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Introduction

The aim which I have set myself in composing this study has been to investigate the comedies of Plautus and Terence in the light of Roman history and Roman history in the light of Plautus and Terence. To this end, rather than treat history as a context by which to explain comedy or comedy as a source to be mined for information about history, I have attempted to keep the two in constant dialogue with each other. The most obvious way in which this approach manifests itself in the four chapters which follow is in the tendency of the argument to develop through a succession of subsections in which the perspective passes constantly between comedy and history, history and comedy. I trust that my reader will not find this procedure unduly disconcerting.

The crucial phenomenon of the age of Plautus and Terence is the rise of Rome from regional power to effective master of the Mediterranean world. If the career of the former coincides first with the great crisis of the Second Punic War and the Hannibalic invasion of Italy, then with the first stages of Roman expansion into Greece and Asia Minor, that of the latter is located in the years immediately after the Battle of Pydna and the Roman conquest of Macedon. Two features therefore predominate in all that I have written: the fundamentally military culture of Rome and the economic and social transformation of the city consequent on the acquisition of empire. If the title which I have chosen for this work suggests to some an enthusiastic complicity with this process, they will be mistaken. For I have no affection for imperialism and have found the comic texts studied most eloquent, not in their celebration of the process of national expansion, but rather in their evocation of the necessary negotiations attendant on rapid political and economic change and in the expression given to perspectives which assimilate uneasily to those propounded by the senate and the Roman ruling class.

It would be fatuous to pretend that this is the first study to attempt to think historically about Roman comedy. Indeed the last chapter of this book engages directly with some of the most intriguing past attempts

to do so and analyses the reasons why the approach has failed to take hold. It is, however, the case that the dominant trends of Plautine and Terentian criticism, whether the analytical criticism of the schools of Lefèvre and Zwierlein or the metatheatrical and formalist approaches of American critics, consider Roman comedy as a literary or at best theatrical artefact. I have indeed learnt much from all such perspectives and have engaged with the conclusions drawn where they have a significant bearing on my argument; I hope nevertheless that one consequence of this study will be to suggest that it is possible, and timely, to ask rather different questions of our texts. To this end, the pages which follow set out in greater detail some of what is at issue in this study and confront certain fundamental problems of evidence and method.

The *Comoedia Palliata* and Rome

Plautus and Terence wrote for the theatrical games (*ludi scaenici*) which took a central role in the rapidly expanding festive calendar of the mid-Republican Roman state. Further opportunity for such performances could be provided by the funeral, triumphal, and dedicatory games so common in this period.[1] All such events make spectacle out of the transformation of the Roman state, the expansion of its horizons, and the consequences which this entails. Modern scholarship may contest claims of a determined plan of overseas conquest; but the festive absorption of alien cult and culture is the obverse of Rome's perception of itself as a Mediterranean and not simply an Italian power.[2]

The best evidence for the festive culture of this period is provided by books 21–45 of Livy and much may be learnt from the historian's account of the institution of two new sets of games. The first of these is the Ludi Apollinares first held at the height of the Hannibalic crisis in 212 BC; the inspiration behind them is said to be perusal of the prophetic verse of the native seer (*vates*) Marcius, but his most striking stipulation is that sacrifice should be conducted according to Greek procedure (*Graeco ritu*).[3] The second is the Ludi Megalenses or Megalesia.[4] These first involved theatrical performance either in 194 or 191 BC

[1] For the festive calendar and the *ludi scaenici*, see esp. Taylor (1937); Gruen (1992) 183–222; Goldberg (1998). Gruen offers a particularly valuable account of the political dynamics of theatrical performance in this period.

[2] Gruen (1990) 10, 33.

[3] Liv. 25. 12. 1–16.

[4] Gruen (1990) 5–33 is fundamental but not impeccable. Burton (1996) offers some valid criticisms.

and it was at this event in 191 BC that the temple to the Magna Mater was dedicated and the *Pseudolus* of Plautus first performed.[5] Yet the Megalesia were first held in 204 BC, ten years before they took on a theatrical aspect, and their inception followed a similar pattern to that of the Ludi Apollinares: recurrent showers of stones prompt inspection of the Sibylline books; this leads to consultation of the oracle at Delphi; and the final cure proposed is the transportation of the stone of Pessinus, the symbol of the Magna Mater, from Asia Minor to Rome.[6] What is perhaps most significant in all this, however, is the necessary diplomatic engagement with Attalus of Pergamum,[7] a large part of which must have turned on the Trojan origins of Rome and their consequent kinship with the region over which Attalus ruled.[8] In later years the priests of Cybele would play an important role in securing the good-will of Roman forces operative in the region.[9]

Both the Ludi Apollinares and the Megalesia are represented as religious observances undertaken in order to secure the well-being of the Roman state and, in particular, the expulsion of a foreign foe in the form of Hannibal. Yet by their conscious institutionalization of foreign cults or ceremonies they also ensure that the Rome which emerges at the end of the Second Punic War will never be quite the same again.[10] It was suggested above that the comic authors who wrote for these festivals evoke some of this cultural transformation. Yet—inasmuch as the works which they present are translations or adaptations of the masterpieces of the Athenian stage—they are themselves profoundly implicated in and indeed at the forefront of the process. Plautus may allude to or exploit more traditional forms such as Atellane farce or mime; he is not content simply to write in them.[11]

As important as the overall Hellenizing character of the theatrical festival is the selectivity of its engagement with Greek culture, and

[5] Liv. 34. 54. 3 cf. 36. 36. 1–7. For the *Pseudolus*, see the didascalia to the play.

[6] Liv. 29. 10. 4–8. The claim of Gruen (1990) 16–18 that the stone originated on Mt Ida attributes undue evidentiary value to the narrative in Ov. *fast.* 4. For a defence of Pessinus as the origin of the stone, see Burton (1996) 42–58.

[7] Liv. 29. 11. 5–8. Gruen (1990) 17–18 and Burton (1996) 43–4 discuss the possibility that Varr. *ling.* 6. 15 represents an alternative version of the role of Attalus but neither notes the profound textual problems identified by Riganti (1978) ad loc. For detailed discussion of this problem, see Leigh (forthcoming).

[8] Hdn. 1. 11. 3; Gruen (1990) 5–33, esp. 15–19, and (1992) 47–8.

[9] Plb. 21. 37. 4–7; Liv. 37. 9. 9–10, 38. 18. 9–10; D.S. 36. 13. I am not convinced by the interpretation of some of these episodes in Gruen (1990) 17 n. 16.

[10] For the strikingly alien character of the cult of Cybele, see Gruen (1990) 5 n. 1, 20 n. 74.

[11] For allusions to the stock types of Atellane farce, see Plaut. *Bacch.* 1087, *Rud.* 535–6.

this is particularly true of the authors of the *comoedia palliata* (Roman comedy in Greek dress). For, while Roman audiences in the same period were accustomed to attending tragedies avowedly based on those of the great fifth century dramatists Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, in comedy the model set by Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Cratinus is eschewed in favour of that provided by the fourth- and third-century writers of what is known as New Comedy, most notably Menander, Diphilus, Philemon, Posidippus, Alexis, and Apollodorus. This is a significant decision and one which requires investigation both in and of itself and for the methodological problems which it entails for a project of this sort.

The form embraced by the Roman comedians creates from the start two significant barriers to historical interpretation. First, the Greek New Comedy on which it is based is characterized by its concern for specifically social and domestic concerns and, with certain notable exceptions, eschews the direct political commentary which characterizes the work of Aristophanes and his peers.[12] To the extent that this new approach represents a necessary response to changed historical conditions, it is itself pregnant with political meaning.[13] Yet it also does violence to the works under consideration to demand that they function exactly like those of Aristophanes or to insist that their every familial crisis, rape plot, and servile ruse contains a covert allusion to specific contemporary events.[14]

[12] For continuation of the personalized attacks on politicians in New Comedy, see Philippid. fr. 25 K-A = Plu. *Dem.* 12. 6–7, 26. 5, fr. 26 K-A = Plu. *Mor.* 750 E–F; Arched. fr. 4 K-A = Plb. 12. 4. 7 with Walbank (1967) ad loc.; Philem. test 9 K-A and fr. 132 K-A = Plu. *Mor.* 458A

[13] Note Men. test. 155 K-A = Platon. diff. com. (Proleg. de com. I) 57 p. 5 Kost. for the claim that the change from comic masks designed as accurately as possible to evoke the features of the contemporary Athenian being mocked to the standardized types and stock roles of New Comedy is due to fear of the city's new Macedonian overlords (*δεδοικότες τοὺς Μακεδόνας καὶ τοὺς ἐπηρτημένους ἐξ ἐκείνων φόβους*).

