THE publication of Menander’s *Dyskolos*, dated by an almost certain emendation in 316 B.C., gives us, with much else, information about the staging and scenery of an early New Comedy, produced only some fourteen years after the rebuilding of the Athenian theatre by the statesman Lycurgus. Discussion of this will be the end of our survey; the later Hellenistic theatre, in which the actors performed on a high stage, is a logical development from the Lycurgan theatre: the picture frame in which the actors appear is completed by the provision of a bottom edge. But that only happened when the creative period of drama was over. The interesting questions are these: when and under what compulsions was the picture frame created, what preceded it and what different compulsions were then operative. The reason for reopening this question is that other evidence besides the *Dyskolos* has been discovered, and some of the old evidence can with profit be reconsidered, but I shall allude to points already rightly established only in so far as they are necessary to complete the story.

Before trying to interpret, I will state the agreed excavational facts about the Athenian theatre:

1. The old (and probably original) temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus, in whose honour the City Dionysia with its dramatic performances was held, lies just below the theatre and from the material and method of building must be pre-Persian, i.e. earlier than 480 B.C., and is probably much earlier. An approximate
date of 560/40 B.C., is given by the limestone pediment of which a fragment was found near the temple. It represents a maenad between two satyrs, who are playing the flute, and the figures closely approximate to the satyrs and maenads on black-figure vases by Lydos and the Amasis painter. Presumably the god himself occupied the centre of the pediment. Whether the subject was Dionysos with satyrs and maenads or Dionysos and the Return of Hephaistos we cannot say. Nor can we be certain whether the pediment belongs to the temple of which the foundations remain or to a yet earlier temple. But we know that ten to twenty years before the introduction of tragedy the temple of the god was adorned with a representation of the god accompanied by satyrs and maenads.

2. (a) In the theatre itself the oldest remains are three short pieces of wall of the same construction as the old temple; all are within the later stage-building, and they are numbered from East to West SM 1, J 3, SM 3. All are situated higher than the foundations and bottom course of the old temple, SM 1 by 86 cm., J 3 by 1.35 m., SM 3 by 37 cm. There is general agreement that SM 3 belongs to a way up from the temple to the orchestra, but SM 1 has been attributed both to the boundary of the orchestra itself and to the terrace wall supporting the orchestra. These portions of wall must be pre-Persian, but more we cannot say.

2. (b) In the auditorium clear signs were found that the hill was hollowed out in the very early fifth century. It is perfectly possible that this forming of the auditorium coincided with the making of the orchestra represented by SM 1, J 3, and SM 3.

3. The earliest surviving trace of stage buildings is the rectangular foundation T, which projects forward from a long wall H carrying slots for wooden timbers. This wall is itself backed by the back wall of the Stoa below it, which was evidently part of the same reconstruction plan. Breccia was used for

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1 Athens, National Museum 3131. Studniczka, A.M. xi (1886), 78, Pl. 2; Frickenhaus, J.d.I. xxxii (1917), 2, Fig. 1; Brommer, Satyroi, p. 27; Bieber, *History of the Greek Theater (= H.T.),* p. 99, Fig. 144; P.C.T. p. 4.
2 P.C.T. pp. 5 ff.; Fiechter, *Das Dionysostheater in Athen,* i 39 f.; iii. 48, 66 f.; Dinsmoor, *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson,* i. 309 f.
4 P.C.T. p. 16, 21; Bulle, *Untersuchungen,* pp. 54, 64; Dinsmoor, p. 317.
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these foundations, and breccia was not used much before 430 B.C. in Athenian architecture. On the other hand this reconstruction cannot have been much later since the pottery found under T and the wall was all of the fifth century or earlier. The highest course of T is 95 cm. above J 3. Therefore the building of T and its wall H effectively obliterated any earlier stage-buildings. T and its wall H may be called for simplicity the Periclean theatre.

4. The Lycurgan stage building, which was built about 330 B.C., had a new marble façade with projecting wings some 5 m. in front of T. The length of the façade between the wings was 20 m.

The certain dates then are (1) pediment of old Dionysos temple (whether in its original form or not) 560/40, (2(a)) earliest surviving orchestra before 480, (2(b)) forming of the auditorium soon after 500 B.C., (3) earliest surviving stage buildings with stone foundations about 430 B.C., (4) Lycurgan theatre 330 B.C.

