

Experiences at the centre of the world: meaning and monumentality at Delphi (c. 570-400 BCE)

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Abstract

In the ancient Greek mind, Delphi was the centre of the world, and it has been the focus of fascination and study for centuries. However, though we may have a wide array of textual and material evidence for the sanctuary, we still lack a full understanding of how it was experienced and understood by its ancient visitors. This is not a problem specific to Delphi: it is difficult to reconstruct experiences in most ancient sites given how few first-hand accounts survive from antiquity. The overarching question that this thesis will ask is, therefore, how visitors from around Greece would have seen, understood, and experienced Delphi, and how that experience contributed to social, political, cultural, religious and mythical identities. This thesis will examine the sanctuary of Apollo c. 570-400 BCE, corresponding to the period of Delphi's greatest prestige.

Experience is a subjective and fluid concept, and traditional methodologies struggle to engage with it. This thesis therefore will take a holistic approach to the sanctuary, creating a methodology based on the material evidence, the landscape and topography, the sensorial landscape, literary accounts of visiting the sanctuary, and culturally mnemonic memories of the, theories of movement, pilgrimage and spatial analysis, and taking inspiration from diverse media such as tour guides and early travel literature. This thesis will look at the messages and meanings of selected key monuments and spaces, and how these evoke specific emotional responses, questions of identity, political and social contexts, and engage with the visitor specifically. This thesis will examine several key sections: the gateway area, the treasury-dominated corner of the Sacred Way, the approach to the temple, and the temple platform itself. Within those, this thesis will examine specific themes that are visually prominent in the spaces: triumphalism through victory monuments, timocracy through treasuries, mythology through the depiction of and evocation of mythological themes, and divine presence through sacred architecture. To do this, this thesis examines a single monument as a case study in each chapter: the Aegospotami monument, the Athenian Treasury, the Naxian Sphinx, and the temple to Apollo. This allows the reader to move through the space at Delphi in the same way an ancient visitor would. By considering experiential approaches to Delphi both holistically and in terms of discrete sections, themes and perspectives, this thesis hopes to provide a more nuanced understanding of Delphi, as well as a framework for future experiential study of ancient sanctuary spaces.

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Introduction

If some giant stage director had the power to move mountains, cut ravines and raise a precipice to make an awesome setting for Apollo's oracle, he could not have exceeded the scene that nature set. The sanctuary (*temenos*) is built 1,800 feet up on a steep and narrow shelf on the lower slopes of Mount Parnassos: behind the buildings, the cliffs of the Phaedriades – the Shining Ones – form a 900-foot high perpendicular north wall. To the south the shelf ends abruptly and the olive groves take a dive to the deep Pleistos ravine below. The entire horizon is formed by mountains: across the Pleistos the grim rocky flank of Mount Kirphis rises sheer: to the south-west the peaks of Arcadia are visible across the Gulf of Corinth, while beyond the sea of olive-trees that submerges the whole plain of Krissa between Parnassos and the gulf runs yet another range of mountains like a rampart in the western sky, guarding the valley-road to Amphissa and the far north. A tremendous panorama, 'a majestic god-touched setting for divination', as Charles Seltman put it.¹

This is how Guy Pentreath sets the scene for his visit to Delphi in *Hellenic Traveller* (1964). The book chronicles the experiences and thoughts of a classical enthusiast on his travels around Greece, a modern-day Pausanias whose focus was not on creating a tour guide, or providing historical information, or even necessarily interpreting ancient evidence: Pentreath set out to *experience* Greece. His work is emotive, descriptive, and as much about how sites made him feel as they are about what they contain. As we will see in Chapter One, travel literature about Greece has throughout the

¹ Pentreath 1964, 71-72.

centuries placed emphasis on the emotional resonance and spiritual power of Delphi. These works vary on routes and intentions, but when visiting Delphi, all seem united in the hope that the visit would bestow some sort of spiritual significance, as did Pausanias when he visited the most sacred of ancient Greek sites. The legacy of the oracle and its role in the Greek world remains significant in the conceptualisation of the sanctuary, and Delphi itself seems to have come to stand for the spirituality of the Hellenic world at large. But it is not just the sanctuary's historic past that draws so much attention; the dramatic vistas and landscape are an important part of what makes visiting Delphi so unique and memorable. Flacelière remarks that Delphi's landscape struck the imaginations of men both now and then, creating an experience unlike any other, and it is the experience of Delphi that this thesis will examine.²

Travel writers were, of course, not the only people to have visited Delphi, though Pausanias is one of its better remembered visitors ([pp. 84](#)). This thesis will focus on the visitor: an ancient individual from the Hellenic world who came to Delphi deliberately to engage in any number of activities. My visitor will remain abstract and non-specific: they do not have specific identities and I will not be creating characters. However, there are certain assumptions that must be made about my visitor for the sake of clarity. They have come to the sanctuary c. 400 BCE, certainly after the dedication of the Aegospotami monument and the end of the Peloponnesian war. Both newness and age convey specific messages, as we shall see with discussions of both the Aegospotami monument and the Naxian Sphinx, which is why it is important to position our visitor at a particular point in time, to understand the significance of this. That being said, I will not be picking a specific time of year at which to position this study. Doing so would, in many ways, be easier, as the range of activities to be considered would be limited to what was going on at that particular point in the Delphic calendar – the rituals of a particular festival, the sudden increase in visitors during the Pythian Games, the expectation of the Pythian oracle's rare consultations, and so on. However, by doing this we would

² Flacelière 1961, 33.

limit potential experience within the sanctuary space. Instead, we must consider the broader expectation and projection of Delphi as a place that encompasses all of these things (and more) at all times. A visitor coming to, for example, the Septeria, would be aware of the Pythian oracle, its fame and political power, and their visit would be impacted by the prestige bestowed on the sanctuary. However, my inclusion of the Pythian oracle as part of this study does at least imply that the visitor is attending at one of the oracle's nine opening slots per year. It is also important to note that this is not a specifically 'Classical' study of the sanctuary: Archaic dedications that would have still been visible to visitors by 405 will be included since a visitor would have seen them and they would have informed the experience of the space. Approaching Delphi in this way will prevent us from viewing the sanctuary through a static lens, which so often limits the study of sanctuaries, and results in a failure to understand them as a living and changing entity.

My visitor is undoubtably Hellenic: though Delphi's fame was extensive enough for it to attract visitors from outside the Greek world, it is indisputable that the vast majority of its traffic would have been Hellenic, and that the monuments and space were primarily designed to communicate with people from the Greek world, as we will see. There is also an assumption that they are literate, and therefore are presumably relatively well educated and financially secure: though the writings of many authors would have been passed on via verbal transmission to many, and theatrical performances could have been viewed regardless of literacy levels, there does exist throughout a degree of presumption regarding engagement with contemporary and previous literary discussions and descriptions. They are also a free citizen, and male, in line with all text sources, the majority of dedicators, and most documented and described visitors. Delphi from the perspective of women or slaves, or indeed from any other demographic, would be near impossible thing to explore given the lack of textual evidence from these social groups, the absence of evidence for how such visitors would have engaged with the sanctuary space, and the difficulty in reconstructing the experiences of these demographic groups in any kind of space for comparison. It is not implausible to believe that access to the space, the oracle, and the rituals of the sanctuary would have been different at Delphi for these

groups, and though it would no doubt be a fascinating area, it falls outside the remit of this study. There is also an inherent assumption that my visitor has come to Delphi to consult the Pythian oracle, when the sanctuary would have been a busy and active place, and during one of the sanctuary festivals, where processions would have taken place.

My visitor is also certainly arriving at some point of festivity within the space. The festival context is an important one to establish, because it allows us to consider not just a singular visitor in isolation, but one who would have met and communicated with others from across the Greek world as a part of their visit. The visitor is a part of a wider network of social information and memory: they know and understand things specific to their social contexts without having actively learned them. These things might be quite general, but in an ancient context, might not be widely disseminated outside of their home environment: this localisation might be in the form of myths, cults and heroes, or in artistic or literary innovations, or in social norms and expectations. We are all influenced by the contexts in which we live, but in a pre-digital context, sharing this information is a difficult thing that must only have happened in specific contexts. One of these would have undoubtedly been panhellenic festivals such as those held at Delphi: our visitor would have had the opportunity to participate in knowledge exchange with the wider Greek world during visits such as these, allowing them to learn more about the space in which they were, the monuments they were seeing, and the specific cultures from which the dedications came.

This person will visit the sanctuary, by which I mean that they have made a choice to travel there for a specific reason, be it to attend a festival, consult the oracle, offer a sacrifice, or just to visit and appreciate the space. This last motive is a more touristic one, but sightseeing within a divine space is different from purely secular tourism, and the religious nature of the site will inform the visitor's engagement with it. People came to Delphi for all kinds of reasons - religious, economic, and political. The sanctuary, which rose to prominence in the Archaic period, became one of the most important religious sites of antiquity. Visitors came from across and beyond the Greek world, and Delphi's

material record reflects a vibrant dedicatory culture. Visitors to Delphi gave thousands of dedications, which took the forms of sculpture, architectural art, inscriptions, buildings, and countless small objects (Fig. 0.1). They did so despite the difficulty of the terrain and the location of Delphi, high up the slopes of Mount Parnassos, and they came from so many places because the sanctuary was panhellenic. Panhellenic is a modern term, meaning ‘all the Greeks’ – a panhellenic sanctuary is a major shrine in Greek territory that was not under the control of a single, civic entity, and could therefore be used by anyone as an ‘all welcoming’ space.³ Delphi was in theory an independent polis, but the sanctuary of Apollo was controlled by a council of interested cities, known as the Amphictyony, and thus was kept (at least in theory) open to all.⁴ Snodgrass remarks that Delphi and Olympia provided spaces for meaningful interaction between Greek city-states, allowing for shared development and homogenisation.⁵ Because of this, the sanctuary and its oracle were the cornerstone of many important historical events and decisions, and self-representation on the Delphic stage was competitive. The fact that everyone could visit the sanctuary meant that it was a stage for all people to present versions of themselves for public consumption, on individual and civic levels. As a space, it was in many ways unparalleled, not only for its dedications and social role but also its topography, dramatic vistas, and views of the valley and distant sea.

³ Pindar, *Pythian* 8.61–62

⁴ Neer 2007, 226.

⁵ Snodgrass 1986, 58; Nielsen 2007, 68; Scott 2014, 16.

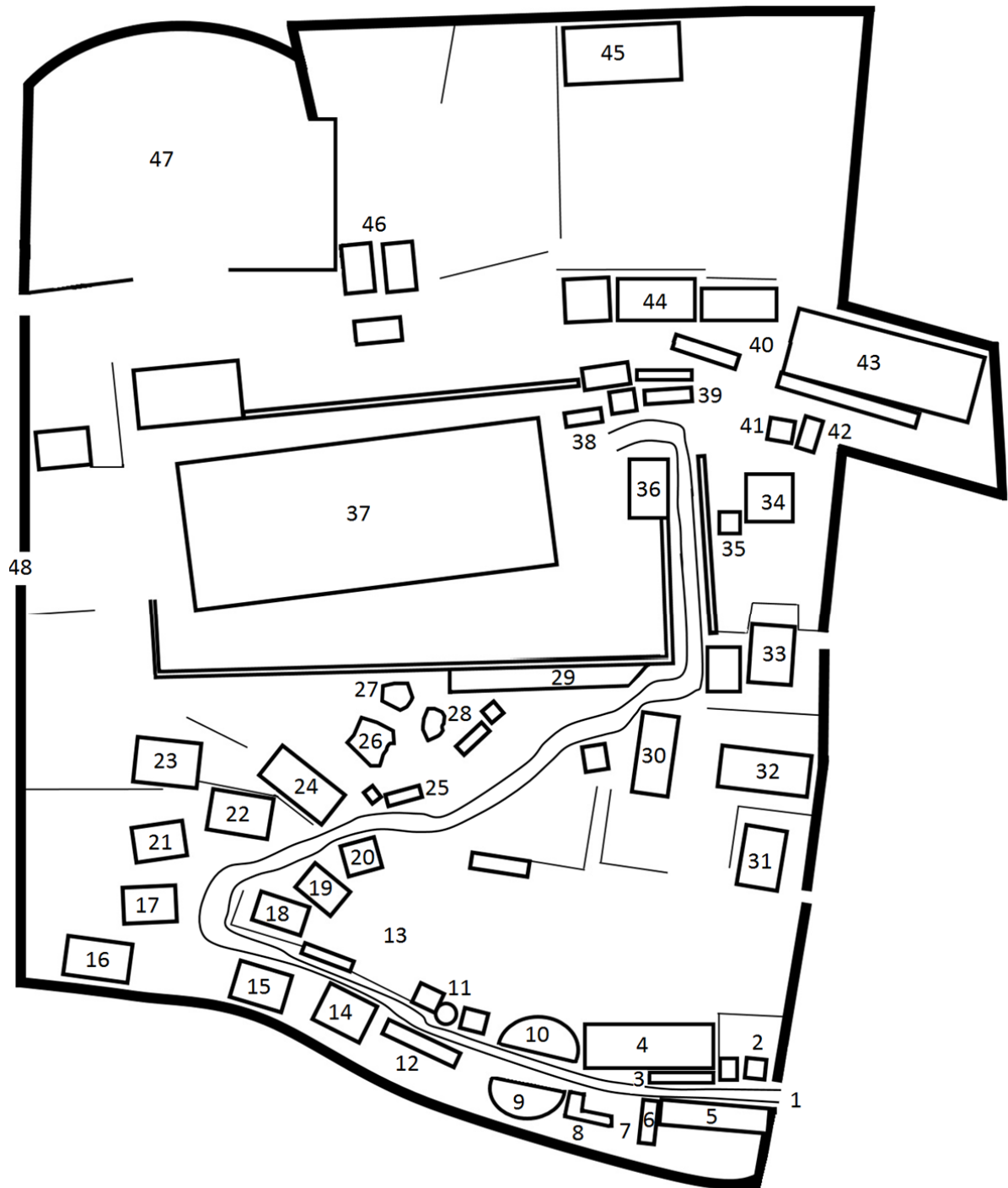


Figure 0.1. Monument map of Delphi. Author's own, adapted from de la Coste-Messelière 1943, 317, Jacquemin 1999b and Barringer 2008, 317.

Key:

1. Entrance to the sanctuary
2. Bull of Korcyra
3. Arcadian bronze statue group
4. Spartan stoa
5. Spartan Aegospotami victory monument
6. Argive horse dedication
7. Athenian dedications from Marathon
8. Argive dedications of the seven leaders of the expedition against Thebes
9. Argive dedication
10. Argive dedication
11. Votive niches
12. Tarentine dedication: bronze statues of horses and captive women
13. Foundations of possible treasury
14. Sikyonian Treasury
15. Siphnian Treasury
16. Theban Treasury
17. Boeotian Treasury
18. Megarian Treasury
19. Syracusan Treasury
20. Knidian Treasury
21. Early treasury?
22. Athenian Treasury
23. Archaic building
24. Delphic 'Bouleuterion'
25. Bases from Boeotian dedications
26. Rock of Sybil
27. Naxian Sphinx
28. Rock of Leto
29. Athenian stoa
30. Corinthian Treasury
31. Archaic Treasury converted into the Asklepion
32. Cyrene Treasury?
33. Possible location of the Treasury of Acanthians and Brasidas
34. Rhodian dedication: chariot
35. Platean tripod
36. Chian Altar
37. Temple of Apollo
38. Statue of Apollo
39. Syracuse dedication: tripod
40. Base of Korcyran dedication?
41. Statue of Eumenes I
42. Statue of Attalos I
43. Stoa of Attalos I
44. Daochos monument
45. Knidian Lesche
46. Two buildings, possibly treasuries
47. Theatre
48. Exit to the West Stoa

[A supplementary database of the monuments c.600 – 400 BCE can be found here.](#)

This thesis aims to examine the experiences of an ancient visitor and like travel literature will attempt to do this by taking a holistic approach. It will focus not just on what people saw, but what these things would have meant, examining the emotional experience as well as the physical one. When I discuss experience here, I am interested in the sensations and associations that the sanctuary would have created, and how people would have participated in and understood the space at Delphi. In order to put forward a new approach to the study of ancient sanctuaries, and to understand better the significance of the site to ancient visitors and its impact on them, this thesis investigates religious,

social, political, civic and individual participation and perception, sensory processing, and the engagement with and understanding of the material and topographic landscape of Delphi. In short: what was the experience of an ancient visitor to Delphi in the Archaic and Classical periods? Though this question may seem a straightforward one, it is anything but. We must consider who our visitor is, when they are visiting, and most pressingly, how can we distil a lengthy and fluid process into the static simplicity of 'experience'. To answer these questions, we must think of the visit as a movement through both space and time, and consider the environment and expectations of the visit, as well as the visitor's actions and interactions within the space.

Scholarship of the site and its landscape is varied, and surprisingly little is written about its topography, despite the impact that it has clearly had on those who have travelled to the site.⁶ Instead, focus has been on the oracle. Delphi's role at the centre of the Greek world was secured by the fame and prestige of this oracle, which weighed in on many significant political matters and historical events in the Greek world. The Pythia remains a major feature of the legacy of the site to the modern day, both as a figure and as an institution. Over Delphi's lengthy history, its oracle was consulted by every major political force, and played a role in some of the most pivotal moments in Greek history. Its role in the literary retellings of famous mythological events ensured its legacy in the ancient and modern world and has propagated some of the more outlandish misconceptions about oracular activity, which have survived to this day. Though discussed with less tenacity, its games have also been the source of attention. Of the games and festivals held at Delphi each year, the Pythian Games are by far the most famous. These games were originally scheduled every eight years: in 586 they were reorganised, and from then on they were held every four years, in the third year of the Olympic cycle.⁷ But, of course, people visited Delphi for more mundane reasons too. Euripides' *Ion* includes a scene of Athenian women visiting the sanctuary and discussing the scenes they find depicted on the temple in one Choral

⁶ See Chapter One, [pp. 80](#) onwards for more examples.

⁷ Valavanis 2004, 188.

scene,⁸ and Flower's work illuminates a particular role that the priests would have held in the sanctuary, informing visitors about the dedications and the stories behind them.⁹ The combination of reputation, tourism, oracular consultation and festival attendance makes for a wide array of visitors. This would be the case for any sanctuary, but Delphi operated as a panhellenic sanctuary, and therefore people from across and beyond the Greek world would have been able to attend.

While there is scope to study any of these areas individually, that is not the point of this thesis. The aim is instead to deepen our understanding of how these sanctuaries functioned in the minds of their ancient visitors by bringing together experiential study, material analysis and the ritual framework of a sanctuary in a way that has not been attempted before to create a more thorough system of investigation into sanctuary space. The aim is to explore the creation and expression of experience at Delphi, but also to understand the importance of the site and how it was perceived by its ancient visitors. To do this, this study will focus on monuments from 570-400 BCE, the spaces they occupied, the presentation of specific themes, and the activities and movements performed in those spaces. Ancient dedications were not static compositions meant to be purely aesthetically pleasing (though this was a vital part of their construction too): they were meant to convey messages and beliefs to their viewers, and the dedications at Delphi were no exception. Visitors' expectations, built upon their prior knowledge of the sights to be seen would only be compounded by stories told by priests when actually at the sanctuary.¹⁰ The themes that each chapter will explore (triumphalism, timocratic excellence, mythology, and divine presence) are key components of this network of meaning. These themes are connected to the type of monuments present in the space (including each chapter's central monument) but are also broad aspects of panhellenic sanctuary presentation that are a key part of understanding the sanctuary space as a whole. This process of analysis can be simplified to *space-monument-themed experience*: 'space' will discuss the location and area

⁸ Euripides, *Ion* 190-219.

⁹ Flower 1991, 63.

¹⁰ For further discussion of this phenomenon, see Flower 1991, 63.

surrounding the dedication, which will be analysed in detail in ‘monument’, and aspects of both, along with the key theme, will be brought together analytically in the second half of each chapter. As I have already emphasised, it is important to include the materiality of the place and the activities performed within it, as all of these intrinsically impact the frames of experience. This study aims to show how religion, society, politics, culture, and art intersect in the realm of experience. To fully understand a panhellenic sanctuary such as Delphi, we must approach it from this angle, and give due attention not only to how all these spaces and moments and ideas are reinforced by Delphi, but also in turn how they work to reinforce its importance, creating a sense of significance in every moment for the visitor. It is impossible to understand how a sanctuary functioned and was understood in the ancient world without first decoding how those who visited it experienced it, and though scholarship has gone a long way towards investigating the form and significance of its monuments, games and oracle, we can go further in understanding the space as an operational whole. This thesis will attempt to create a holistic picture of the sanctuary, bringing together topography, materiality, and literary sources to allow us to explore the semantics of the material evidence in a new and more sophisticated way.

0.1. Scholarship

There has been a huge amount of interest in Delphi in scholarship, be it archaeological, historical, literary and post-classical: even before the site was re-discovered, it was the topic of conversation amongst those interested in Greece.¹¹ Since then, interest in the site has only increased: Østby remarks that, as over one hundred years have passed since the beginning of intensive archaeological study of the main Greek sanctuaries, there is no hope of providing a thorough compilation of the scholarship on sanctuaries.¹² But this thesis aims to provide a new approach to Delphi, and a

¹¹ See Chapter One for more information ([pp. 87](#)).

¹² Østby 1993, 192.

methodological framework that can be applied to other popular sanctuaries within the ancient world. There have been relatively few sensory or experiential studies of the site, and its scholarship can be easily grouped into particular fields of interest. Instead of reviewing all available scholarship on Delphi, I will focus on those areas most relevant to my study. I shall discuss in the next section both the limitations within general Delphic scholarship and those that have provided invaluable comparative study. There is a large body of work that examines the historical and political role of Delphi which falls outside the focus of this thesis, and so will not be discussed here. Instead, I will look at the study of the sanctuary as a whole, and scholarship that examines particular monuments. It is near impossible to separate Delphi from its oracle, and so scholarship on the Delphic oracle will also be included. The final section, however, will focus more broadly on experiential and sensory scholarship, and how studies in other fields have proved vital to this thesis.

0.1.1. The Site

There are many studies of the sanctuary that approach it in different ways: most attention paid to it is centred around the Pythian games, the oracular process, the political significance of the oracle and its responses, or individual monuments removed from their topographical context, such as the Siphnian Treasury. The majority of scholarship is dedicated to the study and wider context of the oracle (particularly Anglophone works), with relatively little focusing on the site itself. The archaeological reports form the basis of the evidence for those that do. In 1880, Haussoulier began to uncover the Athenian Stoa, and in 1892 systematic excavation began under Théophile Homolle of the French Archaeological School of Athens. The 'Great Excavation' (La Grande Fouille) lasted ten years and was concluded with the creation of the on-site museum, but the site has not ceased to be excavated since then, and continues to this day.¹³ The definitive publications have been released in

¹³ For a summary of the excavation history, see Bommelaer 1991, 9-11; Cabanes 2002, 281-282; Scott 2014, 269-284. Pre-excavation finds: Hellmann 1992, 42, 49.

the *Fouilles de Delphes* since 1902 by the École française d'Athènes, with additional supplementary reports in the *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*. These provide incomparable access to the excavated material, with detailed drawings and plate photographs of material that, in some cases, has been lost or changed. There are some frustrations to navigating such a large collection, but they give the modern scholar access to material remains, reconstructions, and many possible interpretations of the sanctuary space.¹⁴ As such, my understanding of the monuments discussed comes directly from these texts. Both this thesis and all other examinations of the site and its monuments owe much to the tireless work done by generations of archaeologists working there for over one hundred years.

As a result of its lengthy history and the phases of the excavation, studying one aspect or monument within the *Fouilles de Delphes* can sometimes present challenges. Evidence for one area of interest may be spread out across several volumes from different decades, for any number of reasons. Perhaps because of this, more modern texts have attempted to bring together excavation details in a more comprehensive form and to present a clearer overview of the sanctuary as a whole. Catherine Morgan's *Athletes and Oracles* (1990) is a notable example of both Delphic studies and this phenomenon. Her monograph provides detailed examination of the sanctuary, with an interest in comparing Delphi and Olympia (not an uncommon choice). Her study is unusual for focusing on the eighth century BCE, rather than the more popular Archaic and Classical periods, and was well received for Morgan's equal integration of historical argument and archaeological evidence. It is a study focused on two specific areas – the Delphic Oracle and the Olympic Games – and it uses the two institutions as touchstones for comparing the development of the two sanctuaries in their early years. We will return to this use of the oracle in the oracular section of this scholarship review, but the treatment of the site itself is worth considering. Morgan provides detailed analysis of an area of evidence and development rarely touched on by scholarship, giving new insight into how Delphi came

¹⁴ The archaeological excavation has been published in the *Fouille de Delphes* series in separate sections: I. History of the City of Delphi (nothing has yet been published in this series); II. Topography and Architecture; III. Epigraphy; IV. Sculpture; V. Small Objects. Inscriptions are also published in the *Corpus d'inscriptions de Delphes* (four volumes).

to be and changing the approach to Delphi itself, shifting attention back to using the archaeological evidence as a central part of historical analysis.

Michael Scott's work on the sanctuary of Delphi is some of the most influential in the English language today. His two published books on Delphi both examine the site as a whole, albeit from different angles, and, like this thesis, use the archaeological excavation reports as their foundation. Like Morgan, his first publication *Delphi and Olympia: The Spatial Politics of Panhellenism in the Archaic and Classical Periods* (2010) compares the monuments and landscape of the two panhellenic sanctuaries, focusing on particular monuments and discussing their backgrounds and contexts as well as the visual networks they operate within. This text has been instrumental to the way that this thesis thinks about the sanctuary, particularly in the way that it moves physically through the sanctuary space and considers the monuments in relation to each other, rather than in isolation. He has continued this theme, contributing a number of other chapters and articles on the monuments of the sanctuary.¹⁵ His second book, *Delphi: A History of the Centre of the World* (2014), provides a narrative overview of the sanctuary, its monuments and its political role in three phases, roughly corresponding to the Archaic, Classical, and Hellenistic/Roman periods. This book seeks to contextualise the monuments of Delphi within the site's own history, and is perhaps aimed at a more popular audience, introducing the sanctuary and its history to a wider readership. Scott brought fresh eyes to Delphi, foregrounding monuments that had not previously received detailed analysis in English language publications and took a holistic approach to the sanctuary that offered new layers of interpretation and meaning to the decoration and placement of monuments. This thesis owes a great debt to the initial work laid out by Scott, and to his view of the Delphic site. Scott's work focuses on the monuments and statues and their historical context, whereas my thesis seeks to add another dimension to the discussion, taking into account how a visitor would have understood and experienced these monuments and spaces. There is, inevitably, some overlap between these

¹⁵ Scott 2007; 2008; 2011; 2015; 2016; 2017.

approaches, but while at times this thesis uses ideas and arguments that Scott has put forward, its main aim is to provide a new light on how the sanctuary operated and was understood in antiquity.

0.1.2. Individual Monuments

I have already mentioned that there are a number of publications focused on individual monuments, which is of course to be expected. However, attention to these monuments has been somewhat inconsistent: the Siphnian Treasury, for example, has been of particular interest to modern scholarship, primarily for its northern Gigantomachy frieze, where its depiction of giants in the guise of hoplites has caused particular debate, an iconographic oddity that stands out for also being one of the very first depictions of hoplites. Scott and Neer both discuss the relationship that this iconography has with other monuments within the Delphic space, but for the most part scholarship has focused on finding an explanation for its Gigantomachy – though many have tried, there has yet to be an entirely persuasive argument or broad consensus.¹⁶ By comparison, however, the other treasuries have not gained similar attention, apart from perhaps the Athenian Treasury that this thesis will also discuss in Chapter Four.

Such specific attention to one monument amongst the many within Delphi might seem odd, but is in many ways an inevitable outcome of how the sanctuary has been approached by the archaeological surveys, which have often studied individual monuments in isolation, out of context with their surroundings and the wider landscape of the sanctuary. This has at times led to monuments being entirely removed from the Delphic realm altogether: Stansbury-O'Donnell (2010) uses the Siphnian Treasury to frame a much wider discussion of Greek art, presenting it as a chronological marker and comparative piece to better show development and advancement in Greek art. The Aegospotami monument appears on occasion in the field of Spartan studies, either in discussions of

¹⁶ Moore 1977; Watrous 1982; Partida 2000; Neer 2001; Scott 2010, Stansbury O'Donnell 2010.

Spartan visual culture and dedications, or in relation to Lysander and his politics – it also occasionally appears in discussions of military victory monuments.¹⁷ Likewise, the Athenian Treasury appears most frequently in discussions of Athenian politics and Athens' rise to imperial dominance or else detailed examination of its metopes,¹⁸ whereas the Naxian Sphinx appears infrequently in discussion at all, though when it does it finds itself used in discussions of hybrid animals, early Archaic art, the development of the ionic capital and the traditions of Cycladic sphinx iconography.¹⁹ Few studies give adequate weight to the Delphic context.

Perhaps inevitably, more studies have been dedicated to the best preserved monuments, but this approach has led to a disproportionate amount of attention being given to certain aspects of the sanctuary. That is not to condemn these: each one enriches our understanding of the monuments and the sanctuary too, as they often give valuable insight into perceptions of the site and its historical role. Monographs such as Scott's *Delphi and Olympia* (2010) have attempted to address this by giving a much broader, holistic overview of the monuments, but due to space limitations this also means that it is not always possible to give monuments thorough and detailed analysis.

For studies of individual monuments, focus on the promotion of the local identities of the dedicators has dominated, often without consideration of how these buildings were influenced and developed by the other messages being promoted around them.²⁰ Identity is, of course, an important aspect of Delphi, which held dedications from across the Greek world in a deeply competitive and widely viewed space, but there is a risk run in ignoring topographical contexts. Studies which do so are unable to integrate the complexities of the material interaction in the sanctuary into their analysis: these monuments exist not in isolation, but as a part of a network of messages and meanings. But this is not a universal problem: Richard Neer's articles on the Siphnian and Athenian Treasuries are careful

¹⁷ For example, Rice 1993; Stroszeck 2004; Palagia 2009; Ruzé 2017

¹⁸ For example: Agard 1923; Dinsmoor 1946; Picard 1946; Boardman 1982; Hölscher 1998; Neer 2004; Marconi 2006; von den Hoff 2009; Gensheimer 2017.

¹⁹ For example: White 1971; Ridgway 1977; McGowan 1997; Richens & Herdt 2009.

²⁰ Scott 2010, 20.

to integrate physical context into their discussions. These two articles run on from each other, the second building on ideas from the first. 'The Politics of the Siphnian Treasury at Delphi' (2001) examines the main themes and ideas surrounding treasuries themselves in the abstract before going on to look at the historical background of the island of Siphnos, its mines, and the particular political situation that led to this dedication.²¹ 'The Athenian Treasury at Delphi and the Material of Politics' (2004) builds on the ideas presented in the previous article, and in this case examines the Athenian Treasury as a 'material trace' of Athens in the 480s.²² Both take into consideration the material used in the building of the treasuries, and what those choices mean. They are both excellent studies in the historical context of the buildings, but what is particularly useful from an experiential perspective is the discussion of their relationships with each other and the temple, and they show an important step along the road to the broader experiential approach that this thesis is interested in. Following in Neer's footsteps, Maryl Gensheimer's 'Metaphors for Marathon in the Sculptural Program of the Athenian Treasury at Delphi' (2017) offers further discussion of the Athenian Treasury. This article is another that is focused on better understanding how the treasury reflects a particular political history, and does so through substantial analysis of its sculptural decoration.²³ It aims to recontextualise it within the context of the role of Theseus and Herakles in Marathon and in Athens, reading parallels for contemporary events in the specifics of the sculptural program. However, while Gensheimer positions the treasury at the heart of the study, it is an approach grounded in the idea of a viewer: she considers its alignment and the placement of its metopes in the context of how visitors to the sanctuary would have seen them, and how they would have moved around the building, adding to Neer's previous discussion by expanding our understanding of how this monument would have been experienced in antiquity, not just today. Like these articles, this thesis focuses on specific monuments, using them as key case studies. However, I am not viewing them in contextual isolation, instead using them as

²¹ Neer 2001.

²² Neer 2004.

²³ Gensheimer 2017.

representatives of themed spaces within Delphi, using analysis of them to better explain and understand the space, adding a new layer of meaning to previous studies.

0.1.3. The Delphic Oracle

The majority of Delphic scholarship is dedicated to the responses and processes of the oracle, and there are many notable works that are significant for the understanding of the Pythia. Flacelière's highly influential *Greek Oracles* (1961) dedicates an entire chapter to Delphi, the only oracle which receives such specific attention; Morgan's book *Athletes and Oracles* (1990), which examines Delphi and Olympia, devotes a chapter to the oracle without dedicating a comparable section to the Olympic Games; Fontenrose's *The Delphic Oracle. Its Responses and Operations with a Catalogue of Responses* (1978) provides lengthy catalogues and discussions of the oracular responses given at Delphi and is a cornerstone of the discipline, as is Parke and Wormell's *The Delphic Oracle* (1958). Maurizio (1995, 1997) focuses on the Pythia herself as a feminist figure, with particular interest in how oracles were given. Price's influential study (1985) focuses on the reasons behind consultation, as well as the way in which oracular consultation was used, not as a complete authority but a guiding tool to confirm predetermined decisions.²⁴

The role of the oracle has overshadowed much of what else went on in the sanctuary, but scholarship is varied in its approach to the subject. Some studies focus on its mythological beginnings,²⁵ or else are general studies of the sanctuary with a particular (and perhaps disproportionate) emphasis on the oracle itself.²⁶ Focus on the oracle's political consultations have also dominated the field, but scholarship has also been fascinated by the Pythian process.²⁷ Particular

²⁴ Flacelière 1937; Parke and Wormell 1958; Fontenrose 1959; Fontenrose 1978; Price 1985. Morgan 1990; Maurizio 1995, 1997.

²⁵ Defradas 1972.

²⁶ Hoyle 1967; Roux 1976; Delacourt 1981.

²⁷ Fontenrose 1978; Price 1985; Maurizio 1995, 1997.

focus has been given to the hexameter verse, the raving of the Pythia, as well as the potential for her breathing in fumes to inspire her communications. Untangling the fallacies of the oracle began in the 1950s, but these preconceptions continue, despite having very little grounding in our ancient literature. However, an increasing number of feminist studies of the Pythia have also emerged, attempting to better understand the significance of what is surely the most famous of the ancient Greek female religious offices.²⁸

Some examinations of the oracle do so from a particular perspective, such as Bowden's study *Classical Athens and the Delphic Oracle: Divination and Democracy* (2015), which explores the role that Delphic oracular consultation had in democratic Athens, examining all the known Athenian consultations of the oracle before 300 BCE (as well as fictional consultations found in Attic tragedy and comedy). This work provides an account of how the Delphic oracle functioned, but examines it in the context of Athens, and the relationship between Delphi and Athens, rather than situating the oracle within Delphi itself. Though it does spend some time discussing the actual mantic process, the interest clearly lies outside of the experiential realm of the sanctuary. This sort of study is not limited to geographic regions (though Sparta's relationship with the Delphic oracle has also been the source of some interest) but also includes thematic subjects, such as the Delphic oracle's relationship with Greek colonisation, as seen in Pease's *Notes on the Delphic Oracle and Greek Colonization* (1917) and Malkin's *Religion and Colonization in Ancient Greece* (1987).

The challenge that remains, to which the majority of scholarship on the oracle gives little attention, is the topographical and physical context of oracular consultation, and the role of consultation within the specific experience of visiting Delphi. There has been some discussion of the geological landscape of Delphi, particularly focused on attempting to prove the reality of the gases that (false) legend says the Pythia inhaled. A notable example of this are the publications of de Boer, Hale and Chanton (2001, 2002, 2003) although even they eventually concede that there is no real

²⁸ See Chapter Six for a more thorough discussion of the mantic process and scholarship's reaction to it ([pp. 261](#)).

evidence for the presence of any hallucinogenic gas ([pp. 267](#)).²⁹ Few studies have paid attention to the temple itself, and the process of oracular consultation within it. Ustinova's work *Caves and the Ancient Greek Mind: Descending Underground in the Search for Ultimate Truth* (2009) dedicates an entire chapter to the temple at Delphi and its artificial grotto, trying to understand the religious experience of the pseudo-cave and juxtaposing ancient testimonies with the results of modern neuropsychological research.³⁰ She also discusses similar themes in 'Cave Experiences and Ancient Greek Oracles' (2009). Coldstream also considers the emotional impact of movement, specifically from light to dark, in 'Greek Temples: Why and Where?' (1985).³¹ These provide useful insight into the mental process of consultation and the experiential side of the Delphic oracle, using the physical context to better inform our understanding of the mantic process and how that would have been experienced. That is what this thesis intends to do, dedicating the final chapter to the physical and sensorial impact of Delphic consultation. However, Ustinova and Coldstream study the temple independently of its broader Delphic context, and in comparison my work will remain conscious of the process that the visitor will have already undergone prior to reaching the temple platform, recontextualising both the temple and consultation within the landscape of Delphi.

0.1.4. Experiential approaches

Archaic and Classical literary accounts of Delphi rarely give insight into the experiences of the individual, and while the epigraphic record can enlighten us to an extent, these accounts make up a fraction of actual visitors. Furthermore, while many monument inscriptions identify dedicators, these are more often than not places rather than individuals, particularly in the later Archaic period, or else were added to the dedications at a later point in time. This throws the metaphorical spanner into the

²⁹ 'The exact area of intersection of the Delphi and Kerna faults cannot be determined.' (de Boer, Hale, and Chanton 2001, 708.)

³⁰ Ustinova 2009, 133-137.

³¹ Coldstream 1985, 97.

methodological works of modern studies of experience, which rely heavily on first-person response. We are forced to consider a different approach to experience. Here is the problem: experience is, in and of itself, subjective and individual. But we have no evidence from the individual and so to present any individualistic experience would be a fallacy. How then can we talk about experience?

There have been some sanctuary studies that have attempted to take a more visitor-oriented perspective. As we have already mentioned ([pp. 16](#)), Neer and Gensheimer both attempt to frame dedications within their immediate topographical locations. Both take care to emphasise the connection between the Athenian Treasury and the temple. Neer considers how the buildings relate to each other, but he does not root his visitor in any particular place, nor does he consider how the angles of view might alter the connections that he points out. Gensheimer pays attention to how the visitor's placement would alter and change their interpretation of the sculpture, but her visitor is abstract, and she does not discuss what else they would have seen, or the wider topography of the site. Likewise, Neer's article on the Athenian Treasury opens with a pilgrim arriving at Delphi and walking to the first corner of the Sacred Way, but after that we do not hear again from the pilgrim. Barringer's study of the architectural sculpture on the temple of Olympia (2005) is one of the more successful attempts to integrate material and visitor context, reanalysing the metopes as positive representations of competitive achievement from the perspective of a viewer competing in the Olympic Games. In *Delphi and Olympia* (2010), Scott uses the physical remains of the sanctuaries to show how visitors interacted with the space in various ways, in order to facilitate a much more thorough comparison between the two sanctuaries. It is an approach largely grounded in modern spatial studies, itself a comparatively new field of study. As Scott himself points out, until the 1970s the study of space was limited to measurement and categorisation rather than any form of constructive analysis. Very little attention was paid to the space of a Greek sanctuary unless there was evidence that some kind of deliberate planning had gone into the construction of that space.³²

³² Scott 2010, 13.

However, since then, the study of space has developed, reflecting the complex movements and negotiations of the people within particular spaces. This is a changing field, with advancements such as Hamilakis' *Archaeologies and the Senses: Human Experience, Memory, and Affect* (2013) but there remains work to be done. Clarke (1977) identified three levels for the study of space: the micro, which focuses on individual built structures; the macro, which attends to the wider landscape; and, the semi-micro, which sits somewhere between the two, demanding the understanding of the micro-level buildings in the context of the landscape that they sit within.³³ The macro and micro levels have reigned supreme in the study of Delphi, represented by both the detailed analysis of individual monuments, and discussions of the sanctuary and oracle's role in the wider Greek world. Though more recent studies have also attempted to look at Delphi within its local context,³⁴ this has been largely focused on its early years and remains at best an undercurrent within the scholarship dedicated to the sanctuary. As Scott remarks, there has been very limited spatial analysis of Delphi and Olympia within the Archaic and Classical periods, despite the fact that it was in these periods that both sanctuaries were at their busiest.³⁵ Scott adopts a semi-micro approach to the sanctuary, considering in particular the repetition of certain iconographic features throughout the sanctuary space, particularly when they are in the line of view of each other. He places his viewer at specific points throughout the sanctuary when considering these networks of messages but does not contextualise them in regard to what they would have been doing within the sanctuary space, nor in regard to what expectations these visitors might have had of the space. This is where the approach taken by this thesis differs, and where other areas of experiential scholarship come into play.

More broadly, experiential and reconstructive approaches to landscapes form an important point of comparison to this thesis. Scott's *Space and Society in the Greek and Roman Worlds* (2013) investigates in detail the way spatial dynamics can be framed and explored, and provides interesting

³³ Clarke 1977, 10.

³⁴ Morgan 1990; Morgan 1993; Hall 2007.

³⁵ Scott 2010, 18.

counterpoints and comparisons between civic and sanctuary spaces, which in the Greek world were overlapping yet distinct categories. This is a straightforward tactic, but others take a more experimental approach to the topic. Keith Hopkins' *A World Full of Gods* (2000) uses the framing device of narrative sections describing twentieth-century time travellers visiting the ancient past to further his own work. Though Hopkins himself acknowledges that this was a questionable experiment, he has (perhaps unfairly) become a warning for anyone attempting to create an experiential approach when looking at antiquity. His time travellers, who visit Pompeii, Egypt, and Ephesus are attempts to incorporate 'emphatic wonder, knowledge, pseudo-objective analysis, ignorance, competing assumptions and disagreements' into the discussion of ancient religion.³⁶ Putting aside the problems with this approach, it is clear that the point is to expose the obstacle of the viewer – the question of who is viewing, and where they come from.³⁷ Positioning the 'time traveller' figure in a piece of scholarship might be able to tell the reader about modern viewers and society, but lacks enough contemporary contextual cognition to help explain the past.

Another experiential avenue is that of the 'walk'. This has been a particularly popular concept in the study of ancient Rome, perhaps because of the interest in the urban space of the city, which does not necessarily translate across into Hellenic scholarship. Lynch's *The Image of the City* (1960) was a particularly notable example of this, which inspired a number of studies, including Zanker's vignettes of Augustan Rome and the impressions they would have left on the visitors' mind (1987) and Favro's walking experiment in *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (1996). The second and seventh chapters of Favro's monograph provide another useful comparison. Favro leads the reader on a walk through the landscape of Rome, first in 52 BCE and then again in 14 CE. The point of the study, and the focus of the other chapters, is to show the development of Augustan Rome, using fictional urban observers to frame the central argument. She argues that a building's context plays an important role in determining its impression on these visitors, and presumably this approach is intended to highlight

³⁶ Hopkins 2000, 3.

³⁷ Banchich 2000.

this. However, there are obvious and immediate problems with this. The urban observers are a Roman father and son in the first walk, but by the second they are a patrician grandfather and his granddaughter. There is no explanation of who these people are, why they have changed, what their personal contexts are, what they are expecting to see, why they are going on this walk. Once a situation attempts to introduce a 'real' figure, it must explain that figure or else run the risk of making them somewhat redundant.

Esther Eidinow's *Oracles, Curses and Risk Among the Ancient Greeks* (2007) creates a very brief fictional narrative that is employed in the text in two places: the first, at the beginning of the introduction, where a man by the name of Lysanias explains how a *mantis* once caused him to question the legitimacy of his unborn child, and he went to Dodona to ask the oracle. The oracular consultation itself is real and recorded: the narrative context is not.³⁸ Lysanias is prompted to tell this tale as another *mantis* is thrown out of a tavern: Eidinow returns to this *mantis*, Philistas, as the book switches focus from oracles to curses. In the second narrative, the bitter Philistas contemplates the binding curse tablets he has for sale, opening Eidinow's discussion of the same.³⁹ These are pseudo-experiential pieces, however, and differ significantly from both Hopkins and Favro. Like Favro, these are ancient figures, and like Hopkins, the narrative stories are fictionalised, but Eidinow uses them purely to set the scene. Her first descriptive section is grounded in a real oracular example, created to introduce the reader to the more casual encounter with an oracle, and the second is to signpost the change in the theme of the book. The scenes serve a function, but the characters themselves do not: they do not impact Eidinow's analysis, nor do they serve to create a fictionalised view of antiquity.

Corrigan remarks that many of the issues taken with previous approaches to studying ancient material culture is the neglect of the importance of the viewer's input in the construction of meaning: scholars have had a tendency to see the meaning of the image determined by the patron and artist

³⁸ Eidinow 2007, 1-2.

³⁹ Eidinow 2007, 139.

alone, without considering the viewer's role in understanding and interpreting that meaning.⁴⁰ However, scholars who attempt to integrate a constructed viewer leave themselves open to criticism of creating a fabricated view of the ancient world. This thesis approaches Delphi with that problem in mind: while interested in the viewer, it does not create one for the sake of the study. If personal records existed detailing the experience of an individual visiting Delphi in the Classical period, then perhaps it would be a different matter – however, such records do not survive, if indeed they ever existed. More to the point, my approach here is to understand experience broadly, not to attempt to isolate particular individuals within the vast scope of those who would visit Delphi.

As such, my visitor will remain deliberately abstract in these terms, as already noted above ([pp. 2](#)). With a different sanctuary which enjoyed a more specific or regional audience, it might be safe enough to create a visitor profile of sorts, specific to the type of person most likely to visit the sanctuary. However, Delphi saw an enormous – if not unparalleled – variety in those who came to attend festivals, consult the Pythia, even just to view the space. To pick one individual identity from these masses would be an arbitrary exercise unless we wished to study *that* identity. But even then, this would be complicated by the necessity of considering intersectional identities that make up the concept of, for example, an Athenian, and even if we were to break down these divides to create one very specific profile, we would then run into the problem of subjectivity and context, both of which would colour any conclusions. For this reason, we will be following the wave of scholarship on Delphi by not creating any such specific profiles. For example, Valavanis (2004) discusses visitors to the sanctuary purely in the context of athletic games, which is unsurprising given the nature of his study; Neer, in his in-depth studies of the Siphnian and Athenian treasuries (2001, 2004), only considers the particular messages that any visitors might be taking in from the monuments; Scott (2010) pays the most attention to his visitors, considering how they would view the monuments, concerning himself with spatial alignment and angles of view. Scott's work clearly considers how the visitor moves

⁴⁰ Corrigan 2008, 68.

through the space and understands the spatial messages, but the aim of the book is not to examine the question of the *context within which* the visitors are viewing these monuments.

The context of viewing is central to my approach, inspired by such studies as Lorenz's 'Dialectics at a Standstill: Archaic kouroi-cum-epigram as I-box' (2010) in which the spatial context of viewing (such as where the viewer stands to observe, how height and distance change the view, and so on) is proven to be critical. Likewise, sensory studies provide invaluable additional avenues to explore the context of viewing. Sensory studies is a recent and growing trend in the study of classical antiquity, and is socially and historically specific. Like this thesis, it is more than an attempt to reconstruct a moment or an event:

the archaeologies of the senses are attempts to come to terms with the fully embodied, experiential matter-reality of the past; to understand how people produce their subjectivities, their collectively and experientially founded identities, how they live their daily routines and construct their own histories, through the sensuous and sensory experience of matter.⁴¹

There are a number of significant sensorial studies that examine different aspects of the sensorial landscape of antiquity, including the recent *Senses of the Empire: Multisensory Approaches to Roman Culture* (2017), edited by E. Betts, which provides a wide variety of sensorial studies in different contexts. Significant strides have been made examining both individual senses and synaesthesia, and it is the interweaving of synaesthesia and cultural interaction upon which my context of viewing often relies. This volume creates a vivid image of the ancient world, bringing together topics such as polychromatic public buildings and statues, the smells of sacrificial meat, the noise of traffic and the urban landscape, and the movement and response to such things by the human body. Phenomenological approaches provide further insight into the lived experiences of material remains, creating an effective combination of literary and archaeological evidence, allowing for a nuanced

⁴¹ Hamilakis 2011, 208.

reevaluation of topics that had already been discussed elsewhere. This is particularly notable in discussions of ritual activities, where fresh study of the sensory aspects of rituals enliven our understanding of the experience of them. With Archaic and Classical Delphi, we are somewhat limited by our sources, which are not detailed enough in their descriptions of events and of the sanctuary to provide comprehensive information about the sensory landscape. However, where possible, this thesis will bring in such sensory evidence to provide as broad and layered an understanding of experience as possible.

Hamilakis suggests that many attempts at sensory study assume a solitary observer, often the archaeologist themselves, who experiences a site or a monument as if for the first time, ignoring the mnemonic experiential context of such visits, which would have been filtered through countless multisensory collective memories and interactions.⁴² This 'solitary observer' is more than just an individual standing alone and observing a monument: they exist outside of the cultural framework that an ancient visitor would have existed in, and have a singular identity. It is this fact that prevents me from producing any one visitor, or indeed inventing a modern narrative of the site. Hamilakis notes that the visual sense has been privileged and separated from the other senses, which is certainly true. He suggests that a more impactful sensory approach is one which does not separate the senses and study them as isolated ideas. Instead, he proposes a broader, multi-temporal sensorial field that includes material substances, light and shadow, memories, and ideas. Hamilakis' sensory landscape is one shaped by prior knowledge, by political and historical awareness, and by communal memory.⁴³

Embodied cognition and sensory analysis provides another avenue of discussion. The work of Schjoedt has been particularly relevant to this thesis, using the predictive coding model to analyse ancient religious and ritual experiences. The predictive coding model is a useful tool for analysing and understanding experiences. It is based on the idea that cognitive processing works by the brain

⁴² Hamilakis 2011, 211.

⁴³ Hamilakis 2011, 116.

creating models of the world informed by prior expectations and experiences (the top down input), which it uses to help predict and anticipate what happens in any given moment or specific experience. The brain then checks this model against a constant stream of sensory input, correcting the model as necessary. In the context of religious experiences and ritual processes, this works on the assumption that religious institutions, individuals and wider social knowledge will impart a top-down prior expectation to participants: in this case, a visitor to Delphi will arrive with a presupposition of what they will do, see and engage with, probably particularly in the case of oracular consultation. However, cult experiences often work by depriving sensory input, making it harder for participants to check these expectations against bottom-up sensory information, ensuring maximum susceptibility to their expectations and emphasising the sacred nature of the process.⁴⁴ This is also done through the architecture and layout of space as well, by creating angles of view and in turn denying visual access to significant places within the sanctuary until specific moments. Sensory denial increases abstract processing, forcing the visitor to focus on other senses instead: this is particularly the case with darkness, which limits the visual input, but can be true of auditory input too. Abstract processing forces a visitor to engage more with other aspects of the sensory landscape, heightening the experiences of a space. The presence of religious authorities such as priests, the anticipation of supernatural presence and agency, and the role of meditation, prayer, ritual movement and other group activities all play a significant role in the construct of religious experiences, as we will discuss later.⁴⁵

My approach will consider experience as a broader phenomenon of the sanctuary space, looking at how *the sanctuary* would affect experience rather than any one sense: like Hamilakis, I will take into account light and shadow, movement, and preconceived ideas. Communal memory is also

⁴⁴ For further discussion of this area, see Frith 2007; Friston and Kiebel 2009; Friston 2010; Schjoedt 2018; Schjoedt and Jensen 2018; Schjoedt 2019; Scott forthcoming.

⁴⁵ Schjoedt and Jensen 2018; Schjoedt 2019. For further discussion of embodied cognition, see Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Bruce, Green & Georgesen 2003; Mylonopoulos 2006; Forster, Liberman and Kuschel 2008; Steidle, Werth and Hanke, 2011; Eidinow 2018, Scott forthcoming.

critical: collective social memory impacts how visitors would understand or interpret monuments, and therefore how the sanctuary would have been understood. While this method will never achieve the nuance afforded by studying individual experiences, it will give us a better understanding of how Delphi fits within the broader Greek world, and perhaps too a more complex explanation for the longstanding significance and importance of Delphi beyond simply the influence of its Pythia or the prestige of its games. After all, there were many oracles and many athletic competitions within the Greek world – what is it about the Delphic experience that makes it so special?

0.2. Research Questions

The overarching question that this thesis asks is how visitors from around Greece would have experienced Delphi in the Archaic and Classical periods and how that experience contributed to ideas of social, political, cultural, religious, and mythical identity. First of all, we must look at the way the site is presented in contemporary literary sources in order to understand what preconceptions of the site a visitor would have had before visiting, and how expectations would have shaped how our visitor would have engaged with and understood the landscape of the sanctuary. Which features and activities of the site were selected and prioritised in these literary representations, and which were omitted? How are they described, and what expectations might a visitor have had prior to arrival? The nature of the literary evidence is such that some of these sources were written well after the period with which this thesis is concerned, and so we must approach them cautiously, since they may reflect a cultural legacy of Delphi rather than the exact experiences of an Archaic or Classical visitor.

Experience is a broad and nebulous term: to understand it, we must break it down. The chapters of this thesis will look at different themes, monuments, and spaces, and to an extent the experiences I will explore will overlap within these. To begin with, we must ask how social experiences, particularly in terms of identity expression, would have impacted the visitor. Delphi's multi-cultural

and panhellenic nature created an arena wherein identity was expressed in a number of different ways, and we will examine how this was done through its material and literary landscape. Identity could be expressed through the use of a local hero or figure, relating to other monuments, constructing spaces dominated by a particular dedicator, or by referring to a specific social feature of the dedicatory community. A significant part of this social experience will be political, so we must ask: what role does political competition have in a visitor's experience? Delphi was a site visited and used by significant Hellenic communities and figures in a number of different ways throughout its history, and so it is not surprising that its material record is often politicized. We must look at the role that political competition had on the space and on the visitor's understanding of, by examining how these political relationships played out through the presentation of military, economic and social competition. We shall, therefore, investigate how monuments explore these ideas as well as how they compete with each other in the space, and how specific types of dedications work in different ways. Cultural experiences also play a role, particularly in terms of shared ideas and social behaviours within the space, and the multi-layered complexity of how individual, civic, and Hellenic identities intersect through the representation of specific historical moments, shared beliefs, cult activities and cultural practices.

How are references to myth used in the construction of messages that a visitor would have seen? The many monuments of the site often refer to mythical stories or scenes, and the mythic experience of the site is significant, not least because of the mythologization of the oracle. To understand this, we must question how dedicators used mythological scenes to present different messages and identities, how specific scenes and figures were utilised in pursuit of this, and how the use of mythology changes the understanding of the Delphic space itself: whether, in fact, the monuments in turn work to mythologise Delphi. Connected to this, we must also ask: what religious experiences might a visitor have undergone? Delphi is a religious site, and so it is also important to examine what the religious experience of the site is, informed by depictions of gods, conceptualisations of sacred space, and cult activity. In Delphi, in particular, this will centre around

the engagement with the space and with the Delphic oracle, and so we must ask what a visitor would have done to consult the oracle, what the mantic processes are, and how these are constructed to strengthen the authority and presence of Apollo. Related to this is the unifying experience of the mantic rituals of the sanctuary, and I intend to look at how these are closely linked to the architecture and art of the space. Reverence for the sanctuary and for the Pythia were shown through sacred architecture, reinforcing the significance of the place and their actions to the visitor, and so I wish to examine how this impacted the experience of the space.

Practically speaking, we must ask of our case studies: what do the monuments tell us about the Greek world and specific moments of history, and how are themes within the sanctuary represented? What cultural, social, and political moments do these represent, and how would a visitor have understood them? These inform the experience of the site, evoking specific emotions or causing the visitor to reflect on past events. These monuments might bring out specific recollections, or else reinforce the messages of the sanctuary as a whole, and each must be examined in detail to understand this. Rather than dividing the site strictly by topic or specific experiences, my approach examines the sanctuary as a series of transitional moments as the visitor moved through the space: my intention is to fully incorporate the topography and trajectory of the Sacred Way into this study. I am interested in the way that the space at Delphi has divided itself, whether organically or by planning, into monument types and themes, a perspective that has not been systematically discussed before. In each chapter we will investigate a specific theme that is represented extensively within the sanctuary, and so we will also ask how these monuments evoke those themes (triumphalism, timocracy, mythology and divine presence), and how this changes the nature of the space a visitor would walk through: how do the various elements of the monument represent the theme? What can the sculpture and decoration, iconography and style, materials used, inscriptions and other elements added over time, contexts represented, and the narrative the monument and/or dedicators present, tell us? It is important not to examine these monuments in isolation, so we must also ask how other dedications connect with our case study, how spaces are themed, and how areas of the sanctuary

construct their own narratives and fit within the process of movement through the space. I am particularly interested in how monuments used multiple strategies to send these messages: the topographical placement and the integration of the landscape; connections and call-outs to other nearby monuments; architectural and sculptural forms, styles and designs; inscriptions and motifs; references to specific moments and events in history.

I will use the framework of Clarke's three levels for the study of space to achieve this ([pp. 21](#)).⁴⁶ Each chapter will ask, therefore, how do micro, macro and semi-micro analyses intersect, and how does this further our understanding of the monument? Once the monument has been discussed, we must ask what the historical context and background was, and how it would have impacted the visitor. The monuments represent specific moments in time and force the visitor to recall past events and moments of significance, creating a sense of experienced history. This is often related to real historical events, but sometimes more generally to a mythological past, and we shall consider whether there is a difference in how these are presented from an experiential perspective. We need to understand the viewing context, and what the visitor would have been doing within the space, and so we will ask: how does the monument and the Delphic context intersect for the visitor?

What is the impact of movement and transition on a visitor? We must presuppose movement through the sanctuary, along the line of the Sacred Way, and with this in mind I have incorporated a relatively underused textual genre into this thesis: the guidebook. Often detailed and systematic, guidebooks to Delphi move through the sanctuary space much as I envision my own visitor doing. Examples such as Andronicos' *Delphi* (1987) provide detailed information on the space and the notable monuments within it, and more importantly for this study how people might expect to move through the space, and what aspects of the sanctuary they should expect to engage with. It is with this in mind that I will look at movement through the sanctuary. Furthermore, we need to examine the impact of the space as a whole, and the monuments specifically, on the visitor, and ask: what is the impact of

⁴⁶ Clarke 1977, 10.

the immediate space on the visitor's understanding of the monument and overall experience? What other monuments are there, and do they create visual connections? Is there any thematic connection between monuments in a particular space? I am interested in the politicisation of the space and of monument crowding, particularly at the entrance and first turn of the Sacred Way, as well as how the inclusion of particular figures or sculptural forms might create a sense of the divine or the otherworldly for the visitor. I intend to look at the presentation of victories and how these encouraged visitors to think in particular ways about certain states or cities at different times, as well as how particular forms were constructed to present particular messages, such as how the treasury form is used to display economic and timocratic pre-eminence. What is interesting about this attitude is how it places visitors within a complex framework of inter-state competition, and how spaces came to be owned by particular places: though the land was Delphi's, these monuments created pockets of territory connected to other *poleis*, particularly Athens and Sparta, creating a strange geographic juxtaposition for a visitor, as if they are literally moving through the landscape of Greece as a whole rather than just one sanctuary within it. At the same time, however, I intend to look at how elements of the sanctuary work to unify and create a sense of cohesion within the space.

0.3. Methodologies

The history of Delphi is so extensive that it would not be feasible to attempt to discuss it in its entirety, and so this study will focus on monuments from between c. 570 and 400 BCE. We cannot securely date the majority of our material evidence to a single decade, let alone a particular year,⁴⁷ and so I will not pin this study specifically, as it seems arbitrary to do so: my assumption is that our visitor will be moving through the sanctuary at some point soon after the dedication of the Aegospotami monument in 405 BCE. Having a 'visitor' has been a central part of the methodology of

⁴⁷ Although we can securely date monuments such as the Siphnian and Athenian Treasuries thanks to their inscriptions or connections to particular historical moments, many others can only be dated stylistically, which has often caused a great deal of debate in scholarship.

this thesis from its earliest stages. There is a careful line to walk between trying to understand an experience and reconstructing it, between trying to imagine ancient people and creating fictional versions of them, as we have already discussed ([pp. 21](#)). Using a visitor might appear to some as a technique that would push a study into dangerous territory, but there is as much necessity to shaping a study around such a figure as there is risk. A study of experience runs the risk of it becoming the scholar's experience, or at least, how the scholar believes they would have experienced the space at the time: a visitor allows us to ground our focus within the ancient context. Using a visitor also allows us to explore the sensory landscape in a coherent way, as well as to link the social conceptions of, movements through, monuments in and rituals of the sanctuary in a unified way: these are, and have always been, studied in a disparate way, but a visitor brings them together. By using a visitor, I hope to gain a unity of approach in regards to the sanctuary, and also to keep my study grounded within that ancient context.

Experience is a vague and varied term that can be used in any number of different ways, often without real explanation of our meaning: it is a mental process that varies from moment to moment and person to person, but at the root of experience is the idea of participation in and understanding of experienced time, whether that is an activity, a particular moment, or a communication.⁴⁸ Many studies of religious experiences rely on first-hand evidence from those who have undergone such a process, cross-comparing accounts of similar events to create a better understanding of the process and its impact.⁴⁹ We have no comparable material from Delphi, but in many ways this does not matter. There are problems with using first-hand material: analysis is limited by the choices in vocabulary and description, and accounts are always taken after the fact, when time and the presupposition of the study (i.e., the fact that the individual is participating in a study on religious experience, lending weight to the experience in question) itself might have altered the memory.⁵⁰ Similarities in descriptions have

⁴⁸ Yamane 2000, 176.

⁴⁹ Margolis and Elifson 1979; Hay and Heald 1987; Argyle and Beit-Hallahmi 2014.

⁵⁰ Cole 1926, 474-476; Proudfoot 1985, 217.

to be examined to make sure that they have not been derived from another source, or indeed from individuals within the study altering their stories subconsciously after hearing the accounts of other people. As such, the fact that we cannot approach Delphi through a series of first-hand accounts or person-based case-studies is in many ways a blessing: it would be near impossible to apply the same level of investigation to ancient accounts as is applied in modern studies.

Instead, this thesis will integrate different types of evidence to create a better sense of the experiential context of Delphi. Focusing on material artefacts is increasingly seen as a gateway into previously ignored structures of meaning, and it is with this in mind that I approach the sanctuary experience.⁵¹ We are lucky with Delphi that so much of it remains or has been reconstructed, and it is from this broad evidence base that this thesis will take its case studies. I will use a combination of photographic and plate images, maps, and tables to help illustrate this thesis, and these have been separated in my list of illustrations for ease. This range of media will help to give a sense of the material available, and clarify specific points, such as my table illustrating the different identifications of the metopes on the Athenian Treasury in Chapter Four ([Fig. 4.10; pp. 202](#)). It would be impossible to cover everything, or even all the main monuments, without this thesis turning into a broader survey of the material, and so particular dedications will be highlighted and examined in greater detail. Because this study is experiential in nature, and the placement and location of these monuments is vital, greater weight is placed on architectural dedications and what can be securely positioned: of the four 'moments' I examine, all of them have locations that have been identified without question. Two are buildings: the Athenian Treasury and the Temple of Apollo; two have bases that remain in situ: the Naxian Sphinx and the Aegospotami monument. Panhellenic sanctuaries offer a unique opportunity to examine the Hellenic world and collective experience, and in turn help to construct that Hellenic identity in the first place. By including monuments dedicated by Athens and Sparta, I incorporate the histories of two of Delphi's most important patrons, as well as two of the most defining historical

⁵¹ Kindt 2011, 701.

moments from the Hellenic world (the end of the Persian War and the end of the Peloponnesian War); Naxos allows me to explore the more fringe elements of the Hellenic world as well as the activities of other sanctuaries in relation to Delphi (in this case, Delos); the temple allows me to incorporate and discuss Delphi-specific ritual frameworks. The materiality of such places, therefore, gives us a relatively unique window into understanding the Greek world in a much wider sense than the study of any local sanctuary space. By examining the scope and scale of interactions that a visitor would have had with individual monuments as well as with the site as a collective whole, I aim to examine how the arrangement of the site affected the way that visitors interacted with individual monuments, and how specific monuments would have created specific reactions from the visitors. We must also consider how people understood and thought of the sanctuary space, and how these ideas were continually reinforced over time by the physical landscape of the sanctuary itself. This thesis will also include literary evidence: the strength of my approach is the integration of literary texts with the monuments themselves, creating an expanded view of the site and its visitors.

Corrigan argues that often, in the study of visual material, singular interpretations are put forward, as opposed to more functional, broader interpretations that recognise the multiplicity of material interpretation and understanding.⁵² Objects will never have a singular meaning, since the intellectual, social, and political background of the viewer would have prompted a multiplicity of responses at any given time.⁵³ Pearce's study focuses on this phenomenon, which she labels 'the dynamics of viewing', in a museum context: she remarks that the message or meaning which the object offers is always incomplete, and it is the role of the viewer to fill in the gaps.⁵⁴ As Bauer remarks, our ability to make interpretations and understand meanings is contingent on our own patterns of contextualisation.⁵⁵ Viewing is an active event, in which the viewer participates in the creation of meaning and in the dialogue through which they understand both material culture and the experience

⁵² Corrigan 2008, 68.

⁵³ Rose 2010, 49-50.

⁵⁴ Pearce 1994, 26.

⁵⁵ Bauer 2002, 47.

of space.⁵⁶ In order to best understand the site of Delphi, we must bring together all relevant aspects of the sanctuary: the material evidence, the landscape and topography, the sensorial landscape, literary accounts of visiting the sanctuary, and culturally mnemonic memories of the site that were passed down through communities. In using such a broad evidence base I intend to create a holistic view of experience that encompasses all facets of the sanctuary; in narrowing my attention to a few, specific moments, I hope to show how this works in practice, provide a framework for future study, and draw attention to previously underrepresented aspects of the sanctuary.

0.4. Structure

This thesis will begin with two chapters that consider the wider evidence for the sanctuary. Firstly, a diachronic chapter will lay out the written and archaeological evidence chronologically, then a second, synchronic chapter provides a walkthrough of the sanctuary, outlining the different sections of the space and the order in which a visitor would come across the monuments. It is important to give this overview to ensure that readers have a clear understanding of how the space operates, what would and would not be in our chronological period, and where it would have appeared, before breaking it down. Our archaeological record shows that Delphi is a competitive and crowded space, a fact supported by our literary evidence.⁵⁷ I have chosen to divide the sanctuary into several smaller areas, and to focus on those areas individually. These will focus on the areas around the Aegospotami monument, the Athenian Treasury, the Naxian Sphinx, and the Temple of Apollo: focused spaces that are the busiest and most visually impactful areas of the sanctuary. Viewing the visitors as engaged in a process of movement is key to understanding how it would have been experienced: our visitors are not isolated, abstract entities who appear at the monument, but people who would have undergone

⁵⁶ Brubaker 2008, 63.

⁵⁷ Pausanias 10; Plutarch *De Pythiae oraculis*, 29-30; Euripides *Ion*.

and experienced other details of the sanctuary first. These sections will be set out clearly in Chapter Two with the use of maps, and these spaces would have been the focus of a visitor's attention due to their placement, details, and cult significance, and so are important in understanding the complex relationship that existed between the person visiting the sanctuary, the cult and ritual aspects of the visit and the sanctuary, and the material evidence of the site as a whole. By studying the sanctuary in this way, we travel through the space with the visitor, engaging with the process of movement and with the changing, fluid experience.

These monuments will form the basis of the remaining four chapters, and each represents key monument types within a panhellenic sanctuary space: temples, treasuries (and their architectural dedications), multi-figure and single-figure dedications. Had space and the nature of our evidence allowed it, I would also have liked to include small-scale evidence and votive niches, but it is next to impossible to securely place smaller dedications to a particular place within the sanctuary, and equally difficult to identify what would have been held in niches. To ensure this study operates within a manageable framework, we shall focus on one monument within each area as the primary evidence for an exploration of the network of connections within each. It is in connection to these 'hotspots' that I will address the questions of what people do and what people see in the sanctuary, by closely examining a particular monument and its inter-relationships with other aspects of the space. Each of these areas is notable for having distinct types of monuments that cluster together. Each chapter title refers to the 'architecture of' the particular theme, because each will examine the complex and careful design and production of the theme in question, how it has been displayed and implemented in the monument in a coherent and structured way. These chapters will follow a clear framework: first, I will introduce the theme that the chapter will focus on, then the space, followed by a detailed explanation and analysis of the monument itself. Following this, I will address the historical or social context of the monument, particularly anything pertinent to the theme. With that in mind, the following section will provide detailed analysis of the connections between the monument and theme, and the final section will recontextualise the monument within the Delphic landscape, thinking in detail about how it would

have been experienced not just in the abstract, but how the individual visiting Delphi would have understood these messages.

In Chapter Three, which looks at victory monuments and triumphalism, we will focus on the Aegospotami monument, and examine how the space at the entrance to the sanctuary became representative of inter-state Hellenic competition, looking at how the different monuments and dedicators transferred political tensions to a monumental battlefield in Delphi. It will focus on the role and intentions of Lysander in creating this monument, how the presentation of themes of apotheosis and divine transcendence would have appeared to a viewer, and what the impact of his dedication would have been within this space. Following this, Chapter Four will look at the presentation of timocratic excellence and the Delphic treasuries, focusing on the Athenian Treasury in particular. This chapter will look at the significance of wealth through decoration, materials, and iconographical messages to see how the Athenians presented a message of timocratic power and cultural superiority across the Hellenic world. This will also examine how the visual connections between treasuries created a network of messages that a visitor was forced to participate in by moving through the space, and how this impacted the experience. Chapter Five will examine mythological depiction and free-standing sculpture through the Naxian Sphinx, and how its presentation of a specifically Cycladic monument type and its highly dramatic form would have worked to create a sense of both the historical and the mythological past for a visitor. Finally, Chapter Six will look at the Temple of Apollo and oracular consultation, examining how visitors would have entered the temple and engaged with the mantic process, and how the material context and mnemonic cultural perception of the oracle would have impacted the experience of a viewer.

Chapter One

Evidence and Experience

How did it all begin? Who chose such a difficult building site, so hard of access, subject to rock falls, liable to earthquakes? No one in their senses.⁵⁸

The evidence for Delphi is extensive, and it is not my intention in this chapter to review it in its entirety – to do so would require the full length of this thesis. But to understand the Delphi that visitors would have experienced, we must have a sense of both the material and the literary landscape that our visitors would know. To do this, we need to understand the physical site itself, from its origins through to its closure, and what the literary record can tell us about the it. Excluded from this will be literary discussions of the oracle: such a corpus is extensive, rarely mentions the site itself, and will be dealt with in Chapter Six ([pp. 261](#)). This chapter is divided into two parts: the first will survey the physical evidence in chronological order to give a clear sense of the development of the site, and the second will examine how Delphi is presented in the literary record to see what constructed ideals and messages are present in the conscious understanding of the sanctuary. The archaeological record tells us what was important to the dedicators and what physical features and materials visitors would be likely to see: the literary record shows us what themes, ideas and associations have been created around Delphi by a wide range of highly educated, literate, elite visitors across the *longue-durée* of classical antiquity, and what common ideas potential visitors might have had prior to arrival. The archaeological section of this chapter will survey both evidence from before and after my principle time period. In so doing, it will show not only what was dedicated during my time period, but also what dedications from earlier might have been visible to a visitor, as well as clarifying exactly what

⁵⁸ Pentreath 1964, 77.

monuments would not have been present. Likewise, the literary section will show what visitors might have already read or heard, and the literary sources from after my period show what themes and ideas were still present around Delphi. Many of these, as we shall see, continue previous traditions, showing what themes were significant in cultural consciousness. It also allows me to identify clear chronological themes within the dedicatory tradition, and at what periods certain types of dedications were popular. Considering both of those things, the final section of this chapter will summarise the factors and the physical and narratological stimuli we need to be aware of when trying to analyse the sanctuary space as an experience. This thesis examines Delphi in the Archaic and Classical periods, but this chapter will survey the evidence from Delphi's entire history. This is, in part, to understand everything that would have been present by the time our visitor arrived, but also to explore how Delphi was understood and depicted throughout its lengthy history.

