

## THE TEMPLES OF PALLANTION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLABORATION IN ARCADIA

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Hardly anybody with some knowledge of art and history would have difficulties in recognizing a Doric temple; hardly any other manifestation of Classical Greek culture has the same immediate and direct appeal to us as these buildings have. In today's world, where comparatively few people are equipped with the linguistic competence and cultural insight which is essential in order to fully understand the literature and much of the figurative art of the ancient Greeks, the strict, clear, and purely abstract character of the Doric temple strikes chords which we recognize in our own culture, and the Doric temple is perhaps the most accessible statement of some of the deepest forces of the ancient Greek civilization. For good reasons the Parthenon, generally acclaimed as the supreme masterpiece of the Doric style, is today considered the principal symbol of the finest moment in Greek history.

When the Parthenon was conceived and constructed in the years after 450 BC, the Doric style had already been developing for a period of about 200 years. In order to fully understand and appreciate a building such as the Parthenon, it is obviously necessary to know as much as possible about its background in the Doric tradition, a tradition which is known to us exclusively through the buildings from an earlier period which happen to be preserved. Unfortunately, only a limited number of Doric temples antedating the Parthenon are preserved to such an extent that their visual effect can be immediately appreciated; most of these are located in Southern Italy and Sicily. Their importance in documenting that particular branch of the Doric tradition is obvious, but on essential points the rules they followed were different from those that applied to most temples in Greece. There is also some material from Greece, where the entire style was doubtless created, and in some cases there is enough evidence to allow extensive and precise reconstructions on paper of buildings which today appear, to the casual visitor, only as desolate ruins. For such reconstructions even modest fragments may suffice, thanks to the rigid, inherent logic of the Doric temple style; publications of recently excavated temple sites have provided quite astonishing demonstrations of what modern methods applied to this material can achieve.

Not all the available evidence, however, has been treated in this way. Particularly in Greece, and to a lesser extent in Southern Italy, modest temple foundations with only fragmentary remains of the elevations have been excavated. Most of these excavations, however, were conducted by

archaeologists with other aims and interests and not always equipped with the necessary architectural competence, which, indeed, was scarce decades ago when most of these excavations took place. Some sort of preliminary publication usually exists and is as a rule sufficient to establish the potential value and importance of the building concerned; such notices, however, are no substitute for full publication according to modern standards and they have tended to be overlooked and forgotten, just as the buildings themselves have been overlooked and forgotten. Several of these temples, earlier in date than the Parthenon, belong to those important early stages, during the sixth and early fifth centuries BC, of the Doric style, for which more documentation is particularly needed. To bring this material into the academic discussion by means of adequate publication should, therefore, be a task of high priority.

The Italian Archaeological School in Athens, under the direction of Professor Antonio. Di Vita, has in recent years made a conscious effort to conclude and publish various old, unfinished archaeological engagements. The Italian School has, since it was established early in this century, been engaged mostly in Crete, where the Minoan palaces of Phaistos and Hagia Triada and the urban centres of Prinias and Gortyn have absorbed most of its energies. On occasion, however, the Italians have taken up minor enterprises elsewhere, and I became involved in one of them when I was cordially invited by Professor Di Vita in 1983 to undertake the study and publication of the temples at Pallantion in Arcadia, in collaboration with Italian and Swedish colleagues.

Pallantion, with a territory of a few square miles, wedged in between the far more important and powerful states of Tegea and Asea, must have been one of the smallest city-states anywhere in the Greek world. Since next to nothing is known about its history, we do not know by what miracles it managed to maintain its independence until the *synoikismos* of Megalopolis in the fourth century BC, and then to regain it again afterwards. Pausanias visited the site in the second century AD and described the principal buildings of the small urban centre, including an old sanctuary, dedicated to gods whom he calls the "pure gods", situated on a low acropolis. After some vain attempts to identify the site early in the nineteenth century, it was found by the French Morea-expedition on a low foot-hill to Mount Kravari, some eight kilometres south-west of Tripolis. No precise description of the visible remains was given and no formal excavation undertaken at the time, and the delay, as often is the case in Arcadia, had fateful consequences; in the 1930's, a modern chapel was constructed on the hill, on the exact site of an ancient temple which was thereby almost completely destroyed. The archaeology of Arcadia had not until then received much attention, and beyond a couple of French excavations at Tegea and Orchomenos and a British undertaking at Megalopolis, the territory had been left to a small group of Greek enthusiasts such as Leonardos, Rhomaios, and Orlandos, who had not shown any interest in the remains at Pallantion.

