Ancient Theatre.

The first occurrence of the term in Plautus' Amphitryon.
The term "tragicomedy" appears for the first time in the Prologue of Plautus' *Amphitryon*, a palliata that presupposes a Greek model. The Latin term *tragico[co]moedia* (P, *tragicomoedia* Leo 1895) seems to be a construction based on the Greek lemma (not attested) *τραγι[κο]κωμωδία or *τραγοκωμωδία. Our exploration into tragicomedy could already be considered a dramatic genre in classical antiquity will begin from this text. It is well known that from the Renaissance to the present this genre has enjoyed various degrees of success in European dramatic production, influencing filmography as well. We will investigate the history of the term with reference to classical theatre since the satyr dramas, comedies, and tragedies, especially by Euripides, with their adventurous plots, happy endings, and some comic scenes bordering on the grotesque, do not neatly fall into either the tragic or comic genre. Indeed, they can only be well explained if understood as a "mixed" genre (Knox 1979[2], pp. 250-74).
The term "*tragico[co]moedia*" appears, for the first time, in two lines of the Prologue of Plautus' *Amphitryon* (ll. 59 and 63), which Chiarini defines as a «comedy of "tragic" mythological content» (Chiarini 1980, p. 99).

Nunc quam rem oratum huc ueni primum proloquar,   50
post argumentum huius eloquar tragoediae.
quid? contraxistis frontem, quia tragoediam
dixi futuram hanc? Deu' sum, commutauero.
eandem hanc, si voltis, faciam <iam> ex tragoedia
comoedia ut sit omnibus isdem uorsibus.   55
utrum sit an non uoltis? sed ego stultior,
quasi nesciam uos uelle, qui diuos siem.
teneo quid animi vostri super hac re siet:
faciam ut commixta sit: <sit> tragico[co]moedia.
nam me perpetuo facere ut sit comoedia,   60
reges quo ueniant et di, non par arbitror.
quid igitur? quoniam hic seruos quoque partes habet,
faciam sit, proinde ut dixi, tragico[co]moedia.

«Now I'll first tell you what I've come here to ask you for; then I'll tell you the argument of this tragedy. What? You are frowning because I said this was going to be a tragedy? I am a god: I'll change it. If you want, I'll immediately turn this same play from a tragedy into a comedy with all the same verses. Do you want it to be one or not? But I am being silly, as if I didn't know that you want it; after all, I am a god. I know what your feelings in this matter are: I'll make sure it's a mixed play; it'll be a tragicomedy! Well, I don't think it would be appropriate to turn completely into a comedy a play where kings and gods come on stage. What then? Since a slave has a role here as well, I'll make it, as I said, a tragicomedy». (De Melo 2011).

The author of the entry *Tragicommedia* in the *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* edited by Silvio D'Amico considers Plautus' use of this term «an occasional occurrence» and that «it is not developed in the Latin theatre» (Ares Montes 1962, col. 1059). However, the term refers to the idea of ancient contamination of the tragic and comic genres; even after Plautus, the idea of "a halfway genre" continued. Lines 54-56 of *Amphitryon* indirectly *express* Plautus'

idea that the difference between comic, tragic, and tragicomic genres can depend on pure *actio*: only different recitations can explain how the exact same lines can switch from tragic to comic or tragicomic. While the plot of *Amphitryon* verges on the tragic, it actually turns out to be a tragicomedy, not only because of the unexpected happy ending but also, and above all, thanks to the role of the actors who were free to interpret the misunderstandings and situations of the various characters in a way that was either tragic or comic (the same verses landing themselves to either interpretation).

The loss of countless ancient texts, including the Greek model of Plautus' *Amphitryon*, needs to be considered if we wish to evaluate the "tragicomedy" of Plautus' text. Attic comedies that present thematic or genre affinities with *Amphitryon* only exist as fragments. Examples of these are the *Nyx makra* by the comic poet Plato (*PCG* 7, FF 89-94, pp. 469-71), the *Amphitruo* of Archippus (*PCG* 2, FF 1-7, pp. 539-40), and the *Amphitruo* of Rhinthon (of which we possess only a lexical fragment: *PCG* 1, F 1, p. 262, from Ath. *Deipn.* 3.111 c). See Gigante 1983, pp. 606-9, Chiarini 1980, pp. 99-115.

Important clues to the Plautian *Amphitryon* model come from vascular representations that present parodies of lost dramas as *phlyakes*, such as Sophocles' *Amphitryon* (*TrGF* 4, FF 122-24, pp. 154-55: perhaps a satyr drama) and Euripides' *Alcmena* (*TrGF* 5.17, F *87b-104, pp. 219-27), in which contamination between tragic Greek myth and the farcical interpretation of Italic tradition is evident.

