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NOTE

This contribution is part of a larger dialogue of three articles and one responding piece that form the current issue of *JOLCEL*. The other contributions are “The Meaning and Use of *fabula* in the *Dialogus creaturarum moralizatus*” by Brian Møller Jensen (pp. 24–41) and “*Introite, pueri!* The School-Room Performance of George Buchanan’s Latin *Medea* in Bordeaux” by Lucy C.M.M. Jackson (pp. 43–61). The response piece is “Latin Education and Classical Reception: the Minor Genres” by Rita Copeland (pp. 62–66).

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Controversial Topics in Literature and Education: Hrotswitha and Donatus on Terence's Rapes*

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ABSTRACT

The paper examines the way Terence's comedy was received and exploited by the dramas of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim. The discussion focuses on a particular comic motif: rape. After the examination of the way Hrotswitha transforms Terentian rapes and incorporates them into her dramatic composition, the paper focuses on a very important spectrum of Terence's survival: education. Specifically, it explores how rape was read and interpreted by the most important treatise of Terence's exegesis: the commentary of Donatus. All in all, the paper aims at identifying possible common approaches between the educational and literary sources under examination, while, at the same time, investigates the extent to which the educational context of Terence's reception affected the literary products that used Terence as their prototype.

1 Introduction

Terence's comedies have survived over the centuries not only as literary readings,¹ but also as school texts. They were extensively quoted by late antique Latin authors, including Christian Church fathers such as Jerome, who studied Terence's comedy at school. At the same time, Terence's influence upon Christian literary production was already evident in the fourth century.² Within this framework, Terence constitutes the prototype for the dramatic

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¹ See, e.g., the influence of Roman comedy on Shakespearean drama, discussed by Robert S. Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Comedy. The Influence of Plautus and Terence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

² On the use of Terence by late antique authors, including Christians (and, of course, Jerome), see Andrew

works of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, the “first known dramatist of Christianity.”³ Although various Terentian echoes in Hrotswitha’s medieval dramas have already been examined,⁴ in this paper, I will focus on a specific comic motif: rapes. First (in section 2), I will explore Hrotswitha’s rape incidents in light of Terence’s comedies in order to show that Hrotswitha’s exploitation of rape incidents reflects the canoness’s deep engagement with Terentian drama. More specifically, this analysis strives to demonstrate that Hrotswitha has a firm knowledge of the principles that govern Terentian rapes, while her use of this motif is much more sophisticated than often noted at first glance.⁵ Secondly (in section 3), I will investigate the acquaintance of Hrotswitha and her audience with Terentian comedy by focusing on one prominent aspect: education. In this context, I will examine Donatus’ interpretation of Terentian rapes (section 4). The aim of this parallel examination is to investigate whether the testimony of Donatus’ commentary, the most important witness to Terence’s exegesis, can be a useful tool for studying Hrotswitha’s exploitation of this dramatic motif (section 5).

2 Hrotswitha’s Terentian drama: what about rapes?

Hrotswitha was a tenth-century canoness in the Benedictine monastery of Gandersheim in Saxony.⁶ Being part of an intellectually stimulating environment,⁷ she produced, among other

Cain, “Terence in Late Antiquity,” in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 387–94; see also Patricia McIntyre, “Comedy of Prayer: The Redemption of Terence through Christian Appropriation,” in *Latin with Laughter: Terence through Time*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes, accessed online at <http://www.umilta.net/terence.html>, where she compares Jerome’s interest in female virginity with the representation of Terentian virgins. McIntyre also suggests that themes of Terentian plots are traced in *The Life of St Marythe Harlot*, a hagiographical work of the fourth century, attributed to Ephraem of Edessa; the study points to the similarities between that work and Terence’s *Heautontimorumenos* as well as Terence’s presence in Christian authors more generally.

³ Katharina M. Wilson, “The Saxon Canoness. Hrotsvith of Gandersheim,” ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 30.

⁴ For an early examination see Cornelia C. Coulter, “The “Terentian” Comedies of a Tenth-Century Nun,” *Classical Journal* 24, no. 7 (1929): who, apart from comic themes, also points to Hrotswitha’s use of Terentian vocabulary, see 527. Coulter concludes that “the connections with Terence remain few in number,” on 528. On the other hand, see the informative analysis of Terentian elements in Abraham and Pafnutius by Carole E. Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” *TAPA* 116 (1986): 369–91. A good examination of Hrotswitha’s exploitation of various Terentian themes is also found in Robert Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas: Is there a Roman in these texts?,” in *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: Contexts, Identities, Affinities, and Performances*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown, Linda A. McMillin, and Katharina M. Wilson (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 147–59. Judith Tarr, “Terentian Elements in Hrotsvit,” in *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: Rara avis in Saxonia?*, ed. Katharina M. Wilson (Ann Arbor: Marc Publishing Co., 1987), focuses on the divine element. See also Peter G. McC. Brown, “Interpretations and Adaptations of Terence’s *Andria*, from the Tenth to the Twentieth Century,” in *Terence and Interpretation*, ed. Sophia Papaioannou (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), on verbal and thematic parallels between Terence’s *Andria* and Hrotswitha’s *Gallicanus*.

⁵ As it will become evident below, I agree with the succinct statement of Albrecht Classen, “Sex on the Stage (and in the Library) of an Early Medieval Convent: Hrotsvit of Gandersheim. A Tenth-Century Convent Playwright’s Successful Competition against the Roman Poet Terence,” *Orbis Litterarum* 65, no. 3 (2010): 172 that “Hrotsvit actually became more Terentian herself than [...] she would have like to admit.”

⁶ On Hrotswitha and her works, see, e.g., Antony Augoustakis, “Hrotsvit of Gandersheim Christianizes

works, six plays with hagiographical themes.⁸ As she states in the Preface to her dramas, Terence is the model of these plays (Praefatio, fol. 78r, 4–13):⁹

Sunt etiam alii sacris inherentes paginis • qui licet alia gentilium spernant • Terentii tamen fingmenta frequentius lectitant • et dum dulcedine sermonis delectantur nefandarum notitia rerum maculantur • Unde ego Clamor Validus Gandeshemensis • non recusavi illum imitari dictando • dum alii colunt legendo • quo eodem dictationis genere • quo turpia lascivarum incesta feminarum recitabantur • laudabilis sacrarum castimonia virginum iuxta mei facultatem ingenioli celebraretur.¹⁰

Hrotswitha, however, admits that, although Terence’s work is quite popular among Christians,¹¹ it presents potentially harmful subjects. This remark is also encountered in

Terence,” in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 399–400; and Mary-Kay Gamel, “Performing Terence (and Hrotsvit) Now,” in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 468; Tara A. Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas of Hrotsvit of Gandersheim” (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2014), 7–14 gives a good synopsis of the testimonies on Hrotswitha and her cultural environment; also Stephen L. Wailes, “Hrotsvit and her World,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 3–21; Wilson, “Saxon Canoness,” 30–63 is a highly informative introduction to Hrotswitha and her work.

- ⁷ On the special status of Hrotswitha’s monastery, both intellectually and politically, and the prominent position of the canoness’s work in the cultural and political developments of her time, see Jane Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets. Language, Gender, and Authority, from Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 96–103; On Hrotswitha’s milieu as well as Hrotswitha’s work as a form of contemporary ‘feminist’ discourse, see Helene Scheck, *Reform and Resistance: Formations of Female Subjectivity in Early Medieval Ecclesiastical Culture* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2008), 121–41.
- ⁸ On Hrotswitha’s works, their production and transmission, see Walter Berschin, “Hrotsvit and her Works,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 23–34; and Katharina M. Wilson, *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: A Florilegium of her Works* (Rochester, NY: Boydell / Brewer, 1998); On Hrotswitha’s plays, their transmission, plots, sources and interpretation, see Stephen L. Wailes, “Hrotsvit’s Plays,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 121–45; on the generic fusion of Hrotswitha’s works, combining hagiology and drama, see Wilson, *Florilegium*, 111–18.
- ⁹ On this passage in relation to the question of Terence’s popularity, see Wailes, “Hrotsvit and her World,” 4–6. Hrotswitha’s self-representation and the notion of ‘rivalry’ might even evoke Terence’s own prologues; see Phyllis R. Brown, “Hrotsvit’s Apostolic Mission: Prefaces, Dedications, and other Addresses to Readers,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 244; and, more extensively, Florence Newman, “Strong Voice(s) of Hrotsvit,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 291–92; also see Wilson, *Florilegium*, 118, who makes a parallel with Terence’s use of Greek models.
- ¹⁰ “Others, though they are deeply attached to Sacred writings and scorn most pagan works, make an exception in favor of the stories of Terence, and charmed by the sweetness of the words, they are corrupted by the wickedness of the subject. Therefore I, the Strong Voice of Gandersheim, have not hesitated to imitate in my writings a poet whose works are so widely read, in order to glorify the admirable chastity of Christian virgins within the limits of my poor talent, in the same dramatic form as has been used to describe the shameless charms of sinful women.” Hrotswitha’s texts throughout this article are quoted from Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, *Hrotsvit: Opera Omnia*, ed. Walter Berschin (Leipzig: B.G. Teubner, 2001); and their translations are taken from Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, *The Plays of Hrotswitha of Gandersheim: Bilingual Edition*, ed. Robert Chipok, trans. Larissa Bonfante (Mundelein: Bolchazy-Carducci, 2013).
- ¹¹ However, Dronke reads Hrotswitha’s claims about Terence’s popularity as an exaggeration. Interestingly,

