

## The Piraeus and the Panathenaia: Changing Customs in Late-Fifth Century Athens

J.D. Hulsey  
University of Houston  
Architecture  
2015

**Abstract:** *The architecture of ancient Greece has been a field of interest since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Equally important to the Greeks of that time, if not more so, was urban planning. One example of this is the reconstruction and reconfiguration of Athens' port, which coincided with the rise of Athenian democracy and empire. This paper explores the effects that the planning of Athens' port, the Piraeus, by Hippodamus of Miletus had on the celebrations of the Athenians during the Age of Pericles, specifically the Panathenaia. The paper uses a variety of sources, from archaeological evidence to contemporary political theory, to conclude that the rebuilt Piraeus had both directly and indirectly positive effects on Athenian civil identity into the late 500s BCE.*

Architecture is, at its best, an expression of a culture's values and organization. We know from the Roman architect Petrarch that the classical Greeks recognized the power of architecture to influence people's emotions and subconscious minds with expressions of power, stability, and beauty. Urban planning, through the harmonious placement of architectural forms, has the power to enhance or destroy this influence.<sup>1</sup> This paper intends to explore the effect that the decentralized grid plan for the Piraeus devised by Hippodamus had on the religious and civic celebrations of the Athenian state from the Age of Pericles through the end of the Peloponnesian War. The conclusion reached is that the strengthened, bustling Piraeus had both directly positive effects, thanks to the division of labor aided by foreign grain farmers and the spread of propaganda by foreign merchants, and indirectly positive effects on Athenian civic identity, due to the large population of foreign traders and metics; the primary lens through which this effect will be seen is through the festival of the Panathenaia. Archaeological records, in addition to political and architectural theorizing by contemporary authors, shall be used to provide evidence and support for this conclusion.

### *The Athenian Urban Form in the Fifth Century*

Traditional Greek city planning, if it could even be considered 'planning,' produced a centralized urban form. The acropolis was the original center of a traditional Greek city and in most cases housed a former citadel or fortified palace of an early monarch.<sup>2</sup> This early center, provided by centralized political power, shifted as trade became more prominent and political participation became more egalitarian: A lower city, called an *asty*, surrounded the acropolis, and formed a center of its own: the agora.<sup>3</sup>

The focus of Greek cities on centralized spaces was never fully developed, except in written form. In these writings, the centralized city, with its acropolis and its agora, became highly idealized and highly-developed. Plato describes one natural conclusion of the central design in his writings on Atlantis. Atlantis was a mythical city, founded by the god Poseidon, which became wealthy and powerful throughout the Mediterranean until a failed attempt to invade Athens, after which it sank into the sea. Plato describes this ancient Athenian rival with a reverence appropriate to its founder, Athena's

---

1 Aristotle, quoted in Helen Gardner, *Gardner's Art through the Ages* (London: Harcourt College, 2004), 126-32: "The [acropolis] should be a spot seen far and wide, which gives good elevation to virtue and towers over the neighborhood."  
2 T. R. B. Dicks, "Piraeus – The Port of Athens," *The Town Planning Review* 39.2 (1968): 145.  
3 *Ibid.*

ancient rival Poseidon, and through his descriptions can be gleaned the ideals Athenians may have held regarding urban planning during the early fifth and late fourth centuries.

Plato begins his description with the central city, albeit highly developed in its own right:

Poseidon, [...] to make the hill whereon she dwelt impregnable he broke it off all round about; and he made circular belts of sea and land enclosing one another alternately, some greater, some smaller, two being of land and three of sea, which he carved as it were out of the midst of the island; and these belts were at even distances on all sides, so as to be impassable for man...<sup>4</sup>

Atlantis's concentric rings mimic the concentric development of the traditional acropolis/asty city complex. The royal family of Atlantis, after several generations, took the design further.

First of all they bridged over the circles of sea which surrounded the ancient metropolis, making thereby a road towards and from the royal palace. [...] For, beginning at the sea, they bored a channel right through to the outermost circle, which was three plethra in breadth, one hundred feet in depth, and fifty stades in length; and thus they made the entrance to it from the sea like that to a harbor by opening out a mouth large enough for the greatest ships to sail through. Moreover, through the circles of land, which divided those of sea, over against the bridges they opened out a channel leading from circle to circle, large enough to give passage to a single trireme; and this they roofed over above so that the sea-way was subterranean; for the lips of the land circles were raised a sufficient height above the level of the sea.<sup>5</sup>

Through the building of roads and digging of canals through the rings from the periphery to the center, the land of Atlantis becomes a fully-developed complex, recognizable to modern sensibilities as a radial city, that is, one in which the main paths radiate outwards from the center, in spokes and concentric rings.

How did Athens in the fifth century stack up to this ideal? Fairly well, as luck (and Plato's heritage) would have it. Athens entered the century as a relatively legible centralized city. The Acropolis of Athens towered over the asty, casting shadows at twilight into the agora. The various sections of the asty were well defined; districts for ceramic works (the *kerameikos*) and state affairs were set off from the rest. The agora itself was incredibly accessible (especially, as will be discussed, compared to the Hippodamean agora), and can be understood as an immense widening of the main street leading through the asty up to the agora.

After the Persian War, Athens became more of a recognizably radial city. Themistocles' Long Walls provided a circular barrier around Athens proper, out of which the major roads of Attica, like spokes in a wheel, passed. Two of these are particularly germane to the line of questioning performed herein: The Piraeus Road, which was defined by the portion of the Long Walls connecting Athens proper to the Piraeus; and the Panathenaic Way, which led from the *kerameikos* through the agora and up to the Parthenon on the Acropolis.

