

YALE CLASSICAL STUDIES
EDITED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF CLASSICS

by
JOHN J. WINKLER
Assistant Professor of Classics, Stanford University
and
GORDON WILLIAMS
Thatcher Professor of Latin, Yale University



VOLUME XXVII
LATER GREEK LITERATURE

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
CAMBRIDGE
LONDON NEW YORK NEW ROCHELLE
SYDNEY MELBOURNE

The importance of sophists*

E. L. BOWIE

Studies of the Second Sophistic are necessarily founded upon the *Lives* of Philostratus, our source for the term itself: and it is now a decade since Glen Bowersock's *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* added depth and breadth to Philostratus' picture in an illuminating presentation of their cultural, social and political roles which has rightly become a standard work. Both Philostratus and Bowersock seem to present sophists as men who acquire political authority through their professional status. Philostratus lays out a mosaic of anecdotes and assessments without much that could be called historical analysis to give it shape: our attention is drawn to consular ancestors or descendants, city offices and benefactions, encounters and friendships with emperors in such a way that we gain the impression that they all derive from the practice of sophistic skills. Bowersock's investigation, by contrast, is carefully articulated and historically argued. Separate consideration is accorded to the sophists' origins in the city aristocracies of the Eastern provinces and their benefactions to these cities; to their acquisition of immunity from offices and liturgies; to their contact with emperors as ambassadors, friends and holders of equestrian and senatorial posts. Yet to my eye the perspective in which these marks of distinction are presented is sometimes distorted, and the distortion affects the truth or falsehood of Bowersock's insistence upon the *historical* (as opposed to literary) importance of the sophists. In the following pages I shall try to show why it seems to me misleading to offer such formulations as 'The social eminence of the sophists in their cities and provinces brought their families swiftly and inevitably into the Roman upper class', or such stimulating challenges as 'It could be argued without apology that

* I am very grateful to Dr J. L. Moles for helpful comments on a draft of this article.

the Second Sophistic has more importance in Roman History than it has in Greek Literature.¹

The crucial fact, amply documented by Bowersock in a couple of pages, is that 'sophists almost always emerged from the notable and wealthy families of their cities'.² With three possible exceptions (and each of these can be challenged), no sophist is known to have risen from humble or even modest origins, nor is any claim advanced by Philostratus that a sophistic career pulled a man up into the established city aristocracies.³ Rather it is apparent that men who turned to sophistic rhetoric were born into families which had long furnished their cities with magistrates, benefactors and diplomats. Once this has been established we learn nothing new or surprising about the sophists when we are told that they too held office in their cities and in the provincial κοινά, lavished spectacular benefactions and represented city or κοινόν on embassies to the emperor. Fortunately for the historian they constitute one sort of city aristocrat whose activity is illuminated by literary texts as well as by epigraphy and the Digest, but this extra illumination should not blind us to the fact that they are going through the same routines as that much larger but more shadowy chorus of city aristocrats of which they are members, and with whom they share the same stage.

The conspicuous advertizement of wealth by the construction of buildings or the provision of single or recurrent distributions is, of course, a characteristic of the city aristocracies where it is hard to see why sophists should differ from others. The benefactions of sophists are but a fraction of the total already known for the Greek East. The millionaire Herodes Atticus finds his closest analogues not among other sophists but among such big spenders of no known sophistic bent as Vibius Salutaris at Ephesus or Opramoas of Rhodiapolis.⁴

1. G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969) (hereafter referred to as Bowersock, *Sophists*), 28 and 58. Compare 10, with n. 6, rejecting Wilamowitz's view of the Second Sophistic as an invention of Philostratus, and the reaffirmation of the historical importance of the movement in *Approaches to the Second Sophistic* (University Park, Pennsylvania, for the APA 1974), 2-3.

2. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 21-3.

3. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 21-2 allows three instances of 'low or middle-class origin', for which see Appendix 1.

4. For sophists' benefactions, Bowersock, *Sophists*, 27f. For Vibius Salutaris at Ephesus, F. F. Abbott and A. C. Johnson, *Municipal Administration in the Roman*

The importance of sophists

In diplomacy and political leadership, however, it might be thought that the sophist's greater skill in public speaking gave him an advantage over his peers, secured him greater authority as a city politician and commended him for more frequent representation on important embassies, embassies which might in turn lead to imperial favour or friendship for the individual.⁵ Unfortunately the case of political activity within city or province is hard to judge. From Philostratus and from the extant orations of Dio and Aristides we have abundant evidence of sophists playing a leading part in times of internal crisis or in conflicts between neighbouring and rival cities.⁶ It is also apparent and in no way unpredictable that none of these figures achieved unchallenged pre-eminence through his eloquence. Dio in Prusa and Herodes in Athens are hard-pressed by political opponents who lack their professional advantages, and Aristides' rhetorical gifts could not check unwelcome attempts to impose liturgies.⁷ But a systematic comparison of the success of sophists with that of others in city politics is unattainable, because we have no source of information about the

Empire (Princeton 1926), 387 no. 71 (= *Inscr. Brit. Mus.* iv.481; B. Laum, *Stiftungen in der griechischen und römischen Antike*, 74; *Inscr. gr. Städte aus Kleinasien*, II.i (Ephesos ia) no. 27); for Opramoas see especially *IGR* iii. 739; for Herodes Atticus the study of P. Graindor, *Un milliardaire antique, Hérode Atticus et sa famille* (Cairo 1930), remains important, but for a brief note of more recent material see G. W. Bowersock and C. P. Jones in *Approaches* (n. 1), 38. A comprehensive study of the benefactions of city aristocrats and others in the Eastern provinces is much needed.

5. As Dr J. L. Moles points out to me, Plut., *Praec. ger. reip.* 814 and Dio, *Orr.* xviii.3 and xlvii.1 might be used as evidence that sophistic rhetoric was widely regarded as useful in a Greek political context. For modern views cf. H. I. Marrou, *Hist. educ.*⁶, 294 (quoted by B. P. Reardon, *Courants littéraires grecs des IIe et IIIe siècles après J.-C.* (Paris 1971), 135–6 n. 35), 'le prestige artistique . . . reconnu à l'orateur aboutit à investir indirectement celui-ci d'une certaine efficacité politique . . .'. On the other hand the unsuitability of the epideictic style to public life is recognized in Cicero, *De or.* i.81; *Or.* 37–42; Quint. x.1.79; Plut., *De lib. educ.* 7a5–6.

6. Cf. Lollianus at Athens, *VS* i.23 (526); Polemo at Smyrna, *VS* i.25 (531) for internal troubles; Marcus of Byzantium at Megara for inter-city rivalry, *VS* i.24 (529); Dio of Prusa, *Orr.* xxxiii–xxxiv; xxxviii–xli; Aristides, *Orr.* xxiii–xxiv Keil.

