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Cilliers Breytenbach/Elli Tzavella: Early Christianity in Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas. From Paul to Justinian I (1st–6th cent. AD). Leiden/Boston: Brill 2023 (Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 114. Early Christianity in Greece 1). XXV, 599 pp., 113 ill., 7 maps. € 174.41/$ 196.00. ISBN: 978-90-04-50960-3.

This book is the first volume of the series "Early Christianity in Greece" (ECG), with editors Cilliers Breytenbach (Berlin), Martin Goodman (Oxford), Klaus Hallof (Berlin [*Inscriptiones Graecae*]), Andreas Müller (Kiel), Joseph Lee Rife (Nashville) and Christiane Zimmermann (Kiel). The ECG is a subseries of the series "Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity" (AJEC), of which the founding editor was Martin Hengel † (Tübingen). It follows the tradition of "Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in der ersten drei Jahrhunderten" and continues the subseries "Early Christianity in Asia Minor" (ECAM). The volumes of the subseries "Early Christianity in Greece" employs literary and archaeological sources to examine the rise and expansion of Christianity in Greece until the reign of Justinian I, while at the same time presenting the advances in research.

In recent decades the expanding study of Roman and late antique Athens has allowed us to understand in new ways the development of Christianity in the city that was considered the cultural center of the ancient world. Although there are many works on late paganism and early Christianity in Athens, none, however, puts their practice and development side by side in any coherent way and none includes so many different sources in illuminating such a complicated period. Cilliers Breytenbach and Elli Tzavella describe Christianity in Athens in opposition to and in interaction with pagan religion and the city's philosophical schools. The authors are interested in religious and sociological issues and demonstrate an impressive grasp of a variety of complex issues. This book is an ambitious and successful attempt to combine fields of research, clearly distinct from each other, albeit complementary, literary, archaeological and epigraphical, covering the period from the first century A. D. to the end of the reign of Justinian I, in 565 A. D. ("Preface", pp. XIII–XIV).

The book offers an excellent overview of the topic over a lengthy period. The authors outline the intellectual (that is, philosophical) and religious ideologies prevalent during this period of transition and study thoroughly the archaeological and epigraphic evidence. The complexity of themes discussed

in this book requires a multi-faceted approach, which the authors successfully apply. One major difficulty in dealing with the topic lies in the fluidity of the archaeological and epigraphical evidence whose dating is uncertain. The historical narrative of early Christianity in Athens and Attica that emerges from the written sources is equally problematic. One has to combine the limited number of Christian literary sources, some of which, however, were later, may have been fictitious and *apocrypha*, or texts of pagan philosophers discreet about Christianity. Given the nature of the sources, the image of pagan Athens naturally dominates our perception of early Christian Athens. The book successfully breaks down this image and unfolds the process of the gradual Christianization of Athens and Attica.

It is a great help to the reader that the literary sources and inscriptions are quoted in the footnotes and translated or paraphrased. The archaeological evidence includes churches and cemeteries, which is catalogued in two appendixes. Breytenbach wrote chapters 1 (sections 1–3), 3, 5, and 6 (sections 2–3, 5, 9–10) and drafted the concordance of inscriptions. Tzavella wrote chapters 1 (section 4), 2, 4 and 6 (sections 4, 7–8) and composed the catalogues given in the appendix of the archaeological material. The remaining chapters were co-written by the two authors.

In Chapter 1, "Introduction: The Christianization of Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas from Paul to the End of the Reign of Justinian I (527–565)" (pp. 1–39), the author openly admits that the "narrative has to remain sketchy and incomplete" (p. 1), because of the lack of precision in dating archaeological remains. In the five sections of the "Introduction" "Previous Research on the Christianization of Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 4–10) is summarized. The early "Literary Sources for the Study of Christianity in Athens" (pp. 10–21) are discussed in section 2, namely 1 Thess 3:1, Act 7:15–18:1; 20:2, the second-century Athenian Apologists, Aristides and Athenagoras, and other scattered references to early Christianity in Athens. In section 3, the author explores the criteria for identifying "Christian Inscriptions from Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 21–24). In section 4 ("Archaeological Evidence on Christianity in Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas", pp. 24–37) Tzavella notes that Christian presence in the archaeological record is relatively late, and explains it by the fact that Christian symbols became evident only after the new religion was firmly established and became dominant (p. 27). Having outlined the brief history of excavations of Christian Athens (section 4.2, "Research History: Excavating the Evidence",

