

John Chrysostom, the *Laudatio Apostolorum*, and the End of the Areopagus

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JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, ecclesiastical author and bishop of Constantinople, ranks among the most prolific writers of antiquity. His relics were transferred from Comana in Pontus (to which he had been exiled) to Constantinople some thirty years after his death in 407, and remained there in the Church of the Holy Apostles up until the age of the Crusades. John's language was often hostile towards groups outside of Christian orthodoxy, not least towards pagan scholars and philosophers. Studies in the relative chronology of John's writings, first undertaken by Bernard de Montfaucon in his early edition and recently and comprehensively reviewed by Wendy Mayer, have yielded the result that while some of John's polemical sermons belong to his appointment in Constantinople, he had already delivered most of these while he was in Antioch.¹ Although some scholars have doubted the authenticity of some of John's most polemical texts, a closer review has sometimes revealed that there is insufficient reason to doubt his authorship.²

¹ W. Mayer, *The Homilies of St John Chrysostom* (Rome 2005).

² Since M. Schatkin, "The Authenticity of St. John Chrysostom's *De sancto Babyla, contra Iulianum et Gentiles*," in P. Granfield et al. (eds.), *Kyriakon: Festschrift Johannes Quasten I* (Münster 1970) 479–489, there is general agreement that the treatise *De Babyla* is by Chrysostom; previous scholars had often doubted this. Recently D. Tonia, *Abraham in the Works of John Chrysostom* (Minneapolis 2014) 155–175, made a strong case for the authenticity, previously doubted, of *De beato Abraham* (CPG 4514). Overall, there is a general tendency to doubt

While an increasing number of works by John Chrysostom are now accessible in critical editions, many of his polemical writings and sermons are not so far edited to a modern philological standard. In those cases, the text uncritically transcribed by Montfaucon remains the only available resource to date. At least one of these polemical sermons is currently accessible in neither an early transcription nor a modern edition, namely, a short sermon called *Laudatio Apostolorum* (“Praise of the Apostles”) that is attributed to John Chrysostom in the two extant manuscripts (CPG 4970).³ The best and oldest manuscript preserving the text is *Vat.gr.* 455 (V), a Byzantine homiliary of the tenth century; the other is Messina, *S. Salvatore gr.* 3 (M), folios 136^v–139^v, from the twelfth century. In this article, I shall first argue that the *Laudatio* is probably an authentic sermon by Chrysostom. The most interesting passage is a brief reference to the “destruction” of the council of the Areopagus in Athens. This is at first glance an allusion to the biblical Areopagus speech of the apostle Paul, but in my opinion it is also—because of the other historical allusions in the immediate context and the general theme of the Christian triumph—a fourth-century reference to the actual end of the council of the Areopagus. I shall also outline the epigraphic and archaeological evidence on the end of the council, arguing that it was no longer held after the Visigothic invasion of Athens in 396. I shall contend that this is because the associated meeting place was a pagan site and that the end of the Areopagus was a sign of the triumph of Christianity over the philosophers of Athens.

the authenticity of works circulating in John Chrysostom’s name. J. Quasten, *Patrology* III (Utrecht 1960) 470–473 (with bibliographies), found debatable many of the arguments with which to question the authenticity of works circulating in John’s name. A more recent survey is S. Voicu, “L’immagine di Crisostomo negli spuri,” in M. Wallraff et al. (eds.), *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren* (Berlin 2008) 61–96.

³ S. Voicu, “Echi costantinopolitani di sant’Ireneo. Note su una pseudo-crisostomica: ‘Laudatio apostolorum’ (CPC 4970),” in B. Magnusson (ed.), *In ultra terminum vagari: Scritti in onore di C. Nyander* (Rome 1997) 357–366, at 358.

1. *The date and author of the Laudatio Apostolorum*

The *Laudatio* is not yet edited in its entirety, but the main part—the part I am relying on here—has been made accessible in an article from 1997 by Sever J. Voicu. I have also consulted photographs of the Vatican manuscript. The *Laudatio* has found little attention since Voicu. I shall therefore first engage with the historical context, date, and authorship of the *Laudatio* and challenge the current view that the work is not an authentic sermon by John Chrysostom. This view is based on the publication of Voicu.⁴ His argument is that Chrysostom cannot have delivered this sermon because both content and style are different from his other sermons and because the sermon was given in Constantinople, probably at some time between 363 and 380, i.e. when John Chrysostom lived in Antioch and before he took up his office there in 397. Voicu does not, however, engage in details of the stylistic argument, stating only that he was unable to identify lexicographic similarities to any of the extant Pseudo-chrysostomic texts.⁵

Fortunately, the *Laudatio* is among the very few sermons given at a location that is firmly known: the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople, the church that kept John's relics during most of the Middle Ages. This is because the sermon itself mentions as currently present in the church the relics of three apostles, or more precisely students of the apostles, Andrew, Timothy, and Luke, which were all kept in this church by the year 360.⁶ The Church of the Holy Apostles was the main church in Constantinople at the time, along with the Great Church, and only the bishop of Constantinople or else a similarly renowned preacher would have delivered a sermon

⁴ *In Ultra terminum vagari* 357–366; see also S. Voicu, “Johannes Chrysostomus II (Pseudo-Chrysostomica),” *RAC* 18 (1997) 503–515, at 515.

⁵ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 358.

⁶ See D. Woods, “The Date of the Translation of the Relics of SS. Luke and Andrew to Constantinople,” *VigChr* 45 (1991) 286–292.

there.⁷ To my mind, it appears unlikely that the sermon was given at any time between 360 and 380 when the city was controlled by the Arian faction, including the two Arian bishops who held the see of Constantinople, Eudoxius and Demophilus.⁸ While passing down a sermon under the name of John Chrysostom assured its survival unless the sermon obviously gave away its heretical content, there is no other known case of a work attributed to John but authored by an Arian.⁹ Moreover, any misattribution of John's sermons normally occurred during the Johannite schism, that is, after John's exile in 403 but before his rehabilitation in 418 and, to a fuller extent, 438. The works and sermons thus misattributed were normally authored by either friends or enemies of John's during his time in Constantinople rather than by preachers of a relatively distant past.¹⁰

Arguments in favour of dating the sermon to before 380 are tenuous indeed. The polemical passage of this sermon, which is central to this article, contains a number of historical allusions which can therefore serve as a *terminus post quem*. For example, the sermon alludes to the apostles who "put to silence the Castalian oracle water."¹¹ At first glance this allusion, along with

⁷ See W. Mayer, "Cathedral Church or Cathedral Churches? The Situation at Constantinople (c. 360–404 AD)," *OCP* 66 (2000) 49–68.

⁸ Thdt. *HE* 4.11–12; Socr. *HE* 5.3, 5.10; Philost. *HE* 9.19; Soz. *HE* 7.5, 7.12.

