

THE BIRTH OF A “BYZANTINE” SENATORIAL PERSPECTIVE[†]

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The main concern of this paper is the emergence of a political perspective among the eastern aristocracies of the Roman empire during the fourth century. It is a perspective illuminated for the historian by its connection with both the efflorescence of the imperial bureaucracy and the development of Constantinople as an imperial capital. For it is possible to trace the social character of the senate of Constantinople (and of the upper echelons of the bureaucracy with which it overlapped) more extensively than could once have been expected in practice.¹ As a result, one may gauge more convincingly than before the extent to which men of *paideia* from the civic elites of

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1 Jones et al. 1971, with the relevant sources of *addenda* and *corrigenda* listed in Mathisen 1987.29–30 (= 1991.345–46). Petit 1957a contains much that is still of value (references to individuals in this paper by name and Jones et al. 1971 numbering are accompanied, where appropriate, by a parallel indication of the name and older numbering under which the same individual appears in the prosopography provided by Petit). On the relationship between the middle to senior ranks of the imperial bureaucracy and the membership of the senate, with equal application to east and west, see the important treatment in Heather 1998.184–97.

the east had come, early on, to be involved as full participants in the increasing “visibility” of Roman imperial power.²

The opportunity to explore in this way the relationship between the eastern, civic aristocracies and the expanding imperial administration is one to be grasped with both hands. For the predominant tendency has been to emphasise that the rising incidence of imperial government (and the foundation of Constantinople as a part of this phenomenon) had provoked the appearance of “two opposing currents” among the eastern provincial elites (Penella 1990.134); that the centralisation of imperial power had caused a “fracturing of the elite” (Brown 1992.19); and that there was direct competition between the duties and opportunities of civic life, on the one hand, and those of a career in the imperial bureaucracy, on the other (Millar 1983). Instructive as the study of these tensions has been, historians have emphasised, within this broad characterisation, those voices among the eastern aristocracies that may seem, most forcefully, to have expressed a mood of grievance at the corrosion of civic autonomy and of the vitality of traditional, civic institutions.

Thus, in a seminal treatment of the problem of eastern political perspectives by Professor Dagron, the differences between Themistius and Libanius were considered to furnish a clear characterisation of a “crise politique de l'hellénisme.”³ In contrast to Libanius, Themistius would cultivate a lasting role at Constantinople, not only as an imperial spokesman but also as the advocate of a unification of Hellenic and Roman political ideals. It was a role allegedly marked out for him in programmatic fashion by Constantius II, who recommended him to the eastern senate in terms that hailed his adlection as a merging of Hellenic wisdom with Roman dignity.⁴ On this account, Julian stood for the repudiation of such a policy, and the relative abeyance of Themistius during Julian's reign acquires, as a result, a radical significance. Their polite disagreement over the role of the philosopher in relation to public life, and over the proper philosophy of kingship, becomes the reflection of a profound divergence over the “vocation” of Roman power.⁵

2 Heather 1994b offers a valuable point of departure. See Brown 1992.35–41 (and chapters 1–2 passim) on the role of *paideia* in relation to government.

3 Dagron 1968.35–82. See also Cracco Ruggini 1971 and 1972.

4 Dagron 1968.60–65, relying on Themistius *Dêmêgoria Constantii* 24 (Dindorf 1961) = *Dêm. Const.* 21a/24 (ed. Downey and Norman 1965–74).

5 Dagron 1968.83–95. The relationship between Julian and Themistius is not, itself, uncontroversial. Vanderspoel 1995.115–34 passim, argues persuasively, however, that the two were not on good terms, cf. Daly 1980. Brauch 1993b emphasises the grounds for their good relations. This, however, is related to an unconvincing attempt to revive a different interpretation of Themistius' career, for which see Brauch 1993a.

Their differences, in other words, amount to a split over the challenge presented by the prospect of a "synthèse de l'hellénisme et de la romanité" (Dagron 1968.65–74, quotation 65).

Such an approach has encouraged a sense that what we are dealing with is "non tanto il problema della cristianizzazione quanto quella della romanizzazione" (Forlin Patrucco 1993.762). An analogy has even been offered between Hellenism and Christianity. Where Christianity experienced a conflict between "orthodoxy" and "heresy," Hellenes could be considered to have experienced a comparable split: "In the case of paganism (and not for it alone) in the east in the fourth century the counterpart to orthodoxy was Hellenism, and the heresy was the political Romanization which Constantine the Great had inaugurated by the foundation of Constantinople" (Lemerle 1986.56 = 1971.54). On these terms, one may say of Libanius that "he is 'orthodox' in terms of cultural and political tradition," whereas Themistius is "orthodox as regards culture . . . but heretical in as far as he preaches the Constantinian tradition of political Romanization of the East" (Lemerle 1986.56).

