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Three Diderot Letters, and *Les Eleuthéromanes*

THE four autograph manuscripts of Diderot here published form part of the collection of Professor and Mrs Raphael Salem which was placed on deposit in the Harvard College Library in 1945. Three of the four manuscripts—letters to Marmontel, Voltaire, and Augustin de Saint-Aubin—are published for the first time; the fourth manuscript, of Diderot's poem *Les Eleuthéromanes*, is here printed for reasons which will be set forth below. A manuscript of *Les Eleuthéromanes* in the Fonds Vandeul has provided variants for the present publication.¹

The letters now first published have been arranged chronologically.

LETTER TO MARMONTEL

There is no direct indication in the following letter of the person to whom it was addressed. It is, however, not difficult to identify the addressee, since he wrote, as the text of the letter shows, the articles 'Grand' and 'Grandeur' for the *Encyclopédie*. A list of contributors in the seventh volume of the *Encyclopédie*, where these articles appeared, attributes the items 'Grand (Morale)' and 'Grandeur (Morale)' to Marmontel.

Assézat and Tourneux observe, in the second appendix to their edition of Diderot's works,² that there must have existed a huge correspondence between Diderot and the numerous contributors of the *Encyclopédie*. The editors sought to locate these letters, but unfortunately failed. The letter which is published here, and which is mentioned in Charavay's catalogue of autograph letters,³ offers an interesting example of this correspondence. It is to be hoped that more letters of the same type will be discovered.

¹The term Fonds Vandeul has been given to the collection of manuscript copies which Diderot left to his daughter, Mme de Vandeul. See for all details my *Inventaire du fonds Vandeul et inédits de Diderot* (Geneva, 1951). A microfilm of the Fonds Vandeul manuscript of *Les Eleuthéromanes* is available in the Houghton Library.

²*Oeuvres complètes de Diderot*, ed. Jules Assézat and Maurice Tourneux (Paris, 1875-77), XX, 108. Hereinafter referred to as A.-T.

³A.-T., XX, 106.

Only one passage in the letter deserves a brief comment: Diderot's mention of Mlle Clairon. The *Mémoires secrets* of Bachaumont contain under the date of 21 April 1773 the following entry: 'On est fâché qu'il [Diderot] ait brûlé une certaine Lettre sur l'Athéisme, qu'il avait écrite à Mlle. Clairon; et dont celle-ci, effrayée d'être qualifiée disciple d'une pareille doctrine, exigea le sacrifice. Il jeta le manuscrit au feu devant elle, mais on ne doute pas qu'il n'en ait conservé une copie.'⁴ Tourneux expressed the belief that this letter existed only in the imagination of the editor of the *Mémoires secrets*.⁵ In a note he even goes so far as to say: 'A aucune époque de sa vie Diderot ne paraît avoir fréquenté mademoiselle Clairon et il n'est pas trace dans ses oeuvres d'une lettre ou d'un traité philosophique qu'il aurait eu la velléité de lui adresser; mais très certainement le rédacteur des *Mémoires secrets* faisait allusion au dialogue intitulé *Le Rêve de d'Alembert*, écrit en 1769 et dont le manuscrit original fut détruit, sur la prière de mademoiselle de Lespinasse qui s'y trouvait, à son insu, l'interlocutrice de d'Alembert et de Bordeu.' Tourneux then refers to an autograph letter of Mlle de Lespinasse to Suard in which she speaks of the incident.

The manuscript collection of the Fonds Vandeul contains an autograph manuscript of the *Rêve de d'Alembert*, and the letter to Marmontel proves that Diderot knew Mlle Clairon. 'Tourneux' denial of the existence of the famous letter on atheism is perhaps as rash as his belief that Diderot was not acquainted with Mlle Clairon. One should never exclude the possibility of the reappearance of a Diderot manuscript. On the contrary, one must hold fast to the conviction that lost manuscripts will be found again.⁶ As to Diderot's enigmatic remark on the service which Mlle Clairon might render him, the vagueness of his language invites the mind to abandon itself to speculations.

[No address or any other identification.]⁷

J'ai lu, monsieur et cher ami, vos deux articles Grands et grandeur, Je les trouve pensés avec hardiesse, Ecrits avec force et précision, et très dignes de vous. ne craignez point qu'ils vous fassent de tracasseries; tout me paroît sauvé à merveilles; et puis, quand ils seront Imprimés, s'il y avoit quelque

⁴ *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire des lettres en France* (London, 1777-89), V, 300.

⁵ *Diderot et Catherine II* (Paris, 1899), p. 63.

⁶ See also on the question of Diderot's acquaintance with Mlle Clairon my *Inventaire*, p. 178.

⁷ Single sheet folded to form two leaves; text of letter on recto of first leaf; dimensions of leaf 153 x 200 mm.

chose qui nous parut a D'alembert et a moi, pouvoir Compromettre votre repos ou votre fortune a venir, nous tirerions un trait la dessus. nous Regretterions le mot que nous effacerions, mais le mot seroit effacé. ne manquez pas de me venir voir, La premiere fois que vous ferez un voyage ici. il faut absolument que Je vous voye; ainsi passez chez moi le matin, ou faites moi donner une heure qui vous convienne. J'ai mille obligations a mademoiselle Clairon. elle m'a offert les entrées a la comedie françoise que Je n'ai point acceptées; mais il faut que vous lui demandiez pour moi autre chose que J'accepterai volontiers et que Je serois bien aise de lui devoir. bonjour mon ami. Je vous salue et vous embrasse de tout mon coeur.

ce 23 avril 1757.

Diderot

J'oublois de vous dire de me renvoyer Incessamment ces articles que J'ai lus avec attention et auxquels, ma foi, Je ne trouve pas un mot ni a retrancher ni a ajouter.

LETTER TO VOLTAIRE

Diderot's correspondence with Voltaire is not very copious. The two men esteemed each other highly, but rarely felt the desire to exchange their ideas, views, or feelings by letter. In his writings Diderot always refers to the patriarch of Ferney as 'de Voltaire'; one may see in this usage a sign of polite reserve and the wish to maintain a certain distance. These two feelings combined with that of admiring respect are also noticeable in the following letter.

