

# Greek Art in Motion

Studies in honour of Sir John Boardman on the  
occasion of his 90th birthday

edited by

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with

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# Temples with a Double Cella: New Thoughts on a Little-Known Type of Temple

Ugo Fusco

## Introduction

This article forms part of a more wide-ranging research project on cult places with a double room in the Greek world, undertaken at the Italian School of Archaeology at Athens.<sup>1</sup> I will limit myself here to presenting some preliminary considerations on this temple typology, referring readers to the final publication of the study for a more detailed analysis.

Cult buildings with a double cella have traditionally been considered a rarity in the literature on Greek architecture and as such have never been the subject of a dedicated study. Indeed, they tend to be mentioned only in passing, as in the comments of R. Ginouvès:<sup>2</sup> ‘le cas est assez rare dans le monde grec; il peut s’agir de deux pièces jumelles, souvent précédées par un vestibule commun’ or the more recent remarks by Marie-Christine Hellmann:<sup>3</sup> ‘Le temple à double *oikos* ou à *cellae* jumelles, non pas juxtaposées mais adossées ou reliées par un mur mitoyen, est beaucoup plus rare: deux exemples en ont été relevés en Crète, tous deux de date hellénistique et dédiés à deux divinités différentes, à Sta Lénika près d’Olonte et à Aptéra. C’est peut-être ainsi que se présentait le ‘temple double’ d’Asclépios et des Létoides, remarqué par Pausanias à Mantinée (VIII 9, 1), et finalement l’Érechtheion entre aussi dans cette catégorie’. An exception to this rule is the study published a few decades ago by A. Barattolo, the most recent to tackle the issue in a more constructive way, at least as concerns the literary evidence.<sup>4</sup> In his architectural analysis of the Temple of Venus and Roma in Rome, accurately described in the title of the volume as a ‘tempio ‘greco’’ for its unusual floor plan (Fig. 6), the scholar also considers the most important instances of temples with a double cella attested in both the literary and the archaeological sources. My own research suggests that the situation is more complex than has hitherto been thought and has uncovered a number of archaeological attestations not considered in the previous literature. I have collected around twenty examples of such buildings, of which a typological selection is presented in Fig. 1.

## Literary tradition

The only surviving literary source to describe temple buildings with a double cella is Pausanias. In his *Description of Greece*, the *Periegetes* lists a total of five such structures, variously termed *ἱερὸν διπλοῦν*, *ναὸς διπλοῦς* and *οἴκημα διπλοῦν*. Specifically, these are the city temple of Apollo Karneios at Sikyon (2.10.2:<sup>5</sup> *οἴκημα διπλοῦν*); that of Asklepios

and Leto with her children (Apollo and Artemis) at Mantinea (8.9.1:<sup>6</sup> *ναὸς διπλοῦς*); the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Ares in the *proastion* of Argos (2.25.1:<sup>7</sup> *ἱερὸν διπλοῦν*); the temple of Eileithyia and Sosipolis in the Panhellenic sanctuary of Olympia (6.20.3:<sup>8</sup> *ναὸς διπλοῦς*) and the sacred building known as the Erechtheion on the Acropolis at Athens (1.26.5:<sup>9</sup> *οἴκημα διπλοῦν*). According to scholars, Pausanias’ choice between the terms *ἱερὸν/ναὸς* and *οἴκημα* is made mainly on the basis of the ground plan and architectural form of the monument at the time of his visit: he employs *ἱερὸν/ναὸς* to refer to what we might call a ‘traditional temple’ type, as at Argos, Olympia and Mantinea. By contrast, he prefers the more generic and vague term *οἴκημα* when discussing those buildings that present evident architectural peculiarities, as at Sikyon and Athens.<sup>10</sup> Thanks to Pausanias’ description of the floor plans of these sacred buildings, it is clear that at Sikyon the rooms and entrances are aligned on a single axis whilst at Athens they lie on different axes, though both these buildings are termed *οἴκημα διπλοῦν*. A more complex and problematic structure that merits a separate treatment is the Erechtheion

enclosure you see on the left a **building with two rooms** (*διπλοῦν ἔστιν οἴκημα*). In the outer room lies a figure of Sleep, of which nothing remains now except the head. The inner room is given over to the Carnean Apollo; into it none may enter except the priests’, translation by Jones 1918.

