

## ON THE CLASSICAL SANCTUARY SPACE AND ITS NATURAL CONTEXT: NATURE AS EXTENSION OR CONTAINER?

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**Keywords:** *Ancient Greek and Roman Painting • Classical Sanctuary Space • Landscape-Architecture Relationship • Phenomenology • Perspective.*

**Abstract:** Even though nature is accepted to be an integral part of classical architecture, there is limited academic literature on this aspect. This paper aims to contribute to this literature with a focus on the transformation of attitudes towards nature in classical culture and the influence of this transformation on sanctuary planning. The first part, titled “Nature as Extension,” examines the integration of nature with the human-made in the seemingly haphazard planning of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. In this sanctuary, myth, nature, and the human-made merge through a phenomenological logic that employs movement and gaze as its major constituents. The second part, titled “Nature as Container,” compares Delphi to the sanctuaries of Athena at Lindos and Fortuna at Praeneste. Perspectival concepts developed in the Hellenistic period could be thought of as instrumental in these sanctuaries, in the creation of an axial and symmetrical space focused on the ascend to the temple. Ultimately, this paper argues that the rupture from nature in the Hellenistic and Roman sanctuaries was a result of the demise of the Archaic mythological tradition and the institution of the philosophical tradition in the democratic polis, humans questioned the dependence of their fate on the almighty gods and defined themselves as the constructor of their own order. Uncontrolled nature became the container of the chaos of the mythical, separate from the controlled human-made realm. The use of perspectival concepts to create introverted spaces preoccupied with their own grandeur rather than the natural context around them could have occurred only in such a cultural context.

### KLASİK TAPINAK ALANLARINDA DOĞAL PEYZAJIN YAPILI ÇEVREYLE İLİŞKİSİ: BİR UZANTI VEYA BAĞLAM OLARAK DOĞA

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Eski Yunan ve Roma resim sanatı • Klasik tapınak alanları • Peyzaj- Mimari İlişkisi • Fenomenoloji • Perspektif*

**Özet:** Doğal peyzajın klasik mimarlıkla yakın ilişkisi yaygın kabul gören bir anlayış olmasına rağmen, bu konu üzerine yazılmış kaynaklar kısıtlıdır. Bu makale, argümanının odağına antik dünyada insan-doğa ilişkisinin dönüşümünü ve bu dönüşümün kutsal alan planlamasına yansımalarını alarak, geçmiş tartışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlar. “Bir Uzanti Olarak Doğa” başlıklı ilk bölümde, Delfi’deki Apollon kutsal alanında, insan yapımı ve doğal olan arasındaki girift ilişki incelenir. Bu kutsal alanda, tanrılar ve insanoğlu, insan yapımı ve peyzaj, deneyime dayalı bir mekansal organizasyon mantığı çerçevesinde entegre edilir. “Bir Bağlam Olarak Doğa” başlıklı ikinci bölümde ise, Delfi, Lindos’taki Athena kutsal alanı ve Praeneste’deki Fortuna kutsal

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Geliş Tarihi: 19.02.2022; Kabul Tarihi: 15.08.2022; DOI: 10.36891/anatolia.1076080

alanı ile karşılaştırılır. Bu kutsal alanlarda, Helenistik dönemde perspektif konusundaki ilerlemeler sonucu gündeme gelmiş olabilecek bazı kavramlar, doğal peyzajdan kopuk, kontrollü bir iç mekân yaratılmasında etkili olurlar. Bu makale, Helenistik ve Roma dönemi kutsal alanlarındaki doğadan kopuşun, antik Yunan kentlerinin demokratikleşme sürecinde, Arkaik mitolojik geleneğin kırılıp felsefi geleneğin yerleşmesi ile ilişkilendirilebileceğini öne sürer. Bu kırılma sonucu insan, kendi kaderinin belirleyicisi olarak düzen kurmaya kendini muktedir saymaya başlar. Doğa tanrıların mekân tuttuğu kaotik bir yer olarak kentten soyutlanır. İnsan, ancak böyle bir kültürel çerçevede, kendini doğal bağlamdan kopuk kendi anıtsallığına odaklanan mekanlar yapmaya cüret eder.

## **Nature and The Ancient Greeks**

For the early ancient Greeks, the boundary between the gods and nature was blurred. In his *Theogony*, Hesiod tells us that the first-generation Greek gods and goddesses represented the nature itself. Ge was the deep-breasted earth, Uranus was the starlit sky, and their children, Titans and Cyclopes, were the raw forces of nature. These were followed by a second generation of Greek gods and goddesses, who had control over nature. Zeus controlled skies, Poseidon seas, Hades underground, and Artemis animals. This second generation of gods and goddesses resided in altars and temples in nature at locations fitting to their identities defined by the myths. Olympus, the highest mountain in Greece, was home to the gods; Poseidon controlled seas from Cape Sounion and Apollo claimed Mount Parnassus as his<sup>1</sup>. Because of this blurred relationship between the divine and the natural, any interference with nature by humans demanded reconciliation with the deities. Building, as a massive intervention, therefore, was a field of

reconciliation that integrated human-made with natural.<sup>2</sup>

Starting with the sixth century, a quest to understand the truth behind life through philosophical reasoning, and not to accept it only as a result of the whims of gods, became the pursuit of philosophers. The inquiry of *arche* by the Pre-Socratic philosophers can be thought of as the first scientific question, which was later related to the question of ethics by Plato and Aristotle.<sup>3</sup> Through the institution of democracy, humans felt the power and necessity to demand control of their own lives and fates. Vernant<sup>4</sup> identifies the fifth century in Athens as the tragic moment, in which, through tragedies, humans questioned god's power over their destinies. Within the context of the democratic polis, philosophers rejected the traditional mythological explanations of the world and professed that the truth about nature could be discovered by the human mind through abstract reasoning or observation. This attitude resulted in a rupture of humans from the divine nature, separating the human-made from the natural.

<sup>1</sup> Hughes 2014, 44-46; Norberg-Schulz 1984, 28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Waterhouse 1993, 100.

<sup>3</sup> Discussion on the mythological versus philosophical worldview of ancient Greeks is inspired by Kaan Atalay, Doctor of Philosophy at Istanbul Bilgi University. See Kirk et.al. 1957.

<sup>4</sup> Vernant-Vidal-Naquet 1990, 23-28.

