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## HUMOUR IN THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE COSTUMES IN THE COMEDIES BY PLAUTUS

ABSTRACT. Pieczonka Joanna, Humour in the Special Features of the Costumes in the Comedies by Plautus (*Humor w szczególnych cechach kostiumów wedle komedii Plauta*).

The article examines certain elements of the costumes not mentioned in Catharine Saunders' monograph but presented in the Plautine plays. The author discusses such issues as the physical condition of the character (drunk and pregnant) and its reflection in aspects of the costume, the ethnic elements of garments (costume of the foreigner – from Carthage, Illyria and Persia) and the comic potential of the stage clothing. It appears that many terms used to refer to costumes often indicate grotesque features of the theatrical clothes used to portray Plautine characters. This phenomenon concerns male characters which are portrayed as having the big belly (*leno* and *servus*) or large feet (*servus*) and female characters which are presented as having large breasts (*meretrix*, *tibicina* and *nutrix*).

Keywords: Plautus; comedies; costumes; humour; grotesque features

In *Costume in Roman Comedy* (New York 1909), Catharine Saunders presents two character categories. The first comprises stock roles; the second is reserved for unusual roles dictated by both the status of a character as a god or a captive and the character's profession, (e.g. *mercator*, *gubernator* or *fidicina*). Costumes are discussed in terms of these categories, including in the chapter concerned with the costume of *prologus*. My text considers certain elements of the costumes not mentioned in that monograph or not fully presented by Saunders. The scope of my interest includes such issues as the physical condition of the character and its reflection in aspects of the costume, the ethnic elements of garments and the comic potential of the stage clothing. For the purposes of this article, the term 'costume' shall refer not only to the clothes worn by the actors but also the shoes, masks, make-up and trinkets worn or carried by them<sup>1</sup>. I consider only textual evidence retrieved from the comedies of Plautus, ignoring the testimonies of Donatus (*De comoedia* 8, 4–7) and Pollux (*Onomasticon* 4, 115–120; 143–154) and evidence introduced by artefacts.

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<sup>1</sup>Similarly: Saunders 1909: VII–VIII.

## 1. COSTUMES VERSUS PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THE CHARACTERS.

## a. DRUNK CHARACTERS

The first costume element to be discussed is characteristic of a drunk character. Wreaths and crowns were necessary accessories for the banquets<sup>2</sup> and Plautus' plays present examples of such garlands being used to indicate inebriation. In *Amphitruo*, the god Mercury states that he will take the garland and pretend he is *ebrius*<sup>3</sup> (*Am.* 999):

capiam **coronam** mi in caput, **adsimulabo** me I'll put a **garland** on my head and **pretend** to  
esse **ebrium**;<sup>4</sup> be **drunk**.<sup>5</sup>

Later, he describes this attire using the substantive *ornatus*<sup>6</sup> to refer to an 'outfit suitable for those who're drunk' (*Am.* 1007):

ibo intro, **ornatum** capiam qui **potis** decet; I'll go inside and pick **an outfit** suitable for  
those who're **drunk**.

Menaechmus-Sosicles wears a similar item in the comedy *Menaechmi* when he is mistakenly recognised by the parasite Peniculus as his patron, who describes Menaechmus as intoxicated and draws attention to the flower garland<sup>7</sup>:

*Men.* 563–565:

pallam ad phrygionem **cum corona ebrius** **With a garland on and drunk** he was  
ferabat, hodie tibi quam surrupuit domo carrying mantle to the embroiderer, the one he  
took from your house today

*Men.* 632–633:

non ego te modo hic ante aedis **cum corona** Didn't I see you standing here in front of the  
**florea** uidi astare? (...) house **with a flower garland** just now?

<sup>2</sup>Dumont 2003: 237. The *corona* is a symbol of banqueting, especially after a meal (Christenson 2020: 348).

<sup>3</sup>According to Skwara (2001: 204), feasting men in comedies generally had wreaths on their heads. Saunders (1909: 121) writes that the *corona* was also probably worn by Jupiter in the second scene of the last act (*Am.* 1131–1143), in which he reveals himself to be a god. The garland is described as stolen from Jupiter in *Men.* 941. The *corona* is also worn by the bridegroom, Olympio *vilicus*, in *Cas.* 767–768; 796; 934.

<sup>4</sup>The text uses the edition of the Plautine comedies by Lindsay 1910.

<sup>5</sup>Unless stated otherwise, translations are from the edition by de Melo 2011, 2012, 2013.

<sup>6</sup>On the use and meaning of the substantive *ornatus* ('costume', 'attire', 'disguise'), the verb *ornare* ('to equip') and the participle *ornatus* ('dressed', 'attired', 'adorned') in Roman comedy, see Saunders 1909: 22–24.

<sup>7</sup>Lashbrook 1965: 211: 'banquetters should wear garlands of flowers around their heads or necks'.

In her recently published companion to *Menaechmi*, V. Sophie Klein<sup>8</sup> recognises that ‘the garland (...) also functions as a signifier (in addition the *palla* – JP) that the audience (correctly) and the characters (incorrectly) use to identify a given twin’, with this element of the costume becoming an important component of the plot<sup>9</sup>.

A potential analogue is the significant role of the garland in Gnaeus Naevius’ comedy *Corollaria*<sup>10</sup>. Eric H. Warmington<sup>11</sup> proposes three translations of this title: ‘The garland-maid’, ‘Seller of garlands’ or ‘A Garland-play’. However, none of these translations includes the diminutive tone of the substantive *corolla*. In this form, the noun appears in the comedy *Pseudolus* in line 1299, twelve lines after the basic form *corona* is used:

*Ps.* 1286–1287:

sed quid hoc? quo modo? quid uideo ego?  
PS. **cum corona ebrium** Pseudolum tuom.

But what’s that? How? What do you see?  
PS. Your Pseudolus, **with a garland and drunk**.

*Ps.* 1296–99:

PS. molliter sis tene me, caue ne cadam: non  
uides me ut madide madeam?  
SIMO. quae istaec audaciast, te sic interdus  
**cum corolla ebrium** ingredi? PS. lubet.

PS. Please hold me gently, make sure I don’t  
fall; can’t you see that I’m drunk as a lord?  
SIMO. What impudence is that, that you strut  
around like this in daytime, **with a garland  
and drunk?**  
PS. I like it. (*belches again*)

Here, the garland is worn by the eponymous slave, who is apparently drunk and mumbles, which is marked in the text with the repetition of the sound ‘m’ (i.e. the stylistic device of alliteration). In the second passage, disgusted at the impudent behaviour of the slave, the *senex* Simo describes Pseudolus’ appearance using the *corolla* form, which certainly demonstrates his contempt towards the slave’s state<sup>12</sup>. The interesting thing is that Pseudolus employs the noun *corolla* himself a little bit earlier (*Ps.* 1265), when he enters the stage already being tipsy and when in his *canticum* he speaks about entertainments he has just enjoyed with his young master. In this speech, he uses two more diminutives which probably are the proof of him being drunk (*Ps.* 1259

<sup>8</sup> Klein 2022: 27.

