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Athens as a City Setting in the Athenian *Lives*

In an influential paper published 40 years ago¹, *The Greeks and Their Past in the Second Sophistic*, E. Bowie gathered together the principal manifestations of archaism in the Greek world of that period, especially stressing the contemporary admiration to Athens. Later on, A. Podlecki² pointed as an obvious yardstick of Plutarch's interest in Athens the number of Athenian subjects of his biographies (10 out of the 23 Greek *Lives*) and S. Swain portrayed Plutarch as a Greek who looked to Athens for his main inspiration³. But they paid little or no attention to places and monuments⁴. This lacuna has been partially filled in by J. Buckler and M. Beck⁵. However I think that there is still place to a more limited and – I hope – more thorough study devoted to Athenian space in the 10 Athenian *Lives*.

Beginning with the *Life of Theseus* that «does not belong to the period where factual history can find a strong foothold» but «to the province of poets and mythographers», and can only, «when cleaned through reason, take the appearance of history»⁶, I propose in this paper to examine the allusions to Athenian places and monuments. As a setting of some events, private as well of public, they often have symbolical value. They may serve to characterize the statesmen or the Athenian people or to perpetuate some past events. In asides or comparisons, they may also be given some attention for their own sake, attesting Plutarch's autopsy and erudition. As a conclusion, I propose to show how these topographic indications put together may help us to reconstruct Athens' physical development from Theseus to Demosthenes and Phocion and to create echoes or contrasts between the Athenian *Lives*.

1. The Life of Theseus.

I begin with description of Theseus' first exploits on the way from Troizen to Athens, since most of them are said to be located in places which were then a part of Ionia. Indeed we learn from Strabo that «in the early times the country after Crommyon was held by the same Ionians who held Attica, since Megara had not yet been founded»⁷. He supports his contention with two arguments. First,

the famous pillar they erected close to Crommyon at the Isthmus with an inscription on the side facing the Peloponnesus reading: “This is Peloponnesus, not Ionia” and on the side facing Megara “this is not Peloponnesus, but Ionia”⁸;

¹ Bowie 1970.

² Podlecki 1988, 231.

³ Swain 1997, 170.

⁴ Podlecki 1988, 236 f. and Swain 1997, 199.

⁵ Buckler 1992 and Beck 2012.

⁶ Pelling 2002, 171.

⁷ Str. 9.1.5 C 392: Τὸ παλαιὸν μὲν οὖν Ἴωνες εἶχον τὴν χώραν ταύτην οἵπερ καὶ τὴν Ἀττικὴν, οὐπω τῶν Μεγάρων ἐκτισμένων.

⁸ Str. 9.1.6 C 392 στήλην ἔστησαν ἐπὶ τοῦ συνομολογηθέντος τόπου περὶ αὐτὸν τὸν Ἴσθμόν, ἐπιγραφήν ἔχουσαν ἐπὶ μὲν τοῦ πρὸς τὴν Πελοπόννησον μέρους τὰδ' ἐστὶ “Πελοπόννησος οὐκ Ἴωνία”, ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ πρὸς Μέγαρα “τὰδ' οὐχὶ Πελοπόννησος ἀλλ' Ἴωνία”.

and the testimony of the most significant Attidographers who, though at variance for many things, 'agree on this that Pandion had four sons, Aegeus, Lycus, Pallas and the fourth Nisus ... and that Attica was divided into four parts'⁹. Again, Pausanias tells us that Pylas, the king of Megaris, had left it to Pandion¹⁰. True, Plutarch places this annexion of Megaris and the stele that celebrates it little later, after the exploits of Theseus, when he says in 25.4:

Theseus, having attached the territory of Megara securely to Attica, set up that famous pillar on the Isthmus and carved upon it the inscription giving the territorial boundaries. It consisted of two trimeters, of which the one towards the east declared: "Here is not Peloponnesus, but Ionia" and the one towards the west declared: "Here is the Peloponnesus, not Ionia".

Accordingly, the killing of the sow at Crommyon¹¹ as well as the killing of Sciron at the Scironian rocks¹² are said to happen in Ionian territory. In both cases, there is a contrast between the location, which is secure, and the true identity of the victim, which is controversial. Some sources say that the sow of Crommyon was not, like the boar of Erymanthus, a wild monster but a female brigand, murderous and dissolute, nicknamed 'the sow' because of her temper and way of life¹³, and that Sciron was not a brigand, as the Athenian version says, but a just king, according to the local historians from Megara¹⁴. Marathon is also mentioned as the setting of the killing of a bull which was a great nuisance for the inhabitants of the Tetrapolis¹⁵.

The purification for these murder took place on the banks of Cephissus¹⁶. The choice of a place that still is part of Attica may have a symbolical value since the Phylalidai who welcomed Theseus and cleansed him are said to be the first fellows he encountered¹⁷ manifesting the *philanthropia* characteristic of the Athenian *ethos* according to Plutarch¹⁸: they manifested it not only towards the descendants of their great men¹⁹, but also towards their enemies²⁰ and even towards deserving animals²¹. Later on in the *Life*²², Plutarch reminds his readers that their hospitality was repaid by Theseus who gave their descendants the superintendence of the sacrifice made to himself to celebrate his killing of the Minotaur.

⁹ Str. 9.1.6 C 392 οἱ τε δὴ τὴν Ἀτθίδα συγγράψαντες πολλὰ διαφωνοῦντες τοῦτό γε ὁμολογοῦσιν οἱ γε λόγου ἄξιοι, διότι τῶν Πανδιονιδῶν τετάρων ὄντων, Αἰγέως τε καὶ Λύκου καὶ Πάλλαντος καὶ τετάρτου Νίσου, καὶ τῆς Ἀττικῆς εἰς τέτταρα μέρη διαιρεθείσης.

¹⁰ Paus. 1.39.4.

¹¹ *Thes.* 9.1.

¹² *Thes.* 10.1.

¹³ *Thes.* 9.1 f.

¹⁴ *Thes.* 10.1-4.

¹⁵ *Thes.* 14.1.

¹⁶ *Thes.* 12.1.

¹⁷ *Thes.* 12.1: μηδενὸς πρότερον αὐτῷ φιλανθρώπου καθ' ὁδὸν ἐντυχόντος.

¹⁸ E.g. *Pel.* 6.5, *Arist.* 27.6 f., *Cim.* 10.7, *Demetr.* 22.2.

¹⁹ *Arist.* 27.6.

²⁰ *Mor.* 799 c.

²¹ *Mor.* 970a-b, 983f, *Cat. Ma.* 5.4.

²² *Thes.* 23.5.

Among the places located in the *astu*, Plutarch twice alludes to the Delphinion – a place also associated with Theseus by Pausanias²³, but for different reasons – first indirectly, when he says that Theseus sacrificed the Marathon bull to Apollo Delphinios²⁴, second directly, when he describes how, at the departure of the young sent with him to Crete, Theseus placed in the temple for their sake a suppliant's bough²⁵. He also mentions the Phalerum harbor where Theseus, returning from Crete, disembarked and made the sacrifice he had promised²⁶. The Acropolis appears only once, when Plutarch quotes a forgery made up by some Athenian who departed from the traditional version of Aegeus' death and told that 'Aegeus on the approach of the ship, ran up to the Acropolis in his eagerness to catch sight of her, stumbled and fell down the cliff'²⁷.

The presence of spatial markers is particularly striking in the description of the battle against the Amazons, in a passage excerpted from the Atthidographer Cleidemos :

Cleidemos, wanting to report everything accurately, says in his history that the left wing of the Amazons' army reached across the place which is called even today the Amazoneion and their right wing across Chrysa, close to the Pnyx. The Athenians who fell upon the Amazons fought against this wing from the Mouseion, and the tombs of those who were killed are located along the broad street leading to what is called now the Peiraeus gate, close to the *heroon* of Chalcodon. On this side they were pushed back as far as the shrine of the Eumenides and yielded to women. But on the other side, near the Palladion, Ardettos and the Lyceum, they dashed their right wing and repelled them to their encampment²⁸.

Like historians such as Diodorus and Livy²⁹, Plutarch also validates the myth by reference to graves, monuments, inscriptions or place names still existing in his time.

The existence of the hero is demonstrated by the tomb where Theseus bones brought back by Cimon from Scyros and the cult associated to it:

²³ Paus. 1.19.3.

²⁴ *Thes.* 14.1: εἶτα τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Δελφινίῳ κατέθυσεν.

²⁵ *Thes.* 18.1: παραλαβὼν τοὺς λαχόντας ὁ θησεύς ἐκ τοῦ πρυτανείου καὶ παρελθὼν εἰς Δελφίνιον, ἔθιγεν ὑπὲρ αὐτῶν τῷ Ἀπόλλωνι τὴν ἱκετηρίαν.

²⁶ *Thes.* 22.2: καταπλεύσας δ' ὁ θησεύς ἔθυε μὲν αὐτὸς ἄς ἐκπλέων θυσίας εὐξάτο τοῖς θεοῖς Φαληροῖ .

