

POST-HERULIAN ATHENS

Aspects of Life and Culture in Athens
A.D. 267–529

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General Aspects of Life in Post-Herulian Athens

Recovery

After the raid of A.D. 267 the so-called Post-Herulian Wall was built, at least in part, by the Proconsul Claudius Illyrius,¹ and the traditionally flourishing pottery industry of Athens soon resumed its activity.² This would have been impossible inside the small enceinte and, in fact, the potters returned soon to their old workshops in the Cerameicus area.³ The new wall was probably intended to create just a temporary refuge such as the similar, contemporary wall around the most essential places in Olympia,⁴ where works of art and other valuables could be stored in times of strife or when there were not enough troops to defend the whole town wall. Whether the Post-Herulian Wall enclosed also the Acropolis and at least parts of the Theatre of Dionysus as well as the temple of Asclepius still seems to be a controversial question, although in the light of recent studies, a positive answer seems to be more plausible.⁵ If it did, it changes the traditional view of life in fourth century Athens considerably: perhaps some of the most important buildings of the town did not need extensive restoration in the fourth century because they had not been

¹ See the discussion in Sironen, no. 2.

² Perlzweig (1961), 9, 20; Rügler in Rügler and Knigge (1989), 84 ff; for the lamp export, see for example Sodini in Abadie-Reynal and Sodini (1992), 89.

³ Rügler (1990), 282 and note 17.

⁴ Mallwitz (1972), 110–113.

⁵ Korres (1980), 18–20.

seriously damaged. An interesting detail is the fact that the construction of the wall was recorded in two inscriptions in verse, the first one of which was rather elaborate in its diction,⁶ a fact which may suggest that classical culture still was very much respected.

The most influential Athenians of the late third century seem to have been the benefactor, archon, priest and historian Publius Herennius Dexippus, son of Ptolemaeus, from the deme of Hermus, and his family,⁷ the abovementioned proconsul, member of Areopagus and benefactor Claudius Illyrius, whose father had already been an archon and his grandfather a proconsul, and probably also Marcus Iunius Minucianus⁸ who took charge of the erection of a statue in Claudius Illyrius' honour. It is not known how they had acquired their wealth but inherited land property remains the most plausible explanation.

The "Library of Hadrian"

The identification and function of the complex known as the "Library of Hadrian" has lately aroused a lot of curiosity.⁹ I agree with the scholars who have seen in it a kind of Imperial Forum, modelled after the Forum Pacis of Vespasian in Rome.¹⁰ I think, however, that its function as a "cultural centre" or "library" in the literal sense of the word has to be reconsidered. It is easy to see that a preconceived opinion in this sense has influenced even the translations of the section of Pausanias' work describing Hadrian's building activity in Athens.¹¹ In my opinion it is reasonable to start examining the problem from two points of view: Since the Forum Pacis of Vespasian is the model of the "Library of Hadrian", what was the practical function of the Forum Pacis? And since it is certain that Hadrian had constructed the complex in question, it would be important to know whether he had built similar complexes in other towns.

It has escaped the attention of many scholars involved in the investigation of the problem that already more than a century ago it had been suggested that the offices of the urban prefect occupied at least a part of the Forum Pacis,¹² a construction originally destined to celebrate the virtues of the *gens Flavia*.¹³ Obviously that is why the *Forma urbis*, the marble map of Rome, was placed just there. The existing fragments come from the copy of the map restored by Septimius Severus after the fire of A.D. 192,¹⁴ but it is well known that an earlier copy existed.¹⁵ In the Forum Pacis the map was fastened to a wall of a building known as a "library", which actually was the seat of the cadastral archives of the town.¹⁶

⁶ Compare Sironen, nos. 4. and 5.

⁷ See, above all, Millar (1969).

⁸ See also Clinton (1989), 1535 for a letter of the Emperor Gallienus mentioning Minucianus.

⁹ See the discussion below, in Karivieri's first article, note 4.

¹⁰ Already Colini (1937), 7–40; Shear (1981) 375 f; see also the whole discussion below in Karivieri's first article, Chapter II.

¹¹ See the examples quoted by Karivieri in her first article, Chapter I.

¹² De Rossi (1867), 64; Urlichs (1870), 473; Jordan (1874), 9; Lanciani (1892). Recently the question has been brought up for discussion by Coarelli (1986), 23–24. In the meantime only G. Gatti (in Carettoni–Colini–Cozza–Gatti (1960), 214–215) had seen the connection.

¹³ Its original name was *Templum Pacis*; see the discussion in Coarelli (1974), 132 ff.

¹⁴ G. Catti, in Carettoni–Colini–Cozza–Gatti (1960), 213–214.

¹⁵ Coarelli (1991).

¹⁶ Gatti in Carettoni–Colini–Cozza–Gatti (1960), 216 ff.

Hadrian seems to have constructed similar complexes, originally destined for the Imperial Cult, in different parts of the Empire, for instance the so-called Trajaneum in his and Trajan's native town of Italica,¹⁷ and the "Library of Hadrian" in his "spiritual home town" of Athens. As to the function of the Athenian complex, however, Filippo Coarelli has suggested in a recently published article that the closest parallel would be the Library of Hadrian in Alexandria which according to papyrus sources had been built around A.D. 127 and where the central state archives were deposited.¹⁸ According to the source, the Alexandrian library had been built "for this very purpose of preventing the concealment of any irregularities" in the cadastral documentation in Egypt.¹⁹ In fact there existed in Alexandria two different state archives, the older of which, the *Nanaion*, was situated in the temple of Isis Nanaia, that is the Babylonian goddess Nana identified with Isis. The other, the Library of Hadrian, was housed in a construction which perhaps only later was known as *Hadrianeion* or the temple of the Divine Hadrian. In cases of dispute the Library of Hadrian had a prior status over the *Nanaion*.²⁰

It is tempting to suggest that Hadrian would have built a similar complex in his favourite town of Athens to celebrate his own virtues and to house the central archives of the whole province of Achaëa.

