

THE PERSONALITY OF HERODES ATTICUS*

In the middle of the 2nd cent. A. D. Aulus Gellius —a young Roman who was later appointed judge in a minor law-court— arrived in Athens to complete his studies in rhetoric and philosophy. He spent one year here attending lectures by the director of the Platonic Academy Calvisius Taurus from Berytus, the cynic Peregrinus-Proteus, and also Herodes Atticus whose hospitality he enjoyed most. Returning to Rome, he sorted out his notes from his studies and from contacts with the Athenian litterati —Greeks and Romans— and supplementing them with various observations in manifold fields (history, antiquities, textual and literary criticism) edited his collection under the title *Noctes Atticae*.

In book I, 2 he describes Herodes Atticus' residence at Kephisia: «Herodes Atticus, a man of consular rank and Grecian eloquence, often invited me and several other Romans —who had left Rome for Athens in quest of culture— to his houses near the city. At the villa named Kephisia in the heat of the summer and against the burning sun of the autumn we were protected by the shade of spacious groves, long and soft promenades, the cool location of the house, the elegant baths with their abundance of sparkling water and the charm of the villa as a whole echoing with splashing waters and singing birds».

Next, Gellius reports an incident, witnessed by himself and many others, during which Herodes gave advice to a boastful and arrogant youth by reading to him a passage from the Stoic Epictetus' Discourses.

On another occasion (*Noctes Atticae* IX,2) the intellectual host rebukes a notorious rascal, who wore a cloak, long hair and beard and wandered about demanding money. As Herodes questioned him who he was, the visitor became enraged because he was not recognized as a philosopher. «I see a beard and a cloak; I do not see the philosopher

* 'Ανακοίνωση στη British School of Archaeology (18-2-1993).

yet» —was Herodes' reply, who later rebuked the insolence of similar types who usurped the «sacred name» of philosophy.

Gellius expresses his admiration for Herodes in exaggerated terms; e.g. in another entry (Bk XIX, 12) he notes: «I once heard Herodes Atticus, the ex-consul, speaking publicly at Athens in the Greek language, in which he far surpassed almost all the men of our time in distinction, fluency and elegance of diction».

The theme of that discourse, which Gellius summarizes, was a refutation of the Stoic doctrine of ἀπάθεια (i.e. lack of feeling) on the grounds that emotions caused by sorrow, desire, fear, anger or pleasure —though they become faults when excessive— may be a highly requisite stimulus for the intellect. This was his reply to a Stoic's attack against him that he did not endure his grief at a boy's loss with sufficient wisdom and fortitude.

Though Gellius' references to his teacher are valuable, one has to consult more independent sources in order to reconstruct Herodes' complex personality and behaviour. Apart from occasional allusions in his contemporary Lucian —not lacking a tinge of irony or even envy— the bulk of evidence is to be found in the epigraphic material and the lengthy chapter on him we find in Flavius Philostratus' *Vitae Sophistarum*, (2,1=545-566). Philostratus, born in Lemnos c. 180 A.D. studied in Athens and subsequently worked as a sophist in Athens and in Rome. In the year 202 A.D. he joined the philosophical circle of the empress Julia Domna. After her suicide and the dissolution of her circle he settled in Athens. Between 230 and 238 he wrote the *Lives of the Sophists* which he dedicated to the proconsul Antonius Gordianus —the later emperor— who claimed a descent from Herodes. Though Philostratus never met Herodes, he was able to gather biographical and other data from the sophist's numerous disciples and acquaintances. On this basis Herodes' life and career can be sketched as follows: He was born at Marathon in 101 or more likely 103 A.D. His official name was Tiberius Claudius Atticus Herodes, with three more names, Lucius Vibullius, Hipparchos, added more rarely. He traced his ancestry to the Aeacids of Aigina and —in the male line— to the celebrated Miltiades and his son Kimon, following the current trend of leading Greek families to stress genealogies and thus emulate the Roman aristocracy in heroic or even divine ancestry.

