ROOSTERS, COLUMNS, AND ATHENA ON EARLY PANATHENAIC PRIZE AMPHORAS

SYMBOLS OF A NEW ATHENIAN IDENTITY

ABSTRACT

This article examines the addition of columns surmounted by roosters to the iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras around 540 B.C. The author argues that the roosters were a visual equivalent of Athena as defender of cities and also a link to the aristocratic ideals of paideia and arete; together with the columns, the birds squarely claimed the favor and military prowess of Athena for the city of Athens. It is suggested that the impetus for this iconographic innovation was an attempt by Athens to promote itself as the emerging leader of the broader Greek world.

Panathenaic prize amphoras have received much scholarly attention over the past century, but many significant questions remain about these vases. The interpretation of the obverse (principal) side of these vases is especially controversial. Recently, scholars have analyzed individual iconographic elements in isolation, frequently with stimulating results. In this article, however, I offer a possible resolution to the controversy by suggesting that the images on the obverse, of Athena, columns, and roosters, together with the prize inscription, operate not only as individual elements but also as complements (Figs. 1, 2). The idea that these elements work as an ensemble derives from visual evidence—they create a cohesive formal composition, with the columns and roosters framing Athena and the prize inscription—and also from the consequent probability that many Athenian viewers would have regarded such a coherent composition as a whole, not just as the sum of its parts. Together, the Athena, columns, roosters, and inscription convey

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All dates are B.C. unless otherwise noted. The fundamental work on Panathenaic prize amphoras is Bentz 1998, with a thorough bibliography up to that date. More recently, see Bentz and Eschbach 2001; Palagia and Spetsieri-Choremi 2007.

2. See, e.g., Eschbach 1986; Valavanis 1987; Tiverios 1996.
a definite message, formulated around the middle of the 6th century, that Athens was the emerging, self-proclaimed leader of the Greek world.

From the earliest surviving Panathenaic prize amphoras, dated to the 560s, to later examples, we can see that much about the vases was highly standardized, including the shape, technique of manufacture, and volume. The iconography of the prize amphoras, a critical component of the vases, was in part standardized from an early date but underwent more transformations through time than did the shape and manufacturing technique. What came to be the standard, or canonical, obverse iconography of Archaic and Classical Panathenaic amphoras after ca. 540 includes an image of an armed Athena rendered in profile, flanked by two Doric columns surmounted by roosters, and the official prize inscription (TON AΘΕΝΕΘΕΝ ΑΘΛΟΝ), usually placed along the inner edge of the left-hand column. The obverse iconography can vary somewhat: Athena can wear a chiton (Fig. 1) or a peplos (Fig. 3); her shield device changes from vase to vase; and very occasionally the prize inscription runs along

Figure 1. Panathenaic prize amphora attributed to the Euphiletos Painter, ca. 530–520. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rogers Fund, 14.130.12. Image © The Metropolitan Museum of Art


The early Panathenaic prize amphoras are the right-hand column (Fig. 4). But the four central elements (Athena, flanking columns, surmounting roosters, and prize inscription) appear in virtually the same arrangement on canonical Panathenaic prize amphoras from ca. 540 to 400, as exemplified in Figures 1 and 2.

These black-figure terracotta amphoras, of monumental size, served as containers for the sacred olive oil that was the prize for athletic contests at the Panathenaic Games. The quadrennial Great Panathenaia, the major

5. On the details of and variations in Athena’s costume, see Bentz 1998, pp. 43–51, esp. pp. 43–45; on variations in shield device, pp. 48–51 (cf., e.g., the three balls in Fig. 1 and the cart wheel in Fig. 2).


7. Surviving 6th-century prize amphoras range in height from 53 to 66.5 cm; over time, taller vases tended to be manufactured, with some in the 4th century standing as high as 87 cm (Bentz 1998, pp. 31–36, 202–203).
festival of Athens, celebrated the victory of Athena in the Gigantomachy. In 566 the Great Panathenaia was reorganized as a quadrennial event that included, among many other festivities and rituals, athletic competitions. The earliest known prize amphoras date to the 560s and are associated with the reorganization of the Panathenaic Games. The reverse side of Panathenaic prize amphoras depicts an athletic contest, generally believed to represent the event for which the amphora was awarded.

The decoration on the obverse side that was standardized around 540—Athena, the columns, the roosters, and the prize inscription—remained canonical throughout the 6th and 5th centuries and has been the subject of competing interpretations. Deserving more scrutiny is the fact that the earliest extant prize amphoras lack the roosters and columns on the obverse. The famous Burgon amphora in London shows Athena striding to the left in a panel that is blank, save for the prize inscription running along its inner left edge (Fig. 3). Above, the neck is decorated with a siren instead of the canonical double lotus-palmette chain (the reverse displays an owl on the neck above a scene of a cart race). A prize amphora in New York signed by Nikias, possibly even earlier than the Burgon amphora, similarly lacks the roosters and columns, although the painter has added additional inscriptions (his signature on the obverse—ΝΙΚΙΑΣ ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕΝ—and the name of the race represented on the reverse—ΑΝΔΡΟΝ ΣΤΑΔΙΟΝ).

8. Some scholars have argued that the Panathenaia celebrated Athena’s birthday: e.g., Parke 1977, p. 55; Simon 1983, p. 33; Neils 1992b, pp. 14–15. Pinney (1988, p. 471), however, has demonstrated convincingly that the origin of the festival was viewed in antiquity as being related to the Gigantomachy. Ancient literary sources such as Aristophanes’ Peplos (fr. 637) and Aelius Aristides (1.362) make clear that this is the case. Ridgway (1992, p. 127), Robertson (1996, p. 56), Shear (2001, esp. pp. 29–33 with a more detailed discussion of the literary sources), and Siewert (2001, p. 5) all agree with Pinney. Pinney (1988, p. 471), followed by Shear (2001, p. 35), also suggests that the motif of the Gigantomachy on the peplos dedicated to Athena at each Great Panathenaia was determined by the aitión of the festival.

9. The literary sources for the reorganization of the Great Panathenaia (distinguished from the annual Small Panathenaia) in 566/5 include Phereskydes (FGrH 3 F2) and Hellenikos (FGrH 4 F22), both quoted by Marcellinus (Life of Thucydides 3–4) and Eusebius (Hieronymi Chronicon, s.v. Olympia 53.3). For a thorough analysis of all the ancient testimonials that indicate the date of the Great Panathenaia’s reorganization, see Shear 2001, pp. 507–515. The Panathenaia occurred as an annual festival before and after 566; this is the founding date for only the quadrennial Great Panathenaia. Helpful sources on the Panathenaia include Neils 1992a and Shear 2001, as well as Anderson 2003, pp. 158–164. On the Small Panathenaia, see, recently, Shear 2001, pp. 72–119; Tracy 2007.

10. Early Panathenaic prize amphoras: Boardman 1974, p. 167; Moore 1999. On the possibility that amphoras were awarded as prizes for Panathenaic contests prior to 566, see Papaspyridi-Karouzou 1938. The amphoras continued to be produced into the 4th century a.d., e.g., Athens, Agora Museum P 26600 (Thompson 1960, pp. 366–367, pl. 80:d; Frel 1973, p. 32, fig. 33); Bentz (1998, p. 19) states that production continued into Roman times.

11. Hamilton (1996) argues that the reverse decoration does not correspond to the event for which the vase was won, but general scholarly opinion contradicts him, not least because several 6th-century prize amphoras bear inscriptions that seemingly indicate the athletic event for which they were awarded and that correspond with the athletic event depicted on the vases’ reverse sides (see Bentz 1998, pp. 82–84; Shear 2001, pp. 402–403). A famous example is the Panathenaic prize amphora signed by Nikias, now in New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art 1978.11.13 = Bentz 1998, no. 6.007; see Moore 1999). On the significance of the reverse decoration, see also Kratzmüller 2007.

12. Cf., e.g., Neils 1992c, p. 37, and Bentz 1998, p. 43. In the 4th century, exceptions to the continued standardization of the decoration occur much more frequently than in the 6th and 5th centuries: Athena reverses direction and is sometimes shown as a Palladian type (see Bentz 1998, pp. 41, 59).

