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"The Cult of Hades"

Supervisor:

Prof. Maria Elena Gorrini

Co-supervisor: Prof. Lorenzo D'Alfonso

Thesis written by:

Ceren Ak

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1. Introduction

The study of material cultural artefacts connected to rituals is what is meant by the short definition of archaeology of sanctuaries.¹ Religious activities were significant in ancient Greek and Roman society. One could argue that ancient religious beliefs were mostly based on rituals and lacked a clear philosophy of worship. In addition, they lack a doctrine that codifies the divine attributes, they differ greatly depending on the area, and perhaps most significantly, the interaction between people and the gods was governed by collective actions.² Although the ancient Greek and Roman gods have been a part of our culture for the longest time, the basic architectural arrangements of their religious buildings and sculptures are known to the most, interestingly the scientific studies on religion and cult are scarce, on the contrary of “architecture” and “sculpture”.³ The study field built around these two paradigms has existed for a long time. It may be argued that it remains the exclusive domain of historians and religious historians. On the other hand, when we analyse classical archaeologists' work in the context of religious studies, one of the first things that stands out is the archaeological evidence found at key sacred sites, particularly Pan-Hellenic.⁴

Ancient religious beliefs and rituals have long been one of the most essential aspects of studying ancient history, particularly because of their close connection to social life. Although a neglected aspect of historical research, the identification and interpretation of material culture connected to cults and rituals is a relatively new area of study within the field of ancient history. This field of study, which falls under the purview of archaeology, is concerned with the analysis of artefacts like architectural remnants, various gifts, or the remains of sacrifices from the sanctuaries. The Cult of Hades lacks these aspects. There is only little known, and there are

¹ Blakely, 2014: 2.

² Bruit-Zaidman & Schmitt-Pantel, 1999: 27.

³ Morris, 1993: 15.

⁴ Dyson 2006: 76-85.

only a few attested sanctuaries. These sanctuaries are usually called “Ploutonion” in ancient Greek, latinized as “Plutonium”. These places, usually located on a fault line or in or near a cave oozing with poisonous gases, represent the entrances or the “actual” entrances to the Underworld. Unfortunately, little is known today about how these cults and sanctuaries were used.

It is worth mentioning that there are also oracles of the dead called “Necromanteion” or “Psychomanteion” and the sacred caves called “Charonium”. Sometimes, scholars use these terms interchangeably. This thesis will mention the sites referred to as with all the terminology mentioned above.

1.1. Methodology and Research Objectives

The primary objective of this dissertation is to present and analyse the known and speculated cult areas in Turkey as the main focus with the sites of Hierapolis, Acharaca, Kodroula and Herakleia Pontica; Greece with the sites of Taenarum in Laconia, Acheron in Epirus, Elis and Eleusis; and Italy with the sites of Lake Avernus near Cumae and Hadrian’s Villa to find further opportunities to investigate the sites to have a better understanding of the characteristics of the mentioned sites, to see if there is a common ground or different patterns. The Acheron in Epirus, Avernus near Cumae, Heracleia Pontica and Taenarum in Laconia were used to known as the big fours of the oracles of the dead, while the other places were simply just sanctuaries with priests and it was not possible to contact with the dead, while there were definitely connections to the Underworld.

The main methodology of this study included the study of the books, articles and excavation reports written about the sites, the ancient sources mentioning these sites. After this, the study of the basic geophysical analysis was done, along with the investigation of very little

architectural and sculptural fragments left. The work will also mention other cultic places located on a fault line like Delphi and Ephesus.

By studying and analysing these sites in one study will contribute to the limited bibliography about this topic, and enhance the existing knowledge about the sanctuary type. The data gathered here and their comparison will hopefully be contributory to the discussion of the topic of which structures might actually have been used as a ploutonium or a necromanteion.

1.2. Hades

In the Greek and Roman mythology the chthonic god Hades was the responsible of the Underworld and the dead. He was the oldest son of the titans Cronus and Rhea⁵ and one of the most important gods of the Greek. His name is mentioned in Iliad 47 times.⁶ Although the meaning of his name is unknown, it is most usually translated as "the unseen one" in English. One of his primary characteristics, the Cap of Invisibility, lends weight to this view.⁷ The word "Hades" was also used as a general name indicating the Underworld.⁸

When the universe was split between Hades and his two brothers, Zeus and Poseidon, after the events of Titanomachy, this Greco-Roman deity—a chthonic god—lived in the Underworld. A three-headed dog named Cerberus was Hades' favourite companion, and classical artists usually depicted the two of them together. Another important character to his story, Persephone/Kore - his wife, was kidnapped by him from her mother Demeter. He had a boatman to carry the souls of the dead across the rivers Styx and Acheron into the Underworld, called Charon. Hades was viewed as an inevitable and cold god who treated everyone equally,

⁵ Erhat, 1989: 129.

⁶ Gazis 2018: 36.

⁷ Miszczak, 2019: 2- 3.

⁸ Erhat, 1989: 129.

rather than as the wicked god of the dead, despite being the one who rules over the dead. He was still a terrifying deity since people were instinctively apprehensive to approach him.⁹

The classic myth involves Hades snatching Persephone, the daughter of Demeter, the Goddess of agriculture. Persephone was playing in a meadow when Hades grabbed her and led her to the Underworld. Demeter was heartbroken by her daughter's departure and ignored her duties, leading crops to perish. Zeus intervened, ordering Hades to release Persephone. However, before returning, Persephone consumed six pomegranate seeds, which bound her to the Underworld for a portion of the year. She splits her time between being Hades' queen and being with her mother. Persephone's underground stay corresponds with winter, when Demeter mourns, preventing growth. When Persephone returns, Demeter rejoices, ushering in spring and rejuvenation. This narrative describes the shifting seasons in Greek mythology.¹⁰ It is said that the meadow Persephone was in is the mountainous region in Asia Minor called Nysa.¹¹ This city will be relevant since Nysa had a sacred site called Acharaca, dedicated to Hades and Persephone.

Hades is in the almost unimaginable place of being a god without a proper cult. Although other incarnations of the god, such as Plouton or Klymenos, receive adoration, the god recognized by the name of Hades does not. This lack of worship is supported by the absence of epigraphic or other evidence for one in the name of Hades throughout the Greek world.

The Greek religion is predicated on the principle of reciprocity and one facet of Hades' isolation is that he gets nothing from worshippers since he has nothing to contribute in return. Even mystery and Orphic cults, which have an esoteric character and are concerned with getting their initiates more favourable terms in the afterlife, do not involve Hades because he

⁹ Miszczak, 2019:2.

¹⁰ Demirtaş 2017: 137.

¹¹ Evelyn-White, 1914: 291.

has no role in allocating death or even evaluating the dead; he solely rules over them.¹² The lack of cult could also be because the word “Hades” was used to cover the Underworld in general. While there is no known cult for Hades, it does not mean that there was no worship in the name of him.

Hades was left alone as a god; he is ancestor to no one, and Greek genealogies usually do not mention him. He might have even appeared as the male equal to Demeter-Persephone,

As the husband of the earth goddess, to fill the void in the social religious system in accordance with the patriarchal pattern of Greek polytheism.¹³

1.2.1. Meaning of the Name

Derived from Aidoneus/Haides, the literary meaning of the god’s name is “invisible” or “unseen”. This name is both used as the name of the god, and the land he rules, the Underworld.¹⁴ To give epic meaning to the name Hades, Homer also uses the same word to mention both the god and his kingdom.¹⁵ The references and other types of proof listed below are sufficient to show that the lower-world deity was also admired throughout the Hellenic world and that he went by a variety of names and forms, including Plouton or Plouteus, Zeus Chthonios [meaning “Zeus of the Underworld”]¹⁶, Klymenos, Trophonios, and, very infrequently, Hades.¹⁷ The fear of actually meeting Hades was so intense that he was given these various titles,¹⁸ latinized as Pluto, which meant “the giver of wealth” because he lived where there were many hidden treasures,¹⁹ identifying him with the precious mines underneath

¹² Burton, 2018: 212.

¹³ Farnell, 2010: 283-4.

¹⁴ Erhat 1989: 120.

¹⁵ Garland, 1988: 49.

¹⁶ Tripp 1970, 257.

¹⁷ Farnell, 2010: 280.

¹⁸ Macauley 2010: 107.

¹⁹ Miszczak 2019: 3.

the soil and the rich vegetation and connecting the Underworld with other riches.²⁰ The title "Pluto" was not used during the Archaic Period²¹ and it is thought that the god was started to be referred to as Pluto starting from 5th century B.C.,²² perhaps due to the people's fears of saying his actual name. In the Classical Period, the name Hades was solely used to refer to the god, not his realm and the souls' descent to the Underworld was expressed as "es Haidou", as in meaning of "to the house of Hades".²³

In the Roman period the god of the Underworld mineral wealth Dis Pater, also referred to as Rex Infernus, along with another Roman underground god Orcus were merged into Pluto. The name was abbreviated as Dis, and it eventually became another name of the Underworld, like the word Hades.²⁴

1.2.2. Descriptions of Hades: The God and the Underworld

The Underworld was thought to be a depressing, gloomy place. The god Hades was associated with this depiction too. In the Classical Period he was usually described with a sullen face, long beard, and knotted hair, sitting on a throne next to his wife Persephone with the scepter and cornucopia as his attributes, ruling the Underworld.²⁵ These two items came into view with the title of Plouton.²⁶ In the neo-classical arts, Hades was often represented in the portrayals of the Rape of Persephone.

Hades has significantly less representation in ancient art, most likely due to the fear of him,²⁷ however some rare pottery paintings of Hades can still be found, sometimes together with Persephone and Demeter, describing the myths about them. The coins (fig. 4) representing

²⁰ Hamilton 2009: 16.

²¹ Farnell 2010: 281.

²² Bremmer 2002: 6.

²³ Garland, 1988: 53.

²⁴ Tripp, 1970: 256.

²⁵ Cömert 2006: 71.

²⁶ Fink 2004: 160.

²⁷ Tripp, 1970: 257.

the kidnapping scene of Persephone, and Cerberus can also be found in Ancient Greece.²⁸ On another example on an Attic black-figure kylix made by Xenokles in the 6th century B.C., Hades can be found alongside his brothers Zeus and Poseidon. He is depicted with an averted head and without any mentioned attributes of his, possibly showing the moment he learnt that he was assigned to be the ruler of the Underworld, expressing his discontent with the assignment. On the Nekyia vase dated to 450-440 B.C., an Attic red-figure calyx krater shows Hades with his wife Persephone, along with other important figures like Hermes, Theseus, and Ajax. The abduction of Persephone is an occasional scene to depict on vases.²⁹ An Attic red-figure bell krater (fig. 5) found in St. Agata dei Goti shows Demeter, Persephone, Herakles, Dionysus and Hades. Here, the gods are sitting together, with Hades wearing a laurel wreath on his short curly hair, holding a large rhyton.³⁰ A limestone relief fragment from Tarentine dating to 4th-3rd centuries B.C. shows Hades and Persephone sitting on their thrones on the left side while Hermes on the right with a woman dressed in chiton and himation waiting in front of a cave like structure (Zanker, 2022: 132-33). Another example from Italy is an amphora (fig. 6) found in Basilicata, dating to 340-330 B.C., by Patera painter. This red-figure vessel has Persephone, Aphrodite, Eros, and Hades on it. Hades is depicted with beard and curly hair, wearing a long chiton and holding his scepter in his hand.³¹

The Underworld is mentioned many times in the Greek myths. The land of Hades is often described in them as gloomy, domicile of the mortals once they are dead. After entering Hades, very few mortals were able to exit the land.³² The only exceptions are heroic, with the examples of Herakles, Theseus, Orpheus, and Odysseus;³³ Odysseus describes the land as where dark shadows roam, a dark swamp that has with a giant, three headed dog named

²⁸ Garland, 1988: 53; Richter, 1913: 175; Burgess, 2000: 50.

²⁹ Garland, 1988: 53.

³⁰ Bell Krater. 380-360 B.C. British Museum. 1865,0103.14.

³¹ Amphora. 340-330 B.C. British Museum. 1867,0508.1334.

³² Anonymous, 1914.

³³ Downing, 2006: 131.

Cerberus waiting at the entrance (fig. 7).³⁴ However, it appears that the Greeks were not particularly concerned with creating a uniform and clearly defined vision of Hades' landscape. They also did not use much creativity with their imagination while designing the geography other than some basic features.³⁵

The Underworld is surrounded by three main rivers; the sorrow river of Acheron, the fire river of Phlegethon, and the most famous one is the river for the unbreakable oaths that the gods vow and hate, Styx. Styx is also the river the souls crossed to reach the Underworld, on a boat sailed by Charon. According to some sources two rivers are added to these: the oblivion river of Lethe and the lamentation river of Cocytus. The souls were judged by Minos, and most were sent to the Asphodel Meadows, a place for souls neither good nor bad. The good souls were sent to Elysion Fields for rewards and bad ones to Tartarus, where they were punished.³⁶

1.2.3. The Terminology Used and Their Meanings

The ancient Greeks used several different terms for their oracles of the dead: Ploutonion, Necromanteion and rarely Psychomanteion.

Ploutonion (Πλουτόνιον) or latinized as Plutonium means the “place of Pluto” and is a dedicated place to the Greek god of Underworld Pluto, mostly known as Hades. They are usually located at a place with poisonous gases.³⁷

Necromanteion (Νεκρομαντεῖον) means the “prophecy place of the dead” and its first mention dates back to the 5th century B.C. The lexicographer of the 5th century A.D., Hesychius claims the word might have been derived from the older Laconian term nekyorion, “seeing place of the dead.”³⁸

³⁴ Purves, 2011: 326.

³⁵ Garland, 1988: 51.

³⁶ Scholl and Mannack, 2010: 77.

³⁷ Miszczak, 2019: 2.

³⁸ Ogden, 200: 168.

Psychomanteion (ψυχομαντεῖον) can be translated as the “drawing place of ghosts” was derived towards the end of the 4th century B.C.³⁹

³⁹ Ogden, 200: 168.

2. Ancient Sources

Many ancient writers such as Homer, Hesiodos, Aristophanes, and Vergilius gave information about the Underworld, and the god himself. Only a few actually cite sacred enclosures as worship places to Hades, and entrances to Hades. From these it is understood that this name is used both for the Underworld and the god who rules it. The Cult of Hades has also a place and an identity in the seasonal cycle mythology due to his connection with Persephone and Demeter, and also in the temples and cults of Demeter and Persephone/Kore.

It is often stated that there is no evidence of any specific offerings which being made in Hades' honour, and it is known that the god did not have a widely recognized cult, however, tragedies mention that libations and worships were made for the god. As an example, Euripides mentions in his tragedy "Phoinissai" that the drops of blood spilt on the battlefield represent a libation to Hades.⁴⁰ This is obviously not the only scale. He was worshipped throughout Turkey, Greece and Italy. Pausanias mentions the lack of cult for the god, but also cites a temple dedicated to him.⁴¹ A Plutonium is mentioned on an inscription from Corinth,⁴² however, there is no architectural evidence which leads to a structure, nor do ancient texts to cite about it.

The terms Necromanteion (oracle of the dead), Charonium/Charonion and Plutonium/Ploutonion were taken into consideration while searching through the ancient sources.

2.1. Hierapolis

Strabo mentions that both a Charonium⁴³ and a Plutonium⁴⁴ exist in the Phrygian cultic centre of Hierapolis. He adds more details about the cave of Charonium mentioning its dense, toxic vapours and moderate size only enough for one man at a time. Sometimes bulls were led

⁴⁰ Garland, 1988: 53.

⁴¹ Burton, 2018: 212.

⁴² Garland, 1988: 53.

⁴³ Str. 12.8.

⁴⁴ Str. 13.4.

into the cave and they would die instantly and Strabo himself says that he threw a sparrow in it to test this. He also talks about the hot springs in the area with water that thickens and turns into stone, and the people of the city building walls with these stones.⁴⁵

2.2. Acharaca

In the Caria region of Asia Minor, between the cities of Tralles and Nysa, there was Acharaca. In this city there was a Plutonium, a shrine for Hades and Persephone and a cave with toxic gases called Charonium. Strabo mentions that the individuals with a sickness would come here to seek treatments from the priests who sleep in the cave and see things through their dreams. This cave is forbidden to anyone other than the priests as it is deadly. An annual festival was also celebrated at Acharaca with men carrying a bull to the cave, as it was mentioned in Hierapolis.⁴⁶

2.3. Heracleia Pontica

After getting tricked by Hera to kill his wife and children, Herakles had to complete 12 labours to atone his sins. The last of these labours was to kidnap Cerberus. For this, he had to travel to the Underworld and successfully come back on earth.⁴⁷ To enter the Underworld he had to use one of the entrances, possibly a cave. While some ancient sources claim that this entrance was located in Taenarum, Greece, according to Xenophon Herakles used the cave with a depth of more than two stadia in Acherusian Chersonese in Bithynia.⁴⁸ This location corresponds to Bababurun in modern day Heracleia Pontica, where a cave named Herakles/Cehennemağzı (Hellmouth in Turkish).

⁴⁵ Str. 13.4.

⁴⁶ Str. 14.1.44.

⁴⁷ Verbanck-Pierard, 2018: 163.

⁴⁸ Xen. Anab. 6.2.2.

Plutarch also associates this place with an oracle of the dead and claims this is where the tyrant Pausanias discussed with the ghost of Kleonike.⁴⁹

The late Antiquity writer Quintus of Smyrna mentions a grand cave with niches filled with crystal water all around, with a wide fissure going down to the pit of Hades.⁵⁰

2.4. Taenarum in Laconia

As mentioned above, the entrance to the Underworld used by Herakles to take Cerberus is widely accepted as the location in Taenarum in Laconia. This is the case also for Apollodorus:⁵¹

“And having come to Taenarum in Laconia, where is the mouth of the descent to Hades, he descended through it.”

