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Ο Αλαρίχος στην Αθήνα

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ALARIC IN ATHENS

Ἡ ἐπανεξέταση τῶν γραπτῶν πηγῶν καὶ τοῦ ἀποτελέσματος τῶν καταστροφῶν στὸν Παρθενῶνα ἐπιβεβαιώνει τὴν ἄποψη τῆς Alison Frantz ὅτι ἡ ἀρχαία πυρκαϊὰ προκλήθηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς φανατικοὺς νεοφώτιστους χριστιανοὺς Βησιγότθους τοῦ Ἀλαρίχου, οἱ ὁποῖοι μὲ μεθόδους γνωστὲς στὴν Ἀνατολή, κατέστειλαν τὴν ἀρχαία θρησκεία καταστρέφοντας τὰ ἱερά της. Ἡ συστηματικὴ ἀπολάξευση τῶν μετοπῶν τοῦ ναοῦ καὶ ἡ καταστροφή ἐναετίων ἀγαλμάτων φαίνεται ὅτι ἔγινε συγχρόνως μὲ τὸν ἐμπρησμό του.

The re-examination of the written sources and of the aftermath of the damages to the Parthenon confirms Alison Frantz's view that the ancient fire was instigated by the fanatical newly baptized Christian Visigoths led by Alaric, who suppressed the ancient religion by destroying its sanctuaries through methods known in the East. The systematic chiseling away of the metopes of the temple and the destruction of statues seems to have been concurrent with the fire.

When the new Acropolis Museum opened in 2009 it exhibited for the first time ever the mutilated metopes from the east and north side of the Parthenon. The occasion brought front and center the following query: when and who could have possibly wrought such extensive damage to those masterpieces¹ of the classical age? At first glance, it is instantly clear that 79² out of the temple's 92 metopes were defaced so violently that the theme depicted by their sculptures is barely recognizable³. During the same time period, it is also noticeable that, for a length of 12 meters⁴, the larger of the temple's eastern pedimental sculptures were also removed or hurled to the ground and destroyed. Similarly, many of the pediment cornices and parts of its drum⁵ seem to have also been removed.

We have no information, be it direct or indirect, on the ravages described above. Nevertheless, the erosion wrought by the atmosphere on the marbles' collision surfaces indicates that the metopes' defacement occurred during the antiquity⁶ and cannot be attributed to Medieval or more recent times. Without a doubt, the attempt at extensive destruction was a deliberate one and, what is more, resulted in the first significant drop in the artistic value of the Great Temple's sculpted masterpieces. Another destructive event which should also be construed as deliberate was the ancient fire which ravaged the cella's interior and damaged the remaining edifice extensively. The fact that the temple's wooden roof stood 14 meters above ground makes it practically an impossibility to have caught on fire by accident

Λέξεις κλειδιά

Τέλη του 5ου αιώνα, Αθήνα, Βησιγότθοι, Παρθενών.

Keywords

End of 5th century, Athens, Visigoths, Parthenon.

¹ A. Michaelis, *Der Parthenon*, Leipzig 1871.

² All the metopes of the East, North and West sides of the temple were defaced with exception of one, be the North West corner (no XXXII). The metopes of South side were in good condition, till 1687.

³ E. Berger, *Der Parthenon in Basel. Documentation zu den Metopen*, 2 vols, Mainz 1986. C. Praschinker, *Parthenonstudien*, Augsburg Wien 1928.

⁴ R. Carpenter, «The lost Statues of the East Pediment of the Parthenon», *Hesp.* 2 (1933), p. 1 ff. E. Berger, *Die Geburt der Athena im Ostgiebel des Parthenon*, Basel 1974. Γ. Δεσπίνης, *Παρθενώνεια*, Athens 1982, p. 15 21, 37 59, 67 85. The finding of few small frag-

ments of these statues indicates the oldness of the destruction.

⁵ Μ. Κορρές, «Ο Παρθενώνας ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαία ἐποχὴ μέχρι τὸν 19ο αἰῶνα», *Ὁ Παρθενώνας καὶ ἡ ἀκτινοβολία του στὰ νεώτερα χρόνια*, Π. Τουρνικιώτης ed., Athens 1994, p. 147 n. 53. Two or three metopes at the middle of the west façade were probably defaced also by the fire, which damaged the cornices above them.

⁶ See J. Pollini, «Christian desecration and mutilation of the Parthenon», *AM* 122 (2007), p. 214, n. 50. The complete loss of their fragments (contrary to those of the south metopes) makes sure that the mutilation took place many centuries ago.

and an almost absolute certainty that we may safely attribute its burning to arson. There are no testimonies to corroborate such a grave matter but the wealth of archaeological evidence allows us to study the damage⁷ as well as its subsequent resolution, i.e., the repairs aiming at making the temple operable again.