The first question is whether the earliest surviving orchestra belongs to the sixth century Dionysos temple or to the early fifth-century auditorium. Or to put it in another way, is it the theatre of Thespis or the theatre of Aeschylus? If the remains do not answer this problem, we can at least consider other arguments. The strongest seems to me the complete disassociation of the old temple from this orchestra. If they were built at the same time, why was the temple not placed on the same level and facing on to the orchestra? If, however, the orchestra was constructed half a century later in response to a crisis, then the disassociation becomes intelligible.

The crisis which caused the forming or remodelling of the auditorium in the early fifth century is generally believed to be the collapse of the *ikria*, the wooden stands on which the audience had hitherto sat. The notices about the *ikria* are both late and confusing, and the word itself can be used both for the stands (which collapsed) and for wooden seats in the later auditorium. The Suda lexikon gives under Pratinas: "he competed with Aeschylus and Choerilus in 499-496 B.C. . . . when he was giving a performance, the *ikria* on which the spectators were standing collapsed and after this the auditorium (*theatron*) was

1 *P.C.T.* pp. 11 ff.
built at Athens”, and under Aeschylus: “he went into exile in Sicily because the *ikria* collapsed when he was giving a performance.” Aeschylus went to Sicily between 472 and 467 and again after 458; Pratinas died shortly before 467; therefore the collapse of the *ikria* must have been before Aeschylus’ first visit. The story of his exile is nonsense; some scholar has converted, as often, a chronological sequence into a causal connection. The names of Aeschylus and Pratinas, who wrote tragedies and satyr plays, tie these *ikria* to the City Dionysia and the precinct of Dionysos Eleuthereus.

These are the only references to the collapse of the *ikria*. Another group speaks of “seeing from the poplar tree”. According to Hesychios “the poplar tree was near the temple where before the auditorium (*theatron*) was made they fixed the *ikria*”. If the temple was the old temple of Dionysos (which is the natural interpretation), we have here precious evidence that before the building of the auditorium the *ikria* were put up near the old temple. This then was the theatre of Thespis, and it lasted until the *ikria* collapsed in the days of Pratinas and Aeschylus; then the new auditorium and the new orchestra, our earliest surviving orchestra, was built.

But we are told that “various passages speak of a single poplar tree (*aigeiros*) in the *agora* which must surely be identical with the *aigeiros* close to the *ikria*”. Reference to the various passages shows that only two refer to the Agora: neither of these mention *ikria*; one of them (Andocides, 1, 133) refers to a white poplar (*leuke*), not to a black poplar (*aigeiros*); the other in its early form refers to *aigeiroi* in the plural not in the singular. Knowing, therefore, that Aeschylus and Pratinas performed at the City Dionysia, we can firmly separate the single black poplar near the temple of Dionysos from the group of black poplars in the Agora.

I do not, of course, deny that there were early dramatic performances in the Agora or that their audiences sat on *ikria*. But the *ikria* did not collapse and the performances had nothing to do with the City Dionysia: there is a tenuous connection with the Lenaion and the Lenaia, and the dramatic performances at the Lenaia were transferred to the theatre of Dionysos about the

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middle of the fifth century. The notices are quite consistent with this interpretation: according to Photius "the *ikria* were the seats in the *agora* from which they saw the Dionysiac contests before the theatre in the precinct of Dionysos was built"; "the *orchestra* was a name used in the *agora* first and later for the lower semi-circle of the theatre. There the choruses sang and danced." Thus the evidence is good for *ikria* and *orchestra* in the Agora, and the *orchestra* was near the statues of Harmodios and Aristogeiton. By the time of Socrates' *Apology* in 399 B.C. it had become the book-market, which agrees perfectly with the transference of the dramatic performances to the theatre in the middle of the fifth century. The further problem is the identification of the Dionysiac contests in the Agora with the performances at the Lenaia festival. The Lenaian festival was held at the Lenaion "a shrine of Dionysos, where they had contests before the theatre was built". This is the familiar phrasing, but the connection with the Agora is tenuous: the Lenaion is said to be near the *Kalamites heros*; Aischines' mother held her rites in the shed near the *Kalamites heros*; on this passage of Demosthenes one ancient commentator remarks: "shed. The building with big doors in the Agora." This is the only evidence for putting the Lenaion in the Agora. On the other hand what were the Dionysiac contests in the Agora if they were not the contests at the Lenaia which we know were later transferred to the theatre? It is therefore tempting to suppose that the *orchestra* in the Agora was in the enclosure of the Lenaion. For the history of Greek staging this tells us very little. The performances in the Agora took place on a dancing floor (*orchestra*) and the audience sat on benches. The performances at the Lenaia (whether identified with the performances in the Agora or not) took place in a large precinct which included the shrine of Dionysos. It must also have had *ikria* and an *orchestra*.

