erecting his own statue and quotes Hesiodus: φήμη δ' οὐτις ἀάμπαν ἀπόλλυται, ἦντινα λαοὶ / πολλοὶ φημίξωσι. θεὸς νύ τις ἔστι καὶ αὐτή, 'but fame is never utterly destroyed/ which many people voice; a goddess she'.

⁶ Cf. Apuleius' defensive strategy in the *Apology* for composing erotic poetry, where he mentions Plato himself (10) as a composer of love-epigrams.

17, 12, 1 *exercendis argutiis*; 17, 12, 2 *lepida sane multa et non facilia inuentu ... dixit*) and the ‘written form’ in which he left these paradoxical inventions (17, 12, 2 *scripta in libris reliquit*). Regarding the first aspect, it is likely that he suggests a connection between such playful exercises and the sympotic topics which used to be on the ‘menu’ at Favorinus’ table (cf. 2, 22; 3, 19). Being intellectual exercises that were liable to criticism, Favorinus’ ‘things without honour’ have an interesting parallel in the sympotic topics that are represented in other Gellian chapters as the playful ‘marginal’ activities of his youth, such as the solving of riddles and sophistic tricks (7, 13; 18, 2; 18, 13).⁷

Thus, Favorinus receives indirect support for his pursuit of ‘things without honour’ from a colleague, the Platonic philosopher Taurus. At Taurus’ table, the invited guests, among whom is Gellius, bring ‘ingenious topics for discussion’ (7, 13, 2 *argutiae quaestionum*; cf. 17, 12, 1 *exercendis argutiis*) such as ‘when does a dying man die?’ as their contribution to the dinner.⁸ The host Taurus defends such questions against the charge of being *captiones futtiles atque inanes*, ‘pointless and idle sophisms’ (7, 13, 7–10), invoking, as did Favorinus, the authority of Plato.⁹

Taurus’ apology for intellectual pursuits that risk being labelled as ‘trivial’ or ‘frivolous’ puts both Favorinus’ ‘things without honour’ and Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* in the broader context of Antonine intellectual culture. The ‘Table Talk’ scene at Taurus’ home reflects the popularity of playful forms of intellectual communication in contemporary elite soci-

⁷ Cf. 18, 2 tit. *sophismatia et aenigmata oblectatoria*; 18, 2, 6 *captionis sophisticae solutio*. For the importance of ‘riddles’ in Antonine literary culture see Opeku 1993, 41f., and cf. Athen. 10, 457c (quoting Clearchus) τῶν γοῖφων ἡ ζήτησις οὐκ ἄλλοτρία φιλοσοφίας ἐστὶ, καὶ οἱ παλαιοὶ τὴν τῆς παιδείας ἀπόδειξιν ἐν τούτοις ἐποιούντο, ‘the solution of riddles is not alien to philosophy, and the ancients used to make a display of their education by means of them’; cf. Apul. *flor.* 9, 28. *Griphoi* occur in a negative context in Gell. 1, 2, 4 (the ostentatious display of dialectical cunning by the young arrogant Stoic).

⁸ Gell. 7, 13, 4 *quaerebantur autem non grauiā nec reuerenda, sed ἐνθουσιμῆματα quaedam lepida et minuta et florentem uino animum lacessantia, quale hoc ferme est subtilitatis ludicrae, quod dicam*, ‘The topics, however, were neither weighty nor serious, but certain neat but trifling ἐνθουσιμῆματα or ‘problems’, which would pique a mind enlivened with wine; for instance, the examples of playful subtlety which I shall quote.’

⁹ Cf. 7, 13, 7 “*Nolite*,” inquit Taurus, “*haec quasi nugarum aliquem ludum aspernari. Grauis-simi philosophorum super hac re serio quaesiuerunt. (...) Sed Plato noster ... neque uitae id tempus neque morti dedit, idemque in omni consilium rerum disceptatione fecit*”. ‘Taurus said: “Do not despise such problems, as if they were mere trifling amusements. The most earnest of the philosophers have seriously debated this question. [...] But our master Plato ... assigned that time neither to life nor to death, and took the same position in every discussion of similar questions.”’

ety, a popularity also evidenced by the correspondence of Fronto with members of the imperial family, in which he practises and teaches both the composing of 'things without honour' such as the 'Praise of Smoke and Dust',¹⁰ and the invention of 'startling thoughts' (ἐνθυμήματα).¹¹ Taurus' defence against imagined criticism of *argutiae quaestionum* as 'trifling amusements' brings to mind Gellius' own intellectual activities as he presents them in his *Praefatio*, calling them 'slight observations' (16 *minutae* ... *admonitiones*) and 'trifling pleasures' (23 *delectatiunculas*), while defending them against possible criticism (16; 18).¹² Both Fronto's correspondence and Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* show strong elements of interaction and competition in the engagement with such 'trivial pursuits' (cf. Gell. 18, 2 tit. *quaestionum certationibus*).

The interactive and competitive nature of 'playful' activity in the Antonine literary community is an important context for the self-referential character of the *Noctes Atticae* and the ambiguous authoritative role of Favorinus therein. As we have observed above, one of the sympotic diversions mentioned by Gellius in 7, 13 is the posing and solving of ἐνθυμήματα. Thus, the 'riddle-like' topics from Antonine literature, like the paradoxical encomium or the discussion of an obscure word, draw our attention to the literary strategy that Gellius pursues in the invention of his own *chreiai*, where the discussion of a word like *penus* or *contio* playfully challenges the reader to 'solve riddles' by following an 'investigational logic' (demonstrative and refutative enthymeme), which can result in the demonstration of the faults and weaknesses of Gellius' rivals and in the refutation of their authority.

Thus, paradoxically, Gellius' frequent praise of his master Favorinus turns out to be a form of 'paradoxical encomium', and the topics that

¹⁰ Cf. Fronto *laud. fumi et pulv.* (p. 215,6f.); *laus negl.* (p. 218,5ff.). Cf. *de fer. Als.* 3, 8 (p. 231,13) ... *illa nugalia* ... '*Laudem Fumi et pulueris*'..., '... those trifles of mine, 'The Praise of Smoke and Dust''. See GCA 2007, 24 for the parallels between this genre and other literary 'trash' such as 'Milesian fiction'.

¹¹ Cf. Fronto, *de eloqu.* 4, 8 (p. 150,8) ἀδοξότερον ἐνθύμημα ('startling thought', Haines), where ἐνθύμημα is a synonym of *sententia*. Fronto similarly uses ἐνθύμημα in *add. epist.* 5, 1 (244,3); 5, 6 (p. 246,10f.) τὰ ὑπὸ σοῦ σοφῶς καὶ πιθανῶς ... προτεθέντα ἐνθυμήματα, 'the propositions so cleverly and plausibly urged by you'; for the connotation of literary play cf. 5, 9 (248,10) ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν φίλῳ πρὸς τὸν φίλτατον πεπαίχθω, 'but enough of this pleasantry from a friend to a very dear friend'.

¹² The ambiguous use of diminutives such as *delectatiuncula* (cf. 1, 3, 30 *disputatiuncula*; 7, 13 tit. *quaestiuncula*) reveals a certain authorial self-consciousness about the literary 'status' of *Noctes Atticae*, and about the way it was likely to be received in the contemporary intellectual world, both in terms of welcoming a legitimate form of literary play, and of criticising a frivolous, 'low' kind of pursuit. See p. 46.

his life and reputation provide for Gellius' 'innocent literary play' turn out to be truly Favorinian *infames materiae*, which Gellius employs for not quite so innocent political satire. Yet, at the same time, these *infames materiae* also make Gellius' chapters fun to read.

The controversiality of Academic Scepticism

The authoritative role of Favorinus in the *Noctes Atticae* is especially ambiguous if we place it in the context of Galen's attack on him as a teacher and a Sceptical philosopher. Again, Gellius reveals a complex strategy of allusion to Favorinus' bad reputation, fusing apparent rehabilitation with satire. By staging himself as one of Favorinus' pupils, Gellius responds to the stone of offence that Favorinus presented for Galen, his controversial didactic claims (the title of Galen's work against Favorinus, *De optima doctrina*, speaks volumes). In a paradoxical way, Gellius both integrates Favorinus' sceptical teaching into the intellectual world of *Noctes Atticae*, and exposes its inadequacy in a context of Roman public life.

As we have observed above, Galen viewed Erasistrateans as sceptical thinkers (Academics and Pyrrhonists) like Favorinus, denouncing their sceptical attitude as 'stupidity'. Galen derided contemporary Erasistrateans for being unable to unravel Erasistratus' sophisms and for blindly adhering to his false dogmas.¹³ In a similar way, Galen associated Favorinus with sophists because he failed to teach his followers the difference between a proof (ἀπόδειξις) and a sophism (σόφισμα), and thus kept them in delusion (*Opt. doctr.* 3, 4; 4, 1). Against this background, it is significant that Gellius represents himself and other *sectatores* as being 'spellbound' (*capti*) by Favorinus' delightful conversation on Erasistratean doctrine (16, 3).

The expression *animum demulcere*, used in a Saturnalian context (18, 2, 1) of competitive play with paradoxes, enigmas and other dialectical subtleties, recalls Gellius' description of the impact of Favorinus' teaching on his own young mind (16, 3, 1 *ita sermonibus usquequaque amoenissimis demulcebat*). To a certain extent, then, Gellius invites his readers to see sophistic *captiones* and *argutiae* on the same level as the teaching of the

¹³ On this frequent charge hurled by Galen at followers of Erasistratus cf. e.g. *On the Natural Faculties* 3,10; on *Antecedent Causes* 11,141–142, especially 142 *illi uero ceu non exercitati ad soluendum sophismata admirantur de doctoribus ut de diis...*

Academic Sceptic Favorinus, as social and playful forms of teaching that were experienced in the Roman educational context of Gellius' youth. Favorinus' rhetorical power, which keeps his pupils spellbound, seems closely connected with his argumentative skills, which reveals him as an Academic philosopher versed in dialectics. The Academic's ability to charm the ears and minds of his pupils seems a faculty of his 'captivating' logic skills (*captiones*).¹⁴ It is not a coincidence that the opening section of 16, 3 with the word *capiti* comes after a chapter on the risks of being trapped by fallacious argumentation.¹⁵

Concerning Favorinus' argumentative skills, Gellius shows us two sides of a coin, a deceptive one and a didactic one. As Alessandro Garcea (2003) demonstrates, Gellius in the *Noctes Atticae* shows an interest in argumentative structures and dialectics, but with a moral purpose. In various chapters, he tries to detect errors, transgressions and mistakes in argumentation, and unmask deceptive intentions.¹⁶ Moreover, Gellius seems to be interested in argumentative structures, which lead one of two opponents to victory. In a kind of 'rehabilitation' of Favorinus from Galen's criticism that he was a sophist because he failed to teach his followers the difference between a proof and a sophism, Gellius shows that Favorinus taught how to recognise a sophism and how to distinguish a 'false' sophism from a 'correct' one (5, 11). Furthermore, by his own interest in logic and in unravelling sophisms, Gellius also 'rehabilitates' himself by proving that he is not just a blind follower of his Academic teacher. Like Galen, who wrote on the ambiguity of language (*De Captionibus*, 'On Fallacies'),¹⁷ he 'prepares' his readers against dialectical deceit by instructing them in a number of its manifestations.

¹⁴ For the binding force of the argumentations of the *dialectici* with regard to their pupils cf. Fronto, *de eloqu.* 4, 10 (p. 150,17f.) *observari autem et omnibus officiis coli dialecticos, quod in eorum rationibus semper aliquid et tortuosi <sit>, eoque fit ut magistro discipulus haereat semper et inseruiat, uinctus perpetuis quibusdam uinculeis attineatur*, '... while the dialecticians are courted and treated with every respect, because in their ratiocinations there is always something obscure and intricate, and hence it results that the disciple always hangs upon his master and is his slave, held fast bound with a kind of everlasting fetter'. For *dialecticus* being a virtual synonym of 'Academic philosopher' see OLD s.v. *dialecticus* b.

¹⁵ 16, 3, 1 *tenebat ... animos nostros homo ille fandi dulcissimus atque eum, quoque iret, quasi ex lingua prorsum eius capiti prosequeremur*. Cf. 16, 2, 4 *capitare*; 16, 2, 5 *haerebis in captione*; 16, 2, 9 *captionem*; 16, 2, 13 *non esse captionis interrogationibus respondendum*; see Garcea 2003, 90–91.

¹⁶ Cf. 5, 10, 1 *uitia argumentorum*; 9, 16, 7 *uitium insidiosum et sub falsa laudis specie latens*; 16, 2, 7 *falsa ... species istius captionis*; 18, 2, 9 *captionum ... fraus*.

¹⁷ See Edlow 1977.

Yet, there is a ‘catch’ in Gellius’ rehabilitation of Favorinus. For example, he refers to a conversation with Favorinus, significantly represented as an acute expert in analysing and criticising syllogisms (5, 11).¹⁸ But, immediately before this chapter, we have a similar master-pupil chapter, where Gellius represents Protagoras as a master of fallacious argumentation, who even uses his cleverly devised sophisms against his own pupil Euathlus but finds himself refuted by him in the end (5, 10, 16). Thus, Gellius implicitly puts Favorinus on a par with a famous sophist, whom he calls an *insincerus philosophus*, an *acerrimus sophista*,¹⁹ and a *magister eloquentiae inclutus*, whose *disciplina* is a *studium facundiae*. By contrast, Favorinus does not appear to use sophisms against his pupil as Protagoras does—yet, Gellius generally resembles Euathlus in the *Noctes* by frequently outwitting his opponents, including his master.

In his politics of ‘rehabilitating’ Favorinus, Gellius uses other philosophical schools as conspicuous targets for the ‘sophistic’ label, such as the Stoics.²⁰ In 18, 1, for example, where Favorinus is the *arbiter* at the debate of two arguing philosophers, a Stoic and a Peripatetic, Favorinus unmasks the sophism of the Peripatetic as an evident cliché from the standard books, exposing him as a pseudo-philosopher in a similar way as Galen had done with him.²¹

¹⁸ Gellius shows similar expertise in 2, 7, 18. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 293; Garcea 2003, 93–94.

¹⁹ Gell. 5, 3, 7 *is tamen Protagoras insincerus quidem philosophus, sed acerrimus sophistarum fuit*; 5, 10, 3 *Protagoram, sophistarum acerrimum*; the only other person called *acerrimus* by Gellius is the Athenian orator Aeschines, in whom Philostratus (*vit. soph.* 1, 18 p. 507) saw the founder of the Second Sophistic; cf. 18, 3, 1 *Aeschines, uel acerrimus prudentissimusque oratorum, qui apud contiones Atheniensium floruerunt*. Referring to the same tradition, Hermogenes (*On Ideas* 399, 4) calls Aeschines σοφιστικὸς καὶ γαῦρος (‘sophistical and arrogant’); see Rutherford 1998, 25 on the negative connotation of σοφιστικὸς (see above, n. 2).

²⁰ In *Noctes Atticae* 1, 2, a young and ambitious Stoic is ‘put in his place’ by Herodes Atticus, notably by quoting Epictetus. Stoics were well-known, and also satirised, for their excessive attention to syllogisms and dialectic; cf. Gell. 1, 22, 7; Cic. *de orat.* 1, 43 with Leeman-Pinkster ad loc.; Lucian. *Conv.* 22f.; *Gallus* 11; *Jup. Trag.* 27; *Vit. Auct.* 22–24; see Brunt 1994, 45. The negative image of the pedant Stoic is assimilated in this age to the negative image of the ‘sophist’ as the quarrelsome intellectual; cf. Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 7, 8 (*Mor.* 711A), where his sophist from the Stoa is simply a disputatious snob, and Lucian. *Demon.* 15, where Demonax humorously puts a young aristocrat in his place, who tried to nail him with a sophistic catch-question (ἐρώτημά τι σοφιστικὸν ... συλλογισμοῦ). Cf. Brunt 1994, 48f.

²¹ 18, 1, 12 *Tum Favorinus aspiciens Peripateticum “est quidem,” inquit, “argutiola haec qua de congio uini usus es exposita in libris; sed, ut scis, captio magis lepida quam probum aut simile argumentum uideri debet”*. ‘Then Favorinus, turning to the Peripatetic, said: “this clever turn which you have used about the congius of wine is indeed set forth in the books;

However, there is also a less positive side to Favorinus' dialectical adroitness, to which Gellius draws our attention in a more subtle way. Favorinus earns thunderous applause for a clever argument on having less in order to want less, which is so tortuous that the form completely overshadows the content (9, 8).²² These are the kind of obscure and intricate ratiocinations described by Fronto, when he criticises the admiration for dialecticians who bind their pupils to them with dazzling logical tricks (*de eloqu.* 4, 10 [p. 150, 17f.]). Moreover, the criticism of using 'false oppositions' (5, 11) could be turned against Favorinus himself in 14, 1, his speech against the Chaldaeans, where he creates a series of false oppositions in his epilogue (§36), which aims to impress and to dazzle with argumentative cleverness rather than to convince with facts regarding the actual content of Chaldaean astrology, which had already been presented earlier in the speech.

To Galen, Favorinus was a conspicuous and representative target of a larger group that shared the sceptical outlook which he so vehemently loathed. We already mentioned the Erasistrateans above; Galen mentions the (new) Academics and Pyrrhonists in one breath in *Opt. doct.* 2, 1 πάντες ἄνθρωποι πλὴν Ἀκαδημαϊκῶν τε καὶ Πυρρωνείων, which implies that he did not see much difference between them (see Hankinson 1995, 142f.).²³ Galen's fundamental criticism of Favorinus is his adherence to two incompatible positions. On the one hand, Favorinus carries the suspension of judgment (ἐποχή) of the 'older' Academics so far as to allege that nothing can be comprehended, not even the sun;²⁴ on the other, he acknowledges that something can be known, and instructs his pupils to form their judgment after arguing on both sides of the issue (εἰς ἑκάτερα ἐπιχειρήσεις). Galen vehemently criticises Favorinus' claim that the latter position, which he had set forth in his essay with the title *Plutarch*, represents the best didactical method (*Opt. doct.*

but, as you know, it ought to be regarded rather as a neat catch than as an honest or plausible argument". The word *argutiola* only occurs in Gellius (cf. also 2, 7, 9; 9, 14, 26).

²² Cf. 9, 8, 3 *inter ingentes omnium clamores*; Favorinus' performance, using logic just to impress, can be compared with that of the young declaimer at 9, 15, who receives a similar enthusiastic response from the audience (9, 15, 9 *clamore magno exultantibus*) by pouring out 'all sorts of principles' (*principia nescio quae*), applying them to a question which was in fact aporetic or unsolvable (on this chapter see Garcea 2003, 95).

²³ Galen mentions Pyrrhonian Sceptics several times, always with contempt (e.g. by calling them 'bumpkin Pyrrhonists'); *On the Distinctions of the Pulses* 8, 711; *Whether Blood is Naturally Contained in the Arteries* 4, 427. See Hankinson 1995, 146 with n. 16.

²⁴ On the issue of who exactly these παλαιότεροι are see Hankinson 1995, 147 with n. 22.

1, 1–2). Galen even explicitly denies that Favorinus' method is a form of education at all (3, 3; 4, 1), and hence labels him, as he does with his other sceptical enemies,²⁵ as a 'sophist', as we have observed above.

Both Gellius and Philostratus respond to the fact that the label of 'sophist' is attached to Favorinus' sceptical position, and both, each in his own way, use a 'rehabilitating strategy' to present this position in the light of their own ideological programme. Philostratus turns Galen's blame into a topic of praise, in the spirit of his own sophistic outlook (cf. the genre of 'paradoxical encomium'):

vit. soph. 1, 8 p. 491 καὶ πολλῶ μᾶλλον τοὺς φιλοσοφουμένους αὐτῷ τῶν λόγων, ὧν ἄριστοι οἱ Πυρρώνειοι· τοὺς γὰρ Πυρρωνεῖους ἐφεκτικούς ὄντας οὐκ ἀφαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ δικάζειν δύνασθαι.

And this is far more true [i.e. that Favorinus' writings are genuine and well-written] of his dissertations on philosophy, of which the best are those on the doctrines of Pyrrho; for he does not deny the followers of Pyrrho the ability to adjudicate, even if they practise [i.e. being sceptics] the 'suspension of judgment'.

Significantly, from all of Favorinus' philosophical output Philostratus particularly praises the very inconsistency that caused Galen to attack Favorinus and to call him a sophist: Favorinus conceded the ability to 'judge' to followers of sceptic philosophy who practise ἐποχή. From the perspective of a Galen, sceptics were unable to pass *any* judgment. In the context of society, this means that sceptics were likely to discharge civil duties, which might include sitting in court. Along these lines, sceptics were intrinsically useless members of society. In Philostratus, these political connotations are underlined by the verb δικάζειν: Favorinus allowed his pupils to make *legal* decisions.²⁶ As we will see below (p. 174f.) Gellius exemplifies this inconsistency in Favorinus' attitude in a chapter where the young Gellius, recently appointed as *iudex*, receives unambiguous advice from Favorinus for his legal decision; an advice which also has political connotations, related to the authority of the *iudex*.

²⁵ Erasistrateans are sophists: cf. e.g. *On Antecedent Causes* 8, 96; 14, 173.

²⁶ Whereas Philostratus uses δικάζειν (Wright: 'to make a legal decision'), Galen had used κρίνειν, with the more general sense 'to judge', 'to decide'; cf. *Opt. doctr.* 5, 2 Γελῶς οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ Φαβωρίνος ἐπιτρέπων κρίνειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς ἄνευ τοῦ συγχωρεῖσθαι τὴν πίστιν τοῖς κριτηρίοις. εἰ γὰρ οὐδὲν ἐστὶν ἐναργὲς τῷ νῷ ἢ πιστὸν ἐξ ἑαυτοῦ, διέφθαρται πάντων ἡ κρίσις. There are some inconsistencies between Galen and Philostratus: whereas Galen finds this 'stone of offence' in Favorinus' *Alcibiades*, Philostratus connects it with Favorinus' writings on Pyrrhonism. Whereas Galen refers to the 'new' Academics and Favorinus' pupils, without distinguishing the Academic position from Pyrrhonism, Philostratus refers to the followers of Pyrrhonism only.

Philostratus seems to praise Favorinus for allowing pupils such as Gellius the kind of political involvement for which he was criticised by Galen. In Philostratus' cultural outlook, the controversial issue gained a programmatic value precisely because of its controversiality, adding to the 'sophistic' quality of Favorinus' identity. Every aspect that labelled Philostratus' heroes as 'sophists' in the past is worthy of his praise—a form of 'rewriting the past' that suits Philostratus' 'invention of tradition'.²⁷

Gellius also refers to Favorinus' connections with Pyrrhonism/ Scepticism, but in a very Gellian way. On the one hand, he devotes a chapter to the issue as another 'interesting topic' for his *Noctes*. The casual way (*strictim notata*) in which the *titulus* of 11, 5 introduces this thorny topic, without mentioning the name of Favorinus at all, reveals the ironical distance offered by the role of 'information-collector', a characteristic pose of Gellius as author. For a contemporary reader, who was aware of the fierce debate in which Favorinus was implicated, Gellius' detached way of referring to this topic must have sharpened his eye for any sign of involvement on Gellius' part. Such a reader is likely to have been sensitive to the suspense created by the initial leaving out of Favorinus' name. Gellius heightens this ironic tension by representing Favorinus' writing activities on the topic of Pyrrhonism in a similar 'Gellian' way. He casually drops the remark that Favorinus 'also' had written on this interesting topic, conjuring up a Gellian picture of Favorinus working reclusively in a library, carefully compiling a treatise that contained additional useful information, without apparent awareness of being the target of a relentless polemic:

11, 5, 5 *Super qua re Favorinus quoque subtilissime argutissimeque decem libros composuit, quos Πυρρωνείων Τρόπων inscribit.*

On this subject Favorinus too with great keenness and subtlety has composed ten books, which he entitled *The Pyrrhonian Principles*.

Immediately after this remark, Gellius tactically draws our attention to something represented by him as a notorious question, which had exercised philosophical minds for generations:

²⁷ For Philostratus' 'Second sophistic' as a form of 'invented tradition' see Eshleman 2005. For the cultural phenomenon of 'invention of tradition' see Hobshaw-Rangern (edd.), 1996.

11, 5, 6 *Vetus autem quaestio et a multis scriptoribus Graecis tractata, an quid et quantum Pyrronios et Academicos philosophos intersit. Utrique enim σκεπτικοί, ἐφεκτικοί, ἀπορητικοί dicuntur, quoniam utrique nihil adfirmant nihilque comprehendere putant.*

It is besides a question of long standing, which has been discussed by many Greek writers, whether the Pyrrhonian and Academic philosophers differ at all, and to what extent. For both are called ‘sceptics, inquirers and doubters’, since both affirm nothing and believe that nothing is understood.

Since the mentioning of Favorinus’ name must have been particularly controversial in this context, much more so than the questioned difference between Academics and Pyrrhonists, Gellius’ ‘tactics of diversion’ are likely to have produced a certain effect of irony, and heightened his readers’ awareness that something more was going on behind this so-called ‘scientific detachment’.²⁸ Thus, Gellius’ treatment of the topic is representative of his programmatic way of dealing with ‘marginal’ and ‘trivial’ topics, that refer by implication to quite central and hot issues from the contemporary debate.

The term (11, 5, 5) *subtilissime*, used by Gellius to refer to Favorinus’ way of arguing his case, may refer to the inadequacy of Favorinus’ Academic cleverness as seen from a Roman point of view. Being the embodiment of *subtilitas*, Favorinus represents an over-subtlety that lacks usefulness. To a Roman mind, the *subtilitas* of dialectics is an ambiguous term.²⁹ Gellius juxtaposes *subtilitas* with *uenustas* (‘charm’) as the characteristics of the middle (*gracilis*) style (cf. 6, 14, 3), of which Favorinus seems to be a representative in the *Noctes*. With his subtle style, Favorinus again stands in the tradition of Socrates, who charmed the Greeks with the subtlety of his arguments.³⁰ With his *subtilitas* and *uenustas* (cf. Gell. 14, 1, 32), Favorinus especially recalls the way Romans

²⁸ Ironically, modern readers of Gellius have fallen into Gellius’ ‘trap’, and have occupied themselves with the ‘*quaestiuncula*’ whether Favorinus and Gellius represent a specifically Pyrrhonist outlook in the *Attic Nights* (cf. Beall 2004, 211 with n. 28).

²⁹ Cf. Tac. *dial.* 30, 4 *ille dialecticae subtilitatem ... cognouerat*, with Mayor ad loc. See OLD s.v. 5 ‘precision of argument, logical quality (as the characteristic of the ‘dialectical’ style)’.

³⁰ Cf. Diog. Laert. *vit.* 2, 19, citing a passage from Timon’s *Silli* on Socrates: Ἐλλήνων ἐπαίδως ... ἀκριβολόγους ἀποφίνας, ‘the enchanter of Greece, inventor of subtle arguments’. For Socrates as a paradigm for Favorinus as ‘enchanteing’ the people with his words cf. Plat. *Symp.* 215b3–d6, where Alcibiades compares Socrates to the satyr Marsyas, because Socrates enchants people with his words as Marsyas enchants them with his flute-playing.

perceived and valued Socrates and his style of subtle argumentation (Cic. *de orat.* 3, 60 *cum ... uenustate et subtilitate*).³¹

This Roman tradition of viewing Socrates throws a significant light on Gellius' representation of Favorinus and his adequacy as an intellectual in a political context. In a programmatic passage from *De oratore*, Cicero blames Socrates for separating things that in a Roman perspective should be united: rhetoric and philosophy, politics and oratory, practice and theory,³² and contrasts him, along with sophists like Gorgias, with statesmen who excelled as orators in their political practice.³³ Along these lines, we can see Favorinus as belonging to the '*genera philosophorum*' who, according to Cicero, consider themselves as Socratics, among whom the Pyrrhonians—all being philosophers who continue the reprehensible rupture between theoretical and practical wisdom originated by Socrates.³⁴

Being an ambiguous term associated with a lack of practical use,³⁵ *subtilitas* sometimes connotes a degeneration into an unpractical, feeble kind of eloquence.³⁶ Thus, in Gellius' description of Favorinus' writings on Pyrrhonism, the programmatic superlatives *subtilissime* and *argutissime*—the latter recalling terms like *argutiae* and *argutus*, which are associated with sophists and sophistic activities throughout the *Noctes*³⁷—point

³¹ Leeman et al. ad loc. point out that the term *subtilitas* may refer to subtlety of argumentation, but in combination with *uenustas* also denotes Socrates' personal performance and style of philosophizing; they compare *de orat.* 1, 17 *lepos quidam, facetiaeque et eruditio libero digna celeritasque et breuitas et respondendi et lacessendi subtili uenustate atque urbanitate coniuncta*; *rep.* 1, 16; cf. also *Brut.* 31.

³² 3, 60 *hoc commune nomen eripuit sapienterque sentiendi et orate dicendi scientiam, re cohaerentes, disputationibus suis separauit*; 3, 61 *hinc discidium illud extitit quasi linguae atque cordis, absurdum sane et inutile et reprehendendum, ut alii nos sapere, alii dicere docerent*.

³³ 3, 59 *qui aut in re publica propter ancipitem, quae non potest esse seiuncta, faciendi dicendique sapientiam florerent, ut Themistocles, ut Pericles*.

³⁴ Cic. *de orat.* 3, 62 *fuerunt etiam alia genera philosophorum, qui se omnes fere Socraticos esse dicebant, Eretricorum, Erilliorum, Megaricorum, Pyrrhoneorum; sed ea horum ui et disputationibus sunt iam diu fracta et extincta*. On the diffuseness and internal strife of all those philosophers and philosophical schools who call themselves Socratics cf. also 3, 61.

³⁵ In 19, 14, 3 Gellius contrasts the works of Publius Nigidius and Marcus Varro, arguing that Varro's work is familiar and in general use, but Nigidius' commentaries did not become popular because of their *obscuritas* and *subtilitas*; 19, 14 tit. *propter earum obscuritatem subtilitatemque in uulgus non exeunt*; 19, 14, 3 *obscuritas subtilitasque earum tamquam parum utilis derelicta est*.

³⁶ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 12, 2, 13 *ita haec pars dialectica ... si totum sibi uindicaueit in foro certamen, obstat melioribus et sectas ad tenuitatem suam uires ipsa subtilitate consumet*; Sen. *epist.* 117, 25 *disputatiunculis inanibus subtilitatem uanissimam agitare*.

³⁷ For Favorinus' *argutiae* cf. 17, 12, 1 *exercendis argutiis* (on 'things without honour'). The noun *argutiola* ('verbal quibble, sophistry') only occurs in Gellius (see above, n. 21);

to the weakness of Favorinus' authority, which lacks the firm foundation that Gellius sees in ancient Roman writers who advocate the practical wisdom of the Roman *sapiens*, who is orator and statesman at the same time.³⁸

To a certain extent, Gellius adapts the principles of Academic Scepticism to his own didactic programme. In his *Noctes* he sometimes poses as an 'Academic' in the presentation of his teaching to his readers, paying homage to the Academic scepticism taught by his master Favorinus (see e.g. Beall 2004, 212). With regard to this intellectual heritage, Gellius practises a mild form of self-satire, calling one of his chapters a *disputatiuncula* (1, 3, 30), which evokes a *disputatio Academica* (cf. 20, 1, 21).³⁹ He reveals his taste for arguing *in utramque partem* by setting out positions which seem untenable to a Roman, for example the *sententia* that a father's command should never be obeyed. Significantly, Gellius labels this *sententia* 'shameful' (2, 7, 6 *infamis*), recalling Favorinus' 'things without honour' (17, 12, 1 *infames materiae*), and he exposes this kind of views as 'sophistic quibbling'.⁴⁰ He also adapts the sceptical attitude to linguistic discussions, which are sometimes represented as an exchange of philosophical argumentations.⁴¹ In a number of cases, Gellius practises the εἰς ἑκάτερα ἐπιχείρησις by exposing two contrary opinions (for example in 2, 25, presenting two opposing linguistic explanations by Varro), sometimes dismissing them both as irrelevant.

the same goes for the word *argutor* (17, 5, 13) denoting 'one who uses over-smart arguments, a sophist', which points to Gellius' significant interest in this kind of stereotypes.

³⁸ Gellius contrasts instruction in dialectics unfavourably with his Roman ideal of practical wisdom in 13, 8, 2. Cf. Praef. 13, where he anticipates the Roman reader's negative response to topics related to dialectics.

³⁹ In this 'little discussion', the issue whether one may do wrong in the interest of friends is argued from various sides, but Gellius does not draw any conclusions and thus stays faithful to Academic ἐποχή (see Holford-Strevens 2003, 46).

⁴⁰ See Beal 2004, 212 with n. 32. Cf. 2, 7, 9 *argutiola* ... *frivola et inanis est*; cf. 2, 7, 2 (sententias) *subtilissime diiudicarunt*, where *subtilissime* recalls the way in which Favorinus discussed Pyrrhonism in his writings (11, 5, 5).

⁴¹ A good example is 14, 5, where two *grammatici* passionately debate whether the correct vocative of *egregius* is *egregi* or *egregie*. Gellius abandons the two as they are 'yelling and fighting' (14, 5, 4), deeming the discussion unworthy of further attention (cf. 9, 14, 26, where a grammatical explanation is exposed as a sophistic quibble, *argutiolum*). The situation in 14, 5 recalls the philosophical debate in 18, 1, where Favorinus is the independent arbiter at an overheated discussion between a Stoic and a Peripatetic philosopher (18, 1, 2).

After the fashion of Favorinus' didactic method, Gellius may choose to leave it to the reader to investigate and judge for himself which of the two presented arguments he prefers. This appeal to the 'active judgment' is also reflected in the principles of his educational programme as phrased in the *Praefatio* (17–18), which encourages his readers both to put Gellius' authorities to the test (*auctoritates pensitare*) and to carry on the research and to study the original texts themselves (Beall 2004, 213), while conceding the reader the possibility even to judge and criticise Gellius himself as an authority.⁴² However, Gellius sometimes adapts this practice as a formal gesture, by only apparently giving the reader the opportunity of forming an independent judgment, whereas the foregoing discussion clearly points out which position is authoritative.⁴³ Adapting it to his Roman outlook, Gellius presents his own sceptical position of rejecting conflicting positions as a 'healthy distance' from philosophy and its tricky sophistries, and values ancient Roman writers such as Ennius as the true authorities that inspire his cultural programme (5, 15).⁴⁴

Thus, Gellius' didactic principles may be inspired by Academic ζήτησις, but in contrast with his master's sceptical statement in 20, 1, 9 (*scis enim solitum esse me, pro disciplina sectae quam colo, inquirere potius quam decernere*, 'for you know that, according to the practice of the sect to which I belong, I am accustomed rather to inquire than to decide'), his own Roman moral outlook is not only focused on *inquirere*, but also on *decernere* ('to decide, to give one's judgement'). He transforms the controversial sceptical didactic method of his master into a way of substantiating the solid foundations of his own platform, formed by the authoritative texts of his Roman canon. At the same time, he shows that Favorinus' sceptical philosophy falls short of the fundamental principles that are needed in the public and imperial context for which Gellius is writing his Roman cultural programme.

⁴² Cf. 6, 3, 55. For Gellius' educational aims cf. also 19, 14, 5 *quae reliquimus inenarrata ad exercendam legentium intentionem*.

⁴³ Cf. 17, 6, 11 *Plura dicere quibus hoc nostrum tuear supersedeo; ipsa enim sunt per sese euidencia et quod a Verrio dicitur et a nobis; quod utrum ergo uidebitur cuique uerius, eo utatur*. Here Gellius' sceptical attitude is only an ironical formality, given the explicit lack of respect for Verrius Flaccus demonstrated by Gellius in this chapter and elsewhere (cf. 18, 7, 5). The reader is expected to 'see through' Gellius' quasi-sceptical attitude in his conclusion. For similar irony cf. 6, 3, 55.

⁴⁴ Cf. especially Gell. 5, 15, 9 and 5, 16, 5, and see Borg 2004, 165 n. 43, who compares Dio Chrysostomus' advice (*Or.* 2, 26) to the good ruler not to carry the study of philosophy too far.

Stereotyping the polymath rival (20, 1; 14, 6)

The inadequacy of Favorinus' authority becomes especially evident in his last appearance in the *Noctes Atticae* (20, 1), a long chapter in which he and the lawyer Sextus Caecilius Africanus discuss the Laws of the Twelve Tables—as in 4, 1 and 19, 13, the scene takes place on the Palatine, before the *salutatio* of the Emperor. Favorinus criticises the law of the decemvirs for their lack of *elegantia*, for their obscurity, and for their lack of moderation in severity and leniency (20, 1, 4).⁴⁵ Favorinus is true to his Sceptical outlook in his 'insoluble difficulty' (20, 1, 15 *difficultas ... inexplicabilis*)⁴⁶ related to the impossibility to realise an absolute equivalence, when a victim is supposed to inflict an exactly identical wound to the perpetrator as a retaliation (*talio*).⁴⁷

For the rest, Favorinus' arguments remain superficial, and seem to reflect contemporary opinions. His insistence on the obscure and out-dated nature of the law recalls Gellius' satirical portrayal of the lawyer who could not explain the word *proletarius*.⁴⁸ As Michèle Ducos (1984) demonstrates, the discussion in 20, 1 is representative of a broader debate in imperial times, an era confronted with the question of how to adapt archaic Roman laws to a changed reality. Both learned men represent two opposed positions from the contemporary debate: whereas Favorinus endorses the following of the *consuetudo* and modifications and relaxations of the law according to the changing needs of the time, or even abolishment of obsolete laws, Caecilius represents the opposite position, which aims to grasp the original spirit of the laws by studying them in their own context, taking the intention of the legislator

⁴⁵ Gellius' ideological perspective (cf. 11, 18, 6) is exactly the opposite, see part III, p. 234.

⁴⁶ The phrase *difficultas ... inexplicabilis* has a legal ring (cf. Paul. *dig.* 44, 2, 6 [ne] *modus litium multiplicatus summam atque inexplicabilem faciat difficultatem*), but the adjective *inexplicabilis* also recalls dialectics (cf. Gell. 9, 15, 6 *inexplicabile*, translating ἀποροῦν; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 292). Cf. 14, 2, 3 on Gellius' *inexplicabilis ... ambiguitas* and see above, p. 164 and below, n. 66.

⁴⁷ As a result, Favorinus fears an endless chain of vengeance taken upon vengeance. See Ducos 1984, 291.

⁴⁸ Cf. 16, 10, 7–8 *cum ... omnis ... illa Duodecim Tabularum antiquitas, nisi in legis actionibus centumviralium causarum lege Aebutia lata consopita sit, studium scientiamque ego praestare debeo iuris et legum uocumque earum quibus utimur*, 'since all the ancient lore of the Twelve Tables, except for the legal questions before the court of the centumviri, was put to sleep by the Aebutian law, I ought only to exhibit interest in, and knowledge of, the law and statutes and legal terms which we now actually use.'

into account.⁴⁹ Hence, Caecilius accuses Favorinus of a lack of ability to understand ancient Roman law, which is a serious accusation in the context of Gellius' cultural programme.⁵⁰

Using stereotypes from Favorinus' 'bad press', Caecilius exposes him as a man of bookish learning and as an Academic philosopher who loves to engage in disputations, but lacks knowledge of fundamental Roman values:

20, 1, 21 *sed, quaeso tecum tamen, degrediare paulisper curriculis istis disputationum uestrarum academicis omissoque studio, quicquid lubitum est arguendi tuendique, consideres gravius cuiusmodi sint ea quae reprehendisti, nec ideo contemnas legum istarum antiquitates, quod plerisque ipse iam populus Romanus uti desiuerit.*

But yet, I pray you, depart for a little from that academic manner of arguing of yours, and laying aside the passion for attacking or defending anything whatever according to your inclination, consider more seriously the nature of the details which you have censured, and do not scorn those ancient laws merely because there are many of them which even the Roman people have now ceased to use.

For Caecilius, Favorinus' Academic disputations represent philosophical quibbling without practical value.⁵¹ It is significant that Caecilius connects the stereotypical image of the Academic, capriciously arguing *pro* and *contra*,⁵² with contempt for Roman *antiquitas* and with a lack of *grauitas* (20, 1, 21 *consideres gravius...*). He praises Favorinus' erudition,

⁴⁹ See Ducos 1984, 295f.

⁵⁰ Gellius frequently emphasises the importance of knowing ancient Roman law, for example in order to understand Ennius; cf. 16, 10; 20, 10. For the importance of legal knowledge for Roman identity see chapter three, p. 93. For the importance of the Twelve Tables for Roman cultural identity (cf. Gell. 11, 18) see Zetzel 2003, discussing Crassus' programmatic statement in Cic. *de orat.* 1, 195 *dicam quod sentio: bibliothecas mehercule omnium philosophorum unus mihi uidetur XII tabularum libellus, si quis legum fontis et capita uiderit, et auctoritatis pondere et utilitatis ubertate superare*, 'I truly believe, if you look at these ultimate sources of our laws, that the little booklet of the Twelve Tables alone is weightier in authority and richer in usefulness than the libraries of all the philosophers'.

⁵¹ Like the disputations by which (Academic) philosophers fill their spare time (cf. 6, 3, 47 *qualia in philosophorum otio disputantur*); for *disputare*, *disputationes* as activities of Academic philosophers cf. Cic. *fat.* 4 *hanc Academicorum contra propositum disputandi consuetudinem indicant te suscepisse Tusculanae disputationes*; Quint. *inst.* 5, 14, 27 (warning against a speech stuffed with syllogisms such as the enthymeme) *dialogis enim et dialecticis disputationibus erit similior quam nostri operis actionibus, quae quidem inter se plurimum differunt*, 'it would be more like a dialogue or a rhetorical debate than a pleading belonging to our art; and these are very different things'.

⁵² For the contemporary satirical use of stock elements of scepticism cf. Lucian. *vit. auct.* 26 ἐπέχω περὶ τοῦτον καὶ διασκέπτομαι, 'I am suspending judgment on that, and investigating it' (the sceptic's answer to his buyer's question, whether he has been bought, posed after the actual purchase for one Attic mina).

but reading between the lines of this praise, an attentive reader would not miss the mocking undertone:

20, 1, 20 *tu es ... unus profecto in nostra memoria non Graecae modo, sed Romanae quoque rei peritissimus. Quis enim philosophorum disciplinae suae leges tam scite atque docte callet quam leges tu nostras decemvirales percalluisti?*

You are indeed the one man within my memory who is most familiar both with Greek and with Roman lore. For what philosopher is skilled and learned in the laws of his sect to the extent to which you are thoroughly versed in our decemviral legislation?

Here, the accumulation of terms for cleverness and expertise (*scite ... docte callet ... percalluisti*) has a comic ring,⁵³ and adds to a picture that suggests personal charm, but no intellectual seriousness.⁵⁴ The term *peritissimus* ironically alludes to legal knowledge, while *percallere* has a ring of excessive philosophical adroitness.⁵⁵ Caecilius views Favorinus as someone of abundant learning, but who fails in internalising true Roman values—the stereotypical image recalls Galen’s negative view on Favorinus as someone who only learns by heart what his predecessors said, but is not in touch with their fundamental principles.⁵⁶ By contrast, Caecilius emphasises that he himself is not thoroughly versed in historical literature (20, 1, 54 *non admodum numero istiusmodi libros lectitantibus*, ‘although I read few books of that kind’), thus avoiding being labelled as bookish, but is able to refer to an important moralising story about *perfidia*, quoting the *Aeneid* (8, 643) at the end of the discussion (20, 1, 54).

Caecilius here appears to be the mouthpiece of Gellius’ ideological programme, although it is significant that Favorinus self-consciously points to his Academic ‘image’ too (confirming his frequent perfor-

⁵³ Cf. Plaut. *Mos.* 279 *ut perdocta callet! nihil hac docta doctius*; *Pers.* 30 *docte calleo*; *Poen.* 233 *quae tam callida et docta sis et faceta*; *Pseud.* 385 *hominem astutum, doctum, cautum et callidum*; 724f. *malum, / callidum, doctum*. Gellius calls Favorinus’ master Valerius Probus *docti hominis et in legendis pensitandisque ueteribus scriptis bene callidi* (9, 9, 12), using two terms that are echoed in Caecilius’ ‘praise’ of Favorinus’ abundant learning in 20, 1, 20.

⁵⁴ For the associations of *scitus* with charm cf. Gell. 6, 7, 1; 19, 9, 3; cf. *doctiuscule* in 7, 16, 2.

⁵⁵ See *OLD* s.v. *peritus* c ‘expert in the law’ and cf. Gell. 10, 20, 2 *Ateius Capito, publici priuatique iuris peritissimus*; 4, 2, 13 *in libris ueterum iurisperitorum*. For *percallere* cf. Gell. 1, 22, 7 *disciplinas enim Tubero stoicas et dialecticas percalluerat*; 13, 10, 1 (on Antistius Labeo) *dialecticam ... penetrauerat Latinarumque uocum origines rationesque percalluerat*; 17, 17 capit.; 17, 17, 2.

⁵⁶ Cf. Galen, *Opt. doct.* 3,3 ἃ μὲν εἰρήκασιν οἱ πρόσθεν, ἐκμεμελητῶς.

mance of self-satire in the *Noctes*), and even shows his approval of Caecilius' victory at the end of the chapter.⁵⁷ Similarly to Caecilius (20, 1, 21 *consideres grauius*), Gellius never associates Favorinus with the important Roman virtue of *grauitas* (Holford-Strevens 2003, 130), as opposed to his other masters such as the Platonist Taurus or the *uir consularis* Herodes Atticus. Standing in a tradition of Roman educationalists like Cicero and Quintilian, Gellius shows a typical Roman ambiguity towards bookish learning, and he condemns erudition that aims at mere quantity of knowledge, without having a 'norm' or selective 'criterion' that guarantees usefulness. Thus, we may compare Caecilius' tone of irony in his address of Favorinus with Gellius' address of an acquainted rival writer of a miscellany:⁵⁸

20, 1, 8 *dic enim, quaeso, dic, uir sapientiae studiosissime ...*

Tell me, I pray, tell me, you deep student of philosophy ...

14, 6, 5 Ὁναῖό σου ... *doctissime uirorum*, ταύτης τῆς πολυμαθίας ...

I congratulate you, most learned sir, on this display of encyclopaedic writing ...

Scholars have rightly pointed out that this enigmatic anonymous friend (*homo nobis familiaris*), who offers Gellius 'a book of great bulk, overflowing with learning of every kind' (*librum grandi uolumine doctrinae omnigenus ... praescatentem*) to aid and adorn his *Noctes*, must be Favorinus.⁵⁹ Indeed, *doctrinae omnigenus* is a literal translation of Παντοδαπὴ Ἱστορία, one of the Greek titles mentioned with disdain by Gellius in a list of rival works in the same genre (Praef. 8).⁶⁰

Gellius' ironical congratulation (note the appropriate code-switching) with Favorinus' display of Greek encyclopaedic erudition (πολυμαθία) in his Παντοδαπὴ Ἱστορία recalls Gellius' programmatic quotation of Heracleitus' dictum from the *Praefatio* (12 πολυμαθὴν νόον οὐ διδάσκει, *Praefatio*

⁵⁷ Cf. 20, 1, 9 *scis enim solitum esse me, pro disciplina sectae quam colo, inquirere potius quam decernere*; 20, 1, 55 *ipso quoque Favorino adprobante atque laudante*.

⁵⁸ For the tone of irony in this 'philosophical' use of apparently polite addresses see Dickey 2002, 145, who mentions the paradigmatic precedent in Socrates' language in Plato and Xenophon, but also occurrences in later literary works, in particular those with some connection to Plato. This usage, moreover, is explicitly characterised by Plato (*Phaedrus* 268d–e) as the appropriate way for an educated man to correct someone (Dickey 2002, 146). Cf. Gell. 6, 17, 4 *uir doctissime*; 19, 10, 13 *magister optime*.

⁵⁹ Holford-Strevens 2003, 117 is sceptical; contrast Beall 2001, 100–102.

⁶⁰ See chapter one, p. 24.

‘much learning does not make your mind know something’).⁶¹ We hear Gellius use the same derogatory tone for rival miscellanies (cf. Praef. 11 *multa et uaria lectitantes*) and for Favorinus’ scholarly activities (14, 6, 1 *multis et uariis et remotis lectionibus*). Favorinus’ offer that Gellius could select from his material what was worthy of record (14, 6, 2) implies that not everything he wrote himself was worthy of record, and that he lacked the *consilium* (‘purpose’) underlined by Gellius in Praef. 11.⁶²

With the exclamation *mera miracula* (14, 6, 3 ‘merely a list of monstrosities’) Gellius stereotypes him as a producer of marvels, implicitly putting him on a par with other polymath writers represented by him in this stereotypical manner, such as Pliny the Elder and Apion (cf. 10, 12, 9–10).⁶³ Gellius represents him as someone who had passed a great part of his life among books (14, 6, 1 *magnam ... aetatis partem in libris uersatus*), which recalls the way Caecilius stereotypes Favorinus in 20, 1, his last appearance in the *Noctes*, and which is at odds with Roman ideals of wisdom that value practical experience above knowledge from books (13, 8, 2). Yet, Favorinus’ wish “I should like to aid and adorn your *Nights*” (14, 6, 1 *adiutum ... ornatumque uolo ire Noctes tuas*) is programmatic in a double sense, both referring to his contribution of information and to his appearance as a character in the *Noctes*, ‘adorning’ the work with his comically ambiguous presence.⁶⁴

The manly advice of a eunuch (14, 2)

Caecilius’ exposure of Favorinus’ inadequate authority in 20, 1 illustrates how Gellius employs Favorinus’ reputation in a seriocomic way,

⁶¹ The description of Favorinus in the *Suda* represents him as πολυμαθῆς κατὰ πᾶσαν παιδείαν; on the broad range of learning in Favorinus’ Παντοδαπὴ ἱστορία see Vardi 2004, 168 n. 31. For Gellius’ use of the Heracleitan dictum in the context of contemporary satire on intellectual attitudes such as polymathy see Keulen 2004, 237.

⁶² For the programmatic meaning of the word *consilium*, associated with the notion of the ‘criterion’, ‘measure’, ‘standard’ etc., see chapter one, p. 24. The fact that Favorinus left it to his followers to decide or judge, but did not provide them with a ‘criterion’ (κριτήριον) to base their judgment on, was a crucial stone of offence for Galen in his *On the best way of teaching* (e.g. 1, 2; 3, 2; 5, 2).

⁶³ For Gellius’ negative portrayals of Pliny the Elder and Apion cf. Gell. 5, 14, 1 (Apion) *litteris homo multis praeditus rerumque Graecarum plurima atque uaria scientia fuit*; 9, 16, 3 (Pliny the Elder) *in his libris multa uarie ad oblectandas eruditorum hominum aures ponit*; on Pliny as a writer of *miracula* cf. 9, 4, 7–16 (see further Keulen 2004, 238–240).

⁶⁴ On Gellius’ use of Favorinus’ Παντοδαπὴ ἱστορία and other works see Holford-Strevens 2003, 115–118.

which serves to make a point related to his cultural programme. For similar purposes, Gellius sometimes plays with the horizon of expectation regarding this reputation, surprising and eluding the reader with unexpected reversals. We have a good example of this in 14, 2,⁶⁵ where Gellius asks Favorinus for advice in a legal decision—underlying the scene is a similar tension to that in 20, 1 between the requirements of Roman legal reality and the academic, unpractical and bookish interests of Favorinus. The opening of the chapter points to a contrast between 'unpractical' forms of learning belonging to childhood and youth (14, 2, 1 *a poetarum fabulis et a rhetorum epilogis*, grammatical and rhetorical schooling), and the practice of professional life, through which useful things can be learned (*ad iudicandas lites uocatas*). Already in the opening section, the term *a rhetorum epilogis* recalls a notorious reason by which Favorinus had become famous, as he performed his epilogues in a sing-song fashion; notably, the section follows the closing section of the previous chapter (14, 1, 36), which ends with such a Favorinian epilogue.

The chapter is also, like many chapters in the *Noctes*, about the search for authority, an authority which Gellius tries to find in the Julian law and in commentaries of Roman jurists (14, 2, 1)—here, as opposed to 4, 1, 20–23, they are of no avail to Gellius in the 'inexplicable perplexity' (14, 2, 3 *inexplicabilis ... ambiguitas*) caused by his dilemma.⁶⁶ In short, the dilemma is that he has to pronounce judgement in a case involving two contestants: the claimant of a sum of money, who has an impeccable moral reputation but cannot prove that he has lent the money, and the man upon whom the claim is made, who is a treacherous and base character, but can appeal in his favour to the lack of any legal evidence in the form of official documents proving that the money was paid to him. In his quest for authoritative principles to guide him in his perplexity (cf. 14, 2, 3), Gellius is deluded by two forms of inadequate authority, which both represent two opposed extremes.

