

Herausgegeben von
Gregor Vogt-Spira & Bernhard Zimmermann

Plautus Revisited

PROBLEMSTELLUNGEN UND PERSPEKTIVEN
DER PLAUTUSFORSCHUNG

Studia Comica



V&R Verlag Antike



Verlag Antike

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ISBN Print: 9783949189906 — ISBN E-Book: 9783949189913

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Band 20

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Problemstellungen und Perspektiven
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Dieser Band wurde im Rahmen der gemeinsamen Forschungsförderung von Bund und Ländern im Akademienprogramm mit Mitteln des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung und des Ministeriums für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur des Landes Baden-Württemberg erarbeitet.



**HEIDELBERGER AKADEMIE
DER WISSENSCHAFTEN**

Akademie der Wissenschaften
des Landes Baden-Württemberg

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek:
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind
im Internet über <https://dnb.de> abrufbar.

© 2024 Verlag Antike, Robert-Bosch-Breite 10, D-37079 Göttingen, ein Imprint der Brill-Gruppe (Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, Niederlande; Brill USA Inc., Boston MA, USA; Brill Asia Pte Ltd, Singapore; Brill Deutschland GmbH, Paderborn, Deutschland; Brill Österreich GmbH, Wien, Österreich)
Koninklijke Brill NV umfasst die Imprints Brill, Brill Nijhoff, Brill Schöningh, Brill Fink, Brill mentis, Brill Wageningen Academic, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Böhlau, Verlag Antike und V&R unipress.

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Umschlagabbildung: Dionysos-Theater und Mosaik einer Komödienmaske,
mit freundlicher Genehmigung des Reihenherausgebers

Einbandgestaltung: disegno visuelle kommunikation, Wuppertal
Druck und Bindung: ☺ Hubert & Co, Göttingen
Printed in the EU

Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht Verlage | www.vandenhoeck-ruprecht-verlage.com

ISBN 978-3-949189-91-3

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Vorwort der Herausgeber

Die Plautus-Forschung ist in der Latinistik häufig ein Feld gewesen, von dem Innovationen ausgegangen und auf dem methodische Grundsatzauseinandersetzungen geführt worden sind. Als umfangreichstes überliefertes Corpus aus der frühen römischen Literatur bietet sich Plautus in der Tat nachgerade als Brennpunkt für Probleme an, die aus der Komplexität jener ersten literarischen Phase Roms rühren und zugleich über sie hinausreichen. Denn in einer allgemeineren Perspektive geht es um einen Wissens- und Kulturtransfer, der sich – ein durchaus ungewöhnlicher Fall – ausdrücklich als solcher versteht. Gerade bei Plautus lässt sich ein überaus spielerischer Umgang damit beobachten.

Nachdem die letzten größeren methodischen Debatten zu Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts geführt worden waren, bleibt für die dazwischenliegenden 25 Jahre – neben den Verschiebungen der Forschungsinteressen sowie der kontinuierlichen Grundlagenarbeit der Schule von Urbino – ein bemerkenswerter Wandel festzuhalten: Darüber, dass die plautinische Komödie exzellente Literatur *sui generis* ist, besteht inzwischen weithin Konsens. Viele Einzelstudien haben Plautus' souveränen Umgang mit unterschiedlichen Traditionen sowie die entwickelte literarische Technik seiner Stücke herausgearbeitet; besonders ergiebig war dabei nicht zuletzt das neue Verständnis für Performanz und Theatralität. Das ist nicht hoch genug einzuschätzen auf dem Hintergrund, dass es lange galt, gegen das Urteil, Plautus sei eine Depravierung attischer Originale, seine Eigenständigkeit zu erweisen und auch für ihn ‚Originalität‘ zu behaupten. Die Plautusforschung ist nicht mehr defensiv, die *Palliata* wird nicht mehr am attischen Maßstab – oder was man dafür hielt – gemessen. Daraus ergibt sich, wenn man es positiv wendet, dass es nunmehr darum geht, für die römische Komödie passende Maßstäbe und Beschreibungskriterien zu entwickeln.

In diesem Zusammenhang fällt die ungewöhnlich dichte Folge von *Companions* ins Auge, die sich in den vergangenen zehn Jahren der Aufgabe verschrieben haben, einen zusammenfassenden Überblick zu Plautus und zur Komödie zu liefern.¹ Das zeugt zunächst einmal von einem international hohen Interesse an der *Palliata*. Das offensichtliche Bedürfnis nach Wiederholung weist allerdings zugleich darauf, dass jede einzelne Synthese ergänzungsbedürftig erschien: Indikator

¹ M. Fontaine und A. C. Scafuro (Hgg.), *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, Oxford 2014; S. Frangoulidis, S. J. Harrison und G. Manuwald (Hgg.), *Roman Drama and its Contexts*, Berlin & Boston 2016; M. T. Dinter (Hg.), *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Comedy*, Cambridge 2019; S. Papaioannou und C. Demetriou (Hgg.), *Plautus' Erudite Comedy. New Insights into the Work of a doctus poeta*, Cambridge 2020; G. F. Franko und D. Dutsch (Hgg.), *A Companion to Plautus*, Hoboken 2020.

für ein dynamisches Forschungsfeld. Insbesondere haben sich dabei noch nicht unbedingt klare, auch methodisch abgesicherte und interdisziplinär verankerte Leitfragestellungen herauskristallisiert, während andererseits gegenüber der älteren Forschung zentrierende Bezugspunkte entfallen sind.

Denn dass Plautus nicht mehr an griechischen Maßstäben gemessen und dagegen verteidigt wird, hat auch eine Kehrseite: Damit ist überhaupt der Bezug auf griechische Vorlagen weitgehend aus dem Fokus des Interesses verschwunden. Wenn in dem einleitenden Überblick zu einem der *Companions* mit einer gewissen Erleichterung konstatiert wird, die Beziehung zwischen Palliata und griechischer Komödie spiele in dem Band zum Glück keine wesentliche Rolle mehr,² mag das ein Reflex auf eine lange den Blick bestimmende Richtung der Plautus-Forschung sein. Der Preis indes ist nicht gering, zieht es doch die Reduktion um eine wesentliche Dimension und damit eine Simplifizierung nach sich. Insgesamt bleibt festzuhalten, dass der Aspekt der Transformation und kulturellen ‚Übersetzung‘ und damit die ‚Zweiwertigkeit‘, die nicht zum wenigsten Reiz und Komplexität der Palliata ausmacht, sowohl thematisch als auch methodisch stark in den Hintergrund getreten ist.

Nun sind die Schwierigkeiten, die sich aus unseren Wissenslücken angesichts weitgehend fehlender Entsprechung zwischen griechischer Vorlage und römischer Umsetzung ergeben, eine Herausforderung. Auf diesem Hintergrund ist es von Bedeutung, dass sich im Zuge der Kommentierung der Fragmente der griechischen Komödie durch das Freiburger „KomFrag“-Projekt das Bild über die griechische Seite erweitert und verändert.³ Denn je mehr man über die griechische Komödie weiß, desto breiter wird auch die Grundlage, um römische Transformationen beurteilen zu können. Das gilt ebenso für die Unterschiede zwischen den einzelnen Gattungsvertretern wie etwa für Gesichtspunkte, unter denen sich Brückenschläge zu ‚typisch plautinischen‘ Elementen ergeben. Im Gegenzug wiederum schärfen auch Fragestellungen und Ergebnisse der Plautus-Forschung den Blick bei der Analyse der griechischen Fragmente.

