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Duri Capitoes: Plautus, *Persa* 60 Revisited

Summary – The text of a vexed passage in Plautus’ *Persa*, Saturio’s *laudatio* to his parasitic ancestors (vv. 53–64), variously emended by editors, is first established paleographically after examining the manuscript tradition. Next, Saturio’s expression *duri capitoes* is explained as a calque of νήσιτιδες κεστρῆϊς “fasting mullets” – a proverbial expression in Greek for starving parasites often found in New Comedy. It is argued that the joke survives translation into Latin only because alternate connotations are recruited to facilitate the creation of a pun on the Roman cognomen *Capito*. Alternately, the expression *duri capitoes* is interpreted as a word play on *caput durum*, a phrase synonymous with *impudens*, which enables Saturio to differentiate himself from other parasite-types, especially from the *quadruplator* who represents in the Roman context the comic stock character of the *sycophanta*.

SATURIO

*Veterem atque antiquom quaestum maiorum meum
servo atque obtineo et magna cum cura colo.*
55 *nam numquam quisquam meorum maiorum fuit
quin parasitando paverint ventris suos:
pater, avos, proavos, abavos, atavos, tritavos
quasi mures semper edere alienum cibum,
neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere,*
60 *neque eis cognomentum erat duris Capitonibus.
unde ego hunc quaestum optineo et maiorum locum.
neque quadrupulari me volo, neque enim decet
sine meo periculo ire aliena ereptum bona
neque illi qui faciunt mihi placent. planen loquor?* (*Persa* 53–64)

The above passage from Plautus’ *Persa* is taken from Saturio’s entrance-monologue in Act I, Scene ii, as it appears in the Oxford Classical Text edited by W.M. Lindsay.¹ The parasite Saturio proudly declares that he is carrying on a long family tradition (*veterem quaestum*), spanning six generations (*pater, avos, proavos, abavos, atavos, tritavos*), of stuffing their bellies by social

¹ Lindsay, *Plauti comoediae*, ad loc. All quotations of Plautus hereinafter are taken from this edition.

sponging (*parasitando paverint ventris suos*), like mice always eating other people's food (*quasi mures semper edere alienum cibum*): their gluttony was such that no one could defeat them (*neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere*). Verse 60 however has proven to be a crux for every editor of the play since the *editio princeps* of the collected comedies;² this is evident from the textual history of the verse and the different attempts made by scholars to explain it. It is maintained here firstly that the most recent editions of the Persa reflect a misunderstanding of the expression *duri capitones* and have only perpetuated the confusion regarding this verse created by humanist editors and commentators since the inception of Plautine textual criticism. It is argued furthermore that two recent emendations to the text are erroneous and should henceforth be abandoned: (1) Erich Woytek's conjecture (1983) *viris* for *duris*; and more recently (2) in the Loeb Classical Library series (2011), Wolfgang De Melo's revival (in addition to adopting Woytek's *viris*) of Friedrich Leo's *atque* at the beginning of the verse instead of the traditional *neque*.³ This paper will survey the textual history of v. 60, which naturally coincides with the discovery and reception of the manuscripts of the plays. This paper will also examine the controversies elicited by this verse in the scholarly literature up to the most recent discussions. In Part I, the manuscript tradition *neque* is confirmed after a survey of the textual history and by an examination of Plautus' compositional technique. All the various historical emendations are refuted systematically after correctly evaluating the syntactic and rhetorical importance of *neque* and understanding Plautus' use of rhetorical schemes as formal devices, especially anaphora and tricolon crescens. In Part II, Woytek's emendation *viris* is contested as extremely dubious and methodologically problematic, although it is conceded that his important contribution to the correct interpretation of v. 60 is indispensable for a fuller understanding not only of the verse and its context but also of the original Greek model. It is argued here that the key element of the meaning of the original Plautine expression *duri capitones* lies in understanding the adjective *durus*, erroneously emended by Woytek. Part III will present an explanation of the vexed paradosis *duris capitonibus*, having demonstrated its reliability paleographically.

² Ritschl, *Plauti Persa*, 127: "Totum versum, durissimum et obscurissimum, quidquid temptaveris." Mueller, *Plautinische Prosodie*, 106 recommends that the whole verse be athetized.

³ Woytek, *Persa*, 97; De Melo, *Plautus*, 460; Leo, *Comoediae*, 139.

Part I: *Neque* and its emendations: *namque*, *atque*, and athetesis

In the best manuscripts (*T* and *B*) Persa v. 60 reads as follows: *neque iis cognomentum erat duris capitonibus*.⁴ By contrast the *editio princeps* of Georgius Merula, *Plautinae viginti comoediae* (Venice 1472), reads: *neque hiis cognomentum duris capitonibus*.⁵ Merula dutifully transcribed the only manuscript available to him – *D*, the so-called Codex Ursinianus (Vat. lat. 3870) – despite its many imperfections. This codex contains twenty comedies divided into two sections from different sources, the latter section containing twelve plays (arranged alphabetically), among which Persa is found between *Poenulus* and *Rudens*. It was not until the Plautine text became established on a firmer footing in the next century with the discovery of *B* and the publication of Camerarius' edition in 1558 that *D* was seen as a much inferior witness by comparison. The defects of *D* are evident in Merula's first recension and in all the early Italian editions based on it. These editions have in v. 60: *his* (*his* Vat.lat.1632 & 1633; *hiis* CDG) instead of *iis* (*B*); they omit *erat* altogether; and they fail to preserve the original colometry of the text, consequently blinding early scholars to the underlying verse structure and the rightful place of *neque* at the beginning of v. 60.

The eighty years that intervened between the editions of Merula and Camerarius witnessed a rush on the printing presses to meet the high demand for copies of Plautus' comedies. There was also a fervor of philological activity among editors and commentators, who set themselves to the task of correcting

⁴ Saturio's monologue (Pers. 30–167) is not preserved in *A*, the Ambrosian palimpsest (Milan, G. 82 sup.); see Studemund, *Apographum*, 330: "Folia ... perierunt i. e. 152 versus, quibus vv. I i, 30 usque ad actus II titulum commode respondent." One must rely on the available witnesses of the Palatine family, i.e. the collation of *T* (Codex Turnebi) by Lindsay and the other Palatine MSS. The most ancient and reliable witnesses are: *T*, from the 9th or 10th century, collated by Lindsay (fully for *Poen.* and *Pers.*, partially for *Pseud.*, *Rud.*, and *Bacch.*) from Duaren's marginalia (see Lindsay, *Codex Turnebi* of Plautus); and *B* (Codex vetus Camerarii) from the 10th or 11th century (Vatican, Pal.lat.1615). Both *T* and *B* transmit the same reading for v. 60: *T* = "neq(ue) iis cognome(n)tu(m) erat duris [capitonibus]", whereas *B* = "neq(ue) iis cognomen tum erat duris capitonibus". After *B* the most important Palatine MSS. are: *C* (Codex Decurtatus), from the 10th or 11th century, now in Heidelberg (Vat.lat.1613); and *D* (Codex Ursinianus), from the 10th or 11th century, now in the Vatican (Vat.lat.3870), both of which are poor copies of the proto-archetype from which also *B* derives. They do not preserve the original colometry as *B* does, and they omit *erat* altogether, reading as follows: "neq(ue) hiis cognom(en)tum duris capitonib(us)".

