

WP4 – Action 4.5

Study 1: the history of Patras during the Roman and Byzantine years



ROME Project - Interreg III B – Cadses

PP7 - Municipality of Patras

WP4

Action 4.5 “Elaboration of several historical studies concerning the connection of Patras monuments with other partners’ monuments”

Study 1: the History of Patras during the Roman and Byzantine years
Historical Study, Final Version

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HISTORY OF PATRAS DURING ROMAN AND BYZANTINE YEARS

Sources¹

Patras belongs to the Prefecture of Achaia (fig.1). The term Achaia in the past was comprehensive. In view of the historical period, it could be used otherwise as a name of a region or as a part of a political unity. For example, after the Roman occupation one of the two prefectures of the Helladic area was named Achaia and covered Peloponnese, Central Greece and some islands.

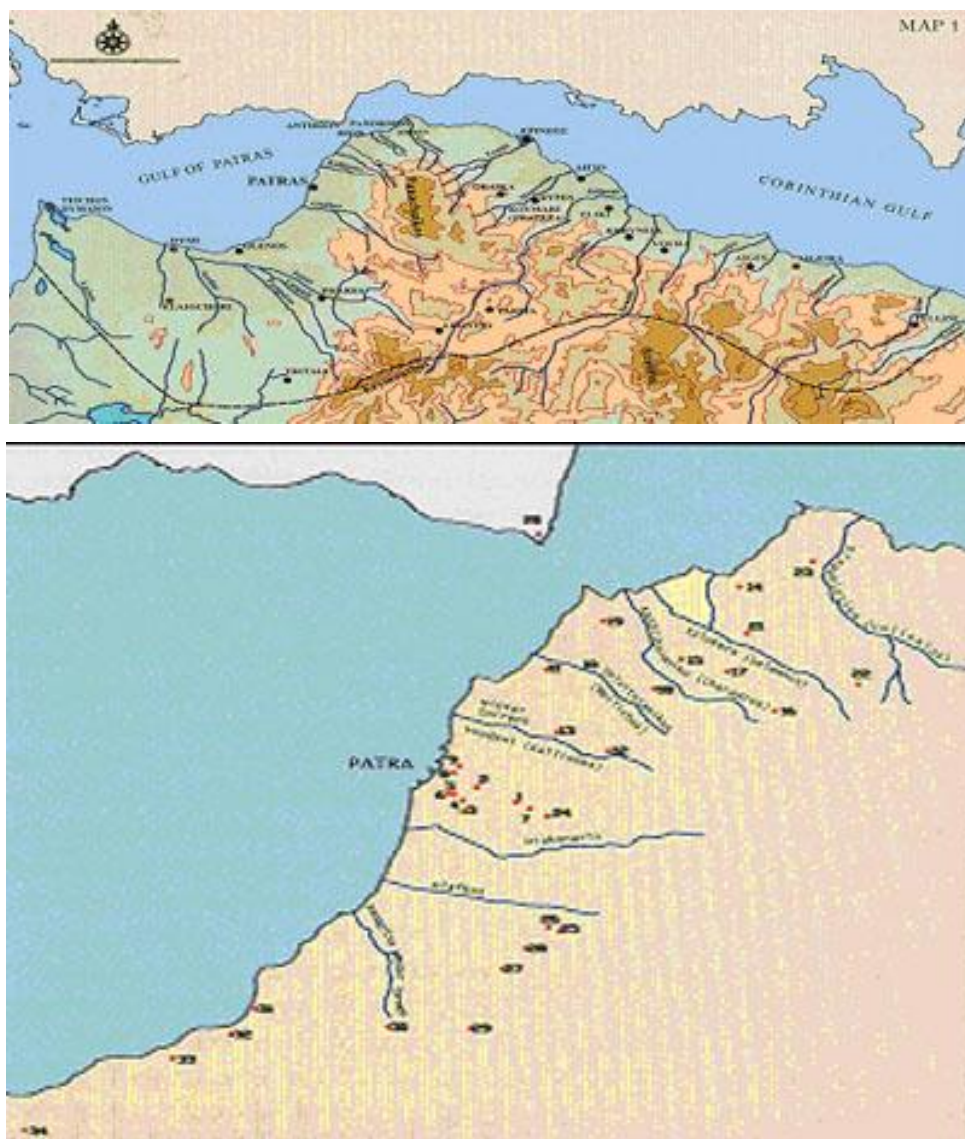


Figure 1. The Prefecture of Achaia

¹Lina Mendoni, *Η Αχαΐα στους Αρχαίους Έλληνες και Λατίνους συγγραφείς*, (Achaia in the Greek and Latin literary sources), *Ancient Achaia and Elis*, Meletemata 13, Athens, 1991, 67-73.

Up to 280 B.C. ancient authors were not very interested in Achaia making only rare references to it. Afterwards, when the Achaian League was reformed and united with other forces of the Helladic area an increasing interest was directed to it. A valuable source for that era is Polybius (200 -120 B.C.) an historian from Arcadia, who describes with details the military operations and the external policy of the league but hardly gives any information about its internal organization.

Cicero (106 B.C.-43 B.C.), a Roman orator, writer and politician whose letters towards Atticus and Ad Familiares, consists an important source about Patras during the 1st c. B.C. Through them the significance and the economical ascendance of the city of Patras, which then diffidently started, can be traced. The evolution of Patras which became enormous in the centuries that followed reflected in the later authors. Plutarch (50-120 A.D.), a historian, biographer and philosopher from Boeotia, mentions useful historical information in his books.

But the most valuable source for Patras' history and archaeology up to the 2nd century AD is Pausanias, a traveller and author from Asia Minor. In his books he described everything he saw in Southern Greece in the second half of the 2nd century AD along with the local traditions and myths (fig. 2). His seventh book 'Ἀχαϊκὰ' is a precious tool for modern historians. More traditions and myths about Achaia were mentioned by other authors of the 2nd and 3rd cent A.D. The Itineraries were helpful sources about topography in the 3rd and 4th century. From the 5th century on, Lexicons came out where all the cities were mentioned and Patras continued to interest the Byzantine historians and chronographers (Procopius, Zonaras). Moreover coins, monuments, and inscriptions found during the excavations enrich our knowledge concerning this period.

