

2 | The Imperial Senate

Center of a Multinational Imperium

WERNER ECK

Philip V of Macedon already recognized one of the decisive political strategies through which Rome strengthened the basis of its rule.¹ In a letter to the inhabitants of the city of Larissa he talks of the fact that the Romans have recognized that there is an advantage in not being possessive about their citizen rights; rather, they try to expand the number of citizens by accepting foreigners, in this particular case freed slaves, and thereby to increase Rome's power. This characteristic feature of Roman politics is referred to also by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, according to whom this practice was implemented in Rome as early as the days of King Servius Tullus.² Philip V was probably too idealistic in his view of Rome's attitude, but he recognized one of the basic principles of Roman politics. In his eyes, Rome did not see membership in the *res publica populi Romani* as exclusive; rather, Rome saw the necessity of accepting other people from the outside into the Roman citizen body – of course under certain conditions and for the advantage of the *res publica*.

This basic axiom can be traced in different ways in Rome's history, starting in the days of the Republic; it becomes more prominent under Caesar, and even more so from Augustus on, when a single individual could make the essential political decisions in Rome.³ The goal of this political and legal openness was primarily to create a strong commitment to Rome and its ruler; the policy was intended to strengthen the loyalty of people to Rome, or to create integration, as we would probably say today.

Not all members of the political ruling class saw this granting of Roman citizen rights as appropriate and useful for Rome. Moreover, the effect was not always what those who granted the *civitas* had hoped for. What took

¹ IG IX 2, 517, ll. 28 ff.: "It is also possible to observe others employing similar enfranchisements, among whom are also the Romans, who receive into their citizen body even their slaves when they free them, giving them even a share in the offices" (translation by Burstein 1985: 87). For the English version, I wish to thank Ofer Pogorelski and Jonathan Price.

² Dion. Hal. 4, 22, 3 f.

³ Still of fundamental importance is Sherwin-White 1973; Vittinghoff 1952; id. 1994; and now, focusing on virgane grants of citizenship, Marotta 2009. For a new model calculating the increase of Roman citizenship, see Lavan 2016: 3–46.

place in AD 9 in Germania east of the Rhine, namely the clash with the Cherusci and the annihilation of the Roman army under the command of Varus, was not normal. Arminius, the chieftain of the Cherusci who led the Germanic uprising, had not only received Roman citizenship from Augustus but even had become a member of the *equester ordo* – nevertheless, he broke his loyalty and friendship with Rome.⁴ But in most cases the effect of granting the *civitas Romana* was what one could expect, at least, so far as can be known from our sources. The integration was strengthened, and the affiliation to Rome and its fundamental interests became more or less natural, for the majority of the new citizens and even more so for their descendants. When the soldiers of the Danube armies saved the Empire during the severe crisis of the second half of the third century AD, it was partly a consequence of the continuous granting of *civitas Romana* to hundreds of thousands of soldiers and their descendants, mainly from the Balkan provinces. We can see this process from the time of Claudius to the beginning of the third century through numerous military diplomas.⁵ Long before the Constitutio Antoniniana, the extensive granting of Roman citizenship to the auxiliary soldiers, mostly born in the Danube provinces, created the decisive requirements for a profound integration of an essential part of the local societies. The affiliation to Rome via Roman citizenship led by and large to stability in the provinces and ultimately contributed to the fact that at the end of the third century, after the long crisis, the former stability was temporarily restored. The positive effect of this integration through Roman citizenship is thus evident.

The integration of the formerly conquered peoples, however, did not occur only through service in the Roman army. Perhaps more important was the integration of the ruling classes of cities and tribes. Participation in public matters in these societies, being usually timocratic and hierarchical, was open in general only to the leaders and not to all members to the same degree. But via the hierarchical structures the majority of the lower population was also integrated even if they could not gain independent political stature. Many ruling families of the Roman commonwealth obtained the Roman citizenship at an early stage, through virginal grants, through procedural actions like the granting of the *ius Latii* in some provinces of the West, or by establishing *municipia*, in which the previous socio-economic leaders of single cities were incorporated into the Roman citizen

⁴ Vell. Pat. 118, 2: *iure etiam civitatis Romanae decus equestris consecutus gradis*.

