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The Ins and Outs of Plautus' Mostellaria: Representing Internal and External Space on and around the Plautine Stage

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The Ins and Outs of Plautus' *Mostellaria*:
Representing Internal and External Space on and around the Plautine Stage
by
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Introduction

This thesis seeks to approach the problem of understanding the practical nature of staging a Latin drama in its debut or shortly thereafter, which is to say before the establishment of a permanent and dedicated theater structure in Rome. Technical and spatial constraints forced the dramas of Naevius, Ennius, Plautus, and Terence to be staged in open-air theaters that were hardly segregated from their immediate surroundings. The blurred lines of inside and outside with respect to these theaters must have been sources of constant anxiety in the *cavea*, which came to a head in the multiple stagings of Terence's *Hecyra* in the 160s BCE. This episode will be our starting point.

From the "failures" of the *Hecyra*, we will move into a discussion concerning the *scaena* of the Roman theater. Prior to the stone theater of Pompey, stages were wooden and assumed to be temporary structures. Because literary discussion on stages is sparse and usually very divorced from the cultural milieu of their initial development, we look to material evidence. This line of inquiry is similarly separated from our target chronologically, but it does help paint the picture of the theatrical traditions of the Italian peninsula in the fourth and third centuries BCE. So-called *phlyax*-vases depict stages and dramatic productions that took place in the southern Italian peninsula and may offer a glimpse into the first intermingling of an Italian tradition with the Greek model. With proper caveats, we can use these vases to establish a tradition in Italy that would have influenced the development of Roman stages in the second century BCE.

Sander Goldberg has produced a virtual facsimile of the stages most likely to be present in the time of Plautus and Terence by taking *phlyax*-vases into account.[1] I will use them to

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1
      Goldberg (2018).

demonstrate the practical constraints and expectations surrounding the theater that would be present. For instance, although there were no stone walls delineating the inside of the theater from the outside, the *scaena* itself created a barrier between the inside of the theater space (i.e. the space the audience could see) and part of the outside (i.e. the space obscured by the *scaena*). I will demonstrate that stages of this type allow for many of our ideas surrounding the boundaries of the modern stage regarding inside action and outside forces to hold true. There would be an expectation of privacy onstage such that actors onstage would not interact with offstage characters or spaces.

I will focus my efforts on the practicalities of staging a play like Plautus' *Mostellaria*, which plays with the expected norms of inside/outside. The *Mostellaria* concerns a "haunted" house. Plautus cleverly plays with the dichotomies of theatrical inside and outside as well as metatheatrical inside and outside via the play's premise. I will systematically show how Plautus innovates on the stage and toys with the interplay between these two otherwise distinct realms of the theater. On a number of occasions the dramatic action breaks from the immersion of the theater by involving both the audience and space surrounding the *scaena* with the action onstage. Voices from offstage affect action onstage, scenes that would be expected to occur inside the houses onstage take place outside, and the boundaries between the *scaena, cavea*, and external spaces are dissolved in the course of the play.

This work on the *Mostellaria* builds on several earlier examinations of space in the play.[2] Each of these approaches examines the *Mostellaria* through the lens of the literary rather than the practicalities. Leach, for instance, approaches the play with the intent of establishing its themes

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[2]
See Fay (1903), Knapp (1917), Sturtevant (1927), Fuchs (1944), Weide (1961) Leach (1969), Mariotti (1992).

via the characterization of Philolaches and Theopropides in the text of the play. Philolaches reveals his morality through his opening monody and subsequently contrasts his wantonness with his upright father. Her conclusions, while interesting in their own right, are not concerned with the presentation of the material on the stage as it would have been seen by the audience. Mariotti examines the opening exchanges of the play between Grumio and Tranio, and he highlights a staging concern within the scene: whether or not one of the doors onstage was open or closed. His approach is similar to what I will examine later with respect to problematic staging elements, but he stops after the first scene and does not draw larger conclusions about the Plautine stage outside of the *Mostellaria*. C.W. Marshall's monograph on the staging of Roman comedy discusses several facets of the practicalities of Roman staging in antiquity, but focuses mostly on the stage itself and the action which takes place atop the platform of the *scaena*.[3] I will provide a wider view of the experience of theater by highlighting the relationship between *scaena* and *cavea* with the surrounding area.

This blending of the "inside" of the theater and the "outside" world draws on Victor Turner and his conception of the liminality of theater, that is to say the removal of oneself from the outside world and engaging with theater on its own terms, hence a suspension of disbelief and other "theatrical magic."[4] I do not mean to suggest that Plautus had such a theoretical framework in mind when crafting and directing the *Mostellaria*, nor any of his other plays. Turner's notion of liminality can be applied irrespective of period.

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[3]

Marshall's first chapter on the experience of Roman Comedy is the only section of his book not explicitly tied solely to the *scaena*. The following chapters on actors, masks, stage action, music, and improvisation, move the focus to the stage for the rest of the book.

[4]

Turner (1982) explores the ideas of the liminal and liminoid aspects of theater for nearly half of the book. His work extends beyond theater *per se* and explores the liminal aspects of several other parts of everyday life.

These previous observations are pertinent to the discussion at hand because of their invaluable insight into the play. The groundwork has already been performed. While Plautus, and the *Mostellaria*, have been discussed on a number of occasions by a number of people, there has never been a robust examination of the practicalities of staging a play which blends the inside with the outside on an otherwise stationary set. There are two central goals for this thesis. First, I aim to demonstrate that there was in Roman Comedy a distinction between inside—the public space shared by the audience and the actors as characters—and outside—the space outside the theater and the space where actors were not in character—but this distinction was permeable to external forces via either malicious instigators unaffiliated with the theater or the performers themselves. Secondly, I will use the *Mostellaria* to explore the relationship between the internal/onstage with the external/offstage. Although the rest of the Plautine corpus could offer episodes wherein this dichotomy is highlighted, the *Mostellaria* is the best example of a play that blends the two.

<u>Chapter 1: The Theater We Know</u>

Theaters in the city of Rome before 55BCE were temporary structures erected for the

purpose of staging events during times of festival. The first permanent structure of this sort in the

city of Rome was the Theater of Pompey, which was constructed in 55BCE, over a century after

the deaths of Terence and Plautus. Prior attempts to build a permanent theater had been thwarted

by the senate for one reason or another.[5] There were, however, several theatrical festivals

celebrated before the dedication or even construction of a permanent theater space. In order to

stage productions and other events, temporary stages would be built and used for the duration of

the festival. These stages, as they appeared in the late third and early second centuries BCE, were

a far cry from the enormous and imposing front of Pompey's theater.[6] After the festival ended,

these wooden structures would be torn down and the lumber most likely repurposed, leaving no

trace of their presence. Scholars on republican theater thus find themselves wanting for more

definitive evidence when trying to reconstruct what the debut performances of Plautus or

Terence looked like. There is no concrete (or wooden) material evidence to guide our ideas.

To explore the practical aspects of using these temporary stages in the second century

BCE, we will examine Plautus' *Mostellaria* which was first produced somewhere between 210-

190 BCE. Before one can discuss the intricacies of Plautus' stage for the *Mostellaria*, one must

first confirm what we can surmise about the performance conditions in these temporary theaters.

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   Livy (40.51.3) cites the censors Aemilius Lepidus and Fulvius Nobilior as giving a contract for a theater
dedicated to Apollo in 179BCE. Fulvius Flaccus and Postumius initiated construction of a theater in 174BCE
according to Livy (41.27.5). Finally, Cassius Longinus and Valerius Messalla nearly completed a theater in 154BCE
although Scipio Nasica deemed it harmful to the character of the state (Livy *Per.* 48).

6

   Cf. Cic. *Fam*. 7.1.2 wherein Cicero decries the pomp and decadence of performances of his time at the
Theater of Pompey, which utilized all of the large space provided to them.

This chapter will start from the "big picture" of how an ancient audience engaged with the actors on stage, what expectations were present in the ancient theater space, and what sorts of intrusions could threaten the performance. The case of Terence's *Hecyra* and the reasons for its restaging will provide a glimpse into the world of ancient dramatic performance and help illuminate the potential pitfalls of stages before permanent theaters. From this discussion on temporary, or at least impermanent, theaters (i.e. *cavea + scaena*), I will turn to the dimensions and shape of the stages one could expect to see in these contexts. This focus on the *scaena* will provide insight into the practicality of performances and onstage action. From this point, I will demonstrate what boundaries exist among the audience, actor, and the outside world when one places a stage at the foot of the steps to the temple of Magna Mater.[7]

1.1 Terence's *Hecyra* and What It Can Show Us

Attending a play in the second century BCE was in no way the same experience one would experience if one were to go out to a play today. Due to the bright and open space necessitated by the lack of practical effects such as lighting, productions were a much more social and public affair than most of their modern counterparts. It would certainly be possible to see not only the stage, but the surrounding area as well from the high vantage of the *caveae* that were used in antiquity. I will explore in more detail the dimensions of these *caveae* and the implications those dimensions have on the sight lines members of the audience had. For the moment, let us consider the permeability of the theatrical space. What sorts of distractions threatened the performance of drama in antiquity?

Terence's *Hecyra* gives us a striking example of how permeable the mid-Republican

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The temple of Magna Mater is a secure location for staging plays of Plautus. This is not to say that all of Plautus' plays were staged at that location, but we know that at least one almost certainly was. See the didascalia of *Pseudolus* for confirmation.

theater was to its surroundings. Specifically, Terence outlines the causes for the "failures" of the

production in his prologues. He bemoans the alleged presence of a rope-walker, or at least the

idea of one, as well as other distracting acts of entertainment that incited his audience against

him. While the audiences in the failed productions did not literally see competing entertainers,

rumors of and/or demand for such entertainers entered the *cavea* and disrupted theatrical

performances. Awareness that such disruptions could happen must have created in Roman

playwrights, actors, and audience members an anxiety about "inside" and "outside" in the

theater.

Terence tells us that his audience was so easily distracted by other happenings that he had

to stage the *Hecyra* three separate times before it was successfully completed. The first attempt

was in 165BCE at the *Ludi Megalenses*.[8] The second attempt was in 160BCE at the funeral

games of L. Aemilius Paulus. The third, and finally successful, attempt was at the *Ludi Romani*

in the same year. In order to gauge the underlying reasons for so many productions, one must

look to Terence's own reasons, which he lays out in his prologues. Through Ambivius Turpio, he

describes the events of both failed performances and why he was unable to keep the audience's

attention. Here is the account of the first failed performance in each of the play's two prologues.

The first prologue is frustratingly vague in assigning a concrete reason for the failure of the

production. Luckily, the second prologue helps elucidate some gaps from the first.

First Prologue

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       The didascaliae Lindsay prints derive from two traditions, A and Σ. A is a 4th-5th century manuscript kept at the Vatican; Σ reflects text found in all of the manuscripts except A. Lindsay's text for the *Hecyra* leads with a didascalia "*secundum* A": *Incipit Terenti Hecyra Acta Ludis Megalensib[us] | S[ervio] Iulio Caesare Cn[aeo] Cornelio Dolabella Aedilib[us]* "Terence's *Hecyra* was performed at the *Ludi Megalenses* in 165 BC (when Caesar and Dolabella were aediles)." There is a second didascalia, described by Lindsay as "*secundum* Σ" which begins: *Incipit <Terenti> Hecyra: Acta Ludis Romanis Sex[to] Iul[io] Caes[are] Gn[aeo] Cornelio Aedilibus Curulibus* "Terence's *Hecyra* was performed at the *Ludi Romani* in 160BCE (when Caesar and Cornelius where aediles)."

Hecyra est huic nomen fabulae. haec quom datast
nova, novom intervenit vitium et calamitas
ut neque spectari neque cognosci potuerit:
ita populu' studio stupidus in funambulo
animum occuparat. (Ter. *Hec*. 1-5)

Hecyra is the name of this play. When it was given the first time,
a strange disaster and calamity interrupted it
so that it could neither be observed nor judged:
the foolish crowd had in this way turned their attention
to some rope-walker.[9]

Second Prologue
nunc quid petam mea causa aequo animo attendite.
Hecyram ad vos refero, quam mihi per silentium
numquam agere licitumst; ita eam oppressit calamitas.
eam calamitatem vostra intellegentia
sedabit, si erit adiutrix nostrae industriae.
quom primum eam agere coepi, pugilum gloria
(funambuli eodem accessit exspectatio),
comitum conventu', strepitu', clamor mulierum
fecere ut ante tempus exirem foras. (Ter. *Hec*. 28-36)

Pay attention with a level head, for my sake, to what I ask.
I bring to you the *Hecyra*, which I have never been allowed to perform
In silence: such a calamity suppressed it [before].
Your understanding will ameliorate that calamity
If it is an assistant to our endeavor.
As soon as I began to put on this [play], the rumor of boxers
And the anticipation of a rope-walker at the same time arose.
The gathering of crowds, the clamor, the shouting of women
All ensured that I left the theater before [my] time

Turpio explains that the blame for the first performance's failure falls squarely on a novel

and strange disaster (*novom...vitium*), namely that the foolish (*stupidus*) audience was entranced

by a rope-walker (*studio...in funambulo animum occuparat*). The novelty attributed to this

"calamity" (*calamitas*) suggests that such occurrences were certainly the exception when staging

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     All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified. The Latin is pulled from Lindsay's (1958 for
Terence and 1974 for Plautus) OCT editions.

plays. If the events that led to the failure of the *Hecyra* were more commonplace, there would be

no need for Terence to ascribe the quality *novum* to it. He does not specify whether the rope-

walker was performing nearby and his appearance so entranced the audience that they were

unable to pay proper attention to the play. In either case, it appears that a miscommunication

regarding scheduling led to the downfall of the *Hecyra* at the *Ludi Megalenses*. The audience

may have assumed that a rope-walker was going to be performing on the stage erected for the

festival and was surprised and disappointed when Terence's actors appeared onstage. In their

discontent, they caused such a tumult that the show could not be experienced (*neque spectari*

neque cognosci potuerit). Turpio bemoans the fact that the play was unable to continue for this

singular, unexpected reason.

The second prologue also describes what happened when Turpio attempted to present the

play a second time, at the funeral games of Aemilius Paulus:

> primo actu placeo; quom interea rumor venit
> datum iri gladiatores, populu' convolat,
> tumultuantur clamant pugnant de loco:
> ego interea meum non potui tutari locum
> nunc turba nulla est: otium et silentiumst:
> agendi tempu' mihi datumst; vobis datur
> potestas condecorandi ludos scaenicos.
> nolite sinere per vos artem musicam
> recidere ad paucos: facite ut vostra auctoritas
> meae auctoritati fautrix adiutrixque sit. (Ter. *Hec*. 39-47)
>
> They liked me in the first act. When meanwhile a rumor arose that
> Gladiators would be given, the people flew together.
> They began to cause an uproar, they shouted and fought for a seat:
> I meanwhile, was unable to keep my place secure
> Now, there is no confusion: only leisure and silence.
> The time for staging a play has been given to me; to you
> The power of watching a play.
> Do not allow, through that power of yours, music to
> Fall to the few: rather ensure that your authority is

Supporter and assistant to my own.

These passages have been the subject of much controversy, as scholars have evaluated what they say about what actually happened in the performances (did audiences leave the theater or make a disturbance themselves?), and what the failures suggest about Terence's popularity, the nature of Roman audiences, and the structure of Roman festivals.[10] For our purposes here, we need to consider just one question: what do the *Hecyra* disasters suggest about the permeability of the mid-Republican theater?

Terence's prologues do not make clear whether these external events were scheduled after his play or during it or even at all. His concern is only the fact that the play was unable to be performed successfully. There are two main lines of argument concerning the failures of the *Hecyra*. Both of these theories highlight the permeability of the stage. Either the audience, having learned that some other event was about to occur (or was simultaneously occurring) which was more interesting to them than drama, left the theater, or they, so unenthused with the show having been clearly scheduled and begun at the appointed time, began to raucously demand something different from within the theater. Sandbach asserts the former scenario, namely that there was confusion regarding the scheduling of events, and I would suggest an inversion on Sandbach's assertion: the audience did not leave, but a throng of people confused about scheduling rushed in.[11]

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    See Gilula (1981), Gruen (1992), Parker (1996), Sandbach (1982), and Lada-Richards (2004).

11

    Terence remarks that an invading throng of people disturbed the peace of his production and fought for seats. After all, "fighting for places does not stop a play unless the places are in the theater where it is being performed" (Sandbach 1982). Moreover, on the whole Terence's plays were not poorly received. Each of Terence's plays was a commercial success, once it was staged. His *Eunuchus* was also the most commercially successful play in Latin dramatic production (see Lada-Richards 2004: 60). Her reasoning for this claim is pulled from Suetonius' *Vita Terenti* wherein the biographer writes *et hanc [Andriam] autem et quinque reliquas aequaliter populo probavit* (Suet. *Vita Terenti* 2). See also Parker (1996: 591ff.).

Turpio has told us that the first performance was a flop due primarily to some competing rope-walking act enticing the audience's attention away from the immediate dramatic performance in front of them. At no point does he state that the people left the *cavea*. He only states that the crowd's mind had been very captivated by the eager anticipation of a rope-walker (*animum occuparat*). Not only does he not suggest that the crowd left the theater, he does not even clarify whether there was a rope-walker present to draw a crowd at all. This may be a product of the dismissive tone Terence wished to take towards distracting acts, but it may also serve as a foundation for a claim that there was, in fact, no rope-walker.

This brings us back to the competing theories for the failures of the *Hecyra*. Looking at the second prologue, which details both previous failures, we see that the first performance failed due to the uproar of the crowd in anticipation of presumably famous boxers, or the anticipation of a rope-walking act (*gloria pugilum*, *funambuli exspectatio*, *comitum conventu'*, *streptiu'*, and the *clamor mulierum*). Both of these competing acts appear to have excited a sizable portion of the present audience and their clamor proved too much for the actors. This is contrasted by the much more violent scene painted by Turpio in the description of the failure of the second performance wherein a throng of people rushed into the theater (*populu' convolat*). They did not peacefully walk in nor quietly take their seats in preparation for gladiators. Rather, they forced their way in and flew upon the members of the audience already seated. Once they were inside, they fought with, shouted at, and generally upset the audience who was already sitting in the *cavea* (*tumultuantur clamant pugnant de loco*). It should be noted that in describing both failures Turpio does not state that there were physical distractions for the audience visible from their seats. In each case, the confusion arose because a rumor was spreading among the audience

(*rumor venit*; cf. *funambuli exspectatio*) or outsiders were invading the theater.

Let us now discuss the other potential threat to the integrity of the theater after discontent brewing autonomously in the *cavea*: scheduling conflicts. While it has been argued that there may have been other events scheduled to accommodate a range of tastes during the festival period, it is much more likely that the norm was to set an entire day aside for one type of entertainment.[12] Rather than be distracted by other happenings around the stage, the audience was expected to direct their attention to the happenings of the stage, whether the production was dramatic in nature, such as with Terence's plays, or something more spectacular such as the rope-walkers and gladiators Turpio decries. As Sandbach has noted, jockeying for seats is not an activity that would disrupt a dramatic performance unless the seats being jockeyed over were already in the theater. It therefore follows that a crowd from outside of the theater invaded the *cavea* and incited the raucous clamor for entertainment other than a play. It would not at all be likely that the audience was observing from their vantage point in the *cavea* some other act going on simultaneously with the play.

In his account of the first failure of the *Hecyra* in the second prologue, Turpio again blames the audience for the production's failure. He more clearly attributes the first failure to the renown of boxers (*pugilum gloria*), the aforementioned anticipation for a rope-walker (*funambuli...exspectatio*), and a raucous brouhaha on top of a large crowd (*comitum conventu', strepitu', clamor mulierum*). The chaos was too much to bear. The audience had been so captivated by the idea of a rope-walker (*animum occuparat; funambuli eodem accessit*

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    Lada-Richards (2004: 57) follows Sandbach and Gilula in the idea that the crowd would have cajoled the performers to leave so that something more entertaining could be brought out. This is counter to previous narratives from Taylor (1937) who cites the *Hecyra* as an exception to the general practice of scheduling different events for different days. This practice is affirmed in E.S. Gruen (1992): 'the conjunction of plays with other forms of entertainment would normally not even arise.'

exspectatio) that they became a crowd. Instead of the crowd then leaving incensed to go find the entertainment they demanded, Turpio himself had to yield (*exirem foras*), presumably with the rest of the actors in tow. Turpio does not suggest in the case of either failure that there were competing acts nearby that the audience saw, only that there was the anticipation of such an act.

