

1. EXCAVATION HISTORY AND STATE OF RESEARCH

The Bouleuterion of Ephesos, located on the north edge of the so-called Staatsmarkt or Upper Agora (pl. 1), has long been a favorite gathering point for tour groups whose guides have been quick to exploit its theatrical layout and an impressive view over the site for their often histrionic introductions to the ancient city.

The building in its final form consisted of an *auditorium* with curved rows of seats set within a buttressed semicircular retaining wall that was bonded to a shallow stage building about 46 m wide (pl. 2). The *cavea*, built into the lower slopes of Panayırdağ, was divided into two tiers by a *diazoma* with a curved podium wall and into five *cunei* by radial stairways. Above a sunken orchestra rose the *pulpitum*, accessible from both sides by sloping *parodos* ramps; this was also accessible from the Agora through the Basilica Stoa, via a back-stage corridor with five doorways in the scene wall. Flanking these doorways rose tall molded pedestals that once supported the columns of an aediculated *scaenae frons* (pl. 3, 1). The outer ends of the *parodoi* formed vestibules which could be entered through tall, arched doorways in the lateral walls or through more modest doorway openings from the Basilica Stoa and Agora. Vaulted staircases, accessible from these points through doorways in the *analemmata*, rose along the inside of the curved retaining wall, then bent sharply to follow radial axes in a second flight which gave onto the *diazoma*.

The first modern reference to the building is found in an account of a visit to Ephesos by the English traveler R. Pococke published in 1745. After describing the ruins of what is today known as the Baths on the Upper Agora he writes:

*“A few paces further to the west, there are remains of a semicircular building, which seems to have seats in it, made like steps, as in theatres, and is built in a rustick manner with pilasters on the outside at equal distances. This might possibly serve for an odium or theatre for music.”*¹

In an accompanying drawing it appears as a curved wall with thirteen radial piers and is indicated on his plan, the first known attempt at a map of the city (pl. 3, 2).² The building appears on several subsequent city plans with little comment and rested undisturbed until the second half of the 19th century when John Turtle Wood, British architect, engineer and amateur classicist, made it a major focus of his energetic antiquarian activities at the site.

Wood came to Smyrna in 1863 to work on the construction of the Smyrna–Aydın railroad but soon made it his main goal to locate the Temple of Diana at Ephesos, a quest that eventually proved successful. His work in the ruins continued for eleven years and is described in his book “Discoveries at Ephesus”, first published in 1877.³ As he was sponsored after the first year by the Trustees of the British Museum he was obliged to offer “some substantial return,” and set to work digging in the “Odeum” and the great theater, buildings certain to produce monumental inscriptions and statuary.

Work in the Odeion began on March 15, 1864: “... even before the excavations were begun, the outer semicircular wall of the auditorium was to be seen above ground at each extremity. I had, therefore, no difficulty in deciding the whereabouts of the proscenium, and I began by cutting at right angles to it a wide trench, which soon exposed to view the outer wall, and the central doorway. I was not long in working my way into the Theatre, and, before the end of the month, I had cleared a considerable portion of the pulpitum or stage, by wheeling the débris out through the central doorway into the open ground in front.”⁴

By the following winter a large portion of the building had been exposed including the orchestra floor, “paved with white marble,” and at least portions of both *parodoi*. Progress was hindered by great numbers of

¹ POCOCKE 1745, 48.

² POCOCKE 1745, 48 pl. 47 for this sketch plan (indicated “F”). For the map of Ephesos, s. 46 pl. 45 with the building indicated at “z.” The city plan is reprinted in WOHLERS-SCHARF 1996, 45 fig. 22. ALZINGER 1962, 253 gives a list of early travelers to Ephesos.

³ WOOD 1877. A reprint in a smaller format has since been published by the Georg Olms Verlag (Hildesheim 1975). On John Turtle Wood s. WOHLERS-SCHARF 1996, 51–62, for his work in the Bouleuterion esp. 55.

