



A unique archaeological monument is gradually revealed in the city centre, near Hefaistos street. It is about a Roman stadium, with a double arch, and there are only two other similar ones, in Rome and in Minor Asia.

After a thirty-year effort, demolitions have started and the subsequent gradual revelation of the stadium, near the Roman Conservatory. A significant building of the 1st century AD, only partly excavated. Only a part is visible, however, and it is situated in Hefaistos St. below St. George Square, near the Conservatory.

An important public building of roman Patra is the amphitheatre, which is gradually being brought to light at the centre of the modern city. In particular, the building occupies the slope and the flat area below St. George Square, in a place neighbouring the roman conservatory which could be said to be the area of spectacles of the ancient city. Architectural remains of the building are gradually revealed, since the area above that is structured. The estimated dimensions of this oblong building are ca. 200X90m., its narrow sides are shaped in the form of a horse-shoe and a sling. The north side, which has been discovered, has an entrance gate while the south side may lie below Pantanassa church and may also have had an entrance gate. The main entrance was at its western, long side. The largest and best preserved part of the Amphitheatre has been excavated at its eastern, long side which is perched on a natural terrace. Hereby, there are 2 or 3 tiers, but the stone benches have been removed. Beneath these tiers, there are preserved underground passageways and various rooms that served as assistant space. This is the biggest united part of the amphitheatre that has been revealed and is visible.

The above complex is located in the area where Paphsaniias mentions he has met a theatre; a fact that causes concerns about its identification. It is likely to be the ancient roman stadium of

the city, work-of-art of the Dometianus era which was probably donated to Patra by the emperor himself to celebrate the colony's 100th anniversary. If this assumption is right, its construction may have been realised between 80 and 90 A.D. Paphsanias' reference of the word "theatre" is not the only one found in antiquity that refers to the stadium, since it signifies the place of the spectators' seats. In the arena of the stadium, there must have been organised sports, musical and theatrical contests, but also the famous roman predator fights and duels. From the city of Patras, there are saved relieves and inscriptions depicting gladiators, while a big mosaic floor of a roman house in Ipsila Alonia, has images of sports, poetry, musical and theatrical contests.

Source: <http://monuments.hpclab.ceid.upatras.gr>

Photos: [www.infocenterpatras.gr](http://www.infocenterpatras.gr)