⁵ Altogether more than 1,200 diplomas are now known. Around 150 diplomas issued to praetorians or the *urbanicani* do not grant full citizenship but only the *conubium* with *feminae iuris peregrini*; but the huge majority of the diplomas grant *civitas Romana*.

body. Even in the new Roman colonies, local *principes* were often integrated into the new citizen body.⁶

The road to integration, however, did not end there; rather, it led in different ways from the provincial cities to Rome, via families whose members became part of the two empire-wide groups, the *equester ordo* and finally the *ordo senatorius*. This process had already begun before Caesar; the first nonethnic Roman who became consul was L. Cornelius Balbus, who received Roman citizenship from Pompeius after the war against Sertorius and advanced to a consulship in 40 BC.⁷ That was still unusual at that time and was also an effect of a time of massive changes; however, it marked very clearly what could be achieved through the decision of the Roman political elite and the ambition of the people, who until that point were excluded from the inner core of Roman society. But even after the turmoil of the civil wars, in which the loyalty to a powerful figure was the decisive criterion by which one could be accepted into the political elite, the admission of former *peregrini* to the *ordo senatorius* or the *equester ordo* did not end.⁸ During his more than forty years of rule, Augustus developed a policy that was decisive also for his successors.⁹ Claudius made it very clear in his speech in AD 48 regarding the request of the *primores Galliarum* to be admitted to the Senate with the following famous words:¹⁰ *sane novo m[ore] et divus Aug[ustus av]onc[ulus] meus et patruus Ti[berius] Caesar omnem florem ubique coloniarum ac municipiorum bonorum scilicet virorum et locupletium in hac curia esse voluit*. This statement did not refer only to the *coloniae* and the *municipia* in Italy but also to Romans already living in *coloniae* and *municipia* in the surrounding provinces. Hence, Claudius continued by saying: *quid ergo non Italicus senator provinciali potior est? iam vobis, cum hanc partem censurae meae adprobare coepero, quid de ea re sentiam, rebus ostendam, sed ne provinciales quidem, si modo ornare curiam poterint, reiciendos puto*. The rhetorical question that Claudius addressed to himself shows that not all members of the Roman ruling class were in favor of expanding their sociopolitical group with people from the provinces; rather, they opposed the intention of the emperor more or less openly. However, Claudius' decision, which he secured by a *senatus consultum*, overruled this resistance.

Claudius' fundamental approach was a constant feature of all later emperors. And naturally, to the criterion *si modo ornare curiam poterint*

⁶ See now Eck 2016c: 237 ff., cf. 238 ff. on citizenship through the foundation of colonies and *municipia*, and 255 ff. on the grant of citizenship to the local ruling classes.

⁷ See Alföldi 1976: passim.

⁸ The most comprehensive treatment of this is still Wiseman 1971. On the political process in general, Syme 1939: 78 ff. 349 ff. On the *ordo equester*, Nicolet 1966 and 1974; Demougin 1988.

⁹ See Syme 1939: 349 ff.; Kienast 2014: 151 ff. with extensive literature.

¹⁰ CIL XIII 1668 = D. 212.

a second criterion was added: loyalty toward the ruling emperor. An example is the conduct of Vespasian, who after Nero and the civil wars was forced to restore the decimated Senate to its former size.¹¹ He included especially people who joined his side during the civil wars of 69/70. Among the senators who entered the Senate for the first time under his rule, one can find C. Caristanius Fronto from Antioch in Pisidia, *consul suffectus* in the year 90;¹² Ti. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus from Sardis/Ephesus, *suffectus* in the year 92; and C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus from Pergamon, *suffectus* in 94.¹³ Catilius Longus came from Apameia in Bithynia; he had served as prefect of an auxiliary unit in Iudaea under Vespasian, just like Caristanius Fronto.¹⁴ From the Iberian Peninsula came L. Baebius Avitus, L. Antistius Rusticus and Q. Pomponius Rufus; the last two were consuls under Domitian just like Polemaeanus and Iulius Quadratus.¹⁵ The homeland of Iavolenus Priscus was probably the province of Dalmatia,¹⁶ and the two brothers Pactumeius Fronto and Pactumeius Clemens were born in Cirta in Africa.¹⁷