[14] The standard periodization of Greek comedy distinguishes between the Old, Middle, and New. In this context, however, it is intriguing to note the alternative division represented by Men. test. 149a K-A = Tzetz. diff. poet. (Proleg. de com. XXI[a]) 78 p. 87 Kost. cf. test. 149b K-A = Tzetz. prooem. I (Proleg. de com. XI[a] 1) 78 p. 26 Kost. where the earliest mode of comedy is associated with the open mockery of Susarion of Megara, the second with the more veiled mockery of Aristophanes, Eupolis, and Cratinus, while the third, that of Menander, permits only disguised attack or symbolic comedy except against slaves, foreigners, and barbarians. To this catalogue of soft targets might be added the figure of the philosopher. Among the many examples of this, see Eub. fr. 137 K-A = Ath. 113 F; Alex. *Olymp.* fr. 163 K-A and *Par.* fr. 185 K-A = D.L. 3. 28; Antiph. *Koryk.* fr. 132 K-A = Ath. 366 B–C; Philem. *Phil.* fr. 88 K-A = Clem. Al. *Strom.* 2. 121. 2.

The second problem lies in the process of adaptation. For both Plautus and Terence maintain the specifically Greek setting of their dramas and a consciously depoliticized and domestic form is thus held one step further back from any direct comment on specifically Roman society or politics by the fact that it is played out in the land of its original authors. This is most importantly so in the case of Terence whose restrained and naturalistic drama restricts all reference to the process of adaptation to the prologue and avoids the tendency of Plautus overtly to revel in the hybridity of the form and to play with the boundaries which divide Greece and Rome: allusions to Roman topography, institutions, and ritual in a Greek play;[15] knowing allusions to Romans as barbarians and Latin as a barbarian tongue;[16] an extravagantly Hellenized Latin vocabulary;[17] characters deliberately acting Greek or even talking in Greek itself.[18] Yet even in Plautus the modern analytical critic will often find much to identify as entirely Attic and suggest in consequence that a given phrase, motif, or scene has nothing to do

[15] For topography, see esp. Plaut. *Curc.* 462–86 with Moore (1991) cf. *Capt.* 90, 489, 882–4 and *Bacch.* 12; for institutions, see e.g. Plaut. *Capt.* 823 and Fraenkel (1960) 126–7 for the aedilician edict, *Persa* 159–60 cf. *Poen.* 1011–12 for the role of the aediles in organizing the games, *Asin.* 269, *Bacch.* 1068–75, *Pseud.* 1051 for the triumph; for ritual, see Plaut. *Curc.* 268–9 cf. *Trin.* 83–7 and Capitoline Jove. Hough (1940) 194–7 and n. 20 lists 84 separate allusions of this sort in Plautus. For the strong suggestion that Plautus does what Naevius did before him, see e.g. Naev. *com.* 21 = Macr. *Sat.* 3. 18. 6 referring to 'Praenestini et Lanuvini hospites'. Beare (1964) 26–9 brings out the richly Roman and Italian element in the Naevian *palliata* and offers a sympathetic discussion of what the *Tarentilla* (*com.* 72–93) might have meant to a Roman audience.

[16] Plaut. *Bacch.* 123, *Capt.* 884, *Mil.* 211, *Most.* 828, *Poen.* 598 all use 'barbarus' or its cognates in contexts which suggest that the barbarian in question is Roman or Italian. Plaut. *Asin.* 11, *Trin.* 19 refer to Plautus translating the Greek original into 'barbarian'. For Romans perceived by Greeks as barbarians and their common language as a source of unity amongst the latter, see Plb. 5. 104. 1, 9. 37. 6, 11. 5. 6–8, 18. 22. 8; Cato *ad fil.* fr. 1 J = Plin. *nat.* 29. 14; Liv. 31. 29. 15 cf. 31. 30. 4, 34. 24. 3–4.

[17] For the readiness of Plautus to introduce Greek loan-words even where the equivalent term did not stand in the Attic original, see Leo (1912) 103. See also the contrast between this aspect of Plautine style and the more reserved procedures of Terence in Hough (1934) and (1947–8); Shipp (1960) 52–3.

[18] For acting Greek associated with dissipation, see the uses of *pergraecari* and *congraecare* at Plaut. *Bacch.* 743, 813, *Most.* 22, 64, *Poen.* 603, *Truc.* 87. The tendency of characters to talk in Greek is attributed by Leo (1912) 106–7 to Plautine mirroring of Roman life, most notably the speech of characters of low social status. However, what Hough (1934) 348–9 finds for Greek loan-words—that they are often used to put on airs and are particularly concentrated in lines describing feasting and female luxury—has a bearing on the use of straight Greek too. For instances where the use of Greek corresponds to the self-conscious refinement of the speaker, see Plaut. *Cas.* 728–31 cf. *Most.* 41 with Leo's emendation 'caeno *κοπρὼν* commixte'. See also Plaut. *Bacch.* 1162 where the *ναὶ γάρ* of Philoxenus is perfect for a character who suddenly feels himself coming over all 'Greek'.

with mid-Republican Rome. It is not necessary to think in exclusively political terms or to invoke the notion of plausible deniability in order to suggest that the comic poets often had much at stake in allowing this view to take hold.

Rome in the Mirror

If the *comoedia palliata* really did have nothing to say about Rome, Cicero at least seems to have missed the point. In his speech in defence of the young Roscius of Ameria, he finds himself representing a son accused of murdering his father out of indignation at his dishonourable relegation to the family estate while his favoured older brother is allowed to enjoy the life of the city. The construction of comic plots around the contrasting lives of different pairs of brothers is as old as Aristophanes,[19] and is also familiar from the works of Alexis.[20] In New Comedy it is most familiar from the reworking of the Menandrean *Adelphoi B* in the *Adelphoe* of Terence and this drama is analysed in detail in Chapter 4 of this study. Cicero, therefore, appeals precisely to the model of comedy in order to underpin his construction of the relationship of the father to his sons, and chooses as his point of reference a play by the great intermediary between Plautus and Terence, Caecilius Statius.[21] And what is most significant here is the way in which the orator can claim without any sign of embarrassment that the characters of this drama are interchangeable with the actual inhabitants of Rome and Italy, that the Caecilian Eutychus and his life out in the Attic countryside are effectively identical with any youth living out in the fields of Veii:

si tibi fortuna non dedit ut patre certo nascerere ex quo intellegere posses qui animus patrius in liberos esset, at natura certe dedit ut humanitatis non parum

[19] Ar. *Dait.* test. 6 K-A = Ar. *Nu.* 528–36 and Schol. Ar. *Nu.* 529a suggests that the *Daitaleis* featured a virtuous youth (*σώφρον μειράκιον*) and his dissolute (*ἄχρηστον*) counterpart.

[20] Alex. *Kour.* fr. 113 K-A = Ath. 443D–E: *ὁ μὲν οὖν ἐμὸς υἱός οἷον ὑμεῖς ἀρτίως | εἴδετε, τοιοῦτος γέγονεν, Οἰνοπίων τις ἢ | Μάρων τις ἢ Κάπηλος ἢ ⟨καὶ⟩ Τιμοκλῆς· | μεθύει γάρ, οὐδὲν ἕτερον. ὁ δ' ἕτερος – τί ἄν | τύχοιμ' ὀνομάσας; βῶλος, ἄροτρον, γηγενὴς | ἄνθρωπος.* The thematic continuity is noted at Wehrli (1936) 49.

