

The Conditions of Dramatic Production to the Death of Aeschylus

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STUDENTS of ancient history sometimes fall into the error of reading their history backwards. They assume that the features of a fully developed institution were already there in its earliest form. Something similar seems to have happened recently in the study of the early Attic theatre. Thus T. B. L. Webster introduces his excellent list of monuments illustrating tragedy and satyr-play with the following sentences: "Nothing, except the remains of the old Dionysos temple, helps us to envisage the earliest tragic background.

The references to the plays of Aeschylus are to the lines of the Loeb edition. I am most grateful to G. S. Kirk, H. D. F. Kitto, D. W. Lucas, F. H. Sandbach, B. A. Sparkes and Homer Thompson for their criticisms, which have contributed greatly to the final form of this article. The students of the Classical Society at Bristol produce a Greek play each year, and on one occasion they combined with the boys of Bristol Grammar School and the Cathedral School to produce Aeschylus' *Oresteia*; they have made me think about the problems of staging.

The following abbreviations are used: AAG: *The Athenian Agora, a Guide to the Excavation and Museum*² (Athens 1962). ARNOTT, *Conventions*: P. D. Arnott, *Greek Scenic Conventions in the Fifth Century B.C.* (Oxford 1962). BIBBER, *History*: M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre*² (Princeton 1961). BROADHEAD, *Persae*: H. D. Broadhead, ed. *The Persae of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1960). DENNISTON-PAGE, *Agam.*: J. D. Denniston and D. L. Page, edd. *Aeschylus' Agamemnon* (Oxford 1957). DINSMOOR: W. B. Dinsmoor, "The Athenian Theater of the Fifth Century," *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson I* (St Louis 1952) 309-30. DÖRPFELD, *Theater*: W. Dörpfeld, *Das griechische Theater* (Athens 1896). FIECHTER, *Theater*: E. Fiechter, *Das Dionysos-Theater in Athen* (Stuttgart 1935). GARVIE, *Supplices*: A. F. Garvie, *Aeschylus' Supplices: Play and Trilogy* (Cambridge 1969). PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE, *Theatre*: A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theatre of Dionysus in Athens* (Oxford 1946). PICKARD-CAMBRIDGE-WEBSTER, *DTC*²: A. W. Pickard-Cambridge, *Dithyramb, Tragedy and Comedy*, 2nd ed. rev. by T. B. L. Webster (Oxford 1962). SÉCHAN: L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique*² (Paris 1967). THOMSON, *Oresteia*: G. Thomson, ed. *The Oresteia of Aeschylus* (Cambridge 1938). VERRALL, *Eumenides*: A. W. Verrall, ed. *The Eumenides of Aeschylus* (London 1908). WEBSTER, *AGT*: T. B. L. Webster, "Staging and Scenery in the Ancient Greek Theatre," *BullRylands* 42 (1960) 493-509. WEBSTER, *Monuments*: T. B. L. Webster, *Monuments illustrating Tragedy and Satyr Play*, *BICS Suppl.* 14 (London 1962). WEBSTER, *Production*: T. B. L. Webster, *Greek Theatre Production*² (London 1970). WYCHERLEY, *Agora*: *The Athenian Agora III, Literary and Epigraphical Testimonia*, by R. E. Wycherley (Princeton 1957).

For the theatre which lasted from *ca.* 470–20 B.C. a stage building with an ekkyklema must be assumed for *Persae*, *Eumenides*, *Ajax* etc.”¹ Again, in the second edition of his *Greek Theatre Production*, “in fact the *Persae*, like all later plays, demands a stage-building with a practicable door, unless we should rather think of Dareios appearing on the roof of his tomb.”² Similarly, P. D. Arnott refers the raised stage and a building at the back of the *orchestra* to the time of the earliest plays.³

In this article I work forward from the performances in the villages to those in the Agora, and thence to the early performances in the precinct of Dionysus, the early plays of Aeschylus and finally the *Oresteia*. In so doing I have attempted to dismiss from my mind all preconceptions and in particular the physical image of the later theatre. There is something new to be said about the production of plays in the Agora in consequence of the American excavations. The vindication by W. B. Dinsmoor⁴ of Dörpfeld’s report on the site of the present theatre in the precinct of Dionysus has encouraged me to look with a fresh eye at his discoveries and to make some new inferences. The most important evidence still lies within the plays themselves. In studying them I have kept to the chronological order, as far as it is known, and I have discussed the *Oresteia* apart from the other plays. Contemporary vase-paintings, though few in number, make a significant contribution. The article falls into the following sections. I. Literary tradition and archaeological evidence. II. Evidence of the plays excluding the *Oresteia*. III. Vase-paintings in relation to the earliest plays. IV. The evidence of the *Oresteia*. V. The testimonia in relation to the *Oresteia*. VI. Summary of general conclusions.

¹ Webster, *Monuments* 3; *cf.* AGT 498f, esp. 504: “there is no reason to suppose that in fundamentals the theatre of Euripides and Aristophanes looked any different from the theatre of Aeschylus and the theatre of Thespis.” As I am advancing a new view, it is inevitable that I should disagree with the main exponents of the current view, in particular T. B. L. Webster and P. D. Arnott; at the same time I am greatly in their debt, as all students of the ancient theatre are, for their illumination of the subject.

² Webster, *Production* 8; he uses the word ‘roof’ because he has a stage-building in mind here, whereas in *Monuments* 3 he suggested the possibility that “the pyre on the ekkyklema was the method of showing Dareios’ tomb.”

³ Arnott, *Conventions* 1–41, especially 8.

⁴ Dinsmoor 310: “perhaps the chief result of this study is the corroboration of his [Dörpfeld’s] discernment of the facts, as expressed in his great work of 1896 and his sketchy revision of 1925.”

I. Literary Tradition and Archaeological Evidence

The literary tradition has come down to us mainly through very late writers. How do we evaluate it? By the date, say, of Pollux or Themistius, or by the nature of the source on which they drew? The question was posed by Pickard-Cambridge in this form: "What reason have we to think that Pollux knew the names of the 'stage-properties' of the days before Thespis?" He replied himself: "It is very unlikely that Pollux had any such knowledge."⁵ Of course this is correct in the sense that Pollux, writing 700 years after Thespis, knew nothing of himself about such matters; but this does not preclude Pollux from having drawn his information from a source which did have knowledge. The same might be said of Themistius, writing 150 years later than Pollux; and it so happens that Themistius mentions his source, who was Aristotle. My own supposition is that these and other late writers—admittedly men of varying ability and capable of error—were not inventing their own theories but were drawing upon the best authorities they could find. Aristotle was one of them, but certainly not the earliest; for Plutarch and Athenaeus presumably derived some of Sophocles' sayings, as Webster remarks,⁶ from Sophocles' own work, *On the Chorus*, that is 'On Tragedy', whether directly or indirectly. Nor is Sophocles likely to have been the only writer on the topic in the fifth century; it was an age in which specialist works were written on the techniques of the literary arts, and in no other literary form was Athens so famous as in drama. The only treatise of this specialist genre which has survived, the *Poetics* of Aristotle, omits certain aspects of the development of early tragedy expressly because they were well known, undoubtedly through earlier expositions of the subject.⁷

We may then rephrase the question: "What reason have we to think that Sophocles (or a contemporary writer) knew the names of

⁵ Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 87.

⁶ T. B. L. Webster, *Sophocles* (Oxford 1936) 7f.

⁷ *Poet.* 1449a28 and 36: "Let the traditions of the individual development of the other aspects (of tragedy) be taken as told . . . Indeed the stages through which tragedy passed and the originators of them are well known, whereas this is not so in the case of comedy." The examples he goes on to give are "the numbers of actors, the adoption of masks, the introduction of prologues and all such matters." It is thus clear that Aristotle and his pupils had to hand abundant information, presumably written, about the details of early and subsequent tragedy. It was available, too, to the great scholars of the Alexandrian library.

the 'stage-properties' of the days before Thespis?" Let us consider the lifetime of Euphorion. Being born about 555 B.C., he will have seen village performances as a boy and performances 'in the town', that is in the Agora, as an adult from 534 B.C. onwards. His son, Aeschylus, born about 525 B.C., will have seen plays in the Agora as a boy and a young man. His own first play, *ca.* 499 B.C., was produced perhaps in the Agora or perhaps in the precinct of Dionysus in the first year in which the theatre there was used. Thus the memories which Aeschylus could retail to Sophocles (who was deeply influenced by him) spanned all the phases of early dramatic performance in Attica at which tragedy, dithyramb and satyr-play were presented. In short we have good reason to suppose that Sophocles (or a contemporary writer) knew the name, for instance, of the table on which a soloist stood 'before Thespis'.⁸ If, then, Sophocles (or a contemporary writer) included the name in a treatise on the theatre, it might very well come down to Pollux or a later lexicographer in a correct form.⁹

Let us take as an example a cluster of passages in late lexicographers and commentators which relate to the period before the theatre was built in the precinct of Dionysus. Sometimes a very late lexicographer may have drawn upon one of his predecessors, but it is clear that there was an ultimate source, used perhaps by more than one lexicographer, which contained the information of which we find pieces in the various lexicographers and commentators.

The identity of the source is not in doubt, because the earliest of the lexicographers involved, Hesychius, names him as Eratosthenes and quotes from him. The famous work of Eratosthenes which dealt with the Attic theatre was entitled *On Ancient Comedy*. Written in at least twelve books, it was "his philological masterpiece" and "seems to

⁸ The name Pollux gives at 4.123 is ἐλεός. It is this word which aroused the suspicions of Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 86, and led them to the general proposition that it was very unlikely that Pollux had any such knowledge. E. Hiller suggested in "Zu den Nachrichten über die Anfänge der Tragödie," *RhM* 39 (1884) 321f, that Pollux may have found the word in an early comedy, but the probability which presents itself if one reads Pollux 4.106f consecutively is that he is drawing upon a very full textbook on drama and not delving himself into early plays for rare words.

⁹ The information which Pollux gives on tragedy usually is worthy of respect. For instance, the chapters dealing with the chorus in 4.106-09 are described in the 2nd ed. of Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens*, rev. by J. Gould and D. M. Lewis (Oxford 1968), as being "for the most part unexceptionable and well informed on the technical language of the chorus, its members, and its functions."

have dealt with every aspect of the subject.”¹⁰ As Librarian at Alexandria in the third century B.C. Eratosthenes had at his disposal all available literary sources, including no doubt some fifth-century writings. In the course of his work he dealt with the Agora; for his book was cited by Diogenes Laertius 7.1.5 in connection with the Stoa Poikile and by Harpocration *s.v.* δεκάζων in connection with the law courts and Lycus. The work was much used by lexicographers; indeed Wycherley (*Agora* p.148) remarked of the numerous references to Lycus in the lexicographers that they were “no doubt derived from Eratosthenes.” We seem to have an exactly parallel case in our cluster of passages.

When a lexicographer arranged his entries alphabetically, he might make several entries from one extended passage in his source. Hesychius has evidently done so in the following entries, in the first of which he names Eratosthenes as his source.

(1) **παρ’ αἰγείρου θέα**: Ἐρατοσθένης φησί, ὅτι πλησίον αἰγείρου τινὸς θέα (αἰγείρος δέ ἐστι φυτοῦ εἶδος) ἐγγὺς τῶν ἰκρίων. ἕως οὖν τούτου τοῦ φυτοῦ ἐξετείνετο καὶ κατεσκευάζετο τὰ ἰκρια, ἃ ἐστὶν ὀρθὰ ξύλα, ἔχοντα κανίδας προοδευμένας, οἷον βαθμούς, ἐφ’ αἷς ἐκαθέζοντο, πρὸ τοῦ κατασκευασθῆναι τὸ θέατρον. [Wycherley, *Agora* no.726]

“View from poplar: Eratosthenes says that there is a view near a poplar (a kind of tree) close to the stands. Up to this tree, then, the stands extended and were set up, stands of upright timbers with planks attached, like steps, on which they used to sit, before the theatre was built.” We are left wondering where this poplar was which Eratosthenes described. The answer is given in the next passage.

(2) **αἰγείρου θέα**: αἰγείρος ἦν Ἀθήνησι πλησίον τοῦ ἱεροῦ, ἔνθα πρὶν γενέσθαι θέατρον τὰ ἰκρια ἐπήγνυον. [W. 723]

“Poplar’s view: there was a poplar at Athens near the shrine where they used to fix the stands before a theatre was made.”¹¹ Eratosthenes doubtless named the shrine, but Hesychius does not; where then in Athens were the poplar and the shrine?

(3) **ἄπ’ αἰγείρων**: Ἀνδροκλέα τὸν ἄπ’ αἰγείρων ἀντὶ τοῦ κυκοφάντην, ἐπειδὴ [δέ] ἐκ τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ αἰγείρου τὰ πινάκια ἐξήπτον, τουτέστιν ἐξήρτων, οἱ ἔσχατοι. [W. 724]

¹⁰ R. C. Jebb, in *A Companion to Greek Studies* (Cambridge 1916) 174.

¹¹ See, for instance, Webster, *AGT* 496.

“*From poplars*: Androcles [was called] ‘the man from poplars’ instead of ‘the informer’, since it was from the poplar in the Agora that the verdict-sheets were fastened, that is tied, by the most distant [spectators].” Thus we learn that the poplar was in the Agora, adjacent to the back row of the stands, from which the spectators viewed (what?) before a theatre was built (where?).

(4) **θέα παρ’ αἰγείρω**· τόπος αἰγειρον ἔχων, ὅθεν ἐθεώρουν. εὐτελής δὲ ἐδόκει ἢ ἐντεῦθεν θεωρία· μακρόθεν γὰρ ἦν καὶ εὐώνου ὁ τόπος ἐπωλεῖτο. [W. 725]

“*View by poplar*: a place with a poplar from which they used to watch, the view from there being considered cheap, as it was from far off and the place used to be sold at a fair price.”

There is another passage in Hesychius which refers to the period ‘before the theatre was built’:

(5) **ὠδεῖον**· τόπος ἐν ᾧ πρὶν τὸ θέατρον κατασκευασθῆναι οἱ ραψωδοὶ καὶ οἱ κιθαρῳδοὶ ἠγωνίζοντο. [W. 520]

“*Odeion*: place where, before the theatre was built, the rhapsodes and citharodes used to compete.” The place was probably in the Agora because contests of rhapsodes and citharodes were held there later, and again we may conjecture that Hesychius was drawing on Eratosthenes.

We have seen in Hesychius (3) the citation of Androcles, a demagogue who was mocked by some poets of Old Comedy. Evidently Hesychius got this name from Eratosthenes *On Ancient Comedy*. A citation of the view from the poplar, not in Hesychius, contains a quotation of Cratinus, a writer of Old Comedy, and no doubt the citation of his name comes ultimately from the work of Eratosthenes:

(6) **αἰγείρου θέα. καὶ ἡ παρ’ αἰγειρον θέα**· Ἀθήνησιν αἰγειρος ἦν, ἧς πλησίον τὰ ἴκρια ἐπήγνυντο εἰς τὴν θέαν πρὸ τοῦ θεάτρον γενέσθαι. οὕτω Κρατῖνος. [W. 721]

“*View from poplar and view beside poplar*. At Athens there was a poplar near which they used to fix the stands for the viewing before a theatre was made. So Cratinus.” [*Anecd.Bekk.* I.354,25]

Photius and the *Suda*, being some centuries later than Hesychius, give versions which are probably based on the entries in Hesychius.

(7) **θέαν παρ' αἴγειρον** τὴν πόρρωθεν λέγουσιν· αἴγειρος γὰρ ἦν τῶν ἰκρίων πλησίον. [Photius, W.727]

(8) **ἀπ' αἰγείρου θέα και ἐπ' αἴγειρον** ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσχάτων· αἴγειρος γὰρ ἐπάνω ἦν τοῦ θεάτρου, ἀφ' ἧς οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες τόπον ἐθεώρουν.

[Suda, W.728]

Here we find mention of the poplar being “above the theatre,” which is misleading in a literal sense, as Eratosthenes wrote of there being a poplar-view “before the theatre was built.” The same phrase occurs in a still later author, Eustathius, commenting on *Odyssey* 5.64:

(9) ἦν γοῦν φασι αἴγειρος Ἀθήνησιν ἐπάνω τοῦ θεάτρου, ἀφ' ἧς ἐθεώρουν οἱ μὴ ἔχοντες τόπον. ὅθεν και ἡ ἀπ' αἰγείρου θέα ἐλέγετο. και παρ' αἴγειρον θέα, ἡ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐσχάτων. και ἦν φασι εὐωνοτέρα ἡ παρ' αἴγειρον θέα.

[W. 722]

We may now summarise what Eratosthenes said in his work *On Ancient Comedy*. There was a time when people watched performances from stands which extended as far as a poplar (see 1 and 6) in the Agora (3) near the shrine (2). The most distant seats on the stands were beside the poplar (3, 7 and 8) and these seats were the cheaper ones (4 and 9). On the other hand it was perhaps not Eratosthenes but only the *Suda* and Eustathius who went on to say that those who had no place watched from the poplar itself (8 and 9) and further that the poplar was “above the theatre” (8 and 9). For Eratosthenes stated that the spectators used to sit on the stands “before the (or a) theatre was built” (1, 2 and 6). It is clear also from the citation about the ‘odeion’ (5) that Eratosthenes wrote about the period before the building of the (or a) theatre. If we had no other evidence, we should conjecture with very good reason that the spectators on the stands were watching the shows which were to be shown later in the newly-built theatre, that is, the dramatic performances. We have further evidence, however, that the stands were used for this very purpose before the theatre was built. It occurs in the *Suda* s.v. PRATINAS.

(10) Πρατίνας . . . ἀντηγωνίζετο δὲ Αἰσχύλῳ τε και Χοιρίλῳ ἐπὶ τῆς ο' Ὀλυμπιάδος, και πρῶτος ἔγραψε κατύρους. ἐπιδεικνυμένου δὲ τούτου συνέβη τὰ ἴκρια, ἐφ' ὧν ἐστήκεσαν οἱ θεαταί, πεσεῖν και ἐκ τούτου θεάτρον ὠκοδομήθη Ἀθηναίοις.

Thus the connection which Eratosthenes made between the stands and the building of the theatre is clarified, and we may conjecture with probability that either Eratosthenes himself was the source behind the *Suda*, or else some other scholar who was able to consult the production-lists or *didaskaliai* and ascertain the Olympiad.

The tradition that the Dionysia was held in the Agora before the building of the theatre in the precinct of Dionysus is given also by Photius and Eustathius, both with reference to the stands.

(11) Ἴκρια· τὰ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ ἀφ' ὧν ἐθεῶντο τοὺς Διονυσιακοὺς ἀγῶνας πρὶν ἢ κατασκευασθῆναι τὸ ἐν Διονύσου θέατρον. [W. 525]

(12) ἰστέον δέ, ὅτι Ἴκρια προπαροξυτόνως ἐλέγοντο καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ, ἀφ' ὧν ἐθεῶντο τὸ παλαιὸν τοὺς Διονυσιακοὺς ἀγῶνας, πρὶν ἢ σκευασθῆναι τὸ ἐν Διονύσου θέατρον. [W. 524]

The same tradition is mentioned by Photius with reference to the *orchestra*.

(13) “*Orchestra*: used first as the name of the orchestra in the Agora, and then as the name of the semi-circle at the bottom of the theatre, where the choruses sang and danced.” [W. 526].

That the early performances of tragedies ‘in the city’ should have been in the Agora is not surprising, because it was the obvious place for any very large concourse of people and was indeed used for meetings of the Ecclesia, the viewing of the Panathenaic festival and the competitions of the rhapsodes and citharodes in the sixth century B.C. When Plato wrote of touring companies performing tragedies in the fourth century B.C., he expected them to use the agora of any city they visited (*Leg.* 817c).

