

New Directions and Paradigms for the Study of Greek Architecture

Interdisciplinary Dialogues in the Field

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Three Hellenistic ‘Naïskoi’ in the Theatre Area at Aigeira: Small Buildings in the Context of an Urban Sanctuary

Alexandra Tanner

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the first results of the architectural study of the three so-called naïskoi—Buildings D, E, and F—in the theatre area at Aigeira.¹ The ancient polis of Aigeira is located on a ridge close to the southern shore of the Korinthian Gulf in the Peloponnesos. The site was provided with a harbour as well as access to the interior. The settlement preserves traces of Neolithic occupation, was important in the Bronze Age, and continued to exist throughout Archaic and Classic times. In the Hellenistic period it experienced important growth, which is best recognised by the construction of the city walls and an architectural ensemble built on a previously unoccupied site that would remain in use until late Roman times. It comprises a theatre, a large peristyle-building complex, the small freestanding “naïskoi” D to F, and other small structures A to C that are situated around a large central open area (Figs. 4.1–4.2).

This arrangement of buildings does not find any direct parallels in Greek urbanism, which raises the question of its role and function. Was this one of the civic or religious centres of the *polis*, or did it serve both purposes? Was it planned and built in a single, coherent building programme or gradually developed over a considerable amount of time? These questions can only be addressed after a careful study of each building and its chronology. One building type that is especially prominent because of its multiple instances, is the so-called naïskos. The three small “naïskoi”, Buildings D, E, and F, are located on either side of the theatre, and two more small temple-like structures situated on a lower terrace, Buildings I and II, are now backfilled.

The main focus of this project are the three Buildings D, E, and F. The study includes the examination of their

building history, functions, and role within the urban context of Aigeira. The distinction of such a “naïskos” from a treasury and a building for banqueting is unclear. The naïskos, consisting of a cella and a pronaos, is the smallest type of a prestigious one-room building and is suitable for various uses rather than one specific function. In this research, the exclusive function of the “naïskoi” as temples is questioned; instead of the term “naïskos”, the more neutral “building” is used here. The problem of identifying small, temple-like buildings as cult buildings, treasuries, or dining rooms has already been raised by many scholars and recently within the framework of Hellenistic studies: apart from general discussions mainly about the Archaic period (Roux 1984, Svenson-Evers 1997, Neer 2001, and Hölscher 2001) there have been discussions of the Hellenistic period and studies on the late classical *andrones* at Labraunda, as well as the buildings at Dodona (Nielsen 2007; Hellström 1990; Emmerling 2012; and Mancini 2013). During the Hellenistic period, as requirements for architecture changed and a new, more holistic perception of space emerged, we may observe new experiments in architecture. At the same time, traditional architectural types retained their importance or attracted revived interest. In sacred architecture of the Hellenistic, trends towards small buildings as well as a museum-like presentation have been particularly clear (e.g. Lauter 1986: 190–96; Cain 1995; Felten 1996; Zimmermann 2015)—tendencies which shall be explored with the present case study. Furthermore, for the first time the methodologies developed in *Bauforschung* are applied to buildings which have been excavated and known for a long time. A close reading of stratigraphic and constructional evidence, an identification of measurement units, and a functional analysis are contributing important new insights into Buildings D, E, and F (Fig. 4.2) Due to the many open questions about the entire site regarding chronology, architecture and function, a holistic approach was necessary: the careful study of the material remains as well as the analysis of the overall design, including historical sources and the results of the entire research in the theatre area.

¹ This study is part of my dissertation project “Three hellenistic ‘naïskoi’ in the theatre area at Aigeira” at the University of Zurich. I would like to thank W. Gauss, the director of the Aigeira excavation for supporting my research. Furthermore, I am grateful to my advisor and co-advisor Prof. Dr. C. Reusser and Prof. Dr.-Ing A. von Kienlin as well as colleagues and participants of the conference preceding this volume, especially the editors, for all discussions.