In diesem Horizont ist im Jahr 2018 das Vorhaben entstanden, ein internationales Symposium zu veranstalten, um die Plautus-Forschung und das „KomFrag“-Projekt in Austausch zu bringen. Dabei ging es nicht um ein Kompendium, das das Plautusbild auf dem Stand heutiger Forschung zusammenfasst; im Mittelpunkt sollten vielmehr die Perspektiven zukünftiger Forschung stehen: Wo liegen Ansätze, die Antworten auf ungelöste Fragen versprechen? Wo sind neue Fragestellungen und Herangehensweisen zu erkennen, die bislang vernachlässigte Horizonte eröffnen? Oder auch, wo sind Materialien neu erschlossen, die ein anderes Licht auf die plautinische Komödie werfen könnten?

² A. Sharrock, ‚Introduction: Roman Comedy‘, in Dinter (2019) 1–14, hier 8.

³ Über das Projekt informiert die Homepage: <https://www.komfrag.uni-freiburg.de/>

Das Symposium war, in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Centro Internazionale di Studi Plautini in Urbino und mit tatkräftiger Unterstützung von David Konstan in New York, für Juni 2020 in dem deutsch-italienischen Zentrum Villa Vigoni in Loveno di Menaggio am Comer See geplant. Wie viele andere Vorhaben musste es aufgrund der COVID-Pandemie verschoben werden. Die Veranstalter waren außerordentlich glücklich, dass es im Jahr darauf vom 16.–18. Juli 2021 im geplanten Rahmen tatsächlich stattfinden konnte, wobei ein Teil vor Ort präsent war, ein anderer Teil aufgrund der noch geltenden Reisebeschränkungen über Videoschaltung teilnahm. Der Austausch erwies sich als so fruchtbar und ergiebig, dass er vom 12.–14. Mai 2022 in der Akademie Meran fortgesetzt wurde.

Die Ergebnisse der beiden Tagungen werden in diesem Band vorgelegt. Die vier Themenbereiche – ‚Plautus‘ ‚Poetik‘, ‚Römische Ordnungen‘, ‚das Spannungsfeld griechischer und italisch-römischer Theatertraditionen‘ und schließlich ‚Konsequenzen für den Plautus-Text‘ – spiegeln Schwerpunktsetzungen und Verschiebungen innerhalb der Plautus-Forschung, wobei sich der Band weder als repräsentativer Querschnitt noch als Fixierung eines allgemeinen Forschungsstandes versteht. Vielmehr will er Impulse geben: Daher werden am Ende eines jeden Beitrags Horizonte und Aufgaben künftiger Forschung formuliert. So hofft der Band zur weiteren Entwicklung der Plautus-Forschung sowie zum wechselseitigen Austausch zwischen griechischer und römischer Komödienforschung beizutragen.

Eines Teilnehmers sei an dieser Stelle besonders gedacht: Boris Dunsch, der im November 2022 im 52. Lebensjahr unerwartet verstorben ist und dessen letzte Beiträge zur Plautus dieser Band enthält (siehe die Vorbemerkung zu seinen beiden Aufsätzen).

Die Herausgeber haben vielfach zu danken. Neben den Autoren und den Diskutanten bei den Symposien gilt ein besonderer Dank Villa Vigoni für die Gastfreundschaft sowie die Förderung und engagierte Unterstützung des Projektes, ungeachtet der Herausforderungen der Pandemiejahre, ferner der Akademie Meran für die im Jahr darauf gewährte Gastfreundschaft. Cecilia Wezel haben wir für die redaktionelle Betreuung des Bandes zu danken.

Gregor Vogt-Spira

Bernhard Zimmermann

Renata Raccanelli

**Pragmatics of gestural communication in Plautus:
the lovers' kiss in *Miles Gloriosus****

In Plautus' works, episodic evidence of non-verbal communication explicitly rises to the surface, almost like the tip of the iceberg of a phenomenon of bodily expression that is as essential in the comedy score as it is resistant to a great extent to the speculation of scholars. While it is certainly possible to reconstruct various features of the expressive codes that were shared between the playwright and the public, it is also true that the dimension of actorial gestures is elusive, as it is anchored to a stratification of cultural conventions, bodily schemes and theatrical styles of which only excessively fragmented and chronologically incongruent evidence remains to draw a reliable overview for Plautus' age. This is even more the case upon considering, as seems possible, that a certain degree of creative freedom must have marked the actors' non-verbal behaviour in a form of theatre like that of Plautus, in which not only the actors' individual characterisation and abilities, but also the tension between the public's expectations and their surprise, or in other words, between the resumption of tradition and the innovative gap of inventiveness, played a fundamental role in creating comic effects.¹ Nevertheless, even in the presence of such complexity, the investigation of non-verbal communication in Plautus has consolidated reliable and productive findings in the course of a rather wide and varied ongoing discussion that sets the basis for the present study.²

* I am truly grateful to the organising committee and attendees of the conference for the stimulating discussion and insightful observations that greatly enriched my way of approaching Plautus, both in these pages and in my prospects for future research.

¹ Panayotakis 2005.

² Research on non-verbal behaviour in the *fabula palliata* crosses diverse fields of specialisation that may only be generally recalled in the present context. It is useful to mention here certain important overall studies on gestures in the ancient – and more specifically the Roman – world, starting from Sittl 1890: see, among others, Aldrete 1999 and 2017, Boegehold 1999, Corbeil 2004, Fögen 2009, Rey 2017/2020. Specific, in-depth explorations of gestures in Latin comedies may already be found in Warnecke 1910 and Taladoire 1951, but essential contributions also derive from research on Menander and the *neoi*: see at least Wiles 1991, and especially 188–208, which presents a study on the differences between systems of signs that may be reconstructed for the Hellenistic and Roman theatre, along with various contributions in the collection of Easterling–Hall 2002. Further stimuli also come from studies on the possible impact of the influence of other theatrical genres that were of vital importance in the Italic area, such as the mime and pantomime (see various contributions in Benz–Stärk–Vogt–Spira 1995: especially Hofmann, Petrone, Zimmermann). The role of dance is also highlighted in the

Within such a context, however, the aim of the present contribution is to verify whether a new methodological perspective of gesture analysis can help in focusing on various aspects of the phenomenon. More specifically, I intend to make use of Licinia Ricottilli's study on gestures, starting from the application of pragmatics of communication to classical texts.³ As is well known, this consists in a systemic approach that is functional towards reflecting on the dynamics of the interaction by integrating various levels of communication (verbal level vs. non-verbal level; level of information on concrete content of communication vs. level of comment on the ongoing relation). The approach, which had already been applied on multiple occasions to the *palliata*,⁴ is particularly useful in the case of comic scores, which often play on entangling these levels in paradoxical forms of communication. The challenge therefore consists in understanding if a pragmatic perspective may help in identifying systems of gestures or gestural paradoxes in Plautus' texts that would otherwise be less apparent in a more traditional reading.