I see no justification for the view that the early performances of tragedies were in the precinct of Dionysus on the side of the Acropolis and not in the Agora at all. It is necessary for the supporters of this view first to reject several of the passages we have considered, the interconnexion between them and the attribution to Eratosthenes, and then to select for acceptance one phrase in the latest and least satisfactory passages (8 and 9) and interpret the phrase ‘above the theatre’ to mean above the theatre in the precinct of Dionysus on the side of the Acropolis.

When we put together all the pieces of the literary tradition, which

have come down to us mainly through late authors, we find that they fall into clearly marked chronological stages. I summarise them as follows.

1. Performances in villages 'before Thespis'.

(a) Themist. *Orat.* 26.316D, "do we not believe Aristotle when he says that at first the Chorus came in and sang to the gods, then Thespis invented prologue and speech?"

(b) Diog.Laert. 3.56, "formerly the Chorus by itself performed the whole drama, and later Thespis invented a single actor to give the Chorus a rest."

(c) Ath. 14.630c, "all satyric poetry was composed at first of Choruses, as was tragedy. So they too had no actors."

(d) Poll. 4.134, "the *ἐλεός* was a table long ago, on which before Thespis a single man stood and made answer to the *χορευταί*."

(e) *Etym.Magn.* s.v. *θυμέλη*, "the *θυμέλη* which still exists in the theatre is named from the table because the sacrificial victims were cut up on it. It was the table on which they stood and sang in the fields when tragedy had not yet been organised."

2. Performances in villages, when Thespis was active and the festival had not been established.

(a) Plut. *Vit.Sol.* 29, "When Thespis and his fellows were starting to get tragedy under way . . . but a competitive festival had not been instituted . . . Solon saw Thespis himself acting (*ὑποκρινόμενον*)."

(b) Dioscorides in *Anth.Pal.* 7.410, "I am Thespis who first fashioned tragic poetry, introducing the villagers to new joys."

(c) Hor. *Ars P.* 276-77, "Thespis is said to have invented the (hitherto) unknown form of the Tragic Muse and to have mounted his plays on a wagon to be sung and performed by persons whose faces were stained by wine-lees."

(d) See 1(a).

(e) See 1(b).

3. Performances in the town after *ca.* 534 B.C., with Thespis producing, *i.e.* in the Agora—his inventions in (d) and (e) below being included as operative now, even if invented perhaps in the villages.

(a) *Marm.Par.*, "Thespis the poet first acted, producing a play in the town and the prize was a goat" (*ca.* 534 B.C.).

(b) *Suda s.v. Θέσπις*, “At first he declaimed¹² with white lead on his face, then he shaded his face with purslane in the performance, and after that he introduced the use of masks which he made in linen alone. He produced in the sixty-first Olympiad” (536/5–533/2 B.C.).

(c) Ath. 1.22A, “Thespis, Pratinas, Cratinus and Phrynichus were said to have been called dancers, because they not only made their plays dependent on the dancing of the Chorus but also taught dancing to volunteers apart from their own productions.”

(d) See 1(a), “Thespis invented prologue and speech.”

(e) See 1(b), “Thespis invented a single actor to give the Chorus a rest.”

4. Performances in the Agora without mention of Thespis and sometimes with the added dating ‘before the theatre was made in the precinct of Dionysus’.

(a) Phot. *s.v. ἴκρια*, “The stands in the Agora from which people watched the Dionysiac contests before the theatre was made in the precinct of Dionysus.” See also the passages on this theme cited above on p.391ff.

(b) *Suda s.v. Πρατίνας*, “Pratinas competed against Aeschylus and Choerilus in the 70th Olympiad (500/499–497/6 B.C.) and first wrote satyr-dramas. It was while he was presenting that the ἴκρια on which the spectators stood collapsed, and it was on that account that a theatre was built for the Athenians.”

(c) Phot. *s.v. ὀρχήστρα*, “The name was used first in the Agora, and later for the semicircle below in the theatre where the Choruses sang and danced.”

5. Performances in the precinct of Dionysus, usually with mention of individual playwrights.

In Period 1 the Chorus alone carried out the performance, and the *choreutae* traditionally numbered fifty (Poll. 4.110, a passage cited and discussed on p.418 below). All the Chorus needed was a flat, soil-covered space, circular in shape to fit the ‘circular’ form of dance, and large enough to allow fifty dancers ample space to perform a variety

¹² Here the verb *ἐτραγῳδῆσε* is specific to the first clause and not common to all three parts of the statement. On this account I translate ‘he declaimed’, which is the sense of the verb in Dem. 18.13. The wearing of the purslane (as a headband) was not part of the make-up but part of the performance (*ἐν τῷ ἐπιδείκνυσθαι*); see Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 76 and 79f, who cite contemporary vase-paintings for the use of white lead, and see Ath. 14.621f for the wearing of a floral headband.

of circular dances. We know that the *orchestra* of the Periclean theatre, some 25m. in diameter and some 78m. in circumference, was large enough for the purpose, because choruses of fifty *choreutae* each performed circular dances there in the intertribal competition.¹³ It is difficult to suppose that a smaller space could have accommodated fifty dancers in early tragedy or that the Periclean architects made an *orchestra* substantially bigger than was needed for fifty dancers. I imagine then that the early dancing space was around 25m. in diameter.

Within such an *orchestra*, intended for the performance of the circular dance, any static property has to be placed in the middle.¹⁴ This is where the *thymele* or altar of Dionysus was placed according to the tradition. Indeed *ὄρχήστρα* and *θυμέλη* were sometimes synonymous, and the choric performances were sometimes called *θυμελικοί*.¹⁵

Within Period 1 there was another property, a table¹⁶ on which one person stood and "made answer to the *choreutae*" (the choric performers). This person was by implication not a *χορευτής* starting up an interchange of song within the membership of the chorus (as in an ode by Alcman), but a separate soloist, a singer (for the spoken word, *rhexis*, came only in Period 3), who 'replied' *ἀπεκρίνατο* (not the technical word for an actor speaking, *ὑπεκρίνατο*) to the lyrical song of the chorus. Where there were so many performers, it was essential that the soloist should be seen to be separate and that he should be able to deliver his voice to the audience. That is why he stood on a table. Now if he had stood on a table in the middle of the *orchestra*, he would have had the *choreutae* all around him in the *orchestra* and he would have faced only those who were in front of him. It is therefore better to suppose that he stood on his table in a position apart from the chorus, that is, on the edge of or outside the dancing-space. In such a position he would be ancillary to the main action, namely that of the Chorus. For an analogy in modern drama one thinks of a narrator or commentator who sits on one side (as in Anouilh's *Antigone*).

¹³ Introduced into the state festival towards the end of the tyranny; first recorded victory in 509/8 B.C.

¹⁴ This is obvious when one joins in a modern ring-dance in Greece; see a picture of one in Bieber, *History* fig.865.

¹⁵ The *thymele* seems to have been in the centre of the tumultuous dance in Pratinas, fr.1 ap. Ath. 14.617B; Isid. Orig. 18.47; Anth.Pal. 7.21. See *θυμέλη* in LSJ and A. S. F. Gow in "The Meaning of the Word *θυμέλη*," *JHS* 32 (1912) 213ff.

¹⁶ Poll. 4.123, distinguishing correctly between the *thymele* and the table.

The table was called the *ἐλεός* (see 1[d] above), the carver's table, like the table on which Eumaeus cut up the meat (*Od.* 14.432); such a table has to be exceptionally strong.¹⁷ It would be placed at one side of the *orchestra* to keep the butchering of the sacrificial animals away from the soil-covered dancing-space.

In Period 2 Thespis himself was the soloist in a village performance, if we accept as genuine the setting of the story in *Plut. Vit.Sol.* 29 (see 2[a] above). In any case it is likely enough that the composer took this rôle, and Dioscorides suggests this in *Anth.Pal.* 7.410 (2[b] above).¹⁸ In the language which was used to describe the village performances there seems to have been an overlap of certain terms which were used later to describe comedy on the one hand and tragedy on the other. For example, Dioscorides couples the 'tragic song' and the goat-prize with the *τρυγικός χορός* and the fig-prize, both appropriate to comedy. In the same way, the use of a wagon as a platform from which songs were sung (so Horace in *Ars Poetica* 276–77 = 2[c] above) was common to the traditions of both tragedy and comedy. We may reasonably conjecture that the performances in honour of Dionysus in the villages were to some extent not yet differentiated in terms of later tragedy and comedy, and that the intermingling of terms in the literary tradition which were later particular either to tragedy or to comedy was due rather to the mixed nature of the performances than to any muddle-headedness in individual authors.¹⁹

We may then attribute to Period 2 the features of Period 1, namely a circular soil-covered dancing-space not less than 25m. in diameter which accommodated fifty *choreutae* in action; a *thymele* in the centre of it; and an *eleos* not at the back but at one side of it, on which a soloist stood and sang, addressing the Chorus in responses. As the performances developed and the soloist's words became more important, the audience probably positioned itself on that part of the circumference which he was facing. We may add from the tradition about Period 2 that the composer was sometimes the soloist singer,

¹⁷ As one can see in any butcher's shop today. There is no need to entertain the suggestion (see Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 86) that the author of a similar passage in *Etym.Magn.* s.v. *θυμέλη* thought that the *choreutae* (fifty in number) stood singing on the table.

¹⁸ Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 86, wonder whether the *exarchon* of the Chorus was the soloist. This is not a meaning of *ἐξάρχων* in *LSJ*, and it is not what Pollux and *Etym.Magn.* indicate; it is therefore likely to be someone else.

¹⁹ See Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 74f on this subject.

and that he and probably other persons sometimes stood not on the *eleos* but on a wagon, which was of course not driven onto the *orchestra*, where it would have impeded the dancers, but remained on the edge of the *orchestra*. The tradition which Horace preserves shows that more than one person stood and ‘acted’ on the wagon: *quae canerent agerentque peruncti faecibus ora*. We have clearly to envisage a soloist singer and some mute actors (*κωφὰ πρόσωπα*) miming an action.²⁰ There was already some make-up for the faces of the actors and presumably some dressing-up for the mimed actions, but the limited scope afforded by a wagon means that the actions were represented rather in the form of a series of tableaux.

In Period 3 a national festival was established and the competition was held in the Agora. Any competitive festival lays down rules for its performances and thereby formalises a literary or dramatic genre. After 534 B.C. one may properly speak of Attic tragedy.

The problems of production in the Agora are very considerable. The area is flattish. It has a slight slope down towards the west, but this does not enable one to see over persons standing immediately in front of oneself. As the main performance was the dancing of fifty persons, it was desirable for viewers to be elevated in tiers, if they were to see the pattern of movement and judge the competitors. This was achieved by the construction of stands (*ἵκρια*).²¹ These were probably set up on one side, that is, on one half only of the area adjacent to the circumference of the *orchestra*, so that the performers of the plays (which were produced successively during the day) had open access to the dancing-space. As the festival was a national one, designed for the populace, and as the population in the prosperous period of the tyranny was very considerable, we may suppose that provision was made from the outset for a very large audience. Thus we need an area for the *orchestra* and the stands which approximates rather to that of the Dionysiac theatre than to that of a modern theatre. In order that people on the stands should not be dazzled by the morning and midday sun, it was desirable that the stands should

²⁰ The idea that Horace meant that some touring company “took his plays about on wagons” (Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 82) does not seem appropriate, because the touring company was a feature of all periods (e.g. Pl. *Leg.* 817A). Horace is more likely to have meant conditions of production peculiar to Thespis.

²¹ For the testimonia see Wycherley, *Agora* nos. 524, 525, 528, 721, 723, 724, 726 and 727; it is a pity that we do not know where the black poplar of no.721 was. Small stands are shown in vase-paintings; see one reproduced in Bieber, *History* 54.

be to the east of the *orchestra*. Moreover, stands in this position took advantage of the slope down towards the west.

The next problem was audibility, particularly since Thespis introduced the spoken word, *rhexis*. We do not hear of either the *eleos* or the wagon in connection with this period, and we may infer that they were not used for acting purposes in the Agora. Whatever took their place was probably, like them, to one side so that the whole *orchestra* was free for the Chorus, and as close as possible to the audience, that is, not separated from the audience by the diameter of the *orchestra*. Elevation of the actor mattered less now that the audience was elevated on the stands. But a back wall behind the actor would be of great value in serving as a sounding-board,²² so that he could project his voice to a very large audience. Such a wall could be provided by a temporary building or by a permanent building, if there was one in a suitable position.

Let us consider first the temporary building of which we have information. This was called a *κκηνή*, a word which was native to the Agora itself, as we know from the famous passage at *De Corona* 169, *τούς τ' ἐκ τῶν κκηνῶν τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἀγοράν*. In the same way the word 'stall' is used of temporary booths in the market-square of Cambridge. Such a *skene* might well have had a counter or a trestled platform for display on which actors could have stood, in order to be elevated above the level of the ground. One could add to it a back wall of wood to aid projection of the speakers' voices, and if the wood was painted white it would serve to make a tableau more visible to the spectators.

The *thymele* was needed for the sacrifices to Dionysus which were made during the festival. We do not know of any spot in the Agora where Dionysus was worshipped. We may therefore assume that the situation of the *orchestra* was not determined by having to make it surround a fixed and already existing altar, but that a movable altar together with the open *orchestra*, the temporary stands and the movable *skene* went to the best location.²³

The American excavations have given us a clear idea of the Agora

²² The importance of such a sounding-board is pointed out by Arnott, *Conventions* 5f: "Acoustically it [a *skene* of some sort] would have acted as a sounding-board to throw their voices back to the auditorium . . . A sounding board, if not essential, would have been highly desirable [in the theatre of Dionysus]."

²³ Pl. *Leg.* 817c gives an excellent example of the setting up of a temporary theatre in an agora before a huge crowd (*κκηνάς τε πῆξαντας καὶ κατ' ἀγοράν*).

as it was in *ca.* 534 B.C., but students of early tragedy seem to have ignored the bearing of this on productions in the Agora. Where would we choose to place the performers and the audience? First we should keep clear of the chief thoroughfare of the city, the Panathenaic Way, which runs transversely through the Agora (see Fig.1); for it is most unlikely that it was blocked for the duration of the festival. If we keep clear of this thoroughfare, the largest area of clear space in the sixth century (and later) lay in the northwest part of the Agora to the west side of the Panathenaic Way. Moreover, it was that part of the Agora which had the various altars and sanctuaries. I should therefore be inclined to place the performances in honour of Dionysus in that area, with the *orchestra* situated west of the stands as we have noted. Given this general situation, one can see that the *orchestra* fits well either between the predecessor of the Tholos and the 'Primitive Bouleuterion' or between the latter and the sixth-century shrine (probably of Zeus). When I visited the Agora in April 1971 with these alternatives in mind, I thought the second position more probable. I have therefore shown the site of the *orchestra* and the *ikria* as on Figure 1; it is of course very approximate, since the orchestra could be anywhere between C and Z. As regards the survival of the name *orchestra* at a time when there were no longer any tragic performances in the Agora, it was used of the area west of the Panathenaic Way, and in particular of the place near the Base of the Tyrannicides (the position of which is open to question). The competitions of the rhapsodes and the citharodes were held there in later times, when the west side of the Agora was occupied by a number of buildings.²⁴

There is one clue to the position of the *ikria* which were set up for the theatrical performances in the Agora. People remembered the climbing of a black poplar tree by persons who wanted to get a view but could not obtain or afford a seat on the stands "before the theatre was made" (Hesychius = Wycherley, *Agora* nos. 725-26). Cratinus in the fifth century made jokes about it (*Anecd. Bekk.* I.354,25). The black poplar was "near the sacred place where they fixed the stands before the theatre was made" (Hesychius = no.723); but which 'sacred place'? This is one of the memories about the sixth century which

²⁴ See AAG figs. 3, 4 and 6, and Wycherley, *Agora* no.276 and no.520 with pp.161-62. Cuttings in the rock alongside the Panathenaic Way (Wycherley, *Agora* p.221) may have been for stands set up to watch the Panathenaic Procession or the competition of the rhapsodes.

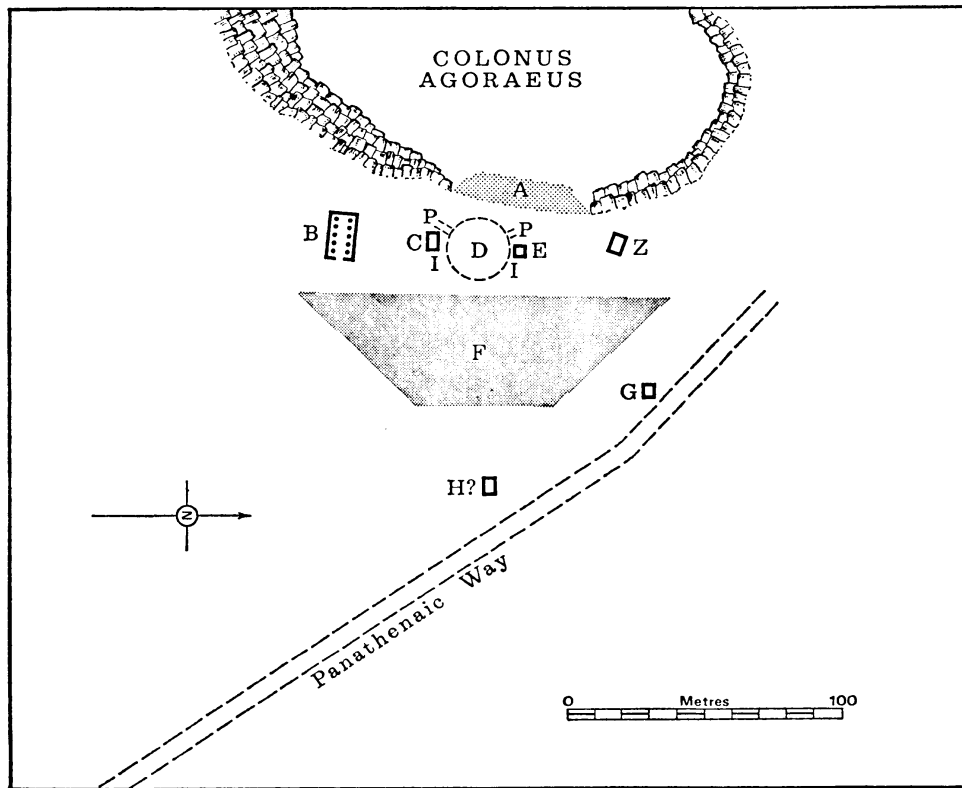


Figure 1. POSSIBLE SITING OF TRAGIC PRODUCTIONS IN THE AGORA

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| A Later rock cutting | H Perhaps base of the Tyrannicides, in
area of orchestra used by rhapsodes
and citharodes |
| B Predecessor of the Tholos | I Position of actors |
| C Primitive Bouleuterion | P Parodoi or entries |
| D Tragic orchestra | Z Sixth-cent. shrine, probably of Zeus |
| E Skene or stall | |
| F Area of ikria | |
| G Altar of the Twelve Gods | |

were written down probably in the fifth century, so that we need a 'sacred place' of that period. Now the shrines along the western edge of the Agora are to be dismissed, if we keep the spectators looking west or southwest rather than east, and we are left with only three 'sacred places' in the fifth-century Agora: the Altar of the Twelve Gods, the Eschara beside it (perhaps of the hero Aeacus), and the Monument of the Eponymous Heroes.²⁵ The first two date from the

²⁵ See AAG 21–24 and fig.4. The Monument of the Eponymous Heroes is up against the edge of the *ikria* (as I have placed them) on the stage side; so it is unsuitable (with my siting). For the Eschara see AAG 67.

sixth century, and the last was erected in the last third of the fifth century. The Altar of the Twelve Gods is much the most likely of these to have been described simply as τὸ ἱερόν. Its position is shown in Figure 1, and it fits my approximate siting of the *ikria*.