On one side of the spectrum, we see Gellius' friends (14, 2, 9), who are experienced advocates, but so caught up in the haste of their busy lives that they do not have any time for doubt (*dubium*); they advise Gel-

⁶⁵ For a discussion of this chapter see Nörr 1996, who compares Plin. *epist.* 1, 10 for the situation in which a Roman who is troubled by his legal duties seeks the support of a philosopher (the Stoic Euphrates).

⁶⁶ The phrase *inexplicabilis ambiguitas* itself may recall legal language, cf. *Novell. Valent.* 1, 3, 2 *minutarum supputationum caligines inexplicabili obscuritate confusas*, and see p. 221.

lius to pronounce immediate judgment, solely based upon the official, legal evidence (or rather the lack of it). These friends strikingly resemble the kind of uncivilised conduct which in Gellius' eyes disqualifies potential readers of his *Noctes*, because they are *intemperiarum negotiorumque pleni* ('absorbed in the turmoil of business affairs', Praef. 19), and do not take the time to inquire. On the other side, there is the bookish erudition of Favorinus, who gives a long-winding exposé on the duties of the judge, which does not help Gellius any further either. Whereas Gellius' friends represent the inadequacy of being caught up *in negotio*, Favorinus represents the inadequacy of being caught up *in otio*.⁶⁷

What the young Gellius needs in his present situation is concrete guidance in an urgent case. A decision has to be made (*inquirere* and *decernere*). Yet, the Academic philosopher Favorinus not only reduces Gellius' fundamental dilemma to a seemingly sophistic trifle (*specie tenui paruaque*) on which his pupil is deliberating (*deliberas*),⁶⁸ but also adds a long list of similar *quaestiones*, pertaining to the 'more useful' theme of 'the full duties of a judge' (*de omni ... officio iudicis*). Favorinus' abrupt transition from the 'trivial topic' to the larger issue of the judge's duties plays with Favorinus' characteristic talent to lead conversations from trivial topics to 'more useful themes' (cf. 4, 1, 19). Favorinus engages at length with his Academic disputation, admitting that it is a 'discussion involving many intricate questions and requiring long and anxious attention and consideration' (14, 2, 13 *disceptatio ista multiuguae et sinuosae quaestionis multaque et anxia cura et circumspectientia indigens*). Favorinus does his Academic Scepticism proud by *inquirere* instead of *decernere*,⁶⁹ and by praising Gellius for his *religio cunctationis* (14, 2, 12). Belying his remark that this is not the place or time to talk about these questions (14, 2, 12), Favorinus displays at length his bookish knowledge (cf. 14, 2, 20 *quae nuperrime legi*), knowledge that—as he himself admits—belongs to leisure

⁶⁷ The phrase that describes how Gellius leaves the court and goes to Favorinus evokes a transition from *negotium* to *otium*: 14, 2, 11 *a subselliis pergo ire ad Favorinum*; cf. Cic. *de orat.* 2, 143 *cum se de turba et a subselliis in otium ... contulerit*; 1, 32 *age uero ne semper forum subsellia rostra curiamque meditare, quid esse potest in otio aut iucundius aut magis proprium humanitatis quam sermo facetus ac nulla in re rudis?*

⁶⁸ For *tenuis* used of trivial, sophistic arguments cf. 6, 3, 47 *neque tenuis istas et enucleatas uoluntatum in rebus illicitis reprehensiones, qualia in philosophorum otio disputantur, magni facit*; cf. 11, 3, 1 *quaerere nonnumquam aput memet ipsum soleo res eiusmodi paruas quidem minutasque et hominibus non bene eruditis aspernabiles*.

⁶⁹ 14, 2, 14 *hoc... quaeritur*; 14, 2, 15 *id... quaeri solet*; 14, 2, 16 *illud amplius ambigi ac dubitari scio*. Cf. 20, 1, 9 *inquirere potius quam decernere*.

time (*cum erit otium*).⁷⁰ His protracted lecture that is out of place and out of time recalls his remark on his own inappropriate verbosity during the symposium in 2, 22, 25–26, which shows again a certain self-awareness on Favorinus' part.

Then, with the surprise effect of an unexpected transition, Favorinus does give concrete advice in the matter (14, 2, 21 *consilio*), which is actually a moral issue rather than a legal issue. Although moral issues belong to the realm of philosophy, and therefore require a philosopher's advice,⁷¹ Favorinus surprisingly gives advice rooted in Roman antiquity, quoting a counsel which is based on the *mos maiorum*, and given by one the heroes of Gellius' cultural programme, Cato the Elder. Favorinus advises Gellius to base his legal judgment on the characters of the disputants rather than the evidence in the case.⁷² Thus, instead of arguing two sides of a question, Favorinus tells Gellius to give credit to the claimant only. This elicits Gellius' telling comment that in giving this advice Favorinus now 'acted like a man', *ut uirum philosophum decuit* (14, 2, 24 'as became a man, who was a philosopher').⁷³

In spite of his praise of Favorinus' manly advice, Gellius leaves the case undecided, blaming it on his youth and lack of experience—perhaps he suspended judgment in accordance with the sceptical principles of his master. It has been argued that Gellius' *aporia* is a deliberate unexpected ending (another *aprosdoketon*, just like Favorinus' Catoian counsel), which may invite critical reflection on this difficult issue.⁷⁴ However, in view of Gellius' praise of Cato's *consilium*, which is significantly quoted verbatim in the last paragraph, and given Cato's role of 'unassailable authority' throughout the *Noctes*, one may wonder whether Gellius truly wishes his reader to view things from a different angle

⁷⁰ It seems that Favorinus derives his *quaestiones* from the precepts of Aelius Tubero on the duty of the judge (14, 2, 20); see Nörr 1996, 39f. The fact that Tubero's and Favorinus' erudition are described in similar terms in the *Noctes* suggests that Gellius invites his reader to rank them as the same type of intellectual; cf. 1, 22, 7 *disciplinas enim Tubero stoicas et dialecticas percalluerat* and see above, n. 55.

⁷¹ Cf. 18, 7, 3 (Domitius Insanus:) *uitae iam atque morum disciplinas quaero*.

⁷² Favorinus' counsel founded on the authority of the *maiores* is connected with *memoria*, since Favorinus remembers (*commeminit*) Cato's reference to *memoria*: 14, 2, 26 *uerba ex oratione M. Catonis, cuius commemorat Favorinus, haec sunt: 'Atque ego a maioribus memoria sic accepi'*. See Blösel 2000, 55. On the importance of *memoria* for Gellius' cultural programme see chapter two.

⁷³ The combination *uir philosophus* occurs nowhere else in Gellius, which suggests a deliberate emphasis on *uirum*; in the present context, it is rather unlikely that we are supposed to take it as a Greek construction.

⁷⁴ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 297 "the chapter serves to stimulate debate".

from Cato's here. If Gellius is suspending his judgment, leaving it to the reader to make up his mind, it is more probable that he does this in the same 'quasi-sceptical' spirit as in 6, 3, 55 and 17, 6, 11.

In my opinion, what we have in the present case is another satirical allusion to Favorinus' fickle reputation as a sceptic, in particular his notorious inconsistency in leaving it to his pupils to determine or judge, whereas he preaches Academic suspension of judgment elsewhere.⁷⁵ Gellius' *inexplicabilis ambiguitas* (perplexity) and *cunctatio* (doubt) in this chapter, including his final suspension of judgment, pay satirical homage to the intellectual heritage of his teacher (cf. 20, 1, 15 *inexplicabilem difficultatem*), whose capricious change to a Roman moral advice to give judgment in the spirit of the *maiores* only adds to the instability of his authority. And yet, the comic ambiguity of Favorinus, here for once allowed to be called *uir*, is thought-provoking, leading the thoughts of the Roman reader to the solid principles of Gellius' Roman cultural programme, inspired by the *memoria* of Cato and the *maiores nostri*. In this way, we may view Favorinus as truly σπουδογέλοιος.

Subversive authority: Favorinus and Socrates

At the end of Part II, we have come full circle by returning to Socrates as an important paradigm for Favorinus. In chapter four, we observed how according to the physiognomical anecdotes Socrates tried to overcome his libidinous nature by training (philosophical *askesis*); yet, from the perspective of a Phaedo of Elis, his innate nature was *not* susceptible to training or rehabilitation. This way of looking at Socrates stimulates reflection on the nature and purpose of his philosophical training, and assessment of its educational value. Gellius invites us to look at Favorinus and his role-model Socrates in a similar way. There is a Roman tradition behind this: as we have seen, Cicero blamed Socrates for separating theoretical and practical wisdom, and viewed him as an anti-model for the Roman statesman, who should be orator and philosopher (*sapiens*) at the same time.

In the spirit of Cicero and Quintilian, Gellius' Roman cultural programme advocates an energetic, practical life, where wisdom is not the-

⁷⁵ Galen, *On the Best Doctrine* 5, 2 Γελοῖος οὖν ἐστὶν ὁ Φαβωρίνος ἐπιτρέπων χοίρειν τοῖς μαθηταῖς; cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 491 οὐκ ἀφαιρεῖται καὶ τὸ δικάζειν δύνασθαι. See above, p. 164.

oretical, static knowledge, but an active, flexible, and dynamic engagement with the duties of public life. Culture and education have their place as youthful pleasures and children's play, but grown-up Romans should give up their puerile tendencies, move on in life and turn to daily experience as the true source of wisdom. Gellius employs the associations between Favorinus and Socrates to show that Favorinus and his approach of education and training fail to meet this Roman educational ideal.

Gellius presents Favorinus as a 'Socratic' philosopher, whose training and discipline make part of his individual identity as a philosopher, and whose life of *askesis* is a personal choice. Against this background, the first chapter of both book 2 and 3 have a significant connection, as they both feature Favorinus and introduce the subject of physical and mental exercise and self-control. Moreover, both chapters treat these subjects in a 'Socratic' way, as chapter 2, 1 features Socrates himself as the focal personality, and chapter 3, 1 presents Favorinus in a Socratic role comparable to chapter 4, 1. Whereas 2, 1 focuses on the asceticism and concentration displayed by Socrates as recalled by Favorinus (2, 1, 3), in 3, 1 Favorinus takes the lead in Socratic questions about manliness that exercise the mind while taking his *sectatores* for a walk to exercise the body, a walk that brings them into an area of public baths.

This is an appropriate place for an intellectual who saw himself as a lover of athletics (*Cor.* 26 φιλογυμναστῆϊ).⁷⁶ Roman imperial baths were sites of (physical) education, where wonderful statues could be admired and interpreted.⁷⁷ Moreover, by the second century some baths at Rome had also libraries, which makes it a public place to read and recite books, a place for *ciuilis eruditio*.⁷⁸ The combination of walking and reading (cf. 3, 1, 1 *inter ambulandum legebatur*) indicates a combination of physical and mental exercise, taking place in a sunlit public space, probably in the centre of Rome.⁷⁹ Yet, public baths had an ambiguous

⁷⁶ Since Hadrian introduced separate baths for males and females (*Hist. Aug. Hadr.* 18, 10), the *balnea uirilia* were the place *par excellence* for Roman men to take care of their masculine bodies in public by gymnastic exercise (*exercitatio*), such as lifting weights; cf. *Iuv.* 6, 420.

⁷⁷ See von den Hoff 2004, 115: "ever since the imperial period, the sculptural design of Roman baths reminded visitors [...] of the *thermae* as places of physical training, health and happy life, evoking ideals of *paideia*, *uirtus* or luxury", and p. 119 on the broad audience in the baths, from the emperor himself to simple veterans and to the educated elite, like in Gell. 3, 1.

⁷⁸ Juvenal (1, 17–18) complains of lectures held in public baths; see Woolf 2003, 217.

⁷⁹ Contrast the shaded reclusion of Herodes' villa in Greece, where we can imagine

reputation, and therefore form an appropriate background for a performance of the ambiguous intellectual Favorinus: both were sexually notorious.⁸⁰

In this scene, where Favorinus exposes one of his pupils called an *in litteris ueterator* (3, 1, 5) as a ‘sophist’, we can read between the lines a Socratic λόγος προτρεπτικός inducing readers to taking care of the self (3, 1, 12).⁸¹ Yet, the chapter is also protreptic in the spirit of Gellius’ programme, juxtaposing good and bad forms of education and inviting us to assess Favorinus’ position in this. The word *ueterator*, ‘an old hand in the study of literature’, is a negative term, implying a wily sort of experience that cannot support the light of day.⁸² A link is suggested between the characterisation of this *in litteris ueterator*, who seems to be recognised as such by the way he looks (*uidebatur*), and the avaricious type that forms the topic of discussion, described by Favorinus’ other pupil as someone whose vigour of body and mind is enfeebled by his dedication to ‘indoor and sedentary pursuits’ (3, 1, 10 *negotiis ... umbraticis et sellulariis quaestibus*).⁸³ Both the ‘*ueterator*’ and the ‘*umbraticis quaestibus intentos*’ embody a type of intellectual who is keen on unpractical learning and theoretical subtleties. Given the programmatic connections with Favorinus’ avarice and effeminacy, the reader is invited to see the *ueterator*—Favorinus’ pupil—as a reflection of Favorinus himself.

Gellius walking along ‘long, soft promenades’ (*longis ambulacris et mollibus*), protected from the burning sun (1, 2, 1–2).

⁸⁰ Cf. Ov. *ars* 3, 640 *celent furtivos balnea multa iocos*, with Gibson ad loc. For baths as a place for paid sex and adultery see Fagan 1999, 34–36; 51.

⁸¹ On the λόγος προτρεπτικός (‘conversion dialogue’) see Schäublin 1985 above, p. 101.

⁸² The parallels from Apuleius are illuminating: *ueteratrix* of a witch (*Met.* 9, 29, 2); *ueterator* of the sophist Protagoras in *flor.* 18, 26 (on Protagoras and Euathlus, cf. Gell. 5, 10); in the *Apology* he uses it with reference to his opponents (cf. 46, 1 *ueteratorie*). Favorinus’ reaction that “never was our Probus guilty of such impertinent and bold subtlety” (3, 1, 6 *tam inportuna tamque audaci argutia*) transfers the guilt to this *ueterator*, whose impertinent and bold subtlety makes him appear as a kind of sophist.

⁸³ Cf. Plin. *epist.* 9, 2, 3 *scholasticas ... atque, ut ita dicam, umbraticas litteras*; Quint. *inst.* 1, 2, 18 *Ante omnia futurus orator, cui in maxima celebritate et in media rei publicae luce uiuendum est, adsuescat iam a tenero non reformidare homines neque illa solitaria et uelut umbratili uita pallescere*, ‘First of all, let the future orator, who has to live in the crowd and in the full glare of public life, become accustomed from childhood not to be frightened of people or acquire the pallor that comes from that solitary life that is lived in the shade’ (see Russell ad loc.). A reads *umbratica*. For *umbratilis* Russell refers to Cic. *de orat.* 1, 157; *orator* 64.

In Quint. *inst.* 1, 2, 18 (see n. 83), the safe and quiet life of those who have their pursuits indoors is symbolised by shade, as opposed to those who work in the heat of the sun, which symbolises facing the demands of public life. In another passage of Quintilian, the imagery of the 'light' is connected to the forum as the central site of public activity, which is contrasted with other places that connote less 'public', and therefore less respectable, kinds of rhetorical activities.⁸⁴ Gellius alludes to this imagery in the setting of his scene, where Favorinus takes his pupils not to the forum but to a different kind of public place, associated with *otium* rather than *negotium* (3, 1, 1), with the significant addition that the conversation did not take place in the full glare of the sun but *subcalido sole* ('in the mild warmth of the sun'). Although it is not stated explicitly why Favorinus' *sectator* 'seemed' (*uidebatur*) an *in litteris uetator*, there is an implicit suggestion that this person's own *umbraticae quaestiones* have made him look pale, spending his time sitting indoors with books (*in litteris*).⁸⁵ Thus, the associations between the *uetator* and Favorinus almost literally throw a shadow on Favorinus' 'Socratic' authority and the value of his training. We are again reminded of the Aristophanic caricature of Socrates, with his pale and wasted appearance, which reflects the Greek stereotype of the intellectual.⁸⁶

We encounter a similar ambiguity in 2, 1, where Gellius quotes Favorinus as an authority on Socrates' biography (Holford-Strevens 2003, 110), who focuses especially on Socrates' physical *askesis* and temperance and abstinence:

2, 1, 1–2 *inter labores uoluntarios et exercitia corporis ad fortuitas patientiae uices firmandi id quoque accepimus Socraten facere insueuisse: stare solitus Socrates dicitur pertinaci statu perdius atque pernox a summo lucis ortu ad solem alterum orientem inconiuiens, immobilis, isdem in uestigiis et ore atque oculis eundem in locum directis cogitabundus, tamquam quodam secessu mentis atque animi facto a corpore.*

⁸⁴ *inst.* 12, 2, 8 *sed quia deserta ab iis qui se ad eloquentiam contulerunt studia sapientiae non iam in actu suo atque in hac fori luce uersantur, sed in porticus et gymnasia primum, mox in conuentus scholarum recesserunt*, '... but philosophy has been abandoned by those who have turned to oratory; it is no longer active in its proper field and in the broad light of the forum, but has withdrawn, first to porticoes and gymnasia, and then to school lecture rooms ...'

⁸⁵ When accused of taking too much care of his beautiful appearance although being a philosopher, Apuleius counters the charge by mentioning the other extreme, saying that his own *habitus* has become meagre through incessant study (*Apol.* 4, 10 *continuatio etiam litterati laboris omnem gratiam corpore deterget, habitudinem tenuat*).

⁸⁶ See Zanker 1995, 32f.; Keulen 2003, 111.

Among voluntary tasks and exercises for strengthening his body for any chance demands upon his endurance we are told that Socrates habitually practised this one: he would stand, so the story goes, in one fixed position, all day and all night, from early dawn until the next sunrise, open-eyed, motionless, in his very tracks and with face and eyes riveted to the same spot in deep meditation, as if his mind and soul had been, as it were, withdrawn from his body.

Given Socrates' paradigmatic role, several elements of the biographical sketch seem to reflect in a positive way on controversial facets of Favorinus' own life and character. Gellius' explicit reference to Favorinus' speech (2, 1, 3 *disserens*) on Socrates' training for a hard, enduring body becomes more meaningful if we connect it to the context of the polemic discourse against Favorinus. Favorinus' effeminate softness and sexual indulgences were seen in negative contrast with the physical toughness and austerity embodied by paradigms of masculinity such as Polemo or Demonax.⁸⁷

Through Gellius' quotation of Favorinus' admiration for the *askesis* and physical rigidity of his role model Socrates, Favorinus' 'authority' seems to be reshaped along a different paradigmatic pattern, which illuminates the qualities of intellectual concentration combined with physical training, qualities that were also valued in a Roman context. On the one hand, Gellius apparently rehabilitates Favorinus as a 'role model' within a Roman context, alluding to the training that formed the *condicio sine qua non* for becoming a good orator.⁸⁸ In his own Corinthian speech, Favorinus emphasised the value of training in becoming a good speaker, thus praising his own acquired competence as a triumph of discipline.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ On the contrast between Favorinus and Polemo see above, pp. 115–117. In Lucian's *Demonax*, the notions of physical exercise and rhetorical practise presented as closely interrelated, cf. 4 οὐ μὴν ἀνίπτοις γε ποσὶν, τὸ τοῦ λόγου, πρὸς ταῦτα ἤξεν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ποιηταῖς σύντροφος ἐγένετο καὶ τῶν πλείστων ἐμέμνητο καὶ λέγειν ἡσοχητο [...] καὶ τὸ σῶμα δὲ ἐγεγύμναστο καὶ πρὸς καρτερίαν διεπένητο, 'You must not conceive, however, that he rushed into these matters with unwashed feet, as the saying goes: he was brought up on the poets and knew most of them by heart, he was a practised speaker [...], he had trained his body and hardened it for endurance'; cf. also 36 Πήτορι δὲ τινι κάκιστα μελετήσαντι συνεβούλευεν ἀσχεῖν καὶ γυμνάζεσθαι, 'An orator whose delivery was wretched was advised by him to practise and exercise'.

⁸⁸ Quintilian acknowledges the necessity of physical training (*inst.* 11, 3, 19f.); cf. also 2, 13, 15, where exercise is put on a par with experience as opposed to rigid rules (see Reinhardt-Winterbottom ad loc.).

⁸⁹ Cf. *Cor.* 27 Ἑλλήσι μὲν, ἵνα ἔχωσιν οἱ ἐπιχώριοι τῆς Ἑλλάδος παράδειγμα ὥς οὐδὲν τὸ παιδευθῆναι τοῦ φῦναι πρὸς τὸ δοκεῖν διαφέρει, 'for the Greeks, so that

On the other hand, Quintilian emphasises that the Roman orator is too much occupied by civil affairs to reserve special time for training (*inst.* 11, 3, 22), and he distinguishes the exercises for the voice-trainer, tuning his mellow voice through all the notes of the scale (11, 3, 22f.), from the daily practice that trains and strengthens the voice of the Roman orator (11, 3, 24). From this Roman educational perspective on legitimate and less legitimate forms of training, Favorinus' reputation for sing-song oratory appears to stand for a less appreciated form of exercise. Moreover, Favorinus' discipline, including the physical discipline of athletics in a Spartan context, has a clear cultural and ideological bias, being the marker of his thorough Hellenisation.⁹⁰ Gellius makes Favorinus refer to this controversial aspect in 13, 25, 4 *opera mihi princeps et prope omnis in litteris disciplinisque Graecis sumpta est*, 'my principal and almost my entire attention has been given to the literature and arts of Greece'. From Gellius' perspective of Roman cultural authority, Favorinus embodies a choice for Greek culture, even if he knows excellent Latin.

Along the same lines, his role model Socrates is the paradigm of Greek philosophy, not of Roman morality. In Gellius' ethical and cultural landscape, there is a significant discrepancy between the Greek discipline and moderation of the individual philosopher symbolised by Socrates, which is termed *labor uoluntarius* and *exercitium corporis* (2, 1, 1), and traditional Roman frugality, moderation and training, which is not only a private, voluntary attitude but also a public duty, secured by the law.⁹¹ Socrates' inertness and isolation from society (2, 1, 5 *nequaquam*

the natives of that land may have an example before them to show that having been trained/educated is no different from being so by nature in respect of seeming' (translation after Whitmarsh 2001, 119–120). Whitmarsh translates τὸ δοξεῖν in 27 with 'in respect of seeming', referring back to 25 Ἑλληνι δοκεῖν τε καὶ εἶναι (Favorinus' eminence in 'both resembling a Greek and being one'). However, in 27 τὸ δοξεῖν has an additional connotation that refers to reputation, renown (cf. Crosby: 'with respect to renown'), and is put on a par with ἀξίωμα (27): just as the Greeks disregard the importance of training (τὸ παιδεύειν) for their 'public image' (τὸ δοξεῖν, the good impression that guarantees a good reputation; cf. LSJ s.v. Π 5 'to be reputed'), so Romans disregard it with regard to their public esteem (ἀξίωμα): thus Favorinus is implying that Romans should 'go Greek' too in order to make a truly good impression as a Roman, which cleverly reverses the fact that he himself lost his ἀξίωμα in Rome as a result of his one-sided attention to Greek παιδεία (25).

⁹⁰ Cf. *Cor.* 26 ὑμῖν μὲν, ὅτι Ῥωμαῖος ὢν ἀφ' ἡλληνίσθη, ... παρὰ Λακεδαιμονίοις δέ, ὅτι φιλογυμναστεῖ, 'with you, because, though Roman, he has become thoroughly Hellenised ... in Sparta, because he is devoted to athletics'.

⁹¹ Cf. 2, 24, 1 *parsimonia* *apud ueteres Romanos et uictus atque cenarum tenuitas non domestica*

... *communi omnium cladi*) form a sharp contrast with a different *exemplum* of athletic exercise mentioned by Gellius. There, he quotes Panaetius' incentive to the virtue of active alertness in the daily reality of society—given the title of Panaetius' work, this virtue is again presented as a duty, not a voluntary exercise (13, 28):

13, 28, 3–4 *uita hominum ... qui aetatem in medio rerum agunt ac sibi suisque esse usui uolunt, negotia periculaque ex improviso adsidua et prope cotidiana fert. Ad ea cauenda atque declinanda perinde esse oportet animo prompto semper atque intento, ut sunt athletarum, qui 'pancratiastae' uocantur. Nam sicut illi ad certandum uocati proiectis alte brachiis consistunt caputque et os suum manibus oppositis quasi uallo praemuniunt membraque eorum omnia, priusquam pugna mota est, aut ad uitandos ictus cauta sunt aut ad faciendos parata: ita animus atque mens uiri prudentis aduersus uim et petulantias iniuriarum omni in loco atque in tempore prospiciens debet esse, erecta, ardua, saepta solide, expedita, numquam coniuens, nusquam aciem suam flectens, consilia cogitationesque contra fortunae uerbera contraque insidias iniquorum quasi brachia et manus protendens, ne qua in re aduersa et repentina incursio inparatis inprotectisque nobis oboriatur.*

The life of men who pass their time in the midst of affairs, and who wish to be helpful to themselves and to others, is exposed to constant and almost daily troubles and sudden dangers. To guard against and avoid these, one needs a mind that is always ready and alert, such as the athletes have who are called 'pancratists'. For just as they, when called to the contest, stand with their arms raised and stretched out, and protect their head and face by opposing their hands as a rampart; and as all their limbs, before the battle has begun, are ready to avoid or to deal blows—so the spirit and mind of the wise man, on the watch everywhere and at all times against violence and wanton injuries, ought to be alert, ready, strongly protected, prepared in time of trouble, never flagging in attention, never relaxing in watchfulness, opposing judgment and forethought like arms and hands to the strokes of fortune and the snares of the wicked, lest in any way a hostile and sudden onslaught be made upon us when we are unprepared and unprotected.

Although both Socrates and the *uir prudens* from Panaetius are examples of insistent wakefulness, the differences in their portrayals are crucial.⁹² Socrates' inflexible obstinacy stands in contrast with the flexi-

solum observatione ac disciplina, sed publica quoque animaduersione legumque complurium sanctionibus custodita est. 'Frugality among the early Romans, and moderation in food and entertainments were secured not only by observance and training at home, but also by public penalties and the inviolable provisions of numerous laws.'

⁹² Verbal parallels: 2, 1, 2 *inconiens*—13, 28, 4 *numquam coniuens*; 2, 1, 1 *ad fortuitas patientiae uices*—13, 28, 4 *contra fortunae uerbera*. Contrasts: Socrates is fixed to one place (2, 1, 2 *isdem in uestigiis*), whereas the mind of the *uir prudens* is on the watch everywhere (13, 28, 4 *omni in loco*). Socrates is obstinately clinging on to his plan to remain standing

ble fighting spirit of the *uir prudens*, which has to be *expedita in sollicitis* ('prepared in time of trouble'). Socrates' immobile fixation recalls the Roman antipathy towards philosophy voiced by Quintilian, who contrasts the ideal orator with philosophers who stubbornly stick to their principles.⁹³ The rigidly immobile Socrates from Gellius also resembles the sitting Socrates in Apuleius *Met.* 1, 6, who embodies the 'superstitious character' known from Theophrastus and Plutarch.⁹⁴ Viewed in the light of Gellius' ideological programme, Socrates turns out to be an example of intellectual subversiveness rather than a paradigm of philosophical authority, which may reflect Catonian thinking.⁹⁵

Socrates' exceptional asceticism in 2, 1 can be viewed as a personal claim to authority, proving his power to control his body to an extreme extent.⁹⁶ Favorinus, the admirer of Socrates, quotes this claim as a way of identification with this particular kind of Socratic authority. However, the Roman outlook on authority is moral and political, viewing the ideal of the *sapiens* in terms of rational restraint and moderation, combined with an active engagement in the state. Throughout the *Noctes Atticae*, the importance of the state is emphasised. Seen from this point of view, Favorinus admires in Socrates an example of extremism or ascetic excess. If we combine this with the perspective of Phaedo

(*stare solitus Socrates dicitur pertinaci statu*; see *ThLL* s.v. *pertinax* 1791, 68 'valde tenax propositi', and see 1791, 71f. for the predominantly negative implications of *pertinax*, 'obstinatus', 'offirmatus', 'durus'), whereas the *uir prudens* is persistent in his defence against unexpected strokes of fortune (*nusquam aciem suam flectens*). The sound effects with *s-*, the figura etymologica *stare ... statu* and the repetition *per- per- per-* underline the obstinate duration of Socrates' attitude and the impossibility to change it (cf. *immobilis*, which reflects Favorinus' ἀσφαβέστερος [cf. LSJ] s.v. ἀσφαφής = ἀσρεπτος, lit. 'without turning round', also used of dogma's, 'unbending', 'rigid').

⁹³ *inst.* 12, 2, 26 *sed haec inter ipsos, qui uelut sacramento rogati uel etiam superstitione constricti nefas ducunt a suscepta semel persuasione discedere*, 'but these rival claims are between philosophers themselves—that is to say, between people who feel bound by a sort of oath of allegiance, or even constrained by superstitious scruples, to think it wicked to depart from a conviction they have once adopted'.

⁹⁴ See Keulen 2004, 228–230 with further refs.

⁹⁵ Cf. Plut. *Cato Mai.* 23, 1, and see Astin 1978, 177: "the criticism of Socrates as destructive confirms that the reference to the youth of Rome listening to its own laws and magistrates may be related to a belief that philosophy was in some sense subversive—subversive of principles and standards of conduct, subversive too of public diligence and martial qualities".

⁹⁶ Compare the discussion in Falco 2000, 192 on Antony's exceptional asceticism in the mountains in Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* as a 'personal charismatic claim'. See also chapter two, p. 39f. on the demands for 'proofs' of charisma in processes of group formation around a charismatic leader.

of Elis (2, 18) on Socrates' libidinous nature, which it did not consider susceptible to training (cf. 2, 1, 5 *a uoluptatum labe cauisse*), Socrates' exercise in physical endurance seems like a ridiculous effort to achieve a pointless self-control.⁹⁷

Gellius, then, associates Socrates and Favorinus as 'subversive' elements of excess, whose exaggerated manifestation of charismatic authority prove them inadequate as a model for the Roman *sapiens*. By building such countertendencies into his cultural world, and inviting the reader to contrast them with other examples that represent the 'dominant cultural discourse', Gellius establishes cultural authority.⁹⁸

A counterpoint to Socrates' and Favorinus' inadequate authority is formed by the chapters on the upright Roman general Gaius Fabricius Luscinus, who proves to be both the opposite of *auaritia* and a paradigm of self-control (1, 14; 4, 8). Notably, Fabricius is one of the names mentioned by Quintilian when he discusses the superiority of Roman *exempla* over Greek precepts (*inst.* 12, 2, 30). As opposed to Socrates, Fabricius embodies the physical and mental self-control of a statesman. Although he hated a commander named Publius Cornelius Rufinus for his immoral character, he did not allow his hatred to interfere with the common good, but prudently used Rufinus' military prowess only as long as it was in the interest of the state (4, 8).⁹⁹ Rufinus can be linked to Favorinus through his *auaritia* and *luxuria*, recalling the Sallustian question whether avarice (*auaritia*) makes the manly soul and body effeminate (3, 1, 6). As opposed to Favorinus, Rufinus is Roman manhood in a living form,¹⁰⁰ exemplifying how immoral conduct may be pardoned, as long as masculine vigour serves the Roman state.¹⁰¹ The *exemplum*

⁹⁷ On the emphasis on the importance of the state in the *Noctes* see Morgan 2004, 199; Morgan also shows that a high proportion of Gellius' virtues are *relational*, like civic involvement, loyalty, and obedience, as opposed to self-control, temperance, and endurance.

⁹⁸ See Brownlee-Gumbrecht 1995, x on the integration of 'negative' cultural authority ('subversive' responses to the official culture) into the dominant cultural discourse as part of a dynamic process, in which the 'threat of difference' has to be first perceived and then resolved into identity, into sameness. See Williams 1995, 225 on the inclusion of minority elements of dissent as an internal condition of long-term authority.

⁹⁹ See Morgan 2004, 199 on Gellius' predilection for great men who sink their political differences for the common good.

¹⁰⁰ 4, 8, 2–3 *P. Cornelius Rufinus manu quidem strenuus et bellator bonus militarisque disciplinae peritus admodum fuit, sed furax homo et auaritia acri erat*, 'Publius Cornelius Rufinus was, to be sure, a man energetic in action, a good warrior, and a master of military tactics, but thievish and exceedingly greedy.'

¹⁰¹ Compare Favorinus' remark in 3, 1, 11 'How then are we to explain the fact, that

teaches that in critical situations Roman manliness prevails over moral shortcomings, but also that, as soon as the circumstances have changed, immoderate conduct (*luxuria*) is enough reason to be expelled from politics.

Gellius even uses Plato's writings as a vehicle for satire of the type of authority embodied by Socrates and Favorinus. He reinterprets Callicles' attack on Socrates' immature fixation on philosophy in Plato's *Gorgias* as a programmatic statement in terms of the moral agenda of his *Noctes* (10, 22). Most significantly, the Roman values proclaimed in the *Noctes* are supported by Callicles' criticism of avoidance of public life by philosophers (Gell. 10, 22, 18 = Plat. *Gorg.* 485):

ὁ γὰρ νυνδὴ ἔλεγον, ὑπάρχει τούτῳ τῷ ἀνθρώπῳ, καὶν πάνυ εὐφυῆς ἦ, ἀνάνδρῳ γενέσθαι φεύγοντι τὰ μέσα τῆς πόλεως καὶ τὰς ἀγοράς, ἐν αἷς ἔφη ὁ ποιητὴς τοὺς ἄνδρας ἀριπρεπεῖς γίγνεσθαι, καταδεδυκότι δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν βίον βιώναι μετὰ μειρακίων ἐν γωνίᾳ τριῶν ἢ τεττάρων ψιθυρίζοντα, ἐλεύθερον δὲ καὶ μέγα καὶ ἱκανὸν μηδέποτε φθέγγασθαι.

For, as I have just said, it is possible for such a man, even though naturally well endowed, to become unmanly, avoiding the business of the city and the market-place, where, as the poet says [Hom. *Il.* 9.441], men become 'most eminent', and living the rest of his life in hiding with other men, whispering in a corner with three or four of them, but never accomplishing anything liberal, great or satisfactory.

Although Gellius carefully avoids quoting any direct personal criticism of Socrates and rather presents Callicles' tirade as an invective against philosophers in general, his readers, who recognised the context from the *Gorgias*, must have been aware of Callicles' straightforward insult of the father of philosophy. The 'abuses of false philosophy' (*de falsae philosophiae probris*) announced in the *titulus* refer in fact to an abuse of Socrates. Gellius repeatedly emphasises the element of truthfulness and straightforwardness in this chapter (10, 22, 1 *Plato, ueritatis homo amicissimus... uere ... ingenueque dixit*; 10, 22, 24 *cum quadam indissimulabili ueritate disseruit*), which simultaneously points at his own lack of shame and restraint in 'defacing' the sacred icon of philosophy.

With the Gellian neologism *indissimulabilis*, which emphasises that the truth of this Platonic statement cannot be ignored,¹⁰² a subtle contrast

it is possible to find many men who are greedy for money, but nevertheless have strong and active bodies?' (*Quid igitur ... dicimus, quod multos uidere est pecuniae cupidus et eosdem tamen corpore esse uegeto ac ualenti?*), which can be read as a comment on the type of men exemplified by Rufinus.

¹⁰² According to *ThLL* s.v. *indissimulabilis* 1205, 65–70, after Gell. the word is only

is suggested with Socrates' famous *dissimulatio* or Socratic irony. Gellius' diatribe against unpractical intellectualism may rather be indebted to the Cynic outlook of his admired Varro's *Menippean Satires*.¹⁰³ Although Plato's text is used as his instrument, Gellius himself turns out to be the one who is 'most ready to point out the truth to all' (10, 22, 1 [ueritatis] *omnibus exhibendae promptissimus*). Ironically, Gellius' use of Plato in the present chapter is a supreme example of *dissimulatio*, as he veils his own Roman 'anti-Socratic' viewpoint by quoting the Greek of Socrates' pupil, and by turning it into a *dissimulatio facetissima* through the allusion to the unmanliness of his own 'Socrates' (ἀνάνδρως).

Using Callicles as his mouthpiece, Gellius maintains that pursuing philosophy as an aim in itself is only allowed for young people being educated, but after *pueritia* it becomes a shameful thing (10, 22, 4):

de ista futtili atque puerili meditatione argutiarum, nihil ad uitam neque tuendam neque ordinandam promouente, in qua id genus homines consenescent male feriati, quos philosophos esse et uulgus putat

... that futile and childish attention to trifles which contributes nothing to the conduct and guidance of life, but in which people of that kind grow old in 'ill-timed playmaking', regarded as philosophers by the vulgar.

In this programmatic statement it is hard to overhear the concomitant message for the *philosophus* who makes the most frequent appearances in the *Noctes*, viz. Favorinus, who is at the same time a rival authority attacked by Gellius for his failure to offer the kind of guidance that he, Gellius, indirectly claims to provide in his *Noctes* (*nihil ad uitam neque tuendam neque ordinandam promouente*). Growing old in the marginal activities of a philosopher,¹⁰⁴ Favorinus appears as no longer the charismatic authority from Gellius' days of youth, but the unmanly intellectual who remains rigidly fixed on his theoretical and bookish abstractions (cf. 20, 1, 21)—today, we would perhaps call him a 'geek', or a 'nerd'.

attested in Iul. Aug. c. Iul. op. imperf. 1, 1; 1, 98 (confirmed by CETEDOC). On the meaning, viz. of a truth that cannot be ignored, see Holford-Strevens 2003, 55.

¹⁰³ See Keulen 2004, 231 and cf. pp. 58–65; on cynic influence on Roman literature see also MacMullen 1966, 61.

¹⁰⁴ Gellius warns his Roman reader against 'growing old' in dialectical subtleties in 16, 8, 17 *ne, ut plerique alii, tu quoque in illis dialecticae gyris atque meandris, tamquam apud Sirenios scopulos, consenescas*, 'there will be great danger lest, as many others have done, you should reach a second childhood amid those mazes and meanders of logic, as if among the rocks of the Sirens'. Compare the associations with old age in the *ueterator* and the *praefica* (for *uoces praeficarum* and *neniae* cf. *aniles fabulae* as a metaphor of useless intellectual pursuits).

It is against this background that we should view the conclusion of the programmatic chapter featuring Favorinus as a rival writer (14, 6, 5), in which Gellius urges him to look at a different kind of Socrates:

nam meae Noctes, quas instructum ornatumque isti, de uno maxime illo uersu Homeri quaerunt, quem Socrates prae omnibus semper rebus sibi esse cordi dicebat:

Ὅτι τοι ἐν μεγάροισι κακόν τ' ἀγαθόν τε τέτυκται.

For my *Nights*, which you have set out to assist and adorn, base their inquiries especially on that one verse of Homer which Socrates said was above all other things dear to him:

'Whate'er of good and ill has come to you at home.' (Hom. *Od.* 4, 392)

This statement reflects a shift in emphasis from dialectical subtleties and skills in deceptive argumentation to ethical preoccupations, embodied by Socrates as we know him from Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, as opposed to the Platonic Socrates (Gell. 14, 3, 5).¹⁰⁵ Within the contemporary debate on cultural authority, it positions the *Noctes Atticae* as a cultural programme within an ethical tradition, pitting its authority against that of Favorinus, and ranking his vast erudition and sophistic cunning as an inadequate contribution to the conduct and guidance of life. Gellius' position is in line with his programmatic Praefatio (13), playing on the traditional Roman lack of trust and understanding regarding those parts of Greek παιδεία that teach the mathematical arts of geometry and astronomy and the subtleties of dialectics.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ See Garcea 2003, 92; Marache 1953, 89 points out that Cynics liked to refer to this use of the Homeric quotation by Socrates.

¹⁰⁶ See Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 227. See below, chapter nine, p. 224.

PART THREE

GELLIUS' IDEOLOGICAL AUTHORITY:
THE CHARISMA OF *ANTIQUITAS*
IN A SOPHISTIC CONTEXT

Δημήτριος ὁ Φαληρεὺς Πτολεμαίῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ παρήγει τὰ περὶ βασιλείας καὶ ἡγεμονίας βιβλία κτᾶσθαι καὶ ἀναγινώσκειν· “ἃ γὰρ οἱ φίλοι τοῖς βασιλεῦσιν οὐ θαρροῦσι παραινεῖν, ταῦτα ἐν τοῖς βιβλίοις γέγραπται.”

Demetrius of Phalerum recommended to Ptolemy the king to obtain and read the books dealing with the office of king and ruler. “For”, as he said, “those things which the kings’ friends are not bold enough to recommend to them are written in the books.”

Plutarch, *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* (*Mor.* 189D)

porro amici est bene praecipere

‘furthermore it is the task of a friend to give good advice’

Lucilius 611 Marx

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE IMPERIAL CONTEXT OF GELLIUS' AUTHORITY

Modesty and caution in addressing the powerful

In the foregoing part, we have seen Gellius' role as an intellectual taking shape against the polemical and competitive background of the various cultural ideals of his time, propagated with fervour by charismatic intellectuals who were competing for the emperor's approval, and trying to attract as many followers as possible. As we have seen, Gellius makes frequent allusions to the polemics and invectives that resulted from these rivalries, which form an important frame of reference for Gellius' own cultural enterprise. In his *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius aims to prove the superior 'market value' of his Roman cultural programme against other cultural options, and to establish his authoritative position within the Roman intellectual elite. The importance of the emperor's judgment in such intellectual rivalries is well illustrated by a remark of the notorious polemicist Galen, who was a successful competitor for imperial preferment, and relates proudly that Marcus Aurelius called him 'the first of physicians and the *only* philosopher' (14, 660 Kühn).

By contrast, Gellius never refers *explicitly* to the emperor as the person for whom he establishes his authority. Yet, by comparing *Noctes Atticae* with other imperial texts such as Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* and Plutarch's moral writings, or more contemporary writers such as Fronto and Apuleius, we may catch glimpses of the impact of the emperor on Gellius' self-presentation, and throw light on his indirect and cautious strategies of literary communication. As we will see, throughout the *Noctes Atticae* the emperor's crucial role of 'assessor of intellectuals' and 'arbiter of knowledge' can be highlighted as an implicit but omnipresent frame of reference for Gellius' self-presentation as a cultural authority.

Along these lines, by placing Gellius' self-fashioning in an 'imperial' context we may also throw some light on the function of his own literary persona, i.e. on the way Gellius views his own useful role as an authority in relation to someone who will benefit from his literary out-

put. Gellius often chooses to establish his authority in an oblique way. Much of what he reveals about his cultural responsibility and about the political context in which he unfolds this responsibility is stated by implication. By placing his self-presentation in a contemporary context, we may form a clearer picture of what this responsibility might have been. Although Gellius appears extremely careful to avoid mentioning any direct connection between himself as a writer and his ruler, a closer investigation of his allusive strategies allows us to 'tease out' an 'imperial' dimension in his literary communication.

If we transfer this to a discussion of readership, we may presuppose two levels of literary communication in *Noctes Atticae*. On the one hand, Gellius is writing for the members of the Roman elite, offering them *Noctes Atticae* as a cultural-educational programme that participates in an ideological process of maintaining and reinforcing social cohesion and cultural identity (cf. Habinek 1998). On the other hand, the authorial voice in *Noctes Atticae* reveals awareness of the highest authority in matters of judging intellectuals and their knowledge, an awareness which points to the emperor as an 'ideal reader', without excluding the possibility of a wider readership.

Gellius' caution and lack of straightforwardness in defining the relational implications of his cultural-educational role should not be viewed in isolation, but can be illuminated in an 'imperial context' as well. Greek sophists, for example, showed little inclination to cast themselves explicitly in a role of 'admonisher'.¹ The same may have been true for many philosophers. In his essay *Philosophers and Princes*, written after a period of severe tension between Roman emperors and philosophers, Plutarch shows that some philosophers were hesitant to advise rulers on kingship, because this made them liable to charges of flattery and personal ambition.² Plutarch's interest in the figure of the philosophic adviser of someone in power is evident in *Philosophers and Princes*, *Rules for Politicians* and *the Uneducated Prince*. Yet, like Gellius, Plutarch articulated his symbouleutic authority in a very subtle, sophisticated way. He does not offer pragmatic advice to the empire's rulers in a straightforward manner. Although his political essays could be interpreted as advice to the emperor, they never address Trajan explicitly, but rulers and magistrates in general.³

¹ On 'sophistic attitudes' see Flinterman 2004.

² Cf. Plut. *Cum princ. philos. esse diss.* 1 (*Mor.* 776B) and see Rawson 1989, 234.

³ See Rawson 1989, 250f. Tim Whitmarsh in his BMCR-review of Stadter and van

Gellius especially resembles Plutarch in his attention to individual moral behaviour and its implications in a political context, and in his use of biographical *exempla* (the *Parallel Lives*) to give the reader 'food for thought' about qualities of leadership.⁴ As we have seen in Part II, Favorinus is an *exemplum* that gives rich food for thought; in this chapter, we will illustrate the symbouleutic aspects of Gellius' authority in more detail by his commemoration of 'wise men' who were also statesmen, especially Cato the Elder and Herodes Atticus. As a rule, Gellius presents the heroes of the Roman past as examples of moral and political conduct, inviting his reader to contrast them with the scandalous lives of more recent sophistic 'stars' who had made the lives of Roman emperors very difficult.

Gellius' literary self-presentation also resembles forms of communication between the intellectual and the ruler or statesman as we find it in imperial Latin writers, including the tensions arising from instruction and advice to someone who is socially superior and '*negotii occupatus*'. On the one hand, he uses a similar 'discourse of modesty' as Fronto does, referring to his intellectual activities in terms of 'trivial matters' and 'minute details', which suggests, among other things, a difference in hierarchy between such philological niceties and the elevated position of the busy emperor.⁵ On the other hand, like Fronto, Gellius puts himself on one level with his addressee by emphasising a shared educated background and a distinctive literary code, contrasting their identity and status as Roman cultural elite (*docti*) from various *semidocti* represented by boastful grammarians and other ignorant rivals. Gellius even competes with Fronto on issues of canonical authority, shaping his profile as an arbiter of taste in a society where the standards for literary fashion were set by the imperial court.

der Stockt 2002 points out that Plutarch's political essays should be further investigated regarding their ideologically Trajanic dimensions. The *Sayings of Kings and Commanders* (see above, p. 191), transmitted under Plutarch's name but of debated authorship, is explicitly addressed to Trajan as a useful work for understanding leadership (cf. *Mor.* 172C–E). Beck 2002 argues in favour of Plutarchan authorship.

⁴ See Stadter 2002, 4, who calls Plutarch 'the age's most articulate political writer'. See also de Blois 1992; de Blois et al. (edd.) 2004. On the moral protreptic in Plutarch's *Lives* see Pausch 2004, 38 with n. 213; on Gellius' affinity with Plutarch's biographical approach see Pausch 2004, 206 with n. 317.

⁵ As we have seen on p. 19, Gellius refers to his *Noctes* with the diminutive *lucubrationunculæ*, a word first attested in a letter by Marcus Aurelius to Fronto with reference to his study during the hours of wakefulness (1, 4, 1 [p. 5,21f.]).

In a similar way, Gellius' intellectual self-fashioning resembles Apuleius' self-presentation in the *Apology* as a man of *doctrina*, associating himself with the proconsul Claudius Maximus as belonging to the same Roman intellectual aristocracy, in contrast to the ignorant fools who had accused Apuleius.⁶ For both Gellius and Apuleius, *doctrina* is both an intellectual marker and a social marker, a distinctive code characterising a kind of elite for which the standards are not set by wealth, class, or political rank, but by education.⁷ To Gellius and Apuleius, knowledge and erudition provided a key to communicate with those who were socially superior. Gellius and Apuleius both participated in the same network of patronage related to the imperial court, a network which included prominent men like Fronto, Lollianus Avitus, or Claudius Maximus, a man who was closely tied to the imperial court and admired by Marcus Aurelius for his moral virtues.⁸ As Bradley (1997, 216–219) suggests, Apuleius casts himself in the role of 'detached adviser' or 'philosopher-counselor',⁹ because this is the appropriate role for him to adopt in relation to the Roman statesman Claudius Maximus (cf. *apol.* 25, 3 *uirum seuerum et totius prouinciae negotiis occupatum*). In his addressing of Roman magistrates, even Apuleius occasionally strikes a tone of modesty that makes him resemble Gellius, especially to distinguish himself as a true authority from boastful, self-important rivals.¹⁰

In view of the powerful role of knowledge and erudition as sources of social advancement and personal political success, Gellius' choice to avoid explicit references to a dedicatee or a patron may only present a *gradual* difference with authors who wrote for the emperor and the imperial aristocracy in a more explicit way, because they were on closer terms with the imperial court, such as Fronto, and, in earlier times,

⁶ For the parallel between Gellius and Apuleius in their intellectual self-presentation see Bradley 1997, 213.

⁷ In *flor.* 8, Apuleius maintained that while few men could be senators, fewer still were noble, fewer still consulars, fewer still virtuous, and fewer still learned (*eruditi*); see Bradley 1997, 216f.

⁸ Claudius Maximus was connected to the court of Antoninus Pius and moved in the company of Fronto and Lollianus Avitus; see Bradley 1997, 215. For Marcus' admiration of Maximus cf. *Med.* 1, 15 and 1, 17, 5; cf. *Hist. Aug. Marc.* 3, 2, where Claudius Maximus is mentioned as Marcus' teacher. On the network of powerful men see also chapter two, p. 42 n. 20.

⁹ Apuleius cannot instruct Maximus, but only remind him of what he already knows (cf. *apol.* 48, 13 *etenim admonendus es mihi, non docendus*).

¹⁰ *Apul. flor.* 17, 2 *quantulumcunque ingenium meum iam pridem pro captu suo hominibus notus est ...* 'for even my small talent has too long been too well-known to people, to its own extent ...'; cf. 18, 12–18.

Pliny the Elder. Possibly, Gellius' lower status did not allow him to make any explicit claim to being the emperor's *amicus*.¹¹ Yet, Gellius would not be the first Latin writer to secure his position in relation to the Roman aristocracy through his literary acumen, in spite of a lower social status.¹² His literary self-presentation as a young follower of Fronto, who was known for helping to promote the careers and interests of his student protégés (Saller 1982, 137), may be symbolic of Gellius' aspirations to 'upward social mobility'.¹³

The Prefaces of Gellius and Pliny the Elder share topoi related to addressing the 'busy emperor', such as references to nocturnal studies, and an emphasis on *otium* and *officium*. Moreover, Gellius' modest self-presentation resembles Pliny's avoidance of claiming a too self-assertive position in relation to the emperor Titus, the dedicatee of his *Natural History*.¹⁴ Yet, whereas Pliny dedicates his work to the emperor, and we thus can surmise that he saw his dedication as a way of distinguishing his role of *amicus* to the emperor—even if he may have never met him in person—there is no direct sign of such forms of literary communication with an emperor or statesman in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*.¹⁵ A possible explanation is that since the first part of Gellius' *Praefatio* is missing, one could surmise that there was some sort of dedication in this missing

¹¹ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 12f.: "Although he is an accepted member of good society, he is one of its lesser members".

¹² See Woolf 2003, 209 with n. 17, who distinguishes senatorial writers and poets such as Lucan, Seneca the Younger and the Younger Pliny, from Latin poets and cultural experts of lower status.

¹³ On upward social mobility see Woolf 2003, 209: "the status dissonance between high-ranking but incompetent readers and lower-ranking expert writers was one pressure leading to the social promotion of many of the latter".

¹⁴ See Murphy 2004, 206–207 on Pliny's "ostentatious modesty". Cf. Plin. *nat. praef.* 1 *libros Naturalis Historiae, nouicium Caminis Quiritium tuorum opus, natos apud me proxima fetura licentior epistula narrare constitui tibi, iucundissime Imperator—sit enim haec tui praefatio, uerissima, dum maximi consenescit in patre—namque tu solebas/ nugas esse aliquid meas putare*, 'Most Gracious Highness (let this title, a supremely true one, be yours, while that of 'Most Eminent' grows to old age with your sire)—I have resolved to recount to you, in a somewhat presumptuous letter, the offspring of my latest travail, my volumes of Natural History (a novel task for the naive Muses of your Roman citizens)—'for 'twas e'ver your way/ to deem my trifles something worth' [Catull. 1, 3].