However his claim to a heroic or classical past may be justified, this most important family in Roman Athens is epigraphically attested in Marathon as early as the first half of the second cent. B.C. with the

names Eukles and Herodes alternating for 7 generations. Members of this house attained considerable prominence as eponymous archons of Athens and hoplite generals. Since the reign of Claudius this emperor's name had been incorporated in the family's filiation. With Tib. Claudius Hipparchos, Herodes' grandfather, the Marathonian family rose to a high prestige. Hipparchos was granted the rights of the Roman citizen of equestrian rank but his large wealth attracted the emperor Domitian's notorious greed. Domitian caused him to be tried on a charge of aspiring to a tyranny and in 92/93 A.D. Hipparchos was condemned to death or exile. His estates were confiscated and later sold by the imperial treasury to private individuals. Then follows a sudden restoration of the family's power and fortune, for which Philostratus conveys a rather naive explanation revealing as elsewhere a protective attitude towards his hero: «Tyche (=Fortune) did not overlook Atticus (Hipparchos' son and father of Herodes) becoming poor, but she disclosed to him an immense treasure in one of the houses he had near the theatre of Dionysus. As Atticus felt more cautious than overjoyed on account of the vastness of the find, he wrote to Nerva, the new emperor, asking him how to dispose of it. «Use what you have found»-was Nerva's reply. As Atticus still remained cautious and explained that the amount of the treasure was beyond his station in life, the emperor answered: «Then misuse your windfall, for it is yours».

The fact underlying this fantastic story seems to be that, since Domitian had exiled or put to death a large number of wealthy people, Hipparchos, fearing a similar fate for himself, salvaged as much as he could of his fortune (in valuables and money) by burying it in the homes of his son Atticus (then aged c. 22 years) and his daughter Claudia Athenais in the hope of some more auspicious development. Before his condemnation Hipparchos initiated friendly relations with the Spartan society. An inscription informs us that two Spartans set up a statue of him in acknowledgement of a certain favour to them. It is also remarkable that about 86/87 A.D. he preferred to send his son Atticus to Sparta to undergo a year's training in the so-called Lycurgan ephebic system rather than at Athens. This enrolment of Atticus strengthened the bonds of the family with the host-city.

On a list of Spartan magistrates of about 110 A.D. a member of the Gerousia records Atticus as having been his fellow-ephebe, to whose patronage he was attached during their common training in the same band (ἀγέλη).

Atticus' career was brilliant. His accumulated wealth and prestige

as a Roman citizen of equestrian class helped him to be elected praetor, senator, consul suffectus (twice) and c. 110 A.D. proconsul of Judaea.

Though an outsider—but no doubt granted beforehand Spartan citizenship as an important aristocrat—he took up the eponymous patronimate of Sparta in the year 134/5—a very high distinction which was also conferred on emperor Hadrian seven years earlier.

Atticus' widely known fortune matched his acknowledged generosity to Greek cities such as Gythium, Megara, the κοινὸν of the Greeks at Plataea, as attested by inscriptions. The people of Gythium dedicated a bust of Atticus on the Acropolis of Athens to honour τὸν ἀρχιερέα τῶν Σεβαστῶν καὶ κηδεμόνα τοῦ ἔθνους as well as the σωτῆρα καὶ κτίστην of their city. The dedication certainly followed his considerable δῶρον—of unidentified nature—which he bestowed on Gythium and whose proper use was guaranteed by imperial approval. Regarding Atticus' liberalities to the Athenians our source is again Philostratus who relates that the magnate would often sacrifice a hundred oxen to Athena in a single day and entertain the populace of the city at a sacrificial feast on that occasion. Whenever Dionysia was celebrated and the image of the god descended to the Academy, Atticus would again offer wine to all—citizens and strangers alike—as they lay on couches of ivy leaves in the Kerameikos.

Atticus' high offices and the lavish distributions of wealth indicate the economic and social background from which Herodes' life and policy developed. No doubt prompted by a strong passion for learning and equal aspiration for eminence he perused classical literature and profited from the teaching of outstanding sophists and philosophers of the Antonine age.

The high fees which were normally demanded by them did not present any problem to his father's inexhaustible resources. According to Philostratus, when Herodes was only a stripling, Atticus entertained the sophist Scopelian of Smyrna, whose fluency he admired. As Herodes at that time cared for extempore speaking only, yet had not sufficient confidence for it, he rejoiced at Scopelian's visit. After the Smyrnaean specialist delivered an extempore discourse, the pupil felt so equipped that he ventured to declaim in Scopelian's style in front of his father. Whereupon Atticus rewarded his son with fifty talents for the successful imitation while giving Scopelian fifteen only. But Herodes added another fifteen talents to the sophist's remuneration from his own present bestowed by his father.

