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Ancient theatres as landscape elements: a classification of modern implementations in Roman theatres of Iberian Peninsula

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In this paper, Roman theatre buildings in Iberian Peninsula are classified by their state of preservation as part of the larger physical and socio-cultural context. The result is a range from written record and trace in the rural and urban landscape to physical remains in various states of preservation within rural archaeological sites, near modern settlements and in modern towns. This typology forms a basis to test correspondence, with the resulting distribution, of the variety observed in intervention types and scales ranging from excavation and publication to consolidation, conservation, restoration, and reconstruction. As elsewhere in the Mediterranean, the latter two intervention types would seem to parallel the establishment of local festivals in rural locations and near modern towns while the middle two accompany site-scale museumification in both urban and rural contexts. As such, the proposed contextual classification aims to contribute in a more comprehensive assessment of modern interventions in ancient performance buildings.

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Introduction: ancient theatres as landscape elements

Up to the introduction of the idea of cultural landscapes, definitions in *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention* (1977) were based on a distinction between natural and cultural heritage. Social anthropologist Tim Ingold (2005: 41) is among scholars who recognize the deep embeddedness, within the tradition of Western thought, 'the basic contrast between physical substance and conceptual form, of which the dichotomy between nature and culture is one expression.' Ingold criticizes, from an ontological point of view, the commonly adopted alternative position within recent social and cultural anthropology that is expressed in the claim that nature is culturally constructed. A deeper inquiry into definitions in *Operational Guidelines* would reveal a similar, culturally perceived definition of nature, which distinguishes natural heritage from a 'really natural' nature that denotes an external world of matter and substance (studied by natural scientists) 'waiting to be given meaningful shape and content by the mind of man' (Sahlén 1976 quoted in Ingold 2005: 41). This reveals both categories, of natural and cultural heritage, to be cultural constructs.

While there is no mention of physical human involvement in the distinction of natural heritage from 'really natural' nature; cultural heritage includes not only individual works of architecture or fine arts, groups of buildings and sites of Outstanding Universal Value from the point of view of history, art or science; but also 'cave dwellings', 'groups of separate or connected buildings that are of Outstanding Universal Value because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape' and sites that are 'works of man or the combined works of nature and of man' which renders them valuable ethnologically or anthropologically. In the current revised version of *Operational Guidelines* (2013), this last group is designated as cultural landscapes that 'are illustrative of the evolution of human society and settlement over time, under the influence of the physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by their natural environment and of successive social, economic and cultural forces, both external and internal'. Cultural landscapes may be designed and created intentionally or organically evolved in time through human activity, may be actively used or abandoned, and may involve natural elements with

powerful associations of meaning. In this way, the dichotomy between nature and culture is in a way resolved, through combining the two in a culturally perceived category of landscape as 'a consequence of a collective human transformation of nature' (Sargin 2000).

Five 'kinds of materiality' Ingold (2005) critically reports after Maurice Godelier (1986) are informative on the nature of the transformation:

'First is that part of nature which is wholly untouched by human activity; secondly there is the part that has been changed on account of the presence of humans, but indirectly and unintentionally; the third is the part that has been intentionally transformed by human beings and that depends upon their attention and energy for its reproduction; the fourth part comprises materials that have been fashioned into instruments such as tools and weapons, and the fifth may be identified with what we would conventionally call the "built environment" – houses, shelters, monuments and the like.'

Ancient theatre buildings obviously correspond to the last category. From seating over natural slopes in the earliest examples (such as the early Theatre of Dionysos in Athens) to totally built structures free-standing on flat land in some urban centers of the Roman Empire (including the three examples in the city of Rome), installation of theatres changed the natural environment physically, in a range revealing a cultural transformation in human society over time and space. Preservation state of ancient theatres, on their part, reveal the influence, over human settlement, of physical constraints and/or opportunities presented by the natural environment, and of successive external and internal social, economic and cultural forces.

Ingold observes a critical division between second and third kinds in Godelier's above classification of materiality, as marking the distinction between the wild and the domestic. Similarly critical is the appearance and disappearance of an urban way of living, which changes part of the nature intentionally, into an urban landscape, and then unintentionally, into an abandoned cultural landscape wherein past human activity is documented by material remains. In a way, this second process transforms the fifth category of materiality back into the second, occasionally rendering rock-cut theatre seats almost undistinguishable from natural rock formations. At the other extreme, older settlements may have served as foundations for successive ones in an urban landscape, leaving scanty ancient theatre remains beneath urban blocks in whose outline the curved form of the theatre may or may not have been preserved.

This paper explores the range between these two extremes to classify ancient theatres by their persistence in the landscape to seek correlation between type and scale of modern interventions and their state of preservation. This is done using data from Iberian Peninsula due to the manageable number of theatre remains and the wide range in their preservation state (Table 1). Classification is made under the categories of rural, peri-urban and urban archaeological landscapes, cautious of the warning by Valentina Russo (2014) that these are selections among various adjectives of some predominant characteristics of the landscape while the real strength of the concept is precisely its capacity to express the essentially complex and mostly unbalanced interpenetration between environmental and human factors. The proposed categories are not aimed, by any means, at imposing order on history despite itself through the forms of structural analysis, against which Michel Foucault (1994) has warned us decades ago.

Table 1. Location and conservation state of remains from Roman theatres in Iberian Peninsula.

Ancient name	Modern location	Conservation state of remains
Acci	Guadix (GRANADA)	under research in an urban area
Acinipo	Ronda la Vieja (MÁLAGA)	restored in an extra-urban archaeological site
Arcobriga	Monreal de Ariza (ZARAGOZA)	traced in an extra-urban archaeological site
Augusta Firma	Ecija (SEVILLE)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Aurgi	Jaen (JAEN)	epigraphically documented
Baelo Claudia	Bolonia (Tarifa, CADIZ)	restored for festivals in an extra-urban
Baetulo	Badalona (BARCELONA)	trace and remains in urban morphology
Barcino	Barcelona (BARCELONA)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Bigastrum	Alicante (MURCIA)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Bilbilis Augusta	Calatayud (ZARAGOZA)	consolidated in an extra-urban archaeological site
BRACARA AUGUSTA	Braga (PORTUGAL)	under research in an urban area
Caesar Augusta	Zaragoza (ZARAGOZA)	museumified in a multi-period urban area
Canama	Villanueva del Rio (SEVILLE)	epigraphically documented
Capera	Caparra (CACERES)	later identified as amphitheatre
Carmo	Carmona (SEVILLE)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology

Table 1. Location and conservation state of remains from Roman theatres in Iberian Peninsula (continued).