Similarly the theatre of Thespis had *ikria* near the old temple of Dionysos Eleuthereus and, we must assume, a dancing floor (*orchestra*). We cannot say how much levelling had to be done.

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2 Quoted by Wycherley, no. 276.
to make the dancing floor, but if the stories about the collapse of the *ikria* are true we must suppose that the hill was only used to support some of the seats. If, as seems natural, the *orchestra* was in front of the temple, the *ikria* on the southern side must have been stands and it was presumably these that collapsed. If this is accepted, one further and very important point follows. The theatre of Thespis had from the beginning the front of the temple of Dionysos as a background. Thespis and his successors down to and including Aeschylus in his early period acted in front of its columns and under its pediment. Thus a doorway with columns and pediment is from the beginning the natural background of Greek tragedy. It may not be chance that the assumed width of this background is very close to the preserved width of T, the projecting foundation of the Periclean stage building.

When the *ikria* collapsed, the decision was taken to use the steepened hillside as a foundation for the seats and to have an *orchestra* well above the temple supported by a retaining wall. The temple thus fell out of the picture, and the audience would see little but its roof below and to the right of the *orchestra*. As a background it must have been replaced by a building of wood or stone all traces of which have been obliterated by the Periclean rebuilding. The chief reason for assuming such a building is the evidence of the plays themselves. This is the theatre in which all the surviving plays of Aeschylus, the *Ajax* and *Antigone* of Sophocles, the *Alcestis* of Euripides were produced, even if we exclude the *Trachiniae*, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, *Medea*, and *Hippolytus* as being possibly among the earliest productions in the Periclean theatre. When every allowance is made for the dramatist's skill in substituting verbal description for visual communication, the evidence of the plays establishes (1) that communication between the actors and the chorus was easy, (2) that a single practicable door faced the audience, (3) that a high platform existed, (4) that

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1. The theatre at Thorikos in Attica has no visible remains of a background (cf. Dilke, *B.S.A.* xliv (1950), 25), but this does not exclude a temporary background. The arrangement assumed is found in the Cabeiran theatre.

a scene inside the building could be represented by a platform (ekkyklema) which was rolled out through the doors. We need not assume scene-painting if, as I have argued, Agatharchus is better dated to the time of the Periclean theatre and painted scenery for a reproduction of Aeschylus. Nor perhaps is the crane (geranos or mechane) a necessary assumption for Aeschylus. It is true that Pollux’s example of the use of the geranos is drawn from Aeschylus’ Psychostasia, but the geranos may have been used in a later reproduction like that of the Europa figured on a South Italian vase of the early fourth century. The crane was certainly used in the Periclean theatre. A temple-like wooden building with a usable roof and a practicable door through which the ekkyklema could be rolled is all that we need assume for the pre-Periclean theatre. We know that the retaining wall was curved and therefore this stage building, which stood between the orchestra circle and the retaining wall, is unlikely to have had any great lateral extension like the wall H behind T in the Periclean theatre. And because the stage-building stood between the retaining wall and the orchestra circle, it seems to me necessary to accept Fiechter’s reconstruction with J 3 as the orchestra and SM 1 as the retaining wall rather than Dörpfeld’s larger orchestra circle which includes J 3 and SM 1 and coincides on the south with the retaining wall.¹

Of the contemporary vases which illustrate Aeschylean and Sophoclean tragedy only one shows indirectly something of stage production. Sir John Beazley ² has published fragments of an Attic hydria painted between 480 and 450, which shows a chorus of Persians evincing astonishment as a king rises above a lighted pyre. The fluteplayer in long robes and the chorus point to tragedy and specifically to Aeschylus’ Persians. But no one would build a pyre on the stage and light it for a single play in the long day’s contest. The burning pyre therefore must be the painter’s imagination, his way of saying that the king was well and truly buried. Why he chose this way of saying it we cannot tell. Or did the producer perhaps use a pyre-like structure as a shorthand for a tomb and was this rolled out on the ekkyklema?

