

The Architecture of the Ancient Greek Theatre

Edited by Rune Frederiksen, Elizabeth R. Gebhard and Alexander Sokolicek



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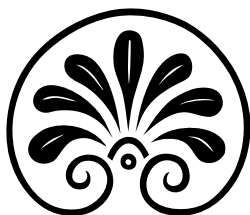
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Acts of an International Conference at the
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Preface

Organizing a conference on the architecture of the ancient Greek theatre, was the realization of an old idea, actually going two decades back, to the time when the organizers first began communicating with each other because of a common interest in the topic. A lot has been said and written about the architecture of the ancient Greek theatre and over the last years a number of significant monographs and articles on individual theatres have issued, new finds have been made, some published, others not yet so. We clearly saw the need for a conference, not on the ancient Greek theatre in a wide sense, but specifically on its architecture, so that certain of the key issues could receive proper attention.

The response to our call for papers was substantial, and we were therefore able to put together a full high-quality two-day programme. The conference took place over two stimulating days 28-29 January 2012 in the auditorium of the Danish Institute. This volume gives the conference permanence, and we are very happy and proud of the fact that all the papers given at the conference were submitted to be published in written form. The presentations were followed by lively discussion, much of which has been incorporated in the papers. A number of issues were and are still being debated and the opinions expressed on such issues are not necessarily shared by the editors. The papers will be of interest first of all to colleagues preoccupied with the architecture of the ancient Greek theatre, but we also hope that the papers will be useful to scholars of ancient drama, of ancient architectural studies in general, and that

in fact a broad readership will take interest in this subject in the years to come.

The conference and this publication were supported by The Austrian Archaeological Institute, The Danish Institute at Athens and The Humanities Division of the University of Chicago. We would like to thank The American School of Classical Studies at Athens for housing the introductory lecture and welcome reception on Friday 27 January, and The Austrian Archaeological Institute at Athens, for hosting a reception on the day after, Saturday 28 January 2012. Thanks are also due to the French and German Archaeological Institutes at Athens for their generous help with providing free accommodation for a number of our speakers.

We would like to thank the staff of the Danish Institute, which did a great job in making the logistics work, in particular Miss Sine Riisager. Thanks are also due to Prof. Stella Drougou, of The University of Thessaloniki, who sat in on the organization committee with the editors as well as Christina Papastamati-von Moock and Andreas Kapetanios for guiding the conference participants in the theatres of Dionysos in Athens and Thorikos, and the 3rd Eforate of Classical and Prehistoric Antiquities of Attica for permission to visit the ruins of the theatre at Thrakones, also Attica. Finally we would like to thank Jim Coulton for having read the papers and provided invaluable feed-back which has greatly improved the individual articles.

The editors in March 2015

Introduction

The purpose of this conference was to bring together architectural historians, and archaeologists whose recent studies have brought new information to bear on the history of the Greek theatre building, its form and function, from the earliest theatral arrangements, through the Classical period and the architectural development in Hellenistic times. Uniting the three elements of the theatre, performance space, seating and stage-building, presented a challenge to the Greek architect. Far from following a canon, the buildings illustrate a variety of solutions that were tried out in different places and under a wide spectrum of local conditions, influenced by the topography and probably by the type of performance and financial resources available for construction.

The essays in this volume represent a selection of theatres from the Greek mainland, Greek cities in Sicily and in Asia Minor, spanning the formative period of the 5th and early 4th centuries BC through the Hellenistic period to examples of theatres where Greek forms were retained in theatres of the Empire. New research in a number of well-known theatres and exploration of hitherto unknown examples has dramatically changed some of the established views about the form of early Greek theatres; about the development of orchestra, stage, and koilon; about regional traditions in the Greek world; about architectural innovations and the continuation in Roman Imperial times. The focus is primarily on the forms of the theatre and less on its role within the community or the production of plays.¹ Seen as a whole the essays shed distinctive light on certain aspects of theatre architecture. Regional diversity is seen together with a continuous development toward the formation of a canonical structure.

We begin with the first phase of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens, for which Christina Papastamati-von

Moock presents the first firm evidence and the technical characteristics of the wooden *theatron* on the south slope of the Acropolis. Despite the fragmentary nature of the new data relating to supports for the seats, the evidence supports an initial reconstruction of the seating and plan of the early building. The author relates the finds to questions of chronology, morphology and function of the early theatre. Particularly interesting is the suggested association of some structural parts of the late Classical theatre and the sanctuary of Dionysos with the incomplete Periclean renovation of the cultural centre of Athens, in which the Odeion formed a part. A further question concerns the role the earlier phases of the Athenian theatre may have played in the creation of the canonical form of the Greek theatre. The driving force of theatre design, Rune Frederiksen points out, came from the organization of the spectator space rather than from the demands of various types of space assigned to the performances. He maintains that the semicircular shape emerged gradually and did not dominate before the middle of the 4th century BC. The theatre at Kalydon in Aetolia is of great importance for our understanding of the development of the koilon because its pi-shaped design creates the largest known example of a rectangular seating space enclosing the rectangular orchestra.

According to Alexander Sokolicek it seems unlikely that Greek theatre architecture developed from rectilinear to a round form just to optimize the seating capacity and to offer a better acoustic and visual experience. Early theatres of the 6th and 5th centuries had individual solutions, and in none of them was the orchestra or koilon curvilinear: they were all more or less rectilinear buildings. In general, they functioned as places for dramatic performances, cult rituals, and political meetings. In the same

¹ These topics are explored extensively and recently in the reports on a colloquium held at the University of Sydney in 2011: *Greek Theatre in the Fourth Century B.C.*, eds. E. Csapo, H.R. Goette, J.R. Green and P. Wilson, Berlin 2014.

period, however, at least three assembly buildings had a much larger spectator space that enclosed a round performance area: the Pnyx in Athens, the so-called “theatre-ekklesiasterion” in Metapontion and the ekklesiasterion in Paestum. Their form was already established by 500 BC and it was evidently thought to be better adapted to large assemblies than to theatre performances. Form seems to have followed function with the result that, when theatres with curved auditoria were built in the 4th century, they were often much larger than required to hold the citizens of a polis.

