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# Girls, Girls, Girls The Prostitute in Roman New Comedy and the Pro Caelio

Nicholas R. Jannazo

*Xavier University, Cincinnati, OH*

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Xavier University

Girls, Girls, Girls

*The Prostitute in Roman New Comedy and the Pro Caelio*

Nick Jannazo

CLAS 399-01H

Dr. Hogue

Jannazo 0

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## Introduction

Prostitution is often said to be the oldest profession in the world, having occurred since the ancient times of Greece and Rome. Today's American society views prostitution as immoral and repulsive, but this has not always been the case. In ancient Rome, Roman men were able to visit a brothel, pay for the company of a prostitute, and leave without being looked down upon or reproached, so long as they did so in moderation. If they frequently visited brothels, though, Roman men were admonished and scolded, as Cato does to a well-known gentleman after seeing him leave a brothel numerous times.<sup>1</sup> Various genres of literature, such as comedy, satire, and even prose, have even used the image of the prostitute, but for different reasons. Plautus and Terence, Roman playwrights of Roman New Comedy, used the image of the prostitute to display the troubling aspects of the lives of prostitutes and also to mock the social settings of Roman men and youths through the inversion of social norms. Cicero, on the other hand, used the prostitute's image in the *Pro Caelio* to diminish the reputation of Clodia and, in turn, that of her *gens*, the Claudii. This paper argues that Cicero drew upon the stock character of the *meretrix* ("prostitute") of Plautus and Terence, among other literary devices and literary characters, to attack the image of Clodia, weakening her testimony in the trial of Marcus Caelius Rufus and thus helping him obtain an acquittal.

The one word that Cicero uses to depict Clodia as a prostitute is *meretrix*, which means a "prostitute" or a "courtesan." The term *meretrix* derives from *mereo*, meaning "to earn," and meant "a woman who earns."<sup>2</sup> The idea expressed in this term was that a woman earned money through sexual performances or other lewd acts. Some scholars view these actions as vulgar and the act itself as an unfavorable venture, so they regarded prostitutes as "base, equated with the

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<sup>1</sup> Flemming 1999:44.

<sup>2</sup> Adams 1983:324; Flemming 1999:40.

lower class.”<sup>3</sup> Other scholars, however, believe that not every *meretrix* was part of the lower class, but rather saw a separate hierarchy for her, both in Roman society and in Roman Comedy. In Roman society, the *meretrix* was seen more as a free, high-class sex laborer. In Roman Comedy, however, this hierarchy was based on “politeness” instead of class and she was seen as indifferent or in an affectionate context.<sup>4</sup> The *meretrix* was also the love interest of the *adulescens*, the foolish youth, who sometimes had to end their relationship at the end of the play in order to marry a respectable woman. Even though prostitution was legal in Rome, accusations of being a prostitute, or actually being a prostitute, resulted in legal consequences.<sup>5</sup>

These were not the only distinctions of a *meretrix* in Roman Comedy, however. Plautus and Terence both divided the *meretrix* into two types: the *mala* (“bad faith”) and the *bona* (“good faith”) *meretrix*. A “bad faith” prostitute concerned herself solely with money and gifts and deceived anyone in order to gain more of them. The “good faith” prostitute, on the other hand, truly loved the foolish youth (*adulescens*), even if she sometimes had to fake feelings for another client in order to advance the plot of the play.<sup>6</sup> In some cases, the *bona meretrix* was revealed to be a freeborn citizen, allowing her to marry the *adulescens* in a legal Greek marriage.

Plautus and Terence had based these features of a *meretrix* on those of prostitutes in Greek New Comedy, from which they drew much inspiration. There were two kinds of “prostitutes” in Greek New Comedy, the *ἑταίρα* and the *ψευδῆς ἑταίρα*. The *ἑταίρα* was the high-class prostitute who performed sexual gratifications for Greek men not yet prepared for

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<sup>3</sup> Crisafulli 1998:225.

<sup>4</sup> Witzke 2015:8.

<sup>5</sup> McGinn 1998:246. Chapters 2 and 7 of McGinn 1998 also thoroughly discuss the legal repercussions of prostitution.

<sup>6</sup> Sharrock 2009:118.

marriage.<sup>7</sup> She was a non-citizen, being either a foreigner or a metic, but still highly educated.<sup>8</sup> The ψευδής ἑταίρα, on the other hand, only seemed like a ἑταίρα. In truth, she was a respectable and sincere woman, sometimes being free.<sup>9</sup> This woman was usually revealed to be a freeborn citizen near the end of the play, allowing her to marry her first lover or client. Marriage in 4<sup>th</sup> century Greece was an important social institution because it determined legitimacy in citizenship. Only legitimate Greek citizens were able to hold public office, participate in religious ceremony, or even inherit property.<sup>10</sup> One's parents had to be legitimate Greek citizens in order for him/her to be considered a legitimate citizen. Thus, the revelation of the ψευδής ἑταίρα as a freeborn citizen had an immense impact on the ending of the play.

Both Plautus and Terence incorporated into their own plays the plots, themes, and other stock characters of the Greek New Comedy of Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus, which is why their plays were referred to as *fabulae palliatae* (“plays in Greek dress”).<sup>11</sup> Their themes concerned elements of real life, focusing on the family and interactions of the members of the *oikos*.<sup>12</sup> The plots for Plautus and Terence progressed in a practical manner and incorporated “twists and turns, contrived suspense, and skillfully delayed recognitions.”<sup>13</sup> Both men relied on elements of Greek New Comedy, but both also employed these elements differently.

Even though there are other terms for a “prostitute,” the only one that is relevant for this study is *meretrix* because that is the only word that Cicero used to call Clodia a prostitute, even though he used other terms and phrases to depict her as a prostitute. Since Clodia was a member

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<sup>7</sup> Hunter 1985:88.

<sup>8</sup> Konstan 1983:108.

<sup>9</sup> Duncan 2006:138.

<sup>10</sup> Thornton 2000:48.

<sup>11</sup> Allan and Storey 2014:228.

<sup>12</sup> Allan and Storey 2014:226.

<sup>13</sup> Allan and Storey 2014:231.

of the Claudian *gens*, which was a high-class, elite family, her characterization as a high-class sex laborer is suitable.<sup>14</sup> This characterization had a more profound significance since it also implicated Clodia in the concept of *infamia*. This concept concerned the unethical actions or deeds that violated the social norms of Rome and resulted in the culprit receiving some sort of punishment.<sup>15</sup> The actions of actors, gladiators, pimps, prostitutes, and even those dishonorably discharged from the army were all considered *infamis*, and their punishments pertained mostly to legal settings, such as not being allowed to act as witnesses in legal proceedings.<sup>16</sup> In an indirect way, however, the concept of *infamia* also “related to a decline in social esteem,” meaning that a person’s value in society also decreased with the implication of *infamis*.<sup>17</sup> A person of high social standing, then, would see his or her status lessen if associated with *infamia*, a matter no elite member of society would want to happen. Other high-class members of society, then, would neglect them or ignore their comments, and this *infamis* person would be excluded from high priority political and social matters.

Characterizing Clodia as a *meretrix* and *infamis* also had an effect on the entire Claudian clan. Through the notion of the honor-shame syndrome, a family’s honor could be ruined by slander or rumor. This would bring shame upon the image of the family, lowering their reputation within society. Both genders of the family were expected to preserve their family honor, each gender fulfilling different responsibilities. Males were to protect their family reputation actively by defending or avenging the woman’s honor when it was slandered, while females were to conserve the honor of their family through their sexual conduct.<sup>18</sup> A woman’s reputation relied heavily on her sexual conduct and, more importantly, on society’s estimation of

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<sup>14</sup> Wiseman 1985:16-17

<sup>15</sup> Apsitis 2013:34.

<sup>16</sup> McGinn 1998:46.

