

L'ILLYRIE MÉRIDIONALE ET L'ÉPIRE DANS L'ANTIQUITÉ

— VI —



Actes du VI^e colloque international de Tirana
(20-30 mai 2015)

édités par Jean-Luc Lamboley, Luan Përzhita
et Altin Skenderaj

VOLUME II

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RECENT INVESTIGATIONS AT THE THEATER OF NICOPOLIS. THE AUGUSTAN BUILDING PHASE

The foundation of *Nicopolis* as a free city, a *civitas libera*⁰¹, by Augustus was aimed not only at commemorating his victory in the nearby sea battle, but was incorporated into the broader context of the rehabilitation of north-western Greece, which, like other regions of mainland Greece, was experiencing a period of economic disruption due to the Roman civil wars of the 1st century BC⁰². In 27 BC, the year of the initial holding of the new Actian Games, Augustus founded the senatorial province of Achaëa, which was separated from the province of Macedonia⁰³. With Corinth as its capital, the new administrative unit, which consisted of the Peloponnesus, eastern central Greece, parts of Thessaly and southern Epirus⁰⁴,

included a number of important urban centers of ancient Greece, in addition to the newly-founded *Nicopolis*. This restructuring systematized the spread of romanization by introducing elements that formed the so-called *romanitas*⁰⁵. The emergence of new public and private structures and the use of new construction techniques and building materials are considered parameters of Romanization which contributed to the urban transformation in the province of Achaëa in the Augustan age. At the heart of this transformation lies *Nicopolis*, which was built within a short time in the first years of Augustus' regime. During its construction, traditional Roman practices as regards urban planning⁰⁶, building materials, and

01 The mention of *Nicopolis* by Pliny as free city (*HN* IV, 5 : *civitas libera Nicopolitana*) and by Tacitus as Roman colony (*Annales* V, 10 : *marique alio Nicopolim Romanam coloniam ingressus*) caused something of a controversy in modern scholarship surrounding the status of *Nicopolis* : cf. T. SARIKAKIS, *Nicopolis d'Épire était-elle une colonie romaine ou une ville grecque*, *Balkan Studies* XI, 1, 1970, p. 91-96; N. PURCELL, *The Nicopolitan Synoecism and Roman Urban Policy*, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 71-90; D. K. SAMSARIS, *Η Ακτία Νικόπολη και η « Χώρα » της (Νότια Ήπειρος-Ακαρνανία). Ιστορικογεωγραφική και επιγραφική συμβολή*, Thessaloniki, 1994, p. 14-16; C. H. LANGE, *Res publica constituta : Actium, Apollo and the accomplishment of the triumphal assignment*, Leiden, 2009 (*Impact of Empire*, Vol. 10), p. 100-105; A. J. SPAWFORTH, *Greece and the Augustan cultural revolution*, Cambridge University Press, 2012, p. 33-36. There is consensus, however, in the status of the free city proposed by SARIKAKIS.

02 A. RIZAKIS, Συμβολή στη μελέτη του ρωμαϊκού αποικισμού της ΒΔ Πελοποννήσου, in *Ποικίλα, Μελετήματα*, 10, 1990, p. 321-322.

03 For the year in which the first new Actian games organized by Octavian were held, see B. M. TIDMAN, On the foundation of the Actian games, *The Classical Quarterly*, 44, 3/4, 1950, p. 125; T. SARIKAKIS, Ακτία τα εν Νικοπόλει, *AE*, 1965, p. 147-148; M. LÄMMER, Die Aktischen Spiele von Nikopolis, *Stadion*, 12/13, 1986-1987, p. 29; O. PAVLOGIANNIS & O. ALPANIDIS, Τα Άκτια της Νικόπολης. Νέες προσεγγίσεις, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 64-66; K. L. ZACHOS, *Ακτία. Αθλητικοί αγώνες των αυτοκρατορικών χρόνων στη Νικόπολη της Ηπείρου*, Athens, 2008, p. 24-25; K. L. ZACHOS, *An Archaeological Guide to Nicopolis. Rambling through the historical, sacred, and civic landscape*, Athens, 2015 (*Monuments of Nicopolis* 10), p. 60.

04 Strabo XVII, 3, 25. The geographical boundaries of Achaïa remain somewhat unclear; cf. S. E. ALCOCK, *Graecia Capta. The Landscapes of Roman Greece*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 14, n. 17.

05 On the lax use of the term *Romanization* by contemporary research in reference to the provinces of the Roman world, see SPAWFORTH 2012 (*supra* note 1) p. 28.

06 K. L. ZACHOS, Οχύρωση και η πολεοδομική οργάνωση της ρωμαϊκής Νικόπολης : Νεότερα στοιχεία και παρατηρήσεις, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 288-291; I. ANDREOU, Τοπογραφικά και πολεοδομικά Νικόπολης, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 231-262; ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 95-100.

techniques⁰⁷, were implemented, as has been documented by our archaeological research over the last twenty years. Moreover, these practices were not confined to public buildings. They were adopted for private houses and even for burial monuments by the rising local elite, who enthusiastically copied morphological elements and building methods known from the cemeteries of central Italian cities⁰⁸. During the early years of Augustus' reign, there were some techniques and building materials employed in *Nicopolis* which were still in an experimental stage, even in Rome⁰⁹. The first inhabitants who contributed to the synoecism of *Nicopolis* came

from cities and villages in Epirus, Aetolia, Akarnania, and Leucas¹⁰, all with established structures and ways of life, found themselves competing to adapt to new circumstances and yet manage to retain elements from their own traditions¹¹.

Augustus reestablished and transferred the previously-regional Actian athletic games, which were originally held at the sanctuary of Apollo *Actius*, to his Victory City. According to Strabo, the new location of the games lay outside the city, in the "suburb" (*Προάστειον*) (**fig. 1**)¹². The hill where Octavian had established his headquarters (*praetorium*) prior to the battle

07 ZACHOS 2007 (cf. *supra* note 6), p. 276-288; K. L. ZACHOS, The Stadium of Actian Nicopolis : Observations on dating and architectural evolution, in K. ZAMPAS, B. LAMPRIPOUDAKIS, E. SIMANTONI-BOURNIA & A. OHNESORG (eds.), *ΑΡΧΙΤΕΚΤΩΝ. Τιμητικός τόμος για τον Μανώλη Κορρέ*, Athens, 2016, p. 541-553.

