

*Dramatic genres*

Dramatic festivals in classical Athens saw productions of tragedies, comedies and satyr-plays; in early Republican Italy there were numerous dramatic forms and performance traditions, with indigenous or Greek background. In such an environment the establishment of 'literary' drama in Republican Rome resulted in the simultaneous presence of a variety of dramatic forms. A basic distinction divides these into 'serious drama' and 'light drama', each of which comprises a number of different subtypes.<sup>1</sup>

As surviving scripts and fragments show, Roman dramatic poets were fully aware of generic distinctions and characteristics of individual dramatic genres as well as of the generic expectations of audiences.<sup>2</sup> That 'dramatic theory' was present from almost the beginning can perhaps be explained by the fact that Roman literary drama did not emerge from unreflective practice, but was started suddenly by a decision of the magistrates and the activities of a single poet, a situation that enabled or required reflections on the emerging form on the part of playwrights.<sup>3</sup> Since Republican dramatists, especially Ennius and Accius, were obviously well read in classical and Hellenistic Greek literature, it is possible that they were familiar with Greek dramatic theories and that this knowledge informed their poetic consciousness and their development of drama in Latin.

Initially, all 'theoretical' endeavours took place within the plays themselves (see ch. 5.3, 5.4). Only Accius, the last major tragic poet in the Republic, active when literary criticism had just established itself in Rome (see ch. 2.10), also wrote treatises on drama, *Didascalica* and *Pragmatica* (only surviving in fragments); these works seem to have dealt with issues such

<sup>1</sup> Aristotle differentiates broadly between two different types of poetry with regard to their objects (Arist. *Poet.* 4: 1448b24–9a6), which is in fact a distinction between 'serious' and 'light'.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Plaut. *Amph.* 50–63; *Capt.* 55–62; 1029–36; Ter. *Haut.* 35–40; *Eun.* 35–41. See Thierfelder 1936; N. W. Slater 1992a.

<sup>3</sup> See N. W. Slater 1992a: 85.

as the chronology of poets, the authenticity of works and the appropriate use of language and structural elements.<sup>4</sup> In *Didascalica* Accius set out to describe ‘the various genres of poems’, which might have included definitions of dramatic genres (Acc. *Did.* 14–15 W. = *Gram.* 12–13 D.: *varia . . . genera poematorum*). No comments on ‘dramatic theory’ by poets are attested for the period after Terence and Accius; the productive process of working out the characteristics of Roman dramatic genres and principles for composition was perhaps completed by then.<sup>5</sup> This may have been a precondition for noble dilettante poets to start writing tragedy as a spare-time activity as they did at the end of the Republican period (see ch. 4.18).

In view of the Republican poets’ generic awareness it might not be mere coincidence that elements of ‘early Roman dramatic theory’ bear similarities to views attested in Aristotle’s *Poetics* and to definitions by his pupil Theophrastus, partly taken up by late-antique Roman writers. For instance, the difference in social status between characters in tragedy and those in comedy is mentioned as a distinctive feature in Plautus (Plaut. *Amph.* 60–3); this may be related to Aristotle’s distinction between the characters of poets and the corresponding ones of the figures they create, which, in his argument in the *Poetics*, leads to a distinction between tragedy and comedy (Arist. *Poet.* 4: 1448b24–7; 5: 1449a30); tragedy is also associated with ‘heroic fortune’ in Theophrastus (Theophr. T 708 Fortenbaugh). Terence, in writing and assessing drama, identifies the categories of *argumentum*, *oratio*, *stilus*, *scriptura* (esp. Ter. *An.* 11–12; *Haut.* 6; *Phorm.* 5), and it is possible, as has been suggested, that these resemble the criteria of ‘plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, lyric poetry’ outlined for tragedy in Aristotle’s *Poetics* (Arist. *Poet.* 6: 1450a7–10).<sup>6</sup> The ridicule of ‘choice words’, of the enormous use of stylistic devices and of the overblown style of drama in Lucilius’ satires in the second century BCE confirms that discussions about constituent elements of drama were taking place in this period.<sup>7</sup>

The terms *fabula*, *tragoedia*, *comoedia* (and *tragicomoedia* on one occasion) are the only generic definitions attested for the main creative period of Republican drama, found in the works of the playwrights themselves.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> See also Degl’Innocenti Pierini 1991: 243. <sup>5</sup> See N. W. Slater 1992a: 101.

<sup>6</sup> See N. W. Slater 1992a: esp. 86–98; also Boyle 2006: 92.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. e.g. Lucil. 650; 597–8; 599–600; 601, 605; 606; 607; 654 M. = 675; 729–30; 727–8; 731; 732; 733; 734; 666 W.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. *fabula*: e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 94; *Capt.* 52; 54; *Poen.* 8; 1370; Ter. *An.* 3; 16; *Eun.* 23; 25; 33; *Ad.* 7; 9; 22; *tragoedia*: e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 41; 51; 52; 54; 93; *Capt.* 62; *Curc.* 591; *Poen.* 2 (cf. also *Poen.* 581); *comoedia*: e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 55; 60; 88; 96; 868; 987; *Asin.* 13; *Capt.* 1033; *Cas.* 9; 13; 30; 31; 64; 83; *Cist.* 787; *Poen.* 1371; Ter. *Haut.* 4; *Phorm.* 25; *Hec.* 866; *Ad.* 6 (cf. also Plaut. *Capt.* 61; *Poen.* 581); *tragicomoedia*: Plaut. *Amph.* 50–63 (see ch. 5.4, n. 81).

In late Republican and early Augustan times further descriptions such as *praetexta*, *palliata*, *togata*, *mimus* and *Atellana* had emerged; the first attestations of these technical terms tend to be later than the earliest surviving texts assigned to the respective dramatic genres.<sup>9</sup> Fully fledged systems of dramatic genres are presented in late-antique grammarians and commentators; these are reflections of the panorama of dramatic genres as it appeared to systematizing scholars in retrospect.<sup>10</sup> Although these scholarly systems are the result of later, organizing approaches, their characterizations still have value as starting points since they seem to go back to the late Republican scholar Varro, to refer to the flourishing period of Republican drama, and to provide definitions that agree in substance with evidence from the Republican dramatic texts and with information given by earlier writers.<sup>11</sup>

While all ancient scholars seem to have applied similar principles in that there are distinctions between Greek and Roman varieties and between serious and light forms of drama, the terminology is not completely uniform. Extant sources have apparently incorporated two traditions (sometimes with some confusion), characterized by different usages of some terms, in particular the application of the descriptions *palliata* and *togata* either to Greek-style and Roman-style comedy or to Greek and Roman drama in general.<sup>12</sup> A reference to Theophrastus in Diomedes (Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 487.11–8.2) and a further, more unspecific reference to ‘the Greeks’ in the same context suggest that the basic ideas for defining the Greek genres and dividing the dramatic spectrum into four types (for the Greek side) go back to Greek predecessors, possibly Theophrastus or even Aristotle.<sup>13</sup>

In the most complete versions of the system, dramatic genres are divided into their Greek and their Roman varieties and then into four corresponding types for each side. In Diomedes’ words (Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.*

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *praetexta*: Cic. *Fam.* 10.32.3; 10.32.5; Varro, *Ling.* 6.18; Hor. *Ars P.* 288; *palliata*: Varro, fr. 306 Funaioli; *togata*: Hor. *Ars P.* 288; Vell. Pat. 2.9.3; Sen. *Ep.* 8.8; *mimus*: Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7; *Atellana*: Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. e.g. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 482–91; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.1–3; Donat. *Com.* 6.1–2; on Ter. *Ad.* 7; Lyd. *Mag.* 1.40; *Lib. gloss.* 1.2–8; 2.9–11.

<sup>11</sup> Cairns (2007: 70) highlights the fact that contemporary writers and audiences were aware of generic distinctions even without naming each genre because of their cultural background, but that modern scholars may use later categories by accepting ‘the useful untruth that some, if not all, genres can be categorized in accordance with rhetorical distinctions’.

<sup>12</sup> To avoid confusion, the traditional terminology, also found in writers such as Cicero or Horace, will be used (unless otherwise indicated): ‘*palliata*’ and ‘*togata*’ refer to two varieties of light drama (‘comedy’). On the history of these systems and the differences in terminology see e.g. Ussani 1967/8: 5–89, 1981; P. L. Schmidt 1989; Häußler 1987/8: 301–6, 1990/2 (including further references).

<sup>13</sup> See also Häußler 1987/8: 305; Pociña Pérez 1996a: 1–2. For a discussion of Diomedes’ text and its relationship to Greek sources see Fortenbaugh 2005: 352–64 (with further references).

I, p. 482.27–9) that gives *tragica* (*tragoedia*, also called *crepidata*), *comica* (*comoedia*), *satyrica*, *mimica* for the Greek side and *praetextata* (or *praetexta*), *tabernaria* (called *togata* by other writers), *Atellana*, *planipes* (called *mimus* by other writers) for the Roman side.<sup>14</sup> The Greek and the Roman dramatic genres are distinguished by their setting; the various forms on each side differ from each other by tone (serious or light), the social and ethical level of the protagonists and the character of the plots; as they are similar in these respects, Greek and Roman versions in the same position correspond in type. No distinctions as to formal features such as dramatic structure, metrical form or language are applied.

Terminological difficulties as indicated by the confusion in some late sources may have been caused by the fact that the overall situation was more complex for Rome than for Greece, because in Rome dramatic genres taken over from Greece and genuine Roman/Italic ones existed side by side. Greece only had the forms and terms of tragedy, comedy, satyr-play (and mime); further distinctions were partly unnecessary and partly not attempted. Serious drama included plays on historical topics (albeit few in number) besides those on mythical ones, but there was no generic or terminological distinction. In Rome, however, more specific terms were coined, probably owing to the greater variety of dramatic forms and perhaps also due to a more refined generic awareness.<sup>15</sup> These new terms were often derived from distinctive pieces of clothing, typical of Greeks or Romans or of certain groups.

Only for *fabula crepidata*/*tragoedia* and *fabula palliata*/*comoedia* are an individual and a date for their introduction identified in the prevailing Roman tradition: Livius Andronicus from 240 BCE onwards (see ch. 1.5, 4.1). This event was obviously felt to be decisive as it introduced literary drama at Rome. Other dramatic genres were developed on this basis, and their establishment was apparently not regarded as equally significant. Therefore the exact dates for the introduction of other dramatic genres are uncertain and can only be inferred from the dates of the first attested playwrights

<sup>14</sup> The grammarians give *Atellana* as the Roman equivalent to the Greek satyr-play, but do not indicate the presence of proper satyr-plays in Rome, nor are there other sources clearly implying it. Wiseman (1994: 68–85), however, assumes that Roman satyr-play did exist (see also Boyle 2006: 13). His evidence suggests that satyr-play was known in Rome, but does not prove that it was an actual productive genre. The reference to three types of scenery (*tragicum*, *comicum*, *satyricum*) in the Augustan architect Vitruvius (Vitr. 5.6.9) seems to describe different forms of available setting, which need not correspond exactly to specific dramatic genres. On this basis the existence of Roman satyr-play as a distinctive dramatic genre cannot be assumed.

<sup>15</sup> See also Häußler 1987/8: 301, 306. On the various comic types in Rome see Fantham 1989a, 1989b; on the systems distinguishing between various comic types in Rome see also Pociña Pérez 1996a: 10–13.

for specific dramatic genres (which often are only approximate). Dating is almost impossible for dramatic genres that developed from indigenous versions, such as Atellana, with details about the early stages of this process hard to establish.

A classification into different dramatic genres tends to encourage the establishment of hierarchies. While Plautus seems to assume that audiences in his time preferred comedy to tragedy (Plaut. *Amph.* 50–63), later scholars valued the ‘serious’ dramatic genres more highly than the ‘lighter’ ones, and they required clear generic distinctions in tone and atmosphere (cf. e.g. Hor. *Ars P.* 89–98). However, palliata and togata were often included among the ‘acceptable’ dramatic genres (besides the quintessentially serious ones), distinguished from the ‘lower’ light dramatic forms such as mime and Atellana.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.1 FABULA CREPIDATA/TRAGOEDIA

The most common form of serious drama in Rome was *tragoedia*, also referred to as *fabula crepidata* in technical discourse (after the tragic shoe: Gr. κρηπίς, Lat. *crepida*). This term denotes Roman tragedy in Greek style, i.e. drama on sections of Greek myth in an elevated style (usually called ‘tragedy’ in modern scholarship).<sup>17</sup>

The framework for plays of this type was taken over from Greece: dramas were based on stories from Greek myth, modelled on the structure of Greek tragedy and often adapted from specific Greek plays. It was obvious to the ancients that Roman tragedies were adaptations of Greek models.<sup>18</sup> However, Roman poets seem not to have translated word for word, but transposed the sense, while arranging the plays in language and meaning for Roman audiences living in a different cultural context. Only if some freedom of translation is assumed does an assessing comparison such as Cicero’s ‘Pacuvius (did) this better than Sophocles’ (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.49: *Pacuvius hoc melius quam Sophocles*) make sense (see ch. 5.1).

Tragedies of the same or a similar title by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides can be identified as the possible basis for a number of Roman tragedies with the help of surviving fragments and titles (indicating the

<sup>16</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.173; Sen. *Ep.* 8.8; Gell. *NA* 2.23.12; August. *De civ. D.* 2.8.

<sup>17</sup> On *fabula crepidata/tragoedia* see e.g. Coppola 1940; Beare 1964: 70–84, 119–27; Grimal 1975: 260–74; Cancik 1978; Dupont 1985: 163–211; Aricò 1997; Mazzoli 1998; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 150–4; Erasmo 2004; Fantham 2005; Schiesaro 2005; Boyle 2006; Goldberg 2007b; bibliography in De Rosalia 1989; Manuwald 2001 [2004].

<sup>18</sup> Cf. e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 1.4–7; *Acad.* 1.10; *Opt. gen.* 18; *Tusc.* 2.48–50; Gell. *NA* 11.4.

dramatized myth); classical Greek tragedies seem to have been the most common source, even though specific models are securely attested by statements of later writers in a few cases only (e.g. Cic. *Fin.* 1.4–5; *Tusc.* 2.48–50; Gell. *NA* 11.4). For other Roman tragedies assumptions on Greek predecessors must remain uncertain, due to the fragmentary state of both Republican plays and a large number of classical and Hellenistic Greek tragedies. For some Roman tragedies no possible Greek exemplar can be identified, when no Greek play on the same protagonist(s) or the particular section of a myth is known. In those cases plays of less famous classical or of post-classical Greek dramatists could have served as models.<sup>19</sup> Or Roman playwrights may have created ‘new’ tragedies along the lines of the typical structures of Greek tragedy, by dramatizing material found in epic narratives, mythographers or other sources (cf. e.g. Acc. *Epinausimache*).<sup>20</sup> As regards form, Roman poets will have been influenced by characteristics of Hellenistic tragedy; and they apparently followed its tendency towards variations of well-known myths and exciting, complex plots as well as effective dramaturgy, pathetic presentation and stage effects.<sup>21</sup>

Since Roman tragic playwrights were able to draw on a large repertoire of Greek tragedies and Greek myths, what is significant for their poetic intentions and the interests of contemporary audiences is the selection of myths. Famous mythical figures had become associated with particular characteristics, which, at least later, were almost demanded for any play about them (cf. Hor. *Ars P.* 119–30; Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.74). By their very nature myths do not allow major changes to names of protagonists or well-known typical actions, but there is the option of choosing different versions or sections of myths or narrating them from different perspectives or with different emphases. Some predilections of individual poets can be discerned as regards story types and topics as well as an overall tendency to present issues and concepts relevant to contemporary Roman audiences and to choose stories with a high dramatic potential. It is hard to identify further criteria although various theories have been put forward.

For instance, scholars have assumed that aetiological, political and historical notions were dominant, at least for the first tragic poets: Roman dramatists are thought to have selected myths connected with the Trojan War (with pro-Trojan reading) or heroes who had travelled to Italy in its aftermath because these plots could be linked to Roman history or

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980: 26–8. On Greek Hellenistic tragedy see Xanthakis-Karamanos 1980.

<sup>20</sup> See e.g. Fantham 2005: 118.     <sup>21</sup> See also Aricò 1997: 61.

to the ancestry of important Roman families.<sup>22</sup> Yet, while it is obvious that numerous Republican tragedies dealt with topics connected with the Trojan War and that a number of dramatized myths may be referred to Rome in this way, it cannot be proved beyond doubt that this connection featured in the actual plays on specific sections of the myths concerned. A 'historical' perspective might have been one aspect, but it is unlikely to explain the entire range of stories chosen.

Some scholars have interpreted the 'historical-political' perspective in a more concrete sense and have read Roman tragedies as reacting to contemporary political, social or cultural events.<sup>23</sup> Even though dramatic scripts, like other works of literature, cannot be separated from the time of composition, Roman tragedies on Greek myths are not able to comment on recent events or topical issues as directly as *praetextae*.<sup>24</sup> Statements on historical reality may be made only indirectly via the structure of the dramatized myths. Thus it is difficult, especially in the absence of precise dates in most cases, to identify particular topical references beyond the general treatment of themes relevant in the respective period.

It is therefore more probably a general 'Roman perspective' that has determined the choice of particular myths or versions of myths because they dealt with fundamental moral, social or political issues pertinent to Roman society rather than because they could provide specific reflections on current events.<sup>25</sup> Just as in classical Greece,<sup>26</sup> tragedies in Republican Rome seem to have commented on and thus influenced society indirectly rather than directly. For instance, tragedies presented stories that paradigmatically showed Roman moral values such as virtue, justice, piety and gratitude; they discussed the legitimacy of rulers, conflicts between conquerors and conquered, the question of the significance of gods and seers or philosophical issues; and they included situations such as the aftermath of a war, confrontation with foreigners or struggles within families.<sup>27</sup> However, when other, specific literary genres were developed for discussions of

<sup>22</sup> See (with various nuances) e.g. Jocelyn 1967: 11–12; Cancik 1978: 322–3; Lefèvre, e.g. 1978b: 8–10, 14–15, 1990; Gentili 1979: 48–9; Petrone 1992: 451; Zimmermann 2004; Boyle 2006: 28–9; more generally, on the use of Greek myth by other peoples see Dench 1995: 61–2. La Penna ([1977] 1979: 58–9) highlights the fact that there is little evidence of 'national' re-elaboration of myths in tragic fragments and that the choice of plots might therefore rather have been inspired by the precedent of Homer and Greek tragic poets.

<sup>23</sup> See e.g. (with different approaches and emphases) Biliński 1962; Lefèvre 2000.

<sup>24</sup> See also La Penna (1977) 1979: 63–4. See also Petrone 1996, on how myths presented on stage served as metaphors for struggles on domestic, civil or political levels.

<sup>25</sup> See also Petrone 1992: 450.

<sup>26</sup> On the function of tragedy in classical Greece see e.g. Cartledge 1997: 18–22.

<sup>27</sup> See also La Penna (1977) 1979: 56.

such problems over the course of the Republican period, drama may have lost its significance as a public 'educational' medium, just as happened in Greece.<sup>28</sup> Still, the focus on topics relevant to Roman society and the Roman terminology used from the beginning enabled pertinent comments in Roman plays to be exploited as references to specific topical events at revival performances in the late Republic (see ch. 2.9). Towards the imperial era new tragedies continued this tradition in their own way and became more openly political and critical.<sup>29</sup>

The choice of myths may also have been determined by a search for stories that could help define and confirm Roman national identity. This may have been achieved by differentiating the Romans favourably from others: the story of the Trojan Horse, for instance, cannot have been a boost for Roman self-confidence when they defined themselves as descendants of the Trojans; hence it seems more likely that this narrative was used for an opposition between honest Romans and sly Greeks.<sup>30</sup> Such an interpretation is perhaps corroborated by Accius' *Deiphobus*: the reference to the inscription on the Trojan Horse in this play might point to the trickery of the Greeks (Acc. *Trag.* 127 R.<sup>3</sup> = 251 W.); and the unfaithfulness and unreliability of Ulixes as well as other negative characteristics are mentioned (Acc. *Trag.* 131–2; 133–4 R.<sup>3</sup> = 252–3; 254–5 W.).