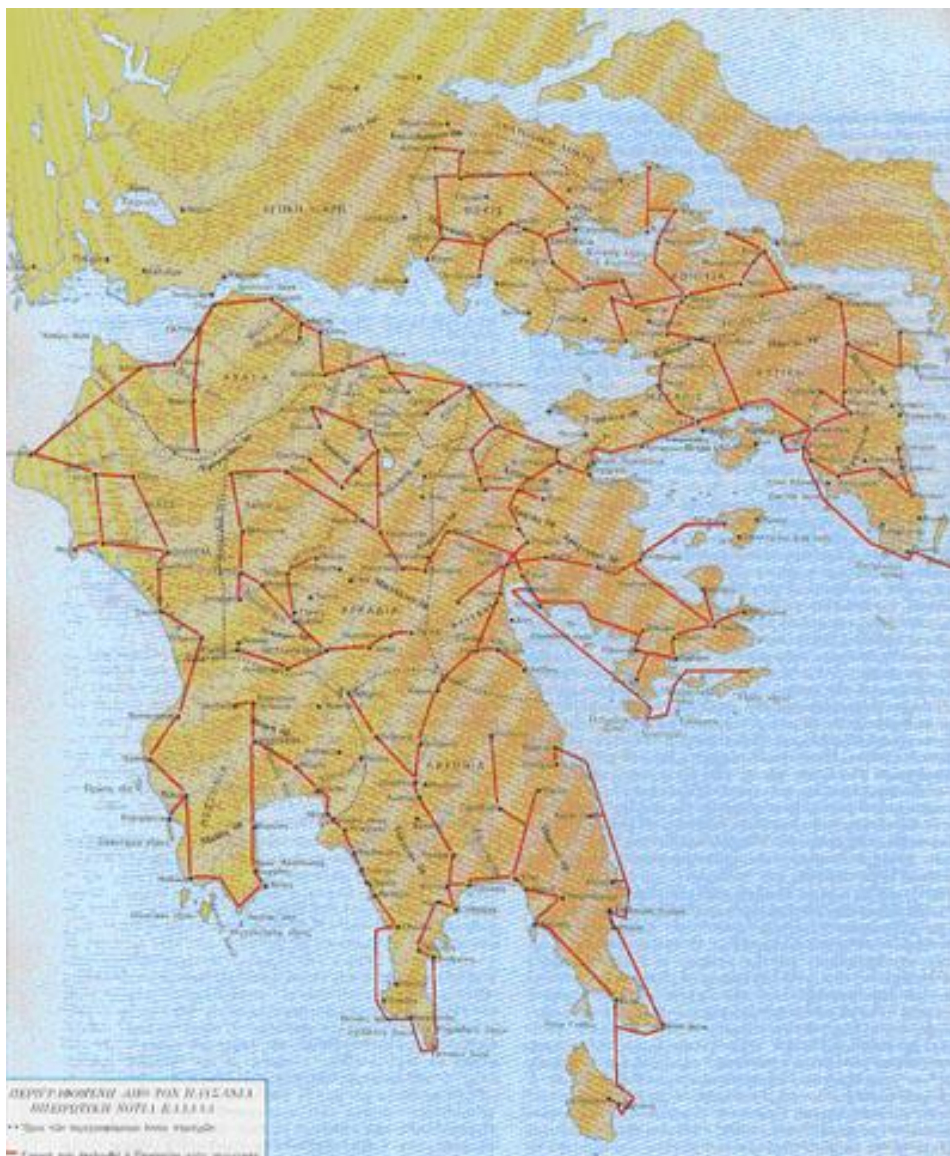


Figure 2. Southern Greece in the second half of the 2nd century AD along with the local traditions and myths

HISTORICAL EVENTS

The historical background

The first signs of settlements in the region of Patras seem to appear in the middle of the 3rd millennium in Pagona and continued throughout the middle of the Helladic period. The Mycenaean period seems to be, for the whole of Achaia, the first phase of prosperity, according to archaeological data (tombs, settlements, findings).

According to the tradition invented during the Hellenistic period, the history of Patras began when the Dorians settled in Laconia around 1100 B.C. and drove the native people away. These people built a settlement in the region of Patras, pushing away in their turn the Ionian inhabitants of the area, who initially moved to Athens and

later to Asia Minor. There, together with the Ionian people of East Achaia they founded the Ionian Dodecapolis.



The Achaean people who originated from Laconia settled in Patras and had Preugenis and his son, Patreas as leaders. In the new area where they settled, three Ionian agricultural settlements had already existed (Aroe, Antheia and Mesatis), which were religiously united by Patreas and were given his name, “Ai Patrae” (plural).

The period of time that Pausanias refers to, depicts the era of continuous movements and settlements, the contact and communication of tribes, the blooming of civilization during the Mycenaean era, the era of the Trojan War.

From the geometric years (1050-700 B.C.), only movable items have been found but not any ruins because the material used was not durable.

In the second half of the 8th century, the second colonization took place. It was the answer to the need for new and fertile land, as well as the solution for the rapidly growing population. However, contrary to East Achaia, Patras and West Achaia in general satisfied the needs of its inhabitants and didn't need to have colonies.

During the Archaic years (700-480 B.C.), Patras didn't take part in the political, cultural and military events of Greece. It neither took part in the Persian wars nor in the Peloponnesian war (431-404 B.C.).

In the classic years (480-323 B.C.), five towns of Achaia minted their own currency. Patras and its agora that time extended up to the Byzantine castle and up to Germanou St.

In 373 B.C. a big earthquake destroys Helike, the capital of the first Achaean League, and Aegion becomes the next important town of the region. During Hellenistic times (323-146 B.C.) four towns of West Achaia (Patras, Pharai, Tritaia, Dyme) form the second Achaean League and Patras became a very prospering town. The Achaean League extended its power over nearly all Peloponnese and became the major political entity in southern Greece.

Roman conquest

But the year 146 B.C. marks the beginning of the Roman rule in South Greece. At that year, near Isthmus, the general Mummius defeated the Hellenic army. Mummius

destroyed the fortresses of the cities that fought against the Romans, abolished democracy, granted a kind of compensation to the Greeks, who were friends of the Romans and forced people to pay taxes to Rome. Later and because of respect to the cradle of Western culture the Romans appeared more lenient and they withdrew the taxes and allowed some towns to be autonomous. The whole of Greece came within the jurisdiction of the Roman general of Macedonia and was called “Achaia” because according to Pausanias “...they defeated the Greeks through the Achaeans, who were then the leaders of Greece”.

When the Romans became the rulers of Greece they started planning and realising the conquest of the rest of the known world. At those times Patras was considered a rather poor city, but its easily accessible position from sea, which made it easy for the ships from and to Italy to use as a port, could facilitate the growth of the population and the affluence.

In 89 BC the king of Pontus, Mithridate had decided to push the Romans away from the East. The Achaeans, the Lacedaemonians and the Boeotians joined him. A three-day battle took place at Chaeronia between the Romans and Mithridate’s army joined by his allies’ forces, but the battle ended victoriously for the Romans. After this, Rome put Sulla in charge of the war against Mithridate in Greece and the cities that had joined him returned to their former situation of submission, under even harsher conditions.

After the destruction of Greece, which followed the war a new threat appeared for the Achaean cities. Pirates attacked from Asia Minor, entered the Corinthian Gulf and plundered the Achaean cities (mostly Patras and Aegion). The Roman general Pompey defeated them and took them to Dyme to create a settlement for them (67 BC).

In 53 or 52 BC the orator Cicero had visited Patras and he had sent a lot of letters to his friend Marcus Curius, a merchant, who had settled in Patras. It is known that during Cicero’s years a civil war between Pompey and Julius Caesar had taken place and the second one prevailed. In 48 BC at Pharsala of Boeotia, Caesar completely destroyed Pompey, who had allied with all the Peloponnesians, Boeotians and Athenians. Before that, Caesar had sent to Greece the General Cointus Calinus, who marched against Patras.

In 46 BC there was a second triumvirate in Rome formed by Octavian (fig. 3), Marcus Antonius (fig. 4) and Lepidus. Lepidus was ignored by the other two, Antonius disagreed with Octavian and finally the last civil war broke out between them.

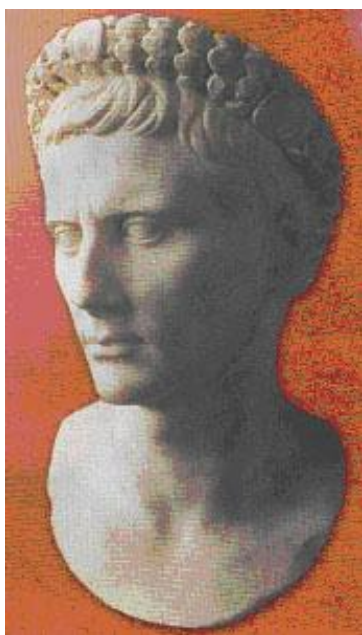


Figure 3. Octavian

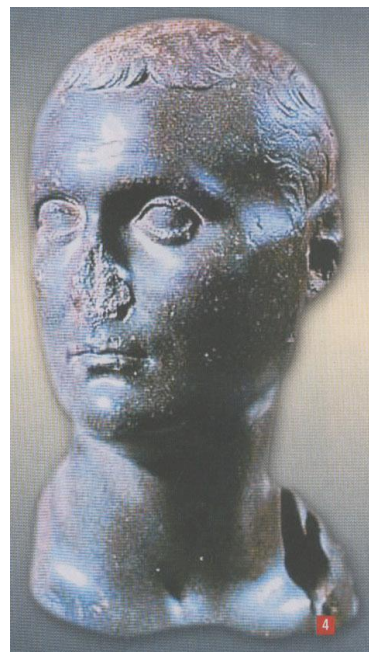


Figure 4. Marcus Antonius

After the partition of the Roman Empire, Greece was given to Antonius. The autumn of the year 32 BC Antonius sailed from Corfu and arrived in Patras, where he spent his winter and his soldiers were able to find provisions after they spread around the area and the nearby villages. At the same time, Octavian came from Brindisi to Greece and in 31 BC a naval battle took place at Actium, where Antonius and his ally, the Queen of Egypt, Cleopatra were defeated.