Topographical constraints are another factor to be considered in tracing innovations in the architecture of the early theatre, as Elizabeth Gebhard points out with reference to the first theatre at Isthmia at the end of the 5th century BC. The architect compensated for the shallow slope designated for the theatre by sinking the orchestra below grade and constructing rectilinear seating at one side and a two-storied scene-building at the other. A shallow porch connected the two levels of the skene, thus forming a narrow proto-proskenion. The entire structure was made of wood and crude brick. The use of stone for retaining walls at the end of the 4th century BC did not change the essential form of the first scene-building that had been designed in response to the sunken orchestra.

As theatres assumed monumental form in the second half of the 4th century BC and were constructed of permanent materials, a Greek vocabulary of theatrical architecture developed, as discussed by Jean-Charles Moretti and Christine Mauduit. The majority of the words are not original creations, but result rather from a specialisation, in the theatrical context, of words that already existed. The appearance of new architectural forms, in some cases, occasioned the invention of new words, some of which were created by composition or derivation from the existing vocabulary. Others were created with reference to the function of the part of the theatre thus identified, like the word *λογεῖον*, meaning the “place from which one talks”.

Not all theatres after the 4th century followed a consistent plan. The lay-out of the semi-elliptical cavea in the theatre at Iasos in Caria has been found to be significantly different from the previously published plan. New work by Berti, Masturzo, and Vittori, integrates epigraphical, historical, and archaeological approaches. They report that the whole area of the stage and scene-building was divided according to a grid modulated in multiples of

3 feet with a foot measure of 0.302 m. The planimetry helped to identify two main phases: the cavea itself, probably in the 3rd century BC; toward the end of the century the skene and the orchestra were added as individual citizens gradually contributed funds for the seats. The structural and epigraphic ‘corpus’ becomes a reference in the study of unusual construction found at Iasos between the second and third quarters of the 2nd century BC.

Martin Hofbauer focuses on three aspects of the older stage-building of the theatre in Ephesos: the dating, arrangement of the rooms, and construction of the east façade. The Hellenistic skene in which five rooms can be restored, was built in the second quarter of the 2nd century BC. A new proposal regards the relation between the upper floor rooms, their entrances and a potential *thyroma* front in the building’s first phase. In a second paper on the Ephesos theatre, Gudrun Styhler-Aydın concentrates on the entire building and discusses the attribution of its various elements to the main periods of construction.

At Sikyon, the natural landscape again plays a central role in the architecture of the theatre. Chris Hayward and Yannis Lolos show that the koilon was deliberately situated on the highest possible slope, and thus its large size represents the original Hellenistic design rather than a later Roman extension. The non-alignment of the theatre and stadium with the grid plan of the Hellenistic city enabled a maximum use of natural topography and minimized the amount of masonry required.

A multifunctional role for the theatre at Messene as a place for performances and political assemblies is affirmed by literary and epigraphic testimony and attested archaeologically in the 2nd century BC by tracks on which the skene and proskenion were rolled aside and stored in a *skenotheke* when not in use. A permanent stage with proscenium replaced the movable skene in the 1st c. AD. Petros Themelis follows the history of the theatre from its construction in the 3rd c. BC to abandonment some five hundred years later, while a study of the masons’ marks by K. Sidiropoulos forms a very useful Appendix.

A cult function is evident for the theatre in the Sanctuary of Hemithea at Kastabos in Caria, where the Kasta-beia, the festival for Hemithea, a healing goddess worshipped solely at Kastabos, was celebrated. The earlier work of Cook and Plommer has been augmented by a collaborative German–Turkish survey of the sanctuary. In this volume C. Wilkening-Aumann describes the layout

of the theatre with wide *koilon* and small scene-building that belongs to a period of expansion of the sanctuary in early Hellenistic times.

A non-canonical theatral structure identified as a setting for cultic performances is the ‘South Building’ at Selinous reported on in this volume by Clemente Marconi and David Scahill. They suggest that it was built to accommodate spectators of rites associated primarily with Temple R, probably a temple of Demeter Thesmophoros. The impressive viewing area with a capacity of c. 500 seated people belongs to the second half of the 6th century BC and it remained in use with slight alterations through the 4th century BC. It belongs to a group of theatral structures (meaning simple, non-canonical theatres, with linear and non-circular *theatra* and/or orchestra) closely associated with local sanctuaries and/or agoras in various regions of the Greek world, including the Peloponnese, Crete, Attica, East Greece, Magna Graecia, and Sicily. Drama in Sicily may have had its origins in association with the cult of Demeter rather than Dionysos.

Reports in this volume of a series of theatres that have recently been excavated or have undergone new studies expand the range and diversity of theatral architecture. At Maroneia excavation of the Hellenistic theatre was conducted by E. Pentazos (1981-1988, 1994), and since 2000 by the IΘ’ Ephorate of Prehistoric and Classical Antiquities. In this volume, reporting on the historical phases and restoration of the monument, Ch. Karadima and her collaborators note that the theatre was built on the slopes of a ravine near the eastern city wall, close to a sanctuary of Dionysus. The irregular stone cavea, the central and peripheral drain of the orchestra, the seats of honour and the *proskenion* date to the theatre’s Hellenistic phase (late 4th early 3rd c. BC). The monument was in continuous use until the 4th c. AD.

Study of recent finds, old finds and archival notes by Walter Gauss and his colleagues suggest modifications to the chronology of the theatre at Aigeira. The late W. Alzinger excavated the building between 1972 and 1988. In 1992 Savas Gogos published the architecture and identified a Hellenistic foundation around the first or middle years of the 3rd century BC and a substantial but unfinished Roman Imperial modification in the 3rd century AD. Walter Gauss proposes that initial construction may better be placed somewhat later, with modifications in the

late Hellenistic and early imperial period. The excavator of the theatre of Halikarnassos, Professor Serdaroğlu, died in September 2005, thus preventing the publication of his findings. Poul Pedersen reports on his study of the building, and in an appendix he and Signe Isager present inscriptions from the theatre. Pedersen points to historical evidence for construction of the theatre in the middle of the 4th century BC, roughly contemporary with the developed form of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens. The form of the cavea follows that of the Athenian theatre, and he concludes that it was built at a time when the great architectural innovations in theatres on the Greek mainland were transferred to western Asia Minor.