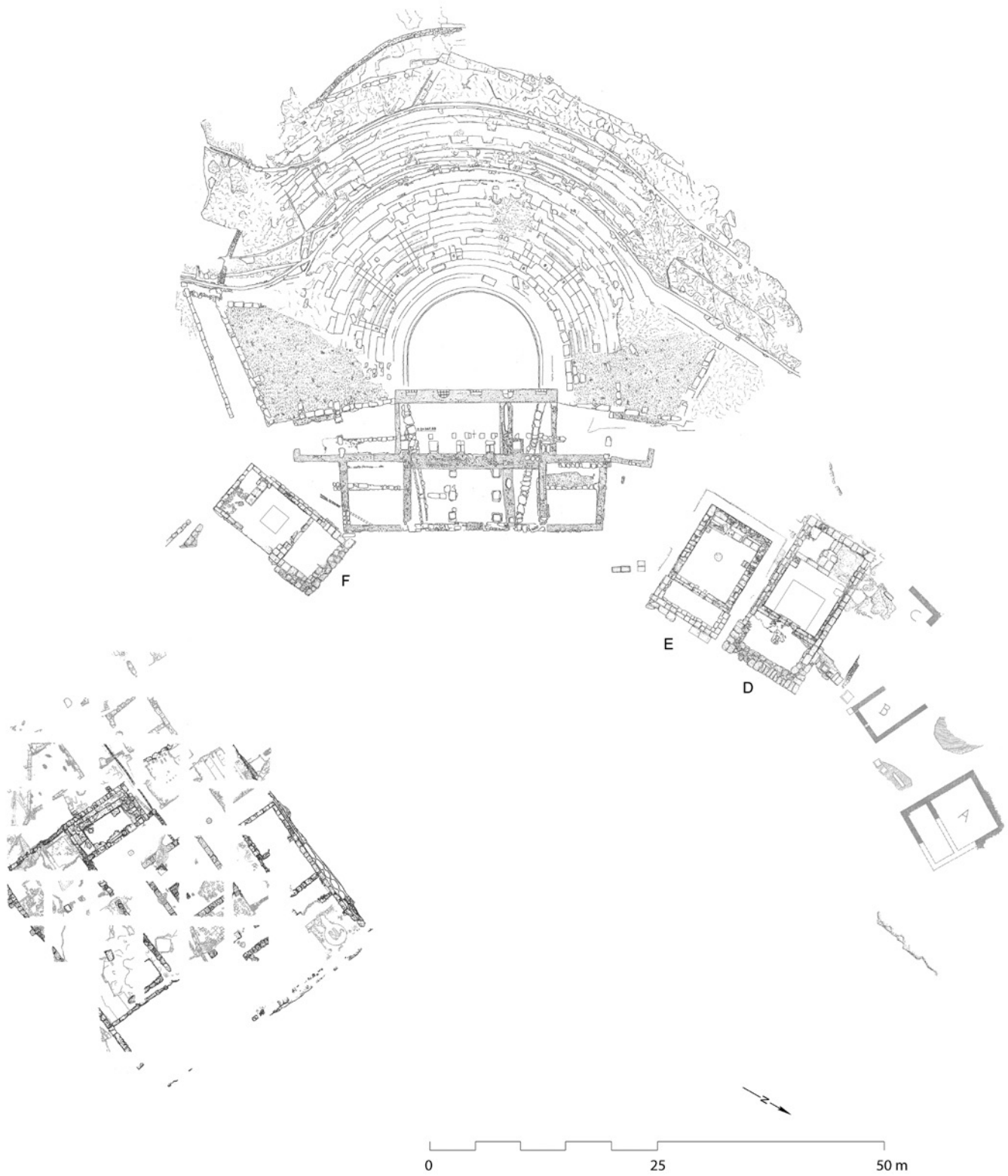


FIGURE 4.1 Overall plan of the theatre area: theatre, peristyle building, Buildings A–F
S. GOGOS, T. HAGN, AUTHOR, H. BIRK; COURTESY ÖAW/ÓAI ATHEN

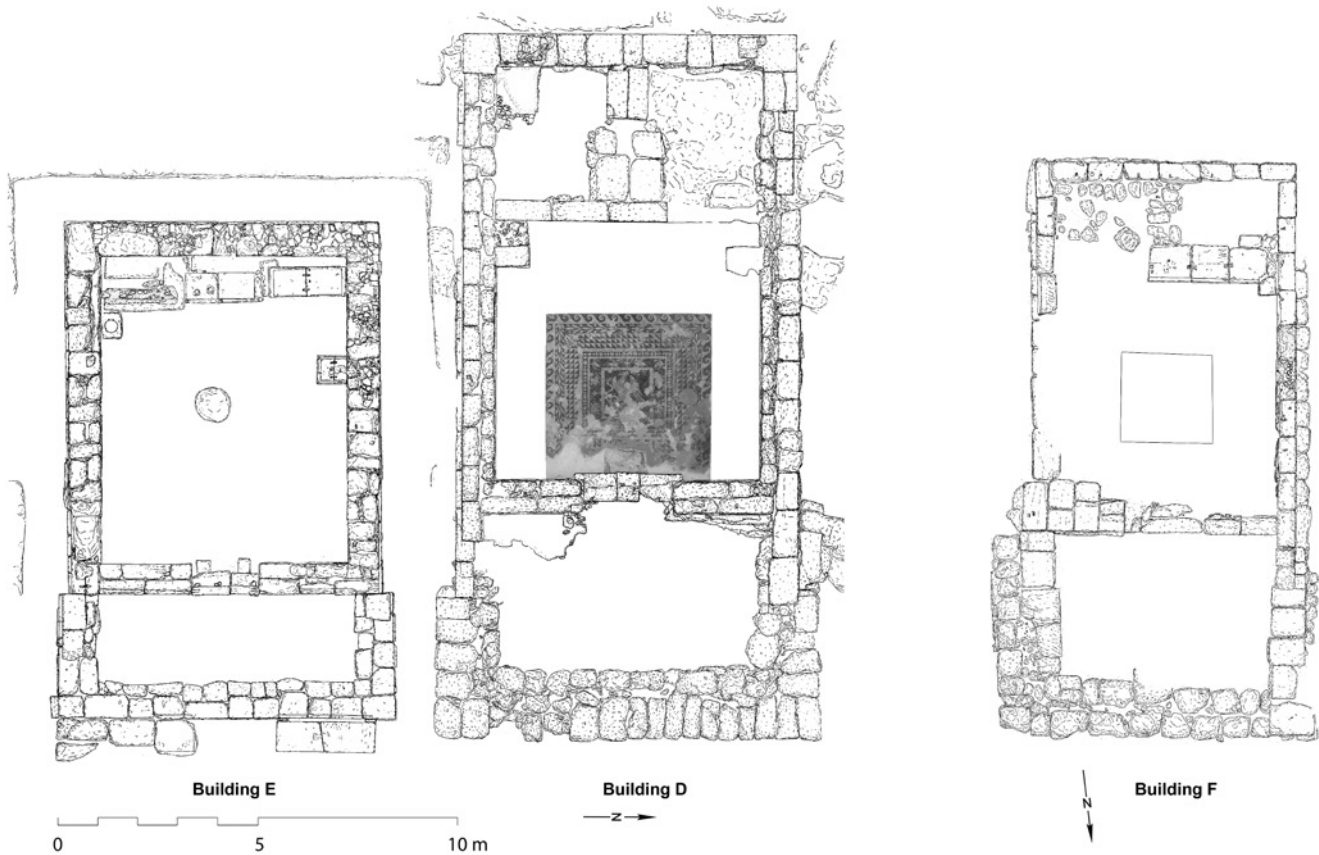


FIGURE 4.2 Ground plans of Buildings D, E, and F
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2 Previous and Current Fieldwork