<sup>9</sup> The reference to the garland also becomes part of an outburst against Menaechmus, who dines without the parasite (Klein 2022: 54): ‘Go right ahead and finish off a feast without me, and then grab a garland, get drunk, and mock me right here in front of the house (628–629)’.

<sup>10</sup> The original Greek version of this play was Eubulus’ Στεφανοπωλίδες. Other plays by Naevius featuring elements of the costume include *Tunicularia*, *Chlamidaria* and *Triphallus*.

<sup>11</sup> Warmington 1936: 87.

<sup>12</sup> Diminutives may have a pejorative meaning – Fritz Conrad (1931: 75) gives other examples of such Plautine lexemes: *homunculus masculus*, *peditastellus*.

*labella*; Ps. 1261 *mammicula*). Later, Simo only repeats the slave's words, but to express disapproval of his manners, whereas Pseudolus uses the basic form *corona*. The choice of *corolla* instead of *corona* by the *senex* does not seem random – it is to reveal his emotional attitude towards the garland and towards what it represents<sup>13</sup>. However, the meaning of this diminutive may also be expressive<sup>14</sup> in another way – it may express irony. Thus, through irony it may also denote something opposite and its secondary meaning may be really augmentative<sup>15</sup>. The diminutive might refer ironically to the garland's size, that is, rather than being small, the garland might be huge or very visible, thus eliciting strong disapproval<sup>16</sup>. Some scholars, such as David Wiles<sup>17</sup>, emphasise that elements of stage costumes might have been exaggerated to be seen from a distance in the theatre context. This phenomenon might explain the perverse description of the garland as 'small', in the same manner used to describe the tokens that signify the gods in the comedy *Amphitruo* (*Am.* 143–145), according to C. W. Marshall:

ego has habeo usque <hic> in petaso  
**pinnulas**; tum meo patri autem **torulus** inerit  
 aureus sub petaso: id signum Amphitruoni non  
 erit.

I'll have these **little wings** here on my hat  
 throughout. And my father will have a golden  
**ribbon** under his hat; Amphitruo won't have  
 this mark.

Despite the diminutive lexeme forms employed, the *pinnulas* ('little feathers/wings') and *torulus* ('a small rope') that the characters wear are probably substantial in size. For Marshall<sup>18</sup>, 'The joke lies rather in the tokens' invisibility to the human characters in the play. If Mercurius wore a large ostrich feather in his broad-brimmed hat ('this little feather') and Jupiter's hat had dangling from it a long garish braid ('a little golden knot') comic benefits emerge (...) both divine characters wear a silly costume throughout the play (...) reducing their status'.

<sup>13</sup>This diminutive is not used *metri causa* – it occurs at the beginning of the line, while many other Plautine diminutives used for metrical reasons appear at the end of the line or in diaeresis (Conrad 1931: 80–81).

<sup>14</sup>Conrad (1930: 134, 143–144 and 1931: 80, 83–84) thinks that most of the Plautine diminutives do not denote small objects, but they express the affections of the speaker.

<sup>15</sup>Cf. the augmentative meaning of the diminutive *faenusculum*, which expresses an ironic opinion of the speaker about a loan at interest – the loan should be small, as the form of the noun suggests, but in Plautine times any interest rates were forbidden and were considered excessive and usurious [since *lex Genucia* (342 BC) and *Marcia* (mid-3<sup>rd</sup> century BC)] – cf. Pieczonka 2020: 135–136, 138–139. Similarly, according to Conrad (1930: 137) the noun *curculio* does not designate a small insect, but the creature (a parasite) possessing the opposite features.

<sup>16</sup>Henryk Rosenstrauch notices that similar diminutives also appear frequently in Menander's comedies to alternatively convey tenderness or act as a pejorative (Rosenstrauch 1967: 82).

<sup>17</sup>Wiles 1991: 191.

<sup>18</sup>Marshall 2006: 59.

In the comedy *Curculio*, the slave Palinurus refers to the young woman Planesium as a drunk woman, calling her *ebriola persolla* (*Cur.* 192). Here, the diminutives indicate his intention to speak pejoratively.

*Cur.* 190–192:

(...) PA. quid ais, propudium?  
tun etiam **cum noctuinis oculis** ‘odium’ me  
uocas? **ebriola persolla**, nugae. (...)

PA. (*to Planesium*) What do you say, you slut?  
You **with your owl eyes** are calling me a pest?  
**You drunken little person**, you trash.

However, the situation is different – the drunk girl does not have a garland, and the only element of her appearance mentioned is her owl eyes, which are big<sup>19</sup>, grey<sup>20</sup> or gleaming. It is unclear whether these eyes represent proof of her alleged intoxication, her beauty, or her ugliness. William Beare<sup>21</sup> translates *persolla* as ‘ugly face’, which could be an insult<sup>22</sup>, given the subsequent usage of *nugae*, which could also represent an insult or a veiled compliment in which an apparent insult is used ironically to mean the opposite. Although Wiles<sup>23</sup> suggests that the mask<sup>24</sup> worn by this character must have had grotesque owl eyes, Thomas B. L. Webster<sup>25</sup> considers the earlier expression *cum noctuinis oculis* a translation of the Greek γλαυκῶπις, ‘with bluish grey/gleaming eyes’ (cf. *LSJ*), an epithet for the goddess Athena, precluding its use as an insult, especially given big blue eyes were considered beautiful in antiquity<sup>26</sup>. However, Pierre Chantraine<sup>27</sup> derives the etymology of this word not from the adjective γλαυκός, ‘bluish grey’, but from the noun γλάυξ, ‘an owl’, understanding Athena’s owl eyes to shine in the dark in a frightening manner. In favour of the theory that the girl’s eyes are owl eyes, i.e. they seem shiny, stands: 1. the fact that the scene happens at night; 2. the passage from *Miles gloriosus* (v. 989), where Milphidippa is called *spinturnicium*, a small owl which has bright eyes<sup>28</sup> that are ready for hunting (*Mil.* 990: *oculis venaturam facere*). *Spinturnicium* is a diminutive

<sup>19</sup>This might have a non-physical meaning, i.e. ‘sent out and ready for spying’, as in the description of the old servant Staphyla in *Aulularia*: *circumspectatrix cum oculis emissiciis* (line 41). For Keith MacLennan and Walter Stockert (2016: 115), the expression *oculis emissiciis* is a humorous military metaphor – the eyes are sent to spy as a soldier against the enemy.

