

Favorinus and the dichotomy of the public and private space in Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae*

Since Holford-Strevens (1997) introduced in his seminal analysis on Favorinus the multifaceted aspects with which the main character of *Noctes Atticae* is presented, a plethora of scholarship has emerged in an attempt to map out the various 'paradoxes' encompassed within the protagonist of *Noctes Atticae*. Some of most cited works include: Keulen's (2009) approach to Favorinus on the basis of the duality between the Greekness and the *Latinitas* his demeanor presents; Gunderson (2000) and his focus on the performative aspect of Favorinus' malleable sexuality; and Howley (2018), who interprets the discursive dynamism of Favorinus as Gellius' authorial strategy to introduce the mannerism of his contemporary *intelligentsia*.

In my presentation I will distance myself from the scholarship that treats Favorinus as an impressionistic entity, whose behavioral fluctuations are presented by Gellius in a rather unsystematic and coincidental manner. Instead, I will argue that Favorinus develops a behavioral pattern that remains dependent on and consistent with the environment he is situated in. I will borrow Russel's (2016) interpretive distinction between public and private space to argue that Favorinus' psychological disposition is conditioned by the type of space he is presented in. In the cases where Favorinus is found in a private indoor space, we see him displaying a self-assertiveness in controlling the mode of discussion and the course of the argument. We watch as he takes the initiative to steer the conversation towards the topics of his desire (*NA* 2.26, 3.19, 2.22), upon which he expresses his profound mastery of the Greek and Latin language. A performative confidence that is not to be seen in the public domain of the *forum*, where his encounters are accompanied by either a lack of monitoring the conditions that pre-determine the

topic of discussion (*NA* 20.1) or a direct critique of the frivolity of his rhetorical erudition (*NA* 4.1).

The goal of my presentation is to direct the scholarship of the second sophistic movement towards a new perspective that encompasses the conceptual doctrines of space theory and psychology studies. Gellius' treatise, a crystallization of the 2nd century AD imperial *zeitgeist*, provides us with a profound amount of yet undiscovered material that could inform us about the spatial perceptiveness of his contemporaries.

Bibliography

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