investigation of Moore 2012, 105–134. An insightful overall methodological reflection may also be found in the synthesis of Panayotakis 2005, while Monda 2010 and 2014 propose stimulating and rigorous in-depth explorations of specific case studies. Useful contributions are also naturally present in studies on techniques of representation, including the previously mentioned Wiles 1991; see at least Marshall 2006, especially 91–94, 167–170 and Cardoso 2019. Based on the reflections stemming from antiquity (suffice it to think, among others, of Cicero and Quintilian), a relevant thread of investigation is focused on the comparison between the *actio* of the actor and that of the orator: see, among others, Graf 1991, Dutsch 2002 and 2013, Fantham 2002, Petrone 2004, Nocchi 2013. This line of research is also entwined with the study of miniatures in Terentian manuscripts, which bear testimony, on the one hand, to a scholastic tradition that is comparable to that of Quintilian and Donatus and, on the other hand, to the iconographic tradition of scenic illustrations whose important precedents may be traced back to the ancient mosaic and pictorial scenes in Menander's comedies (see, for example, Dodwell 2000, Dutsch 2007 and 2016, Nervegna 2013 and 2014). One must also not forget the contribution generally deriving from iconographic research on ancient materials featuring theatrical subjects in understanding scenic gestures in the *nea* and the *palliata*: suffice it to cite, as examples in case, Bieber² 1961 and Webster-Green-Seeberg 1995, as well as influential specific studies such as Csapo 1993.

³ For more studies on the pragmatics of communication elaborated by Gregory Bateson's Palo Alto group, see at least the well-known reference manual edited by Watzlawick-Helmick Beavin-Jackson 1967 (for more on non-verbal communication, see in particular 60–67 and 99–107). For more on the application of methodological tools borrowed from the pragmatics of communication to the analysis of Latin literary texts, see the comprehensive assessment in Ricottilli 2009 and 2021b. More specifically, for an in-depth analysis of gestures and a working definition of its essential coordinates, see Ricottilli 2000.

⁴ More examples of pragmatic analyses of gestures in the *palliata* may be found in Ricottilli 2018 and 2021a in relation to Terence, and in Raccanelli 2021 and 2022 for Plautus. For its application to Seneca's theatre, see at least Calabrese 2021.

Before carrying out the analysis of the text, let us see the working definition that was proposed in this methodological perspective by Licinia Ricottilli:

per gesto intendiamo un comportamento corporeo o facciale che assuma un valore comunicativo, informativo o interattivo nei confronti di un destinatario diretto o di un eventuale osservatore, e per il quale esista una possibilità di controllo da parte dell'emittente.⁵

Moreover, it is worth keeping in mind that the category of gestures includes phenomena belonging to the visual (crying, nodding or lowering one's eyes, etc.), cenesthetic or haptic (gestures involving physical contact such as embracing, kissing, pleading by touching one's knees, etc.), and auditive systems of representation (such as the sound of laughter or crying, the smacking sound of kissing, etc.).⁶

As a case study, I chose one of Plautus' richest comedies in terms of communicative bodily signals, i.e. *Miles gloriosus* in which, as is well known, the famous virtuosic sequence of the *servus meditans* culminating in the *schema* of the *os columnatum* (vv. 200–218) stands out. Without lingering on this mimic scene, which has already been extensively explored,⁷ it is worth observing how it is inserted into a widespread explicit plot of non-verbal gestures and signals that recur throughout the entire comedy. By way of example only, we can indicate at least two other scenes in which particular insistence on gestural language clearly emerges: the courtesan Philocomasium's farewell to the *miles gloriosus* (vv. 1311–1352) that we will focus on soon, and the exhibition of the courtesan Acroteleutium who, having been hired to seduce the same *miles*, pretends to be a *matrona* who has desperately fallen in love with him (vv. 1220–1280). In addition to sections like these, which are dense in gestures and postures, it is possible to record numerous other scattered occurrences of non-verbal communication that sometimes emerge on the level of mimesis and other times on that of diegesis. For instance, it is possible to find knowing looks,⁸ furtive glances,⁹ bouts of laughter,¹⁰ ritual gestures of

⁵ Ricottilli 2000, 16: «with the word gesture, we refer to a bodily or facial behaviour that assumes communicative, informative or interactive value in relation to a direct addressee or a possible observer, and for which there is a possibility of control by an issuer».

⁶ Ricottilli 2000, 15.

⁷ Among the extremely vast related bibliography, we limit ourselves to citing Petrone 1995 and 2004, Zimmermann 1995, Monda 2014, Cardoso 2019.

⁸ *Mil.* 123 f.: *ubi contra aspexit me, oculis mihi signum dedit, / ne se appellarem.*

⁹ *Mil.* 1217: *aspicito limis, ne ille nos se sentiat videre.* Among the playful exchange of glances, see also v. 990: *viden tu illam oculis venaturam facere atque aucupium auribus?*

¹⁰ *Mil.* 1073 f.: *Pa. nequeo hercle equidem risu[m] admoderari: <hahahae!>/ Mi. ob eam causam huc aps te avorti.* (the integration is by Studemund).

pleading,¹¹ pompous poses,¹² attitudes of interpersonal contact,¹³ etc... The text of *Miles* thus underscores particular reliance on the data of non-verbal communication, as opposed to Plautus' other comedies in which this dimension remains implicit or marginally expressed. In such a context, we intend to focus on a specific gesture, i.e. the lovers' kiss, which repeats itself with modular variations throughout the entire comedy. The emergence of a *Motivkette* in the resumption of the lovers' kiss (which is identified at vv. 174 ff.; 533 f. and then 1329 ff. and 1431 ff.) has been debated for a long time by analytical critics in the attempt to reconstruct the relation between *Miles* and Greek models¹⁴. However, from our pragmatic point of view, it is worth examining this thread of gesturality in depth, by systematically investigating its communicative and dramaturgical effects in relation to the construction of a deliberate comic device.

1. Denied kisses: prelude

Actually, we could perhaps already identify an initial, embryonal thematisation of the gesture under examination in the comedy's so-called delayed prologue, where the slave Palaestrio, in narrating the *argumentum*, simultaneously offers an efficient portrayal of the *miles*, in marked contrast with the image of a great seductor that Pyrgopolynices depicted of himself in the preceding scene, supported by the flattery of the parasite. As one will certainly remember, Artotrogus pretended to be assaulted by droves of women ready to pull him by the *pallium* to beg him to set up meetings with the handsome soldier for them (vv. 58–71),¹⁵ but this lively summary of the verbal and non-verbal behaviour of Pyrgopolynices' imaginary admirers is juxtaposed by the *prologizon* slave with the description of the real gestures of the women who actually interact with him (vv. 91–94):

ait sese ultro omnis mulieres sectarier:
is deridiculost quaqua incedit omnibus.
itaque hic meretrices, labiis dum ductant eum,
maiolem partem videas valgis saviis.¹⁶

¹¹ *Mil.* 540–543: Sc. *Periplectomene, te opsecro / per deos atque homines perque stultitiam meam / perque tua genua—Pe. quid opsecras me? Sc. inscitiae / meae et stultitiae ignoscas*). Another gesture of pleading may be found at v. 1239 f.

