

DECIMUS LABERIUS
THE
FRAGMENTS

COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

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DECIMUS LABERIUS:
THE FRAGMENTS

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THE FRAGMENTS

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION,
TRANSLATION, AND COMMENTARY

BY

COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My interest in the Roman mime originated in the early 1990s when, as a PhD student at the University of Glasgow, I studied under the supervision of P. G. Walsh the episodic novel of Petronius from a theatrical point of view (a revised version of my PhD Thesis appeared with the title *Theatrum Arbitri: Theatrical elements in the Satyrice of Petronius* (Leiden 1995)). During my analysis of theatricality in Petronius I realised how important to the author of the *Satyrice*, and to ancient novelists in general, mime was as a structural device, and how inadequate our primary sources were for an understanding of this unique theatrical form. Its significance can be seen both in the frequent exploitation of various mime-motifs by authors of widely divergent literary genres such as love-elegy, satire, and the novel, and in the prominent role mime played in the shaping of medieval and modern popular theatre.

What survives from the scripts of the Roman literary mime today comprises some 55 titles of plays, a number of literary fragments (not all of them considered to be genuine extracts) which amount to about 200 lines, and a collection of over 730 *sententiae*, some of which are attributed to the mimographer Publilius. It is far from certain that all of these one-line apophthegms, which lack a theatrical context and were composed in iambic or trochaic metres, were written by him. The length of the remaining mime-fragments, composed usually in *senarii* or *septenarii*, varies from one word to 27 lines. The fragments are cited mainly by grammarians and lexicographers on account of their linguistic features and their literary value. The overwhelming majority of these mime-fragments, 44 titles and about 150 lines, is currently attributed to the Roman knight and mimographer Decimus Laberius, a contemporary of Cicero and Caesar, both of whom Laberius is reported to have confronted in public. It is therefore unsurprising that Laberius' work, which

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almost eclipses in number all the other Latin mime-fragments put together, forms the foundation on which many of the generalisations made by scholars in relation to mime are based. However representative Laberius' plays are of the Roman mime as a whole, any sweeping statements based on his fragments alone are potentially misleading, because they illuminate only to a small extent our understanding of the development of mime as a literary and theatrical phenomenon; for this reason his work needs to be complemented by careful consideration of the documentary evidence on the Greco-Roman mime. About 100 documents of material culture survive and shed light on the geographical expansion of this type of theatre and on the mechanics of the mime-profession with its acting specialisations, financial arrangements, and honourable rewards. These documents have been usefully edited, translated, and thoroughly commented on in the invaluable but unpublished PhD Thesis of R. L. Maxwell, *The documentary evidence for ancient mime* (Department of Classical Studies, University of Toronto 1993); a small number of literary and archaeological sources on mime is also included in E. Csapo and W. J. Slater, *The context of ancient drama* (Ann Arbor 1995) 369–78. The inscriptions on tombstones of mime-actors and mime-actresses, the graffiti on the walls of temples visited by mimes, the receipts of payment made out to mime-troupes, the dedicatory monuments set up to honour distinguished mime-players, and the visual images of scenes apparently pertaining to mime-plays should function as a salutary reminder that the fragments of the literary plays of Laberius and Publilius, as well as the titles and fragments of many other unspecified Roman mimographers, should be appropriately viewed as extracts of scripts destined for live performance.

However, in spite of its profound influence on the cultural and political spheres of classical and late antiquity, the literary Roman mime has been unduly neglected by modern scholars. The most recent critical edition (M. Bonaria, *Romani mimi* (Rome 1965)), with a translation into Italian, and a brief commentary on the genre's scanty remains, leaves a lot to be desired,

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especially in linguistic analysis and in the discussion of the fragments as parts of theatrical scripts now lost. The only English monograph on mime as a literary and theatrical genre is more than half a century old (A. Nicoll, *Masks, mimes and miracles: Studies in the popular theatre* (London, Sydney, and Bombay 1931)). E. Wüst's concise entry on mime, in *RE* xv.2.1727–64, is admittedly much more accurate and useful than H. Reich's detailed but confusing monograph on the subject (*Der Mimus* (Berlin 1903)); but even Wüst's scholarly contribution is outdated now. By the end of the twentieth century all the Greek mime-texts found in literary papyri had been re-edited and studied by D. L. Page (*Select papyri* III (Cambridge, Mass. and London 1950²)), H. Wiemken (*Der griechische Mimus* (Bremen 1972)), I. C. Cunningham (*Herodae mimiambi cum appendice fragmentorum mimorum papyraceorum* (Leipzig 1987)), and M. Andreassi (*Mimi greci in Egitto* (Bari 2001)), while many works on the literary history of the Roman mime and its influence (especially by L. Cicu, R. E. Fantham, and T. P. Wiseman) called for a re-examination of this theatrical form. Special mention should also be made of the unpublished PhD Thesis of P. E. Kehoe, *Studies in the Roman mime* (University of Cincinnati 1969).

Despite these developments in the field of the Greco-Roman mime, there was no monograph that would offer an up-to-date introduction to the Roman mime and its main issues from a theatrical perspective, a new edition of Laberius' literary fragments, their first-ever English translation, and a detailed commentary on them. This was a scholarly gap that needed immediate attention. Therefore, at one of the meetings of the Classical Association of Scotland (in Aberdeen), I suggested to W. S. Watt, who had by then retired from the Chair of Humanity in the University of Aberdeen, that he might produce a new critical edition of the mime-fragments. He responded jovially but firmly that, having edited Cicero's letters, he would never undertake the edition of an author whose text was transmitted in fragments (he held the same opinion in a note sent to me on 28 July 1998). He then recommended, with a smile on his face,

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that I embark on this task. I foolishly accepted the challenge immediately.

When I began the project, I was extremely ambitious in my demands, even though I had decided quite early on not to deal with the *sententiae* attributed to Publilius, both for reasons of space and because of the different problems inherent in an examination of these apophthegms, which had their own MSS tradition. But, setting the *sententiae* aside, I wanted in my project to cover everything in relation to mime and to solve all the problems associated with it. Now I see that I cannot account for all the stages of the development of the mime from an artless dramatic form into a fully-fledged theatrical genre which ousted the plays of Plautus and Terence from the Roman stage; nor can I provide definite answers to the questions posed by the interpretation of many mime-fragments. I have more often raised questions than answered them, and the reader ought not to be irritated that I use the verbs ‘may’ and ‘seem’ excessively. My aims in this volume were to offer a comprehensive as well as concise account of the development of the Roman mime, to consider why it occupied an undignified position in the literary and dramatic hierarchy of the Roman republican and early imperial eras, to situate the mimographer Decimus Laberius and his work within the relevant historical and literary context, to speculate (whenever possible) on the meaning of the mime-fragments from a theatrical perspective (an original approach to the study of this literary corpus), and to make available to a wide audience material that has never before been presented in English. I will be happy if scholars and students of Latin literature, language, and popular culture are alerted through my work to what we do *not* know about mime, and if I convey the message that most of our literary evidence is precarious, and needs to be treated with extreme caution. A lot of work remains to be done in order for us to understand fully the reciprocal influence of mime and other forms of Greco-Roman literary and material culture. This book is only a small contribution towards the achievement of this larger goal.

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My researches on mime have been made possible with the award of both the Snell Visitorship for Martinmas Term 1999, which enabled me to spend my period of study leave at Balliol College, Oxford, and an Arts and Humanities Research Board grant for Candlemas Term 2000. I am grateful to the librarians of several colleges at Oxford (Balliol, Pembroke, Christ Church) and Cambridge (Clare, Trinity), as well as to the staff in the Bodleian Library (especially, Duke Humfrey) and the British Library, for dealing with my requests to see MSS and early editions of authors who cited mime-fragments. J. N. Adams at All Souls was generous both with his hospitality and with his feedback on an early draft of this book, while Anthony Esposito of the *OED* devoted a lot of his time to the scrutiny of the translation of Laberius' fragments. Various aspects of the project were discussed with Mario Andreassi, Ilias Arnaoutoglou, Susanna Morton Braund, Peter Brown, Adrian Gratwick (who kindly allowed me to cite his unpublished translation of the lines Macrobius attributes to Laberius (= **90**), and gave me invaluable guidance in matters of Latin orthography), Roger Green, Stephen Harrison, Leofranc Holford-Strevens, the late Harry Jocelyn, Matthew Leigh, the late Oliver Lyne, Eric Martin, Jonathan Powell, Michael Sharp, Niall Slater, William Slater, Friedrich Spoth, Catherine Steel, Peter Walsh, David West, and Peter Wiseman. I thank them all for their encouragement, guidance, and helpful comments. Michael Sharp, Elizabeth Hanlon, and Jodie Barnes at Cambridge University Press have been very efficient and supportive throughout the production of this volume, and Malcolm Todd was careful, alert, and effective as copy-editor; he helped greatly in improving the presentation of the material in the book and in correcting many infelicities in the commentary. I am especially grateful to Michael Reeve, whose vigorous criticism urged me to revise the layout of the text and to clear the *apparatus criticus* of readings and conjectures which need not be recorded. His acute observations saved me from many glaring errors and his opinion on the presentation of the material in the volume helped me to position the

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commentary in an effective way. Many of the views that appear in the introduction and the commentary were originally aired in papers I gave at Cambridge, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Lampeter, Leeds, Manchester, Maynooth, Montreal, Munich, Newcastle, Nicosia, and Pretoria. The contribution of the audience of these meetings to my understanding of Roman mime and of Laberius' work is gratefully acknowledged here, but any factual and interpretative errors are entirely my own. My twin brother, Stelios Panayotakis, kindly provided me with copies of works on the mime which were not easily accessible to me. My former colleague Douglas MacDowell gave me a lot of sensible advice and vigorous encouragement throughout the various stages of this long and frustrating project. He has also read the whole typescript and made various helpful suggestions. I thank him for his unfailing support during the past 19 years, and I dedicate this volume to him.

ABBREVIATIONS AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

I ANCIENT AUTHORS

The abbreviations used for ancient authors and their texts can be obtained from Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English lexicon*, revised by Jones (which I abbreviate to *LSJ*) and from the *Oxford Latin dictionary* (which I abbreviate to *OLD*). The following special points should be noted:

- (i) Pl. = Plautus (not Plato);
- (ii) L., fr. (or frs.), and edn = Laberius, fragment (or fragments), and edition, respectively;
- (iii) reference to standard modern commentaries is made by the commentator's name only (e.g. Camps on Prop. 1.1.2);
- (iv) the frs. of Greek comic playwrights are cited according to the numeration of KA, *PCG*: so, for example, 'Sophilus 3' = fr. (*not* line) 3 of Sophilus' extant plays in the edition of KA;
- (v) the frs. of Roman playwrights other than Plautus and Terence are cited in the numeration of Ribbeck³ (see §5 (ix) below), unless otherwise indicated. For instance, 'Pomponius 86' = line (*not* fr.) 86 of Pomponius' plays in Ribbeck's third edn.

