

Achaia, Greece, and Laconica

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IN READING J. Rougé's now basic edition¹ of the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium*, the much later Latin translation of a lost Greek work which he dates to A.D. 359/60, one is struck by the manner in which the author describes Central Greece and the Peloponnese. Rougé prints the *Descriptio Totius Mundi*, a shorter and later version, below the *Expositio* on the same pages, so that one sees at a glance the reasons for corrections in many cases. Retaining two older emendations in line 14, we reproduce the rest of his text of *Expositio* §52, with a change of punctuation in line 8.²

Post Macedoniam Thessalia multa ferens <frumenta> et <in> aliis <sibi> sufficere dicitur. Et
habet montem Olympum, quem deorum habitaculum Homerus ait. Post Thessaliam Achaiae, Graeciae et Laconicae
5 terra, quae in se <studia> habens non sic <in> aliis

¹ *Sources chrétiennes* 124 (Paris 1966) [hereafter Rougé]. A. A. Vasiliev, "Expositio Totius Mundi: An Anonymous Geographic Treatise of the Fourth Century A.D.," *SemKond VIII* (Prague 1936) 1–39, offers an English translation and a good critique of the scholarly literature, but he too misunderstands §52, specifically the tripartite division and, we think, the meaning of the words *provincia* and *historias*. Of Rougé's more comprehensive study the economic geography and historical results have met with general approbation, notably from A. Chastagnol, *Annales ESC* 24 (1969) 463–68, though R. Güngerich, *Gnomon* 41 (1969) 285–88, had complaints about the apparatus.

² Rougé indicates additions by angular brackets: additions or corrections made on the basis of the *Descriptio* are in Roman type, modern editorial supplements in italic. Since the *Descriptio* must be consulted for its omissions and additions, we reproduce, with one change of punctuation in line 10, Rougé's text of §52 in the *Descriptio*:

Post Macedoniam Thessalia, quae multo abundans
tritico habet montem excelsum qui vocatur Olympus. Post
Thessaliam Achaiae et Graeciae et Laconicae terram, quae
sola in se studia habens sufficere sibi tantum potest. Est
5 enim provincia brevis et montensis, quae fruges gignit,
oleum perraro paucum et mel atticum, et magis fama doctrinae et oratorum gloria decoratur. Habet autem civitates optimas: Corinthum et Athenas. Corinthus negotiis viget, habet et opus praecipuum amphitheatri; Athenae vero
10 sola studia litterarum. Laconica Crocino tantum lapide.
quem dicunt Lacedaemonium, ornari putatur.

- sufficere sibi potest; nam et ipsa provincia brevis est et montuosa, et non tantum frugifera potest esse: oleum vero ex paucis generat et mel atticum, et magis fama doctrinarum et orationum glorificari potest; in aliis enim
- 10 quamplurime non sic. Civitates autem habet has: Corinthum et Athenas. Corinthum enim civitatem multum in negotio <vigentem> et habentem opus praecipuum amphitheatri; Athenas vero <studia> et historias antiquas et aliquid dignum nominatu{m}, arc<e>m³ ubi multis stauis
- 15 stantibus mirabile est videre dicendum antiquorum bellum. Laconica vero solo Crocino lapide, quem dicunt Lacedaemonium, ornari putatur.

The sentence with which we are primarily concerned begins in line 4: "After Thessaly (comes) the land of Achaia, Greece, and Laconica. . . , for it is a small and mountainous region." For *provincia* in the meaning 'region' references have been collected from both juristic literature and inscriptions.⁴ In the words *Achaiae, Graeciae, et Laconicae terra* one might see "a pleonastic expression for mainland Greece with no technical distinctions but rather a residue of diverse terms,"⁵ for it is uncertain how much ignorance should be attributed to the author and how much vagueness. Since the author knew the Aegean area, one editor felt that emendation was required, and

³ After J. Godefroy, *Vetus orbis descriptio* (Geneva 1628), had emended *arcum* to *a<cr>um*, C. Müller, *Geographi graeci minores* II (Paris 1861) 524, made the convincing emendations *nominatu{m}* and *arc<e>m*, which F. Buecheler, *RhM* 27 (1872) 476, approved in these words: "Sine dubio scribendum est *nominatu arcem*. ex tot igitur tantisque arcis ornamentis et stauis nihil homo iste magis miratus est quam gigantomachiam Attalicaque opera supra theatrum collocata, τὸν λεγόμενον τῶν παλαιῶν πόλεμον, vel ut Pausanias I 25, 2 refert, Γυάντων . . . τὸν λεγόμενον πόλεμον." This explanation has been accepted by W. Judeich, *Topographie von Athen*² (Munich 1931) 258. It is a curious aberration on Rougé's part (292) to reject these simple emendations because the text of the *Descriptio* has omitted the sentence. Rougé admits that the Greek was probably translated as *arcem*, but then, he thinks, the translator or a copyist may have misinterpreted the translation as referring to a triumphal arch. Surely the editorial task is to reconstruct the translation, not the mediaeval text of the translation. Vassiliev (*supra* n.1) is not right either. On p.15 he retains the emendation *arc<e>m* but does not seem to have read Buecheler: at least he does not recognize *dicendum* as *λεγόμενον* but translates "to see the reproduction of an ancient war." On the confusion between *arx* and triumphal arch see Dittenberger's comment to *IG* III 687.

