

**Public Building  
in Law and Economy of Classical Athens**

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## **Research lines**

- 1 – Political and institutional procedure leading to the construction of public buildings
- 2 – Legal relationship between the *polis* and the workmen paid to execute the building works
- 3 – Funding and financial management of the works

## **Main categories of inscriptions concerned**

- 1 – Laws and decrees
- 2 – Building specifications
- 3 – Building commission accounts

## Political and institutional procedure

Individual proposal / *probouleuma* of the Council



Decree of the *ekklesia*



Project by architects / technical commission



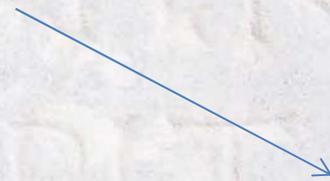
Supervising role of the *boule*



*Poletai*



Commissions of *epistatai*

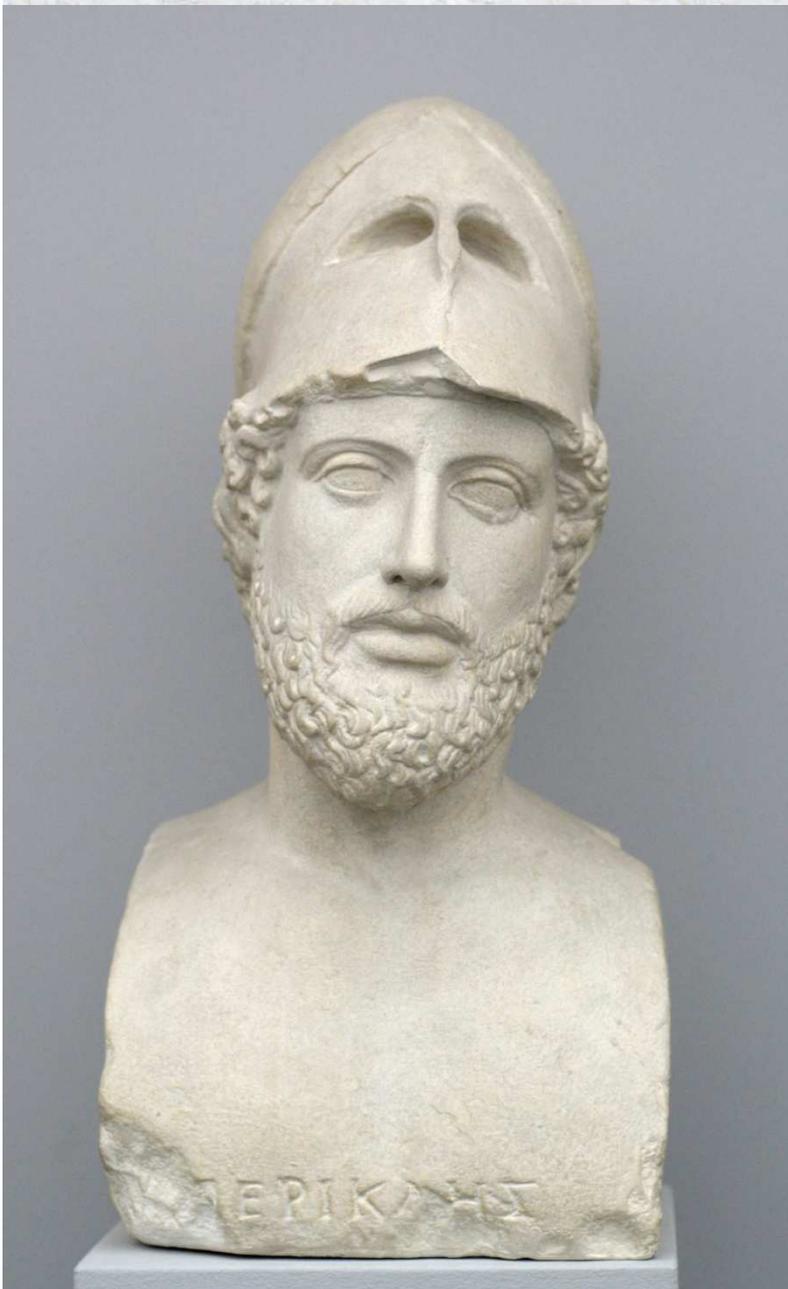


Architects



Workmen and craftsmen executing the work

## Institutional roles in the literary tradition



Plu. *Per.* 13.4: πάντα δὲ διεῖπε καὶ πάντων ἐπίσκοπος ἦν αὐτῷ Φειδίας.

Plu. *Per.* 13.7: τὰ δὲ Προπύλαια τῆς ἀκροπόλεως ἐξεργάσθε μὲν ἐν πενταετία Μνησικλέους ἀρχιτεκτονοῦντος.

Philoc. *FGrHist* 328 F 121: Καὶ τὸ ἄγαλμα τὸ χρυσοῦν τῆς Ἀθηνᾶς ἐστάθη εἰς τὸν νεῶν τὸν μέγαν, ἔχον χρυσοῦ σταθμὸν ταλάντων μδ, Περικλέους ἐπιστατοῦντος, Φειδίου δὲ ποιήσαντος.

Strabo 9.1.12: (sc. Ἰατῖνος) καὶ τὸν Παρθενῶνα ἐποίησε τὸν ἐν ἀκροπόλει τῆ Ἀθηνᾶ, Περικλέους ἐπιστατοῦντος τῶν ἔργων.

# Financial aspects

## Economy dynamics

What were the sources of the the money for the construction works?

Which materials were used?

Did they came from Attica or were they imported?