This reading may be confirmed by an allusion to the Wooden Horse in Plautus' comedy *Bacchides*, when the scheming slave compares the current situation with the Trojan War and, in particular, his attack on the old man with the attack on Troy by means of the Wooden Horse (Plaut. *Bacch.* 925–78).<sup>31</sup> The slave highlights the mischievous and deceitful character of the Wooden Horse sent by the Greeks (Plaut. *Bacch.* 935–6), states by implication that Troy is stupid (Plaut. *Bacch.* 945) and compares himself to Ulixes, as they are both bold and bad men who saved themselves by tricks (Plaut. *Bacch.* 949–52). However, this perspective cannot be generalized in the sense that all Greeks on stage were presented as 'bad'. If they were portrayed behaving according to Roman values, they could serve as models, as Cicero's approving comments on the presentation of the wounded Ulixes in Pacuvius' tragedy *Niptra* (in contrast to Sophocles' version) indicate (Cic. *Tusc.* 2.48–50).

<sup>28</sup> See Wallace 1997: 110.

<sup>29</sup> See Stärk 2000. For more thoughts on the further development of tragedy see 'Overview and conclusions'.

<sup>30</sup> On the problems of 'historical' and 'aetiological' theories in relation to the Trojan Horse and this alternative theory see Erskine 1998.

<sup>31</sup> The 'sources' of the slave's speech and possible references to known tragedies are much discussed (on this issue see Barsby 1986 ad loc.; Scafolgio 2005).



These observations point to the conclusion that Roman tragic poets chose specific Greek myths and/or reinforced particular aspects in the myths so as to be able to bring issues onto the stage that would strike a chord with Roman audiences. As a result of a growing production of dramas, Roman tragic poets were soon confronted not only with Greek models, but also with versions of Latin predecessors, i.e. with a Roman tradition in both form and content. Tragic poets active after the pioneers increasingly turned to myths or parts and versions of myths that had not been dramatized in Rome before and may have been less common. Still, these myths are typically not completely obscure; frequently, they are less well-known versions of or sequels and prequels to common stories, thereby presenting something new and exciting, while being connected with narratives familiar to audiences. At the same time the poets' choices seem not to be governed exclusively by a desire to outdo predecessors and avoid clashes; they also agree with the overall poetic design that can be established for individual playwrights (see ch. 4).

The introduction of Greek-style tragedy to Rome is traditionally connected to 240 BCE, when Livius Andronicus produced a play or plays at a public festival; a tragedy will have been given on this occasion or shortly afterwards (see ch. 1.5, 4.1). The major representatives after him during the Republican period were Naevius, Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius, who all wrote praetextae as well. That means that the pioneers Livius Andronicus and Naevius, active in the second half of the third century BCE, were followed by the tragic triad of Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius, active mainly in the second century BCE (Cic. *De or.* 3.27).<sup>32</sup>

Hence, the major productive period of Republican tragedy extended from about 240 into the early decades of the first century BCE. After the death of the youngest tragic poet, Accius, in about 80 BCE, few new tragedies were produced, while there were revival performances of older plays till the end of the Republic. From the output of the 'big five' and other less famous tragic writers about a hundred tragedies are known by title. No Republican tragedy has been preserved in its entirety; all that remains are *testimonia*, titles and fragments. From the late first century BCE onwards, noblemen turned to composing tragedies as a spare-time activity and intellectual pursuit (see ch. 4.18). Tragedies continued to be written into the early imperial period: Seneca the Younger (c. 1 BCE – 65 CE) is the only imperial dramatist and the only Roman tragic poet by whom complete plays survive.

<sup>32</sup> See also Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 151–2.

Ancient scholars did not distinguish between tragedy in Greece and tragedy in Rome in their characterizations.<sup>33</sup> According to their broad descriptions, tragedy (in contrast to comedy) features noble and important heroes and kings, deals with serious and sad situations such as grief, fear, exile or death, and often ends in misfortune; the drama is presented in an appropriately elevated style. The action is not too turbulent, but rather well organized, and its basis is not completely fictitious. Apart from the subject matter, tragedy differs from comedy in the social status of the protagonists and the atmosphere of the action, and from praetexta in setting and *dramatis personae*. Plautus confirms the criterion of high rank for the cast in tragedy, which may include gods (Plaut. *Amph.* 50–63); he also seems to regard battles as more appropriate in tragedy than in comedy, which indicates a realization of differences in style and outlook between the two dramatic genres (Plaut. *Capt.* 55–62; cf. also Hor. *Ars P.* 89–98).

Titles of Roman tragedies typically consist of Greek names or Latin versions of Greek names, which identify a hero or heroine who is the protagonist of the play or refer to groups of people (apart from a few exceptions such as Pacuvius' and Accius' *Armorum iudicium* or Accius' *Epinausimache* or *Nyctegresia*). What ancient accounts single out as the decisive characteristic of Roman dramas of Greek type in comparison to indigenous predecessors is the fact that they had *argumenta*, i.e. presented stories with a plot (cf. Liv. 7.2.8; Val. Max. 2.4.4). The preserved fragments allow the assumption that mythical stories were translated into dramatic narrative by the typical features known from complete dramas, such as monologues, dialogues, messenger speeches or divine prophecies.<sup>34</sup> Some fragments and *testimonia* point to the existence of prologues (cf. Lucil. fr. 875 M. = 879 W.) and the presence of choruses.<sup>35</sup>

The existence of choruses does not imply that Roman tragedies must have been divided into 'acts' or 'scenes', i.e. were characterized by a regular alternation of spoken monologue or dialogue and choral songs. The physical layout of the stage area as well as the remains of choral utterances (e.g. Pac. *Trag.* 256–67 R.<sup>3</sup> = 280–91 W.) indicate that Roman choruses were involved in the plot and dramatic dialogues (on the role of the chorus cf. also Arist. *Poet.* 18: 1456a25–30; Hor. *Ars P.* 193–201). That Accius noted

<sup>33</sup> Cf. e.g. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 487.11–8.2, 488.14–23; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.2; Isid. *Etym.* 8.7.6; 18.45; *Lib. gloss.* 2.9.

<sup>34</sup> The evidence of fragments and later *testimonia* does not allow the conclusion that Roman tragedy did not have an organically developing action (so Lefèvre 1978b: 43, 55, 66).

<sup>35</sup> On the chorus in Roman tragedy see Hose 1999; on the chorus in the fourth century BCE see Sifakis 1967: 113–20.

that Euripides used choruses in his plays 'rather thoughtlessly' (Acc. *Did.* 11–12 W. = *Gram.* 9–10 D.: *sed Euripidis qui chorus temerius / in fabulis*) further suggests that Accius favoured a method that differed from the one found in Euripides. Moreover, Republican comic poets can be shown to have abolished the choral songs inserted as act-dividers in Greek New Comedy and to have transferred the musical element to actors. Therefore, in view of the formal similarities between tragedy and comedy in Rome, a continuous action without separating choral interludes is likely for Republican tragedy too.<sup>36</sup> At the same time music had a significant role in Republican tragedy: the remaining fragments exhibit a large number of lyric and accompanied lines; spoken sections in Greek texts have sometimes been transformed into sung parts in Latin versions. Like other types of Republican drama, tragedy consisted of a mixture of accompanied and unaccompanied passages.

The reactions of later writers, the selection of myths and some fragments allow the inference that Roman tragedies included more and more dramatic and vivid actions, spectacular scenes and sensational stage effects, which may have been influenced by both Hellenistic performance conventions and Italic traditions (see ch. 1.2, 1.4).<sup>37</sup> Additionally, the language in tragedies was full of rhetoric and pathos, rich in sound effects and high-flown compounds, which was criticized by some later writers (cf. e.g. Cic. *Brut.* 258; Pers. 1.76–8; Sen. *Ep.* 58.5; Mart. 11.90.5–6). Generally, tragic fragments display a high frequency of stylistic features that are typical of all early Roman poetry, such as alliteration, assonance, asyndeton, enumeration or artificial word order.

So Roman tragedy presents itself as an original amalgamation of constituents taken from classical Greek tragedy, Hellenistic Greek tragedy and Italic performance traditions, adapted to Roman views and conventions.<sup>38</sup> In myths, plots and basic structure, Republican playwrights tended to look back to the exemplars of Greek tragedy of the fifth century BCE. In performance conventions and plot effects, they seem to have been influenced by tendencies found in the late Euripides and continued throughout the Hellenistic period, in that there was a penchant for impressive presentation with

<sup>36</sup> In Roman tragedies from the imperial period, however, choral odes can function as dividers between 'acts' or 'scenes'. But since other formal aspects of Senecan tragedy, such as the metrical structure, are closer to Greek practice, while differing from Roman Republican conventions, this fact does not allow unambiguous inferences about practices in the Republican period.

<sup>37</sup> See also La Penna (1977) 1979: 97; Conte 1994: 107–8; Aricò 1997: 74–8.

<sup>38</sup> See Grimal 1975: 267–70.

spectacular effects, melodramatic plots, the presentation of protagonists as ordinarily human and the choice of more recondite versions. Roman tragic playwrights apparently removed act-divisions marked by choral songs while re-introducing the chorus as 'actor' and increased the musical element, distributing it among all actors, which was presumably an Italic component. Although Roman tragedy had to offer good entertainment in order to be able to compete with other spectacles, it did not provide amusement only, but also presented meaningful messages; such a combination turns out to be a characteristic feature of Roman tragedy. Thus tragedy (in the tradition of Greek models) could function as a medium for indirect reflections in public on religious, moral, social and political issues concerning the Roman community.

### 3.2 *FABULA PRAETEXTA(TA)*

*Fabula praetexta* or *praetextata* (in a later variant) is a specific and genuine Roman form of serious drama (cf. Hor. *Ars P.* 285–8).<sup>39</sup> The name is derived from a quintessential Roman garment, the *toga praetexta*, which was worn as a symbol of their position by curule magistrates (as well as by priests and by children before coming of age). Accordingly, Roman magistrates and other public figures are protagonists in these dramas, which dramatize scenes from Rome's early (almost mythical) history as well as significant events from the more recent past or contemporary incidents. Although there are a few Greek tragedies on historical subjects (cf. Aeschylus, *Persai*; Phrynichus, *Miletou Halosis* [cf. Hdt. 6.21]), historical drama was not recognized as a separate dramatic genre in Greece.

In tone and formal structure praetextae are similar to (Roman) tragedies of Greek type, and this is what determines their position in the system of dramatic genres found in late-antique grammarians: by their serious and elevated outlook, praetextae are distinguished from the various forms of light drama and correspond to tragedies on Greek myth, while in contrast to the latter they deal with Roman subject matter. The cast of both serious genres is of equally high rank, but praetextae feature public figures such as kings, generals and magistrates instead of mythical heroes, since they present Latin history and Roman public affairs.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>39</sup> On *fabula praetexta* see e.g. Neukirch 1833: 23–34; Grimal 1975: 274–6; Zorzetti 1980; Zehnacker 1983; Dupont 1985: 213–28; Häußler 1987/8; Petrone 1992: 461–7, 2001; Flower 1995; Wiseman 1998 (and elsewhere); Manuwald 2001a; Kragelund 2002; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 168–70; Erasmo 2004: 52–80; La Conte 2008; bibliography in Manuwald 2001 [2004]: esp. 75–9.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 489.14–90.7, 490.10–14; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.1–3; Donat. *Com.* 6.1–2; on Ter. *Ad.* 7; Lyd. *Mag.* 1.40.

The earliest praetextae are attested for Rome's second dramatist, Naevius, who was active from about 235 BCE. His drama on the victory near the town of Clastidium (modern Casteggio) in 222 BCE can only have been written after that date (*Clastidium*), while his dramatization of the story of Romulus and Remus (*Romulus/Lupus*) cannot be dated and may have been produced earlier.<sup>41</sup> All major Republican tragic poets after Naevius, i.e. Ennius, Pacuvius and Accius, wrote at least one praetexta. Still, the overall number of attested praetextae is far below that of tragedies; altogether, about ten titles are known for the Republican period. No Republican praetexta has been preserved in its entirety; all that remains are titles, meagre fragments and a few *testimonia*. Composition of occasional praetextae and revival performances of old praetextae continued till the end of the Republican period (see ch. 2.9); some further praetextae were composed in the early imperial period.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars have put forward the hypothesis that an equivalent of the Roman praetexta existed in Italy prior to its introduction in Rome, since plays at games organized by local rulers might have presented legends of city founders or historic episodes from the more recent past;<sup>43</sup> the Etruscans at any rate seem to have displayed events from their history (see ch. 1.3). Such a general assumption must remain a hypothesis that can be neither proved nor disproved for lack of evidence. If such plays existed, they will have been of local relevance and not have given rise to a literary tradition in Rome. Presupposing unscripted traditions triggered another hypothesis, namely that far more praetextae existed than those attested; it is thought that besides the known literary versions there was a long and flourishing tradition of Roman historical drama, which was an important means of transmitting and spreading Roman history.<sup>44</sup> Again it is hard to argue for or against the existence of unscripted and hence unpreserved plays, but it would be remarkable for a flourishing tradition to have left no traces at all. One must also bear in mind that the aim of preserved literary praetextae seems not to have been to give a full account of Roman history, but rather to display single events of particular importance for Rome.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Marconi (1967) conjectured a *fabula praetexta* entitled *Regulus* for Livius Andronicus (on the basis of Serv. on Verg. *Aen.* 4.37; Hor. *Carm.* 3.5), but this proposal has met with criticism (see e.g. Manuwald 2001a: 101 and n. 103; Suerbaum 2002: 99 [with further references]) and has therefore not altered the view that Naevius is the first attested practitioner of this dramatic genre.

<sup>42</sup> Beacham (1999: 5) seems to assume that there was an uninterrupted tradition of composition and probably also of performances of praetextae into the first century CE, but there is not enough evidence to prove this theory.

<sup>43</sup> See Rawson (1985) 1991: 470–1.

<sup>44</sup> See Wiseman 1994: 1–22, 1998: esp. 1–16 (and elsewhere); see also Schiesaro 2005: 273; sceptically Flower 1995: 173–5; Manuwald 2001a: 91–4; Feeney 2006: 234.

<sup>45</sup> See also Häußler 1987/8: 306–7.

That literary praetextae, characterized by their close connection to concrete historical events and their political directness, developed in Rome testifies to the Romans' interest in their history and in reinforcing their national identity during a period in which the Roman Empire was expanding: praetextae, particularly those on contemporary events, displayed and promoted Roman self-confidence. Accordingly, as regards their overall messages, Republican praetextae were predominantly supportive of the *res publica*. Towards the end of the Republican period and into early imperial times praetextae apparently started to alter their character, so that the presentation of political situations began to include critical aspects (see ch. 2.9 and 'Overview and conclusions').

In principle, praetextae could be performed on all occasions for dramatic performances in Republican Rome. However, it seems, if the limited evidence is representative, that there were favoured contexts: praetextae on topics from the early history of Rome were presented at regular festivals such as *Ludi Apollinares* (cf. Varro, *Ling.* 6.18), while plays on events from contemporary history were more likely to be performed at festivals organized by individuals and possibly in connection with the event, i.e. at games in connection with the dedication of a temple vowed during a campaign or at the funeral of the victorious commander.<sup>46</sup>

Because of the subject matter poets writing praetextae, particularly those on contemporary events, were more obviously engaged with politics than were poets writing tragedies or any form of light drama. Since, however, these poets still were not dependent clients of all magistrates starring in praetextae (see ch. 2.7), it does not follow that the plays were commissioned in praise of the protagonists with no poetic freedom left for playwrights.<sup>47</sup> Outstanding deeds of individuals shown on stage seem to have been connected with incidents that affected the whole Roman populace. Nevertheless, dramas based on contemporary events are more directly related to the actual situation in their time than are works of other dramatic genres. Hence it may be no coincidence that the story of L. Brutus, the founder of the Roman Republic, is the only praetexta plot for which two different dramatic treatments (according to the transmitted texts) and an (attempted) revival performance are attested.

Titles of praetextae mention the name of the protagonist(s) or (more rarely) the location of the dramatic action. Naming plays after places is in line with the Roman tendency to connect significant events with places, and

<sup>46</sup> See Flower 1995: 172–83; Manuwald 2001a: 110–16.

<sup>47</sup> For this widespread opinion see e.g. Beacham 1999: 5.

therefore this method could only be productive for titles of praetextae. In addition to magistrates, generals or kings as required by the dramatic genre, further figures, such as women, messengers or other people needed for the dramatic action, belonged to the cast. Praetextae could feature a chorus involved in the action, which seems to have consisted of Roman citizens or specific groups of Roman citizens such as soldiers. Because of the historical subject matter, supernatural influence may have been reduced, and gods and religious elements might rather have been represented according to contemporary practices.

Stylistically, praetextae exhibit elements common in all forms of early Roman drama, such as alliteration or artificial word order. By nature, they have a larger number of words denoting Roman institutions than do other dramatic genres. Besides, as the fragments show, praetextae seem to employ the language typical of Roman tragedy; a number of words occur in both genres (in so far as this can be statistically significant in view of the small body of material). There are even instances where later praetextae might not just have used the established tragic language, but picked up on particular verses of earlier tragedies.<sup>48</sup> Poets who wrote both types of plays apparently did not operate with essential stylistic differences between the two varieties of serious drama.<sup>49</sup>

In metrical structure, praetexta fragments display the range of metres generally found in Republican drama; presumably accompanied and unaccompanied parts alternated and music played an important part. As the metres and the types of utterances to be inferred are broadly the same as in other dramatic genres, it is generally assumed that praetextae used the same dramatic elements and forms of speech as other dramatic genres. Specifically, praetextae, being another variant of serious drama, are thought to have been similar to Greek and Roman tragedy in dramatic structure.<sup>50</sup>

The literary and historical significance of the *fabula praetexta* is based on the fact that at a relatively early stage in their literary activity the Romans developed a genuine dramatic genre, modelled in form on Greek tragedy, but original in subject matter. Processes in other literary genres such as historiography or oratory at the time of the emergence of praetexta show that, in this period, Romans became aware of the importance of their history and its display during a crucial phase in the development of the

<sup>48</sup> Cf. e.g. Acc. *Praet.* 2 R.<sup>3</sup> = 13 W.; Enn. *Trag.* 163 R.<sup>3</sup> = 203 W.; Pac. *Trag.* 223 R.<sup>3</sup> = 264 W. – Acc. *Praet.* 34 R.<sup>3</sup> = 34 W.; Pac. *Trag.* 55 R.<sup>3</sup> = 70 W.

<sup>49</sup> See also La Penna (1977) 1979: 53–4.

<sup>50</sup> Due to lack of evidence it cannot be determined whether praetextae followed Hellenistic rather than classical dramatic structure (but so Grimal 1975: 275).

Roman Empire. Although very little of the Republican *fabulae praetextae* has survived, they must have made an important contribution to shaping a Roman national sense, since they displayed significant events from Roman history in an affirmative interpretation to broad audiences.

### 3.3 FABULA PALLIATA/COMOEDIA

While *fabula crepidata* referred to serious drama of Greek type, *fabula palliata* designated the corresponding form of light drama.<sup>51</sup> This dramatic type was simply called *comoedia* by Republican playwrights,<sup>52</sup> but later acquired the generic description of *fabula palliata*, presumably as a means of distinguishing it from comedy in Roman setting, called *fabula togata*. The term *palliata* with reference to drama is first attested in Varro in the first century BCE (Varro, fr. 306 Funaioli, ap. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 489.18), where it is used as a description for all kinds of dramas of Greek type; in late-antique grammarians and commentators the expression refers specifically to Greek-style comedy.

