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DEME THEATERS IN ATTICA AND THE TRITTYS SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

Analysis of the physical form and geographic distribution of deme theaters in Attica demonstrates their multiplicity of functions during the Classical period. A pattern of one theatral area per trittys per phyle is identified, pointing to the use of the trittyes as nodes of communication within the broader framework of Athenian society and democratic organization. The author argues that the multifunctional nature of the theaters is integrally linked to their relationship with the trittyes, and posits that the theatral areas facilitated both deme and trittyes gatherings. The precise role of the trittyes in organizational and administrative functions is further considered.

INTRODUCTION

Deme theaters, or theatral areas, dot both the countryside of Attica and our epigraphical sources.¹ In this article, I examine the evidence for 19 deme theaters in Attica during the 5th and 4th centuries B.C., combining disparate sources in order to consider theaters attested in literature and inscriptions as well as those found in archaeological contexts (Fig. 1). The physical remains of known deme theaters are discussed in detail to establish patterns of construction and form. The overarching goal of the first part of the investigation is to identify the distribution, shape, and functions of the deme theatral areas, noting the hybridity of their form and the implications of the spatial dynamics of the areas. In the second part, this emphasis on form and function is developed with respect to the administrative and organizational makeup of Athenian society and the democracy, with particular

1. An abbreviated version of this paper was presented in 2010 at the 111th Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America in Anaheim, California. I would like to thank T. Leslie Shear Jr. and Josiah Ober for their invaluable help and advice with

this project. The two anonymous reviewers for *Hesperia* provided insightful comments and critiques, as did editor Tracey Cullen. Thanks and appreciation also go to Ronald Stroud, who generously donated his time and provided helpful comments and

references, as well as to Margaret Miles, Jack Davis, and Denver Graninger. Yuki Furuya and Emily Egan lent their expertise and aid in the drawing of the maps. All translations of ancient sources are my own.

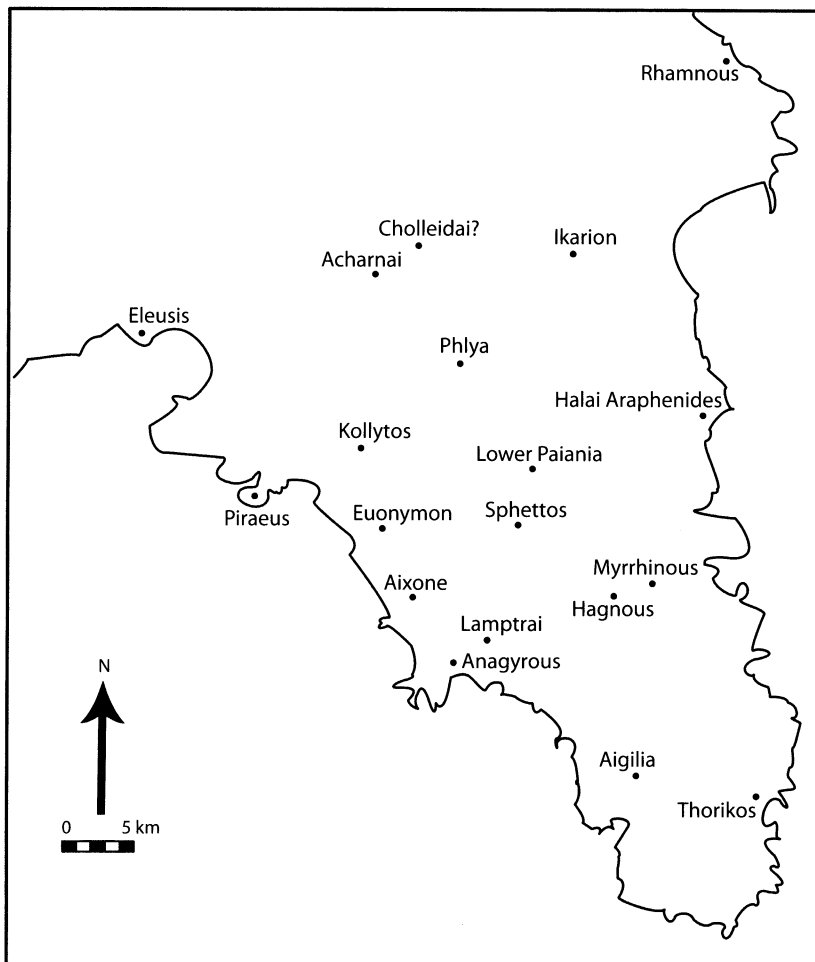


Figure 1. Map of Attica showing all attested deme theaters. J. Paga

emphasis on the trittys system: the multiplicity of purposes implied by the deme theaters helps illuminate the structures and functions of Athenian society and of the *demokratia* on both a deme and trittys level. Rather than viewing the trittyses in terms of military organization and deployment, we can identify a more administrative use.²

An exploration of the political organization of the Athenian democracy must, by necessity, involve an investigation of the system of demes, part of the Kleisthenic reforms instituted in the last decade of the 6th century B.C. One of the elements that may aid our understanding of the demes is the presence, or lack, of theaters or theatral areas. The geographic distribution of the deme theaters represents a crucial link in our conceptualization of the division of the Attic countryside into bureaucratic or administrative segments. Additionally, an evaluation of extant and attested deme theaters highlights the role of the theatral areas and possibly of the festival of the Rural Dionysia in the functioning of the demes, as well as in the more general organization of the polis. The question of deme theaters, therefore, is tied up in the question of the Rural Dionysia, and both are connected to the elaborate matrix of Athenian ritual, society, and democracy.

2. For the military use and function of the trittyses, see Siewert 1982; Humphreys 2008. The problem is discussed in greater detail below, pp. 379–381.

In the following pages, I discuss and evaluate all known and attested deme theaters in Attica during the 5th and 4th centuries B.C., also considering the likelihood that these demes celebrated the Rural Dionysia. I subsequently analyze the physical layout of the archaeologically identifiable deme theatral areas, discuss the relationship between form and function in the theaters, and demonstrate how a more nuanced understanding of these spaces can have a profound impact on various models for thinking about Athenian society and democracy. There follows a section detailing the Rural Dionysia and the role of cult in extra-*astu* activity. The article concludes with an appraisal of the trittys system and, more specifically, of the role of theatral areas within the trittys networks of Attica. A more precise administrative and organizational role for the trittyses is posited, highlighting their important, but frequently overlooked, function in Athenian society.

DEME THEATRICAL AREAS: THE EVIDENCE

It is an unfortunate circumstance of preservation that of the 139 Attic demes, only six have yielded archaeological evidence for a theater or theatral area, and only three of these extant sites have been thoroughly and authoritatively published.³ It seems not only possible, but entirely reasonable, however, to extrapolate backward from texts to remains in the case of the deme theaters: textual evidence for the celebration of the Rural Dionysia, or epigraphic evidence for a system of *choregoi*, for example, could be an indication of a theater in those demes in which remains have not yet been found. David Whitehead takes this approach in his discussion of the Rural Dionysia, when he suggests that evidence regarding the staging of performances and contests implies the existence of a theater, and vice versa.⁴ Given this presupposition, then, it is possible to identify 19 demes in which a theater is in some way attested (Fig. 1).

There is currently no scholarship that synthesizes all of the most recent textual and physical evidence for theaters into a single discussion, but combining the evidence of Pickard-Cambridge, Whitehead, and Jones with more recent discoveries makes it possible to arrive at a comprehensive list of theaters. The literary and epigraphic evidence indicates theaters

3. Thorikos, Ikarion, and Rhamnous have been extensively documented and published. Of the two theaters at Piraeus, the later theater in Zea (ca. 150 B.C.) has been excavated and published, but the earlier one near Mounychia (ca. 450 B.C.), although known since at least the 19th century, was covered over by an apartment building in the early 20th century and its remains are no longer visible. Euonymon (modern Trachones) and Acharnai have archae-

ological evidence for attested theatral areas but lack definitive publication. The remains at Euonymon have been published in brief reports in *BCH* and *Ergon*, and are summarily treated in various other publications (see nn. 42–47, below), whereas the theater at Acharnai has only been briefly mentioned in *Kathimerini* and in *Archaeological Reports*.

4. Whitehead 1986, p. 219.

in the following demes: Acharnai, Aigilia, Aixone, Anagyrous, Eleusis, Euonymon, Hagnous, Halai Araphenides, Ikarion, Kollytos, Myrrhinous, Paiania, Piraeus, Phlya, Rhamnous, and Thorikos.⁵ The demes of Cholleidai and Lamptrai are occasionally posited as demes with theaters, although the evidence remains problematic and positive identification is doubtful.⁶ Sphettos is likewise considered a candidate for a theatrical area by some, although the assignation is tenuous and unlikely.⁷ There is also evidence for a theater on Salamis.⁸ This list, if we are to trust in the validity of the proposition that an epigraphic listing of, for example, a grant of *proedria* in a specific deme implies the presence of a theater, is helpful in plotting the locations of deme theaters and seeing their geographic distribution (Fig. 1). Of the demes with textual evidence for a theater, there are six that present archaeological evidence as well: Thorikos, Ikarion, Euonymon, Rhamnous, Piraeus, and Acharnai.⁹ An examination of the archaeological remains in

5. Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 42–56; Whitehead 1986, pp. 219–221; Jones 2004, pp. 129–136. This list is based on epigraphical and textual evidence; the archaeological evidence is treated separately below. *Acharnai*: *IG II²* 3106, 3092, 1206; *ArchEph* 131 (1992) [1993], pp. 179–193 (= *SEG XLIII* 26). *Aigilia*: *IG II²* 3096. *Aixone*: *IG II²* 1197, 1198, 1200, 1202; *AM* 66 (1941), pp. 218–219, no. 1. It is worthwhile to note, however, with Moreno (2007, p. 72, n. 153), that only *IG II²* 1202 specifically mentions the theater in Aixone, whereas the other inscriptions simply refer to “the theater.” *Anagyrous*: *IG II²* 1210 (from Vari = Anagyrous; Whitehead 1986, p. 220, n. 261). *Eleusis*: *IG II²* 949, 1185, 1186, 1187, 1189, 1192, 1193, 3090, 3100, 3107; *Hesperia* 8 (1939), pp. 177–180 (= *IG II²* 1194 + 1274 + new fragment). *Euonymon*: *SEG XXXII* 267. *Hagnous*: *IG II²* 1183, previously attributed to Myrrhinous and reassigned by Traill (1975, p. 132). *Halai Araphenides*: *ArchEph* 1932, pp. 30–32 (briefly mentioned in Whitehead 1986, p. 220, n. 263); *Ergon* 1957, pp. 24–25 (the decree is noted here, and mentioned in Jones 2004, p. 133, but is otherwise unpublished). *Ikarion*: *IG I³* 253, 254 (= *SEG LIV* 57, 58), *IG II²* 1178, 2851, 3094, 3095, 3098, 3099; *Hesperia* 17 (1948), pp. 142–143, no. 1 (= *SEG XXII* 117). *Kollytos*: Aeschin. 1.157; Dem. 18.180. Kollytos, as a city deme, represents an exceptional case and will be treated in greater detail below. *Myrrhinous*: *IG II²* 1182. *Paiania*: *IG II²* 3097, although note that it is unclear

whether the inscription refers to Upper or Lower Paiania. Lower Paiania is assumed throughout this article due to its higher bouleutic quota (11 for Lower Paiania versus 1 for Upper Paiania). *Piraeus*: *IG II²* 380, 456, 1035, 1496, 1672, 1176 (= *Agora XIX*, L 13, line 106), 1214; Ael. *VH* 2.13; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 54.8; Dem. 21.10; Lys. 13.32; Thuc. 8.93; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.32. *Phlya*: Isae. 8.15. *Rhamnous*: *IG II²* 3108, 3109, 1311; *SEG XXII* 120, 129; *SEG XXXI* 118 (the reference to the theater is restored). *Thorikos*: *SEG XXVI* 136, XXXIII 147, XXXIV 107, XXXIV 174, LV 128. A recent publication by Lasagni (2004) discusses several of the honorific decrees listed above, dividing them into four categories based on the identity of the honorands (= *SEG LV* 39).

6. *Cholleidai*: the deme may be assumed to have a theater only if the protagonist of Aristophanes’ *Acharnians*, Dikaiopolis, did in fact come from this northern deme (see lines 202–279 for the performance of the festival, line 406 for Dikaiopolis’s demotic: Δικαιοπόλις καλῶ σ’ ὁ Χολλήιδης ἐγώ). For discussion of the problems with positing Cholleidai as a deme that celebrated the Rural Dionysia, see Compton-Engle 1999, pp. 364, 366–367; Jones 2004, p. 131. Cholleidai has been retained as a possible deme with a theatrical area in the maps and tables for this article, although its uncertain identification is indicated by a question mark.

Lamptrai: *IG II²* 1161, a fragmentary honorary decree from the Acropolis, dated to the end of the 4th century B.C. The decree calls for

the announcement of some undetermined subject at Lamptrai (it is unclear whether this refers to Upper or Lower Lamptrai) at the Dionysia. The phyle is not identified, although we can assume it to be Erechtheis. It is also unclear whether the Dionysia in question is the Rural or the City. The text is heavily restored.

7. *SEG XXXVI* 187 (fragment of a stele from Philati, possibly assigned to Sphettos by Jones [2004, p. 135]). Association with the/a Dionysia depends on the restoration of lines 10–11. The findspot and extensive restorations make the connection extremely tenuous, and Sphettos, like Lamptrai, should probably not be considered a likely candidate for a deme theater.

8. *IG II²* 1008, 1011, 1227, 3093; Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 8. For the purposes of this article, the Salaminian theater will not be considered.