Asteas, a painter active in the potter's workshop of Paestum in the mid-4th century BC, portrayed a very peculiar scene on a krater that we can interpret thanks to the Plautus' later comedy, *Amphitryon* (Vatican U 19 inv. 17106, Trendall 1967, p. 46 nr. 65; Trendall 1989, pp. 201-2, fig. 364; Simon 2004, pp. 117-18, fig. 9.4): it is night, and Hermes is holding a lantern wearing a *petasus* on his head (exactly as Mercury says he does in *Amphitryon*, ll. 143-44 *nunc internosse ut nos possitis facilius, / ego has habebo úsque in petaso pinnulas*) facing Zeus equipped with "torulus", but without a petasus (see Jupiter in *Amphitryon*, ll. 145-46 "*tum meo patri autem torulus inerit aureus / sub petaso*), with a large phallus and clumsily armed with a ladder to reach a woman, probably Alcmena (*RFVP* 1987, n.76, pp. 124-25; Trendall 1989, pp. 201-2), looking out from the window of the upper floor of a house. This vase shows that even before Rhinthon of Tarentum, who lived between the final quarter of the 4th and the middle of the 3rd century BC, i.e. about fifty years after Asteas and more than 150 years before Plautus' *Amphitryon* (which we date to about 200 BC), farcical dramas were staged in Magna Graecia, starring and ridiculing "tragic" gods such as Zeus and Hermes, with evident genre contamination. Should Plautus not have been the first to blend a tragic model of Attic origin with elements of Italic improvisational theatre (as Lefèvre 1998 thinks), the hypothesis that *Amphitryon*, or another "hilarotragedy" by the Tarentine Rhinthon (cf. *PCG* I, p. 260), could have been the tragicomedy's model seems very plausible (Chiarini 1980, pp. 106-24). Plautus may also have obtained the term "tragicomedy" from Rhinthon (Chiarini 1980, especially pp. 106-15). The *testimonia* about this poet, who was born in Syracuse but flourished in Tarentum, indicate that his "hilarotragedies" combined tragic plots with comic elements: Stephen of Byzantium writes that «Rhinthon, a poet of phlyakes, transformed tragic dramas into laughter» (καὶ ῾Ρίνθων Ταραντῖνος, φλύαξ, τὰ τραγικὰ μεταρρυθμίζων ἐς τὸ γελοῖον, Stephen of Byzantium, *Ethnica*, s.v. Τάρας, p. 260, 6-8 Billerbeck, Neumann - Hartmann 2016, a definition taken up by Eustathius, *In Dionysium Periegetam* 376, Bernhardy 1828, vol. 1, p. 164, 3-6). In presenting Rhinthon, the *Suda* defines his dramas, called "hilatrogedies", as «tragicomical»: «Rhinthon, Tarantine, comedian, initiator of the so-called *hilarotragedy*, i.e., farcical dramas. He was the son of a ceramist and lived at the time of the first Ptolemy. His comic-tragic dramas are 38» (*Suda* P 171.1, *s.v.* ῾Ρίνθων: ῾Ρίνθων, Ταραντῖνος, κωμικός, ἀρχηγὸς τῆς καλουμένης ἱλαροτραγῳδίας, ὅ ἐστι φλυακογραφία. υἱὸς δὲ ἦν κεραμέως καὶ γέγονεν ἐπὶ τοῦ πρώτου Πτολεμαίου. δράματα δὲ αὐτοῦ κωμικὰ τραγικὰ λή). The titles of Rhinthon's hilarotragedies (besides the previously mentioned *Amphitryon*) are *Iphigenia in Aulis* (*PCG* 1, F 5, p. 264), *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (*PCG* 1, F 6, p. 264), *Medea* (*PCG* 1, F 7, p. 264),

Orestes (*PCG* 1, F 8, pp. 264-65), *Telephus* (*PCG* 1, F 9, p. 266) and indicate grotesque parodies of Euripidean tragedies (Gigante 1971, pp. 29-34).

The compound terms.

Other compound terms used to express mixed genres are κωμῳδοτραγῳδία (*comodotragodia*), the adjective παρατράγῳδος (*paratragodos*) and the verb παρατραγῳδέω (*paratragodeo*). Alcaeus, a comedian of the 5th century BC, entitled a comedy that has come down to us in fragments as Κωμῳδοτραγῳδία (*PCG* 2, F 19-21, pp. 9-21). The same title is used by the comedian Anaxandrides (IV BC, *PCG* 2, F 26, pp. 249-50). Unfortunately, the surviving evidence does not allow for a precise reconstruction of the two plays' content and nature, but Alcaeus' F 19 seems to be a parody of Eur. *Or.* 866-68 and 871, a tragedy in which Alexandrian critics had already recognized comic elements (Orth 2013 9.1, pp. 86-107). Plautus' *Amphitryon* seems to continue the kind of comedy stemming from the parody of the tragic genre of which we find examples both in the Attic comedy of the late 5[th] and 4[th] centuries BC, both in the *phlyakes* and in Rhinthon; in this respect, we may say that "*comodotragodia*" is equivalent to "*tragico[co]moedia*" and is synonymous with "*ilarotragodia*".

The verb παρατραγῳδέω represents another key term: we find it for the first time in a fragment of the *Phoeniciae* of the Greek comedian Strattis (450-380 BC) who, with clear parodic purpose and metatheatrical play, adopts the title and the contents of the similarly titled Euripidean tragedy. Edmonds 1975, pp. 830-931 thinks that it was Euripides himself speaking in the surviving comic fragment: Stratt. *Phoin.* F 50 (Fiorentini 2017, p. 200) ἐγὼ γὰρ αὐτὸν παρατραγῳδῆσαί τι μοι ἐκέ[λευσα («to recite something like a tragic parody I asked him»).