pp. 27–32) and progress in research on the advances of Christianity (section 4.3, "Research History: Discussing the Evidence", pp. 32–37), the author deals with the methods used to investigate the development of Christianity in Athens and looks at the limitations implicit in the evidence, literary, epigraphic and archaeological (section 5, "Setting Limits and Crossing Boundaries", pp. 37–39). Churches are studied in the context of topography and of the history of their excavations. Topography, too, is important in the examination of cemeteries and emphasis is placed on funeral practices and religious identity. Oil lamps as indicators of Christian development are rarely mentioned in the book. But as lamps with Christian symbols multiply from the late fifth century, they confirm the evidence from churches and inscriptions that Christianity was becoming increasingly assertive at exactly the same time. Upper class houses, which display the same pattern of Christianization, are not discussed in the book. Likewise martyrological and hagiographical texts, which constructed a new Christian cultural identity then and afterwards, are not a focus of this book, and are mentioned only in passing. The lack of late antique texts on Athenian martyrs and saints obviously indicates a non-radical form of the Athenian Church and that local bishops and monks did not produce *martyria* and *lives* of saints. This, however, could be remedied by later texts, which, in connection to known churches, confirm the cult of saints in the early period, as in the case of the martyr Leonides.

Chapter 2, "Stability and Crisis in Athens and Attica from Paul's Visit to the End of Justinian's Rule (a Geographical and Historical Overview)" (in five sections, pp. 40–75), offers an excellent overview of the physical environment of Attica, the monumental sectors of the city of Athens, settlements in the countryside, and a historical outline of the area from the Roman occupation onwards.

Chapter 3, "Christianity and Philosophy in Polytheistic Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 76–162) in seven sections and many subsections examines the intellectual context in which Christianity evolved in Athens and interaction with the philosophical schools. In section 2 ("Luke's Paul and Athenian Polytheism", pp. 78–87) the narrative of Paul's teaching in Athens according to Luke's *Acts of the Apostles* sets up early Christianity in opposition not to the Roman rule, as in other cities, but to polytheism and philosophy. In section 3, texts by the "Second-Century Christian Apologists" (pp. 88–112), Aristides and Athenagoras, written in the context of paganism and the

philosophical tradition, refer to slander and persecution of the Christians by the Athenians.

Section 4 ("Religion in Athens in the Third and Fourth Centuries", pp. 112–123) outlines the interaction between pagan philosophy and Christian theology in Athens in the third and fourth centuries. Section 5 ("Christian Theologians and Athenian Paideia in the Fourth Century", pp. 123–143) examines intellectual contacts between Athens' Neoplatonic philosophers and Christian theologians. The Christian Prohaeresius held a chair in rhetoric. Gregory of Nazianzus and Basil of Caesarea studied at Athens. The alleged study of John Chrysostom in Athens, his discourse with members of the Athenian assembly and their conversion probably express a seventh-century perspective. The influence of Greek παιδεία on the Christian Fathers is stressed: it injected elements of the philosophical tradition into Christian teaching and contributed to the formation of a fine literary style, necessary for Christian preaching. While there is no indication of any confrontation in third and fourth-centuries texts between Christians and pagans in Athens, the reader will, certainly, conclude that Athens could not induce any of the major theological figures who visited the city and studied at its schools to stay in the city, given that they left Athens for the provinces of the East. Origen, for example, a catechist in the Catechetical School of Alexandria, stayed in Athens for only a short time, before returning to Palestine where he founded the Christian School of Caesarea.

Section 6, "Christianity and the City of Athena: From the Late Fourth until the Mid-Sixth Century" (pp. 143–160), investigates the advance of Christianity in Athens, the decline of paganism in its public form and its persistence in the private sphere. Although imperial policy towards paganism had changed over the fourth/fifth centuries, pagan practices continued. Synesius's account of Athens may indicate not so much "its demise after the invasion by the Visigoths" (p. 146), which is the established view, as an attempt to diminish Athens's importance for higher education, thus implying the superiority of Alexandria's philosophical school, where Synesius had studied. Breytenbach rightly emphasizes the importance of imperial involvement in enforcing Christianization in the case of the empress Athenais-Eudocia, who may have initiated the construction of the Tetraconch Church in the Forum (Library) of Hadrian, perhaps through her brother Gessius, *praefectus praetorio* of Illyricum, who was resident in Athens in 421–443. It should be remarked

that, according to Georgios A. Soteriou, the basilica at Ilissos may also have been a project of the same empress.[1]

Breytenbach also considers the emphasis placed by Neoplatonic philosophers on religion and theurgy that would bridge pagan philosophy with Christianity (subsection 6.2, "The 'Religious Turn' of the Neoplatonic School in Athens", pp. 149–156). The reference made in the *Life of Proclus* by Marinus to the Christians' plan to remove the statue of Athena from the Parthenon highlights the last moments of paganism in Athens.