7. For Dio cf. C. P. Jones, *The Roman World of Dio Chrysostom* (Cambridge, Mass. 1978), and P. Desideri, *Dione di Prusa: un intellettuale greco nell'impero romano* (Florence 1978); for the troubles of Herodes much is added to the information in Philostratus, *VS* ii.1 (559ff.) by the inscription edited by J. H. Oliver, *Marcus Aurelius: Aspects of Civic and Cultural Policy in the East*, *Hesperia* Suppl. 13 (1970) with revisions proposed by C. P. Jones, *ZPE* 8 (1971), 161–83. For Aristides see Bowersock, *Sophists*, 36ff.

thousands of families who ran the cities of the Eastern provinces that is comparable to the *Lives* and *Orations*. Epigraphy can furnish names, offices, and evidence of honour bestowed by city or κοινόν; occasionally it attests an unusual benefaction in economic crisis, whether famine or fiscal embarrassment; but only rarely does it reveal the presence of political conflict, and never the ease or difficulty with which a family placed a son in a succession of high offices.⁸

With embassies it is different. The evidence of literary sources, of the Digest, of imperial letters recorded in cities, and of honorific inscriptions attesting activity as a πρεσβευτής can be assembled to give a meaningful account of the procedures and persons involved. The subject has been treated with characteristic insight and finesse by Fergus Millar in *The Emperor in the Roman World*, and it is with hesitation that I offer some measure of disagreement with details of his presentation. Like Bowersock he attaches particular importance to the part played by sophists in embassies to the emperor: 'Once the hearing was gained, all might depend on the favour with which the emperor greeted the oration; hence arose the well-attested role of the orators of the Second Sophistic on embassies before the emperor.'⁹ Yet the evidence does not entirely support the thesis that sophists were always especially desirable members of embassies. It is true that a command of rhetoric was of great importance, but that could be assumed in a much wider range of the educated upper classes than rhetors and sophists. The πεπαιδευμένοι who formed their audiences and pupils – such men as Menemachus of Sardis, the addressee of Plutarch's πολιτικά

8. For references to political troubles within cities cf. *IGR* iv.914 from Cibyra, honouring Q. Veranius Philagrus as a benefactor and as having καταλύσαντα συνωμοσίαν μεγάλην τὰ μέγιστα λυποῦσαν τὴν πόλιν (this Philagrus may well be an ancestor of the 'Cilician' Philagrus who quarrelled with Herodes, *VS* ii.8) – the date is Claudian; *Inchriften von Magnesia* no. 114 (= *Inchr. gr. St. Kl.* 12 (*Ephesos* II) no. 215) attesting παραχὴν καὶ θορύβους caused by striking bakers in second-century Ephesus that clearly went beyond the capacities of local politicians and precipitated proconsular intervention; *IGR* iv.444 for a similar situation in Pergamum; and the hint of a political quarrel at Stratonicea in *IGR* iv.1156a. 11 ff., the order of Hadrian, clearly in response to the request of an embassy, that one Ti. Claudius Socrates should either repair or sell a house he owned in the city that was falling into disrepair (1 March, A.D. 127).

9. Fergus Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (London 1977), 385. The topic of embassies is touched on *passim*, and they are the central theme of the brilliant chapter 7, 363ff.

The importance of sophists

παραγγέλματα – will have been as familiar with the ground rules as the star performers, and could surely have met the requirement (which I do not contest) of ‘a comportment, diction and choice of words in accordance with the exacting canons of Greco-Roman culture’.¹⁰ But that the speaker should conduct himself in a manner characteristic of sophistic recitals could also be counter-productive. Bowersock includes the embassy of Alexander of Seleucia among his examples of sophistic envoys, but he should perhaps have drawn attention to the fact that Pius’ reaction was far from favourable:

Now the Emperor seemed to be paying too little attention to him, whereupon Alexander raised his voice and said: ‘Pay attention to me, Caesar.’ The Emperor, who was much irritated with him for using so unceremonious a form of address, retorted: ‘I am paying attention, and I know you well. You are the fellow who is always arranging his hair, cleaning his teeth, and polishing his nails, and always smells of myrrh.’¹¹

Philostratus narrates an equally adverse reaction by Caracalla to Philiscus when he appeared before him to defend his own immunity from liturgies:

. . . he gave offence by his gait, he gave offence by the way he stood, his attire seemed far from suitable to the occasion, his voice effeminate, his language indolent and directed to any subject rather than to the matter in hand. All this made the Emperor hostile to Philiscus . . .¹²

Philiscus lost his immunity, and we can see that the *prima donna*-like comportment of the lecture-hall might be unhelpful in a hearing where the emperor, not the sophist, called the tune. It is perhaps worth adding that a speech of Polemo which won Smyrna certain temple privileges was delivered posthumously by another envoy, which shows that in this case, at least, it was not delivery but the argumentation, style, or authority of the composer which seems to have been effective.¹³

There is no disputing that the crucial factor was an envoy’s ability to secure favour, noted, for example, in a decree from Cius

10. *Ibid.* 385.

11. Philostratus, *VS* ii.5 (570–1) (transl. W. C. Wright), cited Bowersock, *Sophists*, 46.

12. *VS* ii.30 (623) (transl. W. C. Wright).

13. *VS* i.25 (529), which is actually cited by Millar, *Emperor*, 434 to demonstrate that rhetoric was crucial.

in Bithynia honouring a man πάντα καὶ [λέγ]οντα καὶ πρᾶ[ττ]οντα [τὰ συμ]φέροντα τῇ πατρίδι καὶ διὰ τὸ [χ]άριεν παρὰ τῷ Σεβαστῷ.¹⁴ This favour might indeed be secured – or alienated – by rhetoric, but other qualifications could be of comparable or greater importance. Highly eligible is a man who already had some connection with the emperor. He might be as humble as one of the emperor's soldiers, utilized as an envoy by the villagers of Aragua in Phrygia when appealing to the Philips in the years between A.D. 244 and 247.¹⁵ At the other end of the social scale the cases of Ilium and Rhodes were defended before Claudius in the year A.D. 53 by no less a person than the young Nero.¹⁶ Between those extremes there were many sorts of individual who might be expected to start off with an advantage when arguing a case before the emperor. Note first an instance from the very beginning of the Principate, before the period under immediate consideration but illustrating a feature which, like many in the conduct of embassies, did not change significantly in the next four centuries: after Actium the city of Rhodus in Syria chose Octavian's admiral, Seleucus, as a member of an embassy sent to the victor in Asia to offer honours and request confirmation of privileges, and Octavian's reply made it clear how important his link with Seleucus was in determining his attitude to the city.¹⁷ A similar grasp of political realities was shown in the reigns of Claudius and Nero by citizens of Cos, for whom many embassies to the emperors were conducted by Ti. Claudius Cleonymus, brother of Claudius' doctor and secretary C. Stertinius Xenophon and himself honoured with a military tribunate.¹⁸ Claudius' reign also saw an embassy from Alexandria which included one Barbillus, acknowledged by the emperor as his friend.¹⁹ The same acknowledgement

14. *IGR* iii.22.

15. *IGR* iv.598.b5 (= Abbott and Johnson, 476 no. 141 lines 8–9).

16. Tac., *Ann.* xii.58.1; Suet., *Claud.* 25.3; *Nero* 7.2. Of course Nero is not technically an ambassador – those sent by Rhodes are honoured in *IGR* iv.1123 (= Abbott and Johnson, 356 no. 52).

17. *IGLS* iii.718, discussed by Millar, *Emperor*, 410–11, observing 'they naturally chose as an ambassador a man who would have the best claim on Octavian's affection and goodwill'.