Plautus too uses this same verb, *paratragoedo*, in the palliata *Pseudolus*. The slave Pseudolus, plotting an intrigue in order to solve an issue concerning a love affair of his master Calidorus, suggests using a formal register (l. 702 *magnifice hominem compellabo*, «I will solemnly apostrophise him») in order to impress his master's wealthy friend, Carinus, who could help them.

So he does ll. 703-7. This is how Carino comments on Pseudolus' high-sounding performance:

Plaut. *Pseud.* 707 Carinus] *ut paratragoedat carnufex* («Carinus] What an emphatic tone of tragedy, the scoundrel!»).

In *Sublime* 3.1, Dionysius Longinus resorts to the idea of a "paratragic" style by mentioning some tragic verses that he considers overly redundant (the reference is probably to a section of Aeschylus' lost *Oreithyia*: Aesch. *TrGF* 3, F 281, pp. 377-79: a drama whose emphasis overflows from the tragic with the effect of entering the "middle ground" of a "mixed" genre (see the discussion in Matelli 2018).

Therefore, it is very likely that Plautus, using *tragico[co]moedia* in the *Amphitryon*, was well aware of the contamination of genres in the phlyacic comedy and Rhinthon's hilarotragedy and also of the Greek terminology that defined – with compound words – the dramatic genre halfway between tragedy and comedy.

The language of Plautus' "tragicomedy" *Amphitryon* shows a delightful mixture of different, if not opposing, registers: ranging from the high, epic-aulic and paratragic tone and the refined technical terminology of legal, political, theatrical and metatheatrical language, to the lexicon and locutions of everyday life (especially in the mouth of the slave Sosia), the insults that the master Amphitryon / Jupiter hurls at Amphitryon's slave and his divine double, and to the mocking witticisms, which nevertheless do not fall into offensively rude or abusive remarks. The high level of comedy is created by the accumulation of the equivocations of the "doubles" acting in the plot (which, in themselves, could lead to tragic results), and by the strong metatheatrical irony in the scenes in which Jupiter and Mercury pretend to be Amphitryon and Sosia, in a paroxysmal dramatic complication destined to melt away only in the final recognition.

Aristotelian theoria.

In the *Poetics* Aristotle defines tragedy and comedy as two opposite theatrical genres, irreconcilable and distinct. Tragedy has heroic or divine protagonists and sets in motion emotions such as *eleos* and *phobos* (pity and fear), while comedy has low and vulgar characters and generates laughter, *geloion*, aroused by something *aischron*, not excessive. Moreover, tragedy imitates actions that proceed from good fate to bad fate, while comedy stages actions aimed at a happy ending. The contrast is clear. Aristotle is well aware of tragedies with double endings (happy for the "good" character and unhappy for the "bad" characters) whose epic model is the *Odyssey*. However, he does not appreciate the contamination of genres: if tragedy takes on the characteristics of comedy, without an unhappy ending (which a tragedy must always have) pleasing the audience, it becomes similar to comedy, to the point that (he speculates) even «Orestes may become a friend of Aegisthus» (*Poet.* 13.1453 a 30-39, see Dewar-Watson 2007, p. 21).

Nevertheless, Aristotle himself − after expounding on the different origins of tragedy and comedy by specifying that the former developed from the dithyramb in honor of Dionysus and the latter from the improvisations of phallic processions − also admits that both forms derive from "satyr" poetry, σατυρικὴ ποίησις (*Poet.* 4.1449 a 20 and 22, see discussion in Else 1957, pp. 172-81; Lucas 1968, p. 84; Shaw 2014, pp. 42-43, cf. Paus. 32.3-5).

He recognizes an embryonic mixed form of dramatic poetry (that will evolve into tragedies, comedies, and satyr dramas of historical age), which for the rest he will no longer deal with.

Satyr drama as a mixed genre.

Improvised satyr poetry took "theatrical" form in Doric lands, in Corinth in the 6th century BC, with Arion of Metimna: he seems to have been the first to transform spontaneous cultic singing into a chorus: «... Arion is also said to have been the inventor of the "tragic mode", the first to set up a chorus, to sing a dithyramb and give a title to what is sung by the chorus, and to introduce Satyrs who spoke metrically» (*Suda* A 3886 Adler, s.v. Ἀρίων: [...] λέγεται καὶ τραγικοῦ τρόπου εὑρετὴς γενέσθαι καὶ πρῶτος χορὸν στῆσαι καὶ διθύραμβον ᾆσαι καὶ ὀνομάσαι τὸ ᾀδόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ χοροῦ καὶ Σατύρους εἰσενεγκεῖν ἔμμετρα λέγοντας, cf. *TrGF* 1, T 9; Gentili 1984-1985, pp. 17-35: 24-25). Next is Pratinas, who lived in the late 6th century and early 5th century BC, and, according to the *Suda*, introduced the performance of dramas around the years in which the stone construction of the theater of Dionysus in Athens began: «Pratinas, son of Pyrrhonides or Encomius, of Phlius, was a tragic poet. He competed against Aeschylus and Cherylus at the time of the 70th Olympiad (500/499-497/496 BC) and was the first to write a satyr drama. When he performed it, the scaffolding on which the spectators were sitting collapsed. After that, a theatre was built for the Athenians. He performed 50 plays, of which 32 were satyr dramas. He won only once» (*Suda* Π 2230 Adler, s.v. Πρατίνας: Πυρρωνίδου ἢ Ἐγκωμίου, Φλιάσιος, ποιητὴς τραγῳδίας· ἀντηγωνίζετο δὲ Αἰσχύλῳ τε καὶ Χοιρίλῳ ἐπὶ τῆς ο' Ὀλυμπιάδος, καὶ πρῶτος ἔγραψε Σατύρους. ἐπιδεικνυμένου δὲ τούτου συνέβη τὰ ἰκρία, ἐφ᾽ ὧν ἑστήκεσαν οἱ θεαταί, πεσεῖν, καὶ ἐκ τούτου θέατρον ᾠκοδομήθη Ἀθηναίοις. καὶ δράματα μὲν ἐπεδείξατο ν, ὧν Σατυρικὰ λβ· ἐνίκησε δὲ ἅπαξ).

