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## LE STRADE DI ATENE, ONCE AGAIN

IN REPLY TO R. OSBORNE'S REVIEW OF THE BOOK *LE STRADE DI ATENE*  
(SATAA 4), *ATENE-PAESTUM 2008*, CR, n.s., 59/2 (2009), 591-592

I would like to reply to some of R. Osborne's critical remarks, notably as regards some of the omissions he pointed out. Above all, I want to defend the approach I adopted in my study to avoid any further misunderstandings.

1) My reviewer dwells all of three times on the quotation in the book's subtitle, 'ὀδοί, στενοὶ and ἀτραποὶ of the city "κακῶς ἐρρυθμοποιημένη διὰ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα"', arguing that I did not give adequate attention to this well known passage in Heraclides Criticos, *Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι πόλεων*, I, 1 (72, 4 Pfister), where the author comments on how the streets of Athens fall short of the expectations of visitors to the city. Explicit references to this quotation - which E. Greco also calls attention to in his preface - are indeed only found in the chapter dedicated to literary sources; more precisely, in the paragraph where I discuss the rare term ῥύμη, employed to designate a street in Athens; the root of which is also contained in the verb ῥυμοτομέω, used by Heraclides to comment on the inadequacy of the city's street system.

Osborne argues that my failure to discuss Heraclides' comment more fully arises from my decision to treat each street individually, rather than tackling the issue of the general urban layout. Almost at the end of his review he returns again to Heraclides' comment and the need to understand its meaning in the light of the fact that my examination of the documentation and my maps indicate that many of Athens' streets were quite wide, but also that overall its street grid does not appear to have been completely irregular. Osborne believes that a plausible explanation for this situation could have been reached by contrasting the Athenian situation with archaeological data

from other cities; for example, by comparing the width of the streets of Athens with those of well-known sites such as Selinus, Olynthus, Camarina and Himera. He therefore sees in my failure to do so one of the limits of my book.

I chose Heraclides' comment for my subtitle because this author attributes the fact that the city's 'streets are poorly laid out' to 'their antiquity'. The issue of the antiquity of the Athenian street layout is indeed repeatedly addressed in the book, and not just in the chapter on written sources; it is also extensively discussed in my commentary on the archaeological evidence. Notably, I deal with it in Chapter 3, where I attempt to diachronically reconstruct the street grid neighbourhood by neighbourhood, and especially in the section where I try to reconstruct how the reticulum of very early routes that crisscrossed many sectors of the city ever since protohistoric times was gradually incorporated in the city street grid (par. 3.1). What emerges is that the street layout of Athens was modified in the course of time, sometimes drastically, as in the case of the works conducted in the Roman period in the area of the Roman Agora and Hadrian's Library (p. 230). Nevertheless, the general layout was never totally obliterated. This layout had inherited an organization of space that went back to remote times, because the archaic city arose on a site that had been inhabited since the Mycenaean period. The meaning of Heraclides' passage in relation to the Athenian context, at any rate, is sufficiently elucidated in two paragraphs (1.2.4 and 1.2.5) in my chapter on sources. Here I attempt to shed light on Heraclides' negative impression of the street layout of Athens through a study of contexts where the term ῥύμη is employed from the fourth century BC onward to designate a par-

ticular type of street, especially in new Hellenistic foundations. My conclusion is that the disappointment of the periegetes reflected his expectations, and that these were based on a well-defined urban model he had in mind. The features of this model must have been 'new' and 'modern', since Athens, with its 'κακή ῥυμοτομία', lacks them, as Heraclides explains, 'due to its antiquity' (διὰ τὴν ἀρχαιότητα). I then asked myself what elements would make a city appear to be designed according to 'new' and 'modern' criteria in the eyes of a third-century-BC observer. It is actually Heraclides himself who suggests the answer when, talking about Thebes, he describes it as 'καινῶς ἐρρυθμοτομημένη' (HERACLID. Περὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι πόλεων, I, 12, 5-6 = 78, 17-18 Pfister). Evidently Thebes, unlike Athens, had the features of a modern city because it had been redesigned from scratch according to new urban planning criteria in the course of the fourth century BC (p. 43, n. 284). Now, the 'modernity' of its layout could not merely reside in the regularity and orthogonality of its street grid, since these elements are already found in colonial foundations as early as the seventh and sixth centuries BC. Clearly here the watershed between the 'old' and the 'new' city model is the work of Hippodamus, who, as we know, planned Piraeus in the fifth century BC, as well as Thurii on the site of the destroyed city of Sybaris. This is not the proper place to summarize what we know about Hippodamus' work. An up-to-date bibliography is offered in my book on p. 45 (nos. 298-303). However, I did use the results of recent investigations at the Piraeus and Sybaris to throw light on innovations that may be ascribed to Hippodamus. My investigation seems to indicate that Hippodamus' innovative contribution did not just include the subdivision (dairesis) of urban spaces into functional areas or 'sectors' (nemeses), but especially the application of a specific hierarchy of streets; that is, ῥυμοτομία. My examination of sources further indicates that a concern with defense played a major role in this planning approach, one of whose objectives was to ensure that individual sectors (neighbourhoods or blocks) could be adequately defended in case of siege (see esp. pp. 44-45). In my study of innovations in urban planning, I also turned my attention to

new Hellenistic foundations and descriptions of their plans in written sources (pp. 42-45). Thus, in the third century BC Athens, although its street grid was relatively regular and included some very wide thoroughfares, such as the Panathenaic way or the Street of the Tripods, lacked certain new features that were regarded as essential for a city to appear modern and wellplanned.