2 DATES

All three-figure and two-figure dates are BC unless otherwise indicated.

3 TITLES

Titles of mimes in bold style refer to the relevant note on them; e.g., **Aries** = see my comments on the title of the mime *Aries* attributed to L. Figures in bold style refer to my numbering of

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frs. attributed to L.; for example, **1** = see my comments on fr. 1 of L. in this edn. A 'n.' added to a figure in bold type refers to a note in my commentary; for example, **1n.** *inplastrum* = see my note on the word *inplastrum* in fr. 1 of L. in this edn; **10.2n.** *gurdus* = see my note on the word *gurdus* in line 2 of fr. 10 of L. in this edn. It must not be assumed that L. wrote the fr. concerned (whether it is a word or a line or a group of lines).

4 PERIODICALS AND REFERENCE WORKS

The abbreviations used for titles of periodicals can be found in the list printed in each of the recent volumes of *L'Année Philologique*. The following reference works are cited by initials only:

<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i> (Berlin and New York 1972–)
<i>CAF</i>	<i>Comicorum Atticorum fragmenta</i> , ed. T. Kock (Leipzig 1880–1888)
<i>CCSL</i>	<i>Corpus Christianorum series Latina</i> (Turnholt 1954–)
<i>CGF</i>	<i>Comicorum Graecorum fragmenta</i> , ed. G. Kaibel (Berlin 1899)
<i>CGL</i>	<i>Corpus glossariorum Latinorum</i> , ed. G. Loewe and G. Goetz (Leipzig 1888–1901 [vols. II–VII], 1923 [vol. I])
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Berlin 1893–)
<i>CSEL</i>	<i>Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum</i> (Vienna 1866–)
<i>DS</i>	C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, <i>Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines</i> (Paris 1877–1919)
<i>EM</i>	A. Ernout and A. Meillet, <i>Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine</i> (Paris 1959 ⁴ [vol. I], 1960 ⁴ [vol. II])

ABBREVIATIONS AND SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

<i>EphEp</i>	<i>Ephemeris epigraphica: Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum</i> (Rome and Berlin 1872–1913)
<i>FGrH</i>	<i>Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker</i> , ed. F. Jacoby (Berlin 1923–1959)
<i>GL</i>	<i>Grammatici Latini</i> (Leipzig 1857–1880)
<i>Gramm. Rom. Fr.</i>	<i>Grammaticae Romanae Fragmenta</i> , ed. H. Funaioli (Leipzig 1907)
<i>IEph</i>	<i>Die Inschriften von Ephesos = Inschriften griechischer Städte aus Kleinasien 11–17</i> (Bonn 1979–1984)
<i>IG</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae</i> (Berlin 1873–)
<i>IGRR</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Graecae ad res Romanas pertinentes</i> , ed. R. Cagnat <i>et al.</i> (Paris 1911–1927)
<i>ILLRP</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae liberae rei publicae</i> , ed. A. Degrassi (Florence 1965 ² (vol. 1), 1963 (vol. 2))
<i>ILS</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Latinae selectae</i> , ed. H. Dessau (Berlin 1892–1916)
<i>KA</i>	see <i>PCG</i>
<i>KS</i>	R. Kühner, C. Stegmann, and A. Thierfelder, <i>Ausführliche Grammatik der lateinischen Sprache</i> (Leverkusen 1955 ³)
<i>LHS</i>	M. Leumann, J. B. Hofmann, and A. Szantyr, <i>Lateinische Grammatik</i> , I: <i>Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre</i> (Munich 1977 ⁵); II: <i>Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik</i> (Munich 1965; repr. 1972)
<i>LS</i>	C. Lewis and C. Short, <i>A Latin dictionary</i> (Oxford 1880)
<i>LSJ</i>	H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, and H. S. Jones, <i>A Greek–English lexicon</i> (Oxford 1940–1968)
<i>ML</i>	W. Meyer-Lübke, <i>Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> (Heidelberg 1935 ³)
<i>NH</i>	R. G. M. Nisbet and M. Hubbard, eds., <i>A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book I</i> (Oxford

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	1970); and <i>A Commentary on Horace: Odes Book II</i> (Oxford 1978)
<i>NW</i>	F. Neue and C. Wagener, <i>Formenlehre der lateinischen Sprache</i> (Leipzig 1902 ³)
<i>OLD</i>	<i>Oxford Latin dictionary</i> (Oxford 1968–1982)
<i>ORF</i>	<i>Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta</i> , ed. H. Malcovati (Turin 1955 ²)
<i>PCG</i>	<i>Poetae Comici Graeci</i> , eds. R. Kassel and C. Austin (Berlin 1983–)
<i>PG</i>	<i>Patrologia Graeca</i> (Paris 1857–)
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologia Latina</i> (Paris 1844–)
<i>RE</i>	<i>Paulys Real-encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> , eds. G. Wissowa <i>et al.</i> (Stuttgart 1893–Munich 1978)
<i>TGL</i>	<i>Thesaurus Graecae linguae</i> (Paris 1831–1865)
<i>TGF</i>	<i>Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta</i> , ed. A. Nauck (Leipzig 1856)
<i>TLL</i>	<i>Thesaurus linguae Latinae</i> (Leipzig 1900–)
<i>WH</i>	A. Walde and J. B. Hofmann, <i>Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch</i> (Heidelberg 1938–1954)

5 EDITIONS

In the *apparatus criticus* and in the commentary the abbreviation *ed. princ.* is used to designate the first edn of Charisius (Naples 1532), Diomedes (Venice *c.* 1475), Gellius (Rome 1469), Macrobius (Venice 1472), and Nonius (?Milan 1471).

I cite by the editor's name the following editions:

- (i) Charisius: Putschius (Basle 1605); Barwick (Leipzig 1964)
- (ii) Diomedes: Keil (Leipzig 1857)
- (iii) Fronto: Mai (Milan 1815); van den Hout² (Leipzig 1988)
- (iv) Gellius: de Quaietis (Venice 1493); Beroaldus (Bologna 1503); Aldobrandus (Florence 1513); Egnatius (Venice 1515); Cratander (Basle 1519); Ascensius (Paris 1524);

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- Mosellanus (Paris 1536); J. F. Gronovius (Leiden 1687); Hertz (Berlin 1883–1885); Marshall (Oxford 1990²)
- (v) John the Lydian: Fuss (Leiden 1812); Bekker (Bonn 1837); Wünsch (Leipzig 1903)
- (vi) Macrobius: Camerarius (Basle 1535); Ianus (Leipzig 1852)
- (vii) Nonius: Laetus (Rome 1475); Bentinus (Venice 1527); Iunius (Antwerp 1565); Mercerus (Paris 1583¹, Sedani 1614²); Gothofredus (Paris 1586); Gerlach and Roth (Basle 1842); Quicherat (Paris 1872); L. Mueller (Leipzig 1888); Onions (Oxford 1895); Lindsay (Leipzig 1903)
- (viii) Priscian: Hertz (Leipzig 1855).

Similarly, I refer only by editor's name to the following editions of comic frs. which include frs. of L.:

- (ix) Bonaria (Genoa 1955–1956¹, Rome 1965²); Bothe (Halberstadt 1824¹, 1834²); Burmannus (Amsterdam 1759); Crinitus (Paris 1510, Lyon 1561); Maittaire (London 1713); Meyerus (Leipzig 1835); Orelli (Leipzig 1822); Pithoeus (Paris 1590¹, Lyon 1596²); Ribbeck (Leipzig 1855¹, 1873², 1898³); Stephanus (Geneva 1564); Zell (Stuttgart 1829); Ziegler (Göttingen 1788).
- (x) *Aldina* = the Aldine edn of Nonius (Venice 1513) and *Corpus* = *Corpus omnium veterum poetarum Latinorum* (Geneva 1603¹, 1627², 1640³).

The following editions are cited by date of publication only:

- (xi) Macrobius: Brescia 1501, Paris 1524
 Nonius: Venice 1476, Parma 1480, Paris 1511
 Priscian: Venice 1472, Rome 1479, Venice 1485, Milan 1503.

The emendations of Salmasius found in Bothe's edn of L. are cited in the *apparatus criticus* as 'Salmasius' without further details; the same method of reference applies to the conjectures of Buecheler, Gesner, and Schraderus (which are cited from Ribbeck's edn of L.); Baehrens, Damsté, Jordan, and Skutsch

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(from Marshall's edn of Gellius); Buttmann, Cornelissen, Heindorf, Hildebrand, Klussmann, and Novák (from van den Hout's second edn of Fronto); Fleckeisen, Klotz, and Lambecius (from Hertz's edn of Gellius); Studemund, and Marquardt and Mau (from Bonaria's edn of L.); Heinsius and Lambinus (from Burmannus' edn of L.); Oudendorpius (from Meyerus' edn of L.); Anon. Bern. [= Anonymus Bernensis] (from Hertz's edn of Priscian); and Gifanius (from Mercerus' edn of Nonius). Scioppius' conjectures are cited from Gronovius' edn of Gellius (Leiden 1706), rev. by J. L. Conradi (Leipzig 1762). Turnebus' are cited from Thysius' and Oiselius' edn of Gellius (Leiden 1666). Falsterus' are cited from Valpy's edn of Gellius (London 1824). Gulielmus' are cited from Pontanus' edn of Macrobius (Leiden 1628²). Guietus' are cited from Carilli *Note* (see below). Rhenanus' are cited from Gerlo's edn of Tertullian, *De Pallio*, *CCSL II* (Turnholt 1954). Gratwick's unpublished emendation in fr. 90 originates from a research seminar he delivered in Glasgow in 1999. I list here abbreviations which appear in the *apparatus criticus* and may cause doubt.

