

THE CITY CENTER OF ARCHAIC ATHENS

THREE STAGES CAN BE DISTINGUISHED in the history of Athens' physical development as a city-state.¹ The first two, perhaps corresponding roughly to the Dark Age and the Archaic period, are known from literature. Thucydides, in a familiar passage (2.15), says that the earliest settlement below the Akropolis was at the south and that the city was later enlarged (reputedly by Theseus) as the capital of Attika, with a single Bouleuterion and Prytaneion. The third stage begins with the new Agora at the northwest, as revealed by excavation.

The purpose here is to examine some leading features of the second stage, when the city center was another agora with peripheral offices and shrines (the respective spellings "agora" and "Agora" will serve to differentiate the earlier and later instances). These features are the old processional way to the Akropolis, the predecessor of the Panathenaic Way (§II); a monumental gateway to the last stretch (§III); the Theseion and the Anakeion, shrines associated with the city center (§IV); the Prytaneion (§V); and the agora square (§VI). First let us consider how the matter stands (§I).

I. THE DISCOVERY OF THE ARCHAIC CITY CENTER

It was clear almost from the start of excavation in 1931 that the Agora at the northwest emerged at a relatively late stage. The remains on the west side of the square, at once the earliest and the first to be excavated, do not antedate the 6th century B.C. The interpretation that long prevailed traced the beginnings of the Agora to Solon and substantial improvements to Peisistratos.² As often happens, the dating has been progressively lowered. T. Leslie Shear Jr. now concludes that the first public buildings are as late as ca. 500 B.C., the time of Kleisthenes and the nascent democracy.³ Furthermore, it is apparent that after the Persian Wars reconstruction proceeded with little regard for what had gone before; even the Panathenaic Way was shifted.⁴

It follows that the Archaic agora was used as such down to ca. 500, or even later, if the transfer of affairs was gradual. A place so bound up with public business and ceremony during Athens' formative period could not have been forgotten thereafter, no more than the early centers of London and Paris are forgotten. Pausanias makes it the starting point for one of the several promenades he marks out within the city (1.17.1).⁵ In the agora itself he records only a single monument, the celebrated Altar of Pity, but the promenade soon takes one to a public building that must have been closely associated with the activities of the agora, namely the Prytaneion, and before that to three notable shrines, those of Theseus, of the Anakes (or "Dioskouroi"), and of Aglauros (1.17.2–1.18.3).

The Prytaneion and the three shrines, though not the agora, are mentioned elsewhere as important landmarks. Furthermore, in [Aristotle]'s *Constitution of Athens* (3.5), the Prytaneion is

¹ I thank Loris Gasparotto for expertly producing the two plans published here (Figs. 1, 2).

² E.g., Travlos 1971, pp. 2, 158; *Agora* XIV, pp. 25–27, 48; Shear 1978, pp. 4, 8; Camp 1986, pp. 15, 38–40.

³ Shear 1994, pp. 228–245. Miller (1995, p. 202) concurs.

⁴ Shear 1993, pp. 405–406; Camp 1996, p. 233.

⁵ Pausanias' "agora" was formerly taken as the one at the northwest, recently, as the Roman Market. The reasons why it must be the Archaic agora are set forth below.

bracketed with three other buildings used by the archons in early days;⁶ the archons and their quarters likewise belong with the agora.⁷ Plutarch adds a place called Horkomasion “beside” the shrine of Theseus. This official-sounding site, “The Oath-taking,” surely had some official function before it was carried back in fancy to a treaty between Theseus and the Amazons.⁸

Where, then, do we look for the Archaic agora and the associated shrines and offices? Not so long ago this question was either dismissed as unknowable or answered with assurances that are now seen to be totally misguided: there was a determined preference for the ground west of the Akropolis and for the nearby slopes.⁹ Then in 1980 a decree commending a priestess of Aglauros, and destined for display in the shrine, was discovered in situ (Fig. 1).¹⁰ The shrine lies right below the Akropolis cliff on the east, where the rock is highest and steepest; the large cave in the cliff face above also belongs to Aglauros.

With this discovery, we can now visualize the capture of the Akropolis by the Persians, as related by Herodotos (8.52–53). Whereas the enemy first occupied the Areiopagos and assailed the west entrance, the easiest approach, the Athenian defense was finally turned by a few soldiers who scaled the cliff above Aglauros’ shrine, seemingly impregnable and therefore left unguarded.¹¹ In Herodotos’ words this was “in front of the Akropolis, but in back of the gates and the usual ascent.”¹² If the area at the east is the “front” of the Akropolis, we might expect it to overlook the city center. Plutarch’s phrase for the Prytaneion site is ὄπου νῦν ἴδρυται τὸ ἄστυ “where the town is now centered.” Somewhat similar is the recurring term “the middle of the city,” used now to locate the shrine of Theseus (Plutarch) and now the Altar of Pity (Staius), and also, on the projecting southeast corner of the Akropolis, the shrine of Erechtheus (Euripides).¹³ As inscribed on the Arch of Hadrian, which stands a little to the south of east of the Akropolis, “the city of Theseus” denotes the area between the arch and the Akropolis. The arch opens on an ancient avenue, now Lysikrates Street, leading straight toward the Akropolis cliff and the cave of Aglauros: a direct view of the “front” of the Akropolis (Fig. 1).¹⁴

I have argued before that the Archaic agora was directly east of the Akropolis,¹⁵ but this is not the prevailing view. The location is addressed in three recent studies, by Shear, Stephen G.

⁶ The Boukoleion, Epilykeion, and Thesmotheteion. Another building, probably from the lost beginning of [Aristotle]’s work, is the Basileion. For details, see Robertson 1986, pp. 160–163; 1992, pp. 80–81; 1993, pp. 215–216; 1997, pp. 119–120.

⁷ In the new Agora, the archons are lodged in the two stoas at the north end of the west side: Robertson 1984b; 1986, pp. 168–173.

⁸ Plutarch, *Thes.* 27.7, probably from Kleidemos, cited just before (*FGrHist* 323 F 18). See Robertson 1986, p. 165; Shear 1994, p. 244.

⁹ For a guarded statement of the west-side theory, see Wycherley 1966.

¹⁰ Dontas 1983; he immediately pointed to the chief consequences.

¹¹ Pausanias (1.18.2) echoes Herodotos while describing the shrine of Aglauros.

¹² Surprisingly, some find Herodotos’ account more problematic than ever. David Lewis (1984, pp. 607–608), while refusing to doubt “that Herodotos visited Athens,” believes at a minimum that he described the episode “without getting himself shown the ground.” Miller (1995, p. 236, note 83) replies to others, unnamed, who would deny or discount the new discovery. One objector, as quoted by Miller, says that this is not “the way we might choose to use the Greek language to locate the east end of the Akropolis.” But the question is how the Greeks used their language. Nowadays we identify any part of any site by the points of the compass. With the Akropolis, terms like “north slope” and “southwest bastion” are in common parlance. This is because the Akropolis is now a plan on a sheet of paper, and the four sides are the four compass points. Greek sources seldom say “east,” “west,” etc., to situate anything. When they do, they illustrate the difficulty. At Thermopylai, too, Herodotos (7.176.2–3) speaks of “front” and “back” but then gives compass directions, which show that he thought the road ran due south instead of due east. Thucydides at his most deliberate and precise (2.15.3) situates early Athens “south” of the Akropolis, when he should have said southeast, or even east-southeast. As a means of orienting ancient readers, the phrase “in front of the Akropolis” could not be bettered.

¹³ Plutarch, *Thes.* 24.3 (Prytaneion), 36.4 (Theseion); Staius, *Theb.* 12.481 (Altar of Pity); Euripides, *Erechtheus* fr. 65 Austin, line 90 (Erechtheion).

¹⁴ *IG II²* 5185. Travlos (1971, p. 254, fig. 325) shows the view.

¹⁵ Robertson 1984a, pp. 386, 392–393; 1986, pp. 157–168; 1992, pp. 43–58.

