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ABSTRACT

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Civic Elites in the Eastern Part of the Roman Empire

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Athanasios D. Rizakis and Francesco Camia

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IMPERIAL PRIESTS IN SECOND CENTURY GREECE: A SOCIO-POLITICAL ANALYSIS

ABSTRACT. *The priesthood of the Roman emperors was a very prestigious office and its holders were usually members of families belonging to the civic (and provincial) elite. The Athenian imperial high-priests and the Achaean league ones – wealthy and socially influential individuals – provide a clear example of this situation in second century Greece. The imperial priesthood certainly had an important role in expressing a privileged relationship between Greek elite and Roman power, and it could also contribute to advancing the career of the Greek notables, some of whom succeeded in entering the Roman equestrian and senatorial orders. On the other hand, the evidence analysed does not permit to conclude, at least in second century Greece, that the imperial priesthood was the fundamental factor in fostering a Roman career.*

INTRODUCTION

The imperial priesthood is one of the most significant signs of the presence of a cult of the Roman emperor and sometimes gives information about the rituals of this cult. However, it can be analysed also from other points of view. In this paper I intend to examine the socio-political aspects of the imperial priesthood. The object of my inquiry is Greece (the province of Achaia) during the second century A.D.

I will first offer a socio-political picture of two imperial priesthoods, one municipal (the imperial high-priesthood in Athens) and one federal (the imperial high-priesthood in the Achaean league)¹, based on what we know of their holders, with particular reference to aspects such as family

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¹ The imperial cult administered by the Achaean *koinon* might be considered in some way a “provincial” cult, but on this point the opinions of the scholars differ (cf. in particular, among others, PUECH 1983, 24, who considers the *archiereus* of the Achaean league a provincial high-priest, and the objections of SPAWFORTH 1994, 221-224). However, the issue of the presence of a provincial imperial cult in Achaia is a complex and controversial one, which cannot, and will not, be dealt with in the present paper. Here I can only underline the peculiar situation of the province of Achaia (by comparison with Asia for example), due to the absence of a *koinon* (or organization) which clearly represents and includes the whole province, a situation which could have had repercussions also on the organization of the imperial cult; cf. HARTER-UIBOPUU 2003, 228-229.

relations, social, economic and political position, connections with the Roman power. Given the available epigraphic evidence on these two priest-hoods, their importance and the prestige of some of their holders, they are particularly indicated for an analysis of this type.

With reference to the two case studies, but also taking into consideration other known imperial priests in the province of Achaia, I will then present some general (and preliminary) remarks on the imperial priesthood in Greece during the second century A.D.

THE IMPERIAL HIGH-PRIESTHOOD IN ATHENS

The following Athenian imperial high-priests can be placed in the second century A.D.: Ti. Claudius Atticus of Marathon, his son Herodes Atticus, Aelius Ardys (of Phaleron?), Ti. Claudius Lysiades of Melite and Furius Marcellus of Gargettos; they bear the title *archiereus* and their tenure was for life².

Ti. Claudius Atticus³ belonged to an important Athenian family – known from at least the end of the second century B.C. – which became prominent in the post-Sullan age, particularly through Herodes (II), acquaintance of both Cicero and Caesar⁴, and his son Eukles (IV), eponymous archon (in Athens) in 46/5 B.C., who maintained ties with the Emperor Augustus⁵. The Claudii of Marathon, who acquired Roman citizenship under Nero, belonged to the Eleusinian *genos* of *Kerykes*, from whose members were selected the holders of three of the four most prestigious Eleusinian priest-hoods⁶.

² On the reform of the imperial cult in Athens around the middle of the first century A.D., probably with an important contribution by Ti. Claudius Novius of Oion, first *archiereus* of the new collective cult of the *Sebastoi*, see SPAWFORTH 1997, 188-191 (cf. *IG* II-III² 3562). Ti. Claudius Atticus and his son Herodes were high-priests respectively in the periods ca. A.D. 100-137 and 137-176; as for the other high-priests, they served after Herodes (cf. BYRNE 2003, 5, 158), but it is not possible to determine in which order; it is not even sure that all of them became high-priests by the end of the second century A.D. – N.B.: Marcellus' high-priesthood is attested by two inscriptions, where the term *archiereus* is partially integrated (*SEG* 26, 1976-1977, 238, l. 2; 239, ll. 3-4). A recently discovered statue base from the Library of Hadrian bears an honorary inscription [*ArchDelt* 52 (1997), *Chron.*, B 1, 37 (A. Spetsieri-Choremi): no text is given, and no explanation is provided for the date indicated (A.D. 180-184); cf. *SEG* 50, 2000, 199; *An.Ép.* 2001, n° 1826] for a certain P. Aelius Iulianus Dionysius from Nicopolis, ἀρχιερεὺς διὰ βίου τῶν Σεβαστῶν and *agonothetes* of the *megala Panhellenia*. Did this individual serve as imperial high-priest in Athens or elsewhere?

³ BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 7.

⁴ Cf. RAWSON 1985, 44-49.

⁵ Cf. *IG* II-III² 3175 (= AMELING 1983, II, n° 10); cf. also AMELING 1983, I, 10-11.

⁶ The *dadouchoi*, the *hierokerykes*, the altar priests.

In Athens, in addition to the imperial priesthood, Atticus held the office of *tamias* of the *prytaneis* of the tribe *Aiantis* and was probably also priest of Zeus *Olympios*⁷. Atticus was also most probably a citizen of Sparta, where he held the office of *patronomos* and was appointed as *Kytherodikas* (but he did not take up the office, presumably because he died before)⁸. At Corinth he was *agonothetes* of the Isthmian games⁹. After having been granted the *ornamenta praetoria* early in the second century, Atticus entered the Roman Senate and around A.D. 132 he became *consul suffectus*¹⁰; he was also a member of the Roman priestly college of *XVviri sacris faciundis*¹¹. Around A.D. 130, when he was *tamias* of the *prytaneis* of *Aiantis* – serving at the same time as *archiereus* of the *Sebastoi* – in addition to financing the regular sacrifices that the *prytaneis* had to perform on behalf of the public welfare¹², Atticus probably set up an endowment to cover the expenses of the annual prytanies of his tribe; later he may have established similar endowments also for the other tribes, as the six statue bases erected for him by as many Athenian tribes seem to indicate¹³. Moreover, Atticus was responsible for an important act of euergetism towards the *polis* of Gythium, which honoured him as its “*soter* and

⁷ A series of inscriptions from Athens (A.D. 132) is dated by the mention of Atticus as priest (very likely of Zeus *Olympios*); cf. BYRNE 2003, 112 (xiii).