²⁷ *Comp. Thes./Rom.* 5.2: τις Ἀττικὸς ἀνὴρ ... πλάττει τὸν Αἰγέα τῆς νεῆς προσφερομένης ὑπὸ σπουδῆς ἀνατρέχοντα πρὸς τὴν ἀκρόπολιν θέας ἔνεκα <τῆς ἐπὶ θάλατταν ὁδοῦ> καὶ σφαλλόμενον καταπεσεῖν.

²⁸ *Thes.* 27.3-5: ἱστορεῖ δὲ Κλειδήμος [FGrHist 323 F 18], ἑξακριβοῦν τὰ καθ' ἕκαστα βουλόμενος, τὸ μὲν εὐώνυμον τῶν Ἀμαζόνων κέρας ἐπιστρέφειν πρὸς τὸ νῦν καλούμενον Ἀμαζόνειον, τῷ δὲ δεξιῷ πρὸς τὴν Πνύκα κατὰ τὴν Χρύσαν ἦκει. μάχεσθαι δὲ πρὸς τοῦτο τοὺς Ἀθηναίους ἀπὸ τοῦ Μουσείου ταῖς Ἀμαζόσι συμπεσόντας, καὶ τάφους τῶν πεσόντων περὶ τὴν πλατεῖαν εἶναι τὴν φέρουσαν ἐπὶ τὰς πύλας παρὰ τὸ Χαλκῶδοντος ἤρῳον, ἄς νῦν Πειραιϊκὰς ὀνομάζουσι. καὶ ταύτη μὲν ἐκβιασθῆναι μέχρι τῶν Εὐμενίδων καὶ ὑποχωρῆσαι ταῖς γυναιξίν, ἀπὸ δὲ Παλλαδίου καὶ Ἀρδητοῦ καὶ Λυκείου προσβαλόντας ὄσασθαι τὸ δεξιὸν αὐτῶν ἄχρι τοῦ στρατοπέδου καὶ πολλὰς καταβαλεῖν.

²⁹ See Gabba 1981, 53 on Livy, and Saïd 2014 on Diodorus.

It is in the heart of the city near the gymnasium, and his tomb is a refuge for the slaves and all those who are humble and fear the powerful, since Theseus was a champion and helper of such during his life and humanely complied with the requests of the humbles³⁰.

Graves serve also as evidence for Theseus' exploits celebrated by Athenian funeral orations (his victory over the Amazons, and his burial of the Argives defeated at Thebes). Plutarch mentions the stele of the Amazon called Hippolyte or Antiope³¹ who fought together with Theseus and was killed by Molpadia :

Some say that the Amazon who was fighting with Theseus fell there hit by Molpadia and that the stele which stands by the sanctuary of the Olympian Earth was set up in her memory³².

About the Argives, Plutarch is more precise and gives his sources:

The graves of the privates are shown at Eleutheriai. But the graves of their leaders around Eleusis and this last burial was a favor which Theseus showed to Adrastus. The account of Euripides in his *Suppliants* is disproved by that of Aeschylus in his *Eleusinians*³³.

Monuments or inscriptions – either seen by Plutarch himself or mentioned by his sources (Dicaearchus or Philochorus) – also serve as reliable evidence. First at 17.5 f., while the sources gave different names for the pilot of the ship that brought Theseus to Crete:

According to Simonides, his name was Phereclos, descendant of Amarsyas, but according to Philochorus, Theseus got from the Salaminian Sciros as a pilot Nausithoos and as officer in command of the prow Phaeax.

Plutarch decides in favor of the second version, which is supported by an existing Athenian monument: 'this is proven by the *heroa* of Nausithoos and Phaiax built by Theseus close to the sanctuary of Sciros at Phalerum as well as by the ritual of the Kubernesia, the festival of the pilots'³⁴, a proof confirmed for us by the inscription

³⁰ *Thes.* 36.4 κείται μὲν ἐν μέσῃ τῇ πόλει παρὰ τὸ νῦν γυμνάσιον, ἔστι δὲ φύξιμον οἰκέταις καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς ταπεινοτέροις καὶ δεδιόσι κρείττονας, ὡς καὶ τοῦ Θησέως προστατικοῦ τινος καὶ βοηθητικοῦ γενομένου καὶ προσδεχομένου φιλανθρώπως τὰς τῶν ταπεινοτέρων δεήσεις. See also Paus. 1.17.2.

³¹ *Thes.* 27.5.

³² *Thes.* 27.6: ἔνιοι δὲ φασὶ μετὰ τοῦ Θησέως μαχομένην πεσεῖν τὴν ἄνθρωπον ὑπὸ Μολπαδίας ἀκοντισθεῖσαν, καὶ τὴν στήλην τὴν παρὰ τὸ τῆς Γῆς τῆς Ὀλυμπίας ἱερὸν ἐπὶ ταύτῃ κείσθαι.

³³ *Thes.* 29.5: ταφαὶ δὲ τῶν μὲν πολλῶν ἐν Ἐλευθεραῖς δείκνυνται, τῶν δ' ἡγεμόνων περὶ Ἐλευσίνα καὶ τοῦτο Θησέως Ἀδράστῳ χαρισσαμένου. καταμαρτυροῦσι δὲ τῶν Εὐριπίδου Ἰκετίδων <καὶ> οἱ Αἰσχύλου Ἐλευσίνοι.

³⁴ *Thes.* 17.5-7 ἐκυβέρινα δὲ τὴν ναῦν Ἀμαρουάδας Φέρεκλος, ὃς φησὶ Σιμωνίδης [fr. 56 B4]. Φιλόχορος [*FGrHist* 328 F 111] δὲ παρὰ Σκίρου φησὶν ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος τὸν Θησέα λαβεῖν κυβερνήτην μὲν Ναυσίθοον, πρῶτά δὲ Φαίακα, μαρτυρεῖν δὲ τούτοις ἡρῶα Ναυσιθόου καὶ Φαίακος εἰσαμένου Θησέως Φαληροῖ πρὸς τῷ τοῦ Σκίρου[ιερωῖ], καὶ τὴν ἑορτὴν τὰ

of the Salaminians [dated from 363/2]³⁵ attesting the sacrifice of three piglets to the heroes Phaiax and Nauseiros.

At 27.1 f., in order to demonstrate that the war against the Amazons was a major exploit, and not an easy enterprise and a female task, Plutarch points to their encampment in the city, attested by the location of the battle which took place near the Pnyx and the Mouseion, the name of some places, and the graves of those who fell there³⁶.

The conclusion of the war with a peace treaty is also attested by the name of a place which is close to the Theseion and is called Horkomosion “the place of the oath” and by the sacrifice performed for a long time to the Amazons before the Theseia³⁷.

Quoting Dicaearchus, Plutarch also tells us that ‘the Academy and Marathon owe their name to the two Arcadians, Echedemos and Marathon, who joined the expedition of the Dioscuri against Theseus and agreed to be sacrificed before the battle’³⁸. Again, he relies on the historian Philocorus, who says that the release of Theseus by Heracles is attested by some place names and that Theseus, returning to Athens, dedicated to Heracles all the precincts, excepting four of them, that were before consecrated to him by the city and called them Heracleia instead of Theseia³⁹. Plutarch also reports, apparently from autopsy, that Gargettus, the place where Theseus cursed the Athenians when he left Athens is still called today ‘the place of the curse’⁴⁰.

Altogether the proofs drawn from toponyms and monuments, which serve to give some plausibility to the legends by anchoring them in existing space, are relatively rare in the *Life of Theseus*. Plutarch rather likes to rely on existing cults⁴¹. This comes as no surprise given «Plutarch’s abiding interest in religious observances»⁴².

Κυβερνήσιά φησιν ἐκείνοις τελείσθαι. According to Calame 1990, 148-50, this name is a variant for Nausithoos.

³⁵ See Calame 1990, 147.

³⁶ *Thes.* 27.1: φαίνεται δὲ μὴ φαῦλον αὐτοῦ μηδὲ γυναικεῖον γενέσθαι τὸ ἔργον. οὐ γὰρ ἂν ἐν ἄστει κατεστρατοπέδευσαν οὐδὲ τὴν μάχην συνῆψαν ἐν χρῶ περὶ τὴν Πνύκα καὶ τὸ Μουσεῖον, εἰ μὴ κρατοῦσαι τῆς χώρας ἀδεῶς τῇ πόλει προσέμειξαν ... τὸ δ’ ἐν τῇ πόλει σχεδὸν αὐτὰς ἐνστρατοπέδευσαι μαρτυρεῖται καὶ τοῖς ὀνόμασι τῶν τόπων καὶ ταῖς θήκαις τῶν πεσόντων.

