

Συναγωνίζεσθαι  
Studies in Honour of Guido Avezzù

Edited by Silvia Bigliazzi, Francesco Lupi,  
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**Skenè Studies I • 1**

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# Contents

SILVIA BIGLIAZZI - FRANCESCO LUPI - GHERARDO UGOLINI Πρόλογος / Prologue	9
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------	---

## Part 1 – Τραγωδία / Tragedy

1. STEPHEN HALLIWELL “We were there too”: Philosophers in the Theatre	15
2. MARIA GRAZIA BONANNO Tutto il mondo (greco) è teatro. Appunti sulla messa-in-scena greca non solo drammatica	41
3. VITTORIO CITTI Una nota inutile ad Aesch. <i>Suppl.</i> 950	69
4. ANGELA M. ANDRISANO Le <i>performances</i> della Pizia (Aesch. <i>Eum.</i> 29-33)	81
5. PIERRE JUDET DE LA COMBE Una dialettica regale. Gli argomenti della regina sulla ricchezza in Aesch. <i>Pers.</i> 159-69.	91
6. LIANA LOMIENTO Osservazioni critico-testuali e metriche su Aesch. <i>Eum.</i> 352-3 = 365-6	107
7. ENRICO MEDDA Alcune congetture inedite di A.E. Housman all’ <i>Agamennone</i> di Eschilo	133
8. FRANCO MONTANARI Mito e poesia: la figura di Clitennestra dall’ <i>Odissea</i> a Eschilo	147

9. ANTONIETTA PROVENZA Un destino paradigmatico. L'ibrido e la necessità del γάμος nel mito di Io	167
10. ALESSANDRO GRILLI Forme e funzioni della parola magico-sacrale nei <i>Sette contro Tebe</i>	195
11. GIOVANNI CERRI Antigone, Ismene e sepoltura di Polinice: protostoria di un mito	219
12. RENZO TOSI Creonte e il potere che rivela l'uomo (Soph. <i>Ant.</i> 175-7)	237
13. ROBERTO NICOLAI Perché Edipo è chiamato τύραννος? Riflessioni sull' <i>Edipo re</i> come tragedia del potere	251
14. SETH L. SCHEIN The Second <i>Kommos</i> in Sophocles' <i>Philoctetes</i> (1081-1217)	277
15. CAMILLO NERI <i>Marginalia Colonea</i>	299
16. FRANCESCO LUPI <i>Minima Sophoclea</i> . Frr. 150, 722, 338 R. <sup>2</sup>	323
17. PAOLA ANGELI BERNARDINI Ecuba, le prigioniere troiane e la presenza del mare nelle <i>Troiane</i> di Euripide	341
18. ADELE TERESA COZZOLI Azione drammatica e metateatro nell' <i>Oreste</i> di Euripide	359
19. JORDI REDONDO <i>Alcestis</i> : Pro-Satyrical or Simply Romantic Tragedy?	385
20. MARCO ZANOLLA Tracce di polemica contro il <i>ploutos</i> nell' <i>Alcmena</i> di Euripide: frr. 95, 96 e 92 Kn.	403

21. EDWARD M. HARRIS  
Pollution and Purification in Athenian Law  
and in Attic Tragedy: Parallels or Divergences? 419

## Part 2 – Κωμωδία / Comedy

22. ANDREAS BAGORDO  
κομψευρικῶς. Tracce di Euripide socratico-sofistico  
nella commedia attica 457
23. MARCO DURANTI  
Due questioni interpretative nelle *Ecclesiazuse*  
di Aristofane (vv. 1089-91, 1105-11) 491
24. GIUSEPPE MASTROMARCO  
Aristofane, *Le donne che occupano le tende*, fr. 488 K.-A. 503
25. OLIMPIA IMPERIO  
I demagoghi nelle commedie di Aristofane e dei suoi rivali 515
26. ANDREAS MARKANTONATOS  
The Heracles Myth in Aristophanes' *Acharnians*:  
The Boeotian and Dicaeopolis Scene (ll. 860-958) 545
27. PIERO TOTARO  
Antiche e nuove esegesi di Aristofane, *Pluto* 168 563
28. FAUSTO MONTANA  
Lamia nella *Collana* di Menandro (fr. 297 K.-A.) 585
29. GUIDO PADUANO  
Un tema della Nea: la verità come perfetto inganno 599
30. MASSIMO DI MARCO  
Una probabile eco della parodia comica del *Ciclope*  
di Filosseno in Ermesianatte (fr. 7.73-4 Powell) 615