Carthago Nova	Cartagena (MURCIA)	museumified in a multi-period urban area
Carteia	Guadarranque (San Roque, Cádiz)	abandoned in an extra-urban archaeological/epigraphic and foundation remains
Castulo	Linares (JAEN)	
Celsa	Velilla de Ebro (ZARAGOZA)	below later building
Clunia	Coruña de los Condes (BURGOS)	restored for festivals in an extra-urban
Corduba	Córdoba (CORDOBA)	museumified in a multi-period urban area
Ebora	Evora (PORTUGAL)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Emerita Augusta	Mérida (BADAJOZ)	restored for festivals in an archaeological next to consolidated for performances in a multi-period
Gades	Cádiz (CADIZ)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Hispalis	Seville (SEVILLE)	
Isturgi	Los Villares (JAÉN)	epigraphically documented
Itálica	Santiponce (SEVILLE)	restored for festivals in a multi-period urban area
Licurgentum	Moron (SEVILLE)	epigraphically documented
Mago	Mahon (Minorca, BALEARES)	trace and remains in urban morphology
Malaca	Málaga (MALAGA)	museumified for festivals in a multi-period urban
Metellinum	Medellín (BADAJOZ)	restored in a multi-period extra-urban area near
Olisipo	Lisbon (PORTUGAL)	museumified in a multi-period urban area
Osca	Huesca (HUESCA)	trace and remains in urban morphology
Osset	Salteras (SEVILLE)	epigraphically documented
Palma	Palma de Mallorca (BALEARES)	trace and remains in urban morphology
Pollentia	Acudia (Mallorca, BALEARES)	free-standing near modern settlement
Regina	Casas de la Reina (CACERES)	restored for festivals in an extra-urban
Saguntum	Sagunto (VALENCIA)	restored for festivals in a multi-period urban area
Segobriga	Cabeza de Griego (Saelices, Salamanca)	restored for festivals in an extra-urban
Sexi	Almuñécar (GRANADA)	trace and remains in urban morphology
Singilia Barba	Antequera (MALAGA)	abandoned remains near modern settlement
Tarraco	Tarragona (TARRAGONA)	legally contested in a multi-period urban area
Termes	Tiermes (BURGOS)	abandoned remains in an extra-urban
Toletum	Toledo (TOLEDO)	hypothesized on the basis of urban morphology
Tucci	Martos (JAEN)	epigraphically documented
Urso	Osuna (SEVILLE)	abandoned remains near modern settlement
Uxama	Osma (SORIA)	traced in extra-urban archaeological site

Data: Roman theatre interventions in Iberian Peninsula

Some compilations cite 20-25 Roman theatres in Iberian Peninsula (e.g. Francisco et al., 2011-2012; Sear, 2006) while catalogues document around 40 (e.g. Rossetto & Sartorio, 1994/95/96; Rupprecht, n.d.; Pedersoli & Paronuzzi, 2010). The difference is due to the fact that some in the latter group—*Aurgi* (Jaén), *Canama* (Villanueva del Río, Seville), *Isturgi* (Los Villares, Jaén), *Licurgentum* (Morón de Frontera, Seville), *Osset* (Salteras, Seville) and *Tucci* (Martos, Jaén)—are evidenced only epigraphically (Ianiro, 1994/95/96). These examples were all in the territory of modern Andalusia which has an overriding urban population living in the largest number of towns in Spain. Record of Roman theatres is valuable in revealing continuity from high-ranking settlements with an urban life featuring theatres in Andalusia which finds its opposite in the scarcity of theatres in northern Spain and Portugal. There is difference also in the available data on each example, partly proportional to their state of preservation and partly to the rank of the ancient settlement in which they were located, as a factor shaping modern interest.

Ancient theatre remains part of rural archaeological landscapes

For abandoned cultural landscapes wherein ancient theatres are almost undistinguishable from natural elements, observers are usually uninformed about the process that transformed their urban landscapes back into a rural archaeological one. As an example, in addition to epigraphic evidence of a theatre in *Castulo* (Linares, Jaén), there also exist scattered pieces of construction but they are so integrated with the natural landscape that it is no longer possible to perceive them as a single Roman public building (Cepas, 1997).

Another example is the rock-cut remains pertaining to Theatre of *Arcóbriga* (Monreal de Ariza, Zaragoza) on the south part of Villar Hill overlooking the Jalón, taking advantage of a profound ravine (Beltran, 1987). There was no archaeological study on the monument due to the poor state of the remains

and their remote location, as is the case also with a similar-looking ravine hypothesized as the *cavea* of Theatre of *Uxama* (Osma, Soria).

In *Tiermes* (Tiermes, Burgos) slightly more visible traces on a slope to the northeast of the site have been identified as a *cavea* taking advantage of an inlet in the rock (*Tiermes*, 1990). Due to their poor preservation state, a performance with an audience of 1,500 over steps carved in another location to the southeast of the fortifications marked the start of annual performances of classical drama at the site in 1991, under the organization of the Tiermes Region Cultural Association (Asociación Cultural Comarca de Tiermes) (*Tiermes*, 1991).

Ancient theatre remains conserved in industrial landscapes

The deterioration process is also unknown for Theatre of *Carteia* (San Roque, Cádiz), which was in a ruinous state already in the eighteenth century when British traveler Francis Carter (c.1741-1783) described it in his *Viaje de Gibraltar a Málaga* (1772). After occasional partial excavations in 1953 and 1970 by University of Seville, an elemental restoration introduced brick supports to sustain concrete pillars in upper tiers. Despite thorough cleaning in 1990 by the Autonomous University of Madrid, these were under thick vegetal growth again in late 1990s (Roldán *et al.*, 1998: 63). This lack of regular maintenance is due to the location of the building amid a large industrial zone that developed in the 1960s, and to absence of local initiative. This is the singular example of an ancient theatre in an industrial landscape in Iberian Peninsula.

Ancient theatre remains conserved in archaeological sites

Ancient theatres in a comparatively poor state of preservation are generally better researched and maintained if they are part of a larger archaeological landscape, as exemplified by Theatre of *Bilbilis Augusta* (Calatayud, Zaragoza). The building was cited since sixteenth century by travelers including Portuguese cosmographer Juan Bautista Labaña (1555–1624) (Lostal Pros, 1980). Vincente de la Fuente (1817-1889) from local intelligentsia showed some interest in the theatre ruins (Martín-Bueno 1982) but its excavation did not start before 1917. Since 1975 systematic research under the direction of Manuel Martín-Bueno from University of Zaragoza led to a theoretical restitution using the Vitruvian layout for the Latin theatre (Martín-Bueno 1975). Despite consolidation efforts, the deteriorated theatre remains in *Bilbilis Augusta* are overshadowed by the reconstructed retaining walls of the adjacent forum area which is, likewise, argued to have been shaped according to Vitruvian proportions.

