

Chapter 4

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With and Without You: Megara's Harbours

The main question that will be addressed in this article is whether and how the harbour towns of the Megarid constituted local places in their own right. Exploring the entangled history of the polis Megara and its ports, this paper also points to the complexities behind scholarly approximations to the local horizon of an ancient Greek city-state.

Population Figures and Territory Sizes

The estimated population of Megara in the fifth century was c. 40,000.¹ In some calculations this figure includes a high number of slaves, c. 15,000 (cf. Plut. *Demetr.* 9).² In the Hellenistic period, the number appears to have been significantly smaller. We note that, while 3,000 Megarian hoplites had fought at Plataia in 479 BCE, in 279 BCE, Megara only sent 400 hoplites to Thermopylai to face the Galatian Invasion.³ This reduction might have been due, in part, to the secession of Pagai and Aigosthena. The epigraphic evidence from Aigosthena, discussed above, informs the estimation of population figures there, at least in the third century BCE. According to Beloch, the

1 Legon 1981: 23, based on estimations of agricultural capacities.

2 Legon 2005: 463.

3 Paus. 10.20.4; cf. Legon 1981: 301, who doubts that this was the full contingent. Plataia: Hdt. 9.28.

ephebic lists represented about 4% of the entire hoplite force, which would come to about 900 citizens.⁴

Megaris, as a whole, may have been about 700 km² in its earliest periods, before they lost parts to Corinth and Athens. The territory was henceforth reduced to about 470 km² in the Archaic and Classical periods (c. 1/5 the size of Attica).⁵ The estimated size of the arable land during Classical and Hellenistic times, with about 1/5 of the total territory, was c. 94 km². The size of the territory of Aigosthena and Pagai after 243 BCE is even more difficult to measure. *The Copenhagen Polis Centre* has assigned them a territory of about 25 km² each.⁶

Megaris and its Maritime Background

Geographically, Megara was favoured by its location at various crossroads. On land, the main travel artery connecting the Peloponnese to Attica and Central Greece ran through the Megarid.⁷ From a maritime perspective, the city had an excellent position for the pursuit of commerce, having two relatively long coastlines with access to both the Corinthian and the Saronic Gulf. Along the coast there are a number of bays, which were ideal in ancient times for the installation of ports. These harbours were crucial hubs in trans-Mediterranean trade.⁸

Megara was an active metropolis in its own right and a significant player in Greek colonization during the eighth to sixth centuries BCE. Megarians founded new overseas settlements and co-sponsored later foundations with their colonies.⁹ Megara Hyblaia was one of the earliest Sicilian colonies founded around 750 BCE (Thuc. 6.2.2; Strab. 5.270–282). Later, Megara concentrated its colonizing activities in the Hellespont and Black Sea

4 Beloch 1906: 55–56.

5 Beloch 1922: 275.

6 Legon 2005.

7 Trever 1925: 115–132.

8 Legon 2005: 463.

9 Antonetti 1997: 83–94.

regions.¹⁰ In all cases, Megara utilized its extensive naval experience and shipping capacity to plan and organize these colonial projects.

Megarian naval power is attested to as early as 600 BCE, or perhaps even earlier, when the Megarians were engaged in a naval battle with Samos (Plut. *Mor.* 57). Moreover, Megara provided twenty triremes for the Greek fleet at Artemision (Hdt. 8.1.1) and at Salamis (Hdt. 8.45). Other examples show that in 435 BCE, at Leukimme, Megara provided 8 ships for the allied fleet (Thuc. 1.29-30),¹¹ and that in 433 BCE, Megara provided 12 ships for the Corinthian fleet that fought against Korkyra at the Sybota Islands (Thuc. 1.46.1). In the ship sheds at Nisaia, in the fifth century, there was room to store more than 40 triremes. After the Sicilian expedition in the Peloponnesian War, the Spartans ordered the member cities of the Peloponnesian League to build 100 ships, 10 of which were requested from Megara (Thuc. 8.3.2).

This important maritime background may have overburdened certain conditions that characterize daily life in the Megaris: Megaris was a mountainous region, and there were only a few sizeable coastal plains with fertile soils that could be used for agriculture.¹² It was not, however, the geographic conditions that made the history of Megara very difficult, but rather the fact that the Megarians always had to deal with the main issue of conflict with their larger neighbouring cities, Athens and Corinth. Their conflicts were notably about the extent and quality of their respective maritime activities.¹³

In the Archaic period, the Megarid seemed to extend more towards the western direction, perhaps even including parts of the Perachora peninsula with its well-known Sanctuary of Hera.¹⁴ Subsequently, the Corinthians occupied most of this territory and integrated it in

10 Hanell 1934; Vinogradov 1998: 131-152; Smith 2006: 54-59; Vinogradov 2007: 465-474; Robu 2012: 181-195.

11 Legon 1981: 207.

12 Antonetti 1994: 539-551.

13 Figueira 1985: 261-264. For early Megarian occupation of Perachora and a Corinthian subordination of Megara, cf. Figueira 1985: 265-267. For a possible role of Orsippus (Paus. 1.44) in this process, Figueira 1985: 271-272.

14 See the discussion by Hammond 1954: 93-102; Salmon 1972: 159-204; Piccirilli 1975: 6-8; Smith 2008: 97.

their state. We hear about serious border-conflicts between Corinth and Megara in the sixth century, which also apparently involved other neighbours, like Argos.¹⁵

In the same period, Megara, possibly under the tyrant Theagenes, was able to gain control over Salamis, and forced the Athenian inhabitants there to flee to Attica.¹⁶ The maritime operation against Athens was initially successful. Later, however, the Athenians were again engaged in a war with the Megarians, their “first enemy,”¹⁷ and after a Spartan arbitration, the Athenians were able to regain control of Salamis.¹⁸ Herodotus tells us that it was Peisistratos who finally secured Salamis for Athens.¹⁹

There was, already in antiquity, a long discussion about the relationship between Athens and Megara, and the early status of Salamis, as illustrated in regional myths.²⁰ The two main mythological figures,²¹ Skiron and Theseus, are discussed in the early epics of Homer and Hesiod.²² Strabo (9.1.10) reports that there was debate about passages in the so-called *Catalogue of Ships* concerning Salamis (Hom. *Il.* 2.556 and 558). The Megarian local historians interpolated an entry linking the island of Salamis with Nisaia and other places, all within Megarian territory, under Ajax's command, in order to make use of Ionian or pre-Dorian antiquity for their claim to Salamis. Solon was accused by some Megarians of having inserted a verse into the *Iliad* of Homer to show that Salamis already belonged to Athens during Homeric times.²³ Strabo (9.1.10) additionally mentioned a dispute between those who connected the interpolation with Solon and those who connected it with Peisistratos.

15 Figueira 1985: 292-293.

16 Piccirilli 1978: 1-13.

17 Dem. 19.252; Plut. *Sol.* 8; Diog. Laert. 1.46; Justin 2.7, Polyaeus 1.20; Cicero *De Off.* 1.30, 108 and Taylor 1997: 21-47.

