

ABSTRACT

This thesis has examined several texts that were created in period from 2nd century AD - 12th century AD, i.e. late ancient texts or the texts that drew inspiration from classical tradition. Although the period might seem too wide, it enabled study of continuity and change in the reception of theatre in ancient monographs on this topics.

Several questions were asked here. The texts seemed not to have much in common generally. This thesis seeks to find out whether there are any affinities, what their real informative value is in respect to their generic affiliation, what influences affected these treatises and whether and how they influenced each other.

The first two chapters determine the issue of this thesis and the current state of research. The third chapter establishes terminology, since the scholarly works on theatre of Late Antiquity and Byzantium have very often defined the term theatre too vaguely, which made it hard to obtain any reasonable output of research. In the fourth chapter the texts to be examined were shortly introduced in chronological order and basic information on their literary qualities was provided to the reader.

The analysis of the texts starts in the fifth chapter that discusses generic questions of drama and theatre in Late Antiquity. Tragedy is studied and compared in relation to pantomime and similar exploration is made in the case of comedy and its relation to mime. Images of these genres in the texts *On pantomime* (Lucian), *Oratio LXIV* (Libanius), *Contra ludos et theatra*, *Contra theatra* (John Chrysostom) and *Apology of mimes* (Choricus) are put into larger context of late ancient literature.

The sixth chapter investigates the writings by grammarians (Diomedes, Euanthius and Donatus) and Byzantine archivists (anonymous treatise *On Tragedy*, Ioannes Tzetzes, Eustathius of Thessalonica), compares their methods and discusses similarities and differences in the ways they deal with the issue of classical drama. The specific attitude towards drama and theatre in the text *On hypocrisy* by Eustathius of Thessalonica is stressed here, too.

The seventh chapter examines the image of theatre genres not based on drama in grammarians' and archivists' texts. The evidence is enriched with the texts by Ioannes Zonaras and Theodore Balsamon commenting on canons of church synods, since they provide us with more information. Thus the attitude of church towards theatre is examined here, too, through comparison between secular law decrees and church decrees dealing with theatre.

In the eighth chapter the authors' awareness of theatre practice in various eras of history is examined and their method of description is studied.

In the ninth chapter our attention turns from the facto-graphical content of the texts to the question of attitude to theatre in the late ancient society and its change during centuries. The taste of audience is studied by examination of the literary sources and so is the image of actors' profession in society. The attitudes towards theatre are also surveyed through the means of argumentation in the apologies and philippics against theatre. This reveals some new affinities among texts.

The tenth chapter closes the discussion by bringing up some other issues closely related to the subject of this thesis. Above all, it is the question of theatre revival in church and liturgical context in Late Byzantium and the quasi-dramas in the periods of both Byzantine humanisms, to use Paul Lemerle's term. Quasi-dramas are identified as a specific way of studying dramatic tradition by Byzantine scholars. The last question briefly mentioned here was the specific case of *Cyprus Passion Play*:

The analysis showed that the relations among texts are very intricate. There are texts that in spite of their chronological distance display many traits in common - as the Byzantine archivists' texts and the Western grammarians' treatises. On the other hand, the texts of philippics against theatre from the Eastern part of the Roman Empire differ a lot from the Western texts on the same topics in argumentation, although these texts are not much distant in time. This also demonstrates that geographical aspects explain neither affinities, nor differences among texts.

The generic analysis presents how important it is to take genre of the text into account, because it influenced the contents of the treatise and the treatment of the information in many ways. It happened not only in the case of "tendentious" texts as John Chrysostom's sermons and Tertullian's and Novatian's compositions, but also in the case of the theoretical treatises.

Finally, the texts analyzed here were organized into three large groups that follow ancient tradition of reflection of drama and theatre. The first group follows Platonic tradition, where the author assumes decisive approach to the subject and explains it clearly, as in the case of drama and theatre Plato does in *Republic*. It always discusses the relation between recipients and the performance. In this work, all philippics and apologies of drama and theatre belong to this group, as well as Eustathius' of Thessalonica treatise). The second group of the texts, called Aristotelian here, is highly theoretical. The authors are not interested in the relationship of performance and recipients, but they intend to analyze their subject in detail and detachedly. Moreover, these texts are typical for critical periods of drama and theatre, where these arts find themselves on certain crossroads of eras or they are not performed anymore. In this work all grammarians' and archivists' works belong to this group of texts, with the exception of *On hypocrisy* by Eustathius of Thessalonica. The last group of texts follows the tradition of metadramatical and metatheatrical critics of drama and theatre by Aristophanes. All Byzantine quasi-dramas belong to this group.