The letter to Voltaire is a letter of recommendation; Diderot must have written many of them. However, only a few have been published thus far.

A M. de Voltaire⁶

a Paris ce 19 Juin 1776

Monsieur

on croit que vous m'aimez et que vous m'estimez; on croit qu'un petit mot de ma main est une tres bonne recommandation aupres de vous. Je ne detrompe personne, et ne refuse ce petit mot qu'a Ceux que Je ne crois pas digne [sic] de vous entretenir. monsieur De Limon n'est pas De Ceux cy.⁹ Je ne vous dirai pas qu'il est Intendant De la maison de monsieur; qu'est ce que cela vous fait? mais bien qu'il Jouit de toute La confiance et de toute La faveur Du prince et qu'il La merite. J'ajouterai qu'il est Le bien-

⁶ Single sheet folded to form two leaves; text of letter on recto of first leaf; dimensions of leaf 167 x 212 mm. The words 'A M. de Voltaire' were added by another hand.

⁹ Voltaire received M. de Limon and replied to Diderot's letter on 14 August 1776 (*Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. Louis Moland, Paris, 1877-85, L, 71-72).

fauteur et Le protecteur De mes enfants,¹⁰ et qu'eux et moi nous lui avons toute sorte d'obligations. L'acueil que vous ferez a Monsieur de Limon acquitera une partie de la dette que nous avons contractée avec Lui. vous ne tarderez pas a vous apercevoir que c'est un homme de beaucoup de merite. c'est une véritable perte pour Les Lettres qu'il a Cultivées avec succès, que Les Circonstances L'aient detourné d'une carriere Dans Laquelle Il se seroit illustré. il pretend que passer a fernex [sic], sans vous avoir vu, ce seroit passer a delphes, sans entrer Dans Le temple d'apollon; et il a raison. Bonjour, Monsieur et tres honoré patriarche. J'ai fait un terrible voyage depuis que vous n'avez entendu parler de moi.¹¹ Combien J'ai causé de vous avec une grande Souveraine¹² et quel plaisir elle avoit a m'entendre.

Je suis toujours avec La meme admiration et Le meme Respect.
votre tres humble et très obeissant serviteur
Diderot

LETTER TO AUGUSTIN DE SAINT-AUBIN

The following letter is addressed to the famous engraver Augustin de Saint-Aubin. The works to which Diderot refers in his letter are among Saint-Aubin's most celebrated. It was Augustin de Saint-Aubin who engraved Greuze's famous drawing of Diderot in 1766 and Van Loo's painting in 1794.

The *Venus Anadyomene* which Diderot requests in his letter is in all probability the engraving which Saint-Aubin made of Titian's painting. Bocher lists in his descriptive catalogue of Saint-Aubin's works the various states of the engraving.¹³ It was first published as frontispiece of the *Dissertation sur les attributs de Vénus* by the abbé La Chau.¹⁴ This dissertation was reviewed in the *Correspondance littéraire* of March 1776;¹⁵ the author of the article called particular attention to the beautiful print of the *Venus Anadyomene*. He also quoted from a witty letter which Voltaire wrote to the abbé La Chau

¹⁰ Diderot's daughter and her husband M. de Vandeuil. I have not been able to find out what services M. de Limon rendered to Diderot's daughter and son-in-law.

¹¹ Diderot's journey to St Petersburg in 1773-74.

¹² Catherine II.

¹³ Emmanuel Bocher, *Les gravures françaises du XVIII^e siècle: V, Augustin de Saint-Aubin* (Paris, 1879). See also Baron Roger Portalis and Henri Bérardi, *Les graveurs du dix-huitième siècle* (Paris, 1880-82), Vol. II.

¹⁴ Paris, 1776. I owe the reference to this work, as well as a number of other indications which I have used in this introduction, to my friend Professor Jean Seznec, All Souls College, Oxford.

¹⁵ *Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique par Grimm, Raynal, Meister, etc.*, ed. Maurice Tourneux (Paris, 1877-82), XI, 212 ff.



Gravé par M. Ponce (Paris) d'après une copie de l'original de l'École de Pélopie, par le sculpteur de l'Académie de France à Rome, M. de Sève, par le sculpteur de l'Académie de France à Rome, M. de Sève, par le sculpteur de l'Académie de France à Rome, M. de Sève.

Gravé à Paris chez J. Barrois, par le graveur en pierre M. de Sève.

PLATE I



See Vol. I. Plate 10.

1770.

See Vol. II. Plate 10.

PLATE IIa



HARPOCRATE.

Sarkine-Copie.

PLATE IIb



MINERVE.

Antoine-Copie.

PLATE IIc

aux mains de Dieux ~~le sort de la nation~~ ^{qui sont les barbares armés,}
~~de tout l'art de la guerre~~ ^{ils ont pu descendre,}
~~de tout l'art de la guerre~~ ^{de tout l'art de la guerre,}
~~de tout l'art de la guerre~~ ^{qu'on va attache en bandeau la}
 de tout l'art de la guerre

sur la tête d'un vainqueur
 et d'une gloire pure une fois il brilla,
 sans fois il fut couronné d'une couronne d'or,
 sur le front d'un Coligula.

Strophe

Sans-il en fin de voir le nuage
 qui n'a que trop longtemps cache la route,
 et montre de l'humanité
 la terre et d'adorer elle image,
 aux stupides aveugles de la calomnie.

Je veux, la terre épuisée, l'indigne à la route;
 Je veux, l'athènes la route à la route;
 la terre l'effraya partout sur son passage;
 et la nuit, pour l'homme trouble,
 l'usage de la malheur son esclave accablé
 cède au regard que le langage.