18. *IGR* iv.1060 = *Syll.*³ 805, esp. 8–9, καὶ πρεσβεύσαντα πολλάκις ὑπὲρ τῆς πατρίδος πρὸς τοὺς Σεβαστοὺς. For the positions and authority acquired by Xenophon cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 85–6, and below n. 25.

19. *Corp. Pap. Jud.* no. 153, 105 Βαρβίλλω τῷ ἐμῷ ἐτέρω. This may be the same

The importance of sophists

of friendship recurs in a reply to an embassy from Philadelphia sent by Valerian and Gallienus from Antioch on 18 January A.D. 255: P. Aelius Pigres is called ὁ φίλος ἡμῶν.²⁰ We know of several envoys that they offered hospitality to the emperor or his armies, even if we cannot be sure in each case that the establishment of a link of this sort with the emperor preceded the man's selection by his city for service on an embassy.²¹ It may also be relevant that a very large number of envoys attested by honorific inscriptions acted either as priest of Augustus in their city or as archpriest associated with the imperial cult administered by the κοινόν. Their very tenure of these offices marks them out as pre-eminent in local politics, but we can see that an emperor might be expected to hearken most readily to a priest who officiated in the cult of his own divinity.²² Finally we should reflect upon the phenomenon of repeated embassies. A high proportion of epigraphically attested envoys claim to have acted two, three, or many times on embassies to Rome or the emperors.²³

as the Claudius Barbillus who became prefect of Egypt in A.D. 55, Tac., *Ann.* xiii.22, as favoured tentatively by Millar, *Emperor*, 87, and if so he is a literary man *perfectusque in omni litterarum genere rarissime* (Sen., *Quaest. nat.* iv.2.13). For a different view and full discussion see H. G. Pflaum, *Les carrières procuratoriennes equestres* 1 (Paris 1960–1), no. 15.

20. J. Keil and F. Gschnitzer, *Anz. Öst. Ak. Wiss.* 18 (1956), 226 no. 8 (= *Bull. Epigr.* (1958), no. 438, *SEG* xvii.528; revisions by C. P. Jones *ZPE* 14 (1974), 294). Keil suggests Pigres is the son of an Asiarch who appears on coins of Philadelphia under Caracalla. He might just be the man mentioned some 25 years earlier by Philostratus as the only pupil of Cassianus, *VS* ii.33 (627) and therefore perhaps a sophist himself (although Philostratus does not so term him explicitly): the MSS read Περίγητος τοῦ Λυδοῦ but the name is unparalleled, and Valckenaer's change to Πίγητος is highly probable.

21. From Prusias ad Hypium (*IGR* iii.66.12–14: παραπέμψαντα τοὺς μεγίστους καὶ θειοτάτους αὐτοκράτορας καὶ τὰ ἱερὰ αὐτῶν στρατεύματα), and 60, 62 and 1421, with similar formulae, all Severan; from Thyatira (*IGR* iv. 1247, 6, ὑποδεξάμενον Μ. Αὐρήλιον Ἀντωνεῖνον βασιλέα καὶ τρεῖς πρεσβεύσαντα πρὸς τοὺς αὐτοκράτορας προῖκα.).

22. *IGR* i.664 (Dionysopolis); iii.204 (Ancyra); 292 (Isaura); 322 (Apollonia); 526, 527 (Lydae); 589, 590, 596 (Sidyma); 628 (Xanthus); 796 (Perge); iv.783 (Apamea); 1238, 1247 (Thyatira); *MAMA* viii.410, 484 (Aphrodisias); *JRS* 30 (1940), 50 (Beroea); Abbott and Johnson, 451 no. 126 (Sinope); *OGIS* 494 (Miletus); *Ath. Mitt.* 75 (1960), 94 no. 6 (Samos). This is not intended to be a complete list.

23. *IGR* iii.66 (Prusias ad Hypium); 204 (Ancyra); 526, 534 (Lydae); 590 (Sidyma); 628 (Xanthus); 681 (Patara); 778 (Attalea); 796 (Perge); 804 (Aspendus); 857 (Corycus); 982 (Citium); iv.25f (Mytilene, Potamon and Crinagoras); 1031, 1033 (Astypalaea); 1060 (Cos); 1169 (Attalea in Asia); 1247, 1255 (Thyatira); 1756–7 (Sardis); *OGIS* 494 (Miletus); *Insch. von Magnesia* 180;

In some cases the repetition may be explained by a shortage of suitable candidates, but when the larger cities are involved I suspect another factor plays a part: the man already known to the emperor and his staff has a greater chance of success.

Since the late Republic, of course, men distinguished in various branches of Greek literary activity had enjoyed special links with Roman dynasts, whether as tutor, court poet or simply cultivated friend.²⁴ Moreover the prestige of Greek culture was such that even a practitioner of distinction not personally known to a Roman leader might nevertheless expect to command some authority. I shall return to this theme when considering sophistic *ab epistulis*. As far as concerns embassies, however, it is clear that few Greeks, if any, who regularly had the emperor's ear would be at the disposal of their cities for ambassadorial duties, though they might intercede from a higher plane,²⁵ and that sophistic rhetoric was not the only art that might confer authority. On occasion we find athletes as envoys for their city; more often philosophers; at least twice a poet.²⁶ Yet in every case we are dealing with members of the upper classes whose station and local political activities would have fitted them to be ambassadors anyway, and it is hard to gauge how important to their eligibility their cultural activity was.

I hope that it may be seen from the foregoing material that many

Ath. Mitt. 75 (1960), 94 no. 6 (Samos); *Fouilles de Delphes* iii.4 (1970), nos. 288, 301 (Antigenes), nos. 304, 335 (Aristotimus); *Forschungen in Ephesos* II (1912), 178 no. 69; *JÖAI* 44 (1959), Beibl. 258 no. 3 (Ephesus); Abbott and Johnson, 451 no. 126 (Sinope). This is not intended to be a complete list.

24. See G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965), esp. 30–41, 122–39; *Sophists*, esp. 10; Millar, *Emperor*, 83ff.

25. Thus perhaps Areus of Alexandria, when in 30 B.C. Octavian spared Alexandria first because of Alexander, secondly for its size and beauty and thirdly Ἄρειω τῷ ἑταίρῳ χαριζόμενος, Plut., *Ant.* 80.1–3, cf. *Mor.* 207 a–b, Cass. Dio li.16.3–4. More explicitly Claudius asks the senate in A.D. 53 to give immunity to Cos in response to the entreaties (*precibus*) of Xenophon, Tac., *Ann.* xii.61.2.

26. Athletes: *Inscr. von Magnesia* 180; *IGR* iv.1251–2 from Thyatira; cf. L. Robert, *Études Anatoliens* (Paris 1937), 50f., on Hippolochus of Pergamum. Philosophers: Apollonphanes of Pergamum, *Ath. Mitt.* 33 (1908), no. 38 (?Augustan); C. Iulius Arynias Isocrates of Samos, *Ath. Mitt.* 75 (1960), 70f. no. 1b (to Augustus); M. Aur. Diodorus Callimedes, *MAMA* viii.499(b), from Aphrodisias. Poets: Crinagoras of Mytilene, *IGR* iv.33; Chaeremon of Tralles, Agathias ii.17 (both in 26 B.C.). Of course many men of letters composed poetry *as well as* practising in that branch of literature on which their reputation was based, e.g. Scopelian, *VS* i.21 (518). We may note also the ἱατρὸς τέλειος καὶ φιλόλογος Ameinias of Lydae, *IGR* iii.534.