⁴ WOOD 1877, 43. Work in the Odeion is described on pages 42–63.

large blocks which had fallen onto the stage, apparently from the *scaenae frons*. The lower eleven rows of seats with their lion paw protomes are described as having been found in perfect condition, although a lithograph shows them roughly as they are today (pl. 4, 1).⁵ His reconstructed plan⁶ (pl. 4, 2) is essentially accurate with the exception of the arrangement of the buttresses and the addition of two doorways at the top of the *cavea*. His placing of a colonnade above the seating is reasonable considering what was known about Roman theaters at the time and the fragments of red granite columns which he discovered in the debris, although this feature must now be rejected.⁷

Most important was Wood's discovery on the stage and in the orchestra of many fragments belonging to thin marble slabs that bore dated letters written by the emperors Antoninus Pius and Hadrian to the people of Ephesos.⁸ Named in the Antonine inscriptions was a certain Publius Vedius Antoninus, "under [whose] auspices," wrote Wood, "were erected, either wholly or in part, the Odeum and other public buildings in that quarter of the city."⁹

Wood's excavations in the Odeion also produced a number of fragmentary statues, apparently part of the building's sculptural decoration. Most significant is the lower half of an over-life-size figure found "near the central doorway", identified as Lucius Verus by an inscription on its plinth.¹⁰ A number of other statues are briefly mentioned including a torso of Silenus and the figure of the Muse Erato,¹¹ both illustrated with lithographs.¹² The latter went down in a shipwreck on its way to England along with the upper half of the Lucius Verus statue and was recovered later much damaged by the sea. Both the Silenus and the lower half of the Lucius Verus statue reached London and are currently in the collection of the British Museum.

More informative, perhaps, than his publication is a collection of several hundred letters which Wood wrote to officials of the Museum during his years at Ephesos informing them of his progress. This archive, exploited only recently by A. Kalinowski and H. Taeuber,¹³ contains two groups of letters written concurrently. The first, housed in the Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, is addressed to C. T. Newton, then keeper of that department. Those of the second group, now in the Museum's Central Archives, were written to A. Panizzi, Principal Librarian until 1866, and then to his successor J. Winter Jones. The letters are especially important in that they give a more detailed account of sculptural and inscriptional finds, and confirm the recent suggestion of K. Fittschen that the building's *scaenae frons* contained an Antonine Imperial portrait gallery.¹⁴

The Odeion came under scientific scrutiny for the first time in 1908 as a direct result of the interest raised by a bull's head capital which J. T. Wood had discovered in front of the building. Excavations under the auspices of the Austrian Archaeological Institute carried out in this area by R. Heberdey and W. Wilberg during the fall campaign¹⁵ uncovered additional capitals and it could be determined that they belonged to a colonnaded hall (so-called Stierkopfhalle) which fronted the Odeion and extended for an unknown distance in both directions.¹⁶ Wilberg published a diagrammatic plan showing the entire Odeion (pl. 5, 1), newly cleaned, which corrected some of Wood's errors; the upper doorways were eliminated and the exposed buttresses shown in their correct

⁵ WOOD 1877, opposite p. 62. This is clearly a copy of a photograph. WOOD 1877, 62–63 complains about the depredations of tourists who carried away as souvenirs not only pieces of sculpture but "fragments of marble from the seats and cornices" broken off with hammers and chisels.

⁶ WOOD 1877, opposite p. 52.

⁷ For this notion cf. also BIER 1999, 11–12; MEINEL 1980, 123; RIORDEN 1996, 104: "This type of roofed gallery usually occurs only in roofless theatre structures".

⁸ See below chap. 8.

⁹ WOOD 1877, 44–46. The letters received their first publication in a section entitled "Inscriptions from Odeum" appended to the back of the book.

¹⁰ WOOD 1877, 47. See below chap. 9 sculp. 1.1.

¹¹ See below chap. 9 sculp. 2.1 and 2.2.

¹² WOOD 1877, 49–51.

¹³ KALINOWSKI – TAEUBER 2001, 351–357.

¹⁴ FITTSCHEN 1999, 130. See below chap. 9, for FITTSCHEN's reconstruction and the contribution of KALINOWSKI and TAEUBER. That the *scaenae frons* included members of the imperial family was noted by J. KEIL, cf. KEIL 1955a, 566–567 (Vedius 3), and BALTY 1991, 514.

¹⁵ The excavations in and in front of the Bouleuterion began on September 7 and concluded on November 11. WILBERG's field notebooks, now housed in the archive of the Austrian Archaeological Institute, Vienna, contain much information about the structure and design of the building.