<sup>6</sup> ‘The Mantineans possess a **temple composed of two parts** (*ναὸς διπλοῦς*), being divided almost exactly at the middle by a wall. In one part of the temple is an image of Asclepius, made by Alcamenes; the other part is a sanctuary of Leto and her children, and their images were made by Praxiteles two generations after Alcamenes. On the pedestal of these are figures of Muses together with Marsyas playing the flute. Here there is a figure of Polybius, the son of Lycortas, carved in relief upon a slab’, translation by Jones 1918.

<sup>7</sup> ‘The road from Argos to Mantinea is not the same as that to Tegea, but begins from the gate at the Ridge. On this road is a **sanctuary built with two rooms** (*ἱερὸν διπλοῦν*), having an entrance on the west side and another on the east. At the latter is a wooden image of Aphrodite, and at the west entrance one of Ares. They say that the images are votive offerings of Polyneices and of the Argives who joined him in the campaign to redress his wrongs’, translation by Jones 1918.

<sup>8</sup> ‘The old woman who tends Sosipolis herself too by an Elean custom lives in chastity, bringing water for the god’s bath and setting before him barley cakes kneaded with honey. In the front part of the **temple**, for it is built **in two parts** (*τοῦ ναοῦ -διπλοῦς*), is an altar of Eileithyia and an entrance for the public; in the inner part Sosipolis is worshipped, and no one may enter it except the woman who tends the god, and she must wrap her head and face in a white veil’, translation by Jones 1918.

<sup>9</sup> ‘There is also a building called the Erechtheum. Before the entrance is an altar of Zeus the Most High, on which they never sacrifice a living creature, but offer cakes, not being wont to use any wine either. Inside the entrance are altars, one to Poseidon, on which in obedience to an oracle they sacrifice also to Erechtheus, the second to the hero Butes, and the third to Hephaestus. On the walls are paintings representing members of the clan Butadae; there is also inside – **the building is double** (*διπλοῦν γάρ ἔστι τὸ οἴκημα*) – sea-water in a cistern’, translation by Jones 1918.

<sup>10</sup> Osanna 1998: 218.

<sup>1</sup> The research project was funded by the Italian Accademia dei Lincei with a ‘Clelia Laviosa’ fellowship and was conducted between May 2016 and January 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Ginouvès 1998: 41.

<sup>3</sup> Hellmann 2006: 29.

<sup>4</sup> Barattolo 1978.

<sup>5</sup> ‘From here is a way to a sanctuary of Asclepius. On passing into the

