

Mitchell Carroll
The site of ancient Phalerum
Wash. 1904

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THE

SITE OF ANCIENT PHALERUM

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Reprint from the GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY BULLETIN
for October, 1904

WASHINGTON, D. C.
JUDD & DETWEILER, PRINTERS
1904

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THE SITE OF ANCIENT PHALERUM.

BY MITCHELL CARROLL, PH. D.,

Head Professor of Classical Philology.

Among the many disputed points in the topography of Athens, none involves problems of more serious moment than the site of ancient Phalerum ; and its determination would lead to the solution of other important questions which now engage the attention of topographers. Phalerum was the old seaport town of Athens before the ascendancy of Themistocles and the rise of the Athenian Empire. Its history prior to the building of the Piraeus, with its magnificent harbors, was interesting and important ; but, eclipsed by the glory of Greater Piraeus, it soon became of second-rate importance, famous only for the Long Wall reaching from Athens into its territory, for its ancient shrines, its pottery, and its anchovies. We wish to review its history, to determine its site, and to call attention to the features of Athenian topography which become in consequence satisfactorily settled.

A brief description of the coast line of Attica that borders the Athenian plain is essential for the comprehension of the problems involved. Southwest of Athens at a distance of from three to four miles the coast line is formed by the broad and regular Bay of Phalerum, an open roadstead with shelving, sandy beach. The Phaleric bay is bounded on the east by the rocky headland of Trispyrgi ; on the west by the promontory of the Piraeus. Between these two points extends a regular stretch of coast line about two and one-half miles in length. To the east of the bay the coast line extends southward in irregular fashion, affording no shelter for ships at anchor. The shelving shore of the bay itself was well adapted for the beaching of small ships, but not for the harboring of vessels. But just to the west of the bay, where the Piraeic promontory

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juts out into the sea, it encloses a small harbor, elliptical in shape, now called Fanari, large enough for the needs of a small navy.

Back of this harbor is the hill of Munychia, the highest point of the peninsula, to the southwest of which is an almost landlocked basin, oval in shape, now known as the harbor of Zea or Pashalimani. Beyond this the coast sweeps round in broken, irregular curves until it reaches the great harbor of the Piræus, a sheet of water about 800 by 1,400 yards in extent.

Somewhere along the Bay of Phalerum, not far distant from the shore, lay in ancient times the deme and town of Phalerum. Even in the Heroic Age it was already important as a seaport, for from here the hero Phalerus, who gave the town its name, sailed with Jason to Colchis in search of the Golden Fleece (Pausanias, I, 1-4). From here Menestheus went with his Athenian contingent to join the Greek fleet on its way to sacred Ilium (Paus., I, 1, 2). From here Theseus embarked with the fourteen Athenian youths and maidens, to be offered up to the savage Minotaur in satisfaction to King Minos of Crete for the death of his son Androgeus (Paus., I, 1, 2).

Herodotus is our chief authority for the importance of Phalerum in historical times. He tells how the sons of Pisistratus cut down the trees in the plain of Phalerum, making the district fit for horsemen to ride over, and then sent out their Thessalian cavalry to attack the camp of the Lacedæmonians, who had come at the bidding of the Delphic oracle to overthrow the tyrants; and how they slew many of the enemy, and shut up the rest in their ships (Her., v, 63). He tells how the Aeginetans once sailed to Athens with ships of war and devastated Phalerum and many other demes in the coast region (v, 81). In his account of the battle of Marathon he tells how the barbarians after the battle came and lay with their ships in the sea which is off Phalerum—for this was then the seaport of the Athenians—and then proceeded to sail back to Asia (vi, 116). He later describes how in the battle of Salamis the barbarians, whose ships had escaped destruction, fled and came to Phalerum to be under the protection of the land army (VIII, 65-67; 91, 92), whence under cover of night they with-

drew their ships to the Hellespont (VIII, 107, 108). Meanwhile, on Cape Colias, to the east of the Bay, the wrecks of the fleet of the Medes were washed up by the waves (Her., VIII, 96; Paus., I, 1, 5).

