

With the Gaze of Place: Multifunctional Complex in Dorida

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Abstract

This thesis concerns the creation of a multi-functional complex in the municipality of Dorida, in the prefecture of Fokida. The plot on which the intervention is taking place is located at the entrance to the settlement of Koniakos, a village located on the eastern slope of Vardousia. The landscape, the traditional architecture of the place, the traditional buildings and settlements combined with the folklore of the place led to architectural gestures that respect the heritage and the natural environment. Consequently, the traditional elements of the area are transcribed in a modern way defining a renewed local character in the area. More specifically, the complex consists of an amphitheater with a capacity of 200 people which will be a place for cultural events, conferences, etc., a refreshment room, a folklore library and a long-term residential zone. The steep slope of the ground helps to compose functions and volumes by creating platforms and bleachers for easier passage and circulation inside the complex. Therefore, the complex of functions tries to transcribe the tradition of the place in a material and immaterial way thus avoiding copying and standardization.

Keywords: Traditional Architecture, Architecture, Tradition, Place

Introduction

Area Analysis

The focus and topic of this thesis were chosen due to my deep connection with this place. My ancestral ties, combined with my academic journey and the knowledge I have acquired during my studies, have sparked several questions.

My main concern was how I could intervene in these environments with historical and documented traditions without resorting to mere imitation. Respecting the landscape, the goal is to create ideal conditions for re-inhabitation and to establish the prerequisites for a return to the land and its roots.

The study area is located in Central Greece, specifically in the regional unit of Phocis. It is divided into two municipal units: the Municipality of Dorida in the western part of the region and the Municipality of Delphi in the eastern part. Phocis covers an area of 2,120 sq. km and, according to the 2011 demographic

data, has a population of 40,343 inhabitants. The Municipality of Delphi occupies nearly half of the region, covering 1,122 sq. km, with a population of 26,716. In contrast, the Municipality of Dorida spans 970 sq. km and has 13,676 inhabitants—roughly half the population of Delphi.

Dorida is predominantly mountainous, consisting of three major mountain ranges: Giona (altitude: 2,484m), Vardousia (altitude: 2,406m), and Trikorfa (altitude: 1,545m). The natural environment exhibits a dry Mediterranean climate, characterized by arid rock formations and low-lying shrubs in Giona, pine, fir, and wild cypress trees at altitudes of 600-1,800m, and a continental high-altitude beech forest throughout the Vardousia range. The northern part of the municipality is rocky, while in the central and southern regions, one finds the artificial Lake Mornos, which supplies water to Athens. Further south, the terrain transitions to lower elevations with valleys, ultimately reaching the coastline along the Corinthian Gulf.

The Mornos artificial lake is located at the center of the municipality, between the Giona and Vardousia mountains. Construction began in 1979 to address Athens' water supply issues. The

lake covers an area of 15.5 sq. km, with a dam holding back 17 million cubic meters of water. The project was completed in 1981.

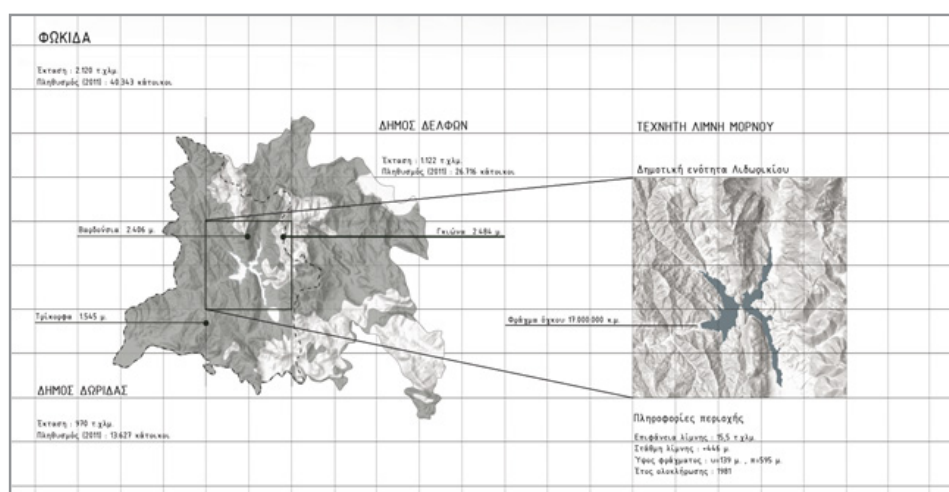


Figure 1: Fokida, Greece

Access to Intervention Area

The intervention area is centrally located within the municipality, specifically in the settlement of Koniakos, which sits at an altitude of 1,000 meters.