This short list shows that already from the Flavian period the Senate was occupied by individuals from quite a few provinces. This trend intensified under the subsequent emperors, so that at the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries, the senators whose original homeland was in the provinces already formed a clear majority in the Senate. The second volume of the congress “Epigrafia e Ordine Senatorio” (EOS) from 1981, published in 1984, presents all the information regarding the background of the members of the Senate known in that year.¹⁸ That information is still valid and nearly complete, as is evident from the two new volumes of the “Epigrafia e Ordine Senatorio 30 anni dopo,” published in 2014.¹⁹ Therefore it is possible to use the results of 1984 in analyzing the background of the senatorial families from the first to the third centuries.

The proportion of senators of Italian origin was never negligible during the imperial period, but that number declined slowly at first, during the first half of the first century, and then more sharply from the beginning of the second century. From the articles in EOS we know that, apart from the Italian senators, the members of the Senate came from thirty provinces. Only a few provinces are missing in this list (i.e., provinces that did not provide any senators at all) – at least as far as we now know; new inscriptions may change this picture in the future. To this group of missing provinces belong Britannia and Germania Inferior, from which we know

¹¹ See the general treatment of this in Eck 1991a: 73 ff. = id. 1995: 103 ff. ¹² PIR² C 423.

¹³ PIR² J 260 und 507; H. Halfmann 1979: 111 ff. ¹⁴ Eck 1981: 227 ff., esp. 242 ff.

¹⁵ Caballos 1990. ¹⁶ PIR² J 14. ¹⁷ PIR² P 36. 38. ¹⁸ Panciera 1982 [1984].

¹⁹ Caldelli and Gregori 2014.

of only one senator who came possibly from either of the two provinces.²⁰ The three small provinces of the Alps did not have representatives in the Senate before the later third century or perhaps only from the beginning of the fourth: The two Moesian provinces were not represented in the Senate even in the later period, unless one wishes to take into account some of the so-called soldier emperors, who have little to do with the normal process of entering the Senate.²¹ The island of Cyprus records no senator, nor does Sardinia.²² The same is true regarding Iudaea/Syria Palaestina, although since 1984 more members of the *equester ordo* from there have become known.²³ At least one senator, M. Valerius Maximianus, came from Pannonia; he was born in Poetovio and was appointed *consul suffectus* around 186.²⁴ From Egypt, namely from Alexandria, we know of two senators, a P. Aelius Coeranus and his homonymous son, both of whom were consuls after the death of Septimius Severus.²⁵ Altogether, the senators from the end of the first century BC to the third century AD who can be identified with some certainty as provincial came from cities located in the following provinces:²⁶

Hispania citerior	Baetica	Lusitania
Gallia Narbonensis	Gallia Lugdunensis	Gallia Aquitania
Britannia or Germania Inf.	Germania Superior	Raetia
Noricum	Dalmatia	Pannonia Superior
Thracia	Macedonia	Achaia
Asia	Pontus-Bithynia	Lycia-Pamphylia
Galatia	Cappadocia	Cilicia
Syria	Arabia	Aegyptus
Creta-Cyrenae	Africa proconsularis	Numidia
Mauretania Caesariensis	Mauretania Tingitana	Sicilia

²⁰ Birley 1982: 531 ff.; Eck 1982: 539 ff. ²¹ Šašel 1982: 553 ff.

²² Bowersock 1982b: 669 f.; Zucca 2014: 341 ff. ²³ Bowersock 1982a: 651 ff.; Eck 2007: 236 ff.

²⁴ CIL VIII 4600; AE 1956, 124.

