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SUBLIM

Sublimità e tragedia in Vittorio Alfieri

(Sublimity and tragedy in Vittorio Alfieri)

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Both in the poetics and literary works of Vittorio Alfieri the concept of the sublime achieved fundamental importance, successfully identified by criticism. However there is still a need for a thorough investigation on this issue. This report aims at initiating research on this topic, focusing on Alfieri's well documented references to Longinus's *On the sublime*. Alfieri's concept of sublime is analyzed on the basis of its significance for his conception of tragedy poetics. The aim of Alfieri seems to shape, by means of its references to Longinus, a poetics of the individualist grandeur, focused on the author, transmitted in a contrivedly peculiar and violently harsh language. The outcome is not only a revision of the basic principles of tragedy, but also, in a stylistic sense, an extreme, non-conventional language.

Alfieri uses the text of Longinus in a number of ways. Not only is he interested in the passages centered on the aesthetics of production and reception, but he especially highlights the rhetoric and stylistic dimension of the treatise. He doesn't develop a sensualist theoretical approach, that is, trying to achieve the sublime from the perception of the senses, nor he submits his doctrinal utterances to the horror, as some other 18th century theorists such as Dennis and Burke do. When Alfieri talks about the sublime, horror and like terms have no relevance. He transfers the Longinian concept of the sublime thoroughly, includes the debate over stylistic aspects and therefore, the critical point of rhetoric either in its conceptualizations of the sublime or in his practical use.

The talk presents, first of all, the central theorems of *On the sublime* according to their importance for the development of Alfieri's theory; secondly, it considers Alfieri's conception of the author, the production and the reception of the literary text under the sign of the sublime. Finally, it deals with the sublime in the theory of tragedy and in Alfieri's literary praxis since his new *Antigone*.