

THE PROBLEM OF THE PROSKENEION
IN THE LIGHT OF VASE PAINTING

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In looking over the restorations of the $\sigma\kappa\eta\nu\eta'$ for the fifth and early fourth centuries B.C., one is startled by their variety. We have everything from Fiechter's unsightly shed with its three yawning openings to Allen's fully developed proskeneion, an integral part of the scene building from the first.

In the theatre of Dionysos at Athens, foundations of the scene building, dating from the late fifth century, are preserved, but what decorations, if any, were in front, must be postulated from other evidence. The plays themselves are consulted and most authorities now agree that a stage is out of the question for the tragedies of the fifth century.

The series of South Italian vases from the fourth century, painted with scenes derived from tragedy, and having a small porch-like building in the background, are usually considered in connection with the theatre problem, and usually thrown aside as affording no dependable information regarding the staging of tragedy at this time. Miss Bieber disposes of them with the remark that they are more important for literature than for stage questions, since incidents from the actual dramatic performances were not copied until Roman times.¹

1. Bieber, M., Die Denkmäler zum Theaterwesen im Altertum, p. 107

The implication here seems to be that since the artist did not reproduce an exact scene from the play, it must follow that the background he paints is just as inaccurate. The champions of the Vitruvian stage for the fourth century naturally see no significance in the little portico or aedicula with its two-stepped stylobate. The caution with which they all approach these vases seems to be fostered by the discovery, which examination of these paintings brings, namely, that the vase painter is an artist and not a photographer.

Dörpfeld's collaborator Reisch pays more attention to them, although he concludes his discussion of the subject with the warning that only so much should be learned from them, "the fact that Euripides was played in Southern Italy until the third century and that the palace type of pillar-hall, raised on one to three steps had its origin in the theater." Dörpfeld himself finds in them a valuable suggestion for the decoration of the scene building in the fifth and fourth centuries, and in his restoration places a porch-like structure with gable roof carried by four Doric columns in front, and resting on a one-step stylobate, before the central door of the skene. His restoration is vigorously attacked by Allen, who considers the vase paintings unreliable.

It is of great importance then in turning to these vase paintings not to read into them too much, but to try first of all to understand the vase painter, to gauge the extent of his originality and dependence, and then, interpreting the paintings

1. Dörpfeld-Reisch, *Das Griechische Theater*, p. 310

in the light of other knowledge, glean some valuable suggestions for the form of the theatrical background.

The vases we propose to study date in the fourth century and are inspired by Attic tragedies produced in that period in Tarentum and other cities of Magna Graecia. There is nothing more likely than that the staging of these plays in a thoroughly Hellenized city of Magna Graecia would correspond to the staging in Athens - hence if we find the vase paintings a dependable source of information we can assume that they shed some light not only on the theatrical background of South Italy but on that of Athens.

We are confronted at once by a series of vase paintings deriving their subject matter from Euripides' Iphigeneia Among the Taurians. In three cases the moment chosen is the handing over of the letter whereby Orestes and his sister recognize each other.¹ A building supported by four columns resting on a stylobate occupies the center of the scene. The amphora² formerly in the possession of the Duke of Buckingham shows one of these structures with columns in the Doric order, which is unique, the Ionic order predominating on the other vases. The roof is gabled at the side and the ceiling boards beneath are very clearly indicated. A door swings open in the background. Artemis hovers in the background to the right; balancing her on the left a satyr appears. In the foreground Pylades, dressed for his journey, occupies the center. He is just receiving the letter from Iphigeneia, who is accom-

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1. Huddilston: Greek Trag. in the Light of Vase Paintings, p. 131
 2. pub. Arch. Ztg., 1849, pl. 12; Overbeck, Bildwerke, pl. 30, 7
Mon. d. Inst. iv, pl. 51; Huddilston, op. cit., p. 132,
fig. 19.

