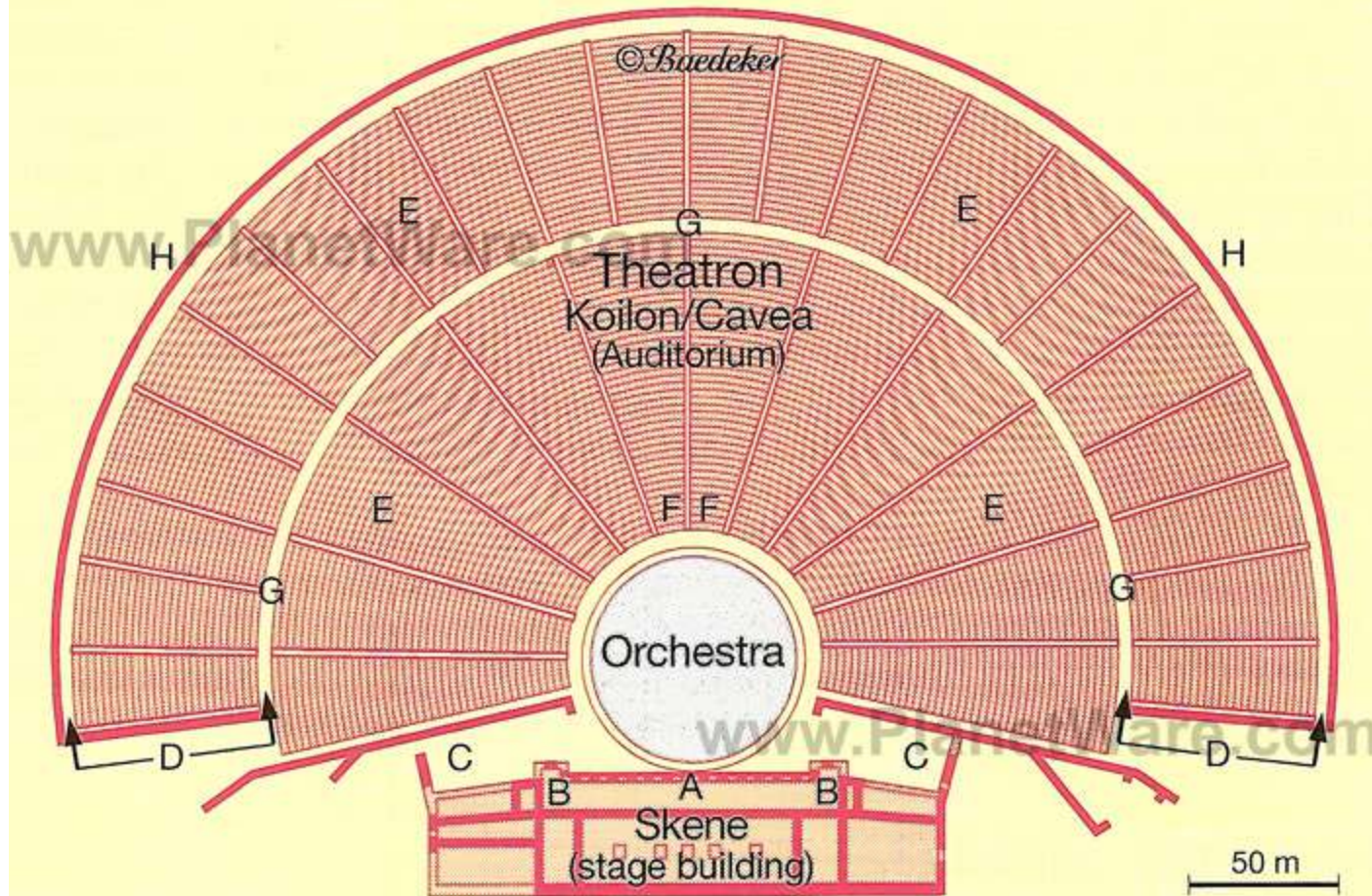


Tragedy in Greek Theater
&
The Tragic Hero

Greek Theatre (Ideal plan of theatre at Epidaurus)