According to Roman tradition, literary comedy of Greek type was brought to Rome by her first dramatist, Livius Andronicus.<sup>53</sup> Although it is not certain (due to differing information in the sources) whether the year 240 BCE saw performances of plays of different dramatic genres (see ch. 1.5, 4.1), the first production of a comedy will have occurred on this occasion or shortly after the introduction of plot-based drama. Livius Andronicus was followed by Naevius and Ennius, who, like him, wrote both tragedies and comedies. Subsequent writers of comedy restricted themselves to this dramatic genre: Plautus, Caecilius Statius, Luscius Lanuvinus, Terence and Turpilius (and a few more shadowy writers) composed *fabulae palliatae* only. In contrast to poets of serious drama, who tended to produce both

<sup>51</sup> On *fabula palliata* see e.g. Smith 1940; Duckworth 1952; Cèbe 1966: 37–123; Lefèvre 1973; J. Wright 1974; Grimal 1975: 285–9; Bain 1977: 154–84; Konstan 1983; Hunter 1985; Pociña Pérez 1996a, 1998; Blänsdorf in Suerbaum 2002: 170–82; Leigh 2004a; Marshall 2006; N. J. Lowe 2008; Sharrock 2009; for an anthology with a selection of texts from all major palliata poets see Traina (1960) 2000; for bibliographies see Introduction, n. 6. More work has been done on palliata than on the other dramatic genres discussed in this chapter, and it is the only dramatic genre that provides complete texts from the Republican period. Therefore the treatment of palliata is more selective and focuses on issues that are most relevant for contextualizing this genre within Roman Republican drama.

<sup>52</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 55; 60; 88; 96; 868; 987; *Asin.* 13; *Capt.* 1033; *Cas.* 9; 13; 30; 31; 64; 83; Ter. *Haut.* 4; *Phorm.* 25; *Hec.* 866; *Ad.* 6.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. e.g. Cass. *Chron.*, p. 128 MGH AA 11.2 (on 239 BCE); *Lib. gloss.* 1.7; 2.11. Boyle (2006: 11 n. 21 [p. 240]) suggests that Livius Andronicus' comedies might not have been fully indebted to Greek comedy, but rather consisted of bawdy, musical farce. Yet in view of how Livius Andronicus handled the newly introduced genres of epic and tragedy, his comedies are likely to have been equally influenced by Greek models.



tragedies and praetextae, comic playwrights concentrated on a single light dramatic genre.<sup>54</sup> The dates of the known palliata poets indicate that the productive period of Republican comedy of Greek type extended from about 240 to the late second century BCE.

*Fabula palliata* is the only dramatic genre in Rome of which entire scripts survive from the Republican period: there are twenty-one (more or less complete) comedies by Plautus (*Amphitruo*, *Asinaria*, *Aulularia*, *Bacchides*, *Captivi*, *Casina*, *Cistellaria*, *Curculio*, *Epidicus*, *Menaechmi*, *Mercator*, *Miles gloriosus*, *Mostellaria*, *Persa*, *Poenulus*, *Pseudolus*, *Rudens*, *Stichus*, *Trinummus*, *Truculentus*, *Vidularia*), besides numerous titles and fragments, and six comedies by Terence (*Andria*, *Heautontimorumenos*, *Eunuchus*, *Phormio*, *Hecyra*, *Adelphoe*); substantial fragments survive for Caecilius Statius and to a lesser extent for Turpilius.

Palliata comedy in Rome is based on the adaptation of selected Greek comedies. The concept of a succession of different types of comedy in Greece, namely of the so-called Old, Middle and New Comedy, is probably owed to Hellenistic Greek scholars, who might have imposed a schematic model of a sequence of discrete phases on what was rather a gradual shift in the predominance of certain varieties.<sup>55</sup> Yet later Roman scholars absorbed this model and noted that Roman poets took up the less aggressive, less topical and less farcical form of New Comedy, dealing with family problems of private citizens and avoiding open political criticism.<sup>56</sup>

This 'private type' of comedy, which is represented by Greek playwrights such as Menander, Diphilus, Philemon, Poseidippus, Apollodorus or Alexis, is what late-antique scholars have in mind when they discuss Greek and Roman comedy (e.g. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 489.3–8; Gell. *NA* 2.23.1). Such theorists define 'comedy' mainly by distinguishing it from 'tragedy' in *dramatis personae*, subject matter and tone:<sup>57</sup> comedy

<sup>54</sup> Hunter (1985: 15) finds it surprising that Roman poets did not begin to write Latin comedies of the same style without Greek originals, which he explains mainly by the existence of *fabula togata*, as the presence of this dramatic genre would have checked the demand for a completely original *fabula palliata*. However, this argument overlooks the fact that *fabula togata* is a Roman form of comedy influenced by *fabula palliata*.

<sup>55</sup> For discussion of the ancient evidence and the possible origin of this model see Nesselrath 1990: 65–187; for a tentative definition and dating of 'Middle Comedy' see Nesselrath 1990 passim; for calls for caution as regards the adoption of this ancient model and neat distinctions between 'Old', 'Middle' and 'New Comedy' see Csapo 2000; Sidwell 2000.

<sup>56</sup> Occasionally, Roman playwrights might have used Greek plays now classified as 'Middle Comedy', which particularly favoured travesties of myth; this has, for instance, been considered for Plautus' *Amphitruo* (for discussion of this issue see e.g. Hunter 1987).

<sup>57</sup> Cf. e.g. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 488.3–23; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.2; Isid. *Etym.* 8.7.6; 18.46; *Lib. gloss.* 1.2–8.

features protagonists of lower rank; actions are set in a private environment and closer to real life, although plots are fictitious (cf. also Euanth. *Fab.* 2.6). Protagonists are confronted by minor dangers, and after some turbulences plays close with happy endings, when the traditional order is re-established. Comedy is more light-hearted than tragedy, but retains or should retain some dignity and sobriety in comparison with other forms of comic entertainment.<sup>58</sup> According to Horace, comedy does not require less poetic effort just because it presents everyday events (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.168–70a).

Greek New Comedy offered itself more readily for transposition to Rome than Old Comedy with its topical jokes and political comments, which would hardly be comprehensible to audiences elsewhere unless heavily adapted.<sup>59</sup> This would have required Roman playwrights to insert corresponding direct comments on contemporary Roman politics, which seems to have been uncommon in the early and middle Republic. Greek New Comedy, however, touched on basic questions of human society that apply to all communities. That the potential for transference was important is confirmed by Aristophanes' last play, *Plutus* (388 BCE), which already shows features that were to become characteristics of New Comedy: in this play there are almost no topical allusions and no parabasis; the issue of wealth and justice is presented as a general problem and on the level of private lives; the chorus is rather insignificant, though present throughout; and a slave plays a major role. Its widely applicable character and entertaining qualities, however, made this drama the most popular of Aristophanes' works in later eras. For the same reason fully developed New Comedy, which also owed much to the late Euripides, was transferable to Rome.

Accordingly, Greek New Comedy constitutes the main model of palliata. Some prologues mention the title of the Greek model and/or the name of its writer;<sup>60</sup> in other cases possible sources can be inferred from plots and titles of Roman plays and extant Greek texts. Out of the Plautine plays for which specific models are known or assumed, three comedies are based on Menander, two on Diphilus, two on Philemon and one on Demophilus. Terence took the plots of *Phormio* and *Hecyra* from Apollodorus and those

<sup>58</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.173–4; Apul. *Flor.* 16; Euanth. *Fab.* 3.5. On Roman definitions of comedy see Pociña Pérez 1996a: 1–10.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. also Plutarch's judgement on the suitability of Old and New Comedy as dinner entertainment: Plut. *Mor.* 711F–12C. Interestingly, Horace mentions a connection of Plautus' (Greek-style) comedy with the Sicilian Epicharmus and of Afranius' (Roman) comedy with the Greek Menander (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.57–8).

<sup>60</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Asin.* 10–12; *Poen.* 50–5a; *Trin.* 18–21; Ter. *An.* 9–14; *Eun.* 19b–20a; 30–4; *Phorm.* 24–8; *Ad.* 6–11; cf. also Ter. *Eun.* 7–13 on Luscius Lanuvinus.

of the remaining four plays from Menander (Donat. on Ter. *Hec.*, *praef.* 1.1).

Whereas in the case of tragedy Roman playwrights were essentially required to keep the protagonists, their names and the setting if the myth was to remain recognizable, there was, theoretically, more freedom for comedy as these plays were based on the experiences of ordinary individuals. In this context a major issue in modern scholarship on palliata has been to identify characteristics of Roman versions in contrast to the underlying Greek ones or, in other words, to determine in what ways Roman poets adapted Greek plays.<sup>61</sup>

Formal changes due to different requirements and conventions on the Greek and the Roman stages are uncontroversial: adaptations in language or scene structure, the simultaneous presence of more than three speaking actors, the lack of act-divisions, a large number of actors' monodies and allusions to Roman institutions are indications of alterations by Roman playwrights. In the absence of sufficient clear evidence for identifying modifications beyond this level, criteria have been inferred on the basis of assumptions on characteristic features of Greek and Roman plays: a number of scholars believe that Greek plays tend to present a tight, logical and forward-moving action, while elements of farce and slapstick, banter among slaves and verbal play, as well as several deceptions, numerous complex turns of the plot or ridiculous figures, point to additions by Roman poets, who wished to entertain audiences by funny and exciting performances and to increase the effectiveness of individual scenes, but did not care about coherent plots, logical structures, well-organized action or meaningful messages.<sup>62</sup> However, comparisons between Roman comedies and their Greek predecessors have to remain hypothetical in almost all cases; therefore it is more fruitful, as has recently been realized, to study the plays as such in their existing form; for this is how they were presented to audiences in performance (see ch. 5.1).

Palliatae obviously include entertaining elements; yet this does not exclude the possibility of their being clearly structured and conveying

<sup>61</sup> For overviews of the history of scholarship on this issue see e.g. Halporn 1993: 191–6; Blänsdorf in Suerbaum 2002: 181–2; Sander-Pieper 2007: 7–32; also Blume 1998: 162–79. This line of research started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (see esp. Leo 1912; Fraenkel [1922/1960] 2007) and continues until the present day (on methodological difficulties see e.g. Franko 2001: 156). More evidence for Greek comedy has become available and opinions on Latin literature have changed; and so have views on the activity of Roman playwrights. More recently some scholars have moved away from approaching Roman comedy mainly on the basis of analytic criticism, and have rather studied the plays in their present form, looking at literary and dramatic aspects (for notable early examples see N. W. Slater 1985; Goldberg 1986).

<sup>62</sup> See e.g. G. Williams 1968: 288; Lefèvre 1978b: 27–41, 67–83; Moore 2001: 246.

messages. Even actions set in a foreign country or fictional characters can have a bearing on Roman life: Cicero regarded protagonists in comedy, like those in tragedy, as real-life figures and exploited them as paradigms for the behaviour of everyday Romans (e.g. Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 47). Although Cicero pursued specific argumentative goals, he probably would not have applied such a perspective in public speeches if his contemporaries had not shared these views to some extent. Terence's late-antique commentators stress that his comedies are both enjoyable and useful as they show examples of different ways of behaviour and thus demonstrate what has to be imitated and what has to be avoided.<sup>63</sup>

Due to the mixture of features appropriate to Greek and Roman settings, their fictional elaboration and the insertion of metatheatrical remarks, the stage-action in *palliata* does not present a coherent picture of a single society, but rather creates a fantasy world. Yet this does not affect its relevance for Roman audiences: the problems of figures in the plays are connected with the experiences of spectators even if they might laugh at some reactions and solutions rather than regarding them as models.<sup>64</sup> The combination of elements and the setting in a different world gives playwrights the freedom both to provide parallels and to set off modes of behaviour against the usual customs in Rome.<sup>65</sup> What is important for the acceptance of a plot constructed in this way is that it is probable (cf. Arist. *Poet.* 9: 1451a36–b15). If, in Plautus' homonymous play, the slave Pseudolus' comparison of his activities with those of a poet, who makes something fictitious seem plausible (Plaut. *Pseud.* 401–3), can be applied to comedy or to Plautus himself, there was an awareness that what a poet describes may have no basis in reality, but must make sense.

Plautus has been seen to blur the distinction between the imaginary world on stage and contemporary Roman reality by inserting references to Roman institutions and places, which invite the conclusion that elements of the behaviour of the fictional Greeks on stage also apply to contemporary Romans.<sup>66</sup> This reinforces the relevance of the comedies to Roman audiences despite the foreign setting. The potential for transference works on a general level concerning modes of behaviour,<sup>67</sup> while in most cases

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Euanth. *Fab.* 2.6; Donat. on Ter. *Eun.*, *praef.* 1.9; *Ad.*, *praef.* 1.9; for the mixture of the serious and the humorous in Greek New Comedy cf. Plut. *Mor.* 712B.

<sup>64</sup> On this issue see e.g. Cèbe 1966: 59; Blänsdorf 1983, in Suerbaum 2002: 178; Bernstein 1998: 244–5; contrast Goldberg 1993: 62.

<sup>65</sup> See also G. Williams 1968: 288, 294; Fantham 1977: 40.

<sup>66</sup> See Moore 1991 (on the *choragus* speech in Plautus' *Curculio*).

<sup>67</sup> See also Franko 2001: 161–2 ('broad topicality').

possible responses to concrete single incidents (and thus dates) cannot be proved.

The fact that specific conventions (e.g. the exaggerated role of slaves) apply in the comedy world has been connected with the Saturnalia, the Roman annual festival whose main day was 17 December and on which the roles of slaves and masters were reversed (cf. Hor. *Sat.* 2.3).<sup>68</sup> It is true that the topsy-turvy world of comedy is reminiscent of the Saturnalia, but some of its features are also present in Greek comedy, and the notion of remoteness and of possibilities not available in the real world is already achieved by the foreign setting. Since the Saturnalia does not include dramatic performances, it seems difficult to establish such a specific connection.

Poets created the Greek-based fictional world by a number of means: titles of palliatae are typically taken from names or characteristics of one of the protagonists or from items essential to the plot. Whereas Plautus tended to Latinize at least those titles that are not proper names, Caecilius and Terence retained the Greek form of titles. According to Donatus, Greek titles give Roman plays more dignity and make them instantly recognizable as palliatae (Donat. on Ter. *Ad.*, *praef.* 1.1).

As for the set-up, one of Plautus' prologue speakers tells the audience that poets of comedies prefer Athens as the Greek setting, so that the surroundings seem really Greek, and announces that the following play will be set in Sicily, where the events are said to have taken place (Plaut. *Men.* 7–12). Indeed palliata plots are localized in Greece and most frequently in Athens.<sup>69</sup> Besides, the Greek context was sustained as poets kept Greek-sounding names for the characters, though they might alter them for special effects.<sup>70</sup> They even retained specifically Greek terms and used allusions to figures of Greek myth and history as well as Greek poets.<sup>71</sup> However, they did not leave the entire set-up unchanged:<sup>72</sup> they also inserted

<sup>68</sup> See e.g. Segal 1987; Lefèvre 1988; also Serbat 1975.

<sup>69</sup> See Duckworth 1952: 82; Dumont 2000: 109.

<sup>70</sup> Characters, particularly the trickster slaves, tend to have speaking names (cf. Donat. on Ter. *An.* 226[4]).

<sup>71</sup> Cf. e.g. *ephebus* (Plaut. *Merc.* 40; Ter. *Eun.* 824); Piraeus (Plaut. *Mostell.* 66b); *eleutheria* (Plaut. *Pers.* 29); Achilles and Hector (Plaut. *Merc.* 488); Alcumena and Juno (Plaut. *Merc.* 689b–90); Alexander Magnus and Agathocles (Plaut. *Mostell.* 775–6a); Titan (Plaut. *Pers.* 1–4; 26–7); Thetis (Plaut. *Truc.* 731); Alcumena (Plaut. *Rud.* 86); Hercules (Ter. *Eun.* 1027).

<sup>72</sup> See e.g. Moore 2001: 245–6; Blänsdorf in Suerbaum 2002: 182. Dupont (1985: 249), however, thinks that there is no 'Romanization' in palliata comedy and that Greek New Comedy is the main reference point for these plays. Dér (1989: 297) infers from Terence's prologues that there were three ways of adapting comedy in this period (exemplified by Plautus and Naevius, Terence, and Lucius Lanuvinus). Yet it is doubtful whether such precise distinctions can be made, even though Terence's prologues reveal that discussions about different ways of composing plays were going on, and individual poets had their own styles.

references to Roman or Italic customs, institutions and places,<sup>73</sup> explained Greek customs or replaced them with corresponding Roman institutions and terminology (cf. e.g. Plaut. *Stich.* 446–8), introduced metatheatrical comments on the Greek setting (cf. e.g. Plaut. *Men.* 7–12; *Truc.* 1–3), had characters talk about ‘the Greeks’ and their typical behaviour<sup>74</sup> or used Roman political and military language.<sup>75</sup>

Besides such adaptations of detail Roman poets could make changes to plot and characterization. Cicero regards Latin versions of *fabulae palliatae*, like those of *fabulae crepidatae*, as literary products worth reading (Cic. *Fin.* 1.4; *Opt. gen.* 18). The extensive comparison of parts of Caecilius’ *Plocium* with its Greek model in Gellius (Gell. *NA* 2.23) shows, even though one need not agree with Gellius’ evaluative conclusions, that the presentation of the dramatic characters is different in the two versions (see ch. 4.7, 5.1).

A significant way of adapting Greek plots is the technique known as *contaminatio*, the fusion of elements from two Greek plays into one Latin play. This process is possible due to the essential sameness of plot across New Comedy. Still, additions or replacements of scenes, which may feature further characters or show the protagonists engaged in particular or additional activities, change the overall impact and structure of a play. According to Terence, who was accused of making use of two Greek plays for one Latin play by opponents, his predecessors Naevius, Plautus and Ennius had already used this method.<sup>76</sup> This strategy is perhaps one of the clearest indications of the independence of Roman comic playwrights and their self-confident exploitation of Greek material.

The typical dramatic set-up in *palliatae* favours particular topics to be touched upon: plots tend to feature one or more families, various types of relationships among its members, love affairs involving people outside the family and threats to those by others. Thus the relationship between family members, between different generations or between men and women is addressed; this includes the role of slaves or problems of education. Social issues and political problems can also surface, such as the treatment of conquered peoples and foreigners, the confrontation of different ethnic groups, the position and power of soldiers and, more generally, the consequences of war or questions of agrarian and mercantile economies. Ethical values such as faithfulness, piety or morally upright behaviour may be presented. The traditional order is eventually (re-)established by happy endings, clarifying

<sup>73</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Merc.* 664–5; *Mostell.* 226b; 746; 770; *Truc.* 690b–1a.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Asin.* 199; *Cas.* 67–78; *Circ.* 288; *Merc.* 525b; *Mostell.* 22b; 64b; *Truc.* 55b.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Mostell.* 1047 (*legiones*); Plaut. *Mostell.* 688; 1049 (*senatus*).

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Ter. *An.* 9–21; *Haut.* 16–21; *Eun.* 25–34; Donat. on Ter. *Eun.*, *praef.* 1.11. On *contaminatio* see e.g. Goldberg 1986: 91–122.

people's identity and often rewarding the innocent and punishing the negative characters.<sup>77</sup> Just as Republican tragedy seems to have consisted of a combination of entertaining spectacle and serious messages, a similar mix applies to contemporary comedy; it is only that its messages are conveyed in a more light-hearted way.<sup>78</sup>

Altogether the procedures of Roman comic poets lead to the conclusion that they created a Roman form of comedy by remodelling Greek versions and adapting them to contemporary Roman taste.<sup>79</sup> On top of their familiarity with Greek literature, Roman playwrights must have been acquainted with the various indigenous comic forms in Italy. Plautus in particular is assumed to have had previous experience with Atellana and to have transferred the improvisational element of early Italic performances to Greek-style comedy; in literary comedy, however, this would be 'artificial improvisation' designed by the poet.<sup>80</sup> The resulting mix that constitutes Roman comedy consists of exuberant stage-action in a Greek-based fictional world and an underlying plot that may convey messages relevant to contemporary Roman audiences.<sup>81</sup>

Although comic plots are fictitious and theoretically a wide range of (family) problems could be dramatized, Greek New Comedy and the corresponding Roman type established generic conventions as well as stock characters with typical characteristics.<sup>82</sup> Roman comic playwrights at least from the time of Plautus onwards alluded to generic conventions; consequently both poets and contemporary audiences must have been familiar with them.<sup>83</sup> According to lists in Terence stock figures in comedy include the 'running slave' (*servus currens*),<sup>84</sup> the 'angry old man' (*iratus senex*), the 'greedy parasite' (*edax parasitus*), the 'shameless trickster' (*sycophanta impudens*), the 'greedy pimp' (*avarus leno*), the 'good lady' (*bona matrona*), the 'wicked courtesan' (*meretrix mala*) and the 'boastful soldier' (*miles gloriosus*); common actions are 'a boy being substituted' (*puerum supponi*), 'an old man being deceived by his slave' (*falli per servom senem*) and 'loving, hating,

<sup>77</sup> On some of these topics and their relevance to contemporary society see Leigh 2004a.