At Nea Paphos construction of the theatre followed shortly after foundation of the city in the early 3rd c. BC. Excavations and study by J.R. Green, C. Barker and G. Stennett reveal that the upper levels of the central cavea date to within a couple of decades either side of 300 BC. The central part and the lower levels were carved out of the bedrock of the hill; the sides were built up on artificial earthen embankments on which stone seats were bedded. An inscription by the Guild of Artists of Dionysos is probably dated to ca. 142 BC and lists members of the Paphian board (*grammateion*) of the Guild, actors and playwrights. The inscription implies a major festival, which the authors suggest was an event marking the opening of the remodelled theatre.

The theatre in the centre of Apollonia, in Illyria, belongs to the second third of the 3rd century BC. Valentina Hinz and Stefan Franz report that the ground plan as well as the decoration show regional features in detail, which find parallels in the hinterland especially in the theatre of Byllis. A political function is suggested by pairs of letters inscribed on the front of the first step of the *koilon* which may relate to the political division of the demos into *phylai* or other units.

Marco Germani provides a general summary of the architectural features of Boeotian theatres with a focus on representative examples that highlight the evolution and the peculiarities of theatral architecture in Boeotia. The region developed a specific need for structures for spectacles because of the local emphasis on musical performance, stimulated by an enormous wealth of legends. On the basis of present evidence the earliest was at Chaironeia (end of the 4th century and the beginning of the 3rd), while the Theatre in the Valley of the Muses built in

the 3rd century, which included a *proskenion*, was the first in Boeotia to follow the Attic architectural trend.

Valentina Di Napoli points out that the theatres of Greece during the Roman Imperial period constitute a paradigm for investigating how a society, deeply rooted within the Classical tradition, responded to cultural influence from Rome. Many theatres were remodelled and provided with more “western” features (a *pulpitum*, where not already present; a two- or even three-storey *scaenae frons*; and decorative elements inspired by Roman models). Furthermore, many *odeia* intended for lectures and musical performances were probably also used for ceremonies for the imperial cult. A strong awareness of and respect for the Greek tradition, a conscious use of the past, and a discrete but steady introduction of Roman models and formulae mark this new phase that developed trends which were first present in the Augustan age.

Arzu Öztürk makes some observations on the development of the raised stage in Asia Minor and asks: was Dörpfeld right in arguing that the orchestra in Classical Greek theatres was used by both the actors and the chorus and eventually the *proskenion* of the Greek theatre was transformed into the *scaenae frons* of the Roman theatre. She cites as examples to prove the point the theatres at Aphrodisias, Stratonikeia and Ephesus.

The complexities of the architectural development in the unusual theatre at Aphrodisias are set out by N. de Chaisemartin. The layout of its structural elements shows a striking contrast between a Greek-style scene-building and the Roman-style *cavea* that was built some eighty years later. The architecture of the stage’s façade superimposes, behind the terrace of a Doric *proskenion*, a two-storeyed *scaenae frons* with Ionic and Corinthian columns, which is a feature generally considered to have originated in Italy. The uncommon arrangement of the central section of this *scaenae frons*, with a huge vaulted passage that opened onto opposite terraces and was topped by a large niche for colossal statues, is also a peculiarity. The architectural decoration of the *scaenae frons* looks like a patchwork of ornamental patterns with origins in various building traditions and geographic areas. Is it a “missing link” between the Greek Hellenistic theatre and the Imperial model as it expanded into Asia Minor? The earliest plan of the orchestra, whose moulded plinth (re-used for the present podium) offers a larger diameter, is linked to the layout of the scene- building by

a complex diagram combining both Greek and Roman Vitruvian diagrams. The hybrid character of the layout shows that its first building phase belongs to a period of dynamic evolution of stage architecture, influenced by new western features, yet still somewhat conservative, as shown by the preservation of the Hellenistic *proskenion*, a feature which was generally dismantled in the theatres of Asia Minor in order to establish higher stages.

Following a similar theme Katja Piesker shows that the Roman redesign of the Hellenistic theatre at Patara in the first half of the 2nd century AD was determined by a combination of elements and was shaped by both Hellenistic Greek and Roman traditions. After the conquest of Alexander the Great, theatres traditionally served as a showcase of Hellenic identity and played an important role in the Hellenization of cities in Lycia. Evidence for changing ‘master-plans’ and several unfinished parts suggest that, while construction was underway, the design of the theatre at Patara was discussed, re-evaluated and altered. With a stage building that is noticeably separated from the *koilon*, the redesign of the building clearly has its roots in the Greek Hellenistic tradition, while the lavishly decorated *scaenae frons*, the use of coloured stones of foreign origin, the marble revetment of the stage and *logeion* façades, the brick substructures of the stage and the theatre temple in *summa cavea* are adaptations of Roman models and technologies.

Hans Peter Isler sums up traditional Hellenistic elements in the architecture of ancient theatres in Roman Asia Minor. The *cavea* often exceeds a semicircle, and the scene-building in most cases remains separated from the *cavea*. There are five stage doors, as was the case in later Hellenistic times, and the raised *proskenion* is maintained. The *scaenae frons* of western origin becomes a common feature in Roman Asia Minor, but it is always straight; the semicircular or rectangular recesses, so prevalent in the west, are almost completely lacking. Thus, the theatre building in Roman Asia Minor is original and differs from that in other provinces in the West and the East in that the only new western element widely introduced is the *scaenae frons* with its *columnatio*, which is an element that had no static or architectural function but was a purely decorative feature.

The editors in March 2015

Studies on Greek Theatres: *History and Prospects*

HANS PETER ISLER

Abstract

Modern interest in ancient theatres has various origins. Early travellers encountered the ruins of theatres throughout Greece and Asia Minor, and sometimes recorded what they saw; an early example is the account by the French doctor Jacob Spon and the English botanist George Wheler of their journey to Dalmatia and the Levant in the years 1675 to 1676. Distinguished architects and architectural specialists have studied and theorized about ancient theatres since the Renaissance. The only surviving ancient treatise on the subject, Vitruvius' De Architectura, has had a significant impact on architecture since this period, in part because of its uniqueness.

The Theatre of Dionysos in Athens has played a particularly important role in studies of ancient architecture since the 18th century. Athens was the birthplace of Greek drama, and the works of the great tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, as well as the comedies of Aristophanes, were performed at the Theatre of Dionysos. In 1838 the Greek Archaeological Society began excavating this monument. In 1896 Wilhelm Dörpfeld, in collaboration with Emil Reisch, published his authoritative book about Greek theatres, which marked a new epoch of scholarly research in this area. Dörpfeld also identified the three issues that would shape the scholarly discussion of Greek theatre for the following decades, and to some extent they are still relevant today. These issues will be illustrated in more detail in our paper, which itself concludes with some proposals for scholarly research on Greek theatres in the future.