²⁵ See Reynolds 1982: 673 f. and J. d'Arms 683, who mention Coeranus' possible descent from an imperial freedman; consequently, he of course could be designated Egyptian only in a "marginal sense," as both authors note. But in the final analysis this is irrelevant, since for example even the senators from the provinces of Asia Minor were not each classified as belonging to a specific ethnic sector of the local population. Descendants of an imperial freedman were after several generations part of the citizens of a city, which was probably the decisive element in determining their origin.

²⁶ See EOS II. Cf. now N. Hächler 2019, 128ff.

The list shows that the majority of provinces of the *Imperium Romanum* sent members to the central governing organ of the empire. But the implementation was not equal across these provinces. The number of provincial cities from which we can identify senators with reasonable certainty is just over 200.²⁷ This is only a fraction of all the autonomous cities in the provinces. The number of cities is divided very differently among the separate provinces. Not in all provinces, however, are the numbers of senators known to us always representative. Only four senators altogether are known from the sixty-four communities of the tres Galliae with their large territories. This is a very minimal representation, whereas Belgica, according to our current knowledge, is completely missing. This low number, however, probably does not reflect reality but can be explained by the epigraphic documentation, or paucity thereof, in the province of Aquitania, the Lugdunensis and the Belgica. The number of senators and their home cities from these provinces may have been in fact higher, especially since Gaul provided the requisite economic base for senators.²⁸

The number of cities in the two Hispaniae, the Tarraconensis and the Baetica, is quite high, but the many known senators from these provinces come from a very limited number of communities: Eleven cities from the Baetica and fourteen from the Tarraconensis sent senators to Rome according to our current knowledge. The highest number of cities represented in the Roman Senate belong to the provinces that also occupy the top places in a senatorial career: Africa (proconsularis) and Asia. About thirty communities from Asia and at least forty-seven communities from Africa sent senators to Rome.²⁹ A few cities are notable for the number of senators coming from them. In Asia, Pergamon and Ephesus stand out in this regard;³⁰ Pergamon also had its first consul, C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus, by the end of the first century and hence it is represented among the leading groups of the Senate.³¹ Surprisingly, the first consul from Ephesus took office around the end of the second century;³² Ti. Iulius Celsus Polemaeanus, who is almost automatically associated with Ephesus because he was buried there, in the basement of his library – hence the name Celsus-Library – was originally from Sardis. But the number of senators from the capital of Asia is the highest we

²⁷ On the basis of the data in Panciera 1982. ²⁸ Eck 1991b: 73 ff.

²⁹ Halfmann 1982: 603 ff.; Corbier 1982: 685 ff.; Le Glay 1982: 755 ff.

³⁰ Halfmann 1982: 625ff, 627 ff. ³¹ Halfmann 1979: (n. 13) 112 ff.

³² Ti. Claudius Severus, Inschr. Ephesus III 648; Halfmann 1982: 628.

know from all cities in the provinces.³³ In Africa there are also several cities that stand out in this respect: Bulla Regia, Lepcis Magna, Hippo Regius.³⁴ However, it appears that until the end of the third century Carthage, the *caput provinciae*, is missing among these cities known for their high number of senatorial families – notwithstanding that Carthage had many aristocratic families. That seems to have changed in the fourth or even the fifth century, when we know many *viri clarissimi* from that city, attested by newly found inscriptions from Carthage.³⁵ They got senatorial rank and title through their occupation in the *officia* of the imperial administration, but they most probably had nothing to do anymore with the Senate in Rome.

Not a few families were represented in the Senate by members over the course of several generations. We know of the first senator from the *familia Silia* from Lepcis Magna as early as the beginning of the rule of Marcus Aurelius, and the last known member of this family was the governor of Germania Superior in 240.³⁶ The earliest consul from the *Cuspii* of Pergamon was appointed in AD 126 under Hadrian;³⁷ therefore, their senatorial status goes back at least to the time of Trajan. The last known member of this family was one of the *consules ordinarii* of the year 197 during the Severan period.³⁸ Among other families, which however came from Italian cities, the membership in the Senate was even much longer. The Neratii from Saepinum had a seat in the Senate from the second half of the first century, and they were represented there at least until the end of the fourth;³⁹ the same is true for the Bruttii Praesentes, who came from the region of Bruttii in the south of Italy.⁴⁰