<sup>78</sup> See similarly (within a different framework) McCarthy 2000: 5–6; on New Comedy generally see Hunter 1985: 147.

<sup>79</sup> For a defence of the literary value and interest of Roman comedy see Fantham 1977: esp. 21.

<sup>80</sup> On this issue see e.g. N. W. Slater 1985: passim; Fantham 1989a: 26–7; Barsby 1995.

<sup>81</sup> On the popularity of comedy in Rome during the third and second centuries BCE see Pociña Pérez 1991.

<sup>82</sup> On conventions in New Comedy see Bain 1977: 148–53.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Amph.* 50–63; *Capt.* 55–62; 1029–36; Ter. *Haut.* 37–40; *Eun.* 35–41. See e.g. Thierfelder 1936; Dumont 1992.

<sup>84</sup> On this figure and its effects (on the basis of an examination of artefacts) see Csapo 1993.

suspecting' (*amare odisse suspicari*). Later writers refer to further items.<sup>85</sup> Some of these typical plot elements are already mentioned in Theophrastus (Theophr. T 708 Fortenbaugh); characteristic features of comedies by himself and by his predecessors are listed in one of Aristophanes' parabases (Ar. *Pax* 729–44).

Despite this widespread agreement on features and characters of a typical comedy among the playwrights, several plots or individual characters in Roman *palliatae* deviate from this standard. This can only be a sign of an advanced stage in the development of the dramatic genre: both playwrights and audiences were familiar with the conventional type, and they enjoyed the tension between the ordinary and the novel. Still, in cases of major variations from the default model, playwrights such as Plautus apparently felt the need to explain those: they broke the dramatic illusion and discussed the character of their dramas in prologues (cf. esp. Plaut. *Amph.*, *Capt.*; see also ch. 5.3). When changes were less radical, they were simply presented to the public; if they concerned individual figures, these might be made to utter self-referential comments.<sup>86</sup>

In addition to such modifications, writers of *palliatae* could employ elements from further literary genres and other forms of speech. Hence there are allusions to typical topics and structural elements of epic, tragedy, prayer, dream narrative, oath, court case or battle narrative, and references to other forms of comic drama, other comedies or comedy itself. This exploitation of additional material is most frequently called 'parody', and a number of examples fall within this category, when forms of speech or terminology associated with different contexts are used in an incongruous set-up. However, there are cases such as Plautus' *Amphitruo* and *Rudens*, where there is no intention to ridicule, but tragic elements, like speeches of lament or discussions of divine justice and fate, have genuine significance. In Terence there is less obvious parody than in Plautus, while the more serious outlook of his plays and the topics discussed come closer to tragedy.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.170b–3: *amans ephebus, pater attentus, leno insidiosus, edax parasitus* ('loving young man, attentive father, ambushing pimp, greedy parasite'); Ov. *Am.* 1.15.17–18: *dum fallax servus, durus pater, inproba lena / vivent et meretrix blanda, Menandros erit* ('as long as the scheming slave, the harsh father, the ruthless female pimp and the flattering courtesan live, there will be Menander'); Apul. *Flor.* 16.9: *nec eo minus et leno periurus et amator fervidus et servulus callidus et amica illudens et uxor inhibens et mater indulgens et patruus obiurgator et sodalis opitulatur et miles proelior, sed et parasiti edaces et parentes tenaces et meretrices procaces*. ('And nonetheless there is the perjured pimp, the fiery lover, the scheming slave, the cheating girlfriend, the restraining wife, the indulgent mother, the rebuking uncle, the helpful friend, the warrior soldier, and also greedy parasites, persistent parents and frivolous courtesans.');

<sup>86</sup> Cf. e.g. Plaut. *Pers.* 25b (on *servus* as *amans*); Plaut. *Truc.* 483–96 (on *miles gloriosus*). Later commentators noted some of those deviations (cf. Euanth. *Fab.* 3.4; Donat. on Ter. *Hec.*, *praef.* 1.9).



Plautus already proves himself familiar with characteristic elements of standard comic plots and the practice of basing one's own plays on Greek models. By the time of Terence Roman comic poets had recognized that, besides Greek models, there was also a Roman tradition in their dramatic genre: Terence's prologues refer to Naevius and Plautus as predecessors and precedents, make it clear that Terence's opponent Luscius Lanuvinus is a rival in the same genre and introduce Caecilius Statius as an immediate predecessor of Terence, with whom he shares an impresario.<sup>87</sup> Positioning oneself within the tradition could then be turned into an argument enhancing the playwright's credentials: Terence aligns himself with the 'good' examples of antiquity such as Naevius, Plautus and Caecilius Statius on the one hand and distinguishes himself from his opponents such as Luscius Lanuvinus on the other hand.

Terence's prologues allow the inference that reusing Greek dramas already adapted by other Latin poets was disapproved of in the case of plays advertised as 'new'; therefore, being active at a later stage in the history of Roman comedy meant that the number of Greek plays at one's disposal was reduced unless one went on a journey to Greece to find further ones, as Terence allegedly did just before he died (cf. Suet./Donat. *Vita Ter.* 5). Terence's prologues also indicate that those who did not take such steps fought hard about the use of each individual scene available (cf. Ter. *An.* 9–21; *Eun.* 23–34; *Ad.* 6–11).<sup>88</sup> However, there are a few titles attested for both Naevius and Plautus (*Carbonaria*, *Colax*, *Nervolaria* [if the relevant text is thus emended correctly]); and the discussion of the use and reuse of Greek plays in Terence favours the interpretation that there were a *Colax* of Naevius and a *Colax* of Plautus, which featured the same two characters of a soldier and a parasite (Ter. *Eun.* 19b–34; see ch. 5.1). The most likely interpretation of this evidence is that in these cases Plautus did not go back to a Greek source, but rather adapted an existing Roman play, as he is attested to have done (cf. Gell. *NA* 3.3.13), and thus did not produce a 'new' play.

These practices trigger the question of the characteristics of the individual playwrights and their relationship to each other. Indeed, differences between the main representatives, Plautus and Terence, have been

<sup>87</sup> Cf. Ter. *An.* 5–7; 18–21; *Haut.* 20–3; 30b–4; *Eun.* 7–34; *Phorm.* 1–23; *Hec.* 10–27; *Ad.* 6–21.

<sup>88</sup> In contrast to comic plots, Greek myths used for tragedies had an independent existence besides drama and were therefore open to adaptation and revisiting in various forms. At the same time, the introduction of a particular mythical character already conveyed an idea of the context, whereas in comedy the entire set-up, the plot and the characters had to be invented and presented to audiences (see also Antiphanes, fr. 189 K.-A.).

recognized:<sup>89</sup> in comparison with those of Plautus, Terence's plays include fewer entertaining scenes of comic banter, have fewer metatheatrical comments and fewer references to Roman institutions; they present subtler character portrayals, increase complexity by double plots, replace expository prologues with discussions on literary questions and thereby heighten suspense and surprise at the expense of dramatic irony, while they retain Greek titles and Greek names of characters; Terence also seems to be concerned more with ethical questions than with issues of the political community.

The existence of differences raises the next question, namely whether Terence is an exception due to his poetic personality or a representative of a continuous development in response to increasing sophistication or changes in taste.<sup>90</sup> The prevailing view among modern scholars posits one broadly stable tradition of *palliata*, with which Terence broke deliberately in a return to Menandriism.<sup>91</sup> Yet it is methodologically unsound to draw conclusions for a dramatic genre on the basis of the evidence for two representatives, who wrote several decades apart from each other, during which significant changes in Roman cultural and social life took place. So it must be checked whether fragmentary plays of other comic poets or *testimonia* on Roman comedy can confirm or contradict this theory.

It is clear, particularly from the prologue to Plautus' *Casina* (Plaut. *Cas.* 5–20), written for a revival performance around the middle of the second century BCE (see ch. 2.9), that changes in the character of comedies occurred quickly throughout the Republican period and that contemporaries were aware of them. For when an 'old' play of Plautus is about to be performed, which will earn the company a profit, the prologue speaker asserts that

<sup>89</sup> See e.g. Leo 1913: 246–8; Duckworth 1952: 384, 393; Gaiser 1972: 1104–9; Moore 2001: 245–8.

<sup>90</sup> Earlier scholars tended to see Caecilius as a representative of a decisive transitional stage in the development of Republican *palliata*, midway between Plautus and Terence (see e.g. Oppermann 1939a, 1939b). This view of a basically linear development was challenged by J. Wright (1974), who believed that 'stylistically, at any rate, Caecilius stands squarely in the Plautine, and hence the Roman tradition' and that 'he adhered to the standard conventions in comic characterization and staging as well'; he argues that the 'complete break with the traditions of the Roman comic stage was not to come until the time of Terence' (125–6) as there was a coherent tradition with the exception of Terence (see also Grimal 1975: 299; Moore 2001: 246; Marshall 2006: 15; besides the reviews of J. Wright's book see also assessments in overviews of scholarship on Roman comedy: Goldberg 1981: 108; Segal 1981: 356). Recently, J. Wright's (1974) theory has been reinforced from a linguistic/stylistic point of view by Karakasis (2005). According to Kleve (2001), 'the occurrence of cantica and obscenities' in the papyrus fragments of Caecilius' comedy 'brings the comedy closer to Plautus than Terence'; Harries (2007: 129–30) also sees Caecilius closer to Plautus. Dér (1989: 283–4) believes that the controversies reflected in Terence's prologues constitute the first occasion in the history of Roman literature when a generation breaks with the tradition of the predecessors.

<sup>91</sup> Pociña Pérez (1996b: 119–20) seems to posit a more gradual and smooth development towards Menandriism and eventual decline, across both *palliata* and *togata*.

audiences prefer 'old' plays to worthless new ones. This indicates that plays written in the 150s or 140s were perceived as different from those composed in the late third and early second centuries BCE. Even though the alleged preferences of mid-second-century audiences are used in a particular argumentative context, the description is likely to contain some truth, since only then does such an argument make sense from the producers' point of view. At the same time there must have been some appreciation of 'new' plays, since otherwise they would not have been offered and there would have been less pressure to argue for the superior value of 'old' plays.

Preserved comic fragments of Naevius and Caecilius Statius indicate that features commonly associated with Plautus, such as colourful language or down-to-earth jokes, can also be found in their plays and that elements known for Terence are already present in his predecessor Caecilius Statius: both Caecilius Statius and Terence had their plays staged by the impresario Ambivivus Turpio, both had problems having their plays produced in full at the start of their careers but were successful eventually through perseverance, both were quoted by Cicero as moral authorities, and both discussed questions such as the relationship between generations or problems of education.

While the process need not have been straightforwardly linear, this evidence suggests that *palliata* evolved gradually during the Republican period; the various stages of this development, during which *palliata* became more serious, restrained and self-conscious, though it did not lose its comic potential, are represented by the sequence of known comic playwrights. One could even claim that comedy and tragedy in Rome were moving towards each other over the course of the Republican period as tragedy became more spectacular and comedy more serious. These processes probably contributed to the eventual decline of *palliata* since ultimately there was no room for a distinctive further development.<sup>92</sup> Such a scenario receives further corroboration from what can be inferred for the last representative of Republican *palliata* for whom some evidence survives, Turpilius: he continued both the serious elements of Terentian comedy and the farcical nature of Plautine comedy, but also included features attested for contemporary tragedy and *togata*.

Since complete *palliatae* survive from Republican Rome, in the case of this dramatic genre a description of the dramatic structure can be attempted,

<sup>92</sup> On possible reasons for the decline of Roman comedy at the end of the Republican period see e.g. Fantham 1977: 49; Goldberg 1993. On these processes see also 'Overview and conclusions' below.

although it has to be borne in mind that conclusions are still based on the example of only two playwrights.

In modern editions comic scripts are divided into a prologue (with the exception of a few plays that lack one) and several 'acts', consisting of a number of 'scenes'. However, the act-divisions are the work of Renaissance editors, following the classical idea of dramatic structure (cf. e.g. Hor. *Ars P.* 189–90). Scene-divisions (based on the entries of new speaking characters) already appear in the manuscripts, even though it is unlikely that they go back to the dramatic poets. Originally, a drama was one continuous performance (apart from the prologue), structured by characters' entrances and exits (see ch. 5.5).

In the manuscripts all utterances are marked as either 'spoken/unaccompanied part' (DV: *deverbium*) or 'sung/accompanied part' (C: *canticum*); i.e. there is a distinction between unaccompanied passages in iambic senarii and passages in other metres accompanied by music (see ch. 5.6). Only two Plautine plays have what may be called 'choruses' (*advocati* in *Poenulus*; *piscatores* in *Rudens*), and these consist of groups of people involved in the action and appearing on stage for a single episode (see ch. 4.6). As regards the modes of delivery, their distribution and effect, comedy in Rome seems to have been similar to tragedy.

Generally, compared with tragedy, comedy was regarded as less artificial and closer to everyday speech in metre and language, as befitted a dramatic genre featuring ordinary individuals, though it was not completely inartistic (cf. Cic. *Orat.* 184; Quint. *Inst.* 2.10.13). Language and forms of speech in comedy are characterized by variety: they include a stylized version of what must have been colloquial language at the time, but also new coinages, linguistic jokes and effects, literal interpretation of words, plays on names and words in foreign languages. Language and style of *palliatae* are intertwined with the metrical structure since verse forms such as polymetric *cantica* offer themselves more readily to a colourful and high-blown style. Significant stylistic features are those typical of all forms of Republican drama, such as alliteration, assonance or formation of new words.

### 3.4 *FABULA TOGATA/TABERNARIA*

While *fabula palliata* denotes comedy of Greek type, *fabula togata* is the Roman counterpart,<sup>93</sup> named after the characteristic Roman garment, the

<sup>93</sup> On *fabula togata* see e.g. Neukirch 1833 (who uses *togata* in a broad sense and includes praetexta); Courbaud 1899; Beare 1964: 128–36; Vereecke 1971; Cacciaglia 1972; Dénes 1973; Pociña Pérez 1975a,

*toga*.<sup>94</sup> Whereas the expression *fabula togata* seems to have been the term commonly used for comedy set in Rome among ancient writers, in some grammatical systems (cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 489.14–90.7; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.1) it functioned as the overall description of all Roman types of drama (in accordance with a distinction between Roman *toga* and Greek *pallium*), and comedy set in Rome was called *tabernaria* (derived from *taberna*, ‘wooden hut’).<sup>95</sup> In all systems of dramatic genres established by later grammarians *fabula tabernaria* or *fabula togata* (in the sense of ‘Roman comedy’) is the logical complement to establish a fourfold division of major dramatic genres with two different types of pairings.

In those systems (cf. esp. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 489.14–90.7; 490.14–18), the two comic forms correspond to each other in types of plot and rank of characters, while they are distinguished by their respective Greek or Roman settings and personages. At the same time *togata* can be paired with *praetexta* (as *palliata* can with *crepidata*), these genres being the Roman versions of serious and light drama respectively (cf. Hor. *Ars P.* 285–8). The comic forms are distinguished from the serious ones by the lowliness of the protagonists and the private subject matter. They feature ordinary individuals, but this does not mean that all characters in *togata* are poor and live in simple huts; plays can include characters from various social classes such as bourgeois, craftsmen or slaves (cf. also Fest., p. 480.15–18 L.).

Such a structure reflects the way in which grammarians and commentators viewed the major dramatic genres in Rome in retrospect. Yet it is uncertain when this full set-up was established, since the date of the introduction of *togata* is unclear and the term ‘*togata*’ is attested only from late

1975b; Tabacco 1975; López 1977, 1983: 15–29; Juhnke 1978: 302–4; Daviault 1979; Rawson (1985) 1991: 479–81; Guardì 1991, 1993; Petrone 1992: 473–84; Pociña and López 2001; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 259–61; for an overview of research since the nineteenth century see Pasquazi Bagnolini 1974, 1975; for bibliography see López 1982, 1994.

<sup>94</sup> For an analysis of the terms *togatus* and *fabula togata* see López 1977; also Courbaud 1899: 1–16; Ussani 1969.

<sup>95</sup> See e.g. Guardì 1991: 209–11. Tabacco (1975) seems to take *togata* and *tabernaria* as referring to two different types of Roman light drama, but there is only a difference in the application of terminology. That *togata* functioned as a general term in some systems is proved by Suetonius’ information about C. Melissus: ‘he also developed a new form of *togatae* and called them *trabeatae*’ (Suet. *Gram.* 21.4: *fecit et novum genus togatarum inscripsitque trabeatas*). Like other terms for dramatic genres, the name for this subgenre of *togata* is derived from a particular piece of clothing, the *trabea* worn by equestrians, especially on ceremonial occasions, and regarded as one of the characteristic features of their class (cf. e.g. Val. Max. 2.2.9; Stat. *Silv.* 4.2.32–3). Therefore modern scholars believe that this type of Roman drama featured equestrians as distinctive characters, perhaps in contrast to magistrates in *praetextae* and ordinary people in *tabernariae/togatae* (on *trabeata* see Neukirch 1833: 34–8; he [e.g. 56–7] infers that there was one Roman dramatic genre for each of the three social classes). Details must remain uncertain as nothing of Melissus’ dramas survives.

Republican times onwards (see ch. 3). Donatus mentions Livius Andronicus as also the inventor of togata (Donat. *Com.* 5.4), but this information is generally regarded as unreliable, for it cannot be corroborated by other internal or external evidence; it rather seems as if Livius Andronicus transferred Greek literary genres to Rome, but did not yet Romanize them fully, a step that was inaugurated by Naevius when he wrote praetextae and an epic on Roman history. Crediting Naevius with the invention of togata<sup>96</sup> would therefore be in line with his poetic profile, but again there is no evidence to prove this.

Scholars therefore, disregarding the two earliest Roman dramatists and starting from the character of togata, used to assume that togata emerged considerably later than the other three main dramatic genres in Rome and much later than the Roman form of serious drama (praetexta) – namely that it came into being only in the middle of the second century BCE. It was understood as a reaction to the growing Hellenization and eventual decline of palliatae.<sup>97</sup> Even though it is true that few new palliatae were produced after Terence's death, revivals of Plautine and Terentian plays flourished in the middle of the second century BCE and beyond (see ch. 2.9). The public was apparently not fed up with palliatae; there might just have been a certain dislike of its 'modern' type, if the argument in a prologue to a revival performance of a Plautine play is representative (Plaut. *Cas.* 5–20). Hence togata is more likely to be the result of differentiation than of opposition: as palliata, which had originally combined Greek and Roman elements, started to become more Hellenic (while it had shown precedents for plot-based comic dramas in Latin), it was possible and desirable to create a Roman comic form.

It is therefore more plausible that the earliest securely attested writer of togatae, Titinius, lived before Terence, because in Varro's statement on three Roman writers of light drama, Titinius, Terence and Atta, the order of names is most probably chronological (Varro, fr. 40 Funaioli, ap. Char., *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 241.27–8), and Titinius' use of metre and language is close to that of Plautus without seeming to be archaizing.<sup>98</sup> These facts

<sup>96</sup> See e.g. Leo 1913: 92; Daviault 1981: 18–19; contra Beare 1964: 39; Guardì 1985: 15; Traglia 1986: 29; Suerbaum 2002: 109.