[21] For the probable identification of the Caecilian drama in question with the work variously known as *Hypobolimaeus sive Subditivus*, *Hypobolimaeus Chaerestratus*, and *Hypobolimaeus Rastraria*, see the introduction of Ribbeck (1898) to Caecil. *com.* 75–91 cf. Landgraf (1914) at Cic. *S. Rosc.* 46. For the Attic *Ὑποβολιμαῖος ἢ Ἄγροικος*, see Men. frr. 372–87 K-A.

haberes; eo accessit studium doctrinae ut ne a litteris quidem alienus esses. ecquid tandem tibi videtur, ut ad fabulas veniamus, senex ille Caecilianus minoris facere Eutychum, filium rusticum, quam illum alterum, Chaerestratum?—nam, ut opinor, hoc nomine est—alterum in urbe secum honoris causa habere, alterum rus supplicii causa relegasse? 'quid ad istas ineptias abis?' inquies. quasi vero mihi difficile sit quamvis multos nominatim proferre, ne longius abeam, vel tribulis vel vicinos meos qui suos liberos quos plurimi faciunt agricolas adsiduos esse cupiunt. verum homines notos sumere odiosum est, cum et illud incertum sit velintne ei sese nominari, et nemo vobis magis notus futurus sit quam est hic Eutychus, et certe ad rem nihil intersit utrum hunc ego comicum adulescentem an aliquem ex agro Veientini nominem. etenim haec conficta arbitror esse a poetis ut effictos nostros mores in alienis personis expressamque imaginem vitae cotidianae videremus.

If fortune did not allow you to be born of any definite father from whom you might understand what a paternal attitude to children was, yet nature certainly granted that you should not be short on refinement: your zeal for learning reached such a point that you were not even a stranger to literature. To turn then to the theatre, does that old man of Caecilius seem to you in any way to value Eutychus, his rustic son, less than that other one, Chaerestratus? (for that, as I think, is his name) or to keep the one with him in the city as an honour and to have exiled the other to the country as a punishment? 'Why are you resorting to these follies?' you will say. As if it would indeed be difficult for me to cite by name any number, not to go too far off, of my own tribesmen or neighbours who wish their sons, whom they esteem most highly, to be regular farmers. But it is loathsome to drag in men one knows when it is yet uncertain whether or not they wish themselves to be named, and nobody is going to be more familiar to you than this Eutychus, and it would surely make no difference to the case whether I named this young man of comedy or someone from the fields of Veii. For I consider these things to have been invented by the poets so that we might see our own ways represented in the characters of others and thus a carefully fashioned image of our daily life.[22]

This is surely an important claim and its implications worthy of further consideration.

It was noted above that it was the particular propensity of Plautus to undermine any naturalistic representation of Attic life by shamelessly jarring references to the differences between Greeks and Romans or to specifically Roman or Italian places and institutions. These are the most obviously Plautine elements in Plautus though the great study of Fraenkel elicits far more than just these.[23] The second chapter of this

[22] Cic. *S. Rosc.* 46–7.

[23] Fraenkel (1960).

study therefore takes as its starting point an area where Fraenkel demonstrates a specifically Plautine intervention in the Greek originals of his work: the elaboration of the slave as hero and his self-representation as a decidedly Roman general. Yet what Cicero seems to suggest is rather different. The closing claim that comic poets present us with an image of ourselves and of our daily life in the characters seen on the stage is one to which he returns in further descriptions of comedy.[24] These in turn may recall the famous praises lavished by Aristophanes of Byzantium on the naturalistic mode of Menander.[25] The crucial difference is that Menandrean naturalism has as its end the theatrical representation of the life of the poet's own society; Cicero, by contrast, for all that the Caecilian *palliata* continues to give its plays a specifically Attic setting, nevertheless finds in them a mirror of Roman life.[26]

What Cicero's remarks betray is a reading strategy which maps the conventional oppositions played out in Greek New Comedy onto specifically Roman coordinates. And, inasmuch as this is a *reading* strategy, it is one which may be extended not only to those plays which go out of their way to draw explicit attention to such a possibility but also to others which aspire to the most perfectly faithful translation of their original. In the instance which Cicero considers, what is at issue is the contrast between the life of the town and that of the country and this in turn will be a prominent consideration in both Chapters 4 and 5. Essential to the argument in both these cases will be the Roman response to the Attic association of the city with indolence and luxury and of the country with self-denial and toil. In particular, attention will be drawn to the contemporary representation of the rustic life as the foundation of traditional Roman culture and the indictment of the city as the fount of new ways which are both luxurious and fundamentally Hellenic. The Plautine response to this is to set a play in Athens, then have the rustic slave indict his spendthrift urban counterpart for Greeking it up; the urban wag responds by speaking to him in Greek.[27] Terence does none of this. Yet not even his care to preserve the smooth surface of post-Menandrean naturalism has spared the *Adelphoe* from interpretation as an image of Roman life and this tradition appears again to be as old as Cicero.[28]

The perception of the world of the *palliata* as fundamentally foreign is often bound up with the notion that some of what it presents would be deemed impossibly scandalous if placed in a Roman setting. Crucial to this approach is the statement of Donatus that the slaves of the *palliata* are allowed to be represented as cleverer than their masters but that generally (*fere*) this is forbidden in the *togata*.[29] Now the fact that this is said to be only generally the case should warn against the assertion of any absolute rules.[30] But, more importantly, the very notion of a form of New Comedy set in Rome or Italy must also offer some potential objective correlative for the subjective reading strategy described above for the *palliata*. And this is indeed the case.

The three authors of the *comoedia togata* substantial remains of whose work have been preserved are Titinius, Afranius, and Atta. There is no firm evidence to date the first,[31] but the statement by Afranius that he has imitated both Menander and his Latin counterpart, that is, Terence, places him most probably in the mid- to late second century,[32] and Jerome's attribution of the death of Atta to 77 BC probably puts him even later still.[33] The further implication of Afranius' avowed debt to Terence and Menander, that plays from Greek New Comedy

[24] Cic. *Hort.* fr. 10 Grilli = Don. *de com.* 5. 1: 'comoediam esse Cicero ait imitationem vitae, speculum consuetudinis, imaginem veritatis'. See also Don. *de com.* 5. 5 apparently also quoting Cicero: 'aitque esse comoediam cotidianae vitae speculum, nec iniuria. nam ut intenti speculo veritatis liniamenta facile per imaginem colligimus, ita lectione comoediae imitationem vitae consuetudinisque non aegerrime animadvertimus.'

[25] Men. test. 83 K-A = Syrian. in Hermog. *II. στάς.* 1 (p. 29, 18 R.), ii. 22, 25 R.: *ὦ Μένανδρε καὶ βίε | πότερος ἆρ' ὑμῶν πότερον ἀπεμιμήσατο:* For similar verdicts cf. Men. test. 94 K-A = Manil. 5. 476 describing the comic poet as 'qui vitae ostendit vitam'; Men. test. 101 K-A = Quint. *inst.* 10. 1. 69 stating that Menander 'omnem vitae imaginem expressit'.

[26] The playwright to whom Cicero refers, Caecilius Statius, has often been treated as a partial forerunner of the naturalistic mode of Terence and it might serve the orator's case were that true. For a survey of such claims but also vigorous arguments against their validity, see Wright (1974) 87–126.

[27] See pp. 101–5.

[28] This at least would be the implication of Cic. *Cato* 65 where Cato the Elder refers to the *Adelphoe* and greatly prefers the 'comitas' of Micio to the 'duritas' or 'diritas' (see Powell (1988) ad loc. for the text) of Demea. The sly joke is that Cato is appalled by the very character whom readers have regularly associated with his own ways.

[29] Don. at Ter. *Eun.* 57: 'concessum est in palliata poetis comicis servos dominis sapientiores fingere, quod idem in togata non fere licet.'