¹⁶ WILBERG 1909, 207–214.

positions. Doorways indicated in Wood's plan as piercing both *analemmata* at their outer ends were indicated by Wilberg as having given access to the vaulted staircases that led to the *diazoma* between the *ima* and *summa caveae*.¹⁷

Wilberg observed correctly that the broad intercolumniations of the colonnade had to be reinforced at some time after its original construction by the insertion of additional columns, and that these were omitted only in the area directly in front of the central of five doorways that allowed passage into the Odeion. He also noted, however, the lack of organic connection between the two structures.¹⁸ Contrasting the crude workmanship of the doorjambs with the fine profile of the wall molding which they cut, and citing the coarse steps inserted in the doorways to equalize the levels of these adjacent spaces, he concluded correctly that the Odeion was built sometime after the "Stierkopfhalle" had been completed.

A report of the season's work by R. Heberdey, published in 1912, included important epigraphic evidence for the Odeion's building history.¹⁹ A fragmentary entablature block combining architrave and frieze, found on the stage, bore part of a dedicatory inscription naming Papiane, wife of P. Vedius Antoninus, the Ephesian benefactor already known from the Imperial letters discovered by Wood. A second inscription, cut in a frieze block that had been carved separately from its architrave, contained a formulaic reference to Artemis and the city of Ephesos. Relating the blocks themselves to the six pedestals that flanked the stage doorways, Heberdey, most certainly at the advice of W. Wilberg, correctly envisioned a two-story aedicular facade "of the usual Roman type".²⁰

Our understanding of the actual form of this *scaenae frons* was confused, however, by W. Wilberg's original ground plan in which the long stretches of the scene wall had been inadvertently represented as broad, column-bearing pedestals. Heberdey's report included the first published photograph to show the excavated building's interior (pls. 5, 2; 6, 1).²¹

Of great interest is a series of about a dozen unpublished drawings by W. Wilberg that are preserved in the archive of the Austrian Archaeological Institute (the ÖAI) (pls. 6, 2–11, 1).²² They are carefully annotated dimensioned sketches, some drawn to a scale of 1 : 100, that seem to have been prepared with a more comprehensive survey in mind which was, however, never carried out. The Institute's archive also contains a set of fine, high-resolution photographs taken after the *cavea* was completely cleared of debris (pls. 11, 2–12, 2). Both photographs and drawings are invaluable as they show the state of preservation prior to restoration work undertaken by the Selçuk Museum between 1960 and 1990 and record features which have not survived.

Equally important are the meticulous notebooks kept by J. Keil, excavation epigrapher during the 1908 season. These "Skizzenbücher", also housed in the ÖAI, contain the inscriptions found in the Odeion as well as those in Wood's dump that was cleared to reveal the "Stierkopfhalle." J. Keil was a good draftsman and it is to his credit that he not only recorded the texts but took great care to record the stones on which they were inscribed. His patience and skill as a "Bauforscher" have made it possible to reconstruct hypothetically the *scaenae frons* to which most of them belonged. His annotated drawings are especially precious because most of the stones he recorded have since disappeared.²³

Exploration conducted at Ephesos between the wars concentrated on large monuments like the so-called Serapeion and the great *thermae*. The Odeion was presented more or less as a completed project in the first guide book to the ruins by J. Keil,²⁴ published originally in 1915 and in a revised edition in 1930.²⁵ When excavations recommenced after World War II, the new director, F. Miltner, abandoned the traditional approach (already being criticized as old-fashioned) that emphasized the intensive study of individual monuments to

¹⁷ WILBERG 1909, fig. 109.

¹⁸ WILBERG 1909, 213.

¹⁹ HEBERDEY 1912, 170–174.

²⁰ HEBERDEY 1912, 171.

²¹ HEBERDEY 1912, fig. 134. Also, fig. 132 for a distant view from the south.

²² ÖAI Inv. 1395/2–4. 6–9. 11. 12 and 1396.

²³ See Skizzenbücher for 1908, no. 1685–1687.

²⁴ KEIL 1915, 74–76 and fig. 36. 37.

