

Goran Vidović

**DISH TO CASH, CASH TO ASH: THE LAST ROMAN  
PARASITE AND THE BIRTH OF A COMIC PROFESSION**

MA Thesis in Medieval Studies

Central European University

Budapest

May 2009

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by

Goran Vidović

(Serbia)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,  
Central European University, Budapest, in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU

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Chair, Examination Committee

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I, the undersigned, **Goran Vidović**, candidate for the MA degree in Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Budapest, 25 May 2009

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Signature

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

“This small work caused me no small effort,” complained the anonymous author. Having spent days and nights studying his comedy, I got to fully understand him: my small work had cost me, perhaps not blood, but certainly sweat and beers.

Many are those who deserve to be mentioned. My professors and friends Vojin Nedeljković and Marjanca Pakiž from the University of Belgrade were the ones who set the foundations of my Latin skills and roused my interest in late antiquity. Manuel Molina Sánchez from the University of Granada has been reading my drafts and supplying me with publications for a long time. Recently, valuable comments, corrections and suggestions arrived from the University of Illinois, and for them I am grateful to Danuta Shanzer and Ralph Mathisen. Numerous instructive remarks of Timothy J. Moore from the University of Austin unfortunately reached me too late to be included. I would also like to express my gratitude to respected scholars who provided me with their articles, for me not easily accessible, namely Andrew Cain, Ivor Davidson and Kurt Smolak.

My friends who were always there for me need no naming: they will recognize themselves. A special place is reserved for the person who encouraged me and believed in me when few others did, who stood just like that small but unconquerable village of courageous Asterix surrounded by Romans: from now on, he is to be remembered as Niels the Gaul.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>CTh</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i> . Ed. Theodor Mommsen. Hildesheim: Weidmannsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 2002.
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968.
<i>ThLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Linguae Latinae</i>

# I. INTRODUCTION

The anonymous late-antique comedy entitled *Querolus siue Aulularia* (“*The Complainer or The Pot of Gold*”) is the only extant Roman comedy apart from Plautus and Terence, and the first known surviving Latin drama since the tragedies of Seneca. Although having been formally pushed into the traditional dramatic frame, this curious text differs conspicuously from classical Roman comedy, and so in many aspects: the language and style, the metrical structure, the plot-arrangement, the treatment of characters, the type of humour, finally the very nature of the play.

The long period of dramatic silence, however, calls for caution. One should not ignore the risk of misreading: the features of the play which we may think of as strange might have been common at the time the *Querolus* was produced. Having acknowledged the potential danger of falling into that trap myself, I shall still attempt to analyze precisely some of those traits of the *Querolus* which I saw as ‘atypical.’ However, I hope to have minimized that risk by focusing solely on those spots where the traces of the transition from the conventional to the unconventional are visible. For that purpose, I will avoid employing the terms such as ‘atypical,’ ‘unconventional,’ ‘unusual,’ or ‘novel,’ when not supplied by a discussion. Also, my occasional usage of the attribute ‘realistic’ does not include any theoretical concept; I will use the term simply in describing a literary character acting in a natural, understandable and, ultimately, human way—as much as one literary character is able to.

My study is also limited to the analysis of one single role, that of the parasite Mandrogerus, and its importance for the plot. In my opinion, only in such strictly confined study it is purposeful to compare what we know from republican comedies



with what we know from the *Querolus*. The gap between them, as it will turn out, can to a certain extent be compensated by the analyses of material collected from other sources.

In the following pages I will first summarize the general problems of the *Querolus* and the solutions proposed in previous scholarship and add some observations of my own. In the third chapter I will sketch the essential features of the traditional literary image of the comic parasite. In the fourth chapter I will analyze how the anonymous author of the *Querolus* significantly altered and deftly reused the *topos* of comic gluttony. This alteration, I will suggest, rendered the parasite Mandrogerus more up-to-date, and far more ‘human’ than his ancient predecessors; in my view, it is a symptom of maturing of the literary type. Another unconventional feature of Mandrogerus, arising from this evolution, will be the subject of chapter V: the striving for independence of the parasite in the *Querolus* is an almost revolutionary shift. It is so inseparably dependent on the plot (or vice versa) that even without any comparative material from other contemporary plays that may have existed I am prone to interpret it as an original one-time experiment. I argue that this experiment was the author’s attempt to demonstrate how outdated yet still somehow binding the comic conventions were in late antiquity. In chapter IV, I will approach this parasite through comparison with similar figures outside the comic genre, which is intended to contribute to the discussions in chapters IV and V, and hopefully solve the puzzling literary profile of the last Roman parasite.

## II. GENERAL PROBLEMS

To begin with, the first problem is the twofold title of the play, *Querolus siue Aulularia*. The *Aulularia*, a title of one the genuine Plautine comedies, is appended to the name of the protagonist, Querolus, ‘the complainer.’ The title of the *Aulularia* could be due to the model of Plautus, which the author followed, or at least so he declares: “We are going to present today *The Pot of Gold*, not an old one, *but* a fresh one, traced following the footsteps of Plautus.”<sup>1</sup> But the anonymous author also offered the alternative title: “Whether this play should be named *Querolus* or *The Pot of Gold*, is for you to judge.”<sup>2</sup> It may well be that the author implied the ambiguous character of the *Querolus*, combining the inherited tradition with his novel project. Also, the announced ‘presentation’ was in all likelihood a figure of speech: the *Querolus* was most probably not designed for a stage-performance.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Quer.* 5.1: *Aululariam hodie sumus acturi, non ueterem at rudem, inuestigatam et inuentam Plauti per uestigia* (emphasis mine). The line quoted above is in fact very problematic; the MSS reading *ac*, “and,” was corrected in the *editio princeps* by Pierre Daniel (1564) into *at*, “but;” the conjecture happened to be on a very sensitive spot, since if the MSS reading would be maintained, the sentence would mean quite the opposite: “We are going to present today *The Pot of Gold*, not an old **and** crude one, following the footsteps of Plautus.” — The reference is given to the page and line numbers in the edition of G. Ranstrand, *Querolus sive Aulularia, incerti auctoris comoedia* (Göteborg: [Acta Universitatis Gotoburgensis LVII] Wettergren & Kerbers Förlag, 1951). Although not the most recent one, it is in my opinion most reliable; suspicious conjectures are quite rare, while the numbering of Ranstrand seems like the best solution; namely, almost every edition of the *Querolus* has its own system of numbering, most of them dividing the text into certain uneven ‘sections.’ Occasionally, I will refer to the text of the play by the number of scene, appearing in the edition of Jacquemard-LeSaos, (*Querolus (Le Grincheux)*, Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1994), but not in Ranstrand’s; although relying completely on the latter, in this case I made a harmless exception for the sake of easier referring: the scene-divisions are the same in both editions, indicated by the change of the roles. Neither of the two editions accepted the five-act division, observed in most of the earlier editions and commentaries, such as F. Corsaro, *Querolus: Studio Introduttivo e Commentario* (Bologna: Pátron, 1965) and the English translation I have occasionally used, the only existing one, by G. E. Duckworth, *The Complainer or the Pot of Gold*, in *The Complete Roman Drama* (New York: Random House, 1942), vol. 2, 891-952. (As I am informed, a new English translation is being produced by Ralph W. Mathisen, University of Illinois.) The five-act division of the *Querolus* seems indeed improvised, based presumably on the debatable act-division of *palliata*, for which see W. Beare, *The Roman Stage: A Short History of Latin Drama in the Time of the Republic* (London: Methuen & Co., 1964), 196-218.

<sup>2</sup> 5.12-13 *Querolus an Aulularia haec dicatur fabula, uestrum hinc iudicium, uestra erit sententia.*

<sup>3</sup> 3.13-14 *Nos fabellis atque mensis hunc librum scripsimus.*

## THE AUTHOR, THE TIME AND THE PLACE

Undoubtedly due to its twofold title, the *Querolus* was mistakenly attributed to Plautus throughout the Middle Ages;<sup>4</sup> it is quite likely that otherwise the text would not have survived. It was already the first modern editor of the *Querolus* Pierre Daniel<sup>5</sup> who questioned the authorship of Plautus, and it soon became clear that the comedy was not written before a considerably later date. The question of authorship became closely connected to the questions of the date and place of composition.

One of the starting points in approaching these problems, and in fact the only personal reference in the *Querolus*, is the identity of the dedicatee of the play. In the first line of the dedicatory prologue, the anonymous author addresses a person by the name of Rutilius.<sup>6</sup> Already Daniel identified the dedicatee as Rutilius Claudius Namatianus, a high functionary at Rome in the early fifth century, and the author of the poem usually referred to as *De reditu suo*.<sup>7</sup> The majority of scholars accepts the

<sup>4</sup> The twelfth-century author of the remake of the *Querolus*, Vital of Blois, entitled his play *Aulularia*, convinced that he is remodeling Plautus (*Aul.* 1-28); the standard edition of the *Aulularia* with an introduction and commentary is M. Molina Sánchez, *Vital de Blois, Aulularia* (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1999). The Spanish scholar is also responsible for the bulk of the studies dealing with the two plays, namely “Estudio escénico, literario y comparativo de *Aulularia* de Plauto, *Querolus sive Aulularia* y *Aulularia* de Vital de Blois” (PhD Diss., ed. microfiche, University of Granada, 1985); “Los personajes de Sycophanta y Sardanapallus del *Querolus* y sus correspondientes en la *Aulularia* de Vital de Blois,” *Medioevo Romanzo* 10 (1985), 339-347; “La recepción de Plauto y Terencio en la comedia latina medieval,” in *Estudios sobre Plauto*, eds. A. Pociña and B. Rabaza, 71-100 (Madrid: Ediciones Clásicas, 1998); “*Plauti per uestigia*: La auctoritas plautina en la comedia latina medieval: los ejemplos del anónimo *Querolus sive Aulularia* y de la *Aulularia* de Vital de Blois,” *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica, Estudios latinos* 27, 1 (2007), 117-133. Vital of Blois also composed a comedy entitled *Geta*, allegedly a rework of Plautus’ *Amphitruo*, but in fact based on a lost, presumably late-antique, original. See also L. Braun, “Die ‘dramatische’ Technik des Vitalis von Blois und sein Verhältnis zu seinen Quellen,” in *Proceedings of the International Colloquium on Medieval Theatre* (May 24-26, 1982): *The Theatre in the Middle Ages*, ed. H. Braet, J. Nowé, G. Tournoy, 60-83 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985). For a list of references to the *Querolus* in medieval authors familiar with the play, see Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, xvi-xvii, n. 12.

<sup>5</sup> P. Daniel, *Querolus, antiqua comoedia numquam antehac edita, quae in uetusto codice manuscripto PLAVTI AVLVLARIA inscribitur* (Paris, 1564).

<sup>6</sup> 3.1-4 *Rutili, uenerande semper magnis laudibus, qui das honoratam quietem quam dicamus ludicris, inter proximos et propinquos honore dignum putans, duplici, fateor, et ingenti me donas bono: hoc testimonio, hoc collegio, haec uera est dignitas*. Some aspects of the dedication are discussed by R. W. Mathisen, *People, Personal Expression, and Social Relations in Late Antiquity* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2003) 17-19, and by E. Sánchez Salor, “La ultima poesia latino-profana: su ambiente,” *Estudios Clásicos* 25 (1981-83), 111-162.

<sup>7</sup> The original title is unknown; for a quick reference on Rutilius Namatianus see e.g. M. von Albrecht, and G. Schmeling, *A history of Roman literature: from Livius Andronicus to Boethius: with special*

identity of Rutilius, although objecting voices are not so few.<sup>8</sup> The opposing opinions as a consequence sometimes reconsidered the time and place of composition as well,<sup>9</sup> for the chronology of Rutilius was the key factor in a more exact dating of the *Querolus*.<sup>10</sup> The question of precise dating being complex and not crucial for the present thesis, placing the *Querolus* in the early fifth century will suffice.

The identity of the dedicatee also suggested Roman Gaul as the place of composition, now commonly accepted.<sup>11</sup> Further indications of Gallic provenance might be some linguistic peculiarities,<sup>12</sup> while the definite evidence is a reference to

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*regard to its influence on world literature*, tr. M. von Albrecht, G. Schmeling, R. R. Caston, F. R. Schwartz (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 1332-1336, with bibliography; for some more specialized studies see G. Boano, "Sul *De reditu suo* di Rutilio Namaziano," *Rivista di Filologia Classica* 26 (1948), 54-87, Alan Cameron, "Rutilius Namatianus, St. Augustine, and the Date of the *De Reditu*," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 57 (1967), 31-39; an in-depth analysis of Rutilius' ideology is F. Corsaro, *Studi Rutiliani* (Bologna: Pátron, 1981). The poem of Rutilius is translated in the Loeb edition by J. W. Duff, *Minor Latin Poets* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1935), vol. 2, 753-829.

<sup>8</sup> For a review of the studies on the *Querolus* up to 1979, see G. Lana, "Rassegna critica di studi sul *Querolus* dal 1800 al 1979," *Bollettino di studi Latini* 15 (1985), 114-21, and a slightly updated by D. Lassandro and E. Romano, "Rassegna critica degli studi sul *Querolus*," *Bollettino di studi Latini* 21 (1991), 26-51.

<sup>9</sup> Corsaro (*Studio*, 18-19) argues that the *Querolus* was composed before 410, because the sack of Rome by Alaric is not alluded to in the play (which is clearly an unconvincing *argumentum ex silentio*), and hence proposes that the dedicatee is not Rutilius Namatianus, but his father.

<sup>10</sup> In the prologue Rutilius was addressed to as a *uir inlustis*, the most senior class of senators. He would rightfully possess this honorary title since he was the Master of the Offices, *magister officiorum*, and the Urban Prefect (of Rome), *praefectus urbi*, the former in 412, the latter in 414 (*CTh.* 6.27.15; *De red.* 1.563: *officiis regerem cum regia tecta magister*, and 1.157-160: *si non displicui, regerem cum iura Quirini, si colui sanctos consulique patres. / Nam quod nulla meum strinxerunt crimina ferrum, / non sit praefecti gloria, sed populi*); for the titles and functions see A. H. M. Jones, *The Later Roman Empire 284-602: A Social, Economic, and Administrative Survey* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), e.g., for the senatorial rank of *illustis*, 178, 378, and 528-530, for *magister officiorum* 103 and 368-9, for *praefectus urbi* 48, 143, 292, 313 and 528. Hence, if the identity of Rutilius is accepted, the *terminus post quem* of the composition of the *Querolus* would be 412. Still, the *terminus ante quem* is more difficult to determine, since the only direct reference is the honorary title of Rutilius, a title which, once obtained, remained even after the function which earned it expires. On various conditions of obtaining and retaining certain title, see R. W. Mathisen, "Imperial Honorifics and Senatorial Status in Late Roman Legal Documents," in *Law, Society, and Authority in Late Antiquity*, ed. R. Mathisen, 179-207 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>11</sup> Certain theories of North-African origin are summarized and rejected by Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, vii-viii.

<sup>12</sup> See N. Golvers, "Le *Querolus* et le parler de Marseille," *Latomus* 43 (1984), 432-437. Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, xlv) offered a hypothesis, yet soon withdrew it in an article "L'emploi des prépositions *apud* et *cum* dans le *Querolus* est-il un régionalisme gaulois?" in *Latin vulgaire, Latin tardif, IV: Actes du IV colloque international sur le Latin vulgaire et tardif*, Caen, 2-5 September 1994, ed. Louis Callebaut, 77-91 (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1998).

the river Loire.<sup>13</sup> This cryptic passage describing certain primitive and isolated communities on the banks of the Loire is the one that made the *Querolus* famous in modern scholarship, concerned mostly with political and social history; it is by far the most frequently quoted one from the play, and practically the only one granted a referential value. It is almost unanimously interpreted as having alluded to the movement of the *Bagaudae*;<sup>14</sup> in addition, it is occasionally seen reporting the same events as Rutilius.<sup>15</sup> Not surprisingly, the scholarly investigation of other parallels between the two authors ensued.<sup>16</sup> Although Rutilius Namatianus indeed seems like

<sup>13</sup> 17.13-20 LAR:... Vade, ad Ligerem uiuito. QVER: Quid tum? LAR: Illic iure gentium uiuunt homines; ibi nullum est praestigium, ibi sententiae capitales de robore proferuntur et scribuntur in ossibus; illic etiam rustici perorant et priuati iudicant; ibi totum licet. Si diues fueris, patus appellaberis: sic nostra loquitur Graecia. O siluae, o solitudines, quis uos dixit liberas? For the interpretations of the reference, see Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 80; Corsaro, *Studio*, 100.

<sup>14</sup> For the general information on complex questions of the movement(s) of the *Bagaudae*, see the standard older work, E. A. Thompson, "Peasant Revolts in Late Roman Gaul and Spain," *Past and Present* 2 (1952), 11-23; see also R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late-Antique Gaul* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 25-56, and V. M. Sanz Bonel, "La aportación pagana, *Querolus* y Rutilio Namaciano, al carácter cristiano de los *bagaudas*," in *Aragón en la Edad Media*, 14-15: *Homenaje a la profesora Carmen Orcástegui Gros*, Vol. 1-2, 1471-1486 (Saragossa: Universidad de Zaragoza, 1999); for a skeptical view on the reference in the *Querolus*, see J. F. Drinkwater, "The *Bacaudae* of fifth-century Gaul," in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?* eds. J. Drinkwater and H. Elton, 208-217 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992). Drinkwater is practically the only scholar who, albeit reservedly, challenged the reference to the *Bagaudae*, and instead hinted to a "southern Gallic, more precisely Massiliot, reference to Marmoutier-style monasticism" (210); unfortunately, he did not develop his hypothesis further. A clue to the passage would be the term signifying the chieftain, *patus*, which is a *hapax*.

