Athenian History and Democracy in the Monumental Arts during the Fifth Century BC

Dissertation
Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By
Lincoln Thomas Nemetz-Carlson, M.A.
History Graduate Program
The Ohio State University
2012

Dissertation Committee:
Dr. Greg Anderson, Advisor
Dr. Tim Gregory
Dr. Mark Fullerton
Abstract

This study examines the first representations of historical events on public monuments in Athens during the fifth century BC. In the Near East and Egypt, for much of their history, leaders commonly erected monuments representing historical figures and contemporary events. In Archaic Greece, however, monuments rarely depicted individuals or historical subjects but, instead, mostly displayed mythological or generic scenes. With the reforms of Cleisthenes in 508/7 BC, the Athenians adopted a democratic constitution and, over the next century, built three different monuments which publicly displayed historical deeds. This dissertation looks to explain the origins of these three “historical monuments” by exploring the relationship between democracy and these pieces of art.

The first chapter looks at monumental practices in the Archaic Era and explains why, unlike in the Near East and Egypt, the Greeks did not usually represent contemporary figures or historical events on monuments. This chapter suggests that the lack of these sort of honors is best explained by the unique nature of the Greek polis which values the well-being of the community over the individual.

The second chapter concerns the origins of the first sculpture group of Tyrant Slayers, who were granted unprecedented commemorative portraits in the Agora most likely in the last decade of the sixth century. While many have posited that this
monument, which celebrated a political act of two recently deceased individuals, can be explained by the new role that everyday individuals played under the democratic government, this study suggests that this honor was adapted from the practice of dedicating effigies of athletic victors.

The discussion then moves to the Stoa Poikile where, in the 460’s, the Athenians hung scenes of historical battles next to representations of mythical tales. The chapter argues that the designers of the Painted Stoa drew on Eastern traditions of large-scale painting and public displays of historical scenes in order to justify the emerging role of Athens as imperial master over the Eastern Aegean.

The fourth chapter focuses on scenes of historical battles on the Athena Nike temple which was constructed atop the Athenian Acropolis in the mid-420’s. The analysis suggests that two specific scenes of Athenians repelling invaders were chosen in order to address contemporary concerns brought about by Spartan invasions. Furthermore, it will be shown that the adoption of historical scenes for temple decoration was part of a series of changes to religious and artistic practices resulting from the Archidamian War and the plague.

In the end, this study argues that there is little correlation between democratic ideology and historical representations in the monumental arts of fifth-century Athens.
Dedication

For my Parents. Obviously.
Acknowledgments

I first want to thank my parents who know that I may never spend my entire life trying to save the world as they have but have supported me unquestionably in every decision I have ever made. I can firmly say without bias that they are the two greatest people I have ever known.

I want to extend a very special thanks to my professors at Beloit College, Art Robson and Kosta Havadas for changing the way I thought about the ancient world, higher learning and, most importantly, myself.

I would like to thank Annie Hoopes for all her support over the years. She is not only a wonderful pediatrician but a great scholar of the Classics as well.

I am grateful to the faculty and staff of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, especially but not limited to Margaret Miles, Denver Graninger and Stella Miller-Collett. Likewise, I want to thank my all colleagues at the American School but mainly Paul Kosmin and Noah Kaye who made me smarter (or, at any rate, made me want to be smarter). I also have to thank the Samuel H. Kress Foundation for supporting my research at the ASCSA. And, of course, I can’t forget
Sarah Madole, my best friend at the School. Life isn’t always easy in Athens and I was lucky to have her by my side, to say the least.

Even though they have no idea what I study and actually distracted me from my work more than they helped me, I would be remiss not to mention my best friends, Dr. Mike Powers and D-List Celebrity Joseph Brzezinski. They are probably two of the worst people I have ever met but I love them nevertheless.

I want to thank Stephanie Steelman for helping me cross the finish line. She was the perfect antidote for the inevitable self-loathing that sets in when you spend the day with your own prose. Although I’ll never live up to the image she has of me, it’s nice to know that such a generous, smart, and beautiful person thinks so highly of you.

I was extremely lucky to have three students in my graduate program who I actually liked personally and respected intellectually. A big shout out to my boys Brian Swain, Dallas Deforest and, yes, even Cary Barber.

I owe much to the faculty of The Ohio State University, more than I can really express. In this, I want to specifically thank Tim Gregory, Lita Tzortzopoulou-Gregory, Nate Rosenstein, Mark Fullerton and, finally, Joseph Lynch, may he rest in peace. It was a sincere pleasure to learn from them.

Lastly, I thank Professor Greg Anderson for writing a book which encouraged me to become a Greek historian and serving as my advisor for the last five years. I could not have asked for a better mentor both personally and professionally.
Vita

September 11, 1981………………………….Born – North Adams, Massachusetts

2000…………………………………………High School Diploma, Mt. Greylock
Regional High School

2004………………………………………….B.A. History, Classical Philology,
Latin American Studies Minor, Beloit
College

2007…………………………………………M.A. History, The Ohio State
University

2004 – present……………………………….Graduate Teaching Associate, History
Department, The Ohio State University

Fields of Study

Major Field: History
# Table of Contents

Abstract ........................................................................................................................................... ii

Dedication ......................................................................................................................................... iv

Acknowledgments ............................................................................................................................. v

Vita ....................................................................................................................................................... vii

Chapter 1: Introduction .................................................................................................................... 1

Chapter 2: Antenor’s Tyrannicides and the Origin of the Political Portrait Statue ............. 20

Chapter 3: The Stoa Poikile, Eastern Influences and Imperial Ideology .............................. 65

Chapter 4: The Athena Nike Frieze and the Peloponnesian War .......................................... 121

Conclusion ....................................................................................................................................... 188

References ....................................................................................................................................... 191
Chapter 1: Introduction

Aside for some notable exceptions, monuments in Greece generally did not depict real people or historical events before the Classical era. While statues of great men and paintings of military victories were fairly common in the hierarchal monarchies of the Near East and Egypt, the practice was almost unheard of in the Archaic era and truly rare in Greece until Alexander’s time.¹

In fifth-century Athens, however, three notable exceptions were constructed in the very heart of the city when the Athenians commissioned a series of monuments depicting near-contemporary events. Shortly after the reforms of Cleisthenes, commemorative portrait statues of the Tyrant Slayers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, were erected in the Agora and a later replacement group even showed them in the midst of their famous murder. In the 460's, the general Cimon and his circle commissioned the famous Stoa Poikile, or Painted Stoa. In this building, alongside large paintings of a mythical battle against Amazons and the taking of Troy, the Athenians placed pictures of the battle of Marathon and possibly a mural of a second historical battle. When the Athenians built the small but ornate Athena Nike temple atop the Acropolis some forty

¹ Holliday 2002, xviii.
years later, they again chose to represent what seems to be a scene of Greeks fighting Persians and, surprisingly, a scene of Athenians battling other contemporary Greeks on the frieze of the Ionic temple.

Not only do these monuments constitute what would appear to be a dramatic break from Greek tradition but it would seem that the adoption of historical subjects for monuments coincides with the beginnings and the heyday of the Athenian democracy. Indeed, there are many reasons one might associate these two developments in Athenian society. The Tyrannicides, erected soon after the reforms of Cleisthenes, honored real Athenians with politically charged statues. The Stoa Poikile and the Athena Nike too celebrated the achievements of the citizen army next to heroes and gods in time-honored mythological tales. Given the new role of everyday citizens in deciding the course of their government, it is tempting to conclude that democracy, individuality, modern perceptions of time, and interest in present-day events all combined to influence the creation of some of the most famous monuments in Athens.

Admittedly, it makes for a wonderful story but can it be believed? Did democracy and democratic ideology change monumental practices? This dissertation examines the relationship between these three monumental depictions of historical events and Athenian politics under the democracy. As satisfying as it might be to attribute the design of the Tyrannicides, Stoa Poikile and Athena Nike temple to sweeping ideological changes, the analysis presented here will suggest a different conclusion. While there can be little doubt that these historical monuments are inherently tied to political circumstances, this study
argues that they were not produced by a society-wide ideological shift, a new democratic temporality, or a novel conception of human agency.

These three monuments, separated by generations, constitutional changes, and momentous historical events, must be explained on their own terms and within specific contexts of their commission. This study will explore the beginnings of this practice in Athens by analyzing the first three monuments which portrayed historical events in successive order. The second chapter will investigate the circumstances surrounding the commission of the first statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the Agora during the last decade of the sixth century. The discussion will then turn to the Stoa Poikile, a portico constructed in the 460’s which held a painting of the battle of Marathon and perhaps another mural of a fifth-century battle. Finally, the mid-420’s frieze of the Athena Nike temple, showing fifth-century Athenians battling both Persians and other Greeks, will be the focus of the fourth chapter.

For every one of these discussions, we will ask a seemingly straightforward question: what is the relationship between Athenian democracy and historical representations on these monuments? As a result, the analysis is ultimately concerned with the decision to put forth such representations. While each of these monuments had a long history and were interpreted in many diverse ways, this dissertation will focus on the actors who commissioned and designed these pieces. This, I concede, may run counter to the prevailing trend of studies on “memory” or “reception,” but it is the only way to truly
understand why these monuments shifted their focus from legendary tales of heroes and
gods to contemporary experience and present-day subjects.

But before we can examine how these historical monuments were introduced into
the landscape of Athens, this chapter will account for their absence during the Archaic
period. The introduction will consider why the Athenians abstained from creating
monuments depicting real people and real events until the Tyrannicides in the last decade
of the sixth century. Certainly Archaic Greeks were capable of such works and there can
be little doubt that they were aware of the practice in the East.

Up to this point, this question has yet to be fully addressed in scholarship and, in
some ways, it is not hard to see why. The lack of scholarly discussion can most likely
explained by a few factors. First and foremost, due to the fragmentary nature of the
archaeological and literary evidence for the Archaic age, in many cases it is unclear who
or what some monuments were supposed to represent. But even more troubling might be
the nature of the question itself. It is generally difficult to account for the absence of
certain forms or representations. While one might be able to explain the meanings of a
sculpted gorgon on a temple or the messages conveyed by the dedication of a tripod,
trying to posit why the Greeks did not chose a particular subject for memorialization is
fraught with obvious peril.

Yet there is more to be done here. Extensive scholarship on the “Eighth-Century
Revolution” and the unique society it produced in Archaic Greece has illuminated this
often confusing and poorly-documentated period. As we better understand how and why
Greek culture and political systems differentiated from other Mediterranean cultures, we can also begin to grasp why their monumental practices were different as well.

This chapter will do just that by looking at Archaic society in order to understand what made Archaic Greece and, more pertinently, its monuments, unique. I will begin with a brief overview of Archaic Greek monumental practices and depictions of contemporary figures. The chapter will then turn to Archaic Greek society in order to suggest several possible reasons why Greeks did not erect statues of people or depictions of their great deeds. Although this is only a cursory glance at a subject which could fill volumes, it will lay the groundwork for understanding the precedents for the historical monuments which are the main focus of this study.

During the so-called Orientalizing period, between 750-650 BC, an influx of Eastern craftsmen, goods and religion brought all kinds of Eastern forms to Greece. Aside from the most famous Eastern imports, such as the adoption of a modified Phoenician alphabet, the influence of this “revolution” can be seen in almost all aspects of Greek material culture. During this period, the Greeks refashioned Eastern art and monumental practices for their own needs. As Morris puts it, “operating outside the often-rigid institutional frameworks of Near Eastern and Egyptian palaces, Greek artists were free to experiment, and indeed had to experiment, to make these adopted media speak to their concerns.”

---

2 For the Orientalizing Revolution, see Burkert 1998.
3 Morris 2009, 78.
One such example is the adoption of life-size sculptures of human figures. In the mid-seventh century, increased trade with Egyptians, Psammetichos I’s employment of Greek mercenaries, and a permanent trading post in Naukratis brought Greeks into close contact with Egyptian monumental forms. There is little doubt that the inspiration for full-scale marble Greek statuary came from interactions with Egyptians but the extent of Egyptian influence is debatable. While, as Jeffery Hurwit proclaims, “it is in Egyptian images of clench-fisted, straight-armed, striding pharaohs and noblemen that the major inspiration for the Greek kouros is surely to be found,” the Greek version of these statues did not necessarily come to explicitly represent high-ranking political figures as their Egyptian predecessors had. They differ in minor stylistic details, proportions, clothing, and material, but no doubt the biggest divergence from the Egyptian model is that the Greek statues were used to portray contemporary individuals.

In Greece, contemporaries were not usually honored with portrait statues until the Tyrannicides and even then the Athenians would not erect another honorific portrait until the fourth century. According to Pliny (NH 34.16-17), in Greece, “it was not customary to make effigies of men unless, through some illustrious case, they were worthy of having their memory perpetuated,” before citing the unique cases of athletic statuary and the Tyrannicides, two notable exceptions which will be taken up later.

---

4 Boardman 2006, 16.
5 Boardman 2006, 6-17; Hurwit 1985.
6 Translation by Pollitt (1990, 30).
Unlike Egyptian statues, except in rare cases which we will explore below, kouroi and korai statues were not accompanied by inscriptions or features which identified the subject of the statues. The lack of these signifiers has led to much confusion about who or what these statues were supposed to represent and, in many ways, the debate over the identity of these figures has come to define modern scholarship on the subject.  

In terms of votive statues, the context in which we have the most Archaic statues, it is highly unlikely that these *agalmata*, or things that were pleasing to the gods, represented the dedicators. In the Near East and Egypt, votive dedications often took the form of “conjunctive representation.”  

“Conjunctive representations” often took the form of “speaking statues,” wherein the inscription implicated stated in the first person who the sculpture was supposed to represent. This tradition stands in opposition to the “disjunctive” representations common to the Greek mainland, where the statues often had little resemblance their dedicators, as in the case of Athenian males dedicating korai. In short, in terms of statuary, unlike Near Eastern and Egyptian practices, Greek statues typically did not claim to represent those who dedicated it. Kouroi statues too were used to mark gravestones, though the identification of these statues as effigies of the deceased is somewhat controversial. The main problem here is the uniformity of the statues which do not vary in age and instead all present a youthful appearance.  

7 On the identity and meanings of the korai and kouroi, see Stewart (1986) who thinks the *kouros* should be seen as an abstract representation of an ideal, specifically aristocratic *arete*, through its beauty, youth and nudity.  


9 See Stewart 1986.
Another aspect of monumental art that differs from Near Eastern and Egyptian forms is narrative depictions of historical events. The Egyptian Pharaohs had a long tradition of decorating their palaces with large-scale, painted representations of historical battles. These Near Eastern historical battle scenes rarely reflected the reality of conflict and did not focus on relaying actual details of building projects, hunts and martial victories. Nevertheless, the subjects were drawn from historical events, regardless of how they were portrayed or the goals behind creating such representations.

In mainland Greece, however, to the best of our knowledge, no monument publicly displayed historical battle scenes until the famous Stoa Poikile in the 460’s. During the mid-seventh century, abstract human forms in scenes of mourning and striding warriors were added to large pots which served as grave markers. Although, it would be tempting to see these as historical representations of war or funeral rituals, they were probably just generic scenes which generally heroized the person upon whose grave they stood.

Other narrative scenes on monuments from Archaic Greece, while often reflecting specific tales rather than a generic composition of figures, do not represent

---

10 For an overview of historical scenes in Egyptian palaces, see Smith 1998, esp. 211-17.

11 Carter 1972, 39. Similarly, when the Athenians begin to choose historical subjects for monuments, they make little effort to relate the depictions to the actual events. The Tyrannicides, for example, murder Hipparchus in the nude and the Marathonomachoi on the Nike frieze do not reflect the hoplite tactics and armor which made their victory possible.

12 Hurwit 1985, 94-98.

13 Osbourne 1996, p. 134. Likewise, Hurwit (2002) argues that the famed hoplite formation on the Chigi vase should be read as a generic scene of warfare which, along with the other scenes, comprises a theme about the maturation of a Corinthian male.
historical events. From the very beginning of narrative scenes on Greek temples, there was a tradition of depicting mythological stories. The temple of Apollo at Thermon, dating to the middle of the seventh century, is to our knowledge the first temple in mainland Greece to display narrative scenes on temple architecture and its metopes were covered in painted mythological scenes. In Corfu, we see the first known decorated pediment at the temple of Artemis and here too the subject is mythological, in this case Perseus cutting off the head of a Gorgon, even though this story has little to do with Artemis. Without exception, all figural narratives on temples will follow this trend of depicting mythological scenes or battles until the Athena Nike temple in the 420’s.

The setting of these narrative mythological scenes not only explains the desire to draw on traditional mythical stories which were tied to their religion but also highlights the difference between the settings of large murals in both societies. In Egypt, for example, historical murals are often found in palaces. As Greece had no powerful monarchs or even extremely wealthy men, large palatial buildings were not available to display such scenes.

Although historical battle scenes were popular in Egypt, their absence from Archaic Greece may be attributed to the overall lack of large-scale monumental painting in mainland Greece until the fifth century. Some have speculated that, despite seventh-century experiments in mural painting at such places like Isthmia, large-scale murals were not popularized in mainland Greece until Cimon brought Polynotus to Athens and

---

14 For more on this pediment, see Benson 1967.
Delphi sometime in the 470’s.\textsuperscript{15} If so, the lack of painted historical scenes might be a reflection of the preferred media of the mainland Greeks as well as the subject matter.

While all of these possible explanations for the dearth of historical representations in Archaic Greek all have some merit, the absence of commemorative portraits and historical battle scene is best explained by the unique nature of the polis and Archaic Greek society in general. Below we will look at the polis society that developed during the eighth century in order to understand why Greece’s political and monumental culture differed from the Near East and Egypt.

Following the collapse of Bronze Age palace civilizations, Greece plunged into a period of economic and cultural poverty, typically known as the Dark Age.\textsuperscript{16} The Dark Age seems to be marked by radical stratification between the land-owning elite, a group Morris calls the “agathoi” and the “kakoi,” and a dependent underclass who worked the land as serfs.\textsuperscript{17} These distinctions were primary visible in burials which may reflect distinctions in everyday society but begin to break down after c. 750 BC as inhumation replaced cremation as the preferred method of burial. Ornate pots, which had formerly been used to mark graves, seem to have gone out of fashion in the mid-eighth century and there was an observable drop in the quality and quantity of grave goods. Exclusive burial

\textsuperscript{15} Pemberton 1989. This will be discussed at length in Chapter 3.

\textsuperscript{16} Although some scholars have recently challenged our pessimistic view of the period between 1100-750, I am inclined to agree with Morris (2005, 3) when he urges us not to abandon the term “Dark Ages.” As he points out, population was on the decline, literacy and craft techniques had disappeared, and people’s height, as well as their life-span, was shorter.

\textsuperscript{17} Morris 1987, 175.
plots were now replaced with “large, homogeneous and poor citizen cemeteries.”  

Archaeology reveals that, around the same time grave goods were declining, there was a corresponding increase in dedications of all sizes at Panhellenic sanctuaries and local temples, from large dedications like tripods to smaller ones, such as hair pins.  

For Ian Morris, these developments indicate the rise of a “middling ideology” and signifies communal resistance to ostentatious displays of wealth. Though Morris’s division of Archaic society into “elite” and “middling” factions is somewhat troublesome, his work has found many adherents. Raaflaub, for example, sees a Greek egalitarian ethos and the influence of politics even as early as the Homeric epics. According to Eric Robinson, “Evidence clearly exists, if not for the concept of full citizen equality, then at least for a growth of inclusiveness in, and the centrality of, the polis, as well as a wavering in the presumption of aristocratic preeminence.” Clearly, if the polis was defined from the beginning as a “middling” society where the right of aristocrats to rule was perpetually questioned, the political environment would create contraints for those aristocrats wishing to erect monuments which explicitly honored individuals or their personal triumphs.  

Others, however, have been skeptical of Morris’s model. While most would accept that the dominant concern in the polis was the community rather than the

\[18\] Morris 1996, 25.  
\[19\] Osborne 1996, 96.  
\[20\] Raaflaub 1997.  
individual, this does not necessarily indicate an inherent egalitarian ideology.\textsuperscript{22} After all, the Archaic age was undoubtedly ruled by small elite factions of aristocrats.\textsuperscript{23} Limiting certain powers of individuals might not reflect the belief in the rights of the lower classes to rule but, rather, it could simply be indicative of elites preventing individuals from monopolizing power, honor, and offices in hopes of creating opportunities for themselves.\textsuperscript{24}

Archaic Greek law, most notably famous law-codes from Dreros and Gortyn, put emphasis on term-limits and sharing offices and this is clearly indicative of a society looking to prevent one man or faction from gaining too much power.\textsuperscript{25} The emphasis on reining-in powerful men and keeping a level playing field for highly competitive elites seems to have been a hallmark of Archaic Greek society. To quote Anderson, “Indeed, the entire system seems to have been informed by an almost paranoid aversion to entrusting any one man with significant, long-term executive authority, indicating a high level of rivalry and a correspondingly low level of trust within the ruling class.”\textsuperscript{26}

Given the structure of this society, it does not seem hard to imagine that other aristocrats would have been wary of giving one man or one family the honor of a portrait or a monumentalized battle scene equivalent to Near Eastern or Egyptian dynasts. But for

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} Murray 1990, 5.
\item \textsuperscript{23} Hall 2007a, 45. Also see van Wees 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{24} See Foxhall 1997.
\item \textsuperscript{25} Hall 2007b, 135: “...the primary aim would appear to be to ensure that real power was shared more equally among an enlarged aristocracy both by limiting the punitive sanctions that could be levied by single officials and by guaranteeing that the most important offices would rotate.”
\item \textsuperscript{26} Anderson 2005, 180.
\end{itemize}
the purpose of our discussion, it matters little if limits on elite excesses were driven by aristocratic peers or from an emerging “middling ideology.” Whatever the impetus, the results were the same. The Archaic Greek polis was one inherently distrustful of individuals honors, offices, and claims of powerful individuals. This may, in part, account for the differences in the types of monuments produced in the Greek city states and in the hierarchal monarchies of the Near East.

The nature of Greek religion and the different role it had in shaping society than in other Mediterranean cultures may also help to account for both Archaic Greece’s unique polis society as well as its monuments. The Aegean differed greatly from Near Eastern society in that it had no notion of divine kingship nor was there a priestly caste who monopolized power through an exclusive relationship with the gods.27 When Greece arose from the Dark Ages, Greeks no longer accepted that the basileis ruled due to divine sanction, as religious ceremonies moved from their private residence to public space.28

This separation of secular and divine power, Morris alleges, was crucial to the rise of the polis but I would also suggest that it may additionally account for the relative paucity of statues representing contemporary individuals in Archaic Greece. As mentioned above, it is doubtful that Greeks dedicated statues of themselves outside of athletic contexts. There are, however, notable exceptions that just may “prove the rule.” Out of approximately 1,000 Archaic dedicatory inscriptions, only three claim that the

27 Morris 2009, 75.
28 Morris 2009, 75.
statue represent the dedicator, as was common in the Near East. Two of these examples come from the sanctuary of Apollo in Didyma which, unlike any other sanctuary in the Greek world, was administered by a priestly caste and may have been dedicated to worshiping this clan, the Branchidai, as heroes. Here it would appear that members with special access to religious offices were given the right to set up statues of themselves. As priestly castes were not typical in mainland Greece, it could help to explain why Greeks did not dedicate statues of themselves in sanctuaries.

All over the Greek world, the Archaic Age saw the rise of powerful individuals, known to posterity as “tyrants,” and Athens was no exception. Given the typical view of Archaic Greek tyranny, the rise of these leaders might seem like ideal situations for commissioning portrait statues of these great leaders or for monumentalizing their famous deeds in stone. After all, as traditional scholarship would posit, tyrants had connections to the East, engaged in massive building projects, and, as strongmen whose power was based on force, they were not encumbered by rules and had no need to risk offending fellow aristocrats.

---

29 Keesling 2003, 104.
30 Keesling (2003, 105) has suggested a similar situation for the Genelaos group on Samos.
31 Polycrates cultivated a guest friendship with no one less powerful than the Egyptian Pharaoh himself (Herodotus 3.39.2) and Thrasybulus used a similar relationship with the Lydian King Alyattes (Herodotus 1.22.4) to maintain his power in Miletus.
32 According to Aristotle (Pol. 5.9.4), tyrants engaged in building projects in order to consolidate their power, though his suggestion that construction was used to distract is less than convincing.
But recent work has brought this consensus about how “tyrannies” functioned into question. Rather than ruling as extra-constitutional strong men, these new studies reveal that tyrants actually engaged in the typical fashion of aristocrats by consolidating power through conventional channels. Archaic tyrants often pushed the limits of acceptable behavior but, in most cases, they worked within the constitutional and cultural framework of aristocratic culture. The constraints of this system, despite tales later sources may relate, would seem to have prevented any sort of monument which transgressed social norms or elevated one individual significantly above the rest.

Greek society, according to Herodotus (7.9B.1-2), was not only accustomed to warfare but was in some ways defined by it. Yet given the frequency of fighting, the undeniable emphasis on martial values, and the potential distinction which both military victory and the memory of such triumphs could bring, one might ask why Archaic Athens did not erect monuments featuring historical battles before the famed representation of Marathon in the Painted Stoa. One might point to the discussion above about the nature of the polis and the fear of elevating the individual as a possible reason. After all, military victories, even more than athletic ones, would have granted honors and fame to commanders which the community might have looked at with suspicion.

A closer look at the nature of the Athenian military and warfare before the reforms of Cleisthenes, however, reveals a simpler answer. Prior to the military reforms in the

---


34 Stein-Hölkeskamp (2009, 110): “In cultural practice and self-presentation the tyrant basically operated within the traditional frame of aristocratic society.”
Cleisthenic legislation, Athens had no standing army or any real method for calling up troops.\textsuperscript{35} In a landmark article, Frost has shown that military ventures before 506, despite the long-established position of the polemarch in the government, were usually private initiatives.\textsuperscript{36} In the cases where Athenians participated in these skirmishes, it is likely that they did so out of personal loyalty to the commander or in order to acquire land, much like armies of colonists.\textsuperscript{37} Peisistratus, Herodotus (1.64) notes, relied on epikouroi, usually thought to be Argive mercenaries.\textsuperscript{38} Tellingly, Aristotle (\textit{Pol.} 5.8.6) partially defines a tyrant as commanding a retinue of foreigners as opposed to a king who used citizens as bodyguards. If victories were achieved by mercenary forces and not Athenian citizens, it would help to explain why Peisistratus would not erect any sort of memorial promoting the feats of non-citizens, let alone a monument which prominently displayed their struggles. These skirmishes may have had tangible benefits to whichever private individual initiated these attacks, but this may also explain why monuments were not built to explicitly celebrate these victories.

As we have seen, the structure of the polis as well as the egalitarian ethos which possibly defined the relationships between its citizens created a stark contrast between Archaic Greek political culture and surrounding societies in the Mediterranean. Due to

\textsuperscript{35} See Frost 1984; Anderson 2003, 148-151.
\textsuperscript{36} Frost 1984.
\textsuperscript{37} As Frost (1984, 293) bluntly puts it, “it can be demonstrated that in late archaic Athens, regardless of the actual law, an effective military force could be raised by the promise of land for the participants - but for virtually no other reason.”
\textsuperscript{38} For a good summary on Peisistratus’s use of mercenaries and a convincing argument that he did so see Signor 2000.
the lack of monarchs, priestly castes and strict social stratification, the Greeks polis
developed into a society which privileged the community over the individual and was
inherently distrustful of powerful men. It has further been suggested that the difference
between hierarchal monarchies and Greek city-states can also, in part, account for the
variation in monumental practices between Egyptian and Near Eastern cultures and
Archaic Greece. Without autocratic strong men, Greeks of the Archaic age did not erect
statues of political leaders.

While Greeks differed from surrounding societies in that they did not usually
commission monuments representing specific individuals or historical events, as we will
see, there were two notable exceptions to this practice. One would be athletic statuary
where victors of crown games were given the unparalleled honor of a statue in
Panhellenic sanctuaries or, in the late sixth century, the Agora of their home polis. The
second major exception is Greeks in the service of Lydian and Persian dynasts who
painted or commissioned historical scenes of great accomplishments of those monarchs,
most likely reflecting Eastern practices.39

These two examples, namely athletic sculpture and large-scale historical
paintings, however, are not just peculiar exceptions which can easily be explained away.
Rather, as this study intends to show, athletic statuary and these Eastern-style historical

39 In two different passages, Pliny (NH 7.126, 35.55) makes reference to an apparently famous historical
painting by one Boularchos, who most presume to have been an east Greek. Herodotus (4.87-8) describes
circumstances surrounding Darius's original bridging and crossing of the Bosphorus c. 513. After revealing
the engineer to be a Samian named Mandrocles (4.87.1), he goes on to describe a large painted votive
which depicted the crossing. These two examples will be taken up later.
murals are actually key to understanding the first two “historical monuments” in Athens, namely the statues of the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile in the Athenian Agora.

The second chapter will search for the origin of the political portrait statue in Athens by looking at the events surrounding the commission and production of the first statue group of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. This chapter will argue that these commemorative portraits were not inspired by the enhanced role of the Athenian citizen in the political process. Rather, it will be shown that the supporters of the Cleisthenic legislation adapted traditional athletic statuary in order to commemorate the Tyrant Slayers and that reformatting athletic honors to reward political success was a common feature of Greek society in the end of the sixth and early fifth century.

The third chapter will turn its focus to the historical paintings which were mounted on the walls of the Stoa Poikile in the 460’s. Like the previous discussion of the Tyrannicides, this chapter will also argue that these historical murals do not reflect changing perceptions of time or a new interest in the recent past brought about by the democratic process. Instead, I will show that both large-scale paintings and historical scenes were inspired by Eastern Greek and possibly even Persian precedents and the use of “Eastern-style” historical paintings represent increased interactions with monumental practices in the Eastern Aegean following the Persian Wars. The chapter will conclude by suggesting that the designers of the Stoa were adapting Eastern and Persian symbols in order to justify the role of Athens as imperial hegemon over formerly Persian territories.
The fourth chapter will look to account for the depictions of the battle of Marathon and a clash with the Corinthians around Megara in the 450’s which were carved into the Athena Nike temple frieze in the mid-420’s. This chapter will situate these historical depictions on a temple within the context of the Peloponnesian War. It will be argued that the annual Spartan incursions into Attica rattled the collective psyche of the autochthony-obsessed Athenians. By portraying historical examples of Athenians successfully repelling invaders on the temple, the supporters of a belligerent policy towards the Spartans hoped to inspire the Athenians to continue what was a controversial war.

In the end, this dissertation will show that all three monuments featuring historical scenes must be addressed and explained on their own terms. Accordingly, I intend to demonstrate that historical subjects of the Tyrannicides statue group, the Stoa Poikile, and the Athena Nike temple cannot be attributed to one thing or a shared common cause, whether it be democratic ideology, changing perceptions of time, or a new interest in the individual. As we will see, only by examining the specific events, actors, and historical contexts surrounding these works of art can we begin to explain the origins of the Athenian historical monument.
Chapter 2: Antenor’s Tyrannicides and the Origin of the Political Portrait Statue

When the first statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were erected in the Athenian Agora, most likely during the last decade of the sixth century, the statue group was like nothing Athenians had ever seen before. The novelty of the monument can hardly be overstated. Before their creation, statues in Athens were used exclusively for traditional religious and sepulchral purposes. These sculptures, however, were not votive dedications but rather were set up in the Agora outside of any religious sanctuary. Although Harmodius and Aristogeiton were recipients of cult activity, the cult dedicated to the Tyrannicides seems to have had no connection with their effigies in the marketplace. Nor did the sculptures mark the graves of the two which Pausanias

---

40 Although Ober (2003, 447 n. 6) has called the question of dating the Antenor statues “unanswerable,” this paper will date their erection to the last decade of the sixth century for reasons which will be explained below.

41 There is no evidence for any connection between the statues and the cult. Mario Rausch (1999, 61) has proposed that the sacrifices to Harmodius and Aristogeiton originally took place near the statues in the Agora before the construction of the tomb. While Anderson (2003, 278 n. 16) calls this suggestion “plausible,” this link is purely conjectural and presumably stems from a desire to explain the oddity of the statues. As we will see later, we need not necessarily associate the statues with cult activity in order to account for their unique nature.
(1.29.15) situates in the Demosion Sema on the road to the Academy. It would seem that this was the first time sculptures were used in Athens for purely secular purposes.\(^42\)

And yet the innovative nature of the monument goes beyond a new use of statuary. The Tyrannicides appear to be the first ever monument of any type in Athens with neither religious nor practical function. For example, while the dedication of the Enneakrounos fountain house by the Peisistratids (Thuc. 2.15) certainly contained political messages, these sorts of construction projects were functional as well as self-promoting monuments.\(^43\) The statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton, however, served no tangible purpose other than commemoration.

Furthermore, the dedication of the statues, most likely by the supporters of the Cleisthenic reforms, represent the first time a political regime ever dedicated a statue of a human outside of an athletic context\(^44\) and were quite possibly the first portraits in

\(^{42}\) Hölscher (1998, 158-60) sees the statue group as the “first truly political monument in Greece” and even goes as far as saying that this was the first monument in all of Greece without any traditional religious function. Keesling (2003, 174): “Antenor’s Tyrannicides are the earliest known Athenian examples of freestanding statues erected outside either a votive or a funerary context, signaling the introduction of statues to a third context, the Athenian agora.”

\(^{43}\) Other examples of non-religious or sepulchral monuments erected in Athens before 508/7 include the Boucolion, Polemarcheion, the Prytaneion and the Themsmotheteion in the Old Agora (Ath. Pol. 3.5). Although these buildings no doubt had symbolic meanings attached to them, they all held specific functions for the pre-Cleisthenic government.

\(^{44}\) Ajootian 1998, 1: “mythological heroes were no longer the only spokesmen for political regimes; now images of mortals joined their ranks.” Stewart (1997, 73) describes it as “the city’s first public, secular monument to real, recently living men, and until the fourth century its only one.” Taylor (1991, 8) speculates that they may have been Athens’s first statues of historical individuals. This has been recently called into question by Keelsing (2002, 180-198) who thinks aristocratic athletes were dedicating statues of themselves on the Acropolis during the sixth century and cites some evidence suggesting that sons were dedicating votive statues of their fathers on the Acropolis.
Athens. While the appearances of the first statues are unrecoverable, the issue of whether the original Tyrannicides statues were just kouroi or had some individualized features no longer seems significant. Modern notions demand that in order to be a portrait, the statues must have reflected individualizing features of the subjects. And yet, with this strict definition, we lose sight of the fact that the statues were supposed to depict these two recently-deceased individuals and there was most likely an inscription saying as much. This, in all likelihood, was a first for Athens.

There is also a strong possibility that the statues represent a startling upheaval in the relationship between monumental arts and contemporary events. If the poses of the Kritios and Nesiotes replacement group, known to us from Roman copies, reflect the arrangement of their predecessors, the original group was likely the first depiction of a historical event in monumental art in mainland Greece. While previous sculptural representations, both in the round and in relief, may have shown narrative events, these

---

45 This issue of Archaic portraiture in Athens has long been controversial and even recent scholarship is sharply divided over whether statues in sixth-century Athens were meant to depict real people. Mary Steiber’s (2004) monograph, *The Poetics of Appearance in the Attic Korai*, argues that individualized features of Acropolis votive korai reflect the differences in the models the sculptors were using rather than regional styles, as Ritcher (1968) had long posited. Keesling (2003), however, has made a convincing argument that Acropolis korai, often dedicated by men, were supposed to depict Athena and not the dedicator or a “sitter.”


47 For the base fragment see Agora I 3872. Hesphaestion (*Encheir. 4*) quotes the epigram on the base of the monument which specially named Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

48 There is no shortage of scholarship on the Kritios and Nesiotes group but for a comprehensive look at the second group, see Brunnsäker 1955 and Taylor 1991, 15-21.
sculptures exclusively displayed scenes from the mythological past. In the case that Antenor posed Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the midst of charging at Hipparchus, a distinct possibility given the configuration of the successive statue group, it would be the first known monumental representation of a real and well-remembered historical event both in Athens and mainland Greece in general.

