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GIUSEPPE EUGENIO RALLO

THE TITLES OF MIDDLE COMEDY, NEW COMEDY,  
AND THE *TOGATA*

In this contribution, I focus on a selection of Middle and New Comedy titles, and the *togata*, discussing possible relationships between them, and eventual clues as to the impact the former might have had on the latter. The article will then problematize whether, and to what extent, the *togata* might have built on Middle and New Comedy, aiming to spur further scholarly analysis of the extant *togatae*. My focus will be on the titles of the *togata* and on the characteristics one could take into account in our knowledge of the subject, when working on such performances' titles.

Over the last few decades, scholars have carefully analysed possible literary and linguistic relationships between Greek models and Roman plays, focussing on the influence that Middle and especially New Comedy<sup>1</sup> might have exercised on their Roman adaptations, that is to say, the *palliatae* ('comedies in *pallium*'). The relationship between Roman comedy and its Greek models, as Halporn has remarked, «has been one of those perpetual questions that engage classicists. It could be called the Homeric Question of Latin studies»<sup>2</sup>. Leo<sup>3</sup> and Fraenkel<sup>4</sup> have particularly reflected on the synergies between Greek models and Roman adaptations, highlighting similarities and differences between the former and latter. In the case of the *palliata*, it has been noted that the Roman comedies of Plautus (less so those of Terence, who remains intrinsically anchored with his Greek models), added several elements to their Greek

<sup>1</sup> Secondary literature on Middle and New Comedy is huge: see e.g. I. KONSTANTAKOS, *A Commentary on the fragments of eight plays of Antiphanes*, PhD dissertation, Cambridge 2000; KONSTANTAKOS, *Tendency and variety in Middle Comedy*, in S. CHRONOPOULOS, and C. ORTH (eds.), *Fragmente einer Geschichte der griechischen Komödie – Fragmentary history of Greek comedy*, Heidelberg 2015, pp. 159-198; KONSTANTAKOS, *The play of characters in the fragments of Middle Comedy: from the repertoire of stock types to the exploration of characters idiosyncrasies*, in M. DE POLI, G.E.RALLO, and B. ZIMMERMANN (eds.), *Sub palliolo sordido. Studi sulla Commedia fragmentaria Graeca e Latina – Studies on Greek and Roman fragmentary Comedies*, Göttingen 2021, pp. 137-190.

<sup>2</sup> J. HALPORN, *Roman Comedy and Greek Models*, in R. SCODEL (ed.), *Theater and Society in the Classical World*, Ann Arbor 1993, pp. 191-213, p. 191. More recently, the issue has been dealt with by other scholars, such as M. TELÒ, *Roman Comedy and the Poetics of Adaptation*, in M.T. DINTER (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Roman Comedy*, Cambridge 2019, pp. 47-65.

<sup>3</sup> F. LEO, *Plautinische Forschungen zur Kritik und Geschichte der Komödie*, Darmstadt 1966 (= 2nd ed. Berlin 1912).

<sup>4</sup> E. FRAENKEL, *Plautine Elements in Plautus*, transl. by T. Drevikovsky and F. Muecke, Oxford 2007 (*Elementi Plautini in Plauto*, tr. with *addenda* by F. Munari, Florence 1960).

models, which are adapted, not just copied<sup>5</sup>. What one reads in the comedies attributed to Plautus, in other words, is very ‘Plautine’, existing in the world of Plautus, the so-called ‘Plautopolis’, as Gratwick has put it<sup>6</sup>. It thus makes sense to argue that «... we are best served if we understand that Plautus was not trying to reproduce in a mechanical way the words of Menander, but to create a piece of Roman art»<sup>7</sup>.

The *togata* (or theatrical genre in *toga*)<sup>8</sup> has been given less importance in scholarship, especially owing to its very fragmentary status<sup>9</sup>. Though a panoptic picture of the *togata* will never be possible, this scholarly lacuna deserves closer attention. A reading of the titles may allow scholars and students to see some possible connections with Greek models, and the *togata* – to the same extent as the *palliata* – may be very likely understood as a genre in relationship with such models. If this is the case, how could one interpret the presence of Greek models and/or allusions thereto in the *togatae*? Are the titles of these *togatae* eloquent enough to tell us something more about this relationship?