Another ancient writer, Pausanias mentions a horrible serpent living in Taenarum was called the “hound of Hades” because of its poisonous bite.⁵²

2.5. Acheron in Thesprotia, Epirus

Acheron is one of the rivers flowing through the Underworld. It also has a correspondence on earth. Herodotus is one of the ancient writers mentioning it. He says that the Corinthian tyrant Periander sent messengers to the Oracle of the Dead on the river Acheron in Thesprotia to learn important information.⁵³ Pausanias depicts the Acheron as one of the entrances to the Underworld and mentions Charon carrying the souls across it.⁵⁴ In the Middle Ages, Dante also mentions Acheron as the entrance to the Underworld in his *Inferno*.⁵⁵

⁴⁹ Plut. Cim. 6.

⁵⁰ Quint. Smyrn. Post Homerica 6.469-91.

⁵¹ Apd. 2.5.12.

⁵² Paus. 3.25.5.

⁵³ Hdt. 5. 92G.

⁵⁴ Paus. 10.28.

⁵⁵ Dante, 3.78.

2.6. Elis

According to Strabo, a naiad nymph called Minthe, daughter of the Underworld river god Cocytus was a mistress to Hades. His jealousy filled wife Persephone, eventually turning Minthe into a mint garden on top of a mountain called after her, Minthi, where also a temple dedicated to Hades was located near Pylus, Elis.⁵⁶ Pausanias also mentions this temple and claims that the men of Elis were the only people who worshipped Hades. The area of the temple would be open once a year and only the priest was allowed to enter. He also gives information about why the Eleans worship the god; It is told that Athena supported Heracles in his expedition against Pylus in Elis. Interestingly, Hades, Heracles' adversary, fought alongside the Pylians, who worshipped him.⁵⁷

2.7. Lake Avernus near Cumae

The Romans placed great importance on Avernus, seeing it as the entrance to the Underworld. Roman writers frequently used its name interchangeably with the realm of the dead.

Virgil mentions in his *Aeneid* that looking for his father, Aeneas descends to the Underworld via a cave situated near the Lake Avernus, where he also meets the prophetess Sibyl of Cumae by the lake's shore, who told him the path to the Underworld. Virgil also talks about the throat burning vapour coming out of the entrance.⁵⁸ Odysseus descends to the Underworld from the same place, meeting his comrade Elpenor who disappeared while at Circe's palace.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Str. 8.3.14.

⁵⁷ Paus. 6.25.2-3.

⁵⁸ Verg. Aen.

⁵⁹ Hyg. Fab. 125.

Strabo also mentions Avernus on multiple occasions. First, he acknowledges an oracle of the dead near Lake Aornus or Avernus⁶⁰ and claims that the lake's appearance led people to believe it was an entrance for the Underworld.⁶¹

Later, he describes the lake, its surroundings and the phenomenon of Plutonium:⁶²

“The Avernus is surrounded by steep hills which encompass the whole of it, with the exception of the entrance. These hills, now so beautifully cultivated, were formerly covered with wild forests, gigantic and impenetrable, which overshadowed the gulf, imparting a feeling of superstitious awe. The inhabitants affirm that birds, flying over the lake, fall into the water, being stifled by the vapours rising from it, a phenomenon of all Plutonian localities. They believed, in fact, that this place was a Plutonium, around which the Kimmerians used to dwell, and those who sailed into the place made sacrifice and propitiatory offerings to the infernal deities, as they were instructed by the priests who ministered at the place. There is here a spring of water near to the sea fit for drinking, from which, however, every one abstained, as they supposed it to be water from the Styx: [they thought likewise] that the oracle of the dead was situated somewhere here; and the hot springs near to the Acherusian Lake indicated the proximity of Pyriphlegethon.”⁶³

Pliny the Elder talks about a cave with poisonous gas around the same region in his *Natural History*, however it could be another cave with similar characteristics.

2.8. Aornum

There are two Aornums in the world, according to the ancient writers. One is in Greece and the other one is in Asia Minor. Pausanias mentions the one in Thesprotia, Greece and tells us that there was an oracle of the dead there and Orpheus used this entrance to the Underworld to reclaim his wife Eurydice back.⁶⁴ Strabo talks about the Asia Minor one very briefly; he locates the place to the south of Magnesia ad Meandrum, near to the village of Carian Thymbria. He mentions a cave called Charonium there with poisonous fumes.⁶⁵ Unfortunately, we do not have further information about these places.

⁶⁰ Str. 1.2.18.

⁶¹ Str. 5.4.5.

⁶² Str. 5.4.6.

⁶³ Translated by H. C. Hamilton.

⁶⁴ Paus. 9.30.

⁶⁵ Str. 14.1.11.

3. Historical Cartography and Protection Attitude

This chapter will talk about the Ottoman cartography and the importance the Ottomans gave to the cultural heritage we protect today. In this chapter, when I say Ottoman, I mean not only Anatolia, but also Egypt and Mesopotamia. Basically, this problem of preservation and source is the same.

3.1. Cartography

Geography was studied extensively throughout the Ottoman Empire. However, prior to the development of modern geography, the Ottomans, like their European counterparts, understood geography as an entourage describing the universe in a broad sense. Under the influence of the Samarkand school, the Ottomans gained geographical knowledge in the form of celestial geography via mathematics. Evliya Çelebi, a traveller who provided vital geographical information in his work *Seyahatname*, including information about the geography, history, culture, sociology, and philology of the regions he visited. During the Ottoman period, Piri Reis' *Kitab-ı Bahriye* and Kâtip Çelebi's *Cihannüma* significantly influenced geography.⁶⁶ The most significant challenge that researchers studying Ottoman cartography highlight is the lack of cataloguing studies that would allow them to meet information appropriate for the vastness of the Ottoman Empire's boundaries. Despite extensive research on significant maps in the Topkapı Palace Museum Library and other libraries, this topic remains unresolved in many manuscript libraries and archives. The fact that many of these libraries' catalogues, which have been prepared since their inception, do not include any space for maps and that geography books are occasionally listed, suggests that new examples of Ottoman historical maps may be discovered as cataloguing efforts increase. One of the issues found in the criticism and classification of Ottoman geographical

⁶⁶ Özlü, Üzüm, 2020: 180-1.

works, considerable and sometimes disproportionate copy differences, also affects maps. The problem, which has become widespread in the form of omitting maps from many works, seldom changes, such as the inclusion of maps that were not originally included in the work.⁶⁷ One cannot enter the archives of the state, even if you have a valid reason it is incredibly hard to get the permission. The archives has a digital database, however only the studied materials are on that database. However, to study and upload the remaining objects to the digital database one has to enter the archives, and the loop continues. There are no detailed city maps to start with, instead of making maps of the neighbourhoods there are larger city maps to have a broad idea. Although the cartography started in the 16th century for the Ottomans, along with other important geographical works, they never gave importance to details with the maps and local small areas.

When the old maps were being investigated to see if there were any interesting names used for the interested sites for the thesis, interestingly, the small coastal city of Karadeniz Ereğlisi, thought to be one of the gateways to Hades, is called Heraclea Pontica, its ancient name, on almost all maps from the 15th to the 19th centuries even though it has no visible ancient structural remains, while the much larger Hierapolis, with its elusive white travertines and a ploutonion, is barely mentioned on maps. And the other interested sites were not mentioned at all.

3.2. Protection Attitude

The interest in the old is based on many factors such as the artistic, economic, utilisation values of ancient artefacts or religious-based fear and respect. This situation has forced countries to adopt an attitude towards cultural assets.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Sarıcaoğlu, 2002: 303-312.

⁶⁸ Madran, 1985: 503.

The first antiquities legislation in Europe dates back to Rome. However, throughout these periods, when historical knowledge was still developing and archaeology had not yet become a science, it was impossible to discuss the establishment of a link between antiquities and history. Nonetheless, in the Roman Empire, where aesthetic impulses were strong, and in the mediaeval nations, where religious feelings were strong, rules and restrictions enacted for aesthetic and religious reasons prevented the destruction of numerous items.⁶⁹ For the first time, Pope Leo X (1512-1513) ruled that works of art were important not just from an aesthetic but also from a historical standpoint, and so they should be conserved. After that, the systematic study of ancient objects began. However, these were limited to works from the Classical Period, and it was not until after the Renaissance that works from all periods were examined.⁷⁰ Turkey disregards its historical monuments. The relationship between old and new, particularly in the physical environment, could not be defined, and the attitude of a society seeking to renew itself toward the old could not be articulated clearly. The new order that will be established after the Republic would surely necessitate new values in life. However, as we can see in the physical environment, the hunt for new values continues without delivering any good benefits, while existing values are simply allowed to waste away. Religious buildings kept by living traditions, as well as buildings within the field of interest of traditional organisations and so protected, do not demonstrate a solid, coherent historical sensibility commensurate with Turkey's long and rich history. And during the Ottoman times, the interest to protect the “old artefacts” only started towards the end of the 19th century with the Westernization efforts.⁷¹ They then realised that they should deal with these artefacts themselves and put them in their own museum so that they can rise to the level of contemporary civilizations. Protection works were carried out starting in Istanbul and laws

⁶⁹ Mumcu, 1969: 53.

⁷⁰ Mumcu, 1969: 54-55.

⁷¹ Akçura, 1972: 39.

were being worked on to prevent the artefacts from being taken out of the country. The public interest was increased even more with the works of Osman Hamdi Bey, an Ottoman intellectual establishing a museum.⁷²

An examination of documents, particularly memoirs and travel diaries, as well as the works of Ottoman historiographers, reveals that the general attitude of Ottoman society toward architecture and works of art prior to the Anatolian-Turkish Age of Art or the Age in which they lived can be described as indifference, unconsciousness, and religion factor⁷³. Local and foreign travellers who visited Anatolia generally did not give much detail, and those who travelled in more detail did not mention any Ploutonion except Hierapolis and Acharaca. Between these two, the one in Hierapolis is mostly discussed. The French traveller Charles Texier, for example, mentions both but gives details about the one in Hierapolis. As an example of an older local traveller, Evliya Çelebi, even though he went to the places very close to both cities, does not mention either of them, though it is debatable whether he actually went to the places he mentions. Evliya Çelebi goes even further and says the following about the ruins of Ephesus: If we write about the ruins, there is no benefit in writing about the ruins. There is trouble in mentioning what is not famous, in prolonging the praise of things that are of little use. In order not to prolong our article, we visited this city of Bodurine, whose great buildings lie in ruins.⁷⁴ This is often the case for other local travellers as well.

According to foreign travellers, Turks do not appreciate old monuments.⁷⁵ Ambassadors who came to the country on missions gave many examples of this lack of awareness of protection. For example, the old Byzantine coins were used as weights by the

⁷² Şahin, 2007: 110-8.

⁷³ Madran, 1985: 505.

⁷⁴ Çelebi, Kahraman 2011: 148-151.

⁷⁵ Şahin, 2007: 104.

people because they were *giaour*⁷⁶ coins. Another example is that while watching the workers at work, they would see the workers dig up a pristine statue of a soldier from the ground and immediately smash it with a hammer.⁷⁷

This behaviour was not only done by the people, but also by the state. Examples include the use of the Parthenon of Athens as an arsenal, the destruction and selling of archaeological artefacts in Greece and Mesopotamia by the state, and the easy sale of artefacts excavated by the people themselves to other countries and foreigners because they were not under state protection. It is known that during the construction of the Süleymaniye Mosque, columns collected from the Hippodrome were cut into slabs and used as paving stones for the baths. Architectural fragments from the city of Alexandria Troas in Çanakkale were taken to Istanbul and used in many different constructions. Beyond the spolia, it is known that some quality buildings in Istanbul and Edirne were destroyed due to the state construction activities⁷⁸ and they were not ashamed of it.⁷⁹

When scholars talk about the importance the Ottomans attached to other cultures and antiquities, they often refer to the relationship between Mehmet the Conqueror and how protected Hagia Sophia. It is true that this attitude was conscious. However, this consciousness should also be an indicator of the desire to maximise the utilisation of the existing building stock and the policy of making the best use of the resources and assets of the state.⁸⁰ Moreover, while Istanbul was a large capital city, it is wrong to compare it with the conservation mentality of small cities in Anatolia.

As a result of urbanisation, destruction of nature, lack of care, building stones found in the surrounding ancient cities due to insufficient resources while building new buildings after

⁷⁶ The word is used by the Turkish to describe the Christians.

⁷⁷ Madran, 1985: 511.

⁷⁸ Madran, 1985: 511.

⁷⁹ Şahin, 2007: 104.

⁸⁰ Madran, 1985: 514.

earthquakes and the importance given to modern life,⁸¹ and due to the fact that some of the cities mentioned in this thesis are on the earthquake zone, unfortunately, there are not enough resources left today. Given all this, it is not surprising that there is little or no surviving literature on ancient cities and gods, since there has been a general lack of interest, a lack of knowledge and a relatively recent interest in the past by the general public.

⁸¹ Madran, 1985: 511.

4. The Gates and Sanctuaries of Hades

Today, a sacred site, a building, or a place set apart for the worship of a god or gods is referred to as a sanctuary. This expression is not only easy to say, but it also makes logical sense when considered in the context of antiquity. People would go to a sanctuary to carry out religious rituals like sacrifice, prayer, and the presentation of votive offerings. Some temples acted as meeting places as well as commercial and political hubs. A location may occasionally have been picked for a variety of natural characteristics. It may be a man-made building or a natural setting.⁸² There were not many shrines to Hades in the past. He was venerated even though he was mentioned in the Eleusinian and Orphic mystery cults and was honoured during ancient Greek funeral ceremonies. Given that he was the god of the dead, Hades was a terrifying figure. Few people took oaths in his name. While offering sacrifices to him, they avoided gazing at him.⁸³

Pausanias encountered multiple Underworld entrances while traversing Greece in the second century A.D. He either attributed the majority of these locations to the legend of Herakles bringing up the monster Cerberos or to the story of the Underworld god Hades raping Demeter's daughter Kore. They were typically defined as naturally occurring chasms and caves in the earth that could be enclosed with fencing if necessary but otherwise had no distinctive construction. They were recognized (and demonstrated by the locals) as the site of a myth, not a specific ritual or cult. Only a handful of the Underworld's entrances were worship places.⁸⁴

People who were not afraid to go into the wet depths of caverns reported that they seemed to have no bottom and were dark and foreboding. They frequently served as gates to Hades, thus it is not strange that they were given the names Charonia or Plutonia after Charon,

⁸² Glinister, 1997: 61-62.

⁸³ Miszczak, 2019: 4.

⁸⁴ Friese, 2018: 217-218.

the ferryman of the dead, and Hades, the lord of the Underworld. Even small grottoes may have been given the name Plutonium due to the widespread belief that caverns served as portals to the Underworld. Divination was regularly practised in these caverns.⁸⁵ While some of these structures are called sanctuaries, some of them are only referred to as gates to the Underworld. However, the sanctuaries are also thought to be the openings to the Underworld anyway.

There are numerous theories concerning where the entrance to the Underworld lies, but the general consensus is that it is beneath the earth and in the west. The soul comes to a place where there is no delight. The aspect of the Underworld is unsettling and dark.⁸⁶ Although it is a contentious matter, the fact that birth is depicted by the rising of the sun in the east and the world of the dead in the west is because death is symbolized by the setting of the sun.⁸⁷

4.1. Meander Valley of Turkey

As one of the regions in the world that best characterizes intracontinental expansion zones and where essential geological features may be identified, the western section of Anatolia, is also one of the most seismically active parts of the earth. Western Anatolia contains morphologically unique horst and graben zones as a result of the geological structures formed by the geodynamic processes that occurred.⁸⁸ Meander Valley (fig. 8), the largest valley in Western Anatolia and the richest in geothermal resources with tufa rock slopes and many natural caves, is located in the middle of this region. From ancient civilizations to the present, this region has witnessed the most intensive economic aspirations and goals.

The valley is situated in a desirable area suited for settlement. The region's ideal characteristics have resulted in the origins of great civilizations. The valley is situated in the

⁸⁵ Ustinova, 2009: 68.

⁸⁶ Bremmer, 2002: 4.

⁸⁷ Edmons III, 2004: 15.

⁸⁸ Sümer, et. al. 2020: 242.

subtropical climate zone with the Mediterranean climate. Even though the valley is surrounded by medium-height mountains with varied surface shapes, the area is mostly flat, the largest and longest depression region in Western Anatolia, and includes very productive agricultural areas. Olives, figs, and cotton are the primary crops farmed in this region.⁸⁹

Western Anatolia has a seismically active crust that spreads in the north-south direction.⁹⁰ The upper crust of Western Anatolia, which altered shape as a result of these expansion forces, was fractured by normal faults surrounded by E-W trending graben. One of the most significant of these depressions is the Meander Graben. The fault line starting from Aydın (where Acharaca is today) towards Denizli (where Hierapolis is today) the fault line sets have formed. These fault lines follow a step like formation and was first developed in Late Miocene.⁹¹ Various catastrophic earthquakes have struck Western Anatolia, where various civilizations have thrived throughout history. The majority of historical earthquakes occurred near Meander and Denizli/Pamukkale Grabens.⁹²

The hills surrounding the Meander river basin include many interconnecting subterranean tunnels. Hot springs containing calcium and other minerals flow through these caverns, gradually increasing them. However, the caves are a geological feature caused by earthquakes. Some underground caves and corridors fill with noxious gases, and these gasses excavated from the ground were considered sacred, serving as points of contact between this world and the Underworld.⁹³

There are 41 ancient settlements known to exist in the Meander Valley basin. 20 of these ancient settlements have remarkable material culture documents.⁹⁴ The most well known ones include Hierapolis, Aphrodisias, Nysa, Miletus, Priene, and Magnesia ad Meander. One

⁸⁹ Çelik, 2001: 3.

⁹⁰ Dewey, Şengör, 1979: 84.

⁹¹ Sözbilir, 2002: 87.

⁹² DAD Catalogue Database.

⁹³ İdil, 1999: 123.