From the middle of the first century AD, the Senate, while it met in Rome, appears to have turned more and more into a mixed assembly, when one considers the provinces of the empire from which the individual members and their families came. From a legal point of view and with respect to *origo*, there was no difference among the individual senators, since all of them had the same *origo*: Rome itself. Ideologically, it could not

³³ Halfmann 1982: 627 ff.; the high number is probably due also to the very abundant inscriptional evidence surviving from there, but it corresponds well with the size of the city and above all its function as *caput provinciae*, by which the contacts of the Ephesians with Roman magistrates were facilitated to a significant degree. It was thus one of the most important requirements for the rise of the imperial aristocracy.

³⁴ Corbier 1982: 711 ff.; 720 f.; 721 ff. ³⁵ Mastino and Ibba 2014: 355.

³⁶ Corbier 1982: 725 and Weiß 2015: 23 ff. ³⁷ RMD IV: 236; RGZM 29; AE 2005: 1714.

³⁸ Halfmann 1982: 626. ³⁹ PIR² N p. 341 ff.; PLRE I p. 615, with the names of the Naeratii.

⁴⁰ The first Bruttius is attested in the reign of Titus (AE 1950: 122); for the last, see PLRE I Praesentes and AE 1978: 262.

have been otherwise: whoever represents Rome must be a Roman, in all respects. The fact that Rome was the *origo* of all the senators is stated very clearly in the *liber primus* of the *Sententiae* of Paulus:⁴¹ *Senatores et eorum filii filiaeque quoquo tempore nati nataeve, itemque nepotes, pronepotes et proneptes ex filio origini eximuntur, licet municipalem retineant dignitatem.* Senators lost, so to speak, their old *origo* and were associated with it at the most so far as they kept the *dignitas*, the reputation and the rank that they had acquired in their homeland. Other sources confirm this legal bond to Rome.⁴² The members of the *ordo senatorius* were not connected anymore to their original community. Moreover, a senator and his relatives did not have any legal duties regarding their place of origin, and no one could oblige them to *munera* there. Rome was to be their base.

Beyond the legal aspects, the separation of the senators from their homeland was a matter of course also for practical reasons:⁴³ They had their duties in Rome itself; above all, they had to take part in the meetings of the Senate and in other gatherings, for example the meetings of the *fratres Arvales*, which are well attested.⁴⁴ This separation from the homeland was reinforced by official tasks required of officeholders. These official tasks were carried out partly in Rome, but mostly outside the capital in different provinces and sometimes in Italy. The emperor sent a senator to his home province very seldom, for a special reason or from carelessness.

If senators wanted to visit their home province,⁴⁵ apart from Sicily and the Narbonensis, then they needed specific permission, which was issued at first by the Senate but soon by the emperor.⁴⁶ This rule of requesting leave (*commeatus*) did not apply for Italy; only senators who were bound to Rome due to a magistracy had to ask. When Pliny the Younger was *praefectus aerarii Saturni*, he asked Trajan for a month's leave so that he could settle some matters of one of his estates near Tifernum Tiberinum, located more than 150 miles from Rome.⁴⁷ For most of the senators, however, regular personal contacts with their home cities in the provinces were not so simple, even under the relatively good travel conditions of the early and high empire. We can assume that many senators who accomplished many discernible things in their home city did so through

⁴¹ Dig. 50, 1, 22, 5. ⁴² Dig. 50, 1, 22, 4; Dig. 50, 1, 23. ⁴³ Talbert 1984: 66 ff.

⁴⁴ See the *Acta fratrum Arvalium* in the new edition of Scheid 1998.

⁴⁵ The requirement that all senators live in Rome affected the mobility of both the senators themselves and many others, on which see Eck 2016d.

⁴⁶ Tac. Ann. 12, 23, 1: *Galliae Narbonensi ob egregiam in patres reverentiam datum ut senatoribus eius provinciae non exquisita principis sententia, iure quo Sicilia haberetur, res suas invisere liceret*; Cass. Dio, 60, 25, 6 f.; cf. Talbert 1984: (n. 43) 138 ff.

