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SANAT VE ŞIFA: ANTIK MEKÂNLARDAN MODERN TERAPÖTIK TASARIMA

Berkay Turgut[1*]

[1] Wrocław Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi, Mimarlık Fakültesi, 0000-0002-7406-4344

**Sorumlu yazar: berkay.turgut@pwr.edu.pl*

ÖZET

Sanat, mimarlık ve şifa arasındaki ilişki, tarih boyunca önemli bir odak noktası olmuş, antik kutsal mekânlardan modern terapötik ortamlara evrilmiştir. Bu çalışma, sanat ve doğanın çeşitli dönemlerde şifaya nasıl katkıda bulunduğunu ve bu katkıların çağdaş mimaride nasıl yeniden yorumlandığını incelemektedir. Antik şifa merkezleri, örneğin Mısır tapınakları, Yunan Asklepionları ve Roma hamamları, fiziksel, ruhsal ve sosyal şifa süreçlerini entegre ederek, genel refahı ve toplumsal uyumu teşvik eden ortamlar yaratmıştır. Orta Çağ ve Rönesans dönemlerinde, manastır bahçeleri ve hastaneler, doğanın, simetrinin ve dengenin sağlık ve huzurun teşvikindeki rolünü vurgulamıştır. Bu mekânlar hem fiziksel tedavi hem de ruhsal yansıma için ortamlar sağlayarak bütüncül şifaya katkıda bulunmuş ve doğayla daha derin bir bağ kurulmasını sağlamıştır. Günümüzde biyofilik tasarım, bu mirası sürdüren ve terapötik mekânlara doğal unsurlar ekleyerek duyusal deneyimleri geliştiren, stresi azaltan ve iyileşmeyi destekleyen bir yaklaşımdır. Maggie's Merkezleri, Khoo Teck Puat Hastanesi ve Eden Projesi gibi örnekler, doğanın, doğal ışığın ve yeşil alanların sağlık ortamlarına entegre edilmesinin fiziksel ve zihinsel iyilik üzerindeki olumlu etkisini göstermektedir. Bu çalışma, mimaride insan- doğa ilişkisinin tarihsel sürekliliğine dikkat çekmekte ve doğal unsurların ve biyofilik ilkelerin düşünceli bir şekilde entegrasyonu yoluyla iyilik halini destekleyen gelecekteki sağlık tasarımı için bir çerçeve sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sanat, Mimarlık, Şifa, Terapötik Mekânlar, Biyofilik Tasarım.

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ART AND HEALING: FROM ANCIENT SPACES TO MODERN THERAPEUTIC DESIGN

Berkay Turgut[1*]

1 Wrocław Bilim ve Teknoloji Üniversitesi, Mimarlık Fakültesi, 0000-0002-7406-4344

**Corresponding author: berkay.turgut@pwr.edu.pl*

ABSTRACT

The relationship between art, architecture, and healing has been a significant focus throughout history, evolving from ancient sacred spaces to modern therapeutic environments. This study explores how art and nature have contributed to healing across various periods and how these contributions are reinterpreted in contemporary architecture. Ancient healing centers such as Egyptian temples, Greek Asklepions, and Roman baths integrated physical, spiritual, and social healing processes, creating environments that promoted overall well-being and communal harmony. In the Medieval and Renaissance periods, monastic gardens and hospitals emphasized the role of nature, symmetry, and balance in promoting health and tranquility. These spaces provided environments for both physical treatment and spiritual reflection, contributing to holistic healing and fostering a deeper connection to nature. Today, biophilic design continues this legacy by incorporating natural elements into therapeutic spaces, enhancing sensory experiences, reducing stress, and supporting recovery. Examples like Maggie's Centres, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, and the Eden Project demonstrate the positive impact of integrating nature, natural light, and green spaces into healthcare environments, fostering both physical and mental well- being. This study highlights the historical continuity of the human-nature relationship in architecture, providing a framework for future healthcare design that supports and enhances well-being through thoughtful integration of natural elements and biophilic principles.

Keywords: Art, Architecture, Healing, Therapeutic Spaces, Biophilic Design.

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INDRODUCTION

Art and architecture have served as powerful tools not only for aesthetics but also for well-being throughout history. Civilizations such as Ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Greece, and Rome developed architectural spaces to promote health by transforming these places into significant healing centers. For instance, healing temples in Ancient Egypt were sacred spaces where patients could purify their bodies and minds. In these temples, the harmony of nature and rituals contributed directly to patients' healing processes. Similarly, in Mesopotamia, the purifying power of water played a crucial role in healing rituals, and it is used for physical and spiritual purification.