Another teacher was Secundus, nicknamed «the silent philosopher»,

who had a quarrel with Herodes. In reaction the student ridiculed his low-born master by parodying the proverbial Hesiodic verse (*Works and Days* 25)

«and the potter envies the potter and the carpenter
the carpenter»

as «the carpenter the orator» —

a pun on Secundus' father who had been a carpenter. Nevertheless, when Secundus died, Herodes delivered the funeral oration in tears and dedicated a statue to his teacher.

On the other hand Herodes became very intimate with another master, the philosophic orator Favorinus from Gaul. When dying Favorinus bequeathed to Herodes all his books, his house in Rome and a black Indian servant who used to amuse them both by sprinkling his native dialect with Attic words and stammering a barbarous Greek.

When grown-up and touring the eastern provinces of Asia Minor in the capacity of a corrector (i.e. overseer presiding over the finances of the Greek free cities) Herodes arrived in Smyrna to hear Polemo of Laodicea —another celebrity of the second Sophistic. When he later describes his impressions from three extempore discourses of Polemo's he had attended, he admits that he listened to the first performance as an impartial judge, to the second as a lover longing for more, but to the third as an enthusiastic admirer. The sequel to this encounter, as recorded by Philostratus, is worth mentioning : after Herodes had left, he sent to Polemo 150,000 drachmae in payment for the rhetorical demonstration, yet Polemo refused it. Then Herodes was informed by a scholar from Tralles that Polemo probably expected 250,000. Accordingly, the wealthy Marathonian sent that sum to Polemo, who accepted it without the least hesitation, as though that amount were in fact his due.

Herodes' professional status was that of a very busy sophist. He devoted considerable time to teaching at his villas in Kephisia or Marathon, to writing his discourses, handbooks of rhetoric, an anthology of suitable passages of ancient erudition, quite a number of letters etc.

Furthermore he attended lectures by visiting peers and he showed off his own oratorical skills at lecture halls in Athens, such as the Agrippaion in the Agora or in the course of the panhellenic festivals. In Olympia he was acclaimed by the audience as «equal to Demosthenes» or «one of the Ten orators of the Canon». Summing up his evaluation of Herodes' merits Philostratus concludes that «whereas men excel in different ways and one sophist may be admirable as an extempore spea-



ker and another at elaborating a discourse, Herodes surpassed every other sophist in his grasp of all these methods». In another passage we read that «all the Athenian youth followed Herodes at Marathon»: Praises of course gratified his pride and flatterers were duly rewarded. The sophist Alexander (nicknamed Peloplaton=clay Plato) of Cilician Seleucia, on his way to Marcus Aurelius—then in Pannonia—interrupted his journey at Athens and gave a performance in the Odeum of Agrippa in the presence of Herodes and his students. Then followed Herodes' emotional declamation, at the end of which Alexander exclaimed: «O Herodes, we sophists are all of us merely small slices of yourself»—thus adapting to the occasion Aeschylus' famous statement that his tragedies were mere slices from Homer's banquet. It was rumoured later that Herodes was so delighted by the eulogy that he donated to Alexander «ten pack animals, ten horses, ten cup-bearers, ten shorthand writers, twenty talents of gold, plenty of silver, and two lisping children, for he was informed that Alexander liked to hear childish voices». Even allowing for a gross exaggeration of facts in this narrative, it is likely that eulogies like Alexander's, spoken in public, gained spectacular acknowledgments from the self-important multimillionaire of Marathon.

Sophistic activity, however, did not entirely absorb Herodes' energy—though his renown in that field caused the Roman court to summon him as a tutor to the future emperor Marcus Aurelius then aged c. 20 years. The acquaintance with Marcus had lasting and beneficial effects on Herodes.