Pausanias's account of Phalerum in his *Description of Attica* (I, 1, 4-5) emphasizes its interest as a spot once of moment, but no longer so. He mentions a number of sacred precincts and monuments, showing that it was a place abounding in hoary traditions. Here were sanctuaries of Zeus, of Demeter, of Sciradian Athena erected by an early historical character (I, 36, 4). Here were altars of heroes, probably Nausithous, the steersman, and Phæax, the lookout man of Theseus' ship, on his voyage to Crete, of the children of Theseus and of Phalerus, the eponymous founder; and here were altars of gods called Unknown, probably seen by the Apostle Paul during his sojourn in Athens, and suggesting the theme of his Areopagus address (Acts XVII: 23).

We have many references to the fact that, prior to the building of Piræus, Phalerum was the seaport town of Athens, in addition to the passage of Herodotus (VI, 116), already cited. Pausanias (I, 1, 2), Diodorus (XI, 41), and Cornelius Nepos (Themist., 1) all mention the fact in commemorating the statesmanship of Themistocles in building the Piræus, and their statements have reference, not to the bay, but to the harbor, of Phalerum. They speak of this harbor as being small and poor, not adequate to the needs of the growing metropolis. Hence it is clear that we must locate precisely the harbor of Phalerum, and this will serve as a stepping-stone in determining the site of the deme of the same name.

Three views are held as to the site of ancient Phalerum: (1) Most recent authorities, notably Frazer (Pausanias, II, p. 12), agree with Ulrichs (*Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland*, II, p. 158 ff.) in placing it near the low rocky height, known as Trispyrgi, crowned by the chapel of St. George, at the southeast corner of the bay. So firmly settled is this view that the spot is now usually called Old Phalerum. (2) Milchoefer, on the contrary (*Karten von Attika, Text*, I, p. 24 ff.; II, p. 1 ff.), would place Phalerum near the chapel of the

Savior, which stands on a conspicuous rocky elevation about one and a quarter miles north of St. George and about fourteen hundred yards from the sea. (3) Leake (*Topography of Athens*, p. 308), one of the earliest topographers, located it to the west of the Bay of Phalerum, on the eastern slope of Munychia, and extending eastward along the bay, practically the site of New Phalerum, now a popular resort of Athenians. This view has been recently revived by Gardner (*Ancient Athens*, pp. 551-553), and we wish by a restatement of the evidence and a new interpretation of the facts to show that this is the correct location.

It will simplify the situation, first, to show that Milchhoefer's hypothesis is untenable: (1) Phalerum, as has been shown, was the old port of Athens, and was therefore on the seacoast, not 1,400 yards away; (2) the Long Wall between Athens and Phalerum, according to Thucydides (II, 13, 7) was thirty-five stadia in length, or nearly four miles; hence a site only one and one-half miles from Athens is altogether out of the question. The decision therefore lies between the usually accepted hypothesis of Ulrichs, locating Phalerum to the east of the Bay, and the recently revived hypothesis of Leake, locating it to the west of the Bay of Phalerum.

1. If we can fix the site of the old harbor of Phalerum it will help in determining the site of the town itself. The two chief authorities on the harbors of Athens are Thucydides and Pausanias. Thucydides' (I, 93, 3) statement is as follows:

Ἐπεισε δὲ καὶ τοῦ Πειραιῶς τὰ λοιπὰ ὁ θεμιστοκλῆς οἰκοδομεῖν (ὁπῆρξτο δ' αὐτοῦ πρότερον ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκείνου ἀρχῆς ἥς κατ' ἐνιαυτὸν Ἀθηναίοις ἤρξε), νομίζων τὸ τε χωρίον καλὸν εἶναι, λιμένας ἔχον τρεῖς αὐτοφυεῖς κ. τ. λ. Pausanias (I, 1, 2) probably had this Thucydides passage in mind in the following: θεμιστοκλῆς δὲ ὡς ἤρξε, τοῖς τε γὰρ πλέουσιν ἐπιτηδείοτερος ὁ Πειραιεὺς ἐφαίνετό οἱ προκεῖσθαι καὶ λιμένας τρεῖς ἀνθ' ἑνὸς ἔχειν τοῦ Φαληροῦ, τοῦτό σφισιν ἐπίνειον εἶναι κατεσκευάσατο.

