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In the Shadow of Athena *Polias*: The divinities of the Academy, *polites'* training and death in service to Athens

We know that the Academy was approximately 1,5 km distant from the *asty*, or a little less. Livy (31.24.10) and Cicero (*De Finib.* 5.1.1) provide this distance with a slight variation. The “*mille ferme passus*” given by Livy (corresponding to one Roman mile, about 1478 m) do not coincide exactly with the “*sex stadia*” given by Cicero (ranging from 1063 and 1260 m, depending on the value we attribute to the *stadium*).

The road that led to the Academy, coming from the *Dipylon*, one of the two doors in the *Kerameikos*, was different from all the extra-urban ways in Athens. In the Classical age it had the absolutely exceptional width of 40 m. This dimension is attested, just outside the *Dipylon*, by the distance between the two *horoi Kerameikou* that marked its limits. But the same width is confirmed by the archaeological finds made even more to the north-west, toward the Academy. A similar size can be explained only on the basis of the particularly important role played by this road. Along its sides in fact – and precisely “from the both sides” (*FGrHist* 370 F 4: ἔνθεν καὶ ἔνθεν, as a traveller perhaps in the Hellenistic age says) -, there were the tombs of the fallen soldiers. These monuments constituted the *Demosion Sema* (Th. 2.34) or *Mnema* (Lys. 2.63; Pl. *Mx.* 242b-c; Paus. 1.29.4), a sort of modern monumental cemetery reserved to the Athenians who had lost in war their lives.

Here, once a year, in the month of Pianepsion (October-November), a solemn ceremony, in which all citizens were invited, took place *demosia*, namely at the expense of the *polis*. The ashes of the soldiers that had fallen on the several battlefields during the just concluded war's seasons were placed in ten cases, corresponding to the ten Cleisthenic tribes, and buried in collective graves, the *polyandreia*. At the same time a man who was previously chosen by the city had a speech, the *epitaphios logos*, an eulogy for the dead (our reconstruction largely depends on the information provided by Thucydides 2.34, who describes in details the ceremony of the first year of the Peloponnesian War, in the winter of 431 B.C., when Pericles himself gave the speech).

The names of the fallen people were inscribed on the *stelai* that were erected on the *polyandreia*. As for the ashes, also the names also were divided according to the Cleisthenic tribes, without other information concerning the patronymic or the demotic, that is to say without the most elementary coordinates of the identity. The dead were therefore virtually unrecognizable. Hundreds of fragments of these lists have been recovered since the Nineteenth century, together with some rare specimen of intact lists and with some more or less fragmentary heading reliefs.

Pausanias, who went through the road between the *Kerameikos* and the Academy and visited the *Demosion Sema* around the middle of the II century A.D., is our main source. At that time the cemetery was no longer in use for centuries and had probably already suffered serious injuries (we all recall the siege of Philip V of Macedon, in 200 B.C, and that of Sulla in 86 B.C.). Pausanias remembers only twenty-seven *polyandreia*, eighteen of which date back to the Vth century, six to the IVth century, two to the III century and only one to the II century B.C. In addition to the collective tombs, he also mentions the monuments of some eminent people, who lived between the end of the Archaic and full Hellenistic age.

In 1983, Christoph Clairmont, on the basis of preserved fragments of the lists, added at least forty-five *polyandreia* to the twenty-seven recorded by Pausanias. In the last years two new lists were discovered. One of them belongs to a monument possibly already known (*SEG* 52.60), but the other one is from a monument otherwise unknown (*SEG* 48.83). There the knights fallen in some minor battles (and not easily identifiable) in the last two decades of the Vth century B.C. were buried. The number of the *polyandreia*, therefore, must be considered provisional.

In spite of the rich literary and epigraphic evidence, so far the location of the *Demosion Sema* was one of the main *cruces* of the Athenian topography. We know that most of the fragments of the lists are from inside the walls, and particularly from the Agora. Only six of them were certainly found in the extra-urban, north-western area (*IG* I³ 1149 fr. m; *IG* I³ 1162; *IG* I³ 1179 fr. a; *IG* II² 5222; *SEMA* 1; *SEG* 51.52).