~~Je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{anti-Christ}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{la route! la route; c'est}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{en regard l'athènes;}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{c'est elle; ce des hommes armés,}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{en l'effraya partout}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{brûlé.}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{ce dans l'usage pour}
~~je verras de révéler, aux poings entrelacés,~~ ^{le froid glaçant.}

Strophe

L'écrite toi; ce doit en lieu de la tempête;
 écoute toi; écoute la terre;
 L'écrite, et en l'écrite qu'en l'écrite monde sujet,
 ni la garde que l'écrite monde
 ni l'écrite impalaise qu'en l'écrite la personne
 n'ant, ou de l'écrite et l'écrite le projet.

Strophe

L'enfant de la nation abhorre l'éclavage;
 implacable ennemi de toutes tyrannies.

PLATE III

on receipt of the dissertation. Voltaire likewise expressed delight over the frontispiece by Saint-Aubin and commented: 'Votre ouvrage, monsieur, est utile et agréable. Je vous sais bon gré de l'avoir orné de monuments très-instructifs. Votre Vénus émergente est admirable; et, pour votre *callipyge*:

En voyant cette belle estampe,
Tout lecteur est bien convaincu,
Lorsque Vénus montre son cu,
Que ce n'est pas un cul-de-lampe.¹⁶

His allusion to the Callipygian Venus refers to the cul-de-lampe at the end of La Chau's work.

Diderot, who was close to Grimm and frequently contributed to the *Correspondance littéraire*, must have been familiar with this review; he knew the abbé and his dissertation.¹⁷ It is also highly probable that he saw the engraving of Titian's painting again during the exposition of 1777 in the Louvre.¹⁸ It may have been on this occasion or as a result of his visit to the exposition that he asked Saint-Aubin for a copy of his engraving. A pencil note by Saint-Aubin at the bottom of the letter in which Diderot reminds the artist of their agreement shows that Saint-Aubin sent Diderot a print 'avant la lettre.'

Since it is important, for our knowledge of Diderot's taste in art, to learn which works he particularly liked and, above all, which works he wished to own personally, I have reproduced the engraving of the *Venus Anadyomene* (Plate I).¹⁹ The print published here, a 'first state,' is not entirely identical with the one Diderot received, for, as we have seen, Saint-Aubin sent him a print 'avant la lettre.' Further, Diderot's print may have lacked the shell. The presentation of Venus is identical in all states of the engraving.

It is more difficult to identify the 'seconde petite planche des pierres antiques,' which Saint-Aubin, to judge from his pencil note, did not send to Diderot. The plate is very probably one of the engravings which Saint-Aubin made for the *Description des principales pierres gravées du cabinet de S. A. S. Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans*, by the

¹⁶ Letter of 21 March 1776 (*Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. Moland, XLIX, 562-563).

¹⁷ See on La Chau Diderot's letter to Sophie Volland of 12 October 1770 (*Lettres à Sophie Volland*, ed. André Babelon, Paris, 1930, III, 231) and on the *Dissertation A.-T.*, XII, 127, n. 2.

¹⁸ See Bocher, *Saint-Aubin*, p. 232.

¹⁹ From a copy in the Print Department of the Fogg Art Museum.

abbé La Chau and the abbé Le Blond.²⁰ The plate which Diderot mentions must be in the first volume, for the second appeared only in 1784. The first volume contains a frontispiece, a fleuron, two vignettes, forty-five culs-de-lampe, and ninety-seven engravings of the stones. Diderot's expression, 'seconde petite planche des pierres antiques,' does not necessarily indicate that he meant the second engraved stone. It is much more plausible that the term 'pierres antiques' referred to the entire collection of engravings which are contained in the first volume. The second stone represents Harpocrates, an Egyptian deity, who had, so far as I know, no particular interest for Diderot. The presentation itself is one of the less interesting in the volume; I have, however, reproduced it here (Plate IIb).

If we take the terme *planche* in its general meaning, it also applies to the vignettes and culs-de-lampe, both of which show Saint-Aubin's originality, inventiveness, grace, and exquisite artistry much more adequately than the engravings of the stones. The first vignette which comes after the frontispiece was among the prints exhibited in 1777 in the Louvre; as a matter of fact, it is listed immediately after the *Venus Anadyomene* as the second print. By its style and subject matter the first vignette could have pleased Diderot very much. Since in his letter he speaks of the second plate in connection with the *Venus* and since the vignette can be considered as the second plate of the first volume — I omit the fleuron, which is part of the title of the book and which is not listed separately as a plate — we may tentatively identify the 'seconde petite planche' as the vignette (Plate IIa).

There is, however, one of the true 'pierres antiques' which must have singularly interested Diderot. In the review of La Chau's and Le Blond's *Description* in the *Correspondance littéraire* of July 1780,²¹ the author mentions one stone in particular: that of a beautiful antique Minerva. He adds: 'Plusieurs personnes ont remarqué la ressemblance frappante d'une belle Minerve antique, couverte du casque guerrier, avec les meilleurs portraits que nous ayons de Catherine II. Cette divinité ne pouvait choisir sans doute des traits plus dignes d'elle. Quel parti M. Lavater ne tirerait-il pas d'une pareille analogie!' The review was probably written by Meister, who showed great enthusiasm for Lavater's studies. As stated above, Diderot's close connection with the

²⁰ Paris, 1780-84. The reproductions shown in Plate II are taken from the fine copy in the Department of Printing and Graphic Arts in the Harvard Library.

²¹ Ed. Tourneux, XII, 415.

Correspondance littéraire and his intimate friendship with Grimm and Meister make it highly probable that he knew the article; he may even have been one of those who noticed the resemblance between the ancient stone and the Empress of Russia.²² No arrangement of Saint-Aubin's engravings could possibly permit one to call the presentation of Minerva the second small plate of the antique stones. We have nevertheless reproduced the 'belle Minerve antique,' in addition to Harpocrates and the vignette, because it is of interest to know the image which Diderot and his friends had formed of Catherine II (Plate IIc).

a Monsieur

Monsieur De S^t Aubin

Rue neuve Des Petits Champs
chez M^r De La Perriere fermier g^{al} 23

Monsieur De S^t aubin a oublie qu'il y a entre Lui et moi, un traite. Je dois Lui envoyer Le premier ouvrage qu'on Imprimera de moi; Lui doit m'accorder en Echange une *Venus Anadyomene*, et sa seconde petite planche des pierres antiques. Si cet oubli vient de ce qu'il estime plus son ouvrage que le mien et de ce qu'il Croit avoir fait un mauvais marché, il a raison. Si ce n'est pas cela, il remettra La *Venus* au porteur, bien enveloppee, de maniere que sa main sale et grossiere ne puisse pas La gater.