[30] Afran. *com.* 189–91 = Non. p. 409 L certainly suggests the attempts of son and slave to deceive the father. See also Afran. *com.* 251 = Non. p. 823 L.

[31] Fuss's emendation of Lyd. *Mag.* 1. 40 *τό τετίνιος* to *τότε Τιτίνιος* would place the comic poet as early as 219 BC but there is nothing else to support such a date. Daviault (1981) 31–4 is more sympathetic to the notion than Guardì (1985) 18–19.

[32] Afran. *com.* 25–8 = Macr. *Sat.* 6. 1. 4 cf. *com.* 29 = Suet. *vita Ter.* fr. 5 Rostagni. It is significant that this claim is made in the prologue to a play the title of which *Compitalia* suggests a specifically Roman festival. For Afranius and Menander, see also Cic. *fin.* 1. 7 cf. Hor. *epist.* 2. 1. 57.

[33] Suet. *vita Att.* fr. 1 Rostagni = Hier. *chron.* ad Ol. 175. 4.

and the *palliata* could be adapted for the purposes of the *togata*, is also significant. What, however, is perhaps most valuable for the purposes of this argument is the tendency of the *togata* explicitly to represent as Hellenizing or as Greek ways which the Terentian *palliata* treats simply as urban, and by extension to find locations for the rigorously self-denying lives which Terence associates with the fields of Attica which may stand in dialectical or symbolic opposition to Rome.

An important characteristic of the *togata* is its tendency to locate its action not in Rome but in the smaller local centres of Roman Italy.[34] One striking implication of this is that the process of Hellenization has gathered pace and is no longer simply to be associated with the metropolis.[35] And it is in this context that the intriguingly titled *Lyre-player* or *Girl from Ferentinum* can present the statement that the people of Ferentinum are zealous for Greek ways.[36] The double title recorded for the work may indeed suggest that one example of such Greek ways is the enthusiasm for the lyre-player's art.[37] Other fragments of the drama might add devotion to the *convivium* and to dining.[38] In a separate fragment of unattested source, a character sporting perfume is said to bear the scent of the gardens of that most Greek and luxurious of cities, Tarentum.[39] One fragment of Atta may suggest scandal that foreign courtesans sport Roman dress;[40] in Afranius one courtesan has the Greek name Moschis and is a native of the Greek city of Naples,[41] while a further play is entitled *Thais*, a common name for Greek courtesans in Terence, Menander, and others.[42] To a character in the same

[34] See e.g. Titin. *com.* 106 = Non. p. 209 L and *com.* 120–1 = Serv. at Verg. *Aen.* 11. 457 which both suggest that the setting of the *Setina* is the town of Setia. For similar titles cf. Titin. *com.* 138–54 = *Veliterna*; Afran. *com.* 15–18 = *Brundisinae*.

[35] Thus Titin. *com.* 112–13 = Non. p. 301 L 'quasi hermaphroditus fimbriatum frontem | gestas' can have a character sport an effeminate new hairstyle around the streets of Setia. Note the need of the Greek calque *hermaphroditus* to express the attendant confusion of gender.

[36] Titin. *com.* 85 = Prisc. *GLK* ii. 129. 15 'Ferentinatis populus res Graecas studet'.

[37] Guardì (1985) ad loc. points to Liv. 39. 6. 8 for the *psaltria* listed among the items of foreign luxury brought to Rome by the army returning from Asia in 186 BC.

[38] Titin. *com.* 88–9 = Non. p. 491 L cf. *com.* 90 = Prisc. *GLK* ii. 213. 3.

[39] Titin. *com.* 183 = Porph. at Hor. *carm.* 2. 6. 10.

[40] Atta, *com.* 3 = Non. p. 193 L 'quam meretricie em lupantur nostro ornatu per vias'. The title of the play *Aquae Caldae* suggests its location in an Italian spa town, perhaps the ideal place for traditional Italians to encounter dubious Greek ways.

[41] Afran. *com.* 136 = Non. p. 497 L.

[42] Afran. *com.* 332–4. For the *Thais* of Menander, see frr. 163–9 K-A cf. Ath. 567C stating that it takes its title from its courtesan heroine. See also Hipparch. Com. fr. 3 K-A = Ath. 484D–E for another *Thais*. The courtesan heroine of the Terentian *Eunuchus* is of the same name.

writer, very likely a prodigal son, the inability properly to speak Greek is a clear source of embarrassment.[43]

Courtesans and lyre-players, fine dining and perfume: precisely the actions which are objectively urban and subjectively Hellenic in the *palliata* are explicitly and objectively Greek in togate comedy. What though of the countryside? It will be no surprise to find instances in the *togata* of rural poverty and simplicity.[44] More important, however, is the clear impression given by one fragment of Titinius that the Greek behaviour which causes scandal in the town is doubly shocking when exported to the countryside.[45] Yet potentially the most significant piece of evidence derives from a fragment of the *Suspecta* of Afranius which is alas transmitted in a corrupt state but subject to an ingenious emendation on the part of Ribbeck: 'in Hortinos iam quantum pote explodam hominem, ut vilicetur.' (I shall now drive the man out into the Hortini as fast as possible to be a bailiff).[46] What this line clearly evokes is the wrath of a *paterfamilias* at the dissipation or some similar offence of a son or slave and his determination to send him out into the countryside as a punishment.[47] Where the text of Nonius is corrupt is in the reading *horpinos* which makes no sense as it stands but suggests reference to some Italian tribe or people. Various alternatives are therefore proposed and each is interesting in that it names a rural grouping implicitly contrasted with the urban locale where dissipation has been pursued.[48] Yet Ribbeck's suggested *Hortinos* is both closest to the transmitted text and has the effect of bringing to mind the one tribe—the Sabines—which features in second-century discourse both as the originators of the traditional Roman life and as its best representatives in the present.[49] For though modern Orte is to be found on the

[43] Afran. *com.* 272–3 = Non. p. 637 L. The title of the play, *Prodigus*, might suggest that the spendthrift son regards this linguistic accomplishment as the necessary accompaniment to his expensively elegant (and thoroughly Greek) ways.

[44] Afran. *com.* 159–60 = Non. p. 432 L. For this theme in Greek New Comedy and the *palliata*, see pp. 98–101.

[45] Titin. *com.* 175 = Paul Fest. p. 235 L: 'hominem improbum! nunc ruri pergraecatur'. Note that Festus glosses *pergraecari* as 'epulis et potationibus inservire'.

[46] Afran. *com.* 327 = Non. p. 273 L.

[47] For similar threats, see Titin. *com.* 176–7 = Fest. p. 230 L cf. Plaut. *Most.* 19, Ter. *Phorm.* 250.

[48] Orpinos *Mercer*; Arpinos *Aldine*; Hirpinos *Passerat*; Norsinos *Bergk*. Ribbeck ad loc. confesses that this is 'res incertissima'.

[49] For Cato, Varro, and the prestige of the Sabines, see pp. 103–5, 161 n. 12. For the piety and severity of the Sabines, see also Cic. *Vatin.* 36, *Lig.* 32; Liv. 1. 18. 1 and 4. It may be noted that Bergk's proposed reading 'Norsinos' would also have Afranius refer to a Sabine people.

Etruscan side of the Tiber, the *Ortinae classes* of *Aeneid* 7. 716 form part of the Sabine forces of Clausus and their association with the tribe is unlikely to have mystified antiquity quite as much as it has the scholarship of our own time.[50] When, therefore, it is necessary to map onto the landscape of Roman Italy the opposed worlds of city and country, of dissipation and toil, around which so much of Greek New Comedy and the *palliata* turns, it seems likely that it is the Sabine tradition which most eloquently represents the latter pole.