⁸ *Roman Peloponnese* II, LAC 270 [1; 2; 6a-c]; for the date of the patronomate (A.D. 130-135) see *Roman Peloponnese* II, p. 172; on the post of *Kytherodikas*, an office with some kind of jurisdictional authority, see SPAWFORTH 1980, 207 and CARTLEDGE – SPAWFORTH 2002, 111 (n. 11). The family of Atticus had close ties with Sparta, and through the Corinthian family of the Vibullii – who probably had taken part in the colonization of Corinth (SPAWFORTH 1996, 171) – was related to the Spartan Euryclids; cf. SPAWFORTH 1980.

⁹ AMELING 1983, II, n° 36. *Kaisareia* were associated to the Isthmian games; cf. GEAGAN 1968.

¹⁰ AMELING 1983, II, nn° 34-35 (*ornamenta*); *An.Ép.* 1990, n° 763; this military diploma shows that Atticus' consulship – in all probability his first and only one – is to be dated not under Trajan (ca. 108), as formerly assumed, but under Hadrian (ca. 132) (cf. BIRLEY 1997a, 209-210, 229-236). Re-examining the chronology of Atticus' career on the basis of the new diploma, BIRLEY 1997a, 236, argues that Atticus may have received the *ornamenta praetoria* under Trajan – maybe when the emperor was in Athens in A.D. 113 – and then entered the Senate, *adlectus inter praetorios*, under Hadrian (cf. also BIRLEY 1997b, 338, n. 3; GRELLE 2000, 459, n. 9).

¹¹ BOL 1984, n° 13.

¹² *Agora* XV, n° 322 (date: see BYRNE 2003, 512); the emperor (Hadrian) and the imperial family are also mentioned among the recipients of the sacrifices.

¹³ AMELING 1983, II, nn° 58 (= *IG* II-III² 3597 a-e) and 59; cf. OLIVER 1949 (esp. 302-303).

ktistes” and as “patron of the *koinon*” (of the *Eleutherolakones*)¹⁴. He was also honoured at Plataia by “the *koinon synhedrion* of the Greeks”, at Eleusis and, after his death, at Olympia¹⁵. To summarise, Atticus hailed from a prestigious Athenian family – whose members had already been imperial high-priests in Athens¹⁶ – he had ties with other Greek *poleis*, where he held offices, he was a senator and enjoyed enormous wealth (which, to a great extent, he inherited from his father¹⁷): in short, he was a member of the civic and provincial elite.

Atticus’ son, the famous Herodes Atticus¹⁸, succeeded his father in the Athenian imperial high-priesthood around A.D. 138. In Athens Herodes became eponymous archon in A.D. 126/7¹⁹; he was also agoranomous, *agonothetes* of the *Panathenaia* and priest of Dionysos²⁰. Moreover, he was archon of the *Panhellenion* between A.D. 137 and 141, in the first years of activity of the “universal” league founded by Hadrian²¹. Herodes embarked on a senatorial career and became consul in A.D. 143²², after having been *quaestor* (of the Emperor Hadrian), *tribunus plebis*, *praetor*, *corrector* of the free cities of Asia²³; he became also a member of the Roman priestly colleges of *XVviri sacris faciundis*, *sodales Augustales* and

¹⁴ IG V 1, 1171 (= IG II-III² 3596). According to SPAWFORTH 1980, 208, the benefaction of Atticus took place in the context of some previous link with Gythium, maybe in connection with the business interests of the family of Atticus’ wife, Vibullia Alcia Agrippina (BYRNE 2003, *Vibullii*, n° 3), in the commercial and banking centre of Gythium.

¹⁵ IG VII 2509 (Plataia); IG II-III² 3598 = CLINTON 2005, n° 460 (Eleusis); BOL 1984, n° 13 (Olympia).

¹⁶ Among them we can mention Policharmos, *archiereus* of the Emperor Tiberius, and Ti. Claudius Hipparchus (grandfather of Herodes), *archiereus* of the *Sebastoi* under the Flavians; cf. AMELING 1983, I, 12-13 (and IG II-III² 3530); BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 4. Moreover, Ti. Claudius Eucles (BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 3) was *hiereus* of Iulia Agrippina Augusta.

¹⁷ Ti. Claudius Hipparchus (BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 4), condemned by Domitian ἐπι τυρρανικαῖς αἰτίαις, had his estates confiscated and was probably forced into exile; under Nerva, Atticus succeeded in recovering his father’s fortune (PHILOSTR. VS 547-548).

¹⁸ BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 8.

¹⁹ IG II-III² 3190; 3733, l. 3; 3734, l. 1.

²⁰ IG II-III² 3602; PHILOSTR. VS 549-550 (cf. AMELING 1983, II, 14); SCHUMACHER 1999, 422.

²¹ PHILOSTR. VS 549, 35. Herodes probably held also the agonothesia of the *Panhellenia*; cf. AMELING 1983, II, 12.

²² AMELING 1983, II, nn° 78-87; Herodes was offered a second consulship around A.D. 160, but he declined the offer because of the death of his wife.

²³ Cf. GRELLÉ 2000, 456 ff.; *IEph* 640 (*corrector*); as *quaestor* of Hadrian, Herodes was admitted *inter amicos* of the emperor (the expression does not indicate a definite office nor an institutional charge).

*sodales Hadrianales*²⁴. Herodes was responsible for several acts of euergetism towards various Greek cities (and consequently frequently honoured by them). In Athens, as *agonothetes* of the *Panathenaia*, he financed the renovation of the stadium over-looking the Ilissus river²⁵ and built the Odeion on the southern slopes of the Acropolis; in addition to that, around A.D. 165 he donated to the ephebes the white *chlamides* which replaced the black ones²⁶. Herodes was honoured at Eleusis, where an *agon* was founded to honour him²⁷, at Corinth²⁸, at Delphoi, where he renovated the stadium²⁹, at Olympia, where he realized the famous *nymphaeum*³⁰, at Ephesus³¹, maybe in connection with his office of *corrector*. As can be seen from these brief notes, Herodes Atticus followed in his father's footsteps and reached even greater fame and prestige. It is interesting to underline Herodes' personal relations with the Roman power: for a period he was educated in the house of P. Calvisius Tullus Ruso, Marcus Aurelius' grandfather³²; as *quaestor* he was admitted *inter amicos* of Hadrian (before whom he made a speech in Pannonia in A.D. 117); from A.D. 141 to 146 he was professor of rhetorics of the future Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus in Rome³³. In addition, Herodes received the support of Marcus during his struggle with the Athenians, which was eventually resolved in his favour. His marriage to the patrician Appia Annia Regilla could also have contributed, in some way, to favouring his relations with Rome³⁴.

²⁴ SCHUMACHER 1999, 422, 436-437.