<sup>15</sup> *Red.* 1.213-216 cuius Aremoricas pater Exuperantius oras / nunc postliminium pacis amare docet; / leges restituit libertatemque reducit / et servos famulis non sinit esse suis ("Exuperantius trains the Armorica sea-board to love the recovery of peace; he re-establishes the laws, brings freedom back and suffers not the inhabitants to be their servants' slaves"); for this passage see Duff, *ad. loc.*, n. 40-41; for the events that Rutilius is possibly referring to, see I. N. Wood, "The Barbarian Invasions and First Settlements", in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 13: The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, eds. A. Cameron, P. Garnsey, 516-537 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> An allusion to the Harpies is most often taken (*Quer.* 34.4-12): SYCOPH: Harpyias quaeso praeteristi quae semper rapiunt et uolant. MAND. Ista sunt quae uota hominum obseruant atque honores numinum. Non solum solemnna, uerum etiam extraordinaria requirunt et parentum debita. Si aliquid ad diem praesentatum non est, cum tormentis exigunt. Hac atque illac totum per orbem iuxta terras peruolant. Digito ad praedam exacuunt curuis timendos unguibus semperque mensis aduolant. Quod contingunt auferunt, quod relinquunt polluunt; cf. *Red.* 2.41-2 Non olim sacri iustissimus arbiter auri / circumstisenses reppulit Harpyias? / Harpyias, quarum discerpitur unguibus orbis, / quae pede glutineo quod tetigere trahunt, / quae luscum faciunt Argum, quae Lyncea caecum: / Inter custodes publica furta volant. / sed non Lucillum Briareia praeda fefellit, / totque simul manibus restitit una manus.<sup>16</sup> The source of both passages is ultimately seen in Virg. *Aen.* 3.225-228 at subitae horridifico lapsu de montibus adsunt / harpyiae et magnis quatunt clangoribus alas, / diripiuntque dapes contactuque omnia foedant / immundo, tum vox taetrum dira inter odorem. Although the mythological image was a poetic *topos*, Rutilius and the author of the *Querolus* both allude to the Harpies in connection to fiscal extortion, plundering with claws, unlike Virgil (the claws may be due to Juvenal, 8.129-130; for the Harpies as extortionists, cf. Sid. *Ep.* 5.7.4); complaints about fiscal violence were

the best candidate for the dedicatee of the *Querolus*, no study so far made visible profit of that presumable connection between the two authors in researching the intellectual background of the anonymous comedy. In some cases, however, it was taken into consideration in establishing the authorship of the play.

Many solutions have been proposed for identifying the author of the *Querolus*, occasionally with implications for the dating. Wernsdorf was the first to offer a name, which even affected the place of composition. In his opinion, the author of the *Querolus* was one Palladius, contemporary of Rutilius, and the *Querolus* was composed at Ostia.<sup>17</sup> Dezeimeris, on the basis of similarities between the *Querolus* and works of Ausonius, suggested that the anonymous author was Axius Paulus, a friend whom Ausonius mentions in one of his letters as having written a play entitled *Delirus*.<sup>18</sup> Herrmann, arguing that the *Querolus* displays features resembling the fables of Avianus, attributed the *Querolus* to the late fourth-century fabulist, which Corsaro accepted.<sup>19</sup> Silvia Jannaccone denied the single authorship of the play, qualifying the *Querolus* as a *retractatio* of a late third-century grammarian, which later suffered considerable interpolations.<sup>20</sup> After the fanciful attribution to Hildebert

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apparently frequent, cf. Salv. *De gub.* 5.28. “In a Gaul where decurions were noted for their plundering, soldiers for their pillaging, and the wealthy for colluding imperial magistrates over the allotment, collection and remission of taxes, only these powerful local aristocrats benefited,” R. van Dam, “The Pirenne Thesis and Fifth-century Gaul,” in *Fifth-Century Gaul: A Crisis of Identity?*, 328. For the practices of extortion of (*munera*) *extraordinaria*, mentioned in the passage of the *Querolus* quoted above, see H. Ziche, “Making Late Roman Taxpayers Pay: Imperial Government Strategies and Practice,” in *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices*, ed. H. A. Drake, 137 (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006).

<sup>17</sup> Quoted after R. Peiper, *Aulularia sive Querolus: Theodosiani aevi comoedia Rutilio dedicata*, (Leipzig: Teubner, 1875), xxx-xxxvi.

<sup>18</sup> R. Dezeimeris, *Sur l’auteur du Querolus* (Bordeaux, 1874), quoted after Corsaro, *Studio*, 15; one of Dezeimeris’ suggestions was that the in the MSS tradition the supposed inscription AXII PAVLI AVLVLARIA was mistakenly transcribed as ACII PLAVTI AVLVLARIA. Corsaro, *Studio*, 16, confirms the plausibility of this theory but rejects it with a not very convincing argument that at the time of the correspondence with Ausonius Paulus was too old to have been capable of writing a comedy not deprived of “freschezza e vivacità;” the letter mentioning *Delirus* is 5.11; for references to other Ausonius’ letters concerning Paulus, see Corsaro, *Studio*, 15, n. 10.

<sup>19</sup> Herrmann, “L’auteur du Querolus,” in *Revue Belge de Philologie et Histoire* (1948), 538-540, quoted after Corsaro, *Studio*, 16-19.

<sup>20</sup> Silvia Jannaccone, “Contributo alla datazione del *Querolus*,” *Aevum* 20 (1946), 269-271.

of Lavardin by Anna Masera,<sup>21</sup> the last solution of the authorship problem of the *Querolus* was proposed by the most recent editor, Catherine Jacquemard-LeSaos. Her argument is based on the verses of Rutilius, who speaks of his friend Lucillus as *arbiter sacri auri* (often interpreted as *comes sacrarum largitionum*);<sup>22</sup> the author, Lucillus, suggests the French editor, inserted himself in the comedy, through the role of Querolus' neighbor, Arbiter.<sup>23</sup> Although some of the proposed solutions are indeed negotiable, the very length of this list proves the possibility of controversial interpretations regarding the authorship of the *Querolus*. Finally, the only safe option is to leave the *Querolus* as the work of an anonymous author.<sup>24</sup>

## STYLE, STRUCTURE AND PLOT

As for the form and structure of the *Querolus*, no less scholarly effort was invested. One of the major enigmas was the supposed metrical setting. Namely, the *Querolus*, so it appears, was not written either in verses, or in plain prose; in Conte's words, "the prose is peculiar, full of suggestions of meter."<sup>25</sup> This complex issue inspired scholarly imagination to the extent that Klinkhamer<sup>26</sup> and Havet<sup>27</sup> undertook the ambitious project of 'restituting' the text of the *Querolus* to the 'original' meter,

<sup>21</sup> A. Masera, *Querolus sive Aulularia. La nuova cronologia e il suo autore* (Turin: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1991); attribution to eleventh century-poet, Hildebert of Lavardin, bishop of Le Mans, is probably the only proposition that did not attract any attention in subsequent scholarship, and not surprisingly so; Masera's method is highly speculative, and the conclusions more than unconvincing.

<sup>22</sup> So Duff, *ad. loc.*, n. 129-131, *Red.* 1.607-614; for Lucillus see Corsaro, *Studi Rutiliani*, 23, n.56; see also Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 103-105;

<sup>23</sup> Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, xxi-xxiv; relying on the verses of Rutilius, A. H. Weston listed Lucillus among the later less-known satirists, see *Latin Satirical Writing subsequent to Juvenal* (Lancaster, PA: The New Era Printing Company, 1915), 135.

<sup>24</sup> One of the rare authors of monographs on the *Querolus* who withheld from proposing a name is M. Molina Sánchez (see above, fn. 4). Among older works reserved in this matter, see a fair analysis of the *Querolus* by R. Pichon, *Les derniers écrivains profanes* (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1906).

<sup>25</sup> G. B. Conte, *Latin Literature: A History*, tr J. B. Solodow, rev. D. P. Fowler and G. W. Most. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 670.

<sup>26</sup> *Querolus sive Aulularia, incerti auctoris comoedia togata*, ed. S. C. Klinkhamer. (Amsterdam: Gartman, 1829).

<sup>27</sup> L. Havet, *Le Querolus, Comédie latine anonyme* (Paris: Vieweg, 1880).

assuming that the current shape of the text is the merit of sloppy medieval copyists.<sup>28</sup>

Although this theory was unanimously rejected in modern scholarship, the presence of some metrical structure is accepted;<sup>29</sup> the most reasonable conclusion is that the *Querolus* was composed in rhythmical prose with iambic and trochaic *clausulae*.<sup>30</sup>

The language and style of the *Querolus* are rather strange mixtures. Mostly following the patterns of republican comedy (although the language is not the least obscene),<sup>31</sup> the author was also drawing on Virgil, Cicero and Juvenal, to name just some.<sup>32</sup> He equally shows a tendency of inserting rare words, such as Greek calques *agelastus*, *pseudothyrum*, *synastrius*, poetic coinages *hirquicomans*, *hamigerus*, *exauriculatus*, or neologisms *uulcanosus*, *fuliginosus*, *maliloquus*.<sup>33</sup> Corsaro called the language of the *Querolus* “in genere corretta e quasi classica.”<sup>34</sup> In particular, it

<sup>28</sup> See discussions in Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, I-IV, and Corsaro, *Studio*, 50-60.

<sup>29</sup> It is worth mentioning that in the course of verse-amending in the two abovementioned editions, a relatively high percentage of verses suffered small or no change (Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, li).

<sup>30</sup> So Ranstrand, *Querolusstudien* (Stockholm: Gernandts Bocktryckeri, 1951), quoted after Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, li; see also A. García Calvo, “La versificación del *Querolus* y el doble condicionamiento prosódico del ritmo,” *Cuadernos de Filología Clásica: Estudios Latinos* 15 (1998), 323-332.

<sup>31</sup> “The author [of the *Querolus*] knows well how to amuse without violating the canons of good taste,” N. K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Letters in Early Christian Gaul* (London: Bowes & Bowes, 1955).

<sup>32</sup> Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, 117-120) provides a list of selected ancient sources of the *Querolus*; Terence is noticed in twenty occurrences, Plautus twenty two, Cicero seven, Virgil six, Juvenal five; references of this kind, found practically in every edition, are usually relying on Peiper’s list (*Aulularia*, xxii-xxx); his list is in general useful and worth consulting if one is into *Quellenforschung*, but sometimes going a bit too far; later scholars were inclined to inherit that enthusiasm in claiming direct borrowing, especially Ranstrand; such investigations are also rarely followed by a discussion. T. Privitera, “Enea a Palazzo (a proposito di una nuova cronologia del *Querolus*),” *Giornale italiano di filologia* 49 (1997), 67-78, in addition to the places in the *Querolus* already seen as Virgilian, analyzed further ‘parallels’ with Virgil; her otherwise feeble research (albeit with several interesting textual comparisons) is worth mentioning for quoting an original and, in a way, accurate remark that the *Querolus* is getting “molto vicino alla pratica centonaria” (73).

<sup>33</sup> *Agelastus*, ‘without a smile,’ was a nickname of M. Crassus, the grandfather of Crassus the triumvir (Plin. *HN*, 7.79.2; Cic. *Fin.* 5.92.8, in Greek); the only occurrence in late-antique texts is in Ambrosiaster’s treatise *Quaestiones Veteri et Noui Testamenti*, quaest. 115, *De fato*, 75 (*agelatus* and *angelatus* from earlier editions corrected by M.-P. Bussières in the most recent one, *Sur le destin*, *SChr.* 512 [Paris: Cerf, 2007]). However, according to *ThLL* only in the *Querolus* (49.3) it is used as a general adjective. *Pseudothyrum* is found in Cic. *Verr.* 2.2.50.3 and *Red.* 14.6; also, Amm. 14.1.3, Oros. 7.6; *hamigerus* and *uulcanosus* are *hapax legomena*, while the adjective-form *fuliginosus* according to the *ThLL* occurs twice elsewhere, only in later texts: in a pejorative meaning, as used in the *Querolus*, ‘soot-black,’ i.e. ‘filthy’, only in Prud. *Peristeph.* 10.261, denoting *lares* (cf. *Symm.* 1.202 *lares umescere nigros*); in Sid. *Ep.* 14.2 *otio fuliginosa* alludes to the domestic atmosphere near the fireplace. For other lexical peculiarities, see G. W. Johnston, *The Querolus: A Syntactical and Stylistic Study* (Toronto: The Publishers’ Syndicate 1900), 63-72.

<sup>34</sup> Corsaro, *Studio*, 52.



suffered late-antique simplification of syntax, while the expressions are patched up from various classical sources. The style of the *Querolus* shows influence of technical rhetoric as well.<sup>35</sup> The play has not yet been properly treated by tracing expressions and constructions corresponding with the contemporary literary sources; some results of such investigation reveal the anonymous author's usage of not so common rhetorical tricks, perhaps current at the time.<sup>36</sup> Also, the *Querolus* is noticeably characteristic for commonplace moralistic sentences which illustrate the frequent proverbial tone of the play.<sup>37</sup>

This plot of the *Querolus* is yet another problem. Namely, it is intersected with lengthy dialogues which in no way contribute to the dramatic action; furthermore, they are retarding it. For any further discussion it is necessary to summarize the plot.

In the dedicatory prologue (3.1 – 5.15), the author addresses a person named Rutilius. Announcement of the plot: “An old man (Euclio) hid a treasure in his house and set off on a journey abroad without telling his son Querolus about the gold. The old man dies abroad, after having revealed the location of the gold to a parasite, Mandrogerus, and having promised him a share if he informs Querolus of the treasure; but the parasite wants all the gold for himself...” After the conventional *captatio benevolentiae* the play is introduced under its twofold title, *Querolus siue Aulularia*. In the first scene (5.17–7.5) Lar familiaris, the Querolus' household god, describes his function and depicts the character of the protagonist; the action begins. The second scene (7.7–23.13) is a lengthy dialogue between Querolus and his household god, Lar, representing his fate. Querolus accuses his fate for his own misfortunes; Lar promises to offer explanations and solutions, and a never-ending debate follows. At the end Lar ambiguously prophesies Querolus' future: he will become wealthy by getting robbed; Lar leaves, Querolus is confused. In the third scene (23.15–26.19), the three impostors are introduced. The chief impostor, Mandrogerus, presents his function and vocation: he is a professional parasite and man-hunter; the two novices,

<sup>35</sup> I. Lana, *Analisi del Querolus* (Turin: G. Giappicheli, 1979), 55-72, explores the rhetorical arrangement of the dialogues in the play, partly as following the ‘thesis-theory’ of late-antique rhetorician Sulpicius Victor (*Institutiones Oratoriae*).

<sup>36</sup> A paronomasia from *Quer.* 42.13, *durus et dirus*, is found only in Augustine, and so on three instances, *De cura mort.* 2.4.11 *dura et dira*, in the *Ciu. Dei* 1.12.25 *dura et dira*, and 19.7.26, *duras et diras*; next, a similar case is *Quer.* 7.20 *Heia, ego officium sum aspernatus, adicit et conuicium*; the *conuicium/officium* couple is attested only once elsewhere, again in Augustine, *Serm.* 150 (PL 38: 812) *quod fuit conuicium tuum, officium est meum*. The exclusivity of these results depends, however, on the huge but not comprehensive *Cetedoc Library of Latin Texts* database; none of these words is a complete entry in the *ThLL*. For *paronomasia*, *parēhēsis*, or *adnominatio*, see e.g. J. Martin, *Antike Rhetorik: Technik und Methode* (Munich: C. H. Beck'sche Buchhandlung, 1974), 304-305.

<sup>37</sup> E.g., 11.22-23 *Peierat saepe qui tacet: tantum est enim tacere uerum quantum et falsum dicere*; 12.17-18 *In amicitiam et fidem stultum ne receperis. Nam inspientum atque improborum facilius sustinetur odium quam collegium*; 19.25 *Quia sapiens nemo est impudens*; 45.11-12 *Sic se res habet. Caelum numquid aequaliter administratur? Sol ipse non semper nitet*.

