

Attributes of Decorum. Cothurnus and Sock (5/6)



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Justifying the two different shoes at the feet of the personification of Decorum (the coturno on the right, the sock on the left), Castellini plunges into a historical and literary treatise that is not easy to read, but that highlights his remarkable qualities as a scholar. A scholar who quotes the great authors of the past as men of their own time, repositories of practical notions to be rediscovered and analyzed in order to correct the interpretative distortions that have occurred in subsequent eras. Castellini's philology shapes a complex, multifaceted figure in which appearance and substance are intimately linked. The grandeur of tragedy and the concreteness of comedy are the two complementary registers to which Coturnus and Sock refer, combining nobility and practicality, refinement and common sense. Balance, the ability to synthesize, and a sense of reality emerge as the founding characters of the allegory of Decorum. See C. Ripa, Iconologia, Eredi di Matteo Florimi, Siena 1613, pp. 176-181. Notes to the text are editorial.

Hitherto we have spoken of decorum in doing & speaking, but now we will also say something of decorum in going & in the conversation with other people. Wherefore he has on his leg a stately cothurnus; having on his left leg, a common sock. For all, Hercules in Aristophanes, ridicules Bacchus because he carried a lion's skin & club with cothurni on his legs, as things which did

not agree together: the Lion's skin being the spoil of a valiant man; thinking that cothurnus were fit only for uxorious persons. Wherefore Hercules said to Bacchus:

*Sed non potens sum, arcere risum,
Videns pellem Leonis in croceo positam,
Qua mens? Quid cothurnus, & clava conveniunt?* [1]

But the cothurnus agree very well with Bacchus, whom we must not esteem to be a softly weak man. For these cothurni were worn by the heroes; as Isidorus relates, whose authority, we will relate hereafter a little larger. From this it is, that they used the same in tragedies; because in tragedies, there appeared also great personages, heroes & princes, for this cause, it is held by the poets that they were fittest for heroes. Plutarchus relates in his *Quaestiones convivales* [2], that cothurni were worn by the hebrew priests: *Primum enim arguit hoc Pontifex Max. qui sestis diebus mitratus ingreditur hinnuli pellem auro contectam indutus, tunicamque; ad talos pertinentem gestans, & cothurnos, multa autem tintinabula dependent de veste, quae inter ambulandum strepitum edunt, ut & apud nos* [2]. By these likenesses of the clothes, Plutarchus shows, as also Tacitus, very imprudently to be deceived, that he was also a priest of Bacchus. Also those garments in those times, were worn by heroes and priests with great estimation. Bacchus, who was held by the poets for a figure of a divine Spirit, and for a man of the Muses, & the first hero who had triumphed, might justly, with the club and lion's skin, wear also the heroic cothurnus, & therefore is he, in the rhymes and old sculptures, figured out with cothurnus. Virgil invites, in George 11th, Bacchus to the grape harvest; saying that he shall dip his naked legs in the new wine, having taken off his cothurni.

*Huc pater o lenae veni, nudataque; musto
Tinge navo mecum, direptis crura cothurnis.* [3]

Upon which place Probus said, that the cothurni were a certain sort of footwear, which the hunters used; wherewith they covered and strengthened their legs, of which you may see the form in the figures of Bacchus & Diana. Which place of Virgil, and Probus his ancient expounder [4], we did not quote, as if the poets did not describe Bacchus with cothurni; but to make you understand that the cothurni were made like buskins or boots, which went round about the leg and above the calf, just as Virgil states in the seventh Eclogue in which he imagined Diana the huntress as a statue of smooth marble with red cothurnus.

*Levi de marmore tota
Puniceo stabis suras evincta cothurno.* [5]

And this I say, because many writers of our time hold that the cothurnus which was worn by heroes, princes, and great personages in tragedies, was high: like the high pattens, after the use of Rome, Spain, Venice, Naples, and other people; but especially of Italy, as Carlostefano says in Baif's *De re vestiaria* [6], when he quotes the first book of Virgil's Aeneid.

Virginibus Tyriis mos est gestare pharetram.

