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2002

In: Sage and emperor: Plutarch, Greek
Intellectuals and Roman power in the
Aims of the Trojan (98-116 AD)

THE SOCIAL ROLE OF THE PHILOSOPHER IN THE SECOND CENTURY C.E.: SOME REMARKS

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Any enquiry into the social role and status of any of the professions at any stage of antiquity has perforce to rely on evidence which is to a large extent anecdotal, and among professions, that of philosopher seems rather more hedged about with obscurity than most. From the perspective of the modern age, the degree of informality and vagueness in the organisation of enrolment, teaching and certification is indeed difficult to come to grips with – and may after all be to some extent an illusion, produced by the very imperfect state of our knowledge.

That said, however, we are not entirely bereft of information. Useful sources for the period under review include Plutarch himself, giving incidental details both of Ammonius' school in Athens and of his own establishment in Chaeroneia; Aulus Gellius, describing aspects of life in the school of Calvenus Taurus in his *Attic Nights*; the satirist Lucian, in his portrayals of the philosophers Nigrinus and Demonax, and his amusing sketch of the competition for one of chairs in philosophy established by Marcus Aurelius in 176, in the *Eunuchus*; and even Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, preoccupied though he is primarily with sophists rather than philosophers. Over and above these literary sources, we have a not inconsiderable number of inscriptions honouring philosophers, which shed useful light on the social roles and positions which they attained.

Let us begin, however, with an anecdote from Aulus Gellius (*NA* 2.2), since it serves to point up two themes on which I would like to dwell: first, the simplicity of the arrangements obtaining in ancient philosophical schools, even the presumably dominant school of Athens; and second, the comfortable relationship which philosophers, Platonic philosophers in particular, seem to have had with the political establishment. The story goes as follows¹:

The governor of the province of Crete, a man of senatorial rank, had come to Athens for the purpose of visiting and becoming acquainted with the philosopher Taurus, and in company with this same governor was his father. Taurus, having just dismissed his pupils, was sitting before the door of his room (*cubiculum*), and we stood by his side conversing with him.

Taurus arose quietly, and after salutations had been exchanged, sat down again. Presently the single chair that was at hand was brought and placed near them, while others were being fetched. Taurus invited the governor's father to be seated; to which he replied: "Rather let this man take the seat, since he is a magistrate of the Roman people". (trans. Rolfe)

Taurus then gracefully (*comiter*) turns this into an excuse for a *quaestio* or *disputatio*, asking whether, in these circumstances, it is more proper for the son or the father to sit, and deciding in favour of the father, since this is a private, and not a civic occasion. However, for us the focus of interest is not what it was for Gellius; rather it centres on the facts (a) that the Governor of Crete came all the way to Athens to visit Taurus, and (b) that there was, initially at least, only one spare chair available in the philosopher's establishment (note that the philosopher does not see fit to give up *his* chair to the distinguished visitor, nor does anyone seem to think that he should!).

The relations between philosophers and members of the imperial administration, as well as members of the aristocracy in general, were not always as edifying as this. Lucian makes his Platonist philosopher Nigrinus complain, in the course of his wide-ranging invective against life in Rome, about the spectacle of philosophers joining in the crowd of parasites who through the doors and attend the dinner-parties of the rich²:

"That common men who unreservedly admit their want of culture should do such things might fairly be thought reasonable; but that many self-styled philosophers should act still more ridiculously than they – this is the most appalling thing! What do you suppose is my state of mind when I see one of them, especially if he be getting on in years, among a crowd of toadies, dancing attendance on some functionary, in conference with the dispensers of his dinner invitations? His dress only marks him out among the rest and makes him more conspicuous³. What irritates me most is that they do not change their costume: certainly they are consistent play-actors in all else. Take their conduct at dinners – to what ethical principle are we to ascribe it? Do they not stuff themselves more vulgarly, get drunk more conspicuously, leave the table last of all, and expect to carry away more delicacies than anyone else? The more sophisticated amongst them, indeed, have often gone so far as to sing!" (trans. Harmon, slightly altered).