⁹⁴ Çelik, 2001: 21.

of the important issues that was effective in the establishment of important ancient settlements in terms of economic and cultural in the Meander Valley is the fact that they were established on trade routes. Although the geographical structure of the valley has an uneven topography, the presence of important passes would facilitate transportation easily. In addition, the fact that the valley has a coast to the Aegean Sea and that the geopolitical position of the area was in a very important location are the main reasons that increase the development of economical and cultural activities in the valley.⁹⁵

A unique variety of oracles can be found in Asia Minor's Meander Valley. They were situated in mephitic gas-emitting caves, which are lethal or extremely harmful to the general public. Strabo mentions three Charonia along the Meander, one each at Hierapolis, Acharaca, and the Aornum near Magnesia. He attributes the abundance of cave oracles to the favorable soil conditions that lead to the creation of caverns.⁹⁶ The geological characteristics of the Meander valley have resulted in the creation of various oracular shrines associated with caves that released toxic vapors that were hazardous or lethal to the daily people. The concentration of toxic gases within the caves was higher than outside, and because these gasses may create hallucinations, which were considered divinely inspired revelations, the caves became hallowed to gods. Pluto and Charon's selection as primary gods of the Meander caverns may have been influenced by their reputation for killing countless mortals, among other things the widespread idea that caves lead to the Underworld.⁹⁷

Strabo mentions the entire region of the Meander is prone to earthquakes and there is subsurface activity involving both fire and water that extends deep into the interior. The instability begins in the plains and spreads throughout the region, including Charonium in Hierapolis, Acharaca in Nysa, and closeby Magnesia and Myus. The soil here is not only weak

⁹⁵ Çelik, 2001: 25.

⁹⁶ Ustinova, 2009: 84.

⁹⁷ Ustinona, 2009: 84-87.

and crumbly, but it is also high in salts and easily flammable. The Maeander River is probably winding because its route varies often, depositing silt in different spots along the shore over time. This silt is also driven into the open sea. For example, the river's silt deposits, which span forty stadia, have transformed Priene from a coastal city to one that is now inland.⁹⁸

4.1.1. Hierapolis

Hierapolis was a Hellenistic Greek city founded on the site of a Phrygian cult center dedicated to the Anatolian mother goddess Cybele in Phrygia, southern Anatolia (fig. 10). It was known for its hot springs. Its large remnants are located near modern Pamukkale in Turkey. Its hot springs have been used as a spa center at least since 2nd century B.C. The city is also famous for housing the tomb of Philip the Apostle. The city was built on top a sanctuary of the local Phrygian mother goddess Cybele and it became a sacred city, with the Letoia being the main religious event, called after the goddess Leto, a local variation of Cybele, who was honored with orgiastic rites. There was also adoration of Apollo Lairbenos. Hierapolis was restored between 14 and 37 CE by the Roman emperor Tiberius and survived until 1334, when a major earthquake hit and left the city to be abandoned. The ruins, unearthed since the 19th century, contain baths, a gymnasium, an agora, a theatre, a necropolis a sacred area for Apollo and a Byzantine church among other things. Hierapolis was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1988.⁹⁹

Following Strabo's description of a narrow opening that could only fit one man, for many years the archaeologist thought this place was a tunnel next to the Temple of Apollo - the old Plutonium-, located to the south of the theatre (fig. 9). In 2013 the then excavation director of Hierapolis Francesco D'Andria extended the excavation towards the south, a

⁹⁸ Str. 12.8.17.

⁹⁹ D'Andria, 2019: 479.

complex with a water pool, a courtyard and a round temple with ionic columns with a cave adjacent, two of which inscribed with the names of Plouton and Kore -the new Plutonium- (fig. 11). D'Andria also discovered two sculptures of the three headed dog Cerberus and a snake inside the water pool, interpreting the cave was associated with the entrance to the Underworld.¹⁰⁰

Plutonium was a deep cave with a narrow mouth (*stomion*) filled with misty poisonous vapours that killed any animal that entered it. Only the galli, Cybele's eunuch priests, were able to enter the cave, perhaps because of their breath-holding tactics, antidotes, or a phenomenon known as *enthousiasmos*. Plutonium consists of a deep chamber and a 0.9-metre-wide hole that emits very hazardous gases (fig. 12-13). Even in the courtyard in front of this chamber, there is a strong odor, and the doorway to the Plutonium's interior is barred for security reasons. Thus, current scientists have verified ancient tales of gas discharge and discovered that they are precise. Excavations at the site discovered an Apollo temple dating back to the first century AD, near to the cavern. This temple was most likely built on the site of an earlier temple, but even if it did exist, it could not have predated the first century BC, as Strabo was unaware of it. The Plutonium could be accessed directly from inside the Apollo temple. Recent geophysical research shows that a fault line went just beneath the temple. The specifics of the rite at the Hierapolis sanctuary are unknown. The indigenous deity, known as the Mistress of Mountains and Caves and identified with Cybele, was most likely the original owner of the mephitic chasm, which the Greeks linked with Pluto. This legend may explain why Cybele and Apollo were worshipped together in the sanctuary during the first century AD, as well as the involvement of Cybele's priests in the oracular cult. Apollo's temple, built after Strabo's period in the mid-first century AD, was a recent addition to the site. The most likely functional explanation for the direct relationship between the Apollo Temple and Plutonium is the use of

¹⁰⁰ Friese, 2019: 228-9.

the gas's hallucinogenic properties. Apollo's house appears to have been built near the mephitic abyss in order to elicit prophetic dreams.¹⁰¹

The water pool of the Plutonium emits the poisonous gas of CO₂, hence the priests inhale it and see the dreams and find a connection with the dead. Today the courtyard of the sanctuary is still full of gas, however it stays close to the ground as the oxygen is lighter than the gas. Hence, the reason why the spectators were not toxicated by the fumes when they were on the theatre steps above the pool.¹⁰²

Even though the visitors associated this place as one of the entrances to the Underworld, no ancient writer mentions that there was a gate there. Of course, since the sanctuary is sacred to the god Pluto, it is mythically connected to the Underworld, however, while there was a sort of connection with the dead, there was no connection on a personal level.

4.1.2. Acharaca

Located between Nysa and Tralles, and connected to Nysa by a sacred road, Acharaca (modern day Salavatlı Village, Aydın) has not much remains other than the area for Pluto and a Kore, and the Plutonium. It was the sanctuary of the ancient city Nysa. Near this place, there is a cave known throughout Anatolia, Charonium, which offers miraculous cures because it is a source of sulfur water, healing the sick. This source has made Nysa an economically developed city in its region. Acharaca was founded by Antiochus I Soter during the first half of the 3rd century B.C. The word Acharaca comes from the Luwi language, meaning Great Water.¹⁰³

Acharaca served as a healing center, with a trained clergy force. The cave was the most perilous element of this location for unwelcome guests. The Plutonium in Hierapolis competed

¹⁰¹ Ustinova, 2009: 84-6.

¹⁰² Friese, 2018: 229.

¹⁰³ Akdoğan Arca, 2017: 186.

with the sanctuary at Nysa, which also claimed the myth of Persephone's kidnapping by Hades. The claim of Nysa as the location of this event was its name, because it occurred on the Plain of Nysa, according to the "Homeric Hymn to Demeter." Despite panhellenic awareness that such a plain existed in Eleusis, the Nyseans were able to bring this story back to their native turf.¹⁰⁴

In some cases, the ill were blessed with visions provided by the gods and followed their instructions, while in others, priests slept in the Charonion on behalf of the suppliants and learned their cure through dreams. Except for the sick and priests, everyone else was barred from entering the area. Enquirers were usually guided by priests, who introduced them into the mysteries. In addition, Acharaca hosted an annual festival. In a nighttime ceremony, participants could see and hear 'all these things', while at noon, naked boys and young men dragged a bull into the cave and left it to die.¹⁰⁵

The sanctuary itself consisted of two temples, one dedicated to Pluto and the other to Persephone, situated close to a massive magnificent cave known as the Charonium. According to Strabo, the Charonium (fig. 16) was located just above the temple sanctuary, but there is no longer a cave there. However, to the west, there is a steep-sided valley through which flows a sulphur-containing stream. Furthermore, atop the valley's rocky slopes, there are some vaulted masonry buildings of a type unique to Nysa. It is likely that these represent the location of the Charonion, but the sulphurous water was undoubtedly the source of Acharaca's reputation as a health spa.¹⁰⁶

Archaeological investigations have identified the Plutonium's location on the east side of the valley near the contemporary settlement. Some limited excavations in the early twentieth century revealed a portion of the Pluto and Kore temple complex. The region was also believed

¹⁰⁴ Mischczak, 2019: 6.

¹⁰⁵ Ustinova, 2009: 87.

¹⁰⁶ İdil, 1999: 123-4.

to have been used as a quarry. H. Pringsheim, a member of the German team working at Nysa, conducted excavations here briefly in 1909 and provided information regarding the temple's layout. The Doric order peripteral temple (fig. 14-15) was most likely constructed during the Hellenistic period, but it was renovated during the Roman Empire and turned into a church. Based on the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Classical Sites*, issued in 1976, the original walls and fortifications were also visible. The cella walls were made of worked limestone and separated into distinct spaces by parallel walls. Thus, the temple appears to have had a unique layout, with the entrance likely located at the north end. The sacred path going to the site from Nysa most likely passed by the temple's south end before winding around to the west and leading into a large open area with an altar to Pluto and Kore in front of the temple entrance. None of the unearthed architectural components could be used to date the temple's construction. However, among the rubble were discovered two seriously damaged Roman capitals, showing that the edifice was still standing by the end of the fourth century A.D. Later on, the temple was encircled by an opus incertum wall and transformed into a church.¹⁰⁷

According to recent traveler reports, just a portion of the temple is accessible. It is also difficult to get there because you must drive uphill through the settlement of Salavatlı and then walk for half a kilometer.¹⁰⁸

There is no mention of an oracle of a necromantion in Acharaca, however, there is definitely intoxicating gases exist around the sanctuary.¹⁰⁹

Unfortunately, there is no contemporary excavations conducted at Acharaca and there is almost no published article about it, therefore, the information one can get is extremely limited.

¹⁰⁷ İdil, 1999: 124.

¹⁰⁸ Miszczak, 2019: 7.

¹⁰⁹ Friese, 2018: 229.

4.2. Pisidia

Pisidia was a region in the Asia Minor, located to the north of Pamphylia, today's Antalya (fig. 17). The region extends over modern Burdur, Isparta, north Antalya and western parts of Konya. The area includes 57 ancient cities and the most well known cities located in this region includes Sagalassos and Termessos. Because of its high height and the alternation of mountain ranges and valleys, much of Pisidia has an Oro-Mediterranean climate that can be described as sub-humid and cool. Temperature variations would have been significant, depending on elevation. The orientation of many of the mountain ranges impacted interactions in such a way that only routes operating perpendicular to the main valleys, particularly those in the enclosed alluvial areas of western Pisidia, provided easy communication, whereas across routes linking a valley to its neighbors would have been extremely difficult. Although Pisidia is nearby the Mediterranean Sea, the mild climate of the south is unable to reach the heights of the Taurus mountains. Although the climate is too dry for forests, crop plants thrive in locations with mountain water. This water sustains the plateau. The Pisidian cities, which were largely built on the hills, benefited from this abundance. Irrigated soil is ideal for fruit production and husbandry. Pisidia was and continues to be a very fertile location, with enough water supply and significant expanses of cultivable ground for both agriculture and fruiticulture, particularly in the western side of the territory, where the great agricultural estates were located.¹¹⁰

According to the reports prepared by the Chamber of Geology Engineering of Turkey (2021), Burdur, Isparta and the north part of Antalya are under the risk of earthquakes due to their active fault lines. This information and the fault lines can be found on the maps prepared by the Institute of Mineral Research and Exploration of Turkey (2023). Furthermore, when the coordinates of the ancient city Kodroula entered to the online map of earthquake risk prepared by the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (2019), it can be seen that the city was

¹¹⁰ Talloen, 2015: 13-20.

built on the very high risk earthquake area.¹¹¹ Considering the active fault lines in the region of Pisidia, to find a temple or a cult dedicated to Hades is not surprising.

4.2.1. Kodroula

Our perspective of religious activity is largely influenced by the sources we use and their availability. In the instance of Pisidia, the evidence supporting religious practice is necessarily influenced by regional research trends. Despite significant efforts over the last decade, many sites remain inadequately recorded and published, and most artefact categories have never been investigated systematically. As a result, imposing patterns on this hard and inchoate material is difficult and occasionally speculative.¹¹² Kodroula falls into these categories perfectly.

Even though a good number of coins known of Kodroula, about the city itself only a very little is known and it is hard to locate where the city exactly is. Richard Talbert mentions the city was settled through Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine times in his *Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World*.¹¹³ The British archaeologist W. H. Ramsay in 1884 and 1886 took trips to West Pisidia trying to document the ruins and inscriptions, to map the ancient cities, and locate the unknown ones. He identifies a number of ancient ruins in Kestel and its neighboring areas that could be either Kodroula, Kolbasa or Kormasa; however he could not identify their ancient names since there was no actual evidence.¹¹⁴

The ruins in the mountainous area of Kestel called Kaynar Kalesi were also documented by George Bean in 1957 and thought to be Kodroula. He mentions the ruins occupying a triangular shaped hill with some parts scattered towards the east. He notes the ruins are mostly undisturbed, however due to the contemporary treasure hunts, a lot of holes were reported. At

¹¹¹ tdth.afad.gov.tr/TDTH/main.xhtml.

¹¹² Talloen, 2015: 11.

¹¹³ 2000: 65.

¹¹⁴ Bean, 1960: 46-7.

the top of the mentioned hill a wall of rubble stones and partially ashlar blocks enclosed the entire area. Towards the west of the hill along with a tomb, architectural fragments of metopes, triglyphs and a number of ostothecae decorated with doors and Macedonian shields were noted. On the southeast part of the hill Bean reports a sanctuary of Pluto and Kore in a vertical rock carved niche with two dowel holes on the floor with a hollowed out rock hole. On the façade, two Roman inscriptions dating to 2nd century A.D. can be found:¹¹⁵

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Πλούτωνι καὶ Κόρη θεοῖς ἐπηκόοις Πόπλιος Αἴλιος Μινουκιανός[ς] καὶ Πετρωνία Αἰμιλία Μάρκον θυγάτηρ ἢ σύνβιτος αὐτοῦ εὐχαρίσαντο κατὰ εὐχὴν κοράσιον ὀνόματι Ἰεροδουλίδα, ἣν καὶ ἐποίησαν ἱεροδούλην, ὥστε ὑπηρετεῖν αὐτὴν τοῖς θεοῖς καὶ μηδενὶ ἐξέστω ἐξαλλοτριώσαι αὐτὴν μηδέ τὰ ἐξ αὐτῆς τέκνα¹¹⁷</p> | <p>2. Κλωδία Μάνου Ψεκάδος ἱερόδουλος Πλούτωνος καὶ Κόρης τό χαλκῆον ἀγάλμα ἀνέθηκεν τῇ Κόρη ἐκ τῶν ἰδίων καὶ Ἰαν τὴν θυγατέρα ἐποίησε καὶ τὰ τέκνα αὐτῆς¹¹⁶</p> |
|---|---|

From these inscriptions it can be understood that these dedicated girls were meant to be priestesses since birth are slaves since free-born people dedicating themselves since birth was not common. Bean does not give any further information about the cult itself and mentions there is no certainty about the cult's existence here and it is not known if it was an open air or closed sanctuary. However since there were decorated epistyle fragments around the structure, this place being dedicated to a some sort of a cult, in this case because of the inscriptions to Pluto and Kore, is not unlikely.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ Bean, 1960: 48.

¹¹⁶ “Klōdia, daughter of Manes, granddaughter of Psekas, priestess of Pluto and Kore dedicated at her own expenses this bronze statue to Kore and made her daughter Ias and her children into priestesses.” Translated by Berk Oğuz.

¹¹⁷ “Publius Aemilius, son of Minucianus, and Petronia Aemilia, daughter of Marcus and wife of Publius, dedicated their little daughter whose name is Ierodoulis willingly to the “epēkooi” gods Pluto and Kore and consecrated her as a priestess to serve these gods: It is forbidden for anyone to remove her or her children/descendants from this position.” Translated by Berk Oğuz.

¹¹⁸ Bean, 1960: 49-50.

In 1996, a survey was held in the area of Kaynar Kalesi (fig. 18). The report of this survey mentions the city walls are protected at least 2 kilometers long, and dated to 3rd century B.C. or early 2nd century B.C. Hellenistic period with a triangular shaped acropolis containing three towers. The area also has a bathhouse and a number of cisterns. One of the buildings, a temple, they investigated in detail is dated to the Augustan period due to the palmette decoration covered with leaves in the pediment. The temple was in doric prostyle, built out of limestone on the bedrock. This temple is dedicated to Pluto and Kore as understood from the inscriptions. This dedication explains an unusual feature of the temple: underneath the cella, there is an underground room reachable by a staircase. The room is interpreted as a secure space to put the cultic sculpture of Pluto.¹¹⁹

While the name of the ancient city stood in Kaynar Kalesi is not certainly known, due to the high number of the coins minted for the city Kodroula found in the area, it is believed that this location is actually ancient Kodroula, a Roman colony.¹²⁰

Fitting to the tradition of the region, this temple was built against the bedrock. The niche mentioned by Bean is underneath the temple, carved out of the bedrock and the two inscriptions can be found here. Mentioned as a hole by Bean, the bothros, is a common cult installment for libations to the chthonic gods, in the bedrock can also be found underneath the temple.¹²¹ The bothros, the underground room and most importantly the inscriptions all make possible that this temple is indeed dedicated to Pluto and his wife, Kore.

Existence of another cult dedicated to Pluto and Kore in the same area was already known from an ex-voto dedication at Gavur Ören noted by Ramsay (1890):

Μένανδρος Τρωΐλου Πλούτωνι καί κόρη εύχίην έκ των ίδίων άνέθηκεν.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Aydal et. al. 1998: 275-6.

¹²⁰ Aydal, et. al. 1998: 277.