The first archaeological investigations in the theatre area took place under the direction of Otto Walter in 1916 and 1925. Systematic excavations were directed by Wilhelm Alzinger in the 1970s and the 1980s, and Anton Bammer dug a few additional small trenches in 1992 and 1993. Apart from the theatre, which was described in a monograph by Savas Gogos (1992), the other buildings and all finds from the excavations were only presented in preliminary studies that were published in a few articles and summaries (esp. Walter 1919; 1932; Alzinger 1972–1975; 1985; 1990; Alzinger, Gogos & Trummer 1986; Gogos 2001; Bammer 1993; 2001; Hainzmann 2001; Schrettle 2007). Guided by Pausanias' description of Aigeira (7.26.2–10) and fragments of sculptures found during the excavations—among them the so-called head of Zeus—the excavators Alzinger and Gogos identified Building D as a temple of Zeus, and Building E as a temple of Artemis (Alzinger, Gogos & Trummer 1986: 49–50; and Gogos 2001: 79). Pausanias (7.26.2–10) enumerated several cult statues and sanctuaries without precise location. However, as Maria Aurenhammer points

out in her most recent research (currently in press), no sculpture can be attributed with certainty to a particular deity or specific building in Aigeira (on the cult attribution, see also Osanna 1996: 261–68; 272–75; Solima 2011: 17–18). Moreover, the excavators identified the entire group of buildings as the sanctuary of Zeus mentioned by Pausanias. It is important to emphasise that very little of the area of about 50 hectares once occupied by the Hellenistic city of Aigeira, which is indicated by the circuit of the city walls, has been excavated and, apart from the buildings at the theatre area, no other sanctuary that might have still existed in Pausanias' times has yet been excavated. Based on the dating of the first phase of the theatre building by Gogos to the mid-third century BCE, the building programme would have been initiated shortly after Aigeira joined the Akhaian League, 275/274 BCE as the excavators presumed. The transformation of the skene building from a Hellenistic *proskenion* to a Roman *scaenae frons* is dated between the time of Hadrianus and the beginning of the crisis of the third century CE, which would have left the building unfinished. Both dates are mainly based on numismatic evidence (Gogos 1992: 85,

119–25). As for the relative chronology of the “naiskoi”, Gogos (2001: 86) argues that Building D was the temple of Zeus, and due to its topographic situation the oldest of the three small buildings, while Building E was built after Building D and the theatre. He considered the building plot as unfavourable because of the slope and proximity to the theatre. As a consequence Building E would have been shortened. However, this interpretation is not supported by any archaeological evidence and thus is open to questioning.

For all future research in the theatre area, the relative chronology of the buildings is crucial. The first step of the ongoing project has, therefore, been the identification of the building phases based on a new documentation and study of the current state of preservation. In 2011 the Austrian Archaeological Institute with Walter Gauss launched a project for the systematic study of the finds and architecture from the theatre area at Aigeira (Gauss et al. 2012; 2013; 2015a; the latest results are presented in Gauss, in press). Drawing of ground plans and elevation

views of the three buildings at a scale of 1:20 by the author of this paper promoted the careful study of every detail of the structures (Figs. 4.2–4.3). Together with the documentation produced during the excavation, they form the basis for the new architectural analysis presented here. Building D, which preserves a floor mosaic in excellent condition that was re-exposed during the campaign of 2013, was also recorded with a high-resolution photogrammetric 3D model (Gauss et al. 2015a: 38–41). While this model has served primarily for the purpose of public presentation, it was also used to generate orthophotos in support of the elevation drawings. In terms of the relative chronology, a detailed study was carried out on the two neighbouring Buildings D and E. Their simultaneous investigation allowed the observation of their similarities, differences, and relations better than a separate analysis of each building (see Tanner [in press] for more details on the archaeological evidence). After presenting the conclusions of this examination, two reconstruction scenarios will be discussed in terms of possible correspondence of