It is a well known fact that there also existed in Athens another temple which was used as the official archives of the town until its destruction by the Heruli,²¹ the Metroön in the Old Bouleuterion in the Agora.²² Just as in Alexandria, Hadrian was not satisfied with the old archives of the *Nanaion*, but established a new one in the temple destined for the Imperial Cult. He wanted another "library" also in Athens to house all the cadastral documents of the province, previously perhaps split between several different archives. And as in Alexandria, these new archives found a seat in the complex destined for the Imperial Cult.

Thus it would also be understandable that a Latin inscription from the end of the third century A.D. recording a *corrector provinciae Achaiae* was found near the complex. *Corrector* was a senior senatorial official whom the Emperors from Trajan onwards customarily sent to regulate the affairs of the free cities, if these were not satisfactory.²³ Diocletian, who degraded the status of Achaëa to the lowest rank of provinces in 293,²⁴ evidently only some years earlier had appointed a senator, Lucius Turranius Gratianus, to the rank of *corrector Achaiae* probably to restore the cadastral archives which had suffered in the Herulian raid.²⁵ It is all the more interesting that this same *corrector* is known to have functioned as the urban prefect of Rome, that is just in the offices situated in the Forum Pacis, soon after having finished his work in Greece, in A.D. 290.²⁶ This is more evidence in favour of our theory that many consequences of the Herulian raid were

¹⁷ See below, Karivieri's first article, Chapter II.

¹⁸ Coarelli (1991); compare *POxy.* I, 34 (verso), an edict of the prefect of Egypt Flavius Titianus, with the commentary of Grenfell and Hunt; Flore (1927), 43–88; the theory was tentatively touched also by Sisson (1929), 64–66; Burkhalter (1990), 191–209.

¹⁹ *POxy.* I, 34, col. II; Coarelli (1991), 80 and note 45 quotes two examples of the cadastral documents kept in the Library of Hadrian in Alexandria (*POxy.* II, 237 and *POxy.* XII, 1473).

²⁰ Cockle (1984), 117.

²¹ Frantz (1988), 25.

²² Camp (1986), 91–94.

²³ See Pliny the Younger, *Epistula* 8.24 for a similar case during the reign of Trajan.

²⁴ Groag (1946), 13; below, Sironen, no. 7.

²⁵ Cadastral archives seem to have suffered often in times of strife. They may have been intentionally destroyed to make the taxation more difficult.

²⁶ Groag (1946), 14–15; below, Sironen, no. 6.

quickly and efficiently repaired and that the “Library of Hadrian” had been restored and was in use as a sanctuary for the Imperial Cult and as the official archives also in the fourth century.²⁷

Learned Activities

Different cultural activities flourished in Athens in the late third and fourth centuries, including the rhetorical and sophistical schools. After only a brief lapse following the raid, the educational activity seems to have returned to normal. Several teachers were active in the city at the time of the Herulian raid, *e.g.* Eubulus, leader of the Platonic school in Plotinus’ time,²⁸ and Cassius Longinus, philosopher, grammarian and rhetor, who led the Academy until *ca.* 267 when he fled to Queen Zenobia in Palmyra. There the Emperor Aurelianus had him killed around 272.²⁹ One of his students was the Phoenician Porphyrius (*ca.* A.D. 233–302) who spent the rest of his life in Rome studying there under Plotinus and continuing after Plotinus’ death to teach his doctrines.³⁰

At about the same time Callinicus (who in some sources is also called Su(e)torius), a sophist in Athens, son of Gaius, who originally came from Petra, gave a speech in honour of the Emperor Gallienus.³¹ He is probably identifiable with the sophist Callinicus who was murdered later near the Euphrates in a place which subsequently was called Callinicum after him.³²

According to Eusebius (*ca.* A.D. 263–339), there existed in Athens a circle of philosophers or sophists which included Cassius Longinus, Nicagoras, Maior, Apollonius, Callietes, Demetrius and Prosenes who used to celebrate annually Socrates’ and Plato’s birthdays.³³ Of these at least Nicagoras, son of Minucianus, was still active in Athens in the early fourth century.³⁴ Through his wife, Himerius also belonged to the followers of this circle and continued its traditions. He was one of the many who withdrew from Athens through fear of the tremendous Prohaeresius. The sophist and teacher Agapetus and the rhetor Minucianus, son of the rhetor Nicagoras who flourished in Athens in the first half of the third century, are known as the teachers of Genethlius.³⁵ Genethlius, son of Genethlius from Petra, was active as a sophist in Athens in the late third and early fourth centuries. He was a competitor of Callinicus but died when only 28 years old.³⁶ Another contemporary of Callinicus and Genethlius was the sophist Tlepolemus whose fame persuaded Libanius to continue his studies in Athens.³⁷ However, the best known of the Athenian sophists was the Cappadocian Julianus, who is said to have excelled among others the contemporary rhetors Apsines and Epagathus.³⁸

²⁷ Compare below, Karivieri’s first article, Chapter IV. with notes.

