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DÖRPFELD'S THEORY OF THE GREEK STAGE.

FOR many years past Dörpfeld's book on the Greek theatre has been expected with the greatest curiosity. Before its publication his theory of the Greek stage had only been revealed in a partial and fragmentary manner, in the course of incidental papers and reviews. We were never sure whether we had the whole theory before us, or whether we knew all the evidence which was to be brought forward in support of it. His book has now been published. The theory is clearly expounded, and carefully worked out in all its details. We are now therefore in possession of all the facts which are necessary for the purpose of coming to a decision about it. Under these circumstances a fresh discussion of this question about the Greek stage may be interesting and profitable. My purpose in the present paper is to state briefly the main arguments which are to be brought forward on both sides of the question; and to explain the grounds on which, as it seems to me, the new theory must be regarded as untenable. In dealing with this subject it will be convenient to divide the period covered by the Greek drama into two parts, and to consider first the later period, from about 300 B.C. onwards; and then to return to the earlier period, that of the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. The evidence in the two cases is somewhat different, and will be more clearly understood if taken separately.

I.

First then as to the later period. The excavations of various Greek theatres during
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the last ten or fifteen years have now given us a fairly clear idea as to the shape and structure of the stage-buildings throughout this period. We now know that from the beginning of the third century onwards the stage-buildings in every Greek theatre consisted of a long rectangular structure, and that in front of it there was a narrow platform about 12 feet high and 10 feet deep. This platform was called the 'proscenion,' as is proved by an inscription at Oropus. It was adorned in front with columns supporting an entablature. In the third century it appears to have been still made of wood. But in the course of the second and first centuries a stone proscenium was substituted for the old wooden ones in almost every theatre. The question now arises, What was the purpose of this proscenium, this long platform about 12 feet high and 10 deep, which we find in all Greek theatres after the end of the fourth century? Here we naturally turn to Vitruvius, who wrote a book about architecture towards the end of the first century B.C., and in the course of it gave a detailed description of Greek and Roman theatres. Vitruvius tells us (v. 6 and 7) that every Greek theatre has a stage, and that this stage is from 10 to 12 feet high and 10 feet deep. Its narrowness is due to the fact that it is only used by the actors in tragedy and comedy; all other performers appear in the orchestra. He adds that the Roman stage is much lower and much deeper, and this for two reasons. It had to be deeper, because all the performers appeared upon it. It had to be lower, because in a Roman theatre the spectators sat

in the orchestra, and would not therefore have been able to see over the top of a twelve-foot stage. Here then we seem to have a clear and final answer to our question. The proscenium which we find in all Greek theatres after about 300 B.C. must have been a stage. It answers exactly to the description in Vitruvius. Dörpfeld however takes another view. He says Vitruvius was mistaken, and that the Greek proscenium was not a stage but a background. It represented the palace or building before which the action was taking place. Actors and chorus stood in front of it, in the orchestra. The lofty stage-buildings above and behind it merely represented the sky. Now this theory seems to me impossible. It is absurd to suppose that Vitruvius was mistaken. He was a professional architect writing about his own special subject, and writing at the very time when many of these proscenia were being erected. His remark about the Greek stage is not introduced as an *obiter dictum*, but is made the basis of the distinction which he draws between Greek and Roman theatres. He had evidently therefore thought about the subject. But even if we suppose that he could make a mistake of this kind, even if we suppose that he had never been in Greece, and never seen a Greek play acted there, still it is impossible that such an absurd error should have remained uncorrected in his book. The connection between Rome and Greece was so intimate, that there must have been thousands of people in Rome who had seen Greek plays performed, and knew how it was done. If Vitruvius had made this absurd blunder, some one would have been sure to point it out to him, and he would have had it corrected.

I think then that the two facts already mentioned—first, the fact that Vitruvius tells us that every Greek theatre should possess a stage of a certain height, and, secondly, the fact that all Greek theatres after about 300 B.C. are found to possess a stage corresponding exactly to his description—I think these two facts are sufficient in themselves to decide the whole question. But there is no lack of further evidence. Various writers of this later period may be cited as witnesses. Pollux, in his description of the Greek theatre, says that ‘the stage is appropriated to the actors, the orchestra to the chorus’ (iv. 123 καὶ σκηνὴ μὲν ὑποκριτῶν ἴδιον, ἡ δὲ ὀρχήστρα τοῦ χοροῦ). Later on he says that the actors, when they ‘enter by the orchestra, ascend the stage by means of steps’ (iv. 127, εἰσελθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν ὀρχήστραν ἐπὶ τὴν σκηνήν