¹⁵ Gellius shares Pliny's emphasis on *otium* and *officium* and his description of his writings as the product of whatever *otium* is left to him, and therefore often of nocturnal pursuits (*praef.* 18). Pliny's reference to Varro in the same context (*praef.* 18 *dum ista, ut ait M. Varro, muginamur* [*musinamur* edd.]) points to a Varronian (Menippean?) origin of 'dallying with nocturnal trifles'; cf. Gell. 5, 16, 5 *non diutius muginandum* (see Holford-Strevens 2003, 260 n. 1 for the implications of this passage for the textual issue in Pliny); see above, p. 20 n. 12 (on *Varro Men.* 219).

part, to the emperor or to another patron, which would be in concord with Pliny's *Praefatio*. This raises the question for what reason this dedication was removed, and whether this was done during Gellius' lifetime already, questions which cannot be further pursued in the context of this study.

In what follows, we will consider the likelihood that *Noctes Atticae* was published either during the joint regime of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus (177–180) or around the year in which Marcus died (180 A.D.) as an important context for Gellius' self-fashioning as an authority, with implications both for his (aspired) position among the Roman aristocracy and for the nature and function of his authority.

Ideal reader and existimator: the emperor's omnipresence

Gellius' strategies of caution and modesty, presenting his Roman cultural programme in the apparently innocuous form of philological minutiae, sympotic questions, and biographical anecdotes from the perspective of a young *sectator*, can be viewed in the context of the sophisticated intellectual culture of the Antonine literary community,¹⁶ a literary community in which the emperor had the highest hierarchical position. Without communicating with him in a direct or explicit way, Gellius uses literary 'codes' that refer to the imperial court as the centre of intellectual life, inviting and enabling the emperor to cast an interpretative eye on Gellius' representations of cultural authority.

At the surface level, Gellius' chapters seem to contain only 'neutral information', the value of which does not seem to depend on a material context. However, if we view Gellius' cultural expertise in a contemporary context of 'imperial authorisation', we can 'open up' this conventional surface and try to unravel his modest and cautious self-presentation as a code of literary communication that is central to his self-fashioning as an authority, an authority that diplomatically seeks to prove itself before someone who has the last word in every way, including his verdict on intellectuals who aspire to a position at the imperial court.¹⁷

¹⁶ For the concept of 'literary community', comprising writers, patrons and audiences, in so far as they are drawn together by literary communication, see Nauta 2002, 31.

¹⁷ For the impact of the emperor's omnipresence on intellectual behaviour see the

In the second part of this chapter, we will look for glimpses in the *Noctes* of the emperor as 'arbiter of knowledge' in three 'fields of authority'. First, we will look at the emperor's traditional role as assessor of strange and marginal knowledge, associated with *mirabilia* and paradoxical writings (1). Second, we will investigate his role of 'tester of knowledge' regarding philological topics and '*quaestiones conuiuales*' (2). And third, we will discuss the emperor's role as '*existimator*', as the person who determines the moral and intellectual value of persons and writings and ranks them in a certain hierarchy (3). This role, as we will see, has both a literary dimension (canonisation) and a sociological dimension (elite formation and reinforcement).

(1) taedium: '*ranking disgust*'

Putting imperial conquest and intellectual authorisation on a par, Romans trusted the emperor to judge what could be 'annexed' to the body of received knowledge. As Murphy (2004, 199f.) points out, Romans saw the emperor as the authority to whom all curious knowledge must be presented, an 'interpreter' of strange facts and "an effective authority for potentially dangerous new language". Related to this authoritative role is the emperor's function as a witness of and safeguard against prodigies. This can be illustrated by an anecdote about the emperor Tiberius. Plutarch (*On the cessation of oracles* 17, *Mor.* 419D) relates how Tiberius had the intellectuals at his court make an investigation concerning Pan, not to amuse himself, but because he took a potentially dangerous prodigy (a voice announcing the death of Pan) very seriously, and had the inquiry made to disarm the prodigy. The anecdote shows that intellectuals at the imperial court had a supportive, advisory function, carried out by doing research that informed and instructed the emperor in his crucial function of 'authorising knowledge'.¹⁸ This resembles what Gellius seems to be doing in *Noctes Atticae*, and what Pliny the Elder was doing before him.

satirical diatribe in Lucian's *Ignorant Book-Collector* (22), on a pseudo-intellectual who tries hard to come across as a man of learning in order to impress the emperor, by buying a great number of books. The speaker mocks him for not realising that the emperor has "many ears and eyes", and will find out about his immoral life.

¹⁸ As Murphy (2004, 200) observes, the authorising function of the emperor was "to receive new knowledge and make sense of it, stamping it with his authoritative interpretation. To fail to do so would be to leave prodigies open to alternative interpretations that might very well destabilize the accepted order of the world."

We can sense Gellius' awareness of the emperor to a certain extent through his responses to those who claimed a similar kind of authority in relation to the emperor. Gellius' self-presentation as an authority entailed a re-ordering of the intellectual hierarchy in an imperial context, in which *Noctes Atticae* was to supersede other sources of authority. One of Gellius' strategies was to integrate them as 'inferior predecessors' in the cultural spectrum encompassed by his work. We see this strategy also in his treatment of curious knowledge. Gellius' self-authorising strategy is twofold: on the one hand, he does not refrain from narrating marvels and unbelievable stories, showing his mastery in a traditionally ambiguous field of knowledge that inquires into 'the extremities of what can be known'.¹⁹ He undoubtedly was aware that Roman emperors and other aristocratic Romans of the past had taken a cultured interest in *mirabilia*.²⁰ On the other hand, Gellius associates some of his predecessors with the kind of weird, incredible and uncanny learning that Romans were likely to exclude from a 'legitimate' body of knowledge.²¹ By implication and by contrast, Gellius claims a position as a 'legitimate' educationalist in a process of self-authorisation that simultaneously hints at imperial endorsement. The following may illustrate how Gellius achieves this.

In a chapter listing paradoxical phenomena from cheap Greek books full of reprehensible fictions, bought at a market-stall in Brindisi, Gellius with feigned innocence states that such things were 'for the most part unmentioned by our native writers' (9, 4, 5, *ferè nostris intemptata*), whereas

¹⁹ See Murphy 2004, 18–22 on 'the necessity of marvels', pointing out how in antiquity inquiries into the uncertain margins of knowledge were, on the one hand, an expected part of 'established' fields of knowledge such as historiography (Herodotus' *History*) and philosophy (*On Marvellous Things Heard*, attributed to Aristotle), within a tradition going back to the poems of Hesiod and Homer; on the other hand, such inquiries were attacked for their untruthfulness. This ambiguous tradition of wonderful and marginal knowledge, which was particularly powerful in the Hellenistic period, creates the background against which we should view Pliny's and Gellius' activities in such fields of knowledge.

²⁰ See Murphy 2004, 57 on the aristocratic interest in *mirabilia* in Rome, mentioning as examples Vespasian's son Titus (Tac. *Hist.* 2, 1–4) and Trajan's intimate friend, the consular and orator Licinius Sura (Plin. *epist.* 4, 30; 7, 27); moreover, Pliny the Elder quotes Titus (2, 89) and Domitian (book 33) as sources for his curious knowledge (Murphy 2004, 60f.).

²¹ For the tension between (Roman) scepticism towards unbelievable tales and a positive attitude, proposing to approach such wonderful and strange knowledge in terms of a deeper inquiry, compare the programmatic discussion between Lucius and the sceptical travelling companion in Apul. *Met.* 1, 2–3.

the rest of the chapter makes evident that Gellius is actually quoting Pliny the Elder throughout—all these bizarre tales appear in the same order in *Natural History* 7, 9–26.²² This is Gellius' subtle way of humiliating a predecessor: he does not state literally that he bought the *Natural History* at a market stall, but the insinuation is there. Moreover, there is a clear hint at the scandal about Larcus Licinus, a wealthy Roman magistrate who became famous for his offensive ambition to buy Pliny's stock of wonderful stories.²³ As Murphy (2004, 56–59) argues, by the standards of Roman literary courtesy, the desire to buy someone's text, thus transforming it into a mere 'commodity', means a downright offence, because it contradicts the aristocratic nature of Roman literary culture as a process of exchanging texts and stories, which marks the social circulation of favour and power.²⁴ Yet, Gellius takes the offence even a step further, by transforming the stories that turn out to be Pliny's into a cheap bundle of old used books from Greece.²⁵

Moreover, Gellius uses the same chapter to present another rival authority in a humiliating light. At the end of the chapter, which recounts supernatural phenomena such as the miraculous metamorphosis of women into men, Gellius alludes to Favorinus, whom he elsewhere associates with writers of marvels like Pliny (14, 6, 3; 10, 12, 9–10). Here, his cryptic remark that hermaphrodites were formerly regarded as prodigies (9, 4, 16 in *prodigiis habitos*) represents Favorinus himself as a strange phenomenon, once considered as a prodigy,²⁶ and now as a source of sexual pleasure.²⁷

²² Holford-Strevens 2003, 70f. observes that Gellius' use of Pliny in 9, 4 is supported by linguistic similarities, but also points to evidence that he used other (paradoxical) sources at the same time.

²³ Gellius reviles Licinus in 17, 1, 1 for his polemic against Cicero's style.

²⁴ See also Nauta 2002, 29–30 on the personalised nature of literary communication in the Early Empire.

²⁵ Cf. Gell. 9, 4, 4 *ipsa autem uolumina ex diutino situ squalebant et habitu aspectuque taetro erant*, 'the volumes themselves, however, were filthy from long neglect, in bad condition and unsightly'; 9, 4, 5 *adductus mira atque insperata uilitate*, 'attracted by their extraordinary and unexpected cheapness'.

²⁶ Gellius' audience will doubtless have been reminded of Polemo's representation of Favorinus as a 'monstrosity'; see Part II, p. 98 on the political context of this portrayal. By implication, the appearance of a eunuch in a discussion of buying deformed slaves in chapter 4, 2 (following a chapter featuring Favorinus) hints at Favorinus' notorious physical defect. Cf. Plut. *Curios.* 10 (*Mor.* 520C) on the 'market of monstrosities', where deformed slaves were exhibited to potential buyers, who were in search of some 'commingled shape and misformed prodigy' (σύμμικτον εἶδος καὶ ἀποφώλιον τέρας, Eur. frg. 472a Kannicht).

²⁷ See Part II, pp. 130–135.

The association between ‘uncanny knowledge’ and the teaching of rival authorities such as Pliny and Favorinus, against which Gellius aims to guard his reader, is reinforced by his self-legitimation as a narrator of such *miracula* (9, 4, 5), which reminds us of Gellius’ educational programme:

... ea ... in his commentariis aspersi, ut qui eos lectitarit ne rudis omnino et ἀνήκοος inter istiusmodi rerum auditiones reperiatur.

... these I have inserted here and there in these notes, so that whoever reads them may not be found to be wholly ignorant and ἀνήκοος, or ‘uninstructed’, when listening to lectures of that kind.

This self-authorisation recalls other passages from the *Noctes* discussed in the previous chapter, where Gellius points to the psychological impact of the ear-pleasing rhetoric of intellectual performers (cf. *auditiones*), by which an unprepared (cf. ἀνήκοος), curious student might be swept away (e.g. 5, 1, 1). Moreover, he contrasts the healthy effects of *Noctes Atticae* on the reader’s soul (Praef. 11; 16) with the disgust (*taedium*) produced by rival miscellanies and works full of *mirabilia* such as Pliny’s *Naturalis Historia*.²⁸ Implicitly, Gellius invites us to see the works of his rivals and the disgusting trashy books from Greece (9, 4, 12) as amounting to the same thing.

This *taedium* is what Robert Kaster (2005, 113–121) defines as a disgust of ‘deliberative ranking’, a kind of aversive judgment that claims superiority without being ostensibly boastful.²⁹ Scholars have criticised Gellius in terms of self-contradiction or conflict,³⁰ since he tells disgusting and useless Greek stories in a Roman work that advocates utility. Yet, both the disgust (‘ranking’) and the recounting (‘psychological preparation’) can be seen to underpin Gellius’ cultural authority. They help Gel-

²⁸ Cf. Praef. 11 *quibus in legendis ante animus senio et taedio languebit*, ‘the perusal of such collections will exhaust the mind through weariness or disgust’ (see Part I, p. 23); 9, 4, 12 *haec atque alia istiusmodi plura legimus, sed cum ea scriberemus, tenuit nos non idoneae scripturae taedium, nihil ad ornandum iuvandumque usum uitae pertinentis*, ‘These and many other stories of the kind I read; but when writing them down, I was seized with disgust for such worthless writings, which contribute nothing to the enrichment or profit of life’; 10, 12, 1 (Plinius Secundus) *multa ... uana atque intoleranda auribus deinde quasi a Democrito scripta tradit, ex quibus pauca haec inuerti meminimus, quia pertaesum est*, ‘(Pliny the Elder) transmits to us many foolish and intolerable absurdities, alleging that they were written by Democritus. Of these unwillingly, since they disgust me, I recall a few, as follows’. On the disgust produced by seeing prodigies such as deformed slaves too frequently cf. Plut. *Curios*. 10 (*Mor.* 520C); cf. above, n. 26.

²⁹ Cf. Kaster 2005, 113 on the disgust of ‘aversive connoisseurship’.

³⁰ Holford-Strevens 2003, 42; Beall 2004, 207.

lius to rank himself above inferior authorities from the past (e.g. Pliny, Favorinus) and the present (9, 4, 5 *inter istiusmodi rerum auditiones*). Yet, by implication, Gellius' 'ranking strategies' point to the role of the emperor as the assessor of knowledge and authority par excellence, and can be read as a sophisticated literary way of convincing him that the authority embodied by *Noctes Atticae* supersedes all other 'annoying' authorities in the field.

(2) *the ambiguous rhetoric of philological topics*

The other field in which the emperor plays a traditional role of 'tester of knowledge' is related to social and convivial settings, in which he on the one hand establishes his own 'cultural omnipotence', and on the other hand tests the intellectuals of his circle for their detailed knowledge. This involves all kinds of tensions between political power and intellectual authority, and a continuous challenge for the intellectual to retain his candour without offending the ruler, and to stay friends with him without degrading himself to a flatterer.

This may be illustrated by anecdotes about two emperors, Tiberius and Hadrian. Suetonius (*Tib.* 70, 3) represents the emperor as amusing himself with putting the scholars of his court to the test with the most obscure mythological questions.³¹ Here, Tiberius embodies the emperor's role as a 'tester' of detailed knowledge,³² a role he in this case apparently performed to satisfy his own whims. In this role, Tiberius had a worthy 'successor' in Hadrian, who liked to demonstrate his cultural omnipotence in discussions on linguistic issues with the intellectuals in his circle. Favorinus was initially one of Hadrian's favourite partners in this intellectual pastime at the imperial court (*Historia Augusta, Hadrianus*, 16, 8–11). Amiel Vardi (2001) points out that Gellius' policy of public humiliation by exposing *grammatici* for their inferior knowledge imitates this favourite diversion of Hadrian.³³ Yet, as we have seen, Gellius' satirical strategies in *Noctes Atticae* have a broader scope, as they not only seek to expose the false pretensions of *grammatici*, but also, in a more subtle way, underline Gellius' authority at the cost of the author-

³¹ E.g. 'Who was Hecuba's mother?' and 'what name did Achilles take when he hid among the women?'. The topics resemble the *mera miracula* for which Gellius mocks the anonymous miscellanist (= Favorinus) in 14, 6, 3–4, such as the question with what kind of bolt Eurycleia had locked in Telemachus.

³² See Bonner 1977, 240.

³³ See also Birley 1997, 194f.

ity of ‘established celebrities’ who were his social superiors, like Fronto, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus.

Thus, the figure of Hadrian is important on a programmatic level, and illuminates Gellius’ subtle strategies of articulating authority in *Noctes Atticae* in three aspects: Hadrian epitomises the emperor as (a) ‘tester of knowledge’; (b) as participant in intellectual discussions which serve as sophisticated entertainment; (c) as the personification of a fundamental dilemma in the communication between two types of authority, the authority of the intellectual and the authority—or, rather, the power—of the ruler, since the latter is per definition the supreme authority in any discipline. Anecdotes inform us that Favorinus sometimes had to pay for Hadrian’s wish to be the best in all fields, and that the emperor’s behaviour even made him acknowledge an alleged mistake without reason.³⁴ Within the contemporary debate on the crucial difference between a truthful *amicus* and a flatterer (Plut. *Quomodo adul.* 16, *Mor.* 58e–f), Favorinus’ attitude toward the emperor could be explained as toadying. As we have seen above, Favorinus’ appearances in the *Noctes Atticae*, especially those in front of the imperial palace on the Palatine (4, 1; 20, 1), subtly point to his unstable authority as the emperor’s *amicus*.³⁵

In view of the above, Gellius’ tactical self-presentation seems to be carefully calculated to avoid any clash with the emperor’s sensitivities regarding either inappropriate claims to authority or reprehensible flattery. Most importantly, he never addresses the emperor directly, but speaks of his audience in very general terms. His programmatic allusions to intellectual playfulness and entertainment, and the staging of various sympotic scenes and competitive dialogues (‘ranking games’), can be interpreted as a reflection of similar pastimes at the imperial court. It evokes the situation of the *convivium* as a social world with contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, it is a world of sharing and friendship, where social barriers seem to be relaxed and where there is more liberty to speak one’s mind;³⁶ this literary *Freiraum* gives Gellius as author carte blanche to discuss topics with a political undertone, or to challenge the authority of eminent readers. On the other hand, it is an occasion of ‘ranking’, bringing to light distinctions in status and

³⁴ Cf. Dio Cass. *Roman History* 69, 3; Hist. Aug. *Hadri.* 15, 10–13.

³⁵ See especially p. 132 n. 48.

³⁶ See above, Part I, p. 69 n. 8.

authority, a process to which the function of the emperor as a 'tester of knowledge' is significantly related.

Gellius explicitly places himself under the authoritative scrutiny of his audience in the *Praefatio*, as he invites to 'weigh the authorities' followed by him (18 *auctoritates hominum pensitent, ... quos ... secuti sumus*), and to find out where true authority lies ('authorising knowledge'). We should also view Gellius' implicit appeal to an 'investigating reader' throughout the *Noctes Atticae* in this context (see Part II), as it presupposes a process of 'ranking authority' by a fully prepared reader, an 'ideal reader', who could be the emperor.

In this way, Gellius does not place himself above the reader, but presupposes a reader with a superior 'investigatory' stance, which enables him to solve and unravel the implications and allusions in Gellius' playful 'trivialities' and 'philological minutiae'. This attitude is very similar to that of Fronto in his way of addressing Marcus Aurelius, for example when he speaks about his paradoxical praise of smoke and dust (*laud. fum.* 2, p. 215,8f.):

Plerique legentium forsan rem de titulo contemnant: nihil serius potuisse fieri de fumo et puluere. tu pro tuo excellenti ingenio profecto existimabis lusa sit opera ista an locata.

The majority of readers may perhaps from the heading despise the subject, on the ground that nothing serious could be made of smoke and dust. You, with your excellent abilities, will soon see whether my labour is lost or well laid out.

As we have seen, Gellius resembles Fronto in his use of a terminology of 'minutiae' in a context of imperial hierarchy, where 'down-to earth' and trivial pursuits are contrasted with the elevated character of the emperor. At the same time, he resembles Fronto in paying homage to his reader's faculty of assessment and scrutiny, and the ability to recognise that there are serious things to be learned from apparently unserious trifles.³⁷ This is a means of paying respect to the emperor's traditional role of 'tester of knowledge', a role which seems reflected in Gellius' 'ideal reader'.

Gellius' implicit challenge to his reader to take his chapters not merely at face value but to connect them with certain contexts can be compared with Fronto's lessons to Marcus in the rhetorical *lusus* of composing and 'finding out' (*rationem quaerere*) imagistic descriptions

³⁷ Cf. also Pliny's quotation of Catull. 1, 3 in his dedication to Titus (*nat. praef.* 1); see above, n. 14.

(*imagines*) by applying them to certain persons and situations. The Frontonian *imagines* are represented as multi-interpretable enigmas to be unravelled by the reader with a sophisticated response, even in a written form which should meet high literary standards itself.³⁸

Thus, Gellius seems to share with Fronto some of the tensions inherent in the role of a (future) emperor's teacher. We see in his *Praefatio* a 'doubleness', an attitude that vacillates between 'teaching' and 'being judged'—and along with this, a vacillation between an addressee as someone who is 'learning', 'becoming' and someone who 'knows' and already 'is', and therefore belongs to a select few (*Praef.* 20f.). We can observe a similar 'doubleness' in *si quis*-phrases such as in 11, 3, 4:

quod profecto facile intelleget, si quis adhibeat ad meditationem suam intentionem et habeat ueteris orationis usum atque notitiam celebriorem

and this surely anyone will easily understand, if he attentively considers the question and has a somewhat extensive use and knowledge of the early language.

On the one hand, this phrase can be read as cautiously hortatory, a protreptic to attain a level of learning in terms of the prescriptions of Gellius' cultural programme. On the other hand, it can be read as a laudatory confirmation of the reader, if he is a *quis* who meets this description, or at least thinks of himself as someone meeting this description. Through the flexibility of such *si quis*-phrases, Gellius can be pedagogical and protreptic without openly patronising, and laudatory without becoming a flatterer.³⁹

In both Fronto and Gellius, the tensions involved in exercising authority in relation to someone in power seem to be resolved if we view them in the context of a dynamic rhetorical *lusus*, in which 'playful learning' goes hand in hand with the challenge of multi-levelled interpretation. Through the 'sympotic' dynamics of mutuality and play, there is less risk of being accused of rising above a reader who is superior in power and social status. The primary focus is on the topic, not on Gellius' relation with his reader. In this way, the chapters of

³⁸ Fronto had put together a whole collection of *imagines* (εἰκόνες) on every conceivable subject; see Holford-Strevens 2003, 134 with n. 17 (with further lit.). Cf. e.g. Aur. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 7 (p. 40,1f.); Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 8 (p. 40,11f.); Fronto used them also for the teaching of style (Steinmetz 1982, 174). Russell (1990, 15f.) compares the εἰκόνες to other rhetorical exercises that Fronto made Marcus do, such as declamations. See also p. 159 n. 11 on the invention of 'startling thoughts' (ἐνθουμήματα).

³⁹ Cf. 1, 3, 13 *si recensere quis uellet*; on *si quis* phrases see also Part I, p. 85 n. 49.

the *Noctes Atticae* are 'neutralised' and 'objectified' into 'contributions to the dinner' (*symbolae*), or 'sweetmeats' (τραγημάτια) to be enjoyed during the desert (cf. 7, 13, 12).⁴⁰ As we have seen, both the *Noctes Atticae* and Fronto's correspondence reflect the playful and competitive dynamics of Antonine literature in general, with its taste for riddles and sympotic questions.

Within this context, the ambiguous rhetoric of 'philological topics' in the *Noctes* is a convenient and 'safe' way of communicating with a powerful person. On the one hand, it yields the power to detect the fallacy of a philological question, which is more than a philological question alone, and challenges and enables to reflect on issues in a politically and ideologically charged field; at the same time, it gives Gellius carte blanche to assume a didactic or even advisory stance. On the other hand, in case of any misinterpretation, it guarantees the 'safe way back', returning to the neutral field of *nugalia* and *disputatiunculae*. Depending on the experience, knowledge, and mentality of the reader, the study of the etymology of *obnoxius* (6, 17) might develop into a discussion of how a powerful person should treat his inferior, or it might revert to its professed objectified or 'scientific' status of etymological inquiry.⁴¹

(3) *existimatio*: canonisation and elite formation

The third field in which Gellius takes the emperor's role of assessor and evaluator of authority into account is related to a process of 'ranking' that we may term, with Thomas Habinek, '*existimatio*', a process that is related to the canonisation of authors and texts, but also deals with forms of hierarchy that go beyond style and literature, and are related to the politics of elite formation. With his *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius actively

⁴⁰ Compare the programmatic nature of the ingredients of the dinner during the Saturnalia (18, 2): 'an obscure saying of some early poet, amusing rather than perplexing; some point in ancient history; the correction of some tenet of philosophy which was commonly misinterpreted; the solution of some sophistical catch; the investigation of a rare and unusual word, or of an obscure use of the tense of a verb of plain meaning'.

⁴¹ See Rives (forthcoming) on a comparable strategy in Apuleius' *Apology*, where his displays of grammatical erudition serve as innocuous, 'neutralised' forms of learning, helping to present himself as socially respectable and approved. Both Apuleius and Gellius use grammatical expertise as a source of cultural and social prestige; see Part I, p. 31, 50 n. 41.

participates in an ideological process of setting and modifying the standards that define the Roman cultural aristocracy.⁴²

This process can be seen in the wider picture of an ongoing contemporary debate on the criteria that distinguish true intellectuals from impostors and pseudo-philosophers, a debate that is reflected in contemporary authors (Fronto, Apuleius, Lucian) and in Gellius himself. One way of illuminating this debate was the use of iconic symbolism that visualised the social subversiveness and intellectual inferiority of charlatans, such as unkempt pseudo-philosophers, or blushing and sweating grammarians, attracting the emperor's eye to those intellectuals who did not deserve imperial endorsement.⁴³ Another way was the composition of fictional anecdotes and vignettes, featuring famous historical personalities who had claimed or received particular roles of authority in selecting and promoting those who in their view deserved to be admitted to a certain elite status or literary canon. Gellius uses the latter way to question the authority of these personalities themselves, in particular Fronto and Herodes Atticus, demonstrating that their criteria and standards for social advancement and literary canonisation were open to criticism and under continuous scrutiny, a scrutiny that indirectly points to the judging eye of the emperor in the contemporary debate.

Gellius' apparent rivalry with Fronto's canonical authority in the *Noctes* (chapter two) is an important indication of his awareness of a supreme '*exstimator*' to whom he wants to prove his authority in matters of canonicity and intellectual hierarchy. We may here observe the same 'doubleness' that we discussed above, for Gellius' attitude both implies claims to an authorial *exstimatio*, which can 'teach' and influence the emperor's judgment, and acknowledges a supreme judge of authority, by whom Gellius will be scrutinised and assessed himself.

Various passages in the *Noctes*, starting with the *Praefatio* (19–21), are indicative of elitist concerns, and stimulate reflection on criteria and procedures to recognise and define an intellectual aristocracy. This concern is embodied by Gellius' use of the term *cohors* for a group of paradigmatic status in a number of passages. The connotations of

⁴² See Habinek 1998, 45–68 on *exstimatio* and the related noun *exemplum* as terms that refer to the process in which Latin literature participates in forms of elite recruitment and acculturation.

⁴³ On the iconic figure of the pseudo-philosopher see below, p. 289. For blushing and sweating bumpkin-like *grammatici* see 19, 10, 14; Kaster 1988, 58.

exclusiveness and normative authority are evident in Gellius' application of the term to the canonical, or 'classical' group of authors from the past, an observation he puts in the mouth of Fronto:

19, 8, 15 *Ite ergo nunc et, quando forte erit otium, quaerite an 'quadrigam' et 'harenas' dixerit e cohorte illa dumtaxat antiquiore uel oratorum aliquis uel poetarum, id est classicus adsiduusque aliquis scriptor, non proletarius.*

So go now and inquire, when you chance to have leisure, whether any orator or poet, provided that he be of that earlier band—that is to say, any classical or authoritative writer, not of the common herd—has used *quadriga* or *harenae*.⁴⁴

As we have seen in Part I, Gellius employs this vignette to demonstrate a shift in authority in his favour, as he turns out to know the authoritative writers (in particular Varro). Other Gellius chapters (e.g. 19, 13) imply criticism of Fronto's judgment on the question of which writers are authoritative (i.e. who belong to the *cohors*).

In 19, 8, Gellius again uses the form of the vignette to pit his authority against Fronto's, but here he alludes to the relation between intellectual authority and imperial power in a 'Gellian' way, as part of the philological discussion, featuring Caesar's *De Analogia* as a powerful source of authority. The starting-point of the discussion is Caesar's view that *harena* cannot be used in the plural, and *quadrigae* not in the singular. Throughout the chapter, Fronto emphasises Caesar's *auctoritas* (19, 8, 9 *contra te ... pronuntiasse*; cf. 19, 8, 10 *permotus auctoritate*) and exemplary language and erudition (19, 8, 3; 19, 8, 12 *uiri docti*).⁴⁵ This may allude to the taste of the 'real' Fronto, who admiringly quotes in his *De Bello Parthico* (9, p. 224, 12f.) the *De Analogia* as a work written by Caesar in time of war, thus using it as a protreptic example for Marcus Aurelius to pursue literary studies in spite of his responsibilities as an emperor.

Whereas the Gellian Fronto seems quite anxious to avoid the impression that he imposes his authority on Caesar's *sententiae*, and makes a cautious effort to support Caesar's view with explanations and parallels (19, 8, 11–13),⁴⁶ Gellius subtly establishes his independent authority in

⁴⁴ See Nauta 2005 on this passage as the first attestation of *classicus* in the sense of 'classic' as we still use it. See Swain 2004, 35 on the use of terms describing old Republican constitutional arrangements: a classical author is 'good-class' and 'landowning', not 'proletarian'.

⁴⁵ For 19, 8, 3 see Part I, p. 34 n. 61.

⁴⁶ Cf. 19, 8, 12 *non ut huius sententiae legisque fundus subscriptorque fierem, sed ut ne Caesaris, uiri docti, opinionem ἀπαρδαμύθητον destituerem*, 'not in order to give my authority and

this chapter in relation to ‘power’. Disagreeing with Caesar’s authority on *quadrigae* (19, 8, 3), Gellius draws attention to the *auctoritas* of Varro, who used *quadriga* in the singular. In terms of an implicit literary communication with the emperor, Gellius establishes himself as a reliable friend by demonstrating his frankness without offending Caesar,⁴⁷ avoiding both the flattery of Fronto and the ‘subversive’ attitude of the poet (cf. 19, 8, 6).

With his knowledge of authoritative writers, combined with the *iudicium* for the appropriate use of words from those writers (cf. 13, 29), Gellius’ authority embodies the educational programme of the *Noctes Atticae*, which is concerned with distinguishing *docti* from *semidocti*, and *honesta eruditio* from ὀψιμαθία.⁴⁸ We are invited, then, to see Gellius’ authority also on the level of elite formation, and we may infer that he expected his moves to be carefully scrutinised by someone who represented official power, someone who listened to the name of Caesar.

The use of Republican constitutional arrangements (*classicus*, *adsiduus*, *proletarius*) to make a ranking by class has, as Swain (2004, 35) observes, a political meaning. Swain mentions three political aspects: (a.) intellectuals in antiquity were usually restricted to the wealthy; (b.) ranking citizens by class and pointing out their mutual duties and obligations is something dear to Gellius; (c.) just as Greeks in this period used the classical past to shape their identity, Romans used the glorious past of the Republic as a means of expressing Romanness. Swain puts it somewhat differently: “Antiquity as a basis for sustaining the idea of Latin’s parity with Greek was as important to Fronto and Gellius as it had been to Cicero”. In my opinion, what Gellius is doing in *Noctes Atticae*

signature to his opinion and rule, but that I might not leave the view of that learned man, Caesar, unsupported.’ The code-switching (ἀπαραισθητον) indicates a delicate topic, and contains a pun with the proper meaning of ἀπαραισθητος (‘inexorable’, ‘incorrigible’), which evokes the picture of the despot, and the verbal meaning (cf. παραινέσθαι, ‘to support’, ‘to justify’, ‘to talk gently to’), which evokes the picture of the obedient subject. Contrast the ‘subversive’ attitude of the poet (19, 8, 6).

⁴⁷ With a diplomatic remark, Gellius points out that he sought with less interest for an example of the plural *harenae*, since ‘no one among learned men’ (*nemo ... doctorum hominum*) had used that form, so far as he could recall, except for Caesar (who probably quoted it in asserting that no such form existed). Indeed, the form is attested in e.g. Horace (only mentioned once by Gellius) and in Suetonius (who is not an authority on language for him); those would not belong to the *docti homines*. Gellius saves his skin by pointing out that Caesar is an exception, tactically ranking him among the *docti homines* and allowing him to quote the plural *harenae* at the same time.

⁴⁸ See Part I, p. 59f. on the importance of these differences in Fronto’s teaching to Marcus, especially in *epist.* 4, 3 (see also below, n. 53).

is not 'sustaining the idea of Latin's parity with Greek', but establishing the superior authority of Roman culture in a process of interaction with the glorious Roman past and the rival Greek cultural phenomena of the present.

In my opinion, the political implications of ranking terms reach even further, since in Gellius' cultural programme the notion of 'elite' is not a given, fixed entity, but is the continuous subject of a process of debate and scrutiny, a process for which *Noctes Atticae* provides an ideological matrix. Here, again, the term *cohors* is significant, as Gellius uses it also for a select and exclusive company of 'approved' intellectuals, as the following examples will show.

In a programmatic chapter placed in the first part of the first book (1, 9), he applies the term *cohors* to the Pythagorean circle (1, 9, 12 *quod omnes, simul atque a Pythagora in cohortem illam disciplinarum recepti erant*).⁴⁹ The focus of the chapter is on the recruitment and reinforcement of an exemplary philosophical elite, namely the Pythagorean school, through a strict policy of selection based on character and appearance (through physiognomical analysis), and on training. Generally speaking, the chapter reflects a contemporary interest in Pythagoras.⁵⁰ Yet, it can also be read in a programmatic sense, as a reflection of Gellius' interest in methods for exercising social control and for forming an intellectual elite group.⁵¹

Gellius' teacher Taurus uses the Pythagorean paradigm in his assessment of the behaviour of contemporary students (*nouicios philosophorum sectatores cum ueteribus Pythagoricis pensitans*), criticising unprepared people who turn to philosophy merely to improve their style.⁵² His complaint that arriving students are ἀθεώρητοι, ἄμουσοι, ἀγεωμέτρητοι ('without purpose, without learning, and without scientific training') recalls the prescriptions of Gellius' cultural programme, which is not intended for a *uulgi* ... *a ludo musico diuersum* (Praef. 20). Terms like *pensitare* and *exis-*

⁴⁹ For the use of *cohors* for a select group of intellectuals (cf. *diatriba*) cf. also 2, 18, 1 *Phaedon Elidensis ex cohorte illa Socratica fuit*; 9, 15, 9 *ceteris omnibus ex cohorte eius qui audire eum soliti erant, clamore magno exultantibus* (note the contrast with the silent followers of Pythagoras' cohorts); 13, 5, 2 *omnis eius* (sc. Aristotelis) *seclatorum cohors*.

⁵⁰ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 262f.

⁵¹ See Keulen 2006, 170 on anecdotes of 'physiognomical recruitment' in Gellius, Apuleius (*Plat.* 1, 1; *Met.* 1, 23; 2, 2), and Philostratus (*vit. Apoll.* 2, 30), and on physiognomical analysis as an integral part of 'reading' and 'judging' characters; see Part II, p. 102f. on similar implications for 'reading' Favorinus in Gellius.

⁵² Taurus in the *Noctes Atticae* frequently complains about the deteriorated manners of contemporary students; cf. 7, 10; 17, 20.

timare, while alluding to the original ‘financial’ and ‘material’ criteria of hierarchy in Roman society, transfer notions of ‘scrutiny’, ‘judgment’, and ‘selection’ to a concern of the present.⁵³ True nobility is not guaranteed by rank or birth or wealth, but proved by character and deeds. Just as *cohors* in 1, 9 stresses the exclusive nature of the Pythagorean circle, the use of the same word in 2, 18, 1, a chapter discussing slaves who became philosophers, underlines that excellence of character and intellect (*ingenium*) and not birth or rank defines the admission into such an exclusive group.⁵⁴

The casual tone in which Gellius adds the final paragraph to the chapter on Pythagorean group formation (1, 9, 12 *sed id quoque non praetereundum est*) is misleading, for in this ‘praeteritio’ Gellius strategically brings his programmatic use of paradigms of elite recruitment to a completion. By comparing the Pythagorean formation of an inseparable fellowship (*societas inseparabilis*) of disciples, who shared all their property and money, with the time-honoured Roman association (*consortium*) termed ‘*ercto non cito*’ (‘undivided inheritance’) by Roman law, Gellius employs the illustrious Roman past to present an idea(l) of the elite as an incorrupt, inseparable community (*societas inseparabilis*), sharing their inheritance without trying to pursue their own interest or gain.

Dillon (2002, 36) discusses an interesting implication of this anecdote regarding the financial position of Taurus, the narrator: as he was possibly dependent on the support of wealthy patrons such as

⁵³ *Pensitare*: cf. 1, 4, 1 *uirtutes pensitabat*; 1, 9, 11 *sectatores ... pensitans*; 9, 9, 12 *in legendis pensitandisque ueteribus scriptis*. *Existimare*: cf. 1, 4, 2 *is Iulianus super eo enthymemate ... ita existimauit*; 2, 27 tit. *quid T. Castricius existimari super Sallustii uerbis*; 17, 20, 4 (Taurus) *sic enim me in principio recens in diatribam acceptum appellitabat, existimans eloquentiae unius extundendae gratia Athenas uenisse*. Cf. Aur. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 10, 1 p. 30,6f. (mocking the sophist Polemo) *satisne ego audaci consilio et iudicio temerario uidear, cum de tantae gloriae uiro existimo?* ‘in judging a man of such reputation, am I, do you think, bold enough in my purpose and rash enough in my judgment?’; Fronto *epist.* 4, 3, 2 p. 56,15f. *in uerbis uero eligendis conlocandisque ilico dilucet nec uerba dare diutius potest, quin se ipse indicet uerborum ignarum esse eaque male probare et temere existimare et inscie contrectare neque modum neque pondus uerbi internosse*, ‘but in the choice and arrangement of words he is detected instantly [i.e. the *semidoctus*], nor can anyone make a pretence with words for long without himself betraying that he is ignorant of them, that his judgment of them is incorrect, his estimate of them haphazard, his handling of them unskilful, and that he can distinguish neither their propriety nor their force’.

⁵⁴ The notions of social (upward) mobility that underly Gellius’ cultural programme reflect contemporary realities; see Zanker 1995, 254, who discusses the richly decorated funerary chamber of the freedman C. Valerius Hermia (ca. A.D. 170). This ‘upwardly mobile former slave’ demonstrates his claim to universal learning by portraits of a philosopher and a rhetorician, probably his teachers.

Herodes Atticus,⁵⁵ his nostalgic anecdote about the Pythagorean ideal from the past may reflect his frustration about the present, where professors no longer found themselves in a community where everything was unselfishly shared, but were totally dependent upon limited contributions by a wealthy man. We may add that the intellectual community in Gellius' day was far from *inseparabilis*, but full of internal strife and rivalry. Thus, through the contrast with the idealised Roman past in Taurus' nostalgic anecdote, Gellius draws attention to the corruption of standards for selecting and maintaining an intellectual elite in the present, due to the financial influence of wealthy individuals and the related competition for power that divides the cultural aristocracy. At the same time, the nostalgic anecdote implies a wish for internal unity and for revived standards of elite formation, implicitly addressing an 'existimator' who can lead and pursue this process of 'rehabilitation'.

Concerns of exercising social control and forming an elite group are foremost concerns of the emperor. Since the emperor is the ultimate 'tester of knowledge' and 'assessor of intellectuals', we may picture his scrutinising eye following the gaze that judges and assesses the various intellectuals in the *Attic Nights*.⁵⁶ The interpretation of the word *cohors* in Gellius as a reference for the contemporary elite, viewed as the circle around the emperor, is supported by a letter of Fronto, who refers to the *cohors* of Marcus Aurelius as a circle of friends. Fronto praises the young Marcus for his powers to unite his *cohors* in harmony, comparing him, not to Pythagoras, but to Orpheus (*epist.* 4, 1, 2 p. 53,21f.):

Quae fabula recte interpretantibus illud profecti significat fuisse egregio ingenio eximiaeque eloquentia uirum, qui plurimos uirtutum suarum facundiaeque admiratione deuinxerit; etumque amicos ac sectatores suos ita instituisse, ut, quamquam diuersis nationibus conuenae uariis moribus inbuti, concordarent tamen et consuescerent et congregarentur, ... [...] Quo si quis umquam ingenio tantum ualuit, ut amicos ac sectatores suos amore inter se mutuo copularet, tu hoc profecto perficies multo facilius, qui ad omnis uirtutes natus es prius quam institutus. [...] Inuidia perniciosum inter homines malum maximeque internecium, sibi aliisque pariter obnoxium. Sed si procul a cohorte tua prohibueris, uteris amicis concordibus et benignis, ut nunc uteris.

This legend rightly interpreted surely signifies this, that Orpheus was a man of matchless genius and surpassing eloquence, who attached to himself numerous followers, from admiration of his virtues and his power of speech, and that he so trained his friends and followers, that, though met together from different nations and endowed with diverse

⁵⁵ See below, p. 295 n. 97.

⁵⁶ See Murphy 2004, 164 on 'the eye of the ruler'.

characteristics, they, nevertheless, lived sociably together in unity and concord ... [...] But if ever anyone by his character had so much influence as to unite his friends and followers in mutual love for one another, you assuredly will accomplish this with far greater ease, for you were formed by nature before you were fitted by training for the exercise of all virtues. [...] Envy among men is a deadly evil and more fatal than any, a curse to enviers and envied alike. Banish it from your circle of friends, and you will keep them, as they now are, harmonious and kindly.

By his emphasis on eloquence and instruction, Fronto subtly alludes to his own secondary role as educator of this Orpheus, an Orpheus that attracted and kept together a *cohors* of *sectatores* and *amici*. Fronto's educational role can be viewed as paradigmatic for Gellius' ideological role as cultural authority, a role that can be inferred from his chapters that address or allude to issues of elite formation and social cohesion. Keeping in mind the emperor's key role in exerting social control and setting standards for the cultural and political elite, we may view the *Noctes Atticae* as Gellius' way of influencing politics through literature. In the next chapter, we shall look at this process in closer detail, focusing on possible indications of Gellius' own view on the nature of his role as cultural authority in relation to the emperor.

CHAPTER NINE

GELLIUS' SYMBOULEUTIC AUTHORITY

The amicus minor and the amicus maior

In a key chapter (12, 4), Gellius paraphrases and quotes Ennius on the inferior 'good friend' (*amicus minor*), whose role is that of the ideal confidant for a man of higher rank (*amicus maior*).¹ Ennius' piece was very well known in antiquity and possibly read in schools; Horace, for example, remembers it when he speaks of his relationship to Maecenas (*sat.* 1, 3, 63f.).² Habinek (1998, 50–54) compares the passage to Polybius 31, 23–24, where the historian reports his admission into the friendship of the young Scipio Aemilianus, to whom he promises assistance in speaking and acting in a way worthy of his ancestors (31, 24, 4–5).

Given his awareness of the political context in which he was writing, it is very likely that Gellius did not just cite the Ennian passage in its own right, but viewed it as illustrative of a specific kind of relationship, a relationship that was central to his self-presentation as an intellectual. At first sight, the asymmetric relationship between the inferior friend and the great man may seem emblematic of the relationships that Gellius himself maintained as a *sectator* of powerful figures such as Fronto and Herodes Atticus, who were both former consuls. We may also think of the *amicitia* that celebrities like Fronto, Favorinus, and Sulpicius Apollinaris maintained with the emperor, an *amicitia* to which Gellius alludes by staging scenes featuring their intellectual victories and defeats on the Palatine before the *salutatio* of their Caesar.³

Yet, Gellius seems to invite us to think of another symbolic meaning of Ennius' *amicitia*, a meaning that is even more central to his cultural programme. In the last sentence of 12, 4, Gellius clearly hints at the

¹ The *amicus maior* in the Ennian fragment is Cn. Servilius Geminus, who was consul in 217 B.C. and played a conspicuous role in the battle of Cannae (see Skutsch 1985, 447f.).

² See Skutsch 1985, 451.

³ On *amicitia* as a term for the relation of patronage between the intellectual/poet and the emperor see Part II, p. 132 n. 48.

self-referentiality of the Ennian quotation, being symbolic of the poet's own relationship with his patron M. Fulvius Nobilior (12, 4, 4):⁴

L. Aelium Stilonem dicere solitum ferunt Q. Ennium de semet ipso haec scripsisse picturamque istam morum et ingenii ipsius Q. Ennii factam esse,

they say that Lucius Aelius Stilo used to declare that Quintus Ennius wrote these words about none other than himself, and that this was a description of Quintus Ennius' own character and disposition.

In view of this emphasis, the topic of *amicitia* may also have a self-referential character with regard to Gellius' own character and attitude in relation to an *amicus maior*. Just as Ennius uses 'history' as a literary disguise for a self-portrait, Gellius may use this *commentarius*, including the Ennian quotation, as a literary disguise for a self-portrait (*de semet ipso*; *ipsius*), in the form of a programmatic statement about the role of the Roman intellectual as the counselor and intimate confidante of a 'powerful friend'. I use the word 'programmatic', since we cannot say anything with certainty about Gellius' own personal relationships with *amici maiores*, but what we can do is to connect the 'self-portrait in literary disguise' with Gellius' programmatic self-presentation throughout the *Noctes Atticae*. Moreover, the word 'programmatic' is also appropriate in view of the influence which the Ennian image of the writer's personal intimacy with public men exerted on the literary self-presentation of the Roman satirists (Lucilius, Horace).⁵ Gellius' own self-presentation stands within this Roman satirical tradition.

In his description of the Ennian *exemplum*, Gellius lists the merits through which the 'inferior friend' has gained his symbouleutic authority, and these merits take us to the heart of Gellius' cultural-educational programme and his own authoritative role:

12, 4, 1 *Descriptum definitumque est a Quinto Ennio in annali septimo graphice admodum sciteque sub historia Gemini Seruili, uiri nobilis, quo ingenio, qua comitate, qua modestia, qua fide, qua linguae parsimonia, qua loquendi opportunitate, quanta rerum antiquarum morumque ueterum ac nouorum scientia quantaque seruandi tuendique secreti religione, qualibus denique ad minuendas uitae molestias fomentis, leuamentis, solaciis amicum esse conueniat hominis genere et fortuna superioris.*

Quintus Ennius in the seventh book of his *Annals* describes and defines very vividly and skilfully in his sketch of Geminus Servilius, a man

⁴ See Skutsch 1968, 94.

⁵ See Hooley 2007, 19f., referring to Muecke 2005: "it allows the satirist to play off his own servility and the modesty of his discourse against the sense of importance it may derive from being close to the beating heart of Rome."

of rank, the tact, courtesy, modesty, fidelity, restraint and propriety in speech, knowledge of ancient history and of customs old and new, scrupulousness in keeping and guarding a secret; in short, the various remedies and methods of relief and solace for guarding against the annoyances of life, which the friend of a man who is his superior in rank and fortune ought to have.

The parallels with Gellius' self-fashioning as a cultural authority are reinforced if we take a closer look at the characterisation of the *amicus maior* as portrayed in the Ennian passage itself (Gell. 12, 4, 4 = *ann.* 268f., quoted according to Skutsch):

*haec locutus uocat quocum bene saepe libenter
mensam sermonesque suos rerumque suarum
consilium partit,⁶ magnam quom lassus diei
partem fuisset de summis rebus regundis
consilio indu foro lato sanctoque senatu;
quod res audacter magnas paruasque iocumque
eloqueretur ...*

so saying, on a friend he called, with whom
he oft times gladly shared both board and speech
and the judgement of his affairs,
on coming wearied from the sacred House
or Forum broad, where he all day had toiled
directing great affairs with wisdom; one with whom
he freely spoke of matters great and small and shared pleasantries ...⁷

On the one hand, the portrayal evokes the 'busy Roman' envisaged by Gellius as audience for his cultural programme (cf. Praef. 12 *uitae negotiis occupatos*, reflected in 12, 4, 1 *uitae molestias*). As we have seen, Gellius' educational concerns with a reader who is *negotiis occupatus* (cf. also Praef. 19) has strong parallels with Fronto's concerns as teacher of a 'busy emperor', and can be compared with similar intellectual attitudes in Pliny the Elder and Apuleius in their relation to a busy Roman statesman. The knowledgeable and reliable character of the *amicus minor* reminds us of Gellius' cultural authority, which follows an ideological tradition of Roman educationalists like Cicero, Quintilian, and Tacitus.

On the other hand, the Ennian quotation offers a close resemblance to Gellius' cultural programme through the elements of relaxation, the dinner context (*mensam*), and the conversations (*sermones*) on all kinds of

⁶ ω has *comiter impartit*; *consilium partit* is the emendation of O. Skutsch.

⁷ Skutsch 1985, 455 on Enn. *ann.* 273 *iocumque* points out that *iocus* must probably be a collective singular. See *OLD* s.v. *iocus* 3 'a thing of no importance, trifle, child's play'.

topics combined with playfulness, including ‘trifles’ and ‘jokes’ (*res ... paruasque iocumque*), which possibly add ‘Saturnalian’ connotations,⁸ and recall programmatic terms of self-deprecation (cf. *nugalia*, *delectatiunculae*, etc.) for the seriocomic quality of Gellius’ literary activity. The element of sympotic conversation may point to the strong dialogic dimension of *Noctes Atticae*, in the same spirit as Plutarch’s *Quaestiones coniuiales* and Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophistae*.⁹

The ‘sympotic’ aspect is related to the medical notion of ‘reinvigoration’, used by Gellius (Praef. 16) to characterise the salutary psychological effect of reading *Noctes Atticae*,¹⁰ as opposed to the *taedium* and *senium* inflicted by rival works such as Favorinus’ Παντοδαπή Ἱστορία or Pliny’s *Natural History*, which lack the useful selectivity of Gellius’ work.

Connected to the notion of reinvigorating the spirit of the reader/*amicus maior* is the programmatic aspect of psychological training in the *Noctes Atticae*, preparing a Roman mind by moderate forms of participation against the ‘dangerous allurements’ of deceitful Greek knowledge, such as treacherous dialectical subtleties and sophisms, fallacious *mirabilia*, and enchanting rhetoric.¹¹ The symbolic connection between Gellius’ cultural programme and the lesser friend’s salutary authority in a sympotic context can be illustrated with Gellius’ chapter (15, 2) on exercising moderation in sympotic pleasures, which can be read in a programmatic way for the ‘psychological preparation’ of his reader.¹²

The ‘moderate’ sympotic behaviour (= Gellius’ cultural programme) can be viewed in symbolic contrast with the ‘immoderate’ sympotic

⁸ For the symposium and the Saturnalia as specific contexts for *ioci* (‘jokes’) in a relation of patronage see Nauta 2002, 167f.

⁹ See Pausch 2004, 155f.

¹⁰ Compare the connotations of ‘remedy’ in 12, 4, 1 *fomentis*, *leuamentis*, *solaciis* with Praef. 16 *ad oblectandum fouendumque animum*. Cf. Aur. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 4, 2 p. 60, 21 *fomentum*. For ‘relaxation’ cf. Praef. 1 *remissiones*; *laxari indulgerique*; see further below, p. 278 n. 33.

¹¹ Cf. 5, 16, 5 *degustandum ex philosophia ... non in eam ingurgitandum* (cf. 5, 15, 9 and see Part II, p. 169); 16, 8, 15–17 (on dialectical subtleties); 9, 4, 5; 10, 12, 4 (miraculous stories; see above, p. 169). On ‘psychological preparation’ against the enticements of rhetoric (5, 1; 11, 13) see Part II, pp. 148–150, 154.

¹² Cf. 15, 2, 7 *Nam cui libentiae gratiaeque omnes conuiuiorum incognitae sint quique illarum omnino expers sit si eum forte ad participandas eiusmodi uoluptates aut uoluntas tulerit aut casus induxerit aut necessitas compulerit, deleniri plerumque et capi, neque mentem animumque eius consistere, sed ui quadam noua ictum labascere*, ‘For when all the license and attractions of banquets are unknown to a man, and he is wholly unfamiliar with them, if haply inclination has led him, or chance has induced him, or necessity has compelled him, to take part in pleasures of that kind, then he is as a rule seduced and taken captive, his mind and soul fail to meet the test, but give way, as if attacked by some strange power.’

behaviour that characterises rival forms of authority, such as the boastful Platonist in 15, 2, or the epideictic rhetoric of the drunken sophist Favorinus, which is explicitly presented as offending the etiquette of the symposium (2, 22, 25–26):

“rationesque omnium uocabulorum, quoniam plus paulo adbibi, effutissem, nisi multam iam prosus omnibus uobis reticentibus uerba fecissem, quasi fieret a me ἀκρόασις ἐπιδεικτική. In conuiuio autem frequenti loqui solum unum neque honestum est”, inquit, “neque commodum”

“And since I have drunk a good bit, I would have prated on about the meaning of all these terms, had I not already done a deal of talking while all of you have been silent, as if I were delivering ‘an epideictic speech’. But for one to do all the talking at a large dinner-party”, said he, “is neither decent nor becoming.”

