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Communicating in Classical Contexts: The Centrality of Delivery

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The contemporary aversion to or disinterest in orality, performance, and delivery in the study of rhetoric and public address ignores the centrality of these elements in the history and prehistory of the discipline. This oversight is particularly puzzling when we consider scholarly examination of the origins and early development of rhetoric in Greece. While various studies of the Older Sophists seek to reconstruct their doctrines and teachings, none makes clear that at least some of these teachers of the speaker's art must have recognized the importance of delivery–especially the importance of using the voice to exploit the sounds and rhythms of words and the acoustical features of the physical settings in which oratory was performed. Fragmentary textual evidence prior to Aristotle's Rhetoric *suggests that some of the Older Sophists–most conspicuously Thrasymachus, Antiphon, and Gorgias–must have been interested in delivery and may have given some instruction in it. Archaeological evidence concerning 5th-century Athenian speaking settings is even more suggestive, and it permits us to infer several things about the kind of vocal training that these teachers probably provided.* **Key words:** Delivery, Sophists, Performance, Orality, Athens, Oratorical Contexts, Law Courts, Pnyx, Stoa

THOUGH it has been almost fifteen years since I undertook the research project of which this paper is one product, three recent experiences provide a more immediate context for what I will be doing here.[1] During spring semester 1999 I taught a course in speech criticism, the readings for which included a wide sample of the scholarly literature in criticism and public address. The essays we read ranged from Wichelns's "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," through neo-Aristotelian and neo-Classical approaches, to the work of Edwin Black, Ernest Bohrmann, Gerald Mohrmann, Michael Leff, Walter Fisher, Karlyn Campbell, and others.[2] I was struck by the fact that virtually none of the essays we read took account of the role of orality–of performance or delivery–in describing or explaining the rhetorical impact of speech. The defect in failing to consider delivery was made quite clear when we watched and discussed Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. One cannot adequately account for the emotional power and persuasiveness of this speech except by considering how King used his voice to express the rhythms of the language he chose and to carry the audience through a series of emotional crescendos that culminated in his final, ringing words: "Free at last! Free at last! Thank God almighty, we are free at last!" Yet, none of our literature in the study of public address does very much with delivery. Why?

A second episode took place the following summer, when I taught a basic public speaking course to a class of incoming university freshmen. I teach speech using the framework of the classical canons of rhetoric, and when I treat delivery–though I encourage students to employ a natural, conversational style that suits their own personalities and vocal characteristics–I stress the importance of using one's voice, gestures, and physical movements to keep the audience's attention and to augment the words one utters and the ideas one seeks to communicate. Throughout the course, however, I noticed that some of the students–including those whose arguments, speech structure, and word choice were outstanding–persisted in delivering their speeches in an unnaturally stiff manner, standing rigidly behind the podium with arms hanging down at their sides. When I inquired about why they continued to employ such an immobile and unanimated style of delivery, many of them explained that this was how they were taught

in high school speech class to give speeches. As it happened, they had received instruction not from speech teachers, but from teachers of English, who apparently neither possessed nor sought to inculcate a sense of the performance-demands of skilled and effective speaking. Certainly much of the wooden lecturing that passes for teaching both in high schools and at colleges and universities bespeaks a general indifference to and underestimation of the importance of delivery as a factor in communication effectiveness.

The last event that helps to contextualize the present essay took place at a faculty retreat my department had in late August of the same year. One of our tasks was to develop some ways of explaining to those outside our discipline–that is, to other departments in the College of the Liberal Arts and to the university community as a whole–just what it is that we in Speech Communication *do.* What about our scholarly and pedagogical interests and competencies distinguishes us from, say, the College of Communications (which comprises journalism, mass communication, and film studies at my institution) or the English department (which has a Rhetoric and Composition division)? One proposition we discussed was that it is our interest in *speech,* in *face-to-face* communicative encounters, in the *oral/aural* dimensions of human communication, that both marks the origins of our discipline and provides a common thread in our research and curricula. We study and teach, it was said, about public speaking and public address, about interpersonal and small group communication, about communicating in organizations and across cultures, about teaching English as a second language, about political campaigns and communication in social movements. In all these cases, our interest is largely in the spoken word. It is also true that some of us study the rhetoric of film, or the impact of the press on public policy debates, or computer-mediated communication. As a discipline, speech has always pitched a "big tent." Through all the diversity of our research interests and teaching activities, however, it is our fascination with how human beings speak and listen to one another that brings us together. So it was argued, at any rate. This position, however, did not achieve consensus among the faculty in my department. Just as with the recent re-naming of our national professional organization from the *Speech* Communication Association to the *National* Communication Association, so it was with my colleagues: an emphasis on the centrality of orality was thought to be too narrow, too traditional, too old-fashioned.

This aversion to a concern with orality, performance, and delivery in our discipline puzzles me. Delivery has long been recognized as one of the most significant elements of the speaker's art. Aristotle, in the earliest surviving statement about the role of delivery in speech, says that it is "of the greatest importance" (*Rhetoric* 1403b20), and it receives considerable attention in Hellenistic and Roman treatises on rhetoric. Contemporary speech textbooks, too, generally devote significant space to this aspect of the practice of effective public speaking. Even so, the performative aspect of rhetoric is often ignored in scholarly examinations of public address and in studies of the origins and early development of rhetoric in Greece.[3]

This latter oversight is particularly perplexing and troubling. When we read in contemporary scholarship about the earliest teachings and writings in the Greek world on the *logôn technê,* we find that the first teachers of speech–the Sophists of the 5th and early 4th centuries BCE–provided instruction in arguing both sides of a question and in arguing from probabilities, in how to organize material according to the parts of a speech, in how to achieve correctness of diction, and in how to use the resources of

language to arouse, engage, or enchant the emotions of audiences.[4] What is not clear in such studies of the Sophists is that at least some of these teachers of the speaker's art must also have recognized the importance of delivery–especially the importance of using the voice to exploit the sounds and rhythms of words and the acoustical features of the physical settings within which oratory was performed. My present purpose is to correct this oversight by adducing from certain textual and archaeological evidence what would likely have been the interests in the area of delivery held by some, if not all, of the Older Sophists. From this evidence, I believe, we can surmise at least in outline the sorts of things about delivery that some sophistical teachings might have emphasized–elements of the art that were elaborated and formalized by subsequent teachers and theorizers of *rhêtorikê* under the rubric of Delivery.

Before we undertake this reconstruction of sophistical instruction in delivery, two caveats are warranted. First, it is problematic to treat the Sophists as a monolithic group who can be characterized by homogeneity in their pedagogy or philosophical doctrines. Sophists of the 5th century came to Athens from throughout the Greek world, and though they generally shared an interest in educating students for participation in civic life as effective speakers and advocates, these professional teachers of political skill embraced a wide range of epistemological and ethical doctrines.[5] Consequently, while the evidence indicates that instruction in delivery was probably provided by at least some 5th-century Sophists, we must be cautious about imputing such instruction to the whole group. At the same time, given the oral culture within which oratory was performed and the acoustical demands of 5th-century oratorical settings, as we shall see, it is not unreasonable to infer that instruction in the speaker's art would have been incomplete without some attention to oral performance skills.

A second caution concerns the process of historical and archaeological reconstruction. Any effort to reconstruct the past must rely on evidence that is often incomplete, even fragmentary. Moreover, the farther into the past we look, the more fragmentary our evidence is likely to be. This is as true for the reconstruction of such artifacts as buildings and other structures as it is for the interpretation of ancient texts, such as the writings of the Presocratics and the Sophists. This fact does not delegitimize history, archaeology, and philology as modes of inquiry. Rather, it reminds us that all such reconstructions are in some degree speculative or conjectural, and the validity of any particular reconstruction rests finally on how persuasively it deploys the evidence on which it draws. In other words, the reconstruction of social history from archaeological and textual evidence is fundamentally rhetorical, and competing reconstructions compel adherence only within the limits of probability. Accordingly, it cannot be demonstrated beyond a doubt that the Older Sophists provided instruction in delivery, nor should one expect such demonstration. Indeed, as Aristotle reminds us, "it is a mark of the trained mind never to expect more precision in the treatment of any subject than the nature of that subject permits; for demanding logical demonstrations from a rhetorician is clearly about as reasonable as accepting mere plausibility from a mathematician" (*Ethics* 1094b23–28). The best we can hope for is that the evidence will provide a probabilistic basis for concluding that at least some of the Older Sophists addressed delivery in their instruction, and for determining what dimensions of performance they are likely to have emphasized. In our efforts at reconstructing sophistical doctrines and teachings, in any event, this is as much as we can ever expect to accomplish, given the evidence available to us.