08 For the lay out, masonries, mosaic floor etc. of the two excavated houses at Nicopolis, the domus of Manius Antoninus, see Th. ΚΥΡΚΟΥ, *Η Έπαυλη του Μάνιου Αντωνίνου : Μία πολυτελής ιδιωτική οικία στη Ρωμαϊκή Νικόπολη*, Athens, 2006 (Μνημεία Νικόπολης 2); ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 131-135, and the domus of Ekdikos Georgios, see E. PAVLIDIS, *Nicopolis. The Domus of Ekdikos Georgios*, Athens, 2015 (Monuments of Nicopolis 5); ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* npte 3), p. 136-145. For the luxurious mausolea in the cemeteries of Nicopolis imitating those in the urban centers of central Italy, see A. ΓΕΩΡΓΙΟΥ, Βόρεια νεκρόπολη της Νικόπολης. Οργάνωση και ταφική αρχιτεκτονική, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 307-323; K. L. ZACHOS & M. KARAMPA, The Cemeteries of Nicopolis, Athens, 2015 (*Monuments of Nicopolis* 7). The first priestess in the local cult of Artemis Kelkaia, which was established in Nicopolis, was Dikaia the daughter of Demaretos whose family must be among the first settlers of the new city, see *SEG* 37, 526. According to the interpretation of an inscription (*SEG* 57, 542) which was found in a secondary use in a field near the Odeon, the Greek couple which sponsored the construction of the Gymnasium of Nicopolis must be of the first settlers belonging to local elite, Y. ΦΑΚΛΑΡΙ, Αναθηματική επιγραφή του Γυμνασίου της Νικόπολης, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 563-569. An alternative interpretation, however, suggests that the inscription does not belong to the Gymnasium of Nicopolis but perhaps to that of Ambracia from where it came as building material : cf. Y. KALLIONTZIS & A. ΠΑΡΑΘΗΝΑΣΙΟΥ, Δύο επιγραφές άλλων τόπων από τη Νικόπολη, *ΓΡΑΜΜΑΤΕΙΟΝ* 4, 2015, p. 59-62.

09 ZACHOS 2007 (cf. *supra* note 6), p. 280, 292; K. L. ZACHOS & E. PAVLIDIS, Die frühen Bauten von Nikopolis. Bemerkungen zu den Bauphasen und-techniken der Kaiserzeit, in R. ASSKAMP & E. TOBIAS (eds.), *IMPERIUM. Varus und seine Zeit : Beiträge zum internationalen Kolloquium des LWL-Römermuseums am 28. und 29. April 2008 in Münster*, Münster, 2010, p. 135-152, 141; see also SPAWFORTH (cf. *supra* note 1), p. 209-210, who incorrectly dates the presence of *opus testaceum* at the Stadium and the Theater of Nicopolis to the Augustan period. For the dating of the *opus testaceum* at the Stadium, see ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 72-73; ZACHOS 2016 (cf. *supra* note 7), p. 547-550; for the dating at the Theater, see ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 75-80; K. L. ZACHOS, E. PAVLIDIS & A. TRANOULIDIS, *The Theater of Nicopolis*, Athens, 2015 (*Monuments of Nicopolis* 11), p. 64-81.

10 Strabo X, 2, 2; VII, 7, 6; LI, 1, 3, 3; *Anth. Pal.* IX, 553; Pausanias V, 23, 3, 5; VII, 18, 8, 5; VII, 18, 9, 3; E. KIRSTEN, The Origins of the first inhabitants of Nicopolis, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 91-98.

11 The Greek language of the coinage, which dominated the inscriptions of the city, the local religious cults in which the Greek pantheon prevailed, and institutions such as the *boulē* and the *demos* were certainly elements of this tradition, cf. SARIKAKIS (cf. *supra* note 1), p. 93-95. Besides the Greeks among the first settlers there were also Romans who contributed to the economic development of the city. Some of them were perhaps descendants of the late Republic Italian *negotiatores* (*Synepirotae*, the *Epirotici homines*) who were familiar with the Epirotic surroundings, cf. PURCELL 1987 (cf. *supra* note 1), p. 74-75; ZACHOS 2016 (cf. *supra* note 7), p. 23, 145.

12 Strabo VII, 7, 6.

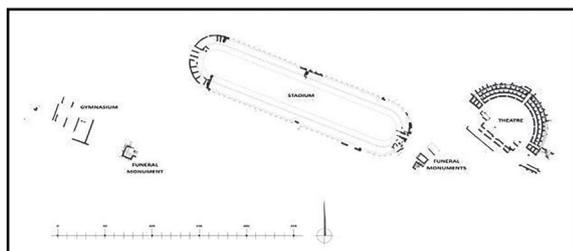


Fig. 1 – The area of the suburb (*Προάστειον*). State plan.

and the area below it were consecrated and turned into an extensive sanctuary, one analogous to the Panhellenic sanctuaries hosting the sacred *gymnic games* of the agonistic *periodos*. The transfer of the games to a site near the hill where Octavian had encamped, the hill referred to by Strabo as “the sacred hill of Apollo,” where Augustus later built the Victory Monument, a combination of trophy and open air sanctuary¹³, not only hints at the *pietas* of the monarch, but also to the dawn of a new era, determined by the good omen given to Octavian at this precise spot at daybreak on the final collision in the waters of the Ionian sea¹⁴. The rural landscape extending from the top of the hill of Apollo down to the foothills and seacoast of the Ambracian Gulf, was henceforth transformed into a sacro-idyllic landscape, resembling those illustrated in the frescoes of the third Pompeian style, on marble reliefs, and on stucco decorative reliefs of the Augustan age¹⁵. Today, the magnificent monuments

of the “suburb” emerge from this landscape, which retains its rural character : the Victory Monument of the naval battle, the Gymnasium, the Stadium, and the Theater. The buildings in the “suburb”, three of which are mentioned in the ancient sources – the Victory Monument¹⁶, the Gymnasium, and the Stadium¹⁷ – as well as the fortification walls of the city farther south¹⁸, belonged to Augustus’ building program, a conclusion which agrees with the excavation evidence.

The Theater of *Nicopolis* is classified as a *Roman* theater in accordance with the characteristics listed by Vitruvius as differentiating Roman from Greek theaters (**fig. 2**)¹⁹. Both the *cavea* and *orchestra* are semicircular. The stage building follows the Roman form (*scaenae frons*, *postscaenium*, *pulpitum*) and is joined with the *cavea* by vaulted corridors

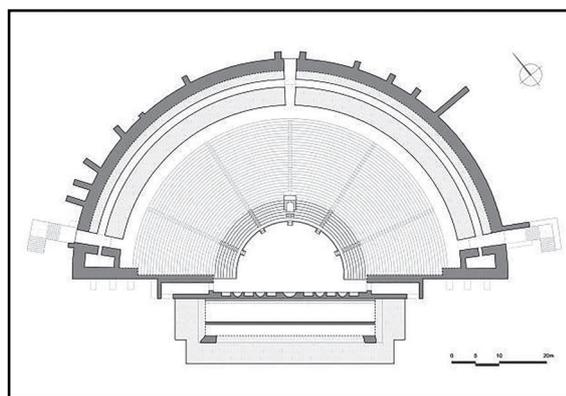


Fig. 2 – The theater of *Nicopolis*. Ground plan of the first building phase. Drawing reconstruction.