Subsection 6.3, "When the Sad End Is Not the Said End" (pp. 156–160), is an outline of the gradual decline of the philosophical school in Athens, as numbers of Christians and churches grew. In the sixth century the measures of Justinian brought about the closure of the school and the last scholarch Damascius allegedly departed for Persia. By then Neoplatonism was deeply religious. It had created a religious system, in the attempt to understand the nature of the divine, a philosophical monotheism and it practiced contemplation, prayer and theurgy. Its influence on Christian theology is manifest in the work of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, dating to the early sixth century (p. 159), which became the most influential work of Orthodox mystic theology in Byzantium. It is generally believed that this work was composed in the East by a Neoplatonist Christian, who aimed to integrate Neoplatonism into Christian theology. If, however, the author was the Neoplatonist Damascius,[2] his aim would clearly have been to infuse Christian theology with Neoplatonism, in the hope of preserving the philosophical school of Athens in a period of decline and pressure exerted by the Christians. In this case, Athens would had been completely Christianized by the time this work was written. The need to reconcile Neoplatonism with Christianity was strongly felt at the turn of the fifth to the sixth century, when Christianity had become strong in Athens and several temples were adapted for Christian cult, which is certainly the picture that emerges throughout the book. In addition, the advance of Christianity in late fifth-century Athens is also indicated in the *Apocryphal Acts of Philip*, where he is depicted preaching, impress-

1 G. A. Soteriou: Παλαιὰ Χριστιανικὴ Βασιλικὴ Ἰλισοῦ. In: AEph, 1919, pp. 1–31, pp. 23–25.

2 Cf. C. M. Mazzucchi: Damascio, Autore del Corpus Dionysiacum, e il dialogo Περὶ Πολιτικῆς Ἐπιστήμης. In: Aevum 80, 2006, pp. 299–334, criticized by E. Fiori: Recensione dell'articolo di Mazzucchi. In: Adamantius 14, 2008, pp. 670–673, et al.

ing Athenian philosophers and converting them through miracles that prove the power of the new religion.[3]

In the "Conclusion" (section 7, pp. 160–162) to this chapter Breytenbach notes the lack of prominent Christian writers from Athens and of an intellectual debate between Christianity and Neoplatonic philosophy. He advances the hypothesis, on the basis of the epigraphic evidence, that Christianity in Athens spread among the lower classes, while the upper classes remained longer attached to the philosophers (p. 161). This view, put forward by Alison Frantz,[4] is certainly correct and applies to most of the cities. It is accepted that from its beginnings Christianity was spreading mostly among members of the middle and low classes, and was less attractive to upper class educated individuals steeped in pagan learning. Of course exceptions are known already at the time of the Apostles[5] and especially under the pressure of imperial policy from the fourth century. In Athens, the aristocrats' attachment to paganism was fostered during the fourth and fifth centuries till the reign of Theodosius II by influential pagan proconsuls of Achaea who had connections with the elite in Rome.[6] Further evidence of the Athenian elites' attachment to paganism is provided by the houses of the upper classes. Their sculptural decoration remained pagan for a long time, which may also indicate that they valued it for aesthetic and cultural reasons. In such houses elements pertaining to Christian worship are hardly found until the sixth century. For example, the small triclinium by the central triclinium of a large aristocratic *domus* alongside today's Acropolis Museum and dating to the late

3 Acta Apostolorum apocrypha. Vol. 2,2: Acta Philippi et acta Thomae. Accedunt acta Barnabae. Ed. M. Bonnet. Leipzig 1903, pp. 3–16; M. Di Branco: La città dei filosofi. Storia di Atene da Marco Aurelio a Giustiniano. Con un'appendice su 'Atene immaginaria' nella letteratura bizantina. Firenze 2006 (Civiltà veneziana. Studi 51), pp. 201–203.