Sycophanta and Sardanapallus, and after them Mandrogerus, tell the contents of their ominous dreams, which Mandrogerus interprets in connection to the gold. The three impostors approach Querolus' house; Mandrogerus hides. In the fourth scene (26.21–29.16) Sardanapallus and Sycophanta are feigning their fascination with the extraordinary powers of a great magician and astrologer; Querolus hears the conversation and insists on meeting him. The fifth scene (29.19–38.17) is a tirade of the fake magician, who demonstrates his mastery in divine affairs and explains the hierarchy of divine powers in obscure animal allegories: powerful Planets, troublesome Geese, ferocious Dog-heads, Monkeys, Swans, Harpies, Furies, Night-owls, and so on. Mandrogerus then manages to simulate fortunetelling; in doing so he makes good use of Querolus' private details which he had earlier learned from Euclio. Querolus, naïve and superstitious, is an easy mark for a well-trained trickster. He complains to Mandrogerus about his misfortune, and the impostor sets the diagnosis: Querolus' house is cursed and needs to be purified, purged of the evil fate, which is concealed—what a coincidence—in the funerary urn. Querolus is impressed and admits the impostor into his house. The sixth scene (38.19–43.2) is a monologue of Querolus' slave Pantomalus; the slave complains on his master's character and praises the slave's underground nightlife. In the seventh scene (43.2–44.11) Mandrogerus locates the funerary urn which allegedly contains misfortune; for Querolus the urn being just an urn, he easily gives it away to Mandrogerus and his conjurers to be 'disposed' at a safe distance. He also obeys Mandrogerus' advice to stay locked in his house since misfortune will return. In the eighth scene (44.13–45.4) the impostors run away with their prey. In the ninth scene (45.6–46.18) Pantomalus and Arbiter, Querolus' neighbor, run a short conversation and decide to enter the house of Querolus which is, according to Mandrogerus' instructions, locked. The tenth scene (46.21–50.29) is the time of a disappointing discovery for the thieves: the urn appears to contain nothing but ashes, and the funerary inscription confirms their fears. Otherwise suspicious of the outcome of the scam as too good to be true, Mandrogerus now starts suspecting that the old miser played a prank on him, and rages in anger and despair; the tricksters cry and mourn their fate and decide to take revenge: infuriated, they start a siege of the house of Querolus, shouting as to impersonate misfortune and intimidate Querolus. Mandrogerus hurls the useless pot into the house and the impostors flee; the urn, however, dashed into pieces, reveals the gold hidden deep within, under the pile of ashes: the tricksters are tricked and the treasure is returned to its lawful owner. It is only by chance that Mandrogerus finds out about the aftermath; he then decides to take his last chance and return, demanding a share of the gold initially apportioned to him by Euclio. The eleventh scene (51.2–51.15) is a brief monologue of Lar who reflects on the outcome of recent events. In the twelfth scene (51.17–53.13) Querolus, Arbiter and Pantomalus finally get to figure out the whole story; having seen Mandrogerus returning, now they decide to make a prank. In the thirteenth scene (53.15–61.22) Mandrogerus' claims his right to half of the treasure, according to the agreement with Euclio. But Querolus now turns the story upside down: there is no gold, there is only a broken urn; the only way that Mandrogerus can prove that the gold exists is to admit that he threw the urn, but then proving himself a thief and sacrileger. After a long court-like debate, Mandrogerus gives up, since by insisting that there was a treasure in the urn, he would admit the theft; likewise, if he denied the existence of gold, he would be guilty of at least sacrilege. The parasite capitulates, and following the suggestion of the neighbor Arbiter, Querolus accepts Mandrogerus as his own personal parasite. The fourteenth scene (62.2–62.10) is only partially preserved. Sycophanta and Sardanapallus, now left on their own, ask from Querolus some money for their departure... (The end of the play is not preserved.)

The play thus begins with a prolix debate, around the middle of the play the parasite-trickster delivers a sort of a lecture, while the closure is a marathon altercation. As far as the plot is concerned, these static episodes, which occupy more than half of the entire play, are superfluous.<sup>38</sup> They indeed render the plot somewhat incoherent.<sup>39</sup> Yet we should not be quick in claiming the author's lack of technique, for these digressions may be distracting but it is unlikely that they served no purpose at all.<sup>40</sup>

Namely, much of what is so puzzling or simply noteworthy about the *Querolus* is contained precisely in these episodes.<sup>41</sup> The opening debate between *Lar* and *Querolus* is famous for moralistic reflections on human destiny, imperfection of the mortals, injustice in society, and numerous bitter-sweet depictions of the dark side of outward human happiness.<sup>42</sup> *Mandrogerus'* exposé, on the other hand, is nothing

<sup>38</sup> Corsaro, *Studio*, 28.

<sup>39</sup> Many attempts were made to solve the puzzle of the plot-scheme. Since the similarities between the *Querolus* and Plautus *Aulularia* are only superficial (the title, roles of *Lar* and *Euclio*, motif of hidden treasure), G. B. Conte (*Latin Literature*, 620) noticed that the *Querolus* looks more like as a sequel of the Plautine 'original.' also, a remark worth mentioning is that the last four scenes of the play appear less like a part of this comedy and more like a beginning of another one, see S. Jannaccone, "Contributo alla datazione del *Querolus*," 270; Jannaccone's hypothesis, as well as the whole paper, is poorly founded, yet it illustrates certain oddities of the plot. Nearly a century ago a highly interesting theory was presented, unfortunately not developed further in subsequent scholarship, that the plot of the *Querolus*, based on the motif of the disguised treasure, originates from various folktales; see D. P. Lockwood, "The Plot of the *Querolus* and the Folktales of Disguised Treasure," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 44 (1913), 215-232. Lockwood's article is in my opinion the most relevant, if not the only relevant, contribution to the subject. L. Alfonsi, "Il 'Querolo' e il 'Dyskolos'," *Aegyptus* 46 (1964), 200-205, saw the *Dyskolos* of Menander as one of the models upon which the *Querolus* was built; Alfonsi's study was obviously motivated by the titles of the two plays, both meaning more or less 'ill-tempered,' implying the main role; the results of this comparison are not impressive. Gaiser, on the other hand, traced Menander's fragmented play *Hydria* as a source of *Querolus*, through an also fragmented intermediary, Plautus' *Carbonaria* (K. Gaiser, *Menanders "Hydria": Eine hellenistische Komödie und ihr Weg ins lateinische Mittelalter* [Heidelberg: Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1977]); for a sound refutation of Gaiser's ambitious hypotheses, see Molina Sánchez, "Observaciones sobre el original del *Querolus sive Aulularia*," *Estudios de Filología Latina* 4 (1984), 133-143.

<sup>40</sup> According to G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy: A Study in Popular Entertainment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 72, they are wholly typical for the period.

<sup>41</sup> Except for *Pantomalus'* monologue, which pays homage to traditional slaves' monologues (cf. Plaut. *Stich.* 707-733); it also serves as an interlude, filling the time during which the impostors search for the treasure; see Corsaro, *Studio*, 132, and Lockwood, "The Plot of the *Querolus*," 222.

<sup>42</sup> 9.16-17 *Quare iniustis bene et iustis male?* 16.25-17.1 *QVER. Placet optio: da mihi diuitias atque honores militares uel mediocriter... LAR. Potes bellum gerere, ferrum excipere, aciem rumpere? QVER. Istud numquam potui;* 20.13-17 *LAR. O Querole, imbecilla tantum uobis corpora uidentur:*

but an arsenal of convoluted invectives against nearly everything and everyone; unfortunately, few of its targets can be identified with certainty.<sup>43</sup> The closing debate over the possession of gold is in form quite likely a rhetorically colored parody of court procedures, while humorously manifesting the paradoxical culmination of the gold-chase;<sup>44</sup> thus it is the least ‘superfluous’ of the episodes. Since the focus of this thesis is the analysis of the connection between the plot and the development of one role, these rhetorical excursions will be not be examined per se. Yet they are an indicator of the heterogeneous nature of the *Querolus*.

## THE GENRE?

From the above said it is clear that the *Querolus* cannot be easily classified; it is practically a patchwork in many respects. The *Querolus* is by all means conceived as a representative of comedy, yet the intrusion of foreign elements naturally attracted the attention of scholars in detecting traces of interpolations from other genres. Corsaro, for one, pointed out and elaborated the resemblance of the *Querolus* to Stoic diatribes, locating many instances concurrent with the Stoic philosophy.<sup>45</sup> Herrmann,

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*quantum animus est infirmior! Spes, timor, cupiditas, auaritia, desperatio non esse felicem sinunt. Quid si nescio quis ille alius in corde, alius est in uultu? Quid si laetus publice, maeret domi? Vt maiora reticeam, quid si uxorem non amat, quid si uxorem nimis amat? 17.24-18.15 QVER. Da mihi honorem qualem optinet togatus ille, muneras quem maxime... LAR... Vende uocem, uende linguam, iras atque odium loca. In summa, pauper esto et reporta penatibus pecuniarum aliquid, sed plus criminum. Plura etiam nunc dicerem, nisi quod efferre istos melius est quam laedere.* For the moral tone of classical Roman comedy see Duckworth, *Nature of Roman Comedy*, 300-304; see also L. Gourde, “Terence the Philosopher,” *Classical Journal* 42, 7 (1942), 431-433.

<sup>43</sup> A vast compilation of all the possible interpretations is provided by Jacquemard-LeSaos, extending up to nineteen pages of dense endnotes (*Querolus*, 88-105); the amount of the collected material is impressive, but the inconclusiveness and resultant confusion of the discussions are depressive.

<sup>44</sup> 54.3-9 QVER. *Pulchre, edepol, solus exinde hic fui. Vbinam mihi nunc tu frater nasceris et nouellus et senex? Vnde subito tam uetustus, qui nuper natus non eras? Nam si fratrem meum te esse adseueres, perditte, illud nunc restat, ut te dicas bimulum, nam tertio anno pater meus ille Euclio, cum est profectus, me, hercle, reliquit solum atque unicum...* 54.25-26 QVER. *Nimirum inde tam fideliter nobis commissa istaec taces. Age amice, quoniam institutus es heres, da quod possit diuidi;* 58.10-11 QVER. *Remoue paulisper inania; putemus nos paululum in iudicio stare. Ornam certe illam tu abstulisti?* (emphasis mine); 59.13-14 QVER. *Nobis interim sufficit purgare nosmet, obiecta repellere, nam si te ingredimur, alia temptandum est uia.*

<sup>45</sup> Corsaro, *Studio*, 42-49; M. L. Colish, in *The Stoic Tradition from Antiquity to the Early Middle Ages*, (Leiden: Brill, 1985), 94-96, denies any significant influence of Stoicism on the *Querolus*.

as mentioned, voted for the presence of fable in the *Querolus*, Boano preferred the *Corpus Hermeticum*,<sup>46</sup> while Braun thought mostly of juridical controversies.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, none of these propositions is unsustainable, and further research could easily double the list.

However, the dominant of the ‘external ingredients’ in the *Querolus* is undoubtedly satire.<sup>48</sup> An interesting disclaimer, unattested elsewhere in comedy, is to be found in the Prologue of the *Querolus*:

“As to our jests and jokes, we desire the freedom of bygone days. No one should take personally what we say to everyone, nor should anyone be offended by a joke meant for the general public. No one should recognize anything, for we are making the whole story up.”<sup>49</sup>

The author’s precaution is indicative: the very fact that he felt it appropriate to disclaim the resemblance to real persons implies that the play could have been easily suspected of expressing precisely that.<sup>50</sup> This is not wholly unprecedented; it has been accurately remarked that the comedies of Aristophanes were satires in every respect but the name.<sup>51</sup> So a comedy in general was not always about harmless entertainment, but Roman *palliata* was. Although in that aspect Old Attic Comedy is so far the best match within the genre, I do not argue for an immediate proximity, for the *Querolus*, in my view, does not offer such a systematic program for one particular period. Of the

<sup>46</sup> Also, Boano (“Sul *De reditu suo*,” 54-87) pointed out interesting resemblances between the *Querolus* and Rutilius’ poem in their tendency toward simple, popular philosophy and several references to Egyptian cults.

<sup>47</sup> L. Braun, “Querolus-Querelen,” *Museum Helveticum* 4 (1984), 231-241; Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, 91-95, n. 5-6) compared many passages of the play with the formulations of the *Codex Theodosianus*; see also above, fn. 44, and below, fn. 103.

<sup>48</sup> ‘Satire,’ of course, is to be taken rather in the modern than in its ancient, technical meaning; this is one of the rare aspects of the *Querolus* upon which the scholars are unanimous: Duckworth (*The Complainer*, 894), Corsaro (*Studio*, 46ff), Lana (*Analisi*, 81ff), Sánchez (*Estudio*, passim), Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, xxxiv-xxxv and 88-105), and so on.

<sup>49</sup> 5.8-11 *In ludis autem atque dictis, antiquam nobis veniam exposcimus. Nemo sibimet arbitretur dici quod nos populo dicimus, neque propriam sibimet causam constituat communi ex ioco. Nemo aliquid recognoscat: nos mentimur omnia* (slightly modified Duckworth’s translation).

<sup>50</sup> To the best of my knowledge, up to Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, xxxi), no scholarly work paid due attention to this disclaimer; Duckworth (*The Complainer*, 950) merely pointed out the similarity with statements often found in modern fiction.

<sup>51</sup> D. M. Hooley, *Roman Satire* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), 1.

numerous victims of its onslaughts none seems to have taken the lead.<sup>52</sup> Also, even though in referring to certain phenomena the *Querolus* may find more cognates among the contemporaries than in earlier literature, in most of the instances it expresses no more than evergreen moral and social criticism.<sup>53</sup>

Finally, this last passage will be one of the guidelines in the present thesis. I will follow the parasite Mandrogerus and analyze how he develops from the conventional character of Roman comedy into a figure ringing more satirical. As a result, I will suggest, the character of Mandrogerus appears more close to life than the stock comic types. Various Mandrogeri<sup>54</sup>—so post-classical satire suggests—were not only more likely to be met in everyday life than the plastic heroes of *palliata* but were also more inspiring. True, in his own time Mandrogerus may have been perceived as conventional as earlier stock characters, but his extraordinary mission in this comedy demonstrates that admission into the dramatic cast-list was not easily won.

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<sup>52</sup> W. Emrich, *Griesgram oder die Geschichte vom Topf* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1965), 9-10, was intrigued by the *togatus* (*Quer.* 17.24, 42.13, 16); Lana focuses on the lecture of Mandrogerus, finding that the anonymous author aims at the imperial offices (*Analisi*, 109-119); Corsaro read many passages as references to Christianity (*Studio*, 47, 106ff); see also his article “Garbata polemica anticristiana nella anonima commedia tardoimperiale *Querolus sive Aulularia*,” in *Oikoumene: Studi paleocristiani pubblicati in onore del Concilio ecumenico vaticano 2*, 523-533 (Catania: Centro di studi sull’antico cristianesimo, Università di Catania, 1964); Corsaro concludes ambiguously: “E la parodia allora se trasformava in adesione” (533). Jacquemard-LeSaos is, as mentioned, and as usual, indecisive. The greatest advancement in searching for one particular target group is made by K. Smolak, “Das Gaunertrio im *Querolus*,” *Wiener Studien* 101 (1988), 327-338; Smolak analyzed quite the number of passages from the *Querolus* detecting various references to the lifestyles of monks and allusions to contemporary monastic texts, particularly examining the roles of the three impostors; although the very topic requires a comprehensive treatment, many of Smolak’s suggestions are worth considering; however, references to his article are surprisingly rare. I am grateful to the author for sending me this not easily accessible publication on short notice.

<sup>53</sup> For the parallels in contemporary sources, see above, fn. 16; for the moralistic commonplaces, see fn. 37 and 42.

<sup>54</sup> The correct Latin plural would in fact be *Mandrogerontes*.

### III. THE COMIC MASK: IN THE MOOD FOR FOOD

#### THE STAFF OF THE *QUEROLUS*

Among the peculiarities of the *Querolus* one that interested me the most is the character-setting. A remarkable novelty is the complete absence of female roles which, as a consequence, deprived the play of any love-motifs, so intrinsic to classical comedy.<sup>55</sup> The *Querolus* (in return?) introduced the role of *Lar familiaris*. He, or preferably ‘it,’ was the narrator in Plautus’ *Aulularia*, but only as a traditional ‘prologue-divinity;’ in the *Querolus*, however, he is a full-time participant, furthermore, the supervisor of events throughout the play. Thus he is the only known example of a non-human role ever to be seen in Roman comedy,<sup>56</sup> excluding the otherwise exceptional *Amphitruo* of Plautus.<sup>57</sup> Lastly, the protagonist Querolus is only superficially similar to the stock type of *adulescens*, to use the least inaccurate category: he is a rather unbalanced and mechanical mixture of the ill-tempered, stingy miser, the naïve youngster, and a kind of a litigator.<sup>58</sup> Moreover, his ‘querulousness’ has no significance for the plot, nor does it inspire character-portrayal in action, which renders the title unjustified. Therefore, except for that odd creature of *Lar*—in itself

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<sup>55</sup> “There are few plays in which love does not have a prominent role although many of the comedies seem less concerned with love itself than with its consequences,” Duckworth, *Nature of Roman Comedy*, 279; see also 237-242. On *eros* in Greek New Comedy, see D. Konstan, *Greek Comedy and Ideology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 93-164; on the function of women in comic plots of mistaken identity, see A. Traill, *Women and the Comic Plot in Menander* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>56</sup> It is perhaps not by chance that *Lar* appears only in front of Querolus. Marcia Colish (*The Stoic Tradition*, 94-96) allowed herself a stunning material mistake twice, namely, to mention and even analyze a conversation between *Lar* and *Mandrogerus*—a conversation which in this comedy never takes place.

<sup>57</sup> The characters of *Amphitruo* are among others Mercury and Jupiter; see the new critical edition and translation of D. M. Christenson, *Plautus: Amphitruo* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>58</sup> Corsaro notices his “tre facce diverse” (*Studio*, 26), while Jacquemard-LeSaos calls him “inclassable” (*Querolus*, xxx); for the general character-treatments in Roman comedy, see Duckworth, *Nature of Roman Comedy*, 236-271.

intriguing, but unimaginable as a dramatic character—the only noteworthy role is the parasite Mandrogerus.<sup>59</sup>

The role of Mandrogerus, as I intend to exemplify, is designed in a highly unconventional manner. Naturally, the term ‘unconventional’ has to be taken with due reserve, since Mandrogerus as a comic figure can only be compared to the parasites we got to know from Plautus and Terence. We can only guess what might have happened during the five-century gap which separates the *Querolus* from republican plays. The all-powerful dramatic conventions might have changed in the meantime. Mandrogerus may have had at least partly adequate antecedents in some supposed plays we have no information of, and late antiquity could have given birth to a new generation of comic parasites. Although as it stands we can only treat Mandrogerus as a unique case, such a development will turn out to be not so inconceivable. The parasite from the *Querolus* is indeed an extraordinary specimen of parasitic behaviour, but his profile gives away certain signs of an almost natural evolution. Mandrogerus, according to my interpretation, is unconventional but intentionally so, in order to demonstrate that evolution. Perhaps strange to say, I interpret him as a logical continuation of the traditional comic type, but his portrayal I nevertheless define as authentic. In the present thesis I will dissolve this apparent contradiction. Before dissecting the last ancient parasite, I will briefly touch upon the earlier literary tradition, gradually progressing towards Mandrogerus’ deviation from it.