13 Strabo VII, 7, 6.

14 Plutarch, *Ant.* 65, 3; Suetonius, *Aug.*, 96, 2.

15 P. ZANKER, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Ann Arbor, 1988, p. 283-291.

16 Dio L, 12, 3-4. For archaeological research on the Victory Monument, see W. M. MURRAY & P. M. PETSAS, Octavian’s campsite memorial for the Actian War, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*, 79.4, 1989, p. 12-85; K. L. ZACHOS, Excavations at the Actian Tropaeum at Nicopolis. A Preliminary report, in J. ISAGER (ed.), *Foundation and Destruction : Nicopolis and Northwestern Greece*, Aarhus 2001, p. 29-41; K. L. ZACHOS, *To Μνημείο του Οκταβιανού Αυγούστου στη Νικόπολη. Το Τρόπαιο της Ναυμαχίας του Ακτίου*, Athens, 2001 (*Μνημεία Νικόπολης* 7); K. L. ZACHOS, The tropaeum of the sea-battle of Actium at Nikopolis : interim report, *AJA*, 16 2003, p. 65-92; ZACHOS & PAVLIDIS (cf. *supra* note 9), p. 136-141. For excavation reports, see *AA*, 51, 1996, Chronika B1, p. 395-98; *AA*, 52, 1997, Chronika B2, p. 576-78; *AA*, 53, 1998, Chronika B2, p. 503-08; *AA*, 54, 1999, Chronika B1, p. 471-474; *AA*, 55, 2000, Chronika B1, p. 557-560; *AA*, 56-59, 2001-2004, Chronika B5, p. 55-56.

17 Strabo VII, 7, 6.

18 For the decorative and symbolic rather than defensive character of the Augustan walls of Nicopolis, see ZACHOS 2007 (cf. *supra* note 6) p. 292; ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 89.

19 Vitruvius V, 7.

(*aditus maximi*). Finally, vaulted passages (*vomitoria*) lead to the cavea. As was the case with most theaters throughout the Roman world, the theater of *Nicopolis* does not follow Vitruvius' theoretical description in its individual elements²⁰. For example, the wall of the *scaenae frons* almost touches the plotted circumference of the orchestra, and the length of the stage is less than twice the width of the orchestra.

During recent archaeological excavations and work to conserve and enhance the monument, new evidence pertaining to its building phases and their individual characteristics was collected. A number of our observations and conclusions concerning the first building phase which is dated to the age of Augustus are presented below²¹.

The reference to the Theater in the *Discourses* of Epictetus, who taught at *Nicopolis* from AD 90 until his death around 135, comprises a *terminus ante quem* for this significant building²². It is odd that it is not mentioned by Strabo as one of the buildings in the suburb, given that he does refer to both the Stadium and Gymnasium²³. This means

either that the theater had not been erected when Strabo visited *Nicopolis* a few years after its foundation, or that he simply failed to mention it. In addition to the Gymnasium and Stadium, ancient authors also mention the victory monument as belonging to the Augustan building program. Archaeological research on the victory monument and stadium has clarified the construction techniques used on these Augustan monuments. These same techniques were also used to construct the fortification walls of the city and its theater, as we will see below. In addition to the Victory Monument, Gymnasium, Stadium, and fortifications, the Theater should also be included in the Augustan building program²⁴.

The great deeds of Augustus, who bears the name of *κτίστης* ("founder") on the coinage of *Nicopolis* and was worshipped by its citizens after his death²⁵, were accomplished with benefactions from individuals belonging to the local elite and the king of Judea, Herod the Great²⁶. As an edifice which hosted the musical events of the new Actian games, the theater could not be excluded

20 F. B. SEAR, *Vitruvius and Roman Theater Design*, *AJA* 94/2, 1990, p. 249-258.

21 On the Theater of *Nicopolis* see W. M. LEAKE, *Travels in Northern Greece*, I, p. 191-192; A. BACCIN & V. ΖΗΝΟ, *Nicopoli d' Epiro*, *Palladio*, 4, 1940, p. 8-14; I. ANDREOU, Το έργο της ΙΒ' Έφορείας Αρχαιοτήτων στη Νικόπολη, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 148-149; K. ZACHOS & A. GEORGIU, Νομός Πρέβεζας-Νικόπολη : Ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα « Κλεοπάτρα », *ΑΔ*, 52, *Chronika* B2, p. 579; Th. KONTOYIANNI, Το θέατρο της Νικόπολης, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 361-370; F. SEAR, *Roman theatres : an architectural study*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 115, 413; K. L. ZACHOS, Το Θέατρο της Νικόπολης, in K. SOUVEREF (ed.), *Αρχαία Θέατρα της Ηπείρου*, Athens, 2012, p. 156-172; ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 75-80; ZACHOS & PAVLIDIS 2010 (cf. *supra* note 9); ZACHOS, PAVLIDIS & TRANOULIDIS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 9).

22 Arr., *Epict.* III, 4.

23 Strabo VII, 7, 6.

24 For a dating of the first building phase of the Theater at the time of Augustus see also KONTOYIANNI 2007 (cf. *supra* note 21), p. 367-368.

25 For the cult of Augustus at *Nicopolis* see A. BENJAMIN & A. E. RAUBITSCHKE, *Arae Augusti, Hesperia*, 28/1, 1959, p. 65-85; C. TZOUVARA-SOULI, Λατρείες στη Νικόπολη, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 189-193; SAMSTARIS 1994 (cf. *supra* note 1), p. 154-159.

26 For the local elite contribution see FAKLARI 2007 (cf. *supra* note 8), p. 568; Josephus mentions Herod's contribution to *Nicopolis*, *BJ* XVI, 147 : *Νικοπολίταις δὲ τοῖς ἐπ' Ἀκτίῳ κτισθεῖσιν ὑπὸ Καίσαρος τὰ πλεῖστα τῶν δημοσίων συγκατεσκεύασε*; Josephus, *BJ* I, 425 : *καὶ τί δεῖ λέγειν τὰς εἰς Λυκίους ἢ Σαμίους δωρεάς ἢ τὴν δι' ὅλης τῆς Ἰωνίας ἐν οἷς ἐδεήθησαν ἕκαστοι δαψίλειαν; ἀλλ' Ἀθηναῖοι καὶ Λακεδαιμόνιοι Νικοπολίται τε καὶ τὸ κατὰ Μυσίαν Πέργαμον οὐ τῶν Ἡρώδου γέμουσιν ἀναθημάτων*; Cf. E. NETZER, Herod the Great's Contribution to *Nicopolis* in the Light of his Building Activity in Judea, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 121-128.

from Augustus' planning. The association of the Theater with the other buildings forming the infrastructure for the Actian games determined its location within the suburb²⁷.

