

Olympia (Greece) as a multi-dimensional space – a landscape archaeology approach to structure, interdependency and change of spatial networks

The sanctuary at Olympia is without doubt one of the most important ones in the ancient Greek world. Archaeologically, it serves as a huge field of experience and pivotal reference point for a large spectre of finds and methods. This had a massive impact on the historical disciplines, which, by striving to understand Olympia, learned a lot not only about the Greek but about the entire ancient Mediterranean world. The repercussions that the excavation of the sanctuary at Olympia created in the 19th century were partly responsible for the formulation of a modern Olympic idea, which in turn gave ancient Olympia its aura. Archaeology had good reasons to concentrate on this aspect of Olympia and has since revealed an enormous amount of valuable information that is excellently documented and has only in recent times produced important results concerning the sanctuary's early phases (in this work one of the applicants was significantly involved).

In close collaboration with other research partners the applicants would like to take advantage of these conditions to take the next step: For the first time, the site will be systematically and comprehensively contextualised. New interdisciplinary approaches and methods will make it possible to place Olympia in its palaeoenvironment and study it as a neuralgic point in a regional network of dependency and historical development. To this end archaeological, historical and geo-archaeological approaches will be brought together in an analytical framework, conceptualizing the sanctuary of Olympia as a vital focus of political and cultural agency.