By analogy with Themistius, the effect of this treatment is to suggest a characterisation of those members of the eastern aristocracies who were involved in the imperial government and in the senate of Constantinople as "heretics" in relation to an accepted political "orthodoxy"—and they are liable to appear as just so many uncharacteristic extrusions from the well-maintained façade of traditional Greek expectations.

The grievances of Libanius over the plight of the city councils, and over the impact of Roman law and Latin on the field of higher education, become the expressions of an "orthodox" attachment to a *romanité* of the kind articulated by Aelius Aristides, two centuries earlier, in his oration *To Rome*. Themistius, by contrast, had "sold out" to the political legacy of the Constantinian dynasty: for he had emerged as the advocate of a "nouvelle romanité," which emphasised, in the same terms that Eusebius had exploited, the "royauté cosmique" of an emperor whose power was a reflection of the absolute authority of God.⁶

The position of Constantinople within the framework of fourth-century political imaginations emerges clearly from such an account: the rise of the new capital had, like the theory of imperial absolutism, added

6 Dagron 1968 (chapters 1–3 passim). Swain 1996.281–82, with n. 106, collects the evidence of Aristides' oration for the "civic" conception of the emperor. Liebeschuetz 1972.242–55 goes some way to keeping Libanius' complaints in perspective.

fibre to the new, “heretical” perspective.⁷ For it was part of the process by which Roman power had been brought into the midst of the deeply rooted world of civic life in the east. Conflicting attitudes to the emerging capital become, as a result, part of the contradiction between the “nouvelle romanité” and the old.⁸

What is really at stake, however, in this approach to the contradictions between the “Libanian” and “Themistian” perspectives, is the emergence of a “réalité byzantine” (Dagron 1968.117 and *passim*). In a 1969 article, Dagron posed this problem clearly. On the one hand, it was in the reign of Justinian that the conclusion would be reached in a process of accommodation—which had begun with the foundation of Constantinople—between the expression, in Latin, of Roman statecraft, and the expression, in Greek, of *paideia*.⁹ On the other hand, along this trajectory, the imperial partition of 395 and its immediate political aftermath allegedly played a decisive role, for which the *de Regno* and *de Providentia* of Synesius supposedly offered the evidence: whereas *de Regno* reflected the “contractual” view of relations between Greek cities and imperial power, in the manner of Aristides’ *To Rome*, *de Providentia* became an allegory, not only of the political events of 400, but also of the division between the two *partes imperii* (Dagron 1969.29–33). The latter work was taken to signal “une interprétation hellénique de la *partitio*”; and to reflect a claim, on the part of the eastern court, to the sole legitimate inheritance of government. This “rupture” of east and west was thought to have encouraged a decisive rapprochement between the Greek aristocracies and the eastern administration.¹⁰

Seen in these terms, the fourth century becomes a clearly delineable phase. The demise of the “Hellenic reaction” against Constantinople, asso-

7 Dagron 1968.89: “La fondation par Constantin et le développement sous Constance de la Rome orientale donnent un support nouveau à l’idée d’Empire œcuménique,” where this latter quality is a hallmark of the political “heresy.”

8 Dagron 1968.117: “Cette romanité, chez Libanios ou Eunape, renvoie à Rome, tandis que chez Thémistios elle renvoie désormais à Constantinople.”

9 The culmination of this process was considered to be the formal adoption of Greek as the language of administration, a conclusion cast in the largest terms—Dagron 1969.23: “En devenant hellénophone, l’Empire romain d’Orient est devenu l’Empire byzantin.” Note, also, Hemmerdinger 1966, dating the administrative development to the 530s and 540s from the evidence for the prefecture of the east.

10 Dagron 1969.31–33. Hence (at 33), “le pouvoir reste d’expression latine et la culture d’expression grecque, mais ils sont réunis. La *partitio* transforme en un problème linguistique celui des rapports entre la culture et l’État.”

ciated with a specific moment in the history of east-west political relations at the start of the fifth century, becomes the symptom of a defining moment in the triumph of “Byzantinism”;¹¹ and, in that connection, it may even take its place as part of nothing less than the history of the break-up of the Roman empire itself.

Such was the price, it may seem, at which a fifth-century easterner such as Nonnus of Panopolis could express, through his account of the oracular engraving of Ophion on the tablet of Cronos, a Greek embrace of the tradition of Roman law at Berytus:¹²

“σκήπτρον ὅλης Αὔγουστος ὅτε χθονὸς ἡνιοχεύσει
 Ῥώμῃ μὲν ζαθέῃ δωρήσεται Αὐσόνοις Ζεὺς
 κοιρανίην, Βερόῃ δὲ χαρίζεται ἡνία θεσμῶν
 ὅπποτε θωρηχθεῖσα φερεσσακέων ἐπὶ νηῶν
 φύλοπιν ὑγρομόθοιο κατευνήσει Κλεοπάτρης·
 πρὶν γὰρ ἀτασταλίη πτολιπόρθιος οὐ ποτε λήξει
 εἰρήνην κλονέουσα σαόπολιν, ἄχρι δικάζει
 Βηρυτὸς βιότοιο γαληναίῳ τιθήνῃ
 γαῖαν ὁμοῦ καὶ πόντον, ἀκαμπεί τείχεϊ θεσμῶν
 ἄστεα πυργώσασα, μία πτόλις ἄστεα κόσμου.”