Two scholars of the Byzantine era, Eustathius and Tzetzes, unequivocally define the satyr drama as a genre "halfway between" tragedy and comedy:

Eustathius writes, «According to the ancients, the peculiar characteristic of the satyr (genre) is to be halfway between the tragic and comic» (ἔστι γὰρ κατὰ τοὺς παλαιοὺς σατυρικοῦ ἴδιον τὸ μέσον εἶναι τραγικοῦ καὶ κωμικοῦ, Eustathius, *In Odysseam* Σ 18.355, vol. 2.184.4-5 Stallbaum 1825-30). Tzetzes, in the *Poem on the different poetic genres*, considers that initially, under the name of "must song" (τρυγῳδία), all three dramatic genres were included, and presents satyr drama as "completely intermediate" between comedy and tragedy: «... *"trygodia"* ("must song") was the designation that applied to all genres. But in time the name of the genre was divided into three: "comedy", "tragedy", and satyr drama, which is entirely intermediate between these» (... κλῆσις δὲ τοῖς σύμπασιν ἦν τρυγῳδία / χρόνῳ διῃρέθη δὲ κλῆσις εἰς τρία, / κωμῳδίαν ἄμα τε καὶ τραγῳδίαν / καὶ σατυρικὴν

τῶνδε τὴν μεσαιτάτην, Tzetzes, *Versus de poematum generibus* 17.2, ll. 51-53 Cantarella s.d., p. 48).

In the satyr dramas, we find characters from myth acting together with satyrs, while in other scenes the tone is playful and grotesque and, if not happy, with a double ending. It is a μεταποίησις, i.e. a "rewriting" of a tragic model where the satyrs introduce transgression into the world of the heroes, without giving rise to an «upside-down world » (Di Marco 2000). Modern critics doubt whether the satyr drama is closer to tragedy or comedy (see the *status quaestionis* and the discussion of the problems in Seidenstickers' 1982 monograph). Among more recent bibliography, Rossi 1989 and Griffith 2010 assimilate satyr drama to tragedy. Shaw 2014, on the contrary, uncovers points of contact with comedy (especially, pp. 149-52).

Side A of the Attic krater of Pronomos (Naples, Archaeological Museum 81673, H 3240; https://www.beazley.ox.ac.uk/record/3D02875A-C39F-47EC-B0C3-396D004855C7;

Table in Taplin-Wyles 2010, p. XV; description by Mannack 2010, pp. 5-13) presents the off-stage of a satyr drama in a Dionysiac cultic context and allows us to capture the characters, postures, and clothing of this mixed dramatic genre. Two actors are wearing the garments of tragic characters (on one side Heracles, with a short chiton and his traditional features, and on the other, a second character, probably a king, wearing a long chiton) and hold tragedy masks in their hands; a third actor (or the chorus leader?), who does not belong to the tragic genre, impersonates the Papposilenus: this character is wearing a tightfitting suit dotted with tufts of white hair, a leopard skin on his shoulders, and holds the typical bearded mask of an old silenus, crowned with ivy. The chorus members wear spotted skirts and have an equine tail and erect phallus (smaller in size, however, than in the phyliacic or comic vases). All satyrs (except one on the left) hold the typical mask in their hands, as does the fellow wearing a decorated short tunic on the right. The chorus member Nikoleos wears his satyr's mask while performing a wide dance step, the *sikinnis*. This painting (which almost certainly commemorated an artistic victory) shows how the tragic genre was scenically mixed with a more vulgar register (but without excess).

Satyr drama in the tragic tetralogy.

The satyr drama was to compete in the Great Dionysia as the "fourth drama" after three tragedies (*Suda* T 395 Adler, s.v. Τετραλογία). Its function, according to Photius (*Lexicon* Σ 502, *s.v.* Σατυρικὰ δράματα), was to "offer relief" (πρὸς διάχυσιν). It is worth noting that, in the practice initiated by Pratinas, the author of the satyr drama was the same poet as that of the tragic trilogy, the group of actors the same, the prize for the best poet or actor of the tetralogy the same (Shaw 2014, p. 2, no. 7), and so was the number of members of the chorus (Krumeich 1999, p. 53), even if they were characterized by "vulgar" nudity and presented an animalistic aspect. The satyr drama is characterized by an abundance of comical theatrical devices (Shaw 2014, pp. 3 ff.), a stylistic register open to colloquialisms, parodies of the heroic style (Seidensticker 1989c, pp. 335-57), and dance steps and choreography different from the tragic ones (such as the *sikinnis* step of the satyr in the foreground in the vase of Pronomos, Seidensticker 1999, pp. 21-23).