In almost all respects, the statues appear to constitute a dramatic break with custom. As Hölscher observes, “Familiar with the monuments of Washington, Garibaldi, or Bismarck that furnish our modern squares, we find it difficult to imagine what an unprecedented act the erection of this one was.” But how do we account for this radical artistic innovation?

This chapter seeks to answer this fundamental question. To be sure, the problem of the origins of the Tyrannicides monument is not a trivial one. This complex interplay between patrios nomos and cultural innovation is crucial to our understanding of the early years of democracy. The monument, and by extension its unconventional nature, is central to any discussion of not only the methods employed by the post-508/7 regime but

---

49 Perhaps our earliest example of a narrative scene in monumental art is the pediment of the temple of Artemis at Corfu. Although Benson (1967) claims that this scene is a narrative, Childs (1994, 6 n. 56) says that, being a synoptic narrative, this classification is somewhat misleading and I would have to agree. It would seem that the first known examples of a true narrative scene in sculpture come from a contemporary Athenian examples. Famously, the Gigantomachy pediment of the Old Athena temple, now convincingly dated to c. 500 by Childs (1994) shows Athena in the midst of battle and Acropolis 145 (Castriota 1998, 206; Boardman 1978, fig. 168) which uses statues in the round to possibly depict a labor of Theseus.

50 Hölscher (1998, 158-60) presents the Tyrannicides at the head of a pretty impressive genealogy but perhaps it is not evident that the statues of Washington and Bismark draw their lineage from those of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Western societies have employed portrait sculpture to commemorate great political actors and thereby to advance a wide spectrum of ideologies but the idea of honoring figures with sculpture was certainly not invented by the Cleisthenes, Antenor or the Greeks in general.
also the influence of democracy on cultural production.\textsuperscript{51}

Despite the significance of this question, scholarship has generally neglected even addressing the novelty of the Tyrannicides, let alone accounting for this sudden shift in statuary practices.\textsuperscript{52} For most, the answer is to be found in contemporary political developments. In this view, the reforms of Cleisthenes, the landmark piece of legislation which brought about popular rule, created a separate political sphere and the novel statues, representing “individual political protagonists,”\textsuperscript{53} were produced as an outward expression of a new isonomic political identity.\textsuperscript{54} In other words, the institution of democracy created new political realities which, in turn, sparked new artistic forms.\textsuperscript{55}

This answer is certainly not without its merits. As we shall see, in reviewing the evidence for the date, production, and placement of the first statue group, this argument presents a cohesive and often compelling narrative which, up to this point, has been generally accepted by the field. The next section will present both the argument for this association as well as the scholarly tradition of attributing sudden changes in material culture to democracy from which this explanation stems.

\textsuperscript{51} See Kurke 1998.

\textsuperscript{52} This may stem from the fact that no ancient source mentions that the statues were in any way a new type of monument but the reluctance to account for the origins of the monument might come from how little we know about its creation. For example, we cannot say for certain when the original statues were erected, who was behind their commission, or even what Antenor’s Tyrannicides looked like.

\textsuperscript{53} Hölscher 2003, 15.

\textsuperscript{54} Hölscher 1998, 181.

\textsuperscript{55} Tanner (2006, 136) has recently reflected similar views: “These institutional ruptures [the reforms of Cleisthenes] and the creation of a new secular representational space must lie behind the creation of portraiture, both as a new category of image, the \textit{eikon}, and as a new type of image.” He (2006, 138) goes on to say, “the new features of portraiture, ponderation and the more differentiated facial iconography are oriented to the new democratic political order.”
Antenor’s Tyrannicides and The Reforms of Cleisthenes

Although we have little evidence about when the original statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were commissioned and set up, several indications point to the last decade of the sixth century and, more specifically, to the years directly following the reforms of 508/7. In the only literary reference dating the monument, Pliny (NH 34.17) claims that the first group was erected in 509, the same year “quo et Romae reges pulsi.” Leaving aside the suspiciously synchronistic correlation between a monument which celebrated the downfall of the Peisistratidai and the expulsion of the Tarquin monarchy, several factors make this scenario somewhat unlikely. For one, the famously unstable political situation in Athens during that year would have made the construction of a very public political monument rather unfeasible. Castriota, pointing out that the monument downplayed the Spartan role in expelling the Peisistratids, suggests that the statues could not have been erected until after Isagoras, Cleomenes, and the Spartans were forced out of Athens. Given both the public and possibly controversial nature of the monument, Castrotia appears to be correct in dating the origin of the statues to sometime after 507.

56 Indeed it is surprising that we know so very little about the Tyrannicides statues given the apparent importance they had in democratic Athens. The few ancient sources that mention the monument all indicate the immense significance of these portraits. Demosthenes (20.70) states that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were the only Athenians to be honored in sculpture during the entire fifth century. The Marmor Parium (FGrH 239 A54) tells us that as early as two years after the Persians plundered the original statues (Archonship of Adeimantos or 478/477 BC), Athenians were busy commissioning, designing, and erecting their replacements while these same citizens allowed most of the monuments of the city to lie in ash and rubble for the next 30 years. Pausanias (1.8.5) testifies that two different Tyrannicides statue groups still stood side by side in the Agora over 600 years after they were originally erected. According to Diodorus (20.36.2), Demetrius and Antigonus had to be given special permission to have their statues near those of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

Moreover, the identity of the artist of the original sculptures would also seem to indicate that the statues were not only erected after 508/7 but also that Cleisthenes himself may have been involved in their commission. Referring to the two Tyrannicides groups, which had stood side-by-side in the Agora since the earlier pair had been returned from Persia sometime around 300 BC, Pausanias (1.8.5) states “tous archaious epoiesen Antenor.” We are safe in assuming that this is the same Antenor whose name appears on the base of a kore (Acropolis Kore 681), dedicated by the potter Nearchos on the Acropolis c. 525-10.\textsuperscript{58} Antenor’s unique style, which involved drilling into the folds of the kore’s garments, has allowed scholars to identify his hand in another seminal late-Archaic work, the East Pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi.\textsuperscript{59} The renovation of the eastern side of the temple in Parian marble, the famous Pythian Bribe, was of course financed by Cleisthenes and the Alcmeonids following their defeat at Lysiphrion in 514. Although the case for this association is somewhat circumstantial, this evidence generally points to some sort of professional relationship between Cleisthenes and Antenor.\textsuperscript{60} If the choice of Antenor reflects the Alcmeonid’s involvement with the commission of the first group, it would then follow that the monument, in some way or another, was a project of

\textsuperscript{58} For an up-to-date discussion on dating Antenor’s Kore, as well as an excellent assessment of the problems inherent in dating votives based on political events, see Keesling 2003, 43-46.


\textsuperscript{60} Boardman (1996, 83) says, “Antenor’s work on the Delphi pediment, paid for by the exiled Alkmaionids, and then on the tyrant-slayers, seems to indicate some rapport with anti-tyrant patrons.” This is certainly a romantic view of the artist but I doubt if Antenor’s motives were primarily political. Instead, I think we can follow the interpretation of Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet (1996, 57), who state about Antenor, “…one is tempted to say, played towards Cleisthenes the same role Calamis played towards Cimon and Phidias played toward Pericles.” I am personally inclined to favor this portrayal of Antenor as an intelligent businessman, looking to please his influential client.
the new government and must have been created after Cleisthenes returned from the last of his exiles.\textsuperscript{61}

Based on the timing of the dedication and Antenor’s links to Cleisthenes, it is likely that the new government, put into place with the reforms 508/7, was ultimately responsible for the statues. But for those who would attribute the monument’s originality to the new democratic order, the case goes beyond the approval and possible commission by the nascent regime. In this view, the creation of a new, secular monument honoring contemporary citizens is inherently tied to a marked ideological shift brought about by democracy.

For Hölscher, the location of the monument is the key for understanding both its original function under the democracy and its novelty. Drawing upon a quote from Timeas Grammaticus (\textit{Lex. Voc. Plat. s.v. orchestra}) who claimed the Tyrannicides were located in the orchestra, the possible original meeting place of the assembly, he proposes that the function of the new monument was specifically related to the new responsibilities of the enfranchised citizens within the context of the assembly and \textit{ostrakismos}.\textsuperscript{62} Far from just commemorative statues, in this view the effigies of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were set up as didactic symbols which instructed inexperienced citizens while participating in their new civic roles in the \textit{ekklesia}.

\textsuperscript{61} Anderson (2003, 94) speculates that the statue group was “among the first monuments erected in the new Agora.”

\textsuperscript{62} Hölscher 1998, 160.
The implication here is that the secular nature of the statues and the representations of contemporary individuals can be explained by the adoption of democracy. In publicly celebrating recently deceased members of the community in monumental art, the new government was openly advertising and encouraging the ability of everyday citizens to affect political change. In other words, the participation of ordinary citizens in the political process parallels the commemoration, for the first time, of “individual political protagonists.”

Hölscher would attribute these secular representations, what he terms political monuments, to what he calls the formation of a separate “sphere of politics.” In his view, the Tyrannicides and subsequent Athenian secular monuments reflect the new government’s attempt to develop an isonomic political identity in opposition to tyranny. Eventually, though we are not sure exactly when, some Athenians came to regard Harmodius and Aristogeiton as responsible for making Athenians “equal under the law.” If the first inscription on the statue-base made reference to isonomia, we might be tempted to further associate the new form of statue with the concept of equal rights for all citizens. To quote Hölscher in full:

---
63 Hölscher (2003, 15) also cites the depiction of citizen soldiers on the murals of the Stoa Poikile, some 30 years later, as another example of representing political protagonists. This idea will be addressed in the next chapter.
65 Hölscher 1998, 158.
67 For further discussion of the epigram, possibly attributed to Simonides, see Taylor 1991, 26, 31-33 and Merritt 1936.
Political monuments, secular as well as religious, were used here in an explicit and systematic way to create political identity. This practice is attested from the beginning of the Kleisthenic order and is essentially connected with it. Some monuments, above all the group of the tyrant-slayers, stress the values of isonomia and democracy and show to what extent politics had become the focus of the citizen community.\(^{68}\)

The idea that the adoption of the Cleisthenic reforms created an instantaneous ideological shift which manifested itself in all aspects of culture is not a new one. Following the influential work of Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet, who describe the reforms of Cleisthenes as a rupture in how Athenians perceived time and space, many have sought to account for changes in material culture through the impact of the reforms.\(^{69}\)

This sort of immediate populist shift is further supported by the recent work of Josiah Ober.\(^{70}\) For Ober, the key event in understanding both the impulses behind the reforms and their sudden impact on Athenian society, is the expulsion of Isagoras, Cleomones, and the Spartan garrison by what he describes as a leaderless mob of Athenians. Emphasizing the “revolutionary nature” of the events of 508/7, Ober presents the siege of the Acropolis as a political uprising to ensure the popular rights proposed by Cleisthenes.\(^{71}\) Ober supposes that “democratic institutional practices arose in response to a historical rupture, to an ‘epistemic’ sociological/ideological shift—that is, a substantial

---

\(^{68}\) Hölscher 1998, 181.
\(^{69}\) Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet 1964.
\(^{70}\) Ober 2008.
\(^{71}\) Ober (2004, 95-112) puts much emphasis on Herodotus’s (5.72.2) claim that the Athenians besieging the Acropolis were “of the same thinking” (\textit{ta auta phromésantes}) in fighting for Cleisthenes’s proposal which would grant them political rights. This analysis brings up some interesting points but the expulsion of the Spartan garrison probably had more to do with a foreign power occupying the most sacred area of Athens rather than being a politically motivated attack.
and relatively sudden change in the ways that Athenians thought, spoke, and behaved toward one another.”  

If true, both the use of a totally new statue form as well secular honors for contemporary individuals would seem to correspond to the radical nature of these transformative events.

This narrative is undoubtedly compelling and it is not hard to see why associating the origins of democracy, Greek portraiture, and newfangled perceptions of the individual would be attractive to Western scholars. But, as with most historical events and monuments of Archaic Greece, the connection between the Cleisthenic constitutional arrangements and the origins of the new statue type is not as straightforward as the communis opinio would have you believe. As the next section will show, the evidence can be open to differing interpretations. After reviewing the methodological problems inherent in attributing changes in material culture to political and ideological shifts, the following discussion will present a different reading of the evidence.

Democracy and Material Culture

In recent years scholars have moved to counter the prominent notion that the Peisistratids, and more specifically their form of rule, left a decisive mark on the material

72 Ober 2008, 83.
73 For example, see Tanner 2006, 136-8.
Although it cannot be denied that leaving behind the tendency to attribute “great works” to “great men” has been constructive to the discourse, the new trend in scholarship has essentially replaced “the archaeology of tyranny” with the “archaeology of democracy.” This approach too has revealed its own set of problems. Recent work has shown that the inclination to prioritize political ideals over cultural production generally represents a flawed methodology. Leslie Kurke has been strongly critical of the tendency of ancient historians to use what she has termed a “reflectionist model” in explaining cultural production. While historians in the past have viewed tragedy, material culture, and generally all cultural production of fifth-century Athens as manifestations of democratic culture, Kurke points out that the relationship between the two need not be “one way.” New trends in sculpture or architecture were not necessarily be shaped by democratic ideology and, in fact, material culture has its own agency in the dialogue between cultural production and ideals.

74 As Hurwit (1999, 118) has pointed out, there is no evidence for any Peisistratid dedications atop the Acropolis and we should be wary of attributing either the Bluebeard temple or the Old Athena temple to the family. Anderson (2003, 70-1) presents evidence that Megacles and the Alcmeonids were in fact behind the construction of the Bluebeard temple and that it was not, in fact, initiated by Peisistratus during one of his first two “tyrannies.” Hurwit (1999, 117) points out that Peisistratus had neither the time nor resources to build the temple during his first two short-lived “tyrannies” in 561/0 and 557/6. Despite the temporal limitations, Hurwit also remarks that the temple must have been in some respects a Panathenaic project due to the great resources such a project would have demanded. Furthermore, Childs (1994) has convincingly down-dated the Old Athena temple to the early years of the democracy.

75 Keesling 2003, 36-7. For example, for years scholars have put forth the concept of a “post-Cleisthenic bulge” in the number of votive dedications atop the Athenian Acropolis. According to this theory, the democratic reforms encouraged (or, in some arguments, legislatively permitted) non-aristocratic craftsmen, so-called banausoi, to dedicate statues in the sanctuary. For example, there is the obvious problem of some dedications by tradesmen before 508/7, most notably Antenor’s kore dedicated by Nearchos the potter most likely between 525-510 BC.

76 Kurke 1998, 155-6: “Many ancient historians treat the relation of politics or economics to culture as base to superstructure: changes occur in the political or economic domains, and they are then reflected in cultural production.”
Methodologically speaking, the idea that the Tyrannicides statues were brought about by an immediate and marked shift in ideology following the events of 508/7 is susceptible to the same critiques. While it is clear that the Tyrant Slayers eventually came to be regarded as a model for behavior,77 we should be careful not to prioritize the influence of political changes. Why is it more likely, for example, that the statues were put up to reflect a changing notion of the individual’s capacity to bring about political change rather than, say, the government erecting these sculptures for other reasons and the statues themselves subsequently inspiring new ideals of political agency?

This sort of analysis is also problematic because it fails to consider cultural production before the adoption of the isonomic constitution or trends outside of Athens itself. To quote Kurke “I want to unsettle this account, first, by challenging the assumption that it is necessarily democracy that is the key factor for the kinds of cultural production we get in Athens—that is, for the uniqueness of this cultural production.”78 This analysis will also follow Kurke and Morris by emphasizing larger Panhellenic trends. Although this chapter is ultimately concerned with Athenian Archaic political practices, both before and after 508/7, any discussion of statuary practices needs to consider the use of sculptures before the Tyrannicides both within Athens and all across Greece.

And yet, pointing out that attributing of the new statue type to democratic ideology represents a flawed methodology does not necessarily mean that this

77 The most famous examples of Athenians proclaiming Harmodius and Aristogeiton as models are Miltiades’s speech to Callimachus before Marathon in Herodotus (6.109.3) and the four scolia preserved by Athenaeus (15.695a).

78 Kurke 1998, 156.
interpretation is wrong. As we saw above, one can make a persuasive case for a relationship between the reforms and the shift in the use of statuary. This section, however, aims to take a closer look at the evidence for this association. As we review the case for attributing the new statue type to the democratic constitution with a critical eye, it will become clear that one might also note several possible objections to this reading. Even if we accept a post-508/7 date for the statues and that Cleisthenes was in some way or another involved with their commission, must we necessarily assume that “popular rule” or “democracy” itself provided the impetus for the novel form of this monument? The evidence both from the time of the creation of the original statues and the entire fifth century would suggest otherwise.

**Democratic Ideology, Individuals and the Monuments of Fifth-Century Athens**

If public commemoration of “political protagonists” in statuary was truly the result of popular rule, we should then expect the practice to continue throughout the fifth century. In reality, Athens would not see another honorific statue of a recent historical figure until the fourth century when the general Conon and King Evagoras were honored in this manner.\(^79\) Even after the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1, the event which brought about "full" democracy,\(^80\) specific recent historical protagonists are downplayed in

---

\(^79\) Demosthenes 20.70.

\(^80\) Raaflaub (1998a; 1998b) has convincingly argued that Athens, although democratic before the Persian Wars, only achieved “full” democracy with the reforms of Ephialtes. Raaflaub sees two crucial developments in this piece of legislation, namely giving political rights to the thetes, partly due to their contributions to the navy, and stripping the Areopagus Council of their powers.
monumental art in favor of the community as whole, such as on the Parthenon frieze, or anonymous and generic hoplites, as seen on the Athena Nike temple.\textsuperscript{81} Apparently the reforms of Cleisthenes did not immediately change the social conventions about honorific statuary, as those conventions continued to be followed for the next century.

If anything, the ideology of isonomia seemed to have strengthened the Athenian aversion to honoring specific citizens in monumental art.\textsuperscript{82} Aeschines spends a good amount of time in Against Ctesiphon (183-5) first explaining how Cimon and his circle were prevented from inscribing their names on the herms commemorating the victory at Eion and then praising the monument for honoring the people (\textit{tou dêmou}) and not individuals.\textsuperscript{83} Plutarch (\textit{Pericles} 31.2-5) famously alleged that Phidias aroused the ire of democratic Athens by painting portraits of himself and Pericles into the Amazonomachy on the shield of Athena Parthenos. In the fourth century, Demothenes (23.196-7) would look back nostalgically to a time when state monuments distributed praise amongst the community as a whole rather than singling-out specific commanders, such as Themistocles, for distinction.

These examples, of course, all concern a reluctance to honor living individuals. Harmodius and Aristogeiton, although contemporary figures known personally by citizens of the polis, had been dead for a number of years before the appearance of the

\textsuperscript{81} Hölscher 1973, 91-98.

\textsuperscript{82} Aeschines 3.186; Hölscher 1973, 55-56.

\textsuperscript{83} Plutarch (\textit{Cimon} 7.2-3) gives the inscriptions and then (8.1) points out that Cimon is not named. Also see Hölscher 1998, 169.
first statue group. Given the hyper-competitive nature of Athenian politics, we might be tempted to conclude that the Athenian democracy only denied monumental honors to contemporary figures who were still alive. This conclusion, however, does not stand up to inquisition.

Despite Thucydides’s (2.45) suggestion that it was easier to honor the dead than the living due to the *phthonos* that such honors would bring, it is clear the Athenians were disinclined to honor even recently deceased peers in monumental art. In the painting of the battle of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile, we might have expected Miltiades at least to be singled-out for his outstanding role. Yet the literary tradition has it that the *ekklesia* itself refused to allow him to be identified by name even though he had been dead for decades.84 Perhaps if there were other cases of a recently deceased Athenian being specifically depicted in state-sponsored monumental art, one could argue that Miltiades was not given this honor due to the Parian fiasco or anti-Cimonian sentiment. But, according to Plutarch (*Cimon* 8.1), even in the glow of Marathonian victory, the assembly refused to single him out by granting him a simple olive crown. The lack of any other fifth-century examples of this practice in either the literary or material record indicates that these refusals reflect an isonomic distrust of honoring one contemporary individual in monuments, either alive or dead.

When the practice begins in earnest in 394 with Conon’s statue, both ancient and modern commentators have recognized that this phenomenon can be tied, in some way or

---

84 Aeschines 3.186.
another, to the weakening of the democratic constitution. For Andrew Stewart, the fourth-century statues of generals betray an increased reliance on individuals after the collapse of the Athenian Empire following the Peloponnesian War.\textsuperscript{85} Julia Shear sees the shift in commemoration from the Acropolis to the Agora, including the new effigies of generals, as a concerted effort by the restored democracy to promote their now unstable brand of government after the Four Hundred and the Thirty.\textsuperscript{86} Whether one regards the portrait honors as the Athenians compromising their egalitarian ideals in the face of changing economic realities or as a new tool utilized by an embattled ideology, both explanations point to the same underlying cause. As Demosthenes (23.196-8) first recognized, far from being inspired by \textit{isonomia}, portrait honors for Athenian commanders in the fourth century stood in direct contrast to the democratic ideals and traditions of the fifth century.

In light of this evidence, the connection between democracy and the new statue-type of the first Tyrannicides appears increasingly untenable. Any explanation attributing the sculptures of Harmodius and Aristogeiton to democratic ideology must account for not only the absence of state-approved public portraits during the height of Athenian \textit{demokratia} but also the reappearance of this sort of honor in the midst of its decline. Clearly it would seem contradictory to hold that the democratic constitution was both the

\textsuperscript{85} Stewart 1979, 122.

\textsuperscript{86} Shear 2007, 114-5. This is certainly worth considering but I would tend to disagree with Shear that Conon was given statuary honors as a democratic response to oligarchy. To my mind, Stewart’s suggestion is much more convincing. Placing Conon’s statue next to the Tyrannicides was probably just a way to show his importance and generally heroizing rather than trying to show him specifically as a democratic champion.
impetus for public statuary honors and, simultaneously, the very reason that the practice was, in the words of Andrew Stewart, “taboo.”87

Given this tenuous connection, perhaps it not surprising that despite the probable existence of isonomic political systems all across Greece during the sixth century,88 as far as we know, Athens was the only polis to honor recent historical individuals with public portraits who were not athletes, a point to which we will return later.89

The Tyrannicides and the Agora

Any investigation of the connection between “democracy” and the Tyrant Slayers statues, must explore the role of the statues in the Agora during the early years of the new government and the regime’s monumental building program within that space. Not only does the political portrait statue not fit with fifth-century democratic commemoration practices, but the use of a wholly unfamiliar form would, at first, seem inconsistent with both the methods and messages of the early champions of the Cleisthenic reforms. This next section will demonstrate that, far from openly advertising the revolutionary nature of the Cleisthenic reforms, the new monuments of the Agora, constructed during the last decade of the sixth century, represent a concerted effort to emphasize tradition and invention of the political portrait monument too should be viewed in these terms.

87 Stewart 1979, 119.
88 For an extensive look at democracy outside of Athens, see Robinson 1997.
89 Lycurgus 1.51.
Let us first discuss the relationship between the statues and the role of the Agora as the assembly’s original meeting place. As discussed earlier, Hölscher suggests that because the Tyrannicides monument was placed in the center of the Agora and supposedly in the orchestra, it must have been set up as a didactic symbol which specifically instructed citizens in the *ekklesia*. This connection between the assembly and the first statues of the Tyrant Slayers, however, is not as neat as it would first appear.

While it is beyond doubt that that both sets of Tyrannicides statues stood in the Agora, Timeas Grammaticus, writing at least as late as the third century AD, is the only source to locate the monument in the orchestra.\(^90\) Given the late date of the source as well as its singularity, perhaps we should be wary of building a case around this evidence. Even if we accept that the statue group was originally set up in the orchestra, we need not presume that the statues were necessarily associated with the assembly. Although we do not know location or dimensions of the orchestra (or if the definition of what was included in this area changed over a 700 year period) it is clear that the orchestra was quite sizable. We know, for example, that the orchestra must have held space for wooden benches (*ikira*) as well as a large performance area which was able to hold the movements of choruses with up to fifty people.\(^91\)

Soon after the reforms, the new government went to work on constructing a new

\(^{90}\) We only have three sources who give information on the location of the statue groups and all three of them are late. Arrian (*Anabasis* 3.16.8) places them opposite of the Metroon and near the Altar of the Eudanemoi. Based on this passage, along with some analysis of Pausanias’s movements, Taylor (1991, 17) would place the statues to the northwest of the temple of Ares.

\(^{91}\) Ajootian 1998, 4-5.
meeting place for the assembly, an immense building project which indicates the enhanced role of the body. It would seem that the Agora was merely a temporary meeting place while the Pnyx was being planned, leveled and constructed. And yet when the ekklesia’s meeting place is moved to their new theatrical area upon completion c. 500, the new government did not transfer the statues nor, as far as we can tell, did they erect another statue group to help instruct the demos how to act. If the true function of the statues are intimately connected with the assembly, one is tempted to ask why this connection only lasted a few years and was almost immediately ignored as soon as the assembly’s new home was finished. Furthermore, the difficulties of precisely dating both Antenor’s statues and the Pnyx should further discourage us from associating the function of the Tyrannicides with the ekklesia. Even accepting that Antenor’s Tyrannicides were set up in the orchestra, we have no evidence that the assembly was meeting there during this time and had not already moved to the Pnyx.

Despite all this analysis, the decision to place the statues in the Agora and possibly in the orchestra area might not be as complicated as we make it out to be. Thucydides (1.20.2; 6.57.1-3) twice tells us that the murder took place next to the Leocorium, a building within the Agora whose location has yet to be identified. It is quite possible, as Taylor suggests, that the statues were put up on or near the spot of the murder and this

---

92 Unfortunately, there is no firm archaeological evidence for the original construction date of the Pnyx. Nevertheless, most would accept the dating of c. 500 put forward originally by Kourouniotes and Thompson (1932, 109).
area fell within the considerable boundary of the orchestra.\textsuperscript{93} After all, at least in the case of the second group, the Tyrannicides statues seem to have been the first free-standing statue group in Athens to depict a historical event. If, indeed, the original statue group similarly portrayed Harmodius and Aristogeiton in the midst of their murder, it would seem logical to place this historical representation in the area in which the act being depicted took place.

But to understand the role the statues played in the Agora, as well as how the monument fit into the larger program of democratic order, we must now turn from the supposed function of the space as the home of the assembly to the actual buildings the government erected alongside the sculptures of Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Although the new regime centered much of their building program in the Agora, the civic space which later would become the commercial and political center of the democratic city was initially laid-out by the Peisistratids,\textsuperscript{94} who delineated the new space sometime in the 520’s with the erection of a fountain house (Paus. 1.14.1) and the Altar of the Twelve Gods (Thuc. 6.54.6-7).\textsuperscript{95} It is perhaps notable that the government chose to remake an area associated with the Peisistratids rather than founding a new one. As we will see, this

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{93} Taylor 1991, 19. Castriota (1993, 202) suggests “The sculptural group of the Tyrannicides, or Tyrant Slayers, stood somewhere in the northwest portion of the Athenian Agora, perhaps not far from the site of the actual event.”

\textsuperscript{94} The relationship of the new space to the enigmatic old Agora, which seems to have been located somewhere to the Northeast of the Acropolis (Shear 1994, 226-8; Anderson 2003, 89-90) or possibly near the Illissos River (Papadopoulos 2003) is vexed.

\textsuperscript{95} A new Princeton dissertation (J. Paga, forthcoming) has reexamined the pottery from the excavation of the south-east fountain house. Based on the presence of a black glaze salt cellar which appears to be from 500-480 BC, the polygonal masonry, and the use of Z-clamps, Paga attempts to redate the fountain house to the early years of the democracy.
\end{flushleft}
stress on tradition seems to have been a hallmark of the early democratic government.\textsuperscript{96} Given the changing demands of the new system, it is not surprising that the building activity in the Agora involved the invention of new types of buildings which fulfilled specific roles for the new political bodies and branches. Yet, for each of these new constructions, the new government made a concerted effort to draw on established forms.

One of these first building projects was the construction of a building to house the new Council of 500.\textsuperscript{97} The construction of the Old Bouleuterion, built around 500 in the southwestern corner of the Agora, represents an entirely new type of building. The structure seems to have had no religious function and yet its designers employed the Doric order in its construction.\textsuperscript{98} The same can be said about the Stoa Basileios which was probably contemporary with the Old Bouleuterion and, like that structure, seems to have been designed with the Doric order.\textsuperscript{99}

As Shear points out, these two structures are the first Greek buildings that we know of, other than those in traditional religious sanctuaries, to employ sacred architectural forms for civic buildings.\textsuperscript{100} While earlier explanations sought to connect the

\textsuperscript{96} Anderson 2003, 103: “This emphasis on tradition and continuity is in fact a recurring feature—almost a leitmotif—of the various other innovations in public life that followed Cleisthenes’s reforms.”

\textsuperscript{97} Due to the construction of the Metroon during the Hellenistic period, only the foundations of the Old Bouleuterion survive. For the original excavations, see Thompson 1973, 127-35.

\textsuperscript{98} Shear (1993, 423) cites the discovery of triglyphs and pieces of metope slabs to show that there was a complete Doric frieze above the entrance to the Old Bouleuterion which seems to have been destroyed by the Persians.

\textsuperscript{99} Camp 1986, 53-7.

\textsuperscript{100} Shear 1994, 231-9.
use of the equally proportioned Doric order with *isonomia*,\textsuperscript{101} a recent suggestion by Anderson seems much more plausible. In short, Anderson proposes that, in employing sacred architecture for these new buildings, their designers were intentionally trying to imbue the strange new buildings with a sense of familiarity in order to emphasize an artificial continuity for both the new structures and the political bodies and offices they were home to.\textsuperscript{102}

And yet, when we return to the topic of the monument to the Tyrant Slayers, are we to believe that the new government created a new form of statue *ex nihilo* which did not draw on any preexisting forms or precedents and essentially presented the new government as a radical change? Although the reforms do seem to be revolutionary in many ways, we must be careful not to confound the political and social changes of Athens with the manner in which these changes were presented to the general public. These two aspects, i.e. the new political realities and the presentation of such, were certainly not the same.

Furthermore, not only does the use of a wholly unfamiliar form not fit with the monumental building program of the Cleisthenic government, but this kind of unprecedented novelty also does not correspond to the other ways which the government chose to advance the legacy of the Tyrannicides. Compared to our knowledge of the statues bearing their likenesses, little is known about the cult of Harmodius and

\textsuperscript{101} Shear 1994, 239.

\textsuperscript{102} Anderson 2003, 102-3. While I think we should follow Anderson in this view, as will be discussed later in the chapter, the use of sacred forms was part of a tradition of cultural adaptation in Archaic politics.
Aristogeiton. The date for the foundation of the Tyrannicides’s hero cult is unknown, but it is generally assumed that the cult was instituted sometime during the last decade of the sixth century.\textsuperscript{103} Our only reference to the cult of the two heroes in question comes from \textit{Athenaion Politeia} (21.6), in which we learn that it was the duty of the polemarch to administer sacrifices to the cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton.\textsuperscript{104} The role of a military official strongly suggests that the cult was initiated and controlled by the state. While celebrating recently deceased individuals with cultic honors was somewhat irregular, the government was attempting to draw on conventional hero-cult worship which appears to have been extremely popular in Attica at the time.\textsuperscript{105} Here, once more, we see the new government reformatting customary practices in order to endorse their new system.

In fact, the promotion of Harmodius and Aristogeiton (and their somewhat insignificant murder) seems to have been a central tenant in the new government’s attempts to emphasize the “traditional” character of their innovative system.\textsuperscript{106} Beyond merely downplaying the radical nature of the reforms, the statues and the cult dedicated to the Tyrannicides sought to establish a narrative which claimed democracy in Athens.

\textsuperscript{103} Taylor 1981, 21.

\textsuperscript{104} The word used for sacrifices in the \textit{Ath. Pol.}, \textit{enagismata}, indicates a specific sacrifice for a dead hero. Herodotus (2.44) in his discussion of the double cult of Heracles, states that people sacrifice to him as an Olympian (\textit{thuousi}) and also as a hero (\textit{evagizousi}), thus pointing out the difference between the two. It is unclear from the sources, however, what making an \textit{enagisma} actually involved. Commonly, though by no means exclusively, hero-cult activity in Athens as well as Greece in general was centered on the tomb or remains of the hero. Pausanias (1.29.15), the only literary source to testify to the existence of such a tomb, mentions that Harmodius and Aristogeiton were buried along the road to the Academy.

\textsuperscript{105} In search of names for his ten new tribes, the \textit{Ath. Pol.} (21.6) says that Cleisthenes submitted 100 names of heroes to the Pythia at Delphi from which to choose. The fact that Cleisthenes had available the names of 100 heroes, all probably recipients of cult activity, has led Garland (1993, 44) to speculate that hero cults were more popular in Athens than anywhere in Greece at that time.

\textsuperscript{106} Anderson 2003, 205-7.
was, in fact, an ancestral tradition which was interrupted by Peisistratid rule. Pointing out the profound Greek distrust of neotera pragmata, Anderson argues that promotion of Harmodius and Aristogeiton implied the restoration of a mythical democratic tradition that already prevailed in earlier times rather than the invention of some new political order.

This creative explanation would help us to explain many puzzling aspects of Athenian “memory” concerning democracy during the Classical era. For example, it is extremely confusing that, although modern scholars almost universally recognize the centrality of Cleisthenes in the creation of democracy in Athens, his role in the process is usually ignored by the ancient sources. Instead, we are oddly told in both Euripides’s Suppliants (350ff; 403ff) and by Demothenes (60.28) that the mythical king Theseus was thought to be the founder of the democratic constitution. According to Anderson, this is no accident. Rather, it represents a deliberate manipulation of tradition in order to lend legitimacy to a form of government which may have seemed frighteningly radical to the citizens of Attica. In this case, the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton served to promote the familiar nature of the democratic arrangements and the illegitimacy of Peisistratid rule. The monument did indeed celebrate the Tyrannicides for making Athens isonomic as the inscription suggested, but the invented tradition implied they did so by

---

107 For a detailed explanation of this convincing argument, see Anderson 2006.

108 The notable exceptions being, of course, Herodotus and the Ath. Pol.
eliminating those who interrupted time-honored isonomic practices rather than founding an entirely new order.

If the Tyrannicides were “a device created by leaders to help deflect attention from the novelty of the recent innovations,”¹⁰⁹ as Anderson alleges, this reading might encourage us to expect that the Tyrannicides monument was itself fashioned from pre-existing cultural materials: a reworking of an established representational mode rather than the invention of a new one. The next section will attempt to argue that far from creating a new form of sculpture to reflect the sudden shift in constitutional arrangements and politics, those who commissioned the effigies of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were deliberately fashioning the statues after a common and accepted form of tribute, namely secular statues of athletes in a polis’s Agora. Furthermore, I hope to demonstrate that the reworking of athletic honors to recognize political achievements was actually a common practice in the late Archaic age and corresponds to other accolades bestowed by the Athenians.

The Tyrannicides and Athletic Sculptures

In looking for earlier models for the new type of statue group, there does seem to have been a precedent for honoring contemporaries with statues in an agora. Although missing from Hölscher’s list of “traditional categories of sculptures,” the setting up of statues of victorious athletes in the agora of their home poleis appears to be an

¹⁰⁹ Anderson 2003, 206.
established convention by the late sixth century and may even predate such honors in Olympia.\textsuperscript{110} Well-known examples include Theagenes of Thasos,\textsuperscript{111} Euthymos of Lokris\textsuperscript{112} and Arrhachion of Phigalia.\textsuperscript{113}

While modern scholarship has often ignored this connection, the similarity between agonistic victor monuments and the Tyrannicides was certainly recognized in antiquity. Lycurgus (1.51) explicitly states that “in other places you will find statues of athletes set up in the agora, while in your city you will see statues of successful generals and men who killed tyrants.”\textsuperscript{114} Lycurgus’s comments show that a statue of a contemporary individual in a city’s agora was an honor reserved for athletes, yet the tradition in Athens, beginning with the Tyrannicides, was different. Interestingly, Pliny (\textit{NH} 34.16-17) also makes this sort of connection (translation by Pollitt):

It was not customary to make effigies of men unless, through some illustrious case, they were worthy of having their memory perpetuated; the first example was a victory in the sacred contests, especially at Olympia, where it was the custom to dedicate statues of all who had been victorious; and in the case of those who had been winners there three times they moulded a likeness from the actual features of a person, which they call \textit{iconica}. The Athenians, I am inclined to believe, set up statues in public for the first time in honor of the tyrant-slayers, Harmodius and Aristogeiton.\textsuperscript{115}

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{110} Herrmann 1972, 115.
\item\textsuperscript{111} Pausanias 6.11.6
\item\textsuperscript{112} Pliny \textit{NH} 7.47.
\item\textsuperscript{113} Pausanias 8.40.1
\item\textsuperscript{114} Lycurgus 1.51.
\item\textsuperscript{115} Pliny, \textit{NH} 34.16-17 from Pollitt 1990, 30.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
Both quotes imply that the statues celebrated Harmodius and Aristogeiton in a manner usually reserved for athletic victors and the material record, as well as the little we can extrapolate about the monument’s appearance, would seem to support a similar conclusion.