## PARASITIC CONVENTIONS

The role of the parasite has always possessed extensive comic potential, which often proved fruitful.<sup>60</sup> Legrand claimed that “[t]he talent of provoking laughter is one of

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<sup>59</sup> *Querolus*’ slave Pantomalus is practically a protatic character (see above, fn. 41); for the two conjurers of Mandrogerus, see below fn. 92.



the most useful assets of the parasite,”<sup>61</sup> while according to Duckworth, “the parasite is the ‘funny’ man par excellence.”<sup>62</sup> The development of this stock character, as we know it from Roman comedy, is rather complex. Its roots stretch far and deep into Greek tradition, Old Attic Comedy and Epicharmus. According to some convincing arguments, *parasitos* is a fourth-century label for the comic type earlier known as *kolax*, the flatterer, and the two terms from that point on were not easily distinguishable.<sup>63</sup>

Flattery and gluttony became inseparable. The image of the parasite was a spineless hanger-on, an adulator with no scruples, eager to do anything so as to achieve his goal; the goal is, as the name suggests, free food. This stock character, originally Greek, seems to have fitted quite well into Roman comedy, where it could have evoked memories of its approximate real-time equivalent, the status of a *cliens*. This potential, however, for some reason was not exploited by Plautus and Terence,

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<sup>60</sup> The stock character of the parasite is sufficiently explored in scholarly works; the classical studies on the parasites and flatterers, still of certain value, are O. Ribbeck, *Kolax: Eine ethologische Studie* (Leipzig: Hirzel, 1883), and A. Giese, *De parasi persona capita selecta* (Berlin: R. Trenkel, 1908). A recent survey of the parasite in Roman comedy is, e.g. S. Flaucher, “Studien zum Parasiten in der römischen Komödie,” PhD Dissertation (University of Mannheim, 2002); the origin of Roman comic parasites is examined by E. I. Tylawsky’s *Saturio’s Inheritance: The Greek Ancestry of the Roman Comic Parasite* (New York: Peter Lang, 2002); a research of the relation between Greek and Roman comedy through the role of the parasite is A. Antonsen-Resch, *Von Gnathon zu Saturio: Die Parasitenfigur und das Verhältnis der römischen Komödie zur griechischen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), with an updated bibliography. For a quick and useful summary, see C. Castillo García, “El tipo del parásito en la comedia romana,” in *Athlon: Satira grammatica in honorem Francisci R. Adrados*, vol. 2, ed. P. Bádenas de la Peña, A. Martínez Díez, M. E. Martínez-Fresneda, E. Rodríguez Monescillo, 173-182 (Madrid: Editorial Gredos, 1987). The study most frequently referred to in the present thesis is Cynthia Damon’s work on the social aspects and the literary image of the parasites, both in comedy and other genres, *The Mask of the Parasite: A Pathology of Roman Patronage* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

<sup>61</sup> Ph. E. Legrand, *The New Greek Comedy*, tr. J. Loeb (London: William Heinemann, 1917), 76.

<sup>62</sup> Duckworth, *Nature of Roman Comedy*, 265.

<sup>63</sup> W. G. Arnott, “Alexis and the Parasite’s Name,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 9, 2 (1968), 161-168. For the distinction between the two terms, see discussion in Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 13-19. See also the arguments of P. G. McC. Brown, “Menander, Fragments 745 and 746 K–T, Menander’s *Kolax*, and Parasites and Flatterers in Greek Comedy,” *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 92 (1992), 91–107, and L. Gil, “El ‘Alazón’ y sus variantes,” *Estudios Clásicos* 25 (1981-83), 39-58. For a novel etymology of the term *colax* in Roman comedy, see M. Fontaine, “*Parasitus Colax* (Terence, *Eunuchus* 30),” *Mnemosyne* 60 (2007), 483-489.

since in their plays even allusions of such sort are not attested.<sup>64</sup> The parasite, after all, under that name, was originally a Greek product, and the *cliens* a typically Roman institution. But the conditions of the two were so conveniently alike that it is not impossible to imagine an audience forming an association on its own.

The dominant attributes of parasites, therefore, are their comically exaggerated voraciousness and servility. Wilner, for example, long ago pointed out as the recurrent characteristics of the parasites “their gluttony, propensity to solicit invitations, their fawning, ability at entertaining, and their abject lack of self-respect.”<sup>65</sup> In a word, the parasite was at his best as a clown.

But the Roman comic parasite sometimes also conducted scams, impersonations and foul play of any sort, which made him similar to a *sykophántēs*. Sykophants were swindlers and blackmailers, abusers of legal procedures, who flourished in classical Athens,<sup>66</sup> and were quite likely stock characters in Greek comedy.<sup>67</sup> Comic parasites thereby acquired multifunctionality, for they could in such cases contribute to organizing the deceit necessary for the dramatic action. It should be

<sup>64</sup> Damon (*The Mask of the Parasite*, 25) also notes that this connection “would prove so fertile in other genres.” This genre is satire, viz. Juvenal (e.g. 1.132-139; 3.75-125; 5.1-14, 156-163, etc.), who is “the only satirist to use the comic label *parasitus*, and he has no inclination to beat about the bush when making a connection between the Greek type and the Roman reality. For Juvenal the parasite was an apt and effective emblem of the Roman *cliens*,” C. Damon, “Greek Parasites and Roman Patronage,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 97 (1995), 181-195, at 191. See also below, fn. 79.

<sup>65</sup> O. L. Wilner, “The Character Treatment of Inorganic Roles in Roman Comedy,” *Classical Philology* 26, 3 (1931), 264-283; 272.

<sup>66</sup> “Habitual prosecutors,” as formulated by D. M. MacDowell, art. *sykophants* in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003<sup>3</sup>). An thorough analysis of the sykophant-parasite connection is J. O. Lofberg, “The Sykophant-Parasite,” *Classical Philology* 15 (1920), 61-72; the Roman comic parasites resembling sykophants are not to be immediately identified with the Athenian sykophants in the technical meaning. For a study on sykophancy in general see also his *Sykophancy in Athens* (Menasha, WI: Collegiate Press, 1917 [PhD Diss., University of Chicago 1914]), and R. J. Bonner, *Lawyers and Litigants in Ancient Athens: The Genesis of the Legal Profession* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1969), 59-71. See also more recent essays of R. Osborne, “Vexatious Litigation in Classical Athens: Sykophancy and the Sykophant,” 83-102, and D. Harvey, “The Sykophant and Sykophancy: Vexatious Redefinition,” 103-121, both in *Nomos: Essays in Athenian Law, Politics, and Society*, ed. P. Cartledge, P. Millett, and S. Todd (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Harvey’s and Osborne’s spelling ‘sykophant,’ ‘sykophancy,’ I find quite convenient to distinguish Greek technical term from the modern English ‘sycophant;’ except in quotations, I will use that spelling in the present thesis.

<sup>67</sup> Lofberg, “The Sykophant-Parasite,” 62, with references.

kept in mind, however, that these missions were only performed by the parasites, on behalf of and to the benefit of their sponsors.<sup>68</sup> Lofberg is simply correct in stating that the “identification of the parasite with the sycophant was but natural.”<sup>69</sup> Thus the parasite could, whenever dramatically useful, become a kind of an ad hoc handyman, able of supplementing or substituting for the famous trickster, the *seruus callidus*. The best example is Terence’s Phormio, the parasite who is running the show by himself, and who is, according to Norwood, “in fact, far less a parasite than a *sykophántēs*, a subtle and elegant blackmailer.”<sup>70</sup> Be this definition perhaps overstated, it stresses well enough that in cases like Phormio’s the parasite’s role contributed considerably to the development of the plot; whether predominantly as a ‘sycophant’ or as an extendedly empowered parasite, is a matter of perception, and not crucial for the present discussion.

But although the parasite could often take a larger part in the action of the play, his voracity and hunger-related sentiments were practically irrelevant for the course of the events. The parasite’s usefulness was grounded on only one side of him—his willingness to perform services—while his gluttony was mere comic

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<sup>68</sup> E.g., Terence’s *Phormio*; see Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 90.

<sup>69</sup> Lofberg, “The Sycophant-Parasite,” 68. The comic type of the parasite thus occasionally united flattery and deceitfulness; this seems to be the reply to the claim that “[N]obody has yet come up with a good explanation of how the word [i.e. sycophant] got its modern sense of ‘flatterer’,” MacDowell, art. *sycophants*, *OCD*.

<sup>70</sup> G. Norwood, *Art of Terence* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1923), 76; Damon, however (*The Mask of the Parasite*, 97-8, with notes), challenges Norwood’s and similar conclusions about Phormio, e.g. Lofberg’s (“The Sycophant-Parasite,” 69 ff). The examples of parasites with significant influence on the plot are Plautus’ Curculio or Gelasimus; also, in Plautus’ *Persa*, the parasite Saturio participated in a fraud (although far from having organized it): he assigned his daughter to pretend to be a prostitute and thus to be offered to a pimp in exchange for the beloved prostitute of Saturio’s friend; when afterwards Saturio’s daughter was proven to be freeborn, the whoremonger’s acquisition turned out to be illegal and he had to release the girl. Saturio’s part in the scam could not have been fulfilled by a regular trickster, a slave, since in order for the deceit to work the girl had to be freeborn. Although his contribution is substantial, Saturio is still a harmless example of a ‘parasite-trickster’ when compared to Phormio or Curculio. For Phormio see W. G. Arnott, “*Phormio Parasitus*: A Study in Dramatic Methods of Characterization,” *Greece & Rome* 17, 1 (1970), 32-57; see also below, fn. 107. P. G. McC. Brown published a brand new translation of Terence’s plays (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

equipment.<sup>71</sup> This is to be remembered while addressing the problems of the role of Mandrogerus.

For the inquiry about Mandrogerus it should also not be forgotten that comic parasites have had many faces; there can hardly be one satisfactory definition for all the parasites of Roman comedy, let alone Greek.<sup>72</sup> As summarized by Duckworth, a parasite could be a professional jokester, a ‘handy man’, or a flatterer.<sup>73</sup> Cynthia Damon, underlining some of his essential features, such as the “subordination of pride to the demands of his belly,” provided the most adequate formulation of the parasite’ nature as the “combination of hunger, dependency and spinelessness.”<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the only possible definition of the comic parasite is a combinatory one. Damon’s combination seems to have roughly covered various possible assignments of this role, implied by the three terms, *parasitos*, *kolax*, and *sykophántēs*.

According to their needs and ideas, Roman comic poets exploited all of these capacities of parasites and while emphasizing one or several of them, used the label *parasitus* as an umbrella term. Neither the *kolax* nor the *sykophant* survived the transplantation from Greek to Roman comedy, or at least, although their remnants are visible, they never became stock characters under these names. Due to the powerful comic effect of humility derived from insatiability, the title of *parasitus* prevailed and became the dramatic convention in Roman comedy, whereas, for instance, “many individuals called parasites by a playwright would doubtless be known as sycophants

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<sup>71</sup> Although the parasites’ availability for doing favours was motivated by their personal gain, notably full stomach, this seems to me rather a convenient connection than a necessary link; moreover, the best example of a skillful and helpful parasite, Phormio, is only officially obsessed with comestibles, and perhaps so because of Terence’s deliberate intervention to make his character more ‘parasitical;’ on the possibility that his parasitic features are introduced by Terence in the character originally a *sykophant*, see Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 89-98, n. 40 and 50.

<sup>72</sup> Archaeology agrees: M. Bieber, *The History of Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 100, notes several different types of the theatrical masks of the parasites.

<sup>73</sup> Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, 265.

<sup>74</sup> Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 99-100. On page 7, Damon also defines the parasite (not necessarily the comic one) as “a conveniently compact personified form of something quite abstract, of a complicated nexus of social irritants including flattery, favoritism, and dependency.”

in real life.”<sup>75</sup> If the truly ‘parasitic’ nature of some parasites is indeed disputable, for Mandrogerus this is even more the case. He does little—if anything—to justify his label. The conventional term *parasitus* does not fit Mandrogerus at all, who is in fact interestingly disguised under the universal term.

One of the premises in analyzing certain aspects of the parasite Mandrogerus is that the comic parasite in general should ultimately be regarded as the caricatured literary expression of various everyday phenomena in both Greece and Rome.<sup>76</sup> Just like the other so-called professional comic roles—the cook, the soldier, the pimp—and more than the ‘non-professional’ ones, the parasite was supposed to point to a certain type(s) of human behaviour from an artistic distance and was addressing the common experiences of the spectators. The complex development of this comic type could have been influenced, among other factors, by civil institutions of Athenian democracy and/or the system of patronage in republican Rome. Different social backgrounds were, so it would seem, the basis for the many-sidedness of the parasite’s role. That basis was then built upon by the playwrights’ imaginations. In Damon’s words, “[b]oth Plautus and Terence can be seen searching for a functional equivalent in Roman society for the parasite of Greek literature.”<sup>77</sup> Just as by the time of Roman comedy the Greek parasite had become anachronistic, so had the Roman parasite by the time of the *Querolus*. In my view, Mandrogerus is in a way a late-antique ‘functional equivalent’ for the parasite of classical comedy.

Although originally—long, long ago—inspired by some flesh-and-blood individuals, Greek and Roman comic heroes were far from expressing a strict

<sup>75</sup> Lofberg, “The Sycophant-Parasite,” 69.

<sup>76</sup> Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 2, sets the ground for her study: “[...]the stock character of the parasite that the Romans knew from Greek plays became in Latin authors a symbol for unhealthy aspects of patronage relationships on their own real world. The figure of the parasite opens up for us the pathology of Roman patronage.”

<sup>77</sup> *The Mask of the Parasite*, 25.

resemblance to everyday life: they were not more than mere types designed either as caricatures or abstracts of life.<sup>78</sup> It is superfluous to remember that, at least in Roman comedy, they were rarely or ever expected to reveal signs of personality. The parasite, for one, was an abstract character par excellence: he was hungry because he was hungry, he was born as a parasite and certainly was to die like one. There was simply no actual explanation of parasitic edacity, which was practically an axiom, a given and unquestionable fact. Still, parasitism, with all its variations and nuances, was an evergreen and widespread phenomenon, and its comic representative was, in my opinion, the most recognizable and the most associable of comic characters; he was all the more humorous because his behaviour looked so familiar. Yet he was presented as utterly abstract and impersonal, in spite of his recognizability, or, perhaps, precisely with the view of excluding the possibility of someone being unpleasantly recognized.<sup>79</sup> Roman comedy, after all, was not satire—not until the *Querolus*.

Namely, in *Mandrogerus* for the first time we can see the parasite acting almost human, be it in an imaginary world of comedy. It is exactly this degree of ‘realism’ which makes *Mandrogerus* unconventional. He can hardly be classified as the conventional comic parasite, but he might easily find his equals elsewhere: outside

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<sup>78</sup> “Life as depicted in New Comedy compared to real life is like an aquarium compared to an ocean,” Владета Јанковић [Vladeta Janković], *Менадрови ликови и европска драма* [Menander’s Characters and the European Drama] (Belgrade: Српска Академија Наука и Уметности, 1978), 64; this doctoral thesis is in my experience the most comprehensive treatment of ancient dramatic characterization (unfortunately, available only in Serbian).

<sup>79</sup> It is a long shot, but this could explain why Plautus and Terence avoided, for example, associating the parasites with *clientes*; the connection was seemingly more appropriate for satire, since the (possible) restraints of the dramatists did not bother Juvenal (see fn. 64); preserving the Greek term *parasitus* (unlike the Latin forms *adulescens*, *senex*, or *meretrix*) may have also helped the comic playwrights in keeping themselves at a safe artistic distance. Plautus’ and Terence’s “searching for the functional equivalent” mentioned by Damon I understand only as looking for the more recognizable form within the typology: if they had wanted so, Roman comic poets would certainly find numerous real-time equivalents with the comic parasite.

comedy and, ultimately, outside literature.<sup>80</sup> I argue that Mandrogerus was meant to remind the audience of some instances of real human behaviour—if not of a certain group in particular—more directly than the earlier comic parasites were doing it.

As I hope to demonstrate, the ‘realistic’ appearance of Mandrogerus is the result of experimenting with comic conventions, conducted to illustrate one possible direction of the character’s evolution. It ultimately manifests the modernity of the *Querolus*. For the discussion of the parasite Mandrogerus, as announced, two features are fundamental: a radically new kind of gluttony and the ambiguous attitude towards parasitic dependence. While the first motif was dealt with in a novel but perhaps not unpredictable manner, the second was subject to an unprecedented treatment.

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<sup>80</sup> See below, chapter VI.

## IV. FROM DISH TO CASH: THE SMELL OF GOLD

As it can be noticed from the outline of the plot, there is nothing humorous about Mandrogerus' parasitism as such: no putting up with insults, no flattering, no suffocating with crumbs. So far he is at least unconventional inasmuch as he is deprived of what Legrand saw as one of the most useful assets of his role. It is also obvious that Mandrogerus is indispensable for the action. Since none of the events would have taken place if it were not for his intention to deceive Querolus, his role in this comedy would practically be the leading one. The novelties of this parasite are, therefore, even more noteworthy. Mandrogerus is an atypical parasite in several aspects and, as it turns out, it is exactly his unconventional appearance which is the foundation of the entire dramatic arrangement of the *Querolus*.