There is a common preconception that depictions of nature or landscapes are mostly missing from early Greek art and literature. This preconception was created mainly by the nineteenth century Romantics, who, in their newly found obsession with nature, discussed the lack of response to and representation of nature in Greek art and literature<sup>5</sup>. Among them, Friedrich von Schiller<sup>6</sup> argued that Greeks were too close to nature and in accord with it to see it as something outside themselves and represent. Alexander von Humboldt<sup>7</sup> tied the lack of depiction of nature as a distinct branch of poetic literature to the anthropocentrism of Greek art. John Ruskin<sup>8</sup> suggested four reasons for the failure of the Greeks to respond to nature. First, he argued that Greeks could not distinguish the landscape from all the divinities that occupied it. Second, he claimed that Greeks were indifferent to the beauties of nature as they lived in the beautiful Greek landscape. Third, he suggested that Greeks did not feel melancholy towards nature since they did not experience the urban life of modern man. Fourth, he believed that since Greeks were obsessed with symmetry, they feared the disorderly, unbalanced, and rugged nature.

Later scholars persuasively argue against these nineteenth century preconceptions by showing that in Archaic and Classical literature and art, references to nature were rich and varied. Yet, recent

comprehensive studies on this topic are still meagre. One of the few detailed studies is by Eleanor Winsor Leach, who, in *The Rhetoric of Space*,<sup>9</sup> examines the Roman depictions of nature in literature and art and compares it to Greek depictions through references to Homer. Jeffrey Hurwit,<sup>10</sup> in his article “The Representations of Nature in the Early Greek Art,” deals with the depiction of nature in Greek art with references to literary sources. His article provides a secure ground for anyone researching Greek attitudes to nature and its conception in later scholarship.<sup>11</sup> Most recently, Donald Hughes<sup>12</sup> explores Greek and Roman attitudes to nature within the framework of environmental philosophy and ecology.

Even though nature is accepted to be an integral part of Greek architecture, there is also limited scholarship on this aspect, perhaps due to the speculative character of this issue. Important exceptions are Vincent Scully’s, Christian Norberg-Schulz’s, and Alan Waterhouse’s studies. Scully’s *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods*<sup>13</sup> is one of the rare books devoted to the relationship of Greek sanctuaries to their surrounding landscape. Norberg-Schulz,<sup>14</sup> in his books on the phenomenology of architecture, attracts attention to the topological character of Greek architecture and its assimilation to *genius loci*. Alan

<sup>5</sup> Hurwit 1991, 34-35.

<sup>6</sup> Schiller 1981, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Humboldt 1844, 22.

<sup>8</sup> Ruskin 1904, 187-190.

<sup>9</sup> Leach 1988.

<sup>10</sup> Hurwit 1991.

<sup>11</sup> Hurwit 1991, 56-57, refers to Murray 1912; Fairclough 1930; Segal 1963; Nicolson 1959, 38-39; Elliger 1975; Redfield 1975, 188-192 Bonnafé 1984 and Anderson 1976, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Hughes 1994; 2014.

<sup>13</sup> Scully 1962.

<sup>14</sup> Norberg-Schulz 1975; 1984.

Waterhouse<sup>15</sup>, in his *Boundaries of the City*, devotes the chapter titled “Cities in a God-Filled Landscape” to Greek and Roman architecture and planning, and argues that the primary purpose of classical architecture and planning was “reconciliation by articulating and dissolving the boundaries of the landscape.”

This paper aims to contribute to this literature by discussing the definition of nature in classical culture, and the transformation of this definition through the study of literature, art, and architecture. Within this general framework, it focuses on the influence of this transformation on sanctuary planning and organizes the discussion mainly in two parts. In the first part, titled “Nature as Extension,” it examines the integration of nature with the human-made in the seemingly haphazard planning of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. In the second part, titled “Nature as Container,” it compares Delphi to the sanctuaries of Athena at Lindos and Fortuna at Praeneste. In these sanctuaries, nature can be defined as the container of the introverted and axial sanctuary space detached from its surrounding landscape. Ultimately, this paper argues that the rupture from nature in the Hellenistic sanctuaries was a result of the demise of the mythological tradition and the institution of the philosophical tradition. This was brought forth by the democratization of the Greek polis and the development of abstract reasoning by the philosopher-scientists that positioned nature not as their extension but as the other to be observed.

## Nature As Extension

In Archaic and Classical Greek literature, nature was described as the beautiful or the sublime, and often used as a simile or metaphor for the characteristics of a human being or the mood of an event. One of the most prominent examples of literature here is, of course, Homer and his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Eleanor Winsor Leach,<sup>16</sup> attracts attention to the description of a harbour in Ithaca by Homer in *Odyssey*:

“There is, in the demos of Ithaca, a harbour belonging to Phorcys, the old man of the sea. Two projecting headlands steep and sharp, embrace the harbour. They keep off the great waves from the tempestuous winds outside. Within, well-oared ships can ride at anchor without mooring when they have come within the boundary of the cove. At the head of the harbour is a slender-leaved olive. Nearby is a cave, lovely in darkness, sacred to the nymphs they call Naiads.” (*Odysseus*, XIII. 96-106)<sup>17</sup>

In this quote, the harbour is described as a site of temporary rest and self-renewal after the long journey of Odysseus. However, more importantly, in addition to its description as a peaceful place, certain natural elements of the harbour are mentioned since they are connected to the protagonist through their symbolic significance. The headlands embrace Odysseus’ ship in his homecoming to his motherland. The olive tree points to Athena’s protection of the hero, and the cave belonging to the weaving nymphs refers to Odysseus’ cleverness

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<sup>15</sup> Waterhouse 1993, 100.

<sup>16</sup> Translation by Leach 1988, 30.

<sup>17</sup> Translation by Leach 1988, 30.



and his wife Penelope's fidelity.

As an example of the sublime depictions of nature in Homer, Jeffrey Hurwit<sup>18</sup> refers to the below quote from the *Iliad*. Here, nature becomes a metaphor for a breakthrough within the violence of the Trojan War:

“... an Argive breakthrough - bright as the moment Zeus the lord of lightning moves from a craggy mountain ridge a storm cloud massing dense and all the lookout peaks stand out and the jutting cliffs and the steep ravines and down from the high heavens bursts the boundless bright air ...” (*Iliad*, XVI. 347-53).

Again, in *Iliad*, Homer portrays Patroclus as a character, who, in his frustration with Achilles, describes him through metaphors taken from nature and through references to its sublime characteristics:

“You heart of iron! He was not your father, the horseman Peleus – Thetis was not your mother. Never. The salt grey sunless ocean gave you birth and the towering blank rocks – your temper is so relentless.” (*Iliad*, XVI. 37-40)

As another example, Sappho forcefully contrasts the serenity of the beautifully imagined landscape with the restless mood of a lover:

“...  
the rosy-fingered moon after sunset,  
Surpassing all the stars, its light  
Spreads over the salt sea  
Alike and the field of flowers,  
And the lovely dew is shed, and roses  
bloom and tender  
Chervil and blossoming melilot.  
To and fro wandering,

She remembers gentle Atthis with yearning,  
Surely her tender heart is heavy ...” (*Poetarum Lesbiorum Fragmenta*, 96)

Plato presents a scene in *Phaedrus*, where Socrates and Phaedrus converse in a setting in the country, fitting the mood of the dialogue about erotic love. Socrates describes this setting by the foot of Ardettos Hill in relation to his senses and his body:

“By Hera, it really is a beautiful resting place. The plane tree is tall and very broad; the chaste-tree, high as it is, is wonderfully shady, and since it is in full bloom, the whole place is filled with its fragrance. From under the plane tree the loveliest spring runs with very cool water- our feet can testify to that. The place appears to be dedicated to Achelous and some of the Nymphs, if we can judge from the statues of girls and votive offerings. Feel the freshness of the air; how pretty and pleasant it is; how it echoes with summery, sweet song of the cicadas' chorus! The most exquisite thing of all, of course, is the grassy slope: it rises so gently that you can rest your head perfectly when you lie down on it.” (*Phaedrus*, 230b-c).