Which types of craftsmen and workmen took part in the construction?



How did public economy and private interest interact? What effects did they have on one another?

## Political scenario

Who paid for the building works?



5<sup>th</sup> c.

War booty?

Allied tribute?



Relationship between democracy and imperialistic policy



4<sup>th</sup> c.

Private wealth?



Relationship between democracy and wealthy elites

# Legal relationship between the *polis* and the workmen

Extra-Attic sources

ἐργώναι, ἐργωνέω, ἀποδίδωμι, ἐκδίδωμι

Public auctions

Entrepreneurs

IG XI 2, 145, ll. 10-11: τοῦ Διοσκουρίου  
τὸν τοῖχον ἐξέδομεν τὸμ πρὸς βορέαν ὑπὸ  
κῆρυκος ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ συγγραφὴν  
οἰκοδομῆσαι Νίκωνι· ΗΗΗ

IG XI 2, 287 A, l. 96: τὸν κοιλόσταθμον τοῦ  
ναοῦ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ποιῆσαι ἠργώνησε  
Κτησίας δραχμῶν ΙΨΗΗΨΔΠΗΨ

Contract for services

(lat. *locatio conductio operis*; it. *contratto d'opera*;  
fr. *contrat d'entreprise*; ger. *Werkvertrag*)

Attic sources

μισθωταί, μισθωσάμενοι, ἀπομισθῶ

Direct hiring

Daily workers and small craftsmen

IG II<sup>2</sup> 1668: ταῦτα ἅπαντα  
ἐξεργάσσονται οἱ μισθωσάμενοι κατὰ  
τὰς συγγραφὰς καὶ πρὸς τὰ μέτρα  
καὶ πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα, ὃ ἂν  
φράζηι ὁ ἀρχιτέκτων, καὶ ἐν τοῖς  
χρόνοις ἀποδώσοσιν, οἷς ἂν  
μισθῶσωνται ἕκαστα τῶν ἔργων

Contract of service or employment

(lat. *locatio conductio operarum*; it.  
*contratto di lavoro*; fr. *contrat de travail*;  
ger. *Dienstvertrag*)

VS

# Erechtheum accounts

(IG I<sup>3</sup> 475, ll. 240-267)

