A HARUSPICY JOKE IN PLAUTUS*

At *Miles* 692–4, the old man Periplectomenus reels off a list of female 'psychics', as he mimics an imaginary wife's demands for money:

> da quod dem quinquatribus
> praecantrici, coniectrici, hariolae atque haruspicae.
> flagitiumst, si nil mittetur quae supercilio spicit

The passage has been something of a puzzle. The references are unmistakably Roman (and it is a Roman festival, the *Matronalia*, that calls for the gifts), but it is not clear how much of the list is a joke.[1] Women are well attested as witches and sorceresses, but not as soothsayers or interpreters of dreams or prodigies. In fact, religious consultation is notably absent from studies of female employment in Rome and, perhaps surprisingly, from studies of women and religion.[2] Yet we should not be too quick to dismiss these diviners as fictional. Stylistic considerations suggest we should take some of them seriously, as does the picture Plautus and his contemporary, Ennius, paint of informal private divination. In a period that is not well documented, Periplectomenus' casual reference offers a valuable glimpse into little-known activities of middle- and lower-class women.

Plautus loved humorous lists.[3] The usual pattern in these jokes is to set the audience up with 'straight' items and then move into exaggerated or nonsensical items. This is a basic joke-telling technique, illustrated in the following examples (gag items in bold):

Pistoclerus lists the 'gods' who dwell in Bacchis' house:

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[1] For ascription of this passage to Plautus, see E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Florence, 1960), 140; H. D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius: The Fragments* (London, 1967), 399, n. 3; L. Schaaf, *Der Miles Gloriosus des Plautus und sein griechisches Original: Ein Beitrag zur Kontaminationsfrage* (Munich, 1977), 284–5 (though K. Latte, *Römische Religionsgeschichte* [Munich, 1960], 286, *ad* 3 sounds a cautionary note). *Contra* O. Zwierlein, *Zur Kritik und Exegese des Plautus II: Miles Gloriosus* (Stuttgart, 1991), 238–9. Plautus citations are from F. Leo *Plauti Comoediae* (Berlin, 1895–6).

[2] J. F. Gardner (*Women in Roman Law and Society* [London, 1986], 233–56), S. Treggiari ('Jobs for women', *AJAH* 1 [1976], 76–104), N. B. Kampen (*Image and Status: Roman Working Women in Ostia* [Berlin, 1981], 107–36), and M. R. Lefkowitz and M. B. Fant (*Women's Life in Greece and Rome* [Baltimore, 1992^2], 208–24) do not mention divination as a category of paid employment. Scholars of Roman women and religion have tended to focus on public forms (e.g. J. Gagé, *Matronalia: Essai sur les dévotions et les organisations culturelles des femmes dans l'ancienne Rome* [Brussels, 1963]), while acknowledging that women played a limited role in these (e.g. J. Scheid, 'The religious roles of Roman women', in P. S. Pantel [ed.], *A History of Women in the West. I. From Ancient Goddesses to Christian Saints* [Cambridge and London, 1992], 397; M. Beard, J. North, and S. Price, *Religions of Rome. I. A History* [Cambridge, 1998], 91; N. Boëls-Janssen, *La vie religieuse des matrones dans la Rome archaïque* [Rome, 1993], 1) because so little is known about their private religious activities. It would not be surprising to find women employed in areas where magic and religion overlap.

[3] A technique B.-A. Taladoire, *Essai sur le comique de Plaute* (Monaco, 1956), 175–6 dubbed 'accumulation'. I am indebted to his extensive list of examples.

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Pist. Amor, Voluptas, Venus, Venustas, Gaudium,
Iocus, Ludus, Sermo, **Suavisaviatio** . . .
Lyd. An deus est ullus Suavisaviatio? (*Bacch*. 115–16, 120)

Demipho describes the ideal maid:

nihil opust nobis ancilla nisi quae texat, quae molat,
lignum caedat, pensum faciat, aedis verrat, **vapulet**,
quae habeat cottidianum familiae coctum cibum (*Merc.* 396–8)[4]

Parasites' food lists and soldiers' military feats were popular types of list joke and they follow the same pattern. For example, Curculio lists Therapontigonus' conquests:

quid enim Persas, Paphlagones,
Sinopes, Arabes, Cares, Cretanos, Syros,
Rhodiam atque Lyciam, **Perediam et Perbibesiam,**
Centauromachiam et Classiam Vnomammiam,
+ Libyamque oram omnem **Conterebromniam**,
dimidiam partem nationum usque omnium
subegit solus **intra viginti dies**. (*Curc*. 442–8)[5]

The gag item always comes at the end of an identifiable group, whether or not this group constitutes the whole list, and line end is the preferred position. An audience could not anticipate the *quae* clause in the *Mercator* list above; hence the placement of *vapulet* at what would sound like the end of the list.[6] The playwright can break a long list into shorter lists by putting the gag items at the end of sequences.

[4] Cf. *Epid*. 230–4 (discussed below) and *Merc.* 18–37, a lover's list of the *vitia* that accompany *amor.* The 25th and last, *parumloquium*, comes right after *multiloquium* and requires five lines of explanation (thus setting up the punch-line: *nunc vos mi irasci ob multiloquium non decet* 37). I suspect that the list of endearments at *Poen.* 365–7 also ends with a joke:

mea voluptas, mea delicia, mea vita, mea amoenitas,
meus ocellus, meum labellum, mea salus, meum savium,
meum mel, meum cor, mea colustra, meus **molliculus caseus**