Restitution especially of deteriorated theatres using Vitruvian descriptions would appear as a favoured method in Spain (Aktüre, 2006), since the early adoption of the Vitruvian treatise in the intellectual context of Iberian Peninsula through *Medidas del Romano* (1526 in Spanish, 1541/2 in Portuguese; Rykwert, 1996) by Diego de Sagredo (c.1490-c.1528). Earliest-known written description of an ancient theatre in Iberian Peninsula dates to a century later. In a letter written in 1650, Macario Fariña de Corral (1608-1663), lawyer and antiquarian, native and citizen of Ronda (Seville), described nearby Theatre of *Acinipo* (Ronda la Vieja, Málaga) as 'constructed impending on the steep slope of the hill' and with niches over its stage doors for bronze sounding vessels, 'similar to that described by Vitruvius' (del Amo, 1982a). Luis José Velázquez de Velasco (1722-1772), Marquis of Valdeflores, described the stage building of the same edifice, in another letter dated 1750, as constructed out of large granite blocks joined by iron claps and lead without mortar, following the Vitruvian rule.

Theatre of *Acinipo* is one of the oldest-dating and rock-cut Roman theatres with one of the best-preserved stage buildings in the Peninsula. After excavations under the direction of Mariano del Amo y De la Hera (1933-2012), director of Archaeology Museum of Huelva Province (Museo Arqueológico Provincial de Huelva), a restoration project prepared in 1980 (Román Fernández-Baca Casares & Alafont, 1993) was implemented through a restoration programme in the geographic area of Expo '92 Seville (Martínez & Espinosa, 2000). Yet, the monument has never been densely visited nor used for modern performances despite its good preservation state, apparently due to its location off the main transportation routes amid naturally-protected environment, without other visible remains from the ancient settlement.

Also included in the Expo '92 Seville programme was Theatre of *Baelo Claudia* (Tarifa, Cádiz), whose remains had been always visible in a well-preserved archaeological site. Results of their first excavation in 1917 were published in 1923, and a first expert investigation in 1969 was followed by an unfortunate hasty restoration (Charles-Picard, 1970). A detailed study of the monument by a French team of experts affiliated with Casa de Velázquez started in 1978 in the framework of a socio-cultural action initiated by the provincial government to benefit from the tourism and cultural potential of the site (Ponsich & Sancha, 1979). Later restorations aimed at preserving and presenting the monument while allowing limited use for modern performances.

Ancient theatre remains restored for local festivals in archaeological sites

Ancient theatres in Iberian Peninsula have been used for modern performances since the first quarter of twentieth century. Gluck's opera *Ifigenia in Tauride* was famously staged in Theatre of *Pollentia* (Alcudia, Mallorca) for Goethe's centenary in 1931 (Gaudens, 1994/95/96). References to the building date back to the sixteenth century (Francisco *et al.*, 2011-2012), with notice of eleven *in situ* seating rows in 1803, and of seven in 1878, the latter by Catalan architect Francisco Martorell y Peña (1822-1878) (Arribas *et al.*, 1973). Physical interventions started in 1923 when Gabriel Llabrés y Quintana (1858-1928), an intellectual from Mallorca, demolished a wall across the visible rock-cut tiers of the *cavea* (Almagro, 1982). Systematic

excavations under Martín Almagro Basch (1911-1984) from University of Barcelona, director of the Archaeology Museum of Barcelona and of Ampurias Excavations, started with finance from William L. Bryant Foundation, also for expropriation of the site in 1952 when it was occupied by an agricultural estate (Almagro, 1982). Since 1998, Theatre of *Pollentia* has been used during the Greco-Latin Theatre Festival of the Balearic Islands.

Also occupied by a farm house in a modern agricultural landscape was the stage of the 800-seat Theatre of *Regina* (Casas de Reina, Cáceres), before material especially from its *scenae frons* was used in a motorway construction in 1941-45 (Álvarez *et al.*, 2004). Trial digs by Mariano del Amo that revealed lower seating rows in a good state of preservation in 1978 were followed by comprehensive excavation in 1980-92 under José María Álvarez Martínez, director of National Museum of Roman Art in Mérida (MNAR for Museo Nacional de Arte Romano) since 1985. Collins (1998) reports the seating of the building as 'tastelessly restored with modern steps', facing a rather coarse restoration in the rear façade of the stage building. More recently, an elegant timber floor was introduced for modern performances in Mérida Festival since 2003, and also for protecting remains of the *pulpitum*, while protective measures including consolidations were taken for visitors in a gradually unearthing archaeological site.

Another annual local festival in the rural archaeological landscape is the Youth Festival of Greco-Latin Theatre, whose start was given by Aurelio Bermejo Fernández, a local professor of Latin who took his students to Theatre of *Segóbriga* (Cabeza de Griego in Saelices, Cuenca) in 1979 for a performance of excerpts from classical works (Bermejo, 2006). Now part of a well-maintained archaeological park, theatre remains at *Segóbriga* were referenced since sixteenth century, and first identified as belonging to an amphitheatre by Ambrosio de Morales (1513-1591). Excavation of the theatre in 1953-55 and 1962-69 went parallel to restorations especially in 1966-72 under the direction of restoration architect José Luis Menéndez-Pidal y Álvarez (1896-1975) who collaborated with the excavation director Martín Almagro Basch (Almagro, 1985). Resumption of excavations in 1976 necessitated parallel consolidations for resistance to the harsh regional climate and for use during representations of classical drama. While the *pulpitum* was reconstructed for the festival on the basis of surviving elements, consolidations and reinforcements for improved intelligibility respected the original work by rendering modern additions readable (Humanes, 1990).