The association of the Dionysiac performances with this part of the Agora and especially with the altar of the Twelve Gods was evidently commemorated still in the lifetime of Xenophon in the fourth century. For in proposing that the Athenian cavalry should honour the sacred places during their processions in the Agora he added the following words: "At the Dionysia too the choruses give additional pleasure by performing dances in honour of various gods and especially of the Twelve."²⁶ It seems likely that the choruses were continuing a practice which had been observed in the Agora at the sixth-century performances and had been transferred to the theatre in the precinct of Dionysus at the beginning of the fifth century.

A few words are needed about the setting of the performances if they are placed as in Figure 1. The *orchestra* was clear and uncluttered, and it had no immediate background;²⁷ this open setting was ideal for choreographic display when the spectators were elevated on stands. The front of the Primitive Bouleuterion on the left of the spectators provided a wall as a background for the actors so that their voices could be more readily projected; they were in a slightly raised position, that is, if the building had a stepped entry or stylobate, and they were closer to the audience than they would have been if set between the back of the *orchestra* and the rock-outcrop of Colonus Agoraeus. I have placed the *skene* on the other side of the *orchestra* from the Primitive Bouleuterion. There were then two entries into the *orchestra*, each entry having an approach concealed by a building. The practical value of these is obvious, for example in representing arrival from A and departure to B. One could also arrange a tableau of actors in front of the *skene* if one preferred it to the Bouleuterion, or if one wanted a second location to suggest a change of locality.

With the formalisation of tragedy in the competition and with the better facilities which the Agora offered, Thespis was able to make

²⁶ Xen. *Hipparch.* 3.2=Wycherley, *Agora* no.203.

²⁷ The Colonus Agoraeus forms a background in the sense that it closes one's field of vision; but it is not steep, and its higher part is at a considerable distance from the back of the *orchestra*.

two important innovations. The soloist (sometimes himself)²⁸ now sang a *prologos* before the *choreutae* entered the *orchestra* by the *parodos*, if one may use the term, that is, from behind one or other building. In this instance the soloist was not 'replying' to a Chorus already on location in the *orchestra*; he was opening the performance. Secondly, Thespis introduced a speaking actor, whose spoken word was called a *rhexis*. He, any mute actors and on occasion the soloist singer were now able to represent narrative and conversation (with the Chorus presumably) in a more natural and extended way than in the village performances. The make-up too was improved by Thespis' invention of the linen mask, which superseded the earlier use of white lead (*Suda s.v.* THESPIIS= 3[b] above). Of the recorded titles of his plays, the *Pentheus* is most easily envisaged. It must have been an almost entirely musical, sung performance with a small amount of spoken conversation from the actor, representing sometimes Dionysus and sometimes Pentheus, delivered to and answered by the *choreutae* (or their leader). A mute might have played Cadmus.²⁹

Of Period 4 we know very little. Phrynichus produced plays in the Agora, his first victory falling between 511 and 508 B.C. As he was remembered especially for the lyrics and the dances of his Chorus, it is evident that the performances continued to be mainly choric.³⁰ No changes in the form of tragedy were attributed to him. This period came to an end when the stands collapsed. It was decided to transfer the performances to the precinct of Dionysus on the south slope of the Acropolis.³¹ The decision was most probably taken in the 70th Olympiad (500–497 B.C.). The inference of this date from the passage in the *Suda s.v.* PRATINAS (= 4[b] above), which mentions the collapse of the stands, is not completely certain in itself; but sherds of the very early fifth century in the soil which was spread to level the slope above the new theatre support such a date, and it is to be noted that soon after 500 B.C. the Old Bouleuterion—much larger than the Primitive Bouleuterion—and 'the archaic temple' (probably dedicated to the

²⁸ As in a village performance; see Plut. *Vit.Sol.* 29 (=2[a] above) and *Suda s.v.* THESPIIS (=3[b] above).

²⁹ As Phrynichus (*Suda s.v.*) introduced the first female 'mask', i.e. character, the *Pentheus* of Thespis had no Agave. The titles of Thespis' plays are given in the *Suda s.v.* No doubt a record of the plays was kept from the beginning of the competitive festival ca. 534 B.C.

³⁰ See Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 63f for references.

³¹ This was done for reasons of public safety and not because a new form of theatre was wanted for new types of performance.

Mother of the Gods) were built on the west side of the Agora in the area where we have shown the *orchestra* in Figure 1.³²

In Period 5 the planners of the new theatre in the precinct of Dionysus tried to reproduce the characteristics of the location in the Agora which suited the current form of lyrical, choric performance with a sort of tableau on one side and with a small amount of action and spoken speech. The first need was to make an *orchestra* of the standard size with an open setting and no background. This was done on the site shown in Figure 2. As we shall see later, there was a drop of six feet at least at the back of the *orchestra*. In front of the *orchestra* there were wooden seats—still called *ikria*—which were placed on the improved hillside in natural tiers for the spectators.³³ These wooden seats were, of course, not curved like their successors in stone but straight, and the pattern of seating on the hillside was probably less compact than in the Periclean or Lycurgan theatre.³⁴ The two entries to the *orchestra*, one from each side, were made rather far back, just as in the Agora; and the approaches to them were to some extent concealed by the slope. The technical names of the entries were *parodoi*; the names were brought probably from the Agora, where they had been particularly appropriate to passages beside buildings.³⁵ It was still necessary to provide a place for the *skene* or/and a place for a tableau of actors. We must turn now to a consideration of the excavations which W. Dörpfeld carried out in 1886, 1889 and 1895.

Dörpfeld's record as an excavator is excellent. J. L. Caskey has recently praised him for "his usual exemplary descriptions" in the excavation of the cemetery in the Nidhri plain of Leucas.³⁶ In respect of Dörpfeld's excavations and his report in *Das griechische Theater* (Athens 1896), W. B. Dinsmoor has stressed the accuracy and the reliability of Dörpfeld's findings.³⁷ Yet recent writers on the early Greek theatre have often underestimated or even disregarded this primary and important evidence.

³² See AAG 20 fig.3 and 22.

³³ Stands were of course unnecessary on such a slope; indeed the move from the Agora was made simply to avoid the use of stands after the disaster.

³⁴ Certainly not as in Bieber, *History* fig.227; and probably not in the rectangular form of fig.229.

³⁵ An 'entry', *εἰσόδος*, was sometimes used to describe the entry into the theatre, as in Ar. *Nub.* 326; but *πάροδος* had a more exact meaning.

³⁶ In *CAH*³ 2.1 (1972) 128.

³⁷ Dinsmoor 310f and 312: "these two attacks on Dörpfeld's old orchestra . . . it would seem . . . are totally devoid of foundation."

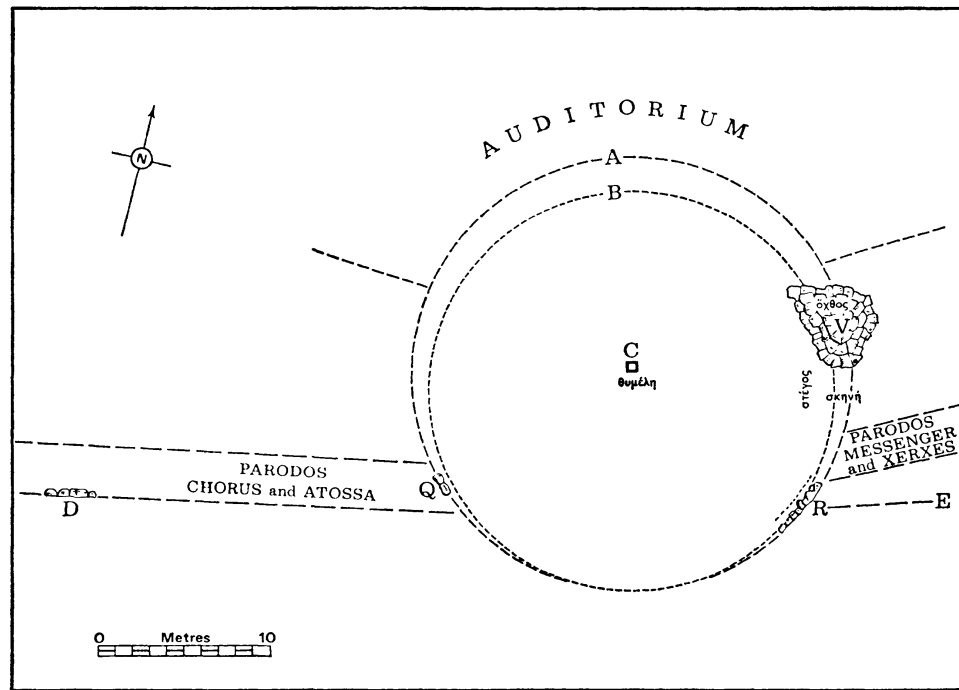


Figure 2. THE EARLY THEATRE IN THE PRECINCT OF DIONYSUS AND THE SETTING OF *Persae* IN 472 B.C.

- A Circle of 26m. diameter as drawn by Dörpfeld
- B Circle of 24m. diameter as drawn by Dörpfeld
- C Thymele
- D Piece of retaining wall of western parodos
- Q Piece of supporting wall of original orchestra (found under socket-hole of Periclean theatre)
- R Piece of supporting wall of original orchestra (found 1.80m. below level of Periclean theatre)
- R-E Eastern parodos as shown by Dörpfeld
- V Rock-outcrop, removed at some time before building of Periclean theatre

The approximate position of the *orchestra* of Period 5 is not in doubt. When soundings were made under the present *orchestra* and to the south of it, it was seen that the natural rock came almost to the surface. This area then was by nature more or less level. As it was the only such area of sufficient size on the hillside, it is evident that the first *orchestra* was made within it. The addition of soil was all that was necessary.

The exact position of the *orchestra* of Period 5 was inferred by Dörp-

feld. On the southeastern edge of this more or less level area of rock he found some stones *in situ*, which he labelled R (see Fig.2). These stones were 1.80 metres below the surface of the level area, and behind them the natural rock rose up to the level area; he therefore concluded that the stones were the foundation layer of a wall which had enclosed this part of the level area. As the stones formed the arc of a circle, the convex face looking southeastwards, he was able to estimate the diameter of the circle at "some 24" metres; later he altered his estimate to some 26 metres, and Dinsmoor has recalculated the diameter at 25.50 metres.³⁸ Thus R was the foundation layer of a piece of a circular retaining wall which on the southeastern side of the generally level area supported a circular surface around 25m. in diameter. He concluded that this circular surface could "be nothing other than the old circular orchestra." Moreover, the material and the style of the masonry were appropriate to the early fifth century in Dörpfeld's opinion. I show on Figure 2 the *orchestra* with the two diameters which Dörpfeld estimated.

His conclusion seems to me irrefutable.³⁹ The piece of wall, called R, lay under the so-called Periclean buildings of the later fifth century B.C., and it has therefore to be dated before the later fifth century. Its precise position on this hillside at that time and the dimensions of the circle to which the arc belonged cannot but be related to the earlier theatre and to the round part of it which was the *orchestra*.⁴⁰

In his sketch of the wall at R, Dörpfeld showed the line of 'Fussboden' or ground-level of the wall. Dörpfeld did not comment on this, nor has anyone else, but it seems to me that an inference can be made from it. The 'Fussboden' was observable only because there was different weathering above and below that line on the blocks of

³⁸ Dörpfeld, *Theater* 26 and fig.6. It is interesting that the dimensions are much the same as those of many grave circles of the Mycenaean period, e.g. at Mycenae; see N. G. L. Hammond, "Tumulus-burial in Albania, the Grave Circles of Mycenae, and the Indo-Europeans," *BSA* 62 (1967) 84, 88 and 91.

³⁹ So Dinsmoor, *loc.cit.* (*supra* n.37); Pickard-Cambridge, *Theatre* 8 (cf. Fiechter, *Theater* I.39), argued that the wall was "part of the supporting wall . . . of a terrace which was larger than the actual orchestra," but it is unlikely that anyone would build a terrace-wall in the arc of a circle bulging outwards rather than as a straight or concave line, for rain and frost would quickly disrupt it. Moreover, there is little for a terrace-wall to support, because there was rock immediately behind the wall, as Dörpfeld reported. It seems rather on practical grounds that the curving wall supports or limits a curving area, namely the *orchestra* itself. There may have been a rail on top, such as was used in the Elizabethan theatre (see *Henry VIII* 5.4 *fin.*).

⁴⁰ So Dinsmoor 312f.

stone. The weathering above the line can have been acquired only during some decades of exposure to the open air, when the wall was freestanding and looked southeastwards, that is, in the period before the stage-building was built on top of this area.⁴¹ If then the wall at R was (as we suppose) a piece of the supporting wall of the *orchestra* of Period 5, it stood unaltered for some decades after the 70th Olympiad (500–497 B.C.). Beyond R there was a drop of nearly two metres onto falling ground and a greater drop still at the southernmost part of the *orchestra*.⁴² Consequently for some decades there was no place for a temporary 'stall' at the back edge of the *orchestra* of this period, nor any likelihood of any temporary building being erected behind (*i.e.* south of) the *orchestra*, because one would have had to build on falling ground some two metres below the surface of the *orchestra* and marry one's building to a curving wall. I take it then that at the production of the *Persae* in 472 B.C. the back fifth or so of the periphery of the *orchestra* was open and uncluttered by any building.

Dörpfeld found another piece of wall (his Wall D) which he thought was probably part of the retaining wall of a *parodos* leading from the western side into the original *orchestra*. It is shown on Figure 2. The continuation of the line of the wall comes approximately to a part of the *orchestra* circle where Dörpfeld found another piece of foundation, called Q, underlying and therefore earlier than the so-called Periclean theatre. It is probable then that the lower side of the *parodos*, as indicated by its retaining wall, abutted on the *orchestra* at or very near to Q.⁴³ If we postulate a balancing *parodos* on the eastern side on the axis of the present theatre, it would have abutted on the *orchestra* approximately at a point in the middle of the northern end of wall R. This, however, is not acceptable because the wall at R was exposed to the weather. We must then turn the axis of the original theatre somewhat westwards and put the eastern *parodos* just north of the end of wall R. I show the altered axis on Figure 2. Thus the positions of the two *parodoi* and the angle of the *cavea* may be assessed; it takes full advantage of the hillside slope.⁴⁴ We can now imagine the *parodoi* being

⁴¹ At the latest the stage-building of the Periclean theatre.

⁴² For an imaginative picture of the wall and the fall at the back of the *orchestra*, see Bieber, *History* figs. 226, 229 and 230.

⁴³ Dörpfeld, *ibid.* (*supra* n.38) and Dinsmoor, *ibid.* (*supra* n.40). Fiechter, *Theater* I.39, found a piece of a black-figure vase by it.

⁴⁴ The axis of the old theatre was only slightly different from that of the Periclean theatre. I differ here from Dörpfeld and Dinsmoor. Dörpfeld thought that the rock at V

used. In the *Persae*, for instance, one of these *parodoi* was used by the chariot of Atossa and the other presumably by Xerxes and his attendants. It should be noted that the *parodoi* are situated more towards the back of the *orchestra* (from the spectator's viewpoint) than their successors in the Periclean theatre. In this respect we may compare the situation in the Agora as I have drawn it (Fig.1).

If we bear the analogy of the Agora theatre in mind, we should expect to find an acting space preferably at a higher level on the edge of or just outside the *orchestra*; not however at the back of it (where there was a fall) but on a part of the side close to the audience; that is to say, either at V, for instance, or at a place on the west side corresponding to V (see Fig.2). Now it is at V that we find a fact of interest, namely that at some time a considerable area of the rock was cut away roughly to the level of the *orchestra*. In April 1971 I saw a piece of this roughly levelled rock alongside the modern *parodos*. The area is shown on Figure 2 in accordance with Dörpfeld's plates I and III, where it appears as some 5m. × 5m. (It is not clear from his account and his plates whether it extends further northwards, that is, under the present *cavea*.) Dörpfeld himself took the levelling of this rock as evidence that the *orchestra* was 26m. in diameter, and in his plan he included part of the area within the periphery of that *orchestra*.⁴⁵ Even so a part lay outside it, and more of it lay outside an *orchestra* of 24m., as I show on Figure 2. When Dinsmoor reassessed the dimensions, the whole area of V lay outside his *orchestra* of 25.50m. diameter, which had a slightly different orientation. Thus the reason for supposing that the rock outcrop at V was removed about 500 B.C. in order to accommodate the *orchestra* of the new theatre has been eroded away. In my opinion the rock outcrop was removed some decades later. During the time when some at least of the surviving plays of Aeschylus were being produced the rock outcrop, sometimes in its

was cut away so that part of the area V could be included in the *orchestra* of 26m. diameter and part could belong to a supposed *parodos* (as it did in the Periclean theatre). Dinsmoor's reassessment of measurements led him to leave the whole of area V "just outside" the *orchestra*, but he still tried to connect area V with the *orchestra* by supposing that it was "for a platform or head of a ramp ascending to the old orchestra from the east parodos" (313). A glance at Fig.2 shows how high up such a *parodos* would be in relation to the *orchestra*. Consequently he had to admit that the axis of the old theatre "differed greatly in direction . . . from that of the present theater." But a *cavea* based on so different an axis would lose much of the value of the slope. I therefore regard Dinsmoor's suggestion as unlikely to be correct.

⁴⁵ See the preceding note. Fiechter, *Theater* I.39, disagreed because the cutting at V was not "kreisförmig."

natural shape, sometimes made to look like a mound, sometimes perhaps carrying properties or extensions, served as a raised area on which an actor or actors could take their stand, just as they had stood on the *eleos* in the villages and on the stylobate of a building or the trestle-platform of a stall in the Agora. The rock outcrop was in fact a natural *bema*.

Thus if we imagine ourselves planning a site for the new theatre on the slope of the Acropolis in the precinct of Dionysus, we can reproduce with little trouble the chief characteristics of the Agora theatre: namely the open dancing-space, the acting-space at one side, the two entries, and the temporary seating in an elevated position. The *thymele* may be added in the centre of the *orchestra*. There is still the *skene* or stall. It could not have been placed at the back of the *orchestra*, where there was a fall. It might have been placed at either side of the *orchestra* close to a *parodos*. Then an actor who had changed in the *skene* at one side of the *orchestra* could have passed unobserved, or at least inconspicuously, to the outer end of the *parodos* at the other side by keeping below and close to the wall at the back of the *orchestra*. On occasion one might have chosen to put the *skene* on the western side in order to suggest a change of location, for instance, from the place represented by the rock outcrop at V. In general, however, a *skene* on the eastern side between V and the eastern *parodos* had special advantages; for it could be wholly or partly concealed behind the rock outcrop (e.g. for PV), and an actor could pass directly from it to the acting-space at V. Such then was the new theatre, and such it remained, I think, for some decades after the 70th Olympiad.

Figure 2 is intended to give a rough idea of this theatre. A word of warning is needed lest we project our idea of the conventional Greek theatre back into this period. In particular the *cavea* was the natural hillside above the *orchestra*, and the pattern of seating was much as in the Agora (see Fig.1), so that the *cavea* did not embrace the *orchestra* at all. Then the acoustics were of course much inferior to those of the stone-lined Lycurgan *cavea*. But more of that later.