ἀναβαίνουνσι διὰ κλιμάκων). The scholiasts on the extant dramas often speak of the performance in a Greek theatre as being partly in the orchestra and partly on the stage. The commentator on *Frogs* 181 says that the scene must be ‘either upon the logeion or in the orchestra’ (ἐπὶ τοῦ λογείου ἢ ἐπὶ τῆς ὀρχήστρας). On 297 he says that Dionysus here appears ‘not on the logeion but in the orchestra’ (οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦ λογείου ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ τῆς ὀρχήστρας). The scholiast on *Knights* 149 discusses the question why the sausage-seller should ascend from the parodos to the logeion (ἵνα, φησιν, ἐκ τῆς παρόδου ἐπὶ τὸ λογεῖον ἀναβῇ. διὰ τί οὖν ἐκ τῆς παρόδου;). There are other scholia to the same effect, which it would be tedious to quote. Now in these passages from the scholiasts and from Pollux, the point to notice is this. They do not merely say there was a stage in Greek theatres, but they describe the performance as one partly on the stage and partly in the orchestra. Dörpfeld says they are all mistaken; that they lived after the Christian era, and were confusing the Greek theatre with the Roman. But this would not account for their mistake, suppose there was one. In Roman theatres all performances were confined to the stage; the orchestra was occupied by senators and other distinguished spectators. How then can Pollux and the scholiasts have got this notion of a performance in which stage and orchestra were used at the same time? There was nothing in the Roman practice to suggest it. It can only have been derived from the Greek theatre. But apart from this, the suggestion that Pollux and the scholiasts were misled by their recollection of Roman customs is not a fortunate one. It implies that their writings were the result of personal observation. But no one can read a page of them without seeing that they were merely compilations from earlier sources. The scholiasts often mention their authorities, and these go back to Aristophanes and Aristarchus, and even beyond. Although then they wrote after the Christian era, their statements really represent the opinions of the old Alexandrian scholars. When they say that Greek dramas were performed partly on the stage and partly in the orchestra, it is evident that the Alexandrians thought the same. The testimony of Pollux and the scholiasts is really testimony of the third century B.C.

Another writer whose words appear to be decisive on this question is Horace. Horace in the *Ars Poetica* (278), in recounting the

dramatic reforms of Aeschylus, says that he 'erected a stage on beams of moderate size,' (*modicis instravit pulpita tignis*). Now it is true that Horace is often inaccurate in his account of the early Greek drama. It is possible that he had not much real knowledge about the reforms of Aeschylus. But one thing is certain, that he would never have included among those reforms the 'erection of a stage,' unless a stage had been a regular part of the Greek theatres of his own day. Dörpfeld, in dealing with this passage, offers two alternatives. He first suggests that 'pulpitum' means the 'stage-buildings.' But he cites no authority for such a meaning, and none is to be found. The word 'pulpitum' in Latin always means a stage or platform. Then, if the first alternative seems unsatisfactory, he suggests that Horace has made a mistake, like Vitruvius, in attributing a stage to the Greek theatre, and that he was confusing the Greek theatre with the Roman. But Horace, as we know, was for a long time in Athens, and must have often seen Greek plays performed. It is hardly conceivable, therefore, that he should have made a mistake on such a simple matter as the presence or absence of a stage.

Many other writers, ranging from the third century B.C. to the second century A.D., might be cited as witnesses on this question. But as they have often been quoted before, and the passages are now familiar to everyone, I will pass on to what is more novel and interesting—the archaeological evidence. The recent excavations of Greek theatres have brought to light several facts which bear closely on this subject of the stage. The evidence derived from this source appears to be as fatal to the new theory as is the literary evidence. One of the most convincing proofs is that afforded by the structure of the stage-buildings at Sicyon, Eretria, and Oropus. We have seen that, according to Dörpfeld's view, the proscenium was the background, and that the action of the play took place in front of it, in the orchestra. Obviously, in that case, the most important part of the stage-buildings must have been the rooms immediately behind the proscenium, or in other words, behind the back-scene. Now what do we find at Sicyon? We find that one-third of the space behind the proscenium consisted of solid rock. The Sicyonians, in order to save the expense of erecting a lofty auditorium, excavated their theatre out of the rock to a depth of about twelve feet. But they attached so little importance to the rooms behind the proscenium,

that they did not take the trouble to excavate the whole of this part. They left one-third of it as it was. It was only when they came to the first floor of the stage-buildings, the floor on a level with the top of the proscenium, that they provided a clear space from end to end of the building. Their conduct, on Dörpfeld's theory, was very peculiar. But the people of Eretria acted in a still stranger manner. They too excavated their theatre out of the rock. But they left the whole of the space behind the proscenium unexcavated. Consequently, at Eretria, the ground floor of the stage-buildings was on a level, not with the floor of the orchestra, but with the top of the proscenium. There could hardly be a more decisive proof that at Eretria the actors appeared, not in front of the proscenium, but on the top of it. Then there is the case of Oropus. Here the stage-buildings were built upon the ground, and the rooms behind the proscenium were originally open from end to end. But later on the Oropians proceeded to fill up the greater part of the space with earth, and left only a narrow passage immediately behind the proscenium. Such conduct is irreconcilable with the supposition that the proscenium was the back-scene.