Most of the Greeks, in this war, took the part of Antonius as they could not act differently because of his oppressions and tyranny. That's why they were confronted by Octavian, who was named Augustus (= respectable), with leniency.

Patras as a roman colony

Patras had been devastated after Romans' civil wars and the passage of the army and the fleets. Caesar Octavian Augustus (fig. 5) – because of Patras' strategic position for commerce and its neighbouring with Italy decided to reconstruct the city.

In 14 B.C. he founded a roman military colony in Patras which he gave his name; Colonia Augusta Achaica Patrensis (in latin) as coins prove. His great interest in Patras gave a boost to the city and, from then on, Patras was thriving. The geographer Strabo, who was contemporary with Augustus, dealt with the subject of the colonization of Patras by Romans. The population of roman colony of Patras is counted on 15000- 20000 citizens, including roman veterans, natives, people from other places of Peloponnese, the islands and Central Greece. Dyme, Pharai and Tritaia along with the three cities of Locris (Myonia, Oiantheia-Galaxidi, Naupaktos-Lepanto) became attributi i.e. they paid tribute to Patras. The privilege of freedom was given only to the citizens of Patras. As a free city Patras was self-governed with its own public meetings; a glorious and populous city that very soon regained its Greek character.

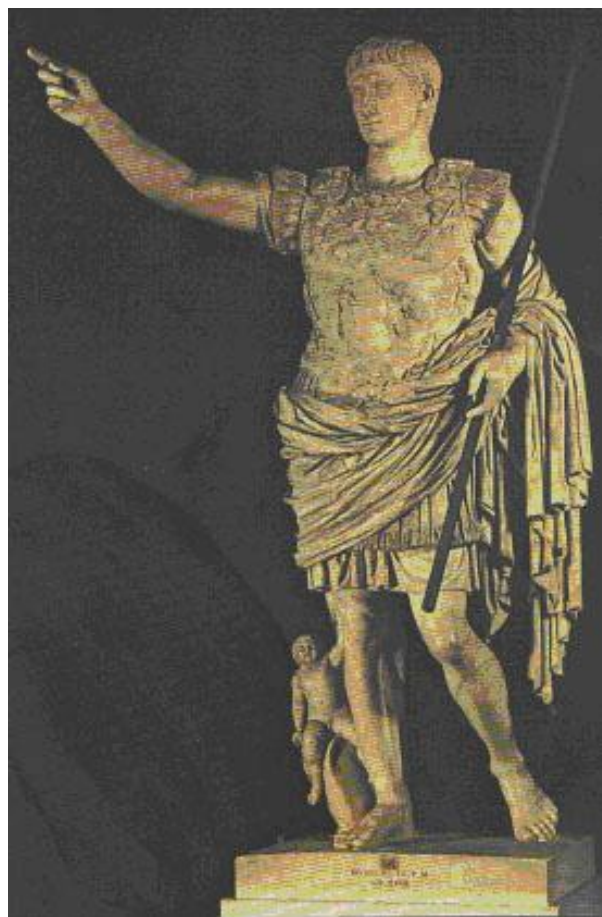


Figure 5. Caesar Octavian Augustus

While Patras, Corinth, which became roman colony during the years of Julius Caesar, and Nicopolis, which also settled by Augustus and named Colonia Augusta

Actium, were progressing in commerce, arts and embellishment other Greek cities were falling into decline and the countryside was desolated.²

Augustus died in 14 A.D. During his times and his heir Tiberius times (14-37 A.D.) a Latin poet, Dometius Phaidrus who had visited Patras, as an inscription states, lived. Caligula (37-41 A.D.) and Claudius (41-54 A.D.) during their governing revered the Augustus' colony but they did not offer Patras any present as we can assume from the thrift that Patras' citizens minted coin in their honour.

On the contrary, Nero (54-68A.D.) (fig. 6) was bewitched by the honours that Greeks showered on him at the end of 66 A.D. and during the Isthmia festivities he proclaimed the freedom of Greece and its tax exemption. Nevertheless, every valuable and masterly work of art was grasped and transferred to Rome to embellish emperor's palace.



Figure 6. Nero (54-68A.D.)

In the years of Nero, Apostle Andrew died a martyr in the place where he taught Christianity, near the oracular spring of Demeter. Today, in this place, stands the old church of Saint Andrew in Patras and Apostle Andrew's well (fig. 7).

² A.D.Rizakis, Romans interventions in the urban and rural landscape of the cities of Peloponnese (in Greek), Acts of the Forth International Congress of Peloponnesian Studies, Corinth, 9-16 September 1990, 1st vol., Athens, 1992,435-436.



Figure 7. The modern shrine of Saint Andrew in Patras

The freedom that Nero assigned to the Greeks did not last long. It was taken off by Vespasian, the founder of the Flavius dynasty, at 69 A.D. With the decree of Vespasian the cities that before Nero were depended by Rome lost their freedom. That is why Patras held its freedom until the first Byzantine period. In inscriptions, at Vespasian's times (69-79 A.D.), Patras is mentioned as base of public land-surveyor and public accountant (curator). During Vespasian's and Titus' times, a lack of coin mint of Patras colony is noticed, a fact that reveals the lost of the coin mint right.

The emperors that followed, especially Domitian (81-96A.D.) and Trajan (98-117A.D.), did not show more interest for Patras than in the other Greek cities. The emperor who proved to be the protector of Greek culture was Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) (fig. 8). He lived in Athens from 122 to 125, he visited Patras and Corinth and he embellished the

towns of the Achaean Congress and Athens. To his intervention was owed the conciliation between Patras and Corinth which in that time were in great competition. From that time there is a coin that depicts the bust of Hadrian with his name and two women: Corinth and Patras in an altar with their arms outstretched towards one another in concord. During Hadrian's times there was in Patras remarkable public library. It is in the 2nd century A.D. that the most monumental public buildings in Patras are dated.

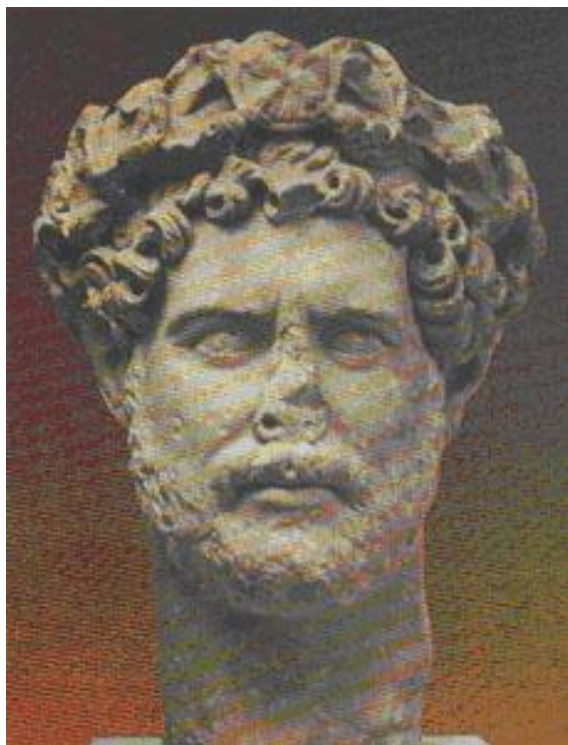


Figure 8. Hadrian (117-138 A.D.)