With the juxtaposition of *adbibi* and *effutissem* (2, 22, 25), combined with the references to Favorinus’ verbosity and taste for delivering show-pieces, Gellius recalls the polemic discourse against the exuberant rhetoric of sophists (cf. ἀκρόασις ἐπιδεικτική), who ‘spit out’ their endless stream of words, a discourse of which we find evidence in the pages of Philostratus himself.¹³ We can compare the image of ‘breaching the code of sympotic conduct’ in Gellius with roughly contemporary writers like Fronto or Athenaeus, who use similar contrasts to illustrate the legitimacy of their own views on ethics or rhetoric.¹⁴

This is a telling background for the Ennian portrayal of the *amicus minor*, a self-referential portrayal used by Gellius to illustrate the legit-

¹³ Philostratus (*vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 491), refers to some speeches, which are according to him unjustly ascribed to Favorinus, as ‘the work of a drunk, or rather a vomiting young man’ (μειραζίου φρόντισμα μεθύοντος, μᾶλλον δὲ ἐμοῦντος). This may be an example of Philostratean wit, presenting a stylistic criticism on speeches of Favorinus as a dispute of authorship. The sophist Scopelian polemises against his enemies in similar terms of drunkenness (*vit. soph.* 1, 21 p. 519); his own exuberant rhetorical performances earned him a comparable reputation (*vit. soph.* 1, 19 p. 520 ὥσπερ βακχεύων; cf. 2, 5 p. 573 ἐμοὶ δὲ ἔπου μᾶλλον ἡγουμένῳ αὐτὸν Σκοπελιανὸν νήφοντα). The connection between drunkenness and eloquence in a sympotic context, moreover, recalls a fragment of Favorinus himself in which he comments on the seductive power of eloquence, and mentions the drunken Alcibiades as an example of the power of youthful beauty to charm both eyes and ears (*On Socrates and his Erotic Science*, frg. 21 Barigazzi; cf. Plat. *Symp.* 212D, where Alcibiades joins the symposium at Agathon’s house ‘σφόδρα μεθύων’ and starts his eulogy of Socrates). See Introduction, p. 10 n. 31.

¹⁴ Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 11, 504E–F) puts the Platonic Socrates, represented as drinking from the cooler until daylight (*Symp.* 213E), in a negative contrast with the Xenophontic Socrates, who declines to drink from large cups (Xen. *Symp.* 2, 24). In his *De Eloquentia*, Fronto uses the image of drunkenness at the symposium of stylistic composition that is ‘out of the proper order’.

imate code of sympotic conduct in his *Noctes*, based on a relation of reliable friendship with an *amicus maior*. This is a friendship based on sharing *sermones*, aimed at preparing, training, and reinvigorating the greater friend's mind by providing a reliable body of knowledge. Being a true *amicus* to a powerful man, he does not annoy him with sophistic subtleties, but engages in civilised conversation.¹⁵ In contrast with chatterboxes like Favorinus, who breaches the sympotic code of moderation and sharing, Gellius' *amicus minor* 'speaks little'.¹⁶ If we transfer this to the programmatic level of *Noctes Atticae*, the implication may be that Gellius as '*amicus minor*' neither offends his superior by dictating concrete solutions nor bores him with floods of useless information, but invites his companion to pit selected examples of conduct against each other, stimulating him to reflect upon and evaluate more and less desirable strategies and policies.

Thus, the authority of the Ennian *amicus minor* symbolises Gellius' cultural programme in its ideological use of *antiquitas* as a charismatic repository of paradigmatic behaviour, functioning as a moral guide that helps the '*amicus maior*' steer his way through problems and crises on the level of society.¹⁷ The charisma of *antiquitas* is epitomised by the Ennian *exemplum* itself, which Gellius presents as a paradigm of ethical behaviour, ranking it above rules about correct living in philosophical writings:

12, 4, 2–3 *Eos ego uersus non minus frequenti adsiduo memoratu dignos puto quam philosophorum de officiis decreta. Ad hoc color quidam uetustatis in his uersibus tam reuerendus est, suauitas tam inpromisca tamque a fucō omni remota est, ut mea quidem sententia pro antiquis sacratisque amicitiae legibus obseruandi, tenendi colendique sint.*

Those verses in my opinion are no less worthy of frequent, attentive perusal than the rules of the philosophers about duties. Besides this, there

¹⁵ Cf. Plut. *Cum princ. philos. esse diss.* 2 (*Mor.* 778B) ὁ δὲ πολιτικός (...) ἀκουσιν οὐκ ἐνοχλῶν οὐδ' ἐπισταθμεύων τὰ ὅτα διαλέξεσιν ἀκαίροις καὶ σοφιστικαῖς, βουλομένοις δὲ χαίρων καὶ διαλεγόμενος καὶ σχολάζων καὶ συνῶν προθύμως, '(the philosopher) who is interested in public life (...) will not annoy them against their will, nor will he pitch his camp in their ears with inopportune sophistical disquisitions, but when they wish it, he will be glad to converse and spend his leisure with them and eager to associate with them'. See Flinterman 2004, 363.

¹⁶ Cf. 12, 4, 1 *linguae parsimonia*; Enn. *ann.* 281f. *uerbum paucum*.

¹⁷ Cf. 12, 4, 1 *rerum antiquarum morumque ueterum ac nouorum scientia*, 'knowledge of ancient history and of customs old and new'. Cf. Ennius' own words (*ann.* 282f.) quoted in 12, 4, 4 ... *multa tenens antiqua sepulta, uetustas / quem facit et mores ueteres nouosque tenentem, / multorum ueterum leges diuumque hominumque*, 'knowing well all ancient lore, all customs old and new, the laws of man and of the gods'. Skutsch 1985, 460 ad loc. compares Hom. *Od.* 2, 188 παλαιὰ τε πολλὰ τε εἰδώς.

is such a venerable flavour of antiquity in these verses, such a sweetness, so unmixed and so removed from all affectation, that in my opinion they should be observed, remembered and cherished as old and sacred laws of friendship.

This comment points to Gellius' own central role as a cultural authority in his *Noctes Atticae*, which stores and fixes the memory of precious ancient Latin texts, thus ensuring that they continue to inspire and influence contemporary society. The Ennian *exemplum* is not only a venerable example from antiquity for the way *amicitia* should work in the present day, and therefore worthy of memory, but also establishes and substantiates Gellius' own lasting status as a Roman intellectual, who embodies the commemorative and symbouleutic qualities of the Ennian *amicus minor*, and whose access to the pure charisma of Roman antiquity makes his *Noctes* stand out against the philosophical theories of his rivals.

In the following, I will illustrate with some examples from the *Noctes Atticae* how Gellius' teaching can be interpreted in terms of an *amicus minor*'s symbouleutic authority, employing his knowledge of a charismatic *antiquitas* to secure his position in a sophistic context of rival claims to imperial *amicitia*. With his knowledge of 'ancient history and of customs old and new', Gellius demonstrates his unsurpassed claim to the crucial role of 'lesser friend', offering a detached but reliable guidance through the crises and problems that a greater friend may experience in society.

Noctes Atticae as 'praecepta generalia' for a 'iudex' (14, 2)

The first example is the scene already discussed in chapter seven, in which the young Gellius is looking for ways to solve a legal dilemma during his recent appointment as a *iudex*. It is a situation of conflicting values, and a situation of ἀπορία, an *inexplicabilis ambiguitas*.¹⁸ Gellius' problem is twofold. On the one hand, there is the particular legal dilemma: either, he will follow the law, but this means that the vicious

¹⁸ Cf. 5, 10, 15 *tum iudices, dubiosum hoc inexplicabileque esse quod utrimque dicebatur rati, ne sententia sua, utramcumque in partem dicta esset, ipsa sese rescinderet, rem iniudicatam reliquerunt cauamque in diem longissimam distulerunt*. See Part II, p. 170 n. 46 and p. 175 n. 66 on the associations of the word *inexplicabilis* with the jargons of law and dialectics.

man upon whom the claim is made will be dismissed, and the claimant, who is of good character, will be prosecuted for a malicious claim (*calumnia*); or he will give credit to the claimant on the basis of his good reputation, but this will entail a judgment which is not based upon legal evidence, and therefore beyond Gellius' competence as a *iudex priuatus* (14, 2, 8). On the other hand, Gellius struggles with the definition of this very competence of the *iudex*, and asks the more general question: what are the duties of a judge? Related to this question is his search for certain general principles and precepts (14, 2, 3 *generalia ... quaedam praemonita et praecepta*), by which a *iudex* can prepare himself for uncertain situations such as this difficult legal case.

Thus, we can link this chapter to a more fundamental inquiry into authority in the *Noctes*. As we have seen, Gellius represents the authority of professional lawyers in a negative way (14, 2, 9), as they are 'busy men' who do not take the time to make a deeper inquiry (cf. Praef. 19). The negative consequences of keeping strictly to the law are vividly represented by the fact that the lawyers of the vicious man even want the righteous man to be prosecuted for *calumnia* (14, 2, 8). Moreover, Gellius alludes to the association between the autonomous authority of justice and violence through the subtle connection between chapter 14, 2 and 14, 4, which both discuss Stoic doctrine about justice.¹⁹ In 14, 4, he cites the description of the rigorous and stern *imago iustitiae* that the Stoic philosopher Chrysippus had proposed as the model for the *iudex*, whom he represented as the 'priest of justice' (*antistes Iustitiae*). Gellius concludes this chapter by stating that philosophers of less severe schools saw in this portrait not justice, but cruelty (*Saeuitiae imaginem ... non Iustitiae*).²⁰

Gellius calls the legal books which he consults his 'silent masters' (*muti magistri*), because he lacks a 'living voice' (*uiua uox*) which can teach him the solution for his fundamental problem.²¹ The opposition

¹⁹ As Nörr (1996, 36f.) argues, Gellius' inquiries in books about the duties of the judge (14, 2, 1 *de officio iudicis*) point to Stoic doctrine about justice, to which belongs Chrysippus' work on the activity of judging (*peri tou dikazein*).

²⁰ Cf. 14, 4, 5 *deliciorum quidam disciplinarum philosophi*, possibly referring with a nudge to Academics like Favorinus, a notorious enemy of Stoic philosophy and a good candidate for the epithet *delicatus* (cf. 3, 5, 1 *nimis delicato diuite*). Cf. Cic. *fin.* 1, 37 *uoluptaria, delicata, mollis disciplina* (on the Epicurean school). For Favorinus' tendency to loosen the norms of *iustitia* cf. 1, 3, 27 (see below, p. 230). Yet, Favorinus' protracted lecture on the duties of the judge in 14, 2 seems indebted to Aelius Tubero, who had a strong inclination towards Stoicism and dialectics; cf. 1, 22, 7 and see Part II, p. 177 n. 70.

²¹ As Leofranc Holford-Strevens points out to me, in the golden age of Roman

between the *uiua uox* and the *muti magistri* refers in the first place to oral and written forms of legal teaching, in accordance with the opening of the chapter describing the various stages of teaching Gellius went through. Yet, the contrast between a 'living voice' and 'written rules', related to Gellius' search for general *praecepta*, has further significant connotations. It recalls the topos of the magistrate as the 'speaking law' as opposed to the law as the 'silent magistrate', a topos which was used to describe a ruler who has all the virtues to govern the State properly.²² Behind the *uiua uox* and the *lex loquens* hides the notion of the νόμος ἔμπροσθεν, which forms a link with the rulership of Cyrus, who becomes a 'seeing law' (*Cyr.* 8, 1, 22).²³ I will return to this notion, which has been used in antiquity to designate various political and religious ideas, further below.

A connection with Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* is suggested by the immediately following chapter, in which Gellius mentions this work in the context of Xenophon's and Plato's debate on different forms of government.²⁴ The thematic link between Gellius' chapter 14, 2 and Xenophon's story of a future emperor's education is particularly evident in the passage that deals with Cyrus' training in justice by experience (*Cyr.* 1, 3, 16–17). There are several parallels. Both Gellius and Cyrus are still young, and appointed by a higher authority to decide cases.²⁵ Both have followed various stages of education before being chosen to put their abilities into practice. Both are in a situation where they are confronted with conflicting views on what is lawful. Cyrus' case involves a similar conflict of values, and he has to choose between a consideration of what is 'the right thing to do' and what is imposed by the law: when a big boy with a small cloak had put his cloak on a small boy, and had taken the other's big cloak for himself, Cyrus had decided in favour of the big boy on a reasonable consideration of what was useful for both. However, he was flogged by his law teacher for deciding against justice

jurisprudence this is something of a surprise; after all, Gellius was personally acquainted with Sex. Caecilius Africanus (cf. 20, 1).

²² Cf. Cic. *leg.* 3, 3 *uereque dici potest, magistratum esse legem loquentem, legem autem mutum magistratum* with Dyck ad loc. Murray 1971, 251 compares Cic. *rep.* 1, 52 *suam uitam ut legem praefert suis ciuibus*.

²³ See Nadon 2001, 124, who points out that Cyrus already saw his own potential as a 'seeing law' as a boy in Persia, at the legal case of the cloaks (*Cyr.* 1, 3, 17).

²⁴ For the structural argument see also Nörr 1996, 38.

²⁵ Cf. Xen. *Cyr.* 1, 3, 16 ὁ δὲ διδάσκαλός με ... καὶ ἄλλοις καθίστηε δικάζειν; Gell. 14, 2, 1 *a praetoribus lectus in iudices sum*.

and the law, which forbid unauthorised appropriation. This response illustrates how the authority of the law, depending on a general belief in society in the validity of an absolute obligation, is enforced by the ‘teacher’ figure by means of beatings and threats.²⁶ Gellius seems to allude to this link between the law and violence in his chapter 14, 4, where Iustitia is identified with Saevitia.

In 14, 3, 3, Gellius relates that Xenophon wrote the *Cyropaedia* as a reaction to Plato’s *Republic*. Rejecting the utopical and metaphysical approach of his rival, Xenophon focused on the practical education of a prince.²⁷ As we have seen in Part II, Gellius suggests his political affinity with Xenophon’s outlook in the *Noctes Atticae* through his programmatic appraisal of the Xenophonic Socrates, who is interested in moral guidance instead of dialectics, physics, and geometry (14, 3, 5; 14, 6, 5; compare also Gellius’ satire of the Platonic Socrates in 10, 22). By representing Xenophon’s response to Plato in a more positive way than the response vice versa, Gellius cautiously draws attention to his position in a fundamental debate on political education. Significantly, Gellius stresses that Xenophon wrote about a different type of government, a monarchy (14, 3, 3 *diuersum regiae administrationis genus*), in conscious opposition with Plato’s ideas in the *Republic* (*opposuit contra conscripsitque*). Yet, Gellius represents Plato’s indirect retort to Xenophon through his sneering remark that Cyrus ‘by no means had a fitting education’ (*Laws* 694C) as an alleged *calumny* of Xenophon’s work (14, 3, 4 *detractandi leuandique eius operis gratia*).²⁸

The link with the *Cyropaedia*, the story of the education of a future absolute monarch of a large Empire, becomes a signifier of ‘royal education’ as a political subtext in Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*.²⁹ The Xenophon-

²⁶ See Nadon 2001, 49 f.

²⁷ Recent studies stress the centrality of political interests in the *Cyropaedia*; see Tatum 1989; Gera 1993; Nadon 2001.

²⁸ Holford-Strevens 2003, 268 points out that also Athenaeus (*Deipn.* 11, 504E–505B) and Diogenes Laertius (3, 34) refer to Plato’s retort to Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia*. Interestingly, Athenaeus resembles Gellius in his emphasis on Plato as a calumniator (e.g. 11, 505B ὁ τοὺς ἄλλους ἀπαξαπλῶς κακολογῆσας). Both Gellius and Athenaeus conveniently misrepresent Plato’s view of Cyrus (in my view this is not due to inaccuracy, as is argued by Holford-Strevens 2003, 268 n. 31) by making it even less positive: whereas Plato had deemed Cyrus worthy of the term ‘patriotic’ (φιλόπολιν), Gellius and Athenaeus make him concede only that Cyrus was ‘energetic’: cf. Gell. 14, 3, 4 *uirum quidem Cyrum gnauum et strenuum* (Gellius calls the ‘bad guy’ P. Cornelius Rufinus *strenuus* in 4, 8, 2; cf. Enn. *ann.* 165); Ath. *Deipn.* 11, 505A στρατηγὸν αὐτὸν ἀγαθὸν εἶναι καὶ φιλόπονον.

²⁹ The *Cyropaedia* was a favourite of both Scipio and Caesar; cf. Cic. *epist. Q. fr.* 1, 1,

tic paradigm sheds light on Gellius' parallels with Fronto's educational role and his own disguised self-portrait in the Ennian *amicus minor* as the 'sounding board' of the *amicus maior*. Moreover, as appears from Gell. 14, 3, the topic of 'royal education' is connected with a debate on regime analysis, which places Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* in a tradition of political philosophy (see Nadon 2001, 12).³⁰ In Gellius, the implicit question of 'what is the best way to govern' is not tackled from a philosophical/theoretical point-of-view, but by the use of the Roman past as a source of charismatic authority, which provides a powerful alternative for coping with situations where various current forms of authority fail to make things work.

In 14, 2, the charisma of the *mos maiorum* offers a *iudex* a legitimate expedient to get out of an impasse created by the limitations of theoretical philosophical education and legal principles. The modesty and lack of experience that lead to Gellius' withdrawing from the case instead of judging on the basis of moral character recall the young and inexperienced Cyrus, who was not allowed by his Persian teacher of law to judge on the basis of what was fitting (τοῦ ἁρμοίοντος).³¹ Through this parallel, Gellius indirectly points by contrast to the Cyrus who became 'the living law' as the ruler of an immense empire. The example of Cyrus illustrates that only a wise man who is at the same time the ruler of the state can correctly decide about lawful possessions.³² *Mutatis mutandis*, the young Gellius' reluctance to act like a *ensor* implicitly points to his awareness that such a decision is not up to him, but to a higher authority, who possesses the power to decide on the basis of moral character. Gellius, like the *amicus minor*, knows his place: his *mediocritas* (14, 2, 25) indicates that his role as *amicus minor* is not to exert any direct influence or to dictate explicit solutions, but to give support on the level of transmitting ideological and cultural traditions that legitimise and consolidate power relations.³³

23 *effigiem iusti imperii*, 'a model of a just ruler'; Suet. *Iul.* 87; see Tatum 1989, 9 f., who calls Cicero's letter to his brother Quintus a '*Quintopaedia*', an education in the art of being a proconsul. On Xenophon's influence in imperial times see Nörr 1996, 38 n. 16.

³⁰ In imperial literature, the continuity of this tradition is visible in Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* (5, 32–36), where the Roman emperor consults three philosophers on the best form of government, Apollonius of Tyana, Dio Chrysostomus, and Euphrates; see Mazza 1980; Rawson 1989, 248 f.; Flinterman 1995, 194–216.

³¹ As an emperor, Cyrus sometimes uses 'the fitting' (πρὸςήκει) as an argument in support of his political authority; see Nadon 2001, 127.

³² See Nadon 2001, 49.

³³ For *mediocritas* as a term belonging to the imperial discourse of self-deprecation,

In the case described by Gellius, not laws or philosophical disputations but moral lore gives a decision-maker the capacity to make the right decision. Being the authority who provides access to this lore, Gellius gives moral and ideological support as an *amicus minor* to an *amicus maior*, sanctioning his power to ‘cut the Gordian knot’ with the ideological endorsement of the *mos maiorum* and Cato the Censor. To the ‘annoyances of life’ (*uitae molestiae*, cf. 12, 4, 1) that the *amicus maior* endured in his toils in the Forum and in the Senate may well have belonged the frustrations caused by the power of laws and regulations, which in some cases impeded him from doing ‘the right thing’. Such an *amicus maior* would have felt comforted and reinvigorated by the advice of an *amicus minor*, which empowered him to make legitimate choices that run counter to the written law.

Gellius’ dilemma in 14, 2 is symbolic of a crisis in contemporary society, where the growing autonomy of legal regulation goes hand in hand with a devaluation of ethical norms (Nörr 1996, 56). Nörr views this crisis in Max Weber’s terms of a battle between formal and material rationality. Connecting it with the discourse of authority, we could also say that Gellius’ ‘moral call’ in the *Noctes* presents the charismatic authority of ancient Roman *exempla* as a stronger alternative to the inadequate rational authority of the judicial system on the one hand, and of theoretical philosophical disputations on the other hand. In this respect, Gellius resembles Quintilian, who pits the vital authority of the Roman *orator*, who has no need to swear allegiance to anyone’s laws, against that of the various Greek philosophical schools, which are constrained by the convictions they have adopted (*inst.* 12, 2, 26–27). Gellius’ fruitless search for *praecepta*, counterbalanced by the authority of the Catoian *exemplum*, recalls Quintilian’s appraisal of Roman *exempla*, which he deems stronger than Greek *praecepta*; in both authors, this opposition simultaneously involves an articulation of Roman identity standing out against Greek identity.³⁴

referring to someone’s low position in the hierarchy towards the emperor; see Part I, p. 56 n. 52.

³⁴ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 12, 3, 29–30 ... *magis etiam quae sunt tradita antiquitus dicta ac facta praeclare et nosse et animo semper agitare conueniet. Quae profecto nusquam plura maioraque quam in nostrae ciuitatis monumentis reperiuntur. [...] quantum enim Graeci praeceptis ualent, tantum Romani, quod est maius, exemplis.* ‘... even more important are the records of the notable sayings and actions of the past. Nowhere is there a larger or more striking supply of these than in the history of our own country. [...] Rome is as strong in examples as Greece is in

Thus, being involved in a nexus of disciplines that interact in a broader political context, Gellius establishes his Roman cultural and ideological authority over and against other sources of authority. He lays claim to a symbouleutic role that makes creative use of a Roman authorising tradition, using the *mos maiorum* to stimulate reflection on a new 'canon of conduct'. At the same time, supported by the subtle links with the *Cyropaedia*, he points to the essential role of the Roman statesman, *orator* and *imperator*, who is the only one who possesses the power and the position to put a Roman moral tradition to a fitting use. This draws attention to the notion of the ruler as a 'living law' (νόμος ἔμψυχος), to which Gellius alludes with the phrase '*uiua uox*': just as Gellius is unable to find general *praecepta* in legal writings, he misses a *uiua uox* who can teach him effective answers to his dilemma (14, 2, 1 *quoniam* 'uocis', *ut dicitur*, '*uiuae*' *penuria* erat).³⁵

As Murray (1971, 273–283) shows in his detailed discussion of the phrase νόμος ἔμψυχός, it does not represent one consistent doctrine, but functions rather as a slogan which was used for various ideological positions in imperial times, pagan, Jewish and Christian.³⁶ Murray relates the idea on the one hand to the Stoic doctrine of the wise man as an absolute ruler who is yet ruled by the *logos* within himself, and on the other hand to the Platonic conception of the perfect king as being above the law, and himself being the law. Gellius' position recalls arguments reported by Plato and Aristotle in favour of being governed by one supreme legal arbiter rather than written law, and against written laws for their incapacity to regulate particular circumstances.³⁷ Yet, Gellius' proper use of the notion is neither Stoic nor Platonic nor Aris-

precepts; and examples are more important'. On the moral role of *exempla* in Roman culture see Mayer 1991, 141–147.

³⁵ For *penuria* indicating the lack of a good leader cf. Cic. *Verr.* II, 5, 2 *imperatorum penuriam*; *rep.* 5, 2 *penuria uirorum* with Büchner ad loc.; *Brut.* 2 *sapientium ciuium bonorumque penuria* with Douglas ad loc.; *Lael.* 62 *sunt ... firmi et stabiles et constantes eligendi* (sc. amici), *cuius generis est magna penuria* with Powell ad loc.

³⁶ For Philo (*Mos.* 1, 162), the phrase recalls the patriarchs and lawgivers of Israel, men who exemplified the Law of God by their upright life, and especially Moses. For Clement (*Strom.* 1, 26, 167, 3; 2, 4, 18, 4) the phrase is connected with the Philonian Moses and the ideal Platonic Statesman; for Lactantius (*inst.* 4, 17; 4, 25), it is identical with the Animate Word, Christ the Divine Logos (see Murray 1971, 276).

³⁷ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 3, 13, 13–14 (1283b) on the situation where the king rules without law, being himself the law and like a 'god among men' (Plat. *Polit.* 295E f.); on the foolishness to 'go by the book', since written rules do not deal with particular occasions see 3, 15, 4 (1286a) and cf. Plat. *Polit.* 294A f. Moreover, the law is unable to regulate issues that require deliberation, 3, 16, 11 (1287b). These are arguments reported

totalitarian. Gellius uses the idea of the 'living law' for his own ideological platform. Using the *mos maiorum* as an ideological foundation for a decision that goes against written laws, Gellius supports a shift in power in favour of a strong Roman ruler whose moral judgment embodies equity as above the written law.

This is not to say that the Gellian chapter intends to endorse a ruler's absolute sovereignty, as if he were not bound by any law. We are still a long way from Justinian's claim to legal absolutism, using the notion of the 'living law' to justify the global doctrine '*princeps legibus solutus*'.³⁸ Gellius doubtless knew the famous anecdote about the sophist Anaxarchus, who wrote a treatise *On Kingship*. His consolation of Alexander after his murder of Cleitus sanctioned the absolute primacy of his will, arguing that any action of a king was *ipso facto* just. This 'travesty of political thinking' exposed him as a court flatterer, in contrast with the philosopher Callisthenes as the king's 'true friend'.³⁹

What Gellius seems to do is not flatter a ruler by confirming his power to do as he pleases, but give a just use of monarchic power an ideological support by embedding it in a time-honoured Roman tradition that values decisions based upon morality above those based upon written rules. This fits the general picture in the *Noctes Atticae* that ranks *auctoritas* above *ratio*, and pairs a distrust of bookish erudition with a protreptic of practical experience as the true source of knowledge. The pedagogical procedure of embedding a ruler's power in a long-established tradition, embodied by the Roman *exempla* presented in the *Noctes Atticae*, is at the same time a procedure of self-authorisation on Gellius' part, as he subtly qualifies himself as an '*amicus minor*', the reliable companion of his *amicus maior*. The *amicus maior* cannot judge and act as he pleases: he needs *praecepta generalia* to prepare him for governing all kinds of particular circumstances.⁴⁰ Instead of the rigidity of written rules or laws, which are unable to respond to individual

by Plato and Aristotle, not expressions of their own convictions (see Robinson 1995, 56f.).

³⁸ Cf. *Novell. Iust.* 105, 2, 4 *cui et ipsas deus leges subiecit, legem animatam eum mittens hominibus*; see Murray 1971, 276.

³⁹ Cf. Plut. *Alex.* 52, 6; *ad princ. inerud.* 4 (*Mor.* 781A–B); Arrian. *Hist. Alex.* 4, 9, 7 with Bosworth ad loc.; Murray 1971, 277f. Interestingly, Anaxarchus was the teacher of Pyrrho, and thus can be regarded as the 'father of Scepticism'.

⁴⁰ Cf. Aristotle, *Politics* 3, 15, 5 (1286a) Ἀλλὰ μὴν καὶ αἱ ἄλλαι δεῖν ὑπάρχειν τὸν λόγον τὸν καθόλου τοῖς ἀρχουσιν 'on the other side, the rulers must have the general principle as well' (tr. Robinson 1995, 54).

cases, Gellius' search for *praecepta* seeks the flexibility of ethical rules, which can be arrived at by deliberation and reflection, and can provide guidance for any particular situation. We can view chapter 14, 2 as an implicit invitation to a 'iudex' to find the key to these *praecepta generalia* in the Roman lore of the *Noctes Atticae* rather than in Stoic doctrine on the duties of the judge or in legal commentaries.⁴¹

The twilight zone between friendship and politics (1, 3)

Gellius 'self-authorising' procedure as an *amicus minor* who supports and endorses the power of an *amicus maior* with his cultural programme can be illuminated further by a similar chapter from the *Noctes*. A similar '*uocis uiuae penuria*' can be inferred from Gellius' chapter on the politically charged theme of asking and receiving favours of friends (1, 3), a much debated topic that was directly related to the question of 'friends in politics'.⁴² As in chapter 14, 2, Gellius invokes a legal case involving a problem of conflicting values (an anecdote about the sage Chilo, 1, 3, 4–7), and emphasises his own search for a *praeceptum*, a definite and universal rule that prepares to respond to individual situations.⁴³ As in 14, 2, we see in the word *praeceptum* a shift from a legal to an ethical and political domain.

Calling his own chapter a *disputatiuncula* (1, 3, 30), Gellius discusses at length the philosophical disputations of Theophrastus and Cicero in

⁴¹ Cf. 14, 2, 2 *in his autem, quae existere solent, negotiorum ambagibus et in ancipiti rationum diuersarum circumstantia nihil quicquam nos huiusmodi libri iuuerunt*, 'but in those complicated cases which often come up, and in the perplexity arising from conflicting opinions, such books gave me no aid at all'.

⁴² See Van der Stockt 2002, 128f. on Plutarch's discussion of this topic in his *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* (13, *Mor.* 807D) and his *De vitioso pudore* (*Mor.* 534A). Strikingly, Gellius quotes Plutarch's treatise *On the Soul* in 1, 3, 31 (the concluding paragraph), but neither of the above-mentioned works. This is all the more striking since his example of Pericles (1, 3, 20) occurs in both *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* and *De vitioso pudore*; see Van der Stockt 2002, 131 with n. 53.

⁴³ Cf. 1, 3, 29 *directum atque perpetuum distinctumque in rebus singulis praeceptum, quod ego nos in prima tractatus istius parte desiderare dixeram*, 'a definite and universal rule that can be applied to individual cases; and it is such a rule, as I said in the beginning of this essay, of which we are in search'; 14, 2, 3 *generalia tamen quaedam praemonita et praecepta sunt, quibus ante causam praemuniri iudex praepararique ad incertos casus futurarum difficultatum debeat*, 'yet there are certain general principles and precepts by which, before hearing a case, the judge ought to guard and prepare himself against the uncertain event of future difficulties'. For a comparison of the two chapters see also Nörr 1996, 43.

their treatises *On Friendship*. He apparently ignores Cicero's insistence on the need for candour in advice given in a context of friendship;⁴⁴ instead, he focuses on the question discussed by both Theophrastus and Cicero, whether one may sometimes act contrary to law in the interest of friends, under what circumstances and to what extent. Although he praises Theophrastus for his modesty and erudition (1, 3, 10 *uīro in philosophia peripatetica modestissimo doctissimoque*),⁴⁵ Gellius emphasises that the philosopher only analyses and discusses, but does not reach a decision.⁴⁶

Favorinus also makes a brief but significant appearance in this chapter. In accordance with his ambiguous character, he stretched his request for political favours so far that it became illegitimate favouritism, and this attitude seems reflected in his definition of χάρις, 'favour' (1, 3, 27):

Fauorinus quoque philosophus huiuscemodi indulgentiam gratiae, tempestiue laxato paulum remissoque subtili iustitiae examine, his uerbis definiuit: Ἡ καλουμένη χάρις παρὰ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, τοῦτο ἔστιν ὕφεσις ἀκριβείας ἐν δέοντι.

The philosopher Favorinus too, somewhat loosening and inclining the delicate balance of justice to suit the occasion, thus defined such an indulgence in favour: "That which among men is called favour is the relaxing of strictness in time of need".

Quoting Cicero, Gellius had already pointed out that there are limits to the indulgence which can be allowed to political friendship (1, 3, 13). As we know, Favorinus had beseeched his friend Hadrian to transgress these limits by asking him to grant him the favour of exemption from his due appointment as high-priest of Arles, a request which Hadrian evidently did not consider 'ἐν δέοντι'.

It is therefore telling that Gellius in the same chapter, again in the guise of a Ciceronian quotation, refers to the powerful response of a

⁴⁴ See Habinek 1990 on Cicero's recommendation of the need to endure criticism at the hands of friends in the *De Amicitia*. For Cicero's insistence on candour in friendship cf. esp. *De Amicitia* 44; 88–89.

⁴⁵ Bernardi Perini accepts Watt's emendation *disertissimo* for *modestissimo*; compare however 1, 3, 29 *satis caute et sollicitae et religiose*.

⁴⁶ 1, 3, 29 *haec taliaque Theophrastus satis caute et sollicitae et religiose, cum discernendi magis disceptandique diligentia quam cum decernendi sententia atque fiducia scripsit*, 'on these and similar topics Theophrastus wrote very discreetly, scrupulously and conscientiously, yet with more attention to analysis and discussion than with the hope of arriving at a decision'. Cf. 20, 1, 9 *noli ... ex me quaerere quid ego existumem*. *Scis enim solitum esse me, pro disciplina sectae quam colo, inquirere potius quam decernere*.

statesman in a situation where a political friend asks him to do wrong in his interest (1, 3, 20):

Pericles ille Atheniensis, uir egregio ingenio bonisque omnibus disciplinis ornatus, in una quidem specie, set planius tamen quid existimaret professus est. Nam cum amicus eum rogaret ut pro re causaque eius falsum deīuraret, his ad eum uerbis usus est: “Δεῖ μὲν συμπράττειν τοῖς φίλοις, ἀλλὰ μέχρι τῶν θεῶν.”

Pericles, the great Athenian, a man of noble character and endowed with all honourable accomplishments, declared his opinion—in a single instance, it is true, but very clearly. For when a friend asked him to perjure himself in court for his sake, he replied in these words: “one ought to aid one’s friends, but only so far as the gods allow.”⁴⁷

The *exemplum* of Pericles, even if it is presented as an individual case, embodies the kind of clear judgment that Gellius seems to be looking for in general, setting it in contrast with forms of authority that fail to provide a decision to a problematic situation. Pericles resembles the figure of the ideal *iudex* implied in 14, 2, who, unlike the young Gellius, is unhampered by *mediocritas* (cf. 14, 2, 25) in reaching a verdict that is appropriate and required given the specific circumstances.

A powerful ruler will possess the *decernendi sententia atque fiducia* that philosophers lack, and embody the indispensable *directum atque perpetuum distinctumque in rebus singulis praeceptum*, ‘a straight and universal rule that can be applied to individual cases’ (cf. 1, 3, 29). Like Pericles, this man will rule out perplexity and confusion by stating very clearly (*planius*) his judgment (*existimatio*) on the limits that he sets to political favours. This is the clear rule that Gellius is so desperately looking for, a rule he is unable to find in Cicero’s *De Amicitia*.⁴⁸ This is the rule that guarantees a proper order of the world, making sure that we are not governed and controlled by changing circumstances and individuals, which amounts to anarchy, but by the salutary judgment of one ruler. Hence, Gellius implicitly associates Theophrastus’ lack of *existimatio* with anarchy.⁴⁹ In

⁴⁷ Whereas Gellius (via Favorinus and Cato) invokes the charismatic authority of the *mos maiorum* in 14, 2, he makes Pericles invoke the charismatic authority of the gods.

⁴⁸ Cf. 1, 3, 19 set *id quaero, id desidero: cum pro amico contra ius, contra quam licet, salua tamen libertate atque pace, faciendum est et cum de uia, sicut ipse ait, declinandum est, quid et quantum et in quali causa et quonam usque id fieri debeat*, ‘but I ask this and want to know this: when it is that one must act contrary to law and contrary to equity on a friend’s behalf, albeit without doing violence to the public liberty and peace; and when it is necessary to turn aside from the path, as he himself puts it, in what way and how much, under what circumstances, and to what extent that ought to be done.’

⁴⁹ Cf. 1, 3, 28 (Gellius’ paraphrase of Theophrastus) *has tamen ... paruitates rerum et magnitudines atque has omnes officiorum aestimationes alia nonnumquam momenta extrinsecus atque*

a similar way, Favorinus' speech against the 'wrong science' of the astrologers (14, 1)—significantly preceding Gellius' search for *praecepta* that prepare a *iudex* (14, 2)—draws attention to the subversive potential of their doctrine that people are governed by the course of stars and planets.⁵⁰

Gellius' criticisms of Cicero, Theophrastus, Favorinus, and (through the mouth of Favorinus) the Chaldaeans point by contrast to his own claims to authority. Gellius' search for general '*praecepta*' not only alludes to the powerful role of the ruler (the '*amicus maior*'), but also to his own influential role (the '*amicus minor*') in helping to maintain the legitimate order of the world. The *praecepta* that are to prepare a *iudex* for his future responses to individual circumstances can also be read in a self-referential way, pointing to the symbouleutic authority of the *Noctes Atticae*. Gellius' ethical teaching fills a gap indicated by himself, offering guidance in the very point on which instruction is most needed, but which other teachers make least clear (1, 3, 16).

Along these lines, the sought-after '*praecepta generalia*' turn out to refer to the pedagogical and protreptic authority of Gellius' chapters, which can be read as '*praecepta reipublicae gerendae*' in disguise, written to support an '*amicus maior*'/ '*iudex*' in his judgment of unexpected situations and future difficulties (cf. 14, 2, 3 *ad incertos casus futurarum*

aliae quasi appendices personarum et causarum et temporum et circumstantiae ipsius necessitates, quas includere in praecepta difficiliter, moderantur et regunt et quasi gubernant et nunc ratas efficiunt, nunc irritas, 'the relative importance and insignificance of things, and all these considerations of duty, are sometimes directed, controlled, and as it were steered by other external influences and other additional forces, so to say, arising from individuals, conditions and exigencies, as well as by the requirements of existing circumstances; and these influences, which it is difficult to reduce to rules, make them appear now justifiable and now unjustifiable'.

⁵⁰ Cf. 14, 1, 3 *ad suadendum ... ut crederemus omnia rerum humanarum et parva et maxima, tamquam stellis atque sideribus euincta, duci et regi*, 'for persuading us to believe that all human affairs, both the greatest and the least, as though bound to the stars and constellations, are influenced and governed by them'; cf. also 14, 1, 4, about a lawsuit which is '*apud iudicem*' (!): *nimis quam ineptum absurdumque ... ut existimemus, id negotium quasi habena quadam de caelo uinctum gubernari*, 'it was utterly foolish and absurd ... to think that this suit of law is also bound to heaven as if by a kind of chain and is decided by the stars'. See MacMullen 1966, 132–134 on the ambiguous reputation of astrologers, which were both popular with emperors and considered a threat to public order for their (vainly disclaimed) ability to say and see things related to the State and the life of the emperor. For the relation between Roman court politics and prophetic activity see Potter 1994, 158–182; Fögen 1997. Part of the humour of 14, 1 is that Gellius has these charlatans exposed by a charlatan (Favorinus).

difficultatum). Prepared for his task by reading the *Noctes Atticae*, this person can assess the use of his power in the light of the legitimising tradition of antiquity, and measure his actions against the 'code of conduct' reflected in the Gellian *exempla*.⁵¹

By letting the charismatic authority of ancient *exempla* (Pericles, Cyrus, Cato, *mos maiorum*) and the controversial authority of notorious unreliable *amici* (Favorinus, Herodes Atticus) 'speak for themselves', Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* prepares the mind of the man who has to rule an empire by judging individual characters and decide in accordance with the given facts of every single situation. It provides moral and ideological support to the powerful statesman for a necessary process of decision-making that sets limits to forms of anarchy like illegitimate favouritism and subversive science.

In his literary role of *amicus minor*, Gellius helps the *amicus maior* to steer his course in the twilight zone between politics and friendship. On the surface, Gellius offers mere '*disputatiunculae*' (cf. 1, 3, 30), with a ring of innocuous intellectual entertainment; however, for the attentive reader, deeper truths can be discovered beyond the literary play.

Gellius' consilium as a 'politics of candour'

In the light of the above, we may observe an important aspect of mutuality in the form of literary communication as employed in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. On the one hand, *Noctes Atticae* expresses a need for someone's supreme judgment and the power to exercise this judgment in forms of effective policy, especially in situations where values or persons conflict. On the other hand, this implied person can find in *Noctes Atticae* a 'canon of conduct' for orientation in such situations of conflict. Reading *Noctes Atticae* enables him to measure his government against authoritative and less authoritative *exempla*, and to form his judgment (*existimatio*) by 'deliberating' with his '*amicus minor*' on ethical *praecepta generalia* that guide and sanction his rule. A key word that expressively encompasses this mutuality is *consilium*, which can both refer to the

⁵¹ Gellius significantly criticises Theophrastus for failing to express an opinion (*non ... existimat*) on single individual cases or with the corroborative evidence of examples (1, 3, 22 *set is quoque in docendo non de unoquoque facto singillatim existimat neque certis exemplorum documentis*), which points by implication to Gellius' own claims to authority.

advice rooted in the learning of *Noctes Atticae* and to the ruler's exercise of judgment in any given adversity or dilemma.⁵²

Moreover, as Gellius very cautiously suggests through his Ennian quotation in 12, 4, 4, his role as *amicus minor* is not to be complaisant if the *amicus maior* ventures an opinion that is ill-considered (*levis*) or wrong (*mala*).⁵³ As Habinek (1990, 174) argues, the lesser friend's discretion in Ennius, speaking little and only when it is appropriate, refers to a 'politics of candour', which depends on the ability to express the advice in such a way that it will have the greatest impact on the interlocutor. In the spirit of the *amicus minor*, Gellius finds diplomatic ways to speak his mind to his ruler.⁵⁴

For example, in the chapter on the interpretation of the Twelve Tables discussed in Part II, Gellius exposes Favorinus as a *levis existimator* (cf. 20, 1, 10) for his servile following of the *consuetudo*, in agreement with the consent of the Roman people, who allowed laws to be relaxed or abolished.⁵⁵ In 11, 18, where Gellius compares the law of the decemvirs with the severe Athenian laws of Draco, the milder laws of Solon, and ancient Egyptian law, he praises the Twelve Tables for avoiding the excess in severity and in leniency found in other laws (11, 18, 6). This reflects Gellius' ideological perspective on ancient Roman law, in contrast with the 'subversive' perspective of Favorinus in 20, 1, 4.

As if speaking 'over the head' of Favorinus, who represents 'contemporary opinion' (Ducos 1984, 293: "porte-parole de son temps"), Gellius employs the scene to imply criticism of the policy of Roman emperors of the recent and less recent past, such as Hadrian, who took measures

⁵² Cf. Praef. 11 *consilium*; 5, 16, 5 *Enniani Neoptolemi... consilio utendum est*; 13, 28, 3 *consilia cogitationesque contra fortunae uerbera contraque insidias iniquorum quasi brachia et manus protendens*; 12, 2, 14 *in re ancipiti pro consilio* (on Seneca's philosophical advice, see p. 318 n. 10); 12, 4, 4 (quoting Enn. ann. 269f.) *rerumque suarum/ consilium partit... de summis rebus regundis consilio*; 14, 2, 21 *M. Catonis, prudentissimi uiri, consilio*.

⁵³ Cf. Enn. ann. 278f. *ingenium quoi nulla malum sententia suadet/ ut faceret facinus levis aut mala*, 'the kind of person whom no opinion, ill-considered or evil, can persuade to do a wrong deed'.

⁵⁴ Cf. Lucian. *Demon.* 51: when the philosopher is asked for advice by someone who has been promoted to a position of power, Demonax tells that authority arises from talking little and listening much. Cf. *Demon.* 50, where he persuades a governor to pardon an impertinent Cynic; see Rawson 1989, 253f. on mildness towards *parrhesia* as an important quality of the ruler.

⁵⁵ For the consent of the Roman people for abolishment and modification of severe laws (20, 1, 10) compare the similar behaviour of the Athenians in 11, 18, 4; cf. 11, 18, 10 *sed nunc a lege illa decemuirali discessum est*, 'but today we have departed from that law of the decemvirs'. Cf. also 12, 13, 5; 16, 10, 8 and see Ducos 1984, 293 n. 22.

to make ancient Roman law more 'human',⁵⁶ or Tiberius and Claudius, who aimed to modernise the *horrida antiquitas* of the law by various modifications and relaxations.⁵⁷

By implication and contrast, Gellius' chapter, significantly staged in an *amicitia*-setting before the emperor's palace, becomes the candid advice of a knowledgeable 'lesser friend' to his 'greater friend' regarding his legal politics, lest he becomes a *levis existimator* of the Roman cultural capital epitomised by the Twelve Tables. As Ducos (1984, 300) points out, the Antonine era is a period of transition, in which concepts of the law were changing, and imperial edicts become more and more powerful. 'Over the heads' of Caecilius and Favorinus, Gellius seems to say to his ruler (20, 1, 22):

nec ideo contemnas legum istarum antiquitates, quo plerisque ipse iam populus Romanus uti desiuerit...

do not scorn those ancient laws merely because there are many of them which even the Roman people have now ceased to use...

According to the *Historia Augusta*, Marcus Aurelius 'engaged rather in the restoration of the old laws than in the making of new' (*Aur.* 11, 10 *ius autem magis uetus restituit quam nouum fecit*).⁵⁸ Since *Noctes Atticae* was probably published in the period around Marcus' death (180 A.D.), we may therefore think of the young Commodus as a possible intended recipient of Gellius' ideological message.

⁵⁶ Cf. Gai. *inst.* 1, 80–81; 3, 72–73 (cf. 3, 73 *diuus Hadrianus iniquitate rei motus auctor fuit senatus consulti faciendi*). In a letter to the prefect of Egypt, Q. Rammius Martialis, in which he discusses successory rights of soldiers' children, Hadrian states that he will interpret more humanely (φιλάνθρωπότερον) the most severe decisions taken by his predecessors. See Ducos 1984, 299 with n. 51–52 (with lit.); Birley 1997, 105f.

⁵⁷ Trajan: cf. Plin. *epist.* 10, 55 *non est ex iustitia nostrorum temporum*. Tiberius: cf. Tac. *ann.* 4, 16, 3. Claudius: cf. Tac. *ann.* 11, 24, 7; cf. also 12, 6, 3. For the *horrida antiquitas* of ancient Roman law cf. also Tac. *ann.* 3, 34, 2f. Ducos 1984, 298 points out that Tacitus hints at the dangers of such continuous innovations, which do not necessarily represent progress; usually the persons who propose them are not the most respectable (e.g. Suillius or Vitellius).

⁵⁸ On Marcus' special attention to legal matters see Birley 1987, 134f.; 179f.; Crook 1975, 69f.

CHAPTER TEN

COMPARATIVE JUDGMENTS IN ROMAN SITES OF MEMORY

Shaping perceptions: space, comparison, and the gaze

A significant part of Gellius' literary strategy in establishing cultural authority is his 'reinvention' of the recent past, introducing the Antonine celebrities of Hellenic sophistication as 'leading characters' in his Latin portrayal of the contemporary cultural world, a portrayal that associates Gellius' claim to authority with the centrality of Roman imperial culture. In this preamble we shall discuss some of the methods by which we can illuminate Gellius' strategy of shaping his reader's perception of this Roman cultural world and its inhabitants. Further below, we shall illustrate this strategy with some examples from *Noctes Atticae*, especially the scene in the Forum Traiani (13, 25).

On the one hand, Gellius connects his authority with the centrality of Roman culture by his use of famous locations. Various scenes staged on the Palatine, in the Forum Traiani, in imperial libraries or in front of bookshops demonstrate that *Noctes Atticae*, despite its title, is firmly anchored in Rome as the centre of power and the centre of culture, bearing out its supremacy as cultural metropolis of the Roman Empire.¹ Monumental places such as the imperial palace or the Trajanic forum can be regarded as 'sites of memory' (*lieux de mémoire*), spaces that store memories over long periods of time, thus ensuring that they continue to influence society.² This concept simultaneously illustrates a central feature of Gellius' cultural authority in his *Noctes Atticae*, which intends to be 'monumental' in a related fashion.

¹ See Woolf 2003 on Rome as the 'City of Letters'; see especially p. 216f. on Gellius.

² For the programmatic concept of 'lieux de mémoire' see Nora et al. (1984; 1986; 1992); for adaptations of this concept to illuminate Greek and Roman cultural and commemorative traditions see Gowing 2005, 5, 79f., 133; Stein-Hölkeskamp/Hölkeskamp (edd.) 2006; Boter/Hemelrijk/Nauta (edd.) 2007.

On the other hand, Gellius invites his reader to acknowledge and perceive the centrality of his Roman cultural programme by means of various strategies of perception, encouraging him to enter various processes of mutual comparison and visual and literary analysis. Gellius' *Noctes* illustrates throughout the ancient predilection for critical comparison, weighing the respective qualities of persons or texts and ranking them by merit.³ In chapters where contrasting characters appear, Gellius challenges the reader in particular to apply his rhetorical training in the exercise of *comparatio* (σύγκρισις), consisting of a comparison of two persons aimed at eulogising or defaming one of them.⁴ As we will see, the reader is frequently invited to weigh the authority of Favorinus against that of Cato, and, for example, to question Favorinus' stylistic judgment of Cato, given in the Trajanic forum (13, 25, 12).

Another method by which we can shed light on Gellius' strategy of shaping his reader's perception is the modern distinction between the so-called 'enraptured gaze', taking his readers into the described space and its inhabitants, and the 'programmatic gaze', which entails an intellectual subjugation of the image to words and categories.⁵ Both forms of gaze reflect aspects of the contemporary cultural world. On the one hand, by introducing eloquent sophists like Favorinus in the public space of Rome, admiring the monuments of empire (13, 25), Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* reflects the parallellism in the contemporary taste for spectacular architecture and epideictic performance.⁶ On the other hand, the programmatic gaze that is focused on the Latin inscription *ex*

³ On comparisons in *Noctes Atticae* see Holford-Strevens 2003, 195–205; Vardi 1996 focuses especially on Gellius' use of comparative judgment in chapters where literary passages are compared (*diudicatio locorum*), e.g. 2, 23 (Caecilius and Menander).

⁴ Cf. Quint. *inst.* 2, 4, 21 (in the context of his discussion on encomia and invectives) *hinc illa quoque exercitatio subit comparationis, uter melior uterue deterior: quae quamquam uersatur in ratione simili, tamen et duplicat materiam et uirtutum uitiorumque non tantum naturam sed etiam modum tractat*, 'from this follows the exercise of Comparison: which of the two men is the better and which is the worse? This rests on a similar principle, but doubles the material and handles not only the nature of virtues and vices but their degree'. See Vardi 1996, 492f. For Plutarch's parallel *Lives* as a historical elaboration of this exercise see Pausch 2004, 174 with n. 148. Unfortunately, Pausch denies Gellius the moral and ideological implications of σύγκρισις which can be observed in Plutarch, where biographical comparison contributes to a construction of Hellenic identity in a Roman imperial context.

⁵ For the distinction between 'enraptured gaze' and 'programmatic gaze' see Newby 2002, 117–118.

⁶ For the parallel between the zeal for spectacular rhetorical performances and the admiration of visual arts and architecture in Gellius' age see Newby 2002, 114.

manubiis (13, 25, 1) represents Antonine intellectual culture as a 'library' culture, which manifests itself in the continuous perusal and interpretation of texts and the study of words and phrases. This library culture is central to Gellius' fashioning of authority.

Imperial monuments and texts as 'transmitters of memory'

An ideal illustration of the methods discussed above is chapter 13, 25, where Gellius does not miss the opportunity to present Favorinus in a scene in the Trajanic forum, which celebrates Cato as an early Roman master of the art of rhetoric. Just like the chapters 4, 1 and 20, 1, the chapter has a pronounced 'imperial' atmosphere, as we see Favorinus walking in the Forum Traiani in the young Gellius' company:

13, 25, 1–2 *In fastigiis fori Traiani simulacra sunt sita circumundique inaurata equorum atque signorum militarium, subscriptumque est: "Ex manubiis". Quaerebat Favorinus, cum in area fori ambularet et amicum suum consulem opperiretur causas pro tribunali cognoscentem nosque tunc eum sectaremur—quaerebat, inquam, quid nobis uideretur significare proprie "manubiarum" illa inscriptio.*

All along the roof of the colonnades of Trajan's forum there are placed gilded statues of horses and representations of military standards, and underneath is the inscription *Ex manubiis*. Favorinus inquired, when he was walking in the court of the forum, waiting for his friend the consul, who was hearing cases from the tribunal—and I at the time was in attendance on him—he asked, I say, what that inscription *manubiae* seemed to us really to mean.⁷

The setting of Favorinus' performance is Trajan's forum, which was a centre of both Roman power and of high culture, and thus creates a monumental background to Gellius' commemoration of the recent past. The opening description of the monumental buildings takes readers into the world of Roman public space, and invites them to look up in admiration at Trajan's colonnades ('enraptured gaze'): the following sentence implicitly suggests that Favorinus and his pupils were looking up too, focusing their attention on the inscription *ex manubiis*, which indicates that the monuments have been financed 'from the proceeds of the spoils'. Favorinus' question reflects the 'programmatic gaze', which focuses on a monument as a vehicle for a Latin expression (*ex manubiis*). In a sophisticated and meaningful way, Gellius' chapter links the cen-

⁷ For a reconstruction of this inscription see fig. 61 in Packer 1997.

tral question about the phrase *ex manubiis* to the monumental nature of the setting.