⁹ See Voicu, in *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren* 61–96. On the usefulness of John's name, P. Allen, "John Chrysostom after Chalcedon: A Useful Ecumenist?" in D. Costache et al. (eds.), *John Chrysostom: Past, Present, Future* (Sydney 2017) 53–69.

¹⁰ W. Mayer, "Media Manipulation as a Tool in Religious Conflict: Controlling the Narrative Surrounding the Deposition of John Chrysostom," in *Religious Conflict from Early Christianity to the Rise of Islam* (Berlin 2013) 151–168, esp. 151–153 (citing Voicu as an authority for this argument), and "A Life of Their Own: Preaching, Radicalisation, and the Early Ps-Chrysostomica in Greek and Latin," in F. Barone et al. (ed.), *Philologie, herméneutique et histoire des textes entre orient et occident: Mélanges ... Sever J. Voicu* (Turnhout 2017) 977–1004.

¹¹ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 365 n.42: τὰ Κασταλίας ὕδατα μαντικὰ ἔσβεσαν (M 137^rB, V119^vA).

the others discussed below, seems to refer to the deeds of the apostles recounted in Acts. Indeed, a number of Christian authors allude to the silencing of oracles in biblical contexts, but most of them are from the fourth century, and because they already wrote about the religious transformations of their own day and age, probably both meanings were implied.¹² In the case of the *Laudatio*, this is obvious because the specific allusion to the silencing of the “Castalian oracle” does not appear before the fourth century (with the exception of the second-century author Clement of Alexandria who wrote long before Christianity took centre stage) and this is for good reasons.¹³ First, the sermons and works of John Chrysostom contain a number of allusions to the apostles, and some of these are fairly obvious presentations of the suppression of paganism in the fourth or fifth century.¹⁴ These “apostles” are therefore more properly persons imitating the apostles, such as monks. Secondly, the reference here is to the wilful destruction of a specific oracle associated with a temple of Apollo who is in turn closely linked to the Castalian spring. Voicu is therefore probably right to draw a parallel from this line to a similar one in a sermon of Gregory of Nazianzus as both passages use similar wording.¹⁵ Gregory wrote this sermon in immediate reaction to the untimely death of the emperor Julian (361–363). His aim was to show that paganism was on the retreat

¹² On such allusions, M. Schatkin and P. Harkins, *Saint John Chrysostom Apologist* (Washington 1985) 34 with further references, e.g. Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 1.46, Athan. *Incar.* 55.1, Eus. *PE* 4.2.8 and 4.4.1 (*GCS* 43.1, 167 and 173).

¹³ Clem. Al. *Protr.* 2.11. On references to Castalia, H. W. Parke, “Castalia,” *BCH* 102 (1978) 199–219.

¹⁴ On this, D. Rohmann, *Christianity, Book-Burning and Censorship in Late Antiquity* (Berlin 2016) 192–193, 200–208.

¹⁵ Gr. Naz. *Or.* 5.32 (*SC* 309, 356–358): Πάλιν ἡ Κασταλία σεσίγηται καὶ σιγῆ καὶ ὕδωρ ἐστὶν οὐ μαντευόμενον, ἀλλὰ γελόμενον· πάλιν ἀνδριὰς ἄφωνος ὁ Ἀπόλλων, πάλιν ἡ Δάφνη φυτὸν ἐστὶν μῦθος θρηνούμενον (“The Castalian spring has again been put to silence and is silent now. She is no longer an oracular water, but something to laugh about: Apollo is again a mute statue, Daphne is again a laurel tree lamented only in myth”).

and that therefore a number of notable temples were closed or destroyed, as he catalogues in the context of this passage on the end of the cult of Apollo. This does not, however, mean that the *Laudatio*, too, was written right after the events which occurred while Julian was staying in Antioch, events that John Chrysostom had personally witnessed. One of the reasons is that the term “Castalian” can refer to Apollo’s oracle either in Delphi or in Daphne near Antioch. The Delphic oracle was shut down at the time of the emperor Theodosius probably in the early 390s and was gone by the time Prudentius wrote the *Apotheosis*.¹⁶ If, therefore, the “Castalian oracle” mentioned in the *Laudatio* is the Delphic one, then this *terminus post quem* would move up close to 397, the year John Chrysostom became bishop of Constantinople. The other reason is that John’s other work on Apollo’s oracle in Daphne near Antioch was also written long after the original events.¹⁷

Voicu therefore goes on to posit a *terminus ante quem*, using an *argumentum ex silentio*. While any *argumentum ex silentio* falls short of being conclusive, Voicu’s argument is particularly problematic: that the anonymous preacher did not mention Christmas.¹⁸ It is not clear why he should have mentioned Christmas in the first place. Although it is true enough to say that Gregory of Nazianzus probably introduced the Christmas date of 25 December to Constantinople during his short spell as bishop of this city, the common explanation is that his predecessors were Arians and any celebrations of the incarnation of Jesus were therefore seen as of secondary importance.¹⁹ If the sermon was delivered on a

¹⁶ Prudent. *Apoth.* 438: *Delfica damnatis tacuerunt sortibus antra*. The temple housing the oracle was perhaps burnt down, according to the Passion of Philip (originating from a Greek text of probably the fifth century): *Passio Philippi* 5.27 (*Studi e Testi* 175, 147): *similiter Delficum Apollinis templum primum adfecit turbo nescio quis, post ignis incendit*.

¹⁷ On this see 434 below.

¹⁸ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 361.

¹⁹ See S. K. Roll, *Toward the Origins of Christmas* (Kampen 1995) 117 and 174–175.

feast day, then it was certainly not 25 December because the sermon first mentions the relics held in Constantinople, and then the apostles Peter, James, and John, whose feast day probably was 27 December. This should render it unnecessary to cite Christmas in the context of the sermon.²⁰ Carrying his argument further, Voicu mentions the possibility that their feast day came to be replaced with the feast day of Stephen the first martyr in the first decade of the fifth century.²¹ To my mind, this makes it even more likely that the sermon dates to the time when John Chrysostom was bishop of Constantinople since he was first exiled in 403 and permanently stayed in his place of exile, Cucusus in Armenia, from 405 onwards. The only reasonable alternative among the misattributed authors preserved among John's sermons is Severian of Gabala who preached in Constantinople between around 400 and 403 where he became John's enemy. This is because the Constantinople sermons wrongly attributed to John were in fact normally delivered by Severian.²²

Given that John Chrysostom did not normally record his own sermons but rather that this was a task carried out by different stenographers (Socr. *HE* 6.4.9), any stylistic argument is weak indeed. It can be surmised that the stenographer recorded ab-

²⁰ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 365 n.1 (M 137^vB, V 119^vA–B): Σὺ μὲν οὖν, ὦ μακάριε Ἀνδρέα, καὶ Τιμόθεε καὶ Λουκᾶ, σύγγνωτέ μοι εἰς ὁμοτρόπους ὑμῶν χαλῶντα τὴν γλῶτταν. Τοῦ γὰρ Πέτρου καὶ Ἰακώβου καὶ Ἰωάννου μνημονεύσας οὐδὲ ὑμῶν ἐπιλέλησμαι (“You, o blessed Andrew, and you, Timothy and Luke, excuse me if I let loose my tongue against those that are of the same kind as you. For when I mention Peter, James and John, I do not forget you”).