4 A. Frantz: Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700. Princeton, NJ 1988 (The Athenian Agora 24), p. 72.

5 E.g. R. Lane Fox: Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century AD to the Conversion of Constantine. London 1986, pp. 293–295, 307–308, 321–322, 334.

6 E. J. Watts: Athens between East and West: Athenian Elite Self-Presentation and the Durability of Traditional Cult in Late Antiquity. In: GRBS 57, 2017, pp. 191–213.

fifth to the early sixth century, has been hypothetically identified as a chapel.[7] Written sources show that in the sixth century in large cities of the East and in Constantinople itself several members of the upper classes were persecuted by emperors for their pagan beliefs. Thus the lack of prominent Christian writers both in Athens and in the rest of Greece may have a twofold explanation. Firstly, it may have occurred because of the administrative and political attachment of the area to the West until the early fifth century and the much longer ecclesiastical dependency from the Church of Rome, which is an issue that deserves particular attention. Secondly, it may have occurred because of the undoubted power of Greek religious and cultural traditions, which were stronger here than in provinces of the East. Religious polemic was not an issue for paganism, because paganism did not claim religious exclusiveness, unlike the religions of the East, i. e. Judaism, Christianity and, later, Islam. Religious texts, such as theological treatises, homilies and saints' biographies, were produced only in the eastern provinces, where catechetical schools were established, fervently militant bishops created a polemical religious environment and heresies gave rise to confrontational theological discussion. Furthermore, the religious traditions of the East expressed local ethnic identities and fed polemical attitudes towards the Greco-Roman polytheism of the ruling class.[8]

As written sources throw little light on the spread of Christianity in Athens, the archaeological and epigraphical evidence remains the major source of information and this is studied by Tzavella in chapter 4, "The Expansion of Christianity: Archaeological Evidence" (pp. 163–232), with three sections and many subsections. In the "Introduction" (pp. 163–164, she presents her approach to the archaeological evidence: (1) churches, with the evidence summarized, while bibliography and construction history of churches is found in an appendix (cat. A); (2) cemeteries, the excavations reports on

7 S. Eleftheratou: The "Makriyiannis Plot". Transformations of the Urban Landscape during Late Antiquity. In: H. Saradi (ed.): Byzantine Athens. Proceedings of a Conference. October 21–23, 2016, Byzantine and Christian Museum Athens. Athens 2022, pp. 74–103, p. 87.

8 E. g. J. Hahn: Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden, und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.). Berlin 2004 (Klio-Beihefte. N. F. 8), pp. 81–105; W. H. C. Frend: The Donatist Church. A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa. Oxford 1985 [reissued]; B. D. Shaw: Sacred Violence. African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine. Cambridge/New York 2011.

which are given in appendix (cat. B); and (3) funerary inscriptions presented with an emphasis on personal names and on the occupations of the deceased, while ceramics and sculpture are integrated in the other sections. Tzavella then examines the transformation of cult places after pagan temples had been officially outlawed, to reach the conclusion that pagan cult in temples is attested up to the fifth century. The Panathenaea and pagan cult in the Parthenon continued until around 430, while cult activity at the temple of Asclepius continued until 450 and at Eleusis to the end of the fourth century. In rural temples, cult is rarely attested in the fifth century, while pagan cult sites on mountain peaks and caves functioned until the sixth century, although they were also frequented by Christians. Having outlined the evidence for pagan temples, the author focusses on the early Christian churches in Athens. The basilica on the Ilissos is perhaps the earliest church *extra muros*. The Tetraconch in the Forum (Library) of Hadrian is dated to the second quarter to the middle of the fifth century and attributed to Athenais-Eudocia. The basilica in the theatre of Dionysus is considered the earliest cemeterial church inside the city. A church at the Olympieion (temple of Zeus) has been dated by John Travlos to the middle of the fifth century (and cat. A, no. 16) based on a ceramic deposit (p. 420), which, however, has recently been persuasively pushed later, from the early sixth century onwards, a date that the authors could not have known at the time of the submission of their manuscript.[9] The basilica of the Asklepieion is considered one of the earliest temples converted into a church, a date now revised to a much later period.[10] The Hephaisteion was converted in the seventh century, for which a much later date is suggested by Bente Kiilerich,[11] to ninth–tenth century, and Yannis Theocharis.[12] The temples on the Acropolis converted into churches are mentioned briefly. The conversion of the Parthenon to Christian use dates to the late fifth century, but the sociologically-based discussion of its use as a cathedral does not help with issues of chronology (pp. 182–183). Tzavella rightly concludes that the absence of signs of any violence committed against pagan temples in the city center, with the pos-

9 Y. Theocharis: Η Αθήνα μετά το τέλος του αρχαίου κόσμου. Αρχιτεκτονική γλυπτική από τον 8ο έως τον 11ο αι. μ.Χ. Athens 2022, p. 238.