The look and pose of the original statues are, for all intents and purposes, unknowable. Scholarly opinion is generally divided over whether they were kouroi (or, at any rate, modified versions of the iconic Archaic statues) or rather a posed-action group which was reflected by their fifth-century successors. Despite this split, either scenario would seem to fit the notion that Antenor’s statues were not only modeled after athletic sculpture in their location and contemporary subjects, but also in appearance.

Based in part on the other suspected works of Antenor, it is likely that the first effigies of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were essentially kouroi statues. Pausanias’s (1.8.5) description of them as “archaious” indicates that the first statues were similar to the portrait of Arrachion, the Olympic pankration victor of 564, which Pausanias (8.40.1) also calls “archaios.” Given Pausanias’s (8.40.2) account of the statue (made out of stone with its feet close together and its arms at its sides), it is pretty clear, as Ridgway points out, that this was a typical sixth-century kouros. If the statues were indeed kouroi, they would then, as Pausanias’s language suggests, seem to mirror typical sixth-century practices for depicting a victorious athlete in an agora.

116 These other works are Acropolis Kore 681 and the east pediment of the temple of Apollo at Delphi.

117 Ridgway (1977, 48). Julia Shear (2002, 619) suggests that they might have been modified kouroi with swords or cloaks, but this is purely conjecture.
Other circumstantial evidence, however, suggests that the dramatic mid-action poses of the Kritios and Nesiotes group were anticipated by (or even directly modeled on) the same sort of positions in Antenor’s predecessors. In this case, the style of the first statues would seem to parallel fifth-century athletic statuary. As Boedeker has noted, the second Tyrannicides group was similar to contemporary athletic sculpture in that the subjects are depicted in an active pose, in the midst of carrying out their celebrated achievement.

When we move our focus from the monument’s figures to the base on which they stood, we see further connections with athletics. As the statue group was truly a new type of monument, there was no precedent for an inscription on a national-political monument, as Friedlander first noted. It is telling then, if this attribution can be trusted, that the commissioners of the monument would have Simonides, a composer of epinikia, to compose the monument’s inscription. If one can believe Simonides had connections with

---

118 The Athena sculpture from the Old Athena pediment, however, which seems to be roughly contemporary with the first group (Childs 1994), would seem to indicate both an ability and an interest in conveying movement through sculpture. Furthermore, action groups in the round, such as Acropolis 145, possibly depicting a labor of Theseus (Castriota 1998, 206; Boardman 1978, fig. 168) seem to be contemporary with Antenor’s first group. Stewart (1997, 70) states that “as honorary, heroic statues, they would not have been posed like kouroi.” But as the original statues were probably the first ever purely honorific statues in Greece, the argument seems somewhat circular. Additionally, Stewart’s claim (1997, 70) that heroes in this posture are shown on Attic vases “shortly after 510” goes unexplained and lacks citation. One could argue that the appearance of the Kritios and Nesiotes poses on vase paintings around 475-470 (for more, see Neer 2002, 168), might reflect that the poses had 30 years to become iconic but the painters could have just as easily incorporated the striking new statues in the years following their erection.

119 Boedeker 1998, 188.

120 Friedlander 1938, 90. Day (1985, 32) disagrees, but he attributes the Chian inscription to Antenor’s group and not, as most suspect, their grave (or cenotaph) in the Kerameikos.
the Peisistratids, his employment perhaps points to a concerted effort to model the monument on athletic prototypes even if it ignored inconvenient political ties.\textsuperscript{121}

Both material and literary evidence strongly indicates that at least the second statue group was crowned in the fashion of athletes and this *stephanosis* ceremony most likely occurred during the Panathenaic games. No less than four different painted depictions of the second statue group show them crowned with wreaths.\textsuperscript{122} Aileen Ajootian has proposed that the column depicted next to the crowned statues on the MFA oinochoe from the Dexileos tomb is probably a representation of a turning-point stele.\textsuperscript{123} Suggesting that this set-piece served to locate the scene within the context of the Panathenaic games, then held in the Agora, Ajootian plausibly argues that the statues were crowned, in the manner of athletes, during the games. Furthermore, an inscription dated to the fifth century indicates that, like Panhellenic victors, the descendants of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were provided free meals in the Prytaneion.\textsuperscript{124}

The commemoration of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as agonistic victors, on the surface, certainly fits well with the social ambience of the time. As the poems of Pindar,
Simonides, and Bacchylides attest, victors were regularly equated with great heroes and their short-lived deeds often won them the highest praise. I would suggest, however, the adaptation of athletic honors for the Tyrannicides goes beyond this superficial relationship and this section will examine several possible reasons the commissioners of Antenor’s statues chose to celebrate Harmodius and Aristogeiton in this manner.

In the new political world of the late sixth century and the early fifth century, the Greeks commonly reformatted athletic honors in order to recognize political or military success. In a famous story told by Herodotus (8.123), the victorious generals assembled at Isthmia in the wake of their victory at Salamis in order to select who should receive the prize for their contribution in the battle. As Susan Guettel Cole has recently shown, the decision to hold the vote at the altar of Poseidon within the sanctuary represents an attempt to draw on an established tradition for both competition and honors. With no precedent, the Greeks looked to traditional athletic rituals to negotiate new political circumstances, a trend that would continue in the fifth century when athletic *stephanosis* was adapted for political honors.

In searching for parallels in the material record, we need look no further than a contemporary monument meters away on the Athenian Acropolis dedicated during the early days of the Cleisthenic government. Soon after the expulsion of the Spartans and enacting the reforms of Cleisthenes, an alliance of the Lacedaimonians, the Boeotians,

---

126 Cole 2001, 205.
and Chalcidians famously marched into Attica. The expedition soon fell apart however when the Spartans withdrew and the Athenians achieved a quick and decisive victory over the remaining forces. Although purely a military victory, we know from Herodotus (5.68) that the Athenians eventually came to see the triumph in political terms.

When it came time to memorialize the victory, which both preserved and vindicated the new isonomic system, the Athenians dedicated a chariot atop the Acropolis.\textsuperscript{127} Perhaps due to the fame of this monument, in the words of Keesling, “it is easy to overlook the fact that the Athenians used a four-horse chariot, a statue type of purely athletic significance, to represent their military victory.”\textsuperscript{128} The dedication of a time-honored symbol to celebrate military and political success seems to be an attempt to draw on a tradition of self-aggrandizing monuments common at Panhellenic sanctuaries and certainly we can see these associations in the reformatting of athletic statuary honors for Harmodius and Aristogeiton.

Moreover, given the Greek distrust of honoring contemporary individuals, the athletic model already had certain disadvantages which may have softened potential criticism of the monument. The resentment of athletic honors is well documented in the fifth century and by using a template that already carried with it certain negative connotations, the commissioners may have sought to integrate the new type of monument into the community. To quote Catherine Morgan, “It is always hard to find generally

\textsuperscript{127} Herodotus 5.77.4.

\textsuperscript{128} Keesling 2003, 175.
acceptable ways to evaluate and honour political excellence and in the aftermath of
events as divisive as the Persian wars, it may have seemed less contentious to use
‘established’ sporting language, into which was already built consideration of the risks of
attracting envy, than to come up with something new.”

While adapting sporting honors for political achievements generally seems to
correspond with contemporary conventions, it is feasible that the athletic allusions were
specifically chosen to suit Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Considering the well-documented
connection between athletics and homoeroticism in Archaic Greece, it would be a fitting
way to honor the heroic deed of two lovers. In her article “Moving Images: Fifth-
Century Victory Monuments and the Athlete's Allure,” Steiner argues that athlete statues
were meant to be erotically entrancing to the viewer. Interestingly, Stewart sees the
same sort of erotic contemplation of the Tyrannicides and implies that, even with the
Antenor statues, the monument carried heavy overtones of homoeroticism. Moreover,
the nudity of the second group, which was probably carried over from Antenor’s
versions, also would have emphasized this connection in a society where public
nakedness was restricted to the contexts of bathing and athletics.

---

129 Morgan 1990, 124.

130 Theognis (1335–6) famously equated happiness with exercising naked and then sleeping with an
attractive youth. For an extensive review on all the evidence concerning this connection and the erotic
connotations of athletic sculpture, see Steiner 1998; Fisher 2009, 533-5.

131 Steiner 1998.

132 Stewart 1997, 73.

133 Stewart 1997, 27. For more on the connections between “costumes of nudity,” athletics, Homeric heroes
and warriors, see Bonfante 1989 and Spivey 1996, 114-5.
Later tradition equated athletics, lovers, and the fall of tyrannies.\textsuperscript{134} Athenaeus (620) alleges that Polycrates shut down the \textit{palaistrai} of Samos, in fear that athletic training would encourage homoerotic relationships which, in turn, would jeopardize his power.\textsuperscript{135} If Athenaeus’s comment is historically accurate, then the antagonism between tyrannies and homosexual lovers may precede the murder of Hipparchus and possibly the choice of representation even alluded to this.

\textbf{The Tyrannicides and the Economy of Kudos}

As discussed earlier, while most would accept that the statues of the Tyrannicides were crowned, few have looked at what this odd ceremony was supposed to signify. The lack of scholarly discussion on the crowns is particularly puzzling given that the immense importance of the wreaths is clearly indicated by four different painted depictions of the crowned statues\textsuperscript{136} and a possible allusion to the crowns in the Tyrannicides drinking songs. So why, exactly, were these statues crowned?

On one hand, the crowning of the statues might be seen simply as a way to honor the pair but I would suggest that the \textit{stephanosis} ceremony along with the adapted athletic statues was part of a larger attempt to associate the pair with Homeric heroes through

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{134} Fischer 2009, 539. \\
\textsuperscript{135} Athenaeus 620. For the connection between gymasia and homosexuality, see Dover 1978, 54. \\
\textsuperscript{136} Brunnsåker (1971, 150), citing the painted depictions of the statues with wreaths, suggests that the crowning ceremony probably took place as a detour during the Panathenaic procession. Shear (2002, 220), in her extensive study of the Panathenaic Festival, also puts the crowning ceremony within the context of the procession and Ajootian (1998, 8-9) suggests that the post on the MFA oinochoe fragment was a \textit{kamptere}, or a racing turning post, thus suggesting that the statues were crowned during the Panathenaic games.
\end{flushright}
what Leslie Kurke has termed “The Economy of Kudos.”137 As the title suggests, Kurke sees a kind of supernatural commerce between the victors and their home city. On one hand, the victors would accrue talismanic power through both their triumph and the crowning ceremony which protected their home poleis. In return, the city reciprocates with “crowns and fillets, the lifelong privilege of eating in the prytaneion, large monetary awards, special front-row seats in the theater, and sometimes a statue set up at public expense in the city or at the site of the games.”138 It is revealing that the Athenians chose to grant every one of these privileges, in some form or another, to Harmodius and Aristogeiton, their statues, and their descendants.

Although the famous pair were now deceased, the statues, together with the crowning ceremony, looked to not only recreate the “kudos-producing” act but to perpetuate this relationship. To quote Kurke, “For indeed, the absence of the victor - his eventual disappearance - is what the erection of the victory monument is predicated on.”139 She continues that “we might say that the victor monument inserts itself into the gap between presence and absence as a kudos-producing machine.”140

This sort of reciprocal exchange between an individual and the polis could also be applied to achievements outside of the realm of athletics. Mandrocles’s dedicatory inscription in honor of his Bosporus bridge clearly shows us that the concept of winning a

138 Kurke 1998, 140.
139 Kurke 1993, 147.
140 Kurke 1993, 148.
crown for oneself and kudos for one’s city could be applied to non-athletic achievements.\textsuperscript{141} Although Mandrocles did not actually win a crown game or even compete in an athletic event, he phrases his dedication in the same formula as a victor, claiming to have crowned himself and garnered kudos for his home polis.

Perhaps the best example of celebrating recently deceased individuals as athletic victors despite not having actually been crowned in the Panhellenic circuit comes from what may be the other most famous statue group of the sixth century. While the dedication of the statues representing Cleobis and Biton at Delphi would be the most obvious “athletic allusion,” Herodotus’s Solon describes them as aethlophoroi (1.31) and almost every part of Herodotus’s story echoes the language of an athletic triumph both in the structure of the story and the specific vocabulary used.\textsuperscript{142} Cicero claimed that the pair even followed the athletic custom of anointing themselves in oil before delivering their mother to the Heraion.\textsuperscript{143} Along with Tellos, who like the Tyrannicides received cult honors after his death, Cleobis and Biton are, in Kurke’s words, the embodiment of kudos despite not being athletes.\textsuperscript{144}

Given the stress on the benefits of kudos for one’s civic community during the polis age, it is not surprising that winning kudos for the city often endowed the victor

\textsuperscript{141} Herodotus 4.88; Kurke 1993, 139.
\textsuperscript{142} Sansone 1991, 125-7.
\textsuperscript{143} Cicero, \textit{Tusculan Disputations} 1.47.113.
\textsuperscript{144} Kurke 1993, 155.
with some sort of “political capital.” Osbourne would even attribute the rise of popularity of crown games to a growing need for “symbolic capital” within the increasingly competitive political sphere of the Archaic polis. This goes back to the time of Cylon (c. 620-600 BC) who Herodotus (5.71) implies sought to convert his Olympic victory and the kudos it bestowed into political power in his description of the Athenian as “anēr Olympionikēs: houtos epi tyrrannidi ekomēse.” In portraying Hipparchus’s death as a ‘kudos-winning’ act and the Peisistratid’s assassins in the manner of agonistic victors, the commissioners of the monument further looked to fashion the murder with political significance. Much like athletic achievements, the act, which essentially accomplished nothing, was recast as a personal exploit with ultimately civic benefits.

**Mimesis and Sixth-Century Political Practices**

Harmodius and Aristogeiton, of course, were not athletic victors. And yet it seems that the commissioners of the statues were drawing on and refashioning this accepted form of tribute in their invention of the political portrait statue. As we shall see, such creative adaptation was fairly common in the politics of the sixth century and thus,

---


146 Osborne 1996, 244.

147 Growing one’s hair long was the consummate look of an aristocratic athlete. For more on this interpretation, see Fisher 2009, 535. Fisher (2009, 535) also cites Cleisthenes of Sikyon’s athletic competition for the suitors of his daughter, held not long after the tyrant’s own Olympic chariot victory, as another example (Herodotus 6.126-7).
by placing the Antenor statues within the context of Archaic power struggles, we might begin to explain the type of cultural innovation that produced this unique monument.

Throughout sixth-century Athens, elite competition for power caused families to search for creative ways to surpass their rivals and our ancient sources are full of innovative schemes, some more credible than others. Perhaps the most famous example of the creativity of politicians and, as we will see, variations on established customs, is the bizarre incident of the Phye procession. In 556/5, looking to unseat Lycurgus as the dominant political figure in Athens, the Alcmeonidai and their patriarch, Megacles II, entered into an alliance with the exiled Peisistratus and the two organized a procession in which Peisistratus drove a chariot carrying an exceptionally tall woman named Phye dressed as the goddess Athena.

148 The examples are many. Originally exiled because of a curse fabricated by adversaries, the Alcmeonid patriarch of the mid-sixth century, Megacles, the father of Cleisthenes, would be responsible for the unusual and decidedly imaginative Phye Procession (Herodotus 1.60.2-5; Ath. Pol. 14.4). Both the Athenaios Politeia and Herodotus recount multiple stories about how Peisistratus used deceit in order to gain and secure power amongst the chaotic aristocratic rivalries of Archaic Athens. After convincing the people to give him armed guards, he then stormed the Acropolis with these same men in his first attempt to seize power (Herodotus 1.59). In his second attempt, Peisistratus then married Megacles’s daughter to cement an alliance, but, much to her father's dismay, deceitfully avoided impregnating her by famously “emigeto hoi ou kata nomon” (Herodotus (1.61.1). As Osborne (1996, 283) notes, the Herodotean lore of Peisistratus gaining power through trickery mirrors the tradition about the Orthagorids of Sikyon. And despite all of his ingenuity, however, Peisistratus’s family would ultimately be forced from Athens as a result of the inventive scheme of the Alcmeonidai, when Cleisthenes bribed the Pythian Oracle (Herodotus 5.66).

149 Herodotus 1.60.2-5; Ath. Pol. 14.4. If you want to somehow make sense of this strange tale, see Connor 1987; Blok 2000, 17-48; Anderson 2003, 68-72.

150 Anderson (2003, 69) points out that the sources explicitly state that Megacles had arranged this spectacle although most scholars have ignored this detail. Blok (2000, 39-47) proposes a new date for the procession. She claims it could not have taken place until after Peisistratus’s glorious return to the city after the battle of Pallene in 546/5. Although this is an interesting argument, its author does not explain the involvement of Megacles in this new scenario.
While goals of the procession are debatable, for our discussion it is not the symbolism of the procession with “Athena” that is important but rather the use of the procession itself.\textsuperscript{151} On the surface, this event might seem like a standard religious procession, but it had no set ritual purpose and did not conform to the conventions for imitating a divinity.\textsuperscript{152} In his classic 1987 article, “Tribes, Festivals and Processions: Civic Ceremonial and Political Manipulation in Archaic Greece,” Robert Connor rejects Herodotus’s claim that the Athenians actually believed that Peisistratus was accompanied by the goddess herself or that the organizers of the procession were trying to trick the citizens. Rather he interprets this ceremony as a type of \textit{mimesis}, best thought of as creative adaptation rather than imitation, of an accepted cultural form and sees this as a hallmark of sixth-century politics. Connor perceives the same sort of adaptation in Solon’s property classes which he suggests were inspired by the processional ordering of members of the community based on the amounts of the grain each individual could allocate to a sacred offering.\textsuperscript{153} By drawing on this established tradition, Connor writes, “the major innovation of the Solonian system would be legitimized by the use of a pattern sanctioned by long custom and religious usage.”\textsuperscript{154}

\textsuperscript{151} Despite the many interpretations of this event--Blok (2000, 45) for example, claims that Phye’s role was to symbolize Athena’s role in returning Peisistratus to power--Anderson’s (2003, 69-70) reconstruction seems the most plausible. He is right to point out that the sources indicate that Megacles was the dominant partner in the alliance and thus we should not see the procession as a restoration of Peisistratus to Athens but rather an attempt to undermine the Boutadai’s politically advantageous control of the Athena Polias cult.

\textsuperscript{152} As Connor (1987, 45) comments, “. . . although there was a cultural pattern among the Greeks of dressing up as a divinity on certain occasions, Peisistratus did not use it.”

\textsuperscript{153} Connor 1987, 47-9.

\textsuperscript{154} Connor 1987, 48.
This type of political *mimesis* would seem to fit into a larger pattern of creative adaptation of cultural norms by Cleisthenes and the champions of his reforms. Herodotus (5.67.1) specifically uses the verb *mimeomai* to describe how Cleisthenes imitated his maternal grandfather in his tribal reorganization. One can see the use of political *mimesis* in the way Cleisthenes named his new tribes after ten preexisting heroes and thus co-opted the entire legacies of the cults associated with the respective heroes for the state.\textsuperscript{155}

The Great Panathenaia was most likely founded in the 560’s by the Boutadai who, in order to enhance their own prestige and power, adapted typical Panhellenic crown games into an Athenian celebration of their patron goddess. It was the new post-508/7 government, however, which promoted the novel tribal system by modifying the festival’s agonistic events so that citizens competed for their *phylai*. Recent scholarship has argued that even ostracism, long considered to be a novel way to regulate powerful individuals in the interest of democracy, should be seen as a formalization of exiles typical in Archaic politics.\textsuperscript{156}

We can also see the same sort of adaptation in the construction of the Old Bouleuterion and the Stoa Basileos around 500 BC. While both were secular and civic buildings without religious function, they were constructed in the Doric order. They are the first Greek buildings that we know of, other than in traditional religious sanctuaries, to employ sacred architectural forms for civic buildings.\textsuperscript{157} Here again, in order to lend

\textsuperscript{155} Connor 1987, 41-2.

\textsuperscript{156} Forsdyke 2005.

\textsuperscript{157} Shear 1994, 231-9.
gravitas to the seat of the new government, the planners of the buildings employed creative adaptation which no doubt was meant to trigger a “psychological association” with revered buildings.158

The use of adaptation to endorse a political ideology or to influence members of the community is not surprising. Peter Foulkes notes that the power of propaganda lies in “its capacity to conceal itself, to appear natural, to coalesce completely and invisibly with the values and accepted power symbols of a given society.”159 In other words, propaganda involves an interplay between those promoting a message and those whose minds it is supposed to influence. Political leaders are obliged to comply with societal norms in order to champion their political system or regime. If leaders of a traditional society choose to nakedly endorse themselves without the trappings of time-honored media, they run the risk that their message will be rejected or ignored.

The Athenians understood this well. Despite the state’s promotion of their radical democracy, the Athenians were surprisingly conservative in depicting their unique constitution in monumental arts. As Castriota notes, “Athenians were reticent about celebrating the democratic constitution by direct visual artistic means; for much of the

158 The term “psychological association” is taken from Pollitt’s (1974, 37-52) discussion of mimesis.
159 Foulkes 1983, 3. In his account of Roman society under Augustus, Karl Galinsky (1996, 3) attempts to clarify the weighted term “propaganda” so often associated with the Princeps. Bemoaning the many definitions of the term as well as its carelessly ubiquitous usage, he points out that the only thing people seem to agree on is that propaganda attempts to influence people. And in this respect we can safely say that the Tyrannicides statues, from their inception, were indeed propagandistic. Although we are unsure of the exact messages the original statues were supposed to convey, it is certain these statues were meant somehow to influence the thoughts of those who saw them in the Agora.
Classical period, they evidently preferred the more indirect approach.”\textsuperscript{160} It is only towards the end of the fifth century, almost a century after the reforms of Cleisthenes, that Athenians became more comfortable depicting historical figures and erecting monuments which openly celebrated demokratia.\textsuperscript{161} Evidently, the Athenians continued to employ mimesis in one form or another long after the sixth century.

Moreover, by applying Connor’s analysis and discussion of mimesis to the invention of the political portrait statue, one can start to answer one of the most puzzling questions surrounding the new sculpture form, namely how this statue type was accepted by a community predisposed to reject highlighting individual achievement with public honor. According to Connor,

the leader, like a tragic poet or actor, adapts familiar material to a new setting and structure. Approached in this way Archaic politics shares elements with drama and other creative arts.... Its creativity derives from the fact that the effective politician has the skill and knowledge, the techne and sophia, to use traditional forms and inherited material to develop new patterns of civic order to give expression to evolving civic feeling, and beliefs.\textsuperscript{162}

Rather than trying to trick or manipulate the populace, the new monument may have reflected the anti-Peisistratid views of the community. This would not be surprising given Herodotus’s account of the behavior of Hippias after his brother's death and, indeed, the skolia and vase-paintings which celebrated Harmodius and Aristogeiton

\textsuperscript{160} Castriota 1998, 201.

\textsuperscript{161} Boedeker 1998, 187-88.

\textsuperscript{162} Connor 1987, 50.
would suggest that the Athenian populace embraced the statues and the Tyrannicides legend much as they did the Phye procession.¹⁶³

And yet, as Connor concedes, this does not mean that politicians were not trying to use *mimesis* to their own advantage.¹⁶⁴ Just as the Phye procession benefited Peisistratus and Megacles, certainly Antenor’s statues served the political needs of the Alcmeonidai.¹⁶⁵ The statues in the agora, along with a corresponding stele atop the Acropolis engraved with the names of the Peisistratids who were exiled from Athens for their *adikia*, can be seen as creative attempt to memorialize the crimes of the tyranny and to keep the Peisistratidai out of Athens.¹⁶⁶ After all, Herodotus (5.91-2) tells us that as early as 506, the Spartans were planning to restore Hippias to power and, shortly after, the

¹⁶³ Neer (2002, 178-81) suggests that popularity of the depictions of the Tyrannicides statues on pottery reflects a debate between both “middling” and “elite” interpretations of the tradition which was being played out in vase-painting.

¹⁶⁴ Connor 1987, 50: “This is not to deny that individual politicians, including some very effective ones, sought their own personal advantage. Surely many of them did. But it would appear that this goal was most likely to be achieved not solely by their careful calculation of personal or family self interest, but by merging their sense of individual advancement into the community's evolving sense of its needs and aspiration.”

¹⁶⁵ In a classic article, D.M. Lewis (1963) attempted to demonstrate the self-serving goals behind the reforms of Cleisthenes. For example, Lewis (1963, 26) claimed by naming demes after powerful rival families such as the Boutadai (who would eventually change their name to the Eteoboutadai or the Real Boutadai), and by organizing the trittyes in a manner which disconnected families from important religious centers, Cleisthenes sought to weaken the power of influential families. Although Lewis eventually takes this menacing characterization a little too far, the article presents some insight into Cleisthenes’s possible motives. While it cannot be discounted that Cleisthenes was attempting to solve tangible political problems with his reforms, it would seem that he designed and proposed them partly to assert his family’s dominance. This interpretation would be supported by Herodotus (5.66.2), who claimed that Cleisthenes only enlisted the support of the people (*ton dêmon prosetairizetai*) when it appeared he would come out the loser in the power struggle with Isagoras. Since the reforms of Cleisthenes functioned as a tool, albeit an exceptional one, in these ongoing sixth-century aristocratic power struggles, the Tyrannicides statues could be seen in the same terms. One of Cleisthenes’s main goals was to restore the Alcmeonid clan to a prominent position among the elite Athenian families. It is possible that the statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton were also erected primarily to serve this end.

¹⁶⁶ Thucydides 6.55.1-2.
exiled Peisistratid was agitating the Persians to do the same (5.96). Far from a unfounded fear, the prospect of a Peisistratid revival remained a legitimate threat until 479. Not unlike his forebear, Megacles, who altered a religious procession in order to undermine the Boutadai, Cleisthenes similarly adapted an athletic monument in the hopes of weakening another powerful family.

Due to the tendency among scholars to attribute much of Athenian cultural production to the influence of “democracy,” scholarship on the subject of the statues of the Tyrannicides commonly situates them in the shadow of the giant that is fifth-century Athens. And yet by taking discussions of the statues out of the political context of the fifth century and into that of the sixth century, we are better able to understand the invention of the political portrait monument.

Conclusion

While we cannot discount a connection between the new type of statue and the Cleisthenic reforms, the time has come to reassess how these two incredibly influential hallmarks of Western society are intertwined.

The absence of free-standing portrait statues in both fifth-century Athens and other egalitarian poleis had led us to the conclusion that the erection of the Tyrannicides statues was not a result of a new concept of the political individual brought about by democracy. Rather it seems that Antenor’s Tyrannicides were adapted from athletic statuary. While

167 Raaflaub 2003, 62.
the choice of an athletic model may have been appropriate for many reasons, the decision
to draw upon an established form of tribute seems to have been in line with Athenian
sixth-century political practices in general and the methods employed by the supporters
of the Cleisthenic reforms specifically. In the end, it would appear that this new form of
sculpture was not created *ex nihilo*, but rather, like most innovations of the sixth century,
followed the patterns of *mimesis* and creative adaptation which pervaded late Archaic
politics.

Although the dedication of a secular monument honoring historical figures
represented a startling change in the subjects depicted in monumental art, besides the
replacement statues of Harmodius and Aristogeiton erected after the Persian sack, this
pattern would not be repeated until the 460’s with the construction and decoration of the
Stoa Poikile. With 50 years of democratic rule and profound egalitarian sentiments
arising after the Persian Wars, can we attribute the painting of two possible historical
scenes within the Stoa to a shifting perception of human agency brought about, in part, by
the institutionalization of popular rule? The next chapter will attempt to answer this
question.
The Stoa Poikile was commissioned, designed, and constructed in Athens sometime in the 460’s,\textsuperscript{168} in part to house large-scale monumental paintings.\textsuperscript{169} Most likely commissioned by the statesman Cimon and originally bearing the name of his brother-in-law, Peisanax,\textsuperscript{170} the Stoa exhibited paintings which, like many Greek monuments before it, publicly displayed scenes of “mythical events.” Alongside these depictions of Troy Taken and an Amazonomachy, however, the Stoa’s designers placed at least one and possibly two paintings of actual recent historical events. Although the issue of what was depicted in the Oinoe scene described by Pausanias (1.15.1) remains a famously vexed and most likely unresolvable question, we can be fairly certain that the large mural containing a representation of the battle of Marathon was part of the Stoa’s original program. Along with the anomalous second Tyrannicides group, this surprising

\textsuperscript{168} Recent excavations of the structure’s foundations has led Camp (2007, 650) to date the construction of the Stoa to the 460’s and closer to 470 BC.

\textsuperscript{169} The idea that the Stoa’s main purpose was displaying the painting cycle mostly stems from the fact that the building apparently had no formal function. Wycherley (1953, 22) sees the building primarily as a \textit{lesche} and states that its southern orientation reflects, in part, its purpose of shielding those lounging within from the north winds. Furthermore, the Stoa might have been oriented to the south in order to light the paintings with sunlight. As Coulton (1976, 24) points out, Greek architects did not use glass and lighting the paintings would have been a major concern for the designers of the Stoa.

\textsuperscript{170} Plutarch \textit{Cimon} 4.5. See below for further discussion on Peisanax and his role in the Stoa’s commission.
inclusion of a historical scene represents the origin of monumental depictions of historical events in Athens and, in all likelihood, mainland Greece.

Like in the last chapter, we are again faced with explaining the introduction of historical scenes into the physical and ideological landscape of fifth-century Athens. While there has been copious amounts of scholarship on the political messages, ethical themes and the composition of the Marathonomachy, very few scholars have attempted to explain what may have been the most striking aspect of the Stoa, namely the depiction of a historical event on a public monument. This chapter will attempt to explain this surprising break with tradition in multiple parts.

After reviewing written testimonia about the Stoa and recent archaeological evidence from the on-going investigation by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, this chapter will look at the idea that the historical paintings were inspired by a new democratic interest in present day events and some of the problems inherent in this thesis. Following this discussion of democratic and aristocratic temporalities, the study will turn to the subject of large-scale narrative paintings and historical representations in monumental art. This chapter will conclude by suggesting that both the Stoa’s

171 Fortunately, unlike the virtually unrecoverable first statues of the Tyrannicides, we are aided in reconstructing the appearance of both the Stoa and the paintings within by archaeological evidence as well as a description of the painting cycle by Pausanias. Furthermore, despite the many mysteries of the Pentecontaetia, we know a bit more about the events, politics, monuments and other example of cultural production during the Cimonian era than in the shadowy last decade of the sixth century. Despite these manifest advantages, however, explaining the appearance of a historical event in this monument is in some ways more difficult. Aside from scraps of literary evidence which describe these murals, the paintings themselves are lost to us as well as any archaeological evidence indicating what they may have looked like. Furthermore, most of the literary evidence concerning the Stoa’s paintings privileges its subsequent history and legacy in lieu of their origins, which is the primary focus of this particular study.

172 For the most extensive look on ethical themes in Athenian monuments, see Castriota 1992.
monumental paintings and depictions of present-day events were adapted from Eastern Greek and possibly Persian models. Although this association has yet to be proposed in scholarship, we shall see that the novel nature of the Stoa can only be explained by its Eastern precedents. In this, the Stoa fits with the larger Cimonian building program which sought to negotiate, as well as justify, the nascent role of Athens as imperial hegemon by adapting Persian symbols.

The Stoa Poikile: Literary and Archaeological Evidence

Although it is often ignored today in favor of surviving monuments such as the Parthenon and its sculptural decoration, in antiquity the Painted Stoa was arguably the most famous monument in Athens. Much of its fame no doubt derived from its later uses, such as housing the seized Spartans booty after Sphacteria or as the seat of Zeno’s famous school, but we cannot discount the role that the original design of the monument played in its prominence in Athens. The mere fact that its paintings came to define the Painted Stoa through its the popular name certainly speaks to their impact on the popular consciousness. Although much could be (and, indeed, has been) written about the later history of the building, this section will focus on the Stoa’s original commission and design in order to explain the first known representation of a historical battle in Greek monumental art.

\[173\]

\[\text{Wycherley (1953, 20) states that the survival of sculpture has prioritized the art of classical Acropolis in the minds of modern scholars but the Stoa’s paintings were much more accessible to ancient visitors and more than fifty references to the building in ancient literature testifies to its fame.}\]
In the early 1980’s, excavations undertaken by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens uncovered what seem to be the remains of the Stoa Poikile just north of the modern Adrianou Street. In antiquity, the Stoa bounded the Agora on its northern edge and was positioned on the Panathenaic way to the northeast of the road, opposite the Stoa Basileios which flanked the road to the southwest. The building ran roughly east to west, roughly following the line of the Eridanos River and was 42.37 m long. The Stoa was oriented to the Agora, with its Doric external colonnade facing south, while its eastern, western, and northern walls, where presumably the paintings were displayed, were closed. Excavations also revealed that an internal east-west Ionic colonnade divided the building’s interior which was 11.51 m deep. The employment of these Ionic columns make the Stoa the first known structure in Athens to combine two different orders.

There are many reasons why the designers of the Painted Stoa may have chosen this particular architectural form for their monument. The design of the stoa lends itself to be both an ideal boundary marker and, with its open side, an inviting public building. But it is possible that the form of the building was dictated by the paintings it

---

174 Shear 1984.
175 Shear 1984, 7 n. 5.
176 Shear 1984, 12.
177 Shear 1984, 12. The combination of these two orders might be symbolic, a point to which we will return later.
178 Coulton 1976, 22.
179 Coulton 1976, 24.
displayed. As Coulton points out, lighting was an extremely difficult problem for Greek architects who, unlike the Romans, did not employ window glass.\textsuperscript{180} Along with its orientation to the South, where its interior would receive the most amount of direct sunlight, the fact that the structure took the form of a stoa might indicate that its primary purpose was displaying the painting cycle.\textsuperscript{181}

Despite the central role of the paintings in the design of the Stoa, it would appear that the murals themselves were not part of the structure but instead were executed on large wooden panels which were attached to the back walls of the building. Synesius (\textit{Ep.} 136), who most likely visited Athens around 395 AD, reports that the proconsul had taken away the panels, on which Polynotus had painted his works.\textsuperscript{182} The use of wooden plaques is somewhat logical as it would have allowed the artists more freedom to execute their works without having to paint the murals directly on the wall. Furthermore, the maneuverability of the murals might give us some insight into the possible addition and rearrangement of the paintings in later periods, a point which we will return to in our discussion of the controversial Oinoe mural.

Unfortunately, the ephemeral nature of the panels make it highly unlikely that we will be able to reconstruct the paintings through archaeological evidence. Although the

\textsuperscript{180} Coulton 1976, 24.

\textsuperscript{181} Kebric (1983, 4) states that, similarly, illuminating the interior painted cycle of the Cnidian Lesche was one of the primary concerns of the architects of the “clubhouse” and this might account for the structure’s placement within Delphi.