panied by a servant. To his right is Orestes looking on with interest. The amphora from St. Petersburg¹ which shows almost the same moment in the play has the usual four column structure, Ionic order, with the gable roof and acroteria. The ceiling boards are again clearly visible. This time Iphigeneia herself stands in the building with the statue of Artemis beside her. To the left and outside of the temple stand Pylades, garbed for his journey, and Orestes a little farther away in a dejected attitude. Some figures irrelevant to the play and purely for decorative purposes, are grouped around this scene. Iphigeneia about to hand over the letter is pictured on another vase, formerly in the possession of the art dealer Barone in Naples.² In a building with gabled roof and acroteria, supported by four Ionic columns on a two-stepped stylobate, stands Iphigeneia with the letter in her right hand. Outside to her right Pylades in chlamys and petasos extends one hand to receive the letter. To the right of the building Artemis is seated, and standing beside her Apollo, grasping the laurel tree. In the background a ³bukraneion is suspended.

The St. Petersburg³ krater which is decorated with a scene inspired by Aeschylus' Eumenides shows Orestes seeking expiation at the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. We meet again a four column structure with gable roof and acroteria. The capitals are Ionic with a curious, elongated abacus. At the back a shield is hung from the architrave. Orestes is repre-

1. Huddilston, op. cit., p. 134, fig. 20; Mon. d. Inst. vi, pl. 66; 420 in the catalogue of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg.

2. Huddilston, op. cit., p. 135, fig. 21; Bull. Arch. Napolitano, 1862, pl. 7

3. Huddilston, op. cit., p. 57, Fig. 5, cat. N° 349; pub. Comptes Rendu, 1864, pl. 65

sented as clinging to the omphalos for protection within the building. The Furies lie about the stylobate fast asleep. To the right and outside the building, the Pythia is fleeing, driven away by the horrible sight.

The Antigone vase from Ruvo¹ contains an excellent example of the four columned building with gable roof and acroteria and ceiling boards indicated. Within the structure stands Heracles, identified by his name, which is written on the architrave. Outside at the right Kreon, in kingly robes and leaning on his sceptre, inclines his head towards Heracles. Two attendants stand behind him, and seated above is Ismene. To the left of the building is Antigone with her hands bound behind her and guarded by a Doryphorus. Further to the left stands Haimon, his head bowed in grief. Objects are suspended² in the background, fillets and little wheels. Heydemann considers this painting as deriving from a post-Euripidean play. Vogel³ puts up a good case for its Euripidean origin. It is not my purpose to enter into either of their courses of reasoning. The main point is that they both see in it a scene inspired by a tragedy. In treating the Archemous vase in Naples⁴ Vogel⁵ argues persuasively that the artist is here representing a scene from Euripides' Hypsipyle. Since only fragments remain, his argument is not irrefutable, but it does seem plausible, and convinced of the dramatic inspiration of this vase painting, I feel no hesitation in adding it to our list of vase

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1. pub. Mon. dell'Inst., x, pl. 26-27; Museum Jatta (No. 423) Arch. Ztg. 1870, Taf. 40, 2
 2. Heydemann: Über eine nacheuripideischen Antigone (1868)
 3. Vogel: Scenen Euripideischer Tragödien, p. 52-55
 4. Heydemann N^o 32 55; Baumeister, Denkmäler, I (1885) 114
 5. Vogel, op. cit., p. 101-107

paintings, influenced by tragedy and containing architectural features which might shed light on the stage setting of the day.

The painting on the Archem^{ous} vase is divided into three rows. The middle row contains in the center a great temple-like building crowned with a gable and carried by four Ionic columns in front. The ceiling boards are in evidence and at the back two ^obukran^a are suspended. Two chariot wheels hang from the ceiling. Between the central columns stands Eurydice, her head bent in grief. Between the columns to the left is Hypsipyle, turned toward Eurydice and apparently pleading with her. Between the columns to the right stands Amphiaraos in armour, and also turned toward Eurydice, as though talking with her. Vogel thinks the artist has chosen the moment when Amphiaraos is asking mercy for Hypsipyle. Various other figures in connection with the story are grouped about the building. Below is Archem^{ous} stretched on his bier with people bearing funeral gifts.