Purpureoque alte suras vincire cothurno. [7]

Some would like to read *Purpureasque*; this is an inappropriate definition under *suras*, i.e. red leg pulps as beautiful, because here nothing has to do with the idea expressed by Horatius in Book four, first Ode: *Purpureis ales oloribus* [8]. And the poet of the Elegy in Death of Maecenas: *Bracchia purpurea candidiora nive* [9]. In fact, Virgil intends to define "purple" the cothurnus, not the calf of the leg. Proof of this can be found, in the seventh Egloga, with the *Puniceo coturno* [10]. The color is pleasing to Diana and all women, according to Turnebo lib. (28, ch. 16). Carlostefano would prefer to read *Alto* instead of *Alté*, believing that the coturno was high above the ground. However, the coturno is high from the foot to the calf, which is precisely why Virgil writes *Alte suras vincire coturno* [11]. Turnebo confirms this in the aforementioned place, noting that, as a huntress, Diana dressed skimpily with her robe above her knee. Since Virgil says that Venus gathered her robe above her knee, Aeneas thought it was Diana the Huntress and asked her if she was Phoebe's sister. *An Phoebi soror* [12]. That is precisely why he wore high cothurni: to hide his legs. *Cum autem supra genua esset sublata vestis, ideo altos gerebet cothurnos, ne cruribus nudis cerneretur* [13]. Therefore, the cothurnus was like a buskin, covering the calf in height and thickness, as Scaliger explains in the Poetics book first ch. 13, saying that the size of the cothurnus was such, that with its height it equaled the size of the heroes, & adds that if this had been the cothurnus, in no way could Virgil have made the hunter wear it, who had to move very fast. *Si talis fuerit cothurnus, quomodo venatricem, eo calceati Virgilius, quam decet esse expeditissimam?* [14]. As if Virgil did not know how cothurni were made, which at that time were seen in theaters and circuses, and were often used in public performances of the best tragedies. Moreover, Virgil not only mentions the cothurnus, but describes it in the above three situations, and attributes it to female hunters, so that it could not have been as tall as women's wooden slippers, but as he himself explains, it dressed and encircled the leg up to the calf: that he was not referring to the cothurnus in the form of a boot is clear from the Elegy in Death of Maecenas already quoted, attributed by some to Gaius Pedo [15], in which Bacchus' coturno is called a sandal, also made like a buskin.

Argentata tuos etiam sandalia talos

Vinxerunt certe: nec puto, Bacche negas. [16]

And Philostratus in imagine 9 of the *Amores* gives Cupid the gilded sandal instead of the cothurnus [17]. The author of the *Adagia* in the proverb *Cothurno versatilior* [18], claims that it was tall, feminine & that to wear it comfortably it had four corners, but I don't know which cobbler told him this, because without an ancient author as a witness, it's not credible, especially since the explanation he gives for this proverb, that the cothurnus is versatile, easy to turn and twist, in that it's good for the left as well as the right foot, for men as well as for women, is misleading. It is true that the cothurnus fits every foot, and, as Servius says in the *Proem of the Aeneid* [19], it fits both the male and the female foot, as Suida [20] reports, but that is not why it is said *Cothurno versatilior*, for if it were so, it could be said *Socco versatilior*, for the clog also fits every foot, right & left, men & women can wear it. That the clog was for women is well known, since the Authors speak of it in the feminine. Apuleius tells of one who, to resemble a woman, wore a silk robe, long hair, & golden clogs [21]. Emperor Vitellius took a clog from Messalina, to carry it with him, & often kiss it. Pliny blames female luxury in lib. 9. ch. 35, saying that they wore jewels in their slippers, & in their clogs, & in lib. 37. ch. 2 *Super omnia muliebria socculos induebat is margaritis* [22]. That men also wore them is suggested by Seneca, who says that Caesar held out his left foot to Pompey to kiss it and show the gilded and jewel-studded hoof he wore [23]; and Suetonius in chapter 52 tells of Caligula, who wore now the cothurnus, now the clog, see then the same author in the *Life of Claudius* chapter 8, where he tells of the pranks played on that emperor by impudent young guests [24] and, according to Sabellico [25], while he slept during the day, they used to put clogs in his hands so that when he woke up suddenly, he would rub his face with them: since it is worn by both men and women, it can be called *Socco versatilior*, but it can also be said *Cothurno versatilior*, that is, more comfortable than a cothurnus, more wearable than an ankle boot, because the cothurnus, like the ankle boot, fits any leg, can be easily turned around, while the female slipper cannot be adapted to a man's foot, but only to a woman's foot, and therefore it cannot be said of it: *Versatilior*. It is also true that every slipper is good either in the right or in the left foot, for those fit every foot, more than the tall ones, & more easily without danger of falling: much less then could the word *Versatilior* be applied to the cothurnus, if it were tall, & large, like a woman's clog, though Juvenal once says in the sixth Satire.