Writing for the *togata* may thus be seen as the systematic working out of a perspective which the determinedly non-naturalistic theatre of Plautus intermittently obtrudes into his version of the *palliata*: that this is, after all, about us, about Rome. Yet what Cicero claims for the *palliata* in his defence of Roscius—inasmuch as it reads against the grain of what the playwright appears to present—is challenging precisely when the form avoids just such Plautine play and bids for the very Menandrean naturalism which the orator's conception of comedy as a mirror to life implies. Likewise, when Afranius wishes to characterize his version of the *togata*, the debt which he avows is not to Plautus but again to Menander and to Terence. The hazards of transmission have sadly failed to vouchsafe any clear instance of what might be involved for Afranius in subjecting a Terentian comedy to *interpretatio togata* but a first stage in any such process must be to treat the palliate original to the type of reading which Cicero invokes. The implications of this conclusion are of signal importance for my work.

Constructing Rome

The other fundamental problem facing a study of this sort is that of history itself. A dominant theme in Chapters 4 and 5 is that of Hellenization and social and economic change, but the nature of such change is not always easy to assess. It is manifest that the riches won from Southern Italy and Sicily in the Second Punic War and from the Greek world in the Macedonian Wars and the expansion into Asia Minor had a drastic impact on Roman society. That the Romans of this period suddenly found themselves with far greater economic resources, and that much of this was spent on conspicuously Hellenic refinements,

[50] For the forces of Clausus, see Verg. *Aen.* 7. 706–22. For various problems relating to the 'Ortinae classes', see Horsfall (2000) ad loc. and at *EV* III. 896 s.v. 'Ortinae classes'.

may be accepted. What remains considerably less satisfactory is the image of Roman society *before* all this began.[51]

Examples of the problems involved may be drawn from the work of two of the greatest scholars of the literature and history of this period. The work of Emilio Gabba is of fundamental importance to the study of economic and social change in the Rome of the mid-Republic, and the historian's extension of this investigation to take in the comedies of Plautus and Terence results in perhaps the most important single contribution to the issues addressed in this book.[52] Yet when Gabba attempts to describe the social conditions of the mid-third century BC, that is, at the time prior to the great transformation begun by the First Punic War, he refers to the impoverished ideal represented by C. Fabricius and Manius Curius.[53] In a separate work the same writer refers to the plebeian measure (*plebeia mensura*) of 7 *iugera* in land distribution and in such a way as to suggest that this figure, to which both Fabricius and Curius are reported to have restricted themselves rather than claim more than was being granted to their men, represents a genuine historical tradition.[54] Two instances, perhaps, of a necessary shorthand, of symbolic figures employed to summarise historical conditions the existence of which can be confidently claimed even if it is no longer possible to document their precise dimensions.[55] Yet it will be instructive to look further into those symbolic figures; for close analysis of what they represent reveals much about the evidentiary problems which the historian is obliged to confront.[56]

The figure of seven *iugera* is cited intriguingly by Varro in relation to the tribune C. Licinius who, 365 years after the expulsion of the kings (*post reges exactos*), that is, in 145 BC, led the people from the 'comitium' into the 7 *iugera* of the forum in order to propose his legislation.[57] Columella meanwhile argues that a small farm well kept will be more productive than a large one that is subject to neglect and cites the example

[51] Lintott (1972) 627–30 illustrates effectively some of the problems faced by the historian.

[52] Gabba (1988) esp. 69–82.

[53] Gabba (1988) 71. Similar remarks regarding M.' Curius and M. Atilius Regulus in Gabba (1979) 22–3, 30.

[54] Gabba (1951) 18–19. For the restraint of Curius and Fabricius, see Colum. 1 pref. 14. For Curius alone, see also Val. Max. 4. 3. 5; Colum. 1. 4. 10; Plin. *nat.* 18. 18; Plu. *Mor.* 194 E; Frontin. *strat.* 4. 3. 12; [Aur. Vict.] *vir. ill.* 33. 5–6.

[55] For a detailed analysis of what can be known of those conditions and of the process leading up to the Gracchan crisis, see Gabba (1979) 13–54.

[56] Gabba (1978) shows the way with his analysis of the 'heredium Romuli'.

[57] Varro *rust.* 1. 2. 9 cf. Cic. *Lael.* 96.

of what he calls 'those seven acre portions of Licinius' (*Liciniana illa septena iugera*) which the tribune granted to each man after the expulsion of the kings (*post reges exactos*).[58] This Columella describes as the plebeian measure (*plebeia mensura*) and Pliny corroborates his claim.[59] As for the archaic tribune Licinius at issue in this passage, the obvious candidate is the C. Licinius whom Livy names among the first tribunes created after the secession to the Alban Mount.[60]

Varro's allusion to the unusual behaviour of the second-century C. Licinius is prompted by the arrival of his friend C. Licinius Stolo. Moreover, the first thing which we are told about this figure, even before we hear of the tribune of 145, is that he shares the name of yet another famous tribune, the C. Licinius Stolo, who in 367 BC proposed that no citizen should be permitted to possess more than 500 *iugera*.[61] It may further be noted—for it is significant—that Varro does not refer to the unhappy tale told by Livy and Valerius of how the tribune was subsequently prosecuted under his own law when the sharp practices were exposed which allowed him to retain 1000 *iugera* himself.[62]

There is good reason to investigate this nest of references to tribunes, land assignations, and Licinii. For their peculiar combination of devotion to the *gens* and to the people bears the quite unmistakable mark of that remarkable politician and historian C. Licinius Macer.[63] When, thus, the Licinius Stolo of 365 years after the expulsion of the kings leads the plebs into the 7 *iugera* of the forum in order to propose his legislation, it is obvious that he reminds them of the great *popularis* achievement of his ancestor C. Licinius who, at least in Macer's *Histories*, must have been credited with the viritane assignation of 7 *iugera* after the expulsion of the kings. And why this is ideologically so significant is that it was only after the expulsion of the kings that the common citizens of Rome were able to claim for themselves more than

[58] Colum. 1. 3. 9–10.

[59] Colum. 1. 3. 10 cf. Plin. *nat.* 18. 18 'haec autem mensura [sc. 7 iugera] plebei post exactos reges adsignata est'.

[60] Liv. 2. 33. 2.

[61] Varro *rust.* 1. 2. 9; Liv. 6. 35. 4–5. The 'popularis' character of this legislation is apparent from Liv. 6. 35. 4 'leges omnes adversus opes patriciorum et pro commodis plebis'.

[62] Liv. 6. 35. 4–5 cf. 7. 16. 9; Val. Max. 8. 6. 3. Oakley (1997) at Liv. 6. 34. 1 offers an excellent discussion of the alleged legislation of 367 BC and a vindication of the partial historicity of the Livian account. Note also the discussion of the references to very similar legislation at Cato *ORF*[3] fr. 167 = Gell. 6. 3. 37 cf. App. *BC* 1. 33; Plu. *TG* 8. 1–4 and their possible relationship to the Licinian legislation in Tibiletti (1948–9).

[63] For the influence of Macer, see Ogilvie (1965) at Liv. 2. 33. 2 and Heurgon (1978) at Varro *rust.* 1. 2. 9.

the miserable 2 *iugera* which King Romulus granted to each man as his future family inheritance,[64] and only after the famous secession of the plebs that the tribunate was created at all.[65]

Gabba's plebeian measure is therefore not an objective fact of land tenure but the symbol of a contest which C. Licinius Macer retrojects to the very earliest years of the state, the contest between rich and poor over the appropriate allocation of the *ager publicus*.[66] So much for the left. Yet the same reference to 7 *iugera* proliferates and with it a very different ideological construction and one which is already evident in Columella even as he transmits the Licinian tradition. For Columella's point, as has been noted, is that a small estate tended well is superior to a large one left to decay and the example of early Romans able to get by on so small a plot is a challenge to the writer's luxurious contemporaries.[67] At this point, Columella introduces the example of one of Gabba's thrifty third-century leaders and tells of how M.' Curius refused the honorary gift of 50 *iugera* in favour of the plebeian measure. Pliny too uses the case of Curius to evoke the simplicity of the past; he makes no mention of the 50 *iugera* refused by the general but attributes to him in a speech before the people the claim that a citizen who could not get by on 7 *iugera* was a menace to the state.[68]

The Plinian version of the Curius story is important and has an important parallel in Plutarch where the general accepts 7 *iugera* for himself precisely in order to deflect the demands of his men for more.[69] In these instances, therefore, the popular audience to whom the general addresses the apophthegm mirrors that of the anecdote as a whole and the message to both is the same: if your leaders can get by

[64] Varro *rust.* 1. 10. 2; Plin. *nat.* 18. 7; Fest. p. 47 L. For a convincing demonstration that the 'heredium Romuli' bears no relation to the realities of archaic land tenure and is very likely a retrojection from the procedures followed, for instance, in the establishment of the colony at Terracina in 329 BC recorded at Liv. 8. 21. 11, see Gabba (1978).