On the one hand, titles of *togatae* allude to Roman (and more broadly, Latin/Italian) scenarios. In the *togatae* attributed to Titinius, for example, titles like *Prilia*, *Setina*, and *Veliterna*, establish a very ‘national’ or ‘nationalistic’ setting, making the *togata* a genre which is ‘native’ to Rome, in the sense that these theatrical representations are often set in the Italian peninsula. *Setina* is illustrative here: that this *togata* bears the name of a local centre (namely, *Setia*) allows us insight into the ‘indigenous’ nature of the genre<sup>10</sup>; similarly, the *togata Veliterna* immediately suggests an allusion to an Italian place, *Velitrae*<sup>11</sup>. The references to places in the *togata*, as in the aforementioned examples, further mark the ‘national’ or ‘nationalistic’ patina of the *togata*, giving these theatrical performances a very ‘Roman’ aspect.

On the other hand, there is evidence to prove a larger-scale, not purely local, aspect. Scrutiny of *togata* titles may tell us more on the relationship these dramatic representations had with their Greek models, as for example in the prologue to Afranius’ *Compitalia* (i.e. Afran. *tog.* 25-28 R.<sup>3</sup> . . . *fateor, sumpsit non ab illo modo, / Sed ut quisque*

<sup>5</sup> Secondary literature on this issue is massive. See in particular G. PETRONE, *Quando le Muse parlavano Latino. Studi su Plauto*, Bologna 2009. The second part of the aforementioned Petrone’s monograph (pp. 115-177) is devoted to Plautus’ comedic poetry and allusions to Roman culture found throughout it. Also important is the analysis provided by C. QUESTA, *Profilo della commedia plautina. Introduzione. Plauto, Pseudolo*, Milan 1983, pp. 26-46. Cfr. also R.M. DANESE, *Plauto, la commedia romana e i modelli greci*, in *REL* 14, 2014, pp. 35-51.

<sup>6</sup> A.S. GRATWICK, *Plautus. Menaechmi. Edited with a Commentary*, Cambridge 1993, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> HALPORN, *Roman Comedy*, cit., p. 208. An interesting anecdote on Matisse quoted by Halporn further clarifies what Plautus likely did with his Greek models: «When a woman visiting his studio said, ‘but surely, the arm of this woman is much too long’, the artist replied politely, ‘madame, you are mistaken. This is not a woman, this is a picture’. So Plautus might say to many of his modern critics, ‘Sirs, you are mistaken. This is not a Greek New Comedy, this is a *fabula palliata*».

<sup>8</sup> On the controversy related to the term *togata*, see discussions in RALLO, *Togatae Nostrae. Sulle tracce della Togata*, in *ClassicoContemporaneo* 12, 2021, pp. 174-190, and RALLO, *What does the term Togata ‘really’ mean?*, in *CQ* 71, 1, 2021, pp. 216-229.

<sup>9</sup> On working with fragments and several issues connected to them, see the recent volume edited by DE POLI, RALLO, and ZIMMERMANN 2021, cit.

<sup>10</sup> On the aforementioned *togata*, see T. GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta. Fabula togata. I frammenti. Introduzione, testo, traduzione e commento*, Milan 1985, pp. 145-154.

<sup>11</sup> On this *togata*, see GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta*, cit., pp. 157-161.

*habuit, conueniret quod mihi, / Quod me non posse melius facere credidi, / Etiam a Latino*)<sup>12</sup>, recently re-studied philologically by Monda<sup>13</sup>.

I have examined the titles of all of the *togatae* attributed – not always unproblematically – to the playwrights Titinius, Afranius, and Atta<sup>14</sup>, and discerned cases of undeniable referencing of, and allusion to, Greek models and parallels. As I show here, several *togata* titles appear to evoke a Greek comic play. The following table compares full titles of *togatae* with titles found in Middle and New Comedy, aiming to provoke scholars and students of Roman and Greek drama to figure out if, and to what extent, *togatae* were built on Greek models.