9. All of the demes with archaeological evidence of a theatrical area have textual attestations as well (see n. 5, above). Recent excavations at Acharnai have revealed the remains of a theater, but as it has not yet been published and is not accessible, it is not extensively discussed below. There are two theaters at Piraeus (see n. 3, above); the later theater, near Zea, is not discussed here. The theatrical area at Euonymon has been only cursorily documented, so discussion of this theater is likewise limited, although not to the same extent as Acharnai and Piraeus, as it was possible for me to view much of the excavated area in modern Trachones in November 2009.

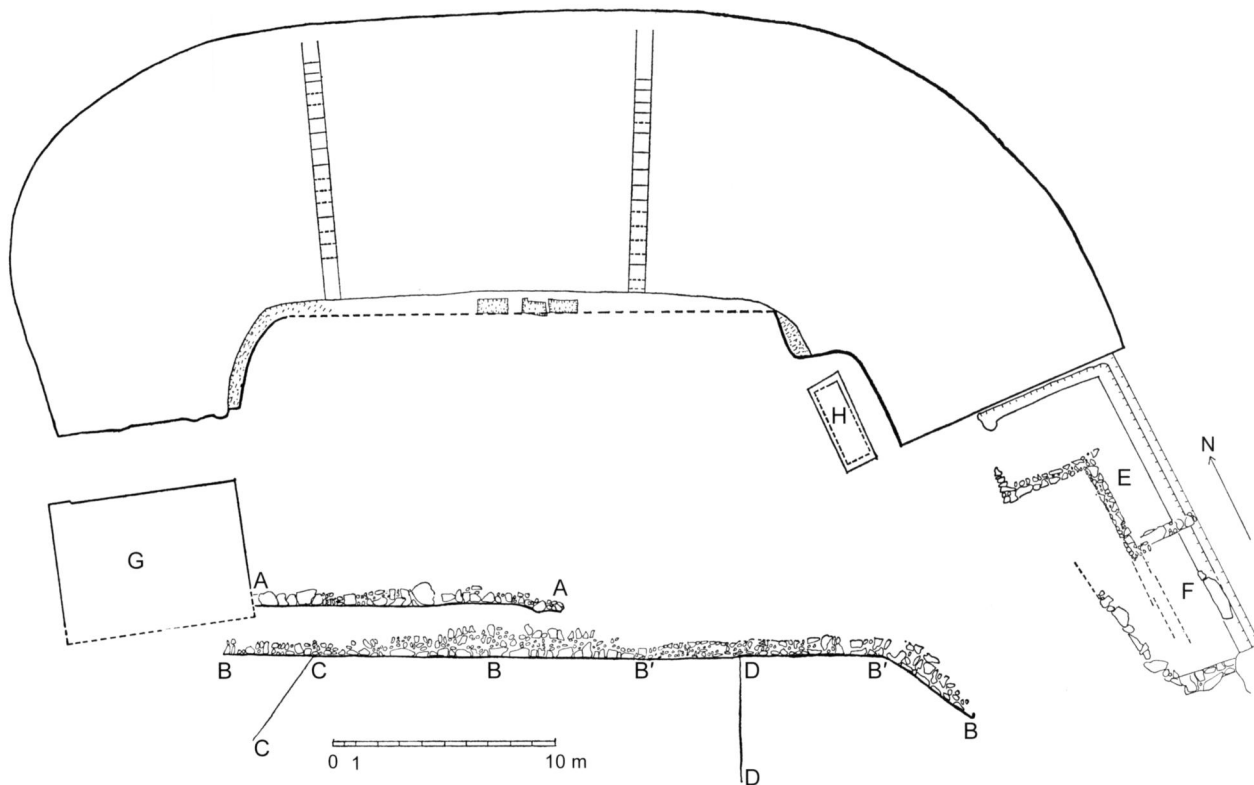


Figure 2. Thorikos, plan of theatral area. After Gebhard 1974, p. 430, fig. 1. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens

these demes will help shed light on the general makeup of deme theaters and, in turn, aid in an understanding of deme theaters on a broader level.

The remains at Thorikos are the earliest treated here and the structures are well preserved, providing a clear example of the overall form and layout of the theatral space (Figs. 2, 3). The area was first excavated in 1886, but the ruins, at least in part, had long been visible.¹⁰ The first stage of construction and use of the orchestra is dated to the end of the 6th century, between 525 and just after 480.¹¹ Herman Mussche, in fact, would prefer a date closer to the beginning of the 5th century.¹² At this time, the theater consisted of a small rectilinear orchestra, delineated to the south by a terrace wall, A-A (Fig. 2; all references to wall names and structure lettering are taken from Elizabeth Gebhard's 1974 plan, with modifications by the author). The natural slope of the hill was most likely used for seating; there are no permanent remains to indicate a prescribed *cavea* during this period, although the existence of ephemeral architectural components, such as wooden *ikria*, or benches, is possible.¹³ It is worth noting that this first phase in Thorikos is nearly contemporary with the first Theater of Dionysos in Athens.¹⁴

The theater was enlarged and altered between 480 and 425. A new retaining wall, B-B, was added just south of A-A, and the lower part of

10. Travlos, *Attika*, p. 430. For excavation details and discussion of the theater, see Hackens 1963, 1965.

11. Hackens 1965, pp. 80–84; Gebhard 1974, p. 429.

12. Mussche 1975, p. 46.

13. Travlos, *Attika*, p. 430; Gebhard 1974, p. 429.

14. Gebhard 1974, p. 429 (with n. 6). Note also that at this stage both theaters consisted primarily of temporary features, i.e., timber constructions

for the *skene* and *cavea*. Only the elements that were structurally necessary for the utilization of the site or that would be labor- and cost-intensive to reconstruct for every use (e.g., retaining walls) were built in stone.



Figure 3. Thorikos, aerial view of theatral area. Photo © Thorikos Archive, Ghent University

the cavea was articulated with stone seats, giving the entire theatral complex an elliptical shape.¹⁵ A small temple dedicated to Dionysos, G, was built to the west of the theater and an altar, H, was placed on the eastern side of the orchestra, forcing the cavea at this point to diverge from its projected track to create a space between the lowest line of seats and the altar. A small complex of rooms of unclear purpose, E and F, extends from the eastern wing of the cavea.¹⁶ In the mid-4th century (after 350), more alterations took place, including the enlargement of the cavea to the north along with the construction of a new *analemma* wall, an extension that allowed even greater numbers of spectators to fill the area (Fig. 3).¹⁷ Two entrances were also added to the rear of the extended cavea, permitting easier access to the upper tiers of seats from the hillside (Fig. 3: upper center and right).

15. It is worth stressing that the *proedria* seats and, in general, the lower tiers of the cavea run in a relatively straight line, southwest–northeast, and it is only the flank ends (to the west and east of the two stairways) that form a slightly curvilinear shape. The centrality and straightness of the *proedria*

seats emphasize the rectilinear form of the orchestra area.

16. Dilke (1950, p. 26) postulates that these rooms were used as a type of “green room” for actors to change costumes or wait. Mussche (1994, p. 214) calls the set of rooms a “banqueting hall.”

17. See Mussche 1990, and 1975, p. 52, for discussion of the population of Thorikos and its relation to the seating capacity of the theater. See n. 67, below, for details regarding the population and capacity of the theaters at Thorikos and Euonymon and the possible financial ramifications.

Ikarion is the next theater in chronological order, if we are to accept the mid-5th-century inscription *IG I³ 253, 254* as an indication that dramatic performances were undertaken in the deme at this time.¹⁸ The fragmentary inscription records the choosing of two *choregoi* from those in the deme who have not undertaken a liturgy before, with specific reference to the performance of tragedy.¹⁹ There are five other inscriptions from Ikarion that refer to dramatic competitions and the institution of *choregoi*, all of which date to the 4th century: *IG II² 1178, 3094, 3095, 3098, and 3099*.²⁰ There thus appears to be a strong tradition of dramatic performance in this deme throughout the Classical period. Ikarion has further mythological and historical connections with Dionysos and acting: it was the site of the god's first landing in Attica, where he was hosted by Ikarios, to whom he imparted the art of viniculture.²¹ Ikarion is also said to have been the home deme of Thespis, the figure associated with the beginnings of tragedy and comedy.²²

The remains of the stone theater at Ikarion are dated to the 4th century, although it seems possible that some sort of nonpermanent construction was in place previously (Fig. 4).²³ The primary constituents of the theater—or more precisely, theatral area—as it appears now include a stone wall, O, and a *proedria* of five thrones, K.²⁴ Wall O is a retaining wall to support the packed-earth floor of the orchestra, again of a rectilinear shape. The placement of the *proedria* indicates the western boundary of the orchestra and the beginning of the cavea. Carl Buck, the original excavator, noted a line of stones, possibly for stelai bases, continuing to the southwest of the *proedria*, but these have now disappeared (cf. Fig. 4, feature N, and Fig. 5).²⁵ There does not appear to be any delineation of the orchestra to the north or south, although the slightly protruding obtuse legs of wall O (walls b–d

18. Original publication of inscription: Buck 1889, pp. 307–315, no. 9. Buck, on the basis of the letter forms, dates the inscription between 447 and 403, Dilke (1950, p. 31) dates it to “about 440 B.C.,” and Gebhard (1974, p. 436) concurs with Dilke. Whitehead (1986, p. 215) assigns it more generally to the “second half of the fifth century” (emphasis original). Dramatic performances seem to have certainly taken place before this time, though, as is implied by the stipulation that the *choregoi* be those who have not served before. The inscription is also discussed in detail and a new text is published in Makres 2004 (= *SEG LIV 57–58*).

19. Whitehead (1986, pp. 215–216) discusses the significance of the appointment of a pair of *choregoi*.

20. Whitehead (1986, p. 216) describes these dedications in greater detail.

21. Notoriously, Ikarios gave this wine to his fellow villagers, who, upon

drinking the new beverage, killed him, believing that he had tried to poison them. For the ancient references to Ikarios, see Hyg. *Poet. astr.* 2.4, *Fab.* 130; Eratosth. *Erigone* fr. 22–27 Powell; Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.14; Arist. fr. 515 Rose; Ael. *NA* 7.28.

22. Pickard-Cambridge (1962, pp. 69–89) discusses sources for Thespis; the ancient references for his origin in Ikarion are Ath. 2.40a–b and the *Suda*, but see Pickard-Cambridge's discussion for critiques of these late attestations, as well as for the problem of the reality of “Thespis” himself. Pickard-Cambridge (1968, pp. 48–49) discusses the deme of Ikarion and the beginnings of tragedy and comedy.

23. Biers and Boyd 1982, p. 18: “Most of the stone construction on the site [of the ancient theatral area] . . . probably dates no earlier than the 4th century B.C.” Bulle (1928, p. 6) suggests a 4th-century B.C. date, with which Dilke (1950, p. 31) concurs. Gebhard

(1974, p. 436), noting *IG I² 186, 187* (= *I³ 253, 254*), dated to around 440 B.C., remarks that “the theater was built around the same time.” Travlos (*Attika*, p. 85) comments that the first building phase probably dates to the end of the 6th century (he compares it to the first phase of construction on the Pnyx), but notes that all the other buildings in the area are of 4th-century construction.

24. Biers and Boyd 1982, p. 14: “We believe that, lacking positive evidence of the use of this area as a theater, it would be best to consider it as a ‘theatral area,’ recognizing that in a deme center secular activities are just as likely as theatral activities to have been carried out in such a space.” Throughout this article, I use “theater” and “theatral area” interchangeably, in order to emphasize the fluidity of space and to avoid the limitations of certain typological labels.

25. Buck 1889, pp. 176–177; Biers and Boyd 1982, p. 12.

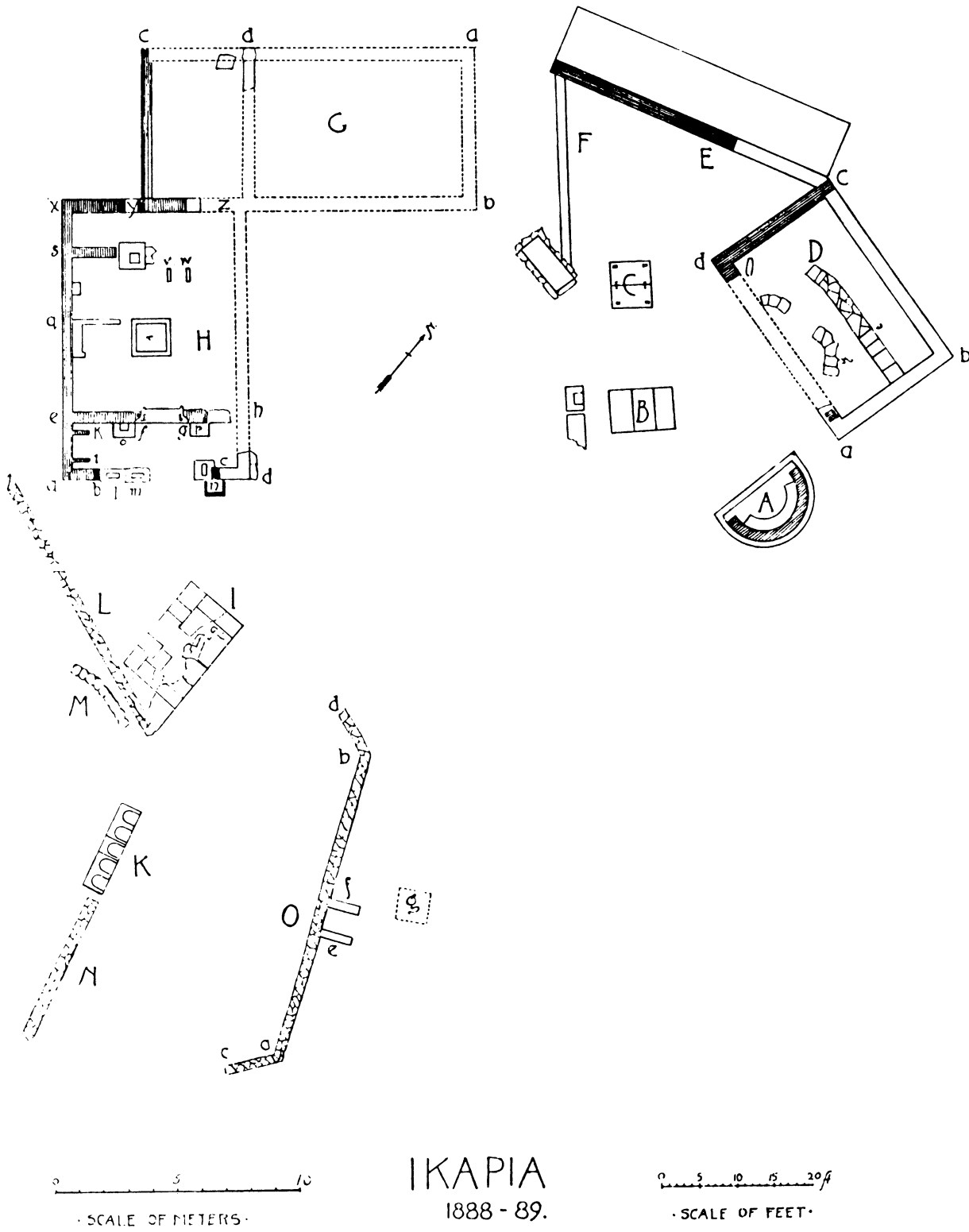


Figure 4. Ikarion, original plan of area, made in 1888–1889. Biers and Boyd 1982, p. 4, fig. 1. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens



Figure 5. Ikarion, state plan following cleaning and reexamination of site in 1981 (no scale included in original). Biers and Boyd 1982, p. 5, fig. 2. Courtesy American School of Classical Studies at Athens

and a–c) may hint at the general parameters.²⁶ We are left with an area of roughly rectilinear form, but as Gebhard notes, “regularity and symmetry do not appear to have been important to the builders.”²⁷ Perhaps this seeming lack of concern with symmetrical shape belies the more fundamental purpose and function of the space: a theatral area or meeting place need not be a perfect circle or square, as long as it facilitates the requirements of its use. Put another way, a circular dance can be performed in a rectilinear space, and the demands of visibility and communal gathering are more important than precise symmetry. The form of the orchestra at Ikarion should not be considered a careless accident or oversight, but an adaptive use of the space for specific purposes.

Possibly contemporary with Ikarion, the remains of the early theater at Piraeus are tentatively dated to the mid-5th century, about the time of the Hippodamian layout for the city.²⁸ Thucydides (8.93.1) refers to the theater as “the Dionysiac Theater at Mounychia,” but it later became known as “the old theater,” after the mid-2nd-century construction of the theater at Zea.²⁹ Following the original excavation in 1881, the remains were covered and a housing development was built over the area, but the reports at the time and shortly afterward indicate a cavea located approximately halfway up the side of the Mounychia hill, oriented to face northwest (toward the harbor).³⁰ Nineteenth-century discussions of the remains on Mounychia, both prior to and following the excavations, do not specify whether the orchestra was rectilinear or circular, although it is shown in an elliptical form in *Karten von Attica*, map II^a, and the same form is reproduced in Judeich’s plan III.³¹

Perhaps more important to the current purpose of this discussion, the theater at Piraeus was closely associated with political rallies and deme assemblies, particularly in the later years of the 5th century. Thucydides (8.93.1) refers to the oligarchic coup of 411/10 and the democratic response: “The hoplites in Piraeus . . . went to the Theater of Dionysos

26. Biers and Boyd (1982, p. 14) were again unable to find clear indications of Buck’s walls b–d and a–c, as well as walls L and M, further to the north and west. If we consider Buck’s original plan, however, it seems clear that these walls served as the northern limits of the cavea, with the altar (I) further emphasizing the closure of the theatral area. In Buck’s initial report of 1888, he remarks that they had opened several trial trenches, one of which contained traces of a wall that “makes a curve as if it might enclose the orchestra of a theatre” (p. 46). I visited the site in December 2009 and was likewise unable to find clear traces of these walls, although there was an undefined arrangement of stones, possibly in a line, near the structure identified by Buck as the altar (I),

which may represent the scant remains of wall L or (less likely) M.

27. Gebhard 1974, p. 435.

28. Garland 1987, p. 161.

29. *IG* II² 1035, line 44 refers to the old theater: τῶν ἀρχαίων θεάτρων. The inscription is dated in the 2nd century or early 1st century B.C. (the archon’s name is unknown).

30. For a brief discussion and bibliography of the Mounychia theater, see Garland 1987, pp. 161, 221 (s.v. Theater of Dionysos). See also limited discussion by Travlos, *Attika*, pp. 342–343 (s.v. Piräus).

31. Leake (1841, pp. 394–395) provides the topographical siting of the theater, ca. 400 yards from the southwest corner of the Temple of Diana, and comments on the references to the theater in Lysias and Thucydides as a

place of assembly and general gatherings, concluding with the comment that “we may deduce that it was a building of some importance” (p. 394). Milchhöfer (1881, p. 63) can provide no details of the theater but mentions that there is a water channel around the perimeter of the orchestra, which he has heard of but not seen. Judeich (1931, p. 451) briefly discusses the terminology surrounding the “alte Theater” and the later Hellenistic theater, but like Milchhöfer, he is unable to supply any details regarding its construction, plan, or form. Both Milchhöfer’s and Judeich’s portrayal of the orchestra as elliptical is based purely on the standard assumption and well-founded (at the time) belief that the orchestras of Greek theaters were circular, not rectilinear.

near Mounychia and, grounding their arms, held an assembly, and it was decided to march to the city straightaway.”³² This passage is important because it provides a clear glimpse of the various uses to which a deme theater might be put, a functional aspect of their form and location that is treated in greater detail below.

Another deme for which we have visible and documented evidence of a theater is Rhamnous, the northernmost garrison site in Attica (Figs. 6–8). The theatral area is located within the fortress, near the gate to the acropolis, and consists of a few trace remains, the most notable of which is the line of the stone *proedria*, similar to that at Ikarion (cf. Figs. 4, 7). It is this line of seats, along with epigraphical evidence, that forms the basis of the identification of the entire area.³³ Three stone thrones remain, although Jean Pouilloux suggests that there were originally seven and Vasileios Petrakos reconstructs the *proedria* with five.³⁴ An inscription (*IG II*² 2849) running in two lines across the front of the *proedria* thrones identifies them as dedicated to Dionysos by the priest of the hero Archegetes.³⁵ Additional inscriptions, both from this area and from the Acropolis in Athens, indicate the performance of comedy and make explicit reference to τῶ θεάτρῳ.³⁶ On the basis of the inscriptions, the theatral area has been dated to the last quarter of the 4th century by Pouilloux, following the previous dating by Bulle.³⁷

To the west of the *proedria*, the east–west line was continued by a series of bases for stelai, and to the east by a marble base for a votive dedication, further defining the northern boundary of the orchestra and dividing the entire area into two halves: orchestra to the south and cavea to the north. The cavea itself is constituted of the rough slope of the acropolis hill and displays no traces of permanent seat construction (Fig. 8).³⁸ The northern limit of the cavea is indicated by the acropolis terrace walls. The southern limit of the orchestra was originally described by Heinrich Bulle as a wall 11.40 m south of the *proedria*; Pouilloux, however, was unable to find any definite traces of such a feature.³⁹ There is a retaining wall, indicated on Bulle’s plan as 6.20 m further south of the first wall (in total, 17.60 m

32. οἱ δ’ ἐν τῷ Πειραιεῖ ὀπλίται . . . ἐς τὸ πρὸς τῇ Μουνυχίᾳ Διονυσιακὸν θεάτρον ἐλθόντες καὶ θέμενοι τὰ ὄπλα ἐξεκλησιάσαν τε καὶ δόξαν αὐτοῖς εὐθὺς ἐχώρουν ἐς τὸ ἄστυ.

33. Pouilloux 1954, p. 73.

34. Pouilloux 1954, pp. 74–76; Petrakos 1999, vol. 1, pp. 90–91. Petrakos states (vol. 2, p. 74) that in addition to the three surviving thrones, there are remains of a fifth (the easternmost throne), the actual chair having been lost sometime after 1923. Travlos (*Attika*, p. 403, fig. 507) follows Pouilloux and reconstructs the *proedria* with seven thrones (Fig. 7).

35. Pouilloux 1954, no. 25, pls. 52:1, 53:1, 2, 55:1; Petrakos 1999, vol. 2, no. 82.

36. These three inscriptions contain explicit reference to the theater at Rhamnous: *IG II*² 1311, lines 7–8 (= Pouilloux 1954, no. 13, pl. 49:1; Petrakos 1999, vol. 2, no. 19; EM 4213): ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλει λιθίνῃ καὶ στήσαι ἐν τῶ[ι θ]εάτρῳ; *SEG XXII* 129; Petrakos 1999, vol. 2, no. 55, lines 13–14 (= *SEG XXXI* 118) has been reconstructed to read [ἀναγράψαι δὲ τόδε] τὸ ψήφισμα ἐν στήλει λιθίνῃ καὶ στήσαι αὐτὴν ἐν τῶ[ι θεάτρῳ] (dated to the second half of the 3rd century). *IG II*² 3108 and 3109 (= Pouilloux 1954, nos. 41 and 39, respectively) both refer to victories in comedy in Rhamnous. See Pouilloux 1954 for all inscriptions from the site, now supplanted by Petrakos 1999, vol. 2.

37. Pouilloux 1954, p. 142; Bulle 1928, p. 3. Dilke (1950, p. 30) agrees with Bulle but remarks that “a kind of theater, however, may have existed here earlier, though without stage or seating of any description.”

38. Dilke 1950, p. 29. Pouilloux (1954, p. 76) comments that access to the cavea was gained on the west by a passage between the stelai and square base, and on the south between the stelai and *proedria*. Petrakos (1991, p. 50) remarks that the theater is “unusual for the simplicity of its form,” and hypothesizes that the spectators sat directly on the hillside itself.

