

ATHENS AND ATTIKA

Athens in the Roman World



HPAH5073

The Wider Greek World under Rome

Being Greek under Roman Rule

ROMAN OUTLOOK

- ▣ Roman identity not defined primarily or exclusively in terms of kinship, but in adopting certain particular customs (*mores*) and material culture.
- ▣ Rationalisation in of space:
 - centuriated farmland and grid-planned colonies.
- ▣ Civic infrastructure: fora, temples, porticos, and baths.
- Paying taxes, letting the “better sort” rule, and giving due homage to the Imperial family.

GREEK OUTLOOK

- ▣ Often defining themselves by kinship:
 - speaking a common language,
 - descended from common ancestors (both historical and mythological),
 - worshipping a common Olympian pantheon.
- ▣ Also local peculiarism and distinctive local cults.

Greek Identity

- ▣ Expressions of “Romanness” (in certain contexts):
 - Onomastics (many elites had Roman citizenship used the family name of the Roman emperor or general that had granted it to them).
 - 212 CE, Caracalla extends citizenship to all free inhabitants.
 - Development of certain types of amenities and civic infrastructure.
- ▣ **However**, this does not mean that the Greeks stopped considering themselves Greeks.
 - Roman hegemony may have also helped to foster a sense of self-identification.
 - Pan-Hellenism – dying out of some local languages in particular regions (notably in western Asia Minor).

Worshipping the Gods and Celebrating the Imperial Family

- ▣ Worship of the gods – common features: processions, sacrifices, hymns, and feasts.
- ▣ However, gods were often represented in locally distinct ways, visually and in terms of epithets and titles.
- ▣ By contrast, the imperial court seems to have made fairly effective mechanisms for propagating consistent visual images.



Statue of the Emperor Hadrian from Olympia.

Euergetism

- ▣ Practice of elites, and sometimes the Imperial court, providing benefactions to local communities.
- ▣ Desire to gain prestige among the community:
 - benefactors would often be commemorate with inscriptions of public statues.
 - Means of gaining popularity – electoral success in a community.
- ▣ Benefaction could take the form of:
 - gifts of oil for the gymnasium,
 - the funding of local festivals,
 - the provision of amenities,
 - ▣ Baths, gymnasia, porticoes, etc.



Inscription honouring Aristoxenos, son of Demophon - benefactor of a gymnasium in Athens (ca. late-3rd to 2nd second century BC). Musée du Louvre.

Greek Theatres

- ▣ Theatres were not just for dramatic performances, but acted as centres of community business.
- ▣ Civic business: meetings of the assembly, holding of trials (in certain cases where very large venue was required).
- ▣ Modification of these structures for beast hunts and gladiatorial combat.
- ▣ Criticism from Dio Chrysostom, Lucian and Philostratus.



Theatre of Dionysos (Athens); Roman era barrier

Civic Status

QUALIFYING AS A BIG CITY

- ▣ Large Greek cities:
 - Alexandria (ca. 500,000)
 - Antioch (ca. 200,000)
 - Apamea (ca. 200,000)
 - Ephesus (ca. 150,000)
 - Athens (ca. 20,000)
- ▣ Different statuses – *coloniae* (actually founded as such) and others granted colonial status – latter not normally granted tax exempt status.
 - Athens received the status of a free city.

“...it is natural for a city’s pride, its people’s dignity, and its reputation with visitors and governors to be enhanced by its buildings, by its festivals, and by the fact that its citizens are immune from judicial scrutiny by outsiders and are not bunched together in the official reckoning like some village...” – **Dio Chrysostom 40.10.**