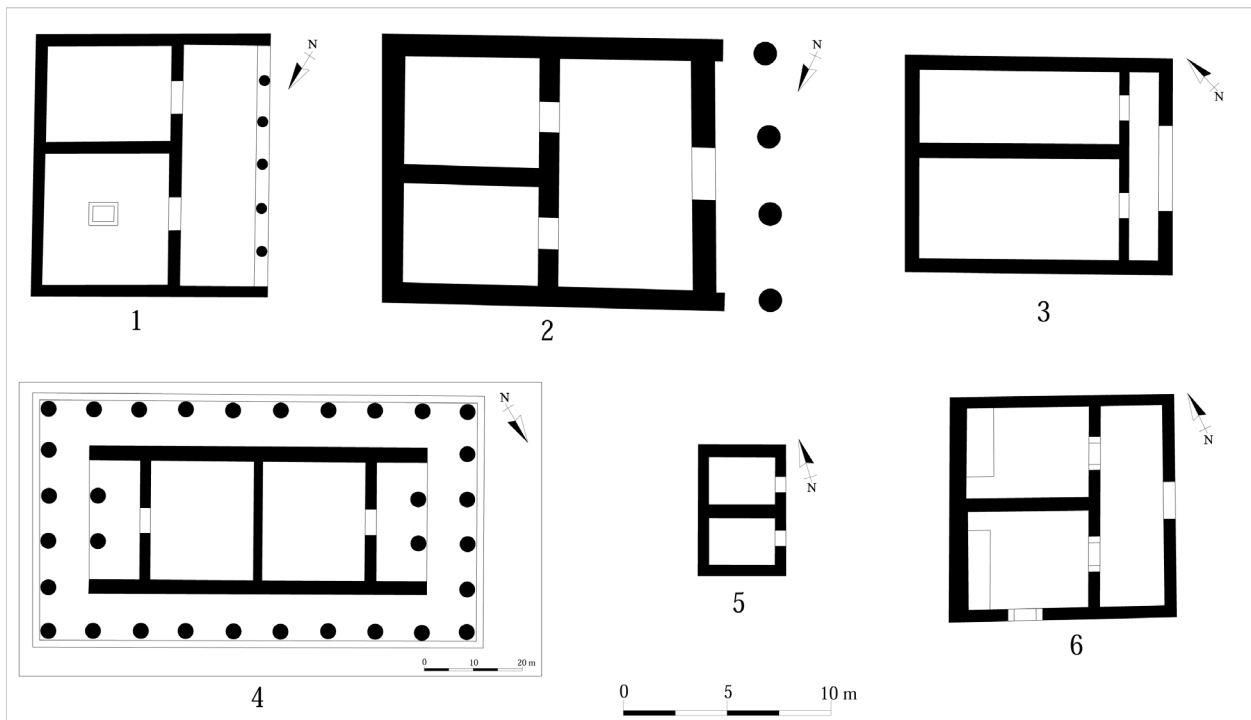


Figure 1. Some examples of cult buildings with a double cella: 1. Sanctuary of Apollo at Alikí; 2. Western cella (*megaron*) of the Temple of Athena Polias; 3. Temple of Demeter (and Kore?) at Spiliotaki; 4. Temple of Athena Nikephoros (later of Augustus and Roma?) at Pergamon; 5. Temple at Aptéra in Crete; 6. Temple of Aphrodite and Ares, at Sta Lénika in Crete (by U. Fusco).

on the Athenian acropolis, for which at least two different reconstructions are possible.<sup>11</sup> The same is true at Mantinea, where Pausanias does not clearly specify the position of the entrances and where the cellae may thus have lain parallel to or opposite one another. As concerns the principal object of this article, the temple at Argos, Pausanias does specify the arrangement of the entrances to the cult rooms: ... καὶ πρὸς ἡλίου δύνοντος ἔσοδον καὶ κατὰ ἀνατολᾶς ἑτέραν ἔχον ...' ('...having an entrance on the west side and another on the east...'; trans. W.H.S. Jones); in other words, the entrances were on opposite sides. The second part of this study offers some considerations on the latter temple, which presents some similarities with the temple of Venus and Roma in Rome.

### Archaeological Evidence

On an archaeological level, both buildings with a double cella are frequently attested in the Greek world for both religious and non-religious purposes.<sup>12</sup> In the case of cult structures, both rooms may be dedicated to two or more gods; alternatively, one room may serve for the cult of a god with the other being used for some other purpose, for example as a banqueting room (the sanctuary of Apollo at Alikí,<sup>13</sup> Fig. 1, n. 1) or altar (the so-called "Temple of Anios" on the island

of Delos)<sup>14</sup>. Finally, the architectural arrangement with a double cella may occupy the entire monument, or just a part of it. Fig. 1 presents an initial selection of temples, or parts of temples, belonging to this typology, demonstrating that the predominant model is that with parallel cellae, though of different dimensions (Fig. 1, n. 1, 2, 3, 5, 6). By contrast, the type with opposing cellae is represented by just one building:<sup>15</sup> the temple of Athena Nikephoros<sup>16</sup> (later of Augustus and Roma?) at Pergamon, recently re-analysed by F. Coarelli<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 1, n. 4). By cross-referencing the information provided by the literary tradition with the archaeological data, we can distinguish between three different types of cult buildings with a double cella on the basis of the floor plan (Fig. 2):

Type A – with parallel cellae divided by a party wall, with separate entrances facing in the same direction;

Type B – with cellae and entrances on the same axis;

<sup>14</sup> Bruneau, Ducat 2005: 243, n. 68.