The importance of sophists

factors might affect the choice of an ambassador from the ranks of the aristocracy, and that the indubitably relevant skills of rhetoric were not so monopolized by sophists as to give them an immediate advantage. Some consideration of numbers involved may support this. Some sixteen cases of a sophist or rhetor on embassies to emperors from Greek cities can be documented from the Flavians to the middle of the third century, seven in Philostratus, four in other literary sources and five known from inscriptions. The period from Augustus to Nero, before Philostratus' Second Sophistic, offers another rhetor.²⁷ For these three hundred years we have attestation of about two hundred embassies. For some we know no more than the names of the ambassadors and the city where they were honoured. A substantial number about which more information is available – some fifty – were primarily congratulatory, and so might not have required the best pleaders available, though such embassies were often concerned to secure retention of city privileges as well as to offer honours to the *princeps*.²⁸ Of those sixty odd embassies whose business we know to have been of considerable moment, 75% are conducted by men of no known sophistic qualifications. This is not remarkable in smaller cities where sophists might be few or undistinguished, but it is significant that in the case of Ephesus, where the epigraphic and literary records of a major sophistic centre are relatively generous, the non-sophistic envoys outnumber the sophists.²⁹ Correspondingly, it is only for six of his 43 sophists that Philostratus mentions embassies, although epigraphy can add a seventh.³⁰ The hazard of epigraphic survival or Philostratus' own very uneven reporting may be distorting the picture, and some sophists will certainly have taken advantage of their immunity from the liturgy of ambassadorial service.³¹ But we are still justified in concluding that the typical members of an embassy were aristocrats who were not sophists; that sophists did not play a preponderant part in ambassadorial activity; and that

27. The cases I enumerate are listed in Appendix 2.

28. As perhaps Dio, and arguably Nicomedes in 217/18, in the list in Appendix 2: other embassies in that list may well be in this category too. Cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 41off.

29. For Ephesus we already know nine ambassadors, listed in Appendix 3.

30. Cf. Appendix 2 nos. (ii), (iv) and (vii), (ix), (x), (xiii). The seventh is Hermocrates, *ibid.* (xi) and (xii).

31. On immunities cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 30ff. with the reservations of M. Griffin, *JRS* 61 (1971), 278–80 and V. Nutton, *JRS* 61 (1971), 52–63.

when they do serve on embassies their role as city politicians from distinguished families is as significant as their eminence in sophistic oratory.

One further observation may be justified by the evidence. We know of three cases of sophists or rhetors acting as envoys to Hadrian, but only one for the entire reigns of Pius, Marcus and Commodus.³² Perhaps the lottery of surviving testimony. But it may reflect an understanding by cities of the different reactions one might expect. Hadrian's enthusiasm for things Greek and his involvement in the arts may have encouraged the belief that he would be impressed by rhetorical virtuosity. Pius was more hard-headed in cultural matters (witness, perhaps, his limitation of the immunities formulated in generous terms by Hadrian) and prone to sarcastic rebuttal of claims on his attention or generosity.³³ We have already seen how the *prima donna* role assumed by Alexander of Seleucia was counter-productive. Marcus does indeed acknowledge learning from Pius the correctness of yielding to those with specialist knowledge τοῖς δύναμιν τινα κεκτημένοις οἶον τὴν φραστικὴν ἢ τὴν ἐξ ἱστορίας νόμων ἢ ἐθῶν ἢ ἄλλων τινῶν πραγμάτων;³⁴ but it is a considerable step from taking specialist opinion on how something should be expressed (which is what this seems to mean) to giving a privileged hearing to the arguments put forward by a rhetor or sophist: the meagre attestation of sophistic embassies to Pius and Marcus, in a generation when Philostratus' Second Sophistic was at its height, might be attributed to these emperors' lower estimate of the rhetor by comparison with Hadrian or Caracalla. We must remember, of course, that a letter from the sophist Aristides is said to have moved Marcus to tears and to have secured the aid for earthquake stricken Smyrna that the city had appointed an embassy to seek. But we should also take note that nothing is said of the embassy being disbanded, nor of its having comprised a sophist among its number.³⁵

32. Cf. Appendix 2 nos. (vi)–(viii) and (ix). It must be admitted that if Polemo had survived to act on the embassy from Smyrna mentioned in *VS* i.25 (529) the tally for the reign of Pius would be two.

33. Note the terms of his refusal of immunity to philosophers, *Dig.* xxvii.1.6.7 and cf. W. Williams, 'Antoninus Pius and the Control of Provincial Embassies', *Historia* 16 (1967), 470ff.

34. *Ad se ipsum* i.16.6, cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 60.

35. *VS* ii.9 (582) referring to Aristides xix.3 as a μονωδία (the title under which

The importance of sophists

The large number of rhetors or sophists who were appointed by the emperor to the office of *ab epistulis* is a very different matter. Here it is indisputable that the verbal expertise of the rhetor could be seen as pertinent to the duties of the post and that literary men were favoured in selection for it.³⁶ But we must be as precise in our analysis of this phenomenon as the evidence allows. In assessing the historical importance of the Philostratean Second Sophistic we must be careful to distinguish declamatory sophists from other literary men, even, as far as possible, from rhetors. Although the terms clearly overlap, it seems that both virtuoso declamation and teaching were expected of a σοφιστής:³⁷ many men who declaimed might be called simply ῥήτωρ but ῥήτωρ could also be used of teachers, and equally of forensic orators, sometimes but not always distinguished as ἀγοραῖοι ῥήτορες.³⁸ In the discussion that follows I attempt to distinguish men whom Philostratus thinks are properly sophists from those whom he does not mention at all or those whom he labels differently, and I hope that observing this distinction may cast some light on the developments involved in selection of such men for the post *ab epistulis*.

Bowersock noted twelve 'oriental litterati' in the office between Hadrian and Caracalla.³⁹ The credentials of some of these are Aristides xviii is transmitted). Aristides xxi also appears to have an imperial addressee, Commodus (cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 46), but if so its invitation to visit the rebuilt city was not taken up.

36. Cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 50ff.; Millar, *Emperor*, 83ff., 226–8.

37. Cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 12–14, and my remarks in 'Greeks and their Past in the Second Sophistic', *Past and Present* 46 (1970), 5–6, repr. in *Studies in Ancient Society*, ed. M. I. Finley (London 1974), 169. For the imprecision of terminology we may now note that Dionysius of Miletus, called ῥήτορα καὶ σοφιστήν in the inscription on the base of the honorific statue set up by Claudius Eutychus (J. Keil, 'Vertreter der zweiten Sophistik in Ephesos', *JÖAI* 40 (1953), 5–7), is simply called ῥήτωρ on the sarcophagus published in *Anz. Wien* (1969), 136.

