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TWO ALLUSIONS TO TERENCE, *EUNUCHUS* 579 IN JEROME

During the Late Roman Empire Terence was the most revered and the most quoted classical Latin poet after Virgil. Among authors both pagan and Christian, none[1] (to judge, of course, by the surviving written record) made as frequent or as creative literary use of his comedies as Jerome,[2] one of the most accomplished polymaths in all of Latin antiquity.[3] In his estimation Terence ranked, alongside Homer, Menander and Virgil, as one of the greatest of all poets.[4] Jerome had an encyclopedic knowledge of Terence's dramatic corpus and quoted or appropriated phraseology from all six of his comedies. A significant number of these reminiscences have already been identified,[5] but others await discovery. The purpose of the present study is to make a further contribution to this particular branch of Hieronymian *Quellenforschung* by adducing and analysing two hitherto unrecognized allusions in Jerome's correspondence to Terence's *Eunuchus*, apparently one of the biggest blockbusters in the history of the Roman stage.[6]

[1] Not even Augustine cited Terence at a higher frequency than Jerome. On the North African bishop's use of Terence in his works, see H. Hagendahl, *Augustine and the Latin Classics*, 2 vols. (Göteborg, 1967), 1.254–64, 2.377–81.

[2] His passion for Terence's drama was probably first kindled in the late 350s and early 360s when he studied in Rome, as a young teenager, under the renowned Terentian scholar Aelius Donatus (see G. Brugnoli, 'Donato e Girolamo', *VetChr* 2 [1965], 139–49), whose commentary on the plays he had studied intensively in school (see Jer. *Apol. c. Ruf.* 1.16).

[3] On his immense erudition, which was unrivalled, by a wide margin, in Latin Christian antiquity, see A. Cain, 'Jerome's Pauline commentaries between East and West: tradition and innovation in the *Commentary on Galatians*', in J. Lössl and J. Watt (edd.), *Interpreting the Bible and Aristotle in Late Antiquity: The Alexandrian Commentary Tradition from Rome to Baghdad* (Aldershot, 2011), 91–110.

[4] Jer. *Ep.* 58.5.2.

[5] See e.g. N. Adkin, 'Terence's *Eunuchus* and Jerome', *RhM* 137 (1994), 187–95; id., 'Hieronymus Eunuchinus', *GIF* 58 (2006), 327–34; R. Godel, 'Réminiscences de poètes profanes dans les Lettres de St. Jérôme', *MH* 21 (1964), 65–70; H. Hagendahl, *Latin Fathers and the Classics: A Study on the Apologists, Jerome, and other Christian Writers* (Göteborg, 1958), *passim*; id., 'Jerome and the Latin classics', *VChr* 28 (1974), 216–27; A. López Fonseca, 'San Jerónimo, lector de los cómicos latinos: cristianos y paganos', *CFC(L)* 15 (1998), 333–52; H. Jürgens, *Pompa diaboli. Die lateinischen Kirchenväter und das antike Theater* (Stuttgart, 1972), 123–9; E. Luebeck, *Hieronymus quos noverit scriptores et ex quibus hauserit* (Leipzig, 1872), 110–14.

[6] i.e. not only was the first audience so enthralled that it demanded and then received an encore presentation on the same day as the debut, but also this play netted its author a small fortune, an unprecedented fee of 8,000 sesterces (Suet. *Vita Ter.* 2). *Eunuchus*, needless to say, greatly contributed to Terence's commercial and financial success; see D. Gilula, 'How rich was Terence?', *SCI* 8/9 (1989), 74–8.

