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SACRED SPACES IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ANATOLIA: ARCHITECTURAL INSIGHTS AND SENSORY JOURNEYS IN ELEUSIS AND KLAROS

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A Master's Thesis

by
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ABSTRACT

SACRED SPACES IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ANATOLIA: ARCHITECTURAL INSIGHTS AND SENSORY JOURNEYS OF ELEUSIS AND KLAROS

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This thesis delves into the profound intersection of architecture, ritual, and sensory experience in the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Oracle at Klaros. Through meticulously examining archaeological evidence, literary sources, and climatic considerations, the study unfolds the architectural designs of the *Telesterion* in Eleusis and the Temple of Apollo in Klaros, focusing mainly on the Late Hellenistic to Imperial Roman era. The experiential aspects of these sacred spaces, including spatial distortion, lighting effects, and climatic conditions, are scrutinized for their impact on participants.

In Eleusis, the *Telesterion's* near-symmetrical layout creates an immersive environment, intensified by tiered seating and artificial illumination during the nocturnal ceremonies. The *Anaktoron* adds a layer of sensory triggers, prompting contemplation on the involvement of deities like Demeter. Meanwhile, the Temple of Apollo and subterranean *adyton* present a unique architectural ensemble. The labyrinthine corridors, deliberate darkness, and altered atmospheric conditions contribute to a transformative sensory experience. The journey through the crypts involves challenging descents, limited movement, and a revelation chamber.

This analysis unveils the profound impact of Eleusinian and Klarian spaces, where the confluence of architectural choices and environmental conditions intricately shapes both initiatory and oracular experiences. The overarching objective of this study is to enhance our understanding of the experiential essence inherent in religious settings. It contributes significantly to a comprehensive knowledge of ancient sacred spaces, portraying them as multidimensional realms where architecture, climate, and sensory manipulation intertwine. This intricate interplay serves as a catalyst, facilitating a profound and meaningful connection between humanity and the divine.

Keywords: Ancient Mystery Cults, Architectural Experience, Oracle at Klaros, Eleusinian Mysteries, Sensory Perception

ÖZET

ANTİK YUNAN'DA VE ANADOLU'DA KUTSAL MEKÂNLAR: ELEFSİS VE KLAROS'TA MİMARİ BAKIŞ AÇILARI VE DUYUSAL YOLCULUKLAR

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Bu tez, mimari, ritüel ve duysal deneyimin derin kesişimine odaklanarak, iki önemli antik gizem kültüne, Yunanistan'daki Elefsis Gizemleri ve Türkiye'deki Klaros Kehanet Merkezi'ne ışık tutmaktadır. Arkeolojik bulguları, edebi kaynakları ve iklim koşullarını titizlikle inceleyerek, çalışma Elefsina'daki *Telesterion'un* ve Klaros'taki Apollo Tapınağı'nın mimari detaylarını, özellikle Geç Helenistik'ten Erken İmparatorluk Roma Dönemi'ne odaklanarak açığa çıkarmaktadır. Bu kutsal mekanların deneyimsel yönleri, mekânsal bozulma, aydınlatma efektleri ve iklim koşulları dahil olmak üzere, katılımcılar üzerindeki etkileri açısından detaylı bir şekilde incelenmektedir.

Elefsina'daki *Telesterion'un* neredeyse simetrik yapısı, tierli oturma düzeni ve gece düzenlenen ayinlerde yapay aydınlatma ile birleşerek derinlemesine bir ortam yaratmaktadır. *Anaktoron*, kutsal nesneleri barındıran ve sembolik bir ateş içeren, Demeter gibi tanrıların katılımını düşündüren duysal tetikleyici bir katman eklemektedir. Diğer yandan, Apollo Tapınağı ve yeraltı *adytonu* benzersiz bir mimari kompozisyon sunmaktadır. Labirent koridorları, kasıtlı karanlık ve değiştirilmiş atmosfer koşulları, dönüştürücü bir duysal deneyime katkıda bulunmaktadır. Kriptlerdeki yolculuk zor inişleri, sınırlı hareketi ve çeşitli şiirsel ölçülerle karakterize edilen bir kehanet odasını içermekte, gizemli bir atmosfer yaratmaktadır.

Bu analiz, Elefsis ve Klaros mekanlarının, mimari seçimlerin ve çevresel koşulların birleşiminin hem katılımcı hem de danışan deneyimlerini karmaşık bir şekilde şekillendirdiğini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmanın genel amacı, dini mekanlarda var olan deneyimsel özü anlama derecesini artırmaktır. Bu karmaşık etkileşim, antik gizem kùltlerini ve kehanet merkezlerini, mimari, iklim ve duysal manipölasyonun sorunsuz bir şekilde iç içe geçtiğı çok boyutlu alanlar olarak betimleyerek anlama katkıda bulunmaktadır. Bu karmaşık etkileşim, insanlık ile ilahi arasında derin ve anlamlı bir bağlantıyı kolaylaştıran bir katalizör olarak hizmet etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Antik Gizem Kùltleri, Mimari Deneyim, Klaros Kehanet Merkezi, Elefsis Gizemleri, Duysal Algı

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Archaeology is a discipline with boundless horizons, continually enriching our world knowledge. While *Homo Sapiens* shares the same anatomical brain structure, the way we perceive and experience the world is marked by diversity. Our senses work at any given time, and we cannot shut them down. We cannot speak of equality between senses, as some circumstances call for the hegemony of one or multiple senses while others call for another. Hamilakis says all sensorial experience is synesthetic and kinesthetic (2014: 114). This is the view that this thesis holds: a synesthetic view. However, using the term here should not be confused with a neurological condition in which one sense stimulates other sensory stimulations (Bradley, 2015: 128). Understanding the complexities of perception and experience is paramount in unraveling the mysteries of our cognitive functioning. To truly grasp the inner workings of our minds, we must journey back in time and try to explore how our ancestors' brains functioned. In this endeavor, archaeology serves as a gateway. This thesis explores how people in the classical period perceived the divine as a complex expression of human experience and understanding. Guided by the emerging discipline of Sensory Archaeology, we may unravel how past societies perceived their sensory world through the tangible literature and physical remnants of ancient culture.

1.1 Aim

This study is directed at unraveling the impact of sensory experiences on divination, rituals, and the perception of religious encounters at Klaros and Eleusis, explicitly focusing on the Hellenistic to Roman periods. At its core, this endeavor is an exploration of the human mind. Human nature compels us to comprehend that which eludes easy perception, and we are acutely aware of the limitations of our sensory faculties. Within this thesis, we argue that consciousness is not a static, universally defined entity; instead, each person possesses a unique layer of reality subject to transformation through diverse methods. To transcend these limitations, individuals throughout history have sought various means, ranging from ascetic practices like fasting, meditation, and sensory deprivation to the use of entheogens. These substances alter consciousness and induce an "*altered state*." The duration and nature of these altered states depend on a complex interplay of internal and external factors.

Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge that the nature of these changes is only sometimes evident. The age-old question, "*What is reality?*" remains elusive, as there is no universally applicable answer. Instead, the concept of reality is bound by individuals' cognitive and neurological capacities. While a single, all-encompassing reality may not exist, there are overarching boundaries within which our personal experiences unfold.

People in the past had the same anatomical structures as today, specifically noses for a sense of smell and eyes with a sense of sight, so these physical factors were no different from ours today. However, they lived in different conditions and were more connected to the environment, unlike us, who have succumbed to virtuality. We can test this concept with the evidence of what is known about the two case examples taken from antiquity, which form the focus of this study, the cult centers at Eleusis and Klaros that witnessed peak activity during the Hellenistic and Roman periods.

1.2 Thesis Structure

In this initial chapter, we lay the foundation for our thesis by delineating its scope and objectives. Additionally, we provide the historical and contextual scene for the two prominent case studies, Eleusis and Klaros. The second chapter will discuss the conceptual framework within which the sensory understanding of divination and ritual, as well as the challenges of reconstructing past experiences, combining the elements, and applying the conceptual framework to the case studies. The third chapter offers insight into the socio-economic, cultural, and mythical contexts in which our case studies, the cults at Eleusis and Klaros, are embedded: this is indispensable for comprehending the sensory experiences that unfolded within these religious settings. Chapter four takes a closer look at the architectural and environmental elements within the religious spaces of Eleusis and Klaros to assess how these elements contributed to the sensory experiences of worshipers, providing a crucial layer to our analysis. In the fifth chapter, we explore the sensory elements, scrutinizing the five primary senses and their potential to induce altered states of consciousness. In the final chapter, we synthesize our findings and provide a holistic interpretation of the sensory experiences in the context of religious architecture. We will employ diverse data sources throughout our exploration, including textual evidence for cross-verification and climactic, environmental, archaeological, epigraphical, and psychological data.

1.3 Scope

Sensory archaeology is a newly developed field within the humanities inspired mainly by anthropology and history, specifically the *Annales* school. As was noted by Smith (2021: 7-63), the critical scholars here were the French historians Lucien Febvre (1879-1956), Robert Mandrou (1921–1984), and Guy Thuillier (1932-2019). Their works became available in English in the 80s and 90s and were critical in establishing the general theory of sensory history, from which sensory

archaeology developed. This led to the foundation in 2012 of the Centre for Sensory Studies at Concordia University to research the history and social life of the senses.

The first sensory studies penetrated archaeology in the late 1990s and early 2000s, with the seminal articles of Houston and Taube (2000) and Gosden (2001). Later work by Frieman and Gillings (2007) was also highly influential. However, a boom came in the 2010s, with the more substantial studies by Skeates (2010), Fahlander and Kjellström (2010), Hamilakis (2014), and Day (2013). Further impetus was given by Mills (2014), Pellini, Zarankin, and Salerno (2015), Le Breton and Ruschiesky (2017), and Platts (2019) and with the publication of two handbooks on the subject by 2019 and 2021. In the 2020s, we finally have a terminology and defined methodology for sensory archaeology (e.g., Day and Skeates, 2019: 5-8, and 558-562).

There are several concepts on which sensory archaeology centers its research and methodology. These are "*sensorium*" and "*theory of extended mind*" (Howes and Classen, 2013: 155), and "*ways of sensing*," "*sensescape*," "*sensorial field*," "*affect*," and "*commensality*" (Hamilakis, 2014: 85), and beyond. Thus, boundaries and concepts have been established for sensory studies in archaeology. However, as Skeates and Day beautifully paraphrase Tringham and Danis (2019: 561), "*There is no single recipe, no toolkit, for sensory archaeology. Nor should there be: the guidelines are in a constant process of revision, and we will put these into practice in different ways.*"

At the heart of this study lies the intrinsic role of human senses in shaping perception, experience, and knowledge. In the Graeco-Roman world, the five Aristotelian senses held pervasive significance: sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell. While acknowledging the synesthetic nature of human experiences, this study, for scientific clarity, defines these senses. Nevertheless, it remains mindful of their inherent interconnectedness. Specific sensory elements may take precedence in certain situations, such as taste accompanying sight and hearing during rituals at the

Telesterion, the central building of the sacred area where the central initiations occurred, in Eleusis or sight and hearing in the context of oracular processions. As it is, in archaeology, a synesthetic understanding of sensory experience is yet to be commonplace due to the limitations of categorical thinking. Nonetheless, this study posits that through the altered states of consciousness, it endeavors to weave together the elements of experience – the physical space, the materials it comprises, and our cognitive processes – culminating in profound divine encounters.

This contribution does not seek to bridge existing gaps but aims to interconnect these elements, enabling a more holistic interpretation to understand the Graeco-Roman religious world. Thus, we must focus primarily on the Aristotelian senses as foundational to understanding the sensory experiences of antiquity. In ancient Greek and Roman cultures, the sense of smell extended beyond the nose, encompassing the throat, ear canals, eyes, and brain (Bradley, 2015: 3). Taste, often considered a subset of touch, was perceived as bodily, inarticulate, and devoid of meaning (Rudolph, 2017: 1). Sound served as a means of communication between worshippers and gods, much like in other cultures, with distinct sounds attributed to different entities (Howes and Classen, 2013: 156; also, Nooter and Butler, 2018: 4). Hearing played a significant role in religious rites such as those at Eleusis and the oracular shrine of Klaros (Petridou, 2013). Loud sounds were used to evoke intense emotions. Oracular consultations relied on the importance of sound (Montiglio, 2018: 18). For instance, in Dodona, the oldest Greek oracular site, prophecies were conveyed through the sound of trees, and Philostratus referred to the place as "*full of divine voice*" (Philostratus, *Imag.* 2.33). Visual elements were likewise essential, as with, for example, the Eleusinian mysteries (Petridou, 2013). The Homeric *Hymn to Demeter*, an early source on the cult, emphasizes the significance of visual experiences (Power, 2018: 16). Moreover, in Greek culture, sight is closely associated with knowledge, with the root word for "*knowing*" traced back to the word meaning "*óρᾶω*." Greek and Roman art often depict eyes as stand-alone motifs, and the evil eye concept carries symbolic significance in ancient culture (Fig. 1) (Squire, 2015: 26; Grethlein, 2015: 87).

1.4 Eleusis and Klaros

As we embark on a deeper exploration of the core themes within this thesis, it is imperative to elucidate the rationale behind selecting Eleusis and Klaros as our focal points. Both sites, distinguished Graeco-Roman religious centers, spanned the period from the Archaic to Late Antiquity. However, our deliberate choice stems from the rich data on both locations' late Hellenistic and early Imperial Roman eras.

Throughout this study, we meticulously employ textual and archaeological evidence from the Archaic to the Roman eras, incorporating them into three distinct aspects. Firstly, in the case of Eleusis, we rely on relatively later textual sources that harken back to the times when the cult was actively operative. Secondly, certain instances present textual evidence with a temporal gap of six to eight centuries; nonetheless, as we progress through later textual sources, a noteworthy pattern emerges – they consistently reference and harken back to these earlier texts, signifying a discernible continuity in the contextual fabric.

Thirdly, in examining archaeological evidence, we emphasize peak periods. Whenever the evidence indicates a different temporal context, it is essential to infer that the provided evidence implies a sustained continuity of the context throughout the centuries. This approach ensures a nuanced understanding of the historical and religious landscape, allowing for a comprehensive analysis of Eleusis and Klaros within the specified temporal framework.

As we will see, both sites emphasized specific aspects of the five senses and, more to the point, have surviving remains to put alongside the literary evidence for their cult practices. Moreover, while both attracted visitors throughout the Greek and Roman periods, the archaeological findings suggest their origins were in earlier periods. That aside, Eleusis has been studied well in archaeology. Because this is the most widely studied mystery cult in the ancient world, it provides good data to fit with the aim of

this study, not to fill a specific gap in knowledge but to bind the independent elements together with the role of the senses in the cult. At first glance, Klaros' second case study might not seem relatable to a study: Eleusis is a mystery cult, while Klaros is an oracular center. However, experience-wise, they are similar because at Klaros, we have an intact *adyton* (Figs. 2 and 3), and this, together with the literary evidence, enables us to reconstruct and understand the sensory experience at that place.

1.4.1 Eleusis

Demeter's sanctuary at Eleusis has produced evidence of human activity dating back to the third millennium BCE (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 43). Organized ritual activity may date back to the Late Helladic (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 75) and perhaps from as early as the twelfth century BCE (Evans, 2002: 118). However, the earliest certain indication of a sanctuary dates no earlier than the Geometric period (Evans, 2002: 118), while cultic activity there is not described until the seventh-century BCE *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (Cosmopoulos, 2015). The history of the sanctuary is better documented from the Late Archaic period onwards, as this was when the site was under Athenian influence (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 139). According to Sourvinou-Inwood, this is the time when the cult became mystic and eschatological (2003: 27), and Cosmopoulos dates this change to the seventh century (2015: 165). Extensive building activity occurred there in the second half of the sixth century, and a second rebuilding phase dates to the fifth century. By contrast, the Hellenistic period saw little construction activity at the site (Cosmopoulos, 2015). Because construction requires finances, the existing structure could likely meet the demands for a time. As for the cult itself, the evidence is that until the destruction of the sanctuary by the Goths in the fourth century CE, it peaked in the Classical period and was maintained at this level throughout the Roman period (Clinch, 2022: 314).

There are two main theories regarding the origins of the sanctuary at Eleusis. The diffusionist theories trace the cult's origins to Egypt through its similarity to that of

the cult of Isis, or from Crete; as the *Hymn* states, Demeter came from there to Eleusis. There are three other proposed places of origin: Thrace, or Thessaly, and an undefined area in southern Greece (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 154-157). These diffusionist theories for the cult's origin prefer to see this as having an indigenous origin, an agricultural cult that evolved through time (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 154-159). An alternative view would see the cult originating from a process of cultural interaction and representing a mixture of an introduced foreign cult meeting an existing indigenous one. Either way, in addition to the primarily agricultural nature of the cult, a view of Demeter as a quasi-Mother goddess may have been added. This need not be considered further here as our concern is how the cult became mystic and eschatological.

The annual festivities celebrating Demeter began with a procession at Athens, in which the sacred objects were carried to Eleusis. Only after the fourth day dedicated to Asclepius would the festivities begin in Eleusis (Clinch, 2022: 317). The Eleusinian Cult of Demeter consisted of two main ceremonies: the Lesser and the Greater Mysteries. The first was held in *Anthesterion* (March), in a sanctuary at *Agrai* near the Ilissos River, to prepare the *mystai* for initiation into the cult proper (Nielsen, 2017: 30). The Great Mysteries were held in *Boedromion* in mid-September and early October and lasted for nine days (Nielsen, 2017: 30). The cult was open to almost all except murderers and, from the 5th century BCE onwards, non-Greek speakers (Clinch, 2022: 317).

The Mysteries could only be held at Eleusis and no other place, the initiates being welcomed a year later as *epoptai* (Burkert, 1987: 37). There were two classes of initiates: *mystai*, the first-time participants, and *epoptai*, the second-time participants. The first stage was characterized by darkness and blindness, and the next focused on seeing (Ustinova, 2013: 112). As for the popularity of the cult, in 408/7 BCE, during a trial at Athens, the jury was composed entirely of initiates, which might indicate that most Athenian citizens were initiates (Ustinova, 2013: 105).

1.4.2 Klaros

The ultimate origin of a cultic center at Klaros, near Kolophon and Notion, may extend back well into the distant past. To begin with, the *Gallession* mountain around Klaros originates in the Hittite name *Galisa*, and the local Anatolian god *Apullunas/Appaliunas*, a god of Troy, might have a connection to the Apollo celebrated in the later sanctuary at Klaros (Şahin, 2012: 263). Further possible data regarding a Hittite origin might be that in the later cult of Apollo here, the revelation was gained through drinking the swamp water (Parke, 1985). Water rituals were integral to the Hittite religion (Mouton, 2022). There is also the fact that the first deity celebrated for revelations here was Leto, Apollo's mother, and oracles were an essential element of second-millennium Anatolian religious activity (Şahin, 2015: 592). We might also add that the legendary founder of Klaros was one *Manto*, the daughter of the oracle *Teiresias*, who worshipped at Klaros. At the same time, Manto's husband is named as "*Bakkhiades*" and "*Zograios*". Both are names of Bacchus/Dionysus and at Klaros, a cult of Dionysus is present from at least the Archaic period (Pişkin-Ayvazoglu, 2015: 207). All in all, then, if the origins of cultic activity at Klaros can be traced to non-Greek origin, the experience we are searching for is, in fact, an Anatolian-origin experience.

That aside, we are concerned with the role of Klaros as one of the two main oracular centers in western Asia Minor during the Graeco-Roman period. Didyma is better known; although the origins of Cultic activity Klaros can be traced back to *Mopsus*, it would be the oldest in the region (Stoneman, 2011: 82). Indeed, there is enough evidence to point to pre-Greek use of the site, even if the first known temple dates to the Archaic period. The Hellenistic period temple is visible today, relatively intact and with much epigraphical evidence from its surroundings (Busine, 2005: 59-69).

Klaros is unique in this thesis because here, as at Patara and Delphi, it concerned a center where prophetic priests received their revelation inside a grotto. A study by Rosenberger has shown that 11 out of 40 oracular centers had a grotto playing a part

in the revelation (Ustinova, 2009: 54). It has been claimed that caves and grottos were selected for cultic purposes because of sensory deprivation and the trance mood they could induce, or in the case of caves, the presence of mind-altering gases enabling an altered state of consciousness (Ustinova, 2009: 153). Also, it is known from Delphi and Klaros that there were professional officials whose lifestyle and accumulation of their time spent in trance helped them to manipulate their consciousness (Ustinova, 2009: 155). As it is, the mystery aspects of the cult at Klaros are documented by seven inscriptions dating from the first and second centuries CE (Ustinova, 2009: 229; Tanriver, 2009: 336). As at Eleusis, it should be noted that religious behavior carries an element of anxiety and unease (Busine, 2005: 122).

Klaros gained increased prominence after the Antonine Plague of 165-180 CE, and some have argued that the conditions of the 3rd century CE encouraged a need to know about the future, perhaps because of the anxious and stressful conditions of the time rather than a significant renewal of 'pagan' beliefs that had diminished between the 2nd and 4th century CE (Busine, 2005: 123-4). Concurrently, we see evidence of syncretism, the introduction of a Christian presence in cultic matters (Zunal, 2022: 179). The reverence of Apollo illustrates this as a messenger of Christian victory through the revelations of the Oracle at Klaros (Busine, 2005: 418). This is important as it shows that the linear evolution of pagan polytheism to Abrahamic monotheism is not that straightforward. Indeed, Moretti found 18 inscribed crosses on the *krepis* and other parts of the Klaros temple (Moretti, Bresch, Bonora, Malmay, and Riss, 2016: 308). However, some might be seen as Christianizing an otherwise ungodly place. As it is, signs of pagan monotheism are present at Klaros through the records related to *Theos Hypsistos* and Iao (Zunal, 2023: 98). Indeed, even after Christianity prevailed in the region, revelations continued there (Şahin, 1998: 25).

1.5 Epilogue

The preceding discussion highlights two distinct archaeological sites: extensively documented and less so. These sites present a compelling foundation for a thesis that delves into sensory archaeology. The overarching objective of this thesis revolves around exploring the notion of "*experience*" within the context of Graeco-Roman era cultic ceremonies. Acknowledging that human experience remains intricately intertwined with the subjective domains of emotions and sensory perceptions is imperative. Consequently, the forthcoming chapter will expound upon the conceptual framework that underpins this scholarly endeavor.



CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In our quest to explore the sensory experiences prevalent during the Graeco-Roman period, the central goal of this thesis is to acknowledge the inherent subjectivity entangled with emotions and sensory perceptions. These aspects are not absolute but deeply rooted in individual perspectives and contextual influences. However, this subjectivity does not significantly hinder our research, as our primary focus is not on pinpointing the specific sensations of the individuals. Instead, we aim to comprehend how they engaged their sensory capacities. The distinction lies in our approach as we delve into the boundaries and circumstances that molded their sensory encounters. Our research does not endeavor to capture an objective "*actuality*" of the past, as this proves elusive. Instead, we strive to explore the conceptual space in which the notion of "*actuality*" resides. In the words of Merleau-Ponty, "*My body is made of the same flesh as the world*" (1968: 248). This perspective aligns with our pursuit of understanding the intricate relationship between individuals and their sensory experiences within the Graeco-Roman context.

2.1 Sensory Understanding of Divination and Ritual

Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, the English anthropologist (1832-1917), proposed an evolutionary theory of religion, suggesting a progression from animism to polytheism and then to monotheism (Costello, 2022: 16). Ethnoarchaeologist Lewis Roberts Binford (1931–2011) contributed to the understanding of religion but presented challenges in terms of testability (Costello, 2022: 18). The perception of 'polytheism' has led some to perceive Graeco-Roman religion as inferior to Abrahamic religions, despite its richness and lack of centralization (Costello, 2022: 16). To gain a better understanding of Graeco-Roman religion, we turn to its material and textual evidence.

We commence with Socrates, who argued that our existence precludes its perception (*Euthphr.* 2011: 55-7), laying the foundation for a materialist view encompassing physics and metaphysics. The Greeks regarded their deities as distinct but only sometimes easily seen, with encounters elusive and occasionally perilous (Platt, 2015: 163). An epiphany, although elusive in definition, encompasses divine manifestation, miracles, and assistance in achieving goals (Versnel, 1987: 43). Deities could manifest in various forms, including statues, with some perceptible by the senses (e.g., Hecate) and others apprehended through the intellect (e.g., Dionysus) (Versnel, 1987: 49). Manifestations took diverse forms, including human-like entities, phantoms, animals, hallucinations, visions, or even through absence (Versnel, 1987: 52-53). Miracles or natural signs, like lightning for Zeus, were also employed (Versnel, 1987: 50). The Graeco-Roman conception of deities was intricate and diverse, surpassing contemporary monotheistic faiths, promoting religion as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the participant's body and the surrounding landscape (Friese, 2010: 30).