similar Christian discussions.¹² For instance, in *Confessiones* 1.16.26, Augustine, specifically referring to the rape episode in Terence's *Eunuchus*, expresses his concerns about reading a passage that mentions a rapist's expression of joy:¹³

non omnino per hanc turpitudinem verba ista commodius discuntur, sed per haec verba turpitudine ista confidentius perpetratur. Non accuso verba quasi vasa electa atque pretiosa, sed vinum erroris quod in eis nobis propinabatur ab ebris doctoribus [...].¹⁴

Augustine's metaphor of 'glass and wine' evokes Hrotswitha's contradistinction between form and content. However, unlike Augustine, Hrotswitha does not reject Terence altogether. Rather, she skillfully approaches this pagan work in a 'selective' way.¹⁵ As she explains, while keeping the 'form' of her original, she simultaneously transforms Terence's 'disturbing' themes into a Christian product which celebrates the chastity of Christian virgins.¹⁶ Interestingly, Hrotswitha's portrayal of women is often dexterously enriched by the exploitation of the theme of rape, a particularly controversial topic, as Augustine's testimony suggests.¹⁷ However, Hrotswitha explains that even though some male actions are 'disturbing,' they serve her purposes, since she deals with 'the madness of unlawful love' in order to glorify chaste women who triumph over it (Praefatio, fol. 78r, 13-24):

Hoc tamen facit non raro verecundari • gravique rubore perfundi • quod huiusmodi specie dictationis cgente detestabilem inlicite amantium dementiam • et male dulcia colloquia eorum • quae nec nostro auditu permittuntur accommodari • dictando mente

Terence was considered 'compatible' with Christian principles even in the 20th century, see Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 69-70; see for instance Gilbert Norwood, *The Art of Terence* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1923), 151; Boyle provides a good overview of how Terence was perceived as an example of Latin 'humanism' over the centuries. However, he rightly adds that some famous Terentian maxims were not 'humanistic' at all (e.g. *Adelphoe* 470-71, excusing rape, quoted on 5), see Anthony J. Boyle, "Introduction: Terence's Mirror Stage," *Ramus* 33, nos. 1-2 (2004): 1-6; for Terence's popularity through the centuries and, at the same time, Christian criticism of him, see also Classen, "Sex on the Stage," 171.

¹² See Wilson, *Florilegium*, 177, on Hrotswitha following the relevant Christian tradition, mostly represented by Augustine and Tertullian; see also Bonds, "Voice in the Dramas," 17 on the parallel with Isidore of Seville, who points to both the benefits and the 'dangers' of the study of classical authors (including Terence).

¹³ Publius Terentius Afer, *Eunuchus*, in *Comoediae*, ed. Robert Krauer and W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), 584-91.

¹⁴ "It is definitely not the case that such words as these are more conveniently learned through this kind of immorality. Rather, using such words gives greater self-assurance to carry immorality off. I am not blaming the words themselves, for they are select and precious vessels. Nonetheless, drunken teachers prepared the wine of error in them for us to drink [...]" Text and translation are quoted from Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions, Books 1-8*, ed. and trans. Carolyn Hammond (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014). On Augustine's references to Terence, including the particular passage, see Andrew Cain, "Terence in Late Antiquity," in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 391-92. On Augustine's criticism, see also Patricia McIntyre, "Comedy of Prayer: The Redemption of Terence through Christian Appropriation," in *Latin with Laughter: Terence through Time*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes, <http://www.umilta.net/terence.html> (2018).

¹⁵ Hrotswitha, unlike Augustine, does not see any dangers lurking in drama's performative form; see Michael S. J. Zampelli, "The Necessity of Hrotsvit: Evangelizing Theatre," in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim (fl. 960). Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 152-55, who also notes Hrotswitha's innovation of using of the form of (pagan) theatre for 'evangelisation.' Zampelli argues that in her Preface the canoness "invokes the theatrical tradition critiqued by Augustine and explicitly places her own work in conversation with it," at 152.

¹⁶ However, as Newlands rightly notes, Hrotswitha's association with Terence is not so much stylistic as

tractavi • et stili officio designavi • Sed <si> hęc erubescendo neglgerem • nec proposito
satisfacerem • nec innocentium laudem adeo plene iuxta meum posse exponerem • quia
quanto blandicię amentium ad illiciendum promptiores • tanto et superni adiutoris
gloria sublimior • et triumphantium victoria probatur gloriosior presertim cum
feminea fragilitas vinceret • et virilis robur confusioni subiaceret •¹⁸

Terence’s opus includes six comedies, four of which contain a rape incident in their plotline (*Adelphoe*, *Phormio*, *Hecyra*, *Eunuchus*).¹⁹ Episodes with sexual violence are also found in other popular texts of Hrotswitha’s time, which, like Terence, were included in school curricula.²⁰ Although one could question whether Hrotswitha’s relevant episodes should be recognized as a Terentian element, I assume that the canoness’s Preface indicates that she does expect from her readers to look at them from a Terentian perspective.²¹

Hrotswitha’s versions do evidently not refer to the social context of Terence’s rape incidents.²² For instance, in classical texts, the concern for the rape’s potential impact upon the victim’s social status is often discussed more extensively than the negative aspects of the action itself. This does, nonetheless, not indicate that Terence is not interested in the victim’s traumatic experience.²³ In fact, although the two authors were active in two chronologically and culturally diverse periods, the canoness was an erudite person, deeply

thematic: “[a]lthough Hrotswitha claims to be indebted to Terence for style and form [...] Hrotswitha has few linguistic borrowings from him; the predominant language of her plays is ecclesiastical rather than classical,” see Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” 370; similarly Dronke, *Women Writers*, 72; on Hrotswitha’s ‘methodology’ as a part of a general tendency of Christian authors (late antique and medieval) who interpret pagan texts according to Christian morality, see Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” 148–50; focusing on Hrotswitha’s use of the term *imitari*, Newman, “Strong Voice(s) of Hrotsvit,” 307–8 points to Hrotswitha’s antagonistic dialogue with Terence, which reflects the image of the contemporary empire as superior to that of Rome; on the latter see also Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” 157; on Hrotswitha’s antagonistic treatment of Terence, see also Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 2; Jane Stevenson, “Hrotsvit in Context: Convents and Culture in Ottonian Germany,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (fl. 960). *Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 46; Joan M. Ferrante, *To the Glory of her Sex: Women’s Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 179.

¹⁷ In fact, as Classen rightly notes, “in most of her plays we discover, curiously, an extraordinary emphasis on sexual crimes, perversions, and vices of various kinds.” See Classen, “Sex on the Stage,” 170.

¹⁸ “I have often been deeply embarrassed and blushed to turn my mind and my pen to subjects that we are not even allowed to hear, because I was forced by the task I had set myself to read and write about the dreadful madness of those driven by unlawful love and to relate their dangerously seductive arguments. But if I had avoided these subjects out of modesty I would not have been true to my intention, to praise the virtuous to the best of my ability: because the more seductive the speeches of unlawful lovers have been, the more marvelous has been the divine assistance, and the greater the merit of those who resist against such temptation, especially when it is weak women who triumph and cause strong men to retreat in confusion.”

¹⁹ James considers Glycerium in *Andria* as a rape victim, but I think that Terence’s text does not offer a clear indication of that. See Sharon L. James, “Gender and Sexuality in Terence,” in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 177.