<sup>17</sup> Chiusi 2011:147.

<sup>18</sup> McGinn 1998:10.

it.<sup>19</sup> If a woman was considered immodest or promiscuous, it would damage her image, which, in turn, would bring shame upon her honor and also her family's honor. Therefore, when Cicero depicts Clodia as a *meretrix*, he not only tarnishes her reputation, but also that of her family.

This paper will examine five *meretrices* from Plautus' and Terence's plays, three from Plautus and two from Terence. The *meretrices* from Plautus' plays are Erotium from *Menaechmi*, Phronesium from *Truculentus*, and Gymnasium from *Cistellaria*, while those from Terence's plays are Bacchis from *Heauton Timorumenos* and Thais from *Eunuchus*. All of Plautus' *meretrices* appear as the *mala meretrix* that Cicero uses to depict Clodia as a greedy and ruthless prostitute, while Terence's *meretrices* offer other aspects to Clodia's image. Cicero also argues that Clodia is a scorned ex-lover whose sole purpose for this trial is to seek revenge against Caelius. Cicero accomplishes this argument by using the rhetorical devices of *prosopopoeia* and *praeteritio*, which he also uses to depict Clodia as a prostitute.

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<sup>19</sup> McGinn 1998:11.

## Chapter 1: The *meretrix* in Plautus

Titus Maccius Plautus, simply known as Plautus, was the first major playwright of Roman Comedy and represented the height of it, along with Terence. Plautus was born c. 254 B.C. at Sarsina in Umbria, but came to Rome to work as an actor.<sup>20</sup> After working as an actor, he became a tradesman but fell into debt and found another job as a mill worker.<sup>21</sup> During his time as a mill worker he began to write plays as another means of financial support. Out of 130 plays, only 20 survive intact and one other in fragments.<sup>22</sup> Plautus was best known among Roman scholars for his meter, dialogue, and jest, but much of his material comes from Greek New Comedy and aspects of Italian farce.<sup>23</sup> He incorporated the plots and characters from the Greek New Comedy of Menander, Philemon, and Diphilus, and applied aspects of Atellan farce to these Greek themes. This application of crude, vulgar plays to Greek themes made Plautus' plays "much coarser and more farcical" than the Greek plays.<sup>24</sup> Plautus' depiction of the prostitute as a *mala meretrix* shows this vulgarity. The rest of this chapter offers three examples of *malae meretrices* from Plautus' plays and explains how each woman embodies these characteristics. The first *meretrix* is Erotium from *Menaechmi*; the second is Gymnasium from *Cistellaria*; the third is Phronesium from *Truculentus*.

The plot of *Menaechmi* concerns one brother, Menaechmus II, attempting to find his long lost twin brother, Menaechmus I, after someone kidnapped him in Tarentum when he was a child visiting from Syracuse with his father. Menaechmus I grew up in Epidamnus and became rich from his adoptive father, who eventually married him to a wealthy woman before his death

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<sup>20</sup> Beacham 1991:29.

<sup>21</sup> Beacham 1991:30.

<sup>22</sup> Bieber 1961:151.

<sup>23</sup> Segal 1968:11.

<sup>24</sup> Bieber 1961:152.

(Plaut. *Men.* 60-62). Now, however Menaechmus I does not like his wife and so he frequently visits a prostitute, Erotium, who lives next door. The play begins with Menaechmus I stealing an expensive *palla* (“mantle”) from his wife and giving it to Erotium in exchange for sexual services and a meal. After giving the mantle to Erotium, Menaechmus I and his parasite, Peniculus, prepare to leave for the forum. Before leaving, Peniculus comments on Erotium’s personality: *meretrix tantisper blanditur, dum illud rapiat videt; nam si amabas, iam oportebat nasum abreptum mordicus* (Plaut. *Men.* 1.193-5). “A prostitute only flatters as long as she can see something she can snatch: if you loved him, you ought to have bitten off his nose by now.”<sup>25</sup> Peniculus opines that Erotium is solely interested in Menaechmus I because he gives her expensive gifts and money. The *palla* that he stole from his wife cost four minae, which would cost around \$72.00.<sup>26</sup> Later on in the play, Erotium, believing Menaechmus II to be Menaechmus I, asks him to take the mantle to an embroiderer for fixing and decorating (426-427). She does not give him any money for the fixing and decorating, but assumes that he will pay for it himself. Erotium makes this assumption again when she asks Menaechmus II, still believing him to be Menaechmus I, to take a golden bracelet to the goldsmith for repair and to add more gold to it (524-527). Menaechmus I actually stole this bracelet, too, from his wife and gave it to Erotium as a gift for her services. These actions depict her greediness and selfish attitude for possessions and wealth, and show how she has no concern or affection for her clients. Peniculus’ comment portrays this very fact because if she truly loved Menaechmus I, then she should have already shown it by passionately kissing him, not by demanding more gifts or money.

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<sup>25</sup> All translations for Plautus taken from *Loeb Classical Library (LCL) 61* for *Menaechmi* and *Cistellaria* and *LCL 328* for *Truculentus*.

<sup>26</sup> Seltman 1924:123 displays a chart for converting mina and drachma to GBP, which I then converted to USD.

In one section of the play Erotium admits to one of her slave girls that her delight or comfort is advantageous for her and her profession, but not for her clients: *amanti amoenitas malo est, nobis lucro est* (Plaut. *Men.* 357). “For a lover loveliness leads to loss, for us, to profit.” Since Erotium is an independent *meretrix*, i.e. not enslaved to a *lena*, she is able to afford slaves and handmaidens and cooks, to whom she gives advice. In this instance, she is explaining to one of her slaves how to deceive clients so that they think that they are the most important and significant person in her life. If her clients believe this, then they will visit more frequently and bring her more gifts or money. This would be a loss for them because they would be spending more money on her, but a benefit for her because she would be gaining more money or gifts. The only thing she has to do is feign affection for her clients and she becomes wealthier while her clients become poorer. This character trait shows just how avaricious Erotium is in this play, doing anything she can to gain more money and gifts at the expense of her clients. Even when she believes she could lose any of her wealth, she confronts the situation head-on. Menaechmus I asks her to return the mantle because his wife found out about it and wants it back, but promises to buy her a new one, even more expensive than the first (678-680). Erotium, however, believes that he is trying to cheat her out of the exchange entirely, receiving a meal and sexual pleasure for free. Thus, she kicks him out of her house, telling him not to return and to find a different woman to visit.

The second *mala meretrix* is Gymnasium from *Cistellaria*. Gymnasium is an experienced prostitute and friend to Selenium, who was raised by Melaenis, a *lena*, to become a prostitute but is actually the legitimate daughter of two citizens, Phanostrata and Demipho. The play begins with these two women, Gymnasium and Selenium, having lunch with Gymnasium’s mother, only named *lena* (“procuress”). During this meeting, Selenium tells both women that she has

been cohabitating with her first and only lover, Alcesimarchus, but now is greatly saddened because he must marry another woman. Both women have observations, and Gymnasium's seem centered solely on retaining a man in order to exploit him: *mi istunc vellem hominem dari; ut ego illum vorsarem* (Plaut. *Cist.* 93-94). "I wish that man were given to me; how I'd manipulate him!" Her comment comes immediately after Selenium had told them that Alcesimarchus had showered her with gifts and flattery upon their first encounter. Instead of feeling sorry for Selenium or consoling her since her only lover must leave and marry another woman, Gymnasium is upset because she herself did not get to have Alcesimarchus as a client. If she had had the chance to encounter him, she would have manipulated him to give her gifts and money with each encounter. She also would have made him increase the quality of gifts or the amount of money with each successive encounter.