In Graeco-Roman religion, personal beliefs were significantly shaped by external factors, necessitating the emergence of ritual. Ritual operates within two distinct boundaries: the physical space in which it occurs and the religious framework within which it is embedded (Durkheim, 1914: 17). Bull and Mitchell (2015: 1-2) identify two modes of religious transmission: the semantic, characterized by religious

teaching, and the experiential, which is imagistic. At Eleusis, we find elements of both modes, while at Klaros, an imagistic aspect is pronounced.

The notion of 'ritual' elicits questions about its precise definition, echoing Lewis Carroll's sentiment that it means precisely what individuals choose it to mean (1871: Chap. 6). Nevertheless, there is consensus that rituals share specific defining characteristics, particularly elements of performance and experiential dimensions. These characteristics are evident in the contexts of Eleusis and Klaros.

Reconstructing the concept of 'experience' presents its challenges. However, altered states of consciousness, mythologies, oracular processions, and the distinctive settings and architectures in which rituals unfolded collectively shaped these profound experiences. In Eleusis and Klaros, ritual markers are discernible, even amid ongoing debates about defining ritual and its influence on cultural identity.

2.2 Ways of Perception

The crucial role of space and boundaries in ritual activities necessitates considering how external factors shape personal beliefs and influence religious experiences (Friese, 2010: 30). Understanding the various ways of perception is essential to appreciating how a person's state of consciousness may be affected during a divine experience.

Perception involves organizing, identifying, and interpreting sensory information to represent and comprehend the presented information or environment. (Goldstein, 2009: 5-7). The entire process of perception entails signals traversing the nervous system, stemming from physical or chemical stimulation of the sensory system (Goldstein, 2009: 5-7). It is crucial to recognize that perception is not a passive reception of these signals but is actively influenced by the recipient's learning, memory, expectations, and attention (Bernstein, 2010: 123-4).

Sensory input is a transformative process, elevating low-level information to higher-level understanding, exemplified by extracting shapes for object recognition (Bernstein, 2010: 123-4). This intricate process intertwines a person's concepts and expectations (or knowledge) with restorative and selective mechanisms, such as attention, which play a pivotal role in shaping perception (Bernstein, 2010: 123-4).

In the context of this thesis, we suggest that the perception of individuals engaging in rituals is deeply rooted in the mythological information or background they possess concerning the ritual. Furthermore, we argue that unseen socioeconomic factors mold these rituals. The infusion of mystical experiences adds a layer to this perception, allowing individuals to grasp the meaning within sacred spaces while actively interacting with the environment through sensory inputs.

Defining 'consciousness' is a complex endeavor, but a basic understanding is required for this thesis. Some argue that consciousness is an awareness of one's mental state (Mylopoulos and Ro, 2017: 107), while others explore its neural basis, linking it to the activation of specific brain regions like MT/V5, responsible for the conscious perception of visual motion (Matthen, 2017: 166-167). Regardless of the definition, it is evident that both external and internal stimuli can alter one's state of consciousness, eliciting various responses and transforming one's perception.

Among the methods for achieving an altered state of consciousness (ASC), the mystical experience, as will be explained by Klaros, is closely related to the scope of this study. This state of mind entails feelings of oneness, a profound belief in the reality of the experience, intense emotions of joy, fear, or serenity, and a sense of ineffability (Ustinova, 2009: 18-19). The near-death experience, as observed at Eleusis, is another path to ASC, marked by moments of extreme intensity, perceived as glimpses of ultimate reality, leading to profound changes in one's outlook on life and death (Ustinova, 2009: 46-47). Achieving ASC relies on physical experiences intertwined with myths surrounding mysteries and oracular processions and the environments and architectures in which these experiences occur.

J.F. Kihlstrom, the American cognitive and social psychologist, identified four specific features involved in achieving and representing an ASC: an outcome of a particular induction, a subjective report of the experience, an external observation, and changes in somatic functioning (1994: 207). A critical aspect to note is that all perception and sensory experiences are inherently synesthetic, with an experience triggering sensations beyond the initially stimulated one. For example, music may elicit a colored image, and dramatic performances, such as rites of passage or symbolic objects, can reorganize brain networks, leading to a shift in perception (Turner, 2015: 44).

Dowd and Hensey highlight this phenomenon (2016: 48) and note that rituals can result in ASC by "*overloading the limbic structures*," the hypothalamus, and the amygdala. This implies that ASC can encompass various moods or mental states, with melancholy being one of them. While melancholia is not typically considered an ASC, it has the potential to profoundly alter one's worldview (James, 1902: 116). As James observes, Tolstoy's experience is a poignant example of melancholia, where the world appears remote, strange, and uncanny, profoundly affecting one's perspective (James, 1902: 116).

Epiphany is another mental state relevant to this study, characterized by visual and sonic manifestations. However, it should not be regarded solely as a visual phenomenon (Platt, 2015: 169). *Phantasia*, akin to our "*imagination*" or "*phantasy*," is another phenomenon that falls under the umbrella term of hallucinations, sensory experiences with a potent sense of reality in the absence of actual stimuli (Farkas, 2013: 399). Hallucinations often manifest as visual experiences, including geometric patterns, zigzags, and bright and dark spots. Importantly, cultural influences shape these experiences' perceptions (Ustinova, 2009: 29).

Furthermore, it is worth considering the potential contributions of pathological conditions such as schizophrenia and epilepsy to achieving ASC. External stimuli and prolonged exposure can trigger psychotic episodes, adding complexity to the

study of ASC. Additionally, fasting, a common practice at Eleusis and Klaros, can lead to hypoglycemia and dehydration, further facilitating the induction of mystical states (Ustinova, 2009: 19-20).

The critical point is that achieving and experiencing an ASC engages all the senses and is often accompanied by visual, auditory, and olfactory sensations, particularly when associated with hallucinogenic substances. For instance, at Eleusis, individuals might have felt the presence of deities, such as Demeter, Kore, or *Iachus* (potentially Dionysus). Besides sensing a presence, initiates may have had visual and auditory hallucinations during ASC. Auditory or verbal hallucinations are commonly attributed to an individual misattributing their inner thoughts to external agencies (Ferryhough and McCarthy-Jones, 2013: 87). This suggests that initiates, under ASC, might have perceived their inner revelations as divine communications.

In the ancient mind, hallucinations were viewed as "*divine revelations of the ultimate truth*"; thus, images like caves, vessels, and fissures, places where the ultimate truth might be revealed, are found in the mysticism of the Graeco-Roman world (Ustinova, 2009: 31-2). In the case of Klaros, we have a dark space, the vault where the divination took place, and we know that at Eleusis, the Ploutonion Cave played some role in the mysteries. According to Ustinova (2009: 41-42), caves and dark spaces created sensory deprivation, which could trigger ASC, hallucinations, visions, and out-of-body experiences. These settings enhanced the potential for sensory and perceptual alterations during religious experiences.

2.3 Challenges

As Heidegger (1971: 3) wrote: "*A boundary is not that at which something stops but, as the Greeks recognized, the boundary is that, from which something begins its presencing.*" The thesis aims to establish the boundaries of the experience based on our information from written sources and archaeology. For this reason, we advocate

a holistic, 'big picture' understanding of experience through our senses and consciousness. For this, the thesis holds the view that all experience is synesthetic. This means there is no experience where only one sense is at play. Every experience involves a multitude of senses. Nevertheless, we must address that while all senses are synesthetic, sense-divided perspective in sensory studies is not contradictory because "*by studying the senses separately, we can develop a deeper understanding of their differential elaboration and interplay in different cultural contexts*" (Skeates and Day, 2019: 8).

Here, we face one clear technical challenge. While aiming at a holistic, 'big picture' view, it is more convenient to divide it into sections to understand better the concepts we are researching and then put the parts back together to see the whole. Another obvious challenge is the nature of the evidence. It is imperative to be aware that the evidence we might have to identify an experience need not directly represent the experience itself but only hint at the nature of that experience. If that experience is related to the mind and body, we have psychological and psychiatric evidence from other related studies. While we have the evidence for the architectural setting, we do not have the direct evidence for its effect on human psychology.

Nevertheless, not all is lost. Some sense of what happened at Eleusis and Klaros at any given time can be deducted from literary evidence. However, that evidence must be treated with some circumspection – we cannot rely on it as providing an objective or even accurate account. Take it at face value unless it can be contradicted by other evidence.

In short, three kinds of problems must be faced with this thesis. One has to do with the limitations of our technical abilities, where we must divide what we discuss into sections to understand the whole better. The second one has to do with the nature of experience. Experience is personal and subjective. The experience happens within one's body; while we can see a person experiencing something physical, we can only guess how that experience is sensed and perceived by that person. However, this

‘guess’ would differ based on the observer's profession. If the person is a psychiatrist or anthropologist, the guess would be within their own professional and intellectual framework and differ from each other. In any case, in this study, we do not have direct evidence for a person’s experience(s) at either place. We can only speculate within the boundaries of a new and developing archaeological analysis since the available evidence does not directly point to the experience but helps us speculate around it.



CHAPTER 3

TOP-DOWN PROCESSING AT ELEUSIS AND KLAROS

Eleusis and Klaros, timeless strongholds of Graeco-Roman spiritual feeling, have stood as venerable cult centers spanning the annals of centuries. Though their magnetic pull extended across the Greek and Roman epochs, the roots of their existence delve into epochs preceding recorded history, as attested by archaeological revelations. The core of their significance as sacred hubs is the poignant myths that obscure them. These myths, woven into the very fabric of these sanctuaries, instigate a profound top-down journey for the pilgrims who navigate their sacred grounds. Top-down processing entails the interpretation of stimuli through the lens of past experiences and acquired knowledge. This approach involves making sense of the information the senses receive, progressing from general impressions to specific details (Gaspelin and Nuck, 2018).

The fascination of these spaces is derived from the compelling narratives and the atmospheric embrace that envelops the visitors. Within these sacred confines, the genesis and culmination of transformative experiences occur, creating a symbiotic relationship akin to an ouroboros—a celestial dance of mythic revelation - and spatial communion.

In this harmonious interplay, the sacred sites emerge as physical locales and portals into the eternal cycle of birth, death, and rebirth—a sacred voyage through the Great Circle of Regeneration.

3.1 Eleusis

The cult center at Eleusis commanded prominence for multifaceted reasons. Firstly, its patronage by Athens, the spiritual and intellectual nucleus of the Hellenized world, imparted an aura of cultural and political significance. Secondly, the unique mystical experience shared by initiates within the Eleusinian Mysteries distinguished it markedly from its contemporaneous cult counterparts, notable for its distinct physical prerequisites. It is imperative to underscore that active participation in the Eleusinian rites promised a more promising future and an enhanced afterlife. As articulated by Cicero (1st century BCE), the *mystai*, those initiated through the ceremonial rites, gained insights not only on living joyfully but also on approaching death with sanguinity, anticipating a favorable outcome in the hereafter (*De leg.* 2. 36). Further elaborating on the cult's assurances, Jan N. Bremmer (2014: 393) elucidates that adherents were assured of two specific blessings: material wealth, resonating with the presence of the god *Ploutos* in the mysteries, and a superior afterlife. While Bremmer acknowledges that artistic representations focused predominantly on the promise of material wealth until the second century BCE, subsequent evidence suggests an evolving emphasis on the assurance of an afterlife, mainly manifesting after the second century BCE. This shift aligns with the ascendancy of Neoplatonism, wherein Demeter and Persephone liberate souls from the Circle of Generation, ensuring a transcendental afterlife and, thus, a departure from the mortal realm towards eternal bliss (Van Den Berg, 2003: 196). This transformative dimension accentuates the enduring influence and evolving spiritual tapestry of the Eleusinian Mysteries. As the mid-5th century Neoplatonist philosopher Proclus, the Successor observed:

“Persephone has been so named . . . because she separates the souls perfectly from their bodies by turning them back to what is above - and this is the most fortunate sort of 'murder' and death for that worthy of it” (Crat. 173, 95.29-96.4).

Fortunately, we gain insights into the initiation process of cults like Eleusis through the writings of Neoplatonist philosophers. For instance, *De Utilitate Mathematicae* 14-15 (1st century CE) and the works of *Syneisus* of Cyrene (373-414 CE), a notable Christian bishop, shed light on the experiential nature of initiation ceremonies in such cults (*Dio* 8, 1136-1137 Migne). According to *Syneisus*, participants in these rituals were not required to acquire knowledge but to immerse themselves in the cultic practices. Consequently, initiates embarked on their journey with predetermined assurances and awareness of the deities accompanying them at Eleusis. This emphasizes the participatory and experiential nature of the initiation process. The significance of myths in religious practices cannot be overstated, as they serve as the foundational narrative providing meaning to these sacred activities. For those who experienced them, the myths were real and not in the past. As Sallustius (1st century BCE) explains in *On the Gods and the World*:

“Now, the Mother of the Gods is the principle that generates life; that is why she is called Mother. Attis is the creator of all things which are born and die; that is why he is said to have been found by the river Gallus... But since the generation process must be stopped somewhere and not allowed to generate something worse than the worst, the creator who makes these things casts away his generative powers into the creation and is joined to the Gods again. Now, these things never happened but always are.” (4)

Therefore, when the *mystai* engage in the symbolic quest for Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, they are not merely re-enacting a historical event but are, in essence, aiding Demeter. In an ineffable realm of time and space, Demeter is actively living the essence that the initiates seek to comprehend (Bremmer, 2014: 384). Consequently, the perpetual significance of myths in this context becomes evident as they ceaselessly underpin and illuminate the experiential dimension of the ritual.

3.1.1 Abduction of Persephone

As depicted in the iconography of the *Regina Vasorum* (4th century BCE) (Fig. 4), various deities played integral roles in the cultic practices at Eleusis. Alongside Demeter and her daughter Persephone (or *Kore*), the pantheon included *Iachus*, a minor god linked with Dionysus and the companion of initiates during the procession

to Eleusis; *Eubouleus*, the patron deity associated with piglets, and *Triptolemus*, a hero nurtured by Demeter's milk (Clinton, 2007: 353). However, despite this diverse ensemble, the focal point of the cultic activities consistently gravitated towards Demeter and Persephone. Demeter, the goddess of agriculture, is iconographically identified with a wheat spike. At the same time, her daughter is symbolized by a single ear of wheat (Petridou, 2015: 86). In the Hellenic tradition, Demeter earned reverence and love as the goddess who, during a famine, aided the mortals dwelling in Eleusis by providing sustenance (Petridou, 2015: 323). Consequently, her powers alone warranted profound respect and devotion.

The crux of the Eleusinian cult's origin and significance, notably encapsulated in the 'Mysteries,' pivots not on Demeter's benevolent intervention during a famine but on the poignant tale of her daughter Persephone's abduction. The myth unfolds with the distressing narrative of Hades seizing Persephone, inciting her mother's wrath. In a complex negotiation involving Zeus' reluctant cooperation, Hades concedes to allow Persephone to return to Earth. However, a symbolic twist is introduced as Hades presents Persephone with a pomegranate, compelling her to spend a portion of the year in the underworld. During this period, Demeter, consumed by grief and fury, enforces a barren spell on the Earth, stalling the growth of crops. Only upon Persephone's reunion with her mother does the Earth's fertility renew, ushering in the vibrant spring while marking the onset of autumn with her departure (Evans, 2018: 104). In this intricate narrative, the Eleusinian Mysteries derive profundity from the cyclic interplay between loss, renewal, and the intrinsic connection between the divine and earthly realms.

The narrative unfolds as a tender tale wherein a grieving mother, consumed by the anguish of separation, yearns for her daughter. However, rooted in divine antiquity, the enduring myth dictates that Persephone must descend to Hades annually despite the relentless sorrow endured by Demeter. This cyclic rhythm, intrinsic to the myth's divine origins, mirrors the retreat and flow of the seasons: Demeter's sorrow-induced hiatus corresponds to winter, her daughter's return heralds spring, and Persephone's

permanent presence aligns with summer (Warren, 2018: 106). Delving into the psychological ramifications within the cultic milieu, the abduction narrative exerts a profound impact on initiates. As participants in the Mysteries, or *mystai*, intimately share in the saga of Demeter and Persephone, they are inherently entwined in the cult's belief system, wherein the underworld undergoes a symbolic demise, paralleling Persephone's transformation from daughter to the wife of Hades—a metamorphosis undoubtedly troubled with emotional strain (Hillman, 1979: 48). The ceremonial reenactment of this myth during the Mysteries, integral to the cult's rites for Demeter and her daughter, becomes a potent source of complex emotions, evoking feelings of hopelessness, hatred, sorrow, and various other negative sentiments. Implicit in the myth is the unseen role of Hades, not merely the god of death but also the harbinger of anxiety and depression. In this context, the abduction emerges as a violation of Persephone's autonomy, mirroring the inexorable violation mortals face in the inevitability of death.

During the mysteries, theatricality was high. The costumes of officials and dramatization of the myth through reenactment enhanced the effects of the myth addressed by *Lactantius* (250-325 CE) (*Div. inst.* 1.21.3) and *Tertullian* (155-220) (*Ad nat.* 2.7). Elements of suffering were an integral part of the mysteries. As *Plutarch* (46-119 CE) reports:

"At first, there is a sense of being lost, fatigue from aimless wandering, and anxious travels through dark paths leading nowhere. Just before the climax, there is a flood of fears—shivers, trembling, sweat, and astonishment. However, following this, a wondrous light greets the wanderer, opening to vast landscapes and welcoming meadows. In this place, voices, dance, solemn, sacred music, and divine visions create a majestic and holy atmosphere." (*Mor.* fr. 178)

While some suggest that reenactment was a simple narration, formal and symbolic, others argue from *Plutarch* that it was a dynamic and interactive process (Petridou, 2018: 74). It is more likely that an experience where initiates had an active role would have been more effective and persistent in conveying certain emotions.

Before reaching Eleusis for the 'Mysteries,' one could reasonably speculate that, much like present-day religious pilgrims, initiates undertook this sacred pilgrimage to engage fully in the emotional richness and divine essence. Their passion for this transformative encounter was sustained and heightened during the ritual experience through various deliberate mechanisms. The tribulations and the emotions they underwent served as a shared ordeal, unifying the initiates as they transitioned into a new, singularly focused identity throughout the ceremonial duration (Petridou, 2013: 315). Essentially, they temporarily shed their selves, undergoing a profound loss of identity and ego. Additionally, the *mystai* anticipated an unmistakable connection with the deities during the ritual. This connection need not have manifested in a direct physical presence; within the Greek-speaking religious paradigm, it was ingrained that the *pneuma*, or "breath"—signifying the "spirit" or "soul" of the deity—resided within the objects representing them (Petridou, 2013: 329).

3.1.2 The Cult and the Local Economy

Attendance at the Eleusinian Mysteries was remarkably inclusive, with no prerequisite other than proficiency in the Greek language and being devoid of murder. The Mysteries welcomed all initiates, transcending social boundaries to include women and slaves, especially following the Athenian assimilation of Eleusis and its rites in the 6th century BCE. Consequently, participants hailed from diverse corners of the Hellenic world, suggesting a broad spectrum of attendees, including both neophytes and those already initiated, drawn together by a preliminary phase of preparation. Illustratively, emissaries from Eleusis' principal priestly clans, the *Eumolpidae* and *Kerykes*, annually traversed the Mediterranean to extend invitations and declare *spondaic*—a two-month truce—to ensure the safety of the initiates during the festival (Evans, 2018: 120). The logistical demands of orchestrating such large-scale gatherings would have posed a considerable challenge to the Athenian state, eliciting the need for extensive coordination and significant financial commitments from all organizing entities involved.

To overlook the commercial and economic dimensions in any discourse on the Eleusinian cult would be an oversimplification. The intricate preparations and the unfolding 'Mysteries' undoubtedly bore financial considerations essential for meeting the substantial expenses incurred. While the operational costs of the Eleusinian temple were undoubtedly considerable, it is crucial to recognize the mutual benefit reaped by the Athenian state and local seasonal vendors and service providers from this religious pilgrimage. The cult itself derived revenue, evident in the imposition of an entrance fee on the inaugural and concluding days of the festival, earmarked for the grand sacrificial ceremonies (Evans, 2002). Notably substantial, especially in its blossoming years, this fee in the fifth century amounted to 15 *drachmae*—equivalent to half a month's wages for an average laborer (Evans, 2018: 122-3). Beyond the entrance fee, it is reasonable to infer that initiates bore additional expenses, encompassing accommodations, as evidenced by a 460 BCE inscription.

Calculations propose that the *Telesterion*, the sacred hall, could accommodate only 4,000 *mystai* at a given time, aligning with Dowden's suggestion that solely the *epoptai*—those initiates of the highest rank, well-versed in the rituals—were granted access to the hall during specific ceremonies (1980: 425). This interplay of financial considerations underscores the multifaceted nature of the Eleusinian Mysteries, where economic dynamics intersected seamlessly with spiritual and ritualistic dimensions.

As it is, the 'First Fruits Decree' of 435 BCE indicates it was a custom for the people in Attica to honor Demeter with the first fruit offerings at Eleusis. Eleusinian civic officials controlled the revenue of these offerings in the treasuries in Eleusis and Athens (Evans, 2018: 128). This would be a valuable source of income for the cult, with the monies, in theory, being retained by the Athenian treasury for cult purposes only. However, these were used to pay for the Peloponnesian Wars (431-404 BCE) (Evans, 2018: 128). That aside, one other way in which the Athenians may have covered their expenses was through the issue in the mid-fourth century BCE of coins

with symbols depicting the mysteries (Bremmer, 2014: 390), which may have functioned as souvenirs and as an advertisement for the 'Mysteries.'

Indeed, such a practice might explain the series of distinctive ceramic vessels in Eleusis and the Athenian *Eleusinion*, sometimes identified as *kernoi*, while others described them as *plemochoai* (Clinch: 2022). Despite the differences in their name, this specific shape was developed in Attica as decorative items or libation vessels (Mitsopoulou, 2011; Miles, 1998). As it is, according to the late 3rd century CE Platonist philosopher, these are probably:

"... a vessel made of earthenware, having many little cup-like figures fastened to it, in which are white poppies, wheat ears, grains of barley, peas, pulse, vetches, and lentils. Moreover, he who carries it, like the man who carries the mystic fan, eats of these things, as Ammonius relates in the third book of his treatise on Altars and Sacrifices". (Deipnosophistai 11.54) (Fig. 5)

In this case, the fact that a specific vessel type was found in the context of the festival suggests the item fulfilled a commercial side, the need to produce these vessel types for either official patronage or as a free-market purchase that created competition.

The available evidence illuminates the economic and political dimensions intertwined with the Eleusinian 'Mysteries,' suggesting that it served not merely as a ritualistic endeavor but also as a strategic source of revenue, strategically promoted by both the Athenian state and the Eleusinian cult's priesthood. A curious inquiry arises regarding the potential linkage between Athens' vigorous promotion of the *Iachus* and its economic motivations. *Iachus*, while a relatively minor figure in Greek mythology, holds significance as the primary attendant of Demeter and a pivotal guide within the 'Mysteries.' The festival dedicated to him witnessed a pilgrimage along the 'Sacred Way' from the *Eleusinion* in Athens to Eleusis proper (Petridou, 2018: 71). *Iachus'* association with the 'Mysteries' traces back to approximately 480 BCE (Nielsen, 2017: 31), and his role as the god of ritual joy frequently aligns him with Dionysus (Graf, 1974). This festival, with its potential to

attract a substantial audience drawn by the popularity of Dionysus, could serve as a lucrative avenue for revenue creation, drawing in more spectators and celebrants and expanding economic possibilities. The symbiosis between ritualistic significance and economic viability underscores the multifaceted nature of the Eleusinian Mysteries and related festivals, where spiritual and financial considerations blend.