This is Lucian having fun, of course, and no doubt somewhat over the top, but it points up the difficulties that the philosopher might well have to face in high society, if he did not want to be dismissed as a curmudgeon. Dining at the tables of the rich and/or politically influential was, after all, an important aspect of the social role of the philosopher, and Plutarch, for one, would be quick to defend it. In his little essay on the topic *That a Philosopher Ought to Converse Especially with Men in Power* (776B-779C), addressed, it would seem, to some junior colleague, he maintains

stoutly that it is part of the duty of a philosopher to commune with men of influence (776C):

"The teaching of philosophy is not, if I may use the words of Pindar⁴, 'a sculptor, to carve statues doomed to sit idly on their pedestals and no more'; no, it strives to make everything that it touches active and efficient and alive, it inspires men with impulses that urge to action, with judgements that lead them towards what is useful, with preference for things that are honourable, with wisdom and greatness of mind joined to gentleness and simplicity⁵, and because they possess these qualities, philosophers⁶ are more eager to converse with the prominent and powerful. Certainly if a doctor is a man of high ideals, he will be better pleased to cure the eye which sees for many and watches over many; and a philosopher will be more eager to attend upon a soul which he sees is solicitous for many and is under an obligation to be wise and self-restrained and just in behalf of many".

This is a fine statement of the public duty of philosophers, from the pen of a seasoned practitioner. A little further on (778Aff.), Plutarch rather wittily compares those philosophers who adopt a 'purer than thou' attitude to consorting with men of power and influence, and to involving themselves generally in public affairs, to Euripides' Hippolytus, in his neurotic distaste for Aphrodite and all her works. He concludes:

"So then, if the dignity that befits leadership and power are associated with a man of moderation and culture (*metriōi kai asteiōi*)⁷, the philosopher will not hold aloof from making him a friend and cherishing him, nor will he be afraid of being called a courtier and a toady:

For those of men who too much Cypris shun

Are mad as those who follow her too much (Hipp. 115-6).

– and so are those who take that attitude towards friendship with famous men and leaders".

And indeed Plutarch practised what he preached. If we survey the settings of many of his dialogues, as well as the scenes portrayed in the volumes of his *Table Talk*, we can see something of what he has in mind. Dining, of course, is not the only context in which philosophers and men of affairs come into contact – embassies and delegations, and attendance at festivals and games, would be others – but it was certainly an important one, and it is the only one into which Plutarch is prepared to allow us any insight⁸, so we must make the best of it.

If we consider just the dinners given by Sosius Senecio (to whom, of course, the nine books of *Table Talk* are dedicated), we can observe something of how a philosopher might fit in to the social scene. The very first question, raised at a dinner given by Senecio at Athens, concerns the distinctly programmatic topic 'whether one should indulge in philosophizing

at a drinking party'. Plutarch himself, after admitting that there are some who feel that philosophy should have no place at such gatherings, any more than the mistress of the household herself, advances the view that, while philosophizing in some mode is perfectly proper, one must take careful thought for the composition of the party. If the majority of the party are learned men (*philoloi*), or even if there is just a scattering of lay-persons (*idiôtai*), then one may philosophize freely, but if the majority are non-philosophical, one must choose one's topics with proper tact. Ideally, "one should talk philosophy without seeming to do so", and lace one's remarks with humour and light-heartedness (613F) – and this indeed is what he largely contrives to do throughout the rest of the collection.

That a prominent member of society might bring together a dinner party consisting entirely or predominantly of philosophers may seem improbable, but is attested to, albeit with satirical intent, later in the second century, once again by Lucian. In his satire, *The Symposium, or the Lapiths*, Lucian presents the scenario of a rich man, Aristaenetus, giving a dinner to celebrate the wedding of his daughter Cleanthis to Chaereas, the son of Eucritus the banker. Since young Chaereas was by way of being an enthusiast for philosophy, Aristaenetus invites, along with his own friends and associates, the heads of all the philosophical schools, the Stoic, the Peripatetic, the Epicurean, and, last but not least, the head of the Platonic school, who was the teacher of the young man⁹. He also invites a grammarian and a rhetorician. All these men are named, but since we hear of them nowhere else, they may nonetheless be fictitious, as, no doubt, is the event itself. However, that Lucian could even postulate such an event is reasonable evidence, I think, of its basic plausibility – even if the outcome, a chaotic and extremely undignified brawl, is considerably over the top! The philosophers are certainly not overawed by their surroundings. Quite the contrary, they behave as lords of all they survey, and merely quarrel amongst themselves over precedence in seating. To have invited them in such numbers is ironically commended by both Lucian and his interlocutor as evidence of Aristaenetus' unusual level of culture (10).