39. Bulle 1928, p. 2; Pouilloux 1954, p. 77.

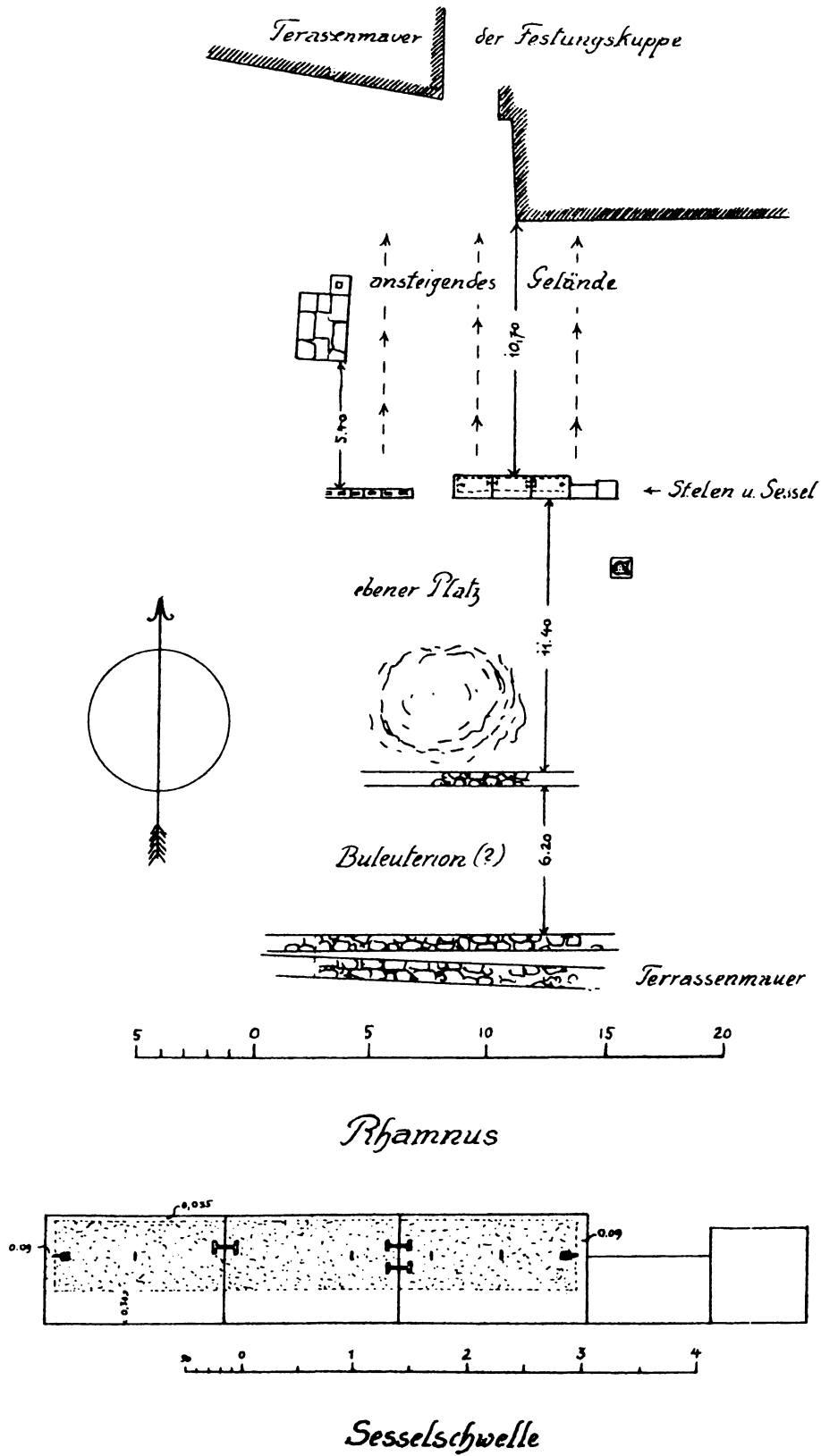


Figure 6. Rhamnus, plan of theatral area. Bulle 1928, pl. 1

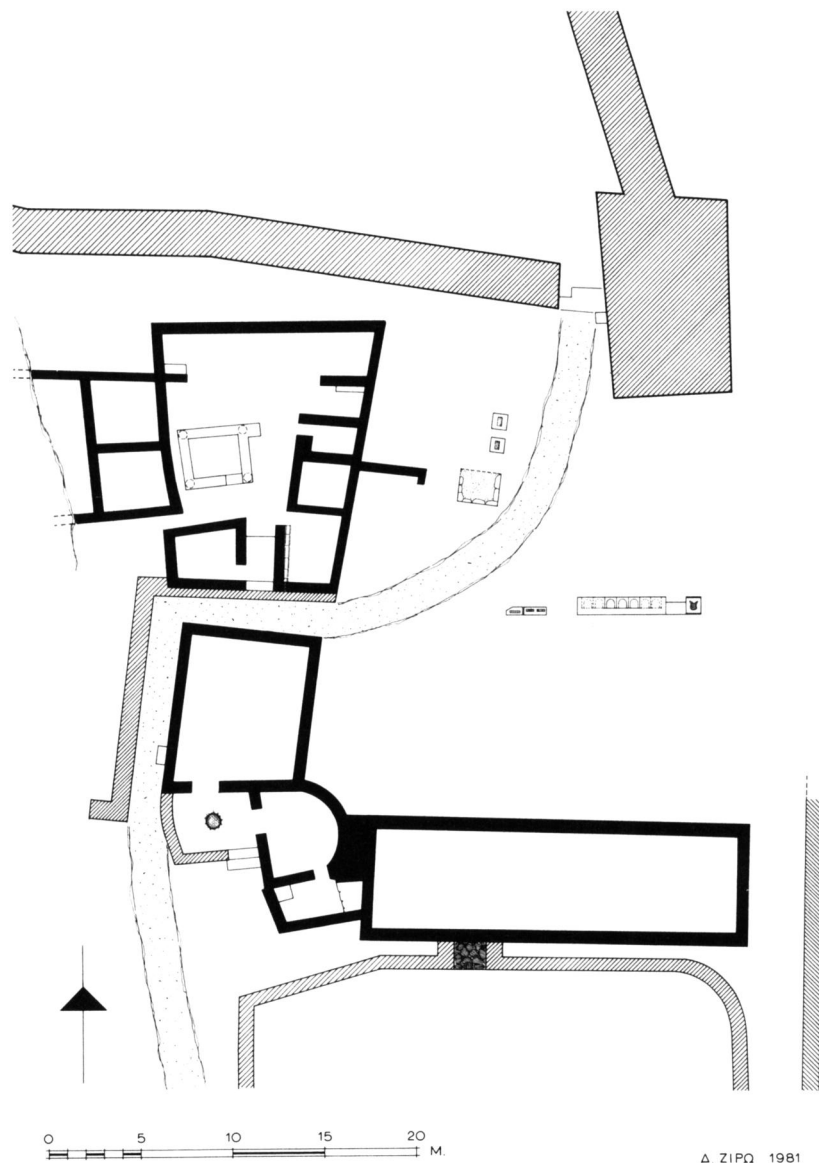


Figure 7. Rhamnous, revised plan of theatral area, showing restored south stoa. Travlos, *Attika*, p. 403, fig. 507. Courtesy Greek Archaeological Society

south of the *proedria*, not accounting for the possible thickness of the missing wall), and Pouilloux confirms its existence.⁴⁰ Petrakos delineates the orchestra to the south by a reconstructed stoa, which would have provided shade and shelter during inclement weather.⁴¹ What one is left with, then, is a rectilinear orchestra bounded to the north by the *proedria* and stela bases and to the south by a stoa, but without clear boundaries on the east and west.

In the deme of Euonymon (modern Trachones), a rescue excavation in 1973 brought to light large sections of a well-preserved theater (Fig. 9).

40. Pouilloux 1954, p. 77.

41. Petrakos 1999, vol. 1, pp. 89–94. Although it is not stated explicitly, it seems probable that Petrakos’s stoa is what Bulle originally saw: the wall

11.40 m south of the *proedria* being the northern (or open front) end of the stoa, the further “retaining” wall being the southern (or rear) end.



Figure 8. Rhamnous, view of theatral area from cavea, looking south toward *proedria* and orchestra. Photo J. Paga

Subsequent excavations in 1980 and 1981 further defined the structure, although a full publication with plans has yet to be presented.⁴² According to the excavation reports, the theater consists of 21 rows of seats preserved in the *koilon*, carved into the naturally sloping rock of the site, and fronted by four stone thrones delineating the *proedria*, one of which is said to have an inscription dated to the beginning of the Hellenistic period, and an additional two thrones of gray “Hymettian” marble, dated to the end of the 4th century.⁴³ There is a rectangular orchestra with a beaten earth floor, sharply delineated on three sides by the cavea seats, and backed by a *skene* building (12.65 × 3.65 m, preserved to a maximum height of 1.95 m) with openings for three doors.

The preliminary reports also mention a *proskenion* of eight Doric columns in *antis*.⁴⁴ The notices further describe two flanking *paradoi*,

42. For excavation reports, see Touchais 1977, 1981, 1982; Mylonas 1980, 1981; Tzachou-Alexandri 1980, 1981. The site is also discussed in Reed 1993, p. 326 (with a photograph by the author on p. 327, fig. 27), and Wiles 1997, p. 29. There is a brief mention of the theater in Goette 2001, p. 186, in which he describes the small *skene* of ashlar masonry covered in stucco and the oblong orchestra and cavea, and fuller discussion in Goette 1995, pp. 16–17, fig. 4, pl. 12:2. Moreno (2007, pp. 43–46) summarizes the

excavation notices and provides a few additional details.

43. The excavation reports are unclear as to whether there are four, six, or ten thrones. I understand the reports to indicate six thrones total, one of which is inscribed, all of which are dated to the late 4th century or early Hellenistic period, and either two or all of which are of “Hymettian” marble. When I visited the site in November 2009, there were six thrones (two thrones per single block of stone) and all were of a grayish marble, possibly Hymettian. I was unable

to find the inscription mentioned in the initial reports. Illustrations in Reed 1993 (p. 326, pls. 26, 27), Ashby 1998 (p. 37, fig. 19), and Wiles 1997 (p. 30, fig. 4, pl. 1) all indicate six thrones total. Goette (2001, p. 186) likewise discusses six thrones. The rows of the cavea seats did not all seem to be cut into the bedrock: the lowest few tiers show signs of having been built up, rather than cut down. I was able to trace only about 10–12 tiers of seats.

44. The unusual shape and construction of the *proskenion* seems to me

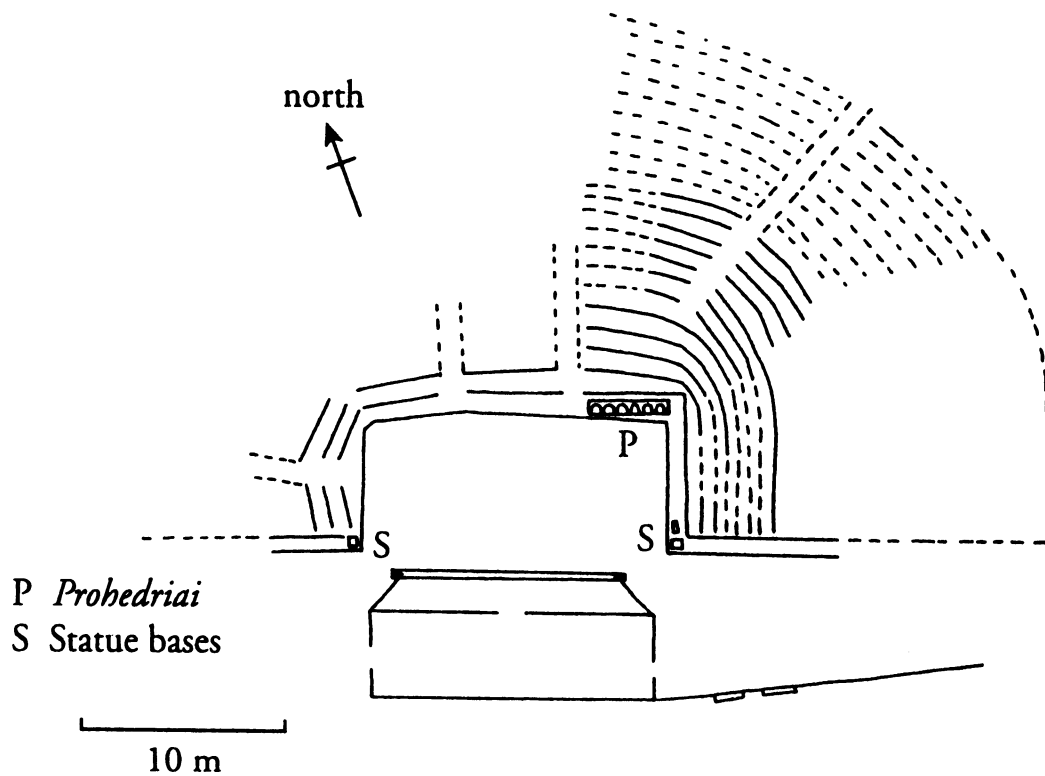


Figure 9. Euonymon, plan of theatral area. Wiles 1997, p. 30, fig. 4. Courtesy Cambridge University Press

fragments of two Archaic, or archaizing, bases and statues of Dionysos, and various ceramic and coin finds.⁴⁵ An inscription dedicated to Dionysos was also found in the area of the theater and helps secure the identification both of the deme and of the structure.⁴⁶ Due to the site's propensity for flooding and the general nature of the rescue excavations, much of the stratigraphy was mixed, although the ceramic finds seem to indicate an initial construction and use around the middle of the 5th century, with rebuilding activity in the 4th century.⁴⁷

A section of the cavea from the theater of Acharnai was discovered during construction work and partially excavated in 2007. The uncovered area has a form that would indicate an elliptical, rather than rectilinear,

to point to a date quite late in the Hellenistic period, although it was difficult to ascertain the precise nature of the structure, given the vegetation overgrowth. The *skene* and *proskēnion* are similar in form to those in the theater at Oropos. There is no mention of the date of the Euonymon *proskēnion* in the excavation reports, although Moreno (2007, p. 44) reports that the original construction of the theater took place in the first half of the 5th century, followed by refurbishment in the 4th century, including the addition at this time of the *proskēnion*. If this dating is correct, that would make

the theater at Euonymon among the earliest known deme theatral areas.

45. See, in particular, Touchais 1977 for a listing of the initial finds. The two bases are still in situ, one on each side of the cavea, near the *paradoi* entrances.

46. *SEG* XXXII 267. The dedication is by Olympiodoros, son of Diotimos, and has been tentatively dated to the early 3rd century.

47. For the later dating, see Mylonas 1980, p. 25; Touchais 1981. Both reports indicate an initial construction date in the mid-4th century and continued use for about a century and a half (or less).

See also Touchais 1982, where sherds from the 4th and 3rd centuries are reported. As with the other deme theaters already explored, this area at Euonymon was probably utilized as a theater and as a general gathering area for some time before the first stone constructions were built, although there is no way of definitively proving this hypothesis given the current state of excavation and publication. For the first construction phase as belonging to the mid-5th century, see Goette 1995, pp. 16–17; Moreno 2007, p. 44; the dating is also discussed in n. 44, above.

orchestra.⁴⁸ A few brief mentions of the discovery of the theater appeared in *Kathimerini* at the time, locating the remains in modern Menidi.⁴⁹ A published synopsis of news reports describes at least 13 rows of limestone, benchlike seats, as well as remnants of the orchestra and *skene*.⁵⁰ According to Platonos-Giota, the date for the theater (on the basis of pottery) is likely to be in the 4th century B.C.

MULTIPLICITY OF SPACE AND FUNCTION IN DEME THEATRICAL AREAS

An important recurring element in the above discussion is the presence of an oblong or rectangular orchestra in four of the visible and ascertainable deme theaters: Thorikos, Ikarion, Rhamnous, and Euonymon.⁵¹ When compared to the circular orchestra of the Theater of Dionysos in Athens, these rectilinear areas seem unusual, leading some scholars to label them “primitive.”⁵² In fact, however, the circular orchestras of Athens and Epidaurous, for example, are the unusual ones, the rectilinear form occurring with greater frequency and over a longer period of use than its circular counterpart. Rather than seeing the rectilinear theaters as abnormalities, we should instead consider them practical transformations of space to suit a multiplicity of purposes.