Gymnasium's actions are typical of a greedy and egocentric *mala meretrix*, which is not too shocking since her mother raised her in this manner. Her mother is a freedwoman, but worked as a prostitute during her enslavement, so she knows about the profession well. Her mother also has some input for Selenium concerning her current situation. Her first advice concerns the number of partners Selenium should take and the second concerns her image. In order for Selenium to prosper in this profession, she needs to take multiple partners, not just one: *verum enim meretrix fortunati est oppidi similluma: non potest suam rem optinere sola sine multis viris* (Plaut. *Cis.* 80-81). "But a prostitute closely resembles a flourishing town: she cannot be successful alone, without many men." Gymnasium's mother had prefaced this statement by contrasting it to the number of partners a *matrona* (an ideal Roman wife) should have, which is only one. Her second piece of advice relates to her representation to her partners: *assimulare amare oportet. nam si ames, extempulo melius illi multo quem ames consulas quam rei tuae*

(Plaut. *Cis.* 96-97). “You should only pretend to be in love: if you are in love for real, you immediately look after the one you love far better than after your own interests.” Both of these comments reveal the true selfish nature of Gymnasium’s mother and that of a *mala meretrix*. Having multiple partners will only add to Selenium’s income because she will earn more money and gifts from multiple men than she will from only one man. She could also pit the men against each other to vie for her affection, which they can accomplish by giving her more money or gifts. This would not be possible with only one man because no one could be a threat to him. But in order for Selenium to do this, i.e. pit men against each other, she would need to fake her love for each man. If she were to pretend to love each man, then she would only concern herself with her own well-being and not that of her partners. Her only concern for her partners would be satisfying them sexually, not at all considering their feelings or emotions. If she had only one partner, however, then she would need to be attentive to his feelings, thoughts, and concerns and would eventually neglect her own. Gymnasium’s mother believes that this would not be prosperous for Selenium because it would take away from her earning more money from other men. She does not see that Selenium is in love with this one man, Alcesimarchus, but looks only at what she has done wrong as a prostitute, at least for a *mala meretrix*, which is fall in love with a man.

The last *mala meretrix* is Phronesium from *Truculentus*, the most ruthless and greedy of Plautus’ *meretrices*. The plot of *Truculentus* is about a prostitute, Phronesium, pretending to have given birth to a soldier’s son so that she can gain lavish gifts and property from the soldier, Stratophanes. Two other men are also vying for her attention, but she must distract them until she can exploit the braggart soldier for all his property. Her longest-running client, Diniarchus, is upset that she is replacing him with the soldier just because the soldier can give her more money:

*eadem postquam alium repperit qui plus daret, damnosiore meo exinde immovit loco* (Plaut. *Truc.* 81-82). “But after she found someone else who could give her more, she ushered the greater spendthrift into my place.” Even though Diniarchus has been with her for the longest time out of all of her current clients, she quickly dismisses him in order to exploit another client for more money and gifts. This instance shows her sole interest in wealth, disregarding any sort of feelings Diniarchus might have for her or any emotional consequence for him. Then again, Phronesium is not concerned with these things as a *mala meretrix*, but only money and wealth.

Phronesium has a baby boy snuck into her house before Stratophanes arrives so that she can pretend that the baby is hers from him. This is the only reason why she wants to keep the baby, as she relates to Diniarchus, who turns out to be the baby’s actual father and wishes to take him away (873-875). She has no emotional attachment to the baby, Diniarchus, Stratophanes, or even her other lover, Strabax. The only thing she is attached to is money. She does confess her love for Stratophanes, however: *quem ego ecastor mage amo quam me, dum id quod cupio inde aufero* (Plaut. *Truc.* 887). “I love that soldier more than myself as long as I carry off from him what I want.” It is not actual love, but feigned love so that she can receive gifts and property from Stratophanes, which is a common characteristic of a *mala meretrix*. She has good reason to pretend to love Stratophanes and to have had his baby, which she reveals to Diniarchus in private: *si quod peperissem id non necarem ac tollerem, bona sua me habiturum omnia esse* (Plaut. *Truc.* 399-400). “If I did not kill the child I’d given birth to and if I took it up, I’d have all his possessions.” Phronesium keeps the baby only to obtain all of Stratophanes’ possessions, which includes his property. Once she exploits the soldier for all his possessions, she will easily dismiss him through divorce or some other disharmonious means (419-420). Phronesium is a

cold and heartless woman, concerning herself only with money or gifts and paying no attention to other people's emotions or feelings.

The ruthlessness of Phronesium does not end with trying to gain Stratophanes' property. She continues to exploit him when he arrives and he gives her gifts. After he gives her two slave girls, both of whom were queens, she chides him because now she will have two more mouths to feed, and she barely has enough food to feed her current slaves (530-534). Realizing that she is unhappy with his gift, Stratophanes attempts to appease her by presenting her with a purple cloak and a mantle from Phrygia (535-536). Even these gifts are not enough to satisfy Phronesium, who scolds him again for the paucity of these gifts in exchange for such a laborious task as childbearing: *hoccin mi ob labores tantos tantillum dari* (Plaut. *Truc.* 537). "Is only such a little thing given to me in return for such great labors?" She is attempting to make Stratophanes feel ashamed by his gifts so that he will give her gifts more fitting for her "laborious task" of childbearing, even though she did not actually give birth to a child. Her ability to play with his emotions in order to manipulate him into giving more gifts shows the callous character and insensitive nature of a *mala meretrix*.

Phronesium's greediness does not stop there, though. She persists in acquiring more money from Stratophanes in order to pay for raising the baby. She even provides an extensive catalogue of items that she will need to raise the child, such as more food, milk, oil, flour, clothes, and cushions (901-908). Stratophanes instantly hands over more money, although Phronesium says that it is still not enough for everything. He promises to give her more, but she is not pleased with him, and she then takes advantage of this when Strabax, her third lover, enters her home. She immediately goes to him, ignoring Stratophanes' alarmed concerns about who this man is. When she finally does acknowledge Stratophanes, she says that he can win her back by

giving her more gold (929). Stratophanes has already given her more than ten minae (913), so he claims, for the baby, but now he must give even more just to be with her. He reluctantly agrees to let Strabax be with Phronesium first, after Phronesium's relentless persistence, and then she will satisfy him afterwards. The reason why Phronesium is so persistent in being with Strabax first is because she already acquired what she wanted from Stratophanes, but she still needs the money and gifts that Strabax promised her (960-961). Phronesium's merciless actions, pitting one of her clients against another just to earn more money and gifts, show just how conniving she is as a *mala meretrix*. She also is able to swindle one of the same clients out of an enormous amount of silver and gold just by pretending to have bore his child. The schemes and tricks that she plays on all of her clients truly show how Phronesium is one of the most cunning and coldhearted *meretrices* of Plautus.

All three *mala meretrices* show their apathetic attitude toward feelings and emotions throughout each play. Each one is concerned solely with becoming wealthier through money, gifts, or property, and does whatever it takes in order to gain these things. In the next chapter, however, the *meretrices* of Terence display some different qualities that could be used to characterize them as *bonae meretrices* instead of the *mala meretrices* of Plautus.

## Chapter 2: The *meretrix* in Terence

Publius Terentius Afer, most generally known as Terence, was born c. 190 – 185 B.C. in Carthage, Africa.<sup>27</sup> He was a slave of Terentius Lucanus, a Roman senator, who brought him to Rome and educated him. After his education, Lucanus freed him and Terence then began to write plays shortly after his manumission.<sup>28</sup> Terence's style of writing seemed opposite to that of Plautus since Terence did not contain the exaggerated stock characters of Greek New Comedy. He produced genuine characters and themes instead of caricatures, and expanded upon family problems and social obligations.<sup>29</sup> He wrote six plays, all of which remain extant, and would have written more before his sudden death at the age of 25.<sup>30</sup> A particularly interesting aspect of Terence's plays was his prologue. Instead of providing information about the play or explaining the play, such as what Plautus does, Terence pleaded with the public to give him a fair hearing of his play and not to trust in the "malignant rumors" and "unfair criticism" of the critics.<sup>31</sup> In the second prologue of *Hecyra*, for instance, Terence mentions that a tightrope walker and a boxer interrupted the first performance of the play (33-34), while the rumor of a gladiatorial show interrupted the second performance (39). One of the main "rumors" was that he received extensive help from some influential men, most notably Gaius Laelius Sapiens and Scipio Aemilianus, in writing his plays.<sup>32</sup> The main critique was that he "contaminated" (*contaminatio*) his plays by combining two original plays from Greek New Comedy into one play.<sup>33</sup> Moreover,

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<sup>27</sup> Bieber 1961:154. There is some speculation as to whether or not he was born in Carthage, but it is certain that he was at least born in Africa. There is also speculation about his birth date as some scholars, such as Forehand 1985:3-4, argue that Terence was born sooner in 195 B.C.

