

# Pindar Fr. 75 SM and the Politics of Athenian Space

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Towns are the illusion that things hang together somehow.  
Anne Carson, "The Life of Towns"

IT IS WELL KNOWN that Pindar's poems were occasional—composed on commission for specific performance settings. But they were also, we contend, situational: mutually implicated with particular landscapes, buildings, and material artifacts. Pindar makes constant reference to precious objects and products of craft, both real and metaphorical; he differs, in this regard, from his contemporary Bacchylides. For this reason, Pindar provides a rich phenomenology of viewing, an insider's perspective on the embodied experience of moving through a built environment amidst statues, buildings, and other monuments. Analysis of the poetic text in tandem with the material record makes it possible to reconstruct phenomenologies of sculpture, architecture, and landscape. Our example in this essay is Pindar's fragment 75 SM and its immediate context: the cityscape of early Classical Athens. Our hope is that putting these two domains of evidence together will shed new light on both—the poem will help us solve problems in the archaeological record, and conversely, the archaeological record will help us solve problems in the poem. Ultimately, our argument will be less about political history, and more about the ordering of bodies in space, as this is mediated or constructed by Pindar's poetic *sophia*. This is to attend to the way Pindar works in three dimensions, as it were, to produce meaningful relations amongst entities in the world.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Interest in Pindar and his material context has burgeoned in recent

Dionysios of Halikarnassos provides us with the first nineteen lines of a Pindaric dithyramb for the Athenians, quoted as a sample of the “austere style” in poetry:

Δεῦτ' ἐν χορόν, Ὀλύμπιοι,  
ἐπὶ τε κλυτὰν πέμπετε χάριν, θεοί,  
πολύβατον οἷ τ' ἄστεος ὄμφαλὸν θυόεντ'  
ἐν ταῖς ἱεραῖς Ἀθάναις  
οἰχνεῖτε πανδαίδαλόν τ' εὐκλέ' ἀγοράν· 5  
ιοδέτων λάχετε στεφάνων τᾶν τ' ἔαρι-  
δρόπων ἀοιδᾶν,  
Διόθεν τέ με σὺν ἀγλαΐᾳ  
ἴδετε πορευθέντ' ἀοιδᾶν δεύτερον  
ἐπὶ τὸν κισσοδαῆ θεόν,  
τὸν Βρόμιον, τὸν Ἐριβόαν τε βροτοὶ καλέομεν, 10  
γόνον ὑπάτων μὲν πατέρων μελπόμεν(οι)  
γυναικῶν τε Καδμεϊᾶν {Σεμέλην}.

years. Many of the essays in S. Hornblower and C. Morgan (eds.), *Pindar's Poetry, Patrons and Festivals* (Oxford 2007), L. Athanassaki and E. Bowie (eds.), *Archaic and Classical Choral Song: Performance, Politics and Dissemination* (Berlin 2011), and D. Fearn (ed.), *Aegina: Contexts for Choral Lyric Poetry* (Oxford 2011), touch directly and indirectly on these matters from a variety of perspectives. See in particular P. O'Sullivan, “Victory Statue, Victory Song: Pindar's Agonistic Poetics and its Legacy,” in D. J. Phillips and D. Pritchard (eds.), *Sport and Festival in the Ancient Greek World* (Swansea 2003) 75–100; R. R. R. Smith, “Pindar, Athletes, and the Early Greek Statue Habit,” in *Pindar's Poetry* 83–140; M. Pavlou, “Pindar *Olympian* 3: Mapping Acragas on the Periphery of the Earth,” *CQ* 60 (2010) 313–326, and “Pindar's *Nemean* 5: Real and Poetic Statues,” *Phoenix* 64 (2010) 1–17; T. Power, “Cyberchorus: Pindar's *Κηληδόνας* and the Aura of the Artificial,” in *Archaic and Classical Choral Song* 67–113; L. Athanassaki, “Giving Wings to the Aeginetan Sculptures: The Panhellenic Aspirations of Pindar's *Eighth Olympian*,” in *Aegina* 257–293, and “Song, Politics and Cultural Memory: Pindar's *Pythian* 7 and the Alcmaeonid Temple of Apollo,” in *Archaic and Classical Choral Song* 235–68. Older but still valuable is K. Shapiro, “Ἕμνων θησαυρός: Pindar's Sixth Pythian Ode and the Treasury of the Siphnians at Delphi,” *MusHelv* 45 (1988) 1–5. The text of Pindar is cited from B. Snell and H. Maehler, *Pindari carmina cum fragmentis* I–II (Stuttgart/Leipzig 1997–2001). Unless otherwise indicated, translations are our own.

ἐναγρέα τ' ἔμ' ὅτε μάντιν οὐ λανθάνει,  
 φοινικοεάνων ὀπότ' οἰχθέντος Ὠρῶν θαλάμου  
 εὖοδμον ἐπάγοισιν ἔαρ φυτὰ νεκτάρεια. 15  
 τότε βάλλεται, τὸτ' ἐπ' ἀμβρόταν χθόν' ἔραταί  
 ἴων φόβαι, ῥόδα τε κόμαισι μείγνυται,  
 ἀχεῖ τ' ὀμφαὶ μελέων σὺν ἀύλοις,  
 οἰχνεῖ τε Σεμέλαν ἑλικάμπυκα χοροί.

[Come] here to the chorus and send glorious grace upon it, Olympian gods, you who approach the much-trodden fragrant-with-incense navel-stone of the city in holy Athens and the all-decorated, famous agora. Receive a share of crowns bound with violets and songs culled in the spring, and look [with favor] upon me as I go from Zeus with the radiance of songs secondly to the ivy-knowing god, whom we mortals call Roarer (*Bromios*), whom we call Loud-shouter (*Eriboas*), singing and dancing in celebration of the offspring of the highest fathers and Kadmeian women. And clear [signs] do not escape my notice, as if I were a seer, when, with the chamber of the red-robed Horai opened, nectarous plants lead on the spring so that it is [even more] fragrant. Then, then the lovely locks of violets are cast upon the ambrosial earth, and roses are mixed with hair, and voices of songs resound with the accompaniment of pipes, and choruses approach Semele with her circular headband.

Pindar's first datable extant poem (*Pythian* 10) was composed for a victory in 498 BCE; his last (*Pythian* 8) for a victory in 446 BCE. Within the poet's active career of more than fifty years, we have no way of dating the dithyramb fragment.<sup>2</sup> As for the

<sup>2</sup> For some scholars, δεῦτερον (8) provides a *terminus post quem* of 497/6; but see discussion, 564–566 below. Several archaeological discussions citing this fragment rely on the date suggested by C. M. Bowra, *Pindar* (Oxford 1964) 408 (“474?”), but it should be noted that Bowra's dating only applies to fr. 76–77 SM (the famous dithyramb for Athens which begins “O shining and violet-crowned and celebrated in song, bulwark of Hellas, glorious Athens”). Fr. 76 and 77 SM may well belong to the same dithyramb, but are highly unlikely to derive from the same poem as fr. 75 SM for metrical reasons (see U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Griechische Verskunst* [Berlin 1921] 311–312 with n.6). Bowra's listing of fr. 75 SM under the year 474 is

performance context, the prominent references to Dionysos and the coming of spring strongly suggest a Dionysiac festival. This is more likely to be the City Dionysia in late March than the Anthesteria in late February; for the latter festival, in fact, we have no certain evidence for dithyrambic performances.<sup>3</sup>

Given Pindar's opening invocation of the Olympian gods to come to the "all-decorated agora," most scholars have taken the "much-trodden, fragrant-with-incense *omphalos*" of line 3 (co-ordinated with ἀγορᾶν by τ(ε) in line 5) to designate the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian agora.<sup>4</sup> This Altar was the

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therefore misleading and should not be relied upon.

<sup>3</sup> K. Friis Johansen, *Eine Dithyrambos-Aufführung* (Copenhagen 1959), argued for dithyrambic performances at the Anthesteria on the basis of a single vase representation of what he identified as six named individuals in the garb of a dithyrambic chorus arrayed around a "maypole" (Copenhagen, National Museum 13817; Beazley Archive Database No. 215175). Johansen connected this vase with Pindar fr. 75 SM as evidence for dithyrambic performances, otherwise entirely unattested, at the Anthesteria. T. B. L. Webster, in A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb Tragedy and Comedy*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1962) 37–38, was inclined to accept Johansen's argument, and Johansen's theory has been followed by G. A. Privitera, "Saffo, Anacreonte, Pindaro," *QUCC* 13 (1972) 137–138, and expanded by B. Bravo, *Pannychis e simposio: Feste private notturne di donne e uomini nei testi letterari e nel culto* (Pisa 1997) 43–99. Nonetheless, as R. Hamilton, "The Pindaric Dithyramb," *HSCP* 93 (1990) 222, notes, "If there had been competitions at the Anthesteria famous enough to attract Pindar, they should have left some record." For critique of Johansen's interpretation see E. Simon, *Festivals of Attica: An Archaeological Commentary* (Madison 1983) 98–99 (citing older scholarship); Hamilton 219–222; P. Wilson, *The Athenian Institution of the Khoregia: The Chorus, the City and the Stage* (Cambridge 2000) 320–321 n.104.

<sup>4</sup> Thus U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Pindaros* (Berlin 1922) 274; A. Puech, *Pindare* IV (Paris 1923) 153 n.1; L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar* II (London 1932) 415; Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb* 21; R. E. Wycherley, *The Stones of Athens* (Princeton 1978) 33, 205; G. Kirkwood, *Selections from Pindar* (Chico 1982) 329; S. Lavecchia, *Pindari Dithyramborum fragmenta* (Rome 2000) 257–260. As Lavecchia (258) notes, the adjective θυόεντα is particularly apt for an altar; cf. Pind. *Pai.* 3.8–9, Eur. *Tro.* 1061. Minority views: Hamilton, *HSCP* 93 (1990) 221, M. J. H. van der Weiden, *The Dithyrambs of Pindar* (Amsterdam 1991) 193, and W. D. Furley and J. M. Bremer, *Greek Hymns* II

‘kilometer zero’ of Athens, the notional center of the polis as a whole—or, in Pindar’s figure, its *omphalos* or “navel.”<sup>5</sup> A natural consequence is that the poem was, in fact, intended for performance in the agora: the chorus summons the gods to that spot. This venue is not, in itself, especially remarkable. Although one might expect dithyrambs to be performed in the Theater of Dionysos, Xenophon mentions a tradition of choruses “going around in a circle” in the agora during the Dionysia. These choruses, he says, “gratify in addition the other gods and especially the Twelve by singing and dancing.”<sup>6</sup> As L. R. Farnell

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(Tübingen 2001) 210, argue that *omphalos* refers to the Acropolis; C. Schnurr, “Die alte Agora Athens,” *ZPE* 105 (1995) 134–135, argues for the Altar of Zeus Agoraios in the old agora of Athens (on this see below).

<sup>5</sup> In the latter respect then just like the *omphalos* stone set up by Zeus at Delphi. Strabo 9.3.6 tells us that Pindar himself narrated the myth of Zeus dispatching two eagles from the ends of the earth and setting the *omphalos* stone at Delphi, where they met each other (fr. 54 SM; cf. Paus. 10.16.3).

<sup>6</sup> Xen. *Hipp.* 3.2: τὰς μὲν οὖν πομπὰς οἶομαι ἂν καὶ τοῖς θεοῖς κεχαρισμενωτάτας καὶ τοῖς θεαταῖς εἶναι εἰ, ὅσων ἱερὰ καὶ ἀγάλματα ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἐστὶ, ταῦτα ἀρξάμενοι ἀπὸ τῶν Ἑρμῶν κύκλῳ περιελαύνουσι τιμῶντες τοὺς θεοὺς. καὶ ἐν τοῖς Διονυσίοις δὲ οἱ χοροὶ προσεπιχαρίζονται ἄλλοις τε θεοῖς καὶ τοῖς δώδεκα χορεύοντες (“In my opinion, processions are most pleasing to both gods and spectators if, however many [gods] have shrines and cult statues in the agora, [the cavalry] march around these in a circle, beginning from the Herms, and thereby honor the gods. Just so the choruses at the Dionysia gratify in addition both the other gods and [especially] the Twelve by singing and dancing”). Scholars once assumed that earlier theatrical and dithyrambic performances took place in the agora: see (e.g.) N. G. L. Hammond, “The Conditions of Dramatic Production to the Death of Aeschylus,” *GRBS* 13 (1972) 389–405, and F. Kolb, *Agora und Theater, Volks- und Festversammlung* (Berlin 1981) 20–61. But see S. Scullion, *Three Studies in Athenian Dramaturgy* (Stuttgart 1994) 52–65, for a strong argument that the late lexicographical tradition is not a reliable guide to early performances in the agora, and that we should rather assume that “from the beginning all dramatic performances in Athens took place on the south-east slope of the Akropolis” (65); for further arguments against early theatrical performances in the agora see E. Csapo, “The Earliest Phase of ‘Comic’ Choral Entertainments in Athens: The Dionysian Pompe and the ‘Birth’ of Comedy,” in S. Chronopoulos and C. Orth (eds.), *Fragmente einer Geschichte der griechischen Komödie / Fragmentary*

and others have argued, Xenophon is probably referring to performances that formed part of the great festal procession that opened the City Dionysia (the *pompê*). This lavish parade included sacrifices, offerings, and probably both *phallophoroi* and the dithyrambic choruses led by their *chorêgoi* in their full regalia.<sup>7</sup>

Such a performance context would accord remarkably well with what we have of Pindar's dithyramb. It helps to explain, for instance, the poem's opening invocation of the Olympian gods in a song ostensibly in honor of Dionysos; it might also account for the syntactic simplicity of this song.<sup>8</sup> This is then not a dithyramb composed for competition by one tribal chorus of men or boys in a given year, but instead a poem intended for performance by a (perhaps smaller?) choral group circling

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*History of Greek Comedy* (Studia Comica 5 [2014]) 97–106.

<sup>7</sup> For the association of Xenophon's reference with the procession see Farnell, *Works of Pindar* II 415; A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1988) 62 (more tentatively, acknowledging that this could also be a reference to the *eisagôgê*); Wilson, *Khoregia* 97–98; Csapo, in *Fragmente* 92–96. For the route and elements of the *pompê* see Pickard-Cambridge, *Dramatic Festivals* 61–63, and E. Csapo and W. J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor 1995) 104–106, 112–115. Indeed, Peter Wilson has suggested, following Foucart, that we might detect a trace of these choral performances forming part of the *pompê* in an Attic inscription from 186/5 set up in the Theater of Dionysos, which awards a crown to “five free boys and their *didaskalos*” (*IG* II<sup>3</sup> 1284.59). As Paul Foucart had argued already in 1877, this cannot represent the crown for the boys' dithyrambic contest; instead, Wilson suggests, this may be a special honor voted by the city for the pious execution of songs by a chorus of boys participating in the festival *pompê* (see P. Foucart, “Sur l'authenticité de la Loi d'Évégoros citée dan la Midienne,” *RPhil* N.S. I 2 [1877] 177–179; Wilson, *Khoregia* 346 n.221).