---

4 Plato, *Critias*, *Plato in Twelve Volumes*, trans. W. R. M. Lamb (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1925), 113d

5 Plato, *Critias*, 115c-115e

### *The Panathenaic Procession*

The Panathenaia was a civic and religious holiday which, at its beginning, centered on a ritual presentation of a new dress, once a year, to the goddess Athena. As Athens grew in prosperity, so grew the size of the dress and of the statue upon which it was placed. H. W. Parke explains, “Athena as a goddess was entitled to have a new dress periodically, and her annual festival was the appropriate occasion for it to be presented to her. Such a presentation also required a suitable procession which would bring the dress to the goddess. [...] when the size of Athena's statue became colossal, her robe was proportionately enlarged.”<sup>6</sup> Parke also notes what he considers to be a curiously un-Athenian quirk of the procession: a ship-like cart was used in the late fifth century to convey the massive robe, or *peplos*, to the acropolis. “...By the late fifth century at least the offering was made of such colossal size that it was as big as a ship's sail. To convey it to the Acropolis it was fixed on a model of a ship mounted on wheels, where it was rigged to the yard-arm of a mast in the center.”<sup>7</sup> While Athena has herself little to do with the sea and indeed in myth contests with Poseidon for the patronage of Athens,<sup>8</sup> Parke notes that this device arose at an opportune time. “Also at the same period the power and glory of Athens was based so clearly on its fleet that the introduction of a ship in the procession must have seemed peculiarly appropriate.”<sup>9</sup> Determining the timing of this device then becomes pivotal to understanding the relationship of the sea, and thus the Piraeus, to Athenian religious identity.

Interpretations of the eastern face of the Parthenon frieze are almost always controversial, but there is one superset of interpretations that is more widely published than others: that the Parthenon itself depicts this procession,<sup>10</sup> or a version of it,<sup>11</sup> or a series of snapshots of it,<sup>12</sup> on its frieze, and has been used as historical evidence for matters pertaining to the procession.<sup>13</sup> Parke notes that the frieze does not include the ship device, and that the size of the *peplos* is human-scaled, but cannot conclude that this fact alone can be used to date the introduction of either, citing “aesthetic reasons” for showing the dress “as it used to be handled.”<sup>14</sup> Jenifer Neils adds that this vessel was not referenced before the end of the fifth-century, at which point the Piraeus was at the height of its power, and never ascended the acropolis with the rest of the *peplos*' handlers.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the question of the metaphorical boat and its place in the procession is neatly answered.

Whether the device of the ship model as a relay for the sacred *peplos* was introduced after the Parthenon was finished, or at the end of the fifth century, the inspiration for its introduction is clear: the waxing influence that the rise of the Piraeus in international business was having on the city and people of Athens. This influence was a two-way street, as can be seen in the rise in prominence of Athens' regional festival.

---

6 H. W. Parke, *Festivals of the Athenians* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), 33.

7 *Ibid.*, 39.

8 Noel Robertson, “Athena's Shrines and Festivals,” in *Worshipping Athena*, ed. Jenifer Neils (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996), 42.

9 Parke, *Festivals*, 39.

10 Jenifer Neils, *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 25.

11 Parke, *Festivals*, 38.

12 Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 23.

13 Jenifer Neils, *The Parthenon Frieze* (Cambridge: The Cambridge University Press, 2001), 49.

14 Parke, *Festivals*, 41.

15 Neils, *Frieze*, 174.

### *The Panathenaic Prizes*

The rise of Athens in the public eye of the average Hellene, the rising popularity of the Panathenaia among foreigners to Attica, and the inflating value of the prizes awarded as part of the Panathenaic Games, are all inextricably linked. The prizes were not, as in the Olympic or Pythian games (for example), mere garlands. Olive oil was the reward, made from Attica's sacred olive trees; a special clay jar, the Panathenaic amphora, was designed to contain and present the prize.<sup>16</sup> For the singers and musical competitors, no oil was given in victory, but silver coin, along with gilt olive branches from wild trees, were instead awarded.<sup>17</sup> The crowns were a specialized prize, which the performers would be able to wear in subsequent performances throughout their career.<sup>18</sup> The Panathenaic amphoras were awarded as prizes to both men and boys who placed first and second in non-musical competitions. The boys were awarded 40 jars to the victors and 8 to the second, save in the *stadion* running competition, where the prizes were 60 and 12 respectively.<sup>19</sup> The awards for adult male competitors doubled that of boys, for example in the *stadion*, where the victor was awarded 120 jars.<sup>20</sup> Horse-related events were only open to men (and, in practice, to the *aristoi*), and included group events; 140 jars of olive oil were awarded to the men's winner of the two-horse chariot race.<sup>21</sup>

All of this attests to the use of olive oil as a cash crop for the Athenian aristocracy in the fifth century, and therefore an interdependence on, and division of labor among, the rest of the Athenian Empire if not the greater Hellenic world. Pericles boasts in his funeral oration: “[...] the fruits of the whole earth flow in upon us; so that we enjoy the goods of other countries as freely as our own.”<sup>22</sup> Pericles' greatest critic, Old Oligarch, confirms: “Whatever the delicacy in Sicily, Italy, Cyprus, Egypt, Lydia, Pontus, the Peloponnese – all these have been brought together into one place by virtue of naval power.”<sup>23</sup> Not only luxuries, but staple crops were imported, often at great expense to Athenian stability. Robert Garland, in his study of the Piraeus, notes that Athens “was dependent upon essential imports, principally corn, timber and slaves, as well as iron, tin and copper.”<sup>24</sup> He notes further that the dependence on imported corn, specifically, began in the middle of the fifth century,<sup>25</sup> after Themistocles' walling-in of Athens and the Piraeus had been completed. It is clear that this decision enabled – or forced – Athens to specialize in pottery and olive oil, and to export these as it imported the majority of its necessities, with the trade imbalance propped up by, as the Old Oligarch put it, “naval power.”