As an Athenian as well as a Roman citizen and profiting from his father's influence, he embarked on a two-fold career. He first entered local politics very young and held in turn the magistracies of agoranomos (in A.D. 125), of the eponymous archon of Athens (at the age of 23), lifelong membership of the Areopagus and, from A.D. 133 to 137, of the first archonship of the Panhellenion, i.e. the new federal institution of Greek cities established in A.D. 131/2 by Hadrian in Athens. As a Roman citizen he was promoted to the hierarchy of public administration (the so-called *cursus honorum*) and was successively appointed quaestor (in A.D. 129), tribunus plebis, praetor, corrector of the Greek cities in Asia—as I mentioned before—and reaching his 40th year of age he rose to the post of consul ordinarius in 143 A.D. Such accumulation of parallel commitments did not prevent him from involvement in municipal struggles nor from carrying out ambitious construction projects in his home city and elsewhere.

An event that decisively enhanced his social standing was his marriage to the 16 year old wealthy patrician girl Regilla—to use simply her prevalent name out of a chain of names (Appia Annia Regilla Atilia Caucidia Tertulla) which identified her in formal documents as required by the norms of the nobility recalling their ancestors. Regilla (Ρήγιλλα in the Greek texts) was the daughter of Appius Annii Gallus (consul in 139 A.D.), whose forebears also held consulships. Through her father she was probably related to Annia Galeria Faustina, the wife of the emperor Antoninus Pius. Herodes was then in his 40th year, which curiously made him about 4 years older than his father-in-law.

The wedding took place in Rome in 141 or 142 and ushered his entrance into the patrician circles of the capital.

The couple settled afterwards in Attica. In the Avlona valley near Vrana a walled enclosure including a villa was transferred to Regilla as a wedding present. At the Marathon Museum there are fragments of an arched gate, —reminiscent of Hadrian's Arch in Athens— which marked the boundary of the enclosure within Herodes' landed property. On one side an inscription reads: 'Ἡρώδου χῶρος εἰς ὃν εἰσέρχεται (=this is Herodes' area into which you enter). On the opposite side it is written: Πηγύλλης ὁ χῶρος etc. Above both of them an inscription expresses the aspiration of the newly weds: 'Ομονοίας ἀθανάτου πύλη (=This is the gateway to eternal concord). Whether or not this assertion did materialize we shall see later. But first a brief survey of Herodes' activity as a benefactor and a great builder.

His interest in structure was revealed when he served in Asia Minor as an imperial corrector. According to Philostratus Herodes noticed that Troy (in fact the later town known as Alexandria Troas) was ill-supplied with baths and the inhabitants drew muddy water from wells and had to dig cisterns to catch rain water. Therefore, he wrote to the emperor Hadrian with the request that three million drachmas be appropriated to provide an adequate water supply. The emperor granted the request and appointed Herodes to take charge of the project.

When, however, the outlay reached seven million drachmas (i.e. more than double the sum approved of) officials in Asia protested to Hadrian saying that it was scandalous that the tribute received from five hundred cities should be squandered on the water supply of a single city. Thereupon, the emperor expressed his disapproval of this expenditure to Atticus, who replied that he would give his son the amount spent in excess of the three million and that Herodes, in turn, would give it to the city.

In Italy Herodes became involved with the welfare of the Apulian city of Canusium by building an aqueduct. The motivation of this generosity is unclear. Either Atticus had acquired land there when he became a senator, or amongst the population, which included a large percentage of Greeks, there lived also distant relatives of Regilla's.

In Epirus the town Oricum (Ὀρίκον), which had fallen into decay after an earthquake, was the beneficiary of the largesse of Herodes, who almost rebuilt it and was therefore proclaimed its founder.

The fact that the sophist, after his encounter with Marcus Aurelius in Pannonia, spent considerable time at Oricum in order to recover from an illness may suggest that he owned a property in that area suited to his physical constitution.

For the Thessalians and the Greeks living near the Maliac Gulf he built the bathing pools at Thermopylae to heal the sick with the mineral springs, which—as Pausanias from personal experience records—had the bluest water (VI, 35, 9).