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In mid 393[7] Jerome composed what was posthumously to become one of his most celebrated writings.[8] Printed as *Epistula* 52 in Isidor Hilberg's standard critical edition of the Hieronymian correspondence in the *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* (vols 54–6),[9] this lengthy work is addressed to Nepotian, a celibate priest in his late twenties who was serving the church in his native Altinum, a coastal city in the province of Venetia-Istria in north-eastern Italy. A few years earlier Nepotian had abandoned a post in the imperial bureaucracy[10] for an ecclesiastical career and he was even being groomed to succeed his uncle Heliodorus as bishop of Altinum.[11] He had strong monastic proclivities and wrote to Jerome, who had been living in the Palestinian village of Bethlehem since 386, to seek guidance on how best to integrate his monastic and clerical vocations. In his response (*Ep.* 52) Jerome seized the occasion to articulate his ideal of the monastic clergy, according to which all ordained ministers of the church have a moral imperative to adopt a rigorous ascetic lifestyle of the kind (not surprisingly) that Jerome himself advocates for lay Christians elsewhere in his writings.[12]

Jerome casts his letter as a stylish exercise in paraenesis,[13] and he accordingly aims to shape Nepotian's daily conduct through a lengthy series of authoritative precepts and prohibitions. He is especially concerned about the young priest's conduct around women (5.4–8, 15.1).[14] For instance, at 5.6 he gives specific directives regarding the house calls that Nepotian, as part of his basic pastoral duties, makes to the homes of female parishioners:

si propter officium clericatus aut vidua tibi visitatur aut virgo, numquam domum solus introeas talesque habeto socios quorum contubernio non infameris. si lector, si acolythus, si psaltes te sequitur, non ornentur vestibus sed moribus, nec calamistro crispent comas sed pudicitiam habitu polliceantur. solus cum sola secreto et absque arbitre[15] non sedeas.

[7] P. Nautin, 'Études de chronologie hiéronymienne (393–397)', *REAug* 20 (1974), 251–84, esp. 251–3, 277. This dating is accepted by S. Rebenich, *Hieronymus und sein Kreis: prosopographische und sozialgeschichtliche Untersuchungen* (Stuttgart, 1992), 202 n. 382. The letter is erroneously dated to 394 by F. Cavallera, *Saint Jérôme: Sa vie et son oeuvre* (2 vols, Paris, 1922), 1.183 n. 2, and J.N.D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London, 1975), 190 n. 59.

[8] For its influence on e.g. St. Patrick's clerical formation, see A. Cain, 'Patrick's *Confessio* and Jerome's *Epistula* 52 to Nepotian', *JMedLat* 20 (2010), 1–15. On Jerome's *fortuna* more generally, see the various essays in A. Cain and J. Lössl (edd.), *Jerome of Stridon: His Life, Writings, and Legacy* (Aldershot, 2009).

[9] This is the edition from which all quotations from the correspondence in this article are taken.

[10] See J.H.D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome, Letter 60* (Oxford, 1993), 142–3.

[11] Jer. *Ep.* 60.14.1.

[12] See e.g. P. Laurence, *Jérôme et le nouveau modèle féminin: La conversion à la vie parfaite* (Paris, 1997). On the important place occupied by *Epistula* 52 in Jerome's broader epistolary agenda, see A. Cain, *The Letters of Jerome: Asceticism, Biblical Exegesis, and the Construction of Christian Authority in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2009), 145–51.

[13] For an overview of ancient paraenetic letters, see S. Stowers, *Letter Writing in Greco-Roman Antiquity* (Philadelphia, 1986), 94–106.

[14] In this respect Jerome undoubtedly is projecting onto his young advisee his own anxieties stemming from his experience at Rome several years earlier when he had been accused of committing sexual indiscretions with some of his female disciples; see Cain (n. 12), 107–9.

[15] This form, rather than the more conventional *arbitro*, is the one given by Hilberg in his critical edition.