A fitting introduction to the study of Mandrogerus is his own introductory declaration of his program; his exposé, a part of which will be referred to again further below, is worth quoting in its entirety:

“Many men pride themselves upon their ability in dealing with swift-fleeing animals or ferocious wild beasts, either in tracking them down, or catching them in their lairs, or overpowering them by chance. How much greater is my talent and my profit, for I hunt men in the sight of all! And what men? Why, particularly the rich, the powerful, and the cultured. (*proudly*) I am Mandrogerus, the most pre-eminent by far of all parasites. There lies near a certain pot, and the breeze has wafted its scent to me across the seas. Away, you mixers of sauces! Away, you concoctions of cooks! Away, you recipes of Apicius! The secrets of this pot were known to Euclio alone. Why are you surprised? It is gold that I follow; it is gold that sends its odour across seas and lands.”

*Multum esse sese aliqui laudant qui uel pugnaces feras uel fugaces bestias, aut uestigiis insequuntur aut cubilibus deprehendunt aut casu opprimunt. Quanto mihi maius est ingenium et lucrum, qui homines uenor publice. Sed quos homines! Diuites et potentes et litteratos maxime! Mandrogerus ego sum parasitorum omnium longe praestantissimus. Aula quaedam hic iacet cuius odorem mihi trans maria uentus detulit. Cedant iuris conditores, cedant omnia cocorum ingenia, cedant Apici fercula! Huius ollae condimentum solus sciuit*



*Euclio. Quid miramini? Aurum est quod sequor: hoc est quod ultra maria et terras olet.*<sup>81</sup>

Mandrogerus' ambitions professed above are problematic, for gluttony, the parasite's prime attribute, is at stake. A striking novelty of this parasite is that, regardless of the essence and the title of his role, he is no longer yearning for a full stomach—but a full sack. A new target, real and palpable, is now a substitute for the conventional, or better, the symbolical one. The parasite himself took care to reveal his intentions, apparently contrary to the expectations of the audience: "Why are you surprised? It is gold that I follow," confesses Mandrogerus. Whether the audience was really to be surprised, or this was just a formula for emphasizing a fact perhaps already conventional by that time, his declaration is striking. Mandrogerus is not an ever-hungry sponger, a ridiculous clown drooling over a piece of bread on the floor; he is a perfidious and determined money-seeker, de facto a robber, motivated by age-old human desire. Nominally hungry for food, this parasite is in fact hungry for gold.<sup>82</sup>

Regarding the comic conventions, this transition is certainly surprising. In a wider perspective, however, one may also infer that such an evolution was only natural. Namely, the comic *topos* of parasitic desire for food must have been utterly

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<sup>81</sup> 23.15-24.4: The (alleged) originality of the parasite's methods and the overall boastful tone of the passage remind one of the monologue of the parasite Gnatho in Terence's *Eunuchus* (241-254); 'statements of purpose' of this kind were otherwise frequent in the plays of Plautus and Terence. The author apparently paid much attention to this passage; cf. the rhetorical setting of the line *cedant iuris conditores, cedant omnia cocorum ingenia, cedant Apici fercula*, with Ambros. *De hel. ieiun.* 13.48: *cedunt pincernarum manus uina fundentium et cocorum labores calida ministrantium, cedunt qui mensuras ipsas bonas supereffluentes diligenti librant examine, ne quid effundant: non cedunt bibentes* (emphases mine).

<sup>82</sup> The terminology is very indicative; Mandrogerus is named *parasitus* several times in the introductory prologues (3.18; 4.1, 5, 13, 16), and only once in the play, by himself, in the pompous exposé cited above (23.19); this is what he was *officially* supposed to represent. However, during the action of the play, he is only referred to by names implying criminal activities: thief, impostor, and sacrileger. Apart from being called *furcifer* (53.16), *scelestus* (53.20; 57.17), *sacrilegus* (57.22), he is most often labeled as *fraudulentus* (5.3, 6; 6.6; 53.9), *perfidus* (6.6, 15; 49.3; 51.10; 53.1), and *fur* (4.3; 6.12; 51.5, 10; 52.4; 61.6, 7); likewise, his fellow-parasites are named *coniurati* (50.28). The most telling, however, is the frequency of the terms denoting his deeds, namely, *fraus* (3.20; 5.3; 6.15; 51.14; 54.18; 56.16) and *furtum* (4.15; 6.11; 23.11; 51.5; 59.8, 17, 18; 60.3; 61.3).

worn-out by the time the *Querolus* was composed.<sup>83</sup> The author needed a more vivid scrounger than what the comic tradition had to offer him. Exaggerated physical appetite was a commonplace motif which the anonymous author applied only as an appropriate—and the only possible—comic excuse for Mandrogerus’ ultimately criminal intentions. Carnal hunger is indeed the most down-to-earth (and, thereby, often the most humorous) manifestation of one’s striving for wellbeing. In the *Querolus*, this essentially animal instinct is—at last—raised to the level of understandable human aspirations for material prosperity. Yet even if we imagine that financial profit has been an *implied* objective of parasitic profession all along, this is the first time we hear it said out loud in a comic context.<sup>84</sup> After centuries of pretending, the fun is over and the masks are down: as if the anonymous author finally decided to disclose that the emperor is naked.

The traditional comic parasite was too harmless a leech to play the role of a more dangerous one in the *Querolus* but surely the best available candidate from the cast-list to do so. Still, although thoroughly adapted, the dramatic convention was not neglected. As far as the technical food-money transition is concerned, the author skilfully used that dichotomy without concealing his twist at all.

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<sup>83</sup> The social and literary importance of food, however, was perennial; see the analyzed selected letters of Gallic bishops from fifth-century Gaul by D. Shanzer, “Bishops, Letters, Fast, Food, and Feast in Later Roman Gaul,” in *Culture and Society in Later Roman Gaul: Revisiting the Sources*, ed. R. W. Mathisen and D. R. Shanzer, 217-36 (Aldershot: Ashgate 2001).

<sup>84</sup> Alciphron’s *Letters* 9-10 record petty thefts of parasites; their prey was, conveniently enough, silverware from the table.

## GOLD, THAT FRAGRANT OBJECT OF DESIRE

Allusions to food and gluttony in association with gold constantly occur in the *Querolus*. As early as in his introductory monologue quoted above, Mandrogerus twice stressed the power of the “scent of gold” which reached and attracted him, because “it is gold that sends its odour across seas and lands.” The parasite’s expected objective, food, is neatly turned into the actual target of these parasites, gold, which thus has a pleasant fragrance.

Immediately follows the reference to cooks and food. One of the lines in this passage is based on Plautus’ favorite play upon the word *ius*, which can mean ‘law,’ ‘right,’ as well as ‘soup.’ Starting with *iuris conditores*, which could thus mean both ‘cooks’ and ‘law-givers,’ the author of the *Querolus* continues the ‘gastro-metaphor’ with a masterful wordplay on *conditum*, which can denote either ‘spice,’ ‘flavour’ (from *condire*), or ‘depository,’ ‘hiding-place’ (from *condere*). Thus, the line *huius ollae conditum solus sciuit Euclio* (24.3) can be understood either as “only Euclio knew the flavour of this dish,” but also as “only Euclio knew the location of the urn.” The joke makes sense only from the perspective of the unconcealed and humorous food-to-gold transition.<sup>85</sup> Soon after the brief conspirative meeting, the tricksters approach the house of Querolus, and Mandrogerus is as explicit as earlier: “I smell gold inside.”<sup>86</sup>

The pot itself proved to be an excellent starting point for jokes of this sort, since the Latin *olla* can be used of a funerary urn with ashes, a vessel with gold, or a dish with food<sup>87</sup>—all three of them being key-points of the play. To the great

<sup>85</sup> Duckworth, *The Complainer*, 951, spotted the pun without entering further discussion.

<sup>86</sup> 25.27 *Sed interius mihi aurum olet* (translation mine).

<sup>87</sup> In its original meaning of ‘cooking dish’ it is used, in its archaic form *aula*, by e.g. by Cato (*De re rustica*), and frequently in Plautus (e.g. *Curc.* 369); an *olla* found containing money is, e.g. Cic. *Fam.* 9.8.14.2-3 (*ollam denariorum implere*), or Plaut. *Aul.* 809 (*quadrilibrem aulam auro onustam habeo*). With a sense most interesting in understanding the puns in the *Querolus*, namely that of a dish suitable

disappointment of the parasites-robbers, that same gold which in the beginning smelled pleasantly will later begin to stink, when they think that the urn contains nothing but ashes of the deceased: “Oh! My breath is caught in my throat. I’ve heard it said that gold had an odour, but the smell of this is really strong ... The lead cover is full of openings and it breathes forth foul odours. I never knew before this that gold could have such a rank smell. It would be a stench even for a moneylender.”<sup>88</sup> Here one can notice that the impostors are allegedly disgusted by the smell of gold, while at the same time they are convinced that there is no gold in the urn. Furthermore, the gold reeks only *because* they lament over its absence and the malodour is the materialization of their regret. Formally speaking, in their misperception they would be able to smell nothing but the remains of a cremated cadaver. Insisting on the stench of the gold invisible to the impostors is by no means an author’s lapse but just another ironic reference to the aromatic attributes of this gold. Conveniently, the odour of gold is justified humorously by its ‘culinary heritage’ in the play, and technically by the stench of the ashes in the urn. Throughout the *Querolus* it is gold which smells instead of food. Now, the ashes smell instead of gold.<sup>89</sup>

This overlapping of the three motifs—food, gold and ashes—is masterfully conceived. The impostors’ tragic illusion from the passage above will also yield Mandrogerus’ cry of despair: “Where are we to turn now, disowned as we are? What

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for keeping ashes, it is found e.g. in Plaut. *Amph.* 134 (*optimo iure infringatur aula cineris in caput*), and *Curc.* 395-396 (*nam quid id refert mea, an aula quassa cum cinere effossus siet?*).

<sup>88</sup> 48.11-16 *Anima in faucibus. Audieram egomet olere aurum, istud etiam redolet... Clastrum illud plumbeum densa per foramina diris fragrat odoribus. Nunquam ante haec comperi aurum sic ranciscere. Vsurario cuilibet faetere hoc potest.* Duckworth’s translation of the last sentence is slightly different: “It ought to have a stench like this for moneylenders.”

<sup>89</sup> The ‘smelling of gold’ is found on one instance in Plautus, but as a casual *a parte* observation, without any development of food-gold relation; when Euclio, the father of the girl, suspects that the (pretended) elderly suitor of his daughter is fishing for dowry, he remarks: “this guy smells my money” (*Aul.* 216 *aurum huic olet*; translation mine). It is not improbable that the line was directly borrowed from Plautus, but its molding to the travesty of gold in the *Querolus* is beyond doubt the anonymous author’s merit. The same goes for the other image as well, the stench of a corpse; it was an association which did not escape Juvenal (4.109), in describing his disgust by the smell of Vibius Crispus, who reeks “with odours enough to out-scent two funerals”, *quantum uix duo funera redolent*; translation of G. G. Ramsay, *Juvenal and Persius* (London: William Heinemann, 1928), 65.

spot will give us shelter? What pot will give us food?”<sup>90</sup> Duckworth mirrored the almost untranslatable *aula/olla* wordplay (court/pot) the best he could, by translating ‘spot’ and ‘pot,’ but he seems to have ignored or missed the possible ambiguity of the last line. Latin *Quae nos olla tuebitur* can be understood either, as in his translation, ‘what dish will feed us,’ or, in a slightly wider sense but in the same vein, ‘what container will provide a living for us.’ But I suggest it can also mean ‘what urn will preserve our remains.’<sup>91</sup> According to this interpretation of mine, the line is more than effectively drawn, since it puns on the three leitmotifs of the play: the official target of all the parasites (food), the means of providing it and the real objective of these parasites (gold), and the visible contents of the urn, which disguise the gold and ultimately hinder these parasites’ ambitions (ashes). The impostors’ tragedy is total, and the essential irony of the whole comedy, the dish-cash-ash triangle, is expressed in one ingenious pun.

Lastly, that the author was consistently transparent in his abuse of the comic motif of parasitic gluttony suggests a remark almost unnoticeably ironic. It is inserted in the conversation in the fourth scene between the three impostors. Mandrogerus tells his accomplices his dream, which professed to him that he would be the only one to come into the possession of Euclio’s gold. The dream, however, also foretold that the treasure would only suffice to fill his stomach, so Sycophanta comments: “Why,

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<sup>90</sup> 47.22-23 *Quonam redituri sumus, tot abdicati? Quae nos aula recipiet? Quae nos olla tuebitur?*

<sup>91</sup> In addition, this could be a double pun, one being the polysemy of the word *olla*, another on *aula* and *olla*, since *aula*, apart from meaning ‘court’ (Gk. *aulē*), is also an earlier form of *olla*, used by Plautus exclusively (see above, fn. 87, and *OLD*, s.vv.); in that case, both the lines *quae nos aula recipiet* and *quae nos olla tuebitur* would in fact mean the same, ‘what pot will keep us.’ *Aula* used instead of *olla* is found in the *Querolus* as well (47.24): *accede, amice, aulam iterum atque iterum uisita*; immediately after follows a proverbial phrase, perfectly fitting the recurrent ambiguous symbolism of the pot in the play; the impostors, having failed to see the gold in the urn, at last gave up: “You can look for another pot to give you hope my friend: this one is not warming us” (48.1-2 *Aliam spem quarere, amice, poteris; haec iam non calet*; translation mine). The adage, humorously adapted in the *Querolus*, dates back to Petronius, 38.13.1 *olla male feruet*, “the pot boils poorly,” i.e. “the affairs are going bad.” The pot let the impostors down, and conveniently so, by loosing its original culinary purpose, constantly punned upon: the proverbial pot *boils* poorly—but the pot from the *Querolus* is not even *warm*.

that's a damned fine dream! What else are we looking for except to satisfy our bellies and gullets?"<sup>92</sup> Chasing after a treasure is thus reduced to parasitic, purely biological appetite, at first sight somewhat unexpectedly, since the "enormous pile of gold"<sup>93</sup> would be naturally expected to provide for a lot more than just a full belly. The author admitted once more that he was well aware of what was *supposed* to be expected from parasites. Here, more overtly than in the lines analyzed above, through his characters he made fun of the conventional frame he had to force them into.<sup>94</sup> Still, as I exemplified, he skillfully managed to pay due respect to the conventions in a witty manner while at the same time releasing his original creations.

<sup>92</sup> 25.3-9 MAND. *Dicebat nescio quis somnianti nocte hac mihi thesaurum istum quem requirimus mihi seruari manifesta fide nec cuiquam alteri concessum esse aurum illud inuenire nisi mihi. Sed insuper adiecit ex istis opibus hoc tantummodo mihi profuturum quod consumpsisset gula. SYCOPH. Optime edepol somniasti. Quid autem aliud quaerimus nisi tantum quod sufficiat uentri et gulae?* It is symptomatic that, although the three parasites are on a joint project, the gold is explicitly reserved only for the leader, Mandrogerus, and it will fill only his stomach (*nec cuiquam alteri... nisi mihi; mihi profuturum...*). Sardanapallus and Sycophanta are in fact peripheral. They are the trainees (*nouelli atque incipientes*, 24.5), Mandrogerus is the instructor. The contribution of his accomplices in performing the scam is by no means negligible, but they are only acting according to the plan, while Mandrogerus is the mastermind. Neither the backgrounds nor the destinies of the three accomplices are connected: Mandrogerus was previously the parasite of Euclio, while for the other two we have no information. They are not present at the debate over the possession of the treasure near the end of the play, since a share of the gold is initially promised to Mandrogerus alone; he will eventually end up as the parasite of Querolus, they go their own way, for their involvement is no longer necessary. Lastly, a group of three parasites is not attested in comedy; the only reference to three parasites together is in Alciphron's *Letters*, 7. Perhaps the parasite is imagined as too selfish to share anything, although in the preserved comedies a group of any three characters does not appear.

<sup>93</sup> 6.2: *enorme pondus auri*.

<sup>94</sup> A reflection upon the parasitic conventions is also to be found at the very end of the preserved part of the play. After Mandrogerus is installed as the personal parasite of Querolus, the two remaining parasites, Sycophanta and Sardanapallus, now left on their own, ask Querolus for some money; they do it quite humbly since they know that "one house can't provide for three gluttons" (62. 5-7 SYCOPH. *Et nosmet scimus, Querole, quoniam tris edaces domus una non capit. Verum quaesumus, uiatichi nobis aliquid ut aspergas, quoniam spem omnem amisimus*). An earlier line (21.5) also reveals 'parasitic' terminology; confused about Lar's announcement that he will become wealthy, Querolus is eager to know: *Numquid rex aliquid largietur?* Here the term *rex* is most likely chosen with respect to its meaning in the comic context (*OLD*, s.v. *rex*, 8), namely, the patron and the benefactor of the parasite (cf. Plaut. *As.* 919; *Capt.* 92; *Stich.* 455; Ter. *Phorm.* 338). Duckworth, *The Complainer*, 912, translates it in that meaning; Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 23, offers multiple interpretations of *rex*, and remains indecisive as usual.