Those who study the evolution of the Greek theatre usually take the long stride from its first establishment in the precinct of Dionysus to the so-called Periclean theatre which came into use probably ca. 420 B.C. Let us note its form, although it was built long after the death of Aeschylus. The *orchestra* was moved some fifteen metres forward so that the *cavea* admitted it into its embrace (see Fig.4); the *parodoi*

too were moved forward, and this led to the removal of the rock-outcrop at V (if it had not been removed at an earlier date), because the eastern *parodos* passed (as it passes today) over its levelled stump. One reason for the movement of the *orchestra* forward is known to us, for it made it possible to erect a stage-building on what had been the back part of the original *orchestra*. The stage-building of ca. 420 B.C. made it unnecessary to retain the rock-outcrop as an acting-space. One result was that some of the spectators sat closer to the *orchestra* and in particular to the back of the *orchestra* than they had done in the early theatre. The relative positions of the early theatre and the Periclean theatre are shown in Figure 4.⁴⁶

Was there an intermediate stage of development between, say, 500 B.C. and 420 B.C.? Dörpfeld and Dinsmoor thought not, but we should, I think, suppose so for several reasons. During this period, which was the most creative period in Attic tragedy, it is almost inconceivable that the physical conditions of production did not develop. In particular any schoolboy sees an immense development in dramatic quality and scenic effect between, say, *Persae* and the *Oresteia*, and this entails some change in the physical conditions of production. Moreover, the literary tradition tells us that Aeschylus invented "the third actor and the *okribantes*," a statement which is particularly worthy of credence because it was made by Aristotle.⁴⁷ There is no doubt what the word *ὀκρίβαντες* meant to a fourth-century writer: a wooden platform on which the actors (*οἱ ὑποκριταί*) performed and spoke.⁴⁸ It is obvious that when the *okribantes* were in use there was less need for the rock-outcrop. Entirely new opportunities were now provided. A wooden platform evidently backed by a wooden wall helped the actor to project his voice, and its long, regular shape made it possible to show three actors speaking on occasion concurrently and engaging in more realistic action. We may relate to these opportunities the lines of Horace, *Ars Poetica* 278–80:

*post hunc personae pallaeque repertor honestae
Aeschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis
et docuit magnumque loqui nitique cothurno.*

⁴⁶ See also Dörpfeld's pl.iii and Dinsmoor's fig.2 with pp.318ff; I am accepting Dinsmoor's date for the beginning of the Periclean theatre in order to keep my argument clear.

⁴⁷ Aristotle in Themistius, *Orat.* 26.316D=1(a) above.

⁴⁸ As in Pl. *Symp.* 194B *ἀναβαίνοντος ἐπὶ τὸν ὀκρίβαντα μετὰ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν καὶ βλέψαντος ἐναντία τοσοῦτω θεάτρῳ* and Hesych. s.v. *ὀκρίβας*.

The reinforced mask, as opposed to the linen mask of Thespis, may also have helped the actor to 'speak loud'. The platform on 'modest wooden uprights' was evidently a temporary structure. It is not to be confused with the Periclean theatre's wooden platform, which rested on permanent stone walls both at the back and in part at the front; the breccia foundations of these walls survive (see Fig.4).

Where did Aeschylus place his newly invented *okribantes*? A platform at V would not be serviceable. Whereas an actor standing on the rock at V could project his voice at different angles by turning his head, a straight back-wall gives only one main angle of projection. Thus an actor speaking on a platform with a back-wall at V on the side of the *orchestra* could project his voice either towards the Chorus

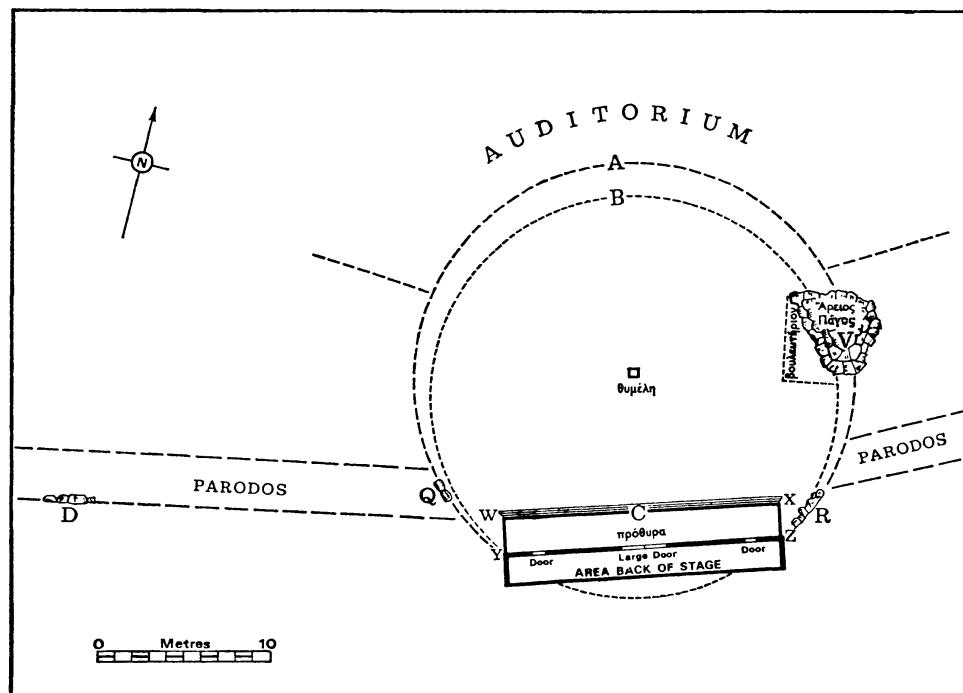


Figure 3. THE SETTING OF *Eumenides* IN 458 B.C.

- A Circle of 26m. diameter as drawn by Dörpfeld
- B Circle of 24m. diameter as drawn by Dörpfeld
- C Forecourt with continuous shallow steps at front
- D Q R V as in Figure 2
- W X Y Z Raised wooden platform resting on very low supporting beams, continuous shallow steps at front
- Y-Z Temple façade with large door and two small doors

in the *orchestra* or towards the audience but not towards both. It follows then that the platform was placed behind the *orchestra*, so that the voice was projected both to the Chorus and the audience: see Figure 3. In order to make the actors more visible now that the distance between the platform and the audience was greater than it had been between V and the audience, an improved mask and probably some new elements of costume were introduced by Aeschylus. As the acting-area and the back-wall of the platform now faced the audience, it was suitable for the display of a painted backcloth or painted panels. Aeschylus is said to have employed for such painting one Agatharcus, who had an understanding of perspective. This can only have been very late in Aeschylus' lifetime.⁴⁹ In the *Poetics* Aristotle attributes to Sophocles the introduction of the third actor and of *σκηνογραφία*. It is apparent that both were introduced during the period when Aeschylus and Sophocles were active as established dramatists, that is between 468 and 456 B.C., and it was later a matter of dispute whether the one or the other was the first to think up a third actor.⁵⁰ On the other hand it was agreed that it was Aeschylus who made the radical change; for by creating the platform he 'organised the *skene*' (*τήν τε σκηνήν ἐκόσμησε*, *Vit. Aesch.* 14);⁵¹ that is to say, he organised what we call 'the stage building'.

When we look at Figure 2 and remember the drop at the back of the *orchestra*, we can see that a considerable reshaping of the site must have been required. If Aeschylus had simply set his stage-platform on the backward third of the *orchestra*, he would not have left sufficient room in the rest of the *orchestra* for large crowd scenes; and this he evidently did not do, for crowd scenes are a feature of the *Oresteia*, produced in 458 B.C. What then did he do? I envisage two possibilities. The first was to take some space away from the *cavea*, move the *orchestra* forward into it and place the new stage-platform on the liberated area at the back of the *orchestra*. It sounds simple until one visualises a rectangular platform being set on an area shaped like a

⁴⁹ As the literary tradition associates Agatharchus with Aeschylus, Anaxagoras, Democritus and Alcibiades, it is clear that he was a very young man in 470–60 B.C. and could not have been painting before that decade.

⁵⁰ The introduction of a third actor is attributed in *Poet.* 1449a18 to Sophocles and in the fragment of Aristotle in Themistius to Aeschylus. Such a disparity in two works ascribed to Aristotle is familiar enough to a student of the *Ath. Pol.* and the *Politics*; it indicates that the matter was disputed at the time.

⁵¹ For a similar use of *κοσμέω* see *Poet.* 1449a29.

waning moon with a drop of two metres or more at the back; moreover, the space behind the platform would be small in size and awkward in shape, with its curving wall and a two-metre drop. The other possibility was to reconstruct the southernmost part. This entailed removing the backmost part of the *orchestra* together with its supporting wall, building in its place a much larger rectangular foundation, and providing on it a platform, a back-stage and a back-entry. This second course seems to me the only practical one. Indeed an indication of it may be inferred from Dörpfeld's excavations.

Neither Dörpfeld nor Dinsmoor asked why the only surviving parts of the original *orchestra's* supporting wall in the southern segment were the two pieces Q and R at corresponding places on the periphery, and why all the rest had disappeared. Now the blocks at Q were found by Dörpfeld underneath the footing of the breccia base of a pillar-socket, and we know now that this breccia base was laid during the building of the Periclean theatre. The builders at that time did not remove these particular blocks.⁵² Similarly at R the builders left a piece of curving wall one metre high underground, while they were extending the stage-platform area above it. It is reasonable to suppose that they would have left the lower part of the rest of the *orchestra's* supporting wall in the same way, *if it had still been there*. My suggestion is that the whole of the wall south of the line Q-R had already been removed during the Aeschylean reconstruction which provided a stage-platform. If so, Q and R indicate roughly the length of this Aeschylean stage, namely some 18 metres.⁵³ The walls at Q and R thus continued to support the *orchestra*, on which the stage-platform encroached only slightly.

As the *Vita Aeschyli* put it, "it was Aeschylus who organised the *skene*." The classical form of the Attic theatre was now achieved. It is shown in Figure 3. In the literary tradition no one attributed any change in this matter to any of his successors, not even to the poets who flourished when the builders of the so-called Periclean theatre

⁵² In other words they did not dig down more than a metre in remaking a foundation for the stage.

⁵³ The length of the platform in the Periclean theatre, as indicated by the postholes in the breccia wall, was some 28m.; and the length of the façade between the wings of the Lycurgan theatre was reckoned at 20m. by Webster, *AGT* 495. Fiechter, *Theater* I.39, argued from the lack of a wall continuing R southwards that Dörpfeld was wrong in attributing R to an old *orchestra*.

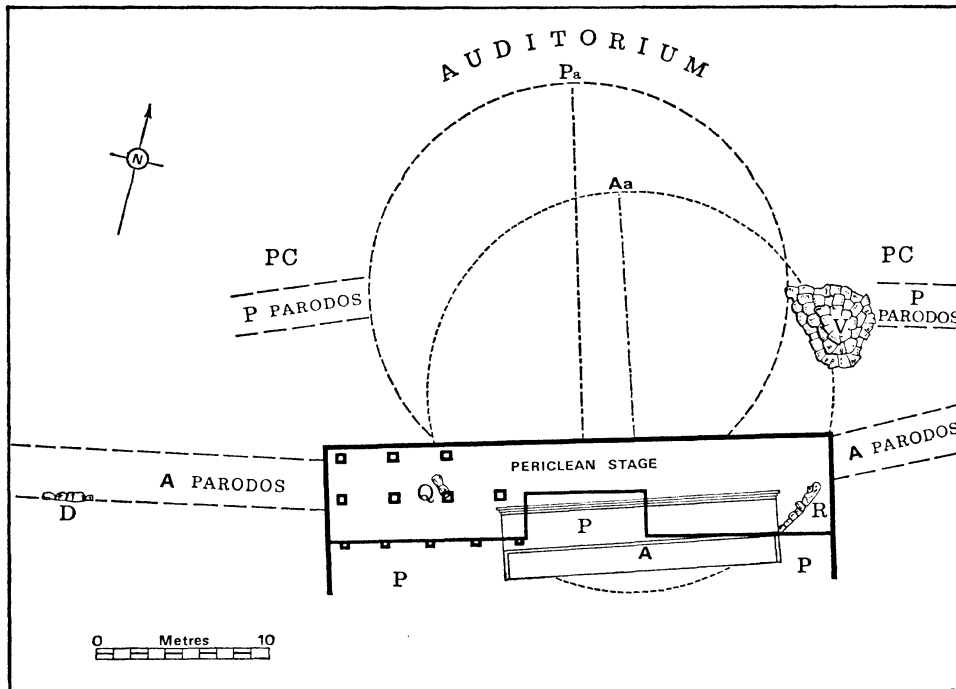


Figure 4. THE THEATRE OF THE ORESTEIA IN 458 B.C. AND
THE PERICLEAN THEATRE ca. 420 B.C.

A Stage-building and forecourt in 458 B.C.

Aa Axis of theatre and orchestra circle (24m. diam.) in 458 B.C.

A PARODOS Parodoi in 458 B.C.

D Q R V as in Figure 2

P Stage-building and stage ca. 420 B.C.

Pa Axis of theatre and orchestra circle ca. 420 B.C.

P PARODOS Parodoi ca. 420 B.C.

PC Southernmost part of cavea ca. 420 B.C.

pushed the orchestra forward and enlarged the stage-building (Fig.4); rightly, for these were changes of location and not of form.⁵⁴

We do not know when the rock-outcrop at V was removed. The plays themselves may perhaps yield some clues.

⁵⁴ I show in Fig.3 a 'back stage area' into which the two-leaved door of the façade leads. See Fiechter, *Theater* I.89f, for the dating of the 'Halle', as he calls it, and the two-leaved door. When the Periclean theatre was built, I take it that a similar two-leaved door led into a back stage area, which was in the Stoa. Others have believed so, but Webster, *AGT* 504, thinks that the Stoa wall was solid and so puts the stage-building and its *eccyclema* in front of the wall. The consequence is that the acting platform in front of the *eccyclema* becomes only one metre deep, which seems crippling for the actors, e.g. in *Soph. El.* 1466f.

II. Evidence of the Plays (excluding the *Oresteia*)

The dates which I attach to the plays are as follows: *Persae* 472 B.C., *Septem* 467 B.C., *Supplices* 463 B.C.,⁵⁵ *Prometheus Vinc-tus* ?, *Oresteia* 458 B.C. I shall consider the first four plays separately from the *Oresteia*, because they contain more explicit 'stage directions' or clues to production, and because the *Oresteia* has problems of its own which may be easier to understand if we take them last.

The element of make-belief in Aeschylus is far less than, for instance, in Euripides, both in respect of gods and ghosts and in the behaviour of persons. This may appear paradoxical to us because we are closer in outlook to Euripides, but it is true historically. For gods and ghosts were parts of current belief in the first half of the fifth century—seen by many on many occasions in the crises of the Persian Wars—and they appeared naturally among men in the *orchestra* or before a temple, whereas men in the latter part of the century became cynical about such matters, and then gods and ghosts appeared by convention on the *mechane* or the *theologeion*, like a fairy queen on a wire in a modern pantomime. So too persons in the plays of Aeschylus spoke naturally in dialogue and occasionally in soliloquy, whereas persons in the plays of Euripides spoke often unrealistically in soliloquy or asides or humorous innuendo. In the same way it seems to me that the movements of persons and the settings of Aeschylus' plays were naturalistic and not fanciful in the eyes of the contemporary audience, whereas those of Euripides' plays contained unrealistic elements and used devices such as the *mechane*, *theologeion* and *eccyclema*, which were acceptable by convention.

In all the plays of Aeschylus a deictic pronoun, usually ὄδε, or a deictic adverb is used to indicate an actual person or an actual feature in the theatre, visible to the speaker. That is what makes Orestes' words so vivid in *Choephoroe* 1048f, αἶδε Γοργόνων δίκην . . . αἶδε πληθύουσι δῆ, and the words of the Chorus so explicit in *Persae* 140, ἀλλ' ἄγε Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι στέγος ἀρχαίου. The actual feature which is most often indicated in the first four plays of my list is an ὄχθος or

⁵⁵ Accepting the restoration ἐπὶ ἀ[ρχαδημιδοῦ ολυμπιαδὶ οἴθ] in the first line of P.Oxy. 2256 fr.3; cf. Garvie, *Supplices* viii, 1–2.

πάγος, that is a mound or a rock. As we hear of it most in *Supplices*, I shall take that play first.⁵⁶

When the play starts the Chorus are in the *orchestra*, singing and dancing. Their old father, Danaus, is not among them. He sits apart. It is he who sees the dust and then the mass of the approaching troops, and he tells the Chorus that it is better (for them) to sit (as suppliants) at “this rock of the assembled gods” (188):⁵⁷

ἄμεινόν ἐστι παντὸς εἶνεκ', ὦ κόραι,
πάγου προσίζειν τόνδ' ἀγωνίων θεῶν.

The Chorus agree and say they would gladly be seated “hard by” him (208 *κοὶ πέλας*). It is clear from this that when Danaus first spoke to the Chorus he was on the rock; being there on a higher level, he was able to see the dust and the mass of the approaching troops, which they did not see. At line 210 the Chorus begin to move to the rock, while Danaus draws attention to the visible emblems and statues of the gods on the rock (218 *ὄρω τρίαῖναν τήνδε*; 220 *Ἐρμῆς ὄδ' ἄλλος*; 222 *πάντων δ' ἀνάκτων τῶνδε*). He tells them then to revere “the common altar of these gods,” which is evidently situated on the rock. Thus they have left the *orchestra* just before the troops, led by the King in his chariot (*cf.* 183), come in through the *parodos* and occupy the *orchestra*. The King now speaks from his chariot, and the Chorus answer from the rock, as Danaus had advised them to do (223–32); for it is holy ground (*ἐν ἁγνῶ*). Later, at 463–65, the Chorus threaten to hang themselves from “these statues” of “these gods” (*βρέτεια τάδε, ἐκ τῶνδε . . . θεῶν*). When agreement is reached, the King tells the Chorus to leave their boughs of supplication “there” (506 *κλάδους μὲν αὐτοῦ λεῖπε*) and to “turn now to the smooth ground here” (508 *λευρὸν κατ' ἄλλος νῦν ἐπιστρέφου τόδε*). They hesitate to leave the holy place, that is, the rock, but they do come down onto the smooth ground where the King is, that is, the *orchestra*. Meanwhile the King and his troops are departing, just as they had come, leaving the Chorus to occupy the *orchestra* and dance and sing.

In the second half of the play, when the Chorus are in the *orchestra* and Danaus is on the rock of supplication, he tells them a piece of un-

⁵⁶ Garvie, *Supplices* 160, gives a summary of views on the staging and the appropriate references to earlier literature on the subject; see too Arnott, *Conventions* 22, for a summary account.

⁵⁷ For the meaning of *προσίζειν* see Eur. *Hec.* 935.

expected news. "From this viewpoint which received us as suppliants I see the ship" (713).

ἰκεταδόκου γὰρ τῆσδ' ἀπὸ σκοπῆς ὄρω
τὸ πλοῖον.

Being in the *orchestra* the Chorus do not see the ship. They are still there when they see the Egyptian Herald and his retainers, now on land (826 ὄδε μάρπτισ). They take flight, obviously to the rock and its statues of the gods, which the Herald tells them later to abandon (852). He and his retainers carry some of them away from the protection of the statues (885f). The Herald and his men are still on the edge of the *orchestra* and on the rock itself, assailing the women, when the King and his troops enter and occupy the *orchestra* (909f). In upbraiding the Herald the King points to the women (940 ταύτας δέ), who are still on the rock. When the Herald and his retainers have gone, the King tells the women to proceed to the city, and thirteen lines later he and his company depart. During these lines and the King's departure the women and their handmaids come down into the *orchestra* and sing their thanksgiving to the King. They are about to place themselves in readiness for a dance (977f) when Danaus and his escort of soldiers enter. Danaus speaks, probably from the centre of the *orchestra* between the Argive soldiers and the women. Then he and the soldiers are probably the first to move away towards Argos. They leave the *orchestra* free for the movements of the two choral groups, the Danaids and the handmaids. It is apparent from the various movements which we have described that the eastern *parodos* leads to the sea and the western *parodos* leads inland to Argos in this play, that is if the *pagos* is at V (Fig.2).

There is a clear distinction between the smooth, level space which is used mainly by groups of persons—the Chorus, the King in his chariot and his troops, the Egyptian Herald and his retainers, Danaus and his escort, the Chorus and the handmaids—and the adjacent rock with its top offering a higher level from which Danaus or the Chorus can speak and command a wider view both ways, *i.e.* down each *parodos*. The old distinction between the *orchestra* and the *eleos* has developed into a distinction between the *orchestra* and the *pagos*.

