A conjectural reconstruction of the theatre of Dionysus in the early fifth century BC. It is possible that there was no skene at all at this time.

The theatre of Dionysus, the Odeon of Pericles in the background.

The theatre of Dionysus in the second half of the fifth century. The skene at this time must have been made of wood. The arrangement shown here has three doorways and the actors can appear on the roof. The Odeon of Pericles in the background.

**Soundscape and the performance of drama in ancient theatres**

**Soundscape: a part of cultural heritage**
Summary

- Revival of ancient drama – beginnings of the 20th century
- Theatres near motorways or in urban centres – traffic and ambient noise during performances
- Adoption of ancient plays in contemporary Greek
- Application of contemporary scenery necessary for drama performances
- Scenery leads the viewer into the imaginary world the play refers to

Soundscape

- Multisensory experience of the performance
- Sound perception, act of drama, theatre landscape
- Physical measurements, architectural & acoustic assessments, theory of theatre, linguistics
- Interaction between the audience and the actors
the first performance spaces – rectangular celebrations called ‘ταυροκαθάψια’ (around 1700-1400 B.C.)
First performance spaces

Theatre of Thorikos

TD0804 – Capri 2011 – K. Chourmouziadou
**Soundscape related – skene-building evolution**

- Related to the evolution of drama (1\textsuperscript{st} performance by Aeschylus on a wooden stage)
- Advanced technologies led to new material use
- More stories – protagonist on the 1\textsuperscript{st} floor of the stage
  - Gods on the roof – disadvantageous lack of background reflective surface
- Hellenistic skene with colonade and three leading actors
- Roman theatres – autonomous shell delayed reflections encountered by decorative facades – diffusion
- Roman stage narrow and high – actors and chorus appear on the stage
Conventional use of skene-building

Conventional use of visible-invisible, outside inside, close-far, approachable-unapproachable

Protagonist entrance – exit

Stage building, palace or temple?

City and country

‘God’ at the roof of the skene-building

Ekkyklema

Periaktoi

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Soundscape

Non physical:

- educated audience expectations
- audience perception due to conventional use of entrances and positions

Physical:

- direct sound
- polyphony of the chorus
- enhancement of the voices through reflections
- external sounds from the surrounding area
- negative - traffic noise
- positive - cicadas etc.
Revival of ancient drama (20th century)

Ephemeral scenery replaced the skene-building

Based on architectural and art movements

No consideration on soundscape preservation
Design guidelines

- Cardioid shape
- Inclined reflective surface
- Wind
- Temporary scenery appropriate height relevant to leading actor’s positions
- Reflective orchestra & temporary parodoi
- Absorption control seat backs high inclination side parapets
- Background noise