⁴⁷ Plin. Ep. 10, 8.

letters.⁴⁸ It is enough to consider Cuspius Rufus, a senator from Pergamon in the period of Pius, whose ties to his family's home city were extremely close.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, when we consider all the factors and circumstances of senatorial life, it is not surprising that many scholars have thought that the contact of most of the provincial senators with their home cities was broken off quite abruptly. This seems to be confirmed by the fact that senators were relatively seldom magistrates in their hometowns, despite the fact that it was still legally possible for them, as Hermogenianus stated in his *liber primus iuris epitomarum* written at the end of the third century.⁵⁰ In practice, of course, this was almost impossible to do *in persona*, since no senator could have been absent from Rome for a whole year for nonofficial reasons. But it would have been possible for a senator to take care of the financial duties of a local office while the concrete functions were taken care of by a local *praefectus*.

On the other hand, we know of not a few examples of senators who time and again – at least when they reached the age of 65 and were no longer obliged to take part in Senate meetings and normally had no tasks as magistrates – retired to their home communities or at least made sure that they were present there.⁵¹ When the city of Carthage wanted to honor Minicius Natalis Quadronius Verus, *cos. suff.* in AD 139, with a *quadriga*, after his proconsulate in Africa, he decided that the monument would be set up not in Rome but in Barcino in Tarraconensis, the city where the Natalis family originated. The *quadriga* with the senator's statue stood in the center of the baths, which had been built by the senator and his father around the year 123.⁵² Such an act is understandable only if the aging senator himself had retired to Barcino, or at least felt himself emotionally connected with the city.⁵³ Similar is the case of C. Antius A. Iulius Quadratus, who saw to it that a great number of honorary statues would be set up for him in his home city, Pergamon. He seems actually to have returned to Pergamon personally as well.⁵⁴ On the other hand, we can see that the home cities of senators in the provinces were rarely selected for honorary statues, which were erected by provincial communities for their former governors. Ti. Claudius Candidus, a legate of Pannonia Superior in the Severan period, was honored in his hometown Rusicade in Africa by a prefect of a fleet who served under his command at the middle Danube.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ Pliny gives many examples how he is involved in various matters in Comum – only by sending and receiving letters.

⁴⁹ On this, see Kriekhaus 2006: 131 ff. ⁵⁰ Dig. 50, 1, 23 praef.; Eck 1980: 283 ff.

⁵¹ See some examples in Kriekhaus 2006: n. 49. ⁵² CIL II 4509 = 6145 = Dessau 1029.

⁵³ Eck and Navarro 1998: 237 ff. ⁵⁴ Eck 2010: 89 ff., esp. 101. ⁵⁵ Erkelenz 2003, 245.

Likewise P. Iulius Geminius Marcianus, legate of the province of Arabia under Marcus Aurelius, saw to it that some cities of his administrative district would erect statues in his honor in his hometown Cirta, even with inscriptions in Greek.⁵⁶ Apart from the cities of Italy, such honorary statues in the provincial home cities of governors are only sporadically attested.⁵⁷ This could indicate a weak relationship of many senators to their natural *origo*.

Less frequent are the cases in which senators were buried “at home,” like Celsus Polemaeanus, whose burial place in the basement of his library in Ephesus has already been mentioned.⁵⁸ C. Iulius Quadratus Bassus, *consul suffectus* in 105, who died in Dacia at the beginning of Hadrian’s rule during a battle against the empire’s enemies, was buried in Pergamon, in his home province Asia, by an order of Hadrian.⁵⁹ Herodes Atticus lived during the last years of his life in Marathon on the east coast of Attica because of tensions between him and Marcus Aurelius. He found his last resting place in Attica.⁶⁰ The majority of senatorial graves, without regard for where the senators came from, have been found near Rome or cities in the vicinity,⁶¹ in other words where normally the nonofficial life of the senators and their families took place.