¹² *Mil.* 1044 f.: Py. *magnum me faciam / nunc quom illaec me illi[c] conlaudat. Pa. viden tu ignavom, ut sese infert?*

¹³ *Mil.* 59 f.: *vel illae quae here pallio / me reprehenderunt.*

¹⁴ Schaaf 1977, 343 and n. 344 p. 434.

¹⁵ See *supra*, n. 13.

¹⁶ "He claims that all women pursue him: / he though, wherever he passes, is the object of ridicule for all. / And so the courtesans here, while they lure him in by puckering

Although the soldier claims that all women pursue him, the truth is that everyone mocks him wherever he goes. And so, the courtesans lure him by making kiss-like gestures with their lips while actually twisting their mouths.¹⁷ The system of

their lips, / for the most part would actually be seen with twisted kisses.” Except where explicitly indicated differently (as here), I refer to the text of Lindsay 1904–1905. At v. 93, *ductant eum*, which is generally accepted by editors, was proposed by Beroaldo following Char. p. 103 K. (based on Fabricius’ conjecture from Charisius’ *ductantem*), while the Palatini witness *ducant eum* (*ducunt eum* C). Based on Fulg. *serm. ant.* 46 (*nictant eum*), Lindsay proposes *nictant ei* (see also Lindsay 1898), later followed by Papaioannou 2009, 166. I wish to thank Walter Stockert for drawing my attention to the conjecture *lactant*, which was proposed by Neumann: an in-depth discussion of the passage is in Stockert 2022.

- ¹⁷ See Flury s.v. *labium* in TLL 7.775.37, at *Mil.* 93: «osculum labiis simulantes alliciunt». On the basis of Non. 1.91: *valgum est proprie intortum*, Ussing 1875–1892 (vol. 2, 15) observes that in *Mil.* 94 *valgus* «ridicule [...] a cruribus ad osculum transfertur». Indeed, in Fest. 514 L. (*Valgos Opillus Aurelius aliique complures aiunt dici, qui diversas suras habeant. Plautus in Milite glorioso, qui talos vitiosos* (94): “*Maiorem partem videas valgis talis*”) the adjective *valgis* in *Mil.* 94 concordances with *talis*, rather than *saviis*, in a *iunctura* that is much more obvious than that which emerged from direct tradition. For more on the rare use of the adjective *valgus* in the sintagm *valgis saviis* with the meaning of «with crooked (bow-legged) kisses», as well as on the metonymic value of the expression (lips instead of kisses), see Hammond–Mack–Moskalew² 1997, 86. As concerns the Plautine specificity of this *Witz*, subtle observations may be found in Stockert 2022. The comparison that Fulgentius (*serm. ant.* 46) establishes between a distorted citation of the Plautine passage under exam and an expression used by Petronius is rather interesting (*fr.* 10 Müller): [*Quid sit exercitus, quid sit nictare, quid sint valgia.*] *Exercitus dicitur contemptus, unde et Plautus in milite glorioso ait: “Itane nos nostramque familiam habes exercitam”, et ubi supra ait: “Plus videas valgis quam sabiis, denique omnes nictant eum”; nictare enim dicimus cinnum facere, valgia uero sunt labellorum obtortiones in subinatione factae, sicut et Petronius ait: “Obtorto valgiter labello”.* [Which means *exercitus*, what *nictare*, what *valgia*]. *Exercitus* means ‘scorned’, so Plautus in *Miles gloriosus* also writes: «So much have you scorned us and our home»; and where he wrote just before: «You would rather see them with grimaces than kisses, so all of them wink at him»; *nictare* in fact, means ‘beckon’, while *valgia* refers to the contorsions of the lips that one makes while vomiting, as Petronius also writes: «with their little mouths twisted in a grimace». The comment of Pizzani 1968, 176–180, is useful and, along with observing how the divergence of Fulgentius’ text from direct tradition is almost a systematic fact, on the basis of Lindsay 1898, reconstructs the process of misunderstanding of the text that led to the creation of the noun *valgium*, which is not recorded elsewhere. In contrast, in light of the comparison with *Miles* 93–94, the hesitation of the scholar to trace *subinatio* back to *supinatio*, i.e. ‘vomit’ (see Cael. Aurel. *Tard.* 4.3.64), and the resulting attempt to interpret the term as a variation of *subatio* («heat, warmth», see Plin. *HN.* 8.51.77.205) cannot be shared. It is not the «contorsioni delle labbra fatte durante l’amplesso» (Pizzani 1968; 43, see Ciaffi 1967, 240 f.: «Smorfie in verità sono gli storcimenti di labbra fatti nella fregola. Al modo che anche Petronio dice “storcendo smorfiosamente il labbro”»), but in reference to the gesture of repulsion

gestures that is roughly outlined in these two verses is rather interesting from a communicative point of view: the initial simulation of kissing is both an invitation and a provocation that is however denied by the *valga savia* that follow. These, in turn, are autocontradictory gestures in which the signal of offer and seduction is disavowed by the movement of the mouth, which is diverted out of disgust, almost as if to emblematised the paradox of a gestural negation. From this point of view, the twisted kisses of the women, with their ironic and teasing value, are a perfect icon that anticipates and sheds light on a main thread of the gestural comicality of this particular work.

Upon closer inspection, the problem of how it may be possible to deny a gesture, or to lie through gestures is one of the classic conundrums of studies on the pragmatics of communication. On the one hand, in fact, the widespread opinion (in modern and classic culture) is that it is much more difficult to lie through body language than through verbal language, and therefore that gestures are usually much more reliable and truthful than words.¹⁸ On the other hand, denial and lying, which are so hard to express within the logic of non-verbal communication, pose a series of questions that are similar to the ones already tackled by Gregory Bateson in his studies on paradoxical communication in play and in humor, according to which, for example, a behaviour that is taking place is contextually re-classified by the interagents through the exchange of the metacommunicative signal “this is a game”.¹⁹ It therefore consists in a scheme featuring the creative use of paradox that poses a very stimulating challenge for an author like Plautus. But let us proceed gradually, starting from the text.

