

Université de Montréal

Macrobius, the Classical *Paideia* and Table Etiquette c. 420 CE:  
A Commentary on the *Saturnalia* 7.1-3

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Ce mémoire intitulé :

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A Commentary on the *Saturnalia* 7.1-3

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## Résumé

### Mots clés:

Latin, Antiquité tardive, Éducation, Réveil païen, Histoire des mentalités

Ce mémoire traite des *Saturnales* de Macrobe, haut fonctionnaire du 5<sup>ième</sup> siècle après J.C. et encyclopédiste latin. Malgré l'opinion reçue, selon laquelle les *Saturnales* dépendraient presque exclusivement d'un nombre très restreint de sources, souvent copiées mot à mot, on a reconnu depuis longtemps que Macrobe remanie de son propre chef l'une de ces sources, les *Propos de Table* de Plutarque, dans son septième livre. Ce mémoire démontre que ce modèle, tout comme les sources mineures, latines et grecques, avec lesquelles Macrobe le complète, lui était assez familier pour servir à l'articulation d'une vision propre; les *Saturnales* ne peuvent donc être cités comme preuve de la décadence de leur époque.

Ce mémoire fournit une traduction et un commentaire des chapitres 7.1-3 des *Saturnales*, avec une explication de leurs rapports avec les *Propos de Table* 1.1 et 2.1 de Plutarque ainsi que des éléments propre à Macrobe, afin de reconstruire sa méthode de composition et de déterminer ses attentes par rapport à son lecteur de l'empire tardif. Le commentaire est précédé d'une introduction de l'auteur, de l'œuvre, et du septième livre.

## Summary

### Key Words

Latin, Late Antiquity, Education, Pagan Revival, History of Ideas

This thesis deals with the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius, the 5<sup>th</sup> century senior civil servant and Latin encyclopedist. Despite the scholarly consensus that the *Saturnalia* is virtually exclusively dependent on a small number of sources, usually copied verbatim, it has long been recognized that Macrobius independently alters at least one of these sources, the *Quaestiones Convivales* of Plutarch, in his seventh Book. This thesis demonstrates that Macrobius was familiar enough with the text of Plutarch, as with the texts of several other minor Latin and Greek sources with which he supplements him, in order to use him to articulate original concepts important to the *Saturnalia* as a whole; the work cannot, therefore be cited as evidence for the cultural decadence of the later Roman Empire.

This thesis provides a translation and commentary of chapters 7.1-3 of the *Saturnalia*, explaining their relation to *Quaest. conv.* 1.1 and 2.1 of Plutarch and the original readings and structure of Macrobius, in order to determine his method of composition and his expectations of his Late Antique reader. The commentary is preceded by an introduction of the author, the work, and the seventh Book.

## Table of Contents

Title page.....	i
Identification of the jury.....	ii
Résumé/ Mots clés.....	iii
Summary/ Key Words.....	iv
Table of Contents.....	v
A. Introduction.....	1
1. The Author.....	2
2. The Work.....	9
3. The subgenre of the <i>quaestiones convivales</i> .....	12
4. Structure.....	14
5. Characters.....	15
6. Use of Sources.....	30
7. Conclusion.....	34
B. Text and Translation.....	36
C. Commentary.....	65
Chapter 7.1.....	66
Chapter 7.2.....	93
Chapter 7.3.....	108
Conclusion.....	132
Appendices.....	136
Bibliography.....	142

## A. Introduction

The encyclopedic *Saturnalia* is the longest work of Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius, fl. 410-30 CE, a senior civil servant of the Western Empire and competent literary adapter. The work has a prominent place in ancient literature as the last surviving literary *symposium* on the Platonic model from Antiquity and our only Latin example of the genre;<sup>1</sup> it was in fact a major intermediary for the classical tradition to the Middle Ages and Renaissance.<sup>2</sup> The stolidly traditionalist *Saturnalia* glorifies the Roman aristocracy of 383-4 CE in its dialogue; published perhaps twenty years after the first sack of Rome and as Christianity was reframing Roman society, it stands out as an anachronism.

Modern interest in the work has been relatively limited, as the landmark theses of H. Linke<sup>3</sup> and G. Wissowa<sup>4</sup> proved that the *Saturnalia* is largely plagiarized from older sources. With the notable exception of E. Türk,<sup>5</sup> subsequent scholarship has accepted the conclusions of Linke and Wissowa in a more moderate form. After their studies, the next defining work was that of Alan Cameron, who redated the *Saturnalia* from 395<sup>6</sup> to 431.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The contemporary *Dialogi* of Sulpicius Severus echoes the genre, but does not follow it particularly closely. All footnotes refer to my bibliography, and all abbreviations follow the Oxford Classical Dictionary.

<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately the original reception of the work is obscure; several ancient citations of the *Saturnalia* have been proposed, all unconvincingly. Courcelle (1956) 220-239 proposed Ambrose's *Hexameron*; see *ibid* (1958) 205-234, but this has been refuted by M. Fuhrmann (1963) 301-308; see Cameron (1966) 27. Santoro (1946) proposed Servius, but Bernabei (1970) 103-114 rejects this, along with the suggestion in Türk (1963) 327-349 of Servius Danielis (Bernabei [1970] 115-119). Finally, Schedler (1916) 1, and Stahl (1952) 43 have proposed Isidore of Seville but Bernabei (1970) 122-133 argues convincingly that the parallels can be attributed to common sources, suggesting (135) that the earliest use of the *Saturnalia* are the instances in 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> century Ireland identified by Charles W. Jones (1943) 108 in his edition of the *De Temporibus* of Bede.

<sup>3</sup> Linke (1880).

<sup>4</sup> Wissowa (1880).

<sup>5</sup> Türk (1962) 79ff. see *ibid* (1963) 348.

<sup>6</sup> Georgii (1912) 521; Türk (1962) 81ff.

<sup>7</sup> Cameron (1966) 37. Flamant (1977) 87, 134-141, and Armisen-Marchetti (2001) XVI-XVII suggest a slightly earlier date but accept most of the proofs of Cameron.

The audience of the *Saturnalia* is still an open question: the partisans of Cameron favour a larger, Christian, readership,<sup>8</sup> while the followers of Flamant, who propose a slightly earlier date of publication and a more intimate knowledge of the milieu described in the *symposium* itself,<sup>9</sup> suggest that the *Saturnalia* was addressed to a small circle of traditionalists.<sup>10</sup> Recent scholarship has explored the theology of the *Saturnalia*<sup>11</sup> and its relation to the letters of Symmachus.<sup>12</sup>

This present study addresses not so much who the readership was as how it was intended to read the *Saturnalia*. My purpose is to examine how the *Saturnalia*, as a school text (*Sat. praef.* 1-2), works, and ultimately, to gauge the vitality of the classical *paideia* in the 420s. As a case study, I will examine the first three chapters of Book 7, which discuss questions to be treated in a *symposium*, in a historical-literary commentary. I will address the way in which Macrobius must adapt Plutarch, his source, for a contemporary Latin reader, as well as his grasp of his material, and his independence from his principal source. To provide the necessary context, I will first introduce the author, and his work, which I will explain in terms of its genre, structure, characters and treatment of sources.

## 1. The Author

The *incipits* of the manuscripts identify *Ambrosius Theodosius Macrobius vir clarissimus et illustris* as the author of the *Saturnalia* and the *Commentary on the Dream*

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<sup>8</sup> Cameron (1966) 36; see Liebeschuetz (1999) 201, Holford-Strevens (1996) 206-207.

<sup>9</sup> Flamant (1977) argues that Macrobius personally knew Symmachus (45), Rufius Albinus (62), Eustathius (69), Servius (79) and Avienus (85).

<sup>10</sup> Flamant (1977) 86, 137-138; see Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XVIII-XIX, Flamant (2006) 102-103.

<sup>11</sup> Syska (1993); Liebeschuetz (1999).

<sup>12</sup> Guittard (2002).

of Scipio,<sup>13</sup> and Macrobius Theodosius<sup>14</sup> as the author of the *Treatise on the Difference and Similarity between Greek and Latin Verbs*. These names vary in order, however,<sup>15</sup> and all except Macrobius are sometimes omitted;<sup>16</sup> the three names never appear together in any other literary source, including the letters of Symmachus, which Macrobius appears to have used.<sup>17</sup> As Macrobius reveals very little about himself in his writings, and as there is no surviving biography, all that we can conclude *a priori* is that Macrobius was a high ranking official in the later Roman Empire,<sup>18</sup> a religious traditionalist,<sup>19</sup> that he wrote after 383-384, the death of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus, the central character of the *Saturnalia*,<sup>20</sup> and that he had a son, Eustathius, to whom both the *Saturnalia* (*Sat.* 1. *praef.* 1) and the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (*In Somn.* 1.1.1) are dedicated. The edition of the text of the *Commentary* at Ravenna c. 485 by a certain Plotinus Eudoxius Macrobius<sup>21</sup> provides a firm *terminus ante quem*.

If no outside source refers to Macrobius by all of his names, it remains quite possible that the extant sources refer to him by a single of these. The name Ambrosius is

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<sup>13</sup> Willis (1963) vol 1, 1; vol 2, 1.

<sup>14</sup> Keil (1855-1923) vol. 5, 631-633.

<sup>15</sup> Macrobius Theodosius Ambrosius is the most common order for the *Commentary* (Flamant [1977] 91).

<sup>16</sup> Ambrosius often, Theodosius sometimes (Flamant [1977] 91).

<sup>17</sup> The fact that Symmachus, who also figures prominently in the *Saturnalia*, does not mention Macrobius in his letters would also tend to favour a later date (Guittard [1997] XI).

<sup>18</sup> The title of *illustris* was reserved for the highest officials, praetorian prefects, the urban prefect, and the heads of departments (Gaudemet [1967] 706).

<sup>19</sup> Cameron (1966) 34; see *ibid* (1967) 385-399. These arguments are accepted by Flamant (1977) 86, 137-138, Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XVIII-XIX, Guittard (1997) XI, and Liebeschuetz (1999) 201. Stahl (1952) 7-8, however, argues that Macrobius may be Christian, and his position has more recently been argued by Bevilacqua (1973) 23-32.

<sup>20</sup> *Symm. Relat.* 10, 11, 12.

<sup>21</sup> The subscript of manuscripts S and P read *Aur. Memm(ius) Symmachus v.c. emendabam vel disting(uebam) meum Ravennae cum Macrobio Plotino Eudoxio v.c. Macrobbii Ambrosii Theodosii v.c. et inl. De Somnio Scipionis* (I, Aurelius Memmius Symmachus of the senatorial order, corrected and punctuated my text of Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, *illustris* and of the senatorial order, *On the Dream of Scipio*, at Ravenna with Macrobius Plotinus Eudoxius of the senatorial order). E reads the same except for the omission of *vel disting. meum*. D has no subscription, however, and B and C have subscriptions which do not mention this recension (Willis [1963] vol. 2, 94), so it is possible that not all manuscripts are descended from this revision; see Marshall (1983) 225.

too often omitted in the manuscripts to be our author's primary name,<sup>22</sup> but since Schanz<sup>23</sup> he has been tentatively identified with a certain Theodosius, the reputedly learned addressee of the *Fables* of Avianus, and perhaps praetorian prefect for Italy in 430.<sup>24</sup> There is no particular reason to assume, with Cameron, that Theodosius was the author's normal official name,<sup>25</sup> but certainly Greek and Latin learning are apparent in all of our author's works, and it is precisely for these that Avianus praises his addressee: *cum in utroque litterarum genere et Atticos Graeca eruditione superes et latinitate Romanos*.<sup>26</sup> Avianus may even be the Avienus who appears as a youth in the *Saturnalia*, as Alan Cameron argues.<sup>27</sup>

As for probable Macrobian, the Theodosian Code lists three roughly contemporary officials: a *vicarius Hispaniae* of 399-400 (16.10.15 and 8.5.61), a *proconsul Africae* of 410 (2.28.6), and a *praepositus sacri cubiculi* in Constantinople of 422 (6.8.1). Until André Chastagnol, it was customary to identify all three officials with each other, and usually with the author of the *Saturnalia*,<sup>28</sup> but Chastagnol proved that the three offices

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<sup>22</sup> Flamant (1977) 91-92, Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, VIII.

<sup>23</sup> Avianus was first proposed by Schanz-Hosius (1920) 32-33. Stahl (1952) 6 backs it, as does Gaide (1980) 22-25, in the introduction to her text edition of Avianus. Mazzarino (1938) 256 ff., and Cameron (1966) 26-27 develop the idea, arguing that Theodosius was Macrobius' primary name. Guittard (1997) X-XI, in the introduction to his translation of the *Saturnalia*, implicitly accepts the reasoning of Cameron, while Flamant (1977) 92-93 and Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol 1, IX-X reject it, although both accept the possibility that the author of the *Saturnalia* was also called Theodosius.

<sup>24</sup> Mazzarino (1938) 255-258, Cameron (1966) 25-38, and Marinone (1967) 14-27, in the introduction to his translation of the *Saturnalia*. Guittard (1997) XI accepts only this hypothesis. But it is admittedly difficult to date Avianus (Gaide [1980] 13).

<sup>25</sup> Cameron (1966) 26-27. Against this, Flamant (1977) 91-95 and Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, IX-X.

<sup>26</sup> Since in both literary genres [that is, rhetoric and poetry] you surpass both the Athenians in their Greek learning and the Romans in Latin culture (*Fab. praef.*).

<sup>27</sup> Cameron (1967) 385-399. See Flamant (1977) 85, Guittard (1997) XIX (although Guittard supposes that the *Saturnalia* was written after the *Fables*).

<sup>28</sup> Teuffel (1883), vol. 3, 221; Sandys (1906) vol. 1, 238; Wessner (1928) col. 170, and Henry (1934) 146-47 supposed that Macrobius occupied all three offices in the Theodosian Code and converted to Christianity after writing his works. Others, like Sundwall (1915) 98, Ensslin (1928) 169, Glover (1901) 172, Whittaker (1923) 11 and Mras (1933) 232 deny or at least suspect the identification with the (single, as they presume) official in the Theodosian Code – and Ramsay (1870) 888 even denies the title of *illustris*. Stahl (1952) 7-9 assumes the identification of the three officials and seeks to reconcile the Christianity

belong to separate career paths.<sup>29</sup> Of these posts, only the *praepositus sacri cubiculi* has our author's title of *illustris*, but since this official is also necessarily a eunuch, he cannot have dedicated the *Saturnalia* and *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* to his son.<sup>30</sup> The vicar of Spain of 399-400, for his part, is unlikely to have become *illustris* later in life, since he is cited for severe blame for interfering with the normal chain of command.<sup>31</sup> Chastagnol retains the proconsul of 410,<sup>32</sup> whom Flamant<sup>33</sup> and Armisen-Marchetti<sup>34</sup> identify provisionally with the praetorian prefect of 430.<sup>35</sup> If, as Flamant and Chastagnol believe, our Macrobius was the Proconsul of Africa in 410, he would have played a vital role in bringing down the largely traditionalist-backed<sup>36</sup> usurpation of Attalus and Alaric by withholding the grain supply to Rome, and would have been installed specifically for this purpose.<sup>37</sup> Flamant<sup>38</sup> and Armisen-Marchetti<sup>39</sup> suggest that Macrobius probably figured in the lost portions of the *Theodosian Code* as well.

It remains to say something about the identification of Eustathius, to whom the *Saturnalia* and the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* are dedicated, and on whom the

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implied by some of these offices with the traditionalism of the *Saturnalia* and *Commentary*. The identification of the first two officials was affirmed by Courcelle (1948) 3, and Benjamin (1955) 13, and is still maintained by Guittard (1997) XI.

<sup>29</sup> Chastagnol (1965) 277.

<sup>30</sup> Cameron (1966) 25, Flamant (1977) 123-26, Guittard (1997) X, and Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XIII.

<sup>31</sup> Flamant (1977) 102, and Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XIII.

<sup>32</sup> Chastagnol (1965) 277.

<sup>33</sup> Flamant (1977) 102-123 offers an elaborate argument for it. It hinges around the fact that the proconsul is probably a pagan (he enforces a brief period of tolerance for the Donatists).

<sup>34</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XIV.

<sup>35</sup> But Cameron (1966) 26, and *PLRE* vol. 2, 698 Macrobius I, identifies the proconsul of 410 with the Vicarius Hispaniarum of 399, as does Guittard (1997) XI. None of these authors identify this individual with the author of the *Saturnalia*.

<sup>36</sup> See Sozom. *Hist. eccl.* 9.9, Zos. 6.7.2.