The olive oil for the prizes came from private estates, and Aristotle describes the process of such taxation:

The olive oil is gathered from the sacred olive trees. It is levied by the archon from the owners of the farms on which the sacred olive trees stand, three *hemikotylia* [about 12 oz., or 350 mL] from each plant [...] Having accordingly gathered the oil accruing in his year, the archon hands it over to the *tamiai* for the Acropolis, and the archon is not

---

16 Parke, *Festivals*, 34.

17 *Ibid.*, 35.

18 *Ibid.*

19 *Ibid.*, 36.

20 Donald G. Kyle, “Gifts and Glory,” in *Worshipping Athena*, 118.

21 H. A. Shapiro, “Democracy and Imperialism: The Panathenaia in the Age of Perikles,” in *Worshipping Athena*, 217.

22 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, trans. Richard Crawley (New York: Dutton, 1910), 2.38.2

23 Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*, *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*, trans. E. C. Marchant (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1984), 2.7

24 Robert Garland, *The Piraeus* (Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2001), 89.

25 *Ibid.*

permitted to go up to the Aeropagus until he hands over all the oil to the *tamiai*.<sup>26</sup>

To maintain production, an *ariston* would have had to plant more trees, or to convert more olives into oil. In addition, it is possible that the cutting of branches for garlands could have impacted production further.

However, this taxation reaped great benefits for the Athenian state, as well as the reputation of Athenian products. The vases of oil were intended by the Athenian state to be awarded to visiting competitors from other city-states within the Hellenic world. Kyle explains that the rhetoric surrounding Athenian generosity, used in Pericles' funeral oration, is just that: rhetoric. Athenian gift-giving was still guided by aristocratic notions of obligation, and Athens gave gifts lavishly in order to build reputation, competing with stronger rivals to earn honor among weaker states.<sup>27</sup> In addition, some Panathenaic amphoras may have been produced solely for export, and did not see use in the prize ceremonies.<sup>28</sup>

Whether by prize or by purchase, these vases were meant to move. They were designed, down to the smallest letter, to represent Athens abroad. Richard Hamilton notes that the inscription on 'canon' Panathenaic amphoras translates to "one of the prizes from Athens," strongly implying that they were meant to be read outside the city, and possibly even outside Attica.<sup>29</sup> Kyle finds amphoras in places as far off as Cyrene and South Russia.<sup>30</sup> The amphoras not only embodied two of Athens' most essential industries, the olive and the ceramic, but also packaged together loads of symbolism surrounding Athena and the games played in her honor.<sup>31</sup> Kyle analyzes one particular amphora, and concludes:

These vases compound several aspects of Athena: the sacred oil recalls her contest against Poseidon; the vase recalls Athena as a goddess of crafts (Ergane); her warlike appearance shows her as a protectress (Pallas or Promachos); the columns may refer to some temple; the cocks may suggest Athena as a bird goddess; the inscription suggests Athena Polias; and the athletic scenes recall Athena as Nike or Hippias. Indeed, could there be a more effective combination of images to glorify the goddess of the polis and its games?<sup>32</sup>

And so we can see that the Panathenaic amphoras, with their material value, their representation of quintessentially Athenian industries, and their iconography, would have made excellent tools of propaganda, and in fact did so.

The success of Athenian propaganda rested on the success of the Panathenaia, which in turn was dependent on Athens' position as a naval power and as a trading center. The Piraeus in the fifth century was not only the port through which passed the vast majority of the artifacts and boasts of Athenian generosity, democracy, and might, it was also the source of Athens' power and position in the later part of the fifth century.

---

26 Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*, 60.2-3, quoted in Michalis Tiverios, "Shield Devices and Column-Mounted Statues on Panathenaic Amphoras," in *Worshipping Athena*, 167.

27 Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 118.

28 Richard Hamilton, "Panathenaic Amphoras: The Other Side," in *Worshipping Athena*, 138.

29 *Ibid.*, 137.

30 Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 122.

31 *Ibid.*

32 Kyle, "Gifts and Glory," 118.

### *The Piraeus and the Empire*

This section will function as an exploration of how this came to be, of how the Piraeus became central to Athenian propaganda, as well as its effect on civic identity. It will then look at the contributions of Hippodamus of Miletus on the form and organization of the port city, and how these added to the extant effects the Piraeus was already having on Athens in the fifth century.

Two great leaders emerged in the fifth century who changed the fate of the Piraeus forever. Themistocles, a politician during the latter years of the Persian War and an archon, fortified the Piraeus, making it not only a strategic strong point but also a military asset. Hippodamus, a city planner who rose to prominence in the years between the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars, turned the Piraeus from a naval center to a commercial and social capital.

Themistocles and Hippodamus worked together, separated by mere decades, to build up the Piraeus; the first as a naval factory, and the second as a livable city. Themistocles' preparations affected the character of Athenian democracy, while Hippodamus' alterations affected the character of Athens' empire.