Laberius *com.* 95 (*siquidem mea colustra fructus fecisset*) offers a *comparandum* for *colustra* as an endearment (not inconceivable, given that colostrum is a rare type of milk), but I take *molliculus caseus* as a *παρὰ προσδοκίαν* joke, playing off *colustra* and punning on the two senses of *mollis*: 'soft' as a type of cheese (e.g. Petron. 66.7; Apic. 4.2.17; Celsus, 2.20.1; Columella, 8.11.14; Pliny, *HN* 28.169, 207) and 'soft' of things associated with love (e.g. the couch, the woman's clothing) though never used of the love object herself. When Agorastocles 'corrects' the list he gives it a new punch-line (cf. *Merc.* 397, 416), capping Milphio's: *sic enim diceres, sceleste: huius voluptas, te obsecro . . . / . . . / . . . / huius colustra, huius* ***dulciculus caseus*** (387–90). Leo brackets 390 (A only has *dulciculus caseus* as an interlinear note between 389 and 391) to avoid the repetition (*Milphionis facetias sane non repetit*) but I think the point is that he is *not* simply repeating Milphio's list. *Caseus dulcis* is another type of cheese (Apic. 1.33.1; Columella, 12.6.2). As G. Maurach (*Plauti Poenulus* [Heidelberg, 1975], 214, *ad* 367ff.) notes, '*caseus* ist als Kosewort singulär'.

[5] J. Collart, *T. Maccius Plautus Curculio. Plaute: Charançon* (Paris, 1962), 84, *ad* 442–6 points out the convention, including the mix of real and joke items: 'Cliquetis de noms authentiques ou imaginaires. Ce procédé de l'énumération macaronique . . . se retrouve dans *Capt*., 160–3; *Persa* 702–705; dans *Mil.,* 13–14 et 42–5, il est utilisé aussi pour énumérer les victoires fictives du matamore.' Cf. *Capt.* 846–51, which starts with reasonable items and moves to implausible luxuries (*nominandi istorum tibi erit magis quam edundi copia*, Hegio drily observes 852).

[6] Cf. *Pseud.* 67–68, where two (perhaps three, BCD om. 67a) *-iunculae* coinages in the list all come at a line end: *teneris labellis molles* ***morsiunculae,*** / [*nostrorum orgiorum* ***-iunculae***] (67a) / *papillarum horridularum* ***oppressiunculae***.

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Palaestrio's definition of *ingenium muliebre* contains three sequences (*-am* nouns, *falsi-* compounds, and *domi* phrases):

> os habet, linguam, perfidiam, malitiam atque audaciam,
> confidentiam, **confirmitatem, fraudulentiam.** (189a)
>
> qui arguat se, eum contra vincat iureiurando suo:
> domi habet animum falsiloquom, **falsificum, falsiiurium**,
> domi dolos, domi delenifica facta, domi fallacias.
> **nam mulier holitori numquam supplicat, si quast mala:**
> **domi habet hortum et condimenta ad omnis mores maleficos**. (*Mil.* 189–94)[7]

Predictable placement serves a vital purpose: it helps the audience spot the jokes. For example, Plautus uses structural repetition to milk the *Mercator* joke further (*ea molet, coquet, conficiet pensum,* ***pinsetur flagro***, 416). List jokes often make a pretence of improvisation. Thus item A gives the idea for B, and sometimes C, D, E, and so on, another reason why the gag items come in predictable spots. We see this convention in short lists as well as long. For example, *Bacch.* 1088, *stulti, stolidi, fatui, fungi, bardi, blenni, buccones*, pairs *fatui* (common) with *fungi* (a *hapax* in this sense, a Plautine invention) and *bardus* (colloquial) with *blennus* (a Greek loan word) and *bucco* (proverbial for stupidity of the most ludicrous—and theatrical—sort).[8] At *Poen*. 266–8, *pistorum amicas*, the first insult after the straight opening item (*prosedas*), sets up the second, *reliquias alicarias*. Even when the items are all jokes, the list wraps up with the longest and funniest. Examples include: *Rud*. 651–3 (Trachalio describes a pimp), *Pers.* 702–5 (where the last fake name contains a veiled threat), and *Capt.* 159–64 (a series of puns on names of peoples and foods).[9] When the list items are all straight, the joke is often a postscript. A few examples: *tergum cicatrosum*, tacked on to a list of physical similarities between Sosias and his divine double (*Amph.* 444–7); *ancillam meam quae latrinam lavat*, an afterthought in a pimp's list of toiletry articles (*Curc.* 577–9); *non hominem . . . sed thensaurum . . . mali*, Charinos' summation of another (unflattering) list of physical traits (*Merc.* 638–41); *filiam utendam tuam*/ *. . . da*, Toxilus' response to a plea, in the form of a meagre list of possessions, that the parasite has no money to lend (*Pers.* 123–8); and

[7] *Confirmitatem* and *fraudulentiam* (both *hapax legomena*) are grandiloquent nonce-words. The second and third forms in the *falsi-* string are likewise coined for the occasion. *Falsiloquom* is not particularly funny by itself (it is used by Hegio, *Capt.* 264, and Jerome later thought it serious enough for *Job* 16.9.2); I take it as part of the set-up. Cf. *Cist.* 203–30, where items are grouped by sound and punctuated by riddles (*nubila mens* 209, 210*, maritumi mores* 221) and *Pers.* 406–411, a list with groups of words for 'filth', *in-* words, a rhyming pair (*avide atque invide*), and a rhyming triplet (*procax, rapax, trahax*). The final items are more or less coined for the rhyme (*trahax* is a *hapax legomenon*, whereas *invidē* occurs in only two other places in Latin literature [vs. 101 occurrences of *avidē* according to a PHI-disk search]).

[8] *Bardus* is attested three other times (Plaut. *Pers.* 169, Caec. 250 Ribbeck, Cic. *Fat*. 10). *Blennus* appears only in Lucilius (1063), who was known for using Greek words (Hor. *Sat.* 1.10.20–1). The reference to *Bucco*, a stock type of Atellan farce, puts Nicobulus' duping in a particularly humiliating light.