The sanctuary of Artemis *Ariste* and *Kalliste*, that can be located approximately 250 m north-west from the *Dipylon* thanks to a number of inscribed *ex voto* found there, for a long time has been considered the only certain topographical milestone for the text of Pausanias. In fact, the author mentions it immediately before starting the description of the *Demosion Sema stricto sensu*.

Two recent discoveries, however, have changed drastically our knowledge, closing down the *vexata quaestio* (at least in my opinion).

In primis, the tomb of Lycurgus, mentioned by Pausanias (1.29.15-16) at the end of the road, immediately before the entrance of the enclosure of the Academy, has been recognized in Nineteen-seventy-nine, at the intersection of the odoi Vasilikon 56 and Kratylou. Here, three *semata* belonging to several members of Lycurgus' family were recovered.

By the way, the most striking discovery took place in 1997 in odos Salaminos 35, about 400 m far from the *Dipylon*, on the north-eastern side of the ancient road. Here the remains of at least five *polyandreia* of the Vth century B.C. were brought to light. Unfortunately the data are very scanty and do not provide many elements to reconstruct the appearance of the monuments.

In effect, not only the topography, but also the aspect of the *Demosion Sema* has long been controversial. A ceramic fragment now in the Museum of Amsterdam offers only one indication, but very precious. Five stelai are depicted side by side on a single base. On the fourth stele we can read clearly ἐν Βυζάν<τιο>, namely the formula by which, on a preserved list, were introduced the soldiers fallen in Byzantium in 447 B.C. (*IG I³ 1162.II.49*).

This aspect of the *polyandreia* seems to be confirmed by the studies carried out on a long base now preserved in the Epigraphical Museum. It was inscribed with an epigram in honour of the soldiers fallen in an unspecified battle, variously identified with the battle of Coronea (447 B.C.), or of Delion (424 .C.) or with the Sicilian expedition (415-3 B.C.). The proposed reconstructions present, with slight variations, an alignment of five stelai very similar to that depicted on the vase fragment in Amsterdam. Actually it was a real, inscribed wall, approximately 6 meters long and nearly 2 meters high! So far this is the most striking evidence of the impressiveness of the monuments that lined the road to the Academy in the classical age.

The chronological question, however, remains open. In fact we don't know exactly when the *Demosion Sema* was founded. Pausanias (1.29.2-15) mentions the *mnemata* of the Tyrannicides, Harmodius and Aristogeiton, that of Cleisthenes and the *polyandreion* of the soldiers fallen in the war against Aegina (in 491/0 B.C.) (1.29.6, 7, 15). On this basis, some scholars argued that the cemetery was established already in the Cleisthenic age, in the framework of the democratic reform of the late sixth century B.C. We know, however, that the deads of Marathon (490 B.C.) were buried on the battlefield (Th. 2.34.5; Paus. 1.29.4), as well as those of Plataea (479 B.C.) (Hdt. 9.85; Paus 9.2. .5-6; Th 3.58.4). Other scholars therefore assumed that the practice became widespread only after the Persian Wars, when the soldiers who fell in the Cimonian victory on the Eurymedon river (perhaps in 469 B.C.) are the first mentioned by Pausanias (1.29.14). It is also likely that the Philaid played a primary role in the codification of the *patrios nomos* (I mean the use to return the remains of the fallen soldiers to their native country). By transferring from the island of Skyros the bones of Theseus - the first Athenian 'fallen' out from Attica - he made a real act of foundation, as a part of a sophisticated, propagandistic operation (Plu. *Kim.* 8.3. -7; *Thes.* 36).

At this point it is clear that the *Demosion Sema* played a fundamental role in the ideology of classical *polis*. Especially in the middle decades of the Vth century, the absence of monumental tombs in the common cemeteries of Athens and Attica, well proved by the archaeological evidence and probably imposed by the law "*post aliquanto Solonem*" which Cicero mentioned, seems to reserve this privilege to the war fallen. The only form of distinction after the death was, therefore, granted by the *polis* in return of the sacrifice of the life on the battlefield. Obviously, this ideological construction was strictly functional to the uninterrupted war effort supported by Athens

between the foundation phases of the League and the Peloponnesian War. In this perspective, the *polyandria* are the ultimate image of a totally pervasive polis: it gives to its citizens, in terms of individual perspectives within the expanded horizons of the empire, as much as it asks them in return.

