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[Page numbers have been given in accordance with the manuscript, Roman numerals have been supplied for unnumbered pages.]

[-<i>-] Anonymus on tragedy

[-1r-] It is reasonable, if we want to discuss how tragedy should be performed, that we bring forward the ancient one, so that we can show it not as a female figure within an extremely opulent theatre and adorned with rich costumes, but at least as attractive lady dressed in a clothes that, albeit not so rich, do not appear inappropriate to her beauty and to her physical features. Aristotle in his *Poetics* said that the parts of the tragedy are six. We shall not deal with the first four, but we shall discuss the other ones concerning reciting, leaving aside a review of the wonderful theatres of antiquity, such as Marcus Scaurus' and the copper vases used to strengthen and sweeten the performers' voices. However, we state that if one wants to perform a tragedy, it is necessary that the theatre should be more magnificent and adorned than one suitable to the comedy, and portraying royal palaces, temples, fora and other marvels of the world, thus accompanying the stage with beautiful a display architecture full of statues. The stage must be rich and well laid-out, furnished with precious and beautiful hanging chandeliers. The theatre must have an auditorium laid-out as a graded semicircle where ladies and gentlewomen may sit, while at the bottom of it there should be seats for the nobility. Also, because those who sat at the back in the part of the auditorium that the ancients called 'the ditch' (fossa) could not see caused fights among the spectators, it is appropriate to arrange it with wood planks making it rather lower towards the front. However, since nowadays the stage and the centre of the theatre are wooden, hence dry and liable to fires, either deliberate or accidental, it is appropriate to store in the high parts of the auditorium vases full of water, sprinklers, sponges and similar tools, to put out any eventual fire and to avoid that the theatre may burn down entirely. In fact, there have been instances in which the theatre burned down with the stage before the performance, and some other time during the play, as it occurred in Arezzo, where many managed to flee after the fire took hold, but many died. I overlook to discuss the position of the seats of the judges, of the musicians and of others more highly regarded, since that tradition has been abandoned, but we state that it is also of great importance to illuminate the stage appropriately, because very often, in order to avoid ruining the shades in the perspective, the lights are dimmed too much, while, if the stage is lit too brightly, the shades are lost. However, do let us move on to discuss the recitation. As this aspect is very important, it is necessary to have extremely skilled performers who can express clearly the text of the poet. In fact, just as a beautiful speech badly recited or a piece of music badly sung will not do justice to its value, thus if a tragedy is acted badly, it will not communicate its excellence and beauty. Therefore, the costumes must suit the character who is introduced on stage. The ancients observed this

correspondence religiously and assigned the appropriate costumes and masks to each performer. Apart from the stage, the chorus provides the greatest adornment through its singing and dancing. The chorus was very large in the stage works written and performed before Aeschylus, and sometimes they numbered forty and more members. However, as such a large number became less liked, it was reduced to fifteen singers and it settled on that number. This happened, in my opinion, in order to portray the Heroes who appeared on stage with a great following of soldiers, courtiers and other accessory characters. This chorus was composed of elderly men or young men, peasants or others, as required by the poet. The chorus entered the stage after the first act of the tragedy, which was called *parodos* by the Greeks, and sometimes it started to sing and dance as it entered, while other times it exchanged some words with the actors who had not left the stage before starting to sing. However, since Aristotle says that the music that is sung by the chorus is a great complement to the action and it was also sung by the heroes, we shall review it as briefly as we can. Hence, since we have lost it to our own detriment, we strive to approach it as close as we can. But the one that in the first place was composed by a superior master, because those ancients <aliqua desunt>

[-2r-] [See the rest at a classe XIX. 42 add. m. rec.]

[-3r-] [Two leaves, of which the second is empty followed by another leave. May 1915. [signum] add. m. rec.]

MS classe XIX 42

[-<i>-]

D 42 XIX [[Musica Uaria]] [[ANONIMO]] [[Musicali]]

[Treatise on the music of the ancients add. m. sec.] [XIX, 42 add. m. rec.]

[-1r-] The ancient musicians were mostly very fine poets or very learned philosophers, and were not just intent on teasing the ear, but on making an impression on the intellect, which is the most noble part of man, according to the topic that they pursued, whether happy, sad or conveying another feeling. This occurred because the verses written by the poet were followed by the musician as to their scansion, and they were accompanied by the sound of the voice and of the instruments with such skill and sweetness, that one would not miss a word, since they were concerned mostly in letting themselves be understood, and, unlike it is customary nowadays, they did not mar the verse with *passaggi* and other inappropriate affectations which modern musicians call ornaments of singing. In fact, if the composer disregards the scansion of the verses and, for instance, lengthens a verse of seven or eleven syllables, it will make it lose its effectiveness. Moreover, composers make infinite mistakes because they do not understand the tones. In fact, the tones of the ancients were suited to portray a character speaking in rage, or sweetly and according to whether they required a high, low or medium style of music. They were also used in the dances and the highest of them, namely, the Lydian and Mixolydian were used in the chorus to accompany cries and laments. However, since their music is lost, one should try to approach it as much as possible by employing

singers of good and pleasant voice who are not a given to the adulation of the *passaggi*, a composer who will not spoil the verse, whose rhythm, even without music or dance, is very powerful, and musicians who do not shun the effort of intabulating and accompanying the verse well through the appropriate use of long and short notes.