<sup>37</sup> This Macrobius does not hold his post for long. The proconsul of 408-9 is Donatus (*Cod. Theod.* 16.5.44; see 9.40.19, August. *Ep.* 100, 113), and Junius Quartus Palladius in August of 410 (*Cod. Theod.* 9.38.12 – according to the emendation suggested by Seeck [1919] 320 and accepted by Flamant [1977] 103 n. 33).

<sup>38</sup> Flamant (1977) 128.

<sup>39</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XIV.

chronology of Macrobius mainly depends. Cameron<sup>40</sup> and Flamant<sup>41</sup> identify Eustathius with the Plotinus Eustathius, *Praefectus Urbi* of c. 461,<sup>42</sup> attested through two inscriptions, one in Rome,<sup>43</sup> the other in Naples.<sup>44</sup> As Flamant notes, both names are very unusual in the West, and since Plotinus is a major source for Macrobius in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, the name is appropriate to his son. The office of *Praefectus Urbi* was often the culmination of a senatorial career in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, although it did not absolutely require one;<sup>45</sup> as it was usually held by men of over 45 years old, we can presume that Eustathius was not born much after 416-7.<sup>46</sup> On the basis of this late chronology, Plotinus Eudoxius Macrobius is now unanimously accepted as the grandson of the author, and thus as the son of Eustathius.<sup>47</sup>

On balance, then, it seems likely that Macrobius himself was born c. 380.<sup>48</sup> A first highlight of his career was his appointment as proconsul in Africa in 410, before he became praetorian prefect for Italy in 430. Whether Macrobius himself, not a native of Rome, was ever a member of the senate is unclear, although he could well have been

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<sup>40</sup> Cameron (1966) 37.

<sup>41</sup> Flamant (1977) 131-133.

<sup>42</sup> Guittard (1997) XI dates it to 462.

<sup>43</sup> An inscription, discussed by Panciera (1982) 658-660 and probably from the Roman Forum, reads *Fl[avius] Macrobius Pl[otinus] [E]ustathius, v(ir) [c(larissimus)... ]*. See also Armisen-Marchetti (2001), vol. 1, XVI. Panciera and Armisen-Marchetti both find it probable therefore that the full name of Macrobius was Flavius Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius. Two other Macrobi in the West, probably brothers (Chastagnol [1962] 255 n. 60), were also Flavii: Flavius Macrobius Longinianus and a Flavius Macrobius Maximianus, although neither is to be identified with the author of the *Saturnalia* (Flamant (1977) 96-97).

<sup>44</sup> *Salvis D.D. N.N. et Patricio Ricimere Plotinus Eustathius v.c.; Urb(i) Pr(aefectus) fecit* (Plotinus Eustathius, member of the senatorial order and Prefect of the City erected this to the healths of our lords and the Patrician Ricimer, *CIL* X 8072, 4 = D. 813).

<sup>45</sup> Chastagnol (1960) 449.

<sup>46</sup> We cannot assume, however, with Guittard (1997) XI that he was not born before 416-17.

<sup>47</sup> Cameron (1966) 37, Flamant (1977) pp 129-131, *PLRE* vol. 2, 413, Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XV-XVI.

<sup>48</sup> Flamant (1977) 134 places the birth of Macrobius c. 385 at the latest. Guittard (1997) XI, following Mazzarino (1938) 256 and Marinone (1967) 27, and refusing the identification with the proconsul of 410, places his birth c. 385-390.

admitted by *adlectio*; certainly he was connected with the Symmachi.<sup>49</sup> There is nothing to fix his date of death, but it was presumably some time before 460.

In the probable identifications, there is nothing to suggest that Macrobius was anything other than a member of the Italian aristocracy, as indeed his descendants certainly were. Modern scholarship has been unanimous in identifying Macrobius as a provincial, however, because he qualifies the educational merit of his *Saturnalia* with the disclaimer *nisi sicubi nos sub alio ortos caelo Latinae linguae vena non adiuvet* (*Sat. praef.* 11)<sup>50</sup> and allows that his work might lack the *nativa Romani oris elegantia* (*Sat. praef.* 12).<sup>51</sup> Close analysis shows a more literary intent and parallels to both Aulus Gellius<sup>52</sup> and Seneca,<sup>53</sup> the two authors from whom Macrobius borrows most of his preface.<sup>54</sup> But this is not to say that the statement has no literal meaning: Avianus praises his Theodosius, probably the author of the *Saturnalia*, for surpassing *et Atticos Graeca eruditione [...] et latinitate Romanos* (*Fab. praef.*),<sup>55</sup> which confirms the suggestion that Macrobius is not a native of the city of Rome.<sup>56</sup> If we are to take both Macrobius and Avianus literally, where should we place the birth of Macrobius? *Sub alio ortus caelo*

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<sup>49</sup> See above, n. 21.

<sup>50</sup> Unless at some point the natural disposition of the Latin language does not help us, born under another sky.

<sup>51</sup> The native elegance of the Roman tongue.

<sup>52</sup> An Italian himself (Marache [1967] VIII), Aulus Gellius excused himself for the prosaic title of his *Attic Nights* (*praef.* 10) *Nos vero, ut captus noster est, incuriose et inmediate ac prope etiam subrustice ex ipso loco ac tempore hibernarum vigiliarum Atticas Noctes inscripsimus, tantum ceteris omnibus in ipsius quoque inscriptionis laude cedentes, quantum cessimus in cura et elegantia scriptiois* (I, however, in keeping with my ability, carelessly and hastily and practically boorishly titled it *Attic Nights* after the place itself and the occasion of my winter vigils, thus yielding to all the others works as much in the praiseworthiness of the title itself as in the care and style bestowed on my writing). As with the *Saturnalia*, this apology is rather artificial: the title of the *Attic Nights* is no more prosaic than the diction of the *Saturnalia* is foreign or deficient. In fact it is very nearly the diction of Aulus Gellius (Bernabei [1970] 16).

<sup>53</sup> The phrase itself seems to refer to Pompey's (Indian) elephants *sub alio caelo natae beluae* in Seneca's *De Brevitate Vitae* (13.1.7). Elephants were supposed to live 200-300 years according to Aristotle (*Hist. an.* 8.9.9; see also Plin. *HN* 8.10), and the animal could be a cipher for Macrobius, Long-life.

<sup>54</sup> See Bernabei (1970) 12-26.

<sup>55</sup> The Athenians in Greek learning and the Romans in Latin culture.

<sup>56</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, X-XI.

suggests no place in particular, and certainly no place in the Latin West.<sup>57</sup> The compliment of Avianus should not in principle exclude a non-Athenian Greek origin, and Macrobius in the preface of the *Saturnalia* implies that he is a Greek writing in Latin.<sup>58</sup> If most modern scholars make Macrobius a Westerner instead,<sup>59</sup> it is because his *Saturnalia* relies heavily on Latin sources.<sup>60</sup> It might be objected that his *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* relies almost equally heavily on Greek sources,<sup>61</sup> but Armisen-Marchetti considers it unlikely that a Greek author would treat philosophy in Latin.<sup>62</sup> Jacques Flamant has therefore plausibly suggested Africa, Spain and southern Italy as likely places of origin, possibilities accepted by Armisen-Marchetti.<sup>63</sup> Of these, southern Italy might be the most likely place to find a thoroughly Romanized ‘Greek,’ but for the moment we cannot draw firm conclusions.

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<sup>57</sup> Taken seriously it suggests perhaps the extreme exoticism of Sri Lanka, potentially part of another world for Pomponius Mela (*pars orbis alterius*, Pompon. 3.70). *Alius caelus* might suggest Syene, on the Tropic of Cancer and at the southernmost point of the empire, where Eratosthenes had taken his calculations of the circumference of the earth (see Strab. 2.1.7, Cleom. *De motu*, 1.7.1, Theon Smyrn. 124.10-15). Plin. *HN* 2.183, in turn, provides a plausible Latin source for this information; see Davies (1969) 235-238 for the references to Plin. *HN* 9 in *Sat.* 3.15-16.

<sup>58</sup> By contrast with A. Albinus, ‘a Roman born in Latium’ writing in Greek (*Sat. praef.* 14). The English school before 1950 maintained that Macrobius was a Greek (Glover [1901] 172; Sandys [1906] vol.1, 238; Whittaker [1923] 11), a position also defended by Marrou (1950) 349.

<sup>59</sup> The German school has favoured the Western empire (Wissowa [1880] 15; Mras [1933] 285; Stahl [1952] 5), especially Africa, (Jan [1848-1852] vol. 1, 7; Schanz-Hosius [1920] 191; Teuffel [1883] 221; Wessner [1928] col. 171; more recently Guittard [1997] X, n. 4). Since the 1960s a western origin has been unchallenged.

<sup>60</sup> Jan (1848-1852) vol. 1, 6 and Wissowa (1880) 15 also argues that Macrobius sometimes cites Greek incorrectly. Their evidence has not been seriously challenged since, and is accepted by Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XI.

<sup>61</sup> Described by Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, LIV-LX, despite the possibility of some Latin sources (pp. LX-LXI).

<sup>62</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. I, XI.

<sup>63</sup> Flamant (1977) 94, noting that Macrobius would have had easy contact with the Roman aristocracy in these places. Accepted by Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XI.

## 2. The Work

Like its author, the *Saturnalia* is difficult to date precisely. Its treatment of Servius as an established grammarian suggests a date after 410,<sup>64</sup> but the *Saturnalia* cannot be dated relative to Servius' commentary on Vergil, since neither work is dependent on the other.<sup>65</sup> Political circumstances might favour Alan Cameron's date of 431,<sup>66</sup> when many of the descendents of the characters of the *Saturnalia* held important posts, but do not require it.<sup>67</sup> This year might be seen rather as a *terminus post quem* for the *Saturnalia*, since the dedication and subject matter suggest that Eustathius, its dedicatee, was approximately 12-15 years old when it was written,<sup>68</sup> and as we have seen he was born no later than 416-417. A date in the late 420s, suggested tentatively by Flamant<sup>69</sup> and Armisen-Marchetti,<sup>70</sup> if not absolutely certain, is therefore nonetheless reasonable.<sup>71</sup> Macrobius had begun to assemble material for the *Saturnalia* before the birth of Eustathius, as he explains himself;<sup>72</sup> in all likelihood, then, Macrobius began his work not much after 410.

Like all the works of Macrobius, the *Saturnalia* is scholarly and shows a taste for combining Greek and Latin learning. Along with the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, it forms part, almost certainly the first,<sup>73</sup> of a single educational program

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<sup>64</sup> Flamant (1977) 87.

<sup>65</sup> By Cameron (1966) 32, and more rigorously by Flamant (1977) 83-84.

<sup>66</sup> Cameron (1966) 35-37.

<sup>67</sup> Flamant (1977) 136-137 and 140 questions the need for favourable political circumstances since there is no evidence that the *Saturnalia* was ever widely distributed in Antiquity. Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XVIII voices similar doubts.

<sup>68</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XVI; Gonzalez (2007) M9, 233. Flamant (1977) 89 suggests 14 years old.

<sup>69</sup> Flamant (1977) 134 proposes 425-428.

<sup>70</sup> Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XVIII.

<sup>71</sup> Guittard's suggestion (1997) XI of 430-440, based on the assumption that the *Saturnalia* cannot have been written before Macrobius reached the rank of *illustris*, is, again, unlikely.

<sup>72</sup> *Sat. praef.* 2

<sup>73</sup> The *Saturnalia* represents a supplement to the teaching of a *grammaticus*, while the *Commentary* forms part of a philosophical education. The addresses to Eustathius in the two works also suggest a progression

dedicated to Eustathius, to which Macrobius calls attention in his preface (*Sat. praef.* 2-3). Its relationship<sup>74</sup> to the fragmentary treatise *On the Difference and Similarity between Greek and Latin Verbs*,<sup>75</sup> dedicated instead to a certain Symmachus,<sup>76</sup> is less clear, although both works share an interest in grammar.<sup>77</sup> Where the *Saturnalia* distinguishes itself from these other works is with respect to its length – even in fragmentary form<sup>78</sup> it is by far the longest of the works of Macrobius – and by its thoroughly literary presentation.<sup>79</sup>

Despite its educational purpose, then, the *Saturnalia* is not merely a textbook. Macrobius generally limits himself to literary criticism, but supplements<sup>80</sup> rather than duplicating the curriculum of the *grammaticus*.<sup>81</sup> Pointedly, the characters of Macrobius view Vergil, their chief subject of conversation, as more than a mere school text (*Sat.* 1.24.12-13). Nor is the *Saturnalia* a medley like the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius,

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in age (Marinone [1990] 369-371; Flamant [1977] 90, with some reserves, and Armisen-Marchetti [2001] XVI-XVII).

<sup>74</sup> The lack of the title *illustris*, which Cameron (1966) 36 and Guittard (1997) XI have taken as proof that the *De Differentiis* was written earlier, is less significant than they suggest if, as Flamant and Armisen-Marchetti points out, the *Saturnalia* and *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, which include the title, could very well also have been written before Macrobius reached that rank (Flamant [1977] 93 and Armisen-Marchetti [2001] vol. 1, XII).

<sup>75</sup> Wessner (1928) 174; Fontaine (1983) vol. 1, 38-40; Flamant (1977) 233-252.

<sup>76</sup> *Incipiunt pauca excerpta de libro Macrobiani Theodosii: Theodosius Symmacho suo salutem dicit* (Vindobonensis 16, in Keil [1855-1923] vol. 5, 631-633). Cameron (1966) 34 argues that the identification with Q. Aurelius Symmachus is impossible, and both Wessner (1928) 170-198 and Flamant (1977) 238 n. 22 identify this Symmachus as his son. Guittard (2002) 291 suggests that the Symmachus in question is more likely the grandson of the orator; Gonzalez (2007) 232 inexplicably identifies him with the orator himself.

<sup>77</sup> With the exception of the full *Ars Grammatica*, which Macrobius does not seem to have written (Flamant [1977] 241). Flamant 241-242 notes that nearly all of the grammatical questions (*quaestiunculae* as he terms them) in the *Saturnalia* are taken from Aulus Gellius and all are Latin. The *De Differentiis*, on the other hand, is a comparison (unique in the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century, as Flamant 244 comments) between Greek and Latin verbs.

<sup>78</sup> Guittard (1997) XXIX-XXX outlines the different developments and the *lacunae* in the *Saturnalia*.

<sup>79</sup> Flamant (1977) 258.

<sup>80</sup> Flamant (1977) 292. For Latin literature, the *florilegia* provide interesting anecdotes; for Greek literature, *florilegia* offer access to classics which Macrobius had not read directly (Flamant [1977] 299-304).

<sup>81</sup> Bernabei (1970) 12-13; see Flamant (1977) 244 for grammar and 265 and 271 for rhetoric.

although the *Attic Nights* provide much of its material.<sup>82</sup> Gellius' informal structure is implicitly rejected in the preface.<sup>83</sup> Is it too much to suppose philosophical reasons for this rejection? The *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, which follows the *Saturnalia*, is clearly a philosophical work and ends with a reference to rational philosophy.<sup>84</sup> If the *Saturnalia* is ultimately a step towards the contemplation of the One, it must therefore reflect unity and order itself. It is hardly surprising, then, that the model for unity in the *Saturnalia* is none other than Plato and his *Symposium*.<sup>85</sup>

### The symposium genre

It seems that the young readership of the *Saturnalia* was as yet unfamiliar with the distinctly Greek<sup>86</sup> *symposium* genre, since Macrobius requires a triple preface to explain it.<sup>87</sup> Macrobius himself had probably not read Plato's *Symposium* directly,<sup>88</sup> and his primary source for its form and preface was likely Porphyry's *Commentary on the*

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<sup>82</sup> Bernabei (1970) 37-38 points out that, with the exception of Books 3 and 4, where important *lacunae* make it difficult to judge, there are passages taken from the *Attic Nights* in every book of the *Saturnalia*, and states that "at least thirty-four passages of the *Saturnalia* were copied from the *Noctes Atticae*" (p. 38). Although no citation from Aulus Gellius is more than a page long, no author is used more frequently (p. 38) or with fewer revisions (p. 39). We have already mentioned the prefaces (*Sat. praef.* 2-3 = *NA praef.* 2-3); for a full treatment of Macrobius' use of Aulus Gellius, see Bernabei (1970) 37-92.

