PLAUTUS ON THE PALATINE*

By SANDER M. GOLDBERG

(Plates I–II)

Better get up and stretch your limbs:
A long play by Plautus is coming on the stage. (*Ps.* 1–2)

I. THE QUESTION

It was probably in the agora at Athens and possibly in the seventieth Olympiad (i.e. 499–496 B.C.) that a wooden grandstand collapsed while a play by Pratinas was being performed. The Athenians responded quite sensibly to this disaster by moving their dramatic performances to the precinct of Dionysus Eleuthereus, where the audience could be more safely accommodated on the south slope of the acropolis. Or so it appears: no fact of this early period in ancient theatre history is ever entirely secure.[1] By the time of Aeschylus, however, what we call the Theatre of Dionysus was certainly the place where Athenian tragedies and comedies were performed, and the facility grew in size and grandeur along with the festivals it served. One result of this continuity has been a great boon to the performance-based criticism of Greek drama. Enough knowledge remains of the theatre's structure and of the productions it housed to fuel a lively and informed interest in the mechanics of Athenian play production. It has been possible to maintain, for example, that in fourth-century comedy, the parodos to the audience's right was the direction of city and harbour not just because Pollux says so but because spectators in the Theatre of Dionysus really do have the road to agora and Piraeus on that side.[2] Such realities have been a significant asset as scholars integrate the evidence of plays, the later testimony of grammarians and encyclopedists, and the discoveries of modern archaeology.

Conditions at Rome were, of course, quite different. The city had no permanent theatre until 55 B.C., when Pompey dedicated one in the Campus Martius. Cornelius Balbus soon built a second nearby, and Caesar was planning a third near Apollo's temple when he died in 44, but by that time Rome's last great dramatist, Accius, had been dead for half a century. The Roman theatres we know are thus strikingly removed in time from the Roman plays that we know. The resulting gap has cultural as well as literary significance: Republican Rome never had a permanent theatre because Republican

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[1] Photius, s.v. ἰκρία specifically puts these seats in the agora before the theatre was built (ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ . . . πρὶν ἢ (κατα)σκευασθῆναι τὸ ἐν Διονύσου θέατρον). Further details are supplied by Hesychius and the Suda, though their authority and consistency are matters of controversy. See A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Theater of Dionysus at Athens* (1946), 10–15; F. Kolb, *Agora und Theater* (1981), 26–31; L. Polacco, *Il teatro di Dioniso Eleutereo ad Atene* (1990), 24–32 (including all the testimonia). The danger of such collapse was not exclusively an archaic phenomenon, as the Hellenistic original of Pl., *Curc.* 643–7 attests. See W. Beare, *The Roman Stage* (1963), 241–7.

[2] Pollux, *Onom.* 4.126–7, 130–1, generally supported by Tzetzes, *De. Com.* XIA1 125–7 (Koster), an addendum to Dübner's *Vita Aristoph.* XI (not in Koster), and Vitr. 5.6.8, though these sources tend to confuse stage right and audience right. ⟨→ K. Rees, 'The parodoi in the Greek theater', *AJP* 32 (1911), 377–402 and Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit. (n. 1), 234–9. The convention is easily read, for example, into Men., *Sa.* 95–6 as Moschion exits to the country while Demeas and Nikeratos enter from the harbour. See K. B. Frost, *Exits and Entrances in Menander* (1988), 103. Attempts to find this convention preserved in Roman comedy are reviewed by M. Johnston, *Exits and Entrances in Roman Comedy* (1933), 4–12.

Romans, or more specifically the Republican Senate, actively resisted the building of one. The evidence for this opposition is well known but worth repeating.

Three attempts are usually cited. In 179 B.C. the censors Aemilius Lepidus and Fulvius Nobilior let a contract for a 'theatrum et proscaenium ad Apollinis', i.e. a theatre between the Capitol and the Velabrum (Liv. 40.51.3). Among the public works initiated by the censors of 174, Fulvius Flaccus and Postumius Albinus, was a theatre for the use of the aediles and praetors, presumably a single facility to be available for the various *ludi scaenici* in their charge ('scaenam aedilibus praetoribusque praebendam', Liv. 41.27.5). Both of these must have been substantial contracts to find their way into the official record, but we hear nothing more of either venture. Therefore neither was built. In 154, however, the censors Cassius Longinus and Valerius Messalla did begin, and almost completed, a stone theatre in the Lupercal. That project was halted by senatorial decree about three years later, and the structure was then demolished after Scipio Nasica declared it harmful to the national character and the Senate concurred.[3] This curious record of starts and stops has encouraged two important assumptions. The first is that the plays of, for example, Plautus and Terence were performed in temporary structures of unknown size and sophistication. Duckworth represents the *communis opinio*: 'In the earliest days of the Roman theater, temporary stages were constructed of wood for each performance. The spectators at first probably stood or sat on the hillside or brought stools. . .'[4] But what hillside was that? How did the spectators balance stools on its slope? Historians of Roman theatre have been strikingly incurious about such practical details and accept without demur the resulting blow to any serious performance-based criticism of Republican drama. When, for example, the Choragus of *Curculio* begins his satiric tour of the Roman forum, no-one asks where he stood, which way he pointed, and what his audience could see when he did so. Books on *The Stagecraft of Plautus* and *Roman Theatre Production* seem beyond our capabilities.[5]

The second scholarly assumption is that the Roman aristocracy, for all its encouragement and sponsorship of *ludi scaenici*, was deeply suspicious of theatre and anxious to control it. The moralistic arguments Livy ascribed to Scipio Nasica are often taken at face-value and projected onto the nobility as a whole, though it is hard to square this anti-theatrical attitude with the striking expansion in number and scale of the *ludi scaenici* in this period. Evidence for both the Romans' growing enthusiasm for plays and their growing opportunities to indulge that enthusiasm abounds, leading Gruen to suggest a more practical reason for the Senate's refusal to permit a permanent venue for them. 'The ritual of erecting and then dismantling temporary structures,' he argues, 'gave annual notice that the ruling class held decisive authority in the artistic sphere.'[6] Even this kind of argument, of course, precludes meaningful performance criticism, but we need not content ourselves with historical arguments drawn largely from the written record. Our knowledge of the Republican city itself continues to grow. Is it still the case that all evidence for Roman theatre production has been lost in the ruling class's exercise of that putative 'ritual'?

[3] Liv., *Per.* 48: 'inutile et nociturum publicis moribus'. The other sources are Val. Max. 2.4.2 (who names the censors), Vell. Pat. 1.15.3, App., *BC* 1.28, and Oros. 4.21.4 (who dates Scipio's intervention to 151). There are discrepancies among these accounts and some textual problems, but the general course of the episode is beyond dispute. See E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (1992), 206 n. 110. For the possibility that beneath these discrepancies lies evidence for a fourth attempt to build a permanent theatre late in the second century, see n. 32 below.

[4] G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (1952), 79. Cf. J. E. Stambaugh, *The Ancient Roman City* (1988), 229: 'the spectators sat on the grass or on wooden bleachers'. No references are given, but the jerry-built quality of the Plautine theatre is often adduced from Tacitus' comment at *Ann.* 14.20 that games used to be presented on temporary stages before hastily-constructed grandstands, not the best testimony, especially in its moralizing context, for theatre practices three centuries earlier.

[5] Contrast the continuing fecundity of Greek scholarship on such issues as reviewed, for example, → E. Hall, 'Theatrical archaeology', *AJA* 101 (1997), 154–8. For the problems of topography and dramaturgy in Pl., *Curc.* 462–86, → T. J. Moore, 'Palliata Togata: Plautus, *Curculio* 462–86', *AJP* 112 (1991), 343–62.

[6] Gruen, op. cit. (n. 3), 209. For the more traditional view, with its decidedly moralistic cast, see Duckworth, op. cit. (n. 4), 79–82 and J. A. Hanson, *Roman Theater-Temples* (1959), 18–25.

There is certainly little *written* evidence to be found for where and how the Romans performed their plays. When Saunders gathered and discussed it early in this century, she was forced to an understandably bleak conclusion:

> One must conclude, then, that it is dangerous to dogmatize on this subject, as on most others connected with the early Roman stage. Our evidence is too slight and the period of time involved is too long for us to believe that it was marked by a perfectly uniform practice. There was, unquestionably, a prejudice in favour of a site near the shrine of the god of the *ludi*, but some places were better suited for plays than others, and audiences must have varied for different *ludi* and for different periods.[7]

No second step came until 1959, when Hanson published a book now widely neglected by students of Roman drama but deeply relevant to their concerns. *Roman Theater-Temples* studied in greater detail than Saunders could the association of dramatic venues and temples in the Roman world. Though the written record had scarcely improved a jot since Saunders' time, the archaeological record had, and Hanson made the most of it. His work looks largely at structures of the late Republic and Empire, but he began with Saunders' conclusion that in the earlier days of the Republic, *ludi* were generally held within the precinct of the particular god being honoured. There is evidence of this custom for the *ludi Florales* and *Ceriales* and some for the *Apollinares*, but we are best informed about the *ludi Megalenses*. This is because P. Clodius Pulcher, as curule aedile in 56 B.C., presided over these games with such riotous consequences that Cicero soon contrasted his arrangements with the modest solemnity of their origins: 'What shall I say of those games which our ancestors wished to establish and to celebrate as the Megalesia on the Palatine, before the temple, in the very sight of the Magna Mater?'[8] This testimony is especially welcome because the Megalesia is in other respects the best documented of the *ludi scaenici*. Plautus' *Pseudolus* was performed at the dedication of Cybele's temple in 191 B.C., and four of Terence's six plays were produced for her *ludi* in the 160s. All of them must therefore have been performed, as Cicero says, not just in the general area of the Palatine but immediately before her temple.

The podium of this temple is to be found on the south-west side of the Palatine. The substantial remains there have been recognized for what they are since at least the discovery in 1873 of an altar inscribed 'M(ater) D(eum) M(agna) I(daea)', her official title at Rome. Modern excavations in the area were first conducted by Romanelli in the 1950s, who focused his work on the podium, where terracotta figurines of Attis were found, and on specific features of interest in the area such as the Scalae Caci. He was not yet in a position, however, to describe the surrounding plaza or its development over time, which is the knowledge required to understand the staging there of Republican *ludi*,[9] and Hanson himself had only preliminary accounts of Romanelli's findings at his disposal. His discussion in *Roman Theater-Temples* of the early *ludi Megalenses* and their significance in the history of the Republican theatre was thus something less than we might desire.[10] The temple podium and the area surrounding it on the south and west, however, are currently being excavated by Pensabene. Thanks to his work, significant new results are available, and some old questions can now be answered.[11] It is, therefore,

→ C. Saunders, 'The site of dramatic performances at Rome in the times of Plautus and Terence', *TAPA* 44 (1913), 87–97.