Pallantion might not have attracted the attention of the Italians either if it had not been for the particular conditions in which they had to operate in 1940, before the war broke out between Italy and Greece towards the end of October. That year their traditional excavation sites in Crete and Lemnos were not accessible to them owing to problems of communication and to the sensitive military character of those islands. In order to maintain their activity in Greece, it became necessary for them to find more accessible sites on the Mainland, where they had never before conducted excavations. Their choice fell on Arcadia, where the recent Swedish excavations at Asea had demonstrated what wealth of prehistoric material one might hope to recover at a well-chosen site. On account of its traditional connection with the oldest history of Rome, Pallantion must have seemed a particularly attractive choice to the Italian archaeologists of that period. Various Roman authors of the Augustan period, taking up a tradition probably from the Republican annalists, described the emigration of a group of Arcadians from Pallantion under the leadership of the hero Evander at the time of the Trojan War to the site of Rome, where they founded a settlement on the Palatine hill whose name was thus derived from Pallantion. The encounter between Aeneas and Evander on the Palatine is the principal theme of the eighth book of Virgil's *Aeneid*, the Roman national epic. In 1940, two years after the impressive celebration of the Augustan bimillenary in Italy, this tradition could not be overlooked, and the hope of recovering traces from Evander's period and perhaps even confirmation of the Augustan legends were probably an important motive behind the Italian decision to excavate Pallantion.

The excavation lasted for some weeks during August and September, 1940, under the director of the School, Professor Guido Libertini. He was assisted by one of the School's students, Alfonso De Franciscis, who after the war had a brilliant career in the archaeological service of Southern Italy, concluding it by holding the chair of archaeology at the University of Naples. The political tensions of those months, just before the war broke out, must have weighed heavily on the atmosphere of the excavation, but the collaboration between the Italian archaeologists and their Greek workmen and colleagues does not seem to have suffered. The generosity of the Greeks towards their archaeological guests is well demonstrated by one astonishing fact; when Italy attacked Greece on October 28, the Italian archaeologists who were still in the country were allowed to leave with the Italian diplomats although they did not have diplomatic status and according to international law should have been interned.

The excavation was concentrated in two areas which a preliminary survey had picked out as particularly promising: in the plain behind a small, modern Byzantine church and on the Acropolis. In the plain, a couple of minor Byzantine churches, late graveyards, and some indications of a Classical sanctuary were uncovered, but nothing from any earlier period. More interesting results were obtained on the acropolis where considerable remains of a polygonal fortification wall enclosed four modest,

but interesting temples from the Archaic and Classical periods. The temples are not impressive but they constitute the largest concentration of religious buildings anywhere in Arcadia and, moreover, they belong to the early period of Greek temple architecture for which more documentation is needed. Considering the circumstances at the time of excavation, it is evident and understandable that it was not possible to publish the results; later, when the storm had passed, and the Italian School could again resume its activities, under the long and prestigious direction of Doro Levi, other tasks were more pressing and more appealing. An unusually full and informative preliminary notice had been given in the first volume of the School's "Annuario", first published after the war, but neither the school nor the persons involved in the excavations seemed to have any intention of carrying on what had been, after all, just a minor episode of the School's activity.

When my own research on the early formative stages of Doric temple architecture brought the preliminary notice on Pallantion to my attention, I got in touch with Professor Di Vita and the Italian School. Since his interest in concluding the School's old and half-forgotten obligation with a definitive publication coincided with my own wish to do some further research on these buildings, a joint Swedish - Italian mission was set up with the support of Dr. Robin Hägg at the Swedish Institute at Athens (who among other things, took care of the financial backing and the necessary permission from the Greek Archaeological Service) and of Dr. Th. Spyropoulos, director of the Archaeological Ephorate of Laconia and Arcadia. The mission consisted of an archaeologist, dott. Mario Iozzo and an architect, arch. Alan Ortega, from the Italian School, and of three Swedish students, Marie Jansson, Anne-Charlotte Nordfeldt, and Ewa Samuelsson and worked at Pallantion for three weeks during August and September, 1984, under my direction. Since time, means, and staff were strictly limited, it was possible to clean, study, and draw only the two better preserved of the four temples; the other two have been studied and will be published on the basis of the records from the 1940-excavation and the assistance of, until his death in 1989, Professor De Franciscis and one of his pupils, dott. Mario Pagano. All the above mentioned are to be thanked for their contribution to the project, which will be published in the "Annuario" of the Italian School. Meanwhile, some preliminary conclusions can be presented here.