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The Meleagros amphora in Naples is probably painted with a scene from Euripides' Meleagros, the contents of which we know from the Scholiast of Aristophanes' Frogs. The artist has chosen one of the last moments in the tragedy according to Vogel,² when the log has burned out and Meleagros sinks in his death swoon upon his couch supported by Tydeus and Deianeira. To the left a woman is hastening into the building in which the whole scene takes place. It is a structure supported by three Ionic columns in front. Two are shown in the rear. The whole is covered by a flat roof and the ceiling boards are drawn in.

1. Heydemann, Mus. S. Aug. N^o 11, pub. Arch. Ztg. 1867, Taf. 220, Bull. Arch., Nap. viii, Tav. ~~VI~~

2. Vogel, op. cit. p. 83 (~~Armentum~~)

The most famous vase of all those influenced by tragedy is the great Medea amphora¹ in Munich. On this we see a building, open on all sides, with gable roof, supported by six Ionic columns resting on a two-stepped stylobate. From the ceiling boards two shields are hung. The upper section of the paintings is bounded by two tripods. The artist has been inspired by the messenger's description of Kreusa's death. He has chosen the moment when Kreusa, shown within the palace, having tried on the fatal robes, has fallen across the chair. Her father stands beside her, half supporting her with one hand and tearing his hair with the other. From either side her mother and brother hurry towards the palace. In the center of the lower section $\theta\iota\sigma\tau\rho\omicron\varsigma$ or the personification of Medea's wrath is about to drive off in her dragon chariot. Here we have a fine instance of the vase painter thoroughly imbued with the spirit of Euripides. His imagination has been kindled by the messenger's report and he gives embodiment to the picture created in his mind.

There are several characters in the scene who do not belong to the dramatis personae of Euripides' Medea and this fact has suggested the possibility of another source than Euripides. Huddilston's interpretation² that the artist has merely added some figures to suit his own fancy seems more in keeping with the spirit of the South Italian vase painter, who never illustrates or copies scenes from the dramas but is primarily an artist.

1. (Canosa) 810 Jahn's cat. pub. Arch. Ztg. 1847, pl. 3.
Millin's Tombeaux de ~~Canosa~~, 1816, pl. 7; Wiener Vorl.
Ser. 1, Taf. 12

2. Huddilston, op. cit., p. 153

On the Thersites vase¹ in Boston a four columned building challenges our attention. The capitals are unusual, being a development of the Aeolic capital, according to Mr. Paton. Palmettes crown the gables, and shields, chariot wheels, and greaves hang from the ceiling boards. Mr. Paton in his article² on this amphora calls it a "soldier's hut." But it is so like the other buildings we have been observing that it must have the same origin.

Although Mr. Paton thinks the artist drew his subject matter from an old story now lost to us, he admits that any interpretation must be hypothetical, and mentions the fact that Chaeremon wrote a play about Achilles and Thersites, which we know of only through the title and two lines that have come down to us. This does give the painting a faint claim to dramatic inspiration, but it is the four columned building open on all sides that interests us.

Another structure on a one-stepped stylobate, carried by four Ionic columns supporting a gable roof with acroteria, occupies the center of a scene painted on a crater in the Ancien Couvent de S. Philippe de Neri in Naples.³ Around this building a combat rages. One man lies dead upon the stylobate. Reinach describes it as the death of Neoptolemus. The murder of Neoptolemus by Orestes and his band at the temple of Apollo at Delphi is vividly described by the messenger in Euripides' Andromache, which is the inspiration for another painting to be discussed later - and it seems very likely that

1. (Apulian) pub. A.J.A., 1908, pl. xix

2. A.J.A., 1908, Paton, 406.

3. Ancien Couvent de S. Philippe de Neri in Naples, pub. Nouvelles Annales, 1838, pl. B; Reinach: Vases Peints, p. 351

this too derives its subject matter from the play.

