

5 Fountains and Basins in Greek Sanctuaries

On the Relationship Between Ritual Performance and Architecture

Abstract: Ancient written sources emphasise the importance of water sources for Greek sanctuaries. However, this significance is only mirrored in exceptional cases in an elaborate architectural staging of fountains or springs. Despite an often very prominent location within the temenos, they usually do not play any role in the structuring and hierarchisation of spaces. The ritual use of water differs significantly from this. Sacred space was explicitly constituted and structured performatively through various lustral rituals in which water played a dominant role. These ritual acts usually took place in front of or behind the actual architectural entrance, often a monumental propylon, as proved by the corresponding basins and fountains. Ritual and architectural boundaries were therefore not identical. Architecture and ritual, or the experiences of crossing the architecturally marked border and the performative rite de passage, are thus to be regarded as clearly differentiated phenomena despite their spatial proximity.

τοῦ ναοῦ δὲ οὐ πόρρω στάδιον χώμα γῆς ἐστί [...]. ἔστι δὲ ἐν τοῖς πρὸς ἄρκτον τοῦ ναοῦ κρήνη, καὶ ἐπὶ ταύτῃ βιασθῆναι τῇ κρήνῃ φασὶν Αὐγὴν ὑπὸ Ἡρακλέους [...]. ἀπωτέρω δὲ τῆς κρήνης ὅσον σταδίοις τρισὶν ἐστὶν Ἑρμοῦ ναὸς Αἰπύτου.

Not far from the temple [of Athena in Tegea] is a stadium formed by a mound of earth [...]. To the north of the temple is a fountain, and at this fountain they say that Auge was outraged by Herakles [...]. Some three stades away from the fountain is a temple of Hermes Aepytus.¹

Introduction: In the description of the sanctuary of Athena Alea in Tegea, Pausanias mentions only the stadium and a spring as worth seeing in addition to the temple he described in detail before. On the other hand, he did not mention any other architectural structures, though their existence can be proven archaeologically in Tegea.² In other places, too, Pausanias repeatedly emphasizes springs and fountains as essential features of Greek sanctuaries in a very similar way.³ Partly, as in Tegea, they are connected with a myth,⁴ partly a specific use in ritual is tangible⁵ or special qualities were attributed to water, for example in the context of healing cults.⁶

Many other text sources emphasize the importance of water in the Greek sanctuary, which is reflected here.⁷ Water could possess mantic qualities,⁸ springs could be assigned a sacred character if they were consecrated to deities or nymphs, and they could receive their own cult officials and their own cult facilities, such as a statue or a cult table, as is recorded epigraphically for Andania.⁹ It is obvious that water sources beyond such specific cultic implications fulfilled purely practical tasks, especially in extra-urban shrines, which had to offer visitors overnight accommodation and refreshments. Sacred laws, for example, do not only prove a great effort to

¹ Paus. 8, 47, 4 (translation by Jones 1979).

² Østby 2014, 16.

³ Paus. 2, 27, 7; 3, 22, 8; 3, 26, 1; 4, 31, 1; 4, 33, 4; 7, 5, 2; 7, 24, 3; 7, 27, 9; 8, 10, 4; 8, 19, 2; 8, 32, 5.

⁴ Paus. 1, 21, 4; 2, 32, 4; 3, 21, 2; 3, 24, 2.

⁵ Paus. 1, 34, 4; 2, 17, 1; 5, 16, 8; 6, 20, 2; 7, 21, 12–13.

⁶ Paus. 4, 35, 8–11; 5, 13, 11; 6, 22, 7; 8, 29, 1; 10, 24, 7. Plut. Mor. 41, 433 B–C mentions the special quality of the river Alpheius in Olympia.

⁷ Summarizing: Cole 1988.

⁸ Friese 2010, 96–98.

⁹ Gawlinski 2012, 84–86 = IG V,1 1390, 84–86. For other holy fountains, cf. Paus. 2, 24, 6; 3, 20, 1; 3, 23, 8; 7, 22, 4; 9, 10, 5; 9, 24, 4.

protect water purity,¹⁰ but a whole series of inscriptions also shows that the sale of drinking water or the installation of baths was a source of income for the sanctuaries that should not be underestimated.¹¹

Water therefore played a special role in the Greek sanctuary in a variety of ways, also in a variety of uses. The characteristics of the springs and wells were presented to foreign visitors as attractions. In Tegea, the spring was also used by Pausanias as a starting point for describing the immediate surroundings, thus it had a quality as a topographical point of reference and orientation.

Against the background of such a multi-layered image – only sketched here – that can be derived from the written sources, the question arises of what role the provision and presentation of water also played in the architectural design of Greek sanctuaries or what significance water played in the structuring, hierarchisation or even constitution of spaces within the sanctuary.

Therefore, on the one hand, how water resources were positioned within the sanctuary and how they were architecturally staged will be examined. On the other hand, the spatial quality of the ritual use of water and its relation to architecture will be examined. To limit the material, the view is directed only to sanctuaries of the Greek mainland and Asia Minor from Archaic to Hellenistic times. Even when sanctuaries were located extra muros, they usually were closely linked ritually (e. g. through processions) and institutionally to the city they belonged to. Both the priesthood and many visitors were citizens of the city, so that the social communication that took place in the sanctuary, for example in the form of rituals, building activities or even donations of smaller votive offerings, always had a direct effect on the urban society. This, combined with their substantial architectural design, shows that sanctuaries can be understood as quasi-urban spaces.

Placement and architectural staging of water sources

Basically, two areas within the sanctuary can be distinguished in which water sources were more frequently placed. On the one hand, this is the immediate vicinity of the temple or altar, and on the other hand, the entrance area and the main routes of the sanctuary.

In Tegea¹² (Fig. 1) and Delphi¹³ (Fig. 2,1), there are typologically very similar fountains from the 6th and 5th centuries BC on one of the long sides of the temple – the former can most probably be identified with the Fountain of Auge cited above. In both cases, these are narrow stairwell shafts which lead to a well shaft in Tegea or to a basin fed by a pipe in Delphi.

The stairwell is enclosed by narrow slabs that support the surrounding soil. While the well in Delphi, located far to the west of the temple, has no relation to the temple front and the altar, in Tegea there is a visual connection from the altar area. In addition, the lateral cella door connects the fountain area closely to the temple interior. Although lateral cella doors have recently been found in the Hellenistic temple of Delphi¹⁴ as well, the fountain there was probably cut off from its water supply by the new temple construction and thus lost its function. It can at least be assumed, however, that the side doors already existed in the Alcmaeonid temple, since in many other points its basic structure was adopted during the rebuilding process in the 4th century BC.

¹⁰ LSS no. 4; LSCG no. 152 = Le Guen-Pollet 1991, 60–63 nos. 13–15, with French translation.

¹¹ E. g. LSCG, no. 45; LSCG no. 75 = Le Guen-Pollet 1991, 35 no. 6; 58–60 no. 12, with French translation.

¹² Glaser 1983, 14 no. 7; figs. 19–22; Østby 2014, 16 f. figs. 5–6; Papathanasopoulos 2016, 118–121 figs. 55–58.