²⁵ KEIL 1930a, 91–93. fig. 53. 54. The text was not changed in the subsequent editions, s. KEIL 1955b, 100–101 fig. 64. 65; KEIL 1957, 114–116; KEIL 1964, 130–132 fig. 73. 74.

concentrate on what he called “kultur- und stadtgeschichtlich wichtige Fragen.”²⁶ He wanted to understand Ephesos as an organic entity both in terms of time and space.

To achieve this, he connected the lower city with the area of the Odeion further to the east by rapidly clearing the main thoroughfare which was named “Kuretenstraße” after the lists of Curetes discovered inscribed on columns that had been reused in Late Antiquity for arcades at its western end.²⁷ In the process, he uncovered, immediately to the west of the Odeion, a complex of structures which he soon recognized as comprising the sacro-political center of the city (pl. 1).

F. Miltner was essentially correct in his interpretation; a square chamber with four pedestals at the corners bearing columns heart-shaped in cross-section, and what appeared to be the foundations for a hearth in the center, could reasonably be identified as the sanctuary of Hestia Boulaia by a dedicatory inscription found reused in a late wall, while “Kuretenlisten” inscribed in the marble foundation and walls in an anteroom to the south identified the complex as the city’s Prytaneion.²⁸ He forced the evidence, however, by attempting to identify late features built of brick between the columns in the central chamber, or “Hestiasaal”, as benches used by the members of the City Council at their meetings, thus attributing to the complex the additional function of a Bouleuterion.²⁹

This theory, accepted initially by W. Alzinger,³⁰ was soon to be generally rejected, but was important because it raised, for the first time, the question of where the members of the Ephesian City Council met to conduct official business, and focused new interest on the “Odeion” immediately to the east while pointing up the necessity of fieldwork for a proper reevaluation. F. Eichler, who succeeded to the post of excavation director after F. Miltner’s death, seems to have been expressing a ground swell of largely unpublished opinion when he wrote in 1965:

*“Durch den jüngsten Befund hinter dem Ostteil der Basilika wird die bisherige Deutung des ‘Odeums’ als Bühnengebäude vor allem wegen zu geringer Tiefe der vermeintlichen Bühne äußerst fraglich, vielmehr drängt sich die Bestimmung als Versammlungsbau auf, wie solche in anderen Städten dem Rathausbereich angehören. Das ‘Odeum’ wäre demnach das Bouleuterion der Zeit ab der Mitte des 2. Jh.s n. Chr. gewesen.”*³¹

The Odeion/Bouleuterion question was put on a sounder footing with E. Fossel’s study of the building’s remains published in 1967 in the Festschrift in honor of F. Eichler.³² Fossel argued on the basis of her close scrutiny of masonry and structural details, and on its topographic situation in what was already being called the “Regierungsviertel,” that the so-called Odeion was in fact the city’s Bouleuterion. Her illustrative material was less than adequate and she often stopped short of driving a point home, leaving the reader to draw his own conclusions, but her observations were essentially sound and could serve as a starting point for further study.

Most important for her argument was the lack of a proper scene building; she noted that the closed space between the Bouleuterion and the Stoa immediately to its south had resulted from a secondary insertion of short connecting walls and served not as a true backstage corridor with facilities for performers, but as a catchment for rainwater which poured down from both roofs into a (then newly discovered) water channel in its floor. Furthermore, Fossel saw the *pulpitum* as being too narrow for the dramatic performances that would have taken place in an Odeion. She noted without further comment that the column-bearing pedestals of the *scaenae frons* were not bonded with the stage wall, an observation that implied a simple façade without a scenic apparatus resembling Bouleuteria on the Hellenistic model of Miletus and Priene.³³ However, with this study, the

²⁶ MILTNER 1955, 40.

²⁷ MILTNER 1955, 23–40. For subsequent reports, the last published after MILTNER’s death, see MILTNER 1956–58, 1–63; MILTNER 1959a, 243–314.

²⁸ MILTNER 1956–58, 28–37; for the lists of Curetes s. KNIBBE 1981. New investigations on the Prytaneion were begun in 2007 under the direction of M. STESKAL, Austrian Archaeological Institute.

²⁹ MILTNER 1959a, 296–312.

³⁰ ALZINGER 1962, 222–226. In contrast, BAMMER 1961–63, 151, plan no. 53 and p. 156, identified the so-called Sockelbau, the sub-structure for the Chalkidicum terminating the Basilica Stoa on the West, with the city’s Bouleuterion.