<sup>20</sup>Thornton 1767: 131.

<sup>21</sup>Beare 1951: 186.

<sup>22</sup>For a similar perspective, see Barrios-Lech 2020: 232.

<sup>23</sup>Wiles 1991: 137. Dorota Dutsch (2015: 20) also sees grotesque features in the description of Planesium.

<sup>24</sup>Notably, Ted H. M. Gellar-Goad (2021: 98–99) considers the word *persolla* a metatheatrical remark referring to the actor’s mask.

<sup>25</sup>Webster 1970: 197.

<sup>26</sup>Wolner 1931: 28.

<sup>27</sup>Chantraine 1999: 226.

<sup>28</sup>Hammond, Mack, Moskalew 1968, 161.

derived from *spinturnix*, which in turn originates from Greek σπινθαρίς, ‘a spark’ – this confirms that the owl was perceived as a bird with sparkling eyes. Moreover, Festus (446 L.) claims that the bird was considered ugly (*avis genus turpis figurae*), which returns the discussion to the possibility that the terms in *Curculio* are used ironically and do not reflect the girl’s appearance. Furthermore, the character is likely drunk with love<sup>29</sup> or insane rather than actually inebriated.

#### b. BIG-BELLIED COSTUMES

Meanwhile, a grotesque joke used by Plautus to present a female character, Alcumena, in another of his plays, the comedy *Amphitruo*, sees the slave Sosia comment on the woman’s belly, suggesting that she must have eaten everything in the house<sup>30</sup> because she looks like a very well-fed person.

*Am.* 664–668:

SO. Amphitruo, redire ad nauem meliust nos.

AM. qua gratia?

SO. quia domi daturus nemo est prandium aduenientibus.

AM. qui tibi nunc istuc in mentemst? SO. quia enim sero aduenimus.

AM. qui? SO. quia **Alcumenam** ante aedis stare **saturam** intellego.

AM. **graudam** ego illanc hic reliqui quom abeo. (...)

SO. (*seeing Alcumena*) Amphitruo, it’s better if we return to the ship.

AM. Why?

SO. Because at home no one’s going to give us a lunch on our arrival.

AM. How did that idea occur to you now?

SO. Well, because we’ve come too late.

AM. How so?

SO. Because I can see that **Alcumena** is standing in front of the house, with **a well-fed look**.

AM. I left her **pregnant** here when I went away.

*Am.* 681:

AM. Et quom [te] **graudam** et quom te **pulchre plenam** aspicio, gaudeo.

AM. I’m pleased to see you **pregnant** and **beautifully round**.

Amphitruo explains that Alcumena is pregnant, not overfed, with Sosia’s remark calling attention to the imminent birth of her children<sup>31</sup> (cf. *Am.* 480 – *hodie illa pariet filios geminos duos*; *Am.* 500: (...) *menses iam tibi esse actos vides*). However, the comment also implies that the costume must have featured grotesquely large padding<sup>32</sup>, leading David Christenson<sup>33</sup> to call Alcumena

<sup>29</sup>Philippides (2018: 287–290) calls Phaedromus and Planesium lovesick and presents the cure for this sickness.

<sup>30</sup>Dutsch (2015: 20) writes about ‘the fantastic physiology of Alcumena’s python-like digestion’.

<sup>31</sup>Christenson 2001: 245.

<sup>32</sup>Dutsch 2004: 629, n. 22.

<sup>33</sup>Christenson 2001: 244–245.

‘an exaggeratedly stuffed matrona’<sup>34</sup> and argue that the character would have been presented in the manner of the mythological burlesque. The joke becomes funnier via the recognition that the character of Alcumena would have been portrayed by a male actor<sup>35</sup>. W.B Sedgwick<sup>36</sup> even suggests that the translation of the expression *pulchre plena* in line 681 of *Amphitruo* as ‘nicely filled out’ or ‘prettily padded’ represents a metatheatrical reference to the costume feature. Although a kind of padding was used to stage Greek Old Comedy<sup>37</sup> and for phylax performances, it is apparent that such padding was also required to present pregnant characters in *palliata*. Naevius’ comedy *Quadrigemini* (‘The Quadruplets’) and a fragmentary preserved play assigned to Plautus, *Trigemini* (‘The Triplets’) might have exploited the costume’s grotesque belly feature even further.

A passage from *Truculentus*, another Plautine comedy, might confirm the use of costumes to present pregnant women. However, although preserved by the Palatine line of manuscripts, this passage has been contested by Franz Bücheler<sup>38</sup>, who correctly recognises that the *meretrix* Phronesium pretends to feel unwell (*aegra*) after her faked childbirth, rather than still pregnant.

*Truc.* 472:

quae me **graudam** esse **adsimulaui** militi  
Babylonio;

I **pretended** to the soldier from Babylon that  
I was **pregnant**

*Truc.* 475:

†eumque **ornatum** ut **grauda**† quasi  
puerperio cubem.

I am **fitted out** in such a way that I appear  
**unwell** as if I were confined to bed after  
childbirth.

*Truc.* 475 (Bücheler):

sumque **ornata** ita ut **aegra uidear** quasi  
puerperio cubem.

However, the passage from *Curculio* describes a pregnant belly large enough to hold two children: ‘the potbellied leno Cappadox proclaims that he is carrying twins’<sup>39</sup>.

<sup>34</sup>We might add that she is stripped of her seriousness, despite being presented similarly to a Roman matron. Christenson (2001: 245, 251) emphasises that she is also presented as a person not satiated sexually. Sedgwick (2003: 103) holds a different position: ‘Whenever Alcumena appears, P. forgets his clowning and the tone changes to something not unworthy of tragedy’.

<sup>35</sup>Phillips 1984–1985: 123.

<sup>36</sup>Sedgwick 2003: 107. Another translation of this expression is ‘perfectly plump’ (Christenson 2000: 259).

<sup>37</sup>Phillips 1984–1985: 122–123.

<sup>38</sup>The contestation is proposed in accordance with *Truc.* 463–464: *uosmet iam uidetis, ut ornata incedo:/ puerperio ego nunc med esse aegram adsimulo*.

<sup>39</sup>Christenson 2001: 245. Michael Fontaine (2018: 30) proposes understanding the pimp’s statement as a complaint about his ascending testicles rather than the liver disease. The scholar



*Cur.* 230–233:

(...) PA. quis hic est homo?  
**cum collatiuo uentre** atque **oculis herbeis?**  
de forma noui, **de colore** non queo  
nouisse. iam iam noui: leno est Cappadox.

PA. Who is this chap with a **well-stuffed belly** and **eyes as green as grass?** From his figure I know him, but from his **color** I don't know him. Now I know him: it's the pimp Cappadox.