In Ancient Greece, Asklepions were sacred spaces dedicated to Asclepius, the god of well-being. He offered both spiritual and physical healing. Meditation, nature walks, and water rituals were employed to support patients' recovery. Roman baths, meanwhile, provided not only cleanliness but also opportunities for social interaction and relaxation, thereby supporting physical and mental health. These structures aimed not only for bodily healing but also for social cohesion, fostering both individual and communal well-being.

In modern times, biophilic design and therapeutic spaces integrate elements of nature and art into contemporary healthcare architecture, drawing inspiration from ancient approaches. Biophilic design enhances individuals' sensory experiences by incorporating natural elements, thus aiding in their well-being process. This study explores how art and nature have contributed to healing from ancient times to today and how these contributions are reflected in modern therapeutic environments.

The connection between art and well-being has persisted throughout history, maintaining its therapeutic effects into the present day. In this context, biophilic design is more than just a modern aesthetic choice since it represents a deeply rooted healing tradition adapted into contemporary architecture.

INTEGRATION OF HEALING AND ART IN ANCIENT TIMES

Healing Temples in Ancient Egypt

In Ancient Egypt, the pursuit of well-being was closely linked to temples dedicated to Imhotep, revered as a deity of healing. These temples were meticulously designed to promote both physical and spiritual well-being, featuring expansive courtyards, towering columns, and natural lighting (Figure 1). Such architectural elements allowed patients to experience healing in a serene atmosphere that was closely integrated with nature. Herbal treatments and purifying incense rituals were commonly used to cleanse both body and spirit (Nunn, 2002). The strategic placement of these temples and their harmony with the surrounding environment supported patients' spiritual balance while contributing to their physical recovery. Academic studies and archaeological research on Egyptian medicine and architecture provide valuable insights into these rituals and structures (Wilkinson, 2016; Redford, 2018).

The well-being temples of Ancient Egypt served not only as centers for treatment but also as sacred spaces that fulfilled the spiritual and cultural needs of society. Rituals performed in these

temples helped patients regain their spiritual equilibrium and strengthen their communal ties. Therefore, the architectural layout and functions of these temples reflected the broader Egyptian understanding of health and holistic healing (Kemp, 2007).

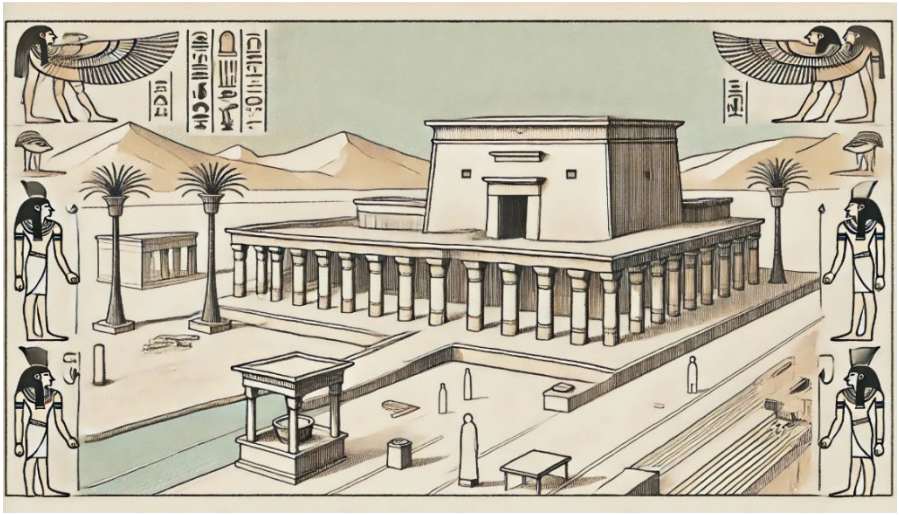

Figure 1. This illustration was created to visually support the discussion in this article on Healing Temples in Ancient Egypt. 2024 December Berkay Turgut

Healing Through Water in Mesopotamia

In Mesopotamia, water was regarded as a sacred element for both physical and spiritual purification. Temples dedicated to well-being deities, such as Gula and Asalluhi, centered around rituals involving the purifying power of water. Built near water sources, these temples featured sacred pools where patients could bathe for spiritual and physical cleansing. The belief that illnesses were caused by evil spirits formed the basis for using water to cleanse these malevolent forces (Bottéro, 2001). The architecture of these temples was designed to reflect the calming and well- being effects of water, incorporating extensive water channels and sacred pools. Archaeological studies on Mesopotamian temples offer detailed insights into the role of water in healing and its impact on society (Figure 2).