<sup>97</sup> See e.g. Neukirch 1833: e.g. 66; Courbaud 1899: 17–27; Cacciaglia 1972: 207–8; contra Duckworth 1952: 68–9; Beare 1964: 129; Dénes 1973: 187; Daviault 1981: 15 (and references in n. 1); Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 260; Boyle 2006: 13.

<sup>98</sup> For studies of Titinius' language and style in comparison with Plautus see Przychocki 1922: 186–8; Vereecke 1971; Daviault 1981: 35–7; Guardì 1981; Minarini 1997. Petrone (1992: 476 and n. 66) remains cautious and calls to mind the fact that Titinius could also be later than Plautus and be among the many poets who were indebted to Plautus; yet this would still assign Titinius to a relatively early period.

point to a probable origin of togatae in the first half of the second or even in the late third century BCE. This assumption makes togata's creation still somewhat later than that of the other major dramatic genres, but keeps it well within the innovative period of Roman drama.

The beginning of the second century BCE, right after the conclusion of the Second Punic War, saw significant developments in Roman society and culture, concerning a variety of areas.<sup>99</sup> In particular, Romans were confronted with intensified contacts with Greeks and their culture; they got to know an alternative way of life and saw an influx of luxury items. Hence it is not unlikely that the establishment of comedy set in Rome happened in the same period, when Roman society was developing fast and tried to reassert its core values against influences from abroad. On this dating togatae emerged when new palliatae were still being written, so that the creative phases of the two forms of comic drama overlapped.<sup>100</sup>

The only securely known representatives of togata are Titinius, L. Afranius and T. Quinctius Atta, and their output seems to cover the second century until early into the first century BCE.<sup>101</sup> Of the triad, Afranius was the most important according to ancient *testimonia*, and from his plays the greatest number of titles and fragments has been preserved. In total about sixty titles of togatae and almost 650 lines of fragments have survived.<sup>102</sup>

The Roman dramatic genre of praetexta presented genuine Roman stories in the corresponding setting, while apparently following the model of (Greek-style) tragedy in form and structure. Information on togata points to the conclusion that the distinction between Greek and Roman was less clear-cut for the light dramatic genres, even though togata was probably the Roman dramatic form that came closest to being a 'mirror of life' on

<sup>99</sup> These include the introduction of a large number of new forms of architectural ornaments (see von Hesberg 2005: 49). Cacciaglia (1972: 211–12) connects the origin of togata with the emergence of a new bourgeois class after the victories in the Punic Wars and the consequent wealth (see also Guardì 1985: 15–16), but this can hardly be the only reason.

<sup>100</sup> See e.g. Przychocki 1922; Duckworth 1952: 68–9; Beare 1964: 129; Vereecke 1971: 184–5; Pociña Pérez 1975a: 81, 1975b: 368; Daviault 1981: 19; Stankiewicz 1984; Guardì 1985: 15–19. On the discussion about togata's date of origin see Guardì 1991, 213–16, 1993: 272–4.

<sup>101</sup> The information in a scholion on Horace on writers of praetextae and togatae (Ps.-Acr. on Hor. *Ars P.* 288: *praetextas et togatas scripserunt Aelius Lamia, Antonius Rufus, Gneus Melissus, Africanus* [leg. *Afranius*], *Pomponius*. – 'Those who wrote praetextae and togatae are Aelius Lamia, Antonius Rufus, Gneus Melissus, Afranius (?) and Pomponius.') is generally regarded as mangled and unreliable, since there is obvious confusion between several dramatic genres and their representatives; it is therefore not clear whether any of the individuals named, apart from what seems to be a reference to Afranius, were indeed writers of togatae. A C. Melissus is attested elsewhere as a writer of *trabatae* (cf. Suet. *Gram.* 21.4; see n. 95 above), and he might be referred to here if the scholiast got the first name wrong. Pomponius may be the writer of *Atellanae* (see ch. 4.14) rather than an imperial composer of tragedies and praetextae (see Manuwald 2001a: 50 and n. 83).

<sup>102</sup> On the transmission of togatae see Jocelyn 1991.

the basis of setting, personages and topics.<sup>103</sup> Horace emphasizes that for both praetextae and togatae Roman poets departed from Greek models and celebrated domestic events (Hor. *Ars P.* 285–8), while in its context this statement seems to refer mainly to subject matter rather than to dramatic form.

Despite the Roman framework, togata poets apparently continued to look to Greek New Comedy and its Roman adaptations as their dramatic models:<sup>104</sup> Afranius refers to Terence in a fragment that is likely to come from a metaliterary prologue in Terentian style (Afr. *Tog.* 29 R.<sup>3</sup>), and the ancient *Vita* interprets this as reflecting his esteem for Terence as an outstanding and incomparable comic writer (Suet./Donat. *Vita Ter.* 7). In another fragment Afranius admits that he freely borrowed whatever suited him from Menander or anybody else, even Latin poets (Macrob. *Sat.* 6.1.4: Afr. *Tog.* 25–8 R.<sup>3</sup>). According to Horace people regarded Afranius as comparable with Menander (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.57); Cicero confirms that Afranius borrowed from Menander (Cic. *Fin.* 1.7), drawing parallels between Afranius' borrowing and Ennius' borrowing from Homer for his epic on Roman history. The late commentator Euanthius compares Plautus, Terence and Afranius as regards the style of their works and their relationship to tragedy and mime as if they were representatives of a single light dramatic genre (Euanth. *Fab.* 3.5). Since the subject matter and plot outline of palliata and togata (family problems and love affairs) were closer together than those of crepidata and praetexta, the Roman version was apparently able to adopt more than dramatic structures from the corresponding Greek form. This practice also shows that material presented in palliatae was regarded as relevant for dramas set in Rome.

Nevertheless, togata differs from palliata beyond the setting.<sup>105</sup> For instance, Seneca claims that in seriousness togata was midway between tragedy and comedy and that it contained meaningful statements; he implies that it talked about philosophical questions (Sen. *Ep.* 8.8; 89.7).<sup>106</sup>

<sup>103</sup> According to Courbaud (1899: 97), spectators of togatae could believe that they were watching 'vitam ipsam' ('life itself') instead of a 'spectaculum' ('show'). Obviously, what was presented on stage was a 'dramatic version of real life'.

<sup>104</sup> See e.g. Pociña Pérez 1975b: 368, 1996b: 130–1. On the relationship between palliata and togata see Daviault 1979.

<sup>105</sup> Zillinger (1911: 41), however, believes that there was no difference between palliata and togata apart from the characters' nationality (see also Guardi 1993: 271) and therefore togata was not regarded highly by Cicero.

<sup>106</sup> Even though Ussani (1969: 410) rightly notes that Seneca will have made this assessment from his personal point of view, fragments and other *testimonia* confirm the character of togata indicated thereby.



In the text of Fronto's letters togatae are mentioned as a source of 'elegant' (*urbanae*) *sententiae*, while other light dramatic genres can provide *sententiae* of different character (Fronto, *Ep. ad Ant.* 4.2, *m<sup>2</sup> in margin<sup>d</sup>*) [p. 106 v.d.H.]. Such descriptions could be given only if togatae did not consist merely of entertainment, but also conveyed messages, apparently to a greater degree than palliatae.<sup>107</sup> This agrees with a more solemn outlook and structure indicated by the Menandrian model at least for Afranius. Donatus says that in togatae (in contrast to palliatae) slaves were commonly not allowed to be cleverer than their masters (Donat. on Ter. *Eun.* 57), which is in line with both a more sober set-up and the depiction of (fictionalized) Roman reality.<sup>108</sup> It also agrees with both these features that, according to Gellius, Afranius discussed the term of *sapientia* and its origin in one of his plays, giving both the Greek and the Latin term and identifying *usus* and *memoria* as its 'parents' (Gell. *NA* 13.8; Afr. *Tog.* 298–9 R.<sup>3</sup>; cf. Sen. *Ep.* 89.7).

Structural and thematic elements of light drama could apparently be employed irrespective of generic differences, appropriated in different ways according to dramatic genres and the poets' individual agenda. Yet the more sober atmosphere in togata precludes the assumption of too close a similarity with Plautine comedy in all respects.<sup>109</sup> Although Plautus' comedies do contain messages, they have a greater potential for entertaining elements, not least due to the foreign setting, which allowed for the creation of a fictional world on this basis. Togatae were not Roman versions of Plautine comedy; they rather presented less fanciful surroundings and characters closer to real-life individuals. After Greek and Roman poets of Greek-style comedy had provided models of successful pieces of light drama, togata poets applied these structures to create thoroughly Roman plays with the corresponding adjustments.

<sup>107</sup> On the greater seriousness of togata see Courbaud 1899: 97–101. Cacciaglia (1972: 211–12) believes that the tone in togata was lower than in palliata, while being superior to Atellana.

<sup>108</sup> Leigh (2004a: 9) rightly stresses that Donatus makes no absolute statement for togatae, but rather talks of 'commonly' (*ferè*). Quintilian criticizes the fact that Afranius defiled his plots with indecent love affairs with boys (Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.100), which might trigger the assumption of a lewd and farcical atmosphere in togata (see e.g. Jocelyn 1991: 281). But since Quintilian adds that Afranius thereby exhibited his own way of life, it is more likely not to be a general characteristic of togata, but something peculiar to the poet Afranius. The fragments do not confirm such an element, and there is no other evidence on Afranius' character. An epigram by Ausonius, introduced as a caption for a picture of an indecent woman, mentions Afranius' plays as examples of obscene love relationships (Auson. *Epigr.* 79); in the context this presumably refers to the common love affairs of *meretrices* rather than to homosexual relationships.

<sup>109</sup> So apparently Pociña Pérez 1975a: 85–6, 87–8. On the different background and more sober setting in togata see also Dénes 1973: 189, 195.

A comparable tension between differences from and similarities to other dramatic genres characterizes individual dramatic features of togata.

In language, metre and style no big differences from other forms of Republican drama can be observed.<sup>110</sup> There are no major distinctions in linguistic levels and stylistic features between Greek and Roman or socially higher and lower characters across the various kinds of light drama, except for the names of characters and locations. As one would expect for a comedy set in Rome, vocabulary and ways of expression are rather straightforward and down to earth, yet embellished with the standard stylistic figures of early Roman poetry such as alliteration, asyndeton or enumeration. There are frequent exclamations and addresses, which must be reflections of lively dialogues between characters on stage.

The known writers of togatae share a few identical or similar titles of plays among each other (cf. Afr. – At.: *Megalensia*, *Materterae*; Tit. – Afr.: *Privignal Privignus*), but also with palliata (and Greek) comedies (cf. e.g. Caec. *Asotus*, *Harpazomene*), literary Atellanae (cf. Pomp. *Augur*, *Decuma fullonis*, *Satura*; Nov. *Fullones*, *Fullones feriati*, *Fullonicum*, *Gemini*) and literary mimes (cf. Lab. *Aquae caldae*, *Augur*, *Compitalia*, *Fullo*, *Gemelli*, *Sorores*, *Virgo*). Equally, methods of generating titles are similar to those of other light dramatic genres, for instance naming a play after a girl from a certain town (cf. Naev. *Tarentilla*). Reuse of titles seems not to have been a problem; to what extent plots overlapped, however, is difficult to determine on the basis of the remaining fragments.<sup>111</sup>

Atmosphere and surroundings in togata are entirely Roman: all titles are in Latin. Figures who are named bear Roman everyday names, such as Lucius (Tit. *Tog.* 179 R.<sup>3</sup>), Quintus (Tit. *Quintus*), Sextus (Afr. *Tog.* 19/20 R.<sup>3</sup>), Servius (Afr. *Tog.* 95 R.<sup>3</sup>), Titus (Afr. *Tog.* 304/5 R.<sup>3</sup>), Manius (Afr. *Tog.* 211 R.<sup>3</sup>), Tiberius (Tit. *Tog.* 32 R.<sup>3</sup>) or Paula (Tit. *Tog.* 109/10 R.<sup>3</sup>), or Oscan and south-Italian ones, such as Numisius (Afr. *Tog.* 294 R.<sup>3</sup>) or Numerius (Afr. *Tog.* 272 R.<sup>3</sup>),<sup>112</sup> with the exception of names such as Moschis (Afr. *Tog.* 136 R.<sup>3</sup>), Thais (Afr. *Thais*) or Nicasio (Afr. *Tog.* 189 R.<sup>3</sup>), referring to courtesans and slaves, reflecting their sociological and ethnic background. The few places mentioned are located in Rome or Italy or have connections to Rome (Tit. *Setina*, *Veliterna*; Afr. *Brundisina(e)*; Tit. *Tog.*

<sup>110</sup> See e.g. Daviault 1981: 21–2; Guardi 1985: 17. On the language of togata see Minarini 1997.

<sup>111</sup> Daviault (1981: 21–2 and n. 1) assumes that togata poets might have used the long-established practice of *contaminatio*. While it is likely that togata poets (and Afranius in particular) combined material from various sources, the process will have been different for comedy set in Rome as it was not based on the adaptation of one or more Greek models.

<sup>112</sup> See e.g. Guardi 1985: 16. On those names see Rawson (1985) 1991: 481 and n. 61, 485 n. 92.

120 R.<sup>3</sup>: *Tiberis*; Afr. *Tog.* 136 R.<sup>3</sup>: *Neapolitis*; 233 R.<sup>3</sup>: *Gallia*; At. *Aquae Caldae*); terms for institutions are Roman (e.g. Afr. *Augur*, *Compitalia*, *Megalensia*; At. *Aedilicia*, *Megalensia*).

Assumptions on dramatic structure can hardly be made in view of the relatively small number of fragments transmitted for each play, particularly in the absence of guidance by a standard plot or a mythical story. However, togatae probably had a plot and did not consist merely of a series of loosely connected episodes; this is almost certain in view of parallels drawn with palliata and praetexta in ancient sources, with particular mention of plot (cf. e.g. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 489.29–30; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.1), and of fragments that indicate dialogues and issues developing over the course of a play.

According to Pseudo-Asconius there were fewer characters/actors in Latin plays such as Atellanae and togatae than in Greek-style comedies (Ps.-Asc. on Cic. *Div. in Caec.* [p. 200.14–15 St.]); the preserved fragments, however, do not allow a verification of this statement. The only structural detail that can be established is that plays opened with prologues and continued with characters' monologues and dialogues; there is no evidence for the presence of a chorus.

Prologues could apparently contain metaliterary discussions, as is inferred for Afranius (Afr. *Tog.* 25–8; 29 R.<sup>3</sup>); at the same time another piece of evidence attests Priapus as a prologue speaker (Macrob. *Sat.* 6.5.6: Afr. *Tog.* 403–4 R.<sup>3</sup>). Hence both types of prologues – narrative ones perhaps spoken by a deity as in Plautus and metaliterary ones as in Terence – seem to have been possible in togatae,<sup>113</sup> as in palliatae. In both dramatic genres the metaliterary prologue makes its appearance only with a later representative, both these poets being active at about the same time, which suggests a shift of interest among poets and audiences in this time and a corresponding development of dramatic forms.

While the surviving fragments contain almost no allusions to mythical figures or Greek gods (only Priapus: Afr. *Tog.* 403–4 R.<sup>3</sup>) and few references to Roman gods such as Diana (Afr. *Tog.* 141; 144 R.<sup>3</sup>) or Lares (Afr. *Tog.* 277 R.<sup>3</sup>), the fact that togatae are set in everyday Rome or Italy apparently does not rule out divine influence or omniscient deities. As *Sapientia* is quoted speaking in the first person in one fragment (Afr. *Tog.* 298–9 R.<sup>3</sup>), she must have appeared on stage in personified form, or a character must have narrated an encounter with her or an appearance of her. Yet deities attested in togata fragments are minor ones or personifications, apart from

<sup>113</sup> See Daviault 1981: 22–3.

Diana, who, however, seems not to have influenced the action, but to have been honoured. The same is true for gods in Plautus' comedies except for the special case of *Amphitruo*.

In view of what is known about Roman theatrical conventions, togatae will have been performed on the same stages with the standard set-up as palliatae; the setting will just have been differently defined as Rome or a country town in Italy. Indeed, locations familiar from palliatae, such as 'inside the house', 'outside the house', 'the Forum' or 'the country', are mentioned in togata fragments.<sup>114</sup>

As regards topics and *dramatis personae*, togatae present figures common in palliatae, such as slaves (Afr. *Tog.* 189–91; 313–14 R.<sup>3</sup>), parasites (Tit. *Tog.* 45–6; 47; 99 R.<sup>3</sup>; Afr. *Tog.* 366–8 R.<sup>3</sup>), pimps (Tit. *Tog.* 45 R.<sup>3</sup>), courtesans (Afr. *Thais*; *Tog.* 133; 136 R.<sup>3</sup>; At. *Tog.* 3 R.<sup>3</sup>), courtesans as musicians (Tit. *Psaltria sive Ferentinatis*, *Tibicina*), nurses (Afr. *Tog.* 179 R.<sup>3</sup>) or twins (Tit. *Gemina*).<sup>115</sup> But they also feature wives (Tit. *Tog.* 38; 41; 70/2 R.<sup>3</sup>; Afr. *Tog.* 99; 222; 241; 376 R.<sup>3</sup>) and husbands (Tit. *Tog.* 39/40 R.<sup>3</sup>); there is mention of marriage (Afr. *Mariti*; *Tog.* 82; 354–5 R.<sup>3</sup>) and divorce (Afr. *Divortium*). Besides, there are members of the extended family, such as sisters (Afr. *Sorores*), aunts (Afr. / At. *Materterae*), stepmothers (Afr. *Tog.* 57–8 R.<sup>3</sup>), stepchildren (Afr. *Privignus*; Tit. *Privigna*; *Tog.* 155 R.<sup>3</sup>), daughters-in-law (At. *Nurus*), mothers-in-law (At. *Socrus*) or sisters-in-law (Afr. *Fratrariae*); the exuberance of various terms for family relationships in Afranius was already noted by Nonius Marcellus (Non., p. 894 L.: Afr. *Tog. inc.* xxvi R.<sup>3</sup>).

Hence relationships between men and women seem not to concern mainly potentially illicit and extramarital affairs, but rather to take place within a family community or between families: fragments and titles indicate mention of marriages, discussions of projected matches, preparations and consequences of marriages, including topics such as marital conflicts in connection with dowries or estates, the distribution of power and duties at home or unfaithfulness and divorce. The shift from love affairs between young men and mistresses in palliata to a focus on marriages and their consequences in togata means that the human situations presented are closer to everyday life and observe established moral conventions, resembling the conditions in a Roman *gens* headed by a *pater familias*. Also, plots do not necessarily include additional conflicts between generations; there is less

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Tit. *Tog.* 60–1 R.<sup>3</sup>; Afr. *Tog.* 47–9; 107–8; 130; 398 R.<sup>3</sup>; At. *Tog.* 7 R.<sup>3</sup>. See e.g. Beare 1964: 132; Guardì 1985: 17, 1991: 211, 1993: 271.

<sup>115</sup> See e.g. Daviault 1981: 23; Guardì 1985: 17.

need for a clever slave to support the lover; and women can play a more important role.

Another group of characters, distinguishing togata from palliata, consists of representatives of various professions or craftsmen, such as fullers or hairdressers (Tit. *Fullones* or *Fullonia*; Afr. *Cinerarius*), which is reminiscent of Atellana and contributes to locating plots in everyday life.<sup>116</sup> This connection is also maintained, beyond the issue of marriage and its corollaries, by references to ordinary domestic chores, topics such as the contrast between life in the city and in the country, the problem of luxury, decadence and changing traditions, religious customs or differences between Romans and other Italic peoples as well as Greeks. Some of these issues seem to reflect upon the situation in contemporary society, since the conclusion of the wars against foreign enemies had brought unprecedented wealth to Rome and forced Romans to confront other ways of life and to engage with people from different countries, while it removed the defence against external threats as one of the foremost aims of public life.

