NOTES • KORT BYDRAES

NOTES OF LATIN COMEDIES BY JOHN FOXE

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John Foxe (1517-1587) is known primarily for his work on the Protestant martyrs of Mary’s reign (The Book of Martyrs, 1563, and several other editions), but he also wrote plays in Latin which show strong influence from Plautus and Terence. I shall examine here those edited by John Hazel Smith, Two Latin Comedies by John Foxe, the Martyrologist: Titus et Gesippus and Christus Triumphans (The Renaissance Society of America, Renaissance Text Series IV, Cornell University Press, 1973). Smith has given us editions with facing English translations; the edition of Titus et Gesippus is based on a manuscript in the British Library, Lansdowne 388, that of Christus Triumphans on Lansdowne 1045 (an autograph) and printed versions. Both manuscripts are described by Smith as early drafts with many revisions (pp. 7-8 and 47). The manuscript with Titus et Gesippus has been published in facsimile by J.H. Smith (together with Samuel Bernard’s Andronicus Commenus, prepared by John L. Klauser) in Renaissance Latin Drama in England, Vol. 1, 6 (Olms: New York, 1986). The comedy Titus et Gesippus is presumed to have been written in 1544-45, Christus Triumphans in 1556 (see pp. 9 and 32).

First, two textual notes:

*Si quid meum usquam uides tibi aut tuis quod expetendum sit, vel id deberi a me tibi, Chreme, credito - itque pro mutua ac inveterata hac vitae simul quae mihi iam diu tecum incoepit consuetudine* (66 v. 3-7).

To *itque* Smith writes in note 5: ‘A dubious reading; the dash could be a *v* (?) read *vic ’que*.’ I suggest *idque*. 

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ni is eset quem vis non fuit violare..., id in hac iam
designassem virgine quod Paris ...(84 v. 17-19).

In the apparatus (p. 383) Smith notes that the manuscript has vis, corrected
from f... Fas would make sense, whereas vis does not; one of the hands
may very well have written fas: see the facsimile f. 127v.

Smith’s punctuation leaves something to be desired; for example:

Laboratum est sedulo, ac si pro capite here hercle sudandum
sit, meo (76 v. 40-41).

The vocative here should be separated with commas, and the comma before
meo should be deleted.

Prodigium hominis sterquilinium, nebulonis (78 v. 1).
The comma should be before, not after sterquilinium.
Rather often the translation has to be corrected:

Nae ego istud multis nominibus audisse gaudeo (84 v.
20-21)

‘Well! I’m glad I heard that, of all names.’

 multis nominibus means ‘for many reasons’.

Chremes: ...velim audias vel verbum unum. – Simo:
Verbum! Quid verbum te? Nimis iam diu verba novis
data sunt
(120-21 v. 43-45)

‘... I have heard too many words for a long time now.’

 Verba dare alicui means ‘to deceive somebody’, and that sense is also
possible here.

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hoc nocte quam nil prorsus somni coepi genis (174-75 v. 4-5)

‘How I spent this night, on my knees, not once closing my eyes in sleep.’

Why ‘on my knees’? Gena is here a synonym of oculus: ‘How I did not get any sleep in my eyes this night.’

Merito sacrum et adorandum caput (192 v. 9-10)

‘Deservedly revered and honorable head.’

Caput here means ‘person’, as often in ancient comedy.

conclamata in re, consilium ne captes (302-03 v. 21-22)

‘when the battle cry sounds, don’t stop for counsel.’

Conclamata in re means ‘in a hopeless situation’: cf. Ter. Eun. 348. At 62 v. 50 Smith has translated conclamatum est correctly as ‘It’s hopeless.’

Invaluit demum ille, nos excludimus – vos bellaedum stertitis. Bona verba (246 v. 39-40)

‘... Sweet words.’

Bona verba means literally (here as well as in Ter. Andr. 204) ‘speak words of good omen.’