²⁰ E.g. Statius’ *Achilleid* and Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*, see Marjorie Curry Woods, “Rape and the Pedagogical Rhetoric of Sexual Violence,” in *Criticism and Dissent in the Middle Ages*, ed. Rita Copeland (Cambridge/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), who also notes that “[t]he commentators writing for the schools, particularly for the younger students, do not allegorize or moralize these texts,” at 64.

²¹ On Hrotswitha’s sources, see Wailes, “Hrotsvit’s Plays,” 127–8 on *Dulcitius* and on 129 on *Calimachus*; in both cases, Hrotswitha seems to have treated her (not always specified) material quite creatively. On a similar reading of the Preface, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 93: “Since Terence is the only source Hrotsvit mentions by name, it is difficult to try to determine what other sources she employed.”

²² Augoustakis, “Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” 408.

²³ Seminal for the exploration of Terence’s intentions in this respect is the study by Sharon L. James, “From

acquainted with classical authors.²⁴ Hence, her exploitation of Terence is not one-dimensional. As Robert Talbot succinctly notes, “[t]he key to the recognition of Terentian elements within Hrotsvit is to notice the way she transposes them.”²⁵ Essentially, Hrotswitha’s correspondence with her *exemplum* is often a case of ‘differentiation’: the ‘bad’ characters in Hrotswitha are the pagans who threaten the innocent Christians’ chastity, while comic *meretrices* (i.e., “sex-laborers”) turn into women who eventually acknowledge their sinful life and convert to Christianity.²⁶ Within this heavily modified dramatic universe, Hrotswithian rapes constitute a potential martyrdom for Christian women who are eventually rewarded, not with a conventional marriage, as in the comic prototypes, but through their unification with God.²⁷ In fact, ‘rape’ in Hrotswitha has a special form: it is a case of intended—and in the end failed—sexual approach against unwilling Christian women.²⁸

Thus, although at first sight Hrotswitha’s plays might not reveal a strong thematic association with Terentian comedy,²⁹ a closer look at the canoness’s treatment of the ancient playwright shows that her exploitation of dramatic motifs—including that of

Boys to Men: Rape and Developing Masculinity in Terence’s *Hecyra* and *Eunuchus*,” *Helios* 25, no. 1 (1998): which shows how the rape incidents of Terence’s *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra*, deviating from the norms that govern New Comedy rapes, express a certain degree of criticism of the idea that sexual violence against women might be seen as a medium for a rapist to reach masculinity.

²⁴ On Hrotswitha’s rich educational background, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 14–17; and Wailes, “Hrotsvit and her World,” 6 (on both Christian and pagan texts); also Brown, “Hrotsvit’s Apostolic Mission,” 241–42; Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” 378–82 discusses Virgilian echoes in *Abraham*; on this see also Dronke, *Women Writers*, 79–80; on the cultural framework in which Hrotswitha worked as well as the intellectual opportunities offered in her monastery, also in association with Terence, see McIntyre, “Comedy of Prayer”; see also Stevenson, “Hrotsvit in Context,” 44–50 for the literary works Hrotswitha seems to have been acquainted with.

²⁵ Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” 148.

²⁶ In translating *meretrix*, I follow Serena S. Witzke, “Harlots, Tarts, and Hussies? A Problem of Terminology for Sex Labor in Roman Comedy,” *Helios* 42, no. 1 (2015): 7–27; see her thorough study for a good survey of the various types of prostitution in Roman comedy and the manifold meaning of the particular term. On Hrotswitha’s criticism of Terence’s representation of women, see Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, 131–32; on Hrotswitha’s treatment of the *meretrix* type, see Evangelos Karakasis, “*Quantum mutatus ab illo*: Terence in Hrotswitha,” *Hellenika* 52 (2002): 290–91; for an extensive examination of Hrotswitha’s female characters against those of Terence, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas”; based on the theological context of Hrotswitha’s work, Macy notes that ‘lascivious’ could be any woman who has sexual intercourse, see Gary Macy, “Hrotsvit’s Theology of Virginity and Continence,” in *A Companion to Hrotsvit of Gandersheim* (fl. 960). *Contextual and Interpretative Approaches*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown and Stephen L. Wailes (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2013), 72; on the other hand, as Wilson notes, some of Hrotswitha’s characters are in fact more ‘wicked’ than those of Terence. See Wilson, *Florilegium*, 117.

²⁷ For rapes resolving into marriage in ancient comedy, see, for instance, Menander’s *Samia* and *Georgos*, Plautus’ *Aulularia*, Terence’s *Adelphoe*; see further Vincent J. Rosivach, *When a Young Man Falls in Love: the Sexual Exploitation of Women in New Comedy* (London/New York: Routledge, 1998), 14–23; for Hrotswitha’s different versions of Terentian marriage, among which the case of *Dulcinius*, see Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” 153; on Hrotswitha’s exploitation of the marriage motif as well as her influence by Augustine’s relevant discussions, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 76–83.

²⁸ On Hrotswitha’s transformation of the rape motif, see Karakasis, “Terence in Hrotswitha,” 285; Augoustakis believes that the contrast between the ridiculed, failed rapes of the pagans with those of comic tradition is an intentional play by Hrotswitha, see Augoustakis, “Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” 406; see also Florence Newman, “Violence and Virginity in Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” in *Hrotsvit of Gandersheim: Contexts, Identities, Affinities, and Performances*, ed. Phyllis R. Brown, Linda A. McMillin, and Katharina M. Wilson (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2004), on Hrotswitha’s dramas celebrating chastity and virginity through the exposure of the female body, which is often placed in danger.

²⁹ See also Brown, “Interpretations and Adaptations,” 246.

rape—is in fact multifaceted.³⁰ In this context, while several scholars have rightly pointed to Hrotswitha's preoccupation with presenting the facts from a female perspective,³¹ we should not forget that Terence has also been praised for being particularly sensitive to the female characters' experience.³² Although Terence's dialogues lack the Hrotswithian female protagonists' ardent speeches, Terentian women often do have a strong voice.³³ What is more, Hrotswitha's emphasis on female qualities such as virginity, although reflecting Christian principles,³⁴ corresponds to the central theme of rape in comic plots: comic victims are always 'good' citizen girls, and this is of course one of the reasons that the plays' happy endings reward them.³⁵

In Hrotswitha's *Dulcitus*,³⁶ set in the fourth-century Roman empire under Diocletian, the eponymous character becomes obsessed with the beauty of three Christian virgins, Agapes, Chionia, and Hirena. When he arranges to meet them in order to 'satisfy' his lascivious desires, he is punished. This scene is witnessed by the virgins (fol. 91v-92r, IV.1-3, ll. 4-26), who witness Dulcitus losing his mind and 'embracing' the cooking pots instead of the girls.³⁷ Hirena acknowledges that he is *mente alienatus* ("[h]e's completely out

³⁰ For a good summary of various scholarly approaches to the extent to which Hrotswitha's work is informed by Terentian themes as well as on Hrotswitha's relationship with her prototype as a case of *aemulatio*, see Bonds, "Voice in the Dramas," 26-57; on Hrotswitha's exploitation of elements of classical comedy, see also Zampelli, "Necessity of Hrotsvit," 153, and his analysis of the plays on 159-97; on Hrotswitha's deep knowledge of Terentian motifs, see the analysis by Karakasis, "Terence in Hrotswitha"; Gamel traces parallels between Terence's *Eunuchus* and Hrotswitha's *Pafnutius*, especially in regard to the treatment of women, see Gamel, "Performing Terence," 478-81; also McIntyre, "Comedy of Prayer," traces Hrotswitha's conscious use of Terentian motifs, such as the use of disguise in *Abraham*.

³¹ On Hrotswitha's accentuation of female roles, often against her sources, and her challenging of 'traditional' ideas about women, see Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, 143-65; see also Ferrante, *Glory of her Sex*, 181-3 on Hrotswitha's dramatic production focusing on female protagonists; on this innovation, see also Bonds, "Voice in the Dramas," *passim*, and 58-95 on how he transforms women from 'objects' (like those of Terence's plays) into 'subjects.' Hrotswitha even presents herself as a female author in correspondence with "male criticism"; see Brown, "Hrotsvit's Apostolic Mission," 246.

³² Compare Thais' monologue in *Eun.* 197-203; also Bacchis in *Heautontimorumenos* 381-95, who describes men's selfish attitude towards *meretrices*; on Terence's portrayal of *meretrices*, see section 3 of this paper. Terence takes into consideration the female perspective in other instances too: Bacchis in *Hecyra* exposes the danger of being treated with suspicion by women of her profession (775-76) and, also, by men (820); also, in *Hecyra* 828-9 we learn how Myrina was violently raped by Pamphilus; similarly, we get a description of Pamphila's shocking rape experience in *Eunuchus* (657-59). In addition, in *Andria* 74-86 Simo narrates how a poor girl, Chrysis, was forced by circumstances to become a sex-laborer. On Terence's focus on the female perspective in the rape incidents of *Eunuchus* and *Hecyra*, see also James, "From Boys to Men," 41-45.

