Intellectual Resistance to Roman Hegemony and its Representativity

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Introduction

It is generally accepted that the populations in Roman provinces dominated by Greek culture did not adopt Roman culture or identify themselves as Romans to the same degree as provincials in the Western part of the Empire. One explanation for the continuous domination of Greek culture in the East is often based on the form of provincialization Rome chose there. When Pompey reorganised Bithynia-Pontus between 66 and 63 BC he chose to preserve the polis culture as the administrative centre where it already existed, such as in Bithynia and the south coast of the Black Sea. In the Pontic Kingdom, where the urban structure was less developed, Pompey founded a number of new cities organised according to the polis model.

It is commonly thought that Rome's use of the *polis* model prevented a full-scale introduction of Roman institutions and Latin and Roman religion in Anatolia and the East, thus enabling the population in Greek colonies and cities founded by various Hellenistic kings to maintain Greek traditions and ways of living relatively unchanged.[1] It has later been argued convincingly that the coming of Rome did cause significant changes in Greek communities and brought changes to the constitution of the *polis*, where in particular the *boule* was modified. As part of the reorganisation of Bithynia-Pontus, Pompey introduced a minimum age of thirty, later reduced to twenty-two by an edict of Augustus, and gave ex-magistrates membership for life. Another significant change was the introduction of censors who controlled and elected new *boule* members.[2]

That the Greeks continued to dominate the cultural pattern in the East has led to the belief that apart from introducing a new material culture and architectonic changes in the civic landscape, the influence of Roman culture never reached a level that significantly challenged Greek cultural identity. As a result, the Greeks continued to identify themselves as Greeks rather than as Romans or as members of the Roman community.[3] This particularly strong Greek self-consciousness, believed to have formed the background for a profound Greek cultural resistance, scepticism or indifference towards Roman culture, is often ascribed to Greek intellectualism and the tradition of philosophers, sophists, historians and other Greek writers who promoted

Greek traditions, cultural heritage and history under periods of Roman rule.[4] Such intellectual resistance has often been attributed to the literary movement "the Second Sophistic', a literary tradition from the first to the third century AD in which the authors' linguistic style was inspired by that used by Greek Athenian writers, particularly in the fifth century BC.[5]

This use of Attic Greek and the increased focus on the Greek past are likely to have evolved as a response to various upheavals in the Greek world, caused by the Macedonian Empire and the subjection to Roman rule. In the Hellenistic Age, *koine* Greek began to develop and eventually became the predominant language among Greeks. *Koine* was used in academic circles by such writers as Polybios and Strabon, but was also the language used by writers of less excellence such as the evangelists, and it was the language spoken by the uneducated part of the population. In the imperial period, as the knowledge of ancient Greek deteriorated, Attic Greek developed as the language of excellence, with members of the intellectual elite assuming a kind of Greek inspired by the Athenian intellectuals writing in the golden age of Athenian domination.[6]

This intellectual interest in the Greek past and the fact that some of the authors profoundly criticized Roman hegemony and culture in the imperial period has led to the impression that the Second Sophistic tradition represents a general Greek scepticism or indifference towards Roman culture.[7] It seems likely that a literary tradition celebrating a chosen Golden Age of Greek culture did indeed develop as a response to a period when knowledge of the Greek past and cultural heritage were under severe pressure from Roman political, economic and cultural influences. And though it is easy to overestimate the right to speak freely under the Antonine emperors, it appears that the emperors from Trajan to Marcus Aurelius tolerated a large degree of criticism, particularly when it was directed towards the previous dynasty. In this respect, Marcus Aurelius celebrated his own and his father's, Antoninus Pius', tolerance of philosophers' criticism.[8] Whether this criticism developed because it was allowed to do so by the new dynasty – as an attempt to show more openness towards critics of the imperial institution in general, or Domitian in particular – or whether such criticism was permitted because it was in any case too strong to suppress, is difficult to determine. But at the beginning of the second century AD not only Domitian but also the less successful of the Julio-Claudian emperors and the imperial institution in more general terms were exposed to criticism by both Latin and Greek authors such as Suetonius, Tacitus, Plutarch and Dion of Prusa.

But the view of the Second Sophistic literary tradition as a movement generally critical towards Rome does not take into consideration the cultural, political and social differences between the authors; nor does it take into account that each writer's individual experience with Roman authorities is likely to have had a profound influence on the ways in which Greek writers reflected on and described Rome.

The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how members of the Greek intellectual elite responded to Roman hegemony and the cultural influence of Rome. It will discuss whether Greek authors writing in a Second Sophistic tradition are more convincingly understood as a literary movement with similar views on Rome or whether personal experiences and different periods in which the author wrote caused significant differences in the literary treatment of the Romans. In this respect it should be kept in mind that there are examples of authors related to the Second Sophistic tradition who had a positive view of Rome and responded by taking active part in the Roman community. This paper will also discuss whether the critical attitude towards Rome, clearly expressed by a part of the Greek intellectual elite, represents a general view within the Greek provincial elite. A case study of how the local elite in Bithynia-Pontus responded to the coming of Rome indicates that the local elite, through careers in the Roman administration and the use of Roman names, were eager to present themselves as Roman and as members of the Roman community.

Intellectual resistance

Lucius Mestrius Plutarchos from Chaironeia

One of the Greek intellectuals to have expressed the strongest criticism of Roman hegemony and the influence of Roman culture is the biographer and moral philosopher Lucius Mestrius Plutarchos from Chaironeia in Boiotia.[9] With his Boiotian descent, Plutarch differed from the majority of the Second Sophistic authors, who originated from Asia, Bithynia, or the Hellenised world of Asia Minor and the East. Nonetheless, Plutarch is interesting in a study of intellectual responses to Rome because he was one of the few Second Sophistic writers who maintained a sceptical attitude towards Rome throughout his literary career.

Plutarch did not encourage a definitive confrontation with Rome to free the Greek world from Roman hegemony. Instead, his literary activities were directed towards a Greek audience. He argued that increased participation in Roman politics and imperial administration, where members of the Greek elite either adopted Roman traditions or left their home towns in order to follow personal ambitions in Rome or in the provincial administration, would increase Rome's influence and reduce the knowledge of the Greek past.

Plutarch's concern is expressed repeatedly in the *Moralia* as well as in the essay *Praecepta gerendae reipublicae* or *Precepts of Statecraft,* where he criticises members of the Greek political elite for serving as procurators and governors (primarily for reasons of prestige or money) while leaving their fatherlands unattended.