10 Ibid., pp. 231–260.

11 B. Kiilerich: The Hephaisteion in the Byzantine Period. In: Saradi (ed.): Byzantine Athens (note 7), pp. 196–211.

12 Theocharis (note 9), pp. 201–223.

sible exception of the destruction of the Parthenon metopes, indicates that the elites wanted to preserve an antique urban identity (pp. 184–185).

Section 3 of this chapter, “The Transformation of Burial Spaces” (pp. 199–232), includes eight subsections that employ an archaeological and sociological approach. Emphasis is placed on the topography of cemeteries, types of graves, objects found in the graves and on the transformation of burial practices. From published reports, which are systematically gathered, the author concludes that Christian tombs were situated in extramural pagan cemeteries with three known churches, the basilica of bishop Clematius, the basilica in the National Garden and the Hagia Triada basilica in the Kerameikos. Among intramural burials of major importance is a tomb situated between the south-east corner of the Parthenon and the Acropolis wall and dated by coins to the reign of Tiberius II (578–582) (p. 200). The significance of this burial in connection with the conversion of the Parthenon into a Christian church is discussed in Appendix A (p. 372). Tzavella’s observation that burials in churches are not securely dated to Late Antiquity in churches in Attica (p. 217) needs to be reassessed: Clematius’ grave was found directly in front of the βῆμα of his church.[13] It should be remarked also that Clematius was recognized as saint, given that in the inscription of his sarcophagus he is termed ὅσιος.

As in other cities, fourth-century Christian burials are rarely found, although they become increasingly recognizable from the fifth century from funerary inscriptions and objects adorned with Christian symbols, especially lamps. The conclusions of this chapter focus on Christian burial customs and the observation that the transition from pagan to Christian practice was gradual and often overlapped with pagan habits.

Chapter 5, “Christianity in Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas: A Survey of the Epigraphic Evidence” (pp. 233–291), offers a survey of Christian inscriptions, mainly sepulchral, in seven sections. Of the 317 Christian inscriptions from Attica, 243 are epitaphs of which 179 are from Athens, while the origin of many inscriptions in the Athens Epigraphical Museum is unknown. Only some 17 to 21 are dated by Erkki Sironen to the fourth to fifth century. Having presented the sepulchral formulas of the inscriptions, Breytenbach

13 D. Pallas: Ἡ Ἀθήνα στὰ χρόνια τῆς μετάβασης ἀπὸ τὴν ἀρχαία λατρεία στὴ Χριστιανική. Τὰ ἀρχαιολογικὰ δεδομένα. In: Ἐπιστημονικὴ Ἐπετηρὶς Θεολογικῆς Σχολῆς Πανεπιστημίου Ἀθηνῶν 28, 1989, pp. 851–930, p. 864.

focusses on Christian symbols and names, biblical quotations and liturgical formulas and of members of the clergy. The process of Christianization is obvious in the names of the deceased: names of Greek gods appear in the earlier inscriptions, biblical names increase from the fifth century, Christian theophoric names appear in the fourth century and increasingly afterwards, and names deriving from Christian moral values crop up from the fifth century onwards. Breytenbach (pp. 249–250) points to the little information from the inscriptions pertaining to the role of the upper classes in the spread of Christianity in Athens, in contrast to the Christian tradition found in the *Acts of the Apostles* and the *Apocryphal Acts of Philip*.