³⁷ *Thes.* 27.7: τοῦ γε τὸν πόλεμον εἰς σπονδὰς τελευτῆσαι μαρτύριόν ἐστιν ἢ τε τοῦ τόπου κλησίς τοῦ παρὰ τὸ Θησεῖον, ὄνπερ Ὀρκωμόσιον καλοῦσιν, ἢ τε γινομένη πάλαι θυσία ταῖς Ἀμαζόσι πρὸ τῶν θησείων.

³⁸ *Thes.* 32.5: ὁ δὲ Δικαίρχος [fr. 66 Wehrli] Ἐχεδήμιου φησὶ καὶ Μαράθου συστρατευσάντων τότε τοῖς Τυνδαρίδαις ἐξ Ἀρκαδίας, ἀφ’ οὗ μὲν Ἐχεδημίαν προσαγορευθῆναι τὴν νῦν Ἀκαδημίαν, ἀφ’ οὗ δὲ Μαραθῶνα τὸν δῆμον, ἐπιδόντος ἑαυτὸν ἐκουσίως κατὰ τι λόγιον σφαγιάσασθαι.

³⁹ *Thes.* 35.4: λυθεὶς ὁ Θησεὺς ἐπανήλθε μὲν εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας ... καὶ ὅσ’ ὑπῆρχε τεμένη πρότερον αὐτῷ τῆς πόλεως ἐξελοῦσης, ἅπαντα καθιέρωσεν Ἡρακλεῖ καὶ προσηγόρευσεν ἀντὶ θησείων Ἡράκλεια, πλὴν τεσσάρων, ὡς Φιλόχορος [FGrHist 328 F 18a] ἰστόρηκεν.

⁴⁰ *Thes.* 35.5: αὐτὸς δὲ Γαργηττοὶ κατὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἀράς θέμενος, οὗ νῦν ἔστι τὸ καλούμενον Ἀρατήριον.

⁴¹ *Thes.* 4.1, 8.4-6, 12.1, 13.4, 14.2, 16.2 f., 17.7, 18.1 f., 18.3, 20.6 f., 20.8 f., 21.1 f., 22.4, 23.2-5, 25.5 f., 27.3, 27.7, 36.4-6.

⁴² Podlecki 1988: 237; see also Calame 1990, 142-84 and 289-396.

2. The 'Historical' Lives.

The Athenian *Lives*, from Solon to Demosthenes and Phocion, spread from the beginning of the sixth century to the end of the fourth century, from the war against Salamis [*Solon*] to the Persian Wars [*Themistocles*, *Aristides* and *Cimon*], the Peloponnesian War [*Pericles*, *Nicias*, *Alcibiades*] and the Macedonian War [*Demosthenes* and *Phocion*]. Given that their heroes were all statesmen, these *Lives* give pride of place to public locations. But Plutarch also pays some attention to the houses to substantiate some conclusions, characterize his heroes or to bring out some overlap or tension between the domestic and the public spheres.

A typical feature of Plutarch's use of space is his attempt to locate precisely some incidents in order to give more vividness to his narrative. He is not content with alluding generally to the *agora*. In *Solon* he also give some precise details. When the lawgiver made a sudden and unexpected appearance in the *agora*, he mounted the herald block to recite his elegy on Salamis⁴³. Relying on autopsy, Plutarch also reports that small fragments of the revolving tables on which the laws of Solon were inscribed 'have survived right up to his time in the Prytaneion'⁴⁴. Again, he tells his readers that, when Solon's laws were sworn, each member of the board of the *Thesmothetai* swore a special oath at the stone in the *agora*⁴⁵.

Sometimes precisions are given for themselves in a parenthesis, may be to display Plutarch's knowledge of the institutions and the monuments of Athens. Mentioning the ostracism of Aristides, Plutarch not only gives an outline of the history of this institution which was abandoned at the time of Hyperbolus, he also adds that each citizen brought his *ostrakon* 'to a place in the *agora* which was all fenced about with railings'⁴⁶. In *Cimon*, in a digression concerning his sister Elpinice, who included the painter Polygnotus among her lovers, he reports that

it is said that this is the reason why, when Polygnotus painted the Trojan women in what was in those days called the Pisianactean Stoa (the Painted Stoa nowadays) he used Elpinice as a model for Laodice's features⁴⁷.

The comparison with his sources is quite significant. In his narrative of the Sicilian expedition, Thucydides only mentioned the Athenians' passionate desire for the expedition which seized the younger and older alike⁴⁸. In Plutarch's *Alcibiades*, the same feelings are given concrete expression and precise location :

⁴³ *Sol.* 8.1 f.: ἐξεπήδησεν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἄφνω ... ἀναβάς ἐπὶ τὸν τοῦ κήρυκος λίθον, ἐν ᾧ δὴ διεξῆλθε τὴν ἐλεγείαν ἧς ἐστὶν ἀρχή [fr. 2 D.].

⁴⁴ *Sol.* 25.1: κατεγράψαν εἰς ξυλίνους ἄξονας ἐν πλαισίοις περιέχουσι στρεφομένους, ὧν ἔτι καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Πρυτανείῳ λείψανα μικρὰ διεσφύζετο ὧν ἔτι καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐν Πρυτανείῳ λείψανα μικρὰ διεσφύζετο.

⁴⁵ *Sol.* 25.3: ἰδίως δ' ἕκαστος τῶν θεσμοθετῶν ἐν ἀγορᾷ πρὸς τῷ λίθῳ καταπατίζων.

⁴⁶ *Arist.* 7.5: ὄστρακον ἕκαστος λαβὼν ... ἔφερεν εἰς ἓνα τόπον τῆς ἀγορᾶς περιπεφραγμένον ἐν κύκλῳ δρυφάκτοις.

⁴⁷ *Cim.* 4.6: καὶ διὰ τοῦτο φασὶν ἐν τῇ Πεισιανακτείῳ τότε καλουμένῃ (Ποικίλῃ δὲ νῦν) στοᾷ γράφοντα τὰς Τρωάδας τὸ τῆς Λαοδίκης ποιῆσαι πρόσωπον ἐν εἰκόνι.

⁴⁸ *Thuc.* 6.24.3: καὶ ἔρως ἐνέπεσε τοῖς πᾶσιν ὁμοίως ἐκπλεῦσαι· τοῖς μὲν γὰρ πρεσβυτέροις ... τοῖς δ' ἐν τῇ ἡλικίᾳ.

The young men of the city were immediately carried away by Alcibiades hopes, while their elders filled their ears with wonderful tales about the expedition; the upshot was *that in the wrestling schools and lounging places* people could commonly be seen sitting and mapping out the shape of Sicily and the position of Libya and Carthage⁴⁹.

The same is true in a passage of *Nicias*, published nearly at the same time according to C.P. Jones⁵⁰, which looks like an expansion of *Alcibiades* 17.4:

The youths in the wrestling schools and the old men in the workshops and lounging places would sit in clusters drawing maps of Sicily, charts of the sea about it and plans of the harbours and districts of the island which look towards Libya⁵¹.

A. Private Houses.

Once Plutarch relies upon his knowledge of the house of a former statesman to substantiate some conclusion concerning his lifestyle⁵². The house of Phocion, which still existed in his time in the deme of Melite, attests the simplicity of his lifestyle ‘it was decorated with bronze plates, but otherwise simple and modest’⁵³.

More often the house is used as a setting for incidents that illuminate characters, as pointed out by J. Buckler⁵⁴.

To begin with a minor instance, in the *Life of Solon*, Plutarch specifies that the meeting of his hero with Anacharsis took place in Solon’s house, in order to demonstrate the shrewdness (ἀγχινοία) of the Scythian who plaid on the two meanings of οἴκοι:

Once on a visit to Athens Anacharsis went to Solon’s house [ἐπὶ τὴν Σόλωνος οἰκίαν ἐλθόντα], knocked on the door, and said that he was a foreigner and had come to forge ties of friendship hospitality with him. Solon replied that this was something better done at home [οἴκοι = in one’s homeland], but Anacharsis said “well you are at home [οἴκοι = in your house], so why don’t you forge ties of friendship and hospitality with me”. Impressed by the man’s wit, Solon made Anacharsis welcome and had him to stay for quite a while⁵⁵.

In the *Life of Cimon*, the dinner which took place at Athens in the house of Laomedon is a way of characterizing both Cimon who sang not unpleasantly and

⁴⁹ *Alc.* 17.4: καὶ τοὺς μὲν νέους αὐτόθεν εἶχεν ἤδη ταῖς ἐλπίσιν ἐπηρμένους, τῶν δὲ πρεσβυτέρων ἠκροῶντο πολλὰ θαυμάσια περὶ τῆς στρατείας περαινόντων ὥστε πολλοὺς ἐν ταῖς παλαίστραις καὶ τοῖς ἡμικυκλίοις καθέζεσθαι τῆς τε νήσου τὸ σχῆμα καὶ θέσιν Λιβύης καὶ Καρχηδόνας ὑπογράφοντας.

⁵⁰ Jones 1966, 68.