- Bentley [for fr. **14**] emendation cited from Marshall's edn of Gellius; [for fr. **93**] cited from Willis' edn of Macrobius (Leipzig 1970)
- Bergk [for fr. **11**] *Philologus* 29 (1870) 329; [for frs. **42, 48, 58, 59, 60, 63, 68**] *NJhb für Phil. und Paed.* 101 (1870) 830, 831, 845
- Fabricius [for fr. **8**] *Bibliotheca latina I* (Leipzig 1773) 476–7; [for frs. **49(b), 65, 87**] cited from Barwick's edn of Charisius [see §5 (**i**) above]
- Fruterius [for frs. **9, 50(b)**] *RhM* 33 (1878) 245; [for fr. **90**] cited from Burmannus' edn of L. [see §5 (**ix**) above]
- Haupt [for fr. **6**] cited from Barwick's edn of Charisius [see §5 (**i**) above]; [for fr. **39**]

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- Hermes* 3 (1869) 341–2; [for fr. **67**] *Opuscula* I (Leipzig 1875) 202
- Heraeus [for fr. **24**] *Die Sprache des Petronius und die Glossen* (Leipzig 1899) 8; [for fr. **72**] cited from van den Hout's second edn of Fronto [see §5 (**iii**) above]
- Lachmann [for fr. **58**] *In T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libros commentarius* (Berlin 1850) 140; [for fr. **60**] cited from Ribbeck's edn of L. [see §5 (**ix**) above]
- Leo [for fr. **15**] *Analecta Plautina de figuris sermonis* II (Göttingen 1898) 10; [for fr. **17(b)**] *Hermes* 48 (1913) 147
- Scaliger [Jos.] [for frs. **8, 21, 26, 31, 38, 48, 56(b)**] cited from the *marginalia* in Iunius' edn of Nonius [see §5 (**vii**) above]; [for frs. **84, 93**] *Catalecta Virgilii et aliorum poetarum Latinorum veterum poemata* (Leiden 1617); [for fr. **20**] cited from Thysius' and Oiselius' edn of Gellius (Leiden 1666); [for fr. **80**] cited from A. Gerlo's edn of Tertullian, *De Pallio*, *CCSL* II (Turnholt 1954); [for fr. **90**] cited from Burmannus' edn of L. [see §5 (**ix**) above]
- Wase *Stricturae Nonianae* (Oxford 1685) [for fr. **38**] 13, [for fr. **8**] 16, [for fr. **24**] 20

In the *apparatus criticus* I also record the conjectures of the following scholars which appeared not in editions of ancient authors but in the following books and periodicals:

- Brakman C. Brakman, *Mnemosyne* I (1934) 149
- Brock A. Brock, *Quaestionum grammaticarum capita duo* (Dorpat 1897) 152
- Carassa M. V. Carassa, *Dioniso* 8 (1940) 168
- Carrion L. Carrion, *Emendationum et observationum liber primus* (Paris 1583)
- Dziatzko K. Dziatzko, *RhM* 33 (1878) 94–114

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Froehner	W. Froehner, <i>Philologus</i> 71 (1912) 164–5
Keulen	B. Keulen, <i>Mnemosyne</i> 48 (1920) 192
Leopardus	P. Leopardus, ‘Emendationes et miscellanea’, in J. Gruterus, ed., <i>Lampas sive Fax artium liberalium</i> III (Frankfurt 1602)
Lipsius	I. Lipsius, <i>Opera omnia quae ad criticam propriae spectant</i> (Antwerp 1585)
Luchs	A. Luchs, ‘Quaestiones metricae’, in G. Studemund, ed., <i>Studia in priscos scriptores Latinos collata</i> (Berlin 1873) 70
Muretus	M. A. Muretus, <i>Variae lectiones</i> (Leiden 1586)
Palmerius	J. Palmerius, <i>Spicilegiorum commentarius primus</i> (Frankfurt 1580)
Passeratius	J. Passeratius, <i>Coniecturarum liber</i> (Paris 1612)
Perottus	N. Perottus, <i>Cornucopiae sive linguae Latinae commentarii</i> (Venice 1513)
Schneidewin	F. G. Schneidewin, <i>RhM</i> 2 (1843) 636–8
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The following list is not a complete bibliography, but it includes books and articles for which abbreviated references are used throughout this book. Details of works cited only once or twice are given in the introduction and the commentary. The book by R. Webb, *Demons and dancers: Performance in late antiquity* (Cambridge, Mass. and London 2008), appeared too late for me to take it into account in my discussion of mime and elite culture.

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ADDENDUM

At the stage of reading the proofs I obtained copies of two important volumes on Latin grammar and syntax: W. D. C. de Melo, *The early Latin verb system: Archaic forms in Plautus, Terence, and beyond* (Oxford 2007); D. Langslow, ed., *Jacob Wackernagel. Lectures on syntax: With special reference to Greek, Latin, and Germanic* (Oxford 2009). I have not been able to include references to these works in my commentary. During the same period I was made aware of a series of ‘Princeton/Stanford working papers in Classics’, which were published in 2008 at <<http://www.princeton.edu/~pswpc/papers/authorAL/kaster/kaster.html>>. They contain collations of the MSS of Macrobius’ *Saturnalia* by R. A. Kaster, who is currently preparing a new edition of this text for the OCT series. I revised all my sections on Macrobius’ text in accordance with Kaster’s excellent research. The titles of the papers and their version numbers are as follows: ‘A collation of British Library Cotton Vit. C. III and Vatican Palatinus latinus 886 (Macrobius’ “*Saturnalia*”’, version 060803; ‘Four manuscripts of Macrobius’ “*Saturnalia*”’, version 060804; ‘A collation of Cambridge Corpus Christi College 71 (Macrobius “*Saturnalia*”’, version 060805; ‘A neglected witness to Macrobius’ “*Saturnalia*”’, version 060806; and ‘The medieval tradition of Macrobius’ “*Saturnalia*”’, version 120801, which contains a revised stemma of the MSS of the *Saturnalia*.

INTRODUCTION

I DEFINING THE ROMAN MIME

Nowadays the word ‘mime’, when used as a verb, indicates the acting of a play or a role, normally without words, by means of gestures and bodily movement. When used as a noun, it signifies the play that is being performed and the performer himself.¹ This form of modern theatre should not be confused with what the Romans understood by the term ‘mime’, despite the features which both the Latin *mimus* and contemporary mime share. Mime in Roman culture was primarily a type of popular entertainment which covered any kind of theatrical spectacle that did not belong to masked tragic and comic drama, and in which actors and actresses enacted mainly low-life situations and used words in their performances.²

The theatrical term *mimus* existed in the Latin vocabulary from at least the late third century BC, and had four possible meanings, not all of which are attested in sources belonging to the same era. It denoted an actor in a form of drama which was normally simple in structure and farcical in content (*CIL* 1², 1861; Varro *apud* Aug. *De civ. dei* 4.22, 6.1; *Rhet. Her.* 1.24), the improvised spectacle or the literary play which a mime-actor performed (Varro *LL* 6.61; Cic. *De orat.* 2.259),

¹ See *OED* s.v. and J. Lawson, *Mime: The theory and practice of expressive gesture with a description of its historical development* (London 1957); T. Leabhart, *Modern and post-modern mime* (London 1989); and the articles in J. Redmond, ed., *Themes in Drama* 10 (Cambridge 1988). There is also an exciting website dedicated to the promotion of modern mime as theatrical art: see www.mime.info/index.html.

² Among the numerous studies on the history of Roman mime see introduction in the edn of Bonaria 1–17; Beacham *Theatre* 129–39; Beare *Stage* 149–58; Cicu *Problemi*; Duckworth *Comedy* 13–15; Fantham *Mime* 153–63; Giancotti *Mimo* 13–42; Horsfall *Mime* 293–4; Kehoe *Adultery* 89–106; McKeown *Elegy* 71–84; Nicoll *Masks* 80–134; Rieks *Mimus* 348–51 and 361–77 (with bibliography); Wüst *Mimos* 1743–61; and F. Dupont, *L’acteur-roi ou le théâtre dans la Rome antique* (Paris 1985) 296–306. My brief account of the characteristics of mime owes much to these studies.

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the literary genre to which mime-plays belonged (Cic. *Pro Cael.* 65), and (metaphorically) a hoax or sham or pretence which was staged at someone's expense (Sen. *Contr.* 1.5.2).³ The Greek noun μῖμος in the sense of 'an imitator' goes back to Aeschylus (*TrGF* 57.9 Nauck), and by the fourth century BC we find it in the sense of 'an actor' (Dem. 2.19) and 'a form of drama' (Arist. *Po.* 1447b10). Was the Roman mime a theatrical product imported from Greece? The significant literary contribution to the development of farcical comedy made by Sophron and Epicharmus in Sicily in the fifth century BC and by the erudite 'Alexandrian' poets Theocritus and Herodas in the third century BC, as well as the lively presence of mime-actors in the courts of Macedonian and Eastern royal palaces (Dem. 2.19; Diod. Sic. 31.16.3) and in the private banquets of wealthy Roman patrons in the first century BC (Plut. *Sull.* 2.2–4, 33.2, 36.1), demonstrates that the Roman mime was not a purely Greek theatrical phenomenon transported to Italy by travelling mime-performers. From the third to the first century BC there existed a strong native Italian theatrical tradition,⁴ with which the mime from the East was blended to form what should be more correctly termed the Greco-Roman mime.

Any discussion of how Roman authors defined mime-drama ought to be preceded by a warning and a distinction. The warning concerns the conceptual fluidity and the dramatic flexibility

³ For more instances of each of these meanings see *TLL* VIII 988.63–990.49. One of the quotations cited by *TLL* (VIII 989.66) regarding mime as *genus ludi scaenici* is Lucil. 1345 M = 1143 W (*dum mimi conscius: mimi vel dicimus mimi codd.*), cited by a scholiast on Persius 1.27. If the text printed by Marx is accepted, this instance is probably the earliest extant literary reference to mime as a distinct form of theatrical entertainment. But the reading *mimi* has been rejected by other editors of Lucilius, who print *dici mihi* (Buecheler, Terzaghi, Krenkel) or *Decimus mihi* (Warmington). The entry on mime in the *OLD* does not mention the Lucilian passage and groups together examples of *mimus* designating a literary play and examples of *mimus* indicating mime as a literary genre.

⁴ This is discussed in detail by E. Rawson, 'Theatrical life in republican Rome and Italy', *PBSR* 53 (1985) 97–113, reprinted in *Roman culture and society: Collected papers* (Oxford 1991) 468–87.

which characterised the Roman mime as a form of entertainment. It is perhaps because of the great variety of performances called mime in antiquity that an exact definition of this genre is so difficult. In our literary and documentary sources mime-performers are often named alongside street-actors and popular entertainers whom we would nowadays associate with a circus. The targets of mime-satire included social mores, philosophy, religion, and politics, and the extraordinary style of mime-plays combined instances of vulgar obscenity happily co-existing with sophisticated apophthegms of highly moral standards. Because of the heterogeneous nature of the Roman mime, which seems to defy any attempt at literary categorisation or generic classification, a scholarly distinction was drawn between the non-literary, 'popular' form of mime, which was brief and crude, and depended mostly on improvisation, and its development, mainly during the late republic, into a form of literature in the hands of Laberius and Publilius. The literary mime was composed in verse and performed in theatres. The 'popular' mimes may have been enacted in streets, squares, theatres, and private houses,⁵ and had words, but possibly not a fixed script, which could have been copied by later scribes and assessed on literary grounds. This distinction between the two strands of mime-drama is helpful because it underlines the varied nature of the spectacles covered by the generic title *mimus*. But it can also be misleading and ought to be made with caution, because it is far from clear that the repertory of the 'literary' mimes was different

⁵ See Cic. *Ad fam.* 9.16.7; *POxy.* 2707 (sixth century AD; see Maxwell *Mime* 124 no. 21); Nicoll *Masks* 99–109; and Beare *Stage* 149, 270–4. On the *scena* 'the theatre-platform' see Isid. 18.43; Amm. Marc. 26.15; *CGL* 4.168, 5.41, and 5.391. On the *proscenium* see *CGL* 5.324, 5.476, and 5.556. On the *orchestra* see Isid. 18.44 and Festus 194.6–12 L. On the *siparium* 'small curtain or screen' see Cic. *De prov. consul.* 6.14; Iuv. 8.185–6 and schol. Iuv. 8.186 Wessner; Apul. *Met.* 1.8; Festus 458.11–13 L; and Paul.–Fest. 459.4 L. On the *scabillum* 'a kind of hinged clapper attached to the sole of the foot, and used for beating time for dancers in the theatre' (*OLD* s.v. 2) see Cic. *Pro Cael.* 64–5; *Auct. de dub. nomin.* = *GL* 5.590.4–5 K. On the *choragium* 'stage properties' see Paul.–Fest. 45.19 L; *CGL* 4.293 and 4.397.