All these observations seem to show, as indicated earlier, that the former home communities of the Senate members did not play an essential role in their lives and that the contacts with them were reduced or even broken off. Through this interpretation of our relevant material one decisive aspect of senatorial existence is not being taken into account: the economic basis of all these families. Each senator had to prove that he had a minimum fortune of one million sestertii, although many, if not the majority, had much more than that.⁶² Otherwise many of them would have been classified as *pauper senator*. Plentiful evidence attests to far greater fortunes and respective incomes, not only for Seneca but also for many other people like Q. Vibius Crispus.⁶³ The larger part of these fortunes consisted, as was general in Roman society, of landed property, which produced income directly through farming or by other forms of land use, from which the Roman families could make a living.⁶⁴ We know that in the time of Trajan, each new senator had to invest a third of his fortune in Italian landed property, because – as Pliny writes in one of his letters – in this way it could be

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* (n. 55) 269. ⁵⁷ See, in general, the lists in Erkelenz 2003: (n. 55) 239 ff.

⁵⁸ See Eck 2010: (n. 54) 106 ff. ⁵⁹ Habicht 1969: No. 21. ⁶⁰ Philostr. VS. 565 f.

⁶¹ See the dissertation of Th. Knosala, *Die Grabrepräsentation der ritterlichen und senatorischen Bevölkerungsgruppe in Lazio. Beginn der Republik – spätere römische Zeit*, which will be published at Propylaeum Heidelberg 2021.

⁶² For this topic, see Talbert 1984: (n. 43) 47 ff.

⁶³ PIR² V 543; cf., in general, Duncan-Jones 1982: 17 ff. ⁶⁴ Andermahr 1998.

guaranteed that the senators would not look at Italy merely as *hospitium aut stabulum*.⁶⁵ Under Marcus Aurelius this Italian requirement was evidently lowered to one quarter.⁶⁶ This means two things: On the one hand, the relationship to Rome – at least among the *homines novi* – was still weak, while the connection to the home communities was stronger. On the other hand, this indicates more than anything else that the larger part of the productive land, despite the partial transfer to Italy, still remained in the provinces. If the majority of the landed property of the senatorial families stayed in their former homelands, then the members of these families were in one way or the other necessarily present there, via administrators (*procurators*) or maybe also via close relatives, who represented the interests of the senator at home. Moreover, the revenues from the lands must have gone to Rome, in kind or as cash value. Such close connections to the home cities are illustrated, for example, by the letter of Septimius Severus from AD 204, by which he conveyed to an unknown recipient – perhaps a proconsul from Asia – that a *senator populi Romani* according to a *senatus consultum* should not tolerate any billeting in his house against his will. Nine copies of this letter on marble slabs have been found in the territory of the provincia Asia; senators probably fixed the text publicly on their properties, in order to protect their houses in the cities of the province.⁶⁷ The same is evident from a decree of Valerian and Gallienus,⁶⁸ who verify in writing to a senator named Iulius Apellas that he should not tolerate any billeting in his house, which was probably in Smyrna. All the senators who posted such imperial documents not only had property in their home cities but also were carefully trying to protect the value of their property. These documents signify that the provincial senators – just like their colleagues from Italy – had to maintain economic contact with their places of origin. This contact could consist not only in impersonal connections involving merely the “transfer” of the revenues to Rome but also perforce in a real relationship with the citizenry of the communities, who were directly involved in the senators’ transactions; as

⁶⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 6, 19, 4: *eosdem patrimonii tertiam partem conferre iussit in ea quae solo continerentur, deforme arbitratus – et erat – honorem petituros urbem Italiamque non pro patria sed pro hospitio aut stabulo quasi peregrinantes habere.*

⁶⁶ HA. *Marc.* 11, 8.

⁶⁷ CIL III 14203,9; IG XII 5, 132; Inschriften von Ephesus II 207. 208; AE 1977, 807; TAM V 1, 607 = Drew-Bear et al. 1977: 365: *Exemplum sacrarum litterarum Severi et Antonini Augustorum videris nobis senatus consultum ignorare qui si cum peritis contuleris scies senatori populi Romani necesse non esse invito hospitem suscipere subscripsi datum pridie Kalendas Iunias Romae Fabio Cilone II et Annio Libone consulibus.*

⁶⁸ CIL III 412 = IGR IV 1404 = Drew-Bear et al. 1977: 367 n. 53 = SEG 27, 763 = Petzl 1987, no. 604.

a result, in turn, the senators retained knowledge of the situation in their cities, quite the opposite to the prevailing opinion about the relations of provincial senators to their places of origin.