The four temples on the acropolis of Pallantion are situated within the fortification wall, two on the summit and two on the South-Eastern slope of the hill. They probably all belong to a single sanctuary; two of the temples, called C and D, even share the same orientation. It seems likely that this was the sanctuary of the "pure gods" mentioned by Pausanias, as was also proposed by Libertini. Unfortunately, none of the objects discovered, either in 1940 or in 1984, were of any help in identifying more closely these mysterious deities.



The Temples of Pallantion

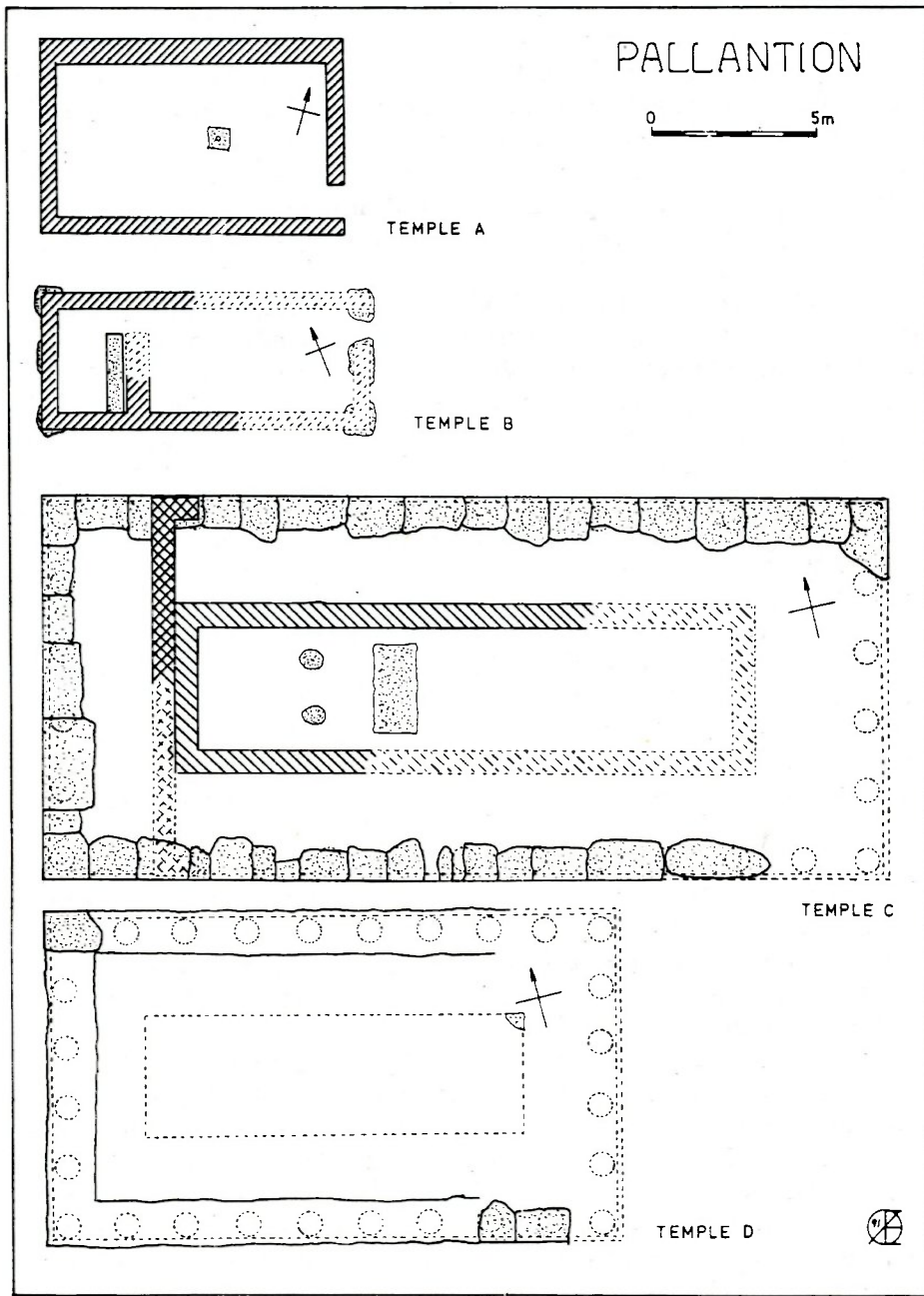


Fig. 1. Temples A-D at Pallantion (drawing author).

