

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON HADRIANIC ATHENS

IN A RECENT ARTICLE in this journal, "Athens: From City-State to Provincial Town," T. Leslie Shear, Jr. has drawn attention to Hadrian's Library in Athens and to a newly identified contemporaneous basilica at the northeast corner of the Athenian Agora. He suggests that the two buildings, considered together, demonstrate "the physical presence of Roman rule" in Athens and indicate, in part, how Hadrian "could fuse together disparate elements of the two classical cultures."¹ In the following brief note² I extend Shear's discussion to three other instances of Hadrianic construction in Athens: the refurbishment of the Roman Agora (also known as the Market of Caesar and Augustus), the near-by foundations of a massive temple, possibly identifiable as Hadrian's Pantheon, and "New Athens", the new residential quarter attributable to Hadrian. Evaluation of the available evidence indicates that these three projects are closely associated with Hadrian's Library and the basilica (Fig. 1).

The Library of Hadrian and the contemporary basilica are linked by their apparently deliberate alignment and unmistakable Roman character.³ The Library is related in appearance also to the Roman Agora, immediately adjacent and parallel to the south: the general architectural scheme and scale of the two buildings are much the same.⁴ This relationship seems intentional. Hadrian was responsible for the restoration and embellishment of the enormous rectangular court begun by Caesar and completed by Augustus. He undertook various repairs and paved the entire internal peristyle in marble, and one of the laws of his revision of the Athenian constitution was inscribed prominently on the market's main entrance, the Gate of Athena Archegetis (*IG II²*, 1100).⁵ This restoration and ornamentation should be connected with Hadrian's new constructions near by.

¹ Shear, pp. 375–377 (see below for full citation).

Works frequently cited are abbreviated as follows:

Kokkou = A. Kokkou, "Ἀδριανεὶ ἔργα εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας," *Δελτ* 25, 1970 [1971], pp. 150–173

Shear = T. L. Shear, Jr., "Athens: From City-State to Provincial Town," *Hesperia* 50, 1981, pp. 356–377

Wycherley = R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens*, Princeton 1978

² I would like to thank P. Feldblum, Professor L. Richardson, Jr., and the Publications Committee of the American School for their suggestions and criticisms, and the Duke University Research Council for funding this research.

³ Shear, p. 376.

⁴ Shear, p. 374. For further information on the Roman Agora's site, apparently without permanent buildings until Caesar's day, see Travlos, p. 28, and for more about the entire court, see Travlos, pp. 28–35, and Wycherley, pp. 102–103. The Roman Agora was 111 × 98 m.; the Library, 122 × 82 m.

⁵ Travlos (p. 29) dates the repairs to A.D. 126–127. The inscription is the famous decree regulating the sale of oil; for its relation to the Athenian constitution as revised by Hadrian at Athenian request, see J. H. Oliver, "The Athens of Hadrian," *Les empereurs romains d'Espagne*, Paris 1965, pp. 129–132. For more detail on the constitution, see D. J. Geagan, "Roman Athens, Some Aspects of Life and Culture," *ANRW II*, 7.1, Berlin 1979, pp. 392–394; and S. Follet, *Athènes au II^e et au III^e siècle*, Paris 1976, pp. 116–125.