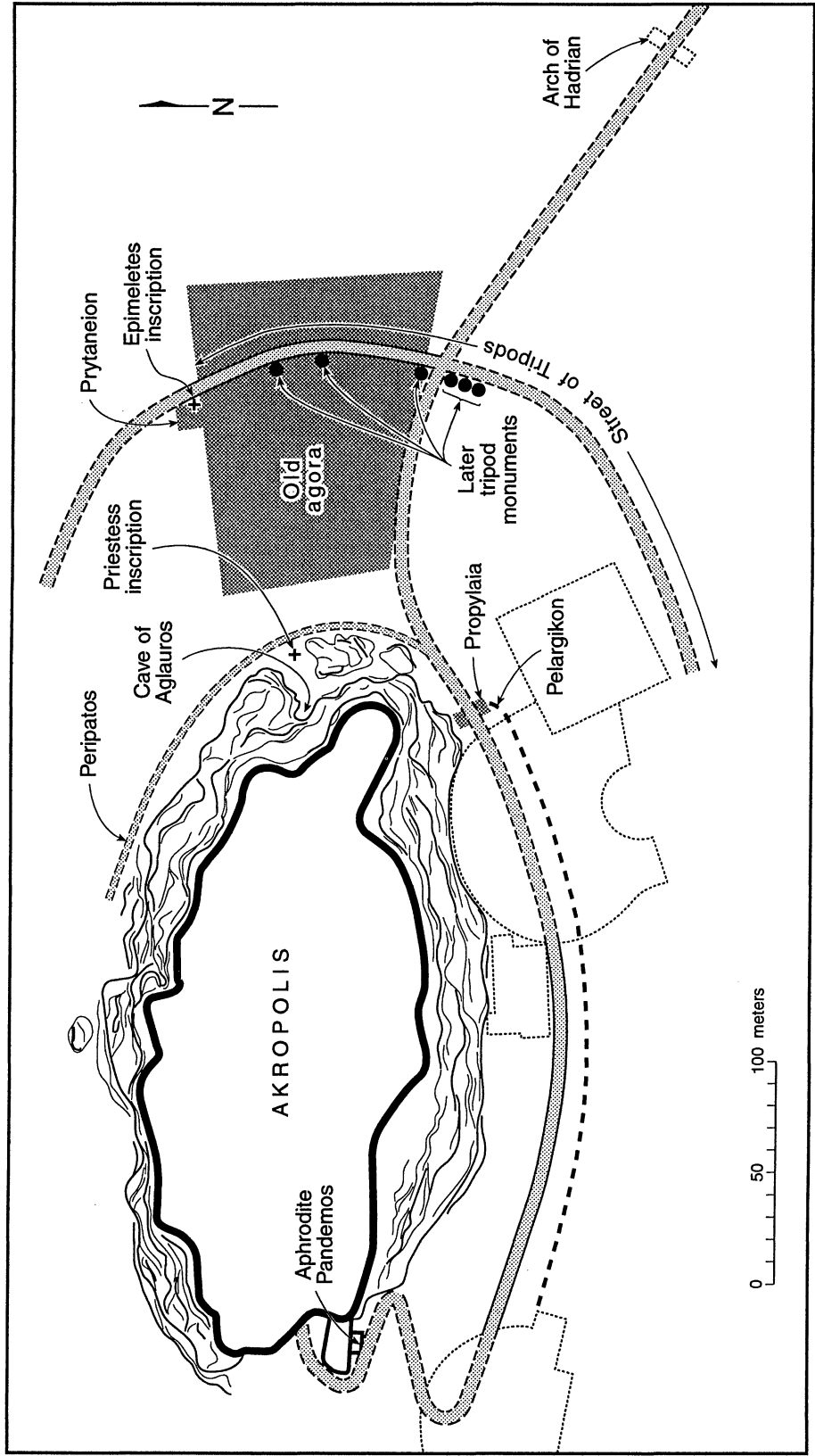


FIG. 1. The Archaic city center and the processional way to the Akropolis

Miller, and Christine Schnurr.¹⁶ Although none could take account of the others, all three agree in placing the agora north of the Akropolis, toward the eastern end but not beyond it, or not by much. This might seem conclusive. Yet let us weigh their arguments.

Miller, though not the others, starts from the conviction that Pausanias' "agora" is the Roman Market, a short way east of the Classical Agora.¹⁷ If this were right, the associated shrines and offices would be strung out from here to the shrine of Aglauros. Yet Pausanias cannot be so interpreted: his use of the word ἀγορά is always circumspect, and at Athens more than ever.¹⁸ He points to a square so called at forty-one cities that he visits (and at a few others that he does not) and mostly describes, as we might expect him to, shrines, statues, and tombs, and less commonly government offices.¹⁹ Each city, even the largest, has but one; at a few he notes approvingly that the agora is of the older style, that is, more irregular, with smaller stoas and with streets between them. Nowhere does he mention a market square, or market buildings or goods. Thus he omits much of what the word ἀγορά normally connotes; nor does he refer in any fashion to the many public squares and quarters that must have been devoted to crafts and commerce.

At Athens Pausanias uses the word only at 1.17.1–2, in the promenade that begins with the Altar of Pity. This is indeed the only monument that he assigns to the agora (by way of expatiating, he mentions other altars of ethical personifications out of topographic order), and he seems to say that both the Altar and any other remnants are nondescript, οὐκ ἐς ἅπαντας ἐπίσημα, "not easily distinguishable for everyone."²⁰ The Altar of Pity, being trumpeted in old legends (even if surviving sources are fairly late), belongs in some ancient setting: it belongs, in fact, in the Archaic agora, since Altar of Pity is a descriptive name for the indispensable altar of Zeus, protector of suppliants.²¹ The word "agora" then has a special antiquarian reference. It was presumably this usage that led Pausanias, like some other literary stylists, to adopt a lesser name, "Kerameikos," for the newer Agora (1.2.4, 3.1, 14.6, 20.6, 8.9.8).

The Roman Market, on the other hand, was a commercial area, and the colonnades and shops date only from the late 1st century B.C. It is not the sort of place that attracts Pausanias. Nor does it fit his topographic sequence. Miller's version in effect continues Pausanias' visit to the "Kerameikos." But if Pausanias had meant to proceed from the Agora at the northwest to the Roman Market at the north, he would have chosen other routes, or another sequence, in touring the former. As it is, the first Agora promenade ends at the Eleusinion and a place still farther east, the still unlocated temple of Eukleia, and so very close to the Roman Market. His second, shorter, promenade ends much farther off, at the Stoa Poikile.²² In the light of excavation we have come to recognize Pausanias' adroitness as a guide. He would not take us to the Roman Market by such a meandering course, especially when there was a fine decorative avenue leading directly to the Market from the southeast corner of the Agora.²³

¹⁶ Shear 1994, pp. 225–228, 245–246; Miller 1995; Schnurr 1995a; cf. Schnurr 1995b, pp. 140–141, 147–149. Kalligas (1994, p. 28) has a very different suggestion, that the Prytaneion is the building we usually call the Odeion of Perikles. This does not commend itself.

¹⁷ Miller 1995, p. 202, after Vanderpool 1974a. Vanderpool's conclusions have been widely accepted. Note, however, that while favoring the Roman Market, he also entertains "the old 'Eretria' market, or some other area." My objections in respect to the term "agora" and the Altar of Pity will apply to any alternative.

¹⁸ Cf. Wycherley 1978, p. 65, note 83; Robertson 1992, p. 46. Wycherley, however, returns to the equation of "agora" and "Kerameikos."

¹⁹ See the standard editions of Pausanias by Spiro (Teubner 1903) and Rocha-Pereira (Teubner 1973–1981), index s.v. ἀγορά. For "old-style" agoras, see 6.24.2–10; 7.22.2; 10.32.10; 10.35.4, 6.

²⁰ The phrase is so interpreted in *Agora III*, pp. 70–71, on good grounds.

²¹ See Robertson 1992, pp. 51–54.

²² Both promenades begin at the northwest corner of the Agora, which is signaled at the start of each by a repetition of names and phrases, "the Kerameikos" and "the so-called Basileios" (1.3.1, 14.6).

²³ For the avenue, excavated in the early 1970s, see *Agora Guide*, pp. 135–139. Vanderpool (1974a, p. 310) thinks that Pausanias *did* go this way; Miller (1995, p. 225, note 10) acknowledges the difficulty. The whole area and the relative distances can be seen in the perspective view published in *Agora Guide*, pp. 48–49.

Another site at the north is fundamental to the case as presented by Miller, Shear, and Schnurr: the former church of Agios Dimitrios Katiphoris, some 200 meters east of the Roman Market and about as far to the north of the Akropolis. The church is cited in 19th-century reports for the provenience of certain inscriptions and also a large sculpture. Three of the inscriptions are decrees concerning the agonistic festival Theseia that were avowedly posted in the Theseion; the sculpture is a group of Theseus and the Minotaur, obviously suited to the shrine. Other inscriptions, a good many, have to do with the epebes.²⁴ Between the agora and the Theseion, and close to both, Pausanias signals the Gymnasium of Ptolemy, a center of epebic activity (two of the epebic inscriptions mention the library of the Gymnasium). On the face of it, this concentration looks highly significant.²⁵

The appearance, however, is misleading. To quote Miller himself, “the church was used as a generic landmark” to identify material recovered from a considerable stretch of what is now called the Post-Herulian Wall (the church was built at a gate in the wall).²⁶ The wall enclosed a certain area north of the Akropolis and was built in haste with masses of stone from outside the area. Everything to the east of the Akropolis is outside. We may suppose that stone was carted for a distance, if this was needed.

Furthermore, other pertinent stones came to light in quite a different quarter. The sole surviving object that undoubtedly originates in the Archaic agora, a votive altar set up beside the Altar of Pity, was found in the Odeion of Herodes Atticus.²⁷ Another decree for a priestess of Aglauros, similar in all respects to the new discovery and hence deriving from the shrine, was found somewhere between the Odeion and the Theater of Dionysos.²⁸ The middle ground between these conflicting proveniences is the east side of the Akropolis.

Thus far, there are some points of disagreement. But the recent studies have rightly insisted on another indication, the remains in situ that show the line of the ancient Street of Tripods (Fig. 1).²⁹ The street ran south from the Prytaneion to the area of the Theater of Dionysos. As Pausanias (1.20.1) explains, the tripod monuments along the street were very large ones in which the base formed a virtual temple, like the surviving monument of Lysikrates. Foundations for other monuments on a similar scale have been found over a stretch of about 150 m, mostly on the west side of the street; a foundation on the east side reveals the width of the street, about 6.5 m. The northernmost monument is slightly north of east of the cave of Aglauros and of the findspot of the inscription honoring her priestess, at a distance of about 130 m.³⁰ There can be no doubt that the whole stretch belongs to Pausanias’ Street of Tripods.

The Street of Tripods is itself part of a longer road, perhaps a very old one, that skirts the Akropolis on the east and the north until it meets the Panathenaic Way at the northwest corner of the Eleusinion sanctuary.³¹ Where on this road shall we envisage the Prytaneion? Still at the

²⁴ For the Theseion inscriptions, see Shear 1994, pp. 228, 246, note 22; Miller 1995, pp. 209, 233, note 62; Schnurr 1995a, p. 135. For the sculptural group, see Miller 1995, p. 233, note 62; also Vanderpool 1974a, p. 309. For the epebic inscriptions, see Miller 1995, pp. 203, 227–228, notes 18–20.

²⁵ Schnurr (1995b, pp. 148–149) brings another inscription into play, *IG II² 2318*, the great record of Dionysiac victors, most fragments of which were found north of the Akropolis. She suggests that this monument stood in the Prytaneion, but only because she also thinks that the early orchestra was in the Archaic agora. The argument is circular.

²⁶ Miller 1995, p. 227, note 18. The stretch of wall that was demolished at the same time as the church was some 70 m long, according to *Agora XXIV*, pp. 137–138.

²⁷ *IG II² 4786* (A.D. 44 or 46?), “*in odeo Herodis*.” Cf. Robertson 1992, p. 52.

