elaborate directions for the construction of these vases, which were to be tuned in a chromatic scale;@@1 he mentions their use by the Greeks, but says he knows of no Roman theatre which possessed these vases, the real utility of which is very problematical.@@2 The segmental floor space in a Greek theatre was called the *όρχήστρα (orchestra),* and was occupied by the chorus ; in the centre of this was the *θvμέλη,* a platform slightly raised on steps, in the middle of which was an altar to Dionysus. The stage *(πpoσκήvιov, proscenium)* was a narrow platform, raised 3 to 5 feet above the orchestra, with which it communicated by stairs, so that the chorus could move from one place to the other ; the central part of the stage, where the principal actors usually stood, was the *λoγείov* *(pulpitum).* The stage was also connected with a chamber under it *(ύπoσκήvιov)* by a flight of stairs called *χaρώvιoι κλίμακες,* by which ghosts ascended. At the back of the stage was a lofty wall, which usually reached to the level of the colonnade behind the highest row of seats ; this was the *σκηνή (scena),* in which were three doors leading into the stage from the actors’ dressing-rooms behind it.@@3 This wall was usually decorated with three orders of columns and entablatures, forming an architectural façade, w’hich represented a palace or temple, before which the action of the play was supposed to take place. Other movable wooden scenery was in some cases added in front of the permanent scena ; or curtains with woven or embroidered figures were hung against it to form a background to the actors *(παρα­πέτασμα* or αύλαίαι, *aulæa or siparium).* More elaborate painted scenes were also used, but, according to Aristotle (*Poet.,* iv. 16), not before the time of Sophocles. Various kinds of machinery were used, such as the *μηχανή,* to suspend in the air an actor who was playing the part of a god descending from heaven;@@4 and the *βpovτείov,* an apparatus to imitate thunder by stones rolled in metal jars, probably in the ghost-chamber under the stage. Women were not excluded from the Greek tragic drama, but appear to have sat by themselves in the upper rows of seats (Athenæus, xii. 534).@@5 At least in late times the chief priestesses of Athens occupied marble thrones in the *προεδρία* or front row.

The remains of the Dionysiac theatre at Athens, the prototype of all later theatres, were excavated in 1862, when the proscenium, orchestra, and lower rows of seats were found in a fair state of preservation. It must have held 30,000 people : the cavea reaches from the foot of the Acropolis hill to close under the upper circuit wall. The rock-cut cavern, w’hich was faced with the choragic monument to Thrasyllus (320 b.c.), seems to have opened behind the highest row of seats ; the face of the rock is here scarped to a curve concentric with the lines of seats. The most interesting discovery was that of a row of 67 marble thrones in the front row, each inscribed with the name of one of the chief Athenian priests or with that of a secular official.@@6 The cavea was divided into 13 cunei;

a low wall separated the auditorium from the orchestra. The front or “riser” of the stage is decorated with fine reliefs of deities on large marble slabs. These existing features are mostly restorations of the time of Hadrian, but the reliefs themselves are of much earlier date. The floor of the orchestra is very late, formed of roughly laid slabs of stone, with a large central lozenge in marble, which may mark the limits of the thymele, and is apparently part of an earlier pavement.

The position of the Dionysiac theatre, with many of the chief temples of Athens in sight, and with its glorious view of Mount Hymettus, the blue waters of the Ægean Sea, and the islands of Salamis and Ægina, should not be forgotten in reading the dramas of the great tragedians, with their impassioned appeals to the glories of nature and their allusions to the protective presence of the divine patrons of Attica.

Outside Athens the largest Greek theatres were those at Megalopolis (Paus., viii. 32), Cnidus, Syracuse, Argos, and Epidaurus. By the end of the 4th century b.c. every important Hellenic city possessed its theatre, and new ones were built or old ones restored throughout the whole period of Roman domination. The most perfect existing example is that at Aspendus in Pamphylia,@@7 a building of the 2d century of our era, in which the early Greek model has been closely followed. Aspendus is the only place where the whole scena with its three orders of columns is still standing, and every row of seats exists in almost perfect condition. In this theatre the whole interior appears to have been covered by an awning,@@8 supported along the top of the scena by wooden poles set in rows of perforated corbels like those on the Colosseum in Rome. The earlier Greek theatres were probably unsheltered from the sun. Next to Aspendus, the theatre of Tauromenium, in Sicily (see Taormina), is the best preserved, at least as far as regards the scena and the upper gallery round the cavea. That at Myra, in Lycia (fig. 1), is also in good preservation.

*The Roman Theatre.·*—In the main the theatres of the Romans were copied closely from those of the Greeks, but in the Greek theatre the orchestra occu­pied more than a semicircle, while the Romans made it ex­actly half a circle. The accompanying diagrams (see fig. 3) show the principle on which the plan of each was set out.@@9 The Romans also introduced another important change, in many cases con­structing theatres on a level site, not scooped out of a hill­side as in the case of Hellenic theatres. This necessitated an elaborate arrange­ment of substruc­tures, with raking vaults to carry the seats of the cavea, and also an additional visible facade with tiers of arches following the semicircle of the auditorium. The design universally adopted for this appears to have been tiers, usually three in number, of open arches, with intermediate

@@@1 The well-preserved theatre at Tauromenium, in Sicily, still has these niches, which are contrived in the dwarf wall on which the columns of the upper gallery stood.

2 Earthenware vases, which are sometimes found under the floors of mediæval church stalls, were probably placed there through a mistaken notion that this was carrying out Vitruvius’s recommendation.

@@@3 The central door, used by the chief actor, was “ the royal door. ”

@@@4 Hence the Roman proverbial phrase, “ deus ex machina. ”

@@@5 This is shown by Jacobs, *Verm. Schriften,* iv. p. 272, and Passow in *Zimmermann's Zeitschr. f. d. Alterth.,* 1837, No. 29.

@@@6 These thrones are of various dates, ranging from the reign of Augustus or even earlier to that of Hadrian ; see *Papers of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens,* vol. i. p. 123. Similar Greek theatre seats of earlier date still exist in the choirs of some churches in Rome, where they were once used for the episcopal or celebrant’s throne. These were probably brought to Rome during the imperial period for use in the Roman theatres or amphitheatres. The finest example of pure Hellenic work is in S. Pietro in Vincoli; it is decorated with delicate honeysuckle scroll-work in relief.

@@@7 See Texier and Pullan, *Asia Minor,* London, 1865.

@@@8 There was also a wooden pent-roof corbelled out over the stage.

@@@9 See Vitruvius, iii. 8 (Greek theatre) and iii. 2 to 7 (Roman).