¹²¹ Talloen, 2015: 107.

¹²² “Menander, son of Troilos, dedicated this offering to Pluto and Kore from his own resources.” Translated by Berk Oğuz.

Ramsay interpreted this inscription belongs to a heroon, however Bean claims a votive offering is strange for a tomb.¹²³

While there is no mention of a cave or toxic fumes coming from the ground like the other cultic areas of Hades, this area is very close to an active fault line with a high level earthquake risk, fitting to the other cultic areas of Hades. Unfortunately, the investigation in Kaynar Kalesi/Kodroura is not enough and the sources available are incredibly limited.

4.3. Bithynia

Bithynia was a region in the northwest of Asia Minor adjoining Europe and Asia with the Bosphorus and the Black Sea (fig. 19). For this reason, the area stayed settled throughout the ages. The area was neighboring Pontus and Paphlagonia on the northeast, Phrygia and Galatea on the east and southeast, and Mysia on the west. Various bodies of water surrounded the entire region, from seas to rivers. Bithynia had several important cities in its territory: Nicomedia, Nicaea, and Chalcedon are the most well known ones.¹²⁴ Strabo mentions Bithyns as a tribe in Thrace, and immigrating to the east.¹²⁵

King Croesus absorbed the Bithynians into the Lydian monarchy, bringing them under Persian control (546 BC), and they were included in the satrapy of Phrygia, which encompassed all of the cities up to the Hellespont and Bosphorus. During the Hellenistic period Bithynia was an independent kingdom and in 74 B.C. the region was gifted to the Roman Republic, becoming a united province with Pontus. The region consists of forests and mountains with

¹²³ Bean, 1960: 49.

¹²⁴ Chisholm, 1911: 12.

¹²⁵ Str. 7.3.2.

valleys and shorelines of abundance in resources. The most important mountain is the Mysian Olympus, today's Uludağ, with summits covered in snow for the most part of the year.¹²⁶

North Anatolian Fault Line goes through this region. This fault line is one of the fastest moving and active fault lines in the world. This line is the boundary between the plates of Anatolia and Euroasia.¹²⁷ This fault line does not pass through Heracleia Pontica directly, however, of course it has a great effect on the geological formations of the area the city was built on.

4.3.1. Heracleia Pontica

Heracleia Pontica is located in the modern day Zonguldak, Turkey. Zonguldak is located in the western Black Sea region and has coastlines on the north and west. Its terrain is rough with mostly mountains with occasional plains. The territory of Zonguldak, which is deeply fragmented in places by river valleys, consists of mountainous areas of medium height. The only important indentation of the shoreline along the Black Sea is Bababurun near Karadeniz Ereğlisi, ancient Heracleia Pontica. In many places in the area, coal-bearing layers are visible on the surface.¹²⁸

The city was founded by the greek polis Megara in 560 B.C. -even though some writers claim a much earlier date-¹²⁹ and from its establishment until the Hellenistic period it stayed as an independent city state.¹³⁰ The city, which recognized Roman sovereignty as a result of very heavy losses, began to be ruled by various rulers determined by Rome under Roman rule. The city also accepted Roman colonists and became a city where Romans also lived. It is known that Adiatorix of Galatian origin was appointed by Marcus Antony as the ruler of Heracleia,

¹²⁶ Chisholm, 1911: 12.

¹²⁷ Şengör, et. al. 2005: 37.

¹²⁸ Zonguldak Valiliği, 2024.

¹²⁹ Paus 5.26.7.

¹³⁰ Herda, 2012: 72.

that he put the Romans to the sword in the city some time before the Battle of Actium on 2nd of September 31 A.D., and that the city was included in the Province of Pontus and Bithynia as a result of this event.¹³¹

The ancient city takes its name from the Greek mythology hero Herakles. There are other Heracleias existing, however this one being located by the Black Sea differentiates it from the others and hence gets the name Pontica.¹³² According to the myth, one of the labors given to Herakles to rinse himself from his sins, he had to capture the three-headed dog of Hades, Cerberus, from the Underworld in Heracleia Pontica¹³³ and a cave in this city is thought to be the place where Herakles went to the Underworld. It must be noted that the area being rich in coal is interesting in terms of the connotation of the Underworld.

When the Megarians established their new colony in Maryandini in 560 B.C., they discovered a sizable cave there and quickly made the connection between it and the myth of Heracles' journey into the Underworld and his return with Cerberus. The cave was given the name Acherusian, and a neighboring river was given the name Acheron to complete the image of the gate to Hades. This created a landscape replica of the location of Odysseus' famed council of the dead.¹³⁴

W. Hoepfner discovered the location in 1966, following Quintus' writing, in the middle of three caverns on the south side of the so-called Acheron Valley, south of the contemporary Turkish city of Karadeniz Ereğli.¹³⁵ The cave is entered by a meter wide path.¹³⁶ Today, this tiny dromos-like entry leads to a platform and a roughly rectangular chamber that is mostly submerged by water more than a meter deep.¹³⁷

¹³¹ Str. 12.3.6.

¹³² Akkaya, 1994: 10.

¹³³ Xen. Anab. 6.2.2.

¹³⁴ Ustinova, 2009: 71.

¹³⁵ Friese, 2018: 219.

¹³⁶ Ogden, 2001: 170.

¹³⁷ Friese, 2018: 219.

The walls appear to be worked, at least on the eastern side of the chamber (fig. 20). Three of the walls have small half-round niches carved into them, they were most likely holding sculptures and other dedicatory objects. Architectural remnants suggest that there were maybe more constructions in front of the cave as well as within the chamber. Another tiny tunnel runs from the northwest end of the chamber to a small low unworked cave where human bones from the Middle Ages have been placed (fig. 21-22).¹³⁸

Aside from this survey, no more research were conducted to define the function of the site, and no dedications or inscriptions, nor literary sources, suggest a necromantic worship at this location. Xenophon recognized the Herakleian gateway to Hades as a tourist attraction, but he did not identify any shrine or worship here. Plutarch may have simply used the ambiance of the necromantic ritual to demonstrate the cruelty of the ruler Pausanias, who first killed his bride and then regretted for it. Finally, despite writing about an entrance to Hades, Quintus of Smyrna did not employ the term *necromanteion*.¹³⁹

The ancient sources do not call this place specifically a *necromanteion*, and modern sources interpret the cave as one due to the mythology. Two modern writers mention an odor oozing from the pool, there is actually no poisonous gases being emitted in the area and since there is not inscription dedicated found, we cannot say for sure that this cave had a *necromanteion*. The only thing that can be related to the Underworld maybe is the coal mines in the area.

¹³⁸ Friese, 2018: 220.

¹³⁹ Friese, 2018: 221.

4.4. Greece

Greece is regarded as one of the most active places on Earth's surface due to its high geotectonic activity. The Aegean Sea and adjacent lands comprise a region with strong seismicity and complicated tectonics governed by the movement of convergent plate boundaries. The collapse of the Tethys oceanic basins in the region caused crustal thickening, post-orogenic extension, and magmatism. From the Pliocene to the present, extensional activities continued in the greater Aegean Sea area. The current geodynamic processes are governed by two major structures: the Hellenic trench (located along the current subduction of the African plate) and the North Anatolian Fault system, which ends in the North Aegean Sea.¹⁴⁰ There are major fault lines passing through the regions Epirus, Thessaly and Peloponnese; these are the regions that are also connected to Pluto and the Underworld.

4.4.1. Taenarum in Laconia

Taenarum, in the southernmost tip of the Peloponnese now known as Cape Matapan, is an unsurprising location for a Poseidon sanctuary (fig. 23). This sanctuary was unique in that it included a cave and a temple, or 'a temple like a cave'; according to popular belief, the cave was another portal to the netherworld through which Heracles transported Cerberus from Hades.¹⁴¹

Plutarch mentioned a psychopompeion here, and Roman authors linked it to Orpheus' descent into the Underworld. The cave, according to Pomponius Mela, was in a bay on the point of a promontory. It was enclosed by a grove and was near a Poseidon shrine. Pausanias described an entrance to Hades that resembled a temple "made like a cave" with a Poseidon statue in front of it.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Pavlides, et. al. 2024: 431.

¹⁴¹ Ustinova, 2009: 69.

¹⁴² Friese, 2018: 222.

Taenarum's worship featured divination. Those who gazed into a spring at Taenarum were said to see harbours and ships. According to legend, Poseidon, who possessed Delphi with Gaia, acquired Taenarum from Apollo in exchange for his half of Pytho. This trade means that the two sanctuaries' values and functions are compatible. The Taenarum shrine was significant because it housed a notable oracle of the dead. This sanctuary feature explains the placement of Hades' gate in the Taenarum cave. Plutarch describes a Cretan called Tettix ('Cricket') establishing the psychopompeion at Taenarum. Cricket was a perfect starter of a ghostoracle in Greek lore since it was earthborn, bloodless as a ghost, wise and dear to Apollo and the Muses.¹⁴³

The sanctuary has frequently been located at the north end of Sternis Bay, at the very tip of the Mani peninsula, according to modern study. Today, we locate the remnants of a small cave above the beach, 50 meters below a vaulted structure, most likely Hellenistic. The beach cave is 15 meters deep and 10 to 12 meters broad; the ceiling has collapsed. A two-metre-thick ashlar wall, built on rock-cut foundations and fitted with a doorway, blocked the entrance, most likely to conceal the ritual taking place inside the cave. The natural rock east of the entrance has been trimmed to produce a terrace on which more (cultic) houses could have been built. There were cuts for the installation of sculptures and stelai in front of the foundations, together with sanctuary documents, none of which mentioned a death oracle. It is so questionable if the very modest cave was truly the site of a death oracle; it could just have been displayed to visitors as the 'gateway to Hades' and the location of the Herakles-Cerberus story.¹⁴⁴ During the Byzantine times, a church was built on top of this area (fig. 24)

¹⁴³ Ustinova, 2009: 70.

¹⁴⁴ Friese, 2018: 223-4.

4.4.2. Acheron in Thesprotia, Epirus

Herodotus originally used the Greek word "nekyomanteion" (a location of necromancy) in the fifth century B.C. to refer to a "oracle of the dead on the river Acheron in Thesprotia." Sophocles also used the phrase to refer to a "Tyrsenian lake," most likely Lake Avernus near Cumae in Campania.¹⁴⁵

Hades was invoked in the ritual of necromancy (nekromankia), a magical connection with the ghosts of the dead. Together with his wife Persephone, he was in charge of the nekromanteia, also referred to as the oracles of the dead. His only notable place of worship on Greek soil was the Oracle of the Dead at Thesprotia, Epirus. In the past, it was believed that the door to the afterlife was located here, close to the Acheron River. The location of the Hades door where Odysseus entered to see Teiresias, the seer, was also known to the ancients.¹⁴⁶ Odysseus conducted his call to the dead at this foreboding location. Other mortals were given credit for comparable deeds after Odysseus, including Theseus and Lucian's Menippus, who both traveled over the Acherusian plain on their way back from the Underworld. The first person to speculate that Odysseus truly went to the oracle of the dead in Thesprotia was Pausanias. Odysseus learns of the cave at the Acheron from the witch Circe, who also gives him instructions on the rituals to be carried out in order to invoke the dead and make them talk, therefore Homer makes no reference of an established oracle. In any event, the nekuomanteion on the Acheron had to have been established very early because Periander the Tyrant of Corinth consulted it in 600 B.C., at which point it was already well-known. According to Herodotus, Periander despatched a mission to 'Thesprotia on the Acheron River' to offer sacrifices for his late wife. Her soul then appeared to the envoys and interacted with them. Herodotus regrettably did not bother to provide more specifics on the festivities.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁵ Friese, 2018: 217.

¹⁴⁶ Miszczak, 2019: 4.

¹⁴⁷ Ustinova, 2009: 73.

A site was broadly assessed to the ancient descriptions near Epirus. A large complex (fig. 25) with particularly thick walls (62x46 m) were excavated, encompassing a central hall with smaller rooms and roaming corridors. Underneath the central hall there was a crypt (fig. 26) out of rock. The building was constructed in the 4th century B.C. and probably destroyed in 168 B.C., after the Pydna war. The excavators speculated that the rooms were most likely used by the pilgrims for preparation with rituals including seclusion and purification. Some rooms had containers and these containers had different food in them, such as seeds, legume - that had hallucinogenic affects- and a trace of sulphur. In the central hall there were metal objects including a bronze cauldron, catapults, and ratchets. They were interpreted as the machinery parts which pilgrims used to create ghostly sceneries with sulphur. In adjacent rooms, a number of terracotta sculptures of Persephone and Cerberus were found. This view of the complex is widely accepted despite the fact that no comprehensive scientific report on the excavation has yet been published. However, the numerous discoveries of catapults and commonplace items have caused D. Baatz to doubt the building's designation as an oracle center and to surmise that it was instead a Hellenistic town farmhouse with a cellar and a cistern. This view makes more sense since too many artifacts from non-cultic contexts were found and votive objects are lacking.¹⁴⁸

4.4.3. Elis

Elis, the biggest city and capital of the same-named city-state, was situated on the north bank of the Peneus River, between Elis' hilly region and its coastal plains. The site was nearly constantly occupied from the beginning of the Middle Palaeolithic to the end of the Early Byzantine period, when the city was abandoned. Etolos Oxylos is regarded as the city's mythical founder in 12th-11th century B.C. He purportedly took advantage of the Dorian

¹⁴⁸ Ustinova, 2009: 73-4.

invasion to subdue the area's early inhabitants and establish the first settlement. The city thrived during the early historical period, the late Archaic and early Classical Periods, and the Early Roman.¹⁴⁹

Pausanias depicts the Eleans as the only people who worship Hades, he mentions sculptures and altars to the god in other places. At Elis, Hades is veiled behind euphemism names like 'Klymenos' or 'Zeus Chthonios,' and the deity's lethal character is highlighted, as opposed to the perception everywhere of Hades-Plouton as a provider of fertility, a god who carries a cornucopia and is associated with Demeter and Kore. The town also has a temple dedicated to Hades, and according to the description of Pausanias, it appeared to be a sealed Underworld-like temple that only Hades' priest could enter, because you only go to Hades once when you die, and descend into the Underworld is no little matter.¹⁵⁰

Unfortunately, there is nothing to be seen today on the site, and nothing more is known about the Temple of Hades.

4.4.4. Eleusis

Eleusis was an ancient Greek city best known for the Eleusinian Mysteries that occurred there. Eleusis, located in the lush plain of Thria approximately 14 miles (23 kilometers) west of Athens and across from the island of Salamis, was independent until the 7th century BCE, when Athens conquered the city and made the Eleusinian Mysteries a prominent Athenian religious festival (fig. 27). A small mountainous site around 22 kilometers west of Athens, located at the head of the Thriasian plain and on the coast of a lake-like sea flanked by Salamis. Because of its position, it has been inhabited from the Early Bronze Age till the present. It rose to prominence as a result of the secret religion of Demeter known as the Eleusinian Mysteries,

¹⁴⁹ Matzanas, 2012.

¹⁵⁰ Burton, 2018: 211-5.

which were held once a year. The cult originated during the Mycenaean Age, became Panhellenic in the sixth century B.C., and achieved universal prestige during Roman Imperial times. During the Classical Period, the township was known as the Goddess Sanctuary. It was destroyed first by the army of Xerxes in 480-479 B.C., next by the Kostovoks in 170 B.C., and ultimately by Alaric's hordes in A.D. 395. The first two devastations were followed by rebuilding; however, the site never recovered after the last devastation, and by the end of the fifth century, it had been totally destroyed by Christians. Excavations have been ongoing since 1882, revealing the remains of the famed Sanctuary of Demeter along with the entire sacred precinct, including the Great Propylaea, a 2nd century A.D. duplicate of the principal edifice of the Propylaea on Athens' Acropolis. It also traced its extensions over time and showed multiple stages in the structure of the Telesterion, or Hall of Initiation, which was originally built in late Mycenaean times, before 1000 B.C. For solitude, the territory was enclosed by fortifications in consecutive centuries, in geometric and archaic times, during the reigns of Peisistratos, Kimon, and Perikles, and in 380-370 B.C. They have survived for a long time and demonstrate that as the cult's popularity grew, so did the size of the refuge.¹⁵¹

Around 500 B.C., Hades was recognized as the patron of agricultural abundance within the Eleusinian Mysteries and the god's name was used to describe the Underworld, not the deity himself. Eleusis was perceived as the gate to the Underworld, along with the place where Hades kidnapped Persephone. The Plutonium at Eleusis has two half caves, however the modern academics has not found any traces of any toxic gases.¹⁵²

The caves are located to the west of the Lesser Propylaea (fig. 28), meaning they were probably the core of the primal cult. An aperture can be observed on the north wall of the smaller cave, and a six-step stairway cut into the rock is retained on its outer side. The stair

¹⁵¹ Stillwell, 1976.

¹⁵² Miszczak, 2019: 4.

goes to a lower lying location outside the Plutonium enclosure, where there is a deep well-like pit. In front of the main cave are the poros foundations of a tiny temple dedicated to Plouton. It dates from the 4th century B.C. and consists of a rectangular cella with projecting pillars. This temple incorporated the remains of an earlier temple from the 6th century B.C. Later, in the 4th century B.C., the Plutonium was delineated by the construction of a triangle retaining enclosure made of isodomic poros blocks, with a tiny porch at its southeast end. The enclosure divided Pluto's precinct from the remainder of the Sanctuary. A deep circular hole on the inside of the enclosure was most likely related with religious ceremonies. Two votive reliefs discovered in this area that depict Hades and Persephone confirm that the temple was the Plutonium. Although it is unclear how the caverns were used or what ritual was possibly related with them, their presence in this particular place appears to have been essential in choosing it for the erection of Hades' precinct. Their morphology could have provided an appropriate setting for the religious drama of Persephone's annual return from Hades.¹⁵³

4.5. Italy

Italy is located on the southern edge of the Eurasian Plate, which is bordered by the Aegean Sea Plate, the Adriatic Plate, and the Anatolian Plate. The Apennine Mountains have several faults that stretch along the whole Italian peninsula and represent the majority of the destructive barrier between the Eurasian and Adriatic Plates, resulting in Italy's high level of tectonic activity. Furthermore, Sicily and Calabria are at the boundary where the African Plate subducts beneath the Eurasian Plate, resulting in the formation of Mount Etna, a stratovolcano (Enciclopedia di Geografia, 2006: 782-3). There are still volcanic and tectonic activities passing very close to both Lake Avernus, and Tivoli.