> Is there any comparison between such a favour (friendship between Greeks and influential Romans) and the procuratorships and governorship of provinces from which many talents may be

> gained and in pursuit of which most public men grow old haunt-
> ing the doors of other men's house and leaving their own affairs
> uncared for? (*Moralia* 814 D, translation by H.N. Fowler)

Plutarch criticises the Greek elite for seeking influence in the Roman world, which provided wealth and prestige in the Roman community but urged Greeks to humiliate themselves as clients at the doors of the political elite in Rome. This discussion was opened in another essay, *De tranquillitate animi* or *On Tranquility of Mind*, which discusses the issue of inner peace. Here Plutarch is critical of the members of the local elite, particularly in Galatia and Bithynia, who are constantly pursuing more prestigious positions in the Roman administration because they were unsatisfied with their social standing at home (*Moralia* 470 B-C).

   Plutarch's negative view of the Greek involvement in the imperial administration should be seen in the light of an overall belief that Greek cultural identity was best preserved when the influence from Rome was kept at a minimum. What presumably concerned Plutarch was that participation in the imperial administration would drain the Greek communities of individuals with the necessary economic and cultural resources necessary to maintain and qualify local government, and leave a political vacuum only to be filled by an even larger influence from Rome.

   Plutarch was keen on making his fellow Greeks understand that they were no longer free but placed under the rule of Rome, as stated explicitly in his account of the role played by local magistrates.

> You who rule are a subject, ruling a state (polis) controlled by
> proconsuls, the agents of Caesar … You should arrange your cloak
> more carefully and from the office of the generals keep your eyes
> upon the orators' platform, and not have great pride or confidence
> in your crown, since you see the boots of the Roman soldiers just
> above your head (Moralia 813 E, translation by H.N. Fowler).

Plutarch's main concern here is to show his fellow Greeks that they are no longer free, but ruled by emperors and various Roman officials, who generally lack the cultural education and dignity to rule the Greek communities. As part of the same general concern that the influence from Roman culture could threaten Greek culture, Plutarch warns his fellow Greeks against spending their economic resources on festivals and celebrations – a comment which should be seen in the light of Plutarch's own involvement in erecting a statue in honour of Hadrian.[10]

   Plutarch did not see Greek liberation from Roman hegemony as a realistic goal; instead, he recommended close contacts with influential Romans who could represent Greek interests at Rome (*Moralia* 814 D). What Plutarch aimed for was merely to make the Greek provincials realize that they had a different

cultural origin and that the influence from Roman culture would weaken the knowledge of Greek culture.

Dion Cocceianus of Prusa in Bithynia

Another Greek intellectual who criticised the Roman influence in the Greek world was Dion of Prusa. Like Plutarch, Dion was worried that Roman hegemony would weaken the authority of the Greek cities and further undermine Greek cultural identity.

Dion's relations to Rome as such can be divided into three periods: before, during and after his exile. In the first period, Dion acted as a public speaker in Rome and moved within the political elite. As an intellectual Roman citizen with powerful friends and a wealthy family, Dion had a prestigious career in the Roman administration within reach, but for some reason this favourable prospect took a dramatic turn for the worse in the early years of Domitian's reign. And even though the validity of the exile story has been questioned by Philostratos (*VS* 488) it seems convincing that Dion's career in Rome ended under the reign of Domitian, either as a consequence of his role in the conspiracy against Domitian in 82 AD (Dion, *Or.* 13.1) or – in Philostratus' version – as a voluntary exile caused by Dion's fear of the emperor's rage (*VS* 488).[11]

Dion's work concerning political issues can be divided into four categories: the acceptance of Roman rule, as in his speech to the Alexandrians (*Or.* 32); his advice to the emperor on how to rule the empire (*Or.* 1-4); the issue of *concordia* between Bithynian cities (*Or.* 38-39), and the speeches on local politics in the city of Prusa (*Or.* 42-49). Like Plutarch, his main point of view was that Greeks were to accept Roman rule but not Roman culture, the influence of which was to be avoided by minimising the Roman authorities' influence.

Dion's agenda was less distinct than Plutarch's. According to his own account, Dion moved within the highest circles of the Roman elite under the reign of the Flavian Emperors, where he was highly celebrated as a public speaker until the accession of Domitian.[12] If Dion is to be trusted, it is likely that he stayed in Rome on a regular basis and his career choice must have brought him into daily contact with members of Rome's political elite. His philo-Roman period is illustrated by the Alexandrian speech, in which he, speaking before the assembly in Alexandria, urges the inhabitants to live a more respectable life and honour the emperor, either Vespasian or Trajan, for what he has done for their city and to re-establish a more favourable rapport with the imperial house (*Or.* 32.95-96.).

In his own version, Dion had been an integrated part of the imperial power he so eagerly criticised later. One element of Dion's critical attitude towards Rome is represented in his view of imperial worship, where he questions the practice of celebrating the living emperor as a god with the argument that a heavenly king (Zeus) gave the earthly king (in this case Trajan) the power to rule men (*Or.* 1.42; 1.45). For Dion, the emperor could attain divine status

and become a *daimôn* or a *hêrôs*, but only after his death (*Or*. 3.54.).[13] Dion thereby distances himself from the population of the Bithynian cities, who were among the first to offer divine worship to Octavian in 29 BC when he passed though Asia Minor on his way home from Alexandria. Again, Dion's concern might have been to downplay the importance of the Roman Emperor and try to balance the Emperor's popularity in Asia Minor.

Dion's profound criticism of the Roman Empire is related to his experiences with the rule of Domitian, which is described as a regime of evil: the emperor demanded to be worshipped as both "a master and a god" (*Or*. 45.1.), thus calling for the kind of cult that Dion argues against. The speech may have served to point out how badly Roman civilization could develop, while at the same time creating a vision of a more ideal type of emperor, personified by Trajan.[14]

The series of speeches on *Concordia* between the Bithynian cities held in Nikaia and Nikomedeia and in Prusa and Apameia, respectively, bear witness to Dion's increasing unease with Rome and Roman authorities. In the speeches *Or*. 38 and 39, Dion discusses the issue of solidarity between the cities. In Dion's mind, the competition between Nikaia and Nikomedeia to be the best city in the province compelled the cities to vie for unnecessary, honorary titles such as Metropolis or First City of the province. Such competition could, according to Dion, cause a disaccord between the cities, weaken their ability to unite against Roman demands, and enable the governor to benefit from the disharmony, as in *repetundae* processes, where the governor could seek support from one of the competing cities and avoid conviction.