It cannot be doubted that delivery was regarded as important by the ancients. Quintilian (*Institutio* XI.3.2) notes that "[delivery] itself has an extraordinarily powerful effect in oratory. For the nature of the speech we have composed within our minds is not so important as manner in which we produce it, since the emotion of each member of our audience will depend on the impression made upon his hearing." He continues (XI.3.5–6), "for my own part I would not hesitate to affirm that a mediocre speech supported by all the power of delivery will be more impressive than the best speech unaccompanied by such power. It was for this reason that Demosthenes, when asked what was the most important thing in oratory, gave the palm to delivery and assigned it second and third place as well. . . ." This is so, he observes (I.10.25), because "it is by raising, lowering or inflexion of the voice that the orator stirs the emotions of his hearers. . . ."[6] Cicero, too, thinks that delivery is the most important element in eloquence: ". . . the effect of all of these oratorical devices depends on how they are delivered. Delivery, I assert, is the dominant factor in oratory; without delivery the best speaker cannot be of any account at all, and a moderate speaker with a trained delivery can often outdo the best of them."[7] Likewise, the writer of the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* observes (III.11.19) that "many have said that the faculty of greatest use to the speaker and the most valuable for persuasion is Delivery. . . . That an exceptionally great usefulness resides in the delivery I should boldly affirm. For skilful invention, elegant style, the artistic arrangement of the part comprising the case, and the careful memory of all these will be of no more value without delivery, than delivery alone and independent of these."

Prior to the *Ad Herennium,* other than a lost work on delivery by Theophrastus,[8] Aristotle's discussion of delivery at the outset of Book 3 of the *Rhetoric* is our earliest extant treatment of this aspect of the speaker's art. "Delivery [*hypokrisis*]," he tells us,

> . . . is of the greatest importance, but has not yet been treated by anyone. In fact, it only made its appearance late in tragedy and rhapsody. . . . Now [delivery] is a matter of voice, as to how it should be used for each emotion, when it should be loud and when soft and when intermediate, and how the tones . . . should be used, and what rhythms are adapted to each subject. . . . But no treatise has yet been composed on this, since the matter of style itself only lately came to be considered, and it seems a vulgar matter when rightly understood. But since the whole business of rhetoric is to influence opinion, we must pay attention to [delivery], not as being right, but necessary. . . . [For delivery] is of great importance owing to the [hearer's lack of skill (*mochthêria*)].[9]

What of instruction in delivery prior to Aristotle? Plato, in his elaboration of the constituents of a "true art" of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* (263b–272b), says nothing about this component of the speaker's art.[10] During the late fifth and early fourth centuries, however, the professional teachers of the *logôn technê* promised to provide the citizen with a knowledge that would equip him, in Plato's words, to take "proper care of . . . the State's affairs, so as to become a real power in the city both as speaker and as man of action" (*Protagoras* 318e). Are we to suppose that these teachers said nothing about the importance of performance in effective speaking? If, as Aristotle says, no one had yet written a treatise on the subject, it will not be surprising that the textual information we have is fragmentary and ambiguous, but there are indications that instruction in delivery would have been provided by at least some of the Older Sophists.[11] For example, Aristotle notes (*Rhet.* 1404a13–15) that "some writers have attempted to say a few words about it, as Thrasymachus, in his *Eleoi,*" a work that apparently discussed delivery in

connection with appeals to the emotions.[12] Of Thrasymachus' writings we know little else, except that he wrote a textbook on speaking,[13] and that he was credited by Theophrastus as the "originator" of "a truly remarkable excellence . . . : The diction that condenses the thought and expresses it distinctly, a diction which is wholly appropriate and indeed essential to forensic speeches and to every genuine contest" (Sprague 87). This tantalizing statement suggests that Thrasymachus may have been concerned with both word choice and enunciation, since in a predominantly oral culture the *sounds* of words must be considered when determining how to express an idea. This understanding of Thrasymachus' teaching is strengthened by Aristotle's report (*Rhet.* 1409a2) that he was the originator of the *paian,* a stylistic form that played on the rhythmic sounds of words. In the evidence available about his teachings, therefore, there are indications of a pronounced sensitivity to the aural effects of language–to its rhythms and cadences–and of an explicit interest in delivery–in the performative aspect of speech. Clearly, this element of the speaker's art was included in at least some sophistic instruction during the fifth century.[14]

References to the possible interest in delivery of other Sophists are few and oblique, but they do suggest that several of them were attentive to the performative element of speaking. Plato, for instance, notes of the Sophist Hippias that he "can draw distinctions with greater precision than any man, [in] the force of letters, syllables, rhythms, and harmonies."[15] The reference to "rhythms and harmonies" must be taken to refer to the *sounds* of speech, and consequently they indicate an interest in the oral/aural dimension of discourse. Likewise, Antiphon of Rhamnous, who made a reputation by composing speeches for the lawcourts, was renowned according to Hermogenes for the "expressive quality of his style" and for his use of "grand language" (Sprague 115). It was said of him by Photius that "he does not use artificial forms of speech, but . . . his thoughts are expressed in a straightforward and unaffected manner" (119), and he was called Nestor "because he gave so much pleasure in speaking" (121). Thucydides (VIII 68) observes that Antiphon was "one of the ablest Athenians of his times. He had a most powerful intellect and was well able to express his thoughts in words." While none of these statements demonstrates conclusively that these teachers of the art of speaking addressed delivery when they provided instruction to Athenians who had political aspirations, such comments do suggest both that these men were skilled speakers themselves and that they were attuned to the rhythmic and harmonic potentialities of the Greek language.

This was true of none of the Older Sophists more than of Gorgias of Leontini, whose reputation for "extraordinary, dazzling oratory, . . . [and] poetic rhythms" is well documented.[16] Of his speaking, Philostratus comments that ". . . he was an example of forcefulness . . . and of unexpected expression and of inspiration and of the grand style . . . and of detached phrases and transitions, by which speech becomes sweeter . . . and more impressive, and he also introduced poetic words for ornament" (Sprague 30). According to Suidas (Suda), "he was the first to give the rhetorical genre the verbal power and art of deliberate culture and employed tropes and metaphors and figurative language . . . and doublings of words and repetitions and apostrophes and clauses of equal length."[17] As a speaker, then, Gorgias was conspicuously attentive to the sounds, rhythms and cadences of speech. We must bear in mind that Gorgias taught and practiced his art when prose composition was still heavily influenced by the tradition of oral poetry. Thus, his interest in verbal style necessarily reflects an acute awareness of the acoustical qualities of speech: it is the auditory reception of spoken discourse that most

guided his selection of words and phrases.[18] Moreover, insofar as he taught largely by example, we might infer that his students, too, were responsive to the acoustical and auditory potentials of their public statements.

Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen* well illustrates this interest in the aural dimension of speech. Kennedy's translation nicely captures the rhythmic and poetical qualities that characterized Gorgias' speeches:

> What is becoming to a city is manpower, to a body beauty, to a soul wisdom, to an action virtue, to a speech truth, and the opposites of these are unbecoming. Man and woman and speech and deed and city and object should be honored with praise if praiseworthy and incur blame if unworthy, for it is an equal error and mistake to blame the praisable and to praise the blamable. . . . For either by will of Fate and decision of the gods and vote of Necessity did [Helen] do what she did, or by force reduced or by words seduced (or by love possessed).[19]

These words on the page, of course, do not demonstrate the acoustical elements that enable them to delight the ear and enchant the soul: they must be read aloud–indeed, they must be *intoned*–if the poetical qualities of Gorgias' oral style and his deployment of the vocal aspects of delivery are to be appreciated.[20]

The textual evidence, therefore, suggests strongly that at least some of the Older Sophists were attentive to the performative dimensions of the speaker's art. Their interest in the rhythms, cadences, and harmonies of words and phrases bespeaks an awareness of and a concern for the acoustical dimensions of speech and their persuasive impact. The other principal source of evidence concerning possible sophistical teachings about delivery lies in the architectural and acoustical properties of the physical settings in which orations were performed during the 5th and early 4th centuries. If we can begin by accepting, following Plato's characterization of Protagoras, that the teachings of the Older Sophists were meant to equip the student "to become a real power in the city both as speaker and as man of action," then we might infer that one focus in teaching the art of speech would be on addresses to be delivered at meetings of the citizens' assembly–the *ekklēsia*. In addition, as Aristotle observes (*Rhet.* 1354b), sophistical writings about speech "all try to describe the art of speaking in a lawcourt. . . ." Thus, it is to deliberative and forensic speaking that the teachings of the Older Sophists were particularly directed, and it is to the settings of such speeches that we should look for an understanding of how an emphasis on delivery may have figured into these teachings.[21]

Examining the physical settings in which classical Athenian oratory was practiced provides insight into the performance-demands to which the effective speaker must have been responsive. For professional teachers of the art of speaking to have ignored these demands, especially in light of their own oratorical practice (I am thinking here principally of Gorgias, Antiphon, and perhaps Thrasymachus), would have rendered their instruction somewhat less than practical to the aspiring Athenian politician. Although it is beyond the scope of this paper to investigate all such settings in detail, a study of representative deliberative and forensic settings can illuminate the sorts of acoustical conditions under which the 5th-century speaker labored, and thus the performative elements to which early sophistical instruction may have been directed.[22]

Prior to the 6th century, virtually all civic functions in Athens were carried out in the open air, either in the Agora or on the nearby Hill of Ares (the Areopagos).[23] Early in the 6th century the first civic buildings were constructed along the west side of the Agora.[24] By the beginning of the 5th century these structures were replaced by several important buildings that figure directly or indirectly in oratorical practice during the time of the

Older Sophists: namely, the Stoa Basileus or Royal Stoa, the Bouleuterion, and the "Heliaia" or law-court (see fig. 1).[25] By the end of the century, these three buildings were joined by another courtroom and by two additional stoas–the Stoa of Zeus and the *Poikile* or Painted Stoa–and the Old Bouleuterion had been replaced by the New Bouleuterion as the meeting place of the Council of 500 (see fig. 2). Moreover, the Athenian assembly had moved to the Pnyx by 500 BCE at the latest. The following discussion, then, will concentrate upon these oratorial settings: for deliberative speech, the Pnyx and the Old Bouleuterion; and for forensic speech, the "Heliaia" and the Painted Stoa. What were the acoustical and auditory characteristics of these settings, and what performative demands and opportunities did they create for the speaker?