*Cur.* 220–222:

CAPP. (...) nam iam quasi zona liene cinctus ambulo,  
**geminos in uentre habere uideor filios.**  
nil metuo nisi ne medius dirrumpar miser.

CAPP. (...) I am now walking around constricted tightly by my spleen as if by a belt, **I seem to have twin sons in my belly.** I don't fear anything except that I might burst in the middle.

Here, the pimp complains that his belly is so large that he is going to burst in a moment<sup>40</sup>, but of course, his stomach hurts because of jaundice<sup>41</sup> (*Cur.* 239: *morbis hepatarius*) not pregnancy. However, for Marshall<sup>42</sup>, 'this description provides an internal reference to Plautus' *Amphitruo*, with line 221 referring metatheatrically but indirectly to the portly actor's previous role as the pregnant Alcmena'. Obviously, this assumption would make sense only if *Amphitruo* had been staged just before *Curculio*, which is hard to prove. Nevertheless, the padding actor portraying Cappadox wore under his costume must have resembled that used by a male actor playing the role of a pregnant woman. Therefore, the reference in line 232 may be metatheatrical – it may allude to the appearance of the actor. Notably, this costume would likely also feature make-up or a mask reflecting the pimp's odd skin pigmentation and eye colour, functions of his illness<sup>43</sup>.

The comedy *Rudens* also includes a pimp, Labrax, portrayed as having a huge belly, describing him as *uentriosus* (*Rud.* 316–318):

(...) TR. ecquem  
**recaluom** ac Silanum senem, statutum,  
**uentriosum,**  
**tortis superciliis, contracta fronte,**  
fraudentum,

TR. Have you seen any old man **with a bald forehead**, like Silenus, good-sized, **with big belly, with twisted eye-brows and a scowling forehead**, a swindler

claims that the twins (*gemini*) denote the testicles and the adjective *hepatarius* (*hapax legomenon*) comes from not *hepar*, 'a liver' but ἥπατος, 'the hepatus fish'. Thus, for Fontaine (2018: 32) 'Cappadox has a stomachache from eating too much of it'. However, this would not explain the strange colour of the pimp's eyes or the references to the character's big belly in other comedies.

<sup>40</sup>Earlier, the slave Palinurus describes his belly as *collatiuus* – 'supplied by contributions from many quarters' – *OLD*.

<sup>41</sup>Philippides 2018: 283. Other symptoms of his disease are given in Pl. *Cur.* 236–238: (...) *lien enicat, renes dolent, pulmones distrahantur, cruciatur iecur, radices cordis pereunt, hiraes omnes dolent.*

<sup>42</sup>Marshall 2006: 142.

<sup>43</sup>Wright 1993: 62: 'Cappadox's makeup (or mask...) may have been colored green to indicate his illness'.



Thus, this character also has several other grotesque features: he is bald at the front, has a puckered forehead and a peering expression. These must have been communicated by a wig, a mask or make-up. If he had rounded shoulders, he would resemble a Dossennus figure from an Oscan farce. Notably, some scholars<sup>44</sup> have tried to prove the influence of *Atellana* on the presentation of Labrax in *Rudens* by demonstrating the possible reference to Manducus, who was identified with Dossennus, in one of the later passages (*Rud.* 535–536):

<p>LA. quid si aliquo ad ludos me <b>pro manduco</b> locem?          CHA. quapropter? LA. quia pol <b>clare crepito dentibus.</b></p>	<p>LA. What if I hire myself out somewhere as <b>a muncher</b> for games?          CHA. Why?          LA. Because I make <b>a lot of noise with my teeth.</b></p>
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Unfortunately, we cannot say for sure whether Plautus is alluding here to the farce stock character or to the figure carried during the *pompa circensis*, a ceremonial circus procession<sup>45</sup>. Thus, the potential Atellan influence is not explicit. Nevertheless, Labrax's grotesque features must have been conveyed somehow<sup>46</sup>, and he might also have worn a ridiculous outfit, with Marshall<sup>47</sup> suggesting that the clothes worn by the pimp may 'have been shrunk by the seawater', as potentially implied by the diminutives *tuniculam et ... misellum pallium* (*Rud.* 549–550):

<p>LA. cheu! redactus sum usque ad unam hanc <b>tuniculam</b> et ad hoc <b>misellum pallium</b>. perii oppido!</p>	<p>LA. Dear me! I've been reduced to this one <b>little tunic</b> and that <b>wretched little cloak</b>. I'm utterly ruined.</p>
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If the scholar is right, the actor playing Labrax would have needed to wear a padded belly and ill-fitting clothes to produce the pimp's farcical look. However, the other possibility is that the pimp described the garments as small because he wants to show his frustration and bitterness with losing his possessions after the shipwreck.

In terms of male figures in Plautine comedies, slaves also frequently appear with grotesque features, usually rendered as stout, as in the case of the eponymous Pseudolus.

<sup>44</sup>E. g. Marshall 2006: 144.

<sup>45</sup>Pieczonka 2019: 195–197; 207.

<sup>46</sup>Wiles 1991: 138. Cf. also Duckworth 1994: 92: 'the miniatures show only two broad classes = the grotesque, big-mouthed type for slaves, parasites, old men, and comic characters in general, and more natural masks for women and young men'. Similarly: Skwara 2001: 188, 192.

<sup>47</sup>Marshall 2006: 57.

Ps. 1218–1221:

HA. rufus quidam, **uentriosus**, **crassis suris**,  
**subniger**,  
**magno capite**, acutis oculis, ore rubicundo,  
admodum  
**magnis pedibus**. BA. perdidisti, postquam  
dixisti **pedes**.  
Pseudolus fuit ipsus. (...)

HA. Someone red-haired, **paunchy**, **with fat calves**, **darkish**, **with big head**, sharp eyes, a ruddy face, and **very big feet**.  
BA. (to *Harpax*) You've killed me now that you've mentioned **feet**. It was Pseudolus himself.