Another proof is afforded by the height of the proscenium. Vitruvius says that it should be not more than 12 feet high, and not less than 10. As a matter of fact most of the proscenias which have been discovered are about this height. Sometimes they are more. The proscenias at Athens and at the Peiræus were about 13 feet in height. On the other hand they are sometimes a great deal less. At Delos and at Oropus the proscenium was only about 8 feet high; the columns which supported the entablature in front of it were only 6 feet 6 inches. On Dörpfeld's view, these proscenias, with their architectural front, represented the palace or other building before which the action was carried on. But what are we to think of a palace about 50 feet long and only 8 feet high? The background at Oropus and at Delos, during the performance of a tragedy, must have been most peculiar. We should remember that the Greek tragic actor walked upon cothurni, which added about six inches to his stature. He also wore a mask with a lofty onkos which raised his height by another six inches. Consequently the Greek tragic actor, when equipped for the stage, can hardly have stood less than about 6 feet 6 inches. This being so, if Dörpfeld's view is correct, it follows that the protagonist

who took the part of the king at Oropus and at Delos must have been just about the same height as the columns which supported the roof of his own palace. When he made his entrance through the central door of the palace, he would have to bend his head in order to avoid knocking it against the cross-beam. Surely the theory is a weak one which involves such ridiculous consequences. If the Greeks had adopted a background of this absurdly diminutive height, without any reason for doing so, this fact alone would have been strange enough. But it must appear stranger still that, having once adopted it, they should proceed to add about twelve inches to the stature of their actors, in order to make the disproportion between the size of the actors and the size of the palace still more preposterous.

The reason which Dörpfeld gives for the lowness of the proscenium—the background, as he calls it—is as follows. He says that such proscenias were first erected at Athens in the fifth century, and were intended to represent an ordinary house of that period. But the ordinary house at Athens in the fifth century was, he thinks, about twelve feet high. To this theory there are several answers. In the first place, as we have just seen, some proscenias were only eight feet high; which is far lower than any ordinary Greek house, either at Athens or elsewhere. In the second place there is no clear evidence to show that the Athenian house of the fifth century was twelve feet high. From the remains lately discovered at Delos it appears that in the better class of houses there even the first storey was more than twelve feet. But granting, for the sake of argument, that an Athenian house of the fifth century was of the size which Dörpfeld supposes, what has this got to do with the size of the scenic background? The Athenian theatre, we must remember, was developed originally as a place for tragedy, and not for comedy. Comedy, at the beginning of the fifth century, was very little regarded. The background, therefore, must have been intended, in most cases, to represent a palace or a temple. But why should this palace or temple have been made the same height as an ordinary house? Moreover the proportions must have appeared extraordinary. A structure about fifty feet long, and from 8 to 12 feet high, would be altogether unlike any temple or palace. Dörpfeld replies to this that it is impossible on the stage to represent buildings as large as they really are; that in modern scene-painting the representations of palaces and temples are

much reduced in size as compared with the originals. This is quite true. But they are reduced to scale, and in proper proportions. A modern scene-painter, in representing St. Paul's, would no doubt have to make his representation much smaller than the actual St. Paul's. But in diminishing the height he would diminish the width at the same time. No modern scene-painter would produce a temple 50 feet long and 8 feet high; nor can we suppose that the ancients would have put up with a similar disproportion.

Again, there is the question as to the doors of the proscenium. If it was the background, it ought to have had three doors, the usual number in a Greek back-scene, as Pollux and Vitruvius tell us. But in most of the proscenias discovered there is only one door. In two of the proscenias, those at Megalopolis and Thespiae, there is no door of any kind. Even the single door, when it is found, is very narrow for the central door of the back-scene. At Epidaurus it is only 4 feet wide, at Oropus only 3 feet 8 inches, at Delos only 3 feet 3 inches. A door so narrow as this would be altogether unsuitable as the central door of the palace, and is quite inconsistent with the use of the *eccyclema*. When we come to the Graeco-Roman theatres, where the wall at the back of the stage has in many cases been preserved, there we find everything corresponding closely with the descriptions of the grammarians. There are always at least three doors, as we should expect; and the central door is of considerable width. At Termessos it is about 7 feet. As regards the absence of the requisite number of doors in the proscenium Dörpfeld gives the following explanation. These Hellenistic proscenias, as we see from the remains, consisted of an entablature resting on columns. The space between the columns was filled in, not with a regular wall, but by slabs of marble or wooden boards. Dörpfeld suggests that when doors were required, they might be provided *ad libitum* by removing the intervening slabs. But if three doors were regularly required in the dramatic performances, it is most improbable that they should not have been provided as a permanent fixture in the proscenium. It is most improbable that the Greeks should have put themselves to the trouble of opening out these temporary doors at each festival. In any case we can hardly doubt that if the proscenium had been the back-scene the Greeks would always have provided at least *one* permanent door, and would not,

as at Megalopolis and Thespiae, have erected proscenia in which there was no door of any kind. The absence of a door in these two places seems to prove conclusively that communication between the orchestra and the space behind the proscenium was a matter of no importance.