The first Athenian to properly place the importance of the Piraeus to Athens was the archon Themistocles, and although the idea was not his alone, the inspiration certainly was.<sup>33</sup> The earliest archaeological evidence we have of Athenian development of the Piraeus is that of a naval port, and later of the fortifications which were to become the famous Long Walls. Thucydides attributes these developments to Themistocles.

Themistocles likewise persuaded them to build up the rest of Piraeus, for it was begun in the year that himself was archon of Athens, as conceiving the place both beautiful, in that it had three natural havens, and that being now seamen, it would very much conduce to the enlargement of their power. For he was indeed the first man that dared tell them that they ought to take upon them the command of the sea, and withal presently helped them in the obtaining it. By his counsel also it was that they built the wall of that breadth about Piraeus which is now to be seen. [...] For principally he was addicted to the sea because, as I think, he had observed that the forces of the king had easier access to invade them by sea than by land, and thought that Piraeus was more profitable than the city above.<sup>34</sup>

Themistocles was archon in 493. However, these preparations dragged on for many years, and in 482 when the decision was made (proposed by Themistocles) to build 200 ships for defense against the Persians, the Piraeus shipyards were not ready, and most of the ships were built at the old port of Phaleron.<sup>35</sup> The first great project for which the Piraeus harbor was used was the evacuation of Attica to Troizen, Aegina, and Salamis ahead of the invading Persians, which Garland describes as “surely the largest naval exercise ever to be mounted from the Piraeus.” While the Attic people were saved, and eventually successful against the Persian armies, Athens itself was sacked; this first tragedy was, thankfully, not indicative of future fortunes.

Originally, in 458-7, the defensive Long Walls linking the city of Athens to its coastal demes cradled both the Piraeus (the Northern Wall) and the old Phaleron Bay (the Phaleric Wall).<sup>36</sup> However, with the Phaleron falling into disuse, extra fortifications were required which focused more on the

---

33 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 15.

34 Thucydides, *The Peloponnesian War*, 1.93 3-5, 7

35 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 20.

36 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 24.

Piraeus. Nearly ten years later, just after the signing of the Thirty Years' Peace between Sparta and Athens, a Middle Wall parallel to the Northern Wall was constructed (see Figure 1).<sup>37</sup> This acted as a complement to the Northern Wall, and changed the shape of the protected region entirely. Where before it was a wedge, the space protected was now a corridor. The implications of defense were altered as well. The fertile farmland just north of the Phaleron was no longer prioritized; instead communication was privileged between the walled asty of Athens and the walled port of the Piraeus.<sup>38</sup>

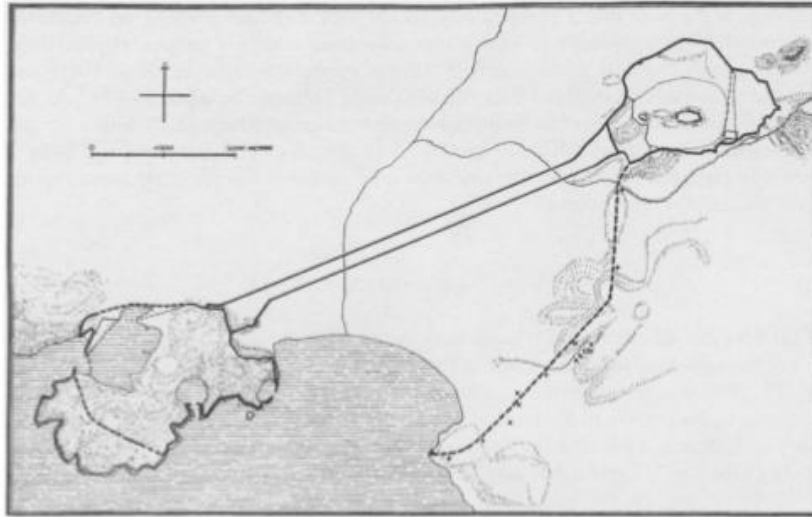


Figure 1. The Long Walls connecting the Piraeus to Athens.  
Source: Gill, "Hippodamus and the Piraeus," figure 2.

This led to a focus, in Attica, away from the hills of olive trees and horses, and towards the seas and ships. And, as the triremes, which were so prized by the Athenian state, required masses of well-coordinated men to work them, this shift in geographical focus shifted the politics of Athens towards a more radical democracy. Shapiro writes that these rowers were taken from the lowest designated class of citizens, the *thetes*, who soon recognized a shift in the balance of power as they became "indispensable" to the Athenian Empire; these rowers not only exercised their new-found strength in the assembly, leading to a greater political democracy, but also pushed the old guard to redistribute the rewards of imperialist policies to the masses, in spectacles of greater social democracy.<sup>39</sup>

This simultaneous radicalization of both democracy and imperialism was peculiar to Athens among the Mediterranean states, and remains so in the West. The old oligarchy, and indeed the Old Oligarch himself, noted well the connection between the two,<sup>40</sup> as the benefits to the lower-class citizens from both the building up of the empire and the democratization of domestic politics came at the expense of the *aristoi*: "At least the *demos* think themselves worthy of taking money for singing, running, dancing, and sailing in ships, so that they become wealthy and the wealthy poorer."<sup>41</sup> From at least as early as this point, anti-imperialism became a rallying cry for the Athenian landed aristocracy.

37 *Ibid.*, 25.