According to *Harpax*'s description, Pseudolus has thick calves and a fat belly, similar to the aforementioned pimp. A huge stomach is also a feature of slaves in other dramas, such as *Asinaria* (v. 400), in which Saurea is called *uentriosus*, and *Epidicus*, in which the eponymous servant describes the slave Thesprio as stouter and heavier<sup>48</sup> (*corpulentior* and *habitor*; v. 10). Therefore, a big belly seems to be a typical feature of the slave character, likely shown on stage using a padded costume similar to that worn by the fat pimp. A potential difference might have been observed in the stage movement of the two characters. According to Marshall<sup>49</sup>, Cappadox might have moved slowly on the stage because of his big belly and injured spleen. The stout slave probably pretended to try to run quickly despite the big belly, potentially adding considerable humour to the running-slave scenes. If the *servus currens* also had big feet – represented by the actor wearing too-big sandals – the scene would have been even funnier. I mention large feet<sup>50</sup> because they are an important element of the Pseudolus' portrayal. The question only remains – if they were a conventional feature of every slave's costume? Pieces of ancient material culture (reliefs, terracotta figurines, mosaics) depict slaves with big feet, which could be the evidence in favour of this hypothesis<sup>51</sup>. Perhaps the phrase *tu es gradibus grandibus* from the comedy *Epidicus* (v. 13) also implies that large feet were the hallmark of slaves in *palliata*, although, it literally refers to the character's big steps<sup>52</sup>.

### c. BIG-BREASTED COSTUMES

As for female characters in comedies, grotesqueness could be easily achieved on stage because all women parts were performed by male actors. The masculine form of the actors could be easily covered by a costume, a wig and a mask or

<sup>48</sup>The usage of the adjectives in *gradus comparatius* suggests that perhaps the slave is stouter than the last time the characters met, but if so, the meeting must have happened in the backstory of the comedy.

<sup>49</sup>Marshall 2006: 142.

<sup>50</sup>Saunders 1909: 102.

<sup>51</sup>Cf. Bieber 1961: 104–105, 150.

<sup>52</sup>The phrase *es gradibus grandibus* has been conjectured by some scholars with the verb *is* which better suits the image of motion (Duckworth 1979: 110).

make-up, with the feminine voice captured by an actor's soprano or treble<sup>53</sup>. Nevertheless, it is likely that the audience still recognised the actors as men, fully aware that the female features of the costumes were fake. The actors must have worn padding to create the illusion of breasts, which were probably exaggerated in size, as can be inferred from several Plautine passages, the first of which comes from the comedy *Poenulus*, in which Adelphasium, who is preparing to become a *meretrix*<sup>54</sup>, is described as *mammeata*, that is, 'large-breasted' (*Poen.* 392–393):

MI. opseco hercle te, uoluptas huius atque  
odium meum,  
huius amica **mammeata**, mea inimica et  
maleuola,

MI. (*to Adelphasium*) I entreat you, his darling  
and object of my hate, his **full-breasted**  
girlfriend and my enemy and opponent

Erin K. Moodie<sup>55</sup> suspects that this was a neologism invented by Plautus for comical effect to call attention to this grotesque feature of the female costume. A similar joke appears later in the same comedy: the pimp Lycus advertises his flute girl, *tibicina*, but the soldier Antamoenides rejects her for her grotesque appearance:

*Poen.* 1415–1416:

LY. uin tibicinam meam habere? ANTA. nil  
moror tibicinam;  
nescias, **utrum ei maiores buccaene an  
mammas sient.**

LY. Do you want to have my flute girl?  
ANTA. I don't care for a flute girl; you  
wouldn't know **whether her cheeks or her  
breasts are bigger.**

He does not approve of the girl's appearance because her cheeks are so inflated that the breasts are as large as them<sup>56</sup>, with smaller breasts preferred by ancient men<sup>57</sup>.

For Dorota Dutsch, there is one more joke about breast sizes in that same comedy. After the scene where nurse Giddenis and her son recognise each other, Hanno makes a remark about her 'feminine equipment', *supellex muliebris*. Agorastocles asks what he means by that, and Hanno explains that he has in mind *clarus clamor*<sup>58</sup>.

<sup>53</sup>Skwara 2001: 215. Christenson defines this voice as falsetto (2001: 246), noticing the joke in the comedy *Rudens*, where it refers to male actors excessively pretending to speak as if they were women: 'An exchange between two courtesans at *Rud.* 233–4 (*certo uox muliebris auris tetigit meas/ mulier est, muliebris uox mi ad auris uenit*) is more comic if the actors speak in artificially high tones'.

<sup>54</sup>Saunders 1909: 75.

<sup>55</sup>Moodie 2015: 126.

<sup>56</sup>Moodie (2015: 204) suggests that the girl's cheeks and breasts were both unattractive.

<sup>57</sup>Greeks preferred rather smaller breasts, often comparing them to apples or other similar fruits (Gerber 1978: 204; cf. also Ter. *Eu.* 313–315).

<sup>58</sup>This is a technique that Eduard Fränkel calls an 'identification motif'; for the chapter on this motif, see Fränkel (2007: 17–44) and Buzássyová 2023 in this issue.

*Poen.* 1144–1146:

HA. matrem hic salutatur suam, haec autem hunc filium.

tace atque parce **muliebri supellectili.**

AG. quae east **supellex?** HA. **clarus clamor.**

AG. **sine modo.**

HA. (*to Agorastocles*) He's greeting his mother, and she on the other hand this son of hers. (*to Giddenis*) Be quiet and spare us **the female furniture.**

AG. What **furniture** is that?

HA. **Loud shouting.**

AG. **Just let her be.**

*Poen.* 1144–1146 (trans. D. Dutsch<sup>59</sup>):

HA. (*to Giddenis who presumably continues to produce loud weeping sounds*) Shut up! Go easy on those **female tools** of yours.

AG. What **tools?** HA. **Those big, booming... lungs.**

Dutsch<sup>60</sup> understands *supellex muliebris* as the woman's bosom, because the sound is produced in the chest, and *supellex* would be the breasts for a wet-nurse, which she would need to practise her profession. The *nutrix* Giddenis is presented as an attractive woman (*Poen.* 1113: *specie uenusta*), with Dutsch<sup>61</sup> understanding the expression *sine modo* to refer to her breasts as 'abundant' or 'oversized'. The actor presenting this character must have used 'impressive padding'<sup>62</sup> to simulate these big breasts.

According to Christenson<sup>63</sup>, 'Overt metatheatrical play with the convention of men performing female roles is curiously lacking in Plautus'. However, I contend that these passages prove otherwise, with the jokes referring to the grotesque features of the female costumes calling attention to the incongruence between the male actors and the purportedly female characters. In the comedy *Casina*, Chalinus' transvestite disguise<sup>64</sup> is constructed on the basis of the same pattern: the male actor wearing a female costume, with their male nature not revealed until the bridesmaid's veil is removed<sup>65</sup>. This situation likely differed from that of other female characters performed by men by the mask and the make-up, with the costume itself likely not giving the secret away. For Beare<sup>66</sup>, line 848 of *Casina* demonstrates that the breasts must have been padded realistically.

<sup>59</sup>Dutsch 2004: 629.

<sup>60</sup>Dutsch 2004: 628.

<sup>61</sup>Dutsch 2004: 629.

<sup>62</sup>Dutsch 2004: 629.

<sup>63</sup>Christenson 2001: 245.