The construction of the Theater had to be adapted to the geomorphology of the area, along the gentle fringes of the sacred hill of Apollo, which was composed of gravel soil (**fig. 3**). The axis of symmetry of the theater, which was oriented towards the southwest, extended to the south to meet the axis of symmetry of the adjacent stadium to the west. South of the intersection of these two axes, there was a flat open space, part of which was occupied by a cluster of luxurious mausolea, which probably belonged to the officials responsible for organizing the games²⁸.

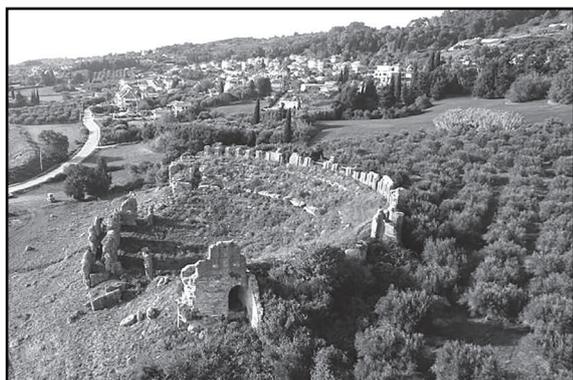


Fig. 3 – View of the Theater from East before the recent excavation and conservation works. On the foreground the entrance to the east *vomitorium*.

The *cavea* rests mainly against the hillside and partly on artificial embankments supported by a perimeter retaining wall, reinforced at irregular intervals by buttresses (**fig. 4**). The retaining wall was constructed in *opus incertum*, while rectangular stones were used for straightening the corners of the buttresses. These were mainly of local beach rock. On the upper part of the wall,



Fig. 4 – Part of the perimeter retaining wall with buttresses. On the left protruding slabs for carrying the masts.

double rows of limestone slabs protrude at regular intervals, the uppermost of which bear circular holes and the lower ones circular sockets. They were carrying the wooden masts on which the awning (*velarium*) was supported protecting the audience from the elements. Near the ends of the semicircle of the *cavea*, the masonry of the perimeter wall is interwoven with the ashlar blocks of the *analemmata* (*substructiones*) of the theater, which are raised at the end of the *cavea* on both sides of the stage building and reinforced at intervals with buttresses (**fig. 5a, 5b**). The façade of the *analemmata* consisted of ashlar blocks in the pseudo-isodomic masonry system, employing large hewn stones of varying lengths and widths placed in rows of stretchers with headers at irregular intervals. Randomly behind the rows of the façade, there are blocks of a second row. The gaps between the blocks in each layer were filled with concrete. The concrete on the interior non-visible façade of the *analemmata*, bears a lining of irregular stones in keeping with the *opus incertum* system. The total thickness of the body of the *analemmata* is about 2.60 m. The concrete

27 In addition to the gymnastic contests of the Old Actian games, musical contests were added to the New Actian games, Dio LI, 1, 2 : ἀγῶνα τέ τινα καὶ γυμνικὸν καὶ μουσικῆς ἵπποδομίας τε πεντετηρικὸν ἱερόν. Concerning the musical contests information is gained from the agonistic inscriptions which mention poets, sophists, tragedians, comedians, heralds, trumpeters, lyre-players, voice teachers (teachers of singing and recitation), flute-players, and pantomimists, SARIKAKIS 1965 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 152.

28 ZACHOS & KARAMPA 2015 (cf. *supra* note 8), p. 66-69.



Fig. 5a – The façade of the west *analemma* near the end of the retaining wall of the *cavea*.



Fig. 5b – The south façade of the west *analemma*.

in the core of the wall is buff colored and composed of mortar with fine sand, gravel, and limestone chunks of various sizes (10-40 cm). In various places within the core some

rectangular holes are distinguished, which are signs of wooden planks existed once inside the core of the *analemmata*. One such hole in the west *analemma* measures 30 x 16 cm. The ashlar blocks used in the retaining walls are mostly of limestone, and to a lesser extent of porous, sandstone, conglomerate, and andesite. They were taken from ancient buildings in the area, probably from the neighboring settlement of Michalitsi, identified with *Bouchetion*, one of the Elian colonies of Kassope²⁹. In some locations, the stones retain elements of their original use; for example, in the upper part of the western *analemma*, stone blocks are seen on the face of the wall, as well as within the core (at points where stones have been removed from the façade) with drafted margin all around and dressed panels. In the rows of facing stones, various clamp cuttings are observed: for limestone, Π-shaped clamps were used, and for porous, dovetail clamps (fig. 6)³⁰.



Fig. 6 – Dovetail clamp cuttings on porous blocks on the west *analemma*.

The highly coherent result of the masonry of the *analemmata* is demonstrated by the

29 For the identification of Michalitsi with Bouchetion, see V. KARATZENI, Ambrakos and Bouchetion. Two “πολίχνια” on the north coast of the Ambracian gulf, in J.-L. LAMBOLEY & M. P. CASTIGLIONI (eds.), *L’Illyrie méridionale et l’Épire dans l’Antiquité – V. Actes du V^e colloque international de Grenoble (8-11 octobre 2008)*, I, De Boccard, 2011, p. 145-155.

30 On the ashlar blocks of the high enclosure wall that protected the Forum of Augustus in Rome from fires in the working-class quarter of Subura, oak swallow tail clamps were found in comparable cuttings, see W. HEILMEYER, E. LA ROCCA & H. G. MARTIN, *Kaiser Augustus und die verlorene Republik. Eine Ausstellung im Martin-Gropius-Bau, Berlin 7. Juni-14. August 1988*, Mainz, 1988, p. 167, entry n° 56.

fact that the extremely tall retaining walls are still standing, despite the looting of blocks from various parts of the superstructure, even from its corners. Similar masonry with ashlar blocks lining the surface of the walls and binding into a single body with the concrete core was employed for the Victory Monument of Augustus³¹, the underground passage of the eastern *sphendone* from the first building phase of the stadium³², and on the gates of the fortification walls³³, all of which belonged to the Augustan building program. This construction method belongs to the Roman masonry type referred to by Vitruvius and Pliny as *emplekton* (ἔμπλεκτον)³⁴, in which the concrete core binds with the lining stone or brick of the façade³⁵.

Three barrel-vaulted tunnels (*vomitoria*) open in the peripheral retaining wall of the cavea : one in the center and two near each end (*vomitorium sinistrum*, *vomitorium dextrum*). Due to the uneven terrain, the means of accessing the *vomitoria* differed. The west and the east *vomitorium* was accessed by a staircase, while the northern or central *vomitorium* was accessed directly from a road that probably passed by. The pilasters at the entrances to the *vomitoria* are built with rectangular beach rock or sandstone, which support arched lintels with travertine voussoirs, bound by a thin layer of mortar (**fig. 7**). Over the voussoirs of the central *vomitorium*,



Fig. 7 – The entrance to the west *vomitorium*.

there is an inserted polychrome zone built in *opus reticulatum* with sandstone and ceramic *cubilia* (**fig. 8**). This is an excellent example of *opus reticulatum* in mainland Greece, and was apparently confined to this part of the



Fig. 8 – The entrance to the central *vomitorium* during the excavations.