There is another piece of archaeological evidence which may be dismissed more briefly, as it has already been well known for many years. I refer to the vase-paintings found in the Greek cities of South Italy, and belonging to the third century B.C. These paintings represent comic scenes acted by the Phlyakes. The Phlyakes were a sort of farcical comedians, whose performances were not unlike those of the oldest Attic comedy. In many of these paintings they are represented as acting on a stage. In some cases the stage is a rude erection of wood. In other cases it is an elaborate structure, nine or ten feet high, and with columns in front, just like the proscenia which we have been discussing. Often there is a flight of steps leading down to the orchestra. In one case the action is taking place partly on the stage and partly in the orchestra. One of the actors is represented as actually ascending the steps to the stage. This evidence seems to prove beyond a doubt that in the Greek cities of South Italy, during the third century B.C., performances were sometimes given in theatres with a tall stage, and that both stage and orchestra were employed for the purpose, and were connected by steps. Dörpfeld now admits that this was the case. But he contends that the arrangement was an exceptional one, intended only for these farces of the Phlyakes. For these performances, he admits, wooden stages were erected, and the exhibition took place partly on the stage and partly in the orchestra. But the regular dramas—the tragedies and the comedies—were performed solely in the orchestra. But all this is the purest assumption. There is not a particle of evidence to support it. It is altogether improbable that a different arrangement should have been adopted in the case of these farces, and in the case of the regular drama. Moreover, as we have already pointed out, in some of the paintings the stage on which the Phlyakes are performing is obviously a permanent erection, and not a mere temporary platform of wood. It seems certain therefore that the Greeks of South Italy, during the third century B.C., provided a stage for their actors in all

dramatic performances; and this being so, we can hardly doubt that the same was the case in Greece generally.

I have now mentioned the most important of the archaeological discoveries which seem to be inconsistent with Dörpfeld's theory. To enumerate them all would make this paper too long. The facts already brought forward, combined with the testimony of Vitruvius and the other ancient writers, are sufficient, I think, to prove the existence of a stage during the period we are discussing. I will now consider the reasons which induce Dörpfeld, in spite of this apparently overwhelming evidence, to deny the existence of such a stage. And first of all it is necessary to bear in mind this fact, that by the beginning of the third century the Greek drama had altered considerably in character. The chorus had become a mere shadow of its former self. It was often discarded altogether. When retained, its functions were practically confined to singing choral interludes between the successive acts. It had no longer any real share in the action of the play. Apparently it seldom or never appeared upon the stage. Pollux and Vitruvius both say that the stage was confined to the actors, and that the chorus remained in the orchestra. We may ask, what was done in the case of reproductions of the old plays of the fifth century. The only old plays reproduced at this time were those of Sophocles and Euripides. When their tragedies were revived, the text was probably rearranged so as to reduce the choral part to a series of mere interludes. We know for a fact, on the testimony of Dion Chrysostomus, that the same sort of thing was done in the first century A.D.; and we may therefore assume that it had begun to be done as early as the third century B.C. The fact that the chorus was occasionally discarded altogether in the third century is a proof that even when it was retained its part was an insignificant one.

To turn now to Dörpfeld's objections. He says that these proscenia of the Vitruvian type would have been too narrow for the performance of a play. But their narrowness has often been much exaggerated, owing to false calculations. None of them, as it now appears, were less than about ten feet in depth. But a stage ten feet deep and fifty or sixty feet long would be amply sufficient for the performance of a Greek play, when the chorus was confined to the orchestra. The fact has been proved by actual experience. Most readers of this

paper have probably seen the plays produced in the theatre at Bradfeld. The stage there is only ten feet deep and thirty feet long. Yet any one who has been present at one of these performances must admit that there was plenty of room upon the stage. Dr. Gray tells me that on one occasion, at the funeral procession in the *Alcestis*, as many as sixty people were bought upon the stage at the same time, and without any difficulty. It is clear then that the Vitruvian stage, which was just as deep and twice as long as that at Bradfeld, would have been large enough to accommodate both the actors and the chorus in an ancient Greek drama, and would have been more than large enough for the performance of a play in which the chorus was practically confined to the orchestra.

Dörpfeld further objects that these Hellenistic proscenia were too high to have served as stages. Their height, as we have seen, varied from 8 to 13 feet. No doubt a stage of this size would appear excessively large in a modern theatre. But in an ancient theatre the case was different. There were no spectators sitting immediately in front of the stage. The audience was excluded from the orchestra. Further than this, the theatres were of enormous size. At Athens the spectator in the top row of the auditorium was 300 feet from the stage, and 100 feet above it. To such a spectator the twelve-foot proscenium must have seemed a comparatively small object. In theatres of this kind, where the majority of the audience were raised a great height from the ground, it would obviously be an advantage to have the stage as high as possible, consistently with not spoiling the view of the people in the lowest tiers. As for the objection that the chorus would not have been able to converse with the actors, if they had been separated from them by so great a difference of level, this is answered by the fact already mentioned, that by the beginning of the third century the chorus had ceased to take any share in the dialogue, and merely performed the same sort of functions as the band in a modern theatre. There is also this point to be considered. The highest proscenium of which we have any trace was 13 feet, the lowest about 8 feet. If then it is urged that a proscenium of 13 feet would have been too high for a stage, we may reply that it is far more difficult to suppose that a proscenium of only 8 feet could have served as a back-ground.

Another objection of Dörpfeld's is that

in the existing proscenia there is no trace of any communication between the stage and the orchestra. Now such communication, as we have already pointed out, was seldom required at this time, owing to the exclusion of the chorus from all share in the action. When it was wanted, it was supplied by temporary wooden steps. Pollux (IV. 127) says that the actors, when they enter by the orchestra, ascend the stage by steps. Athenaeus, the writer on military engines (p. 29, Wesch.) speaks of the steps which were placed in front of the proscenium for the actors. Moreover steps of this kind are found depicted in old paintings, along with other theatrical accessories, such as masks and costumes (Wieseler, *Denkmäl.* ix. 15, iv. 5). In several of the Magna-Graecia vases they are represented in their place, in front of the stage. As to their existence there can be no doubt. Dörpfeld says further that if the stage was twelve feet high, the steps would have been so long as to project far into the orchestra, and produce an ugly appearance. But this result might easily have been avoided by placing the steps parallel with the stage. At Tralles, where there is a stage of the Roman type, but much higher than usual, such steps are actually found, lying parallel to the stage, and on each side of the door which leads out from the front wall of the stage into the orchestra. A similar arrangement might easily have been adopted in the Hellenistic theatres.