18 Plut. *Sol.* 12.5; Hdt. 1.59; Strab. 9.1.10; Ailian *VH* 7.19; see Higbie 1997: 279-308, 284-287.

19 Hdt. 1.59.4.

20 Bohringer 1980: 5-22; Wickersham 1991: 17-31; Piccirilli 1974: 387-422.

21 According to Strabo there was also a dispute between Athens and Megara about the burial customs in both poleis. See Paus. 1.43.3 with Muller 1981: 218-222 and 1983: 619-628.

22 Hereas (*BNJ* 486) implies that Peisistratos manipulated the works of Hesiod and Homer to make the Athenian hero Theseus more popular; cf. also Plut. *Theseus* 25.4; Philochoros *BNJ* 328 F107. For the author: Piccirilli 1974: 387-422.

23 Plut. *Sol.* 10; Deieuchidas *FGrH* 485 F5-6, 486 F4; Prakken 1941: 348-351 and 1944: 122-123; Davison 1959: 217; Graziosi 2002: 249-250.

In the Archaic and Classical periods, Megara was a wealthy naval power with a well-established sphere of maritime influence – including extensive trading networks – and was able to compete with Athens and Corinth. In the fifth century, however, the infamous Megarian Decree excluded the Megarians from all ports of the Athenian Empire and prohibited Megarian trade with Attica (Thuc. 1.139.1). The date of the decree and its importance for the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War is still controversial and much debated.²⁴ Yet the whole affair clarifies how important maritime communication and trade was for Megara and how much the Megarian economy was affected by the boycott. Megara was also a key point in Athenian strategy during the Archidamian War.²⁵ All this pressure from outside was paralleled in Megara by civil war-like phenomena, along with refugees contributing their part to the destabilization of Megara. At the beginning of the Peloponnesian War in 431 BCE, the Athenians invaded Megaris with their full force and devastated large parts of the country (Thuc. 2.31). Thucydides emphasized that such an incident happened each subsequent year until 424 BCE, when the important Megarian harbour of Nisaia fell into Athenian hands.

In the fourth century the strong maritime image of Megara changed. A passage in the speech of Isocrates on *Peace* (8.117) is paradigmatic for this. He remarks that there was something special with regard to the economic conditions in the Megarid. Isocrates says that the Megarians had the largest estates of all the Greeks, although generally only small and insignificant resources were at their disposal. They had no land, no harbours and no silver mines, so they had to cultivate rocky terrain.²⁶

Some ancient testimonia²⁷ indicate that the soil in the Megarid was poor and the amount of arable land was limited.²⁸ The Megarians were, however, able to manage their own affairs free from foreign influence. Despite their difficult position between the Corinthians,

24 For the Megarian Psephisma (Thuc. 1.67.4; 1.39.1; 1.44.2; Plut. *Per.* 29.4) see Ste. Croix 1972: 225–289, 381–399; Legon 1981: 200–227; Gauthier 1975: 498–503. Thucydides (4.66) comments in detail on the difficult situation in Megara in the time of the Archidamian War; cf. Legon 1968: 211–231 and 1973: 161–171; Zahrt 2010: 593–624.

25 Florence 2003: 37–58.

26 Isocr. 8.117.

27 Theophr. *Hist. plant.* 2.8.1; Strab. 9.1.8; Isocr. 8.117; Paus. 1.40.1.

28 Around 300 BCE cereals from Cyrene were sent, among other goods, to Megara, Argos, Larissa, Rhodos and Sikyon with a total value of 30.000 medimnoi; cf. Bresson 2000: 135–138; Laronde 1987; Kingsley 1986: 165–177.

Boiotians, and Athenians, they now always enjoyed peace. For Isocrates, Megara was a positive example of a city whose population lives a comfortable, prosperous and self-determined life in peace with their neighbours. What is really striking in this statement is that, in his opinion, Megara did not have any harbour in the fourth century, which is probably an exaggeration. After 300 BCE, Megara used bronze coins with a prow of a trireme on the obverse and two dolphins swimming in the circle on the reverse, clearly indicating the continuation of a strong maritime tradition.²⁹

For Isocrates, Megara is also a good example of a city that could be counted among the wealthy poleis in Greece because of their special attitude³⁰ and their neutral position in politics.³¹ Despite its very limited territory, and its poor, stony soil, it seems that the Megarians made the best out of their situation. Megara exported vegetables (Athen. 7.13; 1.49) and fostered strong wool production in the mountain pastures.³² Consequently, Megara was well known for its exports of woollen garments; Xenophon notes the economic importance of the Megarian textile industry, which included highly specialized ladies' outerwear³³ that were exported to Athens and elsewhere (*Mem.* 2.7.5-12).³⁴

Nisaia

Nisaia is the only attested Megarian harbour on the Saronic Gulf, and is closely associated with the island, or promontory, of Minoa (Thuc. 3.51; see also Paus. 1.44.5), identifiable by a mediaeval fortification called Palaiokastro.³⁵ In antiquity, Minoa was connected to the

29 Some scholars identify this icon with the bronze beak as a part of a trireme captured by Megara in a battle against Athens near Nisaia, which was preserved in the Olympieion at Megara (Paus. 1.40.4).

30 Smith 2008.

31 Robu 2014a: 100-102.

32 According to Lohmann, the rocky hinterland of Megaris was important for the economic situation there. There was no giant fortress in Megara in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE. Most of the alleged defenses appear to have been tower farms or round buildings, mainly used by shepherds, see Lohmann 2002: 75; van de Maele 1992: 93-96.

33 Betalli 1982: 261-278, with the literary and epigraphic (especially *IG II²* 1553-1578 and 1672-1673) evidence for textile production in Megara.

34 Lohmann 1997: 63-88.

35 Three proxeny decrees from Megara were discovered on one stone in the ruins of Palaiokastro, Heath 1912-1913, no. 1-3; see Legon 1981: 67. The inscription announces that these should be set in the Olympieion.

mainland by a bridge (Strab. 9.1.4). The exact position of Nisaia and Minoa and their topographical relationship to each other is still debated because no island in this region fits with Thucydides' description of the coast.³⁶ In my opinion, a final solution is not attainable, especially because the natural conditions near the coast may have changed over the course of time.

Nisa was regarded in antiquity as an earlier name for Megara,³⁷ and Nisos, son of Pandion, was the eponymous founder of Nisaia in one of the traditions (Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F78).³⁸ Local Athenian historians came to the consensus that Aigeus and Nisos can be counted as sons of Pandion, and that "once Attica had been divided into four parts, Nisos got Megaris as his lot and founded Nisaia" (Strab. 9.1.5). Later, Minos waged war against Nisos and his ally and step-son Megareus (Hellanikos *FGrH* 4 F75). Alongside this Athenian-oriented tradition, others believed that Megara was founded by the Boiotians, and that Megareus, the eponymous founder of Megara, came from Onchestos in Boiotia (Paus. 1.39.5. Apollod. 3.15.8). Centuries later, emigrant Megarians in Kyzikos were described by Apollonios Rhodios as Nisaians (Apoll. Rhod. 2.747, 847).

Some of these stories and myths are part of strategies to support the Athenian claim on Megara and its territory because it had once been part of Attica. On the other hand, the Megarians referred to the Homeric *Iliad*, in particular to the *Catalogue of Ships*, in order to prove that they had a pre-Dorian history. Within this controversy, we additionally find reflections concerning a Boiotian influence on the early history of Megara. We will see that the Megarian settlements on the Corinthian Gulf were closely connected to their Boiotian neighbours as a quite decisive counterpart to the city of Megara.³⁹

Nisaia was always in a difficult position because the Athenian island of Salamis was only a few kilometers away. Under most conditions, it was easy for the Athenians to control the

³⁶ Smith 2008: 153-166.