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to that of the ‘popular’ ones, or that the ‘literary’ mimes developed from the ‘popular’ ones and did not co-exist with them. Moreover, it is not always obvious that authors such as Ovid and Petronius were influenced by only one of these mime-strands, and it is instructive to note that the differentiation between ‘literary’ and ‘popular’ was not made by ancient authors, whose testimonies normally betray an obvious contempt for all of these shows.

The usual starting-point in modern discussions of the features of the Roman mime as a *literary genre* is the definition of *mimus* found in the treatises of late antique grammarians and commentators. But mime as a literary form of scripted theatrical entertainment was commented on by educated Romans long before the time of Donatus, Diomedes, Evanthius, and Isidore (whose definitions I discuss below), and it is instructive to see what the explicit comments or implicit statements of the earlier sources were on this matter before we evaluate the information offered by writers of late antiquity. Of special value is the evidence which deliberately differentiates mime from other types of comedy. Already in the middle of the first century BC Cicero seems to treat the Roman mime as a loosely constructed form of comic drama,⁶ whose plot abounded in tricks (*fallaciae* or *praestigiae*) borrowed from the degenerate life of Alexandria (Cic. *Pro Rab. Post.* 35); mime is a type of theatre that, Cicero believes, should be juxtaposed to formal comedies (*fabulae*), which had a structured plot and a proper ending (Cic. *Pro Cael.* 65). This is not entirely true. Cicero in his speeches on the defence of Rabirius Postumus and Caelius was not interested in describing accurately the format and content of mime-plays, but in demolishing the credibility of the Alexandrian witnesses supporting his opponents and the sincerity of the story put forward

⁶ This does not necessarily mean that all mime-plots presented dramatic inconsistencies; see Quint. 4.2.53: *Est autem quidam et ductus rei credibilis, qualis in comœdiis etiam et in mimis. Aliqua enim naturaliter secuntur et cohaerent, ut si bene priora narraveris iudex ipse quod postea sis narraturus expectet.*

by Clodia; he achieves this by associating the members of the opposite party with a form of drama that was generally regarded as insubstantial and disreputable.⁷ Moreover, some scenes from the extant fragments of Laberius (for instance, **50(a)**) resemble closely story-lines from *fabulae palliatae*. Even so, Cicero's invective must contain at least a grain of truth, otherwise it would not have made sense in the context of the speeches. His remarks are also supported by papyrological finds and by other literary sources which link Egypt (and specifically Alexandria) with mime, and confirm that at least some mime-plays had an abrupt ending and a plot that depended on improvisation.⁸

Cicero draws extensively on mime in order to create a detailed negative example for those wishing to achieve the ideal of the perfect orator. His instructions include constant warnings to future public speakers to avoid excessive mimicry, 'for, if the imitation is exaggerated, it becomes a characteristic of mime-actors who portrayed characters, as also does obscenity' (*De orat.* 2.242). Quintilian follows Cicero's doctrine almost to the letter (6.3.29). In the same section of his rhetorical treatise (*De orat.* 2.251–2) Cicero conveniently singles out the characteristics of mime-wit as follows: ridicule of human figures who exhibit particular vices, emphasis on mimicry, exaggerated facial expressions (perhaps our strongest evidence that, in most cases during Cicero's time if not always, mime-actors and actresses did not wear masks),⁹ and

⁷ See R. G. Austin, ed., *M. Tulli Ciceronis pro M. Caelio oratio* (Oxford 1960³) 128–9; M. Siani-Davies, *Cicero's speech pro Rabirio Postumo* (Oxford 2001) 195.

⁸ In addition to the literary mimes of Herodas and Theocritus, several papyri and other literary sources testify to the presence of mime-activities in Egypt and especially in Alexandria: *P.Oxy.* 1025; *P.Oxy.* 519; *P.Oxy.* 1050; *P.Osl.* 189; Dio Chrys. *Orat.* 32.4, 32.86; Philo *In Flac.* 34; Pallad. *Laus hist.* 26; *HA, Verus* 8.11. The mime of the 'Adulterous Wife' (*P.Oxy.* 413 *verso*) occasionally makes sense only if we assume that the protagonist embellished her lines with actions that are now irretrievable, and has an ending which seems dramatically contrived and abrupt.

⁹ To my knowledge, only Nicoll *Masks* 91 is sceptical about this assumption: 'There is not . . . a single statement made by an earlier writer which stamps the whole mime drama as maskless; it seems probable that some parts at least required the use of exaggerated and comic masks.' This may be the case

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obscenity.¹⁰ Although these features square with what we know about mime-drama in the republican era, it should be emphasized that our primary source for mime in this period is Cicero himself, and it is thus difficult to disentangle what is accurately reported on mime-practice from the distorted or even invented mime-details which suit the argument of Cicero's case. It should also be stressed that these characteristics are articulated from a rhetorical perspective, and that they allow us to observe mainly not how mime-actors acted but how vital it was for the Roman male citizen with political ambitions to act in public within the acceptable social norms.

A feature peculiar to the mime-stage, and surely linked with its low reputation, was the employment of women for female roles. Although it may be argued that the voice of a female character portrayed by an actress is 'a real woman's voice' (that is, the expression of – and an insight into – what a woman of that time would have felt about certain issues, such as adultery, presented on the stage), such a view is seriously undermined by the surviving evidence of the mimes of Laberius and Publilius, and the non-dramatic references to lost mime-plays, according to which the female characters of Roman mime are as conventional and artificial in their behaviour as their female counterparts in the other genres of popular theatre. The reliability of the majority of our evidence on historical women who acted in mimes is somewhat compromised by the image of the 'starlet' that was deliberately created and projected onto these women, who functioned as attractive, even seductive, social scapegoats.

in Tertullian's account of mythological mimes (*Apolog.* 15.3): *Imago dei vestri ignominiosum caput et famosum vestit* 'The image of your god covers the head of a shameless and infamous person.'

¹⁰ Mime-performances were traditionally associated with obscenity (from Cicero to the Church fathers), even when viewed in the context of a religious festival. See Cic. *De orat.* 2.242; *Ad fam.* 7.1.2; Ovid *Tr.* 2.279–81, 2.497–8, 2.515–20; Val. Max. 2.6.7b; Mart. *Epigr.* 8 praef.; Tert. *De spect.* 17.1–2; Aug. *De civ. dei* 2.26; <Evanthius *De fabula*> 3.5 = 20.2 Wessner; Choric. *Apol. Mim.* 88. But this bad reputation was not always justified, and often served a specific social and moral purpose (discussed below).

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Their function was to preserve the chastity of decent wives, whose role was to be faithful to their husbands and produce legitimate children. In fact, the body of the mime-actress seems to have been exploited to such an extent that it became a stereotypical source of entertainment; this was the case especially in the festival traditionally associated with the mimes, the *Floralia*, which became annual in or after 173 (Val. Max. 2.10.8; Ovid *F.* 5.347–50; Lact. *Div. inst.* 1.20.10). The striptease of women in these shows (whether they were actresses or prostitutes is beside the point) was allegedly designed to fulfil the theatrical conventions of the time, but in reality functioned as a means of control of the behaviour and the moral standards of aristocratic Roman *matronae*.¹¹

Bearing in mind the above features of mime-theatre and the distinction which the ancients themselves made between mime and pantomime – a form of drama in which a solo actor was telling a story, usually taken from Greek mythology, by means of skilful dancing and elaborate movements to the accompaniment of a chorus or a *cantor* singing the plot¹² – it is not surprising to find weak points in the well-known definition of mime offered by the grammarian Diomedes, who was writing in the fourth century AD, and was paraphrasing a Hellenistic source

¹¹ For a detailed discussion of the portrayal of mime-actresses in literary sources see D. R. French, 'Maintaining boundaries: The status of actresses in early Christian society', *Vigiliae Christianae* 52 (1998) 293–318; R. Webb, 'Female entertainers in late antiquity', in P. Easterling and E. Hall, eds., *Greek and Roman actors: Aspects of an ancient profession* (Cambridge 2002) 282–303 (especially 287–9); and C. Panayotakis, 'Women in the Greco-Roman mime of the Roman republic and the early empire', *Ordia prima: Revista de estudios clásicos* 5 (2006) 121–38.

¹² See Isid. 18.48 (*De histrionibus* . . . *hi autem saltando etiam historias et res gestas demonstrabant*), 18.50 (*De saltatoribus*), and Maxwell *Mime* 21–2. On pantomime see E. Wüst, 'Pantomimus', *RE* xviii.3 833–69; V. Rotolo, *Il pantomimo: Studi e testi* (Palermo 1957); M. Kokolakis *Platon* 10 (1959) 3–56; E. J. Jory *BICS* 28 (1981) 147–61; Jory in A. Moffatt, ed., *Classical, Byzantine and Renaissance Studies for Robert Browning* (Canberra 1984) 57–66; I. Lada-Richards, *Silent Eloquence: Lucian and Pantomime Dancing* (London 2007); and the contributions to E. Hall and R. Wyles, eds., *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime* (Oxford 2008).

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(possibly Theophrastus) on drama.¹³ Diomedes lays emphasis on the spoken word (*sermonis*), imitation (*imitatio* and *mimus dictus* παρὰ τὸ μιμεῖσθαι, *quasi solus imitetur*) and bodily movements (*motus*) as the primary means by which mime-actors performed their roles, and makes it clear that obscenity (*factorum et dictorum turpium cum lascivia*) was a standard ingredient in these performances, which drew their material from uncensored everyday life (μίμησις βίου τὰ τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων),¹⁴ not from heroic or divine subjects.¹⁵ Diomedes was not a theatrical critic and was in no position to ascertain what mime was like centuries before his time. His definition contains information which could easily have been obtained from performances of his own era, or could have been copied from his unacknowledged Greek source. There is no mention of the religious context of mime-performances, of the maskless appearance of mime-actors, of the employment of women for female roles, of the unrealistic and grotesque presentation

¹³ Diomedes *De arte gramm.* 3 = *GL* 1.491.13–19 K: *mimus est sermonis cuius libet imitatio et motus sine reverentia, vel factorum et dictorum turpium cum lascivia imitatio; a Graecis ita definitur μῖμός ἐστιν μίμησις βίου τὰ τε συγκεχωρημένα καὶ ἀσυγχώρητα περιέχων. mimus dictus παρὰ τὸ μιμεῖσθαι, quasi solus imitetur, cum et alia poemata idem faciant; sed solus quasi privilegio quodam quod fuit commune possedit: similiter atque is qui versum facit dictus ποιητής, cum et artifices, cum aequae quid faciant, non dicantur poetae.* Diomedes does not render faithfully the Greek definition which he cites, since he omits from his version the Greek words τὰ τε συγκεχωρημένα. For him mime can only be vulgar and obscene, but the impression that mime-performances contained nothing but sex and violence is inaccurate and misleading (see Rawson *Vulgarity* for an excellent discussion of this). Diomedes' passage and its possible source are discussed by Giancotti *Mimo* 26–8, Reich *Mimus* 263–74, and R. Janko, *Aristotle on comedy: Towards a reconstruction of Poetics II* (London 1984) 48–9.