To travel from Athens to Koniakos, visitors can choose between two main routes:

- The mountainous route via Amfikleia, Bralos, and Oiti
- The more common route via Livadia, Amfissa, and Lidoriki

The second route is the preferred option, as it takes approximately four hours and offers better road conditions, avoiding the winding, mountainous roads of the first route.

For visitors traveling from western Greece, access is provided via:

- The Rio-Antirrio Bridge or through Nafpaktos, crossing the Corinthian Gulf to Eratini, where the ascent into the mountainous part of the municipality begins.

Local Transportation

- The secondary road network serves local travel between settlements, while provincial roads offer shorter routes and access to more remote areas.
- For those without a private vehicle, the KTEL intercity bus service is the next available option. However, due to the village's remote location, multiple transfers are required, making public transport less convenient.
- The nearest railway station is located in Bralos, but no rail network extends beyond that point.
- A maritime transport network is also available, primarily serving local residents and tourism activities.



Figure 2: Access in Fokida

Points of Interest

- Phocis, and especially the municipality of Dorida, remains a relatively undiscovered destination that has not been widely promoted. As a result, the points of interest within the region have been identified in relation to its settlements.
- Visitors to the area can explore parks and forests, such as the thematic park of Pavliani and the Mining Park on the slopes of Mount Giona. They can also discover archaeological sites, with Delphi being the most significant, or venture into hidden spots with waterfalls and natural springs.
- A major attraction is the mountain ranges of Giona and Vardousia, where experienced mountaineering and hiking groups have developed hiking trails. Notably, these trails are connected to the settlement of Koniakos, which is located on the slopes of the Vardousia mountains.
- The diverse natural landscape makes the region suitable for both winter and summer activities. The northern part reaches an altitude of 2,500 meters, while the southern part is bordered by the Corinthian Gulf, offering a mix of mountain and coastal experiences.
- Despite the variety of activities available, central mountainous Dorida, including Koniakos, remains a non-touristic area, characterized by its traditions and its people, rather than large-scale tourism.

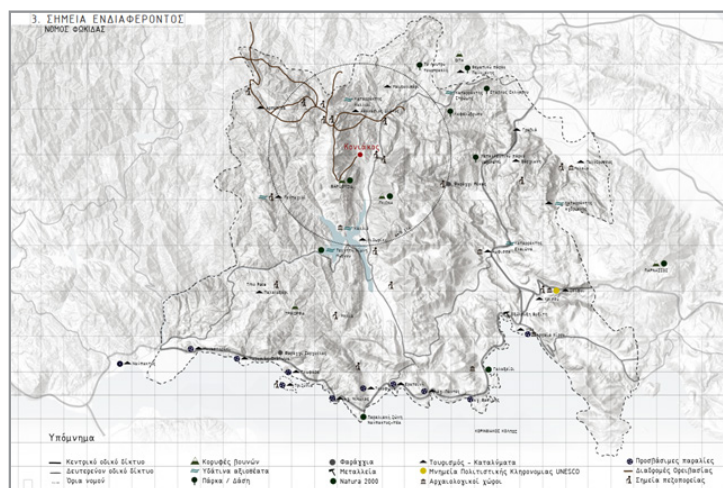


Figure 3: Fokida, points of interest and tourism

Peripheral Area: Analysis of Road Network

Focusing on the Dorida region, the relationship between settlements becomes more evident. These settlements are generally located at an altitude of approximately 850 meters and are strategically oriented to overlook the Mornos Lake and the lower-altitude areas where the tributaries of the Mornos River flow. Their locations were historically chosen for livelihood purposes, as access to water was essential for cultivation, livestock farming, and daily consumption. This is evident in the proximity of settlements to water sources. Notably, Mornos Lake is a man-made intervention that was created much later and did not influence the original development and planning of these settlements.