A study of the vase paintings inspired by tragedy does not lead one to the conclusion that the artist is reproducing the scene as he might have seen it enacted. In several instances he is illustrating the messenger's speech, and even when he chooses a moment that was enacted in the theatre, he adds figures which were not in the *dramatis personae*, or inserts an extraneous satyr or a "common love-scene" as on the St. Petersburg¹ amphora.

But in the list of vases selected, a small four columned or six columned building, usually open on all sides, with gabled roof and acroteria appears again and again, and whether it represents a temple or palace depends on the background that the play requires. Palace and temple alike have the same characteristics, our only way of judging which is meant comes from our knowledge of the play itself. Thus on the Medea vase, the six columned Ionic building in which Kreusa swoons, we interpret² as representing a palace. On the St. Petersburg amphora the four columned Ionic building which contains the statue of Artemis must be representing the temple of Artemis. But before drawing any conclusions as to the significance of the buildings, let us turn to the plays themselves and see what kind of background they require.

Professor Rees,³ in his search for a fitting setting for the plays, finds verbal evidence from the characters themselves for an open porch-like structure. Slowly but surely he builds up his evidence for a "prothyron," starting with the Roman

1. 420 in the cat. of Hermitage; pub. Mon. d. Inst. vi, pl. 66; Huddilston, op. cit., p. 134

2. do.

3. Classical Phil. x (1915), Kelley, Rees, p. 117, The Function of the *Προθύρον* in the Production of Greek Plays.

"vestibulum" which he traces to its equivalent πρόθυρον, citing references to it in Menander, Aristophanes, and finally most strikingly in the fifth century tragedies themselves. Verbal evidence is then strengthened by plausibility, for the acceptance of a prothyron as the setting for most of the tragedies solves innumerable difficulties. It furnishes an excellent place for scenes that necessitate a certain seclusion. Phaedra's couch is rolled out into this portico. Here Alcestis is carried and Electra sits by the bed of Orestes. The prothyron is most strikingly suggested in Iphigeneia among the Taurians, where Iphigeneia, coming from the temple addresses Thoas, vs. 1159

ἀνάξ, ἔχ' αὐτοῦ πρόσθεν ἐν πλυσταρίῳ

(stay thy foot there in the portico)

The series of Iphigeneia paintings do not illustrate this exact moment, but they all show Iphigeneia in a portico-like building about to hand over the letter to Pylades. So easily does the prothyron come to mind in the reading of the play, that when one turns to the paintings and sees the four-columned building open on all sides it appears convincingly as the portico. Especially on the amphora, formerly in the possession of the Duke of Buckingham, where a door swings open in the rear of the building, suggesting the door into the temple, there is no doubt left that we are looking into the portico of the temple.

Curiously enough one of the fragments of the Hypsipyle which survives refers to a pediment

ἰσοῦ πρὸς λίθ' ἑξελίλυσαι κόρας
γρ' πτόους (τ' ἐν λίστ) οἷσι πρὸς βλέπον τύπους

(Look, direct your eyes toward the sky and gaze upon the painted statues in the gable)

In the Archem^{ous} vase painting, which takes its subject matter from the Hypsipyle, we have a splendid example of a façade with four columns supporting a gable roof. Here we have both literary evidence and a vase painting in perfect accord. The coincidence is too happy to be an accident. The poet and vase painter have the same thing in mind, the theatrical background. The dramatist worked with perfect awareness of the limitations of the theater - a palace or temple front must do, and so in most cases he adapts himself to these conditions. How ridiculous it would be for him to write such lines referring to a gable, and commanding someone to gaze upon it, if a structure answering this description did not exist!

The setting for the Ion, judging from lines in the play, must have been the portico of the temple of Apollo at Delphi. Ion at the opening of the play seems to be in this portico, sweeping it with the "bay's young bough."

Professor Rees, in discussing the back-scene for the Eu-menides of Aeschylus, thinks the likely setting was again the portico of Apollo's temple at Delphi, with Orestes within it as a suppliant upon the omphalos. He pictures the Erinyes lying about sleeping. "At vs. 33 the priestess enters the vestibule of the temple, here used to represent the adyton, where she sees Orestes seated among the sleeping Furies."