It is quite natural that Herodes should heighten his home city's prestige with spectacular structures. Apart from minor works he fulfilled his commitment to the Athenians that he would welcome them as well as the athletes and visitors from all over Greece to a stadium of white marble. And indeed the decaying Lycurgus' stadium which occupied the valley between Ardetos and the opposite low hill was resealed in marble by Herodes within 4 years for the Panathenaic games of A.D. 144. Four or five years later Pausanias (I, 19, 6) described it as «a marvel to the eyes» adding that «the greater part of the Pentelic quarry was exhausted in its construction». Philostratus too (550) expresses his admiration in similar terms by saying that it is «a monument that is beyond all other marvels, for there is no theatre that can rival it». As the site was used as a quarry in the course of the centuries and the marble disappeared, a hundred years ago the wealthy Greek from Alexandria George Averoff followed Herodes' example by restoring the stadium in marble for the revival of the Olympic games in 1896 and for their 10th anniversary celebration in 1906.

Another great public building was the Odeum which he erected in memory of his wife Regilla, who died c. A.D. 160. It had the typical plan of a Roman theatre with a seating capacity of 5000 to 6000.

Its roof was made of cedar wood. Because Pausanias circulated his book on Attica before the date of the construction of the Odeum, he makes up for this omission later, when c. 174 A.D. he deals with Achaia and Patras in particular. In his 7th book (20,6) he states that «the

Odeum of Patras is in every way the finest in Greece, except of course for the one at Athens. This is unrivalled in size and magnificence.

The reason why I omitted to mention it in my description of Attica is that my account of the Athenians was finished before Herodes began the building».

Herodes' lavish expenditures also went to Delphi, Olympia and Corinth, the latter in charge of both the Isthmian games and Poseidon's sanctuary. It is well-known that the Panhellenic shrines and their festivals secured greater publicity for orators, writers, artists and benefactors.

The stadium of Delphi, previously built of local stone from Parnassus was now resealed with Pentelic marble. A triumphal Arch was also added adorning the south east entrance to it.

Herodes' ties with Olympia were strengthened through his discourses there. In A.D. 149 the Eleans invested Regilla with the priesthood of Demeter surnamed Chamyne.

The office entitled her to attend the Olympics of 153 as the only female θεωρὸς τῶν Ὀλυμπίων. In return Herodes replaced the old images of Demeter and Kore with new cult statues made of Pentelic marble (Paus. VI, 21, 2).

Yet the most valuable service rendered to Olympia, which —to quote Lucian— «prevented the visitors from dying of thirst», was the construction of an aqueduct 3 km long supplying drinking water through an Exedra (or Nymphaeum). The inner side of the upper semi-circular tank had fifteen niches holding portrait statues of the imperial patrons and members of Herodes' own family. The inscription on a marble bull records the dedication of the reservoir to Zeus by Demeter's priestess Regilla: Ῥήγιλλα ἱέρεια Δήμητρος τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὰ περὶ τὸ ὕδωρ τῷ Διί.

We now move to another area which attracted Atticus' and Herodes' interests: That of Corinth. This cosmopolitan city —on Roman coins designated as Colonia Laus Julia Corinthiensis, yet hellenized by the 2nd cent. A.D. —was the seat of the Roman proconsul and capital of the Achaia province. Atticus, after recovering the ancestral fortune, appears as an important person in Corinth's economic life. Two honorary busts are set up for him by Corinthian citizens on the occasion of his being awarded the «ornamenta praetoria» —no doubt in expectation of liberalities from the wealthy aristocrat.

He probably had land holdings in the region later bequeathed to Herodes. During Nerva's reign (96-98 A.D.) or the first years of Trajan

(98-117) Atticus shares the agonothesia of the Isthmian games with another choregos —a distinction entailing heavy expenses.

Herodes' major contributions to the city included the remodelling of the Peirene fountain and the Odeion. Round the court of the Peirene outside a two-storeyed new façade three monumental arches were constructed, lined with white marble and embellished with nine statues in niches. A statue base recovered nearby and identifying the lost portrait of Regilla's ('Ρήγιλλάν μ' ἐσορᾶς, εἰκόνα σωφροσύνης) suggests that Herodes, with official authorization, put up images of his family there, exactly as he had done in the Olympic Exedra.