13. See Moore 1999 on pre-canonical prize amphoras.

14. London, British Museum B130 = Bentz 1998, no. 6.001; ABV 89, Burgon Group, no. 1; CIV, British Museum 1 [Great Britain 1], pl. 1 [25]:1. The prize inscription here reads TON ΑΘΕΝΕΟΘΕΝ ΑΘΛΟΝ:EMI (I am from the games at Athens).

The columns surmounted by roosters do not occur on an official Panathenaic amphora until around 540, when they appear on a prize vase attributed to Exekias, now in Karlsruhe (Fig. 4). Exekias has painted Athena in the canonical manner, facing the viewer’s left. Flanking the image of the goddess stand two Doric columns, each topped by a rooster standing erect and facing in profile toward the center of the vase. The only aspect of Exekias’s prize amphora that deviates from subsequent Panathenaic prize amphoras of the 6th and 5th centuries is his placement of the official prize

16. Karlsruhe, Badisches Landesmuseum 65/45 = Bentz 1998, no. 6.014; CVIII, Karlsruhe 3 [Germany 60], pls. 17:1, 18:1, 19:1, 20:1, 5, 6. Two other early prize amphoras now in Malibu show columns: J. Paul Getty Museum 81.AE.203.A: Lindner 1992, p. 147, pl. 26; Zisa 2000, pp. 57–61, fig. 1a; J. Paul Getty Museum 81.AE.203.E: Lindner 2000, pp. 80–81, fig. 1a–c. These may be slightly earlier than the Karlsruhe amphora, although this is not certain. The latter amphora 81.AE.203.E shows Athena facing to the right, a very unusual occurrence in 6th-century prize amphoras, and one that highlights the years around 540 as a time of experimentation in the iconography of Panathenaic amphoras.
inscription, which runs along the inner edge of the right-hand column. Nonetheless, this is the earliest surviving Panathenaic amphora to contain each element of the later, standard obverse composition. The goal here is to explore the critical issue of why, around 540, a pair of columns surmounted by roosters first appears alongside the image of Athena, and to address the visual and cultural significance of this iconographic innovation.

ICONOGRAPHIC ELEMENTS

The Figure of Athena

To understand the meaning of the roosters and columns on Panathenaic amphorae, one must first consider the nature of the image of Athena. Many scholars have identified the Panathenaic Athena as a statue of the goddess on the Acropolis, either a cult statue or other statue set among the architectural monuments of the Acropolis generally (symbolized by
the columns), or a statue set, in fact, between two columns. These attempts founder upon several obstacles. First, if the Panathenaic Athena represents a statue between two columns, one would expect to find the columns on the earliest prize amphoras. Although it is possible that a statue of Athena enclosed by two columns stood on the Acropolis in the middle of the 6th century, archaeology has not yet offered evidence of such a dedication. Second, the figure’s striding pose would be unusual for an Archaic cult statue. In posture, it does not follow a known statue type from monumental sculpture of the first half of the 6th century. Finally, the variation of the shield device and garments of the Panathenaic Athena from vase to vase argues against a depiction of a specific statue (see Figs. 1, 2). There is no archaeological evidence for a statue of the Panathenaic Athena type on the Archaic Acropolis.

Admittedly, one sees in Archaic art a blurring between depictions of statues of deities and living gods, which may arise from the lack of distinction in Archaic Greek religion between cult statues and the deities they represented. De Cesare, for example, interprets the figure of Apollo on a well-known amphora in London by the Euphiletos Painter as a “living statue,” a divinity oscillating between epiphany and cult statue (Fig. 5). Unlike the Panathenaic Athena, however, the figure on the London amphora is frontal and standing, much more in keeping with Archaic cult cult statues set between two columns: Neils 1992c, p. 37. See also Scheffold 1937, p. 38. Shapiro (1989, p. 29) does not believe that the Panathenaic Athena depicts an actual statue, but he does argue that the figure of the goddess was likely to have been influenced by the appearance of “an important statue somehow connected with the Panathenaia.”

17. Statue not necessarily set between two columns: Raubitschek 1949, p. 359; Boardman 1974, p. 167; Miller 1982, p. 97; Hurwit 1985, p. 246; Hedreen 2001, p. 28; Segal 2008, p. 61. Statue set between two columns: Neils 1992c, p. 37. See also Scheffold 1937, p. 38. Shapiro (1989, p. 29) does not believe that the Panathenaic Athena depicts an actual statue, but he does argue that the figure of the goddess was likely to have been influenced by the appearance of “an important statue somehow connected with the Panathenaia.”


19. Even the bronze statue of Athena Promachos dedicated in the mid-5th century on the Acropolis (see Paus. 1.28.2) most probably depicted the goddess standing quietly, not striding (Shapiro 1989, p. 26). See also Harrison 1957; Shapiro 1989, pp. 26–29; Ridgway 1992, pp. 127–129. Some red-figure vase paintings depict statues of Athena in a striding position that are meant to be seen as Archaic. For example, a scene of the Ilioupersis on a cup attributed to Onesimos (formerly Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 83.AE.362, now Rome, Villa Giulia 13363 [Walsh 1984, p. 246, fig. 73]) shows Kassandra kneeling naked at a striding statue of Athena resting upon a base. However, this cup is dated ca. 500–490, decades later than the first appearance of the Athena on Panathenaic prize amphoras, and could therefore reflect a contemporary, not High Archaic, form of cult statue. High Archaic, black-figure depictions of Athena as a striding statue do not show her atop a base, which has raised the possibility that these images show the goddess herself rather than a statue (see Hedreen 2001, pp. 27–32, although he proposes that these older representations depict a statue). As Ridgway (1992, p. 129) argues, bronze statuettes from the Acropolis support a standing, not striding, form for the “Athena Promachos” statue type in the High Archaic period and suggest that representations of the striding Promachos type in vase painting do not derive from a three-dimensional prototype.


22. See De Cesare 1997, p. 84, who finds the status of the image of Athena as statue or living figure on Panathenaic prize amphoras to be ambiguous.

23. London, British Museum B49: ABV 326; Add 88, no. 326; CVH, British Museum 3 [Great Britain 4], pl. 35:2a; De Cesare 1997, p. 84. Numerous other scholars discuss this vase, e.g., Oliver-Smith 1964, p. 235; 1969, p. 9; Richter 1970, pp. 16–18; Boardman 1986; Shapiro 1989, pp. 59–60; Oenbrink 1997, pp. 117–121, 184, 242; Danner 2004, pp. 246, 264; Marconi 2009, pp. 5–6. Danner (2004, p. 245) argues for a slightly earlier date (ca. 550), as does De Cesare (ca. 550–540) (1997, p. 84), but the most recent opinion (Marconi 2009, p. 5) upholds the dating of ca. 540–530 proposed by Shapiro (1989, p. 60). Marconi (2009, p. 6) agrees that the image on the vase represents both the god and the statue of the god, indicative of Archaic religious beliefs in the presence of the deity in his or her cult statue.
For the reasons mentioned above, the identification of the Panathenaic Athena as a statue remains unlikely. Indeed, Oenbrink has concluded that the earliest preserved representations of statues of gods in Attic vase painting are the images of the Palladion in Archaic depictions of the sack of Troy and the rape of Kassandra, and the image of Apollo on the Euphiletos Painter’s amphora of ca. 540–530, later than the earliest Panathenaic amphoras.

Given the festival’s close link to the Gigantomachy, some scholars have proposed that the Panathenaic Athena might be a largely independent creation of vase painting, understood by viewers as the goddess in the Gigantomachy. I will instead suggest, however, that the columns on

24. Interestingly, the tripods flanking Apollo on the London amphora are surmounted by heraldic birds; this iconographic parallel should not, however, lead us to identify both Apollo and the Athena on Panathenaic amphorae as representations of cult statues.