In the case of the second failure, the audience may have been cajoled into joining with an invading crowd of expectant gladiator-watchers and jeering at the performers until something new was brought out. Parker suggests that there were two camps of spectators: the audience who wanted to see Terence's production and the crowd (*populus*) who did not. Lada-Richards casts doubt on Parker's reading because of how elliptical the text of the prologue is, and I am inclined to agree. At no point does Turpio praise the audience for attempting to preserve the sanctity of the performance. Rather, he repeatedly blames the whole audience for their foolishness and susceptibility to distraction as reported by an outside crowd. Without hard evidence of the audience's bravery in the face of an invading crowd, it seems just as plausible that those who already had seats would fight to keep their seats for the alleged gladiatorial combat rather than fight to keep Terence's company on stage.

Whether the crowd was fed from outside detractors running in or a growing dissatisfaction with the production, it is clear that Turpio is decrying the very audience that sits before him while he is airing his grievances. Without any directionality in the text, one should infer that the sudden brouhaha taking place is the result of a crowd of more people flooding into (*populus convolat*) the *cavea* to see the gladiators rather than a spontaneous upheaval in the midst of an audience presumably prepared to witness the *Hecyra*. These new "audience" members were loud (*tumulantur, clamant*) and distracting as well as violent as they began to

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jockey for a seat (*pugnant de loco*). The ensuing crowd was so chaotic and violent that Turpio felt that he could not hang on to his place on the stage. (*Ego interea meum non potui tutari locum*). All of this is to say that the audience most certainly did not see a separate crowd gathering near the theater or beyond the stage to watch gladiators or rope-walkers. Instead, the audience *was* the crowd.

Turpio rejoices in the fact that he now seems to have the perfect opportunity to stage the play (*nunc turba non est: otium et silentiumst: / agendi tempus mihi datumst; vobis datur / potestas condecorandi ludos scaenicos*) lest the audience undergo a similar metamorphosis into the crowd. He explicitly tells the audience that they must help ensure the successful production of the *Hecyra* by obeying his authority and that of the whole troupe, implicitly saying that he would like the current state of silence to continue throughout the play (*nolite sinere per vos artem musicam recidere ad paucos: facite ut vostra auctoritas...fautrix adiutrixque sit*). Because previous audiences have not been so kind as to give their wholly undivided attention to the drama unfolding before them, Turpio admonishes the crowd to continue to be amenable to the production about to take place. Only through their cooperation can the play finally be staged. This sentiment suggests that Terence holds the audience somewhat responsible for his own failings, even though we can say that the crowd, not the audience, is at fault. Had the previous audience(s) not succumbed to the popular uprising taking place, then he would not have had to abandon the stage.[13]

Turpio has explained how exactly the crowd upset the play during its second attempt at being staged, at the funeral games of L. Aemilius Paulus in 160BCE. He outlines the cause for

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[13]

    As Lada-Richards (2004:59 n.14) notes "Whether Terence's spectators would have been able, realistically speaking, to avert the mayhem is an entirely different matter."

failure in the second performance as follows. Rather than a rope-walker or boxers, this production was marred by the idea that there could possibly be gladiators instead (*rumor venit / datum iri gladiatores*). There was no anticipation of gladiators. There was no notion that gladiators would definitely make an appearance. A mere *rumor* had permeated the *cavea* and sowed the seeds of a failed production.

One can see a pattern emerging in the failures of the *Hecyra*. In the case of both failures, external forces, whether based on fact or fiction, had enough power to derail an otherwise successful performance. All of the play's problems stem not from the script, nor the actors nor anything else from the *scaena*: rather it is the permeability of the *cavea* and lack of a strong filter against external influence that has created the necessary environment for rumors to thrive and infect the minds of the audience. Not only can the anticipation of a rope-walker upset the audience so much that the actors must leave the stage, but the idea that gladiatorial combat may be staged is enough to cause a wild crowd to flock to the *cavea* and turn an otherwise peaceful audience into a frenzy.

The prologues of Terence's *Hecyra* shed light on theatrical practices and expectations in the second century BCE in the following ways. Terence's stage lacked the concrete divisions between being outside of the theater and being inside the theater. There were no solid walls to enclose the space of the theater and clearly define it in relation to other external spaces. It was therefore incumbent on the audience to make the distinction between what belonged in the theater and what did not. Although the audience would be able technically to see beyond the scope of the stage due to the lack of walls such as those found in the monumental theater of Pompey, the audience was expected to focus their attention on the stage itself for action. Certain

intrusions still threatened the temporary stages of the Republic. Anticipation of a rope-walker, for instance, or the rumor of gladiators is enough to excite the crowd into such a frenzy that the play cannot go on. Such rumors must have been brought into the theater from outside. Either someone in the audience had heard from someone else that the more exciting events were going to happen, or someone brought the idea themselves into the theater and upset the crowd with gossip. In either case, the audience was not actively watching more than one form of entertainment. There is a clear delineation between actor and audience as separate entities. Turpio's addresses to the audience make this evident. In those prologues, however, there is no clear evidence that the audience could look meaningfully beyond the space of the theater at other events that were probably not even taking place.

The *scaena* of the theater appears to be intact; there is no account of someone unexpectedly running onto the stage and delivering a line not in the script or causing some other kind of uproar. The *cavea*, on the other hand, is susceptible to discordant behavior. In short, the stage in Plautus and Terence's day was secure and free from interference, but there was a certain amount of anxiety concerning the cavea. An awareness of this anxiety should be kept in mind as we eventually turn to Plautus' *Mostellaria* and the interplay between internal and external spaces therein.

1.2 "*Phylax*" Vases as Models?

We have now discussed at length certain events that transpired in the theaters of Terence and highlighted the permeability of the *cavea* before the erection of stone theaters. I aim to use the conclusions drawn from Terence's accounts of audience behavior to help paint a picture of Plautus' theater decades earlier. The two authors could not have used vastly different stages from one another. To understand better these experiences with the lack of a permanent theater one

must supply a theater where there is none. In order to construct a theater, even if only in the mind's eye, one must start with a place to stand—a platform for the actors, otherwise known as a *scaena*. The earliest evidence available for Italian stages comes from southern Italy and Sicily with a series of so-called *phlyax*-vases that were produced in the fourth and early third centuries BCE.[14] *Phlyax*-vases vary wildly in their depictions of the stage. Some appear to be massively tall, others are more humble in their height. Some stages are quite plain while others are extravagantly adorned. Although these vases come from a time and culture far removed from the period of Plautus and Terence, it is still helpful to use them as evidence for the appearance of stages in the rest of the Italian peninsula. T.P. Wiseman lays out a case that "a common fourth-century culture of mimetic representation extending far beyond the Greek cities of southern Italy into Latium and Etruria" was the milieu in which we find these *phlyax*-vases.[15] The vases allude to various theatrical scenes, several of which have been identified as scenes from tragedy, Old Comedy, and other Attic forms of drama.[16] They also depict several elements indicative of a stage. These vases do not, however, provide the full picture. The artists, as Goldberg puts it, seek to recall memories of the performance rather than accurately reproduce what the audience would see.[17] The only details one can glean from the scenes depicted are that there was a stage.

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These "stages" predate Plautus by, conservatively, over a century, which could open up the same criticism we have for the Theater of Pompey. The evolution of stage design, if we take these vases at face value, tends towards larger and more complex spaces. Therefore, it is easier to take these vases as a starting point and scale up their complexity to a point between themselves and the grandeur of Pompey's theater to get an idea of Plautus' stage.

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Wiseman (2008: 123) Cf. Robinson (2004), Carpenter (2009), and Taplin (2012: 247-250).

16

Taplin (1993: 30-48) lists several objects that contain mythological scenes. Those scenes contain details found in the recently produced tragedies of Euripides and other mytho-dramatic scenes. These vases do not appear to depict the tradition of New Comedy from which Plautus and Terence derived their own style.

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Goldberg (2018: 146) "[The testimony of the phlyax-vases] can thus be maddeningly and perhaps misleadingly vague, since the artists aimed not to create fully formed documents in the history of theater but only to

Consider the following exempla of *phlyax*-vases, which Hughes has discussed. These vases will illustrate the similarities and differences between the stages of the southern Italian *phlyax* style and the more recognizable comic traditions of New Comedy.
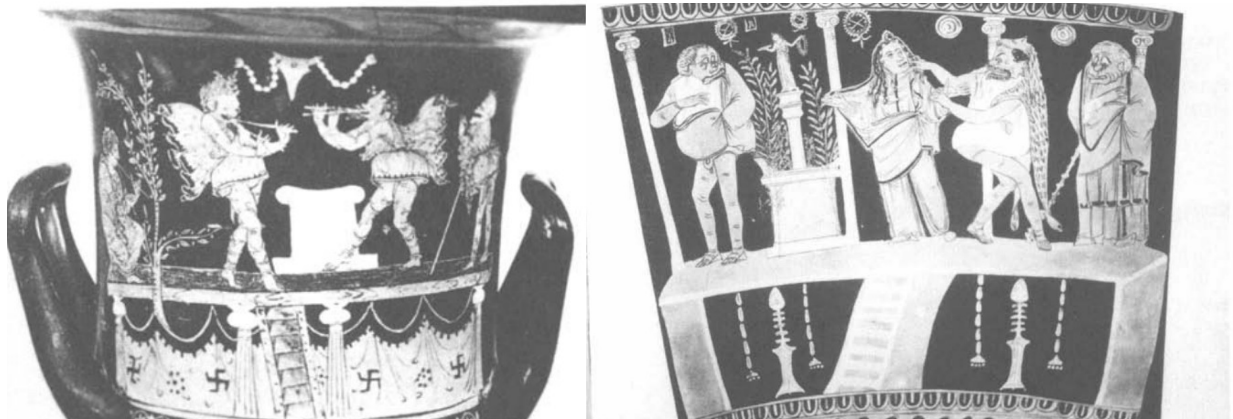
Figures 1 and 2. (Left) The Bari Pipers. Apulian, Group of the Yale Pelike, c.365-350BCE, Bari: Malaguzzi-Valeri Collection 52, Soprintendenza Archeologica della Puglia (= Hughes 1996 Plate 6). (Right) PhV2 79: Herakles and Auge. Sicilian, Manfria Group, c.340-330BCE, Lentini: Museo Archeologico. (= Hughes 1996 Plate 2).

Figures 3 and 4. (Left) Robbing a miser, Paestan, Aestas, c.350-340BCE, Berlin: Staatliche Museen F3044. (=Hughes 1996 plate 10). (Right) Bell krater, Italy, Campania, The Libation Painter (attributed to). Late classical/Hellenistic Period, 350-325BCE fired clay, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne. (D14-1973). (= Moore 2; =Taplin 15.13)

Keeping in mind Goldberg's own reservations regarding these vases, one can safely

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stimulate memory of specific theatrical moments."

determine the following truth about Wiseman's theatrical milieu of the fourth century BCE: stages in their most basic form were raised platforms. Knowing that stages are platforms is hardly helpful information. One needs to know how high these platforms were raised off of the ground, and whether or not actors or other things could be seen around the platform. If the platforms were raised sufficiently high, would the audience be able to see the space behind the stage by looking underneath the platform? If the actors wanted to obscure the space behind the platform, did they hide it by covering the underside of the platform, implementing a solid backdrop, or some combination thereof?

Hughes addresses the question of how high these platforms were raised. By using the steps placed at the front of the stage as a ruler, he attempts to show that the stages were raised anywhere from 1-2 meters. I find this conclusion difficult to accept. It has already been established that the main focus of the vases is the activity taking place atop the platform. Artists painting these scenes have been given license to omit certain aspects of the stage such as columns, as evidenced by Hughes' own argument regarding the vase in figure 3. The fact that the staircases depicted on these vases contain six or more steps is only to convey to the viewer that there were, in fact, steps in front of the stage. If the artist had painted fewer, then it may have become difficult to conclude that what one is looking at was a set of stairs. Hughes also assumes the height of these stairs is between eight and nine inches (20-22 cm), the modern standard for stairs. While I do not begrudge such assumptions per se, they do not allow conclusions as definitive as Hughes suggests. I do not contend that the stairs were of a greater height than modern stairs, rather I follow Goldberg in suggesting that the platforms were only raised just over a meter from the ground. This means that the depictions of staircases in the *phlyax*-vases are

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caricatures of actual staircases which contain far too many stairs. One should expect to see four

or five steps connecting the stage to the ground rather than the ten or more found in figure 2.

With this in mind, we can say that the stage in figure 4 may actually be on the shorter side and

figure 1 is raised just over a meter provided that the proportions are correct. Regardless, raising

the stage is a good idea theatrically. By clearly dividing the spaces of "onstage/inside the play"

and "offstage/irrelevant to the play" the audience has a clear focal point for their attention. They

are less likely to muddle the boundaries between action on and pertaining to the stage and

distracting action in the surrounding area.

Raising the stage is only useful to a degree, however. There are a number of reasons why

the stage should not be raised much higher than a meter. First, the stability of the structure

deteriorates as the platform is raised unless great expense is spent for greater support. None of

the vases that have been shown here exemplify the rigorous support structures necessary for what

would quickly amount to a multi-story structure. A taller structure also threatens to cause

discomfort for those sitting in the front. It does not make sense to force those closest to the stage

to crane their necks to see the action of a play when a lower structure would suffice.

Let us now examine the vases with an eye for backdrops and obscuring space from the

audience. Earlier depictions of the stage are simpler in their design while those from the latter

half of the fourth century tend to contain more embellishments and adornments. As the stages

develop, they become more complex.[18] Hughes argues that the wooden stages on which the

performances above would have been staged were not necessarily temporary.[19] His comments

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     Hughes explains the traditional idea that *phlyakes* themselves would serve as a bridge between sixth-century Doric farce and the comic traditions of Rome. The performances of the *phlyakes* were more akin to mime than drama and were as crude as the stage on which they were performed (Hughes 1996: 95).

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regarding the permanent nature of the stages suggest a certain modularity of the stage. There was no need for a standard backdrop to the stage, for instance, because the people could construct one as needed. I argue that performances took place sans backdrop at first, although superstructures which turn into the backdrop began to appear later, finally culminating in what we consider to be a standard *scaena*.

The stage in the vase in the top left (fig. 1) with the Bari Pipers is dated anywhere from 10-25 years earlier than the stage in the top right (fig. 2) with Herakles. The stage for the pipers is simply a level platform raised some distance off the ground. A single staircase leads to the stage from the front and there is minimal decoration around the platform. Herakles' stage, on the other hand, is framed by a superstructure atop the platform. A single staircase connects the platform of the stage to the ground. It should be noted that neither of these stages has seemed to develop a full backdrop akin to those found in Roman stages. There are no doors, house fronts, or other structures. Because there are no walls separating backstage from the audience, there cannot be a reasonable expectation of privacy between actors and audiences. Audiences would be able to clearly see any actor or prop set behind the stage. The stages also depict varying degrees of structure. Figures 3 and 4 both contain the beginnings of a backdrop which is shown on the left-hand side of the vase. These structures clearly do not constitute a full backdrop, but they allow more complex entrances and exits, namely via doors onstage rather than simply walking directly onto the stage. I will detail the significance of this difference below.

Each of the vases above depict several figures engaged in a dramatic production. This is apparent by their dress and the appearance of a stage framing the image. In figure 4, a rustic-

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According to Hughes, "[the stages] were not only permanent, although frequently remodelled, but that they stood in for 'official' theatres in a number of cities" (Hughes 1996: 96).

looking figure stands to the right. The central figure is leaning to the left and holding a lit torch apparently ready to set alight the *auletris* standing to the left. With respect to the layout of the stage itself, there are three steps leading from the front of the stage. The stage has a doorway, or at least the side of some house-like structure, on top of the platform. The stage appears to be lower to the ground than those stages with the Bari Pipers (fig. 1) or Herakles (fig. 2). The backdrop of the stage is still largely underdeveloped. It appears that the audience would be able to see everything behind the actors. Figure 1, for instance, does not appear to have a backdrop of any kind on the stage. There is ample decoration around the stage, but nothing to suggest the standard backdrop of dramatic production as we understand it from the Greco-Roman tradition wherein a series of doors or at least facades of houses were set in order to create the dramatic illusion necessary for most, if not all, plays.

Figure 2 depicts a number of columns and decorations on and around the stage. There does not appear to be a wall behind the actors. The actors would then be seen in a sort of colonnade on stage with a decorated roof and frame, although there is no clear wall behind the actors. Figures 3 and 4 also appear to have some superstructure atop the platform that may suggest the use of a backdrop, but, because of how unobtrusive they are in the action, they seem not to function as a full backdrop. These structures appear only to have facilitated the illusion of houses for the sake of entrances and exits from the wing. As stages developed, these side entrances may have been relegated to the back of the stage thereby creating the backdrop. Of course, this representation could be due to the artist's desire to highlight the actors and the events of the stage. If the artist had wanted to depict the detail of the backdrop, then the figures of the actors would be more difficult to see than on the flat black backdrop. With that said, it is still

very probable that the stages depicted in these vases are still relatively barren and simple compared to those found in Plautus and Terence's time.

Now that we have addressed the space behind the stage, let us turn to the underside of the platform, which appears to be just as unobscured as a stage without a backdrop. The space underneath the platform was not meant to be hidden from view per se. Although several of the vases depict platforms decorated with adornments that hang off of the front of the platform, the decorations are hung in such a way that they would do a terrible job obscuring the space. Hughes concludes, then, that stage conventions of the time did not necessarily require that the audience not be able to look underneath the stage.[20] As the development of the *scaena* continued, the space beneath the stage may have become intentionally hidden from the audience. If the underside of the stage is undecorated and uncovered, members of the audience who are sitting nearest to the stage would have a clear view under the stage such that they would be able to see backstage even if the elevation of the platform obscured a direct line of sight to the back of the stage. As stages become more and more complex and the traditions of theater evolve such that actors seek a level of privacy from their audiences, backstage space becomes more defined. The boundaries of the stage are starting to expand. In figure 1, Hughes highlights the four fillets which surround *thymiateria*, or incense burners, under the stage. Musing on the construction of such a stage, Hughes suggests that "the space beneath the stage was not to be seen by the audience, and the hangings or other masking material served a practical, as well as decorative, purpose."[21] No longer does the stage stop at the edge of the platform, but there is now space behind the platform

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      Hughes (1996: 99). "The fact that even in the later years of the century many vases show stages without hangings tends to confirm the view that stage conventions did not require concealment of this space."

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      Hughes (1996: 101).

that is meant to be hidden from the audience to allow the "magic" of theater to take place. The *thymiateria* from above serve as a distraction to keep the audience's focus away from seeing through the underside of the stage. In other stages, a decorative drape fully obscures the sightline under the stage.