2. How to deny gestural evidence: deceiving the foolish slave (first movement)

The matter we are starting from is therefore that of an exhibited and contextually denied gesture. In truth, if we extend our gaze to include the entire plot, we realise that the first part of the comedy (vv. 79–595) is actually based on a necessary deception to deny gestural evidence. As one will remember, in fact, in *Miles gloriosus* the scenic action opens when the clever slave Palaestrio, after secretly reuniting his master Pleusicles with his courtesan Philocomasium, who had been kidnapped by the braggart soldier, must face the kidnapper’s foolish servant Sceledrus who,

that is codified in the mimicry of rejection (see Müller-Ehlers⁴1995, 365 in reference to Petr. fr. 10: «Eine ‘Schnute’ ist das Verziehen der Lippen, wenn man sich übergibt. Wie denn auch Petronius sagt: Dabei verzog sich die Lippe zur Schnute»).

¹⁸ See Watzlawick–Helmick Beavin–Jackson 1967, 62–68 and 102–105. In particular, see 63: «it is easy to profess something verbally, but difficult to carry a lie into the realm of the analogic» and 65: «analogic language shares with analogic computing the lack of the simple negative, i.e., an expression for ‘not’».

¹⁹ Bateson 1972/76, 216–235: see Bateson 1953/2003 and 1956/96.

while spying from the rooftop, saw the two lovers clandestinely kissing in the neighbour's home (vv. 173–176):

de tegulis
modo nescioquis inspectavit vostrum familiarium
per nostrum impluvium intus apud nos Philocomasium atque hospitem
osculantis.²⁰

The gesture constitutes immediate proof of their relationship, that Palaestrio manages to undermine by leading Sceledrus to believe that he did not see Philocomasium, but her twin. In this manner, the deception at the expense of the *miles* can continue undisturbed in the second part of the comedy (vv. 596–1437) with the happy ending featuring the liberation of the courtesan and the escape of the two lovers with the *servus callidus*.²¹

Let us now focus on the first movement of the comedy. Palaestrio clearly defines the nature of the challenge that must be tackled, which consists in lowering cataract into Sceledrus' eyes and employing clever tricks «so that he did not see what he saw» (vv. 147–149):²²

ei nos facitis fabricis et doctis dolis
glaucumam ob oculos obiciemus eumque ita
faciemus ut quod viderit non viderit.²³

The foolish servant is thus trapped in the net of illusions that is created by the deceiver and surrenders to its mystification within an unconscious mirroring echo of his words. In fact, upon being convinced that he actually saw the courtesan's twin, he admits that the fog that had fallen over his eyes has finally lifted (v. 405: *nunc demum experior mi ob oculos caliginem opstitisse*) and that «he did not see her (*scil.* Philocomasium), even if he saw her» (v. 407: *non vidi eam, etsi vidi*).²⁴

²⁰ “From the rooftop / just earlier one of your household saw here in our house / through the watershed Philocomasium and our guest / kissing”.

²¹ For more on the structure of the plot, see at least Questa 1980, especially 71–77 and Bettini 1982. See Hammond–Mack–Moskalew ²1997, 24–26; Maurice 2007.

²² See *Mil.* 196–199: *paulisper tace, / ... dum consulo quid agam, quem dolum doloso contra conservo parem, / qui illam hic vidit osculantem, id visum ut ne visum siet*. The matter is resumed at vv. 291 f., 315, 345, 518, 589 f.

²³ “By means of our malicious plots and attentive cunning / we will make a cataract fall over his eyes and make it / so that he did not see what he saw.”

²⁴ For more on deceptions in *Miles*, see Sharrock 2009, 105–110: «This play is obsessed with the issue of sight, and who sees, and who is tempted to see» (110). For more on the central role of vision in *Miles*, see Dumont 2014. Ehrman 1997 claims that the comedic topic of Sceledrus' blindness veils the emergence of mythological models like that of

The deception, as Gianni Guastella has demonstrated,²⁵ is achieved by Palaestrio thanks to a sophisticated strategy of validation – by means of the filters of oniric invention and storytelling – of a ‘parallel reality’ that is never subjected to the one truly indisputable test, i.e. an autopic observation of the co-presence of the *meretrix* and her presumed twin.²⁶

From our point of view, it is worth highlighting how the *servus callidus* enacts his manipulation by deliberately working on the tension between *visa* and *verba*, so that the words win and negate any visual experience (v. 187 f.):

ut eum, qui se hic vidit, verbis vincat ne is se viderit,
siquidem centiens hic visa sit, tamen infitias eat.²⁷

In this process of verbal deconstruction of the evidence, gestures (kisses, alongside embraces) are used for an insistent repetition: the tricksters thus reactivate its memory at least fifteen times, first to discuss the manner of its denial and then as a sort of relentless provocation against Sceledrus, who in turn reiterates the same cliché while he falls in their trap.²⁸ Non-verbal behaviour is always exclusively evoked here on a diegetic level in the characters’ stories; nevertheless, even in the absence of a mimetic concretisation on the scene, it maintains an iconic strength of condensation. Based on the pragmatic principle according to which gestures are worth part of an entirety, the lovers’ kiss is capable of summarising the entire content of the relationship between the courtesan and the adulescens in one signal, thus revealing their betrayal of the *miles*. In other words, the condensation effect that is connaturated by the gesture is functional towards the construction of a sort of comic *Leitmotiv* in the first movement of *Miles*, almost as if it were a mocking game of provoking exhibition that is contextual in relation to the negation process of the evidence.

Let us thus review the mechanism of the trick once again from our point of view. As previously mentioned, Palaestrio manipulates Sceledrus in a back-and-forth race between the *miles*’ house and the adjacent one of his neighbour, which are united by a hidden hole that had been previously made by Palaestrio. Behind

the story of Actaeon and other heroes who were punished for seeing what they should not have seen.

²⁵ Guastella 2003.

²⁶ See vv. 248–250: *nimis doctum dolum! / sed si ambas videre in uno miles concilio volet, / quid agimus? Pa. facilest: trecentae possunt caussae conligi.* An approach to the comedy of doubles in reference to argumentative paradoxes may be found in García Hernández 2003 (especially 104 as regards the mockery of the twin in *Miles gloriosus*).

²⁷ “With her words she should convince him, who has seen her here, that he has not seen her; / even if she has been seen here a hundred times, she should still deny it.”

²⁸ See vv. 196–199; 242–245 (two occurrences); 263 f.; 275; 287–289; 319 f.; 337 f.; 366; 390 f. (two occurrences); 401; 460 f.; 473 f.; 506–509; 533 f.; 555 f.

the scenes, Philocomasium can therefore pass from one side of the wall to the other and appear before the foolish slave personifying herself or her twin. The point is that when she appears in the guise of the twin, she shows herself precisely while kissing and embracing young Pleusicles, who is the neighbour's guest (v. 533 f.). Thus, the very repetition of the same gesture that had proven the courtesan's guilt, rather than confirming her betrayal, is now creatively projected within a different and reconfigured frame as autoptic evidence of her innocence. In other words, this 'gestural slap' that crowns the trick of the illusory double induces the foolish slave to read the second occurrence of the same signal as disapproval of the first occurrence.