Breviorque videtur

Virgine Pygmea nullis adiuta cothurnis [26].

But it does not follow from this that the tragic cothurnus had been as high as a woman's clog, because the poets usually understood the cothurnus worn by great, & supreme personages, in their symbolic height & grandeur, while Juvenal in this case wished to emphasize the material height, meaning that

the woman in question, without the addition of some thickness, appears shorter than a pygmy. To prove that it was not a coturno tall as the woman's clog, in addition to three quotes from Virgilio, there is the authority of Probus, who in his comment to the Georgiche says: *Cothurni sunt calciamentorum genera Venatori apta, quibus crura etiam muniuntur, cuius calciamenti effigies est in simulacris Liberi, & Dianae* [27]. Et Servius, who in the first of the Aeneid states that they are hunting boots. *Cothurni sunt calciamenta venatoria* [28]. It follows that they were not as high as women's clogs, because then it would be impossible to walk on hills, stony & thorny places. From Pliny's Book seventh chapter 20 [29] we also learn that they were not as thick as women's slippers, where he relates that he saw the actor Athanatus, a man of fifty, appear on the stage to flaunt his strength in an armor of lead & with heavy cothurni. Such heavy cothurni would have made a bad impression if they were as big, tall and ostentatious as women's clogs, instead, they were shaped like a buskin, open, high on the calf to be more comfortable on the leg & had to be especially proportioned to the armor, as it is easy to see in the ancient statues of heroes and princes, of boot-shaped cothurni, clog-shaped high, & squared at the corners, as Alexander says, ab Alexandro [30], there are none, while the other type can be seen in very many statues of emperors, muses, Diana, & Bacchus, and besides the authors mentioned above, Velleius Paterculus also mentions the coturno of Bacchus in his last book, where he tells of Mark Antony, who wished to resemble Bacchus, & for this reason wore, among the things belonging to Bacchus, the cothurni. *Cum autem nouum esse Liberum patrem appellari iussisset, cum redimitus hedera, coronaque; velatus aurea, & Thyrsus tenens, cothurnisque; succintus, curru velut liber pater vectus est Alexandriae* [31]. And Tacitus in the eleventh book of the Annals, says that Messalina, wife of the emperor Claudius, celebrated the feast of the grape harvest at home, & that in the guise of a bacchante, with her hair down, shaking the tyrant in the wake of Silius crowned with ivy, she wore the coturni, & turned her head with a chorus of bacchantes clamoring around. *Ipsa crine fluxo, Thyrsus quatiens, iuxtaque; Sylius Hedera victus, gerere cothurnos, iacere caput serpente circum, procaci, choro* [32]. These Bacchantes wearing cothurni, are seen in the ancient marbles of Rome, and they could not have jumped, & run furiously in the bacchanalia, if the coturno had been as high as the woman clog, very much raised, as some say, with cork, or with some other kind of wood. Leaving aside huntresses & bacchantes, if the cothurnus had been high & raised from the ground, someone explain to me how they could have fought over mountains, countryside & forests the Amazons who fight with crescent-shaped shields & coturni, as Plutarch relates in the Life of Pompey. *In hac pugna Amazones a Montibus Thermodonti fluvio accubantibus profesta auxilio venisse perhibentur Barbaris, quippe a proelio, dum spolia Barbarorum legunt Romani Peltas Amazonicas, cothurnosque; reperiere* [33]. Of course, it is impossible to fight with stilts on the feet as much for men as for women, who when they play hide-and-seek, in the most difficult steps, or when they want to walk