In one of the most persuasive treatments of rectilinear orchestras, Gebhard argues that the rectilinear shape is an early incarnation of the theater and that there is no clear evidence for circular orchestras until the end of the 4th century.⁵³ According to this thesis, then, the rectilinear orchestras at Rhamnous and Ikarion, both of which date to the 4th century, and the theatrical area at Euonymon, which might date to either the mid-5th or

48. A public lecture given by the excavator, Maria Platonos-Giota, on November 30, 2009, at the Museum of Cycladic Art in Athens presented the finds from Acharnai and nearby areas, and concluded with a discussion of the discovery of the theater. Her photographs showed a theater with at least 11 intact stone bench-seats, two preserved *diazomai*, a water channel with one preserved cover slab, a *proedria* area, and a fragmentary slice of the orchestra floor. These elements would seem to support a reconstruction of the theatrical area with an elliptical orchestra, though it is impossible to know the projected curvature, given the present body of evidence. For other recent finds from Acharnai, see Platonos-Giota 2004.

49. The first announcement of the discovery appeared in the *Kathimerini* for February 17, 2007 (“Dig Unearths Ancient Theater”). An “In Brief” note

for February 22, 2007, again mentions the theater.

50. Whitley et al. 2007, p. 8. I was unable to ascertain the presence of a *skene* in the photographs shown at the public lecture by Platonos-Giota (see n. 48, above). Whitley et al. (p. 8) give a 5th-century date for the theater, but it is unclear what the evidence is for this earlier dating.

51. The early theater at Piraeus could have been rectilinear, although it is impossible to be certain. The dimensions of the orchestras are as follows: *Thorikos*: 13.00 × 19.00–23.50 m; *Ikarion*: ca. 8.00 × max. 20.00 m; *Rhamnous*: ca. 13.00 × 11.40–17.60 m (10 × 25 m according to Petrakos 1999, vol. 1, p. 89, although he seems to refer to the general area, not specifically the orchestra); *Euonymon*: 7.50 × 15.30 m.

52. See, e.g., Dilke 1948, p. 150; 1950, p. 25.

53. Gebhard 1974, pp. 428–429: “there appears to have been no fixed shape for the orchestra in the early Greek theater.” Green (1989, p. 20) summarizes her argument thus: “The rectilinear orchestra is not a design of itself but a function of the early form of the cavea: the orchestra is simply a space between the seating and the acting area.” Anti was the first to discuss the phenomenon of the rectilinear orchestra in his 1947 book, the thesis of which sparked an immediate and long-standing debate among scholars of both archaeology and the ancient theater. Ashby (1998, pp. 24–41) discusses the historiography of the debate and offers additional evidence to strengthen the hypothesis of a rectilinear form for the earliest theaters, drawing examples from the Bronze Age and 8th century, and from throughout the Greek world.

4th century, are either based on earlier rectilinear structures that are now missing (this seems to be the conclusion favored by Gebhard), or represent spaces that may not be, strictly speaking, theaters.

Bulle, followed by Pouilloux and subsequently Petrakos, also takes steps toward the latter line of interpretation with respect to Rhamnous. The area between the wall 11.40 m south of the *proedria* and the terrace wall was labeled by Bulle “Buleuterion(?)” (Fig. 6), building on Milchhöfer’s assignation of the total area as the “Agora des Demos, den Mittelpunkt des öffentlichen Lebens.”⁵⁴ Bulle suggested that this space served multiple purposes: for the storage of public documents, for the erection of stelai and honorary statues, as a gathering space for the inhabitants of the deme, and as an area for the dancing of choruses and playing of games.⁵⁵ Dilke disagrees, remarking that “Bulle has no reason to call it a *bouleuterion*.”⁵⁶ Petrakos, on the other hand, returns to the general idea of Bulle’s *bouleuterion*, and makes a strong argument that the area between the *koilon* and the stoa to the south served as both the theater and the agora of Rhamnous.⁵⁷ Mussche adopts Bulle’s theory with respect to Thorikos, and the hesitancy of Biers and Boyd to call Ikarion’s structure a theater outright, betrays, I believe, a conviction that the theatral area served civic and political functions as well.⁵⁸ Indeed, these theatral areas seem to have a primarily civic and political function, and only a secondary use as venues for dramatic performance.

The Thucydides passage regarding the theater in Piraeus (8.93.1) demonstrates the important organizational role a deme theater could, and did, play: it is a large, open space with ample room for seating and speaking; it is a specific topographical area known well enough to function as a familiar landmark and to be used as a rallying spot for large segments of the population; and the design of the theater itself facilitates communication. The physical space of the theater, whether circular or rectilinear, is particularly conducive to organized action: the area is ideal for arranging a large group such that the majority can focus their attention on a single individual or on a select few. The axes of viewing within a theatral area are oriented with a centripetal movement, drawing the spectator’s focus both downward and inward, although it is possible for the people seated in the cavea to observe and interact with each other, in addition to the individual(s) in the orchestra area. Thus, the spatial and hierarchical relationship between the cavea and the area of the orchestra or *skene* establishes a mode of viewing conducive to deliberative decision making, as the lines of communication circulate throughout the space and come to focus on the center.

This observation further gains strength when one considers the use made of the Theater of Dionysos in Athens during the 4th century, when, following the Lykourgan reconstructions, the theater was used by the

54. Bulle 1928, p. 2, citing Milchhöfer. This is the area reconstructed as a stoa by Petrakos (see Fig. 7, above).

55. Bulle 1928, pp. 2–3.

56. Dilke 1950, p. 29.

57. Petrakos 1991, pp. 50–51; 1999, vol. 1, pp. 89–94. Note Petrakos 1999,

vol. 2, nos. 23 (= *SEG* XLIII 35), 43 (= Pouilloux 1954, no. 19; *SEG* XV 113, XIX 82), and 73 (= *SEG* XLI 73, heavily restored, although the preserved [- -]γορα[- -] in line 11, restored by Petrakos in 1999 as [ἐν τῆι ἀ]γορᾶ[ι], secures the assignation), all of which

call for the erection of stelai with honorary decrees ἐν τῆι ἀγορᾶι and were found in the general vicinity of the theatral area.

58. Mussche 1975, p. 52; 1994, pp. 214–215; for Biers and Boyd, see n. 24, above.

Ekklesia as a meeting place more frequently than the Pnyx.⁵⁹ The function of the theatral space is integrally linked to its form, but that form itself is adaptable and malleable, particularly in the demes, where the space had to fulfill a multiplicity of purposes. In light of these visual axes and spatial relationships, it becomes apparent that the rectilinear orchestras and scant permanent architectural constructions of the deme theatral areas are not “primitive” or “unsophisticated,” but rather are individually adapted to suit the multivalent needs of the specific demes they served.

When Kleisthenes “mixed up” the people of Athens in 508/7, he did so by instituting the system of 139 demes, 30 trittyes, and 10 phylai, in order that each phyle would include part of the population.⁶⁰ Government business and administration was conducted on a large pseudo-representative scale within Athens, in the Boule, but also on a personal face-to-face level in the individual demes.⁶¹ It is here, within the demes, that we can see the fullest realization of the Kleisthenic reforms, as the demesmen came together to oversee their own business, but also their role in the business of the polis. Each deme held its own assemblies to take care of matters such as the registration of new members, the choosing and examination (*euthynai*) of officials, the administration of oaths to registered citizens, the regulation and management of deme funds and property (such as the theatral areas, sanctuaries, and agorai), and more deme-specific matters such as the conducting of festivals and cults, the appointment of priests and priestesses, and the awarding of honorific decrees.⁶²

The times and frequency of the deme assemblies varied from deme to deme. Whitehead calculates that the minimum number of meetings for a deme would be one per year, but he insists that a single annual meeting is highly unlikely.⁶³ Indeed, it is even possible that the deme assemblies met just as often as, if not more frequently than, the Ekklesia: there was less distance to travel, thus making the time commitment of attending a meeting less onerous, and matters concerning the individual demes and demesmen might come up often, particularly in the realm of ritual and festival, and be easier to deal with in brief monthly or even weekly meetings than extended annual meetings. Particularly in the demes that played important roles in

59. The epigraphic and literary evidence for the Lykourgan Theater of Dionysos supplanting the Pnyx as home to the Ekklesia is collected in McDonald 1943, pp. 44–61. The earliest known inscription, *IG II² 140*, line 4, dates to 353/2, but the majority of the evidence is from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. For the Lykourgan building activity, see discussion in Thompson 1982, p. 145; Camp 1996, pp. 45–46; Hintzen-Bohlen 1997, pp. 31–38. The most recent treatment of the use of the Theater of Dionysos during the Lykourgan period is found in Lambert 2008, which examines 10 honorific decrees passed by the Ekklesia in the Theater of Dionysos. In

general, these honorific decrees speak to the importance of the theater during the 330s, but they also demonstrate the integral connections between theater and politics at this time: the decrees are passed by the Ekklesia, meeting in the theater, and at least half were erected in the sanctuary of Dionysos.

60. Arist. *Ath. Pol.* 21.2: ἀναμεῖξαι βουλόμενος, ὅπως μετάσχωσι πλείους τῆς πολιτείας. In other words, each of the 139 demes was affiliated with one trittys (inland, coastal, or city). Each phyle included three trittyes (one inland, one coastal, one city). Therefore, each deme was part of a trittys, which was in turn part of a phyle.

61. By “representative” I do not

mean to suggest that the bouleutai acted as “representatives” of their respective demes or phylai in our modern sense of the term, but that each phyle was represented, as in “made visible” or “included,” via the 50 bouleutai.

62. Whitehead (1986, pp. 86–120) discusses the deme assembly, remarking that “although no source tells us so directly, it may legitimately be assumed that a provision for every deme, great and small, to meet in assembly and administer its own affairs had been part of Kleisthenes’ inaugural measures.” For the business of the deme assemblies, both internal and relating to the polis at large, see esp. pp. 97–120.

63. Whitehead 1986, p. 92.

the broader polis (e.g., Eleusis, Piraeus, Thorikos, Rhamnous), frequent deme meetings might prove necessary to ensure the proper functioning of deme-based income-generating elements, such as pan-Athenian sanctuaries, ports, harbors, and mines, and for demes concerned with matters of protection, such as garrisons and border areas.

The meeting place for the deme assemblies varied from deme to deme, but it seems clear that the gatherings did not, at least during the Classical period, take place in Athens itself (with the exception of those demes that belonged to the city trittys and were located within the city walls).⁶⁴ In the smaller demes, those with a bouleutic quota of only one or two, we might envision these assembly meetings taking place in the largest house in the deme, or in any generalized open area, either public or private, that could accommodate the registered citizens.⁶⁵ For medium-sized demes such as Thorikos (quota of five), Rhamnous (quota of eight), or Ikarion (quota of five), some sort of facility or public area was most likely employed to allow the registered demesmen to gather: a space that was possibly delineated as such, or a space that was transitory in nature. In the largest demes, such as Piraeus (quota of 9) and Acharnai (quota of 22), there frequently existed individual agorai, in which meetings would take place (see Table 1 below for a listing of the bouleutic quotas for the demes with theatral areas).⁶⁶

For those demes that seem to lack an agora, an area generally understood for our purposes as a large open space delineated, either topographically or figuratively, as an arena specifically for public activities, we should look to the theatral areas as providing the necessary venue for deme assemblies.⁶⁷ They are large spaces with ample seating and are generally

64. Contra the interpretation of Dem. 57.10 (*Against Eubulides*) implying that deme meetings took place in Athens. The deme in question, Halimous, belonged to the city trittys of phyle IV, Leontis, and was located ca. 10 km outside the *astu*, so it is possible that this particular deme held meetings within the limits of the city. As one of the anonymous *Hesperia* reviewers observed, it is also likely that at least some deme meetings took place within Athens during the Peloponnesian War, when citizens were transferred from the countryside to within the Long Walls. Whitehead (1986, p. 90) believes it is possible that some deme meetings took place in the city during the second quarter of the 4th century, but he finds it highly unlikely that this occurred earlier and with any amount of frequency. For most of the demes, however, it would have been quite impractical to have the deme meetings in the *astu*, given the inconvenience of travel, and we should assume that they occurred

primarily within the demes themselves.

65. All references to bouleutic quotas are taken from Traill 1975, pp. 67–69, table 2.

66. As a single example for Piraeus: *IG II² 1176*, dated to 324/3, instructs the demarch and treasurers of Piraeus to set up the inscribed stone “in the agora of the demesmen” (line 27), cited in Whitehead 1986, pp. 86–87, n. 4. See n. 57, above, for similar instructions on stelai from Rhamnous.