³⁷ Pind. *Pyth.* 9.9; *Nem.* 5.46 and 85; Sim. F.11.28-44.

³⁸ Suda, kappa 423: "Nisaia was also the name for the whole of the Megarid, from Nisos, son of Pandion. Hellanikos writes, 'he took both Nisaia and Nisos the son of Pandion and Megareus the Onchestian.'" For Nisos, his Megarian affiliations and his function as an Attic hero, cf. Kearns 1989: 188; Smith 2008: 94-95.

³⁹ It has been posited that Nisa in the Boiotian entry in the *Catalogue of Ships* (*Il.* 2.508) is Nisaia/Megara, e.g. Rigsby 1987: 93-102.

shipping traffic in and out of the port. Earlier, in 561 BCE, the Athenians under Peisistratos may have led an army against Megara and were able to seize the Megarian harbour of Nisaia, but it is not easy to find an adequate historical context for this episode. What happened to Salamis before and after Solon is especially unclear, particularly concerning the Megarians' struggle to bring the island back under their control.⁴⁰ We also lack the information as to whether or not the Megarians were able to recapture Nisaia.

Megara is attested as a member of the Peloponnesian League as of the end of the sixth century BCE (Thuc. 1.103.4),⁴¹ however, Megara left the Spartan sphere of influence in the mid-fifth century at a time when the city was engaged in serious border conflicts with Corinth (Thuc. 1.103.4). The city became an ally of Athens in 461 BCE, granting Athens access to both the Megarian harbours of Nisaia and Pagai. Henceforth, the Athenians were able to operate with a fleet in the Corinthian Gulf from points that were directly accessible by land from Attica. The Athenian-Megarian alliance could also be used to block navigations between central Greece and the Peloponnese. At this time, an Athenian garrison was installed in Nisaia. The Corinthians strongly disliked the Athenians' involvement in Megaris (Plut. *Cim.* 17.2; Thuc. 1.103.4), and they responded immediately with resolute military action.

During this alliance, the Long Walls which connected the city of Megara with the harbour area of Nisaia were built. The walls covered a distance of over 1.5 kilometers.⁴² Their length is given as 8 *stadia* (Thuc. 4.66.3) or 18 *stadia* (Strab. 9.1.4). A section of the Long Walls has recently been uncovered (*AR* [1990-1991] 12). The Long Walls created a corridor containing a secure communication line between the city and the coast. This important and extravagant project was contemporaneous with the Athenian construction of their own Long Walls. Athens subsequently applied this concept successfully in other cities, like Argos (Thuc. 5.82.2) and Patras (Thuc. 5.52.2). Aristophanes, who recognized the walls' importance with regard to trade and mobility, uses the phrase 'Megarian Legs' (*Lysistrata* 1170) to describe the walls between Megara and its port, Nisaia. The city of Megara and its closest harbour were regarded, at least from the fifth century BCE, as one

40 Figueira 1985: 291-292.

41 Legon 2005: 463; Figueira 1985: 300.

42 Conwall 2008: 45-48.

entity. When Megara returned to the Peloponnesian League in 446 BCE, the Athenian garrisons in Megaris were eliminated; only Nisaia remained for a short time under Athenian control. With the Thirty Years' Peace between Sparta and Athens the Athenians ultimately lost both ports in Megaris, and at this point the Athenian garrison was compelled to abandon Nisaia.

The relationship between Athens and Megara was poisoned afterwards for generations. In the Archidamian War, the most important aim for Athens was to regain control over Pagai and Nisaia, Megara's most important harbour and focus of military confrontations in the Saronic Gulf. This meant, virtually, to control the Megarid as a whole.⁴³

Nisaia is also presented as a point of interest in the first years of the Peloponnesian War. In 429 BCE, after their defeat by the Athenian fleet in a sea battle near Naupaktos, the remainder of the Peloponnesian fleet retired to Lechaion. The commanders, inspired by the Megarians, planned to make a surprise attack on the unprotected Athenian harbour of Piraeus. Eight thousand Peloponnesian soldiers marched overland to Nisaia, and they used 40 ships from the Megarian *neorion* to attack Piraeus and Athenian strongholds in the Saronic Gulf. After a short time, the Peloponnesians abandoned the attempt to attack Piraeus and instead sailed to a promontory on Salamis where they successfully attacked a *phrourion* called Boudoron.⁴⁴ The Athenians used this place as a watch point (*phylakē*) with three vessels posted there to prevent shipping in and out of Nisaia. Eventually, the Peloponnesians retreated to Nisaia (Thuc. 2.93–94). The effect of the blockade from Boudoron is disputed; nevertheless, it constituted an important part of the strenuous Athenian efforts to force Megara into submission. Nisaia was, according to Thucydides, a *neorion* of Megara with a capacity of at least 40 triremes.⁴⁵ Thucydides also characterized Nisaia as a *limēn* (4.66.3), whereas Strabo speaks of Nisaia as an *epineion* of Megara (9.1.9).⁴⁶

43 Legon 1968: 211–223.

44 McLeod 1960: 323.

45 Blackman 2013: 580–581. *Neorion* means dockyard or shipshed.

46 Suda E 2489.1–3 “from the fact that merchant ships are launched from it and beached there. Alternatively, a small town by the sea, where the cities have their dockyards; just as Piraeus that of the Athenians and Nisaia that of the

Thucydides notes an important detail in his report. He states that the Peloponnesians found that the Megarian ships they had taken from the *neorion* were not dry inside but were leaking because they had been stored for a long period in the shipsheds. This seems to indicate that the Megarians were, at this time, not very active at sea, and were not able to keep their whole contingent of triremes in use and in good condition.⁴⁷ We also hear that just a few years earlier the Megarians provided only 12 triremes to assist Corinth.

In 427 BCE, a democratic regime seized power in Megara and exiled some of the oligarchs. The Athenians were then able to control the fortified island/promontory of Minoa (Thuc. 3.51; Paus. 8.6.1), and between 427 and 424 BCE, the Athenians used this happenstance to bring Nisaia under their direct control. In Megara there was a controversy about the exiles. The democratic group, in secret negotiations with the Athenians, who still used the island of Minoa as a base for expeditions, developed the following plan: the Athenians would be given access into the Long Walls with the aim of interrupting the connection between Megara and Nisaia, the latter of which still acted as a Peloponnesian garrison. After some difficulty, the Athenians gained access into the space inside the Long Walls, but it was not possible for the city to be handed over to them. Eventually, the Peloponnesian garrison was forced to leave Nisaia and the port fell into Athenian hands. The intervention of a Peloponnesian army again prevented the capture of the whole of Megaris, but the Spartan commander, Brasidas, did not succeed in bringing Nisaia back under Peloponnesian control.

The Long Walls were recaptured shortly afterwards by the Megarians, now again ruled by an oligarchic regime. The fortifications were razed to the ground in a highly symbolic act by conservative Megarians in order to stabilize the political and military situation (Thuc. 4.109.3). Nisaia, however, remained in the hand of the Athenians, even subsequent to the Peace of Nikias after 421 BCE. The reason for this decision was that the Athenians had acquired Nisaia by capitulation, not by force or treachery (Thuc. 5.17). Not until the year 409 BCE was Megara able to reintegrate Nisaia back into its city (Diod. 13.65.1).