Now, the question I want to pose here is: why the *Demosion Sema* was placed exactly along the road linking the *asty*, and the Acropolis in particular, with the Academy? There are many possible answers, but the right one, at least in my opinion, is just one. The topography is to be explained in the light of the meaningful ideological value of the Academy in the education of the Athenian citizens.

We have just assumed that the duty of the citizen was to serve the *polis* until the supreme sacrifice of life. Therefore, the road that the Athenian youths usually travelled toward the main place of their citizen's training was a very appropriate place for the monuments that commemorated the fallen soldiers. They were practically 'accompanied' – if we can say so - by a sort of gallery of heroes: more or less close in time, famous or more often totally unknown, the fallen soldiers were examples to look at, to point to each other along the way, to remember and, if necessary, to emulate.

The meaningful ideological value of the Academy in the education of the Athenian citizens took shape during the VIth century BC, probably for a specific initiative of Pisistratus and his sons. The topic was the subject of a contribution I published in 2003 in the "Annuario della Scuola Archeologica Italiana di Atene". I can not, here, for obvious reasons of time, go into the individual arguments. Therefore I just recall the main points and I refer to the article those who eventually are interested to deepen the topic.

I begin with the dossier concerning the literary and archaeological evidence.

The existence of a monumental phase of the VIth century BC at the Academy can be argued by a series of relevant clues.

Even if the tradition is generally reluctant to attribute the monuments to the tyrants, the sources mention two interventions at the Academy, dating back to the generation of Pisistratus and his sons. Pausanias (1.30.1) reminds an altar of Eros placed in front of the entrance of the Academy and dedicated by Charmos, a man very close to Pisistratus. The sources remember him as *eromenos* of Pisistratos (Plut. *Sol.* 1.7), and as *erastes* of the young Hippias, to which he later gave in marriage his daughter (Athen. 13,609 cd). The kinship is sure and underlined by the existence of an Hipparchos son of Charmos, known as the first ostracized in 487/6 B.C.

Athenaeus, who relies on the attidographer Kleidemos, quotes at length two verses of the dedicatory epigram of Charmos. They shine a little light on the appearance of the archaic gymnasium, with sports facilities dispersed in the shade of the trees (the mentioned *termata* can only refer to the

racetracks; they are in fact the point of arrival of the competitions, and therefore are ubiquitous in the vascular *imagerie* of the gymnasium).

Only Plutarch (*Sol* 1.7) reminds not an altar (*bomos*) but a statue of Eros (*agalma*) dedicated by Pisistratus. It is therefore possible that the votive offerings were two. They were more or less contemporary and to be framed within the same ideological program, focused on Eros and the values related to the god in the gymnasium. I will return to this point.

The paroemiographic tradition preserves a proverb connected to an Ἰππάρχου τειχίον, that is a wall that Hipparchos, the son of Pisistratus, built around the Academy (περὶ τὴν Ἀκαδημίαν). The work was so expensive to require the grant of a special tax, but it was never finished, so it has become the symbol of an extreme and unnecessary expense. Despite the doubts raised even by authoritative voices, I think there is not a compelling reason to doubt this tradition. It is unequivocally attested in the *Codex Bodleianus*, a collection of proverbs probably depending on the Alexandrian writers, and in the *Lexikon* of Suidias. Only in its later echoes this tradition appears distorted by the displacement, I think arbitrary, of the Hipparchos' wall at the *Pythion* (παρὰ τὴν Πυθίαν). It seems very likely to me, given Charmos' altar and Pisistratus' statue, that Hipparchos completed what was begun in the previous generation, with a *peribolos* enclosing an area very large (hence the considerable expense). The project would fit perfectly into the overall picture of the Hipparchos' life and works. By imposing the Homeric poems in the Panathenaic games and by inscribing timeless nuggets of wisdom on the herms scattered along the roads of the Attica he intended to educate the Athenians, as the dialogue entitled by his name and attributed to Plato shows.

Now, the archaeological evidence of this literary tradition is scarce, but not entirely irrelevant. I omit the Hipparchos's wall, for which at least two proposals of identification have been advanced. None of them is convincing and only the future research will settle definitively the question.