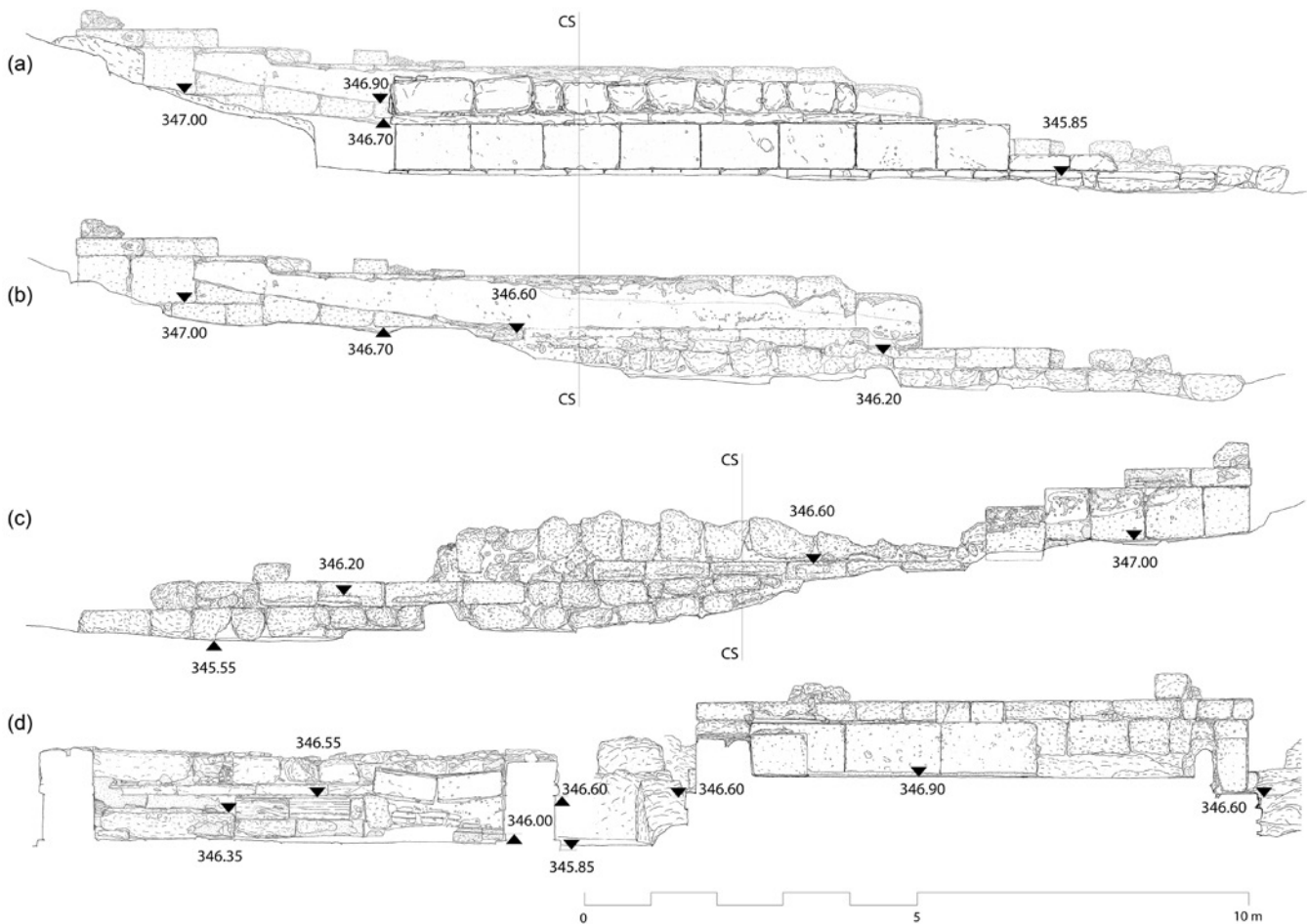


FIGURE 4.3 (a) South elevation of Building E in front of Building D; (b) south elevation of Building D; (c) north elevation of Building D; (d) cross section of Buildings D and E towards west

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the different building phases of the two “naïskoi”. The development of these two scenarios is a method for dealing with the many ambiguities concerning the building history which promotes the ensuing discussion of the more probable reconstruction. Finally, the architectural analysis enables the study of the functions and meanings of those buildings and their context.

3 Evidence and Architectural Phases

Buildings D and E are located side by side to the north of the theatre, where they are built into the sloping terrain, whereas Building F is situated south of the *skene* building. Like the northern Buildings A, B, and C (Walter 1932: 232), several statue bases, and the peristyle building (Hagn 2001), they face a wide, open public space (above, Fig. 4.1), where neither trenches nor geophysical analyses found evidence for structures (Rusch et al., in press). Although the group of buildings gives the impression of a symmetrical ensemble constructed on a rectangular grid, it is slightly irregular: Building F is located closer to the theatre than Building E, and the three “naïskoi” on both sides of the scene building are not quite oriented along orthogonal lines to each other.

The three buildings are all prostyle. The preserved dimensions of the foundations are 8.4×12.5 m for Building E, 9.7×17.7 m for Building D, and 8.2×14.5 m for Building F. While their deep pronaoi, podium at the rear, and floor

mosaics make Buildings D and F typologically similar to one another, Building E has only a shallow pronaos, and a collection of bases and pedestals in the rear of the cella, which is nearly square (Fig. 4.2).

The foundations of Building E were cut into the bedrock. Its socle was built with orthostates on a slightly wider dado base, both of local conglomerate, and with a dado crown of sandstone. The upper layer consists of irregular, partly reused blocks and tiles belonging to a later phase (Figs. 4.3a, 4.4a). The longer Building D is similar regarding its above-ground wall construction, except for being made entirely in the local conglomerate, but its foundations differ considerably. Rather than cutting a level platform, the foundation is built over the sloping bedrock, and so differs in elevation by about 1.50 m from the eastern to the western part (Figs. 4.3b-c, 4.4b). As a result, the interior floor of Building D is significantly, i.e. 90 cm, higher than the floor level in E (Fig. 4.3d). In the area south of the theatre building, the bedrock is at a lower elevation. Therefore, Building F is constructed on a foundation several courses deep that is founded on the bedrock. The socle is also built of orthostates in conglomerate, but no dado crown is preserved. Due to its incomplete preservation and its location away from the other two “naïskoi”, the ensuing discussion will concentrate on the other two buildings.

The elaborate socle of Building E was visible all around, and rough stone only appears below the bottom of the dado base (at +345.85 m above sea level; Figs. 4.3a, d–4.4a).



FIGURE 4.4 Detail of the south wall socle of (a) Building E and (b) Building D
PHOTOS BY AUTHOR; COURTESY ÖAW/ÖAI ATHEN

Although there is a joint between the cella and pronaos, the lack of a foundation on the eastern wall of the cella precludes the existence of an initial phase of the building as an oikos lacking any pronaos. Instead, the construction technique is consistent throughout the building (Fig. 4.3a). The first floor is on the level +346.0 m, directly above the trimmed bedrock, indicated by wall plaster on the interior and remains of a mortar floor in the cella and pronaos at the same level. In light of this floor elevation, in the first phase the krepis could only have been one step high. This first phase was very likely decorated with wall plaster in the masonry style, fragments of which were found in the cella (Alzinger 1986: 41–2; Leibetseder [in press]). Fills in the cella containing these fragments and the threshold that was set at a higher elevation indicate a slight rise of the interior floor and a more substantial increase in the outer ground level, including the pronaos, by about 30 cm. A second step for the krepis was necessitated, while two steps led from the pronaos down into the cella. The superstructure of the wall was most likely built from mud-brick; air-dried bricks are preserved in situ at the rear, inside of Building E. Hans Lauter (1986: 50–1) points out that the use of mud-brick became more common in the Hellenistic era even for public buildings. When the outside ground level was raised again, as revealed by the plaster on the south wall of Building D (Fig. 4.4b), Building E was rebuilt with a higher socle in order to protect its brick wall against ground moisture from the soil (Fig. 4.3a). The layer of reused blocks and roof tiles contains spolia from the *skene* building of the theatre dating the rebuilding to Roman times. The two fragments of semi-columns, P2 and P3, are comparable with the fragments P1 and P4 found in situ and near the *proskenion* (Gogos 1992: 62–66; 123–25; table 31–39). No blocks of an upper structure are preserved, apart from two Doric columns reused as bases in the cella which probably belonged to the initial pronaos.

Following the natural slope of the bedrock, Building D was situated at a higher elevation than its neighbour Building E. The masonry of the pronaos and cella walls was built within one phase (Fig. 4.3c). There is only one floor level throughout the pronaos and cella, that containing the aforementioned pebble mosaic (+346.90 m; Figs. 4.2, 4.3d). The level of the threshold and the width of the pronaos foundations lead to the reconstruction of a three-step krepis. The podium in the rear part of the cella also belongs to the same building phase, as shown by the rough inner surface of the orthostates (Fig. 4.3d) (Alzinger 1988: 12).