Megarid. It is possible for the word to be used of every port and coastal [town] which now most people call a *katabolos* ("naval station")."

⁴⁷ Blackman 2013: 21.

The Athenians, under their *stratēgos* Phokion, rebuilt the Long Walls in 343 BCE, when some democratic Megarians secretly requested assistance from the Athenians to confront the Makedonians who were collaborating with some Megarian oligarchs.⁴⁸ According to Plutarch, the Athenians fortified Nisaia and were responsible for the reconstruction of Megara's Long Walls.⁴⁹ Phokion secured Megara for Athens, and the Long Walls were more than a pure fortification, but also a symbol of a special political understanding both in Megara and in Athens. Athens had once again financially committed itself to a high degree, and an Athenian garrison was again stationed in Nisaia. As for the Long Walls, they still seemed to exist in Strabo's time (9.1.9), whereas Pausanias makes no mention of them.

There was a sanctuary of Poseidon in the port of Nisaia (Thuc. 4.118). This god was prominently honoured in almost all Megarian and Herakleiot colonies.⁵⁰ An Enyalion was also situated near the harbour (Thuc. 4.67).⁵¹ Pausanias informs us that near the harbour was a sanctuary of Demeter Malophoros, but the roof had fallen in because of old age. This was a very old cult that was relevant also for Megarian colonists who brought the goddess with them to their colonies in the Archaic period (Paus. 1.4.3).⁵² Finally, there were salt pans near Nisaia (*Schol.* in Aristoph. *Ach.* 700); Aristophanes mentions the export of salt to Athens (Aristoph. *Ach.* 721. 772).⁵³

Pagai

Pagai ("Springs") was the excellently located main Megarian harbour on the Corinthian Gulf.⁵⁴ The site is situated near modern Alepochori. Geographically, Pagai was separated from the rest of Megaris by a distance of some 16 kilometers over a hilly terrain. In antiquity, a road from Pagai to Megara led through a plain framed by the foothills of the

48 Gehrke 1976.

49 Dem. 19.294-296; Plut. *Phok.* 13.2 and 15.1; see Gehrke 1986: 110.

50 Robu 2013: 65-80.

51 Antonetti 1998: 35-46.

52 Bremmer 2012: 31-33.

53 Langdon 2010: 161-166. For the famous roses near Nisaia see Athen. 15.683f.

54 Smith 2008: 35; cf. Hellanikos *FGrH* F44: "Pagai: a place in the Megarid." See also Ps.-Skyl. 39.

Pateras to the northeast, and the Geraneia mountains to the southwest. There existed a relatively simple land connection between Pagai and the urban center of Megara by one of the principal roads through the Megaris,⁵⁵ although the exact route is still debated.⁵⁶ Another ancient road led along the coast of the Corinthian Gulf from Pagai, with a connection in the north to Aigosthena and hence to Kreusis in Boiotia. The steep cliffs near the coast and the sudden violent winds there made the route from Pagai via Aigosthena to Boiotian Kreusis quite dangerous.

Pagai was fortified in the fifth century BCE (Thuc. 1.103.4) and situated so as to control the eastern end of the Gulf of Corinth. The place was also a part of the defense and signaling system in ancient Megaris.⁵⁷

A port located at Pagai was sometimes considered as unfavourable due to the lack of suitable natural conditions, such as a protected bay.⁵⁸ At modern Alepochori there is a small promontory with a harbour area to the east. Some stone blocks found in the water have been interpreted as ship sheds.⁵⁹ The acropolis is located on a small hill near the coast, and remains of a circuit wall with towers and gates are still visible, probably built in the Hellenistic period. It is unclear if there was a fortification connecting the acropolis with the harbour area and the lower city. Perhaps there was a main gate through which the harbour area was accessed. There are also the remains of a Hellenistic theatre.⁶⁰

We know that in the year 461 BCE, the Athenians, now allied with the Megarians, obtained control of Pagai at the same time as Nisaia. The brief report in Thucydides gives no information as to whether the Athenians in Pagai initiated defense measures or installed a garrison. The Athenians now possessed easy and comfortable access to the Corinthian Gulf, which they used successfully. They also gained an important strategic position with

55 Wiseman 1974: 535-543.

56 Smith 2008: 84.

57 Smith 2008: 89-92.

58 Meyer 1942: 2285.

59 Lebègue 1875: 44-46; Wiseman 1978: 22: "Traces of the ship-sheds have been noted in the harbor.". See also Meyer 1942: 2286: "Am Strand glaubte Lebègue noch die überfluteten Reste von Schiffshäusern zu erkennen." Bernier 1993: 144-145.

60 Van de Maele 1992: 99.

regards to the connection with the settlement of the Messenians at Naupaktos near the straits of Rhion. For years the Athenians used Pagai as a harbour and were able to extend their naval sphere of action into North-Western Greece with raids against Peloponnesian Sikyon and Oiniadai in Akarnania in c. 454 BCE.⁶¹

After Megara's revolt from Athens and its reintegration into the Peloponnesian League in 446 BCE (Thuc. 1.103-114), Athens sent a successful military expedition against Megara, defeating them in battle and driving them back into their city, though the Athenians were incapable of preventing the loss of Pagai. In a famous memorial inscription from Athens,⁶² we are informed that the Athenians returned home by a difficult route from Pagai to Attica to avoid a direct military confrontation with a Spartan army. Athens was finally forced to relinquish Pagai (and Nisaia) after the conclusion of the Thirty Years Peace with Sparta in 446 BCE (Thuc. 1.115.1, 4.121.3).

During the Peloponnesian War, Megara was once again hard pressed by the Athenians, whose central aim was to regain control of Pagai. For this reason, it is not surprising that there was, in 425 BCE, amongst the claims stated by the Athenians under Kleon during the peace negotiations with Spartan ambassadors,⁶³ the return of the two most important Megarian ports, Nisaia and Pagai, to Athens (Thuc. 4.21).⁶⁴

By 424 BCE the regular military incursions of the Athenians into Megarian territory had made life very difficult. At the same time, internal political strife in Megara became more and more evident. Megarians in favour of an oligarchy were exiled by democratic groups in 427 BCE, so they settled in Plataia (Thuc. 4.66.1). Later the exiles moved, in 424 BCE, to Pagai to start plundering activities against the rest of the Megaris (Thuc. 3.68.3).⁶⁵ Pagai now played a special role because the exiles there were easily connected with their Peloponnesian allies, and could easily be supplied by them, by means of the Corinthian

61 Thuc. 1.111.3; Plut. *Per.* 19.3. According to Diod. 11.88.1-2 the number of ships was 50. According to Plut. *Per.* 19.2-4 there were 100 triremes active in the Gulf of Corinth at this time. In Thucydides we do not find any numbers. Cf. Hornblower 1991: 170; Stickler 2010: 143.

62 *IG I³*.1353 (446-425 BCE); Edmondson 1970: 193.