The Chorus probably numbered twelve. The literary evidence records three stages through which the tragic chorus passed: "it was fifty in early times" (Poll. 4.110; see p.446 below for consideration of

the additional phrase “to the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus”); it was twelve for a period of unknown duration, and it was raised to fifteen by Sophocles (*Vit.Soph.* 4 and *Suda s.v.*), and this remained the classical number (Poll. 4.108). At the beginning of the century the *orchestra* in the new theatre was planned to accommodate fifty persons dancing; this may have been for the dithyrambic chorus, which was always fifty in number, and not the tragic chorus, which may already have diminished. At the other end of the scale the Chorus of old men in *Agamemnon*, produced in 458 B.C., numbered either twelve or fifteen; we know this because after the first death-cry of the King at 1343 the Chorus disintegrated and spoke as individual persons.⁵⁸ A Chorus of old men, acting as Councillors of the Persian Empire, figured in two earlier plays, *Phoenissae* of Phrynichus in 476 B.C. and *Persae* of Aeschylus in 472 B.C., and it seems most likely that in these plays the Chorus numbered twelve. If so, the period when the Chorus numbered twelve and perhaps finally rose to fifteen ran from 476 to 458 B.C.⁵⁹

One particular argument in this matter was different when the play was dated by Gilbert Murray and many others to soon after 497 B.C. For the expectation was that a chorus would have been fifty at so early a time, and it was noted that Aegyptus was said within the play to have had fifty sons (321) and that the suppliant women were described in *PV* 853 as a brood of fifty. Now that *Supplices* is dated to 463 B.C. or thereabouts, however, the probability is that the chorus numbered twelve or fifteen, and we may note that within the play the Danaids do not refer to their own number; and in fact twelve or fifteen *choreutae* may well have been accepted as representing the fifty Danaids of the legend, just as a dozen elders probably represented a Council of Elders. What really seems to decide the matter is an

⁵⁸ The Chorus were twelve if the coryphaeus spoke not only three trochaic lines in agitation but also a pair (probably the last pair) of iambic lines in deliberation and the others spoke a pair of iambic lines each in deliberation. They were fifteen if three spoke a single trochaic line each with the King's second death-cry coming between two speakers and then the other twelve spoke a pair of iambic lines each in deliberation. The choice between the two is quite open and certainly should not be made as arbitrarily as it is by Pickard-Cambridge, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) 235: “There is certainly no argument here for fifteen choreutai.” In fact I prefer fifteen, because the distribution of lines is more symmetrical, and symmetry was much practised by Aeschylus in the *Oresteia*.

⁵⁹ Aristotle says in *Poet.* 1449a16 that Aeschylus reduced τὰ τοῦ χοροῦ, that is, the part of the Chorus. While this is different from saying that he reduced the number of *choreutai*, it may well be that a diminishing rôle was accompanied by a diminishing number. We should then expect that his most mature period, ca. 472–58 B.C., saw a Chorus of twelve in operation.

estimate of the total numbers on location between lines 910 and 953. The Chorus then had their handmaids (954),⁶⁰ presumably one to each Danaid (978) so that there were balanced choirs for the antiphonal singing in 1018–73. The alternative totals of the women then were 100, 30 or 24, the last being in fact the size of a chorus in a comedy. The Herald and his attendants were, one imagines, proportionate in size, say 30, 10 or 8, as they were armed, and the King, presumably in his chariot as at line 183, and his attendants were at least equal to the Egyptians, say 30, 10 or 8. The grand totals then were about 160, 50 or 40, and there was presumably also a chariot, drawn by a pair of horses. As there was much movement of a rapid kind in this part of the play, the first figure seems to be unacceptable. We end up then with a Chorus of twelve or fifteen Danaids. Even so, the number of persons in this part of *Supplices* (and in the latter part of *Eumenides*) was considerably larger than in any extant play of Sophocles, and there was therefore more opportunity for choreography and choral singing. *Supplices* in fact contained considerable elements of what we might call ballet and opera.⁶¹

The centre of the action was the *pagos*. Here Danaus moved as a single actor. Here the suppliants sought sanctuary, and from here the Egyptians tried to carry them off. When the play is regarded as a sequence of events, its visual centre is the *pagos* with its common

⁶⁰ The Handmaids were, I imagine, attendant on the Danaids throughout the play. They are first mentioned at line 954 as *ὑπάκουες*, a noun of masculine gender (*contra* Webster, *The Greek Chorus* [London 1970] 124), used both of male and female, e.g. *Hymn.Hom.Cer.* 440. As the King's last word to the Egyptian Herald is followed at once in the text by the line mentioning the Handmaids, it is almost certain that the Handmaids were already present and in that case had been since at least the arrival of the Herald at 825, and that entails their presence in the choral stasimon 776f; otherwise the King must be supposed to remain silent for some moments while the Handmaids come in through one *parodos*, for the first time but unannounced, and the Herald and his followers go out through the other *parodos*. As the Handmaids were evidently of the same mind as the Danaids from the start until near the end, Aeschylus was obtaining the effects proper to a Chorus of twenty-four (or thirty, if the Chorus proper was now fifteen) both in movement and in singing. Such effects were particularly appropriate when the Danaids played the main rôle in the play. For current views on the size of the Chorus in this play see H. Lloyd-Jones, "The *Supplices* of Aeschylus: New Date and Old Problems," *AntCl* 33 (1964) 368, and Garvie, *Supplices* 207 n.9.

⁶¹ What Athenians remembered in the fifth century of the early tragedies was the music and the choreography (e.g. Plut. *Quaest.Conv.* 8.9.3), and this was so too in the case of the dithyrambs, if the fragment of Pratinas is from an early dithyrambic performance as Webster believes (Pickard-Cambridge-Webster, *DTC*² 20). *Supplices* was in these respects archaic perhaps, but there is no doubt that the second part of *Septem* provided opportunities for magnificent singing.

altar and the statues of the gods, who watch the acts of men. When we consider the play as a whole, the *pagos* rivals the *orchestra* in claiming our attention. It is no trivial stage property. It is solid; it carries the weight of some twelve or fifteen persons.⁶² As we shall see also in *Prometheus Vincit*, it is evidently an actual rock.

There is open access from the *orchestra* to the *pagos*, so that the whole Chorus can move onto the rock easily. Speeches are delivered from either. The King speaks from his chariot in the *orchestra* (certainly at 234f and probably at 911f), and Danaus speaks from the top of the *pagos* (176–233, 710–75, and probably 605f). They were in the appropriate position which Pericles sought in delivering the Funeral Speech: “he went forward onto a high *bema* in order to be heard by as many of the crowd as possible” (Thuc. 2.34.8). The top of the rock serves here as a high *bema*. The Herald speaks at first from within the *orchestra*; it is possible that he, and Messengers in other plays, spoke from the forward side of the altar in the centre of the *orchestra*, using its step to gain a little height. All the speakers are in the forward half of the *orchestra*+*pagos* complex and as close as is practicable to their audience.⁶³

A striking feature of the play to a modern reader or viewer is the lack of conversation between people on the *pagos*. Instead, a speaker on the *pagos* addresses a speaker in the *orchestra*; indeed the Chorus are told to do so (195 and 232). The sequence of conversations, with the place of the speaker added in brackets, is as follows: Chorus (*orchestra*) and Danaus (*pagos*); King (*orchestra*) and Chorus (*pagos*); King (*orchestra*) and Danaus (*pagos*); King (*orchestra*) and Chorus (*pagos*); Chorus (*orchestra*) and Danaus (probably *pagos*, 605f); Chorus (*orchestra*) and Danaus (*pagos*); Herald (*orchestra*) and Chorus (*pagos*);

⁶² I assume that the Handmaids stayed at the foot of the *pagos*, perhaps on the audience's side of it. Those who believe that there was a raised stage and a background building with a practicable door in *all* the plays of Aeschylus have to suppose that the *pagos* of the text, complete with altar, statues of the gods and at one time the Danaids, was an artificial construction of considerable size; Arnott, *Conventions* 22, would have it mounted “upon a raised platform of some sort,” and this would be helpful to those who had to demolish and remove it before the next play of the trilogy began. Gilbert Murray, *Aeschylus* (Oxford 1940) 55f, having put the stall or *skene* at the back of the *orchestra*, supposed that the wall of the *skene* was “so treated as to look like a High Place”; but it would have to be a very substantial wall to carry the weight of altar, statues and Chorus.

⁶³ The importance of being in an elevated position (e.g. in a pulpit) close to one's audience and having a sounding-board or something similar behind one is obvious. Altar-steps are shown on a vase-painting of ca. 500–490 B.C., published in *Ἱστορία τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἔθνους* III.2 (Athens 1970–) 356.

King (*orchestra*) and Herald (side of *pagos*), King (*orchestra*) and Chorus (*pagos*); Chorus (*orchestra*) and Danaus (*pagos*). This interchange of conversation between the two areas is not due to any restriction in the number of speaking actors; for there could easily have been a three-sided conversation between King, Danaus and Chorus, or between King, Herald and Chorus. It is due rather to the position of the *pagos* on the side of the *orchestra* and the fact that its length in practice faces the *orchestra* and not the audience. The actor on the *pagos*, speaking to someone in the *orchestra*, is sideways to the audience, or part sideways, and facing his respondent in the *orchestra*. In the same way a second speaker on the *pagos* would also face the *orchestra*. If the speakers talk to one another, they are directly in front of the Chorus in the *orchestra* but they are sideways to the audience in the *cavea*. We are so familiar with a platform-stage set not sideways to but fronting the audience that we find the set positions of the speakers in this play difficult to understand and accept.⁶⁴

I turn now to the other three plays and consider in them (1) the form which the *pagos* takes, (2) its position in relation to the *orchestra* and the *parodoi*, (3) the existence of a stall or *skene*, and (4) the uses to which the *pagos* is put. I therefore divide what follows into four sections.

1. The form of the *pagos*.

In *Septem* the *pagos* is "this acropolis," and it has statues of the gods upon it (240 τάνδ' ἐς ἀκρόπολιν, τίμιον ἔδος, ἰκόμαν, and 211 ἀλλ' ἐπὶ δαιμόνων πρόδρομος ἦλθον ἀρχαῖα βρέτη). The Chorus go up onto "this acropolis," give offerings to the gods (101), approach the statues (211), and prostrate themselves before them (185). Here too there is no doubt about the solidity of the *pagos*.

In *Prometheus Vincitus* the *pagos* is "this *pagos*" or "this rock" (20 τῷδ' ἀπανθρώπῳ πάγῳ; 117 τερμόνιον πάγον; 130 τόνδε πάγον; 272 τοῦδ' ἀγείτονος πάγου; 31 τῆνδε . . . πέτραν; 748 τῆσδ' ἀπὸ κτύφλου πέτρας; 968 τῆδε . . . πέτρα). It is solid enough when Prometheus is nailed to it, and Hephaestus moves down its side to shackle his legs. Prometheus is fixed there, upright, straight-legged, in the open air, high on the rock face (32 ὀρθοστάδην . . . οὐ κάμπτων γόνυ; 113 ὑπαιθρίους; 271

⁶⁴ Those who put the *pagos* on the stage-platform at the back of the *orchestra* are faced with the difficulty that anyone speaking from the *orchestra* to anyone on the *pagos* has to have his back more or less to the audience; this is a major difficulty when the Chorus is taking part in a dialogue as in *Supplices*.

πεδαρσίαις). The Chorus of Oceanids move on to it (283) and are on it with Prometheus at the end (1059 τόπων . . . ἐκ τῶνδε, and 1067 μετὰ τοῦδε). The rock itself is “rough” (747 στύφλου) and is described as “this jagged ground” (283 ὀκραιοέσση χθονὶ τῆδε); one side is steep enough to be called “this jagged gully” (1016 ὀκρίδα φάραγγα . . . τήνδε), and it is high enough for Io to talk of throwing herself down from it (747). All this amounts to an accurate description of an outcrop of rough, jagged limestone.⁶⁵

In *Persae* the *pagos* is a “mound” (ὄχθος), within which Darius lies in his grave, and it has a “high top.” Such a mound was familiar to the Athenians in the plain of Marathon, and there were analogies in Asia, for instance at Gordium where the Phrygian kings lay buried. Atossa goes up the mound (684). It is evident that to the eye of the spectator the Ghost of Darius comes up from within the mound and emerges at its highest point. For the Chorus pray to the gods to “send up his soul from below into the light” (630, cf. 645), and to Darius himself to “come to the high top of the mound” (659 ἔλθ’ ἐπ’ ἄκρον κόρυμβον ὄχθου). Their prayers are indeed answered; for as the Ghost appears, he says “I have come from below” (697 κάτωθεν ἦλθον); so too when his task is done he says “I shall depart into the darkness of the earth below” (839 ἐγὼ δ’ ἄπειμι γῆς ὑπὸ ζόφον κάτω); and no doubt down he goes. With these words in the text the playwright did not intend his Ghost to come on and go off through the *orchestra*. It is evident that the top of the *pagos* was made to look like the top of a tumulus and there was space within the top for the Ghost to rise into view and sink out of view.⁶⁶

2. The *pagos* in relation to the *orchestra* and the *parodoi*.

When the Chorus of Oceanids approach, Prometheus catches the scent (*PV* 115; cf. Eur. *Hipp.* 1391) and hears the whirring of wings, but

⁶⁵ Not, however, appropriate to a stage-building. Arnott, *Conventions* 97, suggests that “the rock in such scenes was not realistically represented but only symbolised by an upright post to which the actor was bound”; but one cannot suppose that Io climbed up this post when she talked of throwing herself down from the *πέτρα* (748). Arnott connects his suggestion with a painting on a kylix from Caere which shows the punishment of Atlas and Prometheus (the painting is shown in E. A. Lane, *Greek Pottery*² [London 1963] pl.31a); but the painting is not connected with any play, the ware is Laconian, and a purely mythological subject is represented in “a simple-minded, literal manner,” as Lane says (p.36).

⁶⁶ Webster, *Monuments* 3, would have the *ὄχθος* appear on an *eccyclema*, which was wheeled out onto a stage platform only one metre deep (see n.54 above); a very large *eccyclema* would have been required. See Broadhead, *Persae* xliii ff (who seems to favour a mound on a stage-platform) for a discussion of various views.

he cannot see anything. It is they who address him first. Thus it is clear that they have come up from behind Prometheus. Now if Prometheus had been placed at the back of the *orchestra*, he would have seen both *parodoi*, and the Chorus could not then have used the *parodoi*. Therefore in approaching from behind him the Oceanids would have had to come by air (on the *mechane*); but this is not acceptable for a Chorus, whether of twelve or fifteen persons.⁶⁷ The Chorus then did enter by a *parodos*, and this *parodos* lay behind the rock on which Prometheus was so clamped that he faced the audience and the forward part of the *orchestra*. Thus the relationship of *parodos*, *pagos* and *orchestra* has to be as I have shown it on Figure 2. The Oceanids come up the *parodos* into the *orchestra* in two or three winged cars,⁶⁸ which are said to have competed with one another (128 *προέβα . . . θοαῖς ἀμίλλαις*), and the leader in the first car calms the fears of Prometheus by calling to him as she comes along the side of “this rock” (129) into the forward part of the *orchestra*. There she and her companions are recognised at sight by Prometheus (136f).

The leader of the Chorus converses from her car in the *orchestra* with Prometheus on the *pagos* until he invites them to dismount and hear with sympathy the account of his future sufferings. They realise that he wants them to come closer to him; so they set foot on the level *orchestra* and say they will approach “this jagged ground” (283). They have already moved onto the *pagos*, leaving the *orchestra* free, when Oceanus enters in his four-wheeler or mobile quadruped (397); in the same way in *Supplices* the Chorus vacated the *orchestra* and moved onto the *pagos* so that the King and his troops could enter. Like the Oceanids, Oceanus has come by the eastern *parodos* (for his daughters had obtained permission from him before they came, 130), and his carriage takes him into the forward part of the *orchestra*. Conversation ensues between Oceanus in his car and Prometheus on the *pagos* until Oceanus departs as he had come by the eastern *parodos*.

⁶⁷ As Arnott, *Conventions* 76, points out. His further deduction, that “the chorus must enter above Prometheus, as he asks them to step down to earth (274) and they agree (281ff),” does not seem to me to follow; for all the Chorus have to do is step down from their car or cars to the ground. Arnott assumes a *theologeion* and a crane capable of lifting a winged chariot and fifteen bodies onto the *theologeion*, while Prometheus is tied to a pillar on the stage-platform below; later the Chorus climb down ‘off-stage’.

⁶⁸ We associate cars and ghosts and explosions with pantomime until we see a Wagnerian opera or *Tales of Hoffman*; then we realise that they are quite compatible with seriousness. I find less difficulty than Arnott does (*Conventions* 77).

The Chorus then move forward into the *orchestra*, and between two *stasima* they converse with Prometheus.

The opening words of Io when she enters at 561 may give us a clue to the position of Prometheus. "What land (is this)? What people? By what name am I to address him I see there shackled to the rock and battered by the storm? What is your offence that you are being destroyed?" Entering by a *parodos*, Io sees the Chorus first, then Prometheus high on the rock, and then when he looks at her she addresses him in the vocative. It seems that she, like the Oceanids, having come by the eastern *parodos* enters the *orchestra* from behind Prometheus and then going forward sees him from the side before he turns his head to see her. This entry should be compared with that of Hermes at 944. Then Prometheus sees Hermes from three lines off, recognises him and describes him, and Hermes addresses Prometheus immediately in the vocative. It is clear that Hermes has entered by the western *parodos*, down which Prometheus can see because Prometheus is on the eastern side of the *orchestra* and facing into it. In this play, then, the eastern *parodos* leads to the caves of Ocean and the farthest lands, and the western *parodos* leads to Olympus and the Olympian gods.