[8] Cic., *Har.* 24: 'Nam quid ego de illis ludis loquar quos in Palatio nostri maiores ante templum in ipso Matris Magnae conspectu Megalesibus fieri celebrarique voluerunt?'

[9] P. Romanelli, 'Lo scavo al tempio della Magna Mater e nelle sue adiacenze', *Monumenti Antichi* 46 (1963), col. 202–330: 223–7 discuss the history of excavations on the site. Cf. E. Steinby, *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (1996), 3.206–8. Identification of the figurines remains controversial: see G. Thomas, 'Magna Mater and Attis', *ANRW* II.17.3 (1984), 1506. The altar has on an adjacent side an inscription dated 27 March A.D. 192, the day of the *lavatio* of the Magna Mater (*CIL* 6.4.2: 30967L). For the official cult title, see S. Takács, 'Magna Deum Mater Idaea, Cybele, and Catullus' Attis', in E. Lane (ed.), *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults* (1996), 372–5.

[10] Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 13–16. Hanson was the first to bring archaeological evidence into the discussion but was probably discouraged from pursuing it far by Romanelli's belief that no trace of the original temple remained.

[11] The main publications are P. Pensabene, 'Area sud-occidentale del Palatino', *Roma, Archeologia del Centro*, Lavori e studi di Archeologia 6 (1985), 179–212; '"Auguratorium" e tempio della Magna Mater', *Archeologia laziale* 2 (1979), 67–74; 'Scavi nell' area del Tempio della Vittoria e del Santuario della Magna Mater sul Palatino', *Archeologia laziale* 9 (1988), 54–67; and 'Nuovi rinvenimenti nell' area sud-ouest del Palatino (1992–1993)', *Archeologia laziale* 12.1 (1995), 13–28.

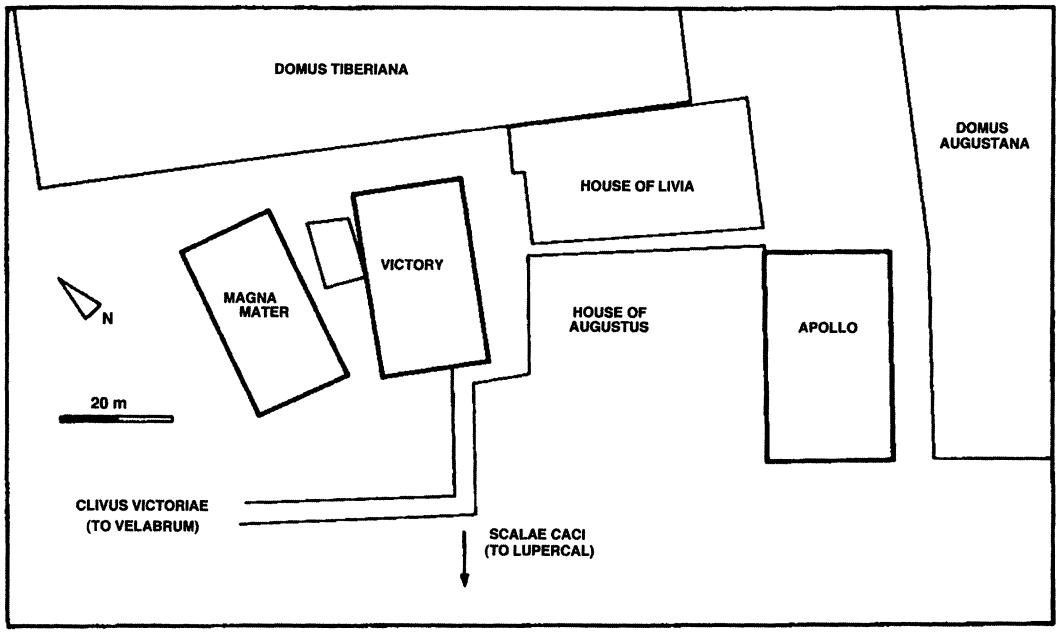

FIG. 1. THE SOUTH-WEST CORNER OF THE PALATINE.

possible to renew Hanson's investigation and to ask if, at least for the *ludi Megalenses,* a more concrete idea of Republican theatre production and its occasion is finally possible.

II. THE VENUE

The Romans' victory over Hasdrubal at the Metaurus in 207 B.C. and their further successes in Spain under Scipio made Hannibal's position in Italy untenable. Nevertheless, the Senate still had to decide whether to bring Hannibal to a decisive battle where he was or to force his withdrawal by attacking Carthage directly. The inevitable political tensions over this choice were exacerbated in 205 by a series of prodigies. The Sibylline Books were then consulted and a remedy found: Hannibal would be driven from Italy if the Asian Mother of the Gods were brought to Rome. This recommendation was confirmed by Delphi, the cooperation of King Attalus of Pergamum was secured, and in 204 the Magna Mater, in the form of a black stone, was received in Rome and offered temporary sanctuary in the temple of Victory on the Palatine. Regular games in her honour known as the *Megale(n)sia* were established in 194, and on 10 April 191 her own temple on the Palatine was dedicated. Among the entertainments on that occasion was a performance of Plautus' *Pseudolus.*[12]

The site of these events on the Palatine may be visited today, just south of and below the Domus Tiberiana and west of the houses we associate with the names of Livia and Augustus. The arrangement of buildings on this corner of the hill, over the crest from the Forum, is certain, though the two ancient access routes to it from the south and west, the so-called Scalae Caci leading down to the Lupercal and the Clivus Victoriae running west to the Velabrum and the Tiber beyond are more problematic. The present situation is represented schematically here.

[12] Liv. 29.10.4–11.8, 29.14.5–14; Ov., *Fasti* 4.247–348 (arrival of the Magna Mater). Liv. 34.54.3, 36.36.3–5 (her games and temple). A fragmentary didascalion to *Pseudolus* preserves the date and occasion of its performance. For the coming of the Magna Mater, a much discussed event, see in general Thomas, op. cit. (n. 9), 1502–8 and with special attention to its politics, E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (1990), 5–33. For the history of the *ludi Megalenses* → L. R. Taylor, 'The opportunities for dramatic performances in the time of Plautus and Terence', *TAPA* 68 (1937), 289–91

TEMPLE AREA ON THE PALATINE. IN THE FOREGROUND TO THE RIGHT THE PODIUM OF THE TEMPLE OF VICTORY, CENTRE THE PODIUM OF THE TEMPLE OF JUPPITER VICTOR, AND TO THE LEFT THE HIGH PODIUM OF THE TEMPLE OF MAGNA MATER.

STEPS OF THE TEMPLE OF MAGNA MATER ON THE PALATINE.

Looking north from the Scalae Caci, the podiums of three structures are visible (Pl. I).[13] In the foreground to the right (east), and at an angle to the others, is the podium of the Magna Mater's first resting place in Rome, the temple of Victory, which was dedicated in 294 by the consul L. Postumius Megillus. Beside it at the centre of the photo is a small structure (*c.* 12 by 7 m) showing signs of Augustan and Hadrianic rebuilding that is probably the Temple of Juppiter Victor vowed by Q. Fabius Maximus Rullianus at the Battle of Sentinum in 295.[14] West of these is the extremely high podium of the temple of the Magna Mater, its remains forming a rectangle which Romanelli measured at nearly 18 by 33 m. His excavation of this podium down to the bedrock revealed a cement foundation faced with *opus incertum* of tufa and peperino that had been rebuilt twice, once with facings in *opus quasi reticulatum* and again, providing most of the visible remains, in *opus reticulatum*.[15] These stages can be easily reconciled with the written testimony, for the structure dedicated in 191 was rebuilt after a major fire in 111 B.C. and apparently restored a second time under Augustus in A.D. 3.[16] Romanelli, however, was troubled by the roughness of the earliest construction he had found and concluded that the structure in *opus incertum* was in fact the product of that first, perhaps hasty rebuilding, which must have obliterated all traces of the original temple.[17] The dubious logic of this conclusion — why should a foundation on bedrock faced in an early second-century style not be the original structure? — was promptly pointed out by Coarelli, and empirical support for his view now comes from the new University of Rome excavations: deposits of fill on the podium have been dated to the early second-century (and may thus be assigned to the original structure), and it has become clear that all renovations to the temple were set on the original foundation.[18] The existing podium must therefore preserve the approximate size and position of the original structure.

The first temple erected on that podium stood a good nine metres above ground level and was reached on its south side by a two-tier stair, the lower and wider tier approximately forty metres wide at its base and wrapping around a spring-fed lustral basin on its east side. The second, taller but narrower section rose directly to the front of the temple itself. Before and to the east of the temple was a small plaza paved in tufa blocks and a curved path descending west to the Lupercal directly below as reconstructed here in Fig. 2. This was the structure as dedicated in 191 B.C. and known to Plautus and Terence. When the temple burned in 111, however, the authorities took the opportunity not just to rebuild and modernize it but to improve the adjacent plaza by raising its

and for their activities, H. H. Scullard, *Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic* (1981), 97–101.

[13] The photographs, taken on 10 April 1997 (the date seemed propitious), are my own. I am grateful to Dotoressa Capo di Ferro of the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma for guiding me through the site and to Professor Patrizio Pensabene of the University of Rome for permission to reproduce his elevations of the temples there. An aerial photo of the Palatine, most helpful for showing the steepness of the slope at this point, appears as the frontispiece to F. Coarelli, *Roma. Guide Archeologiche Monadori* (1994).

[14] Liv. 10.33.9 (Megillus); 10.29.14 (Fabius). Identification of the Victory temple was first suggested tentatively by F. Castagnoli, 'Nota sulla topografia del Palatino e del foro Romano', *Archeologia Classica* 16 (1964), 186 and confirmed by T. P. Wiseman, 'The Temple of Victory on the Palatine', *Antiquaries Journal* 61 (1981), 35–52 = *Roman Studies* (1987), 187–204 and 380–1, who also identifies the smaller structure as Fabius' temple of Juppiter Victor. A. Ziolkowski, *The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome* (1992), 172–9, supports Castagnoli and Wiseman on identification of the Victory temple but believes the smaller structure to be the 'aedicula Victoriae Virginis prope aedem Victoriae' dedicated by Cato in 193 B.C. (Liv. 35.9.6).

[15] Romanelli, op. cit. (n. 9), 227–39.

[16] Fire of 111 B.C.: Obseq. 39 ('maxima pars urbis exusta cum aede matris magnae.'); cf. Val. Max. 1.8.11; Tac., *Ann.* 4.64, and M. G. Morgan, 'Villa Publica and Magna Mater', *Klio* 55 (1973), 231–45. Augustan restoration: *Res Gestae* 19; Ov., *Fast.* 4.348, with Pensabene, op. cit. (n. 11, 1985), 183–7 and P. Gros, *Aurea Templa* (1976), 232–4.