> Or is it possible you are not aware of the tyrannical power your own strife offers those who govern you? For at once whoever wishes to mistreat your people comes armed with the knowledge of what he must do to escape the penalty. For either he allies himself with the Nikaian party and has their group for his support, or else by choosing the party of Nikomedeia he is protected by you. (*Or*. 38.36, translated by H. Lamar Crosby)

In the third phase, after Dion's return about a decade later, his goal was no longer a political career on the imperial level; instead, he channelled his energy toward improving the political status (*Or*. 44.11-12) of his native Prusa as well as to beautifying the city through an extensive building programme to prevent Prusa from falling behind the other cities in the region (*Or*. 47).

In the speech he gave before the assembly in Prusa, shortly after his return from exile, Dion presents his plans for upgrading the political status of Prusa, a project that he, due to his alleged ties to the new imperial family, saw himself as the perfect man to carry out. In Prusa, Dion tells his fellow citizens that the city had a reasonable chance not only to acquire the right to hold court and obtain a larger council, but also to obtain freedom (*Or*. 44.11-12), which

would free the city from the influence of the Roman governor. No doubt this must have caused much excitement in the city. A man from a noble family returns to the city after many years in exile and claims to be able to elevate the city to about the highest status a city in the empire could obtain. To Dion this may have been a long-desired opportunity to place himself in the role of Prusa's most important benefactor.

In the following speech, *Or.* 45, however, it becomes clear that Dion may have overestimated his influence at the imperial court. It seems likely that Prusa was granted the right to increase the number of council members and the right to judge court cases, but the request for freedom was never granted. From the speech, which shows Dion in a defensive position (*Or.* 45.2-4), it seems that he was criticised by his fellow citizens in Prusa for not delivering what he had promised.

To judge from the speeches, the embassy to Trajan must have been viewed as a failure not only by Dion's political enemies in Prusa but by Dion himself, who, it is safe to assume, had expected more from his encounter with Trajan. The request for the right to hold court and to raise the number of *boule* members were small improvements which Trajan could easily grant as a way to show his favour, but the real aim of Dion's visit to Rome must have been the grant of freedom, which Trajan denied.

Dion was thus both politically and personally involved with the political elite in Rome and spoke highly of the emperor in Alexandria. Understandably, this positive sentiment changed, either as a result of the exile, which caused a significant loss of influence in the capital, or as a result of his inability to persuade Trajan to give Prusa freedom. The hardest blow might not have been the problem with the unpredictable emperor Domitian but rather the disappointment with the highly respected Trajan.

Dion presented the exile as a phase during which he grew from sophist to philosopher, and therefore as less devastating than it might sound,[15] and the embassy to Trajan as more successful than claimed by his enemies. But this does not change the general picture of a man who once had a positive attitude to Roman hegemony until Domitian forced him into exile and changed his political status both in Rome and locally.

Flavios Philostratos from Athens

The third century writer Philostratos, from a wealthy family in Athens, is another Greek writer to have profoundly criticised Roman rule. Through Apollonios, a holy man from Tyana living in the first century AD, Philostratos criticised the influence of Roman culture in the third century AD.[16] Referring to a collection of letters attributed to Apollonios, Philostratos criticised the adoption of Latin names, calling it unworthy for a man to have another man's name but not his looks.[17] This statement is likely to have been directed towards those Greeks who took the emperor's name and then obtained Roman citizenship. But Philostratos went further in his criticism of Roman hegemony,

arguing, again through Apollonios, this time in the biographic work on the life of Apollonios, that the Greek cities and culture were in moral decline, and he blamed this development on the Roman governors and their inability to rule the more culturally educated Greeks (*Ap.* 5.36).

In his work on the *Lives of the Sophists*, Philostratos complicates matters further; he praises those who stood up against Rome and the emperor, such as Polemo from Smyrna, who expelled Antoninus Pius from his house in Smyrna when Pius was the governor of Asia. But at the same time, Polemo's is praised for his ability to collaborate with the Roman authorities for the benefit of Smyrna and appears in Philostratos's portrait as both a distinctive sophist with a school in Smyrna and the one who presided over the Olympic Games that Hadrian founded in Smyrna (*VS* 532). Polemo's status as a highly educated Greek intellectual and a local politician with close relations to Rome and the one responsible for a cultural event introduced by Rome is not seen as a problem by the Athenian Philostratos. Again, there is an acceptance of Roman rule combined with criticism of the influence Roman hegemony had on the cultural pattern in Greek communities.

Similarly to Dion from Prusa, Philostratos also failed to meet his own ideals. Dion joined the elite in Rome after Trajan denied him the political success of freeing Prusa, and Philostratos's criticism of Greeks joining the Roman administration is not in accordance with the way he lived his own life. His name, Flavios Philostratos, indicates that his family obtained Roman citizenship under the Flavian emperors, and one of his sons seems to have been admitted to the senate.[18] When Philostratos criticises the use of Roman names and those Greeks who took part in the malfunctioning and morally inferior Roman administration which ruined Greek culture, it is a criticism that applies to himself as well as his own family.

L. Flavius Arrianus from Nikomedeia in Bithynia

Other Greek intellectuals had an entirely different attitude towards Rome. One example of a more positive view of Roman hegemony is represented by L. Flavius Arrianus from Nikomedeia in Bithynia, who was elected consul and appointed governor of Cappadocia in the middle of the second century AD. Arrian's production does not contain any obvious criticism of Rome; instead he appreciated the Roman people's ability to adopt the best elements from other cultures and make them their own (*Taktika*, 44.2-3).

In his book *Hellenism and Empire* from 1996, Simon Swain suggests that even though Arrian wrote accounts of his life as a Roman governor,[19] he was primarily interested in what Simon Swain calls Greek issues – Alexander the Great, the history of Bithynia, and Greek hunting techniques – indicating Arrian's interest in Greek culture. This might very well be a correct observation, but it also raises the question of how Greek Bithynia actually was. Plutarch singles out Bithynians and Galatians as people who were less likely to be satisfied with their social standing in their home com-

munities and therefore more drawn towards Roman magistracies (*Moralia* 470 B-C).