In a 1996 essay I described various classical Greek speaking sites and argued that at least one of them–the early 5th-century BCE Pnyx in Athens–may have been acoustically defective and therefore problematic as an auditorium for deliberative oratory.[26] Just

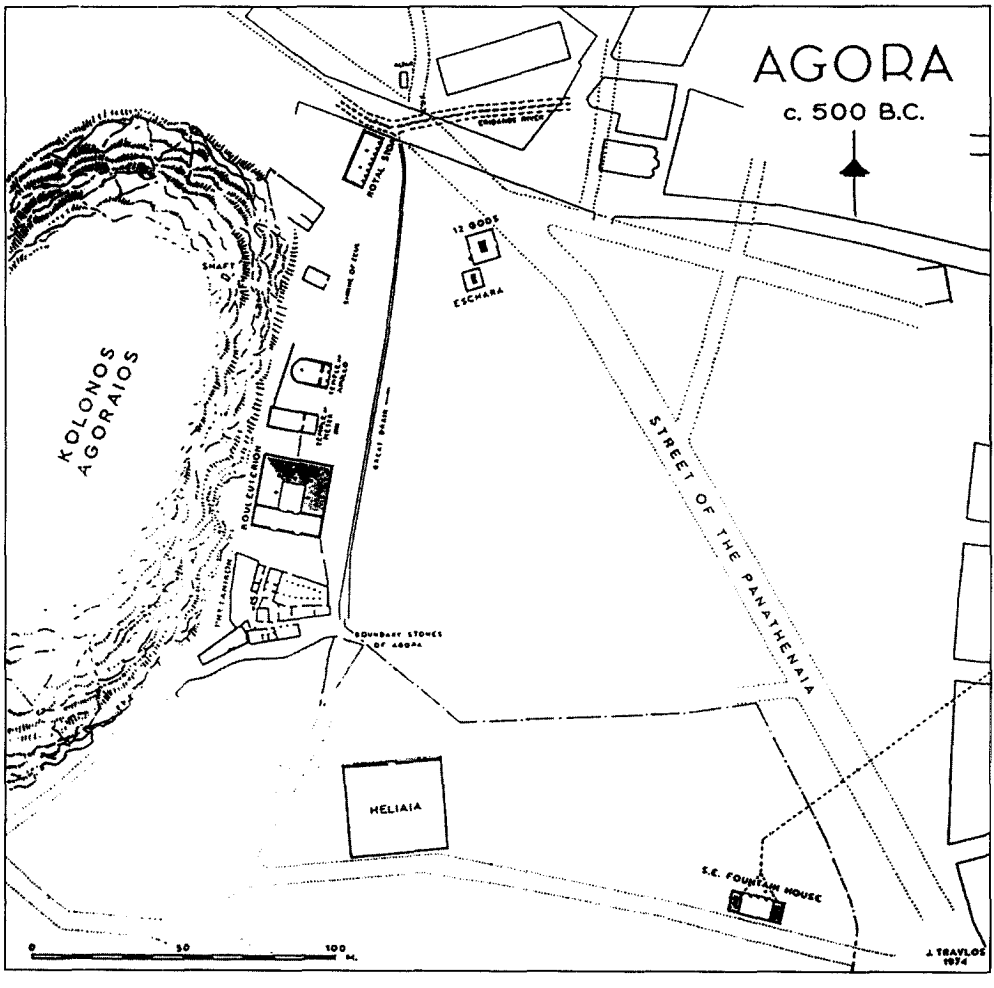


FIGURE 1
The Athenian Agora ca. 500 BCE

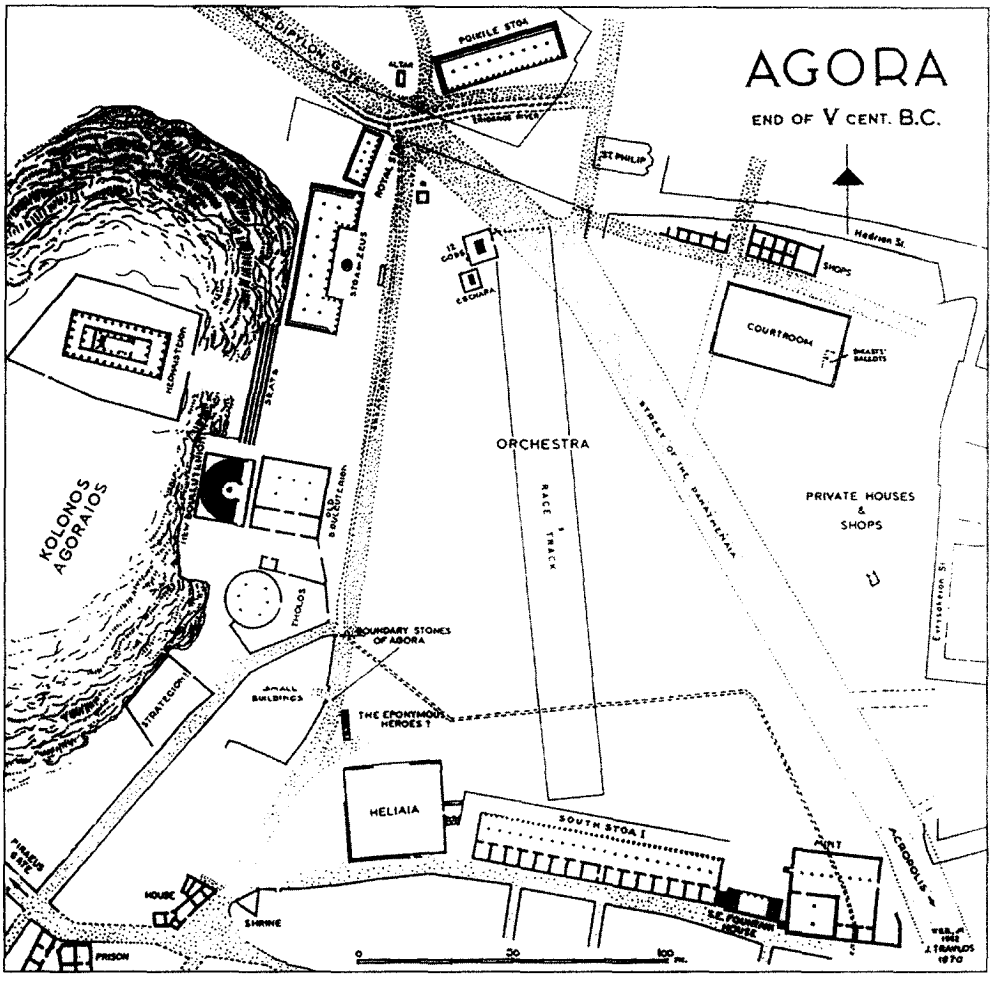


FIGURE 2
The Athenian Agora ca. 400 BCE

prior to the end of the century, however, the auditorium was reconfigured in a way that mitigated at least one principal source of difficulty–the wind (see fig. 3). Even then, however, the Pnyx presented a considerable challenge to the speaker. The sheer size of the seating area–in phases I and II it was over 30 meters from the speaker's platform to the rear of the amphitheater–meant that the volume of the speaker's voice was a key factor in his effectiveness (see fig. 4).[27] It must be understood that when I write of vocal volume here I am not merely stating the obvious. In the spring of 1997, while teaching in Athens, as a field experiment I took my students to the Pnyx for a demonstration. The excavation of the site has exposed the dressed limestone embankment that was the floor of the *cavea* (audience area) during phase I, so the site in its present condition approximates the earliest version of the auditorium. The twenty-three students positioned themselves along the rear of the phase I *cavea* and at various intermediate points between there and the location of the original speaker's platform. I delivered a portion of