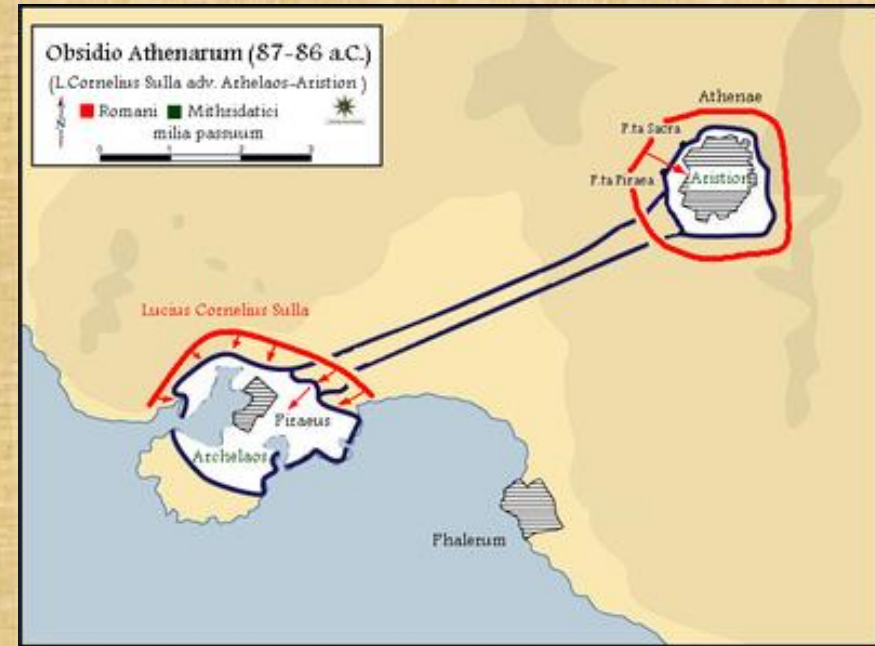
City Governance

- Many of the features of democratic style government that we associate with the Classical period, on the face of it continued in the Imperial era:
 - Assemblies, councils, eponymous magistrates.
- Increasingly oligarchic governments since 146 BCE (defeat of the Achaean league).
 - “The walls of all the cities that had made war against Rome Mummius demolished, disarming the inhabitants, even before assistant commissioners were despatched from Rome, and when these did arrive, he proceeded to put down democracies and to establish governments based on a property qualification.” – **Pausanias 7.16.9.**

Roman Athens

Sulla and the Siege of Athens

- Athens was besieged by Sulla (87-86 BCE) during the First Mithridatic War.
 - Besieging of the city and starvation of the population.
 - City was sacked and many people massacred.



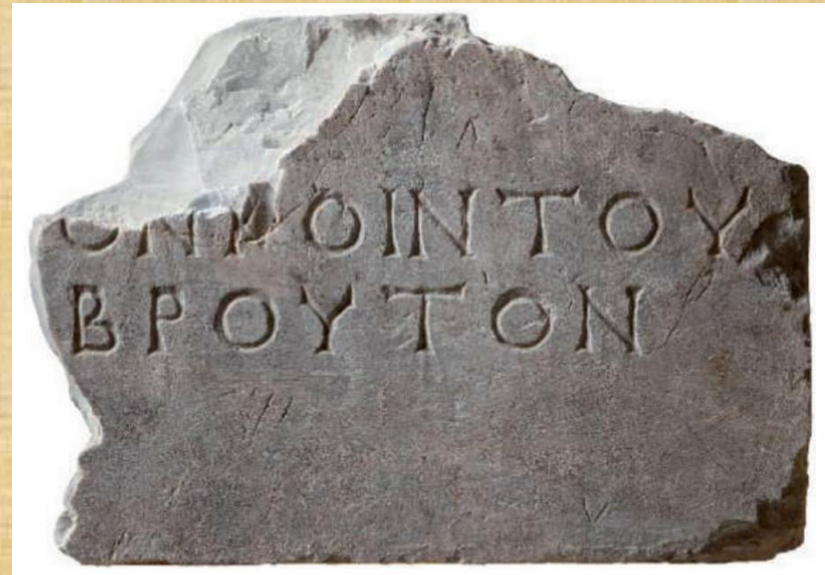
“He took Athens, as he says himself in his Memoirs, on the Calends of March [1st]... On the capture of the town, the tyrant [Aristion] took refuge in the acropolis, and was besieged there by Curio, who was appointed to this task... Not long after, Sulla took the Piraeus also, and burnt most of it, including the arsenal of Philo, a marvellous work.” – **Plutarch *Sulla* 14.6.**

“Sulla chopped down the grove of the Academy [of Plato] and constructed his largest [siege] engines there. He demolished the Long walls, and used the stones, timber, and earth for building mounds.” – **Appian** *Mithridatic Wars* 30.

Athens and Roman Patronage

- ▣ Pompey granted Athens fifty talents to rebuild parts of the city that were destroyed by Sulla (Plut. *Pomp.* 42; Cic. *Att.* 6.1.25).

“The people, from the gifts given by the god Gaius Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar, son of a god, to Athena Archegetis (Leader), when Eukles of Marathon, who has taken over the care (of the market) on behalf of his father Herodes, was hoplite general and ambassador, (and) when Nikias of Athmonos, son of Sarapion, was archon.” – “Restoration Decree” - *IG II² 1035*.



“How often will the glory of your ancestors save you from self-destruction?” – *Appian Bellum Civile* 2.88.

