

The foundations of the building lying along the south parodos (side-entrance) of the theatre were identified with the temple of Hera. It comprised two rooms and was probably built before the re-establishment of the city around 370 BC. The cult statue was made by the famous 4th cent. sculptor Praxiteles.

Next to the Heraio at the south are the remains of another building identified with the Sanctuary of Zeus Soter (Saviour).

At the back of the scene of the theatre lie the foundations of two temple-like buildings dated to Roman times. Twin temples of this type are possibly related to the imperial cult. The remains of a construction dated to the Late Geometric (8th cent. BC) and the Archaic period (7th – early 5th cent. BC) found recently under the foundations of the south building give new evidence about the early history of the site. This construction is probably related to religious ceremonies.

The city plan and the fortification wall

According to the evidence available, the city plan consisted of an extensive network of horizontal and vertical streets forming rectangular city-blocks.

You have the opportunity to see a restricted section of the urban space by visiting the two edifices that were partly excavated in the past and are now included in the second suggested route. The first building is identified as a private house (villa) and the second possibly as a basilica.

At the last part of the route you have the chance to visit the remains of the imposing walls built in the 4th cent. BC. The circuit comprised around 120 towers and at least eight gates. The Gate of Tegea, the best preserved of the circuit, was the starting point of the road that led to the neighboring territory of Tegea. This road also linked Mantineia with the sanctuary of Poseidon Hippius (related to the horses), the protector god of the city, that was probably located to the contemporary village of Melia.



The Gate of Tegea



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF MANTINEIA



ENHANCEMENT OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE OF MANTINEIA

Photograph on the front page: Relief plaque probably depicting the priestess

Diotima from Mantinea

National Archaeological Museum, Athens/

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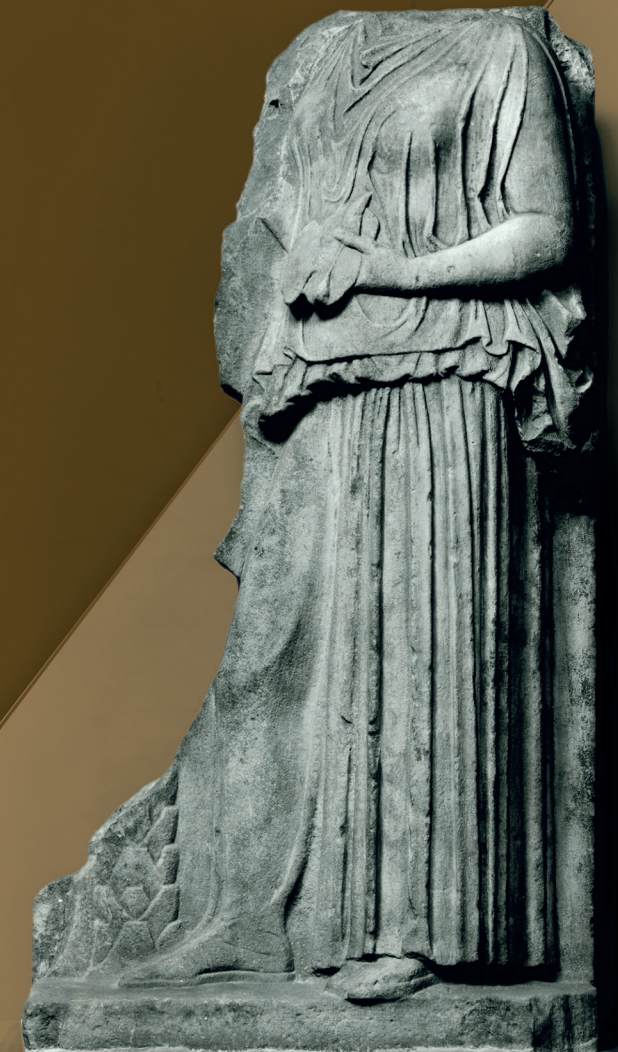


ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
Τπουργείο Πολιτισμού και Αθλητισμού



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Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης





MANTINEIA AND THE MANTINIKE

Mantineia and its territory, the Mantinike, occupied the northern part of the Tripolis plateau during antiquity. The hills to the North and a narrow valley to the South separated the Mantinike from the arcadian territories of Orchomenos and Tegea respectively. Mount Artemision constituted the eastern boundary between the Mantineian territory and Argolis. A defensive network of observatories on top of hills ensured the overall control of this flat territory.