In contrast to these rich and varied references to nature in Archaic and Classical Greek literature, depiction of nature in Archaic art was meagre and simple. Lack of representation of nature as a place or setting in Greek art has mostly been tied to the focus of Archaic Greeks on the representation of figure and event. Natural elements on pottery can be seen frequently and only in simple forms of rocks and other landforms, trees and other vegetation, and water.<sup>19</sup> These can

<sup>18</sup> Hurwit 1991, 35.

<sup>19</sup> Natural elements in Greek art are discussed by

act as narrative props of the well-known stories of myths or as attributes of gods and goddesses: vines are emblematic of Dionysiac activity, Sisypos needs a hill to roll his rock up, or Sinis uses a pine tree to kill.

Natural elements on pottery can also be used as symbols for virtues or the mood of the figure represented. On an Attic calyx crater representing the dice game between Achilles and Ajax, there is a palm tree with five fronds behind Achilles and four fronds behind Ajax (Fig. 1). Five fronds point to the superiority of Achilles, whereas four fronds inferiority of Ajax.<sup>20</sup> On the Polyksena Sarcophagus now in the Museum of Troy, Polyksena's mother, Hekabe sits under a tree without leaves.<sup>21</sup> This tree is a symbol of the sorrow of the mother, who had lost her child to sacrifice, and of the mourners behind her. Right arm of the middle mourner merges with the branches of the tree, which mimics the gestures of the women in despair (Fig. 2).

As a result, it is possible to argue that nature in Archaic Greek literature and art was not depicted as a space or a background, in which the events took place. Rather, it was integrated into the narrative as an extension of the figures, integral to them. Here I want to move onto architecture and argue that similarly, at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, nature does not constitute a background/container in one of the most beautiful landscapes of Greece. The human-made

becomes an extension of the natural topography in this site, located at the slopes of Mount Parnassus descending towards the Pleistos Valley.

Mythological stories connect the human-made to the natural at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. These stories, which attest mythological significance to the landscape, are the governing factors behind the location of the site itself and its most conspicuous element, the temple dedicated to Apollo. According to Greek mythology, Delphi literally marked the centre of the world. Zeus released two eagles from opposite ends of the earth, which met in the sky above Delphi. The *omphalos*, or the navel stone, marked this centre on the site.<sup>22</sup> Delphi was also a particularly important sanctuary of Ge, or Mother Earth. One of her children, the serpent Python, was the ancient guardian of Delphi's Castalian Spring. Apollo killed the Python, captured the spring, and founded the oracle at Delphi.<sup>23</sup> Pythia, the priestess, who delivered the sacred words of Apollo, sat on a tripod in the inner chamber at the basement of the Temple of Apollo.<sup>24</sup> Researchers believe that this chamber was located on a chasm on the earth's surface, which opened as a result of a massive earthquake. Through this chasm, poisonous gases were emitted, causing the trance state of the Pythia.

Therefore, the construction of the Sanctuary of Apollo at this particular site and the Temple of Apollo on a chasm at this location was justified by the myths

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Heinemann 1910; Waywell 1969; Wegener 1985, 4-10; Carroll-Spillecke 1985; Birge 1982; Hurwit 1991; Güven 2012.

<sup>20</sup> Symbolism of the palm tree is discussed by Miller 1979 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1985, 125-146.

<sup>21</sup> Çevirici 2006, 53-57.

<sup>22</sup> Scott 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Fontenrose 1959, 13-22.

<sup>24</sup> Norberg-Schulz 1975, 63.

identifying the natural characteristics of the site. In other words, through myths, the human-made and the natural were reconciled at this site. Here, I also would like to argue that locations of other structures encircling the temple and making up the sanctuary space were also determined through an organizational logic, which connected the human-made and the natural. This logic ensured the experience of the site in full integration with the nature around it.

Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, although in existence from the eighth century B.C.E., became the most important oracular centre of the Greek world during the sixth to fourth centuries B.C.E. During this period, it developed by the construction of many commemorative monuments in the form of treasuries, columns, sculptures and sculpture groups (Fig. 3). These monuments, which were dedicated by Greek cities or private individuals, celebrated the power and victory of their dedicators. In time, Delphi became a sort of museum of Greek history because of these monuments.

The sacred road among these monuments was developed in time by the addition of the treasuries and the monuments along it.<sup>25</sup> It, in fact, assumed its final form and was paved during the Roman period (Fig. 4). Therefore, during the various building phases, circulation inside the sanctuary was left free, allowing

various paths to be defined among the treasuries and dedicatory monuments. Even though the ritual entrance to the site had always been from the southeast corner, multiple entrances opening to the city of Delphi surrounding the sanctuary further added to the freedom of movement inside.

The treasuries and dedicatory monuments were located on different grounds and angles in a seemingly haphazard fashion on the sacred road. It seems like there was no conscious planning effort in their placements. Recent scholarship argues otherwise. For example, Michael Scott<sup>26</sup> in *Delphi and Olympia* scrutinizes the political rationale behind the seemingly haphazard locations of certain treasuries and monuments in the sanctuary. In this paper, I am not going to look into the specific locations of particular monuments, but in the same vein as Scully<sup>27</sup> and Norberg-Schulz<sup>28</sup> discuss the existence of a phenomenological logic under the seemingly haphazard spatial organization of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. In order to form an understanding for the twenty-first century viewer of this classical phenomenological logic, I will make use of contemporary examples.<sup>29</sup>

I will start with the early twentieth century still life paintings of Cezanne, which I find instrumental in explaining the organizational logic behind the commemorative monuments of the Sanctuary

<sup>25</sup> New studies undermine the notion of a single main route through the sanctuary. See Roesch 1984, 187-188; Jacquemin 1999, 32-33 and Scott 2010, 24.

<sup>26</sup> Scott 2010.

<sup>27</sup> Scully 1962, 108-115; Scully 1991, 57-63.

<sup>28</sup> Norberg-Schulz 1975, 63-65; Norberg-Schulz 1984, 28-30.