15 - - - - - ] χυλοργοῖς ἐς τὲν  
ἐποροφία]ν ἡμάντας ἀποχρέσασιν  
μῆκ]ος ἑπταπαλάστος, πλάτος δεκ-  
αδά]κτύλος, τ[ριδ]ν ἡμοβελίων: ἑκα-  
στ]ον : ΔΔΔΔΓ: Κ[ό]μονι ἐμ Με.: οί., ΗΡΔΔΔ,  
20 ΔΓ††: Τιμομάχοι : Ἀχαρν[εῦ :] ΡΔΓΠΠ, Δ†Π  
ΠC: Τλεσῖαι Κεττίοι : ΔΔΔ[Δ]ΠΠ : ΔΔ† Μικ-  
ῖοι : ἐμ Με.: οίκ.: ΡΔΔΔΠΠΠ: †[†]C. Εὐθυδόμο-  
ι Μελιτ. : ΠΠΠΠ: ἐς τὲν ἐποροφίαν ἡμάντ-  
ον ἐργασίας ἀργυρίο κεφάλαιον : ΡΔΔ  
25 ΔΔΓ††: τέκτοσι μισθόματα καὶ καθ-  
εμερίσια. κεραμόσαντι ἠνπὲρ τῆς ὀ-  
ροφῆς ἐπὶ τῷ νεῷ, Κτέσονι Λακιάδει,  
ΔΔ††††: τὸ(s) σφεκίσκος θῆσι καὶ τὸς ἱ-  
μάντας καθ' ἑμέραν, Γέρνι, ἡμέρ-  
30 ον : Π†Π†: Μικίονι, ἡμέρον : ΠΠ† †††: Κ-  
ροῖοσι, ἡμερῶν : Γ†Γ†: διαφάρχσαν-  
τι τὰ μετακίονια, τέτταρα ὄντα, τὰ  
πρὸς τῷ Πανδροσεῖο, Κόμονι ἐμ Με. οί.,  
ΔΔΔΔ: πομφόλυγας τορνεύσαντι ἐς  
35 τὰ καλύμματα, Μικίονι ἐγ Κολλυ.: οί.: ††††.  
πρίσται ἐς τὰ καλύμματα διαπρίσα-  
ντι σφεκίσκον, Ραιδίοι ἐγ Κολλυ.: οί.: Γ.  
τὸ τειχίον ἐνοικοδομέσαντι τῷ ἐργ-  
αστερίο ἐπειδὴ ἡαι σελίδες ἐσχέχ-  
40 θεσαν, Μικίονι ἐμ Μελιτει.: οί.: ΠΠΠΠ: τέ-  
κτοσι μισθομάτων ἀργυρίο κεφάλαι-  
ον : ΡΔΔΔΔ†ΠΠΠΠ: Γραφεῖ καλ-  
ύμματα γράφσαντι : ΔΠΠΠΠ : ἐπὶ τὲν ὀρ-  
οφὲν, ἐπὶ τὰς σελίδας τὰς ὑπὲρ [τῷ  
45 ἀγάλματος : †††††: δραχ[μῶν ἑκάσ-  
τ]ον τὸ κάλυμμα, - - - : ΡΓ†: - - -