²¹ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 361. The relics of Stephen were purportedly found in 415, according to the finder's own account, the *Epistula Luciani*, and the feast day established on that occasion.

²² On the range of authors preserved in John's name, Voicu, in *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren* 61–96. On the historiography of Severian's life, P. van Nuffelen, “Boundless Ambition or a Friendship that Went Wrong? Narrating the Conflict between John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala,” in J. Leemans et al. (eds.), *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala* (Leuven 2019) 245–257.

breviated notes only and that a later compiler could therefore rework the text. In fact, by Voicu's own admission, relatively few of John's works have been handed down to us without considerable editorial interventions, and this makes it difficult to eliminate authorship by stylistic considerations only.²³ There can be no doubt that thematically a sermon on the praise of apostles and particularly one that contains a polemical digression, as is the case with the *Laudatio*, fits well into John's sermons, who wrote a number of works on this or related themes.²⁴ It is equally uncontested that John had a special liking for polemical attacks particularly against pagans.²⁵

A comparison with the authentic works by John Chrysostom does reveal certain similarities.²⁶ The polemical digression of the *Laudatio*, discussed below in greater detail, contains such a rare word form as the third person plural *aischynousi(n)* (αἰσχύνουσι), with only six attestations from antiquity in total. Of these, two are found in authentic works of John Chrysostom, and these are the only attestations in the context of putting persons, including pagan intellectuals, to shame.²⁷ Other variant forms of αἰσχύνω, too, appear with great frequency in John's sermons. On some occasions, John mentions Greek philosophers in the immediate

²³ Voicu, in *Chrysostomosbilder in 1600 Jahren* 63. See also Mayer, in *Philologie, herménéutique et histoire* 982–983 (with further literature).

²⁴ John's sermons on saints are too numerous to list. Sermons specifically dealing with apostles include the *Homiliae de laude sancti Pauli* (SC 300), and these, too, contain polemical digressions.

²⁵ On this, Rohmann, *Book-Burning* 40–48, 186–193, 200–209.

²⁶ Recent articles arguing for the authenticity of sermons have used a similar methodology: S. Holman, C. Mace, and B. Matz, "De Beneficentia: A Homily on Social Action Attributed to Basil of Caesarea," *VigChr* 66 (2012) 457–481; C. Weidmann, "Unitas omnibus linguis loquitur," in R. Bishop et al. (eds.), *Preaching after Easter* (Leiden 2016) 304–322.

²⁷ The obvious point of reference is Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.89. The other attestations are *Hom.* 32 in *Ac.* 4 (PG 60 233.27); *Phil. Jud. De confusione linguarum* 47; *Arist. Prob.* 952b13; *Aster. Hom.* 15.3 line 73 (SEJG 23); *Procop. Gaz. Commentarii in Isaiam* (PG 87 2408.19).

context of tyrants and this is almost a unique feature of John's sermons, including the *Laudatio*.²⁸ In the same context, the *Laudatio* is using the words *bracheos* (βραχέως) alongside a form of *sbennymi* (σβέννυμι), indicating that the obliteration of pagan culture occurred in a short amount of time, something that is also said in other works by John.²⁹ A *TLG* search of the peculiar accusative junction *somatikon thanaton* (σωματικὸν θάνατον, "bodily death"), found in the *Laudatio*, reveals only five results for ancient ecclesiastical authors, with two attestations in John Chrysostom (and only one in a non-ecclesiastical author).³⁰ Moreover, like the *Laudatio*, several sermons generally regarded as authentic works of Chrysostom, too, contain expositions on the first line of the Gospel of John, "in the beginning was the word."³¹ The sermons of Severian of Gabala, on the other hand, are known for their redundant style, but the *Laudatio* does not display such a style.³² Finally, while polemical attacks against Greek philosophers are common in John's authentic sermons, a search for any

²⁸ Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.11 (*SC* 362 102); *Jud. et gent.* 13.9 (*PG* 48 831.56); and see n.33 below.

²⁹ σβέννυμι in the context of pagan culture: Chrys. *Hom. 2 in Jo.* 2 (*PG* 59 31.49 and 52, quoted n.34 below, and 32.17); *VIII homilia habita* 1 (*PG* 63 501.2); βραχέως (or similar) in the same context: *Pan.Bab.* 2.13 (*SC* 362 108); *Jud. et gent.* 12.3 (*PG* 48 829.65).

³⁰ M 136^{vA}, V 118^{vB}. Chrys. *Hom. 4 in Gen.* 7 (*PG* 53 47.5); *Hom. 38 in 1 Cor.* 2 (*PG* 61 324.50).

³¹ The biblical line ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος appears variously in the *Laudatio*, first in the title (Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 365 n.9) and then in the body text (M 138^{fA-vA}, 139^{fB-vA}; V 119^{vB}–120^{fA}, 120^{vB} = Voicu 366 nn.46, 50, 57). The same line is attested in Chrys. *Anom.* 5.167 (*SC* 28); *Hom. 3 in Gen.* 2 (*PG* 53 34); *Exp. in ps.* 44.8 (*PG* 55 194); *Hom. 16 in Mt.* 2 (*PG* 57 240); *Hom. in Jo.* (*PG* 59 29, 33, 37, 39, 45–47); *In epistulam ad Galatas comm.* 1.2 (*PG* 61 615); *Hom. 2 in Hebr.* 3 (*PG* 63 23). See also W. Pradels, R. Brändle, and M. Heimgartner, "Das bisher vermisste Textstück in Johannes Chrysostomus, Adversus Judaeos, Oratio 2," *ZAC* 5 (2001) 23–49, at 46.

³² On Severian's style, S. Voicu, in *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala* 259–283, at 275. See also R. Bishop, "Le sixième Discours sur Lazare attribué à Jean Chrysostome," in *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala* 39–63.

form of *philosophos* in Severian's corpus currently included in the *TLG* reveals just four attestations, and these are all in a surprisingly benign context, completely opposed to John's attitudes.³³ In conclusion, it appears certain that the author of the sermon was a renowned preacher in Constantinople of the late fourth or early fifth century, and in my view this is an authentic sermon by John Chrysostom. Carrying this argument further, the following sections will link the polemical digression of the *Laudatio* to John's own life, historical events of the late fourth century, and some of the themes John reveals in his other sermons.