63 Thuc. 4.8-10.

64 Thuc. 4.21.3.

65 Thuc. 4.66.1; cf. 3.68.3. Gehrke 1985: 107; Losada 1969: 145-157; Panagopoulos 1989: 275.

Gulf. The oligarchic exiles in Pagai, together with their allies, started a war against Megara. This forced the democratic group to cooperate with the Athenians. The oligarchs were able to dismantle the Long Walls and to take control of Nisaia, but they were not successful in their efforts to bring Megara under their control. The exiles in Pagai were, however, allowed to return to Megara. With the help of other conservative people in Megara, they took advantage of the instability in the city to restore oligarchic rule.⁶⁶

The history of Pagai is rather sparse for the next 150 years. In the middle of the third century BCE, Megara lay helpless between Achaians and Boiotians and was forced to enter the Achaian League after the integration of Corinth by Aratos (Polyb. 2.43.6; Plut. *Arat.* 24.3), with the aim of saving the city from Antigonid domination. At the same time, in 243/2 BCE, Pagai and Aigosthena severed their close political ties with Megara and joined the Achaian League as independent cities. This means that the harbour in Pagai changed its dependent political status, perhaps as a Megarian *komē*, and henceforth becomes an autonomous city within the federal state of the Achaians. Such a change would have altered both the political and economic constitutions (Polyb. 3.37.10).

In 224 BCE, Pagai joined, along with Megara and Aigosthena, the Confederation of the Boiotians, when the Spartan King Kleomenes had already “pushed his Arkadian corridor to the Gulf,” and thus separated the western half of the Achaian League from its eastern half.⁶⁷ In reality, it meant that he cut off Megara from the rest of the League. So Polybius states that “with the consent of the Achaians”, Megara and Pagai joined the Boiotian koinon (Polyb. 20.6.8). This would seem to indicate that there was an official decision by the Achaian koinon to support the new political orientation of Megara, Pagai, and Aigosthena. Yet, one must ask whether it is actually true that the Achaians supported the transfer of Megara, Pagai, and Aigosthena. What can we say about the Megarian motivation or the motivation of the members of the Achaian League?⁶⁸ Mackil speculates here about a positive relationship between the Achaians and the Boiotians and thinks that

66 Thuc. 4.74.1-4.

67 Urban 1978: 150 and 224.

68 Urban 1978: 192-193.

the interstate cooperation might be based on a partnership of the two koina of mainland Greece.⁶⁹

For about 30 years Megara, Pagai, and Aigosthena remained part of the Boiotian koinon, in fact, a citizen from Pagai acted in the late third century as a Delphic *theōrodokos* (see *BCH* 45, 1921, 11.28). This situation changed in c. 192 BCE, when Megara and Pagai returned to the Achaian League and quarreled with the still Boiotian Aigosthena about the harbour at Panormos.⁷⁰ Pagai's *syndikoi* were closely involved in the quarrel between Megara, Pagai and Aigosthena,⁷¹ which the Boiotians tried to prevent. They sent a force to attack Megara and Pagai but withdrew when they heard that the Achaians had arrived with their own contingent (Polyb. 20.6.10–12; Plut. *Philopoimen* 12).

There is a decree of *proxenia* published by the polis of Megara for Pagai, in which it is possible that the Achaian city of Sikyon acted as a representative in favour of the interests of Pagai.⁷² Later, in an inscription found in Pagai, a certain Apollonides is mentioned as the Megarian *basileus*, which shows that Pagai was no longer independent from Megara (*IG* VII.188, c. 192 BCE). In the Roman period Pagai functioned as an independent city, but there are no extant decrees until the period of Roman supremacy.⁷³ Pagai re-emerged as a major harbour in the Corinthian Gulf, where Italian *negotiatores* were active in cooperation with traders from Megara and Aigosthena⁷⁴, thereby showing that Pagai was still a good choice as a port for merchandise. An inscription from Pagai, dated from 67–59 BCE, mentions an agora, a theatre, and magistrates like the *keryx* of the *synhedrion* (*IG* VII.190).

In the middle of first century BCE we hear about an agonistic foundation in Pagai to finance a festival that was no longer being regularly celebrated due to the lack of public

69 Mackil 2013: 112.

70 See *IG* VII.188; *SEG* 13.327.

71 Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 329, n. 242.

72 Harter-Uibopuu 1998: 110–111.

73 Liddel 2009: 425. In *IG* VII.190 Pagai acts as a polis (c. 67–59 BCE); *SEG* 50, 480, 193; Rhodes 1997: 111.

74 *IG* VII.190 from the first century BCE, with Wilhelm 1907: 17–32. Cf. Hatzfeld 1975: 73; Smith 2008: 122. It is possible that after the destruction of Corinth, Pagai benefitted economically. Both the Megarians and Pagai might have been affected by pirate raids around the year 80 BCE: Plut. *Pomp.* 24; Cic. *fam.* 4.5.4; cf. Rigsby 2010: 308–313.

funds. Soteles, son of Kallinikos, had taken responsibility for generously financing the festival, and was honoured for giving Pagai 1,200 Alexandrine drachmas (*IG VII.190*).⁷⁵ The money financed the yearly celebration of the pyrrhic dance performed during the festival of the Soteria in Pagai.⁷⁶ The Megarians and Pagaiaans long commemorated Artemis' aid against the Persians under Mardonios in 480 BCE.⁷⁷ According to Pausanias, there was a statue of Artemis Soter in Pagai, which looked exactly like the one in Megara that was erected in the fifth century BCE to commemorate the defeat of the Persians. Moreover, on the Pagaian coinage, there was a depiction of a running Artemis wearing a *khiton* and carrying torches.⁷⁸

An Archaic inscription mentions another cult in Pagai, that of Apollon Lykeios (*IG VII.35*). An inscription from the early Imperial period shows that Herakles was worshipped (*IG VII.192*). A new inscription from Dourachos, near Alepochori, references Apollo Apotropaïos as a local god of Pagai. This inscription may belong to the remains of an Archaic and Classical sanctuary near Alepochori.⁷⁹ At the time of Pausanias there was also a *herōon* for Aigialeus, son of Adrastos, who had been buried in Pagai and was probably worshipped as a hero in the Aigialeion.⁸⁰ Pausanias mentions the Megarians' claim that Tereus, son of Ares, was king of an area known as Pagai on the western coast of Megaris, but Pausanias does not agree with this story and suggests that Tereus was actually king of Daulis in Phokis (Paus. 1.48.7-8).

Panormos

The only source that informs us about a third harbour in Megaris on the coast of the Corinthian Gulf is an inscription from the Hellenistic period. At the beginning of the second century BCE, in a Megarian proxeny decree for judges from Achaia and Sikyon, it

75 *IG VII.190*; Wilhelm 1907: 19-20; Ceccarelli 1998: 95-97.

76 *IG VII.190*. See also *IG VII.16* on the Soteria at Megara.