The above mentioned significant indications that both the destruction of the sculptures and the fire owed their existence to deliberate actions lead to the premise, if not the certainty, that both the destruction and the fire must have happened simultaneously: Not only was the intention uniform but the effort exerted in destroying the temple was a concerted one. Destroying the metopes and accessing the cornice of the eastern pediment necessitated the use of scaffolding as high as 12 to 16 meters. What is more, setting the temple on fire necessitated amassing enormous quantities of flammable material within the cella's interior. It is also safe to assume that the pedimental parts of the east side were destroyed at that time as well just as it is safe to assume that the destruction cannot be linked to efforts to establish the Parthenon as a church since it would have necessitated using its western side as the front of that church and not the east. The conversion of the Parthenon into a church occurred much later⁸ and not until the temple had been restored and the cult of Athena had resumed for some time.

Thus, the question remains as to when the great, ancient fire at the Parthenon occurred. Scholars engaged in studying the history of the temple speak vaguely⁹ about the fire and its impact. Two have formulated premises supported by solid arguments which have been generally accepted. However, neither scholar links the arson to the destruction of the sculptures or mentions it in any way.

In 1973, John Travlos¹⁰ attributed the fire to the raids visit-

ed upon Athens by the Heruli in 267 AD. He also maintained that the temple's repairs were carried out by Emperor Julian the Apostate during his brief reign (361-363). The extensive damage wrought on the Athenian Agora by the Herulli had convinced J. Travlos that it had included the Acropolis despite the fact that the only existing historical account of Athens¹¹ being raided by the Herulli does not confirm it. Still, a number of other scholars¹² argue that the Rock was no included in the raids by the Herulli.

The weakness in Travlos' theory lies in the length of the time period of almost one century¹³ between the temple's destruction and its repair. It also lies in the complete silence on the part of those who would have normally sung Emperor Julian's praises¹⁴ over having repaired such a significant temple with a view to perpetuating the ancient cult. In the epistle of Julian to the Athenians, he makes no mention of the matter. Unfortunately the repairs of the Parthenon cannot be pinpointed in time on the basis of technical evidence nor can they be dated on the basis of *spolia* from other earlier monuments¹⁵ which were used as repairing materials.

Six years later, Alison Franz challenged the theory of J. Travlos and formulated her own¹⁶. In her theory, she maintained that the arson was perpetrated by Alaric's Visigoths (396-397) and the repairs were made by Herulius, Illiricum's Praetorian Prefect. Franz based her argument on the numerous marble fragments archeologists recovered in an early 5th-century wall of the Athenian Agora. The fragments had their origin in the Parthenon¹⁷ and came from coffers and Doric columns which had constituted part of the cella's interior prior to the fire. Their large number and their excellent condition ruled out the possibility that the temple could have possibly been de-

⁷ I. Τραυλός, «Η πυρπόλησις τοῦ Παρθενῶνος ὑπὸ τῶν Ἑρουλῶν καὶ ἡ ἐπισκευή του κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος Ἰουλιανοῦ», *ΑΕ* 1973, p. 218-236. Μ. Κορρές, (as above note 5), p. 140, 141, fig. 3, 4.

⁸ See below. The connection of the temple conversion with the defacement of the metopes seems reasonable but has no literary or archaeological supports. Μ. Κορρές, (as above note 5). Χ. Μπούρας, «Οἱ ἐργασίαι ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ Παρθενῶνα καὶ ἡ μετατόπιση τῶν ἀντιλήψεων γιὰ τὴν διατήρησι τῶν μνημείων», *Ὁ Παρθενῶνας καὶ ἡ ἀκτινοβολία του*, (as above note 5), p. 314, 315. K. Schwab, «Celebrations of Victory. The metopes of the Parthenon», *The Parthenon from Antiquity to the Present*, J. Neils ed., Cambridge 2005, p. 165.

⁹ R. Ousterhout, «Bestride the very peak of Heaven, The Parthenon after antiquity», *The Parthenon from Antiquity to the Present*, op. cit., p. 292-329. Μ. Κορρές, (as above note 5), π. 140, 141.

¹⁰ I. Τραυλός, (as above note 7).

¹¹ Γεώργιος Σύγγελλος, *Ecloga chronographica*, A Mosshammer ed., Leipzig 1984, p. 382.

¹² Κ. Καραπλή, «Η Αθήνα καὶ οἱ βαρβαρικὲς ἐπιδρομέες», *Ἀρχιτεκτονική καὶ πολεοδομία ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα ἕως σήμερον*, Athens 1997, p. 305. I. Τραυλός, *Πολεοδομικὴ ἐξέλιξις τῶν Ἀθηνῶν*, Athens 1960, p. 124.

¹³ That is, between 267 and 363 A.D.

¹⁴ Mainly of Libanios, Mamertinos and Ammianus.