[9] *fraudis sceleris parricidi periuri plenis<simus>, / legirupa impudens impurus,* ***inverecundissimus,*** */ uno verbo apsolvam, lenost* (*Rud*. 651–3, perhaps not Plautus' funniest list, though delivery may have helped). Sagaristio tells a pimp his name: *Vaniloquidorus Virginesvendonides / Nugiepiloquides Argentumexterebronides* / [*Tedigniloquides Nugides Palponides*] / ***Quodsemelarripides Numquameripides*** (*Pers.* 702–5**).** Hegio lists the 'mercenaries' Ergasilus needs: *primumdum opus est Pistorensibus; / eorum sunt aliquot genera Pistorensium: / opus Paniceis est, opus Placentinis quoque; / opus Turdetanis, opust* ***Ficedulensibu****s; / iam maritumi omnes milites opus sunt tibi* (*Capt.* 160–4). The *Pistorienses*, *Placentini*, and *Turditani* existed. *Ficedulenses* is a nonce-word (but punning on *Ficulenses*, inhabitants of *Ficulea*).

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the eloquently contemptuous *servolorum sordidulorum scorta diobolaria*, which caps the list of *prosedae* (*Poen.* 266–70). Even lists without gag items or postscripts are usually shaped to make a humorous point.[10] These examples show that Plautus varies the type of joke in the list (puns, coinages, exaggerations, nonsense items, even riddles) but not the shape.

As a list of women's expenses (*damna mulierum*), *Mil.* 692–4 falls into a stock category of list jokes. Within the popular subject of women's faults—a centuries-old topic for catalogues, joking and otherwise—the expenses of women formed a virtual sub-category. Such lists in Plautus demonstrate the same pattern of mixing straight items with gag items, often in pairs. Epidicus and Periphanes, for example, make fun of the language of women's fashions:

> Pe. Quid erat induta? an regillam induculam an **mendiculam**?
> Ep. Inpluviatam, ut istaec faciunt vestimentis nomina.
> Pe. Vtin inpluvium induta fuerit? . . .
>
> Ep. . . . tunicam rallam, tunicam spissam, linteolum caesicium,
> indusiatam, patagiatam, caltulam aut **crocotulam**,
> subparum aut **subnimium**, ricam, basilicum aut exoticum,
> cumatile aut **plumatile**, carinum aut **cerinum**–gerrae maxumae.
> cani quoque etiam ademptumst nomen. Per. Qui? Ep. Vocant **Laconicum**.
> (*Epid*. 222–4, 230–4)

'Thin' and 'thick' weaves, linen, the *indusium*, *patagium*, *supparus*, and *rica* are attested elsewhere.[11] Ovid mentions *cera* as a clothing colour (*Ars Am.* 3.184) and Plautus himself refers to *carinarii* ('brown-dyers'? at *Aul.* 510). *Crocotulam* and

[10] For example, *Aul.* 373–5 puts items in descending order of price, to show Euclio's cheapness; *Mostell.* 356–61 orders by severity the punishments that Tranio will pay someone to suffer in his place, culminating with crucifixion (and a joke: 'when he's nailed hand and foot, then he can collect from me'); *Merc*. 646–7 is a geographical zigzag (every second item represents a jump eastwards) that reflects the lover's disordered state of mind.

[11] See G. E. Duckworth, *T. Macci Plauti Epidicus* (Princeton, 1940), 245–8, for a survey and discussion of the ancient references. W. Hofmann, 'Die Monologe im *Epidicus* und *Truculentus*', in U. Auhagen (ed.), *Studien zu Plautus' Epidicus* (Tübingen, 2001), 242, suggests the jokes may not have been transparent even to the original audience. In the same volume, W. G. Arnott, 'Plautus' *Epidicus* and Greek comedy', 81–2, challenges Fraenkel's contention (cited above, n. 1, 127–30) that this list originated *in toto* with Plautus. Arnott points out that Greek comic poets loved lists of foods and other items, including expensive women's paraphernalia such as jewellry (Nicostratos 32K-A, 7 items), clothing (Antiphanes 289K-A, 3 items; Men. 94K-A, 3 items), luggage (Men. *Sik.* 388–9, 4 items) and, if one counts mime, shoes (Herodas 7.57–61, 16 items). Arnott notes that the pun *Laconicum* also works in Greek. The majority of the gag items in *Epidicus*, however, are probably Plautine. Greek food lists contain real and desirable, if expensive, foods and seasonings; other lists rely on a humorous premiss rather than gag items, e.g. from Alexis (W. G. Arnott, *Alexis: The Fragments* [= *Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries* 31, Cambridge, 1996], 33): creatures noisier than a certain woman (96K-A); terms of abuse for the speaker's sons (113); swift creatures of myth who are nonetheless slower than a parasite's patron (205.1–3); or *pharmaka* for love (281). Herodas 7.57–61 appeals more to voyeurism but may include joke names. There is Greek precedent for complaining in lists (e.g. culinary items the speaker refuses to lend, Alexis 179.3–10, Men. *Dys.* 505–8, perhaps also Men. 365K-A), but again the items are real and the humour evidently lay in the length of the list (Anaxandrides 42K-A beats all with 84 items) and the delivery (some were *pnigoi*, e.g. Ar. *Eccl.* 1169–75). The Greek lists are shaped for jingles (e.g. Ar. *Ach.* 874–5 *θρυαλίδας / φαλαρίδας*; 878–80 *ἀλώπεκας / σκάλοπες . . . πικτίδες / ἰκτῖδες ἐνύδρως ἐγχέλεις κωπαΐδας*) but not for punchlines (e.g. Dicaeopolis' joke simply interrupts the Boeotian's list in *Ach.* 876–7; gag and straight items alternate at Ar. *Plut.* 190–2). Most of the Greek examples in Arnott ('Plautus' *Epidicus*', 81) have no jokes at all.