Apart from the themes treated in his literary production, Arrian's cultural identity as Greek has been based on a remark in his biography of Alexander the Great, where Arrian makes the unclear statement that he did not have to state his name, who his family and *patria* were, or which magistracies he held in his hometown, because this was already well known.[20] Arrian never specifies what he intended by *patria* or what kind of magistracies he held there. Simon Swain argues convincingly that Arrian was referring to Niko-medeia, and that the magistracies referred to may have been the priestly college of Demeter and Kore, which Arrian, according to Photios, held in Nikomedeia.[21]

It seems convincing that Arrian saw himself as Greek, but the somewhat cryptic statement about his *patria* and Greek-ness may indicate that his cultural identity was not at all obvious to his contemporaries, which in turn may suggest that a Bithynian origin was viewed differently than descent from Mainland Greece and Ionia. Arrian presumably wrote *The Anabasis of Alexander* in his Athenian years,[22] and it is likely that he, a man from Bithynia, who spent much of his adult life in Rome and in the provincial administration, seemed more Roman than Greek to a Athenian audience and therefore needed to justify his Greek descent in an Athenian environment.

Cassius Dion from Nikaia in Bithynia

In many ways Cassius Dion from Nikaia had a relation to the Roman world similar to that of Arrian. Cassius Dion also had a glorious career in the Roman administration, where he was elected consul twice, the second time with the emperor Severus Alexander as his colleague,[23] and he was appointed governor in Africa, Dalmatia and Pannonia.[24] Unlike Arrian, who was the first senator in his family, Cassius Dion's father was a consul and governor in Lycia-Pamphylia,[25] Cilicia[26] and Dalmatia.[27] He lived the majority of his life in the Roman world where he, like Arrian, fulfilled his role well enough to be chosen repeatedly as Rome's representative in prestigious provinces.

In his *Roman History,* written in Greek, Cassius Dion criticises the Emperors for their incompetence – for instance, Domitian, who is criticised for having killed countless numbers of Romans[28] and forcing the Roman public to worship him as a god.[29] Cassius Dion also expresses a general disapproval of the imperial cult, in the fictive speech of Maecenas held to Augustus (52.35-36.1.). Here it is argued that no man could ever vote any honours to an emperor on his own free will and that the ruler thereby ends up bestowing such honours upon himself – with the risk of being ridiculed (52.35.2.).

This criticism of the ruthless emperors, however, was in no way a Greek phenomenon but was very much alive among Latin intellectuals such as Tacitus and Suetonius, who were far from reticent in their negative treatment of the last Flavian emperor.[30] Even though Cassius Dion wrote his Roman his-

tory in Greek and referred to Nikaia as his fatherland, he was a part of the Roman community and must have been seen as such by his contemporaries when he represented Rome as the governor or curator in the Western or the Greek-speaking part of the Empire.

Cassius Dion is thus another example of a Greek intellectual with a clear Greek cultural heritage, someone who saw himself as part of the Roman political elite, as indicated by his use of "we" then referring to the senatorial order.[31] As governors in prestigious provinces, Arrian and Cassius Dion held high positions in the political elite and benefitted significantly from their relations in Rome and in the provincial communities. In many ways, their situation differed significantly from the experiences that Dion of Prusa had with the Roman authorities, and it is questionable whether he and Plutarch had anything in common with Arrian and Cassius Dion apart from their admiration of the Athenian language and the Greek literary tradition – and the fact that they all were Roman citizens.

Aristeides from Hadriananoutherai in Asia

The last Greek intellectual to be discussed here is Ailios Aristeides, who is essential to the question of Greek intellectuals' relations to Rome because he delivers a generally positive account of the Roman Empire in his speech *To Rome* held in the capital in front of the imperial family. Aristeides is particularly favourable in his account of Rome's ability to integrate the provincial population in the Roman community by granting Roman citizenship, which is seen as quite distinct from Athenian hegemony, where Athens is criticised for not making her subjects an integrated part of the empire.[32]

> I mean your magnificent citizenship with its grand conception because there is nothing like it in the records of all mankind. Dividing into two groups all those in your empire – and with this word I have indicated the entire civilized world – you have everywhere appointed to your citizenship, or even to kinship with you, the better part of the world's talent, courage, and leadership, while the rest you recognized as a league under your hegemony. (Aristeides, *To Rome* 59. Translation by Oliver 1953).

And Aristeides goes on to praise Roman citizenship for its ability to unite the Empire through what may be called a common Roman identity.

> On the contrary, you (the Romans) sought its (the Roman Citizenship) expansion as a worthy aim, and you have caused the word Roman to be the label, not of membership in a city, but of some common nationality… (*To Rome* 63)

Due to the circumstances in which the speech was presented, it has been questioned whether Aristeides' celebration of Roman hegemony was a sincere reflection of Aristeides' view of Rome or part of Aristeides' own agenda to flatter the new emperor, Antoninus Pius. The simple answer to this question is that the latter is true. Aristeides is known to have flattered not just the imperial family but also the governor in the province of Asia in order to free himself from the obligation to serve as a magistrate in Smyrna (*Sacred Tales* 4.87-92).

But Aristeides' attempt to free himself from his obligations in Smyrna is not necessarily an indication of scepticism towards Roman hegemony. It is just as likely that he wasn't interested in local politics and would rather not spend the money magistrates were expected to expend. That *To Rome* should be less trustworthy as a reflection of Aristeides' view of Rome is not entirely convincing. In the fourth of the *Sacred Tales,* where the issue of immunity is presented, it is clear that the conflict between Aristeides and the Asian cities was mainly of a local character. And when the governor Severus was forced to intervene, he took Aristeides' side in the conflict and supported his attempt to avoid the office in Smyrna (*Sacred Tales* 4.100). As pointed out by Simon Swain, it is clear that Aristeides was uninterested in Roman politics, but this does not mean that Aristeides was against the Roman order, which he praises highly not just in *To Rome* but also in the speeches on concord between Asian cities (*Or.* 23.11 and 54), or when Marcus Aurelius and Commodus are referred to as divine, *theios,* while they are still alive (*Or.* 29.5).