Regarding the road network, it follows a winding pattern to ease the ascent to the settlements due to the steep terrain. As a result, while the geographical distances between settlements are relatively short, travel times are longer due to the elevation changes. The sharp altitude variations, combined with the presence of the river and the lake, establish a spatial relationship between settlements and their counterparts on the opposite side—a key factor to consider in any intervention within the settlement. The cross-sectional studies illustrate how the elevation gradually decreases as one moves southward within the municipality, from the settlement towards the lake.

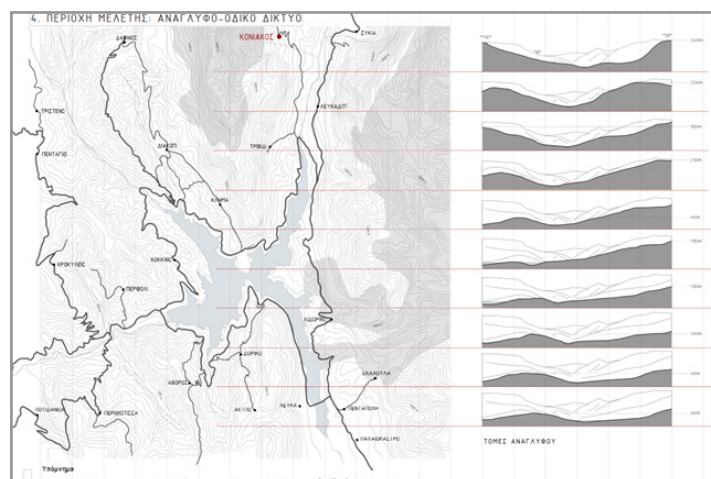


Figure 4: Municipal of Dorida, landscape sections

Analysis of the Spatial Characteristics of Settlements and Building Structures

Based on my heritage and personal experience, all aspects of the local tradition were explored, with traditional settlements being part of this. After an in-situ survey of the area, some typologies were identified in relation to the ways in which the settlements developed. It was observed that there are settlements that develop in two groups, linearly, on peaks as one group, concentrically, and orthogonally. Additionally, the locations where the settlements developed were investigated. It was found that the settlements are either on mountain slopes, on mountain peaks, in gorges, or in valleys.

In addition to the settlements, the traditional buildings of the area were examined, with a focus on the typical Doric two-story house. This structure consisted of a lower floor, which served auxiliary purposes such as storage and the keeping of animals, and an upper floor, the main living space of the family. Key characteristics included the 4:3 ratio openings around the structure, except on the northern side. The external stone staircase led to

the entrance of the house, which included a balcony and a courtyard that was part of the dwelling. The main building materials were stone masonry with clay and mud, wooden joinery with wooden beams and lintels, oak frames, beams (used to support the floor), and the construction of the four-pitched roof.

Alongside these buildings and settlements, which, in combination with the landscape, are part of the tradition, there is also folklore. This includes objects from everyday life, clothing items, cookware, and production tools. In other words, small but highly significant pieces of daily life at that time.

Tradition, however, consists of both material and immaterial elements. These include song, dance, music, and theater. Koniakos is the place where the folk songs of Dorida were collected, making it the element that most defines the settlement. These songs capture the customs, traditions, joys, sorrows, and struggles of everyday life. Together with the melody, they reveal popular emotions.