1.1. Material evidence and Archaeology

The modern site of Delphi is impressive: with the reconstructed Athenian treasury, temple columns and extensive remains, there is much to see beyond the views. This is, in part, due to its lengthy and intensive excavation, which began in trial form in 1840 and continues to this day.⁵⁹ The wealth of evidence is due both to quantity of dedications, and to the history of earthquakes in the area, which resulted in the covering and preservation of materials that might otherwise have been eroded, repurposed, looted or destroyed. We owe much to the dump deposits of antiquity, which have proven an invaluable source of material. Excavation and preservation, as well as ancient literary sources, mean that we have a detailed picture of what the sanctuary looked like throughout its history. This section is based mainly on the archaeological record, but does on occasion also reference literary sources for monuments when the material record lacks detail or evidence: to create a successful

⁵⁹ For a summary of the excavation history, see Bommelaer 1991, 9-11; Cabanes 2002, 281-282; Scott 2014, 269-284. Pre-excavation finds: Hellmann 1992, 42, 49.

overview of the site material it is necessary at times to rely on both. Scott remarks that despite the tendency to characterise Greek space as being physically open, the reality is often much more varied and should be characterised by indeterminacy. Rather than viewing this as a negative, Scott frames it as a positive, particularly in terms of sanctuary space. Though he is discussing Delos specifically, the same holds true for Delphi, as we shall see in this chapter: such variation and indeterminacy allowed for the growth and creation of a space where different communities could interact, and where a higher degree of cultural interaction was encouraged.⁶⁰

1.1.1. Mycenaean Evidence

By the thirteenth century, there is evidence for an extensive settlement in Marmaria, the site which would later become the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, including house structures, burial mounds, and over two hundred Mycenaean figurines: it is possible that cult activity originated at the Marmaria site, rather than the Apollo sanctuary site.⁶¹ There is no evidence for any monumental architecture or significant building work at the Apollo site, and the stratigraphical record shows that the Apollo sanctuary does not follow the building layouts of the Mycenaean period, which we would expect if they had a cult function and the later sanctuary developed from them.⁶² Much of the evidence from this period lacks contextual data and appears to have been redistributed in antiquity. The evidence is predominantly terracotta, and consists of oxen and dog figurines, as well as numerous female figurines in the standard phi and psi types (Fig. 1.1). It is generally thought that these are representative of small, local or domestic shrines rather than an organised cult.⁶³ There has been extensive debate since Schliemann's day around the interpretation of votives from this era and of this type and what they are supposed to mean, and it is outside the scope of this discussion to attempt to reach a consensus

⁶⁰ Scott 2013, 161-163.

⁶¹ Perdrizet 1908, 5-7; Lerat 1935, 184-207; Amandry 1938, 305-307; Styrenius 1967, 144-145; Themelis 1983, 248-250; Morgan 1990, 107; Dietrich 1992, 41-58.

⁶² Amandry 1950, 321-322; Lerat 1961, 338-352; Themelis 1983, 248-250.

⁶³ Picard 1948; Tzonou-Herbst 2002; Kolonia 2006.

here.⁶⁴ General analysis of them, however, does often connect back to Delphi: Hermann, Hiller, Morris and Amandry all suggest a link between the tripod of the Pythia and the common terracotta tripod seat form. Much of this debate, however, is centred around revivalist eighth century forms, and in either case the broad use of these forms across the Aegean means that a specific connection between these types and Delphi is unlikely.⁶⁵



Figure 1.1. Mycenaean terracotta figurines (1400-1200 BCE). From Kolonia 2006, 32.

1.1.2. Ninth century

The settlement seems to have declined suddenly at the end of the Mycenaean period, with a break in the evidence that Morgan argues indicates a hiatus in settlement in the immediate area until c. 875/860.⁶⁶ The reasons for this are unclear, but it is not without precedent: numerous settlements were abandoned in this period. Reestablishment of the settlement does not seem to have come about

⁶⁴ Schliemann 1880; Tsountas and Manatt 1897; Blegen 1937; Picard 1948; Wace 1949; Nilsson 1971; Hägg 1981; Renfrew 1985; McDonald and Thomas 1990; Wright 1994; Tzonou-Herbst 2002.

⁶⁵ Amandry 1950, 1986; Hermann 1982; Hiller 1983; Morris 1992.

⁶⁶ Morgan 1990, 107-108. See also: Lerat 1938, 207-208; Desborough 1952, 199; Amandry 1950, 326.

until the mid-ninth century, datable through the ceramic evidence,⁶⁷ though there is a notable lack of tombs in the area until much later, in the seventh century.⁶⁸ Does this suggest that the growing activity was cult, rather than domestic or urban? Not necessarily: burials may have simply occurred elsewhere. Morgan argues that this was an urban settlement due to the nature of the ceramic evidence: if so, it was fairly substantial in size for the period, and seems to have grown as a dispersed cluster of houses, following many other settlements in the period.⁶⁹ Recent evidence suggests that some bronze shields and spears, previously dated to the eighth or seventh centuries, may actually belong to the thirteenth to eleventh century. If these are dedications, they suggest a more complex and continuous cult presence at Delphi than previously thought, possibly from the late eleventh to the ninth: cult practices seem to be maintained elsewhere, such as Olympia, and perhaps a Delphic cult was also maintained in this gap.⁷⁰ However, without contextual information and broader evidence, it is pure speculation, and there is little additional evidence to challenge Morgan's view. It seems likely that there was no long history of cult activity in Delphi: a sudden decline at the end of the Mycenaean period leads into an archaeological silence, followed by a sudden appearance of small bronzes and tripods at the end of the ninth/beginning of the eighth century. Morgan argues that the most likely reason for the lack of slow build up or natural patterns of growth is that Delphi had a small, local shrine that saw a sudden boost in popularity, coinciding with and exacerbated by a steep rise in population across the Itea plain and a decline in the power of Medeon.⁷¹ Tomlinson doubts that any cult activity prior to this migration was connected to Apollo, arguing that he was an imported god of this period.⁷²

⁶⁷ Lerat 1961, 352-357; Morgan 1988, 314-15; Morgan 1990, 108.

⁶⁸ Morgan 1990, 109. Lemos mentions one Early Protogeometric burial from the west of the sanctuary, and a Submycenaean/Early Protogeometric burial in the dromos of a Mycenaean chamber tomb. Lemos 2002, 171; Snodgrass 1971, 203-205; Lerat 1937, 44.

⁶⁹ Morgan 1990, 106-107. See Themelis 1983 for full details of the Iron age evidence and its distribution. Also: Amandry 1950, 321-322; Lerat 1961 338-352, 338-351; Amandry 1981, 721f; Morgan 1990, 109.

⁷⁰ Luce 1993; Morgan 2003, 121; Molloy 2018, 282. Olympia: Eder 2001, Whitley et al. 2007.

⁷¹ Morgan 1990, 106; 115; 126-128.

⁷² Tomlinson 1976, 64.

1.1.3. Eighth Century

Though there may have been a growing local cult, it is probably safe to assume the beginning of a dedicated sanctuary space did not occur until the eighth century at the earliest. Whether there was a boundary is unclear, but there was some understanding of the sacred space: domestic settlement buildings were driven out of what we know later became the sanctuary space towards the end of the century. What we can assume from this is that a sub-section of the urban space was considered sacred in some way, but that the sacred and non-sacred co-existed, with the sacred space expanding in the late eighth and early seventh centuries at the point when sanctuary buildings started to appear. The Corinthians were the dominant force in the dedicatory traditions of Delphi in this period and seem to have had a significant trading presence in the urban settlement. The evidence is predominantly small bronze figurines, characteristic of the period, which we will discuss in more depth later: these can be traced to various places across Greece, perhaps indicating the early stages of Delphi's external popularity.⁷³ Delphi was certainly not a dominant force at this point, however: the nearby Corinthian sanctuary of Perachora was a much wealthier sanctuary space.⁷⁴

There is no evidence for cult buildings in this period, but Coldstream argues for an early temple existing in Delphi at this time, on which he assumes that the eighth-century temple of Apollo Daphnephoros at Eretria must be based.⁷⁵ Unfortunately there is no evidence to support this, and his argument is based on the supposition that there *had* to be a temple in Delphi at this time. This rather circular argument probably comes from the accounts of Pausanias, who talks at some length about the early temples at Delphi. Some of Pausanias' temples may be plausible, though others are clearly mythological: the distinction is rendered somewhat irrelevant by the fact that no evidence for any of them survives before the seventh century.⁷⁶ There is also no evidence for any specific deity or cult

⁷³ Bergquist 1967, 30-2; Rolley 1983, 110; Morgan 1990, 129-133.

⁷⁴ Morgan 1990, 125-127. Perachora: Payne 1940; Dunbabin 1962.

⁷⁵ Coldstream 1977.

⁷⁶ Pausanias 10.5.9-13; Sourvinou-Inwood 2009, 234; Neer 2012, 187. An opinion shared by Rolley (1983, 130) and Morgan (1990, 132), who notes a number of attempts to prove the existence of other early temple structures: Lerat 1938, 215; Bergquist 1967, 30-32; Price 1985, 130.

being worshipped at this time: the dedications are generic enough that they could be votives given to any deity, and though the abundance of male, *kouroi*-esque bronzes led early excavators to assume a connection to Apollo, it has long since been proven that Apollo does not have any stronger connection to *kouroi* or *korai* than any other deity.⁷⁷

The majority of our artefacts from this period come from a dump deposit found along the length of the Sacred Way. These dumps are both a blessing and a curse: on the one hand, they save material that otherwise could have been lost, but on the other hand they preserve nothing of the original context of these objects, and so we are left to guess. What we have is a number of bronze statuettes, tripods, and some imported pottery, mostly Corinthian in origin.⁷⁸ The appearance of these bronzes is considerably later than at Olympia: Delphi lacks the early, more rustic roots of Olympia, and does not have the same tradition of early (but post-Mycenaean) terracotta. Rolley has published on the tripods and statuettes in considerable detail, and a lengthy repeat of his findings seems unwarranted, but there are some general comments worth making. In terms of style, these tripods lean more towards Corinthian and, from the end of the eighth century, also to Attic. However, there are also some early Cretan dedications, though it is more likely that they reached the mainland through trading links rather than through Cretans visiting the sanctuary.⁷⁹ In Olympia, tripods become an uncommon feature during the seventh and sixth centuries, eventually disappearing: by contrast, tripods continue at Delphi throughout its entire lifespan as a sanctuary. This difference can probably be explained by the relevance of the tripod to the oracular traditions of the Pythia.⁸⁰ It is tempting to view these early Delphic tripods as evidence for the early existence of the oracle, but as Olympia

⁷⁷ Themelis 1983, 222-3; Morgan 1990, 129-131.

⁷⁸ Corinthian pottery not being particularly surprising given its relatively close proximity across the bay to Delphi, as well as its early interest in the cult: Morgan 1990, 134. For the dump deposit: Amandry 1944, 36-51; Neeft 1981.

⁷⁹ Rolley 1977, 15-23; 100-2. Though Morgan does not dismiss the possibility of this happening on a smaller scale (1990, 142-143).

⁸⁰ Morgan 1990, 140; Rolley 1977, 105-113.

proves, they are a popular form of votive of the time period, and there is no evidence to suggest oracular activity at this time.

Most of the anthropomorphic statuettes are Argive or Corinthian in style, with many comparable to contemporary Attic examples from the Acropolis dump deposits, though horse figures lean more towards Thessalian styles. Although Olympia saw rustic themes and animals in this period, war themes – warriors, helmeted horsemen, charioteers – were more popular in Delphi (Fig. 1.2.).⁸¹ This is probably due to differences in development: whereas Olympia was a slow growing, rural sanctuary supported by local inhabitants, Delphi grew quickly, and under the attention of a number of specific settlements that were already developing early tensions and political competitiveness. What is interesting about this period is how quickly this growth occurs, and how rapidly such a small cult enters into a larger political framework; already we see multiple groups expressing an early interest in Delphi.



Figure 1.2. Eighth-century bronze warrior figures. From Kolonia 2006, 45.

⁸¹ Olympia: Hatzi 2008, 48-57. Delphi: Rolley 1977, chapter 1; Morgan remarks that this is quite fitting considering the helmets, armour and weaponry that became common dedications (1990, 141). Examples at Kolonia 2006, 68-69.

1.1.4. Seventh century

The beginning of the seventh century saw a continuation in its bronze traditions. There are notable examples of warrior-type dedications (Fig. 1.3) as well as an array of eastern-influenced metalwork (Fig. 1.4). Griffins and sirens appear, normally as decorative additions to metal objects.⁸² This fits with the material evidence from across the Greek world, and corresponds with the Orientalizing period, in which many eastern motifs, styles and techniques were adopted by Greece. Delphi was not immune to the styles and fashions of the Hellenic world and was normally up to date with changes.

Few sanctuaries were building on a large scale in this time period. Even Delos, which began its ascent to monumentality far earlier than the mainland, had only just begun at the beginning of the seventh century: we will discuss Delos in more detail in Chapter Five ([pp. 233](#)).⁸³ It is not until c. 650 that we begin to see some buildings appear in the Delphic record. The first treasury we know of was dedicated by the Corinthian tyrant Cypselus in 650.⁸⁴ For his treasury Cypselus acquired the most impressive position, next to the final turn up to the temple platform, overlooking the Sacred Way below due to the terraces of the sanctuary slope. The next treasury we can securely identify is the original Athenian one from c. 600 (generally referred to as the proto-Athenian Treasury).⁸⁵ There are a number of other early buildings known from foundations, some of which no doubt come from this period, but there is not enough evidence to securely date or identify them.

⁸² Kolonia 2006, 48-59.

⁸³ Vallois 1944, 14–16, 48; Bergquist 1967, 28; Coldstream 1977, 215; Bruneau and Ducat 1983, 123-155; Mazarakis-Ainian 1997, 181; Gounaris 2005, 46; Constantakopoulou 2007, 40.

⁸⁴ Herodotus. 1.14.2; Bourguet 1912, 658; Jacquemin 1999a, 216-221; Scott 2014, 66.

⁸⁵ Herodotus 2.180; 5.62.2–3; Jacquemin 1999a, 247–248; Scott 2010, 56 (n. 85), 57; Scott 2014, 66.



Figure 1.3. Bronze statuette, Cretan workshop, c. 630. From Kolonia 2006, 70.



Figure 1.4. Bronze bust of a griffin, from a cauldron. 7th c. From Kolonia 2006, 50.

By c. 650, the oracle was attracting more attention, and the sanctuary acquired monumental buildings, equalling and then surpassing other sanctuaries.⁸⁶ A temple was constructed, evidence for which comes predominantly from rooftiles and the in-situ blocks rebuilt into the south-west corner of the sixth-century temple.⁸⁷ The dating is tenuous: Dinsmoor suggests that it was built c. 600, whereas Morgan argues that comparison of the rooftiles with those from Corinth and Isthmia allows for an earlier date, perhaps as far back as 650. The addition of a monumental temple might be indicative of the formal institution of the oracle itself. We are certain that the oracle was in place by the end of the

⁸⁶ Morgan 1990, 126, 155; d'Agnostino 2000, 80; Rolley 2002, 279; Davies 2007, 5.

⁸⁷ Courby 1927, 190-201; Broneer 1971, 40-53; Jacquemin 1999b, 30-32; Østby 2000, 241.

seventh century, as the days in which she operated were extended from one to nine per year following the end of the First Sacred War.⁸⁸ However, there is no evidence for when she began her original one day per year schedule, just mythological precedents put forward by later writers which were possibly fabrications made by the priesthood to create a more substantial history for the sanctuary. It is worth noting that, despite the formalisation of the oracle, Delphi does not yet appear to have had a *temenos* boundary: rather, its space is delineated by a series of structures, which may have had social or cult purposes.⁸⁹

The First Sacred War was a pivotal moment for Delphi as a sanctuary space, and for its archaeological record. Apparently fought between the local Amphictyony and the settlement of Kirrha, which had control over the oracle, the dispute was about the taxation (or robbery) of visitors to the oracle by the citizens of Kirrha.⁹⁰ This local Amphictyony was the Anthelian, centred on the cult of Demeter at Anthela, one of the oldest Amphictyonies of which we know. Dating for the First Sacred War is vague at best, and problematic at worst. The ten years put forward by some sources is suspiciously reminiscent of the Trojan War tradition and given the imbalance in settlement sizes it seems highly unlikely that a war would have been sustained for that long. No doubt this war was a series of skirmishes that local legend and later fictitious accounts transformed into something grander. Whatever did occur, it resulted in the passing of control of the sanctuary to the Amphictyony, which changed its name to the Great, or Delphic, Amphictyony. They founded the Pythian Games and extended oracular consultation, opening Delphi up to a whole new stream of revenue and visitors: this is a key turning point in the Delphic material record.⁹¹ Delphi begins this century as a relatively small sanctuary, with some interest from settlements around the Greek world: it ends the century

⁸⁸ Dinsmoor 1950; Morgan 1990, 133-134; Valavanis 2004, 262.

⁸⁹ Amandry 1938, 317; Amandry 1950, 322-327; Luce 1992, 2008; Rolley 2002, 278.

⁹⁰ The sources vary on whether it was robbery or taxation: it is this author's suspicion that this depends on whether they base their information on what the Amphictyony said, or on what the Kirrha locals said.

⁹¹ Mosshammer 1982; Morgan 1990, 135-136.

hosting games open to all and boasting an oracle that was already clearly popular in the local area, though it is obvious from its rapid growth that the oracle would soon extend its influence.

1.1.5. 600-548 BCE

Rather than attempting to cover the sixth century as one entity, I follow the structure of the development of the site, and divide the century by the fire of 548, which changed the archaeological record and the trajectory of the site. This first period is short but saw significant development in the sanctuary. We would expect, due to the Amphictyonic changes described in the previous section, an increase in local patronage of the sanctuary. What comes as something of a surprise is the upsurge of interest from everywhere else. Several more treasuries are dedicated, as well as free standing sculpture, including the famous Kleobis and Biton, dedicated c. 600 by the Argives and displaying the more traditional Peloponnesian style of kouros (Fig. 1.5).⁹² The sanctuary gained its first peribolos walls, officially demarcating the space, and improvements to the temple were made.⁹³ There are other, smaller dedications from this period mentioned in literary sources but not surviving in the archaeological record: of note are a krater from Alyattes in the temple peristyle and piles of iron from Rhodopis of Naucratis on the temple platform. Gyges was said to have dedicated a treasury and six golden bowls, which Herodotus later apparently saw in the Corinthian Treasury.⁹⁴ We can take these entries in one of two ways: either this is the time when Delphi becomes interesting and popular enough for stories about dedications to begin to spread and eventually to be preserved, or else this is the point when Delphi begins to attract a new and wider variety of dedicators from different dedicatory traditions.

⁹² Herodotus 1.31; Rolley 1975, 3-12; Ridgway 1977a, 46-48. See Scott 2010, 46-56 for the full range of dedications.

⁹³ Peribolos walls: Luce 1992, 2008; Scott 2010, 46. Temple improvements: Billot 1977; Jacquemin 1999b, 30, 222; Scott 2010, 46.

⁹⁴ Herodotus 1.25; 2.134-135; Strabo 9.3.8; Herodotus 1.14. Many expensive dedications from individuals would eventually be housed in other treasuries, for protection or to free up space.



Figure 1.5. Kleobis and Biton. From Kolonia 2006, 75.

The Naxian Sphinx was dedicated in c. 570, and we will discuss it in greater detail in Chapter Five ([pp. 228](#)). The Delian Triad and the Silver Bull were also in place from before the fire. These are some of the only dedications, along with the early Corinthian Treasury, to remain in situ before and after the fire. Several more buildings also came into existence, including the so-called Chapel of Ge, a

potential Bouleuterion, and a *tholos* and *monopteros* that made up a pavilion from Sikyon.⁹⁵ The Knidian Treasury, constructed c. 550, was the first treasury constructed out of island marble and in the ionic order, and from what we can tell was the most highly decorated building of the time at Delphi: the first version of the Athenian Treasury was also dedicated in this period.⁹⁶ Croesus would have dedicated his now famous gifts, if such a thing actually occurred: his dedications were said to include a lion on a base of gold ingots, the ‘Croesus’ baker’ statue, offerings of gold and silver bowls, gold and silver casks, his wife’s necklaces and girdles, and a golden shield, later put in the temple of Athena.⁹⁷

The fire changed the sanctuary dramatically. Significant damage was done to the dedications, and many monuments were pulled down due to structural damage and to increase the space. Delphi took this opportunity to expand its own *temenos*.⁹⁸ There is literary and archaeological evidence for twenty-eight dedications that predate the fire. Of these, at least fourteen were either destroyed in the fire or were pulled down afterwards. Two more were rebuilt,⁹⁹ and of five more we have little evidence beyond foundations or literary references.¹⁰⁰ In this period Delphi’s dedications seem to follow the artistic traditions of the Greek mainland, and we see a wide variety of material and types of dedications.

⁹⁵ Excavation reports for the Naxian Sphinx: Amandry 1953; Homolle 1909. The Delian Triad and Silver Bull: Kolonia 2006, 164-195. The Chapel of Ge: Bourguet 1914, 123; Courby 1927, 186-188; de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 69 n.7; Jacquemin 1999b, 149; Neer 2012, 310. Sikyonian pavilion: Laroche and Nenna, 1990; Neer 2012, 65-68. Additional buildings: de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 480; Jacquemin 1999b, 33; Scott 2010, 13; 19; 20.

⁹⁶ Knidian treasury: de La Coste-Messelière 1938; Salviat 1977; Bommelaer 1991, 141. Early Athenian treasury: Jacquemin 1999b, 246.

⁹⁷ Herodotus 1.50-51; Pausanias 10.8.6.

⁹⁸ Herodotus. 2.180; 5.62.2-3.

⁹⁹ The original Athenian treasury and Orthagorid pavilion (Laroche and Nenna 1990; Neer 2012, 65-68, 186.)

¹⁰⁰ Our remaining six monuments include one treasury, tenuously dated to 600-455 BCE (Neer 2012, 312; 32). The other building is the so-called Chapel of Ge (Neer 2012, 310: 10). Our final four dedications were free standing statues: The Naxian Sphinx, Kleobis and Biton, the chryselephantine Delian Triad, and the silver bull. The original location of these final three are unknown.

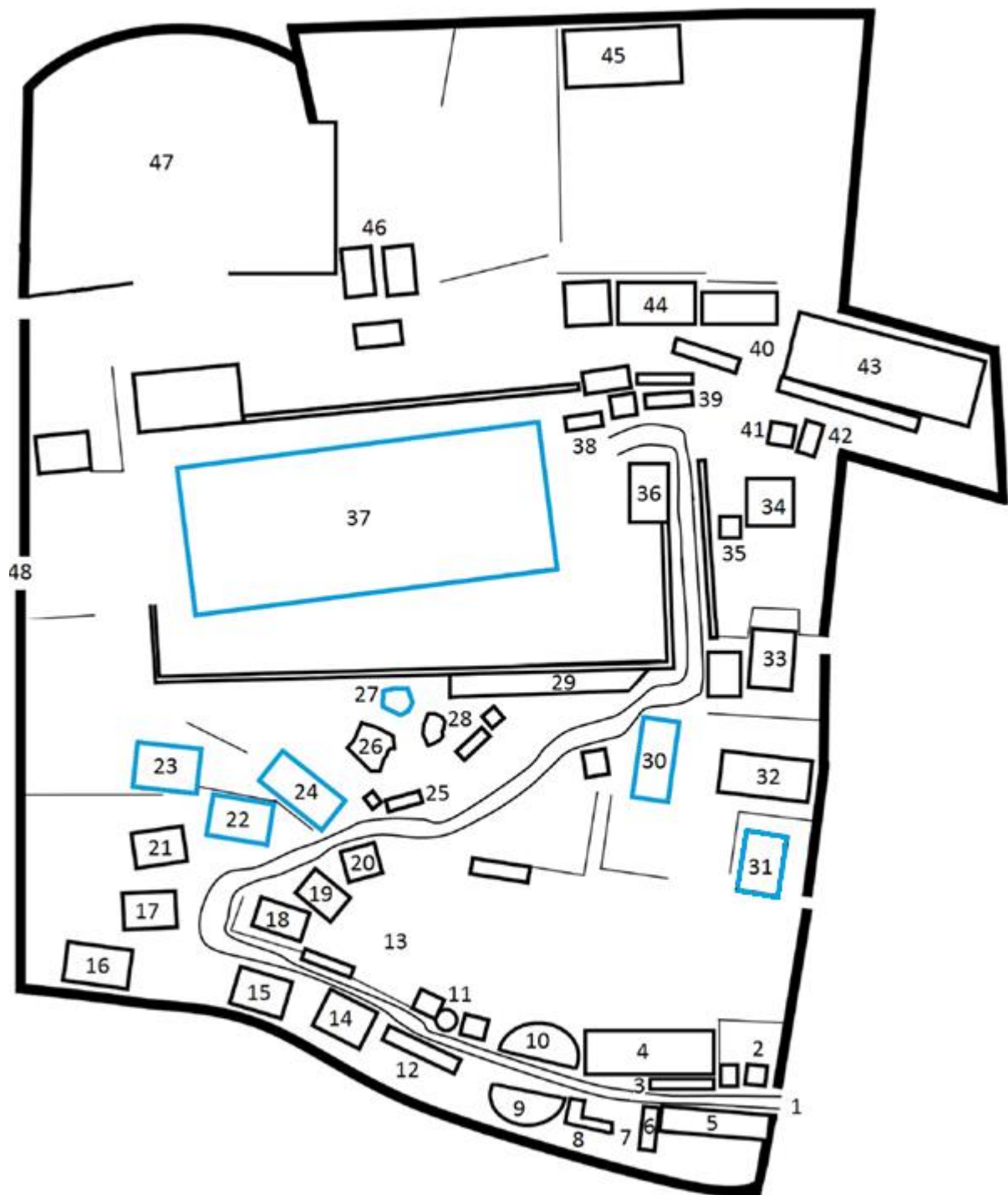


Figure 1.6. Time phase map of the sanctuary, monuments from 600-548 BCE in blue. Author's own.

Key:

22. Athenian Treasury (first phase)

23. Archaic building

24. Delphic 'Bouleuterion'

37. Temple of Apollo (first or second phase)

27. The Naxian Sphinx

30. Corinthian Treasury

31. Archaic Treasury converted into Asklepion

1.1.6. 548-500 BCE

The extension of the site following the fire meant that previously occupied space was suddenly open to new dedicators. One of the most notable dedicators that took advantage of this was the small island of Siphnos, who claimed an early spot in the area that would soon become the competitive treasury space of the first corner, discussed in more detail in Chapter Four ([pp. 210](#)). The site changed dramatically in this period, and fittingly so did the assertion of political messages in dedications (which often became much less ambiguous), with personal allegiances and opinions making themselves obvious. These treasuries may have begun as relatively simple, but quickly became increasingly complex and dramatic in their display. Following the building of the Knidian Treasury, we see a first wave of treasury building, including the Boeotian, Siphnian and Megarian treasuries, and the former Sikyonian pavilion being converted into the Sikyonian Treasury to sit alongside them. The proto-Athenian Treasury was first rebuilt by the Peisistratid family c. 525, probably in response to fire damage (referred to from here on as the Peisistratid Treasury).¹⁰¹ Further, more tenuously identified treasuries include the Klazomenian, a possible Etruscan treasury, and a Syracusan or Potidaian treasury, reflecting both a continuing interest in Delphi and treasury building, but also the wider expansion of the Hellenic world in this period.¹⁰²

There were also free-standing dedications in this period: notable additions include the pair Cleandrus and Olympichus dedicated by Cleoitas and Aristomachus, found on the temple terrace; the Massalian bronze dedications of a statue of Athena and another of Apollo; and a Parian marble kouros and an offering on a column from the sons of Charopinus, dedicated in celebration of their father. One particularly odd Corinthian offering is described as a frog, a water snake and a palm tree, which was

¹⁰¹ Boeotian treasury: Bourguet 1929, 219-220; Bommelaer 1991, 128; Scott 2010, 60-61. Siphnian treasury: Jacquemin 1999b, 211-212; Partida 2000b, 40; Neer 2003; Scott 2010, 62-66. Megarian treasury: Bommelaer 1991, 126; Partida 2000b, 187; Scott 2010, 69-70. Sikyonian treasury: Laroche and Nenna, 1990; Bommelaer 1991, 118; Scott 2010, 62. The second Athenian treasury: Herodotus 2.180; 5.62.2-3; Jacquemin 1999b, 247-248; Scott 2010, 56-57.

¹⁰² Klazomenian treasury: Jacquemin 1999b, 66, 149; Partida 2000, 224, Scott 2010, 69. Possible Etruscan treasury: Briquel 1984, 218, 220-221; Gras 1985, 451, Scott 2010, 69. Syracusan or Potidaian treasury: Bommelaer 1991, 155; Jacquemin 1999b, 146; Scott 2010, 69.

held in the Treasury of the Corinthians. Smaller scale dedications apparently included iron chains, sent from Cyrus to mark his capture of Croesus, and an incense burner from King Evelthon of Cyprus, seen by Herodotus in the treasury of the Corinthians.¹⁰³

The sanctuary was reshaped around a new *temenos*, and Delphi's 'Golden Age' saw growing competition between dedicators and an increase in wealth of material (Fig. 1.7). During this period, the oracle continued to grow, seeing an increase in recorded consultations, despite the fact that there was not a completed temple in place.¹⁰⁴ It was not until c. 500 BCE, nearly thirty-five years after the fire, that the temple was finally complete: this will be discussed further in Chapter Six ([pp. 256](#)). It seems that the Amphictyony ran out of money towards the end of the build and commissioned the Alkmaeonidai to complete the project. How the oracle operated in this time is unclear: did the Pythia host consultations amongst the ruins and building work on the temple platform, or was a temporary consultation place set up somewhere else in the interim?¹⁰⁵

What is particularly interesting is the descriptions in our sources of not only the major buildings, but of small *objet d'arte*. The importance of these written accounts cannot be ignored when it comes to visitor experience: certainly visitors must have gone to Delphi expecting to see certain monuments and sights, as Euripides' *Ion* suggests.¹⁰⁶ The monumentality of the sanctuary became as much a part of its glamour as the oracle or the Pythian Games: monuments are given in thanks and in hope, the site's activities gained added prestige by virtue of the dedications. The beginnings of the tradition of treasury building show a shift that follows the historical record: there is a marked movement towards community dedication and the first signs of political competition which will dominate the Delphic landscape.

¹⁰³ Pausanias 10.8.6, 10.18.7; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 12; Herodotus 1.90; Herodotus. 4.162; Jacquemin 1999b, 479.

¹⁰⁴ See Fontenrose (1978) for a survey of consultations and responses held in this time.

¹⁰⁵ Herodotus 5.62; Neer 2004, 86; Scott 2010, 56-59; Athanassaki 2011, 248. For a full discussion of the temple, with particular reference to its internal features, see Chapter Six ([pp. 256](#)).

¹⁰⁶ The Chorus in particular remark on a number of sights, many of which they seem already familiar with. Euripides, *Ion* 186-221.

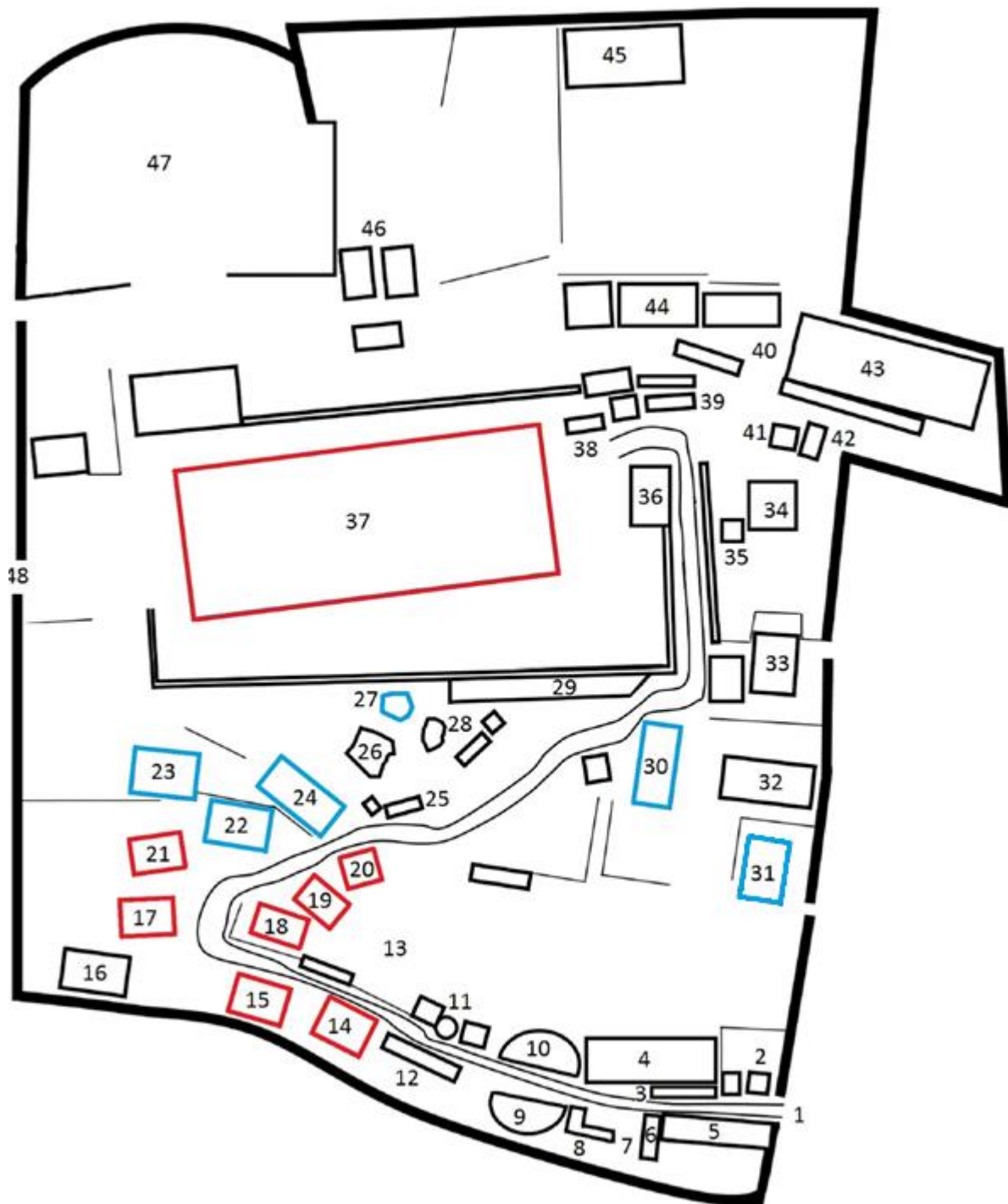


Figure 1.7. Time phase map of the sanctuary, monuments from 548-500 BCE in red. Author's own.

Key:

14. Orthagorid pavilion
15. Siphnian Treasury
17. Boeotian Treasury

18. Megarian Treasury
19. Syracusan Treasury?
20. Knidian Treasury

21. Early treasury?
37. Temple of Apollo (Alkmaeonidai)

1.1.7. Fifth century

In 490 BCE, fifteen years after the temple was completed the now-democratic Athens responded to this aristocratic representation by rebuilding the previous Peisistratid treasury to better reflect the nature of the *polis* (Fig. 6).¹⁰⁷ Sikyon had already done a similar rebuild, but the Athenian Treasury remained the crowning glory of the Sacred Way: see Chapter Four ([pp. 175](#)) for more. Broadly speaking, this marks the end of the great treasury rush. A few treasuries were built later, but they were all outside the central group, and many are insecurely identified: the Athenian monument is the last of the famous Delphic treasury builds. Athens also added a stoa further up the Sacred Way not long after the completion of its treasury, and a victory inscription to the temple of Apollo.¹⁰⁸ Further additions were made on the temple platform itself in the form of the Chian Altar, which dominates the movement towards the temple.¹⁰⁹

The Athenian Treasury marks the shift in Delphic dedicatory traditions towards victory monuments. As relationships in the Greek mainland became increasingly competitive, so too did Delphi's dedications, as we will discuss in Chapter Three ([pp. 142](#)). *Poleis* continue to add inscriptions, sculpture, and booty to their treasuries, continually updating them and creating a record of military and cultural achievements: the competitive narrative of the tyrants evolves into a inter-*poleis* competition, playing out particularly with displays of military power. The Phocians dedicated two thousand shields in thanks for their victory over the Thessalians; Athens added inscribed shields to the temple of Apollo and filled its stoa with booty. The iconic Serpent column and tripod was given in

¹⁰⁷ Neer 2004, 67.

¹⁰⁸ Neither the date of the stoa nor its reason for dedication are known: its inscription does not clarify matters. See Walsh 1986 for a summary of the dating debate: also Coulton 1976, 18; Bommelaer 1991, 147–150; Jacquemin 1999b, 315.

¹⁰⁹ Daux 1943, 173; Amandry 1984, 206–219; Scott 2010, 71; Peck 2012, 41–44.

thanks for the victory at Plataea (Fig. 1.8), and the Great Amphictyony itself dedicated a statue group of Scylla and Hydron as an honorific dedication for valour in battle.¹¹⁰

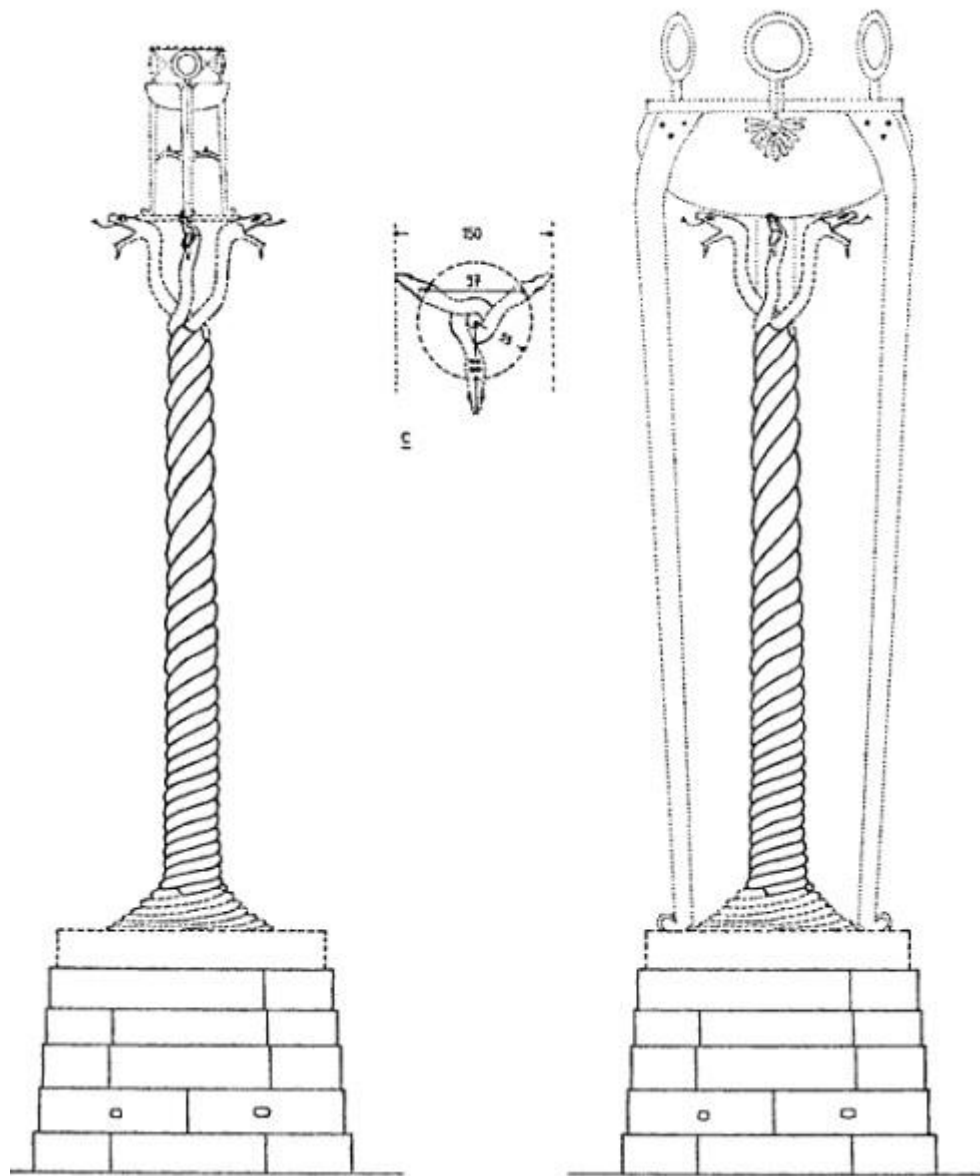


Figure 1.8. Reconstruction of the Serpent Column. From Gauer 1968, fig. 4.

¹¹⁰ Phocian shields: Herodotus. 8.2. Athenian shields: Pausanias 10.19.4; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 116. Serpent column: Gauer 1968, 75-96; Mansel 1970; Ridgway 1977b; Stephenson 2016. Scylla and Hydron: Pausanias 10.19.1.

There were a number of larger dedications too: Athens dedicated a group of statues depicting their eponymous heroes in c.460 in commemoration of Marathon; the Messenians and Naupactians gave a triangular column with Nike for their victory over Calydon; and the Megarians dedicated a statue of Apollo with a spear for their victory over Athens. There are a series of dedications said to have been from Lysander that also add to the competitive nature of the sanctuary space as a whole, including the Aegospotami dedication, and a series of golden stars. These are just a few of the vast number of dedications that appear in Delphi in this era.¹¹¹ The dedicatory tradition of this period is defined by competition: first with Athenian domination of the space and challenges to it from across the Hellenic world, and next by extensive dedications from Sparta.

Towards the end of the century, we begin to see shifts in the standards of dedications. A niche containing dedications replaced the older Boeotian Treasury – it was presumably also dedicated by the Boeotians, though we cannot be sure. This is the first time since the fire that a treasury is removed to make room for a different monument, and perhaps is an indication of the changing perception of such extraterritorial dedications after the long decline in their popularity. This is the end of what people consider to be Delphi's Golden Age, and the monuments in place at this time encapsulate what Delphi was in the mind of the Hellenic visitor: a place in which cities represented their highest and greatest achievement, and as such, a place that represents the best that the Hellenic world had to offer (Fig. 1.9). We will discuss in further detail in Chapters Three and Four the presentation of political competition through military ([pp. 161](#)) and financial ([pp. 191](#)) competition, but it is clear that this period presents an image of the Hellenic world as rife with competition and inter-state division.

¹¹¹ Athens: Jacquemin 1999b, 190-191; Scott 2010, 80-81, 96. The Messenians and Naupactians: Thucydides 1.103; Pearson 1962, 401-402; Scott 2010, 98-99. The Megarians: Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 16; Pausanias 10.15.1. Lysander and Sparta: Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 2; 8. See Chapter 3 for an extended discussion ([pp. 149](#)).

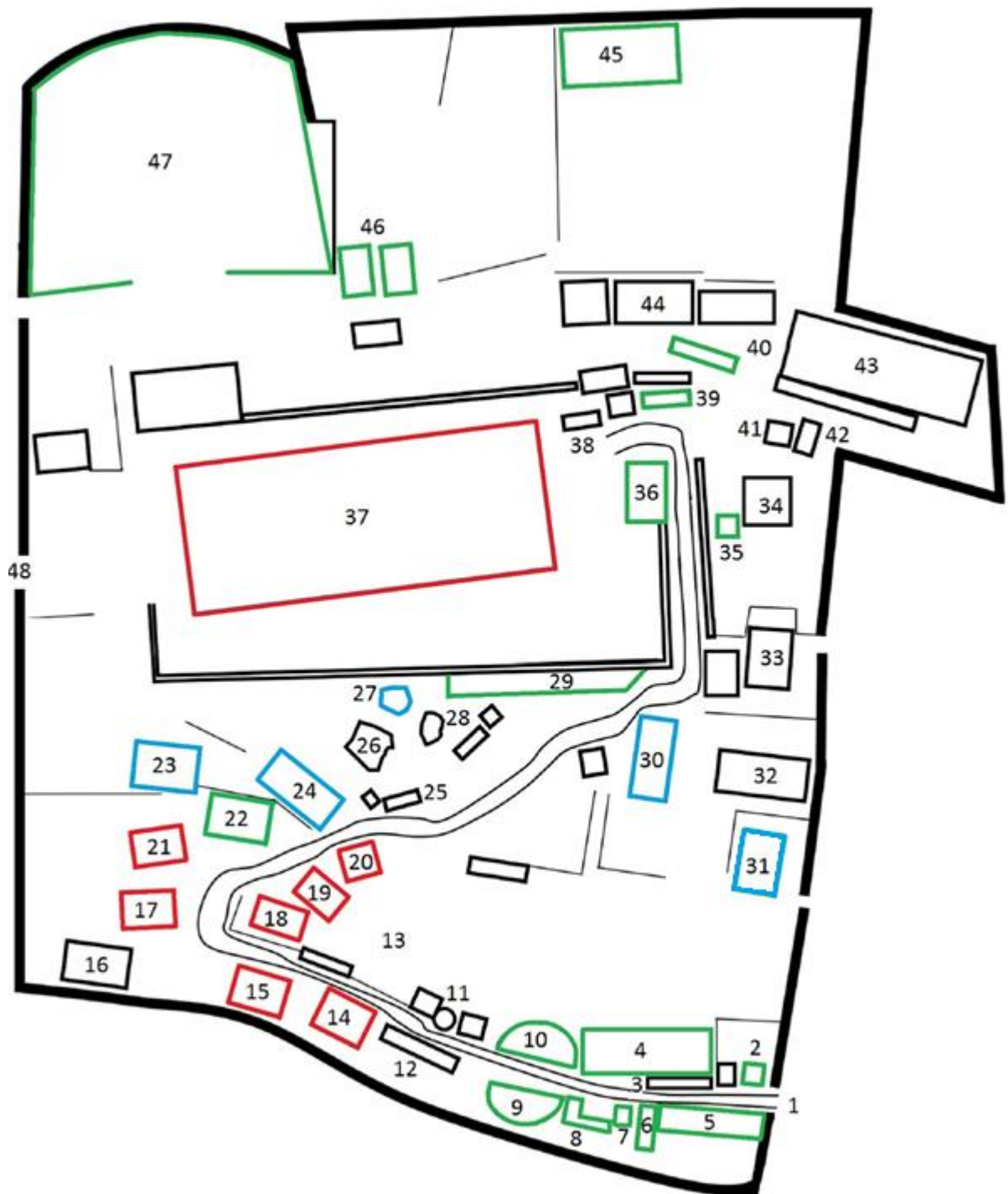


Figure 1.9. Time phase map of the sanctuary, monuments from 500-400 BCE in green. Author's own.

Key:

- | | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2 Bull of Korcyra | 9. Argive dedication | 39. Syracuse tripod |
| 4. Spartan Stoa | 10. Argive dedication | 40. Korcyran dedication? |
| 5. Aegospotami monument | 22. Athenian Treasury | 45. Knidian Lesche |
| 6. Argive horse dedication | 29. Athenian Stoa | 46. Two buildings, poss. treasuries |
| 7. Marathon victory monument | 35. Platean tripod | 47. Theatre (first phase) |
| 8. Argive dedication | 36. Chian Altar | |

1.1.8. Fourth century

The fourth century saw changes in the Hellenic world, and Delphi was not immune. Sparta dominated the site for the first three decades of the century: their extensive gifts and monopolisation of the oracle are a rather heavy-handed show of Hellenic domination, but in time this supremacy faded. Sparta found itself the target of monumental confrontation. The Argives erected a semi-circular statue group opposite their similar monument from the fifth century, next to the Spartan dedication for victory over Athens. But the Argive monument cut over the Spartan Stoa, and restricted access to it. As Scott puts it, 'dedications to victory inflicting wounds on dedications of their enemies'.¹¹² The Spartan Stoa was later cut off even further in 369 BCE by an Arcadian statue group, celebrating the development of their new confederacy, with a dedication reading 'for victory over the Spartans': further discussion of Sparta's competitive dedicatory history can be found in Chapter Three ([pp. 145](#)).¹¹³ The oracle was closed for long periods of time in this century when the temple suffered structural damage: without dedications in thanks or for *promanteia*, it would make sense for the material corpus to shrink.¹¹⁴ That is not to say, however, that no building work was done at all in this time period. An unknown later treasury, originally dated to the Classical period, was re-dated to 376-330 by Amandry, indicating that there is still some monumental building going on, and repairs made to the temple were made by a collection of dedicators.¹¹⁵ A Theban Treasury was also built: Thebes also dedicated three additional complementary monuments.¹¹⁶ The 350s onwards also saw extensive work done on the theatre and gymnasium, and there are a series of other foundations that might have come from this time period, though we may only speculate as to their function.¹¹⁷ Eventually, however, military victory dedications dwindled, being replaced instead by honorific statues and

¹¹² Bommelaer 1971; Scott 2014, 146.

¹¹³ Argive monument: Salviat 1965; Bommelaer 1971a, 1971b. Arcadian monument: Jacquemin 1999b, 62; Nielsen 2007, Scott 2008; 38; Scott 2014, 146.

¹¹⁴ Scott speculates that temporary accommodation allowed the Pythia to continue operations (2014, 150).

¹¹⁵ Amandry 1981, 688.

¹¹⁶ Michaud 1973, 127-129; Partida 2000b, 196-198; Scott 2010 114-115. Additional dedications: Bousquet 1963, 206-208; Jacquemin 1999b, 128, 157; Scott 2010, 115.

¹¹⁷ Scott 2014, 154-156.

dedications for Pythian victories.¹¹⁸ The statues of Onymarchus, Philomelus, Idrieus and Ada, and Gorgias of Leontini are notable examples of this phenomenon.¹¹⁹ In the second half of the century, many of the dedications seem to come from locals, from Delphi itself or from the Amphictyonic states: the offering from Damaius of Delphi, a statue of Apollo, and an offering to Aphrodite are all notable examples.¹²⁰ Whether this indicates an increase in wealth in the local area or a decline in the fortunes of the larger external powers in Greece is hard to determine: it is possibly a combination of both. Many of our dedications are small offerings, and the famous limestone omphalos is also dedicated at this time.¹²¹ Several niches were added to the Sacred Way at this point, perhaps to accommodate the increase in smaller offerings. There are also a number of extant offerings to Asklepius at this time, following the dedication of a possible Asklepiion.¹²² Likewise, the epigraphic tradition shifted in this century, with increasing numbers of explanatory inscriptions being added to older monuments such as the Naxian Sphinx, indicated a changing awareness of these older styles: where before its distinct style and the iconographical link between Naxos and sphinxes made it clear who dedicated it, the monument now required explanation. Further discussion of the Naxian style can be found in Chapter Five ([pp. 236](#)).¹²³

Phocian interference also impacted Delphi: a large amount of material was melted down by the Phocians after they occupied the sanctuary in 356 BCE.¹²⁴ Interestingly, Phocian occupation did not seem to stop the dedicatory tradition: Scott notes several examples of dedications from this period.¹²⁵ Eventually, they were ousted by Philip of Macedon, and Delphi entered into a new period of material regeneration. They removed the Phocian dedications (a somewhat bold move from a

¹¹⁸ Pausanias 10.9.2; Jacquemin 1999b, 493; 528; 087; Raussa 1994, 52-66; Smith 2007, 95; Scott 2010, 111.

¹¹⁹ Pausanias 10.18.7; Jacquemin 1999b, 407; 406; 368; 334.

¹²⁰ Jacquemin 1999b, 017; 137; 221.

¹²¹ Jacquemin 1999b, 7-9; 179; 267-269.

¹²² Jacquemin 1999b, 230; 226.

¹²³ Amandry 1953, 7.

¹²⁴ Diodorus Siculus 16.24, 16.56.6, 27.5; Bonner and Smith 1943, 124; Jacquemin 1999b, 238; Sanchez 2001, 178; Scott 2010, 124-125.

¹²⁵ Scott 2010, 125. These include the victory monument of Sostratus of Sikyon (Bousquet 1961, 77), statues of Idrieus and Ada by Miletus (Jacquemin 1999b, 205) and a number of Phocian dedications (Amandry 1981, 741).

religious perspective, perhaps indicating a shift in the balance between cult and politics) and used the fine levied on the Phocians by the Amphictyony to rebuild extensively, produce coinage, and create a new statue to Apollo.¹²⁶ Renewed access to the sanctuary sparked a wave of new dedications, including statues from Thebes and the Boeotian confederacy, Knidian building works, a treasury from Cyrene and a column topped with a gold-coated statue of Helios from Rhodes.¹²⁷ Offerings for individuals increase in frequency towards the end of the century, including the Daochus monument, and by the end of the century, Athens had returned with a host of new monuments, including the Acanthus column (Fig. 1.10).¹²⁸ A particularly interesting monument is the military victory monument dedicated by the Orneates of the Argolis at the end of the century for a victory won in the sixth century: it was sculpted in the archaic style and placed in the area popular in the fifth century for military dedications. The intention was to create an impression of a long-standing relationship with Delphi, and a sense of their own military and historical prowess, indicating that Delphi was still perceived as a place of central authority that many people would visit.¹²⁹

The changing shape of the political world was reflected clearly in the materiality of Delphi: the domination of Athens and Sparta, and then their subsequent fall, followed by the rise of comparative new powers was documented through the display of victory monuments. Wider economic and cultural shifts are visible in the styles and quantities of dedications, and even the rise of newer deities can be seen when examining the material record. Political changes shape the material record even in terms of our gaps, although the rise of Philip of Macedon has surprisingly little impact on the archaeological material. This is not a Delphi in decline, as many presume: this is a changing Delphi, one weathering the tides of an increasingly tempestuous Hellenic landscape. Delphi maintained a central position in

¹²⁶ Fine imposed on the Phocians: Reinach 1928, 34-36; Bousquet 1988. Statue of Apollo: Pausanias 10.15.7. For the extensive rebuilding, see Scott 2010, 126, particularly n. 81.

¹²⁷ Thebes and the Boeotian confederacy: Pausanias 10.13.6; Defradas 1954, 146; Roesch 1982, 448; Scott 2010, 127. Knidian analemma wall: Pouilloux 1960, 120-139; Jacquemin 1999b, 67. Cyrene: Laroche 1988; Bommelaer 1991, 155; Partida 2000, 162, 167; Scott 2010, 127. Rhodes: Pliny *Natural History* 34.63; Cassius Dio 47.33; Bommelaer 1991, 168.

¹²⁸ Daochus monument: Jacquemin 1999b, 206; Scott 2010, 133. Acanthus column: Pouilloux and Roux 1963, 122-149; Bousquet 1964; Jacquemin 1999b, 58; Scott 2010, 133.

¹²⁹ Pausanias 10.18.5; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 15; Scott 2014, 167.

the mentality of the Hellenic world, and given the economic context of the time, the dedicatory tradition at Delphi remained strong (Fig. 1.11).



Figure 1.10. Acanthus column. From Kolonia 2006, 335.



Figure 1.11. Time phase map of the sanctuary, monuments from 400-300 BCE in purple. Author's own.

Key:

- 3. Arcadian statue group
- 11. Votive niches
- 16. Theban Treasury
- 25. Boeotian dedications
- 32. Cyrene treasury?

- 33. Treasury of Acanthians and Brasidas?
- 34. Rhodian dedication
- 44. Daochos monument
- 48. West Stoa

1.1.9. Third century

Delphi was not abandoned in the third century: at least in the first half we see continued activity. Though there was something of a decline in interest in sanctuaries, the invasion of the Gauls in 279 renewed interest in Delphi. Shields taken from the Gauls were hung on the temple of Apollo, and a series of inscriptions gave thanks to individuals who provided information that led to the recovery of sacred money belonging to Apollo.¹³⁰ The Aetolians were particularly prominent as head of the Great Amphictyony: they maintained control of the games and oracle, though both were less popular than they had been. The West Stoa became the place of Aetolian commemoration, filled with Gallic armour. They also constructed a statue of the personification of Aetolia, a victory monument, and a monument with statues of all the Aetolian chiefs.¹³¹ The Chians repaired their altar and added an inscription, and a series of renovations to the sanctuary once more took place, with a new stadium completed in 275 BCE.¹³² The introduction of the Soteria by the Aetolians also saw work being done to the Delphic complex, particularly the gymnasium, and individual Aetolians began dedicating in force, including examples by Aristaineta, Charixenus, and a dedication to the Ptolemies by the Aetolian Lamius.¹³³ Once again, we see interest from Athens following the Gallic invasion, extending the statue base alongside the Athenian Treasury to include new figures. Roman dedications also appear in this period, including a golden mixing bowl dedicated by Claudius Marcellus.¹³⁴

Conversely, the Hellenistic monarchs snub Delphi. We have no evidence for dedications from any of the major or minor dynasties.¹³⁵ The only exception to this rule was the Attalids of Pergamon,

¹³⁰ New interest in Delphi: Fontenrose 1988, 137; Scott 2014, 167; Valavanis 2004, 222. Gaulish dedications: Pausanias 10.19.4; Polybius 1.6.5, 2.20.6; Cicero *Pro Fonteio*, 14.30; Segre 1929; Scott 2014, 171-173.

¹³¹ Aetolian interest and influence: Flacelière 1937, 93; 98; Parke and Wormell 1956a, 258-259; Jacquemin 1999b, 256; Scott 2014, 173-176. West stoa: Amandry 1981, 729-732; Bousquet 1985, Bommelaer 1991, 218-219; Perrier 2011. Statue of Aetolia; Courby 1927, 288-291; Bommelaer 1991, 223; Partida 2009, 296; Perrier 2011. Statues of Aetolian chiefs: Pausanias 10.16.4; Courby 1927, 291-299; Perrier 2011.

¹³² Athens: Jacquemin 1999b, 229. Chios: Amandry 1986, 205-218; Bommelaer 1991, 173-175. Sanctuary extensions: Bommelaer 1991, 146, 215; Valavanis 2004, 190.

¹³³ Soteria works: Scott 2014, 176. Individual dedications: Jacquemin 1999b, 64; Bommelaer 1991, 235-236.

¹³⁴ Pluarch *Life of Marcellus*, 8; Parke and Wormell 1956a, 270.

¹³⁵ There may be any number of reasons for this: the monarchs are still dedicating elsewhere, so it is clearly not a lack of interest in Greek sanctuaries (Scott 2014, 73). Most likely is the difference in political constitutions:

a relatively minor dynasty who built their prestige on their defeat of the Gauls. They rebuilt the theatre at Delphi, which had once again fallen into disrepair, and notably built their own stoa, imitating its Classical Athenian predecessor. This stoa broke through the eastern boundary of the temenos on the level of the temple. The *temenos* was extended around the line of the building itself, a bold and unprecedented move.¹³⁶ Attalid motivations were twofold: it was a clear and positive message to the Aetolians, who were questioning Attalid commitment to their alliance. On a grander scale, it also fit with the message that the Attalids were promoting in their own building projects: that they were the new Hellenic superpower of the age.¹³⁷ Dedicating in a sanctuary such as Delphi helped reinforce this, because despite its relative decline, Delphi was still viewed as a central part of Greece and the Hellenic identity that the Attalids were trying to adopt.

By the end of the third century, the nature of Delphi's material record had notably shifted. The lack of attention from Hellenistic kingdoms no doubt reinforced its increasing insignificance in the mind of the Greek world, and its dedications were dominated by those with significant personal investment in the sanctuary space, such as the Aetolians. Though Delphi continued to operate for centuries to come, this is in many ways the end of the sanctuary as we have known it: from this point onwards it becomes a symbol of the Greece-that-was, leaning on a historical significance but lacking the power it once held.

tyrants and democratic polities alike used the oracle for political verification and to maintain popularity, but the Hellenistic Kings relied on divine right and ultimate authority, the Ptolemaic line going as far as taking on the mantle of the God-King Pharaoh. They had no need for the political verification of the oracle, and established their own Games and religious centres.

¹³⁶ Jacquemin 1999b, 388; Scott 2014, 177.

¹³⁷ Scott 2014, 177.



Figure 1.12. Time phase map of sanctuary, monuments from 300-200 BCE in orange. Author's own.

Key:

- 41. Statue of Eumenes I
- 42. Statue of Attalos I
- 43. Stoa of Attalos I
- 47. Theatre

1.1.10. 200 BCE onward

Delphi was closely involved in Rome's long march towards the conquest of Greece, and this is reflected in the material record: by the end of the third century, Roman dedications begin to appear. In 207 BCE, Rome dedicated in thanks for victories against Carthage, followed by the dedications in 196 BCE of the consul Titus Quinctius Flamininus following his defeat of Macedon. Flamininus sent his own shield, along with shields of silver and a crown of gold, and Delphi put up a statue to him in return.¹³⁸ The addition of a Roman in the centre of the Greek world is a great political message, and one that subsequent Romans did not hesitate to replicate. Pergamon, now ruled by Eumenes II, maintained its interest in the sanctuary. In the 180s he supported the construction of the theatre, and he was honoured with additional statues in the sanctuary.¹³⁹ In 172, on his way to visit Delphi, Eumenes was killed by Perseus of Macedon, and grievances against Macedon were inscribed and displayed in the sanctuary.¹⁴⁰

During the Third Macedonian War Rome returned in force to Greece. Presumptuously, Perseus had begun constructing a victory monument in Delphi before the Romans even arrived, making his swift defeat in 168 BCE at the hands of Lucius Aemilius Paulus more than a little ironic. Paulus took over this monument (Fig. 1.13), erasing the Greek inscription and replacing it with a Latin one – despite the fact that very few visitors would have been able to read it – and topped it with a golden equestrian statue, making no reference to Apollo himself. This monument stood on the temple terrace, alongside many other monuments commemorating Greek victories over invading enemies.¹⁴¹ Lucius Mummius sent dedications to Delphi following the sacking of Corinth in 146 BCE, but following this, the dedicatory trend seems to shift to more localised offerings, as the Greek world's power and

¹³⁸ Carthage: Scott 2014, 184-185. Flamininus: Plutarch, *Flamininus* 12.5-7; Picard 1991, 111.

¹³⁹ Courby 1927, 275-289; Daux 1936a, 686-695; Roux 1976, 165-175; Jacquemin and Laroche 1986, 785; Bommelaer 1991, 206-210.

¹⁴⁰ Death of Eumenes: Polybius 22.18.4; Livy 42.15-17; Livy 42.40; Daux 1936a, 320-325.

¹⁴¹ 'de rege Perse Macedonibusque cepet'; Jacquemin 1999b, 418. Also: Plutarch, *Aemilius Paulus* 28.4; Laroche and Jacquemin 1982, 207-212; Bommelaer 1991, 235; Jacquemin 1999b, 239; Scott 2014, 190-191.

influence were significantly reduced.¹⁴² Athens was one of the few places that continued to dedicate in Delphi, renewing the Pythais festival and cutting new inscriptions into the Athenian Treasury, including the now famous musical notations.¹⁴³ Even at the turn of the first century, Delphi was active, refitting its stadium and dedicating games-related victory statues.¹⁴⁴

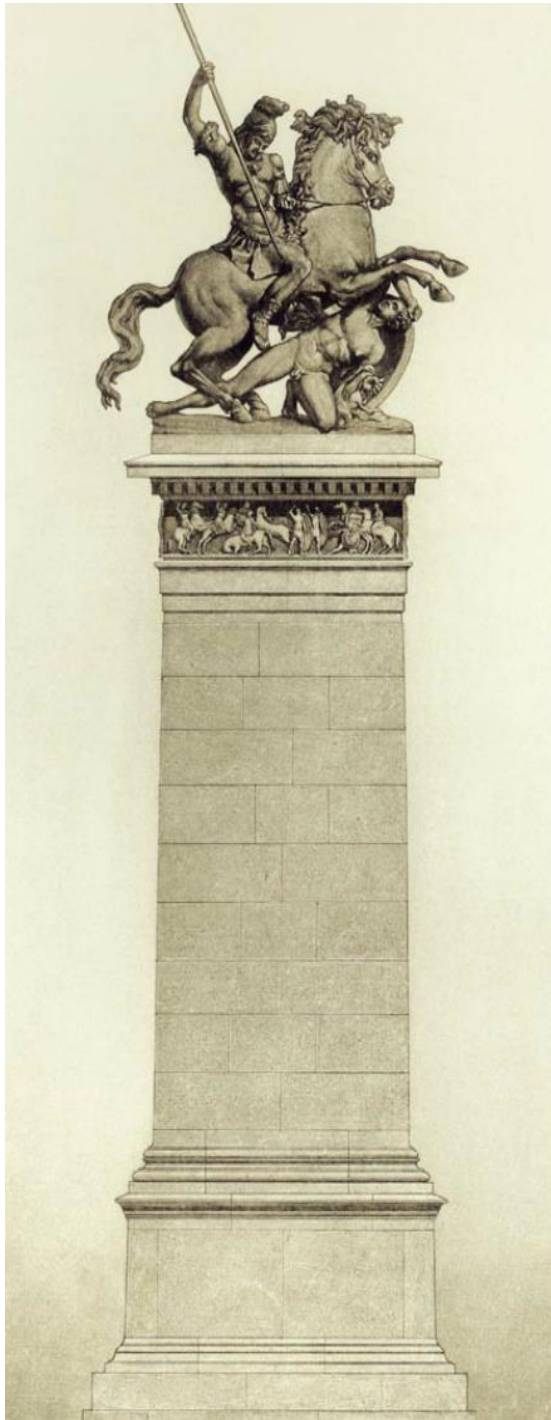


Figure 1.13. The monument of Lucius Aemilius Paullus, reconstructed by Tournaire (1894). From Kolonia 2009, 339.

¹⁴² Polybius 39.6.1.

¹⁴³ Daux 1936a, 532-540; Bélis 1992, 131-135; Mikalson 1998, 269-270.

¹⁴⁴ Stadium: Bommelaer 1991, 215; Scott 2014, 197. Statues: Weir 2004, 109; Scott 2014, 197.

However, Delphi also began losing items from its material record. In 87 BCE, during the Mithridatic Wars, Sulla raided both sanctuaries at Delphi and confiscated a number of metal dedications.¹⁴⁵ This dramatically changed the fortunes of the sanctuary, as well as the inviolable nature of the site. Subsequent invasions from both the Illyrians and the Thracians sent Delphi into a slow decline, from which it would never recover.¹⁴⁶ However, this period also saw the growth of a new type of material evidence: we have over thirteen hundred inscriptions detailing manumission, starting in around 150 BCE.¹⁴⁷

1.1.11. Delphi under Rome

The Julio-Claudians were broadly disinterested in Delphi, and Scott notes that the list of dedications at Delphi from the first century makes for ‘rather sad reading’.¹⁴⁸ Augustus in particular is surprisingly disinterested in Delphi in comparison to his involvement with Olympia, though he and Livia were said to have sent dedications to the sanctuary.¹⁴⁹ Several other statues to imperial figures and officials were put up. Claudius reinstated communications with Delphi, resulting in inscriptions, and many statues were set up in his honour.¹⁵⁰ Nero was the first emperor to go to Delphi, in 67 CE. Apparently, renovations were done to the stadium and theatre to honour his arrival, and he was said to have consulted the oracle and participated in the games. However, he also removed a huge number of monuments from Delphi and shipped them back to Rome. According to Pausanias, this included some five hundred statues; by contrast he reports that Nero removed only twenty from Olympia. This is possibly an exaggeration, but it is nevertheless interesting that Delphi is presented as having far more

¹⁴⁵ Pausanias 9.7.5; Plutarch, *Sulla* 12.4-5; Statius, *Silvae* 5.3.293; Daux 1936a, 398; Scott 2014, 197-198. Also see: Pape 1975, 37; Jacquemin 1999b, 239.

¹⁴⁶ Courby 1927, 116; Scott 2014, 199.

¹⁴⁷ Daux 1936a, 15-60, 220, 269, 491-495; Parke and Wormell 1956a, 261-262; Lejeune 1939; McInerney 2011, 98; Scott 2014, 200-201.

¹⁴⁸ Scott 2014, 206.

¹⁴⁹ Jacquemin 1999b, 75; Scott 2014, 204.

¹⁵⁰ These communications between Emperor and sanctuary would last until the rule of Gallienus: Jacquemin 1999b, 274; Weir 2004, 88. Statues: Scott 2014, 207-208.

taken from it than Olympia, telling us something about both the beauty and quantity of Delphi's votives, but also the relative importance of Delphi as a site.¹⁵¹

Both Titus and Domitian become eponymous archons for Delphi, and in 84 CE Domitian refurbished the temple at his own expense, adding in a huge five metre long inscription reminding everyone of this: in return, Domitian was honoured with a statue.¹⁵² Further building work was done under his reign by Tiberius Flavius Soclarus, including to the gymnasium complex.¹⁵³ The next emperor with a particularly interest in Delphi was Hadrian, who also visited the site, consulted the oracle, and dedicated a statue of Antinous following his death (Fig. 1.14). Under Hadrian, the sanctuary issues a new series of coins, bearing the Emperor's head on the obverse, and sanctuary imagery on the reverse. Columns along the gymnasium were refurbished, and the first version of the Roman agora was built.¹⁵⁴ The Pythian Games remained popular under Roman rule (with Herodes Atticus as a benefactor), were exported around the Roman Empire in the second century, and continued until at least 424 CE, even outlasting the Olympic Games.¹⁵⁵ The material record of Delphi in this period reflects the continuation of the games through victory statues, but more importantly, the distant but undeniable presence of the Roman imperial elite.

¹⁵¹ Pausanias 10.7.1; Pliny, *Natural History* 34-36; Parke and Wormell 1956a, 283; Jacquemin 1999b, 228; Spawforth 2012, 236; Scott 2014, 209-211.

¹⁵² Haussouller 1881, 451; Jacquemin 1999b, 75; Weir 2004, 153; Spawforth 2012, 238; Scott 2014, 212-14.

¹⁵³ Bousquet 1952b, 28-29; Pouilloux 1980, 289; Bommelaer 1991, 73; Weir 2004, 101-103.

¹⁵⁴ Coinage: Bommelaer 1991, 36; Weir 2004, 104; Scott 2014, 223-228. Statue: Picard 1991, 133; Scott 2014, 223-228. Columns: Bommelaer 1991, 76. Agora: Weir 2004, 95-96, Scott 2014, 223-228.

¹⁵⁵ Weir 2004, 110-11; Amandry 1981, 720-721; Bommelaer 1991, 215-211; Scott 2014, 237-238.



Figure 1.14. Close up of the marble statue of Antinous. From Kolonia 2009, 350.

1.1.12. Later Delphi

Dedications from the third century CE show an increase in reuse of previously existing material, suggesting a decline in economic strength.¹⁵⁶ The notion that with the closing of the temples Delphi also withered, a belief encouraged by tour guides and guidebooks, is faulty. The illusion was further strengthened by the destruction of monuments from the fourth to seventh centuries by archaeologists to allow for excavation of lower layers and even to facilitate the admission of tourists.¹⁵⁷ In reality, Delphi remained an active site, though the scale of activity was much reduced:

¹⁵⁶ Bousquet 1943, 124-126; Weir 2004, 90; Scott 2014, 239.

¹⁵⁷ Petridis 2009, 101-102.

fourth-century CE statues of philosophers have been found, and bath house renovations are attested by an inscription in 319 CE.¹⁵⁸ Constantine was honoured with two statues, and Valens and Valentinian were both similarly honoured, though for the first time in the inscription record Delphi dropped its honorific of '*hiera*'.¹⁵⁹ The agora was rebuilt with extensive stoa, and became the choice location for imperial sculpture.¹⁶⁰

Nevertheless, Delphi's situation had changed. The outlawing of paganism by the Emperor Theodosius in the early 390s resulted in the sanctuary's closure. Domestic settlements were built over first the stadium, then over the sanctuaries of Athena and Apollo.¹⁶¹ It was a slow development: Deroche records the construction of at least three basilicas, but none can be dated before 450 CE.¹⁶² A number of mosaics from Christian chapel spaces have also been found in the area, some of them still in place when the excavation began (Fig. 1.15): these display popular Christian motifs, with a particular emphasis in places on snakes, linking back to Delphi's ancient past.¹⁶³ The sanctity of the *temenos* space clearly diminished in the minds of those in the area, coming full circle from the earliest periods of Delphic history as domestic buildings began to cross the boundary of the sanctuary, being constructed over former sacred space. A large number of the fourth to seventh century buildings were grouped in the sanctuary of Apollo, including a Roman agora.¹⁶⁴ The town of Delphi survived the decline of the sanctuary and existed until the first quarter of the seventh century CE, and in many ways remained a successful settlement until c.620 CE. Petridis remarks on the transformations of house plans in the area across the fifth and sixth centuries, arguing that they are indicative of growth

¹⁵⁸ Statues: Picard 1991, 138; Scott 2014, 240. Bathhouses: Bousquet 1952a, 660; Bommelaer 1991, 191-192; Etienne 1996, 183; Weir 2004, 54.

¹⁵⁹ Constantine: Scott 2014, 45. The monument to Valens and Valentinian is the last known pagan monument at Delphi: Jacquemin 1999b, 79; Scott 2014, 244.

¹⁶⁰ Bommelaer 1991, 89; Weir 2004, 94; Scott 2014, 242.

¹⁶¹ Laurent 1899, 271; Daux 1965, 1049; Amandry 1981a, 724; Déroche 1986, 143-145; Déroche 1996, 184-186; Bommelaer 1991, 92, 237; Picard 1991, 192; Maass 1997, 74-75; Scott 2014, 245.

¹⁶² Spieser 1976, 317; Déroche 1986, 115.