Demetrius, *On Style*, 169 states that «laughter is alien to tragedy» (ὁ δὲ γέλως ἐχθρὸς τραγῳδίας), while satyr drama is a "playful tragedy": «No one could think of a playful tragedy unless he wrote a satyr drama instead of a tragedy» (οὐδὲ γὰρ ἐπινοήσειεν ἄν τις τραγῳδίαν παίζουσαν, ἐπεὶ σάτυρον γράψει ἀντὶ τραγῳδίας).

Satyr drama's "genre" problem stems from theatrical competitions being limited to tragedy and comedy. Even Aristotelian theory admits the tragic / comic genre dichotomy without recognizing the intermediate genre.

We know of various satyr drama titles, but only Euripides' *Cyclops* has survived in its entirety. Based on the Odysseus *epos*, it features Odysseus as the protagonist, a chorus of satyrs and a plot with a double ending – positive for our hero and unhappy for the Cyclops. The precise number of satyr plays by each of the three great tragedians of the 5th century BC is unknown. In the Library of Alexandria, there were only eight satyr dramas by

Euripides, one of which was doubtful (Sutton 1980, pp. 59-68, Carrara 2012, p. 328; Pechstein 1999, pp. 399-402): this is a surprisingly low number since the Alexandrian tradition attributed 92 dramas to Euripides, and thus 23 tetralogies that would presuppose as many satyr dramas (*Vita* 2, 3 Schwartz 1887); for Aeschylus, we have at least 14 certain titles of satyr dramas compared to at least 17 tetralogies (a total of 70 to 90 dramas, Wessels 1999, p. 89); and for Sophocles 15 titles compared to about 120 works, thus about 30 tetralogies (Sutton 1980, pp. 36-59; Scheurer 1999, pp. 224-74, see discussion in Carrara 2012, pp. 315-18). These numerical data raise an important question about the nature of the fourth drama.

The Alcestis *of Euripides, fourth drama in 438 BC, without chorus of satyrs.*
The question of the fourth drama without a chorus of satyrs is raised by the fact that Euripides' *Alcestis* was staged in 438 BC as the fourth play. The *hypothesis* attributable to Aristophanes of Byzantium mentions that Euripides won second prize with *The Cretans*, *Alcmeon in Psofides*, *Telephus* and *Alcestis*, which was nominated to fourth position, and defined as «quite satyric», because it turns towards joy and pleasure (unlike tragedies). The same source adds that, like the *Orestes*, Euripides' *Alcestis* should be considered "extraneous" to the tragic genre since it begins with misfortune and ends in joy and incorporates characteristics more typical of comedy (*Hypoth. Alc.* 27-31 Meridier 1926 τὸ δὲ δρᾶμά ἐστι σατυρικώτερον ὅτι εἰς χαρὰν καὶ ἡδονὴν καταστρέφει παρὰ τὴν τραγικὴν. ἐκβάλλεται ὡς ἀνοίκεια τῆς τραγικῆς ποιήσεως ὅ τε ᾿Ορέστης καὶ ἡ ῞Αλκηστις, ὡς ἐκ συμφορᾶς μὲν ἀρχόμενα, εἰς εὐδαιμονίαν δὲ χαρὰν λήξαντα, <ἅ> ἐστι μᾶλλον κωμῳδίας ἐχόμενα.). Interestingly, this text insists on the "rather comical" ending of the *Alcestis* (τὸ δρᾶμα κωμικωτέραν ἔχει τὴν καταστροφήν). The *scholion* on l. 1691 of the *Orestes* takes up the same judgment by juxtaposing in turn the plots of the *Orestes* and the *Alcestis*: «Tragedy ends in either lament or pity, while comedy ends in agreement or reconciliation. From here, we see that this drama uses a comic ending: a reconciliation between Menelaus and Orestes takes place. But also in the *Alcestis* we pass from misfortune to happiness and back to life» (ἡ κατάληξις τῆς τραγῳδίας ἢ εἰς θρῆνον ἢ εἰς πάθος καταλύει, ἡ δὲ τῆς κωμῳδίας εἰς σπονδὰς καὶ διαλλαγάς. ὅθεν ὁρᾶται τόδε τὸ δρᾶμα κωμικῇ καταλήξει χρησάμενον· διαλλαγαὶ γὰρ πρὸς Μενέλαον καὶ ᾿Ορέστην. ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν τῇ ᾿Αλκήστιδι ἐκ συμφορῶν εἰς εὐφροσύνην καὶ ἀναβιοτήν, Schwartz 1887). Tzetzes acknowledges the Alexandrian scholarly tradition that called "satyr play" any drama with a happy ending. However, in the Prolegomena *De Comoedia Aristophanis* (16.2 ll. 153-55 Cantarella s.d., p. 43), he says that he later discarded this conviction. He explains that he had been persuaded by Alexandrian scholars that Euripides' *Orestes* and *Alcestis* and Sophocles' *Electra* were "satyr dramas" in that «from suffering they end in joy» and that this is also what he taught. However, after reading many other Euripidean dramas he found and recognized true satyr dramas, as those that «provide pure theatrical pleasure and laughter without a transition from bad to good fortune» (... τοῖς δὲ τραγικὰς βίβλους ἐξηγησαμένοις πεισθείς, οἷς καὶ οὗτοί φασι τὰ αὐτά, εἶπον ῾Ορέστην καὶ ῞Αλκηστιν Εὐριπίδου καὶ Σοφοκλέους ᾿Ηλέκτραν εἶναι σατυρικὰ δράματα, ὡς ἀπὸ πένθους εἰς χαρὰν καταλήγοντα, καὶ οὕτω μέτροις τε καὶ λοιποῖς μου συγγράμμασιν γράφων ἐδίδασκον, ἕως ἀναγνοὺς Εὐριπίδου πολλὰ δράματα εὗρον καὶ ἔγνων σατυρικὰ δράματα τέρψεις θυμελικὰς ἀμιγεῖς καὶ γέλωτα φέροντα). For Tzetzes, the drama that can correctly be considered a "satyr drama" was *Syleus* with Heracles' exploits as he frees himself from the demon's captivity (Pechstein - Krumeich 1999, pp. 457-73). Sophocles' *Electra*, that Tzetzes mentions along with Euripides' *Alcestis* and *Orestes*, has nothing "tragicomic", and Cantarella n.d. (critical note p. 43) suspects that Tzetzes or his source confusedly wrote *Electra* instead of *Tyró*, a Sophoclean satyr play mentioned as similar to *Alcestis* and *Orestes* by the *scholion* on l. 1691 of Euripides' *Orestes*. *Alcestis*, a "tragedy" with a happy ending performed in place of a satyr drama, has been the subject of much discussion (*exempli gratia* Burnett 1971, pp. 24-46; Carrara 2012, pp. 327-30). I merely note that the interpretation that «the satyr-less play was a reaction to the recent enactment of the Athenian law known as the "decree of Morychides"» is unconvincing (Shaw 2014, echoing