<sup>28</sup> Forehand 1985:2.

<sup>29</sup> Goldberg 1986:21.

<sup>30</sup> Forehand 1985:16.

<sup>31</sup> Forehand 1985:13.

<sup>32</sup> Forehand 1985:6. Some even accused them of writing the plays, not Terence, but it is most probably that Terence was only in the company of them when writing the plays and he might have discussed certain topics or ideas with these men.

<sup>33</sup> Beare 1951:92.

he was accused of stealing characters and entire passages from other Latin plays, passing them off as his own creation. Nevertheless, he defended himself in his prologues, saying that he had never heard of the plays from which he was alleged of stealing and that his plays were adaptations of plays from Greek New Comedy.<sup>34</sup> The rest of this chapter offers two examples of a *meretrix* that can be seen as *mala, bona*, or both. The first is Bacchis from *Heauton Timoroumenos* and the second is Thais from *Eunuchus*.

The plot of *Heauton Timoroumenos* concerns a father trying to reconnect with his son after he scolded him about his affair with a young maiden. The son, Clinia, returns home after being a soldier overseas, but decides to stay with his friend, Clitipho, instead of his father, Menedemus, because Menedemus had rebuked him before leaving. Menedemus actually felt miserable about his actions, and now wishes to reconcile with Clinia. Both men, Clinia and Clitipho, are in a relationship with a woman, Clinia with Antiphila and Clitipho with Bacchis, although Antiphila is only a maiden while Bacchis is a prostitute. While Menedemus knows about Clinia's relationship, Clitipho's father, Chremes, is unaware of his son's relationship. Clitipho wishes to keep his relationship a secret, but wants Bacchis to visit him, so he devises a plan so that both Bacchis and Antiphila can visit them. The remainder of the play concerns this plan and all the scheming involved with it, including that of Clitipho, Bacchis, and even Syrus, the slave of Chremes and Clitipho.

Bacchis does not shy away from explaining herself to Antiphila, but explicitly mentions that her actions seem harsh and rapacious for a reason: *nam expedit bonas esse vobis; nos, quibuscum est res, non sinunt. quippe forma impulsus nostra nos amatores colunt: haec ubi immutata est, illi suum animum alio conferunt. nisi si prospectum interea aliquid est, desertae*

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<sup>34</sup> Beare 1951:94.

*vivimus* (Ter. *Heaut.* 388-91). “It’s in your interest to be good, but our clients don’t allow us to. Lovers cultivate us because they are attracted by our beauty; once that’s faded, they take their affections elsewhere; and, unless we have meanwhile made some provision for the future, we’re left to live on our own.”<sup>35</sup> It is not in Bacchis’ nature to be greedy, characteristic of a *mala meretrix*, but she must charge a high price in order to provide for the future. When she starts to age and her beauty diminishes, then her clients will visit younger and more beautiful prostitutes. Therefore, she must charge them at higher prices now so that she has enough money saved for when she becomes older and loses clients. When she begins to lose clients, her income will start to diminish, so to avoid living on the streets and in poverty, she must start to accumulate wealth now in order to have enough for when she can no longer attract clients.

Bacchis’ first comment in the above excerpt shows her good-natured character, typical of a *bona meretrix*. She praises Antiphila for taking only one lover because their love will be genuine and resilient, not artificial like Bacchis’ relationships are with her clients. Bacchis cares for Antiphila’s well-being with her one lover, and wants to assure her that she is doing the right thing in having only one lover. Bacchis does not caution Antiphila as to the misfortune that would befall her if she did not take more lovers because there would be no misfortune. Antiphila is not any type of prostitute, she is a young maiden who is in love with one man and who cares dearly for this one man. Bacchis realizes this and wishes to commend Antiphila for it. Bacchis’ beliefs here are indicative of a *bona meretrix*, one that cares for one client and is not greedy or selfish.

Not every character in this play believes that Bacchis is so pure and genuine. Chremes, for instance, views Bacchis as the typical *mala meretrix*, greedy and expensive, depleting her

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<sup>35</sup> All translations for Terence taken from *Loeb Classical Library (LCL)* 22.

client of everything and wasting his resources in any way possible. He first mentions the size of her entourage, with each member being adorned with lavish clothing and jewelry (451-452). Then, he makes a ridiculous comment about her expenses: *satrapes si siet amator, numquam sufferre eius sumptus queat, nedum tu possis* (Ter. *Heaut.* 452-454). “If she had a satrap for a lover, he’d never be able to sustain her extravagance, let alone you.” A satrap was a provincial governor in the Persian Empire whose wealth was astronomical.<sup>36</sup> Chremes is exaggerating the content of Bacchis’ lavishness in order to dissuade Menedemus from allowing Clinia to remain in a relationship with his woman, who he believes to be Bacchis, not Antiphila. He even further insists that she is expensive and wasteful after he provided a dinner for her and her entourage: *nam unam ei cenam atque eius comitibus dedi. quod si iterum mihi sit danda, actum siet* (Ter. *Heaut.* 455-456). “I’ve provided one dinner for her and her retinue; if I had to do it again, I’d be bankrupt.” Chremes continues his speech by explaining how much wine Bacchis wasted by spitting it out, complaining about its taste, and then asking for more wine. Chremes is determined to describe Bacchis as a *mala meretrix*, believing that he is helping Menedemus prevent Clinia from continuing to see Bacchis, whom he thinks is Clinia’s lover. What Chremes does not realize is that his own son is in love with Bacchis, thus characterizing him as the stock character of the *adulescens*. In the end, Clitipho must end his relationship with Bacchis and find a suitable wife, as is typical of the actions of the *adulescens*.

These depictions of Bacchis characterize her as the exemplary *mala meretrix* of Roman New Comedy, but seem to contrast greatly those of her earlier depictions with her interaction with Antiphila. Contrasts like this are quite common in Terence’s plays as oftentimes a character

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<sup>36</sup> Barsby 2001:227n.

will exaggerate or misinterpret certain actions or speeches.<sup>37</sup> Most often, he/she is misinformed or deceived by other characters, who are attempting to gain something from him/her. Syrus, for instance, manipulates Chremes into giving him money for Clitipho, who actually needs the money to pay Bacchis for her services, not for one of Syrus' outrageous schemes.