[17] Romanelli, op. cit. (n. 9), 232: 'non si puo pensare che al principio del II secolo av. Cr. un tempio della importanza di questo, sul Palatino, venisse costruito non piu in opera quadrata di pietra (tufo o peperino) ma in opera incerta. . .' Yet Temple D in the Largo Argentina, which F. Coarelli, 'L'identificazione dell' Area sacra dell' Argentina', *Palatino* 12.4 (1968), 365–73, identifies as the Temple of the Lares Permarini dedicated in 179 B.C. by the censor M. Aemilius (Liv. 40.52.4), has a comparable podium. The identification of this temple, but not the dating of its original podium, has since been challenged by F. Zevi, 'Tempio D del Largo Argentina: Tempio delle Ninfe in Campo?', *Archeologia laziale* 12.1 (1995), 135–43.

[18] F. Coarelli, 'Public building in Rome between the Second Punic War and Sulla', *PBSR* 45 (1977), 10–13; Pensabene, op. cit. (n. 11, 1979), 71.

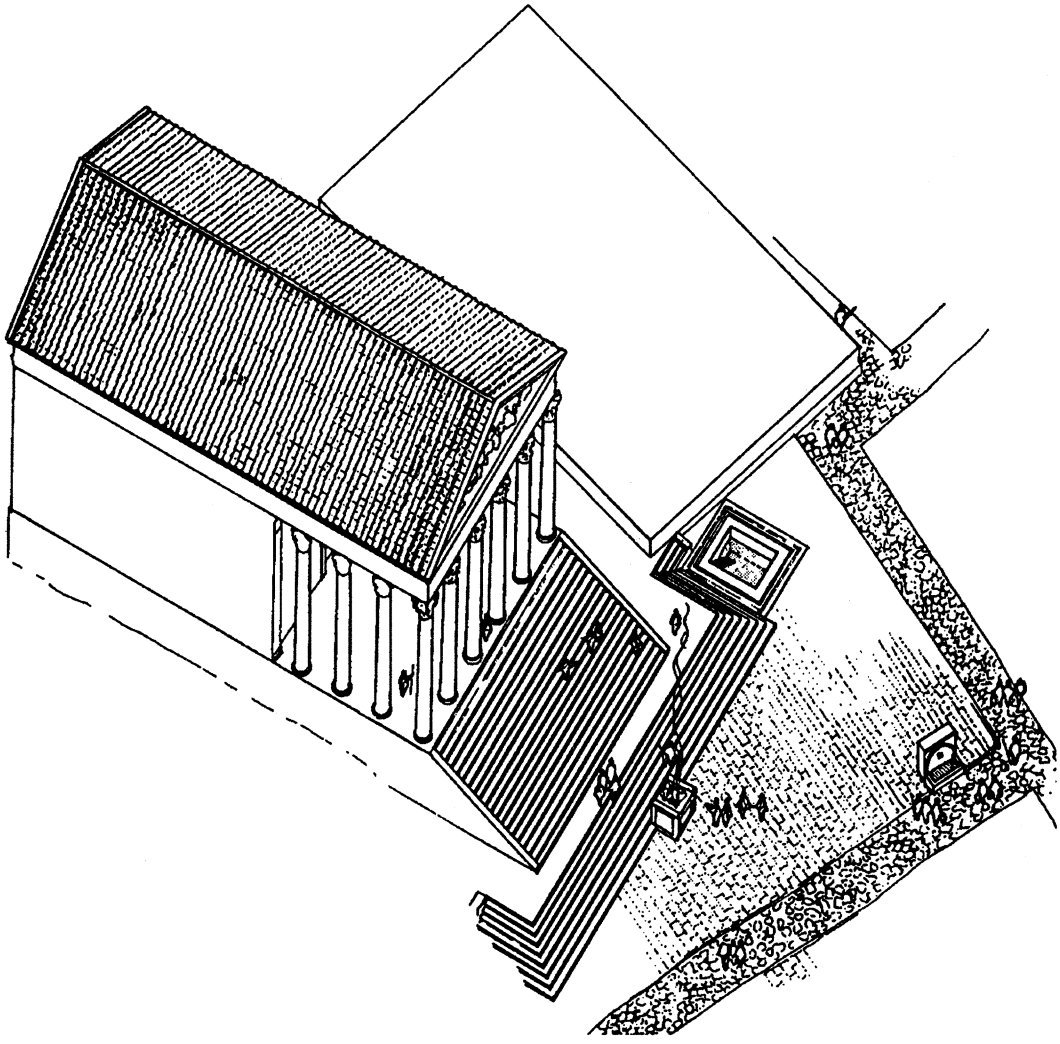

FIG. 2. TEMPLE OF THE MAGNA MATER: REPUBLICAN PHASE.
(from P. Pensabene, *Archeologia laziale* 9 (1988), 59)

height and extending it over the edge of the cliff to the south. This was accomplished through a series of vaults making a covered street to the front and west of the temple. The lower tier of the temple's steps and the basin were covered in the process. In subsequent centuries these vaults were gradually extended, creating by Severan times an elaborate covered commercial district to the south and west that is the current focus of the University of Rome excavation (Fig. 3). What concerns us now, however, is the original approach to the temple and its surrounding plaza because this was the site of the original Megalesia, 'on the Palatine . . . before the temple, in the very sight of the Magna Mater'.

One thing about this space is immediately clear. Though the area between and around the temples to Victory, Juppiter Victor, and the Magna Mater could have accommodated a reasonable number of activities, it is too small (and probably too irregular) a space to accommodate a complete theatre structure, i.e. both a *cavea* and *proscaenium*, of any size. A freestanding building, however temporary, for the original *ludi Megalenses* is impossible. How then were its dramatic performances staged? The key to the problem lies in the lesson that the Athenians learned in the *agora* three centuries earlier: the challenge in accommodating plays is not in providing a platform for the actors. Stages are easily built. The real difficulty is in finding safe and adequate

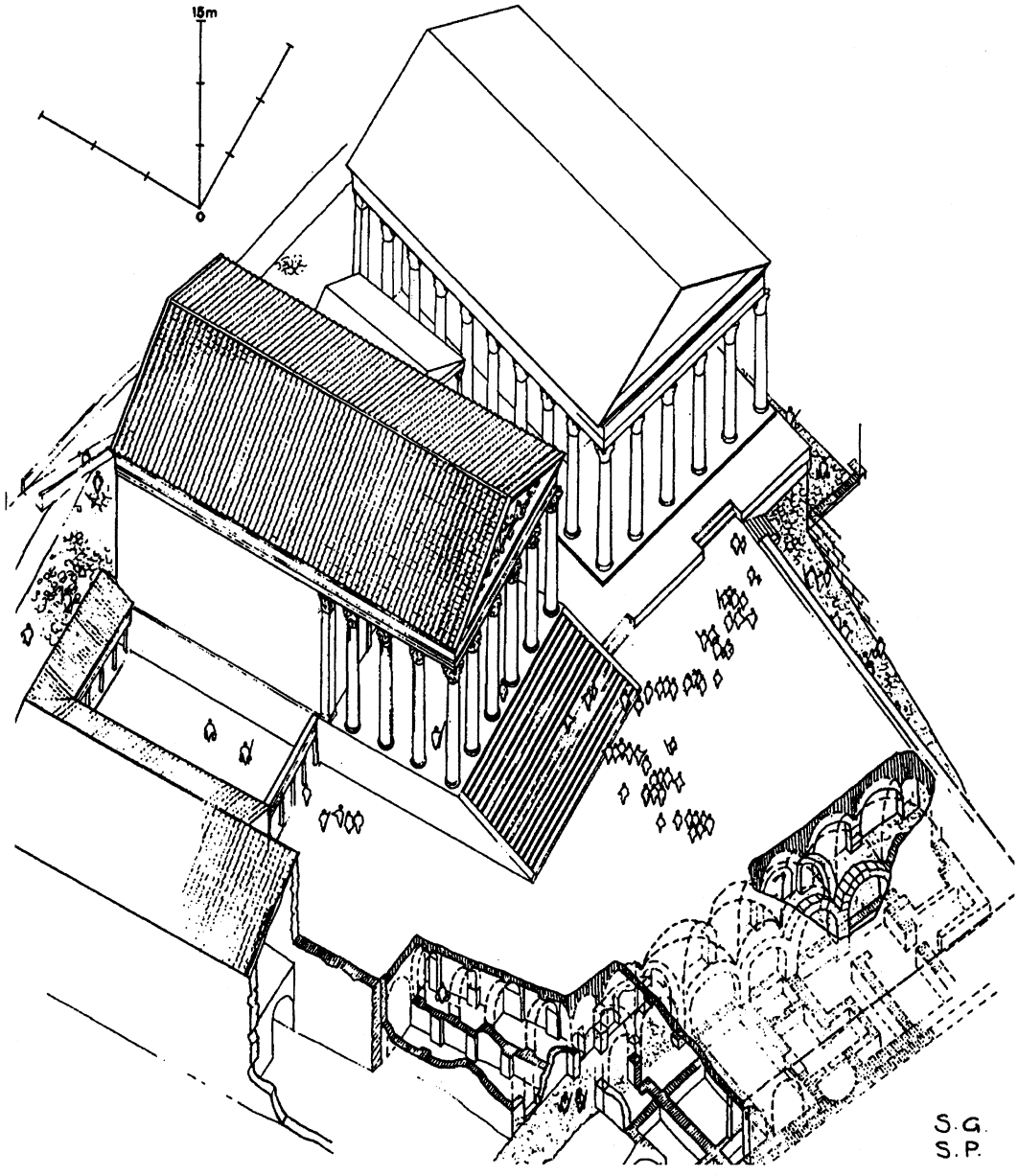

FIG. 3. TEMPLE OF THE MAGNA MATER: SEVERAN PHASE.
(from P. Pensabene, *Archeologia laziale* 9 (1988), 63)

seating for the audience. The unusually wide and high approach to Cybele's temple provided the Romans with a ready solution to this problem. A wooden stage was constructed in the plaza before the temple, and the audience sat on the broad and tall steps leading up to it. It cannot be otherwise. There is no other place to seat the crowd.[19] This fact — and the current state of the excavation — present historians of the Roman theatre with a unique opportunity. Romanelli did not know when the lustral basin and lower stair of the temple were built over. It is now clear that these changes were part of

[19] This possibility was actually raised by Pensabene, op. cit. (n. 11, 1979), 71–3 and echoed by Scullard, op. cit. (n. 12), 98, but both shy away from its consequences. A somewhat cryptic remark by Servius ap. *G.* 3.24 that stages were once more temporary than seats may offer some indirect support for the idea. Theatre historians, with the partial exception of Hanson, have avoided the question entirely.

the extensive renovation after that fire in 111. The steps that survive around the basin, now clearly visible below the podium, are therefore part of the original structure and came to be preserved under the vaulting of the newly extended plaza (Pl. II).[20] These must therefore be part of the very seats on which the Roman crowd gathered to watch *Pseudolus* in 191. When the prologue-speaker warned them to get up and stretch their limbs, this is where they did it. However ephemeral the Roman stage may have been, this one relic of its history survives, a relic more tangible than any remains from the golden age of Athenian drama. That in itself is pleasant to contemplate, but the ramifications of this fact and the identification of this venue are of much more than antiquarian interest.