77 See Paus. 1.44.4, 1.40.2; Hdt. 9.14; cf. Muller 1982: 405-407; Pritchett 1998: 154.

78 Imhoof-Blumer 1885: 53.

79 Valta 2016: 239-252.

80 Pind. *Pyth.* 8.53-55; Paus. 1.44.4, 9.19.2; Apollod. 1.103. Adrastos was buried in Megara.

is attested that Pagai was involved in a territorial dispute with Aigosthena. Aigosthena was still part of the Boiotian League at that point, and their conflict was over a harbour with the telling name Panormos, “natural, protected from all sides by the winds”.⁸¹ The surrounding details of the inscription explain that there were two harbour cities, each belonging to a different koinon, and that the conflict was resolved at the request of both the Boiotians and the Achaians.⁸²

Panormos was most likely located in the northern part of a small, protected bay near Psatha, at the east end of the Corinthian Gulf. Ancient remains such as Hellenistic pottery and cut-blocks of stone have been found here. If this is the case, then Panormos was indeed situated in the border area between Aigosthena and Pagai, with the harbour separated from the territory of Aigosthena by the Mytikas mountain range that reaches down to the sea.⁸³

It is not clear when Panormos was founded or if it was ever a permanent harbour. Perhaps it was created only when Megara joined the Achaian League, in compensation for the grant of political independence to its former *komai* Aigosthena and Pagai.⁸⁴ After 242 BCE, Megara lost direct control of these two harbours, potentially provoking the search for a substitute. What these measures meant for the general economic condition in Megaris cannot be determined. Maybe the Megarians were able, with the support of the Achaians, to establish a corridor to Panormos to trade products from the hinterland via the Corinthian Gulf. They would have used the existing road network in Megaris and Panormos could have been integrated into the still existing defensive system along the Gulf of Corinth.⁸⁵

81 Lehmann-Hartleben 1923: 293. Fuchs 1932: 98.

82 SEG 13.327. Ager 1996: 85.

83 Lebègue 1875: 50ff. Meyer 1949: 658. Meyer 1942: 2285. Ober 1985: 23. Muller 1983: 176–179. Bernier 1993: 124. *Contra* Legon 1981: 33, “The fine bay and gentle beach at modern Psatha, which lies midway between Pagae and Aegosthena, was too inaccessible by land ever to have either commercial or strategic value, and so it remains today.”

84 Panormos was probably a new settlement established in the third century BCE. We have no traces of fortification near it (Smith 2008: 80) Smith speculates about two settlements near Psatha (Vathykhoría and Kryphtes). From there it is possible to ship to the west via the Corinthian gulf. (Smith 2008: 41. Nr. 35 and 39–40).

85 Wiseman 1978: 26; Smith 2008: 89–92.

Aigosthena

Aigosthena, the most northern Megarian harbour on the Corinthian Gulf, was situated at Porto Germano at the eastern end of a bay, at the base of Mt. Kithairon. Aigosthena is separated from the rest of the Megarid by steep foothills. Pausanias reports (1.44.4) that Aigosthena and Pagai were located in the most mountainous parts of Megaris bordering Boiotia.⁸⁶ Aigosthena itself is surrounded by the foothills of Mt. Kithairon in the north and Mt. Pateras in the south, enclosing a small, arable coastal plain.⁸⁷ In a protected corner of the bay was a small harbour. The coastal town might be equally classified as Boiotian or Athenian, since the period of Megarian control was only relatively short. Aigosthena was connected to Attica and Boiotia by two passable ancient routes. The first is through the valley of Vilia, where there is a relatively easy road into Athenian territory. As for the second, in the north, via a coastal road, Aigosthena was connected with Boiotian Kreusis.⁸⁸

The acropolis was on a hill near the coast and was connected to the harbour area by fortifications in order to secure access to the sea. Some submerged piers and dry-docks have been discovered there. There are also some early archaeological material in Aigosthena, which might refer to a settlement that existed there already in the Dark Ages and the Archaic period.⁸⁹

The date of the fortification in Aigosthena and the identification of the parties responsible for this impressive and well-preserved installation with its numerous gates and towers, cannot be established with certainty.⁹⁰ This is also true for some watch posts and towers near Aigosthena at Tsamali and Mallia Psatha.⁹¹ There is little evidence that the impulse to build these walls came from Megara itself.⁹² The construction and building of such a

⁸⁶ Ps.-Skyl. 39; Plin. 4.23. Ptol. 3.15.18. Steph. Byz. s.v. *Aigosthena*.

⁸⁷ Aigosthena was well known for its wine, Polyb. 6.11a. For vineyards there, cf. Robert 1939: 116.

⁸⁸ Ober 1985: 121-122.

⁸⁹ Smith 2008: 78.

⁹⁰ See Smith 2008: 47-49; Ober 1985: 121: "Aigosthena is isolated from the rest of the Megarid and had no strategic value for Megara." It is possible that in this time an Athenian garrison was sent to Aigosthena, Ober 1983: 387ff. and 1987: 586ff. For the historical background, Gehrke 1976: 40ff.

⁹¹ Ober 1983: 40; Smith 2008: 41, 44-45.

⁹² Van de Maele 1992: 93-107, who thinks that Demetrios (c. 302) was responsible for the fortification; cf. also Lawrence 1979: 388-399; Robu 2012: 85-116.

fortification was a very costly enterprise and, therefore, probably was the work of a nearby greater power with more resources and ambitions. It was built either by the Athenians in 343 BCE, when they began to reconstruct the Long Walls from Megara to Nisaia, or by Demetrios Poliorketes, who had installed a garrison in Aigosthena in 300 BCE.⁹³ If an earlier date for the construction is allowed, then it is also possible that the Boiotians under Epaminondas could have been responsible for the fortification.⁹⁴ It is conceivable, however, that the place had been used for maritime purposes for a long time, but under quite different conditions.

Aigosthena is first mentioned in ancient Greek sources in Xenophon's *Hellenika*, during a time when it was situated in the territory of Megara. Xenophon described the unplanned, dangerous march of the Spartans and their allies, as part of the difficult means by which they were to access the harbour by land. They marched under Kleombrotos from Boiotia to Aigosthena in 378 BCE,⁹⁵ where the Spartan king dissolved his army.⁹⁶ Aigosthena is mentioned once more in the *Hellenika* during the events after the Battle of Leuktra in 371 BCE, where the defeated Spartans and their allies retreated back to Megarian Aigosthena.⁹⁷ There they met Archidamos, the leader of a Spartan auxiliary contingent. The report of Xenophon is very brief, so we are not told how Archidamos had come to Aigosthena. It is possible that he came by ship from Sikyon.⁹⁸

In his *Periplus* Pseudo-Skylax (39), generally dated to the middle of the fourth century, refers to Aigosthena as a polis, together with other poleis in Megaris. If this restoration of the manuscript is correct, then Aigosthena is referenced here – in the rubrics of *The Copenhagen Polis Centre* – most likely as a polis in the urban sense rather than a political organization.⁹⁹ In an inscription dated to c. 300 BCE, Aigosthena is called a *komē*, the policies of which were determined in Megara. Aigosthena can thus be characterized as a *komē* or a polis at the same time. The site was, in other words, a dependent settlement in

93 Cf. Liddel 2009: 224; Robu 2014a: 95-118.

94 Cooper 2009.

95 Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.16-17; 6.4.25-26.

96 Xen. *Hell.* 5.4.16-17; Ober 1985: 122-123.

97 Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.25-26; 6.4.17-19.

98 Xen. *Hell.* 6.4.26.

99 Hansen 1995: 142-143; Legon 2005: 462.

the territory of Megara.¹⁰⁰ It is generally conceivable that from the fourth century a sizeable population inhabited Aigosthena and identified itself as Aigosthenitan. It is also possible that, besides the port facilities and buildings used in the context of trade, there existed public buildings, sanctuaries, and other structures in the urban design of the city.