However, let us go back to describe the exit of the chorus. Its masks entered three by three after the first act, an order that the ancient Greeks named *yokes*, or, in another way, five by five, a way of entering the stage named after the order of entrance. In my opinion, the reason behind this was that sometimes they stood on stage sometimes one after the other in groups of five and they danced accompanied by their instrument or singing, [-1v-] or in a group. or singly without dancing, or they did everything, dancing and singing, at the same time. These dances represented the motion of the eighth sphere, or of the sun, or of the moon, or of another planet, or their theoretical progression, or other wonderful subjects. In order to be understood better, we shall produce the example of when they represented the *Primum mobile* as leading the celestial globes. When they entered the scene, they started to rotate, either holding each others' hand or separately, and moving towards their left they performed an entire circle singing and dancing, until they returned to the same place. Then, they imitated the other motion with the same steps and music and they turned in the opposite direction to the first one. Finally, they represented the stillness of the earth by standing still. The members of the chorus did not play any instrument, while the master of the chorus and the musician, who had taught them the music and the dance, stood nearby on one the side. The poets were very sensitive to the dance, that the ancient called *saltatio*, and, in the verses accompanied by the dance, they used the trochee and the anapaest very widely. The first two syllables of the anapaest are short and the remaining one is long, while the first one of the trochee is long and the second one is a short. Thus, they were appropriate for the dance. Only one member of the chorus sang accompanied by the instruments, or all of them in unison. In fact, those great wise men who knew nature well realised that the low voices were apt for drunkenness and sleepiness and were naturally slow, while the high voices, because of their high pitch, suited fast movements and laments, and voices of middle range suited greatness and decorum. Therefore, they did not want to mix them in their singing. In fact, were this to be mixed, it would occur what happens to those mix black and white and obtain a colour that resembles neither of them. Therefore, they had the singers sing according to their scope, as we said, in order to generate in others this or that emotion. Aristotle discusses this matter and says that who does not produce in others this or that emotion is not a good musician, while elsewhere he states that musicians were so practised and united that, regardless of how many [-2r-] voices sang in unison, they appeared as one. In his *Politics* he says these words: 'Nor the master of the chorus would allow someone in the chorus who sang more sweetly or loudly than the others.'

However, going back to the chorus, we say that, after they sang for the first time, they retired to one of the sides of the stage (in my opinion three by three or five by five, in the way in which they came on stage). One must pay great care to the place where the chorus should sit, since it appears that many errors occur in this for the sake of appearances. After the second act, which was called episode, the chorus returned on stage singing and dancing. This chorus was called static, and the reason of this was, in my opinion, that its members did not leave the stage until the end of the tragedy. The static chorus returned a third time singing and dancing, and again after the fourth act, in a similar way, but not

dancing, because, since horrible events were represented on stage between the fourth and the fifth act, any cheerful dance would have been inappropriate. Nevertheless, the chorus employed some physical moves such as clapping or other gestures suited to tragic events. After this, it did not sing again, but stood on stage until the end occasionally interacting with the main performers. One must be aware that in some sorts of emotional tragedies in which fierce and bloody events took place at the end (which was called *Commos*) for instance when a messenger or someone else brought some horrendous news, the chorus together with the main actors showed the feeling that they felt with actions and inarticulate (or barely intelligible) exclamations full of pain by accompanying them with hand movements and gestures. The words *Commos* means painful lament or something similar. This last act, called, exodus, was the end of the tragedy. One must be clear that the dances were cheerful or poised in character according to the role played by the chorus.

[-2v-] In the choruses or in the tragedies stage machinery was not employed either before or after, because it did not occur (as in the *intermedi* of our comedies) that, since they are separate from the main play, machines and what is more convenient to them are employed by someone else. It is true that sometimes machines were used within the tragedy itself, for instance the sort that placed on the left entrance of the stage and allowed the entrance of Achelous, Arethusa, Tethis, Proteus or others by turning in an instant.

There was another machine that, when superhuman help was needed, allowed the descent from the sky of a god who would resolve the drama. The same machine also allowed heroes such as Belleophon, Triptolemus, Perseus, Medea or others to be lifted into the air. There was another one called a crane that descended very rapidly from the sky, took a character and lifted him or her to the sky, as in the case when Aurora kidnapped Memnon or Boreas Oreithyia, and another one that turned the heroes into gods, as when Hercules was transformed. Let this be a sufficient discussion of the machines and the end of this short essay of ours, since it would be too much to discuss in detail the magnificent expenses that the ancient sustained in performing tragedies, as one reads that the Athenians spent more in performing tragedies than they spent in a great and long war fought by that most flourishing republic.