fast or run, take off the flats, even if they are low in cork: it follows that the cothurnus should have had the form of a buskin without any thickness under the foot, & if Isidore of Seville in the 19th book chapter 34. says that they had the form of slippers, in this he is wrong, but he is right when he says that the tragedians used it in theaters & the heroes. *Cothurni sunt quibus calciabantur Tragoedi, qui in Theatro dicturi erant, et alta intonantique; voce cantaturi, est enim calciamentum in modum crepidarum, quo Heroes utebantur* [34]. In this passage he speaks in the past, *Calciabantur, utebantur*. As if he had not seen them in the theater in his time. Therefore, if the tragic authors used them for the heroes in the theater, it is obvious that Virgil saw them several times & knew what they looked like, much better than modern authors, & that they were exactly like those he described, boot-shaped, so that modern authors are accustomed to call cothurnus the buskin. That is why we wanted to present our image of decorum in this way, against the opinion of modern authors who did not see the cothurni at the time they were used, as Servio, Probo & Virgil saw them, who says that Diana's cothurni were purple, & this color is particularly suitable for tragic representations, both because bloody cases are told in it, & because emperors, kings, princes, & noble people to whom purple suits them, therefore the poets assigned the coturno to prestigious personages, the socco on the other hand, to working people, commoners & less important.

[1] «I can't stop laughing - look at that lionskin on top of your little yellow number. What's the idea? Why these cothurni and club?». Aristophanes, *The Frogs*, prologue, 47.

[2] «In the first place, the high Priests proves this, who upon festival days, with a mitre enters; having a young deer skin put upon him, set with gold; having his coat to the ankles, and cothurni: there hang also many bells on his garment, which in going make a sound, as by us». Plutarchus, *Quaestiones convivales*, I, 6, 2.

[3] «Come hither, Lenaeon sire, strip off your cothurni and with me plunge your naked legs in the new must». Virgil, *Georgics*, II, 7-8.

[4] Marcus Valerius Probus (1st century AD), Roman philologist, biographer and commentator of Virgil ("Pseudo-Probus").

[5] «Full-length in polished marble, ankle-bound with purple cothurnus, shall thy statue stand». Virgil, *Eclogues*, VII, 31-32.

[6] Charles Estienne (Italianized as Carlostefano; 1504–1564), a French physician, humanist and publisher, adapted Lazare de Baïf's (1496-1547) *De re vestiaria*.

¶7¶ «It is the custom of tyrian girls to carry their quivers and bind their calves with purple cothurni». Virgil, *Aeneid*, I, 336-337.

¶8¶ «With thy purple cygnets fly». Horace, *Odes*, IV, I, 10-11.

¶9¶ «Splendid arms whiter than snow». Anonymous, *Elegy in Death of Maecenas*, I, 62.

¶10¶ See note 5.

¶11¶ See note 7.

¶12¶ «Or Phoebus's sister? », *Ibidem*, I, 329.

¶13¶ «Not reaching the robe to cover his knees, he wore high coturni so as not to show his legs». Castellini quotes from an unidentified writing by Adrien Turnèbe or Tournebeuf (1512-1565), Turnebo in the Italianized version, a French humanist mentioned just above.

¶14¶ «If such is the cothurnus, how can Virgil make a hunter wear it, who must move as fast as possible?» Julius Caesar Scaliger, *Poetices libri septem*, Antoine Vincent, Lyon 1561, I, 13.

¶15¶ Gaius Albinovanus Pedo (1st century BC - after 15 AD), Roman poet of Ovid's circle.

¶16¶ «It must have been silver sandals that bound your feet: I do not think, Bacchus, you will deny it». Anonymous, *Elegies in Death of Maecenas*, I, 65-66.