\textsuperscript{182} In this letter to his brother, Synesius (\textit{Ep.} 136) famously lamented the decay of Athens following the Herulian destruction, claiming there was nothing to admire in the city besides the Academy, the Lyceum and the Painted Stoa, despite losing its paintings. It is unclear what the physical condition of the Stoa was at this time.
paintings which account for the Stoa’s name are forever lost to us, the discovery of the Stoa’s remains does help us to better understand our most complete description of the paintings inside the structure. During his visit to Athens in the first century AD, Pausanias toured the Stoa and relayed indispensable details about the paintings displayed within the structure.183

With its location now secure, we can be fairly confident that Pausanias entered the Stoa on the western side and describes the different scenes as they were arranged at the time of his visit in order from west to east.184 Pausanias (1.15.1-3) describes four different scenes displayed in the Stoa, two derived from mythological subjects and, interestingly, two which apparently depicted some version of actual historical events.

Arriving at the Stoa, Pausanias (1.15.1) alleges that the first (prôta) scene in the cycle is the beginning of a battle between Athenians and Spartans in Argive Oinoe. The combatants, he claims (1.15.1), were not depicted in the midst of armed struggle but rather only at the point where the two sides were initially coming to blows. As both the mural and the battle it supposedly represented are unattested in any other source from antiquity, this one sentence serves as our only clue to the subject, date, and composition of the painting.

Consequently, the credibility of Pausanias’s testimony has been debated at length. Aside from the absence of any literary reference to this clash with the Spartans, the

183 Wycherley (1953, 25) describes Pausanias’s account as “peculiar” and, therefore, open to multiple interpretations.

184 Before his account of the Stoa, Pausanias’s describes the Hephisteion which we now know is to the northwest of the Stoa.
supposed battle scene also presents some other problems. As we will review below, a preponderance of evidence suggests that Cimon, son of Miltiades, was behind the commission of the Stoa. Given the famously philo-Lacedaimonian leanings of Cimon, who even named his child Lacedaimonius, the nakedly anti-Spartan nature of the painting has troubled some.185

Despite these problems, in the words of Andrewes, the “painting demands a battle and one must do one’s best to provide one.”186 As a result, multiple conflicts have been proposed as the subject for the mural in order reconcile Pausanias’s description with the anti-Lacedaimonian character of the scene, the oddity of depicting Athenians fighting other Greeks in monumental art of this period, and the absence of testimony about this battle with the Spartans.

Hölscher, accepting Pausanias’s account wholesale, suggests that the Oinoe painting shows an actual conflict between Sparta and Athens dating from the period of the Athenian alliance with Argos from 462 to 451, when Thucydides (1.112.1) says that the Spartans and Athenians established a truce.187 This would mean that the Oinoe scene was not part of the original program but rather was added sometime in the 450’s during

185 Plutarch Cimon 16.1. Thucydides (1.45.2) tells us that the same Lacedaimonius was a general at Corcyra in 433/2.

186 Andrewes 1975, 11.

187 Hölscher 1973, 68: “Man muß also der Überlieferung glauben.”
Cimon’s exile.\textsuperscript{188} In this scenario, the allies of the embattled Philaid added the scene in order to emphasize his Athenian allegiance and to downplay his undying pro-Spartan reputation.\textsuperscript{189}

Others have sought to criticize and modify Pausanias’s account in order to reconcile some of the more troubling aspects of the painting. Lillian Jeffery, for example, claims that it would have been unusual to monumentalize a historical battle between Greek factions at this time,\textsuperscript{190} and suggests that the inspiration for the Oinoe mural was drawn not from contemporary events but, like the scenes of Troy Taken and the Amazonomachy, displayed a “mythical” event.\textsuperscript{191} Before the battle of Platea, Herodotus’s (9.27.3) recounts that the Athenians cited recovering and burying the bodies of the Seven from Thebes as part of their ancestral deeds which entitled them to defend the left flank over the Tegeans. Jeffery suggests it was this mythical event which was depicted in the Oinoe scene and the Stoa’s painting cycle reflected this catalog of Athenian achievements.\textsuperscript{192}

\textsuperscript{188} This idea, however, is less than satisfying for multiple reasons. For one, it requires us to accept the existence of the Spartan/Athenian clash in Argive Oinoe for which there is no other evidence. While this alone should not discourage us from accepting this theory, the supposed later addition of a painting raises some questions about how the new scene was added. If the Stoa was created to display the Sack of Troy, Amazonomachy and Marathon painting, adding a fourth scene would require some adjustment to the paintings. As they were executed on wooden boards, it is certainly possible that they were rearranged to accommodate the new Oinoe scene but augmenting the entire cycle seems like a strange decision.

\textsuperscript{189} Plutarch (\textit{Cimon} 17.4-7) states that Cimon’s offer to help battle the Spartans at Tanagra was rejected for fear that he would confuse the Athenian army in order to aid the enemy. Perhaps the dedication of the Oinoe scene served to address these fears.

\textsuperscript{190} Hölscher (1973, 68-9) sees no problem either with instantly monumentalizing such a recent event as long as it did not depict portraits of individuals or single out one person for praise.

\textsuperscript{191} Jeffery 1965.

\textsuperscript{192} Jeffery 1965, 51-2.
In 1985, David Francis and Michael Vickers proposed a radical reevaluation of the “Oinoe Problem.” In short, they claim that Pausanias was correct in reading the label “Oinoe” on the mural but that he misjudged not only which Oinoe it was referring but also the action in the painting. Instead of meeting the Spartans in armed conflict in Argive territory, they claim that the Athenian forces were shown meeting their Platean allies in a small Attic village of Oinoe, outside of Marathon. Far from showing a separate conflict, they propose that the Oinoe scene worked in conjunction with the Marathon painting.

Recently, Jeremy Taylor has also argued the Oinoe scene was a later addition but places the composition and erection of the painting to the period of the Peloponnesian War. Taylor would agree that the painting did in fact show a battle between the Athenians and Spartans with the label “Oinoe,” but claims that the scene represents a skirmish between the two sides at a town with the same name on the Attic-Boeotian

---


194 The idea that Pausanias could not tell the difference between allies meeting each other and rival armies about to clash is perhaps the weakest part of the Francis and Vickers thesis. The confusion, however, might have been caused by the poor condition of the 500 year old paintings though it is unclear why the figures which were damaged while the supposed “Oinoe” label remained legible. In support of their thesis, they (1985, 106) cite Pausanias’s (5.18.6-7) description of the Chest of Cypselus where he admits he cannot tell if the two sides are attacking or greeting one another.

195 This theory has received some support, most notably from Castriota (1992, 78-9). Although he generally accepts this basic premise, Boardman (2005) has recently amended the Francis and Vickers thesis. His argument stems from two main ideas. First, due to his reading of Pausanias, he sees the Marathon painting as three distinct scenes (prominently displaying Miltiades, Callimachus, and Cynegeiros, respectively), based on the awkward transitions between the three scenes and the lack of cohesion. Then, citing Pausanias’s remark on the ill condition of the contemporary paintings of the Propylaia’s Pinakotheke, Boardman (2005, 67) plausibly suggests that the Stoa’s pictures were in poor shape after 600 years. Therefore he suggests that the Marathon scene originally consisted of four parts and that the Oinoe pre-battle scene advocated by Francis and Vickers was originally hung with the other three but was moved during the process of restoration.

196 Taylor 1998, 228.
border in 431 mentioned by Thucydides (2.18.1–19.1). Taylor sees this defeat of the Spartans as a major milestone in the defense of Attica and claims that the erection of the Oinoe scene and the Lacedaemonian shields from Sphacteria in the Stoa comprise a new anti-Spartan character of the building which arose during the Peloponnesian conflict.

Despite all these creative solutions, the issue of what was depicted in the Oinoe scene, when it was erected in the Stoa, and what resemblance it bore, if any, to Pausanias’s description, most likely remain unresolvable questions. In truth, all of these proposed solutions to the “Oinoe Problem” have some merit, but unfortunately the evidence is so slight that any solution can be nothing more than speculation.\(^{197}\) Whether the Oinoe mural was supposed to show a scene drawn from the mythical past or contemporary events, as we will see below, we can be fairly certain that from the beginning, the Stoa’s painted cycles juxtaposed scenes of mythical and recent events.\(^{198}\)

Returning to Pausanias’s account of the Stoa, after his tantalizingly brief insight into the odd Oinoe scene, he (1.15.2) abruptly changes subject and describes a painting of the Athenians and Theseus battling Amazons located on the middle of the walls (\textit{en de tôi mesōi tôn toichôn}). Comparing this prepositional phrase to other descriptions in Pausanias, Stansbury-O’Donnell argues that Pausanias is signaling a change in direction

\(^{197}\) Until more textual or archaeological evidence comes to light, trying to solve the Oinoe problem will remain purely an intellectual exercise with little chance of the scholarly community coming to any sort of consensus.

\(^{198}\) Boedeker (1998, 189): “Even if the Oinoe painting was not what Pausanias says it was, however, the Marathon painting alone indicates that both ‘ancient’ and fairly recent battles were depicted on the walls of the portico.”
which indicates that the Oinoe scene was not on the same wall as the Amazonomachy. The phrasing here, however, is vague and open to differing interpretations. In any case, we can be confident that when Pausanias visited the Stoa, the Oinoe scene, whatever it may have represented, was the first to greet visitors entering from the West, either on the western or northern (back) wall, and that the Amaonomachy was almost certainly on the back wall. Again, little is known of the Amazon battle scene but in our oldest extant reference to any of the paintings, Aristophanes (*Lysistrata* 688), has the chorus cite the example of Mikon’s Amazonomachy as proof that women are horse-like creatures. Aside from telling us that the depiction of the female warriors in some way resembled horses, this early piece of evidence firmly attributes this part of the Stoa to the artist Mikon.

Following the Amazonomachy, Pausanias (1.15.2) alleges there was a scene of the Greek kings assembled after the fall of Troy to address the crimes of Lesser Ajax. In this episode, he (1.15.2) mentions that Ajax and his victim Cassandra are depicted along with other female captives, but reveals nothing more. Fortunately, Plutarch, in his life of Cimon (4.5-6), gives a few more details about the composition and commission of the scene of Troy Taken. The Illupersis, he states (*Cimon* 4.5-6), was painted by Polygnotus of Thasos who did not receive payment for his work but rather was granted Athenian citizenship in exchange for his labor. The painter, Plutarch (*Cimon* 4.5) alleges, was said to have had an illicit affair with Cimon’s sister Elpinice and modeled his depiction of

---


200 It is, however, unclear what exactly the chorus means when it states that Mikon’s Amazons are horse-like.
Laodice in the Troy Taken scene after her. This, coupled with other evidence, would indicate a close personal relationship between Polygnotus and Cimon, a point to which we will return later.

Lastly, Pausanias (1.15.3) says that at the end of the painting (tēs graphēs), the Stoa displayed a scene from the battle of Marathon. Of the four scenes he describes, Pausanias spends the most time recounting the particulars of the Marathon scene and, thanks to several other literary references, we know significantly more about the make-up of this painting than the other three.

Pausanias (1.15.3) divides the action of the Marathonian composition into three parts. In the first part of the Marathonomachy, the Plateans and the Attic contingent are fighting the barbaroi. The depiction of Plateans alongside the Athenian forces is confirmed by Demothenes (59.94), who states they were identifiable by their distinctive “Boetian hats” (tas kunas tas Boiōtias). Pausanias (1.15.3) writes that this initial part of the painting does not show either the Greek forces or the Persians at an advantage, indicating a distinct chronological succession throughout the mural. In the middle, however, the Persians forces are hectically fleeing and pushing one another into a marsh.

201 It is notable that Pausanias uses the genitive singular here, perhaps expressing that the murals comprised a singular composition in his mind.

202 Taylor (1998, 225) sees this as not merely a recognition of Platean valor, but an attempt to “flatter” and to play up the Athenians’ connection and alliance to another Boeotian power in light of Theban tensions. The recognition of the Plateans would correspond to a special prayer for both allies during the Panathenaic Festival which we know of from Herodotus (6.111.2). Castriota (1992, 79) would like to see the prayer offering and the specific depiction of their lone Marathonian allies on the Stoa as a boast to not only have spared Attica but the rest of Greece.
Finally, in the last third of the mural, Greeks are slaughtering the invading army as they try to board their Phoenician ships. ²⁰³

Pausanias (1.15.3) names several figures who specifically appear in the Marathon scene though he gives us very little about how they were depicted. Pausanias first mentions that the mythological heroes Theseus, Echetlus, and Heracles all appeared in the Marathonomachy. All three heroes have a strong connection to Marathon, both the location and the battle itself. According to Plutarch, Theseus was said to have miraculously appeared on the battlefield in 490 (Theseus 35.5). Pausanias (1.32.5) states that the Athenians believed Echletlus was present at the battle, dressed in peasant clothes and slaughtering Persians with a plow. Heracles himself had a long-established cult at Marathon ²⁰⁴ and, according to Pausanias (1.32.5), the Marathonians claimed to be the first among Greeks to worship Heracles as a god.²⁰⁵ The metopes of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi, a monument funded by the spoils of Marathon and now securely...

²⁰³ Some have speculated that Pausanias’s in-depth description, with multiple fields of actions and a large array of characters, coupled with the tripartite nature of the Marathon mural would indicate that the Marathonomachy was significantly larger than the other three paintings. In Stansbury-O’Donnell’s (2005, 76-7) new reconstruction, the Marathon painting occupies roughly half of the Stoa’s back (north) wall while the Amazonomachy and Illupersis murals comprise the other half. The argument is mostly speculative and difficult to prove but if true, it would lend even more evidence to the idea that the Marathon painting was central to the Stoa’s program and that the other paintings responded to this painting. Stansbury-O’Donnell’s (2005, 77) further suggests that the large size of the mural might indicate that multiple artists collaborated on the piece, explaining why both Mikon and Panainos are both credited for their work on the Marathonomachy.

²⁰⁴ Kearns 1989, 45.

²⁰⁵ Morgan (1990, 221) suggests that Theseus was included with Heracles in order to elevate him to the level of the hero-god and “present him as a latter-day Heracles.”
dated to after 490 BC, prominently feature both Heracles and Theseus, indicating a close iconographical connection between these heroes and the battle. Athena’s presence is mentioned as well but, like the three heroes, Pausanias (1.15.3) gives no indication to the appearance, location, or role of the goddess in the composition.

Thanks to multiple other sources, however, we are able to discern a bit more about the appearance of the historical figures who Pausanias names in the painting. Pausanias states that historical figures were conspicuous as well, specifically naming both the generals Callimachus and Miltiades. Along with these two, Pliny (35.57) claims that the painting included portraits Cynegeiros and the Persian commanders Datis and Artaphrenes. In *Against Ctesiphon*, Aeschines (186), following his discussion of the controversy surrounding the Eion Herms, tells us that the demos allowed Miltiades to be depicted in front, urging on the soldiers. Aelius Aristides (*On the Four* 174) elaborates on this, claiming that Miltiades was shown exhorting the hoplites with an outstretched hand. Although a scholiast to the passage states that Miltiades was pointing to the Persian forces, Harrison draws on some possible comparanda, such as the Trysa frieze and the Parthenos shield, to argue that Miltiades was probably gesturing to his own troops rather than to the enemy. Harrison further suggests that Miltiades may have been adorned

---

206 The issue of whether the Athenian Treasury at Delphi was built before or after 490 and, consequently, its connection with Marathon, has long been controversial. After years of debate about the date of the Treasury, new evidence strongly implies both a secure date for the monument and its relation to Marathon. On the southern side of the treasury, there is a base whose inscription states that it displayed the spoils of the Persian Wars and recent work by Pierre Amandry (1998, 122) has confirmed this base was indeed part of the original structure.


with a tripled crested helmet, similar to the military leader in the Trysa frieze.\textsuperscript{209} If so, this rare feature in Greek art, most famously displayed on the Athens Parthenos statue, would have further distinguished Miltiades from the other figures.

At no point in his discussion of the Stoa does Pausanias attribute the paintings to any specific artist but he does mention at another point (5.11.6) that Panainos, brother of Phidias, painted the battle of Marathon scene in the Stoa at Athens. Pliny (\textit{NH} 35.37) also confirms Panainos as the Marathon painter but some evidence, notably Arrian (\textit{Anabasis} 7.13.10), suggests that Mikon actually composed the scene.\textsuperscript{210}

As we have just seen, not only did the mural show a historical event, the painting depicted well-known and identifiable historical figures from the community.\textsuperscript{211} Again, we are faced with the same essential problem as last chapter. Although the use of painting fits with other aspects of the Cimonian monumental program, the depiction of a well-remembered historical event in monumental art represents a break with the norms and customs of both Athens and mainland Greece in general. This next section will attempt to explain the peculiarity of the Marathon (and possibly Oinoe) paintings by looking at a variety of possible solutions which scholars have previously employed in order to explain the origins of this “historical monument.”

\textsuperscript{209} Harrison 1976, 357.

\textsuperscript{210} Jeffery (1965, 43-4 n. 14) suggests that it was a collaborative work between the two or that Panainos began the work and Mikon completed it when Cimon’s exile forced him to abandon the project.

\textsuperscript{211} Stansbury-O’Donnell (2005, 78) claims that the battle of Marathon painting should be seen as “mythohistorical” due to generation-long distance between the battle and the painting.
Overview of Scholarship

Although, as we have seen above, the depiction of a historical battle on a public monument was a new practice in Athens, some scholars have argued that this should not be problematized. Going back as far as Bruno Snell, there has been an opinion that the Greeks saw no real difference between the recent, well-remembered past and events that we now refer to as “mythological.” The line of reasoning partly stems from the idea that even Thucydides, who prided himself on the rational and accurate nature of his narrative (1.21-2), accepted the events of the Trojan War as actual historical events. As events such as the Illupersis and the battle of Marathon were both part of “real” history, the Greeks could simply chose either one as subjects for cultural production. According to this line of thought, long-established stories carried more ideological resonance so when faced with the choice of representing traditional myths or contemporary events, the Athenians often chose to depict more respected and time-honored events.

Could it be that representing recent events, while seemingly an issue for us, was not really a problem for the Athenians? Edith Hall, criticizing this approach, presents the logical counterargument:

---

212 Snell 1928, 66.

213 Hall 1989, 64.

214 Certainly the first known historical tragedy was met with some controversy, but some scholars have sought to explain this cool reception with the argument presented above. Garvie (2009, x) for one, asserts that there was no apprehension about basing a play on contemporary events in the early days of tragedy. Insisting that Phrynicus’s crime had nothing to do with his choice of contemporary subject but picking a subject that was literally “too close to home” in two respects. One, of course, was that the play apparently reminded the Athenians, awaiting eminent Persian retribution, of their “oikeia kaka,” in Herodotus’s (6.21.2) words. He also suggests that the setting, a known Greek polis rather than a far away Eastern palace, riled the Athenians.
Greek visual arts, like the epics from which most tragic plots were to be drawn, had previously confined themselves almost exclusively to the deeds of gods and legendary heroes, which is proof in itself that Greeks could distinguish myth from recent history: a yardstick had existed which told them that statues and vases and epic poems were unsuitable vehicles for the celebration of yesterday’s local triumphs.215

Clearly the change in subject matter for art and tragedy, even if it was limited to a few examples, represented an exception to what the Athenians felt was an appropriate way to memorialize contemporary events. The depiction of the Marathonian battle and possibly the Oinoe scene represents more than a mere departure from previous Athenian monumental practices but an exception to an ideal of what sorts of scenes were deemed acceptable for memorialization. It is this change, both on the part of those who commissioned the piece and the demos who approved the program and served as its audience, which must be explained.

Up to this point, the most popular explanation for the Stoa’s historical scenes has looked to a larger ideological shift in how Athenians perceived time, the impact of present day events and the ability of human beings to effect the outcome of history. According to this theory, famously advanced by Meier,216 the fifth century brought about an entirely new democratic temporality, variously referred to as “rational time,” “real time” or “linear time.” Central to this new view of history was the development of the

215 Hall 1989, 66. Hall rightly criticizes the notion that the Greeks saw no real difference between myth and history. As she (1989, 65-6) notes, one could believe in Agamemnon but that does not mean a veteran of Marathon could not see any difference between Trojan War stories and memories of a battle that he participated in.

belief in the ability of human beings to change the outcome of the future. According to Meier, this bold new concept of human agency came about in part as a result of new political institutions of the Classical age. No longer “subject to the arbitrary rule of the nobles,” the democratic system saw that most of what happened was now decided by “identifiable agents.” Witnessing public deliberations and the increasing involvement of the community in making decisions with tangible results led to the development of “democratic time.”

According to this theory, a “democratic” or “rational” temporality, with an emphasis on present-day events and the mutability of the future, came to replace “aristocratic” temporality, with its focus on the mythical past, which had dominated Greek thought, literature, and art during the Archaic era. On the surface, it would appear that this scenario has much to offer. Although the vast majority of Athenian cultural production draws from the mythical “ancient past” for its subject matter, a small but notable number of examples from the fifth century take their subjects from contemporary events. The “historical tragedies” of Phrynicus and Aeschylus, the novel genre of the funeral oration, and the development of historical genre reflect a new interest

---

217 Csapo and Miller 1998, 100; “Time became historical. This meant that time could be ordered by logic, reason, and causality, all of which brought it within the compass of human control.”


219 Csapo and Miller 1998.
in contemporary subjects. In short, it is argued, the “confidence” brought about by new political mechanisms served to create a new interest in recent events which, in turn, is reflected in the Stoa’s contemporary subject matter.

While it has long been held that the Classical era saw a noticeable shift in Greek conceptions of time, the nature of this transition has been the subject of much scholarly debate. The origins of “temporal studies” presented the change in perceptions of time and human agency as an evolutionary model. According to this model, referred to as Geistesgeschichte, the Greeks of the Classical era developed a new temporal awareness in line with our modern conception of time. This theory sees the Greeks, and ancients in general, as gradually moving away from a “cyclical” conception of time towards linear, Judeo-Christian notions of time and progress.

The French School of understanding Greek notions of temporal awareness represents a reaction against the Geistesgeschichte or evolutionary model of conceptions of time. While Geistesgeschichte sees the Greek understanding of time as progressing from a primitive, timeless sense of the past to a “modern” conception of time, the French structuralist approach organizes perceptions of time into distinct periods divided by points of dramatic rupture. In this line of reasoning, different notions of time and

---

220 Although this premise has widely been accepted, some have challenged the impact of democracy on such fields as history. For example, Nicholas Purcell (2003, 19-20) argues against the idea of attributing the study of history to democracy, pointing out that the early historians were never too keen on the values of democracy and that the aristocracy had much to gain from an emphasis on tradition and great deeds of the past.

221 Csapo and Miller 1998, 90.

222 Csapo and Miller (1998, 89) state that this, primarily, reflects the influence of structuralist historians such as Foucault.
historical thinking, as they are dictated by social systems, cannot coexist in the same society. Therefore, any piece of cultural production created after the “rupture” of the Cleisthenic reforms must have reflected a democratic temporality.\textsuperscript{223}

In a meticulous article on Greek perceptions of time, Eric Csapo and Margaret Miller reject both these models and convincingly demonstrate that there was not an abrupt shift between these aristocratic and democratic temporalities.\textsuperscript{224} Arguing against the prevailing French structuralist approach which divides temporal perceptions into disjointed epochs separated by points of dramatic rupture, Csapo and Miller show that the Greeks simultaneously experienced two different conceptions of time, pointing out that both some traces of “rational” time can be seen before the fifth century and aspects of “aristocratic” temporality can be seen throughout the fifth century. Rather than an immediate shift in 508/7, they propose a dialogic process with each temporality developing and evolving in response to each other.\textsuperscript{225}

Amongst this conflict of temporalities, Csapo and Miller allege that the demos explicitly asserted their interest in the recent past, in part, through monuments.\textsuperscript{226} Csapo and Miller see the emphasis on the events of the Persian Wars in almost all aspects of cultural production in general and the Stoa Poikile’s program specifically, as an attempt on the part of the demos to create a “new heroic age” in reaction to what they see as

\begin{footnotesize}
223 This view was expressed most famously by Lévêque and Vidal-Naquet (1964) who describe the reforms of Cleisthenes as a rupture in how Athenians perceived both time and space.

224 Csapo and Miller 1998, 89-90.

225 Csapo and Miller 1998, 89.

\end{footnotesize}
“aristocratic obsession with a distant past.”227 Along with the Stoa’s emphasis on Marathon’s importance in defending democratic freedom from monarchic barbaroi, they see Herodotus’s (6.102; 6.107) assertion that Hippias was waiting in the wings during Marathon to restore the Peisistratid tyranny and the eventual promotion of Harmodius and Aristogeiton as part of a larger Athenian popular legend which equated the victory in the Persian Wars to the defense of Athenian democracy. In this view, the Stoa’s historical scenes not only reflected a new interest in the present but was part of a concerted effort on the part of the demos both to defend the democratic constitution and to react against an aristocratic tradition which privileged the “mythical past.”228

And yet, it is this very premise of two conflicting temporalities, convincingly demonstrated by Csapo and Miller, which undermines this argument. As stated above, Csapo and Miller have shown that aspects of aristocratic temporality can be seen in cultural production even under the democratic constitution. While it is tempting for us to attribute all aspects of culture produced under the isonomic constitution to a new democratic conception of time, we should look carefully at both the patronage of the Stoa and its use of the “recent” past before declaring that its historical scenes either stemmed from or served to promote a “democratic temporality.”

As we will see, the evidence indicates that the Stoa Poikile was both commissioned by an aristocratic circle and, perhaps more dammingly, did not present a

228 Csapo and Miller 1998, 119-121.
new democratic interest in recent events and the mutability of the future. The Stoa’s paintings, with its juxtaposition of contemporary and mythical events, represent a traditional aristocratic strategy of showing present-day achievements as analogous to the great deeds of the past. While the presentation of this temporality in monumental form does indeed represent a new strategy for advancing this traditional view, in the end, it is only the exhibition in pictorial form which is novel.

The little of what we know about the Stoa’s commission does not, in fact, reflect the patronage of the demos but rather that the building was commissioned by the consummate Athenian aristocrat Cimon or, at any rate, his political circle. Despite the many debates surrounding the Stoa, one thing about the commission of the building seems relatively clear. Both the literary and circumstantial evidence strongly indicates that Cimon the Philaid was behind or at least involved with the commission of the Stoa, and that the structure was part of a larger Cimonian building program. Furthermore, every piece of evidence which would indicate Cimon’s hand in the project, specifically the private naming of the structure, the portrait of Miltiades, and the Eastern influences of...

---

229 In truth, not much is known about the process by which public buildings were commissioned during this era but it is evident that some public buildings, such as the Thesion, were primarily financed by Cimon rather than the demos. Boersma (1970, 52) doubts that it was a Cimonian initiative to build or remodel the Thesion upon his return from Skyros with the bones of Theseus in 476/5. He claims that because of the sheer importance of the building, the assembly must have taken the active role in its commission. This proposal, however, is unsatisfying. Aside from the fact that large political bodies do not and cannot design buildings, attributing a building project to the έκκλεσία fundamentally misunderstands how the passive political body functioned. This is not to say that the purposed plan of the building and the painting cycle were not ultimately approved by the assembly. On the contrary, given what we know about the process by which the Eion Herm and Miltiades’s name on the Stoa was decided, this is a distinct probability. But placing the citizen body on the forefront of the construction project in lieu of the man who initiated the recovery of Theseus’s relics seems wholly unnecessary.

the Stoa’s design, reflect traditional aristocratic strategies for advancing individual and familial claims to excellence within the structure of the polis system.\textsuperscript{231}

Undoubtedly the most convincing argument in favor of Cimonian involvement comes from the portico’s original and formal title. Before the synecdochic title was adopted in the fourth century, several sources testify that the building was called the Peisianaktion, after Cimon brother-in-law, Peisianax.\textsuperscript{232} Aside from a simplistic familial connection between Peisianax and Cimon, the fact that the building originally bore the name of a private citizen might further indicate its construction during the years of Cimon’s political domination. As first observed by Russell Meiggs, the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1 effectively changed the policy of naming a public building after a private donor.\textsuperscript{233} In the early years of the democracy, building projects, such as the Stoa Basileios and the Old Bouleuterion, seem to have had no firm connection to any one citizen or family.\textsuperscript{234} This would seem to continue up to 480 when a new trend arose for the “Platean Oath Era.” As Meiggs points out, although there was little monumental construction in the years between the Persian sack and the reforms of 461/2, almost all

\textsuperscript{231} As Raaflaub (2007, 119) reminds us, “the function of the assembly was more passive than active.” The body could not “design” a building but rather only had the power to approve of a plan presented to them.

\textsuperscript{232} Diogenes Laertius 7.1.5; Plutarch \textit{Cimon} 4.5; Schol. Demothenes 20.112; Isidore \textit{Origines} 8.6.8.

\textsuperscript{233} Meiggs 1963, 44; Jeffery 1965, 41.

\textsuperscript{234} As discussed above, according to Anderson (2006), this sort of de-emphasis on individuals such as Cleisthenes represents the new government’s attempt to promote a mythical democratic tradition in order to downplay the radical changes in the constitution.
building projects are associated with private individuals.\textsuperscript{235} This would seem to indicate that after the radical reforms, this sort of private patronage seemed undemocratic. According to Plutarch (\textit{Pericles}, 14.1), when the people of Athens complained to Pericles about the price of the Acropolis building project, he shrewdly offered to put only his name on the building. The Athenians, who were now predisposed to find such personal associations with public buildings distasteful, swiftly rejected this proposal and willingly supported public funding. Likewise, an inscription most likely dating to the 430’s (\textit{IG} I\textsuperscript{2} 54) indicates that the assembly again rejected Pericles’s funding of a public building in favor using tribute from the allies.\textsuperscript{236}

Although it had long been suspected that the Stoa was constructed during the height of Cimon’s power, archaeological evidence has recently been able to place this attribution on firmer footing. The discovery of the Stoa in the early 1980’s allowed the excavators to securely date the building to between 470 and 460.\textsuperscript{237} Initial excavations of the red-earth fill used for the Stoa’s foundations revealed many vessels from the 460’s, including diagnostic pieces from 17 skyphoi with a firm chronology.\textsuperscript{238} Recently, Camp has endorsed Shear’s dating of the building to somewhere in the 460’s but has slightly

\textsuperscript{235} Along with the Peisianakteion, Meiggs (1963, 44) cites Cimon’s work on the Academy, his plane tree-landscaping in the Agora, the south wall of the Acropolis and Themistocles’s patronage of the temple of Artemis of Good Council.

\textsuperscript{236} Meiggs (1963, 44) rejects the idea that Plutarch merely concocted the story after seeing such the inscription and states that, rather, these two separate incidents reflect a sincere democratic distrust of private monuments.

\textsuperscript{237} Shear 1984, 13-4.

\textsuperscript{238} Shear 1984, 13-4.
revised the date, placing it closer to 470. In either case, we should feel comfortable in dating the commission and construction to the time before Cimon’s exile in 461.

Moreover, the composition of the Marathon painting would also seem to indicate Cimon’s hand in its design. As mentioned above, Miltiades was not only depicted in the Marathon painting but also seems to have had a central role in the battle. After referring to the prominence of Miltiades in the Marathonomachy, Aeschines (Against Ctesiphon 186) states that a popular vote prevented the disgraced general from being identified by name but instead only permitted him to be depicted in front of his men. The conspicuous nature of Miltiades’s portrait in the mural is further supported by other ancient authors, but perhaps more revealing is the controversy this depiction apparently aroused. The fact that this aspect of the Stoa’s adornment apparently was put before the assembly for approval and that it was so contentious that the ekklesia ultimately rejected this proposal

---

239 Camp (2007, 650) cites pottery found under and against the western foundations for this earlier dating.

240 This controversy might also be the key to understanding why if Cimon was, in fact, behind the commission of the Stoa, his name was not attached to the building. Some, such as Castriota (1992, 76) have speculated that even though Cimon most likely played a part in the planning of the building, the Stoa carried Peisianax’s name because it was either proposed or constructed after Cimon’s ostracism in 461. With Cimon now exiled, the idea goes, his brother-in-law took up the project either by providing funds or sponsoring the project’s legislation. With Camp (2007, 650) moving the date of the Stoa’s construction closer to 470 and into the first half of the decade, however, this theory no longer seems tenable. In light of this new archaeological evidence, I would like to propose a new theory. Cimon, of course, had faced similar legislative difficulties in trying to adorn the Eion Hermis with the names of his Strymon generals some years earlier. If the glorification and redemption of his father by prominently displaying and labeling the disgraced general was, from the outset, one of the objectives in displaying the Marathonian victory, it is probable that Cimon expected this sort of resistance from the assembly. Both the Eion Hermis controversy and the statue group including his father at Delphi (Pausanias 10.10.1–2) may reflect various attempts by Cimon to subvert the isonomic distrust of honoring individuals in monumental art. Cimon, probably weary of the implications of a son proposing a permanent monument to his disgraced father, might have turned to his brother-in-law. By working with or through Peisianax, he could have sought to work around the demos’s uncomfortableness with individual honors by having someone else propose the design to the assembly.

241 Aeschines Against Ctesiphon 186; Cornelius Nepos Miltiades 6.3; Pliny NH 35.57. See Harrison (1972, 356; 376) for further references.
in lieu of a lesser honor, testifies to the centrality of honoring Cimon’s father in the monument’s construction. This desire to set up a permanent monument to his father closely corresponds to Cimon’s dedication of a statue of Miltiades amongst a group of gods and heroes at Delphi (Pausanias 10.10.1–2). The similarity between the two monuments, respectively created by the brothers Panainos and Phidias and both displaying images of Miltiades next to portraits of mythical heroes in an attempt to redeem the disgraced statesmen, would also circumstantially imply Cimon’s involvement.

The employment of painted cycles seems to have been a hallmark of Cimonian construction. The unique use of monumental painted decoration and one of the artists capable of executing such works were probably imported to Athens by the famous Philaid himself. The Thasian painter Polygnotus, widely acknowledged to be a part of Cimon’s circle, is said to have executed the Illupersis scene and possibly may have even overseen the entire project. Like Cimon’s Thesieon, Polygnotus was employed to participate in painting of a public building which was also funded by a victory of Persians. Moreover, Connor suggests that the alleged portrait of Cimon’s sister Elpinice in the Sack of Troy scene was not just a playful act of a lover or a simple case of an artist using a model.

242 This statue group, its patronage, and date will be taken up below.

243 We will return to the relationship between Cimon and monumental painting later where it will be discussed at length but for now it is important to note this as another piece of evidence attributing the monument’s design to Cimon or his circle.
Instead, he argues, that with the portrait, Polygnotus “paid a complement and acknowledged the connection between his work and the house of Cimon.”

All of these factors would seem to comprise a convincing case for Cimonian commission or at least his involvement in the planning of the monument. Cimon’s conservatism and even his possible distaste for democracy is a well-worn topic in both ancient and secondary sources alike. If Csapo and Miller are correct in their assertion that aristocratic patrons were engaging in a “contest of temporalities” then we might be tempted to dismiss the idea that the use of the historical scenes reflected a democratic understanding of time. To quote Csapo and Miller, “what makes art democratic or aristocratic is the degree to which it implicitly or explicitly supports the interests of one group over another.”

If we look at the Stoa and its program in these terms, it becomes more difficult to ascribe the historical paintings to the influence of democratic ideology. During the 460’s, Cimon was involved in what appears to have been a factional dispute between the political aims of his circle and supporters of radical democracy which eventually culminated in the reforms of Ephialtes and Cimon’s ostracism. Although almost nothing is known of Ephialtes, it is clear that his legislation is directly associated with the

244 Connor (1970, 163) sees the likeness Elpince as analogous to Benozzo Gozzoli’s famous inclusion of portraits of the Medici in the Procession of the Magi. Similarly, Shapiro (1992, 31) says that the artist “doffed his hat” to Cimon with this gesture. Connor (1970, 163) also suggests some Cimonian significance in showing Elpinice as Laodice who had an affair with a son of Theseus.

245 Csapo and Miller 1998, 89.

246 Raaflaub (1998b, 100) points out, the reforms of Ephialtes are intrinsically intertwined with a factional dispute with Cimon and his circle.
According to Plutarch (*Cimon* 15.1-3), the reforms were passed while Cimon led a group of hoplites to assist the Spartans in crushing the helot revolt and when he tried preserve the powers of the aristocratic Areopagus council after he returned, he brought the ire of the demos upon himself. If the Stoa represents the interests of any side in this contest, it would be the aristocratic entity rather than the demos with whom he butted heads on multiple occasions.