²⁸ *IG II² 948*, “*intra theatra Bacchi et Herodis*.” Cf. Robertson 1984a, p. 392; 1986, p. 159, note 26; 1992, p. 109, note 73.

²⁹ Shear 1994, p. 227; Miller 1995, pp. 211, 236–237, notes 84–89; Schnurr 1995b, pp. 146–148. See also Miller 1970, pp. 223–227, 230–231; 1978, pp. 45–54; Robertson 1986, pp. 158, 160; Choremi-Spetsieri 1994; Kazamiakes 1994.

³⁰ Published by Choremi-Spetsieri (1994, pp. 35–39); noted in Shear 1994 and Miller 1995.

³¹ See Shear 1994, p. 226, fig. 1 (the branch of the road that passes south of the Eleusinion is slighter and later). The Prytaneion was formerly located near the west end of the road, so that most of its length was the Street of Tripods;

east, but a little farther north, there is another revealing find: the inscribed base for a statue of an "*epimelētēs* of the Prytaneion" (Fig. 1). It was formerly built into a house at no. 20 of the modern Tripods Street, a block north of the northernmost monument foundation, which is in the basement of no. 28.³² Although not in situ, it is complete and will not have been carried very far. The Prytaneion is likely to be nearby. According to Pausanias (1.18.3), the Prytaneion is "near" the shrine of Aglauros; the statue base is about a hundred meters northeast of the stele honoring Aglauros' priestess. Shear, Miller, and Schnurr look for the Prytaneion at some point farther north and west, but mainly because they suppose the agora and other landmarks to lie still farther off in this direction.³³

There is indeed another consideration that may have weighed with them, although I do not find it expressly stated. Whereas Pausanias comes to the Prytaneion at the end of the promenade that includes the "agora," he first mentions "the Street of Tripods leading from the Prytaneion" at the beginning of a subsequent promenade around the area of the Theater of Dionysos and the Akropolis (20.1). Thus we might think that the Prytaneion stood at a boundary between the one promenade and the other, and that the Street of Tripods lay entirely within the latter. Yet the inference does not hold unless Pausanias in the latter promenade follows the Street all the way. He seems not to, for after mention of the characteristic tripod monuments he is immediately in the Theater area (20.3). The Street of Tripods only serves to give the direction of approach to this area. Part of it may lie within the other promenade.³⁴

With this understanding of the "agora" promenade, all the promenades in which Pausanias arranges his description of Athens become quite distinct and can be plotted on the ground. They are five in number (Fig. 2:I–V). (I) After coming up from the port, Pausanias goes around the new Agora, the "Kerameikos" (1.2.4–16.3). (II) Then he starts afresh with the avowed "agora" and ends with the Prytaneion (17.1–18.3). (III) This is the most extensive promenade, comprising the southeast sector of the city and the adjacent suburb of Agrai (18.4–19.6). (IV) He then goes next to the Theater of Dionysos and the Akropolis (20.1–28.4). (V) The last promenade is around the Areiopagos but is mainly for the sake of a digression on all of Athens' lawcourts, which are taken out of topographic order (28.5–29.1).

It is striking that promenades I–IV correspond to successive stages of Athens' physical and political development, from Mycenaean origins to Classical fulfillment, but in reverse order. (I) The new Agora is no earlier than ca. 500 B.C. (II) It was preceded by the agora east of the Akropolis, the Archaic city center. (III) That in turn was preceded by the Dark Age settlement at the southeast, as defined by Thucydides. (IV) At the beginning was the Akropolis, a Mycenaean citadel. For Pausanias, as for the Attic chroniclers before him, the stages were marked off, not by archaeology as they are for us, but by their respective legends.

Now we shall look closely at the Archaic city center. Fresh arguments can be brought to bear on both the location and the individual features.

Choremi-Spetsieri (1994, p. 31) is still of this opinion. Beyond the Panathenaic Way a main road continues west to the Peiraieus gate.

³² *IG* II² 2877: 0.53 m wide, 0.50 m deep, 0.20 m high. See Miller 1978, pp. 45–46; Robertson 1986, p. 160; Shear 1994, pp. 227, 245, note 14; Schnurr 1995b, p. 147.

³³ Shear 1994, p. 227; Miller 1995, p. 211; Schnurr 1995b, pp. 147–148. If we inspect their maps closely, we shall find that Schnurr (1995b, p. 153, fig. 5, near "G") puts it farthest away, west of the intersection of the modern Mnesikles and Prytaneion Streets; Miller (1995, p. 233, fig. 1, "P?") puts it not quite so far away, at the end of Tripods Street; and Shear (1994, p. 226, fig. 1) puts it one block south of the end of Tripods Street. Of course these locations are only offered as approximate.

³⁴ In the next promenade after the one that includes the "agora," Pausanias goes from the Prytaneion to the southeast sector of the city by a route that must at first be the Street of Tripods, although it is not so identified (1.18.4, ἐντεῦθεν λούστω).

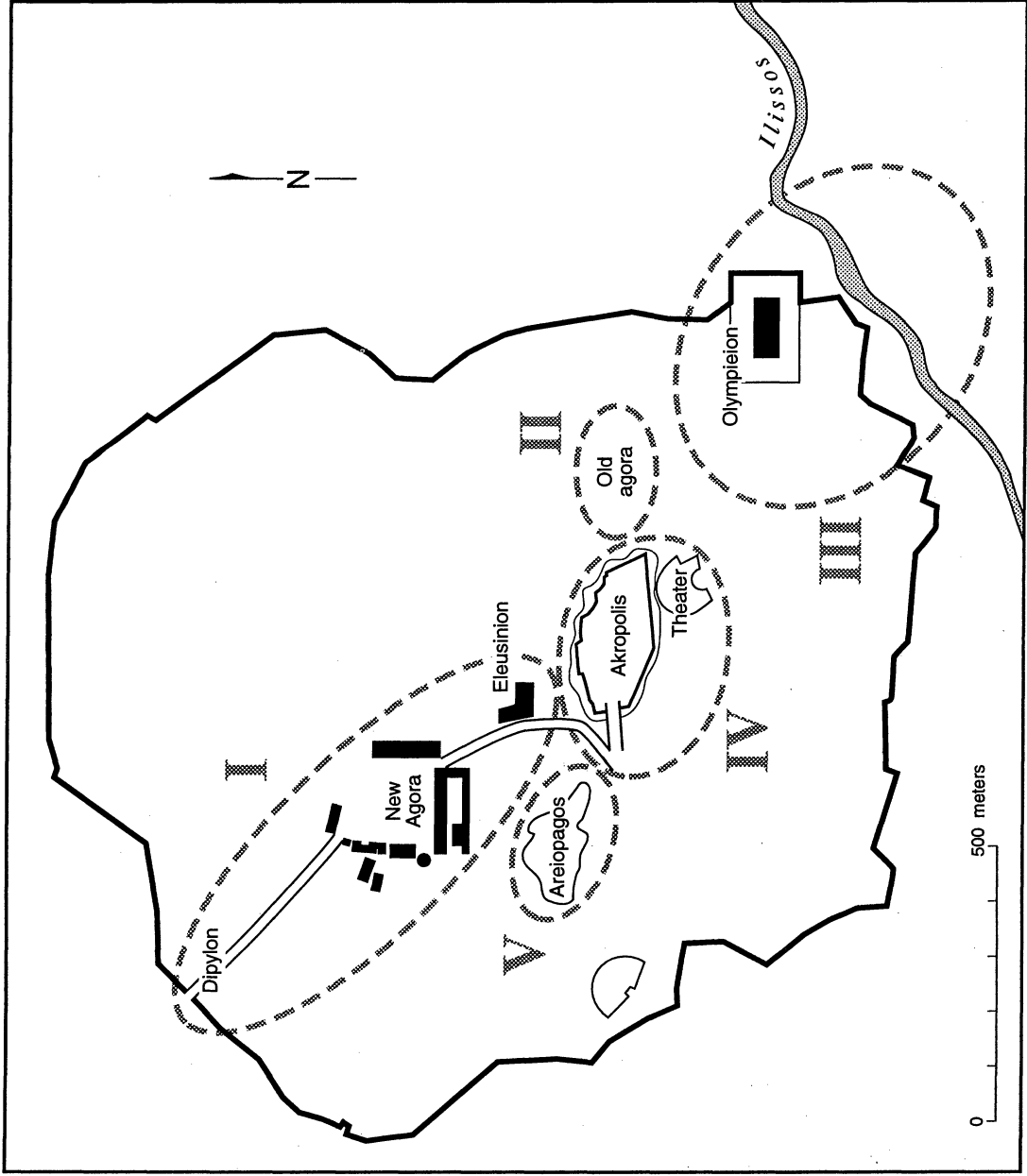


FIG. 2. Pausanias' five promenades around Athens

II. THE OLD PROCESSIONAL WAY TO THE AKROPOLIS

“There is only one entrance to the Akropolis,” says Pausanias (1.22.4), meaning the great ramp surmounted by Mnesikles’ Propylaia. Even before the ramp was constructed, the main entrance was always on the west side, where the rock is lowest, and Pausanias’ dictum almost certainly holds for all of Athens’ history as a city-state.³⁵

There are two paths with rock-cut steps on the north slope of the Akropolis, both assigned to the Mycenaean period. The one gives access from above to the terrace and caves at the northwest, which were once enclosed by their own defensive wall.³⁶ This route, then, was not a means of entering the Akropolis. The other path is a winding but natural approach at the northeast. It was improved by the Mycenaeans, doubtless when they first fortified the Akropolis, since a postern gate was provided. Later, however, the gate was blocked and the path abandoned, so that houses were built over it.³⁷ In view of these remains, we cannot suppose that the path was ever used again. In later days the Akropolis was chiefly a place of worship, and the steep and narrow path would not have been a decent or even a possible route for processioners and sacrificial victims. This needs saying with some emphasis. Our sources speak of an Akropolis “gateway” at the east, near the shrine of Aglauros (§III), and one thinks at once of the northeast ascent.³⁸ The thought must be put aside, for the reasons just given.