[65] Liv. 2. 33. 1–2. For 'post reges exactos' as a dating formula, see Liv. 4. 3. 4, 4. 4. 1, 4. 4. 7, 4. 15. 3, 7. 3. 8, 10. 9. 3 and the passages collected at *TLL* 5. 2. 1449. 66–9. Here it becomes something considerably more pointed.

[66] Liv. 5. 30. 8 cites a figure of 7 'iugera' for the land distributed after the sack of Veii but this is unusually high. For the more miserly distributions recorded elsewhere in the first decade of Livy, see Oakley (1997) at Liv. 6. 36. 11.

[67] Colum. 1. 3. 9–10 cf. Plin. *nat.* 18. 7 where 2 'iugera' were enough for the age of Romulus while in Neronian Rome even an ex-slave might find a garden, a fishpond, or a kitchen that size rather cramped.

[68] Colum. 1. 3. 9–10 cf. Plin. *nat.* 18. 18 'Mani quidem Curi post triumphos immensumque terrarum adiectum imperio nota contio est: perniciosum intellegi civem, cui septem iugera non essent satis. haec autem mensura plebei post exactos reges adsignata est.'

[69] Plu. *Mor.* 194E.

with so little, why can't you?[70] And those leaders—both those of the semi-legendary past *and* of the third and second Centuries—seem to engage in a positive stampede to acquire their 7 *iugera* and if possible in the most ideologically attractive because agriculturally hopeless terrain: Livy, Dionysius, and Columella have Cincinnatus get by with 4 *iugera* after he is punished for the failure of his son to appear in court, though Valerius is sufficiently obsessed with the magic number to add that he lost another three when standing surety to the treasury for a friend;[71] M. Atilius Regulus, Roman commander in the First Punic War, farms 7 *iugera* on the Pupinia and, when his bailiff dies during the African campaign, is obliged to seek permission to surrender his command so that he may tend his fields;[72] the land invidiously spared by Hannibal and then sold by Fabius Maximus in order to pay for the ransoming of prisoners refused by the senate consists of 7 *iugera* and is again on the Pupinia.[73] In short, 7 *iugera* when wrested from the rich in place of the 2 granted by Romulus are a powerful example of what can be achieved through agitation for land reform; the same figure invoked as an instance of what even great leaders could—and can—survive on is an equally powerful tool for those determined to frustrate demands for a more realistic distribution in the present. Either way it is worse than useless as documentary evidence for the property held by Rome's leaders in the years before the rise to power.[74]

When so much of the remembered simplicity of earlier generations is actually an emotional response to the perceived extravagance of the present, it is hard to find objective evidence of what Rome changed from in order to become what she was. This problem has an obvious bearing on the approach taken to Plautus in Fraenkel's *Elementi*

[70] Cf. Harris (1979) 265: 'Even if M.' Curius took only seven *iugera* of Sabine land, not the 50 offered by the senate . . . it was obviously not his only property.'

[71] Liv. 3. 13. 10, 3. 26. 8; D.H. 10. 8. 4; Colum. 1 pref. 13; Val. Max. 4. 4. 7. For the 'prata Quinctia' and the 4 acres of Cincinnatus, see also Plin. *nat.* 18. 20; Paul. Fest. p. 307 L.

[72] Val. Max. 4. 4. 6 cf. Colum. 1. 4. 2–3; Apul. *apol.* 18; Frontin. *strat.* 4. 3. 3.

[73] Val. Max. 4. 8. 1. The Pupinia is a stretch of land between Rome and Tusculum which is a byword for aridity and infertility (Cic. *leg. agr.* 2. 96; Varro *rust.* 1. 9. 5–6; Liv. 26. 9. 12; Colum. 1. 4. 2–3). For the claim that all the great farmer-politicians tended this land, see Val. Max. 4. 4. 4.

[74] Cf. Ogilvie (1965) at Liv. 4. 47. 7 and Oakley (1997) at Liv. 6. 36. 11, who both note that even 7 'iugera' was far too little for anyone to sustain himself or his kin. Ogilvie's suggestion that such small allotments represented the owner's *heredium* on which he could at least build somewhere for his *penates* to reside may be accurate as history but runs entirely counter to the rhetorical construction placed on the issue by the texts. Likewise Oakley's observation that such small plots presuppose access to substantial additional areas of *ager publicus* to exploit.

plautini in Plauto.[75] For Fraenkel is relatively confident that certain figures presented in Plautine comedy—most notably courtesans and parasites—are fundamentally strange to the unrefined Rome of the period and detects evidence for this in the Latin poet's presentation of such figures in terms which distort the Greek original in order to make his characters more akin to recognizable Roman types.[76] When therefore the scandalized Lydus of the *Bacchises* looks into the house of the two sisters, what he actually describes is the sordid world of the enslaved brothel-prostitute, not the grand and independent courtesan of Athens.[77] When the Ergasilus of the *Captivi* dreams only of pork, he is recognizable as the gluttonous Dossennus of the Atellana.[78]

Fraenkel's claim as regards courtesanship may prove satisfactory as a generalization. It does not, however, explain how Livy is able to attribute the exposure of the Bacchanalia scandal in 186 BC to a courtesan Hispala Faecenia who bears more than a passing resemblance to her peers on the comic stage,[79] and whose profession is described in terms which may in fact constitute the closest Latin comes to finding an equivalent for the high-class services of the Greek *hetaira*.[80] More striking still, perhaps, the confidence with which the modern scholar proclaims the facts of Roman social life in this period contrasts intriguingly with the ability of certain of the contemporaries of Plautus to imagine a quite different reality.[81] Take, for instance, Cato the Elder whose prose

[75] Fraenkel (1960).

[76] Fraenkel (1960) 144–5 cf. 183 and n. 2, 239. Fraenkel's approach is anticipated by Leo (1913) 139–40, 144.

[77] Fraenkel (1960) 144–5, cf. Leo (1913) 144; Zagagi (1980) 127.

[78] Fraenkel (1960) 239.

[79] Liv. 39. 9. 5, 'scortum nobile libertina Hispala Faecenia, non digna quaestu cui ancillula adsuerat, etiam postquam manumissa erat eodem se genere tuebatur'. Walsh (1994) ad loc. notes Hispala's likeness to a Terentian 'bona meretrix'. For a defence of the historicity of Hispala, see Pailler (1988) 363–9.

[80] Liv. 39. 9. 5, 'scortum nobile', cf. M. Porcius Cato, *ORF*[3] fr. 69 = Liv. 39. 42. 8, 'nobile scortum' for Philippus Poenus; Val. Max. 4. 3. ext. 3 'nobile Athenis scortum' for Phryne. For mid-Republican parallels for this term cf. Ter. *Haut.* 227 'meast potens procax magnifica sumptuosa nobilis', *Hec.* 797 on the 'nobilitatem' of Bacchis and the claim of Don ad loc. that 'nobilis' is the characteristic term used to describe either 'meretrix' or 'gladiator'; Lucil. fr. 263 M = Non. p. 557 L 'Phryne nobilis illa'. Adams (1983) 321–7 demonstrates the tendency of 'meretrix' to represent a higher class of prostitute than 'scortum' but does not discuss the manifestly oxymoronic 'scortum nobile'.