¹⁶³ Laurent 1899, 207, 269-271; Bommelaer 1991, 237; Déroche 1992. Also a lamp with the image of Christ with a snake at his feet: Dyggve 1948, 9-28; Goffinet 1962, 260

¹⁶⁴ Petridis 2009, 102; Petridis 2010, 23-31.

and development rather than decline.¹⁶⁵ It remained active in the production of local ceramics up until its abandonment, with the earliest workshops dating from the second half of the fourth century CE: by 590, we have evidence for pottery, metalwork and tanning workshops. The pottery includes amphora, basins, bowls, and lamps, and is generally a light red, good quality clay.¹⁶⁶ Eight bread stamps have been uncovered in Delphi, dating from the end of the sixth century and the early seventh. They were probably produced under the control of the local church, and were decorated with Christian motifs: their dimensions and decorations suggest that they were used for the baking of holy bread for saint's days, and are not necessarily indicative of a widespread baking trade.¹⁶⁷ The abandonment of the settlement seems to have come very suddenly, with architectural remains, ceramics and coins all disappearing at the same time. It remained abandoned up until the formation of the village of Castri, sometime in the fifteenth century.¹⁶⁸

Delphi saw a decline in its later years, but its survival is remarkable given the historic change happening around it. It is better in many ways to think of this as an inevitable change, a gradual fading as history caught up with a sanctuary that managed to outlast many of its counterparts around the Hellenic world. As in the ninth century, the line between urban and sacred space began to blur, echoing its earliest years of development until the material record, without dramatic flourish, simply disappears.

¹⁶⁵ Petridis 2010, 23-31; Petridis 2014, 279-280.

¹⁶⁶ Petridis 2012a, 15-16, 17-18.

¹⁶⁷ Petridis 2012b for an overview of all eight stamps.

¹⁶⁸ Petridis 2014, 281. For a summary of the ceramics: Petridis 2003, Petridis 2012a.



Figure 1.15. Detail from the mosaic floor of early Byzantine basilica, early sixth century CE. From Kolonia 2006, 367.

1.1.13. Summary

It is clear then that throughout its history Delphi was constructed around the expression of identity and political competition within the Hellenic world (and beyond). It was used as a tool of self-verification and validation – the importance of the space is reinforced by the dedications, which were placed because of the importance of the space. We see the excellence of cities and individuals played out in increasingly competitive spaces, showing antagonistic dynamics at play in the worlds of

economic success and military prowess. The construction of specific areas of dedication-types is notable and will be explored further in Chapter Two ([pp. 111](#)). The archaeological record at Delphi is shaped around its oracles and games, but also around a deeply rooted need to promote identities and to maintain civic and local individuality at all costs. But the material record at Delphi also shows much more than a storehouse for Hellenic achievement. It reflects the historic context of the Greek world in a way that is often overlooked both as a pedagogical tool and as a point of research: its record reflects changes and shifts in each century, wars and disputes and civic competitions as well as the priorities and desires of the people who lived through them. If we were looking for a way to study Greek history in its entirety, there would be worse places to start than Delphi. For the purposes of this thesis, this survey of material shows us how time changes the priorities of the dedicators as well as the shifting landscape of the sanctuary, both of which will be relevant to our later discussions.

1.2. Literary Evidence

If the archaeological record shows us what *was* there, the literary record provides us with a better understanding of what people *expected* to be there. If there is a ‘Delphi of the imagination’, it is best preserved here, and gives us a clear understanding of the anticipation of visitors across time. It shows what parts of the sanctuary were most important to the writers, and by extension what was most important to their contemporary readers – or, at least, what came to be most important to them, based on what they read. What is striking is how many of these ancient ideals have filtered into modern texts, and indeed how many of these have shaped the idea of Delphi in the imagination before the extensive excavation clarified the actual physical nature of the landscape. Many preconceptions linger, particularly when it comes to the oracle, which we will discuss in further detail in Chapter Six.

1.2.1. Greek Sources

Reference to Delphi in ancient literature is extensive: it is mentioned in texts of almost every genre. However, many of these specifically reference the oracle or oracular consultations. The Pythia's responses, both historical and mythological, are included in tragedy, epic, lyric poetry, historical writing, and philosophical discussion, as well as being covered extensively by Pausanias, Plutarch and a huge number of other Roman sources that we simply do not have space to cover.¹⁶⁹ These will be dealt with in the relevant chapters: for now, I will examine here the ancient sources which discuss Delphi as a space.

Of course, some of these texts also discuss the oracle, and it is unfair to expect the two to be entirely disconnected. Strabo is explicit in explaining that the oracle is as famous as the sanctuary itself. Euripides connects the actions of the Pythia to the beauty and working of the sanctuary space as a whole, and the importance of the oracle in major moments is a point often stressed when discussing the sanctuary, as is the power that the oracle has to define the roles and actions of men. Aeschylus notes the details of the wreathes when the narrative goes to the inner shrine; Aeschines remarks on the shrine and its votive offerings when explaining the punishment of tribes who had committed sacrilege against the space; Diodorus noted the protection that the oracle affords the space.¹⁷⁰

It is buffeted by neither the invading onset of winter rain, the loud-roaring cloud's
pitiless army, nor the wind that sweeps all kinds of rubble into the depths of the

¹⁶⁹ Tragedy: on King Aigeus' lack of children (Euripides, *Medea* 679); on Orestes avenging the murder of Agamemnon (Aeschylus, *Choephoroe* 270-296; 1031-1032). Epics: on Agamemnon consulting the oracle (Homer, *Odyssey* 8.78-81). Lyrics: on Tepelemos killing his brother (Pindar, *Olympian* 7.32-33); on the Heraklids (Pindar, *Pythian* 5.69-72). Historical writing: on Sparta founding a colony in Trachinia (Thucydides 3.92.5.); on Xenophon joining Cyrus' expedition (Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.5-8); on the Siphnians' decision to build a treasury at Delphi (Herodotus 3.57). Philosophy: on the wisdom of Socrates (Plato, *Apologia* 21a-c); on the exile of Athamas (Plato, *Minos* 315c.). Pausanias: on the proposed colony of Archais of Corinth (Pausanias 5.7.3); on Pligaleian exiles (Pausanias 8.39.4); on the cleansing of Corinth following the death of Jason and Medea's sons (Pausanias 2.3.7). Plutarch on Theseus (Plutarch, *Theseus* 26.4); on the outbreak of the Second Punic War (Plutarch, *Fabius Maximus* 18.3); on Solon and the war with Megara over Salamis (Plutarch, *Solon* 9.1).

¹⁷⁰ Strabo 9.3.2; Euripides, *Ion* 82-110; Aeschylus, *Eumenes* 39; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 3 107; Diodorus Siculus 11.14.

sea. Its facade, shining in pure light, will announce your chariot victory to the speech of men and make it famous.¹⁷¹

This perhaps best exemplifies another theme in descriptions of the sanctuary space: that of the beauty of both the landscape and the sanctuary, both of them the extension of Apollo's presence on earth. Euripides' *Ion* introduces the sanctuary in a similarly poetic way:

The untrod Parnassian cliffs, shining, receive the wheel of day for mortals [...] The smoke of dry myrtle flies to Phoebus' roof. [...] the silver whirlpools of Castalia; come to the temple when you have bathed in its pure waters.¹⁷²

Lucian too presents an idealised beauty in his description of the landscape, even if he depicts a Delphi in relative decline: his focus is on the glorious mountains, the yawning caves, the connection of the gods to a landscape made unreal by that very divine connection. The breath of the gods lingers still in the ancient gorge of Lucian's imagination, and even the ruinous nature of the sanctuary is not enough to dispel its importance. For Euripides too the ridge of Parnassos itself is a seat of heaven, lit with the light of the flaming torches held by bacchantes. Strabo is less fanciful, but even he begins his description with a focus on the wild landscape, on the precipitous mountains and the fertile plains that stretch towards the sea. Reflecting on its former greatness, he describes the ancient settlements now sunk into obscurity, the sanctuary itself, by contrast, remaining important in his description. The presence of the god is noted by Diogenes, and Plutarch also describes those left shuddering after viewing the space. It was the centre of the world, by nature a holy place.¹⁷³

The beauty and impressiveness of the dedications, specific to the landscape of the sanctuary itself, were also continuously noted. Herodotus makes reference to a number of them, their artistic and political significance, as do Thucydides and Plutarch. The 'lovely temple' of Apollo, in particular, is

¹⁷¹ Pindar, *Pythian* 6.10-15.

¹⁷² Euripides, *Ion* 83-96.

¹⁷³ Lucan, *Pharsalia* 5.71; Euripides, *Ion* 714-718; Strabo 9.3.3; Strabo 9.3.4; Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* 2.6; Plutarch, *Alexander* 74.6; Strabo 9.3.6.

made much of in the *Homeric Hymns*, as are the ‘priceless tripods’. Delphi is ‘rich in gold’, and its votives are worth as much as the wisdom of its maxims. It is unsurprising, given the nature of his work, that Strabo spends some time discussing the monuments at Delphi, but so does Euripides, who expands on the monuments and their decorations at some length in *Ion*. The Chorus, who wander the sanctuary as tourists describing what they see, remark on specific scenes, and reference things contained within the treasuries.¹⁷⁴

For the sources that predate Pausanias, the landscape of Delphi is viewed through a divine lens, the oracle and its consultations not just a political influence but a cultural cornerstone. The descriptions are at times fanciful but imbued with a sense of the divine: not only is Apollo present in Delphi, Delphi itself is a representation of his power and beauty. To those familiar with these texts, they would have seen and understood Delphi through these constructions, already prepared to accept the divine power of the place before they even reached the slopes of Mount Parnassos.

1.2.2. Plutarch

The most extensive and diverse literary source for the oracle and for sanctuary proceedings are the writings of Plutarch, born 47 CE in Chaeronea. Plutarch provides a rare thing for Delphi: first-hand knowledge. He worked in a series of civic and religious roles within the city and its sanctuary, most notably as a priest for the cult of Pythian Apollo. He published two extant texts: the *Moralia* and *Parallel Lives*. Delphi comes up in his *Parallel Lives* frequently, when the figures he discusses visit the sanctuary, but it is the *Moralia* that provides extensive insight into the sanctuary. It is composed of around sixty individual treatises on a variety of subjects, three of which deal specifically with Delphi. The first is a discussion of the letter ‘E’, the second is a discussion of why the Pythia no longer gives

¹⁷⁴ Homeric Hymn, *To Apollo* 3 287; Homeric Hymn, *To Apollo* 3 443; Pindar, *Pythian* 6.9; Diodorus Siculus 9.10; Strabo 9.3.6 for its omphalos; 9.3.11-12 for the previous wealth of the treasury and votives; Euripides, *Ion* 186-221; Euripides, *Ion* 1141-1177.

oracles in verse, and the final one discusses the inspiration of the Pythian oracle.¹⁷⁵ *On the epsilon at Delphi* (Περὶ τοῦ εἵ τοῦ ἐν Δελφοῖς, also referred to as *De E apud Delphos*) is a discussion of the meaning of the philosophical maxim attached to the temple, but offers no firm conclusions. *Oracles at Delphi no Longer Given in Verse* or *De Pythiae oraculis* (Περὶ τοῦ μὴ χρᾶν ἔμμετρα νῦν τὴν Πυθίαν) is, as the name suggests, a discussion between Plutarch's friends about why the Pythia no longer gives oracular missives in verse, and takes place outside the Temple of Apollo. One of these friends has just toured the sanctuary and discusses several monuments and statues within it, including the colouring of the bronze, which will be of particular note in Chapter Three ([pp. 154](#)). *On the Obsolescence of Oracles* or *De defectu oraculorum* (Περὶ τῶν ἐκλελοιπότων χρηστηρίων) is once again a discussion between Plutarch's friends, this time on a number of topics including Hellenic depopulation and one friend's trip to Britain, and ends with a debate about how the Pythia was inspired to give her oracles.¹⁷⁶

These texts are fundamental in reconstructing the Pythian process, and will be used much more extensively in Chapter Six, which deals with that very topic, but as Scott notes all of these deal with the sanctuary as a whole, and are particularly vital for understanding how the sanctuary was engaged with, understood, and enjoyed by visitors at the end of the first century CE. In particular, he notes how these show that Delphi became a popular tourist destination, a place to engage with history and memory as well as the sanctuary dedications themselves.¹⁷⁷ These sections show Delphi through the eye of the visitor, and give a sense of a multi-faceted experience, one where visitors would ask questions and discuss what they could see, learning about the history of the sanctuary and the monuments as they explored. How genuine this is in terms of ancient experience is a difficult question: these are constructed dialogues used to discuss ideological points of interest to Plutarch. But Plutarch's first-hand experience of the sanctuary and its practices cannot be ignored or dismissed outright.

¹⁷⁵ Barrow 1967, 12, 132; Scott 2014, 215. Roles in Delphi: Barrow 1967, 31; Scott 2014, 216.

¹⁷⁶ Plutarch, *Moralia* Book 5 (384D-394C; 394D-409D; 409E-438E). For the sake of clarity, however, this thesis will reference the individual treaties directly rather than using the *Moralia* referencing system.

¹⁷⁷ Scott 2014, 218-219.

1.2.3. Pausanias

One of the most vital sources for the landscape of Delphi comes from Pausanias' *Description of Greece*. Despite the survival of his extensive text, little is known about the author himself. His text was written between 115 CE and 180 CE, and belongs to the genre of periegetic, a tour guide of the Greek world that mixes geography, history, mythology, art history and ethnography.¹⁷⁸ Delphi is described in Book 10, the final section of his written travels that moves geographically through the Hellenic world. McNerney states that Pausanias' writings have the hallmarks of a hasty visit, but that seems an unfair statement given the length of his description.¹⁷⁹ In fact, Delphi gets the second longest description of any place in the work.¹⁸⁰ Like Strabo, Pausanias begins his account with the approach through the local landscape. He opens discussing the difficulty of getting to the sanctuary: 'the high road to Delphi becomes both steeper and more difficult for the walker',¹⁸¹ and continues describing the approach, first to the sanctuary of Athena then to that of Apollo. His focus is on the space itself, and its abundance of monuments. He remarks on the number of buildings that are visible just from the approach to Delphi.¹⁸²

The monuments that he describes are chosen according to preference ('I will mention which of the votive offerings seemed to me most worthy of notice'¹⁸³) rather than by any other determining factor, though it is worth noting that he does mention a number of politically important monuments, so presumably both beauty and historical significance factor into his definition of 'worthy'. The account emphasises the connection to the wilderness, particularly the rivers, woodlands, and the Castalian springs. He makes particular note of the athletic, musical, and military victory dedications, and lists them in extensive detail, focusing on the artefacts and the reasons behind their dedications. He also mentions a number of treasuries, but remarks that there was no treasure to be seen in any of

¹⁷⁸ Habicht 1988, 2; Scott 2014, 233.

¹⁷⁹ McNerney 2004, 43.

¹⁸⁰ 7.75 % of the whole, only beaten by Olympia, which gets a substantial 13 % (Sidebottom 2002, n. 24).

¹⁸¹ Pausanias 10.5.5.

¹⁸² Strabo 9.3.1.; Pausanias 10.5.2-10.5.5; Pausanias 10.5.5; Pausanias 10.8.6; Pausanias 10.8.6.

¹⁸³ Pausanias 10.9.1.

them.¹⁸⁴ Once again, the focus of these moments are the treasuries themselves, but also the reasons behind their dedication: the Siphnian Treasury in particular gets a full explanation, as does the Theban Treasury.¹⁸⁵

Pausanias' journey begins in the former political centre of the Greek world – Attica – and follows a grand tour of his own devising to Delphi, the religious centre. It is a merging of a glorious past with the underwhelming present, and Pausanias exempts Delphi from the inevitable decline which he sees in the rest of Greece. Delphi, and all sanctuaries, are clearly associated with wealth, and Pausanias does not hesitate to emphasise this.¹⁸⁶ For Pausanias, Delphi is representative of the Hellenic world and its histories, and as such it should not be surprising that he goes on so many transgressions in his attempt to explain the monuments that he comes across. The importance of history is evident throughout, as is his focus on the legacy of the Hellenic world. His text finishes with an extensive study of the Delphian Lesche, dedicated by the Knidians, which contained a number of paintings. His descriptions of them are focused on the details, and the stories from which the scenes come.¹⁸⁷

What Pausanias makes relatively little reference to is Apollo himself, or indeed oracular consultation, except when it is relevant to the background of a monument. He does offer sections explaining the mythological history of the Sybils, and the history and formative years of the oracle, but these seem to be presented as a separate part, and do not receive much more attention than his comparable section explaining the background of the Pythian Games. It is unclear whether these receive so little attention because they are common enough knowledge that they do not require expansion, or if he simply did not view them as a part of his touristic *modus operandi*, but it is an odd departure from the texts which come before him. He presents the sanctuary as a separate construct

¹⁸⁴ Pausanias 10.9.1; Pausanias 10.8.8-10; Pausanias 10.9.2-10.10.4; Pausanias 10.11.1.

¹⁸⁵ Pausanias 10.11.2; 10.11.5.

¹⁸⁶ McInerney 2004, 53; Arafat 2009, 581.

¹⁸⁷ A useful and frustrating account given that these masterpieces do not survive: Pausanias 10.21.5-10.31.12.

to its oracular traditions; the visitors for which he might be writing are interested tourists, disengaged from cult activity, not the devout pilgrims of a bygone era.

Though Pausanias was used extensively by nineteenth century excavators, in more recent years there has been increased criticism of his work and its use as a guide to the archaeological record.¹⁸⁸ It is clear that Pausanias is not a straightforward tour guide, but one grounded in constructing a particular idea of the Hellenic world centred around the unity of Greece. Pausanias only remarks on two monuments that date later than 260 BCE (the stadium and a structure in the Athena sanctuary). Within the context of the growing interest in Greece's historical and cultural contribution to the Mediterranean, this focus is understandable.¹⁸⁹ But what does that mean for a thesis such as this one? Avoiding Pausanias altogether leaves extensive gaps, particularly in terms of smaller scale dedications that have since been lost or melted down. We might not be able to take him entirely at face value, but his presentation of a unified Greece is still a useful one for considering how the site was received and experienced by visitors to the sanctuary, and many of his observations are corroborated by other sources or indeed by the archaeological record itself. This thesis sets out to bring together disparate forms of evidence to create a deeper understanding of the sanctuary space, and while we must be cautious in taking Pausanias' interpretations too literally, I intend to mitigate potential issues with other sources and unassailable archaeological facts wherever possible.

1.2.4. Later Sources

There are far fewer texts describing Delphi after Pausanias. Later Roman authors seem broadly disinterested in Delphi as a site, perhaps because of its relative decline by their time. After all, for how long should we expect writers to wax lyrical about sights that are no longer there to be seen,

¹⁸⁸ Lacroix 1992; Jacquemin 2001; Scott 2014, 234.

¹⁸⁹ Pausanias' goals and focus: Daux 1936b, 179; Habicht 1988; Elsner 2001, 18; Elsner 2004, 262; Weir 2004, 105. Buildings after 260 BCE: Daux 1936b, 173; Habicht 1988, 23, 134-135.

particularly when Rome itself was full of so many artefacts comparable in beauty and scale? Interest in the oracle, however, does not diminish in the same way and is represented in a number of ways. There are discussions about those who consulted the oracle in the past, its legacy and former power, and how it helped to shape the world in which Rome rose to power. However, this is not the only narrative that oracular – and Delphic – literature followed.

What later Roman authors – particularly Christian writers – were fascinated by were the specifics of the Pythian oracle. The focus on the traditions (largely reconstructed from Plutarch) and mantic rituals (largely constructed from a desire to undermine them) was an exercise in condemnation. This is broadly done by connecting the Pythia – and by extension Delphi – to the underworld, now viewed in more of a negative light. There are numerous unsubstantiated oracles described and discussed, to further discredit both the Pythia and pagan religion as a whole.¹⁹⁰ Delphi itself, as a sanctuary and a site, gets little mention: when it does appear, it is a largely reconstructed landscape focusing on caverns, chasms, and the vapours that the legacy of the Pythia is still trying to shake off.¹⁹¹ There are some examples to the contrary: the Christian writer Claudian speaks with enthusiasm about Delphi, describing the Castalian waters as having ‘the fore-knowledge of fate’.¹⁹² As with the archaeological record, literary descriptions of visits to Delphi seem to tail away, and though it remained discussed as a historical site, there is a long gap before visitors reappear in literary record.

1.2.5 Rediscovery

Cyriac of Ancona was, so far as we know, the first foreign visitor that went searching for Delphi after the site was abandoned in the early seventh century CE. He visited Greece for six days from the 21st of March 1436, spurred by the new Western interest in the physical remains of the ancient past, as

¹⁹⁰ Philostorgios 77.12.

¹⁹¹ Pseudo-Callisthenes 36; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 5.28.

¹⁹² Claudian 4.2.5.

opposed to the previous, near-exclusive interest in its literary legacy.¹⁹³ In fact, Cyriac himself remarked that monuments and inscriptions made for more faithful witnesses than did the texts of ancient writers. Cyriac was interested in the physical remains of the ancient world, influenced by the growth of the Humanist movement. He spent six days wandering the land around Delphi, despite there being very little to see, searching for remnants of the past and eventually incorrectly labelling an Argive monument as the Temple of Apollo. Unfortunately, much of Cyriac's writings are lost, but we know he visited the stadium and theatre, and saw a selection of still visible monuments.¹⁹⁴ This is indicative of the direction that writers will begin to take throughout the modern era: though fascination with the historic context persists, later writings become significantly more like Pausanias in their interests. But Cyriac represents not just a brief moment in history or the life of one man: his visits to the world of Greek history, and to Delphi, show a continued fascination with the past, and the power that it would continue to have over later travel writers. Understanding these pre-visit assumptions and the in-visit experience of these later writers can help us reflect on the possible ancient assumptions and experiences of the site.

Seventeenth and Eighteenth centuries

It is not until the seventeenth century that another literary record of a visit to Delphi appears. The first seems to be Vernon in 1675, who complains of the difficulty of the journey (perhaps explaining why so few records exist).¹⁹⁵ The next extant records of visitors to Delphi are those of Spon and Wheeler, who journeyed together through Greece in 1675-1676. Spon remarks of Delphi: 'I found most bizarre, that the most famous place in the world would have had such a reversal of fortune, that we were obliged to seek Delphi in Delphi itself, and to ask where was this Temple, when we were on his foundations'.¹⁹⁶ There would not have been much of the ancient site left to see at this point, after

¹⁹³ Colin 1981, 531; Hellmann 1992, 20; Scott 2014, 249-250.

¹⁹⁴ Bodnar 1960, 33-34; Etienne and Etienne 1992, 26; Hellmann 1992, 15; Déroche 1996, 186; Maass 1997, 232-236; Mulliez 2007, 134-135; Belozerskaya 2009, 180-183; Stonemann 2010, 27; Scott 2014, 249-251.

¹⁹⁵ Stonemann 2010, 38-80.

¹⁹⁶ Spon 1679, 45.

centuries of landslides and the building of a settlement over much of the area (Fig. 1.16). But this did not stop these early tourists from visiting the sanctuary and writing about it anyway. Wheler remarks 'I need not tell you what this Place was in ancient times: all the World knows, how famous *Delphos* hath been for the Oracle of *Apollo* there, consulted for so many ages together. But its ancient Glory is now vanished; and it remains Great, at present, only in the Writings of the Ancients'.¹⁹⁷

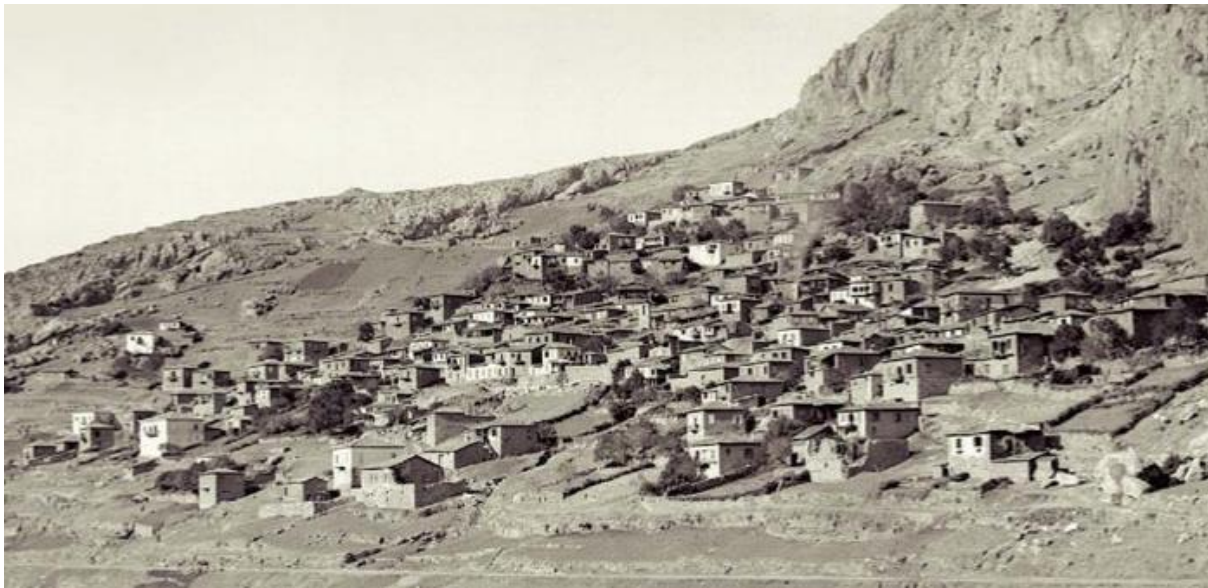


Figure 1.16. The village of Kastri, built over the ruins of Delphi, prior to excavation. From Kolonia 2006, 18.

Wheler seems particularly taken with the landscape, describing in some detail the fountain and the streams, as well as Parnassos itself.¹⁹⁸ They are clearly influenced by the account of Pausanias' visit, Spon even recounting his list of mythological temples, and describing Pausanias' movements through the space as if they were instructions left for him to follow. When Spon and Wheler visited, many of the ancient marbles available to see were held in the monastery in no particular order.¹⁹⁹ Spon's final words ('We must be content with it, and content ourselves with what the Books could tell us of the riches and ornaments of this place, for there is nothing but misery, and all its brilliance has passed like

¹⁹⁷ Wheler 1682, 314.

¹⁹⁸ Wheler 1682, 314.

¹⁹⁹ Spon 1679, 45-46; 48. Wheler also mentions him by name: 1682, 315; Spon 1679, 50; Wheler 1682, 314.

a dream')²⁰⁰ suggest that visitors at this time would have been disappointed by their visit, but in fact he seems almost inspired by it, even composing his own verse when confronted with the sights.²⁰¹ They both focus on the importance of the oracle in the ancient world, and it is clear that it is the historical significance of the Pythia that has drawn them both to the site.²⁰²

Richard Chandler's *Travels in Greece* (1776) also focuses on the history of the site, putting particular emphasis on the oracle, and making clear but unacknowledged reference to Plutarch in doing so. It ends with a bizarre anecdote, where Chandler washes his hands in the springs, and was 'instantly chilled, and seized with a tremor'. He returned to the monastery where he was staying, only to 'fall into a most profuse perspiration', and he ends his account wondering if the same thing happened to the Pythias of antiquity, and if such a thing was attributed to Apollo.²⁰³ Edward Dodwell also visited Delphi: his description of Delphi is brief and illustrated. Like his predecessors, he was disappointed at the remains of the sanctuary, but impressed by the overall experience of the visit:

No situation can surpass the approach to Delphi. Its grand and theatrical appearance, combined with its ancient celebrity, its mouldering ruins, and its fallen state, form such extreme contrasts, that it is difficult to decide whether more regret is excited by its departed splendour, or more satisfaction felt in still beholding some remains of its former magnificence.²⁰⁴

Dodwell's work provides useful descriptions of the sites he visited and is supplemented by a huge quantity of illustrations. Delphi has two plates included in the text, and they give us an understanding of the kind of sights travellers from this period would have seen: windswept, isolated, with the remains of the sanctuary still clearly buried (Fig. 1.17).

²⁰⁰ Spon 1679, 51.

²⁰¹ Spon 1679, 42-43.

²⁰² Spon 1679, 42; Wheler 1682, 314.

²⁰³ Chandler 1776, 294, 302.

²⁰⁴ Dodwell 1834, 19-20.



Figure 1.17. 'Ruins at Delphi, in Phocis' (top) and 'View at Delphi' (below). From Dodwell 1834, pls. XXXIV, XXXV.

There are broad continuities in such accounts that inform the understanding of experience. J.J. Barthélemy (1832), J. Stuart and N. Revett (1794), Ch.R. Cockerell (1846), W. Haygarth (1816) all include detailed descriptions of Delphi along similar themes. Despite the practicality in their discussions of remains, there is a constant thread of longing for the distant past, and somewhat fantastical recreation in both art and text (Fig. 1.18). They seem inspired by the beauty of the landscape and the purity of the air. They make some mention of the ruins and the marble remains on display in the local area, but the focus of their visit seemed more to be about engaging with the general atmosphere and embracing the legacy of the sanctuary. Their experience is almost one of religious pilgrimage: the site itself is holy by association with notable moments in Greek history, and they the pilgrim historians, visiting to reach a place of knowledge and understanding.



Figure 1.18. Vue de Delphes et des deux roches du Parnasse (View of Delphi and the two rocks of Parnassos).
From Barthélemy 1832, 22.

Nineteenth century

Yet there I've wandered by thy vaunted rill; Yes! sighed o'er Delphi's long-deserted
shrine

Where, save that feeble fountain, all is still.²⁰⁵

Byron remarks on Delphi in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and his focus is clearly on what he views as a physical and spiritual decline. He mourns the change in Delphi's landscape much as he mourns the rest of Greece, which is presented in the poem as a ghost of its former greatness. But this is not necessarily the theme found in all literature of the period. Delphi is included in the first book in English marketed specifically as a Guide to Greece, Murray's *A hand-book for travellers in the Ionian Islands, Greece, Turkey, Asia Minor, and Constantinople*, published in 1840. This rather ambitious text was based on a travelogue by Levine written between 1831 and 1833, and the fact that Delphi was even included in such an extensive journey is quite shocking given how little there actually was to see of the sanctuary at this time. Readers of such texts were likely to be interested in Greek history and literature, and no doubt they would have anticipated the inclusion of Delphi even if they were unaware how little of it remained: perhaps too the early stages of the excavation were beginning to excite fresh interest. It mentions several other smaller villages at which a visitor might want to stop and rest, and that there are guides available at Kastri, indicating some degree of touristic interest. It mentions several ancient inscriptions, the fountain, and other remains, including the Gymnasium and the temple foundations which had been uncovered since Spon and Wheler's time.²⁰⁶ The concern is clearly to reconstruct an idea of the past, just as it was for Byron:

To form an accurate idea of what Delphi was, we must imagine an ancient theatre,
with stone terraces in place of seats, of sufficient width to admit of temples upon

²⁰⁵ Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* 1.1.

²⁰⁶ Murray 1840, 39-41.

those semi-circular terraces; the Stadium being the uppermost structure of the series, and the Castalian Spring and the Gymnasium at the right extremity.²⁰⁷

He mentions too the valuables now missing that might still be buried beneath them, and makes a reference to Pausanias.²⁰⁸ Stephens, who attempted to visit Delphi, was disappointed that he would not be able to reconstruct the past by drinking from the fountain and sleeping on the slopes of Mount Parnassos.²⁰⁹ As we might expect, the emphasis is on the sacred nature of the space and the beauty of the landscape, though there is now more of an interest in specific monuments. There seems to be a great concern with the reconstruction of the past: these writers go to this site to walk in the shoes – or sandals – of the ancients. There seems to be a significance placed on the site in general when visiting Greece, the idea that the trip could not be complete without getting to Delphi. Such ideas were not revolutionary: Nibby, in his tour of Greece in 1828 also comments on the monuments, the fountain, the tall cliffs of Parnassos, also making explicit reference to Pausanias. This Grand Tour Italian text is equally indicative of the interests of the time, and the importance of the sanctuary in the popular imagination.²¹⁰

Twentieth century and beyond

If Delphi has earned immortal fame, it is not by the dark speech of the Pythia, nor by the prudent replies of the priests, but by the art it fostered, and especially by the echo of the Oracle's words in the great men, who with eager ears and trembling approached it.²¹¹

Poulson's remark is from a piece of academic work, but it is well worth including for thinking how the sanctuary still operates within the Western cultural mindset. The site inspires modern people, who engage with the historical legacy of the oracle and site, which remained present in the works that the

²⁰⁷ Murray 1840, 41.

²⁰⁸ Murray 1840, 41.

²⁰⁹ Stephens 1838, 10.

²¹⁰ Nibby 1828, 85-87.

²¹¹ Poulson 1920, 327.

visitors read. He remarks 'Delphi planted in the human mind the invincible yearning for the lofty and supernatural, and Delphi showed to all mankind the way to honourable effort in the arena of life'.²¹² Harriet Monroe is also inspired by the legacy of Delphi, and the idea of visiting it, of reconstructing a past based on the ruins of the present.²¹³ Collas' concise guide to Delphi describes it as one of the most beautiful landscapes, and sums it up with the comment that Delphi is 'one of the few historical sites where a visitor, even with a very sketchy historical knowledge, may immediately come into communion with the ancient spirit'.²¹⁴ This era provides more detailed histories of the sanctuary, with ever-present references to Pausanias. The importance of the oracle and the monuments are again emphasised, as well as the connection between the sanctuary and Greek history. The increasing number of guidebooks swing the discussion more heavily in favour of the visual material, as does the increase in tourism to Greece.²¹⁵ The world was, at this time, becoming more interested in travel for leisure, and more able to afford it. Interest was, by extension, increasing in sanctuaries such as Delphi, which features in every prominent guidebook despite the relative difficulty in accessing the sanctuary.

The myth and mirage of Delphi and its oracle continued, lingering across genres, but it remains connected to the sanctity of the site. In William Golding's *'The Double Tongue'*, the young Pythia is shaken by her first view of Delphi itself, and it is described with the same reverential tone that we have come to expect.

As the shutters swung back it was as if the light burst in, too much light, not direct light from Apollo's sun but coming from everywhere, dazzling from what I now saw were buildings in white stone that seemed to lift and tumble up, up rather than down, as if they were escaping the earth and flying like a storm of birds into the sky. And as my eyes became accustomed and distance deepened, I saw how the separate buildings were picked out, adorned as a woman by jewels with delicate

²¹² Poulson 1920, 328-329.

²¹³ Monroe 1928, 'Delphi'.

²¹⁴ Collas 1950, 7-8.

²¹⁵ Petrakos 1977; Petsas 1981; Andronicos 1987.

patterns of colour which danced round architraves and capitals or glowed in the shade of colonnades. Then, beyond and as if it held up the deep blue sky, was the precipitous wall of the Shining Rocks.²¹⁶

There is an interesting focus on the details, on the beauty of the sanctuary as a whole, with a throwback to the pre-Pausanias traditions of connecting the landscape to the majesty of the god. And Golding's depiction of Delphi is not all beauty and majesty – in other ways, too, the presence of the divine is felt in his depiction:

People talk about the air of Delphi. They seldom mention the fear that settles on you when you see it, fresh and beautiful and deadly. There are gods hiding everywhere but allowing themselves to be sensed, as if at any moment with a flash of light and a clap of thunder one would start into presence and purpose and power.²¹⁷

Perhaps the best way to conclude this discussion of the modern perception of visiting Delphi is with the following section from a modern travel writer. Middleton is neither an expert on Classics nor on Greece, and her knowledge of the site and its history shows not only the impact of Delphi on the cultural consciousness of the West but also how these themes have become so deeply entwined in the concept of the sanctuary:

And perhaps this was Delphi's power, I thought. There was something shockingly simple about the place. For all its powerful legacy, it was, at its core, elemental. Rocks, sky, and earth. A place of mystery and answers. Of solid rock and unstable ground. I thought of all the strange vicissitudes of my life - of anybody's life - and felt its connection to this place. Who of us hasn't known certainty only to have the ground shift unexpectedly beneath us. And who of us has not been visited, from

²¹⁶ Golding 1995, 43.

²¹⁷ Golding 1995, 41.

time to time, by sudden grace or good fortune. A second chance, forgiveness ... an unplanned trip to Greece.

This was Delphi's power. I watched the boys approach on the path. I turned and looked up the mountain again. This was indeed a sacred place. I felt it.

And, like grace itself, completely unexpected.²¹⁸

1.2.6. Summary

Our literary sources show many continuities through the ages, most notable of which is the focus on the sacred nature of the sanctuary, which extends far beyond the deconsecration of the site and the fall of paganism. We see a consistent assumption through antiquity and beyond that there is something essentially transformative about time spent in Delphi: that the visit itself is worth as much as anything you might see or do when there. There is a clear expectation of an important and spiritually significant experience. There is consistent emphasis on the beauty of the site, but also on its isolation and wildness, framing the sanctuary and visits to it as something highly out of the ordinary, requiring great effort, and therefore special. Perhaps this is less surprising in the context of Greek authors, given that Delphi operated as one of the most politically significant sites, the host of a panhellenic game, and as home to Apollo. Following this, the attention given to it by Roman authors is also logical, both in terms of pagan authors and later Christian writers attempting to reconstruct a narrative around a pagan past. However, the reverence shown to it by later authors, those who came after Delphi was built over and before it was excavated, is something of particular note. It shows the influence that Delphi has, that it has always had, on constructing an idea of antiquity in the West: to Spon and Wheler and many that came after them, a trip to Greece was not complete without a trip to Delphi, despite what little there was to see.

²¹⁸ Middleton 2010, n.p.

These varied sources are, though useful, also problematic in their use. There is a clear issue with chronology: many of these sources, including Plutarch and Pausanias, were written a significant amount of time after 405 BCE. By the point of their time in Delphi, not only had the Delphic sanctuary changed, but the Hellenic world as well. Monuments had been added, removed, and altered by the passage of time: stories and social priorities would have shifted, as would the ways in which messages would have been interpreted. Authors also bring their own biases to their narratives, and have distinct goals of writing. Though Pausanias is a travelogue of sorts, as we have already discussed, his work is also shaped around the idea of a Greece that may never have existed: Plutarch is working in a sanctuary that has changed in terms of its social function, and much of his discussion is focused around the perception of and changes in the oracular tradition. Even authors who date to much closer to our time periods, such as Herodotus, are not without problems in this context: his work has its own intentions, namely in framing a discussion of East and West, and Delphi along with many other events, people and places, are referenced only within this specific framework.

What then are we aiming to get from these sources? It is not, necessarily, how they experienced the site: even if that was the intention, there are virtually no examples of this type of discussion in the contemporary literature, and the experience of later writers might in many ways mislead us. What is useful instead is a sense of the monuments present: where they were, how a visitor might approach them, what decorations or narratives were presented on them. Likewise, any information on the historical context of a monument, or the dedicator, also helps explain these monuments. These sources also help explain what the landscape of Delphi looked like is also of use, and how the wider sanctuary space is organised. Information about how the space was engaged with is also useful for us – are there places where particular activities took place, or that people might congregate, for example? But with all sources, we must be cautious, and must seek to verify the information through other means where possible. Pausanias is far and above the most valuable writer for the monuments of Delphi, as he describes a wide array of them as he progresses through the sanctuary space. However, many of these are no longer extant, and he can be vague about the

placement of smaller scale monuments: though he might say that he passed a monument, he rarely specifies on what side of the road they lie, or give any specific parameters to how close they are to other monuments. This is to be expected: it would be incongruous for any travel writer to describe monuments in such specific detail. This is why any description of a monument must be confirmed by the archaeological record, and also why all monuments included in this have such definitive locations.

There is, of course, less objectively provable information that can be taken from these sources as well. Euripides' *Ion* is an excellent example of a contemporary source that describes people using the sanctuary: the Chorus walk around the site, commenting on what they see, engaging with the visual language of the sanctuary and its meanings. Such information is invaluable, and shows us that the sanctuary could be used in this way: no one comments on the Chorus' activities, and they are very much presented as common occurrence, showing us that visitors must have engaged with the sanctuary space in such a way – much as my visitor will do throughout this thesis.²¹⁹ Plutarch's discussions of monuments are also at times framed around the idea of people walking around the sanctuary, and show discussions of meaning, and though this is from a later period it at least shows a continuation of a tradition, and that Euripides was not alone in presenting Delphi this way.²²⁰ Plutarch's role within the sanctuary also gives him unprecedented access to the inner workings of the oracle, and he often discusses the Pythia within the context of what has changed since the Classical period, giving us, if not the exact workings, at least a sense of what they might have been. Like with monuments, the oracular process can also to a certain extent be verified by the archaeology of the temple structure. Herodotus may not discuss the workings of Delphi, but he does at times give specific and detailed explanations of certain monuments when they become relevant to his narrative, which we can use to help expand our understanding of not only the monuments, but what visitors might have understood about them or have known prior to arriving at the sanctuary.

²¹⁹ Euripides, *Ion* 184-240.

²²⁰ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 2-3

We must, as I have outlined, be careful when we are using these sources, and avoid taking too much at face value or as clear fact. Information about the sanctuary has to be verifiable with use of the archaeological evidence, and reference to experiences and emotional response to the sanctuary can be used to inform our discussion, but cannot become the sole narrative. Likewise, discussion of the oracle or other ritual information is very useful in terms of reconstructing the mantic process, but we must be careful to analyse these descriptions to understand whether they represent unusual examples, or if they are being used to present a particular narrative or point. The archaeology sits at the front and centre of this study, but these sources, when used carefully, also give us an invaluable additional layer of insight into the world of Classical Delphi, and so cannot be ignored.

1.3. What comes before

To understand experience we must study it in its totality, which means asking why people came to Delphi, what they interacted with, and what they took away from this.²²¹ It is important to consider the possible influences that visitors would have had: our literary accounts can help us reconstruct some of this, but anthropological and museum studies scholarship can add to the conversation too. The calendar of the Delphic year tells us when people would have come to Delphi: for the festivals (at four distinct times within the year); for the oracle (arrival early in any month of the nine in which Apollo was in residence); for viewing the sanctuary (theoretically at any point in the year, though the difficulty of travel would inevitably be increased in the winter months). Adverse weather would make the trip less appealing, and so it is safe to assume that the bulk of travellers came to Delphi in the fairer months of the year.²²² For the Pythian Games, the advance *theoria* would give travellers warning on when to leave; Salt and Boutsikas also argue that the heliacal rising of the constellation of Delphinus would warn potential visitors to leave in time to welcome Apollo back to Delphi, though there is little

²²¹ Falk and Dierking 2013, 13-24.

²²² The months in which Apollo is said to reside at Delphi coincide almost exactly with what Semple deduces is the sailing season – March 10th to November 10th, when winds were best suited to sea travel (Semple 1932, 579).

support for this in the ancient sources, and it seems unlikely that this would have been the main way in which visitors planned a journey to Delphi, given the fame of the site and the advance warning of the *theoroi* for the Pythian Games.²²³

The oracle opened on the seventh day of each month, and on the festival months the festivities would also have started with the oracle. Therefore, there is a certain overlap when it comes to potential visitors (and of course, practicality suggests that people would have come for both if they were already making the journey). For visitors to Delphi, the journey may have been a long one: dedications from the Cyclades, from eastern Ionic states and from beyond the Greek world indicate that some visitors came from far afield, but visitors were just as likely to come from local settlements and amphictyonic states. To Morinis, a pilgrimage must contain both a journey and a goal, but there is no set distance or type of destination necessary for the term to be applied.²²⁴ The very fact that pilgrimage occurs across cultures and times in so many different ways means that it is almost impossible to construct a definition that fits all potential examples. There is little conceptual similarity between an Aboriginal Walkabout and a Buddhist pilgrimage to the temples of Lumbini, and few commonalities between the consultation of the Delphic oracle or the zodiac-determined mass bathing ritual of the Hindu Kumbh-Mela. It is impossible to reconstruct a single model of pilgrimage, and equally difficult to try and conflate the experiences of a individual visitor to Delphi, and this is clear even from the beginning of the process; the variety in journeys immediately creates a diversity that is impossible to reconcile with any single model.

However, one commonality between all pilgrims, regardless of the distance they must travel, is the shift from one mode of landscape to another. When visiting panhellenic spaces the pilgrim not only moves from one geographically defined space to another, but to an ideologically different one as well. Rutherford remarks that pilgrimage to panhellenic sanctuaries such as Delphi should not be

²²³ Salt and Boutsikas 2005, 568-572. Perhaps this might have been more likely in the seventh century, when the oracle was only open for one period in the year and so precise arrival time was even more important. However, a lack of ancient evidence leads me to be wary.

²²⁴ Morinis 1992, 15.

considered a movement from secular to sacred space, but from local to panhellenic space.²²⁵ This further emphasises the transitional nature of the individuals engaging in pilgrimage and invites them into a place in which they are cognitively open to the cult processes with which they will engage.

Gilitz argues that before the twentieth century, pilgrimages were normally undertaken on foot, and were expected to last a long time: this invited introspection and solitude but could also allow the creation of temporary communities of travellers. But in the context of polarised Hellenic identities, it is unclear whether this panhellenic space would encourage the disintegration of civic and political difference or further reinforce them. However, the connections between travel and religious activity provide an interesting avenue of thought. This journey invites the traveller into a state of liminality, and Gilitz suggests that this emotional, physical and social transition is one of the most important aspects of the pilgrimage as a whole.²²⁶ Indeed, for many new pilgrims, he argues that the journey itself seems to have as much impact as the time spent in the destination itself – he references in particular accounts of the pilgrimage to Compostela, whose emphasis in sources seem to be more on the mental changes undergone during the journey.²²⁷ Elsner summarises a pilgrimage as ‘a journey into one’s identity in its topographic, cultural and spiritual resonances’.²²⁸ his emphasis is not necessarily on the physical journey, but on the potential for an internal one. This idea is reinforced by Morinis in his anthropological examination of pilgrimage.²²⁹ Pilgrimage separates itself from other forms of travel by virtue of the transformative nature of both the journey and the actions undertaken at the destination: the pilgrim returns feeling somehow altered from their journey.²³⁰ What process should we expect a Delphic visitor to have undergone?

Coleman and Elsner remark that the traveller must be confronted with rituals, holy objects and sacred architecture. These elements interrelate and reinforce both each other and the sacred

²²⁵ Rutherford 1995, 276.

²²⁶ Gitlitz 2014, 42-43.

²²⁷ Gitlitz 2014, 43.

²²⁸ Elsner 1992, 10.

²²⁹ Morinis 1992, 3-4.

²³⁰ Morinis 1992, 1.

nature of the destination itself, and Delphi is certainly not lacking in these features.²³¹ Rinschede remarks that many, and perhaps most of the rituals, artefacts, and natural features that Greek pilgrims encountered were likely to have been known to them already from the reports of other pilgrims and from myth – and, presumably, from the literary sources being recounted around the Hellenic world. The visitors made the journey to the sanctuary in the expectation of seeing precisely these sights. The monuments are inherently political, ingrained in the identities of the dedicators, and these things were not disconnected from the experience. As the worship of Hellenistic rulers and Roman emperors shows, and the presence of temples within cities everywhere has revealed, religion was not and could not be separated from politics in the Graeco-Roman world.²³² Flower's work highlights a particular role that the priests played at Delphi, informing visitors about the dedications and the stories behind them.²³³ These influence the literary sources in turn, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of experiences, retold and then expected and then encountered and then retold once more.

As Falk outlines in his work on experience in museums, in order to truly understand experience, we must not hesitate to discuss difficult questions: why the visitors have come, what they will see, what the conditions of the visit are, and what the intentions of the place itself are.²³⁴ In order to do this successfully for Delphi, we must remember that these visitors have come with particular intentions, and that they do not simply proceed through the sanctuary in a static and disconnected way. The existing archaeological and literary records inform our understanding of the visitor experience, but we must walk the awkward line between having no set visitor profile and still remembering that they are individuals with agency and varied interpretations and understandings of the sanctuary.

²³¹ Coleman and Elsner 1995, 6-7.

²³² Alcock and Osborne 2012, 250.

²³³ Flower 1991, 63.

²³⁴ Falk 2009, 17-18.

1.4. Conclusions

This thesis aims to understand the experience of a visitor to the site. To do this, we must understand in detail the kind of material with which they were confronted, the stories they may have heard, and the preconceptions of the experience that they bring with them through the social and collective memory of their local communities. Delphi remained a vital part of the cultural fabric of Greece throughout antiquity and maintained its significance even afterwards. This chapter set out to examine the evidence available to us in trying to understand visitor experiences at Delphi, both in terms of the material and topographical landscape and the experiences recorded in literary sources. Delphi's extensive excavation has provided a detailed and thorough material history of the site, from its Late Bronze Age settlement onwards. In the ninth century Delphi is a small place, and the evidence is predominantly ceramic, and it is not until the eighth century that the evidence begins to suggest cult activity at the site. The seventh century evidence shows a growth in significance, with increasing bronze and ceramic goods, and the beginning of architectural buildings. It is clear that the oracle is practising by mid-way through the century, though it is not clear how much of a reach it had throughout the Hellenic world – it is not until the beginning of the sixth century that the material record begins to suggest the extensive reach and fame that Delphi would achieve. The sixth century is a decisive one for the sanctuary, showing extensive growth and a widespread rebuild of its major monuments following the fire of 548.

The evidence from before the sixth century suggests a reasonably well attended and successful sanctuary, one with local support and interest, as well as a few patrons from further afield. There is certainly nothing in the material record at that point that shows that Delphi was destined to become as significant as it did. It is hard to pinpoint exactly why Delphi became so powerful and important in such a short amount of time, but it did, and the evidence from the material record increases in quantity and quality throughout the Archaic and Classical period, only beginning to decline from around 200 BCE. As I have already said, its material record is shaped around oracles and games,

and its literary record in antiquity often follows suit: we have extensive literary references to these famous events. But both the literary and material record also show us the role of cities and individuals in shaping the Delphic landscape, how individuality and identity sat at the forefront of dedicators' minds as they helped to construct the space.

Reconstructing the material record helps us understand the way the landscape looked, and how it would have been experienced by those passing through it. The literary record is also a vital tool for understanding this. There is a clear thread running through the literary material that Delphi is expected to be a wild, beautiful and transformative space: visitors attend expecting a strange and divine experience, even into the modern day, when the worship of Apollo has been relegated to the distant past. Likewise, the process of travelling to a sanctuary is clearly expected to evoke a sense of significance and divine presence. The literary record is suggestive of collective cultural memory and contributes to it as well: the visitor to Delphi would come to the sanctuary already anticipating certain situations and feelings.

Chapter Two

The sanctuary: a reconstruction

A visitor arrives at Delphi. The scene is far more complex than that, but to reconstruct it we must be careful not to stray from the objective landscape, from reasonable supposition, and from logical interpretation. We can imagine the sanctuary, the marble bright against the hillside, shining beneath the towering rocks of the mountain, but we must be careful in our reconstructions. We know the material that would have existed in the sanctuary by c. 400 BCE, we can make educated guesses on the reasons for visiting the sanctuary, and we can even with some success reconstruct the sensorial landscape through which they would have moved. It is easy enough from that to get an idea of what a visitor might have experienced as they moved through the sanctuary space, but we must not rely on presumed responses or cognitive impulses. This chapter will provide a holistic walkthrough of the sanctuary space, from entering to reaching the temple platform and the theatre complex behind it. This walkthrough will be divided into several distinct sections (Fig. 2.1), will include the monuments the visitor would have seen, and will place the walkthrough within the context of a festival: what the sanctuary would have been like on a festival day, and how being in a festival procession would have impacted the experience. The aim of this chapter is to provide a holistic overview of the sanctuary space: whereas the previous chapter outlined the totality of the evidence, this one attempts to put that evidence into the context of a visit to the sanctuary. The following chapters will reconstruct specific spaces and experiences: this chapter will reconstruct the totality, in order to better contextualise what comes later. This thesis, like much previous scholarship, places the oracle in the centre of the study, but it is also worth considering the sensorial experience of processions and ritual involved in festivals. The oracle, likewise, will be integrated into Chapter Six, which looks at the temple (pp. 261).

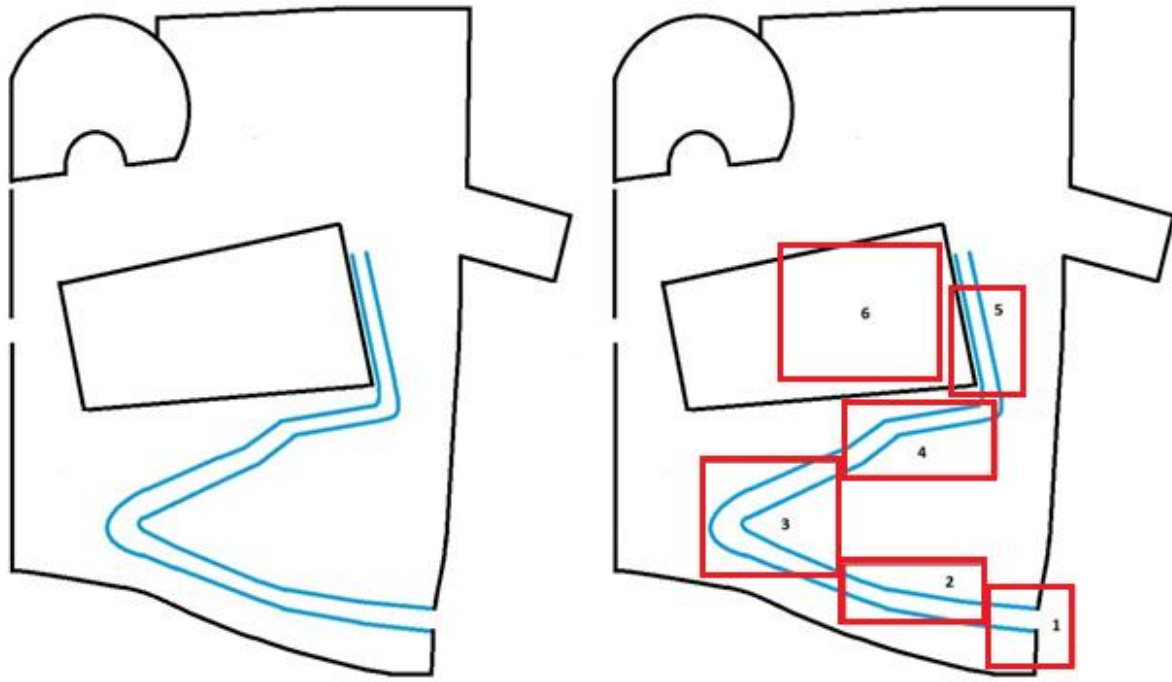


Figure 2.1. Rough plan of the Sanctuary of Delphi with the Sacred Way outlined in blue and the sections discussed in this chapter indicated in red. Author's own.

2.1. The Delphic Festivals

The Pythian Games is the most famous of the Delphic festivals. These games were originally scheduled every eight years: in 586 they were reorganised, and from then on were held every four years, in the third year of the Olympic cycle.²³⁵ The panhellenic years would have been busier for the sanctuary than others: though not held until Boukatios (late August/early September), *theoroi* were sent out in Bysios (late February/early March) to announce the festival across the Greek world. At this time, renovations to the sanctuary would begin, and the sacred truce to protect travellers would also be instated. Because of the high importance of the Pythian Games, we have a more coherent and complete narrative for the events of this festival than others. The Pythian Games were a *panegyris*, composed of religious features (sacrifices, processions, prayers, and feasting), competitions (musical,

²³⁵ Aupert 1979; Fontenrose 1988; Picard 1989, 69-81; Amandry 1990; Miller 2004, 95-101; Valavanis 2004, 162-267; Scott 2010, 41-145; Kyle 2014, 133. Unlike the other festivals of the panhellenic cycle, Delphi's foundation legend was not associated with a hero cult, but rather the killing of the great serpent (Hyginus Fabulae, 140).

athletic, and equestrian) and social events (dinners and commercial events). Flacelière argues that all the festivals held in Delphi began on the seventh day, so that the opening sacrifices could overlap.²³⁶ This is clearly the most practical of arrangements, meaning that people could arrange their visits so that they could do both in one trip. If this was in fact the case, then the Pythian Games began on the seventh day of Boukatios, coinciding with the oracular sacrifices, and would begin with the sacrifice of three animals (*tritys*) by the sanctuary, followed by the sacrifices of cities and private individuals. A re-enactment of the clash between Apollo and the python would conclude the first day, and the second day would be composed of a common dinner for all participants (*hestiasis*). The third day would be for music competitions, the fourth for athletic, and the fifth for equestrian contests. The participants in these games were the high status members of participating cities – kings, princes, rulers and officials: however, there would have been no restrictions on who could come to watch these spectacles, other than those of time and convenience.²³⁷

There were a number of festivals that took place in Delphi by Plutarch's time, and Plutarch is our main source for them and for the definitive calendar division. Delphi was divided into the period when Apollo was present in the sanctuary and when he was not, when Dionysus took control of Delphi. The Pythia, as an agent of Apollo, operated only when Apollo was present, and many of the other events on the calendar were organised around this divine schedule, such as the Theoxenia, which took place in Theoxenios, celebrated the return of Apollo to Delphi from the Hyperboreans, and marked when he took control back from Dionysus. This also coincided with Apollo's birthday, although this was more traditionally celebrated in Delos. According to Herodotus, the event was celebrated with the use of a huge silver krater dedicated at the sanctuary by Croesus.²³⁸ This mythological background is key to understanding the festival calendar of Delphi.

²³⁶ Flacelière 1961, 39.

²³⁷ Valavanis 2004, 188-194; Kyle 2014, 133-134; Pausanias 10.7.2-7.

²³⁸ Herodotus 1.51; Pausanias 9.23.3; Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 9; Philostratus, *Vita Apolloni* 4.31; Pollux 1.34; Bommelaer 1991, 29; Hoyle 1967, 84; Scott 2014, 220.

There is also a broader schedule: the Pythian Games were held once every four years, as a part of the panhellenic games schedule, and there were other festivals that took place only once every eight years. These include the Herois (possibly Dionysiac, about which very little is known), the Charila (which involved the distribution of barley and the burial of a doll), and the Septerion.²³⁹ The Septerion was the most elaborate of these festivals, celebrated Apollo's victory over the Python, and involved the building and burning of a ceremonial hut while a chosen youth re-created Apollo's flight to Tempe.²⁴⁰ Many of these we have very little evidence for; others fall outside of the time frame of this thesis, such as the annual Soteria, held in honour of the Pythian Apollo and Zeus Soter, in thanks for the victory of the Aetolians over the Gauls in 278 BCE.²⁴¹ The festivals of Dionysus also fall outside the scope of this thesis, such as the mysterious one held once every two years involving the Thyades of Delphi and Athens.²⁴² No doubt there were other activities and arrangements in this part of the year too, though the Orphic traditions of these months are almost entirely lost. These were probably smaller and more poorly attended than the Apolline festivals: not only was there no oracle to attend, these months also fall outside the ideal sailing calendar.²⁴³ This calendar leads to an imbalanced social life for Delphi: some years there would be relatively few festivals taking place, whereas others would host the Pythian Games or the Septerion. Some years would be quiet by necessity: Delphi was closed for structural repairs for many years in the third century, and presumably no organised events were held.²⁴⁴

A visitor coming to consult the oracle might choose any of the nine months that Apollo was present, though the oracle was only open on the seventh day. Those coming to Delphi to engage with

²³⁹ The Herois: Roux 1976, 84-85; Scott 2014, 220. The Charila: Hoyle 1967, 86-87; Roux 1976, 169-71; Scott 2014, 220.

²⁴⁰ Plutarch, *Quaestiones Graecae* 12; Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 15; Graninger 2009, 109-124; Roux 1976, 166-168; Scott 2014, 220-221. There is some doubt over the meaning of some of its features: Bommelaer 1991, 30.

²⁴¹ On the Soteria: *IG II3* 1 1005; Nachtergaele 1977, 435-47; Champion 1995, 213.

²⁴² Hoyle 1967, 91-92; Roux 1976, 178; Scott 2014, 219.

²⁴³ It is telling that the months in which Apollo is said to reside at Delphi coincide almost exactly with what Semple deduces is the sailing season – March 10th to November 10th, when winds were best suited to sea travel (Semple 1932, 579).

²⁴⁴ Scott 2014, 150.

a festival might well have also consulted the oracle, but given the brief time in which the Pythia was open to consultation and the number of people who might wish to consult it, it seems that at least some would not have been able to, particularly considering *promanteia*. Processions through the sanctuary space were a common feature of ancient festivals, and no doubt would have been included in the Delphic festivals: as such, festival goers make a logical case study for movement through the sanctuary, as they would have been progressing along the Sacred Way, at a clear and controlled pace, with a chance to observe the landscape and topography of the site.

Gregorian	Delphian	Attic	Apollo	Dionysus
December	Amalios	Poseideon		Present
January				
February	Bysios	Gamelion	Present	
	Theoxenios	Anthesterion	Present	
March	Endispoitropios	Elaphebolion	Present	
April				
May	Herakleios	Mounichion	Present	
	Ilaios	Thargelion	Present	
June	Apellaios	Skirophorion	Present	
July				
August	Boukatios	Hekatombaion	Present	
	Koathoos	Metageitnion	Present	
September	Heraios	Boedromion	Present	
October				
November	Daidaphoros	Pyanepsion		Present
	Poitropios	Maimakterion		Present

Figure 2.2. The Delphic Calendar. Author's own.

2.2. Entering the Sanctuary

It is important to remember that our visitor would have already undertaken a journey from their own homes and *poleis* to the sanctuary, and would have already spent some time on a pilgrimage, either by land or by sea, to reach the slopes of Parnassos. Attempting to reconstruct their full routes would be futile: visitors to Delphi came from all over the Mediterranean. However, we can reconstruct the area immediately around the sanctuary to get a sense of the surrounding space. Before entering the sanctuary, the visitor would walk through the urban space, perhaps passing the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia, depending on the direction of their approach. Delphi's gymnasium would not be constructed until c. 330 BCE, but there may have been pre-existing facilities in this space. Likewise, they would also have passed what would later have been the Castalian fountains, which provided water to a basin in the later palaestra: some archaic foundations underneath perhaps indicate a much older sanctuary to Demeter, which our visitor may have passed.²⁴⁵ The fountains are named for Castalia, a nymph whom Apollo transformed into a fountain at Delphi. She was said to inspire poetry in those who drank her water and was a central part of the Pythian mantic process ([pp. 265](#)). Two archaic fountains survive: the sixth-century fountain house had a marble-lined basin surrounded by benches.²⁴⁶ Would a festival goer have had to cleanse themselves in the Castalian springs before entering the sanctuary? The references to this practice refer more specifically to oracular consultation, if not the Pythia herself, but the practice of purification would hardly be an unusual one in the Hellenic world.²⁴⁷ It would not have taken long to reach the boundary of the sanctuary from the springs: the *temenos* (1) itself was demarcated by a visible wall from early on (indicated by the early extension of the wall after the fire).²⁴⁸ This transition is immediate and lacks the extended process of climbing and movement that one finds when ascending to a civic acropolis: in the case of Delphi, the visitor has already done the

²⁴⁵ Homolle 1899, 560-583; Jannoray 1937, 53-56; Jannoray 1953; Delorme 1982, 53-73; Daux 1984, 134-146; Bommelaer 1991, 73-79.

²⁴⁶ Amandry 1977, 179-228.

²⁴⁷ Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 221-225; Lucian, *Bis accusatus sive tribunalia* 1; Pseudo-Callisthenes 36; Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 5.28.

²⁴⁸ Bergquist 1967, 30-32; Rolley 1983, 110; Morgan 1990, 133.

arduous climb, and moves through the civic space before entering the sanctuary itself. The entrance, therefore, lacks the immediate and dramatic arrival that climbing an acropolis does, but Delphi itself has a much longer pilgrimage process than a standard urban sanctuary to begin with.

What is often ignored in discussions of the space is the urban environment that surrounded the sanctuary. The visitors would have gone from the busy external world through a defined boundary into the land of Apollo. Settlement and sanctuary actively coexisted at Delphi from the eighth century, and continued to do so until the eventual decline of the sanctuary at some point in the early seventh century CE.²⁴⁹ The portico by the entrance was a primarily profane space where shopping or trading was carried out: by the Roman period this was an active agora, fully monumentalised under Hadrian, but archaeological evidence shows that it was a busy area in our period too.²⁵⁰ When visiting today this may feel like a natural part of the sanctuary, but for an ancient visitor, well used to clear boundaries between the sacred and the secular indicated by cliffs, walls and ideologies, it would have been obvious that this was not a part of the sacred space. Even without monumental architecture to indicate a gate, the movement into sacred space would have been clear.

When entering the sanctuary, the visitor would first pass through the *temenos* boundary. Though it is clear that there were other gaps in the *temenos* that would have allowed entrance, and that the terracing of the slope would have allowed for additional pathways throughout the sanctuary, the Sacred Way was no doubt the most central entrance. In later years, visitors might have entered through the gateway to the West Stoa (48) if they came from that direction, but it is clear from the building program that the lower entrance was the most significant; it is closest to the Castalian springs which pilgrims would first have bathed in, and the addition of the Roman agora indicates that this would have been the most used entrance. Likewise, for any visitor intending to view the sanctuary space as a whole this would be the most logical place to start. It is also the most practical entrance:

²⁴⁹ Amandry 1950, 328; Morgan 1990, 108-112.

²⁵⁰ Bommelaer 1991, 89; Scott 2014, 241-242.

the others would have required the visitor to climb up the steep hillside along the *temenos* wall to access. It is perhaps surprising that there is no developed gateway to indicate this entrance as we see elsewhere around the Greek world (Fig. 2.3). However, as the visitor passes through the entrance, they would have seen the Bull of Korcyra **(2)** raised on a podium on their right, with the fourth-century bronze statue group dedicated by the Arcadians **(3)** immediately following it.²⁵¹ The bull statue was, as might be expected by its name, a large statue of a bull on a tall base, while the Arcadian group consisted of a line of bronze statues. Opposite these is the fifth-century Spartan dedication to victory at Aegospotami, a colossal dedication comprising thirty-nine bronze statues standing in two rows, possibly the largest group of free-standing sculpture that Delphi had to offer and a suitably impressive monument **(5)**.²⁵² These monuments flank the entrance of the sanctuary on each side, forming a protective guard that the visitors have to pass through in order to progress along the Sacred Way, further into the sanctuary itself.

The Sacred Way of Delphi as it exists today is a Roman construct, representing a historically dominant route through the sanctuary. It is necessary to fix a specific route through the sanctuary to reconstruct the movement of the visitor through the space, but why this one, when it is clear that this Sacred Way dates to the latest phases of the sanctuary, and that Hellenic visitors would have had the opportunity to enter through different means. There was certainly, as Scott remarks, a complex sequence of movement around the space that extends beyond the Sacred Way itself, allowing visitors the opportunity to engage with the space and its monuments in different ways.²⁵³ However, the study of the experience of the sanctuary requires us to position the visitor within the space, and to have an outlined route through the space, in order for us to be able to discuss it coherently. Though there are some indications of the earlier and alternate routes through the sanctuary, they are not always easy

²⁵¹ Bull of Korcyra: Pausanias 10.9.3-4; Gauer 1968, 108; Rausa 1994, 41-42. Arcadian confederacy dedication: Roy 2000, 310; Nielsen 2007, 38; Scott 2008; Scott 2014, 103-104.

²⁵² Bommelaer 1981, 22; Scott 2010, 104-108. See Chapter Three for further details ([pp. 147](#)).

²⁵³ Scott 2014, 103.

to trace, and I would argue that the Roman Sacred Way represents a significant and important process of movement for its earlier visitors too.

The entrance to the sanctuary that I present as the main entrance certainly does seem to have been the most popular since its creation shortly after the fire at Delphi in 548 BCE. There were other entrances to the sanctuary at the levels of the different terraces, and other possible walking routes through the space from there, but by 400 BCE I believe this was a significant entrance: why else would so many historically and politically important monuments have been dedicated there? It is hard to imagine why Lysander would have dedicated the Aegospotami monument here if it was a secondary space, and the later development of agora space by this entrance suggests that it was busy. Following this route through, we see a steep route to the visitor's right, and the temenos wall on the left: there is a clear and unbroken route forwards, and monuments that were clearly dedicated to line it, showing a demarked route. Likewise, the positioning of the treasuries shows that there was a sharp turn in the route, twisting up towards the visually dominant Athenian Treasury. After that, the route is once again demarked by the steep slope on one side and the temple terracing on the other, and the final corner up to the temple terrace was, again, clearly present. I would argue that the presence of so many monuments lining this route shows that it was in existence during my time period, even if it was not formalised at this point. This does not, of course, rule out the presence of other routes that cut through the space, and where these are relevant to the discussion, these will be discussed. The intention of this thesis is to discuss experience, and a vital part of this is movement, and as such my visitor will be following this central route, but we will leave space for the discussion of possible alternatives and the variations this might create in the cumulative experience of the sanctuary space.²⁵⁴

²⁵⁴ Roesch 1984, 187-188; Jacquemin 1999, 32-33; Scott 2010, 24.

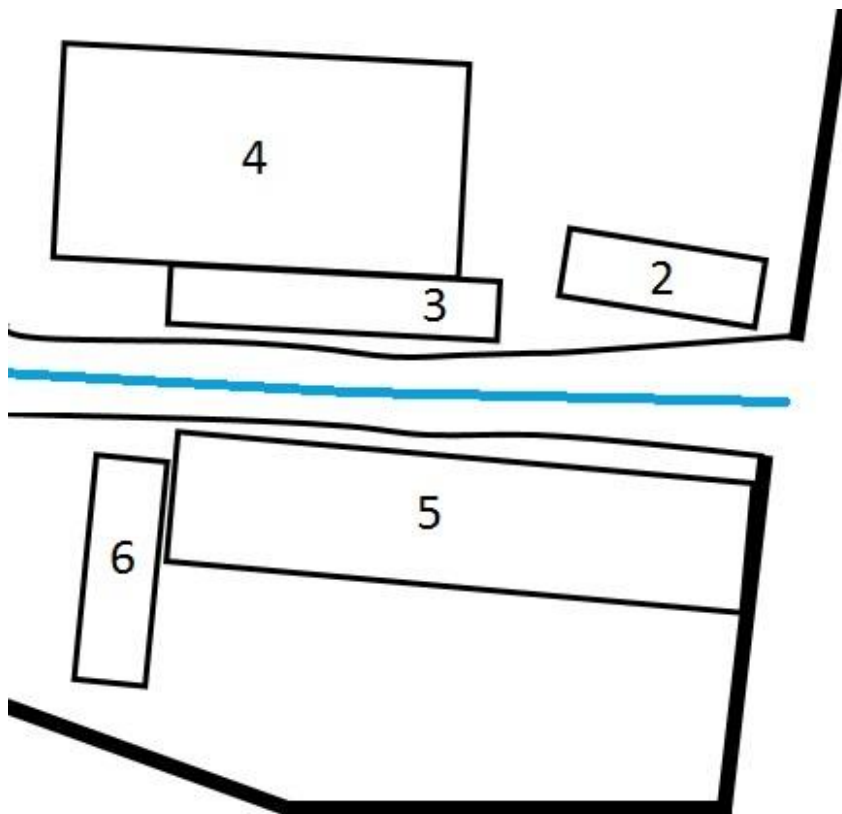


Figure 2.3. Section 1 of the Delphic sanctuary space. Lines of movement indicated in blue. Author's own.

Key:

- 2. Bull of Korcyra
- 3. Arcadian bronze statue group
- 4. Spartan Stoa
- 5. Spartan Aegospotami victory monument
- 6. Argive horse dedication

Despite this, the first subsection of space in Delphi might be considered a little underwhelming compared, for example, to the colossal gateway that the Athenian acropolis had to offer. However, from a visitor's perspective, this is a vital moment in which they move from outside to inside, the moment in which their pilgrimage realises itself as they finally enter the sanctuary. If we think back to the predictive coding model, the *temenos* boundary itself is an active part of the denial of bottom-up sensory input that subverts traditional cognitive processing. Though it is difficult to reconstruct the boundary walls at Delphi or exactly what the entrance would have looked like at this point, it is safe to assume that there would have been some kind of denial of view, creating an increased anticipation and an even more dramatic reveal for this impressive monument.