A clear delineation of the problem during the fourth century is liable, however, to contribute to a characterisation of Constantinople as a city that was, for a long time, rather “alien” to the east.¹³ It also, perhaps, presents a temptation to look upon Nonnus, rather like Libanius, as the example of a “man of his time,” and to derive from the contrast between the two men a particular contrast in their respective generations.¹⁴

It is all the more significant, therefore, that it has become substantially harder in recent years to accept the suggestion of a marked

11 Dagron 1969.29: “La réaction qui condamne l’Empire constantinienne est à la fois proromaine et «antibyzantine».”

12 Nonnus *Dionysiaca* 41.389–98 (ed. Keydell 1959, trans. Rouse 1942): “‘When Augustus shall hold the sceptre of the world, Ausonian Zeus will give to divine Rome the lordship, and to Beroë he will grant the reins of law, when armed in her fleet of shielded ships she shall pacify the strife of battlestirring Cleopatra. For before that, citysacking violence will never cease to shake citysaving peace, until Berytos the nurse of quiet life does justice on land and sea, fortifying the cities with the unshakable wall of law, one city for all cities of the world.’”

13 Brown 1971b.137–38, Matthews 1975.103.

14 So, for instance, Liebeschuetz 1996.86, where the view can be accepted *en passant*.

transition at the beginning of the fifth century. It has been emphasised that it is, in fact, rather difficult to trace the relevant parallels between Aristides' *To Rome* and Synesius' *de Regno*, and that there are significant inconsistencies of detail in the reading of *de Providentia* required for Professor Dagron's case.¹⁵ More broadly, of course, the years immediately following 395 no longer seem to mark a definitive change "de l'unité à la division de l'empire."¹⁶ For an emphasis on such a change has been found to make too little of the continuities of the Theodosian period, not least in terms of political perspectives. It would need more than governments at loggerheads to shift a worldview. One of the most refreshing features of the fragments of Olympiodorus, for instance, is the evident potential for a rehabilitation of the memory of Stilicho in the east. For it is here, in a work dedicated to the Emperor Theodosius II, that we find our warmest appraisal of Stilicho since Claudian.¹⁷ With fresh attention to the following decades, it has even become possible to maintain that, during the fifth century, the division between east and west was not a matter of major importance (Rousseau 1996). For the Theodosian age, in particular, this is a judgement that is likely to stand. Not least, it carries with it the testimony of the *Codex Theodosianus*, which had been offered, in one sense, quite deliberately as a monument to the continued unity of the empire in the face of past political differences (Matthews 2000.chap. 1 passim).

Yet the answer can hardly be as simple as moving Dagron's "turning point" from one particular date to another. It is best, instead, to approach the problem on as many levels as possible, though with two particular suggestions in mind: first, that no account of the views of either Themistius or Libanius, or both, can be expected to describe the "balance" of perspectives among the eastern aristocracies as a whole; and secondly, that just as the imaginative appeal of an empire based upon a unified, Mediterranean world would survive the political differences that followed 395 (in a certain real sense, indeed, till at least the late sixth century), greater emphasis may yet be placed on the fourth-century development of a

15 Cameron and Long 1993.301–10. In addition, one should note that the position of Aristides' *To Rome* even as an indicator of *second-century* Greek sentiment is not at all straightforward: note the cautionary conclusions of Swain 1996.297.

16 Démougeot 1951 remains the classic statement of the case for this transition.

17 Matthews 1970.90–91 notes this as the survival of a western view, stemming from Stilicho's circle. Yet the adoption and maintenance of precisely such a view by Olympiodorus is revealing in its own right.

real shift in political perspectives, at a more immediate level, toward the city of Constantinople.

