ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

Συγγραφή : *Αριστοδήμου Γεωργία*
Μετάφραση : *Ντόουσον Μαρία-Δήμητρα* , *Καμάρα Αφροδίτη*
Για παραπομπή : *Αριστοδήμου Γεωργία , "Termessus (Antiquity), Theatre", Εγκυκλοπαίδεια Μείζονος Ελληνισμού, Μ. Ασία*
URL: <http://www.ehw.gr/l.aspx?id=9264>

Περίληψη :

Greek theater at the city of Termessus (modern Güllük) in Pisidia with a capacity of 4200 seats. It is built within the city walls, below the Agora. It has an E-SE orientation. Its first building phase is dated to the Hellenistic period, probably in mid-2nd century B.C. It underwent alterations during the imperial era, firstly in the Augustan period, when it was transformed into an arena and then in the 2nd century A.D. when the scene front was added. Due to its state of preservation, size and multiple building phases, it is considered as one of the most important buildings of the city. The monument has been neither excavated nor restored.

Χρονολόγηση

2nd century B.C., Roman Imperial period

Γεωγραφικός Εντοπισμός

Termessus, Pisidia

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1. Location

The theater is a significant edifice, built in the ancient city of Termessus, near the Agora. It faces east- southeast. Its topographical site is evocative, since there is a steep rock of the slope behind it that consists an impressive natural scenery. Because of the plainness of the soil, artificial substructures were required for the formation of the cavea.

2. Architectural Description

The theater follows the ground plan of the Greek theaters, although it has a Roman character like the theater of Sagalassus and most of the theaters in Pisidia.[1] It is of relatively small size with a cavea's diameter of 65 m. and an orchestra of 25.5 m., which gives a capacity of 4,200 seats.

3. Building Phases

Two main building phases can be recognized, during which a different style of masonry was used, visible in parts of the cavea. They were followed by a third one, related to the extension of the monument, and a fourth one which was constrained to modifications and repairs:

3.1. 1st Building Phase – Hellenistic Period

The theater's auditorium (cavea) exceeded a semicircle. The retaining walls were constructed duringthis period. There is no archaeological evidence regarding the early scene building. The ground plan of the theater must have been very simple.

3.2. Second Building Phase – Augustan Era (27 B.C. - 14 A.D.)

The completion of the cavea and the scene building belongs to this phase. The ground plan does not differentiate itself much from the earlier theater. The cavea follows the usual layout, meaning that it exceeds a semicircle. It is built against a natural slope taking advantage of its incline, while for the construction of the retaining walls artificial substructures were required in order to cover the incline.[2] Access to the cavea was via the Agora on the West.

The auditorium (cavea) is divided horizontally into two zones (*maeniana*). The lower section of seating (theatron, *ima cavea-maenianum*) had eighteen rows of seats and was divided vertically by six staircases (scalae, scalaria) into five wedge-shaped compartments, called cunei. The seats were made of grey stone.[3] At the rear side of each seat there is a shallow depression where

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the spectators placed their feet without annoying those that sat in front of them. Inscribed names on the seats indicate either the individual seats or the owner of the seat.[4] The top row of seats of the ima cavea had a continuous back-rest**.** Those seats formed a kind of inner wall to diazoma to protect the seated spectators, as well as those who were moving along the semicircular passageway.

The upper section of seating (epitheatron, summa cavea) included eight rows of seats and was divided by eleven staircases into ten wedge-shaped segments (cunei).[5] A broad staircase in the middle of the summa cavea permitted direct access to the diazoma. This structure facilitated the spectators' movement and prevented the jam of people at the exit.[6] There was a gallery (porticus in summa cavea) running around the top of the cavea for the easy access of spectators and for the protection in case of rain.

The orchestra was encircled by a stone parapet 1.75m. high, for the protection of spectators from the violent actions of the combats and the wild animals' hunting. Thus the lower rows of seats of the ima cavea were not used.