In addition, many senators were also the patrons of their home cities, to whom the inhabitants, especially from the ruling classes, could turn and seek consultation.⁶⁹ Cornelius Fronto, a senator from Cirta in Africa and a rhetoric teacher of Marcus Aurelius, is a clear example of continuing commitment to one's home city,⁷⁰ just as Pliny the Younger is with respect to his *patria* Comum. We can therefore assume that many senators, if not all, were kept informed about the situation of their home city and hence also about the situation of the province of their city.⁷¹ It is surely no accident that Pactumeius Fronto is called *consul ex Africa primus* on an inscription of his daughter from Cirta.⁷² The Superaequani said of their fellow citizen Q. Varius Geminus: *primus omnium Paelign(orum) senator factus est*.⁷³ A *centurio* of the *legio III Augusta* honors his commander Ti. Claudius Gordianus and points to the fact that he, the commander, came from *Tyana ex Cappadocia*.⁷⁴ Other texts also mention occasionally the origins of senators.⁷⁵ The connection between a senator and his provincial city or an entire province was seen therefore as something absolutely real and accepted.

When we look at the origins of individual senators, it is undeniable that the Senate was the center of a multinational empire. Multinational is, of course, understood here not in the modern sense of nations but in the sense of different *patriae*, with which specific citizen rights were connected, which stood originally on the same level as Roman citizen rights. One can assume that the members of the Senate were aware that they came from different regions of the empire and that their cultural background was not the same; but most of them did not see these differences as multinational,

⁶⁹ Engesser 1957; Eilers 2002; Nicols 2014.

⁷⁰ Champlin 1980. Several inscriptions from Messene in Achaia yield a strikingly clear case of a senator's strong ties to his home city; see Eck 2017.

⁷¹ This is true above all for senators who were patrons of cities, with whom personal contact had to be maintained. See, for example, for M. Sedatius Severianus, legate of Dacia Superior and patronus of Sarmizegetusa: when he became *consul suffectus* five *legati* of Sarmizegetusa came to Rome to congratulate the patron: CIL III 1562 = Dessau 3896 and Dessau 9487, AE 1933, 249.

⁷² CIL VIII 7058 = 19427 = Dessau 1001 = ILAlg II 1, 644. ⁷³ CIL IX 3306 = Dessau 932a.

⁷⁴ AE 1954, 138.

⁷⁵ See, e.g., AE 1956, 124: *M(arco) Valerio Maximiano M(arci) Valeri Maximiani quinq(uennalis) s(ac(erdotalis)) f(ilio) pont(ifici) col(oniae) Poetovionens(ium)*. In a *titulus honorarius*, which was installed under a statue for P. Cornelius Anullinus in Illiberis, the residents of the city explicitly mention that he came from their city, CIL II 2075 = Dessau 1139. That was not normal. But in this case, the widespread custom in Baetica of adding a mention of one's home city to one's name in inscriptions, played a role.

namely as reflecting different *patriae*, but rather in a much simpler way: senators from Italy versus senators from the provinces. This is at least what the rhetorical question in Claudius' speech assumes: *non Italicus senator provinciali potior est*.⁷⁶ It seems that by this expression Claudius meant the notion of a majority in the Senate, with which of course he did not want to agree. In any case, it is hard to doubt the fundamental awareness of their diverse origins among most members of the Senate. These observations raise a further question: Did the knowledge and the consciousness of the different geographical and hence diverse cultural backgrounds have implications, either in the collective decisions of the Senate itself or in the decisions of individual senators? The question is legitimate and interesting, but answering it will require a wide-ranging investigation, which will be carried out in the future.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ See n. 3.

⁷⁷ On the possible consequences of the origin of senators from certain provinces, cf. now Kirbihler 2014: 279 ff.