The Pausanias passage is misinterpreted by both Leake and Gardner, who would confine it to three sections of the great harbor of Piræus, and the Thucydides passage by Leake by a similar construction. There is, however, no inconsistency of statement

between Thucydides and Pausanias. Both apply the word Piraeus to the entire peninsula; both refer to three distinct bodies of water, the three harbors earlier described; and the further statements of Pausanias show that there is no authority whatever for considering three divisions of the great harbor meant, when there is reference to three harbors. Thus in the next sentence Pausanias adds: *καὶ νεῶς καὶ ἐς ἑμὲ ἦσαν οἴκοι καὶ πρὸς τῷ μεγίστῳ λιμένι τάφος Θεμιστοκλέους*, manifestly a reference to the great harbor of Piraeus as a whole. And after some account of the Piraeus, he continues in I, 1, 4: *ἔστι δὲ καὶ ἄλλος Ἀθηναίους ὁ μὲν ἐπὶ Μουνυχία λιμῆν * * ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ Φαλήρω*, that is, the second of the three is the harbor usually called Zea or Pashalimani south of the hill of Munychia, and the third what is commonly known as Munychia or Fanari, southeast of the hill, the original Pre-Persian harbor referred to above (*ἀνθ' ἐνὸς ἔχειν τοῦ Φαληροῦ*). A study of the other passages cited by Milchhoefer (*Schrift-Quellen zur Topographie von Athen*, p. cv) confirms this interpretation;¹ and the ruins of ship-sheds is a further evidence that these were the three fortified harbors of the Piraeus. (See Gardner, "*Ancient Athens*," pp. 562-563.)

If we accept the third and smallest of the three harbors of the Pirais peninsula as the old harbor of Phalerum, we have the first link in the chain of evidence for the determination of the site of ancient Phalerum itself. Pausanias expressly speaks of this harbor as being in the neighborhood of Phalerum (*λιμῆν * * ὁ δὲ ἐπὶ Φαλήρω*). Hence the deme and town would hardly be two-and-one-half miles away from the harbor at the eastern end of the Bay.

Other evidence adds to the strength of this position.

2. Thus Strabo (ix. p. 398) in naming the seacoast demes from Piraeus to Sunium, says: *μετὰ δὲ τὸν Πειραιᾶ Φαληρεῖς δῆμος ἐν τῇ ἐφεξῆς παραλίᾳ · εἰθ' Ἀλιμοῦσιοι Αἰξωνεῖς Ἀλαιεῖς κ. τ. λ.*, stating that the deme Phalerum immediately succeeded along the coast eastward the deme Piraeus and was in turn succeeded by the deme Halimus.

3. Next consider the evidence for the site of Halimus, the succeeding deme to Phalerum. Milchhoefer (*Karten von Attika*, Text, II. 2) argues with force that Halimus occupied the territory between St. George to the east of the Bay, and St. Cosmas, about three miles

¹ Schol. ar. Pax 145; Strabo ix, p. 395; Com. Nep. Themist. 6; Hesychius s. v. Zea; Timaeus Lex. Plat. p. 260.

further south. This stretch of land is now called Kalamaki, a name readily derived from Halimus. Demosthenes (c. Euboul., p. 1302, 10) states that Halimus was thirty-five furlongs from Athens, a distance that would throw it into this territory. Furthermore, Cape Colias was of this deme, for the Demeter-shrine mentioned as being in its neighborhood (Hesych. s. v. *Κωλιάς* . ἔστι δὲ καὶ Δημητρος ἱερόν αὐτόθι πολύστολον) is, according to Plutarch (Solon 8), none other than the Thesmophoria sanctuary of Halimus (Paus. I, 31, 1.)