Early Travellers

The interest in ancient theatres in the modern era has various origins. Early travellers encountered the ruins of theatres throughout Greece and Asia Minor and frequently wrote about them. Distinguished architects and architectural specialists have studied and theorised about theatres since the Renaissance. Moreover, the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens has played an important role in studies of ancient architecture since the 18th century.

The modern interest in ancient theatres goes back at least to the 15th century. It is not surprising that theatres always attracted the attention of early travellers: they are large structures that were often in relatively good condition, at least with regard to the koilon. They were easy to identify due to their semicircular form, even when they were partially ruined or buried. At first, no distinction was made between Greek and Roman theatres. Many travellers employed the terms 'amphitheatre' or 'half am-

phitheatre', so that in some cases it is not certain they are referring to a theatre.

Ciriaco de' Pizziccoli, also known as Ciriaco da Ancona, was a merchant and spent the majority of his life travelling; he also had a great passion for the ancient past.¹ In 1445, he visited the island of Delos. There he found a large theatre (*ingens ex marmore theatrum*) with 25 rows of seats, measuring 60 cubits across.² He also made a drawing of the ruin. His drawing shows that he had only identified the koilon, and had not recognised the remaining parts of the scene building, although he had noticed the large cistern that was located behind the stage area, and drew its arches.

Delos and Athens were probably the most popular locations in Greece for early travellers. Philippe Fraisse and Jean-Charles Moretti compiled an exemplary documentation of the numerous trips to Delos made by travellers before the beginning of the French excavation of the theatre in 1882.³ Similar publications for other locations, Athens in particular, would be very valuable to current scholars.

A number of reports about ancient theatres can be found in individual accounts of journeys undertaken for various purposes. An early example is an account by the French doctor Jacob Spon and the English botanist George Wheler of their journey to Dalmatia and the Levant in the years 1675 to 1676.⁴ They mention the Odeon of Herodes Atticus at Athens, mistaking it for the Theatre of Dionysos, as well as the theatres in Delos, Ephesus, Hierapolis in Phrygia and Laodicea on the Lycus, where they noted four theatres; today two theatres and an Odeon have been documented there. Spon and Wheler also saw the theatres in Miletus and Smyrna, as well as the Roman theatre in Pergamum.

Travel reports of this kind began to appear more frequently in the 18th century. We will only concern ourselves here with those writers who are important for the study of ancient theatres.

The botanist Joseph Pitton de Tournefort (1656-1708) travelled to Asia Minor and the Black Sea on behalf of the French King Louis XIV from 1700 to 1702.⁵ He was primarily interested in vegetation, but he does mention the three theatres in Delos, Samos and Smyrna in his book, which was published posthumously in 1717. Travelling on his own initiative throughout the Orient from 1737 to 1742, the Anglican bishop Richard Pococke (1704-1756) also reached Egypt.⁶ He mentions numerous theatre structures in his book,⁷ including Caesarea Maritima and Gabala in the Levant. On the whole, his texts are very precise and informative; the first mentions of many such structures are to be found in his work.

In 1776 Marquis Marie Gabriel Florent Auguste de Choiseul-Gouffier (1752-1817)⁸ travelled as far as Telmessus;⁹ he was the first to venture along the southern coast of Asia Minor as far as the Western border of Lycia, and he mentions seeing theatres at a number of his destinations.¹⁰ His publications were accompanied by large plates that often provide important documentation of structures in a greater state of preservation than they are today. Due to political reasons the Marquis was not able to publish his book until 1809, after the French Revolution, but it became a great success.

Richard Chandler (1738-1810) travelled to the Orient on behalf of the Society of Dilettanti in London. He was the author (or co-author) of volumes 1 and 2 of *Antiquities of Ionia* (1769-1800). In addition to this he wrote two accounts of his travels.¹¹ He was the first to identify correct-

1 Only a small fraction of the great deal of material that he had compiled about the antiquity survives; the majority of it was destroyed in a library fire.

2 Fraisse & Moretti 2007, 2-3, pls. 5-7.

3 Fraisse & Moretti 2007, 2-16.

4 Spon & Wheler 1678.

5 Pitton de Tournefort 1717.

6 Pococke 1743-45.

7 Alabanda Alinda; Aphrodisias; the Odeion of Herodes Atticus in Athens, interpreted as a Theatre of Dionysos; Augusta Raurica; Caesarea Maritima; Cyzicus; Ephesus; Gabala; the Roman theatre at Gortyn; Hierapolis; two theatres and the odeion at Laodicea on the Lycus; Magnesia on the Maeander; Mylasa; Nicaea (Iznik); Nysa; Samos; Smyrna; the theatre and Bouleuterion at Stratonicea; the theatre and the odeion at Teus; and Tralles.

8 Choiseul-Gouffier 1809, 123-4, pls. 71-2.

9 Later Makri, today Fetiye.

10 Alexandria Troas; Assus; Ephesus; Euromus; Halikarnassos; Heraclea on the Latmus; Iasus; Miletus; Parium; the Roman theatre at Pergamum; and the theatre and the Bouleuterion at Stratonicea.

11 Chandler 1775; Chandler 1776.

ly the location of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens. He also mentions Alexandria Troas; Alinda; Athens, where he noted the Odeon of Herodes Atticus and the Odeon of Pericles; the theatre and the odeon in Ephesus; Epidaurus; Erythrae; Hierapolis; Iasos; Clazomenae; the three theatres in Laodicea on the Lycus; Miletus; Mylasa; Nysa; Piraeus (the theatre at Munichia); Priene; Sardeis; Smyrna; Stratonicea; and Teus. In general, however, his references to the theatres are brief and not particularly informative.¹²

The routes taken on such journeys were often dictated by religious interests. The ‘Seven Stars’, the ancient cities of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira (Manisa), Sardis, Philadelphia (Alaşehir) and Laodicea on the Lycus, were located in Western Asia Minor. Each of these communities was mentioned as the recipient of a letter in St. John’s Book of Revelation (2:1-3, 29). Many of the travellers at the time were members of the clergy, *i.e.* classically schooled individuals who were often also keen to collect inscriptions. The first such traveller to be interested specifically in the ‘seven churches’ was Thomas Smith (1638-1710),¹³ chaplain to the British ambassador at the Ottoman Porte. His book appeared in 1678, the same year as Spon and Wheler’s publication. Spon and Wheler likewise visited many of the ‘Seven Stars’, as did Pococke and Chandler.¹⁴

In view of the great interest in ancient theatres in the 18th century, it is striking that neither ancient theatres nor Vitruvius are referred to in the *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire des Sciences, des Arts et des Métiers* (1751-1763),¹⁵ edited by Denis Diderot and Jean-Baptiste le Rond D’Alembert.