In Mesopotamia, water was considered as a means of not only physical cleansing but also spiritual renewal. The purifying power of water contributed to patients' well-being while also being supported by communal rituals. These rituals aimed to spiritually cleanse patients and reintegrate them into the community. In this context, Mesopotamian healing temples stood out as complex structures where physical and spiritual healing were offered together.

Figure 2. This illustration was created to visually support the discussion in this article on Healing Through Water in Mesopotamia. *2024 December Berkay Turgut*

HEALING AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME

Asklepions in Ancient Greece

In Ancient Greece, Asklepions were sacred spaces dedicated to Asclepius, the god of well-being, designed to provide patients with both physical and spiritual well-being. These healing centers were built in close connection with nature, featuring beautiful landscapes, fresh air, and a serene environment. Meditation, nature walks, and water rituals were used to support patients' health. Asklepions also included statues of Asclepius and healing springs, which played an important role in the healing process (Edelstein and Edelstein, 1945). The architecture of these spaces combined natural and built elements harmoniously to create a tranquil environment that promoted both spiritual peace and physical recovery (Figure 3).

Asklepions were not only places for medical treatment but also provided psychological rejuvenation and spiritual comfort. Patients would stay in "abaton" which is a special dormitory where they would experience therapeutic dreams believed to be messages from Asclepius himself. This dream incubation practice gave patients hope and a sense of spiritual connection and contained an essential part of the well-being rituals. The holistic approach combining nature, spirituality, and physical treatment made Asklepions unique sanctuaries of healing in the ancient world.

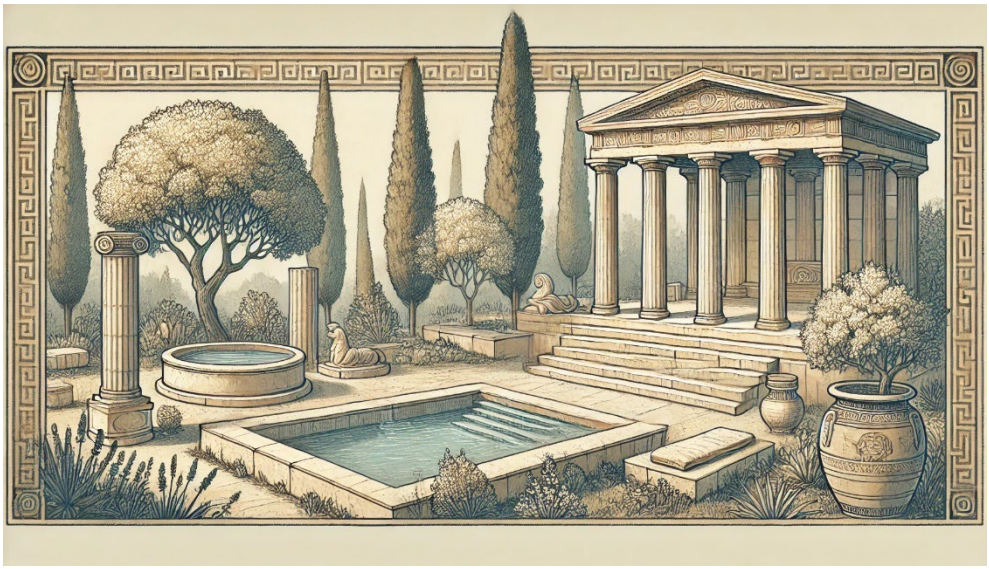

Figure 3. This illustration was created to visually support the discussion in this article on Asklepions in Ancient Greece. 2024 December Berkay Turgut

Roman Baths: Centers of Healing and Social Interaction

Roman baths were spaces for both bodily cleansing and social interaction. These grand structures featured hot and cold pools, large courtyards, and natural lighting creating an ideal environment for relaxation and health. Known as "thermae," these baths were not just places for hygiene but also served as centers for spiritual relaxation and social gatherings. The architectural layout included various rooms, such as the "caldarium" (hot bath), "tepidarium" (warm bath), and "frigidarium" (cold bath), each offering different experiences to cleanse and rejuvenate the body (Fagan, 1999).