In *Persae* the mound containing the grave of Darius cannot be in the centre of the *orchestra*. Being large and high, it would have impeded the movements of Atossa's state-carriage and her retinue. In addition there is a practical objection which arises from the limitation that only two actors took speaking parts. The actor who exits as the Messenger at 514 has to reappear as the Ghost of Darius at 681; since he exits by a *parodos* he could only get back to a mound in the centre of the *orchestra* by walking across the *orchestra*, which would hardly accord with the words of the Chorus or the Ghost himself. On the other hand, if the mound was on the *pagos*, as I suppose, the stall or *skene* could be placed between the *pagos* and the eastern *parodos*, so that the actor could pass from the *parodos* into the *skene* and from there go unseen into the mound.⁶⁹

3. The existence of a stall or *skene*.

The stall or *skene* was by its very nature movable. It need not have been put in the same place for each trilogy or tetralogy. While the

⁶⁹ For suggestions about the position of the tomb see Broadhead, *Persae* xliii f, and Arnott, *Conventions* 58f.

back of the *skene* was used as a changing room, the front or display area could serve as a feature visible to the audience. A council house or *bouleuterion* was a feature of Phrynichus' *Phoenissae*, produced in 476 B.C., and Aeschylus' *Persae* and *Eumenides*, and in these plays there are references to the Chorus having seats or sitting down or standing up. *Phoenissae* opened with a Eunuch laying covers on seats for the Imperial Counsellors (*Hypothesis* to *Persae*); in *Persae* the Imperial Counsellors withdrew to sit in this ancient covered place and take counsel (*Persae* 140f ἀλλ' ἄγε, Πέρσαι, τόδ' ἐνεζόμενοι στέγος ἀρχαῖον, φροντίδα κεδνήν καὶ βαθύβουλον θώμεθα, χρεία δὲ προσήκει); and in *Eumenides* the Athenian jurors filled "this court" and were instructed by Athena to "rise up and cast their votes" (*Eumenides* 570 πληρουμένον γὰρ τοῦδε βουλευτηρίου κυγᾶν ἀρήγει, cf. 684, and 708 ὀρθοῦσθαι δὲ χρὴ καὶ ψῆφον αἶρειν). This so-called Council House was open at the front and sides, like a stall, because the audience could see the Eunuch who was delivering the prologue and laying covers on the seats, and again the Imperial Counsellors could see Atossa approaching by the *parodos*; equally in *Eumenides* the jurors faced the litigants who were in the *orchestra*, and it is to be expected that the jurors were visible to the audience at least in most of the *cavea*. In *Persae* the Council House, being a *στέγος*, has a canopy, again like a stall.⁷⁰

We have already seen that in *Persae* the *skene* lay between the mound on the *pagos* and the eastern *parodos*. Its back was used as a changing room, so that the actor could move unseen from the mound into it and then from it into the eastern *parodos*, from which he emerged as Xerxes. This *parodos*, then, was used by persons coming from abroad, namely the Messenger and Xerxes, and the other *parodos* by those who lived locally, namely Atossa and her followers. Early in the play the Chorus withdraw from the *orchestra* in order to leave it free for the ceremonial entry of the Queen in state; as she enters by the western *parodos*, they move to the eastern side where the *skene* is, and there they have "this ancient covered place," presumably the front part of the *skene*. If the Chorus numbered either twelve or fifteen, the front of the *skene* was extended (which would not be difficult with a movable temporary structure) or a token number of Counsellors actually sat down in it. We should then imagine the *skene* projecting into the *orchestra*, in order to be visible to most of the audience, but at the latitude of the space between the *pagos* and the

⁷⁰ For a summary of views on the *stegos* see Broadhead, *Persae* xliv f.

parodos. Such a position meets the other condition, that the raising of the Ghost and the performance by the Ghost should be visible to the audience; for it all takes place between the side of the *skene* and the audience. See Figure 2, where approximate positions are shown.⁷¹

When we come to consider *Eumenides*, we shall see that a similar position is suitable for the *skene*. In *Supplices* the same actor plays the parts of Danaus and the Herald, and the *skene* may be placed anywhere outside the *orchestra* provided that the actor has access to both *parodoi*.⁷² In *Septem* both *parodoi* are used (369f), Eteocles coming from the inner city and the others from the outer part of the city; here a similar position would be suitable for the *skene*. In the last part of the play, if it is genuine, as may be the case (see nn.83 and 107 *infra*), the actor who took the part of Eteocles has to appear as one of the sisters; it seems to be immaterial which *parodos* he uses for his entry. In *Prometheus Vincetus* the *skene* should be either invisible to the audience or inconspicuous, because the setting is “desolate,” “untrodden,” with no sound or sign of man (2 and 20f),⁷³ and there should be access to the *skene* from both *parodoi*. A position behind the *pagos* is again suitable. No use is made of the front part of the *skene* in *Supplices*, *Septem* and *Prometheus Vincetus*. That part of it may not have been erected in these plays. No one speaks from inside the front part of the *skene* in any of the plays.⁷⁴

4. The uses to which the *pagos* is put.

We have seen in considering *Supplices* that an actor speaking from the *pagos* addresses himself to a person or persons in the *orchestra* and not to another person on the *pagos*. It is the same in *Septem*. Eteocles, standing on the acropolis rock, addresses the Citizens, the Chorus and the Messenger in turn, all being in the *orchestra*. At 181f Eteocles is in the *orchestra* and speaks to the Chorus, who are on the rock (211); at his order (265) the Chorus leave the rock, and Eteocles may ascend it when he makes his prayer at 271f just before his exit. When the

⁷¹ The canopy or roof of the front part of the *skene* may have been canted, so that a spectator could see into it from the *cavea*.

⁷² As we have noted, the drop of more than two metres at the back of the *orchestra* enabled an actor to pass unseen from one *parodos* to the other.

⁷³ Believers in a palace-front or a stage-building have to take a different view of the relationship between Aeschylus' choice of words and his stage set.

⁷⁴ At the opening of Parliament at *Persae* 150f I imagine that the Leader of the House comes out into the *orchestra* to greet the Queen Mother and do obeisance (152). In *Phoenissae* of Phrynichus the prologue was spoken from inside the Bouleuterion, apparently.

Messenger and Eteocles return by different *parodoi* at 369f, we may suppose that the Messenger speaks from the centre of the *orchestra*—standing perhaps on a step of the central altar—and that Eteocles and the six champions are on the *pagos*. At the end the Herald makes his announcement from the acropolis rock to the sisters and the Chorus, who are all in the *orchestra*. The dialogue is always between *pagos* and *orchestra*. There is no instance of dialogue between persons on the *pagos* alone. Within the *orchestra* the two parts of the Chorus address one another (369f). It seems probable that all speaking within the *orchestra* was made from the forward half of it.

In *Persae* the exchanges between the Queen and the Counsellors in the court scene are conducted in the full *orchestra* (150–248). The Messenger takes a central position between them—standing perhaps on a step of the central altar—and he delivers himself first to the Chorus, who reply in lyrics, and then to the Queen, who answers in iambics. As he speaks his long speeches, he faces the audience. When Atossa returns in humbler circumstances (not this time in a state-carriage), she speaks at first while she is standing in the *orchestra*, and then she moves onto the side of the mound to pour libations (598–622). The Chorus utter the high laments and beat the ground in accordance with the ritual for raising the dead (683f), being on the side of the *orchestra* which is adjacent to the mound. When the Ghost speaks to Atossa, she is “hard by the tomb” (684 *τάφου πέλας*), and the Chorus are “near the tomb” (686 *ἐγγύς ἐστῶτες τάφου*). Thus she is in advance of them⁷⁵ and is probably standing on the slope of the *pagos*. The Ghost is above them all, being on the top of the mound. During the conversation which the Ghost has first with the Chorus, then with Atossa and finally with the Chorus, it is to be assumed that Atossa is visually separate from the Chorus, and it is therefore likely that she stays on the slope of the *pagos*, being slightly above the Chorus and lower than the Ghost. The lyrical exchanges between Xerxes and the Chorus were obviously in the *orchestra*.

Prometheus Vincetus starts with Kratos and Bia in the *orchestra* and Hephaestus nailing Prometheus to the rock, and the conversation is between Kratos in the *orchestra* and Hephaestus on the *pagos*. Prometheus, high on the rock, dominates the scene throughout the play, as the Ghost does during the central part of *Persae*. He talks to persons who are in the *orchestra*: the Chorus of Oceanids, then Oceanus while

⁷⁵ This point is noted by Broadhead, *Persae* 173.

the Chorus are clustered round the *pagos*, and then the Chorus between their *stasima* (436–525). In contrast to the static Prometheus, Io is very active, repeatedly stung by the gad-fly. At some point between 593 and 747 she goes up onto the *pagos* and leaves it, because she wishes at 748 that she had thrown herself down from it. I suggest that she went up while the Chorus and Prometheus were speaking to one another (631–39) and came down while they were speaking again to one another (687–99). Thus her long speech in iambs (640–86) was delivered while she was on the *pagos*, and it was of course addressed not to Prometheus but to the Chorus (635f and 640). Prometheus too speaks primarily to the Chorus in the *orchestra* in 700–41, and Io was by then back in the *orchestra*. From 742 to 886 they are in the *orchestra*, and the long speeches are made by Prometheus on the *pagos*. After the exit of Io the conversation between the Chorus and Prometheus continues, but it is interrupted by the entry of Hermes from the western *parodos*. Hermes holds the centre of the *orchestra*, while the Chorus shrink back to the eastern side of the *orchestra* and are clustered round and on the *pagos* at the end of the play.

Thus the uses to which the *pagos* is put in *Septem, Persae* and *Prometheus Vincetus* are much the same as in *Supplices*. It is the centre of visual interest. It is the scene of some action in all the plays, sometimes throughout and sometimes for a part only. Many speeches are delivered from the *pagos*, which may in this sense be called a *logeion*, but there are no dialogues between two persons on the *pagos*. There is open access between the *orchestra* and the *pagos*. In all the plays except *Persae*, the Chorus move at some time onto the *pagos*. There is thus no rigid division for the Chorus between the *orchestra* and the *pagos*, such as developed in the later ‘Periclean’ theatre between the *orchestra* and the raised platform-stage.

In the four plays which we have considered there is no indication whatsoever in the text that any temple-front, palace-front or ‘stage-building with a practicable door’ was visible to the players. This is significant enough in itself, when we remember the indications of *πάγος* or *πέτρα* and *τάφος* or *τύμβος*. Even more significant perhaps is what happens in *Persae* when a palace is mentioned. “Here I come,” Atossa says at line 159, “having left (my) gold-spangled palace.” If a palace-front had been there at the back of the *orchestra*, she would merely have stepped out of the door. But no, she has come by carriage (607f). She departs by carriage, and she asks the Chorus to escort

Xerxes and his attendants to the palace (not just show him the door at the back of the *orchestra*). In fact the palace is out of sight of the players, and it is presumed to be at some distance from the scene of action.⁷⁶ Those who postulate the existence of such a stage-building for these four plays seem to me not only to lack support from within the plays but even to go against the indications of the plays.⁷⁷

III. Vase-Paintings in Relation to the Earliest Plays

The contemporary paintings which refer to plays of our period and also give an indication of the setting are rare indeed. I mention here all the examples of which I am aware. Few though they are, they are of incomparable importance.

1. A painting which Beazley dated to "between 480 and 450, and in all probability between 470 and 460 or 450" is of interest in relation to *Persae*.⁷⁸ Fragments only survive. One of them, showing a flute-player in Greek dress, indicates that a tragedy is being represented. Beazley deduced from the fragments that there was a pyre of logs, laid alternately end on and lengthways, with small flames coming from the ends; rising from behind the pyre there was a man in oriental costume who held two sceptres or staves with his forearms upright; and four men in oriental costume, shown as less large than the first man, who were shrinking away in astonishment and terror. The man rising from behind the pyre is obviously a king. The four men belong to a

⁷⁶ As Arnott, *Conventions* 57, emphasizes.

⁷⁷ It is extraordinary how persistent this postulate is. See, for instance, the brief summaries in Broadhead, *Persae* xliii ff, and Garvie, *Supplices* 160ff: "The tomb of Darius stands in front of the royal palace" (Ridgeway); "the *Persians* . . . and the *Seven against Thebes* . . . require at most a very simple building with a single door" (Pickard-Cambridge); "Wilamowitz and others contend that in the case of the *Persae* the background was a royal palace." Broadhead believes in three Acts "before a council chamber (its front may well have formed the background of the stage), before the tomb of Darius (supposed location and position on the stage uncertain), and possibly still before the council chamber . . . (it may have been before the palace)." It was somewhat different with *Supplices*, when it was thought to be much the earliest play extant. Then most critics thought it was performed "without a background building but with a raised section, or mound of earth or wood, at a tangent to (or less probably in the middle of) the orchestra." But as soon as the play was dated ca. 463 B.C., it had to fall into line: as Garvie remarks, "the view has recently been revived that a skene did exist from early times, both a raised stage and a background building. Arnott argues that the *κοινοβωμία* was to be found in this raised stage."

⁷⁸ J. D. Beazley, "Hydria Fragments from Corinth," *Hesperia* 24 (1955) 305-19 with pl.85; Webster, *Monuments* AV 13; Beazley, *ARV*² 571, 74; Beazley, *Paralipomena* 390, 74 (Leningrad Painter).

chorus, and one at least is on a lower level than the others. There is little doubt that they are all Persians.

The interpretation of the pyre is uncertain. One view is that a cremation is being represented and the king is escaping from it. In that case the king had been placed as a corpse on the pyre, the logs had just been lit, and miraculously the king arises resurrected into life. There are two objections to this: there is no corresponding legend of a resurrection in tragedy, and the king is not rising from a prone or propped-up position or from a royal throne. The alternative view is that the ghost of a king is rising from his grave inside a mound (in answer to an invocation) and that the flames (of incense?) coming from the log-ends are part of a ritual for raising the dead. There are several points in favour of this view. Ghosts rising are appropriate to tragedy of the time; the king is rising upright, as if by levitation, from below and behind the pyre; and there is no need to suppose a conflagration of an actual pyre of logs on the spot. Moreover, Beazley noted in one fragment a low *κρηπίς* or foundation layer which on many vases “is usually surmounted by a tumulus of half-oval form,” and I have noticed in some of these⁷⁹ that small flames, like those issuing from the log-ends, are shown issuing from round holes in the *κρηπίς* (e.g. in no.4 below). I take it then that we are to infer from the *κρηπίς* the existence of a mound against which a pyre of logs is set, the burning perhaps of incense, and the ghost of a king rising from his grave within the mound, behind the pyre of logs. The members of the chorus standing on different levels, some on the mound and others in the *orchestra*, have been carrying out the invocation. The brief description which Webster gives, ‘Oriental king rising from behind pyre’, might be augmented to read ‘Oriental king rising from burial-mound behind pyre’.⁸⁰

Whether this painting represented a scene in the production of Phrynichus’ *Phoenissae* or Aeschylus’ *Persae* or some other play on the same theme, it is surprisingly similar to the scene which has been evoked from our study of the appearance of the Ghost of Darius on the top of the mound and the shrinking back of the Counsellors in astonishment and awe. It shows that we are right to take the stage

⁷⁹ See n.85 *infra* for examples.

⁸⁰ The Ghost of Achilles appeared in a similar manner above his tomb in Sophocles’ *Polyxena*, as Longinus 15.7 says: ‘*Ἀχιλλέως προφαινομένου ὑπὲρ τοῦ ταφοῦ*. Webster, *Monuments* 3, says that “the pyre on the ekkyklema was the method of showing Darius’ tomb”; see also his AGT 499f.

directions of Aeschylus literally and to believe that when the Chorus say "come to the high top of the mound," there was in fact a mound and the Ghost of Darius did in fact come to the top of it. Further in points of detail in the painting the king wears the tiara, and one of the orientals wears the type of slipper which the Chorus in *Persae* expect Darius to be wearing when he appears (660f).

2. A painting of 480–70 B.C. on an Attic *askos* shows "a hero rising above his tomb." This indicates that our interpretation of the last painting is appropriate to the period. Webster included it in his 'Monuments illustrating tragedy, etc.' as AV 4, but said in AGT 500 that there is nothing to connect it with tragedy.

3. Another painting is of interest in connection with the closing scene of *Septem*. The vase-fragments are of a style which was said by Miss Lucy Talcott to "suggest a date in the neighbourhood of 470 B.C.," and she was supported by Beazley.⁸¹ On one fragment a mask is carried by a boy, and it has all the traits of the ninth type of mask which Pollux (4.140) describes precisely, namely that of the *κούριμος παρθένος*, 'the maid in mourning'.⁸² The classical example is Antigone, and Miss Talcott had no hesitation in saying that this mask was the mask of an Antigone. She added that the other fragments "would provide for Ismene and the Herald as well." There seems to be good reason to suppose that the painting had some reference to the climax of the great trilogy on the house of Laius.⁸³

Of the mask Miss Talcott wrote, "There is no reason to doubt that it was of linen, stuccoed over and painted." Now the linen mask was invented by Thespis; it was then of linen alone (*Suda s.v. THESPIS*=3[b] above). Phrynichus first used a female mask, that is, he included a female part in a play (*Suda s.v. PHRYNICHUS*). Aeschylus was described by Horace in *Ars Poetica* 278 as "inventor of the mask," by which is

⁸¹ L. Talcott, "Kourimos Parthenos," *Hesperia* 8 (1939) 267–73; Webster, *Monuments* AV 9; Beazley, *ARV*² 495.

⁸² Showing, incidentally, that the description of this mask by Pollux is true of ca. 470 B.C., and that this item at least and presumably others in his list are more than just a part of a "useful classification of Hellenistic and Roman masks," as Webster calls them in *Monuments* 13.

⁸³ If so, it indicates that the final scene of our *Septem* was similar in its three characters to that of *Septem* in 467 B.C. The point may be added to those made by H. Lloyd Jones, "The End of the Seven Against Thebes," *CQ* 9 (1959) 80–115, when he discussed the genuineness or otherwise of the final scene. For arguments against Lloyd-Jones see H. D. Cameron, "'Epigoni' and the Law of Inheritance in Aeschylus' *Septem*," *GRBS* 9 (1968) 247ff with references in n.4.

probably meant the mask of linen reinforced with plaster in its final classical form, and he was said to have invented the use in tragedy of "terrifying masks painted with colours" and "large and dignified masks."⁸⁴ Our mask of Antigone is an example of the mask of linen reinforced with plaster, excellently made and painted. Its date "about 470 B.C.," or if the painter was inspired by the final part of *Septem* about 467 B.C., is thus a *terminus post quem* for a well developed actor's mask.

4. A famous vase painting of the late archaic period shows a scene from a satyr-play,⁸⁵ possibly *Sphinx* which followed *Septem* in 467 B.C. Two satyrs with axes are attacking a high tumulus on which a Sphinx is seated. At the base of the tumulus there are round holes out of which flames are shown emerging, as in painting no.1, which may represent the Ghost of Darius rising from behind a pyre. In this play, whoever the author may have been, we seem to have the *pagos* made up as a high tumulus, exactly as we have supposed was the case in *Persae*.

5. A vase dated to 470–60 B.C. shows the golden fleece hanging on a high rock, guarded by a dragon, and Jason reaching up for it with outstretched arm. The rock is some three metres high, but being on the edge of the painting its full height may not be shown.

6. Another vase of the same style and period shows a parody of the very same scene as on no.5. The golden fleece is hanging on a high rock, guarded by a dragon, as before; but a satyr takes the place of Jason and there is a different figure standing behind him in support.

The serious and the humorous treatments of the same scene in the period when tetralogies on the same theme were being produced suggest that we have here a scene from a tragedy and a scene from a satyr-play on the same theme. Now Aeschylus wrote a tetralogy on the story of the Argonauts, the satyr-play being called *Cabiri*, and as Miss Richter remarked, "it is quite possible that the scenes on these vases were inspired by his dramas."⁸⁶ Even if they do not represent scenes from plays by Aeschylus, it is probable that they were inspired by a tragedy and a satyr-play on the same theme within the decade *ca.* 470–60 B.C. If these paintings were inspired by contemporary pro-

⁸⁴ *Suda s.v. AISCHYLOS*: cf. Bieber in *RE* 14 (1930) 2073.

⁸⁵ R. Engelmann, "Noch einmal die Vase Vagnonville," *JOAI* 10 (1907) 117ff and fig.39; 8 (1905) 145ff; *JHS* 19 (1899) 171ff; Beazley, *ARV*² 281,34.

⁸⁶ G. M. A. Richter, "Jason and the Golden Fleece," *AJA* 39 (1935) 182ff.

ductions,⁸⁷ they suggest that in the setting of some plays of the period prior to *ca.* 460 B.C. there were two important properties. The first was a high burial-mound which we have seen in nos. 1, 2 and 4. It was high enough for the apparition of a king to rise from within it, presumably to his full stature, and for the sphinx, when seated on its top, to be safe from the axe-wielding satyrs. The second was a rock, at least three metres high, which we see in nos. 5 and 6; it was painted to look substantial, and it was there throughout two plays at least of a tetralogy. The central area was shown as flat, open and without background, and the mound and the rock were shown on one side of it (not in the middle); in no.1 some of the *choreutae* were on the lower part of the mound and others were on the flat ground, *i.e.* in the *orchestra*, while the actors in nos. 3, 4, 5 and 6 stood on the level ground. On the other hand there were no indications of a palace façade or an altar, such as appear in some later vase-paintings.

As a postscript one may mention a vase-painting of *ca.* 350–25 B.C., because O. Crusius and others have believed that it represents a scene from Aeschylus' *Sphinx* (see no.4 above).⁸⁸ On our left the Sphinx is seated on the top of a rugged rock; on the level ground to the right of the Sphinx a Silenus dressed in a theatrical costume, as described by Pollux (4.118), holds up a bird in his outstretched hand towards the Sphinx. Perhaps the scene was a parody of the Sphinx confronted by Oedipus in Aeschylus' *Oedipus*. For the attitude of the Silenus is reminiscent of the attitude of Jason and the satyr in nos. 5 and 6, and the rock is again on the left side of the painting. Was this a painting of a traditional scene rather than of a contemporary scene in the production of a famous play of Aeschylus?