⁴ J. Triantaphyllopoulos, *Studi in onore di Giuseppe Grosso* V (Turin 1972) 196f; S. Dušanić, *ŽAntika* 11 (1961–62) 127–31.

⁵ This fine phrase has been adopted from the report which the journal's helpful referee submitted.

though Rougé (290) rejected the interpretation “Achaia, namely the land of Greece and Laconia,” he did not explain the triad. The commercial man who composed the Greek original was accustomed to put into three ports, namely those of Corinth, Athens, and Gythium, and so to visit three areas which in order of economic importance he called Achaia, Greece, and Laconica. Achaia and Greece could be accepted as two names for the same area if it were not for Laconica. Since Laconica is in no sense the equivalent of the first two, one is reasonably drawn to an explanation of these three terms as meaning for the author three distinct areas. Assuming that these terms in fact had different meanings for him, we shall attempt to define them.

Achaia meant for him the part of Greece inhabited by the heirs of Roman colonists and those Greeks who fell under the legally restricted *imperium* of a senatorial proconsul, *i.e.*, the province proper set up permanently by Augustus, when the proconsul of Macedonia was relieved of the necessity of keeping an eye on Greece south of Thessaly. The author himself probably had no interest in the government, but he reflected a terminology which had developed for at least 360 years among a people to whom the government was indeed important.⁶

The term *Graecia* (*Ἑλλάς*), which long antedated the reign of Augustus, could mean in the four centuries after Augustus the whole area of the province plus the *civitates liberae*, but it also had old

⁶ For Achaia, the Roman province, the reader may consult E. Groag, *Die römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia bis auf Diokletian* (Ak. Wiss. Wien, Schriften der Balkankommission, Antiquarische Abt. 9, Vienna/Leipzig 1939) and *Die Reichsbeamten von Achaia in spätrömischer Zeit* (Dissertationes Pannonicae, SER. I, no. 14, Budapest 1946). The name of the province is spelled *Achaia* not only in the *Expositio*. It is so spelled in good manuscripts of Tac. *Ann.* 1.76, 1.80, 5.10, Suet. *Claud.* 25, Sen. *Ep.* 104, and in all Latin inscriptions such as *Corinth* VIII.2 nos. 23, 65, 66; VIII.3 nos. 100, 132, 135, 137, 358, 488. Without making an exhaustive search the writer found in *CIL* and *AE* thirty-seven Latin inscriptions with the spelling *Achaia* and none with the spelling *Achaea* for the province. This is worth mentioning because some editors, *e.g.*, of *CAH* and Sherwin-White's edition of Pliny's letters, adhere to *Achaea* as the name of the province. Admittedly Greek *ai* went into Latin as *ae*, and Romans were well acquainted with the Achaean League long before they had occasion to set up a province. An epigraphical occurrence of the phrase *Achaea capta* was recorded by a sixteenth-century copyist (*CIL* IX 4966 or *ILS* 21), and manuscripts of Pliny which have *Achaia* in *Ep.* 8.24 for the province may still use *Achaei* for the League (10.65.3, *recitatae epistulae divi Vespasiani ad Lacedaemonios, et divi Titi ad eosdem et Achaeos*). What strikes the present writer as remarkable is not the occurrence of the spellings *Achaei* and *Achaea* but the avoidance of the latter spelling in prose when the subject is the Roman province.

associations. The historical load which the term carried brought Athens, Sparta, and various other cities to mind, the glorious cities which Augustus and his successors had left independent, as if independence was their due. Hence 'Hellas' (*Graecia*) evidently could take on for a commercial man such as our author the special meaning of old free cities and leagues which were not part of Achaia.⁷