Indications of the public reaction to changes in the situation at Rome are the fierce discussions about the eventual repeal of the *Lex Oppia* (restricting the luxury of women) in 195 BCE, introduced during the Second Punic War in 215 BCE (cf. Liv. 34.1.1–8.3), or the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus* of 185 BCE. Togatae may have commented on such current issues:<sup>117</sup> for instance, an allusion to female luxury in Titinius' *Barbatus* could be connected with the abrogation of the *Lex Oppia* (Tit. *Tog.* 1; 2; 3 R.<sup>3</sup>).<sup>118</sup> That the luxury of women is a topic also in Plautus' palliatae (Plaut. *Aul.* 167–9; 475–535) confirms that it was a topical issue at the time. Afranius' *Vopiscus* seems to have included a reference to 'laws on marriage and children' proposed by the censor Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus in 131 BCE (Afr. *Tog.* 360–2 R.<sup>3</sup>), a move that was attacked by Afranius' contemporary Lucilius in his satires (Lucil. 676–86 M. = 636–46 W).<sup>119</sup> If these snapshots are representative, togatae could comment on specific events or issues that were at the centre of public discussions. Plays featuring

<sup>116</sup> Togatae and Atellanae share further themes and characters: for instance, fragments of both dramatic genres refer to marriages, wives with dowries, people from rural Italy, Roman festivals, Roman gods or 'philosophical' discussions. On the ubiquitous presence of fullers in Roman light drama see Guardi 1978.

<sup>117</sup> Horace's 'celebrate domestic deeds' (*celebrare domestica facta*) and his parallel between praetextae and togatae (Hor. *Ars P.* 285–8) do not imply that both dramatic genres were equally topical; this rather highlights the fact that both presented 'domestic' (i.e. Roman/Italic) issues instead of plots set in Greece (but see Daviault 1981: 29–30; Guardi 1985: 17).

<sup>118</sup> See e.g. Przychocki 1922: 180–5; Daviault 1981: 30, 33, 92, 94, 95; Guardi 1985, 17: 103–5, 1993: 272; also Verecke 1968.

<sup>119</sup> See e.g. Daviault 1981: 30, 39, 234, 236; Guardi 1985: 17, 1993: 272.

music girls (Tit. *Psaltria sive Ferentinatis, Tibicina*) may be conventional, since playing instruments was a traditional accomplishment of courtesans, but this detail might have acquired particular relevance in view of the fact that music girls were admitted at Roman dinner parties in 187 BCE (cf. Liv. 39.6.8).<sup>120</sup>

To describe a debauched way of life *togata* poets use terms such as *pergraecari* or *res Graecae* (e.g. Tit. *Tog.* 85; 175 R.<sup>3</sup>); as these also occur in *palliatae* (e.g. Plaut. *Bacch.* 813; *Mostell.* 22; 64; 960; *Poen.* 603), they might be standard words in this context. Yet in a Roman setting they gain added significance as they mark a distinction between Romans and Greeks. In a Roman environment ways of life that are simply present in *palliatae* can be defined as ‘Greek’ and are thus contrasted with Roman customs: according to *togata* fragments a ‘Greek lifestyle’ manifests itself, among other things, in interest in music girls, courtesans, dining or perfume and is particularly outrageous in the country. The contrast between Greek and Roman may be part of a broader framework in *togata*, according to which Romans are distinguished from other peoples.<sup>121</sup> For there is talk about individuals bought in Gaul (Afr. *Tog.* 232–3 R.<sup>3</sup>) and about a person with Gallic clothing and diet (Afr. *Tog.* 284 R.<sup>3</sup>). Other figures are characterized by their Oscan and Volscian languages, as they speak no Latin (Tit. *Tog.* 104 R.<sup>3</sup>).

In a couple of verses by Afranius a person says that they are ashamed of introducing anything Greek when talking to a Numerius, since he will ridicule them (Afr. *Tog.* 272–3 R.<sup>3</sup>); this indicates a contrast between a character who is open to Greek influences and another character who is ignorant or does not approve of them. Unfortunately, the fragment does not reveal whether it is the phil-Hellene or the other person that the audience is expected to laugh at. That at any rate a topical issue is being discussed is confirmed by comparable evidence: Cato had already commented on the use of Greek by contemporary historians (cf. Gell. *NA* 11.8.1–5), and the aim to become and to be perceived totally Greek is ridiculed by the satirist Lucilius (Lucil. 88–94 M. = 87–93 W.). Since Afranius discusses Greek words and their Roman counterparts (Afr. *Tog.* 298–9 R.<sup>3</sup>), just as his contemporary the tragic poet Pacuvius does, playwrights obviously addressed such questions and could expect some interest on the part of audiences.

Beyond those broad characteristics shared by the three known *togata* poets, each of them exhibits distinctive features that seem to correspond to

<sup>120</sup> See e.g. Daviault 1981: 34.      <sup>121</sup> See Leigh 2004a: 9–12.

their period or their position within the development of this dramatic genre.<sup>122</sup>

Titinius, the first attested writer of togatae, apparently experimented with the new dramatic form and was in the process of creating something that took its starting point from (non-literary) Atellana (yet more serious and less stereotypical) and palliata (yet more serious and Roman), conformed to Roman customs (presenting love affairs transferred to a Roman marital and family set-up) and was of topical interest (alluding to current discussions and social issues). It is in his plays that Roman colour is most noticeable: at least three of them involve cities in ancient Volscian territory (in southern Latium to the south of Rome); and there is mention of people who speak Oscan and Volscian, but no Latin.

Afranius, the second representative of togata, who was active shortly after Terence, at a time of significant Greek influence, seems to have been more sophisticated and conscious of what he was doing. He apparently enjoyed playing with the entire literary tradition before him: Afranius discussed his own poetic practices, mentioned Terence and Pacuvius, alluded to Cato and Lucilius, talked about 'women on stage' (*scenicae* . . . *mulieres*) and 'bad poems' (*poematorum non bonorum*) and is said to have aimed at imitating the orator C. Titius (cf. Cic. *Brut.* 167); at any rate he made characters in his plays speak in oratorical fashion.<sup>123</sup>

That Afranius refers not only to previous comic poets, but also to (roughly) contemporary writers in other literary genres corroborates his claim that he takes from any writer, be they Greek or even Latin, whatever suits him (Macrob. *Sat.* 6.1.4: Afr. *Tog.* 25–8 R.<sup>3</sup>). His references to material outside his own dramatic genre are marked, either by the insertion of the writer's name or by the use of characteristic, almost proverbial expressions. This practice indicates that the poet had no intention of hiding his debts, but rather expected his audiences (or parts of them) to recognize them. That he also discussed literary issues (possibly in prologues) and had to defend himself against criticism of his poetic technique, like his contemporary Terence, indicates that literary discussions were going on at the time and that there was an interest in such questions on the part of both poets and audiences. Afranius' penchant for rhetoric accords with the style of Terence's prologues and with dramatic *agones* in Pacuvius and Accius

<sup>122</sup> Obviously, such distinctions have to be made with caution due to the scarcity of the available evidence (see the desperate attitude in Beare 1964: 131; also Guardi 1993: 277).

<sup>123</sup> Cf. Afr. *Tog.* 7 (cf. Pac. *Trag. inc.* 11v R.<sup>3</sup> = 35 W.; see Zorzetti 1973); 23–4 (cf. Cato, *Orat.* fr. 71 *ORF<sup>2</sup>*); 25–8; 29; 91; 92; 100–1; 271; 274–5 R.<sup>3</sup> (cf. Lucil. 957–8 M. = 696–7 W.; but see Rawson [1985] 1991: 481).

(on Accius cf. also Quint. *Inst.* 5.13.43). The similarity of Afranius' plays to typical features of Terence's and their differences from characteristic elements of both Titinius' and Plautus' works suggest that there was a simultaneous development from 'Roman to Greek' for both *palliata* and *togata*.<sup>124</sup>

For the last representative of Republican *togata*, Atta, it is even harder to establish an individual profile because of the meagre remains of his dramatic output, but he seems to have used this dramatic genre to react to changes in the running of the games, for in his play *Aedilicia* the organization of the games seems to be referred to (*At. Tog.* 1 R.<sup>3</sup>). Although some aspects of the organization of dramatic performances had already been mentioned in Plautine and Terentian prologues (*Plaut. Poen.* 1–45; *Ter. Haut.* 1–2; *Eun.* 19b–22), an entire play on the subject operates on a different scale, and Atta has another play on a specific festival (*At. Megalensia*).

Such a piece might be symptomatic of an interest in the institution of dramatic performances itself in a period when these developed towards spectacle (cf. already *Afr. Megalensia*). The mention of *planipes* in a fragment from Atta's *Aedilicia*, which might allude to a mime actor, would fit in with such an interest.<sup>125</sup> This need not imply that Atta's *togatae* included mime elements, but it might indicate that in his lifetime, just before the first literary mimes are attested, mime actors were recognized and associated with spectacles organized by aediles. In the same period the tragic poet Accius wrote treatises about dramatic performances (*Didascalica*, *Pragmatica*), which marks a twofold tendency of drama towards spectacle and erudition. The latter point is exemplified in Atta's discussion on the first month of the year (*At. Tog.* 18; 19–20 R.<sup>3</sup>) or in a play on the custom of *supplicatio* (*At. Supplicatio*).

Although due to the Roman setting *togata* had a more sober tone than *palliata* from the start, such a development across the three known representatives would invite the conclusion that *togata* also changed in accordance with general processes in the character and organization of dramatic performances over the Republican period. Then this dramatic genre would have declined at the end of the Republic not because of its own inherent faults, its Menandristic and an increasing seriousness that was not appreciated by the mass of spectators,<sup>126</sup> but, like other dramatic

<sup>124</sup> See also Courbaud 1899: 37; Pociña Pérez 1975b: 375.

<sup>125</sup> Reading and interpretation of the crucial fragment of Atta's *Aedilicia* (*Tog.* 1 R.<sup>3</sup>) are disputed (see e.g. Daviault 1981: 254–5 vs. Guardì 1985: 173).

<sup>126</sup> So e.g. Cacciaglia 1972: 244 (who sees a development in parallel to *palliata*); Guardì 1985: 17–18, 1993: 272; Pociña Pérez 1996b: 130–1. On the 'death of comedy' see Goldberg 1986: 203–20, 1993.



genres, rather owing to the overall situation of dramatic performances at the time.<sup>127</sup>

There were, however, revivals of Afranius' plays, both in Cicero's time (Cic. *Sest.* 118) and later in Nero's (Suet. *Ner.* 11.2), when the pieces were shown according to the conventions of the respective period: they were used for political statements in Cicero's time (see ch. 2.9) and exploited as extravagant and ridiculous spectacles by Nero.<sup>128</sup> At the end of the first century CE Juvenal mentions recitations of togatae among those of works in other literary genres (Juv. 1.3); yet it is not entirely clear whether he uses the term togatae in the sense of 'Roman comedies' or of 'Roman plays' more generally.

### 3.5 FABULA ATELLANA

*Fabula Atellana* is a form of light drama (cf. e.g. Petron. *Sat.* 53.13) named after the Oscan town of Atella in Campania (between Capua and Naples), where, according to ancient tradition, it was first performed (cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 489.14–90.7; Euanth. *Fab.* 4.1).<sup>129</sup> Atellana was apparently a kind of burlesque popular farce, regarded as crude, rustic and old-fashioned and considered to be a short, impromptu performance. It featured 'Oscan characters', simple stock characters with specific characteristics (*Oscae personae*: cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 490.18–20).

Details of this dramatic genre's emergence and shape among the Oscans remain unclear. At any rate Atellana is a native Italic form of dramatic entertainment, even though it will have been subject to Greek and Etruscan influences over the course of its development. Therefore, while the dramatic forms of crepidata and palliata were essentially adapted from established Greek dramatic genres, and praetexta and togata were presumably created on this model, the Roman literary Atellana evolved in Italy on the basis of a pre-literary Oscan variety of this dramatic form. Atellana shares this characteristic with the Italic mime, but differs from the latter as it did not

Courbaud (1899: 103–18) thinks that the new dramatic genre was not sufficiently distinct from the already existing palliata and did not find favour with the general public due to its greater seriousness. Guardi (1993: 277) suggests that another reason for its disappearance was that togata took on more and more characteristics of Atellana. The surviving evidence does not support these theories.

<sup>127</sup> See also Daviault 1981: 31. <sup>128</sup> See also Beare 1964: 135; Daviault 1981: 52.

<sup>129</sup> On *fabula Atellana* see e.g. Munk 1840; Nicoll 1931: 65–79; Szilágyi 1941; Duckworth 1952: 10–13; Frassinetti 1953; Beare 1964: 137–48; Marzullo 1973: 11–37; Petersmann 1974, 1989; Rieks 1978: esp. 351–61; Raffaelli 1987; Fantham 1989a; Petrone 1992: 485–94; Höttemann 1993; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 264–72; Panayotakis 2005a; also Denard 2007.

become associated with a particular festival. Both these dramatic genres came to function as 'after-pieces': Atellanae seem to have been performed as 'after-pieces' (*exodia*, after performances of other plays) from some point in the Republican period onwards.<sup>130</sup>

Information about early Atellana is scarce; almost all evidence relates to its later existence in Rome. Therefore the early stages of its development can only be sketched rather vaguely. Atellana seems to have come to Rome at a relatively early date, probably in the third century BCE. Scholars have assumed that Oscan workmen, fullers in particular, brought it to Rome in connection with the festival of Quinquatrus and the cult of Minerva, since these figures continue to play a major role in literary Atellanae.<sup>131</sup> Plautus uses terms describing stock figures of Atellanae, and at least one passage seems to presuppose familiarity with them and their particular characteristics (Plaut. *Bacch.* 1088).<sup>132</sup> Festus posits Atellana actors in Rome for the time of Naevius (Fest., p. 238.12–20 L.); later writers assume this dramatic genre's presence in Rome for the third century BCE (cf. Liv. 7.2.11–12; Val. Max. 2.4.4).

Livy's text, if thus interpreted correctly, suggests that Atellanae in Rome combined features of Oscan farce with traditional Roman verses of jest (Liv. 7.2.11–12). Yet characteristics of the Oscan Atellana must have remained noticeable since the dramatic genre was named after its origin and regarded as a distinctive type. However, there is nothing in the fragments of literary Atellanae in Latin that would be remarkable in a Roman dramatic genre and might therefore be regarded as particularly 'Oscan'. Naturally, in Rome

<sup>130</sup> See Liv. 7.2.11; Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7; Suet. *Tib.* 45; Juv. 6.71–2; Schol. on Juv. 3.175. Several ancient sources describe Atellanae as *exodia*, while only Cicero and the scholion to Juvenal mention that they followed tragedies. Livy's evidence is more difficult: he talks about Atellana's relationship to other dramatic forms and is usually taken to say that improvised jests of youths merged with Atellanae. Oakley (1998: 67–9), however, interprets the text (as constituted by him) as meaning that those jests became attached to Atellanae, i.e. themselves functioned as 'after-pieces' to Atellanae, leaving him with testimony that he himself calls 'seemingly contradictory', and he regards it as 'perhaps unwise to posit too rigid a separation between Atellans and *exodia*'. Whatever the correct reading of the Livy passage is, the context favours the interpretation that the two kinds of performances eventually became one, while it is unlikely that two similar types were given after each other. Nonetheless, N. J. Lowe (2008: 83) rightly calls for caution, noting that this function of Atellana is 'suspiciously analogous to that of satyr-play in the Athenian tragic competitions at the City Dionysia, so the claim may be founded on inference rather than evidence'. The interpretation of the Juvenal passage is also controversial, but here too the reading that Atellana is an *exodium* is the most likely one (on this issue see Courtney 1980: 271–2, on Juv. 6.71).

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Pomp. *Fullones, Quinquatrus, Atell.* 13; 27–8 R.<sup>3</sup>; Nov. *Fullones, Fullones feriati, Fullonicum, Atell.* 95 R.<sup>3</sup>. See Frassinetti 1953: 39–47, 1967: 3–4; Guardi 1978; Rieks 1978: 355–7; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 265.

<sup>132</sup> On Plautus' familiarity with Atellana and further, more doubtful references to its characters see J. C. B. Lowe 1989: 168 and n. 43.

Atellanae came to be performed in Latin; this seems to have caused a linguistic adaptation of the names of at least some of the main figures.<sup>133</sup> At the same time there are references to what seem to be dramatic performances in Oscan at Rome until the late first century BCE.<sup>134</sup> Individual Oscan words are attested in Latin Atellanae (cf. Fest., p. 514.28–30 L.: *Atell. inc.* 6–7 R.<sup>3</sup>), but occur also in other Republican dramatic genres. Hence a Romanized form and an Oscan form of Atellana (possibly developed and influenced by contemporary Latin performances) might have existed side by side.<sup>135</sup>

Later grammarians (presumably on the basis of the Latin literary version) classified Atellana as a Roman form of light drama, corresponding to Greek satyr-play: the two dramatic genres are described as similar in plot, words and jests, but differing in the characters on stage.<sup>136</sup> Apart from the grammarians' intention of construing a regular system, this parallel may be based on both the farcical character of these dramas and their position as 'after-pieces' in performance schedules. In late Republican times mimes apparently became more common in this function (cf. Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7); yet Atellanae were still being performed (as *exodia*) in the early imperial period (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 45; *Ner.* 39; *Galb.* 13).

This final position of Atellanae perhaps agrees with the fact that they could be rather short pieces, if this is the reason for Fronto's diminutive *Atellaniolae* (Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes. et inv.* 2.8.3 [p. 29 v.d.H.]),<sup>137</sup> and featured a limited number of characters (cf. Ps.-Asc. on Cic. *Div. in Caec.* 48 [p. 200.14 St.]). That Atellanae acquired the status of 'after-pieces' implies that they were integrated into the schedule at Roman festivals; this particular position might be reminiscent of their origin as a popular, less formalized dramatic form, performed by less professional actors. According to a scholiast, 'after-pieces' had to provide 'comic relief' for the sad atmosphere caused by preceding tragic pieces (Schol. on Juv. 3.175).

In view of the dates of its representatives, the rise of literary Atellana coincided with the decline of *palliata* and *togata*.<sup>138</sup> The development of Atellana, therefore, might be a response to a desire for basic entertainment and for performances set in a 'realistic' Roman environment, after *palliata*

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Varro, *Ling.* 7.29: Osc. *Casnar* = Lat. *Pappus*; Fest. Paul., p. 41.18 L.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3; Strabo 5.3.6 [C 233]; Suet. *Iul.* 39.1; *Aug.* 43.1.

<sup>135</sup> Frassinetti (1953: 48–64) identifies a variety of subtypes of scripted and non-scripted Atellana in both Oscan and Latin; yet precise distinctions of this kind are difficult.

<sup>136</sup> Cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 489.14–90.7; 490.18–20; Mar. Victor., *Gramm. Lat.* 6, p. 82.10.

<sup>137</sup> On the text: *inibi sunt et Novianae Atellaniolae et Scipionis oratiunculae* see van den Hout's apparatus in the Teubner edition (1988: 29): '*novianae et atellaniolae* A : et del. Heindorf : *Novianae et <Pomponianae>* Hertz : *Naevianae et Atellaniolae* Rossi'.

<sup>138</sup> For thoughts on reasons for the rise of Atellana see Frassinetti 1967: 7–8.

and togata no longer sufficiently catered for this. The prominence of everyday characters such as fishermen and tradesmen in both Accius' tragedies and Turpilius' comedies, the last representatives of Republican crepidata and palliata respectively, may indicate an interest on the part of audiences in watching real-life characters rather than more remote figures and stories. Atellana could provide the required fare while reducing elevated and elaborate features (such as those criticized by the satirist Lucilius since the 120s BCE) and even ridiculing traditional plots. The topics, characters and settings of Atellana result in everyday, straightforward, entertaining, yet meaningful stories in a (stylized) Roman or mythical environment.