The Odeum (fig. 9), the Nymphaeum (fig. 10), the Baths, the aqueduct (fig. 11), the port is only few of them. Patras' citizens wanted to express their gratitude to the emperor so except from the coins where Hadrian was labelled regenerator of Achaia (in Latin: restitutor Achaiae) they constructed in his and his predecessor, Trajan, honour baths and cryptoporticus (colonnade) with inscription.

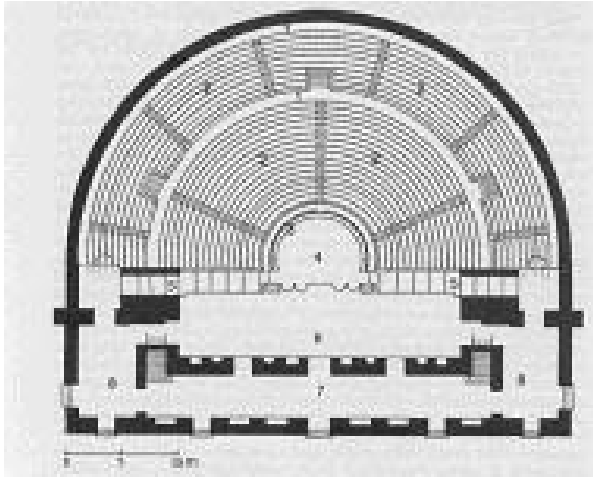


Figure 9. The Odeum

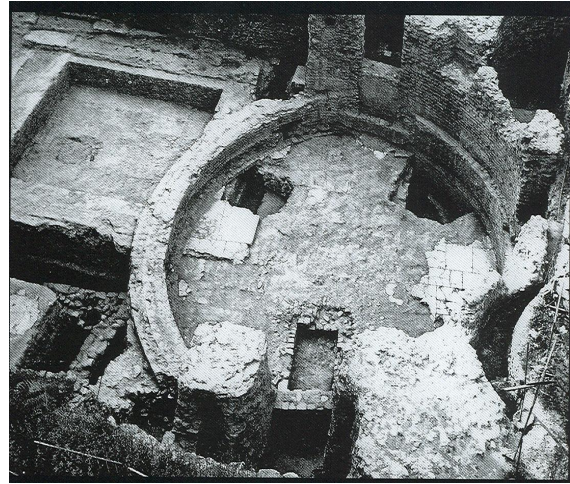


Figure 10. The Nymphaeum



Figure 11. The Roman the aqueduct in the valley of Aroe

Patras which continuously was developed in the sectors of commerce and craft was beautified, met a population explosion and was visited by many strangers. The erudite historian from Chaironeia and Hadrian's teacher, Plutarch (fig. 12), had visited Patras.

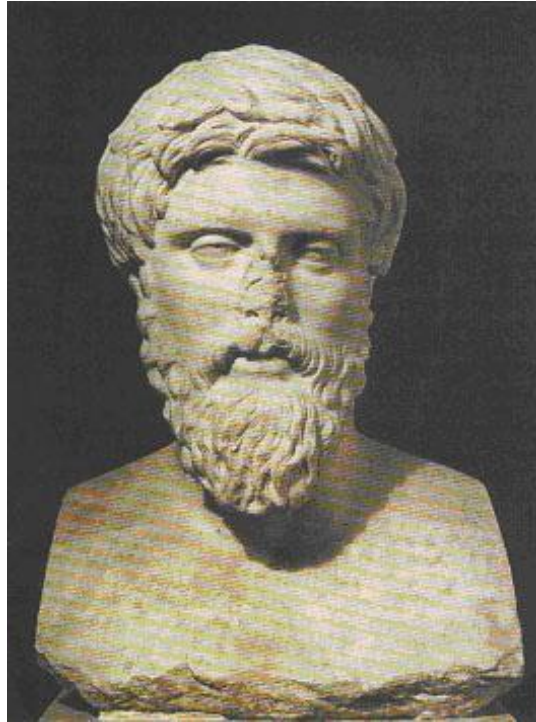


Figure 12. Plutarch

During Trajan's times, at 99, the roman nobleman Sossius Senecio had become consul and at 107 governor in Achaia. During Antoninus (138- 161) and Marcus Aurelius (161-180) (fig. 13) times tranquility had prevailed in Greece. The most known author from Patras that lived in the years of Marcus Aurelius was Lucios.

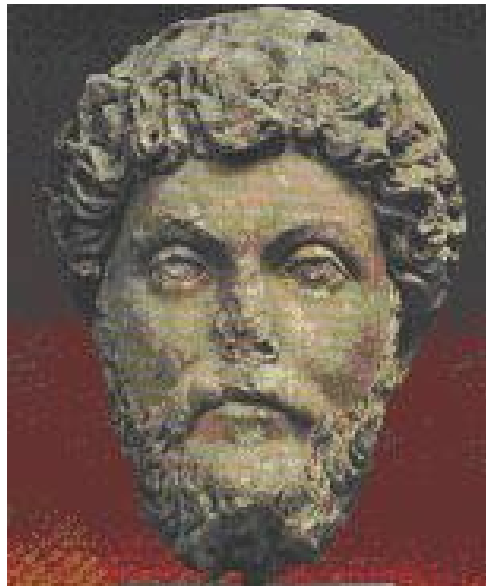


Figure 13. Marcus Aurelius (161-180)

In the years of Caracalla, in Dacia's frontier Goths had a few clashes with Romans (215) but in 251 in emperor's Decius time repeated barbarian invasions were made in

Moisia and Thrace. Then, Decius occupied Thermopyles with guards to secure Greece.

The General Aimilianus won the Goths in Moisia and at 253 Greece was safe. The Greeks sent the allied armies in Thermopyles, the Athenians fortified their city and the Peloponnesians constructed walls at Isthmus, in Corinth. So the intruders turned to Illyria and Asia Minor. The danger had passed away for a while as in 267 during Galenus (fig. 14) reign the Goths crossed the Aegean, occupied the islands, disembarked in Attica and Peloponnese, seized Athens, Corinth, Argos, Sparta, Achaia and Patras and returned back to their base. Afterwards, for almost a century Greece remained immune against attacks but was influenced by the convulsions that happened to the Roman Empire.

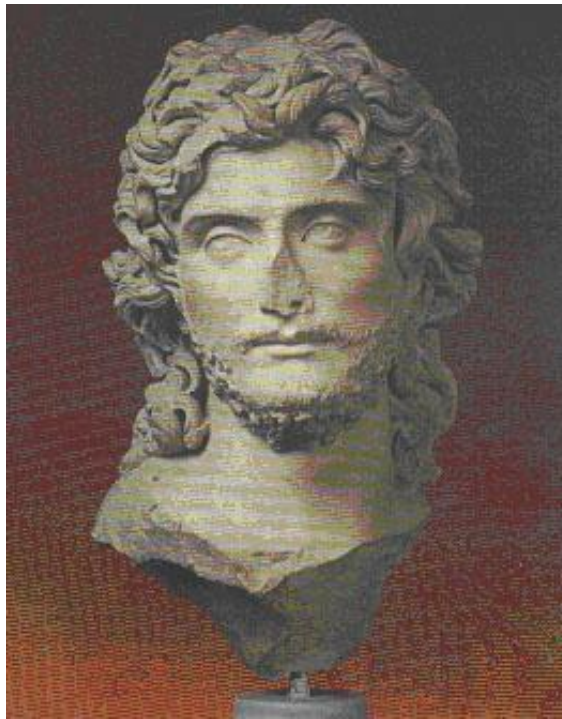


Figure 14. Galenus

Byzantine years

In 330 the capital of the Roman Empire was transferred to Constantinople by Constantine the Great (fig. 15).