The space between the two Buildings D and E and the two facing longitudinal walls is important in terms of the

relative chronology. While the socle of Building E is elaborated all around, that of Building D follows the natural slope of the bedrock and is unworked in the western part at a higher level than the socle of Building E (+346.70 m; Figs. 4.3a, 4.4a, b). Therefore, contrary to the initial hypothesis of the excavators, Building D must have been built after E, and the space between them filled up subsequently. Due to this raising of the outside ground level, the socle of Building E was raised during a later phase, when spolia were used as building material.

In summary, three main building phases could be identified, two for Building E and one for Building D. In Building D, several layers of plaster on the exterior walls and painted entablature blocks attest to further alterations and use phases, as do modifications on pedestals in Building E. As for their dating, at the moment only the style of the floor mosaic in Building D provides a direct indication of the construction date. Recent research by Veronika Scheibelreiter-Gail (in press) confirms its dating by Dieter Salzmann (1982: 33–4) to the third century BCE, while he dated the mosaic more precisely to the middle third of that century. The architectural terracottas can only be dated generally in that century. Finally, Building F is the most recent, with its floor mosaic dated by Scheibelreiter-Gail to the second century BCE. This building, however, reuses foundations of an earlier building—the southern rear wall and a euthynteria of 120 cm width—and therefore most probably was the krepis of a stoa facing the open space to the north.

4 Design Units and Reconstruction

As a basis for reconstructing the “naïskoi”, their design scheme and measurement units were investigated. Researchers have debated whether foot units were restricted to three principal systems (Attic, Doric-Pheidonic, Samian-Ionic) or a wider variety existed (e.g., Coulton 1975: 85–7; Müller-Wiener 1988: 31–2; Koenigs 1990; 2015: 51–53 and n. 181, with bibliography). Analysis of the ground plans revealed two possible modular systems based on differing foot units for Buildings D and E, consistent with two independent processes of design and construction. The wall thickness on each building can be assumed to correspond to one design module, because the main building dimensions are evenly divided by this multiple (Fig. 4.5). The same modules can also be observed in elevation: in Building D corresponding to the height of the orthostates, and in Building E to the combined height of the orthostates together with the euthynteria.

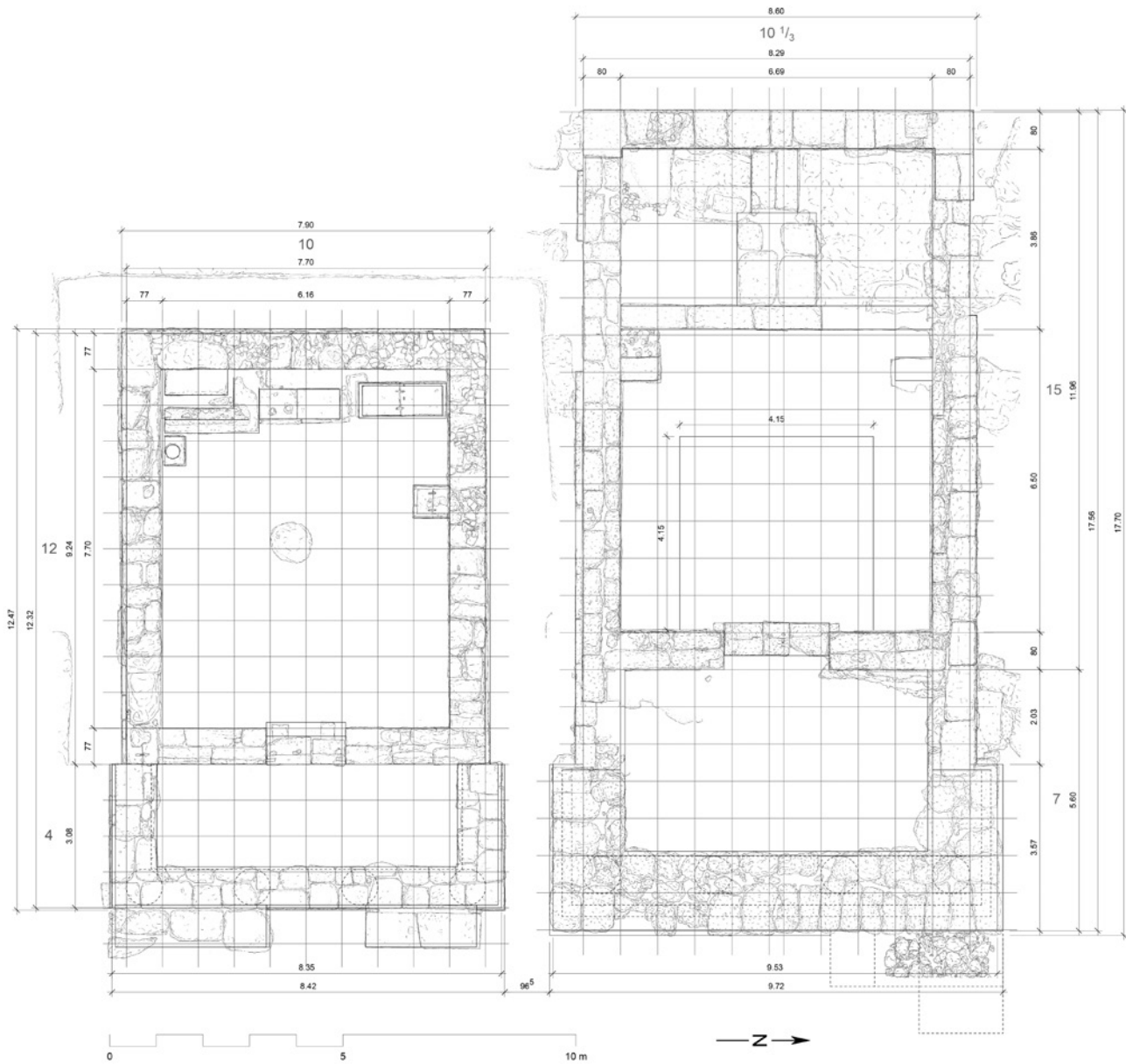


FIGURE 4.5 Reconstruction of the ground plans of Buildings D and E
AUTHOR

The probable foot units for each building have been derived from these modules in Table 4.1, where one module consists of 2.5 feet. Building E utilises a foot unit of 30.80 cm (from a module of 77.0 cm), significantly smaller than the foot unit of 31.90 at Building D (from a module of nearly 80 cm, or more precisely 79.75 cm). In contrast to the very accurate execution of Building E, the dimensions on Building D are less clear due to its less precise construction and poorer state of preservation. Building D also shows an irregularity in the width of the building, which measures 10 and $\frac{1}{3}$ modules, that might be the result of a wider central intercolumniation. However, since the stylobate is lost, no traces of columns are preserved to confirm this assumption. The socle of Building E