In support of his theory Dörpfeld brings forward an argument based on the theatre at Megalopolis. The arrangement of this theatre was peculiar. The place of the usual stage-buildings was taken by a large hall or meeting-place called the Thersilion. The front of the Thersilion was like an ordinary temple façade; and at the bottom was a flight of five steps, each about 13 inches high. To one side of the Thersilion was a long building, apparently called the *Σκανοθήκη*, and probably used for storing the scenic decorations. In this building are the remains of a low wall, running in the same straight line as the bottom of the flight of steps, and about the same length as the stage must have been. Dörpfeld supposes that this wall was used for working a *scaena ductilis*. He supposes that, when dramas were to be performed, a wooden scene-painting was pushed out from this wall immediately in front of the lowest step of the Thersilion, and served as a back-ground. The actors in front of it must have been on the floor of the orchestra.

But this arrangement appears to be impossible. If the back scene had been placed in the position he supposes, immediately in front of the steep flight of steps, the representation of dramas under such circumstances would have been little short of ridiculous. The actor entering from the back-scene would have had to come down these steps to reach the threshold of the door. At first little more than his legs would have been seen, at any rate by the spectators in the upper part of the theatre. His whole person would hardly have become visible, until he reached the lowest step. For a tragic actor to make his entrance in this way would have been far from dignified. Moreover, in plays like the *Hippolytus* and the *Alcestis*, where a sick woman on a couch had to be carried out, it would have been extremely awkward to have to carry her down a flight of steps as steep as those at Megalopolis. The *eccyclema* would of course have been quite impossible to work. Although then the *Σκανοθήκη* at Megalopolis may very likely have been used for the storage of scenery, it is clear that this scenery, when used, cannot have been put up in the place which Dörpfeld suggests.

Another argument against the ordinary theory is based by Dörpfeld on the remains of the theatre at Delos. The structure of this theatre was also very peculiar. The stage-buildings consisted of a long rectangular erection. In front of it was a *proscenium* of the ordinary type. The peculiarity consisted in the fact that this same *proscenium* was continued, though in a modified form, round the sides and back of the building. Dörpfeld argues from this that the *proscenium* cannot have been a stage, as it would be absurd to erect a stage all round the stage-building. But if there is any validity in this argument, it might be advanced just as effectively against his own theory. Supposing, as he does, that the *proscenium* was the scenic background, it would be equally absurd to provide a scenic background on all sides of the stage-building. But as a matter of fact, though the arrangement at Delos was peculiar, there is nothing in it which conflicts with the ordinary opinion about the Greek stage. It is true that the stage-buildings were surrounded on all sides by a raised platform; but the front portion of this platform differed considerably from the parts on the sides and at the back, and was clearly intended for a different purpose. In front it was an ordinary *proscenium* of the Vitruvian type. It was supported by a series of columns; and the spaces between

the columns were filled up with boards or slabs. On the sides and at the back, on the other hand, it rested on square pillars, and not on columns; and the spaces between these pillars were left open. It is evident therefore that the front part was intended to serve as a stage; the continuation on the sides and back formed a sort of portico or colonnade, and was no doubt designed as a shelter from the rain. Vitruvius expressly advises architects to construct porticoes of this kind close to the stage-buildings, for purposes of shelter. In the Athenian theatre the back of the stage-buildings was furnished with such a portico. The fact that at Delos this portico was continued round the sides of the stage-buildings, as well as the back, and that it was of the same height as the *proscenium* in front, is no doubt peculiar. It was apparently an architectural experiment. But it throws no light on the stage question one way or the other. The front part of the erection at Delos was just like an ordinary *proscenium*. If therefore the *proscenium* in other theatres was intended for a stage, it must have been intended for a stage at Delos.

The *proscenium* in a Greek theatre was also called the *λογεῖον* or 'speaking-place.' It is so called by Vitruvius; and the word *λογεῖον* occurs in Delian inscriptions as early as the third century B.C. This being so, we are naturally led to ask how this fact is to be reconciled with Dörpfeld's theory. If the *proscenium* was the background, and not the stage, why should it have been called *λογεῖον*, or the 'speaking-place?' Dörpfeld makes the following answer. He says that in Greek tragedies the gods used to make their appearance on the palace roof, or in other words, on the *proscenium*; and that it was therefore called the *θεολογεῖον*, and for shortness the *λογεῖον*. But this statement will not bear examination. There are several passages in the extant dramas which show that when the gods made their appearance on high, they appeared, not on the palace roof, but above it. Cp. *Herc. Fur.* 817 ὑπὲρ δόμων, *Eur. El.* 1233 δόμων ὑπὲρ ἀκροτάτων, *Ion* 1549 οἶκον θυοδόκων ὑπερτελής. There is also the scene at the end of the *Orestes*, where the palace roof is already occupied by Orestes, Pylades, and Hermione; and Apollo and Helen suddenly make their appearance above them, and are described as ἐν αἰθέρος πρυχαῖς (*Or.* 1631). In fact, there are only about nine instances in the extant dramas, in which the palace roof, or the roof of a house, is known to have been used by the actors. If then the *proscenium*

was really the back-scene, the top of it must have been called the *λογεῖον* or 'speaking-place,' because the actors did *not* usually speak from it. Nine instances out of forty-four dramas are not sufficient to justify us in regarding it as a regular speaking-place.