3.2 Klaros

The etymology of the name Klaros remains shrouded in controversy, with various historical accounts proposing divergent origins. According to the Nikandros of Kolophon (2nd century CE), the name is derived from the circumstance wherein *Kleros*, alongside Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, purportedly partitioned the dominion of the universe at this locale (*Alex.* 11). Alternatively, the toponym's roots have been associated with an eponymous hero, *Clarus*. However, a prevalent narrative traces its origin to *Manto*, the daughter of the renowned prophet *Teiresias*. Legend has it that Apollo took *Manto* to Delphi initially, but she was subsequently conveyed by a man named *Rhacius* to an alternative location in Asia Minor. There, she emitted a resonant cry (*κλαίω* = '*claiō*') and shed poignant tears for her lost homeland, with these tears purportedly giving rise to the spring at Klaros (Tanriver, 2009: 46).

3.2.1 The Myth of Klaros

This narrative underscores the connection between Klaros and Kolophon and implicates Notion. Two sacred ways that intricately link Klaros with these significant locations highlight the linkage. The Kolophon sacred way, extending back to the Mycenaean era and persisting until at least 294 BCE, spanned 13 kilometers. The other sacred route extended southward, interconnecting the region with Notion (Şahin, 1998: 31). The intricate origin of Klaros, woven with a rich array of myths and historical connections, mirrors the complex interweaving of divine narratives and ancient pathways that have played a role in shaping its enigmatic etymology.

Moreover, Pausanias (2nd century CE) posited that the cult at Klaros possessed ancient origins, leaving room for speculation that its roots could extend into the pre-Greek era (7.3.1-4). Regardless of its temporal origins, the narratives surrounding the division of the earth and the poignant 'cry' of Manto carry potential psychological connotations. If Klaros served as the locale where three gods partitioned the world, it would signify a remarkable site where an event unfolded, invoking a potent blend of anxiety and astonishment. Conversely, if the toponym is intricately tied to the cry of Manto and the revelation realized through water, the emotional palette expands to encompass melancholy and depression. Irrespective of its foundational narrative, the literary evidence attests to the Oracle at Klaros attaining prominence notably during the Antonine Plague of 165-180 CE (Zunal, 2023: 92). This historical context adds a layer of significance to Klaros, marking it as a sanctuary that resonated in times of widespread crisis and underscored its enduring role in divining pivotal moments throughout history.

The cult center at Klaros was a complex devoted to multiple deities, including Artemis, Leto, Dionysus, and Apollo. The earliest archaeological evidence attesting to Artemis at Klaros is an Archaic kore adorned with her name (Günata, 2017: 158). Artemis crucially held the patron deity for elite children participating in the festivals, where music played a pivotal role (Günata, 2017: 169-72).

Gunderson's analysis (2021: 413-414) highlights the followers' desire to commune with Apollo to receive the god's knowledge. However, this communion, she elucidates, necessitated being in a "*locus horridus*," an untamed landscape characterized by mountains, deep gorges, dark forests, swamps, and trees associated with the underworld, such as the olive, cypress, and poplar. Gunderson contends that combining the natural landscape and the constructed environment created an epiphanic experience for the pilgrims (2021: 412). This fusion of the wild topography with the artificial structures served as a catalyst, facilitating a profound and transformative encounter for those on their sacred journey to connect with the divine at Klaros.

However, the absence of an iconographical tradition depicting Apollo in such a role should be noted, even though Dionysus, associated with Apollo at Klaros, is acknowledged as the god of wine and grapevines (Pişkin-Ayvazoğlu, 2015: 206). In the context of the Klaros sanctuary, it is essential to recognize that Apollo held a dual role as a god of healing, and his son Asklepios was revered as the god of health. Furthermore, a gemstone displays an Apolline figure with a *kithara*, daphne leaf, and tripod, accompanied by the epithet "*Klarios*" (Tanrıver, 2009: 252). This unequivocally indicates an association of the cult at Klaros with some form of healing function, stressing its significance, particularly during the period of the Antonine Plague. The multifaceted nature of Apollo's attributes at Klaros, encompassing both artistic representation and inferred associations, adds depth to the understanding of the cult's role in fostering health and well-being during challenging times.

3.2.2 The Cult and the Local Economy

Klaros hosted at least two significant festivals: the annual Lesser *Claria* and the Greater *Claria*, occurring every fifth year. These celebrations encompassed sacred rituals, athletic contests, elaborate sacrificial festivities, and a dedicated Dionysiac festival (Şahin, 1998: 50-55). Beyond their cultural and religious significance, these events served as substantial sources of revenue. As the primary provider of animal husbandry for the Klaros sacrifices, Kolophon contributed to this economic influx. The financial sustenance extended to various aspects, including accommodations, the marketplace, rent, and taxes levied on diverse goods and properties (Zunal, 2023).

While Klaros yielded numerous mass-produced figurine groups featuring Apollo and Artemis (Dewailly, 1998: 370), the absence of a discovered local workshop adds an intriguing layer to its archaeological profile (Doğan-Gürbüz, 2012: 224). Despite this, Doğan-Gürbüz (2012: 224) highlights the uniqueness of the Apollo with Lyre figurines, emphasizing their divergence from identical groups found elsewhere and suggesting a distinct localized production. This distinctive artistic element adds depth to the understanding of Klaros as a center where unique cultural and economic facets

converge since a local figurine might point to a sacrificial item unique to Klaros. As with Eleusis, specific types of purchasable goods might have been one of the “*signatures*” of the places.

The existence of a consultation fee at Klaros remains shrouded in uncertainty. Nevertheless, parallels in other oracular centers, such as the well-documented *pelanoi* fee at the fourth-century BCE oracle of Trophonios in Lebadea (Busine, 2005: 191), provoke speculation on similar practices at Klaros. Regardless of the fee's presence, the influx of visitors brought about additional revenue streams. It is reasonable to assert that those seeking consultation belonged to the wealthy class, considering the financial investment required not only for the oracle's guidance but also for the associated travel expenses (Tanriver, 2009: 457).

The Sacred Ways to Klaros reveal a wealth of dedications by notable figures, among them Menippos, Antiochus (son of Antiochus III), Sextus Appuleius II (Consul of 29 BCE), L. Valerius Flaccus (Consul of 86 BCE), G. Valerius Flaccus (governor of Asia), Cicero, Pompeius, and Polemaios (Tanriver, 2009: 107) (Figs. 6 and 7). These dedications served multifaceted purposes. Primarily, they functioned as a form of propaganda for esteemed personalities, leveraging the social atmosphere of these revered sites to attract a diverse audience. Secondly, the dedications served as endorsements, strengthening the credibility of the sacred area for revenue-generating purposes. Analogous to a strategically placed billboard in a city, these dedications caught the populace's attention.

A nuanced perspective emerges when considering the visitors. The presence of dedications by renowned figures conveyed not only a promotional aspect but also an assurance of high-quality service and experience for those who sought the oracle's guidance. The cumulative effect of these dedications created a narrative of excellence, elevating Klaros into a revered space where the convergence of influential individuals underscored its significance and prestige.

The Oracle at Klaros exerted a magnetic influence, drawing seekers from the far reaches of the empire. Epigraphic evidence, with the notable exception of Egypt,

reveals that individuals and delegations from the entire Eastern Mediterranean and beyond sought the oracle's guidance at Klaros (Tanriver, 2009: 467) (Fig. 8).

We know from dedication and inscriptions mainly dated to the Imperial period, that cities sought advice on foundational matters (Smyrna), addressing issues of famine and field infertility (*Caesarea Troketta* and Nicomedia), coping with plagues (Pergamon, Hierapolis, *Caesarea Troketta*, Callipolis, a city by the shore of Hermos, and Odessos), safeguarding against pirate and bandit attacks (*Syedra* and *Iconion*), mitigating earthquake impacts (Ephesos and Smyrna), fulfilling cult orders (Hierapolis), resolving administrative problems (Hierapolis and Aizanoi), addressing health issues (Revelations for Caracalla and the inquiry of Aelius Aristides, a prominent orator of the second Sophistics), navigating theological matters (*Oinoanda*, Tübingen Theosophia, Lactantius, and Labeo), and even unraveling riddles (For the Antiochians by the shore of Orontes) (Tanriver, 2009: 476-79).

Certainly, suggestive evidence indicates that the cult priests actively promoted 'brand loyalty.' This is exemplified by revelations conveying Apollo's desire for devotees to maintain their connection with the sanctuary, even during adversities (Busine, 2005: 137). Additionally, there is documentation of a competitive environment aimed at drawing consultants, akin to customers, to the sanctuaries. This served as a substantial source of income and contributed significantly to the reputation of these sacred spaces (Busine, 2005: 194).

The monuments, integral to the sacred precinct, were strategically situated within this consecrated space, demarcated by a *propylon*. Flanking each side of this *propylon* was *Katagogeion* (Zunal 2023: 1085) (Fig. 9). Ongoing excavations have unveiled twenty rooms of diverse dimensions, confirming the structure's utilization during the second century CE. However, whether visitors accessed these spaces remains to be seen (Zunal, 2023: 1085). In the recent 2021 excavations, a control seal belonging to a Kolophonian *Agoranomos* was unearthed, indicating a possible seasonal residence within the sacred area overseeing the marketplace inspections (Zunal, 2023: 1088).

Furthermore, the 2016-2020 excavations revealed a Roman structure south of the sacred precinct. Due to the limited material recovered from this structure, it is presumed to have served a seasonal purpose (Zunal, 2023: 1086) (Figs. 10 and 11). It is speculated that merchants have inhabited these shops in certain months, serving the delegations and people coming to the sanctuary.

The festivals at Klaros, particularly the Lesser and Greater *Claria*, played a pivotal role in attracting visitors and generating substantial revenue for the sanctuary. The diverse dedications along the sacred ways, made by influential figures, served not only as a form of propaganda but also as a testament to the credibility and quality of the oracle's services. The oracular consultations, drawing individuals from across the Eastern Mediterranean and beyond, covered a broad spectrum of concerns, ranging from civic matters to personal inquiries, emphasizing Klaros' significance and multifaceted nature as a divine consultation center. The evidence suggests that the cult priests actively fostered 'brand loyalty,' encouraging devotees to revisit the sanctuary even in challenging times. The ongoing excavations reveal intriguing details about the infrastructure, including the *Katagogeion* and the recently discovered control seal, shedding light on the potential seasonal use of specific structures within the sacred area. Klaros emerges as a dynamic and influential oracle, shaping the spiritual landscape and leaving an indelible mark on its time's economic and social fabric.

3.3 Prelude to a Sensory Encounter

These sacred centers served as spiritual and psychological transformation hubs, where the myths and rituals were deeply interwoven with the human experience. The myths surrounding Demeter and Persephone at Eleusis and the multi-deity cult at Klaros offered unique perspectives on how individuals perceived and internalized their religious experiences.

At Eleusis, the promise of a better life, wealth, and a blissful afterlife through participation in the Mysteries was central to the top-down process that framed the worshipper's interpretation of their world. The mythical narratives were not mere historical reenactments but were experienced in the present, shaping emotions and forging connections to the divine. The Abduction of Persephone myth exemplified the psychological complexity, engendering a deep sense of empathy, sorrow, and even anxiety in the initiates. Top-down processing within the cultic context transformed participants into temporary initiates who felt the emotions and presence of the deities, emphasizing the power of myth and ritual.

In contrast, Klaros offered a diverse religious experience centered around Apollo, Artemis, Leto, and Dionysus, with the setting and rituals deeply linked to the landscape. The top-down process involved a desire to unite with Apollo and receive divine knowledge, often within untamed landscapes, invoking complex emotions like awe, melancholy, and possibly even depression. The pilgrimage aspect attracted a wide range of visitors from across the Eastern Mediterranean, and the oracular consultation provided spiritual guidance and generated revenue. This chapter explored both centers' economic and political dimensions, shedding light on how the state, local communities, and prominent figures capitalized on the religious experience. The sacred areas of Eleusis and Klaros served as platforms for the manifestation of power, revenue generation, and the fostering of a sense of belonging.

In essence, the religious landscapes of Eleusis and Klaros showcased the intricate interplay between the human psyche, socio-political contexts, and sacred narratives. The top-down processing of myth, emotion, and spirituality within these spaces enriched our understanding of how ancient worshippers interpreted their world and found meaning, emphasizing the enduring significance of psychological and religious experiences.

As we explore the mysteries at Eleusis and Klaros in the following chapters, we will continue to unravel the profound influence of these sensory engagements on the perception of initiates. We will investigate how these rituals were designed to stimulate the senses and mold how participants perceived themselves, their world, and the sacred narratives. In doing so, we will gain a deeper understanding of the enduring significance of these psychological and religious experiences and their role in shaping the beliefs and perceptions of those who ventured into these ancient mysteries.



CHAPTER 4

PHYSICAL SPACE AT ELEUSIS AND KLAROS

The human experience is inherently linked to the spatial dimension as our encounters unfold within the confines of our physical boundaries. Regardless of our thoughts' paths, our existence remains firmly rooted in the tangible space occupied by our bodies. The comprehension of our existence is intricately tied to space, and every aspect of our articulated experiences is made possible through its dimensions. These occurrences manifest within carefully crafted spaces tailored to our specific experiential intentions.

In contemporary literature, space is delineated through two primary lenses: the geometrical definition and the perceptual field (Norberg-Schulz, 1979: 11). When conceived as a perceptual field, space requires the engagement of our senses for comprehension. In this context, the term "*sensorium*" is employed, denoting "*culturally and historically located arrays of the senses and sensibility*" (Pearson and Shanks, 2001: 54). Whether referred to as space or sensorium, it comprises a multitude of elements. Among these elements are light, sound, and time, converging to form the intricate fabric of our perceptual reality (as thoroughly examined in McMahon, 2013)

However, another crucial factor to consider is the landscape. The true significance of the space where the performance unfolds can only be fully grasped by recognizing its integration with the surrounding environment. The scenery, stretching beyond the immediate performance area, carries a significance comparable to the space designated for the performance itself. In architecture, distinctive qualities imbue it with intrinsic value for habitation and experience. This is because the essence of architecture goes beyond mere structural components; it is encapsulated in the intangible aspects of the atmosphere, light, smell, surfaces, and colors. These elements emanate from the building materials and permeate through them, infusing the structure with a life force and an inherent sense of joy in living.

Thoughtfully designed buildings have the potential to impact our emotions and well-being significantly. Certain structures are believed to exert a tangible influence on our happiness, which is vital in enhancing our overall quality of life. Architecture, and our perception of it, profoundly affects our senses, establishing a profound connection between emotions and activities (e.g., (Love 2016: 223 and 225, and Küller, 1991: 128). The interplay of engagement, senses, and emotions converges to shape the overall experience. The pivotal role of the physical environment in shaping human behavior, underscoring the potency of architecture in molding our responses and interactions, is widely acknowledged (see, e.g., Donald 2022; 10). This understanding seems to have roots dating back to ancient times. For instance, it is asserted that Minoan and Mycenaean palaces ingeniously utilized architecture to govern the flow of movement, orchestrating immersive space experiences. When perceived as integral components rather than mere embellishments, frescoes – as seen at Knossos, etc. – offer valuable insights into these lived encounters (Day, 2019: 38).

In specific societies, the channel for communicating with gods, the supernatural, and animals form a diverse mosaic of dances, rituals, processions, and music. While this ability may be restricted to rulers or ritual specialists in some cultures, others perceive divine presence through statues, monuments, and dedicated ritual edifices

(Inomata, 2019: 250). Public ceremonial structures often serve as platforms for engagements with non-human entities, their physical layouts meticulously crafted for this specific purpose. They become the settings for events equally carefully designed to induce heightened sensory experiences and evoke profound emotional reactions by seamlessly integrating visuals, sounds, smells, and movement. This includes various elements such as vibrant attires, music, incense, feasts, dances, and processions (Inomata, 2019: 256). These orchestrated sensory and emotional stimulations emerge as integral components of the communal narrative, connecting individuals with the divine and leaving enduring imprints on collective memory. A thorough examination of physical space and environment becomes essential in the sensory analysis of ancient religious places.

4.1 Eleusinian Physical Space

The Eleusinian experience was a dynamic journey that commenced in Athens and unfolded through a procession guiding participants to Eleusis along a specific route known as the 'Sacred Way.' Along this path, initiates interacted with various architectural and physical features, including the *Ploutonion* cave and the *Mythraeion* temple, with the pinnacle of the experience occurring within the *Telesterion*. However, the comprehensive impact of the environment and atmosphere along the route and at the site cannot be overstated; it was an integral facet of the overall encounter. Despite the multifaceted significance of various elements in Eleusis, this discussion will narrow its focus to the *Telesterion*, delving into this sacred space's climatic and atmospheric dimensions.

4.1.1 Eleusis: Physical Location and Topography

Eleusis is situated at the western extremity of the expansive *Thriassion* Plain, hemmed in by the imposing mountain range of *Parnitha* and *Pateras* to the east, with the *Kithairon* mountain gracing the northern landscape (Map 1) and the *Aigaleo* serving as a raised barrier between Eleusis and Athens. The cult site stands on an

undulating alluvial plain, the *Thriassion* Plain, forming a fertile landscape; a sparse Leptosol soil characterizes the surrounding mountains (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 29), suitable only for arboriculture owing to its lack of water retention properties. To the south, it meets with an open sea bay, reflecting a broader geographical evolution; the coastline here has receded over time, resulting in Eleusis being 500 meters inland from the sea. However, it is crucial to consider that the configuration of Eleusis near the sea during the rites may have differed from its current state, creating a dynamic interplay between geography and the evolving landscape of this sacred site.

Regarding the structures within this site, the pinnacle is the Acropolis, gracefully positioned on an undulating hill slope (Fig. 12), commanding attention at an elevation of 180m. In contrast, the *Telesterion* to the east occupies a lower elevation ranging from 40m to 50m, with a portion intricately carved into the bedrock (Fig. 13). The temple follows a west-to-east orientation, gently inclining toward the south, symbolically paying homage to Athens. Access from the Sacred Way was situated on the north, facilitated by a substantial *propylon* (Figs. 14 and 15).

Following the Lunar calendar, the Mysteries unfolded during the last third of the month, *Boedromion* (Kerenyi, 1967: 311), aligning with the transition from late September to early October, signaling the onset of the autumn season. While no dedicated climactic study is specific to Eleusis, insights can be derived by examining the contemporary climate and general climate studies from that era. Thus, understanding how the natural surroundings and climatic conditions may have played integral roles in shaping the immersive experience of the Eleusinian Mysteries becomes evident.

To commence, Eleusis falls within the modern Mediterranean climate classification, characterized by mild, wet winters and warm to hot summers (Zerefos et al., 2011). Notably, autumn tends to be warmer than spring, with the first rains typically arriving around mid-September and early October, coinciding with the cessation of the eastward expansion of the Azores high (Zerefos et al., 2011). In historical times,

spanning approximately from the 8th century BCE to the Late Imperial Period, intriguing patterns of climatic variation emerged. Around 4900 BP, a period of increased aridity peaked, persisting until 2500 BP, with the driest conditions in the East Mediterranean occurring around the onset of the first millennium BCE. Subsequently, around 1900 BP, a wetter climatic phase emerged (Manning, 2022: 379).

According to contemporary census data, the average temperature in September hovers around 25 degrees Celsius, gradually cooling to 20 degrees Celsius in October. Of course, we cannot be certain that these variables existed in Graeco-Roman time. Yet allowing for that possibility – and archaeology involves as much supposition as imagination alongside data – then, given that the Eleusinian Rites were conducted during the nocturnal hours, the temperatures likely dipped considerably below the daytime averages, potentially rendering some nights notably cold. In a study of a recent forecast for Eleusis during the week of September 24-30, 2023 (Fig. 16), a gradual decline in temperature from 30 degrees Celsius to the 20s was projected, notably with precipitation on at least three days.

Precipitation is a critical aspect to examine in this context, and contemporary meteorological data reveals that August records a mere 4mm of rainfall but notably escalates to 18mm in September and peaks at 33mm in October, which, along with the forecast for late September 2023, underscores the possibility of rainfall when the rites unfolded. We should note here how in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, lines 79, 91, 337, 402, 445, and 464 add another quality attributed to the darkness of Hades, that the realm of the deceased is portrayed as existing 'beneath the damp obscurity,' echoing similar descriptions elsewhere in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* (line 482). This is also seen in the *Odyssey*, where the abodes of Hades, referred to as *oikia*, *domoi*, and *dôma*, as well as the pathways leading to them, bear the imprint of moisture, casting them as 'moist' or 'decaying,' as seen in phrases like 'to the damp chambers of Hades' (*Od.* 10, 512; 11, 57; 22, 322; 24, 10).

While it is essential to distinguish between artificial moisture and the atmospheric humidity referenced in the *Odyssey*, it is noteworthy that, historically, humidity tends to rise during certain months, reaching up to ninety percent on rainy days.

Considering Eleusis' geographical context, with the *Telesterion* situated on the coast and an open plain to the east, the choice of limestone for the temple's construction adds an intriguing dimension. Limestone, known for its porous nature, could have contributed to a degree of humidity in the architectural environment. This atmospheric quality might have influenced the initiates' experience, mainly if they were cognizant of the symbolic connection to Hades, given that they were undergoing a symbolic near-death experience with the promise of a more favorable afterlife. The initiates, guided by the belief that salvation follows the endurance of agony, embarked on a transformative journey shaped not only by their internal trials but also by the atmospheric conditions surrounding the sacred spaces of Eleusis.

Finally, we might note the wind speed factor. While Eleusis today is not renowned for strong winds, its slightly elevated topography, with the sea to the south and an open plain to the east, suggests the potential for noteworthy wind conditions due to the natural differences in atmospheric pressure over the water and the land mass with its gradually increasing elevation. This aspect adds another probable layer of environmental complexity to the multifaceted experience of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Overall, given the possibilities of local climate variation at Eleusis, we might infer that the essence of these rites was rooted in fostering bountiful and productive autumn and winter.

This climatic backdrop, marked by intermittent dry and wet periods, may offer insights into the origins of the Eleusinian Mysteries. The mythological narrative, often interpreted as an allegory for the end of autumn and the onset of winter, aligns with the notion that the Mysteries were rooted in an agricultural cult. Initiates residing in the region possibly engaged in rituals dedicating a portion of their harvest, potentially influenced by the climatic conditions impacting their cultivation practices during those times of environmental variability.

4.1.2 *Telesterion*

The *Telesterion*, Eleusis' prominent temple, did not emerge *ex nihilo*. Beneath its foundations, traces of an earlier Megaron B complex from the Early Mycenaean period have been uncovered, initially utilized as a residence, which yielded evidence of animal-burned sacrifices (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 160). That aside, there is unambiguous evidence that establishing the earliest known sanctuary was an eighth-century event. This initial sanctuary was then transformed, evolving into a roofed temple known as the *Telesterion* in the late seventh or sixth century BCE, a square structure boasting a roof measuring 25x27 meters (Evans, 2002: 234-235; Nielsen, 2017: 33).

During the original Peisistrateion period (c. 560-550 BCE), the *Telesterion* underwent significant transformations, expanding to twice its original size, its roof supported by twenty-two columns arranged in five rows (Gatton, 2017: 598). It was built using stone from the island of Poros, on foundations featuring the robust and reddish-hued Kara Stone limestone (Mylonas, 1961: 79). The Cimon-period (early 5th century BCE) additions of 470 BCE further magnified the temple's scale, doubling its size to the northwest and introducing twenty-one columns organized in seven rows, with the *Anaktoron* now occupying a central position within the *Telesterion* (Gatton, 2017: 598). This was completed between 435 and 421 BCE, as the structure incorporates elements dateable to the Periklean period (Mylonas, 1961: 111: Fig. 17).

The resulting structure is an almost square hypostyle hall, each side measuring approximately 51.50 meters in the ground plan. During the 4th century BCE, a portico was added to its eastern side, featuring two entrances on each side and two at the front, allowing direct access to the interior. Rows of seats were meticulously arranged along the inner walls, occasionally interrupted by strategically placed doorways. The back wall boasted a continuous seating area spanning its entire width. The robust roof, supported by 42 columns, was organized in six rows of seven

columns each. Each column was the foundation for smaller columns, upholding the interconnected roof beams.