⁵ Merula, *Plautinae viginti comoediae*, 383. For the purpose of this paper, Humanist authors mentioned in the text are referred to primarily by their respective *noms de plume*, e.g. Joachim Kammermeister = Camerarius.

the Plautine text, collating different manuscripts, emending many of the obvious corruptions transmitted by Merula from *D*, and elucidating the meaning of many obscure words and phrases. The earliest commentaries appeared at the end of the 15th century: the first, *Plautinae viginti comoediae* (Venice 1499), being the joint effort of Giampietro Valla and Bernardo Saraceni; and immediately thereafter, *Plautus integer* (Milan 1500), by Pius Bononiensis (Giovanni Battista Pio). A century later, the classical scholar and neo-Latin poet Friedrich Taubmann irreverently (perhaps unjustly) criticized these editions as the work of street-peddlers (“*manus mangonum esse passas*”). Chief among these he indicted Pius and Saracenus, whose editions were ubiquitous (“*regnum et tyrannidem in literis habuere*”).⁶ However that may be, it is quite true that the meaning of the expression *duri capitones* was incorrectly understood by these early commentators. With only Merula’s prose recension to work with, it was impossible for them to base their editorial decisions on any sound principles, whether metrical, rhetorical, or paleographic; they simply emended the text to suit their different interpretations.

The eclectic approach is evident in the different expedients which each commentator employed to support his erroneous conjectures. Valla, for example, proposed “*namque*” instead of *neque*, arguing that the nickname *duri capitones* signified the parasite’s characteristic determination, the fact that “they never change their purpose” (“*Ideo duri capitones inquit sunt appellati quod numquam de sua mutarentur sententia*”).⁷ According to this interpretation, a reputation for obstinacy (pertinacity, doggedness), for being *testardi*,⁸ was an admirable quality for the parasite to want to praise in himself. Since “*namque*” makes v. 60 subordinate to the previous verse, one arrives at a dubious paraphrase (59f.): “no one could defeat my parasitic ancestors in voracity, for (“*namque*”) they had the surname *duri capitones*,” i.e. because of their single-minded determination. To be sure, Saturio does remark on his own obstinacy in Act III, scene i, where he says to his daughter (373f.): *Ego de hac sententia / non demovebor*. If one admits a reference to obstinacy in v. 60, accepting Valla’s explanation, it would be necessary to prefer “*namque*” over *neque*. However, the resultant awkwardness of the proposition hardly justifies the emendation. The enthusi-

⁶ Taubmann, *Plauti comoediae XX superstites*, prefatory letter.

⁷ Valla – Saracenus, *Plautinae viginti comoediae*, ad loc. This interpretation of *duri capitones* is quoted s.v. *capito* in: Stephanus, *Dictionarium*, 85^r: “*homme testu, qui ha mauvaise teste, Que on ne peult vaincre par parolles. Plaut. in Persa, 3,6, Neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere: nanque his cognomentum duris capitonibus.*”

⁸ Cf. the use of Fr. *têtard* and It. *capitoni* for big-headed aquatic creatures, tadpoles and eels respectively.

asm for arriving at an emended Plautine text was such that reserve was often cast aside and ‘corrections’ were sometimes made erroneously.

Saracenus had similar troubles with the verse: like Valla, he interpreted *duri capitones* as an honorary surname of Saturio’s forebears (“quasi in edendo pertinaces et omnino insuperabiles”).⁹ He also required an emendation to support his interpretation. He suggested keeping *neque*, but only as part of a litotes requiring an addition besides: “neque his frustra fuit cognomentum duris capitonibus.”¹⁰ One can sense here an effort to resist a change in the syntax by subordinating the clause, such as Valla had suggested with “namque”, but the supplementation of extraneous words was probably overreaching. An equivalent positive statement might read: “atque his *commode fuit cognomentum*”, which would imply that Saturio is paying his ancestors a positive compliment (“ut more suo oblectet auditores dictis iocularibus”).¹¹ By contrast, Pius agreed with Valla and accepted *namque* (“scribo *namque iis*”), but in his comments on *duris capitonibus* he lent support to Saracenus’s interpretation “in edendo pertinaces,” writing: “qui duris dentibus et ferreis ut sunt mures: collativum ventrem haberent et omnia caperent in ventrem.”¹² As late as Lambinus’s edition (Paris 1576), this interpretation (first proposed by Saracenus and supported by Pius) was being repeated: “hi cognomento duri Capitones dicebantur, quod essent in comedendo pertinaces.”¹³ The metaphor of mice always eating other people’s food was thus underscored by reading a complex pun on the phrase *duri Capitones*: on the one hand, *capito* < *caput* stands for *dentes* by synecdoche, enhancing the image of edacious mice with “big, hard teeth”; on the other hand, by paronomasia and false etymology, *capito* < *capio* gives the connotation of capaciousness to the esurient bellies of the mice (i.e. Saturio’s parasite-ancestors), “qui ... omnia caperent in ventrem.” One sees a similar attempt to relate *capitones* to gluttony in Alciatus’s Lexicon (1568), s.v. *Capitones*: “in Persa esse non magni capitis,

⁹ Saracenus – Valla, *Plauti comoediae*, ad loc. This interpretation will be echoed s.v. *capito* in: Stephanus, *Lexicon*, ad loc.: “Duri capitones: ἀτέραμνοι.”

¹⁰ See the list of emendations in Saracenus – Valla, *Plauti comoediae*, 5°.

¹¹ Saracenus – Valla, *Plauti comoediae*, ad loc.: “ut integer sensus reddatur vel subaudi vel potius adde frustra fuit: quae verba profecto conveniunt in fine versiculi hoc modo neque his frustra fuit cognomentum et reliqua vel loco neque lege atque et omnino subintellige verbum fuit.” Here Saraceni’s alternative reading “atque” anticipated Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*, 95, and his followers: Ammendola, *Plauto: Il Persa*, 26; Olivar, *Plaute, Comédies: El Persa*, 21; and most recently, De Melo, *Plautus*, 460.

¹² Pius, *Plautus integer*, ad loc.

¹³ Lambinus, *Plautus ex fide*, 891.

sed magni ventris et gulae, quod omnia capiant.”¹⁴ It seems unwarranted, however, to ignore the real etymological connection between *capitones* and *caput*, in favor of a fanciful connection with *capio*.

All these early interpretations are predicated on the understanding of *duri capitones* as an honorary sobriquet, referring to the gluttonous character of Saturio’s ancestors – a positive rather than a negative statement. The athetesis of *neque* in v. 60 in Camerarius’s edition appears to support this positive interpretation. As late as the 19th century, Theodor Bergk still objected to *neque* as a corruption, arguing that it would be too silly and inept for Saturio to say which surname his family did not have.¹⁵ Apparently, it never occurred to anyone that *duri capitones* could in fact be a pejorative expression, which Saturio would sensibly want to deny. This would obviate the need for emendation altogether. It would furthermore be supported by the context in which Saturio shows a preference for negative expressions. Until Woytek (1973) convincingly established the meaning of *capitones* as a Latin calque of Greek κέστροεις, “mullets”, (to be discussed in more detail in Part II) and the rightful place of *neque* at the beginning of the verse, every commentator persisted in the assumption that *duri capitones* was Saturio’s self-honorific.

Each edition based on Merula’s first recension resorted to one or another of various emendations designed to eliminate the negative conjunction *neque*. Valla’s emendation “namque” was adopted in a revised edition by Beroaldus (Bologna 1503) before the stichometry of the text was discovered.¹⁶ The new recension by Pylades Buccardus (Brescia 1506) also reproduced “namque”,¹⁷ but it attempted to restore the original verse structure of the text, since the editio princeps had presented the text without any breaks. It is very likely that Buccardus arrived at his verse divisions wholly by intuition, since no manuscript other than *D* (or its copies) was available to him.¹⁸ Thereafter, “namque” was reproduced in later editions by Angelius (Florence 1514) and Aldus Manutius (Venice 1522).¹⁹ The latter of these editions became the standard text of the comedies until it was replaced by Camerarius. The radically new edition by Joachim Camerarius (Basel 1558)²⁰ was based on the more reliable

¹⁴ Alciatus, In Plauti comoedias lexicon, 90.