Je le Salue et L'embrasse toujours

Diderot

ce 11 avril.²⁴

LES ELEUTHÉROMANES

Diderot's poem *Les Eleuthéromanes, ou les Furieux de la liberté* was first published under the title 'Dythirambe Ou abdication d'un Roi de la Fêve. L'an 1772.' in a periodical of the Revolution.²⁵ The editors

²² We must recall that Catherine gave to Diderot, when he left, a ring with an engraved stone; this stone was Catherine's portrait. See Diderot's letter to his wife of 9 April 1774 (A.-T., XX, 51).

²³ Single sheet folded to form two leaves; text of letter on recto of first leaf; address on verso of second leaf; dimensions of leaf 104 x 164 mm. Above 'Petits Champs,' in the address, the words 'rue therese' were added later in pencil—in all probability by Saint-Aubin; they are now partly effaced.

²⁴ Under this date is added in pencil: '1781,' and below, equally in pencil: 'je lui ai Envoyé une Venus avant la lettre en février 1782.' These additions must be by Saint-Aubin.

²⁵ *La décade philosophique, littéraire et politique; par une société de Républicains*, X (An IV—1796), 553—558.

limited their comment on the poem to a footnote saying that the verses were published from an original autograph manuscript and that the reason why the poem had not appeared earlier would be apparent to everybody reading it. By this they alluded to the revolutionary lines in Diderot's poem: lines which are indeed a direct invitation to revolt and vengeance as well as to the suppression of the existing order. No better moment for the circulation of the poem could have been chosen.

Not long after this first publication appeared a note in the *Journal d'économie publique, de morale et de politique*,²⁶ in which the editors of the *Décade* were accused of inaccurately printing Diderot's poem. Roederer, the editor of the *Journal* and author of the note, claimed to have in his possession the original manuscript of the poem. In this manuscript, he stated, the line which in the edition of the *Décade* reads 'Grimme, soyons amis' reads 'Naigeon, sois mon ami.' Why deprive Naigeon, Roederer asks, of Diderot's testimony of a well-deserved friendship? Does Naigeon not have enough credit in the Republic? Was it the intention of the *Décade* to cripple a verse or Grimm's name, which has only one syllable? Roederer concluded his criticism with an appropriate political flourish: 'O you who are courtiers in the Republic, were you good republicans under the monarchy?' This thrust at the editors of the *Décade* is followed in the next issue of the *Journal*²⁷ by a new edition of Diderot's poem. Its title is given as 'Les Eleuthéromanes, ou Abdication d'un Roi de la Fête. Dithyrambe; par Diderot, 1772.' Then follows a quotation from Horace and a prose introduction, entitled 'Argument.' In a note, Roederer repeats his accusations against the editors of the *Décade* and adds that they also suppressed the title of the poem and omitted the 'Argument,' which explains the origin and the purpose of the poem. Roederer's accusations were, as we shall see, without any basis; the editors of the *Décade* had simply reproduced the text of their autograph manuscript.

Naigeon, in his edition of the poem, quotes Roederer's comment in its entirety and then informs his reader that Roederer had two autograph manuscripts of the dithyramb and used both for his edition.²⁸ Assézat and Tourneux, in their turn, conclude from Naigeon's remarks that it was probably he who gave Roederer the second manu-

²⁶ I (An V-1796), 344-345.

²⁷ I, 360-367.

²⁸ *Oeuvres de Denis Diderot* (Paris, An VI-1798), XV, 488 ff. Naigeon reproduced title and text from the *Journal*, changing only, in the quotation from Horace, 'Seu per audaces' to 'Seu super audaces.'

script.²⁹ They go on to say that they had rediscovered the manuscript used by the editors of the *Décade*; it had come into the possession of a M. Dubrunfaut. It is this manuscript which Assézat and Tourneux reprint in their edition, adding to it, however, the title, the argument, and some variants from Roederer's edition, and listing in footnotes the original readings of the manuscript published by the *Décade*. The editors of this journal had simply reproduced Diderot's revised text. This manuscript appeared later in the Charavay sale catalogue, and is at present in the Salem collection deposited at Harvard. We shall refer to it from now on as S. Though it has been published twice, neither of the existing editions does justice to its many interesting features. As mentioned before, the editors of the *Décade* did not list the variants; Assézat and Tourneux not only fail to mention all the variants, but introduce features from other manuscripts of the poem. Moreover, S contains many valuable clues to the composition of the dithyramb, clues which Assézat and Tourneux either failed to notice or did not think worthy of listing. Before we discuss these features and present an annotated transcript of S, a few remarks on the second manuscript which Roederer used are necessary.

Roederer and Naigeon claim that the second manuscript also was autograph. Since the whereabouts of this manuscript are unknown, we have to take their word for it. Naigeon certainly was able to identify Diderot's handwriting, and he was, as one easily understands, particularly interested in the second manuscript, which contained at the end his own name instead of that of Grimm, for whom Naigeon had a full measure of contempt and whose friendship with Diderot he resented. If one now examines Roederer's text, for which the second manuscript was used, one is surprised by its lack of strophic structure. While in S the poem is divided into smaller sections of variable length entitled 'strophe,' 'antistrophe' and 'épode,' Roederer's text shows only a rudimentary sectioning of the dithyramb by means of a few intervals. We must assume that the second manuscript warranted such a radical departure from the first, but it is difficult to understand why Roederer, and after him Naigeon, adopted it. For in the 'Argument,' which Roederer published for the first time and which he considered essential for the understanding of the poem,³⁰ Diderot deals precisely with the

²⁹ A.-T., IX, 9, n. 1.