measures 12.32 m long—equivalent to 16 modules (40 feet of 30.80 cm)—by 7.70 m wide—equivalent to 10 modules (25 feet of 30.80 cm). The length of the cella is 12 modules (30 feet of 30.80 cm), and the depth of the pronaos is 4 modules (10 feet of 30.80 cm), meaning that the proportion of the cella to the pronaos is 3:1. The reconstructed length of Building D is 17.56 m—equivalent to 22 modules (55 feet of 31.90 cm)—and its width of 8.29 m equals $10\frac{1}{3}$ modules (26 feet of 31.90 cm). The ratio of the length of the cella to the depth of the pronaos is about 15 modules (37.5 feet of 31.90 cm) to about 7 modules (17.5 feet of 31.90 cm), and thus slightly greater than 2:1.

The two distinctive metrological systems reveal that foot units were not standardised at Aigeira, even in two

TABLE 4.1 Building D, E: Dimensions and design units

	Building E			Building D				
	cm	30.8-cm foot	77-cm module	cm	31.9-cm foot	80-cm module	30.8-cm foot	32.5-cm foot
Length cella (orthostates)	924.0	30.0	12.0	1196.0	37.49	14.95	38.83	36.80
Length pronaos (euthyntheria)	308.0	10.0	4.0	560.0 (reconstructed)	(17.55)	(7.0)	(18.18)	(17.23)
Total length of building	1232.0	40.0	16.0	1756.0 (reconstructed)	(55.05)	(21.95)	(57.01)	(54.03)
Width cella (orthostates)	770.0	25.0	10.0	829.0	25.99	10.36	26.92	25.51
Wall-thickness (orthostates)	77.0	2.5	1.0	80.0	2.51	1.0	2.6	2.46
Height orthostates				80.0	2.51	1.0	2.6	2.46
Height socle (orthostates + euthyntheria, min.)	77.0	2.5	1.0					
Height frieze + geison				64.0	2.01	0.80	2.08	1.97
Lateral length of floor mosaic				415.0	13.01	5.19	13.47	12.77

neighbouring buildings. There are further examples demonstrating the existence of these separate foot units.² An interesting fact mentioned by Hennemeyer (2013: 104) is a passage by Polybios (2.37.7–10) stating that in the second century BCE, measurement units were standardised within the Akhaian League, with an implication that various units had still coexisted in this region in the third century. Furthermore, the 30.8-cm foot in Building E is almost identical to the foot of 30.7–30.8 cm in the theatre identified by Gogos (1992: 133). This was confirmed by the new study of the layout of the ensemble which revealed that the theatre and Building E are based on a radial scheme originating at the centre of the orchestra and using circles of radii of 25, 70, and 100 feet of 30.8 cm. Thus, the contemporary planning and building of the two structures is confirmed.

During excavations several architectural blocks were found in an upper destruction layer between the two buildings. These whole blocks and fragments belong to the frieze and geison courses in the Ionic or Corinthian order, the 12

such blocks adding up to a total length of 7.17 m. According to their findspots they must have fallen from the southern wall of Building D. Since the metal clamps have been removed from the blocks, they would have been moved by later interventions after their collapse. Still, this must have involved no more than turning them around their longitudinal axes, which would be the easiest way to overturn them. Accordingly, the original position of the blocks—facing south—can still be reconstructed. The lateral entablature seems to consist only of a frieze and geison that together were 64 cm high, which is close enough to 2 feet of 31.90 cm to confirm their assignment to Building D.

The extensive architectural analysis of Buildings D and E demonstrates that Building E was built first. Furthermore, the alignment of the colonnades of the pronaos indicate that both buildings were simultaneously in use for some period of time. Under these conditions, two possible scenarios of the reconstruction of the building history will be presented and discussed by means of schematic drawings (Fig. 4.6). Here Building D is restored with an Ionic order, while the upper structure of E is hypothetical, unless the reused Doric columns in the cella are attributed to the building. In addition, each building consists of a tetra-style prothesis.

In the first scenario, the first phase consists of Building E, constructed with a one-step-high krepis with four columns (Fig. 4.6: upper left). Later, next to Building E, Building D was constructed with a three-step-high krepis of similar width, with four columns in the Ionic or Corinthian order. The pronaos floor is 80–90 cm

2 As for the unit of 30.80 cm of Building E, on the Salamis relief Mark Wilson Jones (2000: 79–80) detected a unit of 30.60 to 30.70 cm along with the so-called Doric-Pheidonic foot. At Argos a foot unit of 30.80 cm has been derived by René Ginouvès (1956: 112–3) from the foundations of the second temple of Hera. On three stoas and other buildings at Priene, Arnd Hennemeyer (2013: 102–105) discerned feet ranging from 30.75 to 31.00 cm. Regarding the foot of 31.90 cm found on Building D, a similar 31.60-cm unit discovered on the temple of Zeus at Stratos by the excavators Courby & Picard (1924: 85) was recently confirmed by Jari Pakkanen (2013: 86–7).



FIGURE 4.6A–B Reconstruction scenarios I and II of the building history of Buildings D and E (author)

higher than that of Building E. Probably the pronaos of Building E was already slightly raised by the height of one step. At some point, both buildings collapsed, and at least Building E was destroyed down to its socle (Fig. 4.6: middle left). When both buildings were rebuilt afterwards in Roman times, the socle and the floor elevation in the pronaos of Building E were again increased along with the outside ground level, and the entablature of Building D was repainted. Building D was probably in use for a longer period of time, since the entablature blocks of only this building have been discovered, whereas all the reusable blocks from Building E seem to have already been removed and reused in ancient times (Fig. 4.6: lower left).