¹⁵ Bergk, Plautinische studien, 45: “um so unpassender erscheint dies, wenn gerade der betreffende name so ganz geeignet für einen parasiten ist. Man muss daher lesen: *Namque* iis cognomentum erat duris capitonibus, wie schon *Pius* ganz richtig bemerkt hat.”

¹⁶ Beroaldus, Plautus diligenter recognitus, 191^v.

¹⁷ Buccardus, P., Comoediae viginti plautinae, 255^v.

¹⁸ Jansen, Aulularia edition, 94; Ritschl, Kleine philologische Schriften, 65.

¹⁹ Angelius, Plauti comoediae viginti, 284^v; Aldus, Ex Plauti comoediis XX, 218^v.

²⁰ Camerarius, Plauti comoediae XX, 691.

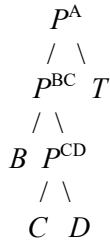
(theretofore unknown) manuscript *B* (Vatican, Pal.lat.1615), which came to be known as the Codex vetus Camerarii. This manuscript preserves the iambic senarii of Saturio's monologue, restores *erat* in v. 60, and (important for this discussion) has *neque* at the beginning of the verse. However, despite the unequivocal manuscript tradition, Camerarius decided to athetize *neque*. It is unfortunate that he did not comment on his reasoning, but one may assume, as later scholars did, that he believed *neque* in v. 60 was due to a scribal error (dittography). Supposedly, the scribe who copied the lost immediate archetype of *B*, seeing *neque* in the line above, repeated it by mistake in v. 60. The emended text was promulgated by the primary advocates of Camerarius in the 19th century: Ijsendijk ("antefero ceteris lectionem Camerarii") and Ussing ("‘*Neque*’ iure delevit Camerarius; ex antecedenti versu irrepsit").²¹ Apparently, Camerarius was unpersuaded by "namque" in the earlier editions. The deletion of *neque* here effectively marks the verse as a whole new sentence without any grammatical connection to the sentences before or after. This appears inconsistent with Plautus' compositional technique, which tends to coordinate each verse in the passage with the preceding one by means of various conjunctions (*nam, quin, quasi, neque, unde, nec*, etc.). Nevertheless, Camerarius's edition became the new standard text, which was followed for over three centuries – by Sambucus (Basel 1568), Lambinus (Paris 1576), Taubmann (Wittenberg 1605), Gruter (Wittenberg 1621), Gronovius (Leiden 1664), Operarius (Paris 1679), Naudet (Paris 1832), Weise (Quedlinburg 1848), Ijsendijk (Utrecht 1884), Six (Leiden 1885), and Ussing (Copenhagen 1886) – until Ritschl (1853) restored the transmitted text.²²

As with earlier editors, Camerarius's decision to athetize *neque* on the basis of dittography is grounded on a positive understanding of the expression *duri capitones* as self-flattery rather than insult, which Saturio naturally would want to reject. Until Woytek first secured the validity of *neque* in v. 60, the manuscript tradition was generally thought to be corrupt. As far as the text of *Persa* is concerned, it is found in the posterior section of both *B* and *D*, among the same group of twelve alphabetically later comedies. The following schema (using Lindsay's notation) represents the relationships between the several

²¹ Ijsendijk, *De Plauti Persa*, 9; Ussing, *Commentarius in Plauti comoedias*, 183.

²² Sambucus, *Plauti comoediae viginti*, 617; Lambinus, *Plautus ex fide*, 890; Taubmann, *Plauti latinae comoediae*, 950; Gruterus, *Plauti comoediae*, 1120; Gronovius, *Plauti comoediae*, 858; Operarius, *Plauti comoediae*, 242; Naudet, *Plauti comoediae*, 546; Weise, *Plauti comoediae*, 62; Ijsendijk, *De Plauti Persa*, 9; Six, *De Persae plautinae aetate*, 209f.; Ussing, *Plauti comoediae*, 11. The only exception to these, which retained "namque" is Pareus, *Plauti sarsinatis umbri comoediae XX*, 575. Cf. Ritschl, *Plauti comoediae*, 14.

manuscript sources for the text of *Persa*, where P^A stands for the lost proto-archetype of the Palatine family of MSS including T ; P^{BC} for the lost archetype of the latter part of B and P^{CD} (= the lost source of C and the latter part of D).



On account of the independence of T in relation to B and other Palatine MSS, T can serve the important function of a check on BCD , just as B serves as a check on CD .²³ Therefore, unless one is prepared to object that the proto-archetype P^A had originated the error in transmission, Lindsay's collation, which shows *neque* at the beginning of v. 60, ought to be incontrovertible proof that every edition since the editio princeps except Ritschl (1853) had wrongly emended *neque*. The unanimity of the manuscripts is at least acknowledged by the Teubner edition of 1896 and the OCT of 1905, both of which restore *neque* in v. 60, although the former places a dagger next to the verse and the latter admits in the apparatus that "fort. recte" Leo's emendation "atque" may be correct.²⁴ But without a clear explanation of the expression *duri capitones*, and a reasoned understanding of the sequence of clauses before and after v. 60, it is impossible to know just how the verse should be read in its immediate context.

Woytek (1973) first objected to the fundamentally questionable methodology of introducing textual interventions (without admitting his own susceptibility to the same objection), either by emendation or athetesis, for the purpose of transmuting a negative statement to a positive one.²⁵ Saurio clearly has a preference for negative expressions in his monologue; therefore, it is reasonable to read v. 60 as an integral part of a complex rhetorical scheme consisting of negative clauses. Negative words are preferentially placed at the beginnings of clauses, often in the first position of the verses (*numquam* 55; *quin* 56; *neque*

²³ Lindsay, *Codex Turnebi*, 8: "T stood to B and to the original of CD in the same relation as B stands to C and to D."

²⁴ Lindsay, *Plauti comoediae*, ad loc.; Goetz – Schoell, *Plauti comoediae*, ad loc.

²⁵ Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 67: "Erstens muß man vom methodischen Standpunkt einwenden, daß diese Auslegung ja erst durch einen Texteingriff ermöglicht wird, der eine Verkehrung der Aussage des Satzes ins genaue Gegenteil bedeutet."

59.60.62.64; *sine* 63). The placement of *neque* at the beginning of successive clauses in 59–64 is especially notable, as each coordinate clause becomes increasingly longer than the preceding one. The resulting tricolon crescens consists of a first colon (*neque ... vincere*) measuring a single verse (59); a second colon (*neque ... locum*) measuring two verses (60f.), and a third colon (*neque ... placent*) not only measuring three verses (62–64), but embedding within itself still another tricolon, each member of which again begins with *neque*. In fact, the anaphora appears to put the word *neque* into relief as the marker of the rhetorical structure:

60 *neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere,*
neque eis cognomentum erat duris Capitonibus
unde ego hunc quaestum optineo et maiorum locum,
neque quadrupulari me volo, neque enim decet
sine meo periclo ire aliena ereptum bona,
neque illi qui faciunt mihi placent. planen loquor?