¹⁵ The columns used to support the roof of the temple were taken from an hellenistic stoa of Athens, I. Τραυλός, «Η πυρπόλησις...», (as above note 7), p. 226-232, fig. 3. For the various marble architectural members used to repair the jambs of the main door, see Μ. Κορρές, *Μελέτη ἀποκαταστάσεως τοῦ Παρθενῶνος* 4, Athens 1994, p. 61 ff, fig. 25-27, p. 69 ff. and pl. 9.

¹⁶ A. Frantz, «Did Julian the Apostate rebuild the Parthenon?», *AJA* 83 (1979), p. 395-401.

¹⁷ W.B. Dinsmoor, Jr. «New Fragments of the Parthenon in the Athenian Agora», *Hesp.* 43 (1974), p. 132 ff. The fire damage however happened before 435 AD (the year of the Theodosius II edict imposing the destruction of pagan temples) given that the wall in which the Parthenon fragments were found, is older. See above note no 26.

stroyed as far back as 250 years¹⁸ prior to their new use. At the same time, they constituted tangible evidence that they had been re-used far more recently.

All of the above points in Franz's theory coincide with the time period during which the Visigoths raided Southern Greece (395-396) and do not appear to have the weaknesses the points of Travlos' theory do. A. Franz argues that the temple, ten years after its destruction, owes its restoration to Prefect Herculus¹⁹. This is corroborated by a wealth of evidence such as the time continuity; Herculus' construction projects in his effort to fortify the cities of Illyrikon at the Emperor's orders²⁰; the well-known inscription in Hadrian's Library²¹; and the homage paid to Herculus by the Athenians who even honored him by erecting a statue of him²².

It is unimportant whether Herculus was a Christian²³ or not: perceived against the broader background of a building project implemented in Greece where the followers of the old cult were still the overwhelming majority and where the way of life had changed little, such a detail holds no significance. Between 312 and the middle of the 5th century²⁴, the violent conflict between Christians and pagans (*ethnikoi*) in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt – the empire's eastern provinces, included plundering and pillaging ancient temples²⁵ and works of art. As it has been documented by a plethora of written accounts, especially in the large cities the unrest between pagans, heretics, and Orthodox Christians never

abated. The driving force behind the systematic destruction of ancient temples were groups of fanatic monks²⁶, high-ranking officials such as Maternios Kynegios²⁷, and even bishops who wielded enormous power²⁸ within their sphere of influence. Especially in cities where the pagans were the majority, the bishops would ask the imperial army²⁹ to assist them in their task. This atmosphere of utter license and oppression has been admirably conveyed to us by Libanius' epistle «ὕπερ τῶν ἱερῶν»³⁰ [in favor of temples] as well as by the contradictory imperial laws and decrees³¹ of the time which were either abused or deliberately ignored. Prior to the orders of Arcadius and Honorius in 398³² and the Edict of Theodosius II³³ in 423, destroying ancient temples may have officially been against the law, yet the temples were destroyed all the same³⁴.

In his epistle, Libanius pays particular attention to the activities of the zealot-monks³⁵. A decree issued in 390 is also indicative of the times as it forbade monks to enter cities³⁶. The concept of the 'holy man'³⁷ and the fear that another wave of Christian martyrs would rise again, or the cities would be subjected to a surge of uprisings³⁸ turned the militant monks in the East flagrantly unprincipled. According to Eunapius³⁹ «... τυρανικὴν γὰρ εἶχεν ἐξουσίαν τότε πᾶς ἄνθρωπος μέλαιναν φορῶν ἐσθῆτα καὶ δημοσίη βουλόμενος ἀσχημονεῖν».

And while all this was happening in the East, the situation in Greece was an entirely different matter. Up until me-

¹⁸ That is the Heruli invasion (267 AD).

¹⁹ According to J. Boardman and D. Finn, *The Parthenon sculptures*, London 1985, p. 214, the interior colonnade and the roof of the temple were restored in the 5th century.

²⁰ Τ. Λουγκῆς, *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, Ζ', Athens 1978, p. 118.

²¹ Ἰ. Τραυλός, *Πολιοδομικὴ ἐξέλιξις*, (as above note 12), p. 132, n. 2. A. Frantz (as above note 16), p. 401 (*IG II/III* no 4224).

²² By the sophist Apronianus. A. Frantz, *ibid*, note 53, J. Pollini, (as above note 6), p. 211.

²³ A. Frantz, «Herculus in Athens. Pagan or Christian?», *Akten des VII. Internationalen Kongresses für Christliche Archäologie*, Trier 1965, p. 527-530.

²⁴ For a concise history of the period see Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, «Ὁ μέγας αἰὼν», *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ Ἔθνους*, Ζ', p. 32-91.