Laconica is more difficult. If the translator had said *Attica* instead of *Graecia*, it would be easier to include Lacedaemon in his *Laconica*, but if we are right in associating *Graecia* with the old free cities as a group, we cannot exclude Sparta from *Graecia*. The Lacedaemonians were the second most famous city among the Hellenes (the ancients thought more in personal than territorial terms such as we use). I suggest that what he means by *Laconica* is not the land of the Lacedaemonians as it would have been in the classical and Hellenistic periods, but the land of the Laconians who once served the Lacedaemonians but were now independent. The League of the Eleutherolacones⁸ was established by Augustus (Paus. 3.21.6); R. Bernhardt thinks that the Laconians were freed from Spartan domination and the league created just after the fall of Eurycles of Sparta between 7 and 2 B.C.⁹

Achaiae, Graeciae, et Laconicae terra is treated as a whole in lines 5–10. The order in which the three parts are introduced is retained in lines 11–17 where our author treats them separately. Achaia means for him, above all, Corinth, a real city very active in commerce and provided with an outstanding amphitheatre. Corinth *caput est totius Achaiae provinciae*, as Apuleius said (*Met.* 10.18). *Graecia* means for our

⁷ In the second century, while the proconsul of Achaia was a senator of praetorian rank, usually chosen by lot among others of praetorian rank, the corrector (if any) of the free cities might be either praetorian or consular, certainly consular if he held both posts. In the fourth century the combination of proconsulship and correctorship under a consular appointed by the emperor himself became normal. Since the correctorship was no longer mentioned, merely the proconsulship which went back to Augustus, G. F. Hertzberg, *Die Geschichte Griechenlands unter der Herrschaft der Römer* III (Halle 1875) 244, could say that the old category of free cities had now disappeared, though he admits the special consideration that these old cities still enjoyed, not only in the reign of Julian, but regularly. Some privileges and the ancient tradition still remained.

⁸ The most striking text is an inscription, *SEG* XI 923, first published by S. B. Kougeas, *Ἑλληνικά* 1 (1928) 16–43, and then, with better photographs, by E. Kornemann, *Neue Dokumente zum lakonischen Kaiserkult* (Breslau 1929).

⁹ *Imperium und Eleutheria* (Diss. Hamburg 1971) 193–95 n.523, with further references and bibliography.

author, above all, Attica, the free city of Athens. Sparta did not have imposing structures, and since it was no port, he had probably never been there. But Athens was still the most famous center of learning in the ancient world, and men went there to study and to see the monuments of antiquity. The translator's phrase *historias antiquas* does not mean "ses écrits anciens," but clearly τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀρετῆς ὑπομνήματα,¹⁰ or, more generally, information derived from the viewing of ancient monuments with or without escort. One may compare the phrase of Aelius Aristides in the *Panathenaic* 11, τὸν μὲν ἀεὶ κατάπλουν τῶν ἐμπορίων τε καὶ καθ' ἱστορίαν ἢ χρεῖαν εἰσαφικνουμένων, the travelers who visit (Athens) "for knowledge (ἱστορίαν) or for business."

Gythium could not be singled out as if it were in a class with Athens and Corinth even in port facilities and constructions, to say nothing of entertainment or instruction, but Laconica as the third part of the region or *ethnos* had to be mentioned, although it could boast no city of any reputation. Its one product for export had a name acquired before the Free Laconians obtained independence from the Lacedaemonians.

Having set forth our occasionally different interpretation of ambiguous words and obscure phrases and having insisted on administrative as well as economic information in the passage, we conclude with a translation as follows.

"After Macedonia (comes) Thessaly, (which) produces much grain and is said to be self-sufficient in other products as well. It has also Mt Olympus, which, Homer says, is the abode of the gods. After Thessaly (comes) the land of Achaia, Greece, and Laconica.

¹⁰ Himerius (ed. Colonna), 5.30, where Themistocles, it is imagined, says in the Oration against Xerxes: *Τί δὲ ἦν τῆς πόλεως τῆς ἡμετέρας τὸ ἐπίσημον; σεμνότης οἰκοδομημάτων, πανταχοῦ τῆς ἀρχαίας ἀρετῆς ὑπομνήματα, ὁ παρὰ τῆς φύσεως κόσμος μείζον τοῦ παρὰ τῆς τέχνης προσιθεῖς τῇ πόλει τὸ κάλλος. οἶα μὲν ἰδεῖν ἀκρόπολις, οἷον ἄλλο θεῶν μετ' οὐρανὸν ἐνδιαίτημα: οἶος δ' ὁ τῆς Πολιάδος νεὼς καὶ τὸ πλησίον τὸ Ποσειδῶνος τέμενος.* Thus Himerius found Athens particularly notable for its architectural elegance and natural setting, for its historical monuments and the Acropolis. In a list of Paeonistae published by J. H. Oliver, *TAPA* 71 (1940) 306–11, and now dated A.D. 190–210 (by J. Traill, *Phoenix* 29 [1975] 296, and E. Kapetanopoulos, *Talanta* 6 [1975] 24–29) there are names of prominent Athenians, including περιηγητῆς καὶ ἱερε[ύς | Διός] Πολιέως Λικίν. Φ[ίρμος], who not only held an important priesthood but is listed first as official periegete of Athens. One presumes that he personally conducted distinguished visitors around the historical monuments and that through assistants he organized tours for ordinary visitors who came καθ' ἱστορίαν.