With an idea of height and backdrops in mind, let us consider the width of these stages so that we may imagine a stage of this type in Rome for the production of Plautine drama. From our definition of the space occupied by the platform, we will then explore the significance of our conservative estimates for the size of ancient temporary stages. In figure 3, Hughes points to the number of columns or supports found beneath the stages to hazard a guess at the width of the stages. His reckoning suggests that the width of the stage is conservatively just under 8 meters. He explains that there are at least two more supports not shown to the observer which round out the stage. If each of those supports is separated by 1.1 meters, then the width of the stage comes out to our 8 meter estimate above. If, however, the supports underneath a stage were placed at the absolute edge of their functionality, that is to say, over 2 meters apart, then the width of the stage nearly triples. Goldberg adopts Hughes' conservative estimate as an average for his own stage. I follow Goldberg below in my discussion of sightlines and what audiences could see because I aim to demonstrate that there was ample space unseen by the audience even in the most extreme conditions.[22]

What does all of this mean for us reconstructing a stage where material evidence is so lacking? If we follow Wiseman's ideas concerning the shared milieu of southern Italy and the

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[22]
        That is to say, when the stage is at its smallest and the audience has its best chance to see behind the stage, there is still plenty of obscured space to be utilized in similar ways to modern performances (i.e. a dedicated space in which actors could take a respite from being in character).

development of Roman stages, the use of the vases to construct a general stage becomes much less of a reach and more of a natural step forward. Hughes is the first to offer scaled dimensions from the vases giving us a width of roughly 6-8m and a height of 1-2m. Instead of such a high platform, Goldberg revises Hughes' height to a shorter, more practical 1m off the ground similar to the comic stage in figure 4 above. His main reason for adjusting the height of Hughes' stage is that a stage so tall "would produce a platform too high and unstable for comfortable performance."[23] If the stage is raised to such heights, regardless of the trust one has in its construction, it would begin to feel unstable. Moreover, there is no need for a stage to be raised so high, especially in the Roman period. Because the *cavea* would raise spectators well above the height of the stage, there is no use in trying to obscure the stage's surface from the audience. Goldberg offers us the dimensions of the stage platform as follows: 3-4m tall, which is to say the distance from the ground to the top of the backdrop is at most 4 meters; 3.5-4.5m deep; and 9-10m wide (fig. 5 below). When one places an average person atop a stage of these dimensions, one sees that there is enough space for not only several actors, but also the doors necessitated by New Comedy and its Latin adaptations. These doors serve as additional entrances and exits from the houses typically found in comic plays.
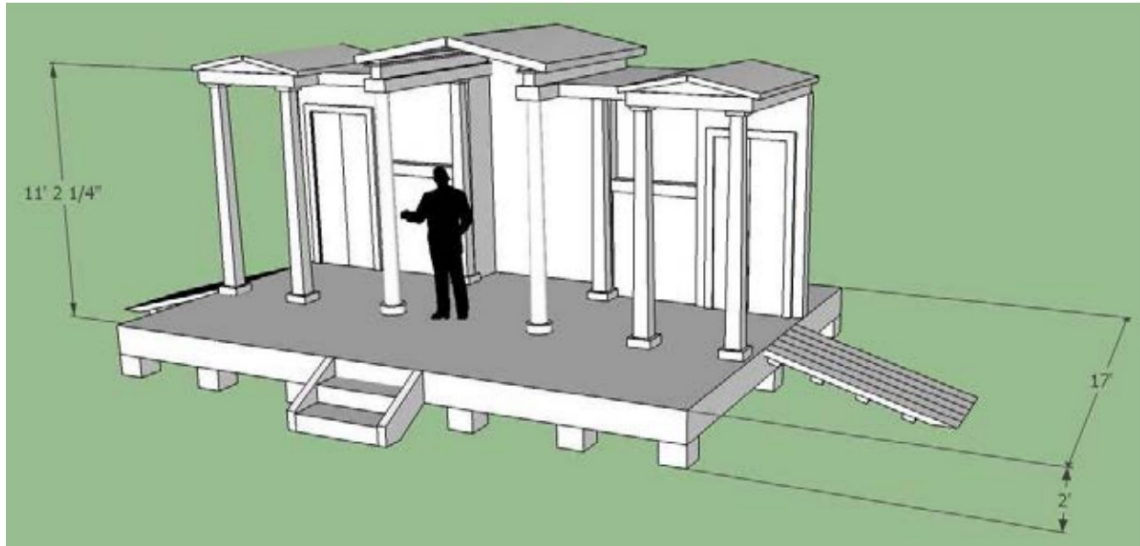
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[23]   Goldberg (2018: 148).

Figure 5. UCLA Reconstructed Roman Stage. A model stage developed from the calculations of Hughes 2012 by the UCLA Humanities Virtual World Consortium at the UCLA Experiential Technology Center under the direction of Professor Chris Johanson. The model builder was Marie Saldaña. (= Goldberg 2018 Figure 3)

Note also that Goldberg has introduced a wing entrance via the ramps to the sides of the platform. These entrances do nothing to obscure an actor approaching the stage from the audience's view, but they do provide a boundary between being literally onstage and offstage. Such a division demonstrates who was relevant to the performance.[24] Goldberg implies that several developments have taken place since the *phlyax* period to the Republic. His stage, as depicted above at least, is not raised high enough that one can look through the underside of the stage. Additionally, it has a fully developed backdrop. The privacy of the actors has become a staple in dramatic performance.

1.3 The Temple of Magna Mater: a Case for "Theater-Stages"

Now that we have established a thread of theatrical development with respect to the shape and size of stages in the Italian peninsula, let us place that stage in the city and see what the

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By placing entrances on the wings of the stage, one can avoid the potentially uncomfortable interaction of an actor walking in front of other actors or during some important lines/jokes in order to get on stage. By coming up the sides, incoming characters no longer have the same potential to interrupt performances for their own entrances. Rather, the audience's attention should remain focused on the action directly raised in front of them.

Romans would see. Theaters are composed of two halves, the *scaena* where the actors would perform and the *cavea* where the audience would sit. Because there was no clearly designated space that served as a full theater in Rome until 55BCE, one had to adapt an existing space or create a whole structure to be a *cavea*. Goldberg has suggested the use of the temple of Magna Mater on the Palatine hill as perhaps the most securely identified location for dramatic productions in the second century BCE.[25] The Magna Mater herself was received in Rome in 204BCE and housed on the Palatine in the temple of Victory until her temple was constructed and dedicated in 191BCE. Prior to a temple dedicated to the goddess, the Megalensian Games, in which dramatic performances were held in her honor, began in 194BCE. The size of the temple's podium is given to us as roughly 18 by 33 meters.[26] While the temple was rebuilt twice since its dedication, each renovation was built upon the same foundation. Therefore, the site represents an accurate scale of the temple in the time of Plautus, since it has neither increased nor decreased in size. According to Goldberg, "the first temple erected on that podium stood a good nine metres above ground level." This is to say that the top of the steps is nine meters above the ground, not the roof of the structure. The podium was flanked by two-tiered stairs, and took up nearly forty meters lengthwise.[27] The front face of the temple looking down from the hill was around 20

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[25]

Goldberg arrives at this conclusion through Cicero railing in 56 BCE against Clodius Pulcher, who had so grievously mismanaged the application of the *ludi Megalenses*. Cicero reveals to us that the games were held in the presence of the goddess, i.e. in sight of her temple. (Cic. *Har.* 24 '*Nam quid ego de illis ludis loquar quos in Palatio nostri maiores ante templum in ipso Matris Magnae conspectu Megalesibus fieri celebrari voluerunt*?')

[26]

Goldberg (1998: 5) points to Romanelli (1963: 227-239). Romanelli discusses the history of excavations on the site of the temple of Magna Mater and provides his own measurements of the temple. Pensabene states at the start of his 1998 article "*Le dimensioni del podio erano quindi di 64x118 piedi* [19.5m x 39m]..."

[27]

Goldberg (1998: 5): "The first temple erected on that podium stood a good nine meters above the ground level and was reached on its south side by a two-tier star, the lower and wider tier approximately forty meters 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."

meters wide, accounting for the additional width of the steps, and its steps would have been where an audience would sit during a production.
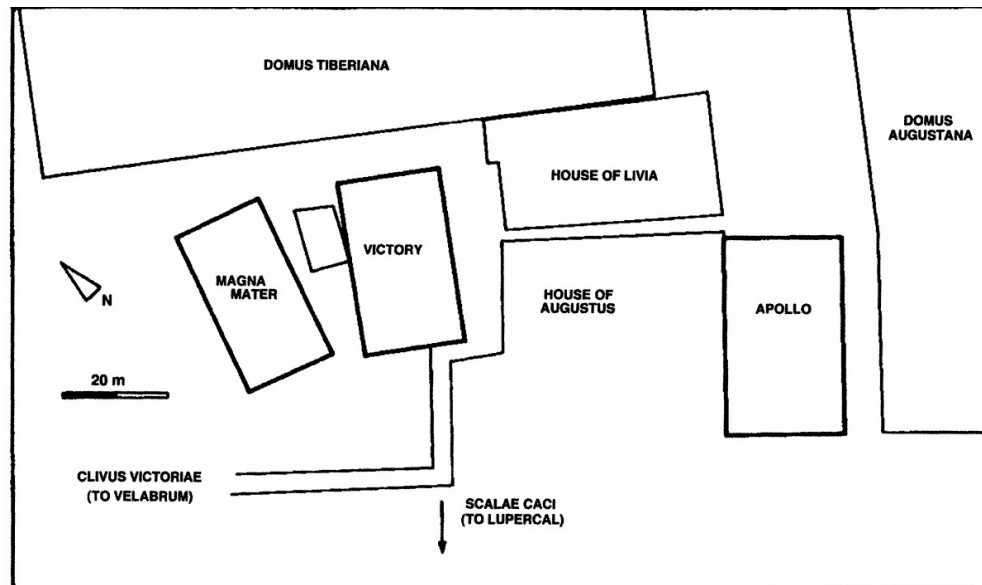
Figure 6. The southwest corner of the Palatine. (=Goldberg 1998 Figure 1)

Due to its awkward positioning relative to other temples in the Palatine area, there is certainly not enough space to construct a whole independent theater space containing both a *cavea* and *scaena*, but this is not a problem because the temple itself could serve as half of the theater equation. The steps of the temple of Magna Mater on the narrow side at the front are the best candidate for solid and safe seating for the audience as shown in the figure below. If one were to take Goldberg's stage described above, one could easily place it here before the steps of the temple while also accounting for the space of the lustral basin at the foot of the steps.
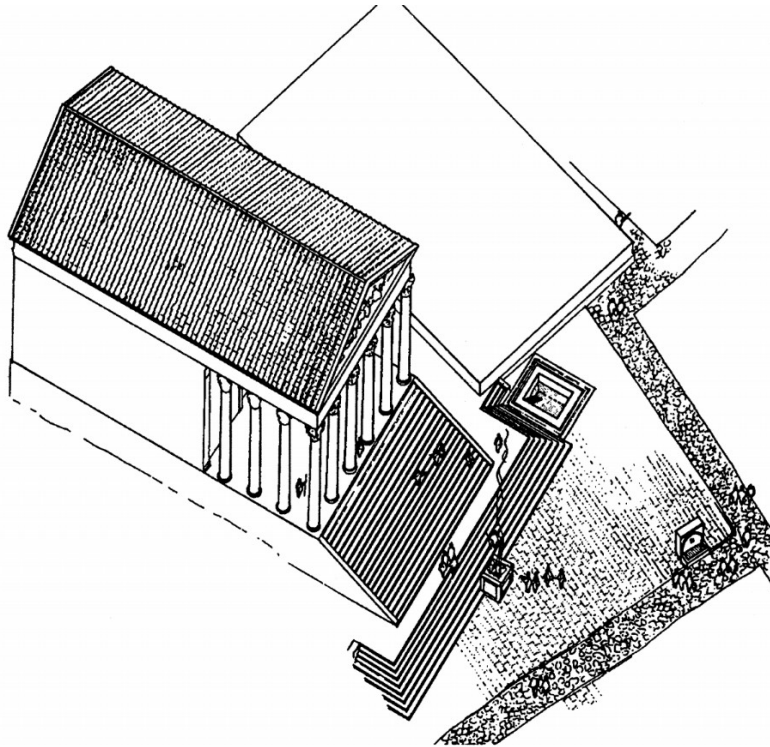
Figure 7. Temple of the Magna Mater: Republican Phase. (=Goldberg (1998 Figure 1) =Pensabene (1988: 59)).

Goldberg's stage helps immensely in our investigation to understand what the experience of ancient drama was like in the late third and early second centuries BCE. A structure fitting Goldberg's measurements could easily fit in the oddly-shaped space in front of the temple of Magna Mater, thus turning the temple into a theater space during festivals. This is because the *cavea* is always present in the form of the steps and the *scaena* can be added to the space as needed.

With Goldberg's stage and the rough dimensions of the temple of Magna Mater in mind, we can effectively determine whether or not there was a suitable amount of space obscured from the audience such that there was a reasonable expectation for a distinction between onstage and offstage/backstage action in Plautus' time. While it is possible that aediles may have paid for larger structures that would extend higher or wider than Goldberg's stage that would render this

point moot, let us take the small structure Goldberg gives us as an extreme case — the bare minimum one would expect a stage to be during a festival. The reasoning behind choosing such a small stage in front of the large steps of Magna Mater is to give the audience the best chance at seeing around the stage and rendering offstage/backstage privacy impossible to expect in the second century BCE.

In our quest of extremity, let us first place the stage right up against the bottom step of the temple. From this distance, the bottom step cannot be used as seating because of its proximity to the stage, nor is there any space for a pseudo-orchestra for additional seating; but for the sake of argument let us determine how much space is obscured using this scenario.[28] We begin by measuring how far back someone can stand from the raised stage and remain unseen from someone placed at the peak of the steps (figure 8). Let us follow Goldberg who is, in turn, following Pensabene and Romanelli that the height of the podium is roughly 9 meters tall. This alone does not help us. One needs to know how long the stairs were. In order to determine this value, since the steps themselves have not survived to us, we must hinge all of our calculations on one assumption: that the Romans would not build steps that were uncomfortably steep nor use an excess of resources to create a ramp. The average angle of attack for a staircase is between 30 and 35 degrees.[29] As we continue to figure this case, let us use the greatest figure of 35 degrees to allow our hypothetical spectator the best chance to see behind the stage. It should be noted that this is an average angle of ascent. The temple of Magna Mater had two tiers of steps and we cannot with any certainty determine the length of a single step, let alone the wider step found at

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[28]
   I call the space in front of the Roman stage a pseudo-orchestra because there is no evidence that Roman plays ever incorporated dancers or a chorus in the orchestra in the same manner as the Greeks.

[29]
   This is the modern standard. Taking such a leap is not unprecedented (cf. Hughes 1996:101).

the boundary between tiers (cf. fig 7). Let us therefore state that 35 degrees is the average rate of ascent for the steps. One tier of steps may be shallower, one may be steeper. With the knowledge that the height of the stairs is 9 meters and the angle of ascent roughly 35 degrees, we can determine the value for X in the figure below.
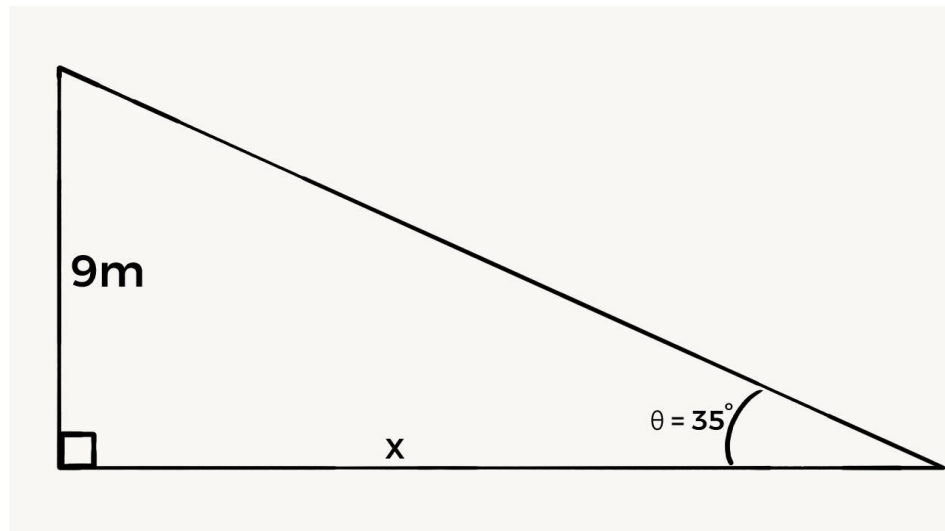
Figure 8. Sketch of a profile view of a simplified staircase leading to the temple of Magna Mater.

To determine the value for X in figure 8, one must apply trigonometric functions. One can do this because the triangle formed by dropping a line from the top of the temple steps to ground level creates a right triangle. Because the triangle contains a 90 degree angle, one can use the functions of sine $(\sin(\theta))$, cosine $(\cos(\theta))$ and tangent $(\tan(\theta))$. These functions are simply the proportions between the various sides of the triangle.[30] Because we know the angle θ and the length of the side opposite of θ, which is to say the height of the steps, we can determine the value of X. The tangent of 35 degrees is 0.7.[31] The value of X is determined by establishing the proportional relationship between X and our known value of 9 to the output of the tangent

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      Sine can be written as the opposite side (9) over the hypotenuse, cosine as the adjacent side (X) over the hypotenuse, and tangent as the opposite side (9) over the adjacent side (X).

31

      This is evident from a unit circle as well as double-checking with a calculator.

function applied to 35. The equation can be expressed as the following:

$$\tan(35°) = {}^{9m}/_X = 0.7$$

$$0.7 = {}^{9m}/_X$$

$$X = {}^{9m}/_{0.7}$$

$$X = 12.86m$$

With this knowledge in hand, we can now move on to solve for how much space is obscured by Goldberg's stage from the vantage point of the steps. If we place Goldberg's stage right up against the bottom step to create the best chance for someone of average height (around 1.65m) standing atop the steps to see behind the *scaena*, then we get the following diagram where the hypotenuse of the larger triangle serves as the sightline available to our individual placed atop the steps:
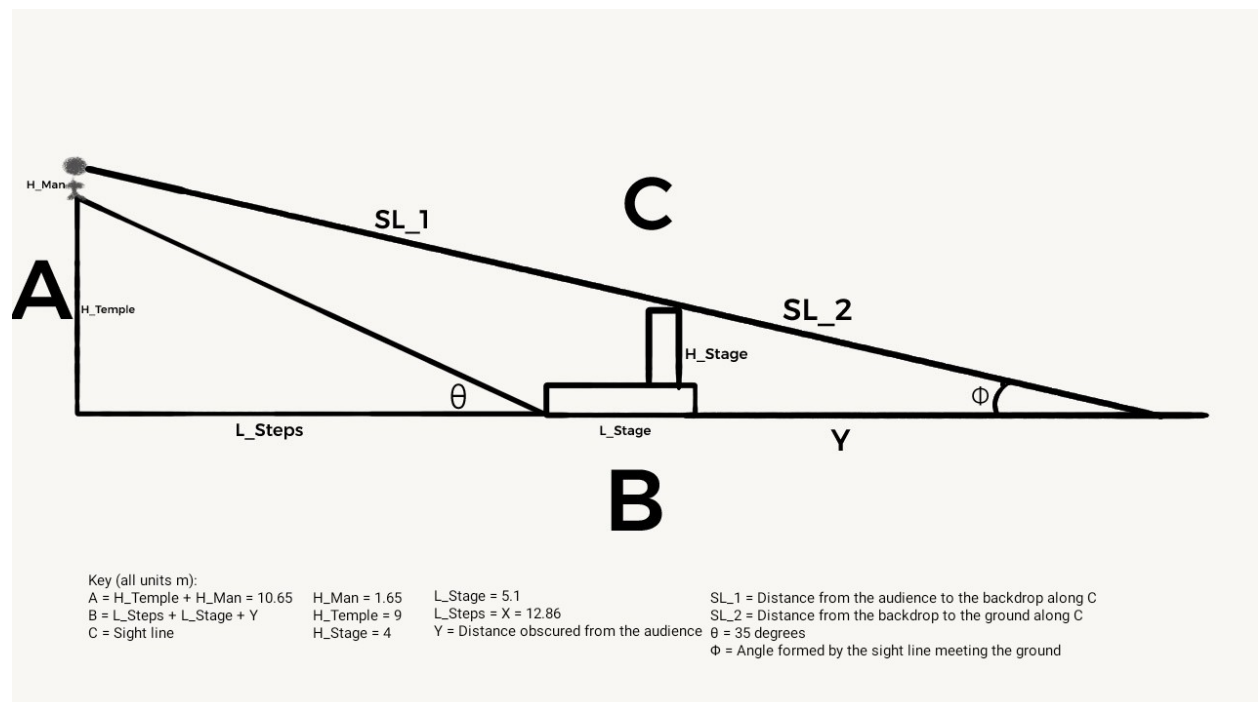
Figure 9. Profile view of Goldberg's stage in front of Magna Mater (not to scale).