More often, however, it would seem from the *Table Talk*, it would be a case of a single philosopher present – or at most two, a Platonist and a Stoic or Epicurean¹⁰ – and perhaps a grammarian, rhetorician, or doctor, along with a selection of prosperous and prominent *idiôtai*, all functioning on very much equal terms. The easy familiarity with which Plutarch treats, and is treated by, such Roman grandees as Q. Sosius Senecio (*cos. ord.* 99 and 107), distinguished military commander in Germany and Dacia and personal friend of Trajan, and then of Hadrian, and L. Mestrius Florus (*cos. suff.* 75

and later proconsul of Asia, probably in 89/90), who had both been a friend of the short-lived emperor Otho, and enjoyed the confidence of the Emperor Vespasian, is most impressive. Plutarch may first have come across Senecio, who was much younger, when Senecio was quaestor in Achaëa back in the 80's (the dinners he describes with him all appear to be in Greece: in Athens (1.1), in Patrae (2.1), and even at home in Chaeronea, at the wedding of Plutarch's son, Autobulus (4.3)). Mestrius Florus he would appear to have met while on one of his visits (possibly embassies) to Rome in the 80's or 90's, though Florus later plainly spent much time in Greece, where he is portrayed as dining on no less than ten occasions in the *Table Talk*. In I 9, for example, we find him entertaining Plutarch along with the *grammatikos* Theon and the Stoic philosopher Themistocles (who was also of good family, being notionally a descendant of the great Themistocles), while at III 3-5 we find him again entertaining a group of his friends (*sunêtheis*, 650A), including, apart from Plutarch, the interesting Sextius Sulla of Carthage (who was also a friend of Senecio's, cf. II 3), Apollonius *ho taktikos* (whatever art or science that signifies)¹¹, and the doctor Athryitus of Thasos; and again, at V 7, he is entertaining, besides Plutarch, Plutarch's relative by marriage (*gambros*)¹² Patrocleas, his own *gambros* Gaius¹³, and an old friend of Plutarch's from Tithora in Phocis, Soclarus, a generous giver of dinner-parties himself¹⁴. These dinners are presumably taking place in Athens, but at VIII 10, we find him, interestingly, at Thermopylae (where he may have gone to take the waters), reading a copy of Aristotle's *Problems*, and raising questions arising from it to a gathering which included, besides Plutarch's sons, the rising young philosopher Favorinus of Arles, who seems to have been a protégé of Plutarch's¹⁵.

Plutarch himself, of course, is not merely a philosopher; he is also himself a provincial grandee, near the top of the social scale, and a prolific giver of dinner-parties himself¹⁶, so he is not, perhaps, the best figure to choose for the purpose of illustrating the social role of philosophers. On the other hand, though, as we shall see, the average philosopher (apart, perhaps, from certain unwashed Cynics) was reasonably well-heeled – at least a scion of the provincial elite, if not a property owner himself – so that it is not in general easy to distinguish the role that a philosopher would assume in society specifically *as a philosopher*, from the role that he would have assumed in any case as a member of the provincial elite.

One can perhaps more meaningfully focus, however, on the status of a figure such as Plutarch's teacher Ammonius, who had migrated to Athens from his native Naucratis in Egypt, or, in the generation after Plutarch, L. Calvenus Taurus, who similarly migrated from his native Beirut.

