

**The Little Panathenaia and the Creation of Identities in Ancient Athens**  
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Annually on 28 Hekatombaion, Athenians gathered together to honour the goddess Athena with sacrifices at her most important festival. Every fourth year, the celebration was held in a grander form, the Great Panathenaia, well known to scholars who regularly note the meaning of its name, ‘all Athenian’, and its role in displaying the city to herself (e.g. Parker 2011: 201; Anderson 2003: 159-160; Kavoulaki 1999: 299, 301-302; Maurizio 1998: 297, 316; Wohl 1996: 25-27; Neils 1992: 27). In contrast, the Little Panathenaia has excited little attention: at best, consideration of it is appended to discussions of the pentaeteric festival (Ziehen 1949: 486-488; Parker 2005: 268-269); otherwise, it is simply ignored. Scholars, consequently have not considered the implications of the name ‘all Athenian’ nor how it created identities for participants. Applying approaches to identity creation which were developed in the social sciences, I argue that the Little Panathenaia focused on creating and displaying identities at the level of the individual and the sub-group, rather than at the level of the overall group. These processes relied on differential participation and marked out exemplary individuals who served as models for other Athenians. These identities, however, were not stable over the course of the festival so that the proceedings were more inclusive at some moments than at others.

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