## THE HOLY STOMACH: IN FOOD WE TRUST

The potential of selfish stomach-centered urges for symbolizing instances of human depravity has been a fruitful and often cultivated field. The notion of a belly as an ultimate authority is as old as Cicero's "abyss and glutton, living for his stomach."<sup>95</sup> But the metaphor was further developed by Christian authors in their exegeses of the Pauline epistle to the Philippians: "For many walk, of whom I have told you often (and now tell you weeping), that they are enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction; *whose God is their belly*."<sup>96</sup>

The biblical metaphor of the stomach as the supreme divinity of the "enemies of the cross" was exploited abundantly by Christian authors.<sup>97</sup> For a versed rhetorician and apologist such as Tertullian, this was an opportunity not to be missed; he expanded the original sentence of St Paul in his style: "For to you your belly is god, and your lungs a temple, and your paunch a sacrificial altar, and your cook the priest, and your fragrant smell the Holy Spirit, and your condiments spiritual gifts, and your belching prophecy."<sup>98</sup>

Judging by its frequency in late antiquity, the effective metaphor of the 'divine stomach' became a powerful *topos*. It is hardly surprising then that we find it used as a satirical jest in a text so devoted to gluttony, such as the *Querolus*.<sup>99</sup> In the course of

<sup>95</sup> Cic. *In Pis.* 41 *nam ille gurgis atque helluo natus abdomini suo* (translation mine).

<sup>96</sup> Vulg. Phil. 3:18-19 *Multi enim ambulant, quos saepe dicebam vobis (nunc autem et flens dico) inimicos crucis Christi: quorum finis interitus: quorum Deus uenter est* (emphasis mine).

<sup>97</sup> E.g., Ambros. *In Luc.* 7.2396, or Hier. *Comm. ep. Paul., Ad Tit.* 40. The references are innumerable (more than forty instances are recorded in the *Library of Latin Texts* database only).

<sup>98</sup> Tert. *Ieiun. adu. Psych.* 16.1 *Deus enim tibi uenter est et pulmo templum et aqualiculus altare et sacerdos cocus et sanctus spiritus nidor et condimenta charismata et ructus prophetia* (tr. S. Thelwall). Augustine, on his behalf, added the slightly exotic *helluo* (*Serm.* 51.594 *edaces, ebriosos, helluones, quorum deus uenter est*); *helluo*, literally, "abyss," "bottomless pit," with an explicit allusion to insatiability, as in Cicero (see above, fn. 95), Terence (*Heaut.* 1033) and Apuleius (*Apol.* 57.24, 59.4), is accepted by e.g. Augustine, Ambrose, Jerome and Salvian. Only Augustine uses it in the connection to the biblical passage, which can be safely attributed to the influence of Ciceronian passage.

<sup>99</sup> The notion of gluttony in the *Querolus* was not only called upon as a universal vice in a timeless context, but sometimes also with concrete contemporary references. In the second scene (13.23-24), *Querolus* regretfully and angrily lists all the insults which the poor suffer: "Alas! What charges they add! Folly, carelessness, laziness, gluttony" (*Hui quantum adiiciunt! Stultitiam negligentiam somnum*

his ‘lecture’ in the fifth scene, Mandrogerus explains the nature of certain mythical creatures, briefly summarizing: “These monsters are innumerable, but cowardly and worthless. There is only one thing they follow and worship: the great god *Pan-cake*.”<sup>100</sup> The author generated a master-piece play upon the words *panis*, ‘bread,’ and *Pan*, the pagan god, almost impossible to replicate in translation.<sup>101</sup> This brilliant pun is the most succinct definition of voracity in the *Querolus*: the gluttonous lifestyle as a metaphor of selfish greed is promoted to a profession, or better, confession.

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*et gulam*). At first sight, the message is somewhat awkward in this context, since Querolus complains that these are the vices attributed to the poor, apparently by the rich; in ordinary circumstances, negligence, idleness or voracity would in fact seem as proper reproaches by the poor to the rich ones, who would have the leisure and sufficient revenues to afford such vices; stupidity is, of course, applicable to both. But in this passage the author of the *Querolus* was probably alluding to a concrete phenomenon of the fourth century. Namely, the lower classes in the cities—although sources mention only Rome and Constantinople—were regularly provided with free food supplies (on subsidies and the legislation, see Jones, *The Later Roman Empire*, 695ff). As a result of constant subsidies granted to the poor in the cities, it became almost a *topos* to accuse the lower classes for undeserved privileges. Free provisions fostered leisure, and Ammianus Marcellinus calls the plebs of Rome “idle and indolent” (28.4.28 *otiosa et deses*). Indigence was in the eyes of higher classes almost immediately associated with provision of free food, and as a consequence of such benefits, with laziness and gluttony; legislative terminology (*CTh* 9.42.5) is reflecting this attitude; see A. Marcone, “Late Roman Social Relations” in *The Cambridge Ancient History, Vol. 13: The Late Empire, A.D. 337-425*, ed. A. Cameron, P. Garnsey, 338-370 (London: Cambridge University Press, 1998), at 358-359.

<sup>100</sup> 34.16-17: *Innumerabilia sunt haec prodigia, sed ignaua et uilia. Solum hoc est quod sequuntur atque obseruant unice Panem deum* (emphasis and translation mine). The creatures in question are “swift, night-wandering, goat-footed, capricorn-like faces” (*noctiuagi, celeres capripedes, hirquicomantes*); commentators withheld from attempting to identify them.

<sup>101</sup> Duckworth offered ‘Pan-loaf.’



## V. FROM CASH TO ASH: THE RISE AND FALL OF AN IMPOSTOR

The discussions in the previous chapter in my opinion corroborate the claim that the author of the *Querolus* consciously altered and reused the *topos* of parasitic gluttony; it was significantly upgraded, or better yet, updated. This recurrent comic motif was skillfully distorted so as to make the necessary bridge and the link between food and gold was humorously justified. However, this transition is just a symptom and the announcement of the general transformation of the last ancient parasite.

Namely, the extraordinary appearance of the parasite in the *Querolus* does not end with the alteration of his target. Mandrogerus is the only known case of a parasite initiating and conducting a fraud by himself and for his own purposes. Mandrogerus' self-proclaimed profession, in his monologue quoted above metaphorically presented as man-hunting, is swindling and imposture, and a public one: "How much greater is my talent and my profit, for I hunt men in the sight of all! And what men? Why, particularly the rich, the powerful, and the cultured. I am Mandrogerus, the most pre-eminent by far of all parasites." He is a professional trickster, or at least so he would have us believe.<sup>102</sup> In two consecutive lines he defines himself both as an impostor and a parasite. Although tricks and deceits have been powerful comic vehicles ever since, the association above is actually quite unusual.

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<sup>102</sup> Jacquemard-LeSaos (*Querolus*, 87), notes that the entire declaration of Mandrogerus, strongly emphasizing *publice*, "ne coïncide pas avec la situation dramatique telle qu'elle se présente au premier degré et qu'elle doit vraisemblablement trouver sa clé ailleurs;" correct, but not really helpful. Indeed, Mandrogerus declares himself as a professional trickster, but at the end he willingly accepts *Querolus*' offer to become a parasite again: how come one so determined and skilful swindler gives up so easily after only one defeat? He won nothing, but lost nothing; then why not continue with his 'practice'? In terms of technical inconsistencies the question is appropriate; however, the tone and the form of the passage are *topoi*, cf. Phormio's showing-off with the number of 'victims', *quot me censes homines iam deverbasse usque ad necem, hospites, tum civis?* (vv. 327-328) and the hunting-metaphor in 330-334; see also Damon, *Mask of The Parasite*, 18. Also, as I hope to prove, Mandrogerus' role of the impostor was only temporary, and so for a reason.

As already mentioned, earlier comic parasites were also occasionally available for all kinds of dirty jobs, deceits included, in order to win the favor of their sponsors and achieve their own end. Knowing that, one might be tempted to qualify Mandrogerus approximately as the ‘sykophant-parasite’ or the ‘Phormio-type’ parasite.<sup>103</sup> However, there is one huge obstacle to that association. Mandrogerus is not organizing a fraud at the request or for the benefit of his patron, but—quite the opposite—against his demand and to his detriment. Furthermore, it is precisely Mandrogerus’ disobedience and disloyalty which is the decisive impulse of the course of events: none of them would have happened if he had kept his word given to Euclio. To make sure, pretence of friendship was by no means foreign to the earlier comic parasites. Opportunism was, in fact, mandatory; Plautus’ Curculio, for instance, was ready to “transfer his attentions to a new patron when it looked like the old one had exhausted his resources.”<sup>104</sup> Parasites were not depicted as being hindered by scruples, but fear. Technically speaking, any parasite would have had more liberty to abuse the trust of his patron like Mandrogerus did if the patron were far away and soon to die, like Euclio. Still, comic parasitic opportunism is far from the cold-blooded treason of Mandrogerus. But, even if it were not, it is not Mandrogerus’ hypocrisy that matters here, it is his ambition: he is not betraying his patron to find a

<sup>103</sup> Similarly to sykophants, and just like Phormio, Mandrogerus is presented as a legal expert; after having professed supreme knowledge of contemporary legislation, he is called *iure instructissimus*: QVER. ...*Potesne discere leges novas?* MAND. *Ha, ha, he, illas egomet ex parte condidi.* QVER. *Senatus consultum dico egomet seruilianum et parasiticum.* MAND. *Ohe, uisne interdictorum capita iam nunc eloquar ad legem Porciam, Caniniam, Furiam, Fufiam, consulibus Torquato et Taurea?* QVER. *Potesne obseruare omnia?* MAND. *Istud apud me paruum est. Tu nunc ut ediscam iubes: ego docere iam uolo* ARB. *Hui, multarum palmarum hic est. Recipe, quaeso, iure instructissimum. Talem quaerere homines pro magno solent* (61.11-20). However, Mandrogerus’ familiarity with legal affairs is but humorously declared here, without having been actually attested in action. Quite likely this was merely a reminiscence of the sykophant-type parasite, indeed the closest match to Mandrogerus (cf. *Phorm.* 374 *bonorum extortor, legum contortor*). The *Querolus* is otherwise filled with legalistic phraseology and allusions to court-like procedures (see above, fn. 44 and 47), viz. the opening debate between Lar and Querolus and the closing one between Querolus and Mandrogerus (see e.g. notes by Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 91-95, n. 5-6). For the obscure parody of legal documents, the so-called *Decretum parasiticum* or *Lex Coniualis*, appended after the end of the play by Jacquemard-LeSaos and rejected by Ranstrand, see Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 113-114.

<sup>104</sup> Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 100.

new one, but to be emancipated. Mandrogerus is thus the sole instigator and executor, and the only one to profit from his scam: not even his accomplices would have got a share of the prey if he had succeeded.<sup>105</sup> Both of his patrons, Euclio and Querolus, would of course have suffered a loss. In simple terms, unlike any other known comic parasites, Mandrogerus is not an employee of any kind: he is his own boss.

Here we see a severe violation of one of the fundamental dramatic conventions concerning parasites: instead of humility and dependence this parasite is displaying arrogance and (an attempt of) autonomy. As formulated by Damon, “there are two basic techniques that a dependent might use to attract benefits from a patron, namely, flattery and service.”<sup>106</sup> Mandrogerus does not perform either nor is he begging for charity at all: for he is not a dependent. All the conventional elements of Mandrogerus’ actions are in fact not necessarily only parasitical: he is indeed simulating loyalty to profit from his victim’s naïveté, and he does have his own interests in mind. Even if we accept these as proper to the parasites only, Mandrogerus betrays the comic type by missing the two most essential characteristics, subservience and dependence; gluttony, as we have seen, has already been taken care of. He thus represents an independent impostor as a separate role rather than a parasite in any of its variations. It is quite likely that in the case of Mandrogerus we are witnessing a development of a new comic character: the impostor as a separate role.

The author’s move in creating the role of Mandrogerus could have been fairly simple; all he had to do was to merge some of the well-known parasitical traits, Phormio’s skills and Curculio’s opportunism, for example. Yet no playwright we know of had tried anything similar before. Moreover, the deftest and the most

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<sup>105</sup> See above, fn. 92.

<sup>106</sup> Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 13.

‘sykophantic’ of the parasites, Phormio, turned out to be the most loyal.<sup>107</sup> Although the ingredients—wit and spinelessness—existed, the blend thereby produced, natural as it may seem, would not be the comic parasite, and the author of the *Querolus* was aware of that; as I hope to have proven above, he was quite familiar with the assets of the conventional parasite. The only explanation is that the author was not looking for a typical parasite at all. It almost seems as if it was about time that a stock character hitherto so ruthlessly exploited finally earns his independence. The poor creature would most certainly deserve it, but then he could not be the parasite. Still, the author insists on Mandrogerus being the parasite.

For the moment, let us explore the possibilities. At first sight it may indeed seem that the author aimed at generating a brand new comic type, a kind of self-standing impostor, while simply using the title of the parasite as an excuse. The author had already once considerably modified the conventions while officially observing them, when transforming the nutritive motivation of the parasite into a financial one. We could reckon that perhaps in this case the author also had no alternative but to name his authentic character, say, a parasite. True, if the anonymous playwright was searching for the next best to impostor among the conventional roles available, the parasite seemed like the only choice: greedy, lacking scruples and legally free. If, therefore, we allow the possibility that the author may have applied the conventional label *parasitus* reluctantly from the beginning while in fact he had something else in mind—rapaciousness instead of gluttony, for instance—we must also admit that he managed to fill the gaps. But that goes only for the food-to-gold transition; the

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<sup>107</sup> Phormio is on several occurrences, and deservedly so, called *amicus*, vv. 324, 562, 598, 1049 (562 even *amico amicus*, “a [true] friend to a friend” [cf. Plaut. *Mil.* 658]). Giese, *De parasiti persona*, 21, called him “*adiutor fidelissimus domini*.” See also a charming essay of T. J. Moore, “Who Is the Parasite?: Giving and Taking in *Phormio*,” in *Greek and Roman Comedy: Translations and Interpretations of Four Representative Plays*, eds. S. O’Byrhim, G. F. Franko, T. J. Moore, D. Olson, 253-264 (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2001). Moore defines Phormio as “the greatest benefactor in a play filled with benefaction” (260).

conversion of a comic parasite into an independent impostor was more difficult to conduct. A voracious comic character may be allowed to express hunger for money more easily than a role by definition dependent to act autonomously without any supervision. Mandrogerus is officially classified as the parasite,<sup>108</sup> although the author could have safely named him, for example, the *sykophant*. *Sycophanta* would be far more appropriate a term, certainly familiar to the author, since one of the parasites of the *Querolus* bears it as a proper name.<sup>109</sup> Also, even though the *sykophant* was not a stock character in Roman comedies, introducing one would have been far less damaging to the conventions than the abuse of the parasite's role in this manner. The author of the *Querolus* thus had other options at his disposal yet he chose precisely this one. I am strongly convinced that he deliberately insisted on the formal title of *parasitus* while investing his parasite with capacities improper to the type.

Namely, Mandrogerus is introduced in the comedy as the former parasite of Euclio, and ends it as the parasite of Querolus. In between, however, he is acting as a standalone individual on a private mission, and it is only that side of him that we see in action, since his initial parasitic condition is narrated retrospectively and the final one announced just before the end of the play. As far as the audience is concerned, throughout most of the play—or better, all of it—Mandrogerus is the parasite in name only. But why was it that necessary that Mandrogerus nominally be the parasite?

Some kind of link between his two faces does exist: the prerequisite of the plot is the information on the treasure, which Mandrogerus would not have acquired if he had not previously been a parasite of Euclio. This connection, however, is not

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<sup>108</sup> See above, fn. 82.

<sup>109</sup> *Sycophanta* was also a character in Plautus' *Trinummus*; the name suits him since he is employed as an agent, notably a messenger, and so for a task approximately corresponding to the mission of Mandrogerus. Apart from recognizing some similar expressions in the two comedies (e.g. Corsaro, *Studio*, 34), the scholars have not explored the possible influence of the *Trinummus* on the plot of the *Querolus*.

decisive, since the author could have easily avoided the involvement of the parasite if he had wanted so. Although Euclio, caught in an unforeseen situation, was not in a position to choose and the person most likely to be found in his vicinity is his personal parasite, any close person would have served just as good a messenger in the *Querolus* as the parasite. Given that, perhaps so far we even may concede that Mandrogerus' 'parasitism' was not essential for the plot. However, the author was far from obliged to employ the parasite, yet he did choose him, at the cost of violating the conventions.

But more important, Mandrogerus' ultimate restoration to the subject position calls for attention. Since the game was over, it was unnecessary and superfluous for the story. Mandrogerus being officially the 'bad guy,' it was even rather unexpected that he was granted an amnesty. But he was forgiven and restored to the favourable parasitic position.<sup>110</sup> His restoration, therefore, must have been planned for a reason and his emphasized parasitic descentance was not there by chance. As a matter of fact, as early as in the Prologue, the author virtually announced the restoration: "The outcome is this: as a result of fate and their own merit, the master and the parasite are restored each to his due place."<sup>111</sup> Thus at the end both of them are back to where they belong. It was far from coincidence that Mandrogerus entered and ended the play as the parasite, and I suggest that his parasitic cycle is exactly the explanation of the atypical 'episode of independence' which took place in between, or better, the result.

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<sup>110</sup> Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 15, quotes the instances of the term *parasitus* proving that in Roman comedy the name in itself was not necessarily derogatory, and that the parasitic position could thereby have easily been seen as favorable when suiting the needs of the play.

<sup>111</sup> 4.15-17 *Exitus ergo hic est: ille dominus, ille parasitus denuo fato atque merito conlocantur sic ambo ad sua* (translation mine).

### **“THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY PATRON’S INHERITANCE”**

The story is simple. Mandrogerus was given an opportunity the parasite could only dream of: he was promised half of the ‘enormous pile of gold,’ an amount definitely sufficient for an independent life. For the parasite, it would be the chance of a lifetime; if this parasite had accepted the designated share, naturally he would not have to be a parasite anymore. All he had to do was to keep his word given to Euclio.