<sup>29</sup> Here, I feel compelled to emphasize that my argument is one of many possible ways of experiencing the site. Yet, I believe that this argument is worthwhile because of its emphasis on the relation of the site to the nature surrounding it.

of Apollo at Delphi. The seemingly haphazard placement of these monuments resembles the seemingly haphazardly drawn objects in the still-life paintings of Cezanne with the presumed mistakes in perspective. Erle Loran,<sup>30</sup> in his analysis, shows us that shifting planes of these objects that seem to float on various grounds attest to different viewpoints of the painter, therefore movement of the painter when painting (Fig. 5).<sup>31</sup> So just as the dynamic gaze of Cezanne is the major constituent of his compositions, in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, the dynamic gaze of the architect can be thought of as the constituent element in the spatial arrangement of its commemorative monuments.

Ancient Greek architects made no use of drawings in planning the layout of their sanctuaries in the way architects do today.<sup>32</sup> In modern planning, spatial relations are contemplated on paper through bird's eye view drawings that abstract the experience of the site. The layout of the monuments at a Greek sanctuary was not drawn on a two-dimensional medium but sculpted through observations from the eye level and was formulated for the gaze of the pedestrian movement. The planning was done on site, letting the specifics

of the landscape take the primary role. At the centre of this landscape, stood the architect with his sightlines and his moving body tailoring the experience of the three-dimensional relationships of the built environment.<sup>33</sup>

To explain further this organizational logic, integrating gaze and movement as its major constituents, I want to call it cinematic and refer to the director Sergei Eisenstein.<sup>34</sup> In his well-known article "Montage and Architecture," Eisenstein mentions Choisy's analysis of the Parthenon and reinterprets it through cinematic concepts such as shots, sequence and montage.<sup>35</sup> At the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, cinematic concepts could also be helpful in explaining the experience of the site and its organizational logic. In cinematic terms, it might be argued that the seemingly haphazard placement of the dedicatory monuments and treasuries on the multiple flexible paths of the sanctuary allows multiple moving/viewing sequences for whoever experiences the site. This plurality of montage sequences results in multiple narratives of Greek history extending to various geographies and times, juxtaposed through the moving body and gaze of each visitor.

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<sup>30</sup> Loran 1970, 76-77.

<sup>31</sup> Maryse Posenae, Doctor of Art History at Sabanci University argues that these different viewpoints could attest to the movement of the painter when painting.

<sup>32</sup> For a discussion of whether ancient Greek architects used architectural drawings see Coulton 1977, 53-54; Kostof 1977, 3-27; Haselberger 1985, 126-132; Robbins 1994, 10-11; Perez-Gomez and Pelletier 2000, 97-105.

<sup>33</sup> This idea of the moving body of the architect is against the Doxiades 1937 claim that classical

sanctuaries were planned according to the sightlines from a fixed point.

<sup>34</sup> Eisenstein 1989, 117-121.

<sup>35</sup> Eisenstein 1989, 117-121, quotes Choisy's analysis of the Acropolis in Athens in his attempt to unravel the moving/viewing sequence of the site. He suggests that Choisy's analysis reveals the meticulously calculated shots of first impressions that the buildings of the Acropolis create. These impressions make up a montage sequence, revealing themselves shot by shot while walking on the Acropolis.

Such a plurality of montage sequences in twentieth-century cinematic terms finds its basis in what Jocelyn Penny Small, in her article “Time in Space: Narrative in Classical Art,” explains as the lack of interest in linear chronological sequencing in ancient Greek art.<sup>36</sup> She ties this to the relative rarity of literacy in ancient times, which renders a different thought pattern for the ancient mind based on hierarchical relationships, rather than ours that demands a chronological sequence with a beginning and an end.<sup>37</sup> This thought pattern, based on the memorizing practices of the oral tradition and supported by the inflected nature of both ancient Greek and Roman languages, is attuned to dissecting events into episodes that unfold in a non-linear order. Ancient Greek depictions of events in art, therefore, defy linear chronological sequence, since they are organized either according to the hierarchical relationships of these episodes or compress time representing a set of episodes together.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, I would like to argue that these modes of representation of time can be thought of as resulting in layered compositions, which allow the viewer to arrange the episodes of an event in any sequence she/he wants.

An example especially relevant here is a painting by Polygnotos of Thasos (active ca. 470-460 B.C.E) covering the walls of the Lesche (Club House) built by Cnidians at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi<sup>39</sup> (Fig. 4, 61). This painting did not survive until our time. Yet, it was described in detail by Pausanias, who was a Greek traveller and geographer in the second century C.E. From his description, we learn that the walls of the Club House were covered by murals depicting scenes from two stories of Homer: Sack of Troy (Iliupersis) and Odepius’ journey to Hades (Nekyia). Mark D. Stansbury-O’Donnell’s recent reconstruction<sup>40</sup> places Iliupersis on the right and Nekyia on the left, occupying the walls of the room like brackets. Stansbury-O’Donnell argues that these stories were divided into various episodes, which were juxtaposed on two or three grounds on the wall plane (Fig. 6). These episodes, although they belong to these particular events, also extend to different times and places through their protagonists. Therefore, we can claim that they intricately interweave various times and places, without attention to linear chronological sequence, at different layers of one big composition. This layering of various episodes of a

<sup>36</sup> Small 1999, 562 claims that “strict sequencing of events in the order that they actually happened was not of paramount interest in antiquity.” For similar observations she refers to Snodgrass 1982, 11-12 and Toynbee 1965, 61.

<sup>37</sup> Small 1999, 557, claims that even though literacy was not widespread in antiquity, artists were among the first to be literate.

<sup>38</sup> Small 1999, 563-564, gives the Francois Vase (570-560 B.C.E.) as an example of hierarchical arrangement. On this vase, the events are not arranged with a chronological order, and the Wedding of Peleus and Thetis as the most important

event occupies the widest band on the shoulder on both sides. Small 1999, 566-567 also gives Laconian Cup (550-530 B.C.E.), as an example for compression of time in a single scene. On this cup, the story of the Blinding of Polyphemus is narrated as a single scene through depiction of attributes of sequential events together such as the legs of the half-eaten companion, the cup of wine and the pole.

<sup>39</sup> Kebric 1983.

<sup>40</sup> Stansbury-O’Donnell 1989; Stansbury-O’Donnell 1990.

story resembles the layered composition of treasuries and dedicatory monuments of the sanctuary at Delphi, telling the history of Greeks in the multiple montages created through the multiple moving/viewing sequences of the visitors.<sup>41</sup>

One other cinematic concept that might be helpful in understanding the overall organization of the Sanctuary of Apollo is the “establishing shot.” In filmmaking, these shots establish the overall spatiotemporal context of the events. Thus, the establishing shots, at the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, can be thought of as the constants within the plurality of the montage sequences reminding the totality/reality of the sanctuary within its physical and temporal context. The multiple montage sequences extending the space and time of the sanctuary to various geographies and times in history were brought back to here and now through the establishing shots, which can be defined as views/frames from particular locations. The human-made is merged with the landscape in these frames.