4. As to Cape Colias, there are two disputed sites assigned to it—the promontory of St. George, so often referred to in this paper, and the tongue of land further south known as Cape Cosmas. Ulrichs, Bursian, and Frazer adopt the latter site; Leake, Milchhoefer, and Gardner, the former. Pausanias (I, 1, 4) states that Cape Colias is twenty furlongs distant from the objects mentioned in Phalerum, and refers to its Aphrodite shrine. Those who locate Phalerum at St. George naturally locate Cape Colias at St. Cosmas in order to have the right distance between those points, but in so doing they overstep the mark by over five furlongs. Hence evidence for the St. George site as Cape Colias is evidence for the location of Phalerum to the west of the Bay, twenty furlongs away. Now St. George can with propriety be called a promontory (*ἄκρα*), while St. Cosmas is merely an offshoot of land hardly geographically deserving the name of cape. Then Pausanias mentions Cape Colias and the Aphrodite shrine along with Phalerum, while he reserves mention of the Thesmophoria shrine of Halimus for the special section on demes (I, 31, 1); this he would hardly have done had the Aphrodite shrine been as far south as St. Cosmas. Finally, Milchhoefer states that the current which sweeps round the Piraeus peninsula could well carry the wrecks of the Persian ships, referred to above, to St. George, but not to St. Cosmas. The weight of evidence therefore favors St. George as the site of Colias.

The evidence generally cited for the location of Phalerum at St. George is as follows: Paus. I, 1, 2, *Φάληρον δέ, ταῦτη γὰρ ἐλάχιστον ἀπέχει τῆς πόλεως ἢ θάλασσα*. Paus. VIII, 10, 4: *Ἀθηναίοις μὲν δὴ σταδίους εἴκοσιν ἀφέστηκε τῆς πόλεως ἢ πρὸς Φαλήρω θάλασσα*. Schol. Ar. Birds, 1694, *φιάλην πεσοῦσαν ὀφθῆναι ἐν τῷ Φαληρικῷ ἀπέγοντι σταδίους εἴκοσι*. As the eastern end of the Bay near St. George is the nearest point of the coast to the city and answers fairly well in distance to the twenty furlongs mentioned, these statements are

taken as conclusive proof for the site of the town of Phalerum. But the last two passages quoted refer rather to the Bay than to the deme of Phalerum, and the first refers merely to the harbor nearest the city. The statement of distance is not exact enough to be convincing.

Then, furthermore, actual traces of the Long Wall to Phalerum, mentioned by Thucydides, found in the neighborhood of St. George, are cited as evidence by the advocates of this site (See Ulrichs, *Reisen* II. p. 162 : Curtius, *Att. Stud.* I, p. 73 ; Kaupert, *Monatsber. d. k. Akad. d. Wiss. zu Berlin* p. 632 ff.). Milchoefer (*Karten v. Att.* II. 2 ff.) later endeavored to trace the remains of the Wall detailed by Kaupert, but in vain. In fact throughout this investigation we have found all evidence drawn from remains of walls or houses too indefinite to possess any scientific value.

5. This brings us, however, to our final argument and to a consideration of the most important corollary to the determination of the site of ancient Phalerum—namely, the discussion of the so-called Third Long Wall of Athens.

Most topographers, with the notable exceptions of Leake and Gardner, have advocated the existence of a Third Long Wall, called the Phaleric, in addition to the two Long Walls to the Piraeus. As the remains of this third Long Wall have never been satisfactorily traced, nor its utility satisfactorily explained, the reasons for belief in its existence have rested mainly on the literary evidence.

This is as follows :

a. Plato's expression τὸ διὰ μέσου τείχος (Gorgias, 455 E) has been taken as evidence of the existence of three Long Walls, one on either side of a middle wall in the system of fortifications. Leake, however, renders this "the wall between city and port," in which sense the term διαμέσου is used by Dio Chrysostom VI, 87, καίτοι διακοσίων σταδίων εἶναι τὴν περίμετρον τῶν Ἀθηνῶν, τοῦ Πειραιέως συντεθειμένου καὶ τῶν διαμέσου τειχῶν.