²⁵ PHILOSTR. *VS* 550.

²⁶ *IG* II-III² 2090, l. 6.

²⁷ *IG* II-III² 3604 B = CLINTON 2005, n° 438 (statue dedicated by the *boule* of Corinth); *IG* II-III² 2094, l. 52 (*agon*).

²⁸ From this city probably comes the inscription published by GRELLÉ 2000.

²⁹ *FDelphes* III 3, 66 (honoured by the Delphians for his *philia* and *philoxenia*; he was also designated *benefactor* in another inscription erected in honour of his wife – *FDelphes* III 3, 71); PAUS. 10, 32, 1 (stadium).

³⁰ SCHUMACHER 1999 (for the *nymphaeum* see BOL 1984).

³¹ *I.Ephesos* 640. On the building activities of Herodes see QUASS 1993, 221-222.

³² FRONTO p. 36, 20-21 (cf. VAN DEN HOUT 1999, 98; he says that Herodes' father was consul in 108 – see *supra*, n. 10).

³³ HIST. AUG. *Aur.* 2, 4; *Ver.* 2, 5; AMELING 1983, I, 71-72. BIRLEY 1997a, 236, supposes that "Herodes gained the *latus clavus* from Hadrian in 117 or 118, following his meeting with the emperor in Pannonia".

³⁴ Regilla (BYRNE 2003, *Annii*, n° 28) was related to Antoninus Pius' wife Annia Galeria Faustina.

Aelius Ardys (of Phaleron?)³⁵ belonged to an important Athenian family, which obtained Roman citizenship under Hadrian and whose members held the highest political and religious offices in Athens³⁶. Ardys was eponymous archon (A.D. 150/1), hoplite general, twice herald (probably of the Areopagus), *agonothetes* of the *Olympieia* and priest of Dionysos *Eleuthereus*³⁷. He was a member of the Athenian elite.

Ti. Claudius Lysiades of Melite³⁸ also belonged to an illustrious Athenian family, which claimed ancestry from Pericles and whose members are known from the end of the third-beginning of the second century B.C. The Claudii of Melite achieved Roman citizenship under the Emperor Claudius and monopolized, between the first and the second century A.D., the Eleusinian priesthood of the *dadouchos*; moreover, members of this family held the most important Athenian political offices³⁹. In addition to the imperial high-priesthood, Lysiades was eponymous archon (A.D. 174/5?), *panegyriarchos* and *prytanis*⁴⁰. He does not seem to have been responsible for particular acts of euergetism, but the charge of *panegyriarchos* was in itself an onerous liturgy, since it forced its holder to bear great expenses during the *panegyris* of the Eleusinian mysteries⁴¹; as *panegyriarchos*, Lysiades might have been involved in some imperial festivals. Lysiades does not seem to have had relations with other *poleis*; presumably, his Athenian career was largely made possible due to the prestige of his family.

As for Furius Marcellus of Gargettos⁴², we do not know a lot of him. In addition to the high-priesthood – presumably to be placed towards the end of the second century A.D. – he was *kosmetes* of epebes, priest of Zeus *Eubouleus* and maybe hoplite general and priest of Apollo *Patroos*⁴³. He is

³⁵ BYRNE 2003, *Aelii*, n° 7.

³⁶ On this family see KAPETANOPOULOS 1971; FOLLET 1976, 195-198.

³⁷ IG II-III^a 3742; 3687, ll. 11-15 (cf. GEAGAN 1967, 105, n. 103).

³⁸ BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 159.

³⁹ Ti. Claudius Leonides (ca. A.D. 33-100) [BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 154] was the first member of his family to bear the title of *dadouchos*; the Claudii of Melite lost control of the *dadouchia* around A.D. 150, yet in the 180s another member of this family, Aelius Praxagoras – whose original *nomen* was Claudius [BYRNE 2003, *Claudii*, n° 140] – held the *dadouchia*. On the Claudii of Melite cf. KAPETANOPOULOS 1968; WOLOCH 1969.

⁴⁰ IG II-III^a 3609; *Agora* XV, n° 429, l. 2.

⁴¹ PLUT. *Quaest. Conv.* 679b; cf. OLIVER 1950, 175-176; GRAINDOR 1934, 97; GEAGAN 1967, 136; CLINTON 1989, 1534.

⁴² BYRNE 2003, *Furii*, n° 3; cf. KAPETANOPOULOS 1976-1977.

⁴³ SEG 26, 1976-1977, 238-239; *Agora* XV, n° 411, l. 10 [here the name is restored by BYRNE 2003, *Furii*, n° 3 (ii)].

not known – nor other members of his family are – to have held any other important political or religious office in Athens (or elsewhere); however, he can be considered a member of the Athenian elite too.

The known Athenian *archiereis* belonged to very influential and distinguished Athenian families, which monopolized political and religious life in second century Athens⁴⁴. The Claudii of Marathon belonged to the Eleusinian *genos* of *Kerykes* and controlled, through Atticus and his son Herodes, the Athenian imperial high-priesthood for the first three quarters of the second century. Moreover, ancestors of Atticus had already been imperial high-priests during the first century A.D. The Claudii of Melite controlled the Eleusinian *dadouchia* for about one hundred years, between the first and the second century A.D. Members both of the Claudii of Melite and of the Aelii of Phaleron held the most important Athenian political and religious offices during the second century A.D.

The holders of the Athenian imperial high-priesthood were wealthy and influential men, both socially and politically, as shown by the liberality of Herodes, and by the other political and religious offices that they held, in Athens and elsewhere. In Athens, with the exception of Atticus and Marcellus, they were all eponymous archons, and Aelius Ardys was hoplite general; Atticus held offices at Sparta and Corinth, and his son Herodes became archon of the *Panhellenion*.

The five Athenian *archiereis* were all Roman citizens; two of them, Atticus and his son Herodes, embarked on a career in Rome, as senators, and both reached the consulship. The success of Atticus and Herodes at the service of Rome was determined more by their family and personal connections with the Roman authorities than by the fact that they were priests of the imperial cult. Ancestors of Atticus had had relations with such Roman figures as Caesar and Augustus; Atticus himself recovered (with the approval of the Emperor Nerva⁴⁵) his father's fortune and was granted, probably under Trajan, the *ornamenta praetoria*. As for Herodes, he was admitted *inter amicos* of Hadrian, had personal relations with the Emperors Marcus and Lucius, and married the patrician Regilla (daughter of a consular); it is particularly worth noting that Herodes – who, as son of a man provided with *ornamenta praetoria*, was destined to become a senator – entered the Senate well before succeeding his father as imperial *archiereus* in Athens⁴⁶.

⁴⁴ Cf. WOŁOCH 1969.

⁴⁵ PHILOSTR. *VS* 548.