In Chapter 6, "Aspects of Christianity in Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 292–341), Breytenbach, interested in applying a sociological approach to Christianization of Athens, focusses on the family relations that identify individuals, and less frequently social status and profession. He concludes that the small number of inscriptions belonging to upper classes before the middle of the sixth century suggests their late conversion (pp. 298–300). Imperial initiative in church construction has been suggested in the Tetraconch (and, we may add, perhaps in the Ilissos basilica), but it may have been bishops who initiated the conversion of temples into churches (p. 303). Given that civic properties and urban pagan temples were transferred from civic administration from the fourth century onwards to the fisc and to the Church, the Tetraconch may indeed be the result of imperial initiative. In addition, it should be remarked that legal and other texts indicate that emperors often granted permission to bishops to convert temples, considered imperial properties, to churches.[14] Subsection 4.4 of this chapter ("Control of Agricultural Surplus by the Church?", pp. 304–305) highlights the important evidence provided by olive presses, *pithoi* with stamped rims and amphorae and by numerous amphora stamps of the churches in Lavreotic Olympos and Amygdaleza in the late sixth century. Tzavella seems hesitant to conclude that this is evidence of landownership and trade of agricultural produce by local churches (pp. 196, 304, 347). In addition to the Ikaria inscription, mentioned by the author, such cases are known from vari-

14 B. Ward-Perkins: From Classical Antiquity the Middle Ages. Urban Public Building in Northern and Central Italy, AD 300–850. Oxford/New York (Oxford Historical Monographs), p. 204; H. Saradi: The Byzantine City in the Sixth Century. Literary Images and Historical Reality. Athens 2006, pp. 202–203.

ous areas of the Empire and likewise date to the late sixth and seventh century.[15]

Subsection 4.5 ("Evidence for Monastic Life", pp. 305–306) directs attention to three sixth-century inscriptions that mention monasteries from somewhere west of the Forum of Hadrian, from Megara and from an unknown area. These are extremely important pieces of information that testify to the existence of early monasteries in Athens and Attica. Yet it is not unusual that monasteries cannot be identified archeologically (p. 306), since at this period they were usually housed in urban residences.[16]

Section 5 ("Churches as Organized Institution", pp. 306–312) consists of three subsections. In 5.2 ("Clergy", pp. 308–311) Breytenbach observes that eight inscriptions refer to readers (ἀναγνῶσται), a number higher than those in other areas of the empire (p. 354), while none refers to priests. This is a point of "fundamental importance" with the conclusion that "Christianity focused on reading and teaching, not on sacrifice" (p. 310). This hypothesis cannot be substantiated without evidence from written sources, as the evidence offered by inscriptions may be merely accidental. The early form of the Eucharist as part of ἀγάπη meals that took place in houses was replaced as early as the second century by the Sunday Eucharist. When churches were being built in the fifth and sixth centuries, it is hard to believe that the holy altar sanctified with saints' relics (also found in some churches in Attica) was not used for the Eucharist. In the conclusions (pp. 354–355) Breytenbach suggests that the high number of readers (ἀναγνῶσται) responded to a society used to philosophical argument and dialogue. This indeed offers a new understanding of the early Athenian Church, although philosophical teaching was fundamentally different from the Jewish tradition of readers in the synagogues and from Christian ἀναγνῶσται, who read the Bible and expounded on it recognizing the authority of the Sacred Books. Other early sources show that the ἀναγνῶσται were highly educated men and presumably enjoyed social visibility. The office of the ἀναγνώστης attracted intellectuals, as, for example, the emperor Julian who was an ἀναγνώστης before he turned to

15 Saradi (note 14): Byzantine City, pp. 421–423.

16 Ibid., p. 330, 372; O. Delouis: Portée et limites de l'archéologie monastique dans les Balkans et en Asie Mineure jusqu'au Xe siècle. In: O. Delouis/M. Mossakowska-Gaubert (eds.): La vie quotidienne des moines en Orient et en Occident (IVe–Xe siècle). Vol. 1: L'état des sources. Le Caire 2015 (Bibliothèque d'étude 163), pp. 251–274, p. 253.

paganism. The number of ἀναγνῶσται in the Great Church of Constantinople, Saint Sophia, was limited by Justinian to 120 (Novella 3) and rose again by Heraclius to 160.[17] Thus the large number of ἀναγνῶσται in Athens and Attica may suggest that by the sixth century many intellectuals had converted to Christianity and then found new opportunities to teach and display their rhetorical skills and authority. Section 6 ("The Role of the Bible and Theology in Inscriptions", pp. 312–323), containing four subsections, examines references to the Bible and Christian imprecation formulas in epitaphs.