The other *meretrix* is Thais from *Eunuchus*. The plot for this play concerns the prostitute Thais attempting to secure a gift, a slave girl who grew up with Thais as her adoptive sister, from the braggart soldier Thraso in order to return her to her family. Thais believes that if she can return the slave girl, Pamphila, to her family, she will earn some favor with the family. More importantly, however, Thais wants to give Pamphila to her family because she is family to Thais, and there is nothing more valuable than family: *primum quod soror est dicta, praeterea ut suis restituam ac reddam. sola sum: habeo hic neminem neque amicum cognatum. quam ob rem cupio aliquos parere amicos beneficio meo* (Ter. *Eun.* 146-149). "First, because she's called my sister; and, besides, I want to restore her to her family. I am alone. I have no friend here or relative, and so I'm keen to gain some friends by doing a good turn of my own." Thais' main concern is returning Pamphila to her family, as any sibling would do for their own sister or brother. Secondly, Thais is a foreigner in Athens, the setting of the play, and she has no friends or family, so she believes that she can gain family and friends by doing this good deed. People would see the kindness in her action and view her as kindhearted, characteristic of a *bona meretrix*. When she returns Pamphila to her family, i.e. her brother Chremes, Thais does not expect anything in return: *hanc tibi dono do neque repeto pro illa quicquam abs te preti* (Ter. *Eun.* 748-749). "I am giving her to you as a present and I am not asking any reward from you in return." Thais does not seek any type of reward or monetary gain from returning Pamphila to her

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<sup>37</sup> Knorr 1995:224.

brother, but only wants her to be safe and no longer a slave to the braggart soldier. Her actions once again can be seen as generous and compassionate, typical of a *bona meretrix*, and not at all egocentric or callous.

Her true feelings for Phaedria are also reminiscent of a *bona meretrix* because they are sincere and directed only for him: *hoc certo scio, neque me finxisse falsi quicquam neque meo cordi esse quemquam cariorem hoc Phaedria* (Ter. *Eun.* 199-201). “I am quite sure I have not invented any falsehood and nobody is dearer to me than Phaedria.” She truly loves only one man, Phaedria, which she reveals here, and does not feign affection for him in order to gain something from him; her love is genuine and pure. Thais still needs to pretend to love Thraso, however, in order to secure Pamphila from him and return her to her brother. In this instance, she might be seen as a *mala meretrix*, but her motive is for the greater good, i.e. to give Pamphila back to her brother, which is more characteristic of a *bona meretrix*.

While Thais seems to be a *bona meretrix*, she also has qualities of a *mala meretrix*. She still wants and asks for gifts from clients, especially from Phaedria: *nonne ubi mihi dixti cupere te ex Aethiopia ancillulam, relictis rebus omnibus quaesivi? porro eunuchum dixti velle te, quia solae utuntur his reginae; repperi. heri minas viginti pro ambobus dedi* (Ter. *Eun.* 165-169). “When you told me that you wanted a slave girl from Ethiopia, did I not leave everything and find you one? On top of that, you said you wanted a eunuch, because only royal women have them. I found one, and yesterday I paid twenty minae for the pair.” She still needs to earn money for herself, so it is not abnormal for her to ask for gifts or money. But, the gifts she does ask for are quite expensive, which is characteristic of a *mala meretrix*. Even more typical of a *mala meretrix* is her initial attitude toward Phaedria’s arrival and delivery of gifts: *tamen contemptus abs te haec habui in memoria; ob haec facta abs te spernor* (Ter. *Eun.* 170-171). “Though you

treated me with contempt, I did not forget; and in return for all this you scorn me.” Even with these gifts, Thais appears coldhearted to Phaedria. Her contemptuous attitude seems common for a *mala meretrix*, but there is a specific reason for her appearance in this way. Thais still has to obtain Pamphila from the soldier, so she must entertain him first before Phaedria. She even asks Phaedria to leave for a couple days so that she can entertain Thraso, which Phaedria thinks is her scorning him and being dissatisfied with his gifts. In truth, she is only trying to obtain Pamphila so that she (Thais) can return her (Pamphila) to her brother, which would be characteristic of a *bona meretrix*, not a *mala meretrix*.

Both *meretrices* for Terence appear as neither *bona* nor *mala*, but a combination of both. Bacchis and Thais charge high prices for their service and request lavish gifts, which a *mala meretrix* would do. Bacchis has to charge high prices in order to provide for the future once her beauty fades and she can no longer obtain clients. Thais still needs to earn money, and she cannot be cheap with her prices or she will fail as a prostitute in general, becoming poor or impoverished. But, both women also are sensitive and sincere in their actions, appearing *mala* for the sake of some ulterior motive, usually for the betterment of another character, which is exemplary of a *bona meretrix*. Bacchis praises Antiphila for her decision of having only one man to love because their love will be resilient and honest, while Bacchis’ relationships are meaningless and artificial. She realizes that these relationships are only temporary, not meant to be as meaningful as that of Antiphila’s, which is an important realization for her. She does not become upset and vengeful when these relationships end because she knows that they were supposed to end at some point, so she does not create any sort of attachment to these men. As will be explained in Chapter 4 of this thesis, Clodia does not make this realization, so she is shocked when her relationship with Caelius does end, which is the reason she has reacted so

vindictively toward Caelius with her accusations against him in his case, all of which will be explained more in Chapter 4. But first, Chapter 3 needs to cover more background information about the case, those involved in the case, and their interactions with each other before the case.

### Chapter 3: Context of *Pro Caelio*

The *Pro Caelio* involves the defense of Marcus Caelius Rufus against Lucius Sempronius Atratinus in 56 B.C. There were five charges in total, but Cicero only handled two of them: *de Dione* and *de veneno in Clodiam parato*.<sup>38</sup> The first charge concerns the murder of Dio of Alexandria, a renowned philosopher of the Academic school, while the second charge concerns the attempted poisoning of Clodia. The prosecutor, Sempronius, was the son of Lucius Calpurnius Bestia, whom Caelius had previously prosecuted twice on the same charge of *ambitus*.<sup>39</sup> Sempronius' accusation against Caelius was brought under the *lex de vi*, which allowed the case to be heard immediately even though the *Ludi Megalenses* were being held.<sup>40</sup> The *Ludi Megalenses* were games held in April to celebrate Cybele, the "great mother of the gods," in which everyday activity ceased and everyone was to enjoy the festivities.<sup>41</sup> There were a few exceptions, however, in which not all everyday activities ceased, one being court cases brought under the charge of *vis*. Since the jurors could not participate in the festivities, Cicero brought the games to them. He mocked the entire case, claiming that there was no crime, that the charges were due in large part to a scorned lover, and that the jurors should be enjoying the holiday: *nullum facinus, nullam audiciam, nullam vim in iudicium vocari... libidinem muliebrem comprimendam putet, vos laboriosos existimet quibus otiosis ne in communi quidem otio liceat esse* (Cic. *Cael.* 1.11...15-17). "No real crime, no outrage, no act of violence was before the court at all... that a woman's malicious passions ought to be kept under control, and that you, members of the bench, are overworked, since even on public holidays you do not get time off."<sup>42</sup> Cicero's attempt to mock the case fell heavily on the claim that a revengeful lover was the sole

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<sup>38</sup> Austin 1960:152.

<sup>39</sup> McCoy 2006:182.

<sup>40</sup> Austin 1960:153.

<sup>41</sup> Scullard 1981:41.

<sup>42</sup> All translations for sections of *Pro Caelio* in Chapters 3 and 4 are taken from Grant 1989:166-214.

cause of the charges. If he could support this claim, then he could quickly acquit Caelius and everyone could return home and participate in the *Ludi Megalenses*.

This revengeful lover was the famous Clodia Metelli. She was the wife of Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer and the brother of Publius Clodius Pulcher, the political enemy of Cicero. After her husband's death in 59 B.C., Clodia was able to engage freely with other men, no longer being constrained by the duties of a wife to a high Roman official.<sup>43</sup> One of her many lovers was Marcus Caelius Rufus, a young politician who had many connections with powerful Roman men. Both Marcus Crassus and Cicero mentored him when he first came to Rome, and Caelius even made a friendship with Clodius Pulcher and a romantic one with his sister Clodia after moving into his home on the Palatine.<sup>44</sup> This friendship, however, would shortly last. Strife between the three of them from Caelius' secret involvement with Ptolemy XII, the king of Alexandria and Egypt, caused a falling out. It was during this time, c. 57 – 56 B.C., that Caelius had prosecuted Bestia twice for electoral bribery and had vehemently opposed Fufius Calenus' candidacy for one of the positions of *pontifices*.<sup>45</sup> Clodius greatly favored Fufius Calenus because Calenus, as tribune of the *plebs* in 61 B.C., was one of the main sources for Clodius gaining acquittal of the charges in the *Bona Dea* trial.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, when Sempronius brought this prosecution against Caelius, the Claudians were more than willing to lend support and help in any way.