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This is an elegant passage characterized by an aggregation of rhetorical figures including threefold alliteration (*vidua tibi visitatur aut virgo* and *calamistro crispent comas*), threefold anaphora (*si ... si ... si ...*), twofold negative–positive arsis–thesis (*non ... sed ... nec ... sed ...*) and antithesis (i.e. beautification of the soul with virtues vs. adornment of the body with fancy attire and through coiffing[16]). Of particular interest, though, is the last sentence, *solus cum sola secreto et absque arbitre non sedeas*, which itself is marked by polyptoton, pleonasm, alliteration and assonance. Hieronymian source critics have failed to recognize that it bears a striking resemblance to a line from Terence's *Eunuchus*. In one scene Chaerea relates to his friend Antipho how he traded clothes with a eunuch named Dorus so that under this disguise he could gain unlimited access to, with an eye to sexually assaulting,[17] his love interest Pamphila, who had been staying at the time in the home of the courtesan Thais. His ruse was successful and, much to his delight, he was put in charge of guarding the girl. He was given explicit instructions by Thais neither to allow any man to see her nor to leave her side:

edicit ne vir quisquam ad eam adeat et mihi ne abscedam imperat;
in interiore parti ut maneam solus cum sola. adnuo
terram intuens modeste.

(578–80)

There are compelling reasons for supposing that Jerome's *solus cum sola secreto et absque arbitre non sedeas* constitutes an allusion to Chaerea's *ut maneam solus cum sola*. The arresting polyptotic[18] expression *solus cum sola* is attested only here in Latin literature prior to Jerome.[19] This fact alone is noteworthy in view of Jerome's exceptional fondness for Terentian turns of phrase more generally and for *Eunuchus* in particular, evidently his favourite of the six plays.[20] This rarity of occurrence assumes special significance when we consider that both authors deploy the locution in similar contexts where the propriety of male–female relations is at stake.

[16] This notion is a commonplace of patristic moral exhortation. See e.g. Clem. Al. *Paed*. 3.1.1, 3.35.2; Cyprian, *Hab. virg*. 9; Greg. Nyss. *V. Macr*. 29; Ambrose, *Virg*. 1.6.30; John Chrys. *Hom. in Matth*. 30.6, 51.5, 89.4 (PG 57:370; 58:516, 786); Paul. *Carm*. 25.49–53; August. *Ep*. 211.10 'non sit notabilis habitus vester nec affectetis vestibus placere sed moribus', 262.9.

[17] Chaerea's admission of rape is indirect: he tells Antipho after the fact that if he had failed to capitalize on being alone with Pamphila in the locked house, then he would have been no better than the eunuch whom he was impersonating (604–6). Thus he leaves the details of the act to the imagination of Antipho and the audience. As J. Barsby, *Terence, Eunuchus* (Cambridge, 1999), 201, points out, this omission is not simply a matter of discretion but rather it is a dramatic technique whereby the audience is able to hear a different account of the rape later and from a different point of view (643–67); cf. V. Rosivach, *When a Young Man Falls in Love: The Sexual Exploitation of Women in New Comedy* (London, 1998), 46–50, and see also L.P. Smith, 'Audience response to rape: Chaerea in Terence's *Eunuchus*', *Helios* 21 (1994), 21–38. Even though the rape is not actually described, it none the less is characterized allusively as being violent and as having a devastating effect on the victim, Pamphila; see S. James, 'From boys to men: rape and developing masculinity in Terence's *Hecyra* and *Eunuchus*', *Helios* 25 (1998), 31–47. See also, more generally, K.F. Pierce, 'The portrayal of rape in New Comedy', in S. Deacy and K.F. Pierce (edd.), *Rape in Antiquity* (London, 1997), 163–84.

[18] On Terence's partiality to polyptoton and other devices of sound, see G. Focardi, 'Lo stile oratorio nei prologhi terenziani', *SIFC* 50 (1978), 70–89.

[19] This is confirmed by a search of the relevant databases, the most comprehensive of which is the *Cetedoc Library of Christian Latin Texts, CLCLT–6* (Turnhout, 2005).

[20] Adkin (n. 5), 327, noting that Jerome quotes from this play more than from any other Terentian play, calls Jerome a '*Eunuch*-freak'.