26. As suggested in Bentz 1998, p. 43; Siewert 2001, p. 5; and Tiverios 2007, p. 4. Oenbrink (1997, p. 210) also argues that the Panathenaic Athena is an invention of vase painting, although he does not draw a link to the Gigantomachy. Rather, he argues that the image of the goddess on the prize amphoras was inspired by Homeric epic. On early Attic representations of the Gigantomachy, see Vian 1952, pp. 95–106; Moore 1979.
the vase locate the goddess within the city limits of Athens, and thus it seems unlikely that the Panathenaic Athena was meant as an actual representation of Athena in battle against the Giants. Several vases do appear to transplant the Panathenaic Athena into scenes of the Gigantomachy, and one amphora attributed to the circle of the Painter of Munich 1410 even depicts Athena striding to the viewer’s right, defeating a Giant, flanked by two Doric columns surmounted by roosters. But using such examples as evidence that the Panathenaic Athena depicts the goddess in battle with the Giants is problematic. In all these vases, the artists deemed it necessary to include opponents in order for the viewer to see the goddess in the fray of the Gigantomachy. Moreover, these vases are all later than the earliest depictions of the Panathenaic-type Athena on prize amphoras. It seems more likely that later vase painters adapted the obverse imagery of prize amphoras for their Gigantomachies than that the Panathenaic Athena was originally intended as a combatant in the Gigantomachy.

Indeed, there are no surviving contemporary representations of Athena in the Gigantomachy that show her as a solitary figure. Certainly, in Archaic vase painting a single figure can serve *pars pro toto*, indicating a broader narrative. Some representations of the Troilos episode from the third quarter of the 6th century, for example, depict a crouching Achilles alone. In these depictions, however, the hero is not technically alone, although he is the only human figure; Achilles is accompanied by a palm tree, which contextualizes him and locates the scene in a sanctuary of Apollo and thus enables the viewer to identify a particular moment in the Troilos story (the slaughter of the Trojan prince in the Thymbraion). Once the roosters and columns appear on the Panathenaic amphoras, Athena also is not shown alone (nor, for that matter, was she ever, as the official prize inscription always accompanied the goddess). These additions, along with the prize inscription, contextualize her and place her on the Athenian Acropolis, in

27. Panathenaic Athena transplanted into scenes of the Gigantomachy: e.g., Frankfurt, Neumann (Böhr 1982, no. 44, pl. 46); Tampa, Tampa Museum of Art 86.25 (Böhr 1982, no. 95, pl. 95, identifies it as Athena vs. a Giant; Noble Collection, p. 18, no. 18, identifies the scene as Athena vs. Ajax); Aberdeen, University Museum 684 (ABF 278, no. 29; LIMC IV, 1988, p. 223, no. 226a, s.v. Gigantes [F. Vian with M. B. Moore]). Circle of Painter of Munich 1410: Paris, Cabinet des Médailles 245: ABF 308, no. 70; Böhr 1982, p. 112, no. M2; LIMC IV, 1988, p. 222, no. 212, s.v. Gigantes (F. Vian with M. B. Moore); Tiverios 2007, p. 4.

28. See Tiverios (2007, p. 4) for an example of this approach.

29. E.g., LIMC IV, 1988, pp. 217–219, 221–223, 226–227, nos. 114, 120, 153, 178, 212, 226, s.v. Gigantes (F. Vian with M. B. Moore). This contradicts Pinney’s assertion that, were Athena facing to the right instead of to the left, we would be intended to mentally supply Athena with an opponent (Pinney 1988, p. 468).

30. The earliest surviving representation of the Panathenaic Athena in a Gigantomachy may be a type B amphora attributed to the group of the Princeton Painter and dated ca. 550: Madrid, Museo Arqueologico 10925: ABF 298, no. 11; LIMC IV, 1988, p. 221, no. 178, s.v. Gigantes (F. Vian with M. B. Moore). Again, however, the goddess is shown fighting a number of opponents and is accompanied by Ares.

31. See Böhr 1982, p. 32, who notes that the Swing Painter and his contemporaries seem to have adopted the figure of Athena shown on Panathenaic amphoras for their depictions of the goddess’s battle against the Giants. Further evidence that the Panathenaic Athena was invented independently of other schemas and was only later adopted to fit the Gigantomachy is provided by an amphora in Rome by the Swing Painter, Villa Giulia 56099, in which the Panathenaic Athena appears in a scene with Ajax and Cassandra; see Böhr 1982, no. 10bis, pl. 9.

32. See LIMC I, 1981, pp. 74–75, 80, nos. 219, 279, s.v. Achilles (A. Kossatz-Deissmann): a black-figure amphora in Göttingen (no. 219) and a metope from the Heraion at Foce del Sele (no. 279).
the heart of Athens—hardly a location conducive to a reading of the scene as the battle of the Gods versus the Giants.\(^{33}\)

The image of the goddess on prize amphoras might be understood as Athena \textit{after} the Gigantomachy, as Pinney argues, although not in the actual narrative context of the battle against the Giants.\(^{34}\) As Neils has pointed out, gods with their definitive attribute (for example, Zeus and thunderbolt, Poseidon and trident, or Athena and spear) need not refer to a specific narrative.\(^{35}\) The Gigantomachy is present in the Panathenaic imagery insofar as Athena acquires her reputation for military valor through such mythological exploits, but the image references such specific narratives only through allusion, not through narrative content. The Panathenaic Athena is, therefore, a more general symbol of the goddess as (military) protectress of Athens, a divinity striding forward prepared to compete and fight as an Athenian and on behalf of Athenians.\(^{36}\)

**Roosters**

It is in this context—of Athena as protectress of Athens—that the roosters and columns introduced to the Panathenaic prize amphoras around 540 should, in my view, be interpreted.\(^{37}\) The scholars who have paid serious attention to the Panathenaic roosters have generally turned to our knowledge of cockfighting in Athens to interpret the birds as symbols of the fighting spirit.\(^{38}\) While the rooster’s renowned fighting prowess was surely a component of its meaning on the Panathenaic amphoras, cockfighting alone cannot explain the full significance of the roosters surmounting the columns. Minimal literary and artistic evidence for the sport exists from

\(^{33}\) There is no solid consensus in the ancient sources on the location of the Gigantomachy, although none locates it in Attica (see Gantz 1996, pp. 445–454, for an analysis of these sources). Moore (1987) argues that Exekias tends to reduce his narrative scenes to only the figures essential to the myth. Exekias, however, still gives some indication of the setting or the episode (not to mention that one could easily argue, given the evidence of contemporary vase painting, that at least one Giant was a figure considered essential to the myth of the Gigantomachy).

\(^{34}\) Pinney 1988, p. 474.

\(^{35}\) Neils 1992c, p. 37, n. 43.

\(^{36}\) Cf. Pinney 1988, p. 474. Pinney argues that Athena is engaged in a victory dance, the pyrrhic, to celebrate her victory over the Giants (but see Neils 1992c, p. 37, n. 43). Such a link to the Gigantomachy might have existed in the minds of contemporary Athenian viewers, but Pinney’s argument that “the primary meaning of the image is narrative, not metaphoric” (p. 474) is less convincing. As discussed below, the Athena, in the context of the obverse decoration as a whole, should be read precisely as a general symbol and not as a depiction of a particular narrative event. That Athena was viewed in the 6th century as the protectress of Athens is attested by the fragments of Solon (fr. 3.1–4), who writes that Zeus will never destroy Athens: “such is she, who, great-hearted, mightily fathered, protects us, Pallas Athena, whose hands are stretched out over our heads” (trans. Neils 2001b, p. 192).

\(^{37}\) There are several examples of columns surmounted by birds on pseudo-Panathenaic amphoras that may date before 540 (see Brandt 1978, pp. 11–13); however, 540 remains the earliest date at which a known official prize amphora displays this iconography. In addition to the Karlsruhe amphora (Fig. 4), one can cite Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum 81.AE.203.E = Bentz 1998, no. 6.013, which Bentz (1998, p. 125) dates to ca. 540/530; see n. 16, above.

\(^{38}\) Beazley 1986, p. 84, most influentially, joined by Bruneau 1965, p. 107; Boardman 1974, p. 167; Bentz 1998, p. 53; Tiverios 2007, p. 6. E. Simon has argued that the roosters on the prize amphoras refer to Zeus and incorporate the worship of Zeus into the Panathenaic imagery (\textit{RE} Suppl. XV, 1978, col. 1415, s.v. Zeus). Neils (1992c, p. 38) concurs, but see Bentz 1998, p. 43, for a refutation. Pinney (1988, p. 474) views the roosters as heralding the return of light after the nocturnal Gigantomachy. The roosters may generally connote dawn (the Panathenaic procession did begin at dawn), but the roosters on the prize amphoras are not in the act of crowing. On the roosters’ allusion to dawn, see Tiverios 2007, pp. 6–7.
The 6th century; this relative paucity may suggest that cockfighting was only nascent in Athens at the time, at least as an upper-class pastime, but it could just as easily result from the vagaries of the preserved archaeological and literary records. Extensive literary and visual evidence for the widespread practice of cockfighting in the city does not appear until the Classical period.