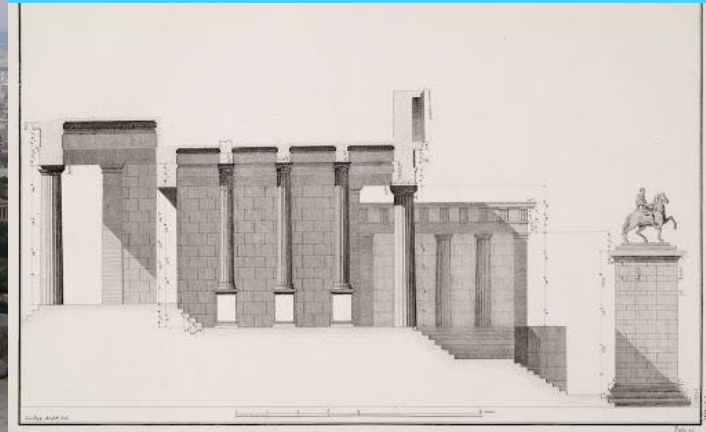
Augustan Athens



Athenian lead token, showing the head of Apollo and a six-rayed star

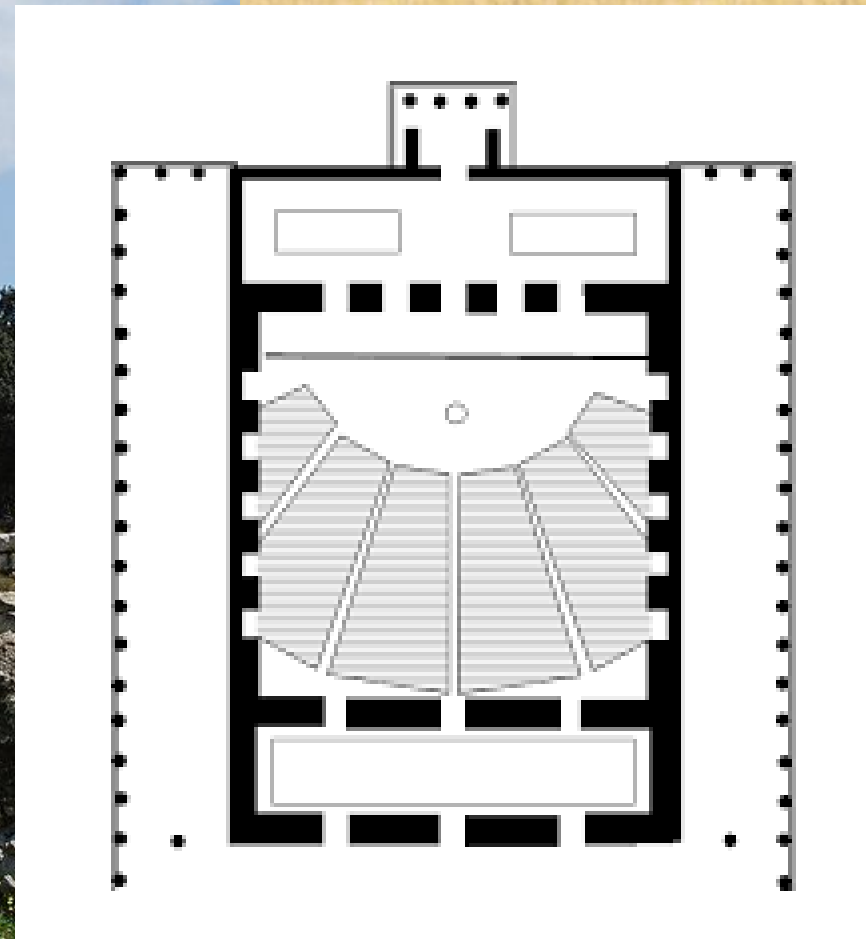


Monument (or pedestal) of Agrippa – originally constructed in honour of Eumenes II and Attalos II of Pergamon (early second century BCE).



Portrait of emperor Augustus (Athens, National Archaeological Museum, inv. no. 3758)

“The people (dedicated this monument) to its benefactor Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, consul for the third time.” – *IG II² 4122*.



Augustan Athens (2)

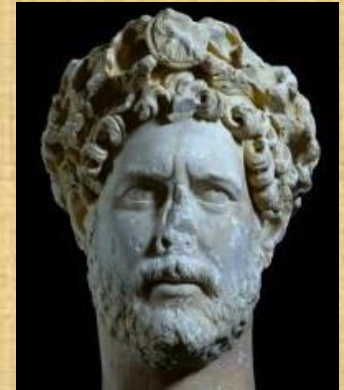
- Built with Pentelic marble.
- The temple's Ionic columns similar to those of the nearby Erechtheion.
- Possibly the Temple of Roma and Augustus was placed in the “field of memory” to commemorate Augustus' victory (albeit diplomatic) over the Parthians in 20 BCE.