<sup>8</sup> That this opening invocation is in fact a problem is made clear by van der Weiden's contorted efforts to explain it away: “The fact, however, that the invoked gods are not the recipients of the poem (which is, of course, Dionysus), must make us aware that this is not a real hymnal opening. It has no cult intention, but is ‘merely’ meant to make a *πρόσωπον τηλαυγές* (O.6, 3–4), a grand opening ... Since dithyrambs are hymns to Dionysus we expect hymnal elements directed at him, and they can be found in the second part of the fragment” (*Dithyrambs of Pindar* 186).

around the altars of various gods as part of the festival *pompê*.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, if fr. 75 SM was intended to be performed in this way, it is tempting to suggest that Dionysios of Halikarnassos might be quoting a substantial portion of the full text of the song (at least a third or a half of the whole), and that it might have been a composition that was performed regularly for many years at the Dionysia (hence its familiarity).<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This is the performance context assumed by Farnell, *Works of Pindar* II 415: “The prevailing opinion that it was intended to be sung, not in the theatre, but in the old market-place before the altar of the Twelve Gods—the one built by the younger Peisistratos and enlarged later by the demos (*vide* Thuc. vi.54.6)—is most probable; it not only gives special force to l. 5, and the most natural meaning to ὁμοῶδες ἄσπετος, but it is confirmed by Xenophon’s statement that the Dionysiac choruses at Athens performed a special service of thanksgiving to the Twelve Gods.” Cf. Csapo, in *Fragmente* 100–104, who likewise argues that fr. 75 SM was a non-competitive dithyramb performed by a chorus processing and circling around the Altar of the Twelve Gods as part of the *pompê* of the City Dionysia.

<sup>10</sup> It is striking that Dionysios cites nineteen lines of the poem, but only offers word-by-word and sound-effect analysis for the first nine lines. How to account for this discrepancy? Dionysios is not simply quoting as far as the first major syntactic break/period (as we might expect), for that falls at line 12. Van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 189, suggests that Dionysios’ reference to the song’s ἀρχή indicates that he is quoting a complete metrical unit (i.e., the first strophe of the song). This may well be, but we would add that the whole poem would perhaps be no longer than a single triad, or if astrophic, no more than two or three times the length of the quotation. (For arguments against assuming a triadic structure here see Hamilton, *HSCP* 93 [1990] 211–212.) In addition, we would suggest that Dionysios may be motivated in the length of his quotation by the rhetorical structure of these nineteen lines, which exhibit ring-composition and work up to a climax in lines 16–19 (on which see below). His introduction of the quotation is not a bar to this posited length. He says, “And let Pindar begin—and there is a certain dithyramb of his which begins...” (ἀρχέτω δὲ Πίνδαρος, καὶ τούτου διθύραμβός τις οὗ ἐστὶν ἀρχή: *Comp.* 22.4), but a quotation introduced by ἀρχή can constitute as much as half the length of the whole; cf. Athenaeus’ quotation (13.573F) of Pindar fr. 122 SM. For the familiarity of the poem, notice how well known most of Dionysios’ examples are in this treatise—e.g., especially Thucydides, from whom he quotes a sentence from the funeral oration (Thuc. 2.35.1: *Comp.* 18) and the opening paragraph of the *History* (*Comp.* 22).

Thus we consider the identification of Pindar's *omphalos* with the Altar of the Twelve Gods compelling. But it is worth pausing over the poet's specific word choice. Although *omphalos* makes sense as a metaphor for the 'zero kilometer' of Athens, it also evokes the holy *omphalos* at Pytho—a sense that the reference to *manteia* in line 13 only seems to confirm.<sup>11</sup> This Apolline element may seem out of place in a Dionysiac context, but it has its own motivation: at Athens, the Altar of the Twelve Gods had a prior association with Apollo Pythios. Peisistratos the Younger—son of the tyrant Hippias and grandson of the tyrant Peisistratos—had dedicated both the Altar of the Twelve and the Altar of Apollo Pythios during his archonship in 522/1. Thucydides (6.54.6–7) describes what were evidently famous acts of piety:

τὰ δὲ ἄλλα αὐτὴ ἡ πόλις τοῖς πρὶν κειμένοις νόμοις ἐχρήτο, πλὴν καθ' ὅσον αἰεὶ τινα ἐπεμέλοντο σφῶν αὐτῶν ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς εἶναι. καὶ ἄλλοι τε αὐτῶν ἠρξαν τὴν ἐνιαύσιον Ἀθηναίοις ἀρχὴν καὶ Πεισίστρατος ὁ Ἰππίου τοῦ τυραννεύσαντος υἱός, τοῦ πάππου ἔχων τοῦνομα, ὃς τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν βωμὸν τὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἄρχων ἀνέθηκε καὶ τὸν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ἐν Πυθίου. καὶ τῷ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ προσοικοδομήσας ὕστερον ὁ δῆμος Ἀθηναίων μείζον μῆκος τοῦ βωμοῦ ἠφάνισε τοῦπίγραμμα· τοῦ δ' ἐν Πυθίου ἔτι καὶ νῦν δηλὸν ἐστὶν ἀμυδροῖς γράμμασι λέγον τάδε·

μνήμα τόδ' ἦς ἀρχῆς Πεισίστρατος Ἰππίου υἱός  
θῆκεν Ἀπόλλωνος Πυθίου ἐν τεμένει.

<sup>11</sup> Indeed, this is Pindar's only metaphorical use of the term *omphalos*; all seven other occurrences in the Pindaric corpus designate the navel-stone at Pytho (*Pyth.* 4.74, 6.3, 8.59, 11.10, *Nem.* 7.33, *Pai.* 6.17, fr. 215b.12 SM). For a parallel for *omphalos* used metaphorically to designate an altar or shrine "in the agora" of Megara see Simonides Epigram XVI.9–10 Page (= *IG VII* 53, for Megarian citizens fallen in the Persian Wars): ἀστοὶ δ' ἄμμι τόδε (ξυνὸν) γέρας ὀμφαλῶ ἄμφις / Νισαίων ἔπορον λαοδόκῳ 'ν ἀγορᾷ. Although the text is a reinscription of the fourth century CE, D. L. Page, *Further Greek Epigrams* (Oxford 1981) 214–215, considers nothing in the full epigram inconsistent with an early date of ca. 479 BCE. Indeed, for Page, the bold image in *omphalos* here strongly suggests an early and original composition: "The tomb was 'about the navel', a site further defined as 'in the *agora*'. The phrase is novel and striking, unlikely to be the work of an 'expander'" (215).



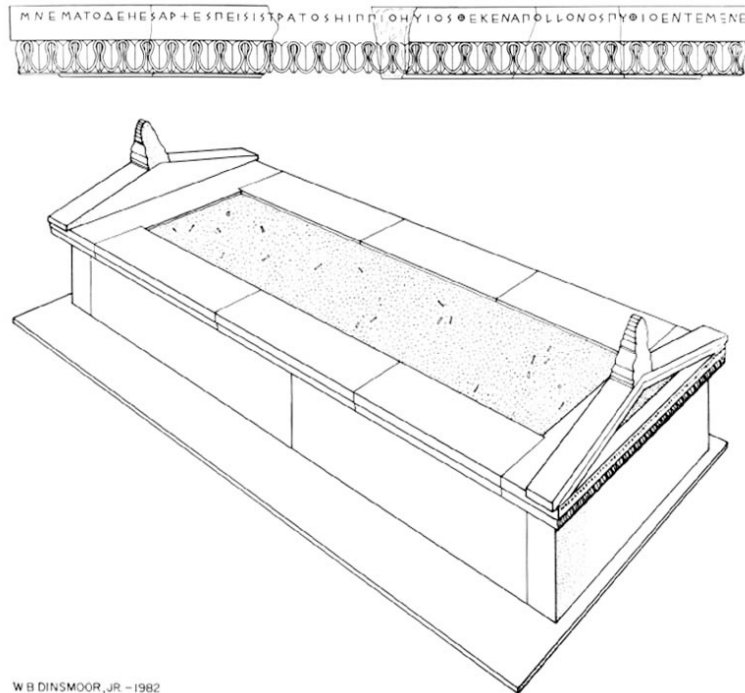
For the rest, the city was left in full enjoyment of its existing laws, except that care was always taken to have one of the family among the archons. Among those relatives who held the yearly archonship at Athens was Peisistratos, son of the tyrant Hippias, and named after his grandfather, who when he was archon dedicated the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the agora, and that of Apollo in the Pythion. The Athenian people afterwards built onto and lengthened the altar in the agora, and obliterated the inscription; but that in the Pythion can still be seen, though in faded letters, and is to the following effect: "Peisistratos son of Hippias set up this memorial of his archonship in the precinct of Apollo Pythios."<sup>12</sup>

The Pythion inscription itself survives (*fig. 1*).<sup>13</sup> Thucydides, at any rate, is clear: Peisistratos' gestures lived on in Athenian memory, thanks to commemorative inscriptions, to the point that the democracy at some later date felt compelled to take action. Pindar's metaphor seems particularly evocative in this light. Its juxtaposition of a (Pythian) *omphalos* with the Altar of the Twelve Gods makes good sense given the day-to-day realities of Athenian public cult.

In what follows, we shall argue that Pindar's dithyramb was indeed performed by a *kuklios khoros* circling around the Altar of the Twelve Gods, as most scholars have assumed. But we shall also suggest that, in Pindar's lifetime, this monument was located in the old agora of Athens to the east of the Acropolis. Set in this context, Pindar's poem offers a set of coherent topographic cues that point us to the ancient shrines and cult centers in that neighborhood. This thematic of place is integral to the poem's purpose within the broader milieu of fifth-century Athens.

<sup>12</sup> Thuc. 6.54.6–7, transl. Crawley (modified).

<sup>13</sup> Athens, Epigraphical Museum 6787 (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 948, CEG 305*). For the 2009 discovery of a new fragment see [http://www.greekepigraphicsociety.org.gr/newsletter\\_05-2011.aspx](http://www.greekepigraphicsociety.org.gr/newsletter_05-2011.aspx) (accessed July 2013).



*Figure 1:* The Altar of Apollo Pythios, dedicated by Peisistratos the Younger, with inscription. Drawing courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

### *The Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods and the regulation of space*

The Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods was, like many others, a place of refuge for fugitives. More importantly, and uniquely, its altar was the ‘kilometer zero’ or *milliarium aureum* for Athens: distances in Attica and beyond were measured to and from this spot.<sup>14</sup> A fifth-century inscription gives a sense of the altar’s role

<sup>14</sup> Testimonia: Wycherly, *Agora III* (1957), nos. 203, 363–378, 698. Although we have no explicit testimony from the archaic period for its functioning as a zero milestone, the Altar of the Twelve seems highly likely to

in organizing the Athenian landscape:<sup>15</sup>

[ἡ πόλις] ἔστ<η>σ[έμ με β]ροτ[οῖς] μνημεῖον ἀληθὲς  
 [πᾶσιν] σημαίνει[ιν μ<έ>τρ[ον] ὁδοιπορίας·  
 [— — — τ]ὸ μεταχρῶν θεῶν πρὸς δώδεκα βωμὸν  
 [πέντ' ἐπὶ?] τεσσαράκοντ' ἐγ λιμένος στάδιοι.

The City set me, a truthful memorial, to sign to all mortals the measure of their journeying; the distance to the Altar of the Twelve Gods from the Harbor is forty-five stades.

The Altar was, in short, a device for regulating Athenian space: it formalized the landscape in terms of political institutions.

The organization of space was a concern of the Peisistratidai, as of other Archaic tyrants. During this same period, Hipparkhos son of Peisistratos—brother of Hippias and uncle of Peisistratos the Younger—erected herms at the halfway point between Athens and each of its subordinate townships, or demes.<sup>16</sup> These semi-iconic monuments, hybrids of statues and boundary-markers, organized the landscape relative to the city and its demes according to a metrical system, and thereby made the regime visible on the ground. Like the Altar, the herms were *topopoetic*, ‘makers of places’, in the sense that they constituted hitherto unmarked or unexceptional bits of landscape as meaningful within a larger matrix.

Yet this system did not arise in a vacuum. Preceding both herms and altar were less centralized ways of ‘zoning’ or ‘territorializing’ the landscape. Boundary stones, *horoi*, were one

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have served as the centerpoint of the system of Hipparkhan herms (thus R. Parker, *Athenian Religion: A History* [Oxford 1996] 73 n.23, 81; see discussion below). If this was the case, then this function should date to the Altar’s earliest foundation. Welcome evidence for its role as a site of refuge already ca. 519 BCE comes from Hdt. 6.108.4, who describes the Plataians taking refuge there when they offer themselves to the Athenians.

<sup>15</sup> *IG I<sup>3</sup> 1092bis* (2 init. Boeckh) = Wycherly, *Agora III*, no. 374. Cf. Hdt. 2.7.1, calculating the distance from the Altar to Olympia.

<sup>16</sup> An analogy noted in H. A. Shapiro, *Art and Cult under the Tyrants in Athens* (Mainz 1989) 133.

method; their legitimacy could be contested, as is evident from Solon's triumphant claim to have removed them (ὄρους ἀνεῖλον).<sup>17</sup> Herms resembled these traditional markers in their pillar-like, aniconic aspect; they were certainly understood to have evolved from them and from the *Hermaioi lophoi*, small cairns that marked boundaries in Homer.<sup>18</sup> As iconic images, however, the herms also resembled statuary—another space-regulating technology. Mortuary precincts, many of them small and clan-based, punctuated the Attic countryside; they contained bright memorials—kouroi, korai, and stelai—that attested to the power of local elites in rural districts. The Hipparkhan herms were civic counterparts to these aristocratic grave monuments, recasting the landscape relative to the *astu* and the tyranny.<sup>19</sup>

Each herm, accordingly, bore two inscriptions, one locating it in space and the other consisting of a gnomic epigram by Hipparkhos himself (“This [is] a Reminder of Hipparkhos: Walk with Just Intent,” “This [is] a Reminder of Hipparkhos: Deceive Not a Friend,” and the like).<sup>20</sup> A surviving example reads

<sup>17</sup> Solon fr.32.3–7 West. On Attic boundary stones see J. Ober, “Greek *Horoi*: Artifactual Texts and the Contingency of Meaning,” in *Athenian Legacies* (Princeton 2005) 183–211, with earlier bibliography.

<sup>18</sup> Hom. *Od.* 16.471, with Paus. 3.10.6, 8.34.6, and 8.35.2–3. See also R. Osborne, “The Erection and Mutilation of the *Hermai*,” *PCPS* 31 (1985) 47–73; M. Gaifman, *Aniconism in Greek Antiquity* (Oxford 2012).

<sup>19</sup> R. T. Neer, *The Emergence of the Classical Style in Greek Sculpture* (Chicago 2010) 28–30; see also J. Quinn, “Herms, Kouroi and the Political Anatomy of Athens,” *G&R* 54 (2007) 82–105.