The Aigosthenitai that are mentioned in *IG VII.1* (c. 300 BCE) did not act as the assembly of an independent polis but as a dependency of Megara.¹⁰¹ They were able only to recommend honors to Megara, for a certain Makedonian *stratēgos*, Zoilos of Boiotia, who had been appointed as commander of the garrison at Aigosthena by King Demetrios.¹⁰² It is worthwhile to note that the Zoilos inscription was not set up in Aigosthena, but in Megara, because we find the following publication clause: the decree should be written on a stone stele and placed in the main sanctuary in Megara, the Olympieion, so ... “that all may realize that the people of Megara honor those who act favourably towards either the city or the *komai* in word or deed.” The inscription clearly indicates in the last paragraph that in the early third century there were several *komai* in Megaris. The question of whether Pagai can also be regarded as another *komē* must be left open due to the lack of clear evidence.

In 243 BCE Aigosthenai became an independent polis member of the Achaian League, together with Megara and Pagai. Aigosthena was now able, officially and formally, to define its own territory, which was separate from the rest of Megaris. The polis had now passed a constitution and developed its own judicial procedures, for instance the *nomothesia* (*IG VII.223*, difficult to date), which was inspired by the Megarian model as much as by the Achaian *politeia*.¹⁰³

This situation changed in 223 BCE, when Aigosthena was incorporated as an independent polis into the Boiotian Confederacy. Henceforth, decrees followed the standard formula in

100 Hansen 1995: 74–75.

101 Hansen 1995: 74.

102 Mack 2015: 217.

103 To the period from 242 to 223 BCE or 192 to 146 BCE belongs a decree of *proxenia* from Aigosthena for a citizen of Megara, (*IG VII.223*), which mentions the federal secretary of the Achaians, the *basileus* in Aigosthena as eponymous official, *damiourgoi* and *synarchai* as a typical Achaian institution); cf. Robu 2011: 79–101. The date of this inscription is still debated, Smith 2008: 128.

Boiotia.¹⁰⁴ This orientation was accompanied by changes to Aigosthena’s constitution, which was now based more on the Boiotian rather than on the Megarian–Achaian model.¹⁰⁵ Both the use of the Boiotian dialect in inscriptions and the formula of the decrees indicate that Aigosthena was deeply influenced by the Boiotian koinon at the time. The archon in Onchestos, the highest Boiotian federal magistrate in the third and second centuries BCE, now dated decrees from Aigosthena.¹⁰⁶ Three decrees of *proxenia* by Aigosthena can be dated during the time when the polis was part of the Boiotian state. The Aigosthenitans granted *proxenia* to the following: a man from Khaleion (*IG VII.208*); a citizen from Sikyon (*IG VII.213*); and a Thespian (*SEG 49.500*).¹⁰⁷ The geographic distribution of the honorands’ places of origin suggests that the external contacts of the polis were concentrated in and around the Gulf of Corinth, which was primarily used as the economic conduit. A treaty of friendship with Siphai (*IG VII.207*) also dates from this time. The Siphaians were privileged in Aigosthena with *proedria*, and were allowed to participate in common sacrifices as if they were citizens of Aigosthena, because of *eunoia* and *homonoia*.¹⁰⁸ These *psēphismata* were erected in the shrine of the hero Melampous in Aigosthena (*IG VII.207, 208, 233*).¹⁰⁹

This was a time of integration for Aigosthena into the *ethnos* of the Boiotians. We have a total of 12 preserved ephebic inscriptions, most of which were published on a great stele and in chronological order by the archons in Onchestos.¹¹⁰ In three late third century catalogues, the names of the *ephēboi* who had been graduated to the ranks of the *tagmata* or *peltophorai* survive. The names of those who were victorious in a military competition (*ton hopliton*) are also listed. The event was performed by the *ephēboi* in either Aigosthena or at the Pamboiotia.¹¹¹ Yet many questions remain. Unlike other contemporary poleis, some

104 Liddel 2009: 411–436, and Robu 2016: 337.

105 See Maquieira 1992: 85–89, who discusses elements of the Boiotian dialect in the inscriptions of Aigosthena.

106 A *polemarchos* is mentioned, clearly as an adopted Boiotian magistrate, in *IG VII.207, 208, 213*. Cf. Smith 2008: 113.

107 Dated to 100 BCE. There is also a decree of *proxenia* for a Megarian (*IG VII.223, 192–146 BCE* or earlier?) with the right to pasture in Aigosthena. In the Boiotian Koinon it was an established practice for member–states to grant decrees of *proxenia* to non–Boiotian cities in addition to federal decrees of *proxenia*.

108 Robu 2014b: 295.

109 See now the honorary decree for Philleas from Aigosthena. The stele was originally set up in the sanctuary of Melampous, cf. Diakoumakou 1999: 173–175.

110 Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 269–284; Hennig 1985: 329–342.

111 Roesch 1982: 346–347.

scholars think that in Boiotia all young men with citizen status were enrolled.¹¹² These catalogues were a symbol for a new military order that was established in Boiotia, after the reform of the army between 250 and 237 BCE.¹¹³ The *ephebeia* would have been an important part of this reform, with boys and young men trained by experts in the phalanx formation. Military teams from each Boiotian city competed with one another to demonstrate their *euhoplia* and *eutaxia*, annually at the Pamboiotia, in honour of the goddess Athena Itonia.¹¹⁴

IG Number	Type of list, date	Number
IG VII.209	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> , 223–201 or earlier	10 names
IG VII.210	Peltophoras from the <i>epheboi</i>	1 name
IG VII.211	Peltophoras from the <i>epheboi</i>	1 name
IG VII.212	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> , 219–198	5 names
IG VII.214	Peltophora and Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 218–197	1+4 names
IG VII.215	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 217–196	c. 8 names
IG VII.216	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> , 215–194	11 names
IG VII.217	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 214–193	8 names
IG VII.218	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 214–103	6 names

112 Étienne and Knoepfler 1976: 202.

113 Roesch 1982: 252.

114 Chaniotis 2005: 23.

IG VII.220	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 223–192	1 name
IG VII.221	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 223–192	7–8 names
IG VII.222	Catalogue of <i>epheboi</i> 223–192	5 names

The date when Aigosthena seceded from the Boiotian League and rejoined the Achaians is still disputed, yet Polybius claims that Philopoimen was *stratēgos* at the time. André Aymard thus dated the secession of Megara to 206/5 BCE.¹¹⁵ Alternatively, Beloch was the first who dated Philopoimen’s *stratēgeia* to 193/2 BCE, a date that is generally accepted today. In the following period we have a decree of *proxenia* for a Megarian (IG VII.15). He is honoured with *proedria* at the Melampodeion and with the right to pasture at Aigosthena. This was a forceful statement about the autonomy of Aigosthena from Megara. A distinct rivalry between Megara and Aigosthena is documented concerning the dispute over the ownership of the harbour of Panormos (IG VII.188, 189).