As for Scenario 2, the first phase is the same as in Scenario 1, but Building E would have collapsed early (Fig. 4.6: upper right). The building was then reconstructed at an elevation raised modestly by 20–40 cm. Simultaneously, Building D was constructed above the

natural bedrock, whose foundations thus required no labourious rock-cutting. After a second demolition, Building E was rebuilt with a higher socle and floor level in the pronaos in Roman times, the entablature of Building D was repainted, and the outside ground level raised again. The final phase and abandonment of the buildings is unchanged from the first scenario (Fig. 4.6: lower right).

In Scenario 1, on the one hand, the raised ground level would have been motivated by a new architectural conception of the site that included the addition of a second building (D) and more prestigious prostyle porches on both Buildings D and E. In Scenario 2, on the other hand, the destruction of Building E would instead have led to the raising of the floor level. From the architectural point of view, Scenario 1 encounters some difficulty explaining the relatively large difference of nearly 90 cm between the two floor levels. Yet, that neighbouring buildings can have

differing floor levels may be observed at the two treasuries in the sanctuary of Athena Pronaia at Delphoi, where there is a discrepancy in floor level of about 30 cm (Bommelaer 2015: 80, fig. 11). Scenario 2, however, requires there to have been a second rebuilding in Roman times—and thus is a more complicated account of the remains because it must posit another destruction or decay. Still, the fact that Building F was built on a predecessor supports the assumption of the reconstruction of the initial building E already in Hellenistic times. Then, possible historic events can be considered that could have eventually provoked the demolition. Nevertheless, the few relevant literary sources—i.e., about the offshore earthquake in the region in 373 BCE (see, e.g., Lafond 1998), the sack of Aigeira by the Aitolians in 219 BCE that is described by Polybios (4.57–58), or the dissolution of the Akhaian League by the Romans in 146 BCE (Pausanias 7.16.9; Schwertfeger 1974: 18)—do not provide definitive information about any destructions at Aigeira.

5 Typological and Functional Study

Whereas all three buildings share in common a prostyle plan and krepis limited to the area of the pronaos, the ground plan of the first built Building E differs from those of Buildings D and F, which, with elongated plans, are more similar to each other (Fig. 4.2). A building with a similar ground plan to Building E is the temple of Artemis Orthia in the Asklepieion of Messene, which was built in the fourth century BCE. It consists of a comparable nearly square cella and a narrow pronaos, although its dimensions (8.42 × 5.62 m) are smaller than those of Building E (Müth 2007: 164–7, fig. 92). A parallel to Building D is found in the organisation of the interior space of the temple of Despoina at Lykosoura, from the third century BCE (Lauter-Bufe 2009: 94–6), although at 11.40 × 21.40 m the Lykosoura temple is slightly larger than Building D (cf. Lauter 1986: 189–94; Schrettle 2007; Mattern 2015: 105–15 for general observations about the typology of Hellenistic naïskoi). In terms of the use of the buildings, however, the inner organisation of the ground plan is more significant than the general building type. The typological similarities of Buildings D and F—e.g., a podium in the rear part of the cella—suggest a similar function which has perhaps been altered in comparison to the earlier Building E. The later reorganisation of the bases in the rear of Building E may also represent an attempt to create a podium.

In order to investigate the question of whether these typological differences are a result of a general change in function or fashion among such “naïskoi”, and to what

extent the different ground plan typologies were influenced by their function, the possible uses of the small temple-like Buildings D, E, and F in Aigeira must be re-considered here—as temple, treasury, or banquet hall, as well as the possibility of multiple functions. Often for such small structures neither the archeological evidence nor the ancient terminology is certain (Hölscher 2001: 143–44; Neer 2001: 274, n. 5 with bibliography; Leypold 2008: 12–14). For example, the function of the Hellenistic temple-like buildings at Dodona, which are comparable to the small buildings at Aigeira, is also unclear and controversial. At the very least, their most common interpretation as shrines for various deities has recently been questioned, entertaining possible functions as treasuries or dining halls (Quantin 2008: 20–9; Emmerling 2012: 201–10; 150–55; Mancini 2013; Piccinini 2006: esp. 160), and at the time of their discovery, the excavator had suggested a function as treasuries (Evangelidis 1929: 108).

As for the most obvious possible function for a naïskos as a temple, the constitutive elements are a cult image and an altar (Burkert 1988: 36). No traces of an altar were found in the area of Buildings D–F, but still the existence of an altar cannot be excluded. While Buildings D and E face East, as expected for temples, Building F instead faces north. Each building has internal bases suitable for cult statues, even if relevant inscriptions are lacking and no statues have been recovered that could be attributed to these bases, and in fact no other pedestal is known from the theatre area. The study of the figural terracottas by Rudolfine Smetana (in press) has revealed that most belonged to Building E, which supports a cult function. Upon review, the elaborate architecture of the buildings and the presence of numerous statue bases suggest cult functions especially for Building E, but also for Building D.

Regarding the second possible function as a treasury, a distinction is often made between “proper” treasuries founded by cities in panhellenic sanctuaries and those used more generally as storerooms (Neer 2001: 279–81; Svenson-Evers 1997: 141). Furthermore, Georges Roux (1984: 156–57) and Richard T. Neer (2001: 279) emphasise that solidly built walls and other means to impede access to the interior are characteristics of treasuries. Those features cannot easily be attributed to the three buildings at Aigeira, which, for example, most probably had mud-brick walls. More broadly, Roux interprets a treasury building as not only a shelter for dedications but also itself as a dedication, although the distinction from a temple is not always clear (Roux 1984: 171; also see Hölscher 2001: 149). For more accurate differentiation, Roux (1984) introduces the terms “temple-trésors” and “temple-sanctuaire”.

According to this interpretation, we cannot rule out a function as treasury for the three buildings.