Roman baths played a crucial role in promoting public health and social cohesion. They provided opportunities for people from different social classes to come together, socialize, and engage in leisurely activities. This interaction helped break down social barriers and contributed to collective well-being. Additionally, they often included gardens, libraries, and gymnasiums to support both mental and physical health. The emphasis on creating a holistic environment for physical and mental rejuvenation underscores the therapeutic nature of Roman baths and their importance in society (Figure 4).

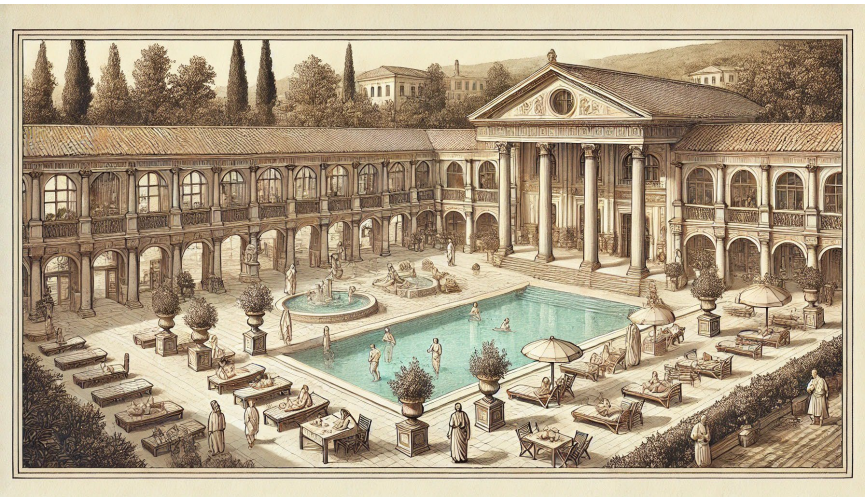

Figure 4. This illustration was created to visually support the discussion in this article on Roman Baths: Centers of Healing and Social Interaction. *2024 December Berkay Turgut*

The Role of Architecture in Healing and Community

Asklepions and Roman baths illustrate how art and architecture in the ancient world provided both well-being and social functions. These spaces were designed not only to address individuals' physical health but also to foster social interactions that contributed to mental well-being. The integration of nature, art, and community into the healing process reflects a sophisticated understanding of health that goes beyond mere physical treatment.

In both Greek and Roman societies, these well-being spaces were not only isolated medical facilities but also vibrant community centers. The ancient approach to healthcare was multidimensional, encompassing physical, emotional, and social aspects. By blending aesthetic beauty with functionality, these ancient healing environments laid the foundation for modern therapeutic spaces, emphasizing the positive impact of well-designed environments on human health.

HEALİNG GARDENS İN THE MEDİEVAL AND RENAİSSANCE PERİODS

Monastic Healing Gardens in the Medieval Period

In the Medieval period, monastic gardens served as both agricultural and spiritual centers. Monks cultivated medicinal herbs in these gardens, which were used to treat the sick with the calming and restorative power of nature and provided patients with a peaceful environment for spiritual cleansing. Monastic gardens were not only places for growing medicinal plants but also sacred spaces where patients could pray and accelerate their well-being process in a quiet setting. Monks developed their medical knowledge in these gardens by using herbal medicines to treat patients. The most well-known healing gardens of the Medieval period are vivid examples of how nature and medical knowledge were integrated by monks (Bennett, 2006).

Renaissance Healing Gardens and Hospital Architecture

During the Renaissance, hospital architecture merged with artistic and aesthetic values to provide a well-being experience. The Ospedale degli Innocenti in Florence is one of the iconic symbols of this understanding. Symmetry and balance became cornerstones of Renaissance architecture where these features were evident in hospital buildings as well. Large courtyards, gardens, and big windows that allowed natural light were used to promote both physical recovery and mental relaxation. Spaces designed for patients to interact with nature accelerated their healing while offering them comfort and tranquility. These structures combined aesthetics, balance, and nature in the design of healing environments as well as the groundwork for modern hospitals (Goldthwaite, 1980).

The architectural style of the Renaissance, based on symmetry and natural light, was not merely an aesthetic pursuit. It was also designed to directly influence patients' recovery processes. By leveraging the power of nature and light, Renaissance hospitals aimed to provide balanced and peaceful environments that promoted human health. The history of these spaces reveals the origins of designing modern healthcare facilities in harmony with nature.