Sceledrus, as the victim of the *ludificatio*, cannot but surrender to the (fake) evidence and beg the forgiveness of the neighbour, the *senex lepidus* Periplectomenus, an amused accomplice of the deception. It is probable that Sceledrus witnessed the gesture from an offstage position, as may be gleaned from his contrite report to the elder (vv. 528–557):²⁹

Sc. pro di immortales! similiorem mulierem
 529–530 magisque eandem, ut pote quae non sit eadem, non reor
 deos facere posse. PE. quid nunc? Sc. commerui malum.
 531 PE. quid igitur? eanest? Sc. etsi east, non est ea.
 PE. vidistin istam? Sc. vidi et illam et hospitem
 complexam atque osculantem. PE. eanest? Sc. nescio.
 535 PE. vin scire plane? Sc. cupio. PE. abi intro ad vos domum.
 continuo, vide sitne istaec vostra intus. Sc. licet,
 pulchre admonuisti. iam ego ad te exhibo foras.—
 PE. numquam edepol hominem quemquam ludificarier
 magis facete vidi et magis miris modis.
 540 sed eccum egreditur. Sc. Periplectomene, te opsecro
 per deos atque homines perque stultitiam meam
 perque tua genua— PE. quid opsecras me? Sc. Inscitiae
 meae et stultitiae ignoscas. nunc demum scio
 me fuisse excordem, caecum, incogitabilem.
 545 nam Philocomasium eccam intus. PE. quid nunc, furcifer?
 vidistin ambas? Sc. vidi. PE. erum exhibeas volo.
 Sc. meruisse equidem me maximum fateor malum
 et tuae fecisse me hospitae aio iniuriam;
 sed meam esse erilem concubinam censui,

²⁹ The text (vv. 535–540) insists on the servant's exit and subsequent re-entry on the stage. The hypothesis according to which Philocomasium is visible on the scene, and appears to the public from time to time at one door or the other (with her lover in the neighbour's home), is thus less plausible.

550 quoi me custodem erus addidit miles meus.
 nam ex uno puteo similior numquam potis
 aqua aquai sumi quam haec est atque ista hospita.
 et me despexe ad te per impluvium tuom
 fateor. PE. quid ni fateare ego quod viderim?
 555 et ibi osculantem meum hospitem cum ista hospita
 vidisti? Sc. vidi (cur negem quod viderim?),
 sed Philocomasium me vidisse censui.³⁰

We thus summarise how the gestural evidence of the deception at Sceledrus' expense is denied while keeping in mind that, in this case, all of the occurrences of kisses are probably expressed on a diegetic level through the characters' stories. The process of denial does not include tactics of distraction, but rather emphasises attention through the cyclical reproposal of the gestural *Leimotiv*. The act of kissing is therefore not concealed, but rather paradoxically contradicted by means of a second exhibition within a falsified situational frame in which one of the interagents is distorted (the courtesan appears masked a double of herself, thus denying her own presence and participation).

³⁰ "Sc. By the immortal gods! a more similar woman / and more the same without being the same, I do not think / the gods could make. Pe. and so? Sc. I deserve to be punished. / Pe. well then? is it her? Sc. even if it is her, it is not her. / Pe. have you seen this woman? Sc. I saw her and the guest / embracing and kissing. Pe. is it her? Sc. I do not know. / Pe. do you want to know with certainty? Sc. of course I do. Pe. go right away / into your house; see if yours is at home. Sc. all right; / that is a good suggestion. then I will quickly come back out to you. / Pe. wow, I have never seen anyone be deceived / in a more entertaining and insane manner. / but now he is coming out. Sc. Periplectomenus, I beg your pardon, / by gods and men and my foolishness / and your knees— Pe. what are you begging of me? Sc. to forgive me / for my stupidity and foolishness; now I finally know / that I have been senseless, blind, inconsiderate; / because Philocomasium is in here. Pe. and so, you rascal? / did you see both of them? Sc. yes. PE. I want you to call your master here. / Sc. I admit that I deserve great ailment / and to have wronged your guest. / but I did think it was the concubine of my master / that my master the soldier entrusted to my care. / because one cannot draw from a well water that is more similar / than are our woman here and your guest there. / I also admit that I looked down into your house through / your watershed. Pe. and how could you not admit what I saw? / and there you saw my guest kiss / that female guest? Sc. yes, I saw it: why deny what I saw? / but it was Philocomasium that I was sure I had seen."

3. How to dissimulate gestural evidence: deceiving the *miles* (second movement)

Let us now proceed to the second part of the comedy to examine the scene in which the soldier falls into the trap that had been devised at his expense (vv. 1311–1376). The *servus callidus* and his accomplices had, in fact, organised a plan to distract him by engaging a self-proclaimed *matrona* who pretends to pine over Pyrgopolynices who, in his rush towards this new adulterous adventure, hurriedly dismisses the courtesan Philocomasium, letting her depart for Athens with the slave Palaestrio under the protection of an unlikely sailor with an eye-patch who in truth is her young lover Pleusicles. The *meretrix* puts on a masterful farewell scene and feigns great despair over her separation: she weeps and, upon being conceded one last embrace from the *miles*, she purposefully pretends to faint in order to be supported by the lover disguised as a sailor, who obviously takes the opportunity to embrace and kiss her right under his rival's eyes.³¹ As may be seen below, Plautus created the perfect opportunity to present a virtuosic variation of the gestural module that we already know. Let us follow its development in the text (vv. 1329–1352):

- PH. opsecro licet complecti priu' quam proficisco? PY. licet.
 1330 PH. o mi oculo, o mi anime. PA. opsecro, tene mulierem,
 ne adfligatur. PY. quid istuc quaesost? PA. quia aps te abit, animo male
 factum est huic repente miserae. PY. curre intro atque ecferto aquam.
 PA. nihil aquam moror, quiescat malo. ne interveneris,
 quaeso, dum respiscit. PY. capita inter se nimi' nexa hisce habent.
 1335 non placet. labra ab labellis aufer, nauta, cave malum.
 PL. temptabam spiraret an non. PY. aurem admotam oportuit.
 PL. si magi' vis, eam omittam. PY. nolo: retineas. PA. fio miser.
 PY. exite atque ecferte huc intus omnia quae isti dedi.
 PA. etiam nunc saluto te, <Lar> familiaris, prius quam eo.
 1340 conservi conservaeque omnes, bene valet et vivite,
 bene quaeso inter vos dicatis †et me† apsentem tamen.
 PY. age, Palaestrio, bono animo es. PA. eheu! nequeo quin fleam,

³¹ The passage is examined in Arnott 1997, 118 in an insightful article dedicated to the reconstruction of the scenic action that may be gleaned from the stage directions that are incorporated in the Plautine text. The contribution (which is part of a diptych including Arnott 1995) focuses on the play of creative variations of stereotypes that are expected by the audience in various love scenes in Plautus' repertoire. The observations on *Miles* 1311–1353 are useful, with the exception of the fact that the one to enter the scene with Philocomasium at v. 1310 f. is not her lover Pleusicles, but rather the slave Palaestrio, to whom therefore – in agreement with the courtesan – the stage directions that are weaved into the text at the beginning of the dialogue are reported.

quom aps te abeam. PY. fer aequo animo. PA. scio ego quid doleat mihi.