²⁸ Porphyrius, *Vita Plotini* 15, line 20.

²⁹ For the life and death of Longinus, see Longinus, *Ars rhetorica* (ed. Hammer (1884), 179–207); Porphyrius, *Vita Plotini* 14, lines 19–20; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* X.3.1; Eunapius 4.1, lines 2–3 and 5; Flavius Vopiscus, *Aurelianus* 30.3; Zosimus 1.56; *Suda*, *s.v.* Longinus.

³⁰ Porphyrius, *Vita Plotini* 7, line 50; 20, line 91; Eunapius 4.1, line 2; *Suda*, *s.v.* Porphyrios.

³¹ *Suda*, *s.v.* Callinicus; Jerome in *Danielem*, *prologus*.

³² Libanius, *Epistula* 21.

³³ Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* X.3.1.

³⁴ See Fowden (1987).

³⁵ *Suda*, *s.v.* Genethlius; *id.*, *s.v.* Minucianus.

³⁶ *Id.*, *s.v.* Genethlius.

³⁷ Libanius, *Oratio* 1.11–12.

³⁸ Eunapius 9.1, line 1.

His pupils, who contended seriously with the pupils of Apsines, included Prohaeresius, Hephæstion, Epiphanius, Diophantus and the rhetor Tuscianus.³⁹ He used to give private lectures in his house, which he later bequeathed to his favourite pupil Prohaeresius.⁴⁰ After Julianus six sophists were appointed as his successors, but some of them withdrew from Athens because Prohaeresius had become so outstanding.⁴¹ Jealous competitors once had Prohaeresius expelled from Athens, but he was soon recalled⁴² and highly honoured by the Emperor Constans,⁴³ who bequeathed Athens some corn yielding islands in his honour.⁴⁴ A statue of him was erected in Rome, and the Emperor even granted him the honorary title of *στρατοπεδάρχης*, *praefectus castrorum* (?).⁴⁵ Under Julian he lost or resigned his official post because he was a Christian,⁴⁶ but later he regained his aucturity and died around 366/7 as a very old man, probably in the house which he had inherited from his teacher, the sophist Julianus.

The vivid student life of the fourth century in Athens is reflected best by Libanius who studied there under Diophantus in the 330's⁴⁷ but later, when he was offered a chair there in the 350's, did not want to stay there "because he did not want to decay together with the town".⁴⁸ On the other hand, he describes how the teachers used all available means to enrol as many new students as possible.⁴⁹ Among these were the future Emperor Julian (although only for a short time), Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus and Priscus, who later accompanied the Emperor Julian on his last expedition and was present when he died.⁵⁰ The rhetor Diophantus recruited pupils actively from Arabia, where he himself came from, and the sophist Epiphanius recruited entirely from the East,⁵¹ but at least the former also kidnapped students from other teachers.⁵² Among the students of the fourth century there are an exceptional number of Arabians from Petra. This list of the Athenian sophists and rhetors of the fourth century, which is by no means complete, is sufficient to prove that the scholarly activity was in the long run not greatly affected by the Herulian raid.⁵³

It is perhaps only a peculiarity of our sources that almost all the known personalities of fourth-century at Athens belonged to the class of sophists, rhetors and other teachers. The Athenian pottery was again well established in the market, and the numerous teachers and students needed provisions which only the neighbouring countryside of Attica or the nearby islands could supply. Without doubt this provided the living for a large class of landowners and farm hands. For instance the future philosopher Aedesius had been sent to Athens at the beginning of the fourth century by his family from Cappadocia to earn a living by other means than by studying philosophy, which he did.⁵⁴

³⁹ *Id.* 9.1, line 3.

⁴⁰ *Id.* 9.1, line 4.

⁴¹ *Id.* 10.3, lines 9–13.

⁴² *Id.* 10.3, line 15–10.4, line 1.

⁴³ *Id.* 10.7, lines 1–2.

⁴⁴ *Id.* 10.7, line 5.

⁴⁵ *Id.* 10.7, line 4–5.

⁴⁶ Jerome, *Chronicon*, sub anno 362.

⁴⁷ Libanius, *Oratio* I.16–25; Eunapius 16.1, lines 2–3.

⁴⁸ Libanius, *Oratio* I.82 ff.

⁴⁹ Eunapius 16.1, line 2.

⁵⁰ Ammianus Marcellinus XXV.3.23; Libanius, *Oratio* XVII.272.

⁵¹ Eunapius 10.3, line 12.

⁵² *Id.* 16.1, line 2; Libanius, *Oratio* I.16 and 85.

⁵³ See also Millar (1969), 16 ff.

⁵⁴ Eunapius 6.1, lines 1–3.

Some of the students and future teachers did not need to earn their living by teaching because they came originally from very wealthy families: this is true *e.g.* of Himerius, who owned large estates in Armenia and Thrace,⁵⁵ and Iamblichus, who had inherited land from his father and was able to help Athens to rebuild her town walls towards the end of the fourth century.⁵⁶ Severus, a fellow-student of Libanius, who came from Lycia, had a large income from the timber which was produced on his estates.⁵⁷ The brothers Antiochus, Axiochus and Musonius, sons of the Pamphylian-born Athenian rhetor Musonius who was *vicarius Asiae* in A.D. 367/8,⁵⁸ also seem to have been wealthy. The younger Musonius celebrated a *taurobolium* in A.D. 387.⁵⁹ Allegedly he was then a senator. Other prominent Athenians of the fourth century were the archon and president of the *panegyris*-festival Hegias, son of Timocrates,⁶⁰ who was celebrated for his generosity, and Flavius Septimius Marcellinus, another benefactor, λαμπρότατος and ex-agonothete, who from his own resources built a gateway to the Acropolis.⁶¹ Still another long family line of rich and influential Athenians is formed by Plutarchus, the ἀρχιερεύς of Attica, ἱροπόλος of Dionysus and priest of Asclepius, who erected two statues of the god at Epidaurus in A.D. 308,⁶² and his offspring (see Table 1).