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plumatile appear to be variations on the clothing terms *crocota* and *plumarius,* modified for the sake of the rhyme. The effect is to trivialize the distinctions between the garments, as the slave openly scoffs at those to whom such distinctions matter. 'Beggar [dress]' is a gag item, spoofing 'royal dress', and *subnimium* puns on *supparum* (as if it were from *sub* + *parum*).[12] Megadorus' list in *Aulularia* 508–22, the *tour de force* of this joke type, resembles *Mil*. 692–4 in focusing on the tradespeople who need to be paid.[13]

Comic conventions accordingly lead us to expect a few straight items in the list of diviners. Moreover, *Mil.* 692–4 is part of the *third* list joke Periplectomenus delivers in this scene, and the first two follow the usual form. His catalogue of virtues as a *conviva commodus* (642–8) starts with conversational *savoir-faire* (*cavillator facetus*) and ends with not excreting (much) spit, phlegm or snot, with a postscript poke at Apulians.[14] The list of 'youthful' services he offers (663–8) is divided by clear structural markers that set apart the joke at the end: *opusne erit . . . advocato tristi . . . / opusne leni . . . / . . . / vel hilarissimum convivam . . . / vel primarium parasitum . . . /* ***tum ad saltandum non cinaedus malacus aequest atque ego***.[15] We may reasonably expect 692–4 to continue the pattern: the first item (*praecantrix*) should be real and the last item (*haruspica*) should be a joke. (The *quae* clause need not be a joke, though I suspect it is.)[16] In a pair such as *hariolae/haruspicae* we would expect the second to be the joke, an expectation that may

[12] Context suggests that *mendicula* is also a humorous coinage. The women who wear these clothes are *ornatae meretrices,* and the one in question is decked out with particular luxury (*vestita aurata, ornata ut lepide, ut concinne ut nove*). Mendicancy was surely the last thing these women wished to call to mind.

[13] Cf. *Trin*. 251–3, where the youth Lysiteles lists the *familia* a *meretrix* brings with her for the night: *vestiplica, unctor, auri custos,* ***flabelliferae, sandaligerulae, l*** *cantrices,* ***cistellatrices****, nuntii,* ***renuntii*** */ raptores panis et peni*. The first three are well attested (Treggiari [n. 2], 80), as are *cantrices* (ibid. 91) and *nuntii*, whereas *renuntii* is the obvious joke. I take the remaining three, all *hapax legomena*, as humorous Plautine inventions to spice up a conventional joke (cf. Ter. *Haut.* 451–2 *ancillas secum adduxit plus decem/oneratas veste atque auro*). Rich women did appear with flocks of attendants, but even in Livia's large and specialized household they are simply called *pedisequae*. Moreover, even in the most specialized household slaves still handled tasks that needed doing (e.g. Tiberius had a *cistarius a veste forensi* CIL 6.5193), but a *cistella* is too small to hold anything requiring maintenance and 'sandal-bearing' is just absurd (particularly in the plural: even the *armiger*, on which *sandaligerulae* seems to be modelled, was only needed singly). But Plautus is describing a procession (*ducitur tota familia*) and using the specialized slaves to create a visual effect (i.e. their job here is to carry particular items, and the joke is that this is all they do). Cf. J. H. Gray, *Trinummus* (Cambridge, 1897), 91, *ad* 253: 'the plurals are plurals of rhetorical exaggeration to make the whole number appear as large as possible, and with the same object the "messengers" are comically subdivided into *nuntii, renuntii*, as if there was one set to bear messages and another set to carry replies'. P. P. Spranger, *Historische Untersuchungen zu den Sklavenfiguren des Plautus und Terenz* (= *Forschung zur Antiken Sklaverei* 17 [Stuttgart, 1984], 79–80), and G. W. Leffingwell, *Social and Private Life at Rome in the Time of Plautus and Terence* (New York, 1918), 83, caution against pressing the Plautine evidence too far. W. Wagner, *Trinummus* (Cambridge, 1890), 41–2, and Treggiari (n. 2), 81, are more inclined to take the passage at face value.

[14] *post Ephesi sum natus, non enim in Apulis; non sum Animulas* (*Mil.* 648)

[15] *Cinaedus*, in addition to being obscene and irrelevant (because it is utterly useless to a comic lover), is much more degrading to a free citizen than anything else on the list.

[16] What *quae supercilio spicit* (*Mil.* 694) may refer to is unclear. It is generally taken as an unusual form of divination (J. Brix, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus* [Leipzig, 1884], 87, *ad* 693; R. Y. Tyrrell, *The Miles Gloriosus of T. Maccius Plautus* [London, 1894], 62–3, *ad* 693; E. Paratore, *Plauto: Miles Gloriosus (Il Soldato Spaccone)* [Florence, 1959], 168; M. Hammond, A. M. Mack, and W. Moskalew, *T. Macci Plauti Miles Gloriosus* [Cambridge, MA, 1963], 139, *ad* 694; cf. *Merc.* 396–8). If it is not, the joke may lie in elevating an obscure superstition (attested *Pseud.* 106 *quia futurumst ita supercilium salit*, Theocr. 3.37 ἄλλεται

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be reinforced by an observation about Plautus' use of *atque*. Plautine plays are filled with alliterative, assonant, and rhyming pairs with *atque*. Virtually any play contains at least half a dozen, and the *Miles* is no exception.[17] Plautus often uses *atque* to link the joke element in a list or pair. The linked word may set up the gag, as in the following examples:

> Chal. Adsunt quae imperavisti omnia:
> uxor, sortes, situla **atque egomet**. Ol. Te uno adest plus quam ego volo
> (*Cas.* 358–9)

