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Antonio Corso

## The Birth and the Development of the Idealized Concept of Arcadia in the Late Classical Societies

The establishment of an idealized concept of the life in forests and meadows and of the localization of the happiness in the groves in the Greek historical region of Arcadia is a long process.

In the Greek archaic society the notion that living in forests is something beautiful is never stated. Homer in *Iliad* 6. 200–202 represents Bellerophon who is punished by the gods and thus wanders desolated and dismayed upon the Alean plain. Here loneliness is regarded a negative condition: the exclusion from the *laos*, from the men's club of a community [5, pp. 315–317; 367–369; 790–792 and 919–922]<sup>1</sup>.

On the contrary, Hesiod's description of the Summer in his *Works and Days* (vv. 582–596) is at the very beginning of the idea of enjoying the countryside far from any concern:

'Let me have a shady rock and wine of Biblis a clot of curds and milk of drained goats with the flesh of a heifer fed in the woods, that has never calved, and of firstling kids; then also let me drink bright wine, sitting in the shade, when my heart is satisfied with food, and so, turning my head to face the fresh Zephyr, from the ever flowing spring which pours down unfouled, thrice pour an offering of water, but make a fourth libation of wine' [10].

However in the late archaic aristocratic thought the *polis* begins to be seen from a negative point of view as an environment dominated by the *ochlos* or by the *kakoi*, i.e. by the lowest part of a society. This feeling is expressed especially by Theognis. This poet notes that Megara is no longer what it was in the past because the population has been changed and the low class took over the *polis* (see Theognis 1. 53–76; 233–236; 283–292 and 367–370) [14]. Thus the noble can only stay clear of them and of the city centre.

This negative concept becomes very trendy in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC Athenian culture, especially in the second half of the period. Already Phidias is told by Tzetzes to have avoided the agora of Athens in order to stay lonely and to be concentrated in his artistic projects and dreams (see Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 8. 351–352) [7. 2, p. 317, no. 1072].

Euripides is also said in the *Bios Euripidou* to have avoided the crowd and to have preferred to be lonely in a cave on the island of Salamis (see *Vita Euripidis* 4.23–5.1 and Gellius 15. 20. 5) with a view toward the Peloponnese. The archaeological find of this cave on this island with an inscription related to Euripides probably confirms the reality of this desire

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to stay clear of people [9]. Moreover, Thucydides 8.68.1 specifies that Antiphon was looked with suspicion by the commoners because he was never going to the assembly, but always he stood clear of them.

This negative opinion of the *polis* is sanctioned in the *Athenaion Politeia* wrongly attributed to Xenophon but on the contrary written by an oligarchic Athenian of the age of Thucydides: this writer asserts that living on an island would be the best option (2.14–16). Very soon the visual culture reveals that the world far from the life of the community is seen in very positive terms.

Sometime in the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC the Athenian bronze sculptor Strongylion is asked by Megara to make a bronze statue of Artemis the Saviour (*Soteira*) (see Pausanias 1.40.2) [7.2, pp. 414–416, no. 1163]. This statue commemorated the help given by this goddess to the Megarians who fought the Persians in the forest north of this *polis* (see Herodotus 9.14). Strongylion's Artemis is represented on coin types of Megara as well as of Pagae — where a copy of this statue had been set up (see Pausanias 1.44.2) — and moreover is reproduced with statuettes [2.3, pp. 9–39]. The goddess was running in the grove. Probably for the first time she was represented as a teenager wearing a short diploid chiton. She held in both hands torches with which she lit the road to the Megarian army in the darkness of the forest. The association of this beautiful and teenage goddess with the forest leads to a positive notion of the latter: a place where the beauty of a goddess can be appreciated. Perhaps for the first time, beauty and forest are closely linked.

The iconographic pattern of Artemis in the grove became topical throughout the late Classical period. The Dresden type of Artemis probably dates around 360 BC. Since it is represented on Megarian coins in the context of the Apollinean triad of Praxiteles [2.3, pp. 9–39], probably she was the Artemis of Praxiteles for Megara (see Pausanias 1.44.2) [7.3, pp. 86–88, no. 1895]. She is also an appealing teenage goddess represented in the grove where she is about to strike her arrow.