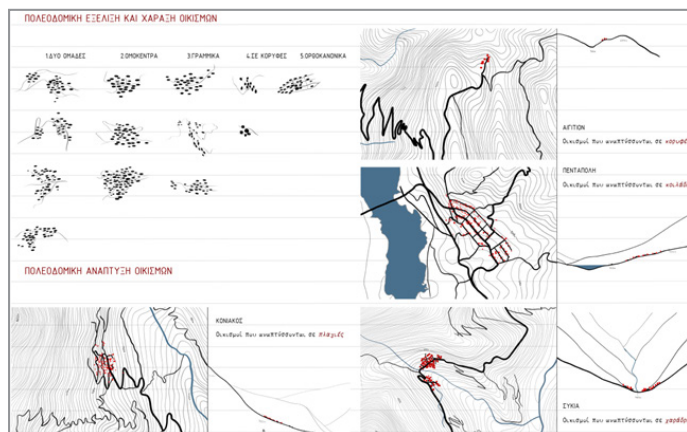


Figure 5: Settlements in Dorida

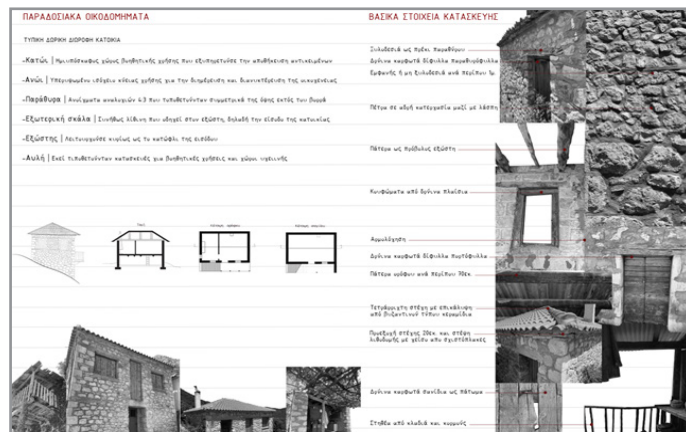


Figure 6: Traditional Architecture Characteristics

Intervention Area

Koniakos is located on the eastern slopes of the Vardousia Mountains at an altitude of 1000 meters. It is a settlement that develops concentrically, with its central core being the village square, which creates relationships with the opposite mountain, Giona, at all levels.

The road network is divided into four axes due to the steep terrain and the amphitheater-like position of the settlement. Within the settlement, movement is mainly done through paths.

The site for the intervention is located at the entrance to the village. This area used to be the courtyard of the village school, which has remained inactive for about 50 years.

The settlement is primarily composed of typical Doric houses, as well as public buildings such as the cafeteria in the village square, the church, and the former school, which aims to revitalize the complex with a range of functions.

Central idea

The central idea of the proposal was to make the best use of the elevation difference on the site and preserve the passages. In order to facilitate better circulation, the volumes of the building are dispersed, creating an additional passage.

The second disruption comes from the creation of an embrace, or a terrace on a scale that symbolizes a second core of the settlement. By distinguishing the functions of each volume, a zone is created that preserves the passages, free circulation, the square, and a lower zone with new viewpoints and movement paths.

The free movement and the arrangement of volumes, combined with the passages and terraces of different scales, connect public and private functions with a slight setback, creating secondary circulation.

The Idea

- A void space is created, with the focal point being the square at scale, the passages, and the smaller terraces.

- The freedom of movement dominates the entire composition, creating connections with the road network and the slopes.
- The inner square was kept enclosed, and because I was interested in the typology, specifically the typical Doric house, I created these prisms.
- By creating a second movement zone, the public and private spaces are smoothly separated, without restricting free movement.
- The roofs take on functions and movements, allowing for observation and relationships with the opposite side at every point in the composition, meaning transparency dominates.