III. THE CONSEQUENCES

What does the rediscovery of this venue tell us about drama at Rome in the time of Plautus and Terence? Much of course remains uncertain. The many changes that subsequently occurred in this area as the city grew make it difficult to unravel the tangled skein of later testimony, much less to extract from it evidence directly relevant to Plautine performances. Cicero, for example, explicitly contrasts the fiasco of 56 B.C., when Clodius' slave-gangs disrupted the *ludi Megalenses*, with the decorous celebration of these games in earlier times, but his account is deliberately vague: 'What can be said to be more profane than that an entire band of slaves, freed by a magistrate's license [Clodius was aedile], was let loose onto one stage and put over another, so that one sitting was subjected to the authority of slaves and another consisted entirely of slaves?' ('Quid magis inquinatum . . . dici potest quam omne servitium, permissu magistratus liberatum, in alteram scaenam inmissum, alteri praepositum, ut alter consessus potestati servorum obiceretur, alter servorum totus esset?' *Har.* 25). What these gangs actually did and where they did it is entirely unclear. Cicero's *alter. . . alter* has been taken to mean two distinct venues, one in the traditional area before the temple and a second presumably below in the Lupercal, where the censors' stone theatre had been aborted a century earlier.[21] By eliminating half the temple steps after the fire of 111, the new configuration by the end of the century might well have encouraged the building of a separate theatre in the more spacious surroundings of the Lupercal, leaving the extended plaza around the temple for the boxers, acrobats, and lesser attractions that had crowded Terence's actors so disastrously a few generations earlier (*Hec.* 33–6). But such performers do not themselves require a stage. If the dramatic companies had use of the Lupercal, why would the Romans still have squeezed a second stage into the comparatively cramped space on the Palatine?

A pantomime based on the story of Cybele and Attis and performed in the plaza before her temple is attested for later times, when the goddess' Phrygian nature was given free rein in a series of March rituals, but no evidence links its performance to the Republican *ludi*. It was probably a later development. Pantomime, a mute dance performed to choral accompaniment, came to Rome with the Greeks Pylades and Bathyllus in the Augustan age, while the March rites for the Magna Mater were

[20] The basin itself is made of tufa blocks and paved with cotto tiles. See Romanelli, op. cit. (n. 9), 302–6 and figs 72–3, and for the stages of rebuilding, Pensabene, op. cit. (n. 11, 1988), 58–60.

[21] Thus T. P. Wiseman, 'Clodius at the theatre', in idem, *Cinna the Poet* (1974), 168–9, building on a suggestion of Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 14 n. 29.

established and began to flourish only under Claudius.[22] Though the cult always had an ecstatic and exotic aura, its practices in Republican times were strictly controlled to accord with Roman sensibilities. Cicero did not expect to be challenged when he referred to her traditional *ludi* as 'especially chaste, solemn, and pious'.[23] The one religious play actually attested for the Megalesia had a Roman subject, Claudia Quinta, the matron who had escorted the Magna Mater to Rome. This must have been a *fabula praetexta* on an essentially Roman theme, the vindication of Claudia's virtue, and was doubtless performed on the same stage as the other theatrical entertainments at the games.[24] There is therefore no reason to think that the Republican Megalesia required two theatres. Lenaghan is probably right to suggest that Cicero was referring not to two theatres but to two performances: 'The two *scaenae* and the two *caveae* might be different performances on different days in the same theater.'[25] This interpretation is at least easier to square with Republican practice.

The point, however, should not be pressed: how and where crowds were entertained at the late Republican Megalesia must remain uncertain. Fortunately, however, the problems raised by Clodius' hirelings and Augustine's pagans do not affect our understanding of arrangements in the 190s B.C. The topography and history of the site as they emerge from the recent excavations combine with Cicero's appeal to the practices of *nostri maiores* — his rhetoric intends a clear distinction between traditional and contemporary practices — to make the location of the original venue on the Palatine and its limitations for the staging of plays clear and unambiguous. What are the consequences of this identification for the history of Roman drama? We often brush aside matters of production, though often only tacitly, with vague reference to the experience of later times, when crowds in the tens of thousands filled the immense *caveae* of elaborate edifices. Their experience in those venues has furnished our mental picture of the earlier Republican *ludi* as well. A close look at conditions on the Palatine should now give us pause. Three broad issues demand at least a reconsideration.

1. *The Building of Permanent Theatres*

The history of theatre-building in the Republic has been much discussed, usually with emphasis on its political implications. The prevailing interpretation, which stresses

[22] August., *C.D.* 2.4 speaks explicity of the shows 'for the Berecynthian mother of all, before whose couch on the holy day of her *lavatio*, such things are sung publicly with unholy performances' ('Berecynthiae matri omnium, ante cuius lecticam die sollemni lavationis eius talia per publicum cantitabantur a nequissimis scaenicis. . .'). Arn., *Nat.* 7.33 specifies a play on the story of Attis. The *lavatio* of the Magna Mater was held on 27 March; Augustine's 'cantitabantur' indicates a pantomime. For these March rituals, ➞ D. Fishwick, 'The *cannophori* and the March festival of Magna Mater', *TAPA* 97 (1966), 193–202, Thomas, op. cit. (n. 9), 1517–21, and for juxtaposition of the March and April celebrations, M. Beard, 'The Roman and the foreign: the cult of the "Great Mother" in imperial Rome', in N. Thomas and C. Humphrey (eds), *Shamanism, History, and the State* (1994), 164–90. Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 14–16, and Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 20), 168–9 do not distinguish sufficiently between them. Pylades' career at Rome dates from the 20s B.C.; Bathyllus was a favourite of Maecenas. For pantomime generally, see R. C. Beacham, *The Roman Theatre and Its Audience* (1992), 140–9.

[23] Cic., *Har.* 24: 'qui sunt more institutisque maxime casti sollemnes, religiosi.' For Republican constraints on the cult of Cybele, see D.H. 2.19.4–5, Lucr. 2.600–60, the explanatory apologies of Ov., *Fast.* 4.191–246, and K. Summers, 'Lucretius' Roman Cybele', in Lane, op. cit. (n. 9), 337–65.

[24] Ov., *Fast.* 4.291–348 tells how Claudia drew the goddess' ship up the Tiber, 'mira, sed et scaena testificatur loquar' (326). For the story, see T. P. Wiseman, *Clio's Cosmetics* (1979), 94–9, and for the *praetex*: ➞ H. I. Flower, '*Fabulae Praetextae* in context: when were plays on contemporary subjects performed in Republican Rome?', *CQ* 45 (1995), 170–90 and further references there.

[25] J. O. Lenaghan, *A Commentary on Cicero's Oration* De haruspicum responso (1969), 125. *Scaena* can mean 'performance' as well as 'stage'. At Cic., *Leg.* 1.47, for example, 'sensus nostros non parens, non nutrix, non magister, non poeta, non scaena depravat, non multitudinis consensus abducit a vero', the sequence 'poet. . .performance. . .audience' is unmistakable. *Cavea* at *Har.* 26 ('in alteram [sc. caveam]. . .ex altera') would then by metonymy mean 'audience'. The one problem with this interpretation lies just above, where Cicero imagines a swarm of bees coming *in scaenam caveamve* (25). This indeed sounds like a building, but *scaenam caveamve* is in fact Mommsen's emendation of *caenam caveam* in the best manuscript and thus presupposes what for us is the point at issue.

the fears and moral postures of the Roman élite, must at least in part be right. The long-standing resistance to constructing a permanent theatre at Rome doubtless had a political dimension of this sort: the acoustics and sight-lines of ancient theatres made them favoured locales for the kind of public meeting and political demonstration that the Senate may have well been reluctant to encourage. Theatres also came to be associated with a general licentiousness and lack of civic responsibility. Romans, for example, never forgot how L. Postumius Megellus, three times a consul, and his whole delegation had been mocked and insulted by a theatre full of raucous Tarentines.[26] Small wonder that Scipio Nasica's appeal to public morals — including a proposed ban on all seats at games within a mile of the city, since standing was an old Roman virtue — won a hearing and left an enduring mark on the historical record.[27] The Senate thus, as Gruen suggests, had every reason to keep the cash appropriation for each festival within its annual gift. Yet the association of dramatic performances with temples at Rome also suggests a side to this issue that has not been adequately explored.

The Romans' tendency to mingle — modern critics might say 'confuse' — political and religious functions too often leads us to emphasize the political over the religious implications of their actions.[28] It is thus easy to forget among modern discussions of the aborted theatre projects that the debate as it developed among the Romans clearly had a religious as well as political dimension. Both censors of 179 B.C., for example, took an interest in temples and their surroundings. Aemilius Lepidus modernized the columns of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol and removed their clutter of honorific statues and inscriptions. His colleague Fulvius Nobilior built porticoes by the temples of Hercules, Spes, and Apollo. The two censors together restored numerous sacred areas to public access (Liv. 40.51). Lepidus' attempt to construct a theatre 'ad Apollinis' should probably be understood in this context; it suggests an effort to upgrade the *ludi Apollinares* by providing a permanent facility for its plays. These games in Apollo's honour included theatrical entertainment from their founding in 212 (Fest. 436–8L) but were originally held in the Circus Maximus.[29] The temple of Apollo had last been refurbished in 353 (Liv. 7.20.9) and was no doubt poorly suited to the growing demands of *ludi scaenici*. That would explain why Lepidus proposed an entirely new structure for plays: the inadequate venue required both a *proscaenium* for the actors and *theatrum* for the audience. The effort of course failed (as did the next one by the censors of 174), but when an independent stone theatre was eventually built on this site, it was still identified, at least in its builder's mind, with the temple of Apollo.[30]

The attempt in 154 B.C. to build a stone theatre in the Lupercal suggests an analogous association of a permanent structure with a festival, this time with the Megalesia. Cultic connections linked the Lupercal, associated with the infancy of Romulus and Remus, and the hut of Romulus above in the precinct of Victory, but

[26] D.H. 19.5, D.C., fr. 39.6–8 and Zon. 8.2. Val. Max. 2.2.5 draws the moral. Further references in Broughton, *MRR*, 189–90. The year was 282 B.C.

[27] Val. Max. 2.4.2: 'standi virilitas propria Romanae gentis nota esset', a moral argument remembered as late as Tac., *Ann.* 14.20. There is no evidence, however, that a *senatus consultum* banning seats ever had any significant effect, nor do we ever hear of an audience unable to sit for a performance. No ban, of course, could have been easily enforced when temple steps stood conveniently by.