[81] Among these must be the interpolator who added Plaut. *Curc.* 485 to the choragus' tour of the forum: 'ditis damnosos maritos apud Leucadiam Oppiam'. Grammatical discontinuity and the repetition of 'ditis damnosos maritos' from the opening of v. 472 suggest that Leucadia Oppia is a post-Plautine addition. It is, however, easier to imagine irresponsible, *rich*, spendthrift husbands being drawn to a high-class courtesan, if such Leucadia was, than to the 'scorta exoleta' of v. 473. For the text, see Zwierlein (1990) 263–5; Moore

history, the *Origines*, introduces the remarkable claim that one Larentia earned so much money from her career as a *meretrix* that she was able to bequeath a very considerable portion of land to the nascent Roman state.[82] This, it should be remembered, is the same Larentia whom other versions identify as the nurse of Romulus![83] Yet Cato appears to have retailed neither this version of the career of Larentia nor another in which her eventual wealth derives from marriage in favour of one in which she succeeds precisely thanks to her profession.[84] If the term *meretrix* cannot be claimed immediately to suggest the grand manner of the Hellenistic *hetaira*, it is clear from her independent status and considerable resources that Acca Larentia is no low-grade *prostibulum* either. What Fraenkel rejects as a misunderstood novelty, Cato seems to retroject to the most archaic past.[85]

A similar observation may be made with regard to the second category discussed by Fraenkel: the parasite. In this instance Fraenkel acknowledges the possibility that distinguished Roman gentlemen employed clowns at dinner to whom the Greek title of parasite was then applied.[86] He then describes as most strange the following statement from Cato's account in the *De Agri Cultura* of the duties of the bailiff: 'parasitum nequem habeat. haruspicem, augurem, hariolum, Chaldaeum nequem consuluisse velit.' (Let him have no parasite. Let

(1991) 358. For the suggestion that the 'scorta exoleta' are male prostitutes, see Moore (1991) 349 and n. 16. It would be good to know when Leucadia set up in business.

[82] Cato *orig.* fr. 16 P = Macr. *Sat.* 1. 10. 16: 'Cato ait, Larentiam meretricio quaestu locupletatam post excessum suum populo Romano agros Turacem, Semurium, Lintirium et Solinium reliquisse et ideo sepulcri magnificentia et annuae parentationis honore dignatam.'

[83] C. Licinius Macer fr. 1 P = Macr. *Sat.* 1. 10. 17; Plu. *Rom.* 4. 4–5; D.H. 1. 84 and 87 claim that Acca Larentia is the nurse of Romulus and marries the rich Tarutius after the death of Faustulus. When Tarutius dies, she leaves his property to Romulus.

[84] Plu. *Rom.* 5 cf. *Mor.* 272F–273B; Fast. Praenest. for Dec. 23 = *CIL* I² p. 338; Macr. *Sat.* 1. 10. 12–15; Tert. *nat.* 2. 10; Aug. *civ.* 6. 7 tell of how the priest of Hercules loses at dice with the god and procures him Acca Larentia as his prize. Hercules instructs Acca to go to the forum and befriend the first person she meets. She does so and thus becomes the wife or lover of the wealthy Tarutius/Carutius who leaves her his property when she dies.

[85] What appears to make Cato's version stand out and therefore justify Macrobius' citation of it as an alternative to the version given at *Sat.* 1. 10. 12–15 is his attribution of the wealth of Larentia specifically to her activity as a 'meretrix' and his failure to refer to Tarutius. The closest parallel account is that of Valerius Antias fr. 1 P = Gell. 7. 7. 5–7. Schröder (1971) 159–67 discusses the Cato fragment well and rightly notes that, inasmuch as neither Plutarch nor Augustine imply that Larentia ever marries Tarutius, the claim made in the *Origines* could refer to or presuppose the same story. Momigliano (1969) 471–9 is fascinating but does not do justice to Cato's version. For Acca Larentia as courtesan cf. Macr. *Sat.* 1. 10. 13 describing her as 'nobilissimum id temporis scortum' cf. Aug. *civ.* 6. 7 where she is 'nobilissimam meretricem'.

[86] Fraenkel (1960) 183 n. 2.

him wish to consult no soothsayer, augur, prophet, or Chaldaean.)[87] What makes this particular recommendation so unusual is the implication that a phenomenon, which is assumed to be unknown in the Rome of Plautus except through books, should be perceived at the time of the *De Agri Cultura* as something which even the slave retained to manage one's farm might enjoy. One response to the problem is to ignore it.[88] Another is to cite the equivalent if infinitely more banal instruction provided by Columella and claim that the two versions are effectively saying the same thing.[89] Yet what Cato actually seems to suggest is that parasitism is so prevalent a phenomenon among the urban rich that even the slave who stands in for the absentee landowner on his rural estate may be tempted to ape his ways.[90] Likewise, when he comes to prescribe the appropriate behaviour of the bailiff's wife, what is to be forbidden is the imitation of the indolent ways of the women of the urban leisure class.[91]

Is it therefore to be concluded that the Rome of the period of the *De Agri Cultura* was in the grip of parasitism? Perhaps not. It may indeed be right on one level to retranslate Cato along the lines of Columella and see this merely as a warning against excessive entertaining of guests by the farm-manager. Yet, if this is so, the elaborate terms in which Cato has expressed himself suggest strongly that he has begun to see his own society in the terms proposed by comedy. Cato writes specifically for an absentee landlord,[92] and maybe he has seen something in the *Persa* of Plautus, and its images of slaves running riot and acquiring parasites for themselves, of the risks which that landlord runs.[93] At which point

[87] Cato *agr.* 5. 4. Cf. Plaut. *Men.* 76 where 'parasitus' and 'hariolus' are listed among the inhabitants of the comic stage. *Ariolus* is also the title of a comedy by Naevius (*com.* 20–4).

[88] Hug's article on parasitism at Rome at Pauly, *RE* 18. 4. 1397–1405 does not mention this passage at all but still claims at 1398 that at the time of Plautus and Terence the parasite was still an unknown figure in the simple social world of the Romans.

[89] Colum. 11. 1. 23, cf. 1. 8. 7, 'hospitem nisi ex amicitia domini quam rarissime recipiat'. For this approach, see Leo (1913) 140 n. 2; Boscherini (1970) 121–2.

[90] Pighi (1944) 41.

[91] Cato *agr.* 143. 1, 'ne nimium luxuriosa siet. vicinas aliasque mulieres quam minimum utatur neve domum neve ad sese recipiat. ad cenam nequo eat neve ambulatrix siet. rem divinam ni faciat neve mandet, qui pro ea faciat, iniussu domini aut dominae'. Cf. Plaut. *Mil.* 693 where one's wife will seek money at the Quinquatrus to pay both 'hariola' and 'haruspica'.

[92] Cato *agr.* 4. 1 cf. 142.

[93] See Damon (1997) 48–51 discussing Cato *agr.* 5. 4 in the light of Plaut. *Persa* 31–5 and 83–101. For an even more exact playing out of these anxieties cf. Pompon. *com.* 45–6 =Non. p. 242 L: 'longe ab urbe vilicari, quo erus rarenter venit, | ⟨id⟩ non vilicari, sed dominari est mea sententia.' For the problems attendant on absentee landholding, see also Colum. 12 pref. 9–10.

the intervention of the philologist to restore dull reality and reassert a theory of the unfamiliarity of Greek forms becomes somewhat paradoxical.

The conclusion to be drawn from both the foregoing analyses should be clear. Where Gabba founds an account of actual historical change on claims for a Roman past generated in response to that change, Fraenkel asserts objective realities of mid-Republican Roman life which fall short of the imaginative power of certain Romans at large in that time. That Rome in the age of Plautus and Terence was subject to and perceived as being subject to dramatic socio-economic change will not be denied; quite how primitive was the world which came before is somewhat harder to recover. In short, just as the comic texts to be studied are themselves part of history, so it will be wise to remember that much of what we call history is itself a fundamentally textual construction.