Some Attic vases from the mid-6th century do show scenes of cockfighting, which suggests that the sport was present in Athens at that time. These vases invariably include visual clues that make clear for the viewer that the event being witnessed is a cockfight and not simply two heraldically confronted roosters. Sixth-century Attic vases with scenes of cockfighting tend to include human handlers or spectators flanking the central pair of roosters, which are shown directly abutting each other, usually with heads lowered in aggression and feathers raised (Fig. 6). In some cases, the act...
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of cockfighting is suggested by the direct parallel drawn with an adjacent scene of human combat, an early example being a black-figure plate in Oxford, in which two roosters (with, significantly, heads lowered and abutted) face off in the predella below the main scene of Herakles and Apollo struggling over the hind. 43

In scenes where two roosters are simply confronted with heads lowered and feathers raised, without human handlers or scenes of human combat, we might be witnessing a scene of cockfighting, but it is impossible to be sure (Fig. 7). 44 Heraldically confronted roosters, often used as flanking devices, are common motifs in mid-6th-century Corinthian, Lakonian, and Attic vase painting, but they seem to have no relation to the sport of cockfighting, or even, necessarily, to the birds’ fighting spirit. 45

Apt comparanda for the use of non-fighting roosters as framing devices can be found in two Attic amphoras (one a pseudo-Panathenaic amphora) that are approximately contemporary with the introduction of the columns and roosters to official Panathenaic prize amphoras (they are dated ca. 550–540); these two vases each show two roosters surmounting columns flanking a central image of a lone kitharist or kitharode (Fig. 8). 46 On an Attic black-figure hydria dated ca. 560, two upright roosters flank a central scene of three men in robes. Also flanking the three men are pairs of sirens and swans; there is no allusion to cockfighting (nor, needless to say, to siren- or swan-fighting), nor seemingly to a fighting spirit (Fig. 9). 47

44. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 06.1021.157: CV A, New York 2 [USA 2], pl. 23a–d.
45. Neither Payne 1931 nor Amyx 1988 mentions cockfighting as an element of the meaning of roosters on Corinthian vases. Stibbe 1972 includes several examples of heraldically confronted roosters in Lakonian vase painting, both on amphoras and in the exergues of cups: e.g., Toledo, Toledo Museum of Art 64.53: Stibbe 1972, no. 4, pl. 22:2; Samos, Museum of the Heraion K1189: Stibbe 1972, vol. 1, p. 281, no. 212; vol. 2, pl. 70:1.
47. New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 56.171.28: ABV 84, no. 4. On several Attic vases, Dionysiac scenes are flanked by columns surmounted by roosters, e.g., an amphora by the Euphiletos Painter: Naples, Museo Nazionale 86362: CV A, Museo Nazionale di Napoli 5 [Italy 69], pl. 29. These vases merit further study, although it seems possible that the motif was transplanted from the Panathenaic amphoras’ iconography to scenes involving other deities.
In 6th-century Attic vase painting, roosters as framing devices may be simply heraldic or may refer to the animals’ “fighting spirit,” although “fighting spirit” must not consequently be synonymous with “cockfighting” as a leisure activity. The roosters on the Panathenaic amphoras lack the visual clues that would indicate a scene of cockfighting in mid-6th-century Attic vase painting; they have much more in common with mid-6th-century Corinthian and Attic vases that use roosters as heraldic framing devices. Rather than wanting to show two birds engaged in or on the verge of combat, the artist is more likely to have introduced the roosters...

48. A pseudo-Panathenaic amphora of ca. 540–530 attributed to the Princeton Painter (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art 1989.281.89) depicts the roosters atop columns on its obverse with their heads turned toward the outer edges of the panel, so that they can hardly be said to be confronted: Neils 1992c, p. 43, no. 18; Moore 2007, p. 36, fig. 23. If the fighting nature of roosters were such a central meaning of the newly introduced birds on Panathenaic prize amphoras, the Princeton Painter might be expected to show them “confronted” on his imitation of the official Panathenaic iconography.
to the Panathenaic amphoras in order to frame Athena with devices that highlight her military might and aggression, as scholars have suggested, and to increase the aesthetic symmetry of the obverse composition.  

Nevertheless, other fundamental aspects of the rooster as a symbol on the amphoras have not been explored. The rooster (*Gallus gallinaceus*) reached Greece in the 7th century from Persia. It was originally called Περσικὸς ὄρνις (literally, “Persian bird”) until the 6th century, when it acquired the name *alektor* (ἀλέκτωρ) or *alektryon* (ἀλεκτρυών), which came to be its common names in the Classical period. The root of these two names is the verb ἀλέξω, which means “defend” or “ward off.” *Alektor* is properly a noun of agent: literally, one who defends or wards off. Thus, the rooster came to be considered, as the transformation of its name suggests, as a defender or a protective combatant. Interestingly, the same etymological root also gave birth to various epithets of Athena. In the *Iliad* (4.8), Homer refers to the goddess as Athena Alalkomeneis, invoking her Athens—rather than a scene of actual cockfighting.

49. See n. 38, above, on roosters symbolizing a “fighting spirit.” Exekias, who may indeed be credited with introducing roosters to Panathenaic prize amphoras, painted several vases that explicitly show scenes of cockfighting: e.g., neck amphora in Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 89.273 (here, Fig. 6); see n. 42, above; neck amphora in Munich, Antikensammlungen J1295 (1470); *ABV* 144, no. 6; *CIL* 7 [Germany 32], pls. 351–354. In contrast, when Exekias painted the birds on the Panathenaic amphora in Karlsruhe (Fig. 4), he instead sought to represent the essence of the rooster—its aggressive and violent spirit, appropriate to Athena the military protectress of Athens—rather than a scene of actual cockfighting.


52. On the etymology of ἀλέκτωρ and ἀλεκτρυών, see Chantraine 1968, pp. 57–58, s.v. ἀλέξω.
as “armed protectress of cities.” The appearance of this epithet in Homer ensures that it would have been familiar to 6th-century Athenians.

The earliest appearance in Greek literature of *alektor* or *alektryon*, meaning rooster, is in a passage of the elegiac poet Theognis of Megara (lines 861–864):

οἱ μὲ φίλοι προδιδοῦσι καὶ οὐκ ἐθέλουσί τι δοῦναι ἀνδρῶν φαινομένων· ἀλλ’ ἐγὼ αὐτομάτη ἐσπερίη τ’ ἔξειμι καὶ ὀρθρίη αὖτις ἔσειμι, ἢμος ἀλεκτρυόνων φθόγγος ἐγειρομένων.

My friends betray me and refuse to give me anything when men appear. Well, of my own accord I’ll go out at evening and return at dawn, when the roosters awaken and crow.

It is not, perhaps, coincidental that Theognis (fl. ca. 550–540) is contemporary with the introduction of the roosters and columns on the Panathenaic prize amphoras. *Alektor* and *alektryon* also denote “rooster” in the fables of Aesop, who lived in the first half of the 6th century, and *alektor* appears as well in a fragment of Simonides. By the 5th century, *alektor* and *alektryon* were the common designations for the rooster. As the rooster became etymologically associated in the mid-6th century with the concepts of protection and military defense that had been attached to Athena since at least the time of Homer, it became a newly appropriate symbol to complement the identification of the Panathenaic Athena as protectress of Athens. Shear has argued that the Great Panathenaia was meant to emphasize the special relationship of all Athenians with their guardian deity, a relationship not enjoyed by other cities. The canonical decoration on the obverse of the prize amphoras proclaimed this relationship. Linguistically, there existed a connection between the rooster as *alektor* and Athena as protectress of Athens. By combining these motifs on Panathenaic amphoras, Athenian vase painters gave this connection visual form and made it specific to Athens: Athena not as protectress of any generic city but of Athens in particular.