<sup>15</sup> N. 1. Sanctuary of Apollo (?) or of the Dioscuri (?) at Alikí (6th century BCE, Servais 1980; Grandjean, Salviat 2000: 162-165; Falezza 2012: 362-372); 2. Western cella (*megaron*) of the temple of Athena Polias (475-406/405 BCE, Hurwit 1999: 144-145; Monaco 2015: 132; Di Cesare 2015: 131-132, 134, 138 and notes 109, 111); 3. Temple of Demeter (and Kore?) at Spiliotaki (late 6th - early 5th century BCE, Verdels 1964: 121-122); 4. Temple of Athena Nikephoros (later of Augustus and Roma?) at Pergamon (last quarter of the 3rd century BCE, Radt 1988: 179-190; renovation of the cella in the Imperial period: Coarelli 2016: 55-59); 5. Temple at Aptéra in Crete (Hellenistic period, Sporn 2002: 266); 6. Temple of Aphrodite and Ares, at Sta Lenikà in Crete (Bousquet 1938; Sporn 2002: 68-73).

<sup>16</sup> Radt 1988: 179-190.

<sup>17</sup> Coarelli 2016: 55-5.

<sup>11</sup> Travlos 1971: 217, fig. 280 and 218, fig. 281. For general information on the monument see the recent overview in Monaco 2015: 132-136.

<sup>12</sup> For example the *pastas* house: Pesando 1989: 63-72. Among the buildings with a double cella present in sanctuaries but that cannot be considered temple structures, though in some cases the interpretation is controversial, we could mention *hestiatoria* (banqueting rooms) on which there is a vast bibliography; see the recent overview in Leybold 2008.

<sup>13</sup> Falezza 2012: 362-272.



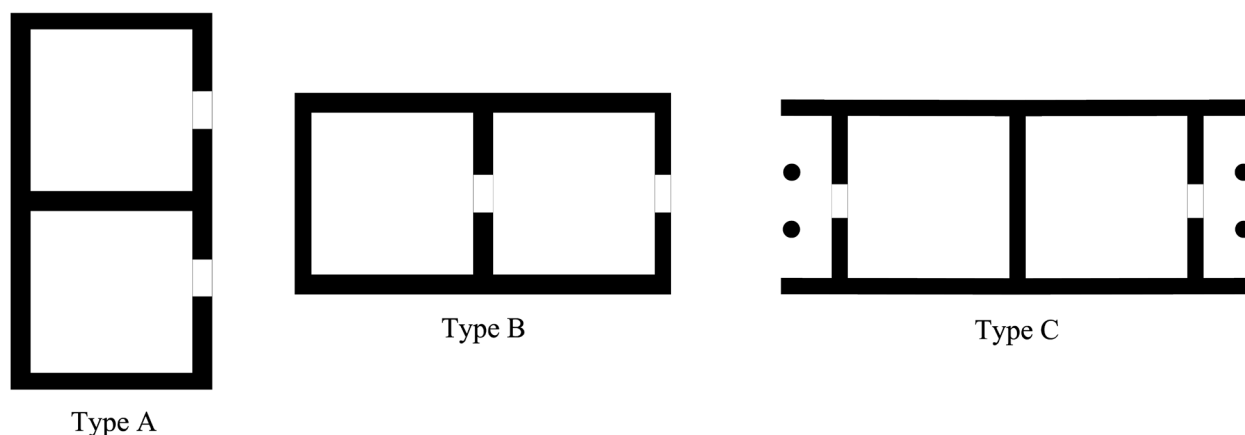


Figure 2. The three architectural types (A, B, C) of cult buildings with a double cella (by U. Fusco).