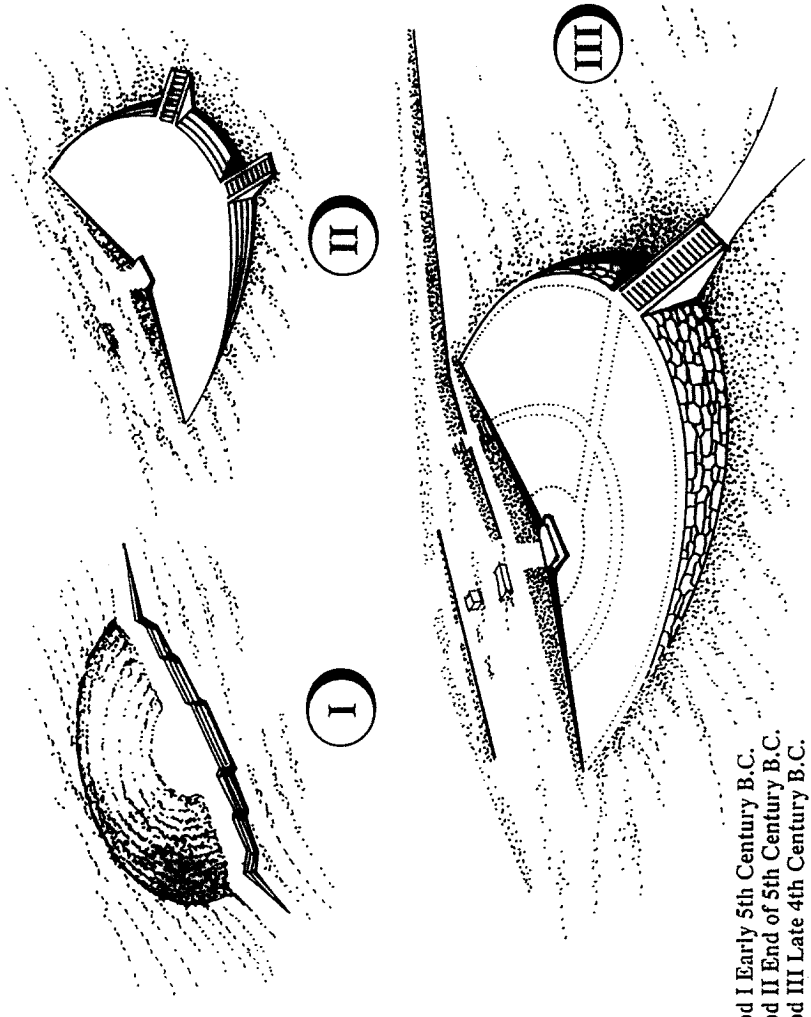


FIGURE 3

Pnyx

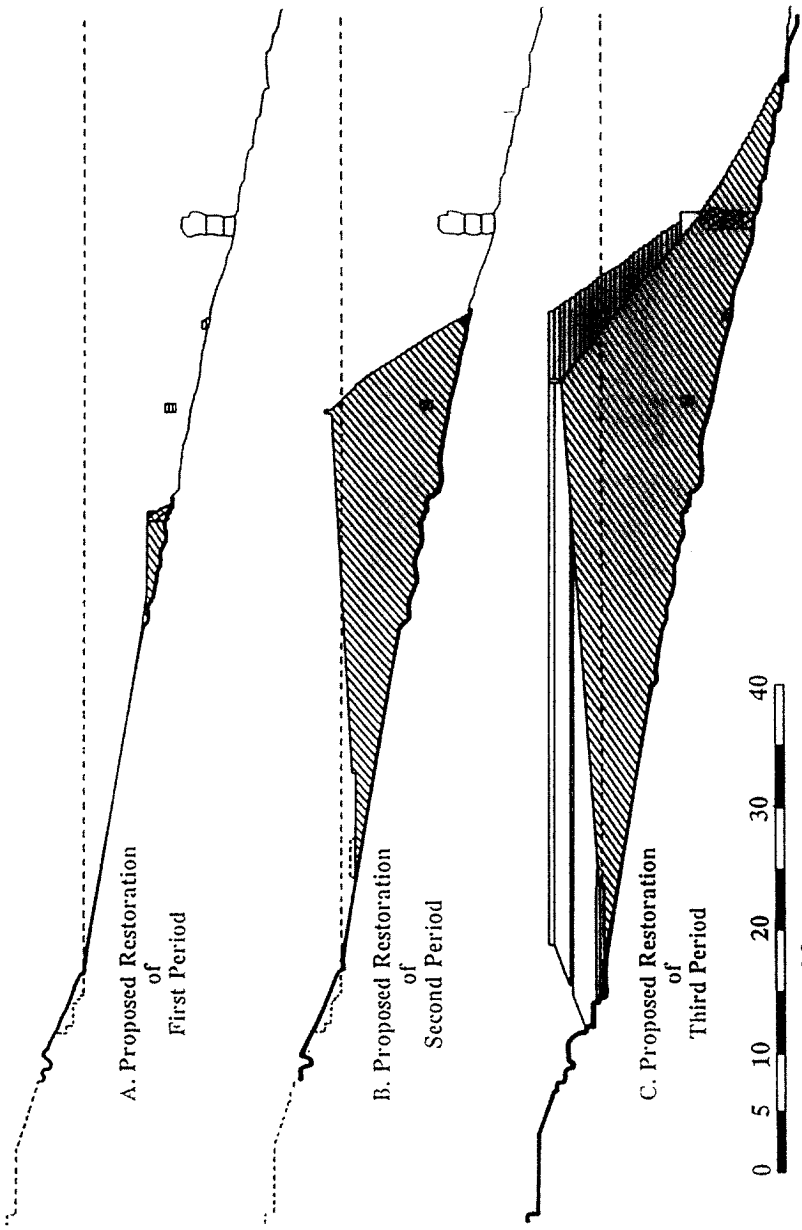


FIGURE 4
Pnyx: Section Views

Demosthenes' "First Philippic" on a day that was marked by mild breezes from the northeast (the direction of the prevailing winter winds in Athens now as in ancient times). I had to maintain a level of volume that amounted almost to shouting in order to be heard even by auditors who were only three-quarters of the distance to the perimeter of the *cavea.* To have sustained the required level of vocal output for an extended period–even for fifteen or twenty minutes–would have been very challenging physically. I was reminded of what a performer such as Luciano Pavarotti must have to do if he is to fill an outdoor space with his voice. The physical demands–on the vocal cords, on the diaphragm–are daunting. Clearly, if an aspiring 5th-century orator was to be trained to perform adequately in such a setting as the Pnyx, he must have been encouraged to consider (and to practice) vocal volume.

He must also have been encouraged to consider the factor of pitch–the highness or lowness of the voice. In general, vocal pitch in the middle frequency range of the adult male (with whom we are concerned when discussing Athenian orators of the 5th century)–around 150 Hz–will carry farther and thus be intelligible over a greater distance than will a lower pitch.[28] Accordingly, a speaker who wishes to be heard clearly in a setting like the Pnyx must learn (and perhaps be taught) to pitch his voice in the mid-range. In learning to speak effectively in the *Ekklēsia,* then, the aspiring Athenian orator was required to attend to such vocal qualities as volume and pitch if he were to succeed in being heard, let alone in being persuasive.

A second locale for deliberative oratory presents rather different challenges to the speaker. Following the constitutional reforms of Kleisthenes between 510 and 507 b.c.e., the newly created Council of Five Hundred convened in the Bouleuterion to consider proposed legislation and to determine which proposals would be placed before the entire Assembly for discussion and voting. Set along the western side of the Agora (see fig. 5), this building featured an auditorium that was roughly 15 by 21 meters, with tiered benches for seating and a high, open-raftered roof. The walls above the foundation were constructed of unbaked brick and were surfaced both within and without with stucco (see fig. 6).[29] We can get some sense of how the interior of this building looked from the remains of surviving Hellenistic bouleuteria and similar structures, such as the *Ekklēsiasterion* at Priene in western Asia Minor, which were constructed of stone and thus have survived in a better state than their mud-brick predecessors (see fig. 7).

What might it have been like to speak in such a chamber? First of all, it must be observed that, even with an audience as large as five hundred (or more–the *Ekklēsiasterion* at Priene could accommodate seven hundred), this was a relatively intimate setting for oratory. A speaker would have been no more than seven meters from his nearest listeners, and less than twenty from those who sat in the furthest corners of the chamber–about the same distances as in a modest lecture hall on a typical university campus today. Consequently, vocal volume would probably not have been a major issue facing the speaker. However, the smooth-plastered walls of the council chamber, though not as reflective as the dressed stone of the later Hellenistic auditorium, would have presented a certain potential for reverberation, and therefore for auditory distortion. In this connection it is interesting to note the criticism of the sophist Prodicus of Ceos as a speaker. Philostratus (*Lives of the Sophists* I.12) observes of him that "when on an embassy to Athens, he appeared before the council and showed himself an extremely capable man, though a bit hard to hear because of his low-pitched voice" (Sprague 72). Likewise, Plato has the Sophist staying in a room once used for storage and has Socrates observe

