The first stages were built on a slant (a *raked stage*), with the back of the stage rising up and away from the audience. The audience stood or sat on flat ground. With the stage slanted, actors furthest away from the audience could be seen because they were “upstage”. The actors closest to the audience were “downstage” based on the slant. The directions of left and right are based on the actors’ left and right—this makes it easier for the director to direct the actor!