²⁵ D. Kinney, «Temples», *Late Antiquity*, G. Bowersock, P. Brawn, O. Grabar ed., Cambridge Mass 1999, p. 717-719. E. Sauer, *The archaeology of the religious hatred in the Roman and the early Medieval World*, Charleston 2003. C. Mango, «Antique Statuary and the Byzantine beholder», *DOP* 17 (1963), p. 55-56. P. Brown, *The World of Late Antiquity*, London 1971, p. 103-107. Ἀ. Δεληβορριάς, «In terpretatio Christiana», *Εὐφρόσυνον, Ἀφιέρωμα στὸν Μανόλη Χατζηδάκη*, Α', Athens 1991, p. 107-122.

²⁶ Λιβάνιος, Ὑπερ τῶν ἑλληνικῶν ναῶν, Γ. Ἀβραμίδης ed., Athens 1998, p. 111. Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, (as above note 24), p. 87.

²⁷ Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, *ibid*, p. 84, 87.

²⁸ G. Fowden, «Bishops and Temples in the Eastern Empire 320

435», *Journal of Theological Studies* (1978), p. 53-78.

²⁹ Like the cases of the destruction of the Serapeion in Alexandria (idem, p. 59), of the temple of Zeus in Apameia (idem, p. 60, 64) and of the Marneion in Gaza (Μάρκος Διάκονος, *Βίος Ἁγίου Πορφύριου*, Β. Κατσαρός ed., Thessaloniki 2003, p. 201-221).

³⁰ Λιβάνιος, *op. cit.* He addressed the letter for the sake of the temples, to the emperor Theodosius.

³¹ Among imperial constitutions of the Justinian Kodex 16 exist differences and oppositions because they were issued for different special purposes and they had not general acceptance. See A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora XXIV, Late Antiquity*, Princeton 1988, p. 69-70, n. 83-88.

³² Cod. Theod. 16, 10, 16 of the year 399.

³³ Cod. Theod. 16, 10, 22 of the years 407-408 and 432.

³⁴ D. Kinney (as above note 25), p. 717, Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden (as above note 24), p. 87, G. Fowden (as above note 28), p. 63.

³⁵ Λιβάνιος, *op. cit.*, p. 68, 93, 113.

³⁶ Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, *ibid*, The law was revoked after two years.

³⁷ P. Brown, *The world of Late Antiquity*, p. 103, 104, 106, 107, *idem*, «The rise and function of the holy man in Late Antiquity», *JRS* LXI (1971), p. 87. «Above everything the holy man is a man of power».

³⁸ Well known in Antioch and Alexandria. It is significant that the law of Arcadius imposing the destruction of pagan temples in the open country (Cod. Theod. 16, 10, 16) suggests that the action should take place «... sine turba ac tumultu».

³⁹ Eunapii, *Vitae sophistarum*, J.F. Boissonade ed., Paris 1878, p. 472.

dieval times and with the exception of the Thessaloniki monks there is not a single account⁴⁰ corroborating the existence of monks or hermits behaving in such a manner. Bishops were few⁴¹ and far between (with Bishop Jovianus of Corfu⁴² being the sole exception) and did not seem to encourage violent acts within cities where the followers of the old cults were still holding sway. Especially in Athens, the cult of Athena and its Panathinaea procession would continue⁴³ as late as 411-412 and the schools of philosophy would not fall silent until almost a century later. The conversion of temples into churches that ensued shows that the claim of the Christians on the ancient legacy as their own was not limited to the intentions and efforts exerted by the State⁴⁴ but also spread to the architectural monuments that had survived. Over time, the conversion to Christianity of the upper social classes reduced fanaticism and the sharp conflicts characteristic of the 4th and 5th centuries.

All the accounts making reference to the Athens of approximately 400 verify in the most convincing manner that the destruction of the Great Temple was not the work of a handful of Athenians-turned-Christian⁴⁵. A destruction of such magnitude and terrorist overtones could only happen in the hands of foreigners. Thus, the theory of Alison Franz, that the fire may have been set by Alaric's Visigoths, acquires significant weight.

The historian Zosimos⁴⁶ is the one responsible for the overall impression⁴⁷ that, out of respect for it, Alaric and his Gothic armies did not harm the city of Athens, espe-

cially after a vision in which Athena, fully armed, accompanied by Achilles appeared to them above the city's walls⁴⁸. Nevertheless, the analysis of the sources and archaeological testimonies indicate that this naïve tale is far removed from reality.