An illustration of this very scene is found on the St. Petersburg krater.² The familiar four-columned structure occupies the center of the painting and within, clinging to the omphalos, Orestes is represented as seeking protection.

1. Rees, op. cit. p. 130

2. Huddilston, op. cit., p. 57, fig. 5; Cat. N° 349; pub. Comptes Rendu, 1864, pl. 6.5

The likely setting for the Eumenides as for so many other tragedies is the prothyron, and when we turn to this vase painting we see a porch-like structure depicted. Once again the vase painting is in accord with other evidence.

In the instances cited above a prothyron is either suggested by the lines in the plays themselves or comes naturally to mind as the plausible setting for many scenes. It does not seem a hazardous leap to see in the constant architectural feature that appears again and again on the vases the prothyron or porch-like building before the skené, which the plays presuppose and which the vase painter draws in mechanically to represent the background for the action that has inspired him to composition. The background he would render in the most comprehensible terms. He would choose the fixed way, while in the foreground he could move the figures about to suit his fancy. The stage setting was the same for so many of the tragedies that the vase painter who went often to the theatre would retain the memory of the fixed type of background, while the exact position of the actors or even the action itself might fade in his mind.

That we can discriminate between an attempt to represent a temple for its own sake and a sense for the theatrical setting can be seen from a study of two amphoras from Ruvo. The first painting¹ illustrates the account by the messenger in the Andromache of the murder of Neoptolemus at Apollo's shrine in Delphi. The sanctuary of Apollo is clearly indicated by two tripods, the laurel tree, the omphalos, and in the center background Apollo's temple drawn in perspective, so that three columns of the peristyle are shown. Neoptolemus has sought

1. Amphora (Ruvo) Naples; N° 239 Jatta Cat.; pub. Annali d. Inst. 1868, pl. E; Huddilston, op. cit., p. 84, fig. 10

refuge at the altar in the foreground, but he is already at the mercy of Orestes and his band. The building in the background with one side of its colonnade indicated is obviously meant for a temple. It is in marked contrast to the porch-like structure we have been dealing with. The other instance¹ which seems to me indisputably a representation of a temple and not the prothyron is a scene from Iphigeneia among the Taurians which shows the temple of Artemis in the background with several columns of the peristyle drawn in. The perspective of these is not as successful as in the case of the other amphora, and the columns seem to run horizontally with the façade, but a break in the architrave indicates that they are to be thought of as part of the colonnade along the side.

In these two instances we find the vase painter working quite independently of the theatrical background and drawing in a building which is distinctly a temple and not the porch-like structure which stood for palace and temple alike in the actual production of the play.

On the Madrid Assteas vase we have a different architectural structure.² Two slender Ionic columns supporting a roof which is drawn in perspective, frame in the scene. At the back a two-storied colonnade is depicted. A single colonnette supports an epistyle, above which four Doric colonnettes divide this story into five openings. To the right a door swings open through which Megara, the wife of Heracles, is fleeing. Heracles himself advances with his child in his arms to the left where a fire fed by numerous household articles is burning.

1. Amphora (Ruvo) Naples, Heydemann, N° 3223; pub. Mon. d. Inst. ii, pl. 43; Overbeck, Bildwerke, pl. 30.4

2. pub. Mon. d. Inst. viii, 19; Wiener Vorleg., Ser. B., Taf. I; Hirzel, Annal., 1864, S. 323ff.