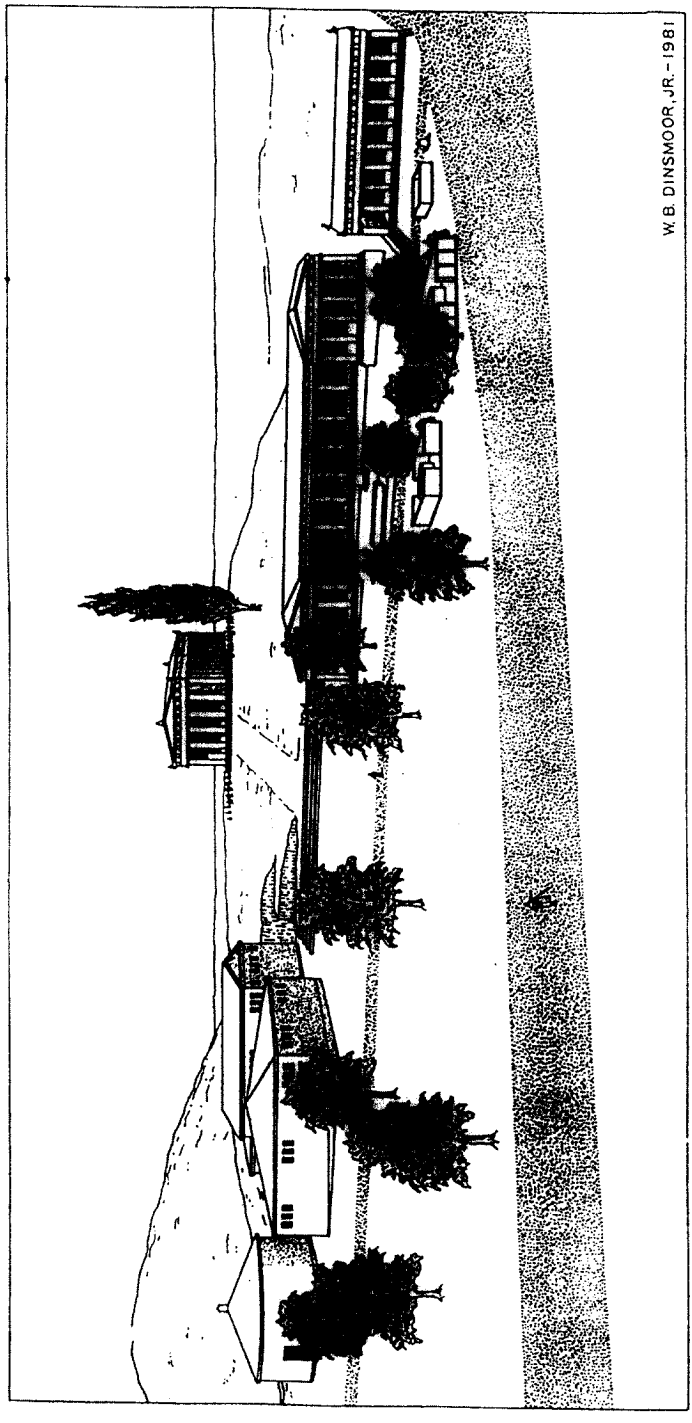


FIGURE 5
The Classical Agora–West Side

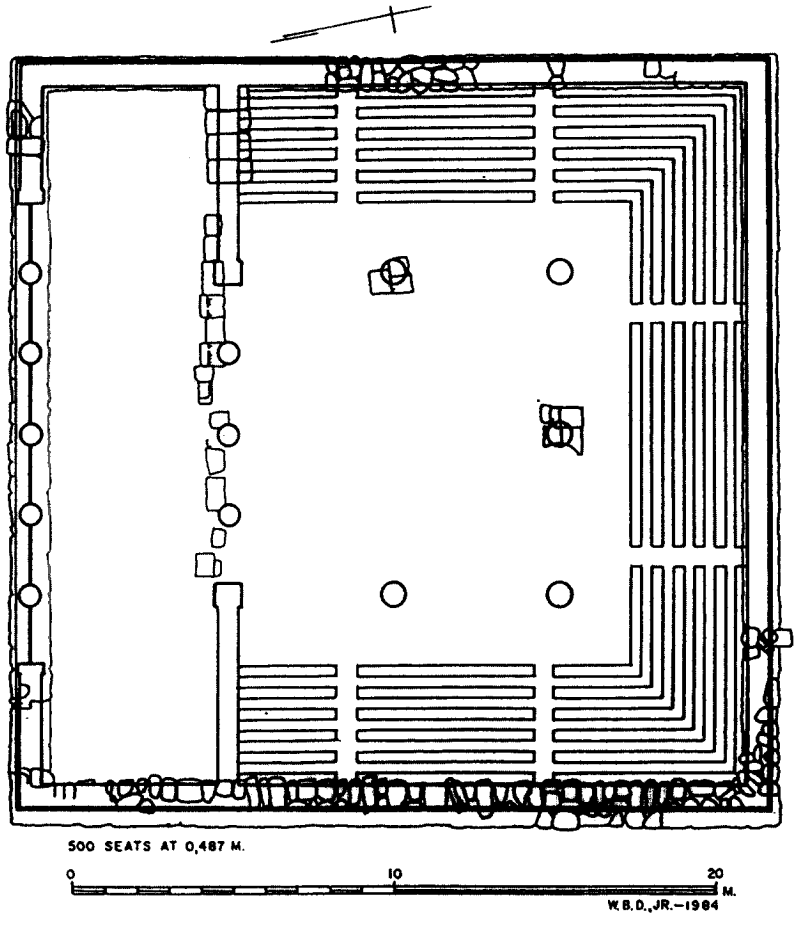


FIGURE 6
The Old Bouleuterion

that "from outside the room I was unable to hear what they were discussing, although I tried very hard to hear Prodicus, since he struck me as terribly wise and even divinely gifted. But because of the deep pitch of his voice, a rumble was set going in the room that obscured what was being said" (*Prot.* 315d–316a).

We must recognize that the potential for reverberation in the Council House would have been attenuated somewhat by the presence of five hundred soft, clothed human bodies. Even so, it seems likely that the speaker who wished to be heard clearly must have been attentive to this acoustical feature of the building, and thus would have monitored both the pitch of his voice and the timing of his utterances, allowing silences between phrases so that his later words would not be lost in the reverberations of those just spoken. We can certainly hope that an orator as gifted and experienced as a Gorgias or an Antiphon would have developed this skill, and that he would have tried to inculcate in his students an awareness of and responsiveness to this element of effective oral performance.

When we turn from deliberative to forensic settings we find that similar issues confront

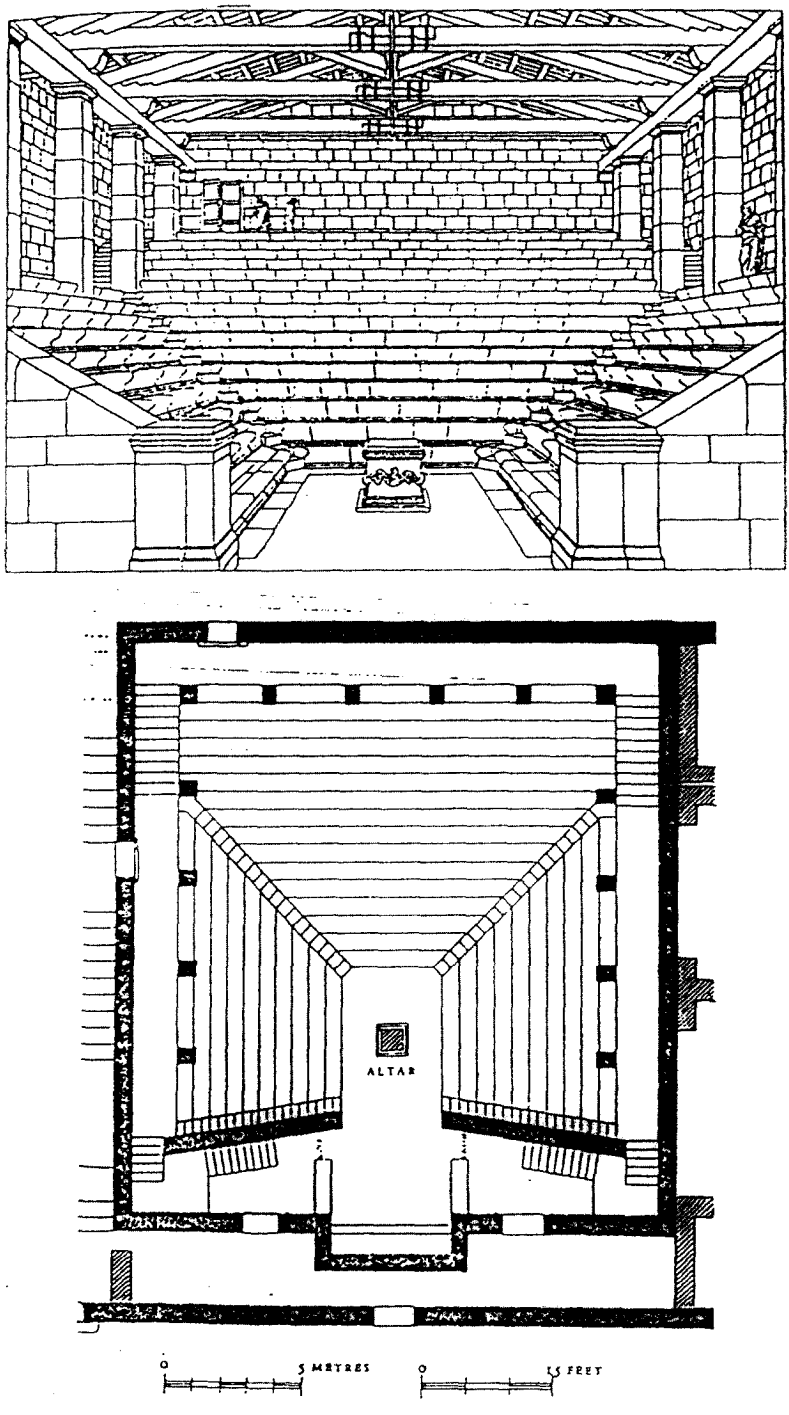


FIGURE 7
Restored Interior and Plan of *Ekklesiasterion* at Priene

the speaker. The oldest lawcourt in the Agora was, on documentary evidence, the Heliaia.[30] Though direct evidence for identification is minimal, the rectangular peribolos (walled enclosure) at the southwest corner of the classical Agora has, by a process of elimination, been accepted as the most likely location for this courtroom (see fig. 8).[31] It has been reconstructed in its earliest phase as a wall of indeterminate height enclosing a space of some 26.5 m by 31 m, which could have accommodated as many as 1500 jurymen (Wycherley, *Stones* 35). After some period of use, it seems, roofed colonnades were added, presumably to protect dikasts (jurors) from the sun or rain (see fig. 9).[32] Our present interest is in the structure in its original form–a walled enclosure that isolated dikasts and speakers from the presumed commotion of the nearby market-square.