<sup>20</sup> [Pl.] *Hipparch.* 228D–229B: “He proceeded, with the design of educating those of the countryside, to set up figures of Hermes for them along the roads at the midpoint between the city and every deme; and then, after selecting from his own wise lore, both learnt from others and discovered for himself, the things that he considered the wisest, he threw these into elegiac form and inscribed them on the figures as verses of his own and testimonies of his wisdom, so that in the first place his people should not admire those wise Delphic legends of ‘Know thyself’ and ‘Nothing overmuch’, and the other sayings of the sort, but should rather regard as wise the utterances of Hipparchus; and that in the second place, through passing up and down and

(IG I<sup>3</sup> 1023 = CEG 304):

[ἐ]ν μῆσοι Κεφαλῆς τε καὶ ἄστεος ἀγλαὸς ἡερμῆς.

At the midpoint of Kephale and the town, radiant Hermes.

This formulaic verse runs down one side of the herm. Along the other side, where the Hipparkhan gnome would have been, the text seems deliberately to have been effaced; a curious form of *damnatio memoriae*, leaving the tyrant's name but effacing his words.<sup>21</sup>

μνῆμα τόδε ἡπ(π)άρχο· [---].

This [is] a reminder of Hipparkhos: [text missing].

Made of bright, flashing stone, the “radiant” Hermes was visible from afar and thereby provided a point of reference for organizing the landscape, like a beacon in the wilderness. One side performed this task with reference to the *astu* or town, the other with reference to the Peisistratid regime.

The Altar of the Twelve Gods was the focal point of this system, like the spider at the center of a web. By evoking this monument, with reference specifically to its Peisistratid origin and its ‘topopoetic’ function, Pindar points us to one theme of his dithyramb: the politics of space under democracy.

*The Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods: archaeological evidence*

Precisely because the Altar of the Twelve Gods was topopoetic in Athens, its exact location is a matter of some urgency

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reading his words and acquiring a taste for his wisdom, they might resort hither from the country for the completion of their education. There are two such inscriptions of his: on the left side of each Hermes there is one in which the god says that he stands in the midst of the city or the township, while on the right side he says: *The memorial of Hipparchus: walk with just intent*. There are many other fine inscriptions from his poems on other figures of Hermes, and this one in particular, on the Steiria road, in which he says: *The memorial of Hipparchus: deceive not a friend*.” Transl. Lamb.

<sup>21</sup> A. Aloni, “Anacreonte a Atene. Datazione e significato di alcune iscrizioni tiranniche,” *ΣPE* 130 (2000) 83.

for any understanding of Pindar's poem. The matter seems straightforward: Pindar locates the Altar in the "all-decorated agora," and the excavators seem to have found it there, just opposite the Stoa of Zeus.<sup>22</sup> The site lies, for the most part, directly beneath the modern Athens-Piraeus railway; only the southwest corner of the precinct is accessible, excavated in 1934 and again in 1946 by the American School of Classical Studies (*fig. 2*). In 2011, work on the railway line briefly revealed more of the precinct; despite protests from archaeologists and neopagans, it was quickly re-buried, but not before valuable salvage work was performed under the auspices of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ephoreia.<sup>23</sup> The principal surviving elements are as follows (*figs. 3, 4*):

- The sill of a low peribolos wall, reused as a foundation ("Sill 1").
- Another peribolos sill, resting atop the earlier one ("Sill 2").
- A few paving slabs from the interior of the *temenos*.
- Some fragments of what seems to be an altar, found underneath the pavement.

The identification of these remains with the Twelve Gods derives from a statue base that abuts the exterior of the peribolos (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 951; fig. 5*):

[Λ]έαγρος : ἀνέθεκεν : Γλαύκονος  
 δώδεκα θεοῖσιν.

Leagros, son of Glaukon, dedicated [this] to the Twelve Gods.

<sup>22</sup> On the Altar see M. Crosby, "The Altar of the Twelve Gods in Athens," *Hesperia* Suppl. 8 (1949) 82–103; H. A. Thompson, "The Altar of Pity in the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 21 (1952) 47–82; Shapiro, *Art and Cult* 133–141; L. Gadbery, "The Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian Agora: A Revised View," *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 447–489; N. Saraga, "Νέα στοιχεία από τη σωστική έμερα της Α' Εφορείας στην Αρχαία Αγορά της Αθήνας," in S. Oikonomou and M. Donka-Tole (eds.), *Αρχαιολογικές Συμβολές Β Αττική* (Athens 2013) 128–148. Testimonia: Wycherley, *Agora* III, nos. 361–378.

<sup>23</sup> See [http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/\\_w\\_articles\\_wsite4\\_1\\_17/02/2011\\_379147](http://www.ekathimerini.com/4dcgi/_w_articles_wsite4_1_17/02/2011_379147). Photos: <http://eineken.pblogs.gr/tags/bomos-12-theon-gr.html>. Retrieved 31 July 2014. An excellent preliminary report of the salvage excavation may be found in Saraga, in *Αρχαιολογικές Συμβολές Β* 128–148.

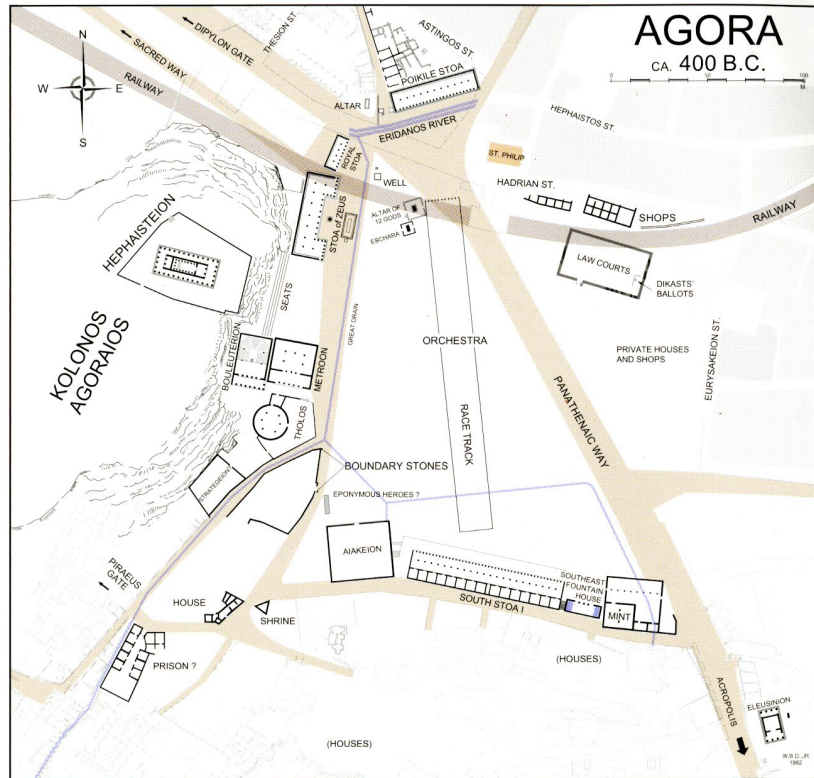


Figure 2: Plan of the Athenian Agora at the Kerameikos  
 (“the Classical Agora”) ca. 400 BCE.  
 Drawing courtesy of the American School of  
 Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

There is no other evidence for the identification, which has never, to our knowledge, been questioned.<sup>24</sup>

The original excavators associated the altar fragments and

<sup>24</sup> See, *inter alia*, R. Osborne, “Did Democracy Transform Athenian Space?” in R. Westgate et al. (eds.), *Building Communities: House, Settlement and Society in the Aegean and Beyond* (BSA Studies 15 [2007]) 196.

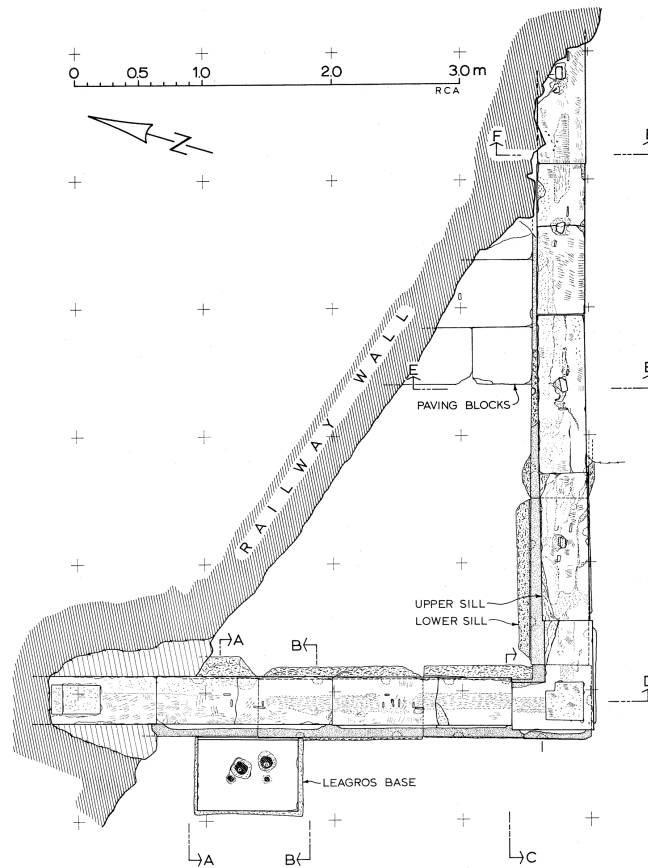


Figure 3: Athens, Agora, Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods: site plan (this plan does not take account of recent salvage excavations). Drawing courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

the first phase (Sill 1) of the peribolos with Peisistratos the Younger, ca. 522/1, and dated the second phase (Sill 2) and the interior pavement to the last third of the fifth century.<sup>25</sup> More recently, however, Laura Gadbery has shown that the stratig-

<sup>25</sup> Crosby, *Hesperia* Suppl. 8 (1949) 101.



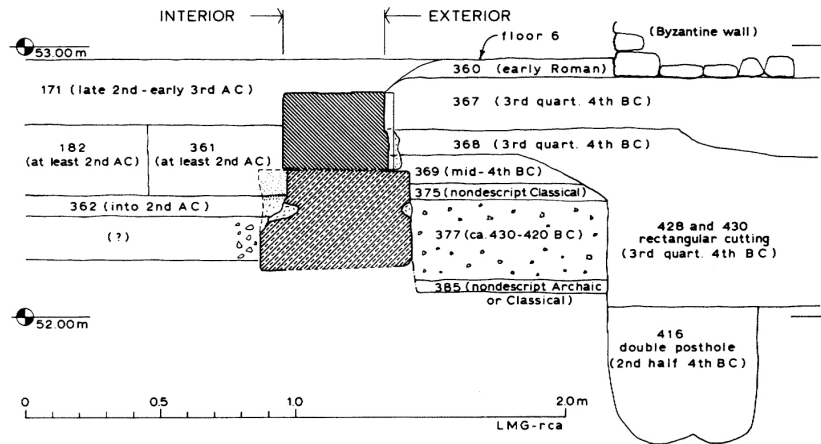
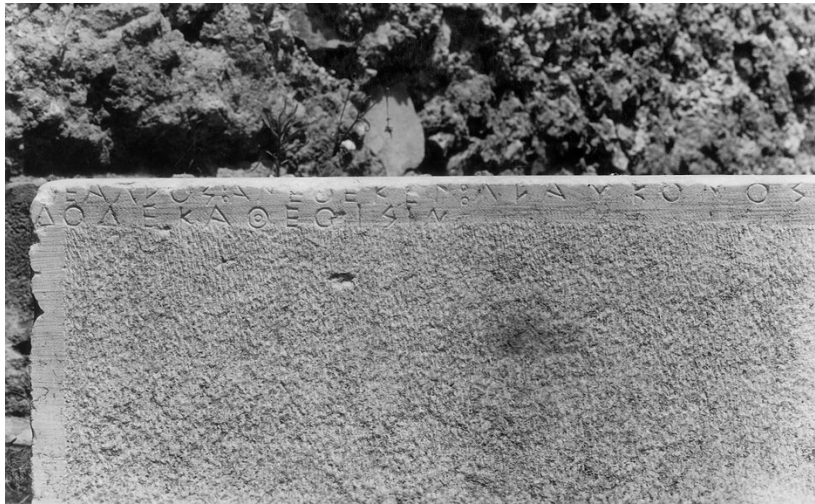


Figure 4: Athens, Agora, Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods: section of peribolos. Drawing courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

graphic data support only a *terminus ante quem* of the late fifth century for the installation of Sill 1; there is no evidence for the placement of the sill prior to that date. Gadbery concluded that Sill 1 (and the parapet it supported) must have been “shifted and reused” in the late fifth century.<sup>26</sup> But where did it originally stand, and when was it made? As to the date, Gadbery admitted that “the stratification tempts one to date the initial construction of the earlier parapet” to the late fifth century.<sup>27</sup> Yet she concluded, tentatively, that Sill 1 and its accompanying parapet must be Archaic, on the basis of similarities with a nearby monument known as the Eschara. Those similarities, however, are inconclusive, consisting primarily of chisel marks of a sort found on monuments ranging from early Archaic

<sup>26</sup> Gadbery, *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 461.

<sup>27</sup> Gadbery, *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 467.



*Figure 5:* Athens, Agora: statue base bearing dedication by Leagros, alongside the peribolos of the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods. Photograph courtesy of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, Agora Excavations.

through late Classical.<sup>28</sup> Thus Nicoletta Saraga, in her publication of the recent salvage excavation, has suggested that the earliest peribolos was either constructed or repaired after the Persian Wars.<sup>29</sup> As to the original location of the parapet, there is no archaeological evidence to indicate where the blocks first stood—except that it must have been someplace other than where they stand now.<sup>30</sup> In short, the earliest peribolos of the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods was erected sometime before the late fifth century, and was moved to its current location at that

<sup>28</sup> Noted in M. Arnush, “The Career of Peisistratos son of Hippias,” *Hesperia* 64 (1995) 146.

<sup>29</sup> Saraga, in *Αρχαιολογικές Συμβολές* B 144.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. S. G. Miller, “Architecture as Evidence for the Identity of the Early Polis,” in M. H. Hansen (ed.), *Sources for the Ancient Greek City-State* (Copenhagen 1995) 224 n.4; J. K. Papadopoulos, *Ceramicus Redivivus: The Early Iron Age Potters’ Field* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 31 [2003]) 296.

time. As to when it went up, and how far it was moved—these are questions that stratigraphy alone cannot answer.

What is clear is that the site was renovated in the late fifth century, and that the second peribolos (Sill 2) was added even later, in the fourth century.<sup>31</sup> During the fifth-century remodeling, the *temenos* was paved and, presumably, the altar renovated (explaining the debris beneath the pavement). It is tempting to associate this phase with the testimony of Thucydides (6.54.7) to the effect that the Athenians, at some unspecified date, enlarged and extended the Peisistratid altar in such a way as to obliterate its dedicatory inscription. From beneath the pavement comes part of the corner volute of the altar, exactly the element that one might expect to be trimmed off during the enlargement that Thucydides describes.<sup>32</sup> The historian does not say that the Altar was moved at the same time, but that is what the archaeological evidence suggests.