> Staph. nam hic apud nos nihil est aliud quaesti furibus,
> ita inaniis sunt oppletae **atque araneis**.
> Eucl. . . . araneas mihi ego illas servari volo (*Aul.* 83–4, 87)

It may be humorous for other reasons: as a bit of wordplay, as at *Cas.* 801 (Lys. *Quid agis, mea salus?* Ol. *Esurio hercle,* ***atque*** *adeo hau* ***salubriter***) or *Men.* 191 (*Induviae tuae atque uxoris* ***exuviae****, rosa*); a coinage, as at *Merc.* 581 (*nunc tu sapienter loquere* ***atque amatorie***) and *Curc.* 77 (*nomen Leaenae est, multibiba* ***atque merobiba***);[18] or simply a little comic hyperbole, as at *Epid.* 320 (*exedor miser* ***atque exenteror***). *Atque* is of course a common conjunction, and not the only one to serve this purpose, but these examples provide one more reason to think *haruspicae* was chosen for sound as much as sense, and comes where we would expect a joke. From the stylistic evidence, then, *haruspica* is ridiculous, *praecantrix* is not, and the two specialties in between are debatable. How well does this match the historical picture?

Praecantrix is attested as an occupational title by Varro: *ut faciunt pleraeque, ut adhibeant praecantrices nec medico ostendant*.[19] *Adhibeant*, the customary word for engaging the services of a professional,[20] suggests that money is involved (the *medicus* whom these women supplant certainly collected an honorarium for his services).[21] It was evidently a woman's profession, since no masculine form is attested and regular practitioners all appear to be women.[22] The 'spell-casting' was not necessarily exotic. Varro treats it again as an alternative form of health care in the *Satires* (*ego medicina Serapi utor, cotidie praecantor*, *Men.* 152) and Ovid mentions an old woman hired to chant a spell as part of the annual rites of Tacita *(cantata ligat . . . licia*, *Fast.* 2.572).

ὀφθαλμός μευ)—perhaps little more than a figure of speech like 'I can feel it in my bones'—to a formal specialization.

[17] For example, *fortem atque fortunatum* 10, *amplexantem atque osculantem* 245 (cf. 320, 1453), *stultitia atque insipientia* 878, *male atque malitiose* 887, *orare atque obsecrare* 971, *adiisse atque exorasse* 1226, *adeundi atque impetrandi* 1228, *tremit atque extimuit* 1272. Plautus was by no means the only comic poet to use this sort of jingle. Cf. Caec. 143 Ribbeck *plorando orando instando atque obiurgando*, 202 *clamo postulo obsecro oro ploro atque inploro*.

[18] Both are humorous coinages but *multibiba* sets up for *merobiba,* the more exaggerated and more original joke (copious drinking is a predictable old woman's trait and Latin has many compounds with *multi-*). The words would be less effective if reversed.

[19] Varro, *Cato, vel de liberis educandis* (= *Logistorici* fr. 15, cited Nonius p. 494).

[20] *OLD* s.v. 5b.

[21] Or a retainer from the town council, if he was a public physician (R. Jackson, *Doctors and Disease in the Roman Empire* [Norman and London, 1988], 57). On *honoraria* for medical services, see also A. Borkowski, *Textbook on Roman Law* (London, 1994), 266–7.

[22] For example, the *Satyricon*'s Chrysis (who uses *lapillos praecantatos* 131.5), the *praecantatrices* mentioned in Porphyry (*Comm. in Hor. Carm.* 1.27.1), Apuleius' *cantatrices anus* (*Met*. 2.20.7, 2.30.7) and the *anus* of *Fast*. 2.571–82 (a professional according to A. J. Boyle and R. D. Woodward, *Ovid: Fasti* [London and New York, 2000], 200, *ad* 2.571–82). The only male subject of *praecan(t)o* attested is Hercules (Serv. *ad Aen*. 8.270, *cum ipse Hercules, rem divinam faciens, preces praecaneret*).

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The next item, *coniectrix*, is a generally accepted correction by Camerarius (*conlectrici* BCD, *coc̣ṭ[ri]c̣i̯* A).[23] The basic service was to 'cast' or interpret a dream, *somnium alicui conicere* (*Curc.* 253). A person who made a living at it was called a *coniector*.[24] *Coniectores* were familiar figures for Plautus, and the word for an 'interpretation', *coniectura*, was so firmly established in daily speech that it appears more often in a figurative sense (of any inference from signs, *exempla*, or other observations, and frequently in the idiom *coniecturam facere*).[25] The emended form *coniectrix*, however, would be a *hapax*, and there is no other evidence that women provided the service or used the title. A scene in *Curculio* may shed light on whether it is likely or even possible that women could cast dreams.

Curculio 229–79 dramatizes a very ordinary dream interpretation. Cappadox, a sick old *leno*, wants the slave Palinurus to cast a dream (*coniecturam facere*) in which Asclepius, he explains, 'sat far away from me, and would not come near me'. A willing Palinurus soon defers to the cook, the real 'expert' (*magister*), who takes the dream as a portent of ill fortune (*magnum malum, / quod in quiete tibi portentumst*) and offers the most banal advice (*pacem ab Aesculapio / petas*). The significance of dreams is taken as self-evident and interpretation is a form of divination (*scire divinitus*, Palinurus defines it 248). Yet all three characters consider it a skill that any intelligent person can master with a little instruction.[26] Unlike 'official' haruspicy, it did not require literacy and could be a hobby, as it seems to be for Palinurus, permitting different levels of skill. Palinurus admits that the cook is better than he (*meliorem quam ego sum* 256), though he puts himself ahead of professionals (*coniectores a me consilium petunt: / quod eis respondi, ea omnes stant sententia* 249–50). Not only was dream-casting an accessible skill, it was also a frequently needed service. The cook mentions interpreting for Palinurus regularly (*tute ipse, si quid somniasti, ad me refers* 254), and the pimp seeks a *coniectura* on the same day as the dream.[27] Although it was possible to interpret third-hand as Palinurus does (or claims to do) for the *coniectores*, one normally knew the client. Here the cook makes an exception for the *leno* (*tam etsi non novi, dabo* 259), but casting for a close acquaintance like Palinurus (254, cited above) is the implicit norm. The ongoing relationship between client and interpreter depicted at *Mil.* 692 is consistent with this picture. The money is a gratuity, not a fee, paid annually during the *quinquatrus*. Given the personal nature of the relationship and the service (health seems to pass for a typical subject), one might expect women to have consulted other