<sup>83</sup> *Facta igitur est in his quoque commentariis eadem rerum disparilitas, quae fuit in illis annotationibus pristinis* (Therefore the same unevenness of subjects which was found in those original notes has also been reproduced in these commentaries - *NA praef.* 3) becomes *nec indigeste tamquam in acervum congersimus digna memoratu, sed variorum rerum disparilitas, auctoribus diversum, confuse temporibus, ita in quoddam digesta corpus est, ut quae indistincte atque promiscue ad subsidium memoriae adnotaveramus, in ordinem instar membrorum cohaerentia convenirent* (We did not, however, pile these things worthy of being remembered indiscriminately in a heap, but the unevenness of the various subjects, with diverse authors, and confused times are processed into a sort of body, so that what we noted unclearly and confusedly from the source of our memory, might come together in an orderly arrangements of parts with a certain coherence). See Wissowa (1880) 14ff. for the stylistic unity of Macrobius.

<sup>84</sup> *In Somn.* 2.17.16. Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, discusses the philosophical end of the *Commentary* on XLVI-XLIX.

<sup>85</sup> The genre was popular among Neo-platonists in Late Antiquity, notably Porphyry and Julian (Flamant [1977] 183).

<sup>86</sup> Flamant (1977) 182 notes that there is no direct Latin antecedent for the *Saturnalia*: Apuleius' *Quaestiones Convivales* follow a distinct genre, and Horace (*Sat.* 2.8) and Petronius (*Sat.* 5) and Aulus Gellius (*NA* 6.13) include *symposia* only as part of larger works.

<sup>87</sup> Flamant (1977) 177.

<sup>88</sup> Flamant (1977) 177-178.

*Symposium*.<sup>89</sup> He nonetheless follows his model very closely: unlike the sources for content, which Macrobius tends to simplify and rationalize,<sup>90</sup> the *symposium* genre is sacrosanct.<sup>91</sup>

The genre traces its origins to Plato and Xenophon, whose model was virtually codified, and is discussed fully in the works of Martin<sup>92</sup> and of Flamant.<sup>93</sup> The *symposium* is a dialogue over dinner and always aims for a certain naturalism; as a literary genre it is characterized by unusual variety, combining seriousness and gaiety and featuring characters of various ages and professions. The conversation is always loosely structured, and propelled by incidents such as quarrels and the arrival of new guests. The genre allows for more license than a philosophical treatise because of the distance between the reader and events described: Macrobius, like Plato, has his *symposium* recounted to another person by a character not present at the original banquet. Macrobius, however, does not take advantage of this license and develops the effect of distance almost for its own sake: his comic scenes are never experienced directly, but always through the prism of literature.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4. The subgenre of the *quaestiones convivales*

To the genre of the *symposium*, Macrobius, in Book 7, adds the subgenre of the *quaestiones convivales*, for which Plutarch is our only extant source.<sup>95</sup> In the form of a

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<sup>89</sup> Flamant (1977) 178 n. 27, 211. The work is discussed in Bidez (1964) 67, sub. n. 6. Porphyry's φιλόλογος ἀκρόασις, known through Eusebius (*Praep. evang.* 464c-468: 10.3), may also have been an influence, although it is not clear whether it was a full *symposium* (Flamant [1977] 183, 211).

<sup>90</sup> Bernabei (1970) 5.

<sup>91</sup> Flamant (1977) 209 notes that Macrobius is in certain respects closer to his Platonic model than any other author in the post-Platonic tradition.

<sup>92</sup> Martin (1931).

<sup>93</sup> Flamant (1977) 172-221.

<sup>94</sup> Flamant (1977) 187-189.

<sup>95</sup> As other examples in this genre, Fuhrmann (1972) XIII-XIV proposes Aristoxenus, Perseus, and Didymus Chalcenterus, and Macrobius himself cites Apuleius and Aristotle (*Sat.* 7.3.24). The work of

medley, the *quaestiones convivales* present enigmas on varied subjects, which alternate between discussions about banquets (συμπποτικά) and topics appropriate for sympotic conversation (συμπποσιακά). Without the unity or philosophical pretensions of a full *symposium*, the genre is defined largely by the disparate scientific questions of the συμπποσιακά, but the individual enigmas are nonetheless presented with the dialogue form<sup>96</sup> and even the stock characters<sup>97</sup> of a literary *symposium*. It is appropriate, then that Plutarch places his work under the patronage of Plato and Xenophon (*Quaest. conv.* 1 *praef.* = 612D).

From the συμπποτικά, Macrobius retains the whole range of subjects treated by Plutarch, including the appropriate circumstances for discussing politics, religion, and philosophy.<sup>98</sup> In his much more extensive treatment of the συμπποσιακά, however, he retains only the characteristic scientific questions, avoiding politics entirely and treating religion only briefly (7.13.9-16). Since he insists on the supremacy of philosophy over science,<sup>99</sup> however, Macrobius appears to have ended the *Saturnalia* with a treatment of

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Aristotle is now lost and not otherwise attested, but for Aristotle and proper conduct at banquets, see the discussion at *Sat.* 2.8.10-16. The *Quaestiones Convivales* of Apuleius are lost and otherwise mentioned only by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Ep.* 9.13.2); Linke (1880) 52-57 argues that this work was the intermediary for pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias in Book 7, but Flamant (1977) 302 and Holford-Strevens (1996) 906-907, have rejected the necessity of an intermediary.

<sup>96</sup> Fuhrmann (1972) XIV-XI argues, against Martin (1931) 170-177, that Aristoxenus, Perseus, and Didymus Chalcenterus probably wrote in dialogue form, and Fuhrmann (1972) XIV-XV argues, again against Martin, that Plutarch follows this sympotic form rather than the form of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*.

<sup>97</sup> Fuhrmann (1972) XVII-XVIII. The originality of Plutarch was likely in assigning these roles to his circle of friends.

<sup>98</sup> Flamant (1977) 185-187 argues that if the justification for discussing philosophy at dinner is raised here rather than at the beginning of the *Saturnalia*, it is precisely because it has never really been called into question by Macrobius and the topic is raised here to satisfy the genre. This ignores the circumstances in which the topic is raised: Book 7 is a lighthearted section and the conclusion of a work that is propaedeutic to the philosophical *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*. The frequent references, open and veiled, to philosophy are thus particularly appropriate and require particular explanation.

<sup>99</sup> See below, p. 24-26.

the *quaestiones convivales* in order to prepare the reader for the philosophy and natural science of the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*.

## 5. Structure

Exploiting the natural divisions between day and evening<sup>100</sup> and between the three days of the Saturnalia festival,<sup>101</sup> Macrobius is able to impose an unusual degree of structure on the informal *symposium* genre. The chiasmic nature of this structure is clearest with the evenings: the first and the last evenings are parallel,<sup>102</sup> each requiring each character to contribute something in turn, either a joke (*Sat.* 2.2) or a question (*Sat.* 7.4-15),<sup>103</sup> and each beginning with a reference to the banquet of Dido in the *Aeneid* (*Sat.* 2.1.1; *Sat.* 7.1.1). It should be noted that Macrobius does not demand a direct correspondence in length between the parallel sections, and appears to have expressly avoided it, pairing the jokes of Book 2 with the necessarily longer questions of Book 7, and allowing most characters to ask several questions. The parallels between the evenings may often have particular didactic purposes, however, clear in the opening image of each chapter: by balancing the refusal to countenance a dancing girl in *Sat.* 2.1.7 with the symbolic admission of Philosophy in 7.1.7,<sup>104</sup> Macrobius exhorts his young reader to philosophy.

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<sup>100</sup> Macrobius assigns the days and evenings to serious and to lighter subjects respectively, an original division (Flamant [1977] 184-185) spelled out in his preface (*Sat.* 1.1.4).

<sup>101</sup> With the exception of Athenaeus' monumental *Deipnosophists*, which offers no indications of time, none of the previous literary *symposia* now extant, even Julian's *Banquet of the Caesars*, which is also set at the Saturnalia (Κρόνια), is drawn over more than a single day.

<sup>102</sup> The intervening second evening discusses luxury in the literary sources, including a monologue treating the various species of nuts and fruit (*Sat.* 3.18-20).

<sup>103</sup> Just as certain anecdotes in *Sat.* 7.1-3 are both preceded and followed by explanatory remarks (as in *Sat.* 7.1.12), or explanatory remarks are framed by the material that they explain (as in *Sat.* 7.2.9), it seems probable that the lost conclusion to Book 7 originally balanced the triple preface and preliminary gathering of the evening before the Saturnalia (*Sat. praef.* and 1-5).

<sup>104</sup> The contrast between philosophy and the dancing girl is evidently a *topos*, in the same tradition as the famous choice of Hercules between the road of virtue and the road of pleasure (Cic. *Off.* 1.118), and as the

<p><b>Book 2.</b></p> <p>(A1) Dancing girl to be introduced (misuse of Plato) and refused (2.1.7)</p> <p>(B1) The guests each tell jokes of famous people in turn (2.2.1-15)</p> <p>(C) A Latin translation of the poem of Plato on a kiss (2.2.16-17)</p> <p>(B2) Jokes of various people (2.3-7)</p> <p>(A2) Indulging in wine suggested (misuse of Plato) and refused (2.8)</p>	<p><b>Book 3.13-20.</b></p> <p>(beginning missing)</p> <p>Discussion of ancient luxury (3.13-17)</p> <p>Servius discusses fruit and nuts (3.18-20)</p>	<p><b>Book 7.</b></p> <p>(A1) Philosophy introduced (7.1.1)</p> <p>(B1) The guests each ask questions of Disarius in turn (7.4-14.4). Evangelus invites Eustathius to rebut Disarius (7.5)</p> <p>(C) Eustathius defends the doctrines of Plato on light refraction and the epiglottis (7.14.5-15.24)</p> <p>(B2) The chicken and the egg, and the putrefaction of meat (7.16). Evangelus invites Eustathius to rebut Disarius (7.16.19-34)</p> <p>(ending missing)</p>
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The same structure, it seems, is repeated within the evenings themselves, although the loss of the beginning of the second evening and the endings of the first and third makes it more difficult to appreciate. As with the evenings taken together, the individual evenings emphasize philosophy in their structure; Plato is particularly prominent, even if he contributes relatively little to the total length of either evening, since he appears at the prominent centre and wings of the Books and is alternately misused, praised, and exonerated by the characters. For the use of a similar organization within individual chapters and sections of chapters, see the commentary, below.

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contrast between philosophy and the muse of poetry in Boethius (*De consolat. Phil.* 1.1). The choice of philosophy at a young age, in both cases, makes the topos particularly appropriate for an educational work such as the *Saturnalia*.

## 6. Characters

It is generally agreed that all the characters of the *Saturnalia* are historical persons, and all religious traditionalists;<sup>105</sup> many are taken from the letters of Symmachus.<sup>106</sup> Together they make up the last traditionalist elite, fittingly, if artificially, assembled to celebrate the the earliest of Roman religious festivals.<sup>107</sup> In keeping with the variety required of a *symposium*, they represent four classes of characters.<sup>108</sup> The senatorial characters are particularly numerous, and include the three hosts of the three respective days of the festival, Praetextatus, Nicomachus, and Symmachus, as well as Rufius and Caecina Albinus, whose son Decius and relative Postumianus speak in the introduction. Their official duties are expressly excluded from the work, however: *togatus certe, vel trabeatus, paludatusque seu praetextatus hac die videatur nullus* (*Sat.* 1.6.2).<sup>109</sup> To these Macrobius adds three “professionals:” Eustathius in philosophy, Eusebius in rhetoric, and Disarius in medicine. The genre requires a Cynic and Horus provides one; in the *Saturnalia*, however, he becomes an exemplar of the philosophical life and the unpleasant image of the literary Cynic is transferred to Evangelus the boor, who enters with Horus.<sup>110</sup> Finally, the youths Servius and Avienus ensure an appropriate mix of ages among the guests.

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<sup>105</sup> Flamant (1977) 86, although not all the characters are attested elsewhere.

<sup>106</sup> Guittard (2002) 291-293. The demonstration is convincing for Praetextatus, Nicomachus, Disarius and Evangelus, but does not explain the presence of Eusebius or Eustathius. Whether these characters really form a historical “circle of Symmachus” or “circle of Praetextatus” is less clear, and De Paolis (1987) 291-300 argues that they do not.

<sup>107</sup> *Saturnalibus apud Vettium Praetextatum Romanae nobilitatis proceres doctique alii congregantur, et tempus sollempniter feriatum deputant colloquio liberali, convivium quoque sibi mutua comitate praebentes, nec discedentes a se nisi ad nocturnam quietem.* (*Sat.* 1.1: During the Saturnalia the leading figures of nobility of Rome and other learned men gathered at the home of Vettius Praetextatus and solemnly passed the holiday in cultured discussion, also applying themselves to the banquet with mutual affection, and not leaving from it until the hush of night). For religion in the *Saturnalia*, see Appendix 2.

<sup>108</sup> Flamant (1977) 26.

<sup>109</sup> Indeed today no one is seen dressed in a toga or state or military robes, or in the fringed toga. *Sat.* 5.1.7 and *Sat.* 7. 5.4 both allude to the oratory of Symmachus, but oratory is treated strictly as an art.

<sup>110</sup> Flamant (1977) 197-198.

## Praetextatus

Vettius Agorius Praetextatus<sup>111</sup> (c. 310-384) is the chief host and leading character of the *Saturnalia*. He is also well attested historically. Praetextatus had been *quaestor*, *praetor*, governor of Tuscia-Umbria and of Lusitania, Proconsul of Achaia,<sup>112</sup> Urban Prefect in 367-368,<sup>113</sup> and was Praetorian Prefect for Illyria, Italy, and Africa in 384,<sup>114</sup> when he died as consul designate.<sup>115</sup> He was also priest of several oriental cults, a fact celebrated in the funerary inscription of his widow<sup>116</sup> and by another inscription dated to 387,<sup>117</sup> but criticized by Jerome,<sup>118</sup> and passed over in silence by his son.<sup>119</sup> Praetextatus was also interested in Aristotelian philosophy and translated the works of Themistius,<sup>120</sup> whom he may have personally met.<sup>121</sup> He is the addressee of much of Book 1 of the letters of Symmachus.

The *Saturnalia* brings out the authority of Praetextatus on religious matters, and, to a lesser extent, his philosophical interest. He hosts the preliminary gathering (*Sat.* 1.2.15 - *Sat.* 1.5.17) and the gathering of the first day (*Sat.* 1.6 - *Sat.* 2.8.16), and the ending of the *Saturnalia*, now lost, may have related his death.<sup>122</sup> In Book 7 the authority

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<sup>111</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 722-724, Vettius Agorius Praetextatus I.

<sup>112</sup> Chastagnol (1962) 172.

<sup>113</sup> Ammianus Marcellinus (22.7.6 and 27.9.8-10) praises his character and describes his resolution of the conflict between Ursinus and Damasus for the see of Rome.

<sup>114</sup> *Cod. Iust.* 1.54.5.

<sup>115</sup> *Symm. Relat.* 10, 11, 12.

<sup>116</sup> *CIL* VI 1779.

<sup>117</sup> *CIL* VI 1778.

<sup>118</sup> *Adv. Iovinian.* 8; *Ep.* 23.2-3.

<sup>119</sup> *CIL* VI 1777.

<sup>120</sup> Boethius *In Arist. Int.* 2.3.7.

<sup>121</sup> Courcelle (1948) 17.

<sup>122</sup> Cameron (1966) 28-29, by analogy with the *De Republica* of Cicero and the *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus. This would set the date of the *Saturnalia* at 384. But Cameron (1966) 28 n. 33 is evidently wrong to argue that Macrobius *must* have used Athenaeus directly because he does not cite him (on the strength of the evidence that Macrobius does not cite Aulus Gellius, or Plutarch; we will see that Macrobius does cite Plutarch). See Flamant (1977) 27, n. 41 who argues that if the *Saturnalia* were set in December 384, Decius and Postumianus, who meet in January of the following year, ought to have mentioned the death and thus fixes the date of the *Saturnalia* at 383 at the latest, a year before the death of Praetextatus.

of Praetextatus is unmistakable: he proposes serious and philosophical topics of conversation (*Sat.* 7.1.1), and argues that the *quaestiones convivales* are fitting for the old as well as for the young (*Sat.* 7.4.1), proposing that the guests each ask scientific questions to the doctor Disarius in turn. He sets the tone with the first question, on the respective merits of simple and complex food (*Sat.* 7.4.3), a question treated at great length (7.4.4 - 7.5.32), but does not intervene again.