¶17¶ Philostratus the Elder (c. 190 - ?), Greek writer, author of the *Images*, a work consisting of sixty-four descriptions of pictorial works, real or imagined, exhibited in a villa near Naples.

¶18¶ *Adagia* is a collection of proverbs in Greek and Latin, edited by Erasmus of Rotterdam and first published in 1503.

¶19¶ Servius the Grammarian (4th century AD), roman philologist, author of several commentaries on Virgil's works.

¶20¶ Suda (or Suida) is the title of a byzantine encyclopedic collection dating back to the 10th century.

¶21¶ Castellini refers to Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*.

□22□ «Who, among other effeminacy, wore sandals of pearls». Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*, XXXVII, 6.

□23□ Seneca (4 BC - 65 AD), Roman philosopher and dramatist.

□24□ Castellini refers to Suetonius' *Lives of the Twelve Caesars*.

□25□ Marcantonio Coccio (or Cocci), known as Sabellico (c. 1436 - 1506), Italian historian.

□26□ «Without the cothurni, she seems shorter than a pigmy maiden». Juvenal, *Satires*, VI, 505-506.

□27□ «Cothurni are a type of footwear suitable for hunters, which also protects the legs. They are represented in the statues of Libero and Diana». *Pseudo-Probus*.

□28□ «Cothurni are hunting footwear». Servius the Grammarian, *Commentary on the Aeneid*, I, 337.

□29□ Castellini refers to Pliny the Elder's *Natural History*.

□30□ Alessandro Alessandri, also called Alessandro ab Alexandro (1461-1523), Italian humanist and jurist, author of the *Geniales dies*.

□31□ «After he had surnamed himself the new Liber Pater, and had himself brought in a chariot to Alexandria, like that god, with his head girded with ivy, wearing a saffron robe trimmed with gold, with a tyrant in his hand and cothurni on his feet». Velleius Paterculus, *Roman History*, II.82.1.

□32□ «She herself was there with dishevelled tresses and waving thyrsus; at her side, Silius with an ivy crown, wearing the cothurni and tossing his head, while around him rose the din of a wanton chorus». Tacitus, *Annals*, XI, 31.

□33□ «In this battle it is said that there were also Amazons fighting on the side of the Barbarians, and that they came down from the mountains about the river Thermodon. For when the Romans were despoiling the Barbarians after the battle, they came upon Amazonian shields and cothurni». Plutarch, *Parallel Lives, Pompey*, XXXV.

□34□ «Cothurni were the footwear worn by tragic actors, who in the theater had to recite verses with a high voice and intonation; it was in fact a type of footwear similar to crepid, used by heroes». Isidore of Seville,

Etymologies, XIX, 34.

Homepage; Decorum, graphic elaboration of the table illustrating Cesare Ripa's "Iconologia", Motte, London 1709.

Below; reproduction of pages 176-181 from Cesare Ripa's "Iconologia", Eredi di Matteo Florimi, Siena 1613. (www.archive.org).

habbiamo ne li nostri attetti, & moti d'animo, dobbiamo rallegrarci con la moderata Honesta, & conuenienza del decoro, in tal maniera la uirtù dell'animo, si vedra sempre fiorita d'ogni tempo come l'Amaranto.

Habbiamo discorso circa il decoro dell'operare, & del parlare, resta, che trattiamo anco del decoro circa l'andare, caminar, & comparir fuori tra le genti, che perciò alla gamba destra habbiamo dato il graue coturno, & alla sinistra il semplice iocco, le bene Hercole si ride in Aristofane di Bacco che portaua la mazza, & la pelle del Leone, con li coturni alle gambe, come cose sproportionate, essendo la pelle del Leone spoglia di persona forte, eputando il coturno, molle, & delicata persona, però disse gli Hercole, che ha da fare il coturno con la mazza.

Sed non potens sum, arcere risum

Videns pellem Leonis in croceo positam,

Quæ mens? quid coturnus, & claua conueniunt?