The number of travel reports increased during the 19th century. A complete list of these works is beyond the scope of this paper; again, only some of the most important will be mentioned.

William Martin Leake (1777-1860), a retired English officer, travelled throughout Greece and Asia Minor and published a number of works with topographical information between 1824 and 1836.¹⁶ He always listed the theatres he encountered, and by his reckoning, the number accounted for in Greece, in particular, increased.

The archaeologist and architect Félix Marie Charles Texier (1802-1871)¹⁷ published his monumental three-volume work between 1839 and 1849; it included the results of the expeditions that he undertook on behalf of the French Ministry of Culture in the years 1834-1836, 1839 and 1842.

The archaeologist Charles Fellows (1799-1869) travelled to Asia Minor for the first time in 1838.¹⁸ He discovered ancient monuments in Lycia, including many theatres. Shortly thereafter Englishmen Thomas Abel Brimage Spratt (1811-1888; later to be vice-admiral) and naturalist Edward Forbes (1815-1854) journeyed throughout Lycia where they too investigated many theatres.¹⁹

The British geologist William John Hamilton (1805-1867) undertook an unusual journey through Asia Minor in 1835 that led him as far as Pontus and Armenia.²⁰ He traversed regions that at the time were rarely, if ever, visited by other travellers, and he recounted his journey in a substantial volume. As the son of a classical scholar he was interested in ancient ruins and thus mentioned the theatres that he encountered, including some that have since disappeared without trace.

The ancient theatres in North Africa gradually came to light only after France’s conquests in the years following 1830, although a few older accounts by individual travellers exist.²¹ As is well known, nearly all of the theatres in Maghreb date from imperial times.

Based on the literature that was available at the time,

12 Among the travelers of the 18th century we should also remember James Dallaway (1763-1834), physician and chaplain of the British Embassy to the Ottoman Porte. He visited Ephesus, Miletus, Notium, the Roman theatre at Pergamum, Smyrna and the theatre at Teus. See Dallaway 1797.

13 Smith 1678. Smith visited Ephesus, Laodicea on the Lycus, Pergamum, Philadelphia, Sardeis, Smyrna and Thyateira, and also Hierapolis in Phrygia.

14 Later the English clergyman Arundell traveled to the seven cities (Arundell 1828). He was followed by Lampakis (Lampakis 1909) and others.

15 Diderot & le Rond D’Alembert 1751-1763.

16 Leake 1824; Leake 1830; Leake 1836.

17 Texier 1839-1849. Texier mentions, in some cases for the first time, the theatres at Aezani, Alexandria Troas, Antiphellus, Aspendus, Assus, Cnidus, Cyzikus, Ephesus, Hierapolis, Iasos, Melos, Metropolis, Myra, Nicaea, Nysa, Patara, the Roman theatre at Pergamum, Perge, Pessinus, Sardeis, Simena, Smyrna, Telmessus, Tralles and Tripolis; a few of these are documented with good illustrations. Short descriptions of numerous other ancient places that also include mentions of theatres can be found in Texier 1862.

18 Fellows 1839; Fellows 1841.

19 Spratt & Forbes 1847.

20 Hamilton 1842.

21 James Bruce, a British consul-general in Algiers around 1765/66, journeyed across Algeria and Tunisia. Lambert Playfair published some of Bruce’s unpublished drawings and part of his travel books (Playfair 1877).

Johann Heinrich Strack,²² professor at the Academy of Arts and at the Artillery and Engineering School in Berlin, made the first compilation of all ancient theatres known at the time in 1843. The plans of 28 theatres were included, some with section drawings. Classical philologist and archaeologist Friedrich Wieseler,²³ professor at Göttingen, published the plans, section drawings and additional details of 68 theatres on four plates only eight years later in 1851. The entry for each structure was accompanied by a commentary about its source material. The book also contained a supplementary plate that included the newly discovered theatres in Lycia. Strack's work was thus made obsolete, and an authoritative compilation of all known theatres (with illustrations, where available) was now accessible to all.

The Influence of Vitruvius and Renaissance Architects

Vitruvius' book *De Architectura*, which was published early in the reign of Emperor Augustus, is the only ancient treatise about architecture that has been preserved. Philological analyses of the text have demonstrated that all of the existing manuscripts of Vitruvius' texts were based on a single archetype from the 8th/9th century, which by good fortune survived the end of antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The uniqueness of the text explains the great impact it has had on architecture since the Renaissance, but its importance was apparently not as great during antiquity. Although this is a point of debate among Vitruvius scholars,²⁴ it is a fact that very few later Roman authors cite him.²⁵

The rediscovery of Vitruvius' work happened in the 14th century. Renaissance architect Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) employed *De architectura's* ten-book structure for his principal work, *De re aedificatoria* (1452), without, however, making any direct links to its content. The first printed version of Vitruvius' work appeared in the late 15th century, and it thus became available to a larger circle of lovers of antiquity. Particular interest was shown at first in the remarks made about the orders of columns and their proportions; the section on theatres was not widely commented upon. Nevertheless, the first interest in the ancient theatres of Rome can be observed beginning in the early 16th century. Around 1519, Baldassare Peruzzi built a new palace for the Savelli family partially over the ruins of the cavea of the theatre of Marcellus in Rome. Peruzzi took this opportunity to draw a plan and a section of the remains of the ancient theatre.²⁶ This plan, although not exact in every detail, was later confirmed in significant points by the discovery of the Forma Urbis Romae, the marble map of ancient Rome dating from the later 2nd century AD, as well as by modern research.²⁷ Peruzzi's plan was employed in Sebastiano Serlio's (1475-1554) architecture treatise and in other later works. The brothers Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane and Giovanni Battista da Sangallo also drew a plan of the theatre of Marcellus at the same time.²⁸ The third volume of Sebastiano Serlio's *Cinque libri dell'architettura*,²⁹ first published in 1551, had a great influence on the architecture of his time and of the following centuries. It included plans and detailed information about three ancient theatres: the theatre of Marcellus in Rome, the theatre in Ferentium, north of Rome, and the large theatre in Pola, Istria (Fig. 1).