One such establishing shot can be thought to be located at the opening on the upper terrace of the sacred road called the Halos (Fig. 4, 32a). This opening, which is conjectured to have been left open to receive ritual gatherings, was not built over throughout the building history of the site.<sup>42</sup> Especially by the end of the fourth century B.C.E., when the two sides of the first part of the sacred road were defined by the commemorative monuments and treasuries, this opening became the locus where the visitor was

exposed to the totality of the site. In the much more defined first part of the sacred road, the visitor was temporarily isolated from the exterior. Yet, when he/she turned up the contour and walked past the Athenian treasury (Fig. 4, 27), the view opened up, allowing vistas to the surrounding landscape.

Straight ahead, the cliffs making up the gorge of the Castalian Spring came into view (Fig. 7). The gorge naturally opening up towards the sanctuary echoed the sacred road opening up at this locus towards the natural. On the left of the sacred road, *stoa* of the Athenians, polygonal wall of the temple platform, Temple of Apollo and the steep slope of the Phaedriades Mountains framing the sanctuary became visible (Fig. 8). The polygonal terrace wall echoed in form the surface of the slope, suggesting continuity between the human-made and the natural; and the columns of the temple and the *stoa* appeared as intervening human-made layers. On the right of the sacred road, a sweeping view of the valley allowed a complete understanding of the location of the site within the natural landscape.

Another establishing shot can be positioned at the top rows of the theatre. The theatre is nestled into the earth, duplicating the hollow concave space created by the slopes of the Phaedriades Mountains above it. Looking down from the top of the *cavea*, multiple layers of the site are montaged in a single unifying frame. The human-made terraces, on which the theatre, Temple of Apollo, the treasuries, the gymnasium and the

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<sup>41</sup> Karababa 2019.

<sup>42</sup> Jacquemin 1999, 34; Scott 2010, 42.

Sanctuary of Athena Pronaia stand, merge with the layers of the natural topography descending towards the bottom of the valley (Fig. 9).

As a conclusion, it is noteworthy to add that the establishing shots of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi were from the loci, where the ritual performances were held. We, therefore, can suggest that at these loci, the site, conceived as a part of its surrounding natural landscape, acted as a stage for the performances integrating the mythological and the mundane, i.e., gods and humans.

### Nature As Container

The spatial organization of the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi, allowing various moving/viewing sequences in full integration with the surrounding nature, contrasts starkly to the spatial organization of some later sanctuaries exemplified by the Hellenistic Sanctuary of Athena at Lindos<sup>43</sup> and the Roman Sanctuary of Fortuna at Praeneste<sup>44</sup> (Figs. 10, 11).<sup>45</sup> The spatial organization of these sanctuaries reveals an obsessive control over the moving/viewing sequences in contrast to

the freedom in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi. An axial approach to the temple located at the focus of ascending terraces dominates the sanctuary space in these examples. Everything else situated symmetrically along this axis constructs an interior, in which the human-made is detached from its surrounding environment.

The axial mode of planning present in such sanctuaries can be intimately linked with the development of perspective as a representation tool, which began with the scenographic trials in Greek painting at the end of the fifth century B.C.E.<sup>46</sup> Vitruvius (*De Architectura* 7. Praefatio. 11) mentions that the Athenian painter Agatharchos painted the first tragic set and wrote a treatise about it in the late fifth century B.C.E.<sup>47</sup> This treatise led Anaxagoras and Democritus to formulate their own ideas on the representation of three-dimensions in stage paintings in the late-fifth and early-fourth centuries B.C.E. Ultimately in the late-fourth and early-third centuries B.C.E., Euclid wrote his Theorem 8 explaining perspective in his book on *Optics*.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Hollinshead (2012) argues that the sanctuary was rebuilt probably according to an all-encompassing plan in the third century B.C.E. as a result of its total destruction after a fire in the fourth century.

<sup>44</sup> Filser (2013) argues that the sanctuary was built as a single unified design with Hellenistic influence during the late second century B.C.E.

<sup>45</sup> These sites are chosen because they are the earliest examples that illustrate my point of view clearly. We can add to these most of the later Roman sanctuaries, which confirm to this later mode of axial planning. In most of the Roman sanctuaries temples are located at the focal point of an axis, and the sanctuary is an introverted system that exercises control over movement and gaze.

<sup>46</sup> Soyöz 2010, 1-101; Bek 1993.

<sup>47</sup> Scenographia literally means stage painting or scene painting, but the term came to be used as the term for spatial perspective, because it was first employed in the painted stage settings designed for theatrical performances. Pollitt 1974, 240-245, discusses the historical accuracy of Vitruvius' statement about Agatharchos. He suspects that this statement perhaps was anachronistic, and a fully developed system of perspective described by Vitruvius may not have taken shape until the third or second century.

<sup>48</sup> The issue of existence of an all-encompassing system of perspective in classical painting and its presumed methods is a matter of ongoing scholarly dispute. Most recent sources discussing this

Several Greek theatres rebuilt or built in the Hellenistic period were probably the main schools of perspective painting.<sup>49</sup> Vitruvius (*De Architectura* 5. 6. 8) describes tragic, comic and satyric sets representing palace facades, houses with balconies and landscapes. These were painted on wooden panels called *pinakes*, which were inserted into the openings on the stage buildings. By the mid-fourth century B.C.E., we see the three-dimensional representation of a palace facade with receding lines on a *krater* from Tarentum. Scene paintings on the walls of the Roman houses in Pompeii and Boscoreale, which date from the mid-first century B.C.E., are also thought to be a continuation of the tradition rooted in Hellenistic stage paintings (Fig. 12).

Here, I would like to argue that this new visual regime in painting based on the three-dimensional representation of space could have caused a new approach to spatial planning to develop among ancient architects during the Hellenistic period.<sup>50</sup> Architects, aware of the perspectival constructions in painting, by the Hellenistic period, might have started accommodating certain concepts of space related to perspective.

These concepts of space related to perspective are best explained by Erwin Panofsky in his foundational book

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issue with references to earlier discussions are Tobin 1990, 14-40; Perez-Gomez and Pelletier 2000, 97-105; Gros 2008, 1-17; Stinson 2011, 403-426; Sinisgalli 2012; Scholari 2012, 24-46.

<sup>49</sup> Bieber 1939, 249-252; Beyen 1938, 97-207 and 352-359; Little 1935; Little 1936; Little 1956; 1971.