The third possible identification as buildings for banqueting is even more problematic, since dining halls are typologically variable; Roux (1973: 538) states simply, “il n'existe pas d'hestiatorion type” (and see Leypold 2008: 176–85). Fortunately, some of the *oikoi*—called “small buildings” in Delphoi, for example—may be identified as dining buildings thanks to epigraphical and archaeological evidence (Hellmann 1992: 300–4; also see Bruneau and Ducat 2005: 171). The temple-like Buildings A and B at Labraunda even have inscriptions on their architraves denominating them as *andrones* (Hellström 1990). Usually, however, the use of a room for banqueting is identified by interior features, primarily the floor construction. In this view, the central floor mosaic inside Building D that is surrounded by a slightly raised pebble floor—a form typical of dining rooms—is strong evidence for such an identification (Börker 1983; Leypold 2008: 142–75, esp. 148–50, 163–64). In the cella of Building D, nine symmetrically arranged *klinai* of 170–175 × 80 cm can be reconstructed on the floor, which is raised by 1 cm.

In conclusion, the “*naïskoi*” at Aigeira present some evidence for use as temples as well as for dining, whereas a function as treasuries seems less likely but is not entirely excluded. Could they possibly have been multi-functional buildings? Lauter (1986: 191, 193) generally denies any additional uses for Hellenistic *naïskoi* besides as a temple, although he notes the similarity to treasuries: “Dem Wesen und der Konvention nach sind kleinere Prostyloi und Antebauten Gehäuse für das in ihrer Cella Aufzubewahrende. Als Tempel sind sie bzw. ihre Zellen demnach Gehäuse für die Kultbilder und sonst nichts”. Tonio Hölscher excludes an additional function as a dining building for the Olympian treasuries due to the central position of the original cult statue (Hölscher 2001: 149). For Building D with its statue base in the rear of the cella, besides its evident cult function, at least a temporary use as a dining room appears likely. Moreover, the *andrones* at Labraunda, which seem to have had both sacred and dining functions, provide a parallel for the “*naïskoi*” at Aigeira. Pontus Hellström (1990: 252) remarks: “It thus appears that temple-like buildings can be banqueting halls even if there is a niche or a base for a statue at the back wall”. If we look back to the pre-archaic “Herdhaus”, or “temple-hestiatorion”, we encounter a multi-functional building used for cult sacrifice and social-political meetings (Drerup 1969: 123–28; see also Börker 1983: 10 and Mazarakis Ainian 1988: 116–19). Over the course of the Archaic period, according to Mazarakis Ainian (1988: 118), the different functions were separated from each other

and attributed to separate buildings: “Little by little the three primordial functions of early Greek temples were separated from each other: the temple itself remained the house of the divinity in which the cult image was kept while distinct edifices, serving as treasuries and hestiatoria, were erected in the proximity of the temple”. Perhaps this separation of function did not occur uniformly everywhere in the Greek world, or it was no longer maintained by Hellenistic and later times. Inge Nielsen (2007: 34–6) draws a parallel between the multi-functional Hellenistic and Roman buildings—used by religious associations for meetings, banquets, and cult—through the “temple-hestiatorion”, and, in the Roman era, multi-functionality in temples became even more common, with uses including not only religious ceremonies, but also meetings of all kind, archives, art exhibitions, etc. (see, e.g., Anderson 1997: 242–7). Although of a more civic character than those buildings for private religious associates, the small buildings at Aigeira could have been similarly multi-functional in a later phase. After all, they seem to have served more purposes than solely as shrines for a museum-like presentation of cult images, or as miniature temples (Lauter 1986: 194–6; Cain 1995: 123–5).

6 Conclusions

The current research has led to new results concerning the architectural design and relative chronology of Buildings D and E, and the nature of the entire architectural ensemble. The holistic approach to the study of the three so-called *naïskoi* D, E, and F including the layout of the entire group of buildings and results of material studies by other scholars—such as, for example, the figural terracottas—has led to new insights regarding the planning and function of the buildings. Despite the lack of abundant architectural blocks of the upper structure, we may offer possible reconstructions of the buildings and their life histories.

The detailed examination of the evidence has shown that Building E was constructed before its neighbour, Building D. Building E as well as the theatre and probably a stoa preceding Building F would have been the first constructed in the area using the same measuring unit, whereas the one identified in Building D is distinct from them. Despite the chronological differences, Buildings D and E were still closely related to each other, as witnessed by their aligned prostyle porches of similar width—at least during their first period of coexistence. This joint conception of the buildings must have originated in the course of third century BCE, the time of the construction indicated

by the floor mosaic of Building D. Building F, dateable to the second century BCE by its floor mosaic, followed the typological model of Building D. Furthermore, the differences between the three buildings concerning building techniques, dimensional units, typology, and interior layout indicate design and construction at different points in time, and by different people or groups of people, public or private.

If the relative sequence shows that the theatre and Building E are contemporary and probably earlier than the middle of the third century BCE, the accepted dating of the theatre to ca. 250 BCE should also be reconsidered (Gogos 1992: 119; see also Gauss *et al.* 2015b: 268–69). Furthermore, it is unclear when Aigeira joined the Second Akhaian League founded in 281/280 BCE, though this probably was only towards the middle of the third century (Löbel 2014: 42–45, 405). The population transfer from the abandoned polis Aigai to Aigeira in the second half of the fourth century might have led to urban construction projects in the theatre area (on Aigai, see Löbel 2014: 44; Rizakis 2016: 23–4) while further building activity took place after Aigeira joined the League.

To conclude, the three temple-like buildings at Aigeira each appear to have had different functions, some designed as multi-functional buildings. Combined uses for cult activity, the display of dedications, and dining is at least possible for Buildings D and F. Nevertheless, due to the lack of attributed cult statues, altars or inscriptions, the deities and ritual conducted in this area remain unknown. Whereas the early Hellenistic ensemble comprising one naïskos is typical for a local sanctuary, the later arrangement of the architecture in the theatre area does not emphasise one single outstanding building that could be regarded as the main temple, as we would usually expect in a Hellenistic sanctuary—as in, for example, the Asklepieon of Kos, the Sanctuary of Zeus at Labraunda, or the sanctuary of Dodona. Nevertheless, since a temple is not a requirement for a Greek sanctuary, the group of buildings could still form a sanctuary, regardless of their particular functions. Furthermore, the presence of multiple small temple-like buildings indicates cult activity as well as dining in the framework of the enlarged sanctuary of later Hellenistic times.

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