“No one could surpass them in hunger, nor did they have the name *Duri Capitones*, from whom I got this trade and my ancestral station, nor do I wish to be an informer, for it isn’t right to go taking away other people’s goods without risk to myself, nor do I like those who do that.”²⁶

Having argued for the dignity of his inherited profession and how he pursues and cultivates with great care the old calling of his forefathers, Saturio unleashes a series of negative statements: (i) “No one could defeat them” (59); (ii) “They, from whom I got my position in society, never had the name *duri capitones*” (60f.); (iii) “I neither want to be, nor do I approve of, a *quadruplator*, who indecently swindles other people’s property without risk of personal injury” (62–64). Since, however, it is by means of a negative statement (*neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere*) that Saturio boasts of his descent from a stock of indefatigable champions, it is reasonable to expect the following negative statements to be likewise self-congratulatory. Skipping 60f. for the moment, let us consider how in 62–64 Saturio congratulates himself by making an important distinction between himself and another kind of rascal, when he says that he does not want to play the *quadruplator*.²⁷ Here Plautus employs a Latin calque of Greek συκοφαντεῖν. The συκοφάντης belonged to the class of buffoons of Greek Old Comedy modeled on the professional informer of the Athenian law courts, who made a career out of pettifoggery and false accusations, indicting people averse to litigation, even filing lawsuits against

²⁶ All translations of Latin or Greek are by the author, unless cited otherwise.

²⁷ Danek, *Parasit*, 236; Lofberg, *The Sycophant-Parasite*, 62.

them in court, in order to extort money.²⁸ As in the prologue to Terence's *Heaut.*, v. 38, Saturio as *edax parasitus* is differentiated from the *quadruplator* as *sycophanta impudens*. It is ironic, however, that Saturio is making the point that he has an altogether different pedigree from the *quadruplator*, because in Act IV he winds up lending support to Toxilus' extortion scheme by summoning the leno Dordalus to court. Nevertheless, it is important to see that v. 60 comes right between Saturio's *laudatio* of his hereditary profession and the diatribe against the *quadruplator* beginning at v. 62. The logical coherence of the sequence of negative statements beginning at v. 59, would then require the reader to understand also the expression *duri capitones* in v. 60 as derogatory in nature.

It is a credit to Woytek that the underlying text of the Greek original is discernible in the word *capito*. Understood as a calque of Greek κεστρεύς, *capito* is the Latin name for the grey mullet (*Mugil cephalus*), a marine fish named for its large head (also called *cephalus* < Gr. κέφαλος).²⁹ The grey mullet was proverbial in Greek for fasting – κεστρεύς νηστεύει “the grey mullet is fasting”.³⁰ According to Aristotle, the grey mullet is the only fish that does not feed on its own kind or, for that matter, on any flesh whatsoever; therefore, once caught, it is always found with an empty stomach.³¹ The phrase νηστis κεστρεύς, “fasting mullet”, was a common metaphor for starvelings in Greek comedy. The many quotations collected by Athenaeus (cited by Ribbeck and Woytek) make it clear that in the language of Greek comedy the expression was always understood *in malam partem* as an abusive formula directed against the hungry and gaping parasite.³² He is always *miser famelicus*, as

²⁸ Chroust, *Legal Profession*, 366; Lofberg, *The Sycophant-Parasite*, 61.

²⁹ The same fish is mentioned in a recipe in Cato agr. 158,1,5: *ubi iam coctum incipit esse, eo addito brassicae coliculos duos, betae coliculos II cum radice sua, feliculae pullum, herbae mercurialis non multum, mitulorum L. II, pisces capitones et scorpionem I, cochleas sex et lentis pugillum.*

³⁰ Paus., Ἀττικῶν ὀνομάτων συναγωγή (κ 29): κεστρεῖς νηστεῖς ἐκάλουν καὶ κεχνηότας καὶ πεινῶντας, in: Erbse, *Untersuchungen*, 190; Zenobius, *Epitome collectionum Lucilli Tarrhaei et Didymi* 4,52: Κεστρεύς νηστεύει: παροιμία ἐπὶ τῶν πάνυ λαϊμάργων, in: Schneidewin – von Leutsch, *Corpus paroemiographorum Graecorum*, 99; Suda s.v. κεστρεῖς (κ 1432); Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades*, 106.

³¹ Arist. *hist. an.* 591a (17–20): Ἀλληλοφαγοῦσι δὲ πάντες μὲν πλὴν κεστρέως, μάλιστα δ' οἱ γόγγροι. Ὁ δὲ κέφαλος καὶ ὁ κεστρεύς ὅλως μόνοι οὐ σαρκοφαγοῦσιν· σημεῖον δέ, οὔτε γὰρ ἐν τῇ κοιλίᾳ πόποτ' ἔχοντες εἰλημμένοι εἰσὶ τοιοῦτον οὐδέν." Ath. 7,77 (20–22): ἐν δ' ἄλλοις φησὶν ὁ Ἀριστοτέλης· ὁ κεστρεύς καρχαρόδους ὢν οὐκ ἀλληλοφαγεῖ, ἅτε δὴ οὐδ' ὅλως σαρκοφαγῶν. See LSJ s.v. νηστis II, 2: “fish so called because its stomach was always found empty.”

³² Erasmus, *Adagiorum chiliades*, s.v. κεστρεῖς cites Hesychius' gloss, which explains that the word was leveled as an accusation against Athenians for gluttony and insatiability: καὶ τοῦς

Gnatho says of a fellow-parasite in Terence's *Eunuchus*, v. 260. Hence (argues Woytek), Saturio is saying: "My forefathers always ate other people's food like mice, and no one could surpass them in voraciousness, and they did not have the nickname 'capitones' (i.e. fasting- or starving-mullets)."³³ What previously appeared to be a non sequitur now becomes a coherent statement with humorous amplification. Saturio seems to declare proudly that no one has ever defeated his family in their profession, since they were always successful in being able to fill their bellies, and (what is more) they never earned a reputation for being starvelings, such was their nature to be voracious and insatiable. Thus the parasite lives up to his name Saturio "the Sated", because his ancestors were never known for their empty bellies. Thanks to Woytek's interpretation it is no longer necessary to reverse the paradosis arbitrarily, because it is coherent in the context. Nonetheless, Woytek's fault lies in not explaining the meaning of *duris* in relation to *capitonibus* and in resorting instead to emendation of the text.

Part II: *durus* = νῆστις

While Woytek's thesis brilliantly elucidates the underlying text of the unknown Greek original which Plautus was adapting, one is certainly justified in being skeptical about the intelligibility of a purely Greek expression for a Roman public that could hardly have been expected to understand it. Marti (1984) correctly remarks that, since there is no indication in Latin literature of the special attributes that made the *Mugil cephalus* proverbial in Attic, a Roman audience would not have been able to comprehend the Plautine expression on the basis of the Greek background.³⁴ Damon (1998) concurs that Plautus would have been expecting "rather much of his audience's translating powers".³⁵ However, the use of calques in translating Greek sources has been a cornerstone technique employed by Roman poets since Livius Andronicus as an outlet for creative freedom.³⁶ One cannot deny in this regard the ingenuity of Plautus, for whom a learned calque would surely have been a source of delight to his

Ἀθηναίους οὕτως ἔλεγον καὶ προσηγόρευον· τὸ γὰρ ζῆον αὐτὸ λαίμαργόν τε ἐστὶ καὶ ἄπληστον. Ribbeck, Kolax, 39; Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 71.

³³ Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 72: "Meine Vorfahren aßen stets fremder Leute Brot wie die Mäuse und an Gefräßigkeit konnte niemand sie übertreffen und sie hatten nicht den Beinamen 'capitones', d. h. Faster- oder Hungerleider(fisch)."