Cicero's involvement with this case and his hostility toward Clodius can also be traced back to the *Bona Dea* trial. Clodius was accused of having entered the house of Julius Caesar, who was *pontifex maximus* in 62 B.C., during the ceremony. The *Bona Dea* ceremony itself was

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<sup>43</sup> Crowther 1934:142.

<sup>44</sup> Wiseman 1987:62-64.

<sup>45</sup> Wiseman 1987:68.

<sup>46</sup> Wiseman 1987:69.

a religious one and involved the removal of everything male-oriented, including male slaves, images and animals, from the house. The wife of *magistratus cum imperio*, who was Pompeia at this time, along with her female slaves and the Vestal Virgins decorated the house and then carried the cult image of *Bona Dea* from the temple to the house, sacrificing a sow and performing a libation over a fire.<sup>47</sup> Clodius had disguised himself as a woman in order to enter the ceremony and see Pompeia, with whom he had been having an affair.<sup>48</sup> Someone had noticed him, however, from his masculine voice and he fled. His defense was that he was not in Rome on that day, but elsewhere. Cicero, however, voluntarily testified that Clodius had visited him on that day.<sup>49</sup> Clodius bribed the jurors, however, and he obtained an acquittal. More importantly, Clodius became angry that Cicero willingly testified against him, and this began the animosity between the two men.

The animosity between Cicero and Clodius only worsened when Clodius was elected tribune of the plebs in 58 B.C.<sup>50</sup> As tribune, he passed a law that exiled anyone who ordered a Roman citizen to death without trial. A few years earlier, in 63 B.C., Cicero had punished to death without trial those men who had conspired with Catiline against Rome. Clodius, therefore, had exiled Cicero in 58 B.C., and during his exile, Clodius persecuted Cicero's wife, Terentia, and their children, along with burning his estate and villas on the Palatine.<sup>51</sup> Cicero's exile was short-lived, however, as he was recalled in 57 B.C.

When Cicero returned to Rome, still angered about his exile, he quickly reentered politics, having the opportunity to attack Clodius indirectly in Caelius' trial. By depicting Clodia

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<sup>47</sup> Versnel 1992:33.

<sup>48</sup> Crownover 1934:139.

<sup>49</sup> Versnel 1992:42.

<sup>50</sup> Leen 2000:4. Leen also states that upon Clodius' adoption into the plebian family, which was supported by the *triumvirs*, he changed his name to Clodius because it was less aristocratic than Claudius, which was his birth name.

<sup>51</sup> Crownover 1934:141.

as the comedic *mala meretrix* of Plautus and Terence, he damaged her reputation, and that of the Claudian *gens*, by extension of the honor-shame syndrome. The impact would lessen their status within society, an ultimate attack on Clodius, who was a prominent member of Roman society.

## Chapter 4: Clodia

Cicero's primary attack on Clodia is calling her a *meretrix*, which damages her reputation and diminishes her testimony. He also ruins her reputation by detailing her licentious behavior through rhetorical devices, such as *praeteritio* and *prosopopoeia*, and by accusing her of incest with her younger brother, Publius Clodius Pulcher. It is through these rhetorical devices and straightforward attacks that Cicero acquits Caelius of the two charges against which he defended and also destroys the honor of the entire Claudian *gens*. The rest of this chapter presents passages from the *Pro Caelio* that contain the direct mentioning of Clodia as a *meretrix* and of incest, and that disgrace her reputation via the rhetorical devices of *praeteritio* and *prosopopoeia*. This chapter will also illustrate the comedic aspects that Cicero uses to mock both Clodia and the entire trial, including the *prosopopoeia* of Caelius and the exaggeration of the Senian bath scene.

Cicero opens his defense of Caelius by attempting to show that the entire case relies on the evidence of one woman, a prostitute: *oppugnari autem opibus meretriciis* (Cic. *Cael.* 1.14). "And, furthermore, that the current action is financed by a prostitute." Cicero's use of the term *meretricibus* has an underlying meaning for two reasons. One reason is that he is appealing to the comedic aspect of Roman New Comedy, while the other is that to the legal aspect of *infamia*. By bringing in comedy through the characterization of Clodia as a *meretrix*, Cicero is able to mock all of her accusations and trivialize the entire case. It is said that comedy is the kind of drama in which "things habitually turn out to be less than they seem," so any claims made in a comedic scene are actually less severe than what the character would have the audience believe.<sup>52</sup> In this way, Cicero is undermining Clodia's allegations against Caelius of murder and attempted murder. He also accomplishes this in a legal setting because a *meretrix* was considered *infamis*,

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<sup>52</sup> Leigh 2004:302.

which resulted in not being allowed to act as a witness in legal settings. If Cicero can discredit her, then he can nullify all her statements. Therefore, Cicero attempts to discredit Clodia's testimony by assimilating her to a typical *mala meretrix* of Roman New Comedy.

He does not solely need to call Clodia a *meretrix* in order to compare her to a prostitute. He can also accomplish this by describing her behavior as that much similar to a prostitute, living openly or having many partners: *nec enim muliebris umquam inimicitias mihi gerendas putavi, praesertim cum ea quam omnes semper amicam omnium potius quam cuiusquam inimicam putaverunt* (Cic. *Cael.* 32.12-15). "And indeed I never imagined I should have to engage in quarrels with women, much less with a woman who has always been widely regarded as having no enemies since she so readily offers intimacy in all directions." Cicero is describing Clodia here, referencing how she has no enemies because she so willingly has relations with them. She does not hesitate to sleep with a man, not even considering any repercussions from her actions.

In this previous instance, Cicero specifically mentioned Clodia, but there are instances where he does not specifically mention her. He draws attention to her, however, by alluding to a distinguishing attribute of hers, such as her house at Baiae: *illae vero non loquuntur solum verum etiam personant, huc unius mulieris libidinem esse prolapsam ut ea non modo solitudinem ac tenebras atque haec flagitiorum integumenta non quaerat* (Cic. *Cael.* 47.8-11). "Yes, Baiae does not simply tell us a tale, but rings with the report that there is one woman so deeply sunk in her vicious depravities that she no longer even bothers to seek privacy and darkness and the usual veil of discretion to cover her lusts." This "one woman" that Cicero mentions is Clodia, even though he does not explicitly say her name. It was well-known that Clodia, along with other elite

Romans, visited Baiae frequently and would engage in lewd behavior.<sup>53</sup> When Cicero mentions Baiae, then, he is indirectly describing Clodia, and in this instance, he is detailing her open attitude toward her sexual desires. She no longer concerns herself with hiding her sexual experiences, but engages in them publicly at Baiae, such as a *meretrix* would do in her home. Shortly after this section, Cicero again mentions a woman engaging in licentious behavior in the open at Baiae: *si quae non nupta mulier domum suam patefecerit omnium cupiditati palamque esse in meretricia vita conlocarit; si hoc in urbe, si in hortis, si in Baiarum illa celebritate faciat... adulter an amator, expugnare pudicitiam an explere libidinem voluisse videatur* (Cic. *Cael.* 49.1-2, 3-4...10-11). “If a woman who has no husband throws open her home to every debauchee and publicly leads the life of a prostitute; if she pursues this mode of existence in the city, in her own gardens, among all the crowds at Baiae... this was not so much adultery as just plain sex.” Clodia’s husband, Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer, passed away under mysterious circumstances a few years ago and some people, most notably Cicero, believed that Clodia herself poisoned him.<sup>54</sup> When Cicero describes a woman with no husband, then, he is referencing Clodia, and his reference is strengthened when he also mentions Baiae. Once again, Clodia is depicted as a prostitute, who openly participates in salacious activities and has many partners.