Designed to house classical Athens' largest jury trials, the "Heliaia" presented the speaker with the obvious challenge of managing vocal volume. While it did not involve the same magnitude of difficulty as was presented by the Pnyx, nonetheless the first Athenian courtroom demanded that the orator be careful to project vocally and to maintain sufficient volume to overcome the presumed audience noise.[33] At the very least, sophistic instruction for courtroom oratory must have emphasized the importance of speaking loudly to be heard by the entire body of jurors.

The early Athenian courts also convened in at least one of the stoas that were clustered in the northwest corner of the Agora (see fig. 10). "The Poikile or Painted Stoa, explicitly attested as [a] venue for trials in the 4th century, was built ca. 460 BCE and can also be assumed to have been used as a court in the late 5th century" (see fig. 11).[34] In general, stoas–long, narrow structures with a solid wall on one long side and across both ends, and with an open colonnade along the other–played a significant part in civic and sacred architecture of the 5th-century Greek *polis*. Typically located on the edge of an open area

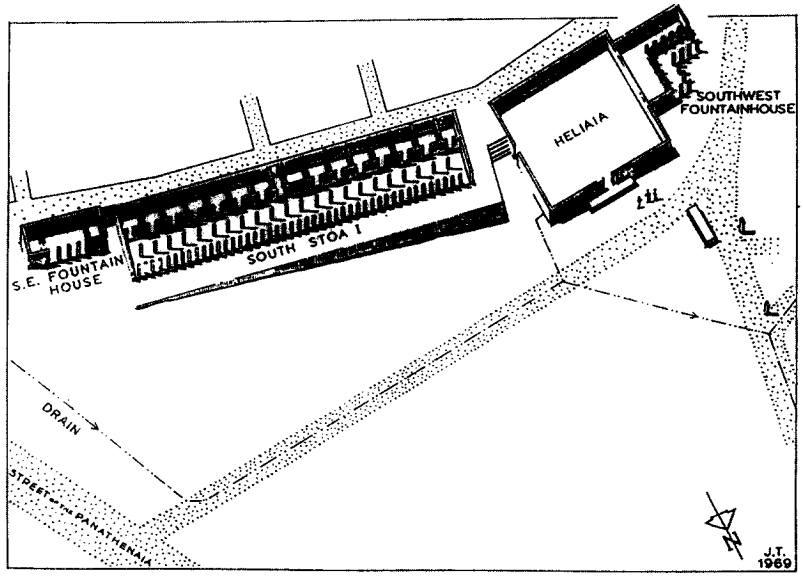


FIGURE 8

The south side of the Agora in a partially restored perspective looking south. The building labelled Heliaia may be the principal lawcourt of Athens.

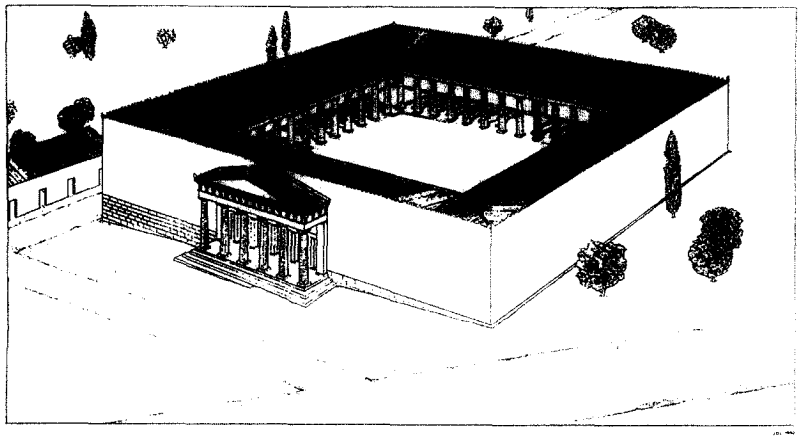


FIGURE 9
The Square Peristyle

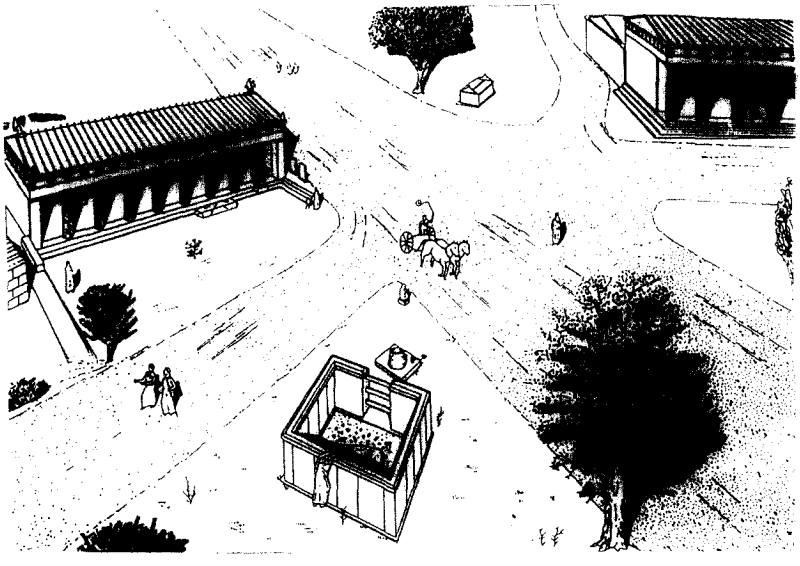
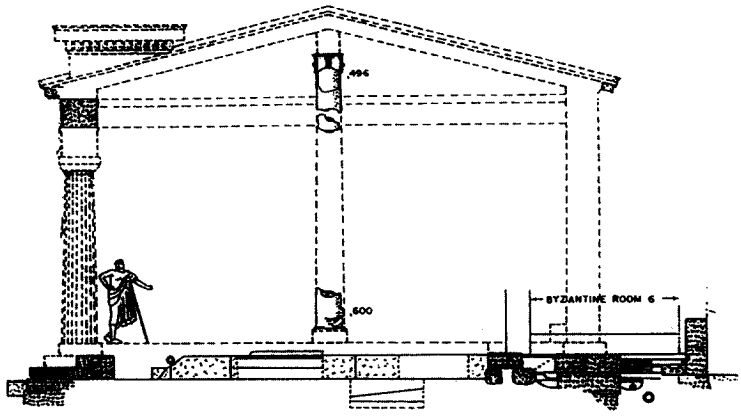


FIGURE 10
The northwest corner of the Agora, with the Royal Stoa at the upper left and the Painted Stoa at the upper right, as it would have appeared in about 400 BCE

(the Athenian Agora eventually had stoas along all four of its sides), the stoa provided "a kind of compromise between an open area and a covered building, offering some protection from hot sun and cold winds and rain. It was useful in many contexts, most particularly in the agora."[35]

The Painted Stoa was intermediate in size, measuring some 12.5 meters wide and, "if the usual proportions for a stoa hold true, should be at least 36 m long and quite possibly more."[36] Based upon these proportions and the remains of architectural members, the building may have been around 7 meters in height. The internal space of the Painted



Restored cross-section (above) and perspective view (below) of the Painted Stoa. The building takes its name from the paintings which hung on the inner walls. Showing scenes of Athenian military exploits, the paintings were executed on removable wooden panels. It is from this famous stoa that Stoic philosophy takes its name.

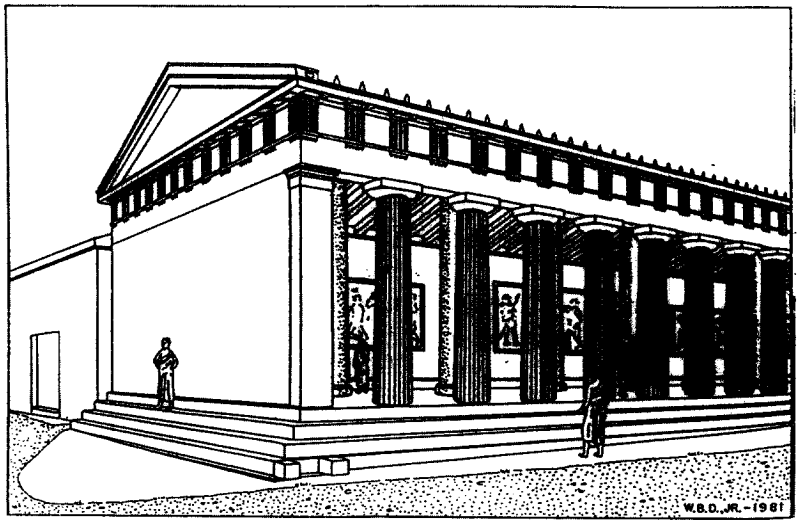


FIGURE 11
The Poikile or Painted Stoa

Stoa, then, could easily have accommodated the 501 jurors mentioned in inscriptions of the 4th century (Camp 72). More importantly for present purposes, this space had acoustical properties that presented the orator with some particularly interesting possibilities. The most outstanding acoustical characteristic of the stoa is the reverberation effect created by the walls along the rear and two ends and by the overhead space up to the roof. As it happens, the 2nd-century BCE Stoa of Attalos–which was built along the eastern side of the Agora and was reconstructed between 1953 and 1956 on its original foundations and to its original specifications–provides a good approximation of the interior of the Painted Stoa.[37] As with the Pnyx, in the spring of 1997 I conducted a field test of this stoa as a speaking site by performing a reading of Gorgias' *Encomium of Helen.* I

was particularly interested in discovering how the interior dimensions of the stoa affected the transmission of vocal sound. I found that there was a pronounced reverberation effect, and it took a few moments to find just the right timing and pace in speaking so that my words had a chance to bounce around inside the building without "piling up" phrase upon phrase. Once I found this pace, however, I discovered that the reverberation both amplified my voice and accentuated the rhythms and cadences of Kennedy's translation of Gorgias' prose. The reported effect on listeners is that the sound is mesmerizing and engrossing.