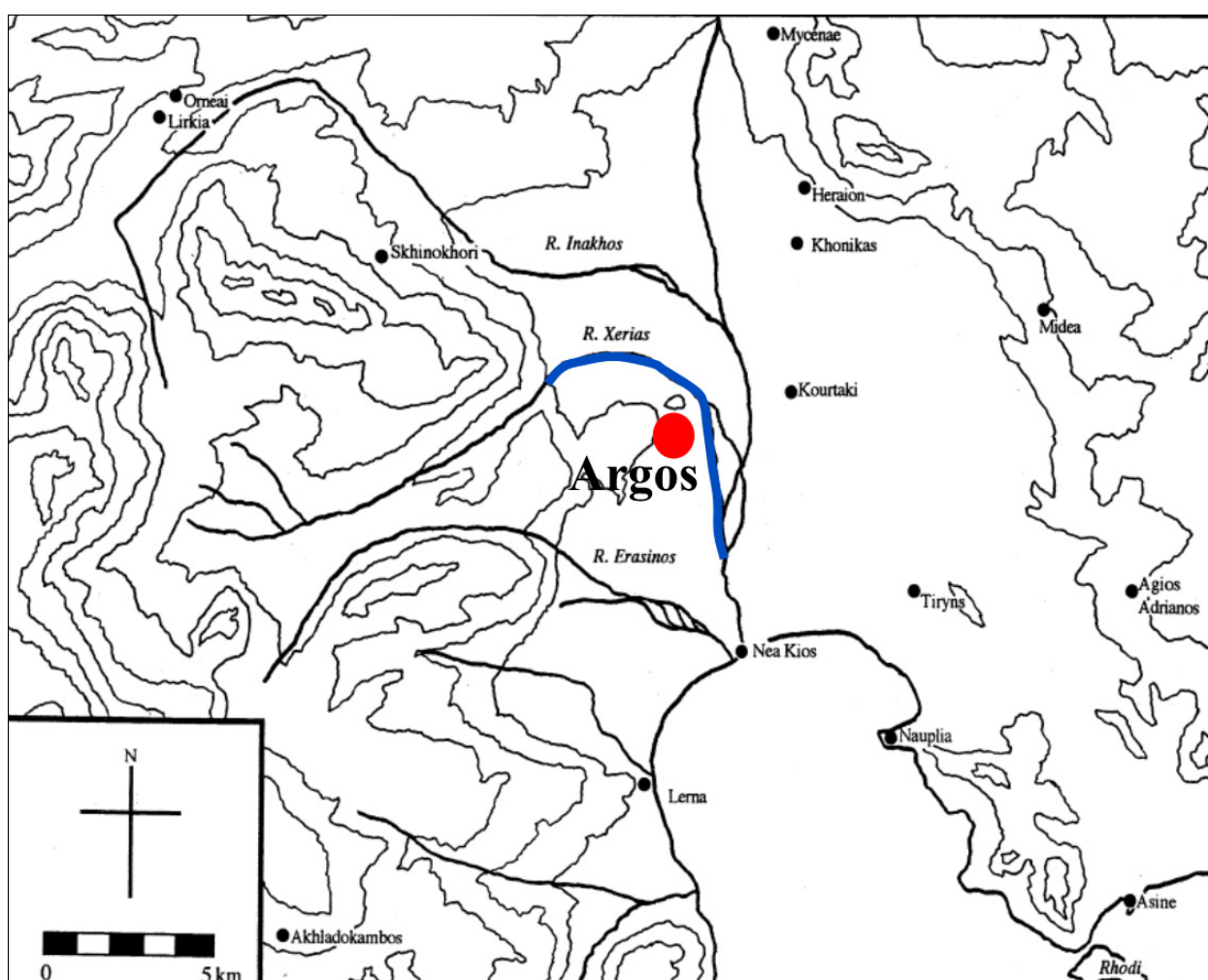


Figure 3. Map of the Argive Plain (reprocessed from Hall 1995, fig. 1).

Type C – with symmetrically opposed cellae, with independent entrances (we have chosen to represent Type C as amphiprostyle, distyle in antis, but obviously the presence of the columns is purely hypothetical). The most frequent type is certainly A whilst B, of which only one instance is attested archaeologically, is the least common and is represented only by the city temple dedicated to Apollo Karneios at Sikyon and the temple of Eileithyia and Sosipolis at Olympia, both

described by Pausanias. Type C comprises some exceptionally large temples of the Roman imperial period, including the temple of Venus and Roma<sup>18</sup> (105.73x48.22 m) in Rome and the Artemision of Sardis<sup>19</sup> (99.16x45.73 m), dedicated to Artemis and Antoninus Pius/Faustina.

<sup>18</sup> Barattolo 1978; Fraioli 2012.

<sup>19</sup> Cahill, Greenewalt jr. 2016.



Figure 4. The road towards Mantinea, with diagonal lines marking the area where the temple described by Pausanias may have been located (reprocessed from Google Earth).

Temple of Aphrodite and Ares at Argos (Fig. 3). Our only eyewitness description of this Argive sanctuary is the brief account provided by Pausanias (2.25.1)<sup>20</sup>, which unfortunately tells us nothing of its precise location, ground plan, elevations, chronology or architectural and sculptural decorations.