The preconditions for such a shift have sometimes been obscured. On the one hand, the foundation of the city has rightly been placed more firmly within the context of its Tetrarchic precursors.¹⁸ On the other hand, a full spectrum of outstanding scholarship has created the temptation to concentrate on the importance of the imperial *praesentia*, with the result that the many years of imperial absence from Constantinople may encourage the conclusion that, for much of the fourth century, the city was very little more than one of a number of occasional imperial stopping-places.¹⁹

It is as well to begin by delineating more clearly the limitations of these approaches in this context. To do so, one must keep in mind the early institutional development of the city. In particular, it has become increasingly apparent that, already by the time of Constantius II, the senate of Constantinople had become the institutional equivalent of the senate at Rome, since the senatorial order had effectively been divided into two distinct orders, east and west.²⁰ As a result, the senators of Constantinople, like their counterparts at Rome, would hold at least the *clarissima dignitas*. From 359, moreover, the city, which had been administered by a succession of proconsuls, would be governed by a *praefectus urbi* on the model of the prefect of Rome.²¹ Such innovations were substantial developments from the embryonic creation of Constantine himself: the anonymous *Origo Constantini Imperatoris* reports Constantine's establishment of the senate, whose members were at that time more modestly styled as *clari* (Anon. Val. 6.30, ed. König); and it was André Chastagnol who first noticed the probability that Constantine had already allowed, by the early establishment of two Constantinopolitan praetorships, a tiny but deliberate "window of

18 For example, Millar 1977.40–57 (as part of a much longer evolution).

19 Classic treatments of imperial ceremony and *adventus* include MacMullen 1964b and MacCormack 1972 and 1981. Millar 1977 is fundamental on imperial law-giving. C. Kelly 1998.139–56 gives a vivid account of both of these aspects.

20 Dagron 1974 (chapters 4–6) is the main treatment of the senate; Chastagnol 1976 adds essential considerations; Petit 1957a remains significant. See, now, Heather 1994b and 1998. It should be noted, however, that whereas the conventional dating of this "senatorial" partition is 357, it is in fact highly likely (for reasons that cannot be summarised here) that the primary change occurred *early* rather than late in Constantius II's reign and hence reflects pressures of a somewhat different kind.

21 Dagron 1974.chaps. 7–9 is the most substantial general survey of the evidence for the prefecture.

opportunity” through which these *clari* might reach the *clarissima dignitas* (Chastagnol 1976.345–47).

There is no need, in the present context, to press the institutional status of the city as it stood in Constantine’s reign, though it should, at least, be noticed. What matters here is a sense of proportion. For beside the majesty of an imperial *adventus*, or even the relative speed and finality in the administration of justice that might be found in the presence of the court, one must keep a firm hold on the continuous reality of more normal, aristocratic concerns. The controlled sense of posture that characterises so much of late Roman epistolography and civic oratory is a reflection, in part, of the extent to which the predominant, often seasonal rhythms of the lives of the elites were determined not so much by the peremptory attractions of a mobile and preoccupied court, as by the subtle rigours of maintaining a “presence” in the manageably delimited circles of aristocratic life.²² Very few aristocrats, eastern or western, were as “driven” as a Petronius Probus;²³ and where offices, though important, were liable to be held sporadically, senatorial rank was lasting and carried both social and legal privileges. That Constantinople should, within a generation, have become the seat of a senate in association with which these benefits could be gained just as they had been in the remoter, predominantly Latin world of Rome is a change whose potential significance ought not to be underestimated.²⁴

Responses to this development are of obvious interest, and a range of fourth-century attitudes to enrolment in the senate can, of course, be documented, as is similarly true of the imperial service. A letter of 359, from Libanius to Themistius, for example, illustrates the viewpoint of the rhetor and advocate Priscianus, from Beirut, who was living at the time in Antioch. As Libanius remarks:²⁵ “[Y]ou conceived the idea of transferring him to you there, and you addressed yourself more or less as follows, ‘We have got to present that great orator to our great capital. But simply to order him to come

22 Petit 1955 remains fundamental on the Antiochene world. See, also, Liebeschuetz 1972. Both studies open up perspectives that allow us to catch glimpses of local and regional life on their own terms.

23 On Probus, see Amm. *Res Gestae* 27.11.1–4 (ed. Seyfarth 1999, with the volumes of Galletier et al. 1968–99, here and subsequently, as relevant).

24 Note, in this connection, Matthews’ important reminder, in the present volume, that Roman society was explicitly an “estate” society, “in which distinctions of class and status were measured in legal and other socially articulated terms,” and in which social distinctions “import direct juridical consequences.”

25 Lib. *Ep.* 62 (ed. Foerster 1903–23, trans. Norman 1992, Letter no. 51). See further, Jones et al. 1971.727 (Priscianus 1) = Petit 1957a, Priscianus I.

here is preemptory and lacks finesse. Some device is needed . . . Let him become a member of the emperor's entourage and we have him hooked. He will tread the path which leads to the exalted Senate.' " Whether or not there was any substance to Libanius' assertion about a subterfuge—and he was well-informed enough that his jaundiced joke need not necessarily have been idle—Priscianus turns up in the following year, 360, as praesidial governor of Euphratensis, and may have gone on to govern Cilicia and Palaestina Prima, perhaps gaining consular rank.²⁶ Significantly, there is an undoubted implication that he would have been ambivalent at the prospect of being a senator of Constantinople for its own sake. At the same time, however, there is also a suggestion that even cautious members of the educated elite may well have been prepared to let advantage be the answer to their qualms.