### Part 3 – Παράδοσις / Reception

31. MARIA PIA PATTONI  
Tragic and Paratragic Elements in Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe* 633
32. PAOLA VOLPE  
Il Ciclope: un mostro tra antico e moderno 653
33. ERIC NICHOLSON  
Finding Room for Satyrs at the Theatrical Table,  
from Ancient to Modern Times 675
34. FRANCESCO DAL'OLIO  
Oedipus Tyrant? Tyranny and Good Kingship  
in Alexander Neville's Translation of Seneca's *Oedipus* 693
35. SILVIA BIGLIAZZI  
Euripidean Ambiguities in *Titus Andronicus*:  
the Case of Hecuba 719
36. VAYOS LIAPIS  
On the Sources of Petros Katsaitis' *Iphigenia* (1720): Between  
Lodovico Dolce, Molière, and the Commedia dell'Arte 747
37. GHERARDO UGOLINI  
Il Genio della tragedia. Antigone nel *Vorspiel* di Hofmannsthal 783
38. DOUGLAS CAIRNS  
Fascism on Stage? Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* (1944) 805
39. AVRA SIDIROPOULOU  
Negotiating Oblivion: Twenty-First Century Greek  
Performances of Ancient Greek Plays 833
40. MARTINA TREU  
'Guidaci a passo di danza'. Cori comici sulla scena 857
41. ADELE SCAFURO AND HIROSHI NOTSU  
Miyagi's *Antigones* 881

## Part 4 – Ἐξω τοῦ θεάτρου / Theatre and Beyond

42. ANTON BIERL <i>Symmachos esso</i> : Theatrical Role-Playing and Mimesis in Sappho fr. 1 V.	925
43. WALTER LAPINI La casa dei belli (Asclepiade AP 5.153)	953
44. MAURO TULLI Plato's κάλλιστον δρᾶμα in Greek Biography	963
45. SIMONA BRUNETTI Il coraggio di tradire per poter tramandare: un allestimento contemporaneo del <i>Gysbreght van Aemstel</i> di Joost van den Vondel	975
46. NICOLA PASQUALICCHIO Piano d'evasione: carcere e utopia negli Shakespeare della Compagnia della Fortezza	1003
47. SOTERA FORNARO Il giovane rapsodo nella Stanza della Segnatura di Raffaello	1025
The Authors	1043

### Appendix

Guido Avezzù's Publications (1973-2018)	1079
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## Πρόλογος / Prologue

Among the many ancient Greek words appropriate for the title of a volume in honour of Guido Avezzù συναγωνίζεσθαι (contend along with, share in a contest; aid, succour, assist; fight on the same side; join in the action) has appeared to the editors as a particularly fitting choice. That verb contains a lexical element that refers to ἀγών (struggle, battle, action) and to ἀγωνίζεσθαι (contend for a prize, fight, struggle). When combined with the preposition σύν (in company with, together with), the verb specifically suggests a collegial action: to compete on the same side, to fight for common objectives. This is what we thought might best reflect Guido Avezzù's personality and his many efforts to promote collaborative initiatives in our academic life and studies. As a philologist and a classical Greek scholar, he began his career at Padua University under the guidance of Carlo Diano and recently concluded it at the University of Verona, where he also served as Presidente del Corso di Laurea in Lettere (2002-2008), Delegato del Rettore per la didattica di Ateneo (2007-2008 and 2013), Preside della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia (2009-2012). In 2014 he founded the *Skenè* research group devoted to theatre and drama studies, and has been leading it to date. Friends, students and colleagues have now joined together to dedicate to Guido Avezzù, in the year of his retirement, a collective sign of heartfelt gratitude and esteem.