Doric Columns

The connection between Athena and Athens is further bolstered by the Doric columns that the roosters surmount. Traditional interpretations of the columns have identified these columns as indicators of a place, such as a sanctuary, or as representations of an actual building, such as a temple. Buildings depicted in Archaic Attic vase painting, however, are usually

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53. Lehmann 1959; Chantraine 1968, pp. 57–58, s.v. ἀλέξω.
55. On the dating of Theognis, see *OCD*, p. 1503, s.v. Theognis (M. L. West); Allen 1905; Figueira 1985, p. 262; Cobb–Stevens, Figueira, and Nagy 1985, pp. 1–2.
56. E.g., Aesop Fables 12: “The Cat and the Rooster,” 20: “The Two Roosters and an Eagle,” 21: “The Roosters and the Partridge,” and 158 “The Thieves and the Rooster” (see Chambery 1927); Simonides fr. 78: ἱμερόφων ἀλέκτωρ (*PMG* 583 Page). It is possible, however, that many of the fables now attributed to Aesop were written at a later date (Temple and Temple 1998, p. x).
57. Dumont 1988, p. 35.
indicated by an entablature extending across the supporting columns. The few representations of temples in Archaic vase painting follow this tradition. On the well-known amphora in London dated ca. 540–530, for example, the Euphiletos Painter delineates the temple or shrine by two Aeolic columns atop a stylobate, supporting an entablature surmounted by a crouching lion; two nonsense inscriptions indicate the shape of the pediment (Fig. 5). Two nearly contemporary (ca. 530) pinakes from the Athenian Acropolis also represent temples. The first depicts a single Aeolic column supporting a Doric frieze; an offering table is visible to the left of the column. The second pinax preserves two Aeolic columns atop a stylobate (visible beneath the shaft of the left-hand column). The artist has painted a Doric frieze running above the columns, as well as a raking cornice to indicate the pediment and a running female figure, presumably a lateral akroterion.

Had the artist who introduced columns to the Panathenaic amphoras wished to depict an actual temple or specific building, one imagines that he would have included an entablature spanning the columns, as this seems to have been the standard iconography of temples on vases at the time. Thus, regardless of the current controversies surrounding which temples stood at which times on the Archaic Acropolis, it seems unlikely that the columns on Panathenaic prize amphoras were intended to depict a temple on the Acropolis.

Scholars have also been tempted to view the columns as depictions of actual votive columns on the Acropolis, since they call to mind monuments such as the Naxian Sphinx at Delphi. A pseudo-Panathenaic amphora in Madrid has the inscription painted directly on the left-hand column, which some interpret as evidence that the Panathenaic columns were inspired by columnar monuments. This vase, however, dates to the late 6th century and is not an official prize amphora; scholars should hesitate to take it as evidence for the appearance of columns on prize amphoras around 540. It is also unclear how many votive columns stood on the Acropolis in the middle of the 6th century. In his catalogue of dedications from the Acropolis, Raubitschek concludes from the fragmentary epigraphic and archaeological evidence that only four column dedications can be dated to the columns when he wished to depict an architectural structure in his paintings, such as on a fragmentary funeral plaque in Berlin attributed to him (Berlin, Staatliche Museen F 1811B: Mommsen 1997, pp. 27–28, pl. 1). On representations of architecture in Greek vase painting, see also Brandes-Druba 1994.

60. Pedley 1987, p. 70.
64. See Zisa 2000, p. 57; Tiverios 2007, p. 5. Exekias himself, who may well have introduced the columns to the obverse iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras, seems also to have indicated an entablature spanning the pediment in his paintings, such as on a fragmentary funeral plaque in Berlin attributed to him (Berlin, Staatliche Museen F 1811B: Mommsen 1997, pp. 27–28, pl. 1). On representations of architecture in Greek vase painting, see also Brandes-Druba 1994.
65. Madrid, Museo Arqueologico 10901: CIV, Madrid 1 [Spain 1], pl. 27:2a, b; Yalouris 1979, p. 244, fig. 142. Neils (1992c, p. 40) interprets this vase as evidence for inspiration from a columnar monument.
the second quarter of the century; he dates all the remaining 6th-century column monuments to the last quarter of the century. Of the four early column dedications, two are likely to have supported statues of animals (possibly sphinxes), but they were fluted columns with Ionic capitals, unlike the columns on the Panathenaic amphoras. A third column monument supported a bowl or tripod, also atop an Ionic capital. The fourth early dedication appears to have had a Doric capital, but it supported a metal bowl or possibly a tripod, not a statue of an animal.

Thus, none of the surviving column dedications from the Acropolis prior to 540 matches the representation of the columns introduced to the prize amphoras at that time. There may well have been column dedications from the middle of the 6th century, such as monuments in wood, that have left no trace for modern scholars. Overall, current evidence suggests that columns did not proliferate on the Acropolis as a type of votive offering until the final quarter of the 6th century, but absence of evidence in this case should not be taken as definitive evidence of absence; we simply do not and perhaps may never know the precise disposition of votive monuments on the Acropolis in the mid-6th century. Certainly, there is an utter lack of evidence outside the realm of Panathenaic vase painting to suggest that votive columns were topped by statues of roosters. While it is possible that the columns represented a pair of votive columns on the Acropolis, it is perhaps more plausible (as discussed below) that the columns served a function seen in contemporary vase painting: to denote a sanctuary setting (regardless of whether identical column dedications existed in the depicted sanctuary).

Another popular interpretation of the columns views them simply as image-bearers for the roosters, with no intrinsic meaning of their own. The roosters, however, could be displayed at least as prominently on the ground, where there would be space to enlarge them, as seen on a Late Archaic lekythos (ca. 500–480) attributed to the Athena Painter. The columns do, however, elevate the roosters to the level of Athena’s helmet, so that the animals’ crests frame the prominent crest of the goddess’s helmet. This arrangement draws a visual comparison between the gallinaceous crest and the military crest (both called lophos in ancient Greek), further equating Athena as defender of Athens with the rooster as alektor. Indeed, in a scheme of decoration as traditional and symbolically laden as the obverse

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66. Raubitschek 1949, pp. 5–8, nos. 1–3 (dedications from second quarter of the 6th century), pp. 8–16, nos. 4–10 (dedications from last quarter of the 6th century).
67. Raubitschek 1949, pp. 5–6, nos. 1, 2.
70. McGowan 1993.
71. Neils 1992c, p. 37. Segal (2008, pp. 61–80) argues that the columns on Panathenaic prize amphoras represent actual votive columns topped by votive statues and thus would have reminded viewers of the reciprocal relationship between gods and mortals in the Panathenaic games (i.e., an athlete could dedicate a votive to the gods and be granted victory in return). Evidence for this line of argumentation is lacking.
72. See, recently, Segal 2008, pp. 49–82. Oliver-Smith (1969, pp. 6–7) also argues that vase painters rarely copied existing structures.
73. Bentz 1998, p. 53. See also Beazley 1986, p. 84.
75. Several ancient authors note the resemblance between the rooster’s crest and the plumes of a warrior’s helmet: Ar. Av. 1366–1369; Lucian Gallus 3; Eust. Od. 1.142.15. Pausanias (6.26.3) describes a statue of Athena in Elis that has an image of a rooster on the goddess’s helmet. See Csapo 1993, pp. 13–14.
of the Panathenaic prize amphoras, it is difficult to believe that columns would have been added purely for aesthetic reasons.

A final suggestion that the columns on Panathenaic amphoras represent turning posts for running or hippic contests offers an attractive athletic association, a clear link between the obverse imagery and the agonistic scenes on the reverse. The reverse of an amphora of Panathenaic shape in Taranto depicts three runners sprinting past a turning post in the form of a Doric column. When columns are used on Archaic vases to represent turning posts, however, they are always (even on the reverse of the Taranto amphora) accompanied by iconographic elements (such as athletic contestants, spectators, and prizes) that make explicit the agonistic context. Moreover, in scenes of races on official prize amphoras, turning posts are depicted as rectangular posts, not columns. The lack of evidence linking the columns on the Panathenaic amphoras to any historical structure—be it temple or turning post—should suggest that they were not intended to document or refer to an existing monument. I propose instead that they were intended as a symbol of the Athenian Acropolis in general.