b. Harpocration s. v. διαμέσου τείχους : τριῶν ὄντων τειχῶν ἐν τῇ Ἀττικῇ ὡς καὶ Ἀριστοφάνης φησὶν ἐν Τριφάλῃτι, τοῦ τε Βορείου καὶ τοῦ Νοτίου καὶ τοῦ Φαληρικοῦ κ. τ. λ. This passage of a late lexicographer is discounted by Leake, as the Aristophanes passage is not extant, and there is nothing to show that the comic poet had reference to the Long Walls.

c. This leaves as the only strong evidence for the existence of the Third Long Wall, Thucydides, II, 13, 7: τοῦ τε γὰρ Φαληρικοῦ

τειχους σταδιοι ἦσαν πέντε καὶ τριάκοντα πρὸς τὸν κύκλον τοῦ ἄστεως καὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ κύκλου τὸ φυλασσόμενον τρεῖς καὶ τεσσαράκοντα. ἔστι δὲ αὐτοῦ ὃ καὶ ἀφύλακτον ἦν, τὸ μεταξὺ τοῦ τε μακροῦ καὶ τοῦ Φαληρικοῦ. τὰ δὲ μακρὰ τείχη πρὸς τὸν Πειραιᾶ τεσσαράκοντα σταδίων, ὧν τὸ ἕξωθεν ἐτηρεῖτο.