The *Telesterion* featured seating on all four sides, reminiscent of a *Boule* structure. However, a distinguishing characteristic was a smaller central structure known as the *Anaktoron* (Evans, 2002: 245) (Fig. 18). While the temple shares some similarities with a theatre, notable distinctions arise: the seating arrangements are oriented towards the central building, and the entire structure is roofed. Noack proposes a flat roof design, while Kourouniotes suggests a double-sloped roof culminating in triangular pediments on the two narrow façades (quoted in Mylonas, 1961: 70). The roof tiles were of Parian marble. They displayed a red-painted petal design with a blue separation line. The *sima*, adorned with painted anthemias interspersed with lotus blossoms, added an artistic flourish to the structure (Mylonas, 1961: 80-1). Access to the larger *naos* was facilitated through three doors in the portico, each averaging a width of 1.30 meters. The central doors aligned with the midpoint of the steps, creating a harmonious architectural symmetry (Mylonas, 1961: 81). At the heart of the roof was an elevated lantern or clerestory, designed to offer ventilation and allow natural light to permeate the *Telesterion's* interior. The interior columns adhered to the Ionic order (Mylonas, 1961). Incorporating Ionic elements in a Doric Temple was a distinctive Peisistratean-period practice, a feature observed in other buildings in Athens (Mylonas, 1961: 82).

4.1.2.1 *Anaktoron*

The *Telesterion*, distinguished by its columned structure, was four times larger than the *Anaktoron*, the rectangular masonry structure in its center, which is assumed to have a vital role in the ritual, with exclusive access granted only to the Hierophant (Gatton, 2017: 587). The precise function of this enigmatic space is a subject of debate, with several plausible interpretations. One hypothesis suggests that, given the meaning of Hierophant as "*one who reveals the holy*," the *Anaktoron* may have

housed sacred objects. Plutarch's (1st century CE) account also notes a significant light emanating from the *Anaktoron* (*Quomodo Quis Sentiatur* 10; 30-31).

However, the proposition of a brilliant light source raises practical considerations. For a luminosity capable of illuminating a space as vast as the *Telesterion* (2601 m²) from a relatively confined area (42 m²), Clinton argues that a door on each side would be necessary, requiring a broad entrance and an intensely bright fire (2004: 93). Logically, Clinton contends that if the *Hierophantai* were to exit the room during the ceremony, exposed to such intense light, it would cause considerable discomfort. Therefore, Clinton suggests that the light source mentioned in historical accounts might be the "*fire of torchbearers*," the officials responsible for illuminating the temple. This perspective also accounts for the interplay of darkness and light during the ceremony, as igniting a substantial fire when the Hierophant emerged would have been impractical given the technological constraints of that era (2004: 94-5). Two potential scenarios are presented, suggesting that the spectacle of fire either unfolded during the *Anaktoron's* opening or towards the ceremony's conclusion when torches were extinguished. At the utterance of the Hierophant's cry, the *opaion*, a circular opening in the center of a dome or a wall, would gracefully open, allowing daylight to cascade into the temple, all while maintaining a profound silence among the participants (Clinch, 2022: 326).

The second facet concerning the *Anaktoron* pertains to the display of sacred objects, with some proposals suggesting that the images of Demeter and Persephone were presented to the initiates in this space. An archaeological discovery, a small votive plaque from the sanctuary (Fig. 19), depicts the image of Demeter with partially visible color traces and a radiant light emanating from her head. Clinton contends that these illuminated images constituted a crucial element of the ritual (2004: 98). He further posits that a platform within the *Telesterion*, measuring 14.2x5.6 meters, facilitated the viewing of these images, culminating in the sacred drama's climax (2004: 99). However, alternative theories exist, particularly concerning the role of darkness in this context. According to Gatton, if image projection occurred at the

Anakton, the *camera obscura* method would likely have been employed. The *camera obscura* principle, applicable in any darkened space regardless of its size or shape, is proposed by Gatton as a plausible means of image projection:

“The camera obscura principle works with any darkened space of whatever size or shape. A camera obscura can be produced concomitantly by a small hole in a roof, wall, or window shutter through which the view of the outside is projected onto the wall inside a darkened room (The camera obscura principle works irrespective of the scale of the dark and light areas. A small dark room is usually surrounded by the bright sunlit world, which projects an image from the outside into the inside. But if the inside of a room is made very bright, and the surrounding space is very dark, then the same hole will cast an image from the smaller space to the larger. The image always flows from light to dark. Could the Anakton, the priest’s holy fore-room, have functioned as a box of light, illuminating figurines and projecting their images into the Telesterion, the darkened temple filled with initiates.” (2017: 591)

Drawing insights from Gatton's experiment, it was determined that "*the larger the aperture, the more light passed through, enhancing image brightness,*" albeit at the cost of introducing fuzziness into the projection (2017: 595). The raised seating surrounding the outer region suggested that the audience faced the *Anakton*, akin to a black box theatre arrangement. However, this conceptual design faced challenges due to numerous columns obstructing views from various angles (Gatton, 2017: 596). Despite the central positioning of the Hierophant, visibility for the majority needed improvement. Unlike conventional seating for observational purposes, these arrangements did not facilitate witnessing the presumed spectacle. Instead, the rituals involved marches that led initiates seemingly nowhere, fostering a sense of distress and disorientation. Guided through a dark maze, initiates ultimately encountered uplifting visions (Gatton, 2017: 596).

In this sense, the columns in the *Telesterion* served a dual purpose, functioning not only as structural supports for the roof but also crafting a dark labyrinth that hindered sightlines while strategically guiding initiates toward the *Anakton*. The *Telesterion* underwent progressive expansions over the centuries to accommodate larger audiences, so the *Anakton* retained its central location and footprint. This resilience

implies that, much like its positioning at the heart of the later temple, the *Anaktoron* stood at the epicenter of the entire experiential journey.

4.1.2.2 Experiencing the *Telesterion*

Stepping into the *Telesterion* marked a profound "*physical and psychological crossing of the threshold for the initiates*" (Fig. 20: Clinch, 2022: 320). This pivotal entrance signaled the initiation's progression, encompassing the *deiknymena* (sacred objects) and the *legomena* (things said). The distinctive architectural makeup, resembling more of an *Odeion* than a conventional temple, underscored the leading role of performance in the ceremonies. The Periclean-period iteration of the *Telesterion*, with its capacity to host up to 3,000 individuals, reflected a surge in popularity (Clinch, 2022: 321). The architecture functioned as a "*mediating element in the culmination of religious ecstasy for initiates*" (Clinch, 2022: 321).

The *Telesterion's* near-symmetrical layout significantly distorts spatial perception and navigation, heightening vulnerability to stimuli. Its tiered seating, oriented towards the *Anaktoron*, coupled with walls featuring two entrances, except for the north-western wall, where seats were carved from the bedrock, created an immersive environment. However, the presence of columns within restricted the visual freedom of initiates, a limitation compounded by the ceremonies occurring at night with artificial light sources.

The experiential journey extended to the *Anaktoron*, a space believed to house sacred objects revealed by the Hierophant to the initiates. Despite the significance of these objects, it was improbable that initiates physically interacted with them due to potential risks. The *Anaktoron's* role expanded to the symbolic fire discussed earlier, acting as a sensory trigger for sight, body, and smell, depending on the burned materials. Although the presence of Apollo is not explicitly documented in Eleusis, the centrality of fire and light, mimicking the sun and posing challenges for direct

observation, prompts consideration of Apollo's potential involvement. Clinch proposes an alternative interpretation, suggesting that the light may constitute ontological proof of Demeter's presence during the culmination. This radiant light, an epiphany of the goddess, could induce a sense of chromesthesia, enabling initiates to transcend their physical selves and temporarily experience the past, present, and future (2022: 327).

4.1.3 Impact of Eleusinian Space

In conclusion, exploring Eleusis and its climatic and architectural dimensions provides a comprehensive understanding of the intricate tapestry that shaped the Eleusinian Mysteries. The physical journey along the Sacred Way, the topography of Eleusis, and the climatic conditions during the Mysteries set the stage for a transformative experience. The discussion then focused on the Telesterion, the central space where the culmination of the Mysteries unfolded.

The *Telesterion*, with its rich historical evolution, architectural features, and the enigmatic *Anaktoron* at its core, emerged as the epicenter of the initiates' experience. The temple's design, from its Mycenaean origins to the elaborate structures of the Peisistratean and Cimon periods, played a pivotal role in shaping the psychological and sensory aspects of the Mysteries. The *Anaktoron*, with its debated functions, added layers of mystery and symbolism, serving as the nexus for the initiates' encounter with sacred objects, sensory stimuli, and transformative rituals. The climatic backdrop of Eleusis, marked by its Mediterranean setting, potential rainfall during the Mysteries, and considerations of humidity and wind speed, further contributed to the atmospheric complexity surrounding the sacred rites. These elements unveil the profound interplay of architecture, climate, and mythology that rendered the Eleusinian Mysteries a unique and immersive journey for ancient initiates.

In this holistic sensory and psychological landscape, Eleusis emerges as a microcosm where the natural, the architectural, and the divine converge. The environmental elements, meticulously orchestrated by geography and climate, become integral participants in the sacred drama. The initiates, attuned to the atmospheric symphony, transcend the boundaries of time and self, experiencing the past, present, and future in the ephemeral glow of Demeter's light.

4.2 Clarian Physical Space

The focal point of the Klaros experience revolves around the Temple of Apollo and its subterranean *adyton* (Fig. 21). This sacred precinct extends beyond the temple itself. A grand pathway, adorned with monuments and dedications, guides visitors through a remarkable journey leading to various points of significance: altars, hecatombs, smaller temples, a *katagogeion*, or hostel, and a *Propylon* (Figs. 22 and 23). Linked initially to Kolophon, the center's association later shifted to the south, Notion, a discreet pathway that leads towards the city, with remnants of small Roman shops just beyond the boundaries of the sacred space (Fig. 24).

4.2.1 Klaros: Physical Location and Topography

The sacred precinct of Klaros is situated in modern Ahmetbeyli, İzmir, Turkey, approximately 20 kilometers from Ephesus, 50 kilometers from Smyrna, and 100 kilometers from Didyma (Map 2)—geomorphological studies conducted by İ. Kayan and continued by M. Doğan have revealed that, while Klaros is now about 1.5 kilometers from the sea, the coastline was directly south of Klaros some 2500-3000 years ago. Moreover, the area where Klaros stands today was built on groundwater and was characterized by abundant sedimentation (Maps 3 and 4; 2013: 101-4), and the area stands out for its abundant water sources.

As for the weather conditions at Klaros in the Graeco-Roman period, we have no specific evidence. Today, the climate aligns with the typical coastal Mediterranean type, featuring mild winters and hot summers. The prophecies at Klaros were exclusively delivered at night, so the daytime weather would have been a lesser factor in these events. (Busine, 2002: 191), The festivals were explicitly on the days dedicated to Hekate and Artemis or preceding these days, and historical records indicate that Dionysia festivals were emphasized at Klaros (Şahin 1998: 26-27). The prophecies occurred during the *Artemisia* festival, a grand celebration for Ephesus that unfolded in early May, while the *Dionysia* was joyously observed after December and mid-March. Given that at such separate times of the year, the weather naturally varied from one to the other: Today, March registers an average temperature of 11 degrees Celsius, May experiences a milder 19.5 degrees Celsius, and December brings cooler temperatures at 9 degrees Celsius. The corresponding rainfall in millimeters follows a pattern of 78, 29, and 126, respectively (Fig. 25).

In his account of the region, Pausanias provides the only evidence for the landscape's appearance in terms of its vegetation. He describes, "*In the land of Kolophon is the grove of Apollo, of ash-trees, and not far from the grove is the river, Ales, the coldest river in Ionia*" (7.5.10, 14.1.27). The vegetation in this region comprises a maki-type forest, interspersed with olive trees and grape yards, occasionally giving way to pine forests inland. We might usefully note here the comment by Gunderson (2021: 414)

"The natural landscape of Klaros largely escapes negative publicity in literary sources, but the chthonic nature of the artificial cave under the temple is frequently emphasized. If the sacred grove of Klaros functioned as a happy, safe space, the cave-like basement did the exact opposite."

4.2.2 The Temple of Apollo

The Hellenistic temple of Apollo, dating back to the fourth century BCE and substantially complete by the end of the 2nd century BCE, if lacking the full complement of side columns (Moretti and Laroche 2010: Fig. 28), was 25 meters wide and 46 meters long. It featured a hexastyle front, extended to eleven or twelve columns, complemented by five steps set all around the structure (Stoneman, 2011:

92; Moretti and Laroche, 2010) (Figs. 26 and 27). It adhered to the typical classical style, presenting a Doric peristyle with a range of six to eleven columns. Internally, the temple was divided into a *pronaos* and a *naos*, reminiscent of the Ionic temples of Asia Minor. Noteworthy was its distinctive depth, facilitating a basement passage to the *adyton* from the floor and a *cella* lacking an *opisthodomos* (Moretti and Laroche, 2010). Parke points out the intriguing choice of using the Doric style over the local Ionic, a surprising architectural preference (1985: 129: Fig. 29). The *naos* featured black instead of white marble, setting a striking tone. The statuary group, positioned at the rear of the chamber, portrayed Apollo holding a lyre, along with Leto and Artemis (Fig. 30). These majestic sculptures, measuring 7 to 8 meters high, were crafted in the first half of the second century, according to Moretti and Laroche (2010). However, Parke (1985: 134) suggests they are of Augustan date. The magnitude of the three is emphasized by the colossal weight of Leto's torso, which measured an impressive 7 tons (Fig. 31 (Şahin, 1998: 40). Whatever their date, these marble statues' imposing presence truly set the temple's environment and feature on Kolophon coinage after Commodus (177-192 CE). This numismatic evidence indicates that Apollo, with his *lyra* or *kithara*, occupied the central position while his mother, Leto, and sister, Artemis, stood alongside him.

4.2.2.1 *Adyton*

The date of the *adyton*, the inner sanctuary, remains uncertain but is considered Hellenistic. It is undoubtedly pre-Augustan as Tacitus provides an account of Germanicus' visit (18 CE) to the *adyton*, describing it as a place with two vaulted chambers supporting the substantial base blocks of the upper *naos* (*Ann.* 2.54). Initially, the privilege of descending to this platform was restricted to the priest and the medium. Nevertheless, inscriptions from the 2nd century CE suggest that specific consultants involved in 'celebrating the mysteries' were also permitted to descend (Ustinova, 2009: 110). The *adyton's* covering comprised the paving of the *naos*, supported by four arches, with dimensions of 3.90 or 3.70 meters, with the highest point of the vault at 3.70 meters, the covering adding an approximate height of 20 centimeters, so 3.90 meters represents the height of the upper layer at the border of

the platform. Initially, visible holes prompted the addition of strips of fabric mounted on wooden battens between the arches, as depicted in Moretti's report (Fig 32) (2012). However, in a recent personal communication (October 2023), he observed that the covering was probably entirely wooden rather than fabric in ancient times:

"We conducted fabric restitution for the vault of the crypt as it was the most straightforward method to convey the volume on-site. However, I do not believe the original covering was composed of fabric in antiquity. I envision it to have been crafted from wood or stuccoed wood."

The *adyton* itself comprises two chambers of black marble connected by a corridor. Significant modifications occurred in the late first century BCE, transforming the ceiling into vaults. The corridor leading to the first chamber underwent seven directional changes, creating a labyrinthine effect, heightened by its dim lighting (Ustinova, 2009: 267) (Fig. 33). Presumably, the two openings giving access to the *adyton* served as both exits and entries (Moretti and Laroche, 2010). Within the first chamber, an *omphalos* was situated alongside some benches (Fig. 34), and access to the inner chamber was provided through a corridor. Initially, a water source was positioned at the chamber's end, separated by a parapet. Still, following a reconstruction, water was directed into a hollow in the pavement, occasionally causing the grotto to flood (Ustinova, 2011: 43); (Fig. 35)). In the second room, eight arches spanned the space. Unlike the first room, these arches exhibited no holes for wooden battens. However, historical evidence indicates that the platform beneath the inner chamber accommodated the triad statue, featuring cemented stone (Fig. 36). This same type of stone was utilized in the fillings of the arches (Fig. 37).

The consultants participating in the ceremony were undoubtedly treated to a spectacular experience. Held in the dark confines of the temple at night, they entered a lamp-lit room where their inquiries were presented. The prophet, stationed in another room, would direct their questions to the unseen *thespiodos*, who articulated these and the answers in verse (Parke, 1985: 222). Epigraphical records indicate that delegations engaged in the consultation and participated in the mysteries, suggesting an initiation process involving preliminary rites (Graf, 2005: 246). Inside the *adyton*,

some consultants positioned themselves in the first chamber beside the *omphalos* or on the benches (Şahin, 2012: 258).

The medium, alone in the inner chamber and rendered invisible, followed a unique ritual. As described by the late Roman period philosopher Iamblichus, the medium descended into the inner chamber a day before the ceremony, initiating a fast to attain *enthousiasma*, or zealotry, with fasting durations ranging between 24 to 48 hours (*Myst.* 3.11) and breaking the fast involved drinking swamp water in the inner chamber and chewing daphne leaves, known for their soothing properties (Ustinova, 2009: 112). Pliny reported the lethal consequences of drinking such water for the *thespiodos* (*HN* 2.232), and by the early fourth century BCE at Klaros, *astragalus* or 'Milk Vetch,' became more prevalent than this ritualistic revelation for non-special revelations (Ustinova, 2017: 63).

The descent for the consultation meant entering a corridor through two entrances originating from the *pronaos*, each marked by five steps (Figs. 38 and 39). The dimensions of each step were around 29 centimeters in width, equivalent to an EU size 43, with a height ranging between 30 and 32 cm. The horizontal widths extended to 70 centimeters, running parallel with the corridors. The total area of the first corridor measured 100 centimeters, while the second turn connecting the two entrances into one long corridor spanned some 210 centimeters (Figs. 40 and 41). For an individual with a height between 1.70 and 1.90 meters, this journey translates to 6 to 9 steps.

The main corridor, once again with a width of 70 centimeters, stretched for a length of 786 centimeters, requiring 12 to 16 steps to traverse (Fig. 42). After the main corridor, the crypt bifurcates once more, and based on the *omphalos*' location, it can be speculated that the entrance was on the right side (Fig. 43). These shorter corridors had a length of 390 centimeters for the inner wall and an additional 70 centimeters for the outer wall, maintaining a consistent width of 70 cm throughout. The journey to the next turn would involve 10 to 12 steps on each side (Figs. 44 and

45). With the width safeguarded at 70 centimeters, the door reaches 440 centimeters, necessitating 7 to 11 steps. Including the average height in various parts of the corridor, considering the missing stones (confirmed through Lewis holes in the existing layer of stones and the knowledge that the corridor was also covered with the temple's pavement), the overall average height measured at 1.77 centimeters.

The door width for chamber 1 was 90 centimeters (Fig. 46). Positioned asymmetrically in the room, the entrance side had a length of 325. In contrast, the inner chamber measured 210, resulting in a total room width of 625 centimeters. The distance between the two doors was 525 centimeters, with a room height fluctuating between 200-220 centimeters due to sediment beneath the water, averaging a water level of 66 centimeters.

From the entrance of the first room to the corridor it required approximately five steps, with the corridor maintaining a width of 70 centimeters once again (Figs. 47 and 48). An opening for swamp water was in the inner chamber, where the *thespiodos* remained alone for at least a day (Fig. 49). While the first room boasted four vaults, this room featured six vaults, offering a greater longitudinal space of 800 centimeters but less width at 355 centimeters and a height of 180 centimeters (Fig. 50).

4.2.2.2 Experiencing Klaros' *Adyton*

For the oracle, the journey to the second crypt commenced ahead of others as a seasoned traveler of the crypt. While he may not have needed a light source for navigation, there likely was one in the crypt. Having undergone a series of purifications, waited in the inner *adyton* for 24 to 48 hours while fasting, and breaking the fast with swamp water and daphne leaves, the oracle experienced an altered state of consciousness. The combined factors of moisture, coldness, darkness, and scents would have facilitated entry into this trance state.

For the participants, it was different. Klaros' dimly lit passageways and concealed chambers contributed to a frightening ambiance illuminated by the vague glow of oil lamps or torches. The environment's design, with corridors taking abrupt turns, may have heightened the sense of unease for those entering, including cult officials. The entrance to the initial chamber might have only become visible at the end of these winding passages, reinforcing the belief that a connection with the deity awaited consultation within the depths of this darkness. Darkness, therefore, played a pivotal role in shaping the immersive experience of the crypts. While torches are mentioned as a possibility, the crypts' sealed environment, concealed beneath the *naos*' pavement, would have hindered air circulation, eliminating the use of any light source generating carbon monoxide. Notably, markings for mounted platforms for torches or any discernible space for tripods in the narrow corridors must be visible. This makes it improbable that any light source other than portable oil lamps was utilized, with olive oil being a likely choice due to its abundance in the region. However, the limited air circulation and the scent and fumes from the oil lamps and burning incense would have created a powerful sensory experience.

The entrance steps, with a height of 30 centimeters, presented a challenging descent and ascent, especially if carrying a lamp, further restricting movement. The height of 1.80 meters and the 70-centimeter width would have contributed to a confining and depriving atmosphere within the corridors. The deliberate darkness enhanced the mystic effect. Additionally, the crypt's location on top of a water source, with an opening in the inner chamber, prevented direct sunlight penetration. The limestone composition, known for heat and water absorption (Klaros was situated in a swampy area; it is probable that limestone accumulated water), likely rendered the stones and air in the crypt moist. The overall coolness of the crypt, intensified by the night-time setting for revelations, added to its unique ambiance.

For the consultants, the journey culminated in the first chamber, providing a reprieve from the narrow corridors. However, after a prolonged waiting period, the atmosphere within the chamber transformed as the oracle of Klaros delivered the

revelation in a mixed meter of *dactylic* hexameter to Iambic, *anapaestic*, and *trochaic*. This poetic composition, noted by Gunderson (2021:423), created a dramatic effect akin to the juxtaposition of *locus amoneus* and *locus horridus*, leaving a place of calm and enjoyment for one of surprise and horror, leaving the consultants confused. The varied meters disrupted the sense of harmony and musical fulfillment, contributing to an atmosphere that Robert described as "*suffocating*" (1967: 311).

4.2.3 The Impact of Clarian Space

The sensory journey within the *adyton* profoundly layers Klaros' narrative. Darkness, carefully orchestrated, envelopes consultants in an immersive experience. The crypt's architecture, designed with deliberate narrowness, heightens the sense of mystery. Portable oil lamps, likely fuelled by abundant olive oil, cast a subdued glow, and the scent of burning incense permeates the air. The descent through narrow steps, challenging and limiting, intensifies the sensory and psychological impact. The crypt's deliberate isolation from direct sunlight and the limestone's heat absorption and water-retaining properties create a cool, moist ambiance. This intentional environment and the mystic revelation delivered in varied meters add an ethereal quality. Consultants find solace in the first chamber, transitioning from the constriction of corridors, only to be plunged into a transformative revelation, perplexing them. The oracle, an adept of the crypt's labyrinth, commences a solitary journey guided by altered states of consciousness induced by purifications, fasting, and the crypt's unique sensory environment.

Klaros emerges as a multidimensional realm where the physical, temporal, and metaphysical converge. The intricate architecture, climatic elements, and deliberate sensory manipulation create a space where seekers navigate through corridors, chambers, and layers of mysticism and revelation. With its enigmatic beauty and profound symbolism, Klaros is a testament to the interplay between human imagination, architectural ingenuity, and divine connection.

CHAPTER 5

THE SENSES AND PERCEPTION IN ELEUSIS AND KLAROS

Eleusis and Klaros featured activities that engaged multiple senses simultaneously. While this chapter separates the senses for simplicity, it is essential to acknowledge that each element discussed here stimulates multiple senses. These elements are categorized based on the primary sense they mainly engage.

5.1 Sight

Our sensory experiences are multifaceted, but sight dominates most of our perception. We assign meaning to the world around us through our sense of sight. The significance of vision may vary across cultures but consistently occupies a central role in the human experience. In the context of Eleusis and Klaros, the act of seeing and the absence of sight, plunging individuals into darkness, were integral aspects of the overall experience. As we will see, it is evident that the experience was intentionally crafted, and the sense of sight was actively manipulated.

The significance of light as a crucial element has attracted the attention of various sensory archaeologists, including Hamilakis (2014: 180), Skeates (2010: 190), and McMahon (2013), and in the contexts of Eleusis and Klaros, light and darkness played a pivotal role in shaping the overall experience of initiates. Revelations occurred during the night at Klaros (Boutsikas, 2017: 57-8), while at Eleusis, the central performance unfolded in darkness (Bremmer, 2014). The interplay between light and darkness served as a powerful tool for emotional manipulation within the realm of religious architecture, contributing to a distinct and emotionally charged experience for participants. Notably, some oracles strategically employed spatial movement within their religious structures to prepare seekers psychologically. Dark passageways or chambers symbolize separation from the external world, creating a profound sense of distance and detachment (Boutsikas, 2017: 57).