Marshall, p. 3). The prescriptions of Morychides' decree of 440/439 BC are obscure (reported by *Schol.* in Aristoph. *Ach.* 67 Wilson 1975, and *Suda* E 3509 Adler, s.v. Εὐθυμένης). The decree prescribed «not to do comedy», but it is unclear whether this is about the performance of comedies (which did not happen), or as censorship of the *onomasti komodein* (see discussion in Medda 2011).

Some fragments and iconographic evidence allow us to hypothesise a certain number of satyr dramas without a chorus of satyrs, the so-called "prosatyric dramas" (Decharme1899, p. 291; Samson 1978, pp. 40-46; Sutton 1980, pp. 180-90; Seidensticker 1989c, pp. 338-40; Pechstein 1999, p. 400-1; Carrara 2012, pp. 327-32). Based on an iconographic comparison, Sutton 1980, pp. 180-90 refers to Euripides' *Busiris*, pointing out that it seems to have young Egyptians in the chorus despite being a satyr drama (*TrGF* 5.1, pp. 368-70; see Krumeich-Pechstein-Seidensticker 1999, Tafel 27 a and b = Berlin, Staatlichen Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz F 2534).

In conclusion: ancient Alexandrian scholarship also ascribed a broad, metaphorical, and 'opaque' sense to "satyr drama", referring to a mixed genre plot with a happy ending and without the need for a chorus of satyrs.

In contrast to Aristotle, genre-mixing was not considered a taboo for Plato's Socrates. In *Philebus* 50 b 1-4, he establishes a similarity between life and theatre, where tragedy and comedy are mixed: «This reasoning shows, therefore, that − in laments, tragedies and <in comedies> − sorrows are mixed with joys, not only in theatre, but also in life's tragedy and comedy, and on many other occasions» (ΣΩ. Μηνύει δὴ νῦν ὁ λόγος ἡμῖν ἐν θρήνοις τε καὶ τραγῳδίαις <καὶ κωμῳδίαις> (add. Hermann), μὴ τοῖς δράμασι μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τῇ τοῦ βίου συμπάσῃ τραγῳδίᾳ κωμῳδίᾳ, λύπας ἡδοναῖς ἅμα κεράννυσθαι, καὶ ἐν δὴ μυρίοις).

In the concluding section of Plato's *Symposium* (*Symposion*, 223 d 1-8), Socrates spends the night talking to Agathon and Aristophanes, forcing them to admit (although distraught from exhaustion) that «it is a poet's gift to be able to compose both tragedies and comedies» (... τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι κωμῳδίαν καὶ τραγῳδίαν ἐπίστασθαι ποιεῖν), and that «who for art is a tragic poet, is also a comic poet» (καὶ τὸν τέχνῃ τραγῳδοποιὸν ὄντα <καὶ> κωμῳδοποιὸν εἶναι).

The characteristics of many tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and especially Euripides, in which the plots touch upon, or come close to the comic genre, should be reconsidered. Jouanna 1998 has shown how in Aeschylus' *Libation Bearers* the nurse's figure takes on a comic connotation, not unlike the figure of the messenger in Sophocles' *Antigone*. The *Eumenides* end with an unexpected happy ending: the acquittal of the matricide. Although these seem to be concessions to situations outside the tragic genre, we certainly cannot recognise them as tragicomedies. Concerning Sophocles, Decharme 1899, p. 291 states that «Sophocles, cela paraît certain, avait composé moins de drames satyriques que de trilogies». In addition to *Tyró* and other satyr dramas, also the plot of *Philoctetes* could be seen as approaching the mixed genre, reaching grotesque peaks, and ending happily with a *deus ex machina*.