2. *The polemical section of the Laudatio and the temple of Apollo in Daphne*

The *Laudatio* was a sermon that was actually delivered in front of an audience at a prominent location. This means that the preacher, for all his polemical thrust, probably intended to be somewhat credible in his historical allusions. My argument is that the polemical parts of this sermon allude to the progress of Christianity and how it overcame its previous persecutors. To make this point, John cites evidence of how the situation for Christianity had changed from the age of the apostles to his own day and age:³⁴

³³ On philosophers, see again Rohmann, *Book-Burning* (n.25 above). Sever. *In Chananaeam et in Pharaonem* 1 (*PG* 59 654.53); *In dictum apostoli* 4 (*PG* 59 670.1); *In ascensionem* 1 (ed. R. Bishop and N. Rambault, *Sacris Erudiri* 56 [2017] line 30); *In Job* 2.2 (*PG* 56 569.9). For the current view on Severian's authorship, Voicu in *John Chrysostom and Severian of Gabala* 259–283.

³⁴ Λόγους οὐκ ἤσκηται· καὶ φιλοσόφους αἰσχύνουσιν· ῥάβδον οὐκ ἐπιφέρονται καὶ τοὺς τυράννους ἠττῶσιν [...] Μέμνημαι δὲ καὶ οἶδα ὅτι μέμησθε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὡς πρὸ βραχέως αὐτάρκως εἰς αὐτοὺς διεξελέλυθα τὸν ὕμνον· ὡς εἰς τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐκπεμφθέντες δύο καὶ δέκα ἄνδρες δαιμόνων καθεῖλαν κράτη καὶ βαμοὺς διαβολικοὺς ἔσβεσαν καὶ τυράννους ἐνίκησαν ἀνυπόδητος [...] Πῶς συγκλήτου ἀνέτρεψαν δόγματα; Πῶς φιλοσόφους κατήσχυναν; Πῶς τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον καθεῖλαν; Πῶς τὸ Ἀττικὸν κατήσχυναν βῆμα; Πῶς τὰ Κασταλίας ὕδατα μαντικὰ ἔσβεσαν; Πῶς πᾶσαν τὴν τοῦ διαβόλου σκεωρίαν ἀνέτρεψαν; (M 137^A–B, V 119^B–^vA). This is based on Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 365 n.14 and 366 n.42. Voicu reads διεκπεμφθέντες, but my reading of V 119^B is ἐκπεμφθέντες. I am grateful to the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana for supplying photographs of the manuscript.

Words they did not practise, but they nevertheless humiliated the philosophers. They did not carry the fasces, but they nevertheless subdued the tyrants. [...] Let us remember, and I know that you also remember, how I have shortly before sufficiently gone through the hymn in relation to these men; how twelve men sent out to the whole world put down the power of the demons, silenced the devilish altars and conquered tyrants. [...] How [were they able to] overthrow the decrees of the council, to put the philosophers to shame, to destroy the Areopagus, to put the Attic tribunal to shame, to silence Castalia's oracular waters? How did they overthrow the entire institution of the devil?

John Chrysostom alludes to the triumph of Christianity at the end of the fourth century when the entire institution of paganism was basically outlawed, the altars destroyed, and tyrannical emperors dead, the others converted. While the reference to philosophers could allude to the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers mentioned in Acts of the Apostles, this could also refer to the general humiliation that pagan philosophers felt when Christianity rose to power or to specific events such as the destruction of the Serapeum in (probably) 391.³⁵ As discussed above, the reference to "Castalia's oracular water" is to the Castalian spring of the temple of Apollo either in Daphne near Antioch or in Delphi and to their famous oracles. John Chrysostom had more interest in the end of the Apollo temple in Antioch in 362, rather than in the one in Delphi in the 390s, and much more is known about the related events in Antioch.

The destruction of the temple of Apollo in Daphne in 362 and the concomitant silencing of the associated Castalian oracle mentioned in this sermon are central to John Chrysostom's own biography. In the 350s the emperor Constantius Gallus had ordered the relics of the local martyr Babylas to be placed within the holy district of the temple of Apollo in Daphne.³⁶ A few years

³⁵ On the view of philosophers and rhetoricians about the Serapeum, D. Rohmann, "The Destruction of the Serapeum of Alexandria, its Library, and the Immediate Reactions," *Klio* 104 (2022) 334–362.

³⁶ Sozom. *HE* 5.19.13; Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.67 (*SC* 362 178).

later, in 362, the emperor Julian attempted to reverse this because he thought that the aim of this translation was to silence the oracle of Apollo.³⁷ Soon after, the temple was destroyed by a fire. As Julian died in 363 and Christianity ultimately triumphed, there was no attempt to rebuild the temple. Gregory of Nazianzus alludes to this renewed silencing of the oracle as he reiterates the term *palin* (“again”) three times in the sentence quoted above (n.15). The *Laudatio* was perhaps echoing this earlier text of Gregory, John’s predecessor as bishop of Constantinople.

The pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus, a contemporary to the events who lived in Antioch before he moved to Rome, says that Julian suspected the Christian community to have laid the fire (22.13.1–2). The alternative version put forward by Ammianus was to blame, of all people, a philosopher who had accidentally caused the fire when he offered incense in the temple. Because of its negative thrust against philosophers, it is likely that this was a rumour spread by the Christian community. Ammianus certainly thought that this rumour was unfounded (*rumore levissimo*) because he says that the ceiling of the temple was far too high to be hit by any sparks (22.13.3).

The other reference to the fire is in a treatise of John Chrysostom, and *De Babyla contra Iulianum et Gentiles* contains a number of polemical themes similar to those found in the *Laudatio*. For example, *De Babyla* celebrates the triumph that the apostles had won over tyrants (like the emperor Julian), philosophers, and magicians.³⁸ While John himself gave out the version that it was the relics of the martyr Babylas themselves who laid fire to the image of Apollo in order “to extinguish the fire of idolatry,” he also quotes from a speech, now lost, of the pagan Libanius, probably his previous teacher. Alluding in the immediate context to a line from a tragedy of Euripides, Libanius concluded that “I say, a little bit in a prophetic manner, that I might catch the

³⁷ Amm. Marc. 22.12.8; Julian *Mis.* 34–36; Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.80–87.

³⁸ Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.11 (SC 362 102). On its authenticity see n.2 above.

culprit and shoot him with these [arrows]”; as well as that “the temple was destroyed when the sky was clear and cloudless.”³⁹ The allusion to Euripides is significant because it mentions the bow and arrows that Orestes had received from Apollo to defend himself from the forces of heaven (Eur. *Or.* 286). Libanius was clearly aware of the Christian version that a lightning bolt had struck the temple because this is the version he firmly rules out. Both the *Laudatio* and the treatise *De Babyla* therefore tend to attribute to divine power what pagans perceived as the deliberate destruction of cult sites.