PANATHENAIC ICONOGRAPHY AND ATHENIAN SELF-IMAGE

Rather than treating the figure of Athena, the roosters, and the columns as disparate iconographic elements, I believe that these elements of the obverse imagery can be more fruitfully interpreted as working collaboratively to symbolize the goddess’s intimate relationship with Athens, her role as protectress of the city, and her preparedness to compete and fight for the Athenians. The reorganization of the Panathenaia in 566 to include quadrennial games represented an effort to put Athens on a footing with the great Panhellenic sanctuaries such as Olympia and Delphi. At the same time that these games equated Athens with Olympia or Delphi, however, they also distinguished Athens from those Panhellenic competitors. The Panathenaic Games included several events not attested at the four major crown games (Olympia, Delphi, Nemea, and Isthmia), such as the apobates, or chariot-dismounting race, an event only for Athenian citizens that supposedly commemorated Erichthonios’s invention of the chariot, and four-horse and chariot events restricted to Athenian warriors. Team or tribal...
events that appeared later and were limited to Athenian citizens—such as the pyrrhic dance, the euandria (contest in “manly beauty”), and the torch race—may represent a crystallization of this earlier impulse to distinguish Athenians from other competitors; some scholars even argue that the pyrrhic dance was part of the Panathenaia from the festival’s earliest days. The Panathenaic Games, therefore, attempted not only to position Athens within a broader Panhellenic context, but also to forge an exclusive (and superior) Athenian identity from within.

Less than two decades after the reorganization of the Panathenaia, by around 550, Athenian coinage is archaeologically attested for the first time, a practice adopted from the great metropoleis of Asia Minor. This early series of Athenian coinage bore images that may have related specifically to the reorganized Great Panathenaia. The middle of the 6th century is also the time when the production of vases with figural decoration died out in Corinth, and Athens then became indisputably dominant in the export market for painted vases. In the second quarter of the century, Attic black-figure vases penetrated for the first time as far inland in Asia Minor as Sardis and Gordian, and a thriving export trade existed to the Greek West as well. Athens also became at this time heavily involved in the foreign trade of goods other than vases to the Greek East as well as to non-Greek areas of western Asia Minor. Given the increasing involvement of Athens with territories outside mainland Greece, it is not surprising that the years leading up to 540 seem to have been a period when Athens was manifestly attempting to formulate and promulgate an identity for itself as a leading city—*the* leading city—within the larger Greek world. The reorganized Great Panathenaia and the amphoras that accompanied it as prizes generated a sense of unique municipal Athenian identity, distinguished not only from non-Greeks but from other Greeks as well.

During this critical period, the columns were added to Panathenaic amphoras to locate Athena squarely within the topography of the city. Columns often served as markers of monumentality in Greek sanctuaries,

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81. On tribal events, see Kyle 1992, pp. 94–97. See Boegehold 1996, pp. 97–103, on the euandria; he argues that it was a cyclic chorus competition performed by the most beautiful men in each *phyle,* not a beauty contest per se. Many tribal events are not attested in the Archaic period; however, see Pinney 1988, p. 468 (citing Dion. Hal. 7.72.7) and Kyle 1992, p. 94, who both argue that the pyrrhic dance was an early part of the Panathenaia.

82. As Kyle (1992, p. 101) writes: “Inspired more by city-state nationalism than by Panhellenism, the focus of the Panathenaia was voiced in its name.”


85. Asia Minor: Markoe 1989, p. 104. West: Boardman 2001, pp. 153–167, with further bibliography. Boardman (p. 162) cites, for example, a shipwreck off Marseilles dating to ca. 515 that contained more than 800 Athenian black-figure cups, as well as vases of other shapes.


87. Anderson (2003, pp. 4–5, 23, and passim) argues that Athens was actually a rather unimpressive city-state, without a true sense of collective identity, prior to the Kleisthenic reforms of 508/7. He fails, however, to give adequate weight to evidence such as the monumentalization of the Acropolis over the course of the 6th century. Moreover, even if Athens was not yet a major player in Greek politics and culture prior to 510, it certainly might have entertained pretensions to greatness. Anderson does admit that various acts of Peisistratos and his sons could be seen as “among the very first tentative steps taken in this direction [of Attic unity]” (p. 22), though he still disputes that the Peisistratid era saw any major growth in “a shared Athenian identity” (p. 23). I disagree with this assertion, particularly given that Panathenaic prize amphoras seem to have possessed a “distinctively Athenian coloring” (to quote Anderson 2003, p. 23) from their inception.

whether as freestanding dedications or as the peristyles of temples.\textsuperscript{89} The Temple of Hera at Olympia, for example, suggests the importance of columns for the monumentalization of Greek sanctuaries; there, the original wooden peristyle was gradually replaced by and monumentalized with columns of stone, so that by the time Pausanias viewed the temple in the 2nd century A.D., only one column of wood remained, in the opisthodomos.\textsuperscript{90} Owing to the importance of physical columns in Greek sanctuaries, painted representations of columns became “part of a semiotic code,” in Segal’s words, for designating the space of a sanctuary in vase painting. That is, columns in vase paintings were able to signify sacred space regardless of whether they corresponded to a concrete votive dedication; they reduced an integral architectural element of the Greek sanctuary to an easily comprehensible symbol.\textsuperscript{91} Even if the Athenian Acropolis boasted few column dedications before the last quarter of the 6th century (again, difficult to prove or disprove), the columns on Panathenaic prize amphoras could participate in a visual code in vase painting whereby they signified the Acropolis.

The addition of the columns to the obverse iconography thus monumentalizes Athena, literally locating her on the Acropolis, the sacred heart of Athens. The columns’ intended reference specifically to the Acropolis becomes clear not through the columns alone, but through the joint effect of the elements of the obverse iconography. The columns place the setting in a sanctuary, while the image of the goddess identifies it as a sanctuary of Athena. Lest there be any confusion about where this sanctuary of Athena was located, the prize inscription spells out that the scene is from Athens. The Archaic sacred space of Athena most famous within Athens, and most intimately connected with the Panathenaic festival and its games, was the Acropolis. That the obverse iconography of the prize amphoras symbolizes a sacred space of Athena is confirmed by its later adoption and modification on pseudo-Panathenaic amphoras such as the name vase of the Nikoxenos Painter; here, on both sides, two Aeolic columns surmounted by roosters frame a figure of Athena standing before an altar, which confirms that the setting is a sanctuary (Fig. 10).\textsuperscript{92}

Thus, the columns on the Panathenaic amphoras, in tandem with the full iconography of the obverse, create a symbolic architectural home for the goddess on the Acropolis, here a synecdoche for the city as a whole, making clear that Athens is not only Athena’s spiritual home, but her architectural, physical home as well; she is, on these vases, truly the queen of the Acropolis.\textsuperscript{93} At the same time that the columns underline the association between the goddess and the city of Athens, they serve as effective visual framing devices, drawing the eye more powerfully to Athena than do scenes on the earliest, pre-canonical prize amphoras. The roosters atop the columns, as references both to military virtue and to the spirit of competition, proclaim the goddess as \textit{alektor}, protectress of the city in which she now finds herself symbolically enclosed via the columns. At a time when

\textsuperscript{89} On columns in vase painting as a common symbol of the Greek sanctuary, see Segal 2008, pp. 68–80.

\textsuperscript{90} Paus. 5.16.1; see also Rykwert 1996, p. 204.

\textsuperscript{91} Segal 2008, pp. 49–82 (quotation, p. 68). See also Oliver-Smith 1969, p. 11.

\textsuperscript{92} Oxford, Miss., University Museum, University of Mississippi 1977.3.115: Neils 1992a, p. 152, no. 13 (see also illustration on p. 47).

\textsuperscript{93} I thank Joan Mertens (pers. comm.) for suggesting the image of Athena as queen of the Acropolis.
Athens was asserting its commercial dominance across the Mediterranean and declaring its superiority over the grand cities of regions such as Asia Minor, it is perhaps also not coincidental that Athenians appropriated what had been a Persian bird and transformed it, both linguistically and visually, into a defender of Athena’s favored city.  

That the obverse imagery was conceived as a programmatic assertion of an emerging Athenian identity as leader of the Greek world is only confirmed by the prize inscription, which announces the vase, and, I would argue, Athena, to be “of Athens.”