[28] H. D. Jocelyn, 'The Roman nobility and the religion of the Republican state', *Jr. Religious Hist.* 4 (1966–67), 103, provides an important, if extreme corrective: 'For a Roman of traditional upbringing the line between sincere magic-making and clear-eyed deception would have been difficult to draw; likewise that between selfish motives and patriotic ones. A sympathetic Greek observer like Polybius might see political intelligence where in fact there was only the naive piety of blinkered untaught minds.' Cf. M. G. Morgan, 'Politics, religion and the games in Rome, 200–150 B.C.', *Philologus* 134 (1990), 14–19.

[29] This is the clear implication of Liv. 25.12.14 and Macr., *Sat.* 1.17.27–9. Cf. Saunders, op. cit. (n. 7), 91–2, too quickly dismissed by Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 12–13. Our evidence for the building activities of the censors is conveniently gathered by Coarelli, op. cit. (n. 18), 3–7.

[30] Aug., *Res Gestae* 21 calls the structure dedicated in memory of Marcellus a 'theatrum ad aedem Apollinis'. The location had been selected by Caesar (Plin., *NH* 7.121; D.C. 43.49.3). The temple, originally dedicated in 431 to Apollo Medicus after a plague (Liv. 4.25.3, 29.7), was extensively rebuilt by the consul C. Sosius in 34 B.C. (Plin., *NH* 13.53, 36.28). See E. La Rocca, 'Der Apollo-Sosianus-Tempel', in *Kaiser Augustus* (1988), 121–5, Steinby, op. cit. (n. 9), 1.49–50, and most recently A. Viscogliosi, 'Ad aedem Apollinis', *Archeologia laziale* 12.1 (1995), 79–92. The existing podium of Sosius' temple is strikingly close to the Theatre of Marcellus, but not so oddly close if we recall the traditional association of plays with temple venues.

Lupercal and Palatine remained physically quite separate spaces in the early second century.[31] The steep cliff and open path up its slope kept the ground below out of sight of Cybele's temple on the Palatine and restricted communication between the two areas. The growing popularity of the Megalesia as a dramatic festival may well have begun to encourage efforts to expand the space available for it, but only after the fire of 111 do clear signs appear that the worship of the Magna Mater had indeed spilled beyond her original precinct. As we have seen, renovation of the temple area then eliminated a significant fraction of the original seating, and removal of the lustral basin suggests that the goddess' *lavatio* was moved to the site that Ovid mentions on the river Almo (*Fast.* 4.337ff.). The chronology of this development also accords well with North's recent claim of a *fourth* attempt to build a permanent theatre, which he dates to 107/6, an attempt eventually confused and conflated by our sources with accounts of the similar failure in 154.[32] If North is right about this venture, it must also have been planned for the Lupercal and motivated by this reconstruction of the hill above: its date could hardly be coincidental. It would have been a natural development, too, since the first arcaded street down the hill to the south and west created an elaborate and coherent connection between temple and Lupercal and could make a new theatre below the hill appear as natural as it was necessary. A procession of the goddess' *exuviae* (a turreted crown on a regal chair) would have still allowed performances in the new theatre to be held 'in the very sight of the Magna Mater'.

It did not happen quite this way, at least not using a permanent stone theatre, but a procession of this sort *is* attested for the late Republic. Varro's *Eumenides* satire apparently described the return of such a *pompa* in the late 80s: while passing the goddess' temple, the satirist hears the cymbals of her priests as an aedile brings her crown back from the theatre.[33] Mention of both *scaena* and aedile confirms that the occasion was the Megalesia, and it is easiest to understand the occasion as a march from a theatre in the Lupercal to the temple above. The ritual may have been a recent development — the origin of theatrical processions is unclear[34] — but one thing is certain: religious rituals were integral to the *ludi scaenici*, even when the theatre in use was a temporary structure. How Rome came eventually to tolerate a permanent one therefore demonstrated not just the growing secularization of the *ludi scaenici* but a manipulation of their traditional association with temple venues.

Religious scruples certainly played a significant part in the first successful effort to build a permanent theatre at Rome. What we call the Theatre of Pompey was, of course, not simply a theatre but a substantial complex of buildings in the Campus Martius. The development was anchored on the west by a temple of Venus Victrix built into the *cavea* of the new theatre and on the east by a Curia and portico opening on to the four temples

[31] The ideological connection between them is stressed by Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 14), 42–6 ; → 'The god of the Lupercal', *JRS* 85 (1995), 1–22. The post-holes of Iron Age structures are visible today just below the steps of the Magna Mater's temple: the most recent report of the area is by P. Pensabene, 'Casa Romuli sul Palatino', *RPAA* 63 (1990–91), 115–62. The Lupercal awaits modern excavation.

[32] J. A. North, 'Deconstructing stone theatres', in *Apodosis: Essays Presented to Dr W. W. Cruikshank* (1992), 76–9, observes that two sources for the events of 154 B.C., Vell. Pat. 1.15.3 and App., *B.C.* 1.125, actually identify the opponent to this project as a consul Caepio, not Scipio, who was not consul. No suitable Caepio was on the scene in 154, but Q. Servilius Caepio, consul in 106, could readily have played such a role at the end of the century. North's scenario is attractive, but how our unambiguous sources for the events of 154, Livy and Valerius Maximus, failed to mention this comparable event of 107/6 remains unexplained.

[33] Var., *Men.* 150B: 'dum e scaena coronam adlatam imponeret aedilis signo deae.' The text is in fact corrupt at the key places, but Scaliger's correction of *essena hora nam* and Madvig's *signo deae* for *signosiae* in the MSS. of Nonius must both be right. For the sense, see Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 21), 158–9, and for the date of the satire, C. Cichorius, *Römische Studien* (1922), 214.

[34] Dio 44.6.3 and D.H. 7.72.13 allude to theatrical processions in the first century B.C., but most of the testimony is much later. S → L. R. Taylor, 'The "Sellisternium" and the theatrical "pompa"', *CP* 30 (1935), 127–8 and Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 81–5. The synoptic view of *ludi* found, for example, in Stambaugh, op. cit. (n. 4), 230–2, cannot be assumed to reflect the early days of any particular festival.

in what is now the Largo Argentina.[35] These *opera Pompeiana* included the theatre, extensive porticoes with shops and galleries, and a significant formal garden, all part of Pompey's effort to shift Rome's urban centre from the overcrowded Forum to the open Campus. Authors from Catullus to Martial attest to the attraction of strolling in these grounds, which were carefully designed and richly decorated.[36] Looking west from the gardens, such a stroller would see the temple of Venus above the line of buildings with the seats of Pompey's *cavea* rising to it just like the steps to a temple. Thus Pompey could rightly boast that he had built not a theatre but a temple to which he had added seats for spectators.[37] It was a brilliant innovation. He, or his architects, may have seen sanctuaries connected to theatres in Asia Minor,[38] but none of the great theatres of the Greek world — and the Theatre of Mytilene was said to be Pompey's model (Plut., *Pomp.* 42.4) — had such a feature. Even the precinct of Dionysus Eleuthereus at Athens preserved theatre and temple as separate structures. In Rome of the early 50s, however, the old association of *ludi scaenici* with temple venues was still too strong to ignore, and so Pompey turned that strength to his advantage with this unusual response to its demands. Even if the inspiration was Greek, the result was designed to resolve a specifically and uniquely Roman problem.

The resistance to building a permanent theatre at Rome was thus not just moral and political but also religious. In the case of the original Megalesia, the temple was itself an integral part of the production space. In effect, the *scaena* was temporary but the *cavea* was a permanent fixture. A separate, free-standing theatre threatened to disrupt this connection between temple and festival. This would have been the result even for a theatre contiguous to the Temple of Apollo, as Lepidus discovered in 179, and especially so for the independent theatre proposed 'aedilibus praetoribusque praebendam' in 154. To shift the venue as these proposals intended to do would have altered the very nature of the *ludi*.[39] This did, of course, eventually happen, and with temporary theatres before there were permanent ones, but those arrangements only came to Rome towards the end of the Republic. Any step in that direction was clearly

→ L. Richardson, Jr., 'A note on the architecture of the *Theatrum Pompei*', *AJA* 91 (1987), 123–6, doubted the existence of a significant temple attached to Pompey's structure because 'we can see no trace of a massive rear addition, which would have projected into the Piazza Campo de' Fiori' (125). In fact, the curve of the temple's apse is preserved in the line of a bearing wall within the present Palazzo Pio just off the Piazza. I am grateful to Professor Astra Zarina of the University of Washington Center for showing me this wall and explaining its significance. The Temple of Venus Victrix also finds its echo in the Temple of Venus Genetrix designed for the rival Forum Iulium. For the conceptual relationship between them, see → R. B. Ulrich, 'Julius Caesar and the creation of the Forum Iulium', *AJA* 97 (1993), 53–4.

[36] Cat. 5.6–8; Prop. 2.32.11–12, 4.8.75; Ov., *Ars* 1.67, 3.387–8; Mart. 2.14.10, 11.1.11, 11.47.3. F. Coarelli, 'Il complesso pompeiano del Campo Marzio e la sua decorazione scultorea', *RPAA* 44 (1971/72), 99–122, discusses the textual evidence and surviving decoration of Pompey's *opera*. For its vistas, see K. Gleason, 'Porticus Pompeiana: a new perspective on the first public park of ancient Rome', *Jr. Garden Hist.* 14 (1994), 13–27, and more generally, Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 43–55. The thematic relation of its constituent parts remains unclear. Coarelli simply notes the presence among its motifs of images recalling Pompey's cult of Venus and others drawn from Hellenistic drama; G. Sauron, 'Le complexe pompéien du Champs de Mars: nouveauté urbanistique à finalité idéologique', in *L'urbs, espace urbain et histoire* (1987), 457–73, sees a more elaborate design inspired by the researches of Varro.

[37] Tert., *De Spect.* 10: '. . .vocans non theatrum, sed Veneris templum nuncupavit, cui subiecimus, inquit, gradus spectaculorum.' The comment is echoed in Gell. 10.1.7: 'aedem Victoriae . . . cuius gradus vicem theatri essent.' An expensive Augustan renovation ('Pompeium theatrum . . . impensa grandi refeci', *Res Gestae* 20) may have raised the proscaenium and obstructed this view, but Pompey's original intention is unmistakable. The rebuilt theatre itself then became the model for subsequent structures, but they — and it — belong to the history of imperial rather than republican theatre buildings. S → F. B. Sear, 'The *scaenae frons* of the theater of Pompey', *AJA* 97 (1993), 687–701.