Schaktin, the editor of *De Babyla*, dated the text to 379 or 380. However, I have argued that John could not have written it before 387.⁴⁰ It is therefore quite possible that John composed the *Laudatio* a few years later in Constantinople. Moreover, since both texts refer to historical events that John personally witnessed in Antioch, viz. the destruction of the temple of Apollo, it is likely that the other allusions in the immediate context of the *Laudatio* also should be taken as evidence of what has already happened. While I hope to have demonstrated that the *Laudatio* does indeed allude to John’s early life in Antioch and to his own day and age rather than (exclusively) to the age of the apostles, I shall now argue that there is evidence to suggest that the council of the Areopagus was permanently abandoned around 396. This fits well with the period of time from John’s becoming bishop of Constantinople in 397 to his first exile in 403. It also fits with my argument that John himself authored the *Laudatio* during this period, perhaps soon after 396.

³⁹ Chrys. *Pan.Bab.* 2.102 (*SC* 362 232); *Lib. Or.* 60.8, ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω, καὶ μαντικῆς τι μικρόν, ὅπως τῇ μὲν ἔλω, τοῖς δὲ τοξεύσω τὸν δράσαντα, and 60.4, ἐν αἰθρία δὲ καὶ τῆς νεφέλης παρελθούσης κατενήνεκται.

⁴⁰ D. Rohmann, “Das Martyrion des Babylas und die polemischen Schriften des Johannes Chrysostomos,” *VigChr* 72 (2018) 206–224. See also H. Teitler, “Ammianus, Libanius, Chrysostomus, and the Martyrs of Antioch,” *VigChr* 67 (2013) 263–288, and *The Last Pagan Emperor* (Oxford 2017) 80–86 and 178, for further literature on the events at Daphne under Julian.

3. *The Areopagus of Athens*

The *Laudatio* mentions the “destruction” of the Areopagus in Athens, as we have seen. So far, the consensus is that the council of the Areopagus lasted until the second half of the fourth century at least, but that there is no indication of exactly when it ceased to exist or why. There are relatively few sources overall attesting the council in the Roman imperial period, but the Areopagus still ranked among the other democratic institutions, the Athenian *boulē* and the Assembly (*ekklesia*).⁴¹ In the early Christian tradition, the year 50 is a decisive one as Acts of the Apostles reports that the apostle Paul delivered a sermon on the Areopagus hill in that year (Acts 17:19–34). The *Laudatio* alludes to this, but this is in the context of the destruction of other temples, such as Apollo in Daphne, and, as I shall argue here, is therefore an intended allusion to both the Areopagus speech and the late fourth century. The Areopagus was still known as an important judicial institution and is mentioned by a number of authors of the second century A.D.⁴² Around the year 265, the emperor Gallienus (253–268) visited Athens and wished to be enrolled as a member of the Areopagus.⁴³ This shows that membership was still highly prestigious in the third-century crisis. John Chrysostom, again in one of his sermons given in Constantinople, alludes to the Areopagus as a historical institution and summarises Paul’s Areopagus sermon and his disputation with the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers.⁴⁴ This sermon ends with John’s recollection of his own past when he was a young man in Antioch and happened to spot a book

⁴¹ On the Roman period, D. Geagan, *The Athenian Constitution after Sulla* (Princeton 1967).

⁴² Tac. *Ann.* 2.55.2; Plut. *An Seni* 20, 794B; Luc. *Bis acc.* 4. Sources on the Areopagus: Th. Thalheim, “Areios pagos,” *RE* 2 (1896) 627–633.

⁴³ *HA Gall.* 11.5. On the date, A. Goltz and U. Hartmann, in K.-P. Johne (ed.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser* (Berlin 2008) 223–295, at 272.

⁴⁴ On the date of the sermon, Alan Cameron, “Earthquake 400,” *Chiron* 17 (1987) 343–360, at 344–351.

floating in the Orontes river. Presuming that someone had thrown it away, he inspected it and was scared to death when soldiers arrived in search for forbidden books. John says that he managed to hide the book and narrowly escaped the death penalty because books, and especially magical books, were closely monitored in Antioch in the early 370s.⁴⁵ Like the *Laudatio*, this sermon, too, is a reminder that pagan culture and philosophy were transitory and prone to decay.

Athens remained a centre for pagan intellectuals longer than other cities of the Roman Empire and its citizens and wealthy elites were also slow to become Christians. No Christian artefact can be securely dated to the fourth century or earlier and there are very few indications of Christian activity during that period.⁴⁶ Most of the important temples were turned into churches as late as the second half of the fifth or the sixth centuries.⁴⁷ But there is some indication that the Christian emperors had already started to divert funds from the pagan city of Athens to the countryside of Achaea and further to the new Christian

⁴⁵ Chrys. *Hom. 38 in Ac.* (PG 60 268–274). John alludes to the magic trials and searches for forbidden books in Antioch that are mentioned also in Amm. Marc. 29.1.40–41, 29.2.4.

⁴⁶ P. Castrén, “Paganism and Christianity in Athens and Vicinity during the Fourth to Sixth Centuries A.D.,” in G. Brogiolo et al. (eds.), *The Idea and Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Leiden 1999) 211–223, at 213, on artefacts and inscriptions; A. Karivieri, “The Ilissos Basilica and the Introduction of Christian Iconography in Athens,” in R. Harreither et al. (eds.), *Acta Congr. Intern. XIV Arch. Christ.* (Vatican City 2006) 895–898, specifically on oil lamps and Christian symbols; A. Frantz et al., *Late Antiquity: A.D. 267–700, The Athenian Agora XXIV* (Princeton 1988) 18–48, on the archaeological finds. See further E. Watts, “Athens between East and West: Athenian Elite Self-presentation and the Durability of Traditional Cult in Late Antiquity,” *GRBS* 57 (2017) 191–213, and *City and School in Late Antique Athens and Alexandria* (Berkeley 2006) 80–97; E. Sironen, “Heidnische Priester in Attika vom dritten bis zum fünften Jahrhundert,” in M. Horster et al. (eds.), *Civic Priests: Cult Personnel in Athens from the Hellenistic Period to Late Antiquity* (Berlin 2012) 209–218, on the Christianisation of Athens and continued cult activity.

⁴⁷ Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora XXIV* 68–71.

capital Constantinople by the late fourth century.⁴⁸ Moreover, the “Library of Hadrian” is attested as an imperial forum and cultural centre of Athens until the fourth century, but was converted into a church in the early fifth century, perhaps under the patronage of empress Eudocia who married Theodosius II in 421. As Paavo Castrén has argued, the library likely included a state archive and there is some indication that this archive was raided either during the Visigothic invasion of 396 or around that time. The structure of course no longer contained a library when it was redeveloped as a Christian building and became probably the first church of Athens.⁴⁹

Nor did the Herulian invasion of 267 put an end to the Areopagus. Any extensive damage attributable to this event can be found in the Agora rather than near the Areopagus hill, and the city flourished again from the late third to the late fourth centuries.⁵⁰ Two speeches given by the sophist Himerius and a few inscriptions attest to the fact that the council of the Areopagus continued to exist until the second half of the fourth century.⁵¹ The latest of these inscriptions is from the early 390s

⁴⁸ Castrén, in *Idea and Ideal* 214–215, who refers to a paper given by Michael Gaddis.