<sup>64</sup>Muecke 1986: 218, n. 9: 'There was transvestite disguise in Menander's *Androgynos*, where a young man puts on his sister's clothes so that he can enter the house of his beloved (*cf. Eunuchus*)'.

<sup>65</sup>Hersch 2014: 224.

<sup>66</sup>Beare 1951: 181.

Cas. 842–848:

(...) OL. O

corpusculum malacum!

mea uxorcula — quae res?

LY. quid est? OL. institit plantam

quasi luca bos. LY. tace sis,

nebula haud est **mollis** aequae atque huius †est

**pectus**†.

OL. edepol **papillam bellulam**. — ei misero

mihi!

OL (*trying to fondle Chalinus*) Oh what a tender little body! My little wife – what on earth!

LY. What’s the matter?

OL. She stamped on my foot like an elephant.

LY. Be quiet, will you? A cloud is not as **soft** as her **breast**.

OL. (*trying to fondle again*) Yes, a **pretty little nipple** – dear me, poor me!

In contrast, Marshall<sup>67</sup> believes that Olympio uses the diminutive forms ironically, which would again indicate the rendering of the breasts as grotesquely abnormal in size. Fritz Conrad<sup>68</sup> considers the diminutives used by Olympio as a manifestation of his affections towards the bride rather than a metatheatrical remark. However, this does not rule out the big-breasted costume theory. This female form would perfectly contrast with Chalinus’ behaviour – his heavy footsteps and military posture which reveal the slave’s real sex<sup>69</sup>. The incongruence would also enhance the humour in the scene.

## 2. COSTUMES OF FOREIGNERS

Finally, I wish to discuss several elements of the costumes worn by foreigner characters. Although Saunders<sup>70</sup> only considers the cases of *Poena* and *Poenus*, other foreigner costumes should also be included in this group. Before discussing these, it is worth considering *Poenus* and *Poena*. The latter is a big-breasted woman – the aforementioned nurse Giddenis from *Poenulus*. However, she also has dark skin and eyes, which would have been conveyed by a mask or make-up (*Poen.* 1111–1113):

HA. sed earum nutrix **qua sit facie** mi expedi.

MI. statura hau magna, **corpore aquilo**. HA. ipsa east.

MI. specie uenusta, **ore atque oculis pernigris**

HA. But tell me **what** their nurse **looks like**.

MI. She’s not of great height, and **has darkish skin**.

HA. It’s her very self.

MI. She’s of pretty appearance, with a **very swarthy face and eyes**.

<sup>67</sup> Marshall 2006: 65.

<sup>68</sup> Conrad 1930: 147–148.

<sup>69</sup> Anderson 1983: 19; Dutsch 2015: 24.

<sup>70</sup> Saunders 1909: 132–134.

Hanno is presented as *Poenus* in the same play. Meanwhile, although Agorastocles, Adelphasium and Anterastilis all come from Carthage, they ‘are represented as if they were typical Greeks’<sup>71</sup>. Thus, the only characters with foreign features are Giddenis, Hanno and his servants. Because George F. Franko thoroughly discusses Hanno’s characterisation in a 1996 article<sup>72</sup>, I shall briefly summarise his perspective. Hanno wears an unusual costume: he has neither a *pallium* nor a belt<sup>73</sup> but instead dresses in a tunic with long sleeves<sup>74</sup>. Perceiving this as effeminate<sup>75</sup>, the soldier Antamoenides mocks Hanno (*Poen.* 1303).

*Poen.* 1303:  
sane **genus** hoc **mulierosumst tunicis**  
**demissiciis**

*Poen.* 1303:  
This kind with their **tunics hanging down** is  
definitely **addicted to women**.

Hanno’s servants wear not only the same long-sleeved tunics but also earrings<sup>76</sup>. There is no scholarly consensus regarding whether the term describing these companions, *sarcinati*, means that they are ‘loaded with luggage’ or that their clothes are ‘mended with patches’<sup>77</sup>.

*Poen.* 978–981:

MI. **seruos** quidem edepol ueteres antiquosque habet.

AG. qui scis? MI. uiden omnes **sarcinatos** consequi?

atque ut opinor **digitos in manibus non habent**.

AG. quid iam? MI. quia incedunt **cum anulatis auribus**.

MI. He certainly has old and ancient **slaves**.

AG. How do you know?

MI. Can’t you see that men **with backpacks** are following? And I think they **don’t have fingers on their hands**.

AG. How so?

MI. Because they come along **with rings in their ears**.

<sup>71</sup> Franko 1996: 425.

<sup>72</sup> Franko 1996.

<sup>73</sup> For the Romans, not wearing a belt was considered embarrassing (Matusiak 2018: 36). According to Skwara (2014: 260), ‘Loose garments were connected with loose manners and promiscuity’.

<sup>74</sup> Knapp 1907: 297.

<sup>75</sup> Saunders 1909: 49–50; Franko 1996: 432; Christenson 2020: 258. Other terms also refer to Hanno’s effeminacy (*puer cauponius*) and low status (*baiolum*) (Franko 1996: 444).

<sup>76</sup> For Burton (2020: 311), the earrings worn by Hanno’s servants were also mocked as a sign of effeminacy, with Richlin (2005: 267) writing, ‘Pierced ears and earrings show up as a suspicious, exotic accessory of male foreigners from the Orient in Petronius *Satyricon* (102.14, associated with Arabs)’.

<sup>77</sup> *OLD*; Gratwick 1972: 233; Kocur 2005: 238; Moodie 2015: 171. However, it is possible that Apuleius confirms that *sarcinatus* is a synonym of *centunculus* (‘patched garment’) in the following: *iuuenem centunculis disparibus et male consarcinatis semiamictum* (*Met.* 7, 5; cf. Manuwald 2011: 75, n. 122).

However, in terms of the description of Hanno, the only thing that remains unresolved is the use of the term *gugga*<sup>78</sup>.

*Poen.* 975–977:

MI. sed quae illaec **auis** est quae huc cum  
tunicis aduenit?  
numnam in balineis circumductust pallio?  
AG. **facies** quidem edepol **Punicast. guggast**  
homo.

MI. But who is that **bird** that's coming here  
with the tunics? Was he cheated out of this  
cloak in the baths?  
AG. His appearance is certainly  
**Carthaginian**. The chap's a **tradesman**.