¹⁵³ Efada, 2020.

4.5.1. Lake Avernus near Cumae

Avernus is the ancient name for the volcanic crater part of the Phlegraean Volcanic Fields at Cumae Campania, west of Naples (fig. 27).¹⁵⁴ A lake also called Avernus fills this crater. Ancient sources believed that Avernus was one of the entrances to the Underworld and a necromanteion.

The word Avernus comes from the Greek word “Aornos”, and means without bird.¹⁵⁵ The name suits the characteristic of the lake emitting toxic gases due to the volcanic activity and killing all the birds flying above it. Due this, the name Avernus evolved into another name to mention the Underworld.

When the Greeks established their first colonies in Italy, and thus the place closest to the sunset and the realm of the dead. The black and still waters of Lake Avernus, the Phlegraean ('fiery') fields around, with extinct volcanoes, along with fissures and cracks with mephitic vapors, hot springs, natural caves, and man-made grottoes, gave the best possible scenery for a necromanteion and for Odysseus' descent into Hades. The lake also was the place where Hercules had his ascent from the Underworld and according to Dio Cassius, the lake also housed the cave where Odysseus was kept by Calypso.¹⁵⁶

There is no record of an actual consultation with the oracle here. The manner of consultation is likewise unclear. The ceremony depicted by Maximus of Tyre is based on Odysseus' actions in the eleventh song of the *Odyssey*, and hence has limited significance as a source for Avernus' ceremonies. Virgil's reference to the Gates of Sleep, through which shades or dreams pass, shows that the necromantic séance was founded on incubation.¹⁵⁷ However, literary action is not a dependable source. According to two different Strabo accounts, the prophetic center was maintained by priests who 'owned the area on lease' or by the mythical

¹⁵⁴ Siebert, et. al. 2011: 50.

¹⁵⁵ Lindsay, 1894: 197.

¹⁵⁶ Ustinova, 2009: 76.

¹⁵⁷ Verg. *Aen.*

Cimmerians, who had a contract with the unnamed king. Nobody knows if the Cimmerians of Avernus existed, let alone if they were the priests who led the sacrifices and propitiation procedures, or how they came to dominate the region. The most perplexing puzzle is that the Cimmerians' caverns at Avernus have never been discovered, either in Strabo's day or today. We have no way to tell what features were exposed. Earthquakes and other natural disasters over the last two millennia have not destroyed the ancient remains in the crater of Avernus: various artificial tunnels built near Cumae and listed by Strabo, as well as remnants of dockyards built by the Roman commander Agrippa in the late 1st century B.C. and later buildings are still visible today.¹⁵⁸

Despite the fact that numerous scholars have sought for the Acheron nekyomanteion here, they have always been proven mistaken. A massive vaulted chamber on the south side of the lake, known as the Grotta della Sibilla (fig. 30), has been revealed to be a military supply tunnel, and an underground labyrinth-like system at the Roman resort of Baiae was probably not used as a death oracle, as stated by R. Paget, but as a warm water supply for the nearby bath. Finally, Strabo's narrative, which is frequently cited as proof for a nekyomanteion near Lake Avernus, should be viewed with caution, as the author plainly rejected the historical context of such a sanctuary.¹⁵⁹

4.5.2. Hadrian's Villa

Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli (fig. 34) is an outstanding complex of classical buildings built by the Roman Emperor Hadrian between 117 and 138 A.D. as a gateway from Rome. It mixes the best parts of Egypt, Greece, and Rome's architectural legacy to create a "perfect city". The remains of approximately 30 structures cover 120 hectares of the Tiburtine Hills near Tivoli,

¹⁵⁸ Ustinova, 2009: 78-80.

¹⁵⁹ Friese, 2018: 224-5.

Lazio Region. Although the structures seem to be positioned randomly, the site is actually a complex and well-planned design that includes a significant number of residential and recreational facilities, wide gardens, and reflected pools, resulting in a calm and contemplative refuge. The structures can be divided into four different groups: The first group with the Greek Theatre and the Temple of Cnidian Aphrodite; the second group with buildings specific to the emperor and his court like the Maritime Theatre, Imperial and Winter Palaces, and the Golden Square; the third group with the several baths and the fourth group with the open air elements of the villa. All around the complex, there is an underground tunnel system connecting these elements. This enormous combination of buildings and structures represents a power that is progressively becoming absolute. Villa Adriana, inspired by prominent places and buildings around the empire, recreated elements of Egypt, Greece, and Rome's material cultures in the shape of a "perfect city". After being damaged and neglected for years following Hadrian's death in 138 AD, the site was finally rediscovered in 1461. The tranquility of the setting sparked a newfound interest in classical architecture. Villa Adriana studies affected builders in succeeding decades, particularly those of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Its amazing architectural achievements continued to have a considerable impact on famous modern-day architects and designers.¹⁶⁰

Towards the southeast part of the complex, a lesser known building separated from the other structures, there is the so-called Plutonium (fig. 33), most likely because of the caves nearby called "Inferi" by the locals. The substructures that serve to level the ground are currently visible, as is very little of the elevation, where an internal portico has been identified with the remains of a polychrome mosaic with a triangle border, in perilous conditions.¹⁶¹ This shows that the structure was intended for residential usage and was surrounded by a large garden. We

¹⁶⁰ UNESCO.

¹⁶¹ Vincenti, 2013: 750.

know that many precious marbles were recovered on the site, indicating that it belonged to the Villa's noble quarters.

The building's traditional designation as the temple of Pluto/Hades, lord of the Underworld, stems from its topographical proximity to the underlying artificial valley, which has been identified as a reproduction of the Underworld since the 16th century, as well as its association with a famous step in the *Historia Augusta* that explicitly mentions the existence of a complex called *Inferi* at Villa Adriana.¹⁶²

Pirro Ligorio provided the first thorough description of Hadrian's Villa in the 16th century. Ligorio was the first to create a complete map of the site and seek to identify the purpose of each single aspect of the villa by giving names to its many components. One century later, Contini developed a more exact plan of the tunnel system beneath the villa based on Ligorio's prior research. All of the draughtsmen who followed, including Piranesi, accepted his map without making significant changes (fig. 31). At the beginning of the 19th century, Reference properly characterized and recorded both exposed structures and accessible underground aspects, making a significant contribution to the characterization of the villa's architectural characteristics. The structures situated in the *Inferi*-*Plutonium* area are commonly associated with the belief in the afterlife and the cult of death. According to this concept, which dates back to Pirro Ligorio's early discoveries, the *Inferi*, a huge ditch excavated in the tuff, represents the River Styx and the entry to the Underworld, whilst the *Plutonium* is a temple dedicated to Pluto.¹⁶³

Cabral & del Re interpreted the "vast and elevated ruins of a building where some columns with various marble capitals can still be seen to have fallen" as a "temple dedicated to Pluto or Kore due to this place being close to the Underworld" in 1779. Around the same time,

¹⁶² Gorrini, et. al. 2020b: 454.

¹⁶³ Ghezzi, et. al., 2019: 2.

Giovanbattista Piranesi, who was in charge of surveying the villa's ruins and developing the famous plan from his arrival in Rome saw the complex differently. Based on the visible remains, Piranesi defined the artificial valley as a 'rustic stadium' and hypothesized that the large building above consisted of a round temple dedicated to Serapis, inserted in a vast porticoed 'atrium' with lateral wings, in which there were rooms used as 'hotels for those who went to the Oracles' with a round temple. Other travellers also contributed to the idea of a Plutonium and followed Piranesi. After nearly a century of oblivion, Salza Prina Ricotti reconstructed the Piranesi plan in 2001 by comparing the preserved walls, which she herself studied, with the hypothetical ones, while keeping the building's proposed cultural objective. Moricca and Pagano's 2004 research resulted in a very accurate survey of the visible structures, including two semicircular wall sections that only partially coincided with those recorded in the Piranesi plan and additions relevant to later phases.¹⁶⁴

The geophysical survey shows a bunch of cavities in the form of a tunnel system, corresponding the remaining tunnel system of the villa. Here also, a number of grottoes exist creating an artificial valley, along with a small cistern, making the connection to the Underworld even stronger.¹⁶⁵ According to the pottery find, the excavated areas of the structure were abandoned by the end of the 3rd century A.D. and they were thereafter subjected to the spoliations until at least the Early Medieval period. During the Late Medieval period the area was used for agricultural activities; all walls were torn down to the ground level in order to create flat, ploughable soil. Only the structure on the podium, the Plutonium, remained standing, most likely for storage or housing animals.¹⁶⁶

Both the architectural and geophysical surveys appear to show that the building, known as Plutonium, differs significantly from what is known from historical drawings and is

¹⁶⁴ Gorrini, et. al. 2020b: 454-9.

¹⁶⁵ Gorrini et. al. 2020b: 460.

¹⁶⁶ Gorrini, et. al. 2020a: 362-4.

intricately tied to the surrounding environment (fig. 32). It occupies one of the villa's few elevated positions, extends significantly beyond what is preserved above ground, and is distinguished by an open, panoramic architecture, with large windows, courtyards, porticoes, and landscape-style decorative elements, such as the large circular structure - vestibule, basin, or flowerbed, will be clarified by subsequent excavations, which tend to incorporate the surrounding view. On the other hand, its relationship to the Underworld valley appears to be critical, not just based on the surveys' findings, but also structurally.¹⁶⁷

Hadrian's Villa was built over the Quaternary Colli Albani volcanic district,¹⁶⁸ making the area prone to natural gases and earthquakes and a plausible area for a Plutonium. However, until there is further proof of an inscription and/or a cultic object, there cannot be any certainty.

¹⁶⁷ Gorrini, et. al. 2020b: 466-8.

¹⁶⁸ Ghezzi, et. al. 2019: 3.

5. Other Cultic Sites Located on a Fault Line

The sites mentioned above are not the only ones utilising the fault lines, natural water springs or a volcanic area for cultic reasons. This chapter will be a short introduction to a few other sanctuaries.

Throughout human history in the eastern Mediterranean region, urban communities and earthquakes have coexisted. Historians have extensively documented the destructive power of seismic activity, as well as the cultural devastation it has caused. Accounts and observations of seismic damage to ancient structures and antiquities provide little information about the size, location, and timing of past earthquakes. Buildings and structures damaged by shaking or offset over faults serve as archeological markers, shedding light on the slip history of potential seismogenic sources and informing regional seismic hazard. If natural springs are necessary for the operation of ancient Greek and Roman communities, the loss of reliable groundwater sources may also be a reason for the abandonment of those places. Large earthquakes are known to significantly alter the pattern and pace of groundwater flow.¹⁶⁹

The mythology of water management practices in the Aegean karstlands lends credence to the theory that groundwater patterns affected the establishment and operation of Greek cities in antiquity. Ephesus in western Turkey, for example, is usually believed to have been founded on the location of the famous Hypelaeus spring, which rises from a cleft in a limestone knoll in the 8th century BC Ionian hamlet to the north of the larger Roman city. The source, which had been used as a sacred well since the Archaic period, was covered by a modest shrine known as the 'Crevice Temple', presumably an Athena Temple, in the late Classical or early Hellenistic period.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁹ Stewart, Piccardi, 2017: 711-2.

¹⁷⁰ Stewart, Piccardi, 2017: 713.

In the Greco-Roman city of Cnidus, south-west Turkey, in which an outstanding near-vertical fault surface creates the dramatic backwall to a sacred enclosure, archaeologist Charles Newton interpreted rock-cut votive niches carved into the exhumed fault plane as indications for a buried mid-4th century BC temple complex beneath. These walls are significantly inclined and bowed at the fault scarp, indicating palaeoseismic ground rupture. The lamps and votive reliefs were devoted to Demeter and Kore's Underworld worship, hinting that the flaw itself may have served as a gateway to the Underworld.¹⁷¹

For nearly two millennia, Delphi, the oracle of Apollo, was revered as the primary oracular center in the Aegean world. Ecstatic prophecy was obtained here by a priestess who first cleaned herself by washing in a sacred spring before inhaling intoxicating vapours emerging from groundwater gushing out of a natural cleft in the rock. Inhaling the sweet-smelling ethylene, a mild narcotic, could be the cause of the Pythia's mantic trance, while any gas-linked neurotoxic effect of the Pythia could be related to oxygen depletion caused by CO₂-CH₄ exhalation in the non-air ventilated adyton. Certainly, Delphi's surroundings are fault-controlled. The site is located at a noticeable step-over in the trace of a major E-W trending active normal fault zone, which forms a beautiful limestone fault escarpment with bedrock fault scarps and polished slip planes at its base.¹⁷²

¹⁷¹ Stewart, Piccardi, 2017: 714.

¹⁷² Stewart, Piccardi, 2017: 715.

6. Conclusions

There are only a few shrines to Hades and gates to the Underworld, even though they are not widely known. They are usually near natural caves, bodies of water, and/or natural gases. People usually worshiped the god in those locations rather than constructing buildings above the ground, but they did occasionally do so. Even if there were more places dedicated, they are now lost. The cult can be considered as one of the mystery cults since there is only a few information available about it, while there is no information on how people worshipped the god. We do not know the rituals and even the places known as gates to or sanctuaries of Hades, might not be gates or the sanctuaries. Some of the attested locations are just speculations, or guesses. What we know is that along with him getting sanctuaries and gates alone, he was also usually named together with Demeter and Kore/Persephone sanctuaries and rituals, like in Eleusis.

The common features to identify a place as a gate to or a sanctuary of Hades are that there should be a cave like structure around, along with the natural gases which are often to give hallucinogenic affects. The locations discussed in this paper do not always carry this attribute, however, whenever there is a cave, or a cave like structure, the academics or travelers decide to name the place as a “Plutonium” or a “necromanteion” without another solid proof, making it hard to differentiate between the real ones, this difficulty is also supported by the lack of artifacts, inscriptions or dedications.

Just because there is a fault line nearby, poisonous gases or natural springs, it does not indicate that the place would directly be connected to Pluto neither. Apollo and Athena, amongst other gods, also have their shrines in tectonically active places. If there is no dedication or an abundance of cultic objects in the place, it cannot be said for certain that area was used as a Pluto sanctuary or entrance to the Underworld. Sometimes the ancient writers

used these mystical places to support their stories and give a more solid background, without having any information about the sites.

Acting as a Plutonium only the Hierapolis one can be named for sure, since an inscription was discovered. Acharaca can also be called a Plutonium since the ancient sources were specific about it, and the location given corresponds to the modern place. There is yet to be an inscription to be discovered. There is also no poisonous gas at Acharaca, only sulphuric thermal water. However, the research activities there was not as excessive as Hierapolis, and there is no ongoing project there. There is still much to discover about Acharaca. Considering Eleusis was a place to worship to Demeter and Kore, Pluto's relation to their myth and right next to the lesser Propylea there is a cave, Eleusis might actually have the Plutonium, supported by the votive relief discovered in the area, depicting Pluto and Kore. However, even though there are seismic activities in the area, there is no poisonous gas near the cave.

The temples dedicated to Pluto are said to be in Kodroula and Elis. While Elis one has Pausanias supporting this claim, unfortunately there is nothing to see today regarding this temple. In the village claimed to be the ancient Kodroula, there is indeed a Temple of Pluto, and inscriptions dedicated the Pluto and Kore, and regarding their entourage.

It is believed that Heracleia Pontica, Taenarum and Avernus were once the scenes of necromancy. None of them actually have any evidence that they were necromanteion. In the cave of Heracleia Pontica while there is a few architectural fragments found and the water inside has a foul smell, there is no inscriptional or sculptural evidence. In Taenarum there was a number of documents found, however none of them were leading to an entrance to the Underworld, nor necromancy. While there could be a Plutonium or a necromanteion in Avernus according to the ancient sources, unfortunately so far there is no actual record of any of these.

The Plutonium at Hadrian's Villa suffers from the lack of inscription and cultic objects. However, only a small part of the area has been excavated, and there is plenty to go. There is

also no ancient writer mentioning the villa having a Plutonium. There is only one source mentioning an “Inferi” on the site, but nothing in detail. The structure may have been called a Plutonium because of the caves nearby and the area being a corrugated place, also because of grottoes, and because the medieval and later travelers associated these dark objects with Pluto. It could also be hypothesized that Hadrian saw other plutonia and necromanteion on his travels and was impressed and had one built for himself, however he never set foot in a city with a Plutonium nor a necromanteion. He is known to have visited Bithynia, where he met Antinous, however it cannot be certainly said that he visited Heracleia Pontica.

These name calling can be sources from simply the researchers and local people trying to fit the finds and locations what the myths and ancient writers described, like how the scholars first thought the Thesprotia structure to be the Acheron, but ended up being a farm.

The subject and content of this research can be further enriched by possible future excavations. Even if it can be concluded that most of the sites are not related to the Underworld or Hades with the data we have, further research can be carried out to be able to say more precisely.

Appendix



Figure 1: The ancient sites mentioned in Turkey.

- 1: Heracleia Pontica
- 2: Hierapolis
- 3: Acharaca
- 4: Ephesus
- 5: Cnidos
- 6: Kodroula



Figure 2: The ancient sites mentioned in Greece

- 1: Taenarum in Laconia
- 2: Elis
- 3: Eleusis
- 4: Acheron in Thesprotia, Epirus



Figure 3: The ancient cities mentioned in Italy

- 1: Lave Avernus near Cumae
- 2: Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli



Figure 4: A coin from Hierapolis depicting the abduction of Persephone on reverse. Dionysos on obverse. 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.(RPC Online 2045; SNG Cop 428.)