5.1.1 Light at Eleusis and Klaros

The officiant leading the ceremonies at Eleusis held the esteemed title of Hierophant, derived from the words '*hieros*' meaning 'sacred' and '*phainein*' signifying 'to show' or 'reveal.' Scholars widely concur that in the Mysteries, the sense of sight took precedence over all others, with the head priest tasked with presenting and unveiling the sacred rites (Montiglio, 2010: 28; Petridou, 2013 and Power, 2018: 16). A poignant illustration of the fundamental role of light and sight in the Mysteries is evident during the "*search*" stage, where torches symbolize Demeter's blindness and her reliance on light to find her daughter, who is lost in the shadows (Boutsikas, 2017: 54). The contrast between darkness and light in the rites of Demeter and Persephone is further emphasized by the presence of numerous lamps in sanctuaries across associated cult centers (as detailed by Boutsikas, 2017: 53).

Moreover, the light's significance extends to the Mysteries' very core. As explored in the subsequent discussion, the absence of light was integral to the Mysteries, creating a deliberate juxtaposition with the darkness that is dispelled by a radiant light inside the *Telesterion* during the revelation of sacred objects in the final stage of the

initiation ceremony (Boutsikas, 2017: 53). This transformative moment, illuminated by sacred light, sharply contrasts with the preceding lack of illumination, as elaborated upon in the ensuing discussion (Ustinova, 2013: 115).

The sacred artifacts associated with the Mysteries, known as "*deiknymena*," were initially housed in the *Anaktoron* within the *Telesterion* and later ceremoniously transported to and from Athens. In the Mysteries' early stages during the initiation, these objects, denoted as "*hiera*" (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 23-4), were unveiled to the initiates. Among these revelations, Tertullian notes the presentation of a phallus to the "*experienced*" initiates during the *epoptai* (*Ad nat.* 2.17). Adding another layer to the symbolism, the Gnostic author Hippolytus of Rome (170-235 CE) describes the object as "*an ear of wheat harvested in silence*" (*Haer.* 5.3.55-56 Schaff).

During these presentations, the presence of Demeter in the form of a statue often accompanies the display (Bremmer, 2014: 387). This intentional absence of sound during the unveiling, emphasizing the primacy of sight, underscores the auditory experience marked by silence. Moreover, this practice suggests that displaying these objects aimed to directly symbolize the deities in the perception of the initiates, blurring the line between symbol and divine being—a concept distinct from the Greek perspective.

Lastly, the symbolism extends to the representation of Dionysus, as the ear of corn or wheat signifies his presence, paralleling the way grapes and wine served a similar purpose (Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003: 27). This intricate layering of symbolism reinforces the multi-sensory nature of the Mysteries, where sight, in conjunction with the deliberate absence of sound, played a pivotal role in conveying profound meanings to the initiates.

Contradictions in the stimulation and deprivation of sight were defining features of the Klaros experience. While participants could engage with visual elements, the

central theme centered on the absence of sight and the enveloping darkness. The *adyton*, the sacred space where prophecies were unveiled, witnessed illumination by artificial light at the time of revelation but retained its mystical shroud of darkness otherwise. Within this sacred space rested the *omphalos*, a crucial element intricately linked to the revelations.

The narrative unfolds with Zeus dispatching eagles simultaneously to the east and west, converging at the world's center—Delphi. The cauldron housing the Pythia was then positioned over a pit recognized as the *omphalos*, the symbolic center or navel of the “*belly of the world*” (Tanriver, 2009: 413). At Klaros, archaeologists discovered a blue-marbled *omphalos* in its original position within the first chamber of the *adyton* (refer to Fig. 51). Notably, perforations on this sacred artifact suggest it might have been adorned with bronze replicas of the leaves of the daphne or laurel tree (Tanriver, 2009: 414: see Fig. 52).

This discovery hints at a fascinating intersection of the senses and their symbolism, particularly about taste, which will be discussed below. As we delve further, it becomes evident that the intricate layers of sensory engagement at Klaros underscore the simultaneous involvement of multiple senses at various stages of the ritualistic experience.

5.1.2 Darkness at Eleusis and Klaros

Darkness, the antithesis of light, assumed a pivotal role in the Eleusinian Mysteries (Boutsikas, 2017: 53). These rites commenced with the advent of the fall season, a period marked by the transition from the radiant light of summer to the encroaching darkness of winter. This symbolic shift embodied a shared despondency experienced by the Earth and its inhabitants. Darkness, as a concept, is intricately linked to a diverse spectrum of emotions, encompassing not only terror, suspicion, fear, and

temptation but also sentiments of freedom, liberation, tranquility, and sensuality (Dowd, 2022: 197).

The profound impact of darkness extends beyond the mystical realm, resonating with contemporary understanding. Research indicates that conditions such as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) can manifest when individuals are deprived of sufficient exposure to natural sunlight. Symptoms associated with SAD include irritability, overeating accompanied by feelings of guilt, excessive sleep, and a decrease in libido (Edwards, 2018: 34). While it is unlikely all initiates experienced SAD, autumn marks the start of the period of distress for people and the world. This underscores the psychological depth inherent in the symbolism of darkness, reflecting its ability to evoke a wide array of emotional responses and its relevance in ancient rituals and modern mental health considerations.

This link between light and darkness at Eleusis is emphasized during the *hieros gamos*, representing the “*holy*” or “*sacred marriage*.” Torches were extinguished, leaving initiates in utter darkness, their fate seemingly hanging in obscurity (Albinus, 2000: 186). Darkness and night are allegories for consternation and trembling (Ustinova, 2017: 135). The sudden emergence of torch-bearing figures and sacred symbols created a near-death encounter that would linger in the initiates' memories for the rest of their lives (Ustinova, 2009: 231). Demetrius of *Phaleron* (350-280 BCE) further emphasizes:

“... for everything implied is more formidable, and one imagines something different. Nevertheless, what is evident is likely to be scorned, just like those stripped bare. Therefore, even the mysteries are said in allegories to cause astonishment and horror, as if in darkness and night. Indeed, allegory seems akin to darkness and night.” (Eloc. 100-101. LCL 199)

Amid the enveloping darkness, fire emerged as both an illuminating beacon and a protective force, the security of which was intentionally stripped away from the initiates during the ceremony.

The profound psychological influence of darkness on beliefs is evident through controlled research exploring the impact of lighting conditions on participants' susceptibility to supernatural thinking (Moyes, 2014: 97). In a study involving 104 participants randomly assigned to either a well-lit room or a dimly lit space, those in the dimly lit environment demonstrated a heightened inclination toward supernatural beliefs, as evidenced by questionnaires and vignette reactions. This observation raises intriguing considerations about the potential impact of a dark setting on belief systems, particularly in earlier societies devoid of convenient and rapid illumination sources, especially within the context of cultic environments.

The significance of darkness in cultivating a mystical ambiance is underscored by the Eleusinian procession's arrival at the sanctuary on the evening of 20 *Boedromion*, the 20th night spanning from September to October. Initiates engaged in various activities during the night, illuminated by torches, possibly already contending with sorrow and fear before entering the *Telesterion* (Widzisz, 2010: 470). As previously explored, the initiates embarked on a symbolic journey into darkness, mirroring the soul's path after death, accompanied by somber emotions encompassing sadness, depression, and fear. An awe-inspiring exhibition of fire suddenly shattered this emotional tapestry, introducing a profound sense of liberation that the initiates may never have experienced.

Notably, insomnia was a prevalent aspect of the initiates' experience during the ceremonies (Widzisz, 2010: 468). This can be attributed to the procession's origin in Athens, involving days-long pilgrimages and continuous rites. The heightened euphoria and restlessness experienced by the initiates likely contributed to their struggle to obtain adequate sleep, potentially subjecting them to the consequences of sleep deprivation. While the inclusion of entheogens may have been a fundamental component of the Mysteries, what remains unequivocal is the integral role of Altered States of Consciousness (ASC) in shaping the overall experience.

Similarly, at Klaros, as an integral part of the ceremonies, participants had to re-enter the enveloping darkness, relinquishing Prometheus' protective embrace of light bestowed upon humanity to explore realms that typically remained concealed. Although the festivities unfolded during the day, the revelations were exclusively imparted in the nocturnal hours beneath a translucent or clouded sky, illuminated solely by torches and lamps (Şahin, 2012: 258). The *adyton*, where these prophecies were unveiled, featured narrow corridors illuminated by torches, lamps, and walls constructed from blue marble. These elements collectively heightened the sense of mysticism (Gunderson, 2021: 420), accentuated by faint sounds of instruments emanating from the distant surroundings. Notably, Apollo, the bestower of prophecies, revealed them exclusively at night (Busine, 2002: 191). As astutely observed, the nighttime setting significantly enhanced the mystical atmosphere, evoking an aura of anticipation and restlessness among the consultants. Much like their counterparts in Eleusis, those at Klaros likely grappled with insomnia, eagerly awaiting the delivery of the prophecy (Tanriver 2009: 454).

5.1.3 Sight in a Cultic Context

The strategic use of light and darkness, as seen in the Eleusinian Mysteries, emerged as a potent tool for emotional manipulation. The abrupt shift from darkness to dazzling light during the initiation ceremony symbolized the revelation of sacred objects, evoking a profound sense of awe and wonder among the participants. This manipulation of sight underscored the significance of vision and accentuated the psychological impact of sensory contrast and surprise.

The deliberate absence of light in Eleusis and Klaros ceremonies, immersing initiates in darkness, symbolized a symbolic separation from the external world, cultivating a palpable sense of distance and detachment. Darkness, with its associations of consternation, trembling, and fear linked to the unknown and the subconscious, wielded a profound psychological influence. Research on supernatural beliefs further

attests to the power of dimly lit environments in fostering such beliefs, even in contemporary Western society.

The nocturnal setting at Eleusis and Klaros held substantial importance, preluding a mystical ambiance that anticipated heightened participant engagement during the ceremonies. Coupled with potential insomnia, altered states of consciousness became integral facets of the experience, potentially induced by factors such as sleep deprivation and the speculated use of entheogens. These elements collectively intensified the psychological depth of the experiences, enhancing participants' receptivity to revelations.

In summary, the deliberate manipulation of sensory elements, specifically the interplay between light and darkness, played a crucial role in molding the psychological experience of participants in Eleusis and Klaros. These sensory engagements were masterfully harnessed to evoke a spectrum of emotional and psychological responses, including wonder, fear, anticipation, and altered states of consciousness. This orchestration contributed significantly to the profound and transformative nature of these religious experiences.

5.2 Sound

While sight was the dominant sense for participants in these Cultic Mysteries, it was invariably complemented by the subtle yet significant presence or absence of sound. The auditory element played a pivotal role in both Klaros and Eleusis. In Eleusis, music assumed a definitive role in the grand processions, contributing to the overall sensory experience. Similarly, it held comparable significance in the festive ambiance of Klaros, where it harmonized with the auditory cues employed during the delivery of prophecies to the consultants.

5.2.1 Sound at Eleusis and Klaros

As the initiates approached the temple at Eleusis, an intense fervor filled the air, marked by the uproar and shouting (Power, 2018: 18). Sound played a crucial role during the *pompe*, the procession leading to the Mysteries. The exclamation of joy, "*Iacche!*" resonated through the atmosphere, gradually transforming into an invocation of the deity *Iachus*, whose cult statue led the procession. This auditory component added a layer to the multisensory experience, forging a connection between the initiates and the divine (Power, 2018: 19).

Nevertheless, a profound metamorphosis occurred upon entering the revered confines of the Telesterion. A feeling of Euphemia permeated within those sanctified walls, creating a euphoric and serene ambiance. This stark contrast to the earlier chaos revealed the deliberate manipulation of sensory elements to evoke specific emotions. This intentional transformation aimed to elicit intense emotions, a prerequisite for the profound suffering central to the Eleusinian Mysteries, as noted by Aristotle (4th century BCE) (Fragment 15 Rose). In the presence of sacred mysteries, initiates were enveloped in fear and awe, fostering a hushed and reverential silence. Clement of Alexandria (2nd century CE) even spoke of mournful sounds as an integral part of the dramatic experience, suggesting that "*the search*" was likely accompanied by solemn lamentations for Persephone (*Protr.* 2.12). Though the exact sounds within the *Telesterion* remain elusive, historical accounts allude to the resonation of a bronze gong during the pivotal moment of Kore's summoning, contributing to the intricate sensory experience (quoted in Power, 2018: 19).

The central figure, the Hierophant, played a pivotal role in shaping the initiates' experience. The first Hierophant, whose "*Eumolpus*" means "*skilled in song*," possibly sang during the proceedings. An epitaph of a Roman Hierophant attests to this, describing the Hierophant as one who "*poured forth the charming voice of*

Eumolpus." Additionally, the Hierophant was known to utter non-musical cries and proclamations, further enriching sensory engagement (Power, 2018: 19).

At Eleusis, the amalgamation of sensory encounters creates a rich fabric of experiences that starkly contrasts the everyday lives of the *mystai*. As Montiglio (2010: 30) observed, these stimuli were sacred and controlled by the gods. This meant that what they saw, heard, smelled, and tasted at Eleusis bore no resemblance to their ordinary experiences. In the climactic moments and the lead-up to those encounters, they had a perception that transcended their usual senses. This meticulously crafted multi-sensory experience was designed to impact their psyche profoundly.

At Klaros, the auditory experience likely surpassed that of Eleusis, considering Apollo's mastery of music, having been tutored in *lyra* by Hermes (Tanriver, 2009: 445). The epigraphic records detailing the religious hierarchy at Klaros strongly support this notion (Tanriver, 2009: 448). These roles encompassed a variety, from a secretary, priest, and *grammateus* to a *Kleidophoros*, or 'key holder,' responsible for the Temple doors, and a *thespiodos*, an inspired singer (Tanriver, 2009: 447-449). During early Imperial Roman times, a *prophetes*, or 'prophet,' emerged, tasked with delivering prophecies in verse form (Robert, 1967: 310; also, Tanriver, 2009: 444, for the functionary's first appearance).

The revelations unfolded within a grotto at Klaros. Evidence suggests that the *thespiodos*, the 'inspired singer,' adhered to a day-and-night fasting regimen before entering this chamber. Throughout the night, they would consume water from a sacred source (Busine, 2005: 48). As seen in an oracle response to a delegation from *Caesarea Troketta* (modern Turgutlu, near Izmir), the answers were delivered in metrical compositions using hexameters, the traditional meters of oracles. Later, these shifted into iambic tetrameters, infusing a sense of divine surprise into the pronouncements (Parke, 1985: 151). This shift in meter form underlines the intentional use of rhythm and meter to convey varying emotions. In the 2nd century

CE, oracular pronouncements at Klaros were delivered in poems characterized by an archaic and poetic language known to the Greeks as the "*language of the gods*" (Tanriver, 2009: 479). Perhaps the role of the *prophetes* recorded at Klaros in Imperial times involved this poetic delivery. Considering that Kolophon, the patron city of Klaros, was renowned as the birthplace of numerous bards in the Greek world (Şahin, 1998: 53), a tentative connection suggests that bards might have been employed as *prophetes* at the shrine.

Apollo was revered as the 'Master of Music' for his proficiency with the *lyra*, and the *kithara*, a stringed instrument attributed to his invention, held a pivotal role in various religious rites. The *lyra* featured prominently in sacrificial ceremonies, processions (*pompe*), and choral performances (*prosodia*), where choirs accompanied rituals with the *lyra*, *kithara*, or *aulos* (Gürbüzer, 2012: 154). At Klaros, this musical connection is exemplified by figurines depicting Apollo with the *lyra* (Şahin, 1998: 53), *kithara*, and *barbitos*, a stringed instrument regarded as the bass version of *kithara* (Gürbüzer, 2012: 75). It is reasonable to infer that music played a significant role in rituals at Klaros, supported by the discovery of *aulos* instruments made from bone near the altar during excavations between 2003-2007, marking the earliest examples of the instrument (Tanriver, 2009: 206 with 209: see Figs. 53 and 54). Subsequent excavations in 2009 uncovered *aulos* parts within the altars of Apollo, suggesting either musician dedications or instruments utilized within the sacred precinct (Çelik, 2020: 2425). Additionally, city delegations visiting Klaros were often accompanied by young children singing hymns, establishing a unique form of communication and a profound connection with Apollo (Gunderson, 2021: 419), potentially involving accompanying instruments at these events.

All this evidence points to the prophecies delivered at Klaros being expressed in poetic and likely melodic language, closely intertwined with musical instruments. The vivid portrayal of these instruments in figurines and their presence as dedications underscores the importance of sound, establishing it as no less significant

than sight. The visual representation of sound elements in the ritual figurines further strengthens the notion of a holistic and multisensory experience.

5.2.2 Sound in a Cultic Context

At Eleusis, the deliberate transition from the cacophony of uproar and shouting outside the *Telesterion* to the profound silence within aimed to elicit intense emotions. The orchestrated manipulation of sound, potentially including the Hierophant's singing and the exclamation of "*Iacche!*" during the *pompe*, played a pivotal role in molding the emotional states of the initiates. The intentional sensory shift from the chaotic exterior to the tranquil interior sought to instill fear, awe, and reverence, prerequisites for the profound suffering and transformation the Eleusinian Mysteries sought to induce.

In Klaros, the sound was intricately woven into the fabric of the religious hierarchy. The *thespiodos*, the inspired singer, adhered to fasting and rituals, emphasizing the sacredness and significance of the forthcoming sounds. The transformation of prophecies into poetic verses with varying meters highlighted the deliberate use of rhythm and meter to convey diverse emotions—this manipulation of sound in delivering prophecies aimed to connect the initiates with the divine through aural experiences. Furthermore, the presence of musical instruments in figurine form, notably the *lyra* and *kithara*, both closely associated with Apollo, underscored the god's role as the deity of music. These instruments were employed in various religious rites and processions, enriching the auditory dimension of the ceremonies.

The evidence strongly suggests that sounds and music at Eleusis and Klaros were not mere incidental elements of the ceremonies but, akin to ecstatic religions throughout history, were carefully orchestrated to amplify the psychological impact of the religious experiences. They added depth and dimension to sensory engagement, contributing significantly to the participants' emotional states and perceptions. The integration of sound with other sensory elements created a holistic and multisensory

experience unparalleled in their ordinary lives, reinforcing the sacredness of the rituals and their profound psychological significance. Overall, these elements of sensory engagement were indispensable in crafting a transformative and profound psychological experience for participants in these ancient mysteries.

5.3 Touch

The complexity of the sense of touch manifests through diverse layers and dimensions, molding the sensory landscape of the Mysteries at Eleusis and Klaros. Its pivotal role unfolds in diverse rituals and activities, from the profound "*search*" at Eleusis for Persephone to the presence of the *omphalos* in the initial chamber at Klaros. Even the seemingly uncomplicated act of drinking swamp water, facilitated by a priest filling a cup, involves a tactile interaction.

When we contemplate touch, our minds naturally gravitate toward the use of hands. This association is evident in the actions of initiates at the *Telesterion*, where they employed their hands to adjust themselves before taking their seats. In both Klaros and Eleusis, the sense of touch played a vital role in assisting individuals in feeling and navigating their surroundings, particularly in moments of darkness when other senses were constrained. Notably, the human fingertips house one of the densest concentrations of sensory receptors in the body, surpassed only by the retina (e.g., Marzvanyan and Alhawaj, 2023). However, touch transcends the use of hands alone. Whether feeling a gentle breeze against the skin, perceiving the texture of stones or flat surfaces through footwear, or sensing the moisture barefoot, these subtle tactile encounters are integral to our sensory perception. This expanded understanding of touch emphasizes its significance as a sensory modality that contributes profoundly to our world perception.

5.4 Smell

The sense of smell, akin to touch, remains somewhat elusive in our quest for comprehensive understanding. It is a sensory realm that offers the fewest material cues to unravel its role and impact, a challenge magnified when considering archaeological remains. Our insights into the role of smell in the Mysteries at Eleusis and Klaros are largely inferential, derived from the limited evidence at our disposal.

5.4.1 Smell at Eleusis and Klaros

The Mysteries commenced in Athens, and initiates embarked on a procession to Eleusis through various rites. During this sacred pilgrimage, inferring that those various smells accompanied the initiates is reasonable. Notably, the sacrifice of piglets along the way may have given rise to a distinctive odor due to the large-scale nature of these rituals (For sensory studies on sacrifices, see Hamilakis and Konsolaki, 2004 and Weddle, 2011). The presence of the participants' shops, tents, and personal belongings may have further contributed to the olfactory environment at Eleusis. Likewise, the smell of wood smoke from the great fire that was kindled at night in Eleusis could add to the climactic moments of the experience, and the smell of the sacrifice, of spilled blood, and the burning of the fat offered to the gods, as well as the cooking of flesh for the ritual meals. Additionally, given the proximity of Eleusis to the sea, the salty breeze from the sea might have influenced the mood and atmosphere experienced by the initiates. Furthermore, Persephone was lured away from her friends prior to her abduction by the sweet scent of narcissus (Draycott, 2014: 69). This could suggest, even though we gave no firm evidence, that as the abduction of young girls picking flowers was common in the mythologies, perhaps the smell of fresh flowers, like sight and sound, added to the olfactory experience of the initiates.

With Klaros, we are on somewhat firmer ground as we have tangible clues regarding the sense of smell coming into play. These include the discovery of incense

remnants, which strongly suggest olfactory elements, and the smell of animal sacrifices in the *hecatombs* performed before the temple. At Klaros, there are also depictions of daphne leaves mentioned below in the context of taste, and these may have been used as incense alongside various herbs. We might even draw a possible parallel with Delphi here, where a tripod and incense were present in the revelation room, and this notion finds some support in depictions of the tripod and the presence of a *thymiaterion* (incense burner) on it (Yılmaz, 2013: 158). The significance of a tripod, as outlined by Lucian, is underscored in its threefold role in facilitating communication with Apollo: it requires a sacred water source, a tripod, and a daphne tree (*Bis Accusatus Sive Tribunalia* 1). Although a marble tripod has been discovered at Klaros, this was in front of the Propylon and could not have served a function identical to that at Delphi in the revelation room. Nonetheless, it could serve a related purpose, employed for purification purposes at the entrance to the sacred area (Tanriver, 2009: 412: see Fig. 55).

Added to all that, as at Eleusis, it is conceivable that various factors, including shops, residential quarters, and fires, could have contributed to the sensory experience by introducing a medley of different scents into the environment. Additionally, while Klaros is now situated approximately 2 kilometers from the shoreline, in antiquity, it was considered a coastal location, potentially accommodating smaller ships at a local port (Şahin, 2012). If so, this proximity to the sea could have infused the surroundings with the distinct aromas of the salty sea and algae at certain times. However, more recent evidence, as outlined by Professor Christopher Ratte on October 19, 2023, during the "Notion" talk at the Annual Excavation Results Symposium at Hacı Bayram Veli University, indicates that in Late Antiquity, a structure was built on what had formerly been thought of as off-coast at that time. In other words, Klaros may have been a coastal location as late as the Imperial period when it received many visitors from the Mediterranean region; due to a natural coastline recession, it was no longer so by Late Antiquity.

5.4.2 Smell in a Cultic Context

In the context of Eleusis, the incorporation of smell is a subject of speculation due to the absence of specific archaeological evidence and limited literary records. On their pilgrimage from Athens to Eleusis, the initiates would likely have encountered an array of odors. The large-scale sacrifice of piglets along the way could have emitted a distinctive and pungent smell, contributing to the intricate sensory experience. The presence of shops, tents, and personal belongings further suggests a rich olfactory environment. The potential use of incense, a common practice in cultic centers, and the burning of wood in the tremendous nightly fire could have added additional layers to the sensory journey. The mythical association with the scent of narcissus, experienced by Persephone, implies a possible integration of smell into the mysteries based on mythic events.

In contrast, archaeological findings at Klaros provide tangible evidence supporting the role of smell in the ritual experience. Remnants of incense, coupled with depictions of daphne leaves and a marble tripod, strongly indicate the use of scent as an integral aspect of the rituals. The tripod's function in purification, along with the sacred water source and daphne tree, emphasizes the significance of smell in facilitating communication with Apollo. The coastal proximity of Klaros before the Late Antique period introduces the possibility of sea-related aromas, such as the salty sea and algae, enriching the sensory engagement. In both Eleusis and Klaros, the integration of smell likely played a vital role in enhancing the overall multisensory experience, fostering a connection between the initiates and the sacred and mythic dimensions of the Mysteries.