31 MURRAY & PETSAS 1989 (cf. *supra* note 16), p. 23-29; ZACHOS 2001 (cf. *supra* note 16), p. 34-36.

32 ZACHOS 2016 (cf. *supra* note 7), p. 544.

33 K. ZAMPAS, Παρατηρήσεις για το σχέδιο και την οικοδομική τεχνολογία του ρωμαϊκού τείχους της Νικόπολης στην περιοχή της βόρειας πύλης του, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 265-267; ZACHOS 2007 (cf. *supra* note 6), p. 278-279.

34 Pliny, *N.H.* XXXVI, 171; Vitruvius II, 8, 7.

35 Tomlinson considers that the Greek name comes from the image presented on the face by ashlar masonry with the uniform alternation of stone headers and stretchers, which from the side gave the impression of the interweaving of materials, as in textiles, cf. R. A. TOMLINSON, *Emplekton Masonry and Greek Structura*, *JHS*, 81, 1961, p. 134-135. For the Roman version of ἔμπλεκτον, see *RE* V 2, 2524-25, s.v. *Emplekton* (Puchstein); A. ORLANDOS & I. TRAVLOS, *Dictionary of Ancient Architectural Terms*, Athens, 1986, s.v. ἔμπλεκτον, τό; H. O. LAMPRECHT, *Opus caementitium : Bautechnik der Römer*, Düsseldorf, 1985, p. 21; J.-P. ADAM, *Roman building : materials and techniques*, London-New York, 2005, p. 135. BRACONI presumes the identification of *opus vitatum* masonry with Roman *emplekton*; see P. BRACONI, *Emplekton*, *Annali de Archeologia e Storia Antica*, Nuova Serie 8, p. 105-118. The ἔμπλεκτον system consisting of brick stretchers and headers as a frame for the concrete core was applied in the construction of fortifications in the Augustan age, cf. ZACHOS 2007 (cf. *supra* note 6), p. 277, n. 20.

theater. *Opus reticulatum* presents an evolution in terms of the layout and regularity of the shape of the *cubilia*, from the Republican era to the Augustan age, when the composition assumed a regular net-like form, with even joints between the *cubilia*. This type of masonry, which is considered a symbol of Romanitas in material culture, was applied beyond Italy and even in distant provinces such as Judea, where it appears on structures erected by King Herod and elsewhere³⁶. The popularity of *opus reticulatum* in Rome and other cities of the Italian peninsula is an issue which raises questions in contemporary scholarship. Although this masonry system exhibits elaborate lining, even in polychrome shades due to the incorporation of different kinds of materials, as is the case with our theater, it was apparently covered with plaster³⁷; it had also the tendency to develop cracks along the diagonal joints as Vitruvius states³⁸. At *Nicopolis*, *opus reticulatum* was used on the retaining wall of the victory monument, where the net pattern does not display the regularity presented on the central *vomitorium* of the theater³⁹. To the above-mentioned cases at *Nicopolis*, which are the earliest examples of the application of this masonry system in Greece, should be added the walls of the temple of Apollo at *Actium* renovated in Augustan times. On some of the walls of the new temple, which was built over the ancient temple, *opus reticulatum* was used exclusively, while on others it was combined with thick bricks

similar to the bricks of the fortification walls at *Nicopolis (opus mixtum)*⁴⁰.

Two vaulted corridors on either side of the stage building (*aditus maximi*) constructed with concrete masonry, lead to the *orchestra*⁴¹. According to the findings from the western corridor, which has been partly excavated, the pilasters and arched lintels on the façades of the corridors are built with rectangular stones and trapezoidal sandstone voussoirs. Above the western *aditus maximi*, remains of the *tribunalium* have been revealed, which rises to three terraced platforms, communicating with an adjacent staircase to the south. Some traces of rubble walls above the eastern *aditus maximi*, which have not been excavated, belong to a similar *tribunalium*.

In two exploratory trenches opened in the area of the stage building, perpendicular to the wall of the *scaenae frons* (trenches Ω and X), it became clear that the stage building from the first construction phase was demolished and replaced with a new structure (fig. 9). The new stage building retained the geometry of the first construction phase in its basic structures. In the lower parts of western and eastern edge of the *scaenae frons* wall, which is built in *opus testaceum* and preserved today to a considerable height, there are wall remains from the first construction phase. Those remains, which are integrated into the *opus testaceum*, are made of the same masonry as that of the retaining wall of the cavea, i.e., *opus incertum* (fig. 2 & 10).

36 D. W. ROLLER, *The Building Program of Herod the Great*, University of California Press, 1998, p. 99; R. MAC MULLEN, *Romanization in the Time of Augustus*, Yale University Press, 2000, p. 21-22.

37 ADAM 2005 (cf. *supra* note 35), p. 264 suggests that perhaps the polychrome *reticulatum* was deliberately uncovered.

38 Vitruvius II, 8, 7.

39 ZACHOS 2001 (cf. *supra* note 16), p. 29-30; C. G. MALACRINO, Il Monumento di Ottaviano a Nicopoli e l'opera reticolata in Grecia: diffusione, caratteristiche, significato, in K. L. ZACHOS (ed.), *Nicopolis B. Proceedings of the Second International Nicopolis Symposium (11-15 September 2002)*, I, Preveza, 2007, p. 371-391.

40 N. KATSIKOUDIS, Ο ναός του Απόλλωνος στο Ακτιο και το Μνημείο του Οκταβιανού Αυγούστου στη Νικόπολη ως τόποι αυτοκρατορικής μνήμης, in *Proceedings of the Conference "Το αρχαιολογικό έργο στην Αιτωλοακαρνανία και στη Λευκάδα από τους Προϊστορικούς έως τους Ρωμαϊκούς χρόνους"*, Μεσολόγγι 6.-8/12/2013 (forthcoming).

41 These corridors of Roman theaters are conventionally called *aditus maximi*, see SEAR 2006 (cf. *supra* note 21), p. 8.

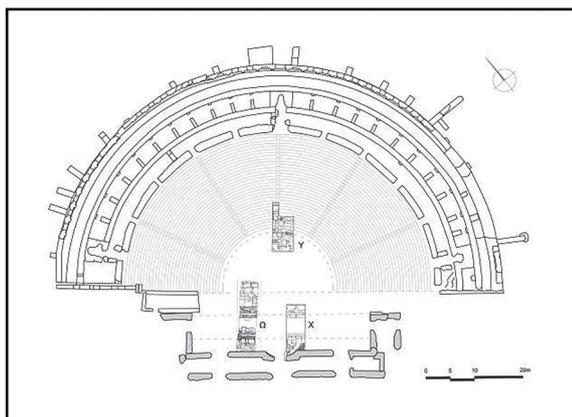


Fig. 9 – Location of the exploratory trenches Ω, X and Y.