To carpenters for planing cross-pieces  
for the roof, seven palms long,  
ten dactyls wide, at one obol and a half each,  
45 drachmae to Komon living in Melite, for 180 cross-pieces;  
20 17 drachmae to Timomachos of Acharnai, for 68 cross-pieces;  
11 drachmae, 4½ obols to Tlesias of Kettos, for 47 cross-pieces;  
21 drachmae to Mikion living in Melite, for 84 cross-pieces;  
2 drachmae, 1½ obols to Euthydomos of Melite, for 9 cross-pieces.  
Sum total for work on the cross-pieces for the roof, 97 drachmae.  
25 Payments to artisans for piece-work and day labor.  
For laying tiles above the ceiling upon the temple,  
to Kteson of Lakiadai, 24 drachmae.  
For laying the rafters and the cross-pieces, by day labor,  
to Gerys, for 6 days' work, 6 drachmae;  
30 to Mikion, for 3 days' work, 3 drachmae;  
to Kroisos, for 5 days' work, 5 drachmae.  
For placing grilles in the intercolumniations,  
four in number, towards the Pandroseum,  
to Komon, living in Melite, 40 drachmae.  
35 For turning bosses for the coffer-lids,  
to Mikion, living in Kollytos, 3 drachmae, 1 obol.  
To a sawyer, for sawing up a rafter into coffer-lids,  
to Rhadios, living in Kollytos, 5 drachmae.  
For building up the wall of the workshop  
40 after the beams had been carried out,  
to Mikion, living in Melite, 5 drachmae, 3 obols.  
Sum total of payments to artisans, 91 drachmae, 4 obols.  
To a painter, for painting 14 coffer-lids  
upon the ceiling, upon the beams above the image,  
45 at 4 drachmae each coffer-lid,  
to - - - - 56 drachmae.

## The Alkmeonids at Delphi

Hdt. 2.180: Ἀμφικτυόντων δὲ **μισθωσάντων** τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖσι νῦν ἐόντα νηὸν τριηκοσίων ταλάντων ἐξεργάσασθαι (ὁ γὰρ πρότερον ἐὼν αὐτόθι αὐτόματος κατεκάη), τοὺς Δελφοὺς δὴ ἐπέβαλλε τεταρτημόριον τοῦ **μισθώματος** παρασχεῖν.

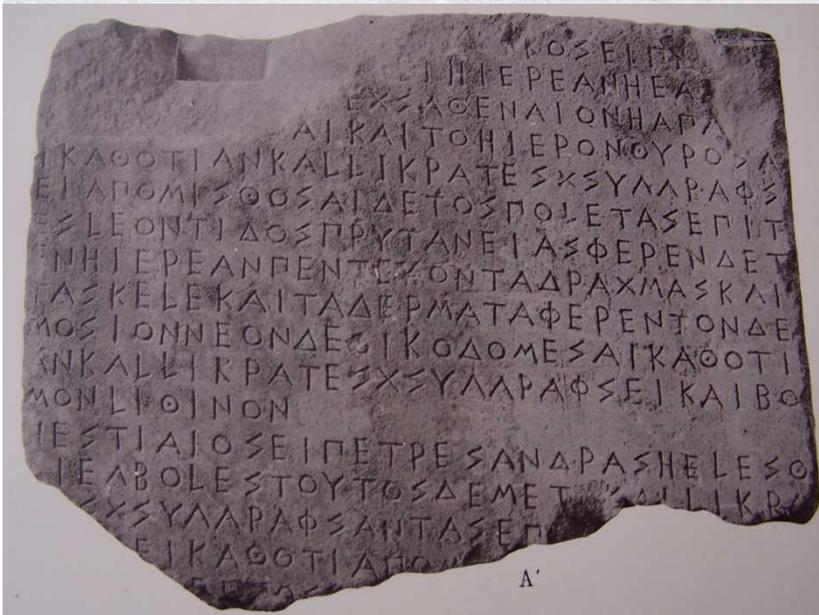
Hdt. 5.61: ἐνθαῦτα οἱ Ἀλκμεωνίδαι πᾶν ἐπὶ τοῖσι Πεισιστρατίδησι μηχανώμενοι παρ' Ἀμφικτυόντων τὸν νηὸν **μισθοῦνται** τὸν ἐν Δελφοῖσι, τὸν νῦν ἐόντα τότε δὲ οὕκω, τοῦτον ἐξοικοδομήσαι. οἷα δὲ χρημάτων εὖ ἦκοντες καὶ ἐόντες ἄνδρες δόκιμοι ἀνέκαθεν ἔτι, τὸν τε νηὸν ἐξεργάσαντο τοῦ παραδείγματος κάλλιον τὰ τε ἄλλα καὶ συγκειμένου σφι πωρίνου λίθου ποιέειν τὸν νηὸν, Παρίου τὰ ἔμπροσθε αὐτοῦ ἐξεποίησαν.