³⁴ Marti, [Review] T. Maccius Plautus: *Persa*, 391–399: "Hier traut W. seinem Dichter recht wenig zu: das Plautinische im Plautus kommt bei ihm gelegentlich zu kurz."

³⁵ Damon, *Mask*, 54.

³⁶ Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 53.

audience and a playful wink at the doctus lector.³⁷ Yet one cannot rightfully deny the integrity and coherence of the Latin text, which one expects could elicit universal laughter only if it made perfect sense even to the illiterate. Therefore, while Woytek's study of v. 60 has established the validity of *neque* based on the understanding of *capitones* as a Latin calque of Greek κεστρεύς, it does not succeed in explaining the verse on its own terms, and it has not prevented the confusion more recently experienced by scholars who still resort to the old emendations.³⁸

It is not helpful that Woytek (first in his monograph and again in his edition of *Persa*) deemed it necessary to introduce an emendation of his own by proposing *viris* instead of *duris*.³⁹ This was immediately rejected by Jocelyn (1983)⁴⁰ and Marti (1984)⁴¹ in their reviews of Woytek's edition, and also by Damon both in her doctoral dissertation (1990) and in her book, *The Mask of the Parasite* (1998).⁴² More recently, *viris* has been praised in Fontaine's study of Plautine diction, *Funny Words in Plautine Comedy* (2010) without any acknowledgement of the objections of other scholars.⁴³ Furthermore, Woytek's justification is altogether suspect, based as it is on a single occurrence of the phrase ἄνδρες κεστρεῖς in a fragment of Aristophanes' *Gerytades* (159 K.-A.):⁴⁴

ἄρ' ἔνδον ἀνδρῶν κεστρέων ἀποικία;
ὥς μὲν γάρ ἐστε νήστιδες, γιγνώσκετε.

"Is there a colony of Cestrians inside? For it is well-known that you are fasting."

It is peculiar that Woytek should make an exception for his own "Texteingriff", having criticized the same procedure in Leo. Still worse, just as the

³⁷ Fontaine, *Funny Words*, 171: "the solution here requires us to see the Greek word κεστρεύς (also called κεφαλών) behind the Latin word *capito*."

³⁸ Damon, *Mask*, 54: "In line 60 I read *namque* with Pius and Bergk for the *neque* offered by the manuscripts. The alteration is easy, palaeographically speaking, and is required by the sense." De Melo, *Plautus*, 460 prints "atque" at the beginning of the verse.

³⁹ Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 73; Woytek, *Persa*, 173.

⁴⁰ Jocelyn, [Review], 197 n. 6: "W. does not repeat the defence (*sic*) he offers at *WSt* 86 (1973)."

⁴¹ Marti, [Review], 394: "W. begnügt sich leider mit einem Verweis auf seine Begründung in *WSt*."

⁴² Damon, *Vetus atque antiquus quaestus*, 30 n. 49; Damon, *Mask*, 54 n. 40: "Though Woytek objects to Leo's 'Texteingriff', his own is more radical."

⁴³ Fontaine, *Funny Words*, 171: "*Viris Capitonibus* is Woytek's ingenious correction for the vexed paradosis *duris Capitonibus* 'hard Capito's' (?) or 'hard Bigheads' (?), neither of which interpretations makes sense."

⁴⁴ Woytek, *Persa*, 173: "Übersetzung von ἄνδρες κεστρεῖς". Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 72 adduces a fragment of Archippus (fr. 29) – ἄνδρες ἰχθύες – as an example of the sort of agglutination he is proposing, but the phrase is too decontextualized to be useful.

humanist commentators suspected textual corruption and therefore emended the text according to their various interpretations, so Woytek has argued that one cannot avoid assuming a corruption in *duris* and instead should read *viris*.⁴⁵ This fundamentally flawed methodology undercuts Woytek's otherwise significant contribution to understanding this locus vexatissimus. In order to avoid dealing with the semantic difficulty posed by *durus* in this context, Woytek prefers to offer up still another conjecture. He does not notice in the Aristophanic fragment the obvious collocation $\eta\sigma\tau\iota\delta\epsilon\varsigma\ \kappa\epsilon\sigma\tau\rho\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma$, which is found in every period of Athenian comedy, as Athenaeus shows by numerous examples (7,77–80).⁴⁶ Could the hapax *duri capitones* be Plautus' translation of this very same commonplace expression in Greek?

To be sure, the passage cannot be completely explained until the connection between the words *duris* and *capitonibus* is clarified. Plautus and Terence often use the word *durus* (and related words *duritia* and *duriter*) to describe the character typically of an adulescens (Philolaches in *Mostellaria*), virgo (Glycerium in *Andria*), or senex (Demea in *Adelphoe*; Menedemus in *Heautontimoroumenos*; Truculentus' master in the eponymous play by Plautus), who is (or formerly was) an example of self-discipline, temperance, and chastity. The word is synonymous with *parcus*, as is evident from its frequent association with *parsimonia*:

Mostellaria 154:

parsimonia et duritia disciplinae alieis eram

“With my frugality and austerity I was a lesson to others.”

Truculentus 311:

*non enim ill' meretriculis
munerandis rem coegit, verum parsimonia
duritiaque*

“For he did not acquire wealth by giving gifts to prostitutes, but by frugality and austerity.”

⁴⁵ Woytek, *Viri Capitones*, 73: “So wird man doch wohl nicht umhin können, eine Textverderbnis anzunehmen und statt *duris* <vi>*ris* zu schreiben, was palaeographisch nicht allzu schwierig ... wäre.” It is argued at Amph. 306 that the universally accepted correction *quattuor viros* instead of the manuscript reading *quattuor duros* is an analogous case of scribal error.

⁴⁶ Aristophanes 159 K.-A.; Amipsias 1 K.-A.; Theopompus 14 K.-A.; Anaxandrides 35,8 K.-A.; Alexis 258 K.-A.; Eubulus 68 K.-A.; Antiphanes 136 K.-A.; Diphilus 53 K.-A.; Euphron 2 K.-A.; Archippus 12 K.-A.; Philemon 83 K.-A.; Adesp. com. 112 K.-A. See also Ribbeck, *Kolax*, 39.

Andria 74:

*primo haec pudice vitam parce ac duriter
agebat, lana ac tela victum quaeritans.*

“At first, she passed her life modestly, with frugality and austerity, seeking a livelihood with her wool and loom.”

Adelphoe 45:

*ruri agere vitam; semper parce ac duriter
se habere; uxorem duxit; nati filii
duo.*

“He has spent his life in the country and has always behaved moderately and austere; he married a wife, had two sons.”

Adelphoe 64:

Nimium ipse est durus praeter aequumque et bonum.

“He himself is too strict, beyond what is just and good.”

Heautontimoroumenos 435:

*conspicuum fugitat: propter peccatum hoc timet,
ne tua duritia antiqua illa etiam adaucta sit.*

“He avoids your sight; because of his transgression, he fears that your old severity may still be increased.”

The word *duritia* is glossed in Pareus’ *Lexicon plautinum* (1614) as follows: “pro continentia victus, quae ab omni luxu et voluptate procul abest”.⁴⁷ It is now clear in what sense *duri capitones* can be understood as a translation of νήστιδες κεστρεῖς, where the modifier *durus* connotes the idea of continence or abstinence, further supported by the fact that νῆστις (composed of νη- + ἔδω) is the exact opposite of *edax* – an association marked by polyptoton in 58f. (cf. *edere, edacitate*). Thus, one may satisfy Woytek’s desideratum for a meaning of *durus* synonymous with Gr. ἐγκρατής.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Pareus, *Lexicon plautinum*, s.v. *duritia*.