Concerning the Odeion, Philostratus (551) after commenting on the Herodeum at Athens goes on: «But I must not neglect to mention also the roofed theatre which Herodes ἐδείματο for the Corinthians, which is far inferior indeed to the one at Athens but there are not many famous things elsewhere which equal it». The verb ἐδείματο (literally meaning: he built) puzzled the archaeologists, who later concluded that it was used rather loosely by Philostratus. In other words a pre-existing Odeum, built towards the end of the 1st cent. A.D. was thoroughly and sumptuously restored by the Marathonian magnate in his last years (c. 175). As Pausanias' visit to Corinth and the completion of his 2nd Book on Corinthia are dated considerably earlier, he could not mention Herodes' name as the builder.

By contrast his account of Herodes' offerings to the Isthmian temple is long and detailed (II, 1, 7-9). The passage concerned runs as follows: «The offerings inside the temple of Poseidon were dedicated in our time (ἐφ' ἡμῶν) by Herodes the Athenian; These are: a chariot drawn by four gilded horses, except for the hoofs made of ivory; two golden Tritons flank the horses, with the lower part of their bodies in ivory. On the chariot stand the chryselephantine statues of Amphitrite and Poseidon, and nearby the boy Palaimon-again of ivory and gold— upright on a dolphin. On the base of this group are reliefs of sea-deities, Thalassa holding up the young Aphrodite surrounded by Nereids and the Dios-kouroi. Standing apart from the sculptural group are other statues offered by Herodes in the cella; these are images of Galene (Calm) and the Sea, a hippocampus (sea horse), Ino, Bellerophon and the winged Pegasus».

It has been rightly pointed out by scholars that the extravagant expenditure for numerous sculptures worked out with gold and ivory and the unmistakable repetition of the scene of Aphrodite's birth from Phidias' Olympic Zeus can only point to a deliberate challenge of com-

parison with the chryselephantine masterpiece in Olympia or with the more recent colossus of the god dedicated by Hadrian to his temple in Athens.

Class consciousness, a high opinion of himself and pretentious display of luxury are dominant traits of Herodes' character and behaviour. Though Philostratus as a rule eulogizes him, he has to admit (586) that the excessive praises to Herodes by a pupil styling him «King of eloquence» (βασιλέα τῶν λόγων) «gave the sophist the keenest pleasure, since he never could resist his longing for approbation». Opposing or discrediting him of course entailed his hostile reaction. «Herodes' life was full of quarrels» is stated by a modern scholar. Though this aphorism is rather hard it is appropriate to look now into the sophist's private life and his relations with his fellow-countrymen and professional rivals.

Charges went round against Herodes that while serving in Asia he clashed with Antoninus Pius, then proconsul in the same province, and that he even came to blows with the future emperor. Philostratus denies it, though adopting the version that the two magistrates «did in a manner shove one another aside, as happens in a rough place and a narrow road». What the incident was about is difficult to guess.

A long lasting feud with his Athenian compatriots, stirred up periodically by political opponents and sophists, originated in Herodes' manipulating the will of his father: Atticus bequeathed to each citizen of Athens an annual payment of one mina. Philostratus says (549) that the terms of the will had been suggested by Atticus' freedmen, who sought in this way to win public favour in face of Herodes' harsh dealing with his own freedmen and slaves. But the provisions of the will were not carried out, for the Athenians unexpectedly agreed to accept a single payment of five minas giving up any further claims. Were they pressed by Herodes to consent to such an unfavourable compact or did the need or desire for money blind them to the advantages of yearly payments? Perhaps the answer is a concurrence of such motives. What, in particular, offended the Athenians was the frustration they experienced when they came to the banks to collect the five minas; Herodes declared that they were liable for the debts their fathers and grandfathers owed to his parents. Accordingly, some received a small amount, others nothing at all, and some were detained as debtors. The Athenians —says Philostratus —felt they had been robbed of their legacy and never ceased to hate Herodes. Referring to the stadium conferred on them as a gift by Herodes, they sarcastically argued that it was fittingly styled as Pana-