The use of the term 'pilgrimage' is somewhat contentious, but for Dillon, it is as simple as paying a visit to a sacred site outside the boundaries of one's own physical environment. As we have already touched on ([pp. 101](#)) it is this movement that partially defines pilgrimage and encompasses the first stage of the experience of visiting a sanctuary. Many definitions of pilgrimage include this

journey as the vital preliminary stage of the experience as a whole. In their cross-cultural study of pilgrimages, Coleman and Elsner define the term simply as the widespread phenomenon of sacred travel. Their model of pilgrimage emphasises the fact that though the 'sacred centre' is the goal, the process of travelling is as much a part of the pilgrimage as the arrival at the destination. The physical journey is a vital part of pilgrimage both for the status that it gives and for the metaphorical resonance that it has. In this model, the pilgrim is a foreigner, and a vital part of the process of pilgrimage is the movement into a different, unknown territory from one's own, either in a geographical and political sense, or in a religious and spiritual one. Furthermore, it must have a deliberate objective that relates to a divine transaction and the intention to participate in some form of ritual or ritualised activity. This is perpetuated within other fields, most notably within the work of Turner and Turner, as well as elsewhere in classical scholarship: Petsalis-Diomidis in particular argues that pilgrimage is a continuous and meaningful process involving the journey, the arrival, the activities undergone at the sanctuary and the onwards journey: she argues that pilgrimage is a total religious experience involving all elements of the process, not simply the stage at which the visitor is at their destination.²⁵⁵

As previously mentioned, Elsner's emphasis is not necessarily on just the physical journey, but on the potential for an internal one. Likewise, in Morinis' discussion of the definition of pilgrimage, he argues that the term can be used wherever 'journeying and some embodiment of an ideal intersect'.²⁵⁶ By this, he means that a journey can be defined as a pilgrimage whenever it is undertaken by a person with the intention to reach a place or mental state that the person believes to embody a valued ideal. This place might be a fixed geographical point, such as a shrine or place of worship, but it might also involve a physical or mental journey in search of a particular cognitive state or understanding. Whatever the destination, be it physical or metaphorical, the journey achieves something that cannot be found at home. The journey defines both pilgrimage as an activity and the way that the visitors to an ancient sanctuary would have experienced their encounter with it. The pilgrim goes through a

²⁵⁵ Turner and Turner 1978, 7; Coleman and Elsner 1995, 6-8; Dillon 1997, XVI; Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 7.

²⁵⁶ Elsner 1992, 10; Morinis 1992, 3-4.

specific process of removing themselves from secular space and on arrival enters the sanctuary. This is a predetermined moment, one which reinforces the sacred nature of the site and the importance of the visitor themselves as a part of this ritual framework. The pseudo-gateway channels the visitor in, through the physical and religious divide, allowing the visitor to enter not only the physical space, but also the constructed Delphi of myth and social memory. It is also, of course, the moment when the festivalgoer joins the community within the sanctuary and begins their procession through the sanctuary space. The liminal process removed the festivalgoer from their normal life and placed them within a new and emphatically special position within Delphi itself, both the real and the imagined version. This construct, this journey, will continue to play out as they move through the space before them.

2.3. Section 1: Victory Monuments

The procession would presumably begin at the entrance and would move through the sanctuary along the Sacred Way. The first part of the sanctuary that visitors would arrive in is the long straight section of the Sacred Way (Fig. 2.4). This area of the sanctuary is dominated by a variety of victory monuments: the Spartans were particularly prominent in this space by the end of the fourth century ([pp. 142](#)). The festival visitor would pass a number of different monuments along the way, though not all of them can be securely placed in any specific place: Pausanias lists a number of monuments from this section in his discussion of Delphi, which is presented as a similar walk-through, but does not give any exact locations.

Pausanias mentions first the athletic victory monument of Phaylus of Crotona, whose athletic history he also explains. Then he describes a selection of statues that seem to have been grouped together: an Apollo and Callisto statue group made by Pausanias of Apollonia; a Victory and an image of Arcas made by Daedalus of Sikyon; Triphylus and Azan by Samolas the Arcadian; Elatus, Apheidas and Erastus by Antiphanes of Argos. All of these, he tells us, were dedicated in Delphi by the

Tegeans following battle with the Lakedaimonian.²⁵⁷ This type of dedication are not rare: there are many monuments in this area that were given in thanks for, or in relation to, specific military encounters. Pausanias notes the Spartans and those Spartan allies that assisted Lysander at Aegospotami were given a number of statues, as noted in the previous section (5) and the procession would have moved past this first.²⁵⁸

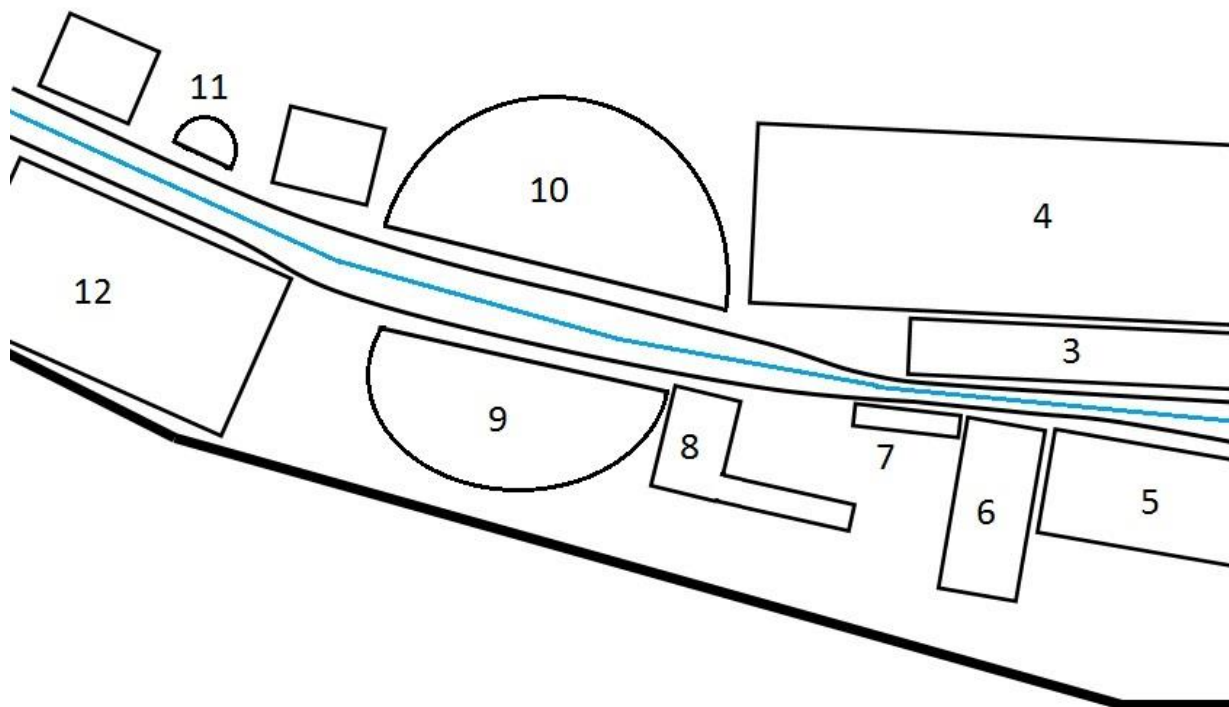


Figure 2.4. Section 2 of the Delphic sanctuary space. Author's own.

Key:

- 3. Arcadian bronze statue group
- 4. Spartan Stoa
- 5. Spartan Aegospotami victory monument
- 6. Argive horse dedication
- 7. Athenian dedications from Marathon
- 8. Argive dedications of the seven leaders of the expedition against Thebes
- 9. Argive dedication
- 10. Argive dedication
- 11. Votive niches
- 12. Tarentine dedication: bronze statues of horses and captive women

²⁵⁷ Pausanias 10.9.2-6.

²⁵⁸ Pausanias 10.9.9.

After that, they would have passed an Argive horse dedication **(6)** as well as a group dedicated from a tithe of the spoils taken in the Battle of Marathon, representing Athena, Apollo and Miltiades, the group also including a wooden horse **(7)**. Near the horse were other Argive votive offerings, including likenesses of the captains of Polyneices **(8)**. Opposite this was the Arcadian bronze statue group **(3)** and the huge Spartan Stoa, one of the biggest dedications within this section **(4)**. The Argives further dominated the space with the addition of two semi-circular group monuments: the first to honour the Epigones **(9)** and the second to their mythical Kings **(10)**. There are also works by Hypatodorus and Aristogeiton, given from the spoils of victory that they and their Athenian allies won against the Lakedaimonians at Oenoe, and other statues opposite these dedicated by the Argives who helped the Thebans to found Messene, and bronze horses and captive women dedicated by the Tarentines made from spoils taken from the Messapians **(12)**.²⁵⁹

Victory monuments are not a form of idolatry in the strictest sense, in that they do not represent a divine form. However, they do represent the great historical and mythological heroes of the past, both recent and more ancient, and in a society that normalises the worship of heroes, such figures operate in a similar way. They were created under special circumstances, dedicated in thanks for victory in military campaigns or panhellenic games. They were often created by the most prestigious artisans of the communities in question and were made of expensive materials. In terms of circulation, these materials were viewed in the context of Delphi, elevated in importance through their connection to this most prestigious sanctuary, and were further circulated and elevated through descriptions passed around communities from pilgrims who have visited the sanctuary. The reception of these monuments is tied into both of these factors: the glory and strength of the monuments are transmitted to the sanctuary's visitors through the form, the context, and the sanctuary itself. For the festival goer, moving through the sanctuary as a part of a procession, these initial monuments form an immediate and immobile audience, watching the activities. The Sacred Way is at no point

²⁵⁹ Pausanias 10.10.1; 10.10.3; 10.10.4; 10.10.5; 10.10.6.

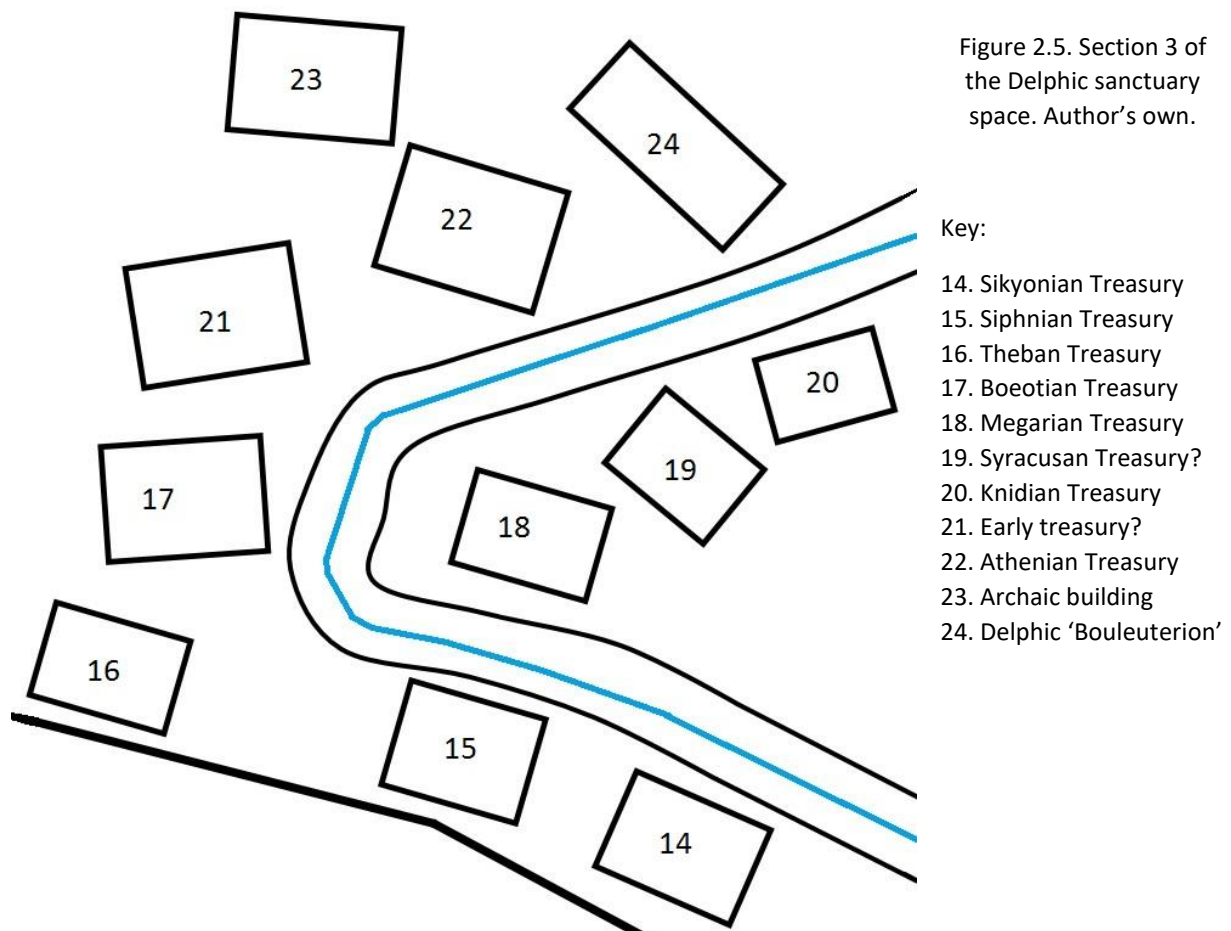
particularly wide: the steep terraces of the slope limit the space and must have compressed any procession into a tightly packed group. The sanctuary is visible above the visitor, the white marble and bronze gleaming in the sunlight against the slopes of the mountain; the natural *chiaroscuro* of the rocks of Parnassos reaching above them, the smoke from the incense bleeding through the air. In the crowd of people in a procession the faces of these statues would catch the eye and the light, appearing here and there between people as if visitations from some divine power. The overwhelming visible landscape has a sensorial power to engage the visitor and raise their experience to a more intense level. Surrounded by the forms of the great heroes of the Hellenic world, the act of processing is both elevated and observed by these statues, the most immobile of Apollo's worshippers within the sanctuary.

2.4. Section 2: Treasury Corner

As the visitor or procession progressed along the Sacred Way, they came next to the first sharp twist of the path, and a sudden shift in dedicatory trends. Here they were confronted with the treasuries, grouped close together and fighting for attention (Fig. 2.5). The visitor in the sanctuary had already moved from Hellenic to panhellenic space, from profane to sacred: now, within the sanctuary itself, they found further delineation of space. The tight corner forces attention: the sudden increase in the size of the monuments, towering above the height of the procession, makes them impossible to ignore. First is the Sikyonian Treasury **(14)**, on the left, with its front façade facing the approach rather than the Sacred Way itself: the visitor sees its façade before they even reach the building, rebuilt from previous Sikyonian monuments.²⁶⁰ Next is the Siphnian Treasury **(15)** whose façade, in contrast, faces away entirely from the movement of the visitor, emphasising instead its extensive Gigantomachy frieze, which runs along the Sacred Way, and inviting the visitor to join with the movement of the gods

²⁶⁰ Laroche and Nenna 1990, ch. 3; Bommelaer 1991, 118.

as they progress into battle.²⁶¹ Then, on the right hand side comes the Megarian Treasury (**18**) which is elevated above the visitor by the slope of the sanctuary; it looms over the visitor, blocking their view of the Sacred Way as it turns, and continues to hide the temple from the watchful eye of the visitor.²⁶² As we have already discussed, this represents a particular chronological period of treasury dedication ([pp. 179](#)).



²⁶¹ Herodotus. 3.57-8; Pausanias 10.11.2; Jacquemin 1999b, 211-12; Scott 2010, 64.

²⁶² Bommelaer 1991, 126.

This forces attention onto the treasury section itself. The treasury of the Thebans **(16)** sits directly on the corner, at the top of this first section of the Sacred Way.²⁶³ As the visitor turned the corner the poros treasury of the Boeotians **(17)** would appear on the left (with the Megarian still on the right) on the old *peribolos* wall,²⁶⁴ and next to that was the an early treasury possibly dedicated by the Potidaians **(21)** in a particularly visually dominant position.²⁶⁵ Above that, in front of the temple platform wall, sat the Athenian Treasury **(22)**.²⁶⁶ Clustered around this was an archaic building, possibly dedicated by the Sybarians **(23)**,²⁶⁷ and the Delphic 'Bouleuterion' **(24)**.²⁶⁸ We will discuss the Athenian Treasury in much more depth later: at the moment it is important only to remember that it sits still partially blocking the view to the temple, which sits immediately behind it but elevated on its platform. The (possible) Syracusan Treasury **(19)** was added last to the group on the corner, on the right-hand side as one turns.²⁶⁹ It sits just past the façade of the Megarian Treasury, still on the right as one takes the turn. Alongside this, further along the path, is the Knidian Treasury **(20)**, the first constructed of island marble and in the Ionic order, which sits angled in the same way as the Siphnian, also possibly with korai columns.²⁷⁰ There are more treasuries, grouped at the back further from the Sacred Way, perhaps gaining less attention through their removal from immediate view from the Sacred Way, but these are of less importance in the context of this chapter.

The treasuries create a contrast to the statue groups and smaller scale dedications of the previous section of the sanctuary. As the Sacred Way grows steeper, the monuments around it grow bigger, pressing close together and physically dominating the space around the visitor. There is an increase in prestige and power through movement, the visitor moving from powerful individuals to powerful places, situating the visitor within a global space and inviting them to recognise the powerful

²⁶³ Partida 2000, 196-8; Scott 2010, 114-115.

²⁶⁴ Bommelaer 1991, 128.

²⁶⁵ de La Coste-Messelière 1969a, 746; Scott 2010, 61.

²⁶⁶ For a full summary: Scott 2010, 77-81.

²⁶⁷ Bommelaer 1991, 233.

²⁶⁸ Jacquemin 1999b, 33; Scott 2010, 49.

²⁶⁹ Daux 1936, 126-129; Bommelaer 1991, 155; Jacquemin 1999b, 146; Scott 2010, 105.

²⁷⁰ Bommelaer 1991, 141; Partida 2000 224; Scott 2010, 47-48.

nature of both the dedicators and the Delphic space. The visitor has been confronted with heroic figures: now they are forced to engage with the Hellenic world. The literal claim on land demands that the visitor takes a metaphorical journey through Greece, reminding them in turn of the power and influence of both Apollo, and Delphi by extension. No other part of the sanctuary better embodies the panhellenic nature of the space, and it places the visitor within a complex and competitive inter-state narrative. This and the previous section evoke powerful yet very human histories, but within the context of Delphi they are connected too to the prestige of Apollo. For the festival goers, many of them representing their home states, this is a clear reminder of where they have come from and what is at stake (or, for those coming just to observe, a reaffirmation of their loyalty and support for the competitors coming from their home state). This compressed space at the corner of the Sacred Way would have emphasised the sounds of the procession and the sanctuary space: the clatter of people moving, of feet against marble, the rustle of clothing, and the murmur of the crowd as they spoke to each other in any number of dialects and languages; the calls of the priests, telling the stories of the monuments and buildings, announcing their activities, and speaking prayers; the sacrificial animals, their hooves and their noise. The sounds of such an experience would surround the visitors, creating an intensity and an atmosphere which built as they moved forward.

2.5. Section 3: Alongside the temple platform

The next section of the Sacred Way would have been another long, straight section, running along the length of the temple platform, moving closer to the platform wall itself (Fig. 2.6). The space is more open here, and it is harder to recreate the kind of environment a visitor or procession would have moved through. There are a number of bases from Boeotian dedications **(25)** but it is unclear what they would have supported. Behind them the visitors would have seen two of the primary non-constructed monuments in this section: the Rock of Sybil **(26)** and the Rock of Leto **(28)**. These are both connected to the mythological history of the sanctuary space and presumably held a symbolic

importance, though whether they would have been all that noticeable for someone in the midst of a procession is uncertain. Here too we see the so-called *aire space*, the area of the sanctuary that never was never built on and seems to have a specific cult connection: we will discuss this in more depth in Chapter Five ([pp. 225](#)).²⁷¹ The dominant monument that they would not have been able to ignore is the Naxian Sphinx (**27**) on which we shall expand in later chapters ([pp. 228](#)). She is a colossal sphinx statue standing on a column to a total height of 11.64 meters, sitting therefore far above the line of sight of the viewer as they move through the space.²⁷² She stands high above them, huge and impressive, her body elevated to the height of the temple itself, facing the direction that the visitors would have to move to continue with their procession. The space is limited here by the slope of the sanctuary, and it does not accommodate as many larger scale monuments as the previous section does.

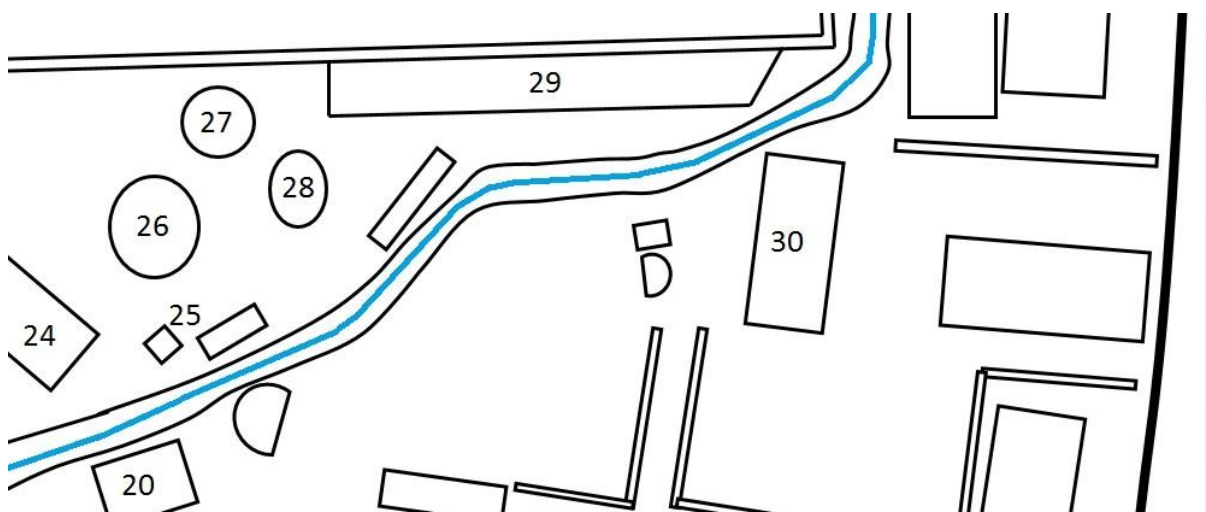


Figure 2.6. Section 4 of the Delphic sanctuary space. Author's own.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 20. Knidian Treasury | 28. Rock of Leto |
| 24. Delphic 'Bouleuterion' | 29. Athenian Stoa |
| 25. Bases from Boeotian dedications | 30. Corinthian Treasury |
| 26. Rock of Sybil | |
| 27. Naxian Sphinx | |
| 28. Rock of Leto | |

²⁷¹ Bourguet 1914, 124-127; McDonald 1943; Jacquemin 1999b, 34; Amandry 2000; Scott 2010 42.

²⁷² Homolle 1909, 41; Amandry 1953, 7.

The next major structure on this route is the portico of the Athenians **(29)**, built not long after their treasury, sitting flush along the wall of the temple platform and hung with booty dedications. It clearly attempted to communicate the wealth and success of Athens, who needed space beyond their treasury.²⁷³ The procession moved even closer to the corner of the Sacred Way, and it is only when they reached the end of the temple platform that the topography allows for further dedications: the early Corinthian Treasury **(30)** sits on the final corner,²⁷⁴ along with an archaic treasury later converted into an Askleion **(31)** below it on the slope of the sanctuary, which took advantage of the rebuilding of the *peribolos* wall in the fourth century to build on previously inaccessible land.²⁷⁵ This is an interesting monument in terms of its placement, for it almost certainly would not have been noticed when a visitor or group of visitors progressed along the Sacred Way. Perhaps it is simply a reflection of the competition over the space in the sanctuary; perhaps it was a misplaced attempt at gaining attention through being different.

Alongside the Corinthian Treasury is a possible Delphic *Prytaneion*.²⁷⁶ There is little we can securely connect to the space in terms of smaller scale dedications. Because of this, it is difficult to say what the visitor to Delphi would have seen. Both Plutarch and some reconstructions also place the previously mentioned treasury of Brasidas and the Acanthians in this section, but there is no conclusive evidence to connect any of the foundations here to this treasury **(33)**.²⁷⁷ However, it is unlikely that anyone moving through the sanctuary as part of the procession would have come into this small section that sits just off the Sacred Way. Instead, their focus would have been more firmly placed on turning up the final section towards the temple platform. The scent-scape of Delphi cannot be ignored either: processions and festival contexts bring the smell of incense and all the associated

²⁷³ Dating for the portico is controversial: Walsh 1986. Reason for dedication is also disputed, but probably set up in honour of all Athenian victories: Hansen 1989. For location and reach: Amandry 1953, 56-77. For dedications hung inside: Amandry 1953, 300; Scott 2010, 96.

²⁷⁴ Herodotus. 1.14.2.; Bourguet 1912, 658; Jacquemin 1999b, 216-221; Scott 2014, 66.

²⁷⁵ Bommelaer 1991, 155; Scott 2010, 127.

²⁷⁶ Roux 1979; 70-77; Bommelaer 1991, 24.

²⁷⁷ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 14; Plutarch, *Lysander* 1.18; de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 481-83; Bommelaer 1991, 160-63.

power and divine connections that come with it, as well as the smell of roasting meat and the laurel burned on the altar of the oracle at the opening of her consultations. The smells of the crowd themselves were present too, sweat and spices and damp fabric and the mingled scent of humanity increasing with the temperature as the crowd moved up through the sanctuary space, pressing together.

The monuments in this section are not as thematically linked as the previous two, but they do provide insight into the visitor experience. This section of the sanctuary introduces the visitor to some of the oldest monuments in the sanctuary. The Naxian Sphinx predates the fire, and though the Pythian rocks are probably not authentic artefacts from a mythological past, they have been deemed as such, and no doubt the priesthood continued to retell these mythological stories to the visitors, evidenced by the fact that Pausanias clearly knows these stories.²⁷⁸ The Corinthian Treasury is the oldest known monument from the sanctuary in general, and architecturally also evokes a previous era.²⁷⁹ The Athenian portico is not a particularly old monument itself, but it actively works to mythologise the victories in the Persian Wars by presenting the dedications in a monument similar to the Athenian Stoa, which was known for its paintings of the great mythological past.²⁸⁰ For the festival goer, this section raises anticipation and reminds the visitor of the process of movement and development through the eras of the monuments, just as they move through the landscape towards the upper section of the sanctuary.

2.6. Section 4: The Platform Corner

The final corner of the Sacred Way turns up along the short edge of the temple platform, taking a steep upwards turn to account for the sharp incline of the sanctuary space (Fig. 2.7). The visitor or

²⁷⁸ Pausanias 10.12.1; 10.12.5; Flower 1991, 63.

²⁷⁹ Herodotus. 1.14.2.; Bourguet 1912, 658; Jacquemin 1999b, 216-221; Scott 2014, 66.

²⁸⁰ Stansbury O'Donnell 2005, 73-77.

procession is compressed into this passage, the narrower space and incline intensifying the experience. Walking up the slope draws the visitor quickly level to the temple platform, but the Chian Altar **(36)** sits firmly between the visitor and the temple platform. The visitor would not yet have been granted a view of the temple façade, but the Chian Altar would have continued to dramatically block this from view in the final moments of ascent, delaying the sight of the entrance to the temple **(37)** which sits at an angle, turned slightly away from the bottom right corner of the platform. The altar was dedicated by the island of Chios c. 500, with a dedicatory inscription informing viewers that the Chians received *promanteia* for their dedication. The altar was made from what was probably a local Chian black stone,²⁸¹ and Scott suggests that the dedication of such a crucial cult object indicates the desire by the Chians to emphasise their links with central Greece at a time when they were building towards their revolt against the Persians.²⁸²

The Chian Altar created a channel through which the visitors must pass in order to reach the platform itself. Though the Sacred Way does not perceptibly narrow in this section, the steep rise of the hill on the other side combined with the altar's height creates the illusion of a hallway, emphasised by the dramatic and dark stone of the Chian Altar itself. The creation of this hallway presses the people within a procession together and heightens the tactile experience, increasing the warmth between the bodies and raising anticipation as they approach the temple platform itself, heightening the sense of community and connection between pilgrims within the procession ([pp. 254](#)). The continuing delay to the final view of the temple is an interesting choice, which builds anticipation, but also creates a further sense of movement and liminality: though the visitor had reached the sacred space of the sanctuary, they must also travel through the sanctuary as pilgrims, absorbing the riches of Apollo and the Hellenic world, moving through themed spaces in their approach.

²⁸¹ Courby 1927, 124; Amandry 1986, 209.

²⁸² Scott 2010, 72.

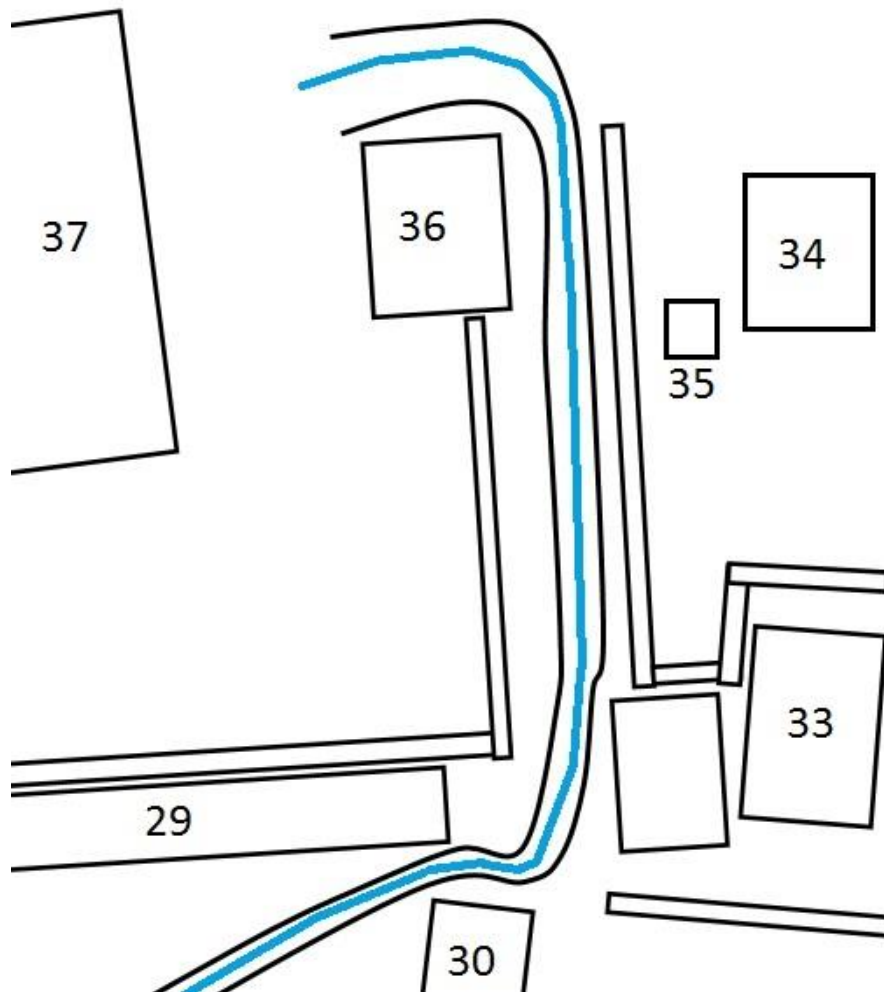


Figure 2.7. Section 5 of the Delphic sanctuary space. Author's own.

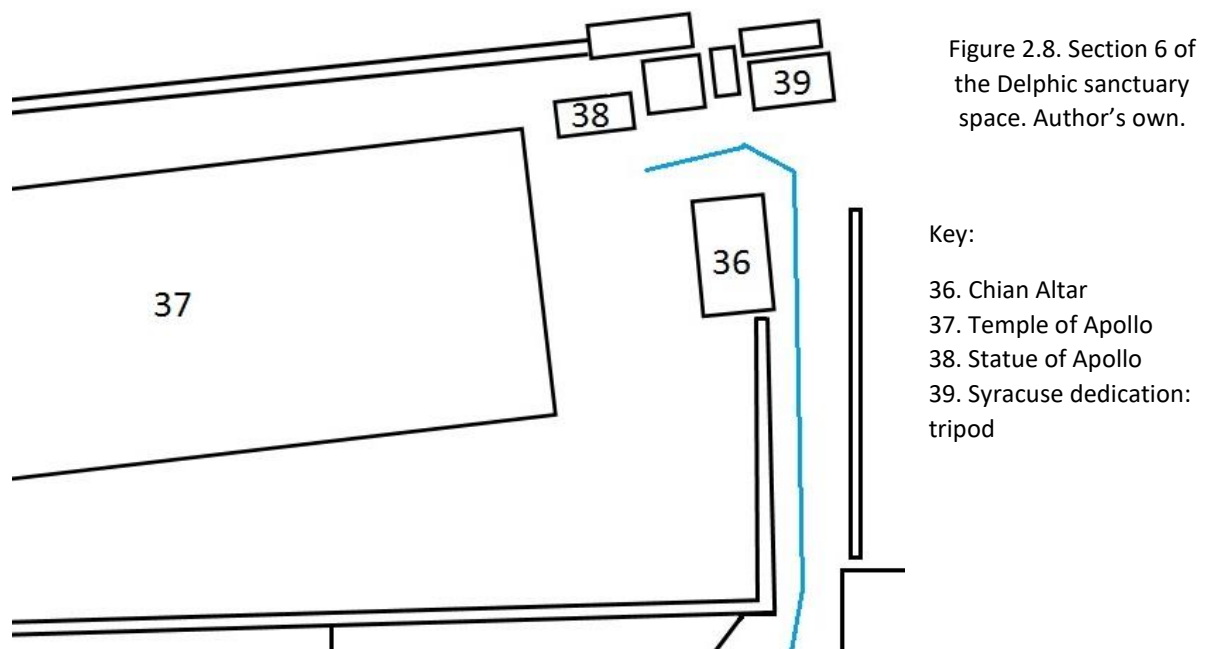
Key:

- 29. Athenian Stoa
- 30. Corinthian Treasury
- 31. Archaic Treasury converted into the Asklepion
- 32. Cyrene treasury?
- 33. Possible location of the treasury of Acanthians and Brasidas
- 34. Rhodian dedication: chariot
- 35. Platean tripod
- 36. Chian Altar
- 37. Temple of Apollo

2.7. Section 5: The Temple Platform

The visitor or the procession has moved around the corner of the Chian Altar and is finally on the temple platform, overlooking the rest of the sanctuary space. The temple platform is ideologically and geographically the heart of the sanctuary (Fig. 8). Once there, the visitor is confronted with the dramatic façade of the temple, as well as the array of dedications in this section of the platform. Topographically, we have not reached the full height of the sanctuary space at this point – the slope of the hillside continues above our visitor, and the sanctuary continues upwards until it reaches the *temenos* at the upper limit of the theatre, the gymnasium off to the side and not strictly a part of the

traditional sanctuary space, with the dramatic cliff-face of the mountains towering above it all. At some point in antiquity there was another building, possibly a treasury (40) on this slope, and statues of Eumenes I (41) and Attalos I (42) stood behind the visitor as they look at the temple, in the additional sub-precinct created by the Stoa of Attalos I (43) ([pp. 68](#)). Also, above the platform stood the Daochos monument (44), the Knidian Lesche (45) and a further two buildings identified as treasuries (46). But the focus of festival visitors would not have been on these monuments; it would have been on the opening sacrifices on the temple platform, and the competitions held at the theatre (47).



By this point, the visitor to Delphi would have ascended a significant way up the height of the sanctuary space, and it is here that they would have had their first clear view of the plain below, unobstructed by buildings, as the height of the platform raises the visitor above any of the other structures. It is at this point that they are not only confronted with the temple and its dedications, but also the dramatic landscape around them. Many of the objects that may have been on the platform in this period are attested by literary sources. Pausanias describes a 'Small Apollo' statue placed on

the platform c. 650, though we have no other reference for its existence in this space. An Apollo statue would hardly be a surprising addition to the space, so there seems to be no real reason to discredit Pausanias. The sculpture apparently dedicated by Croesus was also said to have been placed on the temple platform.²⁸³ Herodotus records a golden lion placed on a base of gold ingots, which was probably placed within the temple, as well as the statue of Croesus' baker. Piles of iron were dedicated by Rhodopis of Naucratis on the temple platform, and Herodotus also describes gold and silver bowls dedicated by Croesus, which stood on either side of the temple entrance, as well as chains dedicated in the threshold of the temple, and the statues of Cleandrus and Olympichus were also placed on the platform.²⁸⁴ A Parian marble *kouros*, as well as an offering on a column by the sons of Charopinus, were also dedicated within this space.²⁸⁵ The bronze Massalian statue of Apollo was also dedicated there at some point in the sixth or fifth century. Three dedications of first fruits made of precious metals were dedicated on the temple terrace.²⁸⁶ At least one of these, by the citizens of Apollonia in Illyria, was associated with the consultation of the oracle, and had a matching sister dedicated in Olympia.²⁸⁷ Also placed on the temple terrace before 500 BCE were two stele dedications, one in honour of the founder of Magnesia, the other for an agreement between Boeotia and the Locrians.²⁸⁸ No doubt there were others, which history has neglected to mention, lost now either to looting or destruction.

As already mentioned, the Doric temple, which had originally been started by the Amphictyony, was finally finished c. 500 with additional sponsorship from the exiled Athenian Alkmaeonidai. The temple exceeded the original contract – the Alkmaeonidai finished the building

²⁸³ Small Apollo: Pausanias 10.16.8. Croesus' dedications do not survive, with the possible exception of the silver bull, which cannot be conclusively connected to Croesus although is often associated with him regardless. Even if it could be, it was buried in antiquity and so there is no way to prove that it originally stood on the temple platform, although that would be the logical place to put a monument of such worth that was not dedicated by a state with an existing treasury: Neer 2004, 89.

²⁸⁴ Golden Lion: Herodotus. 1.50. Croesus' baker: Herodotus. 1.51, Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 2.16. Silver bowls and Cleandrus and Olympichus: Herodotus. 2.134-5; 1.51; 1.90.

²⁸⁵ Scott 2010, Appendix A.

²⁸⁶ Pausanias 10.18.7; Strabo 6.264; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 16.

²⁸⁷ Pausanias 5.22.3; Herodotus. 9.93-4; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 16.

²⁸⁸ Scott 2010, 71.

with a lavish Parian marble façade. Its pediment was excessive and oddly made of free-standing sculpture, rather than deep carved relief; in it Apollo is flanked by youths and maidens, standing frontally and regimentally, recalling victory monuments, with lions slaughtering their prey in the far corners.²⁸⁹ The Alkmaeonidai were stateless exiles, yet still maintained the clout necessary to win the contract, and resources enough to finish it beyond its terms: we will discuss this in further detail in Chapter Six ([pp. 256](#)).²⁹⁰

The platform itself is in many ways a performative space: it displays a vast array of dedications, and there is a huge variety within these dedications. This wealth of material reinforces the reciprocal nature of divine transaction, and reinforces the authenticity of the presence of Apollo and the oracle itself, reminding the viewer of the previous consultants.²⁹¹ That the oracle would be foremost in mind at this point is a given: even if the visitor has not come to consult, they would be well aware that they were standing in front of the temple, in which oracular consultations took place. The sensorial journey expands once more with the taste of the wine and meat from the sacrifices, the smell of the roasting meat, the taste of the dust kicked up by the feet of the moving crowds of people.

2.8. Section Six: Beyond the Temple

The theatre was a fourth-century structure, presumably replacing a previous building of a similar form. At the highest point in the sanctuary, it took the brunt of any rock falls caused by earthquakes in the region, and as such had to be remodelled most extensively by Eumenes II in 160/159 BCE and in 67

²⁸⁹ Herodotus 2.180, 5.62; Floren 1987, 244-245; Athanassaki 2001, 250; Neer 2004, 86; Neer 2012, 190-191. See Chapter Six for further details ([pp. 257](#)).

²⁹⁰ Neer 2004, 86.

²⁹¹ When we use the term 'divine transaction' we refer to the mutual nature of all religious behaviours, particularly in the ancient world. Dedications are, by nature, a reciprocal construct: gifts are given to the god in thanks of or anticipation of divine favour or, in the case of the oracle, advice. Gitlitz argues that all forms of pilgrimage would have to include some form of divine transaction the mortal makes an offering at the very least of their own devotion, perhaps with the added bonus of ritual activities, sacrifice, or dedication, and the deity in return is expected to reward the pilgrim with either some temporal or transcendental reward - or both (2014, 33.)

CE, when the emperor Nero came to the sanctuary; it was further repaired and developed by Herodes Atticus in the second century CE. The orchestra was originally a full circle with a diameter of seven metres, and the skene had two arched openings; access was through *paradoi* from the temple platform, and the *paradoi* supporting walls were engraved with manumission inscriptions recording fictitious slave sales. The lower part of the theatre held twenty-seven rows of seats, but the upper held only eight; it could accommodate a full audience of about 4,500 spectators ([pp. 68](#)).²⁹²

The stadium at Delphi stood at the highest point, at the north-west corner of the sanctuary of Apollo ([pp. 63](#)). There was barely enough room to accommodate it; it was supported by the slope on the north side but had to be reinforced by a wall on the south. Dating for the monument is uncertain, but it must have been built between the second half of the fourth century and the mid-third century BCE, possibly at the insistence of the Aetolian League and possibly to coincide with the implementation of the Soteria. The track and field sporting events would have been held in the stadium, and there was extensive seating inside: a second-century inscription notes that Satyr the Samian performed a hymn in the stadium too, suggesting that musical contests might also have been held there, though this might have just been at a point when the theatre was closed.²⁹³ The *aphezeis* were made of stone, and the southern tiers were only added in 100 BCE. Total capacity was about 6,500 spectators.²⁹⁴ Chariot races would not have been held in the stadium as the space is inappropriate for such an activity.

²⁹² Bommelaer 1996, 95-105; Bommelaer 1991, 207-212.

²⁹³ Dinsmoor argues that there was a fifth-century stadium that was later rebuilt, but evidence is inconclusive (1950, 250-252). Satyr the Samian inscription: Bommelaer 1991, 213-216.

²⁹⁴ Homolle 1899, 601-615; Aupert 1977, 229-245; Pouilloux 1977, 103-123; Bommelaer 1991, 213-216.

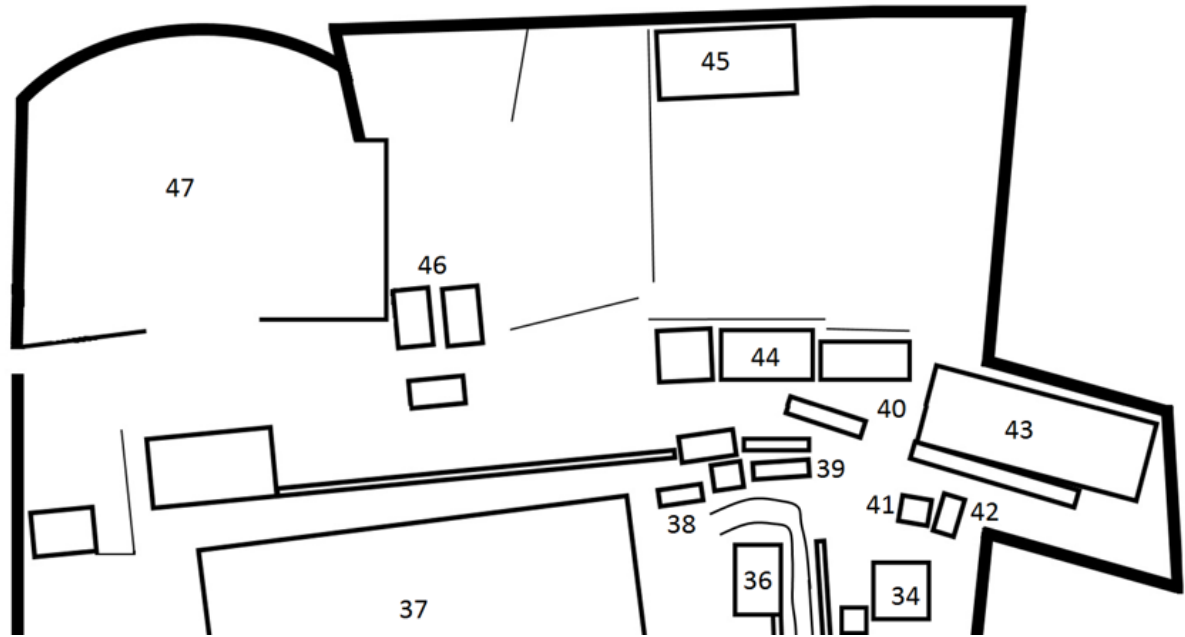


Figure 2.9. The upper limits of the Delphic sanctuary space. Author's own.

Key:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| 36. Chian Altar | 42. Statue of Attalos I |
| 37. Temple of Apollo | 43. Stoa of Attalos I |
| 38. Statue of Apollo | 44. Daochos monument |
| 39. Syracuse dedication: tripod | 45. Knidian Lesche |
| 40. Base of Coryran dedication? | 46. Two buildings, possibly treasuries |
| 41. Statue of Eumenes I | 47. Theatre |

Pindar referred to the hippodrome at Delphi in *Pythian 3*, where a number of prominent sportsmen competed in chariot races: as such, there has been a great amount of scholarly interest in finding the site.²⁹⁵ It was only discovered relatively recently, and not all that close to the sanctuary of Apollo. This should not be too surprising given the topographical limitations of the slopes of Parnassos. A hippodrome requires a particular set of topographical requirements: a flat extended area for the arena with a gentle, natural slope into which to build the stands for the spectators; while this does not seem too demanding, it is a difficult thing to find on the steep, rocky slopes of Mount Parnassos. It took nearly two centuries for the site to be found: it was not, in fact, until very recently that

²⁹⁵ Pindar, *Pythian* 3.73-76. See also: Picard 1989, 73-74; Davies 2007, 47-69.

archaeologists confirmed the location of the hippodrome, though local historians had been speculating on the site for some decades. This is not entirely surprising. Valavanis describes Greek hippodromes as ‘ghost buildings’, noting that very few have survived as they did not have monumental structures.²⁹⁶ It was built near modern Gonia, in the plains of Krisa, below the sanctuary space itself, though this area was still apparently a part of the sacred land owned by Delphi. This raises a number of questions about the logistics of the festival program, although would have made it far easier for transporting both chariots and horses by sea. It has been dated to 590-580 BCE, making it one of the oldest hippodromes in Greece, and must have been built almost immediately after the Pythian Games were announced.²⁹⁷

The landscape of Delphi is a dominant feature in many of the literary descriptions of Delphi, as we discussed in the previous chapter. Delphi sits on a steep cliff on the side of Mount Parnassos, overlooking the valley, with the sea in the far distance: it is a wild landscape, untamed even today. This landscape is a part of Delphi as a whole: the sanctuary operates within it, but also as a part of it, interacting with its surrounding space. The visitor cannot see things in isolation and without context, and the natural landscape is a part of that context. When the visitor sits in the theatre, they see this landscape around them, the mountain range and the valley, and the sanctuary, spread out beneath them, showing them where they have come from, the space that they have moved through. This landscape is dramatic and different from many ancient visitor’s normal experiences, and there are certain features regularly emphasised. One is the effect of the sunlight on the sanctuary space, particularly the way that it makes the buildings and the cliffs of Parnassos shine.²⁹⁸ In other places, we see darkness emphasised in connection to Parnassos, but since this is normally connected to winter Dionysian rituals, it falls beyond the scope of this thesis. The presence of birds is also a regular feature, although this might well just be a literary device intended to evoke the presence of Apollo, whose

²⁹⁶ Humphrey 1986, 6; Scott 2013, 295-308; Valavanis 2017, 625.

²⁹⁷ See Valavanis 2017 for a thorough discussion of the hippodrome discovery.

²⁹⁸ Pindar, *Pythian* 6.14; Euripides, *Ion* 88; 157; the Phaedriades translate as bright, luminous, the shining ones.

oracular abilities were often connected to ravens.²⁹⁹ Reference is also made to the spring waters,³⁰⁰ the steepness of the mountains themselves, and the general elevation of the sanctuary.³⁰¹

Looking down at the full sight of the sanctuary, the visitor brings together a combination of remembered elements: the stories that they have heard or been told, what they assumed that they would do at Delphi, and their experiences when moving through the sanctuary space. The visitor has been removed from reality and from the mundane world and has progressed through the sanctuary space to this final position, situating themselves in the midst of a mythological setting to better facilitate their engagement with the gods. The process of movement has shifted them away from the everyday, in the presence of the divine and in a position of elevation far above that which they occupied before. All pilgrims expect that their journey will leave them altered in some indefinable way,³⁰² and it is here, at the head of the sanctuary, that these visitors will have that change embodied for them. As Muir outlines, when we visit places, we encounter both the real landscape (that is, the landscape composed of rock, soil, vegetation and water that exists beneath our feet and before us) and the perceived landscape (which consists of sensed and remembered accounts about the real landscape). Therefore, in visiting terms, every experience is shaped around both the perceived materiality and the constructed ideal. Tuan perhaps summarises it best: 'Landscape (...) is not to be defined by itemizing its parts. The parts are subsidiary clues to an integrated image. Landscape is such an image, a construct of the mind and of feeling.'³⁰³ Meinig too remarks on the phenomenon, particularly in regards to how entire groups of people will describe the exact same view in different terms, depending on what their prior knowledge and experience may be: 'any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes but what lies within our heads'.³⁰⁴ In the Delphic context this is clearly the case. The ancient world at large had no photographic evidence upon which to base

²⁹⁹ Euripides, *Ion* 107; 154; 904; Strabo 9.3.6; birds are also mentioned in Pausanias' description of the Delphic paintings: 10.29.2; 10.31.6.

³⁰⁰ Euripides, *Ion* 95-96; 119; Pausanias 10.8.9-10; Spon 1679, 50; Wheeler 1682, 315; Murray 1840, 40.

³⁰¹ Euripides, *Ion* 715; Pausanias 10.5.5; 10.9.1; Lucan, *Pharsalia* 5.71; Strabo 9.3.3.

³⁰² Cohen 1992, 50.

³⁰³ Tuan 1979, 89; Muir 1999, 115.

³⁰⁴ Meinig 1979, 34.

interpretation or prior knowledge (and even that does not allow for purely objective consideration) but only the often powerfully constructed forms evident across multiple genres of ancient literature, and the stories of those in their local communities who had also visited far off places, perhaps even handed down through generations. For the visitor to Delphi, having moved through the entirety of the sanctuary, the visitor has a constructed idea of the importance and social elevation of the space. Now, with an unobstructed view of the landscape beneath them, they find this idea reinforced by their own physical elevation and the domination of the sanctuary space: the contradiction between the wildness of the landscape and the structured organisation of the urban and cult spaces only highlights this, for though all gods are in part connected to the wild, they are also connected to the social workings of man. Apollo, perhaps more than any god, embodies this: prophecy and music are at once wild and also tamed for civic good.

2.9. Conclusions

It is clear, then, that the process of movement through the sanctuary creates a specific experiential journey. This journey facilitates the development of the visitor's own personal connection to Apollo, to the sanctuary, and to the festival context. This is done through a number of distinct features in the sanctuary: the topography of the site, with the steep slope, curving route, and delayed views; the deliberate evocation of particular historical periods and a sense of the past; the creation of specific sensorial environments such as the Chian Altar tunnel; the particular grouping of monuments to create the idea of progression and to create distinct sections of experience; the presence of Apollo formed through presentation and the delaying of his revelation. Much of this is probably unplanned, but coincidence does not negate the realities of experience. The aim of this chapter has been to emphasise the ritualism of movement, evoking the idea of sacred procession, and the temporal cognitive shift of moving through time. This sense of procession and movement would have been further emphasised by the prior movement through the wider Hellenic landscape to come to Delphi in the first place. The

exposed temple platform and the landscape, open beneath the visitor, adds a dramatic final vista to this movement, which was no doubt further enhanced through the sensorial overload of the sanctuary space as a whole. The sounds and smells within the landscape and the ritual process would have further added to the experience of the sanctuary space.

The process of movement through the sanctuary shows the visitor the monuments, but it also encompasses sacrifices in front of the temple, views of the landscape, entering the particular sporting and theatrical buildings and contexts, and being a part of the festival community while moving as a part of the procession and when watching the various events. The sensory overload of a festival cannot be overestimated: we have mentioned throughout the various sensorial experiences that would have bombarded a visitor – from the tastes of meat, dust, and wine, to the sounds of the crowd and the priests and the prayers offered to the gods, the feeling of the crowd and the heat against your skin, the smells of incense and laurel and cooking meat and the people pressed around you, the sight of the gleaming sanctuary all around you, shining white and gold and bronze at every turn, the shift from light into shadow giving movement to everything around you as you move through the sanctuary.

Chapter Three

The Aegospotami monument and the architecture of triumphalism

Whereas my first two chapters offered holistic diachronic and synchronic overviews of the sanctuary, this and the following chapters will engage with single monuments and their immediate context. The theme of this chapter is victory monuments, of which there are many in the material record at Delphi ([pp. 63](#)). Though athletic monuments were common in Delphi (though perhaps not as common as in Olympia) my focus here will be the military victory monuments that came to dominate the entrance to Delphi, specifically the Spartan dedication for the naval victory at Aegospotami in 405 **(5)**. Victory monuments like this were common additions to sanctuary spaces, both civic and panhellenic. They were simultaneously historical and sacred, visible symbols of victory. They did not operate as *tropaia*, though many contained captured booty.³⁰⁵ Composition of the monument is key: as Hölscher says, they represent a new dynamic of power, between the victorious and defeated communities, and the world at large, and force other political communities to engage with and recognise the victors' success. Their commemorative nature reflects the victors' perceived superiority and domination, reinforced by recognition. These ideas are achieved through three primary avenues: rituals, ideological concepts, and victory monuments, particularly those placed in a panhellenic sanctuary, where all the Hellenic states could be witness to it.³⁰⁶ War monuments that perpetuate victory and glory are a way to convert military achievement into political power, and as such provide an excellent avenue of exploration in an experiential study of a site. Public monuments allow for the creation of patriotic civic identity and

³⁰⁵ The primary, or perishable type of *tropaia* were erected on battlegrounds immediately after the battle, usually in form of weaponry: by the fourth century, it was common for these to be reproduced on reliefs and coinage. Secondary, or permanent *tropaia*, were made some time after the victory out of bronze or stone and often dedicated in sanctuaries. These are normally in the form of military clothing, weaponry, columns or decorative buildings, but do not traditionally depict figures, either mythological or living. See Stoszeck 2004, particularly 3-4.

³⁰⁶ Hölscher 2004, 13.

self-definition. Such monuments glorified individual political protagonists or the whole citizen body, and the practice remained popular throughout antiquity.³⁰⁷

Though the Aegospotami dedication is no longer extant, it is no less important to this study. Few military victory monuments survive fully at Delphi, but they represent a vital part of the visual framework of the space and should not be ignored. This chapter will focus on how these victory monuments operate within the competitive Delphic context, both individually and collectively, and how they represent Greek triumphalism. My interest here is in how political tensions play out through visual media, and how individuals such as Lysander used these monuments to send specific messages and advertise particular ideologies. Triumphalism is the theme of this chapter, and so it will begin with a discussion of what this means, before moving on to an explanation of the area that this monument is in. Afterwards, this chapter will discuss the Aegospotami monument in detail, the historical context of Lysander and his political aims, and how this monument and triumphalism combine. Finally, the chapter will explore additional experiential perspectives on the monument, and how it would have been understood in the context of Delphi.

3.1. Triumphalism

On the subject of triumphal display and victory commemoration, attention turns naturally to Rome. It is true that, in some ways, the commemoration of victory is less widespread in Greece. The historical sources spend much less time discussing victories than we might expect, and the Greek preference for not depicting contemporary events means that we do not end up with the equivalent of, say, Trajan's column. However, that is not to say that the Greeks did not depict victory. In fact, it was a key component of Greek material culture, from battlefield *tropaion* to monuments such as the Athenian Parthenon, which commemorated the Hellenic victory over the Persians. As Rice remarks, these

³⁰⁷ Hölscher 2004, 15-16.

monuments were used as a form of civic propaganda and as we will see in this chapter sanctuaries became spaces for competitive display between states.³⁰⁸

Much of the discussion about victory commemoration in Ancient Greece has been Athenocentric and has focused on how surviving populations remembered the war dead: in particular, much work has been done on those lost by Athens in the Persian Wars. However, more recently scholarly attention has moved beyond Athens, shifting especially to Sparta, and the Hellenistic and Roman periods in Greece. Studies of Spartan commemoration of victory focus more on athletic achievements, in line with the evidence remaining from that most materially elusive of states.³⁰⁹ There are many ways to read a victory monument, but one more recent trend pertinent to this study is that of memory. Collective memory is a vital concept in discussing ancient victory commemoration. In a pre-modern world, keeping alive the memory of a significant period of history requires visual and literary tools to transmit information and maintain the celebration of victories. Memory is formed through interactions with people and things: in the context of ancient victory, this was primarily through the conveyance of memories of individuals (by their nature, ephemeral and temporary) and through permanent commemoration, which could include both literary and material celebrations. Foxhall remarks on the 'monumental dimension' in which time is rendered permanent through creating monumental architecture and art, and Young (in a discussion of modern monuments) argues that they serve to unify disparate and competing memories, creating singular legacies. For the triumphalist victory monument, both of these impulses are essential: the monument must not only create a sense of eternal victory to offset any future events, but it must also do so with enough conviction that the victory seems absolute and inviolable.³¹⁰ Though these studies do not tend to

³⁰⁸ Rice 1993, 224.

³⁰⁹ Athens: Clairmont 1983, 15; Low 2003, 99; Low 2010, 341; Low 2012, 14-15. Elsewhere: Chaniotis 2005; Holscher 2006; Low 2011; Chaniotis 2012; Cooley 2012.

³¹⁰ Foxhall 1995, 136; Alcock 2002, 15; Marcel and Mucchielli 2010, 142-143; Young 2010, 79; Steinbock 2013, 7; Duffy 2016, 10-15.

discuss the concept of triumphalism per se, it is implicit in the discussion: a triumphalist expression of victory relies on the idea of memory, and the continued expression of success through time.

According to Finley, we should not think of battles themselves as being the objective of those who conducted them, but instead consider the publicity of the victory as the final goal. This publicity goes both ways, conveying positive attributes upon the victors and negative associations upon the defeated. This is what makes these monuments so powerful in a panhellenic context, where the defeated are much more likely to see them. Victory monuments are an attempt to enforce a power dynamic between the victor and the defeated, and sometimes between the victor and the rest of the Hellenic world. According to Hölscher, a victorious battle is an event limited in space and time, but political power is a long-term structural concept: for military victories to be more than short-term successes, they have to be transformed into something that creates power. Hölscher is discussing how war was represented in Rome, but these ideas translate easily to the *poleis* of Greece. He argues that power is created from victories through 'symbolic manifestations that fix and perpetuate conceptually the victor's superiority and dominance'.³¹¹ These monuments are necessary in antiquity to reinforce victories: as Hölscher notes, Archaic and Classical victories did not normally have long-term consequences and were short-term successes, as power changed hands regularly between states. Power had to be won and legitimised over and over again.³¹²

We must therefore consider victory monuments as something more than the literal commemoration of a victory: they represent a tangible and lasting expression of triumphalist values, manmade symbols meant to celebrate the victor and create social dominance. Plato opens his *Laws* with the assertion that every *polis* is, by nature, perpetually engaged in an undeclared war with every other *polis*.³¹³ A victory monument must signpost to the Greek audience not just victory in a single battle or war – it must establish that victory for the long term, conceptualising it as something

³¹¹ Hölscher 2006, 27.

³¹² Finley 1954, 12; Hölscher 2006, 27-28.

³¹³ Plato, *Laws* 626a4.

permanent and unchangeable. Triumphalism requires by definition an element of excess, particularly in a political sense: not just simple a commemoration, but one which takes the event and converts it into something grand and elaborate and promotes the victor excessively. This chapter will discuss how Lysander aimed to do this with the Aegospotami monument, and to do this it is important to view the monument within the context of a broader network of victory celebration that was constructed around Lysander and this naval battle. We must consider how memory plays a part in this monument and how Lysander positioned himself as a deified individual in order to create a sense of a triumph that transcended not just the Peloponnesian War, but the mortal realm itself.

3.2. The space: entering the sanctuary

This chapter will discuss the area immediately after the entrance to Delphi, which we have already described in Chapter Two (section 2.3: [pp. 117](#)). Daux describes the area on the eastern side of the temple platform as the *epiphanestastos topos* and, indeed, that is where many important monuments were placed, gaining prestige and viewers from their proximity to the temple itself.³¹⁴ This gives the impression that it was the only place that dedicators would have been interested in placing dedications. However, the temple platform itself did not have the space for monuments of significant size and would not have allowed for the foundations of building-style dedications, such as treasuries. Though the platform would have been a position of prestige, I would argue that the entrance is an equally important and dramatic position for dedications. It was the first part of the space visible when a visitor entered Delphi, and the straight line of the Sacred Way here meant that the monuments were lined up on either side in two parallel lines. Partida describes the entrance to the sanctuary as being dominated by a chain of multi-figure and multi-ethnic monuments, but this, if anything, underplays the drama of the space.³¹⁵ Some visitors may have used the other entrances to the space: however,

³¹⁴ Daux, 1936, 159-162; Tomlinson 1976, 67.

³¹⁵ Partida 2011, 241.

the close clustering of hugely significant monuments in this space suggests that by our time period, this entrance saw a high proportion of these visitors: dedicators would seek the most visually prominent positions for their monuments that would have seen significant footfall. Though how much control or choice visitors would have had over where they could dedicate is unclear, it is hard to imagine that a dedicator such as Lysander, following one of the most significant victories in Greek history, would not have been able to secure a position of choice.

The Aegospotami dedication was one of the largest and most impressive monuments in this space, if not the sanctuary at large. But of course, monuments do not operate in isolation. As outlined in Chapter One, Delphi was a densely packed space and it is vital that we consider these monuments in the context of everything around them. Likewise, the chronology of these monuments has to be taken into account; it is difficult sometimes to appreciate the politics behind these dedications when we look at a plan of the sanctuary, which does not immediately make clear the order in which those dedications were built and how these spaces organically grew over time. We have already discussed at some length the monuments a visitor would have seen as they entered the sanctuary, which are also listed in the section map of the space (Fig. 3.1) The Aegospotami monument formed part of an unofficial flanking guard of figures as the visitor entered the sanctuary, and it was clearly placed to visually confront the pre-existing Marathon victory monument **(7)**.

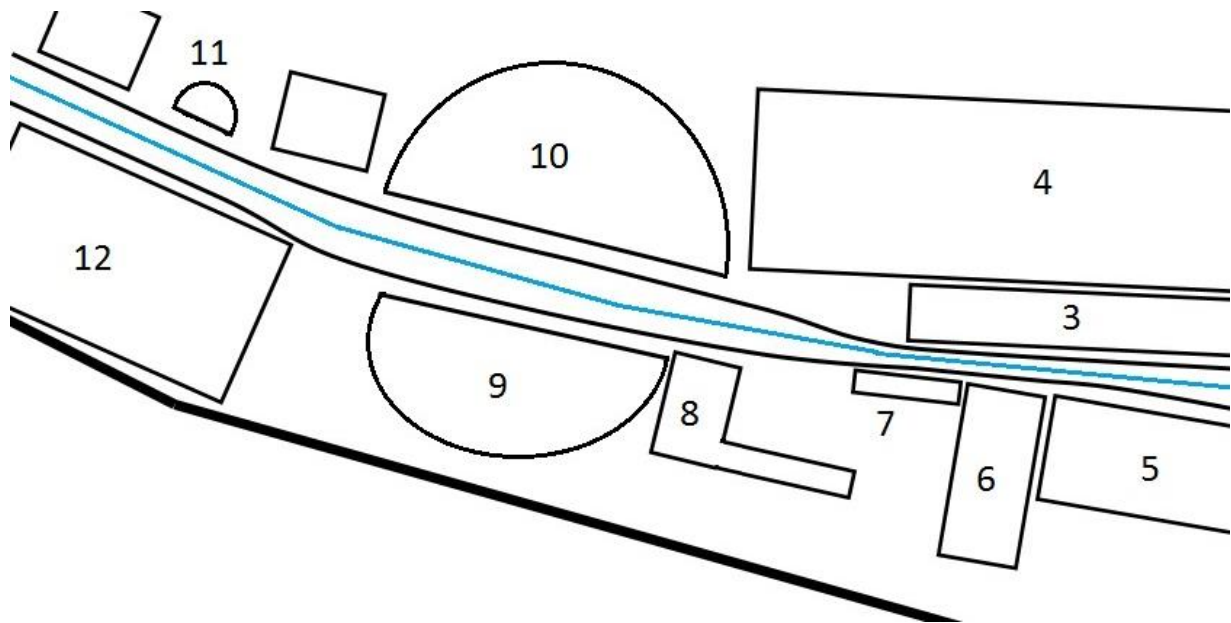


Figure 3.1. Monument map: victory monuments. Author's own.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 3. Arcadian bronze statue group | 9. Argive dedication |
| 4. Spartan Stoa | 10. Argive dedication |
| 5. Spartan Aegospotami victory monument | 11. Votive niches |
| 6. Argive horse dedication | 12. Tarentine dedication |
| 7. Athenian dedications from Marathon | |
| 8. Argive dedications of the seven leaders of the expedition against Thebes | |

What is most interesting about this section of the sanctuary is the chronology of these dedications. By themselves, these monuments provide snapshots of individual achievements, but when viewed in chronological sequence, they reveal an intense political and militaristic competition being played out in the neutral space of Delphi. Throughout the fifth century, Delphic dedications were dominated by the Athenian *polis*, and even prior to this, Delphi had received significant attention from the Peisistratid and Alkmaeonid families. The Athenian contribution is the Marathon victory monument, which at the time of its dedication, was probably the first sculptural group a visitor would have seen. However, Athens became increasingly overshadowed in the sanctuary towards the end of the fifth century, when Argos, Thessaly, and Sparta all became more physically present, reflecting the changing political climate in the Hellenic world. Scott argues that Delphi became an extension of a

battlefield in this period, with increasingly aggressive spatial politics being performed as an extension of the real-life tensions dominating the period.³¹⁶

The most aggressive attack on Athenian monuments came from Sparta itself. After their victory in the Peloponnesian War, Sparta became increasingly involved in the sanctuary: the dedication of Lysander's victory monument, next to the Athenian Marathon victory monument, robbed the Athenians of the honour of having the first and most dramatic monument after the entrance. The Aegospotami dedication held three times as many statues as its Athenian counterpart, and was clearly intended to overshadow it, standing on a taller base and arranged in two rows, making a statement about the comparative position of these two *poleis* within the Greek world. It also served the purpose of characterizing the Athenians as the new threat to Hellenic freedom, and implying that Sparta were now the leading force in the Hellenic world, with divine figures included to cement the importance of Sparta's success.³¹⁷ The Spartan Stoa, on the opposite side of the Sacred Way, served the double purpose of overshadowing the Marathon victory monument with its height, as well as mimicking the Athenian Stoa further along the Sacred Way **(29)**. This obscured the visitor's view of the rest of the sanctuary, focusing attention on the Aegospotami monument.³¹⁸ A statue of Lysander was dedicated in the stoa, and a second was dedicated in the treasury of Brasidas and the Acanthians, remarkable for its long hair and beard, worn in celebration of a military victory.³¹⁹ The stoa was clearly intended as an extension of the Aegospotami monument: the two positioned opposite each other, framing the Sacred Way, creating a corridor dedicated to Spartan supremacy and co-opting all visitors to the sanctuary into this visual dominance.

By the end of the fifth century, the former Athenian dominance of the space had been undermined. Sparta's monumental traditions in the sanctuary had also radically changed: from

³¹⁶ Pritchett 1974, 264-269; Scott 2010, 101.

³¹⁷ Bommelaer 1977, 213; Jacquemin 1999b, 192; Scott 2010, 105-107.

³¹⁸ Bommelaer 1971b, 51; Scott 2010, 107.

³¹⁹ Plutarch, *Lysander* 1.1; 1.18. de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 481-483; Bommelaer 1991, 160-163; Palagia 2009, 39.

modest to ostentatious, with architectural and sculptural elaboration. Sparta clearly felt compelled to engage in the battle for prestige being waged in these panhellenic spaces, although this remained counter to architectural styles at home. Though Sparta's line of attack was against Athenian monuments, they were not immune to spatial warfare conducted by other poleis: the Argive semi-circular dedication later dedicated next to it cut off one of the entrance points of the Spartan Stoa, restricting its usability.³²⁰ The Aegospotami dedication is a successful and powerful monument in its own right, but it is only when we consider it in the context of its surrounding monuments and the battle for visual prestige that we can understand the impact that it must have had. It overpowers the landscape, working in tandem with the stoa, and frames Sparta – and Lysander in particular – as the greatest visual and political force in both Delphi and Greece. The significance of Delphi's role as a panhellenic sanctuary, and the variety of people who would visit it, cannot be overstated. Much of the story-telling generated by and at Delphi reinforced the view that Delphi was at the centre of a network of relations that extended across and beyond the Greek world.³²¹ Placing these messages here, then, meant that they would be disseminated around the ancient Mediterranean. Certainly, a monument like this would have had less of an impact had austerity laws in Sparta allowed for it to be dedicated at home.

This monument operates within a framework of aggressive spatial politics to which visitors were exposed – the crowding of the dedications is a visual representation of the *poleis* competing with each other within Greece, and the connection and references to important political events are often heavy-handed, rarely subtle. The creation of a 'Spartan corridor' formed by the monument and the Spartan Stoa forces visitors to enter, albeit only for a brief moment, a part of Delphi that had become unquestionably Lakedaimonian. This – coincidentally – makes up for Sparta's lack of a treasury. They may not have claimed a piece of Delphi's land in the same way that erecting a traditional treasury would have, but they have done one better, and acquired a section of the Sacred Way that people

³²⁰ Bommelaer 1971a; 1971b; Scott 2014, 146-147; Scott 2016a, 263.

³²¹ McInerney 2011, 100.

would have to walk through, obliging them to place themselves within the political allegiances of the Peloponnesian War. Here, the inclusion of generals from across the Greek world becomes an even more powerful idea: the visitors are implicated in the victory against the Athenians through the inclusion of commanders from their own *polis* or region.

3.3. The Aegospotami monument

The Aegospotami dedication was built at a strange and transitional time in Greek history as the Peloponnesian War ended and the balance of power in the Hellenic world shifted dramatically. All the monuments investigated in this thesis are notable in some way or other, but this one is perhaps the most controversial. It represents not only a pivotal historical moment – the destruction of the Athenian navy, which led to Athens' surrender and Spartan victory in the Peloponnesian War – but also a period of changing styles and priorities in the sanctuary itself. This section aims to provide a reconstruction of the monument as the visitor would have seen it in antiquity, and is a fitting start to our study, not only because it sits at the entrance to the sanctuary but also because, as Scott notes, tours of the sanctuary often began with this monument, both in antiquity (as in Plutarch's tour in *De Pythiae oraculis*) and in the modern day.³²² This section will outline the main features of the monument as it would have appeared in antiquity, examining the statues, arrangement, inscription, and colours.

Given in thanks for Lysander's victory in 405, it is also referred to in scholarship as the Admiral's Monument and the Navarchs' Monument (presumably due to the subject matter), and was truly monumental in scale, though only the bases remain today (Fig. 3.2).³²³ The monument is described in detail by the ancient sources, and also attested by inscriptions on the surviving statue

³²² Scott 2014, 219.

³²³ Flower 1988; Franke and Mircea 2005; Ruzé 2017.

bases.³²⁴ The victory spoils allowed Lysander to dedicate the monument despite not being a king, and it stands out not only in the landscape of Delphi but in the material traditions of Sparta, its size and grand nature going against the austere Spartan norm. It was one of the largest and most self-aggrandising dedications in the sanctuary at the time. It was also unique for including statues of living military commanders for the first time in both the history of the sanctuary and of Sparta.³²⁵ It depicts two lines of figures, the back being generals, and the front being a number of gods, Lysander, and some of his close allies. It is not strange that the monument does not represent the moment of victory: such a thing would run counter to Greek iconographic traditions. Athletic and military victors were normally placed out of any clear narrative context, and identified by tokens of triumph, crowns being the most common – indicating victory to the viewer.³²⁶ However, they were normally more generic than this, and the inclusion of Lysander himself was unusual. As Pliny the Elder tells us, representing men was not customary, and usually was only done if, through some significant achievement, they were worthy of having their memory preserved.³²⁷



Figure 3.2. The Aegospotami monument base in situ. Online image: livius.org (last accessed: 18/08/20).

³²⁴ Pausanias 10.9.7-8; Plutarch, *Lysander* 18.1; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 2-4; Bourguet 1929 24-41; Arnold 1969, 33-36; Bommelaer 1991, 108-110; Jacquemin 1999b, 338.

³²⁵ Jacquemin 1999b, 256; Scott 2014, 177.

³²⁶ Neils 2013, 91.

³²⁷ Pliny, *Natural History* 34.16.