[38] So W. Johannowsky, 'Osservazioni sul teatro di Iasos e su altri teatri in Caria', *ASAA* n.s. 31–32 (1969/70), 451–9, also noting that the theatre in a city like Iasos did double duty as ekklesiasterion, precisely the kind of political use the Roman aristocracy feared. Temples attached to theatres become common; see Hanson, op. cit. (n. 6), 59–77. His examples all show a temple at the back (or behind) the *cavea*, allowing the divinity to look out onto the stage as the Magna Mater originally did on the Palatine and as Venus Victrix learned to do in the Campus Martius. So too the Theatre of Marcellus positioned its *scaena* in notional, if not literal, view of Apollo's temple. Further illustrations and discussion in E. Frézouls, 'Aspects de l'histoire architecturale du théâtre romain', *ANRW* II.12.1 (1982), 356–65.

[39] Rightly observed by F. Altheim, *A History of Roman Religion* (1937), 290–1. Morgan, op. cit. (n. 28), 27 n. 64 fails to see that the topography of the Palatine would have required an entirely different site for a permanent theatre.

too great for the second-century Senate to accept. The appeal of the original venues remained too strong.

2. *The Scale and Emphasis of the Early Ludi Scaenici*

How important to the success of a festival was its offering of comedies and tragedies? We naturally assume they were a significant feature, and not just because students of drama are trained to privilege the value of literary texts. Latin plays based upon Greek originals first appeared at the *ludi Romani* of 240 B.C. in what was evidently a conscious effort to raise the prestige of that event. The Roman authorities themselves must have felt the allure of fully scripted stage performances.[40] Nevertheless, when Ennius in the 180s looked to these games to evoke the Roman sense of community and shared experience, he drew a simile not from the plays but from the great chariot race in the Circus Maximus, when 'everyone eagerly looked to the starting gates'.[41] Only in the next century do the crowds that gathered for plays begin to figure prominently in the written record. The enormous sums, for example, that Caesar as aedile in 65 spent to enhance his reputation included the staging of plays. In 58, the aedile M. Scaurus found it advantageous to build a lavish, three-storey theatre said to hold 80,000 people. Though that figure may have been an exaggeration, theatres did certainly fill in the late Republic, and public demonstrations erupted when actors gave even classical lines a contemporary political spin.[42] By then, however, the city population was approaching the million mark, and the political climate was increasingly unstable. Back in the early second century, the urban population was closer to 200,000, and elections were less easily influenced by public displays.[43] To project *ludi* on a Caesarian scale back to that earlier period therefore risks serious anachronism. Contemporary evidence in fact suggests a somewhat different picture. Gruen has already pointed out that few votes were to be found among the crowds gathered for Roman *ludi*, nor is there much evidence that ambitious magistrates in that period depended on the sponsorship of games to advance their careers in any significant way.[44] Gruen claimed in support of his arguments the composition of the *comitia centuriata* and the record of magisterial careers and responsibilities, but we might also ask how many people would have attended a festival like the Megalesia in the early second century. The space was certainly cramped: Terence complained that a performance of *Hecyra* at the Megalesia of 165 came to a premature end when its audience was distracted by a tight-rope walker performing nearby.[45] That audience was clearly not isolated from its surroundings by the embracing wall of a formal *cavea*. The open space around the Palatine temple fits the description much better, but how large was the audience that abandoned Terence's play?

An estimate is possible since the arrangement of seats is now known. A plausible reconstruction of the original Temple of the Magna Mater (Fig. 2) suggests seven steps, each *c.* 40 m long in the lower, wider tier and eighteen steps of *c.* 20 m length in the

[40] Gruen, op. cit. (n. 12), 80–4. This does not, of course, preclude the possibility of pre-literary drama at earlier *ludi* or their continuation into later times as proposed by T. P. Wiseman, *Historiography and Imagination* (1994), 12–16.

[41] Enn., *Ann.* 79–81: 'omnes avidi spectant ad carceris oras.' See S. M. Goldberg, *Epic in Republican Rome* (1995), 106–8.

[42] For Caesar's aedileship, Suet., *Caes.* 10, Plut., *Caes.* 6.1–3; for M. Scaurus, Plin., *NH* 36.113–15. The Theatre of Pompey, which Pliny thought sufficient for the city's needs, held perhaps 40,000 (*NH* 36.115). For the politicization of the theatre, Cic., *Att.* 2.19.3, *Sest.* 117–26; Suet., *Caes.* 84, and in general, C. Nicolet, *The World of the Citizen in Republican Rome* (1980), 367–73.

[43] Forming a credible estimate for the population of Rome is no easy task. Recent work suggests a population of approximately one million under Augustus, half that in 130 B.C., and no more than *c.* 200,000 at the beginning of the second century. See N. Morley, *Metropolis and Hinterland* (1996), 33–9.

[44] Gruen, op. cit. (n. 3), 188–93.

[45] Ter., *Hec.* 4–5: 'ita populus studio stupidus in funambulo animum occuparat' (cf. 33–6). The situation was different on the next attempt to produce *Hecyra* at the funeral games of Aemilius Paullus, when the audience was disturbed by a second crowd arriving for gladiatorial shows scheduled for the same space, probably in the forum. See D. Gilula, 'Who's afraid of rope-walkers and gladiators?', *Athenaeum* 59 (1981), 29–37, ↛ F. H. Sandbach, 'How Terence's *Hecyra* failed', *CQ* 32 (1982), 134–5. In 56, Cicero was still complaining about the narrowness of the space before Cybele's temple (*Har.* 22).

upper staircase leading directly to the temple. Markings on the fourth-century stone benches of the Theatre of Dionysus at Athens allowed about 40 cm per person; at Rome in the first century, one Roman foot (i.e., *c.* 30 cm) was considered a tight squeeze for an aristocrat.[46] Allowing the Athenians' 40 cm per person to the Roman audience, each step in the lower tier would seat approximately eighty-six spectators, and each of the narrower tiers above would seat about thirty-eight. This yields a crowd of just under 1,300, plus those who might gather on the nearby Temple of Victory or stand elsewhere on or by the podium. Splitting the difference between the Athenian allowance, which might be generous for unmarked and improvised benches, and the minimum width attested for Rome in the late Republic pushes the estimate for a seated crowd to just under 1,600. To imagine any audience of over 2,000 gathering for a performance of *Pseudolus* at the dedication in 191 or fidgetting through the beginning of *Hecyra* in 165 therefore becomes very difficult. Is it possible that the audience was in fact so small?

Restless and even unruly audiences are well attested for the time of Plautus and Terence. There is no evidence of large ones. The prologue to Plautus' *Poenulus* offers a particularly vivid picture of the scene. The speaker, affecting the airs of a magistrate with *imperium*, summons the crowd to order (*Poen.* 17–20).

> scortum exoletum ne quis in proscaenio
> sedeat, neu lictor verbum aut virgae muttiant,
> neu dissignator praetor os obambulet
> neu sessum ducat, dum histrio in scaena siet.
>
> Let's have no has-been whore sitting up here
> on the stage, no lictor or his switches muttering a word,
> no usher playing praetor getting in the way or
> showing people seats when there's an actor on the stage.

We do not know where or when *Poenulus* was performed, but the details here — from the prostitute's easy access to the stage to the need for functionaries (if not necessarily lictors) to squeeze people onto the benches to the problems of noise and obstructed views — are entirely consistent with the size and disposition of an audience gathering for a performance in a precinct like that of the Magna Mater.[47] The very inadequacy of the arrangements there may have prompted the extension of the plaza after the fire of 111 and the eventual expansion of the festival down the slope to the Lupercal.

Equally compatible with such a picture is the evidence for reserved seating at *ludi scaenici*. A special grandstand for senators and equites at the Circus Maximus was a tradition which Livy assigned to the time of Tarquinius Priscus (1.35.8), but a less formal social division was maintained at plays until the censors of 194 B.C. made one official. For the *ludi Romani* of that year, says Livy, they ordered the aediles to reserve places for the senators, 'to separate a senatorial place from the people, for previously

[46] Cic., *Att.* 2.1.5. E. Rawson, 'Discrimina ordinum: the *Lex Julia Theatralis*', *PBSR* 55 (1987), 105, finds even two feet inadequate, 'given that the toga is a bulky garment, that in a culture so given to gluttony many rich men were doubtless fat, and that real squashing would be felt undignified'. For Athens, see Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit. (n. 1), 140–1; the issue has been reopened (though not quite convincingly) by S. Dawson, 'The theatrical audience in fifth-century Athens: numbers and status', *Prudentia* 29 (1997), 1–14. It is notoriously difficult to calculate crowd capacity in unmarked spaces: the issue involves not just the physical size of human bodies (whether ancient or modern, standing or sitting) but their tolerance for each other. Thus the Elizabethan Rose Theatre would, by modern standards, accommodate *c.* 400–500 spectators but can be judged from secondary evidence to have held *c.* 2,000. See I. Mackintosh, *Architecture, Actor and Audience* (1993), 11–14, 22–5 and M. Bradbrook, *The Arts of Performance in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Drama* (1991), 200–10. Such considerations vitiate the calculations of C. Huelsen, 'Il Posto degli Arvali nel Colosseo e la capacità del teatri di Roma antica', *Boll. Communale di Roma* (1894), 312–22, that set the capacity of Balbus' theatre at 6–7,000, of Pompey's at 9–10,000, and of the Theatre of Marcellus at 10–11,000; figures I might otherwise wish I could accept.

[47] At least part of this prologue is post-Plautine, but still not later than the second century. See H. D. Jocelyn, 'Imperator histricus', *YCS* 21 (1969), 95–124, and most recer → T. J. Moore, 'Seats and social status in the Plautine theatre', *CJ* 90 (1994), 114–17. The command at 5 to 'keep your seats and keep your temper' ('bonoque ut animo sedeant in subselliis') is equally consistent with the temple scene: *subsellia* 'benches' is an entirely appropriate term for temple steps.

everyone used to sit together'.[48] Eventually, senators would sit not on the *subsellia* of the *cavea* but on proper chairs (*sedes*) in the orchestra, but at this early date it was enough for them to be spared the jostling and crowding we hear of in *Poenulus*.[49] That was clearly an experience to be avoided if possible. Over a century later, Clodius complained loudly when his sister refused him access to consular seating and he had to find a place among the plebs (Cic., *Att.* 2.1.5). The pleasure of premium seating was not so much its proximity to the stage or, as in Clodius' case, the arena, but its extra space, and the resentment it occasionally engendered was due less to this further evidence of class distinction than to the concommitant loss of seating for the common people.