**Location.** Thanks to the information provided by W. Vollgraff<sup>21</sup> in his topographical study of Argive territory dating to the very early 20th century, cross-referenced with the short account by Pausanias, we can locate the sanctuary near the ancient river *Charadros*, now known as the *Xerias* (Fig. 4), which loops protectively around the periurban area of Argos to the north and east (Fig. 3). According to some scholars, the vicinity of the cult place to the river is explained by the latter's important role in ancient times as a kind of final sacred boundary demarcating the area in which any military disputes arising during expeditions were settled before the Argive army re-entered the city.<sup>22</sup> A passage from Thucydides illustrates this particular role played by the river<sup>23</sup> (5.60.6). According to the Greek historian, the Argive army was returning to the city in 418 BCE after an encounter with the Spartans in the plains to the north of Argos. On reaching the river *Charadros*, the troops made a halt and attempted to stone Thrasyllus, one of the five generals, who was guilty of single-handedly agreeing a truce with the enemy. Thrasyllus survived this incident by seeking refuge

at an altar ('ὁ δὲ καταφυγὼν ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν περιγίγνεται'), which evidently stood in the vicinity. There must therefore have been at least two distinct sacred areas near the river *Charadros*: the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Ares, and the altar of an unknown god. The presence of these cult installations is indicative of the religious importance that the river course held for the city. In this context, we should note that, according to J.M. Hall, the *Charadros* marked the boundary of Argive territory during the Archaic period and therefore had a prominent function on a political, economic and military level.<sup>24</sup>

**Cult statues.** According to Pausanias, both of the sanctuary's cult statues were *xoana*, dedicated by Polynices and his Argive allies.<sup>25</sup> Scholars have interpreted this strange mythological reference as indicative of Pausanias' desire either to underline the antiquity of this cult place,<sup>26</sup> or to stress the strong ties between this sanctuary and the sphere of war.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, the two cult statues are no longer extant, but some attempts have been made to identify images of them on coin series (Fig. 5). Again thanks to Pausanias, we know that the statues stood at the entrances to the two rooms and not, as was usually the case, inside them: the chamber dedicated to Aphrodite lay to the east and that sacred to Ares to the west.

The divine association Aphrodite-Ares has recently been the subject of some detailed studies. Though the presence of Ares in a context linked to war is to be expected, there has been a heated debate over that of Aphrodite, paired with the god Ares since Homer and Hesiod.<sup>28</sup> Two competing theories have been proposed. One of these, championed by V. Pirenne-Delforge, interprets the association of these two gods as an 'opposition complémentaire' that is also reflected on a concrete level in the architectural layout of

<sup>20</sup> See note 7.

<sup>21</sup> 'Nous plaçons ce temple (i.e. the sanctuary with a double cella) à droite de la route actuelle de Mantinée, à un quart d'heure de distance de l'ancienne porte de la Deiras. C'est là que commence le chemin qui mène à la source dite Akoa', Vollgraff 1907: 180-181, see also Kophiniotis 1892: 124. No further information has been found as yet on the location of the Akoa spring, but it is worth noting the presence of a place named Akoba in the area under consideration, where the church of Aghios Nikolaos stands.

<sup>22</sup> Tomlinson 1972: 208; Pirenne-Delforge 1994:167-168; Pironti 2007: 256.

<sup>23</sup> 'And so on their return they (the Argives) began to stone Thrasyllus in the bed of the Charadros, where before they enter the city all causes are tried that arise from an expedition. But he fled for refuge to the altar and was saved; his property however was confiscated', translation by Forster Smith 1959. See also Gomme, Andrewes, Dover 1970: 86.

<sup>24</sup> Hall 1995: 590.

<sup>25</sup> Donohue 1988: 376, n<sup>o</sup> 218.

<sup>26</sup> Pirenne-Delforge 1994:168, 170.

<sup>27</sup> Pironti 2007: 256-257.

<sup>28</sup> Hom. *Il.* 5.355-363 and *Od.* 8.266-366; Hes. *Theog.* 933-937.