³³ Compare the case of Pamphila in *Eunuchus*, advocated by Pythias and Thais.

³⁴ As Macy points out, Hrotswitha's plays promotes 'virginity' even in marriage, see Macy, "Hrotsvit's Theology," 63-64, see *passim* for examples and Hrotswitha's theological background on this matter; on Hrotswitha's emphasis on virginity largely influenced by monastic culture, see also McIntyre, "Comedy of Prayer."

³⁵ See also Dronke, *Women Writers*, 72, who notes that virgins in both Terence and Hrotswitha are victims who are eventually saved.

³⁶ I disagree with Newlands, "Hrotswitha's Debt," 374 that *Abraham* exploits the theme of rape, since in that case we have a clear indication that Maria was seduced and thus had intercourse in her own free will (fol. 103r-103v, III.2, ll. 7-18).

³⁷ *Estimat se / nostris uti amplexibus— nunc sartagi-nes et caccabos amplectitur • mitia libans oscula—* ("[h]e thinks he is embracing us! [n]ow he is fondling the pots / [a]nd hugging the frying pans to his eager breast, / [g]iving them all long, sweet kisses!"). As Classen, "Sex on the Stage," 176 explains, "both kisses and embraces are nothing but thinly veiled symbolic actions leading directly to sexual exchange, or, in this case, rape."

of his mind”), while Chionia names the episode as *ridiculum* (“the funniest thing”).³⁸ Having become the object of ridicule, the enraged Dulcitus orders that the girls be publicly humiliated by being stripped naked. Miraculously, their clothes stay on and the girls’ chastity is preserved.

Intended sexual violence is also noted in *Calimachus*, set in first-century Ephesus. The eponymous character, a pagan, is desperately in love with Drusiana, a noble Christian married woman. To escape Calimachus’ malevolent advances, Drusiana prays to God, and is miraculously saved by death (fol. 96r–96v, IV). Calimachus, devastated, is easily induced by the greedy slave Fortunatus to ‘use’ Drusiana’s dead body—still beautiful and attractive—as he pleases (fol. 96v–97r, VI.1; note Fortunatus’ promises to Calimachus: *dedam illud / tuis usibus*—“I will give her body to you / [t]o do with as you please,” *[a]butere ut libet*—“[u]se her as you will;” also, Calimachus’ words in front of Drusiana’s body: *[n]unc in mea situm est potestate • quantislibet / iniuriis • te velim lacesere*—“[n]ow it lies within my power to force you, / [t]o bruise you and injure you as much as I want.”). While preparing to penetrate Drusiana’s corpse, Calimachus suddenly dies (fol. 97r, VII.1). At the end, Saint John, urged by Christ, resurrects both Calimachus and Drusiana. Realising his fault, the pagan finally converts to Christianity (fol. 99r, IX.13, ll. 3–25).

In both *Dulcitus* and *Calimachus*, Hrotswitha creates a situation totally different from that of her prototypes: in this case, the (failed) rapist is the ‘blocking character’ who threatens the protagonist’s chastity.³⁹ More importantly, whereas in classical comedies the rape is firmly associated with the play’s happy ending, which ends with marriage, in Hrotswitha, the plot’s positive outcome is secured by the *prevention* of rape.⁴⁰ In other words, while Hrotswitha alludes to several recurrent themes of comic rapes, her exploitation is manifold. Some of these themes are eventually presented from a different angle. For instance, the theme of marriage is evoked at the end of *Dulcitus*. However, we do not have a conventional marriage: Hirena, while dying, expects to enter Christ’s wedding chamber (fol. 94v, XIV, ll. 6–18: *virginitatisque receptura coronam • intrabo aethereum aeterni / regis thalamum*—“And [I will] wear the crown of purity. / And I will enter the heavenly bridal chamber of the Eternal King”).⁴¹

Furthermore, the virtue of virginity is singled out for praise in both plays. In *Calimachus*, although Drusiana is married, there is strong emphasis on her sexual abstinence (fol. 95v, II.3, l. 10), reflecting in this way the traditional view of rape victims as being chaste. In this play, however, Hrotswitha subverts the comic tradition of silent virgin victims, as Drusiana defends herself against the man who threatens her chastity (compare her reactions in fol. 96r,

³⁸ It has been rightly observed that this scene contains mime elements; see Dronke, *Women Writers*, 59; Wilson, *Florilegium*, 10; Zampelli, “Necessity of Hrotsvit,” 167.

³⁹ On Hrotswitha’s use of ‘stock characters,’ see Karakasis, “Terence in Hrotswitha,” 287–88. Here, I follow the wide use of the term ‘blocking character’ in the scholarship on Roman comedy to indicate the character that acts as an obstacle to the union of the young man with his beloved. This ‘obstacle’ might be the young man’s father, as Simo in Terence’s *Andria*, who does not want his son to marry a poor girl, or a pimp, like Cappadox in Plautus’ *Curculio*, who keeps the object of the young man’s desire enslaved at a brothel; for examples from Roman comedy, see David Konstan, *Roman Comedy* (Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press, 1983), 28–29. Following this categorisation, ‘blocking characters’ in Hrotswitha’s dramas can be considered those who threaten the heroine’s union with God.

⁴⁰ On Hrotswitha’s hostile position towards rape, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 69–70. See also Augoustakis, “Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” 402, who notes the ‘heroism’ of the women-victims. See also Scheck, *Reform and Resistance*, 155–60 on how Hrotswitha’s rape incidents accentuate the failure of the male rapists’ wicked nature on the one hand and the women’s strength on the other.

⁴¹ On Hrotswitha’s marriage taking a different form from comic tradition, see Augoustakis, “Hrotsvit of Gandersheim,” 402; and Karakasis, “Terence in Hrotswitha,” 284.

III.1-5, ll. 4–32).⁴² She even calls Calimachus a *leno* (l. 14); although here the term is used as an accusation,⁴³ it bears great significance in comic contexts: *lenones* are comic pimps, the blocking characters *par excellence*, who enslave good, chaste girls.⁴⁴ Moreover, Calimachus, although he does not manage to fulfil his initial plans, shares a common feature with some other—successful—comic rapists: he ultimately shows remorse (see his request for becoming a Christian in fol. 99r, IX.13, ll. 3–25).⁴⁵ Calimachus’ reaction is contrasted with that of Dulcitus, who seems to be closer to the rapist Chaerea from Terence’s *Eunuchus*. Chaerea even refers to his act in a rather triumphal tone.⁴⁶ In fact, Dulcitus and Chaerea not only fail to show any sign of regret concerning their actions, but they also present them as an act of justified violence against their victims: Dulcitus’ single aim is to make possession of the girls and to overcome their resistance (fol. 91r, II.1-fol. 91v, III.1),⁴⁷ while Chaerea considers his attitude as a way to take revenge on the sex-laborer Thais, for her alleged crimes against men.⁴⁸

Undeniably, Hrotswitha’s rape incidents share striking parallels with *Eunuchus*’ rape episode. Both Hrotswithian rapists follow Chaerea, *Eunuchus*’ young rapist, in praising their (potential) victims’ attractiveness.⁴⁹ Dulcitus stresses the girls’ beauty (fol. 90v, I.1, ll. 3–14; also, fol. 91r, II.1, ll. 5 and 7),⁵⁰ which definitely constitutes one of the rapist’s motives. Calimachus, whose role was compared to that of a comic *adulescens amans*,⁵¹ reacts in a similar manner (fol. 95r, II.1, l. 11 and fol. 96r, III.1, l. 8). Indeed, the whole episode shows significant parallels in *Eunuchus*’ subplot with regard to Chaerea.⁵² In both plays, the ‘rape’ is prompted by a slave: like Chaerea, it is Calimachus who asks for the slave’s help. However, I certainly do not argue that Hrotswitha in *Calimachus* follows Terence’s

⁴² On Drusiana against *Eunuchus*’ silent Pamphila, see Bonds, “Voice in the Dramas,” 69; Wilson, *Florilegium*, 121 suggests that the audience here would be able to trace the entertaining opposition between Drusiana and mythological passive victims; on the canoness subverting the stereotype of ‘passive’ Terentian girls, see also Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” 372; on Hrotswitha assigning strong voice to her heroines, see also Newman, “Strong Voice(s) of Hrotsvit,” 293–94.