⁴⁸ Cf. Woytek, *Viri Capitoes*, 73: “Man müßte für *durus* an unserer Stelle die Bedeutung ‘streng = enthaltsam, mäßig’, synonym zu gr. ἐγκρατής, fordern, die sich allerdings sonst m.W. nirgends exakt belegen läßt.”

Part III: The ambiguity of *duri Capitones: rigidi Catones / impudentes sycophantae*

Admittedly, the thought of mullets, fasting or not, may have been altogether irrelevant to a Roman audience. The joke remains incomprehensible unless one understands the famous Greek proverb activated on the metatextual level of the Greek model text; it does not survive “translation” to the scene before Roman spectators. It probably did not make any sense in Rome that Saturio’s ancestors were not “fasting mullets”, except perhaps to the doctus lector who possessed the necessary precise knowledge of the model text in order to understand the Latin calque on the fish that is always fasting. How Saturio’s speech could have been at all meaningful in a Roman context must be examined. It is at this point, where the model text is discernible in the shadow of the translation, that Plautus takes advantage of the opportunity for novelty. In order to compensate for the loss of metatextual comprehension on the general audience, Plautus exploits the linguistic possibilities inherent in his translation *capitones* by punning on the famous Roman cognomen Capito (paronomasia).

The original Plautine addition of the word *cognomentum* (the subject of v. 60) sets up the joke that invigorates the Latin *translatio*. Many Roman cognomina derived originally from nicknames supposed once to have distinguished a person with reference to some physical or inherited trait. Accordingly, the humanist commentator Saracenus remarked on the cognomen Capito: “Dicti sunt capitones a capite ut a fronte frontones quae cognomina fuerunt in civibus romanis.”⁴⁹ One can count, in addition to Capito and Fronto, also Naso, Cicero, Strabo, Balbus, Crassus, Flaccus, etc., each originally a humorous nickname serving to emphasize a peculiar feature or prominent attribute of a person’s physiognomy (antonomasia). Often these could be quite unflattering. Cicero combines *capitones* with *strabones* and *frontones* when he describes human physiognomic types that are unimaginable in gods.⁵⁰ Accordingly, the cognomen Capito is supposed to have served originally to emphasize the unusually large head of the person bearing that name. In the same way an animal can be named *capito*, or likewise distinguished as *capitatus*, “big-headed”.⁵¹ Because the plu-

⁴⁹ Saracenus – Valla, Plauti comoediae XX, ad loc.

⁵⁰ Cic. nat. deor. 1,80: *Ecquos si non tam strabones at paetulos esse arbitramur, ecquos naevum habere, ecquos silos flaccos frontones capitones, quae sunt in nobis? an omnia emendata in illis?*

⁵¹ (1) L.-S., s.v. *capito*, II, a: “A sea-fish with a large head, called also *cephalus*.” Gessner, *Historia animalium*, 648: “Qui κέφαλος a Graecis dicitur, Romae et in tota fere Italia servata eadem appellatione cephalo vocatur ... Capite enim magno, crasso, latoque est ... Galli *Mullet* vocant.” (2) L.-S., s.v. *capito*, II, b: “A kind of fish with a large head.” The riverfish

ral form *Capitones* is generic rather than collective and the cognomen was historically assigned to many different gentes in Rome, no particular historical personage need be sought in this connection.⁵² Albeit the use of the surname *Capito* was creatively motivated by Plautus' calque on Greek κεστρεῖς, the supplemented *cognomentum* is a conceit employed with humorous effect on different levels. So far, it has been shown how Plautus' joke works on the meta-textual level of the Greek model text, where the epithet *durus* (with special

called *capito* in Auson. Mos. 10,85: *squameus herbosas capito inter lucet harenas* was identified by Rondelet, *Universae aquatilium historiae*, 190f.: “Κέφαλος fluviatilis is est qui ab Ausonio latine capito nominatus est. A Gallis *Munier*, quod circa moletrinas plurimus sit, ab aliis *Vilain*, id est turpis ac foedus a victus ratione, quia stercore, coeno, sordibus delectetur et vivat. Alii a capitis magnitudine *Testard*.” Ausonius's diction reflects already in the fourth century a development into popular usage of the word *capito* still evident in Italy, a tendency towards generalization until the word would come to signify other large-headed fishes besides the original grey mullet, including especially fresh-water fish of different kinds. Of similar derivation is English *chub*, also called *chevin* (< OF *chevesne*, *chevenel* < Lat. *capito*); see Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch, s.v. *capito*, 264: “bezeichnet schon im It. den durch seinen verhältnismässig grossen kopf sich auszeichnenden döbel.” In the Neapolitan dialect “capitone” refers to the conger-eel. A 19th century English traveller to Naples described the custom of making a particular dish from this fish at Christmas: “There is one dish, however, which the Neapolitan particularly regards as sacred to the season, and were he not to eat of capitone (a kind of conger eel), would believe that ill luck would attend him throughout the year, – that San Gennaro's blood, perhaps, would not liquefy, – that his patron saint would withhold his mediation, – or that his guardian angel would slumber at his post. Hence it happens that this fish at Christmas is sold at Naples at a price absurdly high; for the poorest man, rather than not eat of capitone, would sell the bed on which a few hours later he would be glad to stretch his wearied limbs.” (Wreford, Rome, 159). “Capitone” also has an obscene connotation in Naples, “o capitone senza rëcchie” signifying the penis: “Dicetteme 'a figliola quanno 'o vedette 'a primma vota: Comme è bello e comme è liscio, che bellu capitone senza rëcchie!” In Latin, however, there is no evidence for any such bawdy connotations, even with the qualifying epithet *durus* which Plautus applies in the present passage. The historic-semantic development of the word *capito* demonstrates the persistence of its primary meaning in Latin, namely “big-headed”.

⁵² Attempts to discover a historical *Capito* have been unconvincing. Cf. Dousa, *Centurionatus*, 456: “Allusum vero ad Capitonum familiam, Romae haud incelebrem iam inde ab antiquo, proventu iureconsultorum maxime” (quoted in Taubmann, *Plauti Latinae comoediae*, 950 and Facciolati, *Animadversiones*, 100); Six, *De Persae plautinae aetate*, 209: “Versus sexagesimus non ad Fonteios Capitones spectat, pater enim diu mortuus erat, filius adhuc minor natus, sed legendus videtur: his cognomentum erat duricapitonibus.” Cf. Bergk, *Plautinische studien*, 44: “Eine anspielung auf einen zeitgenossen des dichters selbst, wie man vermuthet hat, vermag ich nicht zu finden.” The name *Capito* is first attested in the *Consular Fasti* for the year 302 a.u.c. (CIL I, 16): P · SESTIUS · Q · F · VIBI · N · CAPITO · V[at]jicaNuS. In later times it was attached to several other plebeian and equestrian gentes (*Atteia*, *Fonteia*, *Gabinia*, *Maria*, *Oppia*, *Roscia*, *Velleia*).

meaning *parcus*) is a translation of Greek νήστιδες. Therefore, the particular expression *duri Capitones*, similar in construction and meaning to Martial's *rigidi Catones* (10, 20, 21), may describe the character of the old Roman *viri boni et probi* akin to Catullus's *senes severiores* who represent the epitome of obstinate adherence to the virtues of temperance and personal restraint – qualities regarded as absolute anathema by the parasite. To be sure, Cato's name was proverbial in Latin for moral *rigiditas*, but this cannot be said of any particular Capito. Plautus' choice of name was deliberate, determined by the very act of translation. The conceit that *Capitones* is a *cognomentum* succeeds at being funny in Latin because the Roman surname, distinguished by the epithet *durus*, represents the old Roman virtue of *parcitas*, so antithetical to Saturio and his family. In prosaic terms Saturio appears to be saying: "No one could surpass my parasitic forebears in voracity, and no one ever called them models of moderation." The chief accent in v. 60 therefore lies on *duris*, not only because of the postposition of the noun *Capitonibus*, but also because it allows an audience with no special knowledge of the Greek model text to understand the translation as something familiar, hence funny. With the addition of *duri* these *Capitones* are identified as persons living in strict adherence to the old, simple, frugal customs of the ideal Roman family.⁵³ This precisely is what Saturio says he and his ancestors are not. Thus the verse becomes an amplification of the previous one and, understood as such, creates a coherent context on both levels of the Latin translation and the latent model text.