I have now gone through the most important of the arguments which can be brought forward on both sides concerning this stage question, as far as it relates to the Hellenistic period. Some points have necessarily been omitted, for want of space. But they would not affect the result very much either way. I think that, as far as any rate as the Hellenistic period is concerned, the evidence in favour of a stage altogether outweighs any considerations which can be adduced on the other side.

II.

I now come to the earlier and more important period, the period of the fourth and fifth centuries, when the drama was still in reality a choral drama. Of course the position of the chorus differed very much at different stages during this epoch. At the commencement of the fifth century it was all-important; during the latter half of the fourth century it had begun to sink into obscurity. Still, speaking generally, we may regard the fifth and fourth centuries as a time when the chorus still played a significant part. As a consequence the conditions of a dramatic performance were very different from what they afterwards became throughout the Hellenistic and Roman epochs.

Let us consider first what is the literary evidence for the existence of a stage during these two centuries. For the fourth century we have the testimony of Aristotle. Aristotle in many places (*Poet.* c. 12, *Problem.* xix. 15 and 49) speaks of the songs of the actors as *τὰ ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς*, as opposed to the songs of the chorus, *τὰ τῶν χορῶν*. Further he speaks of the actor's part as being played *ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς*. His words are *τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ τῶν ὑποκριτῶν* (*Poet.* c. 24). According to the usual interpretation of these passages he means that the actors played their part 'on the stage' and sang their songs 'from the stage.' Dörpfeld however proposes to translate *ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς* as 'from the background,' and *ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς* as 'at the background,' and denies that these two expressions imply the existence of a stage. Now the translations which he proposes may be possible, as far as the Greek is concerned. But is it possible that the passages cited

could have had this meaning in Aristotle. Aristotle's words seem to imply clearly that there was some essential and conspicuous difference in the position of the actors and of the chorus respectively. But if, as Dörpfeld thinks, they all performed together in the orchestra, there would be no such conspicuous difference. It is true that the actors might, for the most part, be rather nearer to the stage-buildings; and that the chorus might, for the most part, be rather more distant from them. But practically they would be standing in the same place; there would be no pronounced difference. It seems to me that Aristotle's words are only explicable on the supposition that the actors appeared upon a stage, the chorus in the orchestra.

For the fifth century we have the evidence supplied by the use of the word *ἀναβαίνειν* in Aristophanes. In three places, when an actor comes on, he is said *ἀναβαίνειν*, though the action is supposed to be taking place on the level ground (*Knights*, 148, *Acharn.* 732, *Wasps*, 1342). It has been proposed in these places to translate *ἀναβαίνειν* as 'come on' and not 'come up.' But such a usage of the word is otherwise unexampled in Greek. Moreover, in one place—*Knights*, 148—it is proved to be impossible. Here Demosthenes cries out to the sausage-seller *ἀνάβαινε δεῦρο*, 'mount up here.' He then shows him the people, the markets, the harbours, and tells him he will be lord of all. But this is not enough. He says, 'You have not seen all yet,' and adds (169), *ἀλλ' ἐπανάβηθι καπὶ τοῦτ' ἐν τούτῳ*, 'mount up on to this table also,' and then proceeds to show him the islands round about. These words show conclusively that *ἀναβαίνειν* must mean 'mount up' in the previous passage, and likewise determine its meaning in the other parallel passages. They also render it probable that in two other places (*Wasps*, 1514, *Eccles.* 1152), where an actor leaving the scene of action is said *καταβαίνειν*, the reference is to the stage.

The evidence just cited from Aristotle and Aristophanes appears to prove that there was a stage for the actors in the fourth and fifth centuries, as well as in the later period. We have now to consider what was the size and structure of that stage. Here the chief evidence is that derived from the extant dramas. These dramas have been carefully ransacked during the last few years, and several treatises have been published containing every passage that can throw light upon the stage question. It is not likely, therefore, that

any new points will now be discovered. Much of the evidence that has been brought forward on both sides of the question is really of very little value. It depends upon a too scrupulous and literal interpretation of the text, or upon a forgetfulness of the fact that there is much that is conventional in all dramatic performances. For instance, when old men are approaching the palace and complain of the steepness of the way (Eur. *El.* 489, *Ion.* 727), this fact is supposed to be a proof of the existence of a stage. It is suggested that they enter by the orchestra, and that the ascent of which they complain is the ascent on to the stage. But if this was so, these old men must have timed their entrance very exactly so as to reach the foot of the stage just when they came to the verses in which they began to grumble about the ascent. There would be something rather ludicrous in the whole proceeding. It seems more natural to assume that their remarks had no reference to the stage, and that the steepness of which they complain was left to the imagination of the spectators.