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Jerome has not merely borrowed a flashy formulation; he has introduced it as an intertext which he summarily subverts. In essence, Chaerea is allusively held up as an example of someone whom Nepotian must *not* emulate in his own dealings with women. Chaerea had resorted to deception and feigned modesty (*adnuo | terram intuens modeste*) so that he could be all alone with Pamphila and execute his scheme.[21] Nepotian, by contrast, is urged to be duly circumspect during house calls to Christian women[22] and to avoid unsupervised socializing with them so that he does not expose himself to sexual temptation or give external observers grounds for harbouring suspicions about him.[23] Jerome's allusion thus implies a twofold antithesis between the cunning and prurience of Chaerea, and the integrity and sexual purity which he adjures his protégé to embody. This is an appropriate, even ideal, intertext for another, related reason: *Eunuchus* derives its title from Chaerea's duplicitous impersonation of a eunuch, and Jerome (and other contemporary ecclesiastical writers) regarded monks as metaphorical eunuchs.[24] Throughout his correspondence and other writings he excoriates hypocrites who use their monastic vocations as a pretence for licentious living.[25] In the letter to Nepotian he implicitly acknowledges the possibility that monastic clergymen may not always behave as 'eunuchs' or be blameless in female company but rather may follow Chaerea's lead and engage in sexual escapades under the guise of their religious profession, and he accordingly establishes measures to preclude this eventuality.

The scene in *Eunuchus* in which Chaerea recounts his exploits was well known in Late Antiquity and drew criticism from Christian moralists like Augustine.[26] Jerome retains a striking enough component of his infamous source text for Nepotian and other contemporary readers[27] who had been classically trained (i.e. those who had intensively studied Terence's plays as schoolboys under a *grammaticus*) to be able to identify and relish his intertextual play. He nevertheless retouches his model in such a way stylistically as to reinforce the rhetorical import of his argument.[28] He preserves the Terentian *solus cum sola* in its original form not only because it cues his readership

[21] On the fraudulence and impetuosity of Chaerea's character, see W.E. Forehand, *Terence* (Boston, 1985), 75.

[22] For their own part Christian women were expected to be conscientious about avoiding clandestine meetings with monks and clerics. Thus Basil (*Ep*. 173) lists vigilance in dealings with men (τὸ ἐν ταῖς συντυχίαις τῶν ἀνδρῶν πεφυλαγμένον) as one of the necessary attributes of the chaste woman. Likewise Jerome advises the widow Furia: *si sermocinandi cum viris incumbit necessitas, arbitros ne devites tantaque confabulandi fiducia sit, ut intrante alio nec paveas nec erubescas* (*Ep*. 54.13.2). Marcella is said never to have invited a cleric or monk into her home unless there were plenty of witnesses (Jer. *Ep*. 127.3.4).

[23] Jerome's concern that his advisees not only be holy but also *appear* holy to others recurs again and again in his correspondence. For the relevant references and discussion, see A. Cain, 'Jerome's *Epistula* 117 on the *subintroductae*: satire, apology, and ascetic propaganda in Gaul', *Augustinianum* 49 (2009), 119–43.

[24] See M. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago, 2001), 245–82.

[25] e.g. in *Ep*. 147 he reprimands the deacon Sabinian, until recently a monk in his monastery in Bethlehem, for having seduced a nun in Paula's adjoining convent. For his invective against sham monks and clerics, see further J. Curran, 'Jerome and the sham Christians of Rome', *JEH* 48 (1997), 213–29; D.S. Wiesen, *St. Jerome as a Satirist* (Ithaca, NY, 1964), *passim*.

[26] See *Conf.* 1.16.26; *De civ. D.* 2.7.

[27] Jerome states his anticipation of an indefinitely broad readership for *Ep.* 52 at two different junctures in the work (4.3; 17.1–2).

[28] On his custom of refining his literary models, see e.g. A. Cain, 'Tertullian, Cyprian, and Lactantius in Jerome's *Commentary on Galatians*', *REAug* 55 (2009), 23–51; id., 'Three further echoes of Lactantius in Jerome', *Philologus* 154 (2010), 88–96.