38. Cf. the father of Alexander of Seleucia, τοὺς ἀγοραῖους λόγους ἰκανώτατος, *VS* ii.5 (570), and τὸ τῶν ἀγοραίων ἔθνος, *VS* ii.20 (614). In the latter passage Philostratus contrasts the forensic orator with the σοφιστής who spends much of his day ξυσπουδάζων μειρακίοις, but ῥήτωρ is also used as late as Pius to describe teachers, cf. *Dig.* xxvii.1.6.7.

39. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 50 referring to Pflaum, *Carrières* II (Paris 1960), 684 n. 1. That note does indeed list twelve *ab epistulis* and observes that the post *ab epistulis graecis* was 'réservée en general aux grands rhéteurs grecs', but the earliest, Dionysius of Alexandria (cf. below p. 41 with Appendix 4), falls outside the period Hadrian to Caracalla, and Bowersock naturally makes no literary claims for the shadowy —ilius of *ILS* 1452 (Pflaum no. 178, and no. 4 in 684 n. 1). To the ten remaining Bowersock adds Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus (cf. below p. 41 with

questionable, but one or two may be added, so that a figure of twelve can be reached, a high proportion of the sixteen names known, for the period from Trajan to Caracalla. But of these only four are properly sophists: Alexander of Seleucia, Hadrianus of Tyre, Antipater of Hierapolis and Aspasius of Ravenna. A fifth, L. Iulius Vestinus, is indeed called σοφιστής by the *Suda*, but the activity catalogued for him is scholarly – an epitome of the Γλῶσσοι of Pamphilus and a selection of words from Thucydides and Attic orators. If Philostratus had mentioned him at all he would very probably have put him in the secondary role he assigns to Celer, a τεχνουργός, who was inadequate to the demands of declamation though a good imperial secretary. Cornelianus, to whom Phrynichus dedicated his *Ecloga*, may be the same sort of rhetor: Phrynichus flatters him as ἐν παιδείᾳ μέγιστον ἄξιωμα ἔχοντα and compliments him on introducing high standards of Greek into imperial hearings, and it is reasonable to suspect that his strength lay in choice of words rather than in declamation.⁴⁰ Of Maximus we only know that the distinction of his φωνή led to his promotion, and, since he too is ignored by Philostratus in the *Lives*, that distinction is more likely to have been in writing than in declamation.

The τεχνουργός Celer is almost certainly the *orator graecus* whom the *Historiā Augusta* records as tutor to Marcus. The same source offers an Ateius (or Attius) Sanctus as teacher of rhetoric to

Appendix 4) and also mentions T. Aur. Larichus (*Sophists*, 55 with n. 2): but Larichus, known from a letter from Commodus to the Athenian *gerousia* to have been in office *ca.* A.D. 186 (J. H. Oliver, *Hesperia* 36 (1967), 332; A. E. Raubitschek, *Hesperia* Suppl. 8 (1949), 289–90) and already known as equestrian from an inscription honouring his wife Ulpia Phila at Xanthus (*TAM* ii.300), has no special claim to be a literary man. But two more figures *could* have been mentioned to strengthen Bowersock's case, L. Iulius Vestinus (who happens to be classified as *ab epistulis* rather than *ab epistulis graecis* by Pflaum, cf. his fasti, *Carrières* II (1961), 1021) and T. Aius Sanctus, who emerged too late for Pflaum's list and is discussed by him as no. 178bis in *Carrières* III, 1002–7. Since he was also too late for the list of second-century *ab epistulis* in G. B. Townend, *Historia* 10 (1961), 380–1, and since that list also omits Alexander of Seleucia, I append a list of those men who were either Greeks with the title *ab epistulis* or are specified as *ab epistulis graecis* (and hence presumably of Greek origin), without here entering into details of chronology or the vexed question of when the imperial secretariat was split between Latin and Greek officials (see Appendix 4).

40. Phrynichus, *Ecloga* p. 379 Lobeck cclvi Rutherford: for other documentation of this discussion see Appendix 4.

The importance of sophists

Commodus, and this man can now be recognized as T. Aius Sanctus, *ab epistulis graecis* to Marcus. To these five non-sophistic rhetors should be added the Hadrianic *ab epistulis* Heliodorus: his involvement in rhetoric is established by the acid remark of his rival Dionysius of Miletus that Caesar could give him money and honour but could not make him a *rhetor*, and Cassius Dio ascribes his elevation to the prefectship of Egypt to his rhetorical ἐμπειρία, but his omission from the *Lives* and the *Historia Augusta's* classification of him as a philosopher may justify questioning whether he declaimed.

There remain two men to whom literary activity can independently be ascribed: the γραμματικός Dionysius of Alexandria, and Sempronius Aquila, who *might* be the Aquila noted as a ῥήτωρ εὐδόκιμος and a pupil of Chrestus in the *Lives*. Eudaemon might also be a literary man, especially if identical with the Eudaemon recalled for his δριμύτης by Marcus along with Charax of Pergamum and Demetrius the Platonic philosopher: but the identification is not certain, and the *ab epistulis* differs from other rhetors in that office by holding a number of non-literary posts before being a *bibliothecis* and *ab epistulis*. Bowersock⁴¹ would also ascribe 'some sort of rhetorical or literary proficiency' to Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus, but he too differs from the others in holding the post *a rationibus* after *ab epistulis*: as Millar observes of the post *a rationibus*, 'With one possible exception [*viz.* Tertullus] no literary men or jurists are attested, and instead we have a substantial series of men with full military and equestrian careers.'⁴² It would be safer to leave Tertullus, like Larichus and —ilius, as men for whom the present evidence does not document literary activities.

The proportion of rhetors and, after Marcus, of sophists, is indeed impressive, but it requires cautious interpretation. What sort of importance does it attest for the Greek sophists? Is that importance such as to establish the greater historical than literary significance of the Second Sophistic?

One point must be recalled at the outset and kept in mind throughout: the movement of educated Greeks from the upper classes of Eastern cities into the service of Roman dynasts did not

41. *Sophists*, 54.

42. *Emperor*, 105.

begin with the Second Sophistic. The process was already under way in the late Republic. Pompey's friend and historian, Theophanes of Mytilene, and Augustus' tutors and advisers Areus of Alexandria and Athenodorus of Tarsus, are simply the most prominent examples of a class of intellectual Greeks taken up by Romans precisely as purveyors of prestigious Greek culture. The phenomenon is fully and admirably expounded by Bowersock in his *Augustus and the Greek World* and its development into the more formal employment of Greeks as imperial secretaries has been delicately analysed by Millar.⁴³ It has always been clear why such men were the most likely type of Greek to win dynastic favour. On the cultural plane they could transmit their store of *paideia* or create a literary monument to their patron's deeds. In political terms they were not only in themselves a link with the aristocracies of Greek cities, but were well suited to guiding and formulating a ruler's dealings with them. There is, of course, a difference in status between the Greek who is a friend and informal adviser and the Greek who is appointed to a salaried post *ab epistulis*, but that difference is a function of the development of the institutions of the principate, and does not disqualify us from treating the two as part of a single historical process.