³⁰ He wrongly accused the editors of the *Décade* of having suppressed the 'Argument'; their manuscript did not contain it.

problem of the division into strophe-antistrophe-epode and develops a very interesting and characteristic theory concerning this type of division. Neither Roederer nor Naigeon seems to have noticed the discrepancy between their emphasis on the great significance of the 'Argument' and their text, which runs directly against the meaning of the 'Argument.' The matter becomes even stranger when one examines *S* more closely: the original text of the manuscript was revised by Diderot. We thus have two phases of the poem. A certain number of divisions marked by the headings 'strophe,' 'antistrophe,' and 'épode' existed already in the first version. In the revised form their number is greatly increased. Already in the first version we find more divisions than in Roederer's text. Since the 'Argument' deals specifically with these divisions and since they increase as the poem develops, it is impossible to assume that Roederer's text constitutes a later version of the poem. It is equally impossible to believe that the manuscript Roederer used offered an earlier version, since his text contains the revisions which Diderot made in the first version of *S*. One would like to find in Roederer's and Naigeon's statements more specific information about the second autograph manuscript which they consulted. From the evidence of *S* and Roederer's text one cannot understand the relationship between the first and second manuscripts.

Assézat and Tourneux mention in their note a manuscript copy of the *Eleuthéromanes* which they saw and in which the division into strophe, antistrophe, and epode was replaced by that into 'le premier,' 'le second,' and 'le troisième.' Diderot had already mentioned in his 'Argument' that his traditional division meant in reality that he divided the poem among three persons:

Jé regarde dans Pindare la strophe, l'antistrophe et l'épode, comme trois personnages qui poursuivent de concert le même éloge ou la même satire. La strophe entame le sujet; quelquefois l'antistrophe interrompt la strophe, s'empare de son idée, et ouvre un nouveau champ à l'épode, qui ménage un repos ou fournit une autre carrière à la strophe. C'est ainsi que dans le tumulte d'une conversation animée, on voit un interlocuteur violent, vivement frappé de la pensée d'un premier interlocuteur, lui couper la parole, et se saisir d'un raisonnement qu'il se promet d'exposer avec plus de chaleur et de force, ou se précipiter dans un écart brillant. . . . Mes strophes sont inégales, et mes Eleuthéromanes paraissent dans chacune, au moment où il me plaît de les introduire. Ce sont trois Furies acharnées sur un coupable, et se relayant pour le tourmenter. Je me trompe fort, ou ce poème récité par trois déclamateurs différents produirait de l'effet.³¹

³¹ A.-T., IX, 10-11.

It is interesting to observe in this passage to what extent dialogue was Diderot's most natural and spontaneous form of expression: the solemn, well-ordered structure of Pindar transforms itself into an animated, somewhat tumultuous conversation or discussion essentially irregular in pattern.

Assézat and Tourneux fail to give any further information concerning the manuscript copy which they saw, and they did not utilize it for their edition. This lack of interest would have prevented us from knowing a new form of Diderot's dithyramb, if we did not have among the papers of the Fonds Vandeuil a manuscript (designated hereafter as *V*) which shows precisely the division according to first, second, and third speaker which Assézat and Tourneux mention. This manuscript is a copy made by a scribe whose handwriting we find in other manuscripts of the Fonds Vandeuil.²² The text of *V* presents the corrected version of *S* and most of the variants of the version published by Roederer; however, it differs from them fundamentally in its structure. It is divided into a greater number of sections than the other two versions and the sections are to be recited in alternation by three different persons. *V* thus presents the final stage of a development which we observe both in the 'Argument' and in *S*. Diderot's reflections in the 'Argument' reveal that the division into strophe, antistrophe, and epode was a disguise for a more natural and essential division. Pindar's form had lost its structural and rhythmical meaning; it had no more than a historical and traditional significance, which proved to constitute a serious handicap since it prevented a new and spontaneous form from coming into existence. The search for a true rhythmical pattern is equally evident in *S*: during his revision of the first version Diderot added more divisions and headings, sometimes hesitating at which point they should occur. In *V* he finally rejected the historical and artificial form and resolutely modernized his work. The irregular pattern of an animated, lively, spontaneous, unpremeditated discussion was the only adequate form for his poem. We notice here the link which connects *Les Eleuthéromanes* with Diderot's *contes* and his ideas on the reform of the theater. In every domain Diderot sought new, adequate forms. Instead of describing or portraying

²² See my *Inventaire*, p. 31. Compare also F. Nicolini's comments (*Etudes italiennes*, n. 5., I, 1932, 170-171) on a copy which Mme d'Épinay's secretary, the abbé Mayeul, made of *Les Eleuthéromanes*. René Glotz's conjectures on the 'Argument' of the poem (*Revue d'histoire littéraire de la France*, XLII, 1935, 559-560) have, in my opinion, no solid basis, and contain several errors.

Rameau's nephew in the artificial, deadening form of *La Raméide* or *La nouvelle Raméide*, he created for the Nephew's heteroclitic personality a new narrative genre; instead of composing a neoclassic dialogue between Democritus, Hippocrates, and Leucippus, he modernized the philosophic dialogue in the three parts of his *Rêve de d'Alembert*.

There exists no objective proof that *V* offers the final stage of Diderot's dithyramb. I have relied exclusively on internal evidence: both the metrical pattern and the text of *V*, which contains the corrections of *S*, the variants of Roederer's text, and a few new additions and changes which seem to me superior to the earlier forms of the poem, are, in my opinion, sufficient evidence to permit the conjecture which I have offered.