5.5 Taste

Taste, the last among the five great senses, occupies a distinctive position in sensory experiences. In the Mysteries at Eleusis, the consumable known as *kykeon* holds a central role, signifying the conclusion of the initiates' period of fasting. Despite its

pivotal significance, the precise composition of *kykeon* and the nature of the substances ingested by the initiates during their Eleusinian sojourn continue to be subjects of controversy and scholarly discourse. The ambiguity surrounding the contents of *kykeon* adds an air of mystery to this sensory aspect of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

In the context of Klaros, taste finds expression through imbibing the locally available swamp water. Additionally, the association of Daphne's leaves with Apollo suggests their potential involvement in a tasting ritual or event, adding another layer of sensory engagement to the religious experience at Klaros. The enigmatic role of taste in both Eleusis and Klaros underscores the elusive nature of this sensory modality in the ancient mystical practices, leaving room for interpretation and contemplation.

5.5.1 Taste at Eleusis and Klaros

At Eleusis, scholars widely agree that the consumption of *kykeon*, a beverage frequently mentioned in Greek literature, played a pivotal role in the Mysteries (e.g., Clinch, 2022: 318; Evans, 2018: 125). Although contemporary descriptions of *kykeon* mention standard ingredients like water and barley, it is acknowledged that various herbs, including pennyroyal—known for its psychoactive properties inducing dizziness—were likely incorporated into the mixture (Clinch 2022: 318). The secrecy surrounding the Eleusinian Mysteries has fueled speculation that *kykeon* might have contained substances capable of inducing a trance-like state, making initiates more receptive to the revelations of the Greater Mysteries (Clinch, 2022: 318; Cosmopoulos, 2015: 21). Substances such as ergot and opium have been suggested, with ergot emerging as a plausible candidate due to its availability, mythological associations, and potential psychological impact (Cosmopoulos, 2015: 21; Evans, 2018: 125; Kerenyi, 1967: 184).

In the case of Klaros, the legend surrounding the spring water in the exterior chamber of the *adyton* carries a poignant story—its formation is attributed to the tears of Manto, the daughter of the blind prophet Tiresias of Thebes. After being taken as a trophy to Delphi and establishing her oracular shrine, Manto shed a tear in misery, giving rise to the spring at Klaros (Şahin, 2012: 257). Situated in the *adyton* alongside an *omphalos*, a tripod, *astragalos*, and daphne leaves, the spring underscores the significance of water as the primary source of revelation, with other elements being secondary (Busine, 2002: 191; Şahin, 2012: 258). Water as a source of revelation is not unique to Klaros, as it was similarly employed in Didyma (Parke, 1985: 219).

Historical records from Pliny the Elder (1st century CE) (*HN* 2.232), Tacitus (56-120 CE) (*Ann.* 2.54), and Iamblichus (245-325 CE) (*Myst.* 3.11) corroborate the existence of this sacred water within the *adyton* at Klaros. Furthermore, Iamblichus noted the mind-altering effects of this water during their time (3.11). According to Pliny, this water endowed oracles with the gift of prophecy but came at the cost of a shortened lifespan for those who consumed it (2.232). The discovery of a rectangular well in the exterior *adyton* (see Figs. 56 and 57) measuring 0.96x1.41 meters lends credence to the historical accounts of the place being home to sacred water (Yılmaz, 2013: 55). As it is, samples taken from the waters here have not been thoroughly examined. However, initial findings indicate that the present-day water lacks the mind-altering properties associated with the ancient water (Tanrıver, 2009: 403). That said, during the Annual Excavation Results Meeting held on October 19, 2023, at Hacı Bayram Veli University, Akın Ersoy, head of the Smyrna excavations, revealed the presence of Radon gas in an open water source there. While there is currently no established connection between alterations in consciousness and radon, studies suggest that prolonged exposure to this gas could increase the risk of lung cancer and potentially lead to dementia (Zhang et al., 2022).

The initiates' journey departed from everyday life, marked by fasting, seclusion, purification, and a profound belief in divine possession. Ancient accounts emphasize

that the water was not the source of revelation but a means of purifying the *pneuma*, the vital breath within individuals (Busine, 2002: 193). Regardless of its specific components, it is likely that the water the oracle drank possessed an intoxicating effect, possibly influenced by a trance-like state. The culmination of the fasting process may have triggered this effect, and it is plausible that the water itself was infused with daphne, significantly altering mental states and perceptions.

Daphne leaves emerge as a pivotal element in the revelatory process, drawing parallels with their historical use at Delphi, where they were traditionally chewed to facilitate the reception of divine revelations due to their soothing and intoxicating qualities (Çavaş, Gülbay, and Ersoy, 2008: 42), like the use of coca leaves in the Andes. The discovery of four bronze items at the rectangular altar in Klaros, unequivocally identified as representations of daphne leaves (see Fig. 58), strengthens the association of daphne with the rituals at Klaros. This finding and insights from Delphi suggest that the spring water at Klaros may have been complemented by chewing daphne, potentially as a ritualistic way to conclude the fasting period. Consequently, the combination of hyperglycemia and hypoglycemia induced by fasting could have been further intensified not only by the properties of the spring water but also by the consumption of daphne.

5.5.2 Taste in a Cultic Context

The meticulously orchestrated sensory experiences at Klaros and Eleusis were designed with precision to elicit profound psychological responses among initiates, paving the way for altered states of consciousness and mystical revelations. The significance of taste as the fifth sense played a pivotal role, actively engaging initiates in these sacred rituals.

In Eleusis, *kykeon* stood as the central element, signifying the end of fasting and the initiation of sacred rites. The shroud of secrecy surrounding its contents, the

incorporation of a diverse array of herbs, and the performance of rituals in torchlight collectively crafted a sensory environment tailored for triggering psychological responses. *Kykeon* was believed to induce a trance-like state, enhancing initiates' receptivity to the Greater Mysteries. The heightened sensory anticipation, accentuated by the flickering torchlight, mirrored the actions of Demeter and Persephone, fostering a profound connection between initiates and their inner psyche and emotions.

In the sacred precinct of Klaros, the captivating legend of spring water, said to be formed from Manto's tears, intertwined with the presence of sacred items, enveloped the environment in rich symbolism. The water, perceived to possess mind-altering properties—factual or perceived—functioned as a conduit to revelation. The potential inclusion of daphne leaves in the tasting process likely heightened the psychological effects, potentially inducing hypoglycemia and contributing to altered mental states. This intricate interplay of legend, sacred elements, and sensory engagement underscored the profound nature of the initiates' experiences at Klaros.

5.6 Perception

The rituals at Eleusis and Klaros, engaging all five senses, transcended mere sensory stimulation; they served as profound psychological journeys for the initiates. Much like the "*Proust effect*," where sensory triggers connect with memories, these rituals aim to evoke a spectrum of emotions, ranging from panic to grief (Clinch 2022: 316). By intertwining symbolic and sensory elements, the rituals immersed initiates in a multisensory experience, mirroring mythical narratives and guiding them through the quest for divine revelations. This deliberate orchestration sought to create altered states of consciousness and mystical encounters, making these religious experiences transformative and deeply meaningful.

Considering individual perceptions, as emphasized by Clinch (2022: 315), the understanding of these experiences remains inherently subjective. The research aims not to define precise experiences but to establish the broad boundaries within which they unfolded. Consequently, a nuanced comprehension of ecstasy becomes paramount, aiding in delineating the limits of perception and shedding light on the transformative and subjective nature of these ancient religious encounters.

In religious experience, two prominent states of mind, ecstasy, and enthusiasm, emerge as significant phenomena induced through various means. These methods encompass vigil and fasting, heightened religious anticipation, whirling dances, exposure to physical stimuli, contemplation of sacred objects, the influence of stirring music, inhalation of fumes, participation in revivalist gatherings, hallucinatory experiences, suggestions, and an array of other practices (Angus, 1975: 91).

The concept of epiphany, marking the manifestation of a deity to individuals, plays a pivotal role and can occur through all sensory modalities or exclusively within one's mind (Petridou, 2015: 23). Burkert (1987: 114) offers a reconstruction of the initiates' experiences at Eleusis, suggesting that during these sacred rites, initiates were enveloped in a profound sense of divine awe. They transcended their identities, experiencing a profound unity with the gods, akin to being momentarily possessed.

These altered states of consciousness, whether induced by fasting and thirst, leading to hypoglycemia and dehydration, or facilitated by various substances, were well-documented phenomena in the Graeco-Roman world. Herodotus (484-425 BCE) alluded to the use of marijuana. Barley beer, with a history dating back to the pre-Neolithic Natufian period, underscores its long-standing role as an intoxicant (Samorini, 2022: 74). Substances such as *harmel*, mandrake, henbane, darnel, *amanita muscaria* (Betts, 2022: 92), and even the naturally occurring narcotic dimethyltryptamine found a role in mystical and ritual experiences (Mishor, McKenna, and Callaway, 2011: 85).

Among the various indicators supporting substance use for creating an Altered State of Consciousness, the figure of Dionysus emerges prominently. As a deity known for his manic nature, Dionysus could influence his followers through the medium of wine and other substances, along with dramatic performances, particularly tragedies (Hillman, 2008: 85). The presence of theatrical plays and frenzied states among the initiates serves as a clear signal of Dionysus's involvement in these experiences.

At Eleusis, the possibility that *Iachus* of Eleusis was an epithet for Dionysus is a significant pointer to the presence of this ecstatic deity from an early date (Kerenyi, 1967: 155-56). Dionysus himself appears through various artistic representations in association with the Mysteries. For instance, the red-figure kylix or wine cup known as *Makron's Cup* (490-480 BCE) (Fig. 59) provides us with the earliest depiction of Dionysus at Eleusis. In contrast, the molded terracotta *Ninnion Tablet* (Fig. 60), discovered south of the *Telesterion* and dated a century later than *Makron's cup*, gives us a unique view of the Mysteries in progress (Mangieri, 2016: 43-9). To these, we can add the *Regina Vasorum*, a 4th century BCE hydria of a water jar depicting the Eleusinian divinities in polychrome relief (Fig. 4), and the red-figure Kerch-style *pelike*, a wide-mouthed amphora for holding wine, possibly by the Marsyas Painter, (360 BCE) offering further evidence of Dionysus' involvement in the Eleusinian Mysteries (Mangieri, 2016: 47-8).

Addressing Petridou's question of "*what made initiates ready to believe that they were encountering deities...*" (2013: 329), this readiness can be attributed to the pervasive influence of Dionysus. Despite the initiates' awareness that the *hierophantai* who performed the rituals were, in fact, human, this awareness did not undermine their belief that these individuals were temporarily possessed, perhaps with the assistance of Dionysus. Dionysus' involvement strongly suggests the induction of mania and altered states of consciousness through natural means or the consumption of entheogens. This influence allowed initiates to firmly believe and perceive that they were encountering deities, not mere mortals.

In the case of Klaros, the presence of the Dionysus cult is well-established. L. Robert (1967) proposed that the Hellenistic altar featured two tables dedicated to Apollo and Dionysus. Furthermore, at Klaros, we can discern a distinct duality in the representation of Apollo and Dionysus, each embodying opposing forces of order and harmony versus chaos and destruction. Notably, their iconography exhibited remarkable similarities, particularly after the mid-fifth century BCE (Pişkin-Ayvazoğlu, 2015: 99). Within the confines of the small exedra at Klaros, a dedicated pedestal to Dionysus was discovered (Fig. 61) (Pişkin-Ayvazoğlu, 2015: 111). Collectively, the presence of phalluses dating back to the protogeometric period, *barbitos* figurines, bronze wine leaves, an *oinochoe* depicting Dionysus from the Archaic period, a clay mask from the Classical period, an altar, a *kantharos* handle, a *Papposilenos* figurine, another clay mask, a sun clock, and a marble mask from the Hellenistic period all unequivocally attest to the existence of Dionysus at Klaros (Pişkin-Ayvazoğlu, 2015: 197).

Dionysian festivals were undoubtedly ecstatic events marked by an Altered State of Consciousness. For instance, *Aiora* or ‘wild’ festivals celebrated in honor of the wine god, held annually at Orchomenus in Boeotia and elsewhere, were explicitly named after their ecstatic nature. Historical accounts even suggest that Dionysus played a role in delivering revelations at Delphi during the winter (Doğan-Gürbüz, 2012: 164). Material evidence, such as terracotta figurines of *barbitos*-players from the 6th century BCE associated with the *Antheateria* festivals in Athens, further reinforces this connection, where children tasted their first (watered) wine (Doğan-Gürbüz, 2012: 165).

Additionally, both Apollo and Dionysus had associations with the sun, as Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius (370-430 CE) noted, who equated the god Iao with Dionysus in later eras (*Sat.* 1.17). This interpretation symbolically links Hades with winter, Zeus with spring, Helios, or Apollo with summer, and Orphic Iao Dionysus with winter (1.18).

In essence, the evidence suggests a significant presence of the cult of Dionysus at both Eleusis and Klaros—Dionysian mania, characterized by music, dance, and revelations, employed wine to induce ecstatic states. The close connection of Dionysus with water is evident in various myths, such as his involvement with Lake Lerna, encounters with sea women during the struggle with Perseus, and seeking asylum with Thetis, who aided his escape through the sea. The myth of Cadmus throwing Semele into the sea while carrying Dionysus further emphasizes this association (Pişkin-Ayvazoğlu, 2015: 41). Based on this wealth of information, it is reasonable to infer that the mythological narratives of both Eleusis and Klaros were intertwined with such ‘maniacal’ experiences, intricately linked to altered states of consciousness, facilitated by tangible artifacts and the presence of Dionysus, who played a crucial role in inducing mania.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION

In this thesis, we have embarked on a metaphorical odyssey through the sacred realms of Eleusis and Klaros, aiming to untangle the complex fabric of sensory experiences that defined the distinctive mystical encounters of those who journeyed to these places. Much like Odysseus navigating the vast seas, the quest involved delving into the depths of knowledge held by the initiates, identifying the sensory interfaces they traversed and meticulously analyzing the entire surroundings that enveloped them during these profound pilgrimages. Through the lens of architecture, ritual, and climatic considerations, I have aimed to map the uncharted territories of these ancient mysteries, navigating the currents of spatial distortion, the winds of lighting effects, and the atmospheric conditions that mirrored the unpredictable nature of the mythic seas. This intellectual and metaphysical expedition has navigated the *Telesterion* at Eleusis and the Temple of Apollo at Klaros as sacred islands, each offering a unique harbor for exploration. This trek through the past and literary and archaeological data has pointed to the mystic secrets embedded in the architectural landscapes and the sensory dimensions of these numinous spaces. As such, the thesis has sought to bring light to the profound essence of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Revelation at Klaros to reveal the transformative power of these ancient sacred spaces.

As such, this thesis has attempted to integrate diverse datasets in archaeology to unlock the untapped potential available from archaeological and literary evidence using other disciplines to understand better the sensory lives of those in the Graeco-Roman World involved in the Mystery Cults. We began with and then examined the innermost elements of mythical knowledge about the settings to establish the backstory. Then, I looked at what could be learned about the sensory experience of those initiates in their cultic practices from the physical evidence. In the discussion, an attempt will be made to present the findings meaningfully within the overall context of the Graeco-Roman Mystery Cults.

6.1 The Architectural Elements at Eleusis and Klaros

Our review of the *Telesterion* and *adyton* structures at Eleusis and Klaros has suggested significant insights into their cult practices' architectural and experiential dimensions. The key findings can be summarised as follows. The *Telesterion* at Eleusis emerges as a multifaceted space designed to accommodate many initiates, emphasizing the performative nature of the ceremonies. The near-symmetrical layout and tiered seating contribute to an immersive environment, amplifying the initiates' vulnerability to sensory stimuli. Artificial illumination and spatial constraints imposed by columns enhance the ritualistic atmosphere. At the same time, the *Anaktoron* adds layers of sensory triggers, given its probable association with a symbolic fire and the sacred objects relevant to the cult. The *adyton* at Klaros, situated within the Temple of Apollo, provides a clear contrast in how it presents a unique architectural ensemble.

To begin with, the oracle's journey to the cult center, marked by purifications, fasting, and unique rituals, unfolds within a space set at the end of a series of labyrinthine corridors. The initiates followed this same route, and with their deliberate darkness and altered atmospheric conditions, they created a transformative sensory experience for those seeking the oracular pronouncements. Challenging descents along narrow stairs- and passageways, constricting movement in physical

space, to enter a revelation chamber characterized by the chanting in poetic meters of an unseen oracle served to create a mystifying atmosphere.

In the architectural setting for both mysteries, we have seen the deliberate manipulation of spatial elements, lighting effects, and climatic conditions as a common thread in the process. The *Telesterion* and the *adyton* architectural settings are tailored to enhance the sensory and psychological impact on participants. The symbolic use of fire, the deliberate play of light and darkness, and the incorporation of ritualistic elements contribute to a holistic initiatory and oracular experience. This underscores the distinctly separate yet interconnected nature of the Eleusinian and Clarian spaces for the rituals there. While Eleusis emphasizes a communal experience focusing on visual and auditory stimuli, Klaros delves into individualized sensory encounters in a confined, labyrinthine setting. Both spaces, however, share a profound commitment to creating an environment where the sacred and the natural converge to facilitate a transcendent connection between the human and the divine. As such, we affirm that our study illuminates the intricate interplay between architectural design, ritualistic functions, and sensory experiences, offering a nuanced understanding of how these ancient sacred spaces were crafted to evoke profound spiritual and mystical encounters.

6.2 Interpretation of Architectural Elements

Analyzing the architectural elements of the *Telesterion* and *adyton* at the sites of Eleusis and Klaros is crucial for comprehending their intended functions within the broader context of the Eleusinian Mysteries and the Clarian Oracle.

At Eleusis, the *Telesterion*, deviating from the conventional temple structure with its *Odeion*-like design, played a pivotal role in the Eleusinian Mysteries. The asymmetrical placement of the *adyton* and the column arrangement inside the temple

created a labyrinthine environment, where the coveted *Anaktoron* was positioned unexpectedly, adding a layer of mystique to the experience.

At Klaros, the subterranean *adyton* of the Temple of Apollo forms a mysterious architectural ensemble. This space offered a mystical encounter for consultants of the oracle and priests alike. Descending the high steps into the darkness with only a lamp heightened the enigmatic nature, especially within the black-marbled limestone's cool, moisture-laden environment. The limited space, necessitating careful navigation and likely frequent contact with walls, intensified the disconcerting atmosphere. The sudden, frequent turns and varying longitudes between each turn accentuated this mysterious ambiance. The vaults were integral to this effect, contributing to a fluctuating perception of space rather than a uniform and consistent height. For the consultants, the room represented an unknown and unwelcoming space, with a corridor in the middle leading to yet another room—a forbidden zone while awaiting the oracle's response.

Conversely, this space might have felt familiar to the oracle, akin to a home. Much like how we navigate our homes in the dark, the oracle likely memorizes every step and turn. However, this familiarity did not necessarily alter the oracle's experience, as the space, despite feeling like a home, could still be an unsettling place where preparations for possession and revelation occurred through fasting and ingesting ritual substances.

6.3 Sensory Experience and Symbolism

Exploring sensory experiences within the *Telesterion* and the *adyton* leads to the perception that the architecture of both places was meant to suggest intricate layers of ritualistic encounters and symbolic dimensions. At the *Telesterion* of Eleusis, the initiatory journey unfolds within a carefully orchestrated sensory landscape. The near-symmetrical layout, tiered seating, and artificial lighting during nocturnal

ceremonies create an immersive environment. The deliberate spatial distortion and the presence of columns contribute to heightened vulnerability and restricted visual freedom for the initiates. Conversely, at the *adyton* of the Clarian Oracle, the experience is solitary and confined. The labyrinthine corridors, deliberate darkness, and challenging descents shape a transformative sensory journey for the consultants.

At both, it becomes clear that the element or state of ‘Darkness’ is strategically employed and pivotal to enhancing the mystical atmosphere. At Eleusis, artificial lighting during the nocturnal ceremonies illuminates the space and imposes a sensory constraint. The deliberate play of light and darkness and the symbolic use of fire intensify the initiates' psychological and emotional states. Similarly, at Klaros, deliberate darkness within the crypts heightens the sense of mystery and seclusion, while portable oil lamps provide a subdued glow. The deliberate choice of artificial lighting becomes a tool for sensory manipulation, guiding the initiates and consultants through their respective journeys.

We can, therefore, see how the sensory elements and characteristics within both spaces can carry and convey profound symbolic significance. At Eleusis, the spatial distortion and artificial lighting symbolize the initiates' transcendence of physical boundaries, reflecting a metaphorical journey from darkness to enlightenment. The presence of fire and symbolic objects in the *Anaktoron* adds layers of meaning, inviting contemplation of the divine. At Klaros, the intentional darkness in the *adyton* symbolizes the unknown and the mystical. The varied poetic meters used in the revelation chamber in delivering the oracles' pronouncements, probably resulting in echoes in this confined space, would contribute to a sense of real or symbolic disorientation, emphasizing the mystical nature of the oracular experience. We might add how the ‘*omphalos*’ stone likely held intricate meanings for the oracle and the consultant. For the oracle, it represented a source of power, suggesting that without it, he would lose his authority. For the consultant, the *omphalos* served as an enigmatic object, contributing to the mystical atmosphere in the crypt—a symbol of

power, a connection to Apollo and Delphi, chosen by the gods as the center of the known World.

In summary, the sensory experiences within the *Telesterion* at Eleusis and the *adyton* at Klaros can be seen as external stimuli that encourage anticipation and lead to a profound symbolic encounter. The manipulation of darkness, artificial lighting, and spatial elements formed a language through which the initiates at Eleusis and the oracle's consultants at Klaros navigated the realms of the sacred and the unknown. It helped lead them toward forging a mystical connection with the divine that transcended the physical and the perceptible.

6.4 Integration of Mythological and Historical Context

The intertwining of mythological narratives and historical context profoundly shaped the design and rituals at the two sites. This is only natural, and the integration of the two helped establish their rituals as a dynamic interplay between timeless myths and evolving socio-cultural dynamics of their contemporary world, creating spaces where the sacred and historical dimensions converged to explore the human connection with the divine.

Thus, at Eleusis, the mythological stories of Demeter and Persephone play a pivotal role in shaping the design and rituals of the *Telesterion*. The sacred journey mirrors the mythical descent of Persephone into the underworld and her subsequent return, symbolizing the cycles of life, death, and rebirth. The *Anaktoron*, serving as the stage for enacting these narratives, imparts meaning to the entire experience. The abduction of Persephone and the sorrow of Demeter form a somber narrative, emphasizing shared pain rather than celebration. Initiates at Eleusis are blessed not for joyously commemorating the events but for empathizing with the suffering of the daughter and mother, facing death only to experience rebirth. It is a poignant reenactment of the anguish endured by the ultimate mother and her daughter.

At Klaros, the Temple of Apollo and the subterranean *adyton* are intricately linked to the myth of Apollo. Indeed, it could well be that the labyrinthine corridors served in part to symbolize that deity's complex and unpredictable nature. While the interaction of mythology, architecture, and ritual is not as straightforward to identify here as at Eleusis, the spring water from which the oracle drank to receive the revelation was supposedly created from the tears of Manto, the prophetess. Weeping became an essential element for revelation and connection with Apollo. For the oracle's consultants, the crypt, where they could feel the presence of Apollo himself, could evoke a mixture of anxiety and euphoria. For the oracle, this connection came only at the cost of enduring hunger and thirst, provoking their forebearers' misery, pain, and tearful sufferance. At Klaros, we can envisage how, with the long-commemorated memory of Manto's tears feeding the pool there, tears without or without physical pain were essential for connecting with the divine. This suggests that pain may be a prerequisite for such a connection—a pain rooted in the profound understanding of how sensory elements and space operate.