Trajan's forum was 'monumental' in various senses. It was the largest of all imperial fora, and continued to impress for centuries.⁸ It honoured Trajan's military triumphs through the famous column, especially his conquest of Dacia and its incorporation into the Roman empire. Moreover, it had a funerary function through Trajan's tomb within the base of the column.⁹ At the same time, the forum was a centre of literary culture and education through the important library, the Bibliotheca Ulpia, which was established there about A.D. 100. Gellius represents himself elsewhere as a user of this library, setting a good example for his readers (11, 17, 1 *sedentibus forte nobis in bibliotheca templi Traiani*).¹⁰ The multiple links between military conquest, power, monumental architecture and literary culture are epitomised by the inscription '*ex manubiis*'. The inscription contains a traditional expression indicating the use of spoils to public or religious ends, such as the construction of fora, temples or libraries.¹¹

By making this inscription the central focus of his chapter, Gellius evokes another significant link, the one between the monumental symbols of Rome's imperial power and his own cultural enterprise. Like Pliny the Elder, Gellius uses the verbal and visual power of imperial monuments to communicate an imperial message that entails his own literary statement of power.¹² Quoting in his text the words *ex manubiis* cut in stone, Gellius gives an 'irrefutable proof' of the link between

⁸ According to Ammianus Marcellinus (16, 10, 15), the Trajanic forum was the part of Rome that filled the newly arrived emperor Constantius II with greatest wonder (357 A.D.). See Edwards 2003, 67–68 on the Forum Traiani and its statues as perpetual visual reminders of imperial conquest and Roman domination.

⁹ On Trajan's forum as a 'site of memory' see Seelentag 2006. On Trajan's column, standing in a space located between Trajan's libraries, the basilica Ulpia and the temple dedicated to the deified emperor, see Huet 1996, 10, 21. In the tradition of the imperial monument of Augustus' *Res Gestae*, Trajan's column was a 'visual inventory' of the actions of the emperor and his troops of war; see Carey 2003, 55–57.

¹⁰ For the Trajanic forum as a centre of Latin literary culture cf. Venantius Fortunatus (6th cent. AD) 7, 8, 25–26 *si sibi forte fuit bene notus Homerus Athenis / aut Maro Traiano lectus in urbe foro*; and 3, 18, 7f. *uix modo tam nitido pomposa poemata cultu / audit Traiano Roma uerenda foro*. On the Trajanic library see Neudecker 2004, 294f.

¹¹ For the expressions *de manubiis* and *ex manubiis* see *ThLL* s.v. 336, 14f.; cf. e.g. Suet. *Jul.* 26, 2 *forum de manubiis incohauit*; *Tib.* 20 *dedicauit et Concordiae aedem ... de manubiis*; *Plin. nat.* 7, 115 *bibliotheca, quae prima in orbe ab Asinio Pollione ex manubiis publicata Romae est*. The spoils of war included many works of art, such as Greek sculptures, turning Rome into a 'museum city'; see Edwards 2003, 49–57.

¹² See Carey 2003, 44f. on the link between monuments, conquest, Roman power

his text and the buildings that commemorated the triumph of empire. In this way, the inscription on the imperial monument becomes an authenticator of Gellius' own cultural authority, raising his writing to the same level as the inscription.¹³

Along the same lines, a parallel is suggested between the gaze of the characters in the scene, admiring the imperial monuments ('enraptured gaze') while reading and interpreting the inscription ('programmatic gaze'), and the gaze of the reader, who reads and interprets Gellius' text. Just like the texts in the imperial library in the Trajanic forum, which have a similar function as 'transmitters of memory' as the imperial monuments and trophies, Gellius' text claims an authority that is founded on the preservation of memory. Gellius' access to the charismatic authority of Roman *antiquitas* turns his *Noctes Atticae* into a literary monument, which also gives shape to his own public image. Elsewhere, Gellius significantly represents his quotations from the ancient Roman wisdom embodied by Pacuvius' poetry as worthy of becoming inscriptions on Roman temple doors (13, 8, 4, on a diatribe against pseudo-philosophers):

item uersus est in eadem ferme sententiam Pacuuii, quem Macedo philosophus, uir bonus, familiaris meus, scribi debere censebat pro foribus omnium templorum: "ego odi homines ignaua opera et philosophia sententia",

there is also a line of Pacuvius to about the same purport, which the philosopher Macedo, a good man and my intimate friend, thought ought to be written over the doors of all temples: "I hate base men who preach philosophy".

Monumental writers under imperial scrutiny

Whereas Gellius' text turns the 'programmatic gaze' upon the inscription *ex manubiis*, other important commemorative elements of the Trajanic forum are not explicitly described, but must have been vividly present in the minds of Gellius' Roman readers, and were likely to be evoked by the compressed visual references in this 'iconic' scene. In the centre of the *area Fori*, where Gellius pictures his younger self

and Pliny's literary representation, which is 'meant to dazzle the reader with the power of Rome' in a similar way as the monuments themselves.

¹³ I am indebted to the stimulating observations of Carey (2003, 60) on Pliny the Elder.

and his master Favorinus walking and speaking on the Latin language, there stood the huge equestrian statue of Trajan.¹⁴ In the very heart of Roman imperial power, with the huge statue of a Roman emperor gazing upon him, the Gellian scene seems to take place almost literally under imperial scrutiny.

Trajan's equestrian statue was the 'response' to the statue of Domitian in the Roman forum, and became in turn the model for the nearly identical pose and rider in the extant equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius,¹⁵ the emperor during whose reign *Noctes Atticae* took its final shape. In the portrayal of Favorinus and Gellius walking and discoursing under the gaze of Trajan, not then the reigning emperor, we may perhaps see an allusion to the continuous presence of the gaze of the emperor, the 'assessor of knowledge', in the literary activity of Roman writers like Gellius. What is more, the scene suggests an interesting parallel between a visual and textual 'suppression' of the emperor's imposing presence in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*. At the same time, this reminds us that what is left implicit in *Noctes Atticae* is often no less meaningful than what is made explicit.

Along these lines, the Imperial setting of the Forum Traiani turns out to be a site of imperial scrutiny. This scrutiny encompasses various strategies of reading that we have observed above, such as the 'investigational' reading of the ideal reader, based on recognising allusions to reputations (Part II), and a continuous process of comparing intellectuals and their output, ranking them by merit (σύγκρισις). For example, Gellius puts Favorinus' controversial reputation under imperial scrutiny by making him refer to his deliberate choice of a Hellenic identity, as well as to his own avarice through a current interpretation of *manubiae* ('the proceeds of the spoils') as a synonym of '*praeda*' ('booty', 'plunder'):

13, 25, 4 "*Etiam si ... opera mihi princeps et prope omnis in litteris disciplinisque Graecis sumpta est, non usque eo tamen infrequens sum uocum Latinarum, quas subsicuo aut tumultuario studio colo, ut hanc ignorem manubiarum interpretationem uulgariam, quod esse dicantur 'manubiae' praeda*".

"Although ... my principal and almost my entire attention has been given to the literature and the arts of Greece, I am nevertheless not so unfamiliar with Latin words, to which I devote occasional or desultory study, as to be unaware of this common interpretation of *manubiae*, which makes it a synonym of *praeda*".

¹⁴ See Packer 1997, 85 and 95 f.

¹⁵ See Packer 1997, 96.

Thus, we see in this ‘monumental’ chapter various forms of σύγκρισις taking place in concert, inviting the reader to compare persons, reputations, and words for their merit in a context of Roman imperial power. Favorinus’ authority is weighed against Cato’s. Consequently, the personification of *avaritia* is contrasted with the hero of *parsimonia* (cf. 13, 24, 2), and a notorious culprit is contrasted with a famous accuser.¹⁶ Through their divergent personalities, time-honoured Roman culture is weighed against contemporary Greek fashion.¹⁷ The word *manubiae* is weighed against the word *praeda*, thus contrasting public generosity with private greed. This comparative inquiry involves a critical comparison of two different ways of using spoils, representing two different ways of using power.¹⁸ Hence, the legitimate use of prize-money for the state (*manubiae*), visually represented by the Trajanic imperial setting, is set off against ‘robbery’ or the abuse of power driven by greed (*praeda*). It is therefore no coincidence that in 13, 25, 14, Gellius makes Favorinus quote Cato’s attack of the greedy pro-war senators in the *Pro Rodiensi-bus*, who were hostile to the Rhodians for the sake of plunder (cf. 6, 3, 7 *opibus diripiendis possidendisque*).

This may illustrate the complexity of the gaze in the *Noctes Atticae*, a gaze which not only entails a programmatic scrutiny of intellectual activity (literature, style, words), but also a critical comparison of the moral and political behaviour of the intellectuals themselves.¹⁹ The imperial settings of some of Gellius’ scenes, like the one in the Trajanic forum, make us sense the omnipresent gaze of the emperor, the personification of Roman imperial power to whom all this is presented as the highest authority in judging the merits and the legitimacy of all cultural activity.

A crucial aspect that comes under imperial scrutiny in the Trajanic forum is the already mentioned relation between the monumentality

¹⁶ In 13, 25, 14, Gellius makes Favorinus quote a passage from Cato’s *Pro Rodiensi-bus* in which he attacks the greedy pro-war senators (cf. 6, 3, 7); in 13, 25, 15, Cato is quoted in his role of accuser of Galba. Favorinus not only quotes Cato the Censor, but also refers to Cicero’s *On the Appointment of an Accuser* (13, 25, 9) and *Against Piso* (13, 25, 22 f.).

¹⁷ Contrast Beall 2001, 100, who argues that Gellius intended to “emphasize the authority of Greek models, and particularly of his mentor, in the use of this figure”.

¹⁸ See Part II, p. 133 for the implications relating to Favorinus’ reputation of avarice. On the important distinction between ‘good’ (public generosity) and ‘bad’ use of spoils (private greed) see Edwards 2003, 49 f., quoting Cicero’s indictment of Verres’ private passion for stolen art (*Verr.* II 1, 55).

¹⁹ See Corbeill 2002, 182 f. with n. 4 on the parallelism felt by the ancients between judging art and judging morals.

of architecture and the commemorative task of literature. Favorinus defines his appraisal of Cato in terms of ἀπομνημονεύειν (13, 25, 12), which alludes to his (lost) work Ἀπομνημονεύματα (*Memoirs*). Moreover, Favorinus foregrounds Cato's role as a historian by mentioning the seventh book of the *Origines* as the context of the speech against Galba (13, 25, 15). The *Origines* were a monumental work in seven books, tracing the history of Rome from the time of Aeneas to 149 B.C.²⁰

The allusions to Ἀπομνημονεύματα and *Origines* point to the commemorative dimension of literary texts in general, which can be called 'historical' in their shared goal of 'recording' memorable persons and facts. As we have seen, the texts in Roman imperial libraries such as the one in the Trajanic forum can be viewed as precious 'transmitters of memory', just like the monumental surroundings in which they were kept. The word ἀπομνημονεύειν confirms Favorinus' professed Hellenic cultural preference, and exposes him as the kind of 'Greek' authority from which Gellius as Roman author explicitly distances himself.²¹ In a process of critical comparison, Favorinus' Ἀπομνημονεύματα and Cato's *Origines* are to be contrasted with Gellius' present Roman *commentarii*, and to be ranked by merit—it is a telling fact that the outcome of this 'ranking' process is still noticable in our modern libraries, for Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* is the only one of these three texts that has survived until the present day.

Through an ingenious use of perceptive and comparative strategies, then, Gellius invites the reader to turn his gaze upon the triumphs of Roman imperial culture, triumphs in which the cultural authority embodied by *Noctes Atticae* participates. Representing himself walking in the centre of Roman power, admiring and studying the permanent reminders of Roman superiority, Gellius connects his Roman cultural programme with the 'art of conquest'. By implication, Gellius' monumental scene in the Forum Traianum draws attention to his own public persona as a writer who commemorates and deserves to be commemo-

²⁰ See Astin 1978, 211–239; for Gellius' use of the *Origines* see Holford-Strevens 2003, 248f.

²¹ Bowie (1997, 5f.; 11) argues that Favorinus in his Ἀπομνημονεύματα dramatised his confrontations with Hadrian, and that this work, safely composed after Hadrian's death, was used by later writers as a source for their reports of Favorinus' clashes with the emperor (see pp. 118, 204). If this is how Gellius read the Ἀπομνημονεύματα, the present allusion adds to the controversial, subversive nature of Favorinus' intellectual activity.

rated in a context of empire. Following a Roman tradition represented by Ovid and Martial, Gellius implicitly 'seeks admittance' for his text in the public library, presenting *Noctes Atticae* as part of a literary heritage shared by Cato's and Favorinus' work.²²

Imperial libraries, such as the one in the Trajanic forum, also contained many portrait statues of eminent writers and poets, which had a similar function of 'transmitters of memory' as the texts themselves.²³ Through his allusions to visual and verbal commemoration, monumentality, and Roman power, it is as if Gellius indirectly invites a bestowal of a similar kind of commemorative honour to that which the elder Africanus once bestowed upon Quintus Ennius, or Asinius Pollio upon Marcus Varro.²⁴ It is significant that, as Neudecker (2004, 295) points out, archaeological evidence suggests that Pollio's library, the first public library of Rome, was later integrated into the Bibliotheca Traiani; if this was indeed the case, and if Gellius acknowledged and recognised this concrete link between imperial past and present, it adds another significant visual and monumental dimension to his self-fashioning as a Roman cultural authority in an imperial context.

²² Cf. Ov. *trist.* 3, 1, 59–72; Mart. 5, 5; 12, 2 (3); see Nauta 2002, 135: "the most important aspect of admittance to the public libraries was official recognition and canonisation as part of the literary heritage"; "inclusion in a public library did imply that a book was 'published', in the sense that it was made publicly accessible, for reading and perhaps even for copying".

²³ On the parallelism of portraits and written texts as 'transmitters of memory' see Carey 2003, 138. On portrait statues in libraries, such as the one founded by Asinius Pollio, see Isager 1991, 116f. On this library see Isager 1991, 164 n. 579; for the important role of Varro see Neudecker 2004, 295, and below, n. 24; cf. Part I, p. 27 n. 32.

²⁴ Both Ennius and Varro are thus mentioned by Pliny in an inventory of Romans of intellectual eminence; cf. Plin. *nat.* 7, 114 *Prior Africanus Q. Ennii statuam sepulchro suo inponi iussit, clarumque illud nomen, immo uero spoliū ex tertia orbis parte raptum, in cinere supremo cum poetae titulo legi*, 'the elder Africanus gave orders for a statue of Quintus Ennius to be placed on his own tomb, and for that famous name, or rather trophy of war won from a third part of the world, to be read above his last ashes together with the memorial of a poet.' [...] 115 *M. Varronis in bibliotheca, quae prima in orbe ab Asinio Pollione ex manubiis publicata Romae est, unius uiuentis posita imago est*, 'in the library founded at Rome by Asinius Pollio, the earliest library in the world established out of the spoils of war, the only statue of a living person erected was that of Marcus Varro'. Significantly, Pliny ranks this honour above the military honour bestowed upon Varro by Pompey the Great for his conduct in the war with the pirates. Compare the statue of Favorinus in the library in Corinth; see Part II, p. 102 n. 16.

Imperial education: Cato the Elder as a political exemplum

As we have seen in Part I, Gellius' conception of cultural authority is closely connected with the use of the Latin library, in particular its pre-Augustan department. Gellius fashions himself as a champion of Roman culture, establishing the supremacy of this culture by his command of the texts that bear out the high moral and literary standards of ancient Rome. Working in the library, reading and excerpting the relevant texts, forms part of what makes Gellius an authoritative writer, and what will enable his reader to fashion his own authority and identity as a *uir civiliter eruditus*. Hence, these activities in the library are central to Gellius' cultural-educational programme, and reflect the contemporary need for authoritative knowledge. As Gellius' vignettes show, learned conversations partake in a broad spectrum of Roman daily life, ranging from an *otium*-activity in the 'private' space of home to an activity of public interest, taking place in the public space of Rome, in the courtroom, in the forum, or in front of the imperial palace. Gellius' programme 'fuels' the same growing public interest in learning that is reflected in contemporary architecture, such as the increasing number of public libraries that were built in imperial times.²⁵

Moreover, as we have seen, Gellius' authority shares many aspects with the pedagogical authority established by Fronto in his correspondence with the imperial family. The parallels between Fronto and Gellius' symbouleutic authority as an '*amicus minor*' to an '*amicus maior*' form an illuminating background for viewing Gellius' discussions of Cato the Elder as a form of 'imperial education', staged in a Roman setting that visually reflects the interrelatedness of power, knowledge, and cultural prestige. This setting included magnificent libraries such as the Bibliotheca Domus Tiberianae on the Palatine (cf. Gell. 13, 20) or the Bibliotheca Templi Traiani in the Forum Traiani (11, 17; cf. 13, 25). As has been recently illuminated by Neudecker (2004), the architecture and organisation of such imperial libraries, but also the books themselves, not only reflect the close relation between 'power' and '*paideia*'—recalling the central role of the emperor as 'controller of

²⁵ See Neudecker 2004, 305f. on imperial libraries as part of the contemporary *Lebensstil*: "... durch unmittelbar verfügbaren Buchquellen und offene Zugänge [begünstigten sie] die beliebten zitatenreichen Diskussionsrunden wie im Kreis des Gellius. Die Ausweitung einer zuerst häuslichen Bildung des *Otium* zum öffentlichen Lebensinteresse erklärt die quantitative Zunahme der Bibliotheksbauten und schlug sich in den architektonischen Entwürfen nieder."

knowledge’—, but also indicate how the imperial state expressed and exercised its power.²⁶ The architecture of the libraries can be read as visual references to this power. Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* partakes in this very nexus of power and cultural prestige by its literary references to libraries and their powerful collection. The most powerful pieces of the collection simultaneously form the ideological core of Gellius’ cultural programme: the speeches of Marcus Porcius Cato.

To illustrate the importance of accessibility of information and the connection of this accessibility to positions of power, Neudecker (2004, 293) quotes a letter by Marcus to Fronto, in which he informs his master of the progress of his ‘lucubrations’ (*epist. ad M. Caes.* 4, 5, 2 p. 61, 14f.):

ego me ad libellos. igitur calceis detractis, uestimentis positus in lectulo ad duas horas commoratus sum. legi Catonis orationem de bonis Pulchrae et aliam, qua tribuno diem dixit. ‘io’, inquis puero tuo, ‘uade quantum potes, de Apollonis bibliotheca has mihi orationes adporta.’ frustra: nam II isti libri me secuti sunt. igitur Tiberianus bibliothecarius tibi subigitandus est; aliquid in eam rem insumendum, quod mihi ille, ut ad urbem uenero, aequa diuisione inperiat.

I to my books: so taking off my boots and doffing my dress I passed nearly two hours on my couch, reading Cato’s speech *On the property of Pulchra*, and another in which he impeached a tribune. ‘Ho’, you cry to your boy, ‘go as fast as you can and fetch me those speeches from the library of Apollo!’. It is no use your sending, for those volumes, among others, have followed me here. So you must get round the librarian of Tiberius’s library: a little *douceur* will be necessary, in which he and I can go shares when I come back to town.

The vignette from Marcus’ letter suggests that the library of Apollo lent books, at least to the heir to the throne, whereas the library of Tiberius’ palace apparently did not, so that Fronto could only catch up with Marcus’ advance in learning by bribing the librarian. Moreover, if he would succeed, Marcus, being the library’s patron, would share the profit.²⁷ Marcus playfully establishes his superiority to Fronto, a superiority to which the possession and knowledge of Cato’s speeches

²⁶ See Neudecker 2004, 308: “Eine Antwort auf die anfangs gestellte Frage nach dem Zusammenhang von Macht und Paideia, von Wissen und Lebensstil findet sich in der Bedeutung der Paideia für den gesellschaftlichen Umgang und damit auch für öffentliche Karrieren. Sie versetzte die Bibliotheken in die vorderste Front staatlicher Bauten und Institutionen. Dort wurden sie in die kaiserliche Kontrolle über das gesamte schriftliche verfügbare Wissen einbezogen, denn das hatte mit Macht zu tun [...]”.

²⁷ The library of Apollo, attached to the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, rivalled

contribute in a telling way. Yet, the imagined reaction of Fronto is also telling for the importance attributed by Marcus to the specific content of Cato's speeches—it is significant that he puts the 'io' immediately after mentioning the topic of the second Catonian speech read by him, which contained the impeachment of a tribune. Apparently, it was in the utmost interest of both the future emperor and his teacher in rhetoric to study the very words with which Cato the Censor accused a politician who did something wrong.

This draws attention to the role of reading speeches of ancient Roman writers as a form of political instruction, a role that is crucial to Gellius' fashioning of authority. We can catch a glimpse of this role in an anecdote on Hadrian, which shows that texts of Cato the Elder were used to motivate or justify imperial politics: Hadrian's order to evacuate Mesopotamia, Assyria and Greater Armenia was probably inspired by Cato's speech *De Macedonia liberanda*, still extant in late antiquity.²⁸

The extent of Cato the Elder's authority in the highest regions of imperial politics is richly documented by Marcus Aurelius' correspondence with Fronto. Marcus associates reading Cato with the joys of *otium* ('*lucubrare*'), in contrast with the burdens of his duties (*epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 18 p. 35,5f.). Moreover, writing in the style of Cato formed part of his curriculum. In the education of the prince, Cato's status as a supreme example of cultural authority was translated into an almost literal process of continuation, entailing a rewriting process that sought to reproduce the model on a literary-stylistic level.²⁹ Given the close connection the ancients felt between style and moral character ('the style is the man'),³⁰ the didactic function of reading and imitating Cato went

that of Alexandria; see Carey 2003, 55 with n. 24 (quoting further lit.); Neudecker 2004, 294; 296f.; Nauta 2002, 134f.

²⁸ Cf. Hist. Aug. Hadr. 5, 3 *exemplo, ut dicebat, Catonis*. For the evacuation cf. Fronto, *Princip. hist.* 11, p. 208,9f. See Birley 1997, 78. On Hadrian's archaic taste cf. Hist. Aug. Hadr. 16, 6 *Ciceroni Catonem, Vergilio Ennium, Salustio Coelium praetulit*, and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 3–4; 355–356.

²⁹ Cf. Aur. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 7 p. 28,2f. *ego ab hora quarta et dimidia in hanc horam scripsi et Catonis multa legi et haec ad te eodem calamo scribo et te saluto et, quam commode agas, sciscitor*, 'from half-past ten till now I have been writing and have also read a good deal of Cato, and I am writing this to you with the same pen, and I greet you and ask you how well you are'. In *epist. M. Caes.* 4, 5, 3 (61,19f.), Marcus possibly refers to a similar exercise. Calling Cato his 'patron' (2, 17 p. 34,18f.), Marcus explains his frequent use of *atque* (a habit of Cato's) with his enthusiasm for the Censor.

³⁰ See Möller 2004; on p. 247 she discusses Fronto's contempt of Seneca's style. See also Veldhuis 2006, 24f.

beyond style; at the same time, the study of style and language was of crucial importance.³¹

This has, of course, implications for Fronto's own political authority as a teacher of eloquence. When Fronto tries to put Marcus' Stoic 'hero' Epictetus in a bad light (*de eloquentia* 2, p. 135,11f.), and commends philosophers like Dio and Euphrates, who combine philosophy with exceptional rhetorical abilities, this may not be merely 'stylistic advice' intended for Marcus' use in the library, but may have further, political implications.³² Likewise, when Marcus pays tribute to the philosopher Severus for introducing him to Thrasea, Helvidius, Cato (Uticensis), Dio, and Brutus (*Med.* 1, 14, 1), the common denominator of these intellectuals is that they were all philosophers who took an active part in political affairs. Marcus acknowledges their impact on his formation as an emperor, as they were an important source of information and influence for his way of governing and his political ideology.³³

In a letter to Lucius Verus (2, 20 p. 128,23), Fronto calls Cato with a significant juxtaposition *orator idem et imperator summus*, pointing to the association between oratorical and military power.³⁴ Thus, the political connotations of Cato's *exemplum* were also transferred to a military context. Moreover, through the activities related to his censorship, Cato the Elder seems to have been a rhetorical model of political *uituperatio* for emperors.³⁵ As we have seen above (p. 247), Marcus was particularly interested in the way Cato impeached a tribune (4, 5, 2, p. 61,14f. *tribuno diem dixit*). Cato's political activities against men accused of misconduct in office, such as Servius Sulpicius Galba, apparently provided *exempla* that offered some kind of guidance for imperial politics.

³¹ Stylistic imitation of literary models and ethical emulation of behavioural models can be described with the same term, ζήλωσις / *aemulatio*; see Whitmarsh 2001, 119 with n. 105.

³² See Desideri 1978, 6–16. Fronto's teaching was not just about words: in propagating his cultural ideal, he could not and did not avoid dealing with representatives of other cultural ideals which had a strong attraction on Marcus, in particular Stoic philosophy.

³³ See Stanton 1968, 193 with n. 59; Francis 1995, 38f.

³⁴ See van den Hout 1999, 306 ad loc. with many parallels. For Cato as both a 'writer' and a 'fighter' cf. also Fronto, *Princip. Hist.* 4 (p. 204,3f.). For the close relation between eloquence and military success in Fronto's imperial teaching cf. *epist. ad Ver.* 2, 22 (129,17f.) *sed caput atque fons bonarum artium et studiorum ab eloquentiae disciplinis oritur, neque res militaris [...] perfecta gigni potest, nisi cum eloquentia creata sit*. See also below, n. 80.

³⁵ For Cato as a 'uituperator' cf. e.g. Aur. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 6 (p. 27,4); Fronto, *de Eloqu.* 1, 2 p. 134,3f.

In a letter to Marcus, Fronto hints at a parallel between Cato's performance as accuser and Pius' decision in the senate which 'gently rebuked the offenders' (*epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 21, p. 51,23 *reos clementer obiurgasset*). Fronto quotes the speech given by Cato at the end of his life against Servius Sulpicius Galba (*contra Seruium Galbam*, 149 B.C., also known by Gellius),³⁶ who had stirred up pity in court by introducing his sons and a nephew, and hence was acquitted from a charge of treacherous mass murder. Indignant at the acquittal of a man who had used histrionic performance to impress his accusers, Cato had described the affair in the final book of his *Origines*, including the text of his own speech.³⁷ Fronto says that Marcus knows this speech better than he himself does and that he has the text in his possession, 3, 21, 4 (p. 52,1f.):

Cato quid dicat de Galba absoluto, tu melius scis; [...] τὸ δὲ ἀκριβὲς ipse inspice ...

you know better than I what Cato says of Galba's acquittal. [...] But see for yourself what the truth of the matter is...

The phrase τὸ δὲ ἀκριβὲς seems a form of 'metalinguistic' code-switching, referring to the rhetorical instruction that underlies this letter,³⁸ but it may also point to a tricky political context, possibly the situation in the Senate solved by Pius, of which we know no further details. Fronto's letter implies that a meticulous reading of the Catonian phrasing was useful in more than one sense, and that Marcus' 'reading power' could establish a significant connection between Cato's speech and a political context. Moreover, Fronto's concluding remark seems to give Marcus a guideline for his reading of Cato, pointing to the Censor's moral standards in his battle against dishonest forms of influencing politics; the present form *dissuadet* suggests that the authority of the Censor's voice is still valid.³⁹

In Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* we may observe the same relation between Cato the Elder and 'imperial education', connected to the use of impe-

³⁶ Cf. Gell. 13, 25, 15 (Favorinus quotes from Cato's speech) *multa me dehortata sunt huc prodire, anni, aetas, uox, uires, senectus*, 'many things have dissuaded me from appearing here, my years, my time of life, my voice, my strength, my old age'.

³⁷ See Astin 1978, 112f.; cf. Cic. *de orat.* 1, 228; *Brut.* 89–90.

³⁸ For this form of code-switching see Swain 2004, 22.

³⁹ Cf. *epist.* 3, 21, 4 (52,2f.) *Cato igitur dissuadet neue suos neue alienos quis liberos ad misericordiam conciliandam producat neue uxores neue adfines uel ullas omnino feminas*, 'Cato, of consequence, is of opinion that no one should bring into court his own or others' children to excite pity, nor wives nor relations, nor any women at all'.

rial libraries, as we see in Fronto's correspondence with Marcus Aurelius. Access to libraries was access to information. Marcus' letter (4, 5) shows that this information was very precious, and not so easily attainable.⁴⁰ Gellius establishes his authority by showing both forms of access, plus his particular use and interpretation of the texts (his 'reading power'), which form the core of his symbouleutic authority. What is more, his message is a cultural message with political undertones, in which *exempla* from Roman *antiquitas* and counter-*exempla* from more recent times can be read as forms of 'imperial advice', offering 'food for thought' for possible strategies in a political context of Roman imperial power. This politico-cultural aspect of Gellius' cultural programme is especially visible in his treatment of Cato the Elder.

In 1, 23, Gellius indicates that his authority is linked to the discourse of rhetorical-political education such as embodied by the Frontonian correspondence. Quoting a part from an earlier speech by Cato against Galba, the *Ad Milites Contra Galbam* (167 B.C.), he significantly adds that he did not have access to the book at the time when he dictated the extract.⁴¹ With this enigmatic remark, Gellius hints that 'someone else' was reading Cato's precious text at that moment in the preparatory phase of his work on *Noctes Atticae* (cf. Praef. 2), leaving it to the reader to guess who had such a keen interest in the speech against Galba at that time.⁴²

In the *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius establishes his authority by inscribing himself in the imperial educational tradition of extolling Cato as an *exemplum* which serves both the sophisticated pleasure of *otium* and a political utility. What is more, he gives his own interpretation to this tradition by transforming the charisma of Cato's *exemplum* into a central asset of his own cultural programme, which makes it outshine rival forms of authority in the competition for imperial favour. As we shall

⁴⁰ Ancient books were precious in a very literal sense, and formed an expensive luxury for those who were not wealthy; see Nauta 2002, 134.

⁴¹ Cf. 1, 23, 2 *ea Catonis uerba huic prorsus commentario indidissem, si libri copia fuisset id temporis, cum haec dictauim*, 'I should have included Cato's own words in this very commentary, if I had had access to the book at the time when I dictated this extract.'

⁴² Gellius' chapter does not discuss Galba, but contains an entertaining anecdote from Cato's speech about Papirius Praetextatus, a boy who was taken to the Senate by his father. Yet, Gellius' chapter evokes Catonian moral standards by referring to the abolishment of the custom to bring one's children to official hearings (viz. of the Senate, cf. 1, 23, 4; 1, 23, 13), and by putting women on stage who try to influence politics by exciting pity (1, 23, 10f.). This actually recalls Fronto's use of the later speech against Galba; cf. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 21, 4 (52,2f.), quoted above.

see below, Cato's authority becomes something to be weighed against the intellectual activities of Gellius' time, such as those pursued by Greek sophists and philosophers. At the same time, Cato's charisma reflects upon Gellius himself as an ideological authority, whose teaching builds up and improves Roman 'reading power'.

The best of both worlds: Cato the Elder as the better sophist

In Gellius' Roman view, Cato's language does not yield to Greek eloquence but even supersedes it, since Cato combines the best of both worlds, the refinement of Greek culture *and* the honesty and dignity of Roman frugality. In 3, 7, 1, for example, where he praises Cato's literary testimony of the glorious deed of the Roman *tribunus militum* Quintus Caedicius, Gellius points out that Cato recorded a deed for the Romans which was 'well worthy of the noble strains of Greek eloquence' (*pulcrum, dii boni, facinus Graecarumque facundiarum magniloquentia condignum M. Cato libris Originum... scriptum reliquit*). With this remark, made in a chapter in which Roman history is matched with Greek history (the Spartan Leonidas), Gellius implies that Cato's written Latin testimony equals Greek *magniloquentia*.

The plural *facundiae* ('examples of eloquence') seems to refer to famous eloquent persons.⁴³ It is likely that Gellius makes a comparison between Cato and the celebrated Greek authors from the past.⁴⁴ Possibly, *facundiae* refers to the canonic group of ten Attic orators already established in the second century A.D. (Hermogenes, *On Ideas* 2, 11).⁴⁵ Yet, if we place Gellius' comparison in the context of Antonine culture, the contemporary Greek sophistic rhetoric springs to mind, which enthralled Greek and Roman audiences by celebrating and emulating the famous Greeks of the past.⁴⁶ If we take a look at other Gellian pas-

⁴³ Cf. *OLD* s.v. *facundia* b (applied to persons); *ThLL* s.v. 158, 43f. ('metonymice i.q. orator disertus'). This is the only passage in which *facundia* is attested in the plural; cf. *ThLL* s.v. 157, 61f.

⁴⁴ Cato was often compared stylistically with Greek writers from the past; Sallust saw Cato as a Roman Thucydides (see Holford-Strevens 2003, 196); Pliny the Younger compared him with Lysias (*epist.* 1, 20, 4); Fronto paired him with Herodotus in *Laud. fum.* 5 m² p. 216,25 (Holford-Strevens 2003, 60; 361).

⁴⁵ See Rutherford 1998, 38 on Hermogenes' 'canon of ten' and the reference to this canon in Philostratus *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 564f.: the followers of Herodes Atticus flatter him with the observation that he belonged to the canon of ten.

⁴⁶ On the nostalgic character of second century Greek culture see Bowie 1970.

sages in which Cato appears, it seems indeed that the Roman reader is invited to assess Cato's authority in relation to more recent *facundiae* in a process of comparison, adopting the exercise of *comparatio* (σύγκρισις) that we discussed above.⁴⁷

Along these lines, in 13, 25 Gellius explicitly juxtaposes Favorinus and Gellius as two *exempla* that 'interrogate each other' and can be measured against each other. Combining two extremes of the contemporary cultural spectrum, Gellius puts the judgment of the old Censor, the ancient Roman statesman *par excellence*, on the lips of Favorinus, the personification of the contemporary Roman fascination for Greek culture (cf. 13, 25, 4), who had notoriously refused to assume public responsibility. Favorinus records Cato's use of pleonasm, which also characterises his own style (Beall 2001, 99):

13, 25, 12 *Hoc ornatus genus in crimine uno uocibus multis atque saeuīs extruendo ille iam tunc M. Cato antiquissimus in orationibus suis celebrauit, sicuti in illa, quae inscripta est De Decem Hominibus (...) hisce uerbis eandem omnibus rem significantibus usus est, quae quoniam sunt eloquentiae Latinae tunc primum exorientis lumina quaedam subluſtria, libitum est ea mihi ἀπομνημονεύειν.*

This kind of adornment, by heaping up in a single charge a great number of severe terms, was frequently used in his speeches by the famous Marcus Cato, who already then was our most classical author;⁴⁸ for example in the one entitled *On the Ten*, [...] he used the following words all of the same meaning, which, as they are some dim flashes of Latin eloquence, which was just then coming into being, I have thought fit to remember.

By quoting Favorinus' judgment of Cato's style as 'some dim flashes' (*lumina quaedam subluſtria*) of Latin eloquence (and not 'brilliant', as translated by Rolfe, a mistake with a heuristic value),⁴⁹ Gellius invites the reader to scrutinise the integrity of Favorinus' authority as a judge of Cato. The sneer at the 'dim flashes' turns out to expose the arro-

⁴⁷ For instance, in Gell. 16, 1 Cato and Musonius are weighed against each other.

⁴⁸ Rolfe translates: 'was frequently used even in early days by our most ancient author, the famous Marcus Cato'; however, *iam tunc* should be taken with *antiquissimus*; for *antiquus* = 'having the characteristic virtues of antiquity', 'classical' cf. *OLD* s.v. 9a; cf. Aur. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 6, 1 p. 27, 7f. (praising Fronto's writing) *facilius ... ipsum Demosthenem imitatus fuerit aut ipsum Catonem quam hoc tam effectum et elaboratum opus. nihil ego unquam cultius, nihil antiquius, nihil conditius, nihil Latinius legi.*

⁴⁹ Cf. *OLD* s.v. *subluſtris*, 'faintly lit', 'dim'. In the passages attested before Gellius (5 in verse; 1 prose: Liv. 5, 47, 2 *nocte subluſtri*) it is either used with *nox* or with *umbra*. Cf. Gellius' description of Gracchus' style in 10, 3, 15 *umbra et color quasi opacae uetustatis* (as opposed to Cicero's *lux ista et amoenitas orationis*).

gance of Favorinus' philhellenic perspective, which is blind to the *lux uerborum* (cf. 1, 23, 1) of the celebrated Cato.⁵⁰

For a reader whose training in comparative judgment is 'fully switched-on', a comparison with a famous personality such as Favorinus can be obvious even when he is not explicitly mentioned. For example, the Gellian appraisal of Cato's eloquence in 1, 23 also invites comparison with the rhetorical allure of Gellius' master Favorinus, and suggests that in Gellius' eyes Cato was not inferior to Favorinus in stylistic charm:

1, 23, 1 *historia de Papirio Praetextato dicta scriptaque est a M. Catone in oratione qua usus est Ad Milites contra Galbam, cum multa quidem uenustate atque luce atque munditia uerborum.*

The story of Papirius Praetextatus was told and committed to writing in the speech which Marcus Cato made *To the soldiers against Galba*, with great charm, lucidity and elegance of diction indeed (*quidem*).

The combination of *uenustas* and *munditia*, the latter indicating a pure elegance without artificiality, indicates the pure language of the ideal Roman statesman.⁵¹ Cato embodies the best of both worlds, because his style not only possesses the *uenustas* of a Favorinus (cf. Gell. 14, 1, 32), but also the *uirtutes dignitatesque uerborum* ('noble and dignified language')⁵² that a Favorinus evidently lacks in Gellius' view. Gellius does not ever associate Favorinus with *grauitas*, or with *dignitas* or *uirtus*.⁵³ Favorinus'

⁵⁰ Cf. Cicero's praise of Cato in *Brut.* 66 *iam uero Origines eius quem florem aut quod lumen eloquentiae non habent?*, 'his *Origines* too—what flower, what lustre of eloquence do they not contain!' It is significant that Cicero also makes Cato's eloquence an object of comparison, arguing that the Romans of his time are ignorant of Cato's admirable style due to their one-sided interest in Attic (67–68); moreover, according to Cicero, the high-flown, elevated style of later writers has 'cut off the light from Cato' (66 *Catonis luminibus obstruxit*).

⁵¹ Significantly, Gellius uses the combination also for king Philip (9, 3, 3); cf. 10, 24, 2 *diuus etiam Augustus, linguae Latinae non nescius munditiarumque patris sui in sermonibus sectator*. The eloquence of Gracchus, whom Gellius considers inferior as an orator to Cato and Cicero, is also characterised by *uenustas* and *mundities* (10, 3, 4), but in his case Gellius associates these qualities with the witty charm of comedies (*qualis haberi ferme in comoediarum festiuitatibus solet*), which is slightly derogatory (cf. Praef. 4 *festiuitates inscriptionum*). On *munditia* cf. Cic. *orat.* 79; Quint. *inst.* 8, 3, 87.

⁵² Cf. 1, 23, 3 (Gellius announces that he is going to narrate the anecdote from Cato in his own words) *quod si non uirtutes dignitatesque uerborum, sed rem ipsam scire quaeris, res ferme ad hunc modum est*, 'but if you would like to hear the bare tale, without the noble and dignified language, the incident was about as follows'. This alludes to Cicero's praise of Cato's oratory in *Brut.* 65 *omnes oratoriae uirtutes in eis reperientur*.

⁵³ Contrast the description (voiced by Taurus) of Plato's language in Gell. 17, 20, 6, which resembles Favorinus' eloquence by its charm (*uenustas, amoenitas*), but where also

successful eloquence is not only a ‘yardstick’ by which Cato’s outstanding rhetorical qualities are measured, but also forms a contrasting foil for establishing Cato’s superiority as an authority from the perspective of Roman cardinal virtues.

We see similar oppositions at work in another chapter (13, 24) that features Cato. As he does elsewhere (9, 2), Gellius uses the emptiness of Greek pseudo-philosophers to bring out by contrast the true spirit of the early Romans, in this case the frugality of Cato the Elder. Cato’s political authority is underlined by the epithet *consularis* (13, 24, 1; cf. also 6, 3, 17).⁵⁴ Cato’s protreptic capacity to instil time-honoured Roman virtues like *parsimonia* is considered more forceful than the vain teaching of Greek philosophers (13, 24, 2):

Haec mera ueritas Tusculani hominis, egere se multis rebus et nihil tamen cupere dicentis, plus hercle promouet ad exhortandam parsimoniam sustinendamque inopiam quam Graecae istorum praestigiae, philosophari sese dicentium umbrasque uerborum inanes fingentium, qui se nihil habere et nihil tamen egere ac nihil cupere dicunt, cum et habendo et egendo et cupiendo ardeant.

This simple frankness of the man from Tusculum, who says that he lacks many things, yet desires nothing, truly has more effect in inducing thrift and contentment with small means than the Greek sophistries of those who profess to be philosophers and invent vain shadows of words, declaring that they have nothing and yet lack nothing and desire nothing, while all the time they are fevered with having, with lacking, and with desiring.

In his own writings, Cato indeed presents himself as having spent his youth in thrift, austerity and industry. In Cato’s self-presentation, his ethical imitation of the ancient Roman farmer-statesman corresponds to his achievements on the state’s behalf.⁵⁵ The idea that values rather than heritage are the true source of aristocratic authority, an idea that we also see promoted in Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae*, is essentially Catonian.⁵⁶

rerum pondera et dignitates are to be found: *ad ipsa enim Platonis penetralia ipsarumque rerum pondera et dignitates pergendum est, non ad uocularum eius amoenitatem nec ad uerborum uenustates deuersitandum.* Cf. 13, 25, 11 *sed quia cum dignitate orationis et cum graui uerborum copia dicuntur* (Favorinus on Ciceronian eloquence).

⁵⁴ Gellius also calls Herodes Atticus *consularis* (1, 2, 1; 9, 2, 1; 19, 12, 1).

⁵⁵ Cf. frg. 93 Sblendorio Cugusi *ego iam a principio in parsimonia atque in durtia atque industria omnem adulescentiam meam abstinui agro colendo.* See Reay 2005, 333 on Cato’s presentation of himself and his life “in imitation of other, more ancient Roman farmer-statesmen and their lives, men whose hands-on labor in their fields was both the source and conspicuous proof of their frugality, austerity, and industry.”

⁵⁶ See Reay 2005, 334f. For this notion in Gellius cf. e.g. 9, 2, 11, where Herodes

By being its living example, Cato was the advocate *par excellence* of the ancient Roman value of *parsimonia*, a virtue that was revered in the ideology of the principate and the empire, and embodied by the emperor Antoninus Pius.⁵⁷

Cato not only ‘preaches through practice’, but also stands out against Greek philosophers as a paradigm of eloquence because *his* words are not *inanes*. Chapter 13, 24 is significantly placed before the chapter mentioned above, where Favorinus in the Trajanic Forum commends Marcus Cato for his style (13, 25, 12), thus constituting two successive cases where the ‘man from Tusculum’ is foregrounded as an alternative to popular contemporary Greek role-models. As we have seen, Gellius frequently plays with Favorinus’ reputation as being a notorious example of *avaritia*, which represents the negative equivalent to *parsimonia* on the scale of Roman notions for thrift.

As in 13, 25, where Favorinus actually appears in person, 13, 24 invites comparison between Cato and Favorinus. In the light of the reader’s comparative judgment, it is interesting to take a look at the connection between 13, 24 and 9, 8, to which other scholars have also drawn attention.⁵⁸ There, Gellius first explains a truthful *sententia* based on ‘the result of observation and experience’ (9, 8, 1 *observato rerum usu*) of wise men, viz. that great want arises from great abundance and not from great lack. This paradox is explained as follows: whoever has much, needs to take precautions that nothing may fail, and therefore must have less in order to lack less.

Gellius shows in a few words two divergent ways in which intellectuals deal with this wisdom. On the one hand, he authorises its truth by referring to the *rerum usus* (‘experience’) that forms the core of his Roman ethical outlook.⁵⁹ *Verum* is the significant first word of the chapter, recalling the *mera ueritas* of Cato in 13, 24, 2, but also *ueritas* as a Roman value cherished by Roman emperors, and as a central quality

Atticus mentions patricians who had deserved ill of the *respublica*, which illustrates how true nobility and inherited nobility do not necessarily coincide.

⁵⁷ On *parsimonia* as a virtue in the ideology of the principate and the empire see Kloft 1970, 35f. Cf. Hist. Aug. Anton. P. 7, 5 *uictus Antonini Pii talis fuit ut esset opulentia sine reprehensione parsimonia sine sordibus*. See also GCA 2007, 423f. on Apul. met. 1, 24, 1 *parsimoniam*.

⁵⁸ For the connection between the two chapters see Beall 2001, 97–98.

⁵⁹ Cf. 13, 8 on the wise thoughts of old Roman poets about Experience and Memory (*Usus et Memoria*). As in the Catonian chapter 13, 24, Gellius opposes Roman practical wisdom and Greek inane words.

in imperial teaching.⁶⁰ On the other hand, Gellius presents the dazzling power of the *sententia*'s paradoxical content as material for a public rhetorical showpiece by means of which Favorinus earns thunderous applause (9, 8, 3).⁶¹

In the light of Favorinus' notorious avarice, this acclaim was not provoked by the morally elevating content of Favorinus' words, but by his striving after maximum rhetorical effect. In 9, 8, 3, then, Gellius stages a cleverly orchestrated spectacle of putting things into brilliant words and moves away from *experience* as a source of truth. The audience is not listening to truth but applauds mere jugglery, exactly the kind of tricks, *praestigiae Graecae*, from which the man from Tusculum used to distance himself (13, 24, 2). A comparison between the sincere *parsimonia* of Cato (who preaches through practice) and Favorinus' winning of acclaim by a rhetorical tour-de-force makes the weight and authoritativeness of Cato's portrayal, the 'grand old man' from the past, appear more substantial and solid. It is Cato's *mera ueritas* (13, 24, 2) that makes the difference.

The range, depth and extent of Cato's authority, combining both the high moral standards (*ueritas*, *parsimonia*) of Roman *antiquitas* and the cunning rhetorical qualities required in an age where a new Greek sophistic is in fashion, make him an unassailable hero in Gellius' cultural programme. For an emperor like Marcus Aurelius, the Gellian Cato turns out to be the perfect ideological role-model. Just as Fronto teaches Marcus that rhetorical and stylistical artifice is not at odds with

⁶⁰ For *ueritas* as a Roman virtue cf. Fronto *epist. ad L. Ver.* 1, 6, 7 p. 111, 16f. *simplicitas, castitas, ueritas, fides Romana plane*; *epist. ad Anton. Pi.* 10, 4 p. 168, 22f. *dicam, quomodo simplicitas mea et ueritas me dicere hortantur*. Marcus repeatedly thanks Fronto for teaching him the truth: *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 13, 1 p. 44, 24 *quod uerum dicere ex te disco*; 3, 19, 2 p. 51, 9 *non desinis in uiam me ueram inducere et oculos aperire*; cf. Verus Fronto *epist. ad Verum Imp.* 1, 1, 2 *Frontonem, a quo ego prius multo simplicitatem uerumque amorem quam loquendi polite disciplinam didicisse me praedico* (Haines *uerique amorem*). See Veldhuis 2006, 15f.

⁶¹ *Hanc sententiam memini a Faurino inter ingentes omnium clamores detornatam inclusamque uerbis his paucissimis*: Τὸν γὰρ μυρίων καὶ πεντακισχιλίων γλαμύδων δεόμενον οὐκ ἔστι μὴ πλείονων δεῖσθαι· οἷς γὰρ ἔχω προσδεόμενος, ἀφελὼν ὧν ἔχω, ἀρξοῦμαι οἷς ἔχω, 'I recall that Favorinus once, amid loud and general applause, rounded off this thought, by putting it into the fewest possible words: "It is not possible for one who wants fifteen thousand cloaks not to want more things; for if I want more than I possess, by taking away from what I have I shall be contented with what remains".' See Part II, p. 147f., 163. For the application of similar thoughts on poverty and wealth to a clever argumentation that serves the rhetorical self-presentation of a *philosophus* cf. Apul. *Apol.* 20.

truthfulness,⁶² Gellius presents in Cato the sincere Roman *sapiens* who is a crafty orator at the same time. In the spirit of Fronto's imperial teaching, Gellius' Cato proves that the mastery of rhetorical and dialectical subtleties can be in the interest of the state, and is not per se indicative of flattery or sophistry.⁶³ We shall elaborate on this in more detail in the following section.

Cato the Elder, the eloquent philosopher-statesman (6, 3)

Gellius' ideological use of the wide-ranging and flexible quality of Cato's authority in a political context is aptly illustrated by his long chapter on Cato's speech delivered in the senate in defence of the Rhodians (6, 3), which exemplifies the superior authority of the ideal Roman statesman in interaction with a critical senatorial opposition during wartime. When Rome was at war with Perseus, the king of the Macedonians with whom the *ciuitas* of Rhodes was on cordial terms, some of the Rhodians tried to persuade the crowds in their popular assemblies to help the Macedonian king in his war against Rome, but no official action of that kind was taken. After Perseus was defeated, the Rhodians sent envoys to Rome to prove their loyalty as a community (6, 3, 5). As they were accused of disloyalty by some greedy senators who wanted to declare war upon them, Cato defended them by this speech, setting out his policy of peace.⁶⁴

⁶² Fronto mentions and refutes Marcus' aversion of rhetorical-stylistic ornamentation as inappropriate for true friendship in *epist.* 3, 16, 1 (p. 47,20f.) *quae tu putas obliqua et insincera et anxia et uerae amicitiae minime adcommodata*. See Veldhuis 2006, 37–41, who comments that 'rhetoric' and 'true friendship' can go together, as long as the latter does not degenerate into flattery (cf. Cic. *Lael.* 91). Cf. *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 2, 3 (p. 18,11f.) *hic summa illa uirtus oratoris atque ardua est, ut non magno detrimento rectae eloquentiae auditores oblectet*, 'herein lies that supreme excellence of an orator, and one not easily attainable, that he should please his hearers without any great sacrifice of right eloquence'.

⁶³ Cf. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 16, 2 (p. 48,9f.) *quibus ille modis Protagoram et Polum et Thrasymachum et sophistas ceteros versare atque inretire solitus?* Fronto presents Socrates as a role-model whose rhetorical craftiness outshines sophists without making himself a sophist. Implicitly, Fronto exhorts Marcus to be a 'Socrates', a true philosopher who still uses rhetoric to beat his devious opponents ('the sophists') at their own game.

⁶⁴ See Astin 1978, 123f.; cf. Gell. 6, 3, 7 *cumque partim senatorum de Rodiensibus quererentur maleque animatos eos fuisse dicerent bellumque illis faciendum censerent, tum M. Cato exsurgit et optimos fidiissimosque socios, quorum opibus diripiendis possidendisque non pauci ex summatibus uiris intenti infensique erant, defensum conseruatumque pergit orationem inclutam dicit, quae et seorsum fertur inscriptaque est pro Rodiensibus et in quintae originis libro scripta est*, 'when some of the members complained of the Rhodians, declaring that they had been disloyal, and recommended

There are two levels in Gellius' chapter. There is the speech itself, from which Gellius quotes extensively, and which documents the conflict between Cato and the pro-war senators. But there is also the polemic between two intellectual authorities who interpret and comment upon Cato's speech: Tiro, the freedman and assistant of Cicero, and Gellius himself, vigorously defending Cato against Tiro's accusations that Cato had used faulty argumentation and devious sophistic devices.

Using a sophisticated strategy that is typical of *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius 'wraps up' a politically charged issue in a 'scholastic' discussion between two 'literary critics' who illuminate a text from the past. At the end of the chapter, he invites the reader to weigh these two 'critics' against each other, presenting the choice between political viewpoints with an ironical distance as a kind of '*diudicatio auctoritatum*', a comparative criticism of two different ways of analysing a speech. Interestingly, Gellius paraphrases the identity of the reader with a conditional clause, resembling the '*si quis...*' phrases that, as we have seen, may cautiously refer to the emperor as 'ideal reader' of *Noctes Atticae* (6, 3, 55):

Commodius autem rectiusque de his meis uerbis, Tullio Tironi respondimus, existimabit iudiciumque faciet, qui et orationem ipsam totam Catonis acceperit in manus et epistulam Tironis ad Axium scriptam requirere et legere curauerit. Ita enim nos sincerius exploratiusque uel corrigere poterit uel probare.