The other way that Cicero shamed Clodia was through the rhetorical devices of *prosopopoeia* and *praeteritio*. *Prosopopoeia* occurs when the speaker addresses the audience through another person or object.<sup>55</sup> *Praeteritio*, on the other hand, is the false omission of a person or idea.<sup>56</sup> The first instance of *prosopopoeia* involves Appius Claudius Caecus, the

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<sup>53</sup> Leen 2000:6.

<sup>54</sup> Crownover 1934:142.

<sup>55</sup> Skinner 1983:276.

<sup>56</sup> “Glossary of Rhetorical Terms,” accessed February 18, 2016, <https://mcl.as.uky.edu/glossary-rhetorical-terms#37>.

famous ancestor of Clodia who was responsible for the Appian Way and the Appian Aqueduct.<sup>57</sup> The second instance involves Clodia's own brother, Plubius Clodius Pulcher. Appius' speech is quite harsh and insensitive, reprimanding Clodia for choosing Caelius as a lover. He wonders why she would pick him, a member of the equestrian order, when she was a member of a noble aristocratic family by both blood and marriage (34.4-5). The only logical explanation, Appius suggests, is that she was interested in Caelius solely for sexual purposes: *cognatus, adfinis, viri tui familiaris? nihil eorum. quid igitur fuit nisi quaedam temeritas ac libido* (Cic. *Cael.* 34.6-7). "Was he, by any chance, a blood-relative, or a marriage connection, or a close friend of your husband? He was none of these things. What other reason, then, could there be except sheer uncontrollable lust?" There was no refined purpose for Clodia wanting Caelius except for sex, such as a *meretrix* would want a partner.

In the other instance of *prosopopoeia*, Clodius offers advice that is more amiable: *calcitrat, respuit, repellit... confer te alio. habes hortos ad Tiberim ac diligenter eo loco paratos quo omnis iuventus natandi cause venit; hinc licet condiciones cotidie legas; cur huic qui te spernit molesta es* (Cic. *Cael.* 36.14...15-18). "He spurns you and casts you off, your presents fail to impress him... Well, try somewhere else then. You have got your park beside the Tiber, carefully sited on the spot where all the young men come to bathe. From there you can pick up a lover any day. So why bother this man who evidently does not care for you?" Clodius mentions that plenty of other men are available for Clodia to choose, she does not have to stay with one man. He also says that Caelius does not want her anymore so she should just forget about him by choosing another partner, an important part in regards to Cicero's main argument.

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<sup>57</sup> Wiseman 1987:20.

The other rhetorical device, *praeteritio*, also occurs twice in the *Pro Caelio*. Cicero indirectly comments on Clodia's sexual behavior by "not" talking about her:

nihil iam in istam mulierem dico; sed, si esset aliqua dissimilis istius quae se omnibus pervolgaret, quae haberet palam decretum sempern aliquem, cuius in hortos, domum, Baias iure suo libidines omnium commearent (Cic. *Cael.* 38.11-15).

As regards that woman, I am not at the moment criticizing her at all. But just imagine someone who bears not the slightest resemblance to her. Imagine a person who offered herself to every man, who quite publicly had a calendar of different lovers for every day, whose gardens, home and house at Baiae were thrown wide open to every sort of lecherous riff-raff.

The effect of *praeteritio* is that it emphasizes the person or object that it is supposed to neglect. When Cicero tells the jurors to disregard Clodia in this statement, then, he is actually reminding them that he is talking about Clodia, not some other woman. He mentions her home at Baiae again, creating more of a distinction that it is Clodia, and he mentions the licentious activities that occur there on a daily basis. She has multiple lovers and does not turn away any man, and her home is open to any man, too. All of these descriptions are characteristic of a *meretrix*, especially a *mala meretrix*.

Cicero's last illustration of disgracing Clodia and her image concern the rumor of her incestuous relationship with her brother Clodius. Cicero's first instance of this at the beginning of his speech is lighthearted and jovial: *quod quidem facerem vehementius, nisi intercederent mihi inimicitiae cum istius mulieris viro – fratrem volui dicere; semper hic erro* (Cic. *Cael.* 32.10-12). "Indeed, my refutation would be framed in considerably more forcible terms if I did not feel inhibited by the fact that the woman's husband – sorry, I mean brother, I always make that slip – is my personal enemy." His final comment, however, directly attacks Clodia, both with respect to her lust and her incestuous relationship with her brother: *M. Caelium libidini muliebri condonatum, ne eadem mulier cum suo coniuge et fratre et turpissimum latronem*

*eripuisse et honestissimum adolescentem oppressisse videatur* (Cic. *Cael.* 78.17-19). “I implore you not to allow Marcus Caelius to be sacrificed to her wanton temper. Never let it be said that this same woman, in collusion with her brother who is also her husband, has been able first to preserve a thieving rogue and then to destroy a fine young man as well.” Cicero is blatantly chastising Clodia for her relationship with her brother and her shameless lust, both of which diminished her reputation and aimed to discredit her testimony.

Cicero implicated Clodia as a *meretrix* from Roman New Comedy by depicting Caelius as the stock character *adulescens*, the foolish youth who has a relationship with the *meretrix* solely for sexual gratification and who squanders his father’s money. Following his last *prosopopoeia* as Clodius, he utilizes another *prosopopoeia* in portraying himself as an untroubled father from comedy who continuously pays for his son’s extravagant expenses. This father is Micio, the brother of Demea from Terence’s play *Adelphoe*. Demea wants to scold his son, Aeschinus, whom he gave to Micio to raise since he (Demea) had two sons, for his recent actions, which include stealing a flute girl from a neighbor and having sex with her. In Cicero’s speech, however, he imitates Micio, who does not care that Aeschinus is acting this way and who wants him to act this way because the *adulescens* was supposed to “expend his sexual energies” on prostitutes instead of in adultery.<sup>58</sup> Cicero’s quote is taken nearly directly from Terence’s play: *fores ecfregit, restituentur; discidit vestem, resarcietur*. (Cic. *Cael.* 38.8-9). “He’s broken down a door, it shall be repaired. He’s torn some clothes, they shall be mended.”<sup>59</sup> Micio is not bothered by Aeschinus’ actions because it was common for youths to do this, i.e. have relationships with unmarried girls. Caelius’ actions, then, were similar to Aeschinus’, which is not shocking since he was only placating his sexual desires. Since it was more beneficial for

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<sup>58</sup> Leigh 2004:304.

<sup>59</sup> The lines in Terence’s play: *fores effregit? restituentur. discidit vestem? resarcietur* (120-121).

Caelius' case if Clodia was depicted as a *meretrix* instead of solely as a widow, Cicero had to portray Clodia as closely as he could to a *meretrix*. This portrayal involved portraying Caelius as the *adulescens*, even though he has since matured since his time with Clodia and now no longer seeks sexual satisfaction with prostitutes, but is an upstanding Roman citizen.

Cicero further undermined the trial by ridiculing the scene at the Senian baths, where Licinius, a friend of Caelius, delivered the poison that was supposed to be used to kill Clodia to her slaves. First, Cicero exaggerates the entire scene, explaining it in eight full sections. Then, he uses a kind of rhyme, homoeoptoton, to mock the actual exchange of the poison: *in balneis delituerunt.* 'testis egregious! 'dein temere prosiluerunt.' homines temperantis! (Cic. Cael. 63.10-11). "They hid out of sight in the baths.' Just the men to see everything and be perfect witnesses! 'In due course they burst out – by mistake.' What splendid self-control!" Cicero even mocks the slaves' inability to capture Licinius, even though there were so many of them and only one of him: *cur Licinium de minibus amiserunt* (Cic. Cael. 64.6). "How on earth did all those fellows allow Licinius to get away?" There should have been no way for Licinius to avoid all of Clodia's slaves, yet he was somehow able to escape them.