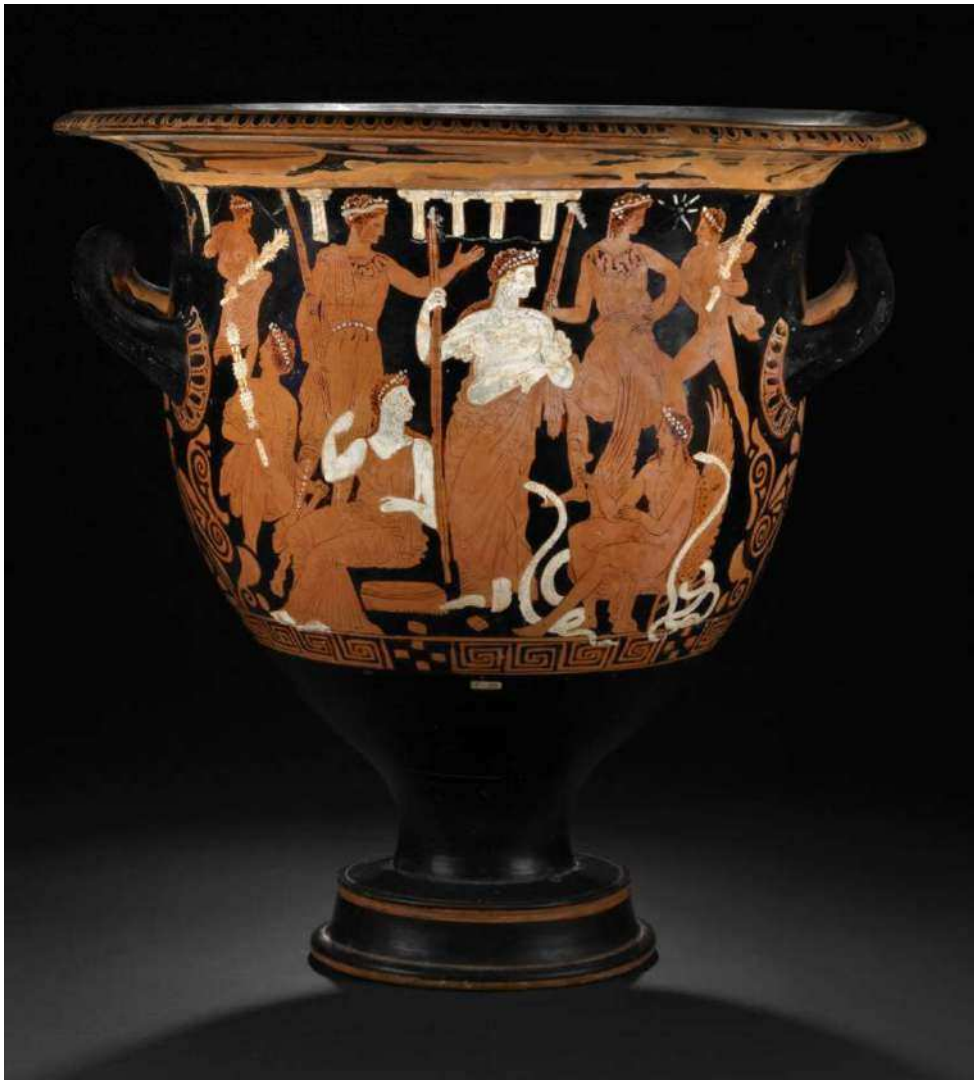


Figure 5: Bell krater showing Pluto and Kore. 380-360 B.C. British Museum 1865,0103.14.



Figure 6: Amphora showing Pluto and Kore. 340-330 B.C.
British Museum 1867,0508.1334.



Figure 7: A sculpture of Pluto and Cerberus next to him. Pamukkale Hierapolis Museum.

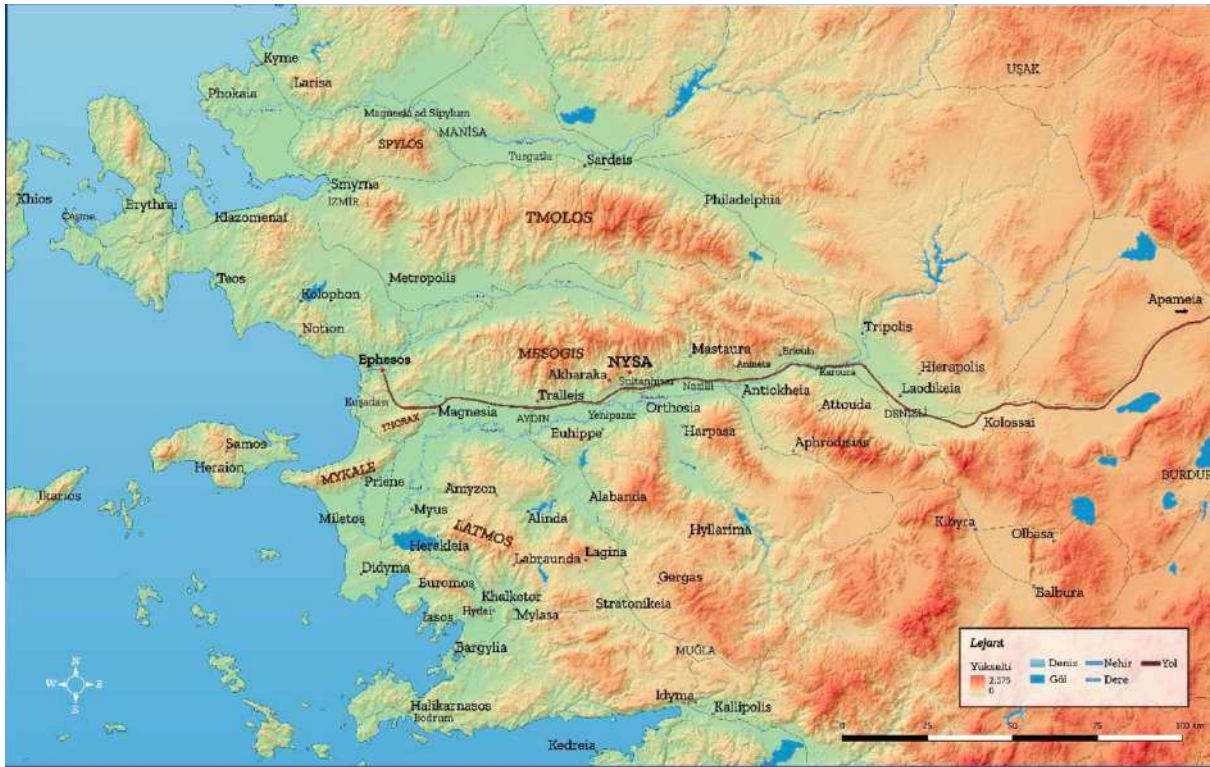


Figure 8: Meander Valley. Acharaca can be found on it. (Öztaner, 2022: 227, fig. 1).



Figure 9: The old Plutonium at Hierapolis the tunnel next to the Apollo Temple. (Miszczak, 2019: 33, fig. 9).

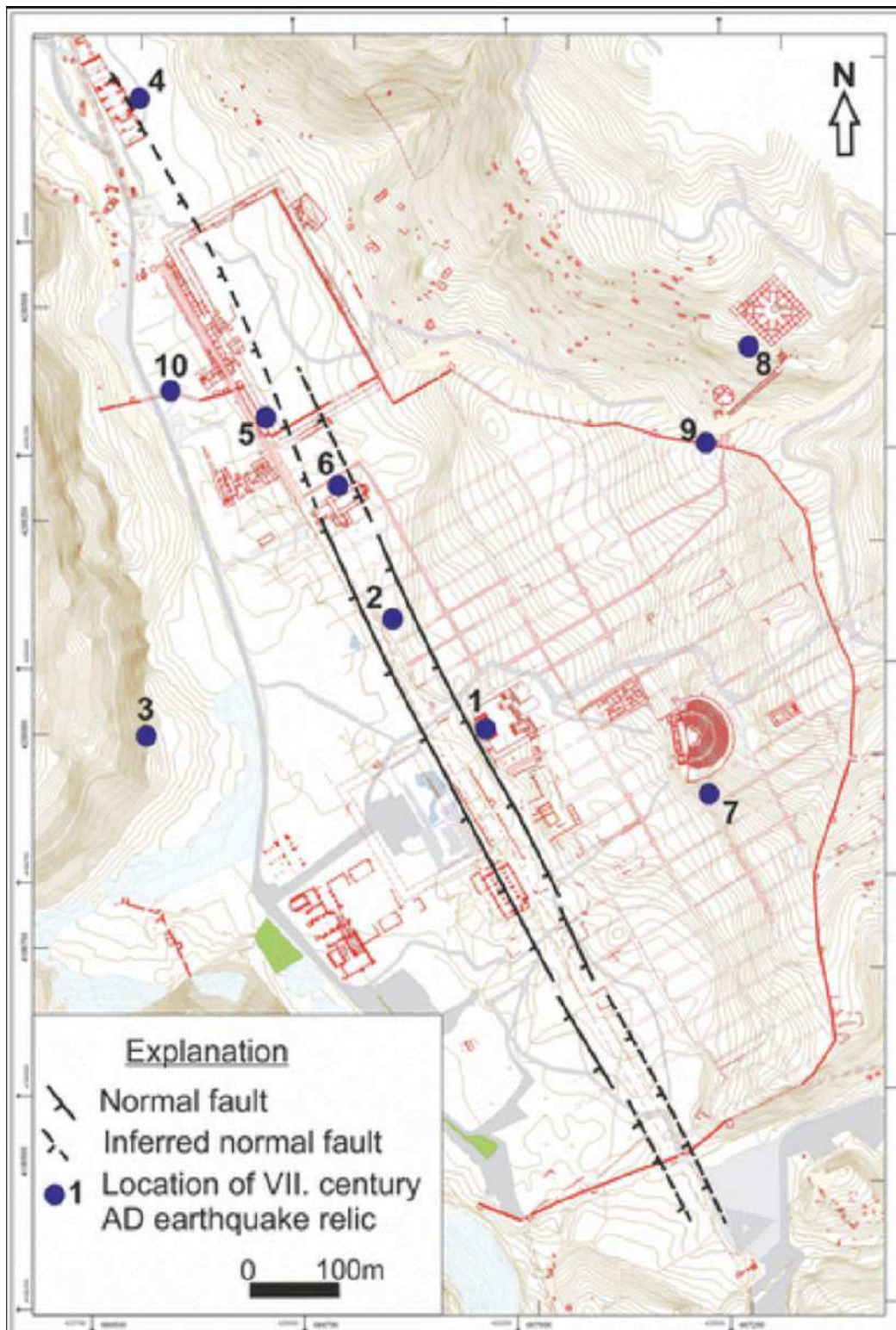


Figure 10: The plan of Hierapolis. The faults are indicated. The blue square is where the Plutonium is.(Wenn, et. Al. 2016).



Figure 11: The New Plutonium at Hierapolis. The pool and the cave is visible with the spectators steps above. Further in the back a part of the theatre can be seen. Photo by Tom Brosnahan.

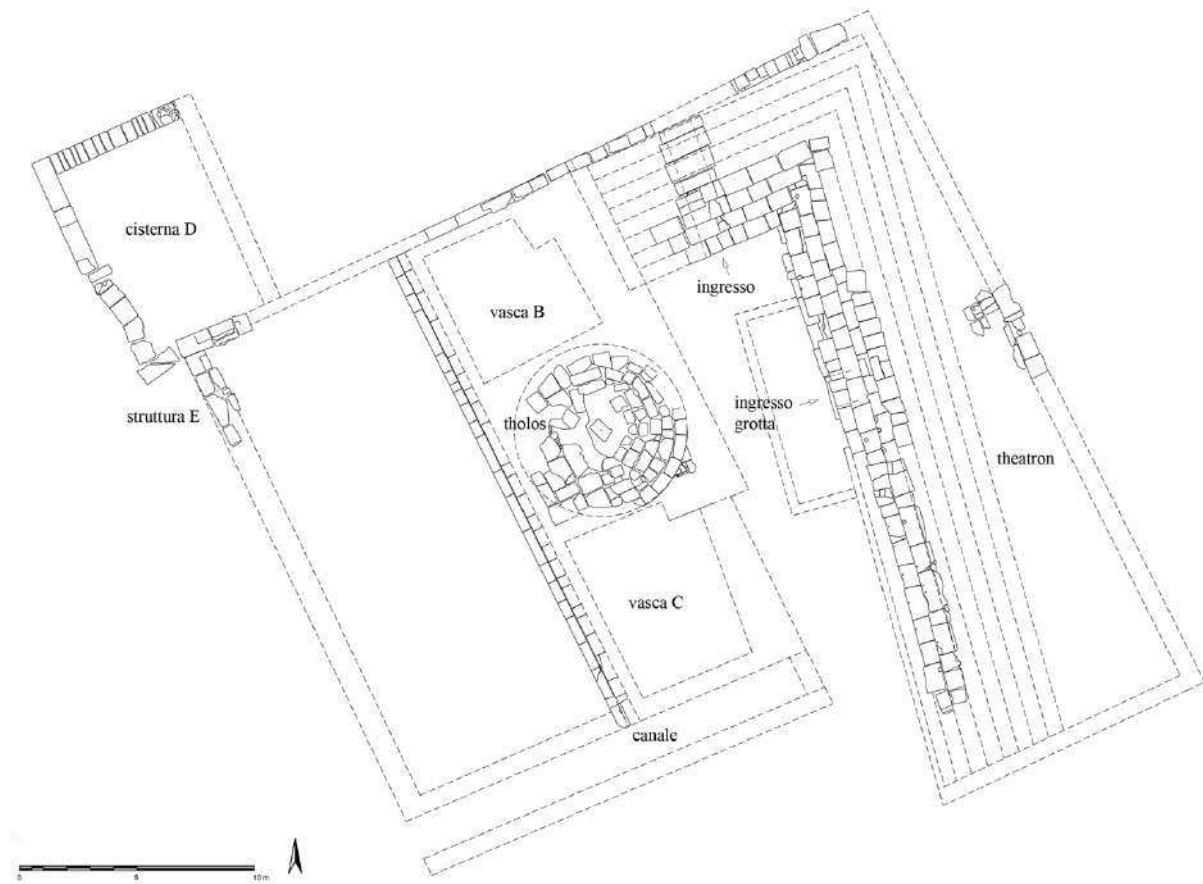


Figure 12: Plan of the new Plutonium (Friese, 2018: 230. fig. 10.6A)



Figure 13: Overview photo of the new Plutonium (Friese, 2018: 230. fig. 10.6B).

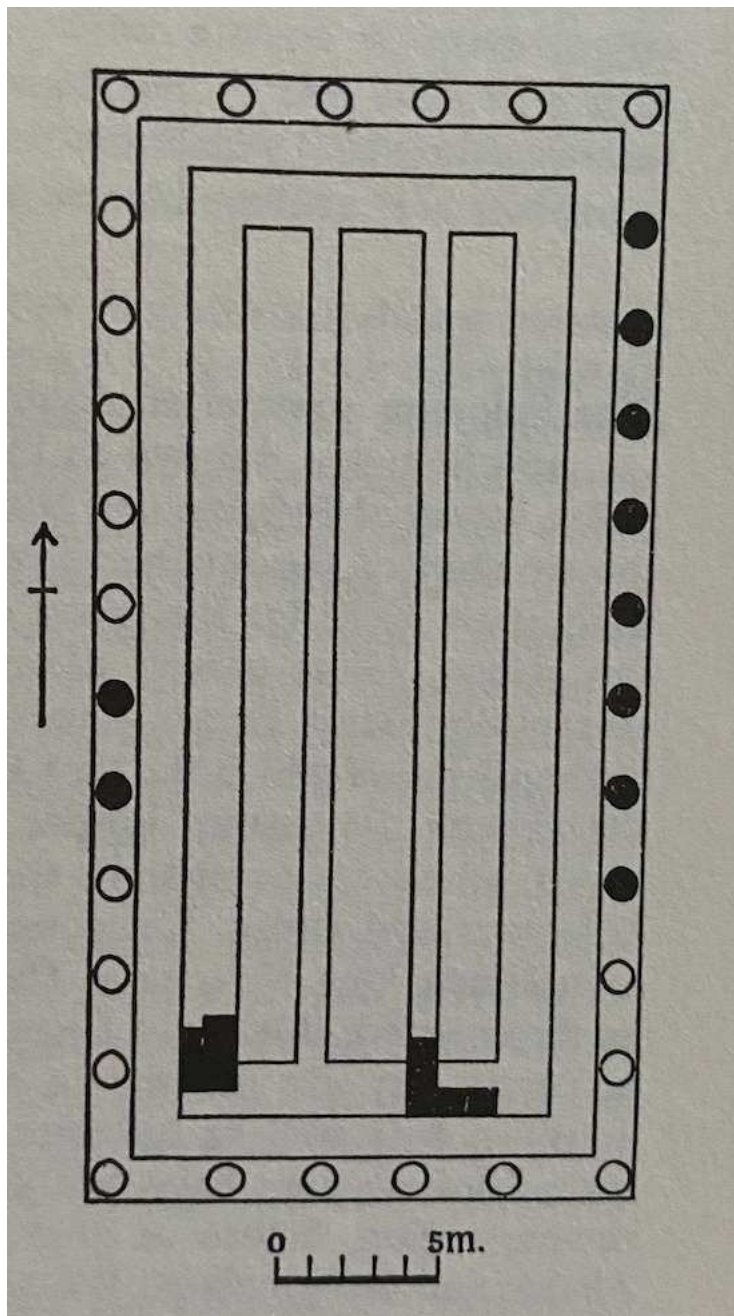


Figure 14: The plan of the temple at Acharaca. (Bean, 1971: 187, fig. 40).



Figure 15: The Temple of Pluto and Kore at Acharaca. Photo by By Izabela Mischczak.