⁴⁹ P. Castrén, “General Aspects of Life in Post-Herulian Athens,” in *Post-Herulian Athens* (Helsinki 1994) 1–14, at 2–6 and 12 on the theory that the library contained an archive and on the end of that archive; A. Karivieri, “The So-called Library of Hadrian and the Tetraconch Church in Athens,” in *Post-Herulian Athens* 89–113, esp. 90–93, 112–113 on the date and location of both the library and the church. See also Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora* XXIV 72–73, on the earliest churches known in Athens. R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*⁴ (New Haven 1986) 118–119, on the other hand, dates the Ilissos basilica in Athens to around 400 because of its building and mosaic elements. If true, this church antedates the one in the “Library of Hadrian.” Contra: Karivieri, in *Acta Congr.* 895–896, with further literature.

⁵⁰ Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora* XXIV 3–18; Castrén, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 1–7.

⁵¹ Himer. *Or.* 7 (addressee of the speech) and 8.78–79 and 132–133 Colonna. T. D. Barnes, “Himerius and the Fourth Century,” *CP* 82 (1987)

and is the most interesting for the question of how long the council of the Areopagus lasted:⁵²

The fortified Areopagus honoured this man even after his death with a portrait that cannot praise him enough because he, Iamblichus, built the towers as the city wall's defence, providing for our happiness.

This Iamblichus was a student of, and received a number of letters, from Libanius. He was a pagan philosopher and rhetorician, born in Apamea, had settled down in Athens in 362/3, and had inherited property from his father. He received letters from Symmachus, head of the pagan senatorial circle in Rome, in 390 and 391.⁵³ Apparently, the inscription was set up after his death in 391 or later. I agree with the current consensus that the fortification work mentioned in the entire inscription (including the second epigram) was done in anticipation of the Visigothic invasion of Attica in 396.⁵⁴ Perhaps Alaric had already started

206–225, at 222–224, dates the speech to 361/2. All post-Herulian public inscriptions of Athens are discussed by Sironen, “Life and Administration of Late Roman Attica,” in *Post-Herulian Athens* 15–62, esp. 17–18, 29–30, 32–35. These inscriptions are *IG II²* 3669, 4222 (from the 370s because it mentions Rufius Festus as a member of the Areopagus and as proconsul of Asia: *PLRE I* 334–335, Festus 3), 3716. See also M. Horster, “The Tenure, Appointment and Eponymy of Priesthoods,” in *Civic Priests* 193, 197–200, for an overview of pertinent inscriptions from the entire imperial period.

⁵² *SEG XXI* 168: Τοῦτον καὶ μετὰ πότμον ἄθωπευτοῖς γλυφίδεσσ[ι] / ὁ στεγανὸς τίσεν Πάγος Ἄρεος, οὐνεκα πύργους / τείχεος ἔρκος ἔτευξεν Ἰάμβλιχος ὄλβον ὀπάσσας (κτλ.).

⁵³ *PLRE I* 451–452, Iamblichus 2.

⁵⁴ Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora XXIV* 51, and Sironen, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 33, both concur on this. A. Raubitschek, “Iamblichos at Athens,” *Hesperia* 33 (1964) 63–68, at 67, on the other hand, had linked the fortification to the Themistoclean circuit wall that was restored some 100 years after the Herulian attack. This could be true for the second epigram, but the first explicitly mentions work on the defence towers rather than on the circuit wall itself, and the other inscription cited by Raubitschek (*IG VII* 96, cf. *SEG XIII* 297), although mentioning defence towers, refers generally to cities in the province of Achaëa rather than to a specific wall in Athens (on the person mentioned in the inscription see *PLRE I* 700, Phosphorius 2).

his invasion of Greece in 395 when the inscription was written and the city wall was fortified with towers. These towers were apparently financed from Iamblichus' inheritance. The council of the Areopagus probably had its own reason to thank Iamblichus because the inscription says that the Areopagus was "fortified" as well. This is the reading suggested by Jeanne and Louis Robert.⁵⁵ The fortification therefore refers to the Themistoclean circuit wall rather than the post-Herulian wall because the latter comprised just a small area north of the Acropolis, but the former did include a greater territory including the hill of the Areopagus. The pagan historian Zosimus wrote that when Alaric besieged Athens, he thought that the city area was too large to be defended successfully (5.5.8). He must have had in mind the circuit wall and not the small territory within the post-Herulian wall. The inscription on the fortification of the Areopagus implies that the entire area was under military threat.

There is evidence to suggest that Alaric and his Visigoths did indeed seize and destroy the wider Areopagus area. However, it is unlikely that Alaric caused a great deal of destruction in the province of Achaea or the whole of Greece during his campaign. Athens was likewise not sacked in its entirety. The emperor Justinian (527–565) apparently rebuilt the Valerian wall, the outer wall of Athens from the Roman imperial period, of similar size as the Themistoclean wall.⁵⁶ This indicates that the area of Athens remained almost as large as in previous centuries. Nevertheless, there is archaeological evidence for destruction, during Alaric's invasion, in the area of the Agora and generally to the west of the Herulian wall, the area where the hill of the

⁵⁵ Raubitschek, *Hesperia* 33 (1964) 64, and Sironen, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 32, both have the translation "the silent hill of the Areopagus," but do not explain it. J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1965, 155 (p.105), list the lexical possibilities and convincingly conclude that στεγανός means "fortified."

⁵⁶ Procop. *Aed.* 4.2.24; Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora* XXIV 58. On archaeological evidence, H. Thompson and R. Scranton, "Stoas and City Walls on the Pnyx," *Hesperia* 12 (1943) 269–383, at 376.

Areopagus is situated.⁵⁷ Excavations have uncovered that the northern slope of the Areopagus underwent major redevelopment at the end of the fourth century, when large private mansions were built there.⁵⁸ The northeast slope even revealed two large houses probably dating from a redevelopment of the fifth century which completely obliterated the buildings from the Greek period.⁵⁹

The Areopagus hill has an overall triangular shape. Whereas the two other slopes are steep, the northeast slope rises gently from the road connecting the Agora in the north with the Acropolis, which is situated southeast of the Areopagus hill. Moreover, in the fourth century B.C. a decree (threatening the Areopagus with suspension if it attempted to overthrow the democracy) was inscribed, “one copy at the entrance to the Areopagus, that is the entrance for those who go into the

⁵⁷ See Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora* XXIV 52–56, and I. Jacobs, “Prosperity after Disaster? The Effects of the Gothic Invasion in Athens and Corinth,” in *Production and Prosperity in the Theodosian Period* (Leuven 2014) 69–90, at 74–81 generally on the scale of destruction during the Visigothic invasion and 76 on the damage in the centre of Athens. Castrén, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 9, agrees: “a well planned military campaign which probably, among other goals, intended to plunder and destroy the last pagan strongholds in Greece.”

