

Ancient Theater Sites in the ATHENA Project

- South Theater in Jarash and Petra Theater (Jordan)
- Siracusa Theater (Italy)
- Carthage Theater (Tunisia)
- Cherchell Theater (Algeria)
- Merida Theaters (Spain)

South Theater in Jarash and Petra Theater in Jordan

The South Theater in Jarash, 48 kilometers north of Amman, was built in the late 1st Century AD. Its stage, semi-circular courtyard and gates leading to the actors changing rooms is equaled by the facades, niches, columns and orchestra, opening to an auditorium divided into lower and upper sections. The former consists of 14 rows of seats divided in four parts or blocks with the front seats reserved for the elites. The upper section is divided into eight parts, each having 15 rows of seats. Theater of Petra in the south of Jordan which is a little further down from the Treasury also built in 1 century AD and has 45 rows of seats divided horizontally, constructed to keep the sun out of the way of spectators.

Carthage Theater in Tunisia

Situated in the suburbs of Tunis, the Carthage Theater stands as a major monument to Carthage, an ancient city destroyed by the Romans in 146 BCE, but later built in 44 BCE to become a great city in the Mediterranean. The Theater was thought to have been destroyed in 5 Century AD but subsequently undergone restorations and renovations. Today, it hosts major international events such as the Carthage Festival of Art, and at one time it was thought to hold up to 5000 spectators.

The Theater of Siracusa in Sicily

The Theater of Siracusa is part of the ancient city of Siracusa founded by Greek settlers in 734 or 733 in the southeastern corner of Sicily. It has 67 rows, the largest ever built by the ancient Greeks, and these are divided into nine sections with eight aisles. The edifice of the theater was later modified by the Romans. The theater has a capacity to hold 20,000

spectators and used for different activities including plays, popular assemblies and for gladiatorial contests.

Theaters of Merida in Spain:

The large Roman theater constructed between 15 and 16 century BC, and its amphitheater, built in 8 century BC and is today the center of many activities as the Festival of Classical Theater every summer with a capacity for 6000 spectators with seating divided into three zones: Lowest, middle and top tiers with the first having 22 rows and the medium 5 rows. The amphitheater has an elliptical shape with an arena of 64 meters by 41 meters used for gladiatorial contests and 15,000 spectators and has lowest, middle and upper tier rows for the ruling classes and the commoners.

Cherchell Theater in Algeria:

The site, in the seaport town of Cherchell, 55 miles west of Algiers, today stands as a monument to the interplay of different civilizations beginning with the ancient Egyptian to the Greeks and the Romans. Cherchell was renamed so in the 8th century when the Arabs conquered Algeria, and the town itself was called Caesaria when there already existed an amphitheater. In 1738, an earthquake shook the town and later on when France occupied it in 1840, it was thought its troops took stones from the amphitheater to build their barracks.