Cicero's attacks and accusations successfully worked because he won the case and helped Caelius gain acquittal of both charges. His success had deeper significance, too, because he not only dishonored Clodia, but her entire family, the Claudian *gens*. Following this trial, Clodia is rarely mentioned again in any Roman literature, which would indicate that Cicero's defamation of her was successful.<sup>60</sup> The reason why Cicero was so successful will be explained in the final chapter, along with a summary of the entire paper.

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<sup>60</sup> Crownover 1934:147 even provides some scholars who believed that she "plunged deeper and deeper into obscure amours" and "had taken other lovers" because she was "always in need of money." Crownover also suggested that

## Conclusion

Cicero's success relied on his ability to make the entire trial a joke by drawing on aspects of Roman New Comedy to portray Clodia as a *mala meretrix* and Caelius as the *adulescens*. Since plays of Plautus and Terence were performed during games and festivals, specifically at the *Ludi Megalenses*, the jurors were familiar with their plays and thus would see the similarities and realize the references to their plays, even though there was a considerable time gap between the first production of the plays and the trial.<sup>61</sup> What makes Cicero's depiction of Clodia as a *meretrix* so comical is that she was not aware that their relationship was supposed to end. In the specific instances mentioned in this paper, the *meretrices* of Plautus and Terence knew that their relationships would end with their clients, which is why they never appear distraught or vengeful after their relationships end. Clodia, on the other hand, does not realize that her relationship with Caelius was only temporary. Her actions during their relationship can be assimilated to a *bona meretrix* because she was not seeking any benefits for herself and she remained faithful to Caelius. Her actions after their relationship, however, are more characteristic of a *mala meretrix* because she takes on numerous men, openly engaging with them sexually in her homes, and then manipulating other men for her own benefit. In either case, Clodia should have known that her relationship with Caelius was only meant to be short-lived, but the fact that she does not is the hilarious part. Clodia was a well-educated woman, being a member of the aristocratic class and a notable member of the ruling power, so her ignorance of her brief relationship with Caelius lessens her excellence in society, creating comical relief for those listening in on the trial. In the end, the jurors saw the comedic aspect of the trial and thus acquitted Caelius of the charges.

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just because Clodia is rarely mentioned, it does not indicate that she "lost her power and influence," but that maybe she merely went to her home in Baiae for the rest of her life.

<sup>61</sup> In most of Terence's plays, *Andria Eunuchus*, *Heauton Timoroumenos*, and *Hecyra*, the production notice specifically mentions that these plays were performed at the *Ludi Megalenses*.

Clodia was part of the elite class during the end of the Roman Republic, so her image had a major impact on her social status. Since she was a member of the Claudian *gens*, it also had an impact on her family's name. Through the notion of the honor-shame syndrome, Cicero attacked the reputation and honor of the Claudian clan, tarnishing it and everyone part of the family line, including Clodius Pulcher. The impact of disgracing the reputation of the Claudian *gens* would have a lasting effect on both Clodia and Clodius. As members not only of the social elite, but also "at the heart of the ruling class of the Roman Republic," their involvement in politics relied heavily on their image.<sup>62</sup> If someone tarnished their image, as Cicero does in the *Pro Caelio*, then the other Roman elites would look down upon them and neglect their input. The Claudians were always members of the aristocratic class, pertinent to the success of Rome; Appius Claudius himself helped construct both the Appian Way and the Appian Aqueduct, staples to foundation of Rome; each male descendant of his was elected to the consulship. The name "Claudius" brought recognition with it, which each member of the family, both male and female, had to uphold. Cicero was now damaging this recognition by depicting Clodia as a *meretrix*, a member of the low class, whom the Roman elite mocked and disregarded with distaste. Since the Claudian name was demeaned, all previous respect to it was now worthless and meaningless. Any input that either Clodia or Clodius had among the Roman elite now would be overlooked and ignored.

Cicero achieved this defamation of the Claudian honor by assimilating Clodia to a *meretrix*, relying on the images of the *mala meretrix* from Plautus and Terence, and by accusing her of having an incestuous relationship with her brother. The *meretrices* of Plautus especially were similar to the image that Cicero depicted of Clodia. Much like Phronesium from

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<sup>62</sup> Wiseman 1987:20.

*Truculentus* and both Gymnasium and her mother from *Cistellaria*, Clodia had a multitude of partners, as Cicero was quick to mention that she had no enemies because she was so readily willing to offer her body for any man (32.12-15; 38.11-15). Cicero also mentioned numerous times how open Clodia was with her desires and sexual activity, not even bothering to conceal her romantic encounters (38.11-15; 47.8-11; 49.1-2,3-4... 10-11); much like Plautus' *meretrices*, she sexually engaged with men openly in her homes. Clodia is an independent woman in control of her entire house, just like Phronesium from *Truculentus* and Thais from *Eunuchus* are independent *meretrices* who are in demand of their own homes.<sup>63</sup> Cicero's depiction of Caelius as the stock character *adulescens*, such as Clitipho in Terence's *Heauton Timoroumenos* or Aeschinus in Terence's *Adelphoe*, further implicates Clodia as the typical *mala meretrix* of Roman New Comedy.

The *mala meretrix* was ruthless and cunning, deceiving men in every way possible just to earn more money or gifts. Clodia was also ruthless, misleading the jurors into thinking that Caelius was part of the killing of Dio of Alexander and that he attempted to poison her in order to hide any evidence of his supposed crime. Clodia even manipulated Sempronius into bringing such harsh accusations against Caelius.<sup>64</sup> Even more callous is the opinion that all of this was done out of spite. Cicero constructed his argument on the premise that Clodia was a scorned lover who sought revenge against Caelius. In the *prosopopeia* of Publius Clodius, Clodius ends his speech by saying that Caelius does not want her anymore and for her to leave him alone (36.18). Clodia persistently tries to win Caelius back, even though he has no interest in her, so she seeks vengeance against him. This vengeance, however, must brutally harm Caelius the way that she believed he harmed her, even though she is seeking physical harm while his was more

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<sup>63</sup> Leigh :2004:311.

<sup>64</sup> Crownover 1934:144.

emotional harm. Cicero even brings in other figures from literature depict Clodia as this scorned ex-lover. The literary figures are two women from tragedy, Medea and Clytemnestra. Both of these women believed that their partners betrayed them, so they each sought radical revenge against their partners, just as Clodia did against Caelius. Even though this paper does not reference it, there are instances in the *Pro Caelio* that specifically refer to these depictions.<sup>65</sup>

Clodia's unwillingness to move on from Caelius, according to Cicero, is the sole purpose for this trial occurring. She does not realize that her relationship with Caelius was only temporary, unlike Bacchis in *Heauton Timoroumenos*. Bacchis knew that her relationships with her clients were brief, which is the reason why she charged such a high price, so she does not become angry or vengeful when her clients leave. Clodia, on the other hand, did not realize this, so she seeks retribution because she thought that her relationship would be long-lasting. The case had no legal precedence, as the charges made it seem, but it was merely a foolish ex-lover seeking revenge against her partner. Therefore, Cicero's ability to showcase this loathing as the cause of the trial by depicting Clodia as a stereotypical greedy *meretrix*, the same example that Plautus and Terence used in their plays, resulted in Caelius gaining acquittal and the degradation of the honor and reputation of the Claudian *gens*.

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<sup>65</sup> Leigh 2004:309 details how Cicero called Clodia the Palatine Medea, building on the image of Caelius as Jason, which one of the prosecutors, Atratinus, had called him. Cicero called Clodia the Palatine Medea to reveal the aftermath of their breakup in court as "the vengeance of the rejected Medea against her former consort."

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