But one will form a juster and more candid opinion of these words of mine, spoken in reply to Tullius Tiro, and judge accordingly, if one will take in hand Cato's own speech in its entirety, and will also take the trouble to look up and read the letter of Tiro to Axius. For then he will be able either to correct or confirm what I have said more truthfully and after fuller examination.

As the present phrase identifies the reader with someone who is able to see and use a text of Cato's speech itself, we are reminded of the way Marcus Aurelius emerges from the Frontonian correspondence as an avid reader of Cato's speeches, with unique access to the imperial libraries containing those precious 'transmitters of memory'. Moreover, given the emperor's role as 'assessor of knowledge', *existimare* and *iudicium facere* can be plausibly interpreted as references to the supreme authority whose *existimatio* ranks intellectuals by merit.

that war be declared upon them, then Marcus Cato arose. He endeavoured to defend and save our very good and faithful allies, to whom many of our most distinguished senators were hostile through a desire to plunder and possess their wealth'.

In his disguise of ‘textual critic’, Gellius merges the stance of the advocate of a policy of peace with the role of political satirist, attacking his opponent Tiro as the representative of uncivilised and un-Roman political thinking. In both roles, Gellius performs in the true spirit of the elder Cato, paying homage to his skilful political argumentation against war and his excoriating denunciations as an accuser.

Along these lines, Gellius’ appeal to the *iudicium* and the *existimatio* of his reader gains a political dimension as well, inviting him to look at Cato as an ideological role-model for the performance of the Roman statesman in a situation of internal political tensions. Thus, Cato’s *exemplum* becomes an *exemplum* of conduct, more particularly of political conduct in a situation at wartime and involving a foreign embassy. The latter element forms part of a pattern in *Noctes Atticae*, which features a strikingly large amount of stories about embassies (*legationes*).⁶⁵ This pattern reflects political circumstances in the Roman empire, where diplomatic activity was an important field in which Greek and Roman intellectuals could prove what they were worth. Moreover, it relates to Gellius’ educational aims, acting as symbouleutic authority for those who had the responsibility to deal with embassies.⁶⁶

For Cato, it was essential that the Rhodians had not committed any hostile act against Rome, even if some Rhodian factions had expressed their wish to do so. It was misdeeds, not mere wishes, that should be punished.⁶⁷ The bottomline of Gellius’ defence of Cato is that he acted in the public interest.⁶⁸ In Gellius’ view, Cato’s concern for the state and the safety of its allies is in accordance with the honourable intentions of the Rhodian envoys, who vindicate their loyalty as a community (6,

⁶⁵ On the frequent appearance of embassies in Gellius see Holford-Strevens 2003, 315f.

⁶⁶ On sophists and diplomacy see Bowersock 1969. On the intense diplomatic activity during Marcus’ reign see below, p. 265 with n. 87.

⁶⁷ See Astin 1978, 112 and 124, pointing out that Cato used the same argumentation in his speech against Galba eighteen years later, in his refutation of Galba’s excuse of the mass murder of the Lusitans by referring to their plans for a new rebellion.

⁶⁸ Cf. 6, 3, 17 *ut a senatore et consulari et censorio uiro, quidquid optimum esse publicum existimabat suadente*, ‘he did so as a senator who had been consul and censor and was recommending what he thought was best for the public welfare’; 6, 3, 18 *pro utilitatibus publicis ac pro salute sociorum*, ‘speaking in behalf of the public welfare and the safety of our allies’; 6, 3, 20 *at cum dignitas et fides et utilitas omnium communis agitur*, ‘but when the common prestige, honour and advantage of all are involved’; 6, 3, 21 *negotia, pericula ipsa rerum communia*, ‘the common interests and dangers’; 6, 3, 44 *quia non Rodiensibus magis quam reipublicae consultabat*; 6, 3, 52 *ut necessarios reipublicae ostentat ... utilitatis reipublicae commonefacit*.

3, 5 *fidem consiliumque publicum*): notably, the first word of this chapter is *Civitas* (*Rodiensis*). Gellius even represents the Rhodians as peacemakers, who had initially sent other envoys to Rome during the war with Macedonia to reconcile the contending parties (6, 3, 2), but had not succeeded.

For Cato, the concern for the *respublica* is closely connected with *amicitia*, friendship and loyalty to the allies of Rome.⁶⁹ Gellius, on the level of his diatribe against Tiro, connects this concern with programmatic viewpoints on Roman civilisation and humanity. Tiro suggests that it is absurd not to anticipate violence just because someone has expressed his mere intention to commit violence: if we do not strike back in advance, we become the victim of the plans against which we failed to guard ourselves (6, 3, 27). Gellius retorts to Tiro that in civilised societies—as opposed to gladiatorial games—men do not have to be the first to commit an injury in order to avoid suffering injury (6, 3, 32). Thus, Gellius blames Tiro for uttering ideas that expose him as not being a true *civis Romanus*: Tiro lacks the civilisation (*mansuetudo*) that characterises the Roman people.⁷⁰ For Gellius, *mansuetudo* is associated with the moral authority of the *maiores* (6, 3, 52 *mansuetudinis maiorum*), the ideological standard against which Tiro's subversiveness is measured.⁷¹ In Gellius' cultural programme, as we have seen, Cato and the *mos maiorum* are sources of charismatic authority.

From the beginning onwards, Gellius discredits Tiro's judgment of Cato by representing his criticism as an insolent rashness, which is only in Tiro's own imagination an example of keen judgment. The phrasing suggests that this sacrilegious attack on Gellius' hero is a symptom of a too audacious, feverish state of mind.⁷² Gellius clearly

⁶⁹ Cf. 6, 3, 2 *amica atque socia*; 6, 3, 7 *optimos fidissimosque socios*; 6, 3, 47 *quorum amicitiam retineri ex republica fuit*.

⁷⁰ Cf. 6, 3, 30 *neque humanae vitae negotia et actiones et officia uel occupandi uel differendi uel etiam ulciscendi uel cauendi similia esse pugnae gladiatoriae*, 'the occupations and actions of human life, and the obligations of anticipation or postponement or even of taking vengeance or precautions, are not like a combat of gladiators'; 6, 3, 33 *quod tantum aberat a populi Romani mansuetudine, ut saepe iam in sese factas iniurias ulcisci neglexerit*, 'in fact, such conduct was so alien to the humanity of the Roman people that they often forbore to avenge the wrongs inflicted upon them.'

⁷¹ The underlying image of *mansuetudo* is that of taming wild beasts (cf. *OLD* s.v. *mansuetudo* 1a); Tiro's rashness exposes him as the opposite of *mansuetudo*.

⁷² 6, 3, 9–10 *Sed profecto plus ausus est quam ut tolerari ignoscique possit. Namque epistulam conscripsit ad Q. Axiū, familiarem patroni sui, confidenter nimis et calide, in qua sibimet uisus est orationem istam Pro Rodiensibus acri subtilique iudicio percensuisse*. 'But surely Tiro showed more presumption than can be tolerated or excused. For he wrote a letter to Quintus

opposes Cato as a man of the truth (6, 3, 25 *ingenue ac religiose dicere; parta sibi ueritatis fide*) to Tiro as a man of lies and calumny (22 *mentitur; 23 calumniatur*). The word *ingenue* suggests a pun at the expense of Tiro, who, being a *libertus*, evidently would never be able to speak *ingenue* (lit. ‘as befits a free-born man’, *OLD* s.v.). Gellius explicitly calls Tiro the freedman of Cicero in 6, 3, 8 (as he does in other chapters), which is not intended as a compliment.⁷³ Gellius adds that the letter in which Tiro formulates his insolent criticism on Cato is addressed to *a friend of his patron* (*familiarem patroni sui*), which reinforces the general impression of Tiro’s ‘not knowing his place’, ‘being out of line’.

The climax of Tiro’s insolent criticism of Cato is 6, 3, 34f., where he accuses Cato as orator of adroitly using the subtleties of sophistic argumentation, as if he were a Greek sophist:

Post deinde usum esse Catonem dicit in eadem oratione argumentis parum honestis et nimis audacibus ac non uiri eius, qui alioqui fuit, sed uafri ac fallaciosi et quasi Graecorum sophistarum sollertius.

Then Tiro says that later in that same speech Cato used arguments that were disingenuous and excessively audacious, not suited to the man which Cato showed at other times, but cunning and deceitful, resembling the subtleties of the Greek sophists.

Tiro’s indictment of Cato behaving like a Greek sophist is a sacrilegious denial of everything that Cato stands for in the *Noctes*, such as truth and Roman manhood. Tiro’s accusation even contains an indirect charge of unmanliness: by using sophistical devices, Cato did not show himself the man that he used to be on other occasions (*non uiri eius, qui alioqui fuit*).⁷⁴

A crucial element in Tiro’s charge of Cato behaving like a Greek sophist is his deceitful argumentation, using dialectical subtleties such

Axius, a friend of his patron, with excessive assurance and hot-headedness, in which, as he imagined, he criticized that speech *For the Rhodians* with keen and fine judgment.’ See *OLD* s.v. *confidenter* 2 ‘audaciously, with effrontery’; *OLD* s.v. *calidus* 10a (of persons) ‘hot-headed, rash, hasty’; cf. Cic. *inv.* 2, 28 *ut si dicamus idcirco aliquem calidum uocari, quod temerario et repentino consilio sit*. Something of the original medical use may shine through in the present passage, especially given the combination with *nimis*; cf. *OLD* s.v. *calidus* 6 ‘feverishly hot’.

⁷³ Cf. Bloomer 1997, 198, who points out that “Roman culture saw the freedman as a linguistic bastard and as a scapegoat for other social transgressions.” On Gellius’ treatment of Tiro see also p. 24 n. 19. For the deeply ambiguous status of imperial freedmen see Nauta 2002, 21; 346f.; see below, p. 267.

⁷⁴ Cf. Cic. *Brut.* 65 *at quem uirum, di boni!*, ‘and yet, good heavens, what a man!’.

as the enthymeme (6, 3, 27 *hoc ... enthymema nequam et uitiosum est*),⁷⁵ or the ἐπαγωγή (6, 3, 35). Both allegations add to the Tironian misrepresentation of Cato as a crafty rhetorician who is only concerned with effect, not truth. The use of the enthymeme can be interpreted *in malam partem*: in 10, 19, 3 and 17, 20, 4, Gellius makes his Platonic teacher Taurus represent the use of the enthymeme as an attractive feature in the eyes of those who are infatuated with rhetoric and style, as opposed to deeper content.⁷⁶ Tiro also presents Cato's employment of the ἐπαγωγή as a deceitful use of logic, a dialectical stratagem by which he leads his opponents into a trap (6, 3, 35 *rem admodum insidiosam et sophisticam neque ad ueritates magis quam ad captiones repertam ...* a most treacherous and sophistical device, designed not so much for the truth as for cavil).⁷⁷ According to Tiro, Cato used deceptive examples to prove that the mere wish to do wrong is not liable to punishment, and that punishment is only due when the wish is accomplished. Using terms like *uafēr*, Tiro associates Cato's oratory with intellectual activity that embodies a contemptible kind of authority in the *Noctes*.⁷⁸

Gellius defends his hero not by denying that Cato used such devices, but by representing his rhetorical manoeuvres as a noble enterprise in the public interest. In Gellius' educational programme, Cato's rhetoric is first-class rhetoric because it serves the interests of the state.⁷⁹ Gellius

⁷⁵ According to Holford-Strevens 2003, 221f. with n. 126 *enthymema* means 'argument' here. In my opinion, there is also a hint at the rhetorical sense of 'syllogistic reasoning' (thus *OLD* s.v. *enthymema* 2, mentioning the present passage), which entails a similar criticism of Cato as a devious sophist as the ἐπαγωγή. For *uitiosus* pointing to unsound methods of reasoning, cf. *OLD* s.v. *uitiosus* 3 and cf. 9, 16, 7 *uitium insidiosum* used of deceptive fallacy in argument; on *nequam* see Gell. 6, 11, observing that in present times *nequitia* refers to craftiness and cunning, whereas in early writers *nequam* means 'useless' or 'morally worthless'.

⁷⁶ Cf. 16, 1, 1 (comparing Cato and Musonius), where Gellius remembers an ἐνθυμημάτιον ('apophthegm') of Musonius learnt '*in scholis*'; the use of this ἐνθυμημάτιον is both connected with brilliant style (cf. 10, 19, 2; 17, 20, 4) and with the power to remain in the memory: 16, 1, 1 *libenter meminieramus*; cf. 10, 19, 2 (on Demosthenes' rhetoric) *quasi quaedam cantilena rhetorica facilius adhaerere memoriae tuae potuit*.

⁷⁷ A form of convincing by means of induction; in Latin this is called *inductio*, cf. Cic. *inv.* 1, 51; *top.* 42f.; Quint. *inst.* 5, 11, 2–3. Cicero and Quintilian emphasise that Socrates made great use of this method (also called παράδειγμα) in interrogating his opponents.

⁷⁸ Cf. 6, 3, 34 *uafri ac fallaciosi ... sollertiis*. The term *uafēr* is more or less synonym with *ueterator* (cf. Gell. 3, 1, 5 *in litteris ueterator*) as a negative label for fallacious intellectual activity; cf. Cic. *rep.* 3, 26 *qui in hac causa eo plus auctoritatis habent quia ... non sunt in disputando uafri, non ueteratores*; Verr. I 1, 141 *nihil ab isto uafrum, nihil ueteratorium expectaueritis; omnia aperta, omnia perspicua reperiuntur*; *off.* 3, 57. See Pease on Cic. *nat. deor.* 1, 39 *Chrysippus, qui Stoicorum somniorum uaferrimus habetur interpres*.

⁷⁹ See Morgan 2004, 193f.

builds up a positive image of Cato's rhetorical strategy by using military terminology, which recalls Fronto's protreptic to use rhetorical devices in a letter to Marcus Aurelius.⁸⁰ At the same time, Gellius pays homage to Cato's imperial image as *orator et imperator summus*. Cato's use of the full resources of the art of rhetoric is pictured by Gellius in terms of an honourable battle for the sake of Rome.⁸¹ His use of the ἐπαγωγή is nothing like the use of sophistical devices by Greek philosophers in their spare time (6, 3, 47 *qualia in philosophorum otio disputantur*), but serve *negotia* (6, 3, 21 *negotia, pericula ipsa rerum communia*). Cato's performance for the sake of public *utilitas* thus stands out against the empty words of an Academic disputer like Favorinus. By contrast, Cato 'indexes' the qualities by which someone may be recognised as a true philosopher, a philosopher who in Gellius' ethical programme represents the true philosopher-statesman.⁸²

Gellius' political consilium in an Antonine context

In the light of the above, it appears that Gellius' symbouleutic authority also embraces issues of political conduct, which invite us to assess his 'voice' in the politico-cultural debate of Antonine Rome. Does Gellius' symbouleutic authority 'fit in' with particular issues that the society that produced *Noctes Atticae* was struggling with? Can we observe specific connections between Gellius' treatment of Cato the Elder and contemporary politics?

⁸⁰ Cf. Fronto *epist. ad M. Caes.* 3, 16, 2 p. 48, 10f. *quando autem aperta arte congressus est? [...] itaque non uineis neque arietibus errores adulescentium expugnabat, sed cuniculis subruerat*. For the parallel between rhetorical and military resources see Veldhuis 2006, 67–69 ad loc., comparing Quint. *inst.* 12, 9, 2–4. Gellius emphasises that Cato uses his rhetorical weapons so subtly, that we are not conscious of their use (6, 3, 52 *sed non ... fieri uidemus*).

⁸¹ Military terminology in 6, 3: cf. 39 *contendere*; 44 *praefulcit*; 47 *propugnaculis defensat*; 51 *minutius* (lit. 'well-fortified', cf. *OLD* s.v. 2b 'well-grounded'); 52 *omnia disciplinarum rhetoricarum arma atque subsidia mota esse ... omnibus promisce tuendi atque propugnandi modis usus est*. Gellius asserts that Cato used every device of rhetoric: cf. Cic. *Brut.* 65 *omnes oratoriae uirtutes in eis reperientur*, and see Holford-Strevens 2003, 196.

⁸² Cf. MacMullen 1966, 52: "... it is sometimes said that Stoicism and philosophy in general drew men away from the political sphere. No contradiction, however, necessarily existed between the studies and the deeds of Cato, for example, but rather a positive connection. They fortified each other." For the Roman ideal cf. Quint. *inst.* 11, 1, 35 *uir civilis uereque sapiens*; 12, 2, 27 (see above, p. 226); see MacMullen 1966, 47 with n. 1. For the traditional Roman antipathy to philosophy cf. Tac. *Agr.* 4, 3 with Ogilvie-Richmond ad loc.

For most of Marcus' reign, Rome was at war, a topic in which Gellius takes some interest. A particularly interesting example, also for the dating of the *Noctes Atticae*, is Gellius' quotation of the fetial formula for declaring war from an extract of the antiquary L. Cincius (16, 4, 1): as Holford-Strevens plausibly argues (2003, 19–20), Gellius could have interpolated the name of the *populus Hermundulus* to make the quotation topical, since in 178 A.D. Marcus revived the fetial ritual in declaring war against, among others, the tribe of the Hermunduri.⁸³

As we have seen, various aspects of Cato the Elder as we encounter him in Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* can be viewed in a context of imperial education, comparable to the role played by Cato (*orator et imperator summus*) in Fronto's correspondence with Marcus. In general, the philosophical dimension of the Roman *sapiens* Cato may have appealed to Marcus Aurelius, the philosopher on the throne. Cato's authoritative example gives expression to the Roman aversion to intellectual conceit, impracticality and empty words, an aversion we also find reflected in the moderate Stoicism professed by Marcus.⁸⁴

Cato's speech *pro Rodiensibus* offers some more specific clues which can be interpreted in an Antonine context. Cato's emphasis on social and political coherence within the Roman sphere of influence possibly reflects ideals of Antonine government.⁸⁵ Cato's politics of friendship and loyalty with an allied *civitas* at wartime may reflect the imperial policy of creating 'client-states', which were officially in a treaty-relationship with the Roman emperor, but fell practically under Roman supervision.⁸⁶ During his campaigns, Marcus Aurelius frequently gave audience to embassies sent by barbarians who asked for peace or offered alliance. Marcus' decisions to grant or not to grant the envoys' wishes depended on political circumstances and financial opportunities.⁸⁷

⁸³ For *Hermundulus* as a deformation of Hermundurur see Holford-Strevens 2003, 19 n. 38.

⁸⁴ See Francis 1995, 1 f.; cf. Gell. 13, 24.

⁸⁵ See Steinmetz 1982, 44–48 on the continuation of Hadrian's policy of peace by Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius; although Marcus' period of rule was overshadowed by wars with the Parthians and various Teutonic tribes, his efforts to manage internal problems resulting from those wars, following the imperial policy inaugurated by Hadrian, were effective.

⁸⁶ On the system of 'client-states' see Birley 1987, 21 f.; on the terminology of friendship in such relations see Braund 1984, 23; on the importance of foreign embassies to Rome to gain recognition and to maintain favour see Braund 1984, 55 f.

⁸⁷ Cf. Dio Cass. 71, 11; 71, 19. See Birley 1987, 169 f. on the period of intense diplomatic activity from 171 AD onwards.

What is more, Cato's speech on behalf of the Rhodians shows how international tensions are concomitant with internal political strife, and it accordingly offers a model of conduct for a statesman who has to battle on both fronts at the same time. Gellius' depiction of Cato's political actions reveals a particular interest in the position of the 'wise aristocrat' in relation to civic political forces, in this case some members of the senatorial circle, the 'old' aristocracy, accused by Cato of greed (6, 3, 7). In other chapters featuring foreign embassies, Gellius also represents leading politicians as being motivated by the prospect of money in their decisions to grant an embassy's wish or not.⁸⁸

The implicit message in such chapters is that a statesman should not be motivated by greed in his political decisions, nor should he trust political counsels by those members of the senatorial elite who base their advice upon their own financial interests. This message may be related to the role of the Senate during Antonine rule. According to the *Historia Augusta*, Marcus Aurelius actively involved senators in legal and political responsibilities,⁸⁹ and frequently asked the *amici* of his *consilium* for political advice in military and civil matters.⁹⁰ In his relation with the Senate Marcus seems to have established a condition which followed Antoninus Pius' policy of reversing a trend towards despotism and servility, and consolidated a certain freedom for senators to interpret and expand imperial proposals.⁹¹

If we view Gellius' sneers at greedy senators in this context of imperial counsel, we may accordingly see the commendation of Cato in terms of his own self-fashioning as '*amicus minor*'. In Gellius' commendation of Cato as a 'strong man' operating against senatorial opposition, we may see a political message that supports a trend toward a more autocratic kind of rule, or at least strengthens the position of the emperor as the only one who can take responsible decisions. Such a message would be concordant with the ideological stance that we may observe in other chapters, entailing an implicit appeal upon a strong

⁸⁸ Cf. Gell. 11, 9–10 and see Braund 1984, 58f.; cf. Plut. *Cat. Min.* 35, 4, where Cato the Younger warns Ptolemy for the 'corruption and rapacity of the chief men at Rome'.

⁸⁹ Cf. Hist. Aug. *Aur.* 10–11; see Birley 1987, 134f.; Crook 1975, 69f.

⁹⁰ Cf. Hist. Aug. *Aur.* 22, 3 *semper sane cum optimatibus nonsolum bellicas res sed etiam ciuiles, priusquam faceret aliquid, contulit*. See Crook 1975, 69f. Notably, the members of this *consilium* were called *amici principis*, 'friends of the emperor'. Marcus is also said to have adlected many of his *amici* into the senate (Crook 1975, 74f.; Birley 1987, 179).

⁹¹ See Oliver-Palmer 1955, 322.

ruler to take his responsibility in situations where standards are corrupted or boundaries are transgressed by others.

In contrast with some greedy senators, Gellius offers authoritative *consilium*, based on the classical example of the perfect Roman statesman, who serves both national and international interests. He (6, 3) presents Cato's eloquent policy of peace as a politics of unity among the elite, with Cato as the enlightened leader, who saves the state from internal chaos by giving the right example, combining the traditional leniency of Roman rulers with the rhetorical expediency of Antonine intellectuals.⁹² On a different level, Gellius' diatribe against Tiro disqualifies the freedman as 'imperial adviser': in fact, freedmen were traditionally excluded from being *amici principis*,⁹³ and emperors were traditionally characterised 'good' or 'bad' according to the extent to which they curbed the powers of freedmen or failed to do so.⁹⁴

On the column of Marcus Aurelius, the ever present figure of Marcus is generally accompanied by a faithful counsellor.⁹⁵ Perhaps, we may read Gellius' self-presentation in the *Noctes Atticae* in terms of a literary assimilation to the role of such a counsellor on an ideological level, proving himself a 'reliable *amicus*' by interpreting the charismatic authority of Roman antiquity in a way that suited the political circumstances in the contemporary context. The topical quotation of the fetial formula for declaring war (16, 4), recalling Marcus' personal engagement in 178 A.D., and the political reading of the speech held in the senate by Cato the Elder, *orator et imperator summus*, can be seen as examples of Roman intellectual engagement in the age of an emperor who was at war during most of his reign.

⁹² See Braund 1984, 57: "On the whole, Romans treated kings who had fought for their political opponents in civil war with considerable lenience". Braund mentions as examples Caesar's lenient treatment of Deiotarus, despite his support of Pompey, and Octavian's pardoning of Herod, who had been a faithful friend to Antony. These examples are later than Cato the Elder, but earlier than Gellius, who was probably familiar with them.

⁹³ See Crook 1975, 42; 140. For Marcus Aurelius' attitude towards freedmen in politics compare his regulations to disqualify freedmen from membership in prestigious councils like the Boule, the Areopagus, and the Panhellenium; see Kennell 1997, 349f. See below, pp. 270, 287, 309f. for the active involvement of Herodes Atticus in promoting his freedmen into these councils.

⁹⁴ See Nauta 2002, 347f.

⁹⁵ Probably his son-in-law, Claudius Pompeianus; see Birely 1987, 178. See Fig. 101 in Caprino et al. 1955, where we see Marcus conferring with two of his advisers standing next to him.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

COMPARATIVE JUDGMENTS IN GREEK SITES OF MEMORY

Herodes Atticus' controversial personality

We see similar self-authorising strategies at work in Gellius' representation of Herodes Atticus, another brilliantly eloquent intellectual from the Antonine period, whose enormous wealth and political ambitions left their marks in the literature and architecture of his time. Herodes' extensive building programme in both Greece and Italy reflect his idealised public image as a generous benefactor and patron of Greek culture; moreover, as a recent study argues, the verse inscriptions found in various places in the Roman Empire connected to Herodes Atticus reflect this public image in a similar way.¹ Gellius, too, appears to pay homage to the celebrated aspects of Herodes Atticus, representing himself as one of the Roman pupils who were attracted by Herodes' brilliant Greek eloquence, and were invited to his villa at Cephisia. As we shall see, this villa can be viewed as a 'site of memory', remembering its visitors of Herodes' significant aristocratic lineage. In Gellius' ideological perspective, the luxurious villa becomes a symbol of Herodes' seductive eloquence.

However, just as we have seen with Favorinus, Herodes was also a highly controversial personality in both Athens and Rome, and Gellius accordingly engages his reader in an 'investigational' reading that involves similar 'play with reputations'. In contrast with his father Atticus, whose benefactions were felt by the Athenians to be in the public interest,² Herodes' generosity was held to be a calculated strategy to save his own reputation. This reputation was badly damaged by the

¹ On Herodes' building programme see Galli 2002; on the verse inscriptions see Skenteri 2005.

² Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 549 διαθήκαι δέ, ἐν αἷς τῷ Ἀθηναίων δήμῳ κατέλειπε καθ' ἕκαστον ἔτος μνᾶν καθ' ἕνα, μεγαλοφροσύνην κατηγοροῦσι τοῦ ἀνδρός, 'his will, moreover, in which he bequeathed to the people of Athens a mina annually for every citizen, proclaims the magnificence of the man'.

way he treated the Athenians in executing his father's legacy, holding them liable for the debts of their fathers and grandfathers.³

One of the depths in Herodes' career was the trial held before Marcus Aurelius at Sirmium (174/175 AD), which dealt with Herodes' active involvement in the illegal promotion of freedmen in respectable councils like the Areopagos, the Panhellenium, and the Boule.⁴ Connected to the charges that led to the trial before Marcus were accusations of tyranny by the Athenians. Philostratus portrays Herodes' frantic outrage during the trial, where he completely loses control of himself and launches into aggressive invectives against the Emperor.⁵

Writers like Lucian and Philostratus show that the controversial aspects of Herodes' public image made him the butt of invective and polemic. Like Favorinus, Herodes was a favourite object of contemporary satire, especially for his immoderate grief at the loss of his wife and of various children or beloved youths.⁶ These controversial aspects to Herodes' personality also cast a shadow on his reputation at the imperial court. Interestingly, he had once become the teacher of Greek rhetoric of the young Marcus Aurelius, who was also a student of the Stoa. Significantly, Marcus does not mention Herodes at all in his *Meditations*, but makes a remark about Herodes' grief about a lost son in

³ Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 549 παρώξυνε ταῦτα τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ὡς ἡρπασμένους τὴν δωρεάν καὶ οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο μισοῦντες, οὐδὲ ὅποτε τὰ μέγιστα εὐεργετεῖν ᾔετο. τὸ οὖν στάδιον ἔφασαν (εἶ) ἐπονομάσθαι Παναθηναϊκόν, κατεσκευάσθαι γὰρ αὐτὸ ἐξ ὧν ἀπεστεροῦντο Ἀθηναῖοι πάντες, 'this treatment exasperated the Athenians, who felt they had been robbed of their legacy, and they never ceased to hate Herodes, not even when he thought he was conferring on them the greatest benefits. Hence they declared the Panathenaic stadium was well named, since he had built it with money of which all the Athenians were being deprived.'

⁴ See Kennell 1997, who convincingly refutes the prevailing scholarly opinion that the legal proceedings, extensively documented by the imperial inscription by Marcus in which he also aims to reconcile the Athenians with Herodes Atticus, had nothing to do with Herodes; see also Byrne 2003, 120. On the trial see also Birley 1987, 180f.

⁵ Cf. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 560f.: according to Philostratus, Herodes was not in his right mind, but longed for death due to the loss of two beloved foster-daughters; yet, he comments that someone trained in oratory like Herodes should have kept his anger under control. Philostratus also reports accusations against Herodes of having lifted his hand against Antoninus Pius on Mount Ida, when the latter was governor of Asia, but considers these accusations false (2, 1 p. 554f.).

⁶ Lucian's hero Demonax mocks Herodes for his unworthy mourning for Polydeukion, who died prematurely (*Demon.* 24–25; cf. also 33). Lucian does not mention that Peregrinus was one of those who criticised Herodes Atticus for his intemperate grief over his lost son, for this would have been too much to the credit of Peregrinus (as observed by Holford-Strevens 2003, 144 n. 75). For Herodes' excessive grief at the death of his wife Regilla as a topic of mockery cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 pp. 556–557.

a letter to his other master of rhetoric, Fronto, a remark which is in accordance with a Stoic perspective.⁷ Indeed, Fronto writes a *consolatio* in Greek to Herodes, in which he reproaches him for his lack of self-control, a behaviour which he deems inappropriate for a man of education.⁸

These satirised aspects of his personality and image form the context that shaped Gellius' portrayal of Herodes, which turns out to be far more complex and unsettling than the generally accepted rosy picture of the famous Greek orator-politician admired by the young Roman student. As in Gellius' portrayals of Favorinus, we may observe in Herodes' appearances in the *Noctes* an ingenious 'politics of rehabilitation', which turns out to serve the purposes of Gellius' political satire. Using a phraseology that recalls Fronto's reproach of Herodes' want of education, Gellius refers to accusations of an anonymous Stoic, which call Herodes' status as an intellectual and as a man into question (*minus sapienter ... parum uiriliter*), because of his uninhibited grief for his lost boy.⁹ Although Gellius on the surface level 'rehabilitates' Herodes by giving him the opportunity to defend himself against such accusations (19, 12),¹⁰ his repeated mentioning of Herodes' *dolor* indicates that he viewed his identity in accordance with the satirical image,¹¹ remind-

⁷ M. Aur. *epist. M. Caes.* 1, 6 p. 13, 14–16 *Herodi filius natus hodie mortuus est; id Herodes non aequo fert animo. Volo, ut illi aliquid, quod ad hanc rem adtineat, pauculorum uerborum scribas. Semper uale*, 'The son of Herodes, born today, is dead. Herodes is overwhelmed with grief at his loss. I wish you would write him quite a short letter appropriate to the occasion. Fare ever well.'

⁸ Fronto *epist. M. Caes.* 2, 1 p. 16, 11–13 τὸ δὲ μετρίᾳζειν ἐν τοῖς ἥττοσιν κακοῖς οὐ δύσκολον. ἐν παντὶ μὲν γὰρ τὸ κατὰ πάντα θρηνεῖν ἀπομιμῶζειν ἔξω τοῦ προσήκοντος ἀπροεπές ἀνδρὶ παιδείας 'But in lesser evils to act with composure is not difficult. For, indeed, in any case, moaning and bewailing in every way is unseemly for a man who has tasted of education.' As Leofranc Holford-Strevens points out to me, there must be something missing in the palimpsest here, e.g. μετέχοντι. The construction ἀνδρὶ παιδείας is not a Latinism, unlike *Add. Ep.* 5, 8 'Ὁμήρω μάρτυρι = *Homero teste* (see Holford-Strevens 2003, 232 n. 45).

⁹ 19, 12, 2 *Disseruit autem contra ἀπάθειαν Stoicorum lacessitus a quodam Stoico, tamquam minus sapienter et parum uiriliter dolorem ferret ex morte pueri, quem amauerat*, 'he was speaking at the time against the ἀπάθεια, or 'lack of feeling' of the Stoics, in consequence of having been assailed by one of that sect, who alleged that he did not endure the grief which he felt at the death of a beloved boy with sufficient wisdom and masculine vigour.'

¹⁰ Pausch (2004, 223 n. 420) aptly points out that presenting oneself in the role of victim in order to elicit sympathy belongs to the advice given by Plutarch in his *On inoffensive self-praise* (*Mor.* 540c–542a).

¹¹ For Herodes' notorious *dolor* in the *Noctes* cf. Gell. 19, 12 tit. *dissertatio Herodis Attici super ui et natura doloris*; 19, 12, 2; 9, 2, 9 'Sed hoc potius... dolori mihi et aegritudini est, ...'

ing his reader of Herodes' negative press, which had even reached the imperial court.¹²

In all its complexity, Gellius' literary representation of Herodes becomes coherent through the underlying theme of his troublesome relations with Roman emperors. This theme is significant for Gellius' self-fashioning as an intellectual, with the emperor as implicit 'ideal reader'. In this context, it is interesting that a crucial aspect of Herodes' career employed by Gellius is his official function to select candidates for the imperial chairs of philosophy in Athens.¹³ This 'historical' fact throws some light on the political connotations of Gellius' choice to represent Herodes in a role of expositor of pseudo-philosophers. As we have seen above, Gellius' reader is continually challenged to weigh different types of intellectuals against each other, and Herodes' own authority as 'judge' is no exception to this pattern.

In what follows, we shall take a closer look Herodes' role of 'scrutiniser' of professed philosophical authority. Evidence of architectural and sculptural elements from the historical context may help to reanimate and enrich the visual and monumental dimensions of Gellius' literary representation of Herodes Atticus, a representation which is shaped and informed by Roman traditions, and reflects the ideology of Gellius' Roman cultural programme.

Herodes' villa, symbol of seduction and conflict

Almost at the very beginning of the *Noctes Atticae*, in the second chapter of the first book, we encounter Herodes in his luxurious villa at Cephisia in his role of scorner of intellectual pretence and philosophical (especially Stoic) arrogance, a role in which he returns in 9, 2 and 19, 12. Although Gellius never calls him a philosopher, he at least implies that Herodes was a *uir sapiens*, as he is represented as a judge of *sapientes*.¹⁴ This aspect of Herodes' authority in the *Noctes* alludes

¹² In another letter to Marcus Aurelius, Fronto mentions rumours about Herodes' alleged abuse of some of his freedmen: *epist. ad Marc.* 3, 3, 3 (p. 37, 14f.); Tobin 1997, 30f.

¹³ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 2 p. 566 ὅτι τοὺς μὲν Πλατωνεῖους καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τῆς Στωᾶς καὶ τοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ Περιπάτου καὶ αὐτοῦ Ἐπικούρου προσέταξεν ὁ Μάρκος τῷ Ἡρώδῃ κρῖναι, 'because Marcus assigned to Herodes the task of choosing the Platonic philosophers and the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Epicureans'.

¹⁴ Cf. Plin. *epist.* 1, 10, 4 (Pliny on the Greek philosopher Euphrates) *ut enim de pictore*

to one of his official responsibilities in the historical context, the task of electing candidates for the imperial chairs of philosophy in Athens. Viewed in this context, Herodes' intellectual scrutiny gains an imperial dimension, related to the emperor's interest in matters linked with the exercise of social control and elite formation. At the same time, Gellius represents Herodes' scrutiny as an attractive, 'spectacular' form of education, introducing him 'in action' in a chapter prominently placed at the opening of his work, featuring a considerable company of Romans gathered as his audience. Thus, Herodes is also 'put on stage' as an intellectual and a teacher himself, and becomes the object of the reader's scrutiny.

Gellius does not introduce Herodes in the centre of imperial power, but in the apparently utopian setting of literary leisure provided by his Greek country estate at Cephisia, described as a place of seclusion for Romans who go away from Rome to Greece, 'to achieve intellectual cultivation' (*ad capiendum ingenii cultum*).¹⁵ The conspicuous setting of Herodes' villa has ambiguous connotations, which can be brought to light from different perspectives. On the one hand, the phraseology used by Gellius to describe Herodes' Greek villa reflects his own cultural programme and the Roman traditions connected to it, evaluating Herodes' position in a Roman cultural hierarchy. On the other hand, the villa's significance can be illuminated by the archeological evidence of the villa as a 'site of memory', constructed to keep the remembrance of Herodes' personality and power alive.

Gellius' description of the villa in *Noctes Atticae* 1, 2 evokes a Roman tradition of using the villa as a programmatic setting for intellectual conversations that explore fundamental issues regarding Roman culture, a tradition most famously exemplified in Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Tusculan Disputations*. Against this background, the villa's setting is symbolic of the aristocratic use of non-urban space, the place of *otium*, where members of the Roman elite allow themselves to move away

sculptore fictore nisi artifex iudicare, ita nisi sapiens non potest perspicere sapientem, 'for if it takes an artist to judge painting, sculpture and modelling, only one philosopher can really understand another'.

¹⁵ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2,1 p. 562 μετὰ γὰρ τὰ ἐν τῇ Παιονίᾳ διητᾶτο μὲν ὁ Ἡρώδης ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ περὶ τοὺς φιλότατους ἑαυτῷ δήμους Μαραθῶνα καὶ Κηφισίαν ἐξηρητημένης αὐτοῦ τῆς πανταχόθεν νεότητος, οἱ κατ' ἔρωτα τῶν ἐκείνου λόγων ἐφοίτων Ἀθήναζε, 'for after the affair in Paionia, Herodes lived in Attica in the demes that he loved best, Marathon and Cephisia, whilst youths from all parts of the world hung on his lips, flocking to Athens in their desire to hear his eloquence'.

from ancient Roman traditional thinking, and to turn to alternative, more Hellenic models of living and learning.¹⁶

Moreover, Gellius stands in a more recent tradition of Roman imperial writers who describe luxurious villas as a site of imperial culture, especially Pliny the Younger (e.g. *epist.* 1, 3 on Rufus' villa; 2, 17 on Pliny's Laurentine villa),¹⁷ Statius (e.g. *silv.* 1, 3 on Manilius Vopiscus' villa; 2, 2 on Pollius Felix's villa),¹⁸ and Seneca.¹⁹ Just like Statius, Gellius describes the villa from the perspective of an 'outsider', a visiting guest rather than the owner.²⁰ Various elements of Herodes' villa in Gellius resemble Pliny's rhetorical descriptions of luxurious villas, which not only display the owners' material wealth but also represent, symbolically, 'factories of literature', places that embody literary and political ideals.

Thus, Gellius' literary representation of Herodes' villa as a site of cultural activity can be seen against the background of the tradition of Roman imperial literature. In traditional Roman moralising discourse, wealth and luxury were criticised, and the luxury villa was often the focus of such criticism.²¹ By contrast, Gellius, like Pliny the Younger, appears to underline the utopian character of the villa setting, attributing a transcendent meaning to the villa beyond material wealth and empty leisure.²² Herodes Atticus' wealth, symbolised by his luxurious villa at Cephisia, gains a higher value because it enables a *Roman* education. Throughout *Noctes Atticae*, scenes of upper-class life and intellectual circles gathering in luxurious surroundings provide meaningful settings for Roman education.²³

Various questions arise. Does Herodes' villa in Attica embody the literary and political ideals embraced by Gellius in his *Noctes Atticae*?

¹⁶ On the Ciceronian villa as a place associated with Greekness and *otium* see Narducci 2003.

¹⁷ On Pliny's description of his Laurentine villa see Henderson 2003, 122 f.

¹⁸ On Statius' poem on Pollius' Surrentine villa (2, 2) see Nisbet 1995; Nauta 2002, 317 f. On Martial's epigrams on villas (e.g. 3, 47; 3, 58) see Nauta 2002, 161 f.

¹⁹ See Henderson 2005.

²⁰ As opposed to Pliny, who usually describes his own villas to his correspondents, e.g. *epist.* 5, 6.

²¹ Cf. e.g. Sen. *epist.* 86, 4–11; Iuv. 7, 178–183. See Hoffer 1999, 29 n. 2.

²² As Hoffer (1999, 29) points out, "the villa is itself a utopian setting, a work of art as well as the highest expression of natural beauty. It therefore symbolizes the higher value of literature, as well as providing the necessary conditions for literary creation."

²³ Hoffer (1999, 32 f.) discusses the relative uniformity of Roman architecture and lifestyle throughout Italy and beyond (n. 8, with lit.), and points out that "the villa life is a common 'language' that belongs to all members of the upper class [...]."

If not, in what other way is Herodes' villa meaningful? Why did Gellius not portray him in a Roman environment? Moreover, is the villa description as utopian as it appears at first sight? What kind of value does Gellius attach to Herodes' teaching in the countryside? As it turns out, the description of the villa illustrates certain aspects of Gellius' cultural programme, while appropriately ranking Herodes' authority in the cultural hierarchy represented by the *Noctes Atticae*.

It is important to note that the description of Herodes' villa is relatively short and sober, and by no means contains the elaborate and grandiose descriptions of visual detail and works of art that we encounter in Statius' poems (e.g. *silv.* 2, 2, 63–72). The gaze behind Gellius' description seems to be programmatic, and does not primarily reflect the awe of the beholder at the opulence displayed,²⁴ such as one would expect when thinking of the kind of elaborate ecphrasis that characterises contemporary taste.²⁵ Not a single mention is made, for instance, of sculptures or of the many herms set up in important areas of Herodes' villas in order to commemorate his heroes.

The description of Herodes' villa contains words that recall stylistic terms, making the villa's opulence, charm and grace reflect its owner's character and eloquence. As we see in other descriptions of buildings, there seems to be a symbolic connection between the owner and his house.²⁶ Gellius' description of Herodes' villa's long and soft promenades contains the ambiguous term *mollis*, which has literary and political overtones, and symbolises the nature of the delights for which Herodes invited Romans to this villa.²⁷ The abundance of sparkling

²⁴ Contrast e.g. the 'enraptured gaze' in Stat. *silv.* 1, 3, 14 *quam lassos per tot miracula uisus*; Nauta (2002, 392f. with n. 47) draws attention to the parallel between Statius' elaborate description of the imperial palace on the Palatine (4, 2) and his villa descriptions in 1, 3 and 2, 2.

²⁵ Despite its lack of visual detail, Gellius' description of Herodes' villa is sometimes seen as reflecting the taste for ecphrasis in the second century (see e.g. Holford-Strevens 2003, 141 n. 58).

²⁶ See van Dam 1984, 190, who compares Hor. *epist.* 1, 16, where his Sabine farm exemplifies the *uir bonus*. Cf. Stat. *silv.* 2, 2, 29 *domini imitantia mores*.

²⁷ Pliny in *epist.* 1, 3, 1 and 2, 17, 27 creates a balance between 'softness' and 'hardness' to make *mollitia* seem acceptable for the Roman aristocrat; cf. *epist.* 1, 3, 1 *quid illa mollis et tamen solida gestatio*, 'how is that soft but firm riding-ground?'; Gellius affirms that the promenades were long and also soft (note the word order *longis ambulacris et mollibus*). For *mollis* in villa descriptions cf. also Plin. *epist.* 2, 17, 15 *adiacet gestationi interiore circumitu uinea tenera et umbrosa, nudisque etiam pedibus mollis et cedens*; 2, 17, 27 (*villas on a sandy beach*) (*litis*) *quod non numquam longa tranquillitas mollit, saepius frequens et contrarius fluctus indurat*.

water in the baths (*nitidis ... collucentibus*) seems to symbolise Herodes' fluent and brilliant eloquence, which is described in similar terms by Philostratus.²⁸

Herodes' brilliant eloquence takes us to the heart of his controversial reputation, a reputation employed by Gellius to highlight him as an example of ambiguous authority within his Roman cultural programme. Like his representations of Favorinus, Gellius' portrayals of Herodes picture him as a champion of Greek eloquence: the phrase *Graeca, uti plurimus ei mos fuit* ('speaking in Greek as was his general custom', 1, 2, 6) presents his use of Greek as a conscious cultural choice, while implying that Herodes was also able to speak Latin.²⁹

Moreover, Gellius' joint references to Herodes as both a brilliant Greek orator and a *uir consularis* allude to the controversial use of his oratorical power in his political activities.³⁰ According to Philostratus (*vit. soph.* 1, 25 pp. 536–537), Herodes preferred renown for being excellent in impromptu speaking rather than for being a consul. His political opponents in the Athenian ἐκκλησία (Demostratus, Praxagoras, Mamertinus) openly attacked Herodes because he corrupted the magistrates of Greece with his honey-sweet rhetoric.³¹ Thus, we can connect Gellius' commemoration of Herodes' rhetorical power and political career, reflected in his villa as a 'site of memory', to a context of political conflict, in which a 'rhetoric of anti-rhetoric' was used to expose the deceptive and dangerous influence of the σοφιστής Herodes Atticus.³²

²⁸ Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 564 καὶ ἡ ἐπίπαν ἰδέα τοῦ λόγου χρυσοῦ ψῆγμα ποταμῷ ἀργυροδίνῃ ὑπαυγάζον, 'his type of eloquence is like gold dust shining beneath the waters of a silver eddying river'. For *nitidus* as a term of elegance and style (of persons: 'elegant, sophisticated') see van Dam on Stat. *silv.* 2, 2, 10.

²⁹ On Gellius' emphasis on Herodes' Hellenic culture see Gamberale 1996, 64–65, who observes that it is no coincidence that the intellectuals visiting Gellius in Herodes' villa in 18, 10 are all Greek rhetoricians and philosophers (p. 65 n. 38). In the trial in which he was the *aduersarius* of Fronto, Herodes probably spoke Latin; Gamberale (79) points out that he had followed the regular *cursus honorum* at Rome, and must have been able to speak Latin to perform his official tasks. As Gamberale argues, other Greek writers such as Appian and Dio Cassius were likely to have been able to speak Latin too.

³⁰ Cf. Gell. 1, 2, 1 *uir et Graeca facundia et consulari honore praeditus*; 9, 2, 1 *Herodem Atticum, consularem uirum ingenioque amoeno et Graeca facundia celebrem*; 19, 12, 1 *Herodem Atticum, consularem uirum, Athenis disserentem audiui Graeca oratione, in qua fere omnes memoriae nostrae uniuersos grauitate atque copia et elegantia uocum longe praestitit*.

³¹ *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 561 ὡς τοὺς ἀρχοντας τῆς Ἑλλάδος ὑποποιουμένου πολλῷ τῷ μέλιτι καὶ πον καὶ βεβρηκότες “ὃ πικροῦ μέλιτος”.

³² Herodes' characterisation as a 'sophist' in Philostratus' *Lives of the sophists* is closely

In general, Herodes' villa in *Noctes Atticae* reflects the seductive and relaxing aspects that Romans perceived in *Greek* culture, ambiguous aspects which they associated with oral rather than with written culture, and with *otium* rather than *negotium*. The cultural connotations of the oppositions between orality and writing, between Greek and Latin, between country and town, and between *otium* and *negotium*, shed light on the connections of the villa description with Gellius' cultural programme. Chapter 1, 2 is connected with the programmatic statements of the *Praefatio* through allusions to a Roman discourse of authority, especially the authority that educated Romans acquire through 'studying (writing) by lamplight', and through improving discussions and debates.

The villa description especially alludes to a passage in Quintilian, which immediately precedes his discussion of the importance of concentrated writing (*inst.* 10, 3, 25 f.). In this preceding passage, Quintilian enumerates seductive sights and sounds which distract the mind from doing its duty (*inst.* 10, 3, 24):

Quare siluarum amoenitas et praeterlabentia flumina et inspirantes ramis arborum aerae uolucrumque cantus et ipsa late circumspiciendi libertas ad se trahunt, ut mihi remittere potius uoluptas ista uideatur cogitationem quam intendere.

Therefore, the charm of the woods, the gliding of the stream, the breeze that murmurs in the branches, the song of the birds, and the very freedom with which our eyes may range, are mere distractions, and in my opinion the pleasure which they excite is more likely to relax than to concentrate our attention.

Compare this with Gellius' description of Herodes' villa (1, 2, 2):

Atque ibi tunc, cum essemus apud eum in uilla, cui nomen est Cephisia, et aestu anni et sidere autumnii flagrantissimo, propulsabamus incommoda caloris lucorum umbra ingentium, longis ambulacris et mollibus, aedium positu refrigeranti, lauacris nitidis et abundis et collucentibus totiusque uillae uenustate aquis undique canoris atque auibus personante.

intertwined with the political rivalries and conflicts which produced negative labels like σοφιστής, ῥήτωρ, δεινότης and δεινὸς λέγειν, labels that belonged to a 'rhetoric of anti-rhetoric' going back to the political discourse of classical Athens (see Ober 1989, 171–177; Hesk 2000, 212–217), in particular the conflict between Aeschines and Demosthenes, which Philostratus uses as a model for 'sophistic identity' (*vit. soph.* p. 483; 1, 18 p. 507). For a comparison between Herodes and Demosthenes cf. *vit. soph.* 1, 25 p. 539 εἰς ὡς Δημοσθένης; on Demosthenes' paradigmatic role in the 2nd century see Swain 1996, 96; Rutherford 1998, 22; Holford-Strevens 2003, 238f. For the negative value of σοφιστικὸς for the 2nd century author Hermogenes (who uses it of Aeschines) see Rutherford 1998, 25. See chapter seven, n. 19.

And there at that time, while we were with him at the villa called Cephisia, both in the heat of the summer and under the burning autumnal sun, we protected ourselves against the trying temperature by the shades of its spacious groves, its long, soft promenades, the cool location of the house, its glittering baths with their abundance of sparkling water, and the charm of the villa as a whole, which was everywhere melodious with splashing waters and tuneful birds.

The Greek cultural world of Herodes' villa, presenting a feast for the ear and the eye and embodying the oral eloquence of its owner, forms a clearcut contrast with the world of Rome, which is associated with Roman textual authority and imperial inscriptions. Herodes' world represents the Quintilianic '*remittere*' ('relax') rather than '*intendere*' ('concentrate'), an opposition which is also meaningful in Gellius' cultural programme.³³ The non-urban surroundings where young Romans like Gellius are captivated by Herodes' Greek eloquence refer to Herodes' penchant for the pure Attic spoken in the countryside of Attica,³⁴ and form a meaningful contrast with the urban environment of Latin literary sophistication in which Gellius' cultural world is anchored.

Gellius suppresses elements associated with writing and preserving memory which were actually present at Herodes' villa, as we shall see, such as the herms with commemorative inscriptions. Other elements from his description add further ambiguous cultural connotations. Just like the villas described by Pliny—also a *uir consularis*—and Statius, Gellius emphasises that Herodes' idyllic villa had groves and baths, offering shade and coolness from the burning sun.³⁵ This may suggest an opposition between nature (the sun) and expensive artifice (the

³³ In Gell. 18, 2, 1, the intellectual pastimes of Gellius' Athenian Saturnalia are presented as a form of mental relaxation, recalling the *remissiones* from Gellius' *Praefatio* (1); at the same time, Musonius' stern dictum '*remittere ... animum quasi amittere est*' draws attention to the thin line between intellectual relaxation and reprehensible frivolity. See Holford-Strevens 2003, 278 with n. 78. For *intendere* as indicator of the ideal reader's attitude cf. Gell. 11, 3, 4 *quod profecto facile intelleget, si quis adhibeat ad meditationem suam intentionem*; 19, 14, 5 *quae reliquimus inenarrata ad exercendam legentium intentionem*. Cf. Apul. *Met.* 1, 1, 6 *lector intende: laetaberis*.

³⁴ See Gray 2006.

³⁵ For the shelter against the sun cf. Stat. *silv.* 1, 3, 7–8; 2, 2, 32. For groves as a typical feature of villas cf. e.g. Plin. *epist.* 5, 6; Sen. *epist.* 55, 6; Stat. *silv.* 1, 3, 38–39; Hoffer 1999, 35 n. 17. For baths cf. Stat. *silv.* 1, 3, 43–44; 2, 2, 17–19; Plin. *epist.* 1, 3, 1 *quid balineum illud quod plurimus sol implet et circumit*, 'how is that bath that so much sun fills and surrounds?'. Gellius notes that Herodes' baths sparkle and shine (1, 2, 2 *nitidis ... collucentibus*), which perhaps suggests that they also reflected the sunlight and were not in the shade. For *colluceo* of reflecting (sun)light see *OLD* s.v. 2.

groves, the baths), an artifice that reflects the prosperity of the Roman Empire.³⁶ Yet, Herodes' villa is different from Pliny's Laurentine villa (*epist.* 3, 17), which reflects "obsession with catching sunlight", but also offers enclosed spaces intended for concentrated studying and writing.³⁷ In Gellius, there is rather an emphasis on shade and shelter, which has a programmatic undertone. Given the traditional Roman associations between burning sunlight and the hustle and bustle of Roman public life on the one hand, and between shade and 'academic' pursuits on the other, the idyllic shelter of the villa's artificial surroundings tell us something about the ambiguous value of the *cultus* that young Romans came to search for in Greece, away from the urban life of *negotium* at Rome.³⁸

The ambiguous connotations of Herodes' villa are also reflected in other sources, such as archeological findings, or Philostratus' biographical anecdotes about the wealthy sophist. Cephisia was the place where Herodes' beloved foster-son (τρόφιμος) Polydeukion was buried, and it seems to have been the main place where the heroicised youth was worshipped by Herodes and his family and friends.³⁹ Herodes' villa, moreover, was decorated with busts of himself and his beloved pupils, and among the sculptural and architectural remains portraits of Herodes and Polydeukion were found.⁴⁰

In spite of its location outside the parameters of Rome, Herodes' estate was politically charged. It reflected important aspects of Herodes' public image, including the controversial ones. Philostratus' description (*vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 559) of Herodes' proclivity to erect statues of his foster-sons in various stages of the hunt, which was criticised by his adversaries, the Roman Quintilii brothers,⁴¹ is partly matched by the numer-

³⁶ For the villa in Statius as reflecting the prosperity and high technical level of the Roman Empire see Newlands 2002, 121; 125.