¹ Cf. Schleif, A.A. lii (1937), 26 f.; Dinsmoor, p. 312.
² Corinth T 1144, Hesperia, xxiv (1955), 305, Pl. 45.
A raised structure on the front of the ekkylcma is the obvious way of introducing Dareius' tomb and the only way of making his rising above it convincing. A fragment of approximately the same date in Boston¹ shows an armed hero rising above his tomb mound (Achilles demanding the sacrifice of Polyxena?) but unfortunately there is nothing to connect it with tragedy.

To the Periclean stage-building belong the foundation T (7.53 m. wide, 3.26 m. deep) and the slotted wall H (28 m. long) behind it. In this theatre provision was undoubtedly made for the crane and for scenery.² All that we can say about the crane is that two holes at the back of T, the Western one measuring 70 × 70 cm. and the Eastern one 1.25 m. × 70 cm., may have held the mast of the crane and the winch which worked it; the jib of the crane must have been attached to the mast above the roof of the stage building since the actor could be raised from the interior of the stage building, swung over, and landed on the stage and vice versa. The scenery which Agatharchos painted was affixed to the stage-building when required. But what shape was the stage-building and what was the real function of T?

Pickard-Cambridge's plan shows a flight of steps leading down from T through the wall H into the long Stoa behind and in front of T a wooden facade with wings touching the orchestra circle. Essentially the same plan with more elaborate wings is given later by Dinsmoor and with the front moved back level with T in Fiechter's earlier "classical theatre".³ There is no evidence either for the staircase or for the facade. Fiechter noted a tooling of the stone of the wall of the Stoa where it runs along the back of T and took this to be the threshold of a doorway which was 0.79 m. above the floor of the Stoa. Schleif⁴ accepted this as a doorway but saw that a further rise of 1.38 m. was needed to reach the level of the orchestra; he therefore assumes a further set of

² Cf. G.T.P. pp. 12 ff. for instances. Medea, Bellerophon, Perseus, and Apollo in the Orestes are certain. I am now inclined to add the plays where a supernatural appearance over the roof is announced by chorus or actor: Thetis in Andromache, Iris and Lyssa in Hercules Furens, Athena in Ion, Dioscuri in Electra, and the Muse in the post-Euripidean Rhesus.
³ P.C.T. p. 16, Fig. 7.; Dinsmoor, pp. 326 ff. Fiechter, iii, Pl. 18.
⁴ Schleif, pp. 30 ff.
seven steps into T from the doorway. In fact we can probably assume that a further three steps would be needed since the door on to the stage (which is in any reconstruction the Northern end of T or T's extension) is above the orchestra. Thus Schleif's staircase would take up about two-thirds of the depth of T and make T almost useless for anything else. Pickard-Cambridge's plan conceals the awkward fact that the alleged threshold is not symmetrical with T but starts well over to the East side and ends shortly past the middle of T, and Schleif's staircase only uses the Western half of the threshold so as not to foul the big Eastern hole in T. In fact the threshold is not a threshold at all; the stones have been tooled to take some large object, picture, relief, or inscription, on the back wall of the Stoa and have nothing to do with T. T was backed by the unpierced Stoa wall.

Seen from the audience T (or rather its superstructure) occupies the position of the old temple in the theatre of Thespis and the assumed scene building of the Aeschylean theatre. In Attic and South Italian art of the late fifth and first half of the fourth century a doorway between columns and under a pediment is shorthand for the theatre; and this must have been a main feature of T's superstructure, so that it looked not so very unlike the old temple. The doors had to open, and the depth available for their opening is limited by the arrangements for the mechane to a maximum of 2.30 m. Thus a 4.60 m. opening is an absolute maximum, if the doorposts were as near the front as possible. But there is another limiting factor. For the Periclean theatre the ekkyklema is not merely assumed but is attested by Aristophanes. By definition the ekkyklema shows the inside of the palace, house, or temple outside the front door. The doors must therefore be set far enough back on T for the ekkyklema to appear in front of them. The total available depth of T is 2.30 m., as we have said, and perhaps 1 m. may be regarded as a minimum distance for the ekkyklema to project beyond the door when it is rolled out. If we take this figure, then the available depth behind the door posts is 1.30 m., which gives a maximum opening of