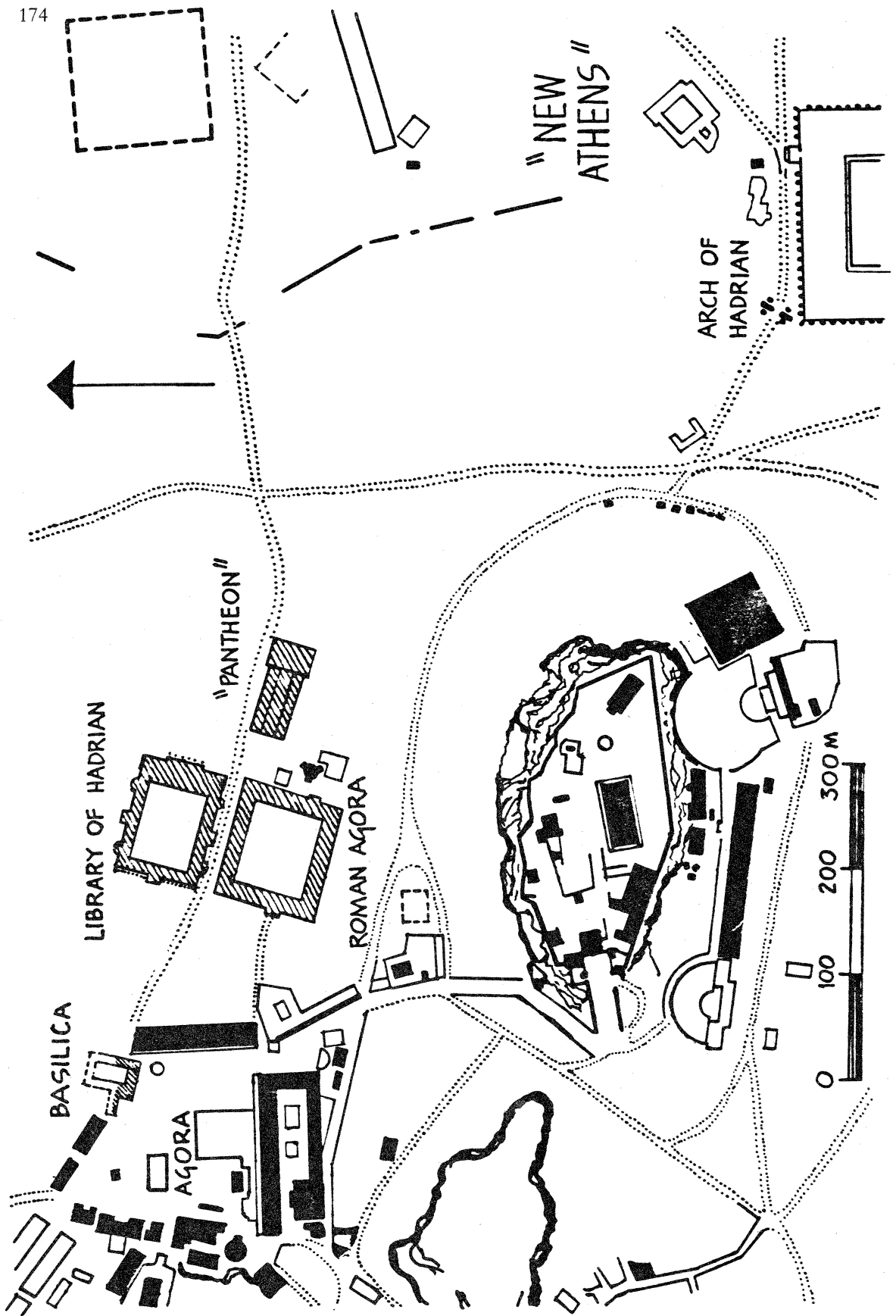


Fig. 1. Partial plan of Hadrianic Athens

Furthermore, another building was erected in the immediate vicinity and at the same time. Some fifty meters east of the Library and Roman Agora, roughly aligned with both and with the basilica further west, have recently been found the remains of a triple-naved podium temple of a monumentality commensurate with the Library and Roman Agora. This temple, possibly Hadrian's Pantheon celebrated by Pausanias (1.5.5, cf. 1.18.9), exhibits Hadrianic building techniques and decorative schemes.⁶ Like the basilica some 210 meters to its northwest, the temple was constructed over the remains of Hellenistic and early Roman buildings,⁷ and the four edifices, basilica, Library, Roman Agora, and temple, all roughly aligned, appear to have been planned as a unit.