⁴⁶ Herodes started his senatorial career as *quaestor* in A.D. 124, while only around 138 he succeeded his father as imperial high-priest in Athens.

On the other hand, the other three Athenian *archiereis* did not have any particular connections with the Roman power – and no one in their families held Roman offices – but this did not prevent them from holding the imperial high-priesthood in their city.

THE IMPERIAL HIGH-PRIESTHOOD IN THE ACHAEAN LEAGUE

A cult of the Roman emperors was instituted within the Achaean league around the middle of the first century A.D.; like the imperial *archiereis* in Athens, those of the Achaean league held their tenure for life⁴⁷. On the basis of the evidence, and according to some recently discovered inscriptions from Messene⁴⁸, it is possible to place in the second century the following *archiereis*, in approximate chronological order: P. Licinius Priscus Iuventianus, Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (I), Cn. Cornelius Pulcher, Ti. Claudius Polycrates, Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (II), T. Statilius Timocrates Memmianus. It should be underlined that the chronology of the *archiereis* of the Achaean league remains still an unsolved problem,

47 On the institution of the cult cf. SPAWFORTH 1994 (esp. 223-224; 226-227); on its possible “provincial” nature see *supra*, n. 1. The first holder of this cult was the Spartan C. Iulius Spartiaticus, at the beginning of the reign of Nero (*Corinth* 8.2, 68; *IG* II-III^e 3538; SPAWFORTH 1994, 218-219; cf. also *Roman Peloponnese* II, LAC 509). According to LARSEN 1938, 451, n. 14, the *archiereis* of the Achaean league remained in office only for a limited period, retaining, at the term of their office, the honorific title διὰ βίου; *contra* PUECH 1983, 22; SPAWFORTH 1994, 219. However, the careers of the holders of the imperial high-priesthood in the Achaean league seem to indicate that they were high-priests for life.

48 a) THEMELIS 2000a, 78-81 (*SEG* 51, 2001, 458; *An.Ép.* 2002, n° 1314 a-b): two long honorary inscriptions – in all probability belonging to the same decree – for the *archiereus* and helladarch (of the Achaean league) Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (I); Themelis dates them to the reign of Trajan (cf. *Roman Peloponnese* II, MES 156 [2]), identifying the proconsul Lollianus Avitus (*SEG* 51, 2001, 458 B, l. 22) with L. Hediuf Rufus Lollianus Avitus (*cos. suff.* in 114 and proconsul of Asia in 128/9); he will have held the proconsulship of Achaia (a praetorian post) a little before becoming consul (THEMELIS 2001, 66). In that case, the *helladarchia* – a jurisdictional (?) charge which remained associated to the high-priesthood of the Achaean *koinon* until T. Statilius Timocrates Memmianus – already existed before Hadrian, contrary to the *communis opinio* (cf. THEMELIS 2001, 66; an helladarch of the Amphictyons is also attested – on helladarch’s possible functions see OLIVER 1978; PUECH 1983, 32-33). *Contra* *An.Ép.* 2002, 467, dates the high-priesthood of Caelianus (I) to the principate of Antoninus Pius (Lollianus Avitus could be identified with the consul of A.D. 161); b) THEMELIS 2000a, 81-82 (*SEG* 51, 2001, 460; *Roman Peloponnese* II, MES 157 [6]): honorary decree (still unpublished) which Themelis ascribes to the *archiereus* and helladarch Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (II), grandson of Caelianus (I).

which is not possible to deal with in the present paper; however, this will not affect the following considerations⁴⁹.

The name of P. Licinius Priscus Iuventianus⁵⁰ – probably native of Corinth – is linked with the restoration and the construction of several buildings at the Isthmian sanctuary⁵¹; in particular, as a kind of *summa honoraria* for having obtained the office of agoranomous – likely not the *aedilitas* of the Roman colony, but a charge in connection with the organization of the *Isthmian* games⁵² – and bearing at the same time the title of *archiereus*, Iuventianus paid for the realization of some fifty lodgings to host the athletes who competed at the *Isthmia*⁵³. Iuventianus is not known to have held other offices, nor to have embarked on a Roman career; however, his “copybook” euergetism is enough to show his social prestige.

Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (I)⁵⁴ belonged to one of the most prestigious families of Messene (and of the Peloponnese), which is known from at least the end of the third century B.C. and acquired Roman citizenship probably under Claudius⁵⁵. The son of Caelianus (I), Ti. Claudius Frontinus, was the first Messenian senator⁵⁶. Caelianus, high-priest and helladarch of the Achaean

49 Iuventianus was probably *archiereus* during the principate of Trajan (possibly already from the end of the first century A.D.); cf. CAMIA 2002. Accepting the date proposed by Themelis for the inscriptions in honour of Caelianus (I) [see previous note], his high-priesthood should be placed before the end of the reign of Trajan – since Cornelius Pulcher was already *archiereus* from the last years of the reign of this emperor (cf. *IG IV* 795) – and after the high-priesthood of Iuventianus, because the latter does not yet bear the title of helladarch (but see *An.Ép.* 2002, 467). Pulcher remained *archiereus* until the end of the principate of Hadrian. As for Polycrates, I follow here B. Puech, who dates his high-priesthood to the reign of Antoninus Pius (PUECH 1983, 28; PUECH 1992, 4874); however, see *infra* (n. 70) for a different date (at the beginning of the second century A.D.). In any case, Caelianus (II), who was still alive in A.D. 164 (*CIL III* 495), probably served after Polycrates. Finally, Memmianus was *archiereus* (and helladarch) of the *koinon* most likely between the end of the second and the beginning of the third century A.D. (cf. SPAWFORTH 1985, 256-258).

50 *Roman Peloponnese I*, COR 378.

51 *IG IV* 203.

52 GEAGAN 1968, 75-76.

53 *Corinth* 8.3, 306 (*SEG* 39, 1989, 340).

54 *Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 156.

55 The first member of this family to become a Roman citizen was Ti. Claudius Theon (*Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 161); on this family see most recently RIZAKIS 2007, 190-192.

56 He entered the Senate under Hadrian and became *consul suffectus* under Antoninus Pius, probably between A.D. 155 and 160 (cf. *Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 142). Caelianus' grandsons, Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (II) and Ti. Claudius Frontinus Niceratus (*Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 150 e 157), also embarked on the senatorial career and held offices in the imperial administration.

league, was honoured with the *aristopoliteia* for his activity as benefactor⁵⁷; in particular, he could have contributed to the restoration of the proscenium of the theatre of Messene, which was in ruins⁵⁸. His family extraction, his importance within the Achaean league, the honours conferred to him by his *polis* contribute to demonstrating the social and political prestige of Caelianus, who was a member both of the Messenian and of the provincial elite. In all probability, he is the man referred to by Pausanias (4, 32, 2), who says that the Messenians honoured him as a hero after his death⁵⁹.