¹⁴ Cf. Chor. *Apol. Mim.* 88: ἐπεὶ δὲ καὶ μίμησις ὑπάρχει τὸ ἐπιτήδευμα, ἑκατέρας δὲ ἰδέας μετέχει – νῦν μὲν γὰρ οὐ σεμνὰ σχηματίζονται, νῦν δὲ πάσης αἰσχύνης ἀπηλλαγμένα.

¹⁵ Cf. Evanth. *exc. de com.* 4.1, p. 21 Wessner: *mimos ab diuturna imitatione vilium rerum ac levium personarum*; 6.2, p. 26 Wessner: *planipedia autem dicta ob humilitatem argumenti eius ac vilitatem actorum.*

of low situations,¹⁶ and of the importance of dance in these plays.¹⁷

The definition of Isidore of Seville, writing in the seventh century (*Orig.* 18.49), is even less original, reliable, and detailed than that of Diomedes. Isidore identifies the harmony between plot and bodily movements (*motui corporis*) as the key to the success of a mime-performance (is he thinking about pantomime?), and relates the Greek etymology of the word *mimus* to imitation of human affairs without giving further explanation as to why this should be so. His use of imperfect tenses (*habebant, agerent, pronuntiare(n)t, componebantur*) suggests that he refers to spectacles of a bygone age, but his mention of a mime-‘composer who announced in advance the plot before the performance of the play’ is surely a garbled version of having a prologue-speaker informing the audience about the plot-line in some *fabulae palliatae*.¹⁸

¹⁶ On mime-caricature see G. M. A. Richter, ‘Grotesques and the mime’, *AJA* 17 (1913) 149–56; J.-P. Cèbe, *La caricature et la parodie dans le monde romain antique des origines à Juvénal* (Paris 1966) 39–40, 45.

¹⁷ That mime-actors, like pantomime-actors, danced is confirmed by Ovid *AA* 1.501–2 (dancing in an adultery mime), Gell. 1.11.12 (*ut planipedi saltanti*), Diod. Sic. 31.16.3, Ath. 195F (dancing mimes at the court of Antiochus IV Epiphanes), Philo *De agr.* 35, and Porph. on Hor. *S.* 2.6.72 (the harmonious combination of Lepos’ speech and dancing). Dance was a common feature in the description of the activities of the mime-performers Bassilla, Eucharis, and C. Caecilius Chariton Iuuentius (*IG* 14.2342 and *add.* on p. 704 of that volume; *CIL* 6.10096 = *ILS* 5213 = *ILLRP* 803 = Buecheler *Carmina* 55; B. Gentili *Archivio storico siracusano* 7 (1961) 20–1). See also Chor. *Apol. Mim.* 124 (δεῖ γὰρ καὶ φωνὴν εὐφραίνουσαν ἔχειν καὶ ῥέουσαν γλωτταν ἑτοιμῶς . . . δεῖ καὶ χορεύειν ἐπίστασθαι καὶ μὴ φθέγγεσθαι μόνον ἐπιδεξίως, ἀλλὰ καὶ βλέμματι θέλγειν) and Stephanis *Choricus* ad loc.

¹⁸ In addition to these attempts at a definition of mime-drama, there exist some references in which mime seems to be linked with comedy. The emperor Marcus Aurelius (11.6.2) views farcical mime not as a variety of comedy but as its successor (especially as the successor of New Comedy). In the fourth century, mime is considered by Evanthius (*exc. de com.* 4.1) as a form of comedy together with *fabula togata*, *fabula palliata*, *fabula Atellana*, and others. The sophist Choricus of Gaza, writing in the sixth century AD, defended the theatre of the mimes and stressed the benefits for its audience. Reversing the formula of Donatus, Choricus regarded *comedy* as a form of mime, and he was justified

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According to the definition of Diomedes and his unnamed Greek source (cited above), mime – unlike epic, tragedy, and comedy proper – dealt with both licit and illicit subjects. This vague description is unhelpful because it covers a vast range of topics from all spheres of life and culture. Moreover, there is some evidence that mimographers borrowed from the realms of epic, tragedy, and myth stories which they then exploited for humorous effect. Can we be more precise about the plot-lines of the plays performed on the mime-stage? Were there in mimes stories of recognition and reunion between parents and long-lost children, of reconciliation between estranged spouses, and of trickery and deceit between masters and servants? The fragmentary evidence of Roman mimes does not allow anything more than speculations on the mime-repertoire, although the scanty references to this subject in our primary (theatrical and non-theatrical) sources do enable us to compile with caution a list of *some* plot-elements of mime-plays. A host of pagan and Christian authors, from Horace and Ovid to John Chrysostom and Choricus, allude to or describe mimes featuring the themes of adultery (perhaps the most popular stock theme of a mime-script), mock weddings, staged trials, staged shipwrecks, the fugitive slave, anti-luxury, false deaths, cunning schemes, poison-intrigues, and reversals of fortune.¹⁹ Moreover,

in doing this, since mime had virtually driven comedy off the stage many centuries before his time. See Kehoe *Studies* 6–8.

¹⁹ Adulterous affairs: Hor. *S.* 2.7.58–63; Ovid *Tr.* 2.497–506, 2.514; Sen. *Contr.* 2.4.5, 6.7.2; Iuv. 6.42–4 and schol. Iuv. 6.44 = 77.8 Wessner; Iuv. 6.275–8 and schol. Iuv. 6.276 = 91.18 Wessner; Iuv. 8.196–9; Tert. *Ad nat.* 1.16.12–13; Minucius Felix *Octav.* 37.12; *HA, Heliog.* 25.4; Cyprian *Ad Donatum* 8; Lactant. *Div. instit.* 6.20.27; Donat. on Verg. *Aen.* 5.65; Salvianus *De gubern. dei* 6.(3.)19 = *PL* 53.111; John Chrysostom 6.558 = *PG* 56.543 and 57.72; Choric. *Apol. Mim.* 30, 55; Kehoe *Adultery*; Reynolds *Adultery*. Weddings: Sen. *Contr.* 2.4.5; Ps.-Quint. *Decl.* 279.17 Winterbottom. Trials: Philo *De Legat.* 359; Choric. *Apol. Mim.* 30, 55. Shipwrecks: Sen. *De ira* 2.2.5. The fugitive slave: Suet. *Gaius* 45.2; Sen. *Ep.* 114.6; Petr. *Sat.* 117.4; Iuv. 13.110–11 and schol. Iuv. 13.109 = 205.4 Wessner. Against luxury: Sen. *De brev. vitae* 12.8. False deaths: Petr. *Sat.* 94.12–5. Cunning schemes: Cic. *Pro Rab. Post.* 35; Petr. *Sat.* 106.1; Ps.-Quint. *Decl.* 338.27–8 Winterbottom; Artem. *Oneir.* 1.76 = 68.16 Hercher. Poison-intrigues: Plut.

ridicule of mythological scenes, satire of philosophical theories and schools, literary parody, and caricature of public figures and political events were subjects which a mime-producer and protagonist (the so-called *archimimus* or *archimima*) did not hesitate to perform with his or her troupe in order to make an audience laugh.²⁰

Mime was regarded as inferior not only to other types of Roman theatre (usually tragedy, the highest type of drama) but also to the rest of Latin literature, and pejorative adjectives such as *turpis*, *vilis*, and *levis* often accompany the word *mimus* in our testimonies on the mime throughout the centuries. Even in the

De sollert. animal. 19 = *Mor.* 973E; *P.Oxy.* 413 ('The Μοιχεύτρια-mime'), 41–3 Page. Change of fortune: Cic. *Phil.* 2.27.65.

²⁰ Mythological satire: Varro *Ant. div.* fr. 3 Cardauns; Cyprian *Ad Donatum* 8; Tert. *Ad nat.* 1.10; Tert. *Apol.* 15; Aug. *De civ. dei* 6.7; Arnob. *Adv. nat.* 4.36; Lactant. *Div. instit.* 2.18.3, 5.20.12; Hilar. *De trinit.* 7.39. Parody of Christian ceremonies: Panayotakis *Baptism*. Political satire: Cic. *Ad fam.* 7.11.2; *Ad Att.* 14.2.1, 14.3.2; Dio 58.19.1; Suet. *Otho* 3.3; *HA, Maximini duo* 9.3–5. Philosophical doctrines are targeted in at least four Laberian mimes (**12**; **22**; **50(a)**.1–5; **79**). Euripides' *IT* and *Cyclops* are parodied in the plot of the Greek Χαρίτιον-mime: see S. Santelia, *Charition liberata* (P.Oxy. 413) (Bari 1991); M. Andreassi *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel* 8 (1997) 18–19; E. Hall, 'Iphigenia in Oxyrhynchus and India: Greek tragedy for everyone,' ch. 5 of *Adventures with Iphigenia* (Oxford and New York 2010). Virgil's works seem to have been especially exploited by mime-actors. We are told that the mime-actress Cytheris gave recitals from the *Eclogues* in the theatre, with Cicero in the audience, to huge popular acclaim (Serv. *ap. Ecl.* 6.11). This is not an isolated theatrical event in the history of the reception of the *Eclogues*, if we are to judge from (and believe) the author of the *vita Vergili* (Suet. *De poetis* 103–4 Rostagni), who refers to repeated theatrical performances of the *Eclogues*. Such an impression is corroborated by the speaker in Tac. *Dial.* 13.2 (referring to Virgilian verses heard in the theatre in Virgil's presence), and the irate Jerome, who castigates Christian priests for abandoning the study of the Gospel, reading comedies, and knowing by heart the bucolic love-affairs of Virgil (Jer. *Epist.* 21.13.9). On a similar front, it is not surprising that specific episodes from the *Aeneid* (the death of Turnus, the unfortunate love-affair of Dido) were taken up as themes presented time and again on the pantomime-stage (Suet. *Nero* 54; Macr. 5.17.5), while the conversation between Aeneas and Anchises in the underworld is, according to Augustine (*Serm.* 241.5 = *PL* 38.1135–6), a familiar theatrical scene in the minds of his readers; for a recent discussion of this topic see C. Panayotakis, 'Virgil on the popular stage', in E. Hall and R. Wyles, eds., *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime* (Oxford 2008) 185–97.