Though it contains centers of higher learning, it cannot be equally self-sufficient in other things, for it is a small and mountainous region and cannot be so productive. True, it brings forth a little olive oil and Attic honey, and it can even glory in the fame of its teachings and orations, with more reason, for in other respects it is by no means so famous. It has, however, these cities: Corinth and Athens. Corinth is very active in commerce and has an outstanding structure of an amphitheatre. Athens has the centers of higher learning and ancient historical monuments and something worthy of special mention, the Acropolis, where by means of many standing statues it is wonderful to see a so-called war of the ancients. As for Laconica, it is considered to be rich in one product alone, the stone of Crocinum which they call 'Lacedaemonian'."

APPENDIX: *Historia Augusta Tac. 18* AND THE *Expositio*

In *HA Tac. 18* the new rules established through the emperor Tacitus are announced to the world by the Senate.¹¹ Letters are said to have been sent out. That to the curia of Carthage is presented first, then that to the curia of the Treviri. *Tac. 18* ends with the sentence: *Eodem modo scriptum est Antiochensibus, Aquileiensibus, Mediolanensibus, Alexandrinis, Thessalonicensibus, Corinthiis, et Atheniensibus.*

How did the author of the *HA* happen to choose precisely these nine cities and in this order? Carthage, Trier, and Antioch hardly head the list because the author thought first in terms of the three continents Africa, Europe, and Asia, and wanted to create an impression of distant parts as well as powerful urban centers away from Rome. His mind did not work that way. It is more likely that although Antioch belonged with Alexandria, one former capital of an anti-Caesar suggested another.

All nine cities are included in the brief *Expositio* and in the briefer *Descriptio*: Carthage in §61, Trier in §58, Antioch in §23 and §27 and §28, Aquileia and Mediolanum together in §56, Alexandria in §35 and §36 and §37, Thessalonica in §51, Corinth and Athens together in §52. One would have expected for Greece the order Athens, Sparta, Corinth, but *Tac. 18* omits Sparta, and *Tac. 18*

¹¹ On the character of the Life of Tacitus see R. Syme, *Emperors and Biography* (Oxford 1971) 237-47.

places Corinth ahead of Athens, just as the *Expositio* does. The order Thessalonica, Corinth, Athens is that of *Expositio* 51–52. Likewise the order Aquileia, Mediolanum is that of *Expositio* 56 and very significant. *Tac.* 18 does not mention Lugdunum in Gaul, nor Cologne in Germany nor any city in Spain, but neither does the *Expositio*.

To the writer it seems obvious that the author of the *HA* had recently seen, partly remembered, then consulted again the Greek original of the *Expositio*. If so, this supplies one more indication (A.D. 359/60) of a later than pretended date for the *HA*, and the *Expositio Totius Mundi et Gentium* should be added to the sources listed by T. D. Barnes, though only for one passage, the bold invention of *Tac.* 18.¹²

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¹² *The Sources of the Historia Augusta* (Coll. Latomus 155, 1978). Ernst Hohl, "Vopiscus und die Biographie des Kaisers Tacitus," *Klio* 11 (1911) 315, says of the cities in *Tac.* 18: "Danach scheint die Auswahl also ziemlich willkürlich getroffen zu sein." Eric Birley, "Africana in the Historia Augusta" *Bonner Historia-Augusta-Colloquium* 1968/1969 (*Antiquitas*, Reihe 4, Band 7 [1970]) 79–90, points out the importance of Carthage to the author of the *HA* and alludes (90) to the impression of an African background for the author, whether he was writing in Carthage or in Rome. Birley rightly says that the list in *Tac.* 18 is very different from the priorities of Ausonius, even though Ausonius too places Carthage next after Rome. K.-P. Johne, *Kaiserbiographie und Senatsaristokratie* (Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur der Antike 15, Berlin 1976) 166, says that it is unclear on what principle the selection of the cities occurred, but he attributes the prominence of Trier to its being an imperial residence. That was of course the reason for its great prominence (*civitatem maximam*) in *Expositio* 58, which Johne does not mention.