Why would Thucydides have omitted such a pertinent detail? In general, we are suspicious of modern scholars' practice of second-guessing ancient authors and arguing *ex silentio* from what they 'would' or 'must' have said: nowhere is this habit more dubious than in the case of Thucydides, with his stringent standards of relevance. But context is important. At 6.54.6–7 (quoted above), Thucydides mentions that Peisistratos the Younger dedicated the Altars of the Twelve Gods and of Apollo Pythios only to support his larger point that the tyrants preferred to let the city use its established laws, while taking care that "one of their own" held office.<sup>33</sup> Peisistratos the Younger appears as an example of this policy, and Thucydides cites the

<sup>31</sup> Date of later parapet: Gadbery, *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 476–485; Saraga, in *Αρχαιολογικές Συμβολές* B 144.

<sup>32</sup> The recent salvage excavations found more fragments; see Saraga, in *Αρχαιολογικές Συμβολές* B 142.

<sup>33</sup> Secondarily, these facts also support Thucydides' assertion at 6.54.5 that, while in power, the Peisistratids "adorned the city beautifully" (*καλῶς διεκόσμησαν*).

two dedications to prove that he was indeed archon. He registers the demos' "later renovation" simply to account for the obliteration of the dedicatory inscription that would have proved his claim; for this reason, he goes on to quote the surviving epigram on the altar of Apollo Pythios.<sup>34</sup> In short, it was no part of Thucydides' brief to mention the relocation of the Altar of the Twelve Gods; therefore it is not probative that he does not mention it. His phrases τῶν δώδεκα θεῶν βωμὸν τὸν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ and τῷ μὲν ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ simply specify where the Altar of the Twelve Gods was at the time of his writing.<sup>35</sup>

The Leagros base—on which the identification of the precinct entirely depends—seems to have arrived at the site as part of this same renovation toward the end of the fifth century. Originally the base supported a bronze statue; the lettering of

<sup>34</sup> Cf. A. Hartmann, "*Cui vetustas fidem faciat*: Inscriptions and Other Material Relics of the Past in Graeco-Roman Antiquity," in P. Liddel and P. Low (eds.), *Inscriptions and their Uses in Greek and Latin Literature* (Oxford 2013) 35–36, suggesting that Thucydides cites these two inscriptions in preference to the (later) archon list to prove his point because inscriptions contemporary with the events discussed were felt to have more probative authority. The more salient question for our purposes is why Thucydides should bother to mention the inscription on the Altar of the Twelve Gods at all, since by his time it had already been obliterated. We contend that his mention of the two altars and inscriptions together shows just how closely linked the two were in Athenian consciousness—linked to each other and linked to Peisistratos the Younger as their dedicator. This same link, we suggest, motivates Pindar's unusual image in *omphalos*.

<sup>35</sup> Indeed, one might wonder why Thucydides finds it necessary to use the phrase "the [altar] *in the agora*"; why was it not enough simply to say "Altar of the Twelve Gods" (as Herodotos does at 2.7.1 and 6.108.4)? Perhaps Thucydides feels the need to add the specification "in the agora" because the Altar of the Twelve is only relatively recently in this location (in contrast to the Altar of Apollo Pythios, which remains in the old quarter of Athens; note the *men/de* construction). In any case, for evidence that Thucydides is writing from the point of view of future audiences, who will only know the Altar of the Twelve Gods in its current location in the new agora, note the tense of the participle in Ἰππίου τοῦ τυραννεύσαντος in the same sentence, with Dover's note in *HCT* IV 333: "the aorist participle ... is past only from the standpoint of writer and reader."

the inscription resembles that on the preserved fragments of the base of the Tyrannicides group, suggesting a date in the early fifth century for the ensemble.<sup>36</sup> By the time the base reached its current location, however, the statue was long gone—a casualty, one assumes, of the Persian sack. In the intervening decades it had been repurposed as some sort of paving stone; the foot traffic was so heavy as to wear away the upper portion of the dedicatory inscription.<sup>37</sup> Presumably it served this function in the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods before the renovation, although the precise configuration of the sanctuary between the

<sup>36</sup> Similarity to Tyrannicides inscription (*IG I<sup>3</sup> 502*): B. D. Meritt, “Greek Inscriptions,” *Hesperia* 5 (1936) 357. Note that as a separate argument from her study of the stratigraphy of the Altar of the Twelve, Gadbery would like to downdate the (lost) statue of Leagros to after 480, contending that, if the base was moved only in the last third of the fifth century (as her stratigraphic argument proves), then the statue must still have been intact at that time: *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 472–474, 487. Why otherwise, she asks, would the Athenians have bothered to move the base? While we follow Gadbery’s arguments about the stratigraphy of the site and the displacement of both peribolos and base, we do not feel compelled to accept this redating of the base itself. We demur for three reasons. First, there may be any number of reasons why the Athenians should have moved the base even in the absence of the statue; we offer one hypothesis below. Second, significant wear on the top of the base indicates that it received heavy foot traffic *after* the statue was removed; this seems unlikely to have occurred while the base was alongside the doorway to the sanctuary, out of the way of pedestrians, but could well have occurred between the time that the statue was removed and the displacement of the base. Third, the base was almost entirely buried when placed alongside the peribolos, which is not the norm for honorific statues. See also next note.

<sup>37</sup> For the marked wear on the base that has worn away some of the inscription see Meritt, *Hesperia* 5 (1936) 359; cf. *fig. 5*. Gadbery, *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 473–474, is inclined to downplay the amount of wear on top of the statue base, since if the statue were still on the base after the Persian Wars and in the last third of the fifth century, when the base was moved to its current location, people could not have been walking on it. Gadbery herself acknowledges that Homer Thompson “does not agree with some of the arguments presented here, particularly those regarding the condition of the Leagros base and the lower sill” (477 n.107).

Persian sack and end the fifth century must remain unclear.<sup>38</sup> From Pindar we learn that the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods was *polybatos*, “much walked-upon,” and the Leagros base may show evidence of this traffic. After being placed alongside the new peribolos at the end of the fifth century, the base was partially buried, so that only its top 30% jutted out of the ground.<sup>39</sup>

It is unclear just what purpose this battered, half-buried stone was supposed to serve. It was, at best, some sort of ruin—a distinctively Athenian form of commemoration that Gloria Ferrari has discussed in detail, of which the most famous example is the inclusion of elements from the older Parthenon and Temple of Athena Polias in the north wall of the Acropolis.<sup>40</sup> The placement makes a bit more sense if, following Wilamowitz, Thompson, and others, we suppose that the Altar of the Twelve Gods did double duty as an Altar of Eleos, or Pity.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Some scholars assume that the Altar of the Twelve Gods was destroyed by the Persians, hence must have been completely out of use between 480 and the last third of the fifth century (e.g., Puech, *Pindare Isthmiques* 151; Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 255). While this supposition, if true, might be helpful for dating fr. 75 SM, the fact is that we cannot be certain of the altar’s status in these years. The best we can say is that it only reached its present location in the Classical agora *after* Pindar’s death. This point suffices for our argument.

<sup>39</sup> Gadbery, *Hesperia* 61 (1992) 465.

<sup>40</sup> G. Ferrari, “The Ancient Temple on the Acropolis at Athens,” *AJA* 106 (2002) 11–35; R. Kousser, “Destruction and Memory on the Athenian Acropolis,” *Art Bulletin* 91 (2009) 263–282. Compare Margaret Miles’s more recent suggestion that the *Lapis Primus*, recording the tribute to the Delian League for the years 454/3–440/39, was originally intended for the Older Parthenon, destroyed in 480 by the Persians: M. Miles, “The *Lapis Primus* and the Older Parthenon,” *Hesperia* 80 (2011) 657–675. Emphatically aniconic, placed alongside an entryway, the half-buried base was perhaps analogous to the herms and Hekates that guarded so many Greek homes and sanctuaries, the relic of a statue doing duty for a lost original. On guardian and entryway figures see C. A. Faraone, *Talismans and Trojan Horses: Guardian Statues in Ancient Greek Myth and Ritual* (Oxford 1992) 3–17.

<sup>41</sup> U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Aus Kydathen* (Berlin 1880) 201 n.4; Thompson, *Hesperia* 21 (1952) 47–82. See also *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4786 and Shapiro, *Art*

Leagros met his death in 465/4 as leader of an ill-fated colonial expedition to settle in Thrace; the city found this setback particularly painful, erecting a memorial in the Kerameikos.<sup>42</sup> The ruins of his dedication—evoking both the Persian destruction and the disaster in Thrace—will have made a fitting adjunct to a newly renovated sanctuary of Pity and the Twelve at the end of the fifth century, at the very moment that Athenian interest in the Thracian region was rekindling.

Such speculations aside, the cardinal point is that the base arrived at its current location from elsewhere, so that its position adjacent to the late fifth-century peribolos represents a tertiary phase of use. There is no archaeological evidence to indicate that the sanctuary of the Twelve Gods was located in the Classical agora before the last third of the fifth century, and good evidence to suggest that significant elements were relocated from elsewhere.

Such mobility is unusual but not unheard of. Homer Thompson has provided a list of “Transplanted Temples and Altars” in the Athenian agora, including the Altar of Zeus Agoraios, the Temple of Ares, the Southwest temple, and the southeast temple (admittedly all later displacements).<sup>43</sup> Some of these monuments migrated great distances; two of the temples came from Thorikos and Sounion, the so-called Altar of Zeus Agoraios originally served a different purpose on the Pnyx, and so on. To these examples one might add a story preserved in Diogenes Laertius in which the philosopher Zeno mentions an altar in the Painted Stoa that has been relocated from elsewhere.<sup>44</sup> What makes the displacement of the Altar of the Twelve Gods so striking, however, is the fact that this monu-

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*and Cult* 141.

<sup>42</sup> For the death of Leagros in Thrace see Hdt. 9.75; for the monument in the Kerameikos, Paus. 1.29.4. For a convenient collection of all the ancient evidence see A. E. Raubitschek, “Leagros,” *Hesperia* 8 (1939) 155–164.

<sup>43</sup> Thompson, *Agora* XIV (1972) 160–168.

<sup>44</sup> Diog. Laert. 7.1.14; Wycherley, *Agora* III, no. 64.

ment anchored the metrical system of the city-state.<sup>45</sup> At stake was nothing less than the place of Athens in its *khôra* and its *kosmos*—the *oikoumenê* of democracy.

Where, then, did the Altar of the Twelve Gods stand before the last third of the fifth century? Where was Pindar's *asteos omphalos*? The stratigraphy is, in this regard, necessarily uninformative. To answer the question will require a different sort of evidence.

### *Pandaidalos agora*

The urban fabric of Athens changed dramatically in the first half of fifth century BCE. The changes represent perhaps the most audacious reworking of the political space in Athenian history, a truly revolutionary gesture. Two points are of special relevance: Themistokles shifted the city's port from Phaleron to Piraeus, and the agora was moved from its original location east of the Acropolis to a new site north of the citadel.<sup>46</sup> The two

<sup>45</sup> The phenomenon is not unknown; the Hungarian zero kilometer mark moved from the Buda Palace to its current location by the banks of the Danube after 1848. In like manner, distances in and around London have at various times been measured from the 'Standard' in Cornhill, St. Mary-le-Bow in the City, and Charing Cross.

<sup>46</sup> Themistokles and Piraeus: Thuc. 1.93.3, Paus. 1.1.2; cf. Ar. *Eq.* 815; for discussions see R. Garland, *The Piraeus* (Ithaca 1987); K.-V. von Eikstedt, *Beiträge zur Topographie des antiken Piräus* (Athens 1991). On the old agora the essential document is the Aglaurion inscription: G. Dontas, "The True Aglaurion," *Hesperia* 52 (1983) 48–63 [*SEG XXXIII* 115]. For discussion and debate see, *inter alia*, N. Robertson, "Solon's Axones and Kyrbeis and the Sixth-Century Background," *Historia* 35 (1986) 157–159; T. L. Shear Jr., "Ἴσονόμους τ' Ἀθήνας ἐποισάτην: The Agora and the Democracy," in W. D. E. Coulson et al. (eds.), *The Archaeology of Athens and Attica under the Democracy* (Oxford 1994) 225–248; E. Lippolis, "Tra il ginnasio di Tolomeo ed il Serapeion: Le ricostruzione di un quartiere monumentale di Atene," *Ostraka* 4 (1995) 43–67; Miller, in *Sources for the Ancient Greek City-State* 201–242, and "Old Metroon and Old Bouleuterion in the Classical Agora of Athens," in M. H. Hansen and K. Raaflaub (eds.), *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* (*Historia Einzelschr.* 95 [1995]) 133–156; Schnurr, *ΖPE* 105 (1995) 131–138, and "Zur Topographie der Theaterstätten und der Tripodenstraße in Athen," *ΖPE* 105 (1995) 139–153; J. K. Papadopoulos, "The Original Kerameikos of



seem to have been connected.

Thucydides famously states that the ancient city center of Athens consisted of “the Acropolis and the area below it turned for the most part toward the south,” ἡ ἀκρόπολις ἢ νῦν οὐσα πόλις ἦν, καὶ τὸ ὑπ’ αὐτὴν πρὸς νότον μάλιστα τετραμμένον (2.15.3). It is to the east-southeast of the citadel that many of the city’s most venerable shrines were located, not to mention the great temple of Zeus Olympios undertaken by the Peisistratid tyrants. More specifically, Pausanias (1.18.2–3) locates the Prytaneion—the civic hearth and seat of the Athenian government—below a shrine of Aglauros, where the ephebes took their oath to defend Athens. For Herodotos, the cave was “in front of the Acropolis and behind/opposite the gates and the ascent,” ἔμπροσθε ὦν πρὸ τῆς ἀκροπόλιος, ὅπισθε δὲ τῶν πυλέων καὶ τῆς ἀνόδου (8.53). This Aglaurion was long believed to be on the north slope of the citadel, but an inscription unearthed in situ in 1980 showed conclusively that it occupied the large cave at the east end of the Acropolis (*fig. 6*).<sup>47</sup> Despite periodic attempts to dissociate the inscription from the cave, the association has stood the test of time.<sup>48</sup> The implications for Athenian topography have been profound. The Prytaneion will have been below the east end of the citadel; so, by implication, will the ancient

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Athens and the Siting of the Classical Agora,” *GRBS* 37 (1996) 107–128; J.-M. Luce, “Thésée, le synoecisme et l’agora d’Athènes,” *RA* (1998) 3–31; N. Robertson, “The City Center of Archaic Athens,” *Hesperia* 67 (1998) 283–302; D. Harris-Cline, “Archaic Athens and the Topography of the Kylon Affair,” *BSA* 94 (1999) 309–320; Papadopoulos, *Ceramicus* 271–316; G. C. R. Schmalz, “The Athenian Prytaneion Discovered?” *Hesperia* 75 (2006) 33–81; Osborne, in *Building Communities* 195–199; S. Martin-McAuliffe and J. K. Papadopoulos, “Framing Victory: Salamis, the Athenian Acropolis, and the Agora,” *JSAH* 71 (2012) 332–361. Contra: U. Kenzler, “Archaia Agora? Zur ursprünglichen Lage der Agora Athens,” *Hephaistos* 15 (1997) 113–136.