Architectural Drawings

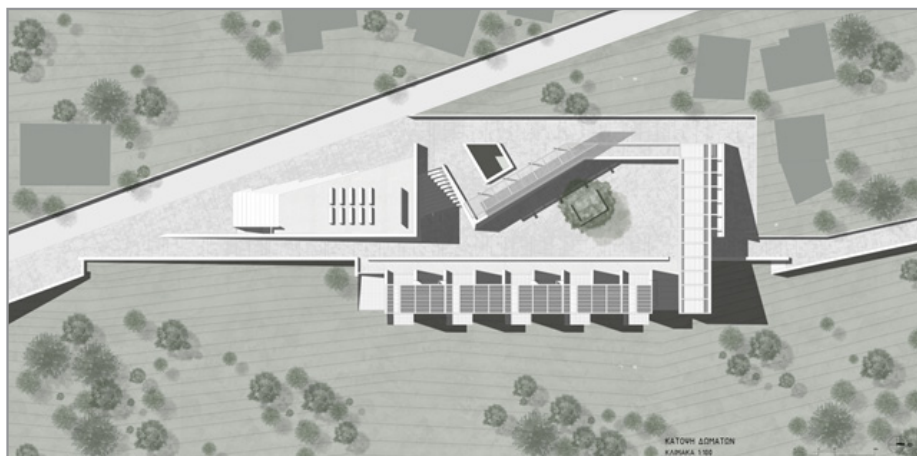


Figure 7: Top view

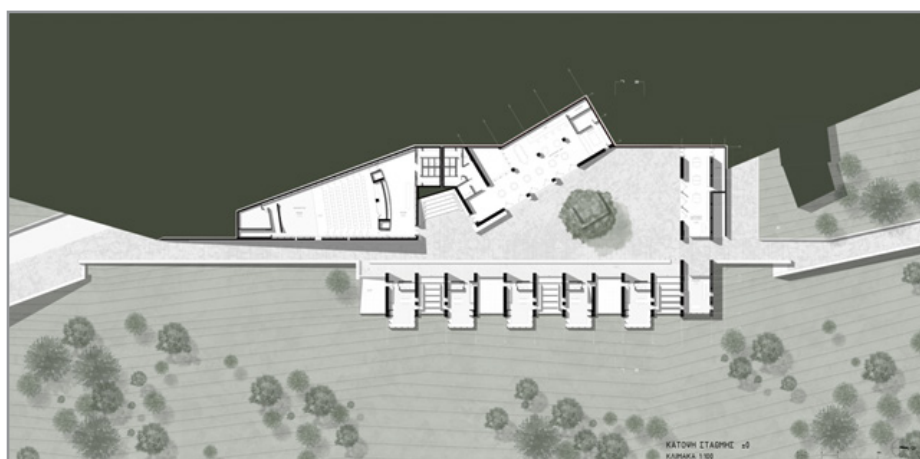
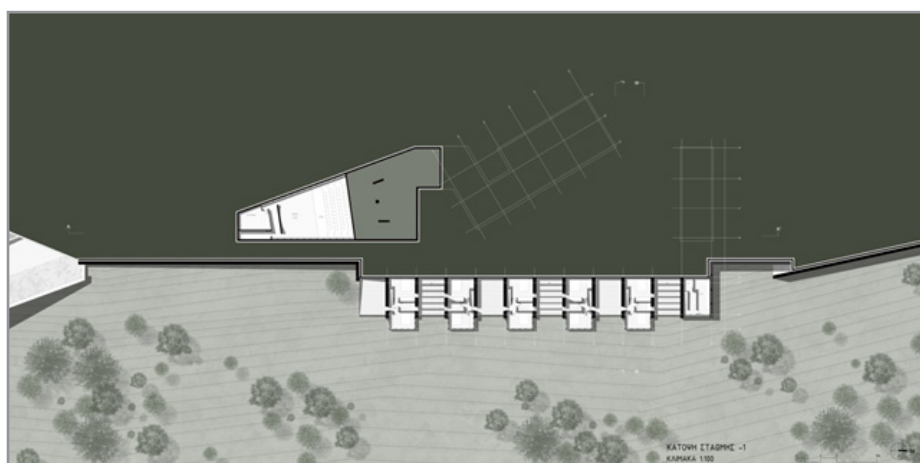