A significant body of literature has long recognized the genre contaminations within Euripides' tragedies. In addition to *Alcestis* (438 BC) and *Orestes* (408 BC), the lost *Andromeda* fragments also suggest the same feature. The *Andromeda* of 412 BC includes a monster to be fought in the plot, a story bordering on tragedy. Still, it concludes with a happy ending, with a chorus represented by young Ethiopian women (*TrGF* 5.1, pp. 233-60). I am also thinking of *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (413 BC) and *Helen* (412 BC), where the happy ending is made possible by a plot organized by a woman; of *Ion* (possibly 412 BC, with Athena as *deus ex machina*), of *Iphigenia in Aulis* (405 BC), a tragedy of equivocations with a probable original happy ending, again thanks to a *deus ex machina* (cf. *Ael. NA 739* = F 857 N² e F 857 *TrGF* 5.2, p. 890), and of the ambiguous plot and intertextuality with Aristophanes' *Thesmophoriazusae* that characterise *The Bacchae*, staged posthumously in 405 BC (Burnett 1971, Sansone 1978, Saetta Cottone 2011, Zanetto 2013).

Recent studies on the tragedies of Euripides and Aristophanes' comedies have revealed an intertextuality between the two authors that is fundamental to understanding their compositions' dramaturgical aspects that otherwise remain unresolved. Some even have spoken of a comic "palimpsest" for the tragic poet and a tragic palimpsest for the comic poet (May 2012). I cannot go into this large problem, but only relate it to the theme of "tragicomedy": the "comic" component present in Euripides' tragedies, which we call "tragicomedy", should be considered in relation to the "paratragic" subtext of some comedies, especially those of Aristophanes, to which it sometimes responds (see the contributions presented in Medda-Mirto-Pattoni 2006, Saetta Cottone 2011, May 2012, Schmidt 1964, pp. 50-52, Wycherley 1946, Major 2013, Gil 2013, Schwinge 2014, Craig 2015, Phillips 2015, Lucarini 2016, Sáenz 2016, Zuckerberg 2016, Miles 2017, Matelli 2019, pp. 263-64 and nn. 102, p. 272).

Conclusion.
The original core of tragicomedy seems recognizable, then, in the tragic style poetry with metrically speaking satyrs invented by Arion. It appears to be the first spectacular evolution of an original ritual satyric poetry, from which, according to Aristotle, the dramatic genres of the classical age evolved (Matelli 2022, pp. 77 and 80).
It precedes the differentiation of the dramatic genres, re-emerging later in the satyr dramas as well as in some tragedies and comedies, to substantiate their dramatic *vis*. The question is controversial, but the evidence does seem to favour this interpretation rather than considering tragicomedy as a secondary evolution of the tragic and comic genres.
I would like to recall two vascular images from the 5th century BC: the first depicting a conscious connection between satyr drama and tragedy, the second the tension towards the unity of tragedy and comedy, driven by satyr drama. I refer to 1) the red-figure krater of the Polignotos Group (Compiègne, Vivenel Museum 1025; krater attributed to the Polignotos Group, 450-440 BC) from 440-430 BC, depicting a seated Dionysus getting a young satyr called Komos to drink by handing him a goblet filled with wine from Tragedy, placed behind the Satyr and 2) the volute krater, dated c. 430 BC (Metropolitan Museum, 1924.97.25, from Gela), depicting two satyrs, both called "Simos", running towards two Maenads, *Komodia* and *Tragoidia* (recognisable by the thyrsus in her hand): the scene is very dynamic, and the two women, *Komodia* and *Tragoidia*, both pursued from behind by a satyr called "Simos", seem destined to clash (or meet). Shaw 2014, p. 149 observes that «The repeated name Simos indicates that both satyrs are the same figure … Simos is only one satyr, but he chases both Tragedy and Comedy at the same time, just as satyr drama is only one genre, but is linked with both tragedy and comedy at the same time».
In conclusion we have evidence to suggest that the tragicomedies that made this genre successful in the Renaissance − from Giovanni Battista Guarini's *Pastor Fido* on − reworked some themes but did not create a new genre. Guarini acknowledged the importance of Greek theatrical precedents in *Il Verrato*, where he vigorously defended the "tragicomic" genre against Jason Denores, who blamed it for contradicting the precepts of Aristotelian *Poetics*.

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Modern Theatre.

The ideal beginning of the modern tragicomedy could be set in 1502, when Ferdinand de Rojas published the second expanded edition (from 16 to 21 acts) of the *Comedia de Calisto y Melibea* in Seville (1499), changing the first term to *Tragicomedia*. Under the title *Celestina*, this anomalous and experimental text (a sort of dramatised novel) was to have enormous success on stage thanks to its daring blend of crude realism and exasperated lyricism. Translated into numerous languages, including Latin and Hebrew, it was banned in 1640 and then revived in the 20th century, for example in Italy in Luca Ronconi's famous 2014 staging based on Michel Garneau's reduction. In the wake of the rediscovery of Aristotle's *Poetics*, all Renaissance culture systematically and almost obsessively tackled the classical dichotomy between tragedy and comedy, discussing their distinctive features in theory and analysing, in particular, those cases that were difficult to classify, such as the escape-tragedies with happy endings of the late Euripides; Plautus' *Amphitryon*, from which the term originates; satyr drama or Terence's pathetic comedies. This contrasts the more rigidly classicist positions, faithful to the dictates of Cicero, who in *De optimo genere oratorum* (1.1) advised against any form of contamination between tragedy and comedy; and the more flexible positions, which aimed to experiment with new forms more suited to contemporary audiences.