The two rows do not match: nine statues about 1.90 meters tall were placed in front, while the back row held thirty statues, which were about 1.60 meters tall but placed on a taller base.³²⁸ Though the bronze statues no longer exist, it is fairly easy to reconstruct the monument from the surviving evidence. The extant statue bases carry both inscriptions on the face and placement indications on top, usually the figure's ethnic identifier or occupation, with some figures occasionally marked out more specifically with a name.³²⁹ Pausanias describes in detail thirty-seven of the figures included in the monument: moving from left to right, the front row first contains the Dioskouroi, Zeus, Apollo and Artemis. The Dioskouroi, made by Antiphanes of Argos, were decorated with twin gold stars in memory of the stars that were said to have pointed the way to Lysander's ship as it sailed out of the harbour. These stars allegedly disappeared from the monument as a portent of Sparta's defeat at the battle of Leuktra in 371.³³⁰ The bronze statue Riace B has been associated with the workshop of Antiphanes of Argos and may share visual links with these Dioskouroi. The similarities between Riace B and two Roman portraits of Gaius and Lucius Caesar in Corinth led to the assumption that they all derive from a common ancestor, possibly the Delphic Dioskouroi.³³¹ This remains purely speculative but does suggest an interesting hypothetical prototype.

Beside these were statues of Poseidon and Lysander, who was represented being crowned by Poseidon. Next came Agias, soothsayer to Lysander and instrumental to his victory, and Hermon, who steered Lysander's flagship. Palagia notes at least two further statues that Pausanias did not describe, including Lysander's herald, attested by the inscription *karyx*, and a commander from Chalkis.³³² They may have been damaged and removed by his time, or else Pausanias did not consider them worthy of inclusion (though his laborious naming of the generals in the back row would suggest the former). The statues of Zeus and Apollo were made by Athenodoros of Kleitor, those of Artemis, Poseidon, and

³²⁸ Bommelaer 1981, 22.

³²⁹ Bourguet 1929, figs. 13, 15, 17; Bommelaer 1981, 22; Scott 2010, 104-108.

³³⁰ Pausanias 10.13.7; Plutarch, *Lysander* 12.1; Palagia 2009, 32.

³³¹ Bommelaer 1992, pl. 38; Partida 2011, 243; De Grazia Vanderpool, 2000, 116.

³³² Bommelaer 1971A, 52, 59; Palagia 2009, 37.

Lysander by Dameas of Kleitor.³³³ Pison of Kalaureia, perhaps a member of the Attic school, made the statue of Agias.³³⁴ The epigram on Lysander's base was written by Ion of Samos, and names Lysander as the dedicator, victorious over the Athenians and their fleet (Fig. 3.3). It reads as follows:

[Child of Zeus], Polydeuces, [with these] elegiacs Ion crowned [your stone] base, because you were the principal [commander], taking precedence even over this admiral, among the leaders of Greece with its wide dancing places. Lysander set up this image of himself on this monument when with his swift ships he victoriously routed the power of the descendants of Kekrops and crowned the invincible Lakedaimon, the citadel of Greece, the homeland with the beautiful dancing-places. Ion of sea-girt Samos composed these elegiacs.³³⁵

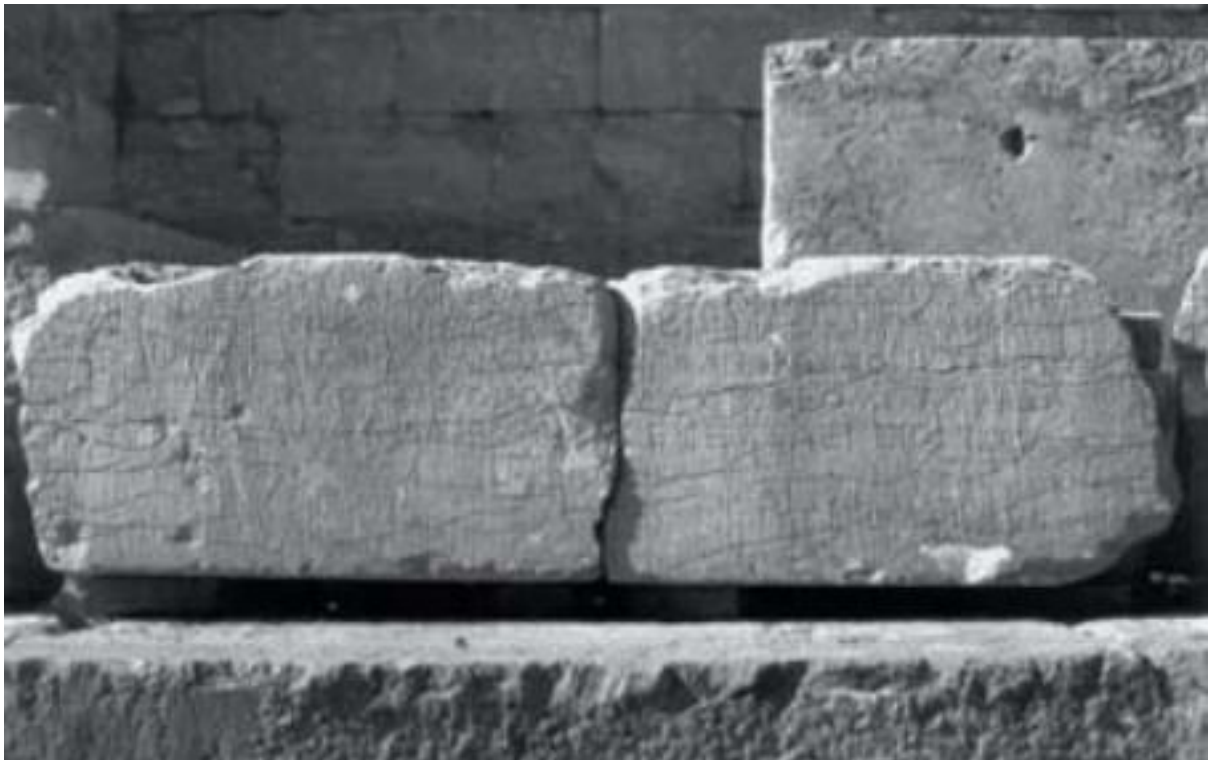


Figure 3.3. Inscription on Lysander's base. From Palagia 2009, fig. 7.

³³³ Palagia 2009, 37.

³³⁴ Pausanias 6.3.5.

³³⁵ Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004, 290-291. [πῶ Διός, ὦ] Πολύδεν[κ]εργίων [ῥκαί τοῖς]δ'ἐλεγείοι[ς] [ῥλαϊνέαν] κρηπίδ' ἐστεφάνωσ[ε] ῥτεά]ν, [ἀρχός ἐπ]εῖ πρῶτος, πρότερο[ς ὁ Ε]τι τούδε νανάρ[χον] [ῥέστας ὅγ]εμόνων ἐλλάδος εὐρ[νχ]όρου. (CEG 819.11)

The allusion to the gesture of Poseidon crowning Lysander is obvious, and Palagia argues that the triumphal tone of the poem indicates that it was composed near the time of dedication.³³⁶ However, Keesling is less certain, arguing that it is not clear if there was a contemporary inscription, and that Ion's epigram was added to the monument in the fourth century. According to Keesling, the assertion of Lysander's individual agency might not have been an appropriate thing to convey in an inscription at the time it was dedicated. However, it would have been appropriate for an inscription added after Lysander's death to assert the legacy of his victory: Ion 'crowned' the statue with a new epigram, as Lysander 'crowned' Sparta with the victory.³³⁷ The addition of a later inscription might seem odd (surely such a vital victory would not have been so easily forgotten), but this corresponds with a period in which a number of inscriptions were added to older monuments across the sanctuary.

Apart from the unprecedented inclusion of living people, these front-row figures are not particularly surprising. Zeus is apt for a victory monument, and Apollo appropriate for a Delphic dedication; Castor and Pollux were considered Spartan, and Artemis gained a place both for her connection to Apollo and for her prominence in her own right in Spartan worship.³³⁸ Poseidon must be included in relation to any naval victory and was an important figure in Lakedaimonian worship with sanctuaries at Tainaron and Malea. As for Lysander, if he was going to include himself, it would be odd not put himself on the front row of his own monument.³³⁹ Lysander gives due space to the gods while simultaneously elevating himself and implying that he was given his victory by them, rather than by the Spartans or any of his allies.³⁴⁰ Agias, Hermon, and Lysander's herald are all important enough to the victory itself to warrant a prominent position on the front row, and are connected enough to Lysander that they do not seem out of place. It is easy to imagine these mortal figures filling in for the generic attendants regularly seen in mythological group scenes, which further mythologises

³³⁶ Palagia 2009, 37-38.

³³⁷ Keesling 2017, 105; 107.

³³⁸ I am thinking, of course, of the centrality of Artemis Orthia in Spartan cult. On this cult, see Pausanias 3.16.7; Boardman 1963; Léger 2015 11-13.

³³⁹ Tainaron: Pausanias 3.25.4; Strabo 8.5.1; Schumacher 1993 72-74; Mylonopoulos 2003, 229-238. Malea: Pausanias 3.23.2; Zavvou 2002, 218-219; Mylonopoulos 2003, 216-217.

³⁴⁰ Keesling 2017, 106.

Lysander himself, casting him in a traditional divine role. The mysterious commander from Chalkis does raise an eyebrow, if only for the prominence he was accorded over the figures on the back row: how he earned such an important spot, alongside the gods and Lysander, is not entirely clear.

The back row was made up of statues of the other naval commanders of Lysander's fleet: most of these figures were not Lakedaimonian but came from Sparta's allies across the Greek mainland and islands, encompassing a huge geographic area. We might expect to see more Lakedaimonians, but the inclusion of other Greeks is understandable when we consider Sparta's new role as the protector and leader of the Hellenic world.³⁴¹ Most of the statues were made by Peloponnesian sculptors of the Polykleitan school, none of whom are particularly famous:³⁴² Teisandros, who created eleven portraits in the back row, is otherwise unknown but may be assumed to belong to the Polykleitan school.³⁴³ From left to right, the figures included are identified as: Aracus of Lakedaemon; Erianthes of Boeotia; Mimas, Astykrates, Cephisocles, Hermophantus and Hicesius of Chios; Timarchus and Diagoras of Rhodes; Theodamus of Knidus; Cimmerius of Ephesus and Aeantides of Miletus; Theopompus the Myndian; Cleomedes of Samos; Aristocles of Carystus; Autonomus of Eretria; Aristophantus of Corinth; Apollodorus of Troezen; Dion of Epidauros; the Achaean Axionicus of Pellene; Theares of Hermion; Pyrrhias the Phocian; Comon of Megara; Agasimenes of Sicyon; Telycrates the Leucadian; Pythodotus of Corinth; Euantidas the Ambraciot; and last came the Lakedaemonians Epicydidas and Eteonicus.³⁴⁴

Spartan victory had only been possible with the aid of their allies, who had supplied troops, financial aid, or both. But some, like Corinth and Thebes, felt excluded from the victory, with Sparta seeming to present herself as the sole reason for their success.³⁴⁵ Though Lysander on the whole maintained that same message, there is a certain diplomacy in including so many non-Lakedaimonians

³⁴¹ Ruzé 2017, 322.

³⁴² Alypos, Patrokles and Kanachos of Sikyon created a number of statues in the back row: Arnold 1969, 6-19; Volkammer 2001; 2004.

³⁴³ Marcade 1953, 104; Arnold 1969. 33, 45; Volkammer 2004.

³⁴⁴ Pausanias 10.9.10.

³⁴⁵ Ruzé 2017, 322.

in this monument, making sure to give a certain amount credit for the success to his allies. How successful such appeasement would have been is uncertain, but one certainly cannot fault him for trying.

This list of statues gives some indication of how overwhelming this monument must have been to a visitor: no doubt the lengthy inscriptions were needed to make it clear who these figures were and also to emphasise the wide variety of places they came from across the Hellenic world (Fig. 3.4). But these inscriptions also make it more likely that a visitor, who could have come from anywhere in the Greek world or beyond, would see a reference to their own region, and connect to the relevant figure (conveniently, also then placing themselves on the side of the Spartans, against the Athenians). Palagia argues that Spartan victory monuments at places like Delphi were particularly lavish and detailed because panhellenic norms allowed them to dedicate in ways that would not have been tolerated at home. Particularly for the individual, like Lysander, Olympia and Delphi allowed a Spartan to swerve the strict regulations on private ostentation.³⁴⁶ The size, scale and grandeur of the statues certainly would have been enough to engage the viewer: if we think of the dynamism of Riace B or even the Delphi Charioteer, both arresting in their own right, it is clear that thirty-nine statues would have been visually striking, dominating the space.

³⁴⁶ Palagia 2009, 32.

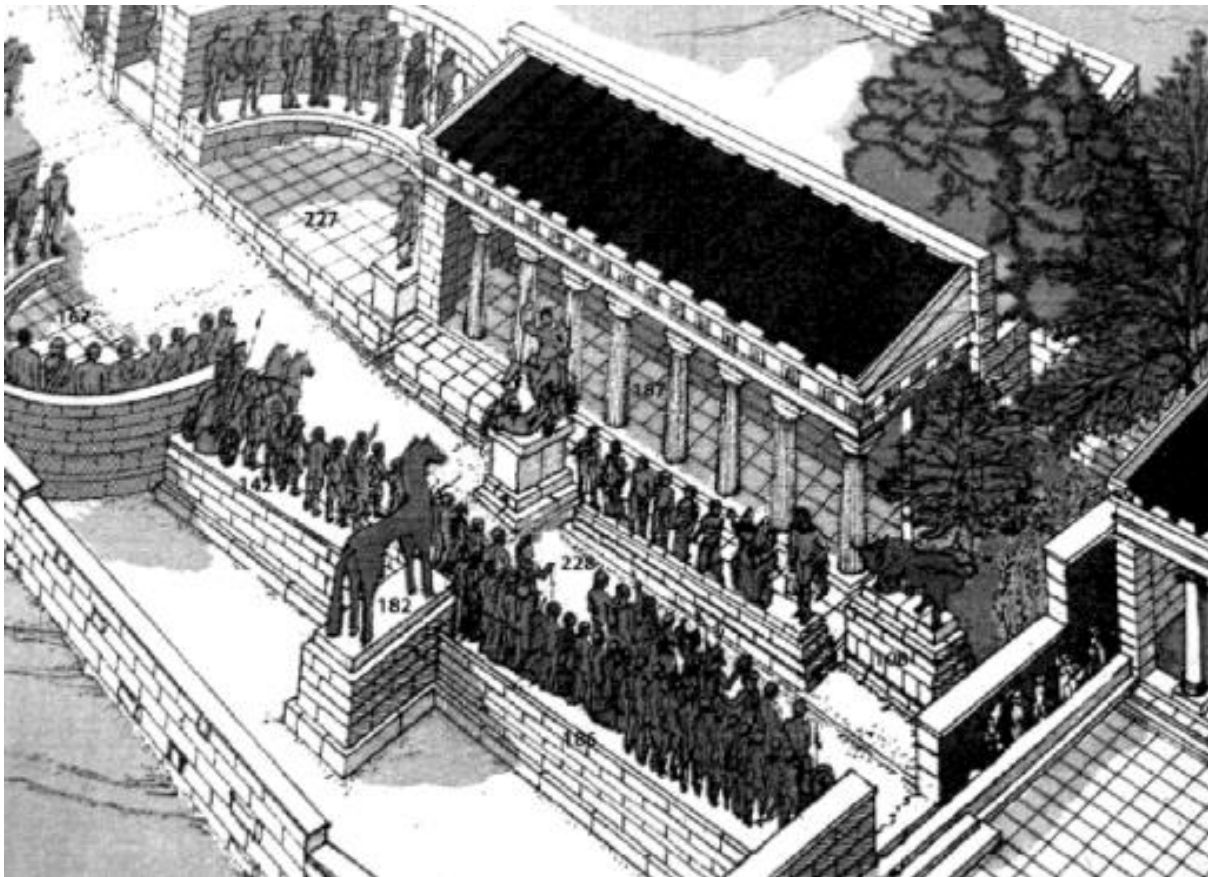


Figure 3.4. Reconstruction of sanctuary entrance, with the Aegospotami monument labelled 186. From Scott 2010, fig. 4.9.

The statues themselves would have developed a patina over time, turning from the expected bronze colour to the green we normally associate with bronze statues: brass, bronze and copper statues oxidise to green, and there are many examples of this in the modern as well as the ancient world, such as the iconic Statue of Liberty. Plutarch is the only ancient writer who mentions the colour, describing the monument as having a ‘deep blue tinge’ (βαφῆ δὲ κυάνου σίλβοντος), ‘with the true complexion of the sea and its deepest depths’ (θαλαττίους τῇ χροῖα καὶ βυθίους ἐστῶτας), and as ‘blending the light and lustre with the blue’ (κυάνῳ). The term violet is also used in connection to the

appearance of the statue (ἰώ).³⁴⁷ The term *κυάνος* and its Roman equivalent *caeruleus* evoke a strong connection to the ocean and to water, and so is perhaps not a word we would expect to see used in reference to a green patina.³⁴⁸ It was almost certainly not painted: Plutarch's account seems to imply that it is the surface of the skin itself that has changed, and Greek bronzes were rarely painted.³⁴⁹ The colour of these statues is important to consider in the context of an experiential study. Colours have associations that a visitor might draw upon, and in the intense competition at Delphi strangeness gives a monument an edge in the visual battleground.

It is possible for particular bronze chemical compositions to end up presenting distinct colours. However, given the variety of sculptors, it seems highly unlikely that any particular rare agent would have been used intentionally or uniformly. Plutarch suggests that this colour is because the statues were made of Corinthian bronze, which had a particular alloy and was given a particular treatment, but this seems unlikely.³⁵⁰ Descamps-Lequime proposes that it might have been salt in the air that changed the colour.³⁵¹ Franke and Mircea agree that discolouration is more likely to have been caused by exposure to agents while in an open-air environment, but their analysis of the Delphi Charioteer (which displayed a distinct blue sheen on excavation) suggests that the discolouration was caused by blue azurite and green malachite which adhered to the surface of the statues during a period of intense restoration work at Delphi (which Plutarch oversaw).³⁵²

In Plutarch's dialogue the speakers are impressed with the colour, debating at some length the reasons why it might have turned blue. The specific terms that Plutarch uses to describe the colour are telling, literally at times comparing it to the sea (θαλαττίους). It seems clear that Plutarch is deliberately connecting the monument to the ocean: thematically appropriate, given that it was a naval victory monument that included a statue of Poseidon. However, it seems unlikely that the

³⁴⁷ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 2-3: Franke and Mircea 2005, 106-107.

³⁴⁸ Bradley 2009, 9-11.

³⁴⁹ Descamps-Lequime 2006, 79-80.

³⁵⁰ Muller-Dufeu 2006, 97-98.

³⁵¹ Descamps-Lequime 2006, 82.

³⁵² Franke and Mircea 2005, 106-107; 112.

monument was deliberately designed to evoke the sea in this way given that they would not have been able to predict the colour change. This is something of a shame: it would have allowed for a rather elegant argument about the use of colour to evoke connections and emphasise iconographical messages. While Plutarch is the only author to discuss the colour, a changing patina would not have been such an unusual a thing; it is quite possible that other authors simply did not feel that it was worth remarking on. Various voices in the debate surrounding colour perception might argue that ancient viewers did not perceive a particular difference between blue and green, but regardless, Plutarch's insistence on the ocean imagery is most likely simply a clever exercise in sophistry rather than any serious observation, as suggested by his subtle references to Homeric imagery.

3.4. Lysander the god

Lysander was mortal, but he was raised above the limits of normal men. Following the Peloponnesian War, heroic honours and lavish dedications were bestowed on him by many Greek states. This monument is a reflection of the standing Lysander acquired in the Hellenistic world.³⁵³ Duris of Samos, preserved in Plutarch, tells us that Samos honoured Lysander with altars, sacrifices, paeans, and a festival called the *Lysandreia*. This is clear evidence of deification, as such honours would not have been appropriate for a mortal who had not undergone apotheosis.³⁵⁴ Badian is one of the more outspoken protestors against a deified Lysander, but even he does not argue that Lysander was not worshipped as a god. What he contests is that this happened during Lysander's lifetime, which in many ways was what was so shocking about his apotheosis. He argues that Duris does not explicitly state that this happened during Lysander's lifetime, although Plutarch believes that it did: he describes an anecdote in which a young Plato consoled the poet Antimachus when he was defeated in the

³⁵³ Rice 1993, 228.

³⁵⁴ Flower 1988, 128; Plutarch, *Lysander* 18.3-4.

Lysandreia when Lysander himself was presiding over the poetic *agon*. For the festival to be in existence during his lifetime, Lysander must have been deified before his death.³⁵⁵

Badian argues that since this anecdote cannot be proven, a posthumous deification must have occurred. Cartledge rejects this theory, and though he perhaps does not offer much in the way of an alternative argument, he does point out that the Aegospotami dedication, as well as other victory monuments, is a clear act of self-heroisation and can be viewed as a precursor to an unusual example of living apotheosis.³⁵⁶ Badian argues that Duris implies that Lysander was the first Greek to receive honours after his death. However, Flower offers an elegant solution to this issue. He argues that Duris clearly believed that Herakles was a real historical figure, and therefore could not have intended to argue that Lysander was the first to receive honours, as Duris, like most Greeks, would have accorded that honour to Herakles himself.³⁵⁷ Flower convincingly argues, therefore, that Duris' meaning would have been clear to his intended readers: that Lysander was the first Greek to whom the Greek cities paid divine honours *during* his own lifetime. Flower acknowledges that Plutarch may not have been quoting him precisely, which could have caused this confusion. The other issue raised is that Duris is the only attested literary source to mention that divine honours were given to Lysander. Flower suggests that Duris, as a pro-Macedonian tyrant of Samos from the early third century, would have had a personal interest in finding a precedent for the deification of living men, and that since Lysander's cult was undoubtably limited to Samos, Duris was in a position to discuss information that may not have been widely known throughout the rest of the Greek world.³⁵⁸ Furthermore, there are many attestations of the existence of the festival itself. It is notable, however, that Lysander was not deified in Sparta after his death, despite Sparta's traditions of deifying mortals, both mythological and historical.

³⁵⁵ Plutarch, *Lysander* 18.3-6; Badian 1981, 33-44; Flower 1988, 131

³⁵⁶ Zinserling 1965, 35-43; Bommelaer 1981, 7-23; Cartledge 1987, 82-86.

³⁵⁷ FGrHist 76 Fr. 93 and 94; Flower 1988, 132.

³⁵⁸ Flower 1988, 128

Lysander's inclusion of living figures was a bold and powerful move and having himself crowned by Poseidon is a particularly fascinating part of this monument. The iconographical intentions of his crowning by Poseidon, witnessed and approved by Zeus, as well as Apollo (implying Delphi's support), cannot be ignored. Lysander is elevated to another level, through his own iconography and through visitor understanding. It runs so counter to Hellenic traditions to have a living historical figure crowned in such a deliberate way by a god that we could forgive a visitor for assuming that Lysander himself was a god or a deified hero. Of course, Lysander was not worshipped as a god or even as a hero in Delphi – such a thing would have left Delphi open to criticism of undue bias towards the Spartans – but the prominent location and visual power does give the *sense* of a god. Though he did not have the traditional accoutrements of worship in Delphi – altars, sacrifices, paeans etc. – he acquired worship of another sort: the recognition and admiration of the Hellenic world.

It is worth noting that, in mythic symbolism, one of the ways that apotheosis was realized was through emergence from the sea,³⁵⁹ particularly relevant given Lysander's naval victory and Poseidon's role in his crowning (Poseidon being one of the most literal references to the sea). His intention here is clearly to be presented on an equal level with the gods that he stands alongside. Pollitt seems to regard the monument as belonging to the same more impersonal tradition as the Athenian Marathon monument and others, but that is not the case.³⁶⁰ As Rice argues, this monument is perhaps best understood as an early element of the previously unparalleled cult of personality that Lysander enjoyed following the Peloponnesian War.³⁶¹ It places Lysander as the prominent Spartan hero, particularly considering that most of the other generals depicted were not Lakedaimonian. Other monuments presented mythic heroes in this role: Athens, as we shall see in Chapter Four, employed Herakles and Theseus as the faces of their victories. By placing himself within the

³⁵⁹ Kantirea 2013, 1: the other ways are disappearance into the earth, elevation to the sky, or metamorphosis into a star, which was how the Dioskouroi were deified, hence their continued connection to star iconography. Perhaps this was made evident on the monument itself as a way to connect Lysander with the mythic twins, and render his apotheosis on the same level as theirs? Helle, Ino, Palaimon, Hemithea, Leukothea and Parthenos are all examples of mortals deified through submersion and ascension from the sea.

³⁶⁰ Pollitt 1986, 304.

³⁶¹ Rice 1993, 228.

monument, Lysander became part of a mythological iconographic tradition and gave himself the divine associations that came with it. From a triumphalist perspective, Lysander's presentation of himself as a divine figure casts the Aegospotami victory as more than another military success in a line of battles in the Peloponnesian War. This suggests to visitors that the monument is a victory far beyond those of other Greek states. It presents Lysander on the level of other mythological heroes, like Herakles, positioning this victory as a mythological, epic one.

Foster argues that his intentions could have been to display the victory as representative of Sparta's 'talismanic agency'.³⁶² Pausanias attributes the destruction of the Athenian navy to a seer, the same Agias depicted on the monument. He credits Agias with capturing all but ten ships of the Athenian navy, and Plutarch tells us that the Dioskouroi were seen in the form of stars on the tillers of Lysander's ship.³⁶³ Foster argues that the monument aims to overwhelm the viewer with talismans: epiphanic heroes, a seer credited with destroying the navy, gods and mythical twins decorated with stars, and most importantly Lysander being crowned by the divine.³⁶⁴ If the intention was to overwhelm the viewer in this way, having himself crowned signifies Lysander's own agency over these talismanic elements, attributing the victory purely to himself despite the inclusion of others, with Agias deliberately relegated to attendant, and the generals moved to the back row to signify their subordinate role. This is not to suggest that Lysander was given the traditional honours given to mythical heroes, such as the *thysia* (a sacrifice ending with a meal).³⁶⁵ Deification is not so clear cut: what is important here is that Lysander was given hero cult honours in some places and was certainly highly regarded, and that here in Delphi he chose to present himself in this manner. This is a suggestive implication, rather than anything explicitly stated.

³⁶² Foster 2018. 38.

³⁶³ Pausanias 10.13.7; Plutarch, *Lysander* 12.1.

³⁶⁴ Foster 2018, 38.

³⁶⁵ It was thought that hero cults were honoured holocaust animal sacrifice, blood libations, and the offering of fully prepared meals (Stengel 1920, 105-155; Burkert 1985, 205) but that has more recently been disproven (Ekroth 2015, 387).

Presenting himself as a god, even in a symbolic and implicit way, would not have been as strange to the ancient viewer as it might appear to the modern audience. Deification (or apotheosis) is the elevation of heroes and men to the status of gods: heroization placed real figures in the sphere of mythological heroes. There were many varieties of heroes worshipped in the Hellenic world: some are descended directly from divine figures, or favoured by specific patron gods; they can be from local places or from epic poetry, they can be warriors or kings or founders, healers or prophets. Herakles is the most notable example of a mortal – albeit a mythological one – that underwent apotheosis, and also had a special relationship with the Spartans.³⁶⁶ By the Classical period, athletes and the ordinary dead became the subject of hero cults, heroic personifications were regularly created to provide legitimacy and patronage, and by Pausanias' time hero cults were common across the Hellenic world.³⁶⁷ Ancestor worship was another form of deifying mortals.³⁶⁸ Recognising the divine in material form is also not unusual. Idolatry, the understanding of objects as a representation of divine figures, is an integral part of the ancient experience. As Platt highlights, the manifestation of a god can occur through many formats other than the traditional 'vision': both literature and material culture can facilitate what Platt defines as a "real' experience of the divine", through providing your own 'face' for the god.³⁶⁹ The visitor, arriving at the sanctuary, would be immediately confronted with the dramatic Spartan Stoa and the Aegospotami monument: the clear message in Lysander's crowning is that of apotheosis. The concept of his divinity is reinforced by the sacred nature of the sanctuary itself. Lysander placed himself amongst the highest echelons of Greek men – heroes – and placed his monument in the area of Delphi that was connected with the greatest military achievements of the Greek world. Sparta's external relations changed significantly after their victory in the Peloponnesian War. The Spartans would have to take on the role of protecting the Hellenic world against the Persians, despite how much aid Persia offered to Sparta and her allies in the war. This monument positions

³⁶⁶ Shapiro 1983, 9; Flower 1988, 132.

³⁶⁷ Antonaccio 1995, 1-2.

³⁶⁸ Rohde 1925, 25; Antonaccio 1994, 390-397; Nagy 1979, 115.

³⁶⁹ Platt 2011, 4-7.

Sparta as the new Athens, and Lysander in particular as the immovable object defending the Greek world. As a triumphalist monument, this elevation translates victory into power, into a legendary and immortal success that could not be undermined either by the passage of history or by later victories.

3.5. Triumphalism and the Aegospotami monument

Celebrating victory was a vital component of Greek mentality, and triumphalism in victory was something at which that the Hellenic world excelled. Greek culture praised victory above nearly everything else, in war and in games: the Greek athlete was commemorated for victory or not at all; the (probably apocryphal) Spartan returned home with his shield or on it.³⁷⁰ Neils points out that there were no victory odes for those who came second, and no such thing as a participation trophy in the ancient Greek mindset. Victories were achieved by a small minority of the population, normally far away from the city at a specific moment in time, and a victory monument would have brought this military success back to the home territory, and placed it somewhere that everyone could appreciate it.³⁷¹ A panhellenic sanctuary such as Delphi is a platform and a performative space that everyone could access; the presentation of victory within such a place is a message to the world. Of all the spaces within the sanctuary, this area perhaps best typifies Hellenic triumphalism. Classical art did not shy away from making broad negative statements about non-Greeks.³⁷² However, this area of the sanctuary did not need to rely on visual stereotypes to send a message about non-Greek opponents (not in the least because many of these monuments commemorated inter-Hellenic conflicts). The sheer mass of Greek victory monuments implies Hellenic power: a civic monument speaks to a community, but a panhellenic monument promotes a message to the world, and all future generations of visitors from across it.³⁷³ These monuments represent the military strength and power of the

³⁷⁰ Plutarch, *Sayings of Spartans Women* 241.14; Neils 2013, 81.

³⁷¹ Neils 2013, 81.

³⁷² Marvin 2002, 211; Hall 2012, 117.

³⁷³ Hölscher 2003, 13.

various Greek states, and the space would have operated in an entirely different way for a non-Hellenic audience. It represents a microcosm of Greece and its prowess, its victory and supremacy. The Aegospotami monument, in particular, brings this message home, representing generals from across the Greek world, spreading the message of superiority.

Why does anyone dedicate a victory monument, and why would a dedicator turn to triumphalism? Perhaps the most important reason for doing so is memory. As Alcock outlines, memory can exist anywhere: in places, structures, in any and all objects deliberately designed or later agreed to provoke memories.³⁷⁴ Monuments are an essential tool in a victor's arsenal for ensuring the memory of victories. As Hamilakis remarks, 'the link between past, present and future is made through materiality. Objects of a durable kind assert their own memories, their own forms of commentary and therefore come to possess their own personal trajectories.'³⁷⁵ When we consider the experience and impact of a victory monument like the one for Aegospotami, it is vital that we take into account all individual elements. This monument deliberately evokes a particular moment, responds to others, and makes a statement about the future, though it is worth noting that this message can change for a viewer over time.

For the Aegospotami monument, its connection to the past is the relationship it had with the Marathon monument and the other Athenian monuments in the sanctuary. As we have already discussed, it deliberately sets out to reframe these dedications and Athens by extension. The present, in this sense, is the victory itself, and it is important to understand what Lysander's motivations were. Contemporary monuments were largely impersonal in nature, and as Pollitt remarks, the Aegospotami dedication is in many ways closer to the propagandistic art of the Hellenistic kings, with its focus was on the personality of the individual ruler.³⁷⁶ It is surprising that this comes from Sparta, and the specific circumstances surrounding the dedication and Lysander himself can go some way to explaining it.

³⁷⁴ Alcock 2002, 28

³⁷⁵ Hamilakis 1998, 117.

³⁷⁶ Pollitt 1986, 19.

Unlike most Greeks, it was the custom of the Spartans to bury their dead on the field of battle, and there was no public tomb in the city to recall military campaigns.³⁷⁷ No doubt, in part, this monument was intended to serve as a memorial to those Spartans and allies who gave their lives during the Peloponnesian War. Likewise, it was customary that the Spartans did not dedicate captured armour (as Athens had done at Delphi following the Persian Wars), though it was common practice for them to dedicate using the revenue generated by selling and melting down spoils of war.³⁷⁸ It also, therefore, stands in for the more traditional way of commemorating victory, allowing Lysander to emphasise his success in a different way, and allowing Sparta to outshine all the other displays of captured armour dedicated by other *poleis* in the sanctuary space.³⁷⁹

Sacred landscapes create sacred experiences: was Lysander hoping that this monument would, for later generations of visitors, place him among the pantheon of divine greats? A victory monument does more than just talk about a single existing victory: it makes a statement about the victories of the future, about the continuity of power and prestige to be bestowed on that victor's city or family. Ironically, as we have already mentioned, Lysander was unintentionally evoking the successes of the future in this dedication: the scale and grandeur of the monument is closer to a Hellenistic royal monument than to contemporary dedications, and Lysander's depiction has more in common with the iconography of a victorious Roman than with traditional Greek commemoration.

3.6. The Aegospotami monument in Delphi

The Aegospotami monument was a large monument in a visible position within the sanctuary space, and it is worth considering the impact that these thirty-nine statues might have had as a collective. Living presence response has been widely discussed in the field of Art History over the last decade. This has mostly centred on examples of viewer responses in which art works are treated not as inanimate objects but as living beings with genuine presence: however, the strange colour of

³⁷⁷ Pritchett 1985, 249; Low 2006.

³⁷⁸ Pritchett 1979, 292-293; Rice 1993, 226-227.

³⁷⁹ Rice 1993, 226-227.

Aegospotami monument's statues and the gleaming of the bronze makes it unlikely that these would be perceived as mortal figures.³⁸⁰ Van Eck argues that living presence response has to be understood as an experience of art coming alive, with art being a performative object.³⁸¹ The idea of monuments – or at least, the statues displayed on them – being experienced as real people is touched on at the end of Palagia's article on Spartan self-presentation, which deals explicitly with the Aegospotami monument. She concludes with the question of how 'real' the portraits of Lysander and his associates were, arguing that the answer lies in the bronze portrait head from the Porticello shipwreck, which would have been created at roughly the same time (Fig. 3.4).³⁸² This is presumably inspired by Plutarch's discussion of Lysander's portrait statue in the treasury, in which he describes the statue as 'iconic,' carrying with it the idea of an exact portrait-likeness.³⁸³ She suggests that there is no reason not to assume that the statues did appear true to life, with Lysander probably sporting the long hair and beard that he grew to celebrate his victory – however the green/blue colour and metallic shine presumably would have made them look less than realistic, despite Palagia's argument.³⁸⁴

³⁸⁰ For a detailed discussion of this scholarship, see Van Eck 2010, 643-644.

³⁸¹ Van Eck 2010, 644-666.

³⁸² Reggio Calabria, Museo Nazionale 17096; Eiseman and Ridgway 1987, 63-68; Mattusch 2006, 228-30.

³⁸³ Plutarch *Lysander*, 1.

³⁸⁴ Palagia 2009, 36-39.

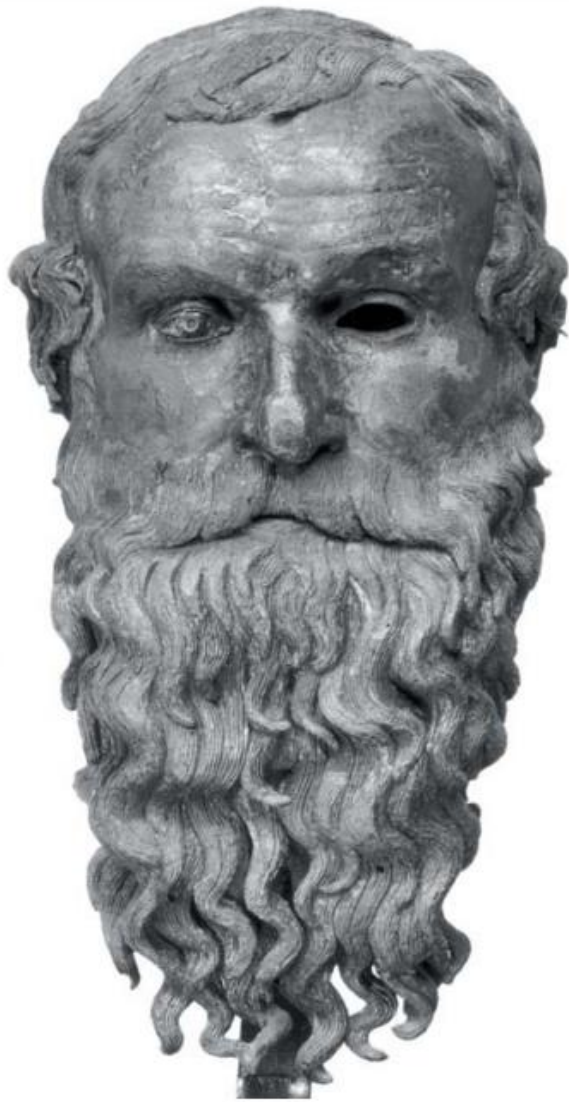


Figure 3.5. Head from Porticello shipwreck. From Palagia 2009, fig. 8.

Does a statue need to look like a real, living human being to create a living presence response? In a world where gods walked the earth and took many forms, without the reality of modern photographic portraiture, perhaps the distinctly inhuman could also evoke living presence. Most people who saw the statues would have never seen Lysander or his generals in person, but a living presence response can be created through depictions of the divine. Would these shining, otherworldly, green/blue statues have created the impression of divine forces being present in the

sanctuary? Visual epiphanies of gods were held to have occurred:³⁸⁵ if we accept the idea that the ancient Greeks recognised gods for their power, size, beauty and vigour, and that cult statues were meant to be a literal depository for divine presence on earth, is it a step too far to argue that a dedication as elaborate as the Aegospotami monument might have inspired some form of living presence response?³⁸⁶ This seems even more possible when we take into account the impact that pilgrimage has on the mental condition of a visitor. As Clarke puts it: ‘the ways to these sacred places, as well as the connections between one sanctuary and another, imprint themselves upon the devotees. These paths constitute a psychomotor stimulus that prepares the devotees for the vision of the deity. The way to the place is, in this sense, a part of the epiphanic experience’.³⁸⁷ The layering and crowding of the two lines of the Aegospotami monument would have made the statues appear like a crowd, lining the side of the Sacred Way. Heroes could manifest themselves amongst the living after death, an idea which is well attested, so the fact that Lysander was presenting himself as a semi-divine or heroized figure would not have been an impediment, but perhaps even a reinforcement of this notion.

The Argive monuments provide a useful comparison. These monuments differ somewhat from the Aegospotami dedication: the semi-circular bases of the Argive dedications create a more static monument, whereas the layers of the Spartan monument give more of a sense of a crowd.³⁸⁸ Likewise, the Argive statues all stand slightly apart and without much overlap or interaction. They are, in many ways, a throwback to the traditional composition of Archaic aristocratic victory monuments, with *kouroi* standing in a line, clearly separated.³⁸⁹ Instead, the overlap that there must have been on the Aegospotami dedication (particularly in the thirty figures on the back row) and the clear lines of connection between the figures (Poseidon crowning Lysander; the Dioskouroi overlapping the lines of

³⁸⁵ Platt 2011, 4-7.

³⁸⁶ Ekroth 2015, 383.

³⁸⁷ Clarke 2012, 258.

³⁸⁸ Pouilloux and Roux 1963, 74; Scott 2010, 105.

³⁸⁹ Neer 2012, 191.

the two rows) evokes a much more real sense of movement and crowding. These semi-circular bases of the Argive dedication also separate the visitor – they have to actively step into the semi-circular terrace in front of the bases to get close. While this does create a clear Argive space, Sparta went one step further in claiming the opening segment of the Sacred Way as their own space, and all the visitors their subjects. The Aegospotami dedication differs too in that most of the surrounding monuments represent mythological heroes and statesmen rather than real contemporary figures, adding to the strangeness of the presentation of contemporary history here, and to the presentation of statues as real people.

If these bronze statues did appear ‘realistic’, they might give the impression that the visitor is surrounded by people: the intense crowding of the back row of the monument would have further added to this idea. Likewise, though Foster insists that the monument is full of talismanic elements, I am not convinced that any of them are so overwhelming that they would stop a living presence response of some kind. Though it seems unlikely that visitors would have seen these as real people, they might have understood them as something more than inanimate objects. The monument might then have had the same impact as a group of living people: if crowds of people surrounded the Sacred Way, we would expect the visitors to feel an element of discomfort or even increased adrenaline, enhancing its significance for them. Perhaps equally relevant would have been how new this monument would have been to our visitor, arriving at the sanctuary shortly after this monument had been dedicated.

Perhaps equally relevant would have been how new this monument would have been to our visitor, arriving at the sanctuary shortly after this monument had been dedicated. This monument does not necessarily break with stylistic tradition, though it does with some standards of depiction and the overall composition. However, the literal newness and minor novelties must have had an impact on the visitor’s perception of it. The Greek relationship with new innovation and design is a complicated one that has been explored elsewhere, and there is not the space to review this in its

entirety: however, what is clear is that the Greek political, literary and artistic landscapes are ones in constant flux, adapting and innovating at every turn.³⁹⁰ What is interesting about newness as a concept in this context is how it might have impacted the visitor experience of it. Imagine for a moment the wide array of material within a sanctuary such as Delphi, some it recent, but some of it dating back a hundred years or more. All materials age when exposed, particularly in the relatively high altitudes of Mount Parnassos. In comparison to the dulled patina of some of its fellow monuments, the shine and lustre of these statues would be particularly visually impressive, actively grabbing attention. Likewise, the events commemorated are particularly recent: not just in living memory for some, like the Marathon monument, but a significant historic event that would have happened within a very recent time period and would have been fresh on the mind of any Hellenic visitor who arrived c. 400 BCE. Not only would it have been visually eye-catching, but it presumably would not have required interpretation or third party explanation for the majority of visitors to have understood and make sense of. Given the significance of the battle and the Peloponnesian war more generally, it is safe to assume it would have elicited a more immediate and powerful emotional response from its viewers: this was a decades long conflict that involved multiple city states. From a triumphalist perspective, this Aegospotami monument's claim on space gives additional weight to Lysander's success, extending it beyond a simple victory to one of elevated triumph, one that not only claims excessive attention and space but also presents its subject as a god. This is a monument to supremacy, to a victory that transcends the mortal realm and reaches the divine. The immediacy of its connections to our visitor reinforces those messages, elevating the victory with this immediate and powerful response and understanding of the monument. Unlike the political messages of the other monuments this thesis will discuss, our Delphic visitor would have had very little choice but to engage with this monument and the triumphalist messages it broadcast around the sanctuary.

³⁹⁰ See in particular Csapo and Miller 1998; D'Angour 2011.

3.7. Conclusions

The Aegospotami monument is of central importance when considering the landscape of Delphi. Not only is it an important example of the spatial politics of the site, it is also a successful and useful example of how Delphi came to reflect specific historical contexts and important moments in Greek history. Robertson considers the monument and its surrounding companions propagandistic, and despite the problematic nature of that word, he is right.³⁹¹ In fact, that is the main point of victory monuments like this one: to convey a set of ideals and principles in support of an individual or state. Triumphalism takes this idea one step further, representing victory as something beyond the mortal realm and beyond the norm, bringing it in to a network of individualistic commemoration that goes against the collective and state driven ideologies of the Classical world. Triumphalism is represented throughout the monument. It is central to the design, arrangement, inscription, and the choice of who is included, and this expression of military power would have had a direct impact on the visitor to Delphi. The Greeks of the Classical period used such monuments as civic propaganda, as the jostling of dedications in the most prominent areas of sanctuaries makes clear.³⁹² We cannot avoid the fact that Delphic monuments, though religious in nature, are also heavily politicised. The Spartan victory at Aegospotami was certainly significant, but what is also clear is that this monument was different. As we have outlined above, it was astonishingly large; it was remarkable for its inclusion of so many living mortals; it challenged the architecture around it and visibly changed the sanctuary space; perhaps most importantly, it served as a monumental recognition of Lysander's own ego and his role in the development of ruler worship. As Rice remarks, there was nothing like it in scale and conception at the time, and there would be nothing like it until the Granikos monument of Alexander the Great.³⁹³

For the visitor to Delphi, the monument would have dominated the landscape, working in tandem with the stoa on the opposite side of the road to present ownership over one of the most

³⁹¹ Robertson 1985 180-181.

³⁹² Rice 1993, 224-225.

³⁹³ Rice 1993, 226.

important places within the Delphic landscape – the entrance. Certainly, part of Lysander's drive here was a desire to publicise to the Greek world at large this particular victory; as we have already said, there is no better place to do that than at Delphi. Likewise, we have already discussed the monument as an act of self-heroization on the part of Lysander, one which would enshrine his heroic position within the Greek world. Lysander presents himself as a mortal hero whose victory has transcended that of the average victor, positioning himself, by extension, as beyond all other mortal men.³⁹⁴ Cartledge takes this view one step further, suggesting that this act of deification was an attempt to prepare the Delphic priesthood to recognise Lysander's 'regal suitability'; Keesling suggests that it seeks to justify the divine and heroic honours that Lysander received.³⁹⁵ From a triumphalist perspective, this goes above and beyond the commemoration of a standard victory, operating as part of an individualistic self-promotion that presents Lysander as being wholly separate not just from his enemies, but also from his fellow Spartans – even the construction of the monument, with Lysander on the front row and his subordinate generals behind him, reinforces this message of triumphalism to the viewer.

The use of apotheosis serves to render this victory as mythological in scale, allowing it to operate within Foxhall's previously mentioned 'monumental dimension', giving it a sense of timelessness to a Hellenic viewer who would be used to seeing mythological scenes depicted in all areas of life. It converts a single victory into permanent power, a reminder to all visitors that this triumph would echo through the ages. The close formation of so many statues reinforces this, creating an experience for the visitor that must have been a little overwhelming. The fact that this is constructed to appear as Lysander's victory, rather than Sparta's, is another key element. The Peloponnesian War was fought between Sparta and Athens, not Lysander and Athens, but the tone of this monument suggests instead that the victory belongs to Lysander, a surprisingly triumphalist message that in many ways would have been better suited to the victories of Hellenistic kings or

³⁹⁴ Flower 1988, n. 45

³⁹⁵ Cartledge 1987, 83-96; Keesling 2017, 105.

Roman emperors, who held a different degree of power to an individual general.. The Aegospotami monument is, therefore, not just important to consider within its own context, but as a precursor to a style of commemoration that would later come to dominate the Mediterranean.

For our visitor to Delphi, only just arriving at the sanctuary, they would have found themselves overwhelmed by the imposing physical presence of this monument. We can only reconstruct this monument, but it is easy enough to imagine the power of the shining bronze layered by the side of the Sacred Way. In the period after which this monument had turned blue, no doubt the sight would have been otherworldly, bronze shining with a strange lustre in the sunlight. Hellenic competition plays a vital role in the landscape of Delphi, and therefore in the experience of a visitor: this corridor of victory monuments might have elicited conflicting feelings about the successes and victories of their own *polis*, or perhaps an even more complex reaction if their home was *not* represented here. This monument is reinforced by the themed space and by Delphi more broadly and reinforces the importance of Delphi in turn; it politicises the visitor, and places them within a complex and competitive framework. Of course, it is impossible to know for certain whether it was planned, but it is noteworthy that a visitor would have been given such an intense reception to the sanctuary, confronted with mythologised heroes as soon as they entered sacred space, reinforcing the sense of divine presence and the significance of the sanctuary.

Chapter Four

The Athenian Treasury and the architecture of timocracy

Like Chapter Three, this chapter examines a particular monument, its context and placement within the sanctuary space, and how it connects to a dominant theme within the sanctuary; in this case, timocracy. The previous chapter looked at military victories, but this chapter will examine a different battlefield: one centred around wealth, resources, and ownership. The chapter will examine timocracy as a concept, the space in question, and the treasury building itself. The question of space is always important, but in Delphi, the treasuries have been built in a specific area, and as treasuries are by their very nature an expression of wealth, and so economic competition becomes an inherent part of the space. The contextual section of the chapter will look at the use of Theseus, Herakles, and Geryon as symbols of both Athens and timocracy, and then how materials and decoration show Athens' economic superiority. Finally, the chapter will examine the treasury within Delphi, and how visual connections and positioning also emphasise the theme of timocratic competition. In doing this, the chapter aims to show how Athens constructed a monument to display its claims of ownership not only over its own possessions and resources, but also on those beyond its own territory. Reconstructed in the modern day, this building gives us a unique opportunity to properly visualise and understand its size and power within visual reality, not just the scholarly hypothetical one, and as such it should be a cornerstone of any visual experiential or topographic study of the ancient world.

Discussion of the building has been dominated by the question of its date and its metopes. The interest in its date comes from the disparity between the evidence and our understanding of it: though Pausanias and the dating of the stone definitively tell us that the treasury was built in 490 BCE, the style of the decorative features fits better with an earlier period, leading many scholars to argue

for a sixth-century build.³⁹⁶ The fascination with the metopes comes from the relative wealth of material that we have; most of the metopes have survived, albeit in a fragmentary form, but none of them have been preserved in situ, meaning that a lot of the debate has been focused on trying to identify them and work out their arrangement on the treasury.³⁹⁷ Though we will attempt to clarify these issues, this chapter aims to provide a much more thorough assessment of the building within a timocratic context. The Athenian Treasury represents a pivotal moment in Athenian and Hellenic history, and as such deserves attention. It was the first building dedicated by democratic Athens in a panhellenic sanctuary, the first building dedicated abroad by Athens since the fall of the Peisistratids and Kleisthenes' reforms, and offers therefore an unprecedented insight into the *polis*, and into the tensions of the time.³⁹⁸

4.1. Timocracy

Solon's reforms introduced a number of changes to Athenian society, including the shift towards timocratic classes. Before Solon, the Attic population was divided into a number of demographic groups which included rich and poor Eupatrids, *hektemoroi*, *pelatai*, slaves, foreigners, prosperous non-Eupatrids, and free farmers, craftsmen and traders. Solon created four new social classes, distinguished by agricultural production and corresponding military obligations, abolishing the old aristocracy in favour of a class-based timocracy. Within this system, the political and military capacities of citizens are inextricably linked to their financial worth. Timocracy for Aristotle was a property qualification for the ruling class, where wealth and property defines the nature and extent of political power. Solon's reforms were based on the same thinking: classification of the population into four tiers was the regulative idea that ownership of wealth determines communal status and, by extension, the exercise of power and authority in a broader society. Discussion of the concept of

³⁹⁶ Most notably: Lippold 1950, 82; Brommer 1982, 68; Floren 1987, 247–250.

³⁹⁷ Most notably: de La Coste-Messelière 1946; Hoffelner 1988; Marconi 2006.

³⁹⁸ von den Hoff 2009, 96.

timocracy in ancient Athens has focused on Solon's reforms, in terms of the historical context that they came from and how the social changes played out more broadly within Athenian society – and the Greek world.³⁹⁹

What is discussed far less is how these timocratic values can be seen in the material sphere. For a society where power and privilege was based on wealth, it should not be surprising that these ideas appear in civic art and architecture, and the Athenian material record is one grounded in displays of wealth and ostentation; the chryselephantine statue of Athena Parthenos is a perfect example of this. If status is defined by wealth, depicting a patron goddess in the most expensive and rare materials is paramount not only to avoid offending said god, but also to display both to the citizen body and to the rest of the world a high level of economic prowess.

While timocratic display shows the wealth of the city or individual responsible for the commissioning of the art, there is something more at stake: it is a display of power through wealth (whereas the previous chapter examined power displayed through military victory and commemoration). Wealth is a less ephemeral construct in the ancient Greek world than military victory. Though cities will inevitably change in terms of their economic strength, this tends to happen over a much longer period of time in comparison to military victories, particularly those of the Peloponnesian War, where the position of Athens and Sparta shifted constantly. That being said, timocratic display can also be connected to victory through the acquisition and display of military trophies. The themes discussed in this thesis have an inevitable overlap within a sanctuary space, because inherent to panhellenic sanctuary display is the idea of prestige and identity, and the themes discussed in this thesis all connect to that fundamental concept – in fact, the Athenian Treasury is also a victory monument, as will be discussed later. Timocratic display is a means of declaring to the world not only that the state or individual is wealthy, but that this wealth can be translated into social and

³⁹⁹ Aristotle, *Athenian Politics* 7.3-4; Plutarch, *Solon* 18.1-2; Rhodes 1981; Chambers 1990; Murray 1993, 194; Ober 2007, 60-61; Raaflaub 2007, 143.

political power. Wealth facilitates trade, travel, cultural transmission, and military strength, and so it is important to note that this chapter is not just interested in how Athens displayed its wealth, but in how Athens attempted to show its power over the Greek world through its display of wealth.

In terms of the Athenian Treasury and timocratic display, we need to look at how this monument displays timocratic excellence, and it does this in a number of ways. We will examine the form and function of treasuries, which in and of themselves are a display of civic and individual wealth. The materials used in the monument are also important in terms of how expensive and rare they were, as well as where they came from, and how much it would have cost to transport them. This can also contribute to the presentation of power as the material might come from a conquered or controlled territory and thus show the power of the state, or else might come from within a state's own territory, in which case it shows the inherent mineral and material wealth of the land. Innovation in design is also an important factor, as it implies that the dedicator has the wealth and ability to train or hire craftspeople and artists of skill. The types of scenes depicted in architectural sculpture can also be an important element in the display of timocratic excellence, as iconographic choices grounded in stories and images connected to ownership and the acquisition of resources also reinforce the idea of wealth and ownership to viewers. In this chapter, we shall also look at the wider context of Delphi, in particular how and why the treasury corner itself emphasised these messages to the viewer, and how connecting to the temple also adds power through ownership to a visitor.

4.2. The space: treasury corner

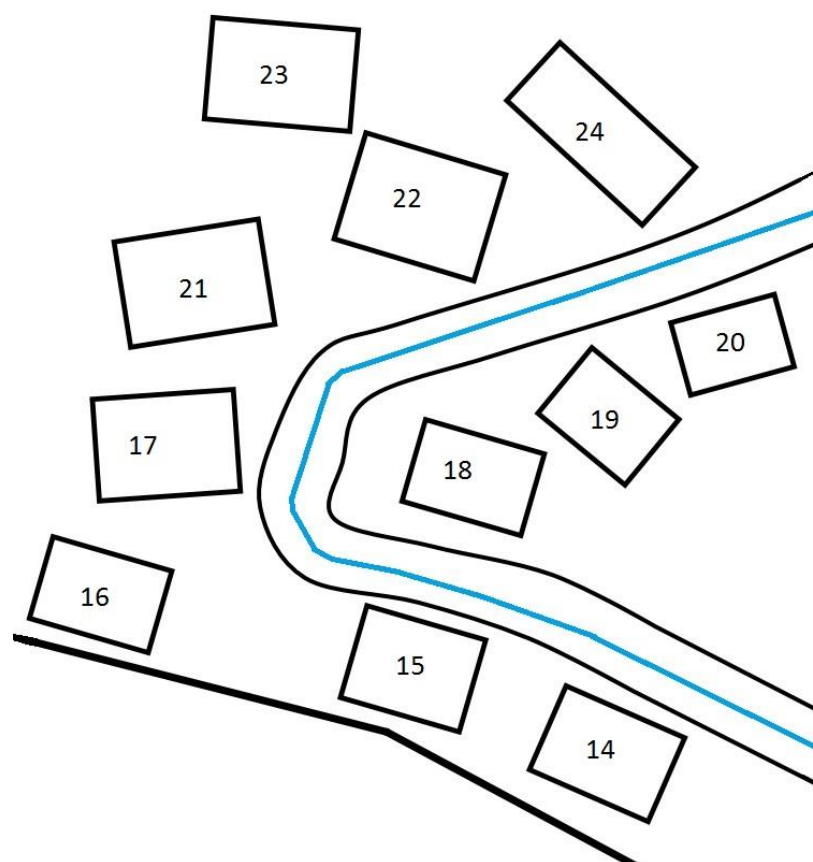
The Athenian Treasury sits at the first corner of the Sacred Way, only coming into view as the visitor rounded the route. This is a competitive and busy space and received some of the first buildings to be dedicated after the fire – no doubt this was due in part to the difficult topography of the Delphic space, which limited building in certain places. In contrast, this corner provided a number of relatively flat areas in close proximity to one another. This section of the sanctuary was dominated by one particular

type of dedication: the treasury (Fig. 4.1), which we have already discussed briefly in Chapter Two (section 2.4: [pp. 120](#)). Treasuries are one of the most unique elements of Greek dedicatory practice. They are broadly uniform with few variations, are found in only two locations, date from a relatively narrow time period, and yet are not associated with any one place or dedicator. In fact, they are built by communities all across the Hellenic world. Treasuries are inherently political, a part of a visual power game played by Greek cities from the late seventh to the mid-fourth centuries. They are extraterritorial, built by a city outside its political domain but maintaining a proprietary link to the dedicating *polis*. They extend the power of the city to the sanctuary, giving the *polis* a kind of ownership over a particular part of the space. There are few comparable instances of cities building in other cities, particularly in the Archaic period.⁴⁰⁰ No doubt the panhellenic nature of Delphi and Olympia makes them the only appropriate places for such dedications: buildings of this nature in a civic space would be a wildly inappropriate claim on political territory.

Figure 4.1. Monument map: treasuries. Author's own.

Key:

- 14. Sikyonian Treasury
- 15. Siphnian Treasury
- 16. Theban Treasury
- 17. Boeotian Treasury
- 18. Megarian Treasury
- 19. Syracusan Treasury?
- 20. Knidian Treasury
- 21. Early treasury?
- 22. Athenian Treasury
- 23. Archaic building
- 24. Delphic 'Bouleuterion'



⁴⁰⁰ Morgan 1990, 234; Neer 2001, 277; 287.

In terms of form, they are all remarkably similar: they are typically *distyle-in-antis*, and every securely identified example has a *naos* and a single *pronaos*, imitating the simplest temple form. The treasury is a storage house for dedications and sacred objects, and as such, they also have thick walls set on a high podium with no steps or windows. Treasuries are votive dedications that look like temples, but are not shrines as they do not contain cult statues. However, they certainly are sacred in other ways, as they sit within the *temenos* boundary and contain the property of a god.⁴⁰¹

Treasuries have only been securely identified in Delphi (where they are found throughout the sanctuaries of Pythian Apollo and Athena Pronaia) and Olympia. Foundations of six small buildings have been found in Delos, and have been referred to as treasuries or inventories, but this identification is uncertain.⁴⁰² There are eleven identified treasuries in Delphi, with the foundational remains for several more also located. Some were rebuilt from the materials of former treasuries or built over older ones. It is worth noting therefore that the eleven identified Delphic treasuries represent the end point of a potentially long-running phase of treasury construction. In comparison, Pausanias describes ten treasuries in Olympia, though excavations found foundational evidence of twelve: they were all clustered together in the northern section of the sanctuary, a segregated area away from the main routes of sanctuary.⁴⁰³ The chronology of the Delphic treasury buildings can be extrapolated from Chapter One, and is summarised in the table below (Fig. 4.2). Treasury building ceased in the late fourth century, due to the fact that unlike ordinary votives treasuries were built by states not by clans or individuals.⁴⁰⁴ Though states continued to be pious, and to win victories and dedicate in

⁴⁰¹ Neer 2001, 276-279.

⁴⁰² These Delian '*oikoi*' were *distyle-in-antis* form storage rooms, but they do not seem to have maintained any connection with their home cities. Dedicators include Andros, Delos, Karystos, Keos and Naxos: the Naxian belongs to the seventh century, with two more dating to the Archaic, one to the Classical. The remainder date 475-450, and are the more modest of the group, with the earlier being more ornate. Though on a smaller scale, Delos was also an inter-state sanctuary able to attract building projects from distant *poleis*. Identification as a treasury is unlikely, but if they were, it does not change our understanding of the form in Delphi. Vallois 1944, 24-27; Courbin 1980, 33-38; Rups 1986, 189-191; Neer 2001, 279-280.

⁴⁰³ Pausanias 6.19.1-15.

⁴⁰⁴ Roux 1984, 155.

ostentatious ways, treasuries were a part of a particular social system, that of the classic *polis*, and with its decline the treasury too disappeared.⁴⁰⁵

Of the eleven identified treasuries at Delphi, nine of them are grouped around the first corner of the Sacred Way, as we have already discussed in Chapter Two (Section 2.4, see [pp. 115](#)). Most of these predate the existing Athenian Treasury, which as we have mentioned was a rebuild itself of a previous monument. The date and appearance of its predecessor are uncertain: we know that it was rectangular, slightly smaller in scale, and that stones from it were reused in the forecourt, which tells us that the predecessor was most likely also Athenian, and so Athens would have had a claim on both the site and the materials of the previous structure. This monument was most likely a Peisistratid dedication, given that they dominated the sixth-century Athenian construction program, and was also likely a treasury, given the size and form of the foundational evidence. The building could have been destroyed at any point, possibly after the fire of 548, and was in turn a rebuild of the so called proto-Athenian Treasury, c. 600 BCE. Gensheimer, in a recent study of the treasury, seems certain that it was partially destroyed in the fire but that portions of its wall were still extant and later incorporated into the second treasury. However, it is unlikely that the blocks would have remained in situ and unused for that long. It is far more likely that, like Sikyon, Athens dismantled the Peisistratid treasury in the wake of Marathon and rebuilt it.⁴⁰⁶ This is a clear reclamation of property and resources: even from its inception the treasury was constructed to display the timocratic supremacy of the Athenians.

The systematic grouping of treasury buildings is curious: why would a *polis* so willingly invite this level of direct competition? Either this reflects the desires of dedicators to create competitive space, or it is an administrative choice to keep dedicatory types together, or else it developed coincidentally. Olympia's treasuries do not help us to answer this: Olympia's treasury grouping, sits

⁴⁰⁵ Neer 2001, 281-282; Neer 2007, 240-241.

⁴⁰⁶ Dinsmoor 1912, 488-492; Audiat 1933, 55-58; de La Coste-Messelière 1969a, 741; Jacquemin 1999b, 57, 145, 246, 315; Neer 2004, 72; Gensheimer 2017, 3-4. On the reuse of material: Scott 2010, 75.

off the main thoroughfares of the sanctuary, but Delphi's is located on the Sacred Way, unavoidable and impossible to ignore. Why did this zoning happen? For larger *poleis* like Athens, it is a way to reinforce their power and prestige on a visual scale. As we can see, the Athenian Treasury stands as the architectural and artistic final word in a long conversation of visual development, firmly cementing Athenian superiority through direct comparison with other treasuries. For powerful *poleis*, treasuries act as direct representations of the timocratic wealth and power of the state – it would have been interesting to see what would have happened if Sparta had entered into this visual tradition. But what would be at stake for the smaller *poleis*? This space operates as an opportunity for such places to enter into a competition that they might otherwise not be able to, to present themselves as being on an equal footing with places with much more political clout. Delphi, and other panhellenic spaces, provides an arena for a competitive dialogue, manifesting in material and artistic forms.

Treasury	Map Ref.	Date	Reason (Pausanias)	Pausanias	Chronology
Sikyonian	14	525-500	Unstated	10.11.2	5
Siphnian	15	525-500	Thanks for profitable mines	10.11.2	4
Theban	16	371	Spoils of Battle of Leuctra	10.11.15	3
Boeotian	17	550-500	N/A	N/A	2
Megarian	18	525-495	N/A	N/A	6
Syracusan	19	c. 413	Defeat of Athenian expedition	10.11.5	8
Knidian	20	586-548	Spoils of war / a victory	10.11.5	1
Potidaian	21	550-500	To show piety	10.11.5	?
Athenian	22	c. 490	Victory at Battle of Marathon	10.11.5	7

Figure 4.2. The treasuries surrounding the corner. Author's own.

The Athenian Treasury sits at the end of a long evolution of a specific form, systematically developed in a competitive area of the sanctuary. It is the final point of a long trend of elaborate treasury dedications, and as a result, the Athenian Treasury had to include the most elaborate decorations in order to surpass all those that had come before, particularly given that it was associated with the victory at the Battle of Marathon.⁴⁰⁷ A treasury building is not only an expensive offering, but was also built to contain the dedications of the individual citizens of the city that paid for it. The treasury therefore immediately operates as an agent of timocratic presentation, displaying the wealth and property of a *polis* by laying claim to the dedications of the citizen body. Sometimes treasuries even gained the property of others: the *biblion* of Andromache of Erythrai was eventually placed in the Sikyonian Treasury and the dedications of the Lydian King Croesus were supposedly displayed in the Corinthian Treasury after the fire.⁴⁰⁸

4.3. The Athenian Treasury

The treasury is an impressive building to a modern visitor: it is the only building in the sanctuary that has been fully reconstructed, and so it claims unparalleled attention. In fact, it is the only restoration of a temple-like structure from the ancient Hellenic world, a project undertaken from 1903 to 1906 and paid for by the city of Athens.⁴⁰⁹ It was also unique in antiquity. It was the first mainland building that held carved metopes on all sides, the first to have columns built in drum form, and the sculptural decoration was carved in deep relief, an extravagance no earlier Doric building had included.⁴¹⁰ This building would have been expensive, making it clear from the outset that Athens had the means to construct something beyond the ability of any other city. Measuring 9.8 x 6.8 metres, it was the standard *distyle-in-antis* with a *pronaos* preceding the *naos*.⁴¹¹ A triangular terrace, presumably for

⁴⁰⁷ de La Coste-Messelière 1953, 181; Scott 2010, 78.

⁴⁰⁸ Strabo 9.3.4; Herodotus 1.51.

⁴⁰⁹ Kolonia 2006, 237.

⁴¹⁰ Agard 1928, 87; Ridgway 1999, 344; Scott 2014, 113.

⁴¹¹ Partida 2000, 48–55.

holding larger votives, stood directly before the doorway; immediately above was the terrace, with the temple itself looming over all (Fig. 4.3). Staircases were constructed to the west and north-east of the building.⁴¹² The building was gabled with a marble roofing system, and outside were ten bronze statues on a limestone base. This base was extended in later centuries to accommodate further statues. A popular opinion, based on the changing number of statues, is that the original ten represented the eponymous heroes of the Kleisthenic tribes. Dating of the later extensions suggest the additions were provided by Antigonos Monophthalmos and Demetrios Poliorketes in 306, and Ptolemy III in 223, reflecting the creation of new tribes.⁴¹³ The use of eponymous heroes was still fairly unusual in Delphi at this time, and demanded a greater knowledge from the viewer, which may well have prompted the presence of an explanatory inscription on the base.⁴¹⁴ Its placement on the Sacred Way, as previously noted, is dramatic. As the visitor turned the corner, they would have seen its long south wall immediately in front of them, its north face running parallel to the temple platform. Its front would only have been visible further up the Sacred Way, when moving back down through the sanctuary (Fig. 4.4). As we have previously mentioned, our route through the sanctuary is based on the Sacred Way. However, there would have been other, different options that some visitors may have engaged with. The archaeological record shows evidence of another entrance, in the opposite corner to the one we have already discussed, whose route would have led towards the front of the Siphnian Treasury, where it would converge with main route. This explains the curious choice of positioning the Siphnian Treasury with its back to the approaching visitor coming along the Sacred Way: it was advertising its front pediment and caryatids to visitors coming from a different route. This convergence of the two entrance routes is almost ideal in the context of the Athenian Treasury: its positioning means that regardless of which approach a visitor takes, they would regardless have to

⁴¹² Spivey 1997, 130-136; Camp 2001, 47-56; Scott 2010, 80.

⁴¹³ On the base, its history, and the *eponymoi*, see Gauer 1968, 45-51; Amandry 1998, 87-89; Jacquemin 1999b, 186-187; Neer 2004, 64-66.

⁴¹⁴ Jacquemin 1999b, 185-187; Scott 2010, 81.

make a sharp turn, revealing the Athenian Treasury. This dramatic moment would happen, therefore, regardless of which of the lower entrances were used.

As previously mentioned, much of the debate surrounding the treasury has involved its dating. This is often the case with monuments from the Archaic and Classical periods and sometimes a specific date does not add much to the interpretation. However, in this case, understanding the exact date is important as it tells us whether or not it was dedicated specifically as a victory monument following Marathon and whether Athens dedicated the treasury as it began to position itself as the supreme state within the Greek world, which in turn informs our understanding of the building as a timocratic monument. Pausanias, in his tour of Delphi, explains the history of the treasury quite clearly. He tells us specifically and explicitly that it was dedicated in thanks for the Battle of Marathon in 490.⁴¹⁵ However, this date has not been universally accepted. The implicit assumption for a long time was that Pausanias had incorrectly dated the treasury based on the dedicatory inscription on a rectangular limestone base on its southern terrace, which is inscribed: 'The Athenians to Apollo as offerings from the Battle of Marathon, taken from the Mede.'⁴¹⁶ This inscription is visible from the Sacred Way, running directly parallel to it, on the south side of the treasury base. The supposition was that this inscription was added later and that Pausanias misunderstood the chronology.

⁴¹⁵ Pausanias 10.11.

⁴¹⁶ The inscription, ΑΘΕΝΑΙΟΙ Τ[Ο]Ι ΑΠΟΛΛΟΝ[Ι ΑΠΟ ΜΕΔ]ΟΝ ΑΚΡΟΘΙΝΙΑ | ΤΕΣ ΜΑΡΑΘ[Ο]ΝΙ Μ[ΑΧΕ]Σ, is given in Jacquemin 1999b, 186–187, with full bibliography at 315.



Figure 4.3. The façade of the reconstructed Athenian Treasury, with the triangular terrace. Photo: author's own.



Figure 4.4. The façade of the reconstructed Athenian Treasury, from further up the Sacred Way. Photo: author's own.

One of the first arguments on this topic was from Langlotz, who argued that the treasury's construction dated to 510-500 BCE, based on architectural representations in vase painting, sculptural style, and a perceived connection with the Alkmaeonid expulsion of the Peisistratid tyranny.⁴¹⁷ Langlotz was followed by a number of other scholars.⁴¹⁸ One of the most influential arguments for the earlier date of the treasury was the use of different types of clamps in the construction, which Richter argues indicate different points in time, with the treasury dating to before 490. However, this is easily explained by Morgan, who brings up the use of both types of clamps in the temple of Aphaia at Aegina, arguing this implies not a difference in date, but the presence of multiple contractors, and as such that

⁴¹⁷ Langlotz 1920, 69–79.

⁴¹⁸ Dinsmoor 1946; Lippold 1950, 82; Brommer 1982, 68; Floren 1987, 247–250.

we cannot use them to rule out a date of c. 490 for the treasury.⁴¹⁹ Most recently, von den Hoff has also argued for an earlier date, arguing that the style of the metopes points to a date well before 490, and that the quality of the carving makes it improbable that sculptors of such skill would have been working in a late Archaic style in the 480s, though this argument suffers for rather obvious reasons since it assumes that all artisans would have immediately adapted their personal styles and ignores many pre-existing monuments which display examples of archaizing. Harrison has offered an alternative view, arguing that the monument was constructed in the 490s, before the battle of Marathon, in a period of economic prosperity for Athens.⁴²⁰

Others have asserted their support for Pausanias's dating and a dedication after Marathon.⁴²¹ The debate should have long since been concluded. Excavations in 1989 (still not fully published but summarised in 1998) support the argument that the treasury and the Marathon inscription were made at the same time, and so the treasury must date to after 490.⁴²² A ledge 0.30 m wide projects from the treasury's stereobate along its south side, helping to support the Marathon base; the two structures are integrally linked, and both must date to after the Battle of Marathon.⁴²³ Of course, to date the treasury to precisely 490 is impractical: some delay between the victory and the erection of the building is likely. Work would have had to wait for the appropriate season, the actual building would have taken some time, and delays are always an inevitability in construction both modern and ancient. Neer suggests that work on the treasury would not have begun until 489 at the earliest, with 488 even more likely.⁴²⁴ The certainty of Pausanias and the contemporary dating of the inscription and the treasury building should be enough to convince even the most dedicated critic of the later dating of

⁴¹⁹ Morgan 1969, 209; n.17.

⁴²⁰ Harrison 1965; von den Hoff 2009, 98.

⁴²¹ de La Coste-Messelière (1953, 179–182) counters the arguments presented in Dinsmoor (1946). See also Gauer 1968, 45–51; Büsing 1979, 123–127; Boardman 1982; Tölle-Kastenbein 1983, 580–581; Stewart 1990, 131–133; Rolley 1994, 216.

⁴²² Bommelaer 1991, 137; Rolley 1994, 218–219; Fittschen 2003, 12–15.

⁴²³ Some still continue to question the connection between the two. Partida (2000: 50–54, 67–70) denies the connection between the Marathon Base and the Athenian treasury and dates the latter to 510–500. von den Hoff likewise suggests a date ca. 500 (2009: 98–100; 2010: 164–166).