Ammonius' origins and social status are obscure¹⁷ – unless we can assume, from the fact of his having a son called Thrasyllus, some relationship with the court-philosopher of Tiberius, who came from Alexandria; but even that would not tell us much about his social origins. However, we find him securely established as a Platonist philosopher in Athens in the 60's C.E., presiding over a school, and performing various public duties, such as lecturing to the epebes. In that connexion, we find him filling the office of *stratêgos* fully three times, and necessarily, therefore, having been granted Athenian citizenship¹⁸. He was plainly a major public figure. Plutarch portrays him, at *QC* VIII 3, during his third term of office, being rudely disturbed during a dinner he was giving by a crowd of citizens, who were shouting for 'the general', no doubt wanting him to settle some dispute. He manages successfully to send his servants to get them to disperse, and turns the circumstance into an occasion for a *quaestio* into "why those inside clearly hear people shouting outside, while persons outside do not hear those inside so well". What is of particular interest to us, however, in the present context is that a philosopher of alien origin should find himself in this position. Again, at *IX* 1, we find him judging a sort of school prize day performance by the epebes, during one of his terms as *stratêgos*, after which he invites the teachers, or trainers (*didaskaloi*), of the successful competitors to dinner.

It is significant, perhaps, that Plutarch never produces Ammonius in company with anyone else of public distinction¹⁹, but that may rather be a function of the capacity in which he was acquainted with Ammonius, to wit, as his student, so that he would not have been present at any dinner-party where Ammonius was entertaining people of real consequence. By the 90's, when Plutarch himself had become a figure of some consequence, Ammonius was almost certainly dead. But we can have little doubt that Ammonius would have been quite accustomed to consorting with Roman governors, visiting senators, or local grandees.

As for Taurus, we have seen him entertaining the governor of Crete, but we also see him, in the pages of Aulus Gellius, in various other contexts, all of which reveal something of his role in society. In connexion with Taurus, there arises a delicate question which must intrigue all who concern themselves with this general topic, but on which remarkably little is ever said in our sources, to wit, how did a philosopher *live*, in the sense of making ends meet – that is, if he was not also a local grandee, like Plutarch? Not to beat about the bush: did one charge fees for instruction, and/or did one receive any stipend or other privileges from the state? Certainly, there was no difficulty about doctors, or lawyers, or rhetoricians

charging fees, and the evidence is that they charged pretty fat ones. It was plainly not unknown for philosophers of some persuasions to do so²⁰, but for Platonists, it seems to me, there was a particular problem, arising from the strictures that Socrates, and Plato following him, had laid on people who took money for imparting wisdom. Apart from the many jibes recorded in Plato's dialogues, we may recall the reply of Socrates to the sophist Antiphon in Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, a work quite popular in later antiquity, when Antiphon jeered at him for not taking money for his instruction (*Mem.* 1.6.13);

"Our theory is this, Antiphon. Good looks and wisdom may be exploited in a good as well as a bad way. For example, if a man sells his good looks to a customer for money, the world scornfully calls him a prostitute; but we consider it moral and good if a man procures for himself as a friend someone whom he discerns to be a high-principled lover. So with wisdom: the world scornfully calls sophists those who sell their wisdom to a customer for money".

That is certainly laying it on the line, and would seem to make the taking of fees as such rather difficult for those purporting to remain true to the traditions of Socrates, whether they be Platonists, Stoics, or Cynics (Peripatetics and Epicureans would, presumably, feel no such constraint). And yet one plainly has to live, especially if one has arrived in town – whether Athens, like Ammonius or Taurus, or Rome, like Nigrinus²¹, or, a century later, Plotinus – from somewhere else in the Empire.

I feel that the difficulty was probably circumvented by, on the one hand, a tradition of 'presents' to one's teacher, either from the pupil himself, or from his father; and on the other, by a system of patrons. We see this latter feature most clearly in the case of Taurus, in the person of Tib. Claudius Herodes Atticus. Herodes, like his father before him, was one of the richest men in Attica, if not in Greece, and was devoted both to rhetoric and to philosophy, being a pretty fair practitioner of both of these arts himself. We see from the pages of Aulus Gellius something of how helpful he could be. True, we do not hear from Gellius of any direct support of Taurus himself, but we do observe the assiduous attention that Herodes gives to Taurus' pupils, which seems to me to imply such support. We find Gellius and his fellow-students, both Greek and Roman, entertained repeatedly at Herodes' villa in Cephisia (*NA* 1.2, 9.2), and on one notable occasion he is laid up there with a fever, when Taurus and some others of the school come to visit him.