While this would superficially indicate that the Stoa supported an aristocratic view of time and human agency, neither Cimon’s involvement nor his aristocratic tendencies necessarily mean that the use of a historical painting was not inspired by a new democratic temporality. Despite Cimon’s aristocratic bent, he was clearly working within the political system to get the monument approved by the demos and, notably, presenting his monument to an Athenian audience which had lived under the democratic constitution for nearly half a century. In the end, however, it is the Stoa’s program itself, rather than simply Cimon’s involvement with the building project, which presents the best argument against attributing the Stoa’s scenes to a new democratic temporality.

Upon closer inspection, it would appear that, despite the unusual appearance of a recent event, the Stoa’s juxtaposition of the recent and mythological past neither presents nor is derived from a rational, democratic conceptualization of history. As Deborah Boedeker has noted, Stoa Poikile, and Athenians monuments in general, do not reflect a

---

247 Raaflaub 1998a, 48.

248 Walker 1995, 60: “As might be expected from such an admirer of Sparta Cimon had no great love for democracy.”
chronological or causal view of historical events. Although Boedeker acknowledges a larger shift in temporality, she sees a clear difference between the interconnected “historical” thinking about the past, exemplified by Herodotus’s attempt to assemble disparate stories to explain the East vs. West conflict, and the Stoa’s presentation of “separate-but-parallel” events. Far from reflecting a novel conception of history or human agency, they represent two opposed conceptualizations of history. To quote her in full:

In its great age of innovation and empire, the Athenian demos had no desire for the kind of interconnected and changing past described by the new historians. The monumental genres that had their roots in predemocratic, Peisistratean times worked well to establish civic identity for the new democracy by drawing on cultural memories, old and newer, passing over the disjuncture—the facts of change—for democracy and empire alike, a highlighting (only) glorious moments—sack of Troy, fall of tyranny, defeat of Amazons or Persians.

Instead, the juxtaposition of the “mythical” and the “historical” represents a traditional aristocratic view of history which celebrated contemporary achievements by placing them alongside great deeds of the mythical past.

This sort of direct comparison of present-day and mythical events mirrors the treatment of recent events in epinician poetry. In the victory odes of Pindar, for example, the deeds of contemporary elites are presented side-by-side with the legendary

---

251 Castriota 1998, 212: “...monuments like the Stoa Poikile, the Nike temple, or the Parthenon exhibited a military subject matter and orientation. They addressed Athenian victories outside the polis, most notably against the Persians, but also against other Greek states such as Thebes and Sparta. Like the epinician poetry exemplified by Pindar or Bacchylides, and above all like contemporary Attic rhetoric, the programs of imagery applied to these buildings engaged in a calculated and adroit strategy of mythic allusion or analogy."
actions of gods and heroes in what many have referred to as a “timeless present.”

According to Grethlein, “the implicit comparison of the victor with a mythical hero allows Pindar to praise his client effectively without the risk of making inappropriate claims for a living man.”

We can see this same sort of aristocratic temporality in the epigram on another Cimonian commission, the Eion Herms. According to Aeschines (Against Ctesiphon 183) and Plutarch (Cimon 7.4-8.1) the epigram explicitly and somewhat audaciously compared the generals who captured Eion to the sacking of Troy by Menestheus. The idea that this monument represented aristocratic values is further supported by Aeschines’s (Against Ctesiphon 183) claim that the victorious Strymon generals asked the democratic assembly for the right to be named on the herms but the ekklesia, distrustful of giving monumental honors to individuals, denied this request.

Aside from the juxtaposition of past and present events, the very choice of prominently displaying both the battle of Marathon and Militades’s role in the victory, further speaks to the aristocratic nature of the program. In many ways, the Stoa served

---

252 Grethlein (2010, 40-1), speaking of Pindar’s Olympian 2, states that “…the free jumps through the present, the historical past, the future and different phrases of the mythical past blur the borderlines between times.” Boedeker 1998, 189: “The juxtaposition of legendary and recent events parallels the patterns well known from epinician odes preformed for athletic champions.” Csapo and Miller (1998, 98) call this part of a “process of self-invention that would reach its culmination in the world of Pindar where gods, heroes, and elites mingled indiscriminately.”

253 Grethlein 2010, 44.

254 Boedeker 1998, 201: “So too, some traditions are preserved that glorify not the polis as a whole but certain elements within it (especially elite families), as long as they do not conflict too strongly with the dominant traditions. Kimon’s brilliant foregrounding of Theseus, his own Vorgänger but also the Father of his Country, provides an example of this.”
as a Philaid dynastic statement. While it would be facile and misleading to imply that Cimon engaged in creating the entire Stoa as merely a vehicle in order to advance himself in the same manner as Archaic elites, clearly the rehabilitation of his father’s public image was a significant aspect of the Stoa’s commission and may have even inspired the Marathon painting. The emphasis on glorifying an individual clan, one of the central tenants of “aristocratic temporality,” would also seem to discount the influence of “democratic temporality” on the choice to display a recent event on the monument.

“Aristocratic time” is markedly different from “democratic time” not only in its interest in the mythical past over the present but also that it is centered around the family rather than the polis. According to Plutarch (On Belated Divine Vengeance 559c-d), the genos gets its power from its origin and its interest in the past is intimately connected to the promotion of the family unit.

Francis and Vickers assert that the Stoa’s central purpose was to promote a clear message, namely the military successes that the Philaid clan brought to Athens:

...the memory of Athens' most glorious victory provided the setting in which her citizens could contemplate more recent triumphs in which Miltiades' son, Cimon, had played his patriotic role. Close to the epigrams displayed in the 'Stoa of the Herms', and celebrating Cimon's victories in explicit terms, the Stoa Poikile


256 Like in the case of the Tyrannicides, it is not possible to neatly separate motivations and messages which praised Cimon, the Philaids, and his circle with those which sought to provide praise to the polis in general. Nor should we. As it was possible for Cleisthenes to both weaken aristocratic power in order to benefit both the Alcmeonids and end factional disputes, Cimon’s monumental program should not be simply seen as an attempt to aggrandize the deeds of his family or the Athenians. These two goals are not mutually exclusive.

257 Csapo and Miller 1998, 97.
through 'silent poetry' provided an *epideixis* of Athenian triumphs gained in the age of Philaid leadership.\footnote{Francis and Vickers 1985, 108-9.}

Given prominence of Miltiades, the portrait of Elpinice and the appearance of Cimon’s *Vorgänger* Theseus in not one but two of the paintings, it is clear that the Stoa’s designers looked to advance Philaid claims to excellence within a monument that glorified the polis as a whole.

When we consider these dynastic expressions in the context of the competing perceptions of aristocratic and democratic temporalities proposed by Csapo and Miller, this promotion of the Philaidai in monumental art seems in direct opposition to the “polis-centered” democratic temporality. This clash of ideologies is evident in the circumstances surrounding not only the commission of the Stoa but also in other Cimonian building projects. The controversy over labeling Miltiades on the Marathon painting and the decision of the demos to reject this honor demonstrates a clear conflict between the aristocratic desire of Cimon to promote his family and the public’s apprehension of singling out contemporary individuals for monumental honors. And while we have no specific evidence that the portrait of Elpinice raised any particular controversy among the citizen body, Plutarch’s (*Pericles* 31.2-5) claim that supposed portraits of Phidias and Pericles on the shield of Athena Parthenos angered the Athenian populace shows that this sort of practice was looked down upon by the Athenian public.\footnote{One suspects that, in part, the story of Polygnotus painting Elpinice’s portrait into the *Sack of Troy* scene remained popular precisely because the Athenians disapproved of it and it was the topic of much discussion.}
But perhaps there is no better example of the struggle between the Philaidai and the Athenian public over claiming credit for Marathonian success through monuments than two statue groups dedicated at Delphi. As discussed above, the portrait of Miltiades in the Marathon painting parallels another portrait which was most likely dedicated by his son at Delphi.\footnote{Kluwe (1965, 21-6) argues, mostly on the basis of the Miltiades, Philaios, and Theseus statues, that this was a private dedication on Cimon’s behalf and was not a state dedication.} Upon entering the Pythian sanctuary, Pausanias (10.10.1-2) describes a large statue group sculpted by Phidias and paid for by the spoils of Marathon.\footnote{Despite Pausanias’s claim--twice no less--that it was paid for by Marathonian booty, some think it apocryphal. Shapiro (1992, 32) suggests that Eurymedon spoils paid for the monument.} Around the central group of Miltiades, Athens and Apollo, Pausanias reports that there were statues of the Eponymous Heroes but only names seven of the ten, omitting Hippothon, Ajax, and Oineus.\footnote{It is unclear whether Pausanias just failed to mention the last three Eponymous Heroes or if they were replaced by Theseus, Philaios, and Codros statues.} Theseus, Codros, and Philaios, the mythical founder of Cimon’s clan, were also featured in the group but it is unclear whether they replaced the missing three statues or merely supplemented the complete group of Eponymous Heroes in which case Pausanias would have forgotten to mention Hippothon, Ajax, and Oineus.\footnote{The date of the Cimonian statue group is unclear. Some, such as Stewart (1990, 257) have argued that the group dates to the period in the late 450’s when Cimon returned from exile. Mattusch (1994, 74), however, would date the group to the late 460’s which means that the group was roughly contemporary with the Stoa Poikile.} In either case, the centrality of Miltiades in the group and the inclusion of Philaios clearly demonstrates that, with this votive, Cimon sought to promote his father and family’s legacy.
In a series of recent articles, Richard Neer suggests that this was an attempt on the part of Cimon to emphasize the role of his family in the Marathonian struggle in response to the claims of the treasury which had a statue group of the canonical ten Eponymous Heroes attached to it and, like most Athenian monuments, avoided singling out one man or family unit for praise.\textsuperscript{264} In Neer’s estimation, the Athenian treasury was constructed, in part, to “nationalize” the Marathonian victory.\textsuperscript{265} By presenting a different version of the Eponymous Heroes and honoring Miltiades in a monument which would greet visitors to the sanctuary before they reached the Athenian treasury, Cimon’s monument served as a response to the civic-minded Treasury up the hill.\textsuperscript{266} If Neer is right about Cimon using the statue group to grasp the credit back from the demos who were putting forth a polis-centered narrative about the victory at Marathon, then I would suggest that we view the Marathon painting in a similar light. Accepting that the Delphic statue group was inspired by a contest of sorts between the Philaid clan and the demos, it would

\textsuperscript{264} Neer 2004, 83-4. This corresponds to two recent articles on treasuries written by Neer (2001; 2004) in which he postulates that, unable to express their wealth at home, elites of the late Archaic era were investing heavily in dedications at sanctuaries outside the polis, such as Olympia or Delphi. In Neer’s analysis, the state is not the driving force behind treasury construction but is merely reacting to these dedications. For Neer, treasuries represent an attempt to appropriate these large votive offerings for the glory of the polis by providing a building for these gifts--his term of “framing” these gifts lends its name to his first article (2001) on the topic. By building a treasury where elite citizens would deposit their dedications, the state was able to “nationalize” these votives for civic pride.

\textsuperscript{265} Neer (2004, 88) claims that the use of Parian marble for the Treasury’s roof was a symbolic way of reminding people of the disastrous Parian fiasco which ended Miltiades’s career. According to Neer (2004, 88), this would have the effect of exercising “Miltiades from the Battle of Marathon, achieving the nearly impossible task of celebrating the great victory while snubbing its general. The glory remains collective, civic as opposed to individual.”

\textsuperscript{266} Neer 2004, 83-4.
correspond to the public fight over naming Miltiades on the Stoa’s historical painting.\textsuperscript{267}

In both cases, Cimon was trying to fight against the polis in order to credit his family. This would indicate that the Stoa’s historical painting of Marathon, instead of being inspired by democratic ideology or temporality, like the Delphi group, looked to subvert the isonomic disposition against honoring individuals in monuments.\textsuperscript{268}

Although it is tempting to attribute the historical paintings in the Painted Portico to a new democratic interest in the recent past, when one looks closely at the specifics of the Stoa’s commission and program, this theory no longer seems tenable. To briefly review, the Stoa itself was most likely commissioned by aristocratic patrons who originally named the building after a private citizen. And, although the demos eventually approved the project, the assembly put restrictions on the type of honors given to Miltiades in the Marathon mural, suggesting conflict between the elite patrons of the Stoa and the Athenian assembly concerning the project. When one looks at the overall program and not just the appearance of historical paintings, we do not see a newfangled conception of democratic temporality. Rather, as explained above, the juxtaposition of the mythological and the recent past simply represents a customary aristocratic method of

\begin{itemize}
\item Connor 1970, 164: “The statues are in honour not just of a great Athenian triumph, but more specifically in praise of the clan to whom that victory was largely due. The earliest and most recent leaders of that clan, the Philaids, were represented at opposite sides of the monument, Miltiades and Philaios. Cimon himself is missing, as good taste would dictate, but the monument is no less eloquent an advertisement of his claims to leadership for being discreet.”

\item Interestingly, Keesling’s (2003, 193) study of Acropolis votive statues reveals, in the rare cases where a statue of an actual person is dedicated before the fourth century, it is almost always a son dedicating a portrait of his father: “Despite the paucity of direct evidence for the subjects of sixth- and fifth-century votive portrait statues in Athens and the motives behind their dedication, representing one’s father could well have been the principal occasion for dedicating portraits of others on the Acropolis before the fourth century.”
\end{itemize}
advancing an individual family’s claim to excellence, be it in monumental form. Far from representing a democratic temporality, the Stoa’s historical scenes, which sought to “mythologize” modern day glories, is both derived from and expresses a traditional aristocratic view of the relationship between the mythical past and present day events.

In fact, it is generally difficult to gauge the impact of democracy on the monumental arts. As Versnel says, “with respect to political projections in the domain of myth and ritual, the Athenians were nationalists and patriots rather than democrats” and Eder suggests that this assessment applies to the art produced by fifth-century Athens as well.

The next section will offer a new solution to explain the appearance of historical scene on a public monument. While most scholarship has sought to account for the use of historical scenes by pointing to internal Athenian political developments, the next section will propose that the advent of historical battle scenes in Athenian monuments can be explained by a conscious decision on the part of Cimon and his political circle to draw on Eastern Greek and possibly even Persian precedents in the creation and design of the Stoa. In arguing this, I hope to show that these scenes of historical events were not inspired by democracy or a new temporality but, rather, the emerging Athenian imperial experience.

The Stoa and the East

In the last section, I argued against attributing the appearance of the historical Marathon painting to a new democratic temporality. While one could contend that the decision to display the Marathonian victory in the Stoa can simply be attributed to Cimon’s desire to promote his father and family’s legacy, the following section suggests another reason for the Stoa’s program. This section will look at the origins and popularity of monumental painting as well as the practice of depicting historical scenes and individuals. As we will see, the evidence suggests that the origins of these historical murals should be attributed to external influences rather than internal political developments as the known precedents for both large scale narrative painting and monumental representations of historical scenes seem to have their roots not in democratic Athens but in the East. This section will argue that while it was the experience of the Persian Wars and the ensuing involvement of Athens in the Eastern Aegean that inspired the historical mural of Marathon, its novel nature should not be attributed to a new sense of confidence nor to an emerging Panhellenic ideal.

Rather, it is argued, both the practice of large-scale painting and monumental depictions of historical events were adapted from Eastern Greek traditions. After looking at Eastern Greek precedents for monumental painting along with Polynotus and Cimon’s connections with the Asiatic Greeks, I will turn my discussion to Persia. While the notion may at first seem strange, I intend to show that Cimon, perhaps the greatest foe to the Persian empire, may have drawn upon Persian traditions in order to glorify himself, his
family, and his polis. Furthermore, it will be argued that the use of Near Eastern models fits with larger Cimonian building program which sought to negotiate, as well as to justify, the nascent role of Athens as imperial hegemon by adapting Persian symbols.

While it is not entirely clear whether large-scale narrative painting originated in Asia or in mainland Greece, before Cimon’s era there is very little evidence for large-scale painting of figures, depicting either mythological or historical scenes, in European Greece and we can be fairly certain that monumental painting was an Eastern import. Two different pieces of evidence, an unknown scene on the outer walls of the cella of the first Isthmian temple and the recent discovery of a seventh-century mural of soldiers in Kalapodi would seem to indicate that, at least in the Archaic era, some mainland Greeks were executing monumental narrative scenes in paint. The practice, however, is unattested in mainland Greece either in literary or archaeological evidence between the mid-sixth century and the 470’s. Likewise, all of our evidence indicates that the practice of large-scale narrative painting was wide-spread and popular in the East.

The first attested Greek painting which we know the subject of apparently took its inspiration from a recent historical event and was most likely executed by an Eastern

271 Boardman (1954, 190) regarding “in fact there is no good evidence for an independent style of major painting on wood or wall until the fifth century.”


274 Pemberton (1989, 182) thinks “such decoration was probably an experiment, rarely repeated, prompted I suspect as part of the generational experimentation with the decorative forms of early stone buildings.”

Greek artist. Pliny (*HN* 7.126; 35.55) tells us that one Boularchos, presumably an Asiatic Greek, painted a mural of the destruction of the Magnesians for the Lydian King Candaules who purchased the painting for its weight in gold. Pliny’s claims are somewhat problematic as Candaules died in the 680’s, about a generation before the event supposedly represented in the painting but the attribution testifies to Eastern Greeks both painting in large-scale form and depicting historical events as far back as the seventh century.²⁷⁶

This is supported by literary evidence which testifies to the existence of such large scale painted representations in the East. Herodotus, for one, attests that large paintings were being dedicated in Eastern Greek sanctuaries in the early fifth century. In Herodotus’s (1.64.3) description of the Phocaeans evacuation of their city while besieged by the Persians, he mentions that they left behind everything dedicated in their temples too large to carry with them. Included amongst these votives were paintings (graphe) which would imply that they were far more substantial than small wooden panels.²⁷⁷

A discovery in Persepolis has slightly illuminated our view of the development of Greek monumental painting. Archaeologists have found fragments of what seems to be a large stone painted plaque of Heracles and Apollo struggling over a tripod (or perhaps a deer) in a scene which resembles similar compositions on Athenian vases.²⁷⁸ Based

²⁷⁶ Schaus 1988, 111.

²⁷⁷ Pemberton (1989, 185) speculates that they were two large to be left behind but there certainly could have been a religious aspect to it, for example, not wanting to take what was now the property of the gods.

²⁷⁸ Boardman and Roaf 1980, 204-6. The painting also includes a third female figure, most likely Artemis, standing behind Apollo who can be securely identified by his bow.
mostly off stylistic analysis of the clothing and anatomy, Boardman would date the painting to about 500 BC, if not slightly earlier.\textsuperscript{279} If this attribution and date are correct, it is the first extant example of Greeks painting besides the Kalipodi and Isthmia murals and the first known secular use of painted mythological scenes.

Although there is no concrete proof that the painter was from the Greek East, it is well known that Persians brought in Eastern Greek artisans for the construction and decoration of Persepolis and, despite some vague connection to Athenian vase painting, it is probable that the Greek painters were not from the mainland. Darius’s Foundation Charter from Susa indicates that masons from Ionia, referred to by the Assyrian term \textit{Yauna}, were part of the construction personnel and graffiti from a quarry in Persepolis records the Ionian names of two Greek workmen.\textsuperscript{280} Circumstantially, the evidence would imply that Cimon, not unlike the Persian court, employed Eastern Greeks for large-scale painting. As Athens became substantially wealthier in the 470’s, Eastern Greeks were drawn to the city in the same way that Ionians artisans traveled East to Iran seeking employment a generation earlier.\textsuperscript{281}

While we can only speculate as to why the Archaic European Greeks eschewed the medium before the fifth century,\textsuperscript{282} the use of large scale monumental paintings in

\textsuperscript{279} Boardman and Roaf 1980, 205.

\textsuperscript{280} Boardman 2000, 129-33.

\textsuperscript{281} Miller 1997, 100-1.

\textsuperscript{282} The reasons for the absence of monumental narrative painting in mainland Greece are unclear. One possible reason, suggested by Pemberton (1989, 183) could be the desire for permanent stone and metal votives which would survive if exposed to the elements in highly visible locations in a sanctuary.
mainland Greece only seems to have been revived when Cimon brought the Thasian Polynotus to Athens to work on the Thesion around 475. Pemberton plausibly suggests that if there were Athenian painters skilled enough to execute the large scale painters, Cimon would have employed them.\textsuperscript{283} Due to the lack of this sort of art form in Athens, Cimon was forced to import an Eastern painter familiar with the technique.\textsuperscript{284} It would appear that both the inspiration for the monumental paintings, as well as the artists and the \textit{techne} to execute such works, all seem to have originated in the East.

Given the popularity and possible Eastern origins of monumental narrative painting, perhaps it is no coincidence then that the building which most resembled the Painted Stoa was a contemporary structure built by Eastern Greeks in Delphi. The Cnidian Lesche, a clubhouse dedicated to Apollo by the people of Cnidus, shares a striking number of attributes with the Peisianakteion. Like the Stoa, the Cnidian Lesche displayed elaborate painted cycles by Polygnotus and the Thasian artist is said to have produced a version of the Illupersis for each structure.\textsuperscript{285}

\textsuperscript{283} Pemberton 1989, 185: “We may assume that Polygnotos already had acquired a reputation as a painter when brought to Athens after the Persian Wars. I use the term ‘brought’ deliberately, for had there been painters of renown in Athens I believe that they would have been chosen to execute the needed works. Presumably Polygnotos was already known as the best if not the only. His first work in Athens was probably the decoration of the new shrine of Theseus, built and/or enlarged after the discovery of the bones in Skyros in 475.”

\textsuperscript{284} Pemberton 1989, 185.

\textsuperscript{285} Pausanias 10.25.2. Kebric (1983, 20) preposes that the Stoa’s Illupersis was a reproduction of the central part of the Lesche’s composition.
For years, scholars have sought to connect every aspect of the Lesche to Athens, Athenian ideology, and Cimon specifically. While it is certainly possible that the Cnidians chose to employ Polygnotus after seeing his work on the Stoa in Athens and hoping to align themselves with the emerging power, given the uncertainty of the date of both Eurymedon which funded the Lesche and the building itself, it is impossible to say for sure which piece Polygnotus painted first. One might reasonably ask why is it less likely that the Lesche, a building commissioned, designed, and painted by Eastern Greeks, possibly a few years before the Stoa, reflected Eastern traditions rather than Athenian ideology and influence. If monumental painting, the commissioners of the building and even Polygnotus himself originated in the Eastern Aegean, one could easily see the Lesche influencing the Stoa. In the end, given the uncertain chronological

---

286 Kebric (1983, 16) claims “If there were any single figures to whom the Cnidians had to answer, it was Cimon.” Yet this begs the question--why did the Cnidian have to answer to Cimon? This supposition assumes one of two things, either that the Cimon forced to Cnidians to design their dedication in a way that would reflect positively on the Athenian general or that the Cnidians were trying to ingratiate themselves towards Athens and the Philaid specifically. The first proposal is difficult to accept. We simply know nothing about the political structure and military structure of Cnidus at this time. It would be a bit premature to assume that, above all other figures in Cnidian society, from prominent aristocrats to local military officials who led the Cnidian forces at Eurymedon, Cimon had eclipsed them all in influence. The second idea is easier to accept but perhaps we should be weary of excising all agency from the Cnidians. Buildings in Olympia and Delphi exhibited almost extreme amounts of civic pride and it is almost unprecedented at this time for a treasury or lesche at a Panhellenic sanctuary to resonate messages praising another polis or individual.

287 Kebric (1983, 30-1) thinks the evidence firmly indicates that Polygnotus work on the Lesche preceded his work on the Stoa. Despite his strong assertion (“The sequence of paintings, then, can be established on relatively firm ground”), some of the evidence he cites—notably that Polygnotus could work for free on the Stoa Poikile because the Amphictyonic Council at Delphi had already had already granted him food and lodging for work on the Lesche—is less than convincing. Nevertheless, given the uncertainly around the sequence of the two works, we must remain open to the idea that the Stoa’s design was derived from the Cnidian clubhouse.

288 Some, most notably Meiggs (1972, 277), have assumed Polygnotus’s work Lesche only took place after Cimon had been exiled and the artist was forced to flee the city in search of new patrons. And yet, as Kebric (1983, 30) points out this argument is hardly compelling, noting that Phidias both worked for Cimon and enjoyed even greater success under his political rival, Pericles.
relationship between the Cnidian Lesche and the Stoa Poikile, perhaps we should refrain from making any definite conclusions. Nevertheless, it is entirely possible that the Cnidian Lesche preceded and even inspired the Stoa and the similarity between the two buildings may speak to the Eastern Greek influences on the design of the Peisianakteion.

But undoubtably the piece which most resembled the Marathon scene’s monumental depiction of a historical event was the famed pictorial dedication by the Samian engineer Mandrocles described by Herodotus (4.87-8). Like the Marathon scene, Mandrocles’s votive depicted a recent event, namely the Persian forces crossing the Bosphoros which Mandrocles had facilitated with the construction of a bridge c. 513 BC. Mandrocles’s pictorial dedication was, of course, dedicated by an Eastern Greek in a Samian sanctuary but its Eastern influences go beyond the medium, location, and dedicator. Hölscher sees the votive as expressing Eastern Greek influence in another way, intriguingly suggesting that the architectural subject matter seems derivative of written construction reports of Greek Ionic temple engineers and the votive may represent this tradition in pictorial form.

And yet the similarity between the Mandrocles dedication and the Stoa’s historical mural might suggest another possibility, specifically that both paintings were inspired by Persian and Near Eastern monuments which often displayed present-day events and contemporary individuals. According to Castriota, “The Persian and earlier Near Eastern

\[289\] See Hammond and Roseman (1996, 90) for the dating of the bridge.

\[290\] Hölscher 1973, 36.
ideology of rulers like Dareios and Hammurabi was very much focused on actuality, i.e., on the rulers themselves in a historical present. In contrast, by Classical times official Greek or Athenian expressions, whether in public oratory, poetry, or art, opted to celebrate the present achievements in the guise of ancient, heroic mythic paradigms instead of glorifying the current leadership directly.”

This Near Eastern interest in showing contemporary events in monumental art is certainly reflected in the Mandrocles votive. Although the painting was dedicated and most likely executed by Eastern Greeks, the scene reflects Persian influence in its composition and subject matter. As Hölscher noted long ago, the depiction of the King reviewing his troops strongly resembles other known Persian scenes, most notably the Apadana relief from Persepolis. In this, Mandrocles appropriated the Near Eastern tradition of monumental depictions of historical events for his dedication in which he claimed to have won kudos for both himself and his polis.

The little we know about the composition Stoa’s Marathon scene seems to reflect Near Eastern traditions in depicting battles. Eve Harrison sees the prominence of Miltiades’s portrait as directly corresponding to a long-standing tradition of emphasizing the commanders in Near Eastern battle scenes. In prominently displaying the generals,

291 Castriota 2000, 461.
293 For the connotations of the use of kudos in his dedication, see Kurke 1993, 139.
294 Harrison 1972, 353.
she suggests that the Marathon scene parallels New Kingdom scenes of armed conflict where the Pharaoh is prominently shown.295

In a footnote in her article about Athenian representations of the past, Boedeker “wonders whether, paradoxically, this development of historical representation [of recent events on monuments] was due in part to Persian influence.”296 Like the Mandrocles dedication, could there have been distinct Persian and Near Eastern influence in the decision to depict a historical scene in Stoa Poikile, a monument which, paradoxically, celebrated the defeat of the Persians?

At first glance, this proposition would stand at odds with the scholarly consensus about the relationship between post-Persian War ideology and Athenian cultural production. It has been largely accepted that, following the defeat of the Persians, the Athenians not only rejected all aspects of the now villainous foreign culture but also began to define themselves in opposition to the luxurious “other.”297 This tradition can be traced back to the very origins of modern Western Classical scholarship and, in part, seems to have reflected both an ancient Greek tradition of contrasting Hellenes and Persians and nineteenth- and twentieth-century European views on ethnicity.298

Reinforced over the next two centuries by ever-persistent concepts of Western

295 Harrison 1972, 353.
296 Boedeker (1998, 390 n. 45) goes on to say “Greeks adopted making public displays of their great deeds as did their enemies Darius and Xerxes.”
297 Famous examples of work which essentially argue that fifth-century Athenians used opposition with the Persian “other” to create a distinct Hellenic identity include but are not limited to Hall 1989 and Cartledge 1993. For a review of this scholarship comprising this “consensus,” see Isaac 2004, 257-60.
298 Wiesehöfer 2009, 162-3.
exceptionalism and “Eurocentric constructs of cultural continuity,” the idea that the Greeks perceived strict divisions between their culture and that of the Persians has become a mainstay of the scholarly discourse.

Recently, however, this view has come under some criticism on multiple fronts. In number of provocative yet convincing studies, Margaret Miller, Eric Gruen, and Kurt Raaflaub have challenged the commonly held idea about Athenian views of Persians and their culture in the fifth century and argue that it is time to abandon such a simplistic view of this relationship.

While it is logical to think that a relatively small and poor population such as the Greeks would have had a more nuanced view of the fantastically powerful imperial power to the East, Miller’s analysis goes beyond just pointing out that Athenian attitudes were not always so black and white. In fact, she persuasively argues that the evidence reveals a conscious effort on the part of the triumphant mainland Greeks to incorporate various aspects of Persian material culture. Far from driving the Greeks away from Persian clothing, design, and luxury goods, the now-frequent interactions resulting from the Persians Wars and the ensuing campaigns in the Eastern Aegean, inspired these cultural exchanges. In other words, the Persian Wars did not lead to a rejection of Persian archetypes but, in some cases, the very adoption of these cultural traits.

299 Wiesehöfer 2009, 163.
300 Miller 1997; Raaflaub 2009; Gruen 2010.
301 Miller 1997.
If both monumental painting and representations of the recent past were indeed adapted from Eastern practices, perhaps it should not surprise us that Cimon, arguably the Athenian with the most extensive familial and professional connections to the East, was most likely behind the commission of the Stoa. By the time of the Stoa’s construction, Cimon’s family had been intermittently active in Eastern affairs for about a century.\textsuperscript{302}

The extensive involvement of his family in the East date back to c. 560 when Miltiades the Elder founded an Athenian colony in Thracian Chersonese.\textsuperscript{303} Cimon himself was the product of a marriage between his father, who ruled as tyrant of Thracian Chersonese, and a Thracian princess, and his half-brother even spent time in the Persian court.\textsuperscript{304}

During his extensive campaigns in the Eastern Aegean, Cimon was no doubt exposed to Ionian, Lydian and Persian customs. As a result of these Eastern connections and his well-documented relationship with the painter Polygnotus, some have theorized that Cimon imported the painter from Thasos in the 470’s after seeing his work on campaign in the Eastern Aegean. And as mentioned above, Pemberton contends that monumental painting of narrative scenes was not popularly utilized in mainland Greece.

\textsuperscript{302} The chronology of Philaid activity in the East is notoriously confusing and the sources often give contradictory accounts. Thanks to earlier work by Hammond (1956), however, we can piece together a fairly logical and cohesive series of events involving the Philaids, Athens, and Thracian Chersonese, the territory which the family would rule over in one form or another for much of the later sixth century.

\textsuperscript{303} Herodotus 6.34-6.

\textsuperscript{304} Root (1985, 177), in her article advocating the idea that the Parthenon Frieze was an adaptation of the Apadana reliefs, suggests that Miltiades might have seen the sculptural tribute scene in Persepolis. She (1985, 177) states “Miltiades was surely well informed on the activities of the Persian court. He would have been in the East long enough to be aware of the planning and execution of the great north facade of the Apadana at Persepolis. He might easily have surveyed the finished product. An influential figure like Miltiades would have started the Athenians thinking along certain lines.”
before the 470’s and was only introduced by Cimon who brought both Polygnotus and the technique to Athens to work on the Thesion.\textsuperscript{305}

On one level the Eastern influences of the Stoa, most likely commissioned by the political circle of Cimon and funded by a victory in Asia, may merely represent increased interaction with Asiatic Greek and Persian customs during early days of the Delian League. I would further suggest, however, that the design of the Stoa may have been intentionally invoking and reformatting Persian and Near Eastern symbols in order to negotiate the nascent role of Athens as imperial hegemon over formerly Persian territories.

As some have noted, the empire was more problematic for the Athenians than their democratic constitution and, as a result, the monumental genre sought to “justify” their imperial suzerainty more than democracy.\textsuperscript{306} It has long been posited that the painting cycles both in the Stoa Poikile and the Thesion, in part, sought to justify the emerging role of Athens as imperial power in the Eastern Aegean.\textsuperscript{307} A closer look at the complementary paintings and design of the Stoa reveals many possible allusions to the East, the defeat of the Persians, and the Delian League.

\textsuperscript{305} Pemberton 1989.

\textsuperscript{306} Hölscher 1998, 182-3: “Since most Athenian political monuments seem to have been stimulated less by democracy than by empire, the need for legitimation must have been particularly strong in the latter sphere.” Boedeker (1998, 195) also points out, in a society which often sought to make sense of the present by invoking familiar mythical precedents, that there were no traditional stories or images to draw upon which celebrated democracy.

\textsuperscript{307} Shapiro 1992, 30.
While scholars have differed over what specific historical event Polygnotus’s scene of Troy Taken was supposed to allude, there is wide-spread agreement that the subject reflected Athenian military success in the Eastern Aegean. Francis and Vickers suggest that the painting was meant to commemorate multiple Athenian victories at Mycale, Byzantium, and especially Eurymedon.\(^{308}\) Alternatively, Castriota asserts that the scene prefigured Cimon’s victories in Thracian Chersonese due to its proximity to the supposed location of Troy.\(^{309}\) In any case, the choice of showing the aftermath of the Greeks’ greatest victory in Asia must, in some way, reflect not only the victory over the Persians but the ongoing struggle to drive them from the Eastern Aegean under the aegis of the Delian League. The choice of the Marathon scene itself may have reflected an attempt on the part of the Athenians to justify their empire both to their own citizen body and to visitors to the emerging imperial capital.\(^{310}\)

On one hand, the Stoa Poikile’s somewhat unusual employment of an internal Ionic colonnade further speaks to the Eastern Greek flavor of the entire monument but the use of the order might also reflect imperial overtones.\(^{311}\) Many have read political motivations into the design of the Stoa of the Athenians at Delphi which, like the Stoa

\(^{308}\) Francis and Vickers 1985, 112.

\(^{309}\) Castriota 1992, 78.

\(^{310}\) We know by 432 that the Athenians invoking their Marathon victory over the Persians had become a trope of sorts. In justifying the empire to the Spartans, Thucydides (173.2) has the Athenian envoys begin with the their role in the Persian Wars while also admitting that they are “always throwing forth” their role in the conflicts.

\(^{311}\) Walsh (1986, 332) sees a political motivation in the choice to use the Ionic order in the Stoa of the Athenians, a building which he dates to the 450’s. McGowan (1997, 231 n. 99), however, is skeptical of attributing political significance to the Ionic order, pointing out that the use of the order seems to begin in Athens under the Peisistratids.
Poikile, also employed the Ionic. The Stoa of the Athenians was constructed in the 470’s to display the cables used for the Hellespont bridge\textsuperscript{312} or, more likely, in the 450’s as a house for Spartan booty.\textsuperscript{313} Robertson, for one, thinks that the Ionic order in the Stoa of the Athenians spoke to Athenian claims of sovereignty over the Ionians:

The Spartans were very consciously the leaders of the Dorian peoples; while the claim of Athens to be the mother-city of Ionia was pressed at this time [the middle of the fifth century] with propagandistic intent. The gradual exclusion of the Doric order in favour of the Ionic for Attic temples may have had a purposeful association with that ancient claim...\textsuperscript{314}

Walsh, agreeing with Roberton, has suggested that the Ionic colonnade in the Painted Stoa reflected similar Athenian claims and argues that both buildings served as a message to Sparta that the Athenians had an ancestral right to rule over the affairs of the Ionian poleis.\textsuperscript{315}

This interpretation would be further supported if the Oinoe battle scene truly depicted a victory over Sparta. Although Hölscher claims that Cimon’s supporters added the battle scene during his exile in the 450’s in order to show his Athenian loyalty, it is equally possible that the supplemental scene was also part of an attempt to further vindicate the Athenians’ increasingly aggressive and imperialistic policies towards their

\footnotesize
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{312} Amandry 1953, 104.
\item \textsuperscript{313} Walsh (1986, 322) thinks it is telling that the dedicatory inscription of the Stoa of the Athenians does not mention the Medes like the inscription on the base attached to the Athenian treasury and doubts that the building could have actually held such large cables. He (1986, 323) points out that when the word \textit{hopla} is used in dedicatory inscriptions, it always refers to armor and thinks a more likely date for the Stoa is the first Peloponnesian War.
\item \textsuperscript{314} Robertson 1975, 347.
\item \textsuperscript{315} Walsh 1986, 333.
\end{itemize}
Delian “allies.” After all, the Spartans were notably the only other polis with a competing claim as savior of Greece and possible hegemonic power. By augmenting the Marathon scene, a battle where the Lacedaimonians were famously absent, with a representation of the first Athenian victory over the Spartans, the designers of the Oinoe scene may have been further making a case for their hegemony. Quite possibly this message of downplaying Spartan claims of superiority contributed to the decision to display the booty taken from the Spartans at Sphacteria, described by Pausanias (1.15.4), within the Stoa Poikile.