The scene of the second building phase must have been erected on the remains of an earlier stage. It was rectangular in shape with a particular elaborate scene front. Its proscaenium (frons pulpiti) was trapezoidal in shape,[7] with a façade adorned with relief plaques. Passageways accessible from three doorways opening on the wall of the proscaenium ran directly to the interior of the scene building. The walls at the angles of the proscaenium were converged and formed the paraskenia. In front of the stage was a proscaenium vish columnar screen two storeys high (scaenae frons). The columns of Corinthian order stood on podia and carried a continuous architrave.[8]

At the lower storey of the scene front there were five doorways, whose size decreased towards sides. There was also one doorway in each oblique side of the scene.The elements of the most splendidly decorated part of the theater have collapsed.

3.3. Third Building Phase

In this phase the cavea was extended towards the south and was connected to the scene. New seats, the tribunalia above the western lateral corridor (parodos), were created on the western retaining wall.[9] They were supported by an oblong barrel – vaulted corridor, which leans on the Hellenistic retaining wall on the west, while on the east it leans on massive barrel - vaults built against the wall of the scene.[10] The cavea is thus connected with the scene, like the Roman western type theaters. In this phase the scene front was rebuilt. Heavy walls were built at sides in place of the open columns.

3.4 Fourth Building Phase – Later Imperial Era

During this time, a modification was made at the upper section of the cavea, which constituted the most fragilepart of the theater and needed rebuilding. The problems of stability and balance were caused by the intercolumnar space between the thin columns of the porticus at the top of the cavea, aiming at not hindering the viewing of the performance. During this phase the columns were replaced by pillars, which carried vaults like the theater of Aspendos in Pamphylia. Arches might have been formed on the porticus' façade. Some capitals are preserved, decorated with floral patterns, characteristics of this late period.

4. Construction : Materials - Masonry

The theater's cavea is made of blocks of local limestone in the isodomic style of masonry *(*opus quadratum). The scene building was constructed by blocks covered with lime mortar, while the scene front was made of marble. There is no uniformity regarding the styles of masonry. Different styles were used on the retaining walls and the outer cavea wall. This is an archaeological evidence that helps the discrimination of the building phases, the modifications and the repairs. The outer cavea wall is made of coursed ashlar masonry, like the theater at Magnesia ad Maeander.[11] They are arranged in horizontal, uneven courses without any mortar, a style that reveals both economy in the building time and an effort of saving material and manpower.

In the lower zone (until the twelfth lower row of seats) of the retaining walls there is an irregular, almost polygonal system with well-

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cut stones. A course of isodomic style follows higher. The two zones are divided by a thin course of projecting stones.[12]

The back wall of the scene building is made of courses of roughly worked blocks which provide a good visual impression on the exterior, while in the interior the blocks are completely unworked.[13] The front wall of the scene is mainly constituted by horizontal courses of irregular shaped blocks, without mortar, with the interpolation of a course of regularly cut blocks.[14]

5. Date

The first construction phase of the theater is dated to the Hellenistic period and more specifically in the 2nd century B.C. The second building phase is dated to the Augustan period (27 B.C.-14 AD), when according to the epigraphical evidence, the cavea and the lavish façade of the scene were completed.[15] During this period the theater was turned into an arena for amphitheatrical games. The third building phase is dated to the late 2nd century A.D. (end of Antonine - beginning of Severan era), while a decade later the south side of the cavea was extended, with the addition of the tribunalia above the west lateral corridor (parodos). Significantly later, during the 4th century A.D., the porticus at the top of the cavea was rebuilt.

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1. Contrary to the theaters of Miletus, Ephesus, Priene which they have a Greek character, see Bieber, M., *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton, 1961) p. 219.

2. Most of the rows of seating rest on the natural slope, while the side sections were constructed on artificial substructures.

3. 0,42 m. high and 0,75 m. wide.

4. De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) p. 16-17, fig. 9-11.

5. In center of the outer cavea wall, there was a zone adorned with half columns, pedestals and cornices. It seems that this section was located on the earlier outer cavea wall, into a recess in the middle of the cavea . It was visible by the visitors who came to the theater from the Agora, see De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore 2* (Roma 1969) p. 15, fig. 7-8.

6. The middle staircase reflects the needs of the era for direct access of the audience to the theater, which was already obvious since the late Hellenistic period. A solution was found during the imperial era, and as in the theater of Selge, it did not affect the structure's aesthetics while at the same time it did not lack practicality. At the top of that staircase there was an arched entrance, from which parts of the antae are preserved in situ. At the final step of the entrance, a recess of a cistern is formed of depth 0,40 m in order to provide water to the audience during hot days, see De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) p. 14-15.