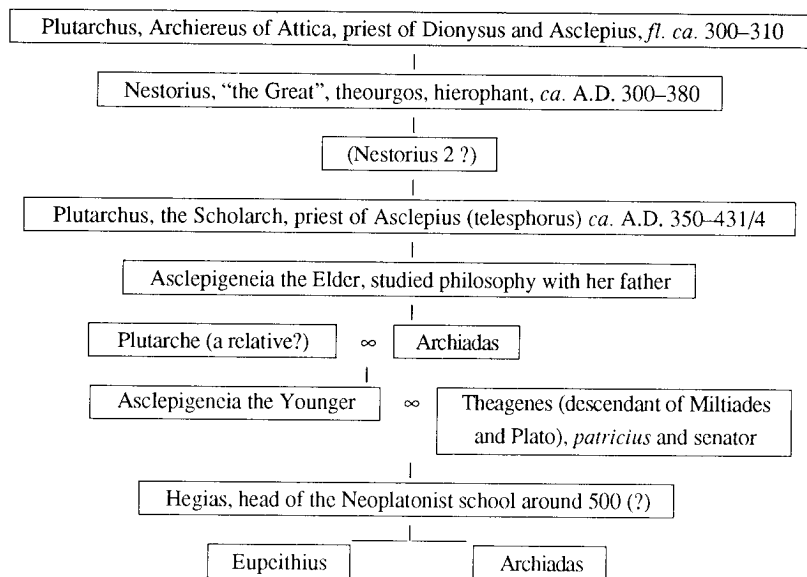


Table 1. Family tree of the Scholarch Plutarchus

⁵⁵ Himerius VIII.3; VIII.22 (?); Libanius, *Epistula* 469 (Armenia).

⁵⁶ See the discussion in Sironen, no. 16.

⁵⁷ Libanius, *Epistulae* 1191 and 1383.

⁵⁸ Zosimus V.5.2.

⁵⁹ *IG* II/III², no. 4842.

⁶⁰ See below, Sironen, no. 11.

⁶¹ See discussion below, in Sironen, no. 12.

⁶² *IG* IV² 1, 436–7.

His son was probably the theurgist Nestorius who performed many miracles during his long life. In Rome he executed a miraculous cure⁶³ and in A.D. 375, as an old man, he was said to have saved Athens from the disastrous earthquake which destroyed Corinth.⁶⁴ His son (or grandson) again was the Scholarch Plutarchus who reorganised and led the Neoplatonist school at Athens and probably built its new seat, the future House of Proclus.⁶⁵

According to some sources,⁶⁶ Plutarchus had a son, Hierius, but it is the general opinion that he only had a daughter, Asclepigeneia (the Elder), to whom he transmitted all his knowledge.⁶⁷ Asclepigeneia had a son Archiadas, a close friend of the Scholarch Proclus, who married Plutarche (a relative?). They had a daughter Asclepigeneia the Younger who became the wife of the *patricius*, archon and senator Theagenes, the most influential Athenian of the later fifth century and a prominent figure in the whole Roman Empire.⁶⁸ Asclepigeneia and Theagenes had a son, Hegias, who probably was the head of the Neoplatonist school for a short time at the beginning of the sixth century. His abilities and reputation suffered from the fact that he was too wealthy and therefore always surrounded by sycophants.⁶⁹ He in turn had two sons, Eupeithius and Archiadas.⁷⁰

It is a common belief that some old Athenian traditions were not continued after the raid by the Heruli.⁷¹ According to Frantz, the Council of the Areopagus, however, lasted at least until the end of the fourth century, and the archonship until at least A.D. 485 when Proclus died and Nicagoras was recorded as the last known archon.⁷² The *ephebia* is not mentioned at all after A.D. 267, and many scholars think that the whole organisation fell into oblivion. On the other hand, the reconstructed Diogeneion (if the restoration of the word is correct), the traditional headquarters of the epebes, seems to have been in use again from around A.D. 400.⁷³ In another inscription, dedicated to the historian Dexippus immediately after the raid of A.D. 267, a Council of 750 members appears instead of the traditional figure of 500.⁷⁴ Later inscriptions⁷⁵ prove that in the fourth century the number of the members of the boule had dropped to 300. The reasons for these changes are not clear, but the general evasion of obligatory duties, especially in times of depression, may at least in part explain the tendency to increase the number of the persons involved.

⁶³ Proclus in *Rem publicam* II, 324, line 11–325, line 10.

⁶⁴ Zosimus IV.18.1–4.

⁶⁵ See e.g. Marinus, *Vita Procli* 12; Photius, *Bibliotheca* 214; *Suda*, s.v. Plutarchus and below. Karivieri's second article, Chapter VI.

⁶⁶ Photius, *Bibliotheca* 242.88.

⁶⁷ Marinus, *Vita Procli* 28.

⁶⁸ *Id.* 29 and below, page 13.

⁶⁹ Damascius, fr. 351 (= *Suda*, H 60); *id.*, fr. 353 (= *Suda*, E 3650).