By contrast, the case of Celsus, an Antiochene rhetor and former pupil of Libanius, illuminates a rather warmer response.²⁷ He, too, was approached in 359, and a letter from Libanius to Themistius again provides some crucial nuggets:²⁸ "For Celsus . . . comes to you of his own volition, a good man to a council of good men. Yet we left no stone unturned to put the man in charge of our affairs, but he replied that he sought the place praised by Themistius"—a reference to Celsus preferring the senate over what would seem to have been senior, municipal office. Libanius goes on: "Nor am I unaware of the attraction. For all the rest, in their desire for the 'Bosporus rich in fish' scurry there, whereas he has no interest in office but believes that, if he becomes a citizen of yours, he will live his life with you—that is, live it in philosophy." Libanius' remarks on the subject of Celsus' lack of ambition may well be knowingly misplaced: the least one may say is that Celsus went on to be governor of Cilicia in 362 and consular governor of Syria in 363–64.²⁹ On the other hand, when Libanius reports Celsus as seeking "the place praised by Themistius," we might be hearing an echo of Celsus himself, rather than merely Libanian politesse. For Libanius' remark about "a good man to a council of good men" is so out of tune with his own depreciation of the senate elsewhere—and would not have convinced Themistius, who was aware of Libanius' opinion—that one may well be

26 E.g., Lib. *Epp.* 136, 643 (Euphratensis); 1118, 1129 (Cilicia?); 1250, 1251 (Palaestina Prima?); and 1158.

27 See further, Jones et al. 1971.193–94 (Celsus 3) = Petit 1957a, Celsus I.

28 Lib. *Ep.* 86 (trans. Norman 1992, Letter no. 44).

29 E.g., Amm. *Res Gestae* 22.9.13, Lib. *Ep.* 1113 (to Caesarius).

tempted to the conclusion that this is the echo of firm, positive views on the senate held by Celsus himself, with Libanius making a tactful show of sharing his friend's enthusiasm.

It is not at all clear, however, that Celsus was an unusual figure. For the same letter casts a shaft of light on the state of Themistius' recruitment-drive for the senate, with Celsus presented, in part, as an example of how well the recruitment was going: "You do not, after all, simply use conscious effort to fill the senate with senators: the fish now land themselves while you snooze."³⁰

Traces such as this of the attraction of Constantinople find a parallel in the career of Clearchus, who provides a particularly revealing sense of the direction in which the wind was blowing. Clearchus was a native of the province of Epirus Vetus, part of the diocese of Macedonia. He moved to Constantinople, probably in the mid 350s, and remained there as a senator who went on to hold a series of distinguished offices, including two spells as prefect of Constantinople, in 372–73 and 382–84, and the consulship in the east in 384.³¹ The significance of Clearchus' move to Constantinople emerges most vividly in light of *Codex Theodosianus* 6.4.11, which required senators who were inhabitants of Achaea, Macedonia, and Illyricum in general to attend the meetings of the senate at Rome. As Dagron has emphasised, this was a law to combat absenteeism from Rome (Dagron 1974.127). It implies, however, that Clearchus, as a native of Macedonia, would have been expected to be enrolled at Rome, rather than Constantinople. This law of 357, would have affected Clearchus directly, unless he had formally moved his domicile to the east and hence escaped the catchment area. If he had not done so before 357, he would have needed to do so afterward. Either way, we have in Clearchus an example of an individual who actively preferred to make his senatorial career at Constantinople rather than Rome.³²

30 Lib. *Ep.* 86.1 (trans. Norman 1992, Letter no. 44.1).

31 See, in general, Jones et al. 1971.211–12 (Clearchus 1) = Petit 1957a, Clearchus I. It is quite possible that, had he moved at the beginning of the 350s, his relocation would have been prompted by the political dangers accompanying the revolt of Magnentius; but a move at that time may well be too early, and could not, in any case, account for his long subsequent involvement at Constantinople.

32 *Digest* 1.9.11 (ed. Mommsen): senators retained a private domicile upon gaining a senatorial one. In the 350s, it was the location of this private domicile that would appear (obviously) to have determined the place of senatorial registration (with the specific exception of temporary transfers of senatorial registration that will have occurred in connection with at least some officeholding). Hence, with *Codex Theodosianus* 6.4.11 (ed.