thenaic since it was built with the money extorted by the sophist from all of them. The uproar about the manipulation of the will spread beyond the confines of Attica and reached the capital of the empire. Cornelius Fronto — the foremost orator in Rome and one of the tutors to Marcus Aurelius— in his correspondence with the imperial prince branded Herodes as «a wicked son unmindful of his father's entreaties». Fronto also acted as an advocate of Demostratus when Herodes had brought him to lawcourt, and later the same Fronto gave his forensic speech of defense a wide circulation. In Athens the leading role in the denigration of Herodes was played by three people, who also held eponymous archonships and whose families were related: Demostratus, mentioned already, Praxagoras and Mamertinus. A sophist Theodotus, hostile to Herodes, also collaborated with them. In A.D. 173 Herodes' enemies invited to the people's assembly (ecclesia) the two brothers Quintilii (serving together at that time as Roman officials in Greece) to hear the heavy accusations pronounced against Herodes to the effect that he was a tyrant. The Athenians also urged the brothers to forward the proceedings of the session to the emperor's ears. Despite Herodes' attempts to bring his enemies before the proconsular court as plotters against him, the latter went secretly to the headquarters of Marcus Aurelius at Sirmium in the Danubian province. A trial ensued before the emperor, at which Demostratus defended himself in an admirable apology, while Herodes, being in a frantic state because of other mishaps, launched into invectives against Marcus and left the court. As the trial developed into an open indictment of Herodes and his freedmen, Marcus' verdict was confined to «a mild» punishment of the freedmen.

Herodes' life was also fraught with successive deaths in his household. I have mentioned the loss of Regilla in about A.D. 160.. She was only 35 and in her eighth month of pregnancy. Herodes' grief overstepped due limits: his blackening the paintings and decorations of the house caused taunting remarks from intimate friends and philosophers. He also lost 2 or 3 sons prematurely and later his daughters Athenais and Elpinike, when still young. Philostratus records (558) that at Elpinike's death the father lay on the floor, beating the earth and crying aloud: «O my daughter, what offerings shall I consecrate to thee?»

In contrast, he disliked his surviving son Bradua—named after Regilla's brother—as he was regarded as foolish and slow in learning and later prone to drunkenness and eroticism. Adding to Herodes' vexations Regilla's brother Appius Atilius Bradua, who became consul ordinarius in 160 A.D. adopted rumours from Athens that incriminated

Herodes in Regilla's death. So he brought a charge of murder against him alleging that on Herodes' orders Alcimedon —his favourite freed-man— had beaten Regilla on the belly and caused her death. Philostratus does not provide any information about occasional outbursts of the sophist against his wife. We only learn about the accuser's self-praises without any convincing proof of the charge and Herodes' jesting remarks and rather rhetorical arguments for his defence. The outcome of that trial which was held before the senate was his acquittal.

It appears that in those trying circumstances he comforted himself with the company of three young boys, whom he brought up as if they were his own children. These were Polydeukion (an affectionate name for Polydeuces —a relative of his of equestrian rank), Achilleus and the slightly older Memnon from Ethiopia.

But these too were carried off within a short lapse of time—probably falling victims to a plague brought back by the soldiers of Lucius Verus' Parthian expedition. Attica seems to have suffered most from the plague. Herodes' attachment to the deceased developed into a cult: «He put up statues of them hunting, or having hunted or about to hunt, some in his shrubberies, others in the fields, others by springs or in the shade of plane trees. They bore inscriptions with curses on any one who would mutilate or remove them». Archaeology has confirmed this literary evidence: At least 25 portraits of Polydeukion and a few others of Achilleus and Memnon have been identified so far, plus 23 texts of execrations— all of them unearthed in areas presumably part of Herodes' property, e.g. in Marathon and the adjacent ground, in Oenoe, Kephisia, Varnava, Ramnous, in Tragounera of Euboea and the site at the Loukou monastery in Kynouria, where architectural and epigraphic finds suggest the existence of another villa of Herodes, perhaps as sumptuous as that at Marathon or Kephisia or the Triopion on the Appian way near Rome.

The phrasing of some inscriptions marking the favourite spots visited by Herodes' party is in the second person as if Herodes conversed with the boys thought of as alive, e.g. «Hero Polydeukion (=in the vocative) it is with you I frequently wandered at these crossroads», or «at these springs we had a conversation». On a headless herm, once carrying Achilleus' bust, is engraved: «Herodes to Achilleus (i.e. offers this portrait) so that I may look at you in this glen and that you and any other may remember how deep our mutual affection was» etc.