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to recall the rape scene more readily but also because the adjectival polyptoton itself (not to mention the close proximity of its two constituent words) has an intrinsic charm and vivacity. Jerome does however improve upon his model in other respects. He converts *manere* to the synonymous verb *sedere*,[29] thereby creating a stunning tonal effect through fourfold sibilant alliteration (*solus*, *sola*, *secreto*, *sedeas*).[30] Additionally, the hyperbatic displacement of *solus* from *sedeas* as well as the pleonastic *secreto et absque arbitre*[31] – which combines assonance (*absque arbitre*) and alliteration (initial–sequent: *absque arbitre*; initial–interior: *secreto et*), thereby complementing the musicality of the immediately preceding polyptoton – work in synergy to lend exceptional vividness and emphasis to Jerome's inculcation of Nepotian's need for absolute discretion around the opposite sex.

This was not the last time in his long and distinguished literary career[32] that Jerome would invoke this cogent intertext in a discussion of monastic ethics. Almost twenty years after writing to Nepotian, he addressed a letter (*Ep.* 128) to his Roman friend Gaudentius, a senatorial Christian with monastic leanings who had requested advice about how to give his infant daughter Pacatula, whom he had dedicated as a virgin at her birth,[33] a proper ascetic upbringing amidst the self-indulgence of aristocratic culture at Rome. At one point in the letter Jerome directs a polemical aside, in the generalizing second person singular,[34] at randy pseudo-monks who profess celibacy and yet plead any excuse they can to have clandestine meetings with their beautiful young maidservants.[35]

virgo es: quid te mulieris delectat societas? quid fragilem et sutilem ratem magnis committis fluctibus et grande periculum navigationis incertae securus ascendis? nescis, quid desideres, et tamen sic ei iungeris, quasi aut ante desideraveris aut – ut levissime dicam – postea desideraturus sis. 'sed ad ministerium iste sexus est aptior'. elige ergo anum, elige deformem, elige probatae in domino continentiae. quid te adulescentia, quid pulchra, quid luxuriosa delectat? uteris balneis, cute nitida, rubicundus incedis, carnibus vesceris, affluis divitiis, pretiosa veste circumdaris et iuxta serpentem mortiferum securum dormire te credis? an non habitas in eodem hospitio, in nocte dumtaxat? ceterum totos dies in huiusce modi confabulatione consumens quare **solus cum sola et non cum arbitris sedes**? cum etiam ipse non pecces, aliis peccare videaris.[36]

Jerome has resolved his impressive sequence *solus cum sola secreto et absque arbitre non sedeas* from the letter to Nepotian into a slightly simpler form. He dispenses with the pleonastic *secreto*, though by the same token *solus cum sola* + *non cum arbitris* is

[29] For their interchangeable use, cf. *TLL* 8.2.281.11–13.

[30] On Jerome's fondness for alliteration in his correspondence, see J. Hritzu, *The Style of the Letters of St. Jerome* (Washington, 1939), 41–4.

[31] Cf. *secrete et absque arbitris* at *Ep*. 130.5.1.

[32] For an overview of his illustrious career, see A. Cain, *St. Jerome, Commentary on Galatians* (Washington, 2010), 3–14.

[33] On this practice, see R. Metz, *La consécration des vierges dans l'église romaine* (Paris, 1954).

[34] This usage of the second person singular is typical of the *Diatribenstil* in satiric writing. See J.B. Hofmann, *Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik*, rev. by A. Szantyr (Munich, 1965), 419; E.G. Schmidt, 'Diatribe und Satire', *WZRostock* 15 (1966), 507–15.

[35] Here contemporary social reality undoubtedly hovers beneath the surface of the text, as Jerome appears to be alluding to the routine sexual exploitation of female slaves by male masters, on which see e.g. C. Osiek, 'Female slaves, *porneia*, and the limits of obedience', in D.L. Balch and C. Osiek (edd.), *Early Christian Families in Context: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2003), 255–75, and S. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York, 1995), 191–3.