⁴³ See the translation in Hrotswitha of Gandersheim, *The Plays*, for *leno nefande*: “[u]nspeakable man, you are no better than a flesh peddler”; see also the translation by Wilson, *Florilegium*, “vile seducer.”

⁴⁴ On this stock character, see Richard L. Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 71–72.

⁴⁵ For instance, Aeschinus in Terence’s *Adelphoe* (471–74) and Lyconides in Plautus’ *Aulularia* (738–39) admit that their actions were wrong and even ask for forgiveness.

⁴⁶ *Eun.* 549–56. Similarly, Diniarchus in Plautus’ *Truculentus* is concerned only because his action was revealed; see his expression of fear in ll. 96–797, 818–20, 823–24, before he is forced to admit the truth and ask for forgiveness (ll. 26–828).

⁴⁷ On Dulcitus’ reliance on his power and authority, see also Classen, “Sex on the Stage,” 176.

⁴⁸ *Eun.* 382–87.

⁴⁹ On this play being particularly ‘present’ in Hrotswitha’s plays, see various analogies discussed in Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” e.g. 372–77, on *Abraham*; also Talbot, “Hrotsvit’s Dramas,” 154–55, on both *Abraham* and *Pafnutius*; and Gamel, “Performing Terence,” 473 on *Pafnutius*, whose eminent *meretrix* is also called Thais.

⁵⁰ On Hrotswitha keeping the emphasis on the girls’ beauty, see Karakasis, “Terence in Hrotswitha,” 284. On 285–86 he points to “love from the first sight” as another parallel.

⁵¹ See Wailes, “Hrotsvit’s Plays,” 129, on the fact that “Calimachus represents the character of the hot-blooded young lover familiar from Terentian comedy”; similarly, Wilson, *Florilegium*, 121. The term *adulescens amans* (“young man in love”) refers to a common character type of Greek and Roman New Comedy: a young man in his twenties, certainly not poor and thus able to enjoy romantic affairs; he is passionate and feels attracted to the physical beauty of a young girl, usually from a lower class; marriage usually marks the end of this state and the young man’s transition to adulthood; see further Rosivach, *Sexual Exploitation in New Comedy*, 4–5. Phaedria in Terence’s *Eunuchus*, deeply in love with Thais, a sex-laborer, is a typical example; also, Aeschinus in *Adelphoe*, son of Micio, in love with a poor girl, *Pamphila*.

⁵² The similarity with *Eunuchus* has been already noted by Coulter, “Terentian Comedies,” 523, who points

Eunuchus in every respect. For instance, Fortunatus’ contribution to Calimachus’ crime is much more significant than Parmeno’s in *Eunuchus*. Hrotswitha’s Fortunatus seems to follow a traditional slave pattern—i.e., a helper in a lover’s affairs, a pattern that is, however, not fully followed by Parmeno in *Eunuchus*.⁵³ Calimachus is even presented as the treacherous slave’s victim (fol. 99v, IX.22, ll. 5–18), while, in the case of *Eunuchus*, Chaerea is the one who victimises his slave: as a result of his actions, Pythias treats Parmeno in a harsh manner (942–70, 1002–29) and Phaedria beats Dorus (669, 716). In fact, although Parmeno suggests Chaerea’s entrance into the girl’s room (372–75) and later even boasts of this scheme (923–29), his contribution to Chaerea’s actions is actually not that decisive.⁵⁴

Despite the evident differences between the two plays, *Eunuchus*’ influence on *Calimachus* can be discerned in some linguistic parallels. For instance, in both plays, the rape is described as a crime: both Andronichus and Calimachus refer to the rape by the term *facinus* (fol. 97v, IX.2, l. 11; fol. 98v, IX.10, l. 5; fol. 100r, IX.22, l. 18), a term also used for describing Chaerea’s action.⁵⁵ Similarly, Saint John’s reference to Calimachus’ sins is made through the term *vitia*, in fol. 98v, IX.10, l. 3, which is also associated with the way in which comic rapes are depicted (compare the term *vitiavit* in *Eun.* 654). Even Calimachus acknowledges the brutality of his intended action (see fol. 97r, VII.1, l. 20, *iniuriis*), when he gives an explicit description of his plans (ll. 9–20: *Nunc in mea situm est potestate • quantislibet / iniuriis • te velim lacessere*—“Now it lies within my power to force you, / To bruise you and injure you as much as I want.”). Although Chaerea does not provide such details, there is a similar, strong emphasis on the rapist’s violent behaviour in *Eunuchus*, portrayed in the vivid description of Pamphila’s negative experience.⁵⁶ What is more, Saint John refers to Calimachus’ *dementia* and *insania* (fol. 98v, IX.10, l. 7), the elements of ‘unlawful love,’ as suggested in Hrotswitha’s Preface (see second passage quoted above), evoking Chaerea’s characterisation as ‘mad.’⁵⁷ In addition, Calimachus openly claims that he will come up with a trick to satisfy his desires (see the use of *insidiis*, in fol. 96r, III.5, l. 7), a point that, once again, calls to mind Terence’s play. Indeed, in both *Calimachus* and *Eunuchus*, the two men approach their (potential) rape victims through a furtive entrance, which is part of a plan. Calimachus manages to enter the room where Drusiana’s body lies by offering money to dexterous Fortunatus (fol. 97r, VI), while Chaerea manages to get into Pamphila’s room only because he is disguised as a eunuch (see the exposition of Parmeno’s plan in 369–77).

Given Terence’s popularity and her own remarks in the preface of her work, Hrotswitha possibly expected her learned readers to be able to trace the manifold correspondence between classical texts and her own versions.⁵⁸ It would therefore be beneficial to explore some possible contexts through which Terence’s comedies were read. As Terence was taught at schools and

to the love-theme of the play; she rightly finds a parallel between the expression of love to friends by both Calimachus and Chaerea; see also *passim* for other analogies between the *Eunuchus* and Hrotswitha’s plays (e.g., in the use of disguise).

⁵³ On this comic stereotypic role and Terence’s slaves, often deviating from the comic tradition as established by Plautus, see the comprehensive discussion by Evangelos Karakasis, “Slaves and Masters,” in *A Companion to Terence*, ed. Antony Augoustakis and Ariana Traill (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 211–22. On Terence’s slaves and the playwright’s modification of “the convention of the slave who manages the action,” see the classic study by C.W. Amerasinghe, “The Part of the Slave in Terence’s Drama,” *Greece & Rome* 19, no. 56 (1950): quotation on 62.

⁵⁴ On Parmeno not being the traditional ‘clever slave,’ since he fails to take control of Chaerea’s scheme, see Karakasis, “Slaves and Masters,” 213.

⁵⁵ *Eun.* 644.

⁵⁶ *Eun.* 645–46, 659–60, 820.

⁵⁷ *Eun.* 301

⁵⁸ On Hrotswitha’s audience having members also in the “imperial court,” see Ferrante, *Glory of her Sex*, 175,

medieval monasteries, an overview of the most important exegetical treatise on Terence can be illuminating and enhance our understanding of how Terence's rapes were interpreted.⁵⁹

3 The context: Terence in schooling

From early on, Terence's comedies formed a part of the Latin curriculum.⁶⁰ Fortunately, we can trace Terence's use in Latin education by means of a unique testimony, namely the commentary of Aelius Donatus, a grammarian of the fourth century, who was a prominent teacher in Rome, where Jerome was one of his students. Donatus' commentary covers a wide range of themes, discusses matters of style and language, often by quoting examples from other sources, such as Virgil, and elaborates on matters of content and plot.⁶¹ A good example of the prominent position that Donatus' commentary held in the interpretation of Terence's work is the long debate on Terence's *meretrices*, who often deviate from the comic stereotype of the greedy sex-laborer.⁶² For instance, in a comment on Terence's *Hecyra* (774.3), Donatus explains that the playwright treated this stock character in a special way, which stands in contrast to comic tradition. However, as Dwora Gilula argued forty years ago, the mere indication towards a *meretrix*'s positive characteristics cannot support the claim of creating a new stock type.⁶³ She has nevertheless pointed to the fact that the way comic *meretrices* are treated in modern scholarship is significantly influenced by Donatus' criticism.⁶⁴ Gilula adds that Donatus' approach of Terence's *meretrices* must also have been influenced by the cultural

also 176 and 179 for her aristocratic, erudite male readers; Dronke, *Women Writers*, 57-58 suggests that it is plausible that Terence's comedies were recited at the Ottonian court; also, in commenting Hrotswitha's sexual themes, Classen, "Sex on the Stage," 192 points out that "Hrotsvit's audience [...] was more worldly than in a standard monastic setting."