Cn. Cornelius Pulcher⁶⁰ hailed from an Epidaurian family which had already obtained Roman citizenship under Augustus⁶¹; he had an intense career, holding offices at both municipal and federal level, in addition to his career in the imperial administration as *equus*. In the Roman colony of Corinth Pulcher was *praefectus iure dicundo*, *curator annonae*, *duovir quinquennalis*; moreover, he was *agonothetes* of the Isthmian games⁶². In the Achaean league he was not only high-priest (and helladarch), but he also became secretary and *strategos*. In addition, he became archon of the *Panhellenion* (maybe the first), and at the same time he was *hiereus* of Hadrian *Panhellenios*⁶³. Pulcher entered the equestrian order; as an *equus* he held the following offices: military tribune of the legio IV *Scitica* (reign of Trajan), procurator of Epirus (around A.D. 114), *iuridicus* of Egypt and Alexandria (reign of Hadrian)⁶⁴. At Corinth Pulcher was honoured as

⁵⁷ *SEG* 51, 2001, 458 B, l. 36.

⁵⁸ *SEG* 51, 2001, 458 A, l. 15; the theatre played perhaps a role in the celebrations which took place during the *Kaisareia* (as happened in Gythium; cf. *SEG* 11, 1954, 923).

⁵⁹ HABICHT 1998, 493; cf. THEMELIS 2000b, 102-113 (a *heroon* of the Saethidae was located in the area of the stadium); see also RIZAKIS 2007, 191, n. 27. Caelianus (I) was already dead when Pausanias visited Messene, between A.D. 155 and 160.

⁶⁰ *Roman Peloponnese* I, ARG 117; COR 228.

⁶¹ Pulcher's ancestor Cn. Cornelius Nicatas, twice priest of Augustus, founded at Epidaurus the *Kaisareia*, added to the traditional *Asklepieia* and *Apollonia*; cf. *IG* IV² 652.

⁶² Both of the *Kaisareia kai Isthmia* and (under Trajan) of the quadriennial contest for the reigning emperor; he was also *agonothetes* of the *Sebasteia kai Asklepieia* (probably at Epidaurus); cf. *IG* IV 795 (ll. 5-11). The earliest ties of the Corneli of Epidaurus with Corinth date to the reign of Claudius: Nicatas' son was *agonothetes* of the *Isthmia* around the middle of the first century A.D. (*FDelphes* III 1, 543). On the *praefectus iure dicundo* see *Corinth* 8.3, p. 65, n° 1; MASON 1974, 22 and 105; HORSTER 2004, 335 ff.

⁶³ *IG* IV 1600 (= *Corinth* 8.1, 80); cf. FOLLET 1976, 126; PUECH 1992, 4843; *Roman Peloponnese* I, 118. The office of archon of the *Panhellenion* was often (even if not always) associated to that of *hiereus* of Hadrian *Panhellenios* and/or to that of *agonothetes* of the *Panhellenia*; cf. SPAWFORTH – WALKER 1985, 82.

⁶⁴ Cf. *IG* IV 795; *IG* IV 1600; *Corinth* 8.3, 138.

*patron*⁶⁵; the Roman colony, thanks to his good offices, obtained fiscal immunity (= *ateleia*)⁶⁶. Apart from Corinth – from where most of the inscriptions regarding Pulcher come – he also was honoured at Troizen, at Epidaurus and at Athens (probably by the *Panhellenes*)⁶⁷. The variety of offices held by Pulcher, together with the abundant epigraphic evidence, indicate that he was an important member of the Greek provincial elite in the first half of the second century A.D.; Plutarch dedicated to him his work *De capienda ex inimicis utilitate*. Pulcher took advantage of his municipal career at Corinth to raise his social standing: like other Greek notables from cities close to Corinth, he succeeded in integrating himself in the ruling elite of the Roman colony, and from there took a leap towards a career in the imperial administration⁶⁸.

Ti. Claudius Polycrates is known from an honorific inscription set at Delphi by the Amphictyonic council and the *koinon* of the Achaeans to honour his daughter Ti. Claudia Polycrateia Nausicaa, *archiereia* of the Achaean league⁶⁹. A native of Sicyon, Polycrates claimed descent from the illustrious Aratus. He has been identified both with the Polycrates to whom Plutarch dedicated his work on the life of Aratus and with his son⁷⁰.

Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (II)⁷¹ – grandson of Caelianus (I) and son of the consular Ti. Claudius Frontinus – apart from being high-priest and helladarch of the Achaean league, had an intense senatorial career; he was military tribune of the legio III *Gallica*, *quaestor* of the province of Sicily, *tribunus plebis*, *praetor*, *legatus* of the legio XI *Claudia*; he also became a member of the priestly college of *sodales Hadrianales*⁷². At Messene, togeth-

⁶⁵ *Corinth* 8.2, 71, l. 6.

⁶⁶ *Corinth* 8.1, 80-81, l. 5; *Corinth* 8.3, 139. The exact nature of this *immunitas* is not clear; WALBANK 1989a takes it to refer to the exemption from both the *tributum soli* and the *tributum capitis*, but see the remarks of MILLAR 1999, 113.

⁶⁷ *IG IV* 795 (Troizen); PEEK 1972, n° 90 (Epidaurus); *ArchDelt* 25 (1970), *Mel.*, 54-55 (Athens).

⁶⁸ RIZAKIS 2001, 45-46 (and n. 39).

⁶⁹ *Syll*³ 846 = *CID IV* 162 (ca. middle of the second century A.D.).

⁷⁰ PUECH 1983, 28; PUECH 1992, 4874 (son of Plutarch's friend). *Contra* M. Kantiréa (in this volume), based on a new restoration of the fragmentary Corinthian inscription *IG IV* 399, identifies the *archiereus* and helladarch Ti. Claudius Polycrates with Plutarch's friend Polycrates and dates his high-priesthood to the beginning of the second century A.D. [in that case the position I assigned him in the list of the Achaean league high-priests (see *supra*) should be changed].

⁷¹ *Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 157.

⁷² Cf. *CIL X* 1123 (= *ILS* 1086), from Abellinum in Italy, where his family had some property.

er with his brother Ti. Claudius Frontinus Niceratus⁷³, he dedicated a statue of the Emperor Lucius Verus and one of Faustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius⁷⁴. A prominent member of the Messenian and provincial elite, like his grandfather he was honoured by his *polis*: a long honorary decree found in the theatre of Messene is probably to be ascribed to him⁷⁵.

