Greek Drama Terms

The Choice List

archon - a magistrate chosen annually by lot who assumed office in midsummer. Prospective playwrights “applied” for acceptance throughout the year.
By what criterion the decision was made is unknown, nor is it clear how the playwrights presented their case to the magistrate. Writers had six months or so to secure funding and rehearse for spring.

choregoi - producers for the playwright. The state paid for the actors, and the choregos paid for the training and costumes of the chorus.

didaskalos - teacher or trainer. He is truly the director of the entire show, often the writer.

hypokrites - actor or answerer. Each actor took several roles so that only three or possibly five actors could perform an entire play.

skene (skeenee) - scene building, literally tent. Early skenes would have been wood then later, stone. Could have one to three doors for entrances and exits

mechane - crane made of wood, would lift actors or special effects such as Pegasus the flying horse or Medea, the chariot of the sun.

bema - speaking platform. It is made of stone to amplify sound and raised at least twelve inches.

Ley, Graham. A Short Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theater. Chicago: U of Chicago Press, 1991.