38 *Ibid.*

39 Shapiro, "Democracy and Imperialism," 217.

40 *Ibid.*

41 Pseudo-Xenophon, *Constitution of the Athenians*, 1.13

### *Planning the Piraeus*

In the early 440s, around 15 years after the completion of Themistocles' Long Walls, the Age of Pericles hit the Piraeus.<sup>42</sup> It's unclear how Hippodamus earned his credentials for access into Pericles' circle and, subsequently, into his most influential position as a member of the land distribution commission charged with the layout of the port *deme*. It's possible,<sup>43</sup> though unlikely given the length his career would have to be,<sup>44</sup> that Hippodamus participated in the rebuilding of his hometown of Miletus.<sup>45</sup> More likely, Alfred Burns argues, that Hippodamus learned aesthetics and planning by osmosis, from growing up during and after the reconstruction of Miletus: "even if one is to grant that Hippodamus derived his inspirations from the new Miletus, one does not have to imply his participation or even presence at the building stage. A city is a permanent monument to its plan."<sup>46</sup> This would have given him the impetus for political writings on urban forms, which Aristotle apparently summarizes but which are lost to us, which ultimately led to his appointment by Pericles.<sup>47</sup>

What exactly were these theories? Aristotle's summary is perhaps the handiest written evidence:

Hippodamus [...] invented the division of cities into blocks [...] His system was for a city with a population of ten thousand, divided into three classes; for he made one class of artisans, one of farmers, and the third the class that fought for the state in war and was the armed class. He divided the land into three parts, one sacred, one public and one private: sacred land to supply the customary offerings to the gods, common land to provide the warrior class with food, and private land to be owned by the farmers.<sup>48</sup>

Hippodamus proposed rational, proportionate divisions of land among the general classes and uses he identified. The parallelogram-block had seen use before, in cities in India and Asia Minor (and, of course, in Miletus),<sup>49</sup> but Hippodamus proposed a further division, a parceling off of multiple blocks into a small number of para-divisions for an "overall functional plan."<sup>50</sup>

### *Cutting up the City*

Hippodamus' planning strategies developed into a principled system over the years he was active as a city planner. Paden outlines several principles central to Hippodamean civic planning. Hippodamean city planning was long-term, comprehensive, and modular in a way that allowed for easy and orderly growth. Zoning and the grid was the key to these three points. The acropolis was de-emphasized in favor of the agora (as seen in Figure 2), and the public buildings of the agora were dispersed throughout the city in a way which left the overall grid intact.<sup>51</sup>

---

42 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 27.

43 However, architects are noted for their long careers. Frank Lloyd Wright and Oscar Niemeyer both lived past the age of 90, and were working on commissions up to the day of their deaths.

44 A. von Gerkan, *Griechische Städteanlagen* (Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1924), 49. Von Gerkan makes a geopolitical argument against Rhodes as a final cap of Hippodamus' career, shortening its length and making a Milesian "internship" possible.

45 David W. J. Gill, "Hippodamus and the Piraeus," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 55.1 (2006): 3-4.

46 Alfred Burns, "Hippodamus and the Planned City," *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 25.4 (1976): 424.

47 *Ibid.*

48 Aristotle, *Politics, Aristotle in 23 Volumes*, trans. H. Rackham (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), 2.1267b

49 Roger Paden, "The Two Professions of Hippodamus of Miletus," *Philosophy & Geography* 4.1 (2001): 27.

50 Burns, "Planned City," 417.

51 Paden, "Two Professions," 33-34.



Figure 2. Plan of central Piraeus. Source: Gill, “Hippodamus and the Piraeus,” figure 1.

The earliest physical evidence for the planning of the Piraeus by Hippodamus and his committee are the boundary stones, known as *horoi*, used for marking off general large areas of use in prospective Greek cities. Dorothy Kent Hill, in 1932, increased the number of known boundary stones related to the Piraeus by half, from 12 to 18<sup>52</sup> and analyzed their findings. From these 18 boundary stones, and the writings of ancient historians such as Pausanias, Hill gives us a rather detailed overview of the Piraeus (drawn later in Figure 3). Two large, irregular spaces on opposite coasts are given to harbors: the northwest port, called Cantharos, a commercial harbor; and the southern port, called Zea, a military quarter with nearly 200 shipyards. Between these lay the public areas: the Hippodameian agora (commonly called the Hippodameia), with a gate into the north area of the Zea; and the emporion, a market space, connected to the Cantharos. All other relatively flat areas of the peninsula were divided into regular blocks; the hills of Mounychia, to the southeast of the Hippodameia, and of Akte, at the west point of the peninsula, were left unplanned and undivided.<sup>53</sup> The Mounychia was an important site as well, being from the seventh century the site of the temple of Artemis Mounychia, and in the late fifth and early fourth centuries the vantage point from which Athenians could watch the boat races as part of the Great Panathenaia.<sup>54</sup>

52 Dorothy Kent Hill, “Some Boundary Stones from the Piraeus,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 36.3 (1932), 254.