⁴²⁴ Neer 2004, 73.

the treasury, and as such, this chapter will proceed under the assumption that the treasury was a Marathon victory monument, erected shortly after 490.

The issue of the dating of the Athenian Treasury is more than just a question of chronological accuracy. The later date frames the Athenian Treasury as the end point of a systematic building program adopted by Athens, which restructured the topography of Athens and led to this extraterritorial dedication. Within a decade of the inception of democracy, the three primary cult and civic buildings of the city were replaced and rebuilt: the marble temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis, the new agora to the north of that, and the new space for the popular Assembly built on the Pnyx. As Neer argues, this building program was purely ideological rather than functional: Athena already had a temple, and the city already had an agora and a meeting place. This is a deliberate break from the past, in a manner similar to Sikyon, which also dismantled a series of monuments following a change in government from 510-480. In both cases, the building programs are associated with the fall of a tyranny, and the Athenian Treasury falls towards the end of this Athenian program of rebuilding.⁴²⁵ From an economic perspective, this later date positions the treasury not only at the end of the main chronological development of treasury building within the sanctuary, but also within an Athenian building program dedicated to presenting Athenian success and economic prosperity.

4.4. Context: Athenian domination

Athens' self-aggrandisement and self-presentation as the leader of the Hellenic world rested on the city's role in the Persian Wars. To consolidate its position at the pinnacle of the Greek world, Athens created a catalogue of its great deeds (the *palagia erga*) to embed the Persian Wars within a longer sequence of Athenian actions, stretching back to mythical times. Gensheimer notes that extant funeral orations also continue to reinforce this message.⁴²⁶ In this section we will explore the timocratic

⁴²⁵ Neer 2004, 72. For the Sikyonian programme: Ridgway 1993; 339-343; Mallwitz 1972, 167.

⁴²⁶ Thucydides 234.1-8; Raaflaub 2004, 60 n. 8; Gensheimer 2017, 7.

meaning of the themes presented in the decoration of the treasury, in particular the use of the Labours of Herakles, the Labours of Theseus, and the Amazons on the metopes and elsewhere, which operate within this wider program of Athenian presentation. We will discuss the more specific details of these later.

Cattle

The Geryon section of the Herakles myth is given particular on the treasury, which is somewhat surprising. It is an established part of the Herakles labour cycle, but it is given significantly more space than any of the other trials, with three metopes dedicated just to images of cattle, without reference to Herakles or any other mythological figure. Cattle represent the most vital part of the ancient Greek religious system, that of sacrifice and feasts, and as such also represent the ancient Greek sacred economy, one which was centred around herds and lands, as well as key components of the pastoral and agricultural worlds.⁴²⁷ Cattle occupied a position of great prestige: the connection between cattle, temples, and trade was prominent throughout the ancient world, and cattle are considered one of the highest forms of gift giving in Homeric epic and Archaic mythology.⁴²⁸ Herakles is presented as the hero in the narrative, and so the viewer becomes complicit in the theft of the cattle, and the ownership of this prestigious property becomes Athens' by default. The cattle are depicted as passive, static, waiting to be taken – just as the Hellenic world was waiting for Athenian domination (from the Athenian perspective). Timocratic ownership played out in this individual iconography, as it does across the rest of the sculptural decoration.

Theseus

Theseus is displayed to the panhellenic audience at Delphi as a restless fighter under divine protection, embodying ideals and values that the Athenians claimed for themselves through this monument. The presentation of such a uniquely Athenian hero is an important one. Neer argues that Theseus had no

⁴²⁷ McInerney 2010, 146.

⁴²⁸ Finley 1981, 233-245; Morris 1986, 9; Silver 1995, 27.

significant place in the iconography of sixth-century Athens, but in the 490s he was cultivated as a new hero for the city, due to his adaptability: Theseus was a figure that represented both monarchy and democracy, ancestral values and revolutions. Despite this, he argues that the Theseus metopes must have been incomprehensible to the majority of visitors to Delphi, as so many of these images and scenes had not been depicted in any large scale before.⁴²⁹ Theseus articulates the significance of Athens to a viewer, both by being Athenian, and because he performed many of his deeds in close geographical proximity to the city, *en route* to Athens from Troizen; others were undertaken in service of the Athenians. Episodes that occurred outside of Attica, such as the Centauromachy, are notably excluded.⁴³⁰

In a discussion of Metope 5, the only one with a peaceful scene, von den Hoff argues that its innovative iconography deliberately connects Theseus to Athena (Fig. 4.5). Athena stands in front of Theseus, the hero lifting up his right hand in a gesture indicating prayer, accepting the goddess's favour. As von den Hoff remarks, this scene and design is unknown in contemporary Attic vases and sculpture but was deliberately adapted from sixth-century vase paintings of Herakles and Athena. This was the first time such a scene had been created for Theseus, and aims to connect Theseus with Athena and to Athens by extension.⁴³¹ Gensheimer argues that in doing this the achievements of the Athenians were thereby elevated to the realm of the extraordinary; firstly through the myriad feats of their two heroes, and secondly (and more particularly) through those heroes' victories over the Amazons in the mythical past and the Athenians' recent success against the Persians (who are metaphorically presented precisely as Amazons)).⁴³² Perhaps more importantly, the reciprocal nature of the composition of the metope (with Theseus' hand extended in prayer and Athena receiving it) speaks to the reciprocal nature of the dedicatory tradition and to the relationship between Athens

⁴²⁹ On Theseus and the early democracy see Neer 2002, 154–168.

⁴³⁰ Neer 2004, 75–77; Gensheimer 2017, 29–30.

⁴³¹ von den Hoff 2009, 100.

⁴³² Gensheimer 2017, 38.

and Athena. In this light, Athens is cast as a place given its wealth and resources by divine right, one whose great immortal sponsor continues to support its economic growth and prosperity.

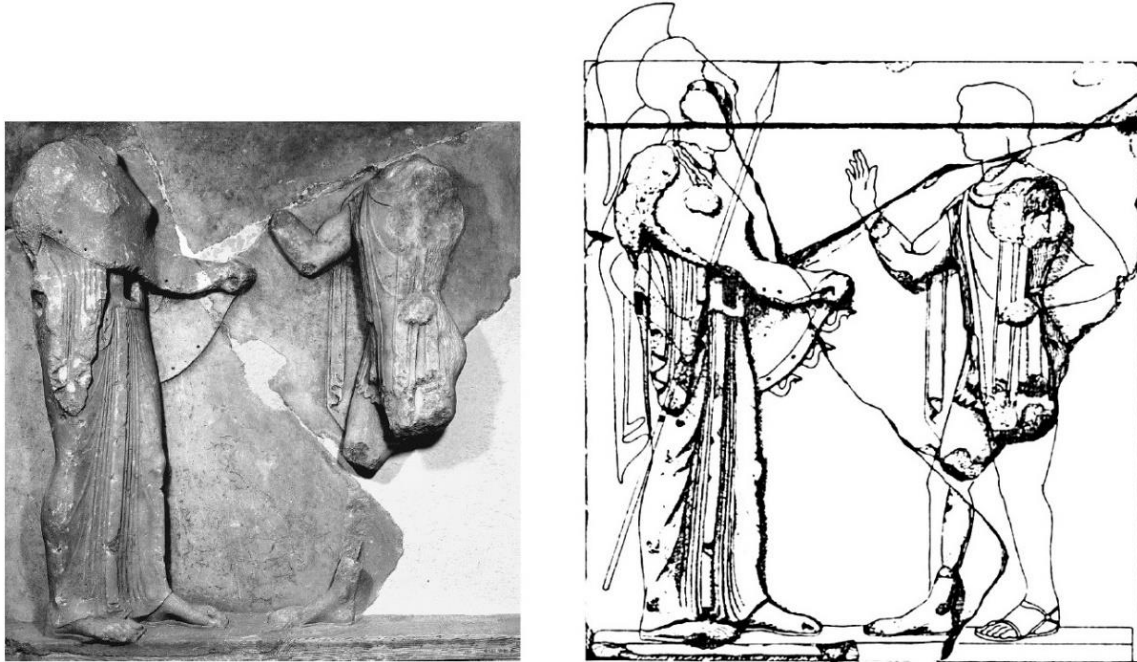


Figure 4.5. Metope 5: Theseus and Athena. From Gensheimer 2017, fig. 13. Drawing: K. Hoffelner.

Herakles

Herakles was presented in his metopes as a comparably active hero, often shown in the process of performing his labours. He was also connected to Athens, thus linking Athenian identity to traditional – and universally shared – panhellenic ideals.⁴³³ The use of the panhellenic Herakles is not surprising, nor is the use of the Athenian-specific Theseus given that this was an Athenian dedication, but the use and contrast of the two together is powerful. Both Herakles and Theseus are associated with the Battle of Marathon, as figures that were said to be champions of the Athenian cause during the battle,⁴³⁴

⁴³³ von den Hoff 2009, 100.

⁴³⁴ Before the battle, the Athenians were encamped in a local sanctuary to Herakles, and victory camped and sacrificed in the Herakleion at Kynosarges. During battle, many soldiers claimed to have seen Theseus in arms, fighting on the front lines. Pausanias's description of the Stoa Poikile (450 B.C.) informs us that both heroes were represented in later years as divine presences and arbiters at Marathon. Herodotus 6.108, 6.116; Plutarch, *Theseus* 35.5; Pausanias 1.15.3.

and placing them together makes a bold statement about the connection between the two. Gensheimer notes clear formal similarities between specific Theseus and Herakles metopes: in particular, she analyses Metopes 2 and 22, 3 and 15, 4 and 16, 6 and 19. She argues that the similarities have the dual purpose of visually aligning the two heroes, and of helping to identify Theseus for viewers that might have been less familiar with him. At times this leads to the creation of unique iconographies and compositions for Theseus, such as in Metope 3.⁴³⁵

Contrasting the two figures is thematically appropriate, and the impact of this has been discussed at some length. Many interpretations of the sculptural programme argue that the intention was to raise Theseus to the level of Herakles, to present a uniquely Athenian hero as being on a par with one of the greatest panhellenic figures. Some view this as a less than equitable divide; Boardman, among others, has claimed that the elevation of Theseus was to the detriment of Herakles.⁴³⁶ However, a deliberate attack on Herakles seems unlikely and politically questionable. More nuanced readings of this juxtaposition have been put forward more recently. Neer argues that the presentation is instead a more reciprocal mutual 'elevation', raising Theseus to a panhellenic level, and turning Herakles into a specifically Attic hero, allowing the two to transcend the difference between Athens and the Hellenic world at large, suggesting that to be Athenian was also to be panhellenic – and perhaps more tellingly, vice-versa. The addition of Herakles in the sculptural programme actively converts him into an a resource for the Athenians to acquire: if the pediment had represented a meeting between the two, then this interpretation would resonate all the stronger. In the pediment of the Siphnian Treasury Herakles steals the tripod from Delphi, but in the Athenian Treasury Herakles is converted into property for the Athenians to acquire.

Amazons

⁴³⁵ Gensheimer 2017, 31; 34; 37

⁴³⁶ Boardman 1982, 5; Neils 1987, 51; Castriota 1992, 33–62; von den Hoff 2009, 100.

The Amazons are also presented as property to be acquired, in a very literal way. The visual Greek mythic cycles regularly presented the defeat of threats to Hellenic culture, including foreigners, giants, monsters, and transgressive women such as the Amazons. Amazons were an eloquent metaphor for the Persians, and their iconography could be easily adjusted; for instance, their frequent use of bows and arrows connected them with the Persian army's archers. The defeat of these creatures was assimilated into this ideology of otherness, extolling the superiority and prowess of Athens. To quote Gensheimer: 'Athenian history became intentionally iterative: battles of the present recalled those of the mythological past and also foreshadowed those of the future'.⁴³⁷ The adoption of the Amazons as a metaphor for the Persians explains why the defeat of the Amazons in the metopes was displayed as so definitive: if the scenes were a metaphor for Marathon, it would go against the image they were trying to present if the battle were depicted as indecisive.

Theseus and Herakles were the two heroes who had conquered the Amazons, and their respective Amazonomachies were therefore the perfect way to tie together all the narrative elements in the treasury's decoration. Gensheimer discusses the significance of the use of Amazons to Athens at some length, particularly how they are used as a stand-in for the Persians, helping to construct an ideological Otherness around the Persians. This use makes particular sense on a Marathon victory monument, and as Gensheimer summarises, Amazons provide a sophisticated allusion to contemporary conflict and Athenian achievement.⁴³⁸

4.5. Timocracy and the Athenian Treasury

Materials

Delphic architecture was constructed using a number of materials. Local limestones were used in large quantities in building foundations and statue bases, but imported stones were popular too,

⁴³⁷ Cohen 2000, 71-97; Gensheimer 2017, 17, 22.

⁴³⁸ Gensheimer 2017, 14-22.

particularly for walls, columns, and architectural bases. Many buildings in the sanctuary employed a mixture of material types. During the Archaic period, Naxian and Parian marble proved the most popular, with Pentelic marble gaining popularity from the Classical period onwards, coinciding with the opening and growth of its quarries.⁴³⁹ The use of imported building materials was no mean feat considering the relative isolation of Delphi and the difficulty in transporting stone over large distances – not to mention the fact that there were readily available sources of limestone much closer to the sanctuary. Transporting stone in large quantity is so impractical that doing so must have a deeper, symbolic meaning.

The Siphnian Treasury is one monument that utilised multiple marble types, observed and more recently confirmed by isotopic analysis. This treasury offers one of the best points of comparison for the Athenian Treasury. It was the only other building made entirely out of marble, and also commanded a noteworthy spot on the Sacred Way, providing a precedent for, and significant challenge to, the Athenian Treasury. The treasury used Siphnian marble for the walls, Parian marble for the caryatids, capitals, friezes and pedestals, and Naxian for the architectural details such as the cornices, *simas* and mouldings.⁴⁴⁰ The use of such varied materials was not arbitrary: it was a deliberate choice intended to make a statement.⁴⁴¹ Part of the intention was surely connected to ostentation and self-representation: the expense of transporting that much material from the Cyclades is a conspicuous statement of wealth. However, though the fine-grained Parian and Naxian marble was necessary for the carved decorative elements, the Siphnian stone was of relatively low quality, producing stones of variable size and poor appearance. As Neer remarks, its use is symbolic, bringing a material from the home territory to the panhellenic sanctuary. It establishes a metaphorical presence alongside a physical one, incorporating the homeland into Delphic space.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁹ Palagia and Herz 2002, 240.

⁴⁴⁰ Daux and Hansen 1987, 25-32; 173-179; Palagia and Herz 2002, 241; Gensheimer 2017, 5.

⁴⁴¹ Palagia 2000, 349.

⁴⁴² de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 248-251; Daux and Hansen 1987, 25-47; Neer 2001, 279; Neer 2004, 78-80.

In comparison, the Athenian Treasury was made entirely out of Parian marble. This was not the first time Athens had used this material in the sanctuary. The Alkmaeonidai, an exiled Athenian clan, had been instrumental in the completion of the new temple following the destruction of the old in the fire. They constructed the eastern façade of the temple of Apollo out of Parian marble, going above and beyond the scope of their contract, a fact deemed important enough to warrant inclusion in our ancient texts despite mention of the temple itself being relatively infrequent. Further analysis of the temple remains has since shown that Parian marble was also used on the roof tiles, *simā*, and lion head water spouts.⁴⁴³ The use of Parian marble connects the treasury to the temple, allowing democratic Athens to make a symbolic claim on the temple, constructed under a different phase of Athenian history, and to further display the command Athens had on not only the resources of the present, but those of the past.

Of course, there is a functional reason to use Parian marble: only high quality, fine-grained stone could have been carved into detailed decorative elements, and Parian marble was strong enough to create the level of depth seen in the treasury metopes. However, as Neer argues, it is likely that the building material motivated the design not the other way around.⁴⁴⁴ From a visual perspective, the Parian marble made the building particularly prominent. Its pale colour made it stand out in contrast to the darker stone of the cliffs behind it, and its crystalline structure made it luminous in bright light, giving the treasury a dramatic glow. The polychromatic accents on the treasury would only have furthered its visual impact. Considerable traces of these colours were originally visible when the building was first excavated but faded when it was reburied during the Second World War. The background of the metopes was dark blue, and the figures were accented in red, with flesh left

⁴⁴³ Herodotus 5.62; Philokhoros *FGrH* 328 F 115. See also: Courby 1927, 92–117; Stewart 1990, 86–89; Bommelaer 1991, 181–183. On the Alkmaeonid temple sculpture see Floren 1987, 244–245. For the analysis of the material, see Palagia and Herz 2002, 241–242.

⁴⁴⁴ Neer 2004, 78.

uncoloured, leaving polished Parian marble to shine instead. Alongside this dramatic colour contrast, additional bronze elements would also have caught the light.⁴⁴⁵

The use of Parian marble is unquestionably lavish: the cost of purchasing and shipping the required quantity of material would have been vast. Pentelic marble was being used in large quantities by the 480s, most notably in the temple on the Athenian acropolis under construction at the time. Not only would using Pentelic marble have been more practical, it would have also been a prime opportunity for domestic patronage, awarding a lucrative state contract to Athenian locals. In fact, the Parian marble was used by Dinsmoor as evidence for a sixth-century date, just on the principle that it must have been made before the opening of the quarries of Mount Pentelikon, otherwise the treasury would surely have been made from Pentelic marble.⁴⁴⁶ The use of Parian marble is even more surprising given the rather cold relationship between Athens and Paros at this point. However, despite this often-tempestuous relationship, demand for Parian marble remained steady even after the Pentelikon quarries were fully operational, and the material remained an important feature of the fifth century building program of Athens, replacing Naxian workshops almost entirely by the 440s.⁴⁴⁷

However, this material was a political statement above and beyond the connection to the temple and the impressive nature of its visuals. Paros opposed Athens at the Battle of Marathon, and so using Parian marble in a Marathon victory monument sends a clear message about the strength and dominance of Athens, as well as their command over the resources of a defeated foe.⁴⁴⁸ One might recall the original statue of Nemesis of Rhamnous by Lysikleides: Nemesis was venerated for her contribution to the defeat of the Persians at Marathon, and Pausanias' account has it that the sculptor was supplied with a block of Parian marble originally intended for the erection of a Persian trophy, then abandoned on the battlefield. Both are physical claims over perhaps the most iconic

⁴⁴⁵ Rups 1986, 129; Hoffelner 1988, 78; Gensheimer 2017, 9 n. 53.

⁴⁴⁶ Dinsmoor 1946; Neer 2004, 78-79.

⁴⁴⁷ Korres 1995, 96-99; Palagia 2000, 348; Gensheimer 2017, 6 n. 30.

⁴⁴⁸ Neer 2004, 78-80.

product of Paros.⁴⁴⁹ The builders of the treasury were faced with a delicate problem in the form of Miltiades, the general who won the Battle of Marathon but who had fallen distinctly out of favour since, and so could not be commemorated directly. Miltiades' failures on Paros would have been well-known, and the choice of Parian marble may have been a reminder of these failures, as well as a visual symbol of Athens' ability to reinstate harmonious relationships, succeeding where Miltiades had failed. The treasury thus uses physical resources to disengage the Marathon victory from the failed general.⁴⁵⁰

The Battle of Marathon was a moment of unparalleled importance in Hellenic history, a definitive victory over the greatest threat ever faced by the relatively young Greek city-states. Athens played a central role in this victory, and therefore their presentation of the victory had to be the most visually impressive. The use of elaboration and decoration on treasuries had to increase on a quantitative (in terms of how much of the building was covered) and a qualitative level (in terms of artistic complexity and skill), but the materiality of the treasury building also had to impress.⁴⁵¹ It was only the second treasury to be built entirely from marble, after the Siphnian Treasury; the use of such a lavish material would indicate obvious wealth to the visitor. The materials used in the construction of the Athenian Treasury achieved the basic goal of any treasury: to appropriate prestige on behalf of the city-state, but also to display to the world that the Athenian command of material resources went far beyond that of their contemporaries.⁴⁵²

⁴⁴⁹ Pausanias 1.23.2-3; Palagia 2000, 349.

⁴⁵⁰ Neer 2004, 84.

⁴⁵¹ Marconi 2006, 160-161; Scott 2010, 50-51; Gensheimer 2017, 5.

⁴⁵² Rups 1986, 2; Hölscher 1998, 156; Partida 2000, 25-29; Neer 2001, 282-284; Marconi 2006, 158-159.

Decoration: Akroteria and Pediments

The treasury was elaborately decorated. Its akroteria were Amazons in the garb of Persians (Fig. 4.6),⁴⁵³ but that is where the certainty ends in regard to its sculptural decoration. Amazons play a vital role in the sculptural decoration of the building, as we have already noted. It is thought that the west pediment, at the rear of the building, depicted a scene of combat: the Trojan cycle, an Amazonomachy, the Rape of Antiope, and a Gigantomachy have all been proposed.⁴⁵⁴ The east pediment, visible from the Sacred Way, included two chariots and a central figure with other, now lost, statues presumably flanking them. Lapalus argues that the east pediment was a modest but incontestable precursor to, and inspiration for, the west pediment of the Temple of Zeus at Olympia, which shows Apollo standing in the centre of a Centauromachy.⁴⁵⁵ The central figure is thought to be Athena, the identification coming from a female head preserved and now included in the general reconstruction, though there remains some debate around this identification and the placement of the head (Fig. 4.7). However, the inclusion of Athena is highly likely given that the monument was dedicated by Athens.⁴⁵⁶ It might not seem particularly innovative to have included Athena on the pediment, but Gensheimer argues that this might well have been the first time the use of images intentionally identified the dedicator.⁴⁵⁷ The nature of the scene has also been debated: the meeting of Theseus and Pirithous, the abduction of Antiope, the meeting of Theseus and Herakles, and a more general epiphany scene have all been proposed.⁴⁵⁸ Any one of these could have been used, and all of them have timocratic undertones. The meeting of Theseus and Pirithous revolves around the theft of cattle, the acquisition of property and the archetypal resource; Antiope fills in as the acquired booty in the abduction scene; the meeting of Theseus and Herakles furthers the timocratic themes connected to the adoption of Herakles as a

⁴⁵³ Boardman 1982; Gauer 1992; Neer 2004, 65. This alone should have been enough of an argument for a post 490 dating of the treasury.

⁴⁵⁴ Bookidis 1967, 76; Delivorrias 1974, 181–182; Floren 1987, 249.

⁴⁵⁵ Lapalus 1947, 161–164, 443–444.

⁴⁵⁶ de La Coste-Messelière 1938, 116–123; Picard 1946; de La Coste-Messelière 1957, 175–181; Jacquemin 1999b, 315; Marconi 2006, 173; Gensheimer 2017, 8.

⁴⁵⁷ Marconi 2006, 173; Gensheimer 2017, 8.

⁴⁵⁸ Bookidis 1967, 77; Floren 1987, 249; de La Coste-Messelière 1957, 177; Knell 1990, 52; Neer 2004, 64.

mythological figure by Athens that we have already discussed; an epiphany scene often denotes a territorial advancement or arrival, as with the temple pediment. Not enough of the material survives to make much of a case for one over the other. Theseus and Pirithous would place an Atheno-centric myth to the fore, one with an ingrained warning against stealing from Athens; the rape of Antiope is an appropriately panhellenic myth for Delphi; Theseus and Herakles would connect the metope cycles together; an epiphany would create a clear visual link between the treasury and the temple.



Figure 4.6. Mounted Amazon lateral akroterion. From Gensheimer 2017, fig. 7.



Figure 4.7. Head of the 'Athena' from the east pediment of the treasury. From Gensheimer 2017, fig. 2.

Decoration: Metopes

There has been significant discussion of the building's metopes, and in particular their identification and reconstruction. Many of them survive, although most are incomplete, and it is unclear how they were originally placed on the building since reconstruction of their placement has been reliant on the analysis of clamp holes and metal attachments, and conjecture. They are relatively small at 67 cm height x 63 cm width, but their depth of carving and colour leaves no doubt that they would have stood out - though we cannot know how this looked for certain, reconstructions help give us a sense of the impact (Fig. 4.8). As previously noted, they show evidence of polychromy and accents

of bronze, and display two distinct cycles: the deeds of both Herakles and Theseus (Fig. 4.9).⁴⁵⁹ The proportions of the building allow for 30 metopes, 28 of which have been discovered. Nine metopes would have been placed on each of the long walls, on the north (parallel to the temple terrace) and south (parallel to the Sacred Way) of the building. A further six would have decorated the shorter sides on the east (above the doorway) and the west. This is the extent of our knowledge. The identification of the metope scenes is in some examples clear, in others contested. An analysis of the surviving metopes was put forward by de la Coste-Messelière and has remained broadly uncontested, with some minor exceptions (Fig. 4.10). This theory identifies all of them as either Theseus or Herakles scenes, with particular space given to Theseus' Amazonomachy and a Heraklean Geryonomachy. There are precedents for the juxtaposition of the two cycles, most notably in the black-figure cup attributed to the Lysippides painter.⁴⁶⁰ What will follow is a summary of the identification arguments and my own conclusions. The proper identification and placement of the metope scenes is important for the present argument: certain scenes give weight to ideas of timocracy presented by the treasury, and their placement adds additional elements to our analysis.

Hoffelner has offered the only detailed critique of de la Coste-Messelière's identifications. He agrees with the identification of the first seven metopes as scenes involving Theseus. He argues, however, for a reinterpretation of the opponents in metopes 2 and 4. Neither figure can be Skiron, due to a lack of common iconography and composition. Metope 2 resembles an Athenian lekythos depicting Prokrustes leaving the only other 'villain-slaying' episode for metope 4: Periphetes. This would have been an unusual addition, as the figure rarely appears on Theseus vase-cycles, but this innovation is fitting: Theseus uses a club in this battle, thus forming a bridge between himself and Herakles.⁴⁶¹ Hoffelner offers several other reinterpretations of de La Coste-Messelière's identifications.

⁴⁵⁹ Rups 1986, 129; Hoffelner 1988, 78; Gensheimer 2017, 9.

⁴⁶⁰ London, British Museum B426, from Nola, c. 530-510. Bothmer 1957, 36-37; Gensheimer 2017, 10 n. 59.

⁴⁶¹ Skiron: Servadei 2005, 40-44; Neils 1987, 48-49; Schefold 1978, 165; von den Hoff 2009, 99-100. Lekythos: von den Hoff 2009, 100; Hoffelner 1988, 78. Metope 2: Hoffelner 1988, 78-80; Servadei 2005, 44-46. Metope 4: Hoffelner 1988, 82-83.

He argues that metope 17, rather than being the Herakles-specific scene of the horses of Diomedes, depicts only a generic scene of Amazons on horseback, as in Metope 10. Indeed, there is no clear reason to give Herakles this metope other than an assumption that the scene should be included. Likewise, he questions whether metope 22 should be considered a part of Herakles' cycle, suggesting instead that it depicts Iolaos. However, I find this less convincing: the surviving placement of the arms is highly reminiscent of the equivalent Atlas metope on the temple of Zeus at Olympia.

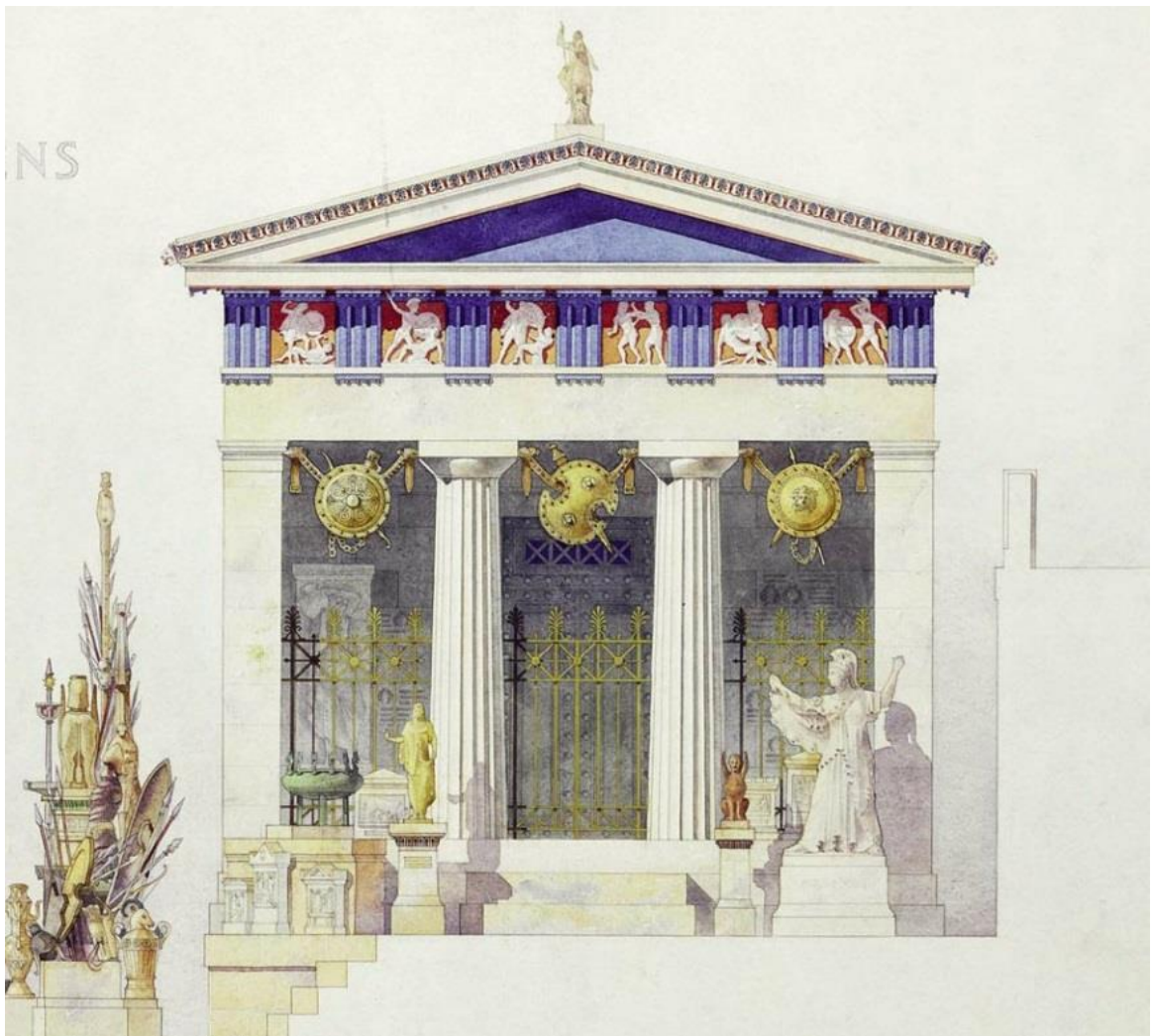


Figure 4.8. The façade of the Athenian Treasury rendered in watercolour and india ink by Tournaire, with the metopes beneath the pediment (1894). From Kolonia 2006, 239.



Figure 4.9. Line drawing reconstruction of the metopes of the Athenian Treasury. From Boardman 1954, fig. 213.

	de La Coste-Messelière (1957)	Hoffelner (1988)	Cycle
1	Theseus and Sinis		T
2	Theseus and a brigand (Periphetes or Prokrustes)	Theseus and Prokrustes	T
3	Theseus and Kerkyon		T
4	Theseus and Skiron	Theseus and Periphetes	T
5	Theseus and Athena		T
6	Theseus and the Marathon bull		T
7	Theseus and the Minotaur		T
8	Theseus and Antiope		T / A
9	Amazonomachy		A
10	Amazonomachy (horseback)		A
11	Amazonomachy		A
12	Amazonomachy		A
13	Amazonomachy		A
14	Theseus and an Amazon		A
15	Herakles and the Nemean Lion		H
16	Herakles and the centaur Nessos		H
17	The Horses of Diomedes	Amazons on horseback	H / A
18	Uncertain	Argues doesn't belong	?
19	Herakles and the Keryneian Hind		H
20	Atlas	Iolaos	H
21	Herakles and Kyknos		H
22	Herakles and a fallen Amazon	Not necessarily Herakles	H / A
23	Geryonomachy		H / G
24	Geryonomachy		H / G
25	Geryonomachy		H / G
26	Herakles and Orthros		H / G
27	Herakles and Geryon		H / G
28	Uncertain		?

Figure 4.10. de La Coste-Messelière's identification of the Athenian Treasury metopes, with changes suggested by Hoffelner. Associated cycles are labelled T (Theseus), A (Amazonomachy), H (Herakles), G (Geryonomachy). Author's own.

Hoffelner also argues that Metope 18 does not belong to the treasury at all, given its technical differences and irregularity of size, being 1.5-2 cm wider than the others. On this, I concur: it seems the only reason it has been included is that it was found relatively close to the building, but there are other buildings in close proximity and little enough surviving to confidently link it to Theseus or Herakles. Hoffelner's considerations are not unanimously accepted: many still use de La Coste-Messelière's identifications. Gensheimer remarks how surprising this is, given that his theory was grounded in modern assumptions of narrative symmetry and equivalency, which do not always apply

to antiquity.⁴⁶² That being said, many of the identifications are based on strong iconographical links: metopes 5-6, 8, 10-12, 15-16, 19, and 23-27 are incontestable, and others are difficult to dispute. The arrangement of these metopes has also been the subject of extensive discussion. Metope 26 was found in front of the treasury's west wall, leading many to suggest that the Herakles metopes belong on this wall. Metope 21's findspot also indicates that it belonged to either the north or east side.⁴⁶³ The only certain metope is 5, which depicts Theseus and Athena. She is identifiable by her aegis, and originally had a bronze helmet. The proportions of the figure suggest that the helmet would have extended beyond the top border, making Athena (appropriately) the tallest figure in the frieze. The cuttings in the cornice for the attachment of the bronze helmet allow us to place it precisely in the centre of the southern side, in the fifth slot from the west.⁴⁶⁴ All other metope positions are open to debate.

De La Coste-Messelière assigns the Theseus metopes to the south side of the treasury, the Amazonomachy scenes to the east, the Herakles scenes to the north side, and the Geryonomachy to the west. This gives Theseus the two most prominent parts of the treasury, parallel to the Sacred Way and above the door, equally visible from further up the Sacred Way.⁴⁶⁵ Hoffelner's arrangement agrees that the Theseus metopes should go on the south side, but otherwise differs, arguing that the Herakles scenes belong on the east, the Amazonomachy on the north, and the Geryonomachy on the west.⁴⁶⁶ Marconi puts forward a third arrangement. Once again, he agrees that the Theseus metopes belong on the south side, and that all the clearly identifiable Herakles metopes – including the Geryonomachy scenes – went on the north. The shorter east and west sides, he argues, would both have been occupied with Amazonomachies, one each given to Herakles and Theseus, deliberately contrasting the two of them with their shared mythological cycle (Fig. 4.11).⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁶² For two recent examples of the preference for de La Coste-Messelière's reconstruction, see Barringer 2008, 117; Steinbock 2013, 171; Gensheimer 2017, 11.

⁴⁶³ Hoffelner 1988, 108, 112-114; Ridgway 1993, 344-345; von den Hoff 2009, 98.

⁴⁶⁴ Rups 1986, 128; Hoffelner 1988, 102-117; Marconi 2006, 172; Gensheimer 2017, 9.

⁴⁶⁵ de La Coste-Messelière 1946, 37-81; Neer 2004, 75.

⁴⁶⁶ Hoffelner 1988, 108-116.

⁴⁶⁷ Marconi 2006, 169-171.

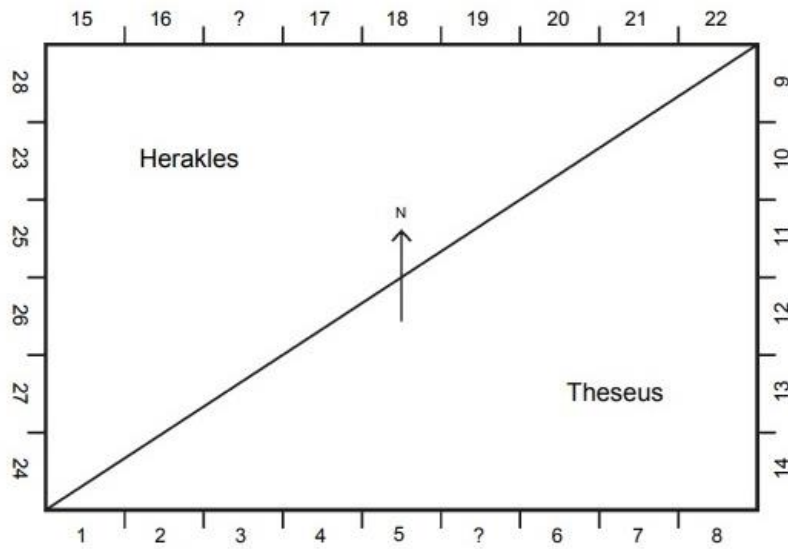


Figure 4.11. A. Reconstruction of the arrangement of metopes according to de La Coste-Messelière.

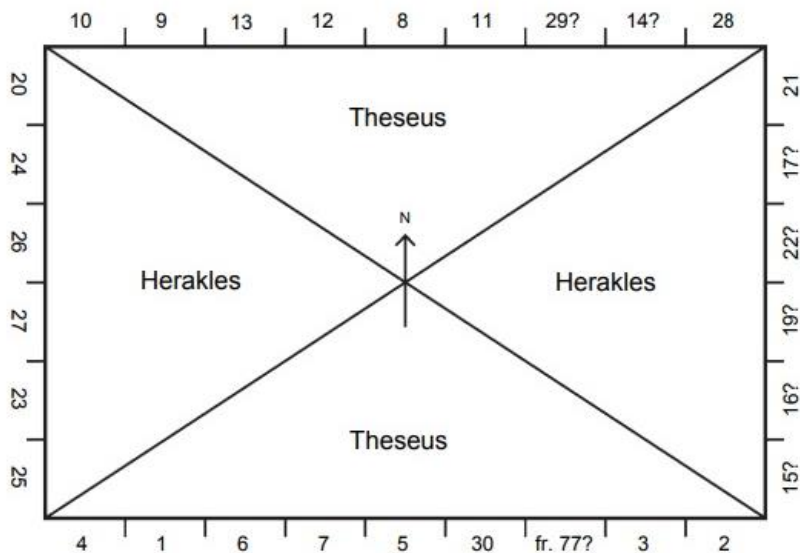


Figure 4.11. B. Reconstruction of the arrangement of metopes according to Hoffelner.

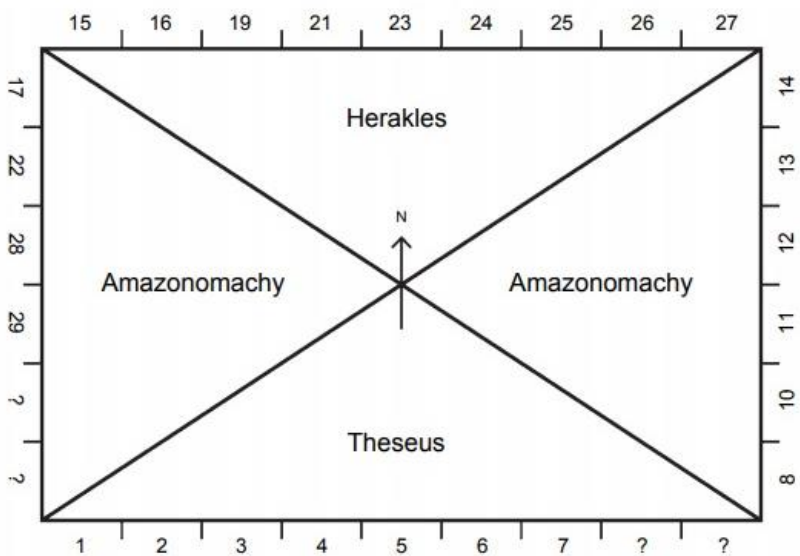


Figure 4.11. C. Reconstruction of the arrangement of metopes according to Marconi.
Diagrams from Gensheimer 2017, figs. 3; 4; 5. Drawing L. Petrocelli.

It is almost certain that the Theseus metopes went on the south side; there are eight scenes that inarguably include him, too many for the east or western walls, and since Athena only appears in the Theseus cycle (Metope 5), it was no doubt intended to be viewed from the prominent south side.⁴⁶⁸ Both Hoffelner and Marconi's reconstructions give equal prominence to Theseus and Herakles,⁴⁶⁹ giving each of them one of the two most important sides, the south and the east. Theseus is given the most visually prominent side, and Herakles gets the front, above the door and below the Athena pediment. In effect, Herakles would be given the *de jure* place of honour, and Theseus the *de facto*. The placement of the Amazonomachy on the eastern wall allows for the alignment of the Amazons with the Amazon akroteria, corroborating Marconi's arrangement. Moreover, the composition of the Amazon in Metope 10 is virtually identical to the left-facing acroterion. When they are displayed together, the akroterial Amazons become a part of the fray depicted below in the eastern metopes (Fig. 4.12).⁴⁷⁰ This interrelationship is a compelling reason to displace the Geryonomachy from the east side and place it on the north instead: as in Marconi's arrangement the cattle would face toward the east, visually echoing the movement of the living cattle moving along the Sacred Way to be sacrificed at the Temple of Apollo. This would place them on the least visible side of the treasury, which would also explain the comparative lack of skill in the Geryon metopes, as noted by Perdrizet.⁴⁷¹ Furthermore, this arrangement means that the figures of Herakles and Theseus all face in a single direction, creating a sense of movement around the treasury to encourage the visitor to participate in a tour around the building, making use of the Athenian-constructed staircases to the west and north-east of the building (presumably added to facilitate this movement).⁴⁷² However, I would argue that we can only accept this arrangement under the assumption that the Herakles Amazonomachy went on the east side, with the Theseus equivalent on the west, maintaining Hoffelner's delicate distribution of prominence

⁴⁶⁸ Hoffelner 1988, 102-108; von den Hoff 2009, 98.

⁴⁶⁹ Presuming that Herakles' Amazonomachy was positioned over the entrance way in the Marconi reconstruction.

⁴⁷⁰ Gensheimer 2017, 13.

⁴⁷¹ Gensheimer 2017, 14 n. 76. Geryon metopes: Perdrizet 1904, 344.

⁴⁷² Scott 2010, 80.

between the two. The complex identification situation is worth clarifying, despite the fact that it might appear arbitrary. The arrangement and identification informs the manner of engagement that we can anticipate from the viewer, as we will discuss in the following sections.



Figure 4.12. Metope 10: Mounted Amazon, and Mounted Amazon as a lateral akroterion. From Gensheimer 2017, figs. 6 and 7. Drawing K. Hoffelner.

4.6. The Athenian Treasury in Delphi

The Athenian Treasury did not operate in isolation. Not only did it sit within a complex arrangement of treasuries, it also shared visual links with the temple of Apollo built by the Alkmaeonidai family a few decades previously. The previous version of the treasury, built by the Peisistratid family, linked back to pre-democratic Athens, and so was pulled down and replaced. The temple also connected back to their tyrannical roots, but democratic Athens could not simply pull this building down. Neer summarises the issue with the temple succinctly: the temple of Apollo is not an Athenian dedication, but it is certainly a dedication by Athenians and as such Athens wanted to lay claim to it.⁴⁷³ From a timocratic perspective, ownership of the most important building within the sanctuary space made a

⁴⁷³ Neer 2004, 86. For a detailed discussion of Athens' role and dedicatory history in Delphi see Neer 2007, 247-251.

lot of sense, as it presents Athens as not only being a central player in the dedicatory traditions of Delphi, but one wealthy enough to fulfil a temple building contract.

We have already mentioned the connections between the temple and the treasury in terms of material, but the comparisons extend further than this. The treasury's marble roofing system mimicked that of the temple, as did its columnar proportions and its architectural sculpture.⁴⁷⁴ The pediments may also have been visually aligned: the temple depicted an epiphany or arrival scene of Apollo on the eastern pediment, and a Gigantomachy in limestone on the western (Fig. 4.13). The treasury also had a scene often identified as an epiphany on the east (and at the very least also displayed a central god with flanking figures and chariots in a similar design) and its western depicted a battle, also sometimes identified as a Gigantomachy.⁴⁷⁵ The metopes of the temple likely depicted labours, like the treasury, probably including Bellerophon and Herakles: one of the fragments has been successfully identified as Herakles stealing the cattle of Geryon, mentioned in Euripides' *Ion*.⁴⁷⁶ Its akroteria were not in the guise of Amazons, but they did depict winged Nikes running, with visual similarities between the two (Fig. 4.14). The steep incline of the area ensured that the Athenian Treasury towered over others built on the terrace below, just as the temple loomed over the treasury section of the sanctuary. Moreover, the small, triangular terraces on the south and east sides, as well as its northern terrace wall, framed the treasury in a similar way to the temple terrace and the temple itself, creating a further visual analogy between the two.⁴⁷⁷

When the treasury was under construction in the 480s, the relation of the Alkmaeonidai to the *polis* was in the forefront of public discourse. The clan was suspected of having tried to betray Athens to the Persians at Marathon, and in 486 its leader, Megakles son of Hippokrates, was ostracized.⁴⁷⁸

⁴⁷⁴ Scott 2010, 78-79.

⁴⁷⁵ Pausanias 10.18.1. See also Jacquemin 1999b, 251; Neer 2004, 84; Scott 2010, 96.

⁴⁷⁶ Euripides, *Ion* 190-136; Picard and de La Coste-Messelière 1928, 189-90.

⁴⁷⁷ Scott 2010, 78-79; Gensheimer 2017, 6.

⁴⁷⁸ Neer 2004, 86; Osborne 2009, 312; Scott 2014, 113.

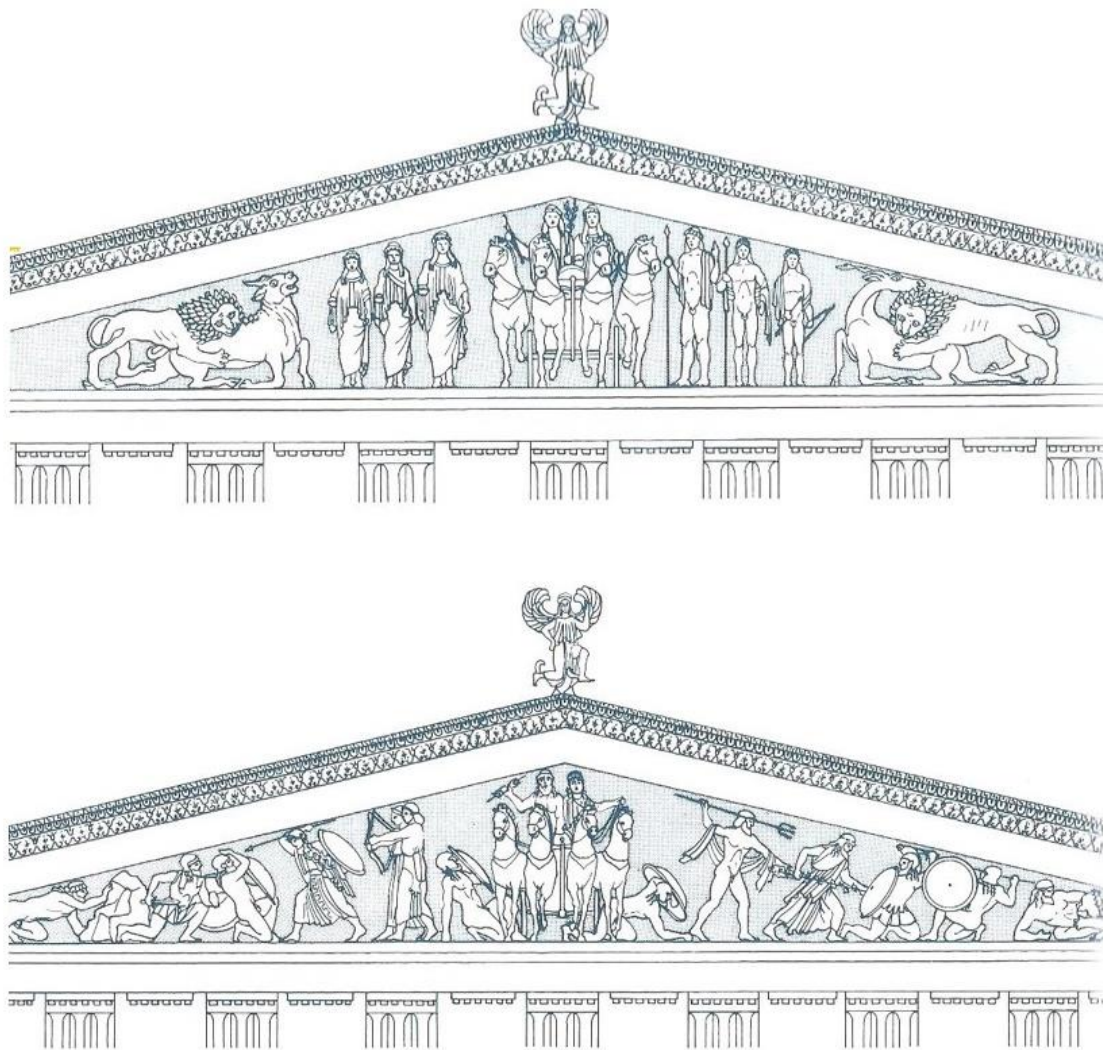


Figure 4.13. Reconstructions of the pediments of the Temple of Apollo. Eastern pediment (above) showing an epiphany or arrival scene, the Western pediment (below) showing a battle scene. From Neer 2012, fig. 7.22 (A and B).



Figure 4.14. Temple akroterion of a winged Nike running. From Kolonia 2006, 228.

By laying visual claim to the temple, the treasury – and Athens by extension – gained the visual resources of the past generation, and also made a clear statement about the fall from grace of the Alkmaeonidai. Neer uses Pindar’s seventh Pythian ode as further evidence for this: it celebrates an Alkmaeonidai victory at Delphi, with specific reference to the temple.

However, Pindar does not specifically refer to it as an Alkmaeonidai offering, but as one from the Athenians as a whole, suggesting what Kurke has described as a model of reciprocal advantage between clan and state.⁴⁷⁹ By connecting the two buildings, Athens ensured its connection to the most central and dominant building of the sanctuary, as well as, by extension, the fame and legacy of its once-great aristocratic family. That Athens believed they had a claim on this temple is clear from the fact that they later added a victory inscription to it and hung captured shields from their own battles to the metopes (a bold claim on a building that actually had significant investment from the Amphictyony).⁴⁸⁰ It was not just the temple that the Athenians claimed as personal property; they dominated the temple platform with a number of other lavish dedications.⁴⁸¹ The relationship between the treasury and the temple is part of a wider attempt on behalf of Athens to claim the property and resources of Delphi on a symbolic level, to further enhance their timocratic supremacy within the sanctuary.

The presentation of these themes seems unaccountably bold, but the treasuries within Delphi had been broadcasting timocratic messages for decades before the Athenian Treasury was built. As previously noted, the Siphnian Treasury provides an obvious visual precedent for the Athenian Treasury, despite some clear differences. It was not a victory monument, for starters: rather, it was built with the revenue from Siphnos' profitable mines.⁴⁸² It does show Herakles in its sculptural decoration, but in general its decoration conforms to the more generic panhellenic myths, rather than anything specific to Siphnos. The pediment, on the west side of the building, depicted Herakles stealing Apollo's tripod, and it has one long Ionic frieze rather than Doric metopes.⁴⁸³ It measures

⁴⁷⁹ Pindar, 7th *Ode* 9-11; Neer 2004, 87; Kurke 1991: 191-92.

⁴⁸⁰ For the inscription: Courby 1927, no. 106; Flacelière 1954, 257-258, no. 190; Scott 2010, 77 (n. 11), 318, no. 82. The date of the shields is disputed, either 490 or 479, after the battles of Marathon or Plataia: Pausanias 10.19.4; Aeschines, *In Ctesiphon* 116. See also Courby 1927, 106; Amandry 1978, 585 n. 46; Bommelaer 1991, 180; Scott 2010, 77, 320. Shields: Pausanias 10.19.4; Aeschines, *In Ctesiphon* 116; Bommelaer 1991, 180; Scott 2014, 113.

⁴⁸¹ Statue of Athena sitting astride a palm tree: Amandry 1954, 300; Miller 1997, 39; Scott 2010, 96-97. The horse statue of Callias: Scott 2010, 96.

⁴⁸² Herodotus 3.57; Pausanias 10.11.2.

⁴⁸³ On the pediment: Picard and de La Coste-Messelière 1928, 153-162; de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 265-269; Boardman 1978, 227-234; Watrous 1982, 159-72; Ridgway 1993, 297-99; Neer 2001, 292.

29.63 metopes and is divided into four scenes, one on each of its four sides. There are two distinguishable sculptors who worked on the frieze in distinct styles: a more traditional, conservative one (Sculptor A) and a modern, more Atticising one (Sculptor B). Sculptor A was responsible for the fragmentary south frieze, depicting perhaps the Rape of the Leukippides or an abduction scene ending in an altar, and the west frieze over the doorway, showing the Judgement of Paris. Sculptor B created the much more famous north frieze, showing a Gigantomachy, and the east frieze, divided into two sections, both from the Trojan War: one showing a duel between two heroes, the other the gods sat according to allegiance on either side of Zeus, who weighed the hearts of the heroes.⁴⁸⁴ Its iconography is integrated into the sanctuary: the pediment depicts a scene from Delphic myth, and the west pediment of the new temple of Apollo also depicted a Gigantomachy scene. The Siphnian use of a Gigantomachy is in many ways more appropriate than Athens' use of Theseus; panhellenic myths would have been more accessible to the viewing public than a specific local hero. There are stylistic similarities between the two buildings as well: the lions on the east pediment of the temple are remarkably similar to the ones from the Siphnian Gigantomachy.⁴⁸⁵

However, what is of particular note are the timocratic themes evident in the architectural decoration of the treasury. As I have touched on already, the very structure of a treasury is inherently timocratic: it is a building created to secure wealth, but to do so in a way that clearly displays it at the same time. These buildings are a timocratic exercise in and of themselves; they show not only that a state has the wealth to build such an excessive dedication, but also that its citizens are wealthy enough to dedicate regularly within it. It was expected that dedications given by individuals would be placed within their corresponding treasury, allowing their *poleis* to lay claim to luxury items given by individual citizens. The physical similarities to temple structures also elevates the form, presenting a sense of architectural elaboration, and many of them are made with luxury materials as the Athenian

⁴⁸⁴ de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 415-436; Deyhle 1969, 22-25; Langlotz 1975, 73-79; Croissant 1983, 71-83; Muss 1983, 181-191; Floren 1987, 176; Ridgway 1993, 394; Neer 2001, 291.

⁴⁸⁵ Neer 2001, 291; 323; Stansbury-O'Donnell 2010, 36; Scott 2010, 65.

Treasury is. Like the Athenian Treasury, the Siphnian Treasury crafts clear visual timocratic messages. The myth of Herakles, Apollo, and the theft of the tripod is one where the acquisition of property is to the fore, as are the abduction scenes depicted on its south frieze and the Judgement of Paris (and the subsequent bestowing of a luxury item, the golden apple) on the west. Its north frieze has garnered by far the most attention. It was in a particularly prominent visual position, running parallel to the Sacred Way, and the visitor walking up towards the temple would follow the direction of the action, as if following the chariots of the gods into battle. There have been many arguments about the possible meaning of the Gigantomachy, which is iconographically peculiar, and there is not much space to discuss them all in detail here, particularly because there is no clear consensus on its meaning.⁴⁸⁶

However, from a timocratic perspective, Moore's reconstruction of the frieze offers an interesting insight: the frieze begins with a male figure, and three fragmentary female figures, who Moore identifies as Hephaestus and the Fates (Fig. 4.15). The literal meaning of the word *moirai* is 'allotments', and a *moira* is an individual's share in the distribution of wealth; Solon even uses it specifically to refer to the sharing of power within a city.⁴⁸⁷ The frieze, therefore, begins with an unambiguous discussion of wealth and power, reinforced with the presence of Hephaestus, the god of metals and smelting, and an object which is most likely a forge: a thinly veiled allusion to metals and the distribution of wealth, standing together on the side of order, which the Giants are seeking to upset. The monument can be read as a strong promotion of the Siphnian way of life, and an advertisement of its wealth: the metals and allotments are personified on the side of moral good to highlight the success of Siphnian society.⁴⁸⁸ The Siphnian Treasury's Gigantomachy frieze, therefore,

⁴⁸⁶ Daux and de La Coste-Messelière 1927, 27–39; Picard and de La Coste-Messelière 1928, 74–98; de La Coste-Messelière 1936, 310–330; Langlotz 1975, 73–79; Daux and Hansen 1987, 173–179; Neer 2001, 302; Scott 2010, 64.

⁴⁸⁷ Moore 1977, 201; Solon frag. 34.

⁴⁸⁸ In this interpretation, the unusual hoplite Giants might therefore be a criticism against public spending on military developments, something that Siphnos seems to have rejected on a social level in this time period.

presents similar timocratic themes to the Athenian Treasury, a building that was perhaps an even more literal presentation of wealth and financial success.

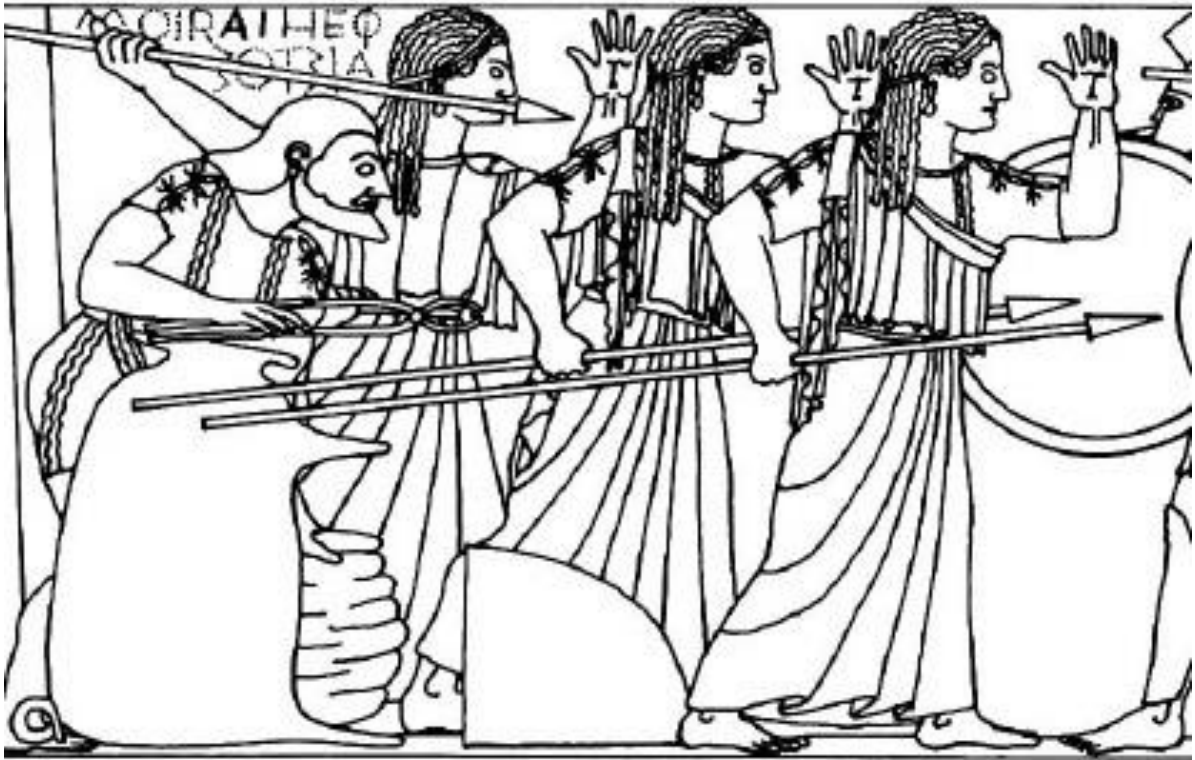


Figure 4.15. Reconstruction of the Gigantomachy from the Siphnian Treasury: Hephaestus and the Fates. From Moore 1977, fig. 15.

Furthermore, the Athenian Treasury itself looks like an object of great wealth. The luminous properties of Parian marble were documented by Pliny and are caused by the mixed grain sizes within the stone, which cause the marble to reflect the light and appear strikingly radiant. It is a material that appears to glow, translucent and ethereal. As we have already mentioned, this building would have sat in contrast to the cliffs of Parnassos behind it: even today, there is still a clear visual contrast (Fig. 4.16).⁴⁸⁹ This must have had great visual impact for the visitor to Delphi, highlighting the wealth and prestige of Athens, its timocratic excellence presented in the form of the building itself. Athanassaki makes a

⁴⁸⁹ Pliny, *Natural History* 36.14. See Rockwell 1993, Fant 1993, 165; Pollini, Herz, Polikreti and Maniatis 1998; Bradley 2006, 16-17.

convincing argument connecting the Theseus metopes to the eighteenth ode of Bacchylides' Fourth Dithyramb, positioning Bacchylides as an 'engaged viewer', one who saw the monument and spent considerable time viewing it. This suggests not only a vested interest in the treasury by the Athenians, but the existence of strong ties between the city and Delphi. Athanassaki argues that Bacchylides expected his audience to compare his ode to the treasury, comparing the two and enriching the experience of the visitor by providing further context and familiarity.⁴⁹⁰



Figure 4.16. The reconstructed Athenian Treasury, with the cliffs of Parnassos behind it. Photo: author's own.

⁴⁹⁰ Athanassaki 2016, 45-46.

These are the kinds of messages we see in this section of the sanctuary, and our visitor to Delphi would not have found the timocratic messages of the Athenian Treasury particularly unusual. That being said, the Athenian Treasury does clearly go above and beyond the norms: every element of it was an excessive presentation of wealth, innovation, and skill. To a visitor, the building presents Athens as being above and beyond even the other expressions of wealth from within the Greek world, and it reinforces the significance of the space. The visitor has just passed through the victories of the recent past; now they move through expressions of civic wealth and timocratic prestige.

4.7. Conclusion

In building this treasury, Athens was clearly eager to declare her reverence for the Pythia and Apollo, and to maintain the support of the oracle. However, the Athenian Treasury represents much more than this. Athens dedicated the treasury after fundamental political reforms, and after its definitive and prestigious military victory. The treasury reflects a rapidly growing political self-confidence, and with its dedication Athens claims an elevated status, one as a panhellenic hero and as the greatest of *poleis*. This self-promotion and display is played out through its topographical placement, its architectural form and design, its connections to the temple, and its developed sculptural programme, all of which were deliberately created to express the timocratic and political power of Athens, reinforced in later years by a series of additional dedications and inscriptions. However, the Athenian Treasury was also carefully designed to assert the economic pre-eminence of Athens both within and outside the Delphic sanctuary.

Within the prestige competitions of panhellenic sanctuaries, economic pre-eminence was as important as military success or athletic victory. A wealthy state had to have the ability to subsidise their armies and host festivals that would attract pre-eminent athletes and poets from around the Greek world. Wealth allowed for the creation of the most elaborate and modern architecture and art and created a sense of power that permeated all aspects of ancient life. For the Athenians, presenting

this was as important as presenting military victory was for Lysander, and they accomplished this with the Athenian Treasury with the use of many individual architectural and sculptural elements. The lavish material used for its construction made a bold political statement and presented Athenian dominance over the Aegean; its unique construction and form articulated the place of the Athenians at the forefront of Hellenic development and economic power. Its hyper-decoration showed not only the command that Athens had over wealth and materials, but also the artistic skill of its people. The combination of Herakles and Theseus inserted Athens into the visual fabric of the sanctuary, while also distinguishing the treasury, and the presentation of mythological scenes grounded in timocratic themes of acquisition and ownership forced the viewer to accept Athens' pre-eminence. The deliberate evocation of the temple in the treasury articulates the treasury as a second temple, increasing the prestige and prominence of the monument by creating a clear visual link between the two. Likewise, the staircases and increased movement around the treasury encouraged the visitor to conceptualise and understand the treasury as a temple; its raised position above the other monuments likewise working to differentiate the treasury – and Athens by extension.⁴⁹¹ As far as the treasury's architectural sculpture is concerned, this expression was staged by combining distinctively Athenian images alongside images that could be considered truly panhellenic. The connection of eponymous and mythological heroes elevated the citizenry of Athens, the very materials the treasury was built from reinforced the idea of Athens' domination, and the dedications placed within it and on the platform in front of it would only have served to emphasise this.

Our visitor has moved through a militarily competitive space, and now they pass through a more subtle battleground: that of wealth and resources. As I have already argued in Chapter Three (Figure 1.16. The village of Kastri, built over the ruins of Delphi, prior to excavation. From Kolonia 2006, 18.), the presentation of politicised, competitive spaces makes for a conflicted visitor response ([pp. 161](#)). An Athenian visitor would inevitably respond to this monument in a different way to most non-Athenians:

⁴⁹¹ Scott 2010, 80; Scott 2014, 113.

likewise, non-Athenian responses to this monument would probably have changed over time, given Athens' shifting role during the Classical period and its eventual defeat by the Spartans at the end of the Peloponnesian War. For a visitor who has already passed the Aegospotami monument, there might be an air of ironic elitism to this treasury. But the timocratic theme present in the wider space creates a specific visitor experience, one that reinforces the wealth of the Hellenic world but also its cultural and artistic achievements, showcased through the numerous offerings on display in and around the treasuries. Where else would visitors have seen such an extensive and varied collection of Greek votive offerings as in this space? The Athenian Treasury exemplifies a Hellenic tradition of visual opulence and to a visitor this space must have represented not only the authority of Apollo but also, in a way, reinforced and validated their own identities as Greeks. Perhaps more so than the victory monuments, the treasuries allow for a sense of Hellenic pride and achievement, due to the less violent nature of the competition.

Chapter Five

The Naxian Sphinx and the architecture of mythology

The Naxian Sphinx is a colossal marble statue of the mythological oracular lion-human hybrid creature. It sat on an Ionic capital at the top of a 9.32 metre column (Fig. 5.1). Dedicated by the Cycladic island of Naxos, it was erected in Delphi in the Archaic period and remains one of the few surviving dedications that antedate the fire in 548 BCE. The fragments of the Naxian Sphinx were discovered in 1861 during Foucart and Wescher's excavations of Delphi, though a link was not immediately established between the unearthed column drums and the Sphinx fragments, as the sharp edges of the grooves did not seem compatible with the Ionic order.⁴⁹² These fragments were subsequently buried following the earthquake of 1870, and rediscovered in 1893. There were three distinct pieces of the sculpture prior to its reconstruction: its head, which was originally identified as Apollo, its body, and the column capital on which it stood.⁴⁹³ More fragments were found soon after its rediscovery including the upper drum of the column, which was discovered in the Chapel of St Elias, where it was being used as a support for the altar.⁴⁹⁴ These fragments were reassembled soon after, into the statue that today stands in the Archaeological Museum at Delphi.

The Naxian Sphinx would have been an unusual sight within the sanctuary as it was the first dedication which took the form of a statue on top of a column. Furthermore, as far as we can tell from our finds, it remained the sole example of this at Delphi. It is clearly unique as a dedication, but within the context of our archaeological record, it stands out even further. We have already mentioned how few dedications survived from before the fire at Delphi ([pp. 53](#)), and as one of these, the Naxian Sphinx gives us an unusual insight into this early period of Delphic history.

⁴⁹² Amandry 1953, 3; Valavanēs and Petrakos 2007, 137-138.

⁴⁹³ Homolle 1909, 41-42.

⁴⁹⁴ Amandry 1953, 4.

This chapter aims to examine the mythology, form, and style of the Naxian Sphinx to further understand the complex issues around identity in the ancient world. It will examine the physical location of the Sphinx and its domination of the Delphic landscape, as well as the form and design of the monument itself. It will subsequently consider the sphinx as a mythological figure and its specific connection to the Cycladic islands in the Archaic period and investigate whether the style of the Sphinx is specifically Cycladic. To do this, we will examine the sculpture's facial and physical features (with reference to a number of comparative sculptures), the variation of sphinx forms geographically, and the style and shaping of the column and its capital. We will also discuss the use of Cycladic materials as a physical extension of identity and presence, as well as the significance of the Delian sanctuary and amphictyony.



Figure 5.1. The Naxian Sphinx. From Kolonia 2007, 90.

5.1. Mythology

In terms of Greek literary narrative, the sphinx rarely appears outside the Boeotian myths, where it is always described as a winged, female figure. The Roman mythographer Hyginus probably best sums up her role in this story:

The Sphinx, offspring of Typhon, was sent into Boeotia, and was laying waste the fields of the Thebans. She proposed a contest to Creon, that if anyone interpreted the riddle which she gave, she would depart, but that she would destroy whoever failed, and under no other circumstances would she leave the country. When the king heard this, he made a proclamation throughout Greece. He promised that he would give the kingdom and his sister Jocasta in marriage to the person solving the riddle of the Sphinx. Many came out of greed for the kingdom, and were devoured by the Sphinx, but Oedipus, son of Laius, came and interpreted the riddle. The Sphinx leaped to her death. Oedipus received his father's kingdom.⁴⁹⁵

There is no mention of the sphinx in the Homeric stories, though they refer to Oedipus' parricide and incest. The earliest reference to the sphinx is in the aetiological catalogues of Hesiod's *Theogony*, where it is not described in detail, but mentioned in connection with Thebes.⁴⁹⁶ The sphinx is described as being the daughter of Echidna and Orthros by Hesiod and Euripides, although in Apollodorus she is the daughter of the Chimera and Typhon, and Pausanias calls her the daughter of Laius.⁴⁹⁷ Euripides describes her as a winged young woman with the body of a lion, though Aeschylus gives her the body of a dog, a variation explained by the versions in which Orthros is her father.⁴⁹⁸ The only mention of a male sphinx in Greek literature comes from Herodotus, who describes the male sphinx statues he had seen in Egypt.⁴⁹⁹ The sphinx's role as an antagonist in the literary record is clear; Aeschylus describes

⁴⁹⁵ Pseudo-Hyginus, *Fabulae* 67.

⁴⁹⁶ Hesiod, *Theogony* 326-327; LIMC VIII.1 1149-150.

⁴⁹⁷ Hesiod, *Theogony* 326-327; Euripides, *Phoenissae* 1019; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.5.8; Pausanias 9.26.3.

⁴⁹⁸ Euripides, *Phoenissae* 106, 1019, 1042; Aeschylus, *Sphinx* f. 236.

⁴⁹⁹ Herodotus 2.175.5.

how Parthenopaïos used the motif of a sphinx on his shield to threaten the Thebans.⁵⁰⁰ Aelian remarks 'the vainglorious legends of Thebes attempt to represent the Sphinx, with her two-fold nature, as of two-fold shape, making her awe-inspiring by fusing the body of a maiden with that of a lion'.⁵⁰¹

The sphinx appears more frequently in the visual evidence both in and beyond Greece. It is an important component of the ancient Greek bestiary, and the earliest evidence comes from Middle Minoan Crete. By the Late Bronze Age, winged sphinxes appeared in all cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East, with the female headed sphinx being particularly linked to Syria and Anatolia, and the male, wingless sphinx to Egypt, where sphinxes represent royal power and normally have heads which represent a distinct individual, unlike the Greek sphinx who represents a single mythological figure.⁵⁰² By the seventh century BCE, the winged sphinx was a common motif, appearing in Cycladic vases, with three distinct workshops evident. Naxos was one of these: work seems to have begun in the first quarter of the seventh century BCE, and the evidence shows a strong Oriental and Cretan influence.⁵⁰³

The sphinx was adopted quickly into the Archaic and Classical visual bestiary, often found on vase paintings and in apotropaic guises on architectural sculpture and funerary monuments. Sphinxes are not commonly evoked as an evil figure in the visual record, but rather as a monstrous protector. The Greek version is usually depicted with wings, the body of a lion, and the head of a woman (as the Naxian Sphinx is) and became a common figure in the Archaic period following the so-called Orientalising period. Though the form appears much earlier in the Egyptian record, the Greek sphinx is clearly distinct. The Greek sphinx is normally female, unlike its (usually male) Egyptian counterpart, whose face is often a portrait of a pharaoh.⁵⁰⁴ The Egyptian sphinx is also more commonly depicted without wings, and generally wearing the *nemes* headdress, unless they are associated with the cult

⁵⁰⁰ Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes* 539-545.

⁵⁰¹ Aelian, *On Animals* 12. 7.

⁵⁰² Feldman 2006, 67-79.

⁵⁰³ Bosana-Kourou 1979, 90; Godart & Tzedakis 1992, 59-60; Rehak 2005, 271-275. For a detailed discussion of Aegean sphinxes, see Kourou 2011.