Furthermore, *To Rome* was not just one long encomium of Roman rule. In his discussion of the emperor's function as the supreme governor, Aristeides appreciates the Roman emperor's ability to rely on an organisation of magistrates, which he could control through letters without the need to travel around the empire (*To Rome* 33). This description is held up against Alexander the Great, whom Aristeides describes as a ruler who accomplished much as a general but little as a king because of his inability to integrate his conquests into a working empire (*To Rome* 25-26). Still, a Roman audience would also recognize the picture of the travelling ruler as a characteristic of Pius's predecessor Hadrian. It is difficult to determine what Aristeides meant by this remark, but it is a reasonable assumption that he was arguing for a type of government based as far as possible on local rule.

Taken together, Aristeides' works provide a picture of a Greek intellectual with a generally positive view of Roman hegemony and the abilities of the Roman administration. But Aristeides also exemplifies an indifferent attitude to the life of Roman politics. Unlike Arrian and Cassius Dion, Aristeides had no desire for a career in the imperial administration, or in the cities of Asia for that matter. He was no doubt deeply rooted in Greek cultural heritage and content to present himself as an important and highly estimated *rhêtôr* either far too important or too ill to take part in the pitiful world of Roman politics.

This lack of interest in political activities, however, was not particularly

directed against civil offices in the Roman administration. As far as we can recall, Aristeides never held any magistracy in the Asian cities, and his reluctance to serve as an imperial priest should therefore not be seen as resistance to Roman hegemony or culture as such. Yet, Aristeides' overall view of Rome is important because it might represent how the population in Asia Minor saw Roman hegemony in general. When Aristeides celebrates Rome for sharing her citizenship and making the word "Roman" signify a common people (*To Rome* 63), he may very well have been in accordance with the majority of the local elite in Bithynian cities, to whom being Roman became a matter of prestige and social status.

Being Roman in Bithynia et Pontus

That Greek intellectuals, for various reasons, criticised the Roman influence in the Greek world is beyond doubt. But it is appropriate to discuss how representative such views towards the Roman world were among the Bithynian and Pontic elite. Simon Swain has argued that Greek intellectuals shared their passion for cultural education (*paideia*) with the larger part of the educated upper half of the Greek community and that it would be wrong to argue that the negative attitude to Rome in the works of, for example, Plutarch, Dion of Prusa or Philostratos are not representative of the audience.[33]

The general pattern of how the local elite in Bithynia-Pontus responded to the coming of Rome was different from the negative view presented in the works of Plutarch, Dion of Prusa and Philostratos. Members of the local elite were keen to exhibit their status as Roman citizens and announce their own or their relatives' merits in Roman institutions and eager to present themselves as Roman in public by appearing with Latin-sounding names. This raises the question of whether a Greek cultural heritage prevented the Bithynian and Pontic elite from identifying themselves as Romans.

An early example of a clearly Roman appearance is from the Roman colony of Apameia, where Catilius Longus, a man presumably of Italian descent, is honoured for his career in the Roman administration. From the Latin inscription it appears that Catilius Longus's career began in the army as *tribunus militium* and led to a senatorial career followed by an appointment as propraetor in the province of Asia.[34] Catilius Longus might have been the first of the *gens Catilia* from Apameia to join the Senate. That the *gens Catilia* were represented in the region around Apameia is illustrated by a Latin inscription where a Cn. Catilius Atticus is mentioned as the owner of the *vilicus* Tertius,[35] who set up a gravestone for his sister. Cn. Catilius Atticus may have been the father of the later L. Catilius Severus Iulianus Claudius Reginus, who had a glorious career in the first half of the second century with appointments as governor in Syria and Africa, consul twice, and election as *praefectus urbanus*.[36] Two other Catilii Severii were recorded as members of the senate in the late second and early third century AD, since they were members of the Arval college, a priesthood consisting of twelve senators who celebrated Dea Dia.[37]

It is hardly surprising that men from a Roman colony of veteran descent held on to their Latin names and chose careers in the Roman army and the upper level of the political elite in Rome. Nor is it exceptional that a man such as L. Catilius Severus Iulianus Claudius Reginus reached a higher level in the provincial administration than Catilius Longus, who was the first in the family to join the senate.

But the use of Roman names and careers in the imperial administration were far from restricted to the elite in Bithynian and Pontic colonies. In his study of the elite in Bithynia, *Notables et élites des cités de Bithynie aux époques hellénistique et romaine (III siécle av. J.-C. – III siécle ap. J.-C.)* from 2004, Henri-Louis Fernoux records men of senatorial status in most of the Bithynian cities. The city of Nikaia was well represented in the senate and the provincial administration. It appears that the first family to join the political elite in Rome was the *gens Cassia*: according to the reconstruction of a damaged inscription, C. Cassius Agrippa was appointed *consul suffectus* around 130 AD and served as *legatus* of the 20th legion in Baetica.[38] Apart from Cassius Dion and his father, Claudius Cassius Apronianus, who, as we have already seen, held the consulship and important provinces, Sedatus Theophilos also represented Nikaia, reaching the level of praetor under the reign of Antoninus Pius.[39]

From the city of Nikomedeia, Arrian and his son Flavius Arrianus both reached the consular office in the second century AD.[40] A third senator of Nikomedeian origin, whose identity is unknown due to the state of the inscription, was apparently admitted to the senate and served as *legatus Augusti* after a long career in Nikomedeia.[41] The city of Klaudiopolis was represented by a total of three senators: Marcus Domitius Euphemus, who reached the level of consul in the late second / early third century;[42] Marcus Ulpius Arabianus, who reached the highest level of the provincial administration as governor in Syria-Palestina and Africa during the reign of Marcus Aurelius and Commodus,[43] and Marcus Ulpius Domitius Aristaeus Arabianus, who reached the level of *praetor* and served as *propraetor* in the province of Asia in the beginning of the third century.[44]

In the city of Prusa, too, the local elite reached the political elite of the Roman empire when Lucius Egnatius Victor Lollianus was admitted to the senate and served as both *corrector* in Achaea and proconsul in Asia in the third century.[45] In addition, Prusias ad Hypium was represented by Claudius Piso, who served as *legatus augusti* in the first legion *Adiutrix pia fidelis* in the reign of Septimius Severus,[46] and Marcus Domitius Valerianus held several military appointments as *legatus* in various legions and served as propraetor in Galatia, Cilicia and Arabia before being elected *consul suffectus* in the middle of the third century.[47]

The studies conducted by Henri-Louis Fernoux show that starting with Catilius Longus in the reign of Vespasian, the elite in the Bithynian cities were represented in the senate and the provincial administration. Up through the second century AD Bithynians were frequently found among the political elite

in the senate and it is also in this period that men of Bithynian origin such as Arrian from Nikomedeia, Marcus Ulpius Arabianus from Klaudiopolis, and the *gens Cassia* from Nikaia obtained prestigious appointments as governors in Cappadocia, Syria and Africa. And it is worth noting that more than just one family from each city often reached the senate. This involvement in the political life in Rome and the provincial administration indicates that the Bithynian elite took an interest in the Roman world. The men mentioned here not only accepted Roman hegemony and showed their Roman status, but they chose an active role in the political life in Rome and careers in the provincial administration where they represented Roman hegemony in provincial communities – exactly what Plutarch argued against.

