PART THREE

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M. Gawlikowski (Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, University of Warsaw, Poland), Two classical sculptures from Palmyra.

The sanctuary of Allat in the western quarter of Palmyra had flourished between the end of the first century BC and about AD 380, when it was destroyed under Theodosius. The cella was built in AD 123/4 or 143/4 to house a statue of Athena, a marble copy of probably Athenian workmanship after an original of the fifth century BC. The headgear and drapery are those of the Athena Parthenos, while the scarf-like aegis and the raised right arm with a cloak thrown over the shoulder corresponds to a type known from a torso in the Agora Museum and several statuettes in the Acropolis Museum. This type also had an Attic helmet, and seems to have been faithfully rendered by the Palmyra copy. An unknown Phidian statue, closely related to the Parthenos, may thus be indirectly indicated.

A small head of Athena with ram heads on her Corinthian helmet, also found in the Palmyra temple, belongs to a type well attested and known as the Athena Giustiniani, recently identified as Athena Archegetis. It is yet another instance of a syncretism by which Greek sculptures came to represent an alien goddess who became one with Athena as the armed protector of her city.