The fortified wall whose repairs are said to have been undertaken by Valerianus and which followed the ancient wall's traces⁴⁹ was in a state of extreme disrepair⁵⁰. Worse, its great length was prohibitive, incapable of forestalling Alaric's barbarians⁵¹ who had already stormed Piraeus. The city, which apparently⁵² Alaric did not destroy, was confined to the north of the Acropolis well protected by its post-Roman fortifications known as the post-Herulian wall⁵³. An on-site visit and investigation reveals instantly something very important: that small, walled-in Athens did not connect to the Acropolis which was an autonomous fortified sanctuary and had its own entrance, known today as the Beulé Gate⁵⁴. On the subject of this, the tale about Athena aside, Zosimos also tells us the following⁵⁵: «... Ταύτην ὁ Ἀλάριχος τὴν ὄψιν οὐκ ἐνεγκὼν πάσης μὲν ἀπέστη τῆς πόλεως ἐπιχειρήσεως, ἐπικεκηρυκεύετο δὲ (τῶν δ' Ἀθηναίων) τοὺς λόγους προσδεξαμένους ὄρκους τῶν λαβόντων καὶ δόντων, εἰσῆει σὺν ὀλίγοις Ἀλάριχος εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας τυχὼν φιλοφροσύνης ἀπάσης, λουσάμενος τε καὶ κοινωνήσας ἐστίασεως τοῖς ἐν τῇ πόλει λογάσι, καὶ προσέτι δῶρα λαβὼν ἀπεχώρει τὴν τε πόλιν ἀβλαβῆ καὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν πᾶσαν καταλιπών...».

It is thus evident that the city surrendered⁵⁶, thus escaping looting and pillaging. However, anything outside the post-

⁴⁰ G. Fowden, «The Athenian Agora and the Progress of Christianity», *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 3 (1990), p. 500. Ch. Bouras, «The Daphni monastic complex reconsidered», *Αετός, Studies in honour of Cyril Mango*, Stuttgart 1998, p. 13. T. Gregory, «The survival of Paganism in Christian Greece, A critical essay», *AJPh*, 107 (1986), p. 235.

⁴¹ Almost all the participants to the 2nd Ecumenical Council in Constantinople (381) were representatives of Eastern bishoprics.

⁴² Γ. Σωτηρίου, *Αἱ χριστιανικαὶ Θῆβαι τῆς Θεσσαλίας*, Athens 1931, p. 187, n. 2, 188, n. 1. Ἰ. Παπαδημητρίου, «Ὁ Ἰοβιανὸς τῆς βασιλικῆς τῆς Παλαιολόεως Κερκύρας», *ΑΕ* 1942 1944, p. 39 49. For the names of the bishops of Athens during the Late Antiquity see Γ. Σωτηρίου, *ΕΜΜΕ*, 1Α, 1928, p. 21 22.

⁴³ J. Hurwitt, *The Athenian Acropolis*, Cambridge 1999, p. 283, n. 17.

⁴⁴ P. Lemerle, *Le premier humanisme byzantin*, Paris 1971, p. 43 73. C. Mango, *Byzantium, The Empire of New Rome*, London 1980, p. 131 134. Σ. Γκουγκενέμι, *Ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης στο Mont Saint Michel*, Athens 2008, p. 59.

⁴⁵ For the situation in Greece, see also El. Key Fowden, «Greece», *Late Antiquity*, (as above note 25), p. 476 (with bibl.). G. Fowden, «Bishops and Temples» (as above note 28), p. 76, 77. T. Gregory, (as above note 40), p. 233, 235, 237. J. Irmscher, «Paganismus in Justinianischen Reich», *Klio* 63 (1981), p. 686, 688. J. Pollini, (as above note 6), p. 211.

⁴⁶ Ζώσιμος, *Histoire nouvelle*, III. F. Paschoud ed., Paris 1986, p. 11 ff (V, 15 f.).

⁴⁷ H. Thompson and R. Wycherley, *The Agora of Athens*, Princeton 1972, p. 210, n. 12.

⁴⁸ Ζώσιμος, op. cit., p. 11 «περινούστατον καὶ πρόμαχον Ἀθηναίων, ὡς ἐστὶν αὐτὴν ὄραν ἐν τοῖς ἀγάλμασιν... παρεστῶτα τὸν Ἀχιλλεῖα τὸν ἦρω...».

⁴⁹ Ἰ. Τραυλός, *Πολεοδομικὴ ἐξέλιξις*, (as above note 12), p. 122, 124, pl. V.

⁵⁰ According to Procopius (*Περὶ κτισμάτων*, G. Downey ed., Cambridge Mass 1961, p. 238, B. 272, 23 24) «... τοὺς περιβόλους... Ἀθήνησι ... χρόνου μὲν μήκει πεποννηκότες ἐπιμελησαμένου δὲ αὐτῶν οὐδενὸς τῶν πάντων ἀνθρώπων...».

⁵¹ Ζώσιμος, (as above note 46), «... ράστα τὴν πόλιν οἰόμενος ἐλεῖν διὰ τὸ μέγεθος παρὰ τῶν ἐνδον φυλαχθῆναι μὴ δυναμένην...».

⁵² A limited number of excavations and investigations took place in the city enclosed by the Post Herulian Wall. Consequently we are not informed about damages there. J. Camp, *The Athenian Agora*, London 1986, p. 199.