⁵¹ *Nic.* 12.1: ὅστε καὶ νέους ἐν παλαίστραις καὶ γέροντας ἐν ἐργαστηρίοις καὶ ἡμικυκλίοις συγκαθεζομένους ὑπογράφειν τὸ σχῆμα τῆς Σικελίας καὶ τὴν φύσιν τῆς περὶ αὐτὴν θαλάσσης καὶ λιμένας καὶ τόπους, οἷς τέτραπται πρὸς Λιβύην ἢ νήσος.

⁵² See Buckler 1992, 4800.

⁵³ *Phoc.* 18.8: ἡ δ’ οἰκία τοῦ Φωκίωνος ἔτι νῦν ἐν Μελίτῃ δείκνυται, χαλκαῖς λεπίσι κεκοσμημένη, τὰ δ’ ἄλλα λιτὴ καὶ ἀφελής; see Buckler 1992, 4818.

⁵⁴ Buckler 1992, 4819.

⁵⁵ *Sol.* 5.2.

Themistocles who was less skillful at singing⁵⁶. Themistocles characteristic 'love of honour' (*philotimia*) is demonstrated by his enticing a famous cithar-player into his house in order to attract there many people⁵⁷. Nicias' superstition is illustrated by his 'keeping at home a seer'⁵⁸. In the *Life of Demosthenes*, Plutarch, apparently relying on autopsy, also mentions the underground room, still existing at his time, he built in his house to attest his continuous training in oratory and the attention he paid to rhetorical delivery⁵⁹. The behavior of Pericles going back home quietly and sending a slave to walk back home a man who hounded him with abuses in the *agora* exemplifies his control of his feelings⁶⁰. His arrangement to prevent any conspicuous spending at home and appointing a steward in charge of a strict accounting of the expenses attests his unusual refusal of the liberality normally displayed by powerful houses⁶¹.

In contrast, Alcibiades' behaviour at home or in others' houses is often used to show the contradictions of his character. On the one hand, relying upon Antiphon's *Invectives*, Plutarch shows his debauchery, when in his teens he ran away from his tutor's house to one of his lover's home⁶². Again, coming drunk at Anytos', he stood in the doorway of the dining room and ordered his slaves to carry to his house half of the golden and silver cups, behaving arrogantly and insolently (*ὕβριστικῶς καὶ ὑπερηφάνως*) according to the guests⁶³. Last, he was impeached for crime against the two goddesses in that 'he did parody the mysteries and made them the subject of a show put on for friends of his in his own house'⁶⁴. On the other hand, he illustrates his ability to repent of previous insolent behavior: after punching for fun Hipponicos, he went to his house ready to suffer a punishment and be whipped by him⁶⁵, and after locking up the artist Agatharchus, he let him go with a gift when he has decorated his house⁶⁶.

B. Private and Public Spheres.

References to private houses and possessions of Athenian statesmen also serve to demonstrate the overlap between the public and private in classical Athens.

Solon's legislation not only changed the existing rules concerning the transmission of property: 'It had not previously been possible to make a will: a dead person's

⁵⁶ *Cim.* 9.1.

⁵⁷ *Them.* 5.3: Τῆ δὲ φιλοτιμία πάντας ὑπερέβαλεν, ὅστ' ἔτι μὲν ὄν νέος καὶ ἀφανῆς Ἐπικλέα τὸν ἐξ Ἐρμιόνοιο κηθαριστὴν σπουδαζόμενον ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐκπλαρῆσαι μελετᾶν παρ' αὐτῷ, φιλοτιμούμενος πολλοὺς τὴν οἰκίαν ζητεῖν καὶ φοιτᾶν πρὸς αὐτόν.

⁵⁸ *Nic.* 5.2: μάντιν ἔχων ἐπὶ τῆς οἰκίας.

⁵⁹ *Dem.* 7.6: κατάγειον μὲν οἰκοδομῆσαι μελετητήριον, ὃ δὴ διεσφύζετο καὶ καθ' ἡμᾶς, ἐνταῦθα δὲ πάντως μὲν ἐκάστης ἡμέρας κατιόντα πλάττειν τὴν ὑπόκρισιν καὶ διαπονεῖν τὴν φωνήν.

⁶⁰ *Per.* 5.2.

⁶¹ *Per.* 16.5 f.; see Stadter 1989, 198.

⁶² *Alc.* 3.1.

⁶³ *Alc.* 4.5 f.

⁶⁴ *Alc.* 22.4: ἀπομιμούμενον τὰ μυστήρια καὶ δεικνύοντα τοῖς αὐτοῦ ἐταίροις ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ τῇ ἑαυτοῦ.

⁶⁵ *Alc.* 8.1 f.

⁶⁶ *Alc.* 16.4 f.

money and land had to stay within the family⁶⁷. As well pointed out by M. Beck⁶⁸, it also impacted on the utilization of private space and imposed constraint upon land, when using wells, planting trees, digging a pit or a ditch or setting bee-hives⁶⁹, obviously in order to suppress a cause for argument among neighbours. Again, his laws regulated private behaviors in public spaces: ‘he prohibited the slandering of a living person at temples, law-courts and government offices and during publicly attended games competitions’⁷⁰.

The distribution of private money and property to the people, which was recommended only if ‘slight’ and done in order to prevent some major misbehavior in Plutarch’s *Precepts of Statecraft*⁷¹ is either approved or criticized in the Athenian *Lives*. In the *Life of Cimon*, Plutarch gives an unreserved praise for the generosity of a statesman who spent his wealth on his fellow citizens:

His generosity surpassed even the unselfish kindness of Athenians of bygone days ... he turned his home into a prytaneum, and on his estates he made the first-fruits of his ripened crops and all the bounty of the seasons freely available for visitors to take and enjoy. In a sense, then, he made the legendary fellowship of the age of Cronus once more a feature of human life⁷².

But in *Pericles*, Cimon’s behavior is portrayed in a less favorable light as a means to win the favor of the poor and a demagogic maneuver to outdo Pericles⁷³. Whereas Plutarch seems to approve the gesture of Pericles who gave to the public the land and the buildings he owned in the countryside in the event of Archidamus sparing his property, in order to prevent slander⁷⁴, he openly criticizes the offer of Callias to bequeath his money and property to the people in the event of his dying without offsprings as motivated only by his fear of Alcibiades’ intrigues⁷⁵.

The house has also a symbolical value. The seclusion into one’s house may symbolize, in *Solon*, the withdrawal from politics: ‘As the people were too afraid to pay any attention to him, he went back home, took his arms and armor and put them in the lane in front of his door’⁷⁶. Conversely, complete devotion to politics may be signified by a refusal of conviviality:

⁶⁷ *Sol.* 21.3: πρότερον γὰρ οὐκ ἐξῆν, ἀλλ’ ἐν τῷ γένει τοῦ τεθνηκότος ἔδει τὰ χρήματα καὶ τὸν οἶκον καταμένειν.

⁶⁸ Beck 2012, 452.

⁶⁹ *Sol.* 23.6-8.

⁷⁰ *Sol.* 21.2.

⁷¹ *Mor.* 818c-d.

⁷² *Cim.* 10.6 f: ἡ δὲ Κίμωνος ἀφθονία καὶ τὴν παλαιὰν τῶν Ἀθηναίων φιλοξενίαν καὶ φιλανθρωπίαν ὑπερέβαλεν ... ὁ δὲ τὴν μὲν οἰκίαν τοῖς πολίταις πρυτανεῖον ἀποδείξας κοινόν, ἐν δὲ τῇ χώρᾳ καρπῶν. ἐτοιμῶν ἀπαρχὰς καὶ ὅσα ὄραι καλὰ φέρουσι χρῆσθαι καὶ λαμβάνειν ἅπαντα τοῖς ξένοις παρέχων, τρόπον τινὰ τὴν ἐπὶ Κρόνου μυθολογουμένην κοινωσίαν εἰς τὸν βίον αὐθις κατήγευ.

⁷³ *Per.* 9.2.

⁷⁴ *Per.* 33.3.

⁷⁵ *Alc.* 8.4.

⁷⁶ *Sol.* 30.7.

Pericles never throughout all the many years of his involvement in politics, went to have dinner at a friend's house ... The point is that conviviality tends to undermine authority and it is hard to maintain an appearance of gravity in the midst of familiar social intercourse⁷⁷.

But the behaviour of Nicias who made himself inaccessible and reclusive by staying at home with his doors closed is criticized as 'a tragic posture' and a cheap way of gaining prestige⁷⁸.

C. Public Places and Buildings.

Public spaces such as the *agora* and the Pnyx and public buildings such as the *bouleuterion* (the Council chamber), the *stratageion* (the office for the board of generals), the law-courts, and the *Prytaneion* (the city-hall) are the usual setting of political events.