The ramp at the west is approached by a broad processional way from the north, the Panathenaic Way; at the Eleusinion the Way turns to the northwest and crosses the Agora; then it turns to the west-northwest and comes to the Dipylon (Fig. 2). This was the route of Athens’ proudest spectacle, the Panathenaic procession, when a huge symbolic company paraded from the Dipylon to the Akropolis shrines. It was also a stage in the route of several other processions. At the chief dramatic festival, the City Dionysia, the procession with the statue of the god went from the Dipylon as far as the Eleusinion and then turned east to reach the Street of Tripods east of the Akropolis. At the festival of Olympian Zeus, the cavalry paraded over the same route to a farther destination, the Olympieion in southeast Athens. At the Eleusinian Mysteries, the initiates went in the opposite direction, from the Eleusinion out through the neighboring Sacred Gate. From the Dipylon to the Akropolis was the last stretch of another distinctive event, the Panathenaic torch race, and probably of other torch races.³⁹

Most of these items are so familiar, and so central to our notion of Athenian public ceremony, that it is hard to imagine the city without them. Yet they are all fairly late, almost as late as the Agora. Everyone is aware of the festival innovations of the middle and later 6th century: the enlargement of the Panathenaia and the Olympieia; the creation of the City Dionysia. But it is not often appreciated that the new ceremonies were a consequence and an advertisement of a great change in the physical shape of the city: they put the northwest sector on a footing with

³⁵ There is a counterindication that need not detain us. In [Diogenes], *Ep.* 30.1–2, pp. 244–245 [Hercher], Plato brings his pupils from the Academy to the city and points out two roads leading up to the Akropolis, one short and steep and the other long and easy, so as to illustrate the two roads leading to happiness, on which he has just lectured. Judeich (1931, p. 182, note 1), who misunderstands the passage somewhat, speaking of Sokrates and the Agora instead of Plato and the Academy, thinks of roads approaching from the Areiopagos and the Agora, respectively. Yet these could scarcely be regarded as different means of ascent. More likely, the author was heedless of reality.

³⁶ Iakovides 1962, pp. 99–101, 124–126, 189–199.

³⁷ Iakovides 1962, pp. 93–99, 136–143, 200–201.

³⁸ So Robertson 1984a, p. 386; 1986, pp. 159–160; 1992, pp. 45, 118. So, too, Shear 1994, p. 227. *Peccavi*. I was swayed by Bundgaard (1976, pp. 23–31), who reconstructs no fewer than five approaches and gates: the one on the west, two on the south, and two on the north. He holds that the northeast ascent was even modified by ramps. Iakovides, however, expressly combats the view that this was once the principal entrance, and his argument is full and convincing: “Though it is passable, it is very narrow and steep, and suited to climbing rather than walking, and quite unsuited to animals” (Iakovides 1962, p. 97).

³⁹ For the cavalry parade of the Olympieia, see Robertson 1992, pp. 140–141; for the torch races, Robertson 1985, pp. 283–285.

the much older districts at the southeast and the east, which were the usual settings for festival gatherings and processions.⁴⁰

The change took place before 510 B.C., when Hipparchos was assassinated while marshaling the Panathenaic procession at the northwest. Archaeological evidence hardly takes us further. The original ramp to the Akropolis was constructed over a demolished house and well that were in use down to ca. 550, but the polygonal masonry of the retaining wall cannot be closely dated.⁴¹ The gate in the Akropolis wall must have required some corresponding adjustment; yet evidence for this is even more elusive.⁴² In any case, the first public use of the Agora area in ca. 500 is a further consequence of the development of the northwest sector.

Long before the change, in fact ever since the earliest Dark Age settlement on lower ground, the Athenians had paraded to the Akropolis to worship at the shrines of Zeus and Athena and Erechtheus. What route did they follow? Thucydides' landmarks for the early city are concentrated at the southeast, near the bank of the Ilissos River, some way off from the Akropolis.⁴³ From here it is natural to approach the southeast corner, the area of the later Theater of Dionysos, from which point the Street of Tripods and its continuation go right around the Akropolis on the east and the north. Yet this is a roundabout way to the west entrance, and the ascent was from the south, as we are about to see. Early worshippers would have done better to turn west at the Theater area and to skirt the south side of the Akropolis. In the ensuing Archaic period, if the agora was more to the east than the northeast, it might still embrace or adjoin the route to the Akropolis, as the new Agora embraces the Panathenaic Way. Such general considerations direct our attention to the south side of the Akropolis.

Before the days of the ramp, the main ascent at the west followed the sloping rock at the foot of the Nike bastion: it started from a rock terrace south of the bastion and then skirted the western and northern sides of the Akropolis until it reached a gate, now untraceable, in the Mycenaean wall (Fig. 1).⁴⁴ The question is how processioners arrived at the terrace. Pausanias tells us, for he comes to the ramp and the Propylaia not by the Panathenaic Way, as we might expect, but from the terrace, where he notes the old cults of Aphrodite *pandēmos*, *Ge kourotrophos*, and Demeter *chloē* (1.22.3). He comes to the terrace from the east-west road along the south side of the Akropolis, which he picks up at the upper *diazōma* of the Theater of Dionysos and follows past the now excavated sanctuary of Asklepios and temple of Themis (21.4–22.1).

It has not been remarked that Pausanias twice designates this road as a usual approach to the Akropolis. He says at the outset (21.4), ἰόντων δὲ Ἀθήνησιν ἐς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἀπὸ τοῦ θεάτρου, “when, at Athens, they go to the Akropolis from the Theater.” And he says again, in passing from

⁴⁰ The extent of the change would be somewhat diminished if the Agora excavators were right in thinking that this area had been previously used for games, especially funeral games. Against this view, see Robertson 1992, pp. 17–18, 94–96. Miller (1995, pp. 216–218) challenges the related view that the processional way through the Agora served as a racetrack.

⁴¹ Vanderpool 1974b; Eiteljorg 1993, pp. 9–11, with pl. I, a photograph of the wall. The date that Vanderpool assigns to the ramp, 566 B.C. as the Panathenaic epoch, or soon thereafter, is too early, as Weir (1995, pp. 257–258) observes. By Vanderpool's own account (1974b, p. 159), the pottery seems to furnish a *terminus post quem* of ca. 550 (“a consistent lot of several score fragments,” going into and through “the second quarter of the sixth century B.C. but not later”). The polygonal masonry is only assignable to “the sixth or early fifth century B.C.” (Vanderpool 1974b, p. 157). This leaves a wide margin, ca. 550–480, for it need not be supposed that the ramp was in immediate prospect when the house and well went out of use.

⁴² Eiteljorg (1993) believes that the Mycenaean gate lasted right down to Mnesikles, with some repair or rebuilding, and that new construction was confined to an exterior courtyard. The case rests on technical observations and arguments that must now be weighed by other experts, but it also has an obvious logic: the monumental gateway followed on the monumental circuit wall.

⁴³ For the “Ilissos area,” see Travlos 1971, pp. 289–298; Robertson 1992, pp. 9–31; 1993, pp. 242–244. The overall picture is not much affected by the uncertainty attached to the precise locations of the Pythion and of Dionysus *en limnais*. The early Panathenaic festival is linked with this area in some fossil rites and stories: Robertson 1996, pp. 58–65.

⁴⁴ Wright 1994, pp. 325–338.

the sanctuary of Asklepios to the temple of Themis (22.1), ταύτηι πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν ἰοῦσι, “for those who go by this road to the Akropolis.” The Attic chroniclers whom Pausanias consulted will have mentioned this route many times, and Pausanias himself describes as still surviving, but as little known, an age-old ceremony of bearing baskets from the Akropolis to southeastern Athens, in which the road was followed in the opposite direction (27.3).

The actual road has been traced for the length of the Akropolis. It is indeed a processional way, about seven meters wide and nearly straight, except where it has been deflected and narrowed by a later extension of the Theater of Dionysos and by the Odeion of Herodes Atticus. Otherwise all the precincts and buildings on the south side of the Akropolis are aligned with the road, which is therefore earlier. Nowadays the term “Peripatos” is used for both the road and the narrow path that ran off it at either end to make a circuit of the Akropolis. The path is so called in a rock-cut inscription on the north side of the Akropolis, which gives the total length as 3,018 feet.⁴⁵ The name should not make us think, however, that the road served only to continue the path; it obviously had a function of its own, as a processional way.

At the west end of the Akropolis the road turned north, or even doubled back to the northeast, to reach the rock terrace at the Nike bastion, a rise of perhaps twelve meters. The line of ascent has not been determined.⁴⁶ Even in later days processioners must have taken this route to the terrace when they honored Aphrodite *pandēmos* on 4 Hekatombaion, in the first procession of the year.⁴⁷ Before he picks up the road, Pausanias explores the Theater area: “the oldest shrine of Dionysos,” the Odeion of Perikles, the Theater, a Gorgon’s head on the south wall of the Akropolis, and the Thrasylos monument, in that order (20.3–21.3). No doubt he entered this area at the southeast and then walked up through the Theater to the Thrasylos monument. And no doubt the Street of Tripods, which he mentioned just before (20.1–2), brought him to the entrance at the southeast. The southernmost foundations for tripod monuments are not far east of the Odeion. Quite recently, a line of bases came to light immediately south of the Odeion.⁴⁸ It is thought that they carried lesser choregic monuments and stood along the north side of the last leg of the Street of Tripods.

In going from the Theater of Dionysos to the Akropolis, Pausanias has omitted the first part of the processional way. It continued east, north of the Odeion, and descended the slope so as to intersect the Street of Tripods. The intersection has been found, right between the Lysikrates monument and the next foundation to the north, a very large one (Fig. 1).⁴⁹ On the other side of the Street of Tripods, the processional way becomes the ancient avenue leading out to the Arch of Hadrian, along the line of the present Lysikrates Street.