In section 7 ("Religious Violence", pp. 323–325) Tzavella examines briefly the evidence for destruction of pagan temples in Athens by Christians: the metopes of the Parthenon, the Asklepieion and the Cave of Pan on Mount Parnes, to which the temple at Ramnous, excavated by Vasileios Petrakos, may be added. Then (section 8, "Organization of Cemeteries", pp. 326–328) Tzavella turns to the organization of cemeteries and to the epitaphs expressing ideas about life after death and points to their relation to the philosophical schools of Athens. By the fifth century the idea of Christ as Savior and as having defeated Hades appears in Christian epitaphs. With section 10 ("Changing the Religious Landscape", pp. 332–341) Breytenbach concludes this chapter by outlining the religious landscape of Athens as it changed from pagan to Christian from the fourth to the sixth centuries and pointing to the transfer to the Trinity of the functions of the gods, although concrete evidence is missing. The most important example – it needs to be stressed – is the replacement of the goddess Athene in the Parthenon with the Virgin Mary.

Chapter 7, "Résumé: Expansion of Early Christianity in Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 342–365), is composed of three sections and the "Conclusion" in pp. 364–365. The authors stress the perspective employed in the book, namely to regard Athens and Attica as a part of the Empire that was gradually Christianized, rather than regarding it as "'the pagan exception'" (p. 364). The pace of Christianization in Athens and Attica is apparently similar to that of southern Greece and slower than that of areas of the East, such as Lycaonia and Phrygia.

The book is supplemented by two substantial and extremely useful catalogues in an appendix. Catalogue A, "Early Christian Churches in Athens,

17 P. Magdalino: *anagnostes* (ἀναγνώστης). In: A. P. Kazhdan (ed.): The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium 1, 1991, p. 84.

Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 369–488), contains 62 entries on churches consisting of a description of their architectural plan, of finds and of proposed dates. Part I: "The Urban Zone of Athens (*asty*)" (pp. 369–433) contains 22 entries. In entry 1 "The Parthenon" (pp. 369–374) Tzavella discusses the evidence for the date of the conversion of the Parthenon to a church. The Tübingen philosophy pointed to by Cyril A. Mango offers the evidence for a conversion at the late fifth to the early sixth century. A summary of the content and the purpose of this text would have been useful and it would point to means employed by Christians for persuasively converting temples into churches. Equally important are three of the Parthenon inscriptions containing invocations to the Virgin, now dated by Maria Xenaki to the sixth–seventh century, one dating to the sixth century and the other two to the sixth–seventh century (p. 371, n. 11). To these sources one can add the late fifth-century Ἐξηγητικὸν περὶ τοῦ ἐν Ἀθήναις ναοῦ, attributed to pseudo-Athanasios, which also points to the conversion of the Parthenon to a church. Tzavella draws attention to the tomb found in 1836 by Ludwig Ross at the south-east corner of the κρηπίς of the Parthenon and the Acropolis wall dated by coins to the reign of Tiberius (578–582). The proximity of the tomb to the temple suggests that it was Christian[18] and, if one recalls the fierce persecution of pagans by Tiberius, reported by John of Ephesus and by Evagrius, this burial was perhaps a clear statement made by a member of the upper classes. Tzavella concludes that the Parthenon was converted into a church in the late fifth or early sixth century.

The small basilica inserted in the eastern πάροδος of the theatre of Dionysus (entry 6, "The Basilica at the Theatre of Dionysus", pp. 395–400) has been connected, hypothetically, by Travlos with martyrs who had suffered martyrdom in the theatre and the nearby cemetery, a view that Tzavella follows. The choice of this site for a church can be rightly understood in the context of the theatre's decline in Late Antiquity (p. 201), and in comparison with other known similar cases.

Entry 17 on "The Ilissos Basilica" (pp. 421–426), a monument of major importance, presents the archaeological evidence and includes a brief discussion of the complex hagiographical issue regarding the martyr Leonides. The first excavators of the basilica suggested that it was dedicated to the cult of the martyr Leonides and to the Seven Virgins persecuted in Corinth in 250