⁵⁸ Detailed description of these buildings is in Frantz et al., *Athenian Agora* XXIV 37–48, who think it is possible that earlier buildings were “deliberately cleared away to make a clean sweep for the new construction” (38). It has once been speculated that the large mansions were the residences of the (pagan) teachers mentioned in Eunapius, but this assumption has been convincingly refuted by Watts, *City and School* 81 n.5. The “House of Proclus” was a large mansion inhabited by a pagan, probably a philosopher and teacher, on the southern slope of the Acropolis after Alaric’s invasion, until the sixth century: Karivieri, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 115–139. The buildings on the northern slope of the Areopagus are similar in style but without pagan elements. It is likely that they were all built following Alaric’s invasion of 396 (Karivieri 116–117).

⁵⁹ See the excavation report by H. Thompson, “Activities in the Athenian Agora,” *Hesperia* 28 (1958) 91–108, at 102–103.

council-house, the other copy in the assembly.”⁶⁰ Benjamin D. Meritt at the time thought that the council of the Areopagus had to be located near the *bouleuterion* in the Agora.⁶¹ However, the same inscription says that one had to “go up” (14, ἀνιέναι) to the council of the Areopagus. Gerald V. Lalonde is therefore probably right that the *bouleuterion* mentioned in the inscription is the council of the Areopagus.⁶² This means that one had to walk up a certain part of the hill before reaching the assembly place proper. The best way to do this was from the northeast slope and from the road connecting the other two civic centres, the Agora and the Acropolis.

The pagan historians Zosimus and Eunapius give a short account of Alaric’s invasion. Zosimus (who probably wrote in the early sixth century) is based on the historical work of Eunapius (347–ca. 414), who was closer to the events. Eunapius’ history is lost and only his biography of sophists survives and is relevant here. Moreover, the extant text of Zosimus is a second revised edition. Because Eunapius’ history was also later available in a revised edition, these editions were probably meant to be more accommodating to a Christian readership than the original text had been, as both authors were at times religiously offensive.⁶³ The extant text of Eunapius attests that Alaric’s Visigoths were accompanied by groups of monks and (in the

⁶⁰ *Agora XVI 73 = IG II³ 320 = B. Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” Hesperia 21 (1952) 340–380, at 355–356. Quotation from lines 24–27: τὴν μὲν ἐπὶ τῆς εἰσόδου τῆς εἰς Ἄρειον πάγον τῆς εἰς τὸ βουλευτήριον εἰσιόντι, τὴν δὲ ἐν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ. The stele (perhaps the copy set up in the *ekklesia*) was found underneath the Hellenistic Stoa of Attalus.*

⁶¹ Meritt, *Hesperia* 21 (1952) 358. A more recent discussion based on Meritt is by C. Hemer, “Paul at Athens: A Topographical Note,” *NTS* 20 (1974) 341–350, at 343–344.

⁶² G. Lalonde, “Two Horos Inscriptions of the Bouleuterion of the Areopagus,” *Hesperia* 82 (2013) 435–457, at 440 and 447. The *bouleuterion* of the Areopagus is mentioned in Aesch. *Eum.* 684–685.

⁶³ The different editions and the religious thrust are attested by Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 98, 84B (II 65–66 Henry).

context of an *ex eventu* prophecy, a prophecy made in hindsight) that their aim was to collaborate with Alaric and to eradicate pagan cult sites.⁶⁴ Zosimus adds that Alaric was permitted to enter Athens in exchange for the promise to spare the population.⁶⁵ Taken together, these two sources indicate that the monks collaborated with Alaric in negotiating access as well as in destroying and plundering selected pagan sites and that this explains the destruction in the area of the Agora and subsequent redevelopment of the wider area. A similar pattern of betrayal and destruction of pagan monuments is known for Alaric's sack of Rome in 410 as well.⁶⁶ Another homily given by Chrysostom in Constantinople (perhaps in 399) possibly alludes to the destruction caused by the Visigothic invasion of Athens.⁶⁷ In this homily, John gives an appraisal of the power that Christianity had conferred on the "barbarian" Visigoths and he asks the rhetorical question: "Where is that of Plato, Pythagoras, and of those in Athens? It has been extinguished!"⁶⁸ While it is unlikely (but not impossible) that John was preaching directly to the Visigoths who had been commanded by Alaric a few years

⁶⁴ Eunap. *VS* 7.3.1–5, esp. 5: "The impiety of those who wore the dark garment and accompanied him unhindered revealed to him the secret entrances of Greece" (τοιούτους αὐτῷ τὰς πύλας ἀπέδειξε τῆς Ἑλλάδος ἢ τε τῶν τὰ φαῖα ἱμάτια ἐχόντων ἀκωλύτως προσπαρεισελθόντων ἀσέβεια). On the dark garment of monks and its specific association with the eradication of the pagan past, *VS* 6.11.6–7 and wider context; and cf. Synes. *Ep.* 154.2–3.

⁶⁵ Zos. 5.6.2. In context, Zosimus highlights the role of Athens' pagan gods and heroes in mitigating Alaric's campaign. This means he is unlikely to focus on the destruction of pagan sites as this would have undermined the power of the divine assistance.

⁶⁶ Procop. *Vand.* 1.2.27 and Oros. 7.39.18. Another reference to the destruction of pagan monuments in Rome (in my view) is Prudentius *Ham.* 723–725, 756–764, with Oros. 7.39.2; Rohmann, *Book-Burning* 256–258.

⁶⁷ On the date and possible occasion of this speech, Mayer, *The Homilies* 156.

⁶⁸ Chrys. *Homilia habita postquam presbyter Gothus concionatus fuerat* 1 (PG 64 501): Ποῦ τὰ Πλάτωνος καὶ Πυθαγόρου καὶ τῶν ἐν Ἀθήναις; ἐσβέσθη;

earlier,⁶⁹ he still seems to applaud the actual destruction of monuments related to the pagan past of Athens during the Visigothic invasion rather than the neglect of Greek philosophers among the Visigothic community because the Visigoths never had an interest in these philosophers in the first place.

The exact location of the council of the Areopagus is unknown today. It has been speculated that this council was no longer sitting on the Areopagus hill by the time the apostle Paul visited Athens, but Timothy Barnes has convincingly refuted this view. While it is possible that some sessions were held in the Agora, the sources are clear that the main assembly place of the council remained on the hill of the same name.⁷⁰ Aristotle describes the meeting of the council in its role as a murder court, and says that it met “in the sacred precinct, in the open air.”⁷¹ The Athenians were concerned about the contagion potentially arising from suspected murderers and avoided contact indoors.⁷² The council of the Areopagus was also close to the sanctuary of the Semnae, the Erinyes or Furies, a cave on the Areopagus hill.⁷³ The combination of these two aspects indicates that the location of the council of the Areopagus appeared particularly pagan and demonic to militant monks of that period. A polemical Christian

⁶⁹ It is not known that Alaric visited Constantinople again after 396: *PLRE* II 43–48, Alaricus 1. On the possibility that he visited Constantinople in or around 399, Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley 1993) 117.