Another minimum intervention strategy initially shaped Theatre of *Clunia* (Coruna de los Condes, Burgos), which was among the always visible and rock-cut Roman theatres of Iberian Peninsula that is now part of a well-investigated archaeological site. The building was excavated in 1775 by Juan Bautista Loperráez Corvalán (1736-1804), a clergy in Santa Iglesia de Cuenca and a member of Spanish Royal Academy of History (Loperráez Corvalán, 1788); and again in 1915 by Father Ignacio Calvo of nearby Peñalba de Castro Church. After more comprehensive research in 1931-34, Theatre of *Clunia* was systematically excavated in 1965-72 under the direction of Pedro de Palol y Salellas (1982) from University of Barcelona. Restorations followed the inclusion of *Clunia* in European Youth Festival of Greco-Latin Theatre in 2000. These proceeded from temporary seating over the *cavea* towards the permanent arrangement of our day, which won the Restoration-and-Rehabilitation Award of Castilla y León in 2004-2005 (Francisco *et al.*, 2011-2012).

Ancient theatre remains part of peri-Urban archaeological landscapes

All ancient theatres mentioned up to here are located in abandoned ancient settlements that have become part of the rural archaeological landscape, due to changes in the settlement networks in Iberian Peninsula from the Roman period onwards. In some other locations, continuity of settlement with or without interruptions is attested by archaeological remains above and/or below the current settlement level, and those from ancient theatres at the edge of modern settlements are at the interface of rural and urban landscapes. They are either part of Roman period archaeological sites and enhanced for festivals, or stand alone in a highly deteriorated state among later buildings without comprehensive interventions.

Ancient theatres restored for international festivals

Located in an archaeological site at the edge of modern Mérida, Theatre of *Emerita Augusta* (Mérida, Extremadura) was painted by Anton van der Wingaerde (1525-1571) in 1567 and sporadically excavated as early as 1597. Highly deteriorated upper tiers of the building were referred to as The Seven Seats (*Las Siete Sillas*), in allusion to mythical Moorish kings defining Mérida's destiny; and used as a bullring in 1778-1843, with trial digs in 1794-95 (Francisco *et al.*, 2011-2012). The monument could be systematically excavated only in 1910-14, under José Ramon Mérida y Alinari (1856-1933), among pioneers of classical archaeology in Spain, with Maximiliano Macías (1867-1934). Mérida and Macías prepared the first intervention project in 1916 and restorations in the first order of the stage building proceeded in 1921 and 1923-25.

In 1924, a group of students from Badajoz staged *Captives* of Plautus in Theatre of *Emerita Augusta*, as the first modern representation of ancient drama in a Roman theatre in Iberian Peninsula (Monleón, 1998). This was followed by an official debut in 1933 with *Medea* of Séneca during the local festival that attained regularity in 1953 as Mérida Classical Theatre Festival (Monleón, 1998). In 1996, the building was included in European Youth Festival of Greco-Latin Theatre (Festival Juvenil de Teatro Grecolatino), and in a Network of Greco-Latin Theatrical Spaces constituted in Mérida by the International

Institute of Mediterranean Theatre (IITM for Instituto Internacional de Teatro del Mediterraneo) in February 2000.

These festivals apparently encouraged restoration of a second order to the stage building in 1967, during a comprehensive intervention under Menéndez-Pidal y Álvarez, whose work also in *Segóbriga* has been evaluated as exemplary in implementing modern scientific criteria, if necessary by de-restoring earlier mistakes in interpretation and anastylosis. A final restoration completed in 1979 has been maintained up to our day, under José María Álvarez Martínez as excavation director before he became the director of MNAR in 1985, through cleaning and protection in 1990s (Francisco *et al.*, 2011-2012). These interventions set an example for later implementations, such as those in Theatre of *Itálica* (Santiponce, Seville).

Known from ancient sources, exact location of Theatre of *Itálica* was published in 1886 by Father Fernando Straton Zevallos y Pérez de Mier (1732-1802) from nearby Monastery of San Isidoro del Campo (Caballos *et al.*, 1999). Trial digs in 1890s and 1930s revealed the upper tiers in good preservation state; but only in 1971-75, excavations could be expanded towards overlapping houses at the edge of Santiponce (Jiménez, 1989). Implementation of the following first restoration project of 1979 was in 1980-83, while that of a second one for the stage building by Francisco Javier Montero Fernández was in 1987-91 with Expo '92 Seville funding; working with the principle of *anaparástasis* to approximate an original state of the building at a certain period on the basis of archaeological and historical data (Montero, 1993). By that time, International Dance Festival of *Itálica* had started in 1988, to be followed in 1997 by the Greco-Latin Theatre Festival organized by a group that would found Andalucía Greco-Latin Theatre Institute (ITGLA for Instituto de Teatro Grecolatino de Andalucía) two years later. In view of festival use, stage implementations at *Itálica* aimed also to screen noise from the neighboring motorway (Jiménez, 1989), which isolated the monument from its rural landscape.

Ancient theatre ruins at the edge of modern towns

Yet, not all ancient theatres similarly located at an interface of rural and urban landscapes have been refurbished parallel to local festivals. As an example, Theatre of *Urso* (Osuna, Seville) was referenced since the manuscripts of Juan de Dios de la Rada y Delgado (1827-1901), a minister of Carlos III who realized limited digs at the outskirts of Osuna in 1784-85 before he became the director of National Museum of Archaeology in Madrid (MAN for Museo Arqueológico Nacional). The building was excavated more systematically in 1876 by the State, in 1903 by the local Archaeology Society for Osuna Excavations (Sociedad Arqueológica de Excavaciones de Osuna), and in 1910s by George Edward Bonsor (1855-1930) (Ruiz & Pachón, 2012). Although documented by photograph in 1954 and by measured drawing in 1984 with the initiative of the Autonomous Government of Andalusia (Ruiz, 2008), Theatre of *Urso* was never subject to any restoration due to its poor preservation state, especially after use as a stone quarry throughout the twentieth century (Ruiz, 2007). Theatre of *Urso* is unique in Iberian Peninsula in having private ownership and also in lacking any presentation effort despite its location near a historic town with high tourism potential (Ruiz & Pachón, 2012). As a result, it is not easy to perceive ancient theatre remains as part of a larger archaeological site in this example, unlike the cases of *Emerita Augusta* and to a degree *Itálica*.

Similar to Theatre of *Urso* in this respect is Theatre of *Singilia Barba* (Antequera, Málaga) references to which are abundant since sixteenth century, with a specific one by Marquis of Valdeflores describing demolition of the building by San Juan de Dios Monastery of Antequera, to the degree that only tiers at two ends of the cavea survived up to the point where they unite with the *scaena* (Atencia, 1988). Located at a site curiously called the Slaughterhouse (Carnicerías) by the natives, these were cleaned and delimited in 1991, under the direction of Rafael Atencia Páez from the University of Málaga, but were never popularly visited and nor used for modern performances (Atencia, 1988; Serrano & Atencia, 1993).

