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**Misfits: Characterisations of grammarians in the late 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD**

Cultural attributes such as sophistication, cultivation, love and knowledge of literature are looked on as distinguishing marks in times of increasing socio-political mobility. Late 2<sup>nd</sup> century authors like Aulus Gellius or Athenaeus obviously seek for such socio-cultural distinctions. As they are not part of the highest strata of Graeco-Roman society, they create strong distinctions to their 'fellow-intellectuals'. They enhance their own intellectual abilities compared to grammarians and other paid professionals, who are disavowed as being marginal, uninformed, and of little knowledge. The paper focuses on Aulus Gellius' characterisation of grammarians.

The stories and anecdotes concerning grammarians in Aulus Gellius' *Noctes Atticae* draw pictures of mediocre and minor characters. Gellius e.g. exposes a so called Sallust-connoisseur, knowing less than he himself and his friends (18,4), ridicules a grammarian (6,17) as being completely uninformed about simple questions of grammar and etymology. Even the late Verrius Flaccus is not spared (17,6,4f.). Grammarians lack basic knowledge of language and literature. These specialists of language and literature know less than the well-educated members of the upper classes and the intellectual elite to which Aulus Gellius would like to belong. Both, Gellius and Athenaeus characterise grammarians as ignorami. Though Gellius presumes that excellent knowledge of literature and language is the most important precondition (which grammarians should probably fulfil) for acceptance as a 'member' of intellectual circles, an 'amateur' status of the speaker Gellius is another.

It is very likely that our perception of the intellectual culture in general and of the grammarians in particular is very much influenced by authors who tried to upgrade themselves by lessening the intellectual and social qualities of other professionals: the teaching philologists, the grammarians.