There is, in fact, a good deal of evidence that may be pieced together to suggest that the "reaction" against Constantinople was already surprisingly remote from the main current, even within Libanius' own milieu at Antioch. To set Priscianus, Celsus, and Clearchus in context, one may name a number of other senators of Constantinople from the second half of the fourth century attested as Antiochenes or else very possibly so.³³ Some achieved extremely prominent positions, in particular, Palladius, *magister officiorum* under Gallus;³⁴ Florentius, *magister officiorum* in 359–61;³⁵ Flavius Nigrinianus, Florentius' father (and so most likely an Antiochene), who was one of the consuls for 350;³⁶ and Calliopius, a *grammatikos*, who assisted Libanius and went on to serve as *magister epistularum* in 388.³⁷

Other Antiochenes held office at less vertiginous levels or are notable in other ways: Olympius, one of Libanius' longest-lasting friends and a former governor of Macedonia;³⁸ Evagrius, Olympius' younger brother, a former pupil of Libanius and a wealthy decurion-turned-governor (whose outstanding contribution to the culture of late antiquity was eventually to translate Athanasius' *Life of Anthony* into Latin);³⁹ another Calliopius, a rhetor who co-operated with Libanius as a teacher and later served briefly in the west as *consularis Macedoniae* in 362;⁴⁰ Marius, a sophist, whose

Mommsen), Clearchus' need for a formal relocation of his private domicile to the east in order to escape the catchment area for Rome.

33 Documentation offered for the individuals in this and subsequent paragraphs is confined to a minimum. Note, however, in addition to Jones et al. 1971, Mathisen 1987. The presentation within each paragraph is in broadly chronological order of enrolment, but precision is impossible and some deliberate variation will also be found for the purpose of connecting family members. It should be emphasised that, although reference to the prosopography in Petit 1957a has been provided as appropriate, there is no attempt to justify the occasional exclusion of Antiochenes included by him or to comment one way or another on his list. The present list is therefore independent of his. Celsus and those that follow total 22, seven of whom are given by Petit.

34 Jones et al. 1971.658–59 (Palladius 4); Lib. *Ep.* 440; Amm. *Res Gestae* 22.3.3.

35 Jones et al. 1971.363 (Florentius 3); Lib. *Epp.* 61, 113; Amm. *Res Gestae* 20.2.2.

36 Jones et al. 1971.631 (Fl. Nigrinianus 2), documenting consulship; see also Amm. *Res Gestae* 15.5.12, 22.3.6.

37 Jones et al. 1971.175 (Calliopius 3); Lib. *Ep.* 18.

38 Jones et al. 1971.643–44 (Olympius 3) = Petit 1957a, Olympius II; Lib. *Or.* 1.275–78; *Epp.* 70 (to Themistius), 251 (to Honoratus).

39 Jones et al. 1971.285–86 (Evagrius 6); Bas. *Ep.* 138 (ed. Courtonne 1957–66; to Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata); Lib. *Epp.* 1287, 1467 (to Salutius).

40 Jones et al. 1971.174–75 (Calliopius 2) = Petit 1957a, Calliopius I; Lib. *Epp.* 214 (to Priscianus), 215 (to Ammianus), 220 (to Modestus); Him. *Or.* 39 *titulus* (ed. Colonna 1951.159).

administration as governor of Phoenice in 363–64 was warmly approved by Libanius;⁴¹ Pancratius, who had studied as a pupil alongside Libanius and was the son of a distinguished rhetor;⁴² Quirinus, a sophist and rhetor, who had served as governor of Lycia, Pamphylia, and Cyprus by the late 350s;⁴³ very probably Honoratus, Quirinus' son, whose case for senatorial privileges was made by Libanius;⁴⁴ Alexander (though he settled in Pamphylia), who took on the festival of the Olympia at Antioch on behalf of his son, and whom Libanius tried to help in various ways;⁴⁵ and Domnio, who was schooled as a rhetor and went on to serve as *vicarius Asiae* in 388.⁴⁶ Hilarius, the son of a philosopher and himself a decurion, who later served as governor of Palestine, may also have gained senatorial status.⁴⁷

To this list, one may add some other possible natives of Antioch: Flavius Magnus, who was *proconsul Asiae* in the middle to late 350s and at court in 359;⁴⁸ Helpidius, who would seem to have been quite close to Julian and was *comes rei privatae* in 362–63 and perhaps *proconsul Asiae* in 364;⁴⁹ Sabinus, a rhetor whom Libanius supported on more than one occasion, who went on to become *consularis Syriae*;⁵⁰ another Olympius, whose brother taught rhetoric and whose son was a sophist, and who may, himself, have served briefly in the west as *proconsul Achaiae*;⁵¹ and Eumolpius, who certainly lived in Antioch, whether he came from the city or not, who went on to serve as *consularis Syriae* in the mid 380s.⁵²