MODERN THERAPEUTIC SPACES AND BIOPHILIC DESIGN

Modern therapeutic spaces embrace biophilic design principles by integrating natural elements into the interior. This design approach uses features such as natural light, vegetation, and water elements to reduce stress and accelerate well-being. Maggie’s Cancer Caring Centres are successful examples of this design philosophy, providing psychological and physical support to patients in environments enriched with plants and water features. Additionally, Ulrich's studies have demonstrated the positive effects of views of nature on the well-being process; patients surrounded by natural scenes recover faster and require fewer painkillers (Ulrich, 1984).

In Japan, Shinrin-yoku (forest bathing) involves direct contact with nature to reduce stress and strengthen the immune system. Such centers emphasize the well-being power of nature through nature walks and meditation, supporting individuals' mental and physical health.

Projects like the Svart Hotel in Norway combine biophilic design with environmentally friendly approaches. It provides a natural setting that integrates sustainability with a well-being experience. This nature-integrated environment accelerates mental relaxation and the healing process for both patients and visitors (Snøhetta, n.d.). Similarly, centers like Delos Living Lab in the United States offer healthy interior experiences using biophilic design (Delos Living LLC, n.d). These projects incorporate plants, natural light, and ventilation systems to contribute to patients' physical and mental recovery.

Eden Project, United Kingdom

The Eden Project in Cornwall, United Kingdom, is an important example of biophilic design that blends ecological renewal with education and well-being (The Eden Project, n.d.). Its large biomes create an immersive environment filled with lush vegetation, water features, and natural

landscapes. Visitors often report feelings of peace and rejuvenation when exploring the biomes by highlighting the impact of nature on mental well-being. It also serves as a model for integrating sustainability into therapeutic design, using green technology to create a harmonious relationship between people and the environment.

Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, Singapore

Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore is a modern healthcare facility that incorporates biophilic principles into its design. The hospital features rooftop gardens, vertical greenery, and natural ponds, transforming the hospital environment into a well-being sanctuary. The presence of plants and water helps to reduce stress and create a calming atmosphere for patients, staff, and visitors. The use of biophilic design in this hospital reflects a holistic approach to healthcare while focusing on mental well-being alongside physical treatment (Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, n.d.).

Healing Forests and Nature Parks in South Korea

South Korea has embraced the concept of well-being through nature by establishing numerous healing forests and nature parks across the country (Korean Forest Service, n.d.). These spaces are used for therapeutic activities like guided nature walks, breathing exercises, and meditation. The healing forests aim to reduce anxiety, improve mood, and enhance immune function to reflect a broader societal commitment to using natural spaces for public health benefits. South Korea's initiatives show how biophilic design can extend beyond buildings to include broader landscape strategies for health and well-being.

Biophilic design merges traditional well-being methods with modern architecture, creating spaces that strengthen human-nature interactions and support health processes. These environments utilize the calming effects of nature to contribute to both physical and mental recovery.

CONCLUSION

Art and nature have significantly contributed to the integration of architecture and well-being for thousands of years, deeply impacting human health and well-being. From ancient temples to modern biophilic design, architecture has evolved to create spaces that support not only physical health but also spiritual healing. Today’s biophilic design approaches reinterpret the well-being potential of nature and art by adapting healing spaces to meet modern needs. This legacy is carried into the future with the drawing from the traditions of the past and the findings of modern science. This study illustrates the continuous dialogue between ancient and modern methods in exploring the effects of art and architecture on human health.

The structures of ancient well-being temples, focused on spiritual cleansing and integration with nature, are directly related to the core principles of modern biophilic design. Therapeutic spaces such as Maggie’s Centres today draw inspiration from ancient teachings to create

environments that contribute to both physical and mental well-being. This historical continuity provides a framework that enables architecture to be redesigned as a healing space.

While the roots of biophilic design lie in ancient times, its more systematic application in modern architecture scientifically supports the positive effects of nature on human health. Projects like Shinrin-yoku in Japan, the Svart Hotel in Norway, the Eden Project in the United Kingdom, Khoo Teck Puat Hospital in Singapore, and South Korea's well-being forests place the healing power of nature at the center of architecture, reduce stress levels, and create healthier living spaces.

The historical and modern approaches presented in this study reveal the reflections of the human- nature relationship in architecture and pave the way for incorporating more nature-based elements into the design of healthcare facilities in the future.

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Turgut, Berkay. (2024) Figure 1,2,3,4. Illustration on Healing Temples in Ancient Egypt, Healing Through Water in Mesopotamia, Asklepions in Ancient Greece, Roman Baths: Centers of Healing and Social Interaction.

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