¹³ Courby 1927, 171–188 figs. 129–139; Glaser 1983, 22–24 no. 15 figs. 42–43; Bommelaer – Laroche 2015, 275 f. fig. 102.

¹⁴ Amandry – Hansen 2010, 270–275 fig. 9, 1.

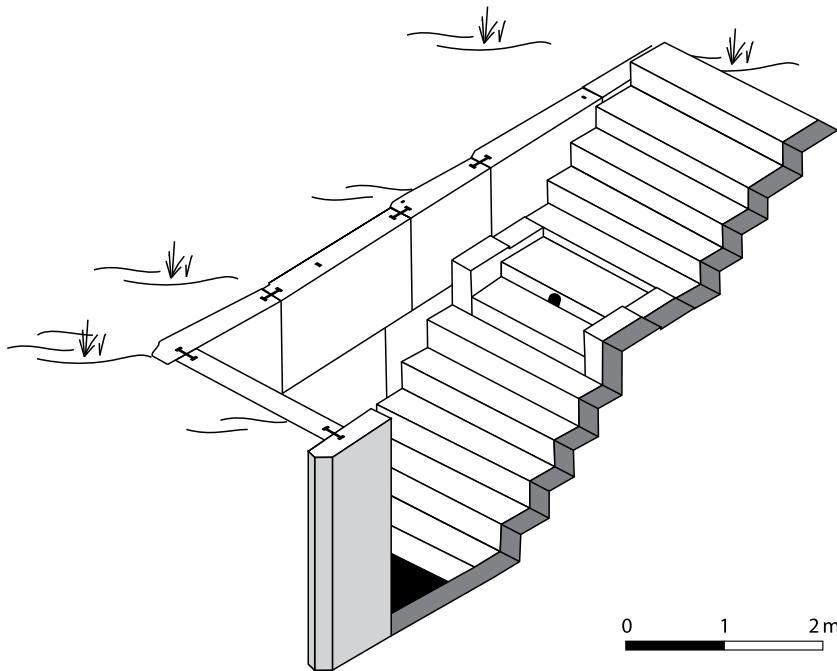


Fig. 1: Tegea, so-called Fountain of Auge, isometric drawing.

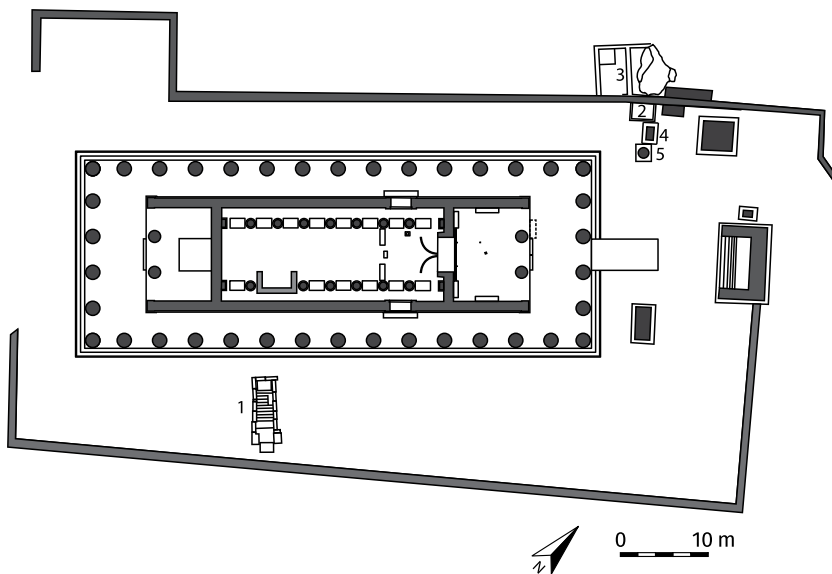


Fig. 2: Delphi, the temple-terrace.

Contrary to this very prominent position, however, both wells in Delphi and Tegea had no representative structure above ground. In Tegea, the presence of clamp holes on the upper sides of the slabs indicates that the wall continued upwards over the outer level – presumably it secured the shaft in the form of a low parapet. In both cases, however, a higher or even monumental architecture above ground can certainly be ruled out, as the low thickness of the wall of 0.2–0.25 m does not support this.¹⁵ Therefore, the parapet and stairwell were the only visible elements. Significantly, the stairwells are not directed towards a central viewing position.

¹⁵ Glaser 1983, 14 interprets the middle step of the staircase as a support for door jambs, as later Østby 2014, 17. Such a door would require a certain height of the wall, since the pivot of the door leaf requires an upper counter-part. However, there is neither a threshold with the usual holes for a door (pivot hole and latch hole), nor dowel holes for a possible anchoring of the door jambs, so that this interpretation is more than questionable. In Delphi,

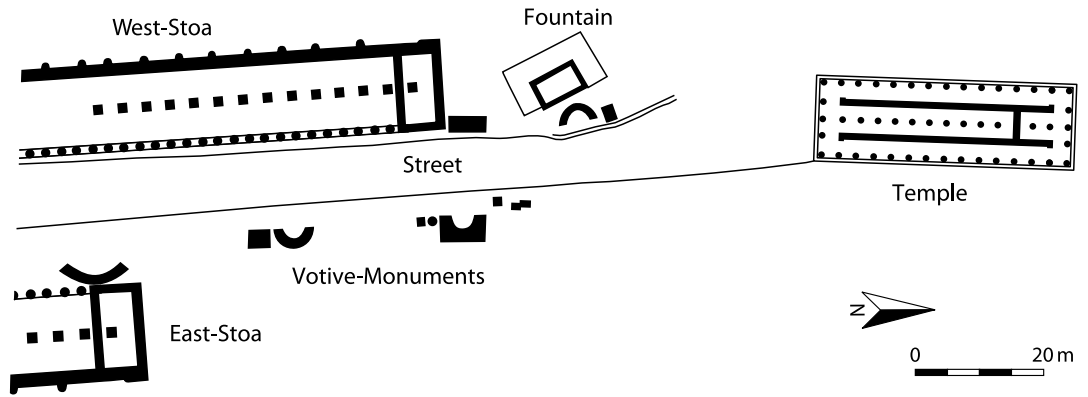


Fig. 3: Thermos, Sanctuary.

The same generally applies to fountains that were positioned in the immediate vicinity of the main altar. For example, the wells in Thermos (Fig. 3),¹⁶ Magnesia¹⁷ and Aulis¹⁸ do not have any monumental structures – the latter follows the same type as the wells in Tegea and Delphi. This does not mean that they could not be part of a designed architectural prospectus, especially in Hellenistic times, as is known from Magnesia, for example. Here the basin is embedded in the pavement in front of the main altar and is thus integrated in the central view-axis from the *propylon* via the altar to the temple front. Nevertheless, the source in this ensemble does not receive any independent architectural emphasis, but remains clearly subordinate to the two monumental architectural units. In Thermos (Fig. 3), in comparison, the approach to the temple was elaborately architecturally designed in the Hellenistic period due to the so-called agora, a street which is bordered by long galleries. But the probably older source was not included in this ensemble. Rather, it was located not only on a lower level from this access road, but was also concealed by an exedra monument oriented towards the road.