41 Jones et al. 1971.561 (Marius 1); Lib. *Epp.* 1135, 1142, 1218 (to Gaianus); 1269; 1361 (to Alexander).

42 Jones et al. 1971.664 (Pancratius 3) = Petit 1957a, Pancratius I; Lib. *Ep.* 256 (to Priscianus); 1277 (to Datianus).

43 Jones et al. 1971.760–61 (Quirinus) = Petit 1957a, Quirinus; Lib. *Epp.* 359, 366 (to Bassus), 535 (to Anatolius).

44 Jones et al. 1971.439 (Honoratus 3) = Petit 1957a, Honoratus II; Lib. *Ep.* 1327 (to Zenodorus).

45 Jones et al. 1971.41 (Alexander 6) = Petit 1957a, Alexandre X; Lib. *Epp.* 1167 (to Celsus), 1189 (to Clearchus).

46 Jones et al. 1971.266–67 (Domnio 2); Lib. *Epp.* 861 (to Panhellenius), 862 (to Argeius). Note (against confusion) that Petit's "Domnio" is "Domninus 2" in Jones et al. 1971.

47 Jones et al. 1971.435 (Hilarius 8); Lib. *Or.* 31.47; *Ep.* 286 (to Palladius); Zos. *Historia Nova* 4.41.3 (ed. Paschoud 1971–89).

48 Jones et al. 1971.535 (Fl. Magnus 9); Lib. *Or.* 40.12; *Epp.* 84, 438 (to Anatolius); *CIL* 3.445.

49 Jones et al. 1971.415 (Helpidius 6); Lib. *Epp.* 35 (to Julian), 1180.

50 Jones et al. 1971.791–92 (Sabinus 5); Lib. *Epp.* 83 (to Atarbius), 339 (to Anatolius), 468 (to Marcianus), 545 (to Spectatus).

51 Jones et al. 1971.645–46 (Olympius 9); Lib. *Epp.* 1258, 1264 (to Aristophanes), 1412 (to Alexander). Cf. Eusebius 17 and Eusebius 24.

52 Jones et al. 1971.295 (Eumolpius); Lib. *Orr.* 40.6–7, 27.6.

Lastly, the brothers Flavius Eusebius and Flavius Hypatius, both consuls in 359, may have moved eastward from the Balkans, as Clearchus did, coming originally from Thessalonica.⁵³ Hypatius would serve in the west with distinction as prefect of Rome in the late 370s and praetorian prefect in 382, but both would appear to have resided in Antioch.⁵⁴

It is sufficiently clear that even those senators not definitely identifiable as Antiochenes were nonetheless living in the east, and examples may be added from a raft of alternative cities and provinces. An eastern domicile for senators may also often be inferred, despite the lack of an attested location.⁵⁵

It is worth reflecting on the direction in which such evidence takes us. First, a treatment of the eastern, senatorial aristocracy that casts its members as *parvenus* will not stand up to scrutiny. It is, in fact, surprisingly difficult to document senators of this kind, while the burden of the evidence points firmly in the opposite direction.⁵⁶ It is not at all clear, furthermore, that the nature of the evidence is itself accountable for this. Libanius' testimony is exceptionally important, but it is diverse as well as plentiful, extending beyond friends and associates to other important officials, offering glimpses when no correspondence survives.⁵⁷ The growth of a Constantinopolitan senatorial aristocracy represents, by and large, a regrouping of certain elements from within the civic elites.⁵⁸

53 Jones et al. 1971.308–09 (Fl. Eusebius 40), Jones et al. 1971.448–49 (Flavius Hypatius 4); see also Jul. *Or.* 2(3).106b–07d (ed. Bidez et al. 1924–64), for their Thessalonican origins, in which case their initial move (though hardly the length of their subsequent stay) was contingent on the marriage of their sister Eusebia to Constantius. Flavius Eusebius was a rhetor (Lib. *Ep.* 457 to Ambrosius) and held the governorships of Hellespontus and Bithynia in the 350s (*Epp.* 457–59 to Ambrosius, Alcimus, and Aristaenetos).

54 In Antioch in the early 370s: Amm. *Res Gestae* 29.2.9–16,21.

55 Further discussion of this evidence and related matters must follow elsewhere.

56 Lib. *Or.* 42.23–25 is the chief testimony for humble origins. Cf. Jones 1963.27–30, sensing that most senators of Constantinople came from “the upper layer of the curial order” but maintaining, nonetheless, that “the upper layer of the [senatorial] order was mainly composed of men who had risen from . . . the lower middle class and even, if Libanius is to be believed, the proletariat of the towns.” Yet the cases that Libanius picked for his oration remain, as should by now be recognised, far more unusual than has sometimes been thought, even if one allows (as one may be strongly tempted not to) that his remarks on social origins are precise in relation to the individuals whom he names.

57 Note, for example, the case of Tisamenus, as *consularis Syriae*, in Lib. *Or.* 33 (especially 33.3: unlike, perhaps, the more distant cases of those named in *Or.* 42, Tisamenus' good birth could not be misrepresented). Cf. *Or.* 1.251 (and Jones et al. 1971.916–17).

