APPENDIX III

THE CLOSURE OF THE ASKLEPIEION AND PARTHENON IN 481–484

Different historical synchronisms of the events of 481–484 have been discussed in their local contexts throughout this work. Marinus of Neapolis’ life of Proclus suggests rather baldly that the closure of the Parthenon came not long before the philosopher’s death in 485.\(^1\) I append the list of the other synchronisms for the convenience of readers.

1. The two quasi-Justinianic laws found in the \textit{Codex Iustinianus} rather more probably go back to the emperor Zeno’s attempts to suppress the pagan factions backing Illus’ rebellion that lasted 481–488.\(^2\)

2. George of Alexandria’s clear allusions in his life of John Chrysostom to both these edicts, but omission of details about the closure of the Parthenon, puts the \textit{terminus post quem} of the laws in 481 (the beginning of the rebellion) and the \textit{terminus ante quem} in 485 at the latest (the date of Proclus’ death). The long-feared \textit{cause célèbre} had come at last and led to the final act against the chryselephantine Athena and the Asklepieion. It was politically inspired, but, contrary to everyone’s expectation, the impetus came from outside Attica.\(^3\)

3. The temple of Aphrodite at Aphrodisias seems to have been dismantled around the same time. The archaeologists have had little on which to base their dating arguments for this except the stylistic features of the marble panels used in the “temple church” emplaced within the temenos.\(^4\) Since a Hellenic “resistance” to the emperor Zeno arose in both Athens and Aphrodisias, there is every reason to suppose that the temple closures had the same motivation: the suppression of seditious civic patriotism that went hand in


\(^2\) supra, Ch. I, Sect. 6.

\(^3\) supra, Ch. IV, Sect. 2 and 3, and Appendix II.

\(^4\) infra, Ch. VI.
hand with Hellenic belief and practice. The opposition at Aphrodisias centered in the circle of Asklepindotos the elder, a wealthy decurion. The Hellenic writers of Athens are rather elusive about the subject of the rebellion. It seems probable therefore that the scholars of the Neoplatonist academy, including Proclus himself and his friends among the city councillors, were in sympathy with Illus’ program because of his promise to restore Hellenic rites to the temples that were still standing.

4. It is not entirely clear whether Zeno moved against the temples immediately to break the resolve of Illus’ sympathizers, or whether he acted afterwards in reprisal. The former of the alternatives is the more pragmatic and therefore the more probable.

5. Timothy E. Gregory has argued quite strongly for the rapid conversion of the Asklepieion site into the healing shrine of St. Andrew. His thesis is perfectly consistent with the arguments framed above on Christianization of rite, temple conversions, and the recategorization of Hellenic divinities into daimones, all of which will have comforted recent converts in their new religious surroundings and perhaps have attracted new ones. It would not be surprising if many pagan Athenians converted to Christianity after the demise of their gods. Such an outcome is consistent with the rapid conversion of temples into Christian shrines elsewhere. The instances of the Serapeum of Alexandria and Marneion of Gaza are the most obvious.

6. George of Alexandria’s stories about the cryptopaganism of the archon Demosthenes and the conversion of the sophist Anthemius are more consistent with behavior after temple conversions than of pagan-Christian polemics around 367/8. The author of this section of George of Alexandria’s compilation perhaps drew on the actual events of 481–484 in shaping his account. On the other hand, he may have fabricated the actual conversion stories simply as a device to show what effect the imperial edicts of 481–484 would have if carried out properly by Acacius of Constantinople and his suffragan bishops. In either case the stories derive from an Athenian milieu.

7. There is no particular reason to suppose that a church was not built in or around the Parthenon shortly after 481–484. This

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5 Infra, Ch. V, Sect. 4.
8 Supra, Ch. II, Sect. 1–3.