67. This view is not new; see Whitehead 1986, p. 87, citing Haus-soullier 1884, p. 5: “Ordinairement, l’assemblée se tenait au milieu du dème, sur l’agora ou dans le théâtre.” We might also recall Bulle’s interpretation of the theatral area at Rhamnous, above, n. 54. It is also possible that, in some cases, the theatral areas and agorai coexisted (i.e., the theatral areas were located within the agorai or served as the agora itself), with the former serving as the meeting location for the deme assemblies. Ober (2008, p. 206)

also expresses this view, noting the large capacity of the theater at Thorikos (the estimated adult male population is assumed to be ca. 300–400 based on the bouleutic quota of five, whereas the theater, in the 4th century, had a capacity of ca. 3,200) as evidence for its use as a general meeting ground, possibly for the entire phyle of Aigeis. On the other hand, the theatral area at Euonymon had a capacity of approximately 2,600 to 3,750, whereas the deme had a population of ca. 4,000, according to Moreno 2007, p. 60 (citing Lohmann 1998, p. 289—which should be corrected to p. 195, or to Lohmann 1993, p. 288—for the capacity of the theater). It is also worth briefly noting the stone thrones that were discovered in situ directly in front of the Stoa Basileios in the Athenian Agora. Their form and location may have implications for activities within the open area directly to the east of the Stoa Basileios.

located in the central nexus of the deme. They are, in certain cases, the depository of inscribed stelai (as at, e.g., Rhamnous), and could thus serve an archival function. Furthermore, these theatral areas would not be otherwise used, except for performances of the Rural Dionysia. Demesmen would be familiar with the theater form as a venue for assembly meetings if they had ever attended a meeting of the Ekklesia following the City Dionysia (a meeting that took place in the Theater of Dionysos in order to consider infractions of festival conduct and vote on the winning productions) or spent much time on the Pnyx, the form of which can be considered theatral, particularly in its third or final phase.⁶⁸ Indeed, these theatral areas were probably used as assembly places more frequently than they were sites of dramatic performances; perhaps we should refer to them not as theaters or even theatral areas, but as “civic centers.”⁶⁹

A “civic center” can be understood in the context of the current discussion as an area capable of encompassing the political, civic, and religious functions of the deme. It is important to emphasize the fact that the agora and the bouleuterion, two of the most common types of “civic centers,” are not form-specific.⁷⁰ The function of the space, in this instance, is more important than whether the area is curvilinear or rectilinear: a bouleuterion need not have four walls and a roof, just as a theater need not have a circular orchestra.⁷¹ That said, however, we might interpret the shape of the extant deme “theaters” as a hybrid, related to their hybridity of purpose: a true multipurpose space, readily adaptable for various uses. The elliptical cavea at Thorikos, for example, combined with its oblong orchestra area, is perhaps best viewed as a marriage of the Pnyx and Old Bouleuterion of Athens. If the first use of the area at Thorikos can indeed be dated to ca. 500, it would, in fact, be contemporary with both of the Athenian structures.⁷² Once a theatral area exists, and the financial and labor resources have been expended, we should expect it to be used for a

68. See n. 59, above, for discussion of the Ekklesia meetings in the Theater of Dionysos. In particular, Lambert (2008) discusses the various matters put to this specific assembly. For the third phase of the Pnyx, see Camp 1996.

69. Parker (2005, p. 64) remarks that “the demesmen probably assembled much more often for religious purposes than for political.” While he is certainly correct in emphasizing the ever-present role of ritual within the individual demes, I believe that it is entirely possible, as suggested here, that the demesmen assembled as frequently as needed in order to discuss political matters, potentially as often as, if not more often than, they assembled for religious matters. There is no evidence to support Parker’s claim, and I show

below that the ratio between religious and political gatherings was probably more equal than he supposes.

70. Compare, for example, the square form of the Old Bouleuterion of Athens with the apsidal double-hall “bouleuterion” at Olympia, or the triangular Agora of Athens with the precise Hippodamian agora of Priene.

71. Contra Dilke’s objections to Bulle’s identification of the “bouleuterion” at Rhamnous (see n. 56, above, and accompanying text), and also contra McDonald (1943, p. 43), who assumes that the Archaic agorai “retained the Homeric sacred circle.” A meeting or assembly can take place in any location; a circle may facilitate a form of equality in discussion (see Chwe 2001, pp. 5, 31–33), but is not necessary for the conducting of the

business of the deme. Csapo (2007, p. 106) cites an economic angle to the rectilinear form of the early theaters, noting that wooden *ikria* are more suitable to a rectilinear than circular space, and links this relationship to the leasing of theatral space to *theatropolai*. In his calculation, the theaters were rectilinear because the *ikria* fit better in this type of space, and the deme or polis could generate income by farming out the construction of the benches on an annual basis.

72. For the date of ca. 500 for the Old Bouleuterion in Athens, see Shear 1993, pp. 418–424; 1994, p. 236. For the first building phase of the Pnyx in ca. 500, see Travlos, *Athens*, pp. 466–475. The dating of the theater at Thorikos is discussed above on pp. 355–356.

wide variety of functions, and not left sitting empty outside of its brief use during dramatic festivals.⁷³

The multiplicity of space and function implicit in the deme civic centers raises further questions regarding deme administration and the role of the demes within the polis of Athens. It has been suggested by some scholars that the demes are miniature poleis, small-scale models of the larger system, with corresponding administrative and organizational structures.⁷⁴ It is beneficial, however, to consider to what degree and in what respect the demes functioned as microcosms of the larger polis with its urban center in Athens, and to what extent they acted more as individual communities existing within the broader conglomeration of the polis of Athens.

In his most recent book, *Democracy and Knowledge*, Josiah Ober describes the demes as the areas in which “strong ties” are formed (to be understood as strong, or personally significant, social connections), as opposed to the “weak ties” across phylai (taken to mean the weaker, or less explicitly personal interactions between people from different demes).⁷⁵ This idea of forging connections across social networks by means of the phyletic associations is remarkably well suited to understanding how the Athenian democracy worked, as the individual connections within demes were expanded across the broader polis by means of the phyletic links.⁷⁶ Ober’s emphasis on the demes as individual communities stands in contrast with the microcosm model and ascribes a more proscriptive role to the demes, one at odds with the top-down administrative structure of the mini-polis theory. One element, however, in the communication and transference of knowledge that Ober does not address in as great detail as the demes and phylai is the trittyts system. The trittytes, as the midpoints between demes and phylai, play a pivotal role in understanding how the democracy was implemented and how Athenian society functioned across the geographical expanse of Attica. The deme theaters, as shown below, provide a potentially fruitful avenue of exploration with respect to both the trittytes and the broader interworkings of Athenian democratic society.⁷⁷

73. It is impossible to overemphasize the multipurpose character of these theatral areas. We are often quick to assign specific functions to specific buildings or aspects of the built environment in the ancient world, without fully taking into account the nuances of space and flexibility of many of these structures. Although it is frequently helpful to affix certain labels to particular buildings and spaces, overreliance on these labels can result in blanket assumptions and a commitment to preconceived functions. A move toward multiplicity of form and function can prove far more advantageous, particularly in areas such as the demes of Attica, which are not as well studied and documented as other sites.

74. Whitehead (1986) is one such prominent scholar who has supported this interpretation of the demes.

75. Ober 2008, pp. 135–141.

76. Ober (2008, p. 137) remarks that “small-scale networks based primarily on strong ties [i.e., demes] are very good at distributing information internally, but they are poor conduits for importing or disseminating useful knowledge *outside the local network itself*” (emphasis original). Ober then proceeds to identify “bridging ties” that forge connections across demes, thus facilitating the movement of information from the local, “strong ties” of the demes to the broader, “weak ties” of the phyletic associations. For other recent work on the applicability of this sort of

network theory to the ancient world, see Malkin, Constantakopoulou, and Panagopoulou 2009, particularly the introduction to their volume, pp. 1–11, and also Vlassopoulos 2009.

77. Ober and I have independently investigated deme theaters as possible conduits of information (Ober’s “bridging ties”). The conclusions arrived at here differ in several respects from those in his 2008 book (see esp. pp. 205–208, for his treatment of the deme theaters), largely in the distribution mapping and intermediary links. Ober posits only 14 theaters and notes their geographic distribution exclusively with respect to the phylai, an assignation that bypasses the integral role of the trittytes as identified here.

THE RURAL DIONYSIA

Before turning to the political ramifications of this investigation of deme theaters, it is important to consider briefly the festival of the Rural Dionysia and its role in the demes, particularly because it is this festival that has frequently been posited as the catalyst for the construction of the theatral areas.⁷⁸ The Rural Dionysia is considerably less well known and studied than its grander counterpart, the City or Great Dionysia, largely due to lack of evidence. Nonetheless, the festival is an important aspect of deme activity, both on a cultic and administrative level, and, as shown below, it potentially has ramifications for our understanding of the trittyes. The extraurban festival took place in the midwinter month of Poseideon, but there was no fixed day: each deme (of those that did celebrate the festival) conducted the rites on different days according to its own festival calendar.⁷⁹ The Rural Dionysia was deme-specific, then, on two levels: in the first place, each deme held the festival on a day of its own choosing within the month of Poseideon, and second, each deme was responsible for the organization, administration, and structure of its own festival. This latter aspect of planning and funding is one that likely created difficulties for some demes, particularly those with less expendable income and fewer citizens eligible for liturgical service than others. A festival, even if conducted for only one or two days, was surely a financial burden, a factor we should consider when evaluating the practicalities of holding the Rural Dionysia on an annual basis in every deme of Attica.⁸⁰

The only component that seems to have occurred in every celebration of the festival and did indeed play a key role, regardless of location, was the *pompe*, or procession, the central feature of which was the conveyance of a large phallus held aloft, alluding to the fertility aspects of the god.⁸¹ It is unclear whether this procession occurred on the first or last day of the rural festival, and it is likewise unclear for how many days the festival

78. See, e.g., Whitehead 1986, pp. 212–222; Wiles 1997, pp. 23–62; Jones 2004, pp. 124–158. Whitehead, however, downplays the connection between the theaters and the festival.

79. See Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 42–43; Whitehead 1986, p. 212 (both citing Pl. *Resp.* 5.475 for the variety of festival days).

80. Parker (2005, p. 64) mentions the example of Kydantidai and Ionidai, who shared the celebration of two festivals to Herakles: *IG I³* 258, *SEG XXXIX* 148. Of course, it would be possible for every deme to hold a small annual festival to celebrate the Rural Dionysia, potentially without dramatic performances or with an abbreviated *pompe*, but the economic factors involved in celebrating the festival on a larger scale surely created hardships and

limitations for many demes.

81. See Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 42–43. Our most complete literary account of the procession is in Aristophanes' *Acharnians* (lines 241–279). There are also a number of inscriptions relating to the celebration of the festival in the Piraeus, collected in Pickard-Cambridge 1968, pp. 44–47. Csapo (1997) discusses elements of the festival of the Rural Dionysia, with particular emphasis on the *pompe*. For further, and more detailed, information regarding various aspects of the Rural Dionysia, see Bieber 1961, pp. 51–52; Simon 1983, pp. 101–104; Henrichs 1990. Rehm (1992) discusses the role of participation in the festivals and the use of theatrical space, but with specific emphasis on the City, rather than Rural, Dionysia.

was celebrated in each deme. A game called *askoliasmos* is said to have been played during the Rural Dionysia, but the sources are late and the connection is tenuous.⁸² In addition to the central procession and games, there is evidence for the performance of tragedy and/or comedy in certain demes, although it remains unclear whether all of the demes—of those that celebrated the festival—held such contests. The references consist mainly of inscriptions detailing the appointment of *choregoi*, dedications by victorious *choregoi*, and grants of *proedria*.⁸³

Although most of our evidence dates to the 4th century, it seems fair to suggest, as most scholars do, that the Rural Dionysia in the 5th century was largely similar. Pickard-Cambridge associates the burgeoning 4th-century evidence for deme theaters with the Lykourgan reconstructions at the Theater of Dionysos in Athens, and draws the conclusion that theater in general was more popular at this time, as indicated by the relative wealth of information, textual and archaeological, from the 4th century as compared to the 5th century.⁸⁴ While it does seem plausible that the theater grew in popularity during the 4th century, the earlier evidence should not be discounted too quickly, and we might even posit a connection backward, from demes to urban center: attention to theatral areas in the demes during the 5th and early 4th century could have inspired greater attention to the Theater of Dionysos in the second half of the 4th century. Thorikos, for instance, is one of the best surviving examples of a deme theater, and the remains there clearly go back to the end of the 6th and beginning of the 5th century. Some of the epigraphic evidence for the other theaters dates to the mid-5th century, and several of the excavators of Rhamnous and Ikarion have postulated earlier theaters, all traces of which were rendered invisible by the later, more permanent, constructions. In general, it seems safe to postulate the existence of the Rural Dionysia and the presence of, at the very least, ephemeral theatral areas in some demes throughout the Classical period, potentially dating back to the late 6th and early 5th centuries.⁸⁵ The theatral areas were therefore visible topographical landmarks in the demes from the early stages of the democracy, just as the Rural Dionysia was an important ritual component of the deme festival calendar.

82. Pickard-Cambridge 1968, p. 45; Whitehead 1986, p. 214. Ancient sources: Verg. *G.* 2.380; Cornutus, *Theol. Graec.* 30. The game seems to have consisted of jumping onto and balancing upon a grease- or oil-covered wineskin.

83. See n. 5, above, for the epigraphic evidence.

84. Pickard-Cambridge 1968, p. 52. For the Lykourgan construction activity in the sanctuary and Theater of Dionysos, see also Hintzen-Bohlen 1997, pp. 21–29.

85. Csapo (2007) is concerned with the leasing of theatral space, specifically

the wooden *ikria* that would have constituted the seating for theatral performances. His conclusions regarding the use of wooden architecture during the 5th century in both deme theaters and the Theater of Dionysos (pp. 103–108) accords well with the hypotheses put forth here, although I do not think that the seating in the deme theaters was as temporary as he suggests: the wooden seating was replaced frequently, not necessarily in order to “keep the wood in circulation” (p. 108), but because it was used consistently throughout the year and thus suffered damage both from the elements and from human use.

MAPPING DEME THEATRICAL AREAS

In addition to their use in the celebration of the Rural Dionysia, the theatral areas stood as centralized focus points for broader deme activities. Closer examination and analysis of the list of demes with attested theatral areas (on the basis of the epigraphical, textual, and archaeological evidence provided above) can shed further light on the functioning of local politics. Figure 10 shows the geographic distribution that results from plotting the identified theatral areas. The question mark for the deme of Cholleidai denotes its uncertain location and its status as a possible, but not altogether convincing, deme with a theater. The demes of Lamprai and Sphettos are not included for the reasons discussed above. It is helpful to compare this map with those of Traill in *The Political Organization of Attica* (see especially his map 2) in order to observe the phyletic and trittyes connections among the demes with theaters.