⁵⁰⁴ Gantz 1996, 24.

of Amun or other sun cults, in which case they might have ram or hawk attributes.⁵⁰⁵ The sphinx is often used as a decorative feature in Phoenician examples, but an amulet from Arslan Tash, dating to the seventh century, invokes protection against the winged sphinx, referred to here in an Aramaic dialect as the 'Strangler', believed to come in the night to strangle new born children.⁵⁰⁶ Though clearly viewed as a monstrous creature at Arslan Tash, elsewhere the sphinx was considered divine: by the fifth century the sphinx had become associated with the goddess Astarte in Sidon, and she appears flanked by a pair of them in multiple depictions.⁵⁰⁷

The role and depiction of the sphinx form in both art and mythology is complex and varied, and this holds true for Greek depictions, which have their own variations. Sculptural sphinxes in the Archaic period are normally seen found as votive monuments, architectural decoration, and on grave *stelai*, and can be positioned and viewed frontally or from the side.⁵⁰⁸ Boardman observes cultural variation in the depiction of lion bodies that can often be transposed onto the sphinx form: in the sixth century their bodies and limbs become lighter, leading with greater frequency to the crouching form. The sixth century also sees regional variation in the depiction of lions: of particular interest to us here, he notes that the Cycladic lion 'offers a sleeker transition from small head to neck and long wiry body.'⁵⁰⁹ Many depictions of the sphinx on Classical vase paintings show it in its Oedipal context.⁵¹⁰ In these, it is regularly shown sat on a projection of rock, or indeed on a column, most likely a reference to the fate of the sphinx, who cast itself from the rock after it was defeated.⁵¹¹

This chapter focuses on identity and mythology, and more specifically, on how mythological forms can be used as indicators of specific identities within the sanctuary. Chapter Three showed how the use of mythological figures could convey messages about human individuals. Chapter Four has

⁵⁰⁵ Ikram 2012.

⁵⁰⁶ Pritchard 2011, 304.

⁵⁰⁷ Teixidor 1977, 38; Gunter 2009, 21, 83.

⁵⁰⁸ Boardman 1978, 167; Neer 2012, 102.

⁵⁰⁹ Boardman 1978, 167-168.

⁵¹⁰ LIMC V. Oedipus und die Sphinx

⁵¹¹ Hyginus, *Fabulae* 67; Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.5.9.

shown how the Athenian Treasury used Herakles and Theseus to convey a specifically Athenian message by connecting their mythological narratives back to the economic supremacy of Athens. However, in this chapter the focus will be on how dedicators used the form and connected mythologies of such figures to present themselves in Delphi, and how that connected to the landscape and the experience of the sanctuary. The study of identity has, in recent years, been dominated by ethnic identity, with the seminal work of Jonathan Hall in 1997 inspiring much debate. His broad argument is that the basic criteria for an ethnic group are shared descent, territory, and a sense of history or connection. This is not a particularly problematic formulation, unlike his controversial opinion that archaeology is unable to discuss identity without the use of literary sources alongside it. Unsurprisingly, this has proved unpopular with archaeologists who, as Antonaccio phrased it, are unwilling to be 'relegated to the status of handmaiden to the written record'.⁵¹² Hall's argument is based on the belief that the written record determines meaning for an entire population or culture, despite the fact that this presents a fragmentary and elitist discourse. The problem with this is that it ignores the archaeological and artistic record, and therefore the evidence for the majority of human history, for which no literary record exists.

Humans interpret their world, their purpose, and their place within the wider universe through mythology. This is clear throughout human history, with evidence stretching as far back as Neanderthal grave findings.⁵¹³ Mythology is a way for a society to present and explain its priorities, to differentiate itself from its neighbours, and to explain its identity. The mythologies of the ancient Greeks have become a ubiquitous element in the study of their world. These myths shifted as different periods invested the narratives with different emphases. Mythology from the Archaic period and earlier focuses on the heroic warrior and his military exploits abroad, but this changes in the fifth century to focus instead on difficult choices and morally ambiguous actions enacted at home.⁵¹⁴ As

⁵¹² Hall 1997, 56-89; Antonaccio 2009, 34.

⁵¹³ Cave 1993, 68; Armstrong 2005, 2; Berk 2015, 68.

⁵¹⁴ Bremmer 2009, 681-682.

such, myths have become a vital tool for understanding all aspects of the ancient world, including those surrounding identity. Consequently, this chapter will consider the role of the mythological sphinx and its connected narratives in analysing the Naxian Sphinx, and how this impacts the experience of such a monument.

The idea of identity has already appeared in this thesis, in terms of both wider Hellenic identities and more specifically Athenian ones, as well as in relation to the constructed identity of Lysander. However, it is the use of mythology itself that will form the central theme of this chapter. This might be easier with a sculptural piece that showed a more developed narrative, as it would presumably have shown more features and allegorical themes for discussion. However, it is the simplicity of the Naxian Sphinx that is so interesting in this context: how can we read a monument with no sculptural narrative and relatively simple features in terms of mythology and identity formation? To do so, we must think explicitly about the connections that the visitors would draw, and how the sanctuary was connected to the sculpture in turn. We must examine the detailed nuance of this sculpture in order to fully understand how it would be experienced: the form that it takes and how that is connected to specific myths, the connection between geography, history, and mythology, and how the landscape impacts interpretation. In doing this, I intend to show how the Naxian Sphinx displays identity and meaning through its familiar mythological form and its contemporary connections to the visitor to Delphi, and how this would have translated within the sanctuary space itself.

5.2. The space: approaching the temple

The Naxian Sphinx **(27)** was dedicated in section four of the sanctuary, positioned close to the platform wall, around 64 metres from the eastern end of the temple platform.⁵¹⁵ As already discussed in

⁵¹⁵ Homolle 1909, 41.

Chapter Two (section 2.5: [pp. 123](#)), the experience of this section of the sanctuary is the hardest to recreate (Fig. 5.2). Around the Sphinx would have stood a number of Boeotian dedications, of which only their bases remain **(25)** as well as the Rock of Sybil **(26)** and the Rock of Leto **(28)**. These two features are connected to the mythological history of the sanctuary space and presumably held a symbolic importance, though it is not immediately clear what that would have been. Next to this cluster stood the Athenian Stoa, sitting flush along the wall of the temple platform **(29)**.

Within this space we also find another peculiarity of the sanctuary: the *fosse de l'aire*, more commonly referred to as the aire (Fig. 5.2). This space may indicate an earlier processional route to the temple, and was probably a sacred subsection of space within the sanctuary. The aire is, unfortunately, not attested in any Archaic or Classical inscriptions, and its exact purpose is not entirely certain. Evidence for its special status comes from absence: it is the only space in the sanctuary that was never used for the display or building of dedications. Because of this, its position at the central nexus of different versions of the Sacred Way, and its centrality within the site, many have argued that it was a space used for religious and political gatherings, and there is later attestation for its use as a space for the performance of religious ceremonies.⁵¹⁶ Layers of ash and animal bone fragments have been more recently uncovered in the area, with a high quantity of charcoal in the soil, indicating cooking and feasting, probably sacrificial, though publication of this has not been substantial so far.⁵¹⁷ The specific nature and use of this space is a subject of lengthy discussion, but perhaps the most important thing for this study is the universal agreement that it clearly held a significant, sacred role.

⁵¹⁶ Daux 1943, 238 1.8-21; Bourguet 1914, 124-127; McDonald 1943; Jacquemin 1999b, 34; Amandry 2000; Scott 2010 42.

⁵¹⁷ Poplin 1991, 700; Luce 2008, 79-80; Ekroth 2017, 38.

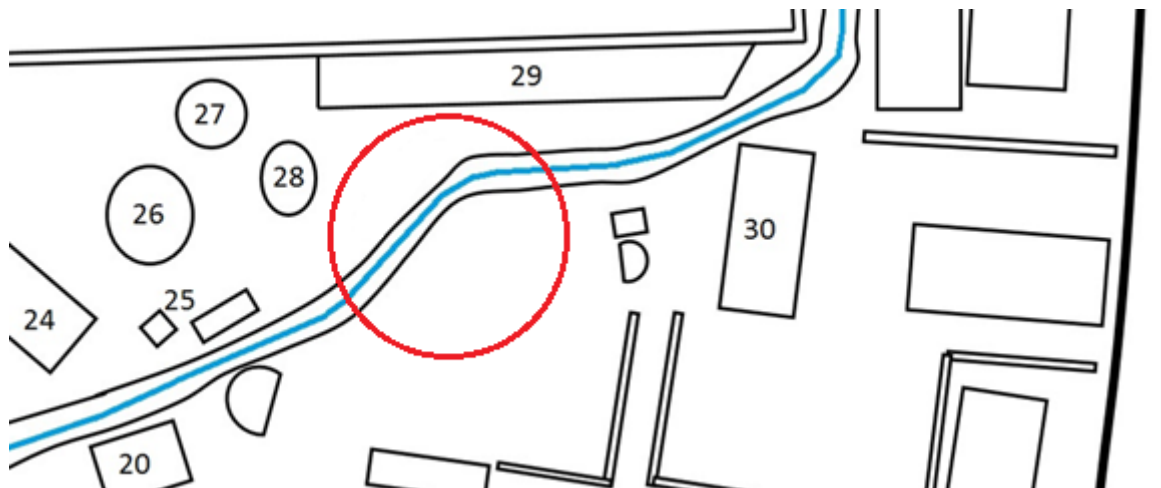


Figure 5.2. Monument map: alongside the temple platform. Aire marked by red circle. Author's own.

Key:

- 25. Bases from Boeotian dedications
- 26. Rock of Sybil
- 27. Naxian Sphinx
- 28. Rock of Leto
- 29. Athenian Stoa
- 30. Corinthian Treasury

The Naxian Sphinx offers us a unique opportunity to examine the precise context in which a dedicatory statue would have been viewed, as its base remained in situ. The inscribed base was discovered in 1861, identifying the monument as a dedication by the people of the island of Naxos.⁵¹⁸ Knowing precisely where the Sphinx stood provides us with a much clearer picture of how and where visitors to the sanctuary would have interacted with the dedication. In fact, very few examples of the surviving or referenced free standing sculptures from Delphi can be so precisely located, many of them simply being attributed from the literary record to the temple terrace.

Its column gave it a significant height, and Ridgway emphasises that this would leave the Sphinx positioned significantly above the other dedications surrounding it at the time.⁵¹⁹ Indeed, for a visitor approaching from the bottom of the Sacred Way, perspective would leave it one of the tallest

⁵¹⁸ Amandry 1953, 7.

⁵¹⁹ Ridgway 1971, 338.

monuments on the site. The height of the column makes it difficult to see the sculpture on top when standing next to it: for a viewer to appreciate the sculpture, it has to be placed a little way from the main route, which is what the Naxians did. Placing the Sphinx in the centre of the sanctuary allowed for maximum visibility of the sculpture, and its location next to the temple platform, the central and most important area within the site, would increase its prestige and importance.⁵²⁰ Scott's work on Delphi has focused extensively on the potential visual relationships between the buildings and monuments, and he considers the height of the Naxian Sphinx and how it connected to the temple. He argues that from the perspective of the visitor, the Sphinx would have appeared to be at the same height as the temple's entablature. This means that the Naxian Sphinx would have looked almost like an additional *akroterion* on the temple, connecting the two in a visual relationship and increasing the Naxian Sphinx's standing and prestige through association.⁵²¹ An *akroterion* illusion would be a very interesting element of this statue – a way for the Naxians to add their own distinctly Cycladic touch to the great temple without actually modifying its architecture. Although this might have been the case, I am not convinced that enough is known about the temple of this period to be certain whether or not this visual alignment did indeed exist for a visitor at the point of dedication, though it clearly would have done for our visitor, arriving c. 400 BCE.

5.3. The Naxian Sphinx

The Naxian Sphinx sits on the capital of a 9.32 metre column. The Sphinx itself is 2.32 metres from feet to the tip of its wings, and measures 1.35 metres in length. The column, capital, and sphinx are all made of marble, and the entire monument would have been 11.64 metres tall. The column itself was originally 0.97 metres wide at the base, tapering to 0.74 meters at the capital.⁵²² The Sphinx is carved in the round, and crouches on the capital, its back legs bent to form two sections, made up of the leg

⁵²⁰ Ridgway 1971, 339; Scott 2014, 87.

⁵²¹ Scott 2010, 47.

⁵²² Homolle 1909, 41; Amandry 1953, 3-10.

and an elongated paw (although in reality a feline leg would divide into three when in this pose).⁵²³ Its front legs end in clawed, leonine paws and protrude straight downwards from its chest, leaving a triangular space between the underbelly and capital (Fig. 6.3). Its body is slender, with narrow shoulders and limbs, but it has been rendered with a taut, firm musculature (Fig. 6.4). Its chest swells gently and is incised with geometric patterns meant to represent feathers, repeated on the wings, which curve outwards before turning back to point in the direction of her head, giving a squared profile. The wings are divided into three distinct layers of feathering through the rendering of three lines, with shorter feathering in the middle section, and longer feathers in the third, outside section.

Its face is an elongated oval in shape, intersected by the horizontal planes of the eyes and mouth, which divide its face into three distinct sections. It has a narrow forehead surrounded by a hairband and the patterned undulations of the hair, incised with fine parallel lines. The hair is carved into clearly defined bands, though they are incised with less detail at the back. One strand on each side of its face, neatly carved in beads, falls forward over the curve of the shoulder. It has arched eyebrows following long, almond shaped eyes emphasised by an incision which mirrors folding on the upper lid. The nose is damaged but seems for the most part not to have flared particularly at any point along its length, the lips and mouth are thin with the barest indication of the archaic smile. Her face appears flat and without projections now, although Homolle emphasises that this is due to damage sustained throughout its history.⁵²⁴

⁵²³ White 1971, 49.

⁵²⁴ Homolle 1909, 46-47.



Figure 5.3. The Naxian Sphinx in profile. From Kolonia 2007, 93.

Figure 5.4. Frontal view of the Naxian Sphinx. From Kolonia 2007, 92.



The monument dates from the first half of the sixth century. Homolle dates it to 560-550 BCE,⁵²⁵ whereas later scholarship leans to c. 570.⁵²⁶ This latter date is based on Amandry's report, which uses comparative analysis of both monuments and sculpture contemporary to the Sphinx and local to Naxos to fix it within a more precise chronology. He draws on a number of features: the capital of the column, the column itself, and the style and form of the Sphinx, and his comparative material includes temples, monumental sanctuary dedications, and free standing sculpture, including various *kouroi* from around the Aegean. In particular, he focuses on a similar dedication to the Naxian Sphinx: another sphinx seated on a column, dedicated by Naxos at Delos (Delos-Naxian Sphinx).⁵²⁷

Most reconstructions of the site depict the Sphinx positioned with its body running parallel to the temple platform, facing north east. The visitor would approach from behind, move along the length, and only get a clear view of its face if they turned afterwards to look back at it. Amandry suggests that this is the most likely way that the Sphinx would have sat, taking into account the weathering on the remains on the column and body.⁵²⁸ Ridgway's conclusions on column dedications also support this. There is a disharmony between votive sculpture and columns: when a sculpture is positioned facing forward, the viewer is unable to appreciate the decorative elements of the volutes. However, if the monument is viewed from the side, or in a setting where the viewer can move around the entire sculpture (as was not easily the case in Delphi), then both the sculpture and the capital could be viewed to their greatest advantage.⁵²⁹ If the Naxian Sphinx did face north east, then the viewer would be given a more effective view of it, with wings arching into the air and extended in full, and the angular space between the capital and underbelly shown off most effectively, with the volutes of the capital visible to visitors walking along the Sacred Way. It seems likely then, that the Sphinx

⁵²⁵ Homolle 1909, 56.

⁵²⁶ Scott 2010, 46; Peck 2012, 34; Neer 2012, 115. Ridgway, conversely, dates it to c. 560 (1977, 158).

⁵²⁷ Amandry 1953, 25-31.

⁵²⁸ Amandry 1953, 14.

⁵²⁹ Ridgway 1977, 157.

faced north east, her gaze falling somewhere between the line of the temple platform and the later Athenian portico.

5.4. Context: Sphinxes and the Cyclades

Materials

All elements of the Naxian Sphinx (the fluted column, the capital, and the statue) are made from a relatively coarse Naxian marble that has been found on both Naxos and Delos.⁵³⁰ It is the only example of this type of stone in Delphi, and it seems likely that the dedication was carved on Naxos and then transported to the site, probably in separate pieces.⁵³¹ There would have been a great deal of difficulty involved in this process. Even within the Cycladic islands, travel by sea was not simple: northerly winds make the passage between even narrow straits very difficult, while strong winds and currents imposed limitations on seafaring. Within the Cyclades, the importance of islands as convenience stops cannot be underestimated.⁵³² There were monuments at Delos that had been transported from elsewhere within the Cyclades: the Naxian Colossus was created on Naxos and then shipped to Delos, despite standing at nine meters in height.⁵³³ However, transport from the Cyclades to Delphi is a much longer and a more difficult task, and had not been attempted on this scale before. The Naxian Sphinx is the first monument, which, as far as we can tell, was constructed from a material that the dedicators sourced locally rather than from the area around Delphi itself.⁵³⁴ In the previous chapter, I discussed the significance of using imported marbles and materials in the construction of monuments ([pp. 191](#)), as they impose a personal connection on a panhellenic sanctuary and lend to the monument a specific claim. As an extension of identity, this is a powerful and clear message, and the fact that Naxos also

⁵³⁰ de La Coste-Messelière 1950, 23-24.

⁵³¹ Amandry 1953, 9.

⁵³² Constantakopoulou 2007, 25.

⁵³³ Nine meters is its height after reconstruction: Hermany 1993, 13.

⁵³⁴ Peck 2012, 36.

used its own marble in Delos is important to acknowledge. It displays a very deliberate extension of Naxian presence and prestige within the Cyclades, a clear desire to differentiate themselves, as well as an attempt to project Naxos onto the Delphic stage. Like the Siphnian Treasury, the Naxian Sphinx was constructed out of a relatively poor grade marble. The logic of using Parian marble for the Athenian Treasury might have been to do with its quality, but this does not hold with the Naxian Sphinx and Siphnian Treasury, where the marble used does not justify the numerous difficulties and expense of shipping. However, the use of Naxian marble demonstrates a further connection to mythological presence, through the presence of the Cyclades, and Delos more specifically.

The Cyclades and the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delos

Naxos had a developed dedicatory tradition by the time of the erection of the Naxian Sphinx, but its focus had been on Delos. Why might the island turn its eye towards Delphi? Both are cults of Apollo, but that does not necessarily mean much. It does seem that the authority of the Pythian oracle was respected within the Cyclades; at the very least, we know that Polycrates of Samos consulted at Delphi on a suitable name for the festival that he founded at Delos.⁵³⁵ However, Polycrates of Samos' control of the island ran 532-522 BCE, after the dedication of the Naxian Sphinx, so though this might be an indication of an earlier investment in the authority of Delphi, it is not evidence for it.⁵³⁶ Further connections between Delos and Delphi have been constructed with the Homeric Hymn to Apollo: Burkert has argued that the hymn indicates that the Pythian and Delian Apollos were connected through festivals, though the question of the unity or disunity of the hymn has been discussed many times since.⁵³⁷ Clues may lie in the interconnected history of Delphi and the Cyclades.

The islands of the Cyclades maintained frequent interactions both with each other and with external communities from the Neolithic period onwards, and were particularly significant in the

⁵³⁵ Burkert 1979, 62.

⁵³⁶ His reign does coincide with the height of the income of the Siphnian silver mines and the Siphnian treasury, (Kroll and Waggoner 1984, 338) and it might be possible to argue that this new Cycladic interest in Delphi might have inspired Siphnos' own Delphic building project.

⁵³⁷ Burkert 1979, 59. For discussions of the hymn, see Miller 1986; Chappell 2006; Chappell 2011.

Archaic period when islands such as Naxos, Paros, Siphnos, and Melos played a prominent role until the period of Athenian domination.⁵³⁸ From an identity perspective, the Cyclades are complex. Hall's basic criteria of shared identity are certainly fulfilled: the Cyclades are primarily Ionian, share a clear geographical area, and the sanctuary on Delos provides a significant connection between them. However, there are a series of issues that must be acknowledged. First of all, Ionian identity is a trans-regional one, which existed in other parts of the Greek world, not just in the Cyclades. Therefore, we have to ask whether the geographically determined 'Cycladic' identity should be considered distinct from the trans-regional 'Ionic' identity. However, unlike areas such as Attica (united under an Athenian ethnicity), the Cyclades are clearly more disparate: even the regional group of the Boeotians, made up of a number of different *poleis*, shared a federal political unity which the Cyclades did not. Conversely, unlike the Dorians or the Aeolians, the Ionians did have one common activity: the sanctuary at Delos, its festivals and other associated activities, were common to all Ionians from Asia Minor, mainland Greece, and the Aegean islands, lending a sense of unity to an otherwise disparate people. The issue is further complicated, however, by the fact that the festival on Delos is Ionian but is not an Ionian-exclusive festival: it was open to all communities of the Aegean.⁵³⁹

The Cyclades are so called, according to ancient tradition, because they circled Delos, and the interaction between the islands was manifested in the formation of a religious amphictyony.⁵⁴⁰ Delos grew early in comparison to other sanctuaries: indeed, bronze tripods from c. 750 BCE have been found at the sanctuary, and the erection of monumental buildings predates those at both Delphi and Olympia.⁵⁴¹ Naxos played an active role in this early development. Naxian pottery dominates the archaeological record from the eighth century, and most inscribed offerings used the Naxian alphabet.⁵⁴² The seventh century marks a change in the dedicatory tradition, with the arrival of

⁵³⁸ Renfrew 2012, 83.

⁵³⁹ Constantakopoulou 2007, 38-60; Vlassopoulos 2015, 5-8.

⁵⁴⁰ Strabo 10.5.1; Pliny, *Natural History* 4.12.65; Dionysius, *Periegeta* 526; Callimachus, *Hymn to Delos* 16-22; Constantakopoulou 2007, 29.

⁵⁴¹ Morgan 1990; Constantakopoulou 2007, 40-41.

⁵⁴² Santerre 1958, 280; Jeffrey 1990, 296-297; Constantakopoulou 2007, 44.

monumental buildings. At some point in the seventh century the *oikos* of the Naxians was dedicated, oriented to the Altar of the Horns. The Terrace of the Lions was built at the end of the seventh century along the main road from the northern port of Scardana, and the Naxian Colossal Apollo was dedicated c. 600 BCE.⁵⁴³ Naxos' presence on Delos is extensive and unparalleled in this period, and due at least in part to a desire to showcase artistic development and wealth to the other members of the Cyclades. Constantakopoulou argues that the reason we have such early displays of monumentality in Delos is because the dedicators were mostly the Cycladic islands, whose relationships were already developed and whose communications were already well formed. Because of this, the communities and their elites reached an advanced stage of competitive conspicuous display early on. Naxos was the first to engage on such an extensive level within Delos, but Paros and Samos would soon follow in this intra-island competition.⁵⁴⁴ We might be tempted to assume that this competitiveness would lead to a distinction of style, but the Chian style of the seated sphinx dedicated by Naxos on Delos would suggest otherwise, as would the necessity of adding a fourth-century inscription to the base of the Naxian colossus.⁵⁴⁵ I would argue that the need for a distinctive style was negated by Naxos' early, unchallenged domination of the Delian dedicatory tradition, and the close lines of communication within the Cyclades.

The Delphic amphictyony seems to have established its control by c. 600 BCE.⁵⁴⁶ The subsequent growth and influence of Delphi was a rapid: by the time of the dedication of the Naxian Sphinx, it already enjoyed a high degree of importance in the ancient Greek world. As we have already discussed, Delos had already emerged as a significant place of dedicatory investment prior to this, and other Cycladic islands were beginning to represent themselves at Delos: the Naxian Sphinx might simply be representative of a Naxian desire to spread influence elsewhere through dedicatory

⁵⁴³ Altar of Horns, the most sacred place in Delos: Bruneau 1970, 19-23; Constantakopoulou 2007, 40-41. *Oikos* of the Naxians: Vallois 1944, 14-16; Courbin 1980, 38-41; Bruneau and Ducat 1983, 123. The Terrace of the Lions: Santerre 1959, 35-36; Bruneau and Ducat 1983, 173; Constantakopoulou 2007, 45. Naxian Colossal Apollo: Santerre 1959, 34; Bruneau and Ducat 1983, 125-126; Constantakopoulou 2007, 45.

⁵⁴⁴ Constantakopoulou 2007, 46-52.

⁵⁴⁵ A parallel to our sphinx at Delphi: Constantakopoulou 2007, 45.

⁵⁴⁶ At which point the Pythian Games were established (Morgan 1993, 30).

investment. However, it could be an intentional establishment of the Delian amphictyony outside of the Cyclades, prompted by a desire to showcase their own already substantial prestige and wealth in a sanctuary that was developing into a panhellenic stage. Either way, it seems tied into the growing prominence of Delphi as a sanctuary, and a desire to showcase some form of power, whether of Naxos individually or of the Cyclades/Delian amphictyony as a whole. In this context, the use of a Cycladic material becomes even more important. This is a very literal extension of the Delian amphictyony, and Naxos more specifically. Might the Naxian Sphinx have been a subtle form of amphictyonic competition, meant to remind a visitor to the site of not just Naxian prestige, but the prestige of another religious-political group? Or does the use of Cycladic stone attempt to connect to the mythology of Apollo himself, born in the Cyclades? If so, the Naxian Sphinx represents a connecting of his homeland to Delphi, thus creating a visceral and physical link between Delos and the emerging power of Delphi, an advantageous, if metaphorical, extension of power back to Delos. The Naxian Sphinx, therefore, does not just represent the myth of the sphinx figure, but perhaps also the mythology of the sanctuary and Apollo himself.

5.5. Mythology and the Naxian Sphinx

In the Hellenic world, the sphinx first appeared as a sculptural type in the Cyclades, after which it spread throughout the mainland and became associated with the funerary sphere. The winged female sphinx is a common motif on seventh and sixth century Cycladic vases, and appears earliest on Naxian vessels, from the first quarter of the seventh century.⁵⁴⁷ In the same period, the sphinx emerges for the first time in the Hellenic sculptural record – once again, in the Cyclades.⁵⁴⁸ From what we can tell, this predominance is unparalleled in other Hellenic sanctuaries at this time. Naxos had a particularly important role in the creation and popularization of sphinxes, although whether this is due to a

⁵⁴⁷ Bosana-Kourou 1979, 90.

⁵⁴⁸ Goldberg 1985, 197; Ridgway 1977, 158-160; Scott 2010, 47.

particular resonance that the sphinx had on Naxos, or simply because Naxos was a dominant force is unclear.⁵⁴⁹ Furthermore, the sphinx *akroteria* type developed in the Cyclades alongside the Nike type.⁵⁵⁰ It is after this that we begin to see the sphinx spread across the Greek world: by the end of the Archaic period it is no longer a specifically Cycladic creature.⁵⁵¹ This early development of the sphinx form in the Cyclades is relatively unsurprising given the importance that the islands had in trade routes between east and west. The sphinx appears remarkably early in the Delphic sculptural record compared to the rest of the Greek mainland purely because of this Cycladic dedication.⁵⁵² It is important to recognise the Naxian Sphinx not just as a standalone monument, but one that operated within a much wider network of iconography that extended across the Aegean.

Though it is widely acknowledged that the early forerunners to the Ionic capital are to be found in the Eastern Aegean and Cycladic islands, some have identified these early capitals as their own form, subtly different from the standard Ionic order. The echinus of this ‘Cycladic capital’ is fatter and the overall plan is more elongated, with no oculus between its volutes. Even those who do not consider the two capital types to be fully distinct acknowledge differing stylistic features, in particular the palmette in the volute corner, usually incised with one to three lobes.⁵⁵³ This type of column was associated particularly with Naxos, Paros, and Delos, the main centres of marble working in the Cyclades in this period. Richens and Herdt identify twelve clear examples of Cycladic capitals, one of which is the Naxian Sphinx.⁵⁵⁴ Of the other twelve, six are votive columns, six belong to temples or other sanctuary buildings, and one other was attached to the previously mentioned Naxian sphinx on Delos: it is clear that this form of column had a particular connection and association with votive

⁵⁴⁹ Other Naxian sphinxes: Amandry 1953, 25-26.

⁵⁵⁰ Though we have no surviving sphinx *akroteria* from the Cyclades themselves, there are a number of examples from around the Greek world depicted in the Cycladic style, such as those on the Athenian Parthenon (Ridgway 1977, 216-218).

⁵⁵¹ Ridgway 1977, 158-160.

⁵⁵² Goldberg 1985, 197.

⁵⁵³ McGowan 1997, 222-223.

⁵⁵⁴ The twelve examples: the Naxian Sphinx, Delphi; the votive column of Alexitides, Naxos; the Temple of Dionysios, Yria; a votive capital in the Paros Museum; the votive column of Archilochos, Paros; votive with sphinx, Delos; corner from Propylon, Naxian Oikos; a votive from Oropos; Temple of Athena Nike, Athens; Temple of Dionysios, Myus; the Erechtheion, Athens; the Propylaea, Athens.

offerings and cult activity, as well as with the Cyclades.⁵⁵⁵ Furthermore, both the Naxian Sphinx and the Delos-Naxian Sphinx share similarities in the mouldings of the volutes and the profile of the baluster, and neither have an abacus. The arrangement of the base mouldings is also near identical to those in a Naxian dedicated *oikos* building on Delos.⁵⁵⁶ It is clear that, at least in terms of column and capital, we can see a distinct localised trend. The Naxian Sphinx, therefore, presents not only a Cycladic form through the sphinx, but also represents an architectural form connected clearly to the Cyclades through the capital.

The dedication is also stylistically connected to the Cyclades. Sphinxes are not a unified group in terms of style. Wright's discussion of the variations offers several clear distinctions between Cycladic, Attic, and Corinthian style sphinxes: Cycladic sphinxes are not normally found in funerary contexts and their style might best be described as having less definition in the modelling of cheekbones, highly arched eyebrows, and a propensity for more scalloped hairlines; the style also leans towards a gentler modelling of musculature, leaving the limbs toned and defined, but slender.⁵⁵⁷ The Cycladic style is also characterised by flat relief and incisions, as well as linear lines, and we see this clearly in the rendering of the Naxian Sphinx's hair and chest, as well as the wings, particularly in the three sections into which the wings are divided. Furthermore, the sculptural figures of Naxos and other Cycladic workshops were often rendered in colossal proportions, just like the Naxian Sphinx.⁵⁵⁸ There is some variation between the Naxian Sphinx and the Delos-Naxian Sphinx, despite the fact that both are Naxian dedications. The Naxian Sphinx has a thinner face with a more pointed chin, but the Delos-Naxian Sphinx is thought to be the work of a Chian sculptor, with the softer facial features that have been attributed to Chios.⁵⁵⁹ Another contemporary sphinx of comparable proportions, found on Naxos, has a similar, slender face. By the middle of the sixth century there was extended contact

⁵⁵⁵ Richens & Herdt 2009, 809-810.

⁵⁵⁶ Amandry 1953, 17-22.

⁵⁵⁷ Wright 1977, 247-250; Ridgway 1977, 158.

⁵⁵⁸ Amandry 1953, 27; Barringer 2015.

⁵⁵⁹ Sheedy 1985, 621.

between the workshops of the different islands within the Cyclades, and this seems to be the cause of this stylistic variety. Though these were all made on Naxos, the close connections between the Cycladic islands meant that artists and styles regularly moved between island workshops. Sphinxes from Cyrene and Aegina also share similarities. Aegina is not a part of the Cyclades, but had long ago established trade routes with them, and Cyrene was originally established as a colony of Thera.⁵⁶⁰ The Cyrene Sphinx sits on a similar Cycladic Ionic column, and her body is of very similar proportions to its Delphic counterpart: she has the same inaccurate folding of the back legs (Fig. 6.5).⁵⁶¹ Facially, she is rather different, and Ridgway argues that rather than Naxian or Parian the simplification of the



sculpture indicates that it is from Chios, which fits with White's conclusion that it was the result of widespread immigration from the Aegean islands.⁵⁶²

⁵⁶⁰ Done so on the order of the Delphic Pythia (Herodotus 4.203.2)

⁵⁶¹ White 1977, 48-53.

⁵⁶² White 1977, 53.

Figure 5.5. Reconstruction of the Cyrene sphinx monument and the head of the Cyrene sphinx. From Wright 1971, fig. 2, 5.



The *kouros* from Melos, the most south-westerly island of the Cyclades, has stylistic facial similarities with the Naxian Sphinx. Made from Naxian marble and dating to c. 550 BCE, it is a near contemporary with the Delphic votive.⁵⁶³ He shares the same flat, scalloped hairline as the Naxian Sphinx, and his hair falls in long lines of braids down his back, exposing a slender neck, and narrower shoulders than we normally see in

archaic *kouroi*.⁵⁶⁴ He has a more reserved smile, his eyebrows appear to be arched to a similar height, and his eyes are of the same shape. His face is slender, and in the same oval shape that we see in our votive: as well as this, his limbs are slender, though toned, and his ribs are just visible, a physique that he shares with the Naxian sphinx. Likewise, the *kore* Phrasikleia, though an Attic monument, is attributed, through an inscription on its base, to Aristion of Paros.⁵⁶⁵ Though much more elaborately decorated than the Naxian Sphinx, the two faces maintain the same oval shape and long nose, and the *kore* also has the same under-defined cheekbones that we see on the Sphinx. The Delian Lions, dedicated by Naxos at Delos have similarly executed bodies with comparably sharp inclines in the angle of the torso, slender forms, prominent ribcages, and a gently modelled musculature.

⁵⁶³ Carter and Steinberg 2010, 107.

⁵⁶⁴ Guralnick 1985, 402.

⁵⁶⁵ Hurwit 2015, 106.

These Cycladic sphinxes, despite being found on different islands and in different contexts, share stylistic similarities, particularly in the head, facial features, and design of the hair. Though none perfectly match, the existence of so many stylistically similar sphinxes is suggestive of a clear Cycladic monument type.⁵⁶⁶ The development of specific sculptural forms in this area is not surprising given its early development of Greek artistic forms, but the particular interest in sphinxes is notable. The sphinx features in Minoan and Mycenaean art, where it is depicted using a mixture of Near-Eastern, Egyptian and Cretan-Mycenaean elements, and was imported along with other hybrid creatures as a symbol of high status to advertise and legitimise the power of a new and growing elite.⁵⁶⁷ It would disappear from the archaeological record after the decline of these civilisations, only to reappear in the seventh century BCE, but before then could be found across the Aegean, including the Cyclades.⁵⁶⁸ Naxos was a powerful island during the second millennium BCE, the era of the Minoan and Mycenaean civilisations; its workshops exported pottery and jewellery across the Aegean, particularly to Crete, Laconia, and the Dodecanese.⁵⁶⁹ As previously mentioned, the sphinx would become a regular feature of seventh century Cycladic earthenware, and would reappear first on Naxos.⁵⁷⁰ In light of this, the Archaic interest in the sphinx becomes clearer. The adoption of the sphinx was perhaps part of claiming a more ancient past, connecting the power of the present to the successes of previous civilisations. Given that sphinxes were so often connected to luxury objects and powerful settings, Naxos seems to be drawing on this prestige as a means of self-elevation.

What does this have to do with mythology? As we have already said, mythology is a way for communities to present and differentiate themselves. This is a complicated enough concept in a unified social group: the Hellenic world is a far more difficult case. The Greeks shared a mythology, but had a highly differentiated social landscape, with different ethnic and civic groups that led to a

⁵⁶⁶ Sheedy 1985, 83.

⁵⁶⁷ Wunsch 1916-1924, 938; Demisch 1977, 12, 64; Burke 2005, 403; Zouzoula 2007, 144- 145; Nys 2018, 229.

⁵⁶⁸ Chase 1952, 28.

⁵⁶⁹ Angelopoulou 2019, 135-143.

⁵⁷⁰ Bosana-Kourou 1979, 90.

patchwork of largely independent societies; even the utility of the term 'Greek' (or even 'Hellenes') is disputed. In reality, what this means is that in the Greek world there were a huge number of individual communities attempting to differentiate themselves using the same mythological language. In such a landscape, claiming visual or literary ownership of particular gods, characters, or stories becomes highly significant in the presentation of individual identities; we have already seen the importance of this in the Athenian reclamation of Theseus and Herakles in Chapter Four. Creating a specifically Cycladic mythology is more than a visual choice; it is a way of differentiating and constructing an identity. In this case, the mythology of the Naxian Sphinx displays the individuality of the Cyclades and of Naxos and serves as a visual reminder of its historical past and the significance of Naxos to the development of the Aegean. It also reinforces the continuing success of the sanctuary of Delos, and forces a connection between these two Apollo sanctuaries, reminding the viewer that though Delphi was important, Delos was pre-eminent both historically and in the mythology of the god.

5.6. The Naxian Sphinx in Delphi

It is difficult to tell how readily the link between the Cyclades and the Naxian Sphinx would have been understood by the rest of the Greek world. In the fourth century, an identifying inscription was added to its base, suggesting a change in how it was viewed and understood: a need for clarity when its origins were becoming obscure.⁵⁷¹ Is this a result of the Cycladic style becoming less recognisable over time or of Naxian presumption at the time of the dedication, assuming that it would have the same level of recognition on the mainland as it did within the Cyclades? Or does this simply reflect a change in the epigraphic tradition, either at Delphi or on Naxos? Now is the time when literary evidence explaining the rationale behind these decisions would have been useful. However, in its absence perhaps we should consider the exposure that the rest of the Greek world would have had to the Cyclades. Given the prominence of the islands as a nexus of Aegean trade and the fame of Delos, we

⁵⁷¹ Homolle 1909, 41; Robertson 1975, 87.

can assume that there must have been at least some level of exposure to their artistic styles. The archaeological record shows a clear Cycladic fondness for sphinxes, so even if the style is not recognisable, the type might have been. Visitors to Delphi, when looking at the Naxian Sphinx, might well have understood these associations, and connected the monument to the identity of the dedicators. In this process of identification, the viewer would also recognise the wealth and resources of the dedicator, an acknowledgement of their power and strength as a community. However, if this type of sphinx is not specifically associated with Naxos but with the Cyclades, or even (as the epicentre of Cycladic dedication) with Delos, then we might also find that a visitor to the sanctuary would associate the experience and prestige of the sphinx with the Cyclades more broadly, or even with a different religious amphictyony. The Naxian Sphinx as a whole could, therefore, reflect an unease between an older sanctuary and its new Delphic opposition, an expansion using dedications rather than armies. But to understand this better, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between sphinxes and the Cyclades.

The Sphinx would have evoked a sense of a historical past, but it also operated within a mythological context through its connections to the Oedipus myth. In comparison to the Aegospotami monument, whose newness communicated its significance and would have provoked a particular sense of recognition ([pp. 166](#)), the archaic style and clear age of the Naxian Sphinx must have stood out to a visitor as well, conveying the antiquity of the monument within the context of the sanctuary, and reinforcing this connection to the mythological past. Though the sculptural sphinxes we see in the Greek world are rarely depicted as part of an overarching narrative, that does not mean that they can be viewed separately from this mythological background.⁵⁷² The monumental column form of dedication must have attracted particular attention. Ridgway suggests that they might have preceded and even prompted the adoption of the Ionic order in mainland temples, and became particularly popular in the Archaic period, gaining variations and adaptations. In particular, the sphinx was

⁵⁷² White 1971, 47; Goldberg 1985, 195.

replaced with Nike, and the Ionic column capital by a pedestal (the best-known example of this being the Nike by Paionios c. 425 BCE, at rival Olympia); they were particularly popular along roads and pathways. The simple design of these arrangements works well from a practical point-of-view: they are easily understood even by a person in motion, unlike a more complex arrangement whose meaning might be lost.⁵⁷³ Most importantly, this form connects the Sphinx to the Oedipus myth (with its link to paths and crossroads), and the tall column recalls the cliffs from which the Sphinx was said to have cast herself. Within the Delphic context, this design allows the Sphinx to appear as if it is following the route that the visitor would take along the Sacred Way, as if it too were progressing towards the temple at the conclusion of the route, and the Pythia.

The special status of the *aire* space must also be considered in this context. The Naxian Sphinx is placed close to this space, affording it particular attention. It would have had a commanding presence during any sacrificial or sacred activities performed in the space, presiding over affairs from above. The interplay between the mythological and sacred spheres are clear: the Sphinx as a statue lends a mythic presence to proceedings, while also gaining significance from this important location. Though the exact nature of the *aire* is uncertain, it does seem likely that some kind of performative ritual actions took place within it, be they ceremonies, rituals, dances, sacrifices or feasts. From a psychological and sensory perspective, spaces like this blur the boundary between the mundane and the sacred, allowing the visitor to participate within a transformative series of actions that elevate their own position to that of mythological characters. Sacrifices and feasting have their own sensory landscapes, defined by the aromas of cooking meat, blood and smoke, the sounds of crackling wood and cracking bones, music and hymns, and the general ambiance of festive people.⁵⁷⁴ This too would add to the mythic significance of the space as the visitor not only moved through it, but engaged in ritual actions within it.

⁵⁷³ Ridgway 1971, 339-340.

⁵⁷⁴ On the significance of smoke: Van Straten 1995; Vernant 1989; Naiden 2013; Ekroth 2017.

The next chapter will discuss the process of Pythian consultation in more detail, but it is worth considering here how the Naxian Sphinx operates within this transitional space. The sphinx is used frequently as an apotropaic figure, on temples, graves, and city gates to protect and to avert danger, sickness, and adversity, but this protective role does not necessarily mean that the sphinx was viewed as a comforting creature, any more than was a Gorgon.⁵⁷⁵ Within the funerary sphere, lions can represent the bravery or strength of the deceased: conversely, the sphinx is never connected to the human realm, existing only in the mythological sphere as a distant and unobtainable force of nature.⁵⁷⁶ The sanctuary context adds to this: Marconi considers a sanctuary a bridge between the terrestrial world and the other, and that sphinxes within them are imbued with an additional sense of liminality due to this sanctuary context.⁵⁷⁷ Although we cannot say for certain that the exact proportions of the Naxian Sphinx and the temple aligned to form the connection for which Scott argues, its height and proximity to the temple structure must have been noticed by visitors, and it is clearly visually aligned with the temple. Like sphinx *akroteria*, the Naxian Sphinx gains from this association, acquiring a sense of *mysterium tremendum*, a mysterious power that causes an observer to tremble in awe.⁵⁷⁸ Of course, the Naxian Sphinx would not have been viewed in isolation. It is also located close to the Rock of Sybil, which Pausanias tells us was the place on which the original oracle, Herophile, stood to proclaim the first oracles at Delphi. Next to them is the Rock of Leto.⁵⁷⁹ These mythological contexts further emphasize the Sphinx's mythic role. The wider context of the area also helps in this regard. The visitor to Delphi has travelled through the wilderness, much as Oedipus would have done when first encountering the Sphinx, and Thebes is not situated that far from Delphi, lending additional weight to mythologised atmosphere.

Gibeault, whose theories are deeply rooted in the Freudian school, argues that the sphinx is experienced on a psychological level as something surreally unreal, and exposes the viewer to the fear

⁵⁷⁵ Ridgway 1977, 156; Marx-Wolf 2012.

⁵⁷⁶ Ridgway 1977, 158.

⁵⁷⁷ Burkert 1988, 34; Marconi 2007, 28, 89-90; Petit 2013, 211-212.

⁵⁷⁸ Marconi 2007; 215; 222; Petit 2013, 212-213.

⁵⁷⁹ Pausanias 10.12.1.

of the unknown. He discusses in particular the answers to the two riddles put to Oedipus, arguing that these answers centre around the self-definition of both Oedipus and the Sphinx herself. Due to this, he believes that anyone who fell under the gaze of a sphinx would recall this particular mythological narrative, and would go through a similar experience, identifying her as the second riddle did; they themselves would be cast into the role of Oedipus. In this situation, they would recall the threat of being devoured, and her presence would provoke confusion and fear of a violent rejection by the creature. Gibeault considers the Sphinx a pregenital mother of Oedipus, encountered before he is welcomed into Thebes and meets, unknowingly, his own mother. The consideration of her as a mother figure stems from the role the Sphinx has in shaping the direction of Oedipus' life, and the continuation of her presence, in the form of plagues, after her death. Gross suggests that the defeat of this chthonic mother figure is reflected in the mythos of Delphi itself, arguing that Apollo's defeat of Gaia parallels this situation, and that the deeply ambiguous nature of the Pythian oracle also recalls the Sphinx's ambiguous riddles.⁵⁸⁰

5.7. Conclusion

It has been assumed that the Archaic period was incapable of producing either complex narrative arrangements or interaction in free-standing sculpture, and indeed, Archaic sculpture is dominated by single statues, or arrangements with statues placed together without significant visual connection. However, as Ridgway remarks, this style of single statue monuments, as well as group monuments with 'single file' composition, remained popular through to the Hellenistic period, even when the opportunity to commission more complex narrative groups was available.⁵⁸¹ The simplicity of the Naxian Sphinx is not, therefore, a chronological necessity but a deliberate choice. However, as this chapter has demonstrated, the stylistic simplicity does not equate to a simplistic interpretation.

⁵⁸⁰ Gibeault 2013, 11-16; Gross 2013, 52.

⁵⁸¹ Ridgway 1971, 339-340.

This chapter aimed to understand the role of mythology in understanding the Naxian Sphinx and its place within Delphi. The sphinx might be a creature known across Greece, but in this case it was used as a specifically Cycladic creature. It evokes the Cyclades in each of its aspects, from the column to the capital to the form and style of the Sphinx itself, reflecting a specific identity and perhaps a wider amphictyonic connection between Delos and Naxos. With this dedication, Naxos is promoting their prestige through the size, material, and unique presence of the sculpture in the sanctuary space; it evokes a historical past and sits within a wider network of sphinx sculptures intended to connect the Cyclades – and Naxos more specifically – to the traditions of the Mycenaean and Minoan period. The choice of material reinforces the wealth and success of Naxos and was the first monument to be made out of local materials. Creating an all-encompassing ownership of a mythological figure was no mean feat in the Archaic Aegean, and whether or not it was a conscious decision on the part of Naxos or the Cyclades, it shows their cultural significance and financial success in a way that is perhaps not always noted in the generally Atheno-centric study of Greek antiquity. What is also curious, though outside the remit of this chapter, is the relationship between, and shared iconographies of, the Cyclades and we might wonder whether Naxos intended the Naxian Sphinx as a message not just to the wider Greek world, but also to the Cycladic communities specifically.

For a visitor to Delphi, this monument would have created a specific experience, connecting the visitor to a mythological narrative and mythologizing the space in turn, lending additional significance to the movement towards the oracle and emphasising the role that Delphi played in the world. To the non-Cycladic audience, these messages might have been less clear, but what would have had significant impact is the connection between the dedication and the Oedipus myth. Why would a dedicator want to connect themselves to this mythological sphere? The Oedipus myth, with its themes of civic unrest, pollution, murder, and incest does not necessarily convey ideals with which a dedicator would want to be connected. But these mythologies are more than their individual themes: they express a broader cultural identity and connect the dedicator to panhellenism. In this way, the Naxian Sphinx manages to evoke identity on many levels. The sphinx form itself also connects on a

mythological level to Delphi, and to the process of Pythian consultation, increasing the sense of awe and fear as the visitor approached the temple. Its prominent location and significant size meant that the Naxian Sphinx would not have failed to catch the eye of the viewer and as time went on it would have appeared increasingly unique as an early Archaic sculpture, given that the fire destroyed many of its contemporaries. This shift in the visual language of the sanctuary would have given the Naxian Sphinx an increased connection to a mythological past, further reinforced by the simplicity of its design. It is clearly not a part of another building or structure, it exists independently, as if the mythological sphinx from the Oedipus stories, waiting on the cliff, had been frozen in time. To the visitor to Delphi, who has passed through the spheres of military victories and timocratic power, the Naxian Sphinx evokes a sense of the mythological. Now the visitor is moving closer to the temple and is in fact overshadowed by it. Previously, the sharp terracing and multiple buildings of the sanctuary must have impeded the view of the temple, but now the visitor must pass alongside but distinctly underneath it, as they prepare themselves for the divine communication they would be about to receive should they be consulting the oracle. The sphinx, another oracular creature, would have reminded the visitor of the sacred task they had come to perform, mythologizing their own journey and creating an increased sense of importance not only of their task, but of the sanctuary itself.

Chapter Six

The Temple of Apollo and the architecture of divine presence

This chapter will discuss the Temple of Apollo and, like the previous chapters, will study it through the lens of a particularly relevant theme: divine presence. However, given the inextricable link between Delphi, Pythia, and temple, this chapter will also look at the oracle and how visitors to the sanctuary would have participated in the mantic process. Likewise, attempting to look at visitor experience at Delphi without any discussion of the oracle would also ignore a highly significant part of the space. The Pythia dominates Delphi: a huge number of the dedications were given in relation to consultations, and the vast majority of ancient (and modern) literature relating to the sanctuary includes the Pythia in some form. The Delphic Oracle is one of the best-documented religious institutions of the ancient Hellenic world. As such, the oracle is a vital part of any discussion of the experience of the sanctuary: even those who would not have been able to consult the Pythia themselves would have been very aware of her existence and the connection between the sanctuary, its monuments, and the oracle.

This chapter aims to understand what experiencing the oracle would have been like by grounding the oracle process within the physical landscape and by interpreting it through the lens of divine presence. The temple is a central part of Greek sanctuary space, and in Delphi, the space is constructed to emphasise this, with the Sacred Way leading directly to the platform. This chapter focuses on the intersection between the oracle, the temple, and the consultant in order to understand the experience of the temple and of oracular consultation. This chapter will, therefore, take a slightly different approach to our case-study structure in chapters 3-5. As with the previous chapters, this chapter will open with a more theoretical discussion of the theme and how I intend to develop and study it, before moving on to space. The space in this case is the temple platform and its surrounding

monuments as best we can reconstruct them. Following that will come the overview of the monument (in this case the temple) including its decoration, pedimental sculpture, and the interior. The contextual section, however, will not examine any external factor: we have looked at Lysander's actions, Athenian development, and the situation in the Cyclades, but this chapter will explore the Delphic oracle itself as the contextual element of the temple. For the sake of clarity, the context will be divided, including a section specifically on the realities of consultation in Delphi, addressing the literary fallacies that have long clung to the understanding of Pythian studies. The next section, following the previously set pattern, will address the manifestation of divine presence in the temple, and the final section will be a wider experiential discussion of the consultant, moving through the sanctuary as a whole to the temple and then its interior.

A wide array of authors in many disparate genres discuss the oracle in a variety of ways, interest spanning centuries and continuing into the Roman period, as touched on in Chapter One.⁵⁸² Nevertheless, details of how the Pythia operated are missing, as authors from the Archaic and Classical period treat the process as common knowledge, without really explaining what a visitor to the oracle would actually have done. It is not until after this that we find sources which discuss the oracle in any detail. These predominantly date from the first century BCE to the fourth century CE and give conflicting and often bizarre accounts. But all these different literary sources, many of which depict mythological scenes, have been merged to create an artificial composite story about the mantic process at Delphi, not unlike the 'Spartan Mirage' phenomenon with which Peloponnesian researchers have so often had to do battle. Unlike the 'Spartan Mirage', however, this 'Delphic illusion' remains largely unquestioned, despite some of its more baffling elements. According to many accounts the oracle is characterized by agitation, jumping and leaping, harshness of voice, intense salivation, ataxia, loss of senses, the inhalation of drugs or hallucinogenic natural gases, and sometimes death. At the

⁵⁸² Aeschylus, Aristotle, Diodorus, Diogenes, Euripides, Herodotus, Julian, Justin, Livy, Lucan, Nepos, Ovid, Pausanias, Pindar, Plato, Plutarch, Sophocles, Strabo, Thucydides and Xenophon, to name but a few. See Chapter One for further discussion ([pp. 79](#)).

same time, the Pythia supposedly delivered complex riddles in hexameter verse while balancing on a tripod. The problematic nature of this depiction seems rarely to be addressed.

6.1. Divine presence

The concept of epiphany in the Graeco-Roman world is evident in literary sources, in which the gods may appear as benevolent helpers or troublemakers in a variety of genres. But the study of epiphany in material evidence is also a growing field of interest. This chapter will look at the presence of divine forces in the sanctuary, and how they would manifest for the visitor to the sanctuary. I will be using the term 'divine presence' as I am not only interested in direct manifestation of the gods, but also the sense of them in the sanctuary space. Of course, Greek *epiphaneia* can also indicate a display of divine power without the personal appearance of a god, such as a miraculous healing, but in this case the sensation or feeling of a godly presence I am discussing does not necessarily include any divine action. Additionally, in the context of oracular consultation, there is a mundane medium between god and consultant, hence the term 'divine presence' feels more appropriate than 'epiphany'. According to Lührmann's widely accepted definition of the word, *epiphaneia* never includes the physical manifestation of a god, but I will argue that the god does take an indirect form through sculptural presence. Therefore, we will be using the term 'divine presence' in this chapter.⁵⁸³

However, to the ancient visitors of Delphi, the idea that their gods might appear before them was firmly grounded in their cultural consciousness. Gordon explains the semantic issue in his definitive article. Our Greek and Roman sources do not differentiate between statues of gods and the gods themselves: it is not 'an Aphrodite', but simply 'Aphrodite', implying a linguistic and cultural unwillingness to differentiate between statue and god. Gordon also outlines the many semantic links between material objects and the divine in the language used to describe these artworks.⁵⁸⁴ The

⁵⁸³ Lührmann 1971; Versnel 1987, 42-43.

⁵⁸⁴ Gordon 1979, 7-8; Gladigow 2005, 62-84.

Roman habit of removing cult statues from conquered Greek cities, thus depriving them of their gods, also speaks to a conceptual connection between art and the divine.⁵⁸⁵ It seems, as far as we can tell, that in the ancient world the line between divine entity and statue was blurred. This is not surprising in the context of a mythological landscape where gods would regularly manifest in different forms, but contrasts starkly with the modern world, where the dominant monotheistic religions worship divinities who rarely appear to their believers in physical, anthropomorphic form. It was clearly understood that people could meet and address gods in their temples and sacred spaces, with sacrifices acting as appropriate transactional offerings to facilitate responses.⁵⁸⁶

The sanctuary space of Delphi adds to this sense of divine proximity. The ritual and sensory framework within which a viewer would participate blurred the distinction between statue and god even further. Tanner discusses this at some length, arguing that the viewing of a cult statue was part of a participatory ritual grounded in shared understanding and experience. This shared experience came from the deployment of knowledge about the gods acquired through culturally shared and reinforced concepts that derived from the Homeric poets and other widely known stories and descriptions of the god in question.⁵⁸⁷ As Platt outlines, interaction with cult statues is a ritual act of viewing: the cult statue exists within a sacred framework, and just as the consultation of an oracle or the offering of a sacrifice is an act of participation within that framework, so too is viewing the statue and acknowledging that god. Images are created by seeing, and by being seen monuments appear to perceive the viewer in turn. Simply by existing and being observed, an interaction is created between object and viewer.⁵⁸⁸

The experience of this section of the sanctuary is clearly grounded in ritual: the context of the oracle is vital for understanding divine presence in Delphi. It is in many ways the most literal connection with a divine force in the sanctuary. As such, this chapter will focus on how divine presence

⁵⁸⁵ Gordon 1979, 10; Pollitt 1986, 66-74.

⁵⁸⁶ Rüpke 2010, 181.

⁵⁸⁷ Tanner 2006, 48-54.

⁵⁸⁸ Bauer 2007, 105; Braunlein 2009, 774-777; Rüpke 2010, 187.

manifested through oracular consultation, but also how the sanctuary itself reinforced this in other ways, because it is clear that divine presence is felt through other aspects of the visit, such as representations of the gods and various other sensorial stimuli. The sanctuary itself is vital for the understanding of divine presence, as the site reinforced this experience. Likewise, the immediate context of consultation is clearly important, as the temple's interior operates as a space reinforced by the significance of the consultation and of the temple form itself. To better understand this, we will also examine the sensorial landscape that the visitor would move through as they entered the temple, particularly through the use of light and shadow, and incense.

6.2. The space: the temple platform

This chapter represents the culmination of the movement through the sanctuary. The space in this section of the sanctuary is one dominated by the temple **(37)** (Fig. 6.1) already described in Chapter Two (section 2.7: [pp. 128](#)). It is both geographically and ideologically the heart of the sanctuary space and sits at the end of the Sacred Way. To reach it, visitors would already have passed by a vast array of offerings and dedications, as we have seen in the previous chapters. Visitors would have been channelled along the Sacred Way to this point: the steepness of the hillside and the spread of dedications would have forced the visitor to follow the path without much deviation, making this point a natural conclusion even if they did not enter the temple or consult the oracle. Approaching the temple platform necessitated a sharp turn in the Sacred Way as the path went steeply uphill along the eastern side of the temple platform, running parallel to the front of the temple. The view of the temple from this path would have been unobstructed in the early days of the sanctuary, but by the end of the Archaic period it was blocked off by the Chian Altar **(36)**.⁵⁸⁹

⁵⁸⁹ On the Chian Altar: Courby 1927, 128; Amandry 1986, 218.

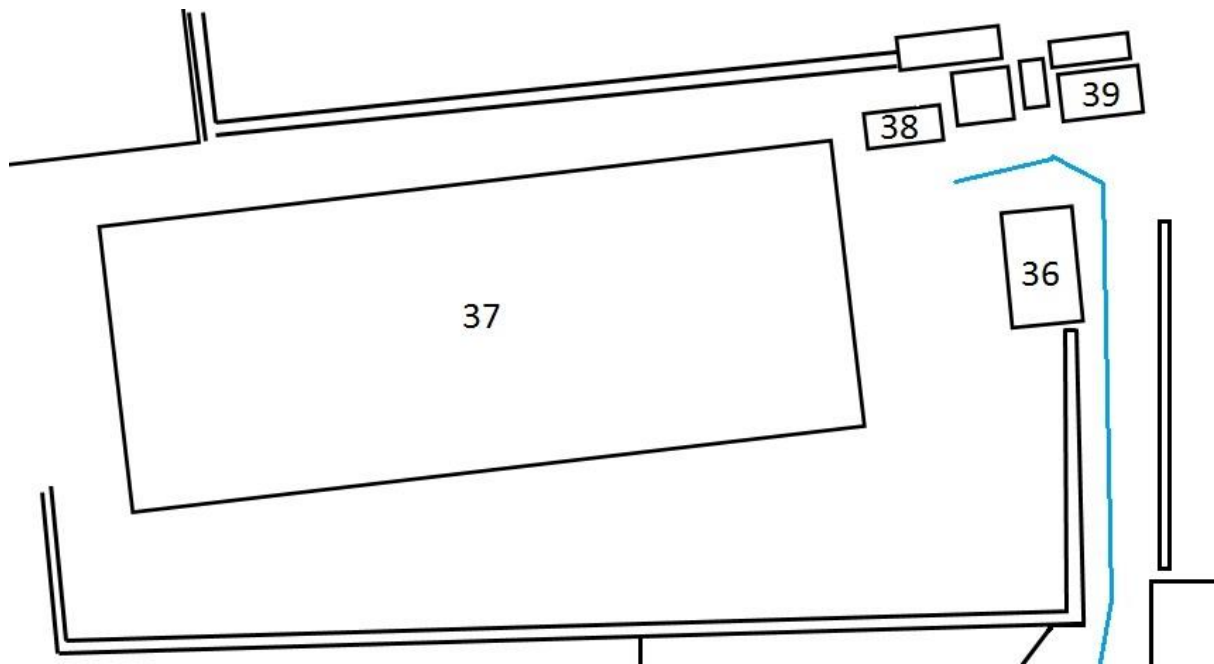


Figure 6.1. Reconstruction of the treasury corner. Plan: author's own.

Key:

- 36. Chian Altar
- 37. Temple of Apollo
- 38. Statue of Apollo
- 39. Syracuse dedication: tripod

Once past that, the visitor would finally have been confronted with the façade of the temple, as well as a wide array of dedications previously discussed in Chapter Two. The Chian Altar created a channel through which the visitors must pass in order to reach the platform itself. Though the Sacred Way does not perceptibly narrow, the steep rise of the hillside on the other side combined with the altar's height creates the illusion of a hallway, emphasised by the dark stone of the altar, which blocked the view of the temple until the visitor rounded the corner (Fig. 6.2). This is the final part of the journey for the visitor to Delphi, and the combination of topography and structures makes it suitably dramatic. Whether this was a deliberate ploy to delay the sight of the temple is up for debate, but regardless, the positioning of the Chian Altar would raise the visitors' anticipation.⁵⁹⁰

⁵⁹⁰ For a detailed discussion of the delay in seeing the temple as a visitor moved through Delphi, see Tomlinson 1976, 70.



Figure 6.2. The façade of the Temple of Apollo, with the Chian Altar in front of it. Modern visitors still find their view of the temple obstructed on the approach. Photo: author's own.

This approach, made of hidden spaces and deliberate reveals, was perpetuated throughout the sanctuary, particularly on the first turn of the Sacred Way, as we discussed in Chapter Four ([pp. 181](#)). If we consider again the predictive coding model, the denial of the view of the temple throughout the space subverts the expectations of the visitor and denies them the bottom-up sensory input confirming the secular nature of the building. By doing this, the sanctuary not only raises the anticipation and makes its final reveal at the end of the Sacred Way more significant, but continues to reinforce the notion of the building as a place of religious significance and separation. It is unfortunate that relatively little of the temple platform's dedications survive: literary sources name a wide array of dedications, but very few are extant. The temple itself would naturally have dominated the space as the most important building in the sanctuary, but evidence for that too is difficult: much of the

sculpture has survived in fragmentary form, but the temple itself was rebuilt several times in antiquity. The visitor to Delphi would already have experienced the transformative messages of the Aegospotami monument, which showed the potential for heroes to move from the mortal sphere to the divine, the divine presence incorporated into the Athenian Treasury, and the Naxian Sphinx's creation of a mythologised space. These monuments would already have given the suggestion of a blurring of the lines between the divine and mortal worlds. This would have been further reinforced by the statues of Apollo on the temple platform and the number of representations of him they would have seen throughout the sanctuary. The visitor would have experienced a journey through the sanctuary, and the tunnel-like channelling of the space would have further emphasised the creation of a liminal space between the rest of the sanctuary and the interior of the temple.

6.3. The Temple

The nature of the landscape at Delphi means that the temple platform must have appeared early on in its history, to allow for structural building on such steep slopes. The history of the temple at Delphi and its different phases remains unclear. Pausanias discusses at some length the predecessors of the temple that he saw when he came to Delphi, but in his usual manner he relates to us a somewhat fantastical series of structures, from one made entirely of bronze to another formed of beeswax.⁵⁹¹ Many are improbable, if not entirely mythological, but it does seem likely that there was a succession of structures before the sixth century BCE, rather than any single shrine or building.⁵⁹² Architectural fragments suggest that there was a monumental stone building in place by c. 570 BCE, though whether these fragments suggest a new build or a renovation to an existing temple is uncertain.⁵⁹³ What we do know is that this temple was destroyed in the fire of 548 BCE.⁵⁹⁴ The next phase of the temple was not

⁵⁹¹ Pausanias 10.5.

⁵⁹² Sourvinou-Inwood 2009, 234; Neer 2012, 187.

⁵⁹³ Neer 2012, 187.

⁵⁹⁴ Herodotus 2.180; 5.62.2-3.

completed until c. 500 BCE by the Alkmaeonidai, as discussed in previous chapters. This is the temple that will provide the focus of this chapter. The Alkmaeonidai were, at the time, exiled from Athens, which was under the tyranny Hippias, the son of Peisistratos. They had a chequered history at Athens: Megakles's involvement in the killing of the followers of Cylon led to exile for violation of the laws against killing suppliants. Their clan was cursed, and even the graves of clan members were exhumed and the remains removed from the city limits.⁵⁹⁵ Their reasons for becoming involved in the temple project are therefore rather obvious: the promotion and elevation of their name and legacy in the face of this disgrace.



Figure 6.3. Fragments of the temple's eastern pediment. From Kolonia 2006, 222-223.

The costly rebuild, taken up by the Alkmaeonidai following the depletion of Delphi's funds, was made predominantly of poros stone, with a front façade of Parian marble, and its eastern and frontal pediment depicted a central Apollo, who stood in a chariot flanked by youthful men, maidens, and wild beasts, with lions slaughtering their prey in the far corners (Fig. 6.3). The inclusion of the god is neither surprising nor innovative, and the pediment delivers an unsubtle message. Its western pediment is described by Euripides as containing a Gigantomachy, and this identification seems to be supported by fragmentary archaeological evidence: Euripides also describes scenes of Bellerophon killing Chimera, Iolaos raising a torch, and Herakles killing the Hydra, and as there is no place for these on the pediment, it is reasonable to assume that these were on the metopes.⁵⁹⁶ Fragments of three metopes from the temple are extant: one, made of poros, is blank, suggesting that some panels were

⁵⁹⁵ Thucydides 1.126.11; Plutarch, *Solon* 12.2-4.

⁵⁹⁶ Euripides, *Ion* 185-194; Floren 1987, 244-245; Neer 2004, 84; Neer 2012, 190.

undecorated.⁵⁹⁷ The other fragments are decorated: one shows a draped female leg that unfortunately lacks enough detail to reconstruct. The other shows the shoulders and necks of two oxen, and presumably depicted the stealing of Geryon's cattle. This suggests that the Labours of Herakles were featured on the metopes, as well as perhaps the deeds of other mythological heroes.⁵⁹⁸ There was also a later Athenian victory inscription on the temple façade, and captured shields were hung on its metopes.⁵⁹⁹ Having moved through the sanctuary, the visitor would already have seen a variety of themes: these continue to be represented on the temple platform. Lysander's victory monument, an ode to both Hellenic and personal success, shows a desire to represent military victories on a panhellenic stage, and the Athenian victory dedications on the temple continue this trend. We have discussed the Athenian Treasury's role in promoting timocratic and economic pre-eminence, and to use marble in the temple façade cannot be read as anything other than a similar desire to showcase wealth. Finally, the connection between Greek mythology and the Naxian Sphinx is further played out on the temple decoration, which displays mythological scenes that similarly broadcast a particular ideological meaning.

The pediment on the temple contained only free-standing sculpture. Apollo was flanked by variations on the *kouros* and *kore* types, standing frontally as in typical funerary or votive contexts.⁶⁰⁰ The six flanking figures are not particularly distinctive, but they recall a particular set of values and traditions that would have been recognisable to the majority of visitors to the site. *Kouroi* and *korai* were used primarily as the votive and funerary sculpture of the elite; they were expensive to create and so would only have been available to the wealthiest in society. These were the principal form of aristocratic dedication in the Archaic period, and the pediment group has been depicted in the compositional formula we see regularly in chariot victory monuments, with the central chariot flanked

⁵⁹⁷ Presumably the ones running along the north and south of the temple, as was conventional at the time. Bookidis 1967, 189–192. For the poros metope, see Courby 1927, 102.

⁵⁹⁸ Picard and de La Coste-Messelière 1928, 189–190; de La Coste-Messelière and Marcadé 1953, 372; Bookidis 1967, 189–192.

⁵⁹⁹ Flacelière 1954, 257–258; Bommelaer 1991, 180; Scott 2010, 77 n. 11; Gensheimer 2017, 4. Shields: Pausanias 10.19.4; Aeschines, *Against Ctesiphon* 116.

⁶⁰⁰ Neer 2012, 160.

by forward facing figures. These victory monuments were also connected to the elite, who were the ones who had the time and the means to sponsor or compete in such activities.⁶⁰¹

Though the pediment is sometimes labelled an epiphany, another theory is that it depicts Apollo's arrival in Delphi. Marconi suggests that the figures that flank him are youths from the land of the Hyperboreans, but a more likely argument given the involvement of the Alkmaeonidai is that it shows Apollo accompanied by Athenians.⁶⁰² Athanassaki argues that the horses that pull the chariot are meant to evoke not only chariot-racing victory monuments but those specific to the Alkmaeonidai clan, and in particular the clan-member Megakles, whose skill at the sport and whose fondness for keeping horses were famous throughout the Hellenic world.⁶⁰³ This symbol of the elite and of the Alkmaeonidai draws Apollo to the site, flanked by figures synonymous with the aristocracy that represent the Athenians. The parallels are not particularly subtle. Herodotus tells us that the completion of the temple was undertaken to convince the Delphic priesthood to advise the Spartans to overthrow the Peisistratid family and to free Athens, which they eventually did.⁶⁰⁴ The family returned in triumph to the city, albeit not for long.⁶⁰⁵ In the pediment, the Athenians escorted Apollo to Delphi, as the Alkmaeonidai rebuilt Apollo's sacred temple; in return, the exiled Athenians would return to their home state. The relationship is reciprocal: one homecoming for another, the temple restoration leading to the restoration (albeit brief) of the family. Dedications are, by nature, a reciprocal construct, given in thanks for, or anticipation of, divine favour or, in the case of the oracle, advice. Giltitz would argue that all pilgrimage requires a divine transaction of one kind or another,⁶⁰⁶ and this is certainly the case at Delphi.

The message of the pediment is unambiguous: the temple is an elite dedication, a visual reminder to the viewer of who dedicated it. The sculptors have adapted features characteristic of elite

⁶⁰¹ Neer 2012, 191; Scott 2014, 211.

⁶⁰² Marconi 1996, 7; Athanassaki 2001, 250; Neer 2010, 93-96.

⁶⁰³ Athanassaki 2001, 249.

⁶⁰⁴ Herodotus. 5.63.

⁶⁰⁵ Neer 2012, 191.

⁶⁰⁶ Giltitz 2014, 33.

dedications to this pediment in order to transform it into something closer to a votive monument from the Alkmaeonid clan than a cult pedimental group. It has been created as an elaborate and expressive message of power and ostentation to advertise their name and their prestige, regardless of, or perhaps, because of, the fact that they were in exile. It is an unabashed declaration that they had not diminished in power, wealth, or influence despite their exile. We could in fact see it as the clan asserting its independence from, and its superiority to, the city from which it originated. The Alkmaeonidai were stateless exiles, yet still maintained the clout necessary to win the contract and resources enough to finish it beyond its terms.⁶⁰⁷

For an oracular consultant, approaching the temple, this pediment would have had an additional layer of meaning, a visual reminder of the reciprocal nature of consultation and divine communication and a clear message of the significance of sacrifice. Temples are, in and of themselves, an expression of the exceptional in the Greek world, and the wealth of material evident not only on the temple but on the platform would have also reinforced the authority and authenticity of the oracle, and forced the visitor to consider their proximity to Apollo. Though they had been on his sacred ground since entering the sanctuary, at this point they were closer to him than at any other time. An important aspect of experiencing material evidence within a sacred space is the question of divine epiphany, as representations of the divine occur frequently throughout sanctuaries, not just in the form of cult statues. As Platt highlights, the manifestation of a god can occur in many formats other than the traditional 'vision': both literature and material culture can facilitate an experience of the divine.⁶⁰⁸ The multiple statues of Apollo on the platform, as well as the pedimental representation, combine with the proximity to the oracular consultation to remind the visitor that they are literally faced with the god. Tanner's consideration of the context of viewing emphasises this, reminding us that both the proximity of the consultation and temple, as well as the sacred nature of the site, would enforce the importance of the moment to visitors, emphasised by the pilgrimage which the visitor had

⁶⁰⁷ Neer 2004, 86.

⁶⁰⁸ Platt 2011, 4-7.

already undertaken.⁶⁰⁹ The pediment scene would have had an additional layer of meaning for an oracular consultant. Whether it depicted Apollo's arrival in Delphi or an epiphany scene, it represents arrival and divine connection, which is a significant part of the framework that the visitor was entering into by going inside the temple. By passing under this pedimental Apollo, the visitor is clearly reminded of the conversation they are about to have with the god. The pediment reinforces the messages the visitor would have received throughout the sanctuary and reminds the viewer of the divine presence inherent in the sanctuary and on the temple platform specifically.

6.4. Context: the consultation process at Delphi

Oracular sanctuaries and sites are places where an individual could communicate and consult with a supernatural entity, normally either a god or the dead. Curnow lists forty-nine oracular sites operating in Greece, and details other oracular sites in operation until the fourth century CE across many other countries.⁶¹⁰ We do not know for certain how all these oracles operated, nor how they compare to Delphi, but it is clear that oracular consultation was both widespread and long running, with the earliest evidence for oracular activity dating to the fifteenth century BCE.⁶¹¹ In a religious structure without written dogma or centralised practise, understanding the wishes of the gods and acquiring specific instructions is a difficult affair. Oracles were a way for the ancient Greeks to get information and advice, and as Parker notes, oracular consultation was of fundamental importance to the Greek religious system, a rare exception to the idea that Greek religion had no revelatory elements.⁶¹² Oracles were varied, but in essence were places where the gods found ways to speak to mortals directly: in the case of Delphi through the voices of specially chosen women whom the gods temporarily possessed. This is not necessarily the only method of oracular conversation, however:

⁶⁰⁹ Tanner 2006, 45.