[36] *Ep*. 128.3.4–5.

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pleonastic, and so the basic rhetorical impact in this regard has been minimally affected (but the elimination of *secreto* does nevertheless weaken the acoustical effect produced by the sibilant alliteration). The substitution of *non cum* for *absque* seems a negligible matter of lexical *variatio*, but there are minor rhetorical implications for this alteration: what is lost from the alliteration of *absque arbitris* essentially is gained back by the repetition of *cum*, which, on account of its identical placement within the two phrases, imposes a sense of symmetry onto this last part of the sentence.

This second allusion to *Eunuchus* is not merely a function of Jerome's propensity to recycle sententious phraseology that he has adapted from other authors.[37] As in the letter to Nepotian, so too here, the intertext serves to accentuate the polar opposition between two extremes of monastic behaviour and at the same time to underscore the importance of maintaining absolute propriety in one's interactions with women, especially behind closed doors. Additionally, in both letters Jerome makes an ironic connection between the title of the play and the notion of the monk as a spiritual eunuch (e.g. at the beginning of the above-cited passage he calls the monk a *virgo*). Yet there is a fundamental difference between the manner in which he applies the Terentian reminiscence in each letter. When writing to Nepotian he only alludes to the possibility of malfeasance on the part of the monk, but in the letter to Gaudentius he caricatures a certain monastic type who bears an uncanny resemblance to Chaerea in his obsession with arranging secret meetings with his attractive young slave girls. And like Chaerea, who treated the sexual assault so nonchalantly because he was under the impression that Pamphila was a slave (*Eun*. 856–8), this salacious monk shows no remorse for his behaviour; on the contrary, he goes to considerable lengths to justify it. Moreover, in certain respects the Terentian allusion better suits the context of *Epistula* 128 than it does that of *Epistula* 52.

The two newly adduced echoes of *Eunuchus* 579 in the letters to Nepotian and Gaudentius augment the ever-growing list of classical allusions in Jerome's correspondence,[38] and the first one in particular enhances our appreciation of the already robust source-critical profile of *Epistula* 52, which is one of the most self-consciously erudite and classicizing literary productions to survive from his pen.[39] They have additional significance in that, with respect to their allusive appropriation of a Terentian character as a negative moral *exemplum*, they typify a prevailing trend in the early Christian *Rezeptionsgeschichte* of Terence.[40]

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[37] See e.g. N. Adkin, 'Falling asleep over a book: Jerome, *Letter* 60, 11, 2', *Eos* 81 (1993), 227–30; id., 'Self-Imitation in Jerome's *Libellus de virginitate servanda* (epist. XXII)', *Athenaeum* 83 (1995), 469–85.

[38] Cf. e.g. A. Cain, '*Liber manet*: Pliny, *Epist*. 9.27.2 and Jerome, *Epist*. 130.19.5', *CQ* 58 (2008), 708–10.

[39] For instance, the classical literary references include but are by no means limited to: verbal reminiscences from at least eleven different Ciceronian works (Jerome also imports a significant amount of material from Cicero's *Cato maior de senectute* in chapter 3 and concludes chapter 8 with an apt extract from the now-fragmentary speech *Pro Gallio*); an epithet for Cato borrowed from Sallust; four Virgilian quotations; one phraseological echo of Plautus, two of Terence (including the one adduced in the present study), and one of Juvenal. See e.g. N. Adkin, '*Cato, Romani generis disertissimus* (Sallust, *Hist*. fr. I 4 M. in Jerome)', *Eikasmos* 9 (1998), 229–32; Hagendahl (n. 5), 191–4.

[40] On this and other ways in which Christian authors (mis)treated Terence's dramatic text, see A. Cain, 'Terence in Late Antiquity', in A. Augoustakis and A. Traill (edd.), *A Companion to Terence* (Oxford, 2013), 380–96.

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