Figure 16: The Plutonium of Acharaca, showing the cave/grotto of the town
(<http://arkeolojigezginleri.blogspot.com/2014/08/akharaka.html>)

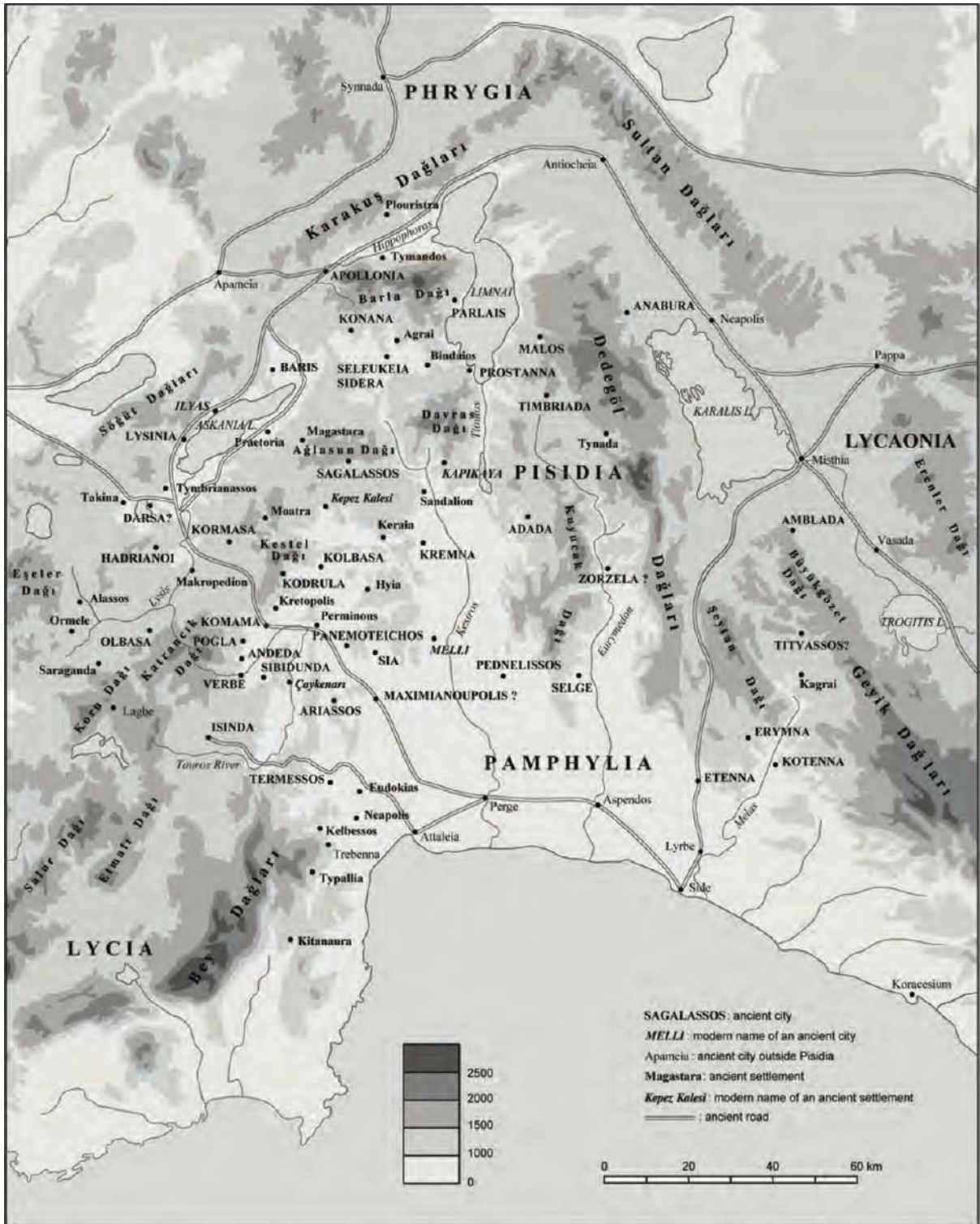


Figure 17: Map of the region Psidia. (Talloen, 2015: xix. Map 1).

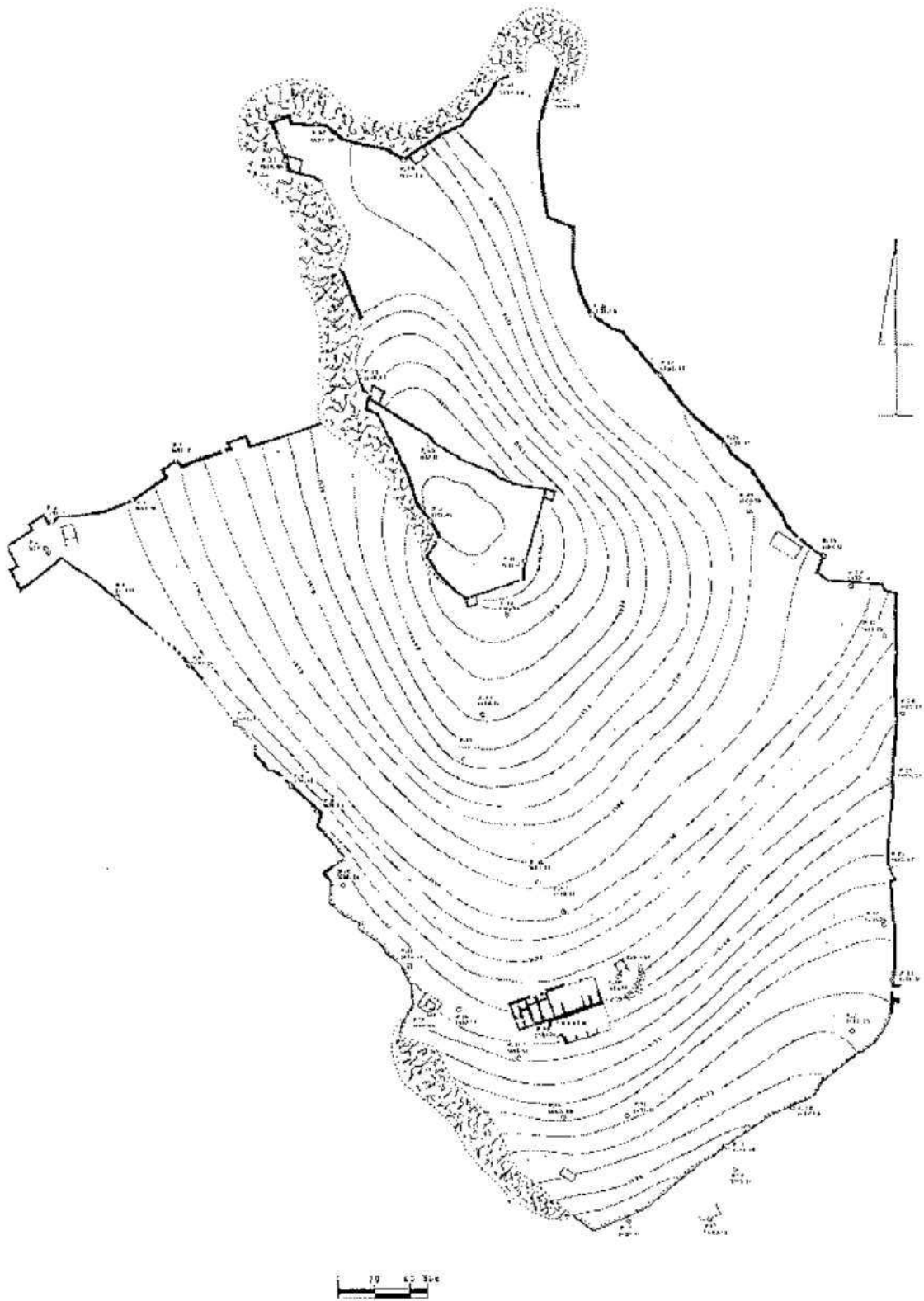


Figure 18: Kodroula city plan. (Aydal, et. al. 1998: 285).



Figure 19: The region of Bithynia by the 3rd century B.C. (Wikipedia Commons).

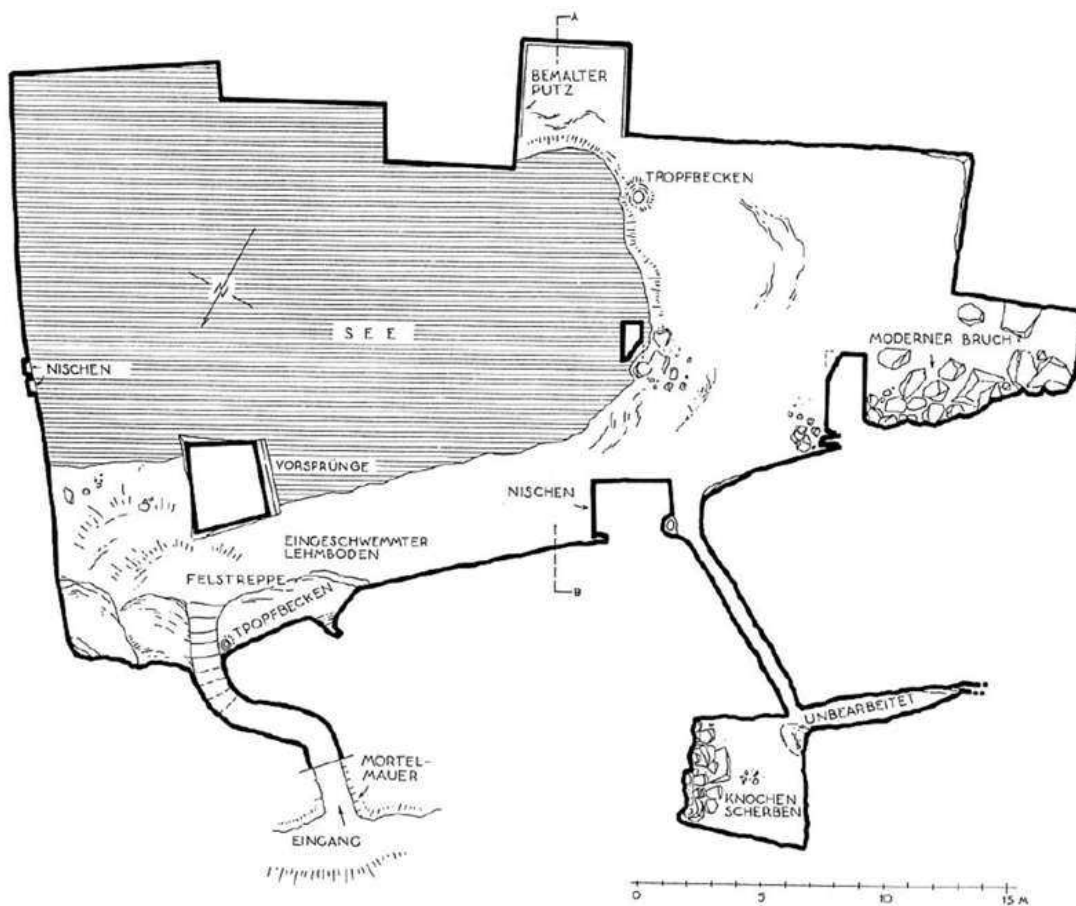


Figure 20: The plan of the cave of Heracleia Pontica (Friese, 2018: 222, fig. 20.3).



Figure 21: The cave at Heracleia Pontica. Photo by Ali Diyar Atamış.



Figure 22: The cave at Heracleia Pontica, another angle. Photo by Ali Diyar Atamış.

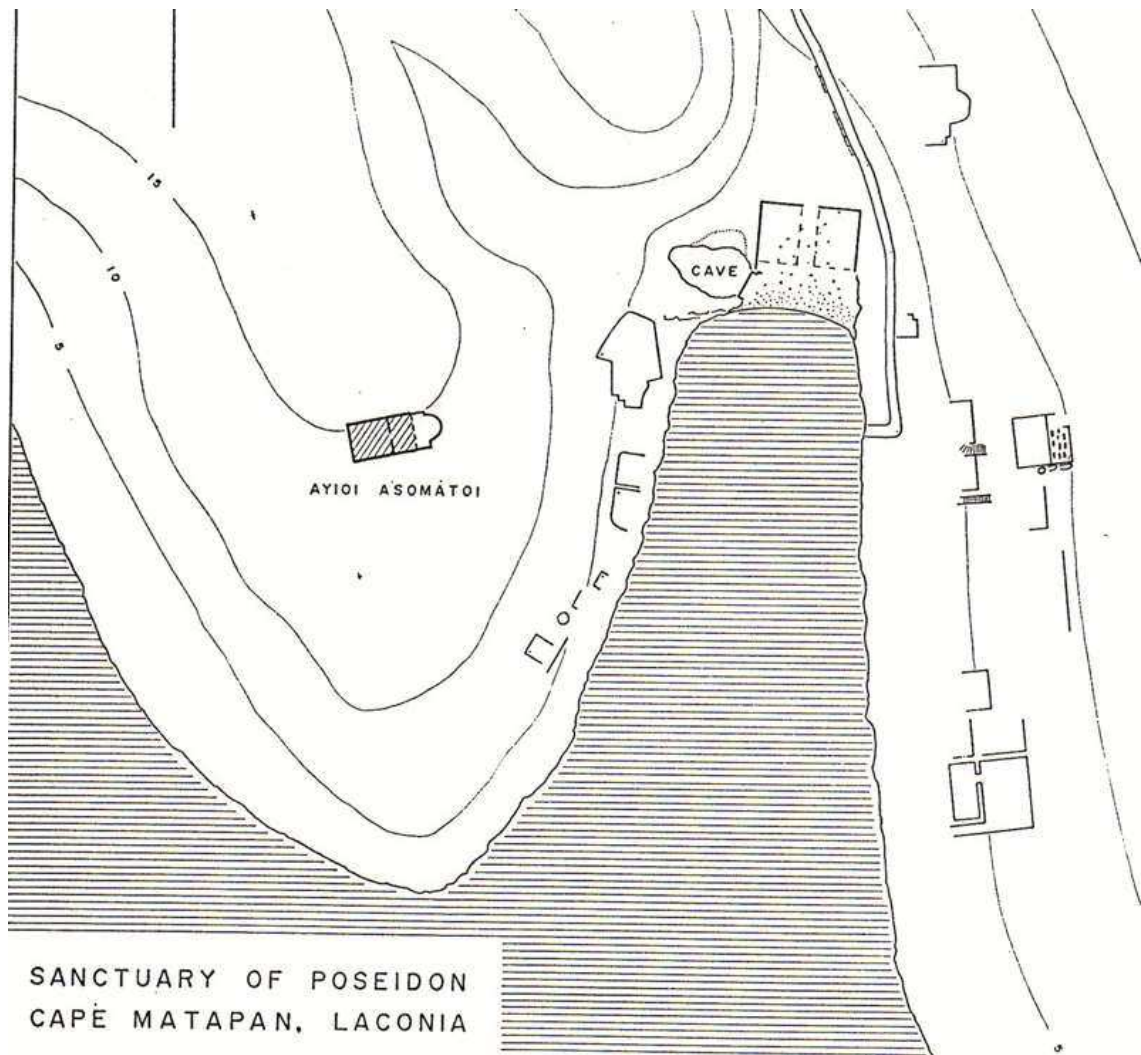


Figure 23: The Temple of Poseidon and the cave of Taenarum in Laconia, the cave is indicated (Friese, 2018: 223. fig. 10.4).



Figure 24: The Temple of Poseidon in Taenarum. Now a Byzantine church on top of it (Jean Housen – CC BY-SA 4.0).

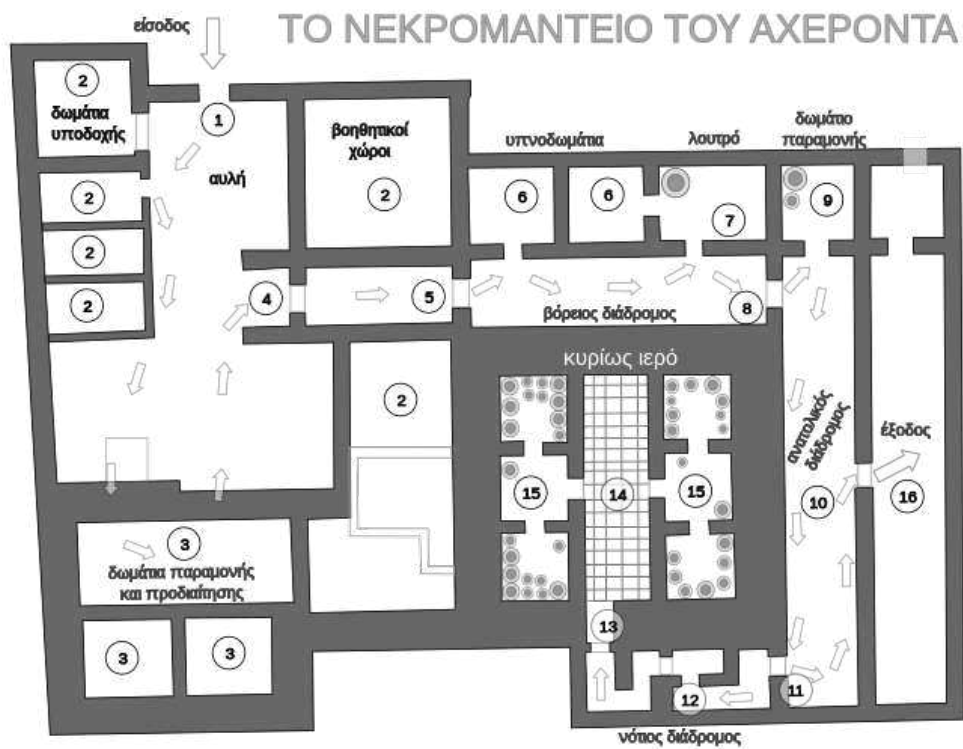


Figure 25: The plan of the structure in Epirus (Wikipedia Commons)



Figure 26: A part of the tunnel underneath the structure (Wikipedia Commons).