Another evocation of Artemis in the grove is revealed by the Versailles type of Artemis (Ill. 4), probably made by Leochares [13]. Again Praxiteles fleshes out this goddess with his Artemis set up in Anticyra in Phocis (see Pausanias 10.37.1) [2.5, pp. 29–34]. This goddess is also dressed in a short diploid chiton, she is running in the forest with a torch and a bow and with a dog. The representation of Artemis in the grove becomes trivial with the Malta [3, pp. 95–97] and Ephesus/Athens [15, pp. 253–254] types of the goddess: probably both have been conceived in Athens during the Diadochenzeit. The frequent occurrence of these re-creations of Artemis in the forest must have made obvious and nearly trivial the idea that the forest is a habitat of a gentle and appealing goddess.

Now let us turn again from images to literary texts. As already Jeager understood [8.3, pp. 156–181], a new and positive notion of the life far from the city is outlined by Xenophon. This oligarchic writer lived for a long period in the countryside of Scillous in Elis in north-western Peloponnese [4]. Perhaps he was the first who recommended how a gentleman should manage his life in the countryside. In his treatise “On Horsemanship” he gives instruction about how to train horses and to enjoy life with them: exercising with horses becomes the beloved sport of the nobles. In his treatise “Hippiarchicus” he portrays the noble offices of the knights. Finally in his treatise “Hunting with Dogs” he exalts the hunting in the forest as the

dignifying occupation of the aristocrat. This depiction of the life of the noble between forests, horses and dogs must have had a very strong impact on the ideal of life and on the life style of southern Greek nobles. It seems that only this type of life was giving pleasure, also helping the decent people — the *agathoi* — to forget the *ochlos* and the concentrated life, characterized by the prevalence of the lower class, which was typical of cities.

Incidentally, this process helps to understand why and how democracy declined in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The new ideals of life were all going toward the opposite direction: that of a ruling class which lives far from the *profanum vulgus*, to anticipate the definition by Horace, *Odes* 3.1.

In this “Zeitkreis” a genial sculptor gave a visual and powerful representation to this happiness in the groves. This sculptor was Praxiteles. As above noticed, more than once he depicted Artemis in the forest. However the symbol of this situation of perfect happiness is represented by his Resting Satyr (see Pliny 34. 69) [2.3, pp. 42–69] (Ill. 6). He is portrayed while he rests on a tree trunk, of course in the forest, holding in his right hand either a musical instrument or a cup. In any case he became the manifesto of the happiness in the forest: as such he will be copied hundreds of times throughout all Classical antiquity until the Severan times.

Another important creation is the Apollo Sauroctonos (see Pliny 34.70 and Martial 14.172) [2.4, pp. 22–65]. This androgynous Apollo rests relaxed on a tree trunk, which in these statues expresses the woodland environment in which the god is imagined to be. Again the playing and disengaged attitude of the teenage god is associated with the forest.

The Hermes of Olympia (see Pausanias 5.17.3 and *SEG* 57 (2007) 981) [2.4, pp. 165–172] represents the adult god carrying the baby Dionysus to the cave of Nysa. Nysa is a fantastic land which is imagined to be at the border of the familiar world. Again the tree trunk on which Hermes rests refers to a far away environment.

The art of Praxiteles must have prepared the Greek public to the concept that happiness lies in an alternative world rather than that of the *polis* and that this world is that of the forests.

The location of this paradisiacal environment in Arcadia is given by the three slabs of Mantinea in eastern Arcadia. They represent the Muses judging the musical contest between Apollo and Marsyas (see Pausanias 8.9.1) [2.4, pp. 142–147]. The rocky environment on which these figures are imagined to be locates the quiet beauty of the Muses and the melody of their songs in a mountain. As time goes, the world of the *polis* appears even narrower. This need for adventures is the psychological basis for the expedition of Alexander.

It is not a case that the picture representing this idealized concept of Arcadia is attributed to Apelles, the beloved painter of Alexander (see Pliny 35.94). This attribution has been demonstrated by Moreno [11] and Andrae [1]. The copy which preserves this painting by Apelles was found in the so-called ‘basilica’ of Herculaneum and is now kept in Naples, National Archaeological Museum, no. 9008 (Ill. 5).

The landscape is rocky and represents a mountain. Arcadia personified seats on it. Behind and above her, Pan plays his syrinx, a winged girl (Nike?) approaches Arcadia. Near her there is a basket of fruits, an obvious symbol of abundance. A deer is nourishing Telephus, while Heracles stands between an eagle and a lion, of course that of Nemea.