In Aulis, the situation is hardly assessable, because the connection to the temple is obscured by a modern street. Therefore, it is questionable whether the small foundation in front of the fountain must be addressed as the main altar of the sanctuary. However, written sources tell about a plane tree in the direct vicinity of the fountain.¹⁹ A natural monument, not an elaborate architectural design, therefore served as an eye-catcher here.

Even more vividly, the low interest in an architectural staging of important water installations can be seen in different examples in Delphi.²⁰ After the landslide in 373 BC, a water basin (Fig. 2,2) was placed in front of the northeast corner of the temple during the construction of the new retaining wall, the so-called Ischegaon. A water pipe supplied it with running water. The traces in the rock show that the basin was not framed architecturally. It also lay behind the

the thin walls were possibly reinforced by a small stone package: Courby 1927, 172. However, even the excavators were uncertain whether this could indicate a structure above ground. Fernand Courby interpreted the thick blocks that adjoin the slabs on the west side as foundations for this package (Courby 1927, fig. 129). However, they do not have a worked surface and are therefore unsuitable as a foundation for a neatly placed and stable wall.

¹⁶ Sotiriades 1899, 61 f.; Papapostolou 1984, 127 f. fig. 1; pl. 105; Papapostolou 2014, 184 figs. 79. 90. 111.

¹⁷ Bingöl 2007, 84 f.; Hammerschmied 2018, 102 f. figs. 2. 6. It was a wide basin (12 × 3 m) embedded in the ground and accessible by six steps on the east side.

¹⁸ Threpsiades 1958, 48–51 figs. 3–4; Drögemüller 1961, 218 f. fig. 12; Glaser 1983, 16–18 figs. 30. 31. The reconstruction by Glaser 1976/77, fig. 1 is in the end hypothetical. The situation in Xanthos cannot be assessed with certainty. Parts of the Imperial Nymphaion seem to date back to the Hellenistic period and seem to have formed an artificial grotto. The source, which originated directly in front of the temple, may have been in ritual use before Hellenistic times, as older findings suggest: Balland 1974; Metzger 1979, 10, 14 f.; Le Roy 1988, *passim*, especially 127; Dorl-Klingschmid 2001, 252 f. no. 120 fig. 180; Longfellow 2012, 146–151 figs. 13–15.

¹⁹ Paus. 9, 19, 7; Hom. Il. 2, 305.

²⁰ Glaser 1983, 26–28 figs. 48–50; Bommelaer – Laroche 2015, 222 f. fig. 77.

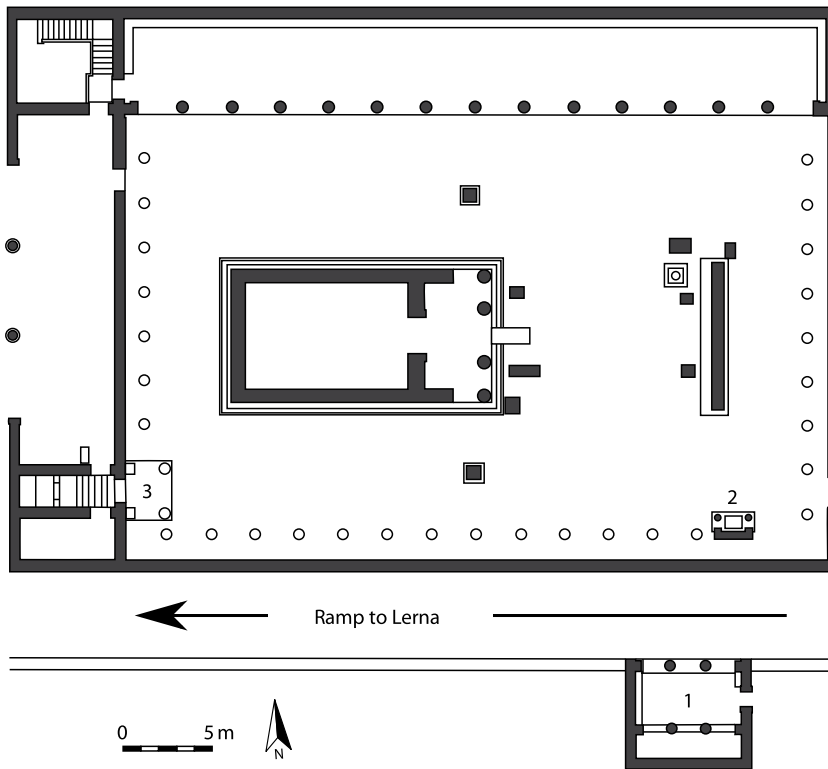


Fig. 4: Corinth, Asclepieion.

victory palm, donated in the 5th century BC after the Battle of Eurymedon (Fig. 2,5). At the latest with the erection of the pillar monument of Prusias (Fig. 2,4) in the 2nd century BC, the view from the temple forecourt to the fountain was completely blocked. Despite the particularly prominent location in one of the most important areas of the entire sanctuary, little attention was paid to the source. It is disputed whether the basin was part of the famous (younger) Kassotis – sometimes associated with a structure directly above the basin (Fig. 2,3) – which played an important role in the oracle. Pausanias²¹ reports that there is ‘a wall of no great size, and the ascent to the spring is through the wall’. Therefore, some scholars have reconstructed a staircase next to the basin.²² Although this attribution is more than uncertain, the description of Pausanias shows that even the Kassotis did not have a monumental façade. So even this important source, analogous to the source of Auge in Tegea, did not have a visual-aesthetic effect strengthened by architecture.

The situation in these sanctuaries becomes particularly apparent when compared to one of the very rare cases in which a source of water indeed plays a very dominant role in the architectural concept: in the Asclepieion of Corinth, a stepped fountain with its own *propylon* (Fig. 4,3)²³ is located exactly in the axis of the entrance, thus gaining its own architectural weight next to the temple’s façade.

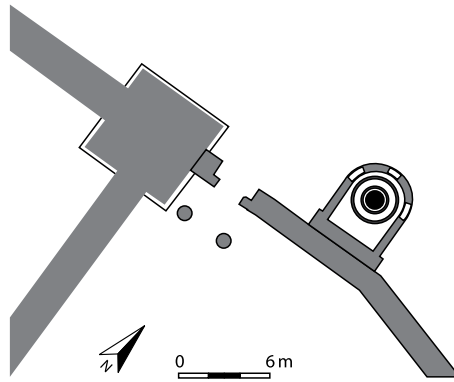
In contrast to such installations in the centre of the sanctuary, fountains with a more elaborate architectural design can be found more often in the area of the entrance to sanctuaries and sometimes along their main streets.

²¹ Paus. 10, 24, 7.

²² E. g. Pouilloux – Roux 1963, 88–92 fig. 25; for the Kassotis in general, cf. Roux 1971, 126–134; for the younger Kassotis, especially 132.