Theatre of *Celsa* (Velilla de Ebro, Zaragoza) is likewise below San José sanctuary 'with traces of the walls of the stage and of the tiers of seats of the cavea.' (Beltrán, 1976).

Ancient theatre remains in urban archaeological landscapes

Fortified castle hills that once were acropolises also act like edges within modern settlements, with their recreational and tourism potential resulting in comprehensive modern interventions in ancient theatre remains at their skirts, while those in urban blocks elsewhere in the city centre may have been museumified as part of multi-period building ensembles, investigated or just hypothesized, depending on their state of preservation. Majority of ancient theatres in the urban archaeological landscape would seem to be isolated from other Roman period remains.

Ancient theatres integrated into the skirts of fortified castle hills

A well-known example of comprehensive modern interventions at the skirts of a castle hill is Theatre of *Saguntum* (Sagunto, Valencia), among the earliest documented theatres in Iberian Peninsula, by a 1563 drawing of Wingaerde and a description in a 1702 letter of Manuel Martí y Zaragoza (1663-1737), Dean of Alicante (Aranegui Gascó *et al.*, 1994). A (now lost) wooden and cork model of the monument was made between 1796 and 1801, followed by a thorough cleaning and some restorations in its upper portico and elsewhere (Lara, 1991). In 1811, necessity aroused for blasting the theatre to prevent its use by invading

French troops to ascend the citadel above; and to prevent blasting, state protection was declared by the Court of Cadiz, as the first of its kind in Spain (Fletcher, 1959). Yet, this could not save the monument from bombardment that destroyed all circulation and substructure vaults, with material from the theatre later used for stabilizing the citadel above and rebuilding in town (Lara, 1991).

In 1860, attempts at conservation started with an enclosing wall financed by the local Town Council, and in 1896 Theatre of *Saguntum* became the first registered Spanish national heritage monument. A restoration project in 1917 by Luis Ferreres Soler (1852-1926) was not implemented as it intended at a complete restoration through truthful reconstruction (Repullés & Mérida, 1917). A comprehensive intervention by Jerónimo Martorell (1876-1951) in 1930 avoided such mimicry by distinguishing the original through modern consolidation materials and techniques, including a special concrete (Lara, 1991). By 1952, part of seating subconstructions were reconstructed to serve as an archaeology museum, and later an enlarged stage was set for *Sagunt a Escena* festival organized by the local Town Council. These triggered further consolidations in 1955, maintaining external aspects of the ancient fabric (Fletcher, 1959); while in 1956-74, 4,000 cubic meters of concrete reconstruction by Alejandro Ferrant Vázquez (1897-1976) focused on the bombarded seating area and vaulted passages (Lara, 1991). The eventual result was described as an 'artificial ruin' by Giorgio Grassi (1985) in his project with Manuel Portaceli for Theatre of *Saguntum* as a functioning theatre and museum.

The project was initiated by the local Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (PSOE for Partido Socialista Obrero Español) government that conceived of historic heritage both as a source for great enjoyment, richness, and intellectual production, and as an economic resource creating job opportunities through tourism (Leguina & Baquedano, 2000). In 1990, Grassi-Portaceli project for Sagunto was carried to court by the rivaling People's Party (PP for Partido Popular) for overruling the ban on reconstruction in Law 16/1985 on Spanish Historical Heritage. In 1993, Valencian Superior Court of Justice declared the implementation as illegal on this basis, ordering its reversal. After sixteen years of appeals for and against its execution, the same Superior Court accepted in 2009 the practical impossibility of enforcing its sentence, mainly due to inconsistencies in earlier interventions, as underlined in expert reports. Ratification of this decision by the Supreme Court put an end to a long and exemplary court case for following implementations.

Although Theatre of *Saguntum* is integrated into the slope of a hill crowned by a citadel, its enhancement has always been undertaken as building restoration rather than urban conservation. As an example for the latter from a similar context, Theatre of *Malacca* (Málaga) was discovered in 1951, during gardening for a newly-completed House of Culture designed by Luis Moya Blanco (1904-1990) (Camacho & Morente, 1989). An excavation campaign in 1980s with the initiative of Rafael Puertas Tricas (1943-2008), director of Museum of Málaga, and J.M.J. Gran Aymerich, researcher in the National Scientific Research Centre of France (CNRS for Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique), revealed the importance of remains not only from the theatre but also from the Fenicio-Punic settlement at the site (Gran Aymerich, 1983). Although Moya's building is evaluated as a work of unquestionable value, its demolition started in 1994 to reveal the theatre, following the excavation (1956-62) and consolidation of the then open part of the *cavea* (Rodríguez, 1993). Although the initial intention may well have been using the monument as venue for Málaga Classical Theatre Festival organized since 1959, the number of performances was limited in 2005 to six per year (Ramírez, 2005). Instead, modern uses of the site were enhanced by a visitor centre that opened in 2010 as part of a competition-winner project. Introducing a cultural axis connecting to other cultural nodes downtown, both making use and overcoming disadvantages of a location at a natural edge in the city, the centre presents and archives archaeological material recovered from the site, and provides support for ongoing archeological works (Fernández-Baca Casares & Tejedor Cabrera, 2007).

A similar urban design approach has been adopted in Medellín (Badajoz) where limited excavations in 1969-70 had suggested heavy pillage for the construction of the castle above during Arab conquest; and later for a church behind the stage of the theatre (del Amo, 1982). Yet, excavations from 2007 onwards revealed the 2000-seat Theatre of *Metellinum* in a good preservation state. Autonomous Ministry of Culture invested 4 million € for its museumification in an archaeology park and use for theatrical performances since 2011, on a timber platform under which remains from the stage building are preserved. In this way, a neglected area was transformed into a recognizable and attractive archaeological site, which won the prestigious Europa Nostra Prize in 2013 (Spain – Medellín..., 2013).

Another Europe Nostra Prize was received in 2010 by the implementation at Theatre of *Cartago Nova* (Cartagena, Valencia) for the similarly well-executed integration of the building into the existing urban layout, in an archaeological park incorporating monuments from various periods in the history of Cartagena, to secure the timely regeneration of a depressed area (Spain – Cartagena..., 2010). The theatre was discovered accidentally, with the demolition of the palace-house of Countess Peralta in 1988, on the north-western slope of medieval Concepción Castle that was the traditional acropolis and fortress of the urban nucleus (Ramallo & Ruiz, 1998). After continuous habitation from fifth century BC, the area was abandoned, for which reason the house-palace had been expropriated by the Town Council for establishing a regional artisanal centre (Ramallo & Ruiz, 1998). Unearthing of the 6,000-seat theatre in a good preservation state by University of Murcia excavations created expectations for economic development in the city. The theatre's declaration as cultural heritage monument in 1997 in the earlier-registered historic urban quarter of Cartagena accelerated appropriation of 185 houses on the site for its museumification (Ramallo & Ruiz, 1998) as part of an archaeology park.