III. THE GATEWAY TO THE AKROPOLIS APPROACH

The sources to be considered next show that at a certain point on the road the processions passed through a monumental gateway, the original Akropolis “Propylaea.” That name and function were afterward assumed by Mnesikles’ creation, but as we have seen, any monumental gateway here was later than ca. 550. Before this, there was only the Mycenaean gate at the top of the path that skirted the Nike bastion.

[Aristotle] and Polyainos transmit two versions, obviously deriving from different Attic chroniclers, of the infamous ruse by which Peisistratos disarmed the Athenians. Both versions describe

⁴⁵ *IG II²* 2639; Travlos 1971, p. 229, figs. 293, 294. Travlos (p. 228) reckons the true length as 1,100 m. Dontas (1983, pp. 48, 50) describes recent work on the Peripatos.

⁴⁶ For hypothetical plans, see Beschi 1969b, p. 513, fig. 1 (by J. Travlos, drawn in 1933), and Travlos 1971, p. 71, fig. 91 (drawn by Travlos in 1967).

⁴⁷ *IG II²* 659 (*LSCG* 39), a. 283/2 [C. Habicht].

⁴⁸ Kalligas 1994, p. 27.

⁴⁹ Choremi-Spetsieri 1994, pp. 32–33. From the Street of Tripods to the top of the Theater of Dionysos the gradient is 20 degrees.

in detail how the Athenians had first assembled under arms at a muster ground on the east side of the Akropolis.⁵⁰ Inasmuch as the processioners of later days who assembled at the Dipylon were forbidden to carry arms, as [Aristotle] tells us elsewhere, the story may well be part of a larger etiology explaining the transfer of business from the east to the northwest.⁵¹ Peisistratos summons the Athenians to assemble under arms in the general area of the Archaic agora, among the landmarks reported by Pausanias. In [Aristotle] it is in the Theseion, in Polyainos the Anakeion. Polyainos in the sequel also mentions the shrine of Aglauros, which Pausanias places right “above” the Anakeion (1.18.2). Both shrines, of Theseus and of the Anakes, are known for actual musters in the late 5th century; indeed, both were designated for different groups in the alarm that followed the mutilation of the Herms, the Theseion for hoplite citizens living within the Long Walls, the Anakeion for the cavalry (the evidence is cited in §IV). The story then is true to life, and both versions are equally plausible.

The ruse consists of drawing the citizens away from this place of assembly to higher ground nearby, so that they leave their arms behind, to be abstracted by the tyrant’s henchmen. Addressing the citizens, Peisistratos cannot be heard distinctly. In [Aristotle], he tells the citizens *προσαναβῆναι πρὸς τὸ πρόπυλον τῆς ἀκροπόλεως*, “to go on up to the gateway of the Akropolis.” In Polyainos, they ask him *προελθεῖν . . . εἰς τὸ προπύλαιον*, “to go on to the gateway.” While he speaks at length ([Aristotle]), or as they strain to listen (Polyainos), the henchmen sequester the arms in the buildings in or near the Theseion ([Aristotle]) or in the shrine of Aglauros (Polyainos).⁵²

Although the story was told in days when all eyes dwelt on Mnesikles’ Propylaia, we must not suppose that only this gateway could be meant.⁵³ The gateway will be one that suits the story. The story would not feign that the citizens gathered at a place east of the Akropolis and then trekked all the way around the Akropolis, whether by the path at the north or by the road at the south, so as to gather again at Mnesikles’ Propylaia. Nor would it feign that the citizens left their arms at the east while they were busy at the west. Instead, the story looks to a gateway near the place of assembly but on higher ground. It is essential that the citizens must walk up to higher ground; only then will they find it natural to leave their arms behind. For a group assembled east of the Akropolis, higher ground is just a little farther west, at the foot of the Akropolis cliff. The only feasible location for such a gateway is on the first stretch of the east–west road, after it climbs the slope (Fig. 1).

Philochoros refers to the same gateway. He tells how Aglauros, a princess of long ago, leapt to her death from the Akropolis cliff as the requisite offering for an Athenian victory. The commemorative shrine was founded at the foot of the cliff, *περὶ τὰ προπύλαια τῆς πόλεως*, “around the gateway of the polis.”⁵⁴ A gateway that serves to locate the shrine of Aglauros will be close to it. If it stood on the east–west road due south of the findspot of the inscription, the distance will not have been much more than fifty meters. Thus the gateway is situated at the same point as

⁵⁰ [Aristotle], *AthPol* 15.4–5; Polyainos 1.21.2. The two equivalent locales given for the muster are no doubt a willful variation by successive Attic chroniclers.

⁵¹ [Aristotle], *AthPol* 18.4. Later practice was controversial, with [Aristotle] contradicting Thucydides. The substance of the controversy is discussed in Robertson 1992, pp. 115–119. Whatever the truth of the matter, the point about [Aristotle] is that he marks a contrast between the beginning and the end of the tyranny, which must have been fully explained in one or more of the Attic chroniclers he consulted.

⁵² Despite *Agora* III, p. 115, no. 344, it is impossible to decide whether [Aristotle]’s phrase *τὰ πλησίον οἰκήματα τοῦ Θησείου* means “the nearby buildings of the Theseion” or “the buildings near the Theseion,” for the genitive may be postponed.

⁵³ Eiteljorg (1993, pp. 49–50) places the gathering in or near the courtyard area that in his view preceded Mnesikles’ Propylaia, but he has not considered the larger topographic issue.

⁵⁴ *FGrHist* 328 F 105. Pausanias (1.18.2) has an equivalent *aition* from some other Attic chronicler, the distracted leap of Aglauros’ two sisters after they looked into the basket containing Erichthonios. Philochoros, in associating Aglauros’ own leap with the shrine, must have situated the sisters’ leap at some other point. Now Euphorion (fr. 9.4 [Powell]) says that Herse leapt from the “Glaukopion,” i.e., the Nike bastion; the bastion is so called by Kallimachos (*Hec.* fr. 17.11 [Hollis]) and in *IG* II² 5006, line 3. For this, Euphorion probably draws on Kallimachos, and he in turn on Philochoros.

before, at the top of the slope where the road goes past the southeast corner of the Akropolis. Beyond the gateway is the more level approach to the west end.

These are undoubted references to the original Akropolis gateway. There are two more probable references, one in Andokides and the other on a monument in the Asklepieion, both dating from ca. 400 B.C. Andokides (3 *De Myst.* 37–39) speaks of τὸ προπύλαιον τοῦ Διονύσου, “Dionysos’ gateway,” as the vantage point from which the informer Diokleides, by his own account, was able to observe the sinister band who mutilated the Herms. He saw them “going down from the Odeion into the orchestra” and afterward standing about in the orchestra, and he recognized some in the moonlight and could reckon their numbers.

Diokleides on that fateful night was making for Laureion, and so for a city gate at the southeast that gave on the road leading past Mount Hymettos. He started, then, from a house north or west of the area of the Theater of Dionysos. It has generally been assumed that the gateway was at the southeast entrance to the Theater area: Diokleides had followed the Street of Tripods.⁵⁵ Yet he could just as well have come to our Akropolis gateway by walking east along our processional way. The gateway here, high above the orchestra, was a far better vantage point for such a view as Diokleides said he had. “Dionysos’ gateway” is perhaps Andokides’ own term for the gateway that serves to locate this purported view into the Theater of Dionysos. Diokleides’ story was familiar, indeed it was notorious, long before Andokides told it once more: “And when he was at Dionysos’ gateway, he said he saw many people going down from the Odeion to the orchestra.” It is a cursory way of speaking, as befits a story that deserves no credit.

The most expressive witness, if it is allowed, is the monument of Telemachos in the Asklepieion.⁵⁶ Our gateway seems to be both cited and depicted on the monument as an older landmark that lends distinction to the new sanctuary. The Asklepieion was installed on a terrace just west of the Theater of Dionysos in the years after 420 B.C. (it is shown in outline in Figure 1).⁵⁷ The monument, a pillar surmounted by reliefs, is inscribed with a chronicle of developments at the sanctuary, year by year. In 415/14 something took effect, perhaps an area was marked out, ἀπὸ τὸ ξυλοπυλῖο, “from the wooden gate” (the word is a *hapax legomenon*).⁵⁸

This “wooden gate” must be the gateway depicted in relief at the top of the monument, which consists of a large tablet with a relief scene on either side. On the one side there is an imaginary scene in the sanctuary, with the imaginary figures of Hygieia and Asklepios, a conventional subject. On the other side is a most unusual subject. It is the gateway, in full frontal view, showing pediment and akroteria, two columns in antis, and double doors. The pediment has beams without moldings, and the columns have neither base nor capital, that is, they are of wood.⁵⁹ On the right side is a statue on a high base, a nude youth standing at ease.⁶⁰ If the actual statue was life-size, the gateway was fairly tall, for it is about four times the height of the statue. On the left side a stork perches on a

⁵⁵ E.g., Judeich 1931, p. 316; Kalligas 1994, p. 27.

⁵⁶ Reconstructed by Beschi (1969a; 1982). Subsequent work (for which see *SEG* XXXIX 240; XLII 197) does not affect the matters discussed here.

⁵⁷ Aleshire (1989, pp. 20–35) shows that the sanctuary was mainly or entirely confined to the easternmost of the three terraces between the Theater and the Odeion of Herodes.

⁵⁸ Beschi 1969a, pp. 412–413 (*SEG* XXV 226), lines 32–34. A masculine accusative preceded the locative phrase, as the object of some verb that must be understood. Conjectures include τὸν [τοῖχον τὸν ἀπὸ] (Dragoumis) and τὸν [περιβόλον ἀπὸ] (Beschi). In 419/18, the Kerykes disputed the area; in 418/17, the dispute was resolved; in 417/16 and 416/15, things were done that are lost in a lacuna. In the entry for 414/13, the year after ours, the plural form τὰ ξυλοπύλαια is conjectured as a newly constructed element.

⁵⁹ So Beschi 1969a, p. 397.