A very different attention should be paid instead to a [h] ὄρος τεῖς ἑκαδεμείας that was found *in situ* by Olga Alexandri in 1966, on the edge of an ancient road now approximately followed by odos Aimonos. The paleography dates it to the end of the VIth century. BC, when the only other known *horoi* are those of the Athenian agora (*IG* I³ 1087 and 1088). * The two series present undeniable similarities in the shape of the letters. So they share also the burden of chronological uncertainty which largely afflicts the Athenian archeology of the late sixth century. The agora *horoi* are generally associated with the Cleisthenic phase more on ideological than on an objective base. Nothing prevents in fact that they antedate the historic watershed of 510 b.C. and are to be referred to the Pisistratid arrangement of the agora, as argued by some authoritative scholar. The same sort regards the Academy *horos*. Certainly the early dating would be consistent with the literary tradition concerning Charmos' and Pisistratos' Eros and the Hipparchos' wall and would therefore

strengthen the hypothesis of a massive structuring of the north-west suburban area in the age of the tyrants. Conversely, we have to get to the Kimonian age to find in the sources the news of a planned intervention at the Academy (Plut. *Kim.* 13.7).

On the other hand, other evidence indicates the presence of buildings constructed with a certain architectural commitment at the Academy in the second half of the sixth century. B.C. I refer to a number of poros blocks reused in the structures of the so called Gymnasium and in its later annexes, but also to three antefixes and to a fragment of a clay painted slab, found in the Thirties to the west of the Square Peristyle.

The antefixes belong to a well-known class of Attic production. Notably they found many stringent comparisons in the finds from the Acropolis excavations. The date, originally set immediately after the mid-sixth century BC (550-40 BC), has recently been lowered to 510-500 B.C.

The size of the clay slab forces us to believe that this was a metope, while the style of the representation seems to indicate a chronology a bit higher in the second half of the sixth century. Again, by typology and technique, it found strict comparison in the Acropolis finds (please note, in particular, the way of delimiting the field using a double dark band). The scene painted a male figure walking to the right. With his right hand he holds an animal that can be variously identified as a small deer or a hare. Both refer not to the proper hunt, but rather to what Alain Schnapp called the "urban hunt". It is focused on the small game and often used cunning; therefore it lends itself to become easy metaphor of the courtship. The prey is not meant to be eaten but is a trophy to be offered in the ritual of seduction within the homophile relationship, which had in the gymnasium its preferred set. Clearly this is the same background in which the presence of Eros is rooted.

Finally a herm found at the so called Gymnasium and dated at the end of the VIth century on stylistic grounds is surely not less interesting. Once more, it found comparisons in the finds from the Acropolis excavations and, especially, in a herm from the Agora. At the same time, the sculptural type was used for some important dedications known from literary tradition: the herm Prokleides dedicated, an otherwise unknown *erastes* of Hipparchos; or the more famous herms the same Hipparchos erected along the Attic roads. I remember in addition the discovery in 1972, at short distance from the *Akademia horos*, of a late-archaic relief with Hemes *kriophoros*. As far as I know, it is still unpublished.

Within this literary and topographical framework, I believe that there are significant clues to suggest that, in addition to Eros, many of the cults attested at the Academy in the classical age and later go back to the Archaic period and are part of a more general program promoted in the age of the tyrants and aimed at making the gymnasium of the Academy the hub of education of the Athenian *élite*.

In general, our main guide is Pausanias (1.30.1-2). Besides the altar of Charmos, site "at the entrance of the Academy" (πρὸ τῆς ἐσόδου τῆς Ἀκαδημίας), he mentions an altar of Prometheus, site "in the Academy" (ἐν Ἀκαδημία), then an altar of the Muses and another of Hermes, and finally, "more inside" (ἔνδον), an altar of Athena, another of Heracles and, in the same place, an olive tree, the second appeared according to the tradition.

I would start from the cult complex lastly mentioned. It consists of Athena, Heracles and an ancient and venerable olive tree (the image of the Douris *kylix* is intended solely as evocative, but the depicted scene corresponds quite well (perhaps not coincidentally) to the cultic reality of the Academy).