This passage at first reading clearly implies the existence of the Phaleric Wall in addition to the Long Walls to Piraeus, but before discussing it let us cite the rest of the evidence.

d. Thucydides himself elsewhere appears to have known only two Long Walls, namely, the Phaleric and the Piraeic. See I, 107, 1. Ἦρξαντο δὲ κατὰ τοὺς χρόνους τούτους καὶ τὰ μακρὰ τείχη ἐς θάλασσαν Ἀθηναῖοι οἰκοδομεῖν, τό τε Φαληρόνδε καὶ τὸ ἐς Πειραιᾶ.

e. Aeschines (II. 173, 174), Pseudo-Andocides (III. 4-7), and Livy (xxi. 26, 8), speak only of two Long Walls, the northern and the southern, and were apparently in ignorance of the existence of a third.

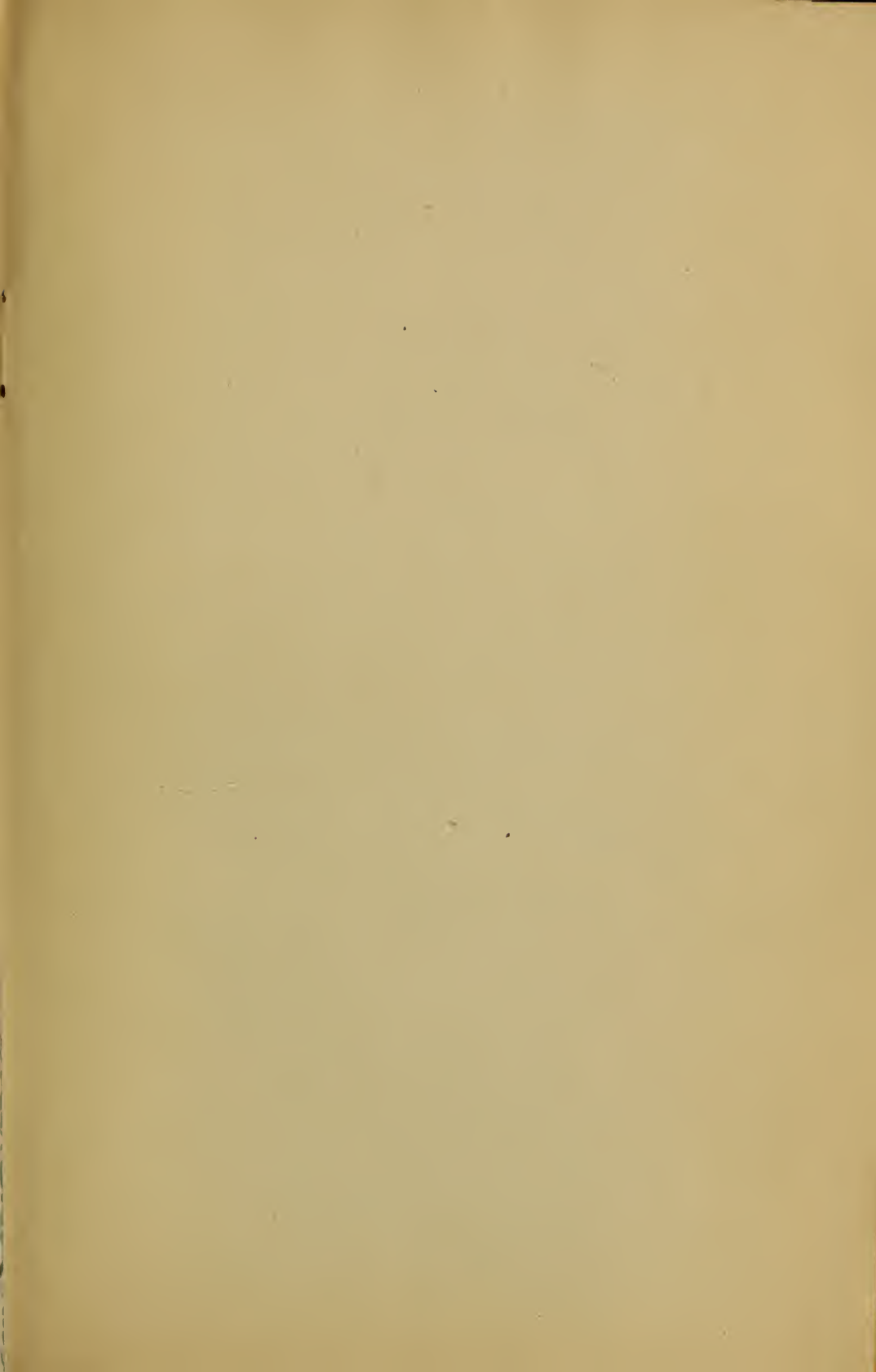
f. Xenophon (Hellenika II. 2, 15) thus states the demand of the Lacedaemonians, after the fall of Athens, for the destruction of the Long Walls : προυκαλοῦντο δὲ τῶν μακρῶν τειχῶν ἐπὶ δέκα σταδίου καθελεῖν ἐκατέρου.