Quam dextro Mercurio succedunt omnia ad unguem ilico (306-07 v. 10-11)

‘How all things work out for a clever Mercury, right down to the fingernail.’
Ad unguem means ‘exactly’; sculptors used to test the evenness of their works with their nails.

Quis malum nobis exorcista hic? (308-09 v. 24-25)

‘Which of you devils has spirited me here?’

Malum is an interjection, nobis ethical dative: ‘Who, damn it, is this exorcist?’ Concerning morphology I mention only the forms creduo (178 v. 15) and creduum (288 v. 8). They are taken directly from Plautus; see M. Leumann, Lateinische Laut- und Formenlehre (München 1977) 528.

As for syntax, consider Deo durum repugnare est, tibi quin duras dabit (284 v. 14-15). In note 15 Smith writes: ‘we might expect the neuter dura, but both B and MSC (the edition and the ms. used) have the feminine form.’ Duras is certainly right: this is an elliptical construction, and plagas is to be understood; similar examples are listed in Arctos 11 (1977), 80 n. 9 and Studii Clasice 23 (1985) 81.

Foxe’s vocabulary is often unclassical, and sometimes he coins new words or derivations himself:

abblandule (102 v. 36): The verb abblandiri is listed in MLWL¹ and by Bartal.²
acquadrare (188 v. 28): ‘to fit’.
adoptacare (220 v. 46): ‘to shade’.
articulifex (346 v. 33): ‘indictment-maker’. Smith assumes rightly that this is a coinage by Foxe.
corollula (280 v. 26): As Smith notes, this diminutive of corolla (in turn a diminutive of corona) is not found elsewhere.
empiriticus (292 v. 7): Smith writes: ‘the substantive empiri (printing-error for empirici?) occurs, but I have found no other instance of an

² A. Bartal (ed.), Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis Hungariae (Leipzig 1901).
adjectival form." I suppose Smith means that he has found no other instances of the form *empiriticus*, for it is a substantive in our passage: *omnes porro neque therapeutici nec empiritici pilum medelae conferunt*. The form *empiriticus* instead of *empiricus* is, however, listed by *TLL* 5.2.530.71 and in the Bohemian dictionary.3

fortunula (322 v. 42): This diminutive of *fortuna* is also listed by Bartal, Latham,4 Plezia5 and Hoven.6

gazula (310 v. 63): This diminutive of *gaza* is listed also by Lathom. The *gazula* 'parva casa' adduced by Bartal is only bad orthography for *casula*.

herunculus (72 v. 32): Diminutive of *(h)erus*.

impotentiuscule (98 v. 1).

linguaculus (138 v. 11): 'talkative'. This diminutive of *linguax* (attested in Gellius) is listed also by Hoven.

mortalitus (278 v. 11): This adverb (instead of *mortaliter*) is not found elsewhere, as Smith notes.

obvinctus (264 v. 4): Also in Plezia's dictionary; the verb *obvincire* is listed by Hoven from Erasmus.

peccatorculus (318 v. 19): Also in Hoven (from Erasmus).

pellicibilis (162 v. 30): 'attractive'. Also in Hoven (from Erasmus).

perstitare (254 v. 2): Smith notes correctly: 'probably a coined intensive of *persto*.'

piscatorculus (258 v. 41).

scroba (272 v. 59): Pejorative for *scriba*, see Smith's note: 'apparently a coinage intended to echo *scriba* cacophonously. It probably plays on *scrofa* "sow"…'

Stygicola (244 v. 29).

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3 *Latinitatis Medii Aevi Lexicon Bohemorum* (Prague 1980-).
4 R.E. Latham et al. (eds), *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London 1975-).
5 M. Plezia (ed.), *Lexicon Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis Polonorum* (Warsaw 1953-).
6 R. Hoven (ed.), *Lexique de la prose latine de la Renaissance* (Leiden 1994).
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