



Summary :

A rectangular marble structure found in the NW corner of the Ephesus Theatre stage. This is a fountain-house in the Ionic order, dating to the Hellenistic period (3rd cent. BC), which was converted during the Roman Period (2nd cent. AD).

Date

3rd century BC

Geographical Location

Ephesus

1. Location

At the NW corner of the stage building of the [Theatre](#) (no.75) of [Ephesus](#), stands a marble fountain house (no.74). It is the culmination of the water transportation system at the convergence of the [Marble Street](#) (no.60) with the [Arcadian Street](#) (no. 83). The Fountain was constructed during the Hellenistic period.

2. Architectural Design

The fountain house is made of marble in the **isodomic masonry** system and has a rectangular shape. Originally it measured 3.82 in width x 1.45 m. in depth. When it was expanded during the Roman period, its dimensions changed (depth 3.65-3.90 m). Its height was 3.73 m.

It belongs to the category of fountain houses with a Pi-shaped ground plan, as three of its sides are closed by walls. The original Hellenistic structure was independent of nearby buildings.¹ Its lateral walls culminate in **pilasters**, and thus its façade, located in its west side, features two columns in antis. The columns of the façade support capitals in the **Ionic order**² and rest on **bases in the Attic-Ionic order**. The pilasters and columns of the façade support an **entablature** comprising a three-fascia **epistyle**³ and a dentilated **cornice**.⁴ The **sima** featured no drain pipes.

The gaps between the columns were closed by low marble parapets. Their existence is confirmed by the dowel holes on the side pilasters and the columns. These parapets framed the cistern which took up the entire interior of the building. As the floor was covered with rectangular limestone slabs the interior of the building remained dry. Water flowed from three spouts in the shape of lions' heads. The lion-head spouts were placed on the rear wall, at mid-height, where the **orthostatai** were crowned by a concave-convex **cyma**. Today only the apertures of the three spouts remain. From the surviving remains it was understood that only the central lion's head was directly supplied with water from the central pipe carrying water from the river Marna. The two flanking lions' heads were indirectly supplied, as they were connected to the central one through another system of pipes.

The roof of the building was flat, made of tiles supported by a timber frame, while the roof in the building's interior was decorated with marble **coffers**. Apart from the Ionic order column capitals, the other architectural members were not decorated. It is, however, possible that they bore painted decoration.⁵

In the second building phase, an antechamber was added to the fountain house. Thus the lateral walls and the roof of the building were expanded. The new façade also featured two columns in antis, with the difference that these columns had unfluted shafts. The monument's ground plan was slightly altered, as it was readjusted around the road which crossed outside it, thus acquiring an almost trapezoid shape.⁶



3. Epigraphical evidence

One of the unfluted columns placed in the monument during the second building phase bears the inscription“Ξ κ τοῦ Μάρναντος”, which informs us that the fountain was supplied with water from the river Marna (modern Dervend Dere).⁷ Although this inscription informs us on the provenance of the water, from the river Marna, it does not elucidate the issue of the water supply pipe. We can not tell whether it was connected to the aqueduct known through inscriptions as “Καινός Μάρνας” (i.e. New Marna).⁸ It is also uncertain whether this is an allusion to the water pipe system funded by **proconsul** P. Calvisius Rusoin the late Flavian period, which supplied water not only from the Marna but also from the river Claseas.⁹ Perhaps the most plausible view is that the Fountain at the Theatre was supplied with water through an independent system of pipes, which was preserved into the Roman period.¹⁰

4. Dating

On the basis of the monument’s building method and stylistic elements of its architecture, W. Willberg has dated the fountain to the 2nd century BC.¹¹ W. Alzinger has suggested a later date, in the 1st century BC, relying on details of the monument’s architectural decoration, without, however, advancing particularly convincing arguments.¹² Most likely the fountain was erected rather earlier, perhaps in the 3rd century BC, which is also the construction date of the Hellenistic conduit supplying water from the river Marna.¹³ The fountain’s second building phase, during which the structure was expanded, dates to the Roman Period, more specifically not before the 2nd century AD. This is clear from the study of the style of the inscription’s letters.¹⁴

5. Current State and History of Research

The fountain house was unearthed in 1897 during excavations carried out in the theatre of Ephesus. The overall architectural form of the monument has been published in the third volume of the Austrian Institute’s excavational reports from Ephesus.¹⁵ The drawing of the monument by G. Niemann, included in the edition, is rather well-grounded, given that a large percentage of the building’s architectural members survive. Alzinger mentions this fountain house in brief in his work on the architecture of the Augustan era at Ephesus,¹⁶ while a more detailed description of the structure can be found in the collective study of [Fountain houses in the cities of Asia Minor](#) by Cl. Dori-Klingenschmid.¹⁷ Today the monument survives in an excellent state of preservation.

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1. It was later connected with its neighboring buildings with tall brick walls.
 2. On the stylistic details of the Ionic capitals, see W. Alzinger, *Augusteische Architektur in Ephesos* (Wien 1974) p. 70.
 3. The epistyle is crowned by a cyma, accentuated by being placed over astragal. P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) p. 268.
 4. On the form of the fountain’s cornice see P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) p. 271.
 5. For more details on the architectural form of the fountain during its first building phase see P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) pp. 266-273.
 6. P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) p. 268, pl. 272.
 7. See, Börker, R. Merkelbacht (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Teil II, (Nr. 101-599) (I.K. 12, Bonn 1979), no. 417, p. 142.