The Pnyx is mentioned only once, in *Themistocles*, when Plutarch stresses the negative consequences of the change of Athens from a land power into a sea power. This transformation, which had a positive result in the short term – the salvation of the Greeks came at that time from the sea – is presented in 19.4 f. as harming Athens in the long-term by promoting the interests of the poor – it increased the power of the *demos* against the best men and filled them with boldness, since power passed to sailors, boatswains and helmsmen – as pointed by T. Duff⁷⁹. It is translated, in an aside, in terms of space by the orientation of the speakers' platform:

It had been built so as to face the sea and was later on turned inland by the Thirty: to their minds the origin of democracy lay with Athens maritime empire, while oligarchy was more to the liking of those who worked the land⁸⁰.

In Plutarch's Athenian *Lives*, the *agora* is the setting of major political events. In *Solon*, Plutarch, echoing Herodotus⁸¹, sets in the *agora* Pisistratus' scheme to be granted bodyguards by the people, Solon's unsuccessful attempt to prevent it as well as his address urging his fellow citizens not to throw their freedom away⁸². In *Nicias*, when, in contrast with Thucydides⁸³, he gives a detailed account of the way in which the Athenians learned about the disaster in Sicily, he adds that the barber of the Pi-

⁷⁷ *Per.* 7.5 f.: ἐν οἷς ἐπολιτεύσατο χρόνοις μακροῖς γενομένοις πρὸς μηδένα τῶν φίλων ἐπὶ δεῖπνον ἔλθειν ... δεινὰ γὰρ αἱ φιλοφροσύναι παντὸς ὄγκου περιγενέσθαι, καὶ δυσφύλακτον ἐν συνηθείᾳ τὸ πρὸς δόξαν σεμνὸν ἔστι.

⁷⁸ *Nic.* 5.2 f.: καὶ ὁ μάλιστα ταῦτα συντραγῶδων καὶ συμπεριτιθεὶς ὄγκον αὐτῶ καὶ δόξαν Ἰέρων ἦν.

⁷⁹ Duff 2008, 171 f.

⁸⁰ *Them.* 19.6: διὸ καὶ τὸ βῆμα τὸ ἐν Πυκνὶ πεποιημένον ὥστ' ἀποβλέπειν πρὸς τὴν θάλατταν ὕστερον οἱ τριάκοντα πρὸς τὴν χώραν ἀπέστρεψαν, οἴομενοι τὴν μὲν κατὰ θάλατταν ἀρχὴν γένεσιν εἶναι δημοκρατίας, ὀλιγαρχία δ' ἦττον δυσχεραίνειν τοὺς γεωργοῦντας.

⁸¹ *Hdt.* 1.5.9.

⁸² *Sol.* 30.1, 4 f.

⁸³ *Thuc.* 8.1.1.

raeus who first knew it ran to the city and set the story going in the *agora*⁸⁴. Again, in *Alcibiades*, the murder of Phrynichus by Hermon takes place in the *agora*⁸⁵.

In the Athenian *Lives*, Plutarch also uses the *agora* to illuminate the virtues of leaders such as Pericles, Nicias or Phocion. Pericles is praised first for his self control, when he silently endured all day long the insults hurled at him by some crude and outrageous fellow in the *agora* where he had an urgent business to see to⁸⁶. Second, for his complete devotion to duty: once he entered politics, ‘the only street in the city where he could be seen walking was the one leading to the *agora* and the Council chamber’⁸⁷. Last for his piety as ‘he always prayed the gods before ascending to the platform’⁸⁸ and delivering a speech. A set of qualities that explain why the *polis*, after stripping him of his military command, began to miss him and called him back to the platform and to the general’s office⁸⁹. Again, Nicias’ dedication to politics is vividly portrayed in terms of space:

when he was a general, he remained in the generals’ building, the *strategeion*, till night and as a counsellor he was the first to reach and last to leave the council chamber, the *bouleuterion*⁹⁰.

His abiding by the rules is made manifest when, in the generals’ building, he invited Sophocles who was the eldest to speak first⁹¹. As for Phocion, he is remarkable for his quick reactions:

fearing to be prevented by the Boeotians from helping the Megarians, he convened the assembly at earliest dawn, convinced them to vote for sending an help and departed immediately with the troops⁹².

He is also praised for his self control at the assembly, as demonstrated by his answer to Lysurgus who hurled at him insults in the assembly⁹³, his successful opposition to a bellicose sycophant at the assembly⁹⁴, and his resisting the uproar of the assembly and his managing to change their mind⁹⁵. Conversely, the same setting is put to use to demonstrate Alcibiades’ insolent and luxurious lifestyle when he grabbed his wife

⁸⁴ *Nic.* 30.1-3.

⁸⁵ *Alc.* 25.24.

⁸⁶ *Per.* 5.2.

⁸⁷ *Per.* 7.5: ὁδὸν τε γὰρ ἐν ἄστει μίαν ἑωρᾶτο τὴν ἐπ’ ἀγορὰν καὶ τὸ βουλευτήριον πορευόμενος.

⁸⁸ *Per.* 8.6: ἀεὶ πρὸς τὸ βῆμα βαδίζων ἠὔχετο τοῖς θεοῖς.

⁸⁹ *Per.* 37.1: [Τῆς δὲ πόλεως] ποθοῦσης δ’ ἐκείνον καὶ καλοῦσης ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα καὶ τὸ στρατήγιον.

⁹⁰ *Nic.* 5.1: ἄρχων μὲν ἐν τῷ στρατηγίῳ διετέλει μέχρι νυκτός, ἐκ δὲ βουλῆς ὕστατος ἀπῆει πρῶτος ἀφικνούμενος.

⁹¹ *Nic.* 15.2: λέγεται δ’ ἐν τῷ στρατηγίῳ ποτὲ βουλευομένων τι κοινῇ τῶν συναρχόντων κελευσθεὶς ὑπ’ αὐτοῦ πρῶτος εἰπεῖν γνώμην Σοφοκλῆς ὁ ποιητής, ὡς πρεσβύτατος ὢν τῶν συστρατῆγων.

⁹² *Phoc.* 15.1: ἐκκλησίαν συνήγαγεν ἕωθεν, καὶ προσαγγείλας τὰ παρὰ τῶν Μεγαρέων τοῖς Ἀθηναίοις, ὡς ἐπειρηφίσαντο, τῇ σάλπιγγι σημήνας εὐθύς ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας ἦγεν αὐτοὺς τὰ ὄπλα λαβόντας.

⁹³ *Phoc.* 9.10.

⁹⁴ *Phoc.* 10.3.

⁹⁵ *Phoc.* 24.3-5.

in the *agora* and took her back home⁹⁶ or trailed his purple-dyed cloth through the *agora*⁹⁷ and to expose his tricky behavior towards a Lacedemonian embassy at the assembly⁹⁸.

The law-courts where, according to Solon's laws, all the citizens could bring a lawsuit against an offender and act as jurors⁹⁹ played a major role in Athenian democracy. In the Athenian *Lives* this setting serves many purposes. Plutarch explains the origin of Demosthenes' eager desire to become an orator by his attending in court the plea of Callistratus who was then at the very height of his reputation¹⁰⁰. He illustrates the shortcomings of democracy when he denounces the professional accusers who used to spend their time at the *Heliaia* (people's court)¹⁰¹ and reminds twice his readers, in digressions appended to the lives of Aristides and Nicias¹⁰², of the tragic fate of the general Paches who slew himself on rostrum in court after his condemnation. He illuminates the fairness displayed in the same setting by Aristides and Phocion: prosecuting an enemy in court Aristides seconded him when the judges refused to hear his play¹⁰³ and Phocion refused to help his son in law in court when he was justly accused¹⁰⁴.

The allusions to the Areopagus usually concern not the place but the institution created by Solon or may be by Dracon¹⁰⁵. However there are three mentions of the Areopagus as a place. First in *Solon* when Plutarch demonstrates how 'Pisistratus, when he was already tyrant, abided by Solon's laws, summoned to the Areopagus on a charge of homicide, he duly appeared to defend himself'¹⁰⁶. Then in *Demosthenes* to illustrate his aristocratic behavior: after the acquittal of Antiphon by the assembly, he nevertheless brought him before the council of Areopagus who sentenced him to death¹⁰⁷ and to demonstrate how he was convicted by the law he himself introduced: having passed a bill providing that those proven guilty of being bribed by Harpalus had to be brought to the council of Areopagus, he was among the first condemned by the council¹⁰⁸.

Given the number of politicians sentenced by the courts, prison is often referred to in Athenian *Lives*. It is the setting of the death of Miltiades¹⁰⁹ and Phidias¹¹⁰. It is used to emphasize the magnanimity of Phocion who agreed to visit in the prison the sycophant Aristogeiton, and his fortitude when sentenced to death¹¹¹, as well as the

⁹⁶ *Alc.* 8.5.

⁹⁷ *Alc.* 16.1.

⁹⁸ *Alc.* 14.7.

⁹⁹ *Sol.* 18.2 f.

¹⁰⁰ *Dem.* 5.1 f.

¹⁰¹ *Phoc.* 16.2.

¹⁰² *Arist.* 26.5, *Nic.* 6.1.