Panathenaic prize amphoras, which traveled

Figure 10. Amphora of Panathenaic shape attributed to the Nikoxenos Painter, ca. 500. Oxford, Mississippi, University Museum 1977.3.115. Photo courtesy University Museum, University of Mississippi

94. Miller (1997, p. 4) argues that Athenian contact with the Persians began as early as the reign of Peisistratos. In my interpretation of the Athenians’ transformation of the Persian bird, I draw, in a sense, the opposite conclusion from Markoe (1989, pp. 107–109), who argues that Athens adopted the eastern motif of the lion attack in the 6th century to cater to non-Greeks who were important trading partners. In the case of the Panathenaic roosters (and perhaps also the lion images on the Archaic Acropolis), it seems more likely that Athenians were asserting their superiority over eastern lands, rather than pandering to them as trading partners. On the Athenian appropriation of Achaemenid culture, see Miller 1997.

95. Siewert (2001, p. 4) agrees that the prize inscription addressed itself to the world of Greeks beyond Attica. See also Neils 2007, p. 50. Shear (2001, p. 505) correctly recognizes that the prize inscription indicates that the Great Panathenaia was, from the 560s onward, tightly linked with Athens’ identity.
all over the Greek world, presented an ideal format for proclaiming this identity. Official prize amphoras have been found in burials and sanctuaries across the Mediterranean and seem, therefore, to have been an important trade commodity. 96 As Kyle remarks, “games brought people to Athens, but prizes [Panathenaic amphoras] took Athens abroad.” 97 Pseudo-prize amphoras— unofficial imitations of the Panathenaic amphoras that can be practically identical on the obverse but lack the official prize inscription— were popular as, among other functions, souvenirs of the games at Athens; 98 they further demonstrate the importance, popularity, and broad dispersal of Panathenaic iconography. 99 The addition of the roosters and columns to the widely diffused prize vases was an inspired idea, one that enhanced the visual composition of the obverse as well as its symbolic efficacy.

Such an interpretation also has the advantage of plausibly linking the iconography of the obverse with that of the reverse. The military and athletic connotations of the Panathenaic Athena, roosters, columns, and prize inscription associate the obverse with the agonistic scenes on the reverse. On one side of the prize amphora the viewer is presented with a particular athletic event, while on the other side he or she sees the topographical and religious context of Athens in which the Great Panathenaia and its athletic competitions unfolded. The roosters also contribute to the link between the obverse and reverse. As animals often associated with pederasty and the gymnasion, the birds flanking Athena invoke aristocratic ideals of paideia and arete and the cult of Eros, which emerged in Athens in the 6th century, under Peisistratos. 100 Ancient evidence, both visual and literary, clearly attests that courting (including the presentation of love gifts, such as roosters) occurred in and around palaestrae and gymnasia. 101 A tangible link, therefore, seems to have existed in 6th-century Athens between Eros and athletics and the gymnasion; the roosters, as a common love gift in the gymnastic context, bring this connection neatly to the Panathenaic prize amphoras. 102

The roosters, coupled with the athletic scenes on the reverse of the vases, speak of paideia and arete, values closely linked with a specifically Athenian (military) identity in the euandria, the competition in manly excellence and beauty held at the Panathenaic Games and restricted to Athenian citizens. 103 They speak of the training of young men to compete for the glory of Athens in the Panathenaic Games—and to serve and protect Athens virtues conveyed by athletics, see Scanlon 2002, p. 14.

96. See the essays in Bentz and Eschbach 2001, part 1, especially Kotsidu 2001 and Neils 2001a. On the distribution of prize amphoras, see also Bentz 1998, pp. 111–116; Tiverios 2007, p. 18. Archaic prize amphoras have been discovered in burials beyond the Greek mainland (e.g., in Upper Macedonia: Kephali- dou 2001), but the burials often date to later periods. It is thus difficult to determine whether the amphoras were exported from Athens during the Archaic period or only later, and whether they were handed down as family heirlooms or sold or traded.


100. Plut. Sol. 1; Paus. 1.30.1; Ath. 12.609d; see also Kovaleva 2005, p. 135. Kovaleva (pp. 136–137) also suggests that Peisistratos instituted the cult of Eros in conjunction with the Panathenaia. On the moral and civic virtues conveyed by athletics, see Scanlon 2002, p. 14.


102. A 6th-century lekythos in Boston demonstrates neatly the connection between erotic love, sport, and roosters: in three registers, it displays, from top to bottom, an erastes propositioning an eromenos, a horse race, and two confronted roosters (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts 08.291: ABV 92; Hoffmann 1974, p. 210, fig. 15).

The obverse may, therefore, be understood as a highly effective projection of self-image for Athens, both at home and abroad, at a time when the city was asserting its identity as a force to be reckoned with in the Greek world. To an Athenian viewer, the symbolism of the front panel would have reinforced the pride of being Athenian and the sense of belonging to the city that the Great Panathenaia was meant to inspire. Given that prize amphoras did travel far beyond Athens, it is possible that Athenian officials and artists also intended their decoration to proclaim to non-Attic viewers that Athena, although worshipped throughout the Greek world, was unmistakably the patron goddess of Athens, with all the glorification of Athens that such an association would imply.

Questions still remain about the introduction of the roosters and columns to the obverse of the Panathenaic amphoras around 540. Why, for example, 540? It is possible that, after several decades of political upheavals and changes of leadership, Athens finally experienced a period of relative stability in which it was able to pursue with more focus the aggrandizement of its status within the larger Greek world. As Panathenaic amphoras came to be recognized as broadly circulating emblems, in a sense, of Athens, it might have seemed desirable to refine the obverse iconography to tie Athena more explicitly with her eponymous city. Who or what, though, was responsible?

As outlined above, the years leading up to 540 saw a number of significant events and socioeconomic developments that escalated the city’s presence and prestige in a broader Mediterranean context: the reorganization of the Panathenaia into a quadrennial festival, the expansion of Attic trade into the East, the minting of Athenian coinage, and the unprecedented spate of building on the Acropolis. Hölscher has described the “psychological” background for 5th-century Athenian art as, in part, “euphoric self-assertion.” Given the transformations in Athens in the 6th century, one wonders whether this sociopsychological drive for self-definition and self-assertion among the upper class really began in Athens in the 6th century, with the canonical iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras as one manifestation. Perhaps the innovations to the iconography of the amphoras around 540 resulted from a broader desire on the part of upper-class Athenians to assert their identity and the identity of their increasingly prominent city and, therefore, to monumentalize the goddess who represented Athens and the Athenians on these prize vases. As Neer has demonstrated, Greek vases are not mere reflections of already existing ideologies, but rather a medium through which artists and patrons could wrestle with, coalesce, and refine ideologies. At an exciting time for

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105. As Kyle (1996, p. 117) notes, Panathenaic prize amphoras were “masterpieces of communication” that were meant not only to reward victors but also to promote the interests of the state.
106. Shear (2001, e.g., pp. 226, 668) stresses that participation in the Great Panathenaia defined one’s identity as Athenian. See also Maurizio 1998, p. 316.
107. On the far-reaching geographic dispersal of prize amphoras, see n. 96, above. On the communicative properties of Panathenaic prize amphoras, see Kyle 1996.
Athens—emerging as a player on the world stage—the fine-tuning of the obverse iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras may have been born of an evolving ideology of Athenian self-definition as the preeminent city of the Greek world.

Given that prize amphoras were, by all accounts, official products of the state—and there is every indication that state officials exercised at least some control over their manufacture and iconography—\textsuperscript{110} it seems likely that one state leader or group of leaders could have effected the change to the vases’ iconography. Several decades ago, at the time Boardman was originally asserting that Peisistratos used vase painting for political propaganda,\textsuperscript{111} the answer to the question of whether Peisistratos could have been involved in the changes to the iconography of the Panathenaic amphoras might have been a resounding yes. Since that time, however, Peisistratos’s propagandistic use of images on vases has been strenuously questioned, and today, the answer to that same question might be an equally resounding no.\textsuperscript{112} The mere mention of the name Peisistratos in conjunction with the iconography of Attic vases has become a red herring. For vase painting broadly (especially for vases produced for private consumption, such as at the symposium), the concerns raised by Boardman’s critics are valid. Panathenaic prize amphoras, however, were produced officially by the city, which is likely to have had a strong measure of control over their iconography. The possibility that one individual or group of individuals had some say in the decision to add the roosters and columns (even if the impetus for such a decision arose from a broader sociocultural framework) should thus not be dismissed out of hand because Boardman once overstated the influence of political leaders on the iconography of Athenian vases.