Figure 8: 0 level plan



Picture 9: 1 level plan

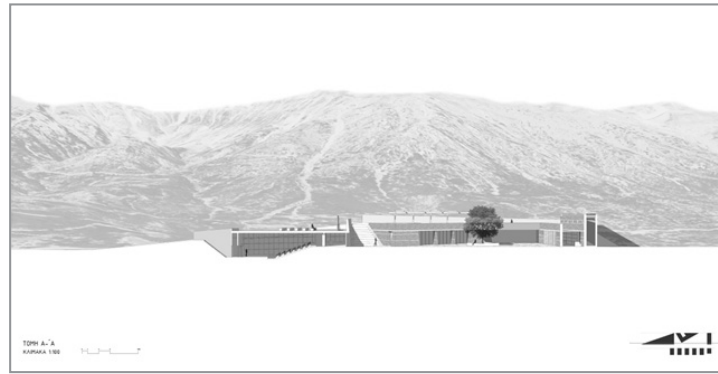


Figure 10: Section a-a



Figure 11: Section b-b

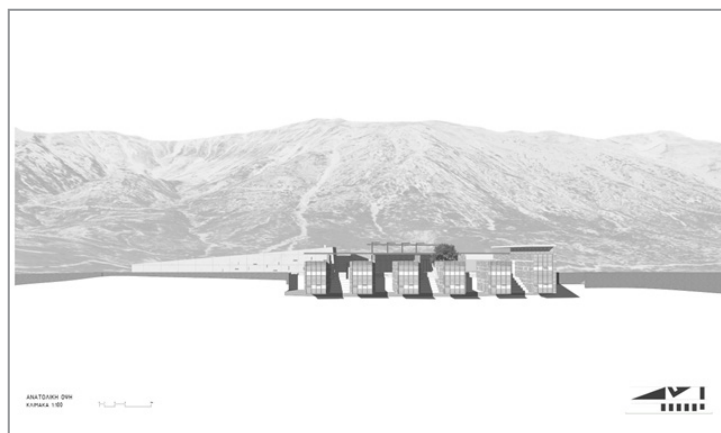


Figure 12: Front view

Photorealistic Renderings

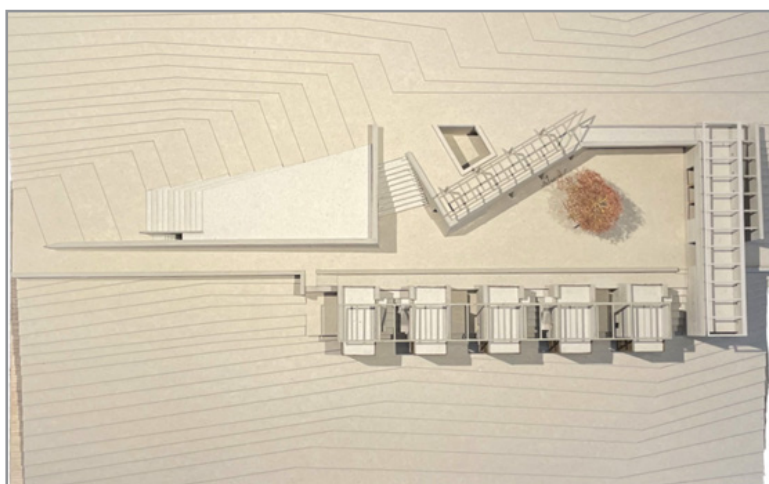
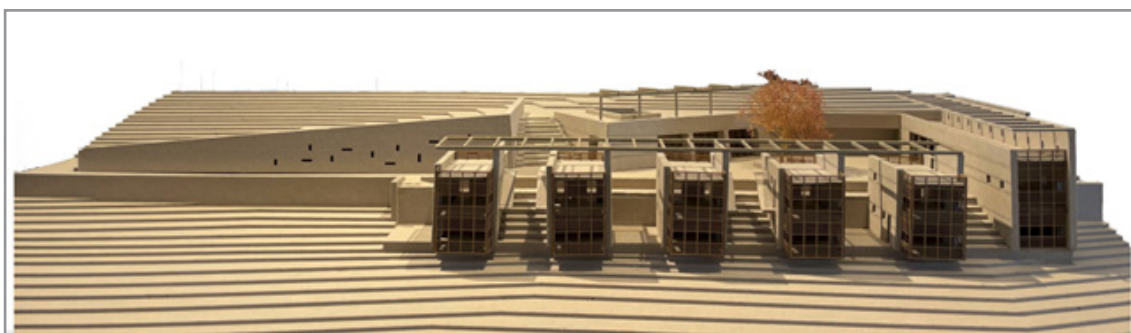


Figure 13: Front view



Figure 14: East view

Model



Conclusion

Following research conducted as part of my study, it was observed that the characteristics of local tradition and architecture form the core of the evolution of today's heritage. Therefore, taking these principles into account, the composition reveals a design that integrates elements from local tradition with forms of contemporary architecture. Respecting both the place and the landscape, this proposal harmoniously unites the old and the new.

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