One last factor that may have contributed to small crowds also deserves mention: the weather. The Megalesia of the 190s B.C. was not the spring festival we might suppose. Its notional dates extended from 4 April, the anniversary of the Magna Mater's arrival in Rome, to 10 April, the dedication day of her temple.[50] The Romans' 355-day year, however, required regular intercalary periods to keep calendar and seasons in line, but a remarkably cavalier attitude to intercalations in this period had produced a calendar some four months ahead of the sun. Thus 4 April 194, when the *ludi* were made regular, was actually 4 December 195, and the dedication of 10 April 191 took place by modern reckoning on 1 December 192. The dislocation was so severe that M'. Acilius Glabrio, consul in 191, finally secured a *lex de intercalando* (Macr. 1.13.21), but the calendar was still two and a half months ahead in the 160s when Terence was producing plays. His Megalesia was then a winter festival, when the sun set early and days could be cool and wet.[51]

For all these reasons it is at the very least unwise to assume without question that the early Megalesia brought urban life to a standstill, enticing crowds in the tens of thousands to see, among its other entertainments, plays by Plautus or Terence. Not even in the late Republic, when theatres were indeed built on such a scale, did the festivals exert such a hold on urban life. As Balsdon observes, 'practically the whole of the million or so inhabitants of Rome must have been unaffected on days of *ludi scaenici* by what was going on in the theatre'.[52] If, as we have every reason to believe, the original productions at the Megalesia were staged on the Palatine, crowds of that size, even if the city could muster them, were a physical impossibility. Thousands, not tens of thousands, saw each performance. The Circus was built to accommodate large numbers of spectators because races could not be repeated. Plays could. To create an appropriate following for Roman drama, we should probably imagine multiple or even continuous performances, creating opportunities for more poets or, as attested for Terence's *Eunuchus* at the Megalesia of 161, encore performances when audiences discovered a

[48] Liv. 34.44.4–5. Cf. Liv. 34.54.4; Cic., *pro Corn.* ap. Ascon. 55 St., *Har.* 24. Val. Max. 2.4.3 confirms the date and the earlier *de facto* practice, though there is some confusion over whether the occasion was the *ludi Romani* or *Megalenses*. See J. von Ungern-Sternberg, 'Die Einführung spezieller Sitze für die Senatoren bei den Spielen (194 v.Chr.)', *Chiron* 5 (1975), 157–63, and Rawson, op. cit. (n. 46), 107–10. For the censors' possible motives and public reaction to them, Gruen, op. cit. (n. 3), 202–5.

[49] Vitr. 5.6.3–5, describing the configuration of stone theatres, contrasts the benches (*subsellia*) in the *cavea* and the *sedes* in the orchestra. *Subsellia* suggest social inferiority: cf. Pl., *Capt.* 471; *Stich.* 93, 488–9, 703–4. The original concession of seats to the Senate in 194 does not imply the existence of an orchestra for them at that time.

[50] These are the only dates noted in surviving calendars, lead → G. D. Hadzsits, 'The dates of the Megalesia', *TAPA* 61 (1930), 165–74, to argue that the festival occupied only these two days. The Romans' tendency in this period, however, to expand the holiday calendar at every opportunity makes so literal a reading of the sources hard to accept. See Taylor, op. cit. (n. 12), 284–304. Scullard, op. cit. (n. 12), 99, is discreetly non-comittal: 'whether it had always been a seven-day festival remains uncertain.'

[51] Thus Liv. 44.37.8 dates to 3 September 168/7 B.C. an eclipse that by modern reckoning occurred on 21 June 168, meaning that the Megalesia in the 160s took place in late January. See J. Briscoe, *Commentary on Livy Books XXXIV–XXXVII* (1981), 17–26.

[52] J. P. V. D. Balsdon, *Life and Leisure in Ancient Rome* (1969), 268, a valid conclusion even without Huelsen's estimate of theatre capacities (n. 46 above), which Balsdon wrongly accepts. Cf. Morgan, op. cit. (n. 26), 33–5. Even among the aristocracy, not everyone was at the games or even in the city. During the Megalesia of 56, for example, Crassus, Caesar, and Pompey (and their retinues) were out of town. Cicero was defending Caelius in the Forum before a jury of equites. See Wiseman, op. cit. (n. 20), 162–3. Milo's trial for the death of Clodius likewise took place during the Megalesia of 52.

particular favourite.[53] Each performance, however, could be small and comparatively intimate, a fact with further consequences of interest.

3. The Performance Space

Finally, there is the shape of the performance space to consider. The area available for actors and audience before the Temple of the Magna Mater is not 'classical' in its configuration. It had no orchestra, but then again, the Roman comedies of Plautus and Terence had no chorus. Though the Greek models on which they were based employed a five-act structure punctuated by musical entr'actes, Roman plays were written for continuous performance, and their elaborate musical elements were incorporated directly into the stage action.[54] These changes fostered a different relationship between actors and the space in which they performed and also between them and their audiences. Whether the actual space available for plays at the *ludi* was a cause or effect of such structural and aesthetic changes is beyond knowing, but there was certainly Italian precedent for this kind of acting space. The so-called phlyax vases of Magna Graecia consistently depict the easy movement of actors between the frankly impromptu wooden stage-platforms provided for them and the space immediately below. Old Cheiron on the famous Cheiron Vase, for example, is being simultaneously pushed and pulled up a set of wooden steps to the stage, i.e. moving from one performance space to another. The Melbourne Auletris shows a slave perched over the top step of a similar staircase as he gestures with hand and torch to an aulos-player below. Neither scene — and these are clearly intended to represent actual performances — reserves any separate space for a chorus, and other vases show pipers and dancers on the stage performing musical routines that an earlier age might have expected to see in an orchestra.[55] All this is entirely in what came to be the Roman tradition: Roman stages were deliberately built deeper than Greek ones because, as Vitruvius observes, all the action in Roman plays takes place on the stage (5.6.2). The phlyax vases date from the fourth century, and Taplin is surely right to stress their affinities with Old Comedy. Yet they continue to tantalize with their combination of Athenian costume and Roman stagecraft, and we do well to remember that stage comedy first came to Rome from Apulia.[56]

Lack of an orchestra and a relatively small space for performance may also bear on a striking feature of Plautine drama, the easy and informal relationship it fosters with its audience. This characteristic has long attracted scholarly attention and is often traced back to the improvisational traditions of Italian popular culture. 'Plautus,' says one pioneer of this view, 'seeks to represent in his literary drama the improvisational spontaneity of preliterary drama, presumably the Atellan farce'.[57] This may well be

[53] Suet., *Vita T.* says that the play was acted twice and earned the unprecedented fee of 8,000 *nummi*. For the amount, see D. Gilula, 'How rich was Terence?', *SCI* 8/9 (1989), 74–8. This is our only known case of an encore, but the record is both unreliable and incomplete. H. B. Mattingly, 'The Terentian Didascaliae', *Athenaeum* 37 (1959), 168–9, traces this particular statement not to Varro but to a misunderstanding of *Eun.* 19–22. The likelihood of multiple performances at Roman *ludi* strengthens the case for understanding Cicero's two *scaenae* at *Har.* 25 as referring to performances rather than theatres.

[54] See R. L. Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome* (1985), 35–42. Roman tragedies were apparently also performed entirely from the stage and without choruses: see H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (1967), 18–21, 29–38.

[55] Cheiron: London, BM F 151. Auletris: Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria D14/1973. Musical scenes include the famous Bari Pipers in a private collection and the St. Petersburg Obeliaphoroi, Hermitage Mus. inv. 2074 (W.1122). All are well illustrated in O. Taplin, *Comic Angels* (1993), pl. 12.6, 15.13, 14.11, 14.12 respectively. If, as Taplin suggests (93–4), these are the stages of travelling players, there would be even less reason to envision an orchestral space before them. The ubiquitous staircase is in any case an indication of ready communication between the stage and the space below, though it is not in itself a hallmark of temporary stages. See G. Sifakis, *Studies in the Hellenistic Theatre* (1967), 130–2.

[56] Livius Andronicus, the first Roman dramatist, was a Greek from Tarentum: Cic., *Brut.* 72–3. For the influence of Magna Graecia on Roman popular culture — of which comedy was certainly a part — see now N. Horsfall, *La cultura della plebs romana* (1996), 21–32, and for Italian theatre outside Rome and Magna Graecia, E. Rawson, 'Theatrical life in Republican Rome and Italy', *PBSR* 53 (1985), 97–113.

[57] N. Slater, *Plautus in Performance* (1985), 165 n. 17. See the useful survey of L. Benz, 'Die römisch-italische Stegreifspieltradition zur Zeit der Palliata', in the significantly titled volume, *Plautus und die Tradition des Stegreifspiels* (1995), 139–54.

true, but the theatre space itself was probably also a factor. The Greek New Comedy that furnished his models had no corresponding 'improvisational' qualities at least in part because of the space in which Greek actors performed. The Theatre of Dionysus, with its tall and wide auditorium, made actors small and distant: the masks, costumes, and stylized gestures of the Greek stage developed in part as a way for them to work their magic under these conditions. Even more serious is the fact that so large a part of the Athenian audience looked down on the actors. It is especially hard for an actor to project forcefully under such circumstances, which is why good theatre design today keeps half the audience below the actors' eyeline. Anything less puts actors in too weak a position.[58] One consequence of this weakness for fourth-century actors is observable in the restriction imposed by later Greek comedy on appeals to the audience from the stage.

The remodelling of the Athenian theatre that is associated with the financial administration of Lycurgus (338–26 B.C.) extended the auditorium farther up the hillside and established an orchestra over sixty feet in diameter. These proportions put considerable space between actors and audience and necessarily limited the intimacy of communication between them. The result is most apparent precisely where Attic drama traditionally encouraged recognition of the audience's presence, the expository prologue.[59] On first glance, for example, the fragment of a delayed prologue from Alexis' *Kouris* (PCG fr. 11) may suggest the kind of illusion-breaking familiar from Old Comedy. It contains both a direct address to the audience and a topical joke:[60]

ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐμὸς υἱός, οἷον ὑμεῖς ἀρτίως
εἴδετε, τοιοῦτος γέγονεν, Οἰνοπίων τις ἢ
Μάρων τις ἢ Κάπηλος ἢ <καὶ> Τιμοκλῆς.
μεθύει γάρ . . .

That son of mine, whom you've just
seen, has become just such a one: an Oenopion or
Maron or Kapelos — or even Timocles!
He's always drinking. . .

The effect of this address, however, is actually rather different from ostensibly similar instances in Aristophanes. When the Dionysus of *Frogs*, for example, makes a joke at the effeminate Cleisthenes' expense (*Ra.* 48), incongruity and surprise are essential to the humour. That a character in so outlandish a costume and so fantastic a place should even *know* an Athenian contemporary is central to the joke. We laugh at the improbable and the unexpected. There is no comparable reason why Alexis' speaker should not know this Timocles and his proclivities. He, Timocles, and presumably his audience, are all fellow-citizens. The prologue-speaker remains entirely and unexceptionally in character. His laugh at Timocles' expense is therefore not incongruous, and it quickly fades as the speaker continues his exposition. The prologue itself is simply the extended aside of a dramatic character, whose joke does not acknowledge the audience in any expanded, much less extra-dramatic way.