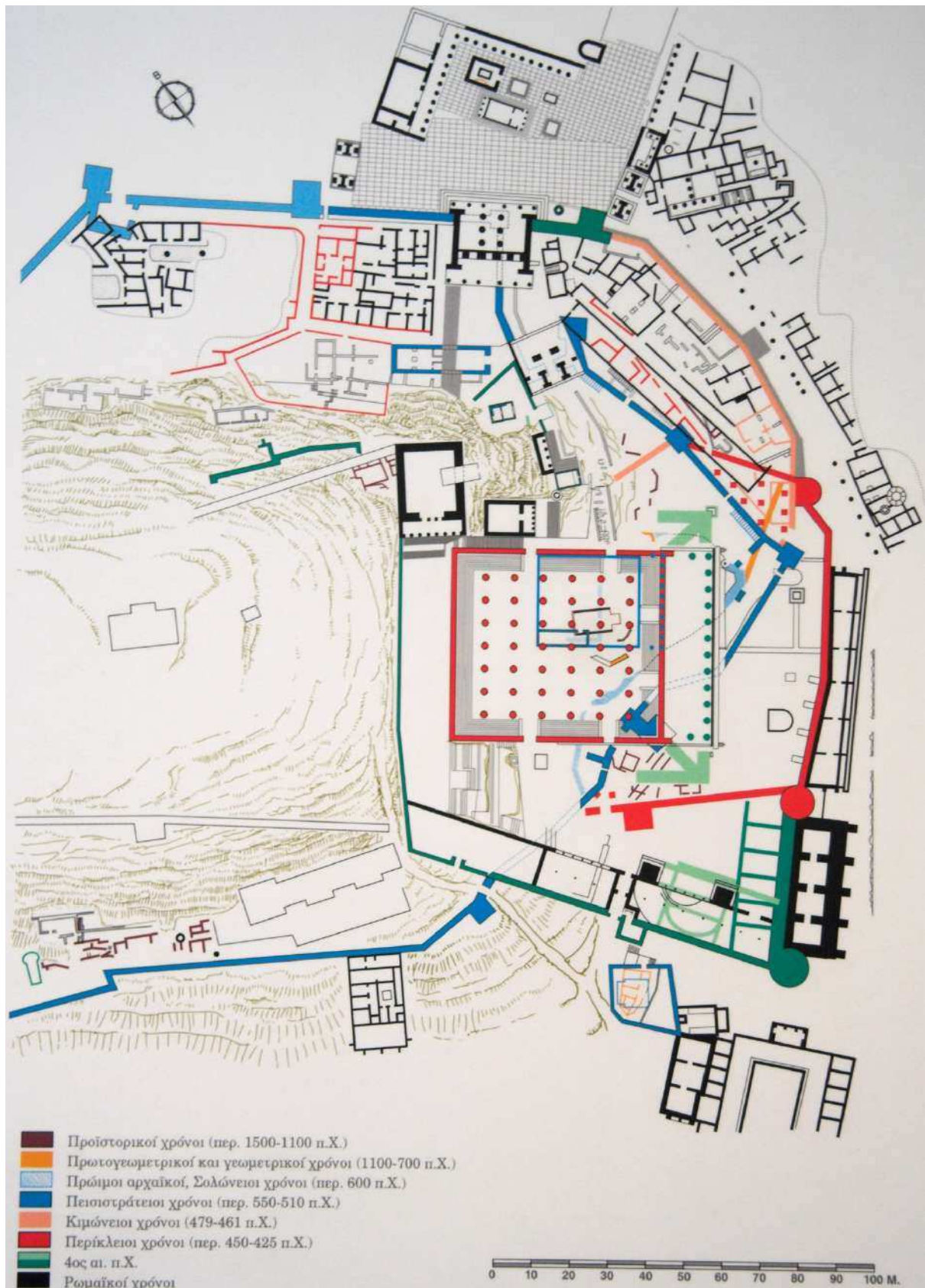


Figure 27: The city plan of Eleusis (Archaeological Museum of Eleusis).



Figure 28: The Plutonium of Eleusis can be seen on the top left, the cave structure on the west of the Lesser Propylaea (Efeda, 2020).



Figure 29: Lake Avernus (Wikipedia Commons).

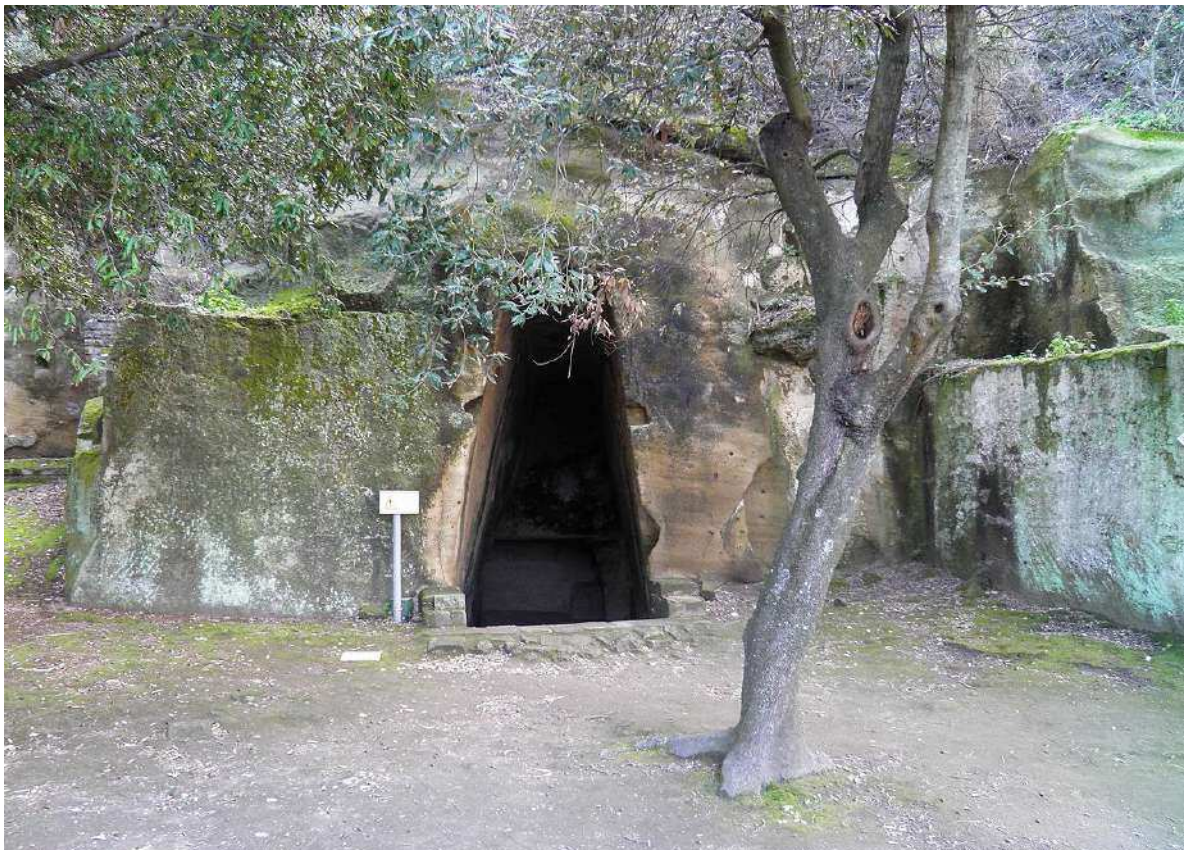


Figure 30: The entrance of the Cave of Sybil (Wikipedia Commons).

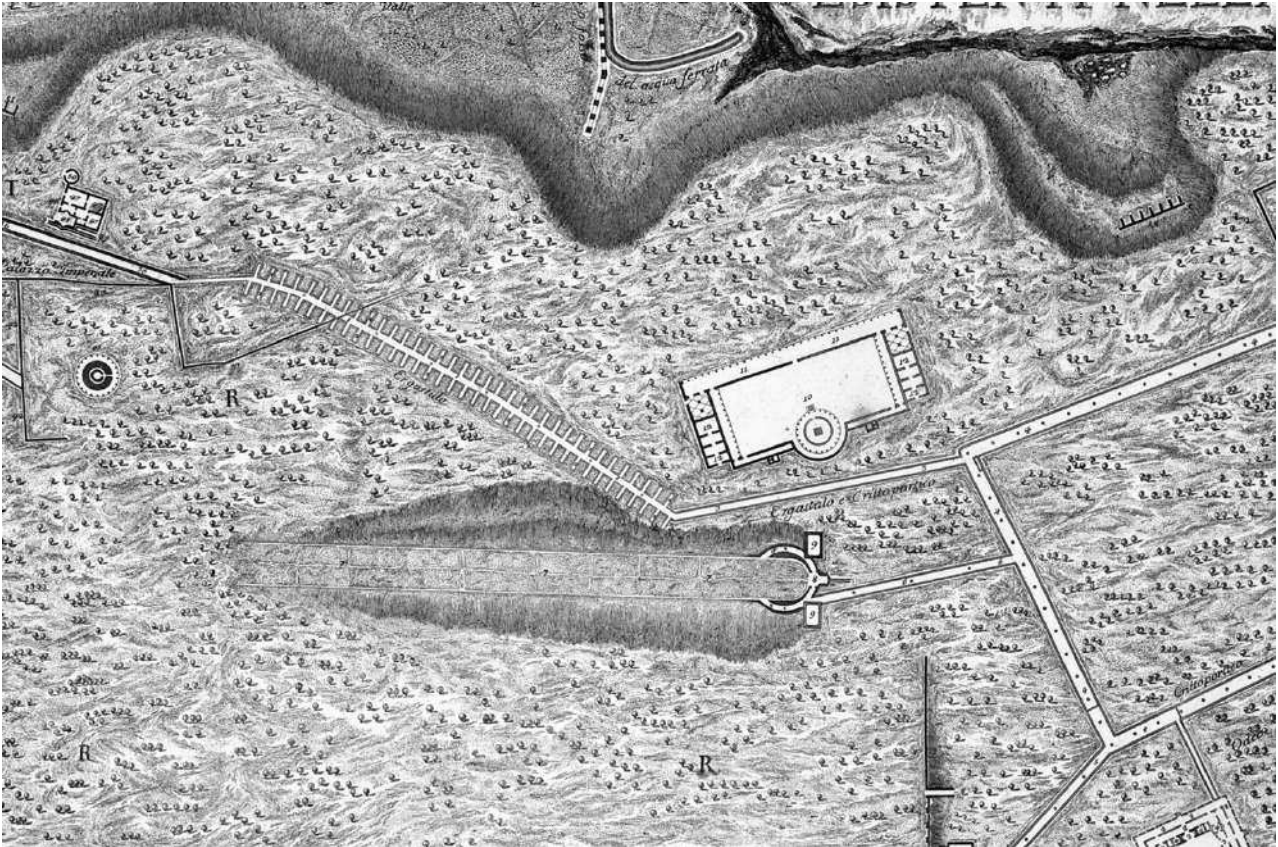


Figure 31: The plan of the Plutonium at Hadrian's Villa, by Piranesi (Gorini, et. al. 2020b: 457, fig. 2).

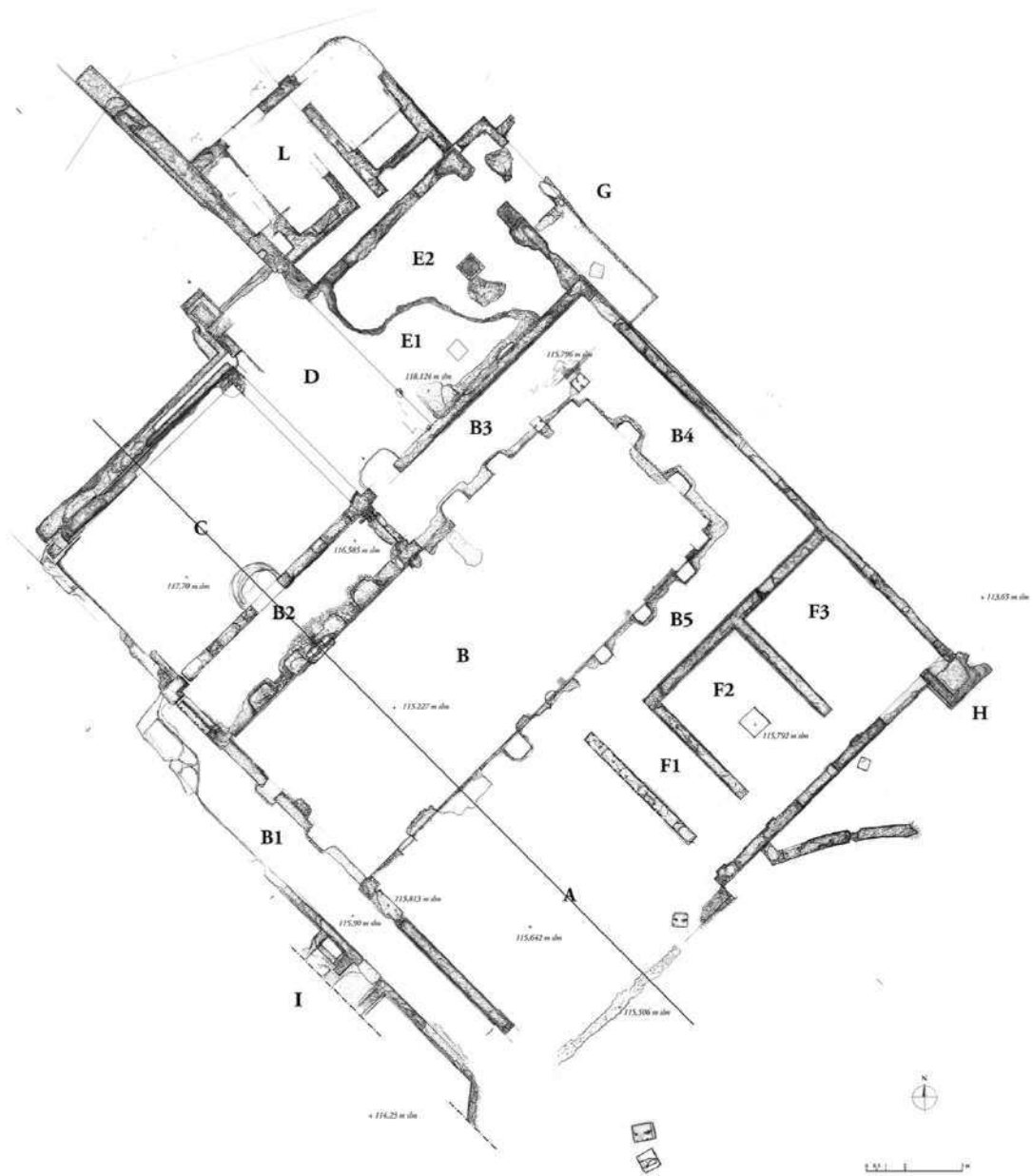


Figure 32: The modern plan of the Plutonium at Hadrian's Villa (Gorrini, et. al. 2020b: 464, fig. 9).



Figure 33: Part of the visible structure visible today at Hadrian's Villa Plutonium (Gorrini, et. al. 2020a: 363, fig. 1).

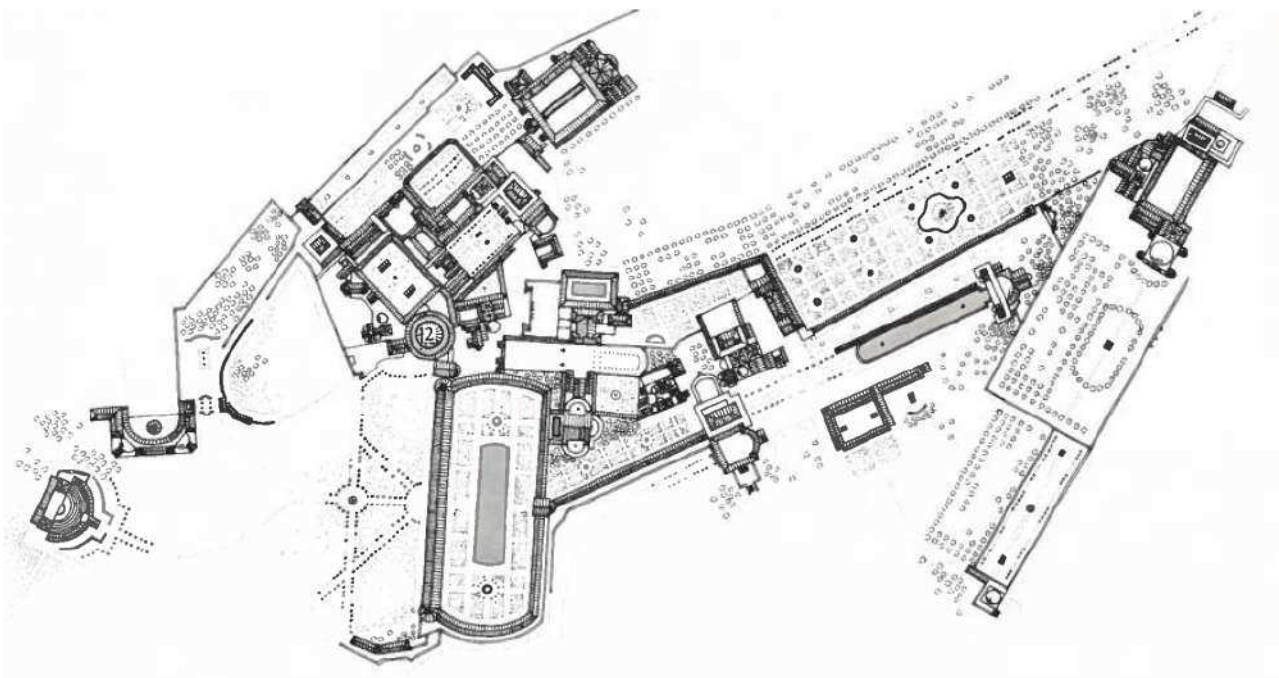


Figure34: Plan of Hadrian's Villa (Ohio State University).

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