Consideration of all four buildings resolves one seeming problem: the lack of a temple structure within the expanse of Hadrian's Library otherwise so comparable to Vespasian's *Templum Pacis* in Rome.⁸ If we assume that the Hadrianic temple was an integral component of an extensive civic complex of juridical, cultural, commercial, and religious functions, there is no need for a temple or shrine to be located within the Library. In fact, such a complex in Athens would be strongly reminiscent of Hadrian's addition of the temple of Divine Trajan in Rome outside, but axial to, Trajan's Libraries, Column, Basilica, and Forum, with the attendant Markets. In both cases we see the results of what has been termed the "drawing-board mentality"⁹ as an orderly civic center was created in the dense metropoleis.

Although it is still uncertain how Hadrian managed the transition from the basilica to the Library and Roman Agora, the location of the two peristyle structures and the temple is clearly determined by one of the main east-west thoroughfares of Athens.¹⁰ The Library and Roman Agora, each with its primary entrance to the west, flank this street on the north and south respectively. The temple further east lies just to the south of the road, facing east where was the new residential quarter variously heralded in inscriptions as "the City of Hadrian" and "New Athens" (on the Arch of Hadrian, *IG II²*, 5185, and on Hadrian's aqueduct, *CIL III*, 549).¹¹ Thus the civic complex physically links the older and newer sections of Athens.

⁶ Kokkou, pp. 159–161; Travlos, p. 439; the temple was 37 × 85 m. and surpassed even the Parthenon in size. Its construction resembles that of the Library of Hadrian and that of Hadrian's peribolos wall for the Olympieion; its decorative scheme on the front of a high podium of Carystian marble is similar to the entrance to Hadrian's Library.

⁷ Kokkou, p. 161; for the remains under the basilica, Shear, p. 376; *idem*, "The Athenian Agora: Northeast Basilica, Shops and Houses on the North Side," *Hesperia* 42, 1973, pp. 134–144; *idem*, "The Athenian Agora, the Northeast Complex," *Hesperia* 40, 1971, pp. 261–265.

⁸ Shear, pp. 375–376.

⁹ See J. B. Ward-Perkins, *Cities of Ancient Greece and Italy: Planning in Classical Antiquity*, New York 1974, p. 42.

¹⁰ For the lack of evidence for the area intervening between basilica and Roman Agora and Library, see Shear, p. 377; for the important thoroughfare which began at the Dipylon Gate and crossed to the Gate of Diochares and presumably beyond, see Travlos, p. 244.

¹¹ Hadrian's biographer calls the sector Hadrianopolis: *Scriptores historiae augustae, de vita Hadriani*, 20.4, and see Stephanus Byzantius, *s.v. Olympieion*. These magniloquent titles, the aqueduct built to supply the sector with water, and the roughly contemporaneous creation of a new Athenian tribe, the *Hadrianis*, suggest that the new residential quarter (unfortunately still unexcavated) was a significant addition to Athens. For the tribe *Hadrianis*, see J. A. Notopoulos, "The Date of the Creation of *Hadrianis*," *TAPA* 77, 1946, pp. 53–56, and P. Graindor, *Athènes sous Hadrien*, Cairo 1934, reprinted New York 1973, pp. 19–21, 35. We

The basilica, situated at the edge of the Athenian Agora, tied the ancestral center of Athenian life to the newer Roman constructions, and the temple's eastern entrance, although traditionally oriented, drew New Athens towards the heart of the older city.

The entire civic complex, so patently Roman in appearance with its frontally designed basilica, great rectangular porticoed courts of the Library and Roman Agora, and huge, frontally oriented podium temple, definitely established the physical presence of Rome in Athens. Furthermore, the location of this multipurpose complex on a main city street, half-way between the new residential area of the city and the traditional center of Athenian life, ensured continuous traffic and use. Hadrian's creation of this civic complex was one way in which he achieved the integration of Greece and Rome without suppressing either culture.

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should note that the association of tribe and residential quarter is not universally accepted: see Follet, *op. cit.* (footnote 5 above), pp. 119–121. For the aqueduct, see Kokkou, pp. 169–171, and Travlos, pp. 242–243.