simple and efficient way of setting out right angles which probably had some influence on the proportions of these early buildings. The plan is slightly more complex than that of A, with an inner room - adyton - where, as the foundation for some sort of bench or shelf along the inside of the dividing wall suggests, ritual objects were kept. The passage between the two rooms was close to the Northern wall of the building and probably corresponded with the entrance on the Eastern facade. Precise parallels for the shape and disposition of this building are scarce but those that can be found tend to suggest a date early in the sixth century, that is, somewhat later than the construction of temple A.



Fig. 3. *Temple B at Pallantion, after the cleaning in 1984 (photo M. Iozzo).*

The investigations of 1984 concentrated on the large and complex temple, called C, located on a shelf of the Southern slope, above temple A. This was doubtless the largest and most important of these buildings. Stratigraphical trial trenches within the building gave good hopes for the possibility of recovering further information. This part of the investigation was brilliantly directed by the Italian archaeologist Mario Iozzo and provided, along with the new architectural drawing of Alan Ortega, the key to understanding the unusually long and complicated building history.

The temple appears as a normal peripteros but has an unusually long and narrow cella which is evidently derived from earlier local forms. The simple walls of rubble and clay, which support a structure of sun-dried brick, are technically similar to earlier buildings but are slightly thicker, perhaps because constructors were now more aware of the problems connected with the weight of the roof tiles. The external dimensions of the cella, reconstructed as 5.20x17.68 m, are in a proportion 5:17, evidently developed from the triangle 5:12:13 with the addition of a square lengthwise. The inner division in the large space just behind the entrance and the

smaller, separate room in the rear part of the cella repeat the layout of temple B, but the division is created not by a wall, but by two, probably wooden, columns whose stone bases are preserved behind a large rectangular foundation which was probably for the cult image. This foundation practically blocked access to the rear part of the room although it was fully visible behind the columns to anyone standing in front of the cult figure. This unusual arrangement has a close parallel in the Classical temple of Apollo at Bassai where the open adyton was separated from the cella by the famous Corinthian column. The arrangement at Bassai had an evident precursor in the plain and unpretentious temple at Pallantion.



Fig. 4. Temple C at Pallantion after the excavation in 1940, viewed from the west (courtesy of the Scuola archaeologica italiana di Atene).

In 1940, the floor inside the cella was still covered by a pavement of terracotta tiles; these had, however, in the succeeding decades been almost completely destroyed. A stratigraphical section could therefore be made in 1984 in the inner part of the room behind and between the column bases, and three stages in the pavement were distinguished. The first was of beaten earth and was found a few centimetres below the column bases. A second pavement of the same material was laid on top and reached the level of the column bases. In the last stage, the pavement was of terracotta tile, covering the column bases. The few objects discovered in the fill of the two earthen pavements provided a general indication of their dates. A plain Corinthian *louterion* of a seventh century type found englobed in the first pavement provided a *terminus post quem* for this pavement, while a few bronze objects - a fibula, the handle of a bronze vase, and the tip of an iron lance - found on its surface and, it seems, datable to around 500 BC, indicate the time when the first floor was in use, before the second



floor was laid. The tiles are probably of a much later date since they are very similar to examples of a certainly Hellenistic date from other Arcadian sites. The records from 1940 inform us that a small Hellenistic lamp was discovered under one of the tiles.

The first of these levels, dated to around 600-550 BC, evidently coincides with the construction of the cella. The second phase, probably of the early fifth century, appears to represent just a modest rise in the level of the pavement for which there is no obvious explanation in the cella. The suggested date seems, however, convenient also for the external foundations, whose large, coarse blocks of irregular dimensions can be compared with the similar foundations of several other Arcadian temples constructed in the decades around 500 B.C. In these temples they always support a regular krepidoma or, at least, a stylobate of more regular blocks. Since it would have been impossible to avoid setting some of the columns over the open interstices, a foundation of this type could not have been used as the immediate support for a colonnade. At Pallantion, as elsewhere, the intention must have been to construct an intermediate layer of more regular blocks between the preserved foundation and the colonnade. This intention explains the raised pavement in the cella; a stylobate of normal height could not have found place between the levels of the external foundation and the first pavement in the cella, but the few centimetres added to the pavement level could make it coincide with the upper level of a normal stylobate thus providing a single floor level inside and outside the cella. For these reasons, it seems necessary to connect the second pavement level with the construction of the external foundation, evidently intended to support an external colonnade as an additional embellishment to a plain temple originally without columns.

