Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

AIDAN KIRKPATRICK

BA (Mercer University, 2013)


Department of Greek and Roman Studies

Monday, May 4, 2015
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B415

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Brendan Burke, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. John Oleson, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Marcus Milwright, Department of Art History and Visual Studies, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Elisabeth Gugl, Department of Economics, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

The orthogonal, or rectangular, grid plan arose out of a need to organize the sprawling cities of Ancient Greece. To one particularly enigmatic figure in history, this problem was met with a blueprint and a philosophy. The ancient city-planner known as Hippodamus of Miletus (c. 480-408 BCE) was more of a philosopher than an architect, but his erudite connections and his idealistic theories provided him with numerous opportunities to experiment with the design that has come to bear his name. According to Aristotle, he was commissioned by the city of Athens to redesign its port-city, the Piraeus, and it is likely that he later followed a Pan-Hellenic expedition to an Italic colony known as Thurii (Thourioi). Strabo argues that the architect was also present at the restructuring of the city of Rhodes; however there is some debate on this issue. Hippodamus’ blueprint for a planned, districted city soon came to define the Greek polis in the Classical period, culminating with Olynthus in the Chalcidice, but his ideas were by no means unique to his own mind. There are precedents for the grid plan not only within the large, administrative empires of the Near East, but also within the Greek colonies of the Mediterranean, whose own histories span at least two centuries before Hippodamus’ lifetime. Since the 19th century, when Hippodamus received his title as the ‘Father of Urban Planning’, confusion and mistranslations have plagued the discipline, casting doubt on nearly every facet of Greek urbanism. Although he could not have invented the orthogonal grid plan, as Aristotle claims, it may prove far more effective to focus instead on Hippodamus’ philosophy and to give voice to where he himself excelled: the theoretical side to city planning.