It will be best then to disregard all evidence of this inconclusive kind, and to confine our attention to those points which really throw light on the question as to the relative position of actors and chorus during the fifth century. The following facts seem to be established. It is evident that the chorus sometimes entered and sometimes departed by the back-scene. Instances are not very common; there are only about six in the extant dramas; still they undoubtedly occur. It is evident, too, that the actors sometimes entered by the orchestra. They must have done so when they entered along with the chorus, and they probably did so when they entered in chariots or waggons. This gives us about ten cases where the actors apparently came in by the orchestra. They may have done so much more frequently, but these ten cases are the only ones for which there is any distinct evidence. On the other hand it was a common practice for actors and chorus to depart together through the orchestra. Many plays end in this way, such as the *Eumenides* and the *Septem.* In Aristophanes it is a favourite form of conclusion for actors and chorus to go off through the orchestra in a joyful procession. The general conclusion then is this, that it was not uncommon in the fifth century for the actors to enter or exit by the orchestra, and for the chorus to enter or exit by the back-scene. But when we pass on from these entrances and exits, and look at

the rest of the play, we find that it is very unusual, during the course of the action, for the chorus to come on the stage, and for the actors to go into the orchestra. The instances in which, apart from exits and entrances, the actors and the chorus can be shown to have come into physical contact with one another, are remarkably few. I mean such cases as when the chorus try to prevent Creon from seizing Antigone, or when the chorus of farmers in the *Peace* mount the stage in order to draw the statue of Peace out of the well. Opinions may differ as to individual cases, but the total number of instances does not amount, at the outside, to more than about fifteen. The conclusion we may draw from this evidence is as follows. There was nothing in the theatre of the fifth century to prevent the actors from moving into the place occupied by the chorus, and there was nothing to prevent the chorus moving into the place occupied by the actors. But except when they were entering or leaving the scene of action, they do not appear to have usually done so, but to have kept apart from one another.

Now what does all this prove as regards the stage? On the one hand it proves conclusively that the stage of the fifth century cannot have been as high as the ordinary Hellenistic stage. If the fifth century stage had been twelve feet above the level of the orchestra, there would have been the greatest awkwardness in actors and chorus passing from one place to the other. But on the other hand it does not in any way exclude the possibility of there having been a stage of some kind or another. If we suppose that the fifth century stage was lower and deeper than that of later times, and that it was connected with the orchestra by a long flight of steps, or by a sloping ascent, then the extant dramas might have been acted on such a stage without the slightest difficulty. Actors and chorus could easily pass from stage to orchestra, or vice versa. The fact that they so seldom come into contact with one another, except when entering or leaving the scene of action, is a strong confirmation of the view that there was a stage of some kind, and that it was reserved in most cases for the actors, while the usual place for the chorus was in the orchestra.

We have lastly to consider how far these results are confirmed by archaeological evidence. Unfortunately there is very little of this. Most of the stage-buildings of which remains have been preserved belong to the third and later centuries. But

we still have the foundation walls of the stage-buildings erected by Lycurgus at Athens about the middle of the fourth century. And the oldest stage-buildings at Eretria apparently belong to the same period. As the two buildings are very similar in shape, it will be sufficient if we confine our attention to those at Athens. The Athenian stage-buildings of the fourth century consisted of a long rectangular structure, with wings at each end on the side fronting the auditorium. These wings projected about 17 feet, and stood about 70 feet apart. Obviously they were intended to enclose the stage. The important point to notice here is this. When in later times, probably in the second century B.C., a proscenium of the Vitruvian type was erected at Athens, these wings were brought back about 6 feet, so that the stage which they enclosed might not be more than about 10 feet deep, the usual depth of the Vitruvian stage. The fact then that the wings of the old Lycurgeoan building projected 17 feet instead of 11, appears to show conclusively that the stage of that period was considerably deeper than the Hellenistic stage, and that its depth was more like 16 feet than 10. But since it was deeper, it must have been lower. If it had been 12 feet high and 16 feet deep, the spectators on the lower benches would not have been able to see down to the back of it. We see then that the evidence of the oldest stage-buildings at Athens, as far as it goes, is distinctly in favour of the view that the early stage at Athens was considerably deeper and considerably lower than that of later times.

As to the exact height of this early stage nothing can be determined. Obviously the main purpose of the stage must have been to make the actors clearly visible to the audience, and to prevent the view of them being impeded by the chorus in the orchestra. A few feet of elevation would be sufficient to produce this result. Dörpfeld, it is well known, denies that the view of the actors would have been obstructed by the chorus standing in front of them. But if we look at the plan of a Greek theatre, it is clear that if the actors were in the orchestra, and the chorus stood in front of them, the chorus must have obstructed the view of a great many of the spectators. In fact we have ancient testimony to that effect. The tragic chorus stood in three rows. We are told that the worst and most ungainly choristers (the *λαυρόσταιται*) were placed in the middle row, because they were not clearly seen by the spectators. Yet however the

chorus stood, there could only have been *one* row between these *λαυρόσταιται* and the audience. If then the actors had been in the orchestra with *three* rows of choristers in front of them, the obstruction to the view would obviously have been very much greater. And it is important to remember that the spectators who would have suffered most by this arrangement would have been the occupants of the lowest tiers of seats. But these seats were reserved as seats of honour, and were confined to high officials or to distinguished citizens. Hence, if Dörpfeld's theory is correct, the distinction which the Athenians bestowed upon their leading citizens cannot have been a very enviable one. The benches which they assigned to them must have been the worst seats for view in the whole theatre.

