

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910774734503321
Titolo	Corona und Nachbarschaft : Qualitative Untersuchung zu Corona und Nachbarschaft in zwei Berliner Bezirken
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Universitätsverlag der Technischen Universität Berlin
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
2. Record Nr.	UNINA9910786804203321
Titolo	Greek theatre in the fourth century B.C. // edited by Eric Csapo [and three others] ; contributors, Zachary Biles [and eighteen others]
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Berlin, [Germany] ; ; Boston, [Massachusetts] : , : De Gruyter, , 2014 ©2014
ISBN	3-11-037368-8 3-11-033755-X
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (590 p.)
Classificazione	AP 64940
Disciplina	792.0938
Soggetti	Theater - Greece - History - To 500 Theater - Greece - Athens - History - To 500 Theater - Greece - History Greek drama - History and criticism Greece Antiquities
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Description based upon print version of record.
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and indexes.
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Sommario/riassunto

Age-old scholarly dogma holds that the death of serious theatre went hand-in-hand with the 'death' of the city-state and that the fourth century BC ushered in an era of theatrical mediocrity offering shallow entertainment to a depoliticised citizenry. The traditional view of fourth-century culture is encouraged and sustained by the absence of dramatic texts in anything more than fragments. Until recently, little attention was paid to an enormous array of non-literary evidence attesting, not only the sustained vibrancy of theatrical culture, but a huge expansion of theatre throughout (and even beyond) the Greek world. Epigraphic, historiographic, iconographic and archaeological evidence indicates that the fourth century BC was an age of exponential growth in theatre. It saw: the construction of permanent stone theatres across and beyond the Mediterranean world; the addition of theatrical events to existing festivals; the creation of entirely new contexts for drama; and vast investment, both public and private, in all areas of what was rapidly becoming a major 'industry'. This is the first book to explore all the evidence for fourth century ancient theatre: its architecture, drama, dissemination, staging, reception, politics, social impact, finance and memorialisation.