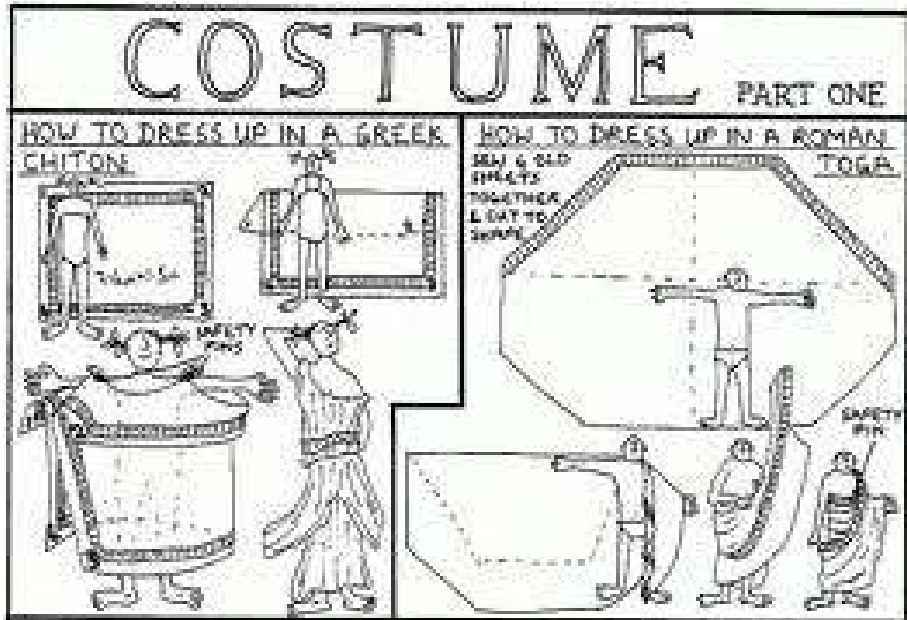
- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|--|
| A | Proskenion (stage) | E | Kerkides ("wedges": sections of seating) |
| B | Paraskenia (wings) | F | Prohedria (seats of honour) |
| C | Paradoi (entrances to orchestra) | G | Diazoma (gangway) |
| D | Entrances for spectators | H | Analemma (outer wall) |

Acting Skill

The actors had to be great in their skill of voice because of the following:

- There were no curtains or lighting (outdoor theaters)
- Scenery and props were minimal
- They wore oversized masks for each character they played.
- Violent events were done offstage and reported in dialogue.

The Costumes



The Chorus

Strophe/Antistrophe



Traditional costuming/masks for the Chorus.



The Chorus

- "Strophe" and "antistrophe" are ways of referring to the rhythmical pattern of a text which was originally sung.
- They divide the ode into alternating parts. Both sections have the same number of lines and metrical pattern.
- Strophe (turn) – The part of an ancient Greek choral ode sung by the chorus when moving from right to left.
- Antistrophe (turn back) – The part of an ancient Greek choral ode answering a previous strophe, sung by the chorus when returning from left to right.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M8k5AGcl5JM>

(paste into your browser) 51 seconds, artistic representation of S and A.

So what does the chorus do?

- Open the drama with a song called a *parodos*.
- Narrate the story (tells the story)
- Tells the audience how to think about the scene that just happened and the characters
- Laments over the terrible events, but never aids in stopping them. In *Oedipus*, they advise him constantly to not overreact, and vacillate between supporting him and questioning him.
- They could be citizens or elders of the play.

TRAGIC HERO

- **The tragic hero is a man of noble stature.**
- **He is not an ordinary man, but a man with outstanding quality and greatness about him.**
- **His own destruction is for a greater cause or principle.**

The Tragic Hero

Aristotle: "A man cannot become a hero until he can see the root of his own downfall."

It should be noted that the hero's downfall is his own fault as a result of his own free choice, but his misfortune is not wholly deserved. Usually his death is seen as a waste of human potential. His death usually is not a pure loss, because it results in greater knowledge and awareness.

Tragic Hero Vocab

- ***Hamartia*** - the tragic flaw that eventually leads to his downfall.
- ***Hubris*** - a sort of arrogant pride or overconfidence or excessive ambition.
- ***Peripeteia*** - a reversal of fortune brought about by the hero's tragic flaw
- ***Catharsis*** - the purging of the emotions or relieving of emotional tensions, especially through certain kinds of art, as tragedy or music.

Characteristics of a Tragic Hero

- **The tragic hero is a character of noble stature and has greatness.**
- **The character must occupy a "high" status position but must ALSO embody nobility and virtue as part of his/her innate character.**
- The character should be born into some form of nobility (remember that in ancient times, nobility was the royal family)

Characteristics of a Tragic Hero

- He is usually a king, or a leader of men - his fate affects the welfare of a whole nation or number of people.
- There is a sudden fall from greatness to nothing
- **The character has a personality trait that leads to his/her downfall. (hubris)**

Characteristics of a Tragic Hero

- **The character is doomed to make an error in judgment.**
- **The hero's downfall, therefore, is partially her/his own fault.**
- **the tragedy is usually triggered by some error of judgment or some character flaw that contributes to the hero's lack of perfection noted above.**

Characteristics of a Tragic Hero

- **Though the hero bears responsibility for his actions, his misfortune is not wholly deserved. The punishment exceeds the crime.**
- **The hero must suffer.**