53 Dorothy Kent Hill, “Boundary Stones,” 257.

54 Parke, *Festivals*, 35.

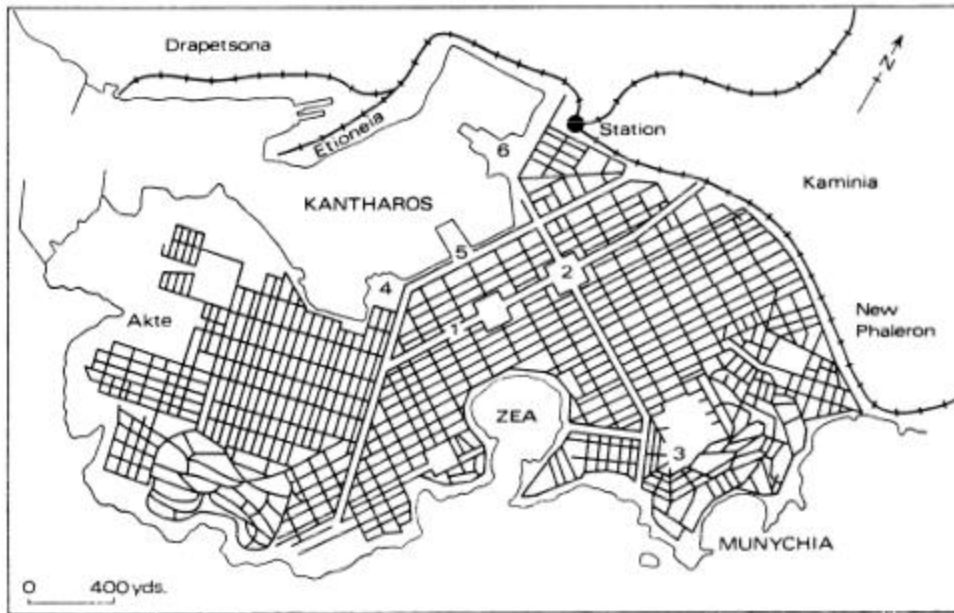


Figure 3. Street patterns in the Piraeus. Source: Dicks, "Piraeus: The Port of Athens," figure 3.

In other words, the composition of the Piraeus was not merely a grid, but a composite spatial organization;<sup>55</sup> a simple web, with the grid punctuated by two or three major centers. This decentralization, and diminishing of focus placed on not only the central agora of a typical *asty*, but also the acropolis (which was moved out to the two hills), was purposeful; the plan of the Piraeus was both less hierarchical and less centralized than Athens proper, embedding a more grassroots democracy into the bedrock of the city itself.

#### *Foreign Integration into the Piraeus*

The decentralization of public and sacred spaces, as well as the lack of major pathways and arteries, decreased the likelihood of any major processions (although the road from the Hippodameia to the Mounychia remained important), but also increased the amount and rate of traffic which could flow throughout the city without danger of congestion. In addition, the division of public spaces by types of use (as opposed to types of users) all but ensured the inevitability of citizen-metic contact on a daily basis; the emporion was for trade, not for foreign traders, and the Hippodameia was for social and political gatherings, not for citizens. Even the naval dock, the Zea, was not barred to foreigners, as foreign craftsmen were required to assist Piraeians in shipbuilding efforts during the Persian War.<sup>56</sup>

This close contact required that the Piraeus, if not Athens, adopt a policy of religious and ethnic tolerance. The population of Attica as a whole in the latter half of the fifth century has been estimated at around 150,000, of which 40,000 were citizens. A further 20,000 people were resident aliens, or *metics*, who primarily lived in the Piraeus; the Piraeus itself was made up mostly of metics.<sup>57</sup> Foreign residents had it easier in Athens than in any other Greek city at this time, and Athens was repaid with a steady stream of staple foods and necessities and a "great contribution" to Athens' reputation in the

55 Francis D. K. Ching, *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2007), 265.

56 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 61.

57 Dicks, "Port," 146.

Hellenic world.

The reasons why Athens not only tolerated but celebrated metics in the Piraeus, and the extent of such accommodations, have been a matter of some scholarship. Athens' outreach to the Mediterranean world through the state adoption and sponsorship of metic cults seems to have been done for much the same reasons as its outreach through the Panathenaic games.<sup>58</sup> Garland lists 30 cults active in the Piraeus during the classical period, of which 17 he identifies as foreign.<sup>59</sup> Von Reden, on the other hand, analyzes this list and finds that only two cults listed fit Garland's own criteria;<sup>60</sup> only one fits ours.

In fact, two extra-Athenian cults were publicly active in the Piraeus during the time in question here. Only one of these was unequivocally foreign: the Thracian cult of the goddess Bendis.

However, it is no coincidence or accident that the cult of Bendis was the first foreign religious group so honored. Athens and Thrace had a long-standing alliance, due to the large amounts of timber and foot-soldiers King Sitalces was able to field, and it is likely that the worship of Bendis was sanctioned more to strengthen this relationship between the two governments than to accommodate Thracian residents.<sup>61</sup> The Thracian cult was formally established among Piraeian citizens in a decree which has been dated as early as 432, and by 429 at the latest the cult of Bendis was fully extant and paying taxes into the Athenian treasury.<sup>62</sup> This coincided with the commencement of the Peloponnesian War, and the effects on Athenian religious practice were to last until its end.