IV. The Evidence of the *Oresteia*

In the *Oresteia* a palace background appears for the first time in the extant plays of Aeschylus. It has a roof on which the sentry lies under

⁸⁷ Webster in fact thought that only no.1 in my list was relevant; for he wrote in *AGT* 499, "of the contemporary vases which illustrate Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedy only one shows indirectly something of stage production."

⁸⁸ O. Crusius, *Festschrift für Joh. Overbeck* (Leipzig 1893) 102f; Séchan 42 fig.10 and 583; A. D. Trendall, *Paestan Pottery* (Rome 1936) 68; Webster, *Monuments* PV 4. A sphinx was sometimes shown on a pillar as a grave monument, but we are dealing here with a rock in a play. The rock is artistically formalized, but it seems unlikely that it is, as Trendall calls it, "a pile of ornamental rocks" introduced into the play for decorative effect.

the stars (*Agam.* 2f), a façade with statues of the gods facing the sun and with seats in front of it (*Agam.* 518f), and a wide doorway into which Agamemnon walks. If the palace façade were placed on the side of the *orchestra* where we have put the Bouleuterion of *Persae*, the statues in the front would look westwards and face the evening sun, and the length of the façade, being almost at a right angle to the base of the *cavea*, would be of no visual value to the spectators. But put it at the back of the *orchestra* facing the audience, as in Figure 3, and the full value of the long acting space is immediately effective, while the statues of the gods catch the early morning sun, which is appropriate to the first play of this trilogy.

In the earlier plays entries were made by one or other *parodos*, and persons in the *orchestra* or on the *pagos* were usually able to see anyone approaching and to make an announcement (e.g. *Persae* 150, *Septem* 369–74, and *Supplices* 180f). But now there was a third entry, from the palace door, often unseen by persons in the *orchestra*, who would normally be facing the spectators. Unexpected entries were now more easily effected. Aeschylus exploited this with the entry at 83 and the exit at 103 of Clytemnestra during the ode by the Chorus; both are unexpected and unannounced, and it is probable that Clytemnestra moved only in front of the façade, where she sacrificed on the palace altar, and did not enter the *orchestra*. She said nothing. The new visual centre is used in an almost hypnotic manner. Again at 1035 her entry from the palace is unexpected.

It is, however, more difficult to correlate the *orchestra* and the façade than the *orchestra* and the *pagos*, because if the Chorus wish to address an actor, they have to turn round, more or less presenting their backs to the spectators, instead of turning only sideways in order to face the *pagos*. This difficulty may explain the use of ἦκω at *Agamemnon* 258. The Chorus, facing the spectators, have just described the sacrifice of Iphigeneia and prayed that the future may turn out in accordance with their wishes; then at line 258 they pass into iambics with the opening line ἦκω σεβίζων σύν, Κλυταιμήςτρα, κράτος. In the earlier plays the verb ἦκω is a technical term for entering the *orchestra* from the *parodos*. Here, however, the Chorus have not entered; the verb seems to be used to make the turning of the Chorus away from the *orchestra-cavea* relationship of lyrical exposition and the beginning of their conversation with Clytemnestra in front of the palace, where

she has reappeared to continue sacrificing.⁸⁹ At 585 and 851 the playwright directs the attention of the spectators towards the façade of the palace by mentioning Clytemnestra and the palace, which are by now closely associated.

The *parodoi* are still used for the traditional forms of entry, that is by the Herald, by the King and Cassandra in the carriage or carriages, and by Aegisthus and his attendants. It is natural for them as they enter the *orchestra* to address the Chorus first. But the centre of action is now the palace front and what it hides. Clytemnestra stands there, defiant or tempting or exultant or weary; Agamemnon goes there to his death; Cassandra shrinks back in horror and finally enters with courage; Aegisthus crows there over the corpses; and the Chorus in the orchestra point there at the wicked pair (1648 ἀμφόιν . . . τοῖνδε). The conversations are still mainly between a person or the Chorus in the *orchestra* and a person in the speaking-area by the palace, and between speakers within the *orchestra*, but at the end of the play we have a new phenomenon when Aegisthus and Clytemnestra both speak from in front of the palace⁹⁰ and the Chorus speak from the *orchestra*.

In *Choephoroe*, while Orestes and Pylades have entered the *orchestra* by the traditional way, that is, by the *parodos*, the new entry is used by the Chorus, who walk with the measured tread of mourning into the *orchestra* from the palace (22 ἰαλτὸς ἐκ δόμων, cf. 45). Orestes and Pylades are standing by “this mounded tumulus” (4 τύμβου δ’ ἐπ’ ὄχθῳ τῶνδε); they hide at once and within earshot (20–21). The Chorus then dance and sing in the *orchestra*. Orestes and Pylades are not hiding by an altar or by any supposed tumulus in the centre of the *orchestra*, because the Chorus would see them during their dancing.⁹¹ It follows that the pair are hiding off the *orchestra*. Electra and the

⁸⁹ I imagine that she comes in just before 83; departs, having made no reply to the questions of the Chorus, at 103; and re-enters between 257 (“the bulwark of the Apian land” being the Chorus) and 258. When she is on, the Chorus address her. Her comings and goings were concerned with making sacrifice (87–102, 262, 594). Opinions differ in this matter. Denniston-Page, *Agam.* 75f, keep Clytemnestra on throughout the choral ode from line 83. It seems to me that the description of Calchas’ prophecies and Iphigenia’s death is more effective if Clytemnestra is not on stage.

⁹⁰ I take it that Aegisthus goes up to the corpse of Agamemnon and points at it (1581, 1583, 1590, 1603, 1608, 1611).

⁹¹ A. Sidgwick, for instance, in his edition suggested that the tomb was probably the *thymele* in the centre of the *orchestra*; the impossibility of hiding by it from a circulating chorus is apparent from Bieber, *History* fig.865.

Chorus then turn to the mound and invoke Agamemnon (just as Atossa and the Chorus invoked Darius in *Persae*). There Electra sees the lock of hair and the lines of footprints, which she follows step by step, comparing her own footprints with them (210), right up to Orestes, who has to jump up willy-nilly (212), for she is upon him. The meeting is not only immediate; it is within sight of the audience. Where then does it take place? The answer is, I think, at that side of the *pagos* which the spectators see.⁹² Orestes hid behind the mound and Electra came upon him there. Thus the mound of Agamemnon is where the mound of Darius was in *Persae*. It is this mound which is the visual centre for the first half of the play. In the invocation scene the children on the mound⁹³ and the Chorus behind them are seen by the spectators mainly from the side, as Atossa and the Chorus were seen in the corresponding scene in *Persae*.

Orestes is still on or by the mound when he interprets the nightmare of Clytemnestra. Next, he reveals his plan for getting inside the palace. It is now the palace which becomes the centre of attention. The spectators' minds are directed first to the forecourt gate (*έρκείους πύλας*), where a doorkeeper is to be expected, and to Orestes crossing the threshold of that gate on the way to the throneroom (571). Presumably the Chorus had already come out by that gate, and Electra now goes in by it (554 and 579). Sure enough, when Orestes and Pylades come and knock at the forecourt door (653 *θύρα έρκεία*, resuming 561 and 571), there is a doorkeeper. When the door is opened, Orestes is kept standing outside; he wants someone to be summoned from within (663), and Clytemnestra herself comes out. It seems that the main door in the palace façade was described both as the forecourt gate (viewed, as it were, from the forecourt) and as the palace gate (viewed, as it were, from within the palace). It had two leaves, as the plural *πύλαι* was used at 561. In addition to this door, used by Clytemnestra at 668 and 718 and by Aegisthus at 854, there appear to have been two doors, one on either side, one leading to the

⁹² Those who think that the altar on the stage represents the tomb of Agamemnon (e.g. Arnott, *Conventions* 59) have to face the following difficulties: as the Chorus enter from the palace (*έκ δόμων*, 22) and are immediately by the altar, there is no time for Orestes to reflect aloud as he does at lines 10 to 21; there is no possibility of his hiding successfully by the altar which the Chorus are passing as they come out of the palace door; there is no other convenient hiding place near by; and when the invocation scene starts at 306, the Chorus will be facing the tomb and have their backs more or less to the audience until it ends.

⁹³ They are together, as lines 334–37 and 501 suggest.

men's quarters to which Orestes and his companions were sent at 712 and the other leading to the women's quarters from which Clytemnestra came out at 885 (the door had two leaves and was barred on the inside, 877f).⁹⁴

The open space in front of the main door was evidently the forecourt, the *πρόθυρα* of line 966. Behind it and above the main door there was the part of the flat roof on which the sentry had lain at the beginning of *Agamemnon*. Clytemnestra was in the forecourt when Orestes emerged from the main door at *Choephoroe* 892. When Orestes and Pylades had driven her inside to die, the main door was shut. Then the Chorus sang that the curb was lifted from the house and that, with the cleansing of pollution, "Time will enter the forecourt of the palace." In fact this was not yet to be; for when the door opened two corpses were brought out into the forecourt, and over them stood Orestes, already beginning to go mad.

Eumenides presents unique problems, to which one's answers can only be tentative. The palace façade serves now as a temple façade. At the start the Priestess offers sacrifice, perhaps at the altar in the centre of the *orchestra*, and then she walks towards the door in the temple façade, saying that she intends to take her seat in the inner holy of holies (29, cf. 39). She passes within and disappears from sight. She then comes out again in terror (34–35) and describes what we have

⁹⁴ Some think there was only one door (e.g. Webster, *Production* 10). It is of course true that one door may give access to apartment-doors within the palace (i.e. apartment-doors unseen by the spectators and non-existent in fact), but that is not in point in this play. At 877 the Servant comes out of the main door, behind which Aegisthus lies dead, and into the forecourt where we see him, asks for the door of the women's quarters (*γυναικείους πύλας*) to be unbarred. This cannot be the very door out of which he has come—open and not barred as we have seen—but it must be another actual door, visible to us. For it now is opened (otherwise why the fuss about getting it unbarred?), and out comes Clytemnestra, all unaware of what is lying behind the main door. Orestes then comes out of the main door (892). He says he will kill her by the side of Aegisthus, and so he does when he drives her in at the main door. Given, then, that there were two doors, it seems natural to suppose that the door of the women's quarters was balanced by the door of the men's quarters; thus at 712 Orestes and Pylades were led into the door of the men's quarters, and Clytemnestra went in by the main door to inform "the lord of the palace" (716). If the façade of the palace was some 18 metres long, as I have suggested, three doorways would be appropriate to such a façade in real life; and in drama several entries are useful. In 1616 the Drury Lane cockpit was converted into a playhouse; from the start three doors were made providing entries to the stage. See *ProcCambPhilSoc* 192 (1966) 7f for a discussion by K. J. Dover of the doorways on the stage; in the case of *Choephoroe* he assumes the existence of 'wings', but I think this is a case of reading back the conditions of the later theatre into the time of Aeschylus.

not seen: Orestes seated at the omphalos-stone and in front of him a group of Furies asleep on seats. She then departs, leaving the matter to the care of Apollo.⁹⁵

At that moment the theatre is empty. The next line in our text is spoken by Apollo to Orestes, and he draws his attention to the Furies bound by the spell of sleep. We see now not only what had been invisible—Orestes and the Furies—but also Apollo and Hermes; moreover, the Furies are, as before, fast asleep. It seems best to assume that while the theatre was empty the omphalos-stone and the seats were brought out into the forecourt, Orestes and the Furies came out and took up the positions which had been described by the Priestess, and then Apollo and Hermes joined them. Thus the tableau is fully set when Apollo speaks at line 64 the striking words, “I shall not indeed betray,” which resume Orestes’ words at *Choephoroe* 269, “He shall not indeed betray.” He then tells Orestes to go to Athens and clasp the ancient statue of Athena. After line 93 Orestes and Hermes depart down a *parodos*, and Apollo (one assumes) departs, going through the door into the temple. The Furies sleep on, motionless; then the Ghost of Clytemnestra rises up, erect over the recumbent Furies, and speaks her words. She breaks the spell of sleep, rouses the Furies and sinks down behind them.⁹⁶ While the Furies in our sight are getting up and moving around and beginning their song, other Furies are emerging from the door of the temple, the last driven out by Apollo himself, who says at 179, “Out, I command you, of this house at once!” During their altercation Apollo refers again to his house, *i.e.*

⁹⁵ Many, perhaps most, of the audience would have been to Delphi. Aeschylus involves them from the start. “If there are any persons from the Greeks, let them come up in turn by lot, as is the custom” (31–32). The illusion is at once created that we are there waiting our turn, so that when she comes out and tells us what she has seen inside it is entirely natural. This is very different from what we call dramatic conventions, whereby in a quite unnatural manner a peasant or an Iocasta talks to the audience at the start, characters soliloquise or make asides, and gods are delivered by crane and corpses by *eccyclema*.

⁹⁶ The actor playing the Ghost probably came in together with the Furies, Orestes, Apollo and Hermes, managing to be unseen and then lying behind a Fury or behind the omphalos-stone until the time came to rise up. He could get off by the main door during the general confusion of the Furies streaming out and moving about. It is however possible that there was a trapdoor in the wooden platform, as in the Elizabethan theatre, through which a Ghost could come up from beneath; for the Aeschylean temporary stage-building did not have stone foundation-walls (as far as we can surmise), and there was a two metre drop at the back. Such a device is included by Poll. 4.127 and 132, “one being on the *skene*.” It is important not to read the conditions of the Periclean theatre from *ca.* 420 B.C. back into the period between *ca.* 460 and 420 B.C. and so exclude the possibility of a trapdoor.

the temple (185, 195 and 205, with the deictic pronoun). In the end the Furies depart by the *parodos* which Orestes and Hermes had taken, and Apollo departs through the door which leads into the inside of the temple. After line 234 the theatre is again empty.

In the next line of our text Orestes speaks, addressing Athena. He has entered from a *parodos* and he is going forward to embrace the statue of the goddess at her house (236 ἤκω, and 242 πρόκειμι δῶμα καὶ βρέτας τὸ δόν, θεά). It is apparent that the omphalos-stone has been replaced by the statue of Athena; this must have been done while the theatre was empty. Next the Chorus enter by the same *parodos*, following the trail (245), and weave their spells over their victim. At 397 Athena enters by a *parodos* (her method of conveyance is uncertain);⁹⁷ she sees Orestes clasping her statue in front of the temple façade and the Furies in the *orchestra*. After a preliminary hearing Athena decides to establish a court of jurors (483f) and says she will return with them already sworn in. She departs by a *parodos*. Up to this point the temple façade, serving as the temple of Apollo at Delphi and then as that of Athena at Athens, has been the centre of our attention. But after Athena's departure and the ode by the Chorus our attention is firmly directed to the return of Athena and the Athenian jurors.

The setting up of the court is a solemn occasion. Athena presides, the city-crier commands silence with a blast of his trumpet, and a crowd of onlookers is held back. Meanwhile "this court-house is filling up" (570 πληρουμένου γὰρ τοῦδε βουλευτηρίου).⁹⁸ Where is it?

⁹⁷ Lines 403–05 supply alternative methods of entry. I regard the entry by chariot as more appropriate to the production of 458 B.C.; see Arnott, *Conventions* 74f. If so, the chariot leaves at line 489; and it may have been the need to get it off which prompted Aeschylus to make Athena go and fetch the citizens rather than send for them.

⁹⁸ The 'Bouleuterion' here and at 684, where it is defined in local terms, is the place where the Council or the Court of Law sits. Verrall, *Eumenides*, keeps the reading of the mss πληρουμένου, while Thomson, *Oresteia*, emends to κληρουμένου. In any case that the Bouleuterion is a physical object is clear from Athena's instructions to the jurors at 708 and her description at 684f. I imagine that the court was as simple a structure as the *stegos* in *Persae*, that is a stall with some seats. In the early part of the play it might have been thought of as a waiting place for consultants of the oracle at Delphi, as suggested at line 31. The alternative view is that the Temple of Athena and the Court of the Areopagus were both on the *skene* at the back of the orchestra; if so, a change of scenery would have been necessary for the transition, and this would have required an emptying of the theatre at 565 before the entry of Athena; see Verrall, *Eumenides* 183–86, on the problem. The scholiast to 489 says that Athena went off but Orestes and the Chorus stayed on at 490ff; Verrall has a different view.

Clearly not along the temple façade, because everyone addressing the court will then have their backs to the spectators; moreover, as we shall see later, the court-house is associated not with a temple but with a *pagos*. The best place for it is either where we put the court-house or council-house in *Persae*, that is on the eastern side of the *orchestra* against the *pagos*, or on the *pagos* itself.

During the period of silence after 573 Apollo enters and Orestes, leaving the statue of Athena, joins Apollo⁹⁹ in the forward half of the *orchestra*. There too the Furies stand when they begin the prosecution. Athena presides, perhaps in a central position between the contestants. We see the jurors side-face and the others full-face.

The Bouleuterion and not the temple is now commanding our attention; for the speakers address themselves to the jurors (613, 614, 643, 674). At the end of the hearing Athena talks about “this Bouleuterion” (684 and 704), and the jurors rise from their seats in the Bouleuterion to cast their votes. Athena’s speech is very explicit. “This court of justice will be for ever . . . and reverence and fear will prevent my citizens from wrongdoing on this rock; for this is the rock of Ares where the Amazons pitched their tents when they came campaigning in anger with Theseus and built this new citadel then with towers, and sacrificed to Ares, when the rock is named after him the “*Ἀρειος πάγος*.” Standing in the *orchestra* Athena points to “this new citadel,” that is, to the walls of the Acropolis, visible over the heads of the spectators. The actual Areopagus Hill is, however, not in sight. I take it that when she speaks of “this rock” she points to the *pagos* against which or on which the Bouleuterion is set, for this is to be imagined as the “*Ἀρειος πάγος*”; it is, as in *Prometheus Vincit*, both a *pagos* and a *πέτρα*.

The voting and the counting were presumably done in the centre of the *orchestra*, where Athena was presiding. The *orchestra* is now the centre of attention and remains so until the end of the play. From here Apollo and Orestes depart; here Athena prevails upon the Chorus; and from here the Eumenides are escorted to their new home. But the *orchestra* is no longer just a large dancing space. It is the very city and land of Athens (884, 888, 890, 902, 912, 915, 927, 978, 991).

⁹⁹ At line 577, when Apollo says *ὄδε ἀνὴρ*, I imagine Orestes is beside Apollo. For a different arrangement of the scene with the jurors and the Furies except for the Coryphaeus presenting their backs to the audience, see Pickard-Cambridge, *Theatre* 46.

V. The Testimonia in Relation to the *Oresteia*

In this section there are a number of points, some mentioned already *en passant*, which bear on the proposition that the stage-building with a temple or palace façade was introduced between 462 and 458 B.C.

The vase-paintings which may represent scenes from the *Oresteia* have been collected by Séchan.¹⁰⁰ None of them is contemporary. Most of them date to the fourth century. It is open to us to dismiss them as being inspired by productions of that century, and in that case they are irrelevant to my argument. But as the possibility remains that a fourth-century painter might have been inspired by a painting of the fifth century, it is appropriate to make some comment.

Only one painting has architectural details.¹⁰¹ It shows Orestes clasping the omphalos-stone inside an open shrine, which has four columns and a roof. The Priestess, close to the shrine, is looking at Orestes and the recumbent Furies and is recoiling in horror. As I have interpreted the play, the picture is an imaginary one, inspired by the text in a general way but not by an actual scene in any production; for the Priestess was describing in the text something which was invisible to the spectators. Even so the painter does not keep to the detail of the text; for his Orestes holds a scabbard and not an olive branch tufted with wool (*Eum.* 43), and his Furies are lying on the ground and not on seats (47). There is thus no reason to suppose that the four-columned open shrine was anything more than a conventional representation of a shrine anywhere, and certainly no reason to suppose that it even resembles the temple façade in the production of 458 B.C.