Through the openings in the gallery Mania, Iolaus, and Alkmene are looking on. There are two conflicting interpretations of the Heracles Mad painting which deserve our attention. Bethe¹ in his desire to prove a high stage for the fourth century theater supposes that the structure represented stood on top of the proskeneion, although no indication of such a stage is in the painting. He presumes this on the grounds that another vase painting of Assteas shows a stage supported by a series of columns. Flimsy and arbitrary as this seems, Bethe makes it one of the "unshakable" arguments for a high stage in this period. Dörpfeld in the Jahrbuch for 1901² points out the absurdity of such a supposition and then presents his interpretation. He recognizes the interior of a palace and not a stage setting. The half-opened door through which Megara is fleeing leads to other rooms of the palace. The two-storied colonnade at the back is part of the palace, a sort of loggia looking into the court. Since this seems to me the only satisfactory explanation of the architecture, I shall not include the Heracles Mad painting in the list of vases with representations of the prothyron. The artist has been inspired by the messenger's speech in Heracles Mad and thinks of the crime as taking place in the real interior of a palace - he has removed the scene entirely from a theatrical background.

The Meleager vase painting presents another problem. Here we have a flat-roofed structure with the ceiling boards in evidence, carried by three Ionic columns in front with two showing in the rear. On a couch within this building, Meleager is sink-

1. Jahrbuch, 1900, p. 59: Die Hellenistischen Bühnen und Ihre Decorationen, Bethe.

Jahrbuch, 1901, p. 27

ing in a death swoon, supported by Tydeus and Deianeira. According to Vogel, who thinks the scene is based on Euripides' Meleager, the artist has painted one of the last moments in the play. Vogel and Heydemann¹ recognize in the structure the ekkyklema, which they think was rolled out with Meleager on it at the moment of his death.

Rees,² after carefully sorting out the various threads in the confused tradition of the ekkyklema, concludes that it was no more than a wheel chair or couch, which explains the puzzling phrase $\hat{\omega}\ \epsilon\pi\acute{\iota}\kappa\epsilon\iota\tau\alpha\ \epsilon\rho\acute{o}\nu\omicron\varsigma$ in Pollux's definition of the ekkyklema. In this painting in the light of Rees's interpretation of the ekkyklema, I see an instance of its use. Into the portico or prothyron, suggested by the structure represented, Meleager's couch is pushed.

The prothyron theory according to Allen³ is undermined by the appearance of similar structures on the underworld vase paintings. It is not difficult to see how it came about that the structures on the two series of paintings are similar. Both series belong to the same class of South Italian ware and in one instance⁴ a vase is painted with an underworld scene on one side and a scene from tragedy on the other. In constructing an imaginary building in the underworld, the painter would naturally employ a type that was familiar to him. The simple four-columned structure that stood before the door of the skene and formed the temple or palace background for the tragedies was easily understood, and so we should not be startled to find almost an exact

1. Vogel, op. cit., p. 83

2. Class. Phil. x, 1915, p. 134

3. Allen: The Greek Theater of the Fifth Century B.C., p. 99

4. Meleager vase, Naples: A. Meleager scene, based on Euripides;
B. Under an aedicula, 4 Ionic columns, plain gable roof *Sakellaro*
reared before Persephone.

copy of the building on the Medea amphora repeated on the great Canosa amphora ¹ in an underworld scene. The striking resemblance extends even to such details as ceiling boards, acroteria and medallions in the pediment. In the Medea palace two shields hang from the ceiling, while in the underworld palace two chariot wheels are suspended instead.

In other instances it is a much embellished prothyron still open on the sides, but considerably altered in appearance by ornate capitals. The Volute amphora from Altamura ² painted with an underworld scene, has a very elaborate palace - the front of the building is supported by caryatids standing on palmette clusters. Another underworld palace on an amphora in Carlsruhe ³ is carried in front by two columns with sphinxes serving for capitals.

The reverse of the Meleager vase in Naples is decorated with a scene from the underworld. In a building supported by four Ionic columns, Iakkhos is seated before Persephone. The building is very simple and has none of the more ornate decorations most of the underworld palaces have. One wonders how much the presence of a scene from the drama has to do with it: the closer the influence of the prothyron, the simpler and more accurate the underworld palace. Out of the original prothyron from the theater the artist has created his infernal architecture.