22 Strack 1843.

23 Wieseler 1851, with pls. 1-3, 14 (suppl.). Most of the book, however, is dedicated to a discussion and illustration of the stage accessories. See also Lullies 1988, 33-4, with a portrait.

24 Höcker writes: 'Inwieweit V's Schriften einen allgemeingültigen Verständnisrahmen für die Architektur der Antike selbst bilden, ist bis heute Gegenstand kontroverser Diskussion unter Architekten, Archäologen und Kunsthistorikern' (Höcker 2002, 269). This discussion is of course particularly important for classical archaeologists and specialists on Greek and Roman architecture.

25 Nine times in total according to Gros (Gros 2006, 399, no. 2). Indeed in the second half of the 1st century AD the elder Pliny mentions Vitruvius among many others as an authority for his books on painting and on stones (*HN* 1.35-6). Sextus Iulius Frontinus makes mention of Vitruvius in his work on the water supply of Rome, which was published after AD 97. Around AD 300 Cetus Faventinus elaborated on Vitruvius' chapter on private architecture. Sidonius Apollinaris, another author who mentioned Vitruvius, wrote in the second half of the 5th century AD. A group of inscriptions containing the name Vitruvius have nothing to do with the author, however.

26 Illustrated by Pernier 1928, pl. 10. This plan has now been attributed to Giovanni Battista di Sangallo, see Günther 1988, 66; 260-1, with figs. 7, 18-9; 265-6, with figs. 7, 24-8. Also Pochat 1990, 258-9, fig. 182.

27 See Ciancio Rossetto 1999, 34-5.

28 See Pernier 1928, pl. 11.

29 See Serlio 1584, pls. 70-74.

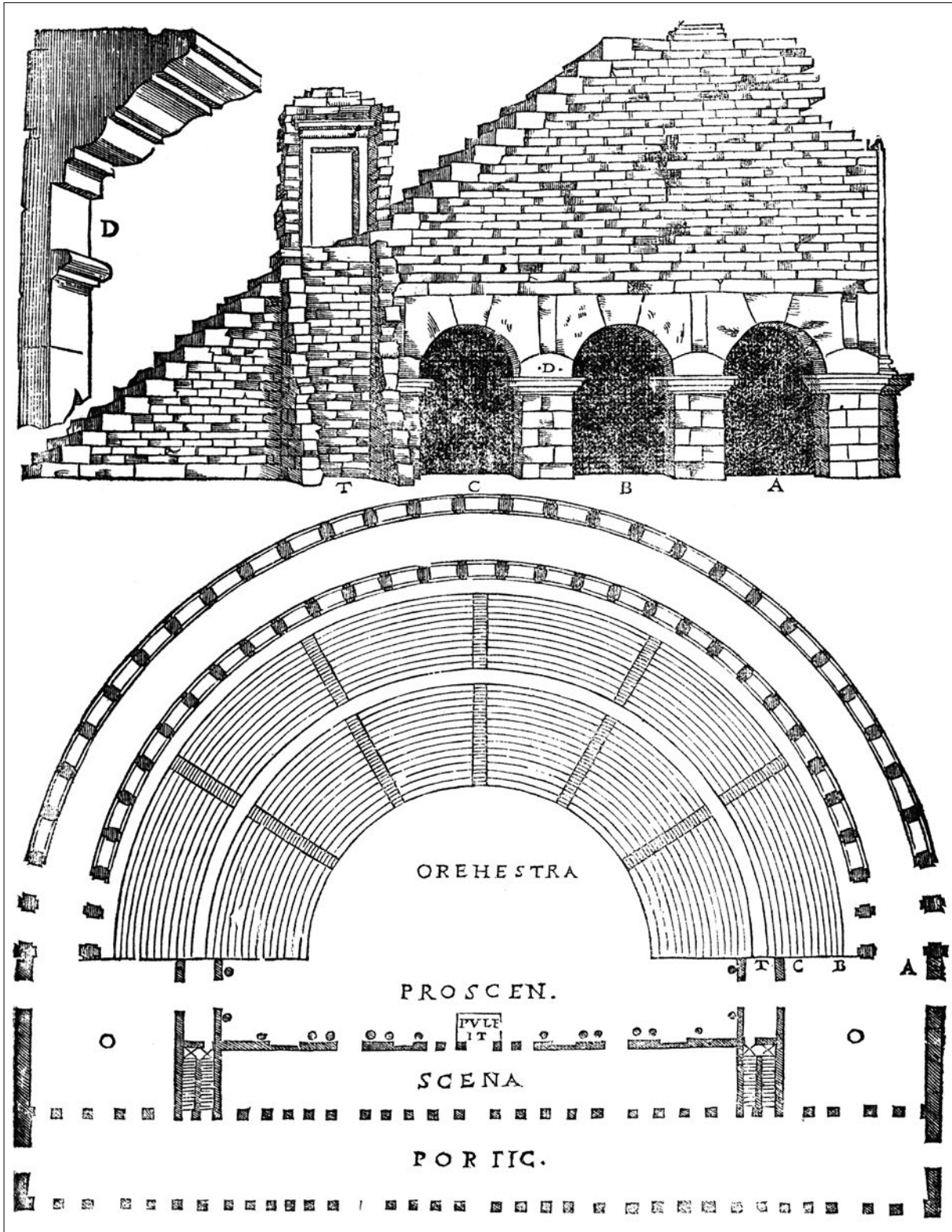


Fig. 1. Pola, large theatre, by Sebastiano Serlio 1551. Serlio 1584.

Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) did not discuss any ancient theatres in his famous publication *I quattro libri dell'architettura* (1570). However, his plans and elevation drawings of the theatre in Verona demonstrate that the eminent architect was also interested in ancient theatres.³⁰ Palladio was certainly familiar with Vitruvius' work; his patron Daniele Barbaro (1514-1570), with whom he once travelled to Rome, had made a translation with commentary of Vitruvius' *De architectura* in 1556. Palladio contributed a drawing of a reconstruction of Vitruvius' theatre to Barbaro's publication, basing it on the theatres still in existence in Verona, Rome, Pola and Vicenza.³¹ Palladio himself based his design for the famous Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza – the construction of which began in 1580 – on ancient models.³²

The interest of Palladio's circle in ancient theatres was manifested also in the person of Onorio Belli, who was from Venice.³³ Belli was doctor to the Venetian governor in Crete from 1583 to 1599; he visited most of the ancient theatres on the island around 1586, documenting them in idealised drawings of plans (Fig. 2) that he sent to Venice, of which only a few have survived. Belli described the structures only summarily, if at all, in his letters accompanying the drawings. His idealised additions were clearly based on Palladio's work.

The Theatre of Dionysos in Athens and its Research History

The origins of Greek drama as performance can be found in Attica, and specifically in Athens.³⁴ Athens was the home to the three great tragedians Aeschylus, Sophocles and Eu-

ripides as well as the comic playwright Aristophanes and countless other Greek dramatists of the classical period whose works are now lost. Their works were performed at the Theatre of Dionysos. It was only natural that early travellers would attempt to determine the location of this theatre, but the first attempts to identify it were unsuccessful. As mentioned above, Jacob Spon and George Wheler,³⁵ as well as Richard Pococke,³⁶ falsely designated the relatively well-preserved Odeon of Herodes Atticus as the Theatre of Dionysos. James Stuart (1713-1788) and Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) also made this mistake in the second volume of their *Antiquities of Athens*.³⁷ They falsely conjectured that the basin in the terrain where the Theatre of Dionysos was located was the ruins of the Odeon of Pericles, despite the fact that Richard Chandler had already identified the location of the Theatre of Dionysos correctly in his book *Travels in Greece* in 1776.³⁸

In 1838 the Greek Archaeological Society began the excavation of the Theatre of Dionysos, which continued, bar some interruptions, until 1865.³⁹ The German architect Ernst Moritz Theodor Ziller (1837-1923) drew a plan, a section drawing and a depiction of the ruin in March 1863.⁴⁰ These are the oldest scholarly illustrations of the site and served as the basis for further research until the appearance of *Das Griechische Theatre* by W. Dörpfeld and E. Reisch in 1896.⁴¹ The excavation of the Theatre of Dionysos earned significant public attention both in Greece and abroad.⁴²

Wilhelm Dörpfeld (1853-1940) undertook additional excavations of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens between 1882 and 1895.⁴³ In collaboration with the Viennese classi-

30 See Cevese 1973, 143, fig. 147.

31 See Ackerman 1966, 178-9.

32 See Ackerman 1966, 179-182, figs. 95-6. Also Cevese 1973, 118-120, fig. 139; 147, fig. 154.

33 See Beschi 1999; Isler 2005, 263-9.

34 See Seeck 1979, 161-2.

35 Spon & Wheler 1678, 160-5.

36 Pococke 1743-5, 240.

37 Stuart & Revett 1787, plan to p. v and vii, H (odeion of Herodes Atticus), and K (the basin in the terrain indicating the position of the Theatre of Dionysos, identified by the authors as the odeion of Perikles).

38 Chandler 1776, 61-2.

39 Pittakis 1839, 59; Rangabe 1840, 87; Rousopoulos 1862, 64, 94-102, 128-47, 209-10, 222-3; Rousopoulos 1863, 249-52, 271-9; 285-94, pl. 40 (plan by Ziller, see pp. 278-9), pl. 41 (section drawing by Ziller, see p. 288), pl. 42 (prospect of the situation at the end of March 1863 by Ziller, see pp. 288-9).

40 See the preceding note. Ziller's drawings have been republished by Julius 1878, 193-204; 236-42, figs. 1-4; and by Fiechter 1935, pls. 11-2.

41 See the older publications by Wheeler 1882/83, 123-79, and by Haigh 1889, especially 107-63. We remember also the studies of Kirchhoff 1882, 1-8 (with plan), and Kirchhoff 1883, 1-7 (with fig.).