A reading of the titles of these *togatae* testifies to how, although the *togata* had a very Roman framework, as suggested by its name (*togata* < *toga*, the Roman mantle)<sup>15</sup>, Titinius, Afranius, and Atta likely continued to look to Middle and New Comedy:

Titles of <i>togatae</i>	Titles of Middle and New Comedy <sup>16</sup>
Titinius' <i>Fullonia</i> or <i>Fullones</i> <sup>17</sup>	Antiphanes' Κναφεύς
Titinius' <i>Gemina</i> <sup>18</sup>	Aristophon's Δίδυμαι ἢ Πύραυνος; Antiphanes' Αὐλητρὶς ἢ Δίδυμαι; Menander's Δίδυμαι
Titinius' <i>Priuigna</i>	Anthipanes' Πρόγονοι
Titinius' <i>Psaltria sine Ferentinatis</i> <sup>19</sup>	Dromon's and Eubulus' Ψάλτρια; Anaxandrides' Κιθαρίστρια; Diodorus' Αὐλητρὶς; Antiphanes' Αὐλητρὶς ἢ Δίδυμαι; Menander's Ἀρρηφόρος ἢ Αὐλητρὶς; Phenicides' Αὐλητρίδες

<sup>12</sup> I cite the *togata* texts in the critical edition of O. RIBBECK, *Scaenicae Romanorum poesis fragmenta. Vol. II. Comitorum Romanorum praeter Plautum et Syri quae feruntur sententias fragmenta, tertiis curis rec. O. Ribbeck*, Leipzig 1898; in the interpretation and analysis of the fragments of the *togata*, I follow A. DAVIAULT, *Comœdia Togata. Fragments. Texte établi, traduit et annoté*, Paris 1981, and GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta*, cit. There is also another edition of the fragments of the *togata*, that is, A. LÓPEZ LÓPEZ, *Fabularum Togatarum Fragmenta (edición crítica)*, Salamanca 1983, but this edition is minimal in comments and analysis.

<sup>13</sup> S. MONDA, *Il prologo "terenziano" dei Compitalia di Afranio*, in R. CANTORE, F. MONTEMURRO, and C. TELESCA (eds.), *Mira Varietas Lectorum*, Potenza 2021, pp. 205-211. On the aforementioned prologue to the *togata Compitalia*, see also R. DEGL'INNOCENTI PIERINI, *Un prologo polemico di Afranio (Compitalia 25-28 R.?)*, in *Prometheus* 17, 1991, pp. 242-246.

<sup>14</sup> On the dates of the playwrights of the *togata*, cfr. J. WELSH, *The dates of the dramatists of the Fabula Togata*, in *HSPb* 106, 2012, pp. 125-153.

<sup>15</sup> Previous scholarship on the Roman *toga* is discussed by U. ROTHE, *The Toga and Roman Identity*, London, New York 2020, pp. 12-16; with regard to the history of the Roman *toga*, ROTHE 2020, cit., pp. 17-36; cfr. also E. DENCH, *Romulus' Asylum: Roman Identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*, Oxford 2005, pp. 35 and 274-276; A. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Rome's cultural revolution*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 38-57.

<sup>16</sup> T. DÉNES, *Quelques problèmes de la «Fabula togata»*, in *BAGB* 32, 1973, pp. 187-201, p. 187 focusses on some Afranius' *togatae* titles, talking of «l'affinité hellénique de quelques-uns de ses titres». Dénes' intuition is interesting; however, it lacks further analysis.

<sup>17</sup> On this title, cfr. GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta*, cit., p. 110f., «considerato che *Fullonia* potrebbe essere nato da errata soluzione del compendio di *Fullonibus*, sembra probabile che il titolo esatto fosse *Fullones*».

<sup>18</sup> The main motif of this *togata* would suggest a correlation with Greek (and Latin) comedies: examples are found in GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta*, cit., p. 121f. I agree with the scholar's criticisms of previous work on this *togata*, «non sembra avere fondamento l'ipotesi del Neukirch (...), che erano rappresentate due gemelle, l'una delle quali era sposata, mentre l'altra, nubile, abitava presso la sorella, suscitando l'ostilità del marito: il conflitto familiare sarebbe cessato con la partenza dalla casa della sorella nubile. Forse ha ragione il Leo (...), nel riconoscere una lite fra coniugi, a comporre la quale interviene il suocero».

<sup>19</sup> On this title, see GUARDÌ, *Titinio e Atta*, cit., p. 139.