### Nicomachus

Son of the distinguished (*Sat.* 1.5.13) Volusius Venustus, Virius Nicomachus Flavianus<sup>123</sup> is the most politically controversial figure of the *Saturnalia* and it would have required an act of courage to present him.<sup>124</sup> Although he is attested only as *pontifex major*,<sup>125</sup> he was evidently a militant traditionalist,<sup>126</sup> and the gaps in his career owe to the fact that the family was out of favour during the reigns of Constantius II,<sup>127</sup> and of Valentinian I.<sup>128</sup> Nicomachus was first governor (*Consularis*) of Sicily in 364,<sup>129</sup> Vicar of Africa in 376-77 where Ammianus Marcelinus<sup>130</sup> and Augustine<sup>131</sup> mention him, and *Quaestor* of the Palace under Theodosius,<sup>132</sup> who evidently never ceased to think highly of him.<sup>133</sup> He was subsequently Praetorian Prefect for Italy, probably from 382-

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<sup>123</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 347-349, Virius Nicomachus Flavianus 15. Flamant (1977) 46 proposes that Macrobius was acquainted with his family.

<sup>124</sup> Flamant (1977) 58.

<sup>125</sup> *CIL* VI 1783 = D. 2948.

<sup>126</sup> According to the anonymous *Carmen adversus Flavianus*, his favoured cults were often oriental, which Flamant (1977) 50 accepts at face value, while Markus (1974) 16 remains more skeptical. Certainly Nicomachus did have a particular interest in divination (*Carm. adv. Flav.* 8, Rufin. *Hist. eccl.* 2.33, August. *De civ. D.* 18.53-54) and in the cults of Jupiter (August. *De civ. D.* 5.26.1) and of Hercules (Theodoret *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.4), both particularly associated with Diocletian (Stein [1959] vol. 1, 66).

<sup>127</sup> Seeck (1883) CXIII-CXIV.

<sup>128</sup> Seeck (1883) CXIV.

<sup>129</sup> Seeck (1883) CXIV, n. 554.

<sup>130</sup> Amm. Marc. 26.6.28.

<sup>131</sup> August. *Ep.* 87.8.

<sup>132</sup> Seeck (1883) CXV, n. 563.

<sup>133</sup> *CIL* VI 1783 = D. 2948.

383 and certainly again from 389-394.<sup>134</sup> After joining the usurpation of Eugenius and Arbogast in 392, Nicomachus was named consul by Eugenius for 394,<sup>135</sup> but committed suicide after its defeat at Cold River in 394,<sup>136</sup> and was posthumously rehabilitated in 431.<sup>137</sup> Among the scholarly achievements of Nicomachus appear a book of *Annals*<sup>138</sup> and a Latin translation of Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyre*.<sup>139</sup> He is the principal addressee of Book 2 of the letters of Symmachus.

Although his son,<sup>140</sup> obliged to convert to Christianity after Cold River, does not appear in the *Saturnalia*,<sup>141</sup> it is significant that Nicomachus does, and that he hosts the second day (Book 3), when religious matters are discussed. His major contribution to the *Saturnalia*, a promised speech on the augury of Vergil (*Sat.* 1.24.17), is however lost, and his remarks in Book 7 are difficult to associate with any particular personal feature.

Although his allusions to Homer (*Il.* 5.75 = *Sat.* 7.6.2), Cato (*Agr.* 7.3 = *Sat.* 7.6.13) and Aristotle (*Sat.* 7.6.15) suggest the historian and translator of Philostratus, his only question concerns the properties of wine (7.6.15).

## Symmachus

Nearly as prominent in the *Saturnalia* as Praetextatus and even better attested outside of it is Q. Aurelius Symmachus<sup>142</sup> (c. 340<sup>143</sup>-c. 402). He was *quaestor*, *praetor*,

<sup>134</sup> Seeck (1883) CXII proposes a career of 382-383, and again from 389-394, but see *ibid* (1919) 116, in which the first prefecture is called into question.

<sup>135</sup> In which capacity he is attested in 392 (Rufin. *Hist. eccl.* 2.33; Paulin. *Ambr.* 26). For the usurpation, see Bloch (1945) 199-241 and O'Donnell (1978).

<sup>136</sup> Rufin. *Hist. eccl.* 2.33.

<sup>137</sup> *CIL* VI 1783 = D. 2948. The date is established by Cameron (1966) 35-37; Flamant (1977) 57 is more skeptical.

<sup>138</sup> *CIL* VI 1783 = D. 2948.

<sup>139</sup> Sid. Apoll. *Ep.* 8.3.1.

<sup>140</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 345-347, Nicomachus Flavianus 14.

<sup>141</sup> Flamant (1977) 58 successfully proves, against Cameron (1966) 30-31, that the genre does not exclude portraying living people, so his religious explanation is the most logical.

<sup>142</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 865-870, Q. Aurelius Symmachus signo Eusbeius 4.

<sup>143</sup> Seeck (1883) XLIV; Chastagnol (1962) 219.

*corrector* of Lucania-Bruttium (365),<sup>144</sup> proconsul of Africa (369-373),<sup>145</sup> Urban Prefect at the time that the *Saturnalia* is set (384-385),<sup>146</sup> and consul (391).<sup>147</sup> The panegyrics, *Relationes* (especially the famous third *Relatio*, to return the altar of Victory to the Senate House), and *Epistulae* of Symmachus are among the most important sources for the period, and there is reason to believe that Macrobius used the *Epistulae* to write the *Saturnalia*, and perhaps even that Macrobius knew him personally.<sup>148</sup> His tact appears prominently in the *Saturnalia*, as Flamant points out,<sup>149</sup> and he is its chief rhetorician, proposing in Book 1 the praise of Vergil as the theme for the rest of the *Saturnalia* (*Sat.* 1.24.14). His own discussion of Vergil's rhetorical ingenuity, at the end of Book 4, is lost, but Symmachus is cited as a recent example of Pliny's style of oratory (*Sat.* 5.1.7).

Symmachus is the host of the third day of the *Saturnalia*, and his role in Book 7 mirrors that of Praetextatus in Book 2, as we will see;<sup>150</sup> this parallelism is evidently behind his argument for the exclusion of philosophy from banquets (*Sat.* 7.1.2-4). Like Nicomachus, he asks only one scheduled question (*Sat.* 7.7.14), which he prefaces, again, with a remark of his own (*Sat.* 7.7.1; 7.7.8-12). As host of this day, however, his particular concern is the prevention of drunkenness, and his question addresses the non-alcoholic qualities of grape juice; it follows a remark on the resistance of women to the effects of wine. The great landowner and tactful rhetorician of the *Epistulae* really

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<sup>144</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 8.5.25.

<sup>145</sup> *CIL* VIII 24584 and 5347; *Cod. Theod.* 12.1.73.

<sup>146</sup> For this period we have Symmachus' own *Relationes*.

<sup>147</sup> Chastagnol (1962) 227.

<sup>148</sup> Flamant (1977) 45.

<sup>149</sup> Flamant (1977) 40-41.

<sup>150</sup> See below, pp. 54-56.

emerges in *Sat.* 7.5.3-4, where he rephrases an uncivil suggestion as a rhetorical exercise, and with the mention of his Tuscan estate in *Sat.* 7.7.14.<sup>151</sup>

### Rufius Albinus

The ‘Furius’ in the manuscripts, another senatorial character, should be identified with Ceionius Rufius Albinus<sup>152</sup> (c.340-c.420), who was judge and Urban Prefect in 389.<sup>153</sup> In this capacity he received the constitution which implicitly removed the festival of the Saturnalia from the list of public holidays,<sup>154</sup> and a law outlawing traditional religious observances in Rome in 391.<sup>155</sup> His previous career is more difficult to trace, but he may have been Proconsul of Africa.<sup>156</sup> He was still living in 417, when his son Rufius Antonius Agrypnus Volusianus became Urban Prefect,<sup>157</sup> and so it is quite possible that Macrobius knew him personally.<sup>158</sup> He could well be the Albinus who Victorinus mentioned as having written on meter;<sup>159</sup> in the *Saturnalia* he speaks on reminiscences of ancient poetry in Vergil (*Sat.* 6.1-3), and on ancient luxury (*Sat.* 3.14-17).

Both poetry and antiquity fall outside the scope of Book 7; here Rufius concerns himself instead with the agency of philosophy at *convivia* (*Sat.* 7.1.8 – an invitation to the philosopher Eustathius to speak), and with the digestion of meat (*Sat.* 7.8.1; 7.8.4 – a question to the doctor Disarius). The digestion of meat relates to the remarks about luxury fish in *Sat.* 3.15-16; whether or not it reflects a real personal interest in meat is

<sup>151</sup> Guittard (2002) 293 notes that the Tuscan estate of Symmachus may be an echo of the letters of Cicero.

<sup>152</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 37-38, Ceionius Rufius Albinus 15.

<sup>153</sup> *CIL* VI 36 959; *CIL* VI 3791b = 31 414 = D789), *CIL* VI 36 960 = D 8950).

<sup>154</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 2.8.19 (389) = *Cod. Iust.* 3.12.7, discussed by Flamant (1977) 21-22.

<sup>155</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10.

<sup>156</sup> Chastagnol (1962) 234.

<sup>157</sup> *PLRE* vol. 2, 168, Rutilius Namatianus 1.

<sup>158</sup> Flamant (1977) 62.

<sup>159</sup> Victorinus, in Keil (1855-1923) vol. 6, 211, 23.

impossible to say, any more than whether his invitation to Eustathius reflects a real interest in philosophy.<sup>160</sup> In any case, the evident enthusiasm of Rufius Albinus for these new subjects offsets the reserve of the hosts in Book 7.

### Caecina Albinus

Probably the younger brother of Rufius Albinus,<sup>161</sup> Caecina Albinus<sup>162</sup> was *consularis* of Numidia (365);<sup>163</sup> there he appears as *pontifex major*.<sup>164</sup> Of the same age as Symmachus, his friend (*Sat.* 1.2.15),<sup>165</sup> Caecina Albinus was presumably born c.340 and is still alive c. 400,<sup>166</sup> when Jerome mentions him (*Ep.* 107.1). He does not rival Praetextatus as an expert on religious questions in the *Saturnalia*, but a brief comment on the origins of the Compitalia festival does reflect his real religious role.<sup>167</sup> Presented primarily as an expert on Varro (*Sat.* 2.8.3) and particularly praised for his memory (*Sat.* 1.4.1; *Sat.* 3.14.1), Caecina Albinus would have recounted the proceedings of the *Saturnalia* to his son if he had not been in Naples and unavailable to tell them (*Sat.* 1.2.2). His pontifical learning does emerge in Book 7 (7.13.11-16), but his scheduled questions deal with the respective effects of heat and cold (7.8.7; 7.8.9; 7.8.12; 7.8.14).

### Decius Albinus

The son of Caecina Albinus, Decius Albinus<sup>168</sup> does not participate in the dialogue itself, but speaks to Postumianus, below, in the preface (*Sat.* 1.2). Born c.

<sup>160</sup> Flamant (1977) 61 argues that it probably does not.

<sup>161</sup> Chastagnol (1956) 241-253; *ibid.* (1962) 234-235, accepted, with some reserve, by Flamant (1977) 59, n. 223.

<sup>162</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 34-35, Publilius Caesonius Caecina Albinus 8.

<sup>163</sup> *CIL* VIII 2388; 2242; 4767; 6975; 7975.

<sup>164</sup> *CIL* VIII 2388 (Timgad), 2242.

<sup>165</sup> The *PLRE* does not, however, identify any intermarriage between the two families.

<sup>166</sup> Marrou (1950) 424.

<sup>167</sup> *Sat.* 1.7.34, despite what Flamant (1977) 63 n. 244, and 64 argues.

<sup>168</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 35-36, Caecina Decius Albinus Iunior 10.

365,<sup>169</sup> Decius is identified as *adulescens* in the *Saturnalia* and would have been about fifteen years old in 384;<sup>170</sup> he would become *consularis* of Numidia (388-392),<sup>171</sup> governor of Campania in 397-398 (Symm. *Ep.* 6.23, 7.47), *Quaestor* of the Palace in 398 (Symm. *Ep.* 7.47), and Urban Prefect (402).<sup>172</sup> He is likely omitted from the banquet because of his age;<sup>173</sup> he may be included in the preface because unlike the son of Flavius Nicomachus he remained a religious traditionalist after 394.<sup>174</sup> He does not appear in Book 7 as extant, and the analogy with Plato and Xenophon would tend to rule out an appearance in the lost portion at the end.<sup>175</sup>

### Postumianus

A friend of Eusebius, Postumianus<sup>176</sup> is a lawyer, although an amateur (*Sat.* 1.2.6) and presumably thus a senator.<sup>177</sup> Although less well attested than the other senatorial characters, he is probably a relative of the Albini, a correspondent with Libanius (*Ep.* 1036),<sup>178</sup> and likely the first cousin once removed of Caecina and Rufius, and first cousin twice removed of Decius.<sup>179</sup> His career is otherwise relatively unknown, but he was probably the *vir illustris* mentioned by Symmachus who was an ambassador of the Senate (*Ep.* 4.52.3; 6.22; 6.26). The sole reminder of *negotium* in the *Saturnalia*, he is invited by Praetextatus but unable to attend the banquets because he must plead cases for his friends

<sup>169</sup> Chastagnol (1962) 257-260.

<sup>170</sup> Flamant (1977) 64-65, Guittard (1997) XVII.

<sup>171</sup> Constantia (Numidia) VIII 703 = D 5789 = *ILAlg.* II 619, 2; VIII 703 = *ILAlg.* II 621, 3; *AE* 1902, 166 = *ILAlg.* II 620; *AE* 1909, 223 + *AE* 1933, 159.

<sup>172</sup> *Cod. Theod.* VII 13. 15 (395/408).

<sup>173</sup> Flamant (1977) 65.

<sup>174</sup> Flamant (1977) 65.

<sup>175</sup> Pl. *Symp.* 3.223; Xen. *Symp.* 9; but see Lucian *Symp.* 47, in which Lycinus, the narrator, ends with a direct remark to the listening Philo.

<sup>176</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 718-719, Postumianus 3.

<sup>177</sup> Flamant (1977) 65.

<sup>178</sup> The identification with the character in the *Saturnalia* is proposed by Seeck (1906) 243, in his edition of the letters of Libanius.

<sup>179</sup> Chastagnol (1961) 749-752.

(*Sat.* 1.2.6). Postumianus serves as the indirect narrator required by sympotic convention,<sup>180</sup> recounting the banquets of the *Saturnalia* to Decius Albinus second-hand. Like Decius Albinus, he may have appeared in the lost conclusion of Book 7, but this is unlikely.

### **Eustathius**

The Greek philosopher Eustathius cannot be firmly identified with any person outside the *Saturnalia*.<sup>181</sup> He was presumably a real person, however, and Macrobius may have named his son Eustathius after him.<sup>182</sup> A friend of Nicomachus in the *Saturnalia* (*Sat.* 1.6.4), Eustathius is rhetorically described, by Symmachus, as a specialist in Academic, Stoic and Peripatetic philosophy (*Sat.* 1.5.13-15)<sup>183</sup> and it is possible to imagine him as a professor of philosophy in Rome, like Celsus in Symmachus' *Relatio* 5.<sup>184</sup> The genre requires a philosopher, and the *Saturnalia* as a pre-philosophical pedagogical text allows him to discuss philosophy in Vergil,<sup>185</sup> but not philosophy as such. Eustathius can often appear merely as a cultured Greek,<sup>186</sup> speaking at length on Vergil's Greek borrowings in Book 5 (*Sat.* 5.2-22).

In Book 7, however, his role as a philosopher is plainly in evidence, and he is one of the most prominent characters in this Book. He speaks on philosophy at *convivia* (*Sat.* 7.1), and on moderation in questions and jokes (*Sat.* 7.2-3). Notably, Eustathius refutes

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<sup>180</sup> Flamant (1977) 206-211.

<sup>181</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 311, Eustathius 5 suggests that he may be Eustathius of Cappadocia (p. 310, Eustathius 1), a student of Iamblichus, although Flamant (1977) 69 rejects this hypothesis, noting that he lived in Rome, since he was a friend of Nicomachus.

<sup>182</sup> Flamant (1977) 69 n. 278.

<sup>183</sup> The literary reference to the famous embassy of Carneades, Critolaus and Diogenes is abundantly explained by Symmachus, following Aulus Gellius' *NA* 6.14.8.

<sup>184</sup> Symmachus requests Theodosius to admit the philosopher Celsus, whom he compares to Aristotle (*Relat.* 5.2) and describes as a professor (*Relat.* 5.1.3) into the Senate.

<sup>185</sup> The development is promised in *Sat.* 1.24.18, along with a treatment of Vergil's astronomy, but lost.