58 See Heather 1994b. By way of a minimum normal standard, see (on grammarians) Kaster 1988.99–134, especially 123, where they are realistically described as “a group of men who might differ considerably in their individual situations, but who would on the whole belong to the quality of their towns, respectable if unprepossessing members of the local elite.” This is less than could be said of most senators named in the foregoing paragraphs.

Secondly, although this development has sometimes been characterised as part of the fragmentation of these elites, it is by no means apparent that this does sufficient justice to the problem. To dissent from concluding with such an interpretation is not to overlook the deep sense of concern at the plight of the city councils. It is, however, to suggest that eastern aristocrats were rather more sanguine, when confronting their circumstances, than they have sometimes been allowed to appear. Libanius' *Oration* 48 provides a sinister but valuable record of the frank collusion that existed between leading civic aristocrats who wished to ensure their control of the councils, and their confreres inside the imperial hierarchy (Lib. *Or.* 48, e.g., 4–14). It was a collusion to which Libanius had, in one sense, given his ready support, writing letters of recommendation on behalf of students who were attempting to join the imperial administration (Petit 1956.158–70). What is missing, therefore, from an account of the “flight from the councils” that presents the phenomenon in terms of decline is, in part, a sense of the pragmatism with which members of the eastern aristocracies set about securing their position in the growing ranks of the imperial government and partly, also, a sense of the value to civic *principales* and their local allies of a network of friends inside the administration.

Yet there is, finally, more to the problem than pragmatism, which cannot fully explain what we know of such cases as those of Celsus and Clearchus, where direct personal commitment to an involvement in the senate is either reported or implied. To approach the question from another angle, there is a sense in which what was happening with the emergence of Constantinople as a capital was not the unwarranted intrusion of Roman power into a culturally closed Greek world in a way that might be expected to spark a major “reaction,” but rather the expression of the arrival in the east of precisely the degree of sustained imperial presence that had been so manifestly lacking at critical junctures in the preceding century. The history of Constantinople begins, from this point of view, with the campaigns of Aurelian; and one might tentatively suggest that the rising fourth-century involvement of eastern elites in imperial government was a reflection, in different circumstances, not only of the same processes that had fuelled the increase in the proportion of easterners in the senate at Rome from the first to the third centuries,⁵⁹ but also (and perhaps more importantly) of the same tendency that has already been detected in the Greek writers of the mid-third

59 Hammond 1957.74–81 remains valuable. Note, also, Bowersock 1982.

century: a sense that the Greek world had been obliged, and was able, to take assertive care of itself.⁶⁰ Senate and bureaucracy were, in this respect, two sides of the same coin. What matters is the colonisation of both by the eastern aristocracies (Brown 1992.38): for the "reaction" of even so conservative a witness as Eunapius could swiftly dry up when the empire wore an educated, Greek face (Penella 1990.128–34). The example of Clearchus is illustrative, therefore, in two particular ways. It poses, at one level, the problem of the position—in the "parting of the ways" between east and west—of Greece, Illyricum, and the Greek elites in the west; and, at another level, like the fish whom the snoozing Themistius was landing, it offers a reflection of the attractiveness of the change that the emergence of a senate that was Greek, but, at the same time, "Roman Imperial" represented. What we are looking at, therefore, is a perspective that had already begun, with surprising ease, to turn away from Rome, and it need not necessarily be incautious, in that case, to describe this aspect of the phenomenon with which we are faced as the birth of a Constantinopolitan—or, indeed, "Byzantine"—senatorial perspective. What is at stake for the modern historian in a development such as this, however, is ultimately the historical role of the imaginative horizons of late antique elites in the transformation of the actual ordering of the world in which they lived.

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60 Millar 1969, with particular reference to Greece, the Balkans, and Asia Minor, though applicable to the Near East as well. See Millar 1993.334–35 on the Palmyrene revolt as an "abortive claim to the Empire" resulting from a power-vacuum (as Greek sympathisers at large are likely, one should note, to have viewed it) rather than as a separatist movement. Cf. Matthews 1975 *passim*, on the pressures that fostered the "privatisation" of power in the West (especially 348–51 on the deep continuity of these pressures in Gaul), with Wormald 1976.221–22 (pragmatic regionalism, though not separatism, rather than privatisation), and Matthews 1990.396 (reprint of Matthews 1975) (regionalism perhaps *underpinning* privatisation), from which discussion valuable questions may, with care, be drawn in relation to the east. Eastern assertion coincided, of course, with a trajectory that ended in Greek self-representation as "Roman," and there is room to suggest that the unprecedented degree to which eastern political energies were channelled into Roman imperial frameworks did much to prevent the very "privatisation" that was beginning to occur in the west.