⁷⁰ T. D. Barnes, “An Apostle on Trial,” *JThS* 20 (1969) 407–419, who gives an overview of previous literature. *Dem. Or.* 25.22–23 attests that the council of the Areopagus at times met in the Stoa Basileios in the Agora. The following sources concur that the regular place of assembly remained on the Areopagus hill: *Dem. Or.* 59.80–83; *IG II³* 320.14; *Arist. Ath. Pol.* 57.3–4 and 60.2–3; *Aristeid. Panathen.* 171 and 314 Dindorf (= 108 and 193 Jebb); *Paus.* 1.28.5; *Luc. Bis acc.* 4 and 12.

⁷¹ *Ath. Pol.* 57.4, ἐν ἱερ[ῶ] καὶ ὑπαίθριοι.

⁷² See S. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Oxford 1993) 272–274.

⁷³ *Paus.* 1.28.6, 7.25.2–3; schol. *Aristeid. Panath.* 108.8 Jebb (Dindorf, *Aristides* III 67); schol. *Luc. Dis acc.* 29.4 (138 Rabe).

text of the sixth century reinforces this impression, referring to the Areopagus as a historical individual, “the archon of the demons,” not as a council. The legendary Dionysius, a judge of the Areopagus, was in this text first a worshipper of Areopagus but later converted to Christianity after he had met the apostle Paul on the occasion of his Areopagus speech.⁷⁴ This polemical text was therefore written at a time with little knowledge of the council of the Areopagus and the polemical thrust of this specific reference was the justification of its abandonment because the Areopagus was harmful to Christianity.

Not just the location and associated contagion, but also specific institutional functions were problematic from a Christian point of view. Inscriptions of the Roman imperial period attest that one of the tasks of the Areopagus was to grant permits to set up dedicatory inscriptions (often to pagan gods).⁷⁵ It is therefore interesting to note that the *Laudatio* as quoted above does not only say that “the apostles” had destroyed the Areopagus, but that they had also “overthrown the decrees of the council.”⁷⁶ Perhaps this is an allusion to the destruction of inscriptions of religious character. As with the other institution mentioned in the passage of the *Laudatio*, the “Attic tribunal” (*bema*, the speaker’s platform of the *ekklesia*), these allusions are to specific institutions of Athens and are not mentioned in the biblical

⁷⁴ *Syriac Autobiography of Ps.-Dionysius*, recension A (Kugener *OC* 7 [1907] 294–312, quotation at 296–297). On the date and background, I. Tanaseanu-Döbler and L. von Alvensleben, “Athens in Late Antiquity – Learning and Paganism,” in *Athens II Athens in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen 2020) 1–30, esp. 1. Dionysius is mentioned in Acts 17:34.

⁷⁵ The inscriptions are too many to enumerate. See G. Gilbert, *Handbuch der griechischen Staatsalterthümer* I² (Leipzig 1893) 185. More recent finds are collected in Geagan, *Athenian Constitution* 140–159.

⁷⁶ Voicu, in *In Ultra terminum vagari* 361, translates “decrees of the senate” (“i dicreti del senato”) rather than “of the council,” presumably having in mind the senate of Rome. While the original συγκλήτου δόγματα can sometimes mean “senate decrees” because there is no other word in the Greek language, the primary meaning of this term is “council decrees” according to LSJ s.v. σύγκλητος.

Areopagus speech. The council of the Areopagus also used to pass decrees on the tenure of pagan philosophers (Plut. *Cic.* 24.7). Christianity regarded itself as the true philosophy and was suspicious of any “false” philosophy. While the sources on religious violence may often be overstated, it is attested that monks not only destroyed temples but also specifically inscriptions in order to demonstrate that the erroneous past had now been overcome.⁷⁷ Some of these pagan spolia were reused in churches. For Athens, one example is an inscription, of the late third or fourth century, mentioning the Stoic, Cynic, and Epicurean philosophical schools and found in a church near the Acropolis.⁷⁸ This piece is interesting because Acts of the Apostles says that the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers of Athens brought Paul to the Areopagus (17:18–19). The fact that this inscription was later reused for the construction of a church perhaps indicates the triumph of Christianity at the end of the fourth century. Another inscription, a *horos*, originally marked the boundary of, and entrance to, the place where the council of the Areopagus met in the classical and Hellenistic periods and perhaps as well until late antiquity. This boundary stone was found in a modern house on the northeast slope of the Areopagus.⁷⁹ This stone therefore links the dismantling of the assembly place of the Areopagus to the redevelopment, following Alaric’s invasion of 396, of the northeast slope of the hill of the same name.

4. Conclusion

This article has proposed that a sermon partly unedited, the *Laudatio Apostolorum*, is an authentic work of John Chrysostom

⁷⁷ Zach. *V. Sev.* (27–30 Kugener). See also D. Young, “A Monastic Invective against Egyptian Hieroglyphs,” in *Studies Presented to Hans Jakob Polotsky* (East Gloucester 1981) 348–360. On problems connected to literary works on religious violence, e.g. J. Dijkstra, “The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt,” in L. Lavan et al. (eds.), *The Archaeology of Late Antique ‘Paganism’* (Leiden 2011) 389–426.

⁷⁸ *SEG XXXVIII* 196. On the date and a discussion of the origin, Sironen, in *Post-Herulian Athens* 36–37.

⁷⁹ *Agora I* 5054. Discussed in Lalonde, *Hesperia* 82 (2013), esp. 455.

and was delivered during his tenure as bishop of Constantinople between 397 and 403, probably during the early years. There is stylistic, lexical, and contextual evidence to support this view. The part of this sermon most interesting to historians is a short polemical section which intends to demonstrate that the power of the apostles is evident because of the triumph of Christianity over paganism and over the pagan philosophers who had doubted the truth of Christianity. In so doing, the sermon alludes to the destruction of pagan altars, the end of tyrants (the emperor Julian), and to the violent end of Apollo's oracle in Daphne near Antioch in 362, and possibly also of the one in Delphi in the early 390s. The sermon also mentions the destruction of the Areopagus. Given that the other allusions are to events of the sermon's own day and age, the destruction of the Areopagus was probably real as well. There is epigraphic and literary evidence that the council of the Areopagus continued to function until around the mid 390s when its members prepared for Alaric's upcoming invasion, but not after 396. The year of 396 was marked by Alaric's invasion of Athens, and there is archaeological and literary evidence for destruction, on the instigation of paramilitary monks, in the area where the assembly place of the council has to be located. The entire area was redeveloped, and a cornerstone from the entrance to the Areopagus found its way to a modern house in that area. The *Laudatio Apostolorum* therefore seems to be aware of, and sympathetic to, the end of this prestigious symbol of the power that Christianity had gained over pagan philosophy since the days of the apostles.

November, 2023

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