⁶⁰ Since he holds an object that might be a carpenter’s tool, whether adze or square, Beschi’s identification as Kalos/Talos (1969a, pp. 392–396) is attractive—not, however, his proposal to recognize the hero’s tomb in a mound southwest of the Asklepieion (see also Beschi 1969b, pp. 512–513). Other sources show that this monument was farther east, between the Asklepieion and the Thrasyllon monument (Pausanias 1.21.4) or between the Asklepieion and the Anakeion (Lucian, 28 *Pisc.* 42). It must have been quite close to our Akropolis gateway.

tree, an emblem of the Pelargikon, "Stork-place." There is an actual wall on either side of the gateway, and the tree is behind it.

The gateway in the relief and in the inscription has been thought to be one at the entrance to the sanctuary of Asklepios. In the arrangement of the terrace revealed by excavation, the entrance was seemingly in the west wall near the south end, though not right at the corner, for just here there is a short break in the wall.⁶¹ Inside was a small temple, and gateway and temple are mentioned as neighboring features in a decree of 52/1 B.C. that authorizes repairs to both (*IG II² 1046*). That this arrangement goes back to the beginning has not been established; in any case, the approach at the east was completely transformed by the enlargement of the Theater of Dionysos. The west entrance is not a likely place for the wooden gateway of 400 B.C., for the wooden gateway was probably much too large; it formed an entrance to the Pelargikon, and in the inscription it is named as a starting point of some kind.

Surely the gateway in the inscription and in the relief is our gateway on the processional way, somewhat to the east of the Asklepieion. The monument of Telemachos presumably stood on the east side of the sanctuary as it was in 400 B.C., with the gateway relief facing east, toward the actual gateway, and the sanctuary relief facing the sanctuary interior. Thus situated, the monument would catch the eye of all who approached the sanctuary by the processional way. As for the nature and extent of the Pelargikon, debate continues without agreed result, and no sober person will profess to know for sure. The relief shows that an area on the south side of the Akropolis was included in the Pelargikon, and there is no reason to suppose that the area was less than the whole length of the Akropolis.⁶² In any case, a suitable gateway has not been found in the preserved and excavated stretch at the Asklepieion.

To sum up, the argument presented here gives us only a rough location for the gateway: near the southeast corner of the Akropolis, where the east-west road reaches the top of the slope and its further course, as far as the Nike bastion, comes into view. Even in these broad terms it seems an appropriate location. There is no better one farther on, certainly not at the west end of the road, on what must have been a rather difficult ascent to and around the Nike bastion. Furthermore, this gateway was probably an entrance to the mysterious Pelargikon area.

IV. THE THESEION AND THE ANAKEION

If we follow the road east from the gateway and go down the slope, we shall soon come to two shrines, the Theseion and the Anakeion. Pausanias visits them successively, and the precinct of Aglauros is "above" the Anakeion (1.18.2). In the story of Peisistratos' ruse, the two shrines are alternative settings for the muster of citizens, who mount directly from either shrine to the gateway.⁶³

Musters are proper to the ἀγορά, for this is the meaning of the word, the *nomen actionis* of ἀγείρειν. Legend suggests that the Archaic agora was once so used (§VI). It is from the herald's stone in the agora that Solon calls on the Athenians to take up arms over Salamis; it is by similar

⁶¹ Indeed, it was not at this point that Beschi (1969a, pp. 388–397) put the gateway, but rather at the south end of the neighboring corridor between the Asklepieion and the next terrace to the west; thus he considered it an entrance to both the Asklepieion and the Pelargikon. The theory that there was a gateway here has since been exploded; see Aleshire 1989, pp. 33–34. Aleshire adjusts the argument as well as can be done to fit the west entrance, but the Pelargikon emblem is now an embarrassment. "There is, however, no necessity to see in the relief an exact reflection of the topography," says Aleshire (1989, p. 34, note 1).

⁶² If the Mycenaean (the presumed builders of the Pelargikon) wished to secure the external Akropolis springs, Klepsydra and the two at the south, they must have constructed outworks that extended east of the Asklepieion spring and so to a point near our gateway.

⁶³ Note also, among the reliefs on the Telemachos monument, the Dioskouroi on horseback (Beschi 1969a, pp. 419–421), seemingly a tribute to the nearby Anakeion.

means that Theseus in his act of synoecism summons the armed host of Attika. This early custom faded, and after the Archaic period it is rare for citizens to assemble under arms within the city. There are no more than three clearly documented instances, in 415, 411, and 403 B.C. In 415 the hoplites of the city muster in the new Agora, and those of Peiraieus muster in the agora there. Two smaller groups, the hoplites of the Long Walls and the cavalry, muster in the Theseion and the Anakeion, respectively (so Andokides, 3 *De Myst.* 45); Thucydides says that people “slept under arms” in the Theseion, doubtless on the following night (6.61.2). In 411 the hoplites of Peiraieus muster first in the theater there, and after coming to the city, they muster in the Anakeion (Thucydides 8.93.1). In 403 the supporters of the Thirty go from Athens to Peiraieus to muster in the agora (Xenophon, *Hell.* 2.4.11). We are left with a question. Why, in 415 and in 411, as in the story of Peisistratos’ ruse, do Athenians muster in the Theseion or the Anakeion, or both, and not in the nearby agora?

Something of the agora survived to Pausanias’ day. The contents, however, were nondescript, and only the Altar of Pity is mentioned by name (§I). In the rest of this promenade (1.17.2–18.3), Pausanias finds much more to point to: statues in the Gymnasium of Ptolemy and the Prytaneion, which also has Solon’s laws; paintings in the Theseion and the Anakeion. Much is said, too, about the associations of the Theseion and the precinct of Aglauros. The agora is the most indigent item of all.

It may be that part of the agora had been given up to other uses, or that some of its elements had become separate. Even the new Agora finally lost its character as an open square, when the temple of Ares and the Odeion of Agrippa obtruded at the northwest and the south. To be sure, the full extent of the square was still unmistakable. In the case of the Archaic agora, it may not have been, if large alterations were made at an early date, especially after the upheaval of the Persian War. We have just seen that in the late 5th century the Theseion and the Anakeion were used for musters. The Theseion was either founded or enlarged in 476/5 B.C., when Kimon brought back the hero’s bones (Plutarch, *Thes.* 36.1–4). It is also on record that both shrines were richly decorated during the 5th century. These might be alterations to the agora; indeed there is evidence that they were.

Plutarch quotes two lines of the poet Melanthios describing Polygnotos’ activity at Athens (*Cim.* 4.7).

αὐτοῦ γὰρ δαπάναισι θεῶν ναοὺς ἀγορὰν τε
Κεκροπίαν κόσμησ’ ἡμιθεῶν ἀρεταῖς.

Through outlays of his own he adorned the temples of the gods and the Kekropian agora with the exploits of demigods.

Of the two agoras that then existed in Athens, it is surely the older one that is distinguished as “Kekropian.” Plutarch, however, thinks of the new Agora and the Stoa Poikile. Polygnotos, he says, painted the Stoa for free, preferring honor to money, a story known to other sources, too, and doubtless originating in these very lines.⁶⁴ It was inevitable that Polygnotos should be associated with the famous Stoa: in this gossiping passage of Plutarch, we also hear how he rendered the fairest of the Trojan women in the likeness of Kimon’s sister, whose favors he enjoyed (*Cim.* 4.6). The best authorities, however, Artemon, *On Painters*, and Juba, *On Painting*, expressly rejected these tales, and said rather that Polygnotos painted in the Theseion and the Anakeion (Harpokration, s.v. Πολύγνωτος). In the Stoa Poikile, Polygnotos’ authorship is not only ill supported but conflicts with the undoubted contribution of two lesser figures, Mikon and Panainos.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Besides Harpokration, cited below, see Pliny, *NH* 35.59. “The exploits of demigods” is hardly apt for the paintings in the Stoa Poikile, of which at least half depicted historical battles (Marathon and Oinoe, possibly Salamis and Phlious); *Agora* III, p. 31, lists the full range of subjects.

⁶⁵ For Mikon as painter of the battle with the Amazons, see Aristophanes, *Lys.* 679, with schol.; Arrian, *Anab.* 7.13.5. For Mikon as painter of the Battle of Marathon, see Arrian, *loc. cit.*; Harpokration, s.v. Μίκων. For Panainos

On the other hand, there is no dispute about the paintings in the Theseion and the Anakeion. Pausanias, who describes them all, divides those of the Anakeion between Polygnotos and Mikon (1.18.1); in the Theseion he mentions only Mikon but leaves room for Polygnotos too (1.17.3). It is conformable with Melanthios' tribute to the master that he should be assisted by a colleague, the Athenian Mikon. What they painted in the two shrines was preeminently "the exploits of demigods": in the Theseion, the battle with the Amazons, the fight between Lapiths and Centaurs, Theseus' sea-dive to visit Poseidon, and perhaps also his release from the underworld;⁶⁶ in the Anakeion, the Dioskouroi wedding the daughters of Leukippos and their joining the company of the Argo. In the lines of Melanthios, then, "the temples of the gods" are, or include, the Theseion and the Anakeion, and "the exploits of demigods" are, or include, the scenes just mentioned, depicting Theseus and the Anakes. The successive terms "gods" and "demigods" rather awkwardly refer to the same persons, for the occupants of the shrines are also the subjects of the paintings; a purist may further object that whereas the Anakes, alias the Dioskouroi, can be placed in either category, Theseus is only a "demigod." Form and meaning do not quite coincide. If these two lines are characteristic, and they are all we have, Melanthios was obsessed with balanced phrases.

We should ask whether the members of the pair "the temples of the gods and the Kekropian agora" are to be distinguished or equated. The second member, as was said, is the Archaic agora; it is "Kekropian" by virtue of its age and its location. It does not, of course, go back to the beginning of the world, as Kekrops does, but it deserves to be so called in contrast with an Agora that was then quite new. And it lies right in front of the Akropolis, where Kekrops is at home. Now by any view, the Theseion and the Anakeion are close to the Archaic agora. It is easy to suppose that in Melanthios' day they were part of it, just as several shrines are part of the new Agora (though all on the west side). It is much harder to suppose that the agora contained quite other buildings, unnamed by Melanthios, that were adorned at the same time by Polygnotos and yet have left no other memory. They could not be shrines, if "the temples of the gods" are sharply distinguished. Faced with these alternatives, we must choose the former. Melanthios tells us in effect that certain shrines of the Archaic agora have been newly decorated.