6.5 Comparative Analysis

It has become clear that despite some significant and subtle differences, the Eleusinian and Clarian experiences encompassed nuanced similarities and intriguing differences, spanning architectural designs, ritual practices, and the profound impact of environmental elements. At Eleusis, the near-symmetrical layout, tiered seating, and artificial illumination of the *Telesterion* created an immersive environment for initiates, with the *Anaktoron* housing the sacred objects, contributing to the spatial dynamics. On the other hand, Klaros' Temple of Apollo and *adyton* highlight a labyrinthine architectural ensemble, with intentional darkness, narrow corridors, and multiple chambers to create an intricate journey for those who wish to consult the oracle. Both cults focussed on nocturnal ceremonies, with the Eleusinian Mysteries unfolding in the *Telesterion* and the Clarian Oracle delivering prophecies exclusively at night. However, the rituals diverge in their specifics. The ceremonies at Eleusis centered around the enactment of mythological narratives, with fire and light as sensory triggers. At Klaros, the oracular practices involved descending into a crypt,

fasting, and altered states of consciousness. That apart, it may also be that climatic factors also played their part in establishing the correct atmospheric conditions for experiencing the cult, leveraging environmental elements to enhance the sensory aspects of the rituals. At Eleusis, for example, we can see how its geographical setting in a fertile landscape surrounded by barren hills and close to the coast, along with seasonal shifts in the weather, aligned with the agricultural cycles embedded in the mythological narrative. At Klaros, such a connection is less obvious but traceable. The temple's apparent proximity to the sea and how this influenced local wind and probably precipitation patterns helped contribute to a distinct atmospheric backdrop. Either way, it is possible to see how both places' architectural, ritualistic, and probably environmental factors converged to create two distinct yet profoundly mystical realms for those who chose to follow their rituals.

6.6 Alternative Interpretations and Limitations

Acknowledging the complexity of the subject matter, though, we must allow for alternative interpretations that present intriguing perspectives on the Eleusinian and Clarian experiences. At Eleusis, the symbolic fire and light triggering sensory responses may prompt alternative views on the presence and involvement of deities like Apollo. The role of the *Anaktoron* as a space for sensory triggers invites diverse interpretations, challenging conventional understandings of its purpose. At Klaros, the unique architectural features of the *adyton*, such as the labyrinthine corridors and varied poetic meters during revelations, open avenues for alternative explanations beyond the established narratives. Nevertheless, the fact remains that this study faced and still faces inherent limitations in its cope that must not be forgotten. While comprehensive, the natural and necessary reliance on historical and archaeological evidence may be subject to gaps and interpretation biases. Of course, the inherently speculative nature of reconstructing sensory experiences in ancient rituals introduces an element of uncertainty.

Studies of this nature open avenues for exploring aspects that are often overlooked. What is lacking in this thesis is a comprehensive and comparative examination of these experiences. Unraveling the evolution of these rituals is an intricate task, necessitating a profound understanding of the contextual frameworks to which these sites belong. Achieving such comprehension requires an in-depth comparative analysis that extends to architectural features, sensory components, myths, and the socio-economic milieu.

Two primary orientations will emerge from this thesis. The first involves a comparative and evolutionary analysis of the architectural space. This can be enriched by insights from behavioral architecture, design studies, and art history, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of spatial perception. The second orientation delves into the socio-economic environment surrounding these sacred spaces. In the case of Eleusis, the process of Athenian assimilation, and instances like Klaros, the patronage from Kolophon and Notion played a pivotal role in shaping these sites' overall functionality.

Moreover, can we elucidate the extensive construction projects witnessed in Eleusis and Klaros during the Roman Empire era in the context of these sites' organizational and professional commercialization? The equation suggesting "better infrastructure results in higher tax revenue" likely involves intricate layers that warrant thorough examination. Exploring these layers will enrich our understanding of ancient practices and illuminate the profound interconnections between architecture, socioeconomics, and the evolution of sacred spaces.

For example, future research is needed on other ancient mystery cults or religious practices from the sensory experience point of view. Exploring diverse cultural contexts may unveil shared patterns or unique variations in architectural designs and sensory experiences, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of ancient rituals. Then, incorporating advanced technologies, such as virtual reality simulations or immersive reconstructions, could provide a more vivid understanding of the

sensory elements within, in our case, the Eleusinian *Telesterion* and Clarian *adyton*. This approach may bridge the gap between archaeological evidence and experiential knowledge, offering novel insights into the initiatory processes. To this, we add the need for enhanced collaboration with experts from associated fields, including psychology, anthropology, and environmental science, which could enrich the interpretation of sensory experience. At the same time, interdisciplinary approaches may offer nuanced insights into ancient rituals' psychological and physiological aspects, contributing to a holistic comprehension of the initiatory journeys. There is also a need for more detailed climate studies specific to the relevant sites, ritual dates, and locations that could enhance understanding of the environmental factors potentially influencing the ceremonies. There is also an obvious need for more profound research into the socio-cultural contexts in which these Mystery Cults flourished. All this suggests is how we still have far to go in developing the field of sensory archaeology, even in historical periods, and how we need to study the apparent intricate interplay between architecture, sensory engagement, and cultural practices in antiquity.

6.7 Conclusion

In conclusion, this thesis has comprehensively explored the architectural designs and sensory experiences present or probably present within the Eleusinian *Telesterion* and the *adyton* at Klaros. We have indicated how the intricate details of these sacred spaces embody symbolic and functional aspects of their relevant cults and their cultic practices. Therefore, the significance of this research lies in its attempt and ability to shed light on the profound intersection of architecture, ritual, and sensory engagement in ancient mystery cults. By meticulously examining archaeological evidence, literary sources, and climatic considerations, we have shown how we might gain insights into the initiatory and oracular experiences of those who entered these mystical realms of their relevant cults. As such, it is held that this specific study has contributed to the broader field of archaeology by offering a multidimensional understanding of the seemingly well-known mystery cults of the Graeco-Roman World. The synthesis of mythological narratives, historical context, architectural

features, and sensory elements, set out here, has suggested a more nuanced perspective on how these aspects converged to create transformative experiences and our comprehension of the diverse expressions of ancient rituals. In that sense, the potential impact of this research extends beyond the specific cults studied, serving as a foundation for future investigations into the immersive dimensions of ancient religious practices. By recognizing the interconnectedness of architecture, consciousness, and sensory manipulation, this study opens avenues for interdisciplinary explorations and encourages a holistic approach to interpreting the mysteries of antiquity. This personal journey through the realms of Eleusis and Klaros offers a glimpse into the past and a gateway to more profound reflections on the intricate relationship between the human and the divine as seen in antiquity.



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FIGURES



Figure 1. Evil Eye mosaic (Squire, 2015: 22).



Figure 2. Northern view of the first chamber or exterior *adyton* at Klaros from beneath the vaults. (January 2023 by Author).



Figure 3. Western view of the exterior *adyton* from the interior *adyton* at Klaros (January 2023 by Author).



Figure 4. Black-Glazed Hydria: *Regina Vasorum*. Circa 330 BCE. (Hermitage Museum).



Figure 5. Eleusinian *Kernoi* (Clinton, 2007).



Figure 6. Western dedications of Post-Hellenistic Sacred Way at Klaros. From the Northern side. (Tanriver, 2009: Plate XXVI).



Figure 7. Western dedications of Post-Hellenistic Sacred Way at Klaros. From the Southern side (July 2023 by Author).

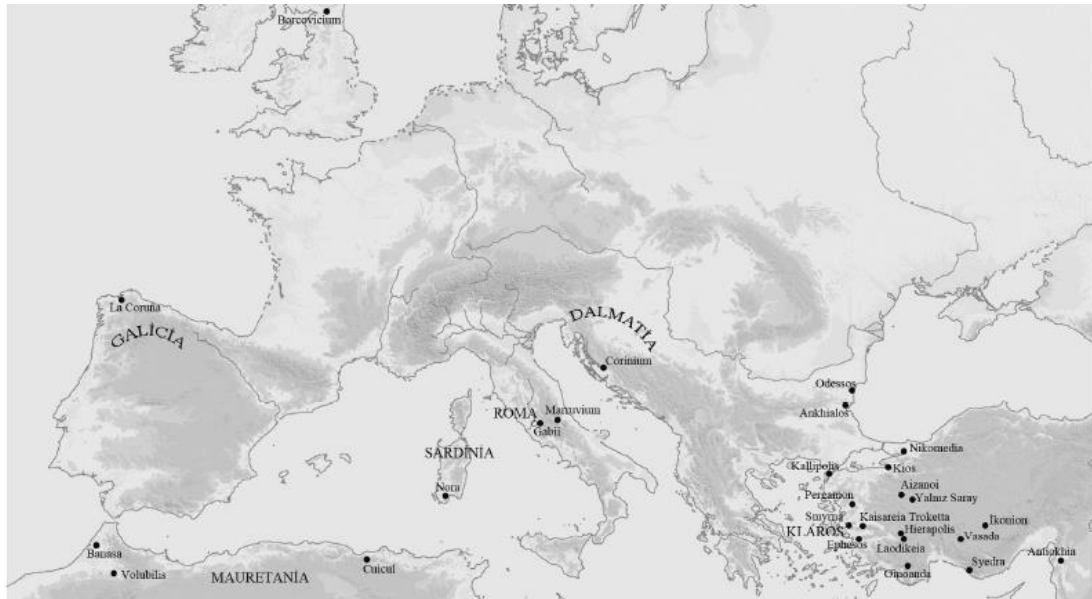


Figure 8. Finding spots of the Klaros prophecies (Tanriver, 2009: Plate XXXIV).



Figure 9. Aerial view of *Propylon*, *katagogeion* complex, and big *exedra* at Klaros (Zunal, 2023: 1090).



Figure 10. Roman structure to the South of the Sacred Area of Klaros. Northern view (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 11. Aerial view of the Roman structure at Klaros (Zunal, 2023: 1092).



Figure 12. Integration of the ancient city and the Sanctuary Plan into modern city plan. (John Travlos, 1972).



Figure 13. Rock-cut Northwest corner of the *Telesterion* of Eleusis. (Papangeli & Chlepa, 2011).



Figure 14. Aerial view of the Sanctuary at Eleusis and the Modern City. From South-east. (Greekreporter.com).



Figure 15. Map of the monuments of Eleusina. (Papangeli & Chlepa, 2011).

Date	Weather	Max.	Min.	Rainrisk	Windspeed	Precipitation / Rainfall mm (in)	Humidity
24. September	Broken clouds	32 °C 89.6 °F	21 °C 69.8 °F	0 %	4 km/h 2 mph	0mm 0 in	54%
25. September	Thunderstorm with rain	31 °C 87.8 °F	22 °C 71.6 °F	55 %	5 km/h 3 mph	4mm 0.16 in	67%
26. September	Scattered clouds	26 °C 78.8 °F	21 °C 69.8 °F	35 %	5 km/h 3 mph	2mm 0.08 in	78%
27. September	Light rain	25 °C 77 °F	16 °C 60.8 °F	55 %	8 km/h 5 mph	4mm 0.16 in	78%
28. September	Heavy rain	19 °C 66.2 °F	16 °C 60.8 °F	90 %	11 km/h 7 mph	17mm 0.67 in	87%
29. September	Few clouds	23 °C 73.4 °F	15 °C 59 °F	0 %	8 km/h 5 mph	0mm 0 in	73%
30. September	Scattered clouds	25 °C 77 °F	17 °C 62.6 °F	0 %	8 km/h 5 mph	0mm 0 in	55%

Figure 16. The Chart of the Meteorological estimations of Eleusina between September 24-30th, 2023.



Figure 17. General view of the Southeast section of the Periklean *Telesterion* of Eleusis. (Mylonas, 1961: Figure 12).

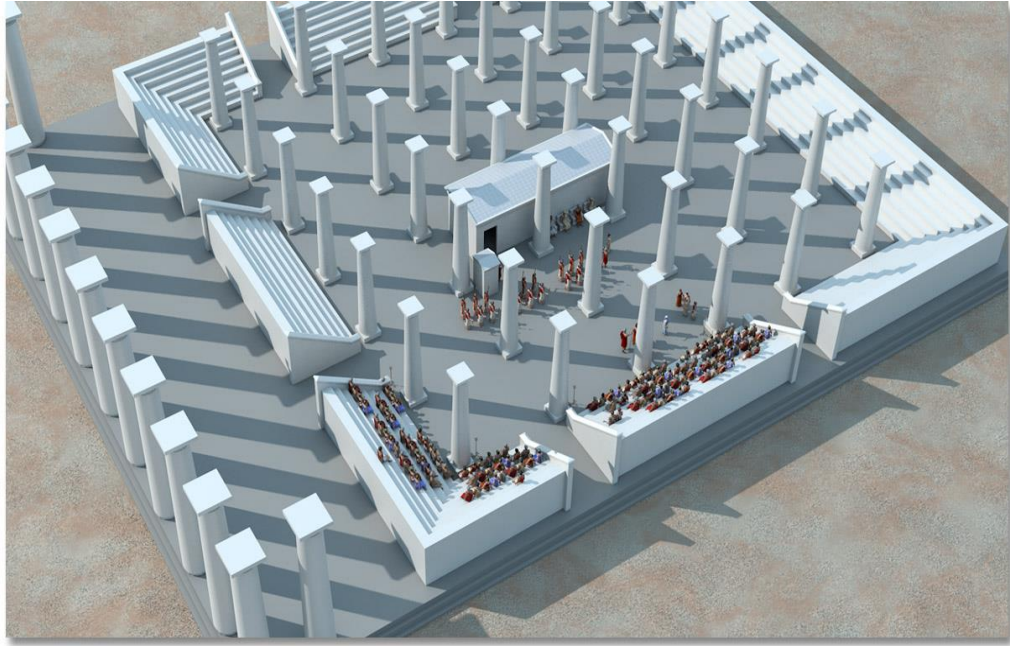


Figure 18. The interior layout of the *Telesterion* of Eleusis in the 2nd century CE. (Reconstruction by Anasynthesis.co.uk).



Figure 19. Votive plaque with the image of Demeter. The National Archaeological Museum, Athens. (Clinton, 2004: 106).

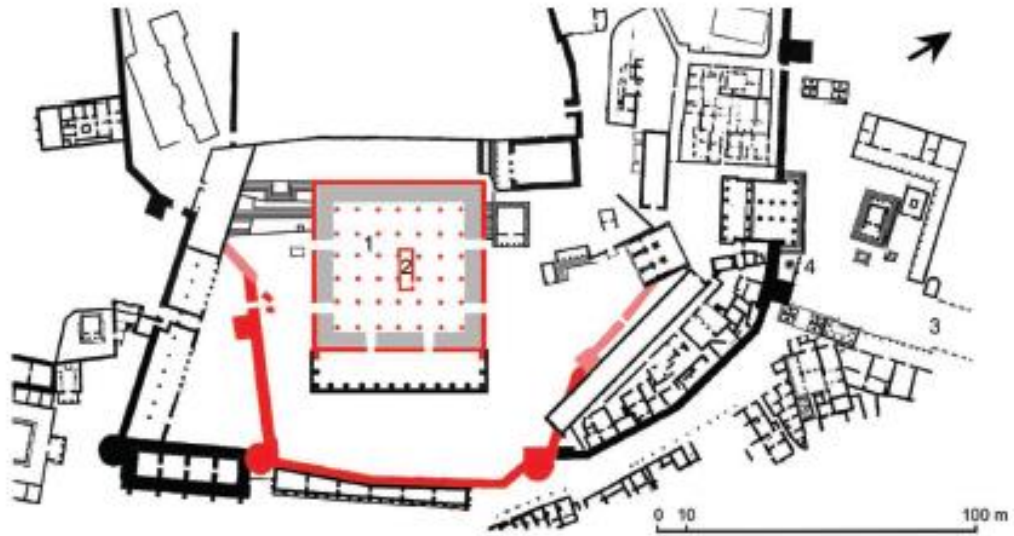


Figure 20. Plan of the Sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis, second century CE, Periclean phase highlighted: (1) *Telesterion*; (2) *Anaktoron*; (3) Sacred Way; (4) Kallichoron Well. (Clinch: 2022: 320).



Figure 21. South-West view of the Temple of Apollo at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 22. Map of the Sanctuary at Klaros at the site. (July 2023 by Author).

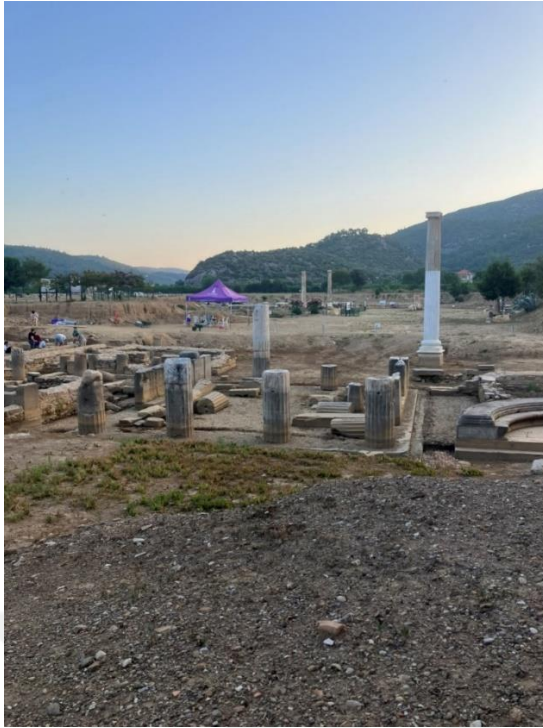


Figure 23. *Propylon*, big *Exedra*, and the surrounding building complex at Klaros. Southern view. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 24. View of Notion from the South of Klaros. From North. (July 2023 by Author).

	Ocak	Şubat	Mart	Nisan	Mayıs	Haziran	Temmuz	Ağustos	Eylül	Ekim	Kasım	Aralık
Ort. Sıcaklık (° C)	7.5	8.4	10.9	14.5	19.5	24.7	28	28.2	23.4	18.3	13.4	9
Min. Sıcaklık (° C)	4.2	4.7	6.6	9.8	14.4	19	22	22.3	18.6	14.2	9.8	5.9
Maks. Sıcaklık (° C)	11	12.3	15.2	19.1	24.6	30.2	34.2	34.3	28.8	22.9	17.3	12.4
Yağış / Yağış (mm)	124	105	78	56	29	10	1	2	24	67	108	126
Nem(%)	77%	74%	71%	68%	61%	49%	43%	45%	54%	66%	74%	78%
Yağmurlu günler (g.)	8	7	6	5	4	2	0	0	2	4	6	8
Güneşli saatler (s)	6.5	7.2	8.7	10.2	11.9	12.9	13.0	12.2	10.8	9.2	7.7	6.6

Figure 25. Annual meteorological data for Ahmetbeyli, İzmir (Klaros).



Figure 26. Reconstruction of the Temple of Apollo and *Hecatombs* at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 27. Side view of the reconstruction of the Temple at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).

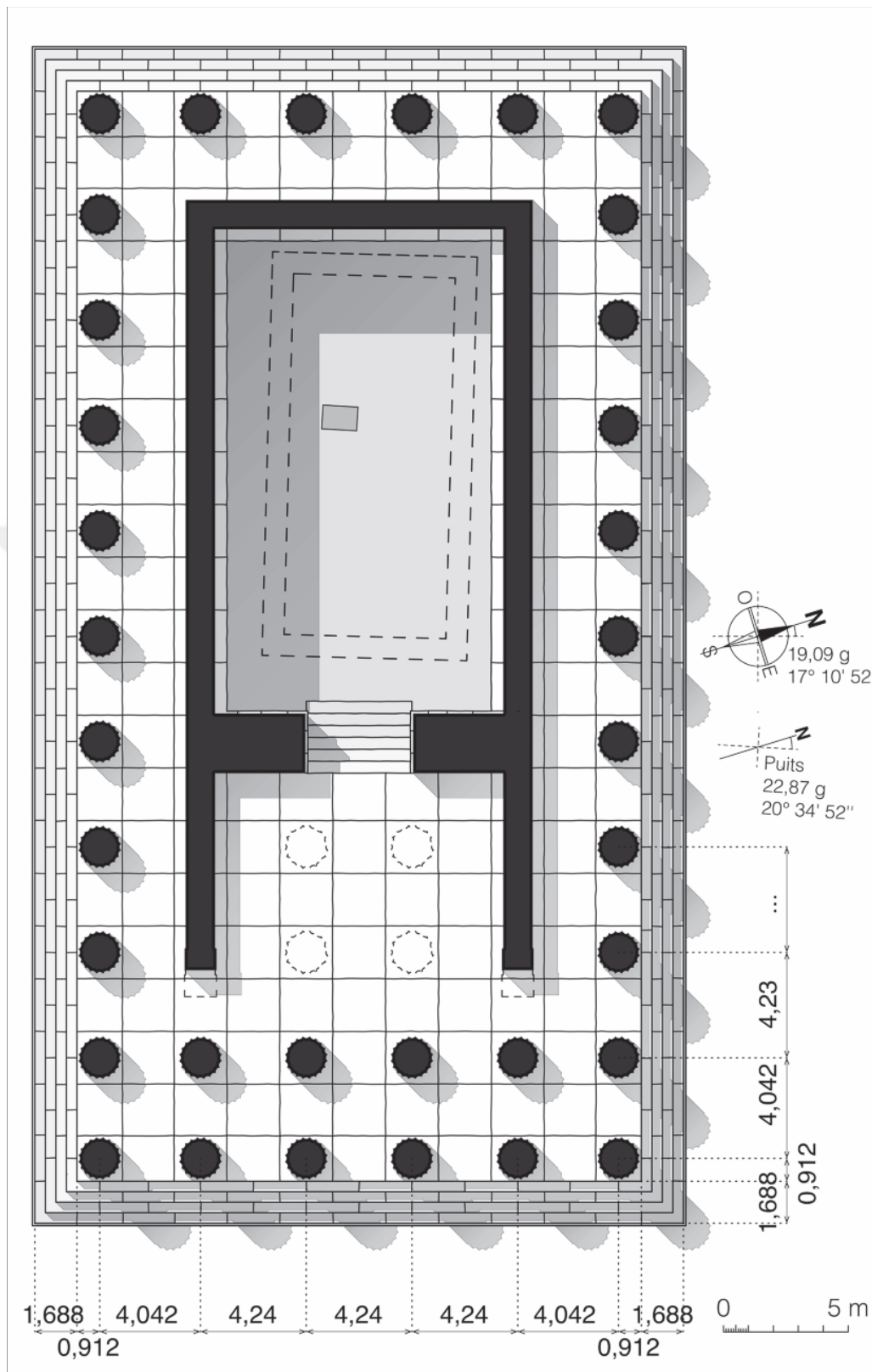


Figure 28. Proposal for the restoration of the initial plan of the Hellenistic temple at 1/500 scale. (By J.-J. Malmay, taken from Moretti et al., 2015: 292).

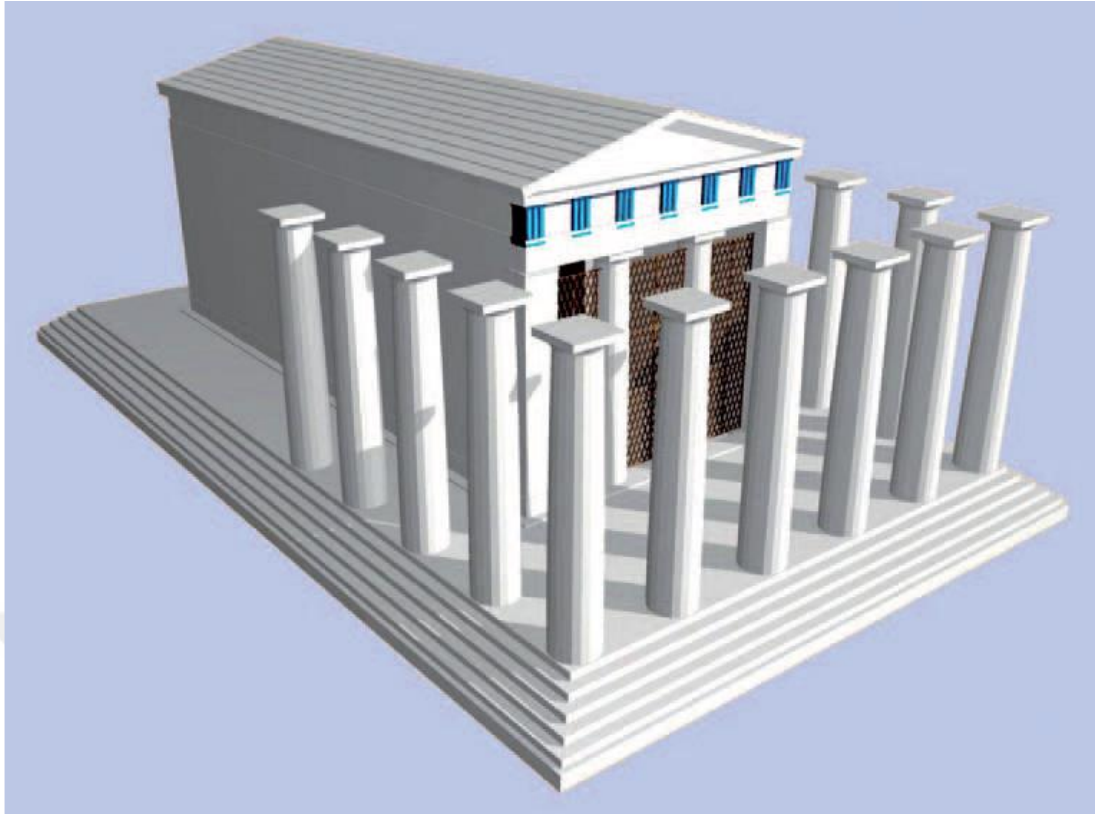


Figure 29. Restoration of the Temple of Apollo at the beginning of the Imperial era. (Archaeological Mission of Klaros. D, Laroche).