T. Statilius Timocrates Memmianus⁷⁶ was probably the last high-priest of the Achaean league to hold at the same time the office of helladarch. He is also the last attested member of the prominent Epidaurian family of the Statilii, which obtained Roman citizenship under Claudius⁷⁷. His ancestor T. Statilius Timocrates (I) became secretary of the so-called Panachaeian league, probably soon after the liberation of the province of Achaia by the Emperor Nero in A.D. 66⁷⁸, while other members of his family were *agonothetai* of the *Apollonia*, *Asklepieia* and *Kaisareia* of Epidaurus. Memmianus was also a citizen of Argos, where he held the agonothesia of the *Sebasteia kai Nemeia*⁷⁹. At Argos – for which he took also part in an embassy to Rome and where it is likely he spent most of his life – he was honoured with a statue for his benefactions⁸⁰. Moreover, Memmianus had an intense career in the federal and panhellenic institutions of Roman Greece; he was three times *strategos* of the Achaean league and became a member both of the Amphictyonic council at Delphi – where he was also helladarch of the Amphictyons – and of the council of the *Panhellenes* at Athens. Memmianus can be considered to typically represent the provincial aristocracy of imperial Greece: his family relations and his career show clearly his high social standing.

Members of important families (like the Claudii Saethidae of Messene,

⁷³ *Roman Peloponnese* II, MES 150.

⁷⁴ *CIL* III 495; THEMELIS 2002, 45-46. Cf. also THEMELIS 2002, 44-45 and *IG* V 1, 1451, two honorary statues (respectively for Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius not yet emperor) paid for by a Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus: according to the chronology assigned by Themelis to *SEG* 51, 2001, 458 (see n. 48), the donor should be identified with Caelianus (II); cf. *SEG* 52, 2002, 405.

⁷⁵ THEMELIS 2000a, 81-82 [see *supra*, n. 48 (b)].

⁷⁶ *Roman Peloponnese* I, ARG 254.

⁷⁷ On this family see SPAWFORTH 1985, 248-258. The *agnomen* Memmianus reveals probably a Spartan descent (cf. SPAWFORTH 1985, 254-255).

⁷⁸ *IG* IV² 80-81 (cf. *Roman Peloponnese* I, 235).

⁷⁹ *IG* IV 590, ll. 10-11. The *Sebasteia* were celebrated every four years in association with the trieteric Nemean games; cf. BOETHIUS 1922, 59-61; CHARNEUX 1956, 609. Memmianus was also *agonothetes* of the *Antinoeia* (both at Argos and at Mantinea) and of the Epidaurian *Asklepieia* (*IG* IV 590, ll. 12-14).

⁸⁰ *IG* IV 590 (ll. 20-24: embassy).

or the Cornelii and the Statilii of Epidaurus), the imperial *archiereis* of the second century Achaean league belonged to the elite both of their cities and, more generally, of the province of Achaia. It should be emphasized that holding a federal imperial priesthood certainly manifested and enhanced their social and personal prestige; moreover, apart from Iuventianus, all the other *archiereis* also held the office of helladarch of the Achaean league.

Some of these men are typical members of the provincial aristocracy. Cn. Cornelius Pulcher held the offices of secretary and *strategos* of the Achaean league and became archon of the *Panhellenion* and *hiereus* of Hadrian *Panhellenios*. T. Statilius Timocrates Memmianus was three times *strategos* of the Achaean league and became a member both of the Amphictyonic council – where he served also as helladarch – and of the council of the *Panhellenion*.

The social and economic prestige of these men sometimes also emerges from other aspects. Iuventianus was responsible for an impressive series of buildings and restorations at the Isthmian sanctuary, while Polycrates was a descendant of the illustrious Aratus of Sicyon.

The six *archiereis* were all Roman citizens, but only two, Pulcher and Caelianus (II), embarked on a career in Rome, respectively as *eques* and as senator. Evidently, embarking on a career at the service of Rome was not considered an essential prerequisite in order to achieve an important imperial priesthood at federal level. At the same time, it does not seem that the imperial priesthood was a “springboard” for a senatorial or equestrian career. The latter was made possible, in the case of Pulcher, due to his previous municipal *cursus* in the Roman colony of Corinth – where he reached the duovirate – while Caelianus (II) owed to his father Ti. Claudius Frontinus – the first messenian senator – the opportunity to enter the Senate.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

It is now possible to reflect on some general aspects of the imperial priesthood in second century Greece. The following considerations are based mostly on the case studies analysed above. Although these two cases do not represent the totality of the epigraphic evidence on imperial priesthoods in second century Greece, they are particularly significant both for the importance of the two contexts (Athens and the *koinon* of the Achaeans) and for the prominence of the individuals who were high-priests. In fact, except for Sparta, with its series of *archiereis* attested since the beginning of the second century A.D., in the rest of the province the number of the epigraphically known priests of the imperial cult is relative-

ly low. These further cases – which I have taken into consideration however – do not substantially modify the picture emerging from the two cases analysed above.

The holders of the imperial priesthood in Greece during the second century A.D. belong to the municipal and provincial elite. They are well-to-do and very influential, both socially and politically, as shown by their liberality and their control over the political and religious life of their communities. These individuals often held other political and religious offices, at both local and regional level; the accumulation of several offices by a single man characterizes the cities of the Greek East during the imperial age and is expression on the one hand of the prestige enjoyed by some individuals (and some families), on the other hand of the growing difficulty in finding – particularly in some economically less developed contexts – individuals with the economic means to sustain the more and more onerous weight of the civic charges⁸¹.

The imperial priesthood contributed to the enhancement of the social standing of its holders and to strengthening their position at the top of society. Firstly, this priestly office was in itself a source of prestige due to its direct connection with the emperor. Secondly, by means of the liberality related to the organizational aspects of the imperial cult, the imperial priests acted as benefactors and manifested their privileged position at both civic and provincial level; in this way, according to the same machinery that ruled other offices and liturgies, a precise social and economic hierarchy was made explicit to the whole society, and the elites could preserve their power⁸². This machinery had the support of the Roman authorities, because it ensured the privileged position of that social stratum on which the Romans relied locally as a means of rule and control, and contributed to the creation and the consolidation of a system of mutual support between Roman authorities and Greek provincial elite⁸³.

All of the second century imperial high-priests in Athens and in the Achaean league were Roman citizens (as most of the other imperial priests attested in the province of Achaia in the second century A.D.). However,

⁸¹ GORDON 1990, 227-228, underlines the strong connection between civic and religious functions in the Greco-Roman city.

⁸² Cf. GORDON 1990, 224 (and n. 68) (the euergetic system is an unequal exchange-system); cf. also PRICE 1984b, 233. See QUASS 1982 for some examples of activity by members of the local aristocracies of the *poleis* of the Greek East (mostly in Asia Minor).