Very likely for most spectators the joke fell flat. The Plautine conceit where in Capito is a cognomen introduces possibilities that did not exist in the Greek model. Plautus appears to have exploited the consequent polysemy, especially in light of what follows in v. 62 about the *quadruplator*. Considerable interference from the Latin expression *caput durum* causes some semantic dissonance with the proposed interpretation of *duri Capitones* as a species of *viri boni et probi*, since the meaning of *durus* is pressed to evolve beyond the special meaning demanded by a strictly philological act of *vertere*. If the expression is taken as a play on *caput durum*, it remains for us to investigate what generally could be meant by that expression in order to understand how the joke may have been funny in the common register of the *sermo plebeius*. A problem arises from the fact that the specific collocation *caput durum* is not attested before Petronius. Yet there was a scholarly consensus, beginning with Casaubon and continuing into the nineteenth-century, that interpreted the expression *duri*

⁵³ Ritschl, *Plauti Persa*, 14 n.: "Spectare versiculus ad alicuius Capitonis (Fontei fortasse) duritiem et in victu continentiam videtur."

Capitones as a nickname describing Saturio's ancestors' proven insensitivity to all kinds of beatings and missiles.⁵⁴ It was usual to quote a passage from *Captivi*, 88–90, showing that the ability to suffer considerable physical violence was prerequisite among successful parasites:

*Et hic quidem hercle, nisi qui colaphos perpeti
potes parasitus frangique aulas in caput,
vel ire extra portam Trigeminam ad saccum licet.*

“And here indeed, you can be sure, unless as a parasite you can suffer fisticuffs and pots being broken on your head, you may as well go begging outside the Trigeminal Gate.”

The parasite Ergasilus asserts that anybody who wants to be a parasite is better off being a beggar if he cannot endure the torrents of physical abuse.⁵⁵ Also in *Captivi*, 472, Ergasilus refers to parasites like himself with the facetious patronymic “*plagipatides*”, i.e., “one who is descended from a long line of beatings” (OLD). To a threat of physical violence from Pistoclus, the parasite in *Bacchides* responds with a bit of self-advice: he should be careful that he doesn't get his teeth knocked right out of his jaws.⁵⁶ In Terence's *Eunuchus* Gnatho reports that a fellow parasite owes his destitute condition to being unable to bear the physical beatings.⁵⁷ Greek sources from New and Middle Comedy featuring parasites enduring all sorts of bodily assaults, especially to the head, have also been adduced in support of this interpretation.⁵⁸ Notwith-

⁵⁴ Casaubon, *Animadversionum libri*, 26: “Propterea dicti alii parasiiti apud eundem festivissimum poetam, duri Capitones.” Bergk, *Plautinische studien*, 44: “der parasit will offenbar sagen, seine vorfahren, die allezeit den ersten rang unter den parasiten behaupteten, hätten den beinamen *duri capitones* geführt: denn ein hartes fell war die erste bedingung jener löblichen kunst.” Ussing, *Plauti comoediae*, 11: “*Duri capitones*, i.e. quibus durum caput est, appellantur parasiiti, quorum est ‘colaphos perpeti frangique aulas in caput’, ut legitur *Capt.* 88 sq.” Cf. Bugge, *Textkritische Bemærkninger*, 175: “Jeg formoder, at to Vers er sammenblandede ..., og jeg søger her følgende Sammenhæng: ‘Neque edacitate eos quisquam poterat vincere / Neque, [aulas frangi in caput, eis melius perpeti / Ex quo] eis cognomentum erat duris capitonibus’.” Damon, *Mask*, 54 n. 40: “his ancestors ate as much as they did because their heads were hard.”

⁵⁵ *Juv.* 5,171–173 criticizes the Roman client for behaving like a comic parasite when he shaves his head and offers it to be beaten for feasts and friendship: *pulsandum vertice raso / praebebis quandoque caput nec dura timebis / flagra pati, his epulis et tali dignus amico.*

⁵⁶ *Plaut. Bacch.* 597f.: *Mihi cautios / ne nucifrangibula excussit ex malis meis.*

⁵⁷ *Ter. Eun.* 244f.: *at ego infelix neque ridiculus esse neque plagas pati possum.*

⁵⁸ *Axionicus* 6 K.-A. 1–6: ὅτε τοῦ παρασιτεῖν πρῶτον ἠράσθην ... / πληγὰς ὑπέμενον κονδύλων καὶ τρυβλίων / ὅστων τε τὸ μέγεθος τοσαύτας ὥστε με / ἐνίστε τοῦλάχιστον ὀκτὼ τραύματα / ἔχειν; *Timocles* 31 K.-A.: εὐρήσεις δὲ τῶν ἐπισιτίων / τούτων τιν’, οἱ δειπνοῦσιν ἐσφροδόμενοι / τὰλλότρι’, ἑαυτοὺς ἀντὶ κωρῶν λέπειν / παρέχοντες ἀθληταῖσι; *Aristophon* 5 K.-A.: δεῖ ... ὑπομένειν πληγὰς ἄκμων; *Nicolaus* 1 (Edmonds): πλευρὰν ἔχειν

standing that it was a commonplace of the comic stage for parasites to be subjected to violent treatment, whether from actual physical blows or merely verbal abuse, it is nowhere in extant Greek or Latin literature attested that a parasite's head had adapted to repeated beatings by being hard. In any case, even if this were admitted, what Saturio appears to be saying in Persa is that his ancestors were not the type of parasites that needed to endure such beatings, which is also consistent with what follows in v. 62, where Saturio is anxious to differentiate himself from another kind of parasite who acts as a foil for himself, namely the *quadruplator* representing in Roman garb a stock figure of New Comedy – the *sycophanta impudens*.⁵⁹

Earlier it was mentioned that the collocation *caput durum* does not occur in Latin before Petronius. In the Satyricon the expression *caput durum* appears alongside *frons expudorata* and *cornum acutum* in the sense of *impudens*.⁶⁰ One reads again in Petronius *dura bucca* meaning the same thing.⁶¹ In *Institutio oratoria* (6,3,83) the expression *caput durum* is used in a similar fashion: Quintilian is giving an example of how foul and violent language (*quod aut turpiter aut potenter dicitur*) may be deemed unworthy of a decent citizen even if it is funny, such as in the case of a certain man who threatened an inferior who spoke freely against him (*libere adversus se loquenti*), saying: “I will smack your head, and bring an action against you for having such a hard skull!”⁶² (*colaphum, inquit, tibi ducam et formulam scribam, quod caput durum habeas*). It is apparent from the context that the expression *caput durum* refers to the impudent and irreverent speech of the inferior man in his dealings with a superior. Such an exchange, similar to those between Latinus and Panniculus in Martial's epigrams,⁶³ can easily be imagined on the comic stage. In Terence's *Eunuchus*, 806, the soldier Thraso, accompanied by the parasite Gnatho,

πρώτιστον ἐν τούτοισι δεῖ, / πρόσωπον ἰταμόν, χρω̄μα διαμένον, γνάθον / ἀκάματον, εὐθὺς
δυναμένην πληγὰς φέρειν. / στοιχεῖα μὲν ταῦτ' ἐστὶ τῆς ὄλης τέχνης; Ter. Eun. 244: *plagas pati* appears to be an exact translation of Nicolaus's *πληγὰς φέρειν*; Diphilus 48 K.-A.: σὲ μὲν καλοῦσι ψωμοκόλαφον δραπέτην; LSJ s.v. *ψωμοκόλαφος*: “one who takes cuffs for the sake of morsels of bread.”