It cannot be denied that Diderot's dithyramb contains many verses of a very poor kind and that his imagery is at times painful. The reflection that the images and the rhetoric curiously anticipate those of the later revolutionary poetry is no more than a historical consolation. However, the weak parts must not make us overlook the many very lively and stirring verses, as well as the brisk rhythmical movement which brings the dithyramb close to good political poetry. Diderot himself was quite aware of the shortcomings of his poem: he realized the incongruity between the frivolous circumstance to which his verses owed their existence and the sudden seriousness of some of the political lines. As with so many of his writings, Diderot let the incongruities stand. One must not confuse this issue, as has so often been done, with the question of literary form. *Les Eleuthéromanes*, which, starting from a joke, rises to the heights of revolutionary poetry, and brings Diderot close to both the radical thought and the sharp tone of the Rousseau of the *Discours*, shows a considerable and consistent effort on Diderot's part to find the proper form and style for his feelings and ideas. The dithyramb is equally important as a document of Diderot's political thought, particularly if one links it with the *Code Denis* and the two poems which Diderot wrote on the first two occasions of his becoming 'Roi de la Fève.'³³ The sudden deepening of playful thoughts on the dignity and functions of a 'Roi de la Fève' into serious political reflections is common to all four poems.³⁴

³³ A.-T., IX, 3-8.

³⁴ See also *Les Eleuthéromanes par Diderot, avec un commentaire historique* (Paris, A. Gliio, 1884), 101 pp. The book is rare; I have consulted the copy in the Yale University Library. The term 'commentaire historique' is somewhat mislead-

The manuscript S, transcribed below, consists of two sheets folded one within the other and sewn to form a booklet of four leaves, the first three of which are numbered from 1 to 3 and bear the text of six full pages. Leaf dimensions are 188.5 x 231 mm. There are considerable margins on either side of the text, as may be seen in Plate III (reproducing the verso of leaf 1). Diderot often left similar margins in his fair copies: it is thus possible that the original text here presented is not a first draft, but was copied from an earlier draft and then revised. All the corrections and insertions are in Diderot's hand. In the following transcript, portions of the text canceled by Diderot in his revisions are printed in italic; underlinings have been retained as underlinings. The lines of the text have been numbered in order to facilitate reference to the annotations, which contain a few observations on the text of S, as well as the variants of V. In numbering the lines all full lines have been counted, even when entirely canceled in revision. The pages of S are indicated in the right margin.

Dythirambe

ou

abdication d'un Roi de la fève. J'an 1772.

à fabâ abstine. pithag.

5

Strophe.

accepte le pouvoir suprême

quiconque enyvré de soi même

peut se flater, emule de Titus,

que Le poison du diadème

10

n'alterera point ses Vertus.

je n'ai pas cette confiance

dont l'intrepide orgueil ne s'étonne de rien.

ing, since there is no historical commentary accompanying the text. The author, who is not identified, studies the relationship between some lines of *Les Eleuthéromanes* and the currents of the French Revolution before Robespierre. Diderot's link with Danton and — later — Auguste Comte is described in admiring terms. All this is seen against a general background of the philosophic and anti-theological (rather than anti-religious, as the author states) currents of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

J'ai connu par l'expérience
que celui qui peut tout, rarement veut le bien.

15 éclairé par ma conscience
 Je l'en crois, et je
sur mon peu de valeur; *J'ai raison, quand* je crains
que Le fatal dépôt de la Toute-puissance,
par le sort ou Le choix remis entre mes mains,
 d'un mortel plein de bienfaisance
20 ne fît peutêtre un fleau des humains.

Antistrophe

ha que plutôt modeste élève
du vieillard de l'antiquité
dont un précepte très vanté
25 défend L'usage de la fève,
du sage Pithagore endossant le manteau,
 je cède ma part au gâteau
à celui qui, doué de la faveur insigne
d'un meilleur estomac et d'une âme plus digne
30 Laisse arriver ce jour, sans être épouvanté
de l'indigestion et de la royauté.

- 1 The title on the title-page of *V* reads: 'Les Eleuthéromanes / Dithyrambes / Seu per audaces nova Dithyrambos / Verba devolvit, numerisque sertur / Lege solutis / Horat.' Roederer's title has one significant feature in common with this title: the reading of 'Seu per audaces' instead of 'Seu super audaces' as in Naigeon's edition and in A.-T.; 'sertur' instead of 'fertur' is an evident slip of the scribe's pen. The title at the head of the text in *V* reads: 'Abdication d'un Roi de la Fève, / L'an 1772. / ou / Les Eleuthéromanes / Dithyrambes / Fabâ abstine / Pyth.'
- 4 The preposition 'à' may be part of a dedication which Diderot planned. A.-T. print 'a' without the accent and thus suggest that it is the Latin preposition, originally used by mistake.
- 5 'Strophe' seems to have been added later. Only a narrow space is left between the Latin motto and the first line of the poem. *V* has 'Le premier.'
- 21 'Antistrophe' may have been added later. *V* has 'Le second.'

Epode

une douleur muette, une haine profonde
 affaisse tour à tour et revolte mon coeur,
 35 quand je vois des brigands dont le pouvoir se fonde
 sur la bassesse et la Terreur
 ordonner le destin et Le malheur du monde.
 et moi,
qui? moi! Je m'inscrirois au nombre des Tyrans!

[Page 2]

moi dont les farouches accents,
 de la mort
 40 dans le sein *du Trepas* s'ils avoient pu descendre,
de Brutus ou de Scevola
des Ravailleurs et des Clements,
auroient ressuscité
non plus pour des forfaits, rammeneront la cendre.
 iroient se faire entendre
 aux manes de Brutus *se seroient faits entendre*
 45 et tu les sentirois, genereux Scevola,
 de ton bras consumé ressusciter la cendre
 qu'on m'arrache ce bandeau la!
 sur la tête d'un Marc-Aurele
 si d'une gloire pure une fois il brilla,
 50 cent fois il fut souillé d'une honte eternelle
 sur le front d'un Caligula.

Strophe

faut-il enfin déchirer Le nuage
 qui n'a que trop longtems cache La verité,

32 'Epode' may have been added later. V has 'Le Troisième.'