Roman Theatre Museum of Cartagena (Museo Teatromano de Cartagena) has its entrance in the eighteenth-century Pascual de Riquelma Palace facing the Town Hall and connects through an underground tunnel to a new building on the street behind the Palace that provides passage to Church of Santa María Coviesa on an upper level, and from there to the theatre remains inside the archaeology park. The complex was designed by Rafael Moneo, whose name is promoted in the official webpages of the Museum (*Museo del Teatro...*, 2014) that became the most visited monument in Murcia Autonomous Region whose government invested 43 million € in the project that opened in 2008, receiving some 145,000 (i.e. more than 450 daily) visitors in 2010 (Sánchez Galián, 2011).

A small ancient theatre in a similar location revealed in 1999 during archaeological research for the definition of the limit of the *palaestra* of the Roman baths on the slope of Cividade Hill in the northern Portuguese city of Braga (*Bracara Augusta*), which made it the most northeasterly located Roman theatre in Iberian Peninsula. Decision for the future of the monument awaits the completion of its archaeological research (Manuela Martins *et al.*, 2008).

Ancient Theatre Museums in Urban Blocks

Incorporating remains from ancient theatres into museums has been a strategy adopted also in other cities of Iberian Peninsula. As an example from Portugal, Roman Theatre Museum (Museu do Teatro Romano) in Lisbon consists of a protective roof over remains from Theatre of *Olisipo* facing a seventeenth century building that was converted into a theatre museum that inaugurated in 2001 (Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 2008). The theatre was first discovered after the great earthquake of 1755 and later covered by new buildings up to 1960 when it was re-discovered thanks to the demolition of a house over it (Cepas, 1997). Located in the Alfama district of Lisbon, along a busy tourist route climbing from Sé Cathedral to Castle of São Jorge, building is still largely below later blocks and roads.

Theatre of *Caesaraugusta* (Zaragoza) was discovered in 1972, after evacuation of the lot of old Church of San Andrés for novel construction (Beltrán Martínez, 1982). As a curious perpetuation of traditions, there once stood a comedy theatre on the site, up to its destruction in a fire famously painted by Goya; and the Principal Theatre (Teatro Principal) of Zaragoza was later built on the same spot (Beltrán Martínez, 1982). Excavations directed by Antonio Beltrán Martínez (1916-2006) from University of Zaragoza revealed theatre remains also beneath Church of the Sacred Heart of Christ around the same block, which is known as Crystal Rosary (Rosario de Cristal) wherein are exhibited the crystal and stained glass floats carried in the famous rosary recitation procession of the city. Finding support in this history of the site, Caesaraugusta Theatre Museum (Museo del Teatro Caesaraugusta), consisting of a protective roof over the lower rows of the 6000-seat theatre and a new building with museum functions, took until 2003 to complete, due to complications involved in such a historic location (Ayuntamiento de Zaragoza, n.d.). Unofficial sources suggest 12 million € investment for the museum (Museo del Teatro de Caesaraugusta, n.d.) that had some 13,000 visitors in ten days after its opening in 2003 (Más de 40.000..., 2003).

Remains from Theatre of *Corduba* (Córdoba) have also been annexed to Provincial Archaeology and Ethnology Museum of Córdoba, which was founded in 1867 and inaugurated in 1962 in its current location in the sixteenth-century Jerónimo Páez Palace (Baena Alcántara, 2008). Already known from the epigraphic record, the earliest remain that was attributed to the Theatre of *Corduba* were stairs unearthed in 1946 when the museum was moving to its current location (Borrego, 2012). Now preserved *in situ* in the epigraphy hall of the museum, the stairs actually belonged to an exterior terrace of a monumental entertainment building complex that included the theatre, which was itself unearthed during digs for an extension of the museum to adjacent plots in 1980s. Partiality of discoveries prevented their identification as belonging to a theatre until 1992 but, from 1994 on, research by the Archaeology Seminar of Córdoba University proceeded parallel to museum extension, whose first section that inaugurated in January 2011 reveals the complexity of constructing over ancient ruins. The architectural project for the 3,800 square meter annex was obtained through an international competition opened by the Autonomous Ministry of Culture in 1998 which was won by Pau Soler Serratosa, Joaquín Lizasoain and Jesús María Susperregui; and the first stage of construction was completed in 2008, at a cost of 16 million € to the Autonomous Government (Caravaca, 2011).

Ancient theatre ruins in urban blocks

Not all ancient theatre remains unearthed in urban blocks of Iberian Peninsula have been incorporated into museums—or this is the case so far for a very small theatre discovered in 2008 during construction of a parking in Guadix (*Acci*, Granada) in southern Spain where excavations continue, revealing a *porticus post scaenam* (López, 2014).

In a similar pending state is the future of remains from the 6000-seat Theatre of *Tarraco* (Tarragona) which were discovered in 1885 and first excavated in 1892-1906 (Mar *et al.*, 2010). Although excavations were resumed in 1919, producing remains notable enough to put the site under custody of the Provincial Archaeology Museum; private ownership enabled building an olive oil factory over the theatre remains in 1940s, which moved out when the lot was sold to a construction company in 1974 (Mar *et al.*, 2010). Destruction of the factory for housing investment was allowed on condition of subsequent archaeological excavation, which produced in 1975-77 such spectacular finds that managed to halt construction work through a strong public campaign. In 1978, Theatre of *Tarraco* was declared a national monument and also public property, which rendered applicable the Law for Compulsory Expropriation from

a group of 63 owners. However, payment of the required sum had to wait for the Supreme Court to designate Catalan Autonomous Government as the legal owner of the site in 1999, with a final and definite sentence after objections no earlier than 2007. In the meantime, the Archaeological Ensemble of Tàrraco is listed in UNESCO WHL since 2000 while museumification of the theatre remains in pending since a preliminary project of 1983 (Mar *et al.*, 1992).