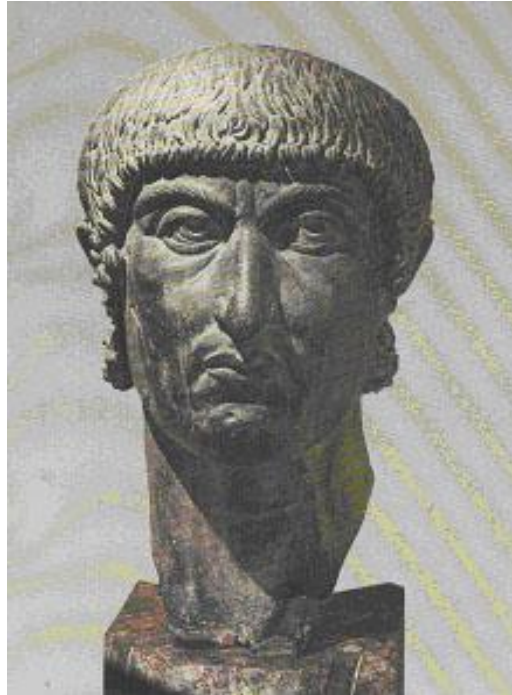


Figure 15. Constantine the Great

During this emperor's years Patras was simply mentioned as a Christian community that was expanding and progressing. His son, Constantius (fig. 16), the emperor from 353 to 361 launched persecutions against heathens so all the ceremonies and sacrifices that were performing in Patras were decreased. Important works of art were destroyed by Christians as they thought that in that way they served the new religion faithfully.

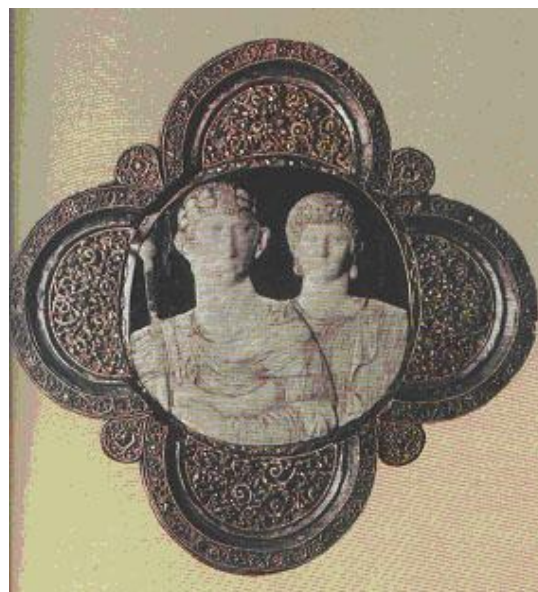


Figure 16. Constantius with his wife

At 344 an Ecclesiastical Synod took place in Sardece, near Sofia of Bulgaria. In this Synod is mentioned to take part the bishop of Patras, Plutarch, who signed in minutes as “Plutarch from Achaia of Patras” instead of “Plutarch from Patras of Achaia”. The bishop in his return met the emperor in Andrianople of Thrace and he informed him that the relics of Saint Andrew were in Patras. Then the emperor ordered Artemius to take over the relics. Later, in the years of Julian (fig. 17), he died a martyr to his faith. When Artemios asked for the St Andrew’s relics he did not manage to persuade the citizens neither to obey to the emperor’s order nor to accept his presents. Gregory of Tours refers that The Apostle was performing miracles and his reputation brought pilgrims in Patras.

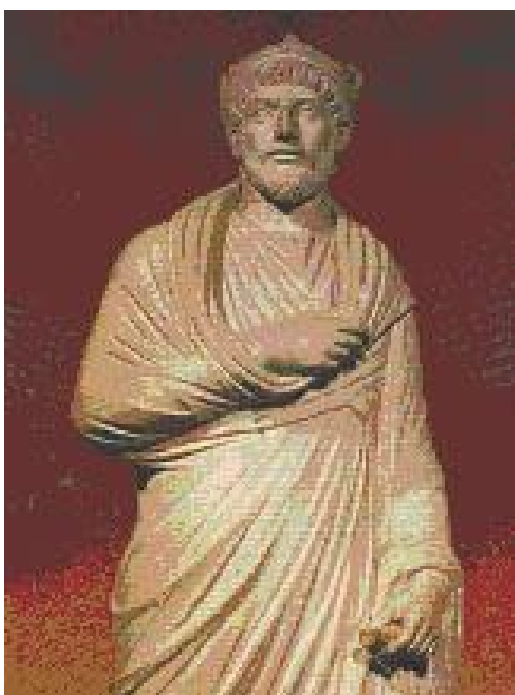


Figure 17. Julian the Apostate

Artemios was determined to execute the emperor’s will even violently. The citizens suggested giving the relics if the emperor took on the expenses for the construction of an aqueduct in Patras, as the tradition says. Indeed, the aqueduct existed in the area of Girokomeio and was visited by many travellers in the 17th and the 18th century: Wheler (1689), an English traveller, Richard Pockocke(1720), C. Wordsworth, Pouqueville, Romardi, Ch.Lenormant. However, the aqueduct is dated in the Roman period (early 2nd c. A.D.) so it is possible that Artemios was referring in a

repair of the already existing aqueduct. At 353 or 357 the relics were transferred in the church of Saint Apostles in Constantinople.

The Scottish historian John of Fordun, who lived during the 14th century, wrote the history of his country until 1153 and informed us about an incident; in the middle of 4th century the relics were under a prior's supervision. One night before the transportation of the Holy relics he saw a dream; an angel told him to abstract limbs from St Andrew's body. After few years, he again saw the same angel to tell him leave Patras with the relics. In his trip the ship was wrecked in Scotia, in the port of Saint Andrew. The king Hugo offered him hospitality and adopted Christianity. In the area of the shipwreck a church was built dedicated to St Andrew and the Saint became the Patron Saint of the country. The symbol of the Scottish flag represents the scheme of Saint Andrew's cross.

The emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363) (fig. 17), who was a supporter of the ancient religion, ordered the reconstruction of many temples in Epirus, Macedonia and Achaia. The emperors who succeeded him to the throne, Jovianus (363-364), Valentinianus (fig. 18) and Valis (364-365) (fig. 19) did not apply his plans and the idolatry gradually declined. During those years Patras was prospering but a strong earthquake the July of 375 shattered the roman areas of the Mediterranean Sea and many cities of Italy, Egypt, Crete, Peloponnese (Patras is one of them) were destroyed.



Figure 18. Valentinianus



Figure 19. Valis

The emperor Theodosius the Great (379-395) (fig. 20) forbade idolatry with law and his son, Arcadius, ordered the demolition of the temples.



Figure 20. Theodosius the Great

From the times of Theodosius the Second (408-450) (fig. 21) the ancient temples started to be transformed into Christian churches and dedicated to saints.



Figure 21. Theodosius the Second

In the end of the 4th century successive raids of Goths took place in Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, Locris, Boeotia, Attica, Corinth, Aigion and Patras that lasted for almost a year. The population and the productive capacity of Greece were minimized on account of the plunders and the slaughters. Indicative of the conditions that were prevailing then is the two provisions of Theodosius the Second. The first one refers to the multitude of fields in Achaia that were without owner and the second allowed only to the Achaeans the reduction of the tax that had been imposed in the East Illyria. Additionally, in the middle of the 5th century Vandals charged from Africa with powerful fleet and sacked the west coasts of the Peloponnese continuously. In 468 Patras suffered from their raids.