⁵³ A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora* XXIV, (as above note 31), p. 125 141, pl. 4, 5, 7 14, The Post Herulian Wall by J. Travlos. The area of the enclosed by the wall city covered the one fourteenth of classical Athens, Ἰ. Τραυλός, *Πολεοδομικὴ*, (as above note 12), p. 129.

⁵⁴ Ibid, n. 2. J. Hurwitt, *The Athenian Acropolis*, Cambridge 1999, p. 383. M. Beulé, *L'Acropole d'Athènes*, Paris 1862, p. 50 61.

⁵⁵ Ζώσιμος, (as above note 46).

⁵⁶ Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, (as above note 24), p. 96.

Roman wall did fall prey to the barbarians⁵⁷ who had recently converted to Christianity. This is corroborated by numerous pieces of evidence on the destruction on the Ancient Agora⁵⁸, the southern slope of the Acropolis; Asklepieion⁵⁹; Dipylon⁶⁰; and a number of other locations⁶¹. The sanctuary of Nemesis at Rhamnous where the cult statue was found shattered⁶² must have been another Visigoth fatality.

It is also certain that the same fate befell the Acropolis. Either it had surrendered, accepting the terms stipulated or it was seized after its only gate had been stormed. Looting of the temples ensued, followed by the systematic destruction of the Parthenon.

As it has already been noted, destroying the Parthenon was no easy task⁶³. It necessitated that the Parthenon's destroyers be imbued by wrathful loathing against the ancient cult. It also required that the invaders' effort and organization was equal to or greater than those observed in Syria, Palestine, and Egypt at precisely the same time frame. The metopes of the Parthenon's south side remained intact possibly because the invaders had run out of means or time for destruction that had been available to them, as was the case of temple destruction in the East⁶⁴. One and only one metope (nr XXXII) on the north side escaped the wrath of the invaders. This oversight on their part may be explained⁶⁵ by the metope's resemblance to a Christian icon theme, the Annunciation of the Mother of God.

In his *Life of Maximus*, Eunapius⁶⁶ gives an account of Alaric's descent on and his unencumbered passage through

the Thermopylae. He then proceeds to provide us with an essential piece of information: «... ὅτε Ἀλάριχος ἔχων τοὺς βαρβάρους διὰ τῶν Πυλῶν παρήλθεν, ὡσπερ διὰ σταδίου καὶ ἱπποκρότου πεδίου τρέχων τοιαύτας αὐτῷ τὰς πύλας ἀπέδειξε τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἢ τε τῶν τὰ φαιὰ ἱμάτια ἐχόντων ἀκωλύτως προσπαραιρελεουσόντων ἀσέβεια...».

In other words, together with the Visigoth armies, those who wore the brown garments, passed «ἀκωλύτως προσπαραιρελεουσόμενοι» the Thermopylae. The excerpt from the text conceals no mystery (as some have claimed⁶⁷) and can be interpreted in the following manner: groups of disorderly monks⁶⁸ followed the Visigoth army with the sole purpose of plundering and destroying any and all pagan elements in Greece. The monks, who no one dared stop in the East or in Constantinople, made it easy for the Visigoth army to pass through the Thermopylae. It has even been argued that they may have been individuals disguised as monks⁶⁹.

Be that as it may, the Eleusis sanctuary was thoroughly destroyed and never re-opened its doors after the raid. Corinth and Olympia were destroyed next. Suffice it to say that, even later, when Alaric marched into Rome and plundered it, the frenzy over destroying ancient temples had not yet abated⁷⁰. Even the hostility manifested against the inhabitants of Greece (pagans and Christians alike) may have been hiding some ulterior religious motives, given that the German-speaking barbarians were followers of the heretic Arius⁷¹. They had espoused Chris-

⁵⁷ The destructions out of the Post Herulian precinct were enough to create the general belief that the city was captured and completely destroyed (Φιλοσόργος, XVI 2). See also A. Frantz, *Late Antiquity*, (as above note 31), p. 52. The two different opinions about the events of the year 396 came out from the lack of information about the fortified parts of the ancient city. See also A. Frantz, «Some invaders of Athens in Late Antiquity», *A Colloquium in memory of George Carpenter Miles*, New York 1976, p. 12, 13.

⁵⁸ J. Camp, *The Athenian Agora*, p. 198-199. A. Frantz, *The Athenian Agora*, vol. XXIV, p. 52.

⁵⁹ T. Gregory, «The Christian Asklepieion in Athens», *9th Annual Byzantine studies Conference*, Durham 1983, p. 39, 40. The cutting to pieces of numerous statues of the Asklepieion is an indication of the raid upon the sanctuary at the same time. In this case, the function of the pagan temple after 450 AD (i.e. the return of Proklos in Athens) presupposes its restoration before the final demolition of both the temple and the doric stoa.

