

# Preface

Although some parts of the theatre of Messene were always visible, the building remained unexplored until 1996 when the late Petros G. Themelis, director of the Society of Messenian Archaeological Studies, initiated excavations in the area of the orchestra. The intensive excavations that took place between 2007 and 2012 brought to light the entire theatre and revealed its distinctive appearance. During my student years, I had the opportunity to complete my apprenticeship and learn about ancient architecture by taking part in the fieldwork conducted at Messene by Juko Ito, former leader of the Architectural Team of Kumamoto University. Petros Themelis graciously granted Juko Ito and myself – Ito's assistant at Kumamoto University in 2009 – permission to survey and study the theatre. The fruitful collaboration between Themelis and Ito greatly facilitated our research efforts, and it has been a privilege and an honour to be part of it.

As part of their fieldwork, many students from Kumamoto University participated in the graphic documentation of the theatre remains; their work is presented in this volume. The success of the project is also due to their skill and dedication. It is not possible to acknowledge all of them here, but their names are listed in the survey outline. I would also like to express my gratitude to Hirofumi Chikatsu and his students for their assistance in the use of photogrammetry techniques.

During the course of my research on the monument and the finds, I greatly benefited from the expertise and generous advice provided by numerous people. I would like to express my profound gratitude to the late Jim Coulton, whose encyclopaedic knowledge and flexible mind were a significant source of guidance during my years as a doctoral student, and continue to be so to this day. My stay as a guest researcher in 2011–2012 at the Department of Classical Archaeology at the University of Freiburg was an ideal opportunity to advance my research. During that time, I benefited from the support and hospitality of my colleagues, especially Ralf von den Hoff, who were kind enough to serve as advisers and benevolent critics of my research. I am particularly grateful to the late Volker Michael Strocka, who read the manuscript and strongly recommended that the results be published in Germany.

In the process of revising the text for publication, the manuscript greatly benefited from the close reading conducted by several reviewers. Gudrun Styhler-Aydin, drawing on her experience working on the theatre at Ephesus, updated my work with the most recent scholarship on theatre architecture. Konogan Beaufay, an expert in Roman baths and architecture, not only provided a native editing of the English text, but also completed a content check and offered further ideas for consideration. I am also indebted to the scholars and friends who have contributed to this book, Voula N. Bardani, the late Rune Frederiksen, Silke Müth, and Bettina Kreuzer. They all served as invaluable advisers in matters related to epigraphy, theatre typology, sculpture, pottery, urbanism, and other aspects of Classical archaeology. I would also like to thank the anonymous peer-reviewers for their comments and bibliographical suggestions. Needless to say, the interpretations and conclusions are the result of my own investigations and analyses, and all mistakes remain mine.

I would be remiss not to acknowledge the invaluable support provided by the DAI Berlin central office and the DAI Athens office in the course of the publishing process in the *Athenaia* series. The late Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt, then head of the architecture department at DAI Berlin, and her successor Katja Piesker, provided crucial assistance in the early stages of the process. Katja Sporn, Director of the DAI Athens, graciously facilitated the acquisition of the publication rights from the Greek Archaeological Service (Ephorate). Reinhard Senff, then Deputy Director of the DAI Athens, and his successor Oliver Pilz provided consistent support throughout the publishing process. Frank Zimmer of Punkt.Satz (Berlin) undertook the copy-editing, while Simon Hoffmann, Ulrike Schulz, and Diana Wolf of the editorial team in Athens, dealt with all the technical issues at every stage, for which I am grateful.

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