40 V: 'au sein,' in all probability a later correction.

43 Diderot evidently forgot to cross out 'la cendre.'

44 Lines 44 to 46 are added in the margin at the left, probably at a later date; see Plate III.

46 Between this line and the following V has 'Le Premier.' In such instances in V there is always an extra space left between the two lines for the insertion of the heading.

52 V: 'Le Second.'

- 55 et montrer de l'humanite
 la triste et redoutable image
 aux stupides auteurs de sa calamité.
 oui, oui, J'en aurai le courage.
 je veux, Lache oppresseur, Insulter a ta rage;
 60 de jour, J'attacherai la crainte a ton cote;
 La haine s'offrira partout sur ton passage;
 et la nuit, poursuivi, troublé,
 Lorsque de ses malheurs ton esclave accablé
 cede au repos qui le soulage,
 tu verras
 65 *je veux que* La revolte, aux poings ensanglantés,
 tenir
promene a ton chevet ses flambeaux agités;
je veux, lache oppresseur, Insulter a ta rage;
je veux que du fer menacant
ma voix fasse à ton coeur passer le froid glaçant
 70 Antistrophe
 la voila! la voila; c'est son regard farouche;
 c'est elle; et du fer menacant,
 son souffle exhalé par ma bouche
 va dans ton coeur porter Le froid glaçant.

59 This line was inserted later by Diderot.

60 Diderot seems to have written first 'Le jour' and then to have corrected it to 'de jour.' V has 'Le jour.'

70 V: 'Le Troisième.' As Plate III shows, in S lines 70 to 74 are added in the margin at the right, immediately after line 66, with lines 67 to 69 canceled. Since there is no additional space between lines 66 and 67, both the heading 'Antistrophe' and the lines which follow must have been added at a later date. The short rule beneath 'glaçant' (in line 74) marks, in my opinion, the end of the insertion and does not indicate that the word should be stressed. In line 69 the second word is crossed out so heavily that my reading 'voix' must be considered a conjecture.

75

Epode

Eveille toi; tu dors au sein de la tempête;

eveille toi; Leve la tête;

Ecoute, et tu scauras qu'en ton moindre sujet,

ni

et La garde qui t'environne

ni

80

et l'hommage imposant qu'on rend a ta personne

n'ont pu de s'affranchir etouffer le projet.

Strophe.

L'enfant de la Nature abhorre L'esclavage;

implacable ennemi de toute autorité

85

il s'indigne du joug, La contrainte l'outrage;

[Page 3]

Liberté, c'est son vœu; son cri, c'est Liberté.

au mépris des liens de la société

il reclame en secret son antique apanage.

des mœurs ou grimaces d'usage

90

ont beau servir de voile à sa férocité;

une hypocrite urbanité,

Les souplesses d'un tigre enchainé dans sa cage,

les yeux

ne trompent point l'œil du sage;

et dans les murs de la cité

95

il reconnoît l'homme sauvage

s'agitant sous les fers dont il est garoté.

75 'Epode' was apparently added later. V has 'Le Premier.'

76 Between this line and the following V has 'Le Second.'

77 Between this line and the following V has 'Le Troisième.'

82 V: 'Le Premier.'

86 Between this line and the following V has 'Le Second.'

88 Between this line and the following V has 'Le Troisième.'

93 Diderot first wrote 'trompe' and then changed it to the plural form. In the same line, V has the original 'œil.'

antistrophe

on a pu l'asservir; on ne l'a pas dompté.

un trait de physionomie,

100 un vestige de dignité

dans le fond de son coeur, sur son front est resté;

et mille fois La tyrannie,

Inquiete où trouver de la securité,

a pali de l'eclair de son oeil irrité.

105 epode

c'est alors qu'un trone vacille;

qu'effrayé, tremblant, éperdu,

d'un peuple furieux le despote imbécille

connoit la vanité du pacte pretendu.

110 Strophe

Répondez souverains; qui l'a dicté ce pacte?

qui l'a signé? qui l'a souscrit?

dans quel bois, dans quelle antre en a-t-on dressé l'acte?

par quelles mains fut-il écrit?

115 l'a-t-on gravé sur La pierre ou l'écorce?

qui le maintient? la justice? ou la force?

de droit, de fait il est proscrit.

Antistrophe.

J'en atteste Les tems; J'en apelle a tout age;

97 *V*: 'Le Premier.' In *S*, the heading 'antistrophe,' written in the right margin, and the following line were inserted later by Diderot.

98 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Second.'

103 *V* has the barred line, but instead of 'trouver' it has 'chercher.'

105 'epode' seems to have been inserted later. *V* has 'Le Troisieme.'

109 *V* has 'd'un Pacte' with a word crased between 'd'un' and 'Pacte.'

110 *V*: 'Le premier.'

113 *V*: 'dans quels antre,' undoubtedly the scribe's mistake.

114 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le second.'

115 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisième.'

118 *V*: 'Le Premier.'

120 jamais au public avantage
L'homme n'a franchement sacrifié ses droits;
s'il osoit de son coeur n'écouter que La voix,
changeant tout a coup de Langage,
il nous diroit, comme l'hôte des bois,
125 "la nature n'a fait ni serviteur ni maître;
"Je ne veux ni donner ni recevoir de loix;
et ses mains ourdiroient les entrailles du prêtre,
au défaut d'un cordon pour étrangler les roix. . . .

[Page 4]

epode

130 tu palis, vil esclave! Etre paîtri de bone,
Epode
quel aveuglement te devoue
aux communs Interêts de deux Tigres ligués?
sommes nous faits pour être abrutis, subjugués?
135 quel moment! qu'il est doux pour une muse altiere!
L'homme Libre, votre ennemi,
vous a montré son ame fiere;
o Cruels artisans de la longue misere
dont tous les siècles ont gemi,
140 il vous voit, il se rit d'une vaine colere.
il est content, si vous avez fremi.

Strophe

Assez et trop longtems cette race insensée
de ses forfaits sans nombre a noirci ma pensée.

