

## THE WATER MANAGEMENT IN ROMAN THEATERS. THE CASE OF SESSA AURUNCA

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### Abstract

The aim of this report is to investigate the problem of the control of the outflow and supply of the meteoric waters in the “Grecian” Roman theatres, in particular regard to the roman theatre of Sessa Aurunca, in Caserta. The archeological complex, from the 2nd century B.C., had been long forgotten, hidden under gardens and crops, until Amedeo Maiuri first foresaw its existence in 1926, thanks to the excavation campaign that brought the *Criptoporticus*, which was just behind the theatre, up. Because of the outbreak of the Second World War, the excavation works had to be stopped. That is why the theatre will be finally brought to light only after the systematic excavation in 1999 that will be completed in 2001. The earthworks, which had involved the entire complex revealed the existence of some traces of the systems of disposal and conveyance of the meteoric waters (drainage channels in the *porticus* pavement of the *summa cavea*, machicolation in the *porticus post scaenam*, etc) which led to a much deeper understanding of the original, however partial, system, which has been extremely useful for the analysis of the problem and an integral part of its own solution. In fact, the theatre was provided with an efficient network of both vertical and horizontal ducts and wastewater was collected from numerous machicolations which were confluent inside the clay elements inserted in the masonry itself. The didactic experimentation here presented has hereby encountered a lack of a proper regimentation system of meteoric water and, due to that, the fragile masonry structures of the theatre is affected by advanced degradation. Starting from extensive studies of the artifact, from a careful analysis of the literature, from an updated survey made through both traditional survey methods and the use of drone, and from non-destructive investigations carried out on the field, the aim of this report is to identify a system of accommodation of the meteoric waters exportable to buildings of the same type, which can be achieved through the restoration of the remaining original systems properly integrated, and the installation of adequate protection of masonry ridges thanks to the use of traditional materials.