⁵⁹ It seems that Terence was especially popular in the 10th century, see Bonds, "Voice in the Dramas," 14; on Terence's popularity in the Middle Ages because of the 'purity' of his language as well as the moral aspects of his work, see Karakasis, "Terence in Hroswitha," 279-80; on Terence in medieval education, including monasteries, see also Augoustakis, "Hrotsvit of Gandersheim," 397-99.

⁶⁰ See Cain, "Terence in Late Antiquity," 382-83.

⁶¹ On the commentary and its themes, see Chrysanthi Demetriou, "Aelius Donatus and his Commentary on Terence's Comedies," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Comedy*, ed. Michael Fontaine and Adele C. Scafuro (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 782-84; for the evidence on Donatus, see Robert A. Kaster, *Guardians of Language: the Grammarians and Society in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 275-78; Rainer Jakobi, *Die Kunst der Exegese im Terenzkommentar des Donat* (Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1996), is the standard study of Donatus' exegetical method.

⁶² On Donatus' remarks on Terence's *meretrices*, see Chrysanthi Demetriou, "Crossing the Boundary of Dramatic Illusion in Terence: Courtesans in Terence and Donatus' Criticism," *Rosetta* 8, no. 5 (2010): 16-33.

⁶³ Dwora Gilula, "The Concept of the *bona meretrix*: A Study of Terence's Courtesans," *Rivista di filologia e d'istruzione classica* 108 (1980): 142-65; over the following decades, Gilula's study has caused several diverse reactions. See e.g. John Barsby, "Donatus on Terence," in *Dramatische Wäldchen: Festschrift für Eckard Lefèvre zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Stärk Ekkehard and Gregor Vogt-Spira (Hildesheim, New York: Olms, 2000), 508 (and n. 17), who, although he identifies some stock 'meretricious' characteristics in Thais of *Eunuchus* (mainly in regard to her receipt of presents by her lovers), nevertheless, regards her as good-hearted; a similar approach is found in Ortwin Knorr, "The Character of Bacchis in Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos*," *American Journal of Philology* 111 (1995): 221 n. 1, who disagrees with Gilula. This paper rightly points out that much of Bacchis' negative characterization in *Heautontimorumenos* is given by biased male reports and that her portrayal by Terence is hardly one-dimensional; similarly Rosivach, *Sexual Exploitation in New Comedy*, 189 n. 4, who notes that *meretrices* "display a complexity of motivations that cannot be reduced to simple terms of 'good' and 'bad'." On the other hand James, "Gender and Sexuality in Terence," 190 rejects the distinction between *mala* and *bona* as a concept that expresses the "citizen perspective."

⁶⁴ Gilula, "*Bona meretrix*," 142.

trends of his time. More specifically, Gilula notes that, for the Roman audience of Terence’s comedies, the treatment of a character as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ was often determined by his or her social status and profession,⁶⁵ which was certainly not the case in Donatus’ time, “which saw the victory of Christianity.”⁶⁶

Although we do not know whether or not Donatus embraced Christian beliefs himself,⁶⁷ the grammarian’s students certainly included people who were acquainted with Christian ideas. Jerome is the most well-known example.⁶⁸ As Gilula points out, Donatus’ commentary was composed under very different circumstances from those in which Terence’s work was produced. Despite this chronological and cultural gap, the commentary undoubtedly played a central role in the way Terence was perceived throughout the centuries. There is evidence that Donatus’ commentary circulated in medieval monasteries in Europe, including Germany; the rich library of Hrotswitha’s monastery—which, however, was destroyed—probably held a copy.⁶⁹ It has been shown that Hrotswitha’s adaptations of Terence’s comedies include various elements of literary theory found in the commentary, such as the discussion on the arrangement of the plot.⁷⁰ Given this important evidence, we cannot exclude the possibility that the portrayal of Hrotswitha’s ‘good-hearted’ *meretrices* was also informed by Donatus’ reading.⁷¹ In this context, it would be interesting to examine the commentator’s thoughts on comic rapes. The ultimate purpose of this examination is to investigate whether Donatus’ approach to this controversial theme might have informed the way Hrotswitha read—and subsequently used—Terence’s rape incidents.

4 Donatus on Terence’s rapes

Donatus’ most extensive comments on rapes are found in the commentary on *Eunuchus*, the Terentian play with the most unusual—and thus perhaps most shocking—rape incident.⁷²

⁶⁵ Gilula, “*Bona meretrix*,” 148: “[t]he *meretrix* by virtue of her profession was always *mala*.” However, we do have references to ‘good’ *meretrices* throughout Roman literature; in such cases, the moral qualities of a *meretrix* surpass the negative implications of her profession and sometimes even improve her social status; for relevant examples, see Anise K. Strong, *Prostitutes and Matrons in the Roman World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 42–61.

⁶⁶ Quotation from Gilula, “*Bona meretrix*,” 149.

⁶⁷ Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 70–95 gives a succinct overview of the evidence of the grammarians’ relationship with Christianity. This evidence is in fact scarce: although some Christian testimonies reject ‘classical’ education, often associated with the elite and the pagan culture, there are also Christian fathers (including eminent Church leaders, both in the West and the East), who acted as grammarians.

⁶⁸ On Jerome’s dilemma, wavering between the values of his literary education and Christian faith, see the evidence in *ibid.*, 81–83.

⁶⁹ Karakasis, “Terence in Hroswitha,” 280, n. 8.

⁷⁰ Karakasis, “Terence in Hroswitha,” *passim*; in defending Hrotswitha’s deep knowledge of Terence Brown, “Hrotsvit’s Apostolic Mission,” 245 also points to the survival of a great number of Terence’s manuscripts accompanied by Donatus’ commentary. Of course, Donatus’ grammatical work was also well-known; Wilson, “Saxon Canoness,” 31–32 notes that Hrotswitha “shows familiarity with grammatical and metrical textbooks and commentaries, such as those of Donatus and Isidore of Seville”; on Hrotswitha’s education and her awareness of “almost all of the figures and tropes discussed by Donatus,” see also Wilson, *Florilegium*, 7.

⁷¹ See Newlands, “Hrotswitha’s Debt,” 382–91, in regard to *Pafnutius*, on Hrotswitha’s influence by the Terentian version of the ‘good-hearted’ *meretrix*; see also Karakasis, “Terence in Hroswitha,” 290, on Hrotswithian *meretrices*’ blandishments, a common characteristic of comic *meretrices*, according to Donatus.

⁷² On this rape, not following the traditional patterns of comic rapes, see Rosivach, *Sexual Exploitation in New Comedy*, 46; and James, “From Boys to Men,” esp. 40–41; also, comparisons with other rape incidents of Terence are found in Louise Pearson Smith, “Audience Response to Rape: Chaerea in Terence’s *Eunuchus*,” *Helios* 21, no. 1 (1994): 21–38.

One of the commentator's most influential remarks is the indication that the victim had taken a shower before meeting her rapist, an act that evokes wedding ceremony procedures:⁷³

relictæ nonnullæ, ut lauari possit ea uirgo, quæ sub uitii huius occasione nuptura est.
hoc enim totum sic inducit poeta, ut non abhorreat a legitimis nuptiis [...]⁷⁴

Katerina Philippides, drawing on Donatus' comments, argues that Terence thus mitigates the negative effects of Chaerea's actions.⁷⁵ Although it is not really obvious whether Terence takes a positive approach to the incident,⁷⁶ the intention of Donatus' comments is certainly clear. As in the case of the aforementioned comic *meretrices'* representation, Donatus' comments are certainly intriguing, since they offer a more positive perspective on the incident.⁷⁷ For instance, Donatus argues that Chaerea's action was significantly prompted by a wall-painting at Thais' house:

bene accedit repente pictura ad hortamenta aggradientæ virginis, ideo quia non ad hoc uenerat Chaerea, ut continuo uitaret puellam, sed ut uideret, audiret essetque una (see v. 26),⁷⁸ cum nihil amplius cogitare ausus fuerit, usque dum picturam cerneret.⁷⁹

Donatus thus stresses that Chaerea had not thought of the rape in advance:

hic ostendit non sibi hæc primum nunc in mentem uenisse, sed tunc etiam cogitata, cum esset in meretricis domo.⁸⁰

Although the commentator sympathizes with Chaerea's excuses, at the same time, he chastises the rapist's attitude towards the girl:

non amore facit sed iniuria.⁸¹

⁷³ Donatus' text is quoted from Aelius Donatus, *Commentum Terenti*, ed. Paulus Wessner (Stuttgart: B. G. Teubner, 1902–1905), *lemmata* are omitted. The translations are mine.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, *ad. Eun.* 581.2. "Some girls were left behind. Consequently, the girl, who as a result of this crime will get married later, will be able to have a bath. For the poet presents the whole thing in such a way so that it does not differ from a legitimate marriage [...]."

