

Introduction

Natalia Toma – Frank Rumscheid

Almost every Greek or Roman building, whose aboveground architecture is at least partially preserved, exhibits signs of incompleteness, mostly in form of undecorated mouldings or unfinished surfaces. Comprehensive studies devoted to this well-known phenomenon are still pending though. Hans Lauter's article 'Künstliche Unfertigkeit. Hellenistische Bossensäulen' (1983) and Thanassis E. Kalpaxis' monograph 'Hemiteles. Akzidentelle Unfertigkeit und "Bossenstil" in der griechischen Baukunst' (1986) were primarily focused on the definition of incompleteness and on the potential of unfinished stages for the development of accepted new architectural forms. Unfinished details are often discussed in publications concerning single buildings and in many cases the authors are proposing individual reasons, which may indeed sometimes have played a role: the imminent visit of the Emperor, changing priorities for the use of available resources or death of the builder-owner, etc. Such reasons can however hardly explain the ubiquitous phenomenon of incompleteness, and therefore one should rather look for 'system errors' in all areas of ancient construction. On this topic, which could only partially be dealt with in the panel and, for which not only archaeologists and researchers of ancient architecture are to be consulted, but also epigraphists, economic and legal historians, should be asked the following questions:

- Which originally unfinished architectural details were regarded as flaws and which were accepted as new architectural forms? When and how did the ancient definition and perception of 'unfinished' change?
- Which notions and/or models were used in the tender-invitations or building-contracts and to what extent had a construction to be completed in order to be accepted and to go into operation?
- Were unfinished surfaces or architectural details for less visible construction sections deliberately planned to reduce time and costs of construction?
- Cost savings of what extent made unfinished surfaces acceptable? Is it therefore conceivable that financial shortages led to the acceptance of certain unfinished details?
- How substantial was the time saving when carving details remained unfinished? Was the time factor so relevant that short deadlines were only to be kept by leaving details incomplete?
- Did the specific organization of the construction site and the efficient professional specialisation of the craftsmanship favor the phenomenon of unfinished details?
- Are there any written sources or material evidence for not accepted and afterwards removed incomplete parts?
- To what extent did the unfinished architectural details influence the material and aesthetic value of a building?

Even if not all questions could be answered exhaustively, the panel lectures, which we present here only in the form of extended abstracts, offered so many interesting case

studies and conclusions that we decided to publish the contributions in detail and with appropriate illustrations as a supplement of the Bonner Jahrbücher.