²³ Roebuck 1951, 46–51. 157 f. fig. 11; pls. 12, 1, 13, 2; Glaser 1983, 24 f. no. 17; figs. 46–47.

Fig. 5: Eleusis, entrance area of the late archaic sanctuary with the so-called καλλίχορον φρέαρ.



One of the most prominent installations can be found in Eleusis (Fig. 5) already from the Late Archaic period.²⁴ Here a high, sigma-shaped balustrade with several entrances secured the round well shaft, which was probably rightly identified with the literarily known καλλίχορον φρέαρ. The fountain is located directly next to the archaic entrance gate outside the walled area of the sanctuary.

Similarly, a monumental fountain house with two columns *in antis* dominated the access ramp to the Asclepieion of Corinth²⁵ (Fig. 5,1) – it, too, was therefore outside the actual temenos.

The fact that a fountain house could also be placed directly behind the entrance is shown by a second fountain in the same sanctuary which can probably be reconstructed in the form of a small *aedicula*²⁶ (Fig. 5,2). The building mediates between altar and entrance, to which it can be assigned in the same way by its orientation and location. So here in Corinth, two prominent sources were placed in front of and behind the entrance.

Another example for a fountain house behind the entrance inside the *temenos* may be found in Labraunda, where the so-called Doric building²⁷ is located in the intersection between the south and east *propylon*, though its function as a fountain is not finally secured. In the spacious sanctuary it frames the lower terrace, but is separated from the sanctuary's core by several further terraces and open stairs.

The same applies to another well house in Labraunda,²⁸ as well as to a fountain façade in the Asclepieion of Kos (Fig. 6,1).²⁹ Both are located at the retaining wall below the main temple terrace and are situated in front of the entrance to this terrace. However, the situation in Kos is difficult to assess. The fountain possibly dates back to the 4th century BC. But, neither the exact *temenos* boundary nor the access situations can be reconstructed for this first phase of the sanctuary's expansion.³⁰ In the last phase of the sanctuary's expansion, the fountain was located near the western side entrance to the lower terrace, while the main entrance in the form of a large *propylon* was in the north. At this time at the latest, the fountain was located only in a marginal position on the edge of the newly created large courtyard and was not related to the axis of the *propylon* or the flight of steps.

²⁴ Ziro 1991, 19–48 figs. 8–22. In comparison to the low parapet in Tegea, here the thickness of the wall is about 40 cm. For an older reconstruction without surrounding walls, cf. Noack 1927, 73 f. fig. 34.

²⁵ Roebuck 1951, 69–74 fig. 20; pl. 18, 5; Glaser 1983, 55 f. no. 41; figs. 46. 114. 145.

²⁶ Roebuck 1951, 26–28 pls. 8, 2–3; Glaser 1983, 91 f. no. 61; figs. 46. 176; Kerschner 1996, 109 f.

²⁷ Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 207 no. 52 fig. 135; Hellström 2007, 74 f.

²⁸ Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 208 no. 53 figs. 8 b; 37 b; 136; Hellström 2007, 95–97.

²⁹ Schazmann 1932, 58 f. pls. 30–33; Glaser 1983, 10 f. no. 4 figs. 10–15; Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 204 f. no. 46 fig. 131.

³⁰ On the problem, cf. e. g. Interdonato 2013, 78 f. She assumes the original main entrance on the opposite side, presupposing a predecessor of the Roman baths.

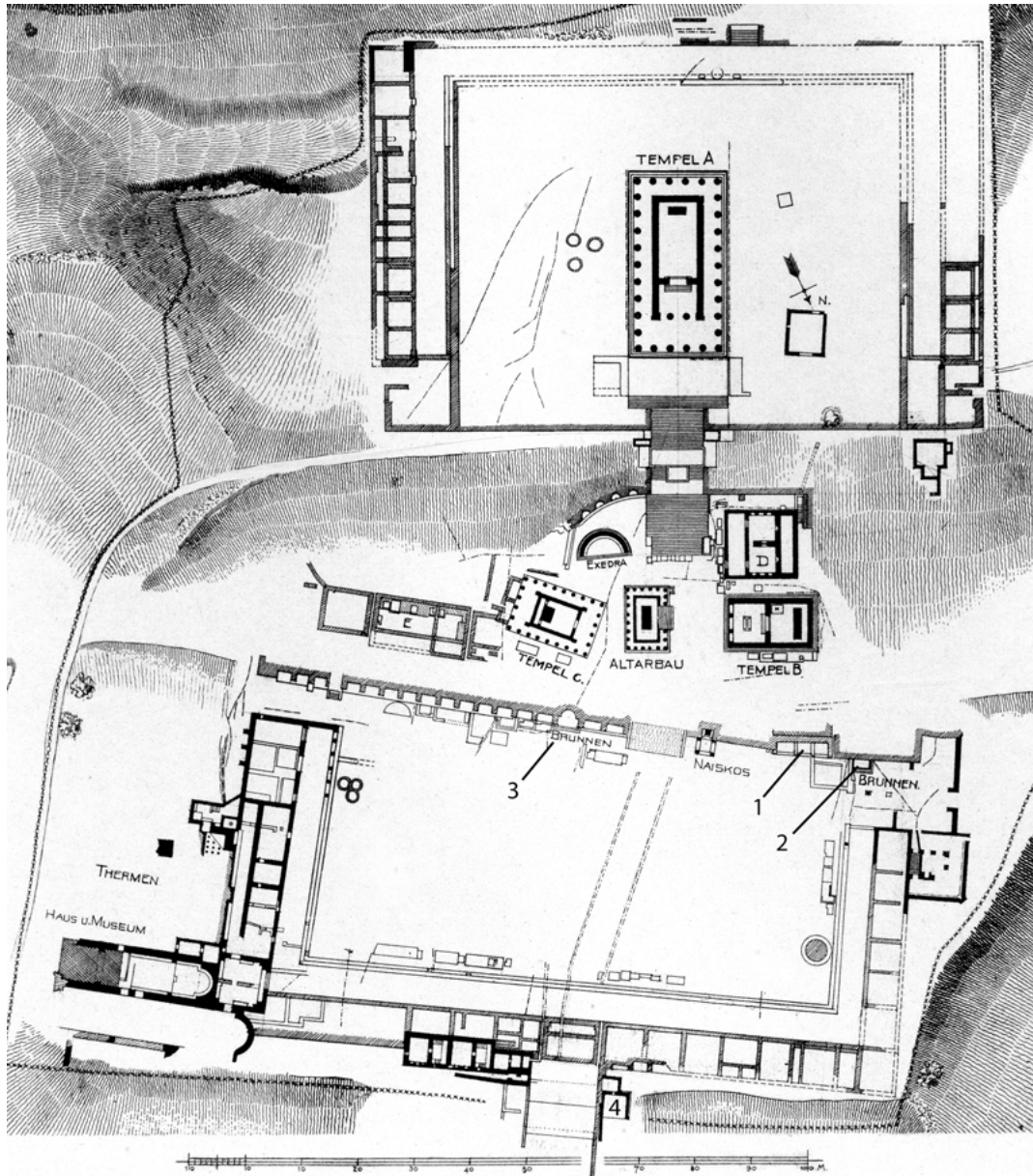


Fig. 6: Kos, Asclepieion.