<sup>47</sup> Dontas, *Hesperia* 52 (1983) 48–63.

<sup>48</sup> See M. Saporiti, “Il santuario di Aglauro,” in E. Greco (ed.), *Topografia di Atene. Sviluppo urbano e monumenti dalle origini al III sec. d.C.* (Athens/Paestum 2010) I 159 (“quasi unanimemente accettata”).



*Figure 6:* Athens, view of the Aglaurion cave from approximate site of Archaic agora (in foreground, Lysikrates monument).  
Photo by Angele Rosenberg-Dimitracopoulou, used by kind permission.

agora. With the Prytaneion go many of the city's oldest shrines and offices. We are told, for instance, that near the Prytaneion stood the Dioskourion or Anakeion (Polyaen. 1.21.2); near the Dioskourion was the Theseion (Paus. 1.17.2–3). Also near the Prytaneion was the Boukoleion, where the king archon had his office before the construction of the Stoa Basileios (*Ath.Pol.* 3.5);

and so on.<sup>49</sup>

That the Archaic agora was elsewhere than its Classical successor is becoming conventional wisdom.<sup>50</sup> As early as 1994, T. Leslie Shear Jr., Director of the agora excavations, cited the Aglaurion inscription to argue that the Archaic city center cannot have been in the same location as the Classical one; more recently, John Papadopoulos and Noel Robertson have given particularly thorough discussions. But the precise location of the archaic agora remains a matter of educated guesswork, since excavation in the area has been piecemeal at best. Shear, along with Christine Schnurr and Stephen Miller, argued that the archaic agora was to the north of the Acropolis, but a distance east of its Classical counterpart.<sup>51</sup> Papadopoulos, Robertson, and others, by contrast, have made a compelling case for following Herodotos and Pausanias to the letter and placing it due east, or even a bit southeast, of the citadel, “in front of the Acropolis and opposite the gates and the ascent.”<sup>52</sup> Such a location tallies with Thucydides’ account of the early city; it makes Pausanias’ itinerary a more or less straight shot from west to east, instead of a bizarre tangle as previously supposed; and it conforms to the fact that many of the oldest and most re-

<sup>49</sup> For a recent survey of the area see F. Longo et al., “Tra l’*Olympieion* e l’Acropoli,” in *Topografia di Atene* II 511–554, esp. 514–520.

<sup>50</sup> Although for a long time many scholars preferred simply to ignore the Aglaurion inscription, e.g. S. Angiolillo, “Hestia, l’edificio F e l’altare dei Dodici Dei ad Atene,” *Ostraka* 1 (1992) 171–176 (arguing, with no reference at all to the Aglaurion, that Building F in the Classical agora was the Archaic prytaneion).

<sup>51</sup> In this they built upon a suggestion by Eugene Vanderpool, who was an early advocate of the idea that the Archaic agora did not coincide with the Classical: E. Vanderpool, “The ‘Agora’ of Pausanias I, 17, 1–2,” *Hesperia* 43 (1974) 308–310.

<sup>52</sup> Herodotos’ phrasing, incidentally, provides a useful example of the difference between modern and ancient spatial logics. The east end of the Acropolis seems, to many modern visitors, to be the rear, because we enter on the West; for Herodotos, however, the east is the front, because the temples in the sanctuary all face that direction, overlooking the town.

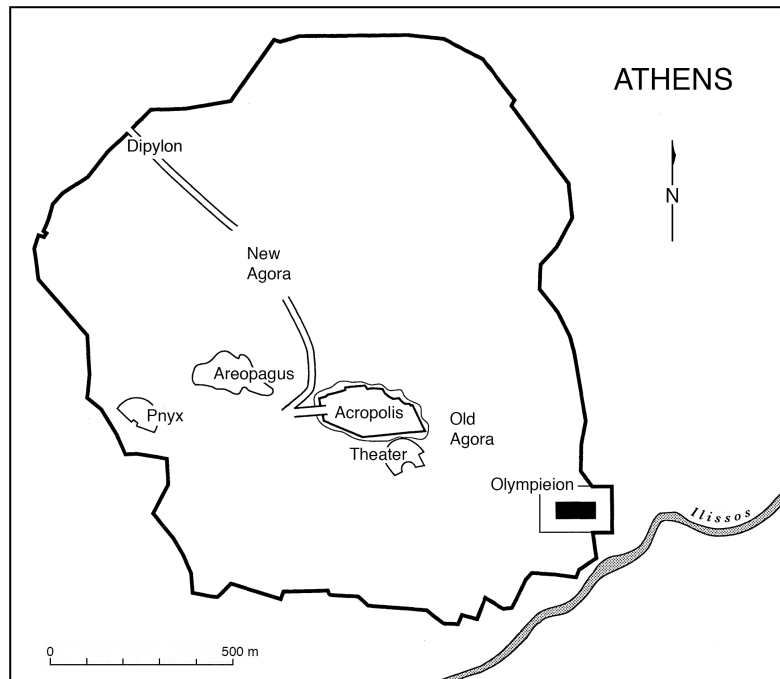


Figure 7: Athens, schematic city plan. Drawing by Richard Neer.

vered shrines of Athens stood in this southeast quadrant. The Hadrianic arch identifying the ancient “City of Theseus” (*IG II<sup>2</sup> 5185*) with this neighborhood provides late but welcome confirmation (*fig. 7*).

As to the date of the shift, Papadopoulos has argued ingeniously that the movement of the agora responds to the transfer of Athens’ harbor from Phaleron to Piraeus.<sup>53</sup> Traditionally, this shift is said to have begun during the archonship of Themistokles; this would give a *terminus post quem* of 492.<sup>54</sup> The

<sup>53</sup> Papadopoulos, *GRBS* 37 (1996) 112, *Ceramicus* 285–289.

<sup>54</sup> For the date of Themistokles’ archonship see Dion. Hal. *Ant.Rom.* 6.34.1; for the connection of his archonship with the beginning of the fortification of Piraeus see Thuc. 1.93.3, Paus. 1.1.2. Although both of these

Phaleron road enters Athens from the southeast, exactly where the archaic agora is likely to have been; coming from Piraeus, however, the Hill of the Nymphs forces a detour so that the road enters Athens from the northwest, by the Classical agora. Boundary stones in the Classical agora suggest that the new site was laid out in the early fifth century, coinciding with the development of Piraeus.<sup>55</sup> This date is broadly consistent with the archaeology of the buildings in the Classical agora; although not devoid of architecture in the Late Archaic period, its monumentalization is clearly a phenomenon of the second half of the fifth century.

At this point it may be useful to review the evidence for the use of the later, Classical agora as a civic center in the first half of the fifth century (see *fig. 2*). The site's chronology ca. 500–460 is regrettably opaque. The most important construction projects for this period—and the best evidence for a specifically civic function for the area—are the Stoa Basileios, the 'Old Bouleuterion', and the Tholos or Prytanikon. The first is usually dated to ca. 500, the second variously to ca. 500 and ca. 475–450, the

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bits of ancient information have been challenged (see e.g. E. Badian, "Archons and *Strategoi*," *Antichthon* 5 [1971] 7–9; A. Mosshammer, "Themistocles' Archonship in the Chronographic Tradition," *Hermes* 103 [1975] 222–234), we accept both as reliable, following D. M. Lewis, "Themistocles' Archonship," *Historia* 21 (1973) 757–758, and S. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides I* (Oxford 1991) 138–140. Papadopoulos (*Ceramicus* 285) in fact follows Badian (7–9) in sundering the fortification of Piraeus from Themistocles' archonship; for Papadopoulos, the move to Piraeus is more likely to postdate the battle of Salamis (he cites the evidence of Hdt. 6.116, that after the battle of Marathon, the Persian fleet anchored off Phaleron).

<sup>55</sup> Boundary stones: *IG I<sup>3</sup>* 1087–1090 = Agora inv. I 5510, I 7039 (both *in situ*), I 5675. T. L. Shear Jr., "Tyrants and Buildings in Archaic Athens," in W. A. P. Childs (ed.), *Athens Comes of Age: From Solon to Salamis* (Princeton 1978) 1–19, and J. McK. Camp II, "Before Democracy: Alkmaionidai and Peisistratidai," in *Archaeology of Athens* 7–12, date the boundary stones to ca. 500, but as Papadopoulos (*Ceramicus* 289–291) notes: "The letter-forms and the material evidence associated with these boundary stones cannot provide a more precise date and, as such, a date shortly after 480 B.C. is just as valid as one around 500 B.C. on the basis of the evidence at hand."

last to ca. 460. Each presents its own problems.

The Stoa Basileios is a small limestone portico (17.7 × 7.2 m) with a dirt floor, dated to ca. 500 on the basis of excavation pottery that has never been fully published; this date has recently been challenged in favor of one in the 470s.<sup>56</sup> The stoa seems to have received a new internal colonnade and a new roof after the middle of the fifth century, and was enlarged with two new wings at century's end. One of these wings supported massive stelai, probably displaying the ancient law code of the city. Abutting the stoa was the great stone, the Lithos, on which the archons took their oath of office. There are clear signs that this stone was shifted to this location from elsewhere; ceramic evidence provides a terminus ante quem for the move of only the fourth quarter of the fifth century BCE (which happens to be about the same time as Sill 1 of the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods was moved).<sup>57</sup> It is striking that the stelai and the Lithos—the two most obvious testaments to the civic function of an otherwise unprepossessing little stoa—should have no archaeologically-verifiable presence on this site before the end of the fifth century. We know remarkably little about the building's early history.

The so-called Old Bouleuterion presents similar problems. The exiguous remains of this structure lay directly underneath the later Temple of the Mother at the foot of Kolonos Agoraios.

<sup>56</sup> The preliminary (and only) excavation report is T. Leslie Shear Jr., "The Athenian Agora: Excavations of 1970," *Hesperia* 40 (1971) 255–279; further discussion in Shear, "The Persian Destruction of Athens: Evidence from Agora Deposits," *Hesperia* 62 (1993) 427–429, and in *The Archaeology of Athens* 242–244 and, for the date ca. 500, 247 n.55. The earliest epigraphic or literary testimony for the stoa is an inscription (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 104) of 409/8 ordering that the law of Drakon be set up before what it calls the Stoa Basileia. See also Papadopoulos, *Ceramicus* 291. For an argument that the building has been misidentified see N. Robertson, "The Stoa of the Herms," *ZPE* 127 (1999) 167–172. For a recent downdating and discussion of siting see Martin-McAuliffe and Papadopoulos, *JSAH* 71 (2012) 351–352.

<sup>57</sup> Shear, *Hesperia* 40 (1971) 259 with n.43. Shear, in *The Archaeology of Athens* 244–245, dates the shift to ca. 500; this seems arbitrary.

The excavator, Homer A. Thompson, dated its construction on the basis of ceramic finds to the second quarter of the fifth century.<sup>58</sup> The building's function is also unclear; although sometimes cited as one of the very earliest council halls in the Greek world, Stephen G. Miller has argued that it was in fact just an early phase of the Metroon, the temple of the Mother that doubled as the Athenian state archive.<sup>59</sup> There is, at any rate, no hard evidence that the building ever housed the Athenian state council. Toward of the end of the fifth century, the smaller 'New Bouleuterion' was built directly adjacent; here, by universal consensus, the Athenian state council most certainly did meet. On one reading of the evidence, then, the 'Old Bouleuterion' was built in the early part of the fifth century as a

<sup>58</sup> More recently, T. Leslie Shear Jr. has proposed raising the date to ca. 500 on the basis of this same evidence, but without detailing his reasons for doing so. Shear, in *The Archaeology of Athens* 236 and n.50, refers to sixteen potsherds, all from Deposit 10:7, that are said to prove a terminus post quem of ca. 500. Unfortunately, he gives no specifics, beyond referring the reader to *Hesperia* 62 (1993) 383–482, which turns out to be uninformative on this score. In fact, Shear's dates for the agora pottery may be a decade or more too high: although he argues convincingly that the agora wells were closed after the Persian destruction of 480, his own dates for the relevant pottery yield almost no evidence for any ceramics after ca. 500. The most plausible explanation for this twenty-year gap in the record is that the pottery is being dated too early—a common problem with Late Archaic Attic fineware. See R. T. Neer, *Style and Politics in Athenian Vase-Painting: The Craft of Democracy, ca. 530–460 B.C.E.* (New York 2002) 202–205.

<sup>59</sup> Miller, in *Studies in the Ancient Greek Polis* 133–156. Contra Miller see T. Leslie Shear Jr., "Bouleuterion, Metroon, and the Archives at Athens," in *Studies* 157–190. Shear shows that Miller's alternative reconstruction of the internal plan of the 'Old Bouleuterion' is inconsistent with the sloping terrain of the site. He does not, however, refute what are for present purposes the essential points: first, that there is no good evidence to suggest that the building ever housed the Athenian state council; second, that it is natively implausible that the democracy should construct a second, smaller ('New') Bouleuterion immediately adjacent to a perfectly good 'Old' one; third, that the architectural continuity between the 'Old Bouleuterion' and the Metroon suggests continuity of function as well.

capacious council hall for the new democracy; then, near the end of the century, the council moved into smaller, redundant quarters next door (the ‘New Bouleuterion’), yielding its former meeting hall to the Mother and the archive. On Miller’s reading, by contrast, the older building was always dedicated to the Mother, while the ‘New Bouleuterion’ of the later fifth century was the first purpose-built council hall in the Classical agora. Where the *Boulê* met before that date is unclear.<sup>60</sup>

The Tholos, finally, was a democratic counterweight to the archaic Prytaneion; hence its name, Prytanikon, which differentiated it from the older chamber. The circular Prytanikon was a dining hall for magistrates (*prytaneis*) chosen by lot, while the old Prytaneion hosted the priests of Eleusis, the descendants of Harmodios and Aristogeiton, Olympic victors, and “those chosen by Apollo.”<sup>61</sup> The construction of the Tholos ca. 460 is the earliest unambiguous evidence that the area north of the Acropolis had become the new civic center of democratic Athens. It may be no coincidence that its construction is roughly contemporary with the reforms of Ephialtes, 462/1, often cited as the commencement of true *dēmokratia* at Athens.

The picture that emerges is of a gradual migration of civic functions from one side of town to the other over the course of the fifth century.<sup>62</sup> The Classical agora seems to have been opened in the 490s at the earliest, but the transition was not

<sup>60</sup> Miller’s discussion of this last question is convoluted; fortunately, the question is not directly relevant to the present argument.