This passage of Xenophon shows there was certainly no Third Long Wall at the close of the Peloponnesian War. Pausanias (1, 2, 2) in referring to the ruins of the Walls in his day is silent as to the Third Wall, and he was doubtless familiar with the passages quoted from Thucydides. Those who locate ancient Phalerum at St. George necessarily hold to the existence of this Third Wall. They assert that the Athenians first built two Long Walls from Athens, one to Piraeus and one to Phalerum, which diverged until they were two-and-a-half miles apart, leaving the whole space of the coast of the Phaleric Bay unprotected and offering perfect freedom to an enemy's navy to attack the city; that, some years after, the Athenians, realizing their mistake, built a second wall to Piraeus parallel to the northern Long Wall, and permitted the Phaleric Wall to go to ruin.

One argument used for locating Phalerum at St. George was that it was only about twenty furlongs from the city. But Thucydides states that the Phaleric Wall was thirty-five furlongs in length. Kaupert would remove this discrepancy by carrying the Phaleric Wall 1140 yards southwest of St. George, thus making the wall thirty-six furlongs in length. But this is hardly plausible.

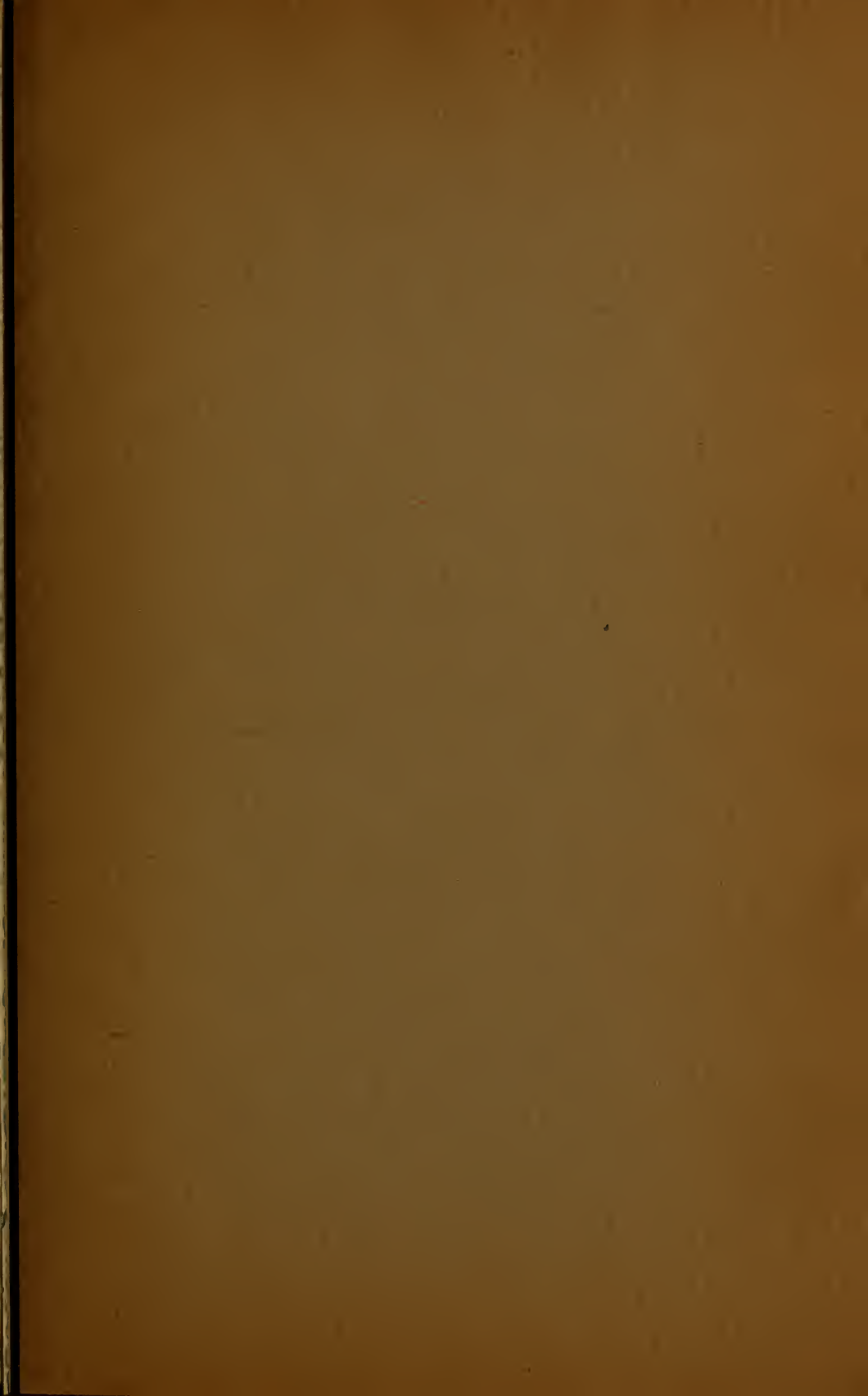
Now if, in the light of the evidence presented, we locate ancient Phalerum to the west of the bay, the southern and the Phaleric Wall become identical, the wisdom of the Athenians in the structure of their fortifications is justified, the statements of Thucydides as to the length of the walls become clear, and the utter lack of mention of a so-called Third Wall from the close of the Peloponnesian War is explained. This leaves only the implied statement of Thucydides that there were Long Walls to Piræus in addition to the Phaleric Wall to be accounted for. Leake thinks it was merely "a negligence of expression"; Gardner, that "the Piræic Wall which was the more important and the more liable to attack, was a double wall, with a face on either side" (Ancient Athens, p. 70). But however this passage may be interpreted it seems clear that the so-called Phaleric Wall from Athens to the east of the bay has existed only in the minds of modern topographers, notably Wachsmuth, Kaupert, Curtius and Frazer.