How widespread the readiness was to become part of the Roman community and to participate in a Roman context cannot be determined from the response at the highest level of the provincial elite alone. It may be argued that the involvement in Roman politics was entirely a pragmatic attempt to gain as much influence or economic benefits as possible. Or that some would always be drawn towards power and assimilate to life in the ruling community. In order to determine how the elite in Bithynia-Pontus responded in more general terms to Roman hegemony, it is necessary to focus on the reception of Roman culture among those who remained at home.

In the Bithynian and Pontic cities, the influence of Roman culture was balanced by indigenous Greek cultural traditions, and the continuous use of the polis structure and Greek as the official language are likely to have caused a different response to Roman culture compared with a life in Rome, in the army or in the provincial administration. Still, the interest in Rome and Roman culture seems to have been significant.

In the city of Herakleia Pontike, Claudius Domitius showed his loyalty to the emperor and his relation to the Roman community in his will by requesting that his daughter Claudia Saturnina, the archpriestess of the cult of Antoninus Pius, was to be honoured with an inscription. It is Claudia Saturnina's nieces, Claudia Saturnina and Claudia Licinnia, who appear to be the ones honouring their aunt's female family members with Roman names.[48] To the city of Herakleia Pontike, the family of Claudius Domitius must have appeared as loyal to both Rome and the emperor, the use of Roman names for the entire family revealing not only the family's Roman status but also a strong desire to appear as a Roman family in public and hence as part of the Roman community.

In Nikaia, the Cassii family seems to have had a somewhat similar relation to Rome. Before admission to the senate and the provincial administration in the second and third century, a G. Cassius Chrestos is recorded as a priest in the imperial cult[49] and as the one responsible for setting up statues and inscriptions in the honour of the Flavian emperors at the northern and southern gates and for honouring M. Plancius Varus on a private initiative.[50] Again, it must have been evident to the inhabitants of Nikaia that Cassius Chrestos was Roman and an active member of the Roman community in the city, a

Fig. 1. The sarcophagus of G. Cassios Chrestos in Nikaia (author's photo).

status in which he clearly took pride. His role as priest in the emperor's cult and his eagerness to honour the Roman governor are once again examples of public appearances in Roman contexts.

The use of Latin names in the form of the *tria nomina* with the *praenomen*, the family name (which indicated whether the person was a Roman citizen) and the *cognomen* was a way to show the family's Roman status. Even female members of Bithynian families were often provided with three or more names in a form designed to imitate the *tria nomina*, as in the examples below:

> Claudia Saturnina and Claudia Licinnia from Herakleia Pontike (*IK* 47.1)
>
> Gellia Tertia and Rascania Prima from Apameia (*IK* 32.22)
>
> Aelia Cornelia from Sinop (*IK* 64.109)
>
> Valeria Alexandria from Sinop (*IK* 64.156)

And there were even women with simulated *tria nomina*:

> Tiberia Claudia Aureliana Archelais from Herakleia Pontike (*IK* 47.8)

Ulpia Titia Fadilliane Artemonis from Prusias ad Hypium
(*IK* 27.54)

Aurelia Heraklidiane Domitia from Prusias ad Hypium
(*IK* 27.85)

Calpurnia Domitia Markiane and Flavia Domitia Artemonis
(*IK* 27.53)

To give *tria nomina* as names to women was a way to further underline the family's Roman status and show the local community that the entire family was to be considered a part of the Roman community. But the practice of giving Roman names to females illustrates that the Roman names were more than just a pragmatic attempt made by the politically active elite as a way to illustrate their legal status. Had the preservation of Greek culture been a central issue, it would have been more appropriate to give girls, who were without political opportunities, Greek names and to keep gravestones within the Greek tradition without mentioning the deceased's merits in the Roman political and provincial administration.

The question of pragmatism is often raised in respect to Romanisation in Greek provinces, where it is argued that Greeks never identified themselves as Roman but only appeared as such for political reasons. In this respect it should be taken into consideration that most of the inscriptions, except those set up in Rome or elsewhere in the empire to record the merits of imperial magistrates, appeared in the home cities of those honoured, indicating that members of the local elite chose to appear Roman in public in a very local context.

If appearing Roman was a pragmatic attempt to flatter Roman authorities without any real underlying sentiments, and if this was a general attitude within the Greek population, it is difficult to see the meaning behind the Roman appearance in the local community, where the inhabitants must have been well aware of the underlying strategy. Roman authorities were hardly the target audience for gravestone and honourary inscriptions in Bithynian and Pontic cities: they could collect their information about individuals' Roman citizenship from censor- and *phylai*-lists.[51] Instead, it seems more convincing that the inscriptions and the expression of a Roman identity were aimed towards a local audience, who would have been difficult to convince had Roman appearance only been a public appearance designed to achieve higher political or economic objectives. It is therefore more appropriate to see the expression of Roman identity as a way of showing a certain kind of status not available to all and thereby an element in the social graduation of the cities' hierocracy. That a Roman name was related to status is indicated by the widespread use of Roman names among individuals without Roman rights who took these names presumably to imitate the elite:

Sexta Quinctia Tyrannis from Nikaia (IK 9.98)

Paulinus son of Paulinus from Nikaia (IK 9.125)

Markianus son of Markus from Prusia ad Hypium (IK 27.1)

Domitius son of Aster from Prusias ad Hypium (IK 27.2)

Domitius, the son of Aster, was honoured as the first archon of the city of Prusias ad Hypium. Since Roman citizens were listed with their full *tria nomina*, it is likely that Domitius was no Roman citizen when the inscription was set up at the beginning of the third century AD. Nonetheless, he had the Roman-sounding name of Domitius.