¹⁰³ *Arist.* 4.2.

¹⁰⁴ *Phoc.* 22.4.

¹⁰⁵ *Sol.* 19.1-5.

¹⁰⁶ *Sol.* 31.3: [Pisistratus] ὅς γε καὶ φόνου προσκληθεὶς εἰς Ἄρειον πάγον ἤδη τυραννῶν, ἀπήντησε κοσμίως ἀπολογησόμενος.

¹⁰⁷ *Dem.* 14.5.

¹⁰⁸ *Dem.* 26.1 f.

¹⁰⁹ *Cim.* 4.4.

¹¹⁰ *Per.* 31.5.

¹¹¹ *Phoc.* 36.1-3.

faint-heartedness of Andocides and Demosthenes. According to Plutarch, who quotes Timaeus, Andocides, in connection with the mutilation of the Herms, was won over in prison by the arguments of a fellow-conjurer and got immunity from punishment by informing against himself and some others¹¹². Demosthenes, sentenced to a huge fine for bribery and delivered over to prison in default of payment, ran away¹¹³. The behavior of the people who cast into prison, without trial, anyone who was accused of anything at all connected to the mutilation of the Herms and the parody of the Mysteries is also clearly criticized by Plutarch¹¹⁴.

The *Prytaneion*, where public benefactors and victorious athletes had dining-rights at public expense, demonstrates Athenians' gratitude to their statesmen and their family: according to the historians, Aristides' daughters were married from the Prytaneion at public expense¹¹⁵. Later on the Athenians also decreed that the eldest member of Demosthenes' family should have dining rights in the Prytaneion¹¹⁶.

The theatre, an institution linked to democracy, was often disparaged in the *Moralia* by the Platonist Plutarch, as pointed out by Podlecki¹¹⁷. In *Solon* the law-giver, who is supposed to be contemporary of Thespis the mythical inventor of tragedy, after attending one of his performances, expresses his disapprobation of a corrupting pastime, since impersonation as a play elicits pretense in serious matters¹¹⁸. Elsewhere, the theatre is presented as the place where comic poets make fun of bad politicians such as Hyperbolus¹¹⁹ and tragedians such as Aeschylus give to Amphiaraios in the *Seven* a praise which is justly applied by the audience to Aristides¹²⁰. In *Cimon*, it becomes the setting of famous incident: when Cimon and his fellow-generals were, against the rule, empanelled as judges and gave the prize to the young Sophocles, Aeschylus was so hurt that left for Sicily¹²¹. The theatre is especially prominent in *Phocion*. This austere statesman did not pay attention to it: when the theatre was filling up, Phocion was walking up and down below the *skene* deep in thought and only concerned with his next speech¹²². Later on, to emphasize the simplicity of Phocion's wife, Plutarch reports the refusal of a *choregos* to give to an actor, who played the part of a queen, the many well attired attendants he was asking for: 'Don't you see the wife of Phocion who goes out with only one servant?'¹²³. He also contrasts his poverty with the wealth of the orator Demades: infringing the law which forbade the introduction of foreigners in the chorus on pain of a fine of thousand drachmas, Demades introduced a chorus made of hundred foreigners, bringing in the theatre together with them the fine of thousand drachmas for each one¹²⁴.

¹¹² *Alc.* 21.4-6.

¹¹³ *Dem.* 26.2.

¹¹⁴ *Alc.* 20.5.

¹¹⁵ *Arist.* 27.2

¹¹⁶ *Dem.* 30.5.

¹¹⁷ Podlecki 1988, 240 f.

¹¹⁸ *Sol.* 29.6 f.

¹¹⁹ *Alc.* 13.5.

¹²⁰ *Arist.* 3.5.

¹²¹ *Cim.* 8.8.

¹²² *Phoc.* 5.7.

¹²³ *Phoc.* 19.1-3.

¹²⁴ *Phoc.* 30.5-7.

At the end of the fourth century, the theatre was also increasingly used for the assembly. This was the case for the only assembly convened contrary to the rules that sentenced Phocion and his friends to death: it included not only citizens but also slaves, foreigners and *atimoi* that is citizens deprived of their rights, the speakers' platform was open to all, and the attempt of one of the best men to dismiss the irregular members was opposed by the mass¹²⁵.

Gymnasia, which show Plutarch's precise and personal knowledge of Athenian space, are also used for characterization. Plutarch knew that the Kynosarges, a gymnasium reserved for the Athenians considered to be illegitimate and dedicated to Heracles because he had the taint of mixed descent¹²⁶, was outside the city gates¹²⁷. This setting is used, perhaps anachronistically – it was Pericles who later on passed a law confining Athenian citizenship to those whose parents were both Athenian¹²⁸ – to demonstrate the resourcefulness of Themistocles whose mother was either Thracian or Carian¹²⁹:

He set about to persuade some well-born youths to exercise there with him, thereby earning the reputation of having cunningly abolished the distinction between the illegitimate and legitimate members of the Athenian society¹³⁰.

As an aside, Plutarch also points out in *Solon*¹³¹ that Pisistratus, because of his love to Charmus, consecrated a statue to love in the part of the Academy where the runners in the sacred torch-race light their torches. Later on, with Plato, the Academy became a famous school of philosophy. As such it is mentioned twice in the *Life of Phocion* who attended there the Lectures of Plato and Xenocrates, together with the Byzantine Leon¹³². Plutarch also characterizes the austere lifestyle of Phocion by pointing out, among other things, that he was never seen in the public baths¹³³.

The Acropolis is 'laden with symbolism'¹³⁴. Its seizure by Pisistratus marks the beginning of his tyranny¹³⁵. The march of Cimon with a group of companions through the Kerameikos up to the Acropolis where he dedicated his horse bridle to Athena before making his way down to the coast in support of Themistocles' proposal that the Athenians abandon their city visibly demonstrates that they needed to fight at sea rather than horseback¹³⁶. At the time of Pericles, the decree of Diopithes which laid down that there should be a criminal prosecution of atheists¹³⁷ was given

¹²⁵ *Phoc.* 34.3-6.

¹²⁶ See Paus. 1.9.3.

¹²⁷ *Them.* 1.7.

¹²⁸ Hansen 1991, 38.

¹²⁹ *Them.* 1.1 f.

¹³⁰ *Them.* 1.3.

¹³¹ *Sol.* 1.7.

¹³² *Phoc.* 4.2 and 14.7.

¹³³ *Phoc.* 4.3.

¹³⁴ Beck 2012, 455.

¹³⁵ *Sol.* 30.5.

¹³⁶ *Cimon.* 5.2.

¹³⁷ Hansen 1991, 78.

special prominence by its link with the Acropolis: ‘the judges should pick up their voting pebbles from the great altar of Athena on the Acropolis’¹³⁸.

Plutarch also pays much attention to temples and rituals. In *Solon*, he tells his readers that the conquest of Salamis was reenacted each year by the sending of a ship with a crew initially keeping quiet but then charging into attack yelling and screaming, while one man in full armor used to run to the cape Skiradion. It was also celebrated by the foundation nearby by Solon of a temple to Enyalus¹³⁹. He also mentions that the pollution originating with Megacles’ killing of Cylon and his fellow conspirators after the breaking of the thread that linked them to the temple of Athena, took place at the sanctuary of the *Semnai*¹⁴⁰. Again, he reminds his readers in a comparison that the Olympieion begun by Pisistratus and his sons was left half finished – may be as an indirect homage paid to the Emperor Hadrian who completed it at Plutarch’s time¹⁴¹. He knew that the temple of Artemis *aristoboule*, celebrating the excellent advices given by Themistocles to the city and the Greeks, was on the site ‘where nowadays the public executioners cast out the bodies of executed criminals and take the clothes and noose of those who are strangled to death’, and was built by Themistocles close to his own house and contained a small bust of the statesman which was still standing in Plutarch’s time – two details suggesting that he had seen it and serving to demonstrate both the pride of this hero and the susceptibility of the Athenians who were irritated by this tribute paid to an individual¹⁴². In contrast, in *Cimon*, he tells that the *demos* gave permission to Cimon to perpetuate the memory of his victory at Eion by erecting three inscribed herms, adding that the name of Cimon was nowhere to be seen on these herms, and explaining that this unparalleled honor, which was not granted to Themistocles and Miltiades, was given to him presumably because this victory was won in Persian territory¹⁴³. In the *Lives* of Alcibiades and Nicias, Plutarch also mentions the mutilation of the Herms, except one called the Herm of Andocides, a dedication of the Aegeid tribe, standing in front of what was at that time the house of the orator Andocides¹⁴⁴. In *Themistocles*¹⁴⁵, as well pointed out by T. Duff¹⁴⁶, «Plutarch finishes his discussion of Themistocles’ family with the claim that he had a “connection” with, or “was a member of (μετέιχε) the Lykomid *genos*, a claim supported by the fact that the Lykomid shrine of initiation (*telesterion*) at Phlya, burned by the Persians, was later restored by Themistocles». In *Cimon*, he reports that «the Athenians built the altar of peace to celebrate this treaty [the treaty of Callias]»¹⁴⁷.