⁶⁰ *The Athenian Agora* VII, p. 53, 63-64.

⁶¹ As in the Roman bath, found during the Athens Metro excavations, in Amalios street.

⁶² Γ. Δεσπίνης, *Συμβολή στην μελέτη του έργου του Άγορακρίτου*, Athens 1971, p. 64, 65. Coins of Constantius found in graves in the temple indicate that the destruction took place after 361.

⁶³ Λιβάνιος, op. cit., (n. 26), p. 100 «... καθείλε νεὸς οὐκ ἐλάττω περὶ τοῦτο πονησάντων τῶν καθαιρούντων ἢ τῶν οἰκοδομη-

σάντων, οὕτως οὐκ ἦν ῥάδιον ἀλλήλων διαξενῦσαι τοὺς λίθους δεσμοῖς ἰσχυροτάτοις εἰσενηνευγμένους». See also G. Fowden, «Bishops and Temples», (as above note 28), p. 58.

⁶⁴ As in the case of the temple of Zeus in Apameia, according to Theodoretos (G. Fowden, *ibid.*, p. 64). For the preservation of the metopes of the south side of the Parthenon see M. Beard, *The Parthenon*, London 2002, p. 55-57. Ἄ. Δεληβορριάς, «Interpretatio Christiana», op. cit., (as above note 25). C. Praschniker, *Parthenonstudien*, 1928, p. 47 ff. J. Pollini, op. cit., (as above note 6), p. 213. According to Cyril Mango (*The Oxford History of Byzantium*, Oxford 2002, p. 96) «... they defaced the curved metopes of the three sides of the temple, then they gave up.».

⁶⁵ G. Rodenwaldt, «Interpretation Christiana», *Arch. Anz.*, (1933), p. 401 ff. J. Pollini argues (as above note 6), p. 214-216, that the metope XXXII has also suffered mutilations and maltreatment.

⁶⁶ Eunapii, (as above note 39), p. 476.

⁶⁷ G. Fowden, *The Athenian Agora and the progress of Christianity*, *JRA* 3 (1990), p. 500.

⁶⁸ Π. Ἀθανασιάδου Fowden, (as above note 24), p. 87. P. Castrén, «General Aspects of life in Post Herulian Athens», P. Castrén ed., Helsinki 1994, p. 9.

⁶⁹ G. Fowden, (as above note 67), *ibid.*

⁷⁰ D. Kinney, (as above note 25), p. 718.

⁷¹ P. Geary, *Barbarians and Ethnicity*, *Late Antiquity*, (as above note 25), p. 121. T. Gregory and A. Cutler, *Arianism*, *ODB*, p. 167. K.

tianity shortly before the raids through the teachings of Ulfila⁷² and his disciples who adhered faithfully to the dogmas promulgated by the arch-heretic.

During the barbaric raid against it, the city of Athens witnessed the loss of buildings and works of art which «πόνῳ καὶ χρόνῳ καὶ πολυχειρίᾳ καὶ πολλοῖς ταλάντοις κατεσκευασμένα»⁷³. It must have been the Parthenon ravaged by fire when, Synesius of Cyrene, grieved, wrote those words describing his visit to Athens⁷⁴. Few are the historical accounts dating back to that time. It appears, however, that during the 5th century, the city, which had become larger, was rebuilt in the spirit of its traditions⁷⁵ and was graced by new public edifices⁷⁶ and buildings dedicated to the Emperors⁷⁷. The new city resumed its cult of Athena and philosophy witnessed a revival, at-

tracting students from foreign lands. It is in the spirit of all that has been mentioned as well as in the spirit of social peace that such pagan monuments as the Parthenon were restored at the beginning of that century.

The christian basilicas erected in the city during the 5th century⁷⁸ were few and relatively small. The conversion of temples into Christian churches⁷⁹ was accomplished with many a delay and with the bare minimum of architectural adjustments as necessitated by the temples' new function. In Athens, with the exception of the Asklepieion, we encounter no other case of a church having been built in the exact location of an ancient temple using the latter's building materials. Everything shows that the Athenians espoused the new religion unhurriedly and without any particular zeal.