<sup>186</sup> Flamant (1977) 69.

the doctor Disarius on five occasions: three times on his own initiative – countering the theories of Aristotle (*Sat.* 7.13.21-27), Epicurus and the Skeptics (*Sat.* 7.14.5-23), and Erasistratus (*Sat.* 7.15.14-24) respectively – and twice at the request of the disagreeable Evangelus and on doctrines to which he is indifferent (*Sat.* 7.5; *Sat.* 7.16.19-34). He is the last to ask a scheduled question, on the refraction of light in water (*Sat.* 7.14.1); his rebuttal (*Sat.* 7.14.5-23) of Disarius’ response includes his much-praised exposition of the ray theory of vision and the primacy of reason in sensation.<sup>187</sup> The relation of the character to his historical model is unclear, but Eustathius in the *Saturnalia* is the veritable embodiment of Neoplatonist philosophy, and in 7.1-3 he delivers the lines of Plutarch himself.

### **Eusebius**

Eusebius<sup>188</sup> is a Greek orator, a professional with his own school (*Sat.* 1.2.7) and sixty years old<sup>189</sup> but impossible to identify with any known historical figure.<sup>190</sup> He is invited late, in place of Postumianus (*Sat.* 1.6.2), and is the latter’s source for the banquet proceedings (*Sat.* 1.2.9-13). His expertise as an orator overlaps with that of Symmachus, but rhetoric is sufficiently important to the *Saturnalia* to permit two orators: Symmachus discusses Vergil’s *inventio et sensus rhetoricae*, while Eusebius expounds on his *ars oratoria* (*Sat.* 1.24.14). It is difficult to compare the two orators, however, since most of Eusebius’ and all of Symmachus’ speech is lost. As an elderly Greek, it is appropriate that he ask a question about Homer’s use of *πολιοκρόταφος* to describe old age in Book

<sup>187</sup> This treatment of epistemology, in decidedly solar terms, complements the solar henotheism of Praetextatus in *Sat.* 1.17-23, and, along with Disarius’ exposition of the soul (*Sat.* 7.9.10-25) is the only truly philosophical development in the *Saturnalia*.

<sup>188</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 304, Eusebius 20.

<sup>189</sup> So Flamant (1977) 70-71, Guittard (1997) XVIII, since Eusebius says that Disarius and he are both on the threshold of old age (*Sat.* 7.10.1).

<sup>190</sup> Flamant (1977) 71; Guittard (1997) XVIII.

7 (7.10.1). The ensuing questions of Eusebius address the various effects of aging on the humidity of the body (7.10.2, 7.10.4, 7.10.7, 7.10.12).

### **Disarius**

The doctor is a required character of a *symposium*, and Macrobius casts the Greek Disarius<sup>191</sup> into this role. A friend of Symmachus (*Sat.* 7.7.13) and of the same age as Eusebius (*Sat.* 7.10.1), Disarius is probably the Disarius mentioned in Symmachus' *epistulae*.<sup>192</sup> There is no particular reason to believe that Macrobius was directly acquainted with him,<sup>193</sup> and (with the exception of a lost joke in *Sat.* 2.2.14), he speaks only in Book 7 of the *Saturnalia*, after the preliminary discussion of Eustathius in 7.1-3. This Book, however, which deals almost entirely with scientific and medical *quaestiones convivales*, provides him with ample opportunity to demonstrate his expertise and he answers at least one question from each of the guests in turn. His cited authorities are Aristotle (*Sat.* 7.13.19), Epicurus (*Sat.* 7.14.4) and Erasistratus (*Sat.* 7.15.3, 8), precisely the authorities demolished by Eustathius,<sup>194</sup> for whom he serves as a foil. Eustathius demonstrates his esteem for Disarius, however, on the two occasions in which he rebuts him at the request of Evangelus (*Sat.* 7.5.5 and 7.16.20). Disarius, then, plays a crucial though subordinate role in Book 7.

### **Evangelus**

Uninvited like Horus, Evangelus<sup>195</sup> is the disagreeable guest of the *Saturnalia*, and presumably to be identified with the disagreeable Evangelus in one of the letters of

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<sup>191</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 275, Dysarius.

<sup>192</sup> Symm. *Ep.* 3.37, to Ambrose, 389: *Disarius clarissimus vir qui inter professores medendi summam iure obtinet locum*. The character in the *Saturnalia* is not a senator, but as Flamant (1977) 72, n. 295 notes, *clarissimus* might not be used in its technical sense here. *Ep.* 9.44, undated, follows the death of Disarius.

<sup>193</sup> Flamant (1977) 71.

<sup>194</sup> See above, p. 25.

<sup>195</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 286, Evangelus I.

Symmachus (*Ep.* 6.7, c. 397).<sup>196</sup> He indicates that he has a villa near Tibur (*Sat.* 7.16.15). The name Evangelus could suggest that he was a Christian,<sup>197</sup> but it is more likely that he was simply a skeptic.<sup>198</sup> His role in the *Saturnalia* is to create controversy and redirect discussion, and he is hostile to slaves (*Sat.* 1.11.1), and to Vergil himself (*Sat.* 1.24.2-4 and 6-7.).

In Book 7, the hostility of Evangelus is directed against Greek learning (*Sat.* 7.5.1-2; 7.9.26), and he relishes the possibility of Eustathius refuting Disarius.<sup>199</sup> Evangelus takes the opportunity of his scheduled question to ask why spinning in circles causes dizziness (7.9.2), and how the brain can be the seat of sensations when it has no sensation itself (7.9.8-9). He later asks about the chicken and the egg (7.16.1), and about bronze in preserving boar meat (7.16.15) – in the context of his estate near Tibur. Having suggested indulging in wine on the evening of the first day (*Sat.* 2.8.4), however, Evangelus leaves the question of wine to others in Book 7. The initial questions of Evangelus bear an uncanny resemblance to those of Eustathius, to whom he disingenuously defers throughout Book 7, and who is scheduled to speak after him (*Sat.* 7.9.26).<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> *PLRE* vol.1, 286 suggests that he may also be the *comes operum publicum* of 357 (*CIL* VI 45 = D. 3222.), but Flamant (1977) 75 argues that the character of the *Saturnalia* was probably a generation younger.

<sup>197</sup> Courcelle (1948) 7-8.

<sup>198</sup> Boissier (1891) vol. 2, 207, n. 2; Flamant (1977) 74-75.

<sup>199</sup> In this Eustathius is naturally disappointed: he had envisaged *Graecus Graeco eripi[ens] hunc plausum, tamquam cornix cornice oculos effodiat* (a Greek taking the applause from this Greek, just as crows gouge each other's eyes, *Sat.* 7.5. 2). Even Eustathius' spontaneous and successful refutations of Disarius are described in terms of the *gloria Graecorum* (*Sat.* 7.9.26) in the plural.

<sup>200</sup> Eustathius, however, yields his place to Eusebius instead (*Sat.* 7.9.27).

## Horus

Horus,<sup>201</sup> the Egyptian boxer turned Cynic philosopher in later life (*Sat.* 1.7.3) should probably be identified<sup>202</sup> with Horus, the rhetorician and boxer mentioned by Libanius as a victor of the Olympic Games of Antioch in 364 (*Ep.* 1278; 1279), and with the philosopher Horus mentioned in the *Epistulae* of Symmachus (*Ep.* 2.39). Characteristically brutal, Cynics are typical of sympotic literature,<sup>203</sup> but Horus, although he arrives uninvited, always respects the decorum of the *Saturnalia* and intervenes most often as an Egyptian, notably in the discussion of the Roman calendar in Book 1. He is the friend of Avienus (*Sat.* 1.7.14).

Remarkably, Macrobius manages to include every aspect of his character in Book 7, beginning with his former rhetorical career to which Symmachus alludes (7.7.8) when Horus argues that women are warm by nature (7.7.2-7). Speaking immediately after Avienus, Horus completes the question of his friend, about thirst and hunger (7.13.1), then takes inspiration from the swollen ring finger of Avienus (7.13.6), comments on the wearing of rings among Egyptian priests (7.13.8), and finally asks about the effect of salt water that he has observed on his single piece of clothing while at Ostia (7.13.17-18). This personal anecdote establishes his poverty in the same way that the stories of the grape juice (*Sat.* 7.7.14) and of the boar meat (*Sat.* 7.16.15) establish the wealth of Symmachus and Evangelus.

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<sup>201</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 445, Horus.

<sup>202</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 445, Cameron (1967) 395 n. 4, Flamant (1977) 73.

<sup>203</sup> Martin (1931) 71-76.

## Servius

The Servius<sup>204</sup> of the *Saturnalia* is universally recognized as the author of the famous commentary on Vergil, who, from the vivid portrait of his timidity, there is every reason to believe that Macrobius knew personally.<sup>205</sup> In the *Saturnalia* he is presented as a newly established grammarian (*Sat.* 1.2.15), roughly 25-28 years old<sup>206</sup> in 383-4, but this is an anachronism as Macrobius himself indicates in the preface (*Sat.* 1.1.5); the historical Servius, born probably c. 372, would be roughly 12 years old at the time.<sup>207</sup> Despite these chronological difficulties and Servius' modesty which prevents him from venturing information unasked,<sup>208</sup> the educational aims of the *Saturnalia* require a *grammaticus*. His primary role, naturally, is to discuss the expressions used in Vergil (*Sat.* 6.6-9). Servius can also discuss the forms *Saturnaliorum*, *noctu futura*, and *die crastini* on the eve of the Saturnalia (*Sat.* 1.4.4-25), however, and the names of various fruits and nuts after the arrival of the dessert course on the evening of the second day (*Sat.* 3.18-20). Servius is painfully shy, and uncomfortable with medical questions – particularly with question of Eusebius on eunuchs (*Sat.* 7.10.12)<sup>209</sup> – so his questions to Disarius in Book 7 concern blushing and paleness (7.11.3, 7.11.6, 7.11.7).

## Avienus

In keeping with the principle of variety of generations in sympotic literature, the *Saturnalia* includes Avienus,<sup>210</sup> a youth roughly 15-17 years old.<sup>211</sup> The same

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<sup>204</sup> *PLRE* vol. 1, 827, Servius.

<sup>205</sup> Flamant (1977) 79.

<sup>206</sup> Flamant (1977) 82.

<sup>207</sup> Flamant (1977) 82.

<sup>208</sup> Flamant (1977) 79.

<sup>209</sup> Servius, evidently, is uncomfortable with jokes as well, and Macrobius had used the same device in Book 2, where Servius nearly refuses to speak after Eusebius recounts the joke of Demosthenes about the courtesan Lais (*Sat.* 2.2.11).

<sup>210</sup> *PLRE* vol. 2, 191-192, Avienus I.

anachronism that allows Servius to participate in the *Saturnalia* allows Avienus to take part:<sup>212</sup> Flamant estimates that Servius is between 7 and 10 years his elder,<sup>213</sup> and that Avienus was therefore born c. 380. He is probably the author, Avianus in the manuscripts, but probably originally Avienus,<sup>214</sup> of the *Fables* addressed to Theodosius, who is generally accepted as Macrobius himself;<sup>215</sup> it follows that Macrobius knew him personally. Avianus is a friend of Horus (*Sat.* 1.7.13), and Postumianus names Avienus as his ultimate source for the gathering on the eve of the *Saturnalia* (*Sat.* 1.2.13), and Avienus supplies the *Dicta Augusti* of Book 2 (*Sat.* 2.4-7). Otherwise his role is mainly to ask questions,<sup>216</sup> so it is not surprising that he asks for clarification regarding the *disciplinae reprehendi et interrogandi* themselves (7.2.1, 7.3.1). He asks no less than fourteen questions in chapter 7.12, on the preservation of meat, on wine, on thirst and hunger.

## 7. Use of sources

The *Saturnalia* is a unified and original work; like the *Aeneid*, however – and particularly like the *Aeneid* as described in Books 5 and 6 of the *Saturnalia* – it adapts older sources. Although Macrobius augments,<sup>217</sup> edits,<sup>218</sup> harmonizes,<sup>219</sup> engages in dialogue with,<sup>220</sup> and systematically reorganizes his ancient sources,<sup>221</sup> he is heavily

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<sup>211</sup> Flamant (1977) 82.

<sup>212</sup> Flamant (1977) 82 notes, however, that Avienus cannot have been born after 382-4.

<sup>213</sup> Flamant (1977) 82.

<sup>214</sup> Cameron (1967) 390-392. But Gaide (1980) 25 is not entirely convinced, although in 27 she speculates that the *Saturnalia* was probably published before the *Fables*.

<sup>215</sup> First proposed by Schanz-Hosius (1920) 32-33. Gaide (1980) 25 proposes a similarity between the portrayal of Avienus in the *Saturnalia* and Aesop in Plutarch's *Banquet of the Seven Sages*.

<sup>216</sup> Flamant (1977) 77.

<sup>217</sup> Hubert (1938) 308-317.

<sup>218</sup> Both for clarity (Bernabei [1970] 4) and for appropriateness to the speakers (Bernabei [1970] 9).

<sup>219</sup> Bernabei (1970) 6, 8-9, 11.

<sup>220</sup> Türk (1962) 108 ff. argues that Macrobius enters into dialogue with Aulus Gellius; for his dialogue between the *Saturnalia* and Plutarch, see below, pp. 33-34.

dependent on them and often copies them *verbatim*. In fact, he admits as much in his preface (*Sat. praef.* 2-4), something that Linke and Wissowa, who accuse Macrobius of dishonesty, seem to have forgotten.<sup>222</sup> And if *verbatim* transcription seems to have been the normal practice of Macrobius with his Latin sources,<sup>223</sup> Greek sources are also an integral part of the project of the *Saturnalia* (*Sat. praef.* 2), and with these Macrobius evidently allows himself more liberties. Much of Book 7 is adapted from Plutarch, but the discrepancies between the two texts are important and cannot stem from a more complete manuscript of Plutarch.<sup>224</sup>

Chapters 7.1-3 draw on many minor sources that it would be cumbersome to cite consistently;<sup>225</sup> but then again, having acknowledged the borrowed material in his preface, Macrobius does not even cite his major sources. This is hardly a fault from an artistic perspective, and perhaps not even from a scholarly perspective. If he provides a veritable index of the sources of Vergil in *Sat.* 5.3-6 and 6.1-5, Macrobius conceives of Book 7 as an introduction: he cites key authorities, not simple intermediaries.<sup>226</sup> Aristotle, Epicurus and Erasistratus are thus important names to retain as the authors of scientific arguments incompatible with Neoplatonist philosophy; pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias and Aulus Gellius are only the incidental sources for certain questions. Plutarch is a

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<sup>221</sup> Mras (1933) 276 has noted this arrangement as concerns *In Somn.* 2.13-17, and we will call attention to them in our commentary of 7.1-3. The chiasms can be very elaborate and are undoubtedly related to Macrobius' interest in numerology evidenced in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (5.2-18, 6.1-82). His inclusion of seven citations in each Book of the *Commentary* is another reflection of this interest in numerology, as Marinone (1990) 373-375 has remarked.

<sup>222</sup> Linke (1880) 14-15, Wissowa (1880) 1-15. At the other end of the spectrum, Türk (1963) 339-349 and Syska (1993) 214-218 seem to ignore the stated purpose of the work in their emphasis on the originality of Macrobius in Vergilian criticism and in his treatment of solar henotheism.

<sup>223</sup> Bernabei (1970) 2.

<sup>224</sup> Hubert (1938) 308-317, against Linke (1880) 46ff. See also Bernabei (1970) 94-98.

<sup>225</sup> Bernabei (1970) 10-11 speculates that this may be the real reason for not citing: "we cannot rule out the possibility that Macrobius' deliberate deceit was self-aggrandizing, but if we choose to relieve him of that rebuke, we can only suppose that he offered himself a choice between always naming his sources and never naming them. He chose the latter course."

<sup>226</sup> Flamant (1977) 2-3, 647, 666.

special case, because he is also a direct source, but it is as an authority for the *quaestiones convivales* genre that Macrobius cites him in *Sat.* 7.3.24.<sup>227</sup> For a more advanced reader, however, the text offers many clear reminders of its original sources: the contents of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales* and of pseudo-Alexander of Aphrodisias's *Physical Problems* in Book 7 are placed in the mouths of the Greek philosopher Eustathius and the Greek doctor Disarius.

The list of parallel passages has been studied by Jan<sup>228</sup> and Hubert,<sup>229</sup> and noted by Flamant;<sup>230</sup> the passages are taken from every section of the *Quaestiones Convivales*, but there is a marked preference for the beginnings of Books. The table of borrowings from Plutarch in Book 7 is slightly altered from Flamant.

