

Studies for the restoration of the ancient theatre of Cassope

The ancient theatre of Cassope is built in the southern foothills of Zaloggo and overlooks the peninsula of Preveza, the Ambracian Gulf, the Ionian Sea, the island of Lefkada and the Acarnanian mountains. It was originally built in the 3rdc. BC with a seating capacity of 6,000. The theatre hosted music events, theatre performances and political gatherings of the Cassopean League.

From an architectural point of view, the theatre is of great interest. Two polygonal retaining walls, reinforced with buttresses, support the two ends of the *koilon* (the seating area or auditorium), which is separated by an intervening *diazoma* (horizontal walkway) into two main seating zones, the lower one consisting of twenty-four rows of stone seats and the upper one of twelve rows. At the top of the auditorium a wider walkway is protected by an outer wall that has an opening, possibly facilitating the exit of spectators from the upper part of the theatre. Eleven stairways divide the theatre into ten *kerkis* (vertical seating zones), the ones at the two edges having half the width of the others.

The orchestra of the theatre is unusual, as it does not form a full circle, but an arc greater than a semicircle. The *skene* (backstage building) is rectangular, flanked by two *paraskenia* (wings) which extend on either side of the orchestra and contain the *proskenion* (stage), which has six columns on its facade.

Despite the passing of time and the wear incurred over the centuries, this monument continues even today to cast its spell and charm visitors.

However, in order to give this ancient cultural venue new life and reintegrate it into the artistic activity of the country, it is essential that structural and geotechnical studies are carried out before proceeding with restoration work.

Studies required for the restoration of the ancient theatre of Cassope	Cost of studies
1. Study for the restoration and overall showcasing of the theatre	€48,000
2. Study for the structural restoration of the theatre	€7,000
3. Geotechnical study and study for preventing the risk of landslides from the rock behind the theatre	€10,000
4. Publicity, promotion and communication costs	€15,000
TOTAL	€80,000

The project will be implemented by DIAZOMA, a non-profit association whose purpose is primarily to research, study, protect, showcase and, if feasible, use ancient theatres and other venues for spectacles, such as ancient odeons and stadiums. It is supported by academics, intellectuals, artists and members of the public determined to take the fate of these monuments into their own hands and give dynamic assistance to the State and its relevant services in the effort to bring ancient theatres into modern-day life.

So, let's join forces and infuse new life into one of the finest Greek theatres, the ancient theatre of Cassope. Then, if we are successful, next summer we may be able to enjoy performances at this special location.