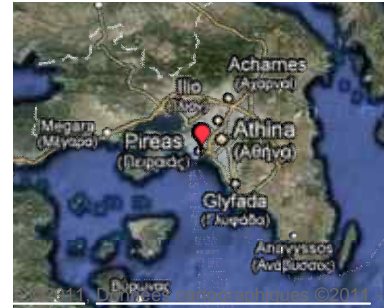


Piraeus - Zea

The port of Zea in the eastern coast of the Piraeus peninsula was the main naval base of Athens fleet. Remains of the ship sheds, the walls that protected the basin, the quays and the auxiliary buildings have been located in the area, however most of them are not visible anymore, being covered by buildings or modern port installations.

Most probably, it was the first out of the three gulfs of Piraeus (Mounichia, Zea, Kantharos) that was formed appropriately for mooring the Athenian fleet after the Themistocles (493-492 B.C.) vision, who conceived a plan for developing the nautical ability of Athens and therefore the Piraeus ports.



Figures 

Main features

Region	Saronic Gulf
Use	Military
Prosperity period (centuries)	5th B.C. - 4th B.C.
Existence of contemporary port	Yes
Findings on site	Yes, remnants of the ship sheds, the moles, the related city walls and the Arsenal of Philon

General description

The entrance to the basin of Zea was to the south, protected with two walled piers. In the eastern side ship sheds have been detected, some of which have been uncovered. It is possible that such buildings extended to the whole perimeter of the harbour, with the exception of area of the gulfs cove. In a small distance to the northwest remains of the famous Philon's Arsenal ("Σκευοθήκη του Φίλωνος") have been found, where the spare and removable parts of the triremes were guarded.

Researches have been conducted to the area by:

1. Gracer 1872, was the first to dwell on the area, found 41 ship sheds in Zea and Mounichia.
2. Milchofer 1881, removed some remains of the ship sheds in the eastern side of Zea (columns not grooved) and marble ophthalmoi (=eyes).
3. Dragatsis and Dorpfeld 1885, excavated 10 ship sheds in the eastern side of Zea basin.
4. Blackman 1968, noticed the existence of sloped surfaces (ramps) in submerged remains of ship sheds found in Zea harbour.
5. Danish Institute 2000-today, under the supervision of archaeologist P. Loven applies a program for recording ancient remains in the port of Zea. An important element of the research is the proof for the theory that two ships were placed longwise in the ship shed (Loven 2005)

Technical features

Construction period (centuries)	5th B.C. - 4th B.C.
Port configuration	Natural Harbour, Inner Harbour
Port basin size	m ²
Main wind direction	S
Port land area	km ²

Port entrance	At the south in between the two walled moles.
Change of sea surface elevation	1.5 m
Sedimentation	No
Outer port structures	Moles
Inner port structures	
Land facilities	Shiphsheds, Defence Structures, Store Buildings
Construction method	Ashlar blocks
Neotectonic history	
Shore line displacement	

Function and operations

The port of Zea was the main navy yard of Athens. Walls were built and transformed it to a protected naval base at the beginning of 5th century B.C. Most probably another wall in the perimeter isolated the port from the main city. Inside the port area, the remains of the ship sheds have been located and the existence of other facilities can be assumed. Researchers (Danish Institute) discovered separate constructing phases at the ship sheds. In the middle of the 3rd century B.C. the Philon's Arsenal was built, most probably belonging to an extensive building program in the decade after 355 B.C. (Papaxantzis 1974, p.107).

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Related researches	Archeological
Findings in museums	<p>Yes, columns of the ship sheds, pyramidal anchors possibly from triremes or for mooring purposes and marble ophalmoi, now at the Piraeus Archaeological Museum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blackman D., 1968, "The Shiphsheds" in J.S. Morrison and R.T. Williams, <i>Greek Oared Ships 900-322 B.C.</i>, Cambridge, pp. 181-192, pl. 29-30 • Dorpfeld W., 1883, "Die Skeuothek des Philon", <i>Ath. Mitt.</i> 8, pp. 147-164.

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