

HEINSIUS, D.

Dan. Heinsii De tragoediae constitutione liber, in quo inter caetera tota de hac Aristotelis sententia dilucide explicatur. Editio auctior multo, cui & Aristotelis De poëtica libellus, cum ejusdem notis & interpretatione, accedit.

Référence : 120249

Leiden (Lugd. Batav.), Ex officinâ Elsevirianâ, 1643.

Commentaire : 12mo. (XII), 368 p. 19th century calf 13.5 cm 'De tragoediae constitutione' established the reputation of Heinsius as an Aristotelian literary critic (Ref: Willems 554; Berghman 964; Rahr 548; Brunet 3,83; Graesse 3,232; Ebert 9377) (Details: Back ruled gilt, with a letterpiece. Boards with blind stamped borders & gilt dentelles on the turn-overs. Marbled endpapers. Elsevier's woodcut printer's mark on the title, featuring an old man who stands in the shade of a vine-entwined elmtree, symbolising the symbiotic relationship between scholar and publisher. The motto is: 'Non solus'. The first part of the book consists of the 'De tragoediae constitutione', the pages 221-321 contain Aristotle's Poetics, edited and translated into Latin by Daniel Heinsius, the pages 322-368 are filled with Heinsius' notes on that text) (Condition: Binding used, and worn at the extremities. Head of the spine gone for 1 cm, foot of the spine chafed. Joint cracked, but strong. Small bookplate on the front pastedown. Paper yellowing) (Note: 'De tragoediae constitutione' established the reputation of the Dutch classical scholar of Flemish origin Daniel Heinsius, 1580-1655, as an Aristotelian critic of reknown. He enjoyed also 'international fame as an editor of classical texts, theorist of literary criticism, historian and neolatin poet, was professor of Poetics at the University of Leiden since 1603, extraordinarius Greek since 1605. After the death of J.J. Scaliger, to whose inner circle he belonged, he held the chair of Greek, from 1609 till 1647. He is best known for his edition of Aristotle's treatise on poetry, (...) which he studied in connection with the 'Ars Poetica' of Horace. This edition is 'the only considerable contribution to the criticism and elucidation of the work that was ever produced in the Netherlands. (...) In his pamphlet 'De tragoediae constitutione', (...), he deals with all the essential points in Aristotle's treatise, giving proof that he has thoroughly imbibed the author's spirit. (...) It was through this work that he became a centre of Aristotelian influence in Holland. His influence extended, in France, to Chaplain, and Balzac, to Racine and Corneille; in Germany to Opitz; and in England to Ben Jonson (...)' (J.E. Sandys, 'A history of classical scholarship, N.Y., 1964, vol. 2, p. 314) Heinsius' edition and Latin translation of Aristotle's 'De poetica liber' was first published by Elsevier in 1610, a year later this was repeated, and expanded with 'De tragoediae constitutione' (1611). Heinsius produced of both works a second and augmented edition, published by Elsevier in 1643. Heinsius' treatise 'De tragoediae constitutione' addresses itself explicitly to the task of presenting a simple and intelligible exposition of tragedy and the tragic plot 'ex mente atque opinione Aristotelis'. Accordingly, the work is based on the Aristotelian definition of tragedy, which is incorporated verbatim in the opening of Heinsius' discussion, and Aristotle's qualitative parts of tragedy (fabula, mores, sententiae, dictio, melodia and apparatus) provide the topics around which the argument is built up. Heinsius' treatise has consequently sometimes been viewed as rendering the 'milk of the Aristotelian word' more or less unwatered'. (P.R. Selin, 'Daniel Heinsius and Stuart England', Leiden/Oxford, 1968, p. 124/25) Nevertheless, 'Heinsius moves away from the Aristotelian concern with the essence of an artistic product to the search for appropriate means of securing what are basically rhetorical effects, ultimately directed to the ethical benefit of the audience'. (Idem p. 145) The treatise did not contribute completely fresh ideas or methods to the Renaissance tradition of the poetic theory. Heinsius' importance lies in the pruning away of complex and elaborate rhetorical Renaissance approaches) (Provenance: Bookplate, probably beginning 20th century: 'Ex libris Emile Brugnon') (Collation: *6, A12-P12, Q4)

(Photographs on request)

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