⁷⁰ *Id.*, fr. 352 (= *Suda*, E 3650).

⁷¹ Day (1942), 260–261.

⁷² Frantz (1988), 12; Marinus, *Vita Procli* 36.

⁷³ Sironen, no. 26.

⁷⁴ Sironen, no. 1.

⁷⁵ Sironen, nos. 13. and 18.

Private Building Activity of the Fourth Century

In the second half of the fourth century the private building activity also seems to have become more intense. According to Miss Frantz's interpretation some pre-Herulian houses were again made habitable especially in the industrial section of the Agora northwest of the Areopagus.⁷⁶

The comfortable villas on the slope of the Areopagus immediately above the old Agora belong to the second half of the fourth century. According to the traditional view⁷⁷ they were "philosophical schools" or residences of wealthy teachers in which they practised their activity allegedly in fear of the feud between different groups of students. Despite the doubts presented by Frantz⁷⁸ they could, in my opinion, be just fashionable "(sub)urban" villas belonging to well-to-do town dwellers. It is worth noticing that there are in Athens several similar residences from this period, and some of them had rooms suitable for lectures and libraries as well.⁷⁹ Other quite comfortable private houses were emerging in the fourth century also near the Panathenaic Way.⁸⁰ On the base of the rhetorically coloured description of the much cited locus in the *Expositio totius mundi*⁸¹ alone, I would not be inclined to deny Athens all activities other than higher learning and tourist viewing historical monuments. The author mentions Athens and Corinth in contrast to each other in Achaea and compares their different characters: Corinth having a decisively commercial nature and boasting an outstanding amphitheatre, while Athens was content with her learning and old monuments. In my opinion the author just wanted to emphasise that Corinth had the characteristics of a normal commercial city of the Roman Empire, while Athens had retained her ancient Greek character of a centre of learning.⁸²

The Emperor Julian's activity in restoring Athenian monuments, especially pagan temples allegedly ruined by the Heruli, has been emphasised by many scholars, most of all by John Travlos.⁸³ Although it is certain that Julian was most positively disposed towards Athens and her traditional cults and appointed a notorious pagan, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, as the Proconsul of Achaea, it does not seem possible that he would have achieved much of this kind during his short and troubled reign.⁸⁴ Elsewhere⁸⁵ we have adhered to the idea that some of the monuments which were supposedly restored by him had in fact not been very badly damaged by the Heruli.

⁷⁶ Frantz (1988), 14, 35; plates 4, 22 a.

⁷⁷ Camp (1986), 202–211; Frantz (1988), 44–47; Camp (1989).

⁷⁸ Frantz (1988), 46.

⁷⁹ E.g. in Kekropos 7-9, Alexandre (1969b), 50–53, plans 19–20, pls. 45–48; Michaud (1971), 819, 821, figs. 29–39; North Slope of the Areopagus, Frantz (1988), 36–37, pls. 24 a, 25 a; Basilisses Sophias/Herodou Attikou, Spathare and Chatzare (1983), 23–25; pl. 4; possibly Makre 1/Dionysiou Areopagitou, Zafeiropoulou (1983), 19–23; pl. 19 a; and many others which at present are not exactly datable but could belong to the fourth century.

⁸⁰ Frantz (1988), 36.

⁸¹ *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 52.

⁸² It is worth mentioning that just the existence of an amphitheatre was considered a manifestation of the Roman character of a town: in Naples, for instance, which for the Romans always remained a Greek town – *urbs Graeca* – there never existed an amphitheatre; see e.g. Lepore (1985), 115–122; Baldassarre (1985), 122–132, while Puteoli boasted two of them; see e.g. De Caro and Greco (1981), 39–44.

⁸³ E.g. Travlos (1973).

⁸⁴ See Frantz (1988), 23.

⁸⁵ Sironen, Chapter I.

Vicissitudes of the End of the Fourth Century

Whether Alaric and his Visigoths occupied and sacked Athens in A.D. 395/6 is another controversial question, actually a crucial one for understanding the Late Antiquity in Athens. Some later literary sources point towards the interpretation that this was not the case,⁸⁶ and traditionally these sources have been followed.⁸⁷ But recent excavations seem to confirm the opposite, that the Visigoths sacked Athens either on their way towards the Peloponnesus or later, when they returned after having sacked the South.⁸⁸ The raid on Greece was in fact favoured by the Praetorian Prefect Rufinus, and Eunapius suggests that Alaric was accompanied by militant monks who were described as “men in the mourning dress”.⁸⁹ Alaric’s expedition thus does not look at all like just a normal barbarian raid but rather a well planned military campaign which probably, among other goals, intended to plunder and destroy the last pagan strongholds in Greece. This would also be reflected in the keen building activity which immediately followed the raid in Athens.

The beginning of the fifth century in Athens was indeed a period of almost unbelievable intensity in restoring old buildings and constructing new ones. And what is still more interesting, the traditional character of the city was respected by the Athenian restorers, despite the fact that, for instance in Rome, a decisive transformation from a traditional towards a Christian society had occurred during the last decades of the fourth century.⁹⁰

The constructions of the early fifth century include among others the “Palace of the Giants”, the bema of Phaedrus in the Theatre of Dionysus,⁹¹ the sundial financed possibly by the same person,⁹² the restoration of the so-called Library of Hadrian,⁹³ several other great villas and smaller houses all around the city,⁹⁴ the Broad Street between the old Agora and the Roman Market,⁹⁵ the “Hallenstrasse” and “Festtor” in the Cerameicus area,⁹⁶ the so-called House of Proclus on the southern slope of the Acropolis and several private and public baths especially in the southern part of the town.⁹⁷ And, in

⁸⁶ *E.g.* Zosimus 5. 5, 5–6, 3.