Ma molto bene a Bacco si conuiene il coturno, che da molle, & delicato reputar non si deue, perche li coturni erano portati da Heroi, come asserisce Isidoro la cui autorità più a basso distenderemo, quindi è che ne li tragici spettacoli s'adoperauano, attesoche nelle tragedie v'interlengono personaggi grandi, Heroi, & Principi, per tal cagione da Poeti viene stimato degno d'Heroi, & Plutarcho nel Simposio 4. q. 5. riferisce, che era portato dalli Pontefici Ebrei. *Primum enim arguit hoc Pontifex Max. qui festis diebus mitratus ingreditur binnuli pellem auro contextam indutus, tunicamq; ad talos pertinentem gestans, & coturnos, multa autem tintinabula dependent de veste, quæ inter ambulandum strepitum edunt, ut & apud nos.* Per similitudine di questo habito gabbandosi Plutarcho si come anco Tacito scioccamente arguice che fusse sacerdote di Bacco portato da Heroi, & Pontefici in quel tempo con molto suo decoro, Bacco tenuto da Poeti simbolo di spirito diuino, Presidente ancor esso delle Muse, & primo Herce, ch'habbi trionfato portar poteua insieme con la Mazza, & pelle di Leone l'Herco cothurno, & però in poesie, e sculture antiche viene col cothurno figurato. Virgilio nel secondo della Georgica, inuita Bacco alle vendemmie dicendogli, che tinga seco le gambe nude nel mosto, leuatisi li coturni.

Huc pater o lenæ veni, nudataq; musto

Tinge nare mecum, directis crura cothurnis.

Nel qual passo Probo dice che li coturni sono certa sorte di calzamenti atti al cacciatore, perche con essi anco le gambe circondano, & fortificano la forma de quali si vede nelle statue di Bacco, & di Diana, tale autorità di Virgilio, & di Probo suo antichissimo espositore, ardecano non tanto per mostrar che il coturno da Poeti si dapa a Bacco solito a portarli si come basso più a lungo tratteremo, quanto per notitia, che il coturno era fatto, come vno stualetto, & borzachino, che cingeua intorno la gamba, per sino la polpa, si come nell'Egloga settima afferma Virgilio nella quale promettea Diana Cacciatrice vna Statua di pulito marmo col cothurno rosso.

nell'Elegia suddetta, in morte di Mecenate attribuita da alcuni à Caio Pedone, nellaquale il coturno di Bacco è chiamato Sandalio fatto ancor esso a guisa di borzachino.

Argentata tuos etiam sandalia talos

Vinxerunt certè: nec puto, Bacche negas.

Et Filostrato ne l'immagine 9. de gl'Amori dà a Cupido il Sandalio indorato in vece di coturno. L'Autore de gli Adagij in quel prouerbio. *Coturno versatilior*. Dimostra che fusse alto da donna, & per posarvisi bene fusse di quattro angoli, ma non sò che maestro di pianelle gie l'abbia detto, non adducendo niuno autore antico per testimonio non è da prestarli credenza, tanto più che esplica quel prouerbio con friuola ragione, che il coturno sia veriatile per dir così ageuole a uoltarsi, & riuoltarsi, perche si accomoda ad ogni piede sinistro, & destro, tanto di donna come d'huomo. E uero che il coturno è atto ad ogni piede, come dice Seruio nel pr. dell'Encide, si accomoda al piede, vll'huomo, & della donna, come riferisce Suida, ma non è vero che per questa cagione dicasi *Coturno versatilior*, che se questo fusse tanto si potrebbe dire *Socco versatilior*, perche anco il zoccolo s'accomoda ad ogni piede dritto, e sinistro, & lo possiano portare huomini, & donne. Che fussi da donna il focco, è notissimo poiche da gli Autori se gli dà epiteto muliebre.

