

Plautus was the next playwright to come along who would turn out to be Rome's most influential playwright for that time period. Through Plautus' time, the new playwrights were adapting a new comedy style. **New**

Student 5: Low Achieved
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1

**comedy was a type of comedic plays that had a lot 'cleaner' jokes, there was nothing so crude as there was in Aristophanes time, although Aristophanes was the first to develop this new style of comedy** (1). The Romans enjoyed this new comedy and it became very popular as it involved people of all classes and was based on every day situations for people of all classes. It was something the people could relate to which was why they enjoyed it so much. Just like the ancient Greeks, women were originally not allowed to attend the Roman theatre. After a while though, this rule was exterminated, and all were able to attend and enjoy the theatre. This did not affect the actors though, who were male Roman slaves that were not given the choice of acting, but forced as a part of their duty. This is another way that the Roman theatre was similar to the Greeks – by having male only actors. In the time of Plautus' plays there was not one permanent theatre for the playwrights. This meant that the plays could only be performed at certain festivals at certain times of the year. A permanent theatre was built in 55BC that was able to hold up to 20,000 people and reached 45m high.

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**An obvious Greek influence was evident. It had the same shape, and features as the old Greek theatre. It had an orchestra exactly like the old Greek theatre to hold the chorus, although it eventually became a seating area for the lowest class of citizens due to such popular demand for the plays.** It still had the same shape, so as to effectively carry the actors' voices right up to the most furthest back spectators, although they had now developed it to be made from large concrete columns, standing up out of the ground, rather than building it into a hillside. From this diagram above, it is clear to see that the new Roman theatre contained nearly all the same features as the old Greek theatre, proving the Greek theatres high influence on the new Roman theatre. The only new difference that the Romans in Plautus' time had established was building it up on concrete pillars, rather than finding a hillside to build the theatre into. The composition of the audience in the Roman theatre was relatively the same as the Greek theatre although it was thought that the Romans were a lot stricter on their segregation of class, gender, nationality, profession, and marital status.

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**The humour that the audience would expect in Plautus' plays was a lot cleaner and more polite than those of Aristophanes, although Aristophanes was the one to establish this new type of comedy. Due to the new comedy style that had become so popular, the audience in the time of the Roman theatre expected much simpler plays as to what they did in Aristophanes time. They were still getting a similar form of play to the ancient Greeks, as Aristophanes was the creator of this new comedy, it was just simpler due to what the audience expected.** They wanted something that they could relate to and enjoy. Through all of this information provided we can clearly see that the new Roman theatre was very heavily influenced by the ancient Greek theatre largely due to Aristophanes influence on comedy in his time. Although Aristophanes was a main influence on the new comedy of the plays in Roman times, there were also other factors such as Greek architecture and traditions that influenced the new Roman theatre in the time of Plautus.

The ideas and values of each of the three time periods had a great influence on many different aspects of the theatre such as the physical environment of the theatre, the composition of the audience, the audience expectations of the performance, the conventions of audience behaviour, and the types of humour that the audience would expect. During the ancient Greek time period, when Aristophanes was present, the people had very political ideas and really valued crude humour as they needed relief from the stress of the Peloponnesian war. During the times of the ancient Romans when Plautus' plays were written, **the people of Rome had become more subdued and relaxed, therefore resulting in them having more relaxed values.** This created small changes in the humour of the plays such as the humour becoming more polite in the 'New comedy Style' that was originally started by Aristophanes towards the end of his life. Finally, during the Early modern England time period, their values and ideas were much the same as in the ancient Roman times. **They didn't have the pressure of any wars, although they did face struggling times.** The influence of Plautus on Shakespeare was so great that many of Plautus' play writing aspects can be identified in nearly all of Shakespeare's plays. Some even practically mirroring Plautus' plays.

2

2

From all of this information gathered it is clear to see that the Greek theatre had a heavy influence on both the Roman and the Early Modern England time periods, although they all influenced each other, in a number of ways. These are things such as the forms of comedy established by Aristophanes and the original plan of the theatre that was created by the ancient Greeks. Also, the humour was relatively the same throughout the time periods, although it was a lot more abrupt and rude during Aristophanes time, but in the end Aristophanes himself was the one who created this new humour style that was used right through to Shakespeare's time.