8. Cf. Cl. Dorl-Klingenschmid, *Prunkbrunnen in kleinasiatischen Städten. Funktion im Kontext* (München 2001) p. 179 and n.757. C. Börker, R. Merkelbach, *Die Inschriften von Ephesos V, Nr. 1446-2000 (Repertorium)* (I.K. 15, Bonn 1980) , no. 1530, p. 57.
9. P. Scherrer surmised that the conduit of P. Calvisius Ruso supplied the theatre fountain as well. Cf. P. Scherrer, Das Ehrengrab des Kaiserpriesters am Embolos - eine Personensuche, in H. Thür (ed.), « . . . und verschönerte die Stadt ». *Ein ephesischer Priester des Kaiserkultes in seinem Umfeld*, *SoSchrÖAI* 27 (Wien 1997) p. 122. H. Thür, however, has argued that this conduit coursed through the city from the NE and terminated at Pollio's Nymphaeum, therefore it is rather unlikely that it also supplied the wider area of the theater. Cf. H. Thür, Girdlensarkophag und Portät eines Kaiserpriesters im Fund - und Primärkontext - Bestandteile eines Ehrengrabes am Embolos? in H. Thür (ed.), « . . . und verschönerte die Stadt ». *Ein ephesischer Priester des Kaiserkultes in seinem Umfeld*, *SoSchrÖAI* 27 (Wien 1997) p. 71.
10. For more details see Cl. Dorl-Klingenschmid, *Prunkbrunnen in kleinasiatischen Städten. Funktion im Kontext* (München 2001) pp. 179-180.
11. P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) p. 272.
12. W. Alzinger, *Augusteische Architektur in Ephesos* (Wien 1974), p. 70.
13. The suggestion for the fountain's dating to the 3rd cent. BC is mentioned in Cl. Dorl-Klingenschmid, *Prunkbrunnen in kleinasiatischen Städten. Funktion im Kontext* (München 2001) p. 180. On the dating of the conduit see Ü. Özis - A. Atalay, *Fernwasserleitungen von Ephesos in 100 Jahre Österreichische Forschungen in Ephesos. Akten des Symposions Wien, 1995* (Wien 1999) pp. 405-411
14. Börker, R. Merkelbach (ed.), *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, Teil II, (Nr. 101-599) (I.K. 12, Bonn 1979), no. 417, p. 142.
15. P. Forchheimer, R. Heberdey, J. Keil , G. Niemann, W. Wilberg, *Agora, Torbauten am Hafen, Wasserleitungen, Brunnenhaus beim Theater, Aquaeduct, FiE III* (Wien 1923) pp. 266-273.
16. W. Alzinger, *Augusteische Architektur in Ephesos* (1974) p. 70.
17. Cl. Dorl-Klingenschmid, *Prunkbrunnen in kleinasiatischen Städten. Funktion im Kontext* (München 2001) pp. 178-180 no. 15, elk.29, 48a, 106a-b.

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Webliography :

	Ephesos- Gesamtplan
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<http://homepage.univie.ac.at/elisabeth.trinkl/forum/forum0897/04plan.htm>

Glossary :

	anta or pilaster, the
A shallow rectangular feature projecting from a wall, having a capital and a base and architecturally treated as a column.	
	architrave or epistyle
The lowest part of an entablature resting on the columns capitals and supporting the frieze.	
	attic-ionic base
Base of an Ionic column, consisting of an upper and lower torus, separated by a scotia and fillets	
	coffer
Recessed ornamental square or octagonal panels sunk in the ceilings of buildings. They were decorated with relief or pictorial, usually floral, designs.	
	cornice
1. (Antiq. and Byz.) Member of the entablature or the architrave that projects in the elevation of a secular or religious building. As a horizontal member it may run along a wall. The cornice may also be the projecting part of the roof, protecting the building from rain. 2. (Byz. archit.) Decorative architectural element used to articulate the walls of a church, both on the inside and on the outside, by marking the division between the vertical wall and the spring of the vaults. It usually bears painted or sculptural decoration of vegetal or geometric motifs.	
	cyma / cymation
Moulding decoration with ovals or tri-cusps alternating with lotus flowers. It was meant to separate or to lay stress upon two surfaces. In ancient architecture we distinguish Doric, Ionic and Lesbian cymation, according to their decoration and section form.	
	entablature, the
The upper part of the classical order, that rests on the columns, it consists of the architrave, frieze and cornice.	
	ionic order, the
An architectural order devised in Ionia and developed in Asia Minor and the Greek islands in the 6th century BC. Its columns have elaborately moulded bases, fluted shafts (with fillets, ending in fillets), and volute capitals. The entablature consists of an three-fasciae architrave, a continuous frieze, usually richly decorated with reliefs, and a cornice. The Ionic order was more elaborate in dimensions, comparing with the Doric.	
	isodomic masonry (opus quadratum)
A type of masonry in which blocks of equal length and thickness are laid in courses, with each vertical joint centered on the block below.	
	orthostate
A course of blocks laid on edge, normally in the lower part of the wall of a building.	
	proconsul, -lis
A quite high ranking official, <i>vir spectabilis</i> according to the rank of the senate, who was inequable only to the <i>Domestikos</i> of the <i>Scholae</i> and to the <i>Magister Militum per Orientem</i> . The proconsul usually served as a governor of the Imperial provinces (i.e. in Asia Minor the provinces of Asia and Cappadocia). The office was demoted from the 9th century onwards and the term was in use until the 12th century meaning a dignity.	
	sima, sime
Part of architectural sculpture made of marble or clay. It bears a meticulous appearance and it has a decorative character crowning the entablature. Its section is semicircular and it was used to channel water.	