Apuleio dice d'vno che per parere donna portaua vna veste di seta, i capelli lunghi, e'l foccolo indorato. Vitellio Imperatore scalzò Messalina togliendoli vn zoccolo, che seco lo portaua, & spesso baciua. Plinio taccia il lusso delle femmine nel lib. 9. cap. 35. che portassero le gioie nelle pianelle, & nelli foccoli, & nel lib. 37. cap. 2. *Super omnia muliebria focculos inducat è margaritis*. Che lo portassero anco gli huomini, raccogliessi da Seneca narrando di Cesare, che porge il piede sinistro a Pompeo, Perso accò lo baciasse per mostrare il zoccolo d'oro che portaua ornato di gemme; Et Suetonio nel cap. 52. riferisce di Caligola, che portaua hor il coturno, hora il zoccolo, l'istesso Autore nella vita di Claudio cap. 8. oue racconta de gli sinacchi fatti a quello Imperatore per ischerzo da conuitati giouani impudichi, secondo il Sabellico, dice, che mentre dormiua il giorno soleuano mettergli nelle mani li zoccoli, accioche in vn subito svegliato si strogolasse la faccia con quelli: sì che portandolo huomini, e donne tanto dir si potria, *Socco versatilior*, ma dicesi *Coturno versatilior*, cioè ageuole più che vn coturno, s'accomoda per ogni verso più che vno stualetto, perche il coturno come stualetto si calza in ogni gamba, si volta, & si riuolta, & si riuersa ageuolmente, come pianella da donna non si potria riuersare ne accomodare al piede dell'huomo, ma solo à quello della donna, perche veggiamo che gli huomini non fanno camminare con le pianelle alte da donna, alle quali pianelle si come non se le può applicare quella voce. *Versatilior*. Ancorche s'accomodi ad ogni piede sinistro, & destro, che ciò farià parlare improprio, & commune ad ogni pianella, ancorche bassa, perche quelle ancora s'accommoda-

no ad ogni piede, meglio che le alte, & più ageuolmente senza pericolo di cadere: così meno si potrebbe quella voce *versatilior* applicare al coturno se fusse alto, & grosso, come la pianella da Donna, è vero che vna volta Giuuenale nella Satira sesta dice.

Breuiorq; videtur

Virgine Pygmea nullis adiuta cothurnis.

Ma non per questo ne segue, che il coturno tragico fusse stato alto, come vna pianella da donna, perche li poeti erano tanto auezzi a pigliar misticamente, con parlar figurato il coturno portato da perionaggi grandi, & supremi, per l'altezza & grandezza, che Giuuenale in questo luogo l'ha preso per l'altezza materiale, intendendo che la Donna pare più piccola d'vna pigmea, senza aiuto di qualche altezza. Per prouare che non fusse materialmente il coturno alto, come la pianella da donna douriano bastare, li tre luoghi di Virgilio, aggiunta l'autorità di Probo, che nel secondo della Georgica dice *Cothurni sunt calciamentorum genera Venatori apta, quibus crura etiam muniantur, cuius calciamenti effigies est in simulacris Liberi, & Diana.* Et Sersio, che nel primo dell'Eneide afferma, che sono stiualetti da caccia. *Cothurni sunt calciamenta venatoria.* Ilche dichiara, che non fussero alti come le pianelle da donna, perche con simile altezza non si può correre sopra colline, luoghi sassosi, & spinosi. Con tutto ciò voglio che lo prouiamo con altre autorità. Da Plinio libro settimo Cap. 20. si comprende pure che non fussero alti come le pianelle da donna, oue egli racconta d'hauer veduto, Athanato Histrione huomo di cinquanta anni comparire in Scena per fare ostentatione della sua gagliardia, con vn corsaletto di piombo, & con li coturni di cinquecento libbre, brutta vista haueriano fatto li coturni di così gran peso se fussero stati grossi, & alti, come le pianelle da donna sconciamente assettati, ma perche doueuano essere a guisa di stiualetto, aperto, che si cinge fino alla polpa della gamba, doueuano essere assettati, & più ageuoli alla gamba, & doueuano comparire con proporzion, massimamente col corsaletto, col quale molto bene veggiamo nelle statue antiche d'Eroi, & Principi li coturni a foggia di stiualetto, a foggia di pianella alto, & quadrato in angoli, come dice Alessandro, ab Alexandro, non se n'è mai veduto niuno, nell'altra sorte veggonfi tuttauia infinite sculture d'Imperadori, di Muse, di Diana, & di Bacco, del quale coturno di Bacco, oltre gli Autori citati ne fa mentione Velleio Patercolo nell'vltimo libro, oue narra di M. Antonio, che voleua essere tenuto vn'altro Bacco, & perciò portaua tra le altre cose attinenti a Bacco, li coturni. *Cum autem nouum esse liberum patrem appellari iussisset, cum redimitus hedera, coronaq; velatus aurea, & Thyrsum tenens, cothurnisq; succintus, curru velut liber pater veclus est Alexandria.* Et Cornelio Tacito nell'vndecimo de gli Annali, dice di Messalina