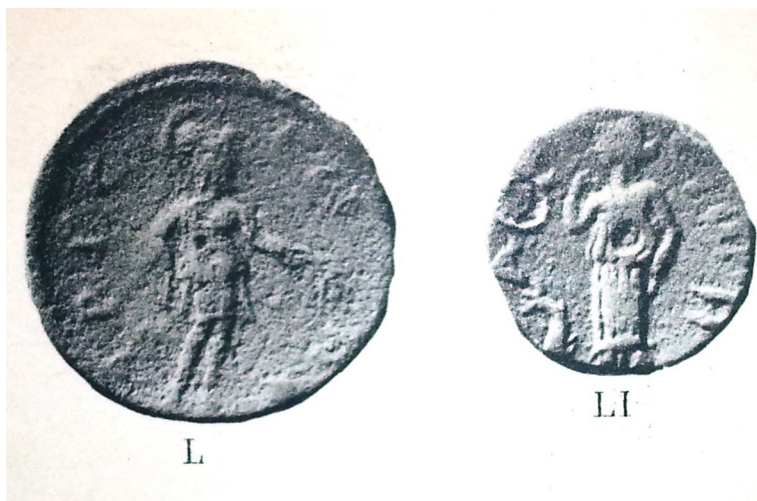


Figure 5. Images on coins showing the cult statues of Aphrodite and Ares (after Oikonomides 1964, pl. L, nos. L, LI= New enlarged edition of Imhoof-Blumer, Gardner, London 1887).

between the goddess Aphrodite and the world of war and military life, offering a wealth of evidence to show her close association with the martial sphere.<sup>30</sup> On the latter view, Aphrodite's pairing with Ares is not antithetical but rather fully complementary.

**Reconstruction.** Pausanias' description of the temple at Argos places it in our type C (Fig. 2). Sadly, though, we have no information on the chronology of the building, nor on its foundation date or any renovations and/or reconstructions that may have occurred before Pausanias visited in around the mid-2nd century AD. By themselves, the analogies of ground plan between the temple at Argos and that of Venus and Roma<sup>31</sup> in Rome (Fig. 6) do not allow us to advance any further hypotheses regarding the former's potential architectural influences on the latter (Fig. 7). However, it is worth mentioning that the emperor Hadrian visited the city of Argos

the monument itself 'comme si leur localisation constituait un cheminement de la guerre à la concorde'.<sup>29</sup> The second theory, proposed by G. Pironti, reinterprets the relationship

(and perhaps also the temple of Aphrodite and Ares) during one of his journeys, likely in 124 CE<sup>32</sup> before work began on the temple in Rome.