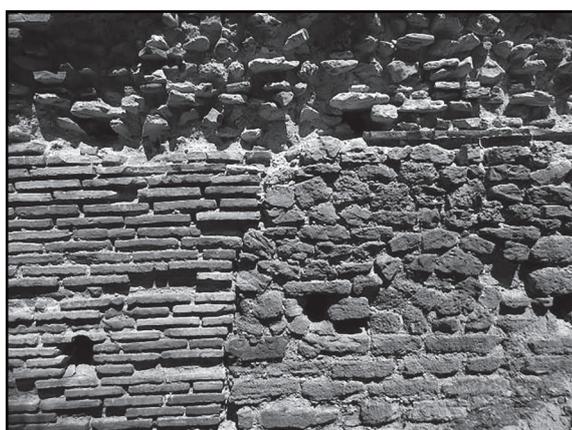


Fig. 10 – Part of the *opus incertum* of the first building phase incorporated to the *opus testaceum* masonry on the *scaenae frons* wall.

In trench Ω (measuring 5 x 2.5 m), dug in front of the *scaenae frons* between the western *hospitalium* and *valvae regiae*⁴², remains of the *pulpitum* and the foundations of the *columnatio* were found (fig. 11). In the southern part of the trench, above the foundation of a wall dated to the first construction phase, the masonry of which consists of sandstone stones and a concrete core, there is *opus testaceum* masonry of the second building phase of the monument. The platform of the *pulpitum* rested on the upper layers of this masonry, which are not preserved⁴³. Farther south two rows of limestone ashlar



Fig. 11 – Excavation trench Ω. View from north.

blocks were found which belong to the podium of the *columnatio* (fig. 12a, 12b). These stones bear II-shaped clamp cuttings. The space between the dressed blocks and bricks lining the wall of the *scaenae frons* a few centimeters farther south is filled with concrete containing limestone gravel and marble architectural fragments, clearly from the decoration of the *scaenae frons* of the first building phase of the monument. In the same trench, farther north, between the wall of the *proscenium* and another wall from the first construction phase which was built of sandstone *opus incertum* masonry, the channel for the curtain (*auleum*) was revealed. Inside it, two limestone slabs were found in situ. The slabs bear rectangular holes which supported the timber beams of the curtain mechanism. The revealed wall of the *proscenium* carries rectangular and semicircular niches, with marble flooring and traces of a marble revetment. In front of the *proscenium*, a significant portion of the orchestra has been revealed, part of which still retains its pavement of limestone slabs, while the mortar substrate is evident elsewhere.

42 On the name, see SEAR 2006 (cf. *supra* note 21), p. 8.

43 In this paper, the words *pulpitum* and *proscenium* are employed in accordance with SEAR 2006 p. 7, n. 133. The word *pulpitum* is used to indicate the platform on which the actors performed, and *proscenium* to indicate the wall of the stage building facing the audience.

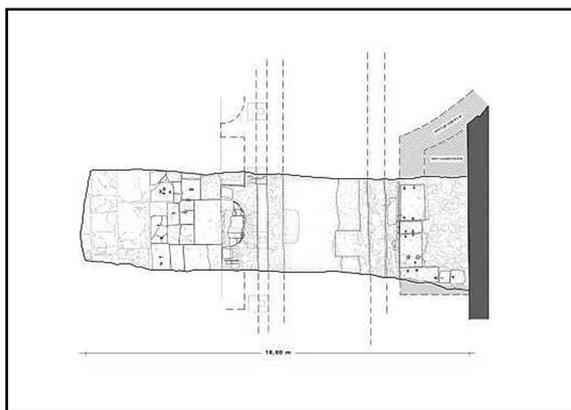


Fig. 12a – Ground plan of the remains in trench Ω.

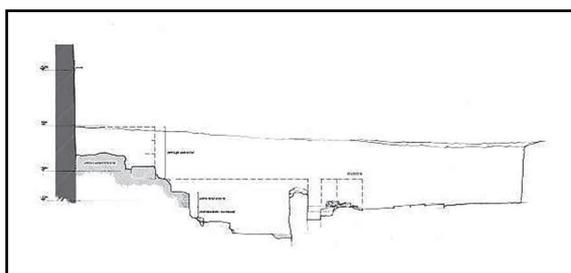


Fig. 12b – Section of the remains in trench Ω.

In trench X, measuring 4 x 6 m (**fig. 13**), opened at the height of the eastern part of the *valvae regiae*, two rows of limestone blocks in a semicircular arrangement belonging to the podium of the *columnatio* of the second building phase were found (**fig. 14**). The stones bear cuttings for Π-shaped clamps. There are traces of white marble flooring and a substrate of thick mortar in front of the semicircular arrangement of the limestone blocks (**fig. 15**). Between the brick lining of the *scaenae frons* wall and a straight segment of the podium, there is a thick layer of hard concrete containing marble gravel and marble architectural fragments from the decoration of the *scaenae frons*, presumably from its first construction phase. The fragments include parts of Ionic capitals, column bases, and a variety of cornices. In the same trench, farther north, the channel

of the *aulaeum*, the *proscenium*, and part of the paved orchestra have been revealed. The wall of the *proscenium*, which lies on the foundation from the first construction phase, is in *opus testaceum*. On this part of the *proscenium* was revealed a semicircular niche framed by two rectangular niches. Like in trench Ω, the niches are paved with marble and have marble revetments on their walls, traces of which have survived. A considerable number of finds were found within the fill of both trenches, including fragments of marble statues and reliefs from the second building phase decoration of the *scaenae frons*, as well as, fragments of inscriptions.

On a third trench (trench Y), opened on the lower part of the *ima cavea*, part of the orchestra and the first rows of the seats were found (**fig. 16**). The orchestra is paved with limestone and polychrome marble slabs of various qualities, indicating repairs on the earliest pavement made of limestone. Some of the marble slabs bear an inscription. The carved letters of which were filled with bronze, that was removed at some unknown date. Due to the buried part of the inscription beneath unexcavated layers, its full transliteration and commentary is impossible at present. From the preserved part it is apparent that the inscription is related with Nero (**fig. 17**)⁴⁴. The rows of the limestone seats (height 0.35 m, width 0.60 m), which are resting on concrete, belong to the first building phase of the theater. As taken from a portion of high-baked stone seat, which was found fallen in front of the entrance to the orchestra at the western *aditus maximus*, in the first building phase, the first row of seats were high-baked. The seats on the *suma cavea* were resting on vaulted substructures of the succeeding building phase (**fig. 18**).