⁷⁵ Katerina Philippides, "Terence's *Eunuchus*: Elements of the Marriage Ritual in the Rape Scene," *Mnemosyne* 48, no. 3 (1995): 272–84. As Hunter, *New Comedy*, 94 points out, "[i]t is clear that Donatus too was worried by Chaerea's action; a number of notes in his commentary seek to explain or mitigate this deed;" he gathers Donatus' relevant comments on 167, n. 20.

⁷⁶ I would rather agree with James, "From Boys to Men," 40, n. 37, that, in this instance, Terence's allusions to marriage reflect his critical approach to the incident: "Terence uses these elements of the wedding ritual to tighten the connection between rape and marriage in this play, and that given Terence's critical view of the connections between rape and marriage in Rome, wedding rites that are performed unwittingly—not to say unwillingly—by a young woman do not excuse rape."

⁷⁷ On Donatus' positive portrayal of Chaerea, see Barsby, "Donatus on Terence," 509; see also Smith, "Audience Response to Rape," 21 for a good summary of the diverse reactions by several scholars in the 20th century; Chaerea's characterization interestingly ranges from 'immoral,' 'selfish' and 'disingenuous' to 'charming' and 'resourceful.'

⁷⁸ Not part of Terence's original text, but Wessner's indication of a parallel.

⁷⁹ "The sudden appearance of the painting suitably encourages the attack on the girl; because Chaerea had not come with this intention, that is, of dishonouring the girl immediately, but, at first, he merely desired to look at, listen to and be with her [see *Eun.* 574]; since he would not dare to think of anything further, as long as he did not look at the painting." From Donatus, *Commentum Terenti*, *ad. Eun.* 584.1.

⁸⁰ "Here, it is shown that this had not entered his mind from the start, but he had thought of it at that time, that is, when he was at the sex-laborer's house," *ibid.*, *ad. Eun.* 592.2.

⁸¹ "He does this not because of love but with outrage," *ibid.*, *ad. Eun.* 646.1.

quid si uerberata est? sed non puderet queri. haec autem iniuria apud uirginem non habet nomen.⁸²

A similar remark is found in the comments on *Phormio*, where Donatus stresses the negative aspects of the rapist’s action again:

bene ‘compressit’, quod interdum iniuriae est, non amoris.⁸³

Evidently, the commentator is particularly interested in the moral dimension of the characters’ attitude.⁸⁴ We could recall here the famous passage from *De comoedia*, attached to Donatus’ commentary, according to which comedy presents both what should be imitated and what should be avoided.⁸⁵ In this context, he also comments on Chaerea’s claim that deceiving *meretrices* is acceptable (*ad Eun.*):

bene non ‘iudicent’, quia et hoc ipsum non satis probum est, id est meretricem fallere.⁸⁶

Although this comment is not directly related to the rape incident, it forms one of the many examples that reveal Donatus’ interest in accentuating moral paradigms or criticising anything not morally acceptable. Similarly, in the commentary on *Adelphoe*, Donatus explains that Aeschinus’ act of rape is understandable, but this does not mean that it is acceptable:

nihil iam de ea sumptum consuetudine est, quod non humanum. et hoc dicere solemus, ubi peccatum quidem non negamus, sed tolerabile esse dicimus.⁸⁷

id est: intelligit, sentit, quia superatus furore peccauerat et quia qui impulsione peccat, non peccat ratiocinatione.⁸⁸

As in the case of Chaerea’s portrayal, the commentator cannot refrain from stating that Aeschinus’ action is of course not morally accepted:

⁸² “What if she was beaten? But she wouldn’t be ashamed to complain. This outrage against the girl, however, has no name,” *ibid.*, *ad Eun.* 659.2.

⁸³ “Nicely *compressit*, which is occasionally used to denote outrage, not love,” *ibid.*, *ad Phorm.* 1018.1.

⁸⁴ See Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, 12: “Explication of the poets combined study of the language, as its larger part, with historical and ethical instruction. [...] The actions of men and gods were explained and judged in terms of accepted *mores* and so were used to confirm them.” Also, on 14: “Whatever its other shortcomings, the grammarian’s school did one thing superbly, providing the language and *mores* through which a social and political elite recognized its members.”

⁸⁵ “Comoedia est fabula diuersa instituta continens affectuum ciuiliū ac priuatorum, quibus discitur, quid sit in uita utile, quid contra euitandum,” in *De comoedia*, V.1.

⁸⁶ Donatus, *Commentum Terenti*, 387.2. “It is right that *iudicent*, ‘they judge,’ is not used, because it is not honourable enough, that is, to deceive a sex-laborer.” See further Sharon L. James, “*Fallite Fallentes*: Rape and Intertextuality in Terence’s *Eunuchus* and Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*,” *EuGeStA* 6 (2016): who rightly points out that the interrelation between deception and sexual violence against *meretrices*, epitomized in the manifold meaning of *ludere* (see esp. 101–4), is prevalent in the rape episode of *Eunuchus*; in this article, James convincingly shows that this theme, as exploited by Terence, is also evident in some instances of the first book of Ovid’s *Ars Amatoria*.

⁸⁷ Donatus, *Commentum Terenti*, *ad Adel.* 471.1. “Nothing non-human is assumed from this habit. And we tend to say this when we do not of course deny that it is a mistake, but we say it is tolerable.”

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, *ad Adel.* 471.2. “This is: he understands, he feels, because he has sinned, conquered by passion, and because the one who sins from impulse does not sin from reasoning;” *superatus furore* is proposed by *Hyperdonat*.

consolatio ab exemplo. et ‘boni’ non: cum hoc facerent, sed: alias boni.⁸⁹

Also, as in *Eunuchus*’ commentary, Donatus is again particularly interested in the fact that a marriage eventually takes place:

sollicita obsequela Hegionis ultima in loquendo ostendit impotentiore personam contra Aeschinum; quo magis gaudium crescit comoediae, quando tali ac tanto pauperior puella sed tamen cupita iungetur.⁹⁰

It has been rightly noted that Donatus considers the incident’s social dimension.⁹¹ However, the possible effects of the commentator’s discussion on the actual audience of his treatise have not been adequately explored. As seen above, Gilula proposed that the rise of Christianity should constitute a central factor in our interpretation of Donatus’ comments on various moral issues. The commentary, however, should not be read solely in relation to its different cultural context,⁹² but also in light of its educational purposes. As far as rapes are concerned, Donatus’ approach is twofold: while he accepts such incidents as unavoidable comic motifs which readers have to deal with or as actions that can occur under certain circumstances, at the same time, he expresses a fierce criticism against the rapists’ attitudes. The commentator’s critical approach is also evident in his effort of mitigation: in his teaching, the grammarian certainly tries to ‘soften’ disturbing aspects of ‘controversial’ topics. Again, the parallel with Augustine is illuminating. As seen above, the latter considers the teaching of rape episodes to young students to be particularly problematic. Although Donatus does not share Augustine’s concerns, he still acknowledges the moral issues raised in these episodes.

5 Conclusion

Some parallels between Donatus’ and Hrotswitha’s approaches are evident. Both authors show a remarkable interest in the dramatic conventions that govern the rape motif: the emphasis on marriage is an indicative example. Another similarity is that, in both cases, rape is presented in a negative light (see the common use of the term *iniuria*). This negative evaluation of rape can be expected from a contemporary point of view. At the same time, however, both Donatus (see the *scholia* on *Adelphoe*) and Hrotswitha’s *Calimachus* emphasise the ‘human’ aspect of the ‘sinner’: Andronichus, for example, claims that Calimachus eventually resurrects because he just acted *ignorantia* (“out of ignorance,” fol. 98r, IX. 2, l. 20) and that he was *carnali deceptus delectacione* (“[d]eceived by love of

⁸⁹ Donatus, *Commentum Terenti, ad. Adel.* 688.2. “Consolation by example. And ‘boni’ is not ‘when they did this’, but ‘good in other respects’.”