A notable emperor was Justinian (fig. 22), whose wisdom and good intention is pointed out by the Byzantine authors. He ordered the governors to be just and caring for their citizens as this was the only way to achieve prosperity and avoid the emigration.



Figure 22. Justinian

Patras was a passing-by for important people. The pope Virgil arrived in Patras in 14th of October 553 from Illyria and Sicily as he was travelling to Constantinople invited by the emperor Justinian. His presence in Patras caused deluge of people.

During Justinian's years, in 551, a strong earthquake occurred in Patras that destroyed the city and caused the death of 4000 citizens, according to the historian Procopios. Above that a plague followed. Justinian constructed fortresses in those cities of Greece that were not walled. Patras' castle (fig. 23) was constructed by him in the second half of the 6th century AD, during the years of big defensive elevation of the Byzantine Empire in the place where the ancient acropolis was. It consists of an external enclosure with towers and an internal one in the NE corner. In 805 the citizens defended themselves against the Slavs and the Saracens in the castle. They finally managed to defeat them. According to the legend mentioned by the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenetus, St. Andrew, the patron saint of the city, led the inhabitants to the victory. The castle was captured by many conquerors: Franks, Venetians, and Turks who made further extensions in castle's defensive mechanism (bastions, moats) and added new buildings (mosques, baths).



Figure 23. Patras' castle

In the same period two Christian monks transferred from China the silkworm. In Peloponnese and the Aegean islands learned the silk-growing and the sericulture, knowledge important for the future economical life of Patras.

For the 7th century we do not know something very important about Patras and the situation in Peloponnese. During the years of Constantine V (746-747) an epidemic disease broke out in Peloponnese and the population had decreased once more. Constantine Porphyrogenetus (912-959) in his book to his son Romanus narrates the siege of Patras by Slavs and Saracens in the reign of Nicephoros I, in 805 and how the Apostle Andrew made a miracle and rescued the citizens. He is referred to the good defend mechanism that Patras had and the well-organised municipal institutions. The archdiocese of Patras was turned into metropolis by the emperor Nicephoros and had under supervision the episcopates of Methoni, Koroni and Lacedaimona.

The 9th century Patras was in its prime thanks to the development of industry especially in luxury carpets, silk fabrics, linen and purple textiles. A well-known rich woman from Patras, Danielis (fig. 24), had in her possession many handicraft workshops, slaves, a lot of gold and silver and was instrumental in the life of Basil A' the Macedon who became emperor from 867 to 886. The Macedonian Dynasty was governing from 867 to 1057. During Basil's years, in 872, a fleet of Saracen pirate ships seized the villages in the areas of Methoni, Kyllini, Patras and Corinth. Nonetheless, Patras was not be harmed a lot by Saracens attacks but from the invasions of Bulgarians from North who irrupted again in the reign of Leon Sofos (885-928) and Constantine Porphyrogenetus. Bulgarians, under the leadership of Symeon, became the terror of Constantinople and the near areas and they were invading in Peloponnese from 924 to 927.



Figure 24. Danielis in Constantinople

Patras had won, in addition with the development of the craft, the favour of Basil the Macedon, Leon Sofos and his successors. The city became commercial centre thanks to the port, which never lost its commercial importance and communication with the cities of the East and West and especially those of Puglia and Calabria. The Arabs geographers had named the port of Patras with the Persian word “bend” which means commercial port.

A personality that acted in Patras this period is Arethas (fig. 25). He was born in 850 at Patras and he studied in Constantinople with the support of Basil the Macedon. In 896 he was ordained deacon in Constantinople and studied Plato’s texts. In 901 he became archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He devoted his life to the collection and interpretation of the ecclesiastical and classical authors. With his order and

expenses manuscripts were copied which, thanks to him, were saved such as Plato's, Aristides' and Euclid's manuscripts. He died in 933 or 934.

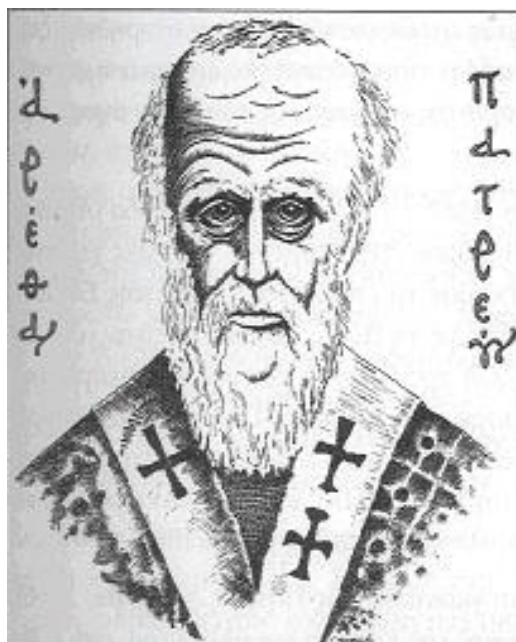


Figure 25. Arethas

In 981, in the reign of Basil II Voulgaroktonos, Bulgarians, under the leadership of Samuel invaded in Macedonia, Thessaly, Central Greece and Peloponnese. Nevertheless, they turned into the northern areas again. Thessaly and especially Larissa suffered tribulations. Moreover, in 995 Samuel reoccupied Thessaly, crossed the river Pineios and advanced on Boeotia, Attica and in Peloponnese through Isthmos doing plundering. The general Nicephoros Ouranos who had been sent by Basil against Samuel won him in Sperhios. The Peloponnesians returned to their peaceful and creative life. The productive power of Greece and especially of Peloponnese was immense. There is an evidence of Kedrinos that in 1037 when Constantinople had been suffered a starvation, 100.000 byzantine metres of wheat were bought from Peloponnese and the rest Greece without any shortage being arisen in those areas.

During 12th century, Saracens attempted pirate incursions on Greek coasts. In 1031 they invade in Patras without causing long-term consequences. From 1080 to 1085, Normans occupied Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia and some Ionian islands. They came from Apulia under Robert Gyiscar and his son Boemund leadership. In 1085 they lost all their conquests.

In 1147, the king of Sicily Roger the 1st occupied for a while Corfu, Thebes, Corinth, Athens and a part of Peloponnese (1141). A lot of captives from East Greece and Peloponnese were transferred in Sicily (over 15.000). Among the captives were a large number of silk-growers and silk-throwers with whom Roger established the first silk-mills of Italy depriving at the same time Greece of the monopoly of silk as all Europe was buying from Italy and the cities of Spain, Lisbon and Almeria.

In 1125 while the doge of Venice Domenico Michiel was returning with his fleet from Syria where he had won Saracens plundered Cyclades and Peloponnese (Patras included) and caused panic.

Frankish Rule

The 12th century is the era when the Crusaders went to Jerusalem for the liberation of the Holy Land from Saracens. But that was just pretence in conformity with the religious spirit of the Middle Ages. The reasons were in the expansionism of Pope who wanted to dominate in the East, in the effort of the traders to economically control the Mediterranean Sea, in the desire of the feudal lords for new lands, in the hope of the poor farmers for a new life.

The Crusades were responsible for the fall of Constantinople and Byzantium in 1204. Boniface, the marquis of Montferrat captured the areas north of the Isthmus and Thessalonica as capital while Peloponnese and the islands were given to the Venetians. The possession of those areas was not so easy because several areas were owned by independent rulers; others were governed by relatives of the royal Family of Byzantium who could defend them. So, Venetians occupied only Crete and some islands, they postponed and finally abandoned the conquest of Peloponnese because they have shortage of soldiers.