While both Piraeians and Thracians worshiped the goddess Bendis, they either did so at different temples,<sup>63</sup> or on different days,<sup>64</sup> or both. Even if they worshiped at opposite ends of the peninsula, as argued by von Reden, it would not necessarily be an instance of coldness, or a token show of support, towards the Thracian metics; the Hippodamean scheme required the decentralization of the acropolis, and it's possible that this was one logical outcome. Further proving the integration of the Bendis cult into Athenian society is the establishment of a second cult center, for Thracians only, in the Athenian asty.<sup>65</sup>

A third argument for the tight integration of Bendis into the Athenian religious establishment is particularly extraordinary. The festival of Bendis, or Bendideia, shared many similarities with the Panathenaia, and differs in ways which show just how deeply the Thracians were appreciated in the Piraeus. In both festivals, two processions were involved; one of foreigners and one of Athenians, and the main game was a torch race, where the torch was relayed on horseback. In the Bendideia Thracians made up one procession, unlike the Panathenaia in which metics of all origins came together as one auxiliary contingent.<sup>66</sup>

Most notable was the sacrifice involved in the Bendideia, which grew over time. Garland examines records of yearly sales of animal hides in the fourth century, and concludes that a hecatomb must have been carried out in 334.<sup>67</sup> A hecatomb, a sacrifice of 100 victims, was rarely carried out in ancient Greece, and in Athenian tradition occurred only at the commencement of the Great Panathenaia every four years.<sup>68</sup> That a sacrifice to a foreign goddess would rival in extravagance the sacrifices to

---

58 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 109.

59 *Ibid.*, 109, 112-138.

60 Sitta von Reden, "The Piraeus – A World Apart," *Greece & Rome* 42.1 (1995): 31.

61 *Ibid.*, 31-32.

62 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 118-19.

63 Von Reden, "A World Apart," 32.

64 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 119.

65 *Ibid.*

66 *Ibid.*, 120.

67 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 120.

68 H. W. Parke's survey of Athenian holy celebrations, *Festivals of the Athenians*, only mentions a hecatomb in relation to

Athens' patron goddess is certainly indicative of the cult of Bendis' popularity among Piraeians, even in the years leading up to this instance, and likely even in the late fifth century. It is certainly eye-widening to us today, and the relative popularity of Bendis and Athena among the Piraeians may have given classical Athenians some pause, even in the tense days of the Peloponnesian war.

This development would have never taken place had the dreams of Themistocles and Hippodamus not come to fruition. The rise of Bendis in the Piraeus was facilitated not only by the centrality of the Piraeus as an international commercial port, but by the tight physical integration of metics and citizens, both in private dwellings and in public spaces. This would have been impossible had spaces been segregated by user types, an effect easier to establish in a radial city like Athens than in the block plan for which the Piraeus was famous.

### *Movement through the Piraeus*

The ease and extent of foreign integration into Athens would have been equally impossible if the land allocators behind the Piraeus had not clearly made movement and traffic a top priority in their considerations for the port city. The points of interest in the Piraeus, and how they related to each other spatially, have been surveyed. Another notable spatial aspect of the Piraeus, praised by Aristotle, was its streets.

Aristotle analyzes the Piraeus' street organization and finds that:

The arrangement of the private dwellings is thought to be more agreeable and more convenient for general purposes if they are laid out in straight streets, after the modern fashion, that is, the one introduced by Hippodamus; but it is more suitable for security in war if it is on the contrary plan, as cities used to be in ancient times; for that arrangement is difficult for foreign troops to enter and to find their way about in when attacking.<sup>69</sup>

In other words, its weakness and its strength are that movement throughout the city between key points of interest is very easily accomplished. From a contemporary point of view, this would be counter-intuitive; would not the traditional city's acropolis, in Athens a literal beacon on a hill, be easier to identify and to capture? Aristotle answers this in the same passage by asserting that, in warfare, topology is of the highest importance. The height of the traditional acropolis makes it harder for invading armored ground troops to capture, and easier for domestic soldiers to defend. By contrast, the flatness of the Piraeus makes capture of the agora a theoretical certainty, despite a clear hierarchy of paths within the city.

It was this ease of movement which made the city livable for fifth-century residents. The multiplicity of streets countered the lack of major roads, making processions through the city possible. This is seen in the Bendideia, which used the pathway created by the Long Walls as a parade route,<sup>70</sup> but even earlier with the incorporation of maritime sports into the Panathenaia.

The Panathenaic boat race took place on the penultimate day of the festival, a day after the procession to the acropolis and a day before the awarding of prizes.<sup>71</sup> Details on the regatta itself are

---

the eponymous festival of the month of Hecatombaion, held in honor of Athena, which came to be associated with the Panathenaia.

69 Aristotle, *Politics*, 6.1330.

70 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 121.

71 Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 15.

scarce, but it is commonly<sup>72</sup> suggested<sup>73</sup> that the racers sailed from the Zea to the much-smaller Mounychia Port, around the hill of Mounychia, upon which spectators would gather to watch.

### *Piraeian Processions and the Panathenaia*

There are no references to a procession, ceremonial or informal, from Athens to Mounychia, but to suggest such a practice as part of the Panathenaia, in light of the processions in honor of both Athena and Bendis, would not be out of place. Indeed, we can imagine Athenians filing *en masse* between the Long Walls, down to the Piraeus. The group would either continue to file down one street into the Hippodameia, thus lengthening the procession, or split into two or more groups. From there the Athenian spectators would proceed up the hill to the east, and begin to watch the scenes unfolding off the coast below.

Evidence of the effects of Hippodamus' and Themistocles' Piraeus on the symbolism of the Panathenaia has been seen, but now questions about formal effects can be asked. If there was a formal procession to the Piraeus, did the form it took, filing or splitting, have an effect on the form of the main Panathenaic procession to deliver the *peplos*?