If the date of this project is correctly established to about 500 BC, it belongs to a period covering the last quarter of the sixth and the first quarter of the fifth centuries, a period when temple architecture had an extraordinary flowering in Arcadia. The immediate model was almost certainly the small temple of Athena and Poseidon at Vigla, just a couple of miles away from Pallantion, but in the territory of Asea near its boundary with Tegea and Pallantion. This small, but elegant building was constructed entirely of marble. It had an external colonnade of 6x13 columns, and its dimensions, 11.60x24.00, are very close to those of the projected colonnade of the temple of Pallantion; they are almost exactly equal in width and about one metre shorter in length. Evidently this is another example of the not infrequent building competitions between neighbouring Greek states; in order to be able to boast of possessing a larger temple than their neighbours at Asea, the Pallantiotes repeated its width but added a few feet to the length. The date of the temple at Vigla can be estimated to around 520 - 510 BC from fragments of the elevation and it provides a useful confirmation of the stratigraphically established date of the temple at Pallantion.

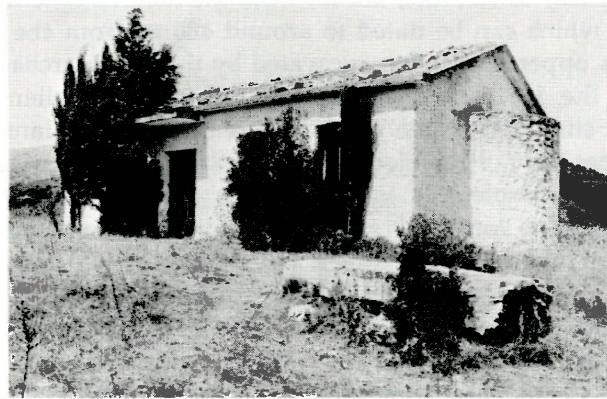


It is evident, however, that the attempt of the Pallantioes to outdo their neighbours was never realized. No trace of a stylobate or of a colonnade - column fragments or pieces of elevation - has ever been found. When the tile pavement was laid in the cella and between the cella and the external foundations, it was joined with full precision to the preserved blocks, demonstrating that at that time no stylobate existed and that any plan to add one had been abandoned. Basically, the temple must have appeared as before, a plain cella surrounded by an open rectangular terrace - a form which is not unknown and has recently been identified in a small, roughly contemporary temple at Kombothekra in Triphylia. At Pallantion, however, this was hardly the original intention since the shape and dimensions of the external rectangle are so perfectly suited to a normal colonnade of 6x13 columns, following the model of the temple at Vigla. If the intention was to construct, as at Vigla, a stylobate and a colonnade of local marble from the Doliana quarries, some sudden change in the economic or political situation of this small state may explain why the project was abandoned; the expenses involved in constructing a fully fledged Doric peripteros of marble might easily have overtaxed their resources.

This would be particularly true if the project involved not only one but two temples. The temple called D is somewhat smaller but has a more prominent location on top of the hill. It is situated at exactly the spot where the modern chapel was built in the 1930's and is consequently poorly documented and badly preserved with only two blocks of its flank foundation extant today. These blocks are of precisely the same material, type, and workmanship as the external blocks of temple C and could also belong to a foundation for a planned, but never executed, colonnade around a modest, earlier building. The identical orientation of the two temples, differing from the independent orientations of the two other temples, suggests that they were from the outset planned in relation to each other. This is likely to have been the case also for the planned external colonnades, although the evidence is insufficient to prove it. If this is the case, the planned colonnade around temple D must have been unusually short, perhaps 6x10 columns.