PH. sed quid hoc? quae res? quid video? lux, salve. * * *

1345 PL.* <salve> iam respisti? PH. opsecro, quem amplexa sum

1345a hominem? perii! sumne ego apud me? PL. ne time, voluptas mea.

1347 PY. quid istuc est negoti? PA. animus hanc modo hic reliquerat.

metuoque et timeo ne hoc tandem propalam fiat, nimis.³²

First of all, it must be observed that this passage presents an effect of gestural progression: the kisses and embraces of the lovers, which were indirectly referred to as events that occurred off stage and were witnessed by Sceledrus in the first movement, are now directly carried out right under the eyes of Pyrgopolynices and the entire audience. The mock, in other words, now emerges to the level of mimesis and addresses the *miles* in person rather than his foolish attendant. Furthermore, it is accomplished precisely when the *meretrix* is dismissed with her gifts, at the moment of greatest exposure to danger, according to the typical Plautine module of free relaunch of the challenge of the rise in risk that borders mockery.³³

As far as this is concerned, it is useful to consider an element of the plot that I am very grateful David Konstan has drawn my attention to: the *miles*' propensity, and that of his slave, to violate the sacredness of the domestic space of a free citizen (think, for instance, of Sceledrus' intrusion from the *impluvium*, and that of Pyrgopolynices into Periplectomenus' home, in function of adultery), which justifies a violent reaction to punish them.³⁴ From this perspective, the twofold

³² “Ph. pray, may I embrace you before departing? Py. You may. / Ph. oh, my treasure, my soul! Pa. please, sustain her, / so that she may not fall. Py. but please, what is happening? Pa. because she is to leave you, / she suddenly fell ill, poor thing. Py. run inside the house and bring some water. / Pa. I care not about water, I would prefer her to rest. do not get in the way, / please, until she comes to. Py. the heads of these two are too close. / I do not like it: remove your mouth from her lips, sailor; stay away from trouble. / Pl. I was checking whether she is breathing or not. Py. it was the ear that you should have drawn near. / Pl. if it seems better to you, I will let her go. Py. no no, hold her up. Pa. oh, poor me! / Py. leave and bring out everything that I have given her. / Pa. now once more I greet you, Lar of the household, before departing. / all you comrades of slavery, farewell and a good life to you; / speak of me among yourselves with benevolence, I pray you, even in my absence. / Py. come, Palaestrio, have courage. Pa. ohi ohi, I cannot keep myself from crying, / as I am separated from you. Py. bear it with resignation. Pa. I know well how much I suffer. / Ph. but what is this? what? what do I see? oh, light, greetings! *** / Pl. <greetings!> have you come to? Ph. please, who did I embrace? / I am dead! but have I come to or not? Pl. do not fear, my sweetness. / Py. what matter is this? Pa. she lost her senses just now. / I strongly fear that at the end the matter has been all too revealed.”

³³ Vogt-Spira 1998, 123.

³⁴ Konstan–Raval 2018.

deceit at their expense takes the form of a necessary redressive move to which gestural mocks are added like an excessive rematch, a playful surplus of gratuitous provocation that is elaborated as a paradox.

Let us now focus on the dynamic of the interaction. The gestural challenge is issued by the courtesan, who invokes one last embrace of the *miles* (v. 1329) and simulates her fainting. The embrace is thus offered to and simultaneously withheld from the soldier because Palaestrio intervenes by ‘diverting’ the apparently delirious woman (v. 1330) into the arms of the fake sailor. Pyrgopolynices’ feeble protest (v. 1331) is kept at bay by the slave, who explains that Philocomasium is feeling ill and that it would be best not to intervene until she comes to (v. 1331–1333). In pragmatic terms, the diversive tactic consists, as may be seen, in denying the evidence of what was truly an embrace between lovers, by downgrading it from a gesture (erotic communicative behaviour) to a functional action (support of a woman who has lost her senses).

This gag deserves a reinforcing variation. Upon being kept at a distance, Pyrgopolynices protests once again and threatens the sailor in search of trouble: their heads are too close, their lips joined (vv. 1334–1336). The *adulescens* employs the same defensive strategy of the slave and denies the kiss, thus reclassifying it as a functional action (v. 1336: «I was checking whether she is breathing or not»). A flash of awareness on the soldier’s part (v. 1336: «then it was the ear you should have drawn near») is overshadowed by Pleusicles’ threat to let the girl, who is obviously still abandoned like a dead weight in his arms, fall. This is the third confirmation of the functional (and not gestural) value of the ‘sailor’s’ actions, and it is conveyed as such a rude and brisk intimidation as to compel Pyrgopolynices to withdraw v. 1337 («no no, hold her up»), while the servant breaks into a cold sweat in an ‘apart’ due to the escaped risk (v. 1337: «oh, poor me»). The mechanism of the comedic device and the rhythm of the interaction prevail over every plausibility and overcome the preordained victim of the deception until he is overwhelmed.

The game goes on in one last gratuitous provocation, when the courtesan pretends to come to and acts bewildered upon finding herself in the arms of the wrong man (vv. 1344–1345a), who replies with a protective movement that is all too revelatory and betrays a rift in the lovers’ gestural dissimulation (v. 1345a: «do not fear, my sweetness»): in fact, Pyrgopolynices is quick to react (v. 1346: «what matter is this?»), but Palaestrio deviates him once again with a distracting movement (v. 1346: «she lost her senses just now»).³⁵ The convoy is finally ready to depart: Philocomasium and the sailor–Pleusicles exit the stage free and loaded with gifts directed towards Athens.

³⁵ Yet at this point it is precisely a careless ‘aside’ of his (v. 1347: «I strongly fear that at the end the matter has been all too revealed») which, upon being heard by the *miles*, puts the success of the deception at risk. Once again, the clever servant must deviate the evanescent attention of the antagonist by rephrasing his line (v. 1349: the transportation of the gifts will not pass unobserved and will draw the blame of the citizens).

Let us briefly review the dynamic of the gag, which is entirely played out on the level of mimicry in this case. Once again, the base of the comedic device lies in the negation of the gesture, which however is executed here in a biphasic sequence, i.e. combining the two different modules that the public already knows. In the first phase, the scheme that already emerged in the *valga savia* of the Prologue (vv. 91–94) of the offer and contextual withdrawal of an erotic gesture (the embrace is addressed to the *miles* but deviated onto the *nauta* with an excuse) is repeated. In the second phase instead, a similar scheme to that enacted in the tricking of Sceledrus (v. 534) is reproduced. In fact, the lovers linger in their effusions right in front of their antagonist, while denying the evidence with a consumed misdirection technique, thanks to multiple elusive strategies:³⁶

- a. they create an illusory frame (the main farewell scene in which Philocomasium feigns her desparation because of the separation);
- b. they dissimulate the degree of their active involvement in the interaction (Philocomasium pretends to have fainted and be unable to communicate; Pleusicles pretends to be a stranger);
- c. they conceal their gestures, thus obscuring their communicative intention and erotic value, in the attempt to reclassify them as functional acts (the embrace is declassified to the support of a senseless body and the kiss to the auscultation of breathing).

The success of this paradoxical communication on many layers, in which the lovers wink at the audience and engage them at a communicative level their adversary is excluded from, is thus ensured by the use of numerous distracting signals that are verbal, but also gestural to a large extent. In addition to those just examined, it is necessary to now briefly pause on a further gestural resource that Philocomasium uses to mislead the *miles*.

4. Digression on gestural distractors: the Plautine code on tears

The farewell scene, as a matter of fact, features a copious flow of tears. The *meretrix* makes her *entrée* on the scene crying (vv. 1311 f.):

PA. quid modi flendo quaeso hodie facies? PH. quid ego ni fleam?
ubi pulcherrume egi aetatem, inde abeo.³⁷

³⁶ In particular, before the interaction the antagonist had already been rendered collaborative by the deception of the fake matron and is therefore distracted by his urgency to be free of Philocomasium.

³⁷ “Pa. what pause will you grant your weeping, I beg you? Ph. why should I not weep? / it is from where I lived my best days that I depart.”

As observed by Palaestrio, who accompanies her, Philocomasium is unable to stop her weeping, nor could it be otherwise, since – as she claims – she is abandoning the place where she lived her finest days. The unstoppable tears flow even while the courtesan, before invoking an embrace from the soldier, expresses her sorrow at being separated from such an exceptional man (vv. 1321–1328):

PH. istuc crucior, a viro me tali abalienarier,
 nam tu quemvis potis es facere ut affluat facetiis;
 et quia tecum eram, propterea animo eram ferocior:
 eam nobilitatem amittendam video. PY. a! ne fle. PH. non queo,
 1325 quom te video. PY. habe bonum animum. PH. scio ego quid doleat mihi.
 PA. nam nil miror, si lubenter, Philocomasium, hic eras,
 <si> forma huius, mores, virtus, attinere animum hic tuom,
 quom ego servos quando aspicio hunc, lacrumo quia diiungimur.³⁸

In the immediate context, there are numerous recurrences of the verb *fleo*³⁹ which, according to grammarians, focuses both on the pouring flow of tears (Serv. ad *Aen.* 11.211: *ubertim lacrimas demittere*), and the vocal expression of crying (Serv. ad *Aen.* 11.59: *flere est cum voce lacrimare*).⁴⁰ The Plautine text indeed provides clues on both traits: on the one hand, the courtesan's flow of tears is immoderate (v. 1311) and unstoppable (v. 1311 and 1324), on the other hand, it is accompanied by words of inconsolable lamentation (v. 1325, but see 1321–1324). Moreover, Philocomasium's gestures are further amplified by the slave, who joins in her sorrow by tearing up himself and lamenting his separation from his master (vv. 1326–1328).

The representation of weeping actually includes, so as to say, the sequence of the dissimulated kiss as an inlay since, among tears and fainting spells, Philocomasium bounces from the arms of the soldier to those of the sailor, while the slave Palaestrio continues to weep while resisting the *miles'* attempts to console him (v. 1342 f.):

³⁸ “Ph. it is because of this that I fret, to no longer belong to such a man, / and in fact you know how to make anyone overflow with witticisms; / and because I was with you, I was more proud of soul; / but now I see that I must lose this nobility. Py. ah, do not cry! Ph. I cannot, / when I see you. Py. have courage. Ph. I know well how much I suffer. / Pa. I certainly cannot wonder, Philocomasium, if you were happy here, / if his beauty, manners, and valor have ensnared your soul, / since I, being but a slave, upon seeing him, cry at the separation.”

³⁹ At vv. 1311 (two occurrences), 1324 and 1342, to which *lacrumo* is to be added at v. 1328.

⁴⁰ See Serv. ad *Aen.* 6.427: *sane ploratus tantum lacrimarum est, planctus, tantum uocum, fletus ad utrumque pertinet, quae plerumque confundunt poetae*. See DEL, 240, Bonfante 1977 and, for more on Plautus, the review in Roccaro 1973.

PY. age, Palaestrio, bono animo es. PA. eheu! nequeo quin fleam,
quom aps te abeam. PY. fer aequo animo. PA. scio ego quid doleat mihi.

The sequence offers a perfect echo to the *miles*' exchange with the courtesan (v. 1324 f.):

PY. a! ne fle. PH. non queo,
quom te video. PY. habe bonum animum. PH. scio ego quid doleat mihi.

It is actually possible to notice that, in reporting the woman's expressions of pain, the slave amplifies their *pathos* with the interjection *eheu*, which is usually «legata a violente emozioni e al pianto». ⁴¹ In other words, Palaestrio loads the sentimental tones of the exchange in an amusing counterpoint with the gestural deception of the lovers in the background.

To better understand the hyperbolic and caricatural value of crying in this scene, a brief glance review of the code of tears in Plautine comedies is sufficient. ⁴² On the one hand, in fact, the entrance on the scene of the *meretrix* in tears (*Mil.* 1311 f.) and sustained by the slave who accompanies her, responds to a common stereotype, according to which Philocomasium's weeping seems to be at least partially comparable to that to which other courtesans abandon themselves when they are conducted out of their homes and towards an unknown destiny. In all of these cases, the *meretrix* is comforted by a companion, who invites her not to cry. ⁴³ In this formula – it must be observed – the verb *ploro* usually appears, which is more expressive and colloquial than *fleo*, which in contrast seems to belong

⁴¹ Hofmann–Ricottilli ³2003, 114. A further echo of the pathetic intonation is presented just below the dialogue between Palaestrio and Pyrgopolynices (v. 1357–1359): PY. *habe animum bonum.* / PA. *eheu, quom venit mi in mentem ut mores mutandi sient, / muliebres mores discendi, obliviscendi stratitotici!* For a sequence of *eheu*, with a decisive ironic intonation, see *Pseud.* 79–82, in a scene featuring various analogies with that under analysis (see *infra*).

⁴² In general, the *topos* of tears in the *palliata* has been investigated in various studies that rightfully explore its contrasting value compared to the dramatic genre, which is consecrated to *risus*, but for the present purposes it is useful to single out some particular constants. A review on *flere* and its compounds in Plautus is provided in Roccaro 1973; Casamento 2006 analyses tears in *Pseudolus*, Raccanelli 2022 in *Cistellaria*; for more on the expression of pain and on female, but also male characters' weeping in the *palliata*, see Dutsch 2008, 96–114; for an overview on the gestuality, terminology and communicative functionality of tears in Terence, see Ricottilli 2018.

⁴³ *Curc.* 520 f.: *quid stulta ploras? ne time, bene hercle vendidi ego te; / fac sis bonae frugisies, sequere istum bella belle;* *Merc.* 501 f.: *ne plora: nimis stulte facis, oculos corruptis tales. / quin tibi quidem quod rideas magis est, quam ut lamentere;* *Pseud.* 1038–43: *ne plora, nescis ut res sit, Phoenicium, / verum haud multo post faxo scibis accubans.* See *Persa* 656 f.: *Do. ne sis plora.*