A few things stand out from an analysis of these maps. In the first place, there is a wide distribution of theatral areas, within both the coastal and inland areas of Attica.⁸⁶ There is an even split between theatral areas located along the coast and those located inland: nine demes near the coast (Eleusis, Piraeus, Euonymon, Aixone, Anagyrous, Aigilia, Thorikos, Halai Araphenides, Rhamnous), and eight demes inland (Kollytos, Hagnous, Myrrhinous, Lower Paiania, Phlya, Ikarion, Acharnai, and possibly Cholleidai). There is a greater concentration of demes with theatral areas in the southeastern section of Attica, with fewer in the northern and western parts, but, in general, the distribution is evenly spaced across the area of the polis. Nicholas Jones has remarked that such a distribution probably alludes to interdeme activities and festival attendance, with specific reference to the Rural Dionysia.⁸⁷ It seems probable that demesmen from those demes that did not have a theater or celebrate the full festival of the Rural Dionysia could, if desired, attend the festival at a nearby deme. Kollytos presents a minor problem in the coastal/inland rubric because the deme has a city trittys assignment and is located within the *astu* of Athens itself. Did the small deme have its own theatral area, or was the nearby large Theater of Dionysos on the southern slope of the Acropolis “borrowed” for the Kollytian Rural Dionysia? This is a question without an easy or ready answer.

The second point of interest in the mapping is that, with the exceptions of Kollytos and Cholleidai (the latter of which probably represents a “false” deme theater, depending on the interpretation of Dikaiopolis’s demotic in the *Acharnians*), all of the demes with theatral areas are ranked in the upper divisions of relative size and bouleutic quota (Table 1). It is important to note, however, that the demes with theaters are not necessarily the largest within their immediate geographic neighborhood, or within their phyle or trittys. For example, Aigilia (bouleutic quota of six) and Thorikos (bouleutic quota of five) both have attested theatral areas, whereas Anaphlystos, located either to the immediate south of Aigilia or possibly in between the two demes, is far larger, with a bouleutic quota of 10, and yet no evidence, either archaeological or textual, has surfaced to indicate that it had a theater.⁸⁸ The relative sizes and bouleutic quotas of the demes with theatral areas are

86. Ober (2008, pp. 206–207) also comments on the distribution of the deme theaters, but looks at them on a phyletic level rather than as a specifically geographical distribution (see n. 77, above). For the coastal demes, see Eliot 1962.

87. Jones 2004, p. 204. He argues that, despite later restrictions and intrademe exclusivity, demes with theaters and lavish festivals, e.g., those at Piraeus, most likely catered to and economically exploited demesmen from neighboring demes. The theater, in his calculation, thus becomes an “income-producing” institution for the deme. Wilson (2007, pp. 128–129) also points to activities in the theater as a means of financial improvement for the demes, citing *SEG XXXIV 107* and the “sale” of *choregos* appointments at Thorikos.

88. For the possible location of Anaphlystos, see Traill’s original maps in 1975 (maps 1–3) and the revised map in 1986.

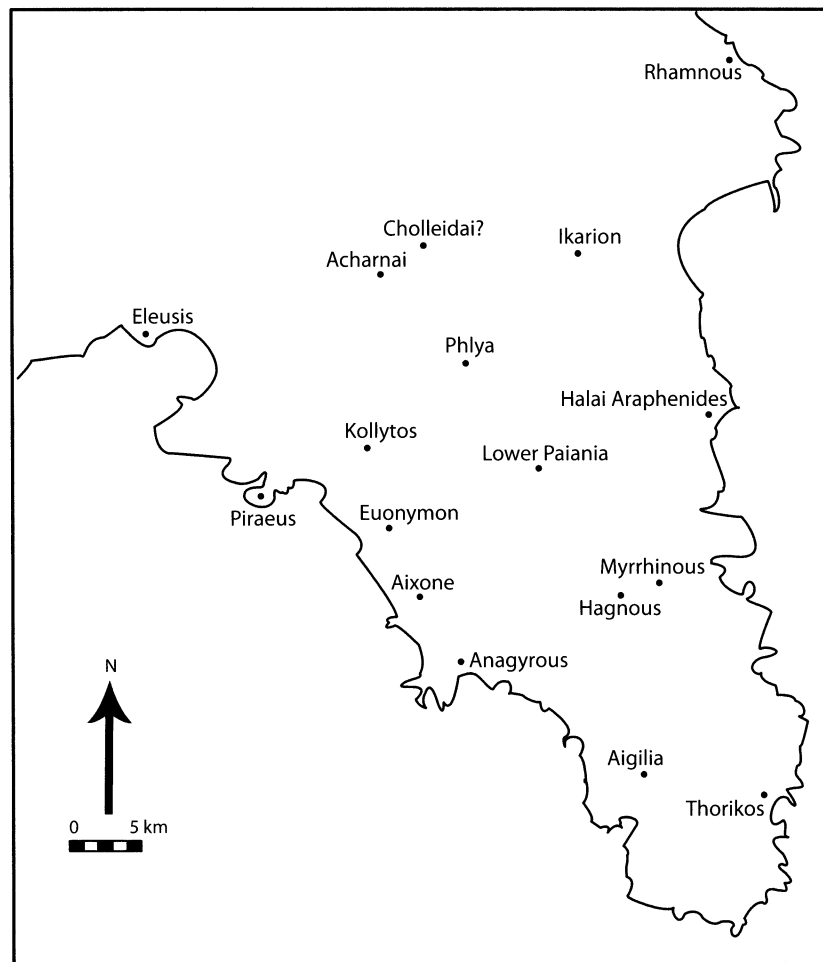


Figure 10. Map of Attica showing demes with positive identification or a high probability of having a theater. J. Paga

important factors given the financial burden of constructing and maintaining a theater (even with wooden architecture), in addition to the costs of the Rural Dionysia festival.⁸⁹ Thorikos represents a straightforward example: it is smaller than many of the other demes with theatral areas, but had access to several lucrative mines, a source of income that may explain why the earliest remains of the theater here were rendered partially in stone, compared to other demes in which any postulated earlier construction was entirely ephemeral. Thorikos has a theater because the deme had reliable and expendable income from an early date.

89. See Csapo 2007 for possible ways in which demes could supplement or circumvent these financial burdens, but see n. 85, above, for problems with his suggestions.

90. In a case that will be dealt with in more detail below, Ikarion and Kollytos could possibly represent a “doubling” of theatral areas in a single trittys: Ikarion was originally assigned to an inland trittys of Aigeis by Traill in 1975, p. 41, but was subsequently moved to a city trittys in 1978, pp. 103–104, along with the nearby deme Plotheia.

The third point of interest is the distribution of theatral areas within trittytes and phylai (Table 2). Within each phyle, either the coastal or inland trittys, or both, will contain a theatral area (with the possible exception of phyle IV, Leontis, depending on the validity of Cholleidai). Three phylai have a deme theatral area in a city trittys: phyle I, Erechtheis, with Euonymon; phyle II, Aigeis, with Kollytos;⁹⁰ and phyle VIII, Hippothontis, with Piraeus. Kollytos, however, is the only attested city deme with a theatral area that is physically within the polis center, whereas the other two are significantly further away. Six phylai have a deme theatral area in an inland trittys: phyle II, Aigeis, with Ikarion; phyle III, Pandionis, with (Lower) Paiania; possibly phyle IV, Leontis, with Cholleidai; phyle V, Akamantis, with

TABLE 1. BOULEUTIC QUOTAS OF DEMES WITH THEATRAL AREAS

<i>Deme</i>	<i>Bouleutic Quota</i>
Acharnai	22
(Lower) Paiania	11
Eleusis	11
Euonymon	10
Piraeus	9
Aixone	8
Rhamnous	8
Phlya	7
Anagyrous	6
Myrrhinous	6
Aigilia	6
Halai Araphenides	5
Thorikos	5
Ikarion	5
Hagnous	5
Kollytos	3
Cholleidai	2

Hagnous; phyle VI, Oineis, with Acharnai; and phyle VII, Kekropis, with Phlya. Eight phylai have a deme theatral area in a coastal trittys: phyle I, Erechtheis, with Anagyrous;⁹¹ phyle II, Aigeis, with Halai Araphenides; phyle III, Pandionis, with Myrrhinous; phyle V, Akamantis, with Thorikos; phyle VII, Kekropis, with Aixone; phyle VIII, Hippothontis, with Eleusis; phyle IX, Aiantis, with Rhamnous; and phyle X, Antiochis, with Aigilia. With two possible exceptions, there is no repetition of a theatral area within a trittys (i.e., there is not more than one theatral area per trittys per phyle), although there are a few trittyses for which no theatral area is attested (almost certainly due to lack of evidence). The two potential exceptions to the one theater per trittys per phyle hypothesis are phyle I, Erechtheis, with Anagyrous and Lamprai, and phyle II, Aigeis, with Kollytos and Ikarion.

To take the first case, Lamprai may have a deme theater, but the evidence is not as clear as for others.⁹² Traill, in *The Political Organization of Attica*, originally placed Lower and Upper Lamprai in the coastal trittys of Erechtheis, which, if Lamprai does have a theatral area, creates a problem of doubling, as Anagyrous also has a theater and is in the coastal trittys. Later, however, Traill removed Upper Lamprai from the coastal trittys and placed it in the inland trittys, retaining Lower Lamprai in the coastal trittys,⁹³ a solution that removes the doubling problem only if the

91. If Lamprai also contained a theatral area, this would present a “doubling” of the coastal trittys for Erechtheis (with Anagyrous). The problem is treated in the following discussion.

92. See n. 6, above.

93. Traill’s reassignment (1982,

pp. 162–169) is based on a reinterpretation of *Agora XV*, no. 42 (= *Hesperia* 30, 1961, pp. 31–33). His reasons (pp. 166–168) for doing so were largely driven by his conviction that the trittyses should all have a relatively equal number of bouleutai. In his effort to create even

coastal and inland trittyses for Erechtheis, he is forced to detach a coastal deme (either Anagyrous or one of the Lamprai demes) and give it to the inland trittys. Traill originally wanted to detach Anagyrous from the coast and move it, as an enclave, to the inland

TABLE 2. PHYLE AND TRITTYS AFFILIATION OF DEMES WITH THEATRAL AREAS

<i>Phyle</i>	<i>Coastal Trittys</i>	<i>Inland Trittys</i>	<i>City Trittys</i>
I: Erechtheis	Anagyrous	?	Euonymon
II: Aigeis	Halai Araphenides	Ikarion	Kollytos
III: Pandionis	Myrrhinous	(Lower) Paiania	?
IV: Leontis	?	Cholleidai?	?
V: Akamantis	Thorikos	Hagnous	?
VI: Oineis	?	Acharnai	?
VII: Kekropis	Aixone	Phlya	?
VIII: Hippothontis	Eleusis	?	Piraeus
IX: Aiantis	Rhamnous	?	?
X: Antiochis	Aigilia	?	?

Lamptraí theatral area was in the Upper and not the Lower deme. If the postulated theatral area was in Upper Lamptraí, Traill’s reassignment would create a phyle for which there is exactly one deme theatral area per trittys. The fragmentary decree *IG II² 1161*, which represents our only evidence for a theater in Lamptraí, unfortunately does not specify whether it refers to the Upper or Lower deme, and is likewise silent regarding whether the Dionysia referred to in lines 4–5 is the City or the Rural festival. In general, the weak evidence for a theatral area in an unspecified Lamptraí deme should warrant its removal from the list of attested deme theaters.

The second exception, phyle II, Aigeis, is equally fraught with problems. In his original deme map of 1975, Traill placed Ikarion in the inland trittys and Kollytos in the city trittys, and under that scheme there was no problem with the distribution of theatral areas in the trittyes of Aigeis. In his later treatment of the deme, however, Traill reassigned Ikarion to the city trittys, thus presenting us with a doubling in that trittys of the phyle.⁹⁴ Under the original distribution, Aigeis was a “complete,” or evenly distributed, phyle with one theatral area per trittys (Kollytos in the city, Ikarion in the inland, and Halai Araphenides in the coastal). Under the revised distribution, however, Ikarion and Kollytos both have theatral areas and both are part of the city trittys. Traill’s later assignation of Ikarion to the city trittys does not have the solid basis that such a drastic reassignment warrants.⁹⁵ He does remark, however, that it is possible that the original Kleisthenic trittyes were arranged topographically (i.e., meaning that

trittys (1978, pp. 104–105). He revised this view in 1982, retaining Anagyrous in the coastal trittys and moving Upper Lamptraí instead to the inland trittys. This rearrangement, however, further forces Traill to assign the small deme of Pambotadai (bouleutic quota of one) to the coastal trittys of Erechtheis (1982, p. 167, n. 17) in order to bring the total number of bouleutai up to 16, despite the fact that it has not been firmly established where Pambotadai

was located, or even whether it was in Erechtheis at all. Thompson (1970, p. 66) mentions only a singular Lamptraí, but he places it firmly in the coastal trittys of Erechtheis.

94. See n. 90, above.

95. As with Lamptraí, Traill is primarily concerned with creating an even distribution of bouleutai across phylai. He notes (1978, p. 103) that phyle II, Aigeis, is a problematic case due to the fact that the inland and coastal trittyes

are contiguous, thus making it difficult to decide in which trittys certain demes should be placed. His reassignment of Ikarion and Plotheia from the inland to the city trittys is based on a reinterpretation of *Agora XV*, nos. 38 and 42. His reading, however, requires several tenuous assumptions, not the least of which is the topographical illogicality of creating a city enclave of Ikarion and Plotheia on the north side of Mt. Penteli.

