Archaic and Archaizing. A few questions about the representation of the Attic religious landscape.

One of the main difficulties in the understanding of Archaic Athens is our scarce knowledge of the spatial organisation of the city and its territory—including its religious landscape. The data at our disposal are scarce and isolated; identifying the context of various places and practices, the horizon of interpretation of most cults and sanctuaries, remains highly conjectural and, as a result, getting a comprehensive view of Archaic Athens is extremely difficult. The only moment when we can get a kind of global vision of Attic spatiality is, towards the end of the Archaic period, the Cleithenic reform of the Athenian tribes. Many different interpretations of the new spatial distribution have been proposed. Some have put the emphasis on its innovative aspect, conceived as a radical break with the Archaic organisation; others have rather insisted on the continuity between the pre- and post-Cleisthenic spatiality. But most of them usually apply the same grid, the same type of interpretation to the whole system. Naturally, as ever, our sources are all posterior to the reform itself and give a view where archaic and archaising aspects are narrowly intertwined. However, this paper will try to show that, provided than one is allowed to use different kinds of analysis to different spaces, it is possible to see how the Cleisthenic tribal reform mixes Archaic traditions and other innovations to create landscapes, including religious landscapes, both familiar and new.

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