In many other cases, however, the water installations in the entrance area consist only of simple rectangular basins, such as in Lousoi³¹ (Fig. 7), in the sanctuary of Demeter at Priene,³² in Megalopolis³³ and in another example from the Asclepieion of Kos (Figs. 6,2; 6,4).³⁴ The reconstruc-

³¹ Reichel – Wilhelm 1901, 15–18 figs. 6–9. They reconstruct a well house with a façade of columns or pillars on the basis of some slabs in front of the basin which formed a regular pavement. Glaser 1983, 58 f. no. 43 fig. 107, on the other hand, assumes only a wooden construction, because the typical traces of stone columns are missing. In addition, the slabs are not well founded, so that a heavy stone superstructure is unlikely.

³² Wiegand – Schrader 1904, 149 fig. 119 c; Dörfl-Klingenschmid 2001, 236 no. 94 fig. 164. von Kienlin – Schneider 2003, 391 also report on lime mortar beds in the entrance area of the *temenos*, which they interpret as remains of water basins. They assume that these were fed by the well.

³³ Lauter-Bufe 2009, 33 f. Beil. 5.

³⁴ Schazmann 1932, 60 pls. 32, 3.4; Glaser 1983, 30 no. 20 fig. 53; Dörfl-Klingenschmid 2001, 205 no. 47 fig. 132. The basins next to the main *propylon* in the north have not been published yet, except the plan by Schazmann 1932, pl. 38.

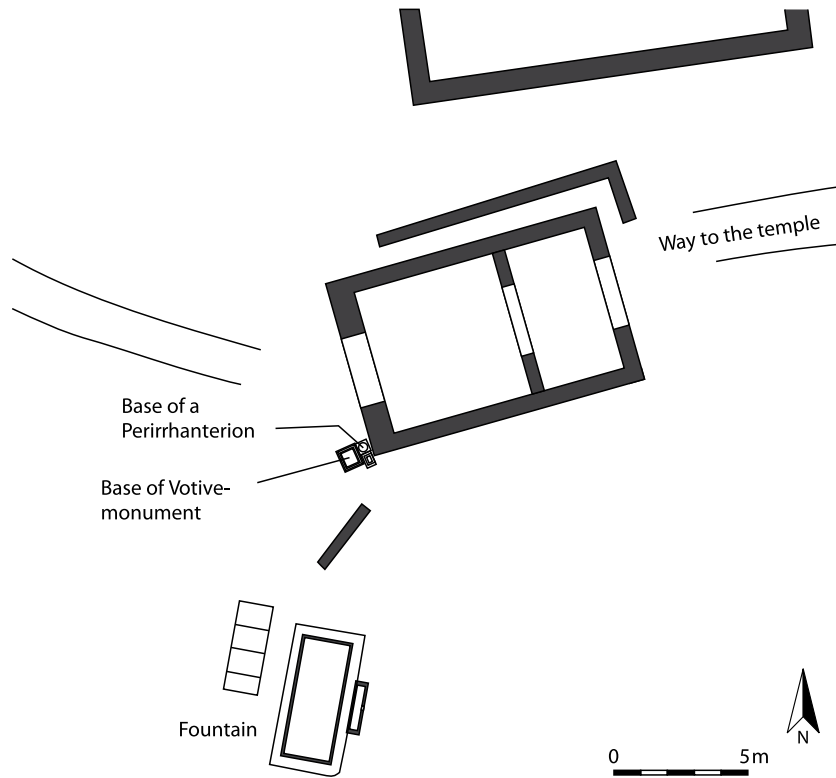


Fig. 7: Lousoi, entrance area of the sanctuary of Artemis.

tion of the fountain in the Hellenistic forecourt of Demeter's sanctuary in Pergamon is unclear, but a fountain-house, as is often assumed, is not secured.³⁵ Occasionally, circular well shafts are also available, as for example at the Great Propylon of Epidauros³⁶ or to the left of the *propylon* in the sanctuary of Demeter in Pergamon.³⁷

All these structures are located in a prominent position in front of or behind the *propylon* or near a central stairway. Normally, this creates a free space in front of the basin, which ensures visibility and usability. However, this visibility was quite rarely emphasized by architectural means.

Significantly, many other monumental sources, such as the spring of Castalia in Delphi³⁸ or the so-called Minoia Fountain on Delos,³⁹ are placed outside the actual sanctuary's area at some distance to the entrance. In Epidauros, the quite monumental water installations⁴⁰ were located in a separate, remote area inside the *temenos*. The fact that they were not understood as part of the monumental core of the sanctuary is evident not only by their orientation, but also by the fact that the area is closed off from temple, altar or tholos by dense rows of votive monuments.

A special case without direct parallels is therefore the large fountain house with exedra in the sanctuary of Poseidon and Amphitrite on Tinos. Its elaborated façade is oriented towards the temple, so that it can be regarded as an important part of the monumental sanctuary, although it is placed at a distance of 27 m from the temple. It may not be a coincidence that such a

³⁵ Bohtz 1981, 15 f. pl. 43, 1; Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 222 no. 77.

³⁶ See below, n. 73.

³⁷ Bohtz 1981, 15 pls. 6, 2. 43.

³⁸ Glaser 1983, 97 f. no. 68 figs. 182–185. 191; 101–105 no. 71 figs. 192–196.

³⁹ Courby 1912, 103–119 figs. 134–155; Glaser 1983, 15 f. no. 8 figs. 23–29; Bruneau – Ducat 2005, 196 no. 30. It may be possible to add a further fountain in the southeast area outside the sanctuary of Thermos, which has not yet been published in detail, so that no reliable information can be given about the possible layout: Sotiriades 1902, 49–51; Glaser 1983, 123 no. 95; Papapostolou 2014, 184 fig. 112.

⁴⁰ Roux 1961, 286–291 figs. 83–86 pls. 82.83; Glaser 1983, 44 f. no. 35 figs. 85–87; 62 f. no. 46; figs. 115–117.

singularly emphasized staging of a water complex can be found in a sanctuary dedicated to deities associated with water.⁴¹

In general, however, the significance of the water resources of Greek sanctuaries, which is often documented in literature, is in reality often not reflected in an elaborate architectural presentation. The initial focus lay on the usability and protection of the water. An increased architectural-aesthetic value was not in the primary focus of the architects. Especially in comparison with the monumental well houses in urban contexts, which had been very common since Archaic times,⁴² the water architecture in sanctuaries remains comparatively modest.