<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.2-25	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1 (612f-614d)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.1-15	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1 (629f-631c)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.2-7 and 11-23	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1 (631c-634f)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.4.4-12 and 32	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 4.1 (661a-662a)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.5.7-32	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 4.1 (662d-663f)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.6.2-13	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 3.5 (652a-653b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.7.1-12	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 3.4 (650f-651f)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.7.14-20	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 3.7 (655f-656b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.6-7	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 4.7 (692b-693e)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.11-12	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 7.3 (702b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.13-16	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 7.3 (701d-702c)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.18-19	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 6.3 (689a-690b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.13.1-5	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 6.1 (686e-687b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.13.18-27	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.9 (626f-627f)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.15.2-13 and 16-24	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 7.1 (697f-700b)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.16.2-14	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.3 (635e-638a)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.16.17-34	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 3.10 (658a-659e)

<sup>227</sup> See above, pp. 12-13. Praetextatus cites Porphyry (*Sat.* 1.17.70) directly in his speech on solar henotheism, although it is for a minor detail.

<sup>228</sup> Jan (1848-1852) vol. 2, 662; see also Linke (1880) 50 and Wissowa (1880) 5 n. 2.

<sup>229</sup> Hubert (1938) 308-317.

<sup>230</sup> Flamant (1977) 180-181.

From Alexander of Aphrodisias:

<i>Sat.</i> 7.4.13-33	<i>Probl.</i> 2.60
<i>Sat.</i> 7.7.8-12	<i>Probl.</i> 1.6
<i>Sat.</i> 7.8.1-3	<i>Probl.</i> 1.22
<i>Sat.</i> 7.8.4-6	<i>Probl.</i> 1.52 and 2.17
<i>Sat.</i> 7.8.7-8	<i>Probl.</i> 1.30
<i>Sat.</i> 7.8.9-11	<i>Probl.</i> 1.56
<i>Sat.</i> 7.8.12-15	<i>Probl.</i> 1.112-113
<i>Sat.</i> 7.9.1-25	<i>Probl.</i> 1.131
<i>Sat.</i> 7.10.1-10	<i>Probl.</i> 1.1-4
<i>Sat.</i> 7.10.11-13	<i>Probl.</i> 1.7-8
<i>Sat.</i> 7.11.3-6	<i>Probl.</i> 1.14-15
<i>Sat.</i> 7.11.7-9	<i>Probl.</i> 1.12
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.9-11	<i>Probl.</i> 2.70
<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.28-37	<i>Probl.</i> 1.128
<i>Sat.</i> 7.14.1-20	<i>Probl.</i> 1.36-37
<i>Sat.</i> 7.16.16-18	<i>Probl.</i> 1.66
<i>Sat.</i> 7.16.34	<i>Probl.</i> 1.35

And from Aulus Gellius:

<i>Sat.</i> 7.12.25-27	<i>NA</i> 19.5
<i>Sat.</i> 7.13.8	<i>NA</i> 10.10
<i>Sat.</i> 7.15.2-13	<i>NA</i> 17.11

For the minor sources of 7.1-3, see my commentary.

## 8. Conclusion

Recent scholarship has concentrated mostly on the earlier books of the *Saturnalia*,<sup>231</sup> and there is still no adequate modern commentary of Book 7,<sup>232</sup> this book,

<sup>231</sup> See Syska (1993), Benjamin (1955), and Guittard (1997).

<sup>232</sup> Marinone's commented Italian edition (1967) and Davies' English edition (1969) both cover the entire work but include only the briefest commentaries. Bernabei (1970) is also quite summary in his treatment of Macrobius' use of Plutarch. Fuhrmann's *Belles Lettres* commentary of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales* (1972) is perhaps the most detailed modern source for this part of the *Saturnalia*, particularly since the projected second volume of Charles Guittard's (1997) commentary of the *Saturnalia* has been abandoned.

furthermore, has particular interest as an adaptation<sup>233</sup> of a Greek text which is still extant, allowing for an analysis of the method of Macrobius.<sup>234</sup> Chapters 7.1-3 are doubly important as a treatment of the sensitive topic of what may be said in private conversation, with a point of comparison three centuries earlier, and as the standard for polite conversation which must be used to judge the work as a whole. This standard allows us to test, and, I think, to confirm, the fundamental coherence of the work of Macrobius.

I have written a “historical” commentary of chapters 7.1-3, treating Macrobius as a source for the intellectual history of his period. The commentary seeks to highlight how Macrobius explains the elements that he considers potentially unclear in Plutarch’s original, as well as how he disguises those elements that he considers overly explicit. The literary structure and references are essential for understanding chapters 7.1-3, and my commentary therefore necessarily treats these elements. For philological details, however, I refer the reader to Marinone.

I summarize here the conclusions of this research. First, it is clear that Macrobius is highly familiar with his model, since he is able to effortlessly reorganize him. He also understands and is able to explain the material that he selects from Plutarch, with very few exceptions, almost always correctly placing the characters of his anecdotes. Next, Macrobius often draws on outside material, not so much to explain Plutarch as to support his own Neoplatonic arguments and to develop pedagogical themes. Certain of the additions are educational *topoi*; the rest of the material is drawn from manuscript

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<sup>233</sup> Macrobius departs from Plutarch more than from any other of his sources now extant (Bernabei [1970] 95).

<sup>234</sup> As a study of the use which Macrobius makes of Greek sources, my thesis follows on the work of Courcelle (1948).

glosses, and from Greek or Latin literary sources, and where this material is repeated from earlier in the *Saturnalia*, the discrepancies may not be as careless as Benjamin<sup>235</sup> would suggest. Finally, then, the Greek text of Plutarch offered Macrobius both a challenge, in that it required explanation, and an opportunity, in that it offered greater freedom to adapt. The library of Macrobius has been unfairly maligned, and it is clear that he had the resources to meet this challenge.

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<sup>235</sup> Benjamin (1955) 44. See note 7.3.10, below.

## **B. Text and Translation**

The text of the *Saturnalia* is well established, and my translation follows the text of Willis (1970), with the exception of *Furius* at *Sat.* 7.1.8, where I read *Rufius*. I have taken the liberty of capitalizing *philosophy*, which consistently refers to the personification of the discipline, throughout. This translation does not aspire to literary merit, for which the reader is advised to consult the translation of Davies (1969), but simply to provide the first level of interpretation for my commentary.

<p><b>7.1.1.</b> <i>Primis mensis post epulas iam remotis et discursum variantibus poculis minutioribus Praetextatus, ‘solet cibus,’ inquit, ‘cum sumitur, tacitos efficere, potus loquaces. at nos et inter pocula silemus tamquam debeat seriis vel etiam philosophicis carere tractatibus tale convivium.’</i>  [2] Et Symmachus: ‘verumne ita sentis, Vetti, ut philosophia conviviis intersit, et non tamquam censoria quaedam et plus nimio reverenda materfamilias penetralibus suis contineatur,</p>	<p><b>7.1.1.</b> After the meal, now that the first courses had been cleared and the setting of smaller glasses had interrupted the conversation, Praetextatus said “Food, when it is eaten, usually makes men quiet, and drink, talkative. But we are silent between drinks, as if such a banquet as ours ought to forego even grave or philosophical discussions.”  [2] But Symmachus said “Do you really feel, Vettius, that Philosophy should take part in banquets, and not be confined, like some austere woman, and more especially the venerable matron that she is, to her inner rooms?”</p>
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<p>nec misceat se Libero, cui etiam tumultus familiares sunt, cum ipsa huius sit verecundiae ut strepitum non modo verborum sed ne cogitationum quidem in sacrarium suae quietis admittat?</p> <p>[3] doceat nos vel peregrina institutio et disciplina a Parthis petita, qui solent cum concubinis, non cum coniugibus, inire convivia, tamquam has et in vulgus produci et lascivire quoque, illas non nisi domi abditas tueri deceat tectum pudorem. [4] an ego censeam producendam philosophiam quo rhetorica venire ars et professio popularis erubuit? Isocrates enim Graecus orator qui verba prius libera sub numeros ire primus coegit, cum in convivio a sodalibus oraretur ut aliquid in medium de eloquentiae suae fonte proferret, hanc veniam deprecatus est. <i>quae praesens, inquit, locus et tempus exigit ego non calleo, quae ego calleo nec loco praesenti sunt apta nec tempori.</i></p>	<p>Do you feel that she should not mingle with Bacchus, from whom uproars are inseparable, when such is her modesty that she excludes the clamour not only of words but even of thoughts from the shrine of her repose?</p> <p>[3] Even a foreign custom and exercise imported from the Parthians may instruct us: they are used to entering banquets with their mistresses, not with their wives, since it is permissible for the former to be brought out in public and even to act wantonly, but it is not proper for the latter to guard their veiled modesty except hidden at home.</p> <p>[4] Should I suppose instead that Philosophy must be brought out where the art of oratory and its popular profession have blushed to come? For the Greek rhetorician Isocrates, who first compelled words, formerly free, to fall into measured portions, when he was asked by friends at a banquet to bring forward something from his store of eloquence, begged their indulgence, saying ‘I am not versed in that which the current time and place demand, and those things in which I am versed fit neither the present time nor the place.’”</p>
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<p>[5] Ad haec Eustathius: probo, Symmache, propositum tuum quo philosophiam ea quam maximam putas observatione veneraris, ut tantum intra suum penetral aestimes adorandam; sed si propter hoc a conviviis exulabit, procul hinc facessant et alumnae eius, honestatem dico et modestiam, nec minus cum sobrietate pietatem. quam enim harum dixerim minus esse venerabilem? ita fit ut ab huius modi coetibus relegatus, matronarum talium chorus libertatem convivorum solis concubinis, id est vitiis et criminibus, addicat.</p> <p>[6] sed absit ut philosophia, quae in scholis suis sollicitè tractat de officiis convivalibus, ipsa convivia reformidet, tamquam non possit rebus adserere quae solet verbis docere, aut nesciat servare modum cuius in omnibus humanae vitae actibus terminos ipsa constituit. neque enim ita ad mensas invito philosophiam ut non se ipsa moderetur, cuius disciplina est rerum omnium moderationem docere.</p>	<p>[5] To this Eustathius responded “I approve of your point, Symmachus, insofar as you honour Philosophy with the mark of esteem that you hold greatest, since you reckon that she must be worshiped only within her own sanctuary. But if she exiles herself from banquets on account of this, her nurselings might likewise go - I mean honesty and modesty, and not least, devotion and temperance. Which of these should I have called less worthy of honour? Thus it would be that, kept away from gatherings of this sort, the choir of such respectable women would surrender the floor at banquets to courtesans only, that is, to vices and crimes.</p> <p>[6] Perish the thought, then, that Philosophy, who deals with banquet duties in her own schools, should shrink from the banquets themselves, as if she were unable to confirm with deeds those things which she is used to teaching with words, or did not know to observe the measure by which she herself sets the boundaries in all the pursuits of human life. I do not invite Philosophy to my table expecting that she, whose particular discipline is to teach the measure of all things, will not herself be measured in her actions.</p>
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<p>[7] ut ergo inter te et Vettium velut arbitrari iudicatione conponam, aperio quidem philosophiae tricliniorum fores, sed spondeo sic interfuturam, ne mensuram notae sibi ac sectatoribus suis dispensationis excedat.</p>	<p>[7] If I may settle between you and Vettius as at a trial hearing, then, I certainly open the doors of the dining hall to Philosophy, but I guarantee that she will take part in such a way that she will not exceed the bounds of the circumspection for which she and her disciples are known.</p>
<p>[8] Tunc Rufius: ‘quia te unicum, Eustathi,’ inquit, ‘sectatorem philosophiae nostra aetas tulit, oratus sis ut modum dispensationis quam das ei convivanti nobis ipse patefacias.’</p>	<p>[8] Then Rufius said “Since our age bore no equal to you as a disciple of Philosophy, Eustathius, please disclose yourself, I beg you, the measure of circumspection that you require of her as she dines with us.”</p>
<p>[9] Et Eustathius: ‘primum hoc eam scio servaturam, ut secum aestimet praesentium ingenia convivarum, et si plures peritos vel saltem amatores sui in convivii societate reppererit, sermonem de se patietur agitari, quia velut paucae litterae mutae dispersae inter multas vocales in societatem vocis facile mansuescunt, ita rariores imperiti gaudentes consortio peritorum aut consonant siqua possunt, aut rerum talium capiuntur auditu.</p>	<p>[9] And Eustathius said “First, I know that she will ensure this – that she appraise the various dispositions of the guests in attendance with her, and if she finds more of her initiates, or at least amateurs, in the company of the banquet than not, she will allow conversation about herself to be kept up, because, just as a few consonants, scattered among many vowels, are easily mastered in the company of the other sounds, so also when the uninitiated are few and far between, they delight in the companionship of initiates, either chiming in with it if they are able, or listening in awe to the august subjects of conversation.</p>

<p>[10] si vero plures ab institutione disciplinae huius alieni sint, prudentibus, qui pauciores intererunt, sanciet dissimulationem sui, et patietur loquacitatem maiori parti amiciorem sonare, ne rara nobilitas a plebe tumultuosiore turbetur.</p> <p>[11] et haec una est de philosophiae virtutibus, quia cum orator non aliter nisi orando probetur, philosophus non minus tacendo pro tempore quam loquendo philosophatur. sic ergo pauci qui aderunt doctiores in consensum rudis consortii salva et intra se quiescente veri notione migrabunt, ut omnis discordiae suspicio facessat.</p>	<p>[10] If, on the other hand, most of the guests are strangers unaccustomed to her study, she forbids the few learned men who are present to unveil her nature and allows more congenial banter to echo among the larger part of the attendance, lest a small nobility be disturbed by too uproarious a mob.</p> <p>[11] And this is one of the virtues of philosophy, that, although an orator cannot prove himself except by speaking, a philosopher applies himself to his discipline no less by remaining silent at the right time than by speaking. In this way, therefore, the few learned men on hand will accede to the general opinion of an uneducated gathering, while the apprehension of truth remains safe and reposes within itself, in such a way that all suspicion of disharmony is banished.</p>
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[12] nec mirum si doctus faciet quod fecit quondam Pisistratus Athenarum tyrannus. qui cum filiis suis rectum dando consilium non obtinisset adsensum, atque ideo esset in simultate cum liberis, ubi hoc aemulis causam fuisse gaudii comperit ex illa discordia sperantibus in domo regnantis nasci posse novitatem, universitate civium convocata ait succensuisse quidem se filiis non adquiescentibus patriae voluntati, sed hoc sibi postea visum paternae aptius esse pietati, ut in sententiam liberorum ipse concederet. sciret igitur civitas subolem regis cum patre concordem. hoc commento spem detraxit insidiantibus regnantis quieti.

[12] And it is not surprising if a learned man should do what Pisistratus the tyrant of Athens once did. When the good advice that he had given failed to meet the approval of his sons, leaving him in conflict with his children for this reason, and when he learned that this was delighting his rivals, who were hoping that a revolution might come out of this conflict in the ruling house, he called an assembly of the whole citizen body. He said that he had indeed borne a grudge against his sons, who had not been amenable to the will of their father, but that afterwards it seemed to him more fitting to fatherly duty that he himself yield to the opinion of his children. In this way, the state would know that the progeny of the king agreed with their father; by this device, he undercut the hope of those who were plotting against the peace of their ruler.