It seems likely, then, that during the 5th century both the Theseion and the Anakeion encroached on the open ground of the agora. Henceforth, when the area is used for musters they take place not in the agora but in one or both of the shrines.

Another function of the agora is continued at the Theseion. Legends speak of suppliants, the mothers of the Seven or the children of Herakles, taking refuge at the Altar of Pity, which is in truth the altar of Zeus in-the-agora; here the suppliants are taken up by Theseus or his son Demophon. Later the Theseion becomes a place of refuge, and the custom is traced to Theseus' legendary role as protector of suppliants.⁶⁷ The later suppliants are indeed "slaves and all humble folk in fear of their betters," as Plutarch has it (*Thes.* 36.2), but this is merely the difference between legend and reality: Philochoros expressly says that "in old days not only slaves but all conditions of men" resorted to the Theseion (*FGrHist* 328 F 177). It is true that Pausanias saw the Altar of Pity, and some other remnants, in an area separate from the Theseion that was still known as the original agora. Not surprisingly, although much of the ground was reassigned to the Theseion and the Anakeion, a few tokens were held back. But since a place of asylum must be spacious and secure, it was the Theseion, not the Altar of Pity, that served the purpose thereafter.

as painter of the same, see Pausanias 5.11.6; Pliny, *NH* 35.57. For Mikon vs. Polygnotos, see Pliny, *NH* 35.59; Aelian, *Nat.Anim.* 7.38.

⁶⁶ Pausanias describes three paintings on three walls of the Theseion, and at once goes on, "About Theseus' end there are many conflicting tales." He dismisses in a few words the story of his confinement in Hades and recounts at length several more-realistic episodes (17.4–6). It has been plausibly conjectured that a fourth mural showed Theseus emerging from the underworld, which is in fact the main scene on a vase of Polygnotan aspect (*ARV*² 601, no. 22).

⁶⁷ *Agora* III, nos. 341, 342, 346, 348–350, 352, 353, 356–358.

Slaves or others sought asylum in hopes of vindication by the law, which the archons administered. In describing the Theseion as a place of asylum, the lexica further say that lawsuits were tried there; they would be mainly allegations of abuse by a slave against his master.⁶⁸ We are also told that the Theseion was used by the archons for the allotment of offices.⁶⁹ This seems to be an isolated use. It is not said that any of the allotments pertaining to the lawcourts took place at the Theseion. Apart from the custom of asylum and related lawsuits and the allotment of offices, all secular business migrated to the Agora at the northwest.

V. THE PRYTANEION

The Prytaneion, says Pausanias (1.18.3), is “near” the precinct of Aglauros and the Akropolis cliff (cf. Fig. 1). The building type so called was generally adopted by Greek cities, including many that did not have the like-named office, a *prytanis* or board of *prytaneis*.⁷⁰ In Archaic Athens the Prytaneion belonged to the eponymous Archon ([Aristotle], *AthPol* 3.5) and perhaps originated with that office. Or it may be instead that the Basileus, as the earlier chief magistrate, was ousted by the Archon, for it was in the Prytaneion that the Basileus always presided over certain homicide cases, as if this were a relic.⁷¹ In any event, the Prytaneion is the earliest headquarters of civic government. Legend takes it back to Theseus’ act of synoecism, when a single Prytaneion was created in the city to replace all the notional instances in the other towns of Attika.⁷² After the Archon and his colleagues took themselves to the new Agora, the Prytaneion continued to be used, especially for ceremonial dining. Pausanias describes its contents (1.18.3, 9.32.8).

It is true that Theseus is credited with two buildings, a Bouleuterion as well as a Prytaneion, but they are not equally real. “Abolishing both the Bouleuteria and the executive offices in the rest of the cities, and establishing one Bouleuterion and Prytaneion in the present city, he synoecized everyone into it” (Thucydides 2.15.2). Bouleuterion and Prytaneion together are characteristic of any civic government; they are often found side by side. Indeed, both have successors on the west side of the new Agora: whereas the Bouleuterion is near the south corner, the stoas used by the archons are at the north. Thucydides then was bound to speak of both, and to attribute the corresponding activities to the earlier towns (cf. 15.1). Yet no Bouleuterion is ever mentioned in the area east of the Akropolis.⁷³ As a practical matter, we may be sure that once the Council began to meet in the new Agora, any other facility was given up and disappeared. Only the Prytaneion remained as visible evidence of Theseus’ dispensation.⁷⁴

Amid the general transfer of business from the old agora to the new, the Prytaneion kept its place. Perhaps the sacred hearth that it contained was in principle immovable; it was certainly

⁶⁸ Photios, *Etyim. Mag.* s.v. Θησεῖον. I.e., γραφαὶ ὕβρεως; see Christensen 1990, pp. 25–26.

⁶⁹ Aischines, *Ctes.* 3.13; [Aristotle], *AthPol* 62.1; on the slight discrepancy between them, see Robertson 1986, p. 165.

⁷⁰ This development is remarked upon by Fritz Gschnitzer, *RE* Supplement XIII, 1973, cols. 802–804, s.v. *Prytanis*.

⁷¹ Yet the relic can be otherwise explained, for it will be granted that the Basileus very probably existed before the Prytaneion, since his title comes down from Mycenaean times. Thus the Prytaneion may have been created as a new headquarters at the same time as was the Archon’s office, and the Basileus may have been installed there too, with whatever judicial duties he then had, only to be removed later, as government business increased.

⁷² Thucydides 2.15.2; Plutarch, *Thes.* 24.3. Plutarch, speaking of both Bouleuterion and Prytaneion, echoes Thucydides. One or more of the Attic chroniclers must have also mentioned the Prytaneion, since [Aristotle] did in the lost beginning of the *AthPol*, as can be seen from the surviving text, a page or two further on. It serves as the initial reference point for the survey of the several buildings associated with the early archons: “the Basileus had the so-called Boukoleion near the Prytaneion,” and so forth (*AthPol* 3.5).

⁷³ The Council once met in the Theseion (*IG* II² 1039, lines 2–3) but only for the purpose of commending the epebes, who had much to do with Theseus’ agonistic festival. The Council meets in special places for special business (e.g., in Peiraieus for naval affairs, in the Eleusinion for the Mysteries).

⁷⁴ In the story of Thales’ plan to establish a common civic government for Ionia, the only organ that is mentioned is “a single Bouleuterion” (Herodotos 1.170.3). This analogy also dictates a hypothetical Bouleuterion beside the actual Prytaneion.

a fixed point in public ceremony. Processions started from the Prytaneion: old ones to certain shrines of Apollo and Artemis in southeastern Athens, and a later one to the shrine of Bendis in Peiraieus. The sacred hearth happens to be mentioned in two instances (Bendis and Artemis in Agrai);⁷⁵ no doubt it figured in the others as well (Delphinion and Pythion). In the Theseus legend, the spring procession that goes from the Prytaneion to the Delphinion is matched by another in autumn, during the festival Pyanepsia; they are, respectively, supplication and thanksgiving for the Cretan adventure.⁷⁶ At the Pyanepsia the procession transports the civic *eiresiōnē*, a larger version of the common article, to a shrine of Apollo, almost certainly the Pythion. It had been constructed beside the Prytaneion, at a spot called the “Field of Famine” (in another etiology, the *eiresiōnē* is the remedy prescribed for a great famine). All these shrines, Delphinion and Pythion and Artemis in Agrai, are at the southeast, the part of Athens that antedates the synoecism. The processions are a demonstrative way of uniting the city of Theseus with its predecessor.

VI. THE AGORA

The Prytaneion can be expected to adjoin the agora (cf. Fig. 1). In other cities, all the excavated examples do so; or if they belong to a sanctuary, they are still beside a square.⁷⁷ This arrangement can sometimes be deduced from inscriptions, too.⁷⁸ The main roads will have led to the agora as to the Prytaneion, and processioners, like soldiers, will have formed up in the agora (the procession to Artemis in Agrai was very grand).⁷⁹ It may seem surprising that in Pausanias’ promenade the agora and the Prytaneion are at the beginning and the end, and the Gymnasium of Ptolemy, the Theseion, the Anakeion, and the shrine of Aglauros come between (1.17.1–18.3). Here is another reason for supposing that some items, the Theseion and the Anakeion, were once part of the agora (cf. §IV); the Gymnasium of Ptolemy might then be next to them but outside the agora. After this promenade Pausanias takes a road leading from the Prytaneion to the “lower” city at the southeast (18.4), and after that promenade he picks up a road leading from the Prytaneion to the Theater of Dionysos (20.1).

⁷⁵ Bendis: *IG* II² 1283, lines 7, 15; cf. *IG* I³ 138, lines 3–4, as restored by W. S. Ferguson. Artemis in Agrai: *IG* II² 1006, lines 6–9; *Hesperia* 30, 1961, p. 223, no. 20, lines 3–5; *IG* II² 1008, lines 4–7; 1011, lines 5–7; 1028, lines 5–8; 1029, lines 4–6; *Hesperia* 36, 1967, pp. 65–66, no. 11, lines 3–5.

⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Thes.* 18.1–2, 22.5–6; cf. *Etym. Mag.* s.v. εἰρεσιώνη.