[23] Printed by Brix (n. 16); A. O. F. Lorenz, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus* (Berlin, 1886); F. T. Ritschl, *T. Macci Plauti Miles Gloriosus* (= *Comoediarum Plautinarum* 4, fasc. 2, rev. G. Goetz [Leipzig, 1890]); Tyrrell (n. 16); Leo (n. 1); W. M. Lindsay, *T. Macci Plauti Comoediae* 2 (Oxford, 1905); A. Ernout, *Plaute: Comédies* IV (Paris, 1936), Paratore (n. 16).

[24] Quint. *Inst.* 36.30 *somniorum atque ominum interpretes coniectores vocantur.*

[25] For example, *Cas.* 224, *Cist.* 204, *Men.* 164, *Poen.* 91 (*coniectura* from signs, cf. Ter. *Ad.* 821–2), *Trin.* 921 (from an *exemplum*). Cf. Ter. *Haut.* 574, *An.* 511–12 (from observations), *An. alter exit.* 997a (of inferring a general truth), and *Eun.* 543 (the back-formation, *coniecto*). Ennius uses *coniectura* of dream-casting (*coniecturam postulat* fr. 18 Jocelyn) and reasoned prediction (*coniectura augurare* fr. 121 Jocelyn). On the origin of the phrase *somnium conicere* see Jocelyn (n. 1), 225 'the usage seems to have arisen from the use of lots in dream interpretation (*sortes conicere*)'.

[26] Cf. *Rud.* 612. After initial difficulties, Daemones eventually manages his own *coniectura* (771–3).

[27] The banality of the service is the point of the joke at *Amph.* 1128–9, where Amphitruo cuts the mythical Tiresias down to comic size (*Teresiam coniectorem advocabo et consulam/quid faciundum censeat*).

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women.[28] If slaves could dabble in dream-casting, it is hard to imagine women could not. Whether they were ever paid is unknowable, although not unlikely. That they used *coniectrix* as an occupational title is doubtful. *Curculio* provides evidence that a little private dream-casting did not qualify one to claim professional status, and the stylistic considerations mentioned above (namely the placement of *coniectrici* as the second item in rhyming pair) invite scepticism.[29]

The conventions of Plautine list jokes argue even more strongly against *haruspica*, which looks like a coinage on the analogy of *harioli–haruspices*, a pairing Plautus liked.[30] It is not hard to see why a *haruspica* might have seemed ludicrous to Plautus' audience. *Haruspices* were interpreters, rather than seers, whose numbers and prestige increased in Rome from the time of second Punic war.[31] They fell into two classes. The better known 'official' class gave ritual prescriptions and were consulted by the Senate, especially concerning prodigies.[32] This kind of haruspicy was recognized as a body of knowledge passed down through the Etruscan aristocracy.[33] The idea that a woman could understand it is not in itself ridiculous. Livy credits Tanaquil with the ability to read heavenly *prodigia*, which he attributes to experience (that is, he recognizes it as an acquired skill rather than an innate gift) and to her Etruscan background (*perita ut vulgo Etrusci caelestium prodigiorum mulier* 1.34.9). Although Livy makes no distinction of sex or class (*ut vulgo Etrusci*), the Roman Senate did, recognizing only male *haruspices*, preferably from aristocratic families. The 'street-corner' (*vicani*) *haruspices* more familiar to Plautus were lower-class professionals who made their living reading sacrificial *exta* for any sort of customer (including *lenones*, *meretrices*, and slaves) and apparently relied on haruspicy for their living.[34] Plautus groups them with *pistores* and *lanii* in a survey of disreputable types in downtown Rome.[35] It was their task to determine whether a *litatio* had been achieved; their work was not, as in Etruria, primarily divination. A *haruspex* in the *Poenulus*, for example, who refuses to pronounce a *litatio* even after the sixth sacrifice also reads a portent in the *exta*.[36] The disgruntled pimp who has engaged his services takes such haruspical predictions as a matter of course (792–3), and though he scoffs when the promised *malum* does not immediately

[28] Brix (n. 16), 87, *ad* 292, and J. L. Ussing, *Commentarius in Plauti Comoedias* (Hildesheim and New York, 1972 [Copenhagen, 1875–92]), 48 take this as normal practice.

[29] But there is one possible *comparandum* for the adoption, by a woman, of a professional title that refers to divination through the interpretation of signs. A Numidian gravestone, probably second–thirrd century A.D., attests to a *Veneria sortiloca* (from *sortilogus*, alternate form of *sortilegus*) who lived to 100 (CIL 8.6181). It is also possible that *sortiloca* is a *cognomen*. Cf. Porphyry's note describing the *divina anus* of Hor. *Sat.* 1.9.29–30 (*namque instat fatum mihi triste, Sabella / quod puero cecinit mota divina anus urna*) as a *sortilega*. My thanks to Paul Harvey and William Klingshirn for these references.

[30] *Amph.* 1132, *Poen.* 791. Cf. Ter. *Phorm.* 708–9 (in the same order). This was no doubt a conventional association, although in longer lists the two are not usually juxtaposed (e.g. Cato, *Agr.* 5.4.4, Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.55).

[31] Thulin, *RE* VII.2, col. 2433.