In the event that these historical battles were depicted in the Stoa in order to defend Athens’ imperialistic and potentially awkward suzerainty over formerly Persian-dominated Greeks, the use of Eastern and possibly Persian monumental practices may not seem as strange as it would first appear. In a thought-provoking article, Kurt Raaflaub has recently demonstrated that the Athenians, inexperienced in the role of imperial master, went about adopting Persian administrative practices and imperial ideology upon inheriting an empire from the enemy. After reminding us how unprecedented actions such as collecting tribute from allies and maintaining a garrison to impose Athenian sovereignty were in the Greek world, Raaflaub tries to explain how the Athenians so quickly developed these sorts of tools in order to hold on to their proverbial “tiger by the tail.” In short, Raaflaub argues that “with few exceptions, the entire range of Athenian

316 Hölscher 1973, 75-6.
317 Raaflaub 2009.
318 Raaflaub 2009, 93.
instruments of empire was derived from Persian models.”

The Athenians did not adopt these methods wholesale, he argues, but adapted each one of them, from acquiring land in allied territories to the office of *episkopos*, from the Persians in order to fit the unique situation of one polis essentially ruling over many.

If both the tools for administering the empire and even the concept of empire itself were modeled on Persian methods, it should not surprise us that the Athenians also looked to the Near East for ways to symbolically justify their somewhat awkward new position, in Pericles’s famous turn of phrase (Thuc. 2.63.2), as tyrant over their Greek brethren.

For example, Isocrates (*On Peace* 82) informs us that during the Great Dionysia, the tribute from the Athenians were displayed in the form of talents, filling the entire orchestra. This ceremony was an unequivocal display of Athenian imperial power for both the benefit of the citizens and, perhaps more importantly, international visitors. Although we cannot be sure when the Athenian began this “parade of tribute” the ceremony itself has obvious parallels with the Persian New Years Day celebrations.

---

319 Raaflaub 2009, 97.

320 Raaflaub 2009, 93.

321 Miller 1997, 257: “In view of the Athenian readiness to draft Achaemenid symbols to suit local purposes, the suggestion that the Delian League and later the Athenian Empire were to some extent modeled on the Persian Empire gains greater credibility.”

322 Goldhill 1990, 102.
depicted in the Apadana reliefs in Darius’s Persepolis palace.\textsuperscript{323} Both ceremonies were meant to simultaneously show off “imperial pride” while reflecting the subservient position of the peoples giving tribute and some scholars have argued that this is no coincidence.

On a related note, Raaflaub has convincingly shown that the Athenians followed Persian precedents not only in administering the empire but also in borrowing aspects of Persian design and architecture for the building projects which constituted their new imperial capital.\textsuperscript{324} Although many have seen Persian and imperial messages in the design of Periclean monuments, such as the Parthenon frieze\textsuperscript{325} and the Odeion of Pericles,\textsuperscript{326} this practice can be traced to the 460’s and can be attributed directly to Cimon.

While we have seen that historical representations and monumental painting were possibly from adapted Persian practices, the Eastern influence in Cimonian building projects and commissions go beyond his use of these two aspects. According to Plutarch (\textit{Cimon} 13.5-8), Cimon put a share of his Eurymedon spoils into public works projects for the city. Among these, Cimon decorated the Agora with plane trees and a waterworks project in order to irrigate the Academy. While this undertaking may at first seem like

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[323] Briant 2002, 183-6 suggests that the reliefs reflect an idealized depiction of the New Year celebration which sought to convey the wide reach and geographic diversity of the empire rather than a “quasi-photographic reflection of reality.” Root 1989, 112. Versnell (1995, 375-77) argues that the Dionysia festival transmitted unmistakable “imperial pride.”
\item[324] Raaflaub 2009, 111-112.
\item[325] Root 1985.
\item[326] Miller (1997, 218-242) reviews the evidence. She (1997, 240) thinks that the impractical nature of the hypostyle hall reveals that the Odeion was purely symbolic and that the adoption of the Persian-style architecture shows that the Athenians were “buying into the imagery of power.”
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
simply an attempt to beautify the city,\textsuperscript{327} the choice to construct public gardens represents far more than a straightforward public works project.

Some have seen a direct correlation between the construction of paradeisoi in Athens and the apparent Persian affection for gardens with waterworks. Citing both literary and archaeological evidence concerning gardens in Pasargadai and around Cyrus’s tomb, it has been suggested by multiple scholars that Cimon was intentionally providing a Persian-style palace garden for the city.\textsuperscript{328} Most European Greeks would have never come into contact with a Near Eastern Palace or had never actually seen a typical paradeisos but, as Raaflaub points out, gardens had been associated with Eastern luxury in the Greek imagination since the time of Homer and proposes that Cimon, who was probably intimately familiar with Eastern gardens, was drawing on this association.\textsuperscript{329}

We may also see the influence of Persian imperial ideology in Cimon’s frequent employment of images of Theseus in his many public building projects. A recent article by David Castriota reminds us that the Persians and Athenians often justified their empires and the harsh tactics they used to suppress their subjects in remarkably similar terms.\textsuperscript{330} Castriota suggests the Cimonian use of the mythical king Theseus in the Thesion as corresponding to the presence of the Great King in Persian monuments. He

\textsuperscript{327} Boersma (1970, 59), for example, sees the garden as simply a public works project which brought citizens shade in return for political capital.

\textsuperscript{328} Miller 1997, 40; Raaflaub 2009, 111

\textsuperscript{329} Raaflaub (2009, 111-112) cites Homer’s description the palace of the Phaeacians during Odysseus’s arrival.

\textsuperscript{330} Castriota 2000.
argues that the emphasis on Theseus and the Persian monarch in public art both stemmed from a desire to justify imperial rule by emphasizing the authority of these monarchs.\textsuperscript{331}

It would appear that reformatting of Eastern archetypes to advance Athenian imperial ideology was a common feature of the Cimonian building program. In some ways, the Stoa Poikile represents the culmination of his monumental projects. It combines several elements of previous monumental commissions, such as the use of large-scale painting, the attempt to put names of historical individuals on a monument, emphasizing a connection to Theseus, and seeking to rehabilitate his father’s reputation. Cimon and his circle, like many mainland Greek elites before him, imported and adapted Eastern art form in order to make a consummately Athenian monument. Much like the combined use of Ionic and Doric orders in the Stoa, the historical paintings represent a hybrid of Athenian and Eastern art forms and ideology. In this, Cimon and his circle reflected the famous adage of the Old Oligarch ([Xen.] \textit{Ath. Pol.} 2.8) who claimed “Where the Greeks tend to use their own manner of speech, lifestyle and dress, the Athenians use a mixture from all Greeks and \textit{barbaroi}.”

What the Athenian audience read into the use of "Eastern elements" of the Stoa is certainly debatable. In one sense, they would have surely recognized the mixture of Ionic and Doric orders, unprecedented in Athens at that time, but what that would have meant to them is unclear. In truth, most Athenians probably knew little about the origins of the large-scale painting or monumental depictions of historical battles. But surely some were

\textsuperscript{331} Castriota 2000, 461-3.
knowledgable enough to make this association between the Stoa and the East. Since the eighth century, elites had emphasized their connections to the East by importing and locally reproducing Eastern cultural products in order to increase their own standing in their local mainland Greek communities. In the case of the gardens, I think we cannot doubt that many Athenians recognized some Eastern allusions.

In summary, we have seen that we cannot attribute the historical scenes in the Stoa Poikile to a new democratic temporality or to the influence of the democratic political system. Rather, I have argued that, like the frequent appearance of Theseus and the construction of watered gardens, the Stoa, with its Eastern-style paintings and historical representations, was ultimately designed to both convey and justify Athenian imperial ambitions in the East.

332 Anderson 2005, 184.
Chapter 4: The Athena Nike Frieze and the Peloponnesian War

Given the large corpus of mythological battles on friezes and temple sculpture in general, a casual visitor to the Athena Nike temple on the Athenian Acropolis, both in antiquity and today, would likely assume that the battle scenes which embellished the Ionic frieze of that building were also drawn from the realm of myth. After all, very little about these scenes correlate to actual fifth-century battles. On all three scenes of war, the heroes fight mostly in the nude much like the mythical Athenians doing battle with Amazons, Centaurs and Giants on the Parthenon. Nor did these clashes reflect hoplite warfare but rather an idealized, heroic form of battle where individuals engage each other in one-on-one combat.

But, as we will see, two of these battles were not mythological tales but rather heroicized representations of real fifth-century clashes. The scenes of military struggles between Greeks and Persians on the south side, along with a depiction of Greeks engaging in combat with other Greeks on the west side, are widely believed to be the first examples of non-mythological battles in Greek temple decoration. The choice to include historical battle scenes over mythological ones on the Nike frieze represents a bold break with the canon of traditional temple sculpture programs. There has been a copious
amount of work done on the temple and even the frieze itself, but this analysis will differ from previous efforts in that its primary focus will be trying to account for this unprecedented use of temple decoration, sculpture and iconography.

This chapter will explain this break with tradition in two parts. The first section will review the temple and the evidence concerning its date before turning its attention to a description of the frieze itself. After this review, the chapter will examine if the frieze really could have displayed historical battles and will attempt to determine what historical battles were shown on the frieze. In the last section, we will look to explicate why the Athenians would have chosen to turn away from time-honored tradition and incorporate depictions of fifth century battles as well as the wider implications of such a decision.

In some ways, this search for an explanation for these scenes will resemble the earlier discussions of the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile. Once again we will examining the possible influence of democracy and imperialism on the historical scenes along with potential precedents for the historical frieze. But in looking for an explanation for the historical scenes, this chapter will cast a wider net. The key to understanding the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile, I argued, is examining the figures who commissioned, designed and crafted them and, by extension, the messages they wished to convey with these monuments. And while we will explore the possible association between Cleon and the temple’s sculpture, the explanation in this chapter will mostly concern larger changes in Athenian society brought about by the Peloponnesian War and the plague. Ultimately, this chapter will argue that the historical frieze can be explained by the impact of the
Archidamian conflict on Athenian ideology and the effect of the plague on the city’s art
and religion. The frieze, which probably displayed three historical scenes of Athenians
repelling invaders from Attica during the fifth century, reflected an intense new interest in
invasions of Attic territory and, more importantly, responses to these invasions.

Furthermore, I hope to show that the placement of these historical scenes on a
temple reflected a new willingness on the part of the Athenians to experiment and modify
traditional religious and monumental practices. This innovation and experimentation, it
will be argued, stemmed from the unimaginable travesty and upheaval brought about by a
devastating plague in which up to a third of the Athenian population suddenly and
inexplicably perished. Only by looking at these two changes in Athenian society together,
namely a new focus on the sovereignty of Attic territory produced by the Spartan
invasions and changes in religious habit due to the plague, can we begin to understand the
frieze of the Athena Nike temple.

The Athena Nike Temple: Its Date and Commission

Though the cult of Athena Nike seems to date back to the sixth century, the
temple, which sits atop the Nike bastion today in a reconstructed form, is a decidedly
late-fifth century monument.\textsuperscript{333} The temple was built on the Nike bastion, which
architectural historians have dated to after 430.\textsuperscript{334} Likewise, many architectural aspects of

\textsuperscript{333} Stewart 1985, 53. See Mark 1993 for the earlier stages of the cult and sanctuary.

\textsuperscript{334} Dinsmoor 1950, 185-6.
the building strongly suggest a date sometime in the 420’s and this date for the temple is almost universally accepted. A famous inscription known as the Decree on the Salary of the Priestess (IG I³ 36), dated to 424/3, provides for a payment of 50 drachmai to the priestess of the cult and many have taken this to be an indication that the temple was finished at this point. It has recently been pointed out that two different statues dedicated to Athena Nike around 425, presumably on the bastion, meant that the temple was most likely completed at that time, as it would not make sense to expose these votives to the dangers of an active construction site. Taken together, we should probably accept 424/3 as a terminus ante quem for the completion of the temple.

While the dating of the temple’s construction seems somewhat secure, the date of its commission and planning has long been the subject of controversy. On the other side of the stele containing the decree for the payment of the Athena Nike priestess mentioned above (IG³ 36), another inscription, The Athena Nike Decree (IG I³ 35), provided for the creation of a priestess for Athena Nike chosen by lot; construction of a temple designed by Callicrates; and an altar. Based on letter forms, primarily the three-barred sigma, the

335 Travlos 1971, 48; Wycherley 1978, 128. The Nike temple bears a strong resemblance to a small Ionic temple near the Illissos River sketched by Stuart and Revett in the mid-18th century but destroyed soon after by the Turks. An extensive study of the remaining architectural remains from that sister-temple reveal that it was probably built sometime in the last half of the 430’s and Miles (1980, 309) suggests that the two buildings were constructed in close succession.

336 On this inscription, see Mattingly 1982; Mark 1993, 107-108; Mattingly 2000; Gill 2001. This priestess was most likely one Myrrhine, daughter of Callimachos, whose epitaph (IG I³ 1330) claims she was the first priestess to serve the sanctuary. The gravestone is dated to c. 400. For more on this inscription and Myrrhine, see Lougovaya-Ast 2006.

337 Shear 2001, 780. These two statues are a Nike, recorded by Pausanias (4.36.4), which was dedicated in honor of the victory at Pylos and one of Athena Nike, known from IG II² 403, dedicated from the spoils of various battles from 425/6 which will be discussed below.
Nike Temple Decree was dated to the mid-fifth century. This created an inexplicable twenty-year gap between the commission of the temple and its construction, and more importantly for our study, associated the temple with the Periclean building program and possibly the Peace of Callias.

An 1982 article by Mattingly put forward the first arguments which sought to reject this strange twenty-year gap in the project by placing the Nike Temple Decree, logically, to the 420’s when the project was undertaken. Throughout Mattingly’s career, he has vocally called for scholars to reject arguments based around the three-barred sigma or other technical epigraphic criteria. This thesis, however, initially did not find widespread support mostly because of the presence of the three-barred sigma in the Nike Decree.

A landmark study in early 1990’s has not only changed our understanding of the three-barred sigma, and subsequently the Athena Nike Decree, but has generally sent shockwaves throughout the field. The use of a laser has helped to read a previously debated treaty between Egesta and Athens (IG I3 11) containing a three-barred sigma. Employing this new technology, the study has revealed the name of Antiphon, dating the treaty to the year of his archonship in 418/7 and presenting a compelling case for the continued use of the three-barred sigma down through the 420’s.

---


339 Mattingly’s (1982) case mostly revolves around the similarities of the Nike Decree to a decree for Chalkis which he suggests should be down-dated to 424/3.

340 Chambers, Galluci and Spanos, 1990; Chambers 1993. The debate revolved around the reading of the archon’s name but the detection of an iota and a phi seems to confirm Mattingly’s reading of Antiphon.
This development has led to a reassessment of several documents previously dated to the 440’s based on the presence of the three-barred sigma, including the Nike Temple Decree. Aside from the issue of whether we should be dating inscriptions based on letter forms in the first place, proof of the three-barred sigma’s continued use into the 410’s should allow us to do away with the foremost objection to dating the Nike Temple Decree to the 420’s. Leaving the problems of the three-barred sigma behind us, along with the troubling twenty-year gap between the commission of the Nike temple and its construction, should allow us to firmly place both the commission and construction of the Athena Nike within the context of the 420’s.341

A notable exception to this scholarly consensus has been Ira Mark who rejects the mid-420’s date for the frieze in favor of a c. 418 date for the sculptures.342 Mark’s down-dating of the frieze mostly revolves around comparanda from Athenian document reliefs, notably IG I3 79, the Rheitoi Bridge Decree of 422/1.343 Noting that the pose of the Artemis figure on the east frieze seems to be more stylistically advanced than the Demeter on the Rheitoi Bridge Decree, he surmises that the Nike frieze must have been created sometime after 421. And yet, as Schultz points out, work on document reliefs clearly shows that the art form is a fairly conservative medium which usually reflects

---

341 In this, I would thank the venerable Ron Stroud who, while at the American School together, constantly reminded me of the inherent problems in dating inscriptions based on letter forms and encouraged me to be skeptical of such arguments.


343 Mark 1993, 136.
trends rather than inspiring them.\textsuperscript{344} In the end, even if we accept that the Rheitoi bridge relief was less “advanced” than the Nike frieze, this should not trouble us given the conservative nature of the medium.

Peter Schultz has recently put together a solid and compelling argument that the sculpture program can be associated with a string of victories in the northwest beginning in 426/5 and culminating with Cleon’s victory in Pylos in 425.\textsuperscript{345} He dates the temple’s adornment to between the summer of 425 and the winter of 423/2. Mattingly and Gill’s new date of the fall of 425 for the Nike Temple Decree corresponds nicely to what we know about the situation in Athens at that time, a point to which we will return later.\textsuperscript{346}

Description of The Frieze

The tetrastyle amphiprostyle Ionic temple was one of the most richly decorated temples in all of Athens.\textsuperscript{347} Moving from the top of the monument, one would notice many subjects and iconography typical to fifth-century Greek temple sculptural decorations. The central acroteria, once thought to be a Bellerophon and Chimaira group, has recently been reinterpreted as either a gilded Nike or tripod, based on a reading of the base.\textsuperscript{348} As for the pedimental scenes, they are widely believed to show typical

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{344} Schultz 2009, 149-50.
\item \textsuperscript{345} Schultz 2009, 150-51.
\item \textsuperscript{346} Mattingly 2000.
\item \textsuperscript{347} Hurwit 2004, 211.
\item \textsuperscript{348} For this new reading, see Schultz 2001.
\end{itemize}
mythological battles, an Amazonomachy in the east and what appears to be a Gigantomachy in the west.349

The frieze, however, represents a radically different program. On three of its four sides, the temple’s frieze displayed scenes of armed combat while the east frieze undoubtedly represented a council of the Gods. Although the subject of these battles is hotly debated, it is usually assumed that at least one and possibly all three of these battle scenes took their inspiration from fifth-century historical conflicts. Unlike in the case of the Stoa Poikile, however, we have no ancient source which names or even indicates the subject of the reliefs and must rely solely on the sculptures themselves in order to determine what they were supposed to represent. This, of course, has led to all sorts of interpretations about the frieze and its meanings. This section will begin with a description of the most likely candidate for an historical battle, the south frieze, before reviewing the west frieze and the north frieze, both of which displayed battles between naked, presumably Greek hoplites.

Of the four sides of the Athena Nike frieze, identification and iconography of the east frieze, the first to greet visitors upon entering the precinct, is probably the least controversial: it appears to show an assembly of the gods.350 Unfortunately for the purpose of this study, determining what specific event, if any, the gods were assembled for does not necessarily get us any closer to understanding what battles were represented


350 For more on the east frieze, see Pemberton 1972, 309-10; Simon 1985; Harrison 1997.
on the rest of the frieze. Nor does specific identification of the divine figures help to explain impulses and conditions which led the designers and commissioners of the Nike temple to place a contemporary battle scene (or scenes) on the frieze. After all, the assembly of the gods was a common feature in sacred temple design, but the action which they oversaw, namely a historical battle, was not. As Palagia notes, “if Athena’s birth was depicted in the east frieze of the Nike temple, it could have no immediate bearing on the iconography of the west, south, and north friezes, except in driving home the message that Athena Nike had crowned Athenian ventures, past and present, with victory.”351 For now let us accept that the assembly of these divine figures primarily represents some sort of validation of the actions taking place on the rest of the frieze.352 As we move forward to the three other sides of the frieze, we must try to determine what exactly the gods were watching over.

The South Frieze

The south frieze displays an intense battle scene where nude combatants clothed only in billowing cloaks fight off an attack from an army wearing pants and riding on horses. The formation, posture and the positioning of the Athenians combatants in the south frieze, or anywhere on the Athena Nike temple for that matter, represent the

351 Palagia 2005, 189.
352 Stewart 1990, 165. Hurwit (1999, 212) sees Athena, in her martial dress, as guarantor of the battles on the sides. Another notable aspect of the east frieze is the clothing of Athena who, unlike her representation on the east frieze of the Parthenon, wears her martial dress. Although a superficially non-agonistic scene, this may reflect the overall military theme of the frieze.
realities of the hoplite phalanx. Unlike the famed north frieze from the Siphnian
treasury, where Apollo and Artemis attack a phalanx of giants, the soldiers have either
broken ranks or, more likely, are engaging in a heroicized hand-to-hand combat. While
it is generally agreed that the south frieze of the Athena Nike temple contains a
sculptured representation of Greeks, either historical or mythological, engaging
combatants in Persian dress, the evidence below strongly indicates that this scene is
meant to show the battle of Marathon.

The most telling aspect of the scene is clearly the dress between the two sides.
Twenty-two of the thirty-nine figures on the south frieze can be identified as Persian, as
they are dressed in fifth-century Persian clothing, consisting of some combination of
tunics with longs sleeves, Median tiaras and, most notably, pants. They are clearly
differentiated from the Greeks who are not dressed in typical hoplite armor but mostly
fight in the nude with only the protection of chalmys, himations and chitons.

While most would see the south frieze as representing specific historic battle from
the Persian Wars, interpretations differ as to which battle it was supposed to show or even
if the south frieze was meant to invoke any particular historical battle. As early as the
late 19th century, Furtwängler proposed that the south frieze, with Greeks fighting

353 Stewart 1985, 91.
354 According to Neer (2001, 304), not only is this the only depiction of a phalanx in the entire corpus of
Greek sculpture but the phalanx only appears seven times in vase painting.
357 Palagia 2005, 184.
Persians on horseback, was a representation of the battle of Platea. Ultimately, however, we should find the Plataean hypothesis unacceptable for several reasons. First, there is little evidence that cavalry was absent at the battle of Marathon. As Palagia points out, Herodotus does not say that Persian cavalry was absent and the idea that the Persians had shipped off their horses to Phaleron before the battle is a modern construction based on a misreading of the Suda.

Perhaps more compelling is the implications of depicting the Panhellenic victory at Platea. If the south frieze indeed celebrated the joint exploits of the Spartans and the Athenians, it certainly would have been quite odd at this time. While the Marathon scene in the Stoa promoted the joint victory of the Athenians and their Platean allies, this was most likely an attempt to flatter the Plateans in the face of Theban tensions. Coming on the heels of the victory at Spachateria, the temple celebrated what the Athenians felt was the defeat of the Spartans or, at any rate, a reversal of its fortunes in the war. Given the highly charged anti-Spartan rhetoric inherent in the construction of the Nike temple complex, which was probably built in the aftermath of a victory over the Lacedaimonians, it is highly unlikely that the Athenians would celebrate a victory to which the Spartans had contributed.

---

358 Fürtwangler 1895, 214.
359 Palagia 2005, 184.
360 Pausanias 1.15.3; Demothenes 59.94.
362 Palagia (2005 184) makes a similar point.
Hölscher would object to even trying to determine what specific battle the piece represents. Instead, he proposes that the scene is not a particular event but synechdochic, showing Medes fighting Greeks more generally. In his view, the composition broadly alludes to the Persian Wars rather than one specific battle, be it Marathon or Platea. While this is certainly an intriguing idea, it is not without its flaws. In all likelihood the battle scene was meant to remind visitors to the precinct of all the Athenian successes against Persian foes and not just the events of 490. But the notion that the South frieze did not represent an actual battle seems to ignore comparisons to the other artistic representation of the Athenians fighting the Persians, namely Marathon painting in the Stoa Poikile.

In a classic 1972 article, Eve Harrison put forth a convincing argument that the south frieze both specifically represents the battle of Marathon and that the piece was, in some respects, adapted from the Marathon painting in the Stoa Poikile. In her estimation, the Athenians charging the Persians on horseback recalls a specific detail from Herodotus (6.112.2) who, in his retelling of the Athenian charge at Marathon, says that the Medes thought the Greeks were mad (maniên) to be running at them without archers or horses. Harrison thinks that this piece of the story had, by this time, become legendary and that the inclusion of a fight between a daring hoplite and the Persian cavalry intentionally recalled this aspect of the tale.

---

She also sees significance in the slipping himation of one of the figures on block G, which may indicate that the person was heroized and thus died in battle. She compares the pose of this to that of Harmodius in the Kritios and Nesiotes Tyrannicides and, citing a passage from Herodotus (6.109) where Miltiades encourages Callimachus to free Athens like Harmodius and Aristogeiton, she tentatively suggests that this figure is supposed to represent Callimachus. Although the identification of Callicrates based on the so-called “Harmodius” gesture might be reading a bit too much into what might just be a downward slashing motion, overall her argument is convincing and, as a result, her Marathon thesis is widely accepted in the field. This identification as Marathon fits both the specific action in the scene and the dress of the participants in the battle, and we should have no problem accepting the south frieze as a depiction of the First Persian War in 490.

The West Frieze

The west frieze displays a heated clash with various figures trying to recover three different bodies amidst the melee. This side differs from the south frieze in two crucial respects. For one, there are no horses on the west frieze and, secondly, the twenty-three

---


367 Schrimpton 1980, 22-3. Pemberton 1972, 303: “I accept the interpretation of the south frieze as the battle of Marathon.” Palagia (2005, 185) endorses the Marathon interpretation and says it’s the only frieze that can be “confidently associated with an historical war.”

368 The relief on the famous Nike parapet which was built probably between 420 and 410, also seems to have Persian spoils decorating the trophies on the south side. For more, see Carpenter 1929; Hurwit 1999, 212-3.

369 The frieze contains four blocks, H, I, K, L arranged north to south.
combatants on the west frieze are not differentiated by dress. While the slaughtered enemy on the south was undoubtedly clothed in Eastern dress, both factions are mostly nude except for cloaks. The homogeneous dress of the two sides and the presence of cavalry suggest that the scene displayed a different battle than the south; a conflict not between Persians and Greeks but rather a clash between two Greek factions.³⁷⁰

All fallen warriors are depicted without cloaks, save the prostrate figure under the depiction of a trophy, but this does not necessarily indicate that they belonged to one side or the other. Nudity is often heroic, but as Jeffery Hurwit reminds us, victims in sculptural reliefs often appear in the nude, such as the Dexileos cenotaph, where their lack of armor indicates helplessness.³⁷¹ The sides may have been differentiated by helmets, but due to the destruction of the heads, this distinction is no longer visible.³⁷²

Without any concrete distinction between the two Greek sides, we must rely on the presence of a tree-trunk, with a helmet and round hoplite shield hanging from it in the background of block L which almost certainly represents a trophy, in order to understand the action taking place in this scene. The *tropaion* originated in the mid-sixth century when armies began dedicating armor not in sanctuaries but on the battlefield.³⁷³ As the

---

³⁷⁰ Pemberton (1972, 304) reads the scene as not an evenly-matched battle but a decidedly one-sided affair, noting “the scene appears to show not so much an even battle as an annihilation.” As it is difficult to say which warriors represent what side, I would have to side with Ridgway (1981, 91 n. 31) in being hesitant about this assessment. This, however, does not discount Pemberton’s overall thesis.

³⁷¹ Hurwit 2007, 55.

³⁷² Pemberton 1972, 304.

trophies were a historical phenomenon connected with hoplite warfare, some have seen the appearance of a *tropaion* on the west frieze as an indicator of a fifth-century battle.\(^{374}\)

Specifically, Pemberton sees the trophy as not merely a reflection of historical battle, but as the cause of the battle itself, and subsequently looks to connect the scene to the 458 BC battle of Megara between the Corinthians and the Athenians related to us by Thucydides (1.105.3-106). According to his retelling (105.3-5) of the event, the Corinthians seized the Geraneia and came down into the Megarid in order to take strategically important territory, assuming the Athenians would not defend Megara while a majority of their forces were off fighting in Aegina and Egypt. The general Myronides, however, raised an army from the older and younger Athenians who were left in the city and achieved an uncertain victory over the Corinthians. Although it was unclear which side actually won (*kai maxês genomenês isorropou pros Korinthous*), he set up a trophy nevertheless. Twelve days later, the Corinthians, having been persuaded by the elders of the city, returned to the battlefield to erect their own *tropaion*. They were then thwarted by the Athenian forces who left from Megara in order to deny the Corinthians their victory monument.\(^{375}\) The result was a slaughter of the Corinthian forces and a victory which Lysias (2.48-53) would later praise alongside the Athenian contributions to the Persian wars.

\(^{374}\) Pemberton 1972, 304.

\(^{375}\) This desire to set up a trophy claiming victory was common. As Hölscher (2006, 29) notes, hoplite skirmishes were often indecisive and “erecting a *tropaion* where the enemy had turned to flee was not merely a symbolic confirmation of the victor’s ‘real’ success; it was the act of success itself. If a battle was not finished by a clear victory of one of the opposing armies, it could be continued on the level of symbolic manifestations.”
The trophy, essentially an ephemeral object, was important in indicating the place of battle. Because the area was fought over twice in a small amount of time, the trophy would have remained as part of the scenery. As the trophy was an integral part of the story told by Thucydides, which itself most likely reflected the popular tradition, placing it within the scene served to ground the action in the Megarid and, perhaps more importantly, within the modern era. Not only was the trophy the cause of the battle, but later tradition would celebrate its symbolism. Lysias (2.53) describes the trophy left behind by Myronides’s forces as representing the most glorious deed for the Athenians (tropaion de stêsantes kallistou men autois ergou), but the most shameful deed (aischistou) for the Corinthians. Notably, arguments advocating a mythological reading usually do not fully account for the trophy.\textsuperscript{376}

While Pemberton’s overall idea is sound, it has come under some criticism, mostly because so much emphasis is put on the trophy.\textsuperscript{377} Yet there was a significant piece of evidence not available to Pemberton at the time of the publication of her work which lends credence to her interpretation. Pemberton, writing in 1972, wholly accepts the 440’s date for the Nike Temple Decree.\textsuperscript{378} But with the revised dating of the Egesta treaty, “the new orthodoxy” of the three-barred sigma and the increasing acceptance of a

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{376} Harrison (1997, 120-1) proposes that the trophy marks the turning point in the battle but there is no indication that one side has a marked advantage to the right of the trophy.
\item \textsuperscript{377} Burn (1998, 69) states “there is little beyond the trophy to support the identification…”
\item \textsuperscript{378} Pemberton 1972, 307.
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
mid-420’s date for the Nike Temple Decree, we are able to see a previously unnoticed
correlation which further supports Pemberton’s thesis.

According to Mattingly, the Nike Temple Decree “almost certainly” dates to the
prytany of Leotnis in the fall of 425.\footnote{Mattingly 2000, 606.} Interestingly, that would place the decree to build
the Athena Nike weeks after an Athenian attack on Corinth led by Nicias and described
by Thucydides (4.42-5). If Mattingly is correct in his dating, the Athena Nike Decree
would have been passed upon Nicias’s return to the city after defeating the Corinthians,
and the choice to depict a similar victory over the same enemy in the first Peloponnesian
War would have had particular resonance. Many aspects in Thucydides’s account of the
425 battle against the Corinthians could be used to describe the west frieze, most notably
4.44.3, where the Athenians claim their dead and erect a trophy (\textit{oι de Athênaioi, ōs
ouketi autois epeisan es machê̂n, tous te nekpos eskuleuon kai tous eautôn anêirount,
tropaion te eutheôs estēsan}).

Aside from illuminating this possible connection with another victory over
Corinthians, placing the commission of the Nike temple in 425 allows us to better
understand why the Athenians might chose this particular battle for memorialization.\footnote{Perhaps the weakest part of Pemberton’s argument is where she tries to account for the twenty year gap by tying the Illisos temple to Artemis Agroteria and subsequently to Marathon. She might (1972, 307) “regard the hiatus between the original decree and the actual building of the Nike temple as extremely significant” but the new date of the Temple Decree makes this sort of argument unnecessary.}

Although today the victory over the Corinthians in 458 might seem like a battle too
obscure to depict on the temple frieze, we know that the Athenians thought the victory to
be of particular importance. In an extremely revealing passage, Lysias (2.48-52) lists Myronides’s victory over the Corinthians right after the Athenian contributions in the Persian Wars, and yet names no other conflicts from either Peloponnesian Wars.\textsuperscript{381} The role of the Megarian Decree in causing the Archidamian War (Thuc. 1.139), the annual Spartan incursions which went through the Megarid and the twice yearly Athenian invasions of the Megarid during the conflict all would have surely brought renewed significance to Myronides’s victory in the mid-420’s.\textsuperscript{382}

Not all have accepted this interpretation. Harrison, although originally open to the idea that the west and north friezes could have represented fifth-century battles, has since reversed her position and now claims that the scene portrayed the recovery of the bodies of the Seven against Thebes.\textsuperscript{383} Her stance is based on the appearance of figures wearing an \textit{exomis}, which is essentially a cloak fastened on one shoulder, on the west frieze. Harrison states that the \textit{exomis}, absent from the south frieze but present on the west and the north, only appears in fifth-century sculptures of subjects from the mythical past. Harrison claims to be working on a broader piece which explains this theory, and perhaps it would be prudent to wait for her publication before analyzing the strengths and

\textsuperscript{381} Lysias generally avoids speaking of the second Peloponnesian War besides Aegospotami (2.58). Although Pemberton herself does not mention it, it may be revealing that the juxtaposition of the Persian Wars scene on the south frieze and this possible representation of the 458 battle on the west frieze exactly mirror the words of Lysias.

\textsuperscript{382} Although Thucydides himself famously downplays the role of Megara in starting the war, this most likely betrays his own biases rather than the actual situation. For more on why Thucydides avoids addressing the importance of Megara and the Megarian Decree, see Wick 1979.

\textsuperscript{383} Harrison 1997, 117.
weaknesses of this particular argument. Yet given that this one aspect of the west and north friezes prompted her to change her opinion, some brief remarks on the subject are in order.

As evidence for the *exomis* representing mythical times, she cites the *exomis* worn by figures on the west and north friezes of the Parthenon and the absence of such a garment on the south frieze. Notably, though, she does not explain why she sees the north and west friezes of the Parthenon as taking place in the “mythical past” while the action of the south frieze does not. Regardless of her interpretation of the Parthenon frieze, the idea that different time periods are being represented on the frieze is not generally accepted and, as a result, the argument does not hold up.

Moreover, the *exomis* seems to have been worn both by actual fifth-century soldiers and by figures in fifth-century art. The use of the *exomis* by soldiers may be explained by its practical nature. In vase painting, the *exomis* is worn by craftsmen or, generally, any figure needing mobility. The *exomis* was eventually taken up for military purposes and was worn by soldiers, as seen in a passage from Plutarch (*Cleom.*

---

384 Harrison 1997, 124 n. 40: “I have written a long article on the subject, which I hope to publish eventually.”

385 Harrison 1997, 117.

386 Harrison (1997, 124-5 n. 40) claims she has written an article on the *exomis* which she intends to publish but she gives no other details on the garment. Given that she puts so much weight into this piece of evidence, it is odd she does not give more evidence.