7. Depth of 5,40μ. and height of 2,36m. Today it is preserved in height 1,77m. According to Bernardi Ferrero, it was 2,60 m. high, see De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) p. 22.

8. The podia flanking the middle doorway supported four columns, while the two podia (between the side doorways) support a pair of columns.

9. The same design characteristic is also found in the theater of Selge.

10. Polygonal style of masonry was used in the structure.

11. Müller-Wiener, W., *Η Αρχιτεκτονική στην Αρχαία Ελλάδα* (1995, translation M. Smit-Duna, Thessaoniki 1995,) p. 80, fig. 33c.

12. It is not certain that the use of the two different styles of masonry on retaining walls reflects two different building phases. This solution might have been chosen for financial reasons, so as the visible parts of the theater seem carefully worked, while the parts that were not visible were roughly finished. The south retaining wall was constructed in isodomic style of masonry, see De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) p. 14, fig. 4.

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13. Every five course at the bottom of the wall are altered with course of smaller stones , while in the middle of the wall this alteration becomes more frequent. See. De Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) p. 17-18, fig. 14-15.

14. It was decorated with wall paintings that are not preserved .The wall paintings required the rough sublayer offered by the courses of the irregular blocks.

15. Bernardi Ferrero, D., *Teatri classici in Asia Minore* 2 (Roma 1969) Apend. no.3

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Γλωσσάριο :

- architrave or epistyle

The lowest part of an entablature resting on the columns capitals and supporting the frieze.

- cavea

The auditorium or audience sitting of a theater.

- corinthian order

The most elaborate of the ancient greek architectural orders. It was developed in the 4th century BC in Greece and it was extensively used in Roman architecture. It is similar to the Ionic order. Its capitals being four-sided and composed of a basket-shaped body decorated with volumes and rows of acanthus leaves.

- diazoma (lat. praecinctio)

The circular passage way between the lower and upper tiers of seats in an anient Greek theater.

- greek type theatre

Theatre type developed in the Greek world during the Hellenistic period. It consists of three main parts which are not connected to each other: the cavea, the orchestra and the scene. The cavea is bigger than a semicircle, usually built on the slope of a hill and supported by retaining walls. The

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orchestra is circular or horse-shoe shaped and the scene is rectangular.
isodomic masonry (opus quadratum)
A type of masonry in which blocks of equal length and thickness are laid in courses, with each vertical joint centered on the block below.
kerkides (lat. cunei)
A wedge-shaped section of seats between two stepped passageways in an greek and roman theaters.
orchestra
The performance space of the ancient Greek and Roman theatre, placed between the scene building and the cavea. It was usually semi-circular in shape and rarely circular.
parodos
It was one of two side passageways in an ancient Greek theatre, between the scene and the cavea, through which the chorus and the actors entered the orchestra.
pillar
Pier of square or rectangular cross-section.
polygonal masonry
A stystem of masonry, with dressed stones which have irregular shape and vertical joints.
proscenium (or proscaenium), the
The colonnade added in front of the skene of the ancient Greek theatre. There the intercolumnar spaces were usually closed by doors or painted panels.
scaenae frons, the
The elaborate aedicular stage façade of the roman theatres that bears a rich architectural and sculptural decoration.
scene (lat. scaena -ae)
The stage building of the ancient theaters originally used for storage but provided a convenient backing for performances.
tribunalium
A raised platform in a Roman Theatre where the magistrates sat; These seats of honor in theatre would normally be at the extreme sides of the cavea above the two side entrances to the orchestra.
vault
A semi-cylindrical roof.

Χρονολόγιο

2nd century B.C.: Construction of the Hellenistic theatre.

Augustan era (27 B.C.-14 AD): 2nd building phase. The theatre was transformed into an arena.

Late 2nd century A.D.: 3rd building phase.

Beginning of the 3rd century A.D.: The cavea was extended towards the south, tribunalia were added.

4th century A.D.: The porticus at the top of the cavea was rebuilt.