18 A different interpretation: Theocharis (note 9), pp. 161–163, 164–165.

A. D., on the basis solely of Michael Choniates' homily which places the basilica with the crypt with the burials outside the city gate. Tzavella outlines the basilica's architecture and mentions the splendid pieces of mosaics. It should be stressed that the laurel wreath symbolized the martyr's glory, and the truncated shells adorning the walls, as in the Octagon of Philippi, reveal the unusual luxury of the church.[19] The author refers to the continuous cult of Leonides in Athens (p. 426), but the metropolitan of Athens Michael Choniates (1182–1204) makes it clear that the cult of Leonides was forgotten in his days and he tries to revive it with his homily. As the identification of the martyr Leonides with another homonymous bishop of Athens in the hagiographical tradition appeared late, the existence of the latter has been questioned.[20] The title of Choniates' homily referring to Leonides as ἱερομάρτυς (namely bishop-martyr) (p. 424, n. 248) may have been added by a scribe of the manuscript, since the text of the homily praises the martyr Leonides without any reference to him as bishop. It is not clear to the reader why the cult of the martyr Leonides in the Ilissos basilica is considered uncertain by the author (p. 424), since the apparently mistaken identification of the martyr with an alleged homonymous bishop does not negate the cult of the martyr. Since this cult is securely documented as far as the mountainous village Klauseio in Eurytania (fifth/sixth centuries), it is reasonable to find it in Athens that was under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Corinth. It should be remarked that in the fourth and fifth centuries it was recommended that the cult of martyrs be disseminated to other districts (e. g. St. Basil, PG 31, col. 505) and parts of their relics were transferred to other churches as a tool to propagate the Christian religion and strengthen the bishops' position. In addition, it has also been suggested that the transfer of the cult of Leonides from Corinth to Athens is supported by the similarity of the plan of the Ilissos basilica with that of Lechaion, although some issues of chronology need further clarification.[21]

Part II, "Minor Towns and the Rural Countryside" (pp. 434–481), includes thirty entries (23–53) pertaining to minor towns and the countryside and

19 E. Chatzedakes: Ἀνασκαφὴ ἐν Ἀθήναις κατὰ τὴν βασιλικὴν τοῦ Ἰλισσοῦ. In: PAAH 103, 1948, pp. 69–80, pp. 78–79.

20 F. Halkin: Saint Léonide et ses sept compagnes martyres à Corinthe. In: Ἐπετηρὶς Ἑταιρείας Βυζαντινῶν Σπουδῶν 23, 1953, pp. 217–223; id.: Recherches et documents d'hagiographie byzantine. Brussels 1971 (Subsidia hagiographica 51), pp. 60–63.

21 Pallas: Ἡ Ἀθήνα (note 13), p. 872.

Part III ("Adjacent Areas", pp. 481–488) entries (54–62) from the Megarid, Aigina and Salamis.

Catalogue B, "Late Antique Cemeteries of Athens, Attica, and Adjacent Areas" (pp. 489–511), contains cemeteries not directly related to the churches reported and discussed in Catalogue A. In Part I, Tzavella discusses the cemeteries in the area of the *asty*. Outside the Valerian Wall (seven entries) the cemetery of Kynosarges contains the earliest Christian graves, some of which may date to the fourth century and some certainly date to the fifth century. Inside the Valerian Wall (five entries), cemeteries show the progress of Christianity and changes in the urban fabric. Three inscriptions from the Roman Agora are of the utmost importance. One of these, in Latin (*si Deus pro nos, qois contra nos*?, Rom 8:31) and dated to around 400 (p. 503), testifies to the existence of an early Christian presence in the city center at the period when imperial laws had strengthened Christianity. The acclamation ὁ Χ(ρι-στὸς) ἐνίκησεν. ἀμήν, γένοιτο, found near the Tower of the Winds and believed to have been used in cities where bishops converted and destroyed pagan temples, is dated by Sironen to the fifth or sixth century. It is suggested that "this later chronology distances the inscription from religious conflict" (p. 504), but it may be interpreted as pointing exactly to the time when Christianity had been firmly established in Athens and when major pagan temples were undergoing conversion into churches, that is, in the late fifth to the early sixth century. Part II with five entries includes Eleusis, Oropos, Megara, Aigina.

The book is a solid piece of scholarship on Christianization of Athens and Attica. It is a significant achievement as it utilizes an immense amount of research to offer a panoramic and detailed picture of the development of Christianity. The emphasis varies from chapter to chapter and hagiography does not get its own chapter, but many individual issues are mentioned in passing. The authors persuasively combine historical, literary, archaeological and epigraphical information, to give specialists in Late Antiquity a comprehensive picture of Christianity in Athens from its beginnings in the first century. At the same time, the enormous and systematically collected information opens the way to further research into a variety of other related subjects and stimulates discussion on many controversial issues.

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