Χαράλαμπος Μπούρας

Ο ΑΛΑΡΙΧΟΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΘΗΝΑ

Ενισχύεται ἡ ἄποψη τῆς Alison Frantz ὅτι τὴν πυρκαϊὰ τοῦ Παρθενῶνος προκάλεσαν ὄχι οἱ Ἑρμούλιοι τὸ 267 μ.Χ., ἀλλὰ οἱ Βησιγότθοι τοῦ Ἀλαρίχου τὸ 396-397. Νέα ἀνάγνωση τῶν κειμένων ὁδηγεῖ στὸ συμπέρασμα ὅτι ἡ περιορισμένη ἐντὸς τοῦ Ὑστερορρωμαϊκοῦ τείχους πόλη τῶν Ἀθηνῶν δὲν καταστράφηκε ἀπὸ τοὺς ἐπιδρομεῖς, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐκτὸς αὐτοῦ τμήματά της (ὅπως ἦταν καὶ ἡ Ἀκρόπολη) λεηλατήθηκαν καὶ πυρπολήθηκαν ἀπὸ τοὺς βαρβάρους. Ἡ πρόθεση γιὰ τὸν ἐμπρησμό τοῦ ναοῦ ἀποδίδεται στὸν φανατισμὸ τῶν πρόσφατα ἐκχριστιανισθέντων Βησιγότθων. Σὲ αὐτὴν ἐπίσης ἀπο-

δίδεται ἡ συστηματικὴ ἀπολάξευση τῶν μετοπῶν τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς, τῆς Βορείας καὶ τῆς Δυτικῆς πλευρᾶς τοῦ ναοῦ, καθὼς καὶ ἡ καταστροφὴ τῶν ἐναετιῶν ἀγαλμάτων τῆς κυρίας ὄψεως, δηλαδή τῆς Ἀνατολικῆς. Ἀπουσιάζουν δυστυχῶς σαφεῖς πληροφορίες γιὰ τὶς μεγάλες αὐτὲς ζημιές τοῦ γλυπτικοῦ διακόσμου τοῦ Παρθενῶνος, ἡ ἐμμονὴ ὅμως τῶν περισσοτέρων Ἀθηναίων στὴν θρησκεία τῶν προγόνων τους κατὰ τὸν 4ο καὶ τὸν 5ο αἰῶνα μαρτυρεῖ ὅτι οἱ καταστροφικὲς ἐνέργειες ὀφείλονται σὲ ξένους ἐπιδρομεῖς.

Καραπλῆ, *op. cit.*, (n. 12), p. 307. Δ.Σ. Μπαλάνος, «Ἀρειανισμός», *MEE*, 5, p. 426. E.A. Thompson, «Christianity and the Northern Barbarians», *The Conflict between Paganism and Christianity in the fourth Century*, A. Momigliano ed., Oxford, 1963, p. 68. I.N. Woods, «Conversion», *Late Antiquity*, (as above note 67), p. 393, 394.

⁷² A. Kazhdan, Ulfilas, *ODB*, p. 2139.

⁷³ Λιβάνιος, (as above note 26), p. 104, on pagan temples in the East provinces.

⁷⁴ «... καὶ καθάπερ ἱερείου διαπεπραγμένων τὸ δέγμα λείπεται, γνώρισμα τοῦ πάλαι ποτὲ ζώου», Συνέσιος *epist.*, 135, *Patr. Gr.*, Paris 1856 1861, 64, 1524.

⁷⁵ Rebuilt as a pagan city. P. Castren, *Late Antiquity* (as above note 25), p. 321, 322, J. Pollini, (as above note 6), p. 211.

⁷⁶ As the palace in the Athenian Agora. H. Thompson, «The palace of the Giants», in A. Frantz, *Athenian Agora*, (as above note 31), p. 95 116.

⁷⁷ A. Frantz, «A public Building of Late Antiquity in Athens», (*IG II*, 5205), *Hesp.* 48 (1979), p. 194 203, pl. 62 64.

⁷⁸ Γ. Σωτηρίου, *EMME*, A1, p. 51 57. Ι. Τραυλός, *Χριστιανικὰ Ἀθῆναι*, Ἀθῆναι 1962, p. 725 731. Α. Ὀρλάνδος, *Ἡ ξυλόστεγος παλαιοχριστιανικὴ βασιλική*, Ἀθῆναι 1956, p. 138, 155, 162, 183 186, 517, 520, 521.

⁷⁹ The problem of the exact date of the temple conversion rests unsolved and it is a general belief that it happened sometime between the 5th and the 7th century. Ι. Τραυλός, *Χριστιανικὰ Ἀθῆναι*, p. 722. C. Mango, «The conversion of the Parthenon into a church», «The Tübingen Theosophy», *ΔΧΑΕ ΙΗ'* (1995), p. 201 203. A. Frantz, *Athenian Agora XXIV*, (as above note 31), p. 92. J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens*, London 1971, p. 445. Μ. Κορρές, «Ὁ Παρθενῶνας», (as above note 5), p. 146. Τ. Τανούλας, *Τὰ Προπύλαια τῆς Ἀθηναϊκῆς Ἀκρόπολης κατὰ τὸν Μεσαίωνα*, Athens 1997, p. 270, n. 4 8. R. Ousterhout, «Bestride the very peak of Heaven», (as above note 9), p. 302 306. A. Kaldellis, *The Christian Parthenon*, Cambridge 2009, p. 23 f.f.