One change that seems to be detectable in this process is in the type of Greek intellectual who attracts Roman attention. Until late in the first century A.D. rhetors are hard to find as advisers or appointees. Instead we encounter philosophers or scholars, many with origin or training in Alexandria. Athenodorus and Nestor of Tarsus, Athenaeus of Seleucia and Areus of Alexandria are all presented in our sources as philosophers. Thrasylus, friend to Tiberius, was an Alexandrian with Pythagorean as well as astrological interests. One of the first men to hold a post with formal responsibility for Greek diplomacy *may* be his son, Ti. Claudius Balbillus;⁴⁴ this man had at any rate Alexandrian training, and seems to have been *ad legationes et res[pon]sa graeca?* under Claudius before becoming prefect of Egypt in A.D. 55. A different sort of Greek intellectual is represented by C. Stertinius

43. Bowersock (n. 24), esp. 30ff.; Millar, *Emperor*, esp. 83ff. Cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 43-4 and 58 (where however it is perhaps tendentious to specify rhetors as men who had 'associated in official and unofficial relationships with the leaders of the Roman aristocracy').

44. Cf. evidence and discussions cited in n. 19 above.

The importance of sophists

Xenophon, who must have come to Claudius' attention by reason of his successful medical practice in Rome before becoming court doctor and being entrusted with Ἑλληνικά ἀποκρίματα: Xenophon may well have been a scholar as well as a doctor, but there is no evidence that he was a rhetor.⁴⁵

Even with the rise of sophistic rhetoric, assigned by Philostratus to Nicetes in the reign of Nero, the holders of the office *ab epistulis* seem still to be recruited from other sources, particularly Alexandria. Dionysius of Alexandria, ἐπὶ τῶν ἐπιστολῶν at some time between Nero and Trajan, is termed γραμματικός by the *Suda*, who tells us that he succeeded his philosophy teacher Chaeremon as head of the Alexandrian Museum. L. Iulius Vestinus, whose activity seems to be that of a γραμματικός rather than σοφιστής in Philostratus' sense, was also head of the Alexandrian Museum before moving to control of the libraries in Rome and the posts *a studiis* and *ab epistulis*: his origin is certainly Alexandrian. If Eudaemon, another of Hadrian's *ab epistulis* and the first specifically termed *ab epistulis graecis*, is a literary man at all, it is equally likely that he had Egyptian connections: certainly he starts as a procurator of the *dioecesis Alexandrina* and ends up, in 141/2, as prefect. Only with Celer and Heliodorus do we at last encounter provably rhetorical figures, and as we have seen, Celer is a τεχνουργός, Heliodorus a philosopher as well as rhetor.⁴⁶ This may remind us that the one Greek whom we encounter advising rulers between Augustus and Hadrian did so as a philosopher rather than sophist, Dio of Prusa: and although Dio may have composed sophistic works for Titus, it is the Italian philosopher Musonius who is remembered as Titus' adviser in Greek tradition.⁴⁷

45. Cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 85–6.

46. For documentation see Appendix 4. Recruitment from the Alexandrian museum may be partly explained by the emperor's role, inherited from the Ptolemies, in appointing its head and nominating members, cf. Millar, *Emperor*, esp. 504–6.

47. Dio's *Melancomas* xxix and xxx were presumably written for Titus; Desideri (n. 7) also argues that *Or.* xviii is addressed to Titus. For Musonius cf. Themistius xiii.173c (p. 248.18 Downey). I exclude from consideration the fictional scene in Philostratus' *Apollonius* v.32ff. This leaves us the kingship orations of Dio as our only example of advice that was certainly intended as weighty and serious, even if we cannot tell how seriously it was taken. For discussion and bibliography cf. C. P. Jones, *Roman World*, 16–17 (*Melancomas*), 115ff. (kingship orations). See further below p. 51 with note 64.

The fact that a number of rhetors reached the post *ab epistulis* in the reign of Hadrian, and that the first Philostratean sophist was belatedly appointed by Marcus, cannot be treated as evidence of Greek intellectuals rising to an eminence that such men would not otherwise have attained. Rather we have evidence of a change in the *type* of Greek intellectual who caught the imperial eye, and we can fairly surmise that had there been no sophistic movement these posts would have been filled by literary Greeks of a different sort. In assessing the reasons for the change it is hard not to see both literary and historical explanations as necessary. But the most important factor was surely a literary one, the growth of sophistic rhetoric into the most prestigious literary activity of the age.

That growth had itself historical as well as literary explanations. The prestige of sophistic declamation must at different stages have been augmented by its having been taken up by a number of distinguished Greeks of *provincia Asia*; by the success some of these attained in Rome as declaimers (Nicetes and Isaeus, perhaps Dio) and ambassadors (Scopelianus to Domitian, Polemo to Trajan);⁴⁸ by the readiness of culturally conscious emperors to hear and reward declaimers – first Trajan honouring Dio and Polemo, then Hadrian treating the same Polemo as a close associate and promoting rhetors and sophists in many ways.⁴⁹ The final seal will surely have been set upon the pre-eminence of sophistic rhetoric among the literary arts by the involvement of the great Herodes Atticus. But it is rarely that the *entire* explanation for a fashion is to be found in its adoption by important people. Something in the practice and content of sophistic declamation satisfied the aspirations of its exponents. In conjecturing what that was we must

48. For Nicetes and Isaeus in Rome cf. Pliny, *Epp.* vi.6.3; ii.3. For Scopelianus and Polemo as envoys cf. Appendix 2.

49. For Trajan's taking Dio into his triumphal chariot cf. *VS* i.7 (488). Philostratus does not actually say the occasion was a triumph, and the precedent of Augustus driving into Alexandria with Areus in his chariot (Plut., *Ant.* 80.1–3) may be taken as corroboration of the story (though a sceptic could see it as its origin). Accordingly I would assume that it has a kernel of truth, though such details as Trajan's much-quoted remark to Dio τί μὲν λέγεις οὐκ οἶδα, φιλῶ δέ σε ὡς ἑμαυτὸν may simply be a Greek *topos* going back to Ar., *Ranae* 1169: εὖ νῆ τὸν Ἑρμῆν· ὅτι λέγεις δ'οὐ μανθάνω. For Trajan's gift of free travel to Polemo see *VS* i.25 (532) and, on the whole theme of imperial gifts and honours to intellectuals, Millar, *Emperor*, esp. 491ff. Was the embassy (Appendix 2 no. (iv)) the occasion for Polemo's eliciting this gift?

The importance of sophists

again take account of historical factors. The men who declaim are among the political leaders of the Greek cities, their declamations train themselves and others for political activity; and where real political power is circumscribed by the dependence of the cities on Rome the fantasy world of declamatory themes allows a Greek aristocrat with a Roman name to play the role of Demosthenes.⁵⁰ Yet even when such considerations have been weighed there remains in the balance a residuum of purely literary appeal. Philostratus' sophists and audiences *liked* the Asianic rhythms, the exuberant conceits and the elaborate *enthymemata* that were appropriate to declamatory rhetoric. The combative speech, which as a literary form had fascinated Greeks since the composition of the first few hundred lines of the *Iliad*, posed questions concerning delivery, type and ordering of arguments, selection and arrangement of words, and was capable of absorbing intellectual attention in the way that its close relative, tragedy, seems to have dominated mid fifth-century Athens or the novel dominates modern criticism. The typical circumstances of its delivery allowed a rapport between speaker and audience denied to circulated written texts: speaker could work upon audience, and the audience could, especially in impromptu performances, feel the stimulus of participation in the act of creation.