The conquest of Peloponnese was undertaken by the Franks. The two allies, Geoffrey de Villehardouin and Guillaume de Champlitte, left the camp of Boniface with an armed force, arrived in Patras and occupied the town with an assault and moved towards Elis (1204). The Franks occupied Elis and moved to Methoni. When they managed to take possession of Methoni, the Greeks of the Peloponnese stopped defend themselves. The Franks divided Peloponnese into twelve baronies that constituted the principdom of Achaia under Geoffrey de Villehardouin.

The barony of Patras was given to Guillaume Aleman who came from Languedoc of France but of German descent. He resided permanently in Germany and in 1266 his family sold the barony of Patras in the Latin Church and the Latin archbishop became ecclesiastical, political and military governor of Patras' barony. The Latin Church became master of the barony until 1430 when Constantine 11th Palaiologos occupied it.

When the conquest of Patras and Achaia was completed by Franks, Guillaume de Champlitte established French clerics in the coastal church of Saint Andrew who elected as archbishop Antelmus, a French man, who was descended from Burgundy or Savoy, belonged to the Benedictine Order and had been boarder of the Parisian monastery of Cluny. He lived in Patras from 1205 to 1243 and served the Latin Church with courage. Antelmus whose seal had been writing "Nos Antelmus Dei gratia Patracensis Archiepiscopus" (We Antelmus by God's grace archbishop of Patras) four years after his inauguration in the archbishopric of Patras participated in the convention in Andravida (Andreville) where the subject of the Greek Church's property that had been confiscated and finally given to the Latin clergy was discussed. The church's lands in Peloponnese were enough because during the Byzantine years thanks to the religiosity, kings and individuals donated to churches, monasteries and other institutions. So, the archbishop of Patras as the principal of the Peloponnesian church took eight Knightly feuds.

After the establishment of the Franks in the Peloponnese a lot of Latin clerics who did not interested in fulfilling their duties although they recovered ecclesiastical incomes went there. When the Pope was informed about that he ordered the archbishop of Patras to punish them with suspension.

Besides the feuds that had been given to the barons, the archbishop of Patras and to his bishops, twelve feuds were offered to the three Orders, four to each. The Orders was the Knights of Saint John, the Hospitaliers, the Teutons and the Templiers whose property in Achaia and Elis, when it was dissolved in 1312, passed to the first Order.

The Templiers had established by Guillaume de Champlitte to the monastery of the Assumption of the Virgin in Girokomio (that in Greek means the old people's home). In 1210 Antelmus assigned the monastery of Girokomio to the monastery of the Cluny evicting with force the Templiers. However, he soon had quarrels with the baron of

Patras, Geoffrey I de Villehardouin, and his knights mainly about economical reasons. The dispute lasted twelve years and continued even when Geoffrey II de Villehardouin succeeded his father to the barony of Peloponnese. The reconciliation came with an agreement in 4 September 1223 and the baron was bound to return to the church all the ecclesiastical land that was kept by him in Peloponnese but the archbishop continued to squander the incomes of Patras' church. Antelmus died probably in 1243 as the papal archives mentioned the inauguration of the new archbishop in that year. When Geoffrey II died without children the hegemony of Morea passed to his brother Guillaume (1246-1278) who in 1259 married Anna or Agnes Comnena, the daughter of the despot of Epirus, Michael the 2nd, and grand-daughter of Michael I Aggelos Comnenos the founder of the hegemony of Epirus. The ceremony took place in the Byzantine church of Saint Andrew and because of the relationship the citizens of Patras carried out the commerce in the Western Greece without obstacles.

Battles between the Franks and the Byzantines were conducted for the regaining of the land in Peloponnese in the 14th century. In 1320 the Byzantines occupied Arcadia while the Frankish rule was limited in the baronies of Vostitsa, Patras, Chalandritsa and Veligosti.

When archbishop of Patras was Guillaume Frangipanis (1326-1337) Patras had become the main commercial centre of the Frankish hegemony in Peloponnese. In the same period while the government of Achaia had Catherine of Valois anarchy was prevailing. So, at the summer of 1338, she arrived in Peloponnese. In Patras she stayed 3 years and she soon understood that the barony of Patras maintained the order in the region and was strong towards every external power. That is why she made Patras independent and the barony of Patras took its place among Achaia's baronies and later was dominated over them.

In the beginning of the 15th century Peloponnese was consisted of the Byzantine despotate of Mystras, the Frankish principedom, the independent archbishopric barony of Patras, the baronies of Arcadia and Chalandritsa which were occupied by the Genovese House of Zacharias while the cities of Methoni and Koroni were occupied by the Venetians.

WP4 – Action 4.5

Study 1: the history of Patras during the Roman and Byzantine years

In 1408 the Pope granted Patras to the Venetians according to the convention that was signed between the archbishop of Patras and the Venetians in 20/8.

In 1429 Constantine Palaiologos captured the city until the Turkish rule which started in Patras in 1458.

COMMERCIAL, RURAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

Commerce and Economy

Patras was not mentioned in the ancient authors as a city known for its commerce as Athens and Corinth was. It began to play crucial role when it took advantage of the destruction of Corinth's port by Romans in 146 B.C. In the second half of the 2nd century B.C. the use of the port for the communication with Italy was strained. Besides Patras all along has been the only important Greek coastal city with orientation to the Ionian Sea. Politicians, travellers, diplomats, traders, exiles were leaving bound for East through the Corinthian Gulf. The funeral gifts of graves of the third quarter of the 2nd century B.C.³ which were composed of gold jewelries stated the existence of an Achaean workshop of funeral jewels influenced by the Italian tradition and confirmed the close and systematic use of Patras' port for the contact with Italy, a contact which later, when the circumstances favoured it, will be enlarged.

During Roman's civil wars Patras was going through a crisis which owed to the Roman Generals' arbitrariness. In the middle of the 1st century B.C. the city's importance linked to the port's motion. Patras was used as a station in orator's Cicero journeys to the East or was a residential place –permanent or temporary – of his friends and acquaintances as his letters informed us. In the ensuing years until the naval battle of Actium (31 B.C.) Patras was used as a place of warlike preparations, collisions and encamping that coerced the citizens into abandoning their city, every economical and commercial activity stopped and the decay of Patras was stunning.

When a roman colony was founded by Augustus in 14 B.C. a new situation that favoured the commerce and navigation was created. That was intimated by the antagonism between Corinth and Patras in Augustus' years and by the construction of the port as part of the city with Poseidon's temple and the sanctuary of Venus as Pausanias informs us although the only archaeological finding which is correlated with harbour installations is situated in 36, Bouboulinas st., very close to the today's coastal line and dates from the second half of the 2nd century A.D. (fig. 26). Consequently, the existence of mole is indicative of the needs and purposes that the port was serving.

³ I.A. Papapostolou, *Ελληνιστικοί τάφοι I*, Athens ,1982, 281



Figure 26. Bouboulinas st

Moreover, the city from the late-Hellenistic years started to expand towards the sea where it finally arrived during the roman years, a fact that indicates the incorporation of the port (which is mentioned in all the itineraries) and its functions in the life of the citizens (fig. 27).



Figure 27. View of Patrai harbour on a coin issued by Geta.

The characterization of Patras as a commercial and economical station justifies the existence of farmhouses which were organised in the district in conformity with the roman system and they were incorporated to the production. Roads were constructed

in Patras to facilitate all the land transports and from the 2nd century A.D. were paved. The craft production, the potteries and the workrooms of jewels conducted to the economical development of Patras.

A local economical decrease was noticed during Gordianus III years when coin mint stopped and the port of Patras lost some of its activities.

The first-Byzantine Patras was sustained to the commerce and navigation, to the agricultural and small-industrial production and those were the factors that helped it to outlive inspite of the Slav attacks, the earthquakes and the diseases that hit the area.

