I venture to suggest that there is nothing wrong with the text of this passage in the suspected clause ὃσπερ ... φασιν, but that it needs emendation elsewhere; and that the evidence of the Arabic version has not yet been properly studied.

Butcher 1), withdrawing in his third edition his previous acceptance of M. Schmidt’s emendation, maintains that ποτε καὶ ἄλλοτε should according to normal usage mean ‘at some other time also’, in an indefinite past or future, rather than ‘on certain other occasions’, i.e. proceedings in the law-courts. He agrees with Vahlen in thinking that if φασίν is retained, we must understand from ἡγονίζοντο the aorist infinitive ἁγωνίζεσθαι. This, he admits, lands us in a serious difficulty, for the use of the klepsydra in regulating dramatic representations is otherwise unheard of. “Still it is conceivable that a report of some old local custom had reached

the ears of Aristotle, and that he introduces it in a parenthesis with the φασὶν of mere hearsay". A minor matter may be noted. In his translation he takes ἐκατὸν τραγῳδίας as subject of ἄγωνιζεσθαι, and of ἡγουνίζοντο in the apodosis, without commenting on the personification.

Bywater, commenting on ἐκατὸν τραγῳδίας, says that it is an extreme instance like the μυρίων σταθείων ζηρον in a 2. He understands τραγῳδίας as object of ἄγωνιζεσθαι, the implied subject being 'the performers'. "The personification implied in Tyrwhitt's rendering si centum tragedias in theatro certare oporteret is (I think) questionable in Aristotle". He finds no reason why ποτὲ καὶ ἐλλοτέ, with a verb in the present, should not have the sense 'at certain times'. Of Schmidt's correction he says that though perhaps too bold it yields an unimpeachable sense, 'as is regularly done at certain other times', i.e. by another class of ἄγωνισται, the pleaders in the law-courts. In the text, however, he obelizes φασὶν.

According to Rostagni, scholars have found the passage difficult because it seems inconceivable that Aristotle should suppose that in ancient times there were dramatic contests with so excessive a number of plays that it was necessary to resort to the klepsydra for timing; but Aristotle is not saying this. He only reports, from hearsay, that on some occasion, perhaps during the classical period when three tragedies per day were presented, they had to be measured by the clock. And it is after all probable that over-long tragedies had sometimes to be cut in performance. This means, what I think Vahlen and Butcher also intended, that ἡστερ... φασὶν refers to the apodosis πρὸς κλεψύδρας ἀν ἡγουνίζοντο but not to the protasis which mentions a hundred tragedies. Rostagni, Butcher and Vahlen agree in denying that there is any allusion to the use of the water-clock in the law-courts. Vahlen, after a survey of instances of ποτὲ καὶ ἐλλοτέ and the similar expressions πῶς καὶ ἔλλος, πῶς καὶ ἔλλος, ποτὲ καὶ αὖθις in Plato, Xenophon and Thucydides, concluded that it is equivalent to the German auch sonst einmal. If so, Aristotle could hardly use it to refer to a custom which had become firmly established in his day. Here, however, Vahlen's argument is tied to the assumption that ἄγωνισεσθαι must be understood with φασὶν, which (as will presently be seen) is questionable.