As for Taurus himself, we do not, as I say, hear of any direct financial support, but one would hardly expect that from the sort of work that Gellius

is composing²². One little remark, though, seems to me to be a straw in the wind. When discussing the ancient Pythagoreans (I 9), on whom Taurus has been holding forth, Gellius adds at the end a note of his own:

"But I must not omit this fact either – that all of them, as soon as they had been admitted by Pythagoras into that band of disciples, at once devoted to the common use whatever estate and property they once had, and an inseparable fellowship was formed, like the old-time association which in Roman legal parlance was termed an 'undivided inheritance' (*ercto non cito*)".

The implication is certainly that one does not do that sort of thing nowadays – but can one derive any other implication from this remark? Not very securely, I'm afraid; but I would *like* to take it that the contrast is not between handing over all that thou hast and handing over nothing, but rather between the Pythagorean ideal of *koina ta philôn* and the sort of moderate, limited contributions that one would make nowadays to the support of one's professor.

Be that as it may, a philosopher had to secure a livelihood, one way or another. We know from various sources that philosophers, like members of other respected professions, such as doctors, school-teachers, and rhetoricians, were exempted from taxes, the billeting of troops, and the burden of public office²³. This, of course, is as good as money in the bank in one way, but it still does not put bread upon the table. There is some evidence that in various other cities of the empire philosophers, like practitioners of other useful professions, such as medicine, were retained on a municipal salary²⁴, but in Athens, until the initiative of Marcus Aurelius in 176, this does not appear to have been the case. We are left, then, with possibilities of patronage, presents, and fees.

In the case of Taurus, I would suggest that Herodes simply set him up, and then kept him comfortable by a series of generous grants, rather than a regular salary (which would be a more humiliating alternative). We catch a glimpse of how things worked, I think, from a story in Philostratus. When Herodes himself was still just a lad, his father was entertaining the distinguished sophist Scopelian, and was so pleased with his performance that he made him a present of fifteen talents, to which Herodes himself added the same amount, from his allowance (VS 521). The sums here mentioned seem quite incredibly large, but we hear later (538-39) of Herodes himself sending a little gift to the sophist Polemon, after a public lecture, of 150,000 drachmae (= 25 talents), and being somewhat hurt when this money was returned by the great man; but it was then explained to him by a colleague that the problem was that Polemon did not consider this enough, so Herodes added another 100,000 dr.

These sums, as I say, are quite overwhelming – exceeding the remuneration of most modern pop stars or footballers – and they do, of course, concern sophists, not philosophers, but it seems to me not improbable that philosophers were in receipt of similar gifts, albeit on a more modest scale. At the beginning of his main treatment of Herodes, Philostratus embarks on a general encomium of his generosity to the arts and sciences (VS 547), praising him for 'restoring to blind Plutus his sight'.

"For he had eyes for his friends, he had eyes for cities, he had eyes for whole nations, since the man watched over them all, and laid up the treasures of his riches in the hearts of those who shared them with him. For indeed he used to say that he who would use his wealth aright ought to give to the needy that they might cease to be in need, and to those who needed it not, lest they should fall into need".

This is indeed an admirable sentiment – directed, however, I would suspect, not at the relief of the deserving poor in general, but rather at persons of culture who might find themselves in want of necessities. And such a one was doubtless Taurus, whom Herodes did indeed regard as his teacher (VS 564). Certainly such a man as Favorinus was in receipt of gifts, both from such patrons as Herodes, and even from the emperor Hadrian himself (with whom he had an affectionate, if rather fraught, relationship), but Favorinus is a rather ambiguous figure, being somewhat more of a sophist than a philosopher – to the point where, when he tried on one occasion to get out of being appointed high-priest of Arelate (a position which involved considerable expenditure on games and suchlike) on the grounds of being exempt as a philosopher, his friend Hadrian disallowed his claim (VS 490)²⁵.

The beneficences of Herodes are well-documented, then, but I think that he was only one conspicuous example of a large body of such cultured grandees throughout the Empire, who would generally have taken lectures with philosophers of one or another school in their youth, and still liked to have them around at their dinner-parties in later life.