⁸⁷ See *e.g.* Wachsmuth (1874), 715–716; Thompson in Thompson and Wycherley (1972), 208–219.

⁸⁸ See *e.g.* Alexandre (1969b), 50–53 (Kekropos 7–9); Spathare and Chatzare (1983), 23–25 (Basilisses Sophias/Herodou Attikou); Catling (1987), 7–8 and Rügler in Rügler and Knigge (1989), 87–90 (Building Y at Cerameicus); French (1991), 5–6, and Shear (1991), 17 (bathing establishment north of Adrianou Street) for the recent excavations showing clear evidence of the raid by the Visigoths.

⁸⁹ Eunapius 7.3–5.

⁹⁰ See *e.g.* Krautheimer (1980), 39 ff.

⁹¹ Frantz (1982) and the discussion in Sironen, no. 27.

⁹² Below, in Sironen, no. 28.

⁹³ Below, in Karivieri’s first article, Chapter IV.

⁹⁴ *E.g.* the building above the Library of Pantainos, Frantz (1988), 67, 117, 119; Camp (1986), 200–202, 213–4; building remains in Thoukydidou in Plaka, Basilopoulou (1983) 16–18, pl. 18; the house in the SW corner of the Agora area, Frantz (1988), 36, pl. 23 d; the southern villa-gymnasium of the National Park, Spiro (1978), 54–58, figs. 58–61; the great house in the NE corner of the National Park (Basilisses Sophias/Herodou Attikou), Spathare and Chatzare (1983), 23–25; the house with mosaics (now in the entrance of the Byzantine Museum) in the corner of Dionysiou Areopagitou/Propylaion, Alexandre (1969a), 32–38, pls. 40–41; the newly-discovered house in Makre 1/Dionysiou Areopagitou, Zafeiropoulou (1983) 19–23, pl. 19 a; *etc.*

⁹⁵ Frantz (1988), 67.

⁹⁶ See, most lately, Rügler (1990).

⁹⁷ See *e.g.* Dontas (1961–1962a), 87–89; a bath in the Dionysiou Areopagitou/Parthenonos/Kallisperi-area, which could belong to the complex of the “House of Proclus”.

fact, the so-called Gymnasium in the old Academy is perhaps just another of these great villas, as Dr. Judith Binder once very convincingly suggested to me.

Several persons have been pointed out as the instigators of this fervid building activity: Herculius, the Praetorian Prefect of the very first years of the fifth century, is Miss Frantz's champion,⁹⁸ while the Empress Eudocia is supported by others.⁹⁹ Only a few examples of all this building activity will be examined here.

The "Palace of the Giants"

The "Palace of the Giants" was constructed on top of the ruins of the Odeum built by Agrippa and restored in the second century A.D. after a collapse of its wide wooden roof.¹⁰⁰ The Palace, which originally was called a Gymnasium,¹⁰¹ or even the University of Athens,¹⁰² by the excavators, stands in the ancient Agora which allegedly had been abandoned or given over to industrial activity for over a century.¹⁰³ In my opinion this palace is a great "(sub)urban villa", quite typical of the period. In fact, similar villas had been built in and near Rome, in the countryside of Italy and in the western provinces from the beginning of the fourth century, when the situation again became safer after the turmoils of the third century.¹⁰⁴ Such palaces as those of Piazza Armerina¹⁰⁵ and a couple of others in Sicily can be mentioned as parallels as well as the great villa in Montmaurin in Southern Gaul,¹⁰⁶ which in my view most resembles the "Palace of the Giants". Similar villas were also constructed in Rome itself, in the areas inside the walls which were being abandoned in the fourth century by the diminishing population.¹⁰⁷ By this I mean to suggest that the "Palace of the Giants" was in no way unusual except that it was some decades later than its best known western parallels and that it was much bigger than its known counterparts in Greece. In most of the abovementioned palaces there are façades resembling triumphal arches, large "ceremonial courts", *thermae*, residential areas including kitchens, large spaces perhaps reserved for public use, and several analogies in details. The fact that the "ceremonial courts" are not similar in shape, is without doubt due to differences of the terrain in question or to the need to make use of existing constructions. In some parallel palaces the functions of different rooms can quite safely be determined on the basis of extant mosaic floors. Unfortunately this is not the case with the

⁹⁸ See e.g. Frantz (1969) and Frantz (1988), 63–66. Compare also below, pages 11–12.

⁹⁹ See below, Sironen, no. 33. with note 220 and Burman, Chapter IV, and Fowden (1990), 497–499.

¹⁰⁰ In the tenth British Museum Classical Colloquium in 1986 F. A. Cooper presented an interesting paper "Building Projects at Athens in the Age of Julius Caesar and Augustus", in which he proposed that the Odeum in the Agora is not the one built by Agrippa, but a later, original second century A.D. construction. The Odeum of Agrippa would instead be the one known as the Odeum of Herodes Atticus. Unfortunately, this important paper was not published in the British Museum Bulletin in which most of the other articles appeared. As far as I know, it has not been published later, either.

¹⁰¹ E.g. Camp (1986), 200.

¹⁰² Frantz (1975), 32–33.

¹⁰³ Camp (1986), 198.