Titinius' <i>Tibicina</i>	Antíphanes' Αὐλητρίς ἢ Δίδυμαι; Menander's Ἀρρηφόρος ἢ Αὐλητρίς; Diodorus' Αὐλητρίς
Afranius' <i>Abducta</i> <sup>20</sup>	Antíphanes' Ἀρπαζομένη
Afranius' <i>Aequales</i> <sup>21</sup>	Alexis' Συντρέχοντες; Menander's, Apollodorus', Euphron's Συνέφηβοι; Alexis', Damoxenos', Diphilus', and Poscidippos' Σύντροφοι
Afranius' <i>Augur</i> <sup>22</sup>	Alexis' Μάντεις; Antíphanes' Οἰωνιστής; Antíphanes' Μηναγύρτης/ Μητραγύρτης; Philemon's Ἀγύρτης; Menander's Μηναγύρτης
Afranius' <i>Cinerarius</i> <sup>23</sup>	Alexis', Amphis', and Antíphanes' Κουρίς
Afranius' <i>Consobrinus</i> <sup>24</sup>	Menander's Ἄνεψιός
Afranius' <i>Depositum</i>	Sophilos', Timotheus', Timostratos', Sosicrates', and Menander's Παρακαταθήκη
Afranius' <i>Epistula</i> <sup>25</sup>	Alexis', Machon's, and Timocles' Ἐπιστολή
Afranius' <i>Incendium</i> <sup>26</sup>	Menander's Ἐμπιπραμένη
Afranius' <i>Priuignus</i>	Antíphanes' Πρόγονοι
Afranius' <i>Prodigus</i> <sup>27</sup>	Timostratos' Ἄσωτος; Antíphanes' Ἄσωτοι
Afranius' <i>Sorores</i>	Antíphanes' Ἀδελφαί
Afranius' <i>Thais</i>	Hyparchus' and Menander's Θαίς
Atta's <i>Aquae Caldae</i> <sup>28</sup>	Amphis', Timocles', and Diphilus' Βαλανεῖον
Atta's <i>Conciliatrix</i> <sup>29</sup>	Eubulus' and Posidippus' Ποροβοσοός
Atta's <i>Lucubratio</i>	Alexis' Πῶνυχίς ἢ Ἐρεθοί; Eubulus' Hipparchus', and Callippus' Πῶνυχίς
Atta's <i>Socrus</i>	Apollodorus' Ἐκυρά

The catalogue establishes that the *togatae* authors Titinius, Afranius, and Atta, when thinking of their characters and/or their motifs onstage, may have been probably influenced by the repertoire of themes, situations, and social and professional

<sup>20</sup> On the title of this *togata*, see DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 142 n. 1.

<sup>21</sup> DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 143 n. 1 argues that «cette *togata* d'Afranius développait sans doute une intrigue amoureuse, au cours de laquelle un *adulescens* apportait son aide à un ami»: this reading, however, is speculative, as there is no evidence of the plot of this *togata*. Nothing, in fact, can be said on the contents of this *togata*, and the fragments transmitted do not illuminate what was happening onstage.

<sup>22</sup> On this title, cfr. DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 145 n. 1.

<sup>23</sup> On the meaning of *Cinerarius*, see DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 149 n. 1.

<sup>24</sup> On the possible bond between the aforementioned *togata* and a comedy of Menander, see DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 153 n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 169f. discusses the title of this *togata*, highlighting the main theme of the theatrical performance, and making some comparisons – though without developing them in full – with Greek plays. He also offers a description of the fragments of the *togata Epistula*, suggesting a reasonable reconstruction of its contents.

<sup>26</sup> On the representation of this *togata* during the Neronian era, our main source is Suetonius (*Ner.* 11, 4 – *Inducta est et Afranii Togata quae Incendium inscribitur concessumque ut scenici ardentis domus suppellectilem diriperent ac sibi haberent*).

<sup>27</sup> On this title and its meaning, see DAVIAULT, *Comoedia Togata*, cit., p. 211 n. 1.

<sup>28</sup> The meaning of the title of this *togata* is difficult to grasp: cfr. GUARDI, *Titinio e Atta*, cit., p. 174, «che il titolo indichi una determinata città è improbabile. Forse l'azione della commedia si svolgeva in una qualsiasi stazione termale dell'Italia centrale, con la rappresentazione del mondo spensierato della gente in villeggiatura, che prendeva a pretesto per divertirsi il fare delle cure termali».