This did not change before Roman times, when more and more fountains with elaborate façades were built even in sanctuaries. The most prominent example is the Nymphaion of Herodes Atticus in Olympia.⁴³ But elsewhere, too, there is an increased awareness of the fountains and springs. Some were extensively renovated and enlarged. For example, the water installations in the Demeter shrine of Pergamon⁴⁴ or in the Letoon of Xanthos,⁴⁵ and, to a lesser extent, the fountain in the Asclepieion of Kos,⁴⁶ were given elaborate façades. In Kos, a further fountain with a circular niche in the central position of the terrace wall was installed, which now had a clear axial relationship with the main *propylon* (Fig. 6,3).⁴⁷

In spite of the often prominent position at the entrance to the sanctuary or near the temple and altar, water installations in the pre-Roman period did not necessarily acquire an architectural form that defined the space. Accordingly, the mythological or ritual significance of water systems was normally not emphasized or even increased by elaborate architectural forms.

Ritual use of water: Purification

If one includes the ritual use of water in the context of the Greek sanctuary, however, the picture is much broader. Hippocrates reported in the late 5th or early 4th century BC that entering a sanctuary required ritual purification with water:

αὐτοὶ τε ὅρους τοῖσι θεοῖσι τῶν ἱερῶν καὶ τῶν τεμενέων ἀποδεικνύμενοι, ὥς ἂν μηδεὶς ὑπερβαίνειν ἢ μὴ ἀγνεύειν, εἰσιόντες τε ἡμεῖς περιρραϊνόμεθα οὐχ ὥς μαινόμενοι, ἀλλ' εἴ τι καὶ πρότερον ἔχομεν μύσος, τοῦτο ἀφανιούμενοι.

*And we ourselves fix boundaries to the sanctuaries and precincts of the gods, so that nobody may cross them unless he be pure; and when we enter we sprinkle ourselves, not as defiling ourselves thereby, but to wash away any pollution we may have already contracted.*⁴⁸

Similarly, many epigraphic sacred laws define the need for both physical and moral purification before entering the sanctuary.⁴⁹ The purity of the visitors, achieved by a complete washing or a

⁴¹ Etienne – Braun 1986, 73–91; Glaser 1983 87–89 no. 59 figs. 161–163. He doubts the usual dating. On a smaller scale, a fountain house with a small *aedicula* in the Asclepieion/Hippolyteion of Troizen can be added: Welter 1941, 30 pl. 17 c; Glaser 1983, 56–58 no. 42 figs. 103–106. The reconstruction of the monument of the Nike of Samothrace as a fountain has been disproved with certainty: Wescoat 2015.

⁴² E. g. the so-called Enneakrounos in Athens: Glaser 1983, 67 f. no. 49 figs. 123. 124. The possible size of fountain buildings in Hellenistic times is demonstrated by the Fountain of Arsinoë in Messene: Reinholdt 2009, 159–176 Beil. 8.

⁴³ Glaser 1983, 110 f. no. 75 figs. 204–209; Longfellow 2012, 141–146.

⁴⁴ Bohtz 1981, 15 f. pls. 6, 3. 43, 2. 44.

⁴⁵ Cited above, n. 18.

⁴⁶ Schazmann 1932, 59 pl. 31; Glaser 1983, 10 f. no. 4 figs. 12.13. 15.

⁴⁷ Schazmann 1932, 55 f. figs. 35–36 pl. 29; Glaser 1983, 45 f. no. 36 figs. 88.89; Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 205 f. no. 48 fig. 133. Further examples for newly built fountains in sanctuaries in Lagina and Samos: Dorl-Klingenschmid 2001, 210 no. 55; 240 no. 100 fig. 27. For the phenomenon in general, cf. Longfellow 2012.

⁴⁸ Hippoc. Morb. Sacr. 4, 55–60 (translation by Jones 1981).

⁴⁹ Wächter 1910; Le Guen-Pollet 1991, 77–80 nos. 22–23; Pimpl 1997, 55 f.; Gawlinski 2012, 61. For the *perirrhanis* in general, cf. RE 37 (1937) 856 f. s. v. Περιρραντήρια (L. Ziehen); Durand – Lissarague 1980, 91 f.; Kerschner 1996,

symbolic sprinkling with water (ritual of *perirrhansis*), can therefore be regarded as an existential prerequisite for the constitution of sacred space.

Water also played a decisive role in the sacrificial ritual at the altar: at the beginning of the sacrifice, sacrificial servants usually walked around the altar carrying the *kanoun* and the *chernips*, a vessel filled with water. This water was then used to sprinkle the victims and the cult participants. In addition, the priest or the head of the sacrifice washed his hands with it later. Thus, integrated into a complex lustral ritual, water played a central role in defining the space of the subsequent sacrificial process. Here, water was used to define both a physical and a social space by bringing the participants together as a group.⁵⁰ But water also marked a temporal limit when it was explicitly used at the start and end point of the ritual.

The written tradition proves that *perirrhanteria*, i. e. vessels that contained the water for the *perirrhansis*, regularly surrounded sanctuaries or were placed in a central position at the entrances, thus limiting the sacred space.

Εἴη δ' ἂν ὁ μὲν εἶσω τῶν περιρραντηρίων τόπος ἔνθεος, ἱερός καθιερωμένος ἀβέβηλος, ὁ δὲ ἔξω βέβηλος.

But let the place within the *perirrhanteria* be holy, consecrated, filled with God, inviolable, outside generally enterable.⁵¹

καὶ τὸ μὲν πρόγραμμα φησι μὴ παριέναι εἰς τὸ εἶσω τῶν περιρραντηρίων ὅστις μὴ καθαρὸς ἐστίν. τὰς χεῖρας: ὁ δὲ ἱερεὺς αὐτὸς ἔστηκεν ἡμαγμένος.

And although the notice says that no one is to be allowed within the holy-water [within the *perirrhanteria*] who has not clean hands, the priest himself stands there all bloody [...]⁵²

Archaeologically, such movable objects are naturally difficult to detect. Nevertheless, there is some evidence for basins at the entrance to sanctuaries, which has already been collected in detail by various authors.⁵³ Mostly these are ashlar bases with a round cavity for a basin, which in most cases were placed to the right of the entrance. This is the case, for example, in front of the entrance to the sanctuary of Poseidon on Thasos⁵⁴ (Fig. 8) or in the sanctuary of Artemis at Lousoi,⁵⁵ where, in addition to the well, such a basin was set up on the right of the *propylon* (Fig. 7).

Occasionally, corresponding basins can also be found in the entrance area of temples. Well documented examples are found in the *pteron* of the archaic temple of Poseidon at Isthmia,⁵⁶ on the right of the access ramps of both temples of Asclepius and Artemis (Fig. 9) in Epidauros⁵⁷

107–111; Pimpl 1997, 4–8. 49–65; ThesCRA 5 (2005) 165 s.v. Rituelle Reinigung (I. Krauskopf); ThesCRA 5 (2005) 179–181 s.v. Peirrhanterion/Louterion (I. Krauskopf).

50 E.g. Gebauer 2002, 213. 246–252; van Straten 1995, 31–49; Pimpl 1997, 63 f.; van Straten 2005, 22 (see as well Chiarenza, this volume). About the potential of lustral rituals in general to mark borders and divisions: Parker 1983, 18–24.

