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Architectural Space in Ancient Greece

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Preface

This is the first translation into English of my doctoral dissertation, which was prepared at the Berlin Charlottenburg Technische Hochschule and published in 1937 as *Raumordnung im griechischen Städtebau*.

My preface to the original edition began as follows:

Two great advances of the last three decades have radically altered the conditions that prevailed in cities over the last three millennia. The first advance concerns building materials. Until about the beginning of this century, man built with clay and stone, wood and marble, natural materials whose characteristic properties of weight and size determined the scale and form of the buildings. Today, the increasing industrialized production of new building materials has given man the freedom to create structures of whatever scale and form he may desire. The second advance concerns transportation. Until the last century man could proceed beyond the pedestrian range only with the help of animals. Today mechanized transportation reigns supreme and is completely altering the form and scale of our cities.

The problems caused by these changing conditions made me determined to discover what man might hold onto in a situation where city planning policies could "as easily lead to terrible failures as to happy solutions" for mankind. I determined to discover what was "the human scale"; what was the secret of the system of architectural spacing used by the ancient Greeks, which had the effect of satisfying man and uplifting his spirit as he entered a public space—whether it was a precinct sacred to the gods with its temples and votive columns or the agora with its stoas and statuary. As a student in Athens, I had visited and studied all the best-known archaeological sites in Greece and, later, several in Asia Minor. In Berlin I was able to restudy them and compare my findings with those of several outstanding archaeologists, including my professor, Dr. Daniel Krencker, Dr. Wilhelm Dörpfeld, Dr. Theodor Wiegand, then President of the German Archaeological Institute, and many other scholars from the

various national archaeological schools and institutes in Athens.

The text of this edition does not constitute a major revision of the original, although some sections have been rearranged, minor inaccuracies have been corrected, and additional references and new illustrations have been provided. The sites discussed in this book thus include only those that had been fully excavated and documented before 1936, when my thesis was written, and their state of preservation as described here is that in which I found them at that time. There has, of course, been a considerable change in the number and condition of the excavated sites in the last thirty years. In cases where findings made since 1936 have altered the situation as I have described it, reference to these is given in the notes. At the Heraion at Samos, for example, excavations are still proceeding. Here I had postulated the position of an entry based on the theory of polar coordinates. Recent findings on the site have shown the existence of an entry close to the point I had selected but not close enough to be conclusive.

Of the sites necessarily omitted from my 1936 study the best known are perhaps Delos and Corinth, but there are also many minor sites, such as Perachora, Kea, Vraona, awaiting investigations that will throw further light on the theory I put forward here.

To Professor Jaqueline Tyrwhitt I express my gratitude for her translation of my German text and for her supervision of this English edition. I acknowledge also the contribution of my young colleague Andreas Drymiotis, engineer-mathematician, who found the time to take some new photographs of the ancient sites. His photographs add to the quality of this presentation.

Constantinos A. Doxiadis
Athens, 1969