<sup>61</sup> For the identification of the Tholos as Prytanikon to differentiate it from the older Prytaneion see E. Vanderpool, “Tholos and Prytanikon,” *Hesperia* 4 (1935) 470–475; S. Dow, *Prytaneis* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 1 [1937]) 27–28; H. A. Thompson, *The Tholos of Athens and its Predecessors* (*Hesperia* Suppl. 4 [1940]) 44; S. G. Miller, *The Prytaneion: Its Function and Architectural Form* (Berkeley 1978) 60–66; F. Cooper and S. Morris, “Dining in Round Buildings,” in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptica: A Symposium on the Symposium* (Oxford 1990) 78–79; Papadopoulos, *Ceramicus* 284. For the categories of those who dined in the Prytaneion (including “those chosen by Apollo”) see the fifth-century ‘Prytaneion Decree’ (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 131).

<sup>62</sup> See for instance M. Saporiti, in *Topografia di Atene* II 520–523.



immediate. The *prytaneis* cannot have moved from the old agora until the construction of the Tholos ca. 460; the Stoa Basileios is, in essence, a cipher before the late fifth century; the ‘Old Bouleuterion’ is obscure in both date and function, and we do not really know where the *Boulé* met before the later fifth century. The situation clarifies only in the final third of the century. Pindar’s career falls almost entirely within this period of transition: as we have noted, his earliest extant poem, *Pythian* 10, dates to 498 and he seems to have died ca. 440.

Athens was literally bipolar in these years. In 477/6, the Tyrannicides monument went up in the new, Classical agora, where part of its base has been found (*IG I<sup>3</sup>* 502). It replaced an older version that Xerxes had carried away; where the first group stood is unclear. Just one year later, however, we find the conservative Kimon investing heavily in the old agora, transporting the bones of Theseus from Skyros and commissioning Polygnotos of Thasos to decorate the walls of the Theseion.<sup>63</sup> Later in the century, the poet Melanthios wrote an elegiac couplet describing how Polygnotos donated his services to the city for this and other projects:<sup>64</sup>

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

At his own expense he decorated the temples of the gods and the Kekropian agora with the exploits of demi-gods.

The phrase “Kekropian agora” is perhaps meant to distinguish the old civic center below the Aglaurion, where the Theseion stood, from the new, Classical one north of the citadel—Aglauros being, of course, the daughter of Kekrops, ancient king of

<sup>63</sup> Paus. 1.17.6, Plut. *Thes.* 36, Harp. s.v. Πολύγνωτος. On the Theseion see the overview in R. Di Cesare, “Il Theseion,” in *Topografia di Atene* II 551–553.

<sup>64</sup> Plut. *Cim.* 4.7 = Melanthios fr.1 West. Plutarch mistakenly identifies the building in question with the Stoa Poikile; it is clear from Pausanias and others that Polygnotos decorated the Theseion. See Robertson, *Hesperia* 67 (1998) 297–298; Papadopoulos, *Ceramicus* 284 n.78.

Athens. It was here that Kimon essentially re-founded the city by burying the bones of its mythical synoikist in the agora, exactly where many colonial foundations (e.g., Cyrene, Paestum, Selinous) entombed their historical oikists, where Amphipolis would later entomb Brasidas, and where Sikyon would entomb Euphron, in ceremonies of refoundation.<sup>65</sup> Over in the new agora, by contrast, the statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton stood as ostensible founders of democracy, much to the annoyance of Kimon's grand-nephew, Thucydides (6.56–59). Later the Thirty would try to turn back the clock by meeting in the old Prytaneion instead of the Tholos (Lys. 13.37). For them, the old agora was a pre- or anti-democratic space.

And the Altar of the Twelve Gods? The logic is simple. If the Archaic agora was east of the Acropolis (as the Aglaurion inscription demonstrates), and if the Altar was in the agora (as seems certain given its function as zero milestone) and was built in 522/1 (as Thucydides and Herodotos attest), then it seems that the Altar must have stood east of the Acropolis. It will have been moved to its present location as part of the general relocation of the civic center at some time in the course of the fifth century. The archaeological evidence is, as we have seen, fully consistent with this scenario: everything points to a renovation and relocation of the Altar between ca. 430 and ca. 400.<sup>66</sup> The

<sup>65</sup> On Brasidas see Thuc. 5.11.1. Brasidas' tomb may have been located: A. Agelarakis, "Physical Anthropological Report on the Cremated Human Remains of an Individual Retrieved from the Amphipolis Agora," in M. Stamatopoulou and M. Yeroulanou (eds.), *Excavating Classical Culture: Recent Archaeological Discoveries in Greece* (Oxford 2002) 72–73. On Euphron see Xen. *Hell.* 7.3.12. On the bones of heroes see D. Boedeker, "Hero Cult and Politics: The Bones of Orestes," in C. Dougherty and L. Kurke (eds.), *Cultural Poetics in Archaic Greece: Cult, Performance, Politics* (Oxford 1998) 164–177. For a related example, also at Sikyon, see Plut. *Arat.* 53.3–6.

<sup>66</sup> Note that this argument makes, and requires, no pronouncement about where Sill 1 of the peribolos of the Sanctuary of the Twelve Gods originally stood, or when it was made. We remain agnostic on these questions. We maintain, and need maintain, only that there is no good evidence that the Sanctuary was in the Classical Agora before the end of the fifth century; that

*prytaneis* moved, the archons moved, and so did the Twelve Gods.

*Polybatos asteos omphalos*

In light of such considerations, we propose to revisit Christine Schnurr's suggestion that Pindar's *pandaidalos* agora is in fact the old agora below the Cave of Aglauros, and not the new, Classical one to the north of the Acropolis.<sup>67</sup> Schnurr points out that the Classical agora can hardly have been *pandaidalos*, "all-decorated," when Pindar wrote; it was, on the contrary, nearly empty. One might add that Melanthios specifies the Kekropian agora to have been "decorated" (κόσμησ'), by the same period; it was a place known for its embellishment.<sup>68</sup> Schnurr herself, however, identifies the *asteos omphalos* with an Altar of Zeus Agoraios, in part because she assumes that the Sanctuary of the Twelve cannot have moved. As we have seen, this assumption is not consistent with the stratigraphy of the *temenos*. Schnurr's suggestion, moreover, seems to miss the point of Pindar's metaphor: *asteos omphalos* is a uniquely apt figure for the Altar of the Twelve Gods because the Altar is the center of the polis, because it is a place of sanctuary (as the Delphic *omphalos* is in *Eumenides*), and because it was dedicated by the same man as the Altar of Apollo Pythios.<sup>69</sup>

This last fact is one that, as Thucydides notes, the democracy

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what evidence does exist indicates clearly that the Sanctuary wall arrived at its present location only at that late date; that this evidence is consistent with a scenario in which the Altar of the Twelve originally stood east of the Acropolis and, like the Athenian government itself, only migrated to the Kerameikos during the fifth century; and that this scenario fits better with what we know of Athenian topography in the 400s than any rival does.

<sup>67</sup> Schnurr, *ZPE* 105 (1995) 134–135 and 141. Cf. Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 259.

<sup>68</sup> This point holds regardless of whether one accepts Schnurr's larger argument that the Lenaian festival was held in the old agora.

<sup>69</sup> The Python itself is said by Hesychios to have been built by the elder Peisistratos: s.v. ἐν Πυθίῳ χέσσαι.

preferred to forget. To be sure, an evocation of Apollo Pythios was never amiss in an Athenian dithyramb, for the god presided over the dithyrambic contests at the Thargelia festival in mid-summer.<sup>70</sup> But fr. 75 SM is clearly a springtime performance for Dionysos; Apollo is, in this sense, superfluous. An oblique nod to Peisistratos helps to motivate this otherwise curious phrase.<sup>71</sup> Pindar's metaphor is, in this sense, merely a reminder of what everyone already knew; to use the language of the Hipparkhan herms, it is a *mnêma Peisistratou*, a "reminder of Peisistratos." That Pindar should make this gesture jibes well with the fact that he wrote the seventh Pythian for Megakles of Athens (486 BCE), who had been exiled the previous year as a *philos tôn tyrannôn*, a "friend of the tyrants."<sup>72</sup> Fr. 75 SM may well date to about the same period, although the point is not necessary for our argument.

Regardless of the poem's precise date, Athenian urban space

<sup>70</sup> On dithyrambs at the Thargelia see Parker, *Athenian Religion* 95–96; P. Wilson, "Performance in the *Pythion*: The Athenian Thargelia," in *The Greek Theatre and Festivals: Documentary Studies* (Oxford 2007) 150–182.

<sup>71</sup> One might even wonder whether the phrase *asteos omphalos*, "the town's navel," might echo the inscriptions that adorned the Hipparkhan herms. There is a certain infelicity to the poet's wording, for the Altar of the Twelve Gods was the *omphalos* or center-point not merely of the *town* of Athens but of the entire city-state, including the countryside: strictly speaking a *πόλεως*, not an *ἄστεος, ὀμφαλός*. But Pindar's language is overdetermined: what *asteos omphalos* loses in strict accuracy it gains in allusion to the *en mesôi asteos* formula of the Hipparkhan herms: "At the midpoint of the town and..." a point calculated with reference to the Altar of the Twelve Gods. If the *omphalos* image connects the Altar to the Pythion dedication of Peisistratos the Younger, then *asteos* might evoke the Hipparkhan herms.

<sup>72</sup> *Ath. Pol.* 22.6, with H. Mattingly, "The Practice of Ostracism at Athens," *Antichthon* 25 (1991) 1–26. One may also note that, according to schol. *Pyth.* 7.18a, Pindar composed a *threnos* for Hippokrates, "a relative of Megakles," probably in the 480s. J. K. Davies, *Athenian Propertied Families* (Oxford 1971) 373, follows A. E. Raubitschek, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1949) 339, suggesting that this [Alkmeonid] Hippokrates would have been born in the decade 560–550, named for Hippokrates, father of the tyrant Peisistratos, and died as an old man in the 480s.

was contested throughout Pindar's career. The democracy literally uprooted the old order—not all at once, but over decades; as late as 404, the Thirty were still trying to resist, albeit futilely, by reverting to the Prytaneion. Throughout the poet's working life, the long process of transferring the civic center from the "Kekropian" agora to the new site by the Kerameikos was underway but incomplete.

In this atmosphere, the poet specifically evokes urban topography and the metrical system by which the Athenians organized their *oikoumenê*, with subtle but unmistakable reference to the Peisistratid era. Unfortunately, current knowledge of Athenian politics in these years—to say nothing of the exact date or circumstances of Pindar's commission—make it impossible to go much further in discerning a specific, partisan program for fr. 75 SM. Pindar might very well be harking back to the *ancien régime*, in keeping with his known association with at least one "friend of the tyrants." But we simply lack the historical documentation to offer meaningful conclusions about so delicate a subject. What does seem clear, however, is that Pindar's dithyramb is concerned with Athenian public space, that the area to which it refers was a site of contestation throughout most of the poet's working life, and that, for whatever reason, the poet emphasizes the older, pre-democratic order.

*Spatial deixis and the thematic of place*

Locating the performance of fr. 75 SM in the old agora of Athens (performed, as we have suggested, by a *kuklios khoros* circling around the Altar of the Twelve Gods) allows us to resolve a pair of long-standing textual problems associated with this fragment. In brief, how are we to construe Διόθεν (7) and δεύτερον (8)?<sup>73</sup> Many scholars separate these two words, giving to each a somewhat problematic interpretation. Thus scholars have acknowledged that Διόθεν is unexpected and more than a

<sup>73</sup> Cf. W. H. Race, *Pindar II* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1997) 311: "The meaning of 'from Zeus' and 'secondly' is not clear."

little opaque. One popular solution is to assimilate Διόθεν to the common hymnal practice of “starting from Zeus”; another, to claim that the poet is “sent by Zeus” or “inspired by Zeus” in what one scholar terms “a rather surprising extension” of the conventional idea that the poet is assisted by the gods or the Muses in the composition of his song.<sup>74</sup> In his commentary on Pindar’s dithyrambs, Salvatore Lavecchia has already offered a fatal objection to the first interpretation: it is possible to say that the song “goes from Zeus” to mean the hymn starts with Zeus, but we cannot extract this meaning from the statement that the speaker (poet or singers) “goes from Zeus.”<sup>75</sup> Yet Lavecchia’s alternative solution—that the poet/speaker goes “inspired by Zeus”—seems no more persuasive. Lavecchia insists that this conceit would be a natural extension of the idea of poetic inspiration deriving from the Muses, Apollo, or the gods in general, since hierarchically all the other gods of poetic inspiration draw their power from Zeus; yet he can cite no convincing parallels for Zeus in this role. In particular, it is not at all clear why Zeus should be singled out as the source of inspiration in what is clearly a dithyramb dedicated to Dionysos.

At the same time, δεύτερον (8) is something of a mystery. Several scholars construe δεύτερον with με in line 7, to mean “coming for the second time.” This phrase is then connected to a report in a *Life of Pindar* preserved on papyrus that “in the archonship of Archias [497/6], Pindar competed and won with a dithyramb in Athens.”<sup>76</sup> On this interpretation, the poet here

<sup>74</sup> “Starting from Zeus”: W. J. Slater, *Lexicon to Pindar* (Berlin 1969) s.v. Διόθεν; van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 194–195. “Sent by/inspired by Zeus”: Kirkwood, *Selections* 329; Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 261–262. Quotation from Kirkwood.

<sup>75</sup> Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 262. Lavecchia also notes that in all the hymnic parallels cited, we have a word like ἄρχω or ἄρχομαι (“beginning from Zeus”), which is noticeably lacking here.

<sup>76</sup> *P. Oxy.* XXVI 2438.ii.8–10: ἐπ’ Ἀρχίου γὰρ ἠγώνισται ἐν Ἀθήναι[ς διθυράμ]βω(ι) καὶ νεν[ε]ίκηκεν. For the archon year see D. M. Lewis, “The Archon of 497/6 B.C.” *CR* N.S. 12 (1962) 201.

flags the fact that this dithyramb is his second for the Athenians, composed at some unknown point after his first win in 497/6.<sup>77</sup> This is supposed to explain δεύτερον, while establishing a firm terminus post quem for the date of our fragment. But no explanation is offered for why the poet should have his Athenian chorus mention in song that this is his second competitive dithyramb in Athens, and we would be hard pressed to imagine the cultic or generic relevance of such a statement.<sup>78</sup>

A second approach is to construe the accusative δεύτερον not with με but with the phrase that immediately follows, ἐπὶ τὸν κισσοδαῖ θεόν, and translate, “[You gods] look upon me going from Zeus with the radiance of songs secondly to the ivy-knowing god.”<sup>79</sup> In contrast to interpretations that separate Διόθεν and δεύτερον from each other and give to each an implausible or artificial meaning, this construal of δεύτερον has the virtue of

<sup>77</sup> Thus Slater, *Lexicon* s.v. δεύτερον; Maehler, *Pindarus* II 83; Kirkwood, *Selections* 329; van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 197; Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 255; Furley and Bremer, *Greek Hymns* I 257, II 211.