This is what emerged from my study. As to Osborne's suggestion that further light could have been shed on Heraclides Criticos' judgment on Athens by comparisons with other archaeologically documented cities, this would have required examining all the cities planned from the fifth century BC onward, recognizing innovations in their *rhumotomia* and, finally, comparing their plans with Athens' 'antique' layout.

It is evident that such a research - besides not making much sense in a study focusing specifically on the topography of Athens - is a subject for another book.

2) Osborne affirms that the loose maps that come with the book show all one needs to know about the street system of Athens and recommends the actual reading of the text only to specialists interested in 'very particular topographical issues'. This statement overlooks all the study behind my archaeological map and disregards the fact that the map itself is nothing but the point of arrival, the final product, of all the work contained in the book. What scientific authority could my map of the ancient Athenian street system have had if I had not published it together with the whole documentation I had assembled to draw it up? As regards the 'very particular topographical issues' dealt with in the text, I need to point out that the book belongs to a series called 'Studi di Archeologia e di Topografia di Atene e dell'Attica'; my attention to specific topographical issues thus reflects a programmatic focus of the series as a whole.

3) Osborne affirms that I did not give adequate prominence to human activities and interactions; such as, for example, the connection between the remarkable width of the carriageway of the Panathenaic way and the festivals held along it. I actually devoted ample space to this issue in my discussions of each individual street. Regarding the Panathenaic



way, for example, in my chapter on sources (1.2.3) I address the problem of the dromos mentioned in inscriptions of the archaic period (horse-racing track or processional way?). I also discuss the celebrations and festivals held along the Panathenaic Way (p. 35, nos. 216-218), as well as evidence for potters' workshops from which the name Kerameikos for the whole neighbourhood crossed by the Way was derived (pp. 37-41). In the archaeological section devoted to the Panathenaic Way (2.37), a paragraph focuses on traces of fixtures possibly connected to the celebration of the Eleusinion, such as torch holders and holes for poles supporting stands or *ikria* (par. 2.37.8). Large steps along the stretch of the street right after the Eleusinion were possibly also used as stands for the festival (p. 147, nos. 784-785).

4) Osborne complains that the names of the demes do not appear in my map, although I discuss issues connected to their topographical definition and the possibility that the streets served as deme boundaries. He also claims that I make no attempt 'to gauge the widely different nature of the various neighbourhoods of the city'. The names of the demes do not appear on my map because the location and limits of each are still uncertain. It is quite probable that the streets served as boundaries of demes, but this has not been proved so far. As to the different functions (residential, commercial, productive) of the various city neighbourhoods, I would like to point out that the description of each street includes mention of the archaeological discoveries made along their edges. Besides, in the paragraphs of Chapter 3 where I examine the city districts sector by sector I attempt to define, within the limits of the available evidence, the nature of each of these districts (see, for example, my general index s.v. 'quartiere'). I also address this issue in the first chapter, the one on literary sources. My study indicates that many streets in Athens were named after the principal activities and trades carried out along them (par. 1.2, esp. p. 22).

5) Last but not least, at the end of his review Osborne criticizes the insufficiency of my research with particular reference to the content of Plate I, where the ancient street grid is overlaid on a satellite image of Athens showing its modern streets ('F. provides an invaluable

base map for future work, but to understand the full significance of what is plotted on the map, we need to do much more than merely overlay it upon that of modern Athens'). He thereby seems to imply that the creation of the said image was the final purpose of my work, and that it was included with the book to highlight the continuity of the ancient and modern street grids (an aspect that he gives much prominence to at the beginning of his review).

This observation shows that my reviewer misunderstood the sense of my research, ascribing to it the absurd purpose of investigating the continuity between ancient and modern streets. It also shows that he has no experience of how one draws up an archaeological map, even a general one such as the one in question. I did not include the satellite image, which I obtained from the Athens City Hall, to highlight the continuity between the ancient and modern grids, but because it provided the cartographic basis, the reference points I used to position excavated street segments (see 'Prefazione', p. 9, and 'Premessa', pp. 11-12). Since these excavations were conducted in an urban context, the topographical indications contained in specialized journals such as *Archaologikon Deltion* or *Hesperia* refer to sites and places located along the city's modern streets. This is the only reason why the modern street grid appears in Plate I and the names of the modern streets are listed in a separate index (pp. 289-292).

In fact, the existence of a correspondence between the ancient and modern street grid (an aspect the reviewer insists upon much more than I do in my book, where the only reference to this aspect appears at the end of the last page of the book, p. 231) is hardly remarkable. The area's orography dictates certain routes, which have generally been maintained over time. Besides, it is well-known that after antiquity Athens remained for many centuries a small fortified town hugging the slopes of the Acropolis. Only with the urban expansion of the Twenties, in the wake of the events that followed the Smirne Fire and the Lausanne Treaty, did the city begin to turn into the megapolis we are all familiar with today.

*Laura Ficuciello*