The "green olive *paidotrophos*", "the wild tree indestructible, fear of enemy weapons", which beautifully blooms under the watchful eye of Zeus *Morios* and Athena *Glaukopis*, appears in the chorus of the *Oedipus at Colonus* by Sophocles (694-705). In the same period, the *Clouds* of Aristophanes confirm the presence of sacred olive trees called *Moriai* in the luxuriant vegetation of the Academy (1005-8). According to the lexicographic sources, they were twelve in origin and derived directly by transplantation (Photius: *metaphyteueisai*), from the sacred olive of the Acropolis, namely the tree miraculously given birth by Athena during the contest with Poseidon for the possession of Attica (Phot. s.v. *moriai elaiai*; Suid. s.v. *moriai*; schol. Soh. *Oedip. Col.* 701). As it is well known (primarily from Aristotle *Ath Pol* LX), the oil given as a prize to the winners of the Panathenaic festival was drawn from the *moiriai* and was contained in the Panathenaic amphores. It is just the start of the production of this ceramic class to date the *moiriai* in the first half of the VIth century, and more precisely to 566 B.C. In this year in effect the chronographic tradition places the "foundation" of the Panathenaic festival by Pisistratus (probably to better intend as a radical reorganization) (Eusebius, *Chronicon*, Ol. 53.3-4; cf. Pherekydes *apud* Marcellinus, *Vit. Thuc.* 3). A band-cup dated around the middle of the VIth century. B.C., now in Monaco's Museum, leaves little doubt that, since the beginning, the amphores with the oil were the prize of the competitions. It is clear, at this point, that the *moriai* played an essential role in the ideology of the city. For this reason a worship of the Athena *Polias* was 'transplanted' *ad hoc* from the Acropolis (as the branch of the first attic olive), to protect the sacred trees. In the archaic age the harvest was probably ritual, as evidenced by some vascular representations, in which the men are naked and crowned, sometimes overseen by Athena herself.

The presence of Zeus, mentioned as *Morios* only by Sophocles, can be explained in the light of the god's connection with the rain. He sends the rain and therefore he is strictly related to the life of the olive trees. Notably a *horos* ΔΙΟΣ ΠΑΡΝΗΣΣΙΟ dated to the beginning of the fifth century was

found *ex situ* in the Academy's area. With the equivalent epiclesis of Παρνήθιος the god was Ombrios on the top of the Parnitha Mountain (Paus. 1.32.2).

Next to Athena, Hercules is the hero of the *athla*. Founder of Pan-Hellenic games, archetype of the athlete, he was a perfect model in the citizen's training, mainly but not only military. In the mirror of the myth, the labors of Heracles are nothing more than the prototype of the several tests that the citizen had to face during his *paideia*. This interpretative key can maybe contribute to explain, for example, the potters' preference for the fight against the Nemean lion: the episode is represented in four different iconographic versions, all of them depending from the gripping schemes employed in the fight in the palaestrai. Within this 'educational' framework, we can understand also the strange iconography of the musician Heracles, spread on the vases since 530 B.C. Without any correspondence in the myth, the scene seems to be a reflection of the growing importance of *mousiké* in the citizen's training.

In this perspective, we easily understand the special place reserved to the hero in the heart of the gymnasium *pantheon*, next to the goddess *Polias*, who oversees on the olive trees, but especially on the training of the citizens.

I believe that we have to read in a pedagogical key also the presence of Hermes with the Muses, according to a combination rather rooted in Attica since the first half of the VIth century. With them the second citizen's training field emerges. It was complementary to the field chaired by Heracles in the inner part of the *temenos*: together with the *gymnastiké*, the *mousiké* was the second pillar of the *archaia paideia*. The Muses, daughters of *Mnemosyne*, the Memory, goddesses from infallible knowing, are clearly the best deities to sponsor the cultural education of citizens, focused primarily on the poetry. Immediately comes to our mind Hipparchos' picture in the Pseudo-Plato's words (*Hipparchos* 228b-c): being *philomousos*, he gathered around him some of the greater poets of his age, like Simonides and Anacreon, and chose the herms as support for his maxims, the nuggets of wisdom by which he intended to educate the people of the countryside.

The last place of worship mentioned by Pausanias is an altar of Prometheus, from where the *lampadedromia* started "toward the city" (πρὸς τὴν πόλιν). The *periegeta* don't specify which *lampadedromia* was of the three that in the classical age took place between the Academy and Athens, at the Panathenaic festival, at the *Hephaisteia* and at the *Prometheia*.