Figure 30. Eastern view of the Temple of Apollo at Klaros and the Triad Statues as they stand today. (August 2023 by Author).



Figure 31. Statues of Leto, Apollo, and Artemis as they stand today at Klaros. (January 2023 by Author).



Figure 32. The canvas covering was restored in the consultants' room at Klaros. Interior view from the southeast. (Moretti, 2012).

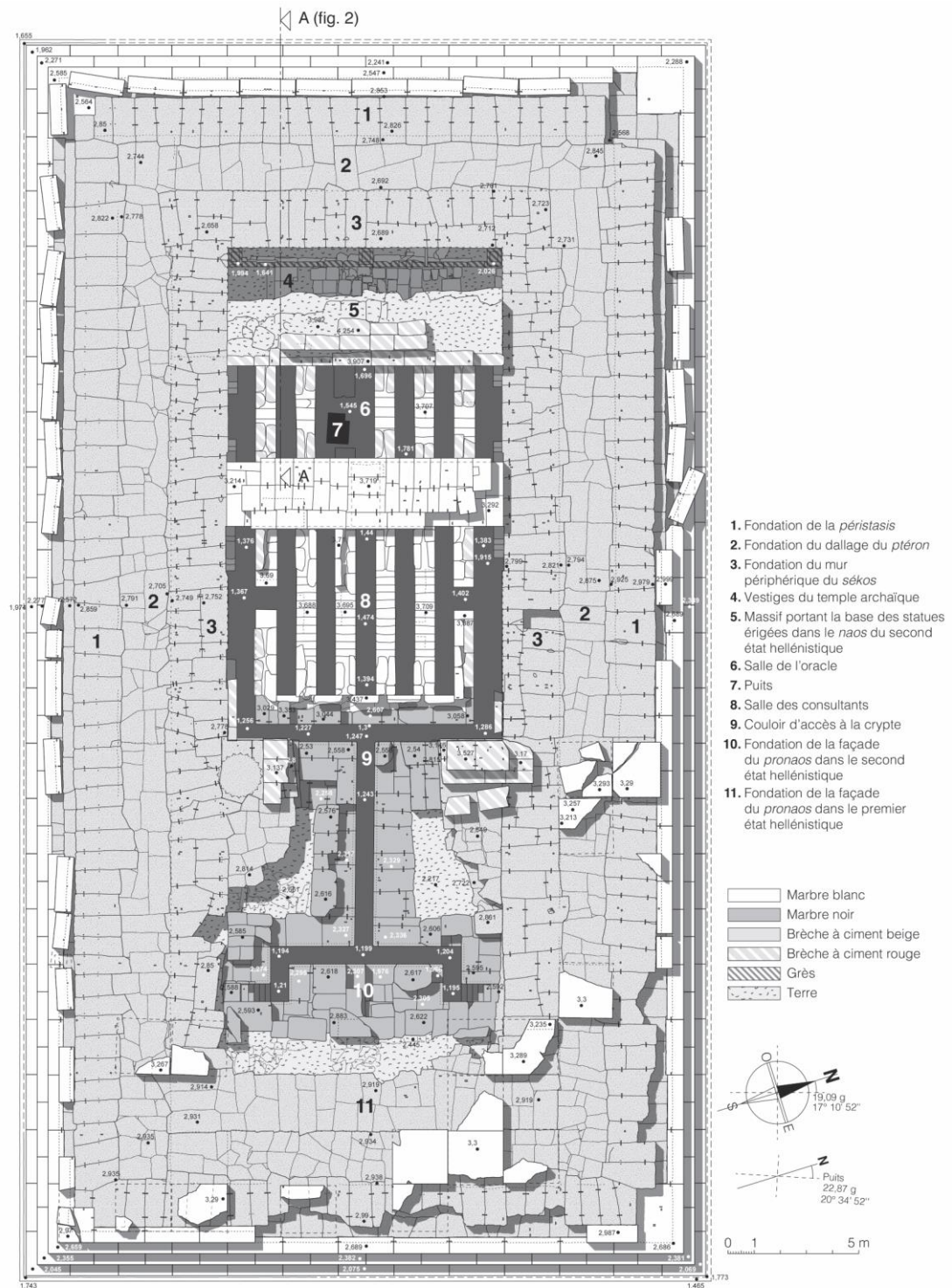


Figure 33. General plan of the remains of the Temple of Apollo at Klaros at 1/250 scale. (By J.-J. Malmay, taken from Moretti et al., 2015: 293).



Figure 34. Seat No. 1511. kept in place in the consultants' room at Klaros. (Moretti, 2012).



Figure 35. The Oracle's Room at Klaros has a well opening. View from South. (Şahin, 2012: 254).

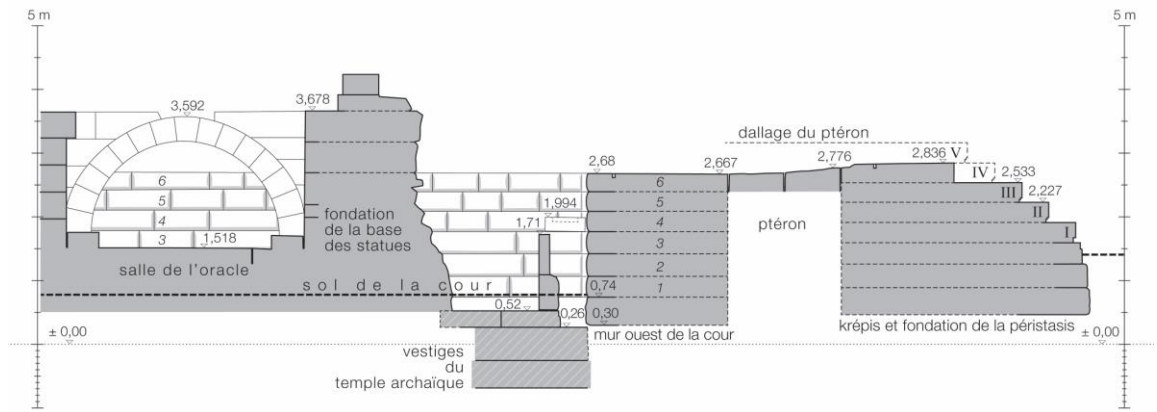


Figure 36. The east-west section at the rear of the Temple of Apollo at Klaros is at 1/100 scale. (By N. Bresch, taken from Moretti et al., 2015: 293).



Figure 37. Stones of the platform and the oracle's room at Klaros. From East. (January 2023 by Author).



Figure 38. Northern steps descending to the crypt at Klaros. From East. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 39. Southern steps descending to the crypt at Klaros. From East. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 40. First turn in the corridor of the crypt at Klaros when descended. Southern side. (July 2023 by Author).

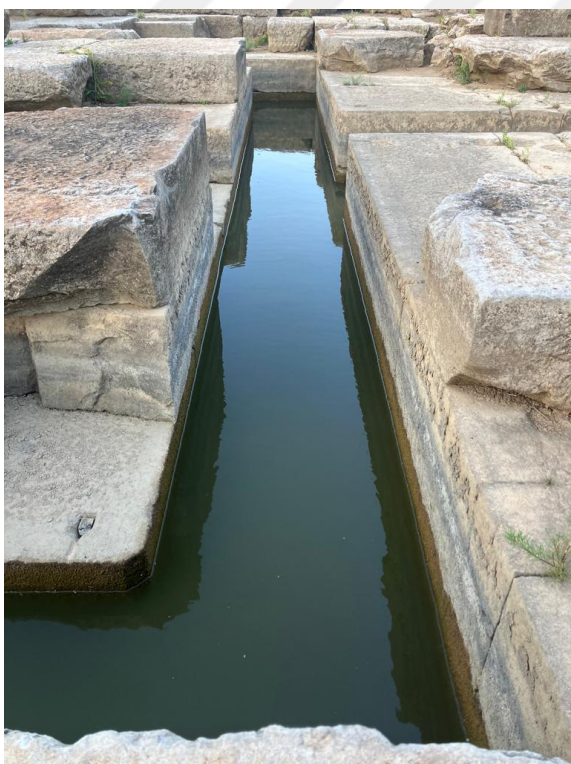


Figure 41. View of the first double-corridor of the crypt at Klaros from the North. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 42. The main corridor of the crypt at Klaros. Towards the consultant's room. From East. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 43. End of the main corridor. Intersection before the turning point for the consultant's room at Klaros. From East. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 44. The view to the South is of the divided corridor from the main corridor at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 45. The view of the North of the divided corridor from the main corridor at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 46. The entrance to the consultant's room at Klaros. From North. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 47. Eastern view of two central vaults in the consultant's room and the corridor leading to the oracle's room at Klaros. The triad statues at the back. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 48. The corridor between two rooms at the crypt at Klaros. (Şahin, 2012: 259).



Figure 49. The view of the well at the oracle's room at Klaros. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 50. The oracle's room at Klaros. From South (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 51. The discovery of the marble *omphalos* in the consultants' room at Klaros. (École française d'Athènes, R. Martin).



Figure 52. Omphalos at Klaros. (Tanriver, 2009: Plate XXXIII).



Figure 53. *Aulos* fragments from Klaros (Tanriver, 2009: Plate CXXVI).



Figure 54. *Aulos* fragments from Klaros (Tanrıver, 2009: Plate CXXVII).



Figure 55. A Tripod from Klaros (Yılmaz, 2013: 197)



Figure 56. The Water source located in the interior of *adyton* at Klaros was closed with a panel by the archaeologists to avoid accidents. (July 2023 by Author).



Figure 57. Drained photograph of the interior of *adyton* at Klaros, where the sacred water is located. (Şahin, 1998: 76).

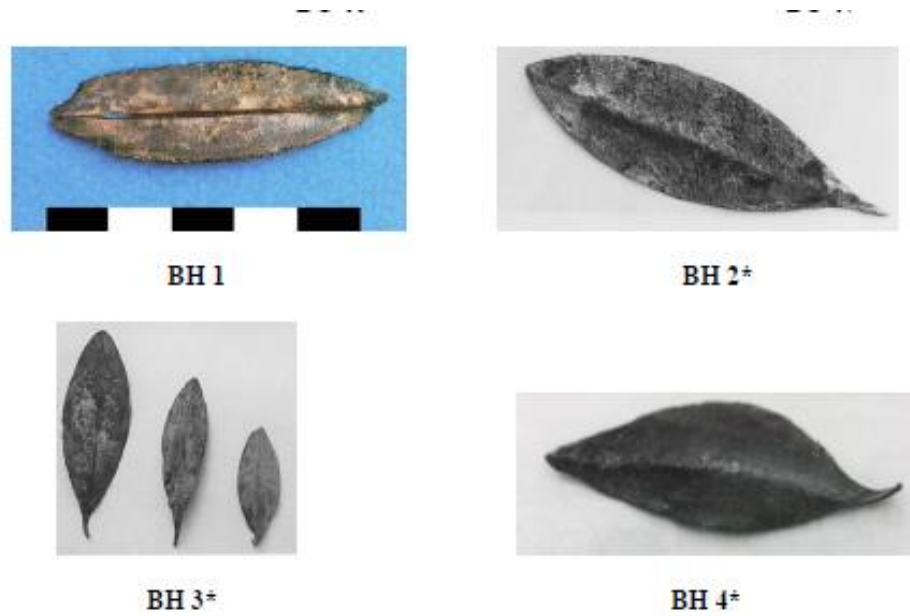


Figure 58. Bronze Daphne leaves from Klaros (Tanriver, 2009: Plate CXXI).



Figure 59. *Makron's Cup*. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art).

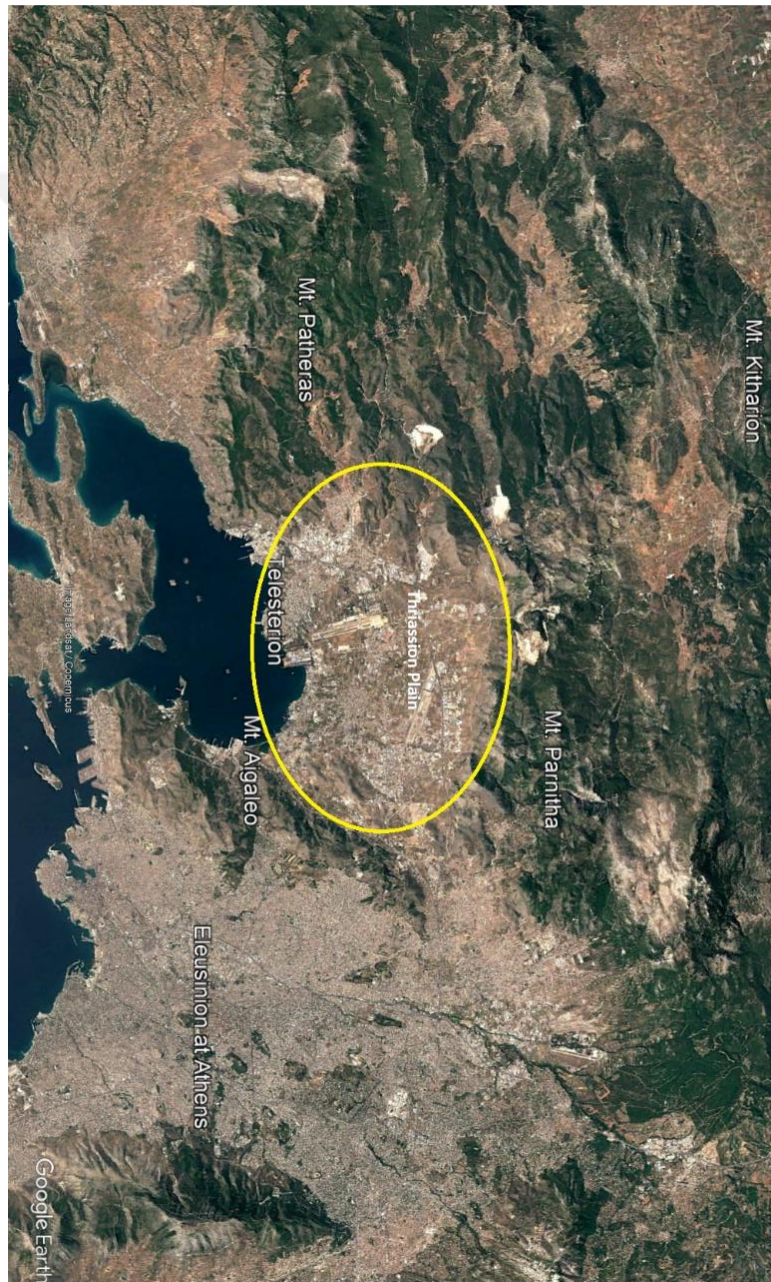


Figure 60. Ninnion Tablet.

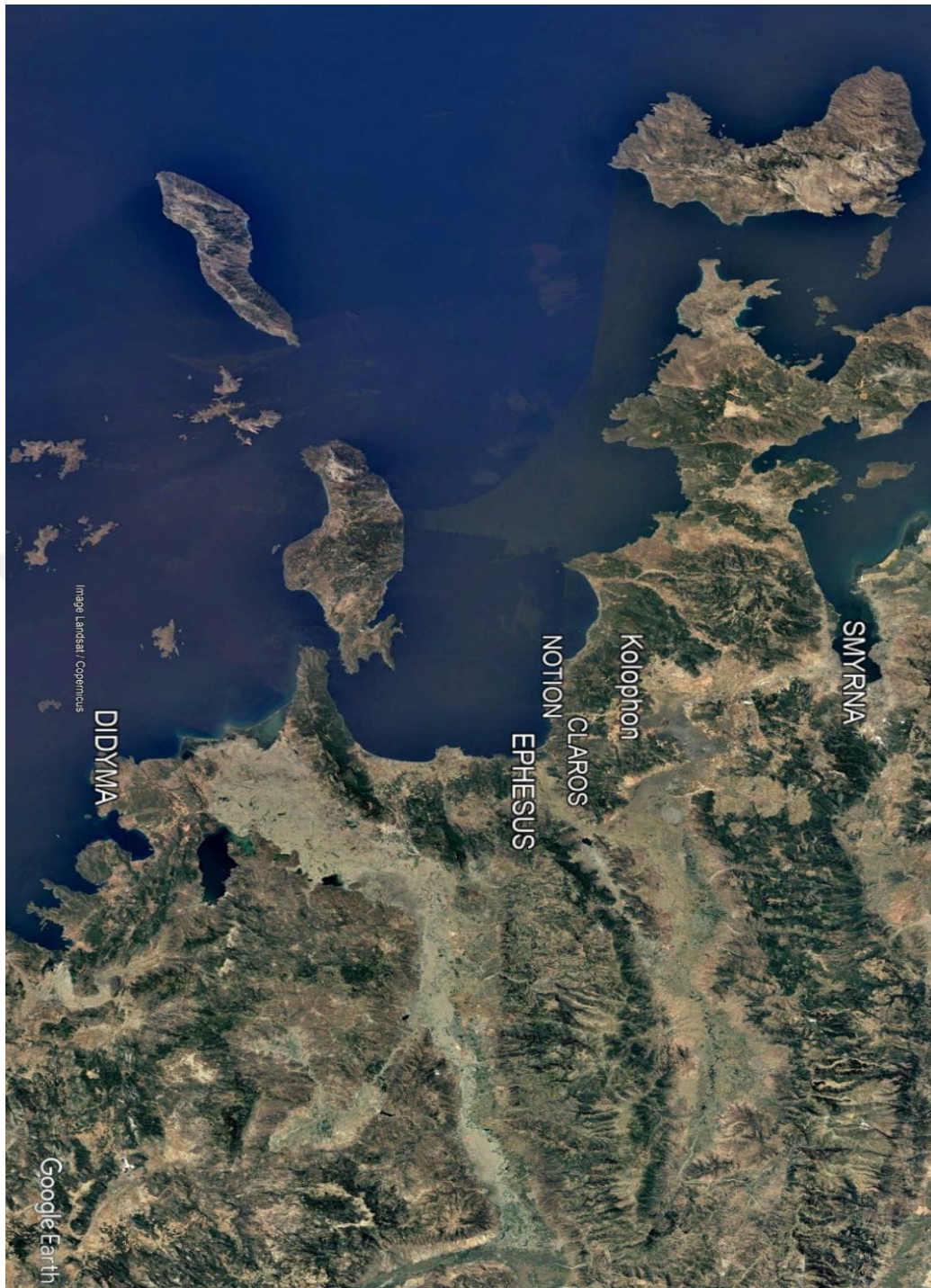


Figure 61. A pedestal dedicated to Dionysus at Klaros. (Pişkin-Ayvazoglu, 2015: Plate VIII).

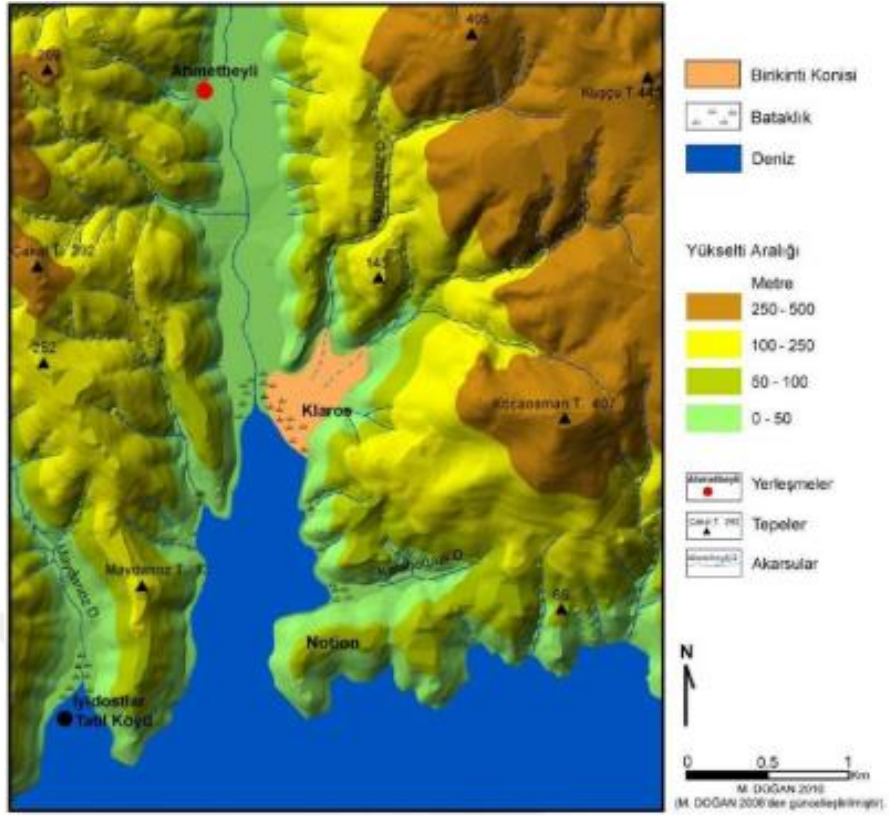
MAPS



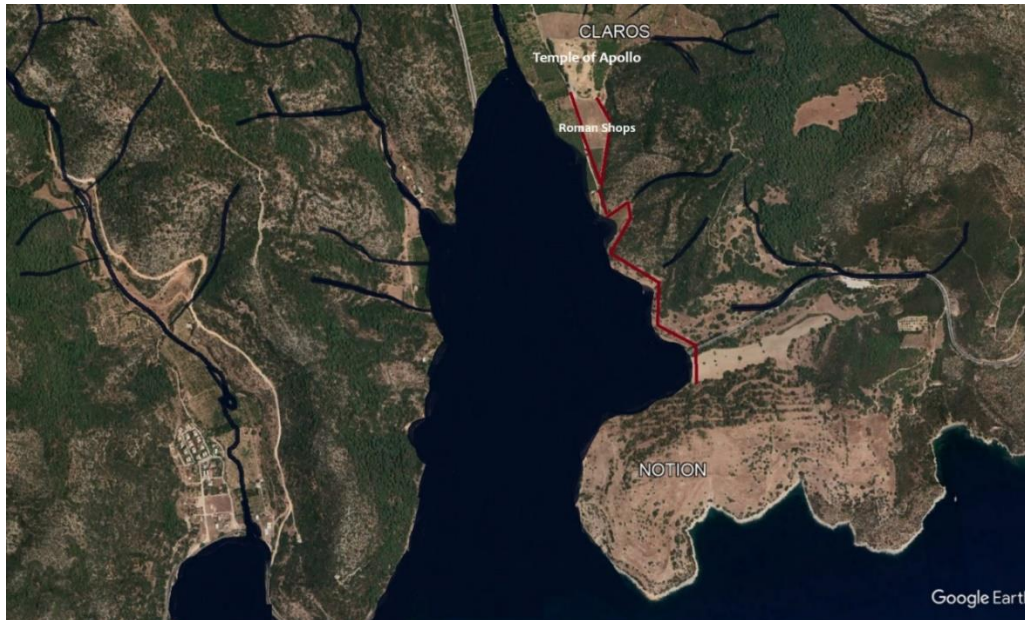
Map 1. The geography of Eleusis. (Author)



Map 2. Geography of the proximity of Klaros. (Author)



Map 3. The state of the proximity of Klaros in 3000-2500 BP. (Doğan, 2013: 976).



Map 4. Reconstruction of the Klaros environment during 3000-2500 BP. (Author. Based on Doğan, 2013: 976)