This landscape has already the most salient features of the myth of Arcadia: the holy mountain, Pan, the divine music he produces with his syrinx, wild animals, the abundance of fruits

lavished by nature, the winds, finally the heroes inhabiting this magic land. The depiction of a real region as an enchanted land was accomplished.

This concept of Arcadia was going to be consecrated in poetry by the epigrams of Anyte of Tegea. These epigrams are among the most beautiful of the Greek Anthology.

This poetess depicts a magic landscape composed of rustic sanctuaries on the mountains, where Pan lives, where the birds are gentle, where both love and sorrow are light. A superior nobility of feelings preserves this environment from anything which is mean and vulgar [6, vol. 1, pp. 35–41; vol. 2, pp. 89–104].

The terms of the Arcadian myth suggested by this great poetess appeared to last for a very long time and were going to become a standard pattern of the western world [12].

Theocritus moved this myth to the west, precisely to Sicily. Virgil brought the Arcadian dream to the countryside of his native Mantua, although in his poems the sorrow becomes real pain.

The Italian poets of the 14<sup>th</sup> century will see this dream in the hills near Florence (especially with the *Ninfale d'Ameto* and *Ninfale Fiesolano* by Boccaccio). Jacopo Sannazzaro in his *Eclogae Piscatoriae* transfers this myth to the sea environment near Naples. However he also rediscovers the Arcadia proper as the mythical region where poetry and love, gentleness and soul nobility live forever with his seminal book *Arcadia*. In the late 16<sup>th</sup> and early 17<sup>th</sup> century the pastoral drama will enrich this myth with a lot of stories. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, Giovanni Sagredo will find the Arcadian dream along the placid Brenta river in Veneto in his *L'Arcadia in Brenta*. Especially the Queen Maria Christina of Sweden, after she had settled in Rome, resurrected this myth thanks to her court of painters and poets. The painters of her circle depicted hills and mountains with gentle shepherds while the poets imagined living in this ideal world. Thanks to Paolo Rolli who lived in England and to Pietro Metastasio who settled in Vienna, this myth became pan European.

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**Author.** Antonio Corso — professor. Centro Studi Vitruviani. Via Vitruvio, 9, 61032 Fano (PU), Italy. antoniocorso@hotmail.com, padua\_athens@yahoo.it

**Abstract:** In the late archaic aristocratic thought the polis begins to be seen from a negative point of view as a milieu dominated by the lowest part of a society. This negative concept becomes very trendy in the 5<sup>th</sup> century Athenian culture, especially in the second half of the period. Soon after the visual culture reveals that the world far from the life of the community is seen in very positive terms. This phenomenon is appreciated especially thanks to the many representations of Artemis clad in short diploid chiton running in the grove. In the late 5<sup>th</sup> century BC a new and positive notion of the life far from the city is outlined by Xenophon. Moreover, the visual culture of Greece in late Classical times is flooded with representations of appealing teenage deities in the forest. The location of this paradisiacal environment in Arcadia is given in a picture attributed to Apelles.

**Keywords:** Arcadia; Phidias; Euripides; Antiphon; Artemis; Xenophon; Praxiteles; Apelles; Anyte of Tegea.

**Название статьи.** Зарождение и развитие идеализированного представления об Аркадии в позднеклассическом обществе.

**Сведения об авторе.** Корсо Антонио — профессор. Витрувианский научно-исследовательский центр в Фано, Виа Витрувио, 9, Фано, Италия, 61032. antoniocorso@hotmail.com, padua\_athens@yahoo.it

**Аннотация.** В позднеархаической аристократической мысли формируется негативный взгляд на полис, который понимается как среда, где доминирует низшая часть общества. Такая отрицательная концепция становится очень модной в афинской культуре V в. до н. э., особенно во второй его поло-

вине. Изобразительное искусство свидетельствует о том, что вслед за этим в весьма позитивных тонах начинает рассматриваться мир, лежащий вдалеке от жизни сообщества. Подтверждением этого следует считать многочисленные изображения бегущей по роще Артемиды, одетой в короткий двойной хитон. В конце V в. до н. э. новые позитивные суждения о жизни вдали от города высказывает Ксенофонт. Более того, греческое изобразительное искусство позднеклассического времени полно изображений юных привлекательных божеств, пребывающих в лесах. В картине, приписываемой Апеллесу, местонахождение этого парадиза, помещается в Аркадии.

**Ключевые слова:** Аркадия; Анита Тегейская; Антифон; Апеллес; Артемида; Еврипид; Ксенофонт; Пракситель; Фидий.

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