<sup>78</sup> The claim of Kirkwood, *Selections* 329, that we have a parallel for the mention of a second poem at *Isthm.* 6.2, precisely proves this point by contrast; in the epinikion, Pindar mentions that this is his second poem for the sons of Lampon because it also represents their second victory, which the poet is celebrating and citing as evidence that there will be yet a third. That is to say, δεύτερον at *Isthm.* 6.2 is encomiastically relevant, but we can see no justification for Pindar’s recording this fact in his dithyramb fr. 75 SM. Privitera, “Saffo” 139–140, proposed a novel solution, linking Διόθεν and δεύτερον: the latter, he suggested, indicates that the dithyrambic chorus had drawn by lot the second position in the performance line-up, and since lots are “from Zeus,” this also explains Διόθεν. Van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 195, 197, effectively refutes both elements of Privitera’s theory, pointing out first that we have no evidence that lots were drawn for the order of dithyrambic competition (as opposed to the drawing of lots for choice of poet and aulos-player, for which we do have evidence); second, that Privitera’s cited parallels refer not to “lots” from Zeus, but to fate or apportionment from Zeus.

<sup>79</sup> Thus Puech, *Pindare Isthmiques* 153; Race, *Pindar* II 311; P. Wilson, “The Politics of Dance: Dithyrambic Contest and Social Order in Ancient Greece,” in *Sport and Festival* 169–170 (quoted in text).

economy; on this reading, the two deictic terms Διόθεν and δεύτερον go together. For Peter Wilson, who connects the two terms, this represents an issue not of textual interpretation or of poetic self-reference, but of cult practice:

What seems to distinguish this from other instances is the way it “begins from Zeus” (Διόθεν 8) and moves on “with splendour of songs secondly to that ivy-knowing god,” and so places the worship of Dionysos and his mother firmly in the wider context of the civic pantheon. The emphasis on the *agora* as a flourishing and famous religious and commercial centre is more than a choreographic deictic. It reflects the degree to which, in Athens, Dionysiac dance and song is an event that brings all together at the centre of the populous and prosperous city—those very qualities being guaranteed by the performance of the dithyramb.

We concur with Wilson’s interpretation, but contend that it can be more specifically anchored in civic space. Thus we suggest understanding both Διόθεν and δεύτερον as spatial deictics, which operate within a dense network of topographic references to shrines and cults in the old agora of Athens.<sup>80</sup> Both words, in short, are of a piece with what might be called the poem’s thematic of place: Διόθεν and δεύτερον go with *pandaidalos agora* and *asteos omphalos* to situate the poem squarely within the real Athenian cityscape. This poem is about real monuments, real places.

The poem’s catalogue of deities acquires significance in this light. Pindar begins by naming the Olympians as a collective (1), and with them the *omphalos*/altar at the heart of the agora. He then proceeds “from Zeus” (Διόθεν, 7) to Dionysos (9–10) and Semele (12), then to the Horai or Seasons (14), before circling back to Semele with an evocation of her “helical” crown (19). With this last phrase we come full circle: Semele’s

<sup>80</sup> One argumentative dividend of this interpretation is that the *egō* throughout the fragment then becomes unambiguously choral, representing the Athenian singers rather than the Theban poet. This is just what we would expect for a cult dithyramb; cf. E. Csapo and P. Wilson, *Historical Documents for the Greek Theatre down to 300 BC* (Cambridge forthcoming).



wreath closes a small ring-composition, a riff on the theme of violets and crowns. The chorus offers wreaths of violets to the gods in line 6, then casts violets onto the ground in 16–17, then returns to the image of a crown in the final line with ἐλικάμπυκα. The initial conceit assimilated violets to songs: “Receive a share of crowns bound with violets and songs culled in the spring”; now, appropriately, the song’s very structure takes a cyclical or “helical” form.<sup>81</sup> This circular composition, moreover, evokes the circular movement of the *kuklios khoros* around the Altar of the Twelve Gods. Structure, imagery, and performance all coincide—which is to say that, insofar as the dance is itself a movement in real civic space, it enacts or performs the poem’s structure and its constitutive tropes. Fr. 75 SM at once spatializes its form and formalizes its space. On the one hand, its ring composition corresponds to the real, circular movement of dancers in space; on the other, its spatial setting acquires the formal regularity of song and dance.

The catalogue of deities is of a piece with this overall thematic. It is, in fact, possible to match each item in the series with a corresponding sacred area in the immediate vicinity of the Archaic agora (*fig. 8*) The first two names are straightforward, for the sanctuaries in question were among the largest and most important in Athens. Zeus Olympios, for instance, had a *temenos* only a short distance to the east of the old agora. Here, in the latter part of the sixth century, the Peisistratids undertook an enormous temple, both polypteral and octastyle, that remained unfinished until the Roman era.<sup>82</sup> To the southwest, meanwhile, was the Sanctuary of Dionysos and the theatrical area (in Pindar’s day the theater itself will have been a temporary wooden structure); the first temple of Dionysos Eleu-

<sup>81</sup> On words of the ἐλικ- root strongly marked to signify circular dance see E. Csapo, “Later Euripidean Music,” in M. Cropp et al. (eds.), *Euripides and Tragic Theatre in the Late Fifth Century* (ICL 24–25 [1999–2000]) 422, and (on this fragment in particular) in *Fragmente* 102.

<sup>82</sup> See R. Tölle-Kastenbein, *Das Olympieion in Athen* (Mainz 1994).

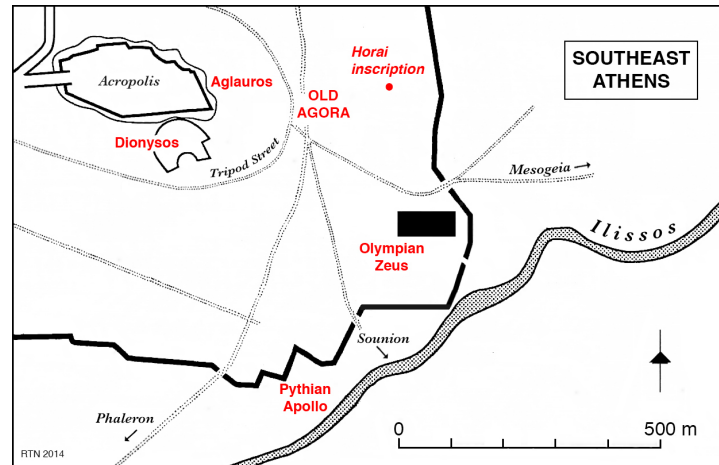


Figure 8: Athens, area of Archaic agora with sites relevant to Pindar fr. 75 SM. Drawing by Richard Neer.

thereus is often attributed to the Peisistratids as well.<sup>83</sup> Between the agora and the Dionysion ran the Street of the Tripods, so named because monuments for dithyrambic victories would eventually line its course.<sup>84</sup>

The Horai present a more complex case. Pindar speaks of a “chamber” (θάλαμος, 14), opened as part of a springtime ritual. While the phrase might be a mere conceit for the change of season, the context invites a literal reading: could Pindar refer to a real shrine? The Horai did have a sanctuary in Athens, although its precise location is unknown. According to Philokho-

<sup>83</sup> For a brief overview of work on the Dionysion see S. Angiolillo, *Arte e cultura nell'Atene di Pisistrato e dei Pisistratidi* (Bari 1997) 70–73. Early theater: E. Csapo, “The Men Who Built the Theaters: *Theatropolai*, *Theatronai*, and *Arkhi-tektones*” with H. R. Goette, “Archaeological Appendix,” in *Greek Theatre and Festivals* 87–121.

<sup>84</sup> For recent discussions see Schnurr, *ZPE* 105 (1995) 139–153, and Schmalz, *Hesperia* 75 (2006) 33–81. On the Street of the Tripods see M. Saporiti, “La via dei Tripodi e i monumenti coregici,” in *Topografia di Atene II* 528–531.



*Figure 9:* Attic black-figure volute-krater signed by Kleitias and Ergotimos (the François Vase): Dionysos (right) and the Horai (left) at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Ca. 575 BCE. Florence, Museo Archeologico inv. no. 4209. Photograph by Richard Neer.

ros, the *hieron* of the Horai contained an altar of Dionysos Orthos (“the Erect”) and was adjacent to an altar of the Nymphs; here sacrificial meat was boiled, not roasted.<sup>85</sup> Dionysos Orthos, in turn, seems to have an association with myths of the origins of wine-drinking in Athens, which has suggested a connection with the shrine of Dionysos *en Limnais* (“in-the-Marshes”) and,

<sup>85</sup> *FGrHist* 328 FF 5b and 173. On Dionysos Orthos see K. Niafas, “Athenaeus and the Cult of Dionysus Orthos,” in D. Braund and J. Wilkins (eds.), *Athenaeus and his World* (Exeter 2000) 466–475.

by extension, a location somewhere by the Ilissos.<sup>86</sup> Yet this reasoning seems tenuous. The Horai did have an association with the wine god, and could often appear in his train, as on the François Vase (*fig. 9*).<sup>87</sup> But that does not really help with locating their shrine.

More concrete evidence comes from an undated inscription that records a dedication to the Horai and the Nymphs together; it must come from the sanctuary that Philokhoros describes.<sup>88</sup> It was found in Ag. Ioannis Chrysostomos, on Daidalou and Periandrou Streets about 300 m. due east of the Aglaurion.<sup>89</sup> Of course the block was not found *in situ*, but the findspot may suggest that the shrine is likely to have been somewhere in this general vicinity. The Horai may have played a role at the Thargelia, a midsummer festival featuring dithyramps in honor of Apollo.<sup>90</sup> This festival centered on the

<sup>86</sup> J. Larson, *Greek Nymphs: Myth, Cult, Lore* (Oxford 2001) 128–129. Current thinking about the location of the sanctuary of Dionysos *en Limnais* is summarized in R. Di Cesare, “Il Santuario di Dionysos en Limnais,” in *Topografia di Atene II* 423–424.

<sup>87</sup> Vasiliki Machaira, “Horai,” *LIMC V* (1990), nos. 20–31. François Vase: Attic black-figure volute krater signed by Kleitias and Ergotimos, ca. 575 BCE, Florence, Museo Archeologico 4209, Beazley Archive Database No. 300000.

<sup>88</sup> *IG II<sup>2</sup>* 4877. Cf. N. Robertson, “The Ritual Background of the Ery-sichthon Story,” *AJP* 105 (1984) 392–393, arguing likewise, based on many of the same ancient sources, for a shrine of the Horai located “east of the Acropolis, perhaps in an area that had once formed the Agora” (392).

<sup>89</sup> Thanks to Nikolaos Papazarkadas for this information.

<sup>90</sup> L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin 1932) 190–192, discusses several late texts that connect Helios and the Horai with the *pompê* at the Thargelia: Porphyry *Abst.* 2.7.1 Bouffartigue (based on Theophrastos), schol. *Ar. Eq.* 729, schol. *Ar. Plut.* 1054. Although Deubner himself was skeptical about the connection (he thought that both Helios and the Horai had been transferred from the Pyanopsia festival), R. Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens* (Oxford 2005) 203–204, is more willing to countenance the possibility that Helios and the Horai were involved in the Thargelia celebrations.

Pythion, where the victors' tripods stood.<sup>91</sup> The shrine was in southeast Athens, again within a few hundred yards of the old agora and the Aglaurion.<sup>92</sup> One might surmise that the sanctuary of the Horai was in the same general vicinity.

Two further pieces of evidence connect the Horai with the Aglaurion itself. The "True Aglaurion" inscription mentions the goddesses in a catalogue of deities "to whom it is customary to offer sacrifice" at the *eisiteria* (11–15):<sup>93</sup>

ὕπερ τῶν ἱερῶν ὧν ἔθνευ τοῖς εἰσιτητηρίοις τῆι Ἀγλαύρῳ καὶ τῶι Ἄρει καὶ τῶι Ἡλίῳ καὶ ταῖς Ὠραῖς καὶ τῶι Ἀπόλλωνι καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις θεοῖς οἷς πάτριον ἦν, ἀγαθεῖ τύχει, δεδόχθαι τῆι βουλῆι...

With regard to the sacrifices offered at the *eisiteria* to Aglauros and to Ares and to Helios and to the Horai and to Apollo and to the other gods to whom it is a hereditary custom (to offer sacrifice), with good fortune be it resolved by the Council ...

Also in the Aglaurion, the Athenian ephebes would eventually swear their oath of service to the state.<sup>94</sup> The oath is known in several versions, both epigraphic and literary. In each case it ends by invoking a number of gods to witness:<sup>95</sup>

<sup>91</sup> P. Amandry, "Trépieds d'Athènes. II: Thargélie," *BCH* 101 (1977) 165–202.

<sup>92</sup> J. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary of Ancient Athens* (New York 1971) 100, and D. Marchiandi, "Il Santuario di Apollo *Pythios* e l'*eschara* di Zeus *Astrapaios*," in *Topografia di Atene* II 430–434. On this region see M.-F. Billot, "Le Cynosarges, Antiochos et les tanneurs. Questions de topographie," *BCH* 116 (1992) 119–156. Efforts to associate the Pythion with the Cave of Apollo *hupo Makraïs* are disproved by L. Gawlinski, "The Athenian Calendar of Sacrifices. A New Fragment from the Athenian Agora," *Hesperia* 76 (2007) 45 [*SEG* LIII 56]. The new fragment of the Altar of the Twelve Gods (see n.13 above) was discovered at 3 Iosiph ton Rogon, or about 660 m as the crow flies SSE of the Aglaurion: a very important find that helps to establish the location of the sanctuary. The distance will have been shorter from the old agora, below the Acropolis slopes.

<sup>93</sup> Text and translation after Dontas, *Hesperia* 52 (1983) 48–63.

<sup>94</sup> Sworn in the Aglaurion: Philokhoros *FGrHist* 328 F 105.

<sup>95</sup> Rhodes/Osborne, *Greek Historical Inscriptions* 88; cf. P. Siewert, "The

ἴστορες {ο} θεοὶ Ἄγλαυρος, Ἑστία, Ἐνυώ, Ἐνυάλιος, Ἄρης καὶ Ἀθηνᾶ Ἀρεία, Ζεὺς, Θαλλώ, Αὐξώ, Ἡγεμόνη, Ἡρακλῆς, ὄροι τῆς πατρίδος, πυροί, κριθαί, ἄμπελοι, ἔλαια, συκαί.

Witnesses are the gods Aglauros, Hestia, Enyo, Enyalios, Ares and Athena Areia, Zeus, Thallo, Auxo, Hegemone, Herakles, and the boundaries of the fatherland, wheat, barley, vines, olive-trees, fig-trees.

