

the extant plays of Aeschylus is a book-play, like the *Medea*, or the *Oedipus at Colonus*, or the dramatic poems of modern times. All are dramas proper, or representations in acting, and the *Agamemnon* is of the same type as the rest.

Even long after the time of Aeschylus, when drama as a purely literary type was fully established and hundreds of tragedies were composed with scarce a hope of performance<sup>1</sup>, and when, as inevitably happened, the importance of the non-literary elements had relatively much declined, even then the part of the 'supers', to use the familiar term, was larger than a hasty reading of the text might lead us to suppose. I will give one striking example of this, where we are made more than commonly sensible of the stage 'crowd' by the fact that some of them are at a particular part of the action converted from mutes into singers. The scene in the *Hippolytus*, where the hero is denounced by Theseus, takes place, as the situation demands and the text shows, in the presence of many persons<sup>2</sup>, servants of the king, friends of Hippolytus, and so forth. It is followed by an ode, sung not by women only like most of the odes preceding, but by men and women in response, a fact which by a mere accident is visible in the text. The *strophe* speaks in the masculine, the *antistrophe* in the feminine, the second *strophe* in the masculine again: the second *antistrophe* does not happen to give grammatical evidence of sex, but is proved feminine by its substance. The text runs thus<sup>3</sup>

στρ. α'. ἦ μέγα μοι τὰ θεῶν μελεδήμαθ', ὅταν φρένας ἔλθῃ  
 λύπας παραιρεῖ· σύνεσιν δέ τιν' ἐλπίδι κεύθων  
 λείπομαι ἔν τε τύχαις θνατῶν καὶ ἐν ἔργμασι λεύσσω κτλ.  
 ἀντ. α'. εἴθε μοι εἰξάμενα κτλ.  
 στρ. β'. οὐκέτι γὰρ καθαρὰν φρέν' ἔχω, τὰ παρ' ἐλπίδα λεύσσω κτλ.

This alternation of gender admits but one reasonable explanation, that these singers are what they declare themselves, men and women respectively. And since the play has a chorus of men (v. 61) as well as a chorus of women, and an excellent opportunity has just occurred for bringing the men upon the stage as part of the crowd, the combination is quite simple. But the case is a good warning how easily we may miss the action in a text without supplemental directions. It is by

<sup>1</sup> *Frogs* 90, τραγωδίας ποιῶντα πλεὺν ἢ μυρία κτλ. It will be noticed that Aristophanes does not say δράματα. I believe he would even then have felt the

word in this context to be impossible.

<sup>2</sup> Eur. *Hipp.* 1083, 1098.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 1102.