Much more could be said about both the historical and the literary trends which contributed to the rise of sophistic oratory. But the above, very crude sketch is simply intended to remind us that there *was* an important literary component and to explain why I wish to insist that without it Greek *sophists* would not have been found in the office *ab epistulis*. There are, of course, other factors contributory to their attraction of Roman 'emperors' attention that are not literary. Already under the Flavians certain families from Asia Minor were securing equestrian posts and access to the Roman senate and magistracies;⁵¹ the escalation of

50. For a fuller exposition of the hypothesis that nostalgia for the glories of classical Greece contributed to the choice of declamatory themes see my article cited in n. 37 above, and cf. a similar interpretation of the enthusiasm for declamation among the Roman aristocracy in the first century A.D. suggested by L. Sussman, *The Elder Seneca, Mnemosyne* Suppl. 51 (Leyden 1978), 14-15.

51. On this important topic the discussions of C. S. Walton, 'Oriental Senators in the Service of Rome', *JRS* 19 (1929), 38ff., and G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World*, 140ff., are still valuable, but for a thorough treatment of the

diplomatic activity as Greek cities vied for titles and privileges brought a still wider range of families into contact with the court; and the phenomenon of the travelling emperor – Trajan on his way to Parthian campaigns and Hadrian indulging in his blend of administrative and cultural tourism – exposed his entourage even more to the tastes of the men and cities that offered him hospitality. In all these forms of contact Athens and Asia Minor bulk larger than Alexandria, and this will have made some contribution to the replacement of Alexandrian by Aegean cultural preferences. Finally the personal element should again be emphasized. Just as the interest of great men like Polemo and Herodes in sophistic rhetoric must have contributed to that art's prestige, so too the friendship attested between Polemo and Hadrian and between Herodes and Marcus will have made access to those emperors easier for other practitioners of the art.⁵²

On the hypothesis here advanced, then, the sophistic *ab epistulis* are witnesses both to a change in Greek cultural fashions and to the increasing penetration of the Roman governing class by Greek families in Athens and Asia Minor. Only once, however, did a sophist's achievement of the post *ab epistulis* 'constitute' the first step in an equestrian or ultimately senatorial career'.⁵³ In the sophistic *ab epistulis*, Alexander died in or shortly after office, Hadrianus perhaps even before he could take it up; Aspasius returned to teaching in Rome. The exception is Antipater. Yet his whole career illustrates how his sophistic eminence was only effective in conjunction with other factors. His father (not known to us or, apparently, to Philostratus, as a rhetor or sophist) is marked out in the *Lives* as one of the most eminent men in Hierapolis and documented by epigraphy as *advocatus fisci* first of Phrygia, then of all Asia. His grandfather, P. Aelius Zeuxidemus Cassianus, had been Asiarch and, as we now know, *logistes* at Aezani.⁵⁴ The

evidence now available cf. H. Halfmann, *Die Senatoren aus dem östlichen Teil des imperium Romanum bis zum Ende des 2 Jh.n.Chr.*, *Hypomnemata* 58 (Göttingen 1979).

52. On these friendships see Bowersock, *Sophists*, 48–50, and below p. 52f.

53. As Bowersock asserts for the category of 'cultivated Greek': yet even for that wider category the instances are few.

54. Cf. Millar, *Emperor*, 92–3, commenting 'With Aelius Antipater of Hierapolis in Phrygia, we come to an area which was central to the Greek renaissance' (92). 'Central' presumably because he touches on the worlds of sophistic declamation, historiography, imperial tutors and secretaries and the movement of

The importance of sophists

advance generation by generation to the emperor's court was undoubtedly aided at its last stage, and that stage's precise form determined, by Antipater's rhetorical gifts, a *sine qua non* of his post as tutor to the sons of Severus and a strong commendation for the post *ab epistulis*. But the upward movement had already begun with his father, and rhetoric may have determined *what sort of post* Antipater would achieve rather than whether he would reach such height at all. The elevation to senatorial rank and appointment to the legateship of Bithynia after his post *ab epistulis* distinguishes him not only from the three other sophists in that post but from all but two of the other Greek *ab epistulis*. About the possible (but not certain) *ab epistulis graecis* —ilius we do not know enough to explain why after a number of equestrian posts, two of them *ab epistulis*, he was adlected *inter praetorios*. But the other, T. Aius Sanctus, offers an interesting precedent to Antipater. It seems likely that his role as *orator* to Commodus, which may have been concurrent with his post *ab epistulis graecis* or *procurator rationis privatae*, was crucial in obtaining him senatorial rank on Commodus' accession, rank marked by the office of *praefectus aerarii*, and finally the consulate. Likewise in Antipater's case his tutorial role may have been more important to his promotion to senatorial rank than the actual post *ab epistulis*.⁵⁵

There are indeed examples of *ab epistulis* appointments which were followed by a senior equestrian post: Heliodorus, who later became prefect of Egypt, but whom we do not know to have had other posts which might constitute a 'career'; and Ti. Claudius Vibianus Tertullus, who indeed had a career beginning with *ab epistulis graecis* and ending *praefectus vigilum* but who may not have been, like Heliodorus, a rhetor, far less sophist. Finally Eudaemon did have a career in which *ab epistulis* and *praefectus Aegypti* figures, but he held two posts before that *ab epistulis*.

The post *ab epistulis* should not, therefore, be seen as a regular route for Greek sophists to equestrian or senatorial careers. The

Asiatic families into Roman governing class: but although some of these features he shares with a number of contemporaries, the combination is unique (just as is that offered by Herodes) and if the term 'central' has any notion of 'typical' it should be resisted. The new post at Aezani is attested by a text discovered and copied by C. W. M. Cox which will be published by B. M. Levick and S. Mitchell, to whom I am most grateful for permission to allude to it in this discussion.

55. See Appendix 4 no. (x); Millar, *Emperor*, 105.

reason is not far to seek, and indeed may also be adduced when we consider how few sophists were actually Roman senators: maintenance of a sophistic career required both declamation and teaching, and these could not easily be combined with the demands of a full administrative career (as could, no doubt, the writing of poetry or history).⁵⁶ This may explain why only two of Philostratus' sophists, Quirinus of Nicomedia and Heliodorus 'the Arab', held the post of *advocatus fisci* for which one would have thought sophistic skills were tailor-made; and why only one, Dionysius of Miletus, seems to have held a procuratorial post.⁵⁷ Again with senatorial careers, it is only Antipater for whom sophistry led to such eminence. Herodes, perhaps too exceptional to be a useful indicator, was the son of a rich Greek who was twice *consul suffectus* and is unlikely to have had to make more than a token show in any but one of the few posts which preceded his own appointment as *consul ordinarius* in A.D. 143.⁵⁸ These will have absorbed only a small fraction of his time by comparison with political activities in Athens, and together these aspects of his public life clearly did not prevent him devoting considerable time to teaching, declaiming and hearing other sophists. The only other