⁸³ BRUNT 1976; WOOLF 1994, 124; MADSEN 2002, 95; BURRELL 2004, 331; RIZAKIS 2007, 184. GRAY 1952, 123, speaks of “the open conspiracy in which Greek and Roman aristocracies found a bond of sympathy and material interest”; cf. also CAMPANILE 2005, 18: “l'accorto sostegno nei confronti dei membri delle classi dirigenti locali rappresentò un mezzo con cui in Asia i Romani imposero e fondarono il loro dominio”.

only four of them – Atticus, his son Herodes, Cn. Cornelius Pulcher, Ti. Claudius Saethida Caelianus (II) – succeeded in entering the equestrian (Pulcher) or senatorial order⁸⁴. As I have attempted to demonstrate above, the “secret” of their success in Rome lies not so much in their tenure as imperial priests, as in their family relations and in their connections with the Roman power. The same consideration can be made for the Spartan senator C. Iulius Eurycles Herculanus⁸⁵, who was imperial high-priest at Sparta during the first half of the second century A.D.; of the five known second century Spartan *archieireis*⁸⁶, he is the only one who held Roman offices. Eurycles, a descendant of the famous and homonymous partisan of Augustus⁸⁷, was one of the mightiest Greek notables of his time; so, it is not surprising that he was admitted to the Senate. As for the rest of the province, as far as I know, in the second century A.D. only two other imperial priests can be mentioned who embarked on a Roman career, the Messenian Ti. Claudius Dionysius Crispianus and the Elean (of Italian descent) L. Vettulenus Laetus, who were both *equites*⁸⁸.

As a general rule, these men enjoyed the support of the Roman authorities as members of the provincial (Romanized) ruling elite, independently of their service as imperial priests.

On the other hand, it is likely that the personal relations some members of the civic aristocracies maintained with the Roman authorities might have facilitated their assumption of the imperial priesthood. In fact, given the political meaning of the imperial cult, those notables who enjoyed personal relations with the representatives of the Roman rule, or were of senatorial or equestrian rank, probably looked, in the eyes of their fellow-citizens, as the best fitted to hold a priestly office by means of which the com-

⁸⁴ It is worth noting that in the first part of the second century the first Greeks (from “old Greece”) started to enter the Senate: Atticus, his son Herodes and the Spartan Herculanus (see *infra*) were among the first senators from mainland Greece. On the important subject of the entry of Greeks from the eastern provinces into the Roman Senate cf. WALTON 1929; SYME 1958, 504-519; HALFMANN 1979; HALFMANN 1982; OLIVER 1982; SALMERI 1991 (esp. 569-575); BIRLEY 1997a; SALMERI 2000, 56-58 (and n. 17); cf. also RIZAKIS 2007, 195 (and n. 44).

⁸⁵ *Roman Peloponnese II*, LAC 462.

⁸⁶ Cf. HUPFLOHER 2000, 149.

⁸⁷ *Roman Peloponnese II*, LAC 461.

⁸⁸ Crispianus was imperial high-priest at Messene between the end of the first and the beginning of the second century A.D. (cf. *Roman Peloponnese II*, MES 136; *Roman Peloponnese I*, EL 148); Laetus was imperial high-priest at Elis in the last part of the first century A.D., and maybe still at the beginning of the second century (cf. *Roman Peloponnese I*, EL 339). For another *archieireus* – whose name is not preserved – perhaps member of the equestrian order cf. *IvO* 354 (Hadrianic/Antonine?).

munities showed their loyalty towards Rome and the emperor⁸⁹; with regard to this, men like Herodes or Herculanius certainly appeared ideal candidates for the imperial priesthood.

At the same time it is evident that, at least in second century Greece, the imperial priesthood was by no means reserved to Greek notables of senatorial or equestrian rank, who do not seem to have had any precedence over others.

Basically, the imperial cult was an enterprise taken quite independently by the Greek *poleis* and *koina*; by means of the imperial priesthood, the members of the local and provincial elites contributed, at the same time, to the enhancement of their social status and to placing their cities in a good light in the eyes of the imperial power. As for the latter, it was obviously in its interest to sustain (and sometimes to encourage) a phenomenon (the imperial cult) which could contribute to the control and rule of the local situations⁹⁰.

There seems to be, however, at least in Greece, no direct link between the priesthood of the imperial cult (both municipal and regional) and a career in Rome. We could say that, although the imperial priesthood can be considered a means for raising one's social status, at both local and provincial level, it does not seem to have been, for its holders, a fundamental "catalyst" for a career in Rome⁹¹. Of course, since the imperial priesthood con-

⁸⁹ Cf. QUASS 1982, 212-213, who underlines that the imperial priesthood itself could have been used by notables to show their ties with the imperial power, and that, in the case of notables members of the equestrian or senatorial order, their relations with the Roman rule was made clear in the first place by their position as *equites* or *senatores*; see also QUASS 1993, 150.

⁹⁰ On the imperial high-priesthood as a means of "Romanization", that is of integration in the Roman structures, at both individual (or family) and collective level, cf. URIAS MARTÍNEZ 2004 (a study based on the Micrasiatic evidence and dealing in particular with the imperial high-priesthood of the province of Asia); for the role of the imperial cult during the early Empire, particularly in the Greek East, as an expression of loyalty towards the imperial power, see also RIZAKIS 2007, 184, 195-196.

⁹¹ With regard to this, we can mention the situation of Phrygia, where the provincial high-priesthood (of Asia) did not constitute a "prelude" to a Roman career – apparently not even for the descendants of the high-priests (see *infra*, n. 95) – and was in itself the most coveted charge for the local notables (cf. CAMPANILE 1997; CAMPANILE 2005, 19: "Numerosi casi ... mostrano che in un'area specifica come quella frigia la competizione per il prestigio e le cariche poteva svolgersi con obiettivi all'interno della provincia, e la dignità più ambita si identificava con quella del sommo sacerdozio d'Asia ... Matrimoni prestigiosi e autorevolezza conferita dalla dignità del sommo sacerdozio erano altrettanto gratificanti e significativi in termini di ascesa politico-sociale quanto l'ingresso, diretto o attraverso i propri discendenti, nell'amministrazione e nella vita politica romana."). Besides, it is worth noting that even in the rest of the province of Asia the provincial high-priesthood seems to have been a "springboard" for a Roman career not so much for the provincial high-priests them-

tributed, as well as other offices, to increasing its holders' prestige and social standing – putting them in contact with the key figure of the Roman power, the emperor – it also played a role, together with other factors (family relations, social standing, loyalty towards Rome), in the advancement of the career of the Greek notables⁹².