³¹ EICHLER 1966, 9; ALZINGER, 1972–75, 254, suggested to F. Miltner already in 1956 that the so-called Odeion was actually the city’s Bouleuterion but received no positive response.

³² FOSSEL 1967.

³³ FOSSEL 1967, 79; s. also MEINEL 1980, 117–118.

identity of the building as an essentially political rather than theatrical monument seemed for the first time to be firmly established.

E. Fossel's observation that the marble facing of the *analemma* walls bore vertical seams, and that the masonry behind it differed on both sides of these seams, suggested a secondary enlargement. She did not pursue the point or attempt to offer a date of construction for the original building, and we were left instead with F. Eichler's remark: "So bliebe noch die Frage nach dem bisher vergeblich gesuchten älteren Bouleuterion zu lösen."³⁴

The possibility of an earlier Bouleuterion underlying the standing one had already begun to present itself in 1960 as early remains started to appear in deep trenches in the Prytaneion.³⁵ In spring of 1961, W. Alzinger attempted to test this hypothesis by excavating in the orchestra.³⁶ After lifting the marble paving, the semicircular space was divided into three north-south segments which were dug in turn (pls. 13, 1–14, 1). Work progressed in 50 cm layers to a total depth of 1.50 m producing significant numbers of Megarian bowl sherds in addition to Hellenistic utilitarian wares.³⁷ Two parallel water channels were revealed running down the center and some scanty remains of walls appeared near the curved podium on the west side (pl. 14, 2). In the east corner of the orchestra immediately beneath the base molding of the *cavea* podium was a massive (foundation?) wall preserved to three courses. It consisted of large blocks laid without mortar as headers and stretchers and seemed to represent the northwest corner of some structure which disappeared under the *cavea* and the *pulpitum*.³⁸ None of this, however, could be construed as belonging to theatrical architecture.

Sondages in the "Stierkopfhalle" dug in 1966 revealed an older, single-aisled Hellenistic Stoa with a stylobate ca. 1.30 m deeper than that of what was by this time known to have been an Augustan Basilica.³⁹ In 1968, Alzinger sunk two trenches against the Basilica's rear wall (S 4/68 and S 8/68)⁴⁰ and discovered in each a seam where this late Hellenistic predecessor abutted the front corners of an early building.⁴¹ The west corner was aligned with a wall of large blocks which underlay the east stylobate of the "Rhodian Peristyle" immediately adjacent to the Bouleuterion.⁴² The second seam, 28.80 m to the east, suggested another north-south wall parallel to the first which Alzinger hoped would prove to be the east wall of a Hellenistic Council House. As this wall had not been picked up in the previous excavations, the orchestra was reopened in 1970, and a broad trench was dug concurrently in the *pulpitum* (pls. 15, 1–2). The latter produced foundations which Alzinger believed to be Hellenistic, but nothing lined up with the seams in the front wall.⁴³ As no further archaeological evidence seemed likely to appear, W. Alzinger eventually took advantage of the less formal forum a "Festschrift" can provide to present his arguments for the existence of a Hellenistic Bouleuterion beneath the Roman one (pl. 15, 3).⁴⁴

While the search for the original Bouleuterion proceeded, excavation was carried out in the narrow corridor behind the scene wall where the deep water channel had been discovered in 1966.⁴⁵ Work progressed in segments from east to west and produced numerous finds including relief sculpture and statuary, but none of this could be definitely connected with the Bouleuterion. However, fragmentary inscriptions from the canal and

³⁴ EICHLER 1966, 9.

³⁵ See the excavation reports: EICHLER 1961, 68 f.; EICHLER 1962, 38–39. See also below chap. 3.1.

³⁶ For a brief notice on this work, EICHLER 1962, 41. A detailed account of the work appears in W. ALZINGER's fieldbooks for 1961 housed in the archive of the Austrian Archaeological Institute in Vienna. See entries for April 24–30 and August 13–15.

³⁷ EICHLER 1962, 41. The finds currently could not be retrieved in the depot at the excavation house (A. GIULIANI and Ch. ROGL, via personal communication).

³⁸ An entry in ALZINGER's notebook for April 30, 1961 gives the average block dimensions as 1.00 m 0.50 m 0.80 m. He assumes this wall to be Hellenistic. The upper surface is visible today and is shown in the state plan (plan 1).