⁹⁰ Ibid., *ad Adel.* 506. “Hegio’s last words, anxious and obsequious, point to a character helpless against Aeschinus. The delight that derives from the comedy accentuates further when a poorer but nevertheless desirable girl gets married to someone of this sort and of such value.”

⁹¹ Rosivach, *Sexual Exploitation in New Comedy*, 20.

⁹² Barsby, “Donatus on Terence,” 510 rightly notes that Terence’s audience would have less negative feelings about rape than Donatus’ readers in the fourth century. Certainly, we have a significant time span here, from Terence’s second century BCE to Donatus’ fourth century CE; see Suzanne Dixon, *Reading Roman Women* (London: Duckworth, 2001), 45-55, on legislation on rape and its development from the first century BCE to the 6th century CE; although the rape of a freeborn girl was considered a case of criminal violence already from the Julian law of the first century BCE, Constantine’s law in the 4th century clearly imposed death penalty in the case of a girl’s ‘abduction’ (see esp. 51-52). However, this of course does not mean that Terence’s audience would have been positive towards Chaerea’s action; see Smith, “Audience Response to Rape,” who notes that a girl’s rape is considered an outrage in Roman society and argues that some members of the Roman audience would approach Chaerea’s overall behavior in a negative way.

flesh," l. 19), while Fortunatus acted *malitia* ("out of wickedness," l. 20). So the moral conviction of rape is not completely negative. There still is a lot of understanding for the 'human nature' of the act. Furthermore, the parallel examination of Donatus' and Hrotswitha's readings of Terentian rape is significant not so much for revealing an identical treatment of this comic motif, but rather for investigating the extent to which the exegetical tradition, here represented by Donatus, informed Hrotswitha's exploitation of Terence (see the research question posed above). Undoubtedly, Hrotswitha's testimony reveals a process that was initiated with the inclusion of Terence's comedies in the educational curriculum, namely the challenge of dealing with 'disturbing' themes from classical texts.⁹³ In this context, Donatus' commentary constitutes the first extensive evidence of the way Roman drama was studied and interpreted in light of certain principles and purposes.⁹⁴ It is particularly important that, in both cases, the rape episodes are used as the ideal instances for moral instruction. It is also remarkable that, although the aim of Donatus' work is very different from Hrotswitha's, both cases present a certain level of 'acceptance' of a theme that possibly seems much more disturbing for later audiences. As seen above, Donatus' observations, although criticising some instances of the rapists' behaviour, give an idea of the action itself, without any hints of 'embellishment.'⁹⁵ Similarly, Hrotswitha's versions do not hesitate to exploit this ancient comic motif, again quite explicitly. The popularity of Donatus' work throughout the Middle Ages suggests that a common background,⁹⁶ or even a similar line of thought, between the *scholia* and Terence's adaptations could have existed. Thus, Donatus' testimony of how Terence's 'disturbing' themes would have been read at schools, and even at the monasteries of the Christian era, can be especially useful in the interpretation of particular aspects of Hrotswitha's Terentian adaptations. Given Hrotswitha's probable acquaintance with Donatus, we should not exclude the possibility that her treatment of Terence's rapes was influenced by the *scholia*.⁹⁷

⁹³ For a parallel, from a contemporary perspective, see Gamel, "Performing Terence," 477, who expresses concerns on how we deal with the staging of a play to an audience of a different period, especially when this play presents incidents (such as rapes), which are disturbing for the audience; in terms of education, see Sharon L. James, "Talking Rape in the Classics Classroom. Further Thoughts," in *From Abortion to Pederasty. Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014), 171–86, on how to deal with rape incidents found in classical literature—including Terence's comedy—in the framework of contemporary university or college teaching.

⁹⁴ As observed in Rita Copeland, *Rhetoric, Hermeneutics, and Translation in the Middle Ages. Academic Traditions and Vernacular Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 22, Servius' and Donatus' commentaries "reflect the major components of the exegetical techniques among the classical grammarians. They offer an indication of an early connection between paraphrase and literary exegesis, as the explication often takes the form of verbal recasting to deliberate on sense as well as on usage." Of course, later, medieval commentaries include more striking examples of how interpretation is linked to Christianity; see, e.g., the commentaries on Statius, discussed in Rita Copeland, "Gloss and Commentary," in *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. Ralph J. Hexter and David Townsend (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 181–85; the commentators in fact claim new 'interpretations' for the poet's work, often by referring to later or contemporary contexts.

⁹⁵ Interestingly James, "Talking Rape," proposes a similar approach: avoiding the omission or euphemistic descriptions of such incidents, at 174, but at the same time treating them with sensitivity; as she succinctly states in addressing her students: "[y]ou can expect to be disturbed by what we're reading, but we can't avoid the subject," at 178.

⁹⁶ On the evidence of the presence of Donatus' commentary in German monasteries, see Karakasis, "Terence in Hrotswitha," 280, n. 8.

⁹⁷ As Talbot, "Hrotsvit's Dramas," 149–50 has shown, Hrotswitha's 'subversive' use of Terence can be seen in connection with the tradition of the allegorical interpretation of Classical texts, which, despite their explicit pagan context, were used for moral instruction. See also Brown, "Hrotsvit's Apostolic Mission," 242, on Hrotswitha's acquaintance with "pedagogical commentaries and glossaries."

Although Hrotswitha's drama follows a specific religious agenda, we could nevertheless claim that her deep knowledge of not only Terence's text, but also the way this was studied by her readers has made her a much better interpreter of her prototype.

Hrotswitha's 'Christianisation' of Terence is, of course, not the only example of Terence's adaptation to the moral principles of each period.⁹⁸ In fact, Terence's comedy seems to have become 'more moral' over the centuries. For instance, some English school productions 'adjusted' the plays by omitting the 'disturbing' scenes, such as the rape incident. The Latin play of Westminster School in London forms a remarkable case. For a long time, Terence's *Eunuchus* was one of the most popular plays; at some point, possibly in the eighteenth century, Chaerea's narration of the rape incident was omitted, while later, in the early twentieth century, the whole play was substituted by an adapted version.⁹⁹

The comparison between different adaptations of Terence extends beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, the aforementioned example is remarkably indicative of the way pedagogical approaches to classical texts changed over time. Strikingly, as this case study suggests, instruction of 'disturbing' themes, like Terence's rapes, appears as much more controversial and difficult in a school of the modern era,¹⁰⁰ whereas ancient and medieval settings, such as those of Donatus' school and Hrotswitha's monastery, adhered more to the classical prototypes. In other words, although rapes seem to constitute a controversial theme for modern and contemporary audiences, especially in elementary or monastic education, Donatus' and Hrotswitha's testimonies might demonstrate that such episodes were approached rather differently in earlier periods. Earlier literature, such as Hrotswitha's important work, although serving a different purpose from that of Terence's comedy, nevertheless, dares to deal with rapes, a motif abundantly found in its prototypes. More interestingly, as the co-examination of Donatus' commentary suggests, Hrotswitha's direct approach of this otherwise disturbing theme was perhaps in line with similar educational practices of her time.

⁹⁸ See the title of Augoustakis, "Hrotsvit of Gandersheim." On Hrotswitha's work being the first case of several others that followed, which mainly consisted of 'expurgated' versions of Terence's texts, see Peter G. McC. Brown, "The *Eunuch* Castrated: Bowdlerization in the Text of the Westminster Latin Play," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 15, no. 1 (2008): 16–28.

⁹⁹ On the 'adventures' of Terence's plays at Westminster school as well as the various reactions, adjustments and adaptations throughout Europe, see Brown, "*Eunuch* Castrated," who uses the *Eunuchus* as the main case study.

¹⁰⁰ Sanjaya Thakur, "Challenges in Teaching Sexual Violence and Rape. A Male Perspective," in *From Abortion to Pederasty. Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom*, ed. Nancy Sorkin Rabinowitz and Fiona McHardy (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014), 152–55, drawing from his personal teaching experience, gives an interesting survey which demonstrates the suspicion with which incidents of sexual violence are treated in contemporary higher education, especially by male instructors, who feel particularly uncomfortable with such cases; see also *passim* for possible students' reactions. On the other hand Madeleine Kahn, "*Why are We Reading Ovid's Handbook on Rape?*" *Teaching and Learning at a Women's College*, 2nd ed. (London/New York: Routledge, 2016 (2005)), 18–56, with Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as a case-study, discusses the challenges of (and the students' reactions to) the teaching of rapes, with emphasis on a female college student audience.

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