It is in these two series of vase paintings, one painted with scenes from tragedy, the other with scenes from the underworld, that we find the prothyron type of building representing

1. Apulian underworld amphora (Canosa) Munich 849; pub. Wiener Vorleg., Series E, pl. I; Millin: Tombeau de Canosa, pl. 3,4 Baumeister, pl. 87
2. Amphora (Altamura) Naples 3222; Wiener Vorleg., E, pl. II; Mon. dell'Inst., 1864, vol. viii, pl. iv.
3. Amphora (Ruvo) Carlsruhe 388; Wiener Vorleg., Ser. E, pl. 3,1 Mon. II, pl. 49, 50

palace and temple. We have shown that it is plausible to seek the prototype for this structure in the theater and logical to assume that this type established by the South Italian artists influenced by the drama and its setting, would be carried over into other scenes, such as those from the underworld. In other vase paintings, buildings are indicated by one or more columns supporting an architrave. On late, careless vases, only upper parts of columns are shown. For example, one in Athens, case 28, N° 12682, shows an architrave supported by four abbreviated Ionic columns, representing a temple or palace in the background. A vase published by Lenormant and Dewitte¹ has a similar architectural feature, four Doric columns supporting an architrave. A more carefully drawn building is the two-columned structure with gable roof on a vase in Madrid,² representing the palace of Minos from which Theseus is dragging the Minotaur. We have observed two attempts at drawing a real temple on two amphoras from Ruvo, so we know that the vase painter had other ways of indicating palaces and temples. But the open porch-like structure is peculiar to scenes derived from tragedy and the underworld.

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Flickinger is troubled by the fact that no background corresponding to the wall of the skené is indicated on the vases. Why should there be? The artist is not interested in a photographic representation of the scene building, but in suggesting the location essential to the scene, and this being usually a palace or a temple front, represented in the theater by the prothyron, there is no reason why he should concern him-

1. Lenormant & Dewitte, pl. lxiii A, vol. III

2. Leroux, Vases du Musée de Madrid, pl. xxv

3. Flickinger: The Greek Theater and its Drama, 1918, p. 237
p. 18, 1. Lukanian Vase, pub. Mon. dell'Inst. pl. xii; Welcker, iii. 23. 2

self with the more remote background of the scene building itself. We should not demand camera functions of the vase painter. In some instances, however, the artist is not unconscious of a back wall. In several of the prothyron scenes objects are hung on an invisible wall, which suggests a wall behind the porch. On the Antigone vase outside and above the prothyron, fillets and little wheels are hung. On a Lukanian¹ vase painting, inspired by the Hekabe of Euripides, two wheels are hung on this invisible wall. They resemble the wheels that appear so often suspended from the ceiling boards of the prothyron. The $\overset{\circ}{\underset{\wedge}{\text{b}}}\text{ukran}^{\overset{\circ}{\text{a}}}$ on the Archem² vase seem to hang on the wall, in contrast to the wheels which are suspended from the ceiling. We know from a reference in Theophrastus's Characters that it was customary to fix the $\overset{\circ}{\underset{\wedge}{\text{b}}}\text{u-krane}^{\overset{\circ}{\text{um}}}$ over the entrance after a sacrifice (Char. xxi, F)

καὶ βουν̄ ούσας τὸ προμετωπίδιον ἐπὶ τῇ κρῇ
τῆς εἰσόδου πρὸς πλῆλῳσαι, στέμματα
μεγέλοισι περισήσας.

Here the $\overset{\circ}{\underset{\wedge}{\text{b}}}\text{ukrane}^{\overset{\circ}{\text{um}}}$ is placed over the entrance or prothyron which represents the palace front.

CONCLUSIONS

Several points have been raised which bring us to the conclusion that we have a dependable source of information for the theatrical background in these paintings. First of all the repeated appearance of the structure, the evidence in the plays themselves for such a portico; and finally the likelihood of a vase painter's retaining the impression of the theatrical background while the details of the action might fade in his mind, and the probability of his using a simple type, familiar and comprehensible to all, to suggest the setting for his pictures.