³⁹ EICHLER 1967, 20; EICHLER 1968, 82.

⁴⁰ On these trenches s. MITSOPOULOS-LEON – LANG-AUINGER 2007, 4–8.

⁴¹ ALZINGER 1988, 23 fig. 4, 5.

⁴² SCHERRER 2000, 84.

⁴³ The sondage in the stage was designated S 6/1970. These excavations are described in ALZINGER's Fieldbook for Spring, 1970, May 1 – 31. See also chap. 3.1.

⁴⁴ ALZINGER 1988, 21–29; ALZINGER 1988, 25 mentions a sondage in the orchestra in 1986, see fig. 18 in this volume. There is no record on the finds.

⁴⁵ Brief mentions in EICHLER 1967, 16, 20. The work is described in ALZINGER's notebooks for spring, 1966 I (along with an inventory of finds and "Fundskizzen"), and spring, 1968 I, p. 21. The contents of this channel will be published separately.

from the Basilica, also at this time being thoroughly cleared of the dumps from earlier excavations, can now be connected with the epigraphic materials recorded by J. Keil and shown to have belonged to the Bouleuterion's *scaenae frons*.⁴⁶

By this time, the building appeared to be sufficiently well-known to invite special studies focusing on the various aspects of structure, design and function. R. Meinel, in his important study, "Das Odeion", published in 1982, offered the most thorough technical building description to date and was able to suggest tentative solutions to problems of roofing, drainage, and fenestration.⁴⁷ Basing his arguments largely, if not entirely, on published materials and on E. Fossel's observations, he presented the building as a Council House which was remodelled as an Odeion, or small, roofed theater, by P. Vedius Antoninus in the mid-2nd century A.D., probably to accommodate musical performances connected with the *Hadrianeia*, a festival celebrated at Ephesos for the seventh time in 151/152.⁴⁸

It is remarkable that all speculation on the building's form – its changes over time and hypothetical reconstruction – has, to the present day, been based on little more than the diagrammatic ground plan published by Wilberg in 1909 as a summary of his intensive study of the monument. No sections or elevations have ever appeared. Nor have analytic drawings been presented to demonstrate the succession of building phases. In an article in the "Festschrift" for D. Knibbe, intended as a pilot project for the present monograph, I offered a new plan based on my initial observations and W. Wilberg's unpublished drawings.⁴⁹ Some of my conclusions about the Bouleuterion's form and chronological development have had to be revised as a result of further examination of the remains. What follows here is, in large part, a thorough study of the building's fabric as a basis for understanding the place of the Bouleuterion in the historical topography of Ephesos.

The chronology of the two main phases of the Roman Bouleuterion presented in this study is based on typological comparisons, on construction and masonry technique and on epigraphic evidence.⁵⁰ The early excavations of the mid-19th century focused on architecture, sculpture and inscriptions. They were not carried out according to stratigraphic methods, therefore small finds and coins cannot be drawn upon as dating evidence. In the course of his search for a Hellenistic Bouleuterion underlying the Roman one, Alzinger sunk several trenches in the 1960s and 1970s. The architectural remains which were discovered below the Roman Bouleuterion are too fragmentary to reconstruct a Hellenistic predecessor, though.⁵¹ The small finds and coins unearthed in these sondages are not stratified, too, and are therefore of no value to chronology.⁵² This volume is focused on the Roman Bouleuterion.

Currently, new large scale excavations are not planned in the area of the Bouleuterion. This study presents the evidence at hand, accumulated over more than 150 years.

(L. Bier)

⁴⁶ Archive of the Austrian Archaeological Institute, Inventar der Fundstücke A, M, W 1963–65 Ephesos I, p. 283–284. These are now housed in the inscription depot beneath the Domitian terrace. See below chap. 8 and Appendix 1.

⁴⁷ MEINEL 1980, 117–133, 315–319.

⁴⁸ MEINEL 1980, 125–133; LÄMMER 1967, 39–55.

⁴⁹ BIER 1999, 7–18.

⁵⁰ See chap. 7.

⁵¹ See chap. 3.1.

⁵² For the finds from the trench sunk in the orchestra and the *pulpitum* in 1970, see chap. 3.1.