51 Poll. 1, 8.

52 Lucian. de sacr. 13 (translation by Harmon 1960).

53 Kerschner 1996, 107–110; Pimpl 1997, 49–54; Seiffert 2006, 72–77. The following examples can possibly be added: a) tripod base in front of the *propylon* in Klaros: Etienne – Varene 2004, fig. 14 a. 100; Ortaç 2001, 153; b) tripod base behind the *propylon* in the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon: cf. below, n. 72. In terms of typology, no distinction can be made between washing basins (*louteria*) and basins for *perirrhansis* (*perirrhanteria*, *aporrhanteria*, *hagisteria*): Kerschner 1996, 104 f.; Pimpl 1997, 4–8; ThesCRA 5 (2005) 178 s.v. *Perirrhanterion/Louterion* (I. Krauskopf).

54 Bon – Seyrig 1929, 322 f. fig. 2 pl. 16. 20; Pimpl 1997, 51; Seiffert 2006, 76.

55 Reichel – Wilhelm 1901, 18 f. fig. 6. 10; Pimpl 1997, 52.

56 Broneer 1971, 6. 12 pl. 7. 8 c; Gebhard – Hemans 1992, 33. 36 f. figs. 8. 10; Kerschner 1996, 113; Pimpl 1997, 25; Seiffert 2006, 78 f.

57 Kavvadias 1905, passim, especially 48–50 fig. 4 pl. B'1, e; Roux 1961, 216; Kerschner 1996, 111 f.; Pimpl 1997, 59. 106–110. 113 f.; Seiffert 2006, 77 f.

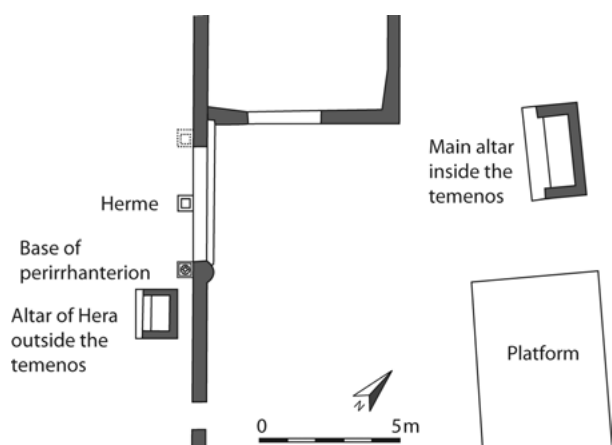


Fig. 8: Thasos, entrance area of the sanctuary of Poseidon.

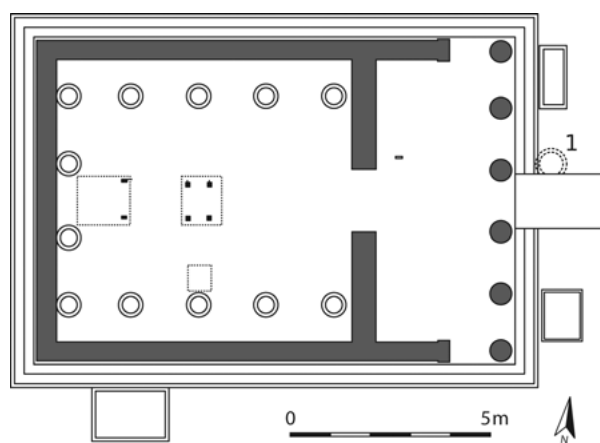


Fig. 9: Epidauros, Temple of Artemis.

and in front of the temple of Athena in Stymphalos.⁵⁸ The fact that these basins were indeed used for ritual cleansing is documented by a series of sacred laws⁵⁹ which formulate distinctive rules of purity for the temple. Of particular interest is the inscription on the Temple of Asclepius in Epidauros,⁶⁰ which can be directly associated with the basin found there.

Water therefore not only served the constitution of sacred space in general, but also helped to identify areas within the sanctuary as particularly worthy of protection and thus to structure the inner space.⁶¹

Although there are some very elaborate *perirrhanteria* with figurative designs from Archaic times, in Classical and Hellenistic times simple bowls on high feet are usually to be expected.⁶² Between the manifold votive offerings that filled the paths and places of the sanctuaries, they will hardly have had a significant effect as individual monuments. The verifiable basins in front of the two temples in Epidauros, for example, were densely surrounded by other, often much larger votive bases.⁶³ In Lousoi, in fact (Fig. 7), there was a monument directly in front of the *perirrhanterion* and thus obscuring the view.

Only in a few exceptional cases was a more elaborate design and thus an explicit emphasis on these basins achieved. For example, very rarely fountain figures were used as water dispensers. Such a figure is, for instance, verifiable in front of the temple of Asclepius in Epidauros, which replaced or supplemented the old basin at the ramp.⁶⁴

Similar to what has already been stated for the fountains, basins and *perirrhanteria* were also regularly placed at the decisive intersections of the sanctuary's area, but possessed only in exceptional cases an emblematic monumentality which helped to emphasise and constitute spaces.

⁵⁸ Williams 2001, 79 n. 14; Schaus 2014, 17. 24 figs. 2, 8. 2, 25. 2, 27. In addition, there are basins in antechambers of some mystery cults, for example for the Kabirot: Kerschner 1996, 113.

⁵⁹ E. g. LSAM 12, 1–4; LSAM 51, 1–4; LSS 91, 1–3; LSS 108, 4–7.

⁶⁰ This inscription has only been recorded by Porph. abst. 2, 19: [...] ἐν γούν Ἐπιδαύρῳ προεγέγραπτο, ἀγνὸν χρὴ ναοῖο θυώδεος ἐντὸς ἰόντα ἔμμεναι· ἀγνεία δ' ἐστὶ φρονεῖν ὅσια. *There was an inscription at Epidauros: pure must one be to enter the incense-fragrant temple, and purity is thinking holy thoughts* (translation by Clark 2000).

⁶¹ Hippoc. Morb. Sacr. 4, 55–60, as well, uses the terms *temenos* and *hieron* to distinguish different areas of the sanctuary.

⁶² Pimpl 1997, 28–34. 41–46. 106–110.

⁶³ An impression of this can be conveyed by the imaginative illustrations in Defrasse – Lechat 1895, figs. on p. 53. 164; pl. 12, even if he did not draw the basin itself.

⁶⁴ Kavvadias 1905, passim, especially 46–48 fig. 3 pl. B', 1–2, c; Kerschner 1996, 95 f.; Pimpl 1997, 111–116 with only four examples.

Performance and Architecture

The procedure of the *perirrhansis* can be reconstructed with the help of a few vase depictions.⁶⁵ Usually they show a human figure standing between a basin and a single column with entablature.⁶⁶ Although it will hardly be possible to identify the architecture with certainty,⁶⁷ the depictions at least prove the connection between *perirrhansis* and an architectural entrance. As a rule, the figure either holds a branch in its left hand or dips its right hand into the basin. While the figure usually stands motionless in front of the basin, a cup in Krakow (Fig. 10)⁶⁸ shows a male figure in a wide protruding step as he dips his right hand into the basin. This shows that *perirrhansis* could also be carried out in motion, as in passing through the entrance.