Because Roman citizenship in Bithynia-Pontus was closely tied to the local elite, a Roman status may very well have helped to further underline the political authority of the Bithynian and Pontic elite, and been attached to significant prestige in the cities' hierocracy. In this way, Roman citizenship can be seen as a super-structure on a person's already existing identity as a member of a certain family, a certain city, a certain social status in a community, where Greek culture played a significant role in daily life. A Roman identity therefore did not need to cause existential crises among a Greek population in Herakleia Pontike, Sinop or Nikomedeia, particularly since Rome never demanded that the provincial communities should give up their ingenious culture.

As Roman status was followed by improved political and economic rights, it was hardly something most provincials would turn down, and since Roman *tria nomina* accompanied Roman status, one might argue that the adoption of Roman names in itself provides no guarantee that Greek provincials using Roman names also identified themselves as Romans. But once again it should be maintained that the tendency to show activities in Roman institutions, the desire to appear to be a Roman family by giving Roman names, often the *tria nomina*, to female members or by choosing a Roman theme on grave reliefs, were entirely voluntary manifestations of belonging to the Roman world.

When Roman citizenship became still more widespread and men of Greek origin appeared still more frequently as magistrates at all levels of the provincial organisation, Roman identity changed from being ethnically defined to being a mere social and political status, as indicated by Aristeides' remark that to be Roman was to be a member not of a single city, but of a much larger community (*To Rome*, 63).

In this respect, there seems to be little concordance between the behaviour of the Bithynian and Pontic elite, who lived in Bithynia-Pontus or in Rome or served in the provincial administration, and those among the intellectual elite who promoted a negative approach towards Roman hegemony or towards Greeks behaving like Romans. It is therefore likely that this intellectual
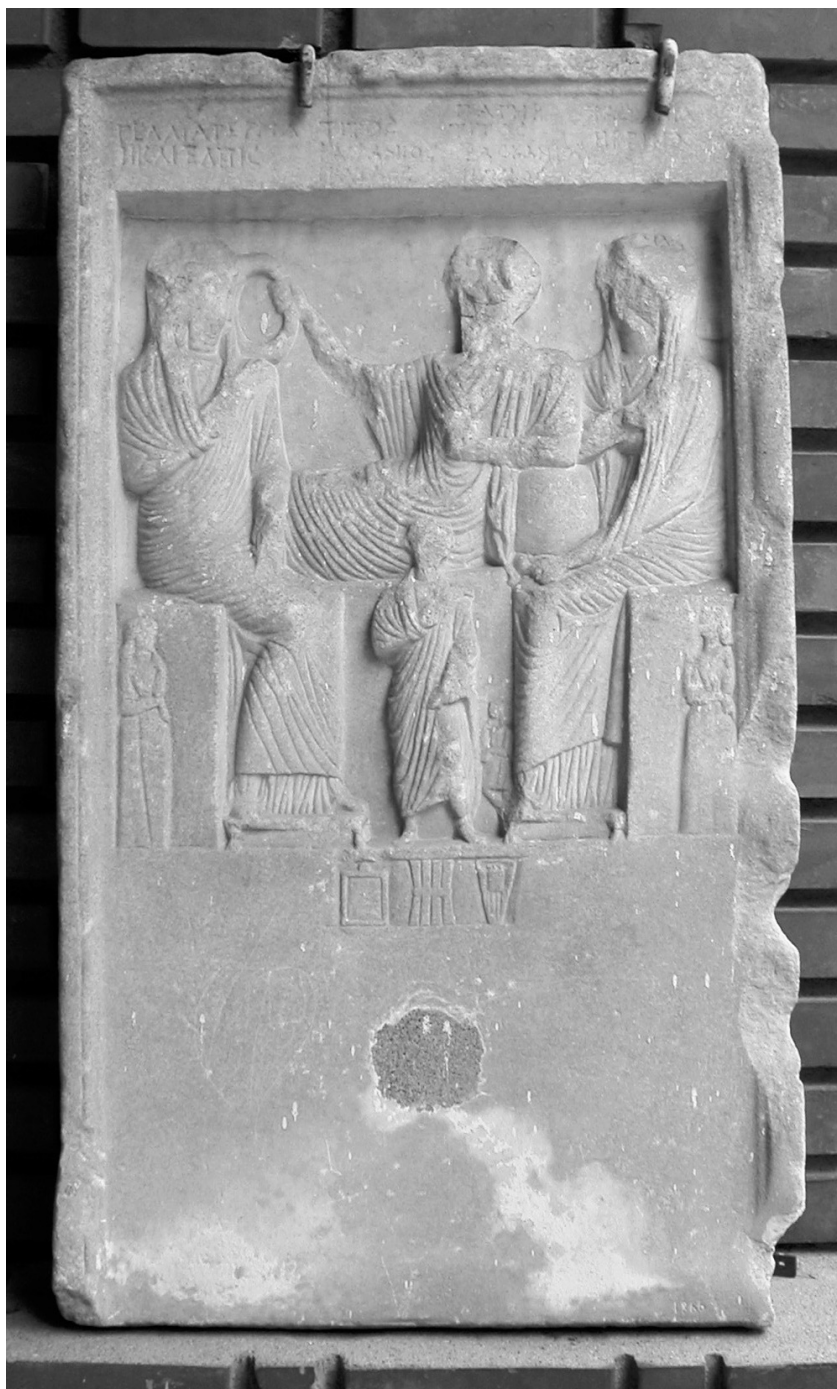
*Fig. 2. **The Rascanii family from Apameia. Bursa Museum (author's photo).***

criticism of Rome is more convincingly seen as criticism of a general positive response to the Roman world among the Greek elite and that writers such as Plutarch, Dion of Prusa and Philostratos were critics of society rather than spokesmen of a general attitude towards Rome.

Conclusion

The Greek intellectual writers do not seem to have had much else in common besides their love for Greek culture and a romantic idea that life in classical Greece was culturally and morally excellent. Their views on Rome and Roman culture are very different and are often related to personal experiences, as indicated by Dion's criticism and Arrian's overall satisfaction with Roman hegemony. There seems to have been a difference between the way intellectuals from the Greek mainland, such as Plutarch and later Philostratos, related to the influence from Rome and the way Bithynian intellectuals such as Dion, Arrian and Cassius Dion treated the coming of Rome. Dion from Prusa was no doubt critical, but not until he failed to free Prusa.