387 Stewart 1997, 176: “So though some historic allusions may be intended at times, one’s overwhelming impression from both far and near is that the [Parthenon] frieze is a unity.” Boardman 1984, 211: “But the [Parthenon] frieze is an enormous monument, it is 160 metres long and carries 360 human and animal figures. Yet it is a unity…”

388 Hannah (1998, 21) states that, although associated with workmen, a man wore an *exomis* whenever one needed the movement of one arm.
37.2) where Cleomenes II unfastens the right shoulder of his tunic before battle
(“...endusamenos ton chitôna kai tên raphên ek tou dekiou paralusamenos ômou...”).
This is reflected in fifth-century sculpture. For example, a soldier depicted on a
gravestone of one Lisas from Tegea, who was a member of the garrison installed at
Decalea c. 413, wears an exomis with his right shoulder uncovered.389

Aside from the issue of the exomis, there are some more troubling aspects to
Harrison’s scene representing the recovery of the bodies of the Seven. The first would be
that the frieze only shows the retrieval of three bodies and not the seven one would
expect given the importance of the number of bodies in this story.390 Another critique is
that she fails to explain why the trophy plays such an important role in the frieze, positing
only that a trophy would show that the battle had turned.391 Given the prominence of the
trophy, of the timing of the Athena Nike Decree in respect to Nicias’s victory over the
Corinthians, as well as the significance of the battle in Lysias’s Funeral Oration, I believe
we should follow Pemberton’s reading of the west frieze as a depiction of Myronides’s
surprising victory over the Corinthians in 458.

The North Frieze


390 Harrison’s (1997, 120-1) idea that three recoveries actually represented a “shorthand representation” is,
to my mind, less than convincing. I would, however, agree with her that the Greek recovery of the bodies is
contrasted with the Persians on the south who ignore their dead.

391 Harrison 1997, 120-1.
The north frieze too presents its own unique set of difficulties for those trying to interpret its subject. Of the four sides, the north frieze is the most problematic due to the poor condition of the sculptures.\footnote{Pemberton 1972, 304.} The frieze itself is very poorly preserved. Not only did it suffer from weather damage,\footnote{Harrison 1997, 109.} but the fragmentary nature of the north frieze is exacerbated by the prevalence of free standing sculpture which was attached to the main block.\footnote{Palagia 2005, 184.} Consequently, in antiquity, the north side was both more conspicuous yet more vulnerable to decay and destruction over time. Today, only one block (M) survives completely intact.

Like the west frieze, the north displayed a battle between two similarly dressed sides, almost certainly two Greek factions. Reading the block from left to right, a figure on the far left steps over a fallen warrior lying prone on the ground. In the central action of block M, three figures, two from the left and one from the right, converge on a man in a chiton whose Corinthian helmet seems to fall off his head. To the right of the attack on the man in the chiton, two horses flee from the action, jumping over what appears to be a shield below.

Despite the fragmentary nature of the north frieze, the details visible in block M have led to some tentative speculation about the subject matter of the sculptural relief. Some have taken the appearance of the Corinthian helmet as the key to understanding the
period in which the north frieze scene takes place.\textsuperscript{395} The Corinthian helmet had been a common feature in archaic war and art alike, but, Palagia claims, the helmet seems to have gone out of style after the Persian Wars. For Palagia, this seems to be proof that the north frieze could not have represented any battle which took place after the Persian Wars and thus assigns the scene to the realm of myth.\textsuperscript{396}

This, however, does not seem to be the case.\textsuperscript{397} The sudden and complete abandonment of the Corinthian helmet style after the Persian Wars is a misconception. According to a comprehensive study of helmets during the Hellenistic age, the use of the Corinthian helmet continued in both Hellenistic Greece and in Republican Italy.\textsuperscript{398} This false impression stems from limited evidence in later periods when more helmet styles were available and a wider variety of helmets were depicted in art.\textsuperscript{399}

In fact, a contemporary piece of sculpture from the Acropolis directly disproves this theory. In perhaps one of the most famous statues from antiquity, Kreslias’s portrait of Pericles depicts the general donning a Corinthian helmet. Most likely, the bust was a posthumous dedication dating to the last decade of the fifth century.\textsuperscript{400} In this case, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{395} Palagia 2005, 186. Schultz (2009, 132) has endorsed Palagia’s opinion on the meaning of the Corinthian helmet.
  \item \textsuperscript{396} Schultz (2009, 142): “Hölscher’s idea that the north side depicted the battle of Oinophyta (457 BC) does not make sense of the physical evidence either because M5 wears an old-fashioned Corinthian helmet…”
  \item \textsuperscript{397} Boardman 2002, 176.
  \item \textsuperscript{398} In a comprehensive study, Dintis (1986, 87-90) puts to rest the idea that the Corinthian helmet was no longer used after the Persian Wars.
  \item \textsuperscript{399} Boardman 2002, 176.
  \item \textsuperscript{400} Keesling 2003, 195. She thinks that the portrait is either a retrospective fourth century dedication or a late-fifth century anomaly.
\end{itemize}
Corinthian helmet clearly did not conjure connotations of Pericles’s role in the Persian Wars nor did it seek to convey to the viewer that the figure was from the realm of myth. According to Beth Cohen, “during the fifth century, an imposing Corinthian helmet perched loftily atop the head came to be associated with military command, specifically signifying the office of strategos in Athens.”\textsuperscript{401} If, like Pericles in Kresilas’s portrait, the figure in the chiton was supposed to be understood as the commander, we should expect to see him with a perched Corinthian helmet. This might explain how the helmet was shown falling from his head, as it would have been difficult to remove the helmet during the course of battle.\textsuperscript{402} This is not to say that the north frieze was categorically a historical scene. Rather, the continued use of the Corinthian helmet both in battle and in Athenian contemporary sculpture firmly discounts the notion that such a piece of equipment necessarily represented a mythical battle.\textsuperscript{403}

Like the \textit{exomis}, we see that the Corinthian helmet was used both in battle and in sculpture throughout the fifth century, but perhaps this sort of analysis misses the point.

\textsuperscript{401} Cohen 1991, 470.

\textsuperscript{402} Schultz (2009, 138) himself argues that the Corinthian helmet on the figure could not have been knocked off his head during battle and must have been intentionally removed. While Schultz thinks either the figure in the \textit{chiton} removed his own helmet, having disgracefully taken it off during flight, or that the figure to the right took off the helmet in order to grab his beard, there is a much simpler explanation for the flying helmet. The helmet probably could not have fallen from his head nor could it have been knocked squarely off if it was not already in a vulnerable position. Instead of having either figure awkwardly remove the helmet during the course of battle, it is possible that the artist might have depicted the falling of a perched helmet from the head of the military leader during the course of battle. In this, he seems to have used the contemporary iconography of a perched Corinthian helmet to indicate the high ranking military status of the owner of the helmet.

\textsuperscript{403} Certainly I would not discount the idea that a mythical character could have been outfitted in a Corinthian helmet in the manner of Pericles. Indeed, it is entirely possible that the artist might have drawn on familiar iconography of contemporary generals in order to single out commanders in a mythological scene.
While it is true that the south frieze uses clothing to distinguish between Greek and Persian soldiers, any argument about the time period of the action on the west and the north which revolves around the clothing of the soldiers is questionable. At risk of stating the obvious, we must remember that all of the Greek protagonists in the south, west and north friezes are virtually naked. It is fairly certain that the south frieze displayed a scene from the battle of Marathon, but we know for a fact that the Athenians did not battle the invading Persian armies in the nude. Clearly the sculptor was taking some artistic liberties with the historical costumes of the Greeks in the frieze and any attempt to determine the date of the battle by the attire seems off-base. In light of this, it seems somewhat misdirected that we focus attention on whether combatants in the second half of the fifth century wore Corinthian helmets or a certain type of tunic. Like the nude Tyrannicides in the Agora, we should not understand the frieze as an exact recreation of a historical event which sought to render faithfully the combatants’ clothes or even their actions.404

A more fruitful analysis revolves around the horses on block M. In 1973, Hölscher suggested that the presence of these two horses might indicate a historical battle with the Boeotian cavalry and put forth Oinophyta as a possibility.405 The horses are un-mounted and the way the two of them run in unison does not fit with the depiction of Persian cavalry on the south side. Accordingly, Felten, Harrison, and Schultz all identify the two

404 Spivey (1996, 114-5) describes this nudity as a “costume.”

405 Hölscher 1973, 92.
horses as part of a quadriga which had been added in paint in the background.\textsuperscript{406} Although some have doubted this, Schultz recently made a close study of the block and presents additional arguments for identifying the horses as having broken away from a chariot.\textsuperscript{407} Most notably he points to a dowel hole over one of the horses which he thinks held an attachment of two horse heads carved from one piece of marble whose legs would have been added in paint.\textsuperscript{408}

Although I have argued that we should be skeptical about placing action in the realm of myth based on the soldiers’ attire, there can be little doubt that the presence of a chariot in the scene would take the action out of the fifth century. Felten wishes to ground the north side, as well as the entire frieze, in the context of the Trojan War. As some have pointed out, however, there are clear and time-honored ways the Greeks chose to remember the war (mostly after the victory), and this particular scene corresponds to none of them.\textsuperscript{409} Harrison has proposed another more intriguing possibility which has recently gained Schultz’s endorsement, namely that block M, and indeed the entire north frieze, represented the Athenian defense of the Heraclids against Eurystheus’s invasion of

\textsuperscript{406} Felten 1984; Harrison 1997; Schultz 2009.

\textsuperscript{407} Palagia (2009, 186) dismisses this line of argument, claiming that there was no room for the chariot, either in paint or as a separate attachment. But this argument could easily be brushed aside if we assume, with Schultz (2009, 141), that the carriage had broken away and its fragments were added around the block in paint.

\textsuperscript{408} Schultz 2009, 141. He cites a quadriga from the south Parthenon frieze as comparanda.

\textsuperscript{409} Felten (1984, 122-3) suggests Memnon as the character with the falling Corinthian helmet. See Hölscher (1997, 146) for a rebuttal to the Trojan War thesis where he points out that the strict typology of Troilus Achilles, Ajax, Cassandra, Priam, Neoptolemus are all missing here.
Attica.⁴¹⁰ In this reading, the central figure in the chiton is Eurystheus, whose chariot has been wrecked during his attempted escape and is being converged upon by the Athenians. His beard is grabbed by Iolaos and the falling Corinthian helmet foretells his eventual decapitation.⁴¹¹

Given the limited evidence, this is the best solution as it not only explains the perplexing and unprecedented iconography but also coincides nicely with contemporary literature, political rhetoric, and the overall environment of the mid 420’s. It takes no great stretch of the imagination to see why the repulsion of an invasion by a Peloponnesian king would have had particular significance in 425. Euripides’s *The Children of Heracles*, performed in 430 or 429, clearly shows that the story was part of the cultural conversation during the war.⁴¹²

But to my mind, the most convincing piece of evidence is that Herodotus (9.26-7) has the Athenians, while making their case to hold the left flank before Platea, list amongst their *palaia erga* the defending of the Heracleidai.⁴¹³ Like the battle of Megara in the funeral oration of Lysias, the repulsion of Eurystheus is named alongside Marathon as a testament to Athenian *arete*. As we know that the Athenians were eventually correlating both the victory over Eurystheus in mythical times and Myronides’s

---

⁴¹⁰ Harrison 1997; Schultz 2009.

⁴¹¹ Schultz 2009, 144-6.


⁴¹³ Harrison (1997, 117) would like to see another of these deeds, namely the recovery of the bodies of the Seven against Thebes, as the subject of the west frieze, though the evidence does not support such a reading due to the lack of seven bodies and the trophy.

146
annihilation of the Corinthians in 458 in their political rhetoric, this combination of these three battles on the frieze might not seem as odd as it would first appear.

Given that up to this point narrative friezes only depicted mythological scenes, the idea that half of the frieze was devoted to the gods and mythological events is unsurprising. Some have specifically argued against identifying all three battles as historical because it would have meant that more recent struggles against Greeks on the north would have had a more prominent position than Marathon as it would be the only scene visible to those ascending the great ramp into the Acropolis sanctuary.\(^{414}\) Placing the struggle against Eurystheus in this revered position would make sense, of course, as it was the “oldest” and most revered battle of the three.

Is it possible that two battle scenes displayed historical events while a third took its subject from mythology? This division between mythological and historical seems to contradict Andrew Stewart’s explanation for the historical frieze. According to Stewart, in order to understand the historical scenes of the frieze, one must view their relationship to the surrounding sculptural program both on the horizontal and vertical plains.\(^{415}\) In Stewart’s opinion, all three battles on the frieze must be historical because they comprise a horizontal relationship between the mythical and historical deeds which literally and figuratively privileges the divine actions above those of fifth-century Athenians. In his model, the sculptures of the pediment and acroteria, the reliefs of the frieze and the

\(^{414}\) Felten 1984, 124.

\(^{415}\) Stewart 1985, 57.
sculpted parapet make up three distinct horizontal planes. These series of sculptures celebrate Athenian victory and martial prowess in three distinct ways: through myth, history, and allegory respectively.

Although this makes for a tidy analysis, we should not be troubled by two historical battles sharing the frieze with a mythological one. The main problem with Stewart’s analysis is that he assumes that all the scenes on the south, west, and north friezes are historical in nature. Yet Stewart provides no evidence to support this claim. In justifying his model, he fails even to discuss the particulars of the contemporary scenes, stating only that the three historical scenes show examples of “contemporary Athenian arete” (emphasis his) by showing victories over Persians and Greeks by both cavalry and infantry. In lieu of an explanation for his contention that all three battles

---

416 Stewart 1985, 58.

417 Stewart 1985, 58: “If the battles are historical, as I believe they probably are, and feature Athenians as victors, as surely they must, then they present three complementary examples of contemporary Athenian arete in war, against both Persians and Greeks, both cavalry and infantry alike.”
are historical in nature, he relies solely on his model to make that analysis. The circularity of this sort of argument is clear.\footnote{Another criticism would be the idea that Athenians would physically privilege the deeds of mythological past over historical events in a hierarchal relationship on the monument. At first glance, this may seem like common sense but the comparanda he (1985, 55) cites, specifically the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile, do not actually bear this out. In the case of the Tyrannicides, the two statues were free standing and not actually placed next to any other mythical statue group. In fact, as I argued in Chapter 2, they probably brought to mind athletic statues of contemporaries more than cult-statues of gods. Likewise, the historical scenes in the Stoa Poikile were not placed in a subordinate position in the building. The Oinoe and Marathon probably at least equaled the two mythological scenes in size and placement. In fact Stansbury-O’Donnell (2005, 76-77) thinks several aspects of Pausanias’s description indicate that the Marathonomachy was significantly larger than the other three paintings. If so, the Marathon scene would have had the most prized position. These criticisms, however, do not necessarily mean that Stewart’s model is wrong but it would benefit greatly from two things. One, Stewart needs to do a better job of arguing that all the scenes were historical with other evidence outside of his model. Two, Stewart should explain that, as the depiction of historical events on a temple is an innovation, this sort of relationship between the “historical, mythical and allegorical” was unprecedented as well. In this context, his model would benefit from a further explanation of why this new sort of “vertical” celebration of different victories was necessary during this period (e.g. given the pressures of the war, etc.).}

In fact, interpreting the scenes as Marathon, Megara, and the defense of Herakleidai from Eurystheus reveals a much more consistent theme and program relating the three battles. While Stewart claims that these conflicts are thematically similar in that they were “three complementary examples of \textit{contemporary} Athenian \textit{arete} in war,” I would argue that all three scenes were chosen specifically as examples of Athenians repelling invaders and that the theme that connected them, or the program if you will, was Athenian \textit{arete} in defense of Attica, a point which we will explore in depth later.\footnote{Stewart 1985, 58. It is probably telling that Stewart uses the word “contemporary” twice here in the same sentence.}

In a fourth century funeral oration, Lysias seamlessly moves from repelling Eurystheus’s invasion (2.11-4) to the Persian Wars (2.15-47) to the battle of Megara (2.48-53) in describing the great deeds of the Athenians. Lysias and his audience were not troubled by grouping these three events, however much “time” separated them. Likewise,
we should have no trouble accepting the grouping of these three events on the Nike frieze.

Despite the evidence presented above, for some the idea that the Athenians represented historical conflicts against both Persians and other Greeks on the Nike frieze has been hard to accept. The reluctance to interpret battles scenes on the frieze as historical is, in some ways, understandable. After all, the practice of showing narrative scenes of historical battles was unprecedented in Athens and likely the entire Greek world. Arguments against historical interpretations of the frieze have ranged from small iconographic details, as seen earlier, to alleged broader cultural taboos against the practice. On closer inspection, however, neither details on the frieze themselves nor larger ideological reasons can be used to dismiss the scenes as depictions of fifth-century battles.

Let us begin with what is perhaps the most cited argument against identifying the west and north friezes as historical, namely the larger implications of depicting a near-contemporary battle between Athenians and other Greeks. It is often stated that Greek monuments not only did not display scenes of Greeks fighting other Greeks but that this practice was looked down upon and generally discouraged. While representations of

[\textsuperscript{420} Burn 1989, 70: “It seems on the whole unlikely that Megara was sufficiently distant to have been considered appropriate, and to represent the triumph of Athenians over other Greeks could have seemed hybristic…” Jeffery (1965, 50): “that the Athenians should have commemorated this battle [Oinoe] with an actual painting of it seems to me an abnormal action for this period.” Robertson (1975, 348): “That other battles represent the contemporary war of Athens against Sparta, though often asserted, I find it impossible to believe…that Greeks of this period would directly represent such a thing on a temple would need to be demonstrated by far clearer evidence than these generalized scenes provide”.]
Greeks fighting Persians were acceptable, the thinking goes, monumentalizing intra-Greek warfare was unlikely because the act would have been seen as hubristic.

This idea has been repeated so many times that it now seems like accepted doctrine but, at this point, it may be useful to ask where this notion comes from. To be clear, no ancient source states that the Athenians, or any other Greeks for that matter, looked down on the practice. In fact, the only source to even mention intra-Greek warfare being depicted on monuments, Pausanias (1.15.1) in his description of the Oinoe scene in the Stoa Poikile, neither seems surprised nor especially concerned with the ramifications of showing a clash between the Spartans and the Athenians in a fifth-century monument. As we have seen, the depiction of historical events in Greek monuments was so rare that it is hard to see any sort of “rules” about the practice of showing Greeks battling other Hellenes. And yet when we do look at these rare historical monuments the evidence directly contradicts the scholarly consensus about showing warfare between contemporary Greek combatants.

The second Tyrannicide group, erected in 478/7 BC, portrays Harmodius and Aristogeiton charging an unseen opponent. As many have pointed out, although unseen, the figure of Hipparchus looms large in the scene.421 True, it is hard to view the monument without picturing the “tyrant” whose murder lends its name to the statue

421 Stansbury-O'Donnell (1999, 76) says that putting the viewer in the place of Hipparchus was an attempt to engage the viewer. Neer (2002, 177-8) has a slightly different view. He thinks taking Hipparchus out of action of the statue group perpetuates the act while placing the victim on vase paintings shows it to be a onetime deed. I would argue that the difference in the two representations (i.e. with or without Hipparchus) can probably be attributed to the respective media of the representations. Placing a large statue of the victim being stabbed in the Agora would entail a far more graphic murder scene which might have been offensive to those Peisistratids still in Athens.
group. It goes without saying that this monument showed two Athenians murdering another Athenian. Admittedly, the Peisistratids were considered disgraced and odious Athenians. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue that the Athenians were comfortable with showing the murder of a fellow citizen yet shied away from presenting a defeat of the Corinthian League members who had been ravaging Athenian lands for half a decade.

Likewise, according to Pausanias, the Stoa Poikile’s Oinoe scene displayed the prelude to a clash between Spartan and Athenian forces.\textsuperscript{422} Although the date and even the action portrayed on this painting is famously in doubt, if Pausanias is to be believed, the scene reveals no hesitancy on the part of the Athenians to honor defeats of fellow Greeks in monumental scenes.

Even if there was a reluctance to show intra-Greek warfare on monuments before the war, a claim which is tenuous given the small sample of historical monuments in general, it is quite feasible that particular hardships of the conflict both inspired leaders to look for new ways to promote this prolonged struggle and altered what the citizen body deemed acceptable. Indeed, there may be some indication that the Athenians have begun to compare the Spartan invasions to the Persian invasions, a point to which we will return in our last section.

To quote Pemberton, “The decision to show battles against other Greeks, not just against barbarians, need not surprise us. In a time of confused loyalties and civic disorder,

\textsuperscript{422} As we saw in the last chapter, only the theory by Francis and Vickers (1985) that the scene showed the Athenians meeting their Greek allies before Marathon would discount the “Greek vs. Greek” theory. Although this theory has won some proponents (Castriota 1992, 78-9; Boardman 2005, 67), surely these supporters of the Francis and Vickers solution were influenced by the commonly accepted idea that the Athenians would not show battles against other Greeks on monuments.
it might have been necessary to see other Greeks cast in the role of barbarians, in order to make the aims of the war clear to citizens.” Accordingly, there is evidence that during the run-up to the war and during the war, Athenians juxtaposed invasions of Attica by the Dorians to the Persian incursions on Attic soil both in speeches and art. In the first year of the war, Thucydides (2.36.4) has Pericles reminding the Athenians how they and their fathers beat back both barbarian and Greek aggression (*barbaron è Ellêna polemion*). It has been recently proposed that the Oinoe painting represented a battle between the Spartans and Athenians on the Attic-Boeotian border in 431. According to this thesis, the Oinoe scene was added to the Stoa Poikile alongside the portrait of Marathon sometime in the 420’s. If this is to be believed, it would show that the Athenians were attempting to compare the recent Spartan invasions to Marathon in images as well as in words during this period.

To review, the only evidence that the Athenians or any Greeks discouraged representations of contemporary Greek vs. Greek warfare seems to be an argument from supposed “silence.” And yet, when we review the history of Athenian historical monuments constructed before the Athena Nike temple, we see no such silence. Rather, it would seem that the Athenian predecessors to the Athena Nike temple openly displayed

---

423 Pemberton 1972, 310.


425 Taylor (1998, 238) tentatively suggests dates of 425 or 421, corresponding to the victory at Pylos or the Peace of Nikias, respectively.
combat between near-contemporary Greeks. Given the rarity of historical monuments, we should feel comfortable in dismissing this argument.

While the prohibition (or even reluctance) against monumentalizing Greek vs. Greek warfare seems to be a modern construction, another similar ideological argument has been used to dismiss the notion that the north and west friezes represented historical battles. Along the same lines, some have rejected historical subjects for the west and north sides of the frieze due to the proximity of the events shown in the frieze.

Interestingly, those who would reject the idea that conflicts from the Peloponnesian War could have been shown on the west and north frieze have no problem with accepting Marathon as the inspiration for the south frieze. For these scholars, there is a clear difference between the “mythohistorical” Marathon and near contemporary battles which many of the citizens viewing the Nike frieze in the 420’s would have remembered. The appearance of the Marathon scene on the frieze, in a position which up to this point had been reserved for mythological tales, can be explained simply by the elevation of this event to the realm of myth in the eyes of the Athenians. In short, Marathon belonged to the realm of myth in the popular imagination and therefore was acceptable for the subject of a temple frieze; other historical battles were simply that, historical, and therefore were unfit to be honored on the monument.

---

426 Hurwit (2004, 186) notes that a Marathonian subject was suitable because, by the 420’s, the battle was “almost legendary.” Hurwit says that Marathon had taken a “mythic” quality and cites the worship of the Marathonomachoi as heroes.

427 Robertson 1981, 123. Burn (1989, 70), including Platea in this, states that these two battles had been “assimilated in the heroic past of Athens and therefore might have been legitimate subjects for the frieze.”
The assumption that Marathon was already considered to be “mythological” and therefore acceptable for the frieze betrays what Leslie Kurke calls “the reflectionist model of the relation of politics and culture.” As briefly discussed in Chapter 2, Kurke takes issue with the notion that art and culture are merely reflections or “shadows” of political ideology. Rather, she advocates seeing cultural production as a contributor in the cultural conversation which actively shaped public opinion.

Clearly, the same sort of critique can be applied to the argument that Marathon’s appearance can only be attributed to the battle having already taken on a “mythological” status and that more recent battles, such as 458’s battle of Megara, could not have been portrayed on the Nike temple because they had not yet reached this standing. As we saw in the last chapter, most would agree that in the case of the Stoa Poikile and the Eion herms, Cimon and his circle were attempting to elevate Marathon and Eion to the levels of the great deeds of the mythical past by juxtaposing these recent deeds with legendary feats. The same could be said about the Tyrannicides, statues which the supporters of the reforms of Cleisthenes erected in order to present a sordid murder as a heroic act with Homeric connotations. They were not erected because the murder had become integrated

---

428 Kurke 1998, 155-6. Although I generally agree with Kurke on this point, her advocacy contra the reflection involves a shift from the author and artists who produced the cultural materials to the audience who received them. As this dissertation focuses mostly on the commission of these pieces, the analysis here is only focused on the audience in one respect, namely the ability to put forth a monument which would not offend the public.

429 For the Stoa, Marathon was presented as at least equal to the sacking of Troy and the Amazonomachy and, if the painting was larger, perhaps the implication was that Marathon was a greater victory. In the case of the Eion herms inscription (Aeschines Against Ctesiphon 183; Plutarch Cim. 7.4-8.1), the juxtaposition of the recent victories in the east and Menetheus’s sacking of Troy in epigram was apparently too transparent for the demos who insisted the names of the generals not be placed on the monument.
into the realm of legend but rather in order to create a new one. If the Tyrannicides, Eion Herms, and the Stoa Poikile could be used as a tool to “mythologize” recent historical events, could the Athena Nike frieze not have functioned in a similar manner?

Admittedly, Myronides’s defeat of the Corinthians was a generation closer to the Nike temple than Marathon. This may present a problem for some as it is often assumed in modern scholarship that, in order to memorialize a historical event in a monument, there must have been some temporal distance between the incident and the commission of a public monument.430 “Mythologizing” a historical event, however, does not necessarily entail a significant temporal distance from the events they portrayed.431 The sculptures of Harmodius and Aristogeiton sought to “mythologize” the murder of Hipparchus almost immediately, most likely within a decade of the act. These same men, as well as the Marathonomachoi, were the recipients of hero cult very soon after their deaths.432 Given the thirty years between the battle at Megara and the Athena Nike, we need not dismiss the identification of the south and west friezes as historical battles based on this critique.

430 Stansbury-O’Donnell (2005, 80) seems to be addressing this oft-cited idea that the Athenians needed some amount of time before erecting a historical monument when he states “There is still the problem of representing such a recent historical battle…” To his credit, Stansbury-O’Donnell later argues against this being a “problem,” though the fact that he feels the need to address it at all speaks to the widespread acceptance of this premise.

431 Castriota 1998, 204: “The Tyrannicides may be seen to assume a mythic dimension particularly on the model proposed more recently by Bruce Lincoln (1989: 23-37), in which events do not need to be removed in time to qualify as myth.”

432 Taylor 1981, 21. The cult of Harmodius and Aristogeiton is generally thought to have been instituted sometime during the last decade of the sixth century.
Ultimately, arguments which rely on mores, habits, or rules about the appropriateness of depicting historical scenes on monuments are unsatisfying. We must remember that commissioning contemporary battle scenes to be sculpted on a temple was itself a completely new notion. To our knowledge, this was the first time this had ever happened in the history of Greek temple design. Given the unprecedented nature of the frieze, one should be hesitant in assigning “rules” which governed its commission. We still must account for this shift from wholly mythological friezes to one which combined both “ancient” and “modern” victory. This puzzling question will be taken up in the next section.

The Argument

As a victory monument, these battle scenes reflected the supremacy of Athenian character and arete. In this, the Nike temple is not all that different from other temples, victory monuments, or martially-inspired votives. And yet, with the exception of the Stoa Poikile, Athenian monuments looked to achieve similar goals without actually depicting historical events on a victory monument and certainly never on a temple. Simply put, what happened in the 420’s to account for this change? This section will explore several possibilities such as the influence of democracy and imperialism before turning to the events and overall environment in the fall of 425. It is only within the context of the Archidamian War, especially the changes to Athenian society and the internal debates

---

which it brought about, that we can explain the elevation of historical events to temple iconography.

**The Historical Frieze and Democracy**

In the last two chapters we explored the idea that depictions of historical events on Athenian monuments were inspired by the democratic constitution. For both the portraits of the recently deceased Tyrannicides and the historical painting of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile, we found that democratic ideology played a relatively small role in inspiring these contemporary historical depictions. With regards to the Tyrannicides, we found that the supporters of the Cleisthenic reforms, looking to downplay the novelty of the new system rather than to publicize its radical changes, most likely drew upon contemporary athletic sculpture to honor Harmodius and Aristogeiton. Subsequently, isonomic and democratic ideology actually *discouraged* the Athenians from honoring any other citizen in the same manner for the entire fifth century.

Along similar lines, the Stoa Poikile’s depiction of one or multiple historical events also does not seem to have been inspired by a new “democratic temporality.” Rather, the juxtaposition of mythical and historical represents a typical aristocratic strategy of advancing personal claims. Furthermore, it was suggested that the experience of empire rather than democracy brought about the Stoa’s Marathon painting. By drawing on Eastern traditions of large-scale painting and monumental historical depictions, I argued that Cimon and his circle were intentionally alluding to the East in order to
negotiate and glorify the emerging role of Athens as imperial hegemon over the poleis of
the Delian Confederacy.

Although it would appear that it was not democracy or democratic temporality
which inspired these other two Athenian monumental historical depictions, this does not
necessarily mean that historical battles on the Athena Nike frieze were not the result of
democratic ideology. Could the historical scenes of the Nike temple reflect a democratic
interest in the present after thirty years of radical democracy?

Despite the fame and esteem of the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile, the
construction of monuments which publicly displayed historical scenes would not be
repeated in Athens for approximately another forty years after the construction of the
Stoa.\footnote{Csapo and Miller 1998, 117: “After a hiatus, historical subjects seem to reappear in 430-400...”}
Before we examine the role democratic ideology played (or perhaps did not play)
in inspiring historical battle scenes on the temple, we first need to briefly review the
period between the Stoa Poikile and the Nike temple and, if possible, to account for the
absence of historical representations.

Csapo and Miller allege that Athens shows interest in historical subjects for
cultural production during two periods, namely ca. 530-460 and 430-400 BC.\footnote{Csapo and Miller 1998, 117-8.} The
reason for these changes, they allege, is to be found in the democratic political
environment of those intervals. In keeping with their claim that historical representations
were a result of a democratic interest in the present, they claim that these two periods
represent the years where the “demos was most self-assertive.” Simply put, Csapo and Miller argue that the use of historical subjects was a result of democracy, and therefore the lack of historical monuments between 460-430 must be explained by a weakened demos.

This characterization of these two periods is puzzling, to say the least, given the rise of the radical democracy after the reforms of Ephialtes in 462/1 BC. Portraying the time after Ephialtes’s reforms as a period where the demos was less “assertive” only makes sense if, like Csapo and Miller and others, one has argued that historical representations and an interest in contemporary events were inspired by democratic ideology. Those who use the rise of democratic perceptions of time to explain historical representations are in the awkward position of accounting for the absence of historical subjects on monuments in the period following the reforms of Ephialtes. In a sense, in order to connect historical monumentalization with an empowered demos, one must ignore much of the commonly accepted narrative about the development of democracy throughout the fifth century.

At this point, let us review the events in question. In the 460’s, at the height of his political dominance, the aristocrat Cimon and his circle commissioned the Peisianakteion and attempted to name Miltiades on the Stoa’s Marathon scene and the commanding generals on the Eion herms and, in both attempts, were rebuffed by the demos. In 462/1, Cimon was ostracized and radical democrats brought about the reforms of Ephialtes

436 Csapo and Miller 1998, 118.
which granted new and unprecedented powers to the demos. Following the events of 462/1, both the practice of representing recent events on monuments and naming public buildings after private individuals stopped for about a generation. During this period, we are told by Plutarch (*Pericles* 14.1-2) that the assembly rejected Pericles’s offer to pay for and name a building after himself and (*Pericles* 31.4-5) that Phidias was arrested for placing portraits of himself and Pericles in the Amazonomachy on the shield of Athena Parthenos.

Given this established sequence of events, it is very difficult to posit that the increased power of the demos led to the adoption of historical scenes on public monuments. In fact, the evidence above reveals exactly the opposite. The demos was clearly mistrustful of any public monument which singled out an individual for praise over society as a whole. Precisely for this reason, historical representations of battles won by particular generals, public portrait statues, and lavish private monuments, all of which threatened to tip the scales, as it were, towards one individual or family, disappear in the 30 year period following the Ephialtic reforms.

In the introduction we saw how the egalitarian nature of Archaic Greece, a period in some ways defined by the domination of politics by powerful individuals, most likely prevented the production of portraiture, historical representations, and monumental honors for individuals outside of athletics. It seems counterintuitive to posit that the adoption of a radically democratic system of government, where citizens actually voted

---

437 Raaflaub 2007, 106.
to exile influential politicians, caused this trend to be reversed. If anything, the new
powers of the demos following the legislation of 462/1 strengthened not only their
reserve but also their practical ability to do something about it.

While Csapo and Miller might be correct that the period of 430-00 saw a renewed
interest in historical subjects for cultural production, one to which they attribute the Nike
temple’s Marathonomachy, it is significantly harder to connect this to a strengthened
democratic spirit, ideology or temporality during this time. In fact, not only does the
material evidence from this era fail to support the idea of a renewed “democratic spirit,”
it specifically shows that the influence of democracy over the monumental genres
actually weakened in this period.

It has been noted several times in this study that it is difficult to see the impact of
democracy on the monumental genre and, for the most part, this is true. A notable
exception would be the sumptuary legislation banning lavish private gravestones.

According to Cicero (de Leg. 2.64-5), the Athenians banned lavish grave monuments
“some time after” Solon, often referred as the post aliquanto law. Although the source
for the edict is suspiciously late, and we do not hear about it from any Greek source, this
supposed sumptuary legislation corresponds to a decline in sculpted grave monuments
beginning around 500-480 and to the absence of such monuments from Athenian
cemeteries for most of the fifth century. Whether one accepts a legal prohibition or larger

438 For the lack of democratic ideology in monumental art, see Burn 1989.

439 The law, if it truly existed, banned tombs with herms and opus tectorium which were mostly likely
painted plaques. For more details see Humphreys 1980, 101-2. Stears (2000, 49) concludes that opus
tectorium probably referred to any stone stele.
cultural constraints, most would tie the absence of lavish funeral displays, with their heroic and aristocratic connotations, directly to democratic and egalitarian ideology.\textsuperscript{440}

It may be telling then that beginning around 430, in an era which Csapo and Miller allege saw a surge in democratic promotion of historical subjects, opulent sculpted grave-markers reappear in Athenian cemeteries.\textsuperscript{441} The one concrete example of the demos exerting their egalitarian ideology on the production of monuments fades away in the wake of the war and the plague. Most would see this as reflecting a larger shift in attitudes away from the polis-centered egalitarian ideology promoted by Pericles to the celebration of the individual \textit{oikos} and private families.\textsuperscript{442} Far from the demos “asserting” their ideology, the Peloponnesian War (and the plague, destruction, and death which it helped to bring about) actually weakened the ability of the demos to prohibit conspicuous consumption or, at any rate, their desire to do so.

Not only is it unlikely that the choice of historical subjects can be attributed to a surge in democratic ideology in the post-430 era but the very notion that Athens was somehow “more democratic” during the rise of the radical democrats is, in itself, a flawed one. While many view Cleon as a radical democrat, this characterization is based on a

\textsuperscript{440} Morris (1994, 76) is doubtful of the law but says that supposed legislation represents real social pressures at this time. Nevertheless, he (1994, 83) concludes that “from 500 to 430 almost all Athenians felt that lavish funerals that evoked images of an heroic and aristocratic past would be a breach of acceptable behavior.” Stears (2000, 45) speculates that the legislation was presented in strictly democratic terms but might reflect the values of Spartan \textit{homoioi} and could have been proposed by Cimon.

\textsuperscript{441} Humphreys 1980, 112; Mikalson 1984, 223-4; Kallet 2009, 112; Oakley 2009, 218-219. A notable exception to this date would be Stears (2000) who sees the trend reversing with the erection of small stone \textit{steele} c. 450 which developed into large sculpted monuments in the 420’s.