⁷⁷ Miller (1978, pp. 67–127) assembled all the archaeological evidence then available. Hansen and Fischer-Hansen (1994, pp. 32, 35–36, 60), after W. Höpfner and E.-L. Schwandner, add Kassope. At Lato and Ephesos, the Prytaneion is on the north side of the agora; at Kassope, it is on the west side. At Olympia it is at the west end of the north side of the Altis; on Delos, it is on the north side of the square east of Apollo’s temples. The siting of the Prytaneion was among the first considerations when a public square was marked out; a southern or eastern exposure was preferred. Other instances of a Prytaneion, or even of an agora, are more or less uncertain (Kolophon, Magnesia-on-the-Maeander, Morgantina, Priene). Only at Ephesos do we see the overall picture. The Prytaneion (with the Bouleuterion close by) adjoins the main processional route near the corner where it leaves the Upper Agora and runs down to the commercial agora. The existing remains are no earlier than the reign of Augustus, but the pattern can be taken as typical.

⁷⁸ On Kos the public hearth, with its presiding goddess, had a role in the extensive regulations for the festival of Zeus Polieus and can be seen to adjoin the agora where the sacrificial oxen are driven around in a process of selection: *Syll.*³ 1025 (*LSCG* 151 A), lines 19, 27–28. The hearth, by its nature, is indoors, and the building, although unmentioned, can only be a Prytaneion. On Thasos “the street by the Prytaneion” is named in regulations for the upkeep of the main streets: Duchêne 1992, pp. 18–20, lines 43–44, “470–460” (p. 130). It demarcates, together with another street and two public buildings, an open area that might be the Archaic agora: so Duchêne 1992, pp. 101–104, very tentatively. On Siphnos we seem to have a literary instance, the marble Prytaneion and marble agora mentioned together by a Delphic oracle and Herodotos (3.57.4).

⁷⁹ In other cities, too, processions are said to start from the Prytaneion. At Aigiale, for Aleximachos: *IG* XII 7, 515 (*LSCG* Supplement 61), lines 46–47; at Mytilene(?) or Dardanos(?), for Kore: *LSCG* 128, line 3; at Methymna, for the Samothracian Gods: *IG* XII 2, 507, lines 11–13; at Pergamon, for Asklepios and Attalos III: *I.Perg.* 246 (*OGIS* 332), lines 14–17; at Pergamon, for Diodoros Paspáros: *IGR* IV, 292, line 42. On Kos(?) a procession for Demeter returns from the countryside to the Prytaneion and so may have started there: Kallimachos, *H.Cer.* 128.

The legend of the “synoecism” also associates Theseus, indirectly, with the agora. In [Aristotle] and in Plutarch, and therefore in one or more of the Attic chroniclers who stand behind them both, Theseus summons the people of Attika to gather all at once in the city, a visible enactment of the synoecism: Θησεὺς δὲ ἐκήρυξε καὶ συνεβίβασε τούτους ἐπ’ ἴση καὶ ὁμοίαι, “Theseus made proclamation through a herald and brought them together on equal terms” (Herakleides Lembos, *Epit. Ath.* 1). ἔτι δὲ μᾶλλον αὐξῆσαι τὴν πόλιν βουλόμενος ἐκάλει πάντας ἐπὶ τοῖς ἴσοις, καὶ τὸ «δεῦρ’ ἴτε πάντες λεῶν» κήρυγμα Θησεῶς γενέσθαι φασί, πανδημίαν τινὰ καθιστάντος, “Wishing to enlarge the city still further, he summoned everyone on equal terms, and they say that the formula ‘Come hither, all ye host’ originated as a herald’s proclamation of Theseus, when he was effecting a sort of general assembly of the people” (Plutarch, *Thes.* 25.1).

Before this, Plutarch gives a different picture of the synoecism, with other details. Theseus goes around the countryside and “persuades” people of high and low degree;⁸⁰ he creates a single Bouleuterion and Prytaneion; and he institutes two festivals, the Panathenaia and the “Metokia” (24.2–4). To represent the summoning as a second stage, “wishing to enlarge the city still further,” is no more than a narrative device to reconcile different versions. Comparison with [Aristotle] makes it clear that the summoning is itself the synoecism. The people are summoned to muster under arms, for the word λέως in the formula denotes an armed host. Their destination must be the agora, the only place for a general assembly (πανδημία). It is also from the agora that the summons is issued: “Come hither.”

Theseus then summons an armed host to the agora. Solon does the same in a colorful tale that was already bandied by Aischines and Demosthenes (Demosthenes, 19 *De fals. leg.* 251–256). His poem on Salamis was understood as an actual address that roused the Athenians to take up arms and fight.⁸¹ Plutarch describes the scene: “Putting on a little cap, he suddenly rushed out to the agora, and after a large crowd ran up, he mounted the herald’s stone and recited the poem” (*Sol.* 8.1–2). Again, we have a herald and a muster, both in the agora. The two stories include details that must be taken from life: the formula “come hither, all ye host,” the little cap, and the herald’s stone.⁸² Surely it is some familiar celebration. Like many a story of old days, the synoecism is said to be commemorated and reenacted in a certain ritual, which is more truly the inspiration for the story. The ritual is the Synoikia, a festival of mid Hekatombaion, near the beginning of the year.

We learn from a fragment of the “Solonian” calendar of sacrifice that a herald was prominent at the Synoikia.⁸³ The festival setting is not specified, but the Archaic agora would seem highly suitable, inasmuch as the early citizen body, in the form of a pre-Kleisthenic *phylē* and *trittys*, were somehow represented.⁸⁴ The deities honored at the festival are Zeus *phratrios* and Athena *phratría*.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ The word “persuade” keeps ringing out: ἐπειθε, ἐπειθεν, πειθόμενοι (24.2). It belongs to the story that the synoecism was commemorated by the shrine of Aphrodite *panḗmos* and Peitho, “Persuasion” (Pausanias 1.22.3). Since the old processional way leads from the agora to this shrine, Apollodoros (*FGHist* 244 F 113, from Harpokration) can say that Aphrodite *panḗmos* “is established around the agora” and is named for the assemblies there (or perhaps he said “not far from the agora,” and this is Harpokration’s paraphrase). Apollodoros dispenses with legend and applies his guiding principle, that divine epithets express the intrinsic nature of a given deity. The epithet *panḗmos* is merely one instance in his discussion of Aphrodite, whose nature it is to *bring people together* (F 112–114).

⁸¹ The poem (fr. 1 [West]) begins, “I have come as a herald from lovely Salamis, substituting [a poem] for a public notice (ἀντ’ ἀγορῆς).” The herald guise and the public notice are an easy metaphor, which does not presuppose any particular occasion. Lefkowitz (1981, p. 40) is doubtless right to say that the whole story started from these words, but it was soon embroidered with the details that we are about to see.

⁸² Shear (1994, pp. 242–245) offers an ingenious conjecture about the herald’s stone. He equates it with the one on which the archons swore their oath of office and suggests that in ca. 500 it was removed from the old agora to the new to become the actual stone that can be seen today in front of the Stoa Basileios. The herald, however, continued to play a part in ritual, and so it is likely that his stone was left in place.

⁸³ *Hesperia* 4, 1935, pp. 19–21, no. 2 (*LSCG* Supplement 10 A), lines 42–43, 55–58. On both days of the biennial celebration a *kēryx* receives various perquisites.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, lines 35, 47: *phylē* of Gleontes; lines 36–37: *trittys* of Leukotainioi.

⁸⁵ *Hesperia* 4, 1935, pp. 19–21, no. 2 (*LSCG* Supplement 10 A), lines 48–50: sacrifice of oxen to Zeus *phratrios* and Athena *phratría*. For the temple attributed to them in the new Agora, see *Agora* XIV, pp. 139–140.

In the mid 4th century this pair was installed in the new Agora, if the small temple beside that of Apollo *patrōos* has been correctly identified. At an earlier date, we might expect to find them in the Archaic agora.⁸⁶

Perhaps the most striking detail is Solon's cap. Later it was interpreted as a plaster for a sore head: he was feigning madness so as to evade responsibility for his daring action. Rather, it was part of the festival. Soldiers once wore a leather cap, *pilos* or *kynē*, until it was replaced by a metal helmet. The herald wore it because this was a muster under arms. Both the herald and the cap reappear in a famous story at Sparta, likewise inspired by a ceremonial muster in the agora. Here the muster almost becomes a revolt, but at the last moment the insurgents, the Partheniai, are forestalled: the herald forbids them to raise their caps as a signal.⁸⁷ Implicit in the story is a festival occasion on which the armed levy first assemble and then, as a gesture on command, smartly raise and don their caps.

The two Athenian tales, of Theseus' synoecism and of Solon's call to arms, were deduced from the ceremonial muster in the usual etiological way, after its real purpose was forgotten or ignored. That purpose was to demonstrate the strength and unity of Attika and also to serve as a drill, so that Athenians were ready to muster at need, as when they came straight from the fields to put down Kylon's coup (Thucydides 1.126.7). It is yet another etiology to say that Peisistratos, in tyrant fashion, perverted the good old custom (§III).

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⁸⁶ There is a complication that can only be acknowledged, not explained. The rules of the deme Skambonidai show that after Kleisthenes, demes might be somehow included in the Synoikia (*IG I³* 244, C 16–19, "c. a. 460"), as we would hardly expect from the "Solonian" calendar. The deme offers sacrifice "at the Synoikia on the Akropolis" and sells off the meat. The Akropolis is not the place for Zeus *phratrios* and Athena *phratría*, the festival deities, nor do they otherwise consort with demes. Was it not appropriate for demes to appear as such in the Archaic agora? Did Skambonidai as an old city quarter have some traditional involvement in the Synoikia?

⁸⁷ Jacoby (on Ephoros, *FGrHist* 70 F 216) distinguishes three versions, as follows: (1) Antiochos, *FGrHist* 555 F 13, from Strabo; (2) Ephoros, F 216, also from Strabo; Aristotle, *Pol.* 1306b29; Diodoros 8.21.1–2; Polyainos 2.14.2; (3) Theopompos, *FGrHist* 115 F 171 (a summary report). In Ephoros, the young men are to raise a cap in the agora, but the plot has been divulged to the authorities and a herald forbids them to do so. In Antiochos, the assembly takes place not in the agora but at the festival Hyakinthia, at Amyklai; yet putting on a cap is still the signal, and a herald forbids it.

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