Leaving now that eerie contact with the deceased pupils, we rejoin

the enterprising magnate in a story recorded by Philostratus, which seems to be historically authentic:

Herodes —apparently in advanced age— was heading for Corinth accompanied by an Athenian citizen; as they both reached the Isthmus he revealed his unfulfilled dream of cutting a canal across the Isthmus and so contracting a long and dangerous sailing round Peloponnesus into a voyage of just twenty six stades. «He longed to do it and bind his name with an eternal achievement, but he never had the courage to ask the emperor to grant him permission, lest he should be accused of grasping at an ambitious plan to which not even Nero had proved himself equal». This is perhaps the reason why he gave up this brilliant project, which was only to materialize after another seventeen centuries.

Herodes Atticus died c. 179 A.D. in his seventy sixth year. Despite his instructions, given to his freedmen, that he should be buried at Marathon, the Athenians carried him off and interred him on the hill by the Panathenaic stadium, on top of which he had had a temple built to the goddess Tyche with Regilla appointed as her first priestess. The epitaph written on his grave read: «Here lies all that remains of Herodes, son of Atticus from Marathon, but his glory is world-wide».

The Corinthians too, paying their tribute to their benefactor, set up a herm with a portrait on his own property. The terse inscription on it takes on a symbolic significance: Ἡρώδης ἐνθάδε περιεπάτει (Herodes used to stroll in this place). No doubt, during his solitary walks Herodes recollected his turbulent life with happy activities in the fields of culture and social welfare, yet interwoven with political and professional troubles and painful bereavements in his own household.

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Μίνως Μ. Κοκολάκης, «Ἡ προσωπικότης τοῦ Ἡρώδῃ Ἀττικοῦ».

Πρὸς ἀνασύνθεσιν καὶ ἐρμηνείαν τῆς προσωπικότητος τοῦ Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Ἀττικοῦ Ἡρώδῃ —ὅπως συνήθως ἀναγράφεται ὁ Μαραθώνιος σοφιστὴς τοῦ 2ου μ.Χ. αἰ.—χρησιμοποιοῦνται οἱ πληροφορίες, ποὺ παρέχει ὁ βιογράφος τοῦ Φλάβιος Φιλόστρατος, οἱ ἐνθυμήσεις τοῦ Aulus Gellius ἀπὸ τῆ φιλοξενίας τοῦ στὴν ἐπαυλὴ τοῦ βαθύπλουτου δασκάλου του, οἱ πενιχρὲς μαρτυρίαι καὶ ὑπαινιγμοὶ ἄλλων λογίων τῆς ἐποχῆς του καὶ τὸ πλῆθος ἐπιγραφικῶν στοιχείων καὶ ἀρχαιολογικῶν εὐρημάτων.

Τὴν ἀκάματὴ πολυμέρεια τοῦ Ἡρώδῃ —ποὺ ἐκφράζεται μὲ τὴ σοφιστικὴ διδασκαλία του καὶ τὶς ρητορικὰς ἐπιδείξεις, τὴν ἐνεργὸν συμμετοχὴν τοῦ στὴν πολιτικὴ ζωὴ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν, τὴν προώθησίν του στὴν κλίμακα τῆς ρωμαϊκῆς διοικήσεως (cursus honorum) καὶ τὴ διεκπεραίωσιν κοινωφελῶν τεχνικῶν προγραμμάτων— συνοδεύουν ἔντονες ψυχικὰς ιδιότητες: ὑψηλοφροσύνη γιὰ τὴ γενεαλογία του· ἐπιδίωξιν ἀναγνωρίσεως καὶ ὑπεροχῆς στὸ χῶρον τῆς κλασικῆς συγκροτήσεως· μεγαλοδωρία μέχρι σπατάλης μὲ στόχους τὴν αὐτοπροβολὴν καὶ τὴν ἀμιλλὰ πρὸς ἀντίστοιχα ἐπιτεύγματα τοῦ παρελθόντος, ἀκόμα καὶ Ρωμαίων ἡγεμόνων. Τέλος, ἀπουσία συναισθηματικῆς αὐτοπειθαρχίας στὶς ἀντίξοες περιστάσεις καὶ ξεσπάσματα παράφορου πένθους γιὰ τὸ θάνατον μελῶν τῆς οἰκογενείας του καὶ προσφιλῶν μαθητῶν του.