The triangle in the bottom left of the larger triangle comprised of the sides L_Steps,

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H_Temple, and the angle θ serves as a profile view of the steps of Magna Mater.[32] The height of 10.65 meters (A in the figure above) is derived from the known height of the steps of 9m added to the height of our hypothetical individual of 1.65m. Directly to the right of the steps is an approximation of a profile view of Goldberg's stage. I have placed the backdrop of Goldberg's stage slightly offset from the literal back of the stage platform because that is how he chooses to display it in his figure above (figure 5). This does not drastically change the conclusions we will draw from the calculations. Some space behind the stage (to the right of the stage in the diagram) is unseen by the individual atop the steps because the stage is in the way. The variable Y represents the total length that cannot be seen by someone atop the steps. We are able to set up a proportional relationship between the area behind the stage and the total length from the base of the steps to the end of the unseen area represented in terms of a single variable, Y. The triangles formed by the sides A, B , and C as well as H_Stage (the total height of the backdrop of the stage off of the ground), SL_2, and Y are similar triangles sharing the angle Φ. Thus, the tangent of Φ is equal both to the height of the stage over Y and A over the total distance covered in the x-axis (the length of the steps + the length of the stage + Y). We can say the following:

$$\tan(\Phi) = \frac{4m}{Y} = \frac{10.65m}{(12.86m + 5.1m + Y)}$$

$$\frac{4m}{Y} = \frac{10.65m}{(17.96m + Y)}$$

$$\frac{Y}{4m} = \frac{(17.96m + Y)}{10.65m}$$

$$Y = \frac{4m(17.96m + Y)}{10.65m}$$

$$Y = \frac{(71.84m + 4Y)}{10.65m}$$

$$10.65Y = 71.84m + 4Y$$

$$10.65Y - 4Y = 71.84m$$

32

      H_Temple signifies the height of the steps, rather than the full height of the temple from the ground to the roof.

$$6.65Y = 71.84m$$
$$Y = 10.8m$$

When one solves for Y, one finds that the total distance obscured by the stage when it is placed flush with the steps is 10.8m. The value, however, that we are seeking is the amount of space that an actor could theoretically use and remain hidden. Therefore, we must cut our figure of 10.8 meters by placing someone circa 1.65 meters backstage and find the point at which their head would begin to be visible (the point at which s meets W in the below figure).
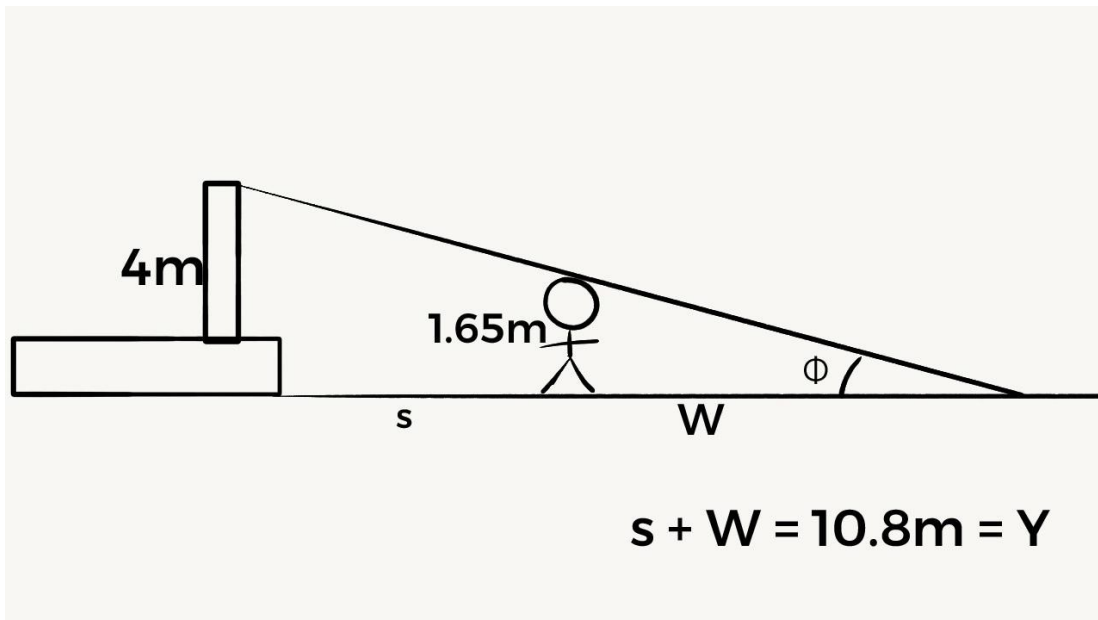
Figure 10 (not to scale). Because the actors themselves have height, not all of the distance obscured by the stage is "usable." At a distance of W meters from the point where the sight line meets the ground, an actor may safely be hidden.

Just as before, one can solve for W by establishing proportional relationships. It can be said, as before, via similar triangles that the tangent of Φ is equal to both the height of the stage over Y and the height of a person over W. Therefore:

$$\tan(\Phi) = {}^{1.65m}/_W = {}^{4m}/_{16.8m} = 0.238$$
$${}^{1.65m}/_W = 0.238$$
$$W = {}^{1.65m}/_{0.238}$$

$$W = 6.93m$$

The amount of "usable" backstage space is 10.8 - W, which gives us a value of 3.87 meters, which is still ample space for someone to walk around backstage and remain hidden. As the stage is moved away from the steps, this figure will only increase.

It may seem that we have concluded that there must have been a clear delineation between onstage and offstage, but we have yet to determine the views from the sides. The steps of the temple were much wider than the stage Goldberg gives us, so we must take into consideration the idea that someone may be sitting at the far edge of the steps and have the ability to peer around the stage. For this example, we do not need to consider the height of the observer's eyes, only their lateral position. As one could imagine, if the stage is placed flush against the steps, there is hardly any space that is obscured from the sides. The following figure illustrates how much space would be hidden from view if the stage were placed at different distances from the steps.
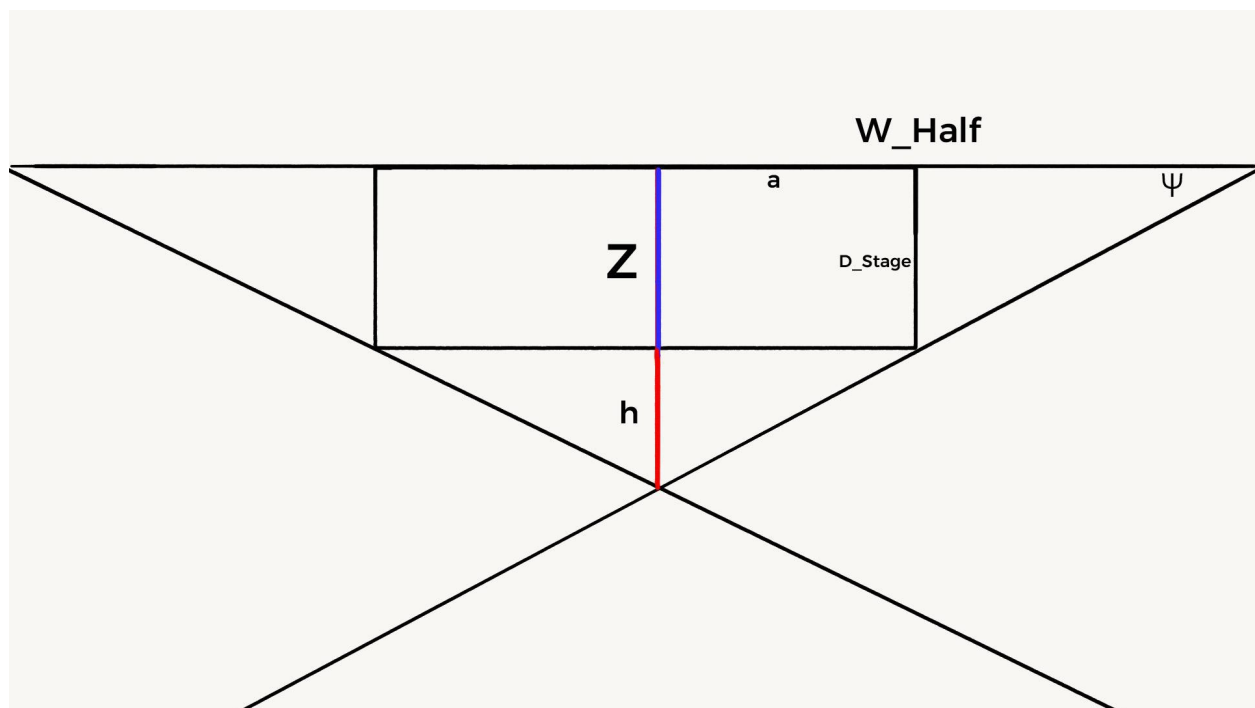
Figure 11. Top-down sketch of Goldberg's stage in front of Magna Mater (not to scale).

In the figure above, we see Goldberg's stage placed squarely in the center of the short side of the temple of Magna Mater and flush with the steps. The distance W_Half is ten meters because we are focused only on half of the narrow side of the temple's footprint. The value a will stand for half of the width of Goldberg's stage sans ramps (4 meters). D_Stage is equivalent to L_Stage in the profile views above (5 meters). Z is the straight distance from the bottom of the temple steps to the back of Goldberg's stage (i.e. the distance from someone directly in front of the stage to the back of the stage), and h is the height of the triangle formed by the sightlines extending from the edges. For the sake of walking through these calculations, let us say that the variable k represents the distance of Z + h.

To determine the value of k, we may once again turn to proportional relationships. This is because the angle formed by the sightline does not change. The tangent of the angle created by the sightlines is equal both to our distance k over W_Half as well as Z over the difference between W_Half and a. We can then set up the equation where Z is 5 meters (the depth of Goldberg's stage itself rounded up with no additional space):

$$\tan(\psi) = {}^{k}/_{10m} = {}^{Z}/_{6m}$$
$${}^{k}/_{10m} = {}^{5m}/_{6m} = 0.83$$
$$k = 10m * 0.83$$
$$k = 8.3m$$

Because we have stated that k represents the total distance from the bottom step of the temple to the peak of the shaded region, we must subtract Z from k to determine h, the height of the triangle formed by the obscured region. In this first case where the stage is flush with the steps, we find that 8.3 - 5 = 3.3. If we take the width of Goldberg's stage (8 meters) as the base of our triangle, we can determine the area of the obscured area as follows using the value for h

we just determined:[33]

$$Area = 0.5 * 2a * h$$
$$Area = 0.5 * 8m * 3.3m$$
$$Area = 13.2m^2$$

This area is a sizable space for actors to move about freely without being seen by the audience. Members of the audience at the top of the steps would not be able to see them; those placed at the extreme edge would hardly be able to see around the stage if it were placed directly at the foot of the temple. While this exercise has been one of extremity, one can see that the amount of obscured space rapidly increases as a more practical approach is applied. If one were to pull the stage away from the temple a mere 5 meters to allow for a pseudo-orchestra for the senatorial class, we can see that the area obscured from the sides rapidly increases. Let us confirm this by solving for the variables below where Z is now 10 (to represent the 5 meters we have moved the stage in addition to the 5 meters that the stage measures).

33

The formula used to determine the area of a triangle is 0.5 multiplied by the length of the base of the triangle multiplied by the height of the triangle, otherwise expressed as ½*base*height.
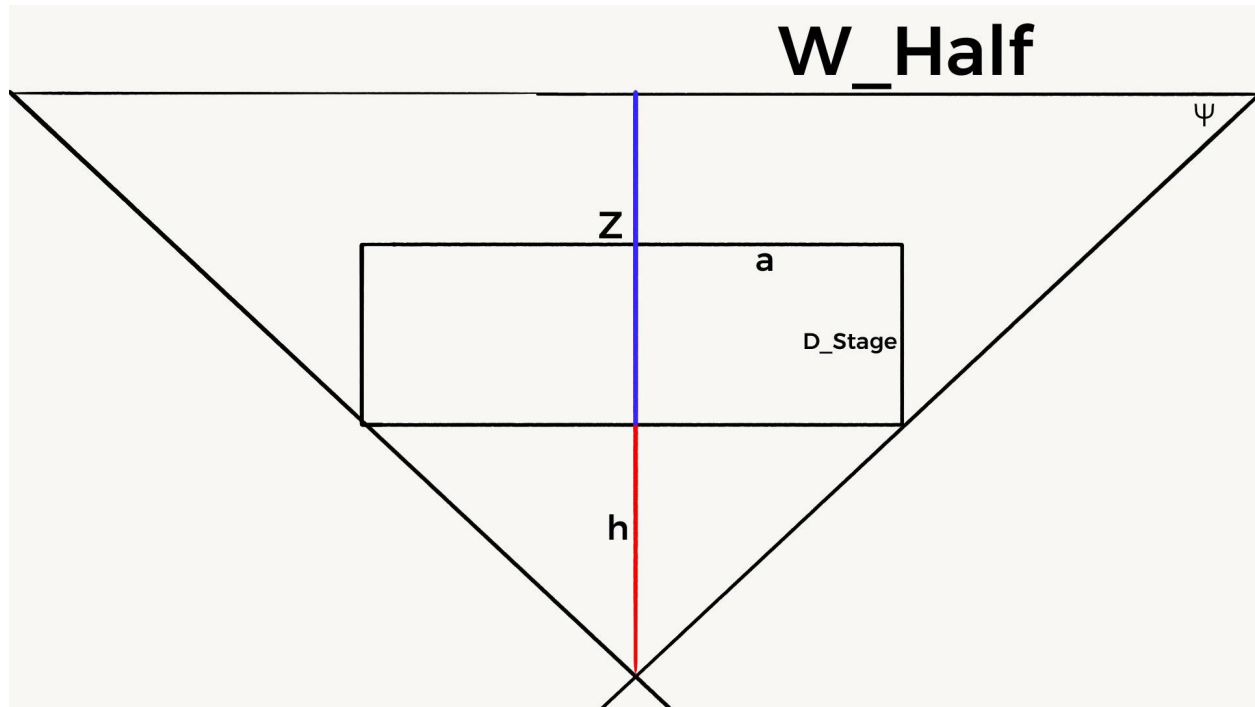
Figure 12. Moving Goldberg's stage away from the bottom step dramatically increases the amount of obscured space (not to scale).

$$\tan(\psi) = {}^{k}/_{10m} = {}^{Z}/_{6m}$$

$${}^{k}/_{10m} = {}^{10m}/_{6m}$$

$$k = 10m * 1.67$$

$$k = 16.7m$$

As before, one must subtract Z (10m) from k (16.7m) to determine h, which yields a new height of 6.7m. While this figure may appear not much larger than our previous result of 4, the area of the shaded region increases significantly:

$$\text{Area} = 0.5 * 8m * 6.7m$$

$$\text{Area} = 26.8m^2$$

As the stage is moved further from the steps, the amount of space increases rapidly such that placing the stage only 5 meters back from the steps affords the actors plenty of space. The amount of space that is obscured from the top of the steps is never less than that obscured from the sides, which tells us that the biggest factor limiting backstage potential is the width of the

stage. While the space is somewhat limited, nevertheless there is still enough space behind the

stage for a troupe of actors, their costumes, and several other things they may need for the show

such as props.

It should not be a wild claim, therefore, to suggest that any stage placed in a similar

milieu would also offer similar protections from the prying eyes of the audience. While it is

nearly impossible to say that the *Mostellaria* would have been performed at the Temple of

Magna Mater itself, we can say that some of Plautus' plays, as well as some of Terence's, graced

stages at the foot of the temple. Placing a stage in front of a structure with raised seating such as

temple steps or the *comitium* or even a structure commissioned for the express purpose of

producing drama for a festival or other games is not an unknown practice to the Romans.[34] In

each of these settings the audience would be given a clear view of the stage because they would

be raised above the people in front of them. This elevation would not allow them to glimpse

behind the stage, however, and the illusion of theater would remain intact. For reference,

consider the following model (fig. 13) derived from our calculations for the temple of Magna

Mater above. The shaded polygon represents the total area obscured from the audience as seen

from the most extreme locations in the *cavea*. It does not extend to the full area encompassed by

the sight lines because we have factored in an actor's height as we calculated earlier to determine

"usable" backstage space. Thus, the area shaded represents not only space obscured from the

audience, but also the total "usable" area that the actors could use.

34

      Although the *comitium* would wrap further around a stage placed inside. We can say that in the abstract it is similar to placing a stage in front of temple steps -- there are raised seats that threaten to see beyond the boundary of the backdrop.
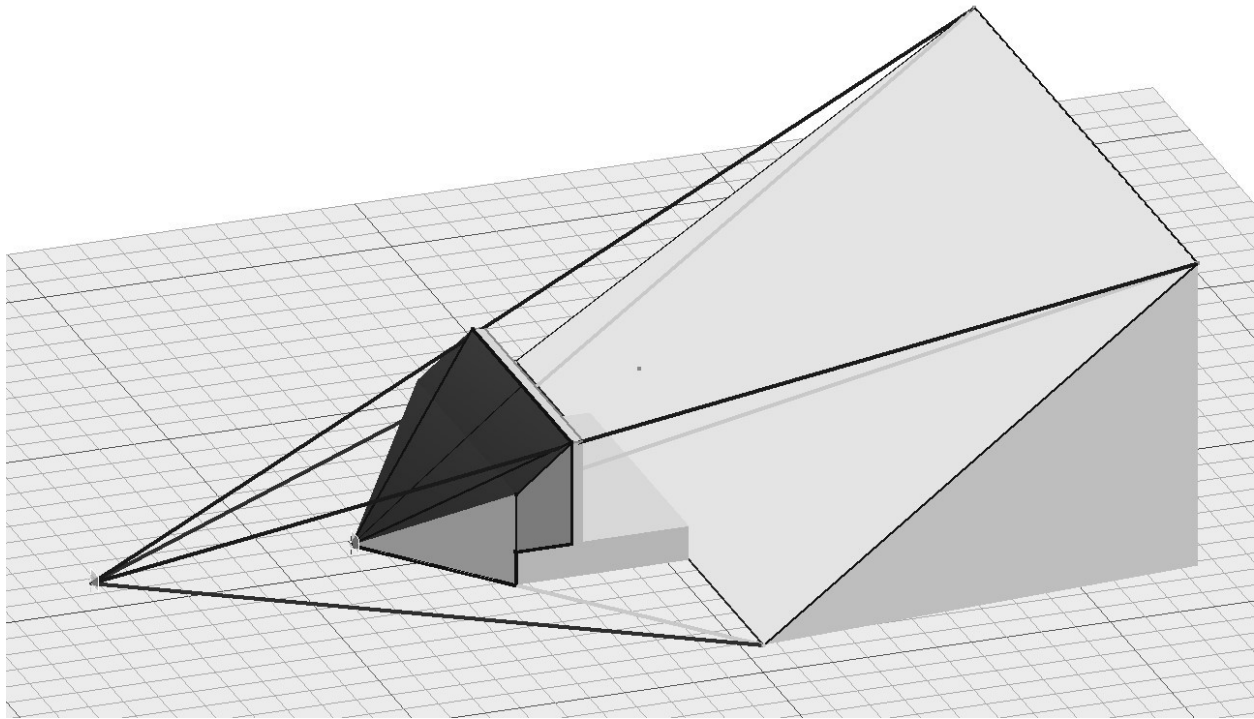
Figure 13. A 3-D model of the obscured space behind the stage as it is flush with the temple steps. Rendered by Harrison Schott using AutoCAD Inventor.

We have concluded that actors entering from backstage via the onstage doors would not have been seen by the audience prior to their appearance on stage, but entrances and exits were not solely relegated to the doors of the stage. Even without explicit stage directions, one can infer that many entrances and exits in Plautine and Terentian drama connect the stage to the *forum* and to the countryside (*rus*) via the exits on the wings. Based on the conclusions from the prologues of Terence's *Hecyra* made above regarding visual distraction in the theater and the lack thereof, we can say that the only possible visual distraction for an audience would be an actor approaching the stage from the wings. While these actors were making the trek from backstage to the wings in preparation to ascend the stage, they were, in fact, actors not yet fully in character.[35] The attention of the audience was supposed to be focused on the action upon the

35

stage, not the surrounding area where technical production occurred. Upon crossing the boundary

of the raised stage platform, the actors would assume the roles of their *personae* and engage in

the action of the stage. The implications, therefore, of Plautus' *Mostellaria* will prove to be quite

significant. By blurring the established boundaries of the stage with its surrounding area, Plautus

effectively expands the area of influence of the stage. Actors near the stage, whether they are

adjacent or just behind the stage, are just as involved in the action on the platform of the stage as

their more obvious fellows.

While these actors would have been wearing their masks, or at the very least holding them in preparation to put them on, this is not the place to discuss the greater significance of an actor's mask and the *persona* of their character. Let it be sufficient here that there exists a substantial relationship between actor and mask. The focus of this paper is on the recognition of theatrical agents and their relationship to the stage proper. For a much more in depth discussion of masks and their role in the ancient stage, see Hughes (2012: 166-177), Marshall 2006.

Chapter 2: The *Mostellaria*: A Case Study for Plautus' Response to the Anxieties and Constraints of Mid-Republican Theatrical Space

We have now established some general truths about the milieu of Roman Comedy in the late third and early second centuries BCE. Terence's retelling of the failures of the *Hecyra* have demonstrated that there existed an anxiety around the theater that external forces were always threatening to upend sanctioned performances. While this anxiety was always present, there is no evidence that those feared intrusions ever manifested as visual distractions to the audience. Rather, they presented themselves as rumors and whispers that permeated the *cavea*. The so-called *phlyax*-vases describe the predecessors of Plautus and Terence with their mostly bare stages and rough form. As the only windows we currently have to observe ancient temporary theaters, we must utilize them, even if there remain several questions regarding their application in Roman Comedy of the third and second centuries BCE. Finally, taking the *phlyax* vases as models, we have demonstrated that a stage of roughly equivalent dimensions to those found on the vases would provide ample space both for the actors onstage and those offstage when placed in front of temple steps or other sloped seating. With all of this in mind, let us pivot to Plautus' *Mostellaria* and explore the implications of Plautus' metatheatricality with respect to the interplay between internal and external spaces, the blending thereof, and even jarring breaks out of the liminal.[36]

These following sections will engage in a systematic approach to the text of the

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[36]

    Flagrant fourth-wall breaking asides occur in antiquity and demonstrate Plautus' blending of the *scaena* and *cavea* as a single space. Rather than treat the stage as a window into the dramatic where the audience and actors have no direct interaction, Plautus will remind the audience that they are witnessing fiction and that they are all members of the production in a sense. For more on the liminal qualities of the theater, see Turner (1982).