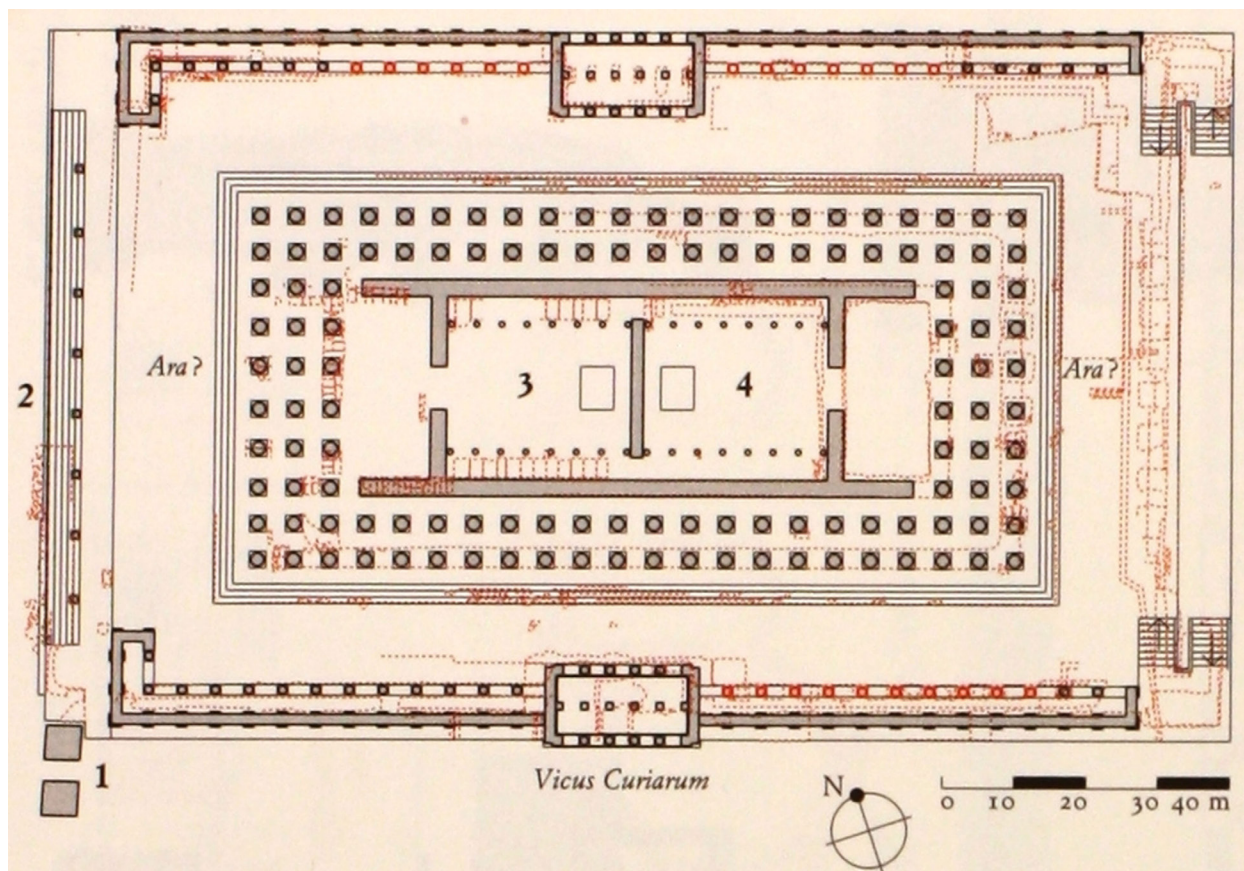


Figure 6. Reconstructed plan of the Temple of Venus and Roma in the Hadrianic phase (after Fraioli 2012, pl. 102).

<sup>29</sup> Pirenne-Delforge 1994: 167-169, 450-454.

<sup>30</sup> Pironti 2007: 237-241, 257-258, 276-277.

<sup>31</sup> Fraioli 2012.

<sup>32</sup> Birley 1997: 179.

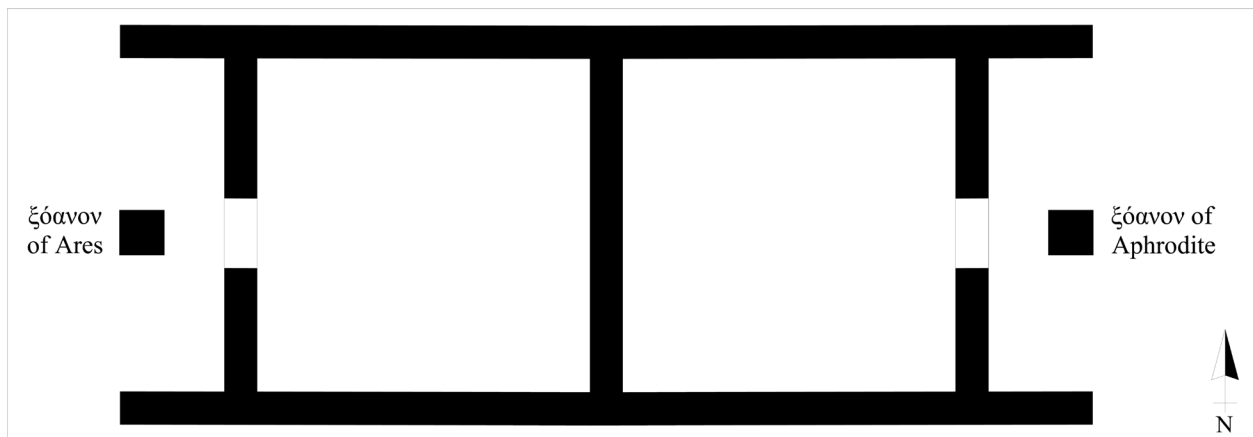


Figure 7. Hypothetical reconstruction of the layout of the sanctuary of Aphrodite and Ares in the periurban area of Argos (by U. Fusco).

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