\textsuperscript{442} Kallet (2009, 112) cites Nicias’s (Thuc. 6.9.2) statement that being a good citizen involves looking out for one’s own property and person as reflecting this larger shift in the relationship between polis and individual.
modern conflation of “democrat” and “demagogue” which, as Mabel Lang reminds us, was certainly not the same thing.\textsuperscript{443} Despite Cleon’s keen manipulation of the system, he was probably generally hostile to democracy.\textsuperscript{444} Lang even goes as far as to suggest that Cleon might have been the author behind the \textit{Athenaion Politeia} of Pseudo-Xenophon.\textsuperscript{445} Whether or not Cleon was truly “The Old Oligarch,” we must put aside the notion that the period marked by his dominance represented a more radically democratic spirit which produced the Nike temple’s historical representations.

Moreover, this analysis of Cleon’s feelings towards democracy misses the point. While it may be true that Cleon’s victory at Pylos might have been the inspiration for the construction of the temple, as Schultz alleges, and that the demagogue may have had some hand in its commission, it is harder to argue that the building displayed any particular political ideology. Even if he was involved in the design of the monument, Cleon was not looking to promote a democratic ideology or, like Cleisthenes, promote a novel democratic constitution. Instead, he was concerned with his own victory and with his policy of continued war against Sparta. This temple, like most fifth-century Athenian buildings, was not a “democratic” monument but an Athenocentric one.

Some have seen specific democratic messages in the frieze, yet these arguments too are far from persuasive. Stewart suggests that the nudity helped, in part, to blur class

\textsuperscript{443} Lang 1972, 163. Pericles too was a \textit{demagogos}, albeit one sympathetic to democracy.

\textsuperscript{444} Lang 1972, 163: “It seems certain that Cleon was an anti-democrat…” She thinks his sympathies were oligarchic and that he probably would have aimed to become a tyrant if the situation in Athens was different.

\textsuperscript{445} Lang 1972, 165-7.
distinctions in a monument which celebrated the victories of an egalitarian polis.\textsuperscript{446} The general anonymity of the soldiers in the freeze as well as their homogenous costumes almost certainly reflects the wariness of Athenians to single out individuals for distinction in monumental art. It does not, however, explain the decision to place historical scenes on a temple nor does it support the idea that democracy inspired the historical frieze. In the end, like the Tyrannicides and the Stoa Poikile before it, the adoption of historical scenes on the Nike temple probably cannot be attributed to the democracy or a new democratic temporality.

\textbf{Athena Nike, Ionia and the Parthenon Frieze}

The practice of representing individuals and historical events on monuments was far more common in the Eastern Aegean and the greater Near East. In the last chapter, I argued that the Stoa Poikile’s program, with its large paintings and historical representations, reflected a society which was now looking to the East after the Persian Wars. It is possible that Athena Nike, an Ionic temple planned near the height of Athenian imperial power, may have reflected similar Eastern influences which could account for the historical scenes on the frieze.

At first glance, this might appear to be an intriguing possibility. Mattingly argues that both the Nike Temple Decree (\textit{IG I\textsuperscript{3} 35}) and the Great Reassessment of tribute of the

\textsuperscript{446} Stewart 1985, 64.
allies (IG I3 71) were passed in the very same prytany, that of Leontis in 425.447 While this may be purely coincidental, it might also be indicative of the focus on empire at this time and could even explain how the Athenians planned to pay for the temple. Furthermore, the Nike temple was one of the first ever wholly Ionic buildings in all of Athens and corresponds to the increasing use of the Ionic order for construction of Athenian buildings throughout the fifth century. Some have tied this trend to an Athenian desire to play up its Ionian connections to its Empire and to illustrate their divisions with the Dorian origins of the Spartans.448

Despite the politics of the time or the order of the building, we simply cannot attribute the historical scene to Ionian or Eastern influence. Though it is true that Archaic Ionian friezes were not exclusively concerned with mythological affairs and frequently displayed chariots and riders, they were nevertheless still mostly decorative.449 Narrative scenes on Ionian friezes only began in Delphi in the sixth century when, according to Ridgway, Doric narrative practices were applied to the free space of the Ionic frieze.450 In the case of the Stoa’s historical paintings, we saw clear precedents in the defeat of the Magnesians by Boularchos and Mandrocles’s dedication. The Nike frieze, however, was very different from the Ionic friezes of the past in displaying historical events. This is

447 Mattingly 2000.
449 Ridgway 1966, 194.
unprecedented for Ionian temples and, unlike the Stoa Poikile, it is hard to see any Eastern influence here.

While it is unlikely that the historical scenes on the Nike frieze reflect specifically Ionian influence, we might be tempted to link the Nike frieze to another Ionic frieze which does shows a narrative scene yet does not represent a mythological event. One scholar has suggested that the Parthenon frieze was a depiction of a real historical event.\textsuperscript{451} If so, there may be a case for associating these two Ionic friezes, which were separated only by a few years and meters. This idea will be considered here.

The issues surrounding the interpretation of the Nike frieze seem somewhat minor when compared to those generated by the perennial enigma that is the Parthenon frieze, arguably the most heuristically problematic monument in all of Greek art. The Parthenon frieze, begun in 442 and completed sometime around 438, was famously ignored by ancient sources, making interpretation of the scene extremely difficult but also a rich topic for modern scholarship.\textsuperscript{452}

Since Stuart and Revett, the Parthenon frieze has generally been accepted, with a few notable exceptions, as a depiction of the Panathenaic procession.\textsuperscript{453} In line with this interpretation, John Boardman has proposed that the frieze represents a specific historical

\textsuperscript{451} Boardman 1977. See below.

\textsuperscript{452} Although Pausanias (1.24.5) describes the pediments of the Parthenon and the Phidiean cult statue, he does not mention the frieze. For date see Stewart 1997, 75.

\textsuperscript{453} A notable exception would be Joan Connelly (1996) who has argued that the frieze represents a specific mythological scene, namely the ceremony leading up to the self-sacrifice of King Erechtheus’s youngest daughter. This interpretation, however, has failed to garner widespread support.
event, the Panathenaic procession of 490 preceding Marathon.\textsuperscript{454} His theory is based primarily on a count of the male figures in the procession which, if one discounts the charioteers, equals 192, which would match Herodotus’s estimate of the dead at Marathon.\textsuperscript{455} If Boardman is correct, and the frieze represents a specific historical event which recalled the events before Marathon, a strong case could be made that the Athena Nike frieze either intentionally recalled the Parthenon frieze with another historical scene or supplemented it by showing the battle after the 490 Panathenaia.

Boardman’s thesis, however, has found few adherents. The frieze is probably the first example of Athenian temple sculpture to depict a contemporary event, albeit in this case a recurring one, namely the Panathenaic procession. But this should not be thought of as a singular historical event.\textsuperscript{456} Unlike the battles on other pieces of temple sculpture, the frieze did not depict a unique event, either mythical or historical, and one should not try to place the scene within a specific time period. Rather, we should view the procession as taking place within an “an idealized present.”\textsuperscript{457} To quote Pollitt:

\begin{quote}
We should understand the frieze not as a kind of documentary picture of a single event but as an evocation of all the ceremonies, contests, and forms of training that made up the cultural and religious life of Classical Athens.\textsuperscript{458}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{454} Boardman 1977; Boardman 1984, 210.

\textsuperscript{455} Boardman 1977.

\textsuperscript{456} Though the identification of the Parthenon as a typical “temple” is a debatable point, all of its architectural elements were drawn from the traditional Doric and Ionic orders with only slight modification.

\textsuperscript{457} Neils 2005, 221.

\textsuperscript{458} Pollitt 1997, 63.
The frieze should be thought of as an expression of ideology and ideals rather than a specific event or moment in time. In the end, we should not consider the Parthenon frieze as a “historical” representation because, unlike the Marathon scene either on the Stoa Poikile or the Nike temple, the frieze was not to be understood as showing an event in 490, as Boardman has suggested. In light of this, it is unlikely that we can attribute the historical nature of the Nike frieze to an attempt to imitate the Parthenon frieze.

Despite the implausibility of Boardman’s theory, there is still some evidence that the frieze of the Nike temple, if not directly inspired by a historical frieze on the Parthenon, reflected the themes of the Parthenon. Indeed, the two monuments share much in common and it is hard to deny that, at least in some respects, the “Nike’s temple decoration follows but extends the program of the Parthenon,” in the words of Hölscher.\(^{459}\) In particular, Hölscher sees the historical scenes on the Nike frieze as taking the themes of the Parthenon (most notably the Athenian struggle against the “other”) and applying them to historical times and situations.\(^{460}\)

On the other hand, this sort of interpretation seems somewhat unsatisfying. One might argue, for example, that themes of Athenian superiority and victory over others, be it Persians, mythological foes, or even other Greeks, run throughout most if not all of the monuments of fifth-century Athens. The Nike temple might have intentionally reflected the themes and even drew inspiration from the East frieze of the Parthenon. But this

\(^{459}\) Hölscher 1998, 173.

\(^{460}\) Hölscher 1998, 174.
theory, much like Andrew Stewart’s “contemporary arete,” still does not explain how or why the Parthenon’s themes of Athenian arete were reworked into historical scenes. In order to account for this shift, we must look to the changes brought about by the Peloponnesian War.

To sum up, it is unlikely that the Nike’s historical battle scenes can be attributed to imperial ideology, Ionic precedents, or the influence of the Parthenon frieze. Although friezes from Ionia and the Parthenon present a more contemporary “flavor,” the only thing Ionic or Eastern about the north, west, and south scenes is that they appear on an Ionic frieze.

While is difficult to say whether or not the choice to display historical scenes on the frieze of the temple came from the same impulse to display the battle of Marathon in the Stoa Poikile, it is impossible to deny that the two buildings shared much in common. Indeed, there are many pieces of evidence which connect the Stoa Poikile and the Athena Nike temple and it is highly likely that the later temple, in some way, intentionally recalled the Painted Stoa in its program.461

As we saw above, Harrison believes the south frieze to be a Marathonomachy but her analysis goes beyond merely suggesting that the south frieze exhibited Marathonian glory and adhered closely to Herodotus’s account. Harrison thinks that the sculptural piece was, at least in part, modeled on the Marathon mural painted for the Stoa Poikile.

461 Castriota (1992, 179) says that if Felton is correct that the west and north sides show Trojan conflicts, and the south specifically depicts Marathon, the pairing of Trojan and Persian War themes in the Nike intentionally reflected the Stoa’s program.
some forty years earlier.\footnote{462} Several aspects of the frieze, she claims, are reminiscent of Pausanias’s account of the Marathon painting and she attempts to name specific characters in the Nike frieze by comparing them to counterparts on the Stoa’s Marathonomachy painting. Yet it is clear that looking for similarities between the frieze and a painting which does not exist is fraught with difficulties and I would tend to agree with Palagia’s criticism that Harrison “stretches the evidence and weakens her argument.”\footnote{463} But even if the south frieze was not directly modeled on the Marathon painting in the Stoa, this is not to say that the Stoa, in some sense, did not inspire the idea of representing Marathon on the south frieze.

In fact, archaeological evidence might indicate a close connection between the two buildings, aside from the fact that they both displayed historical scenes. A new and convincing study has revealed that, after Sphacteria, Cleon most likely distributed the famed Spartan shields among the two monuments. Based on a passage from Aristophanes (\textit{Knights} 843-59) and archaeological evidence, Lippman, Scahill, and Schultz have proposed that the famous shields which the Athenians confiscated after Sphacteria were not all displayed in the Stoa Poikile, as has long been suspected.\footnote{464} The recent discovery of a Spartiate shield, apparently disposed of around the third century BC and therefore unable to have been seen by Pausanias in the Stoa Poikile, has raised concerns about whether the shields were only exhibited in one location. Rather, they suggest, the 120

\footnote{462} Harrison 1972. This idea is endorsed by Stewart 1990, 165. 
\footnote{463} Palagia 2005, 184-5. 
\footnote{464} Lippman, Scahill, and Schultz 2006.
shields were divided up with some being mounted in the Stoa and the rest hung up on the parapet. This would explain the approximately 99 pairs of curious cuttings on the parapet, which seem to have held hooks upon which one could attach a *hoplon* if it still had its handle.\(^{465}\) These hooks would then explain an odd conversation between Sausage-Seller and Demos (*Knights* 843-59) about the dangers of the shields being mounted with handles.

Specifically placing the shields in these two places might circumstantially imply that there was already some sort of connection between the Stoa and the Nike temple complex in the mid 420’s. Unless the decision to distribute the shields between these two monuments was random, it seems Cleon was drawing on an association between these two monuments which celebrated contemporary Athenian military achievements in art.

A recent suggestion by Jeremy Taylor regarding the Stoa’s Oinoe scene might further speak to a connection between the decorative programs of the Stoa Poikile and the Nike temple.\(^{466}\) Taylor suggests that the Oinoe scene in the Stoa did not take place in Argive Oinoe, as Pausanias states, but rather the painting was a depiction of a failed siege of a fort in Oinoe on the Attic-Boeotian border by Archidamus in 431 BC. Although a relatively minor skirmish, Taylor suggests that the event had particular resonance with the Athenians, who chose to glorify the repulsion of the Spartans army in order to reassure citizens concerned by Spartan incursions into Attic territory. If this can be believed, the


\(^{466}\) Taylor 1998.
Oinoe scene would have been added to the Stoa Poikile in the 420’s, making the commemoration of this historical event roughly contemporary with the Nike temple. The Athenians then would be commissioning depictions of fifth-century battles at the same time for both monuments.⁴⁶⁷

There seems to be a case for some sort of connection between these monuments and Harrison is no doubt correct in citing the Stoa Poikile’s Marathon scene as an inspiration, if not the inspiration, for the south frieze. At this point, it may be tempting merely to say that the historical scenes were inspired by or even copied from the Stoa Poikile, but this theory ultimately fails to account for the variations between the two “historical monuments.” While Harrison and others may have shown that the historical paintings of the Stoa set a precedent for monumental depictions of historical events in Athens, they have mostly failed to explain why the designers of the Nike temple frieze would choose to take this historical scene and place it on a temple.⁴⁶⁸ Furthermore, the Nike frieze appears to have one or possibly even two other historical scenes which could not have been inspired by the Stoa. Given these variations, one suspects the motives and inspirations for depicting historical events on the Nike frieze go far beyond merely imitating other buildings. This section will attempt to put the decision to sculpt these historical battles into a larger societal, ideological, and political context.

⁴⁶⁷ Given the treacherous nature of the Oinoe debate, perhaps we should not take this idea too far. Taylor’s (1998) ideas are interesting and he certainly proves that the invasions were on the minds of many Athenians but unfortunately the article spends a lot of time making an argument for an idea that really cannot be proven. Unless more evidence arises, I think it is time we abandon the hunt for the “truth” behind the Oinoe scene.

⁴⁶⁸ Harrison, for her part, generally seems more interested in trying to identify individual figures in the south frieze.
The Archidamian War, Attic Territory and the Debate Over Peace

As we have just seen, we can not necessarily attribute the historical frieze to democracy, imperialism, Eastern influences, or a desire to imitate the Stoa Poikile. Rather, I will argue that the explanation for the frieze can be found among the litany of changes brought about in the wake of an all-encompassing war and an unimaginably devastating plague. The next section will review the psychological effects brought about by the unique nature of the Archidamian war and, more importantly, the responses of the Athenians during the 420’s.

This section will first attempt to situate the historical frieze within the debate over continuing the war in 425. In this, I hope to show that the unusual nature of the conflict created extreme anxiety over the invasions of Attic territory and that the historical scenes on the frieze served to assuage fears about territorial integrity in order to convince a war-weary demos to continue the struggle. The analysis will then turn to the topic of Athenian religion during the war, in which it will be argued that that the adoption of new historical iconography on a temple can, in part, be attributed a willingness to alter traditional religious practices as a result of the plague.

Certainly it is not hard to see a triumphal quality to the Nike temple, as one would expect from such a significant dedication to this particular aspect of the goddess. This is not surprising given the environment which saw its commission and dedication. The Athenians had just pulled off an improbable victory over the Spartans at Pylos who, for
the moment, had stopped their annual invasions. In the words of Schultz, “With 120
Spartans held hostage, nothing stood between Athens and its dream of hegemony. It was
during this climate of triumph -- this ecstatic climate of victory -- that the construction
and adornment of the temple of Athena Nike was completed.”

Was the atmosphere truly “an ecstatic climate of victory” as Schultz alleges?

We know that the assembly rejected ultimately rejected Spartan pleas for peace during the
stalemate at Pylos and after Cleon and Demothenes’s victory at Sphacteria, but we should
not see this as the opinion of the whole community, nor should we assume this to be a
static position. Rather, the sources reflect a far more nuanced division in public opinion
concerning peace with Sparta throughout the war and even after the unexpected triumph
at Sphacteria.

From even before the war, plague, and Spartan invasions, Thucydides (1.139.3-4)
makes mention of those who wished to rescind the Megarian Decree rather than fight.
Although Pericles himself persuaded them to do otherwise, he again was forced to talk
the assembly out of suing for peace after the second invasion. Clearly the large faction

469 Schultz 2009, 152.

470 Hölsher (1998, 176) uses a similar term to describe the Athena Nike parapet: “euphoric.”

471 This point is made by Kallet 2009, 103.

472 It is almost a trope to speak of the feeling of victory in the city but I find this hard to believe.
Thucydides clearly states just how unforeseen the victory was, stating (4.40) that nothing more unexpected
happened in the entire war. Indeed, the Athenians lost badly at Delion in 424, marking this incident as an
exception. Given that no one thought Cleon would be successful (Thuc. 4.28.5) and that success did not
actually last, can we really believe that all of Athens saw this as a permanent shift in the war? Perhaps the
Nike temple was an attempt to convince themselves that victory was actually at hand.

473 Thuc. 2.59.
who desired peace was emboldened by the destruction of their property, and it is hard to believe that after three more seasons of Spartan raids they would not have found more supporters.

No doubt the best example of the war-weariness of the Athenian people was the Lenaia victory of Aristophanes’s *Acharnians* in the winter of 425, mere months before the victory at Sphacteria. The main character, Dicaiopolis, is so fed up both with war and with those politicians who advocate it that he famously makes his own peace with Sparta. For the large part of the population which these sort of views represented, the capture of the Spartans at Pylos provided a much desired opportunity for peace. According to Lisa Kallet, “Those Athenians, for whom Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* not only was funny and fantastical but also spoke to a genuine interest in peace, might well also have seen in the victory [at Sphacteria] a chance for peace that would now more than ever before be on terms decidedly to Athens’ advantage.”

On the other side of this debate was, of course, the aggressive policies advocated by Cleon. We know from Thucydides (4.21-2) that Cleon was the main voice against making peace during the stalemate at Pylos, but a passage from Plutarch (*Pericles* 3.38) implies that Cleon was urging a more belligerent policy than Pericles even in the early stages of the war. Philochorus, in the scholia to *Peace* (665), says that Cleon was against making peace with the Spartans. Similarly, in a passage from *Knights* (794-5), the

---


475 Hornblower (1987, 55-6) suggests that he was one those advocating war in Thucydides 1.139, but was not given a speech because Thucydides wished to introduce Cleon later after Pericles’s death.
Sausage-Seller disagrees with the statement of Cleon (in the guise of Paphlagon) that he is a friend of the Demos, pointing out that he chases away those bringing envoys of peace.476

Given the contrast between Cleon’s policies and the faction that desperately wanted to sue for peace throughout the war, I suggest that we should see the temple and its program within this contest, both in the context of the specific debate over peace during and after the events at Pylos and in the wider discourse over continuing the war in general.

There are many pieces of evidence associating Cleon and his policies with the Nike temple. If Mattingly can be believed, the Nike temple seems to have been commissioned soon after his victory at Sphacteria.477 Schultz finds it especially significant that the Decree on the Payment of the Athena Priestess was passed in the same year (424/3) Cleon was elected general and was possibly given priority seating in the theater as well as meals in the Prytaneion.478 If the Great Reassessment of tribute was truly moved in the same prytany as the Nike Temple Decree, it might give further evidence to this connection between the Nike temple and Cleon, as the reassessment was probably proposed by Cleon’s son-in-law.479

---

476 That Cleon later advocated this position is not surprising seeing that the victory over the Spartans brought him unprecedented power.

477 Mattingly 2000.

478 Schultz 2009, 151.

479 Schultz 2009, 151.
This would all suggest that the program of the Nike temple, conceived in the aftermath of the victory over Sparta and in the midst of a larger debate over whether or not to make peace, was crafted in order to endorse Cleon’s policies and to inspire those who were tired of war to keep fighting. Although we may be tempted to simply see the Nike temple as a victory monument which celebrated and gave thanks to the goddess, the frieze presents a more complicated picture than other monuments to this victory, such as the Messenians’ Nike of Paeonius or the Spartan shields hung around the city. The frieze chose specific battle scenes in order to counter larger concerns. But what were the people who wanted peace concerned with?

There are many indications that the invasion of Attica created what one scholar refers to as an “obsession” with territorial integrity and, perhaps more pertinently, an interest in both mythical and historical examples of Athenian success in the face of foreign invaders.\(^{480}\) Hanson has brilliantly shown that the strategy of annual invasions did not achieve the devastating agricultural destruction that we might expect but freely concedes that the raids and moving within the city walls inflicted severe psychological damage on the population.\(^{481}\) This should be expected given the undying Athenian emphasis on autochthony and their chthonic origins.\(^{482}\) Taylor ingeniously links the

\(^{480}\) Taylor 1998, 232. He (1998, 231-2) further thinks that that Herodotus’s frequent references to Athenian invasions, both mythical and historical, are representative of his interactions with Athenians. He would see particular importance in Herodotus (5.77.3) mentioning that he saw the burn mark left behind by the Persian destruction of the Acropolis. Pointing out that Herodotus probably did not stumble on them himself, he argues that the Athenians likely showed them to the historian and that incursions into the city were probably on this minds of the citizens now more than ever.

\(^{481}\) Hanson 1998, 152-3.

\(^{482}\) For an overview on Athenian autochthony see Rosivach (1987) who links it with egalitarian ideology.
violation of Attic sovereignty to autochthonous origins and, notably, sees the tension between being born of the earth and having one’s land violated by invaders in Euripides’s *Heracleidai* (826-7), when Demophon is reported to have called for the Athenians to defend their land which has given birth to them.\footnote{Taylor 1998, 232.}

This concern with territory and repulsing invasions can possibly be seen in other pieces of monumental art from this period which sought to memorialize failed invasions into Attica from the recent past. Mattingly has suggested that in 431 the Athenians dedicated a replica of a chariot after the defeat of the triple alliance of Boeotians, Chalchidians, and Spartans c. 506.\footnote{Mattingly 1982, 384.} Mattingly goes as far as to say that the chariot group, the cult statue funded by Peloponnesian booty, and the frieze comprised an anti-Peloponnesian display, proudly showing the defeat of other Greeks to anyone who ascended into the sanctuary.\footnote{Mattingly 1982, 384.} With the new study on the bastion, one might now add the Spartan shields to this impressive museum dedicated to Athenian *arete* in the face of fellow Greek transgressors. In addition, Taylor has suggested that the Oinoe scene in the Stoa was a depiction of a failed Spartan siege of a fort on the Attic-Boeotian border in 431.\footnote{Taylor 1998.} In his view, the Spartans preparing to invade Attica through Oinoe marked the beginning of these incursions and, more importantly, provided a concrete example of Athenian success against Spartan invasion.
In response to these worries over the invasions, the Nike temple offered three different examples of Athenians successfully repelling invaders from Attica. Although none of them had been part of the traditional canon of stories sculpted and painted on temples, they were now invoked in order to address the war-weariness and psychological effects produced by a half-decade of invasions. In other words, the unique situation brought about by the invasions produced unique responses to it, most notably the representations of fifth-century battles at Marathon and Megara on the Nike frieze.

On the north, Eurystheus’s failed attack on Attica was given new significance in line with Euripides’s near-contemporary play, and Marathon too glorified the defeat of the Persian invasion. In the speech of the Athenians before Platea, Herodotus (9.26-7) mentions the two battles together. As Schultz notes, “the common idea was that both battles were the result of impious invasions of Athenian territory and that both battles resulted in the destruction of the invaders.”

One can easily see how the stories of Marathon and Eurystheus spoke to those concerned for their land, both on a practical and ideological level. But what about the battle of Megara? Earlier I argued that there is a very good possibility that the scene on the west frieze celebrated Myronides’s victory in 458 over the Corinthians not in Attica but on the Megarian plane. Thus, it might at first seem illogical to argue that the scene was erected in order to glorify the repulsion of invaders. A passage from Lysias, however, shows that the Athenians came to view the actions of the Corinthians in 458 as aggressive.

487 Shultz 2009, 143.
and threatening to Attica. In describing the impact of the victory, Lysias (2.52) praises the make-shift army for beating the Corinthians who were “thinking to invade their own [Athenian land]” (tous eis tén spheteran embalein aksiósantas). The emphasis on defending Attica is especially illuminating seeing that the battle was fought outside of Athenian territory.

One only need to look at a map in order to understand the crucial role control of the Megarid played in protecting Attica from Peloponnesian invasion. The emphasis on Myronides’s victory, which secured both the Megarid and Athens itself against Peloponnesian attacks for approximately twelve years, was certainly understandable within the context of the Archidamian War. Possession of the Megarid was crucial to the defense of Attica. As de Ste. Croix points out, the fact that no Peloponnesian army attacked Attica by going through the Megarid while Megara was aligned with Athens, and then did so almost immediately in 446 when Megara began her alliance with Sparta, shows just how important the territory was to the defense of the Attic homeland.488

There can be little doubt the Athenians connected the loss of the Megarid with the Thirty Years Peace which they were forced to sue for under the threat of Pleistoanax’s army. When the Spartans arrived in Athens in 425 to plead for the life of men trapped at Pylos (Thuc. 4.15-4.21), we are told that Cleon persuaded the assembly to make certain demands from the Spartan envoys. After requesting that the trapped Spartans surrender and be brought to Athens, the Athenians stipulate that the men would only be released if

488 de Ste. Croix (1972, 189-91) rightly points out how invasions of Attica through the Isthmus was, in fact, the “cornerstone” of Spartan strategy when the two powers went to war in 431.
the Spartans returned several territories to Athenian control, the first of which are Pegae and Nisaea, the Megarian ports lost to them under the Thirty Years Peace.\textsuperscript{489} The implication here is clear. The Athenians would only accept peace if they could be shielded from future Spartan attacks by once again controlling the Megarid. It is not hard to see how the Athenians could, and indeed did, connect dominion over the Megarid with their own security.\textsuperscript{490}

The use of historical battles alongside mythological ones, then, can be explained by the unique nature of this war. Never before had a war lasted this long, with these novel challenges, and new strategies were needed to address new fears. A passage from Thucydides might reveal why those advocating for war might have felt it necessary to call on concrete historical examples of Athenian salvation in the face of invasion. According to Thucydides’s narrative (2.21.1), many people accepted Pericles’s “island strategy” even when Archidamus advanced to Eleusis because they had remembered when Pleistoanax retreated after a similar advance fourteen years before. Evidently this example from the recent past helped to assure the Athenians of the safety of their lands. When they saw the Spartans at Acharnai, he (2.21.2-3) tell us, the younger men and the Acharnians became engaged and insisted on defending their lands.

While some no doubt reveled in the victory over the Spartans, many Athenians could not so easily forgot the loss of family members, the abandonment of their ancestral

\textsuperscript{489} Thuc. 4.21.3. Troezen and Achaea are the other two territories demanded from the Spartans.

\textsuperscript{490} For more on the central role of Megara during the war and reasons why Thucydides downplays its importance, see Wick 1979.
homes, and the utter devastation the last six years of war had brought upon them. The Nike temple sought to address these concerns by presenting not only Athenian victories but examples of Athenian success in the face of invasion, both mythological and historical. The frieze both betrays Athenian anxieties over the Spartan incursions into Attic territory and served as a tool to convince those weary of more destruction that the Athenians had, and more importantly would, prevail. The new use of these historical scenes, therefore, can only be explained by this new kind war and the novel fears they sought to address.

**Changes in Religion**

The choice to include one or multiple historical battle scenes over mythological ones on the Nike frieze represents a break with the canon of traditional temple sculpture programs. While the impulses to draw on these particular triumphs may be explained by the highly unusual situation presented by the Spartan invasions of Attica, this does not account for the shift in temple architectural subjects. This can partially be explained by changing religious attitudes in the face of the plague and a willingness to try new practices in the face of great tragedy.

Although the extent of the changes in Athenian religion is debatable, it is clear that the Athenians adopted new religious practices in the face of the Archidamian War and the plague which it helped to bring about.491 In reviewing these changes in Athenian

---

491 For Athenian religion during the war, see Flower 2009; Mikalson 1984.
religion, it will become evident that the Athenians became more open to new cults and practices. This willingness to experiment in this period can, in part, help to explain the introduction of historical scenes into traditional religion temple decoration.

The plague hit Athens in the summer of 430. The forces it unleashed were immediate. As one would expect in the face of such inexplicable and sudden horror, the Athenians initially turned away from time-honored customs. Thucydides (2.53) provides a bleak picture of religious attitudes in response to the plague, famously declaring that the Athenians adopted a nihilistic outlook. Whether this reflected a temporary situation or a larger change in attitudes is debatable.\footnote{Mikalson (1984, 219) suspects that the abandonment of the gods or morals probably only reflected the attitudes during the worst months of the epidemic. Flower (2009, 18-9), citing the continuation of traditional festivals throughout the war and the trial of Socrates after it, argues that the religious environment described by Thucydides was most likely temporary. I would tend to agree with this assessment.}

But it does show religious turmoil and possibly shifting religious attitudes, however temporary they might have been.

The same summer, Thucydides (2.56) describes a failed attempt to take Epidaurus. Despite Thucydides’s silence on any particular religious goals, this military operation was the first strike against the Peloponnese in the war and it is probable that there was another purpose behind this operation. Given the timing of the attack on Epidaurus and the eventual adoption of the cult of Asclepius in 420 following the Peace of Nikias, some have suggested that this was an early attempt to bring the healing cult to Athens.\footnote{Mikalson 1984, 220.} If so, this can be seen as an initial willingness to adopt new practices in response to the plague.
After the second major outbreak of the plague in 427/6, the Athenians again turned to an unusual measure in order to find relief. Thucydides (3.104.1-2) claims that the Athenians embarked on an expedition in 426/5 to purify Delos in attempt to mollify the effects of the second outbreak. Diodorus (12.58.6) states that the Athenians were told to do so by an oracle because the island had been polluted by burials. Some would see political motives in this expedition but, like the aborted attack on Epidaurus, we should be careful not to make these distinctions. Clearly the Athenians were willing to try whatever they could in order to appease Apollo and, hopefully, end the suffering.

In the midst of this turmoil and experimentation, Athens also saw several changes in monumental practice, the most notable being the return of lavish grave monuments to Athenian cemeteries and large private votive dedication at Athenian sanctuaries. As we saw above, this activity probably reflects individuals turning away from a polis-centered ideology, something which would be hard to connect to the Nike temple with its celebration of Athenian triumphs. In the same way, this is not to say that one can attribute the Marathon and Megara friezes to the plague or even the turmoil it brought about, but it does show that some traditions seemed to have been breaking down in the face of the war. Perhaps with all these massive changes, historical scenes on the Nike frieze would not have appeared so strange in this time of great uncertainty. This experimentation in

---

494 Flower 2009, 7: “One can simultaneously hope to win the favour of the gods while self-consciously attempting to use one’s own piety to impress and manipulate others.”

495 For a summary of votive activity during the war, see Lawton 2009.
periods of doubt, I would argue, can help to explain the willingness to place historical scenes on a temple.

**Conclusion**

In the end, perhaps the incorporation of historical battles onto “sacred” architecture, though representing an important shift to us, did not seem like such a great alteration to the average Athenian. By 425 BC, portraits of Harmodius and Aristogeiton actively charging at the “tyrant” would have been familiar to anyone who visited the Agora since the 470’s. The Marathon mural had hung in the Stoa Poikile for forty-some years. It is very possible that the Athenians, already used to seeing modern triumphs in their monuments, were not very troubled by the change in frieze subjects. Pointing to the arguments of those who would advocate specific historical readings of the scenes, Ridgway rightly notes “to distinguish between media or even types of buildings is an unwarranted if not specious discrimination, since stoas were part of religious complexes and housed war trophies of that kind often dedicated in temples.”

Regardless of the impact of the change in frieze subjects on the viewer, the decision to place the battles of Marathon and Megara on the Athena Nike temple frieze does give us a unique insight into Athenian society in the 420’s. While it would perhaps be more satisfying to tie these scenes into larger ideological changes like the impact of democracy or empire on notions of time, they seem to have their origins in very specific

---

496 Ridgway 1981, 91.
events surrounding the Archidamian War. Whether or not they served to reassure a community and a collective psyche damaged by war, plague, and invasion, as I have suggested, there can be little doubt that these battles were supposed to convey messages about the struggle the Athenians were involved in. In this sense, the incorporation of historical scenes on the frieze, regardless of the subjects, tells us much about the Athenian reaction to an unprecedented war.
Conclusion

As satisfying as it might be to attribute the Tyrannicides statue group, the Painted Stoa, and the Athena Nike frieze monuments to larger ideological changes and the effects of the democratic constitution, the evidence ultimately does not support such a theory. This is not to say that these overtly political monuments did not contain democratic resonance. After all, it is not so easy to disconnect publicly displayed pieces of art conceived in a democratic society and approved by a council of voting citizens from this system of government. In the sense that they played a role in the political discourse and may have reflected popular sentiment, all three of these historical monuments were, in some ways, democratic.

But does the focus on historical events in the monumental arts represent a larger ideological change in how Athenians perceived time and their ability to affect present-day events? Can we even attribute their respective origins to a common, underlying cause? This study suggests that this was not the case.

But perhaps this is not as surprising as it would first appear. If there is one thing we can take away from this study, it is that all three depictions of historical events should not be seen as a trend or a movement. These three monuments are very different from
each other. For example, the historical scenes on these monuments all take different forms. Both Tyrannicides groups were free-standing bronze statuary and the battle scenes on the Stoa Poikile and Athena Nike temple were painted murals on wooden boards and stone relief sculpture, respectively. But, most of all, the Tyrannicides, the Stoa Poikile and the Athena Nike temple all arose in response to very different historical and political situations.

The Tyrannicides statues, I have argued, were created in a time of change and uncertainly following a dramatic shift in popular government. They were commissioned by a new democratic regime in order to emphasize continuity. In order to express the “timeless” nature of democracy, their creators drew on conventional athletic honors to equate Harmodius and Aristogeiton to Homeric heroes and, in the process, created a wholly unique type of monument.

The Stoa Poikile was built in response to a series of changes in society brought about by the defeat of the world’s greatest power and the beginnings of the Athenian Empire. They reflect a small city-state expanding its reach to unfamiliar places and increased interactions with Eastern Greek and Persian practices. Furthermore, it was argued that Cimon and his circle were using historical murals to justify and negotiate Athens’s role as imperial master over their Ionian brethren.

The Athena Nike temple’s frieze was conceived in the midst of a physically and psychologically destructive war. I argued that the battle of Marathon and Myronides’s victory over the Corinthians were chosen as subjects for the frieze in order to both
reassure a public divided over the merits of such a struggle and to encourage a weary population to fight on. It was further suggested that placing historical battles on a temple was part of a series of changes both in religious practices and monumental practices which the war and plague helped to bring about.

In the end, these historical representations were conceived, in part, as responses to democracy, empire, and the Peloponnesian War. I, for one, can think of no factors or events which shaped Athenian society more in the fifth century than these experiences. Although three monuments must be explained on their own terms and within specific contexts, together they serve as excellent examples of what it meant to be an Athenian during the fifth century BC.
References


Carpenter, R. 1929. The Sculpture of the Nike Temple Parapet. Cambridge, Ma.


Gruen, E. S. 2010. *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity*. Princeton, NJ.


Meier, C. 1990. The Greek Discovery of Politics. Cambridge, MA.


______. 1999. *Archaeology as Cultural History*. Malden, MA.


______. 2009. “Archaism and the Quest for Immortality in the Attic Sculpture During the Peloponnesian War.” In Art In Athens During the Peloponnesian War, ed. O. Palagia, 24-51. Cambridge.