<sup>50</sup> Algra 1994, 38, argues that “Until the period of Hellenistic schools neither Greek common parlance, nor the early philosophical Greek had a

*Perspective as a Symbolic Form*. Panofsky’s ideas on ancient perspective have been largely contested in the later scholarship, but I believe that his discussion on the perspectival conception of space is still relevant. Panofsky<sup>51</sup> starts his book with Durer’s description of perspective as understood in the Renaissance: “Item Perspectiva ist ein lateinisch Wort, bedeuett ein Durchsehung” (*Perspectiva* is a Latin word which means seeing through). Perspective, therefore, transforms the entire view into a “window” through which we look into space.<sup>52</sup> Through this window, the reality of the psychophysiological space is translated into an abstract mathematical construct, which is fixed by a single immobile eye. This abstract mathematical construct is unchanging and homogeneous.

Thus, a regime of spatial planning based on perspectival concepts exercises obsessive control over how the point of view of the observer should be located in space. Not only the solids, but also the voids in between these solids, are designed as the location of the viewpoints. A defined path for the movement/gaze of the viewer is formulated/shaped by concepts of axiality, infinity and homogeneity.

At the sanctuaries in Lindos and Praeneste, we can see that these concepts

term exclusively denoted space. In this respect Epicurus and Stoics were important innovators.” This quest to define space in Hellenistic philosophical schools can be related to our discussion.

<sup>51</sup> Panofsky 1991, 27.

<sup>52</sup> Panofsky 1991, 76, refers to Leon Battista Alberti, *Della Pittura*, 56: “I inscribe a quadrangle . . . which is considered to be an open window through which I see what I want to paint.”



related to perspective dominated the organization of architectural space. The u-shaped porticoes defining the terraces not only frame the voids but also the gaze and direct it inwards towards the symmetry axis (Figs. 10, 11). There is an obvious control on what is being perceived and at what intervals on this axis. The voids, as moving channels with ramps or stairs, or as terraces defined by porticoes, make up a system that is introverted and homogeneous. This introverted system is preoccupied with its own grandeur rather than the natural context around it.

### Epilogue

This new understanding of space based on perspectival concepts caused the rupture of the human-made from the natural context in Hellenistic and later in Roman architecture. Yet, ultimately, development of perspective could be tied with the development of the philosophical worldview in the classical culture that started with the Pre-Socratic philosophers in the sixth century. The inquiry of *arche* by the Pre-Socratic philosophers can be thought of as the first scientific question, which gave birth to practical science in the Hellenistic period.<sup>53</sup> So the interest in optics can be intimately linked with humanity's dare to separate themselves from the will of gods and search for truth through abstract reasoning and

observation.

As we have seen at the beginning of this paper, the philosophical worldview is generally tied to the establishment of democracy in Athens, starting with Solon's reforms in 594 B.C.E. The notion of the polis as a realm under the control of humans as opposed to nature as the realm of gods developed with the institution of democracy. So, the quote from Socrates in *Phaedrus*, praising nature stated at the beginning of this paper, continues as below and defines this opposition clearly:

“Forgive me, my friend. I am devoted to learning. Landscapes and trees have nothing to teach me- only the people in the city can do that.” (*Phaedrus*, 230b-d.)

Here, I would like to refer to Leach<sup>54</sup> again, who compares the description of a harbour in Ithaca by Homer, which was quoted before, with the description of a harbour in Africa by the Roman poet Vergil:

“There is a place within a long recess where an island makes a harbour by the protection of its sides, against which every wave from the deep sea is broken and cuts itself against returning curves. Here and here again vast cliffs and twin peaks rise threateningly against the sky and under their summit the broad protected sea lies quiet. Then the backdrop, the forest, flashing gleams of light and dark grove looms up with its bristling shadow. Under

<sup>53</sup> Osborne 2006, 72-93, explains the birth of rational thought by Pre-Socratic philosophers and its development after Socrates by Plato and Aristotle. He attracts attention to the development of practical science in the Hellenistic period and claims that “science began to flex its muscles as a quite separate activity from philosophy” during the Hellenistic period. Euclid provided mathematical proofs derived from axioms in his

Elements, published around 300 B.C.E. Archimedes can be considered as a practical scientist as he used theoretical knowledge to design machines. Apollonius, Eratosthenes, Hipparchus and others made significant scientific innovations in mathematics, geometry and astronomy by using scientific methods.

<sup>54</sup> Translation by Leach 1988, 30-36.

the opposing face is a cavern with hanging rocks and sweet waters and seats of stone, the home of nymphs.”<sup>55</sup>

Leach attracts attention to the differences between Homer’s and Vergil’s descriptions. Homer, in his description of the harbour, is not after forming an overall conception of space, but describes the landscape as experienced by the protagonist through his moving gaze. Therefore, in the quote from Homer, elements of the landscape do not form a complete/continuous picture. However, in the quote from Vergil, Leach claims an “increase of verbal and syntactical complexity ... that unites the features of landscape within a broad panorama.” In this description, one can argue for an overall conception of space outlined as if on a map. The spatial interdependence of the topographical features is described by prepositional phrases pointing to their respective locations. Therefore, in this quote, the experience of the landscape can be thought of as from a fixed location at the harbour mouth, in contrast to the moving gaze of the protagonist, as in the case of Homer. Leach points to the fact that compared to Odysseus’ connection to his homeland, Aeneas is a stranger to the scene he surveys. His lack of association with this harbour in Africa might explain his distant look to it from the outside.

As a conclusion, I would like to add to this argument of Leach that Aeneid’s look to the harbour in Africa as an outsider resembles the depiction of nature in

the *Odyssey Landscapes* (Fig. 13). In these Roman paintings dated to the first century B.C.E, the event and the figures are not the primary artistic interest as was the case with the early Greek paintings, but the misty vistas of the sea, rocks, hills and trees containing the stories from the *Odyssey*. The infinite horizons of the *Odyssey Landscapes* as the realm of the mythical are represented to be viewed from outside through the frames of a human-made construct, behind architectural screens.<sup>56</sup> These screens can be thought of as resembling the porticoes of the sanctuaries in Lindos and Praeneste, separating the human-made from the natural. So, in these sanctuaries, nature is not an extension of the human-made as at Delphi, but it is something to be viewed behind the screens. The spatial construct of these sanctuaries separates the humans from the uncontrolled infinity of primal nature, and locates them in a limited, homogeneous and controlled locus. Ultimately, this spatial construct provides human beings with a rational framework, through which they may assess and/or formulate nature as a field of science separated from their being, positioning them as the observer, controller and the utilizer.

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<sup>55</sup> Translation by Leach 1988, 31.

<sup>56</sup> The origins of Roman landscapes dated to the first century B.C.E. are argued to be in the long-lost Hellenistic stage paintings. Not only *Odyssey*

*Landscapes*, but also landscape paintings of the Pompeian third style represent nature through architectural frames emphasizing their otherness. See Dietrich (2017).