moglie di Claudio Imperatore, che celebraua in casa la festa della vendemmia, & che a guisa di Baccante, col crine sparso, scollando il tirso appresso Silio incoronato d'edera, portaua i coturni, & aggiraua la testa facendogli strepito intorno vn coro di Baccanti. *Ipsa crine fluxo, Thyrsus quatens, iuxtaq; Sylius Hedera vinctus, gerere cothurnos, iacere caput serpente circum, procaci, choro.* Simili Baccanti con coturni, veggonsi nelli marmi antichi di Roma, quali non haueriano potuto saltare, & correre furiosamente negli giuochi baccanali, se il coturno fusse stato alto come le pannelle da Donna, rileuato assai, come dicono alcuni col suuero, e con altra materia di legno. Dicami vn poco questi tali, lassando da parte le Cacciatrici, & le Baccanti, se il coturno fosse stato alto, & solleuato assai, come haueriano potuto combattere per monti, campagne, & foreste, le Amazoni, le quali portanano in guerra gli scudi, come mezze Lune, & li coturni, come racconta Plutarco nella vita di Pompeo. *In hac pugna Amazones à Montibus Thermodonti fluuio accubantibus profectæ auxilio venisse perhibentur Barbaris, quippe à praelio, dum spolia Barbarorum legunt Romani Peltas Amazonicas, cothurnosq; reperire.* Certo che con le stampelle sotto li piedi non possono andare a combattere, ne huomini, ne donne, le quali ne i loro giuochi della cieca, ne i pasci alquanto difficili, & nel voler esse camminare in fretta, non che correre, si lieuan le pannelle, ancorche basse di suuero: Onde apparisce che il coturno bisogna che fosse fatto a guisa di stiualeto, & borzacchino senza alcuno solleuamento sotto la pianta, nel piede, & se Isidoro nel 19. libro Capitolo 34. dice che erano fatti a guisa di pannelle, hà torto in questo, hà ben nel resto ragione, che vlassero i Tragici nelli Teatri, & gli Heroi, come esso afferma. *Cothurni sunt quibus calciabantur Tragædi, qui in Theatro dicturi erant, et alta intonant; voce cantaturi, est enim calciamentum in modum crepidarum, quo Heroes utebantur.* Nel qual testo parla in tempo passato, *Calciabantur, utebantur.* Come che à suo tempo non li hauesse veduti in Theatri. Vlati dunque da Tragici sotto personaggi d'Erroi, ne' Theatri, è da credere che Virgilio più uolte li vedesse, & sapesse molto meglio de gli Autori più moderni, come fussero fatti, & che non fussero in altra foggia che in quella da lui descritta, a guisa di stiualeto, & borzacchino, onde communemente appresso gli Autori vulgari, passa lo stiualeto sotto nome di coturno, della cui forma habbiamo noi fatto disegnare la nostra figura del decoro, contentandoci, quando ci siano altri di contrario parere d'errare con Probo, Seruio, & con Virgilio istesso, che sopra sapere con Autori moderni, che non hanno veduto li coturni ne tempi che si vssauano, come viddero Seruio, Probo, & Virgilio, ilquale dice che li coturni di Diana, erano di rosso colore, e tal colore anco è molto proportionato a Tragici rappresentamenti, sì perche in essi vengono esposti

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