¹⁰⁴ See e.g. Percival (1976); Mielsch (1987), 90 ff. for Late Antiquity; Ellis (1991).

¹⁰⁵ Carandini–Ricci–de Vos (1982); Wilson (1983).

¹⁰⁶ Fouet (1969); *id.* (1986); see fig. 34.

¹⁰⁷ Krautheimer (1980), 16 ff.

“Palace of the Giants” since, as far as it is known, no sufficient traces of mosaic floors have been discovered in its rooms.¹⁰⁸

The alleged building activity of the Empress Eudocia in Athens has been extensively treated below by my two colleagues Julia Burman and Arja Karivieri.¹⁰⁹ Mrs. Burman shares the opinion of Homer A. Thompson that the “Palace of the Giants” would have been an official residence,¹¹⁰ adding that its construction was perhaps instigated by the Empress whose dedicatory inscription was discovered nearby.¹¹¹ This is undoubtedly a possibility although it disturbs one a little that an official residence of various kinds has been the first interpretation almost every time a late luxurious villa or palace has been discovered in the provinces.¹¹² Additional evidence has often made it clear that the first impression has not been correct, but instead the owner has turned out to belong to the class of senatorial landowners. It has in fact too often been forgotten how thoroughly Roman society had changed in course of the third-fourth centuries A.D. Many senators of the new generation never even visited Rome or Constantinople, and tended instead to retire from the towns to their estates in the countryside of Italy or in the provinces. There they spent their time as almost sovereign rulers in the company of artists or philosophers while their bailiffs collected the taxes from the tenantry.¹¹³ Only in cases of need did they represent their tenants in the Imperial Court just as the patron saints later were supposed to represent them in Heaven. Under these circumstances it is not often easy to distinguish between the residence of an officially appointed magistrate or a villa or palace of a local magnate.

The taxes of the inhabitants of the province of Achaëa were significantly relieved in the 420's.¹¹⁴ This might have eased the economic position of the landowners of Attica who had existed before and who to some extent must have existed also in the earlier fifth century as they appear again in the later fifth century when we again have more adequate contemporary sources.¹¹⁵ Also the fact that other luxurious villas and palaces were being constructed at the same time all around Athens and its neighbourhood strengthens this hypothesis that the “Palace of the Giants” could be a splendid private residence. The marks of incompleteness in the construction¹¹⁶ could perhaps support this theory.

It is worth noting that in constructing the “Palace of the Giants”, the site of the Temple of Ares was still respected¹¹⁷ and, in fact, at my initiative Dr. Judith Binder was kind enough to check the excavation journal and found out that at least a great number of the blocks which could have belonged to this temple and which were used in the Post-Herulian Wall, turned out to belong to later repairs of the Wall.

¹⁰⁸ Thompson (1988), 106–108 and pls. 63 a–b suggest that mosaic flooring was instead used in the first floor of the palace which, accordingly, would have been the *piano nobile*. However, these traces are also quite insignificant.

¹⁰⁹ See below, Burman, Chapter IV. and Karivieri's first article, Chapter VII.

¹¹⁰ In Frantz (1988), 111 f.

¹¹¹ See below, in Burman, Chapter IV.

¹¹² Compare, for instance, the entire discussion concerning the Palace of Piazza Armerina, e.g. Ragona (1962); Kähler (1973); Di Vita (1972–1973), 251 ff.; Picard (1972–1973), 108 ff.; Dunbabin (1978); Carandini–Ricci–de Vos (1982); Wilson (1983).

¹¹³ Mazzarino (1951), 26 f.; Ruggini (1961), 85 f.; Brown (1976), 34–36.

¹¹⁴ *CTh* XI.1.33; compare below, Burman, Chapter III. “Eudocia and Politics” h).

¹¹⁵ E.g. for Theagenes and his family, see below, page 13.

¹¹⁶ Thompson (1988), 108–109.

¹¹⁷ *Id.*, 97 and note 9.

Later Phases of the “Library of Hadrian”

It has been suggested above that the cadastral archives of the province of Achaea were housed in the “Library of Hadrian”, a complex which contemporarily was dedicated to the Imperial Cult.¹¹⁸ If the archives were destroyed by or during the raid by the Visigoths of Alaric, it would be understandable that the Praetorian Prefect Herculius would have wanted to repair the building soon after the raid. That is perhaps why two monuments commemorating his activity as the “treasurer of laws”, “defender of laws” were dedicated to him at Athens.¹¹⁹ If the archives were intentionally destroyed by Alaric’s troops or by the inhabitants themselves, the character of the raid acquires new dimensions in the political conflicts of the period.¹²⁰

It is equally logical that the devoutly Christian imperial family of the early fifth century would have wanted to transform the central part of the complex into Christian use.¹²¹

The “House of Proclus”

The Scholarch of the Academy Plutarchus¹²² constructed the large villa on the south slope of the Acropolis where his successors lived and taught and which later became known as the House of Proclus.¹²³

The question, whether there were in Athens simultaneously two wealthy namesakes, one of whom was Plutarchus the philosopher¹²⁴ and the other Plutarchus the sophist,¹²⁵ needs further investigation. Previously I have been of the opinion that the philosopher and the wealthy benefactor who three times financed the Panathenaic procession were namesakes and contemporaries,¹²⁶ and in publishing the inscriptions in which these names occur Sironen seems to agree with me.¹²⁷ One important message of these inscriptions is, however, the information that Panathenaic processions were still organised at the beginning of the fifth century, while this seems to have been impossible about half a century later.¹²⁸

In my opinion it is reasonably sure that the ruin discovered in the 1950’s under Dionysiou Areopagitou Street is indeed identifiable as the House of Proclus which, according to Marinus, had belonged to Syrianus and Plutarchus before Proclus, as I have already suggested in my review of Miss Frantz’s book.¹²⁹ In that review I also pointed out that Miss Frantz had unintentionally misquoted a chapter from the Life of Proclus by Marinus, omitting one important word, which made the identification of the construction

¹¹⁸ See above, page 13, and below, Karivieri’s first article, Chapter IV. with notes.