According to the comic conventions, this is exactly what a parasite—both obedient and selfishly concerned only for his personal gain—would be expected to do. Surely the parasites of Roman comedy were not famous for keeping promises, but petty as they were, they would have accepted anything: let alone half of the entire inheritance attained with no investments at all. For them Mandrogerus’ assignment, being a one-time favour instead of perpetual devotion, would have been more than an easy job compared to the humiliations parasites were normally sentenced to. So, a native loser, such as the comic parasite, in Mandrogerus’ shoes would have by all means obeyed and, consequentially, profited. Mandrogerus, however, chose not to; he was not satisfied with one half, he wanted the whole treasure. Thus far, Mandrogerus is unique, if for nothing else, for expressing higher ambitions.

This parasite was not content with his share, and this was his crucial mistake, for if he had been, he would have achieved his goal. Interestingly enough, if he had acted as the parasite and accepted the half, he would eventually have become rich and ceased being the parasite. The outcome of his futile ventures is an amazing paradox. If Mandrogerus had behaved conventionally, he would have ended utterly unconventionally. Initially and finally the parasite, Mandrogerus is in between trying to become what the parasite by definition cannot possibly be: independent.

Fortunately for the conventions but unfortunately for him, Mandrogerus failed, and the conventions were ultimately preserved. The author, however, found a convenient way to reach them: the parasite himself proved responsible. Namely, Mandrogerus was not only sent back where he belonged in spite of his efforts: he returned into his initial and the only possible state precisely *because* of those efforts. This experimental parasite attempted to deny the very nature of his species and for that he was punished.

However, another factor was yet to come into play. The author announced that the outcome was to be the result of both fate and merit, *fato atque merito*, and so it happened. The parasite held the gold in his very hands, and it was only due to his misperception that he failed to see it hidden below the ashes. The Fate, in the play represented by Lar,<sup>112</sup> intervened as a kind of *deus ex machina* at that critical moment; if it had not, Mandrogerus would have succeeded. Artificial as it may seem, this touch of magic was after all a legitimate dramaturgic instrument, and the author simply applied one of the available tools to observe the conventions.

The whole comedy was thus supervised by fate—that is, Lar—all along. Mandrogerus was responsible only for his intentions and for them he must bear the consequences, but Lar took care of frustrating them: “Let him suffer for what he intended to do; for what he had actually done was the result of my endeavour,” reveals the household god.<sup>113</sup> Both Mandrogerus’ merit and fate are equally to blame.<sup>114</sup> Just as Lar had foretold that Querolus would get rich whether he wants it or

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<sup>112</sup> 5.17-20 LAR. *Ego sum custos et cultor domus cui fuero adscriptus. Aedes nunc istas rego, e quibus modo sum egressus. Decreta fatorum ego tempero, si quid boni est, ultro accerso, si quid grauius, mitigo. Queroli nunc sortem administro, huius ingrati non mali; 6.23-24 LAR. Sed eccum ipsum audio, fatum et fortunam clamitat. Iste ad me venit; 8.15 LAR. Ego sum Lar Familiaris, fatum quod uos dicitis.* Also, Querolus’ encounter with Lar is explained as his confrontation with his own fate (6.20-21): *Fatum itaque iam nunc et hominum e diuerso audietis: uos iudicium sumite.*

<sup>113</sup> 51.15 LAR. *Ferat quod facere uoluit, nam quod fecit nostrum est* (translation mine).

<sup>114</sup> The proportion of fate and merit is announced in the prologue, 5.2-4 *Fabella haec est: felicem hic inducimus fato seruatum suo atque e contrario fraudulentum fraude deceptum sua.* Mandrogerus is



not, because he cannot escape the inevitable,<sup>115</sup> it was beyond any doubt that the parasite would end up exactly as he should according to the conventions and Lar's announcement. This intricate development of the parasite character and the interplay between fate and merit in the *Querolus* I see as the product of an original dramatic technique of the author. The conventions were apparently still strong enough and the parasite had to remain within his limits, but this did not stop the author from experimenting within those limits.

This experiment was the character of Mandrogerus: given an offer he could not accept, the rest ensued logically. But in order for the experiment to work, an external force was required to secure the happy ending and satisfy the conventions. The very fact that it was precisely *fatum* is by all means worth investigating,<sup>116</sup> but regarding the plot and the parasite's role it can conveniently function as a personification of what we might call fixed dramatic rules. It was preordained (by fate or literary conventions, all the same) that both the master and the parasite end up

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deceived by his own deception, and *Querolus* is saved by his own fate; almost as if the former's merit is at the same time the latter's fate. The result would not have come about if one of the two components were missing: unconsciously and unwillingly, Mandrogerus did *Querolus* a favour (53.1-3): *ARB. Ille quidem, ut scimus, male meruit perfidus, sed quoniam tibi per illum bene uenerunt omnia, omnes illi bene optamus facto, non merito suo.* Even Mandrogerus finally came to see that his actions were only one part of the story (59.15-16): *Quodnam hoc monstri genus est? Ego totum feci, solus totum nescio.*

<sup>115</sup> 22.5-11 *LAR. Velis nolis hodie bona fortuna aedes intrabit tuas. QVER. Quid si aedes obsero? LAR. Per fenestram defluet. QVER. Quid si et fenestras clausero? LAR. O stulte homo, prius est ut tecta pateant ipsaque sese tellus aperiat quam ut tu excludas uel submoueas quod mutari non potest.* 52.17-19 *QVER. Hoc est plane illud quod mihi Lar Familiaris praedixit meus, etiam renitenti ac repugnanti, uentura mihi bona omnia.*

<sup>116</sup> The concept of fate in the *Querolus* is a complex issue, and it most certainly deserves a separate study. The play offers a number of intriguing passages concerning fate, e.g. the opening dedication (3.10-12): *Meministine ridere tete solitum illos qui fata deplorant sua atque Academico more quod libitum foret destruere et adserere te solitum? Sed quantum licet? Hinc ergo quid in vero sit, qui solus novit, nouerit,* and particularly interesting 6.10-12 *Sed ut agnoscant homines nemini auferri posse quod dederit deus, aurum quod fidei malae creditum est, furto conseruabitur* (cf. Aug. *Enarr. in Ps.* 26.2.5 *ergo quia nobis nemo potest auferre quod dat deus, non timeamus nisi deum*). The fate is a recurrent topic in the comedy, mentioned in different contexts; in the obscure lecture of Mandrogerus in the fifth scene, the fake magician offers the best solution for one's wellbeing (34.20-21): *Quoniam simpliciter interrogastis, scitote inter istaec omnia nihil esse melius quam ut aliqui fato nascatur bono.* There could be some serious confrontation between the Christian doctrine and the prominent position of *fatum* in the *Querolus*, cf., e.g., Aug. *Ciu. Dei* 5.9 *Omnia uero fato fieri non dicimus, immo nulla fieri fato dicimus.* The very fact that non-Christian concept of fate deserved a separate polemical treatise, Ambrosiaster's *De fato*, proves that the topic was considered relevant enough (although far from the most relevant, so Bussi res, *Sur le destin*, 77-78). See also below, fn. 144

appropriately—Querolus as a winner, Mandrogerus as a loser—for otherwise there would have been no comedy. Like this, everything is in order; the plot of the *Querolus* is amusing at least as of an average *palliata*, and everyone is happy: even the defeated parasite is satisfied.

## VI. ABSTRACT PARASITISM AND CONCRETE PRACTICE

*Petit Gemellus nuptias Maronillae  
Et cupit et instat et precatur et donat.  
Adeone pulchra est? immo foedius nil est.  
Quid ergo in illa petitur et placet? Tussit.  
(Mart. 1.10)<sup>117</sup>*

So much for comedy. But Mandrogerus' episode of independence, although now we can regard it as an entertaining interlude, is all too symptomatic to be discarded as just a novel artistic treatment of a stereotyped comic hero. The figure of Mandrogerus does not fit the pattern of the comic type, but could have been inspired by some 'real-time parasites,' more picturesque than the comic ones.

The image of false friends perfidiously prowling around a rich acquaintance whose end was near was known already to Ovid, Horace, Persius, Seneca, Petronius, Pliny, Martial, Juvenal and Apuleius: the literary treatments of the phenomenon are incalculable.<sup>118</sup> The practice was known as *captatio*, 'legacy-hunting,' and these predators, hoping for a share of the inheritance, were sometimes called *captatores* (sc. *hereditatis*) or *heredipetae*, 'legacy-hunters.' The fact that *captatio* was a topic of satire suggests that such practice existed.<sup>119</sup> It was only logical that Juvenal professed

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<sup>117</sup> "Gemellus seeks wedlock with Maronilla; he desires it, he urges her, he implores her and sends her gift. Is she so beautiful? Nay, no creature is more disgusting. What then is the bait and charm in her? Her cough" (tr. W. C. A. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* [London: William Heinemann, 1919], 37).

<sup>118</sup> To name just the most celebrated instances, see e.g., Ov. *Ars am.* 2.271-272; Hor. *Sat.* 1.8, 2.1, 2.3, 2.5 (cf. Porph. *Comm. Hor.* 2.2.); *Ep.* 2.2.182-198 (cf. Porph. *Comm. Hor. Ep.* 2.5); Pers. 5.73; Sen. *Benef.* 4.20.3; Petron. 124. 2-4, 125.3; Plin. *Ep.* 2.20; Iuv. 1.37, 6.40; Apul. *Apol.* 100. Martial's epigrams are a treasury of *captatores*: 1.10, 2.26, 2.76, 3.76, 4.5, 4.56, 6.33, 6.62, 8.27, 8.38, 9.8, 9.48, 9.80, 9.88, 9.100, 11.44, 11.83, 11.87, 12.10, and 12.90. Martial, however, was far from allergic to *captatio* himself: see C. A. Williams, *Martial: Epigrams, Book Two* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 105.

<sup>119</sup> On the notion of *captatio*, see K. Hopkins, *Death and Renewal* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 237-248; V. A. Tracy, "Aut Captantur aut Captant," *Latomus* 39 (1980), 399-402. The most comprehensive approach is E. Champlin, *Final Judgments: Duty and Emotion in Roman Wills*,

this lucrative hypocrisy as one of the reasons which made it impossible not to write satire.<sup>120</sup> How long certain *captatores* had been preparing their profitable strategic positions, and what were their particular relations with their prospective benefactors, depended on each case,<sup>121</sup> but the favorite targets of *captatio* were the rich, the old and the childless.<sup>122</sup> All of the *captatores* had in common that they expected material reward for their merits.

However, we should be cautious in taking satire and epigrams for granted in establishing the statistics; Champlin is justly skeptical about interpreting these literary references to *captatio* as a source for social or legal history.<sup>123</sup> Indeed, the objects of satire were not necessarily the pattern of behavior and social practices most widespread, but often simply the most inspiring ones.<sup>124</sup> After all, Roman literary sources treated this potentially remunerative business as a moral and not as a social problem, and since the *captatio* was not a legal category, it was often a matter of

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200 B.C.-A.D. 250 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 87-102; Champlin's definition of *captatio* in legal and social aspect is worth remembering: "Where *falsum* [forgery of a will] was a legal crime, easy to charge and difficult to prove, *captatio* was a moral crime, easy to charge and all but impossible to prove" (87).

<sup>120</sup> Iuv. 1.29-38 *difficile est saturam non scribere... cum te summoueant qui testamena merentur / noctibus, in caelum quos euehit optima summi / nunc uia processus, uetula uesicae beatae?*

<sup>121</sup> "Captators in literature come in all shapes and sizes, wives, fathers-in-law, cognates, mistresses, lovers, gigolos, freedmen, freedwomen, friends, priests, magistrates, even the emperor" (Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 89).

<sup>122</sup> Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 240; these three recommendations for attracting *captatores* are brilliantly summarized by Martial: "You are childless and rich and were born in the consulship of Brutus: do you imagine you have true friendships? True friendships there are, but those you possessed when young, those when poor. The new friend is one who has an affection for your death" (11.44 *orbis es et locuples et Bruto consule natus: / esse tibi ueras credis amicitias? / sunt uerae, sed quas iuuenis, quas pauper habebas. / qui nouus est, mortem diligit ille tuam*; tr. W. C. A. Ker).

<sup>123</sup> Champlin warns that the term *captatio*, invented by Horace, does not occur in inscriptions and legal documents (*Final Judgments*, 94), thus replying to Hopkins' statement that "[t]he very existence of a special word for them [sc. *captatores*] in Latin is evidence enough that their activities became a well-established element in Roman life" (*Death and Renewal*, 239); both authors are right, since the *captatio*, being legally undefined, did not in fact require an official word for it.

<sup>124</sup> Here I could not agree more with Hopkins (*Death and Renewal*, 241): "I am not suggesting that such behaviour was universal, only that such humour had a sharp point because the behaviour it laughed at... actually occurred." Not in a disagreement with this, Champlin is noting that "with *captatio* we are breathing a rather rarefied literary air, specifically that of Roman satire: it is not a word in daily currency" (95).

personal impression.<sup>125</sup> In any case, more significant for the present discussion are the frequency and the power of the literary image than its hardly measurable correspondence to Roman reality.

## APPLIED PARASITES

The *captator*, therefore, became a literary *topos*. Originally a satirical stock figure, it also proved to possess a developmental and associative potential. The points of contact between *captator* and the comic parasite were numerous, which the satirists did not fail to underline.<sup>126</sup> Essentially, the methods of *captatores* were those of the parasite: persistent adulation, manipulation of the victim's vanity, simulation of friendship, keeping company whenever possible, doing dirty jobs, and so on.<sup>127</sup> In effect the parasites differed in their prey only. But for the exploration of the literary motif this difference, I suggest, goes beyond economic consequences. The *captator*'s expectation of a financial reward is simply more understandable, and thus closer to life, than the perennial parasitic desire for food and nothing but food. Unlike the parasitism, the *captatio* had certain palpable social connotations,<sup>128</sup> and where the parasite was but a symbol and a caricatured mask, for at least some *captatores* we have evidence that they existed.<sup>129</sup> In an imaginary and extremely conventional world

<sup>125</sup> Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 101ff.

<sup>126</sup> In comedy we find the legacy-hunting associated only with the 'neighboring activity' of parasitism, the sykophancy, cf. Ter. *Andr.* 814-5 *clamitent me sycophantam, hereditatem persequi mendicum*. For an elaborate discussion on the literary image of *captatores* in connection with the parasites, see Damon, *The Mask of the Parasite*, 118 ff.

<sup>127</sup> *An eorum servitus dubia est, qui cupiditate peculii nullam condicionem recusant durissimae servitutis? Hereditatis spes quid iniquitatis in serviendo non suscipit? quem nutum locupletis orbi senis non observat? loquitur ad voluntatem; quicquid denunciatur est, facit, adsectatur, adsidet, muneratur. Quid horum est liberi? quid denique servi non inertis?* (Cic. *Parad.* 5.39.1-6); cf. Juv. 10.196-202;

<sup>128</sup> All the factors that fostered *captatio* Champlin names "social pressure points" (*Final Judgments*, 100-101); see also Hopkins, *Death and Renewal*, 239-240.

<sup>129</sup> For example, the notorious M. Aquilius Regulus (Plin. *Ep.* 2.20). Champlin, *Final Judgments*, 98, suspects that many more instances of *captatio* would have been recorded in non-satirical sources if the pen had been in less friendly hands, unlike e.g. those of Cornelius Nepos when reporting about T. Pomponius Atticus (*Att.* 21.1).

of the comic stage the parasites were the champions, but outside of it they were seriously challenged—furthermore, outplayed and outnumbered—by the *captatores*.

And what of the *Querolus*? Although Mandrogerus' character is portrayed only through the events that follow, according to all existing literary models he is to be imagined as practicing some sort of legacy-hunting method while a parasite of Euclio. Or, if one is particularly sympathetic, he just happened to be—how convenient—in the right place at the right time. The fact that Mandrogerus is not actually caught *in flagrante* is in my view no obstacle to labeling him *captator*. Namely, the strategies of the legacy-hunters often ridiculed in satire were, as listed above, nothing but parasitical. First, I hope to have illustrated in the previous two chapters that humiliations of that kind would be most inappropriate to Mandrogerus, whose parasitism was only nominal, and so with a purpose. Second, the author's choice to neglect the explicitly derisible, parasitic side of *captatio*—which in a comedy would be most welcome—and to use legacy-hunting merely as the premise of the plot instead, suggests that its humorous potential was already thoroughly exploited in literature and, thereby, consumed. This notorious depravity was in the *Querolus* apparently downgraded to the level of an ordinary human behaviour, as common as any other basis of the plot: in classical comedy it was love.

Implicit as it may seem, the *captatio* of Mandrogerus was the necessary prerequisite of his future enterprise, and it even continues after the death of the testator, albeit with a different approach. Alongside two other functions of him that we see—that of the quasi-sykophant and the alleged parasite—Mandrogerus is de facto a *heredipeta*, and the *Querolus* is all about legacy-hunting.<sup>130</sup> It was more than a

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<sup>130</sup> It is perhaps more than coincidence that the name of Horace's *captator* Pantolabus, "Take-all," (*Sat.* 1.8 and 2.1), is used in the twelfth-century remake of the *Querolus*, the *Aulularia* of Vital of Blois, for the role of the slave named Pantomalus in the *Querolus*; it may be that while reading the *Querolus* Vital of Blois was reminded of Horace's scrounger.

mere choice of words that the impostors' tragic disappointment with the contents of the urn was followed by Mandrogerus' spontaneous resignation: "Treasure, you have disinherited us."<sup>131</sup>

## WHAT MIGHT THE NEIGHBOURS SAY?

The literary *topos* of legacy-hunting was not short-lived. A source approximately matching the composition of the *Querolus* both geographically and chronologically, adds another clue. St Jerome's letter 117, dated before 406,<sup>132</sup> is addressed to an anonymous mother and daughter in Gaul. The former being a widow, the latter a virgin, the two women have been living separately and each had taken a monk into her home, as a protector. Among providing other moral instructions, Jerome warns the two Christian women of the potential danger of their decisions, namely the gossips that might arise. Referring to one of the monks, Jerome illustrates how the household, and consequentially the community, might react: "One calls him a parasite, another an impostor, another a legacy-hunter, another any fresh name he can invent."<sup>133</sup>

The letter is usually considered to be fictitious, composed as a rhetorical exercise, but even so, Jerome would not have chosen for that purpose a topic so unimaginable.<sup>134</sup> In Cain's formulation, Jerome "employed the epistolary medium to declaim about a hypothetical scenario that conceivably could have occurred anywhere

<sup>131</sup> 47.21 *Exheredasti nos, thesaure.*

<sup>132</sup> J. N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 276, n. 9.