The normal Classical type of colonnade with 6x13 columns, which was quite certainly used in the temple at Vigla and planned for temple C at Pallantion, appears as the dominant form surprisingly early in the group of late Archaic temples from Arcadia. It seems to have been introduced into this region with the little-known and unimpressive temple at Arcadian Orchomenos, which was excavated by a French mission in 1911 and only superficially published. This temple is important also for another reason since it seems to be the first example in Doric architecture (earlier examples in the Ionic order possibly exist) where an external colonnade was planned with the axial spacing from column to column as a standard module, of identical size on both the short and the long sides. For such an arrangement, the 6x13 colonnade is particularly convenient since its number of axial spacings represents the short sides of a Pythagorean

triangle with the sides 5, 12, and 13 units long. At Orchomenos this simple and straightforward system had to be somewhat adjusted for the angle contraction; a slight reduction of the axial spacings near the corners is generally thought to be connected with a problem frequently arising at the corners of the Doric frieze. The temple at Orchomenos, dated to around 530 BC by the shape of the capitals, seems to represent the first clear example of what became in the fifth century the normal system for Doric temples; it is a surprise, however, to find it in such a remote and insignificant place, and there can hardly be any doubt that it reflects developments at some more important centre, the identity of which remains unknown to us owing to the hazards of preservation.



*Fig. 5. Temple D at Pallantion, the two remaining blocks of the southern foundation in front of the chapel of Hagios Ioannia (photo Marie Jansson).*

If the introduction of the 6x13 colonnade was originally connected with the standard axial spacing, one would expect both elements to be connected also in the Arcadian temples, dating to the decades around 500 BC, where the 6x13 colonnade was used. This, however, is not the case; in the temples at Vigla, at Pallantion, and in the somewhat later temple near Asea which follows the same pattern, the more normal Archaic distribution of the axial spacings with a slight difference between front and flanks was followed. This, apparently insignificant, detail has considerable importance since it demonstrates that the axial spacings were derived from the general external dimensions and not the other way around as in the temple at Orchomenos. At Vigla, moreover, the modest fragments of the upper levels of the building seem to confirm the hypothesis that the temple had no angle contractions; there was, at any rate, almost no conflict in the frieze which a contraction could compensate. The same arrangement is better attested in a small prostyle temple, dating to around 550 BC, at Psilikorfi near Tegea. The Arcadian tradition, connecting these two buildings as well as the later temple near Asea, may almost certainly be taken as a basis for the reconstruction of the planned colonnade at Pallantion. This particular Arcadian tradition, which has been overlooked

up until now, should be of considerable interest to Italian scholars since it coincides with what has been considered to be distinctive elements of the Archaic Doric temple architecture of Sicily and Southern Italy. Any direct connection between the two regions does not seem likely, but both regions might be drawing on the tradition of a third centre from which we have no documentation - a different centre, however, from the one we presumed to lie behind the very different temple at Orchomenos and whose influence on the Arcadian tradition was apparently limited to the 6x13 colonnade.

The final outcome of these complicated developments can be studied in the remains of the small temple dedicated to Athena at Alipheira in the western periphery of Arcadia, not far from the famous sanctuary at Bassai. This temple, which can be dated to around 480 BC from the considerable remains of its upper levels, was excavated by the Greek archaeologist A. K. Orlandos in the 1930's and can be studied in his excellent publication from 1967. Its similarity to the unfinished temple C at Pallantion gives the impression that the same project, which was abandoned at Pallantion, was carried out and completed a few years later at Alipheira with only some minor changes. The long, narrow cella building, without inner divisions, is of the same type in both temples and the width 5,20 m is identical; at Alipheira, the length is increased to a proportion of 5:22, adding two squares lengthwise to the basic rectangle 5:12. The external foundation is an almost exact replica of the foundation at Pallantion, with the same coarse blocks of irregular dimensions carrying a more regular stylobate. Some blocks of this were found and provide useful support for the reconstruction suggested above for the temple project at Pallantion. The longer cella required a longer colonnade, which was consequently increased to 6x15 columns with small differences between the axial spacings on the short and long sides in line with the tradition at Psilikorfi, Asea, and probably Pallantion. At Alipheira, however, larger spacings are found on the flanks, something which occurs very rarely in Greece but more frequently in Sicily and Southern Italy. Particularly interesting is the solution at the corners where the remains from the upper levels of the building are sufficient to justify a reconstruction with double angle contraction, involving not only the last axial spacing towards the corner but also the penultimate one; this is seen at the flanks but not at the front. In the fifth century this emerged as a favourite solution to the corner problem in Sicily and Southern Italy, following the example of a few earlier temples in Greece where it, however, always remained rare. The parallel development of this important feature in the Arcadian and Southern Italian tradition - from no contraction at all in the Archaic period to a double contraction in the early Classical period, avoiding the single contraction which was the rule elsewhere in Greece almost from the outset - is too striking to be fortuitous, although it is not easy to suggest likely points of contact between the two traditions.