[32] Ibid. col. 2433–4; S. Montero, 'Mántica inspirada y demonología: los *Harioli*', *AC* 62 (1993), 121; Beard et al. (n. 2), 19–20.

[33] Thulin (n. 31), col. 2437; B. MacBain, *Prodigy and Expiation: A Study in Religion and Politics in Republican Rome* (Brussels, 1982); 43–4. Beard et al. (n. 2), 20 caution against overstating the 'Etruscan-ness' of the *haruspices* at Rome.

[34] Thulin (n. 31), col. 2437, 2440.

[35] *Curc.* 483–4: [*in Velabro vel pistorem vel lanium vel haruspicem*]*/vel qui ipsi vorsant vel qui aliis ubi vorsentur praebeant.* T. J. Moore, '*Palliata togata*: Plautus, *Curculio* 462–86', *AJP* 112 (1991), 354–5 argues for the authenticity of line 483.

[36] *Poen.* 457a–b, 463–5.

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come to pass (746–50), he is of course proved wrong. The play presents this *haruspex* without disrespect to the profession (the pimp's only reflects badly on his own) and as a reputable authority (*non homo trioboli* 463 is the pimp's initial impression) who makes accurate predictions. This kind of work was not open to women. Male *haruspices* officiated at sacrifices in public and we know that women used their services: Columella specifically forbids *vilicae* to consult them; Juvenal complains that women overwork the *haruspex* with sacrifices for a popular cithara-player; and the *Poenulus*' lost citizens have 'their' *exta* read by the haruspex.[37] Who read the *exta* at household sacrifices can only be guessed, but women are unlikely candidates (although the point may be moot, since households with facilities for sacrifice would be out of Periplectomenus' class).[38]

The last remaining recipient on the wife's list, the *hariola*, comes where we would expect a straight item. Here, too, it is important to consider contemporary attitudes towards the male counterparts. *Harioli* were familiar figures in late third-century Rome. They prophesied by divine inspiration, and comic poets made the most of their long hair and wild raving.[39] The *hariolus* even became a minor stock type.[40] Sophisticates might dismiss them as quacks and con men, but popular opinion, at least as reflected by Plautus, did not: *hariolari* means *vera dicere* in Plautus and denotes the ability to 'see' the unknown present or future.[41] It may be spoken sarcastically, as, for example, when a character points out the obvious (*hariolare*, 'you must be psychic!'), but information thus obtained is always true, and it is telling that Plautus draws his 'cunning plan' analogies from cooking and architecture, never divination (there are no sly comparisons between the clever slave and the *hariolus*, a real-life model of ingenuity, one suspects, in improvising believable lies). *Hariola* is not simply a joke at the profession's expense. Nor is prophecy considered an impossible skill for ordinary women who were not famous oracles or sibyls. The slave Gripus raises the idea when Daemones announces his intention to award the casket to Palaestra if she can correctly identify its contents (*quid si ista aut superstitiosa aut hariolast atque omnia, / quidquid insit, vera dicet? anne habebit hariola? Rud*. 1138–40). Gripus' fear of losing the trinkets is real, if far-fetched, and he means his objection seriously. It is significant that Daemones does *not* say that a woman like Palaestra (and much less women in general)

[37] Columella, 1.8.6; Juv. 6.396–7; *Poen.* 1205–07. In the Columella passage, the female counterpart of the *haruspex* is the *saga* (*haruspices sagasque . . . ne admiserit*).

[38] The Bacchic cult offered women some autonomy but gave them no reason to incorporate Etruscan haruspicy (and if these are the 'foreign rites' of 213 mentioned in Livy 25.1.8 we know that male assistants (*sacrificuli*) were brought in).

[39] *Rud.* 377 (hair), *Truc.* 601–2 (raving).

[40] *Men.* 76 (stock type). Naevius wrote an *Ariolus* (fr. 21–6 Warmington).

[41] *Asin.* 579, *Cist*. 746, *Mostell.* 571, *Rud.* 326 (unknown present), *Asin.* 316, 924 (future). Cf. *Amph.* 1132–3: *hariolos, haruspices / mitte omnes; quae futura et quae facta eloquar*. *Hariolari* is used sarcastically at *Rud.* 347–8 (Tr. *non rem divinam facitis hic vos neque erus?* Am. *hariolare.* Tr. *quid tu agis hic igitur?*). Cf. Ter. *Phorm.* 492 (Ph. *nondum mihi credis?* Do. *hariolare*). It does not mean 'talk nonsense' in Plautus, as it does later (Hammond et al. [n. 16], 191, *ad* 1256; Jocelyn [n. 1], 397). *Contra* Latte (n. 1), 268, recognizes 'speak sooth' as the most common sense in comedy but sees examples of the other sense at *Mil.* 1256 and *Phorm.* 492. I take the latter as typical pimp's sarcasm and the former as an expression of astonishment (since the woman's 'divination' is true—the soldier really is nearby—he cannot be calling it 'nonsense'). Casual references to *harioli* suggest they were accorded some respect. At *Cas.* 356 a *hariolus* is considered a kind of *artifex* and reckoned a valuable addition to a household; *occipiam hariolari* is a boast at *Rud*. 377; and at *Phorm.* 705–10 the interdiction of a *hariolus* counts as a socially acceptable reason to postpone a wedding, comparable with prodigies, portents, the advice of a *haruspex*, or a superstition against starting something new before winter.

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cannot prophesy, but that she will prophesy in vain (*nequiquam*) if she does not get the answer right (*non feret, nisi vera dicet: nequiquam hariolabitur* 1141).[42] His implication is clear: her prophetic skill will be useless or insufficient here. Another gullible character, Pyrgopolynices, persuades himself that a lovesick woman can 'divine' his presence by smell (*hariolatur / quia me amat, propterea Venus fecit eam ut divinaret*, *Mil.* 1256–7). The joke is not that female divination is a crazy idea or that the gods do not really give the gift of sight, but that smell is not a method of divination (*naso pol iam haec quidem plus videt quam oculis* 1259).[43] This joke depends on acceptance of *hariolatio* as a special skill: divinatory smell is not especially funny if divinatory sight is already ludicrous.