What all this means for the forensic oratory performed during the 5th century in the Painted Stoa, of course, is that the courtroom pleader who was taught or learned on his own to "play" the acoustical features of the building through vocal modulation, timing, and pace could exploit the aural power of speech to captivate and even to "enchant" the listener. From so gifted a speaker as Gorgias, noted for his use of rhythmic, poetical prose constructions, we might expect a speech crafted precisely to take maximum advantage of these features. Moreover, we might also expect that he provided some guidance in this area in the instruction he offered to aspiring orators in Athens.

In sum, this examination of textual evidence concerning sophistical interest in speech performance and of the acoustical properties of deliberative and forensic settings in classical Athens suggests that teachers and practitioners of the speaker's art during the 5th century, unless they were wholly oblivious to the potential impact of physical surroundings on their effectiveness as advocates, must have considered such elements of vocal delivery as volume, pitch, inflection, timing, and pace. Nothing I have presented here, of course, demonstrates beyond a doubt that Sophists of the 5th century taught about delivery, but it seems to me that the textual and architectural evidence available to us makes such a conclusion highly probable. Given the absence prior to the 3rd century of any treatise or handbook dealing with the performative aspect of the speaker's art, this may be the best we can do. In any event, if we are to understand fully the early development of this art, we cannot ignore the centrality in it of a concern for delivery. As much as were the argument from probability, the two-sided argument, the appeal to emotion, the division of a speech into parts, and the interest in diction and word-choice, this concern is likely to have been a fundamental part of the *logôn technê* as it was taught and practiced in the 5th century BCE.

Notes

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[1]I spent part of a 1986–87 sabbatical leave in Greece studying ancient speaking sites and settings. Some of the findings of this research are reported in my chapter, "Greek Oratorical Settings and the Problem of the Pnyx: Rethinking the Athenian Political Process," in *Theory, Text, Context: Issues in Greek Rhetoric and Oratory*, ed. Christopher Lyle Johnstone (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996) 97–127. An earlier version of the present essay was presented at the annual convention of the National Communication Association in Chicago on November 5, 1999.

[2]Readings included such essays as Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory" (1925); Ernest J. Wrage, "Public Address: A Study in Intellectual and Social History" (1947); Wayland M. Parrish, "The Study of Speeches" (1954); Edwin Black, "The Meaning of Criticism," from *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (1965); L.W. Rosenfield, "The Anatomy of Critical Discourse" (1968); Thomas Benson, "The Senses of Rhetoric: A Topical System for Critics" (1978); G.P. Mohrmann and Michael C. Leff, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rationale for Neo-Classical Criticism" (1974); Leff and Mohrmann, "Lincoln at Cooper Union: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Text" (1974); Carroll C. Arnold, "Lord Thomas Erskine: Modern Advocate" (1958); Forbes Hill, "Conventional Wisdom–Traditional Form–The President's Message of November 3, 1969" (1972); Ernest G. Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetoric Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality" (1972); Walter R. Fisher, "Narration as Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument" (1984); William F. Lewis, "Telling America's Story: Narrative Form and the

Reagan Presidency" (1987); and Karlyn Kohrs Campbell, "Stanton's 'the Solitude of Self': A Rationale for Feminism" (1980).

[3]Scholarly articles on delivery can be counted on fewer than ten fingers. See Balcer (1959), Bowers (1965), Fortenbaugh (1986), Gunderson and Hopper (1963), McBath and Cripe (1965), Nadeau (1964), and Sonkowsky (1959). Likewise, studies of the development of Greek rhetoric and oratory say little (Kennedy, 1963; Russell, 1983; Cole, 1991) or nothing about this aspect of the art (Dobson, 1919; Enos, 1993; Poulakos, 1995; Schiappa, 1991 and 1999).

[4]See Kennedy (1963), Guthrie (1971), Barrett (1987), Cole (1991), Jarratt (1991), Schiappa (1991, 1999), Enos (1993), and Poulakos (1995).

[5]On this point see Guthrie (1971), whose examination of the Sophists' political, ethical, and epistemological doctrines is extensive and informative.

[6]Quintilian concludes (I.10.22) that "it is . . . absolutely necessary for the orator to be acquainted with all these methods of expression which are concerned firstly with gesture, secondly with the arrangement of words and thirdly with the inflexions of the voice, of which a great variety are required in pleading."

[7]*De Oratore* III.56.213. See also *Orator* 15.55–18.60, *De Partitione Oratoria* 7.25, *Brutus* 8.34, 17.55, 37.142.

[8]Diogenes Laertius (5.48) lists such a work, entitled *Peri Hypokriseôs.* Theophrastus may have been the first to make Delivery a fourth canon of the speaker's art, following Aristotle's less formalized scheme of Invention, Arrangement, and Style in the *Rhetoric.* Kennedy (1963) comments that "Theophrastus' second most influential rhetorical work [after his book on Style] was in the field of delivery. Aristotle had pointed out the need for the study of delivery and said that it was a matter of management of the voice to express emotion. These he . . . regarded as an integral part of rhetoric, though the subject of delivery itself he labels vulgar because it was the business of actors" (282–83). Kennedy quotes Athanasius as remarking that "Theophrastus the philosopher says that delivery is the greatest factor an orator has for persuasion, referring delivery to first principles and the passions of the soul and the knowledge of these so that the movement of the body and the tone of the voice may be in accordance with the whole science of delivery" (283).

[9]*Rhetoric* 1403b20–1404a8. The translation follows that of Freese in Aristotle, *The "Art" of Rhetoric* (1975), though I have substituted my own for the last phrase. Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the *Rhetoric* will follow Freese's translation. *Mochthêria* is often translated as "corruption" (cf. Kennedy's translation in *Aristotle: On Rhetoric,* 219; also Freese's, 347) or "depravity" (Murphy, *A Synoptic History,* 61), suggesting that Delivery, Style, and other "extraneous" matters must be attended to owing to the *moral* condition of the audience. However, in the context of the *Rhetoric* it seems clear that it is the *intellectual* rather than the moral condition of the audience that is being described here, since rhetoric deals with debatable matters "in the presence of such hearers as are unable to take a general view of many stages, or to follow a lengthy chain of argument" (1357a1–4) and the judges are assumed to be "simple" or "untrained" (*aplous* at 1357a12).

For discussions of Aristotle's treatment of delivery, see also Sonkowsky, esp. 257ff.; Murphy, *A Synoptic History,* 58–60.

[10]Indeed, given his distrust of the poets and his preoccupation with the content and logical structure of speech, it seems likely that Plato would have considered a concern with the performative aspect of public persuasion as inimical to the speaker's epistemological and ethical responsibilities. His exclusion of the tragic poets from his ideal state rests, in part, on his concern about the persuasiveness of the speaker's voice: ". . . the poets of tragedy will pardon us and those whose politics resemble ours for not admitting them into our polity, since they hymn the praises of tyranny. . . . But going about to other cities, I fancy, collecting crowds and hiring [actors with] fine, loud, persuasive voices, they draw the polities toward tyrannies or democracies" (*Republic* 568b–c; see also 595a–608b).

[11]My survey of sophistic teachings is based on the fragments translated in Sprague, *The Older Sophists* (1972), who includes Protagoras, Xeniades, Gorgias, Lycophron, Prodicus, Thasymachus, Hippias, Antiphon, and Critias. Kennedy (*Art*) notes that "we know . . . that delivery was given attention by such orators as Demosthenes and Aeschines. . . . On the other hand, there is no evidence that the Attic orators learned how to speak directly from handbooks. These were probably mostly for the untrained not the professionals, who learned from each other and experience" (262). Cole comments that "delivery and memory are two standard parts of the later rhetorical treatise which could not have been discussed except through analysis and precepts; but they are, significantly, almost completely ignored by early writers" (88). For discussions of rhetorical handbooks and sophistical instruction in speech, see also Guthrie, Kennedy ("Handbooks"), and Wilcox.

That teachers of the art of speaking provided some guidance concerning delivery is also suggested by the fact that actors received extensive vocal training. See Pickard-Cambridge 153–74.

[12]This work is also alluded to by Plato in the *Phaedrus* (267c), and is titled *Plaints* in Sprague (86) and *Appeals to Compassion* by Freeman (142).