<p>[13] ita in omni vitae genere praecipueque in laetitia convivali omne quod videtur absonum in unam concordiam soni salva innocentia redigendum est. sic Agathonis convivium, quia Socratas Phaedros Pausanias et Erysimachos habuit, sic ea cena quam Callias doctissimis dedit, Charmadam dico, Antisthenen et Hermogenen ceterosque his similes, verbum nullum nisi philosophum sensit.</p> <p>[14] at vero Alcinoi vel Didonis mensa quasi solis apta deliciis habuit haec Iopam illa Phemium cithara canentes, nec deerant apud Alcinoium saltatores viri, et apud Didonem Bitias sic hauriens merum ut se totum superflua eius effusione prolueret. nonne siquis aut inter Phaeacas aut apud Poenos sermones de sapientia erutos convivalibus fabulis miscuisset, et gratiam illis coetibus aptam perderet et in se risum plane iustum moveret? ergo prima eius observatio erit aestimare convivas.</p>	<p>[13] Therefore in every aspect of our life, and especially in the merriment of a banquet, all that seems discordant must, within the bounds of decency, be incorporated into a single harmonious sound.</p> <p>Thus the banquet of Agathon, because he entertained the likes of Socrates, Phaedrus, Pausanias and Erysimachus, thus also the meal which Callias gave for the most learned men, I mean Charmadas, Antisthenes, Hermogenes, and the others like them, knew no speech except that which was philosophical. [14] But on the other hand, the table of Alcinous or of Dido, as if it were fitted for delights only, had Phemius and Iopas, respectively, singing to the lyre. Indeed, dancing men were not absent from Alcinous', and at Dido's, Bitias drank so much undiluted wine that he all but bathed in its abundant overflow. If anyone either among the Phaeacians or the Phoenicians had mixed orphaned words of wisdom with the banquet stories wouldn't he have lost the indulgence that befits those gatherings and provoked clearly justified mockery against himself? For these reasons, the first concern of Philosophy will be to appraise the guests.</p>
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<p>[15] deinde ubi sibi locum patere viderit, non de ipsis profunditatis suae inter pocula secretis loquetur, nec nodosas et anxias, sed utiles quidem, faciles tamen, quaestiones movebit.</p> <p>[16] nam sicut inter illos qui exercitii genus habent in mediis saltare conviviis, siquis, ut se amplius exerceat, vel ad cursum vel ad pugilatum sodales laccessiverit, quasi ineptus relegabitur ab alacritate consortii, sic apud mensam, quando licet aptis philosophandum est, ut crateri liquoris ad laetitiam nati adhibeatur non modo Nympharum sed Musarum quoque admixtione temperies.</p>	<p>[15] Then, when she sees that an opportunity lies open for her, she will speak not about the very mysteries of her profundity between drinks, nor about knotty questions and troubles, but instead will pose useful and simple questions. [16] For if, among those who make it their exercise to dance in the middle of banquets, anyone who challenges his comrades to a race or a boxing match in order to more fully demonstrate his skill will be retired from the merriment of the party as if unsuited to it. It is in this way that those who are versed in philosophy should discuss it at table, so that a blend with an infusion of both Nymphs and Muses might be added to the mixing bowl of wine produced for enjoyment.</p>
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<p>[17] nam si, ut fateri necesse est, in omni conventu aut tacendum est aut loquendum, quaeramus silentiumne conviviis an et oportunus sermo conveniat. nam si, ut apud Athenas Atticas Areopagitae tacentes iudicant, ita inter epulas oportet semper sileri, non est ultra quaerendum inter mensas philosophandum necne sit. Si vero non erunt muta convivia, cur ubi sermo permittitur, honestus sermo prohibetur, maxime cum non minus quam dulcedo vini hilarent verba convivium?</p>	<p>[17] For if, as must be confessed, we are required in every gathering either to be silent or to speak, we must consider whether silence or timely conversation suits banquets. For if it is fitting for us, as for the Areopagites at Athens in Attica, who dispense justice in silence, to always be silent during the banquet, there must be no further inquiry as to whether there should be philosophical conversation at meals or not. But if instead there will be no silent banquets, why, then, where conversation is allowed should respectable conversation be outlawed, especially when words bring a banquet no less joy than the sweetness of wine?</p>
<p>[18] nam si Homeri latentem prudentiam scruteris altius, delinimentum illud quod Helena vino miscuit,  νηπενθές τ' ἄχολόν τε  κακῶν ἐπίληθον  ἀπάντων (<i>Od.</i> 4.221)  non herba fuit, non ex India sucus, sed narrandi oportunitas quae hospitem maeroris oblitum flexit ad gaudium.</p>	<p>[18] For if you examine in more depth the hidden wisdom of Homer, you will see that the soothing drug that Helen mixed with the wine, 'sorrow-soothing and anger-assuaging and bringing forgetfulness of all evils,' was not an herb, nor an extract from India, but the chance to tell stories which turned the guest, forgetting grief, to joy.</p>

[19] Ulixis enim praeclara facinora filio praesente narrabat:  
 οἶον καὶ τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερός ἀνὴρ  
 (*Od.* 4. 271).  
 ergo paternam gloriam et singula eius facta fortia digerendo animum filii fecit alacriorem, et ita credita est contra maerorem vino remedium miscuisse.  
 [20] quid hoc, inquis, ad philosophiam? immo nihil tam cognatum sapientiae quam locis et temporibus aptare sermones, personarum quae aderunt aestimatione in medium vocata. [21] alios enim relata incitabunt exempla virtutum, alios beneficiorum, non nullos modestiae, ut et qui aliter agebant saepe auditis talibus ad emendationem venirent. [22] sic autem vitiis inretitos, si et hoc in conviviis exegerit loquendi ordo, feriet philosophia non sentientes, ut Liber pater thyrsus ferit per obliquationem circumfusae hederæ latente mucrone, quia non ita profitebitur in convivio censorem ut palam vitia castiget.

[19] For she was telling the famous deeds of Ulysses in his son's hearing: 'this and the like the brave man accomplished and endured.' In this way, by spreading the fame of the father and each of his mighty deeds, she made his son take heart, and thus she was believed to have mixed a cure against grief with the wine. [20] What does this have to do with philosophy, you ask? Nothing, indeed, is more akin to wisdom than to adapt conversation to the time and place, with the appraisal of the persons who are present which has already been discussed. [21] For some will be stirred by examples of the virtues, others by examples of magnanimity, and some by examples of modesty, so that even those who conduct themselves otherwise, by often hearing these things, may come to an improvement. [22] Thus indeed, Philosophy will strike those ensnared by vices, if in the succession of topics of conversation at the banquet this too comes up, without their perceiving it, just as father Bacchus strikes with a *thyrsus*- a hidden sword- through the tangles of trailing ivy, since she will not declare herself a such a censor at the banquet that she would openly reprove its vices.

<p>[23] ceterum his obnoxii repugnabunt, et talis erit convivii tumultus, ut sub huius modi invitati videantur edicto:  quod superest, laeti bene gestis corpora rebus/  Procurate viri et pugnam sperate parati (<i>Aen.</i> 9.157),  aut, ut Homerus brevius et expressius dixit,  νῦν δ' ἔρχεσθ' ἐπι δειπνον ἵνα ξυνάγωμεν Ἄρηα (<i>Il.</i> 2.38).  [24] ergo si oportunitas necessariae reprehensionis emerserit, sic a philosopho proficiscetur ut et tecta et efficax sit. quid mirum, si feriet sapiens, ut dixi, non sentientes, cum interdum sic reprehendat ut reprehensus hilaretur, nec tantum fabulis suis sed interrogationibus quoque vim philosophiae nihil ineptum loquentis ostendet?  [25] hanc ergo nullus honestus actus locusve, coetus nullus excludat, quae ita se aptat ut ubique sic appareat necessaria tamquam abesse illam nefas fuerit.</p>	<p>[23] Besides, they will resist in opposition to these things, and there will be such a disturbance of the banquet that the guests would seem to be under a command of this kind:  'For the rest, men, joyously devote your bodies to success and await battle in readiness.'  Or, as Homer said more succinctly and more vividly,  'Now come to dinner so that we may join battle'  [24] Therefore, if the occasion and necessity for reprimanding should arise, the remark will issue from the philosopher in such a way that it is both cloaked and effective. And what wonder is it if the wise man strikes, as I said, without them feeling it, since he sometimes reprimands in such a way that the one reprimanded is actually pleased? And not only by his stories, but by questions also he demonstrates the force of Philosophy who says nothing unfitting.  [25] No respectable business or place, therefore, and no gathering should shut her out, since she conforms herself so well to each one that she appears indispensable everywhere, as if it were a sacrilege for her to be missing."</p>
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<p><b>7.2.1.</b> Et Avienus: ‘novas mihi duas disciplinas videris inducer, interrogandi vel etiam reprehendendi ut alacritas utrimque his ad quos sermo est excitetur, cum dolor semper reprehensionem vel iustam sequatur: unde haec quae leviter attigisti fac quaeso enarrando planiora.</p> <p>[2] ‘Primum,’ inquit Eustathius, ‘hoc teneas volo non de ea me reprehensione dixisse quae speciem accusationis habet, sed quae vituperationis instar est. hoc Graeci <math>\sigma\kappa\omega\mu\mu\alpha</math> vocant, non minus quidem amarum quam accusatio, si inportune proferatur, sed a sapiente sic proferetur ut dulcedine quoque non careat. [3] et ut prius tibi de interrogatione respondeam, qui vult amoenus esse consultor ea interrogat quae sunt interrogato facilia responsu, et quae scit illum sedula exercitatione didicisse.</p>	<p><b>7.2.1.</b> And Avienus said: “You seem to me to introduce two new exercises, of questioning, and also of reproving, since you say that on both accounts delight is communicated to the addressee, and yet pain always follows even a fair reproof. Of these things which you touched on briefly, make a clearer exposition, I beg you.”</p> <p>[2] “First,” said Eustathius, “You should understand that I do not wish to speak about the reproof which takes the form of an accusation, but about that which follows the pattern of blame. The Greeks call this <math>\sigma\kappa\omega\mu\mu\alpha</math>, and if used without consideration it is no less harsh than an accusation, but it can also be handled by a wise man in such a way that it is not unpleasant.</p> <p>[3] But in order to answer you first about questions, the questioner who wishes to be pleasant asks those things which are easy to answer for the person asked, and which he knows that his partner has learned through careful study.</p>
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<p>[4] gaudet enim quisquis provocatur ad doctrinam suam in medium proferendam, quia nemo vult latere quod didicit, maxime si scientia quam labore quaesivit cum paucis illi familiaris et plurimis sit incognita, ut de astronomia vel dialectica ceterisque similibus. tunc enim videntur consequi fructum laboris, cum adipiscuntur occasionem publicandi quae didicerant sine ostentationis nota, qua caret qui non ingerit sed invitatur ut proferat.</p>	<p>[4] For anyone is pleased when he is called on to produce his erudition for the gathering, because no one wants what he has learned to remain hidden. This is especially true for knowledge which he sought with an effort, familiar to him along with a few others, and unknown to most people, such as astronomy, or dialectics and other similar things. For then they seem to attain the fruit of their labour, since they find the opportunity for exhibiting what they have learned without the stigma of showing off, avoided by the one who does not thrust himself upon others but who is invited to expound.</p>
<p>[5] contra magnae amaritudinis est si coram multis aliquem interrogas quod non opima scientia quaesivit. cogitur enim aut negare se scire, quod extremum verecundiae damnum putant, aut respondere temere et fortuito se eventui veri falsive committere, unde saepe nascitur inscitiae proditio, et omne hoc infortunium pudoris sui inputat consulenti.</p>	<p>[5] It is, on the other hand, a cause of great resentment if you question someone in front of many others about something that he has not sought out with much expertise. For he is compelled either to deny that he knows, which people suppose to be the final embarrassment, or to answer at random and to entrust himself to blind chance as to whether his answer is true or false, the source of many a betrayal of ignorance, and he credits all the misfortune of this embarrassment on the one who asked him.</p>

<p>[6] nec non et qui obierunt maria et terras gaudent, cum de ignoto multis vel terrarum situ vel sinu maris interrogantur, libenterque respondent et describunt modo verbis, modo radio loca, gloriosum putantes quae ipsi viderant aliorum oculis obicere.</p> <p>[7] quid duces vel milites? quam fortiter a se facta semper dicturiunt, et tamen tacent arrogantiae metu? nonne hi si ut haec referant invitentur, mercedem sibi laboris aestimant persolutam, remunerationem putantes inter volentes narrare quae fecerant?</p> <p>[8] adeo autem id genus narrationum habet quendam gloriae saporem ut, si invidi vel aemuli forte praesentes sint, tales interrogationes obstrependo discutiant et alias inferendo fabulas prohibeant illa narrari quae solent narranti laudem creare.</p>	<p>[6] And those who have traveled through seas and lands also rejoice when they are questioned about either the location of lands or about an inlet of the sea unknown to many, and they answer freely and describe the regions sometimes with words, sometimes with a pointer, considering it glorious to place what they themselves have seen before the eyes of others.</p> <p>[7] What about commanders or soldiers? They are always on the point of mentioning what they accomplished so bravely, and nevertheless are silent for fear of seeming boastful. Don't they, if they are asked to recount these things, reckon it full payment for their pains, considering it a recompense to tell the things they did among willing listeners? [8] Indeed, this kind of storytelling holds such a taste of glory that if, by chance, grudging or jealous men should be present, they would scuttle these interviews by their clamour and would, by bringing in other stories, prevent the telling of those which usually inspire praise for the teller.</p>
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<p>[9] pericula quoque praeterita vel aerumnas penitus absolutas qui evasit ut referat gratissime provocatur: nam qui adhuc in ipsis vel paululum detinetur, horret admonitionem et formidat relatum. id adeo Euripides expressit:  ὡς ἡδύ τοι σωθέντα μεμνήσθαι πόνων  (<i>Andromeda</i> F. 133 <i>TrGF</i>).</p> <p>adiecit enim σωθέντα, ut ostenderet post finem malorum gratiam relationis incipere. et poeta vester adiciendo <i>olim</i> quid aliud nisi post emensa infortunia futuro tempore iuvare dicit memoriam sedati laboris: ...forsan et haec olim meminisse iuvabit?  (<i>Aen.</i> 1.203)</p>	<p>[9] What is more, once dangers are over and hardships entirely completed, the man who has escaped them is happy to be called on to recount them, but the one who is still held back in these things, even for a little while, shudders at the reminder and fears the telling. Therefore, as Euripides therefore puts it,</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘How sweet, indeed, to recall troubles from which we have been delivered!’</p> <p>For he adds ‘from which we have been delivered’ in order to show that it is after the end of evils that love of telling them begins. And when your poet adds ‘one day,’ what else is he saying except that after he has passed through a misfortune, at a future time, the memory of the hardship is pleasing to the man now at peace?</p> <p>‘...perhaps even this will one day be pleasant to remember’</p>
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<p>[10] nec negaverim esse malorum genera quae non vult qui pertulit vel transacta meminisse, nec minus interrogatus offenditur quam cum in ipsis malis fuit, ut qui carnifices expertus est et tormenta membrorum, ut qui infaustas pertulit orbitates vel cui nota quondam adflicta censoria est. cave interrogas, ne videaris obicere.</p>	<p>[10] I would not deny, however, that there are kinds of troubles which the one who endured does not wish to remember even after they are over, and is no less pained when questioned about them than when he was in the midst of them. This holds for the man who has known executioners and bodily torture, and for the man who has suffered disastrous personal losses, or who was once laid low by the mark of the censor. Do not question</p>
<p>[11] illum saepe, si potes, ad narrandum provoca, qui recitando favorabiliter exceptus est, vel qui libere et feliciter legationem peregit, vel qui ab imperatore comiter affabiliterque susceptus est, vel si quis tota paene classe a piratis occupata seu ingenio seu viribus solus evasit, quia vix implet desiderium loquentis rerum talium vel longa narratio.</p>	<p>them, lest you seem to insult them. [11] If you are able, call often on the man whose reading was well received to speak, or on the one who completed a public commission successfully and without obstacle, or who was kindly and jovially received by the emperor, or someone who, when virtually his entire fleet was captured by pirates, escaped alone whether by cunning or strength, since even a lengthy telling scarcely satisfies their desire for talking about such things.</p>
<p>[12] iuvat, si quem dicere iusseris amici sui repentinam felicitatem quam sponte non audebat vel dicere vel tacere, modo iactantiae modo malitiae metu.</p>	<p>[12] In the same way, anyone is pleased after you bid him to tell of the unexpected good fortune of his friend, which he dares neither to tell of his own accord nor to keep quiet, for fear of seeming either boastful or jealous.</p>

<p>[13] qui venatibus gaudet interrogetur de silvae ambitu, de ambage lustrorum, de venationis eventu. religiosus si adest, da illi referendi copiam, quibus observationibus meruerit auxilia deorum, quantus illi caerimoniarum fructus, quia et hoc genus religionis existimant, numinum beneficia non tacere, adde quia volunt et amicos se numinibus aestimari.</p> <p>[14] si vero et senex praesens est, habes occasionem qua plurimum illi contulisse videaris, si eum interroges vel quae ad illum omnino non pertinent. est enim huic aetati loquacitas familiaris.</p>	<p>[13] The one who rejoices in hunts should be asked about the winding paths of the forest, about wending of the woods, about the outcome of the hunt. If there is a religious man present, give him the opportunity to relate the observances by which he earned the help of the gods, how much profit has come to him from ceremonies, since they consider this also a sort of religious observance, to not keep silent the kindnesses of the gods, and since they also wish to be considered friends of the gods.</p> <p>[14] If indeed an old man is also in attendance, you are in luck, for you will seem to have given him the greatest of gifts if you question him even on subjects that are absolutely no concern of his, for talkativeness accompanies this age.</p>
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<p>[15] haec sciens Homerus quandam congeriem simul interrogationum Nestori fecit offerri: ὦ Νέστορ Νηληιάδη, σὺ δ'ἀληθὲς ἔνισπες, πῶς ἔθαν' Ἀτρείδης εὐρυκρείων Ἀγαμέμνων ; ποῦ Μενέλαος ἔην ; ἢ οὐκ Ἄργεος ἦεν Ἀχαιοῦ (<i>Od.</i> 3. 247). tot loquendi semina interrogando congecit ut prurimum senectutis expleret.</p> <p>[16] et Vergilianus Aeneas gratum se ad omnia praebens Euandro varias illi narrandi occasionibus ministrat. neque enim de una re aut altera requirit, sed ...singula laetus exquiritque auditque virum monumenta priorum (<i>Aen.</i> 8.311), et Evander consultationibus captus scitis quam multa narraverit.</p>	<p>[15] Knowing this, Homer had a heap, as it were, of questions put to Nestor at the same time: ‘O Nestor Neliades, tell the truth, How did wide-ruling Atreides Agamemnon die? Where was Menelaos? Or was he not in Achaean Argos?’ He heaped up all these sparks of conversation together in his questioning in order to satisfy the itch of old age. [16] Vergilian Aeneas too, presenting himself as thankful to Evander for everything, supplies several opportunities for the storytelling of the latter. For he does not ask about one thing or another, but ...‘happily, he asks and listens for each and every monument of yore,’ and captivated by these requests, you know how much Evander told him.”</p>
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**7.3.1.** Haec dicentem favor omnium excepit. sed mox subiecit Avienus: ‘vos omnes qui doctorum doctissimi adestis, oraverim ut hortatu vestro Eustathius quae de scommate paulo ante dixerit animetur aperire.’ omnibusque ad hoc provocantibus ille contexit:

[2] ‘praeter categoriam, quae ψόγος est, et praeter διαβολήν, quae delatio est, sunt alia duo apud Graecos nomina, λοιδορία et σκῶμμα, quibus nec vocabula Latina reperio, nisi forte dicas loedoriam exprobrationem esse ac directam contumeliam, scomma enim paene dixerim morsum figuratum, quia saepe fraude vel urbanitate tegitur ut aliud sonet, aliud intellegas.