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accounts of grammarians and antiquarians of late antiquity, which seem to be structured on a strictly hierarchical basis reminiscent of the divisions in Roman society,²¹ mime almost always comes last in the list of theatrical genres examined and defined by them.²² This is hardly surprising. Mime with its low-life stories and worthless characters was pre-eminently the genre of crude realism in antiquity: a maskless actor or actress, usually a slave or freedman/freedwoman, would expose himself/herself to the public gaze, and satirise people and contemporary events with inelegant and uncouth words that belonged to the vocabulary of the lower classes. Such performances did not seem to have any moral message to convey to their audience. As far as we know, a mime aimed only at making its audience burst out laughing. This laughter (*mimicus risus*) was characterised by Quintilian (6.3.8) as ‘a light thing, aroused generally by buffoons, mimes and brainless characters’.²³

The hierarchical presentation of various types of Roman drama in the treatises of grammarians is due both to the uneven amount of literary material that survives from each of the extant forms of Roman theatrical entertainment, and to the artistic worth traditionally attributed to them. But an arrangement that places mime last in the list of spectacles available to the Romans gives a misleading picture of the development of Roman theatrical culture, and reveals how anxious the Roman literary élite was to keep ‘sub-literary’ genres such as mime at the margin

²¹ On the social significance of the dramatic hierarchy in Latin literature see the insightful remarks of K. Freudenburg *European Studies Journal* 17 & 18 (2000/2001) 63–6.

²² See Donat. ad Ter. *Ad.* 7 = 10.10–13 Wessner; [Caes. Bassus] *Poeticae species Latinae* = *GL* 6.312 K; [Caes. Bassus] *Excerpta de poemate* = *GL* 6.274 K; Diom. *De arte gramm.* 3 = *GL* 1.490 K; <Evanthius *De Fabula*> 4.1 = 21.1–8 Wessner; <Evanthius *De Fabula*> 6.1–2 = 25.17–26.6 Wessner; I. Lydus *Περὶ ἔξουσιῶν* 1.40 = 60.27 Bandy.

²³ See also Cat. 42.7–9; Petr. *Sat.* 19.1; Quint. 6.3.8; Apul. *Flor.* 5; I. Lydus *Περὶ ἔξουσιῶν* 1.40 = 62.8 Bandy, 2.16 = 108.21 Bandy; Choric. *Apol. Mim.* 30.

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of the literary canon in order to maintain and reinforce the literary merit of its own intellectual preoccupations. In other words, the depiction of mime as low, trivial, and vulgar ensured the continuing existence of other literary genres (such as epic, oratory, philosophy, tragedy, and formal comedy) as high, elevated, and sophisticated. It is true that upper-class Romans such as the knight Laberius engaged in the composition of low mimes, but it is equally true that Laberius was far from happy when made by Caesar to act in his own plays (Macr. *Sat.* 2.7.1–5): as a skilful mimographer Laberius was providing entertainment for others of his own class and for the masses, but by having to play a part in his mimes he himself became the source of entertainment, and this was a social gap that was not meant to be bridged. Educated Romans such as Laberius may have experimented with mime as a literary form, but it does not follow from this that they wanted to elevate the mime-genre as a whole to the literary heights of epic and tragedy.

The contempt felt for mimes in antiquity may militate against a generous assessment of their literary value and artistic merit. But this contempt may often be explained both as intellectual snobbery and as a reaction to the potential (and often actual) threat mime posed to the social and political status quo. Mime was attacked on stylistic, linguistic, and moral grounds, but its satirical spirit against authority remained unchallenged. The exclusion of even literary mimes from ‘serious literature’ was both convenient and safe, because mime with its huge popularity could become an important political weapon that might manipulate and influence people’s feelings concerning public figures, social norms, and prestigious institutions. Its inferior status and its ‘sub-literary’ label meant that it could be controlled and that its subject-matter was not meant to be taken very seriously. Sulla was really the first to diagnose the usefulness of mime as a strategic tool for political propaganda, and so not only maintained close (sometimes quite intimate) relationships with actors and actresses, but is also thought to have

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composed mimes himself.²⁴ In fact, Sulla is also the first clear example of the long-standing tension that may be detected in the feelings of the Romans towards mime. For although most mimes were regarded as low both in social status and in literary value,²⁵ there is evidence that throughout the period from Philip of Macedon to Domitian important politicians patronized mime,²⁶ that educated people enjoyed watching unrefined mime-shows, and that they sometimes engaged in writing mimes designed for the stage.²⁷

²⁴ See Plut. *Sulla* 2.2–4, 33.2, 36.1; Nicol. Damasc. lib. cvii *apud* Athen. 261C = *FGrH* 90,75, Jacoby; and C. Garton *Phoenix* 18 (1964) 137–56; Garton *Aspects* 141–67, 243.

²⁵ Our literary sources are almost consistently disparaging towards mimes, but Maxwell *Mime* 88–92 is invaluable for gathering the documentary evidence which demonstrates that *some* mime-actors and actresses not only were honoured with theatrical rewards but also could hold public offices. In addition to the archmime L. Acilius Eutyches, who was a decurion at Bovillae (*CIL* 14.2408 = *ILS* 5196; see Leppin *Histrionen* 237–8, Maxwell *Mime* 152 no. 39):

the archmime T. Uttidius Venerianus evidently held an official position at Philippi [*CIL* 3.6113 = *ILS* 5208; see Maxwell *Mime* 182 no. 52]; Tiberius Claudius Philologos Theseus was a member of the *boule* of ‘many cities’ [*IEph* 1135 and 1135A; see Stephanis *Technitai* 222 no. 1219; Maxwell *Mime* 197 no. 58]; Flavius Alexander Oxeidias was a member of the *boule* of Antioch and Heraclea and of the *gerousia* of Miletus [see Robert 244–8; Stephanis *Technitai* 346 no. 1956; Maxwell *Mime* 200 no. 59]; the part actor C. Norbanus Sorix may have held the office of *magister pagi Augusti Felicis* at Pompeii [*CIL* 10.814; see *RE* xvii.1 935 s.v. Norbanus 12; Bieber *History* 165, 323, fig. 592; Garton *Aspects* 147, 257–8; Leppin *Histrionen* 297–8; Maxwell *Mime* 223 no. 71].

(Maxwell *Mime* 91 n. 3; the additions in square brackets are mine)

²⁶ A list of powerful men favouring mime, each no doubt for their own reasons, would include Philip (Dem. 2.19), Alexander (Ath. 20A), Agathocles of Syracuse (Diod. Sic. 20.63.2), Antiochus II Theos (Ath. 19C), Antiochus IV Epiphanes (Ath. 195F, 439D; Diod. Sic. 31.16.3), Ptolemy II Philadelphus (Ath. 576F), Sulla (Ath. 261C; Plut. *Sulla* 2.3), Julius Caesar (Macr. *Sat.* 2.7.2), Mark Antony (Cic. *Phil.* 2.67, 2.101, 8.26; Plut. *Ant.* 21.2), Caligula (Dio Cass. 59.2.5), Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 14.14; Suet. *Nero* 4.2, 11; Iuv. 8.190–4), Domitian (Suet. *Dom.* 15.3), Commodus (Herod. 1.13.8), Elagabalus (Herod. 5.7.6–7), Gallienus (*HA, Gall. duo* 21.6), Carinus (*HA, Car.* 16.7), Justinian (Chor. *Apol. mim.* 58), and Theodosius (Zosimus 4.33.4).

²⁷ In addition to Cicero, who admired word-plays in mime, see Suet. *De gramm.* 18 (referring to L. Crassicius from Tarentum, probably a contemporary

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A good case-study of this tension is none other than Cicero. He often saw mime-plays, and even more often expressed contempt for them. This scorn frequently appears both in his speeches, in some of which references to mime are used as terms of abuse against his political opponents, and in his correspondence. Yet it is not easy to decide what weight should be attributed to Cicero's opinion as an accurate indicator of the general public's feelings towards mime, nor should his dismissive remarks be interpreted as indicative of the low literary value of the *poemata* of Laberius and Publilius. For occasionally Cicero's attitude towards mime is less unfriendly. In the *De oratore*, especially, he acknowledges the wit of mime-actors, and in fact cites several fragments of Roman mimes older than those of Laberius (2.259, 2.273–4). The topical nature of mime-satire seems to frighten and attract him at the same time. In 61 he fears that his glorious consulship may come to resemble a ridiculous mime entitled 'The Bean' (*Ad Att.* 1.16.13), while in January 53 he jokingly expresses his anxiety for the subject-matter of a new mime of Valerius (*Ad fam.* 7.11.2). In two other letters, written shortly after the assassination of Caesar, Cicero implies that the mimes reflect popular sentiments about this event, and is highly interested in them (*Ad Att.* 14.2.1, 14.3.2).

The uncouth language of the mime, its vulgar subject-matter, and some of its stage-conventions (acting without masks, women playing female roles) are usually given as the main reasons for the generic inferiority attached to mime in the literary hierarchy of Roman theatrical entertainment. These reasons conveniently obscured the fact that mime could exert strong influence in Roman politics, and should not be taken to mean that

of Sulla, who is said to have 'helped' mimographers and taught in a school), Ovid *Trist.* 2.497–506 (an indication that adultery mimes were composed by some poets, but *not* by Ovid, who could have done so had he wished it), and Seneca the Elder and Seneca the Younger (for their approval of the moral qualities of mime and of Publilius' apophthegms see Sen. *Contr.* 7.3.8; Sen. *Epist.* 8.8–9, 94.28, 94.43, 108.8–9, 108.11–2; *De tranq. an.* 11.8; and *Consol. ad Marc.* 9.5).

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mime-texts never observed high literary standards. Laberius is mentioned – along with Plautus, Ennius, Accius, Caecilius, Naevius, and Lucretius – in Fronto's correspondence as a poet Marcus Aurelius is urged to study in order to polish his literary style (*Ad M. Caes. et invicem* 4.3.2 = 56.21–57.1 van den Hout²).

II ORIGINS AND CHRONOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE GENRE

The exact date of the first appearance of a mime-actor or actress on the stage of a Roman theatre during a festival or in an event that formed part of the entertainment at a private dinner-party is unknown. That the mime-profession, however, was clearly associated in the Roman mind with Greek-speaking lands is clearly inferred from literary and documentary sources, and formed an assumption which was fruitfully exploited in Roman rhetoric, historiography, and fiction as part of political invective, satirical abuse, and moral warning against the influence of foreign cultures. The connection the Romans made between mime and Greek culture is not unjustified, because a large amount of the terminology employed for the specialisations attributed to mime-actors and actresses (e.g. *archaeologus*, *archimimus* / *archimima*, *biologus*, *ethologus*, *mimologus*, *mimographus*, *mimus* / *mima*), and the stage-names borne by many mimes (for instance, Protopogenes, who had died by the early third century BC; Eucharis, who, according to her epitaph (*CIL* 6.10096 = *ILS* 5213), performed *Graeca in scaena*; Ecloga; Cytheris; Thalassia) are Greek in origin, while some mime-plays produced at Rome may even have been performed in Greek.²⁸ But which Greek-speaking lands did mime-actors come from, before they emigrated to Rome and other parts of Italy? This has been a much debated

²⁸ See Suet. *Iul.* 39.1; *Aug.* 43.1. Cf. *CIL* 6.1064 = *ILS* 2179 (dated to the early third century AD), which mentions an *archimimus Graecus*, two *scenici Graeci* and two *stupidi Graeci*: could the geographical adjectives be due to the language in which these mime-actors performed rather than to their country of origin? The question is discussed by Maxwell *Mime* 60–2.

question since the early eighteenth century, but the scholarly views on this issue reveal more about cultural prejudices concerning Eastern and Western civilisations than about Roman drama at the time of the early republic.²⁹

We know that, by the fifth century BC, mime was a distinct literary genre, apparently established in Sicily by the Syracusan playwright Sophron,³⁰ who wrote short and bawdy dramatic sketches in literary prose, focusing on scenes from everyday life and on the portrayal of both male and female characters (μίμοι ἀνδρεῖοι and μίμοι γυναικεῖοι). His poems are said to have been popular with Plato and the Athenian public in general (Ath. 504B; Chor. *Apol. mim.* 14–17; Arist. *Po.* 1447b10).³¹ There is also evidence that his work was known to members of the Roman educated upper classes from at least the early first century BC (Varro *LL* 5.179; Val. Max. 8.7.ex.3; Quint. 1.10.17), and two of his plays have titles (Ἀκέστριαι, Θυνηοθήρας) which resemble titles of the extant fragments of Laberius (*Belomistria*,

²⁹ Reich's culturally prejudiced views about an 'Eastern' and a 'Western' mime were severely criticised by A. Körte *NjklAlt* 11 (1903) 537–49, Wüst *Mimos*, and Bernini *Mimo*. Before Reich, the topic was discussed by N. Calliachus, *De ludis scenicis mimorum et pantomimorum* (Padua 1713); O. Ferrari, *De pantomimis et mimis dissertatio* (Wolfenbuettel 1714); Ziegler; Gryzar *Mimus*; J. A. Fuehr, *De mimis Graecorum* (Göttingen 1860); and C. Magnin, *Les origines du théâtre antique et du théâtre moderne* (Paris 1868). Cicu *Problemi* 15 n. 6 and 17–21 offers an excellent account of the scholarly contribution of these early studies.

³⁰ See Solinus 5.13 Mommsen (= Sophron test. 12 in *PCG* 1): *hic* [i.e. in Sicily] *primum inventa comoedia, hic et cavillatio mimica in scaena stetit*. The Sicilian tyrant Agathocles, who ruled from 316 to his assassination in 289/8, is said to have been καὶ φύσει γελωτοποιὸς καὶ μῖμος (Diod. Sic. 20.63.2). On Doric comedy, including Sophron's plays, see Hordern *Sophron*, and S. D. Olson, *Broken laughter: Select fragments of Greek comedy* (Oxford 2007) 33–68.

³¹ Chor. *Apol. mim.* 14: ἴσμεν δέ που καὶ τὴν Σώφρονος ποίησιν ὡς ἅπασα μῖμοι προσαγορεύεται. καὶ τοῦτο μὲν ἅπασι γινώριμον, ἐκεῖνο δὲ τὰς τῶν πολλῶν διέλαθεν ἄκοάς. λέγεται Πλάτωνα τὸν Ἀρίστωνος τουτωνὶ τῶν συγγραμμάτων <***> ὡς ἐκ Σικελίας Ἀθήναζε ταῦτα κομίσει μέγα τι δῶρον οἰόμενον ἄγειν τῇ θρεψαμένη καὶ πόλιν ἐκ τούτων κοσμεῖν Πλάτωνος τε πατρίδα καὶ πάσης μητέρα σοφίας; and Stephanis *Choricus* 152–3. Choricus' testimony is late and depends on earlier anecdotes (see, for example, Diogenes Laertius 3.18); nonetheless, it supports the long-standing view that Sophron was the *heuretēs* of mime.

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Piscator). The Sicilian connection with mime continues well into the fourth century BC, for Xenophon, writing in 380 or later,³² talks of a Syracusan (*Symp.* 2.1 Συρακόςσιος τις ἄνθρωπος; 9.2 ὁ Συρακόςσιος) presenting a spectacle with the story of Dionysus and Ariadne at Callias' private banquet, whose dramatic date seems to be 422. This spectacle, which tells of the loving union of the god of wine with the Cretan princess, in addition to exquisite gesticulation and dancing, included speech used by the principal actors during the performance (9.6 καὶ γὰρ ἤκουον τοῦ Διονύσου μὲν ἐπερωτῶντος αὐτὴν εἰ φιλεῖ αὐτόν, τῆς δὲ οὕτως ἐπομνυούσης), and for this reason should not be regarded as an early example of pantomime, but as a mime-performance of a mythological theme in the form of 'dinner-entertainment'. The contribution of *symposia* to the emergence of mime as a distinct kind of theatre has perhaps been underestimated. It may well be that some Roman mimes found their way to the stage after they were successfully performed in the houses of wealthy and influential patrons (such as Sulla).³³ In the second Olynthiac, dated to 349/8, Demosthenes (2.19) rebukes Philip for welcoming at the royal court low comedians and composers of indecent songs (μίμους γελοίων καὶ ποιητὰς αἰσχυρῶν ἁισμάτων) – a tradition followed by Philip's son Alexander (Ath. 20A).³⁴ More importantly, an Athenian terracotta lamp, dated to the late third

³² The date of composition of Xenophon's *Symp.* is uncertain, but, if it is later than Plato's *Symp.* (as is usually thought), it will have been composed later than 380. See K. J. Dover *Phronesis* 10 (1965) 2–20.

³³ L. Robert *Hermes* 65 (1930) 110 and Hordern *Sophron* 8 take the performance of 'Dionysus' and 'Ariadne' to be a pantomime. E. Hall, 'Introduction', in E. Hall and R. Wyles, eds., *New directions in ancient pantomime* (Oxford 2008) 11 is rightly sceptical. On 'theatre dinners', i.e. meals accompanied by visual entertainment, see the contributions of C. Corbato and G. Brugnoli in F. Doglio et al., eds., *Spettacoli Conviviali dall'antichità classica alle corti Italiane del '400* (Viterbo 1982) 65–76 and 77–90; and C. P. Jones in W. J. Slater, ed., *Dining in a classical context* (Ann Arbor 1991) 185–98.

³⁴ ἔνδοξοι δ' ἦσαν καὶ παρ' Ἀλεξάνδρῳ θαυμαστοποιοὶ Σκύμνος ὁ Ταραντῖνος, Φιλιστίδης ὁ Συρακούσιος, Ἡράκλειτος ὁ Μυτιληναῖος. γεγόνασι δὲ καὶ πλάνοι ἔνδοξοι, ὦν Κηφισόδωρος καὶ Πανταλέων, Φιλίππου δὲ τοῦ γελωτοποιοῦ Ξενοφῶν μνημονεύει.

century BC, preserves our earliest representation of a mime-drama (ὑπόθεσις; see *LSJ* s.v. II.5).³⁵ It is entitled 'The mother-in-law', and could have required at least four characters in its cast (the three unmasked and beardless male figures represented on the lamp, one of them clearly being the stereotypical bald mime-fool, and an actress playing the mother-in-law of the title); for all we know, they may have belonged to an official mime-troupe. The inscription on the back of the lamp, which may have been baked to commemorate the successful performance of the play, reads ΜΙΜΟΛΩΓΟΙ Η ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ ΕΙΚΥΡΑ.³⁶

But mime also flourished in the Hellenistic kingdoms of the Eastern Mediterranean, and it is from cultural centres such as Antioch in Syria and Alexandria in Egypt that mimes are reported to have travelled to Italy and Rome (see Macr. *Sat.* 2.7.6–7; *HA, Verus* 8.11; Maxwell *Mime* 62), either individually or as members of travelling troupes and as associates of an official theatrical guild (the *Parasiti Apollinis* or a *commune mimorum*).³⁷ Already in the third century BC mime-jesters entertained the court of Antiochus II Theos (261–246; Ath. 19C Ἡρόδοτος δὲ ὁ λογόμενος, ὡς φησιν Ἡγήσανδρος, καὶ Ἀρχέλαος ὁ ὀρχηστῆς

³⁵ Plutarch (712E) distinguishes between what people (of his time?) call ὑπόθεσις (mimes with a complicated plot needing a lot of equipment) and παίγνιον (mime-sketches too obscene to be enacted at banquets): μῖμοι τινὲς εἰσιν, ὧν τοὺς μὲν ὑποθέσεις τοὺς δὲ παίγνια καλοῦσιν ἀρμόζειν δ' οὐδέτερον οἶμαι συμποσίῳ γένος, τὰς μὲν ὑποθέσεις διὰ τὰ μήκη τῶν δραμάτων καὶ τὸ δυσχορήγητον, τὰ δὲ παίγνια πολλῆς γέμοντα βωμολοχίας καὶ σπερμολογίας. It is unlikely that this distinction, which is not attested elsewhere, applied to *The mother-in-law* (or to any other mime). Plutarch's passage is extensively discussed by Kehoe *Studies* 78–97, who is not critical enough of the validity of the information.

³⁶ The image on the lamp has been clearly reproduced in C. Watzinger *Ath. Mitt.* 26 (1901) pl. 1 and Bieber *History* fig. 415. The scene it represents is discussed by Watzinger (above) 1–8; O. Crusius in *Festschrift für Theodor Gomperz* (Vienna 1902) 381–7; O. Crusius, *Herondas mimiambi* (Leipzig 1914³) 146–7; R. Herzog *Philologus* 62 (1903) 35–8; Bieber *History* 107; Cicu *Problemi* 91–3; Maxwell *Mime* 215–20; Nicoll *Masks* 128; Reich *Mimus* 553–5; Robert 239 n. 4; and Wüst *Mimos* 1739.

³⁷ See Festus 326 M = 436 L, Mart. 9.28, *CIL* 10.3716, *EphEp* 8.369, *CIL* 14.2408 = *ILS* 5196; E. J. Jory *Hermes* 98 (1970) 224–53; Maxwell *Mime* 74–6.

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παρὰ Ἀντιόχῳ τῷ βασιλεῖ μάλιστα ἐτιμῶντο τῶν φίλων), and of Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175–164; Ath. 195F), who is said to have participated naked in licentious dancing spectacles during a banquet.³⁸ The actor and mimographer Publilius probably came from Antioch (Pliny *NH* 35.199 *talemque Publilium Antiochium* (Jahn: lochium vel locium vel lucilium *codd.*), *mimicae scaenae conditorem*). The actors Porphyry and Gelasius, who became Christian martyrs, came from Ephesus and Heliopolis respectively (see Panayotakis *Baptism*), while Syria's reputation for being a training centre for professionals of low entertainment becomes almost a cliché in authors of late antiquity (see *HA*, *Verus* 7.4, 8.7, 8.10–11; Julian *Misopogon* 342b; Amm. Marc. 23.5.3; *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* 32; and Maxwell *Mime* 62–5).

Cicero's disparaging statement about the *mimicae fallaciae* of Alexandria has already been noted;³⁹ wishing to denigrate the reputation of his opponents, he presents Alexandria as a den of cultural debauchery, where mime and trickery reign supreme, but he deliberately omits in his tirade the long-standing connection of the Egyptian royal capital with the erudite compositions of Theocritus (working at the Alexandrian court in the 270s) and Herodas (writing probably in the mid-third century BC). Syracusan in origin and follower of the Callimachean style of composition, Theocritus is the author of thirty carefully constructed and allusively learned poetic vignettes, two of which (2 and 15) are reported to be indebted to Sophron's mimes.⁴⁰

³⁸ Diod. Sic. 31.16.3 καὶ δὴ ποτε προκοπούσης ἐπὶ πολὺ τῆς ἐστιάσεως καὶ τῶν πλειόνων ἤδη κεχωρισμένων, ἦκεν ὑπὸ τῶν μίμων ἐκφερόμενος περικεκαλυμμένος τεθείς δὲ ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ὑπὸ τῶν συμπαιζόντων, μετὰ ταῦτα τῆς συμφωνίας προκαλουμένης ἀνεπήδα γυμνὸς καὶ τοῖς μίμοις προσπαιζὼν ὠρχεῖτο τῶν ὀρχήσεων τὰς γέλωτα καὶ χλευασμὸν εἰωθυίας ἐπισπᾶσθαι.

³⁹ *Pro Rab. Post.* 35; see also *HA*, *Verus* 8.11 and T. P. Wiseman, "Mime" and "pantomime": some problematic texts', in E. Hall and R. Wyles, eds., *New directions in ancient pantomime* (Oxford 2008) 147.

⁴⁰ Σ Arg. (2) τὴν δὲ Θεστυλίδα ὁ Θεόκριτος ἀπειροκάλως ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μετήνεγκε μίμων; Σ 2.69 τὴν δὲ τῶν φαρμάκων ὑπόθεσιν ἐκ τῶν Σώφρονος μίμων μεταφέρει (and Gow II 33–5); Σ Arg. (15) παρέπλασε δὲ τὸ ποιημάτιον ἐκ τῶν παρὰ Σώφρονι Ἰσθμια θεμένων (and Gow II 265–6). On Theocritus'

The motif of the scorned and, consequently, vindictive woman and the episode of two female visitors at a temple appear also in two of the eight intellectually demanding mimes of Herodas, whose extraordinary style comprises realistic subject-matter presented in a stylised fashion, and combines the portrayal of low-life situations with very learned (some would say artificial) language, which may have been addressed to a coterie of educated readers rather than to the culturally varied audience of a live performance.⁴¹ These *mimiamboi* in choliambics co-existed with the scurrilous spectacles of jugglers, magicians, and other entertainers who were explicitly or implicitly associated with the mime-profession, but there is not enough evidence to suggest that they influenced in any substantial way the style and language of the so-called literary mimes of Laberius, Publilius, and their Latin colleagues. The Roman mimes, like the work of Sophron and Herodas, seem to draw their material from everyday life, and exploit colloquialisms, vulgarisms, and sententious moral statements, but there is no clear evidence to show that they reached the very high literary standards required for the appreciation of their Hellenistic counterparts.⁴² Nor is it possible to see whether Herodas' mimiambos exerted any influence on the *mimiambi* of Mattius or Matius (who wrote before Varro) and of Vergilius Romanus (a contemporary of the Younger Pliny), about whose mime-careers we know next to nothing; 'it is

poetry see J. B. Burton, *Theocritus' urban mimes: Mobility, gender, and patronage* (Berkeley 1995); and R. Hunter, *Theocritus and the archaeology of Greek poetry* (Cambridge 1996).

⁴¹ For the text of Herodas see I. C. Cunningham, *Herodae mimiambi* (Leipzig 1987). A. Cameron, *Callimachus and his critics* (Princeton 1995) 89–90 and Hordern *Sophron* 9 n. 22 do not rule out the possibility that the works of Herodas and Theocritus were performed at a banquet. G. Mastromarco, *The public of Herodas* (Amsterdam 1984) and R. Hunter *Antichthon* 27 (1993) 31–44 argue for full-scale staging of Herodas' mimes.

⁴² The participial adjective *doctus* appears several times in relation to mimes, but it means 'skilled', not 'learned'. See *CIL* 6.10096 (*Eucharis docta erodita*), *Macr. Sat.* 2.1.9 (*docta cavillatio*), *Amm. Marc.* 30.4.21. The word *doctus* in *Sen. apud Aug. De civ. dei* 6.10 (*Doctus archimimus*) is probably the stage-name of an archmime (cf. C. Fundilius Doctus in *CIL* 14.4273 = *ILS* 5275).

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possible that Matius (whose choliambics are the first at Rome) was translating parts of the œuvre of Herodas which we no longer possess, and the calques may favour this view, but he may also have been creating independently, as later in this genre Pliny's friends Vergilius Romanus (*Ep.* 6.21.4) and (in Greek) Arrius Antoninus (4.3.3).⁴³ Even the Greek mime-play which depicts the wrath of an adulterous wife (*P.Oxy.* 413 *verso*, dated to the second century AD), a motif paralleled in the works of both Theocritus (2) and Herodas (5), is a far cry from the elaborate representation of unrequited love in the Alexandrian mimes.

In the light of this rich tradition of mime, a term which by the Hellenistic period could signify a poem of superior literary qualities, a dramatic composition of unspecified length and high literary value, or an artless spectacle of actors performing tricks, dancing lasciviously, and making improvised, obscene jokes, it is frustrating to be unable to point with certainty to the means by which (and the form in which) mime was transferred from Greek-speaking lands into Italy and Rome. There is no doubt, however, that the Romans had witnessed performances of mimes of some kind at least by the end of the third century BC,⁴⁴ the

⁴³ Courtney *Poets* 106. On Matius see Gellius 15.25 (*Cn. Matius, vir eruditus, in mimiambis suis non absurde neque absone finxit 'recentatur' pro eo quod Graeci dicunt ἀναγεοῦται, id est 'denuo nascitur atque iterum fit recens'. Versus in quibus hoc verbum est hi sunt: 'iamiam [codd. praeter X¹Z: iam X¹: nam Z] albicascit Phoebus et recentatur | commune lumen hominibus voluptatis [Hertz: et voluptatis codd.]'. Idem Matius in isdem mimiambis 'edulcare' dicit quod est 'dulcius reddere', in his versibus: 'quapropter edulcare convenit vitam | curasque acerbas sensibus gubernare'); Terentianus Maurus *De Metris* 2416–18 = *GL* 6.397 K (*hoc mimiambos Mattius dedit metro: | nam vatem eundem est Attico thymo tinctum | pari lepore consecutus et metro*); *RE* XIV.2 221 s.v. Matius 4; and especially Courtney *Poets* 99, 102–6. On Vergilius Romanus see Pliny *Ep.* 6.21.2–7 (*Atque adeo nuper audiui Vergilium Romanum paucis legentem comoediam ad exemplar veteris comoediae scriptam, tam bene ut esse quandoque possit exemplar. Nescio an noris hominem, quamquam nosse debes; est enim probitate morum, ingenii elegantia, operum varietate monstrabilis. Scripsit mimiambos tenuiter argute venuste, atque in hoc genere eloquentissime; nullum est enim genus quod absolutum non possit eloquentissimum dici. Scripsit comoedias Menandrum aliosque aetatis eiusdem aemulatus; licet has inter Plautinas Terentianasque numeres*) and *RE* VIII.A.2 1506–7 s.v.*

⁴⁴ It may have been even earlier, if we accept the suggestion that the *mimaulos* Kleon performed in the fourth century BC, and if we interpret the adjective

period of the Athenian terracotta lamp mentioned above. This inference is based both on the episode that is connected to the origins of the proverb ‘all’s well: the old man is dancing’ (*salva res: saltat senex*)⁴⁵ – referring to C. Pomponius, an aged mime who performed at the *ludi Apollinares* of 212⁴⁶ – and on the epitaph of the mime-actor Protogenes, found on a stele in Samnium and dated to the period from 211 to 160.⁴⁷

The episode of Pomponius is related by the grammarian Festus (436 L, 438 L), who claims to have as his source the Augustan writer Verrius Flaccus, by Servius (*ad Aen.* 3.279 and 8.110), and by Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.17.25). It appears that, during a festival in honour of Apollo at Rome, the attack of an unspecified enemy (was it Hannibal? See Livy 25.12–3) interrupted the games, because the spectators had to leave the theatre, and hastened to defend the city. Having defeated the enemy, they returned to the theatre, concerned that they needed to repeat the whole ritual. But their fears proved to be unjustified because they found the aged mime Pomponius still dancing to the accompaniment of the pipe. This is a far-fetched account, which aims at extolling the heroism of early Romans and their exemplary respect for

Ἰταλικῶν as a reference to mime-plays which were Italian in source and content, and were originally performed on Italian soil. See *RE* XI.1 719 s.v. Kleon 10, and Athen. 452F–453A: τῶι δὲ Θεοδέκτῃ παραπλησίως ἔπαιζε γρίφους καὶ Δρομέας ὁ Κῶιος, ὧς φησι Κλέαρχος, καὶ Ἄριστωννυμος ὁ φιλοκιθαριστής, ἔτι δὲ Κλέων ὁ μίμαυλος ἐπικαλούμενος, ὅσπερ καὶ τῶν Ἰταλικῶν μίμων ἄριστος γέγονεν αὐτοπρόσωπος ὑποκριτής· καὶ γὰρ Νυμφοδώρου περιήν ἐν τῶι μνημονευομένῳ μίμῳι.

⁴⁵ This is the reading suggested by E. J. Jory *Hermes* 98 (1970) 237. Taylor suggests *salva res <est dum saltat> senex*, and Lindsay prints *salva res <est dum cantat> senex*.

⁴⁶ For the date see Bonaria 101 (who suggests 211); Beare *Stage* 151; Cicu *Problemi* 23–4; Reynolds *Verrius* (who favours an even later date).

⁴⁷ *CIL* 1.1297 = *CIL* 1².1861 = *CIL* 9.4463 = *ILS* 5221 = Buecheler *Carmina* 361 = *ILLRP* 804: PROTOGENES · CLOVL | SVAVEI · HEICEI – SITVST | MIMVS · PLOVRVMA · QVE | FECIT POPVLO SOVEIS · | GAVDIA · NUGES. For the date see Buecheler *Carmina* 170: ‘carmen Enniana aetate non multo posterius’; Cicu *Problemi* 24–5; Garton *Aspects* 259; Leppin *Histrionen* 282; Maxwell *Mime* 117 no. 13; Wüst *Mimos* 1744. The case for 211 was originally put forward by Reich *Mimus* 558 (see, also, Bonaria 175).