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Florence 11-15 september 2006

*Documentation for conservation and development  
New heritage strategy for the future*

ABSTRACTS



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## ROMAN THEATRES IN SPAIN: KNOWLEDGE AND REHABILITATION

ITALIA

Alessandro Merlo

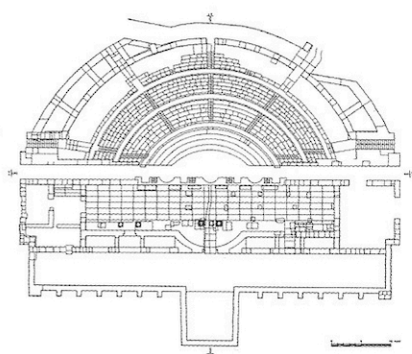
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Theatrical space has a complex architectural and cultural meaning (the Roman theatres had also a specific socio-political and ideological function) which should be understood and, above all, recovered. This approach allows to regard the remains of ancient buildings not only as untouchable archaeological findings, but also as architectural structures that can return to their original function, if it is in line with the needs of the present society. An increasing number of experts takes into serious consideration the possibility to re-use some of the ancient theatre buildings. The most common and affirmed theories, on the other hand, regard the remains of such buildings as archaeological findings which can only be altered with interventions that tend to preserve them - as ruins. A new method of intervention that matches these different points of view could be referred to an 'archaeological planning'. These are its principles: the original parts of the ancient building must be preserved and recognisable in the new structure; the volume and the morphology of the new structure must reflect those of the original building; the structure must be completed by introducing new elements which are realised following the construction techniques and an architectural language suitable for each specific case; any intervention must not follow the principles of building or lexical mimesis.

The project for the functional-architectural reconstruction of the Segóbriga theatre is founded on these ideas. The project choices were determined by the results of the preliminary analysis (organised in five sections<sup>1</sup>) and on the theoretical positions stated above. The criteria on which the methodologies of intervention on Spanish Roman theatres have been taken during the last ten years and the present European regulations dealing with the protection and use of the architectural heritage (particularly those connected to the ancient theatre buildings), have been of great importance to define this approach. The restitution of the building's volume, in fact, reflects the operation which is referred to an "integrated conservation" in the Amsterdam Declaration of 1975 (this type of intervention allows to bring the monument back to life at all levels: functional, aesthetic, cultural, etc.). Besides, the project tried to solve the two main problems cited in the European Plan for Archaeology of 1994 and in the more recent Declaration of Segesta: the necessity to preserve the archaeological remains as they are evidences of the past and the need to re-use the structure adapting it to the modern safety requirements and to the needs of today's theatrical performances.

According to the cited provisions, in the project is fixed to re-build the missing parts of the monument which are essential to understand and use the theatre structure. Particular care is to be taken so that all the operation does not damage the original structure and will be always reversible. This kind of reconstruction would allow to recover the most important original features of the building, such as the fact that it was not an open structure, as many people think due to the present state of the majority of Roman theatres remains.



## NOTES

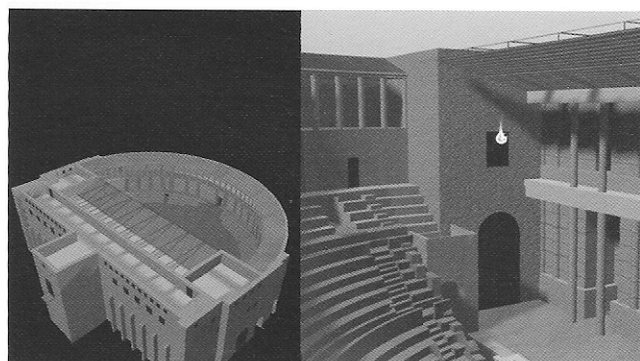
1. All the information collected during the analysis are organised in five sections: Spanish territory (if and how the Romans structured the province and its cities); structural parts of the Roman theatres and their functions; recompilation of the recently published material about Roman theatres in Spain; study of the Segóbriga theatre (both from the historical - the town, the theatre, the excavation and its results - and architectural - the remains of the theatre and the consolidation and restoration interventions realised on it - point of view); structural, formal and technical comparative analysis between the architectural members of the Segóbriga theatre and those of the other Roman theatres in Spain (in order to give an adequate historical and functional interpretation).

1. The Segóbriga theatre, survey: plan

2. The Segóbriga theatre, project: render view

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