³⁷ See Henderson 2003, 123: "The obsession with catching sunlight ... tells of Pliny's love of conventional approach, imperial benevolence, glory, and honour".

³⁸ For the opposition burning sun—shade see Part II, p. 181 (cf. 179 n. 79). Compare the shorter description of the same villa in Gell. 18, 10, 1 in *Herodis, C.V., uillam, quae est in agro Attico, loco qui appellatur Cephisiae, aquis lucidis et nemoribus frequentem, aestu anni medio concesseram*, 'In the midst of the summer heat I had withdrawn to the country house of Herodes, a man of senatorial rank, at a place in the territory of Attica which is called Cephisia, abounding in clear waters and groves'.

³⁹ See Tobin 1997, 100–101; 107. The word τρόφιμος ('foster-child') also connotes 'pupil', 'alumnus', cf. Plat. *resp.* 520D; Lucian. *bis acc.* 6.

⁴⁰ For Herodes' portrayal see Zanker 1995, 243f. (the section 'The Elegant Intellectual'); for Herodes' bust at the Louvre see de Kersauson 1996, N^o. 132.

⁴¹ At the time of their conflict with Herodes Atticus the Quintilii, two learned and

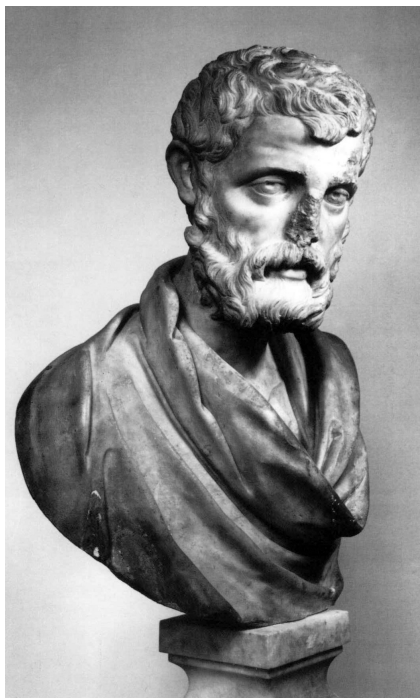


Plate I: Herodes Atticus (see n. 40).

ous archaeological findings of monuments with curse inscriptions, especially in the area of the Cephisia villa.⁴²

With his account of Herodes' statues of his *trophimoi* hunting, Philostratus implicitly compares the relationship between Herodes and Polydeukion with the relationship between the emperor Hadrian and his favourite Antinoos—Hadrian indeed depicted himself and Antinoos in the pursuit of hunting in one of the scenes displayed in the Hunting Tondi in Rome, which originally decorated a monument erected by Hadrian. This adds to the evidence that Herodes Atticus in his self-presentation liked to imitate Hadrian, or had the tendency to put him-

wealthy members of one of the Roman elite families in the East, were administering the province of Achaëa (as special legates).

⁴² As Philostratus points out, the curse inscriptions protect the monuments from being moved or mutilated by malefactors. Such curse-inscriptions also form a significant background against which we should interpret an inscribed poem at Triopion, Herodes' estate on the Via Appia, which asks for divine protection of the estate and threatens potential vandals with utter destruction. See Skenteri 2005, 29–63.

self on a par with Roman emperors.⁴³ This confirms the overall impression that Herodes' public image was one of a person with enormous cultural and financial power and influence and the ambition to present himself as the equal of emperors.⁴⁴

Interestingly, the monuments found in Cephisia do not represent Polydeukion and Herodes' other *trophimoi* in the various stages of the hunt, as Philostratus alleges, but mostly in the form of static herms with inscriptions, which contribute to the villa's status as a 'site of memory'. It is not unlikely that Herodes Atticus' inspiration for these herms derives from the herms set up throughout Attica and Athens by the tyrant with the same name as his grandfather, Hipparchus.⁴⁵

One of the monuments at Cephisia offers a curse inscription on a herm with a portrait head of Polydeukion, with a heading declaring: 'the hero Polydeukion. Once I used to walk with you at this crossroad' (ἥρως Πολυδευκίων, ταῖσδ' ἐποτρύνει ἐν τριόδῳ σὺν σοὶ ἐπεστρεφόμην).⁴⁶ Such monuments of Herodes' personal emotions add to the controversial nature of his villa: from a Roman perspective, love for slaves or *liberti* is a form of *luxuria* and thus something liable to criticism.⁴⁷ The walks Herodes made with beloved pupils such as Polydeukion seem reflected in the strolls along the *longis ambulacris et mollibus* mentioned

⁴³ Emulation of Hadrian (Tobin 1997, 292; Holford-Strevens 2003, 313 n. 38): the portraits and heroification of Polydeukion resembled those of Antinoos; the games set up for Polydeukion at the site of his cult at Cephisia echo the games Hadrian set up for Antinoos (Tobin 1997, 105–106). Herodes continued give the Athenians donations (the Panathenaic Stadium, the Odeion; cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 550), for which Hadrian had set a precedent a few decades earlier (Tobin 1997, 162); on his ancestral estate at Marathon, Herodes had an area called the Canopus, decorated with Egyptianising sculptures similar to those of Hadrian's Canopus in Tivoli (Tobin 1997, 265). Comparison with emperors: in several places, Herodes set up matching protomes of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus and himself, perhaps, as Tobin 1997, 291–292 suggests, as a sort of 'royal triad'.

⁴⁴ See Kennell 1997, 349; 351. For Herodes' risky ambitions see below, pp. 307–309.

⁴⁵ The most famous herms, which were still known to lexicographers of late antiquity (see Hesychius s.v. Ἰππαρχεῖος Ἑρμῆς; Harpokration and Suidas s.v. Ἑρμαῖ) were the memorials of Hipparchus with the inscription μνῆμα τόδ' Ἰππάρχου ('this is a memorial of Hipparchus'), set up by the tyrant throughout the Attic countryside. According to the Platonic dialogue *Hipparchus*, the inscriptions on the herms contained wise thoughts of Hipparchus in verse, such as "This is a memorial of Hipparchus. Walk thinking just thoughts." or "This is a memorial of Hipparchus. Do not deceive a friend." On the herms of Hipparchus see Shapiro 1989, 125–132.

⁴⁶ See Tobin 1997, 121–122.

⁴⁷ Cf. Stat. *silv.* 2, 1; 2, 6 (a consolation poem for freed slaves, which has a slightly apologetic tone, as if the sorrow was something to be ashamed of). Statius deplores a young slave in 5, 5.

by Gellius (1, 2, 2): we may picture Gellius as one of Herodes' *trophimoi* walking together with his beloved master, passing the same crossroad as the historical Herodes once did with Polydeukion, and possibly reading the commemorative inscriptions.⁴⁸

The uncontrolled statesman under imperial control

In spite of the seductive, idyllic surroundings of Herodes' Greek villa, the intellectual cultivation that is presented there by Gellius is far from idyllic. The tone that permeates the scene in 1, 2 is one of fierce diatribe. To a certain extent, the discussion recalls the programmatic statement from the *Praefatio* about learning through competitive debates (19). However, what we observe here is not the *uoluptas* of playful and improving intellectual exchange. The pleasant dinner, staged in a pleasant villa, introduces the reader into a world of polemic, diatribe, and verbal abuse, which 'sets the tone' for much of what is to come in the *Noctes*.⁴⁹ At the same time, this tone is true to the controversial personality of Herodes Atticus himself, whose life was marked by the various conflicts in which he was implicated. Philostratus repeatedly reports that Herodes did not shun the use of aggressive invective, even against the Emperor himself.⁵⁰

Instead of the poetic leisure which one could expect in such a pastoral setting, the text read during the after-dinner conversation is a severe diatribe by Epictetus against those impostors who do not deserve the name of Stoic philosopher.⁵¹ With Epictetus' words, Herodes Atti-

⁴⁸ See Tobin 1997, 121–122. Two of the herms of Polydeukion found at Herodes' villas mention baths; Tobin (1997, 151) plausibly suggests that such sculptures were set up to protect monuments in the area of the baths.

⁴⁹ Compare the opening of the narrative in Apuleius' *Metamorphoses* (1, 2–3), which is also staged in a 'world of *amici*', but sets out in a harsh atmosphere of conflicting positions and diatribe. See GCA 2007, 29f.

⁵⁰ Cf. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 549 (against his freedman); p. 561 (against Marcus Aurelius during the trial at Sirmium). On the latter case see Brown 1992, 48f., who points to the association between lacking self-control and inadequate rhetorical *paideia*.

⁵¹ 1, 2, 6 *librum, in quo ille uenerandus senex iuuenes qui se 'Stoicos' appellabant ... obiurgatione iusta incessuit*, 'the volume, in which that venerable old man with just severity rebukes those young men who call themselves Stoics'; 1, 2, 7 *quibus uerbis Epictetus seuerè simul et festiuiter seinixit atque diuisit a uero atque sincero Stoico ... uulgus aliud nebulonum hominum qui se 'Stoicos' nuncuparent*, '... in which Epictetus with equal severity and humour set apart and separated from the true and genuine Stoic ... that other mob of triflers who styled themselves Stoics'.

cus intends to put an arrogant young Stoic dinner guest in his place, who had claimed superior philosophical expertise in all fields. The young bragger's abuse has a polemical tone that possibly reflects tensions between various claims to cultural authority in the Antonine age.⁵²

Quoting the Greek text of Arrian's Epictetus, Herodes does not teach his Roman students a lesson in Greek moral philosophy as a form of sympotic relaxation.⁵³ Quoting Epictetus, who was as Roman as a Greek could be,⁵⁴ Herodes seems to voice a programmatic aversion in the *Noctes*, a Roman aversion to philosophical knowledge that is not combined with sound morality, or against bookish principles that prove useless in the face of the challenges of real life. The quotation concerns the value of true philosophical knowledge, weighing the use of theoretical principles against the forming of one's own personal judgment by life experience, for which books are of little help.⁵⁵

Thus, the quotation of Epictetus is meaningful on several levels of communication. This is also indicated by Gellius himself at the end of the chapter, pointing out that the words were not only pronounced by Epictetus against others, but also, as it were, by Herodes against the arrogant dinner guest (1, 2, 13). Moreover, Herodes' lesson in moral philosophy is also programmatic on a different level, the level of communication between Gellius and his 'ideal reader'. On this level, the diatribe introduces the reader in the satirical mode employed throughout the *Noctes Atticae*, most often at the cost of Favorinus. It is the mode by which Gellius appears to introduce an intellectual celebrity as a 'mouthpiece' of his own viewpoints, but turns out to satirise his personality by having him make statements to others that expose notorious aspects of his own controversial reputation. Thus, Herodes is not simply the 'hero' who exposes the caricatural arrogant other: like Favorinus, he combines the role of 'exposer' with that of 'object of exposure'.

⁵² Cf. 1, 2, 4 *praeque se uno ceteros omnes linguae Atticae principes gentemque omnem togatam, quodcumque nomen Latinum rudes esse et agrestes praedicabat*, 'maintaining that compared with himself all the Greek-speaking authorities, all wearers of the toga, and the Latin race in general were ignorant boors'... Swain (2004, 37) observes that "the abuse accords both cultures equal status." The arrogant presumptions of the young Stoic resemble the portrayal of the sophist Antiphon in Philostr. *vit. soph.* 1, 15 p. 499.

⁵³ In my view, Beall 2004, 210 sees the moral implications of 1, 2 too much as a subordinate part of the pleasures of dinner conversation ("moral philosophy has its place—provided that it occurs in aid, rather than to the detriment, of a pleasant dinner").

⁵⁴ See B.L. Hijmans's response to R.G. Mayer in the *Discussion*, Mayer 1991, 173.

⁵⁵ The original context of the quotation is in Arrian's Epictetus, 2, 19, 12–17.

Herodes' quotation from the diatribe of Epictetus contains a Stoic discussion of good, bad, and indifferent things (ἀδιάφορα). Among the 'indifferent things' quoted by Herodes are various things to which he had allegedly been not very indifferent in his own life, such as wealth, death, and pain.⁵⁶ Herodes/Epictetus introduces the powerful image of the shipwreck (Gell. 1, 2, 9–11), evoking proverbial sayings related to the virtue of being independent from 'indifferent things' such as wealth.⁵⁷ The Stoic wisdom and the image of the shipwreck evoke a Roman discourse of political philosophy that reflects on the behaviour of the virtuous statesman and his attitude towards glory, power, and wealth.

In his *De re publica*, Cicero makes the younger Scipio use the same image. In his first speech, he views political activity as a necessary task (1, 27, 2), but one which should be seen in a proper perspective, since glory, wealth, and political power are insignificant things in comparison with the kind of wisdom which frees humans from unnecessary anxieties and emotions: whoever possesses no more than what he can carry away with him from a shipwreck feels secure in his possessions.⁵⁸ This wisdom, in the spirit of Scipio's philosophical adviser, the Stoic Panaetius,⁵⁹ is also present in a passage from Cicero's *De officiis* focusing on the attitudes and activities of the statesman, who is identified with the Aristotelian *μεγαλόψυχος* (*off.* 1, 61–92). Paying homage to the Stoic doctrine of ἀπάθεια, Cicero stresses that the statesman should be free from mental agitation and the desire for wealth (*off.* 1, 68f.). Ironically, Gellius makes Herodes Atticus refer to the same doctrine in 19, 12, 3,⁶⁰ in which Herodes attacks Stoic impassivity in defence against charges

⁵⁶ Gell. 1, 2, 9 = Epict. 2, 19, 13. Significantly, wealth (πλοῦτος) is mentioned first.

⁵⁷ See Otto, *Sprichwörter*, s.v. *naufragium*.

⁵⁸ Cic. *rep.* 1, 28, 4 *quis uero diuitiorem quemquam putet quam eum cui nihil desit quod quidem natura desideret, aut potentiorum quam illum qui omnia quae expetat consequatur, aut beatiorum quam qui sit omni perturbatione animi liberatus, aut firmiore fortuna quam qui ea possideat quae secum ut aiunt uel e naufragio possit efferre?*, 'who in truth would consider anyone richer than the man who lacks nothing than his nature requires, or more powerful than one who gains all he strives for, or happier than one is who is set free from all perturbances of mind, or more secure in his wealth than one who possesses only what, as the saying goes, he can carry away with him out of a shipwreck?'.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ On Panaetius' role as philosophical adviser of the Roman statesman Scipio see Rawson 1989, 237–238. Panaetius is also the source of Gellius' chapter on the statesman as the pancratiast who is constantly on guard (13, 28; see Part II, p. 184).

⁶⁰ See Dyck on Cic. *off.* 1, 69a on the five-fold scheme of *perturbationes animi* discussed there, and on the recurrence of the same scheme in Gell. 19, 12, 3. Cf. 19, 12, 2 *disseruit autem contra ἀπαθείαν Stoicorum lacessitus a quodam Stoico, tamquam minus sapienter et parum uiriliter dolorem ferret*.

of immoderate grief, recalling the accusations which had actually been made against him.

In the same passage, Cicero/Panaetius draws an essential distinction between men of leisure, who lead a withdrawn life on their estates, and those who engage in the political life of the community. One particular sentence invites comparison with Gellius' representation of Herodes Atticus, as it invokes a withdrawn life on a luxurious estate.⁶¹ Although the contrast between the two alternative lifestyles is apparently presented without rating there, in his appendix to *off.* book 1 Cicero argues the superiority of the *vita activa* over the *vita contemplativa*.⁶² This provides a telling background for Gellius' ideological perspective on Herodes Atticus.

In chapter 1, 2 of *Noctes Atticae*, Herodes/Epictetus alludes to the *vita activa* through the image of steering a ship through a storm, a situation where theoretical classifications from philosophers do not offer any help: the captain has to act in the experience of the moment.⁶³ This is a subtle reminder of Herodes' own identity as a Roman statesman. In the original context of Herodes' quotation of the diatribe, Epictetus exhorts his addressee not to limit himself to learning written theories, but to form his own judgment by using experience. Moreover, Epictetus significantly adds that forming independent judgment is particularly important in issues of conduct (2, 19, 11 ἐπὶ τῶν ἡθικῶν). By implication, Gellius conveys the same message to his reader, inviting him to form his own independent judgment, and to put 'statesman' Herodes himself under closer scrutiny in the light of his own teaching.

In a similar kind of 'politics of rehabilitation' to that which he pursues with Favorinus, Gellius gives Herodes the 'opportunity' to attack Stoic philosophers who proclaim ἀπάθεια as an absolute Stoic virtue, both at the beginning of his *Noctes* (1, 2, 5) and near the end (19, 12). At the same time, however, Gellius draws the reader's attention to Herodes' controversial character, repeatedly mentioning his immoder-

⁶¹ Cf. Cic. *off.* 1, 69 *quidam homines seueri et graues nec populi nec principum mores ferre potuerunt, uixeruntque nonnulli in agris delectati re sua familiari*, 'these include ... certain strict and serious men who could not endure the behaviour of the populace or its leaders. Some of these have spent their lives on their estates finding their delight in family wealth.'

⁶² See Dyck on Cic. *off.* 1, 69b–71 on Cicero's assessment of the contrast between the *vita activa* and *vita contemplativa*.

⁶³ See Part I, p. 54 n. 47 on the *gubernator* as an image for the statesman.

ate *dolor*,⁶⁴ which is at odds with the *robustus animus* to be expected of a Roman statesman.⁶⁵ Gellius gives Herodes the epithet of a statesman (*uir consularis*), associating him with a Roman life of *negotium*, but, on the other hand, he consistently represents him as a man of leisure, who attracts many young Romans to pursue intellectual culture in his luxurious Greek villa. This provokes reflection in the Roman reader on the rating of a life of political duties versus a life of leisure, issues that were central in the tradition of Roman political philosophy. Herodes was also immeasurably rich; the way he used his power and wealth was notoriously controversial, and not always in accordance with the idea of generosity inherent in the notion of μεγαλοψυχία, as we shall observe in more detail below.

Thus, in this programmatic chapter at the outset of the *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius' reader is invited to assess Herodes Atticus' authority as a statesman and as a μεγαλόψυχος, acknowledging him an *exemplum* to be ranked with other wise statesman depicted throughout *Noctes Atticae*, such as Fabricius and Cato the Elder. Although Cato is never explicitly compared with Herodes in *Noctes Atticae*, a Roman reader might have thought of the contrast between Herodes' luxurious villa and the legendary farm of Cato, who was a wealthy landowner too, but represented himself as a hard-working farmer-statesman, fashioning himself after the Romans of the old days (cf. Gell. 13, 24, 1 *uillas suas inexcultas et rudes*).⁶⁶

However, the climax of chapter 1, 2 is Herodes'/Epictetus' mentioning of the Emperor (ὁ Καῖσαρ) at the end of the quotation: here the text has a curious lacuna. Parallel to the shipwreck caused by a storm as an example of challenges posed by real life, Herodes/Epictetus mentions a summons to court by the Emperor (1, 2, 12 Ἐὰν δέ σε ὁ Καῖσαρ μεταπέμψηται κατηγορούμενον). Significantly, the reference to the Emperor immediately silences the arrogant Stoic, who evidently has no recourse to any catchy syllogism or dialectical trick when it comes to the realities of Roman imperial power.

⁶⁴ For Herodes' notorious *dolor* see above, p. 271 n. 11.

⁶⁵ Cf. Cic. *off.* 1, 67 *ea quae uidentur acerba ... ita ferre ut nihil a statu naturae discedas, nihil a dignitate sapientis, robusti animi est magnaeque constantiae*. For the phrase *robustus animus* Dyck ad loc. interestingly quotes *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* 3, 23, 28, where μεγαλοψυχία is said to consist in ῥώμη καὶ ἰσχύς ψυχῆς.

⁶⁶ See Reay 2005. For the famous Catonian *exemplum* cf. Sen. *epist.* 11, 10 *elige itaque Catonem* and see Henderson 2005, 17 on Cato as the embodiment of 'Traditional Homegrown Sense'.

Yet, the most important implications of mentioning the Emperor as a judge in a context of attacking fake philosophical authority are on the level of the reader's scrutiny of Herodes Atticus. Herodes' reference to being summoned by the Emperor, using a quotation of Epictetus, one of Marcus Aurelius' favourite philosophers,⁶⁷ immediately recalls the confrontation between Herodes and Marcus himself, when he had to appear before the Emperor in court at Sirmium (174/175 AD). The trial formed the climax of Herodes' conflict with the Athenians, which involved accusations of tyranny, and various grievances concerning his illegitimate promotion of freedmen into respectable political positions. Gellius could not have been unaware of this trial, since he probably published the *Noctes Atticae* after Herodes' death.⁶⁸ The implicit allusion to the inscription written by Marcus after his legal settlement of the conflicts may reinforce the underlying contrast in this chapter between the unreliable authority of Herodes' oral power and the enduring authority of Roman imperial writing.

Both the sensational trial and Marcus' inscription must have been vividly present in the collective memory of Gellius' day.⁶⁹ Gellius exploits this memory to arrest his reader's attention at the outset of his work by putting the allusion to the summons by ὁ Καῖσαρ on the lips of Herodes Atticus himself. Herodes' *exemplum* becomes even more meaningful if we substitute for Gellius' ideal reader the figure of the emperor himself, the 'supreme judge of authority' who once delegated to Herodes the task of scrutinising philosophers for the imperial chair. Viewed in the light of the troublesome relation between Herodes and the imperial family, Gellius' chapter turns out to refresh 'imperial memory' regarding the controversial conduct and authority of one of the most conspicuous and influential figures of the recent past, inviting the 'ideal reader' to rate the value of this *exemplum* as a political and cultural role-model.

⁶⁷ Cf. *Med.* 1, 7; 19; see Rawson 1989, 251.

⁶⁸ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 18–19: "In 19, 12, 1 Gellius reports that he heard Herodes Atticus discoursing at Athens 'in the Greek language, in which he far excelled (*longe praestitit*) virtually all others in my lifetime' for the merits of his style; once more the tense indicates that Herodes, who continued successfully declaiming till the very end, is dead, and therefore the notice was written in or after 177."

⁶⁹ At the end of the inscription, Marcus tries to reconcile Herodes with the Athenians; SEG XXIX 127, l. 88f. See Oliver 1970; Kennell 1997.

The ambitious sophist and the subversive philosopher (9, 2)

The central topics of scrutinising philosophical authority and ‘living up to one’s name’ from chapter 1, 2, whether this name is ‘*philosophus*’ or ‘*uir consularis*’, return in another programmatic chapter featuring Herodes Atticus, which is placed roughly in the middle of *Noctes Atticae* (9, 2). Here, the villa setting is not explicitly mentioned; instead, the gaze is directed at other visual repositories of memory, which illustrate the chapter’s concern with ‘names’ as symbols of clashing political and cultural ideals.

Chapter 9, 2 is an illuminating example of the way Gellius participates in the politico-cultural debate of his time through literary means. Employing various traditions of memory of the recent and less recent past, his *Noctes Atticae* provokes thoughts in the present about desirable and undesirable conduct in a Roman political context. Joining various lines of visual and non-visual scrutiny and comparative judgment (σύγκρισις) in concert, chapter 9, 2 is a satirical masterpiece full of contrasting symbols of political conduct, composed around the unifying theme of living up to one’s name. It employs the controversial reputation of Herodes in combination with other evocative names and characters, which have associations with subversiveness and clashes with power. The most important objects of comparative criticism and scrutiny in the chapter are Herodes himself, the unkempt pseudo-philosopher, the Stoic philosopher Musonius, and the *exemplum* of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. This all leads up to the final section of the chapter, in which the Roman *mos maiorum* represents the authoritative tradition of memory, which defines and safeguards elite identity by a *damnatio memoriae*, forbidding the use of the name of those who prove unworthy of their country.

The occasion is Herodes’ encounter, at the time when Gellius was his *sectator*, with ‘a man in a cloak, with long hair and a beard that reached almost to his waist’ (9, 2, 1 *palliatu quispiam et crinitu barbaque prope ad pubem usque porrecta*). Herodes’ primary concern is, at first sight, the unjustified usurpation of the *nomen* of ‘philosopher’ (9, 2, 9 *nomen usurpant sanctissimum et philosophi appellantur*; 9, 2, 11 *cur ergo nos patimur nomen philosophiae inlustrissimum in hominibus deterrimis exordescere?*).⁷⁰ In the spirit of a diatribe by Epictetus (4, 8), Herodes poses a crucial question

⁷⁰ Cf. 10, 22, 1 *in desides istos ignavosque, qui obtentu philosophiae nominis inutile otium et linguae uitaeque tenebras secuntur*; 1, 2, 7 *qui ... sanctissimae disciplinae nomen ementirentur*.

related to a fundamental issue behind the *Noctes Atticae*, the issue of recognising true authority:

9, 2, 4–5 “*Vide*”, inquit Herodes, “*barbam et pallium, philosophum nondum uideo. Quaeso autem te, cum bona uenia dicas mihi quibus nos uti posse argumentis existimas, ut esse te philosophum noscitemus.*”

“I see”, said Herodes, “a beard and a cloak; the philosopher I do not yet see. Now, I pray you, be so good as to tell me by what evidence you think we may recognize you as a philosopher.”

The cliché-figure of the pseudo-philosopher is a familiar feature of contemporary discourse,⁷¹ reflecting a general moral and political concern about the authority of intellectuals in the Antonine age, a concern which was also expressed by Roman emperors. On the one hand, given a general anxiety about teachers with dishonest motives, pseudo-philosophers symbolised a threat to *education*; on the other hand, they were emblematic of subversive or anti-authoritarian *political* behaviour. Gellius’ concerns about illegitimate philosophical authority run parallel to those of Marcus Aurelius, who in his *Meditations* (16, 106) blamed those who define the profession of the philosopher through externals, by wrapping themselves in the traditional worn cloak (τρίβων) and by growing their hair.⁷² Moreover, they confirm the observation made by Antoninus Pius that “those who profess philosophy are rare” (*Dig.* 27, 1, 6, 7).⁷³

A second passage in the *Noctes* demonstrates that Gellius presents such charlatans as a contrasting foil with the true Roman values of his cultural programme, there represented by the wisdom contained in Pacuvius’ poetry, which reflects Catonian thought.⁷⁴ Philosophy, in

⁷¹ See Keulen 2004, 230.

⁷² See Francis 1995, 13. In a revealing passage, Plutarch associates the sham philosopher’s self-presentation with the flatterer’s strategies to ingratiate himself with his patron; cf. *How to distinguish a flatterer from a friend* 7 (*Mor.* 52C). According to Dio Cassius (72, 35, 2), pseudo-philosophers abounded under Marcus, in the hope of financial profit. Cf. *Hist. Aug. Marcus* 23, 9.

⁷³ See Castelli 2005, 7.

⁷⁴ Cf. 13, 8, 5 *Nihil enim fieri posse indignius neque intolerantius dicebat quam quod homines ignaui ac desides, operi barba et pallio, mores et emolumenta philosophiae in linguae uerborumque artes conuerterent et uitia facundissime accusarent, intercutibus ipsi uitii madentes.* ‘For he [sc. his friend Macedo] said that nothing could be more shameful or insufferable than that idle, lazy folk, disguised with beard and cloak, should change the character and advantages of philosophy into tricks of the tongue and of words, and, themselves saturated with vices, should eloquently assail vice.’ As Holford-Strevens (2003, 116 n. 104) points out, Pacuvius’ *intercutibus ipsi uitii madentes* reflects Catonian language: cf. frg. 44 *Sblendorio Cugusi rumorem, famam flocci fecit intercutibus stupris obstinatus, insignibus flagitiis.*

the ethical landscape of the *Noctes*, is closely connected with the good behaviour of the citizen with regard to the state (10, 22, 24), which makes Cato the Elder outshine all other examples, as we have seen. For Gellius, the true philosopher is the philosopher-statesman, which sheds light on the political connotations of the iconic figure of the pseudo-philosopher, and his appearance in combination with the personalities of Herodes Atticus and Musonius.

The connection between the caricature of the pseudo-philosopher and the role of the emperor's authorisation is more explicit in a passage from Apuleius' *Florida* (7), in which he compares the 'defiling' of philosophy with 'unauthorised' representation through sculpture. Just as Alexander the Great refused to allow representations of himself to be made except by 'authorised' artists such as Polyclitus, in the same way, Apuleius argues, only genuine philosophers should be authorised as such, and not those sordid people who put on the philosopher's cloak to fake authority.⁷⁵ Both Gellius and Apuleius testify to the popularity of the iconic figure of the pseudo-philosopher in the vivid contemporary debate about authority, and both authors participate in this discourse in order to establish and 'canonise' their own authority under the scrutiny of Roman power.

Just like Apuleius' speech, Gellius' chapter is highly visual in its implications, drawing attention to the contrasting physiognomies of Herodes' elegant, refined appearance and the rugged, unkempt appearance of the pseudo-philosopher,⁷⁶ which probably reflected two contemporary fashions among intellectuals.⁷⁷ In this context, it is significant that Herodes mentions the Stoic philosopher Musonius (9, 2, 8). Stoics, like Cynics, despised artificial attempts to beautify the body, and with their uncombed hair and unkempt beard they presented a 'polemical

⁷⁵ Cf. *flor.* 7, 10 *neu rudes, sordidi, imperiti pallio tenus philosophos imitarentur et disciplinam regalem tam ad bene dicendum quam ad bene uiuendum repertam male dicendo et similiter uiuendo contaminarent*, 'and that the rude, vulgar, unskilled people who are only philosophers because they wear cloaks should not imitate them, nor should they debase the disciplinary rule invented as much for speaking well as for living well by speaking badly and living in the same way.'

⁷⁶ On the highly visual characterisation of the 'Cynic type' see Clay 1996, 382f.

⁷⁷ Castelli 2005 discusses a physiognomic type among sophists that resembles the *agroikos*, i.e. with a neglected appearance, uncombed hair etc., associated with the looks of a (Cynic) 'philosopher'. On pp. 7–8 she connects such sophists with the type of the 'pseudo-philosopher', such as the one appearing in our chapter, plausibly arguing that the figure of the 'sophist' as a designation for a type of intellectual also represents a kind of 'Halb-philosoph'. For Herodes' elegant appearance see above, n. 40.

statement' against the Peripatetics, the Academics, and the Epicureans, to who neatly styled hair and trimmed beard were of great concern.⁷⁸ In terms of physiognomy, then, the chapter suggests that Herodes Atticus and Musonius were contrasting personalities.

This contrast forms part of a larger pattern of contrasts and parallels in this chapter, which invite various comparative judgments about intellectual appearance and authority. At first sight, the pseudo-philosopher appears to be a contrasting foil for the sincerity of Herodes' and Musonius' authority. Musonius' authority seems to stand out in contrast with the pseudo-philosopher, as he had the reputation of being the living example of what he taught.⁷⁹

Yet, if we take a closer look, the contrasting personalities of Herodes and Musonius can be seen to 'interrogate each other' too. Apparently to corroborate his own diatribe against the false philosopher, Herodes quotes an anecdote about Musonius' encounter with another pseudo-philosopher. Yet, Musonius' *dictum* can be read as a negative comment on Herodes' own reputation (9, 2, 8):

'Musonius' inquit 'aeruscanti cuipiam id genus et philosophum sese ostentanti dari iussit mille nummum, et cum plerique dicerent nebulonem esse hominem malum et malitosum et nulla re bona dignum, tum Musonium subridentem dixisse aiunt: ἄξιός οὖν ἐστὶν ἀγυυρίου.'

Musonius ordered a thousand sesteria to be given to a beggar of this sort who posed as a philosopher, and when several told him that this fellow was a rascal and knave and deserved of nothing good, Musonius, they say, replied with a smile, 'then he deserves money'.

Gellius employs Musonius' gift for satirical diatribe by putting the anecdote on the lips of the person who turns out to be an appropriate victim of its satirical thrust.⁸⁰ The ascetic Stoic Musonius, who had criticised the *luxuria* of the interiors of big estates,⁸¹ is the appropriate

⁷⁸ See Zanker 1995, 111.

⁷⁹ See MacMullen 1966, 52f. with n. 10. In Orig. *contr. Cels.* 3, 66 Musonius is compared to Socrates as a *παράδειγμα τοῦ ἀρίστου βίου*. In Gell. 16, 1, however, where Cato and Musonius are weighed against each other as *exempla* of good behaviour, it is implied that Cato's authority as a Roman *uir sapiens* is to be ranked above the 'Greek school author' Musonius; the chapter evokes Roman sentiment about true educational authority, going back to Cicero's *De oratore* (1, 105).

⁸⁰ Philostratus tells in another anecdote (*vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 556) that a philosopher named Lucius, trained by his master Musonius in making repartees that were apt to hit the mark, ridiculed Herodes for his immoderate grief, thus exhorting him to exercise self-control.

⁸¹ Cf. Musonius frg. 19 and see van Geytenbeek 1962, 111–112.

authority to satirise the immoderate wealth of a Herodes within the comparative frame of this chapter, even when he lived too early to know Herodes in person. Here, Musonius' *dictum* associates money with mischievous crooks.⁸² Musonius' smile (*subridentem*) may point to the authorial irony behind the use of the *dictum* in this context. Musonius' smile contrasts with Herodes' immoderate emotional outburst (9, 2, 9 *dolori mihi et aegritudini est*) as *his* reaction to fake authority, a reaction which is fully 'in character'.⁸³

Musonius' satire is not only about wealth, but also about political activity. In the mutual dynamics of the comparative process of σύγκρισις, Herodes' active political career stands out against Musonius' withdrawn philosophical life. Thus, Herodes represents the *vita activa*, as opposed to the *vita contemplativa* of Musonius. The link with the underlying debate as to whether a philosopher should engage in public life is visible in the phrase *nulla re bona dignum*, 'deserving of nothing good', which is an intertextual allusion to Cicero's *De re publica* (1, 9), where the phrase is used with contempt for someone who engages with the sordid and dangerous occupations of political activity.⁸⁴ From Musonius' perspective, such a person 'deserves money', associating the wealth and active engagement with politics embodied by Herodes as incompatible with true philosophy.

Herodes' Roman characterisation through the epithet of *uir consularis* (9, 2, 1) draws attention to his political career in Rome and to his role as Marcus' teacher. The consular rank epitomises a significant link between high political standing and didactic authority in the world of the Antonine elite. It is important to note that much of Marcus' education was not concerned with philosophy as an aim in itself, but rather with the proper conduct of the future emperor in Roman society. Paramount in this aspect of Marcus' education is the fact that five

⁸² Cf. 9, 2, 8 *nebulonem* ... *malum et malitosum et nulla re bona dignum*; for *nebulos* ('scoundrel', 'rascal'; cf. Ter. *Eun.* 269; 785) used of pseudo-philosophers cf. Gell. 1, 2, 7 *uolgens aliud nebulonum hominum, qui se Stoicos nuncuparent*.

⁸³ Linderman 2006, 98 observes the irony that Herodes mentions the two passions that the Stoics were fighting against. This is the only attestation of the expression with *dolor* and *aegritudo* combined; for *aegritudini mihi est* cf. Gell. 1, 3, 3; for *dolori mihi est* cf. Cic. *Att.* 6, 9, 2; 11, 10, 1; *epist.* 6, 10a, 1; 14, 5, 2. For Herodes' *dolor* see above, n. 64.

⁸⁴ The context is formed by Cicero's rebuttal of objections against his view that *uirtus* is most suitably employed in public life, here refuting the particular objection that public life is unworthy of respectable men (*rep.* 1, 9): *cum ita dicunt, accedere ad rem publicam plerumque homines nulla re bona dignos*, 'they say, for example, that it is mostly worthless men who take part in politics'.

of Marcus' teachers mentioned in the first book of the *Meditations* were consulars.⁸⁵ The fact that in the context of chapter 9, 2 Herodes represents the man of active political life, in deliberate contrast with Musonius, may explain why his villa is not the setting of the scene.

Whereas Herodes Atticus defined his role as an intellectual through active participation in Roman society and close relations with the imperial family, Musonius represented the opposite case. Musonius was a symbol of the democratic spirit, appearing as a free-speaking philosopher who distanced himself from oppressive Roman imperial power as embodied by the 'tyrant' Nero.⁸⁶ The figure of Musonius stands for the individual ethics of a philosopher whose personal, internal authority clashes with political authority and literally brings him into a position of isolation from Roman society.⁸⁷ Musonius' debt to the paradigm of Diogenes as an anti-authoritarian, free-speaking philosopher invites a parallel with the Cynic figure appearing twice in our chapter,⁸⁸ who embodies freedom of speech in an extreme, caricatural form.⁸⁹ Cynics could represent currents of philosophical opposition against tyrannical rule in the Roman Empire, together with those from the senatorial aristocracy who had Stoic sympathies.⁹⁰

Within Gellius' cultural perspective, Musonius emerges as a subversive element, resembling the Cynic figure evoked by the anonymous philosopher with the beard and the cloak as a symbol of subversive authority.⁹¹ In this context, the mockery in *Noctes Atticae* of Stoic fig-

⁸⁵ See Champlin 1980, 119; Francis 1995, 25.

⁸⁶ For Musonius' stress on *eleutheria* ('freedom') and *parrhesia* ('freedom of speech') see Whitmarsh 2001, 142f., who discusses how "Musonius evokes and manipulates the political language of democratic Athens" See also Holford-Strevens 2003, 278 on Musonius' willingness to speak his mind whether it was wanted or not.

⁸⁷ Musonius was exiled to Gyaros by Nero and to Syria by Vespasian—the theme of exile links him to two other intellectuals who clashed with Roman authorities, Favorinus and Herodes Atticus, but in those two cases the exile is disputed (see Holford-Strevens 2003, 102 with n. 25; Tobin 1997, 40, 274).

⁸⁸ Cf. Whitmarsh 2001, 145 "Like Diogenes, and above all like Socrates, Musonius does not define his identity through society, but in accordance with philosophical truth." For Musonius' affinity with Diogenes see also Whitmarsh 2001, 148f.

⁸⁹ Cf. 9, 2, 3 *uultu sonituque uocis obiurgatorio*, 'with anger in his voice and expression'; 9, 2, 6 *nisi accipiat, quod petit, conuicio turpi solitum incessere*, 'who was in the habit of being shamefully abusive if he did not get what he demanded'.

⁹⁰ For the associations between Stoics and Cynics, especially in connection with their ill-repute, see MacMullen 1966, 59f. On the proud attitude of aristocratic families in imperial times and on the Stoa as a bulwark of 'republican' resistance see Desideri 1978, 14–15 and 44 with n. 60.

⁹¹ For the paradigm of the beggar-philosopher as a symbol of subversive authority in

ures like the arrogant dinner guest in chapter 1, 2—put in his place by the *uir consularis* Herodes Atticus, mentioning ὁ Καῖσαρ!⁹²—suggests that Gellius' cultural programme offers an 'official' Roman perspective on 'non-conformists' like Musonius.⁹³ It can be argued that Herodes, the *uir consularis*, is to be preferred above Musonius within the Roman cultural hierarchy.

However, this is only to a certain extent. The implied parallels between Musonius and the Cynic type regarding appearance and subversive outlook are reinforced by a quite explicit financial connection. Musonius gives the mischievous pseudo-philosopher a considerable amount of money, a thousand sesteria (9, 2, 8).⁹⁴ Moreover, this puts Musonius on a par with Herodes Atticus, who gives the slovenly detractor enough money to live on for a month (9, 2, 7). The second pseudo-philosopher is vividly represented as money-grubbing (*aeruscanti*), with a word that makes him resemble another example of subversive authority, the Chaldaean astrologers.⁹⁵ Both Musonius and Herodes, then, are represented as implicated with elements of subversivity. Possibly, it is implied that Herodes gave money out of fear that the philosopher would otherwise attack his reputation with his sharp abuse (9, 2, 6 *nisi accipiat, quod petit, conuicio turpi solitum incessere*), which could be Gellius' hint at Herodes' weak and bribable nature.

Herodes presents his gift as a gesture of humanity (9, 2, 7 *tamquam homines*), but the gesture turns out to be devoid of any serious concern about the character of the man he is supporting (9, 2, 7 *cuicumodi*

Antonine literature see Francis 1995, 60–66. For Cynics preaching against 'tyranny' cf. Dio Chrys. 65, 12, 2; 65, 15, 4; see Francis 1995, 63.

⁹² MacMullen 1966, 60 with n. 16 mentions the Stoic quarrelling pedant in Gell. 1, 2 in a list of common prejudices against Stoic philosophers, which are often comparable to the ill-repute of Cynics.

⁹³ We can compare Musonius with Euphrates, another eloquent Stoic philosopher who provided notorious resistance to emperors. Philostratus in his *Vita Apollonii* turns Euphrates into a ridiculous figure, who is hostile to imperial power and wishes to go back to the democratic constitution of the republic (cf. *vit. Apoll.* 5, 38, 3; 5, 40, 1; *epist. Apoll.* 3).

⁹⁴ Linderemann 2006, 95 ad loc. points out that this would allow a living to someone with a modest lifestyle for about 500 days.

⁹⁵ The hapax verb *aeruscare* evokes a vivid picture of the beggar-philosopher 'in action'. We see him grubbing for coins (cf. Paul. Fest. p. 20 *aeruscare aera undique, id est pecunias, colligere*), while making a parade of being a philosopher (*ostendenti*, cf. *OLD* 4b). Cf. the hapax substantive *aeruscator* used by Favorinus of Chaldaean charlatans in 14, 1, 2.

est). This may allude to a characteristic of Herodes that was publicly known, his readiness to give money both to those who were in need and those who were not.⁹⁶ This indiscriminate readiness probably added to Herodes' bad reputation.

From Gellius' ideological perspective on *humanitas*, which reflects his outspokenly elitist concerns, Herodes does not meet the standards in any way by his 'humanitarian' act. In a programmatic chapter on the different senses of the notion of *humanitas* (13, 17), Gellius clearly disparages the meaning of this word used by the *uolgi*, namely an 'indiscriminate benevolence towards all men' (φιλανθρωπία), and shows his preference for the meaning used by 'the few' who know Latin well: *humanitas* = παιδεία. Keeping the play with the notions of φιλανθρωπία and παιδεία in mind, we may observe Herodes' failure in living up to either aspect of *humanitas*.

On the one hand, he takes the suggestion that a πεπαιδευμένος is more 'human' than others to an extreme by literally denying the other the name of 'homo' (9, 2, 7 *non tamquam homini*; 9, 2, 9 *istiusmodi animalia spurca atque probra*): perhaps this reveals something of Herodes' 'tyrannical' character. On the other hand, Herodes decides to support the man with money as if on a whim, without even taking the criterion of culture into consideration (9, 2, 7 *cuicuiusmodi est*). This discredits Herodes as an authority in matters of elite formation from Gellius' ideological outlook, which encourages judging 'men' in relation to their virtues. It appears that Herodes does not live up to *humanitas* = παιδεία, as he enacts the 'indiscriminate benevolence' that was mocked by Gellius as 'vulgar'. We are reminded of the criticisms directed at Herodes by others for his lack of controlling his passions, which disqualified him as a πεπαιδευμένος. Moreover, what is an emperor to think of a patron who gives financial support to subversive intellectuals?⁹⁷

⁹⁶ Cf. Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 547 ἔλεγε γὰρ δὴ, ὥς προσήκοι τὸν ὀρθῶς πλούτῳ χρώμενον τοῖς μὲν δεομένοις ἐπαρκεῖν, ἵνα μὴ δέωνται, τοῖς δὲ μὴ δεομένοις, ἵνα μὴ δεηθῶσιν, 'for indeed he used to say that he who would use his wealth aright ought to give to the needy that they might cease to be in need, and to those that needed it not, lest they should fall into need'.

⁹⁷ On Herodes' financial support of Greek intellectuals in the *Noctes Atticae*, especially the philosopher Taurus (18, 10), see Dillon 2002, 34–36. Dillon points out that philosophers in Athens, whose profession made it ethically difficult to require fees, were largely dependent on patronage, presents, and gifts, until the initiative of Marcus Aurelius in 176 to retain them on a municipal salary. This measure was possibly also intended to limit the influence of unruly patrons such as Herodes.

Thus, Gellius' chapter implies an awareness that both the asceticism of a Musonius and the display of beneficence of a Herodes could become the object of a critical gaze, a gaze which reflects the ideological prescriptions of Gellius' own programme, but which can also be identified with the scrutinising gaze of the emperor. In a passage of the *Meditations* (1, 7), Marcus warned against 'display[ing] oneself as a man keen to impress others with a reputation for asceticism or beneficence'. Whether one was a wealthy benefactor or an independent preacher of moral truth, the supreme authority in the Roman empire could always call into question the legitimacy of one's conduct.⁹⁸

Herodes the tyrant and the liberators of Athens

In the background of the concern about 'living up to one's name' in chapter 9, 2 is a development in contemporary Roman society of which Herodes formed the epitome. From the time of Claudius onwards, there was a gradual increase in the grants of Roman citizenship to Athenians. Moreover, this entailed also a significant shift in the senatorial class: Herodes Atticus illustrates the development that aristocrats from the East not only received Roman citizenship, but also moved to Rome, where they became actively engaged in imperial politics. If a Roman citizenship was given to somebody whose first language was Greek, he had to assume a Roman *nomen*.⁹⁹ The family of Herodes Atticus received *ciuitas* under Nero: Herodes' full name was *Lucius Vibullius Hipparchus Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes*.¹⁰⁰

As names are closely intertwined with personal and cultural identity, these developments raise the problematic question of the relation between name and identity, involving issues of conduct, use of language, and cultural preferences. As Levi (1996, 231) rightly observes, there must have been limits to the philhellenic tendencies in Antonine society, as soon as they threatened the protection of the identity of the

⁹⁸ μή ... ἢ φαντασιοπλήκτως τὸν ἀσκητικὸν ἢ τὸν εὐεργετικὸν ἄνδρα ἐπιδείκνυσθαι. See Francis 1995, 1f., who points to the significant context of this remark, in which Marcus thanks his tutor Rusticus for teaching him to avoid sophistry and theoretical speculation.

⁹⁹ Byrne 2003 documents the adaptation of Roman nomenclature among Athenians in the Roman Empire.

¹⁰⁰ The full name is testified by an inscription from Delphi; on the nomenclature of Herodes Atticus see Byrne 2003, 114–122.

dominant class. It is in this context that we can view Gellius' cultural programme: as we have seen, *Noctes Atticae* stands in a long-established tradition of Latin literature, described by Habinek (1998) in terms of a literary participation in an ideological process of strengthening the cohesion of the Roman cultural aristocracy against disruptive tendencies such as philhellenism. Viewing Gellius' portrayal of Herodes Atticus in the larger picture of his time, marked by a rivalry between various cultural 'fashions' with the emperor as the 'supreme assessor', this portrayal becomes the object of a critical scrutiny from the perspective of the dominant, i.e. *Roman* culture.¹⁰¹

It is significant that at a time when more and more Athenians were adopting Roman names and gaining Roman citizenship, Hadrian had established the Panhellenium in Athens, reinforcing the city's status as cultural cosmopolis, a status which is also reflected in the flourishing Greek literature and oratory of the second century.¹⁰² Gellius' Roman cultural programme, inspired by the charismatic authority of *antiquitas*, can be seen as a response to the cultural hegemony of Hellenism as proclaimed by a number of flamboyant intellectuals of the age, who fashioned their identity on the basis of the distant past of classical Athens (their 'site of memory'). Gellius' Roman ideological perspective presents these philhellenic celebrities in a different light, and raises the question whether they live up to their Roman name.

Thus, Gellius' portrayal of Herodes Atticus, who was to be viewed by Philostratus as the major personality of his 'Second Sophistic', addresses conflicts and tensions accompanying acculturation into the dominant culture, conflicts which highlight the ambiguous authority of the Athenian Herodes Atticus as an intellectual from the politically dominated class.¹⁰³ From Gellius' Romanocentric perspective, neither Herodes Atticus nor Musonius are 'real Romans'. Herodes, the Romanised Athenian, had moved from Athens to the political heart of the Roman Empire, where he became the future emperor's tutor and also consul. Yet the question is raised of whether Herodes lived up to his Roman status. As we have seen, Gellius portrays Herodes as a champion of Greek eloquence, while implying that he also could

¹⁰¹ Compare Bourdieu's notion of the 'legitimate mode of perception' (1991, 236f.).

¹⁰² See Gray 2006, 349f.

¹⁰³ See Bourdieu-Passeron 1990, 29 on the conflicts that accompany acculturation into the dominant culture, whether for the colonised intellectual or for the intellectual of dominated class-origin.

speak Latin. Though an *eques Romanus* of Etruscan origin, Musonius fashioned himself as a *philosophus Graecus*.¹⁰⁴ His move from the centre of Roman power to the realm of Greek culture symbolises an alienation from Roman society. As a result, Gellius perceives both intellectuals as partaking in traditions of cultural authority that deviate from the normative one in which *Noctes Atticae* is grounded.

The authority of the Roman cultural tradition crowns chapter 9, 2, and is at the same time the climax of Herodes' lecture. It presents a Roman *exemplum* that forms a clear contrast with the previous one, which was a Greek *exemplum* illustrating the '*mos maiorum*' of Herodes' ancestors, the Athenians, whom he calls *maiores mei* (9, 2, 10). Thus, the reader is invited to weigh a Greek '*mos maiorum*' and the Roman *mos maiorum* against each other on the central topic of being true to one's name, and the related issue of living up to the identity that goes with the name, an identity that is indicative of a specific elite status. With the Romanising phrase *maiores mei*,¹⁰⁵ Herodes may indicate his own elite status, since originally only members of the nobility could have *maiores*, while plebeians could not.¹⁰⁶

Herodes recounts how his Athenian *maiores* decided that the names of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, the famous tyrant-killers who were celebrated as liberators of the state, should not be defiled by giving them to slaves (9, 2, 10). The ancient Romans, on the other hand, introduced abolition of *praenomina* to punish those who defiled their aristocratic status by disservice to their country (9, 2, 11 *praenomina patriciorum quorundam male de republica meritorum*). Such malefactors were no longer worthy of remembrance through their names being given to others, and therefore suffered a kind of *damnatio memoriae*.

¹⁰⁴ For Musonius' choice of a Greek identity (contrast e.g. Lucretius and Cicero, who chose to Latinise philosophy), which is symbolically reflected in his biography by his exile from Rome to the Greek Aegean, see Whitmarsh 2001, 142.

¹⁰⁵ Because of its specific Roman resonance, it is hard to find an exact Greek equivalent for *maiores*: cf. προγόνοι, and the far less usual προπάτορες (cf. Lat. *proavus*, 'great-grandfather' or 'remote ancestor, forefather'). Gellius sometimes makes non-Roman characters use the term *maiores* to denote the authority of their forebears or the founders of their philosophical school, which can create a comic effect; cf. the Stoic philosopher in Gell. 19, 1, 13 *maiores nostri, conditores sectae Stoicae*. Ironically, Herodes refers to the ancient Romans with the 'hellenising' phrase *antiquos Romanorum* (9, 2, 22); Lindermann 2006, 104 ad loc. compares the Greek construction οἱ παλαιοὶ τῶν Ῥωμαίων.

¹⁰⁶ See Blösel 2000, 26.

‘Living up to one’s name’, then, is presented as closely intertwined with competing traditions of memory and procedures of selecting a true elite. The Greek and Roman *exempla* have significant parallels and contrasts regarding the merits that qualify someone for elite status. The ‘public’ terms *decreto publico* and *libertati patriae* from the Greek *exemplum* (9, 2, 10) emphasise the ‘national’ dimensions of its ideological message, and prepare for the next step, the central role of the Roman *respublica* in 9, 2, 11. The final *exemplum* gives the whole issue of ‘living up to one’s name’ a Roman political-ideological bias, and crown Herodes’ lecture to the young Gellius with a tribute to loyalty to the Roman state.