<sup>133</sup> Hier. *Ep.* 117.8: *ille parasitum, iste inpostorem, hic heredipetam, alius nouo quolibet appellat uocabulo.* I modified the translation of F. A. Wright, *Select Letters of St. Jerome* (London: William Heinemann, 1933), 389, which gives "incubus" for *inpostor*.

<sup>134</sup> For a sound discussion on the nature of the letter, see J. Lössl, "Satire, Fiction and Reference to Reality in Jerome's *Epistula* 117," *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998), 172-192. The most recent analysis is by A. Cain, "Jerome's *epistula* CXVII on the *subintroductae*: Satire, Apology, and Ascetic Propaganda in Gaul," *Augustinianum* 49 (2009), 119-143. Cain classified the letter as "a specimen of the *suasoria* genre of rhetorical writing" (p. 126); I express my gratitude to the author for sending me a copy of the article immediately after its publication.

in the Christian world.”<sup>135</sup> It is beyond doubt that Jerome was adducing a valid example of legacy-hunting in depicting, like ancient satirists, quite a familiar image. But unlike them, Jerome was faced with one specific target group. In the fourth-century West, in the Christian empire, the various *captatores* of the classical world were replaced by a new breed of opportunists, who could considerably profit from inheritance-hunting—the clergy.<sup>136</sup> Letter 117 in particular was directed against the ancient Christian ascetic practice of *subintroductae*, the cohabitation of men and women in an intimate relationship without engaging in a sexual intercourse.<sup>137</sup> In that sense, Jerome’s polemical remark on the legacy-hunting practice of certain monks as a potentially related topic in one concrete case was only a side-effect, but nevertheless a useful hint for the present discussion.

Jerome’s technique is most suggestive. Lössl qualified the letter as “a piece of fiction packed with satire,”<sup>138</sup> and Jerome’s debt in this letter to both Horace and classical comedy has long been identified.<sup>139</sup> Small wonder then that Jerome applied the known satirical association and effectively decorated notorious *captatores* with parasitical colours, just like Horace, Juvenal, or Apuleius had done; but also, I would

<sup>135</sup> Cain, “Jerome’s *epistula* CXVII,” 127.

<sup>136</sup> I. J. Davidson, “*Captatio* in the fourth-century West,” *Studia Patristica* 34 (2001), 33-43, at 35; summarizing the phenomenon of *captatio* in antiquity, Davidson notes (p. 34) that “in reality the practice was just one among many social nuisances,” while “*captatio* as a literary *topos* is intended to be as a symptom of general moral depravity being traced in an individual or social context.” As for the frequency of condemnations of *captatio* in the fourth-century sources, he reminds (p.39) that “no Christian author makes any attempt to deny that *captatio* is going on,” since “[i]t was easy and no doubt necessary to condemn certain behaviour as morally dubious, but no churchman seriously wanted to shut off entirely such a potentially lucrative source of income... The misbehaviour of clerics who pursued their own ends first and foremost could not be allowed to jeopardize the flow of resources to the community as a whole, or the social benefits that might flow from public devotions of well-born converts” (p. 42); Davidson concludes (p. 43): “The underlying seriousness of the quest to secure assets undoubtedly produced individual excesses, which in turn rendered appropriate the persistence of classical caricatures in Christian rhetoric.” In brief, the individuals had to be officially criticized lest the Church as a whole would not gain bad reputation.

<sup>137</sup> Lössl, “Satire, Fiction...,” 183, and Cain, “Jerome’s *epistula* CXVII,” 127ff, with references.

<sup>138</sup> Lössl, “Satire, Fiction...,” 183.

<sup>139</sup> See e.g. N. Adkin, “Terence’s *Eunuchus* and Jerome,” *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 137 (1994), 187-195, and Lössl, “Satire, Fiction ...,” 181-183. For other classical reminiscences in the letter, see e.g. Cain, “Jerome’s *epistula* CXVII,” 142, n. 88.



add, just like the author of the *Querolus*. In the quoted passage the choice of words is indicative. Jerome employed the three terms—*parasitus*, *inpostor*, *heredipeta*—approximately as synonyms, and all three of them perfectly fit the only known comic parasite of late antiquity. Albeit disguised under the comic mask of *parasitus* Mandrogerus is in practice a *heredipeta*, and the one whose *modus operandi* is that of an impostor.

This is far from proposing any intrinsic similarity between the legacy-hunting of the parasite in the *Querolus* and Jerome's very concrete and gender-related *captatio*. The link I see is an adaptable commonplace. Two details are noteworthy here. First, Jerome did not warn that he himself—a rhetorician with profound classical education—may at the sight of the abovementioned monk evoke the learned satirical association of the parasite with the legacy-hunter. It was to be, so Jerome would have us believe, an immediate and natural association for everyone, notably slaves. Provided that his 'second-hand' reference was not *only* a rhetorical trick for simulating objectivity, it is a good pointer in identifying the stock-phenomenon. Second, Jerome mentioned the three villains merely *en passant*, without providing additional binding tissue between them. Such a casual remark, in a text so carefully constructed, is precious for the present study precisely because it appears so casual. It suggests that all the tree members of the 'scrounging-trinity' were by that time fully recognizable and mutually complementary stock figures whose interchangeability needed no further explanation.<sup>140</sup> Hence, if indeed Jerome's association of a parasite,

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<sup>140</sup> Yet a colourful depiction of typical legacy-hunting methods alone was too inspiring and convenient to be missed; Jerome continues: "They put it about that he sits at your bedside, fetches nurses when you feel unwell, removes the slops, makes you warm bandages, and folds compresses. People are only too ready to believe evil, and tales invented within doors soon get noised abroad" (*ipsum iactant adsidere lectulo, obsetrices adhibere languenti, portare matulam, calefacere lintea, plicare fasciolas. facilius mala credunt homines et, quodcumque domi fingitur, rumor in publico fit.*)

an impostor, and a legacy-hunter was only natural, then so was Mandrogerus' accumulation of these functions.<sup>141</sup>

It is quite reasonable to conclude that the multi-layered comic portrait of the parasite Mandrogerus, in its entirety, was reflecting some more actual social phenomena than any comic parasite had previously done. As much as we know, Mandrogerus is unparalleled in comedy, but at least partly inspired and assisted by the images of *captatores* we find in ancient satirists and St Jerome. The satirical connection was already there, but not the reciprocity: every *captator* was a parasite, whereas not all parasites were *captatores*. More precisely—and to the best of our knowledge—until Mandrogerus appeared no comic parasite had been a *captator*. Mandrogerus is thus the unique representative of a profit-oriented parasite. His role being the central one, the foundations of the comic genre in the *Querolus* seem radically revised and so, I would like to argue, in a logical direction. Previously the comic parasite has been nothing but an abstract symbol of inexplicable eternal hunger,

<sup>141</sup> Whether the anonymous author of the *Querolus* perhaps alluded to the very same problem as Jerome, namely the greedy and perfidious monks, would be a challenging question, all the more tempting given the other possible references to monasticism in the *Querolus*. The very composite name of Mandrogerus is an issue: while the second part is undoubtedly transliterated Greek noun *géron*, (proven by the case-forms *Mandrogeronte*, *-gerontem*), the first part offers more solutions, such as the verbs *mandere* or *manducare*, in accordance with his role of a voracious parasite; the sound association with the plant often connected with magic, the mandrake (*mandragora*) would fit Mandrogerus' impersonation as a magician (Jacquemard-LeSaos, *Querolus*, 75). An alternative etymology proposed by I. Lana, (*Analisi del Querolus*, 32) and analyzed by Smolak ("Das Gaunertrio," 333-335), is to explain the whole name through Greek; thus the first part is Greek *mándra*, originally "sheepfold", but in a Christian context denoting the monastic community (G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961], s.v.); if so, then *mandrogerus* could signify a head of a monastery. The phonetic resemblance to the Greek noun *kalógeros* would speak in favour of the 'monastic' etymology of *mandrogerus*. — As an addition to the intriguing parallels adduced by Smolak, a passage from the *Querolus* (23.1-3), "[w]here is now that sooty, smoky, dirty regiment that lives underground during daytime and prowls on roofs by night?" (*Vbinam illa est cohors fuliginosa uulcanosa atra quae de die sub terras habitant, nocte in tectis ambulat?*) may be corresponding to the *lucifugi uiri*, "the light-shunners," the coinage used in Rutilius Namatianus (*Red.* 1.440) in describing the monks of Capraria; Rutilius is usually interpreted as having alluded to the *latebrosa et lucifugax natio* of Minucius Felix (*Oct.* 8.4; cf. *Tert. Apol.* 42.1-3); see F. Corsaro, *Studi Rutiliani* (Bologna: Pátron, 1981), 69-94; for other instances of *lucifuga* see L. Alfonsi's "*Lucifugi uiri*: Nota a Rutilio Namaziano," *Atene e Roma* 5 (1961), 98-99, and "Su *lucifuga*," *Aevum* 41 (1967), 157. However, neither of the two scholars dealing both with the *Querolus* and the anti-monastic invectives of Rutilius, namely Corsaro and Alfonsi, provided no comment on the possible connection between the two passages.

an artificial depository of lowest instincts, and a grotesque, almost bestial mask without a human face behind it. Mandrogerus is the first applied parasite: a plastic type gone concrete.

One must not forget, however, that neither post-classical satire, nor the quoted letter of St Jerome, nor finally the *Querolus*, were oriented toward faithful representation of reality. All of them were concerned about a “hypothetical scenario[s] that conceivably could have occurred anywhere.” *Captatio* was certainly not either a universal or the dominant code of human conduct in everyday life, but apparently a new stock-theme;<sup>142</sup> it was not a social but a literary epidemic. *Captatio* was only the most practical implication of parasitism, while parasitism was its most fertile literary ground. Legacy-hunting was a concretized, upgraded, and updated version of parasitism, and the representative of that evolution may have been Mandrogerus. In that sense he is far more tangible than the traditional comic parasites, but ultimately no more ‘realistic’ than the satirical *captatores*.

Mandrogerus, however stereotypical he might have been, is the result of a literary evolution. He is a parasite grown mature; and it was about time, we might add. But obviously not yet: the comic genre proved rather conservative in admitting new stock-characters. More than a millennium had to pass until Ariosto’s *Il Negromante* (1520) presented the charlatan-magician, or Ben Jonson’s *Volpone* (1606) the legacy-hunter as fully comic roles. Mandrogerus was apparently well ahead of his time. The Renaissance playwrights seem to have finalized what the author of the *Querolus* had intended: introducing to comedy a figure originally the

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<sup>142</sup> “[W]hen figures like the *captator* become stock characters, there are two possible reactions, not mutually exclusive. One, perhaps the natural one, is to conclude that there was a lot of it about. The other, less obvious perhaps, is to look to quality, not to quantity: not that it was necessarily common, but that it was felt to be very, very bad,” Champlin, *Final Judgements*, 102.

subject of satire.<sup>143</sup> This is not to say that all the impostors and magicians of Renaissance comedy originate necessarily from this peculiar fifth-century parasite. But given the effective literary association of the parasite with impostors and various legacy-hunters in general, certain directions of such a development should be examined. Mandrogerus was a logical continuation of and a natural successor to the ancient parasites. Perhaps this would-be professional trickster was also the ancestor of some forthcoming stock characters.<sup>144</sup> Interestingly enough, by the sixteenth-century the legacy-hunter had gone just as outdated as the Roman comic parasite seems to have been in the time of Mandrogerus.<sup>145</sup>

<sup>143</sup> For the tricksters and legacy-hunters as stock characters, see J. L. Burgess, "The Trickster in Elizabethan-Jacobean Drama: the Development of a Western Archetype," (PhD Diss., Stanford University, 1979); W. R. Dynes, "The Trickster-figure in Jacobean City Comedy," *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*, 33/2 (1993), 365-384, and J. D. Canfield, *Tricksters & Estates: on the Ideology of Restoration Comedy* (Lexington, KY : University Press of Kentucky, 1997).

<sup>144</sup> R. W. Bond noted that "[the parasite] is rarer, however, on the Renaissance stage and his social status rather higher," (*Early Plays from the Italian: Edited, with Essay, Introductions, and Notes* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911], xxxviii); earlier on (xxx ff), he attributed the popularity of sorcerers and astrologers in Renaissance comedy to the obsession with magic and astrology typical of the fifteenth-century Italy: "medieval field of magic and demonology was much larger [than the ancient one]," (xxxii). Next, according to Bond (xxxii-xxxiv), the papal bull of Innocent VIII (1484) and the vigorous prosecution that followed the publication of the inquisitors' manual *Malleus Maleficarum* in 1487, "roused the curiosity of many who would else have been indifferent." (xxxiv). Bond's explanations may be exaggerated, but he is by all means on a good lead. His claim that the stock character of the sorcerer in Renaissance plays was "the most distinct expression of the modern element" (xxx) was challenged by Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy*, 401, n.19: "But one should not overlook the possible influence of Mandrogerus, the self-styled magician and astrologer in the *Querolus*." Duckworth's restrained and almost shy remark could not have been more accurate. Bond may be replied by his own arguments: astrology and magic was no less a burning issue in late antiquity than in Renaissance. The very opening line of Ambrosiaster's treatise *On fate* runs: "*Nihil tam contrarium Christiano, quam si arti matheseos adhibeat curam*." (see also above, fn. 116) Practicing magic and astrology was a capital offence according to the *Codex Theodosianus*, chapter 9.16 entitled *De maleficis, mathematicis et ceteris similibus*; see, M. L. W. Laistner, "The Western Church and Astrology during the Early Middle Ages," *The Harvard Theological Review* 34 (1941), 251-275, and C. Pharr, "The Interdiction of Magic in Roman Law," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 63 (1932), 269-295.

<sup>145</sup> "The text of *Volpone* is crammed with echoes and imitations of famous classical writing. Legacy-hunting, for example, which provides the play with its basic plot, was not a noticeable vice in time of James I;" B. Parker, D. Bevington, *Volpone of Ben Jonson* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 2.

## VII. CONCLUSION

In terms of earlier comic conventions Mandrogerus was most atypical. Far more satirical than comical and strikingly ‘realistic’ as opposed to his predecessors, he was designed to represent certain social parasites. In doing so he was perhaps no less stereotyped than the conventional Roman parasite, but certainly more familiar and more appealing to a late antique audience. Not only that the mask of the comic parasite must have been well worn-out by the time the *Querolus* was composed, but impostors of all profiles—among others, legacy-hunters, magicians and astrologers—were apparently an ordinary phenomenon. This is not to say that they have not been wandering the Greco-Roman world before, but classical comedy was seemingly not prepared for them. This is why Mandrogerus would have fitted better in a satire than in a comedy, for the impostor, unlike the harmless parasite, seems to have been still too dangerous a figure for the merry atmosphere of ancient comedy. By the early fifth century at the latest, however, the setting had apparently changed. The legacy-hunting impostor finally deserved a place in the cast-list and the anonymous author of the *Querolus* was undoubtedly inspired and aided by the satirical portraits of various charlatans, hypocrites, or swindlers already associated with comic parasites. But introducing a treacherous money-seeker in a comedy was easier said than done, for it took quite a few innovative twists to bypass the obstacles. Serious wickedness on the verge of crime required serious adjustment of the comic surrounding.

First, in classical Roman comedy there had been no comic motif of purely financial rapacity (except for the utterly static greed of the *leno*). The anonymous author of the *Querolus* neatly developed it out of the abstract parasitic appetite, and even made use of this transition as a source of humour; the parasite turned out to be

apt for the job after all. Second, if one was to launch an independent trickster as a comic character, the traditional plot-schemes of the *palliata* had to be rearranged. The plot of the *Querolus* was carefully devised around the parasite. To be sure, the author did not strive to complete the mission and give definite birth to a new comic hero. The rules of the comic genre were, so it seems, still powerful enough, and the author, in my interpretation, consciously demonstrated this power: Mandrogerus was before and after all the parasite. The anonymous author devised an original experiment. No parasite was ever offered what Mandrogerus was lest he abuse it and obtain autonomy. The author of the *Querolus*, however, needed precisely an independent entrepreneur, albeit only temporarily.

Unfortunately for Mandrogerus, the comic parasite, unlike the *captatores* or *heredipetae* from satire, was still bound to remain a dependent and a loser. So the author organized a whole sequence of events to secure the parasite's defeat and his final restoration to dependence, while at the same time preserving the spirit of comedy. At the critical point an external force appeared to frustrate the parasite's illegitimate ambitions, and happy ending—indeed the only possible ending—was just a matter of time. Mandrogerus, with the help of fate, ultimately fulfilled his unusual duty and revealed a new, human face of the parasite as best as he could. This face had already existed elsewhere but this was its debut in a comedy, as far as we can trace it. Eventually, this is the face that was to replace the grotesque mask of the ancient *parasitus edax*.

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