⁶¹⁰ Curnow 2004; Eidinow 2007, 32; Oracles of the dead (*nekuomanteia*) are outside the remit of this thesis, though are a fascinating phenomenon. For further information, see: Ogden 2001; Eidinow 2013 35, n. 59.

⁶¹¹ Eidinow 2013, 32.

⁶¹² Parker 2011, 13-16.

gods could also give oracles through the rustling leaves of sacred trees, the ringing of sacred cauldrons, or the gurgling of a sacred stream. Such oracles would require the interpretation of a figure associated with the oracle to tell the consultant exactly what the meaning of such noises was. Many of the centres that practised direct consultation also offered indirect divination; Dodona and Delphi both practised lot oracles alongside the more famous method.⁶¹³ Oracular sanctuaries were not specific to Apollo or Zeus. There are oracles of Ares, Herakles, and Demeter amongst others, and Asclepius was a particularly popular oracular god, who appeared to the sick in dreams to tell them their ailments and advise them of cures.⁶¹⁴ That being said, the two most famous oracles (Delphi and Dodona) did belong to Apollo and Zeus.

The hierarchy between oracles is a difficult thing to trace. Dodona seems to have claimed seniority for its oracle on the basis that Zeus was speaking directly through the leaves, whereas at Delphi a lesser member of the Olympians spoke indirectly through the Pythia.⁶¹⁵ That being said, the Delphic Oracle was clearly understood to be important from its inception,⁶¹⁶ and Delphi seems to have needed relatively little interaction or cooperation with other oracular sanctuaries. Whereas Dodona and Ammon seem to have forged some kind of alliance,⁶¹⁷ Delphi remained relatively independent. Plato makes it clear that oracles held a place of particular reverence within Greece: ‘no one with any sense will alter what has come from Delphi or Dodona or Ammon’.⁶¹⁸ It is also clear that despite the protestations of Dodona, Delphi in particular was considered to be the most important of the Greek oracles by Plato. In the *Republic*, Socrates declares that in an ideal city, the Delphic Oracle should be consulted on all questions concerning cults and the dead, as ‘this god is the ancestral exegete for all mankind on such matters’.⁶¹⁹ Delphic oracles were considered of such particular importance that new cults founded under orders from the Pythia often bore the epithet ‘ordained at Delphi’. Delphi’s

⁶¹³ Johnston 2015, 478-479.

⁶¹⁴ Eidinow 2013, 35.

⁶¹⁵ Morgan 1990, 149; Parke 1967, 13-15; 36-39; Parke and Wormell 1956, Vol. I. 369.

⁶¹⁶ Morgan 1990, 148.

⁶¹⁷ Morgan 1990, 149.

⁶¹⁸ Plato, *Laws* 738C.

⁶¹⁹ Plato, *Republic* 427B-C.

special status was also grounded in mythology: Mopsos (founder of Apollo's oracle at Klaros) was sent to Asia Minor at the behest of the Delphic Oracle, and the founder of Apollo's oracle at Didyma was also said to have been founded by the son of a refugee from Delphi, showing not only that Delphi's special status could somehow be transmitted, but also a desire on the part of lesser oracles to emphasise their links with Delphi.⁶²⁰

Finding the Pythia: realities and fallacies

Delphi was a sacred place even prior to the arrival of Apollo, originally belonging to Gaia. In one version of the myth, Apollo killed her sacred snake and took control, in another he was given the land by Phoebe, who had received it from Themis, who in turn had been gifted it by Gaia.⁶²¹ Despite this lengthy mythological backstory, there is no evidence to suggest that oracular divination was practised at Delphi before the eighth century, despite the extensive mythological history of the sanctuary. Morgan notes that many of these mythological elements were developed relatively late to reinforce the antiquity and primacy of the oracle.⁶²² As Bowden remarks, Delphi is a 'confused fog of myth and history',⁶²³ and this section aims to try and clarify the oracular process, to better understand the specifics of oracular experience. Lipsey perhaps best sums up the problem of Delphi: 'From the beginning there were two Delphis [sic]: the Delphi of fact and the Delphi of the mind'.⁶²⁴ The pervading myth of the Delphic oracle must be addressed in detail if we are to properly investigate the experience of a visiting consultant. Chapter One did not contain a list of these sources, for three reasons; firstly, because they are chronologically disparate and need to be examined together; secondly, because they

⁶²⁰ Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* 3.7.4; Pausanias 7.3.1-2; Fontenrose 1988, 106-108; Parker 2011, 14; Johnston 2015, 483.

⁶²¹ Euripides, *Iphigenia in Tauris* 1234-1284; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1-11.

⁶²² Earlier oracles: Amandry 1950, 212-214; Fontenrose 1959, 409-419; Morgan 1990, 148. Mythology of Delphi: Morgan 1990, 148. See also Fontenrose 1959 and Sourvinou-Inwood 1987. For the traditional view of 'long history' see Parke and Wormell 1956; Roux 1976.

⁶²³ Bowden 2005, 14.

⁶²⁴ Lipsey 2001, 4.

do not look at experiencing the sanctuary, which was the subject of the chapter; and thirdly, because their complexities require examination within the context of a dedicated oracular chapter.

There is a vast wealth of ancient material left to us about the oracle at Delphi, but relatively little about the process of oracular consultation. As Whittaker remarks, this is not because the process was a mystery to the Greeks, but rather because the information on Delphi was so well known that it was taken for granted by our ancient sources.⁶²⁵ Our literary sources, though extensive, are often difficult to use as most of our surviving references to the Delphic oracle use the consultation and response as a part of a framing narrative, particularly in the works of Herodotus, Plutarch, and Pausanias. A prescribed structure is nearly always employed, which Maurizio succinctly describes: a crisis requires a consultation, interpretation of the consultation leads to an action, and the result of this action either confirms the accuracy of the oracle, or shows how the incorrect interpretation led to the fulfilment of the oracle. This plot is continuously reused, as it is what was expected, and so renews and reinforces this tradition.⁶²⁶ Plutarch's dialogues drew on his own experiences as a priest and on a number of other literary sources no longer extant (as already discussed, [pp. 82](#)). These writings, therefore, are essential to understanding the oracular process. There is also little material evidence for the existence of the oracle, other than inscriptions detailing examples of consultation, but this is for equally good reason; Morgan reminds us that while other oracles might have stronger archaeological records, Delphi did not go in for 'material trappings'.⁶²⁷

About one thing all evidence is clear: at Delphi, Apollo spoke through the mouth of a woman, known as the Pythia. Prophecy was delivered at Delphi by the Pythia, a woman chosen from the Delphic citizen body, probably from an elite family. She was past childbearing age (contrary to the oft presented image of a young girl) and was probably not highly educated.⁶²⁸ At its peak, Plutarch says three women actually operated as the Pythia, two taking turns to deliver prophecy, and one in

⁶²⁵ Whittaker 1965, 22.

⁶²⁶ Maurizio 1997, 311-317.

⁶²⁷ Morgan 1990, 149-50.

⁶²⁸ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 22; Parke and Wormell 1956, 34-41; Roux 1979, 64-68; Bowden 2005, 16.

reserve.⁶²⁹ Our sources give the impression that a consultant could come to Delphi and meet the oracle at any point of crisis, and this is the first issue to be addressed. There were only nine days a year when the Pythia was in business, the seventh day of each month that Apollo was present in Delphi. This might seem an improbably limited amount of time for the oracle to be operational, but as Bowden points out, there is no evidence to suggest how long a consultation might take or how many might happen in a day, so it is reasonable to assume that this was indeed the case: this infrequency would only work to increase the significance of the days of consultation on a social level.⁶³⁰ It was not a case of first-come-first-served; those who were granted *promanteia* went first, followed by consultants from the Amphyonic states, then all other Greeks, then barbarians.⁶³¹ Given the fame and infrequency of the oracle, we can imagine there were quite a few who did not manage to see her. Those left over probably had to direct their answers to the lot oracle or talk to local soothsayers. The fact that the wealthiest and most important consultants would be most likely to acquire *promanteia* would mean that a higher proportion of important civic questions would be asked than those of ordinary people, reinforcing in turn the image of the oracle as a vitally and politically important source of information.

According to Plutarch, to begin the process libations were poured on the head of a goat to find out whether the oracle could be opened for consultation.⁶³² It is said that the Pythia would bathe in the Castalian springs prior to consultation. There are only a handful of sources that mention this, but it remains a persistent idea nonetheless.⁶³³ None of the sources are particularly reliable or useful indicators of reality. In Euripides, it is not a Pythia speaking but the chorus of Phoenician women; our Roman evidence all comes from sources that had little immediate contact with Delphi and which employ these descriptions as part of a wider narrative. It is more than likely that this is a conflation of

⁶²⁹ Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 8.1; Bowden 2005, 16.

⁶³⁰ Bowden 2005, 17.

⁶³¹ Price 1985, 134; Scott 2014, 15.

⁶³² Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 46.1; 49.1; Flacelière 1938, 76; Roux 1978, 83-84.

⁶³³ Euripides, *Phoenissae* 221-225; Lucian, *Bis accusatus sive tribunalia* 1; Pseudo-Callisthenes 36.

the fact that visitors to Delphi were said to bathe in the springs to cleanse themselves before entering the sanctuary, a normal practice within Greek cult traditions ([pp. 111](#)).⁶³⁴ The ritual of preparation began with the *consultant* purifying themselves, possibly in one of the sacred springs of Delphi, after which they offered sacred cakes on the main altar outside the temple. After this, the consultant would enter the temple, escorted by priests and a *proxenos* (if appropriate). Once inside, they would sacrifice a sheep or a goat on the inner hearth, after which they would finally be able to enter the *adyton* at the west end of the temple for consultation.⁶³⁵ The consultants were not the only ones who undertook preparations before a consultation. According to Plutarch, the Pythia herself would burn barley and bay leaves on an altar before mounting the tripod, ready to give her oracles.⁶³⁶

Oracles were not delivered in front of the temple, on the platform, though some scholars continue to perpetuate this notion.⁶³⁷ Consultation took place inside the temple: to move from the bright and ornate exterior of the temple platform into such an atmosphere would emphasise to the visitor the solemnity of the process that they were undertaking, and the importance and presence of Apollo, into whose house they have just entered. Inside the *naos* would have been the oracular hearth, the Pythomantis Hestia, which was never extinguished, and it was in front of that hearth that the consultants sacrificed. After this they would have moved into the *adyton*. Coldstream suggests that there was a sunken room, as there is not sufficient evidence for any internal walls in the *naos*. In the space would have been the gold cult image of Apollo, the stone omphalos, the sacred laurel tree, and the Pythia herself, seated upon her tripod.⁶³⁸ There is not enough of the temple left to determine whether it had windows to let in light to allow for the growth of a tree, and it would have been an odd addition; perhaps instead it was a potted tree, moved inside the temple only for special events. Where the tripod stood, and how tall it was, is unknown, as is whether she sat at the same level as the

⁶³⁴ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 16.26.

⁶³⁵ Park and Wormell 1956, 30-33; Maurizio 1995, 83.

⁶³⁶ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 6.

⁶³⁷ E.g. Valavanis 2004, 262.

⁶³⁸ Coldstream 1985, 97.

consultants or not. The tripod, which features in every detailed report of consultation, as well as in the archaeological evidence from Delphi, was a three legged stool rather than some kind of cauldron: furniture inside temples is not generally an unusual feature.⁶³⁹ The question of whether the consultants could see the Pythia during their time in her presence is uncertain, but the evidence gives no real indication that they would not have been able to do so.⁶⁴⁰ Presumably it would have been dimly lit, and had she burnt bay leaves and barley on an altar within the room, then no doubt the scent and smoke would have remained within the space. The idea of a natural cave or chasm being used for consultation seems to have no real basis in reality – the reality of a constructed chamber within the temple building itself has grounding in the archaeology, and will be discussed later. There are no significant cave structures in the nearby mountainside, and it does not actually appear in the literary record until Diodorus' account of the founding of the Pythia – which clearly was not meant to represent contemporary consultation – and Strabo's rather confusing description:

They say that the prophetic chamber is a cave that is hollowed out deep down in the earth, with a rather narrow mouth, from which arises breath that inspires a divine frenzy.⁶⁴¹

This leads us to the next fallacy that requires discussion, that of the inhalation of fumes or consumption of laurel. Plutarch also mentions vapours, in an account often used as proof of the idea. Unfortunately, it is regularly discussed without context. In the dialogue, Plutarch and his friend are discussing the decline of the oracle, and mention the lack of 'exhalation' as one possible theory, only to suggest that any nice smells people might have noticed are more likely to have come from the perfumes of exotic visitors.⁶⁴² At the turn of the millennium, there was much debate about the potential of real evidence for gas inhalation. A survey team made up of a geologist, an archaeologist, an oceanographer, and a toxicologist claimed to have discovered a cross-over of fault lines in the area

⁶³⁹ Miles 2016, 374.

⁶⁴⁰ Courby 1915, 59-69; Flacelière 1938, 80-105; Roux 1976, 101-110; Fontenrose 1978, 226.

⁶⁴¹ Strabo 9.3.5.

⁶⁴² Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 50.1.

that might have emitted a toxic gas; the report caused a minor academic riot, as a number of papers came forward supporting the theory.⁶⁴³ They were, of course, not the first to try to prove the idea, though they were the first to seemingly have real proof. However, the survey team themselves were cautious about whether there was any kind of vent close to the temple, and it quickly became clear that they found no real evidence for the presence of hallucinogenic gas.⁶⁴⁴

Sometimes, the Pythia is said to have chewed on laurel to initiate an episode of inebriation. Laurel is intimately connected to Delphi. The crown given to victors at the Pythian Games was made of the leaf, and Apollo is a central character in the mythological origins of the laurel tree. There are numerous inscriptions noting the purchase of laurel at Delphi, and Pausanias notes that the first prophetess at Delphi was called Daphne, a name which has mythological associations with the oracle as the name of the nymph who was transformed into a laurel tree. Most significantly, the Homeric Hymn to Apollo makes clear reference to the connection between the oracle and laurel:

[...] messengers bring the decrees of Phoibos Apollo the god of the gold sword,
which he declares as oracles out of the laurel below the ravines of Parnassos.⁶⁴⁵

This is more likely to be a reference to the burning of laurel on the altar than to the consumption of laurel, which is not mentioned until Lucian.⁶⁴⁶ Sophocles refers to the chewing of laurel for oracular purposes, but only in reference to Cassandra and Lycophron's Alexandra, despite the fact that this is often included in lists of evidence for laurel consumption.⁶⁴⁷ Plutarch himself explicitly references the burning of laurel on the altar, rather than consumption.⁶⁴⁸ Nevertheless, scholarship has dedicated itself to proving that the Pythia consumed some kind of plant-based narcotic, despite the fact that the

⁶⁴³ Spiller, Hale and de Boer 2002, 189-96. See also de Boer, Hale, and Chanton 2001; Hale et al. 2003. For a thorough (and much more entertaining) discussion of this curious academic controversy, see Lehoux 2007.

⁶⁴⁴ 'The exact area of intersection of the Delphi and Kerna faults cannot be determined.' (de Boer, Hale, and Chanton 2001, 708).

⁶⁴⁵ Homeric Hymn, *To Apollo* 2 395-396.

⁶⁴⁶ Lucian, *Bis accusatus sive tribunalia* 1.705.

⁶⁴⁷ Bowden notes the particular influence that depictions of Cassandra has had on the depiction and conception of the Delphic Pythia: 2005, 15.

⁶⁴⁸ Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 6.

evidence for burning plants as part of ritual cleansing is substantial and fits better with common cult practice at the time. The most notable of these scholars are: Oesterreich, who appears to have consumed leaves himself as part of his research (long live twentieth century experimental archaeology); Littleton, who attempted to blame cannabis; Ratsche who offered a henbane theory; Holland, who put forward the idea that a curious mix of oleander and ‘hashish’ was pumped through the floorboards; and, as recently as 2014, Harissis, who produced a rather confusing study ultimately pointing to oleander poisoning.⁶⁴⁹ As Fontenrose succinctly puts it: ‘these are efforts to explain phenomena that exist in modern fancy rather than in any ancient reality’.⁶⁵⁰

Perhaps we cannot blame academics for spending so much time looking into narcotics when the idea of the Pythian frenzy remains so uncontested in modern scholarship. The idea of the Pythian ecstasy is a confusing one. The earliest literary description of the Pythia is in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*, in which she speaks the prologue, quite calmly and rationally. Herodotus always represents the Pythia speaking sanely and articulately, albeit ambiguously.⁶⁵¹ The oracle in Euripides’ *Ion* listens to the cries of Apollo and sings or gives speeches (*boai*), depending on the translation. She is never shown as frenzied or hysterical.⁶⁵² In *Ion*, Euripides tells us that the Pythia sits on a tripod and sings to the Hellenes what she hears from Apollo;⁶⁵³ whilst she may raise her voice to do so, there is no indication of frenzy or mania. Likewise, when she descends from the tripod, she shows no sign of having been in such a mental state.⁶⁵⁴ Plutarch’s own experiences at Delphi are extensive and well documented, and there is only one account in which the Pythia acts in an alarming manner:

She went down into the oracle unwillingly, they say, and half-heartedly; and at her first responses it was at once plain from the harshness of her voice that she was not responding properly; she was like a labouring ship and was filled with a mighty and

⁶⁴⁹ Oesterreich 1930; Littleton 1986; Ratsche 1987; Holland 1933; Harissis 2014.

⁶⁵⁰ Fontenrose 1978, 203.

⁶⁵¹ Herodotus 1.65; Herodotus 1.47.

⁶⁵² Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 1; Euripides, *Ion* 91-93.

⁶⁵³ Euripides, *Ion* 91-93.

⁶⁵⁴ Euripides, *Ion* 1320.

baleful spirit. Finally she became hysterical and with a frightful shriek rushed towards the exit and threw herself down, with the result that not only the members of the deputation fled, but also the priest Nicander and those holy men that were present. However, after a little, they went in and took her up, still conscious; and she lived on for a few days.⁶⁵⁵

The surprise of not only the consultants but the priests, and their subsequent fleeing in fear, should be enough to indicate that this particular incident was unusual and unexpected. The image of the raving Pythia has remained the dominant model for the giving of oracles at Delphi, and still maintains a strong hold over perceptions of the sanctuary within modern scholarship.⁶⁵⁶ This is despite the fact that amongst those who study the Pythia, her conduct is no longer a controversial issue. The frenzy, be it induced by divine presence or the inhalation of some sort of fumes, has long been discarded as a viable interpretation of the consultation process. Where does this idea of the Pythian ecstasy come from? Fontenrose argues that it comes down to a simple misinterpretation – that the Greek *mania* is translated to *insania* or *vecordia* in Latin, leading our later Roman sources to misconstrue what was happening and present a wild oracle. Plato's conception of a prophetic *mania*, like poetic *mania*, might be to blame, but if so, an oracle under prophetic *mania* would have no more leave of their senses than a poet when composing a verse.⁶⁵⁷

The idea of the Pythia incoherently babbling can also be discarded. There is little evidence that the Pythia needed anyone to translate for her. There is no suggestion that anyone other than the Pythia issued oracular responses, and these oracles were uttered verbally; Maurizio discusses at some length the possibility of them being written down, and refutes the argument.⁶⁵⁸ The role of Nicander in Plutarch is often given in translation as 'oracle-interpreter', but this comes down to a misconception of what the title *prophetes* indicates in a cult context – in this case actually referring to the man in

⁶⁵⁵ Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 51.1.

⁶⁵⁶ Maurizio 1995, 69.

⁶⁵⁷ Plato, *Phaedrus* 244a-245c; 265a-265b; Fontenrose 1978, 204-206.

⁶⁵⁸ Maurizio 1995, 69; Maurizio 1997, 312-314.

charge of administration of the oracle.⁶⁵⁹ Strabo and Plutarch both tell us that poets turned the Pythia's reply into verse, but both are trying to account for the fact that hexameter verse appears in other sources. It is clear even in these that the oracle herself was never assumed to speak in verse form. All records of responses indicate the Pythia speaking directly and clearly to the inquirer, priests and poets do not appear to reinterpret the oracle.

Riddles and hexameter verse cling to the legacy of Delphi, and these remain the most interesting aspect to understand. Riddles are normally only employed in literary accounts which serve to make a moralistic point, such as the infamous Croesus or the Athenian wooden walls oracle. The account of the oracle that led to Lycurgus introducing iron coinage has also been recorded as a curiously ambiguous response: 'love of money and nothing else will ruin Sparta'.⁶⁶⁰ Herodotus secured much of his material at Delphi itself, and no doubt these stories were recounted to him by the priests. His accounts are some of the closest chronologically to the oracles which he is describing, and both he and his sources would have been familiar with the procedure at Delphi.⁶⁶¹ However, outside these specific narratives, there is little evidence of the Pythia speaking in riddles, and it is likely employed as a narrative technique. Our sources are frustratingly vague on this matter. Pausanias, for example, tells us very little useful information about the process of consulting the oracle, though he describes the results of many consultations. Normally, he simply states the supposed oracle, or summarises it, as he describes the situation which has led to the consultation; on occasion, he goes further, and describes the process that follows.⁶⁶² When he does describe the actual moment of consultation in any detail, the image that he gives us is one which does not fit in with any historical understanding of the Pythia, the account of Herophile being one such example. He describes how she chanted oracles standing on

⁶⁵⁹ Bowden 2005, 15-16.

⁶⁶⁰ Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica* 7.12.5; Plutarch, *Instituta Laconia* 42.

⁶⁶¹ Fontenrose 1978, 212.

⁶⁶² Pausanias 10.6.7; 10.9.11; 10.10.6; 10.13.8; 10.10.7-8.

a rock, but this is mythological, and given as part of the mythological history of Delphi, rather than as an example of how the oracle was expected to function.⁶⁶³

In Herodotus, she speaks in verse form - for example, when he recounts Lycurgus' visit to the Pythia, he describes her speaking to him in hexameter verse.⁶⁶⁴ Similarly, Croesus is greeted with lines of verse.⁶⁶⁵ Maurizio argues that the Pythia speaking in verse form – or indeed in riddles – would be the most logical, as her voice would then be differentiated and would indicate that her speech came from Apollo.⁶⁶⁶ However, both Strabo and Plutarch mention Delphic poets, who sat in on consultation and put the Pythia's prose into verse.⁶⁶⁷ If that was the case, then why does Herodotus tell us that she spoke in verse? It is only these sources who mention this, and Plutarch's Theon, who is speaking, is referring to an older practice.⁶⁶⁸ There is no one answer, for no doubt those few sources that do discuss hexameter do so for different reasons. It could be that oracles were described in accounts written entirely in hexameter, now lost to us, and our surviving sources simply lifted these hexameter-style oracles. That being said, not only is it implausible to expect the uneducated Pythia to be able to extemporise hexameter verse, the argument that the priests composed them in advance, knowing the question, is never attested anywhere, and is considered a modern attempt to explain away a phenomenon that simply did not exist. It is possible that such practices were recorded to make the Pythia appear more antiquated, more mystic, and perhaps more authentically divine – particularly in a world where her authority could be questioned, as the famous wooden walls episode indicates.⁶⁶⁹

The Realities of Consultation

Why does this matter? I have so far spent a large portion of this chapter trying to get to the bottom of the reality of consultation. If the reality of consultation was better understood or discussed in

⁶⁶³ Pausanias 10.12.1.

⁶⁶⁴ Herodotus 1.65.; 5.92.

⁶⁶⁵ Herodotus 1.47.

⁶⁶⁶ Maurizio 1995, 86.

⁶⁶⁷ Strabo 9.3.5; Plutarch, *De Pythiae oraculis* 23.

⁶⁶⁸ Fontenrose 1978, 214.

⁶⁶⁹ Price 1999, 73-76.

scholarship it might require less time, but there are pervasive misconceptions about the Pythia that have to be addressed in order to better understand the experience of the visitor to the sanctuary. The nature of Delphic oracular enquiries has been examined at great length by Parke and Wormell, Fontenrose, Parker, Price, and Morgan, among many others. Their collective arguments and impact on the field are too extensive to go into in detail, but all agree on the basic consultation practise at Delphi: that the most common form of enquiry was either a simple statement, a confirmation or refutation, or alternatives requiring the expression of a preference. Various recent oracular compilations show that the main oracular responses took the form of a simple 'yes' or 'no'.⁶⁷⁰ Open ended questions, or predictions of the future, were extremely rare.⁶⁷¹ As Fontenrose stresses, the oracle's reputation for ambiguity was always overshadowed by its reputation for truth, and was a later literary development.⁶⁷² There are, of course, some responses that seem to have been more complicated and obscure. Morgan suggests that ambiguity might have served as a protective device to deflect criticisms in case of an inappropriate or inaccurate response, or to avoid potential fallout from awkward questions requiring the oracle to take sides in a quarrel between equally powerful states or predict the outcome of an equally balanced conflict. In this case, lack of direct response might have been deliberately used to place blame for lack of results on the incorrect interpretation of the consultant, rather than the oracle.⁶⁷³ Likewise, Parker suggests that an ambiguous response might have been used by the oracle to force a consultant to reconsider a question on which no clear response could be given.⁶⁷⁴ Xenophon's description of oracular consultation shows it to have been quite a mundane affair:

So Xenophon went and asked Apollo to what one of the gods he should sacrifice
and pray in order best and most successfully to perform the journey which he had

⁶⁷⁰ Fontenrose 1978; Bremmer 1994; Bowden 2005, 22-24 (Athenian oracles specifically); Eidinow 2013, 33.

⁶⁷¹ Parke and Wormell 1956; Fontenrose 1978; Parker 1985; Morgan 1990; Price 1999.

⁶⁷² Fontenrose 1978, 236-239. Morgan 1990, 156.

⁶⁷³ Morgan 1990, 157.

⁶⁷⁴ Fontenrose 1978, 124-128; Parker 1985, 301; Morgan 1990, 157.

in mind and, after meeting with good fortune, to return home in safety; and Apollo in his response told him to what gods he must sacrifice. When Xenophon came back from Delphi, he reported the oracle to Socrates; and upon hearing about it Socrates found fault with him because he did not first put the question whether it were better for him to go or stay, but decided for himself that he was to go and then asked the god as to the best way of going. 'However,' he added, 'since you did put the question in that way, you must do all that the god directed.'⁶⁷⁵

There is something reassuring about the simplicity of oracular consultation as reflected in the ancient sources, and I see little reason to question Xenophon here, whose brief account aligns with the simple procedure other sources and modern scholarship outline.⁶⁷⁶

So, what did our consultant do? Cross comparison of Delphi with other oracles suggests that there are only a set number of ways in which a consultant might ask a question of an oracle. Questions were normally of a form that allowed either a 'yes' or a 'no' answer or were questions with predetermined choices as answers: should this building be placed on x site, or y? Maurizio believes that a consultation would have consisted of an announcement of the question, Apollo's answer, and perhaps a discussion of the matter at hand. Fontenrose concludes that Pythia normally responded directly to the consultant without intermediaries. The most common form of enquiry was a statement for which confirmation or refutation was sought, or an expression of preference between two options, and when consultants came with defined plans, she either approved or rejected them. Price divides inquiries at the oracle into three categories: the personal, the religious, and the political. Many questions were religiously motivated, and cities would often consult on general political problems and natural disasters, but Price also reminds us that though our sources are often more interested in the consultations of major cities, private individuals also travelled to and consulted at Delphi.⁶⁷⁷ Plutarch

⁶⁷⁵ Xenophon, *Anabasis* 3.1.5-8.

⁶⁷⁶ Mikalson 2005, 101.

⁶⁷⁷ Herodotus 4.151; 4.161; 5.89; Fontenrose 1978, 223; Price 1985, 144; Morgan 1990, 155; Maurizio 1995, 84.

gives us examples of many such private inquiries: whether the consultants will succeed, should marry, should sail, should farm, should go abroad. Such examples are often forgotten by the scholarship on Delphi, which focuses so intensely on its role within Hellenic politics, but the oracle served a very important role for the individual as well as for the states that they were from. There are some variations to this pattern, however. At times our sources show very different lines of enquiry, which did not relate to specific decisions, such as Croesus' question about the length of his line, or Siphnos' question about the continuation of their prosperity.⁶⁷⁸ On occasion the Pythia gave advice without questions, on matters about which she had not been consulted, the most famous concerning the foundation of Cyrene.⁶⁷⁹

Attention to the interpretation of the oracle was vital, particularly if the meaning of said oracle was not particularly obvious. It was the responsibility of the recipient to ensure that they had interpreted the oracle correctly,⁶⁸⁰ the infamous Croesus episode or indeed Sparta's disastrous battle against Tegea serving as a bleak reminder of what could happen should the oracle be misinterpreted.⁶⁸¹ Of course, if the oracle responded in a straightforward way, then such a level of interpretation was not needed, though no doubt great thought was still applied to how to go about the actions which the Pythia had advised. Though the process following the consultation would not have been an interpretive one, a decision would still have to be made about how to follow through with the Pythia's recommended actions. Price identifies the role of human intelligence in the process of consultation in his examination of the so-called 'wooden wall' oracle. He argues that the Athenians had identified a problem which they had not known how to handle, and chose to ignore the first oracle, opting to ask the oracle again for a more favourable outcome.⁶⁸² This attitude to the oracle raises two questions: what happened if the oracle went against the intentions of the enquirer? What

⁶⁷⁸ Herodotus 1.56; 3.57-8.

⁶⁷⁹ Herodotus 4.150-6.

⁶⁸⁰ Price 1985, 148.

⁶⁸¹ Herodotus 1.53; 1.66.

⁶⁸² Price 1985, 148.

doubts were there about the validity of oracles? There are several examples of unwelcome advice given by the oracle, and often the response is to try and evade them.⁶⁸³ But how frequently would a consultant of the Pythia have really ignored the outcome of a consultation? Surely, if a society is to believe in the validity and authority of Delphi's oracle as the Greek world so clearly did, the majority of consultants must have believed in what it said.

6.5. Divine presence and the Temple of Apollo

How did a Greek visitor know that divine power was present in a sanctuary? As Gould summarises, a visitor could never know for certain, but would have to believe.⁶⁸⁴ In the case of the oracle at Delphi, the presence of the god was anticipated in the voice of the Pythia – her oracles were indicative of the presence of a divine authority. As such, those wishing to consult the oracle would have approached this space knowing that in doing so they would soon be face-to-face with, if not Apollo himself, then the receptacle of his divine will. This anticipation would only have been heightened as the visitors passed by the numerous other dedications to Apollo, many of them given in thanks. This visual reminder of earlier generations of oracle-consultants adds to the legitimacy and authority of the sanctuary and its oracle. As Gould argues, Greek religion is inherently fluid, with the repetition and transmission of ritual and myth from generation to generation increasing the authority of the divine powers without binding faith to any canonical authority or dogmatic practice. This holds true with regard to the legitimacy of the oracle, and as we have already said, would already have been in the mind of the visitor following the long-standing oral traditions about the oracle.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸³ Recommending the Athenians flee from the Persian invasion (Herodotus 7.149); advising the Athenians to wait before attacking Aegina (Herodotus 5.89); telling Cleisthenes of Sicyon not to remove the shrine of the Argive Adrastus (Herodotus 5.67).

⁶⁸⁴ Gould 1985, 9.

⁶⁸⁵ Gould 1985, 8; Maurizio 1997, 312.

Once it was time for their consultation, the visitor would finally have access to the temple itself. Upon moving inside the porch the visitor would be reminded of the Delphic precepts inscribed on marble herms or busts.⁶⁸⁶ The location of the Delphic Oracle outside the boundaries of normal life ensured its continuing popularity by removing it from the direct control of any single interested party, but from an experiential perspective it also increased the significance of a consultation. The visitor to Delphi had to remove themselves from the spatial context of their daily life and go into the relative wilderness in order to obtain their answer.⁶⁸⁷ Though there is no indication of a traditional cave system being used in Delphi, nor of any natural cleft below the temple floor, excavations have indicated the existence of an artificial grotto.⁶⁸⁸ There are a number of references to an internal cavern in ancient literature, and the myths of the previous owners of Delphi also create a clear connection between the oracle and the subterranean world. Ustinova discusses the literary evidence at length, and concludes that in the majority of cases the suggestion is that this is a man-made cavern.⁶⁸⁹ There is also a clear tradition in the literature of the Pythia descending when entering the temple.⁶⁹⁰ Perhaps most significantly, an episode recounted by Plutarch also indicates a subterranean space.⁶⁹¹ Systematic excavation of the temple began in 1893, and results revealed an unfortunate lack of evidence for the interior of the temple, which had mostly been destroyed.⁶⁹²

However, the fourth-century space can be reconstructed to a certain extent. The *naos* featured two uninterrupted rows of column bases, running along its length: the *adyton* had to sit between the two, and its dimensions must have been relatively small, at around 5 x 5 meters. There

⁶⁸⁶ Coldstream 1985, 97.

⁶⁸⁷ Morgan 1990, 183.

⁶⁸⁸ Courby 1927, 47-80; Vallois 1931, 319-321; Parke 1939, 20, 27-28; Parke and Wormell 1956, Vol. I. 21; Roux 1976, 94; Green 1989, 110; Sissa 1990, 14; Ustinova 2009, 122.

⁶⁸⁹ Ustinova 2009, 131-137. Descriptions of the cavern: Strabo 9.3.5; Aeschylus, *Choephoroi* 803-805; Aeschylus, *Eumenides* 221; Euripides, *Ion* 226-229; 233; 245; Euripides, *Andromache* 1093; Euripides, *Phoenissae* 237; Pindar, *Pythian* 5 68; *Pythian* 8 63.

⁶⁹⁰ Homeric Hymn, *To Apollo* 3 443; Pindar, *Pythian* 4 55; Diogenes Laertius 5.9.

⁶⁹¹ Plutarch, *Timoleon* 8; Ustinova 2009, 138.

⁶⁹² See Courby 1927. The destruction is in fact so extensive, that some have speculated whether it was deliberate: Bourguet 1914, 249-250; Roux 1976, 93. Bourguet remarks: 'The last Pythia took her secret with her' (1914, 250).

is an area within the *naos*, near to the opisthodomos wall, that is sunk two meters below the rest of the floor, indicating a lower floor level.⁶⁹³ Because of this, a number of excavators and scholars have argued that the temple contained some kind of subterranean grotto acting as an *adyton*.⁶⁹⁴ A space of this size could have accommodated the Pythia, the priests, and the consultants, with the tripod sitting within the space. Ustinova's work on caves includes a detailed section on the *adyton* at Delphi, and its symbolic meaning within that context. Though this was an artificial vault, on a symbolic level it still facilitated the connection between the Pythia and the earth. She argues that the chasm connected the temple to the earth, the omphalos represented the navel of the world, and the laurel tree symbolised its summit, combining two extremities, linking the highest and the lowest spheres together. In Delphi, the juxtaposition created a place appropriate for communication between the realms, a liminal space in which a divine force could come forward.⁶⁹⁵

The sanctuary space as a whole would have prepared the visitor for their moment of divine communication, and movement into the strange, subterranean grotto would have increased the sense of liminality. Our visitor would have moved through a (presumably) sacred space already, as we saw in the previous chapter: the route moves through the *aire*, where our visitor in 400 BCE may or may not have engaged in specific cult-associated activities such as feasting.⁶⁹⁶ However, moving into the temple is a much more impactful visual experience, and communicating with an oracle a much more powerful and individual action. This consultation is a vital part of understanding the experiences of Delphi, not just in terms of how it was experienced, but in terms of how the process was communicated around the Hellenic world by other visitors, reinforcing the sacred nature and significance of the sanctuary space. The movement from bright light to shadow would emphasise this, and the sensory landscape of the incense and burning herbs would also have created a further sense

⁶⁹³ Courby 1927, 47-55; Roux 1976, 106; Amandry 1997, 279-281.

⁶⁹⁴ Courby 1927, 59-69; Parke 1939, 22; 27-30; Roux 1976, 134-135; Delacourt 1981, 42; Green 1989, 100; Roux 2000, 195.

⁶⁹⁵ Ustinova 2009, 150-153.

⁶⁹⁶ Poplin 1991, 700; Luce 2008, 79-80; Ekroth 2017, 38.

of divine presence. Clements argues that the scents associated with divine activities were, in some way, equivalent to the divinities they were intended to attract; that, in sacred places, divine scents and divine presence were inextricable.⁶⁹⁷ Scent is also characterised as indeterminate and transcends boundaries, it is liminal in the same way as the temporal space of the temple. Various scholars have described the sense of otherness that smells can evoke, something which must have been emphasised by the stark contrast between the interior of the temple and the external sanctuary that the visitor would have just left.⁶⁹⁸ Scent is intrinsic to the idea of 'divine corporeality', and the enclosed interior space of the temple would have amplified this, adding an additional element of divine presence to the space and the experience.

It is in this strange space that consultation took place. Fontenrose's extensive collection of Delphic oracles indicates that only a small percentage of said oracles were recorded in writing within a generation of when they were supposedly given. This suggests that the primary means of transmission was word of mouth,⁶⁹⁹ and the repetition of such stories reinforces belief in them.⁷⁰⁰ Perhaps visitors were expecting the mystic Pythia of the written record, but it seems unlikely that the reality diminished the significance of the space, the experience, or the authenticity of the oracle. It can seem strange to us today that the consultants would have believed that this woman sat on a peculiar seat really spoke the word of a god, but this was indeed the case. Tanner argues that the authenticity of the divine presence comes from the aura of the god and the shared, cultural understanding that he is indeed present.⁷⁰¹ Gordon also discusses a collective evocation of shared knowledge on these matters, though he refers to it more specifically as an 'encyclopaedia of kept knowledge'.⁷⁰² Of course, there are problems with the concept of shared cultural understanding in a world as varied as the Hellenic one, but Platt argues that it is more a complex process: it was the

⁶⁹⁷ Sissa and Detienne 2000, 176-178; Clements 2014, 46.

⁶⁹⁸ Adorno and Horkheimer 1972, 184; Gell 1977, 27-29; Vernant 1989, 22-23; Clements 2014, 46-47.

⁶⁹⁹ Maurizio 1997, 313.

⁷⁰⁰ Or, to paraphrase Whittaker, people believed that Delphi was never wrong because they wanted to believe that this was the case (1965, 29).

⁷⁰¹ Tanner 2006, 50.

⁷⁰² Gordon 1996, 11-12.

interweaving of ritual, iconographic, literary, and mythological knowledge that allowed a viewer or reader to reach a sense of divine epiphany.⁷⁰³ Though this can still lead to a lack of coherence from place to place,⁷⁰⁴ we must remember that the presence of the visitor themselves indicates a predisposition to believe in the oracle. Indeed, it is somewhat irrational to think that a pilgrim would have taken the arduous journey to consult the oracle if they did not already believe in its legitimacy.

There is perhaps a better explanation – and indeed exploration – of this experience to be found if we consider cognitive studies, in particular the predictive coding model already mentions, as it provides a clear framework for understanding the impact of a consultation on a visitor to Delphi. Our visitor will have arrived with the top-down expectation of the consultation created by prior expectations, which will have been created from stories shared within their communities, literary and poetic descriptions of the oracle, and perhaps even others who have been through consultations before. It is hard to imagine a Hellenic visitor coming to Delphi c. 400 BCE who would not have some expectation of what would happen in the space. There is already a significance bestowed on the actions of many of these consultations due to the investment of time and the length of the journey required, as well as the infrequency with which the Pythia gave consultations.⁷⁰⁵ We have already mentioned the denial of view of the temple throughout the sanctuary, and how this raises expectations, but now our visitor has reached the temple, and site of consultation, and finds the view of it barred. Scott mentions with some surprise the relative lack of discussion around the impact of the temple and *temenos* walls on the ritual experience, and it is true that there is little debate around this.⁷⁰⁶ The windowless temple walls and relatively small door deprived views of the interior, and prevents the visitor from cross-checking their prior information about the oracular experience, amplifying expectation and imagination as they are unable on a cognitive level to challenge their

⁷⁰³ Platt 2011, 2.

⁷⁰⁴ Platt 2011, 14.

⁷⁰⁵ For discussions of the significance of investment of time within embodied cognition models: Decety and Grezes 2016; Decety and Jackson 2004

⁷⁰⁶ Scott forthcoming. Spawforth 2006, 72-88 provides some discussion of how temple walls dramatized encounters with the sacred, but he is a rare example.

understanding of what would happen within. Once the visitor entered the space, they would have found themselves in a much darker space. Darkness increases abstract processing, the cognitive process of having to interpret and understand things based on a limited set of data:⁷⁰⁷ or, to put it another way, the loss of one sense makes the brain put greater emphasis on the evidence provided by other senses.⁷⁰⁸ The lower light levels increase the mystery of the spaces, and forces the visitor to engage with their other senses.

The enclosed space of the temple would have altered the auditory environment, removing external ambient noise and amplifying the clarity of the sounds within. The smells of the temple space, of incense and burning herbs, would have already had a pre-association with the divine to a visitor familiar with Hellenic ritual practices. The temperature would have felt cooler within the stone walls than outside, a sensation that may have been amplified in the subterranean space where consultation took place. The subterranean space itself would have also frustrated the line of sight for the visitor, limiting their ability to see in detail the space where the consultation took place, particularly initially when their eyes would have been readjusting to the low light levels. The architecture of the temple creates sensory deprivation, creates an environment designed to focus attention and raise expectations for the visitor. All this works to confirm the top-down prior expectations of the visitor: that they would have a significant and personal communication with a god in a special, sacred space.⁷⁰⁹ In this model, the existence of authoritative figures within the process also reduces questioning and executive neural activity. In Delphi, the presence of priests, as well as the Pythia herself, would have acted in this role, reinforcing the sacred nature of the activities and the presence of god, through association and perhaps even verbal verification.⁷¹⁰

⁷⁰⁷ Lakoff and Johnson 1999; Bruce, Green & Georgesen 2003; Forster, Liberman and Kuschel 2008; Steidle, Werth and Hanke, 2011.

⁷⁰⁸ Rosenblum 2010: 33, 279.

⁷⁰⁹ Schjoedt & Jensen 2018: 328

⁷¹⁰ Schjoedt & Jensen 2018: 327-8

Those primed for an emotional experience are more vulnerable to emotional contagion, which is also more likely in crowded spaces and communities. As we will discuss in more detail later, the visitor to Delphi comes not only as an individual but as a part of a wider and unintentional group of pilgrims, unified by the infrequency of oracular consultation and therefore the higher volume of visitors in the sanctuary space.⁷¹¹ After the consultation was complete, this would have continued: high emotional contagion and shared experiences contributes to the intense spread of emotions and solidarity between the group, emphasised by the process of leaving the temple, and re-entering the bright outside world. Their top-down model shaped by prior expectations, from stories told within communities or transmitted through literary sources, would have remained intact. The building of expectations through the sanctuary, the denial of view of the temple, the presence of religious authorities within the space, the sense of liminality when entering the temple, and the deprivation of sensory input when in there all would have constrained the visitor from challenging their expectations at the time of the event. The inability to challenge this creates what Schjoedt and Jensen call 'metacognitive gaps' in understanding that the brain is encouraged to fill in either by accepting pre-established narratives or with the post-narrative explanation provided by others who have gone through the experience, or indeed by society at large: in this case, that they did indeed hear the voice of a god, and experienced a true communication with them.⁷¹²

6.6. Pilgrims in Delphi

Consider the visitor to Delphi that we have followed through the sanctuary: they have moved through several phased sections of the space, culminating in their arrival on the temple platform. These visitors have must have come with many expectations and intentions, but there is one united element: divine connection with Apollo and his sacred space. This chapter has considered how the oracle and the

⁷¹¹ Hatfield, Cacioppo and Rapson 1994: 155-60.

⁷¹² Schjoedt and Jensen 2018: 325-6.

temple would have facilitated this divine communication, but we also need to consider how the sanctuary space itself reinforced that connection. We discussed in Chapter One the role of ‘what comes before’ ([pp. 100](#)), and the influences of the journey to Delphi on the visitor, and now we will revisit that material again.

The visitor to the sanctuary would have been expecting some kind of divine connection even before arriving. Though the term is complicated and contested, the visitor to Delphi can and should be considered a pilgrim: we have already discussed at some length what this means. Greece and Rome have often been overlooked in the context of pilgrimage, and Horden and Purcell argue that the reason for this comes from the fact that they are missing a particular set of terminologies and the ideological consciousness that is characteristic of medieval Christianity. Furthermore, the secularising tendency in twentieth century scholarship has meant that many religious aspects of social behaviour in the ancient world have been played down, and inevitably the influence of Christianity in nineteenth and twentieth century scholarship has also influenced how Graeco-Roman sacred travel has been perceived.⁷¹³ Petsalis-Diomidis remarks that some Classicists still respond to the term pilgrimage with scepticism when applied to the Graeco-Roman world, despite the growing number of studies on the subject.⁷¹⁴ But a trip to Delphi, and a consultation with the oracle, is inherently religious, and the mantic process a definitive cult action.

Morinis outlines key components of pilgrimage, and one upon which he places emphasis is the movement from the known to the unknown and back again, and the transformative nature of both the journey and the actions undertaken at the destination.⁷¹⁵ The visitor to Delphi, particularly those who are coming to consult the oracle, fit both of these categories: they are coming to commune with the god’s vessel and find an answer to a question. Travel to the sanctuary pre-supposes a divine presence and prepares the visitor for this communication. The visitor to the sanctuary is not only

⁷¹³ Horden and Purcell 2000, 446.

⁷¹⁴ Rutherford 1995; Dillon 1997; Elsner and Rutherford 2005; Petsalis-Diomidis 2010, 6-7. See Scullion 2005 for a detailed argument against the use of the term in the study of the ancient world.

⁷¹⁵ Morinis 1992, 10-13.

preparing to enter a physical location but to experience a metaphysical connection.⁷¹⁶ Gitlitz' definition of pilgrimage includes the communication and transaction between man and the divine, an action supplemented by the sacredness of the location and the activities of the pilgrim within this place.⁷¹⁷ Sacrifice and prayer are obvious examples of ritual behaviours, as well as consulting an oracle, ritual cleansing, or any number of other activities connected with divine worship. However, given the multi-functional nature of sanctuaries, many activities combine sacred and non-sacred actions: festivals, for instance, are held in honour of gods. Likewise, visiting a sanctuary in order to see the many beautiful monuments and dedications (something which might be cast as a touristic impulse rather than a religious one) could (and probably would) also involve a sacrifice or libation and at the very least would encourage the pilgrim to contemplate the power of the divine presence sacred to the sanctuary, visually evident in the dedications given in their honour.

In defining pilgrimage, Coleman and Elsner remark that the traveller must be confronted with rituals, holy objects, and sacred architecture. These elements interrelate and reinforce both each other and the sacred nature of the destination itself.⁷¹⁸ Rinschede remarks that many, and perhaps most of the rituals, artefacts, and natural features that Greek pilgrims encountered were likely to have already been known to them from the reports of other pilgrims and from myth. The visitors made the journey to the sanctuary in the expectation of seeing precisely these sights, and viewing them is arguably a religious activity, as it took place against a background of religious assumptions.⁷¹⁹ Sacred activities impact the experience that visitors would have in a sanctuary, by lending weight and importance to actions, and validating the process of pilgrimage through divine resonance. These activities, in their variety, unify the pilgrims, creating common ground between them, de-emphasizing their differences through shared ritual action, no matter what that might be. Communication with the divine was emphasized through these ritualised actions, which were intended to highlight the

⁷¹⁶ Elsner 1992, 10.

⁷¹⁷ Gitlitz 2014, 37.

⁷¹⁸ Coleman and Elsner 1995, 6-7.

⁷¹⁹ Rutherford 2000, 139.

visitors' connection to the divine within this particular space, and will have further aided in the creation of an aura of importance to the monuments and dedications, reminding the visitor that the journey to Delphi was itself one of these ritual actions.

Divine authority is expressed through dedications, reminding the visitor of the power of the god. Messages of identity were also showcased through these monuments and dedications, reinforcing to the visitors not only their own local identity (with dedications from their home states/citizens), but that they existed as part of a larger framework of religious community, opening the pilgrim's eyes to the connections that exist between them and the other pilgrims around them. Our visitor to Delphi would already have seen many elements of divine presence within the sanctuary. The Aegospotami monument showed the potential for heroes to move from the mortal sphere to the divine, the Athenian Treasury showed the role that divine figures held in civic contexts, and the Naxian Sphinx reinforced the idea of mythological figures being present amongst them. Furthermore, the sanctuary would already have emphasized the presence of Apollo; he appeared on monuments and in sculpture, particularly on the temple platform itself, before the visitor even entered the temple. The context of the sanctuary and the reinforcement of divine themes throughout would have left the visitor more receptive to a divine experience. This chapter presupposes an oracular consultation, but it is worth noting that many visitors would not have had the luxury of this interaction. We have to assume, given the limited days in which the Pythia was operational, that many visitors to the sanctuary would not have been there on days when the oracle was open. These visitors might have participated in a consultation with the lot oracle, which is another experience that we do not have space to discuss in detail here. However, the fame of the oracle and the Pythian process would have extended throughout the Hellenic world, a central part of the cultural and social memory of the Greek world. The oracle informs the understanding of the site as a divine space and a place where gods might appear, transforming the sanctuary and the experience into something significant.

6.7. Conclusion

As we have seen, sources for the Delphic oracle present a confusing array of scenarios, and often lack any extensive detail on what would be undertaken during a consultation – as such, it is necessary to reconstruct the bare bones of the experience. This chapter has outlined the reality of the process of consultation at Delphi, a simpler and more straightforward one than ‘the Delphic illusion’ would have us believe. But if our sources are so clearly problematic, why does this illusion continue to hold sway in modern scholarship? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the fact that humanity, on the whole, prefers the stories of the miraculous and mystical to more mundane realities. For our visitor to Delphi, having moved through a complex space deeply grounded in religious activity and divine presence, they would have been ready to engage with some sort of epiphany, be it direct or not. Such a thing was ingrained in the social understanding of the gods and sacred spaces, and the process of pilgrimage would have prepared them to come face to face with Apollo. As Scott remarks, temples and their ritual frameworks have often been separated due to the traditions of scholarship: temple buildings have been the focus of scholars of art, architecture, and archaeology, whereas religious ritual is normally examined through study of the literary and epigraphic traditions.⁷²⁰ This chapter attempts to eliminate this problem by reconciling the Delphic temple with its ritual practises, and as we have seen, our understanding of both is enhanced by doing this.

The experience of this section of the sanctuary is a ritualistic one. It is impacted by the temple, a significant building purely on the basis that it is the central and most important structure in the sanctuary. However, the temple is also made significant by the layout of the sanctuary, its visibility, and its dominant placement on the slope of the hillside. Its role in the experience of consultation is made explicit through the presence of Apollo on the temple pediment, and the themes that play out in the decoration and material of the structure. The presence of Apollo is also emphasised by that pediment, as well as the other statues of Apollo on the temple platform, and his divine presence would

⁷²⁰ Scott 2016b, 135-136.

make sense in the most important part of the sanctuary space. The architecture of the temple and the sensorial landscape that the visitor would move through as they entered the temple, particularly through the use of light and shadow, and incense, prepared the visitor for a divine experience. The presence of a cult statue, coupled with the darkness and movement downwards, created a distinct and awe-inspiring experience, a space made liminal by design. Though the realities of the oracle might be more ordinary and less fantastical than the Delphic illusion would have us believe, the space itself is perhaps far stranger than scholarship often presents it. This understanding of the Delphic oracle, as an essentially mundane process that takes place in a space constructed to create a sublime and atmospheric experience, can only be properly understood through a study of both the temple space and the literary sources, as has been attempted in this chapter.

Though the temple has a significant Athenian flavour, it is also intersectional in terms of the Hellenic world: just as the oracle could be consulted by anyone, the temple is a monument that belonged very directly to Apollo, and so by extension did not belong to any Greek state over another. All of the previous monuments discussed have clear links of ownership with their dedicators, but here at the culmination of their route the visitor would have found a monument with a degree of political neutrality. For the visitor to Delphi, who has moved through the sanctuary space, the temple represents the end of a long series of experiences and, in a way, justifies them. The temple expresses all the themes evident throughout the sanctuary, reinforcing the messages sent to the visitor and their interpretations of them. The presence of Apollo, felt throughout the space, was finally realised in this final phase of the visit, through consultation. But even for those visitors who were unable to consult the oracle, the temple platform and the representations of Apollo displayed on it would have provided a clear sense of their proximity to the god. As a religious experience, this section of the sanctuary offers a transformative and significant moment for the visitor, a culmination of their movement to and around Delphi.

Conclusion

This thesis has investigated religious, social, political, civic, and individual participation and meaning, sensory processing, and the engagement with and understanding of the material and topographic landscape of Delphi. My aim was to provide a new approach to the study of ancient sanctuaries, one that allows us to understand better the significance and impact of such sites for ancient visitors. The aim has been to deepen our understanding of how these sanctuaries functioned in the minds of their ancient visitors by bringing together experiential study, material analysis, and the ritual framework of a sanctuary in a way that has not been attempted before in order to establish a new, more thorough system of analysis of sanctuary spaces. The point of this thesis was to outline experiential perspectives on Delphi, but also to understand the importance of Delphi and how it was configured in the minds of its ancient visitors. We have focused on monuments from the sanctuary between 570-400 BCE, the spaces they occupied, the presentation of specific themes, and the activities and movements performed in those spaces. Within the sanctuary, the visitor moved between spaces with different themed monuments, different sets of messages, and different degrees of cult significance: there are spaces dedicated to treasuries, areas where movement and angles of view are limited and directed, and spaces like the *aire* and temple where the visitor would actively engage with cult activities. The themes that each chapter has explored (military power, timocratic excellence, the historic/mythological past, and divine presence) are a part of this network of meaning. These themes are connected to the type of monuments present in the space (including the central monument, the Temple of Apollo) but are also broad aspects of panhellenic sanctuary presentation that need to be addressed as a key part of understanding the sanctuary space as a whole. This thesis set out to understand how the sanctuary of Delphi might have been experienced by the ancient visitor, by applying a holistic approach and attempting a systematic reframing of the sanctuary into themed sections.

We took a systematic approach to each case study and monument, using macro and micro analytical theory to provide a close reading of both the space and the monument. These monuments were chosen because they best represent the themes and the types of dedications within the space, and so are the most useful when trying to illustrate and understand the experience of Delphi. Each chapter looked at the semi-micro view of the monument, examining both the macro (the wider landscape and interrelationships between dedications and topography) and the micro (the physical details of the monument itself). In order to better understand both the context of the monuments and the way that they would have been understood by the visitor, we then looked at the wider story around the monument in terms of dedicators, reasons for dedication, and the specific Hellenic context of the monument. But in order to understand experience we had to refocus this analysis back onto the viewer, and so looked at what the visitor was doing within the space, how their movement impacted experience, and how monuments were deliberately trying to connect and communicate with visitors.

Chapter One outlined the evidence for Delphi chronologically, both the archaeological and material record and the relevant ancient literature, which together provide useful evidence for the experience and preconceptions of the Delphic sanctuary. Chapter Two presented the material evidence in the order that a visitor would have seen it when moving through the sanctuary space. This diachronic and synchronic pair of chapters provide a backdrop for the analysis of the sanctuary space, to which we applied the framework of our analysis by subsequently dividing the site into themed sections. Chapter Three examined the Aegospotami monument and the theme of triumphalism, using the context of the dedicator Lysander and his actions around the Greek world to better understand the messages being conveyed in this first section of the sanctuary, where an intense competition between states was being played out through military victory monuments. The Aegospotami monument epitomises the phase of competitive victory monuments in the sanctuary and shows how military successes are promoted in order to create long-lasting political and ideological victories beyond the battlefield. Analysis of the iconography, inscription, and how the monument related to

the space around it, showed how the monument represented triumphalism and the power of Lysander and Sparta at this particular moment in time. The monument is a key example for how Delphi came to represent historical contexts and specific events from Hellenic history. This section of the sanctuary introduced the visitor to the idea of divine transcendence through the crowning of Lysander by Poseidon, and the process of entering the sanctuary reinforced the connection between the Delphic space, the monuments, and the divine. The monument established clear connections between religion, mythology, and politics through the propagandistic heroization of Lysander.

This inter-*poleis* competition is visible from another angle, as noted in Chapter Four, which examined the Athenian Treasury and timocratic excellence. Particularly important was the role that Athens played and how it presented itself in the Hellenic world, and how that connected the treasury to broader themes at play within Athens, particularly in relation to the assimilation of specific mythological figures such as Theseus and Herakles. Athens dedicated the treasury after a period of fundamental domestic political reform, and after its first great military victory. The treasury reflects a rapidly growing political self-confidence and reflects Athens' claim to an elevated panhellenic status. This chapter used the materials, iconography, and design of the treasury to prove that it operated as a symbol of Athenian wealth and timocratic excellence. Its position and its connections to the temple helped to conceptualise the treasury as a temple, emphasising its significance to the viewer. Chapter Four also examined the treasury corner, a section of the sanctuary dominated by this particular architectural form and the financial prowess of different communities. What was unique about the Athenian Treasury was the lengths to which Athens went to prove this, and for the visitor to Delphi this section would have helped to elevate the status of Delphi, as it adds to the overall wealth of the sanctuary dedications, in turn reinforcing the significance of Delphi itself.

Chapter Five focused on the Naxian Sphinx, the theme of mythology, and the construction of semi-mythological landscapes in the sanctuary. This chapter chose to look at the sphinx form itself and how it represented and evoked a particular Cycladic context and identity, reinforcing the wealth

and significance of Naxos and the Cyclades more broadly on a panhellenic stage. This chapter also examined the link between Naxos and Delos, and whether this monument suggests an extension of the sanctuary on Delos to Delphi, and how the sphinx form would have appeared to a visitor to the sanctuary. To the visitor to Delphi, who has passed through the spheres of military victories and timocratic power, the Naxian Sphinx would evoke a sense of the mythological, emphasising the sense of movement towards the oracle and the divine connection that was the theme of Chapter Six. The impact of the age of the monument, as well as the creation of connections to mythological landscapes and divine encounters, can alter the perception of both monuments and spaces but also the experience of the visitor, as we have seen with both the Aegospotami monument and the Naxian Sphinx.

In this final chapter, we examined the Temple of Apollo and looked at the theme of divine presence. The sense of a divine presence builds throughout the visitor's movement through the sanctuary. A thorough investigation into the realities of oracular consultation was also included in this chapter to better contextualise what the visitor to the sanctuary would have experienced in this space, using embodied cognitive theory to better understand how these experiences were encouraged and constructed in part by both expectation, architecture and sensory deprivation. Both the exterior and the interior of the space were reconstructed to better facilitate a divine presence experience. Sensorial experience was particularly notable in this chapter, in terms of how the visitor would have moved through dark and light spaces, and the how incense and other smells would have worked to evoke the presence of Apollo.

How did visitors experience Delphi?

We have examined the space a visitor would have moved through, the messages and history presented to them, and how they would have engaged with the physical landscape and dedications of the site, but what does this tell us about how an ancient visitor would have experienced the site of

Delphi? The Greeks themselves thought of Delphi as the centre of the earth, and as a panhellenic sanctuary it acquired an additional level of cultural and societal significance. Panhellenism is a difficult thing to conceptualise because it lacks useful modern parallels, and from an experiential perspective it becomes a complex concept to understand. Would it have created a stronger sense of local identity to a visitor, being confronted by so much that came from extraterritorial dedicators, using unfamiliar styles, techniques, and materials? Or would it have reinforced a sense of Hellenic identity, creating a greater feeling of community and connection between states and individuals? No doubt the answer varied from person to person, but we can be certain that the rarity of panhellenic spaces meant that a visit to Delphi must have been notable and significant, lending importance to the experiences within.

The literary sources describing Delphi are at times frustrating. While they may describe aspects of the site, few present anything close to a holistic experience of a visit: we must extrapolate from what they say. The way Delphi is discussed makes it clear that there is a constructed view of the site in the minds of ancient writers: a place in the wilds, its location emphasising the sacredness of the site. As we saw in Chapter One ([pp. 80](#)) emphasis was placed on the difficulty of approach and the movement from one topographical space to another, a liminal and difficult process that would have prepared the visitor for a sacred encounter and special moment. They would have had to participate in this movement, and participation is another important consideration in the discussion of the sanctuary and its experience. Our sources show that we can presuppose a level of visual participation within the sanctuary space, that people would have stopped to look at the monuments around them, at their details and decorations, and read inscriptions had they been able to. We know that this would have been facilitated by the priests within the sanctuary, who were apparently willing to tell stories of the monuments and their dedicators.⁷²¹ The emphasis placed on oracular consultation shows that this was also a prioritised activity within the space, and the use of cognitive theories and sensory

⁷²¹ Flower 1991, 63.

analysis can better expand our understanding of how these activities would have been experienced, by reframing them in the physical and sensorial landscapes they were in.

Social experiences and identity expression were played out through the presentation of localised features, figures, and materials – the display of gods important to the Spartans in the Aegospotami monument, as well as its promotion of Spartan military triumphalism and Peloponnesian artists; the depiction of Theseus, Herakles, and Athena on the Athenian Treasury, its use of politicised materials, and its presentation of Athenian timocratic power and ownership of Hellenic materials; the role of the sphinx and the specific column form of the Naxian Sphinx and its strong connection to Delos and Cycladic dedicatory traditions. How would these have impacted a visitor's experience? They may have personalised the space, reinforcing the visitor's connection to it, particularly through the creation of dominant subsections of localised space. The dedications themselves worked to do this, but it would have been reinforced by the visitor experience itself, as they connected to aspects of the sanctuary that referred back to their own civic identities, claiming them in their own mind.

This is as political as it is social, and we return to the question of what role political competition had in a visitor's experience. There is no way around the fact that Delphic monuments, although religious in nature, are also politicised. All the monuments we have examined in this thesis are deeply political in nature and present a snapshot view of the Hellenic world at the time they were dedicated. The Aegospotami monument shows the desire of individuals and states to prove their military domination and fulfil their personal ambition, and reflects not only the end of the Peloponnesian War and Sparta's rise to dominance but also the shifting role of the individual in Hellenic politics that would not become fully realised until the Hellenistic period; the Athenian Treasury represents the Athenian drive after the Persian Wars to present themselves as the dominant force within the Hellenic world, as well as demonstrating a period of Hellenic pre-eminence and power; the Naxian Sphinx can be understood as a part of a competition between sanctuaries, as well as the competition inside the Cyclades and between the Cyclades and the rest of the Greek world. It also represents the transfer of

religious power to Delphi. The temple itself was part of a complex situation between the Alkmaeonidai, the Peisistratid family, and pre-democratic Athens. This political competition, played out in so many different ways, is a vital part of understanding experience in Delphi. It informs the monuments and how the visitor would have understood them, but it also informs the nature of the sanctuary itself, presenting it as a place of Hellenic pre-eminence. For the visitor, this might have reinforced their own personal political allegiances, be they to a system or a place. The monuments would remind visitors of the accomplishments of their own communities, as well as those of the Greek world against non-Greek enemies. Political and military supremacy appear at each turn, creating a space that was not only highly competitive but that evoked a sense of the significance of contemporary events. Over time, this might have changed, or even diminished: by later periods, many of these monuments and the events they referenced must have evoked a sense of the distant past, no longer as personal or emotive as they had once been. But to a contemporary visitor, there must have been a discomfiting element to seeing these monuments and the challenge they presented to their own civic authorities: how would an Athenian have reacted to the sight of the Aegospotami monument? How would a Naxian have felt seeing the Naxian Sphinx surrounded by the dedications of a sanctuary that had become so much more powerful than Delos?

That these monuments would have evoked pride and perhaps even patriotism is clear: what is worth considering is how individual, civic, and Hellenic identities would have intersected. Was the experience of the visitor rife with conflict and confusion, or was the presentation of these events through visual media enough to separate them from what was being depicted? Certainly Pausanias and Plutarch do not seem emotionally connected to these monuments, but these later writers lived long after the complex world of the Archaic and Classical period, and do not fit into the intersectional nature of Hellenic identity any more than we do. Intersectional identities are difficult enough to understand as an individual: am I Mancunian, British, or European? I am all of these, but in reality, I am also often distanced from these senses of self: how often do I draw on those identities in processing the things that I see and experience? How would an ancient Greek visitor have felt in

Delphi? Did they draw on their civic identities or their connection to wider Hellenic culture? In reality, I am sure they must have drawn on both, as well as their own personal experiences. Knowledge would shift the way our visitor understood specific monuments too. If they did not know who Lysander was, would the overt messages of triumphalism and deification have had as much of an impact? Possibly not, but the dynamism and size of the monument must still have had considerable impact. Experiences of the sanctuary would have shifted both with knowledge and with personal experiences. A Spartan mother might have thought about her son lost in war when looking at the Aegospotami monument, reflecting on loss rather than victory; a Theban priest might have read the power of the gods in the triumph over the Persians referenced by the Athenian Treasury, rather than any messages about Athens; a Naxian soldier might have felt more of a connection to the victory monuments, reminding him of his own experiences, than the Naxian Sphinx, the form of which was familiar enough to dismiss; an Athenian slave might have interpreted the messages of Athenian ownership broadcast by the treasury in a decidedly different, less positive way than the Athenians intended. Experiencing Delphi must have been complex, but also emotional and deeply personal. A visitor in the Classical period might well have understood their visit to be more than simply touristic, even if sightseeing was the primary intention: it could become something much more personal and transformative as they expanded their view of the world in which they lived, seeing personal and emotional investment played out in impersonal stone.

The display of specific moments of history operated through complex frameworks of visual meanings, relying on allegory, prior knowledge, subtle references, and pre-existing sanctuary material. Specific events like the victories at Marathon and Aegospotami are clearly referenced, and the fluctuations of warfare, cultural achievement, and social development are also easy enough to understand. But at Delphi we also see more subtle interstate competition and the attempts of other sanctuary spaces to create presence at Delphi. These too would have created a unique experience built on both personal knowledge and wider, cultural understanding, placing the visitor in the role of

commentator, elevating both their personal experiences and their role in the sanctuary, making their actions significant by association.

This connects to another theme I initially raised in the Introduction: the use of mythical references, and how that would have affected the visitor ([pp. 28](#)). Mythical references are a dominant part of the visual rhetoric of the sanctuary, appearing in multiple forms. On the monuments we have examined we have seen the depiction of gods on the front row of the Aegospotami monument, the presentation of mythological heroes, epic cycles, and Athena herself on the Athenian Treasury, and the Naxian Sphinx is, in and of herself, an overt mythological symbol. Myth was used to represent cultural, social, and political moments, and that is not particularly surprising in the Greek world, which on the whole shied away from depicting contemporary events directly, instead preferring to use mythological allegory. Connections to mythological scenes allowed historical moments to become transcendent: they represented not only the single moment, but could come in time to reflect all later successes and victories too, and in a sanctuary such as Delphi, promoted the individual or community's connection to the divine and the support and patronage they claimed in turn from their favoured gods. If, as I have argued, the visitor has already been cast in the role of historical commentator, the connection to the mythical realm also elevates them, casting an even greater significance on their actions within the sanctuary.

The sectioning of the sanctuary also created a mythologization of the space as the visitor progressed through it. One of the strongest shared conceptions of the sacred revolves around the ideas of precinct and threshold; when visitors to Delphi passed through the *temenos* boundary, they entered a sacred space, and this knowledge would have informed all activities and movements from that point onwards.⁷²² But this sacred space becomes slowly elevated as the visitor moved through the historical past, approaching the temple, creating a liminality which must have made the visitor's experience strange and otherworldly. Whether this was intentional on the part of Delphi and its

⁷²² Simmins 2008, 10.

priesthood is impossible to say, and in many ways feels too natural a development to have been planned; either way, it served Delphi by creating a transcendent, important space that reinforced the sacred nature and special role of the sanctuary. As visitors left, returning to their diverse homes, the story of Delphi's special nature would have spread too, ensuring future visitors and – most significantly – further tribute.

Despite the diversity and variation within the sanctuary – and within the mythic messages presented within it – there was, at all times, a single unifying feature: Apollo. Everything the visitor would have seen was a gift to the god, given in thanks for his power and favour, and we can assume that an ancient Hellenic visitor would have understood this well enough. He was visually present throughout the sanctuary, appearing on monuments alongside other gods as well as in statue form, particularly on the temple platform. Other popular dedications, like tripods, would also have evoked the god, through the connection between the tripod and the Pythia. Perhaps most significantly, the looming presence of the temple created by the steep terracing would have reminded the visitor of Apollo, particularly if they were intending to consult the oracle, knowing that they would soon hear the god's words. The references to Apollo (as well as the references between dedications) served to unify the space and create a sense of cohesion throughout. For our visitor, movement through the space would have built up the idea of Apollo's presence, something which would have become particularly significant once they reached the temple platform and confronted the god directly.

Every aspect of Delphi is religious, and every action taken there is, by nature, religious too. Therefore, the experience of a visitor to the sanctuary must also be understood as a religious one. Even the observation of monuments is connected to worship through the transactional relationship between god and dedicator: even the most secular seeming monuments are connected back to Apollo by virtue of being in his site, given in thanks for his patronage or support. Visitors would have had an expectation of divine presence prior to arrival, and the physical presence of Apollo throughout the sanctuary would have reinforced this even before the visitor reached the temple. As we have seen,

the complex combination within the temple of artificial grotto, darkness, and the overwhelming smellscape of incense and fire would have given the impression of Apollo's presence, a significant experience within the religious framework of the site. The oracular consultation is noetic and transcendent, the visitor's experiences throughout the sanctuary having built to a moment of great personal significance. Through this interaction, the sanctuary becomes numinous to the visitor, and their experience is elevated beyond the bounds of normal life. It is important to emphasise that this religious experience owes a debt to the work of the rest of the sanctuary space: the experience is heightened and is perhaps only rendered fully successful through the other experiences that the visitor would have gone through in the sanctuary before arriving at the temple.

This thesis has analysed the landscape of, and evidence for, the sanctuary at Delphi, and has grounded that material within the sanctuary itself. It has also examined the literary material and considered the expectations of, and assumptions about Delphi as a wild, beautiful, and transformative space. An interested reader could find many monographs about Delphi, all with useful information and different areas of detail. What a reader would find in this thesis is an examination of the site grounded in the experience of a visitor, one that would inform them not just about the appearance of the site or its role in Greek history, but how it would have been understood as a space. This thesis may have explored a specific ancient space, but this approach can be taken forward to examine any ancient site: by dividing the space into distinct sections as an ancient viewer would have moved through them, and by examining the thematic elements of these spaces through analysis of specific examples, we are able to show not only how the space was constructed, but also how varied experience could be within one sanctuary. We have seen how the physicality of monuments would have changed the space, how the presentation of gods could transform a visit, and how the specific details of dedications worked in harmony with other aspects of the sanctuary to present specific messages. The holistic approach that we have taken here, marrying material and literary evidence with sensorial analysis, space and movement theory, pilgrimage studies, and discussions of religious experience provides an avenue of

exploration that allows us to better understand the variation of experience and space within the sanctuary.

Beyond Delphi, this thesis offers new ways to understand ancient religion, reintegrating cult activities into sacred spaces and recontextualising institutions such as oracles, viewing them not just as individual entities but as part of a lengthy process of movement and participation. Ancient religions are complex, but visitor experience gives us a new avenue to understand a difficult topic. This thesis shows that studying the experiences of ancient viewers, while difficult, is not impossible, and can be grounded in factual material evidence. Likewise, studying from an experiential perspective uncovers and explains new aspects of our evidence, and allows us to better understand the material left to us. This thesis set out to explore Delphi and how an ancient visitor would have experienced it, but it has also provided an insight into the ancient mindset more generally, by showing what the priorities of dedicators might have been. What studying Delphi in this way does is highlight the role of pre-existing knowledge and cultural memory in experience. The visitor to Delphi could not have arrived in a state of total ignorance; they would have come with varying degrees of knowledge about political situations, wars both ongoing and concluded, the roles of different city states in the broader political landscape, and the ways that the sanctuary and its oracle were conceptualised in the oral and literary story-telling traditions of the time. We cannot presuppose any particular knowledge, only that they must have come with some, which would have varied depending on age, class, gender, social status, wealth, literacy, where they were from, and many other factors. In my Introduction, I brought up an issue that is central to this thesis: trying to distil the lengthy and fluid process of moving through and experiencing Delphi into something clean cut and easy to define ([pp. 29](#)). What this thesis has achieved is to show that there are ways to assess the complex concept of experience without creating artificial parameters: perhaps it is best to say that this thesis has shown not 'experience' in Delphi, but 'experiences'. It was not my intention to suggest that any visitor would have felt or understood all of the ideas I have presented, but rather to provide a non-exhaustive list of things a visitor might have felt, or understood, or engaged with. Such a venture has not been attempted in connection with

Delphi before, and I trust this thesis provides a new insight into one of the most valuable and exciting sacred spaces of antiquity. The study of experience is complicated, and trying to conceptualise it even harder, but it is still worth attempting: spaces such as Delphi operate in a unique way and can tell us much about Hellenic priorities and how the ancient world conceptualised its spaces, gods, and itself.

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All abbreviations are those of the [American Journal of Archaeology](#).

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