Topicality and Discourse

The final methodological problem to be raised is that of the type of connection to be drawn between the comic texts and the rest of the evidence for the period. Perhaps the most obvious way to deal with this issue would be to comb the plays studied for specific topical references. This, however, is subject to various difficulties.[94] First, as has been noted above, New Comedy as a whole shuns political comment and the mockery of significant contemporaries. Any such comment is therefore likely to be very carefully disguised if it is present at all.[95] Second, there is no didascalic evidence by which to date any but two of the plays of Plautus and the identification of topical allusion is all the harder for this;[96] where such evidence does exist, the case for topicality is considerably stronger in the one than in the other.[97] Moreover,

[94] For historical work on Plautus which is valuable precisely because it foreswears any appeal to topicality, see esp. Galinsky (1966) esp. 232, cf. Gruen (1990) 124–57.

[95] It is, however, hard to believe that Plaut. *Mil.* 210–12 is not an allusion to the imprisonment of Naevius.

[96] Firm didascalic evidence is available only for the *Stichus*, which was first performed at the Ludi Plebeii of 200 BC, and the *Pseudolus*, which was first performed at the 191 BC opening of the temple of the Magna Mater. For brief discussion of and a bibliography to the largely vain attempts to date the other plays, see Duckworth (1952) 54–6 and Gruen (1990) 124–5 and n. 2.

[97] I have found no credible account of topical reference in the *Pseudolus*. Considerably more plausible is the claim of Wagenvoort (1931) that the joyful celebration of homecoming and plenty in the *Stichus* reflects the atmosphere in Rome at the close of the 2nd Punic war. Wagenvoort points to Liv. 30. 45. 1–2 and the 201 BC homecoming of Scipio. In a play which features exuberant description of the riches brought home by an overseas voyage, it might be appropriate also to point to Liv. 31. 4. 6–7 and 31. 50. 1–3 for the massive supplies of grain imported from Africa and distributed by the aediles. In both cases these notices are linked to accounts of the triple instauration of the Ludi Plebeii. For the grain distributions of 201 and 200 BC, see Briscoe (1973) at Liv. 31. 4. 6. When Gelasimus complains of 'annona gravis' at Plaut. *Stich.* 632–4, the opposite is actually the case. So too at Rome.

though didascalia are supplied for all the works of Terence and the analysis of the *Adelphoe* in Chapter 4 is therefore by far the closest this study comes to genuine topicality, it may be observed that no such approach has been attempted for the poet's five remaining plays, and that perhaps the most significant conclusions to be drawn with regard to this play transcend the topical and embrace the broader problem of authority and what I call the habit of command.[98]

The problems attendant on the appeal to topicality and the nature of the alternative approach proposed may be exemplified with reference to the drama with which the second chapter of this study is concerned: the *Captivi*. Towards the end of this chapter reference is made to Plutarch's *Life of Flamininus* and his account of the 194 BC triumph in which were seen 1,200 Roman prisoners captured in the war against Hannibal, sold into slavery in Greece, and finally restored to freedom by the grateful people of Achaea.[99] As is noted in the discussion of this passage, the potential connection between this episode and the *Captivi* is identified by Lefèvre and the suggestion made that the first production of the play took place at putative triumphal games put on by Flamininus.[100] This, however, is not the only topical allusion which has been noted nor is it the only date for the production of the drama to be proposed. For both Wellesley and Grimal independently note the report at Livy 37. 3. 8 of the early 190 BC relegation of forty-three Aetolian prisoners to the Lautumiae in Rome and link it to the Aetolian setting of the drama and the brief imprisonment of the Aetolian Tyndarus in the quarries.[101] Grimal therefore suggests performance at the September 190 BC Ludi Romani,[102] while Wellesley links this to other less convincing contemporary allusions and argues for the same

[98] See pp. 175–91.

[99] See pp. 86–8.

[100] See p. 88 n. 116, citing Lefèvre (1998) 33–6.

[101] See Plaut. *Capt.* 721–3, esp. 723 'in latomias lapidarias'.

[102] Grimal (1969*a*) 413.

setting or preferably the Ludi Romani of the following year.[103] Finally, and most recently, Kemper points to the thematization of *fides* in the play and suggests an allusion to the dispute between the Aetolians and M.' Acilius Glabrio over the meaning of the term at Livy 36. 28. 1–7 and Polybius 20. 9–10.[104]

All the above suggestions are learned and ingenious and are based on some point of contact between the drama and the historical record. They all, moreover, point to events within a fairly restricted historical period (194–189 BC) and it is quite possible that all are right. None, unfortunately, can admit of any sort of proof. Yet the truly substantial objection is that neither Wellesley, Grimal, nor Kemper attempts to explain what it might mean for the Roman audience to be confronted with a truly noble Aetolian character suffering the fate which their state imposed on his countrymen or to be reminded of the bullying tactics of an Acilius Glabrio. Lefèvre alone does so and his suggestion is that the happy ending of homecoming prisoners presented by the *Captivi* corresponds to the public celebration of the return of the men rescued by Flamininus.

The interaction of comedy and history characteristic of this study is rather different. True, there are many instances where a point of intersection between the events portrayed on the comic stage and those excavated from other ancient sources for the period may suggest a form of topicality. Yet such intersections are only the starting point for the investigation of various discursive categories: the ethical construction of military trickery; the Roman prisoner of war; the conflict between agrarian and mercantile economies; the exercise of *imperium* and the habit of command. In the instance under consideration, therefore, the specific event to which Lefèvre refers itself has a history, a context, and one in which it rather stands out. For, while the analysis of the comic construction of imprisonment and its appropriate resolution by restoration to the family finds much to link the *Captivi* with the events to which Lefèvre refers, the broader historical pattern is very different. Crucial here is the persistent tendency on the part of

[103] Wellesley (1955) 305.

[104] Kemper (2002) 107–9. It is a shame that Kemper does not follow through this claim. Plb. 20. 10. 8–9 describes the threat to chain the Aetolians (*ταῦτα λέγων φέρειν ἄλυσιν ἐκέλευσε καὶ σκύλακα σιδηροῦν ἑκάστωι περιθεῖναι περὶ τὸν τράχηλον*) and how they stand speechless in response (*ἕστασαν ἄφωνοι*). The overlap with the two chained prisoners who stand mute for the first 125 lines of the *Captivi* may well be fortuitous but it is striking all the same.

the senate of the third and second centuries to stigmatize Romans who allow themselves to be captured in time of war; the evolution of the law of *postliminium* to encode this harsh attitude to the imprisoned and to assert the priority of the fatherland over the family; and the recurrence of narratives in which the yearning of family members to be reunited with their kin is sacrificed to the interests of the community.

This then is a history which studies the transformation of Rome through the discourses and constructions which attempt to make sense of the process. There is perhaps no better evidence for the dramatic social, political, and economic change which characterized the age of Plautus and Terence than the simultaneous development of prose history as a literary form and its insistent reconstruction of the distant as well as the recent Roman past. Yet—as has already been hinted and will further be adumbrated in the course of this work—rhetoric, jurisprudence, even agronomy all do very similar ideological work and all ground their claims in historical example and tradition. Comedy, in turn, inasmuch as it is perhaps the most acutely stylized ancient literary genre and the most susceptible to analysis as a closed and self-referential system, fits oddly into this framework. For all that it may often touch on or depict a figure whose status is acutely ideological in a separate contemporary discourse, the comic construction of that same figure will not so much interact with that discourse as run in parallel to it. It must be recalled that when Cicero describes comedy as a mirror of Roman life, he is effectively reading against the grain of the texts he invokes; however revealing such an approach may be, it is worthwhile at times to read with the grain and to respect comedy's desire to figure itself as a world apart. Creative juxtaposition can itself produce significant results.

I am only too aware of the greatest hazard that a work of this sort must encounter: that the historians dismiss it as literary criticism and the literary critics dismiss it as history. I trust, however, that it has something to offer to both.

Comedy and the Rise of Rome

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