In the same way vase-paintings which show Orestes being purified from pollution by pig's blood seem to be inspired by the text at lines 280ff but do not relate to any production of the play. For it is clear from the use of the word *προστρόπαιος* 'suppliant for purification' and cognate forms at 41, 176, 205, 234 and 237 that Orestes is still a suppliant for purification at line 234, when he has just left the shrine at Delphi, and is no longer such when he is at the shrine of Athena at

¹⁰⁰ Séchan 86–101.

¹⁰¹ Séchan 95 fig.30.

Athens (237 οὐ προστρόπαιον); thus he has been purified during his long wanderings in the interim, far from Delphi and then from Athens (75–78). This is the conclusion which R. R. Dyer has expressed.¹⁰²

We are left with some traditions about Aeschylus for which neither the plays themselves nor the vase-paintings offer any indisputable evidence. The first is that Aeschylus invented the *ὀκρίβαντες*. It derives from Aristotle,¹⁰³ and it is supported by Horace in *Ars Poetica* 279: *Aeschylus et modicis instravit pulpita tignis*. This means undoubtedly a low wooden platform, raised on short upright timbers. It formed the speaking-place or *λογεῖον* for the actors (*cf.* Pl. *Symp.* 194b), and it was set in front of the palace or temple façade. It certainly had steps into the *orchestra*, because there was free access for the Chorus between the two areas in *Choephoroe* and *Eumenides*, and these steps may have been continuous along the area in front of the palace or temple façade, so that the entries of the Chorus into the *orchestra* from the palace in *Choephoroe* and the temple in *Eumenides* would have seemed natural. Even the slight elevation which such steps would give to the area in front of the façade would be of great value, for instance, to Clytemnestra when she spoke from in front of the palace in *Agamemnon*.

Vitruvius reports that Agatharchus, an innovator in perspective, “first painted the *scena*” for Aeschylus,¹⁰⁴ thus attributing the introduction of *skenographia* to the time of Aeschylus. As Agatharchus was active in the heyday of Alcibiades, he is not likely to have been painting much before 460 B.C. On the other hand, the introduction of *skenographia* was attributed to Sophocles by Aristotle in *Poet.* 1449a18. The introduction may be placed then within the period when Aeschylus and Sophocles were both producing plays, *i.e.* within 468–58 B.C.,

¹⁰² R. R. Dyer, “The Evidence for Apolline Purification Rituals at Delphi and Athens,” *JHS* 89 (1969) 55.

¹⁰³ Themist. *Orat.* 26.316D; see n.48 *supra*.

¹⁰⁴ Vitr. *De Arch.* 7 *praef.* ii, *primum Agatharchus Athenis Aeschlylo docente tragoediam scenam pinxit et de ea commentarium reliquit*. A. Rumpf, “Classical and Post-classical Greek Painting,” *JHS* 67 (1947) 13, reckoned it “unlikely that a young and untried artist made such an important discovery as perspective painting” and therefore held that *docente Aeschlylo* need not mean “in the lifetime of Aeschylus.” Yet even artists may be precocious—indeed Leonardo da Vinci was in the matter of perspective, and the words are not just *Aeschlylo docente* but *Aeschlylo docente tragoediam*, which mean “when Aeschylus was producing a tragedy.” It is apparent that Vitruvius had a particular tragedy in mind and meant Aeschylus and not a later producer.

and more precisely, if we exclude Sophocles' first production, between 466 and 458 B.C.¹⁰⁵ The opportunity for such painting came not with the use of a *pagos* and a *skene* (or *bouleuterion*) when both were on the side of the *orchestra*, but with the building of a palace or temple façade which faced the spectators from the back of the *orchestra*. As we have seen from our study of the extant plays, the opportunity for this occurred in *Oresteia*, produced in 458 B.C.

The introduction of the third actor is likewise attributed to both Aeschylus and Sophocles,¹⁰⁶ and on the same grounds it may be dated between 466 and 458 B.C. As regards the extant plays, we have seen one possible instance of two speaking actors and one singing actor or *choreutes* in the *orchestra* at the end of *Septem*,¹⁰⁷ but the regular use of three speaking actors occurs first in the *Oresteia*; in *Agamemnon*, where Cassandra is on with Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, in *Choephoroe* 652f and 875f, and in *Eumenides* 85f, 576f and 744f. In three instances the three actors speak from the front of the palace or temple. It was the invention of this long wooden façade, probably with a wooden platform, which seems to have made the staging and the voice-production of three actors more practicable.

We learn more about the temple façade from a satyr-play, *Isthmiastae*, in which satyrs climbed up the façade and nailed their masks to the cornice. The structure was obviously of wood and firmly built.¹⁰⁸ In a tragedy by Aeschylus, *Psychostasia*, Zeus was shown high up, holding a balance with the souls of Achilles and Memnon in the scales, while Thetis and Eos stood under the scales and interceded for their sons.¹⁰⁹ One imagines Zeus on the roof of the temple façade, the balance (perhaps as shown on a late amphora in the Hermitage)¹¹⁰ suspended over the forecourt, and the goddesses there at ground level. We learn from Pollux 4.132 that Aeschylus used a *γέρανος* or 'crane' for lifting a body up into the air, perhaps in *Psychostasia*, but

¹⁰⁵ See Webster, *An Introduction to Sophocles*² (London 1969) 2, for the evidence for these dates.

¹⁰⁶ Themist. *Orat.* 26.316D; Vit. *Aesch.* 15; Arist. *Poet.* 1449a21.

¹⁰⁷ This instance is discussed by H. Lloyd-Jones, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.83) 96 and 111; he regards Ismene as a *parachoregema* (cf. Poll. 4.110, where the singer is additional to three speaking actors).

¹⁰⁸ E. Fraenkel, *ProcBritAc* 28 (1942) 245; Loeb ed. of Aeschylus II² 543f; Arnott, *Conventions* 5. Having three actors (Poll. 4.110), this trilogy was relatively late.

¹⁰⁹ Plut. *Quomodo adul.* 2 p.17A; schol. *Il.* 8.70; Poll. 4.130; Loeb ed. of Aeschylus II² 421; Arnott, *Conventions* 4, 42, 78, 112, 118; Séchan 15f.

¹¹⁰ Séchan 118 pl.iii, for the Ransoming of Hector.

the regular use of the *mechane* was a feature of the plays of Euripides.¹¹¹

Negative evidence is of no value in some cases, but where Pollux does attribute the use of a *geranos* to Aeschylus but remains silent about the *eccyclema*, the silence may support the argument that the *eccyclema* was devised after the time of Aeschylus; similarly its use was parodied only with reference to Euripides and Agathon in the plays of Aristophanes (*Ach.* 395ff, *Thesm.* 95f and 265). If I am correct in supposing that the palace façade at the back of the *orchestra* was first introduced *ca.* 460 B.C., then it is very unlikely that anything so sophisticated as the *eccyclema* was evolved by the time that *Oresteia* was first produced. I imagine that the dead bodies in *Agamemnon* and *Choephoroe* were carried out by attendants, even as those in *Septem* were brought into the *orchestra* by soldiers, and put down in the traditional position for laying out the dead, in front of the doorway with their feet pointing towards the forecourt.¹¹²

There is one last passage to discuss, Pollux 4.109–10, which comes at the end of an impressive and well-informed account of the Chorus:

ὅποτε μὲν ἀντὶ τετάρτου ὑποκριτοῦ δέοι τινὰ τῶν χορευτῶν εἰπεῖν ἐν ᾧδῇ, παρασκήνιον καλεῖται τὸ πρᾶγμα, ὡς ἐν Ἀγαμέμνονι Αἰσχύλου· εἰ δὲ τέταρτος ὑποκριτῆς τι παραφθέγγεται, τοῦτο παραχορήγημα ὀνομάζεται, καὶ πεπρᾶχθαί φασι αὐτὸ ἐν Μέμνονι Αἰσχύλου. τὸ δὲ παλαιὸν ὁ τραγικὸς χορὸς πεντήκοντα ἦσαν, ἄχρι τῶν Εὐμενίδων Αἰσχύλου· πρὸς δὲ τὸν ὄχλον αὐτῶν τοῦ πλήθους ἐκπτοηθέντος συνέστειλεν ὁ νόμος εἰς ἐλάττω ἀριθμὸν τὸν χορόν.

Pickard-Cambridge describes the first two sentences as “confused and probably corrupt” and the last two as “suspicious.” That something has gone wrong with the first two sentences is clear because the word *παρασκήνιον* in this sense is unique and inexplicable, there is no example

¹¹¹ See Arnott, *Conventions* 74ff; Sophocles probably did not employ the *mechane*. Webster, *AGT* 499, thinks that these devices were used in a later revival and not in Aeschylus’ production of the play, but he does not explain what Aeschylus used instead of them in his own production.

¹¹² e.g. *Il.* 19.212 and Hesych. διὲκ θυρῶν, cited by Pickard-Cambridge, *Theatre* 106, who still talks of “a vehicle.” Too much has been put on the not-so-broad back of the *eccyclema*, if it had to come through a normal two-leaved doorway—from Webster’s pyre and tomb of Darius (see n.80 *supra*) to the grand climax of Furies, omphalos-stone, Orestes, Hermes and Apollo. Webster, *AGT* 502, estimates the maximum size of the *eccyclema* as 2.55 × 1.20 metres in the Periclean Theatre.

of the stated phenomenon in *Agamemnon*, the use of a fourth actor in tragedy is incompatible with all other evidence,¹¹³ and the word *παραχορήγημα* makes more sense if applied to the first sentence than to the second. There is also the odd point that the reference to *Memnon* is qualified by the words “they say this has been done,” whereas at 4.130 Pollux cites *Psychostasia* from the same trilogy with no such qualification. This seems to indicate that a scholiast who had no copy of *Memnon* has added the words “and they say this has been done in *Memnon* of Aeschylus.”¹¹⁴ We may hold him to account also for the stupid reference to *Agamemnon*. If we are to make sense of the passage as a whole, it is best to athetise from ἐν ᾧδῇ το παραφθέγγεται and stop at ὀνομάζεται. Then we translate: “Whenever one of the *choreutai* has to speak instead of (there being) a fourth actor, it is called a *parachoregema*.”¹¹⁵ As the words ἐν ᾧδῇ are senseless in relation to the preceding words, and as Pollux keeps moving from the tragic chorus to the comic chorus in these chapters, I suspect that we should conjecture ἐν δὲ κωμωδίᾳ (cf. 4.128 *fin.*), and suppose that the following words referred to a use of a fourth speaker in comedy (which we know did occur in Old Comedy¹¹⁶) and are a couple of lines out of place.

It is likely that the same scholiast added the words ἄχρι τῶν *Εὐμενίδων Αἰσχύλου*, attempting to define τὸ παλαιόν—a term which makes better sense without going down to the end of Aeschylus’ career. The last sentence probably belongs to the scholiast; for it is out of keeping with the dry, staccato definitions of the adjacent chapters. I should thus suggest the athetisation of the words after ἦσαν, and regard the attribution of a chorus of fifty to *Eumenides* as a worthless expression of opinion by the scholiast.¹¹⁷

VI. Summary of General Conclusions

When performances were held in the villages of Attica, the chorus used a circular *orchestra* (perhaps an earthen threshing-floor). An altar (*θυμέλη*) was set in the centre and the ‘circular dances’ were conducted

¹¹³ See Pickard-Cambridge, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) 135f.

¹¹⁴ For additions to the text of Pollux see the edition by E. Bethe (1967) I.xvii; there are examples of scholia at 3.129 and 146.

¹¹⁵ See n.107 *supra* and K. Rees, “The Meaning of *Parachoregema*,” *CP* 2 (1907) 387ff.

¹¹⁶ Pickard-Cambridge, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.9) 149f.

¹¹⁷ The passage is discussed *ibid.* 137 and 234 n.6.

round it. A sacrificial butcher's table (*ἐλεός*) was placed on the edge of the *orchestra*, and a soloist could stand upon it. When performances were instituted in the Agora, a circular *orchestra* was sited probably on the west side of the square. The spectators sat on stands (*ἴκρια*) erected in the space between the *orchestra* and the Panathenaic Way. From their point of view a building known to us as the 'Primitive Bouleuterion' was to the left of the *orchestra*; an altar was set up in the centre, and a market-stall or *skene* was placed on the right of the *orchestra*. Entries into either side of the *orchestra* came from behind and alongside the Primitive Bouleuterion and the *skene*; they were called *parodoi*. The Chorus of fifty *choreutae* danced and sang in the *orchestra*, which was entirely open at the front and at the back, and the spectators on the stands had an excellent view of the patterns of movement. The soloist singer, the one speaking actor and the mute actors who took part in performances positioned themselves on the front step of the Primitive Bouleuterion and/or on a trestle-platform on the front of the *skene*; they were thus close to the audience, and they addressed themselves to persons in the *orchestra* from one side and/or the other. The whole setting was designed primarily for a choric performance.

When the festival was moved to the precinct of Dionysus on the side of the Acropolis hill, a circular *orchestra* was made by putting soil on a roughly level area of rock; but there was a steep drop on its south side, and here a supporting wall of masonry over two metres high was built close to the rock. The surface of the slope of the hillside above the *orchestra* was evened up with soil; the slope was such that no stands were needed, and the spectators sat on benches, still called *ἴκρια*. From their point of view there was a considerable outcrop of rough limestone rock on the left of the *orchestra*, indeed impinging upon it. This outcrop or *pagos* offered an elevated position close to the audience; it was used by a soloist singer, a speaking actor or actors and mute actors, and it could be made up to represent a mounded tomb or an acropolis hill. The stall or *skene*, being movable, could be placed on either side of the *orchestra*, and its forward part could be used as a property, e.g. to represent a primitive Bouleuterion. If it was placed behind the *pagos*, it could be made invisible. *Parodoi* were constructed leading into the *orchestra* from either side, the eastern *parodos* being south of the *pagos*. The considerable drop at the back of the *orchestra* made it possible for an actor to pass unseen from

the outer end of one *parodos* to the outer end of the other *parodos*. Again the whole setting was designed primarily for a choric performance. It was retained for some decades; we can infer this from the fact that the outer face of the piece of *orchestra* supporting wall which Dörpfeld found was so weathered that the original ground level was visible to him.

When we consider the extant plays of Aeschylus which precede the *Oresteia*, we see that there was free movement between *orchestra* and *pagos*, and that the relatively simple setting we have described meets the stage directions incorporated in the texts and the stage requirements as far as we can envisage them. The nature of the theatre maintained the primary importance of the Chorus, and it tended to restrict the use of dialogue, which was conducted not between two or three persons on the *pagos* but rather between one person on the *pagos* and a person or persons in the *orchestra*. There was little opportunity for painting or decoration, because the forward part of the *skene*, when it was used, faced into the *orchestra*, and it was only one side (probably open) of the stall that was fully visible to the spectators. Audibility was not difficult to achieve; for speakers and singers on the *pagos* or in the front half of the *orchestra* were relatively close to the audience.

A radical change in the nature of the theatre was made between the production of *Supplices*, probably in 463 B.C., and that of the *Oresteia*, in 458 B.C.¹¹⁸ Aeschylus was then at the peak of his career. He had won his first victory in 484 B.C., but the plays which were to become famous and so survive were written between 472 and 458 B.C. The time was ripe for him to introduce new ideas. We do not know whether Aeschylus tried them out first in provincial performances or put forward only theoretical arguments, but he it was who persuaded the people to reconstruct the theatre and accept new conditions for the competitive festival.¹¹⁹ In the words of the *Vita Aeschyli* “he

¹¹⁸ As I understand the setting of *PV*, the play was written for the pre-*Oresteia* theatre, that is for production in a year before 458 B.C. It was written after 479 B.C. if *PV* 367ff was inspired by the eruption of Mt Aetna in that year, or after 474 B.C. if *PV* 367ff was inspired by Pindar, *Pyth.* 1.15–28. A play written within these terminal dates—479/4 B.C. to 459 B.C.—which was then preserved as one of the plays in a *Prometheia* by Aeschylus is not likely to have been written by anyone other than Aeschylus.

¹¹⁹ The *choregus* and Aeschylus may have provided a stage on the first occasion at their own cost. In Plato, *Leg.* 817c, it is apparent that a touring company brought its own gear, including a platform; in the late XVI century in Spain actors owned their stage, set it up

organised the *skene*," that is (in the later meaning of the *skene*), the stage or acting-area.

A segment of the supporting wall at the back of the *orchestra* was removed and a rectangular foundation was built there, upon which it was easy to place a temporary wooden structure, representing a palace or temple façade or something similar. The forecourt or rectangular area immediately in front of the façade was probably raised above the *orchestra* by some two or three continuous shallow steps (as on a temple front). There were no advanced side-stages or *paraskenia*, so that the *parodoi* remained where they had been hitherto. Speakers standing in the forecourt had a slight elevation above the *orchestra* but less than they had had on the *pagos*, and they were in addition some thirteen metres farther away from the audience than they had been on the *pagos*. Audibility was therefore more of a problem.¹²⁰ In order to aid voice-production Aeschylus constructed the forecourt of wood so that it was in effect a wooden platform, which together with the wooden façade had acoustic value. On the visual side he introduced changes in costume and colouring which had the effect of making actors appear taller and clearer.

Now that the whole acting-area in front of the façade faced the audience, it was possible to arrange more ambitious tableaux, develop more vigorous and realistic action, and paint an effective backcloth on the palace or temple façade. Dialogue was now natural between two or three actors in the acting-area, e.g. between Clytemnestra, Orestes and Pylades. In the palace façade in *Choephoroe* Aeschylus used three doors. Entry through them could be made by an actor and by the Chorus. At the same time Aeschylus retained many aspects of the earlier theatre: the full *orchestra*, the ceremonial entries through the *parodos*, e.g. of a king in a chariot, the appearance of gods among men, the frenzied Cassandra in the *orchestra*, and the great crowd scenes.

and dismantled it themselves. But the extensive reconstruction of the Dionysiac theatre which is suggested here could only have been made by a decision of the *demos*, perhaps in the revolutionary zeal of 462 B.C.

¹²⁰ We are apt to underestimate the problem, because we know the excellent acoustics of the stone-lined, steep-sided and symmetrical theatre at Epidaurus, especially when it is empty. But the theatre on the Acropolis slope with no stone seating, a vast crowd and a much less regular shape was a different matter. Arnott, *Conventions* 6, points out the difference: "Other older theatres [than that at Epidaurus] are not so well designed. In some of the earliest acoustics, though adequate, are far from perfect. This is certainly true of the Theatre of Dionysus."

For these purposes he used the *pagos* and the adjacent *bouleuterion* in *Eumenides*, and he kept the old freedom of access from *orchestra* to acting-area. It is the combination of the old and the new which has given to the setting and scenic effect of the *Oresteia* an unparalleled richness.

In Aristotelian terms it was Aeschylus who brought the Attic theatre to its "natural form." No innovations of consequence were attributed after his death to his successors. Then some refinements and some gadgets did appear. In the so-called Periclean theatre the acting-area was enlarged and brought forward; the *parodoi* too were brought forward, the *pagos* or outcrop was levelled (then, if not earlier) so that there was room for the advanced eastern *parodos*, and the permanent foundations of breccia for the *skene* were built. The *eccyclema*, the *mechane* and the *theologeion* were now in full use. The increasing specialisation in the acting-area and its dialogue tended to separate the *orchestra* from the *skene* and bring about a situation deplored by Aristotle, in which the Chorus no longer "joined in the action."¹²¹

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¹²¹ *Poet.* 1456a26. Where only one *parodos* was needed in a play, it would have been possible to make a semblance of the rock at V, where it had been in Aeschylus' time; for instance, in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* only one *parodos* is needed, and the two-mouthed cave could be in an artificial rock set up on the side of the *orchestra* at the exit of the eastern *parodos*.