Mostellaria examining a number of scenes that highlight the central themes Plautus had envisioned. Once that has been accomplished, I will conclude that Plautus' *Mostellaria* challenges theatrical traditions as suggested by Terence and others. Through this subversion, Plautus extends the influence of the stage in the theater to beyond the physical confines of the *scaena*.

The plot of the *Mostellaria* proceeds as follows. The stock *adulescens amator*, Philolaches, has been living in luxury in Athens while his *senex durus* father, Theopropides, has been away on business in Egypt for the last three years. In the interim, Philolaches fell in love with the *meretrix* Philematium, whose freedom cost Philolaches a hefty sum borrowed from Misargyrides the money-lender. Additionally, he was cavorting with his friend Callidamates and his girlfriend Delphium in extravagant parties at Theoprodides' unknowing expense. Suddenly, Theopropides unexpectedly returns from Egypt, but is none the wiser to his son's misdeeds because of the cunning slave, Tranio. Upon finding his house locked up in the middle of the day, Theopropides accosts the door so that he may be let in, but Tranio appears and tells him that the house has been abandoned for months because of a spirit that haunts the place. In his deception, Tranio further explains that Philolaches has purchased the neighbor's house and owes a lump sum to Misargyrides the money-lender. In addition to fooling Theopropides about the purchase of Simo's house, Tranio deceives Simo into thinking that Theopropides only seeks to remodel his own house after Simo's. In this way, neither of the *senes* are any the wiser to Tranio's trickery. Ultimately, in comedic Plautine fashion, Tranio's ruse is uncovered, punishment is threatened, but everything works out favorably for the *servus callidus* in the end.

Over the course of the play, there are several entrances and exits as well as "changes" in

location. The stage uses its wing exits to connect to the *forum* (hereafter referred to as the Forum-exit) and to the *rus* (hereafter the country-exit) as is tradition, but the setting of the stage itself is not fixed. Not only does the stage depict the space outside of Philolaches' and Simo's houses, but it also is the setting for Philematium and her attendant Scapha to ready themselves for a date with Philolaches in a much-discussed *Putzszene*. The stage is also home to the preparation, celebration, and aftermath of a *convivium* at Philolaches' house wherein Callidamates is passed out on a couch. Theopropides and Tranio go on a tour of Simo's house and Tranio begins the final scenes of the play by taking the audience on a journey with him as he leaves Philolaches' house and travels via back alleys to get back to the stage. There is ambiguity surrounding a number of entrances and exits throughout the play, and we will explore those most problematic moves as they arise.[37]

Let us now turn to the text of the *Mostellaria* to determine what it can tell modern readers about its staging in antiquity. Because there are no stage directions nor other notes directly attached to the text directly from Plautus' hand, one can only derive practical effects, such as entrances/exits and rough blocking, from what the text necessitates. Later additions to the editions as monastic copies were written should not be taken into account because of their own protracted distance from Plautus' production. We will examine the play in the order presented to the reader or actor. This is not a complete line-by-line commentary, but rather a thorough treatment of the problematic passages of interest. First we will examine the opening scenes before the return of Theopropides. These scenes will establish the (meta)theatrical themes that Plautus will focus on in the *Mostellaria*. The focus of inside/outside derives from Plautus'

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[37] See Appendix A for a complete account of entrances and exits in the Mostellaria.

awareness of the anxieties in the theater that we have outlined above. Upon Theopropides'

return, we will turn to Tranio's deception and his mindfulness regarding who and what are inside

or outside in the play. Next, we will turn to Simo's house tour, where Tranio is tasked with

bringing parts of Simo's house outside so that the audience can experience Simo's house just as

Tranio and Theopropides do. Finally, we will see Tranio use an *angiportum* (alleyway) to travel

between being inside/onstage and outside/offstage, and hide atop an altar on or near the stage.

2.1 Before the return of Theopropides

The very first word of the play, *exi*, gives the audience an idea for the themes that Plautus

is going to be playing with in this drama. Plautus will play with action inside the theater (i.e.

onstage) and action outside the theater (i.e. offstage) on multiple occasions throughout the play.

As the figurative curtain rises on the scene, the audience sees the rustic slave, Grumio, leaving

Philolaches' house *in medias res* continuing a spat that the audience may have heard beginning

through the *scaena* with his fellow slave, Tranio.[38] Grumio is reprimanding Tranio and trying to

force him out of the house. It is unclear if the door of Philolaches' house remains open from

Grumio's exit to the stage or if it is shut behind him. Mariotti defends the position of an open

door while Sonnenschein argues for a closed door at the start of the play. Parallels in favor of a

closed door cite the repeated use of *exi*, which would be punctuated by knocking on the closed

door.[39] Mariotti, however, points out a glaring problem with the closed-door theory: Grumio

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[38]
     See Mariotti (1992: 109): "Lo sfogo dell-innamorato respinto e il dialogo successivo sono stati preceduti anche qui da un contrasto dentro la casa, e gli spettatori avranno udito proteste e grida al di là della porta, anche se questo non risulta dal testo. È lo stesso schema a cui va ricondotto, secondo [Mariotti], l'inizio della *Mostellaria*." His suggestion that the quarrel between Tranio and Grumio could be heard onstage is quite interesting. Namely, offstage and onstage spaces were able to directly interact with one another.
[39]
     Cf. *Capt*. 977, *Persa* 459, *Merc*. 910ff. and *Curc*. 276. These verses all combine the imperative *exi* with

appears to know what Tranio has been up to inside the house, but he himself has only just come

from the countryside.[40] Grumio's pejorative name for Tranio, *nidoricupi* (5), suggests that there

is a pattern of behavior at play. Tranio is always hanging around the kitchen and putting his

fingers where they do not belong. Mariotti's problem with Sonnenschein's closed door does not

allow for a preexisting set of relationships between the actors prior to the action of the play

unfolding. We cannot make a certain claim regarding the state of the door of Philolaches' house

at the start of the play. Although it is not clear how Grumio sees Tranio, his treatment of Tranio

nevertheless is the first thing that the audience sees.[41] While bringing Tranio out of the house, he

cajoles him in the following way:

> GR: exi e culina sis foras, mastigia,
> qui mi inter patinas exhibes argutias.
> egredere, erilis permities, ex aedibus.
> ego pol te ruri, si vivam, ulciscar probe.
> <exi,> exi, inquam, nidoricupi, nam quid lates? (Plaut. *Most*.1-5)

> GR: Get out of the kitchen and go outside, rascal,
> You who show quips among platters.
> Get out of here, you the bane of our master, out of this house.
> I, by God, will rightly take vengeance on you from the countryside, if I should live.
> Go on, git, I say, you kitchen-smell-lover. What are you hiding?[42]

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the directional *foras* suggesting that the addressee is currently within the house or other structure and not onstage to hear the reprimand of whomever is calling. The verb *exire* is used in this sense as well in *Pseud*. 133, *Rud*. 706, and Terence's *Eunuchus* 668ff.

40
      Mariotti asks "come può sapere Grumione che Tranione si trova in cucina?" To which he offers up these competing explanations as follows: che Grumione stia bussando per entrare e, d'altra parte, che abbia già avuto con Tranione un colloquio deludente in cucina.

41
      While the *Mostellaria* has no narrative prologue, it does begin with a "very animated dialogue from which the essential information is obtained." (Mariotti 1992:105). Mariotti also highlights *Cas*. 89 as a comparandum for rustic slaves and city slaves arguing with or without the pressing of their masters.

42
      Alternatively, this could mean "Why are you hiding?" There is ambiguity whether Tranio is hiding something he has stolen from the kitchen or if Grumio is simply asking him why he was hiding in the kitchen in the first place. I have elected to go with "what" because of the potential applications of having Tranio nab a piece of food from under the nose of the staff proceeding to hide it in his clothes or mouth (mask permitting). Additionally, having Tranio come out on stage with Grumio eliminates the problematic nature of Mariotti's open/closed door

While the first *exi* in line 5 is hesitantly added by Lindsay, the sense of this opening

remains clear: Tranio should not be inside because he is a cause of consternation to his fellow

slaves. Although the scene begins with Grumio alone onstage calling for Tranio, who is inside

the house, the audience should understand that the ensuing dialogue is taking place outside of the

house and not in the kitchen where Tranio has been transgressing. Not only does this exchange

highlight Tranio's misbehavior as the *servus callidus*, it also primes the audience to think about

the division between being inside and being outside. Tranio, as a malicious instigator, is

supposed to remain in the spotlight so he may not sneakily get into trouble. Tranio's behavior

likely extends beyond his relationships with fellow slaves into confrontation with his master,

who has fortunately been away for three years.

According to the Palatinus Vaticanus (1612 *saec.* x-xi) manuscript, the compound word

in the middle of line 5 is actually two words—*nidor culine*—which explains the desire to remove

Tranio from the kitchen.[43] The word *culine* as found both in line 1 and as a potential reading for

nidoricupi is attributed by Ussing to Nonius writing on Varro who explains *in postica parte erat*

colina, dicta ab eo quod ibi colebant ignem, "in the back part [of the house] was the kitchen, so-

called because they tended to the fire there." Whether we read *culine* or *cupi* in the text, Tranio is

either in the kitchen or only passing by for the smell. Either way he must be in or near the

kitchen. The *hapax* of *nidorculine* has been suggested by Ussing to mean "kitchen-sniffer,"

drawing upon parallels in Plautus that liken those who hang around kitchens to vultures.[44] Tranio

debate with Sonnenschein.

[43]
     The Palatinus Vaticanus manuscript is cited among commentaries as B or B² to denote a second hand in the manuscript.

[44]
     Ussing (1972:98) *Mihi alia via insistenda videtur; quum enim caesura versus* nido *tueatur, in corruptis litteris RE . CUPI avis nomen quaerendum est; itaque* volturi *scripsi, cuius voracitas pro proverbio erat, cf.* Capt.

has apparently transgressed by hanging around inside the kitchen, a place he is not supposed to be, and has been causing all sorts of trouble. Therefore, he must be removed and sent outside as the first step in expiating his misdeeds. Things that are good and correct occur outside, while spaces are liable to be corrupted if unwanted or unseen forces permeate them. This theme is present here in Plautus and can be overlaid on Terence's prologues to the *Hecyra* from above.[45] Plautus will expand on the theme of internal corruption in the next scene.

By line 6 Tranio has appeared from the inside of the house to converse with Grumio. It is unclear whether Tranio has even heard Grumio's initial salvo of insults in the open threshold of the door or if Grumio's voice has been muffled by the shut door. Nevertheless, Tranio's retort highlights the presence of the house on stage and the characters' positions relative to it. His exposition both performs a narrative function, and hammers once more (meta)theatrical themes Plautus is setting up for the audience, namely the relationship between actors onstage, spaces offstage, and the liminal spaces connecting the two:

> TR: quid tibi, malum, hic ante aedis clamitatiost?
> an ruri censes te esse? apscede ab aedibus.
> abi rus, abi dierecte, apscede ab ianua. (Plaut. *Most*. 6-8)

> TR: Why are you making such a brouhaha here in front of the house, you bastard?
> Or do you think you're in the country? Get away from the house.
> Go on, out to the country, go to the gallows, just get away from the door.

Tranio gives the audience their first taste of the *servus callidus* in this play. He is a bold individual who orders others to go certain places, especially away from the house or door, as we will see roughly four hundred lines later. He and Plautus give the audience a clear picture in

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838. Trucul. 334: *'quasi volturii triduo prius praedivinant de quoio esuri sient'* Trin. 102.

45

      That which is good and proper to Terence, i.e. a successful performance, occurs within the theater. Troublesome and pernicious things, i.e. the rumors of the rope-walker and gladiators, occur outside of the theater.

these opening lines: there is an inside space and outside space that the characters inhabit. When they are outside or, as in this case, in front of (*ante*) the house, the audience can observe and hear the characters' antics. Matters that occur inside, then, will be related outside by characters, just as it was necessary for Grumio to explicitly tell the audience about Tranio's antics as *nidoricupi* since they had not seen him themselves. Tranio shuffles Grumio away from the house with repeated use of the imperatives *apscede* and *abi*, which prime the audience for his later cajoling of Theopropides over 400 lines later.[46]

The conversation between Grumio and Tranio continues for roughly 80 lines, at the end of which Grumio relents and gives up on managing Tranio. He tells the audience that he is leaving for the country: *nunc rus abibo. nam eccum erilem filium | video, corruptum ex adulescente optumo* (Now I shall leave for the countryside. But ho! I see the young master corrupted from his very excellent youth). As I have mentioned above, lines such as this one are the clearest indication modern readers have for stage direction in the text. It is clear that Grumio leaves the stage to make way for the entrance of Philolaches. Most of the other entrances in ancient drama are flagged this way to the audience.[47]

As Grumio leaves the stage, the stock character of the *amator adulescens*, portrayed in this play by Philolaches, enters and begins to pontificate on the qualities of a morally upright person and how they are akin to a well-kept house. He delivers a 70-line soliloquy rounding out

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[46]
    For more on the tone of *servi callidi* and the present imperative as compared with other forms of command such as the present subjunctive, see Barrios-Lech (2016).

[47]
    When exceptions to this rule of heralding occur, modern texts tend to place act divisions. Tranio appears onstage to deliver a monologue from 348-362 before he is recognized by Philolaches. Misargyrides similarly appears without prompting at line 532 once Tranio has set his ruse. Once Tranio leaves the stage at 859, there is nobody left to announce the arrival of Phaniscus (and Pinacium) at 860. Finally, at 1041 Tranio once again enters the stage without any prompting to deliver a soliloquy to the audience once Theopropides and Simo have concluded that they will go and hunt Tranio down for tricking them.

Plautus' messaging as initially outlined by Grumio and Tranio and their physical presence regarding inside, outside, and their relationship not only in a literal sense (i.e. with respect to a house) but also in a personal, introspective manner. First, Philolaches tells the audience that houses must be maintained to prevent subtle, hidden damages from adding up and ruining the structure from the inside. This is advice that any prudent homeowner would already know. Tiles may be broken in a storm (109), rain seeps into the walls and causes water damage (111-112), and if nothing is done the whole house collapses on itself at great expense to whatever family lives there (113). The ruin of the house is not the fault of the builder, according to Philolaches, but of the owner of the house who fails to maintain the structure. He goes on to say that just as an abandoned house falls into ruin from small imperfections and a lack of upkeep, so, too, are people susceptible to corruption in the same way as houses. One's parents are not only their architects, but also their custodians, who must ward off corruption via proper care. Philolaches tells the audience about his own precipitous downfall once he is no longer under the guardianship of his father:

> venit ignavia, ea mihi tempestas fuit,
> mihi adventu suo grandinem imbrem[que] attulit;
> haec verecundiam mi et virtutis modum
> deturbavit detexitque a med ilico;
> postilla optigere me neglegens fui.
> continuo pro imbre amor advenit in cor meum,
> is usque in pectus permanavit, permadefecit cor meum,
> nunc simul res, fides, fama, virtus, decus
> deseruerunt: ego sum in usu factus nimio nequior.
> atque edepol ita haec tigna umiditate putent: non videor mihi
> sarcire posse aedis meas, quin totae perpetuae ruant,
> cum fundamento perierint nec quisquam esse auxilio queat. (Plaut. *Most*. 137-148)
>
> Sloth came; that was my storm;
> when it came to me it brought hail and rain with it;
> this overturned my modesty and the bounds of virtue

and straightaway removed my [roof]tiles;
after that I neglected to cover myself again.
At once love, like a storm/rain, came into my heart,
it soaked deep into my chest and made my heart drip,
now property, credit, reputation, virtue, and honor
have left me all at the same time: I have become much worse.
And, O God, so waterlogged are my rafters now that I do not seem to myself
able to possibly patch up my house, lest it fall once and for all,
lest it fall with its foundation, nor does anyone seem able to help me.

Both Philolaches and the house have internal space away from the public. In this space, diligent care and attention to detail are required to ensure structural or moral integrity. Once rot and corruption begin to take root inside, it rapidly deteriorates to a point where there is no solution but to tear down the structure and start fresh. If proper care is not administered, whether to a house or person, then rot and decay can sneak in, permeate the foundations, and cause rapid deterioration. One does not see the problem until it is far too late to do anything about it. If the audience had not picked up on the themes Plautus had set up in the previous scene, they should now be keenly aware of the play between internal space and external space, at least in the context of the drama in front of them. The audience should be keen to see the parallel between Philolaches and his house as he declaims his woes in front of his own house, which will be described later as haunted and ruined. Not only has Philolaches fallen victim to sloth and love, he is completely helpless to stop them from further ruining his life.

Although Philolaches attempts to demonstrate his moral uprightness by deliberating on the qualities of a good man versus a corrupt, ill-tended man, the appearance of a penitent youth immediately dissolves once Philolaches catches sight of his lover Philematium approaching with her attendant Scapha at hand, readying herself to see Philolaches.[48] Having removed the morally

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48
    Leach (1969:319) "The sight of his mistress is enough to cause him to forget his discomforting sense of guilt."

upright Philolaches from the view of the audience by shrinking back into his natural state full of

vice, Philolaches will further retreat inside as he learns of his father's unexpected return, leaving

only Tranio to concoct a ruse to obscure his wantonness from his father. The rest of the play will

not adhere to the moral message that Philolaches tries to impart at the outset.

Verses 157-312 constitute a *Putzszene* wherein Philematium and her attendant, Scapha,

bring out a number of toiletries to the stage while Philolaches hides himself from his fellow

actors and remains clearly in view of the audience. This is apparent because of his numerous

interjections to Scapha's counseling of Philematium that she not dress herself nicely (i.e. gaudy

and laden with jewels and perfume) because she has already received her freedom, although

Philematium feels a certain sense of obligation to dress up for her lover.[49] The action of this

scene suggests privacy because it involves dressing and adorning oneself for presentation to

others. In this light, I believe that the audience is supposed to understand that Philematium is

hidden inside somewhere and the audience is being granted a private window into her life just as

Philolaches, who stands to the side or perhaps hidden behind some onstage element, also looks

on. This is counter to the practicality of staging such a transition. We have just seen Philematium

enter the stage where Philolaches was only moments ago philosophizing to the audience. After

all, there is only a single space upon which the actors may perform.[50] Modern theaters can

accommodate a number of settings thanks to innovations like blackouts which allow the rapid

interchange of scenery elements, or even a rotating stage to present spaces to the audience that

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49

Fuchs (1944:132): "Es versteht sich von selbst, daß Philematium dieses Ansinnen unter Berufung auf die Dankbarkeit, die sie dem Philolaches schuldet, entschlossen ablehnt 214-215."

50

Cf. Mariotti (1992:106). "L'unico motivo nell'ipotesi, e la necessità di far comparire gli attori sulla scena, dato che il dialogo non si può svolgere all'interno."

are otherwise obscured from view.[51] Such novelties are not attested in antiquity. Therefore one should imagine that Plautus is constrained to a single, immovable platform for the duration of the play. Plautus is deliberately playing with the conceptions of privacy and internal space. We have seen in the first 200 lines of the play that the same space can denote both outside spaces, as with Grumio and Tranio's exchange outside Philolaches' house and Philolaches' own declamation, and more private and internal spaces such as a dressing room for a *Putzszene*. The intermingling of these spaces will only continue as the plot builds up to Tranio's great ruse.

Rather than focus on the text of the play to explain the Plautine elements found within in contrast to Greek predecessors, let us approach this scene from the perspective of practical staging.[52] Let us consider the following exchange between the two women who are preparing to dress Philematium after her bath:

> PHILEM: iam pridem ecastor frigida non lavi magi' lubenter
> nec quom me melius, mea Scapha, rear esse deficatam.
> SC: eventus rebus omnibus, velut horno messis magna
> fuit. PHILEM: quid ea messis attinet ad meam lavationem?
> SC: nihilo plus quam lavatio tua ad messim. PHILOL: O Venu' venusta,
> haec illa est tempestas mea, mihi quae modestiam omnem
> detexit, tectus qua fui, quom mihi Amor et Cupido
> in pectus perpluit meum, neque iam umquam optigere possum:
> madent iam in corde parietes, periere haec oppido aedes. (Plaut. *Most*. 157-165)

> PHILEM: By Castor, I have not bathed with more delight for a long time,
> nor, my Scapha, do I think that I have ever been better washed than now.
> SC: May the outcome for all things be for you just as a bounteous crop of grain.
> PHILEM: How does the crop pertain to my bathing?