From the 6th century A.D. Patras enjoyed a new period of thriving. During Justinian's years the sericulture and the silk-growing was imported in Peloponnese. Danielis, a rich woman in 9th century had a textile factory with great production and commerce that expanded to Italy. Next century, Patras was a commercial centre with frequent naval communication with South Italy. In the 12th century Patras was the first port of Peloponnese that Venetian traders had established while several families of West Europe had gathered in the city (community of Venetians and rest Italians, French, Germans and English).

Moreover, the commerce of Naupaktos, Aetolikon and Aigion concentrated in Patras and Corfu was an intermediary station between Patras and Venice. The commercial transactions with the West Greece were held without obstacles from 1253 thanks to the affinity of the despot of Epirus Michael with Guillaume de Villehardouin. The commerce of Patras with Venice was in prime until the Turkish rule.

Rural economy⁴

Patras and its district were self-sufficient in agricultural products during the Roman years. That is concluded by the existence of the farms (fig. 28) dated in this period, when the rural production was better organised with central and small roads, bridges, irrigating pipes. In the roman years can be dated 68 farms while in the late roman period are decreased in 45. “As well as a quantitative increase they show some qualitative improvement. For the first time the coastal zone was used for habitation, with villages and large farmsteads. The latter show a completely new settlement pattern for the region. Further exploitation of the countryside is clear, constructional debris and the quality of the finds provide evidence for this exploitation.”⁵



Figure 28. Farm

The suppression of the farms system arrived in the end of this period as in the following period, the early Christian, are affirmed 25 positions of farms and in the Byzantine years 7 positions. The incursions of the barbaric tribes in the second half of the 3rd century A.D. and the disease peste antonine which hit the lower classes and the work-force contributed to the decline of the farmstead system. The monasteries

⁴ Michalis Petropoulos, “Αγροκτίες Πατραϊκής”, Structures rurales et sociétés antiques, Centre de Recherches d’Histoire Ancienne, vol.126, Paris, 1994, 406-424.

⁵Michalis Petropoulos, A.D.Rizakis, ‘The Achaea Project. The Coastal Area of Patras in the Northwest Peloponnese: Settlement patterns and Landscape in the coastal area of Patras, Preliminary report’, J.R.A.7 (1994), 205.

with the production and the processing installations of products that conduce to their self-sufficiency may be a survival of the farmsteads.

The rural installations are consisted of a central court, the storerooms, the workrooms with wine or olive presses, the grain mills around it, other auxiliary rooms with the necessary equipment as looms and the separated graves. They produced wine (fig. 29), oil, wheat and flour and took advantage of the meat of the cows, sheeps and pigs and the wool.



Figure 29. Pan and his attendants, the Silenoi, treading grapes.(Roman mosaic from Patrai)

The majority of those farms are found in the plain but there are also on the low mountains where they served the cattle-raising and exploited the products of the woods as the honey and the timber. The coastal farmsteads (*villae maritimae*) provided with fishes the city (fig. 30)



Figure 30. The coastal farmsteads (*villae maritimae*) provided with fishes the city

Other types of the farmsteads are the *villa urbana* in the city, the *villa suburbana* in the suburbs and the *villa rustica* in the countryside. During the roman period in Patras we meet the three above types of the farmhouses. It is reasonable that, as long as in the roman period the city of Patras was limited in size, many farmsteads have found today inside the modern city.

The majority of the farmsteads were situated along the three main roads which leaded to the port of Patras; in the North the road from Corinth and Aigion to Patras, in the East the road from Pharai and Kalavryta to Patras and in the South from Dyme and Elis to Patras. From the port the exportation of the wine (fig. 31), the oil, the wheat, the pottery, the textiles and the products of cattle-raising was conducted.

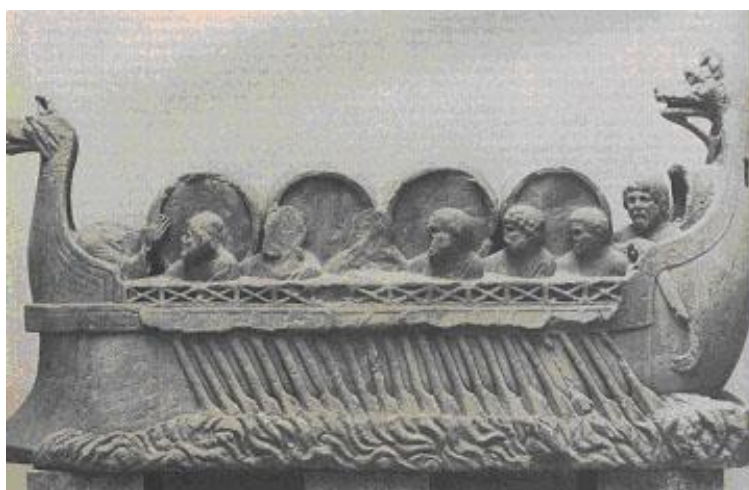


Figure 31. The exportation of the wine

Worship

During the years before Romans the citizens of Patras adored the twelve gods of Olympus in the acropolis of Patras as the rest Greeks did along with the local gods. Moreover, they satisfied their inherent curiosity about the future in the oracular spring of the goddess Demeter which was situated near the port and later was turned into St Andrew's well (fig. 7). As a continuity of Demeter's oracular attribute can be seen the oracle of the oil lamps, Lychnomanteion, which was in operation in the port of Patras (67-69, Mpoumpoulinas st.) from the middle of the 2nd century A.D. until the early 4th century A.D. when it was destroyed by an earthquake.⁶ The prediction of the oil lamps, which was based on the shape of the flame, imported in Greece by Egypt through Romans in the 2nd century A.D. and was popular mostly in the sailors who were interested to know about their trips, the weather and their health. In Patras, many lamp workshops existed during the three first centuries after the Birth of Christ and the clay lamps bear relief depictions (fig. 32).



Figure 32. Clay lamps bear relief depictions

⁶ Michalis Petropoulos, Τα εργαστήρια των Ρωμαϊκών λυχναριών της Πάτρας και το λυχομαντείο, ΤΑΠΑ, Patras, 1994, 142

During Roman times and especially when Patras became Roman colony it was natural to appear –in parallel with the before existing Greek worship- roman worships as those of Kyveli and Attis, oriental devotions that imported to Patras through Rome and were Hellenized, the worship of Nemesis (fig. 33) and that of Augustus. Moreover, several temples were altered as Zeus’s temple which became temple of the three gods of Capitolium.



Figure 33. Nemesis

In the 2nd century A.D.⁷ Patras as a multinational city blended many religious cults where the Pan-Hellenic gods of Olympus existed in parallel with gods from East and Roman ones. Certainly, the presence of a Jewish community and Mithraism community established the accomplishment of the respective worships together with the pre-existing Greek devotion and the diffident appearance of the Christian worship in the end of the 1st century A.D. In the end of the 3rd century A.D. the existence of bishop in Patras is recorded while when the Christianity was approved during Great Constantine’s times Patras has a remarkable Christian community. In any case the victory of the Christianity over the rest cults in Patras must have been contributed in

⁷ Nikolaos Papachatzis, Πανσανίου Ελλάδος Περιήγησις, Αχαϊκά, (Pausanias Perieghese), Εκδοτική Αθηνών, vol. 4, Athens, 1980, 103

the years of Theodosius' successors and surely a church must have existed in the place of Apostle's martyrdom which in the years of Justinian turned into basilica.

EPILOGUE

Although Patras had an eventful and adventurous life during all those years managed not only to survive but to produce culture as well. Today, in the city a lot of constructions – of Roman and other periods- remain to remind people the historical events and the aspects of the citizens' everyday life.

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