“When the Amphictyons had hired out for three hundred talents the work of finishing the temple that now stands at Delphi (that which was formerly there having been burnt by pure mischance), it fell to the Delphians to provide a fourth part of the cost”.

“Then, in their desire to use all devices against the sons of Pisistratus, they hired themselves to the Amphictyons for the building of the temple at Delphi which now is but then as yet was not there. Being wealthy and like their fathers men of reputation, they wrought the temple into a fairer form than the model shown; in particular whereas they had agreed to build the temple of tufa, they made its front of Parian marble”.

## The Athena Nike Decree

*IG I<sup>3</sup> 35, ll. 8-9: ἀπομισθῶσαι δὲ τὸς  
πολετὰς ἐπὶ τῆς Λεοντίδος πρυτανείας*  
“let the public vendors hire out the works  
within the prytany of the tribe Leontis”.



## Plutarch, *Pericles Life* 12.5

τοῖς μὲν γὰρ ἡλικίαν ἔχουσι καὶ ῥώμην αἰ στρατεῖαι τὰς ἀπὸ τῶν κοινῶν εὐπορίας  
παρεῖχον, τὸν δ' ἀσύντακτον καὶ βάνουσον ὄχλον οὔτ' ἄμοιρον εἶναι λημμάτων  
βουλόμενος οὔτε λαμβάνειν ἀργὸν καὶ σχολάζοντα, μεγάλας κατασκευασμάτων  
ἐπιβολὰς καὶ πολυτέχνους ὑποθέσεις ἔργων διατριβὴν ἔχόντων ἐνέβαλε φέρων εἰς  
τὸν δῆμον, ἵνα μηδὲν ἦττον τῶν πλεόντων καὶ φρουρούντων καὶ στρατευομένων τὸ  
οἰκουροῦν ἔχη πρόφασιν ἀπὸ τῶν δημοσίων ὠφελεῖσθαι καὶ μεταλαμβάνειν

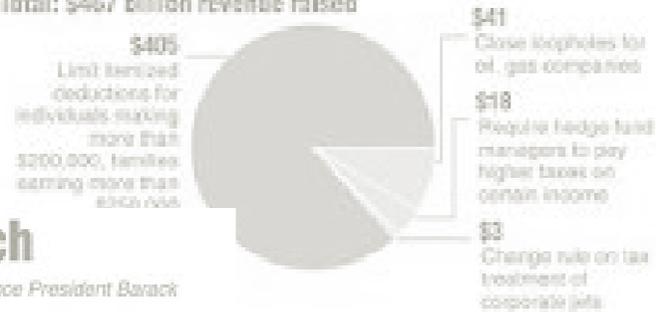
“And it was true that his (Pericle’s) military expeditions supplied those who were in the full vigor of manhood with abundant resources from the common funds, and in his desire that the unwarlike throng of common laborers should neither have no share at all in the public receipts, nor yet get fees for laziness and idleness, he boldly suggested to the people projects for great constructions, and designs for works which would call many arts into play and involve long periods of time, in order that the stay-at-homes, no whit less than the sailors and sentinels and soldiers, might have a pretext for getting a beneficial share of the public wealth”.



## Will the rich pay for jobs plan?

President Barack Obama says he would pay for his \$447 billion jobs plan with tax hikes for the wealthy that have been previously rejected by Republicans and some Democrats in Congress. Amounts in billions:

Total: \$467 billion revenue raised



## Under Obama's watch

The number of jobs gained and lost by month since President Barack Obama took office in January 2009:



# To be continued ...