The word's meaning is contested<sup>79</sup>, and is variously understood as a term of abuse (*OLD*), a racial insult<sup>80</sup>, a profession<sup>81</sup> and the name of a bird. Adrian S. Gratwick<sup>82</sup> suggests the latter possibility on the basis of the Greek γύγης 'a bittern'<sup>83</sup>. Gratwick thinks that the bird must be purple, as the adjective *Punica* suggests, and the word's use must refer to the colour of Hanno's clothes. However, the purple bittern does not exist, leading Gregor Maurach<sup>84</sup> to propose understanding *gugga* as a kind of 'heron'. Meanwhile, there could be yet another explanation, with Franko<sup>85</sup> writing, '*Facies Punica* refers to Semitic features either in Hanno's general appearance or specifically in his mask'. Therefore, I believe that Gratwick's identification of *gugga* as a bittern, a brownish bird, fits the context<sup>86</sup> of describing a colour (i.e. brown rather than purple) to denote the dusky face and skin of the foreigner<sup>87</sup>. Giddenis is similarly compared to an eagle because of her skin colour (see, for example, the quoted translation by Wolfgang de Melo, which renders *corpore aquilo* as 'has darkish skin'). Thus, both characters could be portrayed as foreigners using dark masks or make-up. Meanwhile, the other costume features mentioned (e.g. long sleeves) can easily be achieved, even if the audience might perceive them as rather weird,

<sup>78</sup>The term is preserved not in the Palatine line of manuscripts but in the *codex Turnebi*.

<sup>79</sup>Although Matusiak gathers many possible explanations for the problematic *gugga*, she does not provide any proposition of her own (2018: 37–38).

<sup>80</sup>Ferri 2020: 412.

<sup>81</sup>Krahmalkov 2000: 135; de Melo (2012: 122, n. 53) translates *gugga* as 'tradesman'.

<sup>82</sup>Gratwick 1972: 231.

<sup>83</sup>*LSJ* – Dionysius *De avibus* 1, 16.

<sup>84</sup>Maurach 1975: 327.

<sup>85</sup>Franko 1996: 432.

<sup>86</sup>Skwara also adds that (2014: 269) 'the comparison to a bird is a consequence of a loose garment that is floating in the wind'.

<sup>87</sup>According to Saunders (1909: 124, also n. 1) the colour called *mustelinus* in the Terence comedy *Eunuchus* may also describe the colour of the foreigner's skin (*Eu.* 689), which supports Eugraphius' opinion that *mustelino* = *nigro*, even if Donatus claims that Terence has 'confused the Greek words γαλεώτης ('lizard') and γαλῆ ('weasel')' and the adjective should refer to the character's lizard-like freckled skin (Barsby 1999: 215).



potentially communicating an element of pastiche<sup>88</sup>. For Roman spectators, these long-sleeved costumes were considered not only barbaric but also grotesque, with Ewa Skwara<sup>89</sup> rightly stating, ‘Plautus draws the line between ‘normally’ dressed audience and the ‘strangely’ dressed Carthaginian’.

Notably, the long-sleeved costume, *tunica manuleata*, is also needed to present *peregrinus*<sup>90</sup> in the comedy *Pseudolus*.

*Ps.* 963–964:

BA. quis hic homo chlamydatu <u>s</u> est aut unde est aut quem quaeritat?	BA. ( <i>aside</i> ) Who is that man in a cloak, or where is he from, or who is he looking for?
<b>peregrina facies</b> uidetur hominis atque ignobilis.	The man’s <b>face</b> seems <b>foreign</b> and unknown.

*Ps.* 736:

etiam opust chlamyde et machaera et <b>petaso</b> . (...)	I also need a cloak, a sword, and a <b>hat</b> .
--	--

*Ps.* 738:

(...) <i>Ps.</i> <b>manuleatam tunicam</b> habere hominem addecet.	He ought to have a <b>tunic with long sleeves</b> .
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Here, the *sycophanta* Simia pretends to be a foreigner – namely, the slave who attends the Macedonian soldier Harpax – to cheat the pimp Ballio out of the girl.

The comedy *Trinummus* also sees the sycophant disguised (*Trin.* 767: *exornetur*<sup>91</sup>) as a foreigner. His costume is described in lines 851–852.

*Trin.* 767–768:

ME. is homo <b>exornetur</b> graphice in <b>peregrinum modum</b> ; <b>ignota facies</b> quae non uisitata sit,	ME. He should be <b>dressed up</b> realistically in <b>foreign fashion, an unknown appearance</b> that isn’t normally seen here –
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*Trin.* 851–852:

CHA. pol hicquidem <b>fungino generest</b> : <b>capite se totum tegit</b> . <b>Hilurica facies</b> uidetur hominis, eo <b>ornatu</b> aduenit.	CHA. ( <i>aside</i> ) This chap belongs to <b>the</b> <b>mushroom variety</b> : <b>he’s completely covering</b> <b>himself with his own head</b> . <b>His appearance</b> <b>seems Illyrian</b> , that’s <b>the dress</b> he’s coming in.
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<sup>88</sup> Franko 1996: 426.

<sup>89</sup> Skwara 2014: 269.

<sup>90</sup> *Poen.* 964 also calls the foreigner *ignobilis*, which makes me wonder whether the same motif wasn’t used by Livius Andronicus in one of his dramas – *inc. fab.* 3 (...) **ornamento incedunt gnobilid ignobiles** (Warmington 1936: 22). However, François Spaltenstein (2008: 194) perceives military imagery here, with *ornamentum* apparently referring to a military outfit and *incedunt* to a public parade (cf. *Pl. Mil.* 872: *quam digne ornata incedit, haud meretricie*).

<sup>91</sup> According to Saunders (1909: 25) the verb *exornare* is used by Plautus in the context of disguise.

The *senex* Charmides recognises his appearance as Illyrian<sup>92</sup>, but unfortunately the text does not give us any further information about the features of his face, which apparently indicate his foreign origin. Almost certainly, the mask or the make-up again revealed the character's provenience. Another specific element of his costume is the large hat that extends past his shoulders; according to Charmides, this made him look like a mushroom. Although Charles Knapp<sup>93</sup> identifies this extraordinarily wide headdress as *petasus* (as mentioned in *Ps.* 736), a type of broad-brimmed hat, other scholars<sup>94</sup> claim that it is a *causea*<sup>95</sup>, a beret-shaped leather hat of Macedonian origin that was as hard as a helmet and served as protective equipment for soldiers<sup>96</sup>. The animated reaction of the *senex* who notices the disguised sycophant perhaps indicates that the hat's size was exaggerated for the purpose of staging *Trinummus*.

Finally, such a hat is also mentioned in passages from the comedy *Persa*.

*Per.* 154–160:

(...) cape  
tunicam atque zonam, et chlamydem adfero et  
**causeam**,  
quam ille habeat qui hanc lenoni huic uendat  
— SAT. eu, probe!  
TO. **quasi sit peregrinus**. SAT. laudo. TO. et  
tu gnata tuam  
**ornatam** adduce lepide **in peregrinum modum**.  
SAT. πόθεν **ornamenta**? TO. aps **chorago**  
sumito;  
dare debet: praebenda aediles locauerunt.