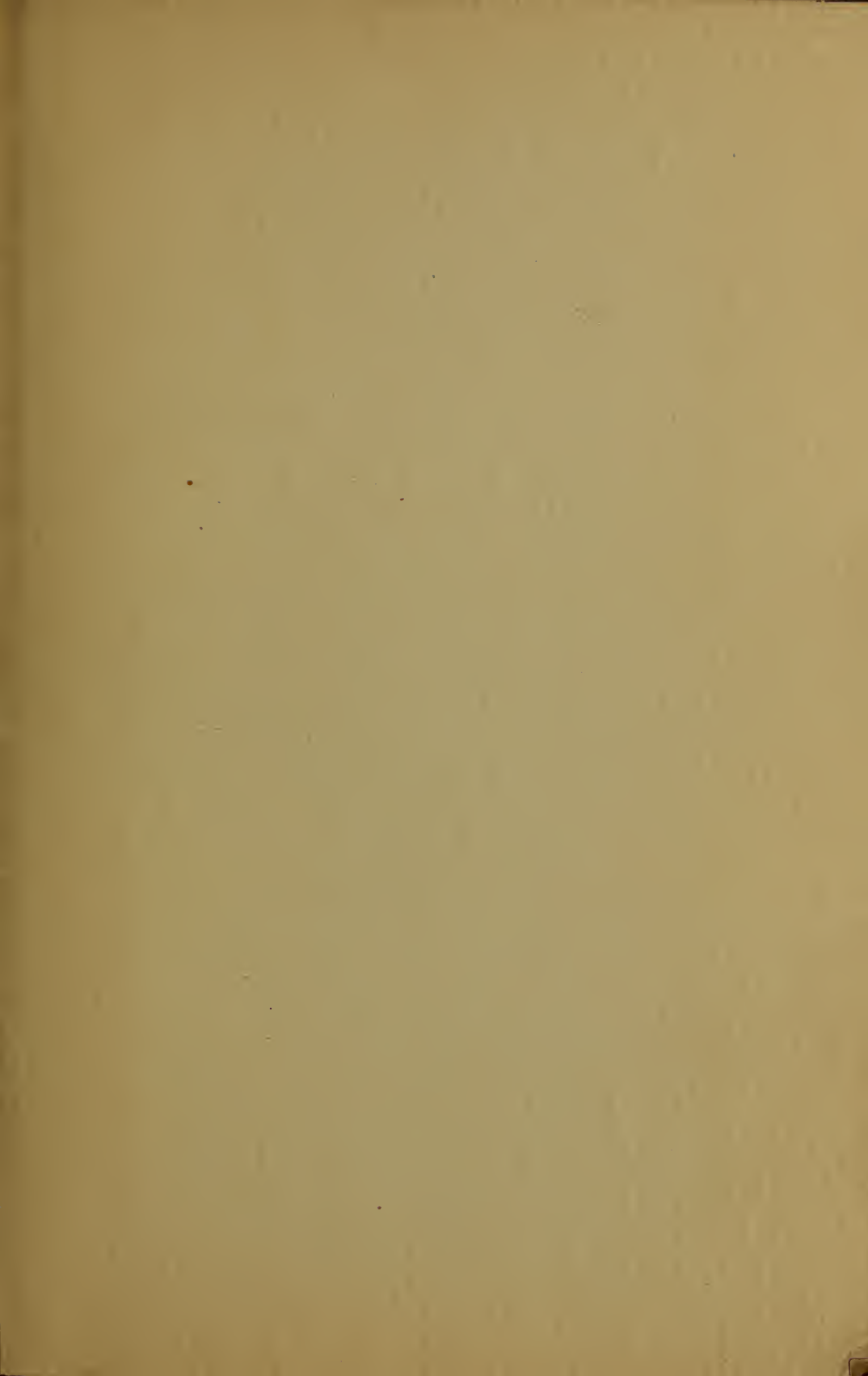
In conclusion, if the site of ancient Phalerum be accepted as being to the west of the bay at the eastern foot of the hill of Munychia, and extending thence along the coast, we have naturally as its corollaries the settlement of the disputed problems in regard to the harbors of Athens, the site of Cape Colias, the site of the deme Halimus, and the so-called Third Long Wall. Surely an hypothesis that brings so many data into harmonious relation is logically correct.



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