¹³⁸ *Per.* 32.3: οἱ δὲ δικασταὶ τὴν ψῆφον ἀπὸ τοῦ βωμοῦ φέροντες ἐν τῇ πόλει κρίνοινεν; see Stadter 1989 *ad l.*

¹³⁹ *Sol.* 9.6 f.

¹⁴⁰ *Sol.* 12.1.

¹⁴¹ *Sol.* 32.2. See Wycherley 1978, 156-64.

¹⁴² *Them.* 22.2 f. See Wycherley 1978, 178, 189 f., Podlecki 1975, 143-6 and Frost 1980, 184 f.

¹⁴³ *Cim.* 7.6-8.2.

¹⁴⁴ *Nic.* 13.3, *Alc.* 18.5 f. and 21.2 f.

¹⁴⁵ *Them.* 1.4.

¹⁴⁶ Duff 2008, 173 f.

¹⁴⁷ *Cim.* 13.5.

D. Dedicatory Offerings and Graves.

Plutarch uses the dedicatory offerings of Nicias¹⁴⁸ which are still standing in his day to prove his extravagant spending to win over the Athenians. He mentions specifically the Palladion on the Acropolis 'which has lost its gildings, but also, in the precinct, the shrine which lay under the tripods he had won as a *choregos*'. As a matter of fact, as demonstrated by Buckler¹⁴⁹ relying on Wycherley¹⁵⁰, this is «one of Plutarch's most glaring blunders». He attributed the monument he has seen to the wrong Nicias, since the inscription associated with the remains of this building proves that the *choregos* named Nicias lived in 320/319 BC.

Tombs and memorials dedicated to great statesmen are mentioned in the *Lives* to demonstrate the *philanthropia* of the Athenians towards their benefactors. 'The tomb of Aristides is pointed out at Phalerum and they say the city constructed it for him, since he did not leave even enough to pay for his funeral'¹⁵¹. In his conclusion of the *Life of Cimon*, Plutarch reports that 'Cimon's remains were brought back to Attica', a fact proved by the existence of the monuments which are still called *Cimoneia*¹⁵².

They also illustrate the remorse they felt after condemning Themistocles, Demosthenes and Phocion. Plutarch, who gives as a fact the existence of a magnificent tomb of Themistocles standing in the city square of Magnesia¹⁵³, also quotes what he considers as a conjecture of the geographer Diodorus who says in *On tombs* that 'near the great harbor of the Piraeus there is a kind of elbow-like promontory ... and as you round this elbow ... there is a fair-sized plinth with an altar shaped tomb on it which is the tomb of Themistocles'¹⁵⁴ – a conjecture confirmed by Pausanias¹⁵⁵. Again, he reminds his readers that

A little while after Demosthenes' death, the Athenians paid worthy honors to him by erecting his statue in bronze and this celebrated inscription was inscribed upon the pedestal of his statue: "If thy strength had only been equal to thy purpose, Demosthenes, never would the Greeks have been ruled by a Macedonian Ares"¹⁵⁶

and reports an incident which occurred there a short time before he took up his abode in Athens¹⁵⁷. Similarly, a little while after the Athenians had sentenced Phocion to death and banished his corpse beyond the frontier of Attica,

when the events taught them what leader and guardian of prudence and justice they has lost, they erected to him a bronze statue and buried him at public expense¹⁵⁸.

¹⁴⁸ *Nic.* 3.3 f.

¹⁴⁹ Buckler 1992, 4820.

¹⁵⁰ Wycherley 1978, 168, 231.

¹⁵¹ *Arist.* 27.1.

¹⁵² *Cim.* 19.5.

¹⁵³ *Them.* 32.4.

¹⁵⁴ *Them.* 32.5 f.

¹⁵⁵ Paus. 1.1.2. See Wycherley 1978, 265.

¹⁵⁶ *Dem.* 30.5.

¹⁵⁷ *Dem.* 31.1 f.

¹⁵⁸ *Phoc.* 38.1.

Rich graves erected in conspicuous places to honor unworthy persons such as courtesans serve also as evidence of shameful behavior. In a digression, Plutarch tells us in *Phocion* that after the death of his lover, the courtesan Pythonike, Harpalus ‘erected her at great expense – 30 talents – a tomb which remains until now at Hermeion, on the Sacred Way leading from Athens to Eleusis’¹⁵⁹.

Some asides only demonstrate Plutarch’s erudition and precise knowledge of Athens’ topography. In *Pericles* Plutarch mentions that the herald Anthemocritus, who was believed to be killed by the Megarians, was buried ‘next to the Thriasian gate which is now called the Dipylon’¹⁶⁰. In *Cimon*, he reports that the historian Thucydides, who was related by birth to Cimon’s family and murdered in a place called Scapte Hyle, ‘had his remains brought back to Attica and his tombstone was shown in the *Cimoneia* alongside the grave of Cimon’s sister Elpinice’¹⁶¹.

3. The Construction of Athens.

The history of Athens’ monuments begins with her mythical king Theseus. His joining together of different communities (*synoecism*), parallel to Romulus’ foundation of Rome¹⁶², is indeed symbolized not only by the destructions of individual Town-halls and Council-chambers, but also by the construction of a Town hall and a Council-chamber common to all at the place where the city is today¹⁶³.

As portrayed by Plutarch quoting Philochorus, Athens in the time of Theseus was not yet a sea-power: the Athenians did not yet turn their mind to the sea and Theseus had to borrow from the Salaminian Sciros pilots for his ship when he traveled to Crete¹⁶⁴. Accordingly, Theseus’ engraving the coins he stroke with a bull is to be explained not only as a celebration of his killing the Marathonian bull, but also as a call for farming life¹⁶⁵. This second explanation is supported by a passage from the *Life of Themistocles*. By making Athens a maritime power, says Plutarch, Themistocles adopted a course of action that ran counter to the policy of her former kings:

it is said that they strove to divert the citizens from the sea and to get them live on agriculture and not on navigation: they spread the story of Athena who competed with Poseidon for the land and won by showing the olive-tree to the judges¹⁶⁶.

¹⁵⁹ *Phoc.* 22.1.

¹⁶⁰ *Per.* 30.3 f. See Stadter 1989, 281 f., Buckler 1992, 4819.

¹⁶¹ *Cim.* 4.3.

¹⁶² *Thes.* 2.2: ὁ μὲν ἔκτισε τὴν Ῥώμην, ὁ δὲ συνόκησε τὰς Ἀθήνας.

¹⁶³ *Thes.* 24.3 f.: καταλύσας οὖν τὰ παρ’ ἐκάστοις πρυτανεῖα καὶ βουλευτήρια καὶ ἀρχάς ἐν δὲ ποιήσας ἅπασιν κοινὸν ἐνταῦθα πρυτανεῖον καὶ βουλευτήριον ὅπου νῦν ἴδρυται τὸ ἄστυ, τὴν τε πόλιν Ἀθήνας προσηγόρευσε, καὶ Παναθήναια θυσίαν ἐποίησε κοινήν. ἔθυσσε δὲ καὶ Μετοίκια τῇ ἑκτῇ ἐπὶ δέκα τοῦ Ἑκατομβαιῶνος, ἦν ἔτι νῦν θύουσι.

¹⁶⁴ *Thes.* 17.6: Φιλόχορος [*FGrHist* 328 F 111] δὲ παρὰ Σκίρου φησὶν ἐκ Σαλαμῖνος τὸν Θησέα λαβεῖν κυβερνήτην μὲν Ναυσίθοον, πρῶτά δὲ Φαίακα, μηδέπω τότε τῶν Ἀθηναίων προσεχόντων τῇ θαλάσσει.

¹⁶⁵ *Thes.* 25.5: ἔκοψε δὲ καὶ νόμισμα, βοῦν ἐγκαράξας ἢ διὰ τὸν Μαραθῶνιον ταῦρον ἢ διὰ τὸν Μίνω στρατηγόν, ἢ πρὸς γεωργίαν τοὺς πολίτας παρακαλῶν.

¹⁶⁶ *Them.* 19.4: ἐκείνοι μὲν γὰρ ὡς λέγεται πραγματεύομενοι τοὺς πολίτας ἀποσπάσαι τῆς θαλάττης, καὶ συνεθίσαι ζῆν μὴ πλέοντας, ἀλλὰ τὴν χώραν φυτεύοντας, τὸν περὶ τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς

This major transformation was linked by Themistocles to a series of spatial changes and new constructions. After his reconstruction of the walls of Athens against the will of the Spartans¹⁶⁷ 'he began to work on the Piraeus since he had noticed the quality of its harbors and wanted to join the city as a whole to the sea'¹⁶⁸ by the building of the walls that connected the Piraeus to Athens.