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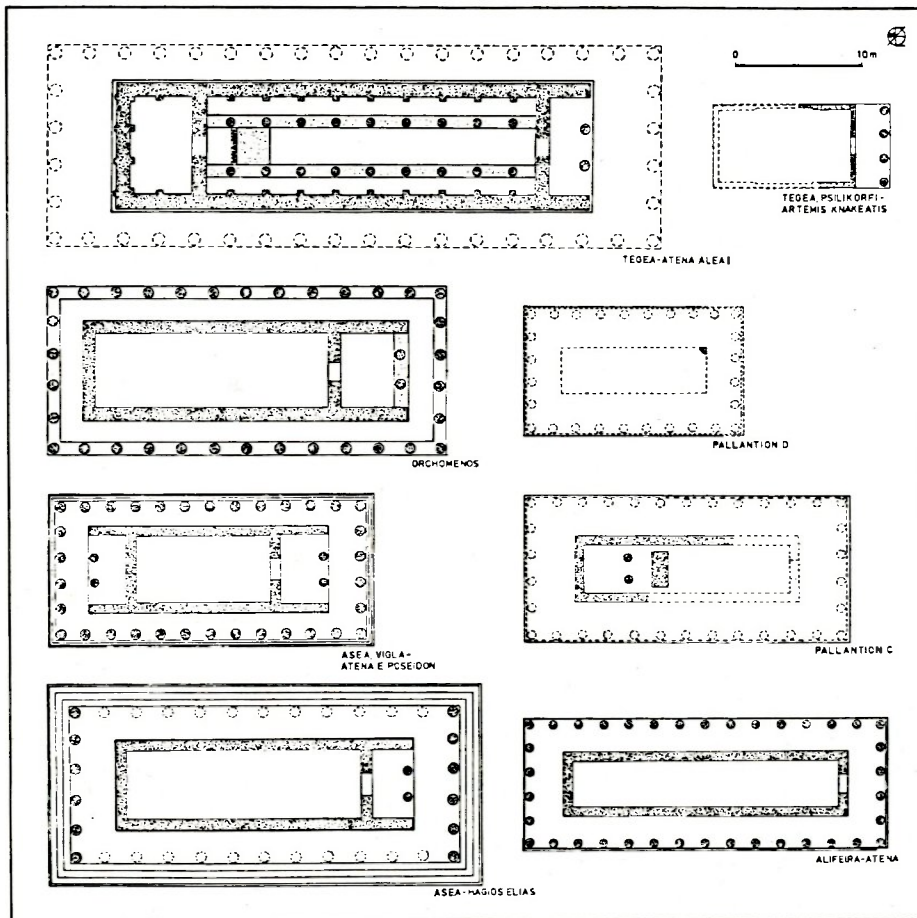


Fig. 6. The Principal Archaic temples of Arcadia, comparative plans on the same scale (drawing author).



Field archaeologists must always be prepared to find something other than what they were looking for, but this is not necessarily a bad thing. The Italian engagement at Pallantion seems to be a good example of this and it has had positive effects at several levels. It may have been a disillusionment for the archaeologists of 1940 that they could recover no traces of a prehistoric settlement and no evidence of Evander, who remained an elusive phantom and will probably always remain so. In compensation, the publication of the material which they actually found will not only emphasize the importance of a much neglected part of the architectural inheritance from ancient Greece but will also quite unexpectedly throw some light on one of the archaeological treasures of their own country, the Greek temples in Southern Italy and Sicily. The Swedes, whose contribution to the mission of 1984 was so essential to its success, may consider its positive outcome as an encouragement to take up again their old activities in Arcadia which have languished since the 1930's. And the Norwegians, who by pure coincidence took up again the old dream of a national institute in Athens, at the very moment when for the first time an international archaeological mission under Norwegian direction was working in Greece, can profit by some of our more general experiences. For a small, marginal nation, now entering the lively, international arena of Classical research which Athens is today, with limited resources of people and of means, such limitations are not fatal as long as we can join forces with other people sharing our wish to have certain things accomplished. It is my hope that this experience, which was one of the most productive results of the mission to Pallantion, may serve as a guidance for the future activities of our institute.

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