“The people (dedicated this monument) to the goddess Roma and Augustus Caesar (at the time that) Pammenes, son of Zenon of Marathon, was hoplite general and priest of the goddess Roma and Augustus savior on the Acropolis, (and) Megiste, daughter of Askepiades of Halai, was priestess of Athena Polias, (and) Areos, son of Dorion of Paiania, was archon.” – *IG II² 3173*.

Hadrianic Athens

(Obv.) IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG, laureate, draped, cuirassed bust right.
(Rev.) PM TR P COS III, helmeted head of Roma or Athena right, with aegis. – RIC 620.



He then grew rather deeply devoted to Greek studies, to which his natural tastes inclined so much that some called him "Greekling." – *Historia Augusta, Hadrian* 1.3.

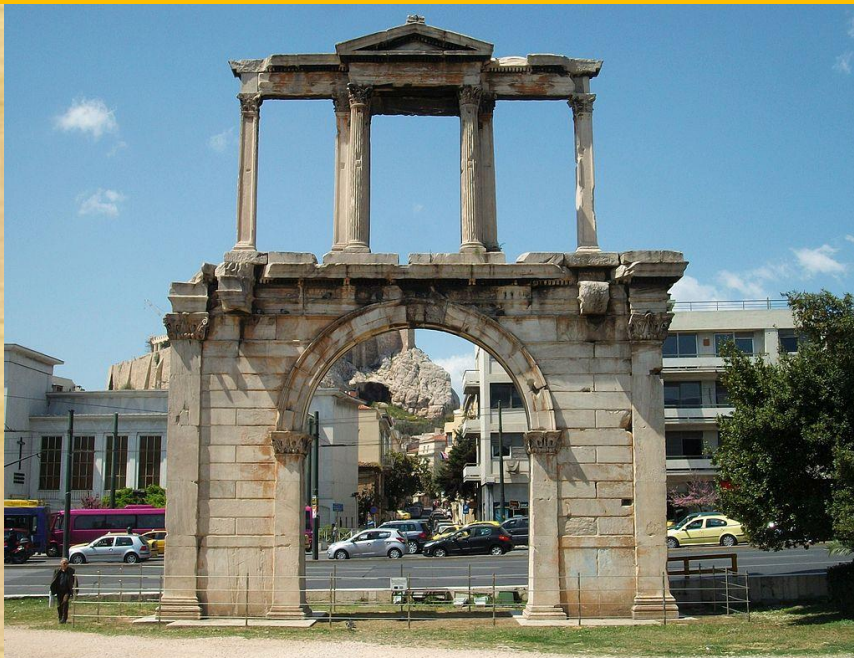


Sulla abated nothing of his wrath against the Athenians, and so a few effected an escape to Delphi, and asked if the time were now come when it was fated for Athens also to be made desolate, receiving from the Pythia the response about the wine skin. Afterwards Sulla was smitten with the disease which I learn attacked Pherecydes the Syrian. Although Sulla's treatment of the Athenian people was so savage as to be unworthy of a Roman, I do not think that this was the cause of his calamity, but rather the vengeance of the suppliants' Protector, for he had dragged Aristion from the sanctuary of Athena, where he had taken refuge, and killed him.

Such wise was Athens sorely afflicted by the war with Rome, but she flourished again when Hadrian was emperor. – **Pausanias** *Descriptions of Greece* 1.20.7.

Hadrianic Athens (2)

“Hadrian constructed other buildings also for the Athenians: a temple of Hera and Zeus Panellenios (Common to all Greeks), a sanctuary common to all the gods, and, most famous of all, a hundred pillars of Phrygian marble. ... here is also a gymnasium named after Hadrian; of this too the pillars are a hundred in number from the Libyan quarries.” – **Pausanias** *Descriptions of Greece* 1.18.9.



Hadrian's Gate (Arch of Hadrian)



Temple of Olympian Zeus

Herodes Atticus

[Preface in which Flavius Philostratus dedicates the work to the consul Antonius Gordianus] “I have written for you in two Books an account of certain men who, though they pursued philosophy, ranked as sophists, and also of the sophists properly so called; partly because I know that your own family is connected with that profession, since Herodes the sophist was your ancestor...” – **Philostratus** *Lives of the Sophists, Preface*.



Odeion of Herodes Atticus (Herodion)



Reconstruction of the Panathenaic Stadium

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