1 Cf. below, p. 505, n. 3; p. 506, n. 3, 4.
2.60 m. and a maximum width for the ekkyklema of about 2.55 m.\textsuperscript{1} The available depth behind the doorposts is also the maximum depth for the ekkyklema, since, when the ekkyklema is not in use, its front must be flush with the doorpost and in fact appears as the threshold of the doors. Thus starting from the possibilities of T we arrive at $2.55 \times 1.30$ as the maximum size for the ekkyklema; starting from the other end, the requirements of the plays, I think we can see that a platform 2.55 m. wide by 1.3 m. deep would provide enough room for the required tableaux, for Euripides and his properties in Aristophanes' Acharnians and for Herakles, the bodies of his wife and children, and the broken column in Euripides' Hercules.\textsuperscript{2}

Together the arrangements for the mechane and the ekkyklema would occupy the whole of T behind the doors. T, as we have seen, had no access from the back; but it must have been possible for an actor who had entered the palace to change his clothes and come on through the parodoi in another part, and it must have been possible to reach the roof.\textsuperscript{3} Changing rooms, access to the parodoi, and access to the roof must therefore have been contained in the wooden building erected on the slotted wall H which stretches on either side of T, and this building must also have had openings leading on to T.\textsuperscript{4} Our only direct evidence for this building is the wall H, which is 28 m. long with slots at 2.56 m. intervals, five on each side of T. The door posts on T according to our assumption stand 2.26 m. in front of the slotted wall. Presumably the front wall of the lateral building was not in front of the door posts on T; therefore its maximum depth cannot have been more than 2.26 m. The only building which affords

\textsuperscript{1} Width of doorways vary greatly: e.g. Oropos 1 m., Priene 1.6 m., Sikyon 2.5 m.; Syracuse and Pergamon total width between wooden supports, 3.5 and 3.7 m. respectively.

\textsuperscript{2} G.T.P. p. 9; Euripides, H.F. 1081 ff.

\textsuperscript{3} E.g. Antigone and the old man in the Phoenissae; gods when they do not use the crane; Bdelykleon at the beginning of the Wasps.

\textsuperscript{4} Demosthenes, Meidias, 17, and his commentators (quoted P.C.T. p. 24) are perfectly consistent with this. His chorus wanted to change in the changing rooms and enter the orchestra (whether through the central doors or through the exits giving on to the parodoi). Meidias nailed up the paraskenia, the lateral extensions of the skene proper, which was the superstructure of T.
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any sort of parallel is the stage building of the theatre in Corinth.¹ This stage building also belonged to the very late fifth century and was built of wood. It was 21 m. long and 4 m. deep, and front and back had eight slots for wooden posts set at 3 m. intervals. The remains at Corinth give no indication of height. We have perhaps a pointer in Xenophon.² He is discussing the ox teams used by Cyrus to move his fortresses on wheels. These fortresses were "3 fathoms high with their wheels" and "their beams had the thickness (of the beams) of the tragic skene". If Xenophon is thinking of the upright beams (or columns) of H and T, then they may have had a height of about 5 m., which is the height assumed by Fiechter for the columns of the old temple. It is also the length of the beam provided for the logeion in the theatre at Delos. The other theatres of which we know the height are much later and the Hellenistic proskenion beneath the stage may well have been lower. But the height of the fourth century (?) skene at Epidaurus is probably given by the gateways to the parodoi and this was 3.53 m. for a skene 19.50 m. long; 5 m. does not therefore seem unreasonable for the Athenian skene which was 28 m. long.

The Corinth building certainly had no projecting wings, and at Athens the projecting wings which appear on the reconstructions are a pure assumption, an assumption which has become less likely since the publication of the Corinthian parallel. The

¹ Corinth: R. Stilwell, Corinth, ii. 15 ff. I suspect that the building was originally 21 m. long and 4 m. deep, set symmetrically with the orchestra. Of other wooden buildings of which traces survive Syracuse is too doubtful to use and it is quite unclear to what date the 3.5 m. openings should be referred; Pergamon presumably from the beginning had the shape of a late Hellenistic stage-building. The slots for the beams in H were from 0.40 to 0.49 m. wide and from 0.35 to 0.46 m. deep; Fiechter, i. 15, compared the 0.40 m. slots in Pergamon; the sockets for the front row of beams in Corinth were 0.20 X 0.30 m. and for the back row 0.50 X 0.60 m.

² Cyropedia, vi. 1, 52-4. Fiechter, iii. 66. Beam for the logeion in Delos: Vallois, Architecture Hellénique à Délos, p. 237; this may be a horizontal rather than a vertical beam, cf. G.T.P. p. 147. The cross beams of the naval arsenal at the Peiraeus were 0.75 X 0.75 X 6 m. (Robertson, Greek and Roman Architecture, p. 182). Ptolemy's Banqueting Tent had two wooden columns 22.5 m. high. Preserved heights of proskenion in Hellenistic theatres: Oropos, 2.68 m. (length 12.30 m.); Priene, 2.723 m. (length 21 m.); Sikyon, 3.10 m. (length 23.75 m.).
main functions of the building were to house changing rooms, to
provide communications for actors between the palace entrance,
the outside entrances (parodoi), and, when necessary, the roof,
and lastly to provide a framework for the display of scenery.
Dinsmoor assumes, as I do, a line of wooden vertical beams
parallel to and in front of the slots but then adds at each end
further vertical beams in front of them to provide the wings.
Such projecting wings would of course have no reflection in the
existent slots of the back wall and cannot be refuted on these
grounds. The arguments against them are first the analogy with
the wooden building at Corinth, secondly the use of the central
doorway by itself as a shorthand for the theatre in vase-painting,
and thirdly the demands of the plays themselves. The plays
demand communication between the orchestra and the parodoi
and the door of the stage-building but nowhere suggest the
desirability of a long narrow area framed by wings. Neither
tragedy nor comedy gives evidence for more than one door in the
stage-building itself (and the existence of such doors would
spread the action along the back wall and thereby make the
framing by projecting wings desirable), and 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: the fundamentals are a circular dancing
floor dominated by a temple (or palace).

In the Periclean theatre (according to the reconstruction pro-
posed above) the central doorway was 2.60 m. wide and gave on
to a platform 7.53 m. wide and 1 m. deep. This area was the
stage in the modern sense, the normal location for the actors
(although at times they remained on the orchestra level), and was
connected with the orchestra by a short flight of steps, which were
usually in the centre but could be placed at the sides when the
ekkyklema was pushed forward for the whole play, as in Sophocles' Philoctetes; there is good evidence for such steps in vase-
paintings of comedy, both Attic and South Italian. On either

1 Pp. 326 f.
2 On tragedy cf. G.T.P. p. 10. On comedy I accept the conclusions of
A. M. Dale, J.H.S. lxvii (1957), 207.
scenes on vases: e.g. G.T.P. no. B l (Attic), 32, 43 (S. Italian), 67 (Sicilian).
side of the central door was a panel roughly 2.30 m. wide which connected the central door with the lateral building H stretching out beyond T, masked the access to the roof and wings, could carry scenery and when necessary contain a window. It is probable that these panels continued the line of the front wall of the lateral building but whether this whole front line was level with the central door or was set slightly back I see no means of determining, but it seems to me more likely that the central door was set a little forward and that this emphasized both its own importance and its connection with the orchestra. If the door columns were thus set forward, the junction with the lateral panels would be masked by columns and the four columns would give rise to the stylization as an aedicula which is commonly used on South Italian vases.

We have no direct evidence as to whether the columns were of wood like the rest of the stage building or of stone. It is probable that the breccia foundation carried a stone floor but this does not necessarily mean that the columns and entablature were of stone. The analogy of South Italian theatre buildings suggests wood and on the Attic Iphigeneia vase the building is certainly wooden although Euripides imagines an elaborate temple with high walls, triglyphs, gilded cornice, pillars, bronze doors, and marble base for the statue, like any fifth-century marble temple. On the Iphigeneia vase the temple is poised on two high steps and the painter may have been thinking of the high threshold formed by the ekkyklema when it was pushed back and of the stage in front of the door. On the South Italian vases

2 Yet another possibility is that doors and side panels were in line and that this whole front on T was set forward of the line of the front wall of H and was topped by a single pediment. This would preserve the proportions of the Old Temple but would not agree either with the Attic Iphigeneia vase (see p. 505, n. 3) or with the South Italian vases which show either a pedimented doorway or an aedicula (see p. 505, n. 4; p. 506, n. 3, 4).
which have scenes inspired by tragedy or actual representations of comedy, the pediment is often shown, the threshold is sometimes shown, and occasionally in the tragic scenes a double step is shown as on the Iphigeneia vase. Where the comic scenes seem to show a plain door without a pediment,\(^1\) this may be illusory as in every case the top of the door coincides with the top of the vase. Three vases deserve special mention here. An Apulian vase \(^2\) of the early fourth century shows a comic scene in which an old man is welcomed by an old woman; the setting is exactly what I have assumed for the Periclean theatre—to the left of the old man a column, which could cover the junction between the lateral building and T, and to the right of the old woman double doors surmounted by a pediment. A rather later Apulian vase \(^3\) gives a version of the letter scene from the Iphigeneia in Tauris in which the aedicula stands on two steps but the lower step is extended to support the altar: in our terms the altar is on the stage at the side of the central door. An Apulian vase \(^4\) of 330/20 B.C. shows Niobe standing in an aedicula with a high decorated base, which represents the tomb of Niobe’s children. If the aedicula represents the central door then the high decorated base is inspired by the ekkyklema: in the original production of Aeschylus the tomb of Niobe’s children was probably represented on the ekkyklema like the tomb of Dareios in the Persae.

In the Periclean theatre the fundamentals are a circular dancing floor dominated by a single door with a stage in front of it. The last play for which we can say this arrangement was necessary is Aristophanes’ Ecclesiazusae which was produced in 391 B.C. There the whole effect of the scene between the girl, the hag, and the young man depends on the two women having separate windows and a common front door.\(^5\) The Dyskolos by Menander is our first and only complete text of a play written for the theatre of Lycurgus. It was produced in 316 B.C. when the

\(^1\) G.T.P. nos. B 34, 37, 61.
\(^2\) Harvard University, McDaniell Collection, Hirsch Sale Catalogue, no. 30, Pl. 16. See now A. D. Trendall, Phlyax Vases, B.I.C.S., Supplt. 8, no. 23.
\(^3\) Apulian vase, Moscow, P.C.T. Fig. 16.
\(^4\) G.T.P. no. A 44.
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new theatre was about fourteen years old. The setting is made clear in the prologue which is spoken by the god Pan: “The shrine of the Nymphs from which I make my entry belongs to the people of Phylae . . . Knemon (the hero) occupies the land on the right . . . a little estate nearby here belongs to” Gorgias, who is Knemon’s stepson. The set therefore must represent a central shrine of the Nymphs with Knemon’s house on the left (for the audience) and Gorgias’ house on the right. The audience sees an elaborate central door (the shrine here, the palace or temple in tragedy), and a simpler door at each side (the two houses in comedy). Behind this façade an actor could pass swiftly between the three doors and the parodoi.

Those needs are made particularly clear by the first act. Let us call the three actors A, B, C. A speaks the prologue as Pan; he makes his entrance and his exit through the Nymphaion (central door). He goes off when he sees the young lover Sostratos (B) and his parasite Chaireas (C) appearing up the right parodos. After 30 lines they are joined by the slave Pyrrhias who enters up the left parodos; actor A has therefore changed his mask and clothes and reappears up the left parodos as Pyrrhias. After another 60 lines Chaireas (C) goes off by the right parodos, changes mask and clothes, and reappears up the left parodos as Knemon. As he appears, Pyrrhias (A) retires into the Nymphaion; later Knemon (C) goes into his house on the left, leaving Sostratos (B) on the stage. Actor A comes out of Knemon’s house as Knemon’s daughter, having changed his mask and clothes. The daughter wants to fetch water from the Nymphaion, and Sostratos goes to get it for her. She goes back into her father’s house (left). As Sostratos takes her the water, actor C, who has changed mask and clothes and crossed over, comes out of Gorgias’ house (right) as Daos, Gorgias’ slave, and comments on the proceedings. After his last words from Knemon’s door as Knemon’s daughter, actor A does an extremely quick change and reappears as Pyrrhias from the Nymphaion.

The remains of the theatre of Lycurgus show the foundations of a front wall with projecting wings and an open hall behind. It is always assumed that the front wall was pierced by three doors of which the central and more elaborate door was used for
tragedy; comedy could use all three doors when necessary or only the two side doors when two houses were all that was needed.\(^1\)

The *Dyskolos* shows the rightness of this assumption. All three doors are needed, and the actors have to be able to change masks and clothes and pass from door to door or into the *parodoi* in the minimum of time. The projecting wings perform the double function of framing the long stage and of covering a short cut from the hall behind the façade to the *parodoi*. This complete change in the character of the theatre corresponds to two essential changes in the nature of comedy. The first is that comedy now requires a realistic scene with *either* two houses or *two houses with a third building between them*. In our scene Knemon’s house, the Nymphaion, and Gorgias’ house must have their separate doors: Daos must be able to enter from Gorgias’ house and watch Sostratos come out of the Nymphaion, walk across to Knemon’s house and give the girl her pot of water as she stands in the doorway. Later the old woman Simike must be able to enter from Knemon’s house to announce that he has fallen down the well at the same moment as the cook Sikon enters from the Nymphaion to ask for silence for the sacrifice.

The other change is the exclusion of the chorus. In the *Dyskolos* the chorus enter after the first act and Daos says: “I had better get out of the way; some drunks are coming.” The manuscripts then note XOPOY, and we assume that the interval between the acts was marked by a song which was not specially composed for the play. There is no reason to suppose that the chorus remained in the *orchestra* during the action of the play; they may only have come on for the intervals. Daos’ preliminary remark is the only link between actors and chorus. Dialogue sung or spoken between actors and chorus and commentary by the chorus leader on the action have alike vanished. In Old Comedy and classical tragedy the action on the stage was watched.

\(^1\) Only the foundations of the front wall of the Lycurgan stage-building exist; so no trace of doors remains. No other surviving theatre helps. Dörpfeld (in Dörpfeld-Reisch, p. 124) attributes the three doors at Epidaurus to the later Hellenistic rebuilding. The first stage-building of Eretria (which to judge from its masonry is not earlier than the fourth century) gives no evidence for three doors: the openings which remain belong to three rooms at the back of the stage buildings.
by the chorus and annotated by its leader, and this relationship was expressed in the design of the Periclean theatre. Now the action takes place on a long, framed stage and the orchestra is empty. Some idea of the appearance of the Lycurgan stage-building is given by a South Italian terracotta of the late fourth or very early third century B.C.; it evidently represents a South Italian theatre remodelled on the lines of the Lycurgan theatre. It is only a logical step further to remove the action to the roof and give the picture frame a bottom as well as sides and top; and this step was taken in the second century.

The theatre of Lycurgus had been in existence about ten years when Menander started to write. He was therefore exploiting existing conditions. The new design of the theatre of Lycurgus must have met an existing demand and, of course, we do not know that it did not have a forerunner in wood. There is perhaps a slight indication of this on a Lucanian aryballos of 340/30 B.C., on which the mask of Electra is posed above a long stage supported by crossbeams. This stage is quite unlike the stages on the rather earlier comic vases which are supported on columns and approached by flights of steps: it might, however, very well be the long low stage of a three-door theatre with wings. If my conjecture that the Menaechmi of Plautus is an adaptation of Alexis' Adelphoi, which was produced about 340 B.C., is right, then plays which demanded two doors were being written about 340; confusion of characters in such plays is quite sufficient without confusion of localities as well. In general it seems to me likely that the demand grew with the comedies of intrigue, which were already being produced before the middle of the fourth century, and that it may have been first met by the provision of side doors in the lateral building H of the Periclean theatre. But this is conjecture, and we only reach comparative certainty with the theatre of Lycurgus and Menander's Dyskolos.

1 G.T.P. no. A 49.
3 Cf. Studies in Later Greek Comedy, p. 72.