51
    Cf. Richard Schechner's adaptation of Euripides' *Bacchae* in 1968 and the site-specific theatre used for the production. The stage was placed in such a way that the actors and audience mingled. The audience was unwittingly part of the action rather than the traditional arrangement where the audience was clearly segregated from the actors.
52
    Fuchs (1944) thoroughly discusses this *Putzszene* and how one can identify Plautine elements such as interpolated reduplication and other idiosyncratic linguistic phenomena. Fuchs' discussion assesses well the literary aspects of Plautus' texts, but it is not pertinent to the issues surrounding how the scene was depicted on a live stage in front of a live audience.

SC: Nothing more than your bathing to the crop. PHILOL: O beautiful Venus,
this woman is that tempest of mine, who has stripped from me
all of my modesty, by which I had been covered; and then Love and Desire
rained upon my heart, and I have never been able to contain them.
Now the walls of my heart are soaked, this house is ruined completely.[53]

The women appear on stage and clearly remark upon what they have just been doing to

the audience. Philematium has just taken a bath outside of the prying view of the audience, yet

inside her home. While the women have just been inside bathing, Philematium did not finish

readying herself for Philolaches, hence this adornment scene. Henry Thomas Riley suggests that

the two women enter the stage with "all of the requisites for a toilet" but does not clarify *per se*

what this means.[54] The actors, as part of their role, probably carried their own props out with

them. Philematium, for her part, would not carry anything while Scapha would be overburdened

with the large collection of accoutrement. It is unlikely that there were stagehands to help with

the large amount of things Scapha would be carrying, but there may have been silent slave

attendants, which appear elsewhere in comedy and would not be out of place in the *Mostellaria*.[55]

Perhaps the stage was preset with the props hidden behind some other element of the stage so it

would be less awkward and cumbersome to carry them all out. If we take the type of stage

determined above as our model, then we should see that there are not many spaces built into the

stage to facilitate hiding props. This does not, however, preclude the placement of furniture or

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53

  We have just seen Philolaches tell the audience that one can be ruined from the inside like a house and
how. The quick repetition of the moral of his speech reminds the audience and drills in the idea that the current
woman on stage is the bane of a well-kept house/person. This serves a thematic function in the play, and also a
practical function. As mentioned briefly above the repetition of similar lines may have been to ensure that all of the
audience heard and understood what was happening on an open-air stage.

54

  Riley (1912). These may consist of only the objects that can be definitively tied to the women via the text
or it may include more objects relating to bathing.

55

  On silent characters in comedy see Prescott (1937) and, much more recently, Klein (2015).

additional elements of scenery. Philolaches, for instance, may be hiding behind a column or other object so that the women do not see him, but he stands at an angle apparent to the audience. It would be strange for the women to pull toiletries out from behind stage elements as if they were always lying there. Therefore, the most probable practice is that actors would bring their own props with them to the stage. Regardless, Philematium and Scapha appear on stage as well as several accoutrements for beautification.

Let us now consider in more detail the happenings of adornment and how we can tell that this is an activity that the audience and Philolaches should not be privy to. Philematium starts by asking Scapha how she looks, which implies that she has either just put something on to gauge her attendant's opinion or that she is already dressed up and no mention has been made of it up until now (172). Scapha flatters her mistress, much to the chagrin of Philolaches, who keeps interjecting how much he would like to rip out Scapha's eyes and maul her.[56] After some time, Philematium gives us direct evidence of the props that she and Scapha had brought out on stage with them: a mirror (*speculum*), some white chalk (*cerussa*), rouge (*purpurissum*), a napkin (*linteum*), a perfume bottle (*unguentis*), gold jewelry (*aurum*), and a shawl (*palla*).[57] Presumably, if the props are brought out with the actors' entrance, there is also some sort of container for all of these things because it would be unwieldy to have all of these objects in one's arms. To each of Philematium's requests for beautification products, Scapha explains that she is so naturally beautiful that any effort made to improve her appearance is a fool's errand. These exchanges are

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[56]
 Cf. lines 252-253; 256-257; 260; 265-266; 270-271; 280-281; 292.

[57]
 The purpose of many of these objects is clear. A mirror allows Philematium to inspect herself. Ceruse pales the face while rouge highlights the cheeks. A napkin is used to remove excess makeup from one's hands. Perfume, jewelry, and a shawl are all self-evident.

presented in brief alternating dialogue wherein Philematium inquires for some beauty product, but Scapha repeatedly insists that she is already beautiful enough. As Philematium kisses the mirror after Scapha states that putting makeup on Philematium would be akin to whitening ivory with ink—an impossible task—Philolaches' reaction demonstrates clearly that the object must be physical and not just a mimed prop onstage. His annoyance with the mirror would be strange if it were not literally on Philematium's lips.

> PHILEM: cape igitur speculum. PHILOL: ei mihi misero! savium speculo dedit.
> nimi' velim lapidem qui ego illi speculo dimminuam caput! (Plaut. *Most*. 265-266)

> PHILEM: Hold the mirror [Scapha]. PHILOL: Woe is me! She's kissed the mirror.
> I should very much want a stone to shatter the head of that mirror!

The *Putzszene* concludes with Philolaches making his presence known to the women and breaking the illusion that there was any privacy for the women (292ff.). The women do not react with surprise or disgust that Philolaches suddenly, as far as they know, arrives. There is no expectation of privacy or sanctity that would allow them to try and force him out of their space. With this lack of privacy, Plautus has been tacitly playing with the boundaries of inside and outside thus far in the plot without directly calling attention to the interplay. In the following scenes, he will take his theme a step further and have Tranio reverse his role from the opening scene by chastising people who are outside when they should be inside.

As Philolaches assures his girlfriend of her beauty, Callidamates, a good friend of Philolaches, stumbles on stage with his girlfriend Delphium. Because Callidamates is coming from somewhere else than the house of Philolaches and seeks entry, any lingering confusion the audience may have had about where the previous *Putzszene* was taking place is dispelled. Because of this necessity of staging, this confirms that the previous scene must also have been

outside. Callidamates would not be drunkenly walking into a private chamber wherein

Philematium was preparing herself for Philolaches. Moreover, Philolaches and Philematium do

not say that they are going anywhere; rather, Philolaches is interrupted in his appeasement of

Philematium by Callidamates' raucous intrusion. Metatheatrically, Plautus appears to be toying

with the idea that external forces, like a visit from an unexpectedly drunk friend, have the power

to barge into a dramatic production operating smoothly.

The actors and audience likely heard Callidamates before they saw him. Philolaches, for

instance, is caught unaware in the middle of talking with Philematium:

> [PHILOL:] sed estne hic meu' sodalis qui huc incedit cum amica sua?
> is est, Callidamates cum amica incedit. eugae! oculus meus,
> conveniunt manuplares eccos: praedam participes petunt.
> CA: advorsum veniri mihi ad Philolachem
> volo temperi. audi, em tibi imperatum est.
> nam illi ubi fui, inde ecfugi foras,
> ita me ibi male convivi sermonisque taesumst.
> nunc comissatum ibo ad Philolachetem,
> ubi nos hilari ingenio et lepide accipie<n>t.
> ecquid tibi videor mamma-madere? (Plaut. *Most*. 310-319)

> [PHILOL:] But is this my friend who's coming here with his girlfriend?
> It's him, Callidamates is coming in with his girlfriend. Huzzah! My eye,
> Our comrades approach: they are seeking a share of the spoil.
> CA: I want you to come for me in time to Philolaches' house.
> Listen up, these are your orders. For from where I was
> I have taken myself from there, so tired was I there of poor
> company and conversation. Now I'm off to Philolaches'
> for some revelry, where they will receive us with jovial feelings
> and with charm. Do I seem at all d-d-drunk b-baby?

Callidamates, having already started to party on his own, explains how he has been

engaged in activity offstage prior to his arrival before the audience. Implicit in this entrance

speech is that the audience is supposed to be blind and unknowing of what is happening offstage.

They did not see Callidamates begin drinking some time before his entrance. Callidamates has to

explain what he has been doing even though he must have come onto the stage from one of the wing entrances. He is not bursting out of one of the doors onstage; rather his speech suggests that he is coming from the forum entrance. This is because he is already drunk. He appears to have been making the rounds from one drinking party to another rather than drinking while traveling into the city. As noted above, the audience would most definitely have been able to see the actor playing Callidamates approaching the stage as he readied himself to enter the scene, but they do not know what the character associated with that actor was supposed to have been doing. The actors, whether or not they are able to see Callidamates readying himself for his entrance, are supposed to feign ignorance of his imminent arrival.

In response to the sudden arrival of Callidamates, Philolaches offers his friend a place to sit because he is apparently having a hard time standing up straight (340), but no couch has been explicitly carried out of the house to meet him.[58] This gesture implies that there was already some amount of furniture onstage. There has not been a break in the action apparent in the script that would allow for any time to reconfigure the stage. Somebody has been onstage continuously from the first *exi* of Grumio to now. Just as Philematium's *Putzszene* suggested the privacy of internal spaces while explicitly being outside, so, too, does this scene begin to present a house party outside of the house. Plautus is going to play with the contradiction of a house party, which is typically celebrated *in* a house rather than *around/out* of a house, in the following scenes.

There are two conceptions of the inside/outside dichotomy at play in this scene. Philolaches and his friends are celebrating while outside of his house. There is nobody inside that

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[58]
     Riley (1912) offers stage directions that indicate that Callidamates "walks forward to the door" and that Philolaches "points to a couch" for him to lie on. This couch suggests a setting within the house, although we remain outside, where we have been for the duration of the play.

the audience is aware of. At the same time, there is a theatrical inside/outside. The party is taking

place inside of the theater, in view of the audience, so that they can participate vicariously. Plot

developments occur outside of that space.

2.2 Theopropides' Return and Tranio's Plan

In the middle of the revelry taking place onstage, Tranio bursts into the scene from

offstage. He is running from the harbor/country-entrance having just caught sight of Philolaches'

father, Theopropides, who has just returned from his business in Egypt and is in Piraeus.

Everything must suddenly be put back in its rightful place. The external force of Theopropides'

arrival is enough to drive action inside the theater. That which is outside must be put inside—the

drunken revelers must be placed back inside out of the public space. The scene is chaotic as

Tranio hastily tries to correct all that is wrong on stage. He forces the partygoers to return inside

the house and remove all evidence that what was intended for internal use was being used

externally. This is a parallel to the opening scene where Grumio forces Tranio out of the house

because there is a play to perform. Just as Grumio wished to ensure the proper production of the

play by ushering Tranio onto the stage, Tranio wanted to hide his master's wanton spending of

his father's fortune by hiding everyone offstage. Tranio begins:

> PHILOL: <adest>, adest opsonium. eccum Tranio a portu redit.
> TR: Philolaches. PHILOL: quid est? TR: <et> ego et tu… PHILOL: quid et ego et tu?
> TR: periimus.
> PHILOL: quid ita? TR: pater adest. PHILOL: quid ego ex te audio? TR: apsumpti sumus.
> pater inquam tuo' venit. PHILOL: ubi is est, opsecro? TR: <ubi is est> adest.
> PHILOL: quis id ait? quis vidit? TR: egomet inquam vidi. PHILOL: vae mihi.
> (Plaut. *Most*. 363-367)

> PHILOL: He's here! Tranio, our provisioner, returns from the harbor.
> TR: Philolaches. PHILOL: What is it? TR: You and I…
> PHILOL: What is this "You and I...?" TR: ...are screwed.
> PHILOL: How so? TR: Your father's here. PHILOL: What am I hearing out of you? TR:
> We're screwed. Your father is coming, I say. PHILOL: Where is he, pray tell?

TR: "Where is he!?" He's here!
PHILOL: Says who? Who has seen him? TR: *I* saw him myself. PHILOL: Woe to me!

Tranio had been sent to the port to procure victuals and other goodies for the party. This is why Philolaches hails him as *opsonium*. The script suggests that Tranio has sprinted to the house from the port because he is hardly able to get a word in edgewise with Philolaches through his panting (364). Philolaches has not been shown to be on edge concerning his father's return. He is unaware of what Tranio is going to say and therefore presses him further to get the information. As soon as Tranio explains for the fourth time that he has seen Theopropides in the harbor returning home, the drunken crowd of Philolaches, Philematium, and Delphium all start to worry about being caught. Fortunately for the inebriated crew, sober Tranio has a plan. He goes on to explain what the party needs to do so that he can fulfil his role as the *servus callidus* and pull the wool over Theopropides' eyes. The plan he offers is quite simple: take everything that is outside/onstage and put it inside/offstage just like sweeping a mess under the rug.

> PHILOL: perii! TR: habe bonum animum: ego istum lepide medicabo metum.
> PHILOL: nullus sum. TR: taceas: ego qui istaec sedem meditabor tibi.
> satin habes si ego advenientem ita patrem faciam tuom,
> non modo ne intro eat, verum etiam ut fugiat longe ab aedibus?
> vos modo hinc abite intro atque haec hinc propere amolimini. (Plaut. *Most*. 387-391)
> …
> PHILOL: numquid aliud? TR: clavem mi harunc aedium Laconicam
> iam iube ecferri intus: hasce ego aedis occludam hinc foris. (Plaut. *Most*. 404-405)

> PHILOL: I'm screwed. TR: Keep your spirits up: I'll remedy that fear with charm.
> PHILOL: I'm nobody...TR: Can't you be quiet? I'll think of something to fix this for you.
> Is it enough if I ensure that your arriving father not only does not come inside,
> but also that he flee far from the house? You all just need to go inside and take these
> things with you quickly.
> …
> PHILOL: Is there anything else? TR: Order the Laconian key[59] of this house

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[59]

    This functions like a master-key to a house. Cf. Aristophanes *Thesm.* 423, which tells us that keys of this design had three wards. οἱ γὰρ ἄνδρες ἤδη κλειδία | αὐτοὶ φοροῦσι κρυπτὰ κακοηθέστατα | Λακωνίκ' ἄττα, τρεῖς

to be brought to me from within. I will lock the doors from here.

Tranio's plan introduces the audience to a verbal play that Plautus is engaging in between the words *intro* and *intus*.[60] The former is used primarily to denote movement into a space from an outside space while the latter can mean both "inside" and "from inside."[61] Plautus is signaling to the audience that they should be quite mindful of who is where and when, as well as just what *intus* means. Tranio clearly indicates that *intus* is offstage in this context, i.e. on the other side of the *scaena*. The *Lexicon Plautinum* defines *intus* confusingly both as *in aedibus* (inside a building) and *ex aedibus* (coming from a building). Lodge cites line 405 correctly as *ex aedibus* with the sense of "bring it out *from* inside." Tranio spent much of his quick planning on moving things onstage offstage, ordering several things and people to be taken *intro*, which is to say from where they were stationed *into* the house. This explains his frequent use of *intro* throughout the scene. Instances of *intus*, on the other hand, were uttered by the partygoers, who inquired of Tranio what they should do once they are already inside the house. There is no implied movement once they are within the house, which explains their frequent use of *intus*. Tranio uses *intus* in his commands only once: to bring out the key *from within* the house.

2.3 The Ruse

ἔχοντα γομφίους. "They carry those horrid secret Laconian keys around with them, the ones with three teeth" (Barton 1971:26). The function of the key's three teeth appear to have been to lock doors from the outside. This is the conclusion drawn from a comment on the *Thesm*. 423 which reads καί φασιν ὅτι ἔξωθεν περικλείεται μοχλοῦ περιτιθεμένου ἤ τινος τοιούτου ὥστε τοῖς ἔνδον μὴ εἶναι ἀνοῖξαι.

60   For a complete catalogue of *intro* and *intus* in the *Mostellaria*, see Appendix B.

61   The *TLL* explains that the adverb *intro* is used as a directional adverb (s.v. *intrō* I.A1), found in response to the question *quo* (to what place), as a more specific use of *in* or an alternate form of *intra* with the accusative case (s.v. *intrō* II). *Intus*, on the other hand, answers the questions *unde* (from where), in the sense of *e loco interiore* (s.v. *intus* I.A1. cf. *Most.* 405), and *ubi* (where), in the sense of *interius* (within) with respect to known locations within houses (s.v. *intus* I.A2.II). *Intus* may also be used as a preposition akin to *in* such as in *Most.* 402 (s.v. *intus* I.A2.III).

With a plan in place and the youths whisked away inside Philolaches' house, Tranio begins the undertaking of fooling Theopropides. His first obstacle is finding an explanation for why the doors to his house are locked in the middle of the day. Theopropides arrives onstage to see an empty stage and decides to try and enter his house only to find that the front door is locked. He goes to knock on the door and calls for someone inside to let him in. This action "startles" Tranio, who seems unwilling to trust that the drunken partygoers will not foil his plan before it has even begun. Tranio seeks to remove Theopropides from the premises and would like to get him away as soon as possible lest anybody inside threaten to ruin the illusion that Tranio is about to create. Tranio intercedes and begs Theopropides not to knock on the doors lest he anger the spirit of a man who has been haunting the house.

Theopropides is rightly doubtful of the claims that a ghost is haunting his house, especially because he has lived in the same house for some time and has only been gone for three years. A ghost could not possibly have moved in while he was away, and he would have noticed a ghost before since he has spent so many years in the same residence. Tranio continues his ruse by recounting what the alleged phantom said to him during a dream. There was a man from across the sea (*transmarinus*) named Diapontius in comedic fashion.[62] While staying as a guest in Theopropides' house, under a different owner, he was suddenly attacked and killed by his host because the host coveted Diapontius' wealth (*auri caussa,* 503). His spirit remains restless because it was not given a proper burial, but was instead interred within the house (*defodit [me] insepultum clam in hisce aedibus* 502). Therefore, Tranio and Philolaches had to leave lest they

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62

The word *transmarinus* is a Latin cognate of the Greek διαπόντιος. The name literally translates to "a man from across the sea."

keep upsetting the restless spirit of a man slain there several years ago.[63] If they were to stay, the

residents of the house would only be subject to more disturbances. Tranio lays the thematic

groundwork for the house to function as an inanimate character in the play. The audience's

attention is drawn to the building rather than Theopropides' inability to enter. Plautus uses this

shift in focus to highlight the largest break in theatrical norms in the whole play: the voice from

offstage.

As Tranio concludes his horror story, the doors themselves knock. Theopropides and

Tranio go back and forth questioning whether they had actually heard the doors knock. Lindsay

presents the text as follows:

> TH: st, st!
> TR: quid opsecro hercle, factum est? TH: concrepuit foris.
> TR: hicin percussit! TH: guttam haud habeo sanguinis,
> vivom me accersunt Accheruntem mortui. (Plaut. *Most.* 506-509)

> TH: Shh! TR: What happened? TH: The doors creaked.
> TR: [loudly to the doors] This man knocked! TH: I hardly have a drop of blood.
> The dead call me to Hades while yet I live.

The ensuing reactions to the knocking of the doors are very muddled in the texts and

subsequent commentaries. According to the *apparatus criticus* in Lindsay's edition, Gruter is the

first to emend *st, st* for *setet*, which is found in the manuscripts outside of P^CD, where the reading

is *sedet*. The manuscripts also give the noise to Tranio, implying that he is shushing

Theopropides. Line 507 is completely muddled with respect to which of the two, Tranio or

Theopropides, speaks the lines present. As Lindsay prints it, Theopropides appears to have

bought Tranio's ghost story. If the lines were reversed, then Tranio would still be in the middle

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63

    It is unclear how long ago the alleged murder is supposed to have taken place. Tranio's description of the
crime as *antiquum* and *vetus* (475ff.) ignores the fact that until three years prior, Theopropides was living in an
otherwise ghost-free house.

of weaving his tale. Line 508 is the first instance of an unclear breach from offstage. In some manuscripts at the line *hicin percussit*, in the place where the speaker is normally indicated, *INTVS* is written instead of Tranio or Theopropides. Lindsay's edition suggests that Tranio is loudly trying to cover up the noises emanating from offstage lest Theopropides become any more suspicious. The manuscripts, however, may be giving the line to *INTVS* so that Theopropides' reaction, *guttam haud habeo sanguinis*, is seen as a wild response to hearing a clear voice from within, thus confirming the presence of a spirit.

According to Ussing, the inciting noise that causes this confusion on stage is created by Philolaches.[64] There is much confusion over the delivery of the lines immediately following the first noise coming from the doors. The manuscripts cannot agree whether Tranio or Theopropides deliver line 506 and 507. B inverts what Lindsay has printed and C is completely blank. Either Tranio is leaning into his ghost story and trying to elicit fear out of Theopropides, or Theopropides is already sufficiently scared and reacting to Tranio's ghost story with terror.