I am conscious, in conclusion, that this discourse seems to have mainly about dining, but that is perhaps after all not that inappropriate. Dining is both an important philosophical activity in its own right, and the composition of the dinner-parties of the great is a good index of who is regarded in a given society as of acceptable social status. It is fair to say that a great many more philosophers and other assorted intellectuals were to be found at the tables of politicians and captains of industry in the heyday of the Roman Empire than would generally be the case nowadays.

However, as we have seen, philosophers did not just dine with the great; they did assist in important ways in the public life of the cities in which

they lived. Plutarch served as archon in Chaeronea and priest in Delphi, Favorinus was (unwillingly) high-priest in Arelate, Ammonius was three times *strategos* in Athens, and supervised the education of the ephebes. None of them, though, I think, can quite equal the all-round usefulness of the splendid L. Vibius Eumenes of Phocaea, who at some time in this period was honoured by his fellow-citizens (*SEG* 40 [1990], 950) as *philosophos*, *stratêgos*, *boularchos*, *eirênarchos*, *ephebarchos*, *gymnasiarchos*, and *agoranomos* – truly a paragon of all that the philosopher should be, except that he didn't publish!

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¹ The date of this – not that it much matters (unless we could identify the governor of Crete!) – may be imagined as falling some time in the early 140's, when Aulus was studying in Athens.

² *Nigrinus*, 24.

³ An ancient philosopher, like a modern churchman, habitually wore, it seems, a quite distinctive dress, as well as a distinctive cut of beard. In general, as we shall see below, the philosopher seems to have filled very much the same role in society as a clergyman would today – without, however, the overtones of state-sponsored orthodoxy that would have been operative until recently.

⁴ An adaptation of *Nem.* 5. 1.

⁵ Reading *apheleias* with Wyttenbach, for the *asphaleias* of the mss., which does not mean much in the context (Fowler's rendering 'conservatism' is somewhat optimistic). Plutarch likes the term *apheleia*, using it on fully eleven other occasions throughout the corpus.

⁶ Once again, the mss. reading, *politikoi*, while translatable, makes little sense. I agree here with Fowler that *philosophoi* should be read.

⁷ *Metrios* and *asteios* are favourite positive-value words for Plutarch, especially the former. All his noble friends, both Roman and Greek, naturally fitted this description.

⁸ He is remarkably reticent, it must be said, about what must have been quite an active career, in the 80's and 90's especially, of both embassies to Rome (during which he will have met most of his Roman friends), and delegations to governors and other officials within Achaea, such as we know him, from various incidental references, to have done a good deal of in his middle years. We may assume that he did not want to indulge in *offensive* self-praise! See on this the excellent discussion of Jones 1971, chs. 3-6.

⁹ It is interesting, by the way, to see evidence that all four of the traditional schools are presented as still flourishing. Since we do not know the date of the piece, we cannot be sure that the four philosophers mentioned are holders of the chairs of philosophy set up by Marcus

Aurelius in 176. Lucian elsewhere, in *The Eunuch*, does present a squabble for the Peripatetic Chair (or, more accurately, for the *second* Peripatetic Chair – this constitutes a small mystery!), so this work could represent the post-176 situation as well.

¹⁰ As, for instance, Themistocles the Stoic is present at Mestrius Florus' dinner-party in I 9, along with Plutarch; Philip of Prusa, a Stoic (along with an anonymous personage who is described, curiously, as 'a long-bearded sophist of the Stoic persuasion'), at a party given by Plutarch himself in Chaeronea (VII 7); Xenocles of Delphi, an Epicurean, is present, with Plutarch and his brother Lamprias (who professed Peripateticism at an amateur level), at a dinner given by the *rhêtôr* Glaucias (II 2); and Alexander the Epicurean at a dinner of Senecio's, at which Plutarch is being teased for avoiding eggs (II 3).

¹¹ Presumably an academic authority on military tactics, rather than a military man himself.

¹² What Plutarch means by this term is less than certain. It cannot mean literally 'son-in-law,' since Plutarch did not have any daughters. It is suggested that it may cover also husbands of nieces. The word, after all, only means 'connexion by marriage'.