Again, this does not mean that Bithynian intellectuals did not identify themselves as Greeks; they were all attached to a cultural heritage dominated by Greek culture: Greek was the official language and the language of the literary traditions, the Greek Pantheon was the predominant religion, and cities were build on the polis culture. But since Bithynia and Asia Minor in general stood on the sidelines and were subjected when Greek powers in mainland Greece reached their days of glory, it is likely that intellectuals and the Greek population in Asia Minor were less attached to the glorious past, compared to Plutarch and Philostratos, who originated from what was once the hard of Greek domination, and therefore more open and eager to participate in what the new world Rome had to offer.

It is therefore up for debate whether it is useful to see the Second Sophistic as an intellectual movement with a generally critical or indifferent attitude towards Rome and Roman culture. Compared with the actual life in Bithynian and Pontic cities, the ideas of especially Plutarch, Dion and Philostratos far from correspond with how members of the local elite responded to the influence of Roman hegemony. Roman identity was regarded as a matter of status, and the local elite were eager to show their relations to the Roman world by participating in the political life in Rome and by appearing in public local contexts as Roman. Consequently, the conclusion of this paper is that the works of the most critical of the Greek writers do not represent the general attitude among members of the elite communities in the Greek cities, at least not in Bithynia et Pontus, but should be read as a criticism of the increased Greek interest in Roman traditions and the widespread adoption of Roman identity.

Notes

 1 Rostovtzeff 1927, 215; A.H.M. Jones 1963, 4; Bowersock (1965) 71-72; MacMullen 2000, 7-10.
 2 Wörrle 1988, 91. For a discussion of Pompey's changes to the *boule* and the use of censors, see Pliny *Ep.* 10.79; 10.112.
 3 Woolf 1994, 128.
 4 Swain 1996, 241 and 414-415; Woolf 1994, 128.
 5 Swain 1996, 18 and 139-140, where Plutarch's focus on the Greek heroes of the fifth century BC is accentuated.
 6 Swain 1996, 19.
 7 Swain 1996, 41-42 and 71.
 8 Marcus Aurelius, *Meditationes* 1.14-16..
 9 Smallwood 1966, no. 487. It is only from this inscription in Delphi, where Plutarch was responsible for erecting a statue of the new emperor Hadrian, that his full Roman name is known.
10 Smallwood 1966 no. 487
11 Philostratos, *VS* 488.
12 Dion of Prusa *Or.* 13.1. See also Whitmarsh 2001, 157; Jones 1978 45-46.
13 Cf. Swain 1996, 195.
14 Whitmarsh 2001, 157.
15 *Or.* 13.11-12, See also Tim Whitmarsh's remarks on the transformation from sophist to philosopher and on the general theme of exile as a period of personal development among Greek intellectuals. Whitmarsh 2001, 134-141.
16 Swain 1996, 381.
17 Philostratos *Apollonios, Letters* 72. See also Goldhill 2001, 6.
18 *IG* II/III^2 1803; *IK* 1.63. See also Swain 1996, 380.
19 "I gave the army its pay and inspected its weapons, the walls, the trench, the sick, and the food supplies that were there. My opinion about this latter point I have written to you in the Latin report." Arrian *Periplus* 6.2. Translation by Little 2003.
20 Arrian *Alexander* 1.12. For a discussion of Arrian's fatherland, see Swain 1996, 244-245.
21 Photius, *Library* cod. 93. See Swain 1996, 245.
22 Hamilton 1971, 16-17.
23 *PIR*^{2} C.492; Suffect Consul Cassius Dion 77.16.4; Consul ordinarius *AE* 1971 430.
24 Proconsul in Dalmatia, Cassius Dion 49.36.4.
25 *CIL* XV, 2164.
26 Cassius Dion 69.1.3.
27 Cassius Dion 49.36.4
28 Cassius Dion 67.11.
29 Cassius Dion 67.5.7.
30 Tacitus *Agricola* 39-46 especially 43, where Tacitus suggests that Domitian had a hand in Agricola's death; Suetonius offers a more balanced but still critical treatment of Domitian's life, depicting the emperor's killing of many noblemen, Suetonius *Dom.* 10.
31 Cassius Dion 73.20.1-3; Rich 1990, 14-15.
32 Aristeides, *To Rome* 41-51.
33 Swain 1996, 241 and 414; see also Woolf 1994, 128.

34 *IK* 32.2.
35 *IK* 32.21 and p. 33.
36 *PIR*² C.558. *CIL* X, 8291.
37 *PIR*² C.556. *CIL* VI, 2098; *CIL* VI, 2099. *PIR*² C.557; *CIL* VI, 2086; *CIL* VI, 2104. Fernoux 2004 450-451.
38 *PIR*² C.481; *IK* 9.57. **Fernoux 2004, 461.**
39 Aristeides *Or*. 48.48; 50.16; See Fernoux 2004, 463-464.
40 To Arrian's son IG II/III², 4251-53; see also Fernoux 2004, 459.
41 *IGR* III, 7, Fernoux 2004, 460.
42 *PIR*² D.146; *IGR* III, 73, Fernoux 2004, 469.
43 *IGR* III, 85; *CIL* VIII 1640, 15876. See also Fernoux 2004, 469 no. 39; Halfmann 1979, 205 no. 148. Fernoux 2004, 469-70.
44 *PIR*² D 134; *IGR* IV, 698. **Fernoux (2004) 471. Halfmann 1979, no. 148.**
45 *PIR*² E 36; *CIL* VI, 1405 and 2001; *CIL* III, 6058; *IG* VII, 2510; Fernoux 2004, 453-454.
46 *PIR*² C 960; *CIL* III, 11082. See also Ameling, *IK* 27 p. 117; Fernoux 2004, 471.
47 *PIR*² D 168; *IGR* III, 904, *CIL* III, 14149. *IK* 27.45. **Fernoux 2004, 472.**
48 *IK* 47.1.
49 *IK* 9.116.
50 *IK* 9.25-29; *IK* 9.51. **For a discussion of a similar celebration of the governor on private initiative, see the dedication to M. Plancius Varus by Ti. Claudius Quintianus,** *IK* 9.52.
51 Our knowledge of the existence of the censor institution in Bithynian and Pontic cities is based on Pliny's book 10, where the role of the censors is discussed by Pliny in *Ep*. 10.79.3; 10.112.1. For examples of *Phylai* lists, see Prusias ad Hypium *IK* 27.1; *IK* 27.2; *IK* 27.3.