To answer these questions, changes in the Panathenaic procession changed over the fifth century must be identified and examined. It has been established that the *peplos* and the ship-device carrying it was a relatively recent introduction at this point. It is known that freed slaves and non-Greeks were allowed to participate in the procession, carrying oak branches, and that members of Athens' empire were required to pay into the festivities in the form of armor and animals for slaughter.<sup>74</sup> It is also known from Aristophanes that young women also played a major role, several major roles in fact, and that one woman could take part in multiple capacities over the course of several processions during her youth.<sup>75</sup> So, the mass of people winding towards the acropolis from the agora down the Panathenaic Way represented a greater amount of people than 'just' the citizens of Athens during the Age of Pericles, and likely filled the street.

The massive increase in trade through Athens allowed a population boom beyond what Attica alone could have ever supported,<sup>76</sup> and in the Age of Pericles it has been estimated that Attica had a total population of up to 150,000 free people (including 40,000 adult male citizens), 100,000 slaves, and 20,000 metics.<sup>77</sup> In the Panathenaic procession, a representative slice of these, in ever-greater numbers, would all be filing down the same Panathenaic Way. This is the change the Panathenaia experienced during the time of the Piraeus' ascendancy in Athenian politics.

If a Piraeian procession took a different form, it is likely to have been reflected in some way in the Panathenaic procession, due to the Piraeus' overwhelming influence on Athens' religious and social life in the fifth century. However, whether a Piraeian procession existed, and whether it took a different form from the Panathenaic procession, has yet to be determined by extant evidence at this point.

### *Conclusions*

It is now helpful to provide a general timeline of the events discussed herein. After the Piraeus was fortified by the Long Walls (begun c. 445)<sup>78</sup>, it began to receive more and more attention from the

---

72 *Ibid.*, 97.

73 Parke, *Festivals*, 37.

74 Neils, *Goddess and Polis*, 23.

75 Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*, trans. Jack Lindsay (London: Franfolico Press, 1925), 641-647.

76 Dicks, "Port," 142.

77 *Ibid.*, 146.

78 Garland, *The Piraeus*, 25.

main Athenian polis. It was then rebuilt by Hippodamus (c. 445-430)<sup>79</sup>, and became a thriving center of trade for the Aegean Sea. More and more foreigners became permanent residents of the Piraeus, and the change in demographics brought a change in religious practices for the Athenians. At the same time, the Piraeus became a naval center as well, and the shift in military strategy from land to sea brought both more democratic reforms to the Athenian people and greater imperialist policies to their neighbors.

Without the Piraeus, the Athenian people in the fifth century could not have grown so numerous or so prosperous. Their civic pride would not have been so strong. Their boasts would not have echoed across the Hellenic world, nor would their empire, if it had even existed, have been made up of so many willing vassals and allies.

The Panathenaia would likely have remained a local festival. Its prizes would have been not nearly as impressive as they were, and the amphoras likely would not have been deemed worth copying by port potters, for sale abroad.

Themistocles made the Piraeus the port of Athens, surely, but it was Hippodamus who turned that port into a city in its own right: a living and thriving burg; a symbol of democracy and empire; and a second jewel in the Attic crown.

---

<sup>79</sup> Garland, *The Piraeus*, 27, 118-19. Garland states that the reconstruction of the Piraeus occurred over a period of 15 years; this time period would include the shipyards at Zea c. 445 (among the earliest Athenian projects in the Piraeus), as well as the Thracian temple to Bendis c. 432 (among the last improvements to the city).

## Bibliography

- Aristophanes. *Lysistrata*. Translated by Jack Lindsay. London: Franfolico Press, 1925.
- Aristotle. *Aristotle in 23 Volumes*. Translated by H. Rackham. Vol. 21. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1944.
- Burns, Alfred. "Hippodamus and the Planned City." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 25, no. 4 (1976): 414-428.
- Ching, Francis D. K. *Architecture: Form, Space, and Order*. Hoboken: Wiley, 2007.
- Dicks, T. R. B. "Piraeus – The Port of Athens." *The Town Planning Review* 39, no. 2 (1968): 140-148.
- Gardner, Helen, Fred S. Kleiner, and Christin J. Mamiya. *Gardner's Art through the Ages*. Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2005.
- Garland, Robert. *The Piraeus*. Bristol: Bristol Classical Press, 2001.
- Gill, David W. J. "Hippodamus and the Piraeus." *Historia: Zeitschrift für Alte Geschichte* 55, no. 1 (2006): 1-15.
- Hill, Dorothy Kent. "Some Boundary Stones from the Piraeus." *American Journal of Archaeology* 36, no. 3 (1932): 254-259.
- Leekley, Dorothy, and Robert Noyes. *Archaeological Excavations in Southern Greece*. Park Ridge: Noyes Press, 1976.
- Neils, Jenifer. *Goddess and Polis: The Panathenaic Festival in Ancient Athens*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.
- . *The Parthenon Frieze*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Neils, Jenifer, ed. *Worshipping Athena*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996.
- Paden, Roger. "The Two Professions of Hippodamus of Miletus." *Philosophy & Geography* 4, no. 1 (2001): 25-48.
- Parke, H. W. *Festivals of the Athenians*. New York City: Cornell University Press, 1977.
- Plato. *Plato in Twelve Volumes*. Translated by W. R. M. Lamb. Vol. 9. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1925.
- Pseudo-Xenophon. *Xenophon in Seven Volumes*. Translated by E. C. Marchant. Vol. 7. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984.

Thucydides. *The Peloponnesian War*. Translated by Richard Crawley. New York City, New York: E. P. Dutton, 1910.

von Gerkan, A. *Griechische Städteanlagen*. Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1924.

von Reden, Sitta. "The Piraeus – A World Apart." *Greece & Rome* 42, no. 1 (1995): 24-37.