Thallo, Auxo, and Hegemone are, according to Pollux, Horai (8.106). At least some of the other deities in the list were worshipped in the vicinity: Aglauros, of course, but also Hestia (in the Prytaneion), Zeus (in the Olympieion) and Herakles (in Kynosarges to the southeast); Enyalios received sacrifice from the polemarch along with Artemis Agrotera, whose sanctuary was in the same vicinity.<sup>96</sup>

In sum, a preponderance of the evidence suggests that the shrine of the Horai was at the east end of the Acropolis, probably in the vicinity of the Aglaurion (which happens to be midway between the church of Ag. Ioannis and the Pythion). It will have been one of several small shrines to fertility deities on the slopes of the rock, along with those of Gê Kourotrophos and Demeter Chloe further to the west (Paus. 1.22.3). Here Dionysos Orthos will have resided, conveniently close to the sanc-

Epehebic Oath in Fifth Century Athens," *JHS* 97 (1977) 102–111. See most recently D. Kellogg, "The Place of Publication of the Epehebic Oath and the 'Oath of Plataia,'" *Hesperia* 82 (2013) 263–276, with earlier references. According to Pausanias 9.35.2, the Athenian Horai are Pandrosos, Thallo, and Karpo, while Auxo and Hegemone are Graces. As Pierre Brulé, *La fille d'Athènes: la religion des filles à Athènes à l'époque classique* (Paris 1987) 34, puts it, "le Périégète a dû faire une confusion," for Pandrosos is in fact one of the daughters of Kekrops, along with Aglauros and Herse. Unlike her sisters, who were worshipped in the Aglaurion, Pandrosos had a temple of her own on the Acropolis itself, alongside that of Athena Polias. Although Pausanias may have gotten his signals crossed, still the error is telling: he has jumbled the Aglaurids and the Horai, thereby, in backhanded fashion, strengthening the argument for a connection between the two.

<sup>96</sup> For these shrines see Billot, *BCH* 116 (1992) 119–156. Enyalios and the polemarch: *Ath. Pol.* 58.1.

tuary of Dionysos Eleuthereus, to the Boukoleion in the agora (where Dionysos would marry the Basilinna every year at the Anthesteria festival), and, in all likelihood, to the sanctuary *en Limnais*, which must have been near the Ilissos although its exact location is unknown.

What effect do these topographical considerations have for a reading of fr. 75 SM? We are, it seems, to imagine a *kuklios khoros* circling the “much-trodden” Altar of the Twelve Gods in the old, *pandaidalos* agora of Athens. As it dances it invokes a roster of deities, to each one of whom there corresponds a different point in the cycle. Starting to the east of the Altar, in the direction of the Olympieion, the chorus mentions Zeus; it then proceeds “from Zeus” (whether clockwise or counter-clockwise we cannot know) to the southwest, in the direction of the Dionysion, home of Bromios and the Kadmeian Semele; then around to the northwest, in the direction of the Aglaurion and the Chamber of the Horai; and around yet again to Dionysos, or more precisely his mother, who might have shared his cult.<sup>97</sup> As it moves, the chorus positions each shrine relative both to the hub—the Altar—and to each of the other points on its circular itinerary. It thereby spins a web of relations linking up disparate points in the urban fabric, with the *omphalos*, ‘kilometer zero’, at its center.

In this way, Pindar renders the contested landscape of fifth-century Athens *kata kosmon*.<sup>98</sup> Unlike many Greek cities of the West—or, for that matter, Piraeus—Athens lacked a regular plan.<sup>99</sup> It was a hodgepodge of sanctuaries great and small that had evolved over centuries, each harboring its own particular rituals and traditions and connected by irregular streets. The

<sup>97</sup> J. Larson, *Greek Heroine Cults* (Madison 1995) 30, 31, 34.

<sup>98</sup> For a similar argument about another Pindaric song in relation to the landscape it orders, see Pavlou, *Phoenix* 64 (2010) 1–17.

<sup>99</sup> For the grid plan of Piraeus as a project of the 470s see Wolfram Hoepfner and Ernst-Ludwig Schwandner, *Haus und Stadt im klassischen Griechenland* (Munich 1994) 22–50.

advent of democracy and the movement of the agora to its later, Classical site can only have made an already complex situation more intricate and confusing. More to the point, it politicized space to a new degree, merely by virtue of uprooting tradition—the effect being most readily apparent, as we have seen, in the countervailing gestures of Kimon and the Thirty. Pindar’s dithyramb, by contrast, suggests an orderliness to the urban fabric: each sanctuary relates cogently to all the others, each connects to each and to the central reference point with all the regularity of measured song and choral dance.

This ordering is not just spatial: it has a temporal dimension as well. For, as we have seen, the image of the *omphalos* implicitly invokes Peisistratos the Younger, whose twin dedications of the Altar of the Twelve Gods and the Altar of Apollo Pythios help to motivate the image. To catch the reference requires a certain local knowledge, which Pindar registers when he calls the agora “famous” or “well remarked” (εὐκλεής). In this way, local history, along with spatial proximity, relates one sanctuary to another. This is old Athens—and, more specifically, Peisistratid Athens. The Olympieion was the largest of all Peisistratid building projects; indeed, it is sometimes associated with Peisistratos the Younger as well.<sup>100</sup> The temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus has also been associated with the family, but in this case documentation is slim. While it may be tempting to see in such allusions a further example of Pindar’s association with the “friends of the tyrants,” given how little we know about the internal politics of Athens in the first half of the fifth century, we do not want to venture or endorse any specific partisan politics behind the thematic of place we have identified in the dithyramb. We simply do not know enough.<sup>101</sup> For present purposes

<sup>100</sup> E.g. Travlos, *Pictorial Dictionary* 402.

<sup>101</sup> For a powerful articulation of the extent of our ignorance of Athenian internal politics for this period see Badian, *Antichthon* 5 (1971) 7–9. Admittedly, Badian’s focus is the period from the reforms of Kleisthenes to 480; nonetheless, many of his observations about the obscurity of internal politics in Athens hold for the entire first half of the fifth century.



it suffices to note that the poet is recruiting his audience's knowledge of local history—and, in so doing, providing a temporal context for his own spatial *kosmêsis*. Put differently, the individual associations of each monument perhaps matter less than their orderly arrangement in song and space alike.

In framing the issue this way, we want to suggest that what the dithyramb achieved in performance was akin to Catherine Bell's model of ritualization, which for her results in "redemptive hegemony." We need to give due weight to both terms in this phrase when we think about the effects of ritual and ritualization. 'Hegemony' because there is inevitably a partisan politics and someone benefits from the powerful effects conjured by ritual. But 'redemptive' is also important: the affirmation of somebody's hegemony works through the motor of causing all participants to feel that the order instantiated in ritual—and only this order—is divinely mandated, right and proper. And for Bell, this is a matter of the forming of "ritualized bodies" through their participation in particular rituals in particular places.<sup>102</sup> With regard to Pindar, we may not be able to specify whose hegemony, but we can track the redemptive power of the ritual by attending to the words of the poem itself, and to the *kosmêsis* of bodies in space that they evoke.

So let us turn to a reading of the poem, for what it tells us of the lived experience of this ritual for participants and audience alike. What we have of this dithyramb mobilizes all the resources of ecstatic Dionysiac song to affirm the centrality of this place and the unity of human participants, gods, and nature forged in this ritual occasion. By so doing, it powerfully legitimizes the old agora, with its shrines arrayed around the 'hub' of the Altar of the Twelve Gods, as the civic center in the most

<sup>102</sup> C. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford 1992) 94–117, 140–142, 206–223; for more extended discussion and application of Bell's model to Greek choral poetry in performance see L. Kurke, "Choral Lyric as 'Ritualization': Poetic Sacrifice and Poetic *Ego* in Pindar's Sixth Paian," *ClAnt* 24 (2005) 81–84.

literal sense. For the nineteen preserved lines of the poem (perhaps a complete strophe?) constitute not just a ring, but as it were an intensifying emotional spiral that climaxes in the last four lines. Within the ring of χορόν (1)—χοροί (19); οἴχνεῖτε (5)—οἴχνεῖ (19), these lines evoke first separation and multiplicity, simply in order to overwhelm and fuse them more effectively in a synaesthetic vision of Dionysiac union.<sup>103</sup> At the exact center of the preserved lines, θεόν (9) and βροτοί (10) articulate an opposition—god vs. mortals—that everything else in these lines works to undo.<sup>104</sup> For everything here is about fusion and integration of all the different elements—gods, mortals, and nature—united in ecstatic Dionysiac worship. It is a truism that Dionysiac dance conjures the gods to be present; here the Olympians are summoned to the agora, where both gods and human participants are crowned (6, 16–17). More striking is the way in which these lines persistently fuse nature and divinity or divinize nature. As M. J. H. van der Weiden notes, the language of line 13, ἐναργέα τ' ἔμ' ὅτε μάντιν οὐ λανθάνει, strongly implies that the signs read by the poem's *egō* are of divine origin, and so here, the tokens of the coming of spring are divinized first as the “opening of the chamber of the red-robed Horai,” and then also by the association of “plants” and “earth” in successive lines with nectar and ambrosia (φυτὰ νεκτάρεια, 15; ἀμβρόταν χθόν', 16).<sup>105</sup> Lines 16–17 then provide a remarkable fusion of all three spheres in the close collocation of the “locks” of violets—foliage, but literally “hair” (ἴων φόβαλ)—and

<sup>103</sup> On the powerful synaesthetic effects of the fragment see A.-E. Peponi, “Theorizing the Chorus in Greece,” in J. Billings et al. (eds.), *Choruses, Ancient and Modern* (Oxford 2013) 32–34.

<sup>104</sup> Van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 198, notes the aurally marked opposition between “god” and “mortals” in these lines.

<sup>105</sup> Thus van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 201–203. Van der Weiden appreciates the divinizing force of the two epithets νεκτάρεια and ἀμβρόταν in rapid succession; less satisfying is the normalizing reading of Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 269–270.

“roses mixed with [unspecified] locks” (ρόδα τε κόμαισι μείγνυται), presumably those of the human and divine participants.

Finally, all of these effects reach a crescendo in the last five preserved lines, which contain four separate grammatical aberrations. Line 15 pairs a neuter plural subject, φυτὰ νεκτάρεια, with a plural verb, ἐπάγοισιν. This grammatical anomaly serves not merely to disambiguate subject and object, as commentators would have it; it produces an effect of multiplicity—the profusion of different spring plants suddenly bursting into bloom.<sup>106</sup> But that bewildering multiplicity is immediately gathered in and unified through what is in effect the opposite grammatical anomaly repeated three times in the last four lines. Here in rapid succession, we find three examples of the so-called *schema Pindaricum*, a masculine or feminine plural subject following a singular verb (βάλλεται ... φόβαι, ἀχεῖ τ’ ὀμφαί, οἰχνεῖ ... χοροί).<sup>107</sup> Combined with the ecstatic repetition τότε ... τότε (16), the grammar itself registers the fusion of all three spheres into a unity—significantly through the action of “voices” (ὀμφαί) and “choruses” (χοροί).

It is tempting to read this bold and vivid shift from mul-

<sup>106</sup> For the suggestion that the third-person plural verb is intended simply to disambiguate subject and object see van der Weiden, *Dithyrambs of Pindar* 202, followed by Furley and Bremer, *Greek Hymns* II 213. In fact, to judge by his practice elsewhere, this hardly seems to be a concern of Pindar’s. Better is Lavecchia, *Dithyramborum fragmenta* 269: “Probabilmente in questo caso evidenzia la molteplicità delle specie di futa, vivacizzando la descrizione della primavera.” For comparable anomalous neuter plural subjects with plural verbs conjuring similar effects of multiplicity and differentiation, cf. *Ol.* 2.83–85, 8.12–13, 10.85, *Pyth.* 1.13–14, with the notes of B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York 1890) 152, 194, 219, 243.

<sup>107</sup> Hamilton, *HSCP* 93 (1990) 216–218, reviews all the examples and notes that the *schema Pindaricum* is “virtually confined to the dithyrambs and so worthy of being considered distinctive” to that genre (217). Given the unifying effects of Dionysiac song and the overwhelming of distinctions Dionysos enables, this restriction makes sense. And yet, scholars have not noted the rhetorical and emotional crescendo that the threefold *schema Pindaricum* effects here.

tiplicity to unity as also applying to the poem's rendering of civic space, unified and infused with divinity by the multiple voices and multiple bodies singing and dancing Pindar's song. And, if we are to follow Peter Wilson and others who see the dithyramb's social work as promoting unity and defusing *stasis*, here these powerful ideological effects serve to set the old Peisistratid/aristocratic agora *es meson*.<sup>108</sup>

Written at a time when the urban fabric of Athens was contested, fr. 75 SM provides a model of reconciliation. Specifically, it exemplifies and enacts rules whereby disparate and even contradictory elements might combine harmoniously. The *schema Pindaricum* does just this at the level of syntax: Pindar's Greek can accommodate seeming violations of protocol without losing sense. The poem's thematic of space works to similar effect, insofar as the orderly, orbital movement of the *kuklios khoros* around the agora establishes cogent relations of space and time between disparate elements of the urban fabric. Zeus, Dionysos, the Horai, Apollo Pythios, the Twelve Gods, all relate meaningfully like so many points in a constellation. Athens was, as we have seen, a haphazard array of shrines, public spaces, and private dwellings. Politics, here, was visible in and as competing systems of order—in and as the tyranny's locatory regime of rural herms and civic altar, and the democracy's corresponding displacement of the agora, the 'zero kilometer' and so much more. With Pindar, this space acquires the orderly precision of a violet-plaited wreath or a choral dance. Athens is exactly as cogent as a plural subject after a singular verb—it should not make sense, but it does, so long as the *choros* makes its circuit round and round the all-decorated agora. In all this, the poet's *sophia* enables him to plait and weave together space, powerfully

<sup>108</sup> See Wilson, in *Sport and Festival* 163–196; B. Kowalzig, "'And Now All the World Shall Dance!' (Eur. *Bacch.* 114): Dionysus' Choroi between Drama and Ritual," in E. Csapo and M. C. Miller (eds.), *The Origins of Theater in Ancient Greece and Beyond: From Ritual to Drama* (Cambridge 2007) 237–239; B. Kowalzig and P. Wilson, "Introduction: The World of Dithyramb," in *Dithyramb in Context* (Oxford 2013) 7–18.

conjuring the illusion (as Anne Carson has it) that things “hang together” to make a town.<sup>109</sup>

*August, 2014*

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<sup>109</sup> This paper emerged from a graduate seminar on “Pindar and the Monuments” that the authors team-taught with Boris Maslov at the University of Chicago in spring 2013. We are grateful to all the participants in the seminar and to the Center for Disciplinary Innovation and the Center for Global Ancient Art, University of Chicago, for enabling this joint venture. Thanks also to the audience members at the University of California, Berkeley, where we presented the argument in talk form in May 2014, for their lively and engaged responses. We owe particular thanks to all the following, who read the paper in draft form and gave us thoughtful criticisms, reactions, and suggestions: Nathan Arrington, Eric Csapo, Eric Driscoll, James Ker, Barbara Kowalzig, François Lissarrague, Emily Mackil, John Papadopoulos, Nikolaos Papazarkadas, Natasha Peponi, Naomi Weiss, and Peter Wilson. Finally, thanks to the two anonymous readers for *GRBS*, to Kent Rigsby for his sage editorial guidance, to Andrew Reinhard and Sylvie Dupont of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens for help with illustrations, and to Angele Rosenberg-Dimitracopoulou for her photograph of the Aglaurion.