- 121 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Second.'
125 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisième.'
129 'epode' seems to have been inserted later by Diderot; the same holds true
for line 131, where Diderot later canceled the word. At line 129 *V* has
'Le Premier.'
133 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le second.'
134 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisième.'
142 *V*: 'Le premier.'
143 *V*: 'une race.'

- 145 Objets de haine et de mepris,
 Tyrans, éloignez vous; approchez, Jeux et ris.
 que Le vin couronne mon verre;
 que La feuille du pampre ou celle du lierre
 s'entrelasse à mes cheveux gris.
 150 du plus agreable delire
 je sens échauffer mes Esprits.
 vite, qu'on m'apporte une lyre.
 muse d'Anacréon, assis sur ton trepié,
 Le sceptre des roix sous le pié,
 155 je veux chanter un autre empire.

Antistrophe

- c'est L'empire de la beauté.
 tout sent, tout reconnoit sa souveraineté.
 c'est elle qui Commande a tout ce qui respire,
 160 depouillant sa ferocité.
 pour elle au fond des bois Le hottentot soupire.
 si Le sort quelquefois me place a son coté,
 Je la contemple et Je l'admire.
 mon coeur, plus Jeune, eut palpité.

165

Epode

frimats

mais a present que Les *glaces* de l'age

- 146 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le second.'
 147 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisieme.'
 149 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le premier.'
 156 'Antistrophe' was inserted later. *V* has 'Le Second.'
 157 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisieme.'
 158 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Premier.'
 159 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Second.'
 161 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisieme.'
 165 *V*: 'Le Premier.'
 166 *V*: 'les glaces de l'âge.'

[Page 5]

ont amorti La chaleur de mes Sens,
 J'economise mon hommage.
 La Bonté, La vertu, La beauté, les talents
 se sont
 170 *se sont entr'eux* partagé mon encens.

Strophe

La Bonté
La Bonte qui se plait a tarir ou suspendre
 Les pleurs que L'infortune arrache de mes yeux.

Antistrophe

175 La Beauté, ce present des Cieux,
 qui quelquefois encor verse en mon ame tendre
 de tous les sentiments Le plus delicieux.

epode

Le Talent, Emule des dieux,
 ccarte
 180 soit que de la nature il *entr'ouvre* le voile,
 qu'il
qu'il fasse respirer ou le marbre ou la toile,
 que par des chants harmonieux,
 effrayantes
 occupant mon esprit d'*etonnantes* merveilles,
 tourmente
 il *emeuve* mon coeur et charme mes oreilles.

185 Strophe

La Vertu qui, du sort Bravant l'autorité,
 accepte son arrêt favorable ou severe,
 sans perdre sa tranquillité,

167 V: 'la fureur de mes sens.'

170 The crossing out of 'entr'eux' is particularly heavy. By canceling these words, Diderot shortened the verse.

171 'Strophe' was inserted later. V has 'Le Second.'

174 'Antistrophe' was inserted later. V has 'Le Troisieme.'

178 'epode' was inserted later. V has 'Le Premier.'

183 My reading of the heavily crossed out original word is not certain.

185 'Strophe' seems to have been inserted later. V has 'Le second.'

188 Between this line and the following V has 'Le troisieme.'

modeste dans l'état prospère
 et grande dans l'adversité.

Antistrophe

Celui qui la choisit pour guide,
 d'un peuple ombrageux et Leger,
 peut, à l'exemple d'Aristide,
 souffrir un dédain passager.
 mais quand l'ordre des destinées

qui des hommes de bien et des hommes méchants
 a limité

[Page 6]

fixe Le nombre des années,
 amène ses derniers instants,

Athènes entière est en alarmes:
 de tous les yeux on voit couler des larmes;
 c'est un père commun pleuré par ses enfants.

Épode

Longtemps après sa mort sa cendre est reverée;
 Longtemps après sa mort sa Justice honorée,
 du
 L'entretien *des* vieillards, instruit les jeunes gens.

AntiStrophe

Aristide n'est plus; mais sa mémoire dure
 dans Les fastes du genre humain;
 et L'herbe, même au temps où renaît la verdure,
 ne peut croître sur
cesse de couvrir Le chemin

191 'Antistrophe' seems to have been inserted later. *V* has 'Le Premier.'

195 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le second.'

196 *V*: 'l'ombre des Destinées.'

200 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisième.'

201 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Premier.'

203 'Épode' was inserted later. *V* has 'Le second.'

204 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le troisième.'

206 *V*: 'Entretien.'

207 Diderot later inserted 'Antistrophe' and then crossed out 'Anti,' at the same time capitalizing the 's' in 'strophe.' *V* has 'Le Premier.'

qui conduit a sa sepulture.

Antistrophe

d' de et d'

Amis, que des honneurs, des titres, des ayeux,

215

des ecussons de la noblesse,

des chars brillants de la richesse

qu'on soit yvre a la cour, a paris envieux

Le peuple repaisse ses yeux.

Laissons sa sotise au vulgaire.

220

La bonté, La vertu, La beauté, Les talents

seront pour nous qu'un gout plus Juste eclaire,

Les seules grandeurs sur la terre

Dignes qu'en Leur faveur on Distingue des rangs.

Épode

225

'Issus d'un meme sang, enfants d'un meme pere,

oublions en ce jour toute inegalité.

Grimm, soyons

Grime, sois mon amis; Sedaine, sois mon frere.

Bornons notre

Bornons notre rivalité

a qui scaura Le mieux Caresser sa bergere,

230

Celebrer ses faveurs et boire sa santé.

213 'Antistrophe' may have been added later. *V* has 'Le second.'

214 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le Troisieme.'

215 Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le premier.'

221 *V*: 'goût plus sûr.'

223 After this line *V* has another line: 'Tout le reste n'est que chimere.'

224 'Épode' may have been added later. *V* has 'Le Second.'

227 Diderot first wrote 'ami' and then changed it to the plural form; *V* has 'Naigeon, sois mon ami.' Between this line and the following *V* has 'Le troisieme.'

230 *V*: 'boire a sa santé,' the preposition having been inserted later.

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