¹³ If this Gaius is identical with the Caesernius of VII 4 (also a *gambros* of Florus), he must have accompanied him to Greece, either permanently or temporarily. Caesernius, like Mestrius, is (as is pointed out by Jones 1971, 48) a name characteristic of Northern Italy, particularly Aquileia.

¹⁴ We find at II 6 a nice description of a fine villa belonging to Soclarus in Athens, with gardens stretching down to the Cephissus, in which he is engaged in grafting various fruit-trees onto one another, which would indicate a major degree of prosperity for a citizen of Tithora.

¹⁵ This presumably puts the gathering somewhere in the mid-110's C.E., not long before Florus' death, since Favorinus, who was born some time in the early 80's in Arelate in Gaul, sounds as if he is at least 30, being already a well-known figure on the Hellenic intellectual circuit, and speaking with authority on the subject of dreams. I will return to Favorinus below.

¹⁶ Many of the questions raised in the *Table Talk* are pitched from the perspective of a *giver* of dinner-parties, e.g. I 2: 'Whether the host should arrange the placing of his guests or leave it to the guests themselves' (at a dinner given by his brother Timon); I 4: 'What sort of man the symposiarch must be' (where Plutarch himself is being urged to assume that office at a drinking-party); or II 10, where Plutarch is himself giving a formal dinner as eponymous archon in Chaeronea.

¹⁷ See the useful discussion of Jones 1966, 205-13.

¹⁸ At this time, it would seem, there was only a single *stratêgos* at Athens, instead of the board of ten of earlier centuries, so that the position was proportionately more distinguished. Ammonius' citizenship (as if that were not obvious) can be demonstrated from that of his son Thrasyllus, who is attested by an inscription (*IG* 2/3, 3558) as being of the deme Cholleidae. That Ammonius was also a Roman citizen is well demonstrated by Jones 1966, his Roman name being M. Annius, presumably bestowed by M. Annius Afrinus, who was suffect consul in 67, and accompanied Nero to Greece.

¹⁹ At III 1, a dinner given by the musician Erato (who seems to have been something of a boon companion, cf. IX 1, 736A), Plutarch presents Ammonius as a rather awesome figure to various young men who are not familiar with him (646A), when he criticizes the company for wearing garlands of flowers, but Plutarch himself knows him well enough to realise that he is only seeking to stir up a discussion, and consequently provokes the physician Trypho (another crony of Ammonius, cf. IX 14) to take him on.

²⁰ One of Nigrinus' complaints, we may note, is against those "who philosophize for hire (*epi misthôi philosophountes*) and put virtue for sale over a counter, as it were" (Luc. *Nigr.* 25). The implication is that Nigrinus himself would not dream of charging a fee. It is not clear, though, whether these miscreants are Platonists, or philosophers of other schools.

²¹ Nigrinus at least, Lucian tells us, was a landowner of sorts back in Attica: he had an *agros* not far from the city (*Nigr.* 26), which presumably yielded something, though Lucian tells us that he had not set foot on it for many years – and indeed spoke dismissively of the ownership of physical plants in general!

²² At an earlier stage, it is possible that Taurus received some support from Plutarch, when he first arrived in Athens. At least, Gellius records him (I 26) as telling an anecdote about *Plutarchius noster*, which certainly implies personal acquaintance, whatever about discipleship. Plutarch never mentions Taurus, e.g. in the *Symposiac Questions*, as he might reasonably have if, like Favorinus, he had been a pupil. But Taurus may have come on the scene only after the composition of that work.

²³ E.g. *Digest* 50.4.18.30: *Magistris, qui civitum munera vacationem habent, item grammaticis et oratoribus et medicis et philosophis, ne hospitium recipiant, a principibus fuisse immunitatem indulam et divus Vespasianus et divus Hadrianus rescripserunt*. Pliny (*Ep.* 10.58) writes to Trajan to ask for exemption for the philosopher Flavius Arhippus, which attests to the fact that such exemptions were not automatic; one had to apply for them.

²⁴ See the evidence collected in Hahn 1989, 100–108 and 137–47.

²⁵ This episode, incidentally, reveals something that one would have suspected in any case, that Favorinus was extremely well got in his native Arelate, independently of what he would have earned as a sophist. In no other way could he even have embarked on his career as a Greek-speaking sophist from Gaul.