56. Literary activity of various sorts can be documented for a fair number of Eastern *equites* and senators. For *equites* cf. for example Cn. Pompeius Macer, the son of Theophanes, a writer of epic (Ovid, *Am.* ii.18) and tragic (Stobaeus iv.24.52) poetry, who was entrusted by Augustus with organizing libraries (Suet. *Iul.* 56) and with procuratorial posts in Sicily and Asia (cf. Pflaum, *Carrières* I, 11 ff., III, 957), finally to be numbered among the close friends of Tiberius (καὶ νῦν ἐν τοῖς πρώτοις ἐξετάζεται τῶν Τιβερίου φίλων, Strabo xiii.2.3); or Ti. Claudius Balbillus (cf. above n. 19). For senators e.g. the prolific philosopher Flavius Arrianus, some of those works at least seem to be written concurrently with his administrative career, in which the legateship of Cappadocia from 131/2–136/7 was no sinecure; A. Claudius Charax, consul in A.D. 147, writer of 40 books of Greek (or Greek and Roman) Histories (cf. Jacoby *FGrH* 103; C. Habicht, 'Zwei neue Inschriften aus Pergamum', *Istanbul Mitteilungen* 9/10 (1959–60), 109f: the consul and historian are certainly identical); Demostratus, a writer on ἀλιευτική and philosophy mentioned by Aelian, *De nat. anim.* xv.19 and perhaps identical with C. Claudius Titianus Demostratus of Ephesus, cf. Halfmann, *Senatoren*, no. 104; or finally Philostratus' contemporary Cassius Dio, consul under Severus, *consul II ordinarius* in A.D. 229.

57. Cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 56–7. Dionysius was procurator οὐκ ἀφανῶν ἔθνῶν (*VS* i.22 (524)) which suggests that the post was not merely honorific (as seems to have been that ultimately obtained for Appian cf. Fronto *Ad Ant. Pium* 9).

58. *Viz. quaestor, trib. plebis, praetor*: his post overseeing the free cities of Asia may have been more demanding, but will at least have kept him in the centres of sophistic rhetoric. For the evidence cf. *PIR*² c 802.

The importance of sophists

sophist in the Lives known to have reached the consulate or indeed to have been elevated to senatorial rank was Ti. Claudius Aristocles of Pergamum. Different both from Antipater and from Herodes, Aristocles seems to have been commended both by scholarship and wealth. He wrote rhetorical handbooks as well as declaiming, and his interest in rhetoric as well as his distinction in society will have provoked Phrynichus' decision to dedicate to him parts of his *Proparaskeue Sophistike*. It is from Photius' notice of that work that we know Aristocles to have been adlected to the senate, probably late in the 170s, but there is no evidence in Photius, in Philostratus or in epigraphy, that he held a post *ab epistulis* or any other equestrian office.⁵⁹ Although his *paideia* was certainly a commendation I would conjecture that his personal connections and status in Pergamum were more important to his promotion: he was a pupil of Herodes, and a large number of Pergamene families had entered the senate by the 170s A.D.⁶⁰ Whatever the reason, it is significant that the extremely abbreviated career, involving adlection (presumably *inter praetorios*) and then perhaps only a suffect consulate, which he need not even hold in Rome, will have made few inroads on his activity as a declamatory *rhetor*.

Many sophists came from families which had already produced consuls; in others a relative reached the *fasces* in the same generation, such as M. Antonius Zeno, a connection of Polemo who held the suffect consulate in A.D. 148. Flavius Damianus married into a family from Ephesus, the Vedii Antonini, which had attained senatorial offices in the second century, and his children predictably rose to the consulate.⁶¹ Other sophistic families,

59. See Photius, *Bibl. Cod.* 158, 100 b 26, βασιλικῶ δόγματι τῆς ἐν Ῥώμῃ μεγάλης βουλῆς ἐγένετο κοινωνός, and for his consulate *Inscr. von Olympia* 462, confirming Philostratus' phrase ἐτέλει . . . ἐς ὑπάτου (VS ii.3 (567)). Phrynichus dedicated the first three books of the *Proparaskeue Sophistike* to Aristocles, but the fourth to one Iulianus, ostensibly because of Aristocles' elevation. Since the whole work was dedicated to Commodus as Caesar, the adlection should fall in or shortly after 166–77, and a later rather than earlier date within that range is indicated by Phrynichus' complaints about his age. Aristocles' own works include (as listed by the Suda A 3918 s.v. Ἀριστοκλῆς) both a τέχνη ῥητορική and five books περὶ ῥητορικῆς (perhaps duplication by Suda or his source?), ἐπιστολαί and μελέται.

60. VS ii.3 (567) attests that he heard Herodes. For the senatorial families from Pergamum cf. C. Habicht (n. 56), 129ff.; H. Halfmann, *Senatoren*.

61. On Damianus and the Vedii cf. Bowersock, *Sophists*, 28, and on the identity

eminent though they were, seem to have been so only in a local context and may have lacked the wealth or connections to join the *συγκλητικοί*. But a sufficient number are senatorial to make the fact that only three sophists were themselves senators striking.⁶² The consulate cannot have been a prize that a sophist might reasonably expect to attain, nor can we assert that pursuit of a sophistic career brought a man's family into the Roman upper class. Rather a large number of sophists came from families who had already been raised into that upper class by the efforts of earlier members or by the Roman recognition of a need to give prepotent Greeks a place in the governing hierarchy. A man from such a family who chose to be a sophist was in some measure preferring the intellectual to the practical life. The professional demands of a sophistic career were not compatible with those of the equestrian or senatorial *cursus*, and the latter were surer routes to high office and power. A Greek who had such a career open to him but chose rather to be a sophist had still a chance, but a small chance, of achieving eminence in imperial circles, either by appointment *ab epistulis* or as *advocatus fisci* or by adlection to the senate. But these political plums were too few to explain why so many upper-class Greeks turned to this activity. The primary reason for that remains the prestige attaching to intellectual eminence among the Greek and Roman members of the élite alike and the especial attractions of this type of intellectual activity adumbrated above.

of the first senatorial Vedius cf. my article cited in Appendix 3 no. (vi). For Zeno cf. *CIL* xvi.96, *PIR*² A 883.

62. A fourth man who both taught and declaimed should be added, Quadratus; Philostratus names him as teacher of Varus of Perge (*VS* ii.6 (576)) and describes him as ὁ ὑπατος αὐτοσχεδιάζων τὰς θετικὰς ὑποθέσεις καὶ τὸν Φαβωρίνου τρόπον σοφιστεύων, and he must be the Quadratus described as *rhetor* whom Aristides encountered as *proconsul Asiae*, generally identified with L. Statius Quadratus, *cos. ord.* A.D. 142 (Aristides i. 63–70, cf. xlvii.22; Halfmann, *Senatoren*, 154 no. 67) but with C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus, *cos. suff.* A.D. 139 (and son of the great Trajanic marshal who was suffect in A.D. 105) by C. A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam 1968), 84 n. 84. See also Bowersock, *Sophists*, 24–5 and 84–5. Philostratus' notice suggests a limited range of declamation, and it is no doubt important that Philostratus does not catalogue him as a sophist in his own right (though he does admit Favorinus). I suspect that his involvement in sophistic rhetoric was less than that of Herodes or Aristocles, and if he *was* the son of the great C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus he may not have been required to hold many senatorial posts.