Ikarion would be placed in the inland trittys), but the later τριττῶν τῶν πρυτανέων (“trittys of the prytanies”) were redistributed such that the trittyes contained approximately equal bouleutic quotas (i.e., necessitating a switch from the inland to city trittys for Ikarion and Plotheia).⁹⁶

For the sake of argument, however, if we accept Traill’s reassignment of Ikarion from the inland to the city trittys, and postulate that such a change occurred at some point in the later 5th or 4th century, we are presented with the following situation: phyle II, Aigeis, originally had an equal distribution of theatral areas across the trittyes, but the later administrative changes and redistributions (in order to achieve relative numeric equality in the trittyes representation in the phylai) resulted in a doubling between Ikarion and Kollytos. Ikarion, however, given its far-removed location and previous associations with the other inland demes of Aigeis, might yet retain an unofficial connection with the inland trittys, despite technically, or administratively, belonging to the city trittys. It seems far more likely, however, that Ikarion (and Plotheia, for that matter) always belonged to the inland trittys of Aigeis.

The mapping of the theatral areas, therefore, demonstrates a roughly equal distribution of deme theaters across trittyes within phylai. Keeping in mind the limitations of the sources, both epigraphical and archaeological (after all, a new discovery could easily wreck a situation that now appears quite tidy), the data nonetheless display a balanced distribution, one that is statistically unlikely to be random or coincidental.⁹⁷ In general terms, for the period of the 10 phylai in the 5th and 4th centuries, there is one theatral area per trittys per phyle. The theatral areas are not concentrated in a single area but are evenly distributed throughout Attica. The demes with theatral areas tend to be medium-size to large, but they are not necessarily the largest or most centrally located demes within their trittyes. Ikarion represents one such example of a medium-sized deme (bouleutic quota of five) that is located far from a central location within the trittys, regardless of whether it is considered an inland deme or a city deme. Ikarion, however, is a special case in terms of the Rural Dionysia and theater, given its close associations with Dionysos and theatrical performance, and these circumstances may explain why this enclave served as the trittys deme with a theatral area.⁹⁸ In the remaining pages, I address the political and administrative implications of this distribution.

96. For this hypothesis of the changing nature of the trittys system, see Traill 1978, pp. 98–99, building on the previously postulated theory of Thompson (1966, pp. 8–10; 1969; and 1971); the problem is also discussed by Stanton (1994b), Rhodes (1971), and Eliot (1967). See further treatment by Siewert 1982, pp. 4–6, 87–105, 122–138. The ancient reference to the τριττῶν τῶν πρυτανέων is *Ath. Pol.* 44.1.

97. Two doctoral students in the

political science department at Stanford University, Tomer Perry and Ariel T. Mendez, have demonstrated statistically that the distribution postulated herein is not random (results unpublished). They analyzed the data, postulating four different hypotheses of random distribution, and were able to reject all of them at a 95% or greater assurance level. I thank them for their interest in this project and their willingness to work on the problem with me. Ober (2008, p. 207, n. 58) demonstrates

by a similar statistical analysis that the phyletic distribution of theatral areas is too regular to have occurred by chance. The refinement of the trittyes’ distribution only further emphasizes the nonrandom nature of the distribution of deme theaters, and shows that the formulation of one theatral area per trittys per phyle is too regular to be coincidental.

98. See nn. 21–22, above, for discussion of the significance of Ikarion.

TRITTYES AND THEATRICAL AREAS

The pseudo-Aristotelian *Athenaion Politeia* contains the following statement (21.4): “He [Kleisthenes] also divided the land among the demes into 30 parts, 10 belonging to the city, 10 to the coast, and 10 to the inland district; and calling these parts ‘thirds’ (*trittys*), he assigned them by lot, three to each tribe (*phyle*), in order that each tribe might have a share in all of the districts.”⁹⁹ This passage is crucial to our understanding of the implementation of the Kleisthenic reforms and the subsequent function of the trittyes in terms of Athenian society. The tripartite trittys divisions, coupled with the institution of the 10 phylai, is a clear example of how Kleisthenes “mixed up” the population of Athens (see *Ath. Pol.* 21.2).¹⁰⁰

While the phylai constituted the broad, overarching organization of the citizenry (politically, administratively, and militarily), the trittyes served as an intermediate phase between the face-to-face type of political activity and administration on the deme level and the more expansive political organization of the Boule and Ekklesia. The trittyes are a critical aspect of the Kleisthenic reforms, both revolutionary in their nature and crucial in their implementation; they are perhaps the most important part of the democratic reforms. They have not, however, been the subject of much intensive research into the organization of Athenian democracy; the phylai and demes are better understood, largely because there is far more evidence for their function within the framework of the democracy. A substantial number of the modern investigations that do examine the role of the trittyes center on the interpretation of *Ath. Pol.* 21.4 and the nature of the τριττῶν τῶν πρυτανείων referred to in *Ath. Pol.* 44.1: Were the trittyes originally envisioned as geographic units, without explicit regard to the distribution of bouleutic quotas within each trittys (a division commonly referred to as the “Kleisthenic” trittyes)? Or was there a concern, either from their inception or arising later in the 5th century, that the trittyes be relatively equal, numerically, according to their bouleutic quotas (a division frequently called the τριττῶν τῶν πρυτανείων, the trittys of the prytanies)?¹⁰¹

In one of the more recent and relatively complete examinations of the trittys system, Peter Siewert has shown that many of the trittyes were organized around common roads and contained contiguous demes, an observation that leads him to conclude that the trittyes served a military function and were designed in order to facilitate swift deployment of the army.¹⁰² The Athenian Agora, in Siewert’s configuration, becomes the central point toward which Attic roads converge, physically directing and gathering the disparate demes into a topographical and political middle

99. διένειμε δὲ καὶ τὴν χώραν κατὰ δήμους τριάκοντα μέρη, δέκα μὲν τῶν περὶ τὸ ἄστυ, δέκα δὲ τῆς παραλίας, δέκα δὲ τῆς μεσογείου· καὶ ταύτας ἐπονομάσας τριττῶς ἐκλήρωσεν τρεῖς εἰς τὴν φυλὴν ἐκάστην, ὅπως ἐκάστη μετέχη πάντων τῶν τόπων. For discussion of the term ἐκλήρωσεν and its implications for the interpretation of

this passage, see Eliot 1968.

100. Bradeen (1955) discusses the role of the trittyes in the “mixing up” of the populace, although his focus is specifically on the breaking up of traditional, that is to say, aristocratic, power holdings. See also Pritchard 2004, for an examination of the practical logistics of this “mixing up” via an investigation

of dithyrambic contests. Among others, Stanton (1984, 1994a) takes a different approach, arguing that the trittyes within a phyle helped support particular elite families and traditional power bases.

101. For references, see n. 96, above.

102. Siewert 1982, particularly sections III and IV. See his map 4 for road networks.

point.¹⁰³ While his observations concerning the road networks uniting the demes of Attica are crucial for our understanding of how the demes communicated with each other and with the city center, it seems to me unlikely that Kleisthenes devised the tripartite “mixing up” of Attica because of an overarching military plan.¹⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Siewert’s work demonstrates that the trittyes had the potential to play an important role in the administration of the new political system, particularly in terms of communication between the center and periphery, as well as between demes and trittyes.¹⁰⁵

To use Siewert’s analysis as a starting point, though, we can envision the trittyes functioning as midpoints in the dissemination and collection of information. The trittyes, in this analysis, would become nodes of communication, both between the *astu* and demes, and within demes of the same trittys. News, announcements, messages, and the like could be shared and passed within the trittys, facilitating the spread of information. Particularly in the early phases of the democracy, but also throughout the 5th and 4th centuries, the trittyes would have served as linking elements, larger than the individual demes but smaller than the phylai.¹⁰⁶ The theatral areas, then, are potentially another way in which the local political organization of the trittyes and demes functioned within the larger framework of Athenian society.

If the distribution suggested here of one theatral area per trittys per phyle is correct, then the demes would have a demonstrable organizational or administrative function on a trittys level, another step in the “mixing up” of the population. The theatral areas or “civic centers,” therefore, could have functioned as venues for discussion and organization on a trittys level, leading us to the possibility of trittys meetings or assemblies, in addition to those in the demes and on the Pnyx. If we are correct in identifying the meaning of τριττῶν τῶν πρυτανέων as implying a single trittys, coastal, inland, or city, sitting in prytany (as opposed to the alternate model of the *epistates* choosing approximately 16–17 of his fellow tribesmen to join him),¹⁰⁷ the men within a single trittys would, by both necessity and circumstance, have greater familiarity with one another, working together more frequently than with other members of the phyle. The men sharing a common trittys would be forging connections across demes, and yet still within their phyle, further contributing to the loosening of traditional or aristocratic ties and reducing the reliance on a strict attachment to a single locality and single deme populace.¹⁰⁸

103. Siewert 1982, p. 67.

104. See also comments by Rhodes (1983), in his review of Siewert’s book. This point is not meant to be a refutation of Siewert’s conclusions, many of which are vital for our topographical conception of Attica. I take issue only with the idea that the Kleisthenic divisions were conceived of solely to effect a concerted military plan. I would rather interpret the unexpected victory of the Athenians in 506/5 over the Boiotians and Chalkidians as a fortunate side effect of the reforms in terms of military success,

rather than a motivating cause.

105. According to Siewert (1982, pp. 66–67), contiguous demes within trittyes and contiguous trittyes were frequently linked by shared roads, a factor that informed the Kleisthenic division of the countryside. Humphreys (2008) builds on Siewert’s idea of road networks and attempts to link the roads to the *naukrariai*, which she further connects to the trittyes. In her estimation, however, the trittyes “served merely as administrative categories without organization, functions, or cults” (p. 21).

106. The trittyes in this analysis would perform a similar function to what Ober (2008) refers to as “bridging ties” (see n. 76, above).

107. See n. 96, above.

108. See, e.g., Lewis 1963, pp. 34–35, regarding the function of the trittyes in the weakening of elite ties, particularly in terms of cult. Osborne (1985, pp. 178–181) discusses the shared use of sanctuaries among some of the demes, a framework that would fit the joint celebration of the Rural Dionysia as postulated here.

The trittyes are a step up from the insularity of the demes, and yet not as heterogeneous as the phylai. As such, they represent a form of continuity and familiarity, in particular for those demes within a trittys that were contiguous, while nevertheless increasing intraphyletic communication. The presence of theatral areas distributed according to trittyes implies a use of the trittys as this type of intermediate networking site, a means through which the men within a common trittys could forge connections above and beyond, or at least in addition to, the service they rendered together during their time in prytany.

As further evidence that the trittyes performed an important and communicative political function during the 5th and 4th centuries, we might consider *Ath. Pol.* 26.3, in which the author describes the reinstatement in 453/2 of 30 local *dikastai*, or judges, deployed in Attica presumably in order to oversee minor disputes and local legal problems.¹⁰⁹ The number 30 is surely a reference to the 30 trittyes.¹¹⁰ In the absence of evidence for deme *dikasteria*, or local law courts, it is even possible that the theatral areas themselves served as makeshift courts, allowing the trittys judge to remain in a single deme to oversee the cases of his assigned trittys, rather than traveling to all of the demes in turn within the trittys. The theatral areas could have easily served this function, allowing many people to gather in a single centralized location, with ample room for seating, a “stage” area for the arguing of cases, and, in some instances, a means of restricting access (as, for example, at the theatral area at Thorikos, where the entrances to the west and east could be monitored, as well as the two upper cavea entrances, added in the second half of the 4th century; see Fig. 3). Here we have yet another demonstration of the multipurpose nature of the form and function of these areas.

CONCLUSION

The theatral areas that are scattered—not haphazardly, but deliberately—throughout Attica render visible the various ways in which the trittyes functioned within the complex political and bureaucratic divisions devised by Kleisthenes at the close of the 6th century. The line of democracy progresses from the crowded meetings of the Ekklesia on the Pnyx and the more restricted “representative” politics of the Boule, out to the trittyes within a given phyle, and is then further subdivided into the individual demes. In terms of both physical topography and abstract policy, then,

109. *Ath. Pol.* 26.3: ἔτει δὲ πέμπτῳ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐπὶ Λυσικράτους ἄρχοντος οἱ τριάκοντα δικασταὶ κατέστησαν πάλιν οἱ καλούμενοι κατὰ δήμους.

110. Rhodes (1981, p. 331), in his commentary to the *Ath. Pol.*, remarks that the number 30 suggests that there was one judge per trittys. The fact that Aristotle uses the phrase κατέστησαν πάλιν, translated here as “reinstated” or “instituted again,” suggests that the 30 *dikastai* existed earlier, an allusion

perhaps to the traveling judges under the Peisistratidai (cf. *Ath. Pol.* 16.5, not necessarily 30 in number at that time) or to a system of local jurisprudence that was part of the Kleisthenic reforms but was shunted aside during the Persian Wars, only to reemerge in the aftermath of Ephialtes’ reforms. Rhodes believes that the earlier *dikastai* that seem to be referenced here were those instituted by Peisistratos and that they were “presumably abolished” in 511/10 dur-

ing the expulsion of Hippias (p. 331). I do not believe that the expulsion of the Peisistratidai required the de facto abolishment of all of their policies; it seems plausible that the local judges, instituted under Peisistratos, were retained, but that their numbers either increased or decreased to result in 30, with a final arrangement of one per trittys. The office was most likely disrupted at some point during the Persian Wars, only to be later reinstated in 453/2.

the trittyes are situated in the middle ground, linking the 10 phylai to the 139 demes.

Given the distribution of deme theaters, it is further possible to imagine the Rural Dionysia as taking place on a trittys level, rather than being celebrated as individual festivals in separate demes; instead of being deme-specific, the festival may have been trittys-specific. If this were the case, the deme theatrical areas would have served as venues for face-to-face interaction among demesmen and across trittytes, further strengthening bonds and ties within the trittytes. The distribution and form of the deme theatrical areas illuminate their multiplicity of functions and demonstrate how the trittytes served as the crossroads between deme and phyle, one of the most important links supporting the matrix of the *demokratia*.

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