At the same time there will have been cross-fertilization among Atellana and other dramatic performances in Italy:<sup>139</sup> early Atellana may have influenced togata and palliata as regards character types, scene structures or comic elements. Vice versa, Greek titles of literary Atellanae such as *Synephebi* recall palliatae, while titles with a mythical background such as *Armorum iudicium* recall crepidatae. Yet the dramatic genres seem to have retained differences in tone and outlook, or at least literary critics such as Horace regarded the genres as distinct and expected dramatists to observe their specific characteristics (Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.168–76; similarly Gell. *NA* 2.23.12): this is at any rate the most likely explanation for Horace's criticism that Plautus' 'greedy parasite' (*edax parasitus*) was rather like a Dossennus; i.e. Horace seems to have expected a parasite in a palliata to be different from a glutton in an Atellana.<sup>140</sup>

Few literary authors quote verses from literary Atellanae or comment on this dramatic genre, which may have to do with its relatively late establishment in Rome and its low regard among intellectuals (cf. e.g. Tac. *Ann.* 4.14.3). However, the attitude to Atellanae could be ambiguous: Cicero, for example, mentions 'Oscan games' (*Osci ludi*) with disdain on one occasion (Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.3), but refers to Novius' jokes approvingly elsewhere (Cic. *De Or.* 2.255; 2.279; 2.285).

The Atellana writer Pomponius was regarded as the inventor of a new dramatic genre despite a (non-literary) tradition before him (cf. Vell. *Pat.* 2.9.6). This assessment need not imply a major change; it may simply

<sup>139</sup> Such interactions are still a matter of debate: as regards dramatic forms preceding Atellanae, many scholars assume a major influence of phylakes (see ch. 1.4) upon Atellanae (see e.g. Rieks 1978, 353–4, 368–9); this was denied by Höttemann (1993), following earlier suggestions (approvingly Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 267). Rieks (1978: 352, 368) highlighted a strong Etruscan element for the early stages. D. Romano (1953: 9–23) argued that Atellana has Roman/Latin roots and later merged with Oscan characteristics.

<sup>140</sup> For views on this difficult Horatian passage see Beare 1964: 139; Brink 1982: 213; J. C. B. Lowe 1989: 169 and n. 47; Jocelyn 1995: esp. 230–9. See also ch. 4.6.

recognize Pomponius' achievement of elevating Atellana to the status of a literary dramatic genre by producing written scripts and adopting a more professional approach.<sup>141</sup> Pomponius was a contemporary of Novius, these two writers representing literary Atellana in the early first century BCE.<sup>142</sup> According to Macrobius, Mummius revived Atellanae after a long period of neglect following Pomponius and Novius (Macrobius *Sat.* 1.10.3); three fragments of his Atellanae (not assigned to specific dramas or with uncertain titles) remain. If Mummius is indeed a later practitioner of this dramatic genre, it may be of interest that Macrobius refers to him when quoting verses on the festival of Saturnalia, along with a line by Novius on the same issue (Nov. *Atell.* 104 R.<sup>3</sup>; Mummius, *Atell.* 3–5 R.<sup>3</sup>). This could indicate that writers of this dramatic genre active in different periods touched upon the same or similar topics.<sup>143</sup>

Protagonists in Atellanae were mainly taken from a fixed repertoire of stock characters with invariable features, the so-called 'Oscan characters' (*Oscae personae*: cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 490.18–20). Extant titles and fragments of literary Atellanae as well as some *testimonia* point to at least four stock figures, who share a degree of gluttony, clownishness and foolishness and who bear simple, speaking names: Maccus, the fool and stupid clown (cf. Apul. *Apol.* 81.3; Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 490.18–20); Bucco, the foolish braggart (cf. Apul. *Apol.* 81; Plaut. *Bacch.* 1088; Isid. *Etym.* 10.30); Pappus, the foolish old man (cf. Varro, *Ling.* 7.29); Dossennus, the cunning trickster and/or glutton (cf. Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.173; Sen. *Ep.* 89.7).<sup>144</sup> These types probably did not always appear together; i.e. not every play starred all of them.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Petersmann (1989: 136) points out that Atellana became literary during the Social War, in a period in which the national self-consciousness of peoples in Italy increased (see also D. Romano 1953: 43). This might have encouraged poets to develop an originally Oscan dramatic form. Butler (1972: 119) believes that Atellana was improvisational at first, later acquired literary form and reverted to the original state after a short period of time. Yet there is no evidence for such a development. Marzullo (1956) put forward the theory that Novius was earlier than Pomponius and that Pomponius only gave the Atellana its fully established literary form, but this hypothesis cannot be proved.

<sup>142</sup> Varro quotes one line by an Aprissius that includes the word *bucco* and could therefore come from an Atellana (Varro, *Ling.* 6.68; see Ribbeck 1898: 332); but there is no further evidence about this poet (see Frassinetti 1967: 14, 95, 113; Stärk in Suerbaum 2002: 272).

<sup>143</sup> Raffaelli (1987: esp. 127–8) regards the fact that two extant fragments refer to Saturnalia as a confirmation that Atellana had a 'Saturnalian' or 'carnavalesque' character. However, the preservation of two fragments on the same topic is due to the interests of the transmitting writer, and they indicate possible topics rather than the character of this dramatic genre.

<sup>144</sup> But see J. C. B. Lowe 1989: 168 and n. 45, who is sceptical of the common characterization of Dossennus. For possible explanations of the speaking names of these characters see Bonfante in Frassinetti 1967: vi–viii; Frassinetti 1967: 2–3; Rieks 1978: 352–3.

<sup>145</sup> Atellanae could also have a Manducus, a large-jawed glutton, but the evidence is too flimsy to regard him as another stock figure or even possibly to identify him with Dossennus. The figure of Manducus is not mentioned in any preserved title, in contrast to the others. The argument rests

Festus says that Atellana performers were called *personati* in the true sense of the word, since they could not be forced to lay down their masks on stage, whereas actors of other plays had to suffer this, presumably at the end of performances (Fest., p. 238.17–20 L.). This note corresponds with information in Livy (and Valerius Maximus) that Atellanae were performed not by professional actors, but rather by free young men, and that Atellana actors were allowed to do military service and were not removed from their tribes (Liv. 7.2.11–12; Val. Max. 2.4.4).<sup>146</sup> Even though such a description might be a later construction, it indicates that Atellana built on masked stock characters (presumably with the appropriate stock costumes) and that performers might be of a higher social class than ordinary actors and therefore allowed to remain anonymous. The use of masks and the representation of exaggerated stock figures require meaningful gesticulation; indeed, later writers mention the use of gestures by Atellana actors (cf. Juv. 6.71–2; Tert. *De spect.* 17.2).

Despite their set-up, Atellanae seem to have had coherent plots: ‘Atellana intrigues/complications’ (*tricae Atellanae*) are referred to (cf. Varro, *Sat. Men.* 198 B.). Even a rather short play with a fixed repertoire of characters may be based on a complex story. Mutual deceptions of the stock figures, trickery, misunderstandings and exposure are likely to have been prominent, their effect being based on the stupidity and foolishness of the characters.

Pomponius and Novius share titles that mention the stock figures or common themes (*Dotata*, *Fullones*, *Maccus*, *Pappus praeteritus*), which is not remarkable in a dramatic genre based on standard characters. Therefore it seems likely that such overlapping would not provoke criticism of the sort that Terence incurred in the case of *palliata* (Ter. *Eun.* 19b–34), though he points to the continuing recurrence of typical figures even in *palliata* (Ter. *Eun.* 35–41; see also ch. 3.4).

almost exclusively on a corrupt passage in Varro (Varro, *Ling.* 7.95: *dictum mandier a mandendo, unde manducari et a quo in Atellanis † ad obsenum [Dossennum Mueller] vocant manducum.*); a fragment of one of Pomponius’ Atellanae is also only a doubtful reference (Pomp. *Atell.* 112 R.<sup>3</sup>: *magnus manduco camellus . . . cantherius*). These pieces of information just suggest the occasional presence of a Manducus in Atellana (for the text in Varro and the view that it does not refer to an Atellana figure cf. Préaux 1962). Whether a reference to Manducus in Plautus (Plaut. *Rud.* 535–6) proves the poet’s familiarity with the Atellana figure or refers to a mask that used to be carried in festival processions (cf. Fest., p. 115.20–5 L.) is uncertain.

<sup>146</sup> If these descriptions are historically correct, the position of Atellana actors seems to have changed by imperial times: Tacitus records that Atellana was seen as in particular need of regulations and restrictions from the Senate, and Atellana players must have been among the actors subsequently removed from Rome under Tiberius (Tac. *Ann.* 4.14.3; also Suet. *Tib.* 37.2; Cass. Dio 57.21.3; for a similar measure under Nero see Tac. *Ann.* 13.25.4).

A fragment that indicates where the figure Pappus lives (Pomp. *Atell.* III R.<sup>3</sup>) suggests that Atellanae were performed with the same set as other dramatic genres, i.e. on a stage representing houses on a street, and perhaps also that there could be a kind of introduction or prologue in which essential information was given, although, in this example, in a jocular tone. Another fragment (Nov. *Atell.* 84–5 R.<sup>3</sup>) shows that, just as in other dramatic genres, the arrival of new characters could be announced by figures already on stage.

In line with the stupidity and foolishness of the characters, the language in surviving Atellana fragments is rather unsophisticated: characters talk a simple, sometimes slightly incorrect Latin and behave accordingly; there are vulgar and dialect words.<sup>147</sup> If an imperial source is significant, Atellanae could include Greek verses just as palliatae could (cf. Suet. *Ner.* 39.3); some titles at least are Greek (Pomp. *Adelphi*, *Synephebi*; Nov. *Hetaera*, *Paedium*), and there are Greek names (Pomp. *Atell.* 64 R.<sup>3</sup>: Diomedes). Occasional use of Greek is in line with the colloquial language of the period. As regards poetic form, the same metres seem to have been used as in other dramatic genres (senarii and septenarii). Late-antique writers claim that the iambic septenarius was prominent in Atellanae as appropriate to their jocular tone; yet in the surviving fragments the trochaic septenarius is the most frequent metre.<sup>148</sup>

Corresponding to the variable character of this dramatic genre, preserved titles and fragments of literary Atellanae indicate the existence of different variants that could be called ‘subtypes’: unsurprisingly, a significant proportion of known plays seems to be based on the ‘Oscan characters’, featuring the stock figures in prominent roles; they are frequently referred to in titles and fragments. They could apparently appear in various specific guises and situations, whereby their characteristics may be ridiculed; they can be shown foolishly unable to cope with particular circumstances, or a drastic contrast between their characteristics and those actually required might be presented. Plays are set in an everyday environment and feature low-life situations; some represent family affairs, rural life and a primitive rustic atmosphere (inferred from titles derived from professions or names of animals). There are also plays that bear titles reminiscent of tragedy; these could be travesties of mythological stories or parodies of tragedies.

<sup>147</sup> For observations on the language of Atellana and mimus cf. Bonfante in Frassinetti 1967: v–xxiv; on the style of Atellana see Raffaelli 1987: esp. 116–27.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. Ter. Maur., *Gramm. Lat.* 6, pp. 396–7.2390–7; Mar. Victor., *Gramm. Lat.* 6, p. 135.25–9 vs. Raffaelli 1987: 117.

As Atellanae came to be performed as ‘after-pieces’ after other plays, they might have presented a light-hearted version of similar material. A further group of Atellanae is formed by pieces with Greek titles reminiscent of palliatae; these may have been either adaptations or again parodic reactions. Another variety (suggested by surviving fragments) seems to have been concerned with popular philosophy and literary criticism, like Latin satire.

Accordingly, topics and themes that can be identified in the remaining texts range from basic bodily functions, the mundane concerns of farmers, various family relationships and love affairs, via Roman gods, Roman festivals and Roman institutions, to mythical figures parodically portrayed, literary comments and allusions to contemporary affairs. Surviving fragments in the literary category include a comment on slaves in comedy, a remark on the success of a poem with the audience or criticism of a named tragic poet (Pomp. *Atell.* 138; 181 R.<sup>3</sup>; Nov. *Atell.* 67–8 R.<sup>3</sup>). There might even be metaliterary self-reflection or self-irony when a fragment requests that Dossennus and the fullers should be given food at public expense (Pomp. *Atell.* 27–8 R.<sup>3</sup>). That, despite their burlesque character, literary Atellanae presented reflective elements, similar to dramatic genres flourishing earlier, might indicate a continuity of those elements on the Roman stage even though audience tastes were changing.

That Atellana was capable of intellectual and stylistic levels beyond mere farce is also indicated by a comment in the text of Fronto’s letters, where ‘affable remarks’ (*comes sententiae*) in comedies and ‘elegant’ ones (*urbanae*) in togatae are distinguished from ‘charming and clever’ ones (*lepidae et facetiae*) in Atellanae (Fronto, *Ep. ad Ant.* 4.2, *m<sup>2</sup> in margine<sup>d</sup>*) [p. 106 v.d.H.]). This is presumably the reason why Fronto allowed Atellana to be included in the reading list of the aspiring orator (Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes. et inv.* 3.17.3 [pp. 49–50 v.d.H.]; test. et fr. 28 v.d.H.), while Quintilian regarded the kind of jokes in Atellana as inappropriate for orators (Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.46–7).<sup>149</sup> Yet Cicero repeatedly refers to a special type of joke in Novius, which apparently consists of unexpected collocations and continuations, with approval (Cic. *De or.* 2.255; 2.279; 2.285). The stylistic quality of Atellana is shown in the fragments by examples of alliteration, assonance, *figura etymologica*, witty statements, word play and puns.

<sup>149</sup> The text (Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.47) as transmitted reads: *illa obscura quae Atellanio more captant; obscura* is frequently emended to *obscaena* (Teuffel), which is then taken as evidence for the obscene character of Atellana.



One fragment of Pomponius includes the Roman names Memmius, Cassius and Munatius (Pomp. *Atell.* 14/15 R.<sup>3</sup>). In the absence of any context it is uncertain who is referred to and what is said about these individuals. At any rate the names do not sound like those of dramatic figures, but rather like those of 'real' Romans, which would demonstrate that references to individuals were possible in Atellana,<sup>150</sup> just as a tragic poet is named in another fragment (Nov. *Atell.* 67–8 R.<sup>3</sup>). The dramatic genre of praetexta proves that affirmative mention of contemporary individuals was possible on the Roman stage (see ch. 5.2); however, a positive presentation seems unlikely in Atellana and is certainly not valid in the case of the tragic poet. Therefore, the special status of Atellana and the fact that performers were allowed to conceal their identities might have paved the way for greater freedom, and some mocking was perhaps conceded in Atellana. It is noteworthy also that for both Pomponius and Novius a play entitled *Pappus praeteritus* ('*Pappus passed over*') is attested, which, according to the remaining fragments, featured the fickleness of the populace and the issue of placing one's trust and hope of support on the wrong voters (Pomp. *Atell.* 105–6 R.<sup>3</sup>; Nov. *Atell.* 75–6 R.<sup>3</sup>). The figure of Pappus as the main character turns these dramas into humorous stories, presumably without direct references to specific individuals; nevertheless, the contemporary problem of voting practices is commented on.<sup>151</sup>

In the early imperial period Atellanae could voice obvious topical criticism, even attacks on the emperor, which were picked up by audiences (cf. Suet. *Tib.* 45; *Ner.* 39.3; *Galb.* 13); Caligula was unable to bear this and had an Atellana poet publicly executed 'because of a little verse with an ambiguous joke' (cf. Suet. *Calig.* 27.4).<sup>152</sup> Attested examples of Atellana verses charged with political meaning do not express criticism explicitly, but rather by means of a clever interpretation of lines and their application to the current situation on the part of actors and/or audiences. On this basis one may conclude that actors could use existing well-known Atellanae to make political statements and hence that in this time revivals of Atellanae could be exploited in the same way as those of tragedies and comedies were in the first century BCE (see ch. 2.9).

<sup>150</sup> See Petersmann 1974: 23–4.

<sup>151</sup> Such topical references bring Roman Atellana closer to Euripidean and Hellenistic satyr-plays than to earlier examples of the genre by Aeschylus and Sophocles (on the role of topical allusions in Greek satyr-play see Seidensticker in Krumeich *et al.* 1999: 33–4; on Greek satyr-play see Krumeich *et al.* 1999, with texts and references).

<sup>152</sup> On Atellana in the imperial period see Rieks 1978: 368.

## 3.6 MIMUS/PLANIPES

According to ancient grammarians the equivalent in Rome of the Greek *mimus* was *planipes*, a term derived from the bare feet of the performers (or the humbleness of the plot or the performance in the 'orchestra').<sup>153</sup> However, Latin writers use both words for the Roman version of this dramatic genre; *mimus* seems to be more common and *planipes* chosen mainly in technical contexts. Ancient grammarians describe *planipes/mimus* as a simple and humble form, analogous to Greek mime.<sup>154</sup> In Rome mime is similar to Atellana in that it had gone through a pre-literary phase ('popular mime') in Italy before it became literary.<sup>155</sup>

Mime is the only Roman dramatic genre that came to be associated with a particular festival: it developed into a characteristic element of *Ludi Florales* (see ch. 2.1).<sup>156</sup> For 211 BCE, however, the old mime actor C. Pomponius is recorded as active in Rome: he danced to the music of a flute as part of *Ludi Apollinares* (cf. Fest., pp. 436/8 L.; Serv. on Verg. *Aen.* 8.110). Apparently, mimes were not restricted to *Ludi Florales*; at any rate this was not the case in late Republican times, when mimes replaced Atellanae in their function as 'after-pieces' (cf. Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7 [46 BCE]).<sup>157</sup> Beyond these *testimonia*, there is no evidence on when mimes became a regular element of festivals at Rome and on when and how a particular connection with *Ludi Florales* emerged.<sup>158</sup> Ovid playfully claims that it had to do with the special character of the goddess honoured (*Ov. Fast.* 5.331–4; 5.347–8), while Lactantius criticizes this version as an unacceptable attempt at ennobling the festival (Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.20.5–10).

Cicero mentions a mime entitled *Tutor* that was 'old' (*mimus vetus*) in his time (Cic. *De or.* 2.259). The meaning and reference point of this remark are unclear; it just shows that mimes were thought to have existed for some time in this period. Still, mime appears to have been one of the last Republican dramatic genres to become literary: this happened only at the very end of the Republic with the two poets Decimus Laberius and Publilius Syrus,

<sup>153</sup> On *mimus* (on mime in Rome and on the development of mime in antiquity and beyond) see e.g. Reich 1903; Nicoll 1931: esp. 80–131; Duckworth 1952: 13–15; Beare 1964: 149–58; Giancotti 1967; Marzullo 1973: 39–82; Rieks 1978: 361–8; Cicu 1988; Jory 1988; Fantham 1989b; Petrone 1992: 495–507; Gianotti 1993: 47–55; Dunbabin 2004; esp. Panayotakis 2010: 1–32; also Gianotti 1996; Denard 2007.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, pp. 482.27–9; 490.3–10; 491.13–19; Donat. *Com.* 6.2; Lyd. *Mag.* 1.40. On some of these sources and their restricted focus see Panayotakis 2010: 7–9.

<sup>155</sup> Maxwell (1996) argues for a strong Etruscan influence on Roman mime, which is possible, but difficult to prove.

<sup>156</sup> Cf. Val. Max. 2.10.8; *Ov. Fast.* 5.331–2; 5.347–54; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.20.5–10.

<sup>157</sup> See Beacham 1991: 129. <sup>158</sup> See Fantham 1989b: 155 n. 10.

the representatives of Latin literary mime in the Republican period.<sup>159</sup> The dates of these poets accord with Cicero's remark in a letter of 46 BCE that mimes, in place of Atellanae, were now given as 'after-pieces' (Cic. *Fam.* 9.16.7),<sup>160</sup> which implies their recognition and increasing prominence as a dramatic genre around this time. Yet the fact that the dictator Sulla was fond of mime (cf. e.g. Plut. *Sull.* 36.1–2) indicates that this dramatic genre was established in Rome even prior to this change.