[3] nec tamen semper ad amaritudinem pergit, sed non numquam et his in quos iacitur et dulce est. quod genus maxime vel sapiens vel alius urbanus exercet, praecipue inter mensas et pocula, ubi facilis est ad iracundiam provocatio.

**7.3.1.** Having said this, Eustathius was met with universal approval, but soon Avienus added “I would ask all you in attendance, most learned of teachers, that with your encouragement Eustathius might be emboldened to clarify what he said about mockery a little earlier.” And once everyone had called for this, the philosopher wove this together:

[2] “Besides for *categoria* [blame], which is ψόγος, and for διαβολή, which is *delatio* [accusation], there are two other terms in use among the Greeks, λοιδορία and σκῶμμα. For these I find no Latin equivalents (although you might perhaps say that *loedoria* is a reproach and a well-aimed insult) and I would almost call *scommma* a disguised bite, since it is often cloaked in deceit or sophistication so that it literally says one thing but you understand another.

[3] Nonetheless, it does not always lead to bitterness, but is sometimes pleasant for its targets. This, then, is the kind of *scommma* which a wise man or other sophisticate uses, especially among tables and wine glasses, where it is always easy to provoke to anger.

<p>[4] nam sicut in praecipiti stantem vel levis tactus impellit, ita vino vel infusum vel aspersum parvus quoque dolor incitat in furorem. ergo cautius in convivio abstinendum scommate quod tectam intra se habet iniuriam. [5] tanto enim pressius haerent dicta talia quam directae loedoriae, ut hami angulosi quam directi mucrones tenacius infiguntur, maxime quia dicta huius modi risum praestantibus movent, quo velut adsensus genere confirmatur iniuria.</p> <p>[6] est autem loedoria huius modi: oblitusne es quia salsamenta vendebas? scommata autem, quod diximus saepe contumeliam esse celatam, tale est: meminimus quando brachio te emungebas. nam cum res eadem utrobique dicta sit, illud tamen loedoria est, quod aperte obiectum exprobratumque est, hoc scommata, quod figurate.</p>	<p>[4] For just as even a light touch sets in motion a man standing on a precipice, so also a small slight sends a man into a rage, if he is steeped or sprinkled in wine. Therefore, in a banquet we must carefully refrain from <i>scommata</i> which hides an insult, [5] for these words stick more closely than straight reproach, just as the curved points of a trident fix themselves more stubbornly in their target than the straight sword blade, since sayings of this sort stir up the laughter of the audience, and in this way the insult is confirmed just as if they had agreed with it.</p> <p>[6] <i>Loedoria</i>, for its part, resembles this remark: ‘Have you forgotten that you once sold pickled fish?’ <i>Scommata</i>, however, which we said is often a concealed insult, says it like this: ‘We remember when you used to wipe your nose with your arm.’ For although the same thing was said in both instances, nevertheless the former is <i>loedoria</i>, because the remark is openly brought up and held against its victim, and the latter is <i>scommata</i>, because you give it a different form.</p>
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<p>[7] Octavius, qui natu nobilis videbatur, Ciceroni recitanti ait: <i>non audio quae dicis</i>. ille respondit: <i>certe solebas bene foratas habere aures</i>. hoc eo dictum quia Octavius Libys oriundo dicebatur, quibus mos est aurem forare.</p>	<p>[7] Octavius, who seemed noble by birth, said to Cicero who was reading aloud ‘I can’t hear what you’re saying.’ The latter answered ‘And yet you certainly used to have your ears well pierced.’ He said this to him because Octavius was reputed to be of Libyan descent, a people whose custom it is to pierce the ear.</p>
<p>[8] In eundem Ciceronem Laberius, cum ab eo ad consessum non reciperetur, dicentem: <i>reciperem te nisi anguste sederemus</i>, ait mimus ille mordaciter, <i>atqui solebas duabus sellis sedere</i>, obiciens tanto viro lubricum fidei. sed et quod Cicero dixit, <i>nisi angusta sederemus</i>, scomma fuit in C. Caesarem, qui in senatum passim tam multos admittebat ut eos quattuordecim gradus capere non possent.</p>	<p>[8] When Laberius was not allowed a seat by this same Cicero, who said, ‘I would offer you a place if we were not so crowded,’ the mime (i.e., Laberius) said to him bitingly ‘And yet you are used to sitting in two seats,’ bringing up uncertainty of allegiance as a reproach against that great man. But what Cicero said, ‘if we were not sitting so closely packed’ was also <i>scommma</i>, aimed at C. Caesar who indiscriminately received so many men into the senate that the fourteen</p>
<p>[9] tali ergo genere, quod fetum contumeliae est, abstinendum sapienti semper, ceteris in convivio est.</p>	<p>rows of the theatre could not hold them. [9] Clearly, then, it is imperative that a wise man always refrain from this sort of <i>scommma</i>, which is full of insult, and that others at least refrain from it at a banquet.</p>

[10] Sunt alia scommata minus aspera, quasi edentatae beluae morsus, ut Tullius in consulem qui uno tantum die consulatum peregit: *solent, inquit, esse flamines diales, modo consules diales habemus.* et in eundem: *vigilantissimus est consul noster qui in consulatu suo somnum non vidit, eidemque exprobranti sibi quod ad eum consulem non venisset, veniebam, inquit, sed nox me comprehendit.*

[11] Haec et talia sunt quae plus urbanitatis, minus amaritudinis habent, ut sunt et illa de non nullis corporis vitiis aut parum aut nihil gignentia doloris; ut si in calvitium cuiusquam dicas vel in nasum, seu curvam erectionem seu Socraticam depressionem. haec enim quanto minoris infortunii sunt tanto levioris doloris.

[10] There are, however, other mockeries less harsh, the bites of a toothless monster as it were, such as what Tullius said against the consul who completed his consulship in only one day: ‘There have always been priests of Jupiter [*flamines diales*], but now we have daily consuls [*consules diales*]. And against the same man: ‘Most watchful is our consul, who saw no sleep in his consulship.’ And to the same man, who was blaming him because he had not come to him while he was consul, he said ‘I was coming, but night overtook me.’

[11] These remarks and the like are more witty than caustic, and this is also the case even for remarks about certain bodily defects, which bring little or no pain, such as when you talk about someone’s baldness as a domed eminence or about his nose as a Socratic depression. For these things, inasmuch as they are marks of lesser misfortune, are sources of lighter pain.

<p>[12] contra oculorum orbitas non sine excitatione commotionis obicitur. quippe Antigonus rex Theocritum Chium, de quo iuraverat quod ei parsurus esset, occidit propter scommam ab eodem de se dictum. cum enim quasi puniendus ad Antigonus raperetur, solantibus eum amicis ac spem pollicentibus quod omni modo clementiam regis experturus esset, cum ad oculos eius venisset, respondit: <i>ergo impossibilem mihi dicitis spem salutis. erat autem Antigonus uno orbatus oculo, et importuna urbanitas male dicacem luce privavit.</i></p>	<p>[12] The loss of the eyes, on the other hand, is not mentioned without provoking a violent response. Indeed, king Antigonus executed Theocritus of Chios, towards whom he had sworn to be sparing, because of <i>scommam</i> that the latter had spoken about him. For as he was being dragged off to Antigonus as if to be punished, and as his friends were comforting him and offering the hope that in any event he would experience the mercy of the king when he had come before his eyes, he answered ‘so you are telling me that I have no hope of rescue.’ Now Antigonus had lost one eye, and this untimely witticism robbed the sharp tongued man of his life.</p>
<p>[13] Nec negaverim philosophos quoque incurrisse non numquam per indignationem hoc genus scommatis. nam cum regis libertus ad novas divitias nuper erectus philosophos ad convivium congregasset, et inridendo eorum minutulas quaestiones scire se velle dixisset cur ex nigra et ex alba faba pulmentum unius coloris edatur, Aridices philosophus indigne ferens, <i>tu nobis, inquit, absolute cur et de albis et de nigris loris similes maculae gignantur.</i></p>	<p>[13] And I would not deny that philosophers have also sometimes stooped to this kind of <i>scommam</i> out of disgust. For when a freedman of the king, recently raised to new riches, gathered philosophers together for a banquet, and to make fun of quibbling questions said that he wished to know why the product of both white and black beans was eaten as a puree of a single colour, the philosopher Aridices, slighted, said ‘You explain to us why the same scars are produced by both white and black whip thongs.’</p>

<p>[14] Sunt scommata quae in superficie habent speciem contumeliae sed interdum non tangunt audientes, cum eadem, si obnoxio dicantur, exagitant, ut contra sunt quae speciem laudis habent, et persona audientis efficit contumeliae plena. de genere priore prius dicam.</p> <p>[15] L. Quintus praetor de provincia nuper reverterat, observata, quod mireris Domitiani temporibus, praeturae maxima castitate. is cum aeger adsidenti amico diceret frigidus se habere manus, renidens ille ait, <i>atqui eas de provincia calidas paulo ante revocasti</i>. risit Quintus delectatusque est; quippe alienissimus a suspicione furtorum. contra, si hoc diceretur male sibi conscio et sua furta recolenti, exacerbasset auditum.</p>	<p>[14] There are jokes which have, on the surface, the appearance of an insult but which do not necessarily offend their hearers, even when the same things would rile a man guilty of their accusations – just as, on the other hand, there are remarks which take on appearance of praise, but which are rendered extremely insulting by the character of the listener.</p> <p>I will speak first about the first kind. [15] The praetor L. Quintus had recently returned from his province, after having maintained the highest standards of integrity while in office, which you might marvel at in the time of Domitian. When, during a sickness, he told the friend sitting next to him that he had cold hands, the latter smiled and said ‘but surely you brought them back hot from your province not long ago.’ Quintus laughed and was pleased; in fact he was the last person one would suspect of embezzlement. On the other hand, if this were said to a man with a guilty conscience and who was brooding over his acts of embezzlement, it would irritate him to hear it.</p>
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<p>[16] Critobulum famosae pulchritudinis adulescentem Socrates cum ad comparationem formae provocaret, iocabatur, non inridebat. certe si dicas consummatarum divitiarum viro: tibi excito creditores tuos; aut si nimis casto: gratae tibi sunt meretrices quia continua eas largitate ditasti, uterque delectabuntur, scientes his dictis suam conscientiam non gravari. [17] sicut contra sunt quae sub specie laudis exagitant, sicut paulo ante divisi. nam si timidissimo dixero, Achilli vel Herculi comparandus es, aut famosae iniquitatis viro, ego te Aristidi in aequitate praepono, sine dubio verba laudem sonantia ad notam vituperationis suae uterque tracturus est.</p> <p>[18] eadem scommata eosdem modo iuvare modo mordere possunt pro diversitate praesentium personarum. sunt enim quae si coram amicis obiciantur nobis, libenter audire possimus, uxore vero seu parentibus magistrisque praesentibus dici in nos aliquod scommata nolimus, nisi forte tale sit quod illorum censura libenter accipiat;</p>	<p>[16] Socrates was joking, not mocking when he called on Critobulus, a young man of renowned good looks, in order to compare their appearance. Indeed, if you said to a man of vast wealth ‘I am setting your creditors on you,’ or to a very chaste man ‘prostitutes are grateful to you because you enrich them with an unending bounty,’ they would both be pleased, each knowing that his conscience was not burdened by these words.’</p> <p>[17] On the other hand, there are also words which irritate under the guise of praise, following the distinction that I have just made. For if I should say to a very nervous man ‘you are comparable to Achilles and Hercules,’ or to a famously unscrupulous man ‘I rank you before Aristides in even-handedness,’ without a doubt in either case these words echoing praise will be taken as a mark of censure. [18] The same <i>scommata</i> can at one time please, and at another time wound the same men, as a result of the various people present. For there are remarks which we can hear freely if they are thrown at us in front of friends, but we certainly do not want any <i>scommata</i> said against us when our wife or parents or teachers are present, unless perhaps it is something which even their censure accepts freely.</p>
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<p>[19] ut si quis adulescentem coram parentibus vel magistris irideat quod insanire possit continuis vigiliis lectionibusque nocturnis, aut uxore praesente quod stulte faciat uxorium se praebendo nec ullam elegantiam eligendo formarum. haec enim et in quos dicuntur et praesentes hilaritate perfundunt.</p>	<p>[19] That is, if someone mocked a young man in front of his parents or teachers because he risked going mad with unending vigils and reading by night, or a man, while his wife was present, because he was acting foolishly by showing himself devoted to his wife and by not finding any beauty in the figures of other women. For these remarks thoroughly delight both their targets and those present.</p>
<p>[20] commendat scomma et conditio dicentis, si in eadem causa sit; ut si alium de paupertate pauper irideat, si obscure natum natus obscure. nam Tarseus Amphias cum ex hortulano potens esset et in amicum quasi degenerem non nulla dixisset, mox subiecit: sed et nos de isdem seminibus sumus, et omnes pariter laetos fecit.</p>	<p>[20] The social position of the speaker, if he shares it with his hearer, also makes <i>scommma</i> agreeable, as if a pauper were to mock someone else for his poverty, or if one man of obscure birth were to mock another. For Amphias of Tarsus, a former gardener who had become powerful, when he had said something about a friend, to the effect that he was ignoble, soon added ‘but we are both from the same stock’ and he made everyone alike happy.</p>

<p>[21] illa vero scommata directa laetitia eum in quem dicuntur infundunt, si virum fortem vituperes quasi salutis suae prodigum et pro aliis mori volentem, aut si obieceris liberali quod res suas profundat minus sibi quam aliis consulendo. sic et Diogenes Antisthenen Cynicum, magistrum suum, solebat veluti vituperando laudare. <i>ipse me, aiebat, mendicum fecit ex divite, et pro ampla domo in dolio fecit habitare. melius autem ista dicebat quam si diceret, gratis illi sum quia ipse me consummatae virtutis virum fecit.</i></p> <p>[22] Ergo cum unum nomen scommatis sit, diversi in eo continentur effectus. ideo apud Lacedaemonios inter cetera exactae vitae instituta hoc quoque exercitii genus a Lycurgo est institutum, ut adulescentes et scommata sine morsu dicere et ab aliis in se dicta perpeti discerent, ac si quