orchestra, which may be supposed to have been used for the appearance of actors (e.g. as ghosts) in the orchestra: they do not exist, however, at Athens or Epidaurus, so that no general argu­ment can be founded on their remains.

The stage buildings of the earliest Greek theatres have been destroyed save for the foundations and architectural fragments, and the interpretation of their remains presents a difficult problem. Whether built on level ground or (as at Sicyon and elsewhere) excavated in rock or earth they consisted of a rectangular structure two stories high, usually with projecting side wings (παρασκήνια). Between these wings was the π*poσκηvιοv* (stage), which at Athens and indeed in all early theatres was built of wood, but was after­wards reconstructed in stone, with a front formed by a row of columns from 10 to 13 ft. high; its depth varied from 8 to 10½ ft. It has been argued by Dörpfeld that the *προσκήνιον* was not a stage, but a background, which could be characterized as a palace, temple, &c., by means of painted πίνακϵϛ set up in the intervals between the columns, and that throughout the history of the Greek drama actors as well as chorus performed in the orchestra. This theory has been supported by arguments drawn from passages of the classical dramatists, which seem to imply that actors and chorus were on the same level, and by *a priori* considerations regarding the unfitness of so high and narrow a platform, uncon­nected with the orchestra by stairs (except such temporary wooden steps as may have left no trace in extant remains), for a stage. But these arguments are outweighed by the positive testimony of ancient writers and inscriptions that the actors in the Greek drama mounted on a platform (όκpίβαs) which was also called the λoγϵιov ("speaking-place ”), and the description of the Greek theatre by Vitruvius, who tells us that the λ*oyϵìov* (Lat. *pulpitum)* was narrower than that of the Roman theatre, and was from 10 to 12 ft. high. Moreover the background afforded by the Hellenistic προσκήνια would have been diminutive in its proportions—it must be remembered that Greek actors stood some 6 ft. 6 in. high when wearing the *cothurnus* and tragic mask—and quite unlike a palace or temple. They never have more than one doorway in the centre, though Vitruvius prescribes three, and in some theatres (where the stage­buildings were partly excavated) there are no rooms at the back of them, but either virgin rock or earth. We may therefore dis­miss Dörpfeld’s theory: but it is more than probable that the wooden stage of the 5th century b.c. was much lower than that of Hellenistic times, when the chorus had either disappeared from dramatic performances or performed musical interludes uncon­nected with the action of the play. Horace, in fact, says of Aeschylus: “ Aeschylus . . . modicis instravit pulpita tignis,” and doubtless preserves a fragment of genuine tradition. When chorus and actors came into contact, wooden steps could be used, and that such were employed even in the later drama is proved by the evidence of South Italian vase-paintings which represent the Phylakes or burlesques popular at Tarentum.

The façade of the *σκηνή* furnished an architectural background, and this was supplemented by painted scenery, which, according to Aristotle, was introduced by Sophocles: Vitruvius, however, tells us that the first scene-painter, Agatharchus, worked for Aeschylus. In their days the *σκηνή* was, of course, a mere booth. Changes of scene were very rare—there are only two in the extant classical tragedies—and were brought about by the use of revolving prisms (πϵpίακτoι). Other appliances used in the Greek drama were the ϵ*κκύκλημa,* a low platform on rollers which was pushed forward in order to show an action supposed to take place in the interior of the *σκηνή* (the scene in a Greek play was always laid in the open air), and the *μηχανή,* a crane by which an actor representing a god could be suspended in mid-air (hence the phrase *deus ex machina).* In the upper part of the *σκηνή* was a balcony called the διστeγiα (“ second story ”), and at the top a narrow platform called the θϵoλ*oϓϵίoν,* upon which gods supposed to be stationary in heaven could appear. Ghosts ascending from the underworld mounted the *χaρώvιοι* κλίμακϵs, whose position is uncertain. The *βpovτtiov* was a machine for imitating thunder by means of stones rolled in metal jars. It is far from certain whether a drop-scene was used in the classical period of the Greek drama; in later times and in the Roman theatre a curtain (αύλαία, Lat. *aulaea, siparium)* was let down into a narrow slit in front of the stage before the play began and drawn up at the end.

It has been mentioned above that in the later Hellenistic theatres the stage was made broader, lower and deeper, and in the Roman theatre, the principle of whose construction, as explained by Vitru­vius, is illustrated by fig. 3, the orchestra is reduced to a semi­circle *(acd).* The line *ef* is that of the background *(scenae frons)* and its limits are those of the *cavea* or auditorium.

The Romans, by their use of the arch in construction and also of concrete for vaulting, were enabled to erect theatres on level ground, such as the Campus Martius at Rome, where an elaborate structure, usually in three stories of arcades@@1 took the place of

the natural hill-slope of Greek theatres. The Roman theatre thus became an organic whole; the auditorium and stage­buildings were structurally connected, and the orchestra was entered from the wings, not by open passages (παρόδοι) as in Greece, but by vaulted corridors. The orchestra was no longer used for the performances (whether dramatic, musical or merely spectacular), but was reserved for senators and other persons of distinction. Hence (as Vitruvius points out) arose the necessity for lowering and enlarging the stage. It is hard to say when this change was made or at what date it was first introduced into Italy (if it did not originate in the west). The larger of the two theatres at Pompeii dates from the Hellen­istic period, but was thrice reconstructed, and it is not clear to what date we are to assign the low stage of Roman pattern; possibly it belongs to the earliest period of the Roman colony at Pompeii founded by Sulla (b.c. 80). The theatre of Pompey (see below) is said by Plutarch to have been copied from that of Mytilene, which suggests that the Roman theatre was de­rived from a late Greek model; and this is made probable by the existence of transitional forms.

During the Republican period the erection of permanent theatres with seats for the spectators was thought to savour of Greek luxury and to be unworthy of the stern simplicity of the Roman citizens. Thus in 154 B.c. Scipio Nasica induced the senate to demolish the first stone theatre which had been begun by C. Cassius Longinus (“ tanquam inutile et nociturum publicis moribus,” Liv. *Epit.* 48). Even in 55 b.c., when Pompey began the theatre of which remains still exist in Rome, he thought it wise to place a shrine to Venus Victrix at the top of the cavea, as a sort of excuse for having stone seats below it— the seats theoretically serving as steps to reach the temple. This theatre, which was completed in 52 b.c., is spoken of by Vitruvius as “ the stone theatre ” *par excellence:* it is said by Pliny to have held 40,000 people.@@2 It was also used as an amphi­theatre for the bloody shows in which the Romans took greater pleasure than in the purer intellectual enjoyment of the drama. At its inauguration 500 lions and 20 elephants were killed by gladiators. Near it two other theatres were erected, one begun by Julius Caesar and finished by Augustus in 13 b.c., under the name of his nephew Marcellus,@@3 and another built about the same date by Cornelius Balbus (Suet. *Aug.* 29; Pliny, *H. N.* xxxvi. 59). Scanty remains exist of this last theatre, but the ruins of the theatre of Marcellus are among the most imposing of the buildings of ancient Rome.

A long account is given by Pliny (*H.* *N.* xxxvi. 5 and 114) of a most magnificent temporary theatre built by the aedile Μ. Aemilius Scaurus in 58 b.c. It is said to have held the in­credible number of 80,000 people, and was a work of the most costly splendour. Still less credible is the account which Pliny gives *(H. N.* xxxvi. 116) of two wooden theatres built by C. Curio in 50 b.c., which were made to revolve on pivots, so that the two together could form an amphitheatre in the after­noon, after having been used as two separate theatres in the morning.

All Roman provincial towns of any importance possessed at least one theatre; many of these are partly preserved. On

@@@1 Vitruvius prescribes for the Roman theatre a portico running round the interior of the auditorium on the level of the topmost row of seats; remains of such a portico (or, as at Aspendus, of a series of arcades) can sometimes be traced.

@@@2 Huelsen has shown that this statement is exaggerated, and estimates the number of spectators at 9000 to 10,000.

@@@3 According to Livy (xl. 51), the theatre of Marcellus was built on the site of an earlier one erected by Aemilius Lepidus.