The issue was settled in the context of the Renaissance courts: on the one hand, the resumption of Greek tragedy, which began with the staging of *Oedipus Rex* at the Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza in 1585, did not have a lasting success due to being overly sumptuous and unsuitable for court context and its lucid reflection on power; on the other hand, aggressive comedy manners (such as those of Plautus) had become inadequate, especially for political reasons, as with satirical comedies of manners. At the end of the 16th century Angelo Ingegneri, in *Della poesia rappresentativa e del modo di rappresentare le favole sceniche* (Ferrara 1598), sanctioned the end of a theatre based on fixed forms and noted the growing success of a hybrid form such as tragicomedy, which reflected the desire to escape and Christian ideology. While the first Renaissance drama to bring the classification of tragicomedy in Italy was the *Fernandus Servatus* by Carlo and Marcellino Verardi (1493), a tragedy with a happy ending dedicated to a real event (the attempted regicide of Ferdinand of Aragon in 1492 in Barcelona), it was with the fashion of the pastoral setting that this genre began to flourish. This was also flanked by lively controversies, such as the one between the Aristotelian Giason Denores, a Cypriot exile who taught moral philosophy in Padua, and Giovan Battista Guarini, author of *Pastor fido* (1590), whose text was to enjoy great circulation in Europe and notable iconographic success. In the *Discorso* of 1587 and the *Apologia* of 1590, Denores accused the *Pastor fido* of being a monstrosity, not only for having mixed two irreconcilable opposites such as tragedy and comedy, but also for having done so through the pastoral genre, unsuitable for either form. Guarini responded to the two attacks with two writings (*Il Verato*, 1588, and *Il Verato Secondo*, 1593), later reworked into a more treatise like form in the *Compendio della Poesia tragicomica* (1601), an innovative theoretical arrangement which contrasted doctrinal rigidity with the historicity of genres, considering the pastoral genre as a polyvalent way (Fusini 2014, pp. 250-51).

In England the weight of the classical tradition in literary theory was not as incisive as in Italy: in a famous passage from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (2.2), Polonius makes a list of genres, ironically accumulating mixed forms, and giving us a confirmation of Shakespeare's creative

freedom, which was to result in his escape-plays and in the unclassifiable *The Tempest*. The effect of Guarini's theory can be felt in the Elizabethan production if we think of John Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess* (1608), a "pastoral tragicomedy", and the various tragedies with double endings, often also referred to as tragicomedies, such as Thomas Heywood's *The English Traveller*. Here too there was no lack of polemics, which attacked the hermaphroditic nature of the tragicomic genre: Philip Sydney in *Apology of Poetry* called this genre a bastard.

In France, the romantic critic George Sainte-Beuve considered the beginning of the French national theatre as the weeks of queuing up for the first performance of Corneille's *Cid* (1637); this tragicomedy was also violently attacked for its irregularity, for example by Georges Scudery; Corneille discussed and partly accepted the criticism in *Discours sur le poeme dramatique* (1660), but already in 1648 had classified his masterpiece as a tragedy, a sign of the end of the golden age of tragicomedy (Guichemerre 1981). In its creative practice, the genre is fully in tune with the Baroque poetics of mixture: Scudery himself wrote a tragicomedy *Ligdamon et Lidia ou La resemblance* (1631) on the theme of the double. Theatrical practice of the companies of actors was unencumbered by academic polemics: Alexander Hardy wrote a very elaborate production, only published in small part, for the company *Le Comédiens du Roi*, directed by Valleran Le Conte and performed at the Hôtel de Bourgogne, in which he performed permanently; to be remembered is the serial dramatisation of the extensive Hellenistic novel of Heliodorus conceived for seven consecutive evenings, which indicates a harmony between novel and tragicomedy (Mazoer 1994; Fusillo 2018). Soon Hardy too was challenged by the new generation of playwrights (Du Ryer, Auvray, Rayssiguier), who were more interested in the subtle theatre of the ego and eros (Lombardi 1995).

In the 18th century, the birth of bourgeois drama marked the overcoming of the opposition between tragedy and comedy after transfiguring it into a new fundamental category for developing the realistic novel: the serious. The tragicomic was increasingly theorised (by Johnson, Lessing, Wieland) as the coexistence and not the juxtaposition of the two opposites, becoming one of the keys to Romantic poetics, with which Shakespeare would be reinterpreted, giving rise, with Victor Hugo, to the poetics of the grotesque and melodrama. It is therefore not surprising that in the 20th century, Beckett defined *Waiting for Godot* (1953) as a tragicomedy, reusing the term with a metaphysically negative connotation; and the category is central to other crucial experiences of 20th century dramaturgy (Brecht, Ionesco, Dürrenmatt, Pinter) (Foster 2004). Various experiences of the contemporary scene can also be read in terms of the tragicomic mixture, achieved above all through the language of the body, and the merciless exploration of the rites of everyday life: the acting of Franca Valeri, who perfectly mixes tears and laughter, the dance theatre of Pina Bausch, the research on dialect of the new dramaturgy (Enzo Moscato, Saverio La Ruina, Spiro Scimone), the theatre of Emma Dante, the work on the contemporary imagination of Roderigo Garcia.

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