A more stable reading picks up again at 508, although there are still numerous problems regarding the voice from inside. Tranio delivers a brief aside to the audience complaining that his ruse has nearly been foiled by the foolishness of those inside. Theopropides addresses this aside by asking what Tranio is saying to himself. This suggests that the privacy assumed by actors delivering asides on the Plautine stage is, in fact, not present. The practice of onstage asides allows characters to share their thoughts and motivations during a scene without the other actors knowing. Such a practice requires the suspension of disbelief that someone standing right next to

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[64]

Ussing (1972:130): "Nam Philolaches timore agitatus cum servo suo colloqui cupit, ac ianua, utpote extrinsecus clausa, intus illa quidam aperiri non potest, sed adolescens, ut Tranionis animum advertat, strepitum non absimilem facit. Quod ubi senex audivit, servus praesenti animo credere se simulat, mortuum illum iam proditurum esse, ut eos, qui quietem suam turbassent, arcessat."

someone else is completely unaware of what is transpiring on the stage in front of them.

Although asides are usually delivered safely away from onstage eavesdroppers and their prying

ears, actors can apparently see and hear their fellow actors when they deliver asides on occasion,

as found here in Theopropides' response to Tranio's aside:

> TH: quid tute tecum loquere? TR: apscede ab ianua.
> fuge, opsecro hercle. TH: quo fugiam? etiam tu fuge.
> TR: nihil ego formido, pax mihi est cum mortuis.
> INTVS: heus, Tranio. TR: non me appellabis si sapis.
> nihil ego commerui, neque istas percussi fores.
> INT: quaeso— TR: cave verbum faxis. TH: dic quid segreges
> sermonem. TR: apage hinc te. TH: quae res te[65] agitat, Tranio? (512-518)

> TH: What are you saying to yourself? TR: Get away from the door!
> Run away, please! TH: Where should I go? Shouldn't you go, too?
> TR: I fear nothing, I've made peace with the dead.
> INT: Psst...hey, Tranio. TR: You will not address me if you are wise.
> I've done nothing to deserve this, 'twas not I who struck your doors.
> INT: Please— TR: Don't say another word. TH: Tell me what conversation you're
> having over there. TR: Get yourself away from here! TH: What's the matter, Tranio?

Because this exchange is riddled with confusion, let us take a moment and examine these

six or so lines closely. The only actors onstage at this juncture are Tranio and Theopropides.

Everybody else has been forced inside one of the facades onstage. Tranio has just delivered an

aside to the audience whereby he bemoans the fact that the sudden knocking of the doors is

upending his plans to scare Theopropides. An actor's aside does not contain an address to the

actor himself, so we can say that these troublesome lines attributed to *intus* cannot be Tranio's.

If we assume that no words from offstage can permeate the stage, and Tranio is not

having a conversation with himself, then we must read the lines attributed to *intus* to

Theopropides instead. The tone of the lines from the use of *heus* and *quaeso* suggest that

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　　Leo supplies *quae res te* for the large lacuna in 517-518.

Theopropides cannot possibly be the agent of these lines. The register is all wrong for a slave's master to address his slave in this manner. The lines, therefore, do not belong to Theopropides.

We have come to the conclusion that a third party, neither Tranio nor Theopropides, delivers the problematic *intus* lines. Commentators appear to agree that readers should supply Philolaches as the speaker of the words, but the lines are vague enough that it could equally be anyone else in the house.[66] I am inclined to follow Lindsay and others who attribute the lines to an offstage voice partially because it simply makes the most sense from the reality of the stage and also because adopting such a view would follow a *lectio difficilior*. This is to say that one should read *INTVS* as the speaker of the questionable lines rather than Tranio or Theopropides. Not only are the hard divisions of inside and outside dissolving before the audience's eyes as Philolaches' voice travels from within the house, but the theatrical divisions of the inside and outside of a character's mind are also wavering.[67]

If we take the stance that Tranio has heard Philolaches' or someone else's voice from within the house, then we can clearly see why his reaction is so exaggerated. Tranio is adamant that Theopropides run from the door where he has presumably been standing for most of the scene. Tranio does not want the voice to be heard by the old man and so he must both separate him physically from the space, but aurally as well by shouting at him to *apscede* and *apage*. Of course, the lines from inside would have to have been delivered at such a volume that they would be heard from the audience. Such volume would require the suspension of disbelief that

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    Ussing (1972:130): "*intus* haec dici Ritschelius intellexit; Tranio autem Philolachetem se alloqui vetat. Haec submisse dicit, nec tamen herum latet."

67

    While the text Lindsay provides only lists the voice as INTVS, I am inclined to follow Ussing's suggestion that the voice is Philolaches' own since he would wish to speak with his slave out of anxiety surrounding the plan. Dramaturgically, any of the drunken partygoers could feasibly speak through the *scaena*, but I would contend that Philolaches is the best candidate.

Theopropides could not, in fact, hear things happening on stage next to him, but we have seen that those boundaries have already been blurred by his acknowledgement of Tranio's previous aside to the audience with his *quid tute te loquere?* above.

The voice from inside the house (outside the *scaena*) serves as the greatest break of theatrical norms. It is standard practice for the actors onstage occasionally to break the fourth wall by delivering asides to the audience. These occurrences are typified by asides often delivered by *servi callidi* to explain their thought process to the audience regarding their schemes. Outside of asides, there is hardly precedent for an actor breaking the division between offstage/outside and onstage/inside, especially in comedy.[68] The standard dynamics of theatrical interaction are between actors and other actors. The audience may become involved with the action onstage or otherwise interject into the production.[69] There is never an actor in antiquity who interacts with the audience while being offstage themselves. By allowing a voice to permeate the *scaena* from offstage, Plautus is subverting the otherwise intact theater and playing with the anxieties surrounding the relationship between the inside and outside of the theater.

2.4 The Tour of Simo's House

The moneylender Misargyrides appears and has a brief discussion with Tranio about paying him for the freedom of Philematium. Theopropides is left on one side of the stage away from the action as Tranio cleverly explains that the old man has returned and will happily pay the sum if only Misargyrides would leave immediately. The action of this scene does not pertain to

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Exceptions to this rule are typically found in tragedy when characters are killed offstage and their shrieking can be heard onstage and in the *cavea*. (Cf. the death of Agamemnon at the hands of Clytemnestra). See also the *Aul.* 691 as a comic exception where Phaedria, who is offstage, calls out to Juno Lucina.

69

Consider rude audience members today who may heckle performers or cheer raucously for them, thus disturbing the rest of the audience.

our discussion of inside and outside, but is necessary to understand how the stage has changed between Tranio's ghost story and the appearance of the neighbor Simo.

As Simo appears and hails Tranio and Theopropides, Tranio begins to panic and must devise a second ruse to keep Theopropides in the dark about his web of lies that he has been weaving. He decides to rope the neighbor Simo in by asking him if Theopropides could take a tour of his house. Simo naturally inquires why his neighbor would suddenly like to see his house since it is not for sale, and Tranio explains that Theopropides is seeking to renovate his own house in the style of Simo's by adding a *gynaeceum* (woman's apartment)*, balineae* (baths)*,* an *ambulacrum* (colonnade) and a *porticus* (porch) (755-756). Simo cannot understand why anybody would like a house like his. He complains about the lack of shade in the open peristyle. Simo's complaint sets Tranio up for the most notable pun of the play, *Sarsinatis ecqua est, si Umbram non habes* ("Is there some woman from Sarsina, if you have no shade/Umbrian?" 770), wherein Plautus makes allusion to his own origins.[70] This conversation constitutes the beginnings of a tour for the audience, since they will never get to enter the facade of Simo's house on the stage. In the end, Simo reluctantly agrees to let Theopropides inspect his house if he is so keen to make the same architectural mistakes as him.

Tranio then walks across the stage where he left Theopropides unattended and explains that Simo is very distraught (*maestus*) at having to sell his house (795-796). Therefore, Theopropides should make no mention of the sale lest he upset his (former) neighbor. The confusion over the status of Simo's house arises as he bids Theopropides *perambula aedis oppido tamquam [eius]* ("walk through it as if it were [his] own" 809-810). Tranio quickly

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[70]
        Much has been written on the pun and Plautus' self-reference. See Fraenkel (107 f.), Leach (1969:323 ff.), Lowe (1985:18 ff.), Rexine (1958:78).

explains that Simo is only keeping a stiff upper lip about selling his house to Philolaches.

Because Theopropides believes that he has bought the house, he refuses to be led through by any

of Simo's attendants, but Tranio insists that he at least give Theopropides a tour. While the men

are discussing a house tour, Simo makes an interesting allusion to previous action in the play:

> SI: salvom te advenisse peregre gaudeo, Theopropides.
> TH: di te ament. SI: inspicere te aedis has velle aiebat mihi.
> TH: nisi tibi est incommodum. SI: immo commodum. i intro atque inspicere.
>
> (Plaut. *Most*. 805-807)

> SI: I'm glad you've made it back safe and sound, Theopropides.
> TH: Thanks, may the gods favor you. SI: [Tranio] said you wanted to inspect my house.
> TH: If it's no trouble. SI: Au contraire, now's a perfect time. Go on in and have a look.

When telling Theopropides to go inside and have a look at his house, Simo says that he

should go *intro* and look around. This may remind the audience of Tranio's earlier action in

clearing the stage before Theopropides' arrival. Just as Tranio's use of *intro* and *intus* when

forcing the drunk partygoers into Philolaches' house had a double meaning whereby the actors

would literally go inside and also offstage, Simo unknowingly utilizes the same formula. An

actor, or actors, onstage must be shuffled offstage so that the plot can continue without its

interjection. The partygoers were forced inside because Tranio needed them to be unseen for his

ruse to stick. They also had to leave the stage because they were violating the accepted rules

regarding what activities should be done inside versus outside. Theopropides must go into

Simo's house because a house tour would hardly be a house tour if he were to simply stand

outside and admire the portico. Once Theopropides is removed from the stage, Tranio will be

able to enact the next phase of his plan.

Tranio begins to lead Theopropides around Simo's house and examine the exterior before

heading inside. The duo look at the entranceway, the walkway around the front of the house, and

the columns surrounding the door. All of these features are, of course, built into the stage so that

the audience does not have to imagine what Tranio is talking about, but rather they see it directly

as the tour begins. Theopropides is unimpressed by the construction of the house, but Tranio

alleviates his worries by assuring him that Philolaches has made a sound investment in Simo's

house.

> TR: viden vestibulum ante aedis hoc et ambulacrum, quoiusmodi?
> TH: luculentum edepol profecto. TR: age specta postis, quoiusmodi,
> quanta firmitate facti et quanta crassitudine.
> TH: non videor vidisse postis pulchriores.
> . . .
> TH: hercle qui multum inprobiores sunt quam a primo credidi.
> TR: quapropter? TH: quia edepol ambo ab infumo tarmes secat.
> TR: intempestivos excissos credo, id is vitium nocet.
> atque etiam nunc sati' boni sunt, si sunt inducti pice;
> non enim haec pultiphagus opifex opera fecit barbarus.
> viden coagmenta in foribus? TH: video. TR: specta quam arte dormiunt.
> TH: dormiunt? TR: illud quidem 'ut coniuent' volui dicere.
> satin habes? TH: ut quidquid magi' contemplo, tanto magi' placet.
> $\qquad$ (Plaut. *Most*. 817-820; 824-831)

> TR: Do you see this vestibule in front of the house and what kind of promenade?
> TH: It's especially bright. TR: Come on, look at what type of columns are there,
> With what sturdiness in construction and what thickness.
> TH: I have never seen more beautiful columns.
> . . . [Theopropides learns how much Simo paid for the columns]
> TH: By Hercules, they are much more unsound than I first thought.
> TR: How's that? TH: Because the woodworm has cut them both from the bottom.
> TR: I think that they were cut out of season, that fault harms them.
> And still they're good enough, if they're covered in pitch.
> 'Twas not a foreign porridge-eating artisan who made these.
> Do you see the joints in the door? TH: I do. TR: [looking at the door frame] See how they
> sleep? TH: They're sleeping? TR: "How they wink" I intended to say, indeed.
> Is this enough for you? TH: The more I consider each thing, the more it pleases me.

The appearance of Simo's house has been used as an anchor for some scholars to attempt

to date the *Mostellaria*, but that discussion serves no purpose here.[71] Instead, let us focus on what

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71

    For a more detailed discussion about the tenuous dating of the *Mostellaria*, see Schutter (1952) and his

the appearance of the house can tell modern scholars about the relationship between inside and outside, both dramatically and literally. Theopropides is on his best behavior so as not to upset Simo for "buying" his house. He aims to compliment the house despite its substandard appearance (*multum inprobiores sunt quam a primo credidi*). He may be pointing out the shoddy construction of the stage itself as a metatheatrical joke to the audience. A wooden stage erected with the expectation of only being used for a week may not have had the most sound construction. Tranio keeps Theopropides distracted by pointing out various things in the entrance of the house starting with the facade that both the actors and the audience can see. He slowly works his way inside without leaving the stage, but finds that at a certain point not even Theopropides can keep up without needing to go inside.

The tour of Simo's house continues by exploring some of the pieces inside the house. Neither Tranio nor Theopropides have actually entered the house, nor will they for quite some time. Instead, Tranio brings the inside of the house outside by looking through the door and describing what he sees for the audience. This is the only way that the audience can experience the inside of Simo's house because of the impracticality of changing the scenery on the stage to try and represent a new space. We have already seen that Plautus either is unable to or is very adverse to change the setting of the stage once the play has begun. Without changing the setting presented to the audience, Tranio goes on to describe a (presumably imaginary) painting he sees within the house and simultaneously describes to the audience the layout of the actors on stage: himself, Theopropides, and Simo.

> TR: viden pictum, ubi ludificat una cornix volturios duos?
> TH: non edepol video. TR: at ego video. nam inter volturios duos
> cornix astat, ea volturios duo vicissim vellicat.

collection of the scholarship surrounding the dating of Plautus' corpus.

quaeso huc ad me specta, cornicem ut conspicere possies.
iam vides? TH: profecto nullam equidem illic cornicem intuor.
TR: at tu isto ad vos optuere, quoniam cornicem nequis
conspicari, si volturios forte possis contui.
TH: omnino, ut te apsolvam, nullam pictam conspicio hic avem. (Plaut. *Most*. 832-839)

TR: Do you see the painting where a crow is fooling the two vultures?
TH: I don't. TR: Well, I see it. For between the two vultures
Stands a crow; it is pinching at each of them in turn.
Here, look at me so that you can see the crow. Do you
See it now? TH: I really don't see any crow there.
You ought to look at yourselves then; since you cannot see
The crow, perchance you could see the vultures.
TH: To hell with this! I don't see any painted bird here at all!

The audience is treated to a spectacle within the spectacle they are watching. The only actors onstage are Tranio, Theopropides, and Simo, who are supposed to be understood as the crow and two vultures respectively. Tranio is unable to bring the painting outside, probably due to the fact that he made the painting up in the first place. Therefore, by bringing the painting outside of the house through his description of the stage, Tranio shows the painting to the audience in a sense even though they are physically incapable of seeing it from their point of view. In fact, neither the audience nor Theopropides can see the painting. Tranio paints the picture on stage with the punchline that the two vultures in the painting are the two men in front of him. He has concluded pulling what is inside the house outside for the audience, and now he and Theopropides will take their leave and actually go offstage.

Knapp argues that this painting is on the exterior of Simo's house rather than in some space obscured from the audience's view.[72] He bases this claim on the fact Tranio and Theopropides have been examining the exterior of the house (the *vestibulum*, *ambulacrum*, and

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72
   Knapp (1917:144) "Where are we to locate this painting [of vultures and ravens]? If anywhere at all, on the *outside* of the house."

postes from 817-831). Because the pair has not clearly stated that they have gone inside, and such a transition is infeasible on the mid-Republican stage, Knapp concludes that they are continuing their tour of the outside of Simo's house, not entering the home until 858. He is reluctant to consider the practicality of staging the drama and the ability of the stage to provide the illusion of an extended space beyond the *scaena*. Tranio, I contend, is peering through Simo's door and describing a large painting that he pretends to see inside. The audience, of course, cannot see the painting, which necessitates Tranio's recreation of the scene using himself and the two old men.

Roman drama makes reference to pieces of art *within* houses on a number of occasions.[73] While it is not the case that exterior paintings were wholly unknown to Roman audiences, it is difficult to imagine why the image would have been left unmentioned for over 800 lines of the drama. Because Tranio has already been at the center of numerous episodes that blend the barriers between inside and outside in the *Mostellaria*, it follows that this, too, is one such episode. He is bringing the inside out by recreating the painting. The painting of the crows must be inside and unseen by the audience, and Theopropides. Tranio would be unable to subvert the boundaries of the stage if the painting were visible in any way either through the open doorway or plastered on the outside of Simo's house. Moreover, there is precedent in the play for blending internal and external spaces. One should be open to seeing a pattern across the play since there is a pattern of interplay.

Along the same line of reasoning regarding objects found within Simo's house that are invisible to the audience, Theopropides and Tranio meet Simo's dog as they begin to enter for a

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[73]
       Cf. *Men*. 141 ff.; *Merc*. 313 ff.; and Terence's *Eun*. 584-90.

formal tour of the interior. As they approach the door, Theopropides remarks that he is worried

about Simo's dog, but is interrupted as it begins to bark and swarm him and Tranio. Simo insists

that his dog is really well-behaved, but Theopropides does not believe him.

> TH: ibo intro igitur. TR: mane sis videam, ne canes— TH: agedum vide.
> TR: st! abi canes. st! abin dierecta? abin hinc in malam crucem?
> at etiam restas? st! abi istinc. SI: nil pericli est, age,
> tam placidast quam feta quaevis. eire intro audacter licet.
> eo ego hinc ad forum. TH: fecisti commode, bene ambula.
> Tranio, | age canem | istanc a foribus abducant face,
> etsi non metuenda est. (Plaut. *Most*. 849-855)

> TH: So I shall go inside. TR: Wait up, lest the dog [*dog barks*] TH: Go on, see.
> TR: Sh! Go on, git, dog. Sh! Won't you go away? Won't you go to hell?
> But you still stand there? Sh! Get outta here. SI: There's no danger, go on;
> She's as calm as though she were pregnant. You can enter with confidence.
> I'm off to the forum. TH: You've been a big help, have a nice walk.
> Tranio, make sure that [the servants] lead this dog away from the doors here,
> even if there is nothing to fear.

There has been debate surrounding the presence of Simo's dog in the production of the

Mostellaria. Drawing on the previous episode with the painting of the ravens, Knapp argues that

Theopropides shudders at an artistic depiction of a dog within the threshold of Simo's house.[74]

His arguments run contrary to previous thoughts by E.S. Thompson, who argued in favor of a

stuffed dog or other canine effigy representing a dog from a distance.[75] Knapp and Thompson

remark upon the dubious idea of a mosaic dog in the style of notable images from Pompeii. If the

dogs in question were simply painted dogs as the ravens were above, two practical questions

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[74]
   Knapp (1917:147) "I am convinced that Plautus meant his audience to think of the dog...as a *painted* dog, somewhere within the house, let us say on the side wall of the entrance-passage."

[75]
   Knapp (1917:147-148) discusses the possibilities of the dog from a stuffed figure to mosaic with varying degrees of confidence. I follow Knapp and Sonnenschein in their conclusion that there need not have been a living, breathing dog on the stage. I disagree, however, with the notion that there was a painted or static image of the dog. Rather, actors behind the *scaena* could have easily mimicked the sound of a dog, thus giving the audience the illusion of a dog.

arise: where is the dog that Theopropides reacts to with such apprehension, and why does Tranio talk directly to the dog as if it were a living, breathing animal?

There are not many places for one to hide on the stage. It is not uncommon for actors to make reference to people and objects not directly onstage. Not even ten lines above, Tranio imagined a painting unseen in its original context by the audience, but recreated onstage for their amusement. As I have outlined, the audience did not see the painting directly because it was displayed within the house, but the actors were able to bring it out in a sense for the audience's consumption. Knapp attempts to show that Simo's dog is no dog at all. Rather, he says, there is a depiction of a dog.[76] I find Knapp's argument difficult to accept largely on the grounds that a depicted dog, whether painted or mosaic, would be difficult for the audience to experience. Tranio cannot bring the dog outside as he has done with the painting of the crows and simultaneously maintain the illusion of the stage unless it is alive. Training dogs for the stage, while not impossible, is not attested in antiquity. One cannot assume a trained dog participating in the play although one cannot state *ex silentio* that there was no such trained dog either. The actors onstage explicitly state that there is a dog and that it is being rowdy or intimidating, and Plautus has already shown himself to be playing with the liminality of the stage by allowing seemingly outside forces into the action. I propose that Plautus' troupe would create the sounds of a dog from offstage so that the audience could hear them just as Philolaches was able to be heard earlier as Tranio concluded his ghost story.