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## Uzun Özet

Doğal peyzajın klasik mimarlıkla yakın ilişkisi yaygın kabul gören bir anlayış olmasına rağmen, bu konu üzerine yazılmış kaynaklar kısıtlıdır. Bu makale, argümanının odağına antik dünyada insan-doğa ilişkisinin dönüşümünü ve bu dönüşümün kutsal alan planlamasına yansımalarını alarak, geçmiş tartışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlar. Sadece mimarlıkta değil, edebiyat ve sanat alanlarında da bu dönüşümün izlerini sürerek, antik dünyada insan-doğa ilişkisini bütüncül bir yaklaşımla açıklamayı dert edinir.

Tanrı-insan ilişkisinin entegre tanımlandığı Arkaik mitolojik gelenekte, doğayı mekân edinen antropomorfik tanrılar insanoğlunun kaderini ellerinde tutarlar. Dolayısıyla bu dönemde doğaya insan eliyle yapılacak bir müdahale tanrısal olanla anlaşmayı/bütünleşmeyi gerektirir. Arkaik dönem edebiyat ve sanatında doğa bir bağlam veya arka plan olarak değil, kahramanların bir uzantısı olarak betimlenir veya resmedilir. Delfi'deki Apollon kutsal alanında da benzer şekilde, doğal olan insan yapımı olanın bağlamını oluşturmaz; insan yapımı olan doğal olanın bir uzantısıdır ve ondan ayrılmaz. Bu kutsal alanda tanrılar ve insanoğlu, insan yapımı ve peyzaj, deneyime dayalı bir mekânsal organizasyon mantığı çerçevesinde entegre edilir. Makalede, bu deneyime dayalı mekânsal organizasyon mantığı modern sinematik kavramlarla ilişkilendirilerek tartışılır. Kutsal alanın görünürde rastgele planı ziyaretçilerin her birinin deneyimleri ile ilişkilenen çoklu hareket/gözlem sekansları kurmalarına imkân verir. Farklı montaj sekansları gibi tanımlayabileceğimiz bu çoklu deneyimler sinema terminolojisinde genel plan diyebileceğimiz tasarlanmış kareler sayesinde, ortak bir zaman ve mekân bağlamına oturtulur. Bu kareler, insan yapımı olanı doğal olanın bir uzantısı olarak ona entegre tanımlar.

İnsanoğlunun tanrıların iktidarını sorguladığı Yunan kentinin demokratikleşme süreci sonucunda, insanın doğa ile entegre ilişkisi kırılır. Bu kırılma sonucu insan, kendi kaderinin belirleyicisi olarak düzen kurmaya kendini muktedir saymaya başlar. Doğa tanrıların mekân tuttuğu kaotik bir yer olarak kentten soyutlanır. Kökü Helenistik sahne resimlerine dayanan Roma duvar resimlerinde, mitolojik peyzajlara, mimari bir çerçevenin arkasından bakılır. Bu mimari çerçeve, Lindos'taki Athena kutsal alanı veya Praeneste'deki Fortuna kutsal alanındaki kolonadlar gibi, insan yapımı olanı doğal olandan ayırır. Bu kutsal alanlarda, Helenistik dönemde perspektif konusundaki ilerlemeler sonucu gündeme gelmiş olabilecek bazı kavramlar, doğal peyzajdan kopuk, kontrollü bir iç mekân yaratılmasında etkili olurlar. Ziyaretçinin hareketinin ve bakış açısının obsesif bir şekilde kontrol edildiği bu matematiksel soyut mekân anlayışı, çoklu hareket/gözlem sekanslarına izin veren Delfi'deki Apollon kutsal alanının mekânsal organizasyon mantığından çok farklıdır. Mekânsal kurgu kendi anıtsallığına odaklanır ve doğal bağlamdan kopar.