¹¹⁹ See below, Sironen, nos. 31. and 32.

¹²⁰ See above, page 9 and note 87.

¹²¹ See the discussion in Karivieri’s first article, Chapters V.–VII.

¹²² See above, Table I.

¹²³ See below, Karivieri’s second article, Chapter I.

¹²⁴ The abovementioned scholarch of the Academy who built the so-called House of Proclus.

¹²⁵ See the discussion in Sironen, nos. 29.–31.

¹²⁶ Castrén (1989), 47.

¹²⁷ Sironen, no 29. with notes.

¹²⁸ See below, page 13.

¹²⁹ Castrén (1991).

in question more difficult.¹³⁰ The house would have been built by Plutarchus at the beginning of the fifth century and owned by successive scholarchs of the Academy. From the point of view of chronology and architecture this hypothesis does not contradict the archaeological evidence, although other interpretations, such as its interpretation as another great villa of the period, could also be possible.

The problems concerning the "House of Proclus" have occupied the members of our team to a great extent. This is understandable because parts of the construction lie practically underneath the residence of the director of the Finnish Institute. Furthermore, Dr. Georgios Dontas was kind enough to give us permission to study the unpublished material of Meliades' and his excavation of the 1950's. The third reason for our concern is the fact that a member of our team, Prof. Gunnar af Hällström, was particularly interested in studying and interpreting the sources concerning the last years of the Academy.

The Later Fifth Century

The traditional way of life continued quite undisturbed until the middle of the fifth century, although signs of Christian influence became more common in Athens. The notables of this period were the scions of the Scholarch Plutarchus,¹³¹ his successor, the Scholarch Syrianus and the young Proclus, who soon, probably in the late 430's, succeeded Syrianus as the head of the Neoplatonic school. However, this is, above all, the period of Theagenes, archon, *patricius* and senator who was considered one of the wealthiest and most influential citizens of the whole Empire.¹³² He was a native of Athens and claimed to be a descendant of Miltiades and Plato. He was so wealthy that he was able to assist both cities and individuals.¹³³ This fact has very often been ignored when the life of Athens in the fifth century has been considered and only the learned activities have been emphasised. Furthermore, he was married to Asclepigeneia, the great-granddaughter of the philosopher Plutarchus and thus related to the other notable family of the period. It is surprising that there would suddenly appear in Athens such an immensely rich person, whose origin is indisputably local. In my opinion rich landowners had to exist continuously, from the time of Herodes Atticus to that of Theagenes.

Towards the middle of the fifth century he and his father-in-law Archiadas seem to have lost a part of their property, probably to raiding barbarians,¹³⁴ since they claim that they would willingly have spent all that property to finance the Panathenaic procession.¹³⁵ However, this was no longer possible. In fact, at the same time as the financial difficulties caused by barbarian raids the traditional religion and culture faced new difficulties: even the Scholarch Proclus who was on very good terms with the leading personalities of the town, had to leave Athens for a year.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ *Id.*, 475.

¹³¹ See Table 1. above.

¹³² Damascius, frs. 257 and 261.

¹³³ Marinus, *Vita Procli* 29.

¹³⁴ Perhaps this raid is to be connected with the alleged raid by the Vandals which Frantz dates to A.D. 467, see Frantz (1988), 78–79.

¹³⁵ Damascius, fr. 273.

¹³⁶ Marinus, *Vita Procli* 15.

At about the same time, also the “Palace of the Giants” suffered damage which was quickly repaired.¹³⁷ It resulted, however, in a change of the function of the palace towards a more utilitarian use, with an aqueduct and several water mills around it. The Palace had thus become the main building of a great farm house, where one of the notables of the time lived. I wonder whether anybody other than Theagenes and his family come into question.

The famous statue of a *togatus*, discovered in the Agora in the 1930's,¹³⁸ belongs to the middle of the fifth century¹³⁹ and is perhaps related to the Palace.

After the deaths of Proclus and Theagenes, the situation of the Neoplatonist school deteriorated rapidly, and the Scholarch Marinus had to spend a certain time in Epidaurus, which seems to have long functioned as a refuge for practising pagans.¹⁴⁰ Some of his successors were not very diplomatic in their relations with the authorities. However, it seems that the Neoplatonic school was not closed because of its politics but as a part of the cultural policy of the Emperor Justinian who wanted to reform higher education.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ Frantz (1988), 78–79.

¹³⁸ Shear Sr. (1936), 198, fig. 18; Kollwitz (1941), 91 f., no. 19, 112; Harrison (1953), 79 ff., no. 64, pls. 41 f.; Thompson (1959), 68, pl. IV 2.

¹³⁹ I thank Dr. Hans Rupprecht Goette from the German Archaeological Institute for the information concerning the statue.

¹⁴⁰ Damascius, frs. 313 and 314.

¹⁴¹ See the discussion in af Hällström's conclusion.