The lines above illustrate how one can supply the sounds of a dog into the dialogue without any difficulty. The aposiopesis in 849 suggests that a dog begins to bark and howl at the

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[76]   Knapp errs in his assertion that the audience should understand that there is a painted dog which causes Theopropides and Tranio to react with such concern.

neighbors approaching Simo's house. As Tranio enters Simo's house, he makes clear that he is

dealing with the dog or, at the very least, the actor or actors making dog sounds. Simo assures his

neighbors that his dog is really quite gentle as long as one is confident around it (851-2).

Theopropides then is also beset by a dog as he enters and orders Tranio to get a better handle on

the dog before expressing his own doubts about how well-behaved the dog will be without their

master around (853-4). Perhaps the humor is found in Simo's knowledge that the dog is not, in

fact, real. If the dog is inanimate, then he can be all the more sure that it is well-behaved.

Theopropides' trepidation, however, remains a sticking point because it is hard to conceive that

he has never seen his neighbor's house before nor his dog, although Simo may have adopted new

dogs in the three years of Theopropides' absence.[77] Rather than being pulled out, figuratively or

otherwise, from the house, Simo's dog carries itself out of the house by barking at Tranio and

Theopropides. Although there is no clear indication that this is the case onstage, I argue that

Plautus has already bent the rules surrounding what can happen onstage and around the stage

with the intrusion of Philolaches' voice from within his house. This break in traditional

dramaturgy is first manifested in the opening of the play where Tranio and Grumio are heard

fighting before their entrance.

Tranio and Theopropides finally enter Simo's house, leaving the stage empty.[78]

Phaniscus, a slave of Callidamates, appears and monologues about slaves who get their

comeuppance, suggesting Tranio's reckoning is at hand. Another servant of Callidamates,

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[77]
      As Thompson noted, "That Theopropides should be frightened at the mosaic figure of a dog on the threshold...seems rather far-fetched, and it seems strange that no allusion to so absurd a mistake should be made by the other actors" (Knapp (1917:148)).

[78]
      Weide (1961:198) suggests that in leaving the stage empty, Plautus was able to expand the appearance of Callidamates' attendants into the full-blown scenes we receive in the *Mostellaria* to mirror the opening of the play between Tranio and Grumio. Cf. Fraenkel 243.

Pinacium, appears and ribs Phaniscus. The two seem to mirror the relationship between Grumio and Tranio at the start of the play. One is the serious, obedient type and the other is more vituperative in tone. Phaniscus knocks upon the door of Philolaches' house to try and rouse his master from his drunken slumber, and Tranio is unable to stop him as he had stopped Theopropides since the two of them are taking a tour of Simo's house. As the two prospective buyers appear from Simo's house, Tranio explains that Philolaches has been out in the countryside, and he will therefore need to leave so that he may bring him back. Theopropides acquiesces and sends Tranio off stage via the country-exit. With Tranio gone, Phaniscus gives up Tranio's ruse by bluntly explaining how Philolaches and his friends would get drunk regularly and consort with a disreputable crowd. Simo returns from the Forum-exit and Theopropides explains that he and Simo have both been duped by Tranio and should hunt him down so that they may punish him properly. Fortunately, Tranio sees that his plan is about to unravel and takes necessary actions to save his skin.

2.5 Tranio's Final Soliloquy

As a final episode to demonstrate the relationship between inside and outside on the Roman stage, let us now turn to Tranio's final soliloquy. Tranio appears to enter from the country but explains that he was really sneaking around the house so that all of the partygoers could escape. At no point has anybody unlocked Philolaches' door since Tranio applied his Laconian key to it.[79]

> [TR:] abii illac per angiportum ad hortum nostrum clanculum,
> ostium quod in angiporto est horti, patefeci fores,
> eaque eduxi omnem legionem, et maris et feminas. (Plaut. *Most*. 1044-1046)

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[79]

See Barton (1971) for the thorough locking of the onstage door.

I left secretly through that alley to our garden
at the entrance to the garden which is in the alley, I opened the doors,
and I led out my whole legion there, both men and women.

Tranio begins by telling the audience that he had escaped via the *angiportum*, or alleyway

between houses, and had snuck through the garden stealthily. This thoroughfare may not have

been a literal alleyway, but a more general street which extended elsewhere off the stage.[80] The

secretive nature of the *angiportum* derives from its location outside of the audience's view.

There is no practical way to show the audience this hidden passageway since the *scaena* totally

obscures the backstage space. Tranio must explain this to the audience both because the audience

could not possibly have seen what he had been up to between his last exit and this entrance and

because the sudden appearance of Callidamates later would be impossible otherwise.[81] Tranio's

escape route, the *angiportum*, must be offstage. There is no clear way to represent an alley

between the houses while maintaining a contiguous facade for the audience such that they are

unable to see backstage. It must also be a common element of Roman neighborhoods for Tranio

to so casually make reference to it.

The word *angiportum* appears a number of times in the Plautine corpus, signifying more

often than not a hidden network of roads or passages outside of the audience's attention. It has

been suggested that the entrance to the alley may have been depicted on a Roman stage via the

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80

 The word *angiportum* is often glossed as the Greek στενωπός though it is sometimes equated with ῥύμη, λαύρα, ἄμφοδον, etc. Harsh (1937) suggests that *angiportum* has no specialized meaning in Plautus, but is used instead in this more general sense. Cf. *Pseud*. 960-961, Cic. *Pro Mil.* 64, and Vit. 1.6.8 as uses of *angiportum* as a general word for street with *As*. 741, *Persa* 444 and 678, as well as Ter. *Eun.* 844-46, wherein *angiportum* is depicted in a more secretive fashion.

81

 Beare (1968:181) remarks that "[the *angiportum*] is a device which enables the dramatist to escape at times from the general rule that a character who leaves the stage by a particular door or wing must return by the same door or wing."

middle of three doors.[82] Permanent stone structures were built with three doors to allow for a

number of productions to be staged with minimal effort.[83] Tranio hints at his use of the

angiportum in 928 by telling the audience as he is leaving to the country-exit, *nunc ego me illac*

per posticum ad congerrones conferam, "Now I will go there 'round back to my conspirators."

Tranio's use of the *angiportum* can be compared with a number of other instances of backdoor

hijinks in Plautus' plays.[84] In the *Asinaria*, Leonidas explains that the master Demaenetus

returned to his house via an *angiportum*, which is why Argyrippus had not seen him return to the

stage between his last exit and the current exchange. The *Casina* contains a similarly nonchalant

explanation of how a character who should be in one place because of their last exit has actually

ended up in a completely different place. Alcesimus remarks, *ego iam per hortum iussero |*

meam istuc transire uxorem ad uxorem tuam: "I have sent my wife to your wife via the garden."

A number of Plautus' (and Terence's) acknowledgements of offstage movement focus on the

gardens found behind the houses of the play, but do not directly mention the connecting passage

of the *angiportum*. Beare suggests that the mere mention of the garden is enough to suppose a

full *angiportum*, and I am not inclined to disagree. We can see then that the *Mostellaria* is not

necessarily innovating the genre by having actors disappear from one exit and appear from

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82

     Merrill (2002 *ad loc*.)

83

     Beare (1968:181) notes that the middle door may have been covered with a curtain if only two houses were necessary for the play, but it has also been suggested that the central door could lead to the *angiportum* between the houses. I follow Beare in being suspicious of such a claim. The door would need to remain open throughout the play since one does not open a door to enter an alleyway. This gaping hole on the stage would ruin the dramatic illusion created by the *scaena* to the obscured backstage space we outlined above, too. For more recent discussion of the problematic exits and entrances surrounding the *angiportum* see Lowe (2007).

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     Cf. *As.* 740-3, *Cas.* 613-4, *Ep.* 660-1, *Merc.* 1007, *Pers.* 444-6, and 678-9, *Stichus* 431-2, 437, 449-52, *Pseud.* 960-2, 971, *Truc.* 248-9, 303-4, Ter. *Phor.* 891-2, Ter. *Adelphi* 908-9. For an in-depth analysis of these comparanda, see Beare (1968:256-63).

another thanks to the metatheatrical device of the *angiportum*, but the fact remains that Plautus as an author has a proclivity to play with the relationships of actors and the stage through their exits and entrances inside and outside the stage space.

The text of the *Mostellaria* has so far presented itself as a self-contained production. There is no need to bring it additional staging elements, nor is there the need for it to be staged specifically at any one location. It could have been staged at the temple of Magna Mater, as we have demonstrated in the first half of this discussion. It may also have been staged in any location that contained raised seating to allow for a sizable audience. There is, however, a single point of contention to the idea that the play requires no additional elements. In the final scene of the play, Tranio leaps atop an altar to escape corporal punishment from Theopropides. We know this because of Callidamates' inquiry at 1135: *sed tu istuc quid confugisti in aram?* ("But [Tranio] why have you fled there atop the altar?"). The presence of an altar or some facsimile thereof near the stage has not been alluded to for the duration of the play, but an altar would not be out of place because of the religious nature of dramatic production in antiquity. The bulk of the production, however, has centered around a small bit of street that extends for at least two houses rather than a sacred temple space. Among the plays of Plautus, altars are mentioned 32 times.[85] The frequent appearance of an altar in other plays suggests, as with the *angiportum* above, that Plautus is not inventing the idea of an altar wholesale for the *Mostellaria*, but is playing with the established tradition that there would be an altar on or near the stage. Characters often seek out the altar as a safe space free from looming bodily torture for their misdeeds earlier

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[85]

For appearances and direct mentions of altars (*ara*) in Plautus, see (in the nominative) *Curc*. 71, *Rud*. 688; (in the dative) *Most*. 1114; (in the accusative) *Amph*. 226, *As*. 712, *Mer*. 676, *Mi*. 411, *Most*. 1094, 1097, 1135, *Poen*. 265, 319, 1179, *Rud*. 455, 691, 695, 698, 707, 1048, 1336, *Truc*. 476; (in the ablative) *Aul*. 606, *Rud*. 688, 723, 768, 784, 840, 846, 1333.

in the play. Tranio, for instance, flees to the altar only after he sees that his goose is cooked and Theopropides is threatening to crucify him for corrupting Philolaches. Compare the appearance of the altar in the *Mostellaria* as asylum with the reference to an altar made in the *Rudens*. The slave Trachalio entreats his friends to rest at an altar on/near the stage so that they can escape from a pimp (Plaut. *Rud.* 688). This altar is a distinct structure from the temple of Venus, which itself serves as one of the facades of the *scaena*. Just as in the *Mostellaria*, the altar in the *Rudens* is casually mentioned and no special brouhaha takes place around its appearance. It can therefore be understood that the presence of altars on or near the *scaena* was not a wild innovation. None of his plays draws special attention to the presence or absence of an altar.

The reference to an otherwise unmentioned altar would be a jarring distraction from the illusion of theater. I believe that Plautus is intentionally placing Tranio atop the altar as a final nod to his ability to blend internal and external spaces in the *Mostellaria*. The text does not suggest that there has been an altar onstage for most of the play, but there may have been no need to because altars and stages were regularly combined for the religious festivals they are associated with. There is no explicit need for the altar to be part of the stage platform, and it is not unreasonable to think that an altar would be constructed for use in the play near the stage or that the stage itself would be near a structure that could act as an altar for the play. Consider the lustral basin found at the bottom of the steps of the temple of Magna Mater (fig. 7). The basin would not be part of the stage *per se*, but nearby and distinct from the platform. This sort of external altar structure could explain the events of the *Mostellaria*, but not the *Rudens*. As discussed above, there is a clear need in the *Rudens* for an onstage altar to be present since a number of characters interact with it and presumably do not leave the stage. Additionally, the

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proximity of the temple of Venus necessitates the appearance of an altar from a narrative perspective. The *Mostellaria*, on the other hand, has no direct need for an altar. The plot has focused on the secular issue of paying debts and general deception. If we say that the lack of need for a built-in altar for the *Mostellaria* allows for the structure to be next to the stage rather than on it, we see that Tranio is engaging in quite the disruption from theatrical norms.

By leaving the stage and continuing to perform, Tranio would commit the greatest break in dramatic illusion afforded to actors: blending the *scaena* and *cavea* directly. Tranio would leave the dramatic world of the play and enter the "real" world of the theater by physically interacting with the space. If, however, we allow the altar to be integrated into the *scaena*, then there is no such flagrant breaking of the internal consistency of the theater. He, and other actors, have winked at the audience via their asides and monodies, but Tranio is the one to firmly break the barrier between the two spaces. His ability to pull objects and ideas from offstage onto the stage is extended into his own ability to push out of the boundaries of the *scaena*. Because of Tranio's greater ability to break the mores of the theater, I would suggest that the altar of the *Mostellaria* would best serve as a secondary structure, although this construction would itself be a deviation from the standard arrangement of the *scaena*.

Conclusion

Over the course of this paper we have discussed a wide range of issues and practicalities of staging drama in mid-Republican Rome. Without the grand stages available to late-Republican and Imperial Rome, playwrights were confined to smaller, more temporary wooden structures that would be erected only around the time of religious festivals in the city whether they were public festivals or funeral games. Such an arrangement left the audience open and susceptible to outside interruption and distraction. This problem is highlighted in the prologues of Terence's *Hecyra*, which detail why the play had to be staged three separate times before it was successfully produced. Terence's response to the failures demonstrate that dramatists were keenly aware of the troubles that staging a play outside in an open-air theater would present. The dichotomy of inside and outside is a contentious relationship wherein one half is always worried about the other's sudden intrusion. Plautus plays off of these anxieties in his metatheatrical approach in the *Mostellaria*.

As for the stages themselves, which have been wholly lost to the archeological record due their wooden design, we have been able to ascertain rough estimates for their dimensions by using so-called *phlyax*-vases as models. Those vases, produced in the late fourth and early third centuries BCE, depict a tradition native to southern Italy and the influence of Greek drama on the region. With some leeway for artistic expression and the distortion of forms, scholars such as Hughes and Goldberg provide us with an estimate of the footprint of a stage in the late third through the mid-second centuries BCE. That stage, when placed in front of a large temple such as that of Magna Mater on the Palatine, would provide enough space obscured from an audience that we can say that there could be an expectation of privacy or a delineation of offstage and

onstage, inside and outside, in the theater.

Taking the *Mostellaria* as a case study for this interplay between internal and external spaces, we have seen that Plautus is comfortable blurring the lines between internal and external spaces. The stage provided a glimpse into the world of the dramatic, but only one setting could be displayed at a time. For the duration of the play, the audience would see the world of the dramatic through the single window of the play. This window of the *scaena* presented Athens to his audience in Rome. There was no easy way for him to shift the scene beyond the facades of the houses of the families involved in the drama. In the same space we see characters like Grumio and Tranio hold a discussion at the door of Philolaches' house, Philematium and Scapha adorn themselves in a presumably private environment, and numerous characters address the audience with asides. Moreover, Plautus plays with the anxieties of external forces acting upon the stage by giving lines to actors offstage, (e.g. 516), and pulling internal elements, like the alleged painting of the crows at 832-839, outside.

We have concluded the examination of the practical implementation of internal and external space in the *Mostellaria*. It is clear who is onstage and when. We know the visual limits of the stage: there is an amount of backstage unseen to the audience, but entrances from the wings are more than likely visible. From this analysis of mid-Republican stages and the plays produced for them, we can now say with more certainty than before how plays of the period would be experienced by their audiences. A play like the *Mostellaria* would have debuted on a wooden platform stage placed at the foot of a religious building like the temple of Magna Mater in an open air setting that would create a distinction between inside and outside not by the construction of the space, but by the boundaries created by the illusion of theater.

Appendix A
Entrances and Exits in the *Mostellaria*

Line	Change
1	Grumio and Tranio enter from Theopropides' house.
83	Grumio and Tranio leave the stage via the country-exit.
84	Philolaches enters from his house.
157	Philematium and Scapha enter (perhaps from Philolaches' house).
313	Callidamates enters from the Forum-exit accompanied by Delphium
348	Tranio enters from Piraeus /the country-exit.
387	Callidamates and Delphium exit into the house, carrying props inside.
391	Delphium returns from Theopropides' house.
398	Delphium and Philematium exit into Theopropides' house.
407	Everyone but Tranio goes into Theopropides' house.
418	Sphaerio enters from Theopropides' house.
426	Sphaerio exits into Theopropides' house.
431	Theopropides enters from the country-exit.
532	Misargyrides enters from the Forum-exit.
654	Misargyrides exits via the Forum-exit.
690	Simo enters from his house.
853	Simo exits via the Forum-exit.
857	Theopropides and Tranio exit into Simo's house.
858	Phaniscus enters from offstage, either the Forum-exit or the country-exit.
885	Pinacium enters from offstage, following Phaniscus.
904	Tranio and Theopropides enter from Simo's house.
932	Tranio exits as if going to the countryside (to the *angiportum*).[86]
990	Phaniscus and Pinacium exit, either to the Forum-exit or country-exit.
996	Simo enters from the Forum
1040	Theopropides and Simo exit into Simo's house
1041	Tranio enters from the country-exit.
1064	Theopropides (and Simo, as well as two servants?) enter from Simo's house.
1122	Callidamates enters from the country-exit.
1181	Everyone exits.

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[86]

Merrill (2002 *ad loc*.) notes in his stage directions that Tranio exits to the alley between the houses, but I am not sure about the practicality of a third, non-structural exit.

Appendix B
A catalog of *intus* and *intro* as found in the *Mostellaria*.

Line	Context
294	[PHILOL:] abi tu hinc **intro** atque ornamenta haec aufer. Get you away from here and take these ornaments inside.
385	[PHILOL:] abripite hunc **intro** actutum inter manus. Carry this guy [Callidamates] inside at once.
390	[TR:] non modo ne **intro** eat, verum etiam ut fugiat longe ab aedibus? Not only [ensure that] he doesn't enter, but also that he flee far away from the house?
391	[TR:] vos modo hinc abite **intro** atque haec hinc propere amolimini. Just go inside, you all, and quickly take these things [with you].
394	[TR:] nam **intus** potate hau tantillo hac quidem caussa minus But drink within no less on account of [the return of Theopropides]
397	[TR:] omnium primum, Philematium, **intro** abi, et tu Delphium First of all, Philematium, go inside. You, too, Delphium.
401	[TR:] **intus** cave muttire quemquam siveris. Don't allow anybody to make a sound from within.
402	[TR:] tamquam si **intus** natus nemo in aedibus habitet As if nobody alive lives within this house.
405	[TR:] iam iube ecferri **intus**: hasce ego aedis occludam hinc foris. Now order [the key] to be brought out from inside: I will close the door from outside.
422	[SPH:] ne **intro** iret ad se. Don't go inside to him.
425	[TR:] clavim cedo atque abi hinc **intro** atque occlude ostium. Give me the key, go hence inside and shut the door.
445	[TH:] Heus, ecquis **intust**? Aperitin fores?[87] Psst, is there anybody inside? Are the doors unlocked?

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[87] Leo suggests *intust*, Schoell reads *hic est*. B^2 reads *istas*.

471   [TR:] nemo **intro** tetulit, semel ut emigravimus
Nobody went inside once we'd left.

675   [TH:] atque evoca aliquem **intus** ad te, Tranio
And call someone from within for you, Tranio.

687   [TR:] Simo progreditur **intus**.[88]
Simo is coming from within.

723   SI: Quod solet fieri hic **intu'** TR: quid id est? SI: scis iam quid loquar.
That which is accustomed to happen inside. TR: What is it?
SI: You know what I'm saying.

807   SI: immo commodum. i **intro** atque inspice.
Au contraire, it's convenient. Go inside and take a look around.

815   SI: quin tu is **intro** atque otiose perspecta.
Why don't you go inside and look around at your own pace.

847   TH: ergo **intro** eo igitur sine perductore
And so I'll go inside without a guide.

848   TH: ibo **intro** igitur.
I will go inside, then.

852   [SI:] eire **intro** audacter licet.
You can go in boldly.

936   [TH:] quid volunt? quid **intro** spectant?
What do they want? Why are they looking inside?

988   [PHA:] quid istas pultas ubi nemo **intus** est?
Why do you beat the door when there is nobody within?

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[88]

Lindsay prints *ipsus* for *intus*. *Intus* is found in A.

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