44 For a preliminary presentation of the inscription see ZACHOS, PAVLIDIS & TRANOULIDIS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 9), p. 52-53; ZACHOS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 3), p. 80. For the visit of Nero to Nicopolis, see D. CALOMINO, *Nicopolis d'Epiro : nuovi studi sulla zecca e sulla produzione monetale*, Archaeopress, 2011, p. 229-232; K. L. ZACHOS, Coins and the City : Architecture on the coins of Nicopolis, in K. LIAMPI *et alii* (eds.), *Νομισματική και οικονομική Ιστορία στην Ήπειρο κατά την Αρχαιότητα, Πρακτικά του 1ου Διεθνούς Συνεδρίου Νομισματική και οικονομική Ιστορία στην Ήπειρο κατά την Αρχαιότητα (Πανεπιστήμιο Ιωαννίνων, 3-7 Οκτωβρίου 2007)*, Athens, 2013, p. 263-266, tabl. 30-33.



Fig. 13 – Trench X. view from north.

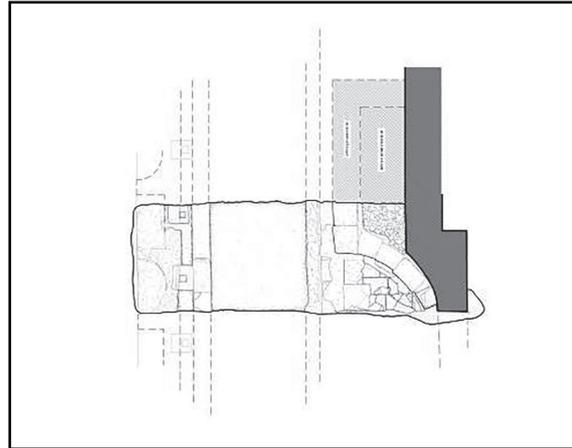


Fig. 14 – Ground plan of the remains in trench X.



Fig. 15 – Trench X. The semicircular arrangement of the limestone blocks with remains of the marble floor. In the background the *opus caementicium* filling with marble fragments.

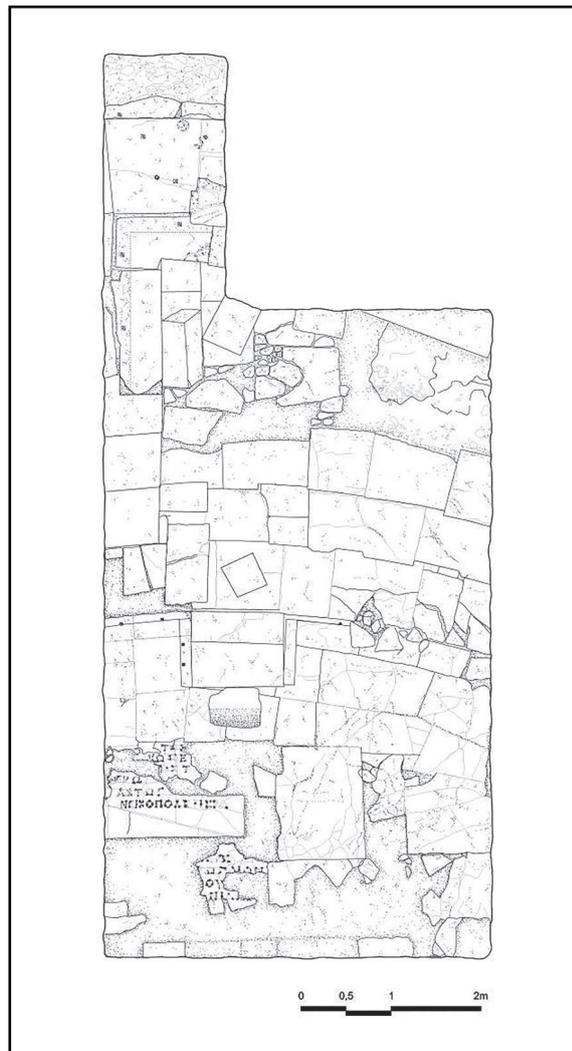


Fig. 16 – Ground plan of the remains in trench Y.



Fig. 17 – The first rows of the seats in the *ima cavea*. In the foreground the polychrome pavement of the *orchestra* pavement with the inscription plaques.

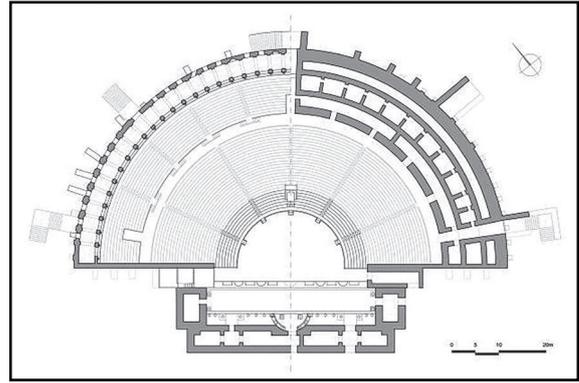


Fig. 18 – Ground plan of the second building phase. Drawing reconstruction.

In a trial excavation trench of the 1960s, dug in front of the *frons scaenae*, more or less near to our trench Ω , a headless statue depicting probably a muse, perhaps Euterpe, was found⁴⁵. This statue must be assigned to the *frons scaenae* sculptural decoration, of the succeeding building phase.

In addition to the stage building of the first Augustan theater of Nicopolis, various parts of the *cavea* were also extensively reconstructed in the succeeding building phase. On the *summa cavea*, vaulted substructures were erected on which the seats were placed. The semicircular retaining wall was raised considerably above its original height. The new wall was of *opus testaceum* with bricks of the same size as those of the stage building. Along the wall, the horizontal separation of the two construction systems may be clearly distinguished. New installations supporting the masts of the *velum* were constructed at a higher position within the *opus testaceum* masonry. A *porticus in summa cavea* was also erected during this reconstruction phase. Its wall displays arched openings, niches, and small tapered

openings. Above the north *vomitorium*, a staircase leading to the *porticus* was erected. This reconstruction, which is dated to the 2nd century AD, increased the height of the back wall of the theater, but not considerably the capacity of the *cavea*. Details of this reconstruction phase are, however, a subject for another presentation.

Summing up this brief presentation of the first building phase of the theater of *Nicopolis*, the building techniques used included *opus caementicium* and *opus incertum*, which predominate, followed by the *emplekton* masonry confined to the *analemmata* and *opus reticulatum* limited only above the arched entrance of the central *vomitorium*. On the decoration of *scaenae frons*, white marble was used, as shown by the marble chunks of the demolished decoration used as aggregates in the *caementicium* placed between the podium of the *columnatio* and the *scaenae frons* wall of the second building phase⁴⁶. On account of the lack of marble and good quality limestone in the immediate area of *Nicopolis*, but mainly due to the accelerated construction of

45 ZACHOS, PAVLIDIS & TRANOULIDIS 2015 (cf. *supra* note 9), p. 40-41.

46 In the decoration of the *scaenae frons* in the second building phase, rosso antico marble was used according to the finds in trench X.

the theater to host the Actian games, a good deal of second-hand material was incorporated in the theater, transferred from ancient buildings of the wider area. It is noteworthy that no bricks were used in the first building phase of the theater, as well as, in the first building phase of the nearby stadium and the victory monument on the holy hill of Apollo, above the theater. Archaeological research in *Nicopolis* until today has shown that during the reign of Augustus, the use of brick was limited only to the city walls.