[58] The eyeline is defined as five degrees above the horizontal of a standing actor of average size. For this principle of theatre design and its consequences in performance, see Mackintosh, op. cit. (n. 45), 135–8. For the Greek acting style, see A. Pickard-Cambridge, *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (2nd edn, 1968), 167–76. Corresponding testimony for Republican Rome is lacking until Cicero's time. There is a good sampling of this in E. Csapo and W. J. Slater, *The Context of Ancient Drama* (1995), 275–85. The description of a Plautine performance by Beacham, op. cit. (n. 22), 86–116, is also helpful.

[59] The point is made and the evidence gathered by D. Bain, *Actors and Audience* (1977), 186–9. For the theatre of Lycurgus, see Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit. (n. 1), 138–41 (cavea), 146–47 (orchestra). Its monumental skene as reconstructed → R. F. Townsend, 'The fourth-century skene of the theater of Dionysos at Athens', *Hesperia* 55 (1986), 421–38, would also have further discouraged intimacy. The fifth-century theatre, which may have had a rectilinear orchestra and certainly had a smaller auditorium, presented a significantly different performance space, which precludes direct comparison between Old and New Comedy. I therefore limit discussion here to Plautus and his Greek models. For the proportions of that Periclean theatre and its lingering problems, see Polacco, op. cit. (n. 1), 170–4 and further references there.

[60] Oenopion and Maron are legendary drinkers. Karpelos is unknown, Timocles presumed to be a contemporary Athenian. See W. G. Arnott, *Alexis, The Fragments* (1996), 304–6.

Pan in Menander's *Dyskolos* is, if anything, still more restrained in his effects. His setting of the scene before our eyes is entirely economical and businesslike (*Dys.* 1–6).

> τῆς Ἀττικῆς νομίζετ' εἶναι τὸν τόπον,
> Φυλήν, τὸ νυμφαῖον δ' ὅθεν προέρχομαι
> Φυλασίων καὶ τῶν δυναμένων τὰς πέτρας
> ἐνθάδε γεωργεῖν, ἱερὸν ἐπιφανὲς πάνυ.
> τὸν ἀγρὸν δὲ τὸν ἐπὶ δεξί' οἰκεῖ τουτονὶ
> Κνήμων . . .
>
> Imagine this is Attic countryside,
> Phyle. The Nymphaion that I've just left
> belongs to the Phylasians and those capable of farming
> these rocks. It's a well-known shrine indeed.
> This farm here on the right's the home of
> Knemon. . .

Though his command in the first line explicitly acknowledges the audience's presence, Pan does not play on or with the need to address them, nor does he develop any special rapport with the crowd.[61] He stays strictly within his role and confines his gestures and his very presence to establishing the world of the play.

Plautus could be equally restrained. The prologue to *Aulularia* is of this type.

> Ne quis miretur qui sim, paucis loquar.
> ego Lar sum familiaris ex hac familia
> unde exeuntem me aspexistis.
>
> So no-one wonders who I am, I'll say it briefly.
> I am the household god of this household
> from which you've seen me enter.

The Lar, like Menander's Pan, never steps outside his role, and his speech is so compact and limited in its effects that Plautus is thought to be closely imitating his Greek source.[62] But this kind of prologue is in fact uncommon. It is much more usual for Plautus to reach out to his audience with extended jokes and stage business, as in the prologue to *Asinaria*.[63]

> Hoc agite sultis, spectatores, nunciam,
> quae quidem mihi atque vobis res vortat bene
> gregique huic et dominis atque conductoribus.
> face nunciam tu, praeco, omnem auritum poplum.
> age nunc reside, cave modo ne gratiis.
> nunc quid processerim huc et quid mi voluerim
> dicam: ut sciretis nomen huiius fabulae. . .
>
> Pay attention now, spectators, if you please,
> so everything turns out well for me and you and
> for this company, these directors and producers.
> Herald, now make this crowd prick up its ears.
> Okay. Enough. Be sure to send a bill.
> Now I'll tell you what I want and why I've come
> here: so you will learn the title of this play. . .

The multiplication of datives in the first sentence and the byplay with the herald that interrupts the speech are not merely examples of gratuitous expansion. Banter and

[61] cf. the similar direct address at 45–6. This style is largely formulaic, paralleled in the first case by Hen., fr. 5.6–8 and repeated *verbatim* in the second by Men., *Sik.* 24–5.

[62] For Plautus and his model, see W. Stockert (ed.), *Plautus, Aulularia* (1983), 8–16 and Arnott, op. cit. (n. 59), 859–64. Not everyone thought such restraint a virtue in a prologue. The hetaira Gnathaena once raised a laugh at Diphilus' expense by saying that she had chilled his wine by pouring one of his prologues into it (Athen. 580). A whiff of that ψυχροτής survives in the prologue to Plautus' *Rudens*.

[63] For the embedded comic routine, see D. Gilula, 'The crier's routine', *Athenaeum* 81 (1993), 283–7. Other good examples of such prologues are *Amph.* 1–7, *Mil.* 79–85 (delayed), *Poen.* 1–10, *Truc.* 1–9. See Slater, op. cit. (n. 56), 149–53.

comic business have become the very point of the exercise as the speaker works the crowd and, almost incidentally, slips in his exposition. The prologue is designed to explain, to interest, and to amuse all at the same time. This is so not simply because Roman audiences had different expectations from Greek ones, although they certainly did, but because Plautus must tailor his scripts to the unique requirements of his performance space. The audience is right there at his player's feet, demanding to be acknowledged and waiting to be drawn in to the performance at hand. There are no parallels for such immediacy in fourth-century Athenian drama, at least in part because the physical conditions of the fourth-century theatre were so different.

The improvised venues of Plautus' day kept audiences smaller, closer, and physically lower in respect to the stage action and both encouraged and required the extraordinary speed and immediacy we observe in his dealings with them. It may again be coincidental that creative comedy at Rome dies toward the end of the second century just as larger theatres of a more Hellenistic type became the norm, but the fact remains that subsequent innovations in Roman theatre design further weakened the actors' position. While the high stage of Hellenistic theatres, for example, helped compensate for their tall auditoriums by raising the actors' eyeline, Roman stages were never so high. They could rise no more than five (Roman) feet above ground level, says Vitruvius, so that the senators now sitting in the orchestra would be able to see the action without straining their necks.[64]

When the Romans started putting orchestras in their theatres and senators in their orchestras is unknown. The word orchestra itself does not appear in any Roman play. For Plautus, *cavea* is the all-encompassing term for the audience's place. Mercury, for example, wants inspectors to patrol the seats 'per totam caveam' (*Amph.* 65–6).[65] The first Roman to employ the word 'orchestra' is Varro, but the context is only vaguely theatrical.[66] There were obviously orchestras in theatres by 67 B.C., when the tribune L. Roscius Otho carried a law securing the first fourteen rows of the *cavea* for *equites*: the orchestra would by then have accommodated members of the Senate, who had been guaranteed privileged seating of their own by the legislation of 194. There is no clear evidence, however, that Roscius' law restored a right, and thus a seating configuration, first granted by C. Gracchus in the 120s.[67] Nevertheless, the wooden theatres of the late Republic must all have been semi-circular — C. Curio's revolving theatres could pivot to make a single amphitheatre — as were the stone theatres of Pompey and Balbus. Roman theatre construction had by then developed the unique geometry that Vitruvius would eventually describe.[68] Perhaps the process began with the generation that rebuilt Cybele's temple and first tolerated a separate theatre in the Lupercal, but that is only a guess. More certain is a general fact: the problems of dramaturgy and social history connected with Roman comedy cannot be entirely divorced from questions concerning the physical space in which these plays were performed.

[64] Vitr. 5.6.2. For the Hellenistic stages, raised perhaps four metres above the orchestra, see Pickard-Cambridge, op. cit. (n. 1), 190–4; Sifakis, op. cit. (n. 55), 133–5.

[65] The word's only other appearances are at *Amph.* 68 (the same context) and *Truc.* 931. *Theatrum* appears just once, referring to the genre, not the place: 'nugas theatri' (*Ps.* 1081). Terence, so much more restrained in his metatheatrical effects, uses no vocabulary drawn from the stage.

[66] Varr., *Men.* 561 refers to an instrumentalist playing in the orchestra ('priusquam in orchestra pythaules inflet tibias, domi suae ramites rumpit'). The pythaules, as distinct from the choraules, accompanied solo singers (Diom. *GLK* 492). For Polyb. 30.22.11, describing Anicius' musical extravaganza in the Circus Maximus, 'orchestra' had its Greek sense of a performance space where dancers performed to musical accompaniment (. . . ὀρχησταὶ δύο εἰσήγοντο μετὰ συμφωνίας εἰς τὴν ὀρχήστραν . . .). On all this, see U. Scamuzzi, 'Studio sulla *Lex Roscia theatralis*', *RSC* 17 (1969), 289–91.

[67] Scamuzzi, op. cit. (n. 66), 270–9. For the *lex Roscia theatralis*: Liv., *Per.* 99 and the scene at Cic., *Att.* 2.19.3. Further references in Broughton, *MRR* 145 and a good, general treatment by Rawson, op. cit. (n. 46), 102–6.

[68] Vitr. 5.6–7 contrasts the different geometry of Greek and Roman theatres. Cf. Frézouls, op. cit. (n. 38), 365–9. Vitruvius' orchestra was strictly a seating area for senators (5.6.2). For a survey of Republican theatre buildings, see Beacham, op. cit. (n. 22), 56–69, and for their design, A. J. Brothers in I. Barton (ed.), *Roman Public Buildings* (1989), 99–104. Curio's 'temporary' theatre, built in 52 B.C., was still in use in June 51 (Plin., *NH* 36.116–20; Cic., *Fam.* 8.2.1).

An inquiry like this one is meant to raise more questions than it answers and therefore will, and even should, be in some sense dissatisfying. It is well to remember the point of the exercise. Renaissance scholars will already know it because they are currently learning a similar lesson on the south bank of the Thames. Watching a play in the New Globe is a striking, even revelatory experience:

> The prologues, the narrative interpolations, the rhetorical addresses to the audience — above all, the soliloquies, with an actor stepping right to the lip of the stage and speaking simply and clearly to the audience — for the first time feel natural. *Of course* he's talking to us — we're right here with him.[69]

It is not that this new experience is 'better' or more 'authentic' than reading Shakespeare in the library or watching one of the RSC's more inventive productions but that it adds to the completeness of our experience and thus to the richness of our understanding of what a play by Shakespeare may have been and can now be. Students of Roman drama have traditionally lacked comparable opportunities, and our sense of Roman theatricality has suffered accordingly. The key point for Latinists to understand is that modern archaeology now encourages us to rethink the matter. *The Stagecraft of Plautus* remains some distance away, but it is time to take at least one more step in its direction.

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[69] Adam Gopnik, 'Letter from London', *The New Yorker*, 7 July 1997, 31. Equally apposite to the Latinist's experience is the comment of Mackintosh, op. cit. (n. 46), 14: 'The Rose excavation provides early evidence that great theatres which nurture creative drama are usually very small'. Our evidence for this truth is much earlier still.