Mime gained a proper position on the Roman stage only when most other dramatic genres were already in decline, even though performances of existing and of occasional new pieces continued. Not only conditions in the contemporary theatre, but also the support received from powerful men such as Sulla and Caesar have been mentioned by modern scholars as explanations for the rise of mime.<sup>161</sup> This is not unlikely and would constitute a prime example of the influence of magistrates on the Roman theatre, noticeable in this period also in Pompey's erection of the first permanent stone theatre in Rome and the lavish opening ceremonies (see ch. 2.4). Performances of mimes continued into the imperial period.

Comments on mime by later ancient writers are mainly critical, since they regarded this dramatic genre as low and vulgar, and looked down upon its crude and frivolous aspects.<sup>162</sup> In particular, performances of mime were considered obscene, since women played the female roles and mime actresses could appear naked or strip nude at the end of performances (cf. e.g. Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.20.10; 6.20.30; cf. also Ov. *Tr.* 2.503–4). Famously, at *Ludi Florales* in 55 BCE, the audience was embarrassed at demanding that the mime actresses should strip bare because of the presence of Cato (Uticensis); having been informed of the situation, Cato left the theatre so that the people could enjoy the accustomed spectacle (cf. Val. Max. 2.10.8; Sen. *Ep.* 97.8; Mart. 1, *praef.*).

Nevertheless, mime seems to have been a versatile and multi-faceted dramatic form. Literary mimes could have meaningful and well-phrased content. Seneca highlighted the fact that there was much in Publilius Syrus'

<sup>159</sup> Other mime writers, such as Catullus, Lentulus, Hostilius or Marullus, of whom little is known, seem to have been active in the imperial period (*testimonia* and/or fragments in Ribbeck 1873: 392–4 / 1898: 370–3 and Bonaria 1965).

<sup>160</sup> On the basis of an anecdote about Laberius and Clodius (cf. Macrob. *Sat.* 2.6.6), presumably dating to 56 BCE (see ch. 4.16), Till (1975: 262) infers that mimes had already replaced Atellanae as 'after-pieces' in this period, but there is no evidence on the point in the performance schedule at which the requested mime was intended to be performed.

<sup>161</sup> See Bonaria 1965: 5; also Jory 1988: 78.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. e.g. Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.1; *Rab. Post.* 35; Ov. *Tr.* 2.497–500; Gell. *NA* 2.23.12; Macrob. *Sat.* 2.1.9. Mimes (and similar spectacles) were fiercely opposed by Christian writers in late antiquity (e.g. Hieron. *Ep.* 52.2; Tert. *De spect.* 17.2; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 6.20.30; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.33.5–7).

mimes that could or should be said in comedies and tragedies or even in philosophical treatises, while he was aware that the same plays included low jokes (Sen. *Ep.* 8.8; *Dial.* 6.9.5; 9.11.8).<sup>163</sup> The preserved *sententiae* of Publilius Syrus confirm the presence of popular-philosophical, sententious elements; the verses spoken at particular performances in Caesar's time (see below) and other fragments show that mime could feature topical political comment. Generalizing somewhat, one may therefore conclude tentatively that mime became prominent when it did because it provided a perfect combination (from the audience's point of view) of the two tendencies observable in the development of drama in Republican Rome: meaningful messages and entertaining elements. Mime provided basic entertainment in an everyday setting as well as straightforward moral rules and comments on topical issues.<sup>164</sup>

The extant titles of literary mimes are partly Greek, but mostly Latin. As there is some overlap in titles with those of other light dramatic genres, mimes could obviously take up titles already employed for plays of other dramatic genres; whether or not there was a special connection to earlier plays of the same title cannot be ascertained.

Distinctions between light dramatic genres were apparently not absolute and mime participated in the common comic tradition in Italy.<sup>165</sup> The remaining titles and fragments of mimes include frequent comic characters and themes, which bear similarities to other light dramatic genres: plots are based on relationships and conflicts within families; they feature wives and courtesans, slaves and masters; issues mentioned comprise marriages and festivals, discussions about inheritance and prodigal sons; there are farm animals, tradesmen (e.g. fullers as in *Atellanae*), fools and love affairs. This evidence is confirmed by later *testimonia* that give masters, slaves, innkeepers, flatterers, young men in love, angry rivals, adulterers, clever women, stupid fools and impersonations of mythical figures as characters in mimes.<sup>166</sup> A Roman setting is indicated by references to Roman gods and festivals as well as places in Italy. Topical comments, moral edification, literary parody, philosophical burlesque (cf. also Ath. *Deip.* 1: 20c–d) and mythological travesties can be inferred for literary mime.<sup>167</sup>

<sup>163</sup> See also Beare 1964: 158; Rieks 1978: 367; Panayotakis 2005a: 142; on the ambiguous character of mime see generally Panayotakis 2010: 14–16.

<sup>164</sup> See also Beare 1964: 154, 158. <sup>165</sup> See also Rieks 1978: 363.

<sup>166</sup> Cf. e.g. Ov. *Tr.* 2.497–500; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.33.5; Choricus, *Apol. Mim.* 110.

<sup>167</sup> Wiseman (1999) assumes that mimes (just like other dramas in his view) told stories connected with Roman history, which are traceable in historiography and aetiological elegy (see ch. 1.4, n. 66;

This mixture is reminiscent of Roman satire and seems peculiar to mime among dramatic genres in Rome.

From this range of topics and the remaining longer fragments it is clear that mimes not only presented erotic farce, but must also have had plots and dialogue. They could apparently open with prologues distinguished from the subsequent action (cf. Macrobius *Sat.* 2.7.2; 2.7.4); when Isidorus claims that the plot (*argumentum*) was announced prior to the actual performance (Isid. *Etym.* 18.49), he may be referring to expository prologues. Cicero seems to presuppose that plots in mime (in contrast to those in *fabulae*) were flimsy and not well constructed, so that, when a proper conclusion could not be found, the play was hastily and arbitrarily brought to an end (Cic. *Cael.* 65). Yet elsewhere he describes a mime with the phrase or title 'beggar just now, suddenly rich' (Cic. *Phil.* 2.65; *modo egens, repente dives*), which points to a basic story line.

Besides, mimes could include references to contemporary circumstances and individuals. This is indicated as early as the second half of the second century BCE by anecdotes about the poets Accius and Lucilius, who were each attacked by name (*nominatim*) by a mime actor from the stage and therefore took them to court (cf. *Auct. ad Her.* 1.24; 2.19). The fact that only one of the poets was successful in having the calumniator condemned might indicate that an attack by name from the stage was not an action of which one would automatically be convicted. Preserved fragments do not feature personal names; yet criticism in veiled form may be obvious enough.

Apart from Cato leaving the theatre at *Ludi Florales* (see above), the most notorious incidents connected with mime are the contests of Decimus Laberius and Publilius Syrus in 47/6 BCE, when Caesar challenged the equestrian Laberius to appear on stage in his own mimes (cf. Sen. *Controv.* 7.3.9; Gell. *NA* 8.15; Macrobius *Sat.* 2.3.10; 2.7.2–5) and Publilius Syrus called on all those who were active for the stage at the time to contend with him in a poetic contest (cf. Macrobius *Sat.* 2.7.7–9; also Cic. *Fam.* 12.18.2; Gell. *NA* 17.14.2).<sup>168</sup>

ch. 3.2 and n. 44). Yet the only preserved title that might indicate a historical or aetiological drama is Laberius' *Anna Peranna*, and there are no *testimonia* to confirm this particular characteristic of mime.

<sup>168</sup> Macrobius, who gives the most detailed account of this incident, continues with a similar story for pantomime: Pylades being publicly challenged by his pupil Hylas (Macrobius *Sat.* 2.7.12–19). The first story is also mentioned by other writers, while the second one is much simpler, does not involve the two most famous representatives and has fewer political repercussions. Hence the story for mime sounds more plausible and rather like the original one, to which another one for pantomime has been added.

These incidents confirm that mime was an open and flexible form, which allowed for divergences from a standard dramatic set-up and to which an improvisational element was not foreign. Moreover, Laberius' verses are described as having included direct (albeit not *nominatim*) criticism of Caesar, which was picked up by the audience (cf. Macrobian *Sat.* 2.7.5; Sen. *Dial.* 4.11.3). While such criticism might have accorded with Laberius' overall attitude (cf. Macrobian *Sat.* 2.6.6; 7.3.8), it shows that political comment was apparently possible and tolerated to some extent. The fact that Caesar was the reference point of those comments and at the same time dominated the whole set-up shows his powerful position, as well as the impact of magistrates on dramatic performances towards the end of the Republic and the role of drama in public life.

That the engagement of mime with the political situation was not as singular as the circumstances might suggest is indicated by Cicero's fear for a politically active friend of being singled out by Laberius and other mime writers if he acted wrongly (Cic. *Fam.* 7.11.2 [January 53 BCE]). Elsewhere Cicero corresponds with Atticus about the audience's reaction to mimes by Publilius, which apparently consisted in an expression of views on the contemporary political situation (Cic. *Att.* 14.2.1 [8 April 44 BCE]). Cicero even seems to expect 'mime actors' utterances' (*mimorum dicta*) and reactions by the people (Cic. *Att.* 14.3.2 [9 April 44 BCE]). Hence using new mimes for political comment on current affairs appears to have been such a common feature that it had to be reckoned with.

Owing to the time in which mime came to the fore, to the support received from powerful men and to the proliferation of inscriptions concerning mimes, there are a number of *testimonia* that provide information on practical details characteristic of mime.

There existed organizational structures specific to mime, perhaps already indicated by the fact that it was only in mime that female roles were played by women. Mime actors were organized in troupes or organizations each called a 'college of mime actors' (*commune* or *collegium mimorum*), headed by a 'chief mime actor' (*archimimus/archimima*).<sup>169</sup> This person would also be the main actor in performances (*archimimus/mimus*), followed in the hierarchy of the division of parts by 'actors of the second, third, fourth part' (*actores secundarum, tertiarum, quartarum partium*).<sup>170</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Cf. Plut. *Sull.* 36.2; *ILS* 5208; 5209; *CIL* VI 10106 = *ILS* 5211; *CIL* VI 10107 = *ILS* 5212; *CIL* XIV 2408 = *ILS* 5196.

<sup>170</sup> Cf. Suet. *Calig.* 57.4; Hor. *Epist.* 1.18.14; *CIL* VI 10103 = *ILS* 5199; *CIL* VI 10118 = *ILS* 5201; *CIL* X 814 = *ILS* 5198; *CIL* XIV 4198 = *ILS* 5200. On troupes of mime actors see e.g. Cicu 1988: 159–75.

As the Latin name of the genre (and its most likely interpretation) as well as references to mimicry with all parts of the body in mimes indicate (cf. e.g. Cic. *De or.* 2.242; 2.251; Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.29), mime actors played barefoot and without masks. Accordingly, facial expression, gesticulation and dancing had an important role (cf. *Anth. Lat.* 487a.13–22; Ath. *Deip.* 10: 452f; Isid. *Etym.* 18.49). Rhetoricians considered excessive imitation as typical of mime, but as inappropriate for orators (cf. Cic. *De or.* 2.242; 2.251–2; Quint. *Inst.* 6.3.29).<sup>171</sup> Modern scholars assume that typically only two or three actors performed in any one piece as one actor could represent several characters.<sup>172</sup>

References to a particular costume of mime actors are uncertain. A comparison in Seneca (Sen. *Ep.* 114.6) suggests that slaves in mime could have a Greek cloak (*pallium*), which they might arrange in various ways. Fools traditionally had shaven heads (cf. e.g. Juv. 5.171–3; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.33.5). Part of the performance (if not all), at least originally, seems to have taken place in the ‘orchestra’, while other dramatic genres were performed on the stage (cf. Fest., p. 436.28–31 L.; Diom. *Ars* 3, *Gramm. Lat.* 1, p. 490.6–7).

Even though all actors in Rome were of low social status, the reputation of mime actors was particularly bad, due to the character of this dramatic genre and the fact that both male and female actors performed. Some names of mime actors are known (often from inscriptions), spread over most of the Republican period. They obviously include Publilius Syrus; among mime actresses Mark Antony’s consort Cytheris/Volumnia/Lycoris is perhaps the most notorious.<sup>173</sup> That Antony socialized with mime actors and actresses (and a mime writer) was one of the reproaches Cicero levelled against him in the heated political atmosphere of the late Republic.<sup>174</sup> This is a prime instance of the ambiguous attitude of intellectuals to the theatre and particularly to mime, since at the same time Cicero was aware of the potential political impact of performances (Cic. *Fam.* 7.11.2 [?January 53 BCE]).

<sup>171</sup> Isidorus distinguishes between the ‘singing’ of tragic and comic actors and the ‘dancing’ of mime actors (Isid. *Etym.* 18.43–4).

<sup>172</sup> The sources on Caesar’s challenge to Laberius talk of the poet ‘acting his mime’ (*suum mimum agere*), and there is no mention of further actors needed for or involved in the performance (cf. Macrobian. *Sat.* 2.7.2; Suet. *Iul.* 39.2).

<sup>173</sup> For information on Republican actors see Garton 1972; for Publilius Syrus see Garton 1972: 260, no. 126; for Cytheris see Garton 1972: 248, no. 70.

<sup>174</sup> Cf. Cic. *Phil.* 2.20; 2.58; 2.61–2; 2.67; 2.101; 8.26; 10.22; 11.13; 13.24.

## 3.7 PANTOMIMUS

Pantomime (*pantomimus*) was popular and promoted under emperors from Augustus until late antiquity; thus it might be regarded as a predominantly imperial dramatic form. Yet pantomime emerged in the very first years of the Principate under Augustus and perhaps earlier, and its appearance can be seen as the conclusion to developments concerning the Roman stage during the Republican period.<sup>175</sup> Discussion of its emergence and characteristics therefore completes the overview of Republican dramatic genres.

Although there were Greek forerunners and earlier simple forms in Italy, ancient writers dated the introduction of pantomime in Rome to 22 BCE.<sup>176</sup> This view apparently reflects the traditional date assigned to a change from pantomimic dances, already present in Rome, to pantomime proper. Pylades from Cilicia (who also wrote a treatise on pantomime) and Bathyllus from Alexandria are credited in ancient sources with 'developing the Italian style of dance', the former representing the solemn and serious 'tragic' and the latter the light-hearted 'comic' variety;<sup>177</sup> Lucian notes that the Italioi called the dancer 'a pantomime' (Lucian, *Salt.* 67). All these pieces of information indicate that pantomime came to be seen as a particular Roman dramatic genre.

Despite the conventional date of 22 BCE given in ancient sources, pantomime was certainly present in Rome prior to this: according to Lucian it reached a more developed stage in approximately the time of Augustus (Lucian, *Salt.* 34). Modern scholarship has inferred that pantomime in Rome might go back to the late 40s BCE: the anecdote in Livy's account of the early theatre, namely that Livius Andronicus acted to the accompaniment of a piper and a singer, which increased the vivacity of his gestures (Liv. 7.2.8–10), disrupts Livy's chronological narrative of the development of early drama and may be a reflection of a preoccupation with pantomime in Livy's time;<sup>178</sup> hence Livy might have wished to provide an aetiological

<sup>175</sup> On *pantomimus* see Rotolo 1957; Jory 1981, 1996, also 1988; Petrone 1992: 508–13; Gianotti 1993: 55–69; Hall and Wyles 2008.

<sup>176</sup> Cf. Hieron. *Ab Abr.* 1995, 22 BCE [p. 165c Helm]; Macrob. *Sat.* 2.7.12; 2.7.18; Zos. 1.6.1.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. Ath. *Deip.* 20d–e; on Pylades and Bathyllus cf. also Sen. *Controv.* 3, *praef.* 16; Suet. *Aug.* 45.4.

<sup>178</sup> See Beare 1964: 219–20; Jocelyn 1967: 21; Gianotti 1993: 48. Gratwick (1982a: 78–9) sees an allusion to 'mime' in this passage. Suerbaum (2002: 54) believes that Livy's source, Varro, cannot yet have known pantomime, but one must beware of circular argument. N. J. Lowe (2008: 82–3) thinks that 'Livy's source (perhaps the great Republican scholar Varro, who is, however, usually better than this) is certainly mistaken to trace the miming of sung parts back to Livius' own day'. But Livy's text itself indicates reservations about this story (cf. Liv. 7.2.9: *dicuntur*), and its insertion in spite of this may indicate its importance within the overall argument.



explanation for this dramatic genre, and the character of pantomime could be one reason for his condemnation of contemporary theatre (Liv. 7.2.13). As the pantomime Pylades is known to have been in his old age in 2 BCE, while Cicero nowhere refers to pantomime as a major factor on the Roman stage, a date in the late 40s BCE or slightly later for the emergence of pantomime as a dramatic form in Rome is possible.<sup>179</sup> Further refinements and an 'official' recognition may have taken place subsequently, perhaps in around 22 BCE.<sup>180</sup>

Such a dating would bring pantomime close to dramatic performances developing into pageants of the sort condemned by Cicero and Horace (Cic. *Fam.* 7.1.2; Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.187–207) and to the flourishing of mime with its emphasis on individuals, 'realistic' display and derivative relationship to tragedy and comedy. Hence this scenario for pantomime gaining prominence would agree well with the development of stage performances in Rome around the middle of the first century BCE inferred from other sources.

Pantomime then developed into a dominant dramatic form in the imperial period, as it was supported by the emperor Augustus and his successors: they provided training establishments for pantomime performers and organized performances of official troupes in Rome and the provinces; they also favoured and protected particular pantomime actors, a number of whom are known by name. Like mime, which became established slightly earlier, pantomime is a dramatic genre promoted by politicians who used these dramatic forms to entertain the populace and ensure their own standing.

The Roman pantomime is a type of dance by an actor (*pantomimus* or *histrion*), accompanied by music. Dancing, singing and instrumental music were distributed over several performers (cf. Hieron. *Ab Abr.* 1995, 22 BCE [p. 165c Helm]); the dancer concentrated on representing character and emotions. In its eventual form pantomime differed from the Greek precedent and earlier Roman versions, for instance, by an increased musical component and by the replacement of a single accompanist with a choir. As the serious variety seems to have been the more common one, pantomimes included the representation of famous mythical characters and their fates, based on tragedies.<sup>181</sup>

<sup>179</sup> See Jory 1981 (slightly differently in Jory 1996).

<sup>180</sup> Jory (1996: 2; see also 1981: 148) suggests 'that the first important occasion that featured the new type of presentation was at the games of Marcellus in 23 B.C., rather than 22 B.C., the date indicated by Jerome'.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. Macrob. *Sat.* 2.7.13–17; Suet. *Calig.* 57.4; Arn. *Adv. nat.* 7.33.3.

The modern view on pantomime can be summarized as follows:

Pantomimes (in literary sources the noun always refers to the performer rather than the genre) were silent solo dancers who interpreted with movement and gesture a libretto sung by a choir to the accompaniment of a variety of musical instruments including flutes, pipes, cymbals, lyres, castanets and even organs. Each production, as in tragedy, was based on a story from mythology or history and, unlike a dramatic performance where the characters appear on stage together and interact, the characters in the pantomime were portrayed successively, as the actor interpreted the rôles in a sequence of interlinked but consecutive solo dances.<sup>182</sup>

Since music, dance and equipment were paramount in pantomime, hardly any knowledge of the language was necessary to understand the story or to enjoy the performance (cf. Lucian, *Salt.* 64). Therefore scholars have seen this type of dramatic entertainment as one of the reasons for the wide spread of theatre throughout all regions of the Roman Empire. Equally, this dramatic genre marks the predominance of entertainment and spectacle over plot and content in the continuing tension between the two main elements of Roman dramatic performances. Still, pantomime is not dance and music only, but based on a story taken, for instance, from myth or history.<sup>183</sup> Hence it is justified to classify pantomime as a ‘dramatic genre’ rather than as a form of dance.

<sup>182</sup> See Jory 1986a: 147.

<sup>183</sup> That the plots of pantomimes were adaptations (rather than replacements) of stories also found in tragedies has been seen as a reason for the disappearance of pantomime libretti (see Jory 2008).