Both passages attest to a skill rather than an occupation, which is the most common sense of *hariolus* in Plautus. *Miles* 692 is the only passage to suggest women could call themselves *hariolae* and make money at it. This may have been possible. The *hariolus* practised a low-status profession in the face of official efforts to promote haruspicy as the more 'scientific' form of divination.[44] They were never part of a *collegium*; anyone who wished could set up shop. Indeed Ennius complains about an abundance of religious quacks in Rome, including *harioli*, who were driven by poverty, madness, or the lack of any other lucrative skill, to promise 'wealth for a drachma'.[45] Ennius does not criticize divination itself, only fraudulent practitioners. It was evidently possible to practise the trade without formal training since he calls them *inertes*. The complaint that some were *insani* (this, in a profession that required a believable show of possession!) makes it clear that the aristocratic poet considered lower-class 'clairvoyance' anything but a skilled trade. Thus, it was possible to earn small sums without training, equipment, or facilities for sacrifice, by means of a service that must have been private, if there is any truth in the caricature of *harioli* promising poor clients vast wealth. Under these conditions the profession would have been more accessible to women than medicine, shop- or brothel-keeping, which they are known to have practised.[46]

Conventions of Plautine list jokes lead us to expect *haruspica*, and possibly *coniectrix*, to be gag items but *praecantrix*, and possibly *hariola*, to be legitimate occupational titles. That the notion of a professional *haruspica* would seem ridiculous

[42] As Plautus does not otherwise question the legitimacy of the profession, I am inclined to read this as a recognition of either its limitations (a certain vagueness being necessary in this line of work) or Palaestra's.

[43] This text follows the MSS rather than Leo (who gives *hariolatur* to Palaestrio).

[44] Montero (n. 32), 121–3.

[45] Cic. *Div.* 1.132 introduces the quotation with *non enim sunt hi aut scientia aut arte diuini sed superstitiosi uates inpudentesque harioli*

> aut inertes aut insani aut quibus egestas imperat,
> qui sibi semitam non sapiunt alteri monstrant uiam;
> quibus diuitias pollicentur, ab iis drachumam ipsi petunt.
> de his diuitiis sibi deducant drachumam, reddant cetera (= fr. 134 Jocelyn)

Jocelyn (n. 1), 398 cautiously attributes this passage to Ennius, rather than to his Greek source ('the class of diviners mentioned—those who *divitias pollicentur*—do not appear in the remains of Attic tragedy. . . . We have perhaps yet another instance of Ennius turning aside from the drama he is adapting and commenting upon contemporary affairs').

[46] S. Treggiari, 'Lower class women in the Roman economy', *Florilegium* 1 (1979), 70–3 (dealers), ead. (n. 2, 1976), 86 (doctors). Comedy itself attests to *lenae* (but one is also known from an inscription, cited in Treggiari [1979], 73, 85, n. 37). Formal training was not, in fact, legally required of doctors (Jackson [n. 21], 58: 'you could become a doctor, man or woman, merely by proclaiming yourself to be one').

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to a Roman audience fits what we know of haruspicy at Rome. Dream-casting and hariolation, however, could be practised non-professionally, and other references in Plautus suggest that his audience would have found nothing remarkable about women doing either. We have no evidence other than this passage that they hired themselves out as professional *coniectrices* and *hariolae*, but neither is out of the question. We know about the private hiring of other female religious experts, such as the *anus* of Ov. *Fast.* 2.571, *piatrices* and *simpulatrices*,[47] or the *praecantrix*, quietly engaged according to Varro in preference to (more expensive?) male professionals, and there were female networks in ancient Rome about which we know little. The Bacchic cult is a famous example: without the Senate decree and Livy's account, it would be impossible to guess its extent from references in Plautus. Another example is the investigation in 331 that caught Roman matrons preparing what appeared to be poisons.[48] Whatever they were, the preparations were produced for women's use, and the incident shows women with specialized knowledge putting their skills at the disposal of other women. These networks barely made it into the historical record. There is no reason private consultation of female religious 'experts' would attract notice, except as the kind of domestic nuisance a satirist or comedian might complain about. Ennius complained that far too many religious quacks were making money in Rome; *Mil.* 692 tells us that some of them were women.[49]

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[47] Paul. *Fest*. p. 212M *piatrix dicebatur sacerdos, quae expiare erat solita, quam alii sagam vocabant*, p. 337M *simpulum . . . unde et mulieres rebus divinis deditae . . . simpulatrices* (*OLD* s.v.).

[48] Livy 8.18. See R. A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome* (London and New York, 1992), 221–2, n. 5 for bibliography on this notorious incident. In the dispute over the nature of these *medicamenta* two patrician women in the ring claimed that they were *salubria* and died trying to prove it. They may have been pharmaceuticals (woman's chores included home remedies, N. Purcell, 'Livia and the womanhood of Rome', *PCPS* 212 [1986], 95). Toxicity often depends on the dosage, and 170 planned murders—the number of convictions—seems highly unlikely. Anything so widely distributed must have had multiple uses or filled a more common need.

[49] The article by N. W. Slater, 'The market in sooth: supernatural discourse in Plautus', in E. Stärk and G. Vogt-Spira (edd.), *Dramatische Wäldchen. Festschrift für Eckard Lefèvre zum 65 Geburstag*, *Spudasmata* 80 (Zurich and New York, 2000), 345–62, unfortunately came to my attention too late to be included in this article.

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