According to Sear's classification of Roman theaters, the Augustan theater at *Nicopolis* is classified among the western type of Roman theaters. The *cavea* and the *orchestra* are semicircular, the *analemmata* are parallel with the stage building, the seating is divided vertically into six *cunei*, the seats do not have mouldings in their rims but only a thin *taenia*. Three vaulted passages ran under the *summa cavea* leading to the *praecinctio*. The theater is provided with vaulted passageways (*aditus maximi*) leading to the *orchestra*. The stage was low and broad, with an estimation height of the *pulpitum* of 0.90 m, and the *proscenium* wall had niches, rectangular alternating with curved. The *scaenae frons* was of the rectilinear type but it seems that the *regia* was not framed by a shallow curved recess, as on the second building phase. Some other elements, however, such as building the monument against hillside, and a *cavea* that does not run up to the scene building, must be due

to the geomorphology of the area selected to host the Actian games.

Exploring the introduction of elements that characterized the Roman theater during the period of the Augustan era in Greece, presents considerable difficulties, since the majority of the ancient Greek theaters continued to be used throughout the Imperial period after repairs and modifications had been made⁴⁷. The investigation is further hampered by the lack of sufficient archaeological data, which often leads to incorrect conclusions⁴⁸. One of the monuments dated with certainty to the time of Augustus, like our theater, is Agrippa's Odeum in the Athenian Agora. Due to its function as a concert hall that was roofed, the monument may not be directly comparable to the theater of *Nicopolis*. However, the semi-circular orchestra and the *cavea* of the auditorium, the low *pulpitum* and the rectilinear *scaenae frons* with three doorways, classify the Odeum among the western type of theaters. The Odeum of Agrippa is considered as an amalgam of elements from Italy, Rome and Greece. According to the excavator of the monument, Homer THOMPSON, "the Odeion would seem to have been the creation of someone thoroughly familiar with the architecture both of Old Greece and of Italy, or, perhaps more likely, the joint product of a team of architects comprising both Greeks and Romans"⁴⁹. The wall of the *proscenium* of the Odeum was decorated with herms crowned by a moulding richly decorated with

47 V. DI NAPOLI, Architecture and Romanization : the Transition to Roman Forms in Greek Theatres of the Augustan Age, in R. FREDERIKSEN, E. R. GEBHARD & A. SOKOLICEK (eds.), *The Architecture of the Ancient Greek Theatre : Acts of an International Conference at the Danish Institute at Athens 27-30 January 2012*, Athens, 2015, p. 365-377.

48 For example the Odeum of *Nicopolis* until recently is dated incorrectly in the Augustan Age, see W. HOEPFNER, *Nicopolis*. Zur Stadtgründung des Augustus, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 133 ; A. ANTONATOS, Το ωδείο της αρχαίας Νικόπολης, in E. CHRYSOS (ed.), *Nicopolis I : Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Nicopolis, Preveza 23-29 September 1984*, Preveza, 1987, p. 358 ; V. DI NAPOLI 2015 (cf. *supra* note 47), p. 369-370. However, according to our recent research the first building phase of the Odeum must be dated in the first half of the 2nd century AD, see K. L. ZACHOS, I. STAMOU, L. LEONTARIS & I. SOUKANTOS, *The Odeum of Nicopolis*, Athens, 2015 (*Monuments of Nicopolis* 6), p. 68-71.

49 H. THOMPSON, The Odeion in the Athenian Agora, *Hesperia*, 19/2, 1950, p. 140.

an interlacing lotus and palmette design. The same pattern crowns two marble semicircular altars which were excavated on the upper terrace of the victory monument at *Nicopolis*. These finds permit the suggestion that there

was some kind of connection among the teams working during the same period in the city of Theseus and the foundation of the city of Octavian.

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Ce colloque international est le sixième organisé depuis le premier en 1984 à Clermont-Ferrand à l'initiative de P. Cabanes, le dernier ayant eu lieu à Grenoble en octobre 2008. Tous les six ans, il permet de réunir l'ensemble de la communauté scientifique travaillant dans les Balkans pris dans une acception géographique large, de la période pré et protohistorique jusqu'au haut Moyen Âge byzantin, ce qui permet d'embrasser sur la longue durée à la fois la façade méditerranéenne et l'Europe danubienne. C'est le seul colloque existant dans ce domaine, et il permet de faire se rencontrer des chercheurs aussi bien originaires des pays locaux que les chercheurs européens et américains travaillant dans le cadre de missions internationales. Le but du colloque est double. Il s'agit d'abord de faire connaître et partager les découvertes récentes dans le domaine de l'archéologie, de l'épigraphie et de la numismatique. En effet, depuis l'ouverture de chantiers internationaux en Albanie, et tout récemment dans la région du Kosovo, compte tenu aussi

du développement considérable des recherches dans la Grèce du Nord-ouest, grâce à la méthode des surveys en particulier, le rythme des découvertes dans ces régions s'accélère, et il est important qu'elles soient confrontées et discutées le plus rapidement possible dans une perspective à la fois de pluralité historiographique et d'interdisciplinarité. Le deuxième objectif est de proposer des synthèses historiques dans un domaine précis qui change tous les six ans ; cette année le thème retenu est celui des villes, territoires, populations et dynamiques environnementales. Ce choix dépend des thèmes de recherche développés par les différentes équipes impliquées sur le terrain, notamment par les doctorants car le



colloque est aussi l'occasion pour eux de faire état de leurs premiers travaux. La confrontation entre l'expérience accumulée par les anciens et le renouvellement des problématiques proposées par les jeunes chercheurs s'est avérée depuis les derniers colloques le gage d'une recherche dynamique et fructueuse. Plus d'une trentaine de posters ont été présentés par ces jeunes chercheurs, ce qui montre leur dynamisme. Le choix de la longue durée, de la préhistoire jusqu'à la période byzantine, qui a toujours été celui de ces colloques, permet d'autre part de mieux mesurer l'évolution de ces régions à travers les siècles, avec ses continuités et ses ruptures, et ce en permettant à toutes les disciplines des sciences de l'antiquité d'apporter leur contribution.. Le succès de ces rencontres se mesure au nombre croissant des pays représentés et des collègues voulant présenter leurs travaux les plus récents. Pour ce 6^{ème} colloque, 12 pays sont représentés et plus de 150 personnes se sont inscrites au colloque. Il se mesure aussi par le fait que, pour la première fois, il se déroule dans un pays des Balkans, ce qui inaugure une tradition qu'il conviendra de consolider.

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