⁵⁹ Lofberg, *The Sycophant-Parasite*, 62. Danek, *Parasit*, 226.

⁶⁰ Petron. Sat. 39: *Itaque quisquis nascitur illo signo, multa pecora habet, multum lanae, caput praeterea durum, frontem expudoratam, cornum acutum*; Burmann, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon*, 172: “*Caput durum: Idem est quod os durum: quo apud Terentium Eunuch, Act. IV. scen. 7. & passim apud alios impudens notatur, tales Graecis κριομύξοι.*”

⁶¹ Petron. Sat. 43: *Durae buccae fuit, linguosus, discordia, non homo.*

⁶² Translation by Butler, *Institutio Oratoria of Quintilian*, 485.

⁶³ Mart. 2,72: *os tibi percisum quanto non ipse Latinus / vilia Panniculi percutit ora sono; 5,61: O quam dignus eras alapis, Mariane, Latini: / te successurum credo ego Panniculo.*

exclaims *Os durum!* in reaction to the adulescens Chremes' assertion that Pamphila is actually his sister. Citing this same passage from Terence, the lexicons are consistent in the meaning of the phrase *os durum*: "a brazen face, an impudent fellow" (Ainsworth);⁶⁴ "front, impudence" (Quicherat);⁶⁵ "shameless, impudent" (L.-S.); "hardened, shameless, brazen" (OLD); "audax, procax" (ThlL). Terence's expression has been variously translated into English as "shameless lying fellow!" (Bernard), "brazen face!" (Riley), "barefaced impudence!" (Barsby).⁶⁶ Terence's expression is glossed by Donatus: "os durum os impudens".⁶⁷ The expression *os durum* occurs in Lucilius with the same meaning.⁶⁸ The expression *esse duri oris* in Cicero and Ovid, like Petronius's *esse durae buccae*, means the same thing but as a verb.⁶⁹ It appears from the variety of such expressions in Latin that, notwithstanding some variation in the body parts to which it is applied, the foremost element is the epithet *durus*, which carries the preponderance of meaning and so remains constant; the body parts (whether *os*, *bucca*, or *caput*)⁷⁰ serve merely as the vehicles for the nuanced meanings of *durus*: brazen, shameless, impudent, presumptuous, insolent, disrespectful, daring.⁷¹ Accordingly, the *duri Capitone*s, so negatively regarded,

⁶⁴ Ainsworth, Dictionary, s.v. *os, oris*.

⁶⁵ Quicherat, Thesaurus, 826.

⁶⁶ Bernard, Terence in English, 168; Riley, Comedies of Terence, 115; Barsby, Terence, 409.

⁶⁷ Wessner, Donati Commentum Terenti, vol. 1, 445. The same idea is more fully elaborated by Plautus, Miles 189–189a: *os habet, linguam, perfidiam, malitiam atque audaciam, / confidentiam, confirmatam, fraudulentiam*.

⁶⁸ Lucil. 11, 417 Marx: *si tricosus, bovinatorque ore improbus duro*.

⁶⁹ Cic. Quinct. 77: *Mihi videri ore durissimo esse, qui presente eo gestum agere conaretur*; Ov. Pont. 1,1,80: *Plus isto duri si precer oris ero*; met. 5,451: *dum bibit illa datum, duri puer oris et audax / constitit ante deam risitque avidamque vocavit*. Barton, Roman Honor, 74: "The *os durum*, the *os ferreum*, the hard, stony, brazen face, belonged to the stupid and shameless." There are similar expressions for such "cheek" in the modern languages, such as English "brass neck" and Italian "faccia tosta".

⁷⁰ OLD s.v. *dūrus* (4. c.): "(w. *os* or sim.)". In ThlL s.v. *dūrus* (gloss II. C. 1): "laboris patiens, strenuus, pertinax, fortis" (2309,25), which cites v. 60 but with Leo's emendation "atque" instead of *neque*, is rejected in favor of gloss II. B. 1. c. "audax, procax" (2308,26), which also cites this verse although tentatively.

⁷¹ Dousa, Centurionatus, 456: "atque unde potius, quam ab delicatulis illis Plautinae aetatis loquitandi formulis, hoc est, vestustate ipsa, qua Durum pro Impudente & improbo perhibebant. Unde & Duros Capitone s hoc loco exponi licet, Ore improbos duro ferreoque (uti Terentius Lucillius, ac Catullus loquuntur) hoc est, attrita perfrictaque fronte insignite praeditos." Pareus, Lexicon Plautinum, s.v. *durus*: "pro impudente. Pers. 1.2. v. 8". Cf. Bothe, Plauti Comoediae, vol. 3, 300: "sicut vulgo, impudentes, quum stupidi sint intellegendi respectu ad verba *durum caput*, h. e. insulsum, quomodo *durum aut rusticum* dixit Cicero de Offic. I, 35, 9, *durum ingenium* Seneca epist. 58 sub initium. Non stolidos fuisse maiores suos ait Saturio, ita-

are just the type of people from which it makes sense for Saturio to want to distance himself.

Therefore, Plautus' witticism works on two levels: on the level of the Latin translation, it communicates in the register of the *sermo plebeius* and depends for its comprehension on the commonly understood meanings of words, although at times it may challenge unambiguous reception; on the level of the latent (reconstructed) Greek text, it appeals to the *doctus lector*, who possesses special knowledge of Greek Middle and New Comedy and can "hear" the allusion to the proverbial fasting mullet – the animal analogue of the unsuccessful parasite. One can arrive at the same punchline from either level of interpretation: Saturio's ancestors were successful parasites, (1) because they ate as often as they could and never went hungry; and (2) because they were not shameless like other parasites who put up with a regular beating in order to earn their keep. The implication is that Saturio's ancestors were cleverer and more sophisticated than any other practitioners of their calling. The discussion among scholars about whether the diatribe against the *quadruplator* (62–76) is a Plautine addition or evidence of *contaminatio* has some relevance here,⁷² since it may be argued that it was by introducing connotations that did not exist in the original Greek that the consequent ambiguity in the Latin calque *duri Capitoes* motivated a subsequent digression away from the model text towards a lengthy denunciation of the effrontery of the *sycophanta-quadruplator*. It has been argued that the apparently very Roman content presented by references to the *quadruplator* and the *dimidium* has in fact Athenian analogues,⁷³ so the case for Plautine addition has rather weak legs to stand on. A stronger case may be made for *contaminatio* marked by the place where fortuitously Plautus' translation appears to have afforded an opportunity to make a witty play on words and to combine similar Greek material.

que illos laudat, ut decet, quos imitari se profiteatur, non vituperat, ut volunt editores, quod impium, absurdum et ab indole huius loci alienum."

⁷² On the question of the formal unity of Saturio's speech, see Danek, *Parasit*, 240; Lofberg, *The Sycophant-Parasite*, 62.

⁷³ Danek, *Parasit*, 233.

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