But the choice of this title also has deeper implications. The verb συναγωνίζεσθαι belongs to the jargon of dramaturgy as employed by Aristotle in a well-known passage of *Poetics*, where he emphasizes the function of the Chorus as an active co-protagonist in a Sophoclean manner, affecting, as an actor, the dynamics of drama (1456a 24-7).<sup>1</sup> Guido Avezzù has often considered the tragic

1 και τὸν χορὸν δὲ ἓνα δεῖ ὑπολαμβάνειν τῶν ὑποκριτῶν, καὶ μῦριον

chorus as central to his areas of interest and research, as witnessed by the conference he organized in Verona in 2007 entitled “... un enorme individuo dotato di polmoni soprannaturali”. Funzioni, interpretazioni e rinascite del coro drammatico greco”,<sup>2</sup> as well as, a few years later, by the inaugural special issue of *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*.<sup>3</sup>

This is not the place to summarize Guido Avezzi's manifold crucial contributions to the study of ancient Greek literature in the last decades. Besides, the list would necessarily be partial, as new publications are underway and others are due in the next few years (including the edition with commentary of Euripides' *Electra* for the prestigious collezione “Lorenzo Valla”, *Oedipus Rex* and Sophocles' fragments for the same series, the English edition of his *Il mito sulla scena: la tragedia ad Atene*, Venezia 2003, to mention but a few). In the Appendix to this *Festschrift* the reader will find an updated list of the dedicatee's publications comprised between 1973 and 2018.

Guido Avezzi has extensively worked on fifth- and fourth-century rhetoric and oratory, with special attention to Alcidas and Lysias, as well as on the history of classical tradition with regard to the manuscript tradition and the philological method, on the one hand, and on the other to the modern critical reception of tragic stories and motifs. However, his central focus has undoubtedly been, and still is, on theatre. The great fifth-century tragedians, first of all, but it would be more appropriate to

εἶναι τοῦ ὅλου καὶ συναγωνίζεσθαι μὴ ὥσπερ Εὐριπίδῃ ἀλλ' ὥσπερ Σοφοκλεῖ. (“The Chorus should be treated as one of the actors; it should be a part of the whole and should participate, not as in Euripides but as in Sophocles”). The Greek text is that of Rudolf Kassel, *Aristotelis de arte poetica liber*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965. Translation by Stephen Halliwell (Aristotle, *Poetics*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> The contributions have been collected in “... un enorme individuo dotato di polmoni soprannaturali”. *Funzioni, interpretazioni e rinascite del coro drammatico greco*, ed. by Paolo Scattolin and Andrea Rodighiero, Verona: Edizioni Fiorini, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> *The Chorus in Drama*, ed. by Guido Avezzi, *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies* 1 (1), 2015.

say theatre in general, in all its dimensions, forms and languages. To theatre he has dedicated what he conceived, and was received, as a truly challenging undertaking: the creation of an interdisciplinary research group gathered together in the name of a collaborative approach beyond disciplinary and departmental boundaries, joining in the same venture senior specialists and younger scholars, professors and doctoral students, Italian and foreign colleagues. This group, which at its foundation in 2014 chose to call itself *Skenè*, currently runs a scholarly biannual journal, *Skenè. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*, now in its fourth year, and the related *Skenè. Texts and Studies* series. The project of a new journal in English, aligned with international standards of peer-review procedures, with an outstanding international advisory board, but with no funding, could at first appear hopelessly unrealistic. And yet, it has met with success beyond expectations.

It is for these and many other reasons that the *Skenè* researchers, actors and choreuts of this undertaking, have decided to pay an affectionate tribute to their illustrious χοροδιδάσκαλος (trainer of the chorus): to the leader of the group, playwright and composer of scripts and scores, director of the action and trainer of chorus and actors.

To Guido, may he long continue to συναγωνίζεσθαι with us.

Silvia Bigliuzzi  
Francesco Lupi  
Gherardo Ugolini

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