Dörpfeld further objects that if we suppose a low stage at Athens in the fifth century, the history of the Greek stage becomes a very fantastic and peculiar affair. We have first a stage of five or six feet, then in the Hellenistic period it suddenly rises to twelve feet, then later on in the Roman period it suddenly drops to five. His own theory, he says, is much simpler. There was no stage at all till the Roman period, and then a stage of five feet was erected. But the figures given by Dörpfeld are quite fallacious. There was no sudden rise and fall of the kind he describes. We know nothing about the height of the stage during the fifth and fourth centuries. But when we come to the Hellenistic period, we find that the stage was not fixed at 12 feet, but varied from 8 to 13. There was no settled rule. Architects naturally tried new experiments. Different heights were tried in different places. Probably there was just the same variety and love of experiment in the fifth and fourth centuries. Again, when we come to the Roman period, we do not find that the height of the stage was suddenly fixed at 5 feet. Some interesting plans and measurements of certain Asia Minor theatres have lately been published (Lanckoronski, *Städte Pamphyliens und Pisidiens*), which throw a new light on this question. Many of these theatres, such as those of Termessos and Sagalassos, were among the earliest Greek theatres to be Romanised. But we find that the height of the stage adopted was not, in most cases, 5 feet, but from 8 to 9 feet. Moreover the stage was not placed in the middle of the orchestra, as in the later Roman fashion, but remained in just the same place as the old Hellenistic pros-

cenium. The orchestra still formed nearly a complete circle. These examples show how gradual was the process by which the Greek theatre was Romanised. If we compare the Graeco-Roman theatre of Termessos with the purely Greek theatre of Delos, the comparison is most instructive. Both theatres are almost identical in size, structure and general arrangement. The auditorium in each extends round two-thirds of the orchestra; the orchestra in each forms nearly a complete circle. The stage-buildings stand well back from the auditorium. The front line of the stage at Termessos is in exactly the same position as the front line of the proscenium at Delos. The height of the stage at Termessos is about 8 feet, and the height of the proscenium at

Delos is almost exactly the same. The only difference of importance between the two theatres is this, that the Roman stage at Termessos is longer and rather deeper than the Hellenistic proscenium at Delos. Now the stage at Termessos was really a stage. There is no doubt about it. The upper parts have been well preserved, and show clearly what its purpose was. Since then the stage at Termessos is known to have been used by the actors, can we doubt that the proscenium at Delos, which stands in exactly the same part of the theatre, and differs only in being shorter and a few feet shallower, was also used for the same purpose?

A. E. HAIGH.

THE USE OF PLACE-NAMES IN HISTORY.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

IN the attempt to solve topographical problems of antiquity, what may perhaps be called Geographical Tradition is one of the methods of research not infrequently employed, at least in addition to or in default of better. This Tradition, or the use of Place-names as a proof of the site of some event, has for instance been used as a favourite instrument in dealing with the well-nigh desperate topographical problems of the second Punic War. And indeed if ever a historian be justified in employing all the means at his disposal, good, bad, and indifferent, it is surely when these particular problems confront him and demand some attempt at solution. Controversy is the happy mother of a family of arguments of this kind. Thus local Tradition and local place-names have been recently involved to demonstrate the Little St. Bernard to have been the Pass whereby Hannibal crossed the Alps. They have been used to support the (to me) more than doubtful Sanguinetto site for the Battle of Lake Trasimene. And recently in studying the question of the site of the Battle of the Metaurus river I have been again and again confronted with this same question, viz: what is the value of this local Tradition? In the absence of many precise topographical details in our literary authorities for this battle, the question of the justification of the appeal to the place-names of the district becomes even

more urgent than in cases where, as in the Trasimene question, our literary information is perhaps but too plentiful. The district on both banks of the Metaurus teems with names of villages, of hills, of bridges, which might conceivably be dragged in to support some theory of the site of the battle. Four such sites at least have been suggested, two on the right, two on the left, bank of the river, between Urbania and the mouth near Fano. In three of these the neighbouring place-names may be urged as additional evidence. It is not my purpose now to discuss this question of the site. That perhaps I may hope to do later. But this which is really a question preliminary to such a discussion seemed to demand some attempt at an estimation of its value, to clear the ground before the main struggle, if this may haply be the result. Even 'finds' too may be partly included in this general subject of the value of Tradition, when all that is left to us is not the 'find' but only a traditional account of the locality of the 'find.'

It is hardly worth while to repeat here the literary account of the battle of the Metaurus, as given in Livy xxvii. 43-49 supplemented by Polybius xi 1-3, Appian, Hannib. 52, Dio-Zonaras, ix. 9, and various passages in such authors as Frontinus, Florus, Eutropius, Valerius Maximus and Ampelius. All put together, the information affords