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Figure 1



Figure 2

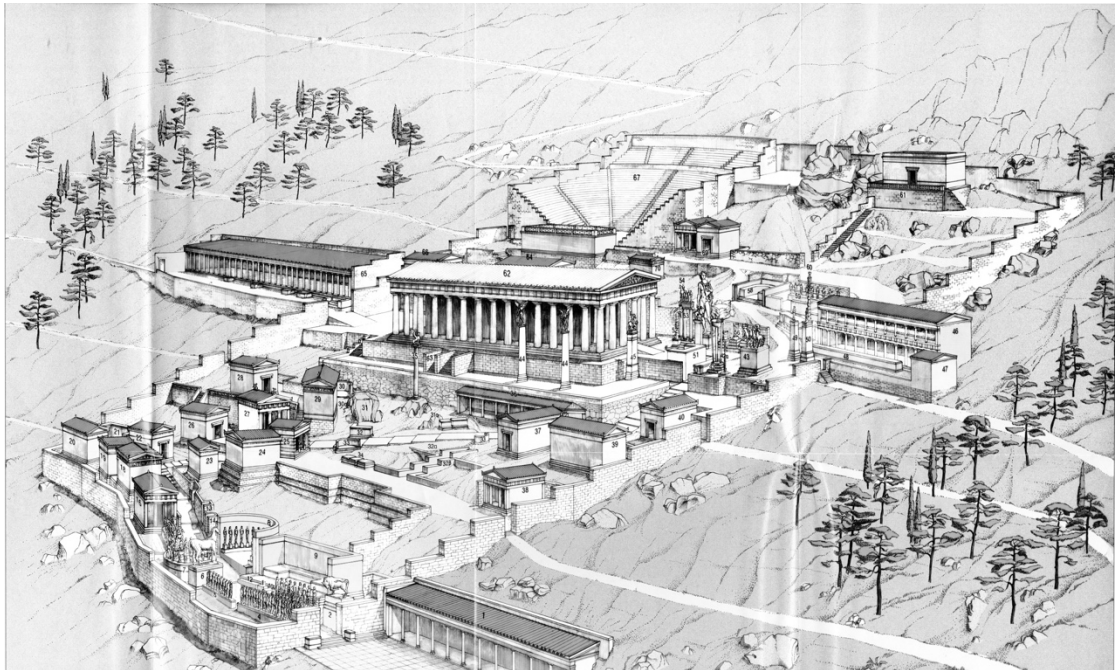


Figure 3

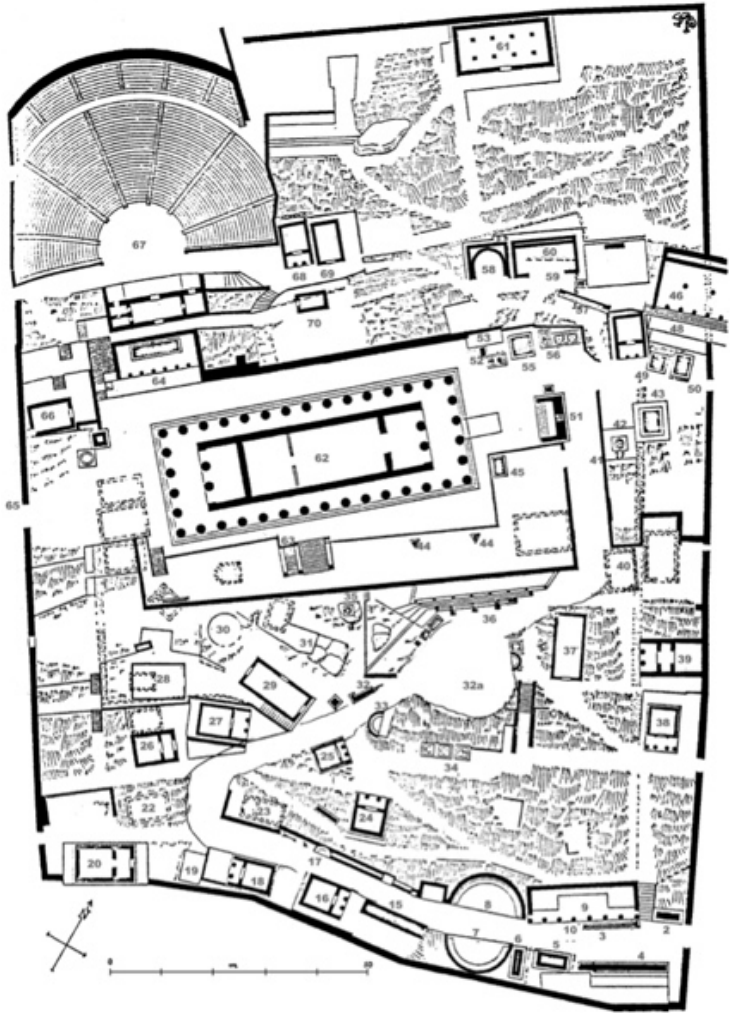


Figure 4

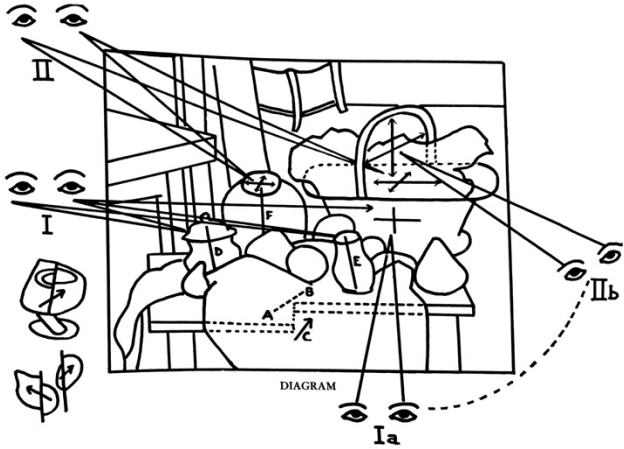


Figure 5





Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8

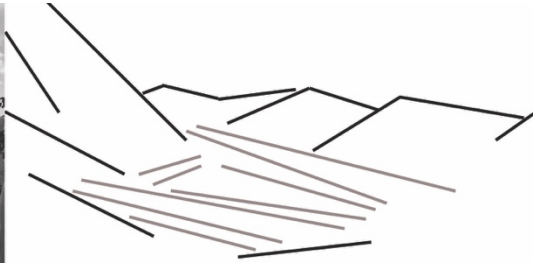


Figure 9

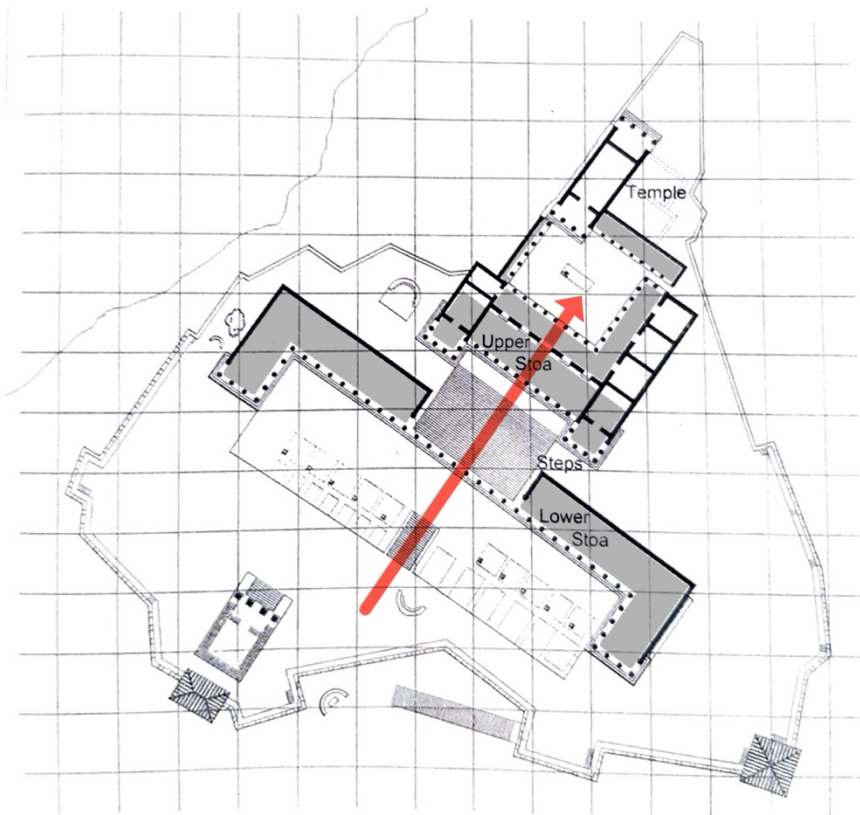


Figure 10



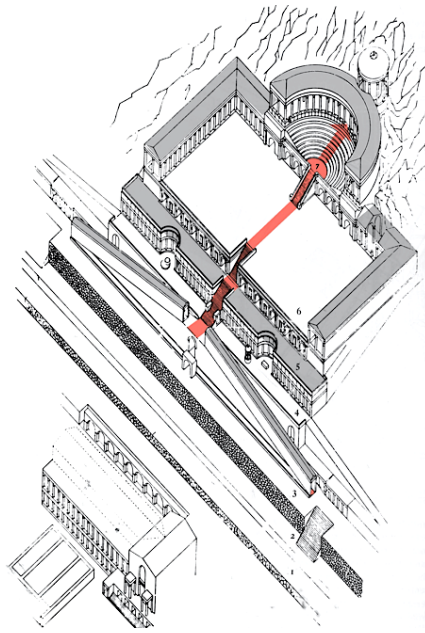


Figure 11



Figure 12



Figure 13