The mythic founder of the city was Mantineas, the grandson of the ancestor of the Arcadians, Pelasgos. "Μαντινική έρατεινή", which means contented Mantinea, is what Homer calls it. The hill Gortsouli was initially the seat of the Mycenaean sovereign of the region and later became the main religious center of the local communities.

The foundation of the city took place after the union of the surrounding communities (synoecism), right after the Persian Wars (478 BC), although it is also possible to place the date earlier (c. 550 BC). The controversy with Sparta led to the destruction of the first city by king Agesipolis in 385 BC. In 370 BC the city was re-founded in the same position under the initiative of the Theban general Epaminondas. In 223 BC the Macedonian king Antigonos III Doson conquered and plundered the city, which to his honor was renamed Antigoneia. The Roman Emperor Hadrian (2nd cent. AD) restored the former name of the city. Mantinea was abandoned during the 6th-7th cent. AD due to Slavic invasions and the inhabitants moved to Messenia.

Mantineia, known from the descriptions of Pausanias (a traveler and researcher of the 2nd cent. AD), was excavated by a French archaeological expedition under the direction of G. Fougères at the end of the 19th century.



THE AGORA AND ITS MONUMENTS

The Agora of Mantinea is of rectangular shape measuring 160 x 90 m. Its monuments date to the Roman Imperial Age (1st- 4th cent. AD), when several of the early buildings were replaced or reconstructed. Imagine an especially imposing place characterized by impressive entrances, framed by stoas in its three sides.

The theatre, also used for public assemblies, defines the west side of the Agora. Its construction coincides with the re-foundation of the city soon after 370 BC. The auditorium (κοίλον) with an estimated capacity of around 6.200 spectators, was formed on flat ground through the concentration of soil. What is preserved today are the lower rows of seats (έδώλια), divided by eight stairways in seven kerkides. At the back of the unpaved orchestra (performance area) the remains of the scene building lay.

Situated to the north-east of the theatre you can see the hero-shrine of Podares. It is a temple-like building dedicated to Podares, a Mantinean who died heroically during the battle of Mantinea (362 BC).



The north sector

Near the Doric stoa and the north entrance of the Agora, the so-called exedra of Epigone is located. It is a semi-circular two-storeyed construction 38 m in diameter that was divided into a number of rooms. This monument is founded on an earlier building of rectangular plan, which is identified with the Agora of the Classical and Hellenistic city.

To the east of the exedra lays the edifice identified with the makellos of Epigone. It was a fenced space of rectangular shape, consisting of workshops and shops arranged around a central paved courtyard.

These impressive buildings were constructed during the 1st cent. AD owing to the sponsorship of Euphrosynos and Epigone, a couple of Mantineans.



The south and east sector

Toward the east end of the southern long side there is a building of rectangular plan identified as the Bouleuterion, the meeting place for the council (boule) of the city. The building consists of two one-aisled stoas sharing a common back wall. The north one is winged with a row probably of ionic columns in the front and was constructed in the late 4th cent. BC. In the Roman period the second stoa possibly Ionic as well was built. The west end of this complex was remodeled in Roman times to provide what was apparently a temple-like building dedicated probably to the imperial cult.

On the south-east corner of the Agora you have the opportunity to explore the complex of the public baths. It was constructed most likely during the 2nd cent. AD and remained in use until the Late Roman period. The baths comprised the cold bath chamber, rooms for warm and hot baths and a number of rooms serving multiple purposes.