<sup>29</sup> On the sense of the term *Conciliatrix*, the title of this *togata*, see Isid. *Orig.* 10, 63, *conciliatrix ob societatem flagitiosae consensionis dicta, eo quod intercurrat alienumque nundinet corpus. Hanc etiam et lenonem uocant*.

characters that was widely developed in Greek Middle and New Comedy. For instance, Titinius' *Psaltria sive Ferentinatis* calls to mind several plays bearing double titles, such as Dromon's and Eubulus' Ψάλτρια, Anaxandrides' Κιθαρίστρια, Diodorus' Αύλητρις, Antiphanes' Αύλητρις ἢ Δίδυμαι, Menander's Ἀρρηφόρος ἢ Αύλητρις, Phenicides' Αύλητρίδες. Afranius' *Augur* may be reasonably compared with Middle and New Comedy titles, that present the Greek correspondent of the Roman *augur*: Alexis' Μάντεις, Antiphanes' Οἰωνιστής, Antiphanes' Μηναγύρτης/Μητραγύρτης, Philemon's Ἀγύρτης, Menander's Μηναγύρτης.

On the basis of the titles of the *togatae* in the table above, one is left with the strong impression that the playwrights of the *togata* very likely continued to look towards, and be influenced by, the Greek theatrical tradition of Middle and New Comedy. Hence, it is reasonable to think that characters and/or themes could also have been taken from Greek Middle and New Comedy. The authors of the *togata* seem to have appropriated and reused these characters, inserting them within a Roman context, localising them and contributing to an enlargement of these characters for the Roman stage. As Gratwick has coined the term 'Plautopolis' when referring to the world portrayed by Plautus in his theatre, so it is possible to create a term to refer to, and encompass, the world of the *togata*, the 'Togatapolis'. To the same extent as in the *palliatae* attributed to Plautus, a distinct world exists within the *togata*, characterised either by elements which one may reasonably consider as native (see my discussion above) or as related to the world of the Greek Middle and New Comedy through the mediation of the *palliata*. The titles of *togatae* suggest a hybrid world onstage: authors of Middle and New Comedy were likely models for the authors of *togatae*, who adapted, rather than merely copying and pasting, their works. The presence of characters and motifs like those the surviving titles of *togatae* alluded to within a Roman context contribute to our understanding of the distinction between 'Greek-ness' and 'Roman-ness' on the stage of the *togata*, a distinction which – as Manuwald has correctly noted – «... was less clear-cut for the light dramatic genres, even though togata was probably the Roman dramatic form that came closest to being a 'mirror of life' on the basis of setting, personages and topics»<sup>30</sup>.

It is then interesting to imagine that *togata* poets were keen on portraying characters and, in general, motifs (directly or indirectly) connected with their Greek models (and parallels or near-parallels). This advances our knowledge of the subject analysed in this contribution, and drives our attention to further explore the issues here exposed, with the aim of clarifying if and how these playwrights of *togatae* might have known and used these Greek models. Although caution is always required when dealing with a fragmentary corpus as the *togata* owing to the fact that conclusions remain (and will inevitably remain) tentative, what we can say with some certainty is that the titles of *togatae* seem to suggest a strong connection with their Greek antecedents, indicating a possible literary and cultural relationship between the two.

<sup>30</sup> G. MANUWALD, *Roman Republican Theatre*, Cambridge 2011, p. 159f.

## ABSTRACT

This article reflects on the titles of *togatae* and of Middle and New Comedy plays, in order to shed fresh light on the Greek and Roman flavour of the ‘Roman’ *togata*. Several *togata* titles likely suggest that Titinius, Afranius, and Atta – like the authors of *palliatae* – continued to look to Greek Middle and New Comedy as their possible models.

Scopo dell’articolo è riflettere circa i titoli delle *togatae* e della commedia greca di Mezzo e Nuova, al fine di spiegare in modo originale il carattere greco e romano della *togata*. Diversi titoli di *togatae* suggeriscono come Titinio, Afranio e Atta – al pari degli autori delle *palliatae* – continuarono a guardare ai copioni della commedia greca di Mezzo e Nuova come a dei possibili modelli.

KEYWORDS: *Togata*; Togatapolis; titles; Middle and New Comedy; Roman Comedy.

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