An opposite case in terms of ownership is Theatre of *Gades* (Cádiz) in an urban block along the waterfront in Pópulo district where the medieval town was once located. Memory of the theatre survived in Islamic references to the area where stood the Christian castle as Theatre Castle (Qars-al-Ma'ab) while its vaulted galleries survived in legends (Corzo, 1989). An attempt for restoring the castle in 1972 eventually led to the theatre's discovery in 1980, under buildings from many periods and in different preservation states in a low-income area (Corzo, 1993). As in Cartagena, a critical decision in Cádiz was to raise living standards in the area while discovering and preserving theatre remains through consolidations, as a bridge between legends and reality of the town. Cádiz Pópulo district project was included in the Andalucía 92 Programme that aimed at financing cultural projects of Andalusian provincial capitals from the accumulation in Seville for Expo '92 and 5th centenary of the discovery of America (Martínez & Espinosa, 2000). In May 2000, Cádiz Town Council decided to host a Greco-Latin Theatre Festival in the partially unearthed cavea of the theatre, with part of the orchestra serving as a stage.

Ancient theatres traced in urban blocks

Majority of these ancient theatres in the urban archaeological landscape had been completely lost beneath later buildings without a trace, to be discovered mostly by chance. Elsewhere in Iberian Peninsula, a closer inspection of land registry maps and actual housing configurations led to the discovery of remains from Roman theatres beneath, in Almuñécar (*Sexi*, Andalucía), Badalona (*Baetulo*, Catalonia), Mahon (*Mago*, Minorca) and Palma de Mallorca (*Palma*, Balearic Islands). A more recent discovery of this type is in the historic center of Huesca where a curved configuration in the urban morphology was confirmed to indicate the location of Theatre of *Oscá* when physical remains revealed during infrastructure works in the courtyard of a dwelling in 2006 (Puértolas, 2006) and during drinking water pipe and pavement renovations in 2013. Among these examples, a restitution hypothesis has been proposed only for Theatres of *Baetulo* and *Palma*, the latter using the Vitruvian description for the Latin Theatre (Moranta, n.d.). These examples from the urban archaeological landscape also support the hypothesis on the adoption of the Vitruvian method especially for highly deteriorated examples.

Even less is known about examples that are hypothesized from actual urban morphology, in a context of archaeologically attested spatial continuity with Roman period settlement, but without any remains securely identified as belonging to a theatre. Examples are Barcelona (*Barcino*, Catalonia), Bigastro (*Bigastrum* near Alicante, Murcia), Carmona (*Carmona*, Seville), Ecija (*Astigi* or *Augusta Firma*, Seville), and Seville (*Hispalis*) itself, as well as UNESCO World Heritage Cities of Toledo (*Toletum*) in Spain and Evora (*Ebora*) in Portugal.

As a conclusion: some observations on intervention variation

This data reveals extreme heterogeneity in the preservation state of ancient theatres in Iberian Peninsula. Nevertheless, it has been possible to classify the majority by their location either in rural or in urban archaeological landscapes, with some at the interface of the two. The first category consists of ancient theatre remains conserved in industrial landscapes (*Carteia*) and in archaeological sites (*Acinipo*, *Baelo Claudia*, *Bilbilis Augusta*, *Termes*), including those restored for local festivals (*Clunia*, *Pollentia*, *Regina*, *Segóbriga*). The second category consists of ancient theatres on fortified castle hill slopes (*Bracara Augusta*, *Cartago Nova*, *Malacca*, *Metellinum*, *Saguntum*) some of which are used for modern performances while others in urban blocks have been either integrated into museums (*Caesaraugusta*, *Corduba*, *Olisipo*) or laying in ruins (*Acci*, *Gades*, *Tarraco*) in urban blocks that may also evidence traces of ancient theatres in their morphology, with (*Baetulo*, *Mago*, *Oscá*, *Palma*, *Sexi*) or without (*Astigi* or *Augusta Firma*, *Barcino*, *Bigastrum*, *Carmona*, *Ebora*, *Hispalis*, *Toletum*) physical remains. At their interface are the ancient theatre remains that were either restored for international festivals (*Emerita Augusta*, *Itálica*) or left in ruins at the edge of modern towns (*Celsa*, *Singilia Barba*, *Urso*).

Following observations will attempt to illustrate the potential of this classification to reveal some trends in the variety observed in modern intervention types and scales, in a range from excavation and publication to consolidation, conservation, restoration, and reconstruction. Complementarily, these observations would demonstrate the validity, for their afterlife as well, of the conclusive observation by Oliva Rodríguez Gutiérrez (2011) for Roman Theatres of *Baetica* that each is a token of a type but, moreover, a singular example of a unique project.

Early references to and excavations of ancient theatres as landscape elements

The presented data would support Raffaele Milani (2000) in that origins and development of the aesthetics of landscape were conditioned by the fashion of travelling, the figure of the connoisseur, and the aesthetic category of the picturesque as experienced by the painter and observer through an aesthetic perception of details and particulars. Indeed, Iberian Peninsula has centuries-long record of travelers (e.g. Labaña, Wingaerde, Carter) who documented details and particulars of ancient theatre remains (i.e. *Bilbilis*

Augusta, Emerita Augusta and Saguntum, Carteia) importantly in the rural archaeological landscape since those in urban archaeological sites were mostly unearthed during urban renovation projects of the past decades.

Other early records come from local men of religion (e.g. Zevallos on *Itálica*, Calvo on *Clunia*), who also realized limited excavations; and from men of letters who have professed a number of disciplines (e.g. Marquis of Valdeflores) who refer to the Vitruvian treatise (i.e. for *Acinipo*), as an indication of their wide erudition as well as of popularity of the Vitruvian edifice in Iberian Peninsula. Occasional reports (e.g. of the Court of Cádiz, Valdeflores, Martorell y Peña) also document the demolition process of ancient theatre buildings (i.e. *Saguntum*, *Singilia Barba*, *Pollentia*) in the rural landscape.

Inclusion of ancient theatres in compilations prepared by these men (e.g. Valdeflores, Ambrosio de Morales) for the Spanish crown (i.e. Ferdinand VI, Felipe II) reveal an early acknowledgement of this building type as national heritage at least from the sixteenth century onwards since when they have also been considered as an integral part of the cultural landscape, as attested best in the traditions and legends referring to ancient theatres (e.g. *Emerita Augusta, Gades*). The first building even taken under state protection to become later the first monument registered as national heritage of Spain was also an ancient theatre (i.e. *Saguntum*).