The victories of Cimon also contributed to the security and the embellishment of the city:

Although the Long Walls – the 'Legs' as they are known – were not completed until later, yet when the original footing subsided into damp, marshy ground, it was Cimon, apparently, who was responsible for establishing them on a secure foundation by financing out of his own pocket the dumping of a great deal of rubble and stones into the marshes until they became firm. He was also the first to embellish the city with the so-called cultivated and refined haunts, which would before long become so extremely popular. He planted plane trees in the city square and transformed the Academy from a dry, non-irrigated spot into a well-watered grove, which he equipped with obstacle-free racing-tracks and shady walks¹⁶⁹.

Whereas Isocrates and Demosthenes credited the democratic government for the great buildings erected in Athens under Pericles¹⁷⁰, Plutarch in *Pericles*¹⁷¹ presents them as his hero's greatest personal accomplishment, as did Isocrates in *Antidosis*¹⁷². He had already reported the opinion of those who think that he was called 'Olympian' because of the buildings with which he adorned the city¹⁷³. Again, in the *comparison of Pericles and Fabius* he enhances his praise of the Athenian statesman by contrasting Periclean Athens with Rome:

by the side of the great public works, the temples and the stately edifices with which Pericles adorned Athens, all Rome's attempts at splendor down to the times of the Caesars, taken together, are not worthy to be considered, nay, the one had a towering pre-eminence above the other, both in grandeur of design, and grandeur of execution, which precludes comparison¹⁷⁴.

The contrast with Thucydides, the *epitaphioi logoi* of classical Athens and Plato's *Gorgias* is striking. The historian in the *Archaeology* mentions the temples and magnificent buildings of Athens and the lack of monuments in Sparta only in a di-

διέδοσαν λόγον, ὡς ἐρίσαντα περὶ τῆς χάρας Ποσειδῶνα δείξασα τὴν μορίαν τοῖς δικασταῖς ἐνίκησεν.

¹⁶⁷ *Them.* 19.1-3.

¹⁶⁸ *Them.* 19.3 f.

¹⁶⁹ *Cim.* 13.6 f.

¹⁷⁰ Isocr. *Areopag.* 66 and Demosth. *Against Androtion* 76.

¹⁷¹ *Per.* 12 f.

¹⁷² *Ant.* 233.

¹⁷³ *Per.* 8.3.

¹⁷⁴ *Comp. Per./Fab.* 3.5: Ἔργων γε μὴν μεγέθει καὶ ναῶν καὶ κατασκευαῖς οἰκοδομημάτων, ἐξ ὧν ἐκόσμησεν ὁ Περικλῆς τὰς Ἀθήνας, οὐκ ἄξιον ὁμοῦ πάντα τὰ πρὸ τῶν Καισάρων φιλοτιμήματα τῆς Ῥώμης παραβαλεῖν, ἀλλ' ἔξοχόν τι πρὸς ἐκεῖνα καὶ ἀσύγκριτον ἢ τούτων ἔσχε μεγαλοῦργία καὶ μεγαλοπρέπεια τὸ πρῶτον.

gression, in order to deprecate their significance and deny any connection between power and monuments¹⁷⁵. The funeral orations – as well as Isocrates' *Panegyricus* and *Panathenaicus* – focus only on the exploits of the Athenians and never mention their buildings. In *Gorgias* Pericles' achievement is even harshly criticized and portrayed as a kind of flattery, a mere 'gratification of one's own and other people's people appetites'¹⁷⁶. When the Attic orators allude in their speeches to the beautiful public buildings of Athens, their purpose is either to contrast the 'love of honour' (*philotimia*) of the ancestors with the selfishness and greed of contemporary statesmen¹⁷⁷ or the democratic regime with the tyranny of the Thirty¹⁷⁸.

Pericles' enterprise is first vindicated by Plutarch because of the pleasure, the adornment, and eternal glory he brought to Athens¹⁷⁹. In contrast with Thucydides, Plutarch also present it as a reliable evidence of Athens' past power and prosperity¹⁸⁰. Moreover he assigns to Pericles himself two unusual justifications¹⁸¹. As well said by P. Stadter in his commentary¹⁸², «the first part responds to the objection of the allies that it is a misuse of the tribute paid to Athens by the members of the Delian League. The second gives the positive purpose: to gain glory for the city and to allow those who stayed at home to get a share of public money by the work given to every trade».

Before giving a precise list of the buildings and statues then completed, the Parthenon, with its *cella* hundred-foot long¹⁸³, the sanctuary of the mysteries at Eleusis¹⁸⁴, the long wall¹⁸⁵, the Odeion¹⁸⁶, the Propylaea¹⁸⁷, the statue of Athena Hygeia¹⁸⁸ and the golden statue of Athena¹⁸⁹ as well as the names of the artists responsible for these works, Plutarch gives a general appreciation which deserves to be quoted:

In beauty each one was ancient from the start, but in freshness each is recent and newly wrought even today: thus a kind of newness always flowers on them, preserving their

¹⁷⁵ Thuc. 1.10.2.

¹⁷⁶ Plat. *Grg.* 503c.

¹⁷⁷ Dem. *Ol.* 3.25, *Against Androtion* 76, *Against Aristocrates* 207, *Against Timocrates* 184, *On Organization* 28-30.

¹⁷⁸ Isocr. *Areopag.* 66.

¹⁷⁹ *Per.* 12.1: Ὁ δὲ πλείστην μὲν ἡδονὴν ταῖς Ἀθήναις καὶ κόσμον ἤνεγκε.

¹⁸⁰ *Per.* 12.1: μόνον δὲ τῇ Ἑλλάδι μαρτυρεῖ μὴ ψεύδεσθαι τὴν λεγομένην δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἐκείνην καὶ τὸν παλαιὸν ὄλβον, ἢ τῶν ἀναθημάτων κατασκευή.

¹⁸¹ *Per.* 12.3 f.

¹⁸² Stadter 1989, 153.

¹⁸³ *Per.* 13.7.

¹⁸⁴ *Per.* 13.7.

¹⁸⁵ *Per.* 13.7. See Stadter 1989, 171.

¹⁸⁶ *Per.* 13.9.

¹⁸⁷ *Per.* 13.12.

¹⁸⁸ *Per.* 13.13.

¹⁸⁹ *Per.* 13.14.

appearance untouched by time, as if the monuments had mingled in them an ever-living breath and unaging soul¹⁹⁰

This praise of a 'classical' Athens and its monuments both ancient and fresh suggest a «view of Athens» – to quote an influential paper of John Stambaugh, *The Idea of the City: Three Views of Athens* – quite close to the Hellenistic portrait of Athens as exemplified in the third century by Heraclides' description of the city which includes the temples and major public buildings¹⁹¹. This is the city where tourists from Rome and Hellenized cities of the Empire such as Strabo from Amaseia in Pontus or Pausanias from Magnesia ad Sipylum flocked to see the things most worthy of attention and to get a sense of the glory that was Greece.

To conclude, Plutarch in his Athenian *Lives* is usually not concerned in Athenian space in itself, except in some asides where he likes to display his acquaintance with the city supported by his own autopsy or drawn from his sources, as pointed by J. Buckler¹⁹². He does not provide any detailed description of the most famous monuments and gives pride of place to toponyms. He is interested in the houses and public buildings only as a setting, as an evidence for events or incidents he reports and, most of all, as a way to characterize directly or indirectly the Athenians and their major lawgivers and statesmen. The Athenian *Lives* also offer their readers an opportunity to compare the behaviour of different heroes at the same place and to get a glimpse of Athens' physical development from the origins to the fourth century.

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¹⁹⁰ *Per.* 13.5: κάλλει μὲν γὰρ ἕκαστον εὐθὺς ἦν τότε ἀρχαῖον, ἀκμῆ δὲ μέχρι νῦν πρόσφατόν ἐστι καὶ νεουργόν· οὕτως ἐπανθεῖ καινότης αἰεὶ τις, ἄθικτον ὑπὸ τοῦ χρόνου διατηροῦσα τὴν ὄψιν, ὥσπερ ἀειθαλὲς πνεῦμα καὶ ψυχὴν ἀγήρω καταμεμειγμένην τῶν ἔργων ἐχόντων.

¹⁹¹ Stambaugh 1974, 312 f.

¹⁹² See Buckler 1992 *passim*.

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to analyze the presence of places and monuments of the city of Athens in the 10 Athenian *Lives* of Plutarch, on the grounds of the previous studies focusing on this topic by Podlecki, Buckler and Beck. Two main parts are devoted respectively, to the mythical *Life of Theseus*, and to historical *Lives* (from Solon to Demosthenes and Phocion). Places and monuments are sorted in a) private houses, b) private and public spheres; c) public places and buildings; d) dedicatory offerings and graves, in order to pick, *Life by Life*, examples of Plutarch use of Athens' city map. Finally, some considerations are devoted to the construction of Athens as deducible by Plutarch's *Lives*.

Keywords: Plutarch, *Lives*, Athens, Places, Monuments.