Take a tunic and a belt, and bring a travel  
cloak and a **hat** which the man who sells her  
to the pimp should have –  
SAT. (*interrupting*) Excellent, splendid!  
TO. – **as if he were a foreigner**.  
SAT. I praise you.  
TO. And you, bring your daughter nicely  
**dressed up in foreign style**.  
SAT. Where should **the getup** come from?  
TO. Take it from **the stage manager**. He has  
to give it to you: the aediles have contracted to  
have it provided.

*Per.* 462–464:

SAG. Numquid moror? TO. euge, euge,  
**exornatu's** basilice;  
**tiara ornatum** lepida condecorat **schema**.  
tum hanc **hospitam** autem **crepidula** ut  
graphice decet!

SAG. I'm not delaying you, am I?  
TO. Splendid, splendid! You're **dressed up**  
magnificently! **The tiara** sets off your **getup**  
in a nice **fashion**. And how beautifully **the**  
**sandals** suit this girl **from abroad**!

Here, two characters disguised as foreigners, the slave Sagaristio and the parasite's daughter, wear garments called *ornamenta*, which 'is the technical

<sup>92</sup> *Hiluricus* = from Illyria/ Illyrian (*OLD*).

<sup>93</sup> Knapp 1907: 296.

<sup>94</sup> Wagner 1884: 115; Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 1993: 127.

<sup>95</sup> Saatsoglou-Paliadeli 1993: 127. In the comedy *Miles gloriosus*, the *causea* is also called a *ferruginea*, referring to it 'having a dark purplish colour' (*OLD*).

<sup>96</sup> Marshall 2006: 57, n. 157: 'The *causea* was a Macedonian version of the broad-brimmed hat, and therefore also associated particularly with soldiers'.

theatrical term for stage costume<sup>97</sup>. These garments are borrowed for the purposes of the plot from *choragus*, who provided them for theatrical performances in real life. The details of the male costume are given when Toxilus begins plotting: he advises Saturio to borrow a tunic, a belt, a cloak and a *causea* hat to make a disguise. But later, when the slave Toxilus comments on the Sagaristio's disguise, he mentions a *tiara*, which Erich Woytek<sup>98</sup> identifies as a Persian headdress 'consisting essentially of a truncated cone of felt but ornamented and elaborated in a variety of ways' (*OLD*). The text does not provide substantial information about the foreign girl's costume, with only her shoes mentioned, *crepidulae*, which are small Greek sandals, as identified by Gellius, who indicates that the term was sometimes in place of the term *soleae* (13, 22: '*soleas*' *dixerunt, nonnumquam uoce Graeca 'crepidulas*'). Because such footwear would have seemed strange as part of a foreign disguise, Clara Hardy<sup>99</sup> thinks that the parasite's daughter wore a tragic costume and maybe even a tragic mask. However, I am not persuaded by this hypothesis, more convinced by the proposition put forward by Woytek<sup>100</sup> that the girl's sandals would have had foreign-looking details of some type. If not, the description of the costume as foreign would make no sense. However, the explanation may be simpler still: *crepidula* is a hybrid that originates from the Greek κρηπίς, with the Latin suffix *-ula* forming the diminutive. It could also represent a translation of the Greek diminutive σανδάλιον, which describes a kind of sandal of oriental origin<sup>101</sup>, perhaps even Persian<sup>102</sup>. Although this would match the Persian headdress of Sagaristio, neither does it exclude Woytek's explanation concerning foreign gadgets. It is possible that Toxilus ironically names the shoes little *crepidae*, using the diminutive to imply that he is making fun of the footwear's unfamiliar appearance. As in other examples concerning diminutives, Plautus sometimes employs them pejoratively to express contempt or irony, sometimes to emphatically demonstrate exaggeration or the complete opposite of their basic meaning.

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

It is possible to broadly conclude that the terms used to refer to costumes often indicate grotesque features of the theatrical clothes used to portray Plautine characters. This includes costumes worn by stock figures and unusual characters and costumes worn as disguises. There are several possible explanations. Plautus

<sup>97</sup> Hardy 2005: 27. See also, Saunders 1909: 19.

<sup>98</sup> Woytek 1982: 320.

<sup>99</sup> Hardy 2005: 26, 28–29.

<sup>100</sup> Woytek 1982: 320.

<sup>101</sup> Chantraine 2001: 987.

<sup>102</sup> Wilcox 2008: 17.

might have been subverting the ‘aesthetic codes of Hellenistic theatre’<sup>103</sup>; he might have modelled *palliata* characters on Atellan figures<sup>104</sup>; he might have exaggerated certain details of the costumes to increase their visibility in the theatre<sup>105</sup>; he might have employed caricatured for the stock figures to contribute to the comicality of the performance. Thus, Beare’s<sup>106</sup> statement that ‘costume is comparatively unimportant in New Comedy’ perhaps should not be applied to Plautine comedies because certain elements or features of the costumes constituted important additional sources of information or humour for these performances.

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<sup>103</sup> Wiles 1991: 134–135; cf. Muecke 1986: 224; Marshall 2006: 138.

<sup>104</sup> Wiles 1991: 134.

<sup>105</sup> Marshall 2006: 155.

<sup>106</sup> Beare 1951: 179. Manuwald 2011: 76: ‘Generally, costume as such seems comparatively unimportant as part of the story in *palliata* comedy. Clothing is typically mentioned only when reference to it has a function in the plot’.

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HUMOUR IN THE SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE COSTUMES  
IN THE COMEDIES BY PLAUTUS

Summary

The article aims to discuss these elements of costumes which are mentioned in the comedies of Plautus but have been omitted yet in the studies on Plautine stage conventions. The first part of the text concerns the costumes which are worn by actors representing characters that have some special physical features. It appears that drunk characters always wear garlands, which point to their state. Big-bellied costumes are worn by male actors who play pregnant women (*Alceme* in *Amphitruo*) but by those who present pimps during the performance, as well. Moreover, many Plautine slaves are rendered as stout, which, combined with big feet, adds much humour to running-slave scenes. The source of laughter lies not only in the padding used to recreate a big belly but also to show the illusion of large breasts, which are exaggerated in size. Such costumes were worn by male actors who presented *meretrices*, *tibicinae* and *nutrices* on stage. The costumes of foreigners consisted of a tunic with long sleeves, earrings, a headdress called *causea*, tiara and some kind of sandals. Many of these elements were grotesque, which, on the one hand, helped to increase the visibility of the costumes in the theatre, and on the other, contributed to the comicality of the performance. The article presents passages from the Plautine plays which contain such metatheatrical remarks about costumes used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.