Especially the position at a ramp, as it is documented at the temples in Epidauros, shows that it will not have been an insignificant, casually executed ritual. The ramp not only provided an architectural setting for the approach to the temple,⁶⁹ but also isolated and exposed the individual visitors who approached the temple and performed the *perirrhansis*, due to its small width and rising height. Accordingly, the ritually necessary cleansing upon entering the temple, which was prominently demanded by inscriptions, must also be understood as a social act. The structural setting with a ramp and a basin aligned to it emphasized and codified it in a significant way.

The execution of *perirrhansis* with the right hand is confirmed by the predominant position of the corresponding basins to the right of the entrance to the sanctuary, to the *propylon* or temple. Usually *perirrhanteria* are directly dependent on the *propylon* and lean against its façade, while wells with their own water supply tend to maintain a certain distance as a more



Fig. 10: Attic red-figure cup with the depiction of a *perirrhansis* in motion.

⁶⁵ Durand – Lissarague 1980; ThesCRA 5 (2005) 179–182 s. v. Peirrhanterion/Louterion (I. Krauskopf).

⁶⁶ E. g.: a) Attic red figure cup, Pan Painter, Villa Giulia 50422; b) Attic red figure cup, Boot Painter, Warsaw, Nat.Mus. 142313. Durand – Lissarague 1980, 93 fig. 4. 8; Kerschner 1996, pl. 24,1. 3.

⁶⁷ References in the individual images are either to the context of a *gymnasion* or a shrine. For the discussion, see e. g. Kerschner 1996, 104 f.; Pimpl 1997, 70 f.; ThesCRA 5 (2005) 178 f. s. v. Peirrhanterion/Louterion (I. Krauskopf).

⁶⁸ Attic red figure cup, painter of the Paris Gigantomachy, Krakow, Czartoryski Museum 1211.

⁶⁹ Sporn 2015.

independent structure.⁷⁰ In all cases, however, the *propylon* or the framing of the entrance to the sanctuary dominated the mostly simple basins and fountains. Those are subordinate to the gate buildings.

The ritual cleansing ceremonies – washing and *perirrhasis* – therefore mostly took place in front of the *propylon* or when entering it. A real integration of the water resources into the *propylon* is not proven.⁷¹ Rather, as shown, water resources are occasionally placed directly behind an entrance, for example in the Asclepieia of Kos and Corinth or in the Demeter sanctuary of Priene. Also, in Epidauros there is a circular well shaft several metres behind the *propylon* and thus already in the sanctuary's area. It may even have been possible to position *perirrhanteria* in the interior of the district, behind the *propylon*, as demonstrated by a tripod base in the sanctuary of Athena in Pergamon, for which a *perirrhanterion* is known from an inscription.⁷² The use of these facilities for ritual cleansing can in no case be conclusively proven, but at least for Epidauros there are some indications for it. Judging by the forms of the clamps, the fountain originates from Archaic times. Before the erection of the *propylon* in the 4th century, it lay isolated at the *temenos* border, so that a corresponding use is reasonable.⁷³ For the later period, continuous use can at least have been achieved by repairing the rim, which emphasises the importance of the well. When building the *propylon*, however, no explicit consideration was obviously given to the ritual boundary and no attempt was made to tie the well closer to the *propylon*.

Conclusion

As was shown, water installations, be they fountains with flowing water or simple basins, rarely were given a monumental shape or an architectural form in the Greek sanctuary. This applies both to sources that were of great importance for the cult and to sources that were presented to visitors as worth seeing for other reasons. Architecture was therefore not used in this case to increase and explicitly stage this significance.

In those cases in which water installations received an architectural emphasis, this was usually near the entrance or a central access road within the shrine. In general, they were often located in particularly prominent places, which were of decisive importance for the structuring of the sanctuary's area. However, it was not water structures or water monuments that were used to define or stage those boundaries by architectural means, but monumental gates or specially designed access paths, such as ramps and staircases. In most cases, the water installations were subordinate or assigned to these buildings.

This is particularly remarkable, because at the same time water was intensively used in rituals that defined boundaries. It is only through the use of water, i.e. through a performative act, that water gains a central and then explicitly space-constituting meaning.⁷⁴ The association with these possible uses can nevertheless assign a marker function to the sometimes very simple

⁷⁰ For another example from Sicily, see Chiarenza, this volume. The exception is the basin fed by clay pipes in front of the westernmost column of the *propylon* in Megalopolis, cited above.

⁷¹ It was different in Roman times. For example, in the Lesser *Propylaea* of Eleusis in the later Imperial period, two basins were installed as part of its inner façade: Hörmann 1932, 43–45. 110. He explicitly emphasizes the usability of the basins for washing.

⁷² Bohn 1885, 55 pl. 18; LSAM 12, 7–9; Ortaç 2001, 153.

⁷³ Though the well is recorded in most of the plans, it has remained as yet nearly unpublished. For a short description, the dating, and its lustral function, cf. Tomlinson 1983, 46 fig. 3; Kerschner 1996, 110; Riethmüller 2005, 173.

⁷⁴ Hölscher 2013, 51 has already pointed out that actions play an important role in the constitution of borders in Greek urban space in general.

monuments, as can be observed in the text sources in which the *temenos* can occasionally be equated with the area within the *perirrhanteria*.

Consequently, boundaries marked by water, or by the ritual use of water, are not congruent with the architectural boundaries. In particular, the monumental *propylon* architecturally marked the transition to the sanctuary. The rite de passage of purification could take place both spatially in front of and behind the *propylon*. The specific ritual of *perirrhanterias* may also have been carried out while entering the *propylon*. However, the *propylon* was never a place of extensive washing and water basins were not integrated into the architecture as an integral part. Although the *propylon*'s main task was to make the crossing of the border a spatial experience, for example, through the difference in level or the strong shading in a closed building, it did not primarily serve as a place of ritual performance. This means that the central ritual action, which can be regarded as a prerequisite for the constitution of sacred space, often did not receive its own prominent architectural staging or was spatially separated from the architecturally marked boundary itself. Ritual and architectural staging, respectively agency and perception, may to some extent lie spatially close together, but in most cases they remain conceptually clearly separated, independent elements.⁷⁵

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- Fig. 4: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Ziro 1991, fig. 22.
- Fig. 5: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Glaser 1983, fig. 46.
- Fig. 6: Schazmann 1932, pl. 37.
- Fig. 7: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Reichel – Wilhelm 1901, fig. 6. 9–10.
- Fig. 8: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Bon – Seyrig 1929, pl. 16.
- Fig. 9: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Roux 1961, pls. 53–54.
- Fig. 10: drawing by Philipp Kobusch, after Kerschner 1996, pl. 24,4. Krakow, Czartoryski Museum 1211.

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⁷⁵ In early Christianity, the opposite can be observed. For baptism as a ritual directly connected with water, a special type of building was developed – the Baptistry – , which explicitly referred to the performance of the ritual. See Zimmermann, this volume.

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