The Melampodeion in Aigosthena, where a cult with sacrifices and an annual festival for Melampous were celebrated, is also mentioned by Pausanias (1.44.5). A musical and an athletic program at the Melampodeia are referenced in IG VII.219. Official decrees of the city were erected in the Melampodeion, a tradition that began in the middle of the third century BCE; clearly this happened independently from Megara.¹¹⁶ The cult of Melampous seems to indicate connections between Boiotian and Eleusian cultic traditions.¹¹⁷ Perhaps Melampous was first honoured as a local hero in Aigosthena, and his divinity as a ‘full’ god was established later, with local conversations gravitating around the idea of genuinely local traditions. In addition to the Melampodeion, there was a Herakleion with its own *agones* and a cult for the Egyptian deities.¹¹⁸ The Egyptian presence may be due to Boiotian influence.

115 Aymard 1938: 14–16.

116 Liddel 2009: 427.

117 Smith 2008: 123.

118 SEG 23.368 and Smith 2008: 122.

A *temenos* in Megara (the so-called Poseidonion) is documented in an inscription from Hellenistic times, in which we also learn of the existence of a *koinon* of the Aigosthenitans.¹¹⁹ A woman named Arete, daughter of Aristandros, had bought a part of a *kepos* located near the sea from the *koinon* of the Aigosthenitans for 1,000 drachmas. She then consecrated it to Poseidon and ordered that the income should be paid to the foundation. We are informed about the existence of a group, or a cooperation of merchants or traders, who represented Aigosthenitan interests in Megara, and were engaged in commercial activities between the Gulf of Corinth and the Saronic Gulf.¹²⁰ It is interesting to note that there was also a Megarian community present in Aigosthena (IG VII.223).

Shifting Local Horizons: Some Concluding Remarks

As elsewhere in ancient Greece, the harbour sites of Megaris evidently served more than one function. As places of trade and exchange, they were important for economic and military purposes, and they were places of political and cultural significance.¹²¹ It is important to see the interaction between polis and harbour places as part of an intricate interplay between cooperation and confrontation. Harbours can also be interpreted as symbolic entities, as networking places with numerous nodes of contact and exchange. This might produce a form of creative antagonism: the people living in a harbour might simultaneously be interpreted as locals with their own history and following their own interests that were also embedded in the political and economic structure of the larger polis.

It is remarkable to note that all four harbours in Megaris had their own names. A quick glance at other cities makes it clear that most poleis rarely assigned a specific name to their harbour (with the obvious exception of Athens and Piraeus). The use of a different name for a harbour area thus betrays certain local structures. Maybe those designations spoke, literally so, to the relationship between port and polis. The name Nisaia was closely

119 IG VII.43 from the third century BCE.

120 Smith 2008: 121.

121 Bonnier 2008: 47-61; von Reden 1995: 24-37.

connected to Megara through stories of mythical descent. Pagai (“well, spring”) and Panormos (“natural outlook”) are known for settlements elsewhere but the perspective from Megara, looking outward to the fringes of the territory, might also have been part of a specific spatial semantics between center and periphery.

In the complex topography of the Megarid, the spatial dynamics between polis and harbours/peripheries played out in a distinctive manner. Nisaia was always closely connected to Megara; the distance to Megara was short, with the Long Walls practically and symbolically highlighting the ties between both. Pagai, further away, seems to have been largely oriented towards Megara. As we have seen, the town proudly recalled its close ties with Megara in their common history, the glorious fight for freedom against Persia in particular. The fact, however, that Pagai opted for political independence in 243 BCE shows that the Pagaians were ready, at that time, to take things into their own hands. They were willing to establish their own frontiers and a separate political organization. Aigosthena, finally, was rather disconnected from the city. The city's geographical isolation from the rest of Megaris prevented its inhabitants from an exclusive and privileged orientation toward Megara.

Economically, we detected a close entanglement between the harbours and the inland polis. Hans-J. Gehrke thus put Megara in the rubric of “medium-sized and small agricultural countries with a maritime component,”¹²² yet Gehrke himself was not entirely satisfied by this label because the stated “maritime component” might have been stronger than the formula suggest, especially in the period before the Peloponnesian War. When Pagai and Aigosthena seceded from Megara in the middle of the third century BCE, this did not exclude ongoing close ties, especially not through associations and other trading groups. Indeed, as we have seen, a *koinon* of the Aigosthenitans was active in Megara in the early Hellenistic period, mainly engaged in the pursuit of economic matters. In the first century BCE, residents from Aigosthena were also present in Pagai (*IG VII.190*). In Megara, in turn, we encounter a group of residents from Pagai who coordinated their

122 Gehrke 1986: 140.

trade with Italian and Roman partners at the time. Apparently, foreign traders such as these were present in all three Megarian cities.¹²³

Dynamic changes in the relations between polis and ports must have reverberated in politics. Our sources attest Megara's division into smaller units clustering around agricultural settlements, possibly referred to as *komai*. Five *merē* are attested, according to Aristoteles' *Constitution of the Megarians*: Heraïis, Peraiïis, Megareïis, Kynosoureïis, and Tripodiskoi.¹²⁴ According to Plutarch, the people in Megaris had lived *kata komas* since early times. In a complex process of political and territorial integration, sometimes described as *synoikismos*,¹²⁵ a new urban center emerged, which provided the new platform for a separation between the polis and its hinterland.¹²⁶ Since the Classical period, the three Doric *phylai* were in place,¹²⁷ which served as a backbone to the military order (also IG IV².71).

How did the harbours fit into the grid of civic subdivisions? We do not know. Nisaia appears in the list of Megarian places by Strabo. He reminds his reader that the contingent of Aias in the *Catalogue of Ships* included sites which apparently were situated in the territory of Megara (Polichna, Aigiroussa, Tripodes, and Nisaia: 9.1.10).¹²⁸ Due to its proximity and importance since the Archaic period, the harbour was probably seen as part of the city of Megara rather than counting among the *komai*. As noted above, IG VII.1 (c. 300 BCE) calls Aigosthena a Megarian *komē*, and the same might have applied to Pagai. It is unclear, however, how both related to earlier settlements in the Megarid, such as those accounted for by Strabo. Michael Sakellariou thinks that Pagai and Aigosthena were either of a "semi-autonomous" state in earlier times, and hence mostly disconnected from Megara, or that they were simply too small to be noticed.¹²⁹ Pausanias (1.44.4), on the other hand, had no doubts that the Megarians founded both coastal sites. During the

123 IG VII.190; Hatzfeld 1975: 73.

124 Cf. Chapter 1. Plut. *Mor.* 295b-c; Aristot. *Poet.* 1446a 30-33; cf. Liddel 2009: 425; Legon 2005: 463; Robu 2015: 361-365.

125 Moggi 1976: 29-34.

126 Legon 2005: 462.

127 Jones 1987: 94-97.

128 Rigsby 1987: 98-102.

129 Sakellariou and Pharaklas 1972: 23.

Classical period both port towns were heavily dependent on Megara, but here, too, we are uncertain as to how this dependency played out. Some scholars believe that the Megarian *komai* resembled the civic substructure of demes in neighbouring Attica,¹³⁰ but there is no evidence to suggest how, if at all, Aigosthena and Pagai functioned as political subdivisions within the political organization of the Megarian polis. What does seem clear, on the other hand, is that both settlements grew and developed further in the Classical period, especially in military and economic terms. With this came, as we have seen, the rise of local traditions differed, in part, from those in the city of Megara itself.

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