Systematic ancient theatre excavations in Iberian Peninsula

Institutional differences in the organization of archaeological excavations in ancient theatres reveal structural differences between administrations in Iberian Peninsula, through the involvement of provincial and local museum, universities, local and autonomous governments. MNAR appears to be the centre for research on ancient theatres in Estremadura, directing two excavations (i.e. *Emerita Augusta, Regina*) and hosting events with following publications (e.g. *Actas...*, 1982). Provincial Archaeology Museum of Huelva was similarly involved in three excavations (i.e. *Acinipo, Metellinum, Regina*) in Andalusia, while Provincial Archaeology and Ethnology Museum of Córdoba and Museum of Málaga have been involved in the archaeological research and museumification of ancient theatre remains in respective cities in Andalusia.

Also in Tarragona, theatre remains have been under custody of the Provincial Archaeology Museum while elsewhere in northern Iberian Peninsula, excavations were conducted by local universities (e.g. of Zaragoza at *Caesaraugusta, Bilbilis Augusta*), like the exceptional University of Málaga excavations at *Singilia Barba*. Differently, University of Barcelona was active at sites remote from its location (*Clunia* in Castilla and León, *Pollentia* in Balear Islands, *Segóbriga*, Castilla and Mancha and *Segóbriga*), as was the Autonomous University of Madrid (*Carteia* in Andalusia) which may indicate absence of an institutionalized centre for ancient theatre research in those locations. Foreign finance from William L. Bryant Foundation for *Pollentia* Theatre excavations may support this observation if taken to indicate insufficiency of government support. Notably, all these are rural-archaeological sites at a distance from modern settlements.

Other excavations supported by foreign (i.e. French) finance are those of Theatres of *Baelo Claudia* and *Malacca*, both located in Andalusia where the autonomous government (i.e. Junta de Andalucía) appears as the conductor (e.g. *Gades*) and main investor in excavations and restorations of ancient theatre buildings, as in Andalusia 92 Programme involving *Acinipo, Gades, Itálica* and *Malacca*. These monuments are now in the Network of Cultural Spaces of Andalusia (RECA for Red de Espacios Culturales de Andalusia) together with Theatres of *Carteia* and *Baelo Claudia* (<http://www.juntadeandalucia.es/culturaydeporte/rutasteatro/>). A parallel tourism and culture route involves various municipalities of Andalusia organized under an association (Asociación de ciudades de la Ruta Bética Romana) over the region that once formed the Roman senatorial province of *Baetica* (<http://beticaromana.org/>). These networks reveal the strategy of the autonomous government to handle the region as an integrated cultural landscape consisting of a variety of human activity, ancient and modern. When we move from major cities towards lesser towns, local initiative may come to fore even in Andalusia (e.g. Archaeology Society for Osuna Excavations at *Urso*; Llabrés y Quintana's interventions at *Pollentia*).

Modern uses of ancient theatres in rural, peri-urban, and urban landscapes

Ancient theatres that have not received any physical intervention for their preservation and modern use, as tourism destinations and for festivals, are the more deteriorated examples (of *Arcóbriga, Castulo, Celsa, Singilia Barba, Termes, Urso*) that are almost lost in rural and peri-urban archaeological landscapes. Local initiative was remarkably active in initiation of festivals of classical drama and dance in comparatively better preserved ones (e.g. *Emerita Augusta, Itálica, Pollentia, Saguntum, Segóbriga*) in rural and peri-urban archaeological landscapes that also serve as tourism destinations with more or less visitors depending on their accessibility.

These events enrich the already varied festival tradition in Iberian Peninsula, from the Crystal Rosary in Zaragoza that starts and ends near Caesaraugusta Theatre Museum to Carthaginians and Romans in Cartagena (<http://www.cartaginesyromanos.es/>). Recent research has focused on the agency of festival traditions in constructing nationalisms (Cofino, 1997), ethnicities (Aykan, 2014), and localities (Vozikas, 2012; Chalcraft & Magaouda, 2011) through an attachment of people to particular

places that Jorge Perez Falconi (2011) and others refer to as 'festivalscapes' in allusion to Arjun Appadurai's definitions with the suffix 'scape' indicating relations dependent on perspective. In Iberian Peninsula, landscapes with ancient theatre remains have converted into such 'festivalscapes', which resulted in physical interventions to enhance building performance during use.

Mérida is perhaps the most popular site in this respect, also due to its accessibility from Portugal. The large-scale intervention that transformed the legendary Seven Seats into a festival theatre apparently involved a considerable amount of reconstruction that, nevertheless, managed to produce a result generally evaluated as scientific restoration (e.g. Francisco *et al.*, 2011-2012), setting an example (e.g. for *Itálica, Segóbriga*) in the implementation of modern scientific criteria by rendering readable modern additions for consolidation and reinforcement for improved intelligibility of surviving elements. The same approach is adopted also in implementations aiming at presenting ancient theatre remains to visitors with minor (e.g. *Acinipo, Baelo Claudia*) or no (e.g. *Acinipo*) festival use. References for all these implementations had generally come from the building scale instead of their larger contexts.

For ancient theatres in urban archaeological landscapes, integrating them into museums (e.g. Cartagena, Córdoba, Lisbon, Zaragoza) and visitor centres (e.g. Málaga) has been an often preferred strategy both for ensuring their protection and for increasing their visitors year round. While the Cartagena project was entrusted to a team headed by Moneo, in Córdoba and Málaga, implementation projects were obtained through competitions and applied with finance from the autonomous government after major changes and delays, until a decade when urban renovation have become key all around the Mediterranean in rehabilitating physically and socio-economically deteriorated urban areas. Archaeological research and protection of the ancient theatre in Cádiz is an early example in this respect, in becoming part of a social responsibility project to enhance Pópulo district above remains with its low income profile. Impossibility of such integral handling of its remains as part of the urban landscape resulted in Theatre of *Tarraco's* laying unprotected in an urban block surrounded by high-income housing.

In this framework, Roman theatre museums in Iberian Peninsula would reveal as important sustainable urban investments, rather than heritage conservation projects; whose success has been measured by the number of visitors in return (e.g. Cartagena, *Clunia*, Zaragoza) and by their positive impact over a wider physical environment, community and economy. The latter had the lion's share in the Europa Nostra prizes awarded to the implementations in Cartagena and Medellín archaeology parks integrating remains from ancient theatres (*Cartago Nova, Metellinum*). Success of these urban and peri-urban examples of sustainable urban regeneration through heritage protection in the past decade are gradually upgrading the controversial image set by the Sagunto Theatre project of Grassi-Portaceli for ancient theatre implementations in Iberian Peninsula.

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