[13]Suidas, according to Sprague (86), lists these titles for Thrasymachus: *Long Textbook, Introductions, Plaints* (the *Eleoi*), *Knock-Down Arguments, Exemplary Speeches;* also listed are *Deliberative Speeches, Textbook on Rhetoric, Trivia, Subjects for Speeches.*

[14]Guthrie observes of Thrasymachus that "he was known primarily as a teacher of rhetoric, in which he was something of an innovator, and most of the extant references to him are concerned with his style. In writing his handbooks and model speeches he paid great attention to the technical details of the art, and experimented with the use of prose-rhythms, as well as developing the appeal to the emotions of an audience" (295).

[15]*Hippias Major* 285c–d. See also *Hippias Minor* 368d: "you had come with a knowledge surpassing others in . . . rhythms, harmonies, and in the correctness of letters. . . ."

[16]Barrett 14. See also Kennedy (*Art*) and Guthrie.

[17]Sprague 32. Other ancient writers note that Gorgias "was the first to use extravagant figures of speech marked by deliberate art: antithesis and clauses of . . . equal length and rhythm. . . ." He was described as "making the style in many places very labored and bombastic and declaiming some passages 'not unlike certain dithyrambs' . . ." (Sprague 33).

[18]On the centrality of orality in Gorgias' prose composition, see Schiappa (*Beginnings*), esp. 86–95, 98–102. He quotes Bromley Smith ("Gorgias: A Study in Oratorical Style," 350) on Gorgias' "symphonic" style: "when read aloud it recalls a piece of music; for it has the cadences, tonal effects, diminuendos and crescendos of a sonata" (95).

[19]For the text of the entire speech as translated by Kennedy, see Sprague 50–54. The angular brackets ⟨ ⟩ denote Kennedy's acceptance of "Diels's 'sense' as given in the *apparatus criticus*."

[20]Enos observes that "the orality of Hellenic dialects offers insight that cannot be understood fully if we consider literary artifacts alone; that is, if we see evidence of composition solely from the literary texts which have survived. Hellenic dialects were distinguished in large part by their tonal features. . . . The tonal features of discourse, as with a Gregorian chant, provide a facet of meaning beyond the words themselves" (125).

Sir Arthur Pickard-Cambridge, in his very detailed account of Athenian dramatic festivals, notes that "there is much evidence to show that Athenian audiences attached great importance to the actor's voice" (165), and his discussion of "delivery, speech, recitative, [and] song" (153–65) stresses the connection in Greek drama between speech and rhythm.

[21]On the Sophists' interest in deliberative and forensic speaking, see Enos and Kennedy (*Art*).

[22]For the purposes of the present study, only speech settings of the 5th century in Athens will be examined. Such settings are representative, however, of auditoria well into the 4th century and beyond, and their basic design is reiterated in *poleis* throughout the Aegean world. An excellent descriptive catalogue of Greek speaking sites can be found in McDonald. Russell recounts the types of physical settings in which Greek declamations of the Hellenistic and Roman periods were performed (see especially 75ff.). Of such orations, Russell observes that "in any case, we are dealing with a form of composition in which delivery and histrionic technique were of supreme importance. These men were actors. . . . It took a lot of energy. . . . Critics often comment on the importance of *hypokrisis* (delivery), and ridicule its exaggerations . . ." (82).

[23]See Camp 35ff.; Wycherley (*Stones*) 35–36. The term *Agora*–initially the "assembly of citizens"–came to mean the "place of assembly"–the town center where the people gathered to deliberate about civic questions. Even before the 5th century the word had come to designate the central market-place and civic center of Athens. Until the late 6th or early 5th century it was indeed the meeting-place of the Athenian *Ekklēsia,* the Assembly of all citizens, which was moved to the Pnyx when traffic and commercial activity in the central square made its continued use as an assembly-place impractical. See Kourouniotes and Thompson, Thompson and Wycherley, McDonald, and Joyner. The ancient Council of the Areopagos served both advisory and judicial functions during the monarchy and much of the aristocratic period. See Aristotle, *Athēnaiōn Politeia* 3.6.

[24]The precise functions of these buildings remain unclear. See Camp 38–39. Wycherley (*Stones*) contends that they "were very probably the archaic predecessors of the Bouleuterion (Council House), the Tholos, and other offices which occupied the site in post-Persian times" (28).

[25]See Camp 48ff.; Wycherley (*Stones*) 35. Boegehold contends that the term "Heliaia" refers both to the court system generally and to a specific building. Moreover, he notes the paucity of evidence regarding the identification of the building at the southwest corner of the Agora as a lawcourt, let alone as the Heliaia mentioned in ancient inscriptions and texts. See esp. 5–6, 17–20.

The Royal Stoa was apparently never used as a general courtroom, though it contained a number of large marble *stelai* on which the laws of the city and its constitution were inscribed, so that any citizen could consult them. Moreover, it housed the office of the Royal Archon, the official who heard indictments and preliminary arguments in pending court cases, including that of Socrates in 399. During the 4th century the council of the Areopagos–whose jurisdiction included homicide trials–is known to have met in the building, though probably not for a trial, since the roofed structure would have led to the "pollution" of the judges if a defendant turned out to be guilty. See Camp 100–05; Boegehold 97.

[26]"Greek Oratorical Settings and the Problem of the Pnyx: Rethinking the Athenian Political Process." *Theory, Text, Context,* ed. C.L. Johnstone 97–127.

[27]Nor was phase III necessarily an improvement in this regard. When the Pnyx was enlarged around 330 b.c.e to accommodate up to 10,000 persons (compared to 5000 in phases I and II), the distance from the speaker's *bēma* to the rear of the seating area was in excess of fifty meters, though both the increased slope of the floor and the extension of the retaining wall above the seating area served to enhance the acoustics of the auditorium.

Pickard-Cambridge, in considering the demands on voice and diction of theatrical performances in Greek theaters, remarks that "obviously the voice needed to be strong enough to carry throughout the vast theatre without shouting. . . . The large theatres demanded practised voice-production rather than violent effort . . ." (165). Additional comments on the acoustical properties and performance-demands of the Greek theater can be found in Hunninger. See also Allsopp 103–15.

[28]For a more detailed account of these factors, see the discussion of vocal frequency and intensity in Johnstone 118–22.

[29]See Camp 52–53; Wycherley (*Stones*) 33–35; Dinsmoor 119. In the years between 425–406 BCE a new

Bouleuterion was built immediately to the west of the old one, the latter being preserved and incorporated into the Metroon. It served as the repository for the city's archives. The new Council House had roughly the same dimensions as the older one, but perhaps with a different seating arrangement (Camp 90–91).

[30]See Boegehold 5–6, 11–15. He notes that an early court might have met on the poros seats cut into the side of the *Kolonos Agoraios* (Market Hill) between the site of the New Bouleuterion and the Stoa of Zeus. Moreover, he contends that the term *Heliaia* originally referred to the "Great Court," that is, to the judging body itself, and notes that there is no attested use of the name to identify a building until the fourth century.

[31]See Camp 46–47; Wycherley (*Stones*) 35; Boegehold 101–03.

[32]Boegehold (12) notes Aristophanes' wordplay on the etymology of the term *Heliaia*. "His jokes about sunning in the Heliaia . . . are etymologically unsound, and yet they may still be indexes to the absence of a roof over all or part of the actual building. [The] building . . . may at first have been completely open. After a period of use, roofed colonnades were added, which nevertheless left an open courtyard. The sun could still enter, and the same sort of reference was still possible." Later (102) he remarks that the construction of the interior peristyle has most recently been assigned to the mid-2nd century b.c.e., well beyond the time-frame of the present study. Nonetheless, fig. 9–a reconstruction of the 3rd-century Square Peristyle building, which was also used as a lawcourt–is included here to illustrate what the later, and somewhat smaller Heliaia might have looked like after the interior peristyle was added.

[33]The problem of audience noise is a constant in the speaking situation. Knudsen and Harris comment that "noise has the effect of reducing the acuity of hearing; that is, it elevates the threshold of audibility. . . . Unless the loudness of speech . . . is sufficiently above the level of the surrounding noise, the speech . . . cannot be fully recognized or appreciated" (28). Pickard-Cambridge observes of Athenian dramatic performances that "there is plenty of evidence of the noisiness of Athenian audiences, both in their approval and their disapproval of a performance" (279). What was true of theater audiences was likely also true of audiences in the lawcourts and perhaps even in the assembly. For a fuller discussion of the impact of audience noise, see Johnstone 123.

[34]Boegehold 11. See Camp 66–72 for a detailed description of the building and its contents.

[35]Wycherley 38. Dinsmoor also describes various Greek stoas in detail. See also Fyfe 157–79 on Greek civic design during the Hellenistic period.

[36]Camp 66. By contrast, the Royal Stoa was 7.5 m wide and 18 m long, the nearby Stoa of Zeus was about 45 m long, and the South Stoa I (also of the 5th century) some 80 m in length.

[37]The Stoa of Attalos, though it measures some 115 meters in length, is only about 12 meters wide from the front columns to the interior wall that divides the portico from the row of rooms along the rear. Moreover, while this stoa has two storeys, the height of the first storey is just under 5.5 meters. See Thompson.

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