More generally, with regard to the ambitions (and possibilities) of the Greek notables to embark on a Roman career, one should perhaps also take into consideration the eventuality that some of these notables did not have such a great interest in pursuing an imperial career, which, among other things, would have implied a separation from their homeland⁹³.

Finally, we can ask if in the province of Achaia the imperial priesthood could have been a “springboard” for the descendants of the imperial priests on the way towards a career in Rome. The answer implies an investigation beyond the chronological limits I have set for the present analysis; however, I will try to offer a few considerations.

selves as for their descendants; two elements should be considered: a) a very limited number of the known provincial high-priests of Asia are known to have belonged to the equestrian order, and even those could have entered the *ordo* before their assumption of the provincial high-priesthood [cf. DEMOUGIN 1999, 590-591 (and n. 54); (591: “sur les 252 dignitaires provinciaux qui apparaissent dans la documentation, 24 personnes sont connues comme appartenant à l'ordre équestre. L'élection à la dignité provinciale ne constitue pas un gage sûr de promotion.”)]; b) the evidence shows that as a rule it was not the provincial high-priests, but their descendants, who embarked on a senatorial career (and in a family the high-priesthood was not retained once one of its members had entered the Senate) [cf. CAMPANILE 1994, 165-166, 168-169 (169: “una volta raggiunto un certo *status* in un *ordo* preciso, il sommo sacerdozio – carica altamente dispendiosa – non è più ‘necessario’.”)]; according to F. Kirbihler (see his contribution in this volume, 138, n. 108), instead, the explanation of the absence of *clarissimi* high-priests is to be looked for in the law (“il y avait un problème de droit”). As for the western provinces of the Empire, FISHWICK 2000 has shown that the priesthood of the province cannot be considered a stepping stone to a Roman career [99: “So far as one can tell from the surviving sources, the summit of their (scil.: of the provincial priests) careers was regularly the priesthood of the province, itself a post of the highest distinction.”].

⁹² Fundamental requisites to have access to the equestrian and senatorial order – and, before that, to become a Roman citizen – were the high economic and social standing and the loyalty towards Rome. Family extraction also had an important role: in particular when a family had acquired the *civitas*, and if some of its members had already given proof of loyalty towards Rome; cf. HALFMANN 1979, 27; see also, for the *civitas*, SHERWIN WHITE 1973, 246-247. Moreover, it must be underlined that in order to aim at an imperial career, in addition to personal requisites, enjoying good (personal) relations with the emperor or the imperial family proved to be decisive, since the possibility to enter the equestrian order and, above all, to become a Roman senator depended ultimately on the emperor's favour and patronage. Cf. also MADSEN 2002, 101: “The provincials' degree of success was presumably related to the number of contacts they had to influential Romans ...”.

⁹³ Cf. SALMERI 1991, 572-574; CAMPANILE 2005, 19-20.

In Asia Minor we can see, in several cases, the following advancement, within the same family: father, provincial high-priest → son, *eques* → grandson, senator (with a few variants)⁹⁴; this pattern – in addition to the fact that, when a member of a family succeeds in getting a seat in the Senate, as a rule he does not hold the imperial priesthood – seems effectively to characterize the priesthood of the imperial cult as a “springboard” for a Roman career⁹⁵.

In Greece, a similar situation may sometimes be found, even if such a pattern is far from being as common. Two notables of Messene can offer an example: Ti. Claudius Frontinus, the first messenian senator, was son of the *archiereus* of the Achaean league Caelianus (I); Ti. Claudius Dionysius Crispianus, high-priest in his city between the first and the second century A.D. and member of the equestrian order, was son of an imperial priest under Nero⁹⁶. The Athenian Atticus and the Spartan Herculanus, both senators, counted several priests of the imperial cult among their ancestors. However, other elements should also be considered and every case should be analysed individually. Let us take the cases of Atticus and Herculanus; we can follow the path from the acquisition of Roman citizenship up to the entry into the Senate through their ancestors, who, as I have said, include some imperial priests. Yet, if, on the one hand, it is true (and natural) that men like Atticus and Herculanus enjoyed the social standing of their ancestors – as usually happened for the new senators from the Greek East – it is also true that their ancestors paved their way to the Roman orders not so much as imperial priests as by means of their social prestige and above all of their connections, sometimes personal, with the representatives of the Roman power, including the emperor⁹⁷. Of course, the imperial priesthood expressed the social standing of these men, showing their loyalty to and, at the same time, their ties with the imperial power, but it was just one of the several prestigious offices that members of the Romanized elites usually held. With regard to this, it should also be considered that municipal imperial high-priesthoods, like the Athenian or Spartan ones, had a different value and meaning from the provincial high-priesthood, like that of the Asian *koinon*. Moreover, if we consider the sen-

⁹⁴ CAMPANILE 1994, 165-166.

⁹⁵ Even in Asia, however, in some regions like Phrygia the same pattern is not properly recognizable (see CAMPANILE 1997, 225); it is also to be underlined that the delineated pattern is not to be considered an automatic scheme (cf. F. Kirbihler in this volume, 146).

⁹⁶ Ti. Claudius Aristomenes; cf. *Roman Peloponnese* II, MES 131 and 136; RIZAKIS 2007, 192-193 (and nn. 33-34).

⁹⁷ Indeed, ancestors both of Herculanus and of Atticus had been on friendly terms with important Roman figures (see *supra*).

atorial families attested in the province of Achaia (around ten)⁹⁸, there are only three cases in which the first member of the family to get a seat in the Senate⁹⁹ had had at least one imperial priest among his ancestors.

To conclude, although I do not consider the imperial priesthood as the crucial factor in fostering a Roman career, I think however that it is to be underlined the importance it had in expressing a privileged relationship between Greek elite and Roman power.

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⁹⁸ Cf. OLIVER 1982.

⁹⁹ C. Iulius Eurycles Herculanus (Sparta); Ti. Claudius Frontinus (Messene); Ti. Claudius Atticus (Athens) – if Atticus, as supposed by A. Birley, became senator – probably through *adlectio inter praetorios* – only under Hadrian, he might have officially entered the Senate after his son Herodes, who started his senatorial career (as *quaestor*) in A.D. 124 (BIRLEY 1997a, 236; BIRLEY 1997b, 338, n. 3). However, Atticus had received, likely under Trajan, the *ornamenta praetoria* (honorary senatorial rank), which paved his son's way to the senatorial career; see *supra*, n. 10. Ti. Claudius Brasidas (II) and Ti. Claudius Spartiacus, members of the senatorial family of the Spartan Claudii, held the imperial priesthood – for the first time within their family – when another member of this family, Ti. Claudius Brasidas (I), had already entered the Senate; cf. *Roman Peloponnese II*, LAC 274, 275, 326.

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