42 See for instance Vischer 1863, 1-13; 35-77, pl. 18 (= Kleine Schriften 2, 1878, especially 324-6).

43 Lullies 1988, 112-3, with a portrait.

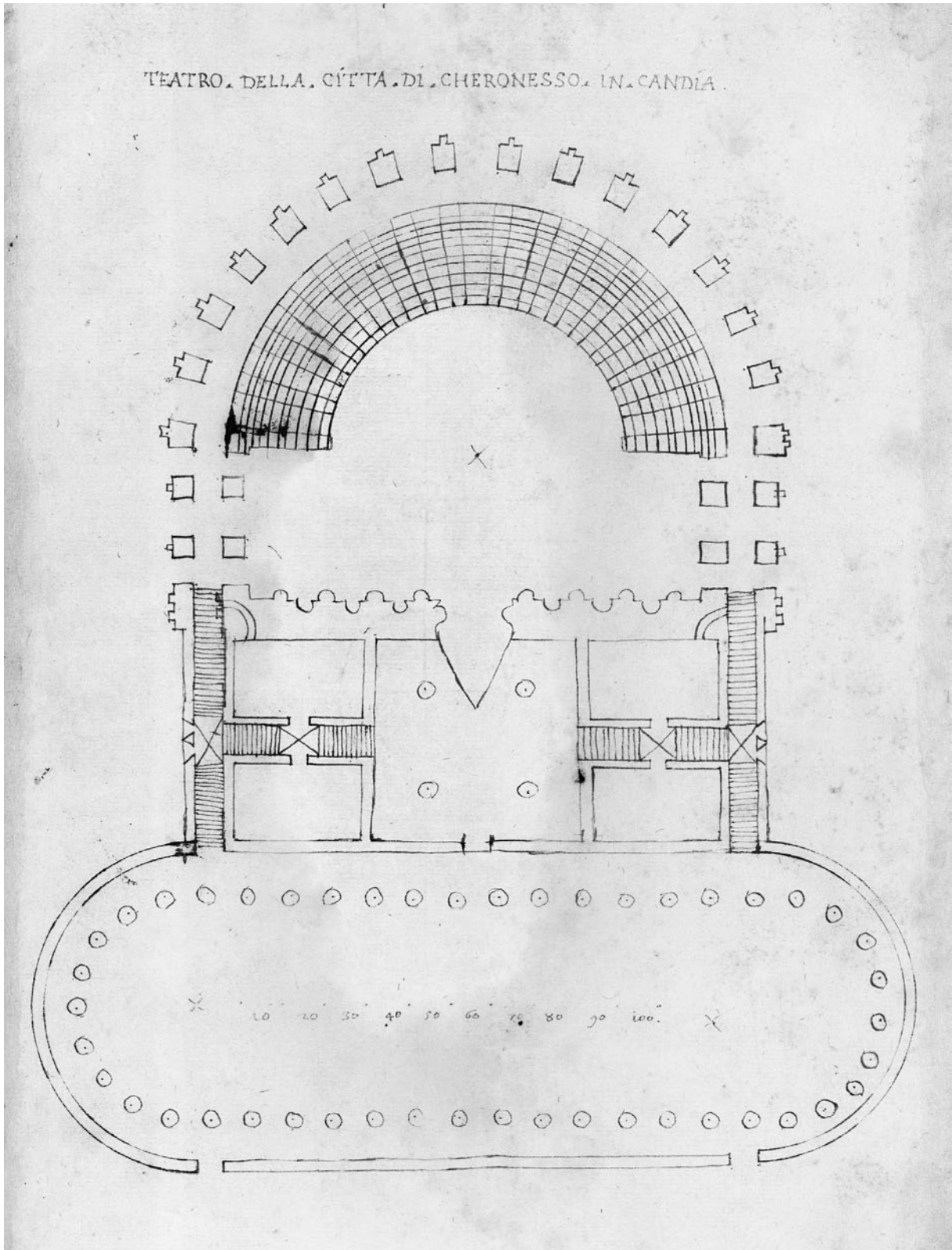


Fig. 2. Chersonesos, Crete by Onorio Belli 1586. Beschi 1999, fig. 66.

cal philologist and archaeologist Emil Reisch (1863-1933),⁴⁴ he published the authoritative book about Greek theatre in 1896, marking a new epoch of scholarly research in this area. Dörpfeld, originally an architect and architectural historian, was already very well known in the archaeological world at the time, due to his extensive experience as an excavator in very prominent places like Olympia and Troy.

Following the great scholarly interest created by the excavation of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens, a number of larger excavations of theatres took place in Greece in the late 19th century. The Greek Archaeological Society excavated the theatres in the Amphiareion near Oropus,⁴⁵ in Piraeus (the Theatre of Zea)⁴⁶ and in Epidaurus.⁴⁷ Archaeologists from the American School in Athens investigated the theatres in Thorikos,⁴⁸ Eretria and Sicyon.^{49, 50} The French School in Athens excavated the theatre in Delos.⁵¹ The British School in Athens excavated the theatre in Megalopolis,⁵² and their excavation of the theatre at Sparta,⁵³ which had commenced in 1892, was completed early in the 20th century.

Dörpfeld had included all of these newly discovered theatres in his 1896 publication, each illustrated with a plan. Three Hellenistic theatres in Asia Minor were also discussed: the structure in Assos that had been excavated by the Archaeological Institute of America; the theatre on the acropolis of Pergamon that had been discovered during the German excavations there; and the theatre in Magnesia on the Maeander, which had also been investigated by German archaeologists. Dörpfeld visited many of these excavations himself and his counsel and opinion were highly valued.

Theatre Research in the 20th Century

Until the middle of the 20th century, scholarly research into ancient theatres was dominated by the work of Wilhelm Dörpfeld, the architects Armin von Gerkan (1884-1969)⁵⁴ and Ernst Robert Fiechter (1875-1948),⁵⁵ and the archaeologist Heinrich Bulle (1867-1945).⁵⁶ Margarete Bieber (1879-1978) published her extensive overview of ancient theatres under the title *Die Denkmäler zum Theatrewesen im Altertum* in 1920.⁵⁷

The constructions that Dörpfeld investigated in 1896 remained the focus of research on Greek theatres for an extended period of time. Thanks to Armin von Gerkan's publication in 1921, the theatre at Priene began to be recognised as an important example of a Hellenistic structure. Heinrich Bulle published the plans of a number of other Hellenistic theatres, particularly from Western Greece. Ernst Robert Fiechter carried out accurate architectural surveys of theatres in Greece, some of which were already known to scholars, but he also helped bring new, smaller ones to light.

Dörpfeld's 1896 work identified the three issues that would shape the scholarly discussion of Greek theatres for the following decades, an agenda that lives on in part to the present day. These issues were: the dating of the Theatre of Dionysos in Athens; the original form of the orchestra in Greek theatres; and lastly, the function of the raised proskenion, which was introduced into the architecture of the theatre at the beginning of the Hellenistic period.

44 Dörpfeld & Reisch 1896.

45 Leonardos 1886, 51-6, pl. 3.

46 Dragatsis 1884, 195-7; Philios 1885, 62-3; Dörpfeld & Reisch 1896, 97-100.

47 Kavvadias 1881, 12-27; Kavvadias 1882, 75-7; Kavvadias 1883, 46-8, pls. 1-2; Kavvadias 1900, 94, pls. 1-2; Kavvadias 1903, 59, pl. 1.

48 Cushing 1885/86, 22-34.

49 See the summary in Isler 2007, especially 11-2.

50 McMurtry & Earle 1889, 272-81, 286-92; Earle 1891, 281-2; Earle, Brownson & Young 1893, 388-409;

51 Homolle 1894, 162-7; Chamonard 1896, 256-318; 390-2, pls. 19-23.

52 Gardner & Schultz 1892.

53 Dickins 1905/06, 394-406; Dawkins 1908/09, 3; Woodward 1923-25, 119-156, figs. 1-12, pl. 14f; Woodward 1925/26, 175-209, figs. 1-7, pls. 27-30; Woodward 1926/27, 3-36, figs. 1-14, pls. 1-4; Woodward 1927/28, 1; Woodward 1928-30, 151-240, figs. 1-23, pl. 19f.

54 Gerkan 1921, especially 87-131. See also Lullies 1988, 226-7, with a portrait.

55 Fiechter 1914. Fiechter also published nine monographs on individual theatres (1930-1950). See also Lullies 1988, 190-1, with a portrait.

56 Bulle 1928. See also Lullies 1988, 168-9, with a portrait.

57 Bieber 1920; Bieber 1939; Bieber, 1961. As is well known, the three editions differ in the conception and in the detail. See also Lullies 1988, 196-7, with a portrait.