He may refer to that of the Panathenaic festival, surely the *lampas* for excellence in Athens. * It was a relay race in which ten tribal teams competed. But it was not a contest like any other, but rather a sort of final proof, that concluded the training of young citizens and marked their entry into the civic body. Aistophanes, in the *Frogs* (1087-98), is quite explicit in pointing out this testing value. Not surprisingly, the race took place on the night that preceded the *climax* of the festival, the *pompé*

and the delivery of the *peplos* to Athena on the 28th day of the month Hekatombaion. Specifically, the *lampadedromia* concluded the day of other two tribal contests in which the value of young Athenians was tested, the *euandria* and the *pyrriche*, and opened the *pannychis*, the night in which the performances of young girls seem to concentrate. It is noteworthy that the award was not made from oil, but was a *hydria*, a vase from the well known ritual value. We learn it from an inscription of the fourth century (*IG II² 2311*, ll. 76-77) and from some vascular representations, in which the vessel appears at the arrival of the race, namely the altar of Athena on the Acropolis, near which the sacred olive is located.

Now, there are several reasons to believe that the cult of Prometheus at the Academy, linked with that of Hephaestus, was added in the Vth century. Probably it is connected to the foundation of the *Hephaisteia* in the second quarter of the century (unfortunately I have no time here to deep the topic). Conversely the tradition preserves the memory of an original, different point of departure for the Panathenaic *lampadedromia*: the altar of Eros. The sources are late (Plut. *Sol.* 1.7; Hermias *in Phaedr.* 231e), but the *lectio* is largely *difficilior* and therefore it's likely to be the truth. So I go back to Eros, from which I started, and I conclude.

The link between Eros and the fire was not understood by scholars, who have mostly excised the notice, considering the altar of Prometheus, the benevolent god who stole the fire from the gods and gave it to the men, a much more suitable starting point for a race with the torches. Athenaeus (13561-562nd), however, offers a valuable clue to understand the presence of Eros at the Academy. He depends on earlier sources: a lost tragedy by Euripides, in which Eros is defined *paideuma* of the *sophia* and *arete*; and the *Politeia* written by Zeno of Kythion (the founder of the Stoic school), where the god is a prerequisite (*paraskeuastikon*) to the *philia*, *omonoia* and *eleutheria*. In this perspective, Zeno indicates Eros as the deity who most contributes (*synergos*) to the salvation of the *polis*. Several examples clarify the concept: the Lacedaemonians sacrificed to the god before the battle, since they were persuaded that the victory and salvation depended on the *philia* among the men deployed; the Theban sacred battalion was composed of pairs of *erastai* and *eromenoi*.

This Eros homophile, instigator of warlike virtues, was felt as the cohesive strength of the armies and was therefore an ideal patron of the war training of the citizens in the gymnasium, Clearly this is not the tender, child Eros, son of Aphrodite, but rather an adolescent, ephebic Eros. The archaic age offers many pictures of him, both in some votive specimens that certainly would deserve more attention (in particular I'm referring to a torso from the Acropolis, with a recess for the insertion of a wing) and in the vascular *imagerie* (the *aryballos* signed by Douris, for example, is from the tomb of the young Asopodoros, buried in the north-east cemetery of Athens at the end of the VIth century B.C.).

This is a fully 'political' Eros. His altar is not a private dedication, occasioned by a contingent *liaison*, even if among 'vips' as Pisistratos and Charmos or Charmos and Hippias. The monument is a programmatic manifesto, a tribute to the force on which the aggregation of the Athenian *élite* was founded. The altar of this Eros is the ideal starting point for a testing context as the *lampadedromia* was. The young competitors brought the fire of the altar of Eros, a transparent image of the ardour that the God has fed into their hearts, to the altar of the goddess *Polias*. Here this fire symbolically constituted the foundations of the complex ideological system upon which the *polis* social order and its survival were based.

To sum up. The monuments of the archaic Academy and the contemporary introduction of a system of worship of great consistency (I hope I have provided the necessary ideological, religious and cultural coordinates for its decoding) are the prerequisite in the subsequent history of the north-west area of Athens. The program set in the age of the tyrants indeed strongly affects the subsequent development of the city. The tract of the *Dromos* between the Kerameikos and the Academy will become -surely no coincidence - the *Demosion Sema*, the most beautiful *proasteion* of Athens in the words of Thucydides, as well as one of the beating hearts of the democratic Athens in the opinion of the ancients and of the moderns.