In his role of author, Gellius excludes Herodes Atticus from the honourable tradition of memory and authority that forms the ideological core of *Noctes Atticae*. Gellius’ *maiores* are not Herodes’ *maiores*. The word *maiores* evokes Republican morality (*‘mos maiorum’*), connoting an authority of moral consensus, especially agreement in carrying out measures, laws, and punishments.¹⁰⁷ As we have seen in 14, 2, Gellius connects the authority of the *maiores* with *memoria*, which points to a long chain of tradition that reaches to Gellius’ own time,¹⁰⁸ since Favorinus remembers (*commeminit*) Cato’s reference to *memoria*.¹⁰⁹

Thus, the term *maiores* is pregnant with *auctoritas*, and draws attention to the memory (*memoria*) that maintains the chain of tradition connected to the *maiores*, a chain of tradition that serves the fashioning of identity. It is therefore significant that Herodes does not use the word *maiores* in the Roman *exemplum*, implicitly confirming that his *maiores* are not *antiqui Romanorum* but *Athenienses* (9, 2, 10). There is no hint of *memoria* or being part of a chain of tradition here: Herodes says ‘*audio*’, which reveals his position of cultural otherness in relation to the final Roman *exemplum*.

¹⁰⁷ In a number of passages Gellius evokes with the phrase *mores maiorum* the extreme severity of the censors, the most prestigious *nobiles*; cf. 4, 20, 10; 6, 15 tit.; see Blösel 2000, 60f. The chapters suggest that Gellius does not blindly adhere to a *mos maiorum*, but, perhaps following Cato’s footsteps, admires only those *maiores* that embody the true virtues of the whole Roman people of antiquity, and not the *maiores* which stand for the severity of certain clans of the established senatorial aristocracy.

¹⁰⁸ See Blösel 2000, 55.

¹⁰⁹ Cf. 14, 2, 21 *utare M. Catonis, prudentissimi uiri, consilio, qui ... ita esse a maioribus traditum obseruatumque ait, ut...*; 14, 2, 26 *uerba ex oratione M. Catonis, cuius commemorat Faurinus, haec sunt: ‘Atque ego a maioribus memoria sic accepi’*.

Gellius cites several examples in which the authority of the *maiores* is invoked by his hero Cato, who did not mean his own *maiores* (he was a *homo nouus*), nor those of the nobility as a whole or of single *gentes*, but the *uirtutes* and *mores* of the whole *populus Romanus* of archaic times.¹¹⁰ Although Cato does not appear in 9, 2, his name could have been mentioned in this context as an example contrary to the instances of unpatriotic patricians (9, 2, 11), as a Roman who gained immortality through his achievements on behalf of the state. True authority that is worthy of remembrance does not depend on membership of a patrician clan (*gens*). Significantly, Cato was a plebeian, not a patrician. True aristocracy proves itself in deeds, not in names. True aristocracy is Roman, not Greek. In Catonian terms, true aristocracy is inspired by *mores maiorum*, but not the *mores* of the established nobility, but the *uirtutes* and *mores* of the *populus Romanus* that reach back to times when the nobility did not even exist.

Gellius challenges his reader to contrast the charismatic power of Roman *mos maiorum* with the Athenian tradition of memory and authority embodied by Herodes' *exemplum*. What is more, within the framing question of the chapter, Gellius also invites scrutiny of Herodes Atticus himself, focusing on his noble ancestry from the ideological perspective of Roman *mos maiorum*. As we will see, his *exemplum* of the famous tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton turns out to reveal further controversial aspects of Herodes Atticus, and demonstrates that he 'lived up to his name' in a such way that it made him an unreliable political figure.

On a certain level, the *exemplum* of Harmodius and Aristogeiton continues the subversive overtones from the preceding part of Herodes' lecture. It shares with the figure of Musonius the topic of resistance against tyrannical forms of authority.¹¹¹ The emphasis is not on the personal freedom of one philosopher, but on political freedom (*libertati*) for all, achieved by Harmodius' and Aristogeiton's efforts against tyranny. It is also an *exemplum* of Greek identity, given the link between Greekness and the love of liberty, a link that has a contemporary polit-

¹¹⁰ Cato himself avoided the expression *mos maiorum*; see Blösel 2000, 58f. For Cato's invocation of *maiores* as a fundament of moral authority in *Noctes Atticae* cf. e.g. 5, 13, 2; 6, 3, 52 *mansuetudinis maiorum*; 10, 3, 17 *ubi societas? ubi fides maiorum?*.

¹¹¹ In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, a recurrent theme is the moral imperative of the true philosopher to oppose against a legitimate authority if its represents tyranny. See Mazza 1980, 46 ('uno dei motivi di fondo del tessuto ideologico dell' opera').

ical resonance.¹¹² The story of the tyrannicides is one of the famous episodes from the past in which Greek identity in the Roman Empire is rooted, and, moreover, an example of political history used by Greek intellectuals to evaluate and assess the authority of emperors and other prominent representatives of Roman power.¹¹³ It was through this very opposition against tyranny that Greek intellectuals, by contrast, outlined the morphology of power, the physiognomy of the good sovereign. Therefore, the *exemplum* was politically charged. As we will see, Gellius ingeniously reverses the political thrust of the *exemplum*, employing it to expose the unreliability and subversiveness of one of the most infamous Greek intellectuals and politicians of imperial times, Herodes Atticus.

Both in ancient Greece and in imperial times, the story about these legendary figures continued to be remembered in art and literature. Yet, it also remained a site of multiple (political) interpretations and conflicting readings. On the one hand, in Athenian popular memory Harmodius and Aristogeiton were unhistorically revered as tyrannicides and martyrs for the liberty of Athens. In classical Athens, school-children learnt patriotic songs about them by heart, and several skolia celebrating their fight for freedom belonged to the common repertoire of Athenian citizens, and survived until Gellius' day.¹¹⁴ Their heroic cult also left lasting visual traces:¹¹⁵ the Athenians erected statues to

¹¹² Cf. Philostr. *vit. Apoll.* 8, 7, 12 "Ἕλληνες ἐλευθερίας ἐρασταὶ ἔτι, and see Flinterman 1995, 90f.: "Greek identity in the *VA* more or less coincides with wisdom or a philosophical frame of mind, *paideia*, and the love of freedom."

¹¹³ For the use of the story for the construction of Greek identity under Roman rule see Flinterman 1995, 91. In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius*, the sage Apollonius urges Roman governors and other senators to revolt against the 'tyrant' Domitian, recalling the action of Harmodius and Aristogeiton together with the episodes of the expulsion of the thirty tyrants and the end of the monarchy and the establishment of the republic in Rome (*vit. Apoll.* 7,4). Cf. also *vit. Apoll.* 8, 16; 8, 25 (the assassination of Domitian is 'worthy of comparison with the feats of the champions of Athenian liberty'); see MacMullen 1966, 310 n. 24; Flinterman 1995, 120 with n. 143. Gellius' younger contemporary Maximus of Tyre mentions the story as an example of liberation from political tyranny; cf. *Orat.* 18 (see Trapp 1997, 160 with n. 4); 35, 4.

¹¹⁴ See Henderson on Arist. *Lys.* 631 φορήσω πτλ., who refers to *Nub.* 966. Four skolia on Harmodius and Aristogeiton are preserved by Athenaeus (15, 695a); see Taylor 1981, chapter 3 (51–77).

¹¹⁵ On the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton in Athens see P.J. Rhodes (1981, 651f.) on Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 58, 1 καὶ Ἀρμόδιω καὶ Ἀριστογείτονι ἐναγίσματα ποιεῖ. The senior living descendants of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were entitled to the honour of 'dinner at the prytaneum' (σίτησις ἐν πρυτανείῳ); see P.J. Rhodes 1981, 108.



Plate II: Harmodius and Aristogeiton (see n. 116).

Harmodius and Aristogeiton, of which a Roman copy survives from Hadrian's villa at Tivoli, testifying to the appeal these heroic figures had to the Roman spectator's eye.¹¹⁶

On the other hand, a historian like Thucydides seemed to be aware of the fact that the patriotic use of the legend was not historically correct.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the reverence of the tyrannicides as fighters for Athe-

¹¹⁶ See Ober 2003, 217–219, who observes that the missing element in the preserved Roman copy of the tyrant-slayers (Museo Nazionale, Naples, inv. 6009) is weaponry: “presumably this is a mere accident of preservation, but the broken swords draw our attention to the weapons employed by the tyrant-killer.” Photograph used with kind permission of the Soprintendenza speciale per i beni archeologici di Napoli e Pompei.

¹¹⁷ At the very beginning of his work (1,20), Th. mentions the story as an example of the way in which traditions have been passed down without any critical reflection. Herodotus (5, 55; 6, 123) and Thucydides (6, 53–59) seriously questioned Harmodius' and Aristogeiton's role in abolishing the tyranny and establishing democracy, emphasising that they were merely lovers revenging a personal insult suffered by Harmodius.

nian freedom was mocked in Aristophanic comedy as a 'naive' view.¹¹⁸ There was a continuing debate in antiquity about the true motives behind the tyrannicides' actions and about their political importance. Indeed, it seems that the dramatic story continued to be used as a convenient and adaptable object for the projection of diverse ideologically biased convictions until Gellius' day, especially by those who represented subversive or critical attitudes with regard to political power.¹¹⁹

Among Romans too, the story was famous for its subversive or anti-authoritarian potential, especially in the first century AD. MacMullen (1966, 35f.) points to the important role of tyrannicide stories in declamations taught in Roman schools, especially under emperors who were seen as tyrants, such as Caligula or Domitian.¹²⁰ The well-known protests about the unrealistic nature of declamatory topics such as tyrant-killing gain an ironical undertone in view of the fact that the educational necessity of the genre excused almost anything said on the subject of reviled autocrats.¹²¹ Moreover, such declamations may not have been so unrealistic as they were alleged to be. As Kennell (1997) argues, there may actually not have been such a great contrast between the 'implausible' topics of the schoolroom and the 'real world' outside.¹²² Accusations of tyranny appear to have been an essential element of contemporary political discourse in the Roman Empire, as we can

¹¹⁸ See Henderson on Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* 616–635; 631 φορήσω πτλ. (with lit.); also on 1149–1158. Their popularity is reflected in Aristophanes' use of the Harmodius-skolia in his comic representation of popular leaders and their supporters, in a brilliant parody of the songs' use as a 'rallying-cry' for those who would patriotically guard against a new tyranny; see MacDowell on Arist. *Vesp.* 1225 Ἀρμοδίου. As Ober (2003, 220) points out, we must imagine the chorus of old men in *Lys.* taking their stand beside Aristogeiton, and singing ὥδέ ("Like this!") while mimicking the shape of the Harmodius statue, assuming for a moment the 'Harmodius-stance'.

¹¹⁹ See MacMullen 1966, 70.

¹²⁰ MacMullen 1966, 35f. "it is amusing to think of an emperor, Vespasian, subsidizing a chair of rhetoric from which these exercises were taught, and still taught later under his son Domitian, the very one who punished anti-tyrant declamations with death." For the importance of tyranny as a motif in declamation see Nauta 2002, 417–418 in his discussion of the *figura* (Gr. *schema*), a 'hidden allusion' to be found out by the audience, which is especially frequent in declamation according to Quintilian (*inst.* 9, 2, 64–67).

¹²¹ Cf. Tac. *dial.* 35,4–5; Iuv. 7,151 *cum perimit saevos classis numerosa tyrannos*, 'when his crowded class slays "The Cruel Tyrant"'. See MacMullen 1966, 303 n. 40 for more examples.

¹²² Quintilian shows that conspiracy against tyrants was not only a topic for classroom *controuersiae* (e.g. *inst.* 7, 7, 5), but also a possible accusation for a 'real life' trial for which his students had to be prepared to perform as advocate (*inst.* 12, 1, 40).

see in the speeches of Dio Chrysostomus. Among the most conspicuous examples is, as we will see in further detail below, the case of Herodes Atticus himself.

At first sight, the mentioning of the episode by Herodes Atticus could be seen as a proud display of his self-awareness as a Greek intellectual, who defines his identity by alluding to the prestigious cultural memory of his ancestors. An Athenian sophist like Herodes would be familiar with declamatory topics from the Greek historical past that celebrated Athens' greatness. The use of such a 'patriotic' historical example as an expression of pride in his Athenian identity would agree with Herodes' overconfident attitude towards Roman rulers in general. As we have seen, he linked his origin to Marathon, a name mentioned by Plutarch as a historical *exemplum* that should be avoided in civic oratory for its offensive connotations within the existing condition of Roman rule.¹²³

However, Herodes' incomplete report of the tyrant-slaying suggests that he is 'rewriting history', manipulating historical memory to conceal a notorious fact from his own family history. In Herodes' representation, the two young men "had set to slay the tyrant Hippias to restore liberty" (9, 2, 10 *libertatis recuperandae gratia Hippiam tyrannum interficere adorsi erant*). Although the information that they tried to slay Hippias is correct, the most salient fact of their actions is left unmentioned: their actual murder of Hipparchus, Hippias' brother, who had insulted Harmodius after being rejected as a lover. In his chapter on Graeco-Roman synchronisms, however, Gellius does mention the latter murder (17, 21, 7 *occisus est Athenis ab Harmodio et Aristogitone Hipparchus, Pisistrati filius, Hippiae tyranni frater*), which confirms that Gellius too considered the murder of Hipparchus as the most important element of the Harmodius and Aristogeiton story, when it comes to historical record. Why does Gellius make Herodes Atticus 'forget' the crucial part of the actual *tyrannicidium*?

What appears at first sight Athenian patriotism on Herodes' part, turns out to be a satirical strategy on Gellius' part, who turns the Greek *exemplum* against Herodes Atticus himself, using the comic thrust

¹²³ In his *Political precepts* 17 (*Mor.* 814a–c), Plutarch had warned against the influence of *meletai* using historical examples that could give offence in the political situation of Roman rule. To be avoided are 'Marathon, Eurymedon, and Plataea, and all other examples that make the many swell and snort with false pride—these we leave in the schools of the sophists' (814c). See Swain 1996, 167. The caution advocated by Plutarch can be seen in some of the speeches of Dio Chrysostom (e.g. 50, 2; see Flinterman 1995, 47f.).

of Aristophanic comedy to expose Herodes' own notorious reputation. If we take a closer look at Herodes' version of the anecdote in Gellius and place it in the context of Herodes' life and personality, a completely different perspective on the story emerges from that of the Athenian's patriotic self-fashioning suggested above. In the light of his biography, Herodes would not identify with either Harmodius and Aristogeiton or his so-called Athenian *maiores*, but rather with the Athenian tyrants themselves.

The omission of the name Hipparchus in *Noctes Atticae* 9, 2, 10 is no small wonder, when we realise that one of Herodes' own names was Hipparchus, after his grandfather Hipparchus. By leaving the Athenian tyrant Hipparchus in the *exemplum* unmentioned, Gellius significantly makes Herodes gloss over the homoerotic aspect which is in the foreground in other versions of the tyrannicides story, including those from Gellius' time (cf. Maximus Tyrius' *Oration* 18, on 'Socratic love').¹²⁴ We can imagine that Gellius' readers, who were familiar with Herodes Atticus' public image, could hardly suppress a smile at Herodes' adaptation of this paradigmatic story of *eros* getting out of control in an educational context. Gellius elsewhere portrays Herodes as a passionate lover of younger boys (19, 12, 2), alluding to his reputation of immoderate grief at lost beloved boys. As we have seen above, Gellius sometimes makes satirical allusions to pederastic aspects of Greek educational relations (2, 18; 8, 6 tit.), aspects which reflect Greek cultural values on the one hand, but might conflict with standard Roman values on the other. Moreover, the present *exemplum* draws attention to Herodes' own role as educator of the elite, and the 'erotic' dimension of his relations with certain pupils, among whom was the young Marcus Aurelius. In a Greek letter to Herodes, Fronto describes their educational relation with Marcus in terms that reflect both 'erotic' ('Socratic love') and philosophical aspects.¹²⁵

¹²⁴ In the *Hipparchus*, transmitted among Plato's works, the educational relationship between the tyrant Hipparchus and an unnamed young man is at the same time an erotic friendship. Socrates in the *Hipparchus* sees the philosophical relationship between the tyrant and the young man, which he describes in educational and erotic terms, as the cause of Hipparchus' downfall, since the young man's preference for Hipparchus as an educator arouses the envy of others (Harmodius and Aristogeiton), whose wisdom is spurned by this attractive young man. On the issue of the authenticity of the lesser known or 'dubious' canonical Platonic dialogues see the Editor's Introduction in Pangle (ed.) 1987; on the *Hipparchus* see p. 3 n. 2.

¹²⁵ *epist. ad M. Caes.* 2, 1 (p. 17, 10f.) εἰ δέ τινος ἐρᾶς καὶ σὺ νέου γενναίου ἀρετῇ καὶ παιδείᾳ καὶ τύχῃ καὶ σωφροσύνῃ διαφέροντος, οὐκ ἂν ἁμαρτάνοις ὁρῶν ἐπ' ἐκείνῳ

Herodes' connection with the story of the tyrannicides has additional implications concerning his turbulent political life. Here, the name Hipparchus, conspicuous by its absence in the Gellian chapter, draws attention to Herodes' notorious family history. His grandfather Hipparchus had his property confiscated on the charge of tyranny, thus foreshadowing a notorious charge that Herodes Atticus himself had to face in Athens (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 547).¹²⁶

ὁ μὲν γὰρ πάππος αὐτοῦ Ἱππαρχος ἐδημεύθη τὴν οὐσίαν ἐπὶ τυραννικαῖς αἰτίαις, ἃς Ἀθηναῖοι μὲν οὐκ ἐπῆγον, ὁ δὲ αὐτοκράτωρ οὐκ ἠγνόησεν,

for his grandfather Hipparchus suffered the confiscation of his estate on the charge of aspiring to tyranny, of which the Emperor was not ignorant, though the Athenians did not bring it forward...

Although we do not know much about the charge against Hipparchus, it seems likely that the emperor Domitian, who was known for denouncing wealthy Romans and confiscating their fortunes, had something to do with it—Philostratus furtively says that “the emperor was not ignorant of it”.¹²⁷ It seems that Hipparchus after his condemnation, very likely followed by an execution, suffered some kind of *damnatio memoriae*, since the documents avoid mentioning his name as much as possible.¹²⁸

By contrast, Herodes Atticus was neither ashamed of his grandfather nor of his name, and made his pride visible in the way he styled himself as a Roman citizen, assuming the name of Hipparchus: *Lucius Vibullius Hipparchus Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes*. Naming himself after

καὶ πᾶσαν ἀγαθὴν ἀσφάλειαν ἐπ' αὐτῷ τιθέμενος, ὥς, ἐφ' ὅσον γε ἡμῖν οὗτος περιέστιν (ἀν)τερραστὴς γὰρ εἶναι σοὶ φημι, καὶ οὐκ ἀποκρύπτομαι), τὰ ἄλλα γε πάντα ἡμῖν εὐάτα καὶ τούτου μακρῷ δεύτερα., 'But if you as well as I love a noble youth, distinguished for virtue and learning and fortune and modesty, you cannot go wrong if you attach yourself to him and set in him all your assurance of good fortune, since as long as he remains to us—for I confess, and make no secret of it, that I am your rival in his love—everything else is remediable and of infinitely less importance than this.' Kasulke (2005, 221f.) rightly calls attention to the notions of ἀρετή and σωφροσύνη which refer to the philosophical interests of the young Marcus. Although, strictly speaking, Herodes was Marcus' teacher of Greek rhetoric, Fronto's description points to the philosophical dimension in the pedagogical relationship between Herodes and his pupil, a dimension that also underlies his lecture about the search for true authority (Gell. 9, 2). Richlin (forthcoming) suggests that the *erastes*—*eromenos* relationship between Fronto and Marcus was fully sexual before Marcus married.

¹²⁶ See Tobin 1997, 15; Kennell 1997, 351.

¹²⁷ For Domitian's threats to the lives and possessions of the social elite in the eastern provinces of the empire see Flinterman 1995, 149 (cf. *vit. Apoll.* 7, 23 and 25).

¹²⁸ See Ameling 1983, 19; Tobin 1997, 16.

an ancestor who had been condemned to death by a Roman emperor, Herodes' attitude is at odds with the Roman *exemplum* in Gell. 9, 2, 11, which literally presents 'a case of the opposite nature' (*exemplo ex contraria specie*), the *damnatio memoriae* suffered by Romans who deserved ill of the state.¹²⁹ The typical example of this *damnatio memoriae* is the case of Marcus Manlius, whose monarchic ambitions not only led to his condemnation to death (Gell. 17, 21, 24), but also to a ban on the *praenomen* Marcus for the Manlii.¹³⁰ The parallels with the despotic ambitions of Herodes Atticus can hardly be ignored. As we have seen above (p. 281 n. 43), Herodes fashioned himself after the example of Hadrian, and set up matching busts of Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus and himself. In Philostratus' *Lives*, Herodes Atticus always appears as a 'regal' figure: the phrase βασιλεὺς τῶν λόγων is used of him alone.¹³¹ It appears that Herodes truly lived up to the name of his grandfather.¹³²

The name Hipparchus, conspicuous by its absence in Gell. 9, 2, 10, recalls the famous tyrant and Herodes' grandfather, who both foreshadow Herodes' own troubles, such as his trials in Rome and Sirmium and the accusations of tyranny by the Athenians. In contrast with his grandfather's case, Herodes' behaviour was denounced by the Athenians, who sought to forward it to Marcus Aurelius' ears through the Quintilii (Philostr. *vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 559). We may glimpse Gellius' satirical nudge when he makes Herodes call those Athenians *maiores mei*, who were in fact the predecessors of his own enemies. Thus, Gellius not only employs the Roman *exemplum* to denounce Herodes' despotic ambitions, but also turns the prestigious tradition of Athenian cultural memory against the Athenian 'tyrant'.

Herodes' Athenian style was Ἡρώδης Ἀττικοῦ Μαραθώνιος, fashioning himself as the descendant of Miltiades (famous for his victory at

¹²⁹ Cf. 9, 2, 11 *antiquos Romanorum audio praenomina patriciorum quorundam male de republica meritorum et ob eam causam capite damnatorum censuisse, ne cui eiusdem gentis patricio inderentur*, 'I hear that the early Romans voted that the forenames of certain patricians who had deserved ill of their country and for that reason had been condemned to death should never be given to any patrician of the clan'.

¹³⁰ Cf. Liv. 6, 20, 14f.; see Lindermann 2006, 104f. on 9, 2, 11 *male de re publica meritorum*.

¹³¹ Cf. *vit. soph.* 2, 10 p. 586, quoting Hadrian of Tyre; 2, 17 p. 598; see Whitmarsh 2001, 105; 153.

¹³² As we have observed above, the herms at Herodes' villa in Cephisia were possibly inspired by the herms placed throughout Attica as memorials of the tyrant Hipparchus. As Tobin (1997, 155–156) alternatively suggests, Herodes' herms may be modelled after those of Kimon, whom Herodes considered as his ancestor (see below).

Marathon) and Kimon. Actually, the aristocrats whom Herodes considered as his true *maiores mei* were either cooperating with tyrants or represented a kind of popularity that could be perceived as 'tyranny'.¹³³ Herodes himself probably identified with men like Kimon and Miltiades because he viewed them, as he preferred to view himself, as aristocratic benefactors loved by the people thanks to their munificence, using their wealth in a public-spirited way.

However, from a 'democratic' point of view, the kind of individual expenditure undertaken by men like Kimon and Herodes Atticus could raise the suspicion of undemocratic ambitions. Scholars have argued that Herodes' label of tyrant not only reflects his financial and political control of the city, but also his cultural and architectural interests, and reveals the Athenians' deep sense of frustration with the form taken by his euergetism. Tobin (1997, 288f.) compares such accusations of tyranny with those against Dio of Prusa, arising from his construction of the portico in Prusa, accusations against which he defends himself in the 47th discourse.¹³⁴

Yet, Herodes' alleged tyranny was also linked to his problematic relation with Roman power. The Athenians' accusation of tyranny seems closely connected with Herodes' feud with the Quintillii brothers. Philostratus' account of the feud (*vit. soph.* 2, 1 p. 559) presents it in terms of a power struggle over the arbitration of artistic taste and culture. The connection between their aesthetic debate and the accusation of tyranny on behalf of the Athenians reflects how closely the concept of 'tyranny' is associated with cultural influence. Moreover, it shows that conflicts on cultural matters can at the same time be viewed in terms of a power struggle within elite society. An important weapon used by Herodes in this struggle was invective and satire, for Philostratus adds that he tried to slander the Quintilli by making jests to Marcus Aurelius at their expense. Gellius the Roman satirist partakes with his

¹³³ Although historical traditions represent Miltiades as an opponent of the tyrant Peisistratus and his son Hippias, other sources indicate he occupied the office of archont in 524/523 (cf. Dion. Hal. *ant. Rom.* 7, 3, 1), which suggests that he cooperated with the Peisistratids ('Vasall', or 'Vertrauensmann'; see Berve 1937, 9f.). On Miltiades' tyrannical ambitions after the victory at Marathon see Berve 1937, 97f. On Kimon see Kallet 2003, 127, who quotes Aristotle's remark about Kimon's 'tyrant-scale property' (*Ath. Pol.* 27, 3 τυραννική οὐσία).

¹³⁴ Cf. Dio Chrys. *Or.* 47, 18; 47, 23–24 and see Kennell 1997, 353. As Simon Swain (1996, 232) points out, Dio's opponents do not trust him, because they see his political aims at home as closely associated with his connections with Rome.

sophisticated chapter on 'living up to one's name' in a similar kind of power struggle.

By alluding to Herodes' association with tyranny, Gellius in particular draws attention to the offensive nature of Herodes' 'regal behaviour' from the perspective of a Roman emperor. In this context, the combined appearance of Herodes and Musonius in the Gellian chapter presents another significant aspect, related to their shared connection to a Greek 'site of memory'. Philostratus' portrayal of Herodes pictures a very ambitious politician, whose aspirations to cut the Isthmus, the tyrannical act of violence *par excellence*, put him on a par with tyrants of the past such as Periander and Nero, who were famous for aspiring to the same project.¹³⁵ Whereas Musonius was the notorious victim of Nero, and allegedly took part in the digging itself as part of his punishment by the emperor (as recorded in the pseudo-Lucianic *Nero 1*), Herodes rather resembles the figure of Nero himself as he desires to do the 'paradigmatically monarchical act'.

However, the most conspicuous 'clash' between Herodes Atticus and the Roman Emperor in the collective memory of Gellius' day was the trial at Sirmium in 174/5 A.D., which was preceded by a political crisis at Athens caused by the increasing number of freedmen entering into the Areopagus, Boule and Panhellenium. Marcus Aurelius was deeply concerned about the weakening of standards of eligibility for Athens' most ancient and most prestigious council, the Areopagus, which led to his reform in 165 A.D. Being an attempt to reimpose ancient standards and expel the ineligible from the council, this reform resulted in a series of investigations into the credentials of many Areopagites.¹³⁶ The reform reflects the exercise of imperial authority to deal with a political and social crisis, caused by the excitement over the loss of Athenian prestige due to the excessive number of 'unworthy elements' who had received the status of Areopagite, which was the highest status at Athens.

The people of Athens, a city deeply divided by aristocratic faction, were obviously frustrated with the members of their elite who engaged in party politics, using their wealth and power to get their partisans into positions of influence.¹³⁷ Here Herodes Atticus comes into the picture, whose involvement in supporting the illegitimate entry of freedmen

¹³⁵ See Tobin 1997, 314; Whitmarsh 2001, 153.

¹³⁶ See Oliver 1980, 312.

¹³⁷ See Kennell 1997, 354, who compares Dio Chrysostomus' claim that he did not

into the prestigious councils of Athens is documented in the legal proceedings of the trial held before Marcus at Sirmium.

When we read Gellius' chapter on names in this context, we may glimpse the underlying political satire. The chapter can be read on more than one level, and the author uses Herodes' character as an instrument to voice opinions that turn back on him like a boomerang. Thus, Gellius makes Herodes refer to the Athenian frustration that prestigious Greek names related to Greek liberty were 'disgraced by contact with slavery' (9, 2, 10 *nomina libertati patriae deuota seruili contagio pollui*), making him expose his own notorious manoeuvres to introduce elements of servile origin into Athens' most prestigious council (note the contrast *libertati ... seruili*).

Moreover, in addition to the hints at Herodes' bribable nature (9, 2, 6f.), Gellius puts a phrase in Herodes' mouth that on a different level turns out to satirise his own inadequacy to judge and scrutinise members of the elite by merit, an inadequacy that results in literally allowing standards to be corrupted (9, 2, 11): *cur ergo nos patimur nomen philosophiae inlustrissimum in hominibus deterrimis exordescere?* ('why then do we allow the glorious title of philosopher to be defiled in the basest of men?'). Paired with the question earlier posed by Herodes at 9, 2, 5 *quibus nos uti posse argumentis existimas, ut esse te philosophum noscitemus?*, this question insinuates that Herodes is not able to provide the required guidance in matters of scrutinising and judging elite membership.

Gellius' political satire as a sign of the times

Gellius' political satire fits into a larger picture of Antonine literature, and again we can fruitfully compare him with Lucian. His *Assembly of the Gods* may provide a literary echo of the political crisis at Athens in the 160's:¹³⁸ the dialogue presents the enfranchisement of unworthy elements in a noble city of ancient prestige in the form of a burlesque of the Olympian gods, who debate on the 'base-born and fraudulently enrolled' gods (*Deor. conc.* 13) who have been recently admitted. At the end of the dialogue, Zeus exercises his authority by forcing through a decree calling for investigation of credentials: his role invites com-

play party politics or split the city into factions by using his influence to get friends enrolled in the council (*Or.* 45, 7–8).

¹³⁸ See Oliver (1980) and Kennell (1997).

parison with the Roman emperor.¹³⁹ As in Gellius, we find in Lucian's dialogue a strong dislike of pseudo-philosophers, whose 'empty appellations' put them on a par with charlatan-gods as forms of falsely arrogated authority.¹⁴⁰

Whereas Lucian focuses on the political procedure and the exercise of the supreme authority to safeguard the prestige of nobility, the target of Gellius' satire is the person who fell into public disgrace by a chronic lack of self-control and judgment in his political ambitions and personal emotions. Significantly, Gellius at the very beginning of *Noctes Atticae* (1, 2, 12) alludes to the role of the emperor as the one who had to undertake action to regulate Herodes' life of conflicts. In 9, 2, Gellius again draws his reader's attention to Herodes' authority as a judge of *philosophi*, in a chapter which simultaneously questions his own qualifications as a *sapiens*. In the literary communication between Gellius and his reader, the crucial question of the chapter gains a programmatic dimension, if we connect his 'ideal reader' with the *existimatio* of the emperor:

9, 2, 5 *quibus nos uti posse argumentis existimas, ut esse ... philosophum noscitemus?*

by what evidence you judge we may recognize ... a philosopher?

As we have seen above, the iconic figure of the pseudo-philosopher symbolises a great contemporary concern about authority, regarding both education (dishonest teachers) and politics (corrupt and subversive politicians). Gellius' portrayal of Herodes Atticus reflects both aspects. As Herodes had been the tutor of the young prince Marcus, Gellius' satirical representation of the lecturing Herodes has a pedagogical dimension, a dimension that disqualifies him in terms of educational authority in an imperial context.¹⁴¹ Moreover, it has a political dimen-

¹³⁹ Cf. Lucian. *deor. conc.* 4 (Momus thanks Zeus for urging him to frankness) ποιεῖς γὰρ τοῦτο βασιλικὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς καὶ μεγαλόφρον, 'that is a truly royal, high-souled action'. In *deor. conc.* 14, Zeus appears as prytaeis (ὁ Ζεὺς ἐπρυτάνει); cf. Ael. Arist. *Rom.* 90, where he calls the emperor τὸν πάντων τούτων ἔφορόν τε καὶ πρύτανιν.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Lucian. *deor. conc.* 13 ἀνυπόστατα καὶ κενὰ πραγμάτων ὀνόματα ὑπὸ βλακῶν ἀνθρώπων τῶν φιλοσόφων ἐπινοηθέντα, 'they are unsubstantial, empty appellations, excogitated by those dolts, the philosophers'; 17 τοῖς δὲ φιλοσόφοις προειπεῖν μὴ ἀναπλάττειν κενὰ ὀνόματα, 'that the philosophers be warned not to make up empty names ...'.

¹⁴¹ See Keulen 2004, 230 with n. 31 on Gellius' concern about the prevalence of teachers who engaged in higher education without having the relevant qualities for being a moral and intellectual example to their pupils.

sion, as Herodes' qualifications as a 'gatekeeper' for the imperial elite are turned to ridicule. How can someone be called a true *amicus* of the Roman emperor, if his unruly power allows standards for the (local) political elite to be corrupted, an elite which shares a responsibility for the order and stability of the Roman empire?

This has important implications for Gellius' self-fashioning as cultural authority, which he subtly associated, as we have seen, with the communication between the symbouleutic authority of the *amicus minor* with the supreme authority of the *amicus maior*. Gellius' cultural programme, it is implied, teaches *argumenta* by which a true 'philosopher' can be recognised; what is more, it instructs and exhorts a superior authority to enforce and consolidate the Roman norms that constitute the legitimate world order and cultural hierarchy.

CONCLUSION: CONSTRUCTING CULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTINUITY

Gellius' conception of authority turns out to be closely intertwined with hierarchy. Like authority, hierarchy does not manifest itself as an unshakable status quo in *Noctes Atticae*, but as an object of continuous scrutiny and debate. Expressing himself through the rich traditions of Latin literature, Gellius actively participates in this debate. Through sophisticated techniques of satirical exposure, his chapters invite the reader to observe meaningful reversals between apparent hierarchy and unstated hierarchy on several levels, and to acknowledge Gellius' cultural authority in a contemporary context. The image that many people have of Gellius nowadays, that of the uncritical admirer of the intellectual celebrities of his age (Fronto, Favorinus, Herodes Atticus) proves to be wrong, if we carefully read *Noctes Atticae* in its literary and politico-cultural context.

Gellius' self-fashioning can be described in terms of 'constructing authority', related to his role of Roman educationalist working in the ideological tradition of Varro, Cicero, Quintilian, and Tacitus. His *Noctes* can be viewed as a Roman cultural programme that provides a literary repertoire of cultural identity for the Roman elite. The agenda behind Gellius' project is the agenda of the Latin intellectual aristocracy, which traditionally vindicated the continuity of its elite monopoly on knowledge by attacking those who threatened this continuity (in Gellius' case: the *grammatici*). Moreover, it maintained its internal unity by scorning those intellectuals whose extreme philhellenism or other controversial cultural pursuits posed a risk to social cohesion among the Roman elite.

Roman 'cultural authority' can be explained in two ways, the intrinsic authority of Roman culture itself, and the authority of Roman authors like Varro and Gellius, whose writings participate in a dynamic process of cultural continuation.¹ Gellius' role of cultural authority is

¹ On cultural continuation see Brownlee-Gumbrecht 1995, x: "a ... culture will

not a passive one, as a writer who merely collects excerpts of a literary and cultural heritage which came down to him in a 'natural way'. His role is an active and dynamic one, constructing his perception of the world through a consciously selective elaboration of a common past presented in the form of *commentarii* ('notes', but also 'memoirs'). Moreover, his role is competitive, as he establishes his authority in a process of interaction with cultural rivals, such as the *grammatici*, or, on a more subtle level, Fronto, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus, who are commemorated by Gellius in a way that suits his own cultural and ideological agenda.

Gellius' 'construction of authority' is also visible in his imaginative use of literary resources and techniques. He projects himself in various roles, which are constructed in the spirit of Latin literary traditions (Menippean Satire) and contemporary Roman intellectual culture (Fronto's teachings). His use of linguistic topics, sympotic questions, and satirical anecdotes reflects the playful, competitive mentality of the Antonine cultural world. By constructing the role of his younger self as the admiring *sectator* of charismatic intellectuals, Gellius presents a satirical comment on contemporary cultural phenomena (eloquent Greek sophists enthralling Roman audiences). In the spirit of Lucianic writings, he invites the reader to recognise the satire and to acknowledge where true authority lies.

Yet, in contrast with the *grammatici*, who were socially inferior and thus could be openly criticised, his 'admired masters' and social superiors Fronto, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus are not directly and explicitly satirised by Gellius, but via innuendo and allusion hidden in playful scenes of dialogue and philological debate. Gellius relies on the operating interpretive strategies of his sophisticated imperial audience, making the reader his accomplice in reconstructing an underlying satirical thrust from apparently innocuous philological topics and minutiae. Inviting his Antonine audience to pursue an 'investigational rhetoric' that scrutinises a person in the light of his character and reputation, Gellius shifts the interpretative burden onto the reader, for whom the *exempla* of *Noctes Atticae* speak volumes when placed in a political context. Moreover, in a tradition of Roman imperial writing, Gellius employs a 'language of praise' for his beloved masters that may be con-

be preoccupied with its origins, exploiting continuation as a way of celebrating the empowering myths that serve as its self-legitimation."

strued as a 'language of blame' by his Antonine reader.² That the literary role of the young intellectual upstart in society created possibilities for such 'doublespeak' is also illustrated by Apuleius' Lucius, whose ostensible praise of Milo's *parsimonia* has the effect of mocking his *auaritia*.³

Gellius' authority is not only a literary construction, but also a responsive comment on real phenomena 'out there', embodied by prominent persons who had made a deep impact in society through their charismatic authority. With their powerful voices, their facial expressions, their movements, and their striking physical appearances, they were able to attract and influence large numbers of followers. Performances by such intellectuals can be seen as illustration of the phenomenon of charismatic authority as a shared experience, related to group formation. The foremost examples are the sexually ambiguous philosopher Favorinus and the wealthy politician and intellectual Herodes Atticus. In *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius' constructed role of his younger self presents an original perspective on a Roman's experience of being among the followers of these charismatic intellectuals. Gellius as author conveniently employs the slandered reputations of these celebrities, vividly present in the collective memory of his day, to view the Antonine cultural world through a satirical lens. His perspective is a Roman ideological perspective, codifying the ruling class' view of the world. It predates the cultural portrayal of the second century by the Greek author Philostratus (3rd century A.D.), who viewed Herodes Atticus and Favorinus through a Hellenic lens as part of a 'sophistic movement'.

Gellius consolidates his authority, which represents the dominant cultural discourse, by integrating figures like Favorinus as inadequate, controversial, or subversive elements into his Roman cultural world, casting them as ambiguous contemporary role-models, against which the reader is invited to pit the unassailable heroes of Gellius' admired Roman past, in particular Cato the Elder.⁴ In *Noctes Atticae*, Gellius' authority is invested in the activity of writing and the canonical author-

² See Bartsch 1994, 169–175 on the slippery nature of the 'languages of praise and blame': an imperial audience would easily interpret ostensible praise as mockery, depending on the political context.

³ Cf. Apul. *Met.* 1, 24, 1 with *GCA* 2007, 423 f. ad loc. For a comparison between the Apuleian Milo and Fronto as depicted by Gellius see above, p. 41 f.

⁴ Favorinus' ambiguous role symbolises the ambiguity felt by Romans toward Greek culture (see above, p. 155): to a certain extent, he represents 'otherness', but to a certain

ity of written texts, employing the strong associations between writing and (Roman) power—reading imperial inscriptions, visiting libraries, excerpting and memorising authoritative Latin texts—to underpin his own claim to literary endurance.⁵ By contrast, he associates Hellenic intellectuals like Favorinus and Herodes with the seductive and deceptive qualities of orality. His description of Herodes' villa (1, 2), symbolising the seductive aspects of its owner's oratorical power, suppresses 'written' elements of preserving memory by not mentioning its famous herms with commemorative inscriptions.

Exposing the instability of the charismatic authority and the unreliability of the political behaviour of these Hellenic 'star-intellectuals', Gellius implicitly advertises the stable and reliable written authority embodied by his *Noctes Atticae*. He repeatedly proves his independence from the oral and aural enchantment of his masters' teaching by demonstrating the results of his own enquiries in the library.⁶ Through his ironical and satirical attitudes towards unreliable or subversive rivals, Gellius outlines by contrast the morphology of true authority, delineating the physiognomy of the good Roman intellectual. Moreover, his cultural-educational programme also imparts authority to the reader, by making him part of the continuous chain of reading and excerpting texts that matter, and by acknowledging and rewarding his critical 'reading power'. Significantly, the last sentence of chapter 2, 22 begins with *considerandum est* (2, 22, 31), as if Gellius invites his reader to go to the library to start a new inquiry.

This points to the material context in which we may view Gellius' literary strategies of self-advertisement: the important connections of Fronto, Favorinus, and Herodes Atticus with the imperial court as *amici* of Roman Emperors form a revealing framework for the impetus behind Gellius' literary project. The literary communication in comparable Roman writers such as Pliny the Elder, who explicitly addressed the emperor in his Preface, or Fronto, tutor of Marcus Aurelius, point to the imperial court as a crucial point of reference in Latin imperial writing. The emperor's pervasive presence in the politico-cultural con-

extent he also 'belongs' to Gellius' educational programme, as a starting-point for learning.

⁵ For the association of writing with elite authority and Roman imperial power see Rimell 2007, 74f. (on the burlesque of this association in Petronius' *Satyricon*); for the connection between orality and seduction see Keulen 2007, 118 (on the Apuleian Prologue).

⁶ Cf. 2, 22, 28–31; 4, 1, 20–23; 16, 3, 6–8; cf. also 17, 21, 1.

text as a 'controller of all knowledge' makes it likely that Gellius had him in mind as a potential reader, even if he never communicates with him in an explicit or direct way. Gellius uses literary 'codes' that refer to the imperial court as the centre of the literary community, inviting and enabling the reader to read and interpret selected texts within a certain ideological framework.

Through subtle intertextual allusions, he positions his *Noctes Atticae* within literary traditions of political philosophy, represented by famous texts like Xenophon's *Cyropaedia*, focusing on the education of a prince, or Plutarch's *Moralia*, which address moral topics with a political undertone, such as the difference between flattery and friendship. In the spirit of Plutarch's interest in the role of 'adviser in politics' and the protreptic authority of his *Parallel Lives*, Gellius' cultural authority can be interpreted in terms of 'symboleutic authority', as his *exempla*, anecdotes, and philological topics give rich food for thought for a man in power, who has to take decisions in situations of conflicting values.

Gellius' self-fashioning as a symboleutic authority can be placed within a tradition of intellectuals who see their role in terms of a sophisticated check on the arbitrary use of power. In a very subtle and sophisticated way, Gellius' chapters offer a form of 'tutoring the ruler', preparing him to avoid succumbing to false forms of authority. This tells us something about the powerful role envisaged for Gellius himself in his work, as his authority aimed to keep government out of the hands of 'illegitimate' forms of authority, such as charismatic sophists, moralising Stoic philosophers, or subversive prophets.⁷ Moreover, his satirical play with the reputations of celebrities is a significant display of his power to influence and modify public opinion, and to control the verdict of posterity by his personal remembrance of those who mattered in society. This forms part of Gellius' way of showing that his literary work mattered and that his opinion counted. Rulers and emperors were aware that they were 'observed' by the men who controlled educated opinion and the verdict of posterity: that this situation created discomfort and tension is illustrated by the fact that emperors sometimes exiled or expelled intellectuals.⁸

⁷ For the notions of 'charisma' and 'conversion' inherent in *demulcere* (16, 3, 1; 3, 13, 4) see chapter six, p. 147f. with n. 28 (cf. p. 160).

⁸ See Murphy 1971, 308. For the role of intellectual as 'mediator', as a social subject between power and society, see Mazza 1980, 65–66.

In view of the above, we may consider Gellius as a political writer, who cautiously manoeuvred to speak his mind without becoming offensive, and to support without becoming a flatterer, creatively using the literary discourse of his age, fully aware of its potential and its constraints, to convey a political message.⁹ His chapters on apparently marginal topics, such as the etymology of *obnoxius* (reflecting on the asymmetry of power relations), the ‘trivial’ question of the duties of the judge (breaking a lance for strong autocratic power against legal formalism),¹⁰ or the *disputatiuncula* on the tension between friendship and politics, become quite central if interpreted in their imperial context. Cast, as it were, in the role of a knowledgeable *amicus minor*, Gellius presents an *amicus maior* not only with a source of literary diversion and mental reinvigoration,¹¹ but also with a source of ideological orientation for reflections on concrete policy in situations of conflicting values, reflections which partake in a rich ancient tradition of writings on political philosophy.

Through its potential for ideological reflection about political power, Gellius’ *Noctes Atticae* becomes meaningful as a form of literary expression in a *political* sphere, revealing its utility in particular dilemmas of power and government in the society that produced it. Using various forms of innuendo and sophisticated allusion, Gellius addressed central problems such as the ‘twilight zone’ between friendship and politics, or

⁹ On the more extended sense of the word ‘political’ see Habinek 1990, 166: “not just the specific activities associated with governmental administration, but all the strategies—verbal, visual, and kinetic—by which a culture and its participants distribute power”.

¹⁰ Favorinus says ominously to Gellius in 14, 2, 12 *id quidem, ... super quo nunc deliberas, uideri potest specie tenui paruaque esse*, ‘the question which you are now considering may seem to be of a trifling and insignificant character’. For the opposition between ‘trivialities’ and ‘imperial advice’, which is directly related to the programmatic interplay between ‘marginality’ and ‘centrality’ in the *Noctes*, cf. 12, 2, 14 (alluding to Seneca’s role as advisor of the emperor) *non pro enthymemate aliquo rei paruae ac simplicis, sed in re ancipiti pro consilio*, ‘not as an argument about some slight and simple affair, but as advice in a matter requiring decision’.

¹¹ Compare Philostratus’ role in relation to his addressee, the proconsul Gordian, as pictured in the *Lives of the Sophists* (p. 480): τὸ δὲ φρόνισμα τοῦτο, ἀριστε ἀνθυπάτων, καὶ τὰ ἄχθη σοι κουφιεῖ τῆς γνώμης, ὥσπερ ὁ κρατὴρ τῆς Ἑλένης τοῖς Αἰγυπτίοις φαρμάκοις, ‘this essay of mine, best of proconsuls, will help to lighten the weight of cares on your mind, like Helen’s cup with its Egyptian drugs’. This role also resembles the role of the sophists, to whom Hadrian turns his mind to lighten his political responsibilities (*vit. soph.* 1, 8 p. 490; see Swain 1996, 397f.). For Philostratus’ frequent attention to the so-called ‘vertical communication’ between sophists and Roman emperors and other magistrates see Flinterman 1995, 38–45; Whitmarsh 1998, 204.

the uneasy relation between power and the law, problems which were so difficult or so dangerous that they were rarely discussed openly and directly, as this could be interpreted as questioning the legitimacy of those who were in power.¹² This was the last thing that Gellius wanted.

An illuminating commentary on Gellius' political satire, which helps to bring out his underlying strategies of fashioning and consolidating a lasting position as cultural-educational authority in an imperial context, is provided by the chapters that immediately follow two chapters on Herodes Atticus (1, 2 and 9, 2). The implicit message in those chapters illustrate how the notion of 'cultural continuity' embraced by Gellius' literary project also entails a notion of political continuity,¹³ while it establishes Gellius' own crucial role in securing both forms of continuity.

If we view chapter 1, 3 in the light of the previous chapter, which alluded to Herodes' controversial reputation in a political context (cf. 1, 2, 12 Ἐὰν δέ σε ὁ Καῖσαρ μεταπέμψῃται κατηγορούμενον), Gellius' discussion of friendship degenerating into favouritism can be read as an exposure of Herodes' nepotism, an exposure which implies a proreptic to enforce the norms that maintain the legitimate world order, when someone lets things get out of hand.¹⁴

In 9, 3, the chapter following the one that exposed Herodes' questionable *humanitas*, Gellius quotes a letter to Aristotle written by the Macedonian king Philip, who 'never was a stranger to the Muse of the liberal arts and the pursuit of culture' (9, 3, 2 *a liberali tamen Musa et a studiis humanitatis*), in spite of his labours and triumphs of war. The letter announces the birth of his son Alexander, and is quoted by Gellius in both Latin and Greek as 'an encouragement to care and attention in the education of children' (9, 3, 4 *curae diligentiaeque in liberorum diciplinas hortamentum*):

9, 3, 5 *filium mihi genitum scito. Quod equidem dis habeo gratiam, non proinde quia natus est, quam pro eo, quod eum nasci contigit temporibus uitae tuae. Spero enim fore, ut eductus eruditusque a te dignus existat et nobis et rerum istarum susceptione.*

¹² See Murray 1971, 277.

¹³ Compare Brownlee-Gumbrecht 1995, x on political authority represented as cultural authority: "this is the 'positive' side of the cultural authority problematic, in which myths of origin and legitimizing historiography play the crucial roles. Both the construct of 'continuity' and the phenomenon of continuation figure as politically essential components in the official presentation of court culture and the monarchy as culturally legitimate and authoritative."

¹⁴ On the implicit proreptic in chapter 1, 3 see above, p. 232f.

Know that a son is born to me. For this indeed I thank the gods, not so much because he is born, as because it is his good fortune to be born during your lifetime. For I hope that as a result of your training and instruction he will prove worthy of us and of succeeding to our kingdom.

Gellius' quotation of Philip's letter gains a self-referential dimension if we read it as a literary reflection of the period of transition in which *Noctes Atticae* took its shape, a period of transition marked by the political crisis to which Herodes' favouritism appears to have contributed in a considerable way. This period of crisis and transition, defined by Marcus' reform of the standards of eligibility for the Areopagus (165 A.D.) and the trial at Sirmium with Herodes Atticus as its most conspicuous culprit (174–175 A.D.), was also the period in which Marcus' son Commodus was born (161 A.D.) and grew up. This means that Gellius was writing the *Noctes* in a time when people's eyes were increasingly turning to Commodus as the future Roman emperor.

Against this background, a phrase like *ad commonendos parentum animos* sheds light on the imperial dimension of Gellius' aspirations to cultural authority expressed through his *Noctes Atticae*, aspirations that aim to ensure a role of continuity by admonishing parents to pay attention to their children's education.¹⁵ By mentioning the *studia humanitatis* ('pursuit of culture') of a king whose reign was troubled by war, Gellius seems to allude to the *humanitas* (παιδεία) of the emperor Marcus Aurelius (9, 3, 2). The bilingual quotation of the letter can be read as a homage to Marcus' learning in both Latin and Greek. At the same time, the word *humanitatis* entails a subtle reminder of the controversial *humanitas* of Marcus' princely educator in Greek rhetoric, Herodes Atticus (9, 2, 7), drawing attention by contrast to Gellius' own rightful claim to pedagogical authority in his Latin *Noctes Atticae*. Moreover, the sentence may subtly remind the son of the *humanitas* of his father, which forms a further endorsement of the enduring 'princely instruction' aspired by Gellius' work.

The evidence we have makes it likely that *Noctes Atticae* became generally available shortly before or after Marcus' death (180 A.D.).¹⁶ By

¹⁵ Cf. 9, 3, 4 *ea epistula, quoniam curae diligentiaeque in liberorum disciplinas hortamentum est, exscribenda uisa est ad commonendos parentum animos*, 'since this letter is an encouragement to care and attention in the education of children, I thought that it ought to be quoted in full, as an admonition to parents'. For Gellius' 'paternal authority' (mentioned with reference to his own children) cf. Praef. 1 and 23.

¹⁶ See Holford-Strevens 2003, 18–20.

implicitly assimilating his symbouleutic responsibility in *Noctes Atticae* to the *exemplum* of Aristotle's future educational role to the young Alexander,¹⁷ Gellius aims to establish and secure Roman cultural and ideological authority at a turning-point in the Empire,¹⁸ associating his pedagogical role with creating conditions for *political* continuity between Marcus' and Commodus' rule:

Spero enim fore, ut eductus eruditusque a te dignus existat et nobis et rerum istarum susceptione.

For I hope that as a result of your training and instruction he will prove worthy of us and of succeeding to our kingdom.

We may interpret Gellius' announcement that more books of *commentarii* will follow (Praef. 23–24) in the light of such aspirations to cultural authority, related to a process of consolidating ideological and political continuity. Unfortunately, we do not know anything about Gellius' fate after Commodus became the sole reigning emperor. However, the evidence we have indicates that Commodus represented an obvious breach with *humanitas* in every imaginable sense of the word, above all the distinguished *humanitas* embodied by his father, the philosopher-statesman Marcus Aurelius.

¹⁷ For Alexander and Aristotle as an exemplary precedent for the relation between the Roman statesman and his philosophical adviser see Rawson 1989, 241 (Pompey and Posidonius) and 250 (Trajan and Dio Chrysostomus).

¹⁸ For Commodus as an 'Emperor at the Crossroads' see Hekster 2002.

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