Although it is tempting to associate Peisistratos with the reorganization of the Great Panathenaea in 566, a number of scholars have pointed out that Peisistratos was not in political power at that time and would therefore have been incapable of effecting such a significant change in the festival’s structure.\textsuperscript{113} Neils has recently suggested that Hippokleides (the archon in 566/5) may have been responsible for transforming the annual celebration into a quadrennial festival, while Anderson posits Lykourgos and his family, the Boutadai, as the responsible parties.\textsuperscript{114} Peisistratos did, however, come to a lasting power in 546, at which point his position was sufficiently strong and secure to consider major alterations to the Panathenaia.\textsuperscript{115} Under Peisistratos, several major innovations were made to the contests performed at the festival,\textsuperscript{116} and it is not unimaginable that Peisistratos himself might have

\textsuperscript{111} Boardman 1972.
\textsuperscript{112} See, e.g., Cook 1987. But see the response to Cook’s critique in Boardman 1989. See also Miller 1982, pp. 95–96; Steiner 2004, p. 461.
\textsuperscript{113} Aelius Aristides (1.362) claims that Peisistratos organized the Great Panathenaia, but see Shear 2001, pp. 510–512; Anderson 2003, p. 162; Neils 2007, p. 51. See also n. 9, above.
\textsuperscript{114} Neils 2007, p. 51 (see also Boegehold 1996, p. 96); Anderson 2003, pp. 67, 107, 163. Shear (2001, pp. 508–512) also suggests Hippokleides and his predecessor archon as the reorganizers of the Great Panathenaia.
\textsuperscript{115} See Bentz 1998, p. 12, n. 30. Anderson (2003, pp. 162–164) acknowledges that Peisistratos’s position would have been secure enough after the mid-540s to intervene in a major way in the Panathenaia, although he believes Peisistratos passed up this opportunity. Compare the passing mention of Peisistratos in Boegehold 1996, p. 96. See also Brandt 1978, pp. 17–19.
\textsuperscript{116} For these innovations, see Shear 2001, pp. 521–525.
wished to make a mark on the iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras established when the Panathenaia had been reorganized in 566.

If the changes to the obverse iconography were indeed programmatic and intended to formulate and disseminate a new Athenian identity, it seems probable that Peisistratos or another influential member of the Athenian aristocracy (or several people jointly) had a hand in encouraging the additions, if not in designing specific features. It required an individual person or persons to translate the general aristocratic sentiment of Athenian self-assertion into the tangible action of adding images of roosters and columns to the obverse of official Panathenaic prize amphoras. Peisistratos or other city leaders would have been responding to a cultural framework outside their individual control (or even awareness), but they are those most likely to have had the power to effect the changes to the prize amphoras that arose out of this broader cultural impetus to define an Athenian identity as the emerging dominant force in the Mediterranean. While we lack dispositive proof that Peisistratos or another elite Athenian instigated the addition of these motifs to the obverse iconography, it seems unavoidable that a change to such an official, traditional product as Panathenaic amphoras did not occur without the hand of an individual or individuals to channel the pervasive mood of upper-class Athenian society.

Along similar lines, the task of devising the specifics of the new obverse iconography required human agency and might have fallen to an individual artist. Given that our earliest surviving vase with all the canonical elements is attributed to Exekias, it is tempting to think that it might have been he who introduced the columns and roosters to the obverse. Exekias certainly did not shy away from innovation—both technical and iconographic—in his vase painting, although a more comprehensive survey of his work, beyond the scope of the present article, would be needed to determine whether other of his innovations had political implications.117 Pseudo-Panathenaic amphoras appear to have displayed columns surmounted by roosters (and other birds such as owls) up to a decade earlier than Exekias’s amphora in Karlsruhe; Exekias, therefore, did not devise the scheme, but he and his workshop still may have been the first to apply it to the official prize vases.118 Conclusive answers to such questions remain open, but I hope to have demonstrated here that the roosters and columns introduced to the obverse complemented the Panathenaic Athena, creating, along with the prize inscription, a cohesive and cogent symbolic ensemble in which athletic competition, military prowess, and the protection of the goddess Athena were all inextricably linked to each other and to the city of Athens—a powerful formulation of Athens’s identity as the leading city of the Greek world.

117. On various innovations of Exekias, such as the introduction of shapes (the calyx krater, the type A amphora) and iconographic scenes (Achilles and Ajax playing dice), see Angiullillo 1997, pp. 109, 155. See also Boardman 1978; Brandt 1978, pp. 2, 11.

118. For a list of amphoras of Panathenaic shape that display columns on the obverse ca. 550–535, as well as the suggestion that Exekias might have shifted the motif to official amphoras, see Brandt 1978, pp. 11–13.
CONCLUSION

The imagery on the obverse of Panathenaic prize amphoras evolved over the centuries that the vases were produced. Although the figure of Athena remained a constant component of the obverse iconography, the goddess was rendered in a more elongated fashion over the 5th and 4th centuries (as were the vases’ proportions) and also underwent a change in direction in the 4th century to be shown facing the viewer’s right. The prize inscription and the columns remained integral parts of the composition, although the latter tended to become slimmer and more elongated throughout the 5th and 4th centuries. The roosters are the only canonical element introduced around 540 that proved dispensable; beginning around 400, they were replaced atop the columns by changing figures or groups of figures. The meaning of the column figures—be they markers of a particular workshop or of the year in which the oil was collected, or simply as a means of refreshing the iconography of the prize amphoras—has been and will continue to be a subject of fruitful inquiry.

Overall, however, the canonical iconography of Panathenaic prize amphoras remained remarkably stable over the centuries. The roosters’ disappearance from the Panathenaic imagery stands out from the iconography’s otherwise constant perpetuation. One wonders whether the original meaning of the roosters as a symbol of Athena’s role as protectress of Athens ultimately faded or whether it somehow seemed less believable after the debilitating plagues and wars of the last decades of the 5th century. The roosters had been added to the prize amphoras at a time of transformation in the Athenian psyche, as the city began to position itself as the preeminent polis in the Greek world. It may not be coincidental that the roosters disappeared at another point in Athens’ history when it perhaps needed again to reformulate its identity—this time adjusting from being overwhelmingly dominant to being markedly less powerful. In this turbulent time for the city, the roosters might have been recast as column figures with greater contemporary relevance. Regardless of the changes to the obverse iconography in later centuries, one can still admire the original effectiveness of the combination of Athena, columns, roosters, and prize inscription.

119. On the heights of 4th-century prize amphoras, see n. 7, above; Bentz 1998, p. 203. On Athena’s change of direction, see Beazley 1986, p. 90; Neils 1992c, p. 31; Bentz 1998, pp. 41, 59. In the 4th century, Athena is occasionally shown as the Palladion type rather than the Promachos type; see n. 12, above.

120. Another significant change of the 4th century was the addition of an inscription on the obverse panel, inside the right-hand column, of the name of the eponymous archon (see Valavanis 1987; Neils 1992c, pp. 40–41; Bentz 1998, pp. 58–59; Shear 2001, pp. 398–400). On 4th-century and Hellenistic Panathenaic prize amphoras, see also Barringer 2003.

121. On the cocks’ replacement by figures, see Eschbach 1986; Valavanis 1987; Neils 1992c, p. 34; Tiverios 1996; Bentz 1998, pp. 53–57. Guy Hedreen (pers. comm.) suggests that the sculptural nature of the figures might have encouraged viewers to interpret the Doric columns in the obverse imagery as votive columns, but I am not sure that we can retroactively assign a votive connotation to the original Panathenaic columns based on the visual evidence of the 4th century.


123. Another politically motivated change occurs at the end of the 5th century in Athena’s shield device; after the fall of the Thirty Tyrants in 403, the famous statue of the Tyrannicides from the Agora appears as a common shield device (Bentz 1998, pp. 50–51): e.g., London, British Museum B605 = Bentz 1998, no. 5.239; Hildesheim, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum 1253 = Bentz 1998, no. 5.244; Hildesheim, Roemer- und Pelizaeus-Museum 1254 = Bentz 1998, no. 5.245. On column figures on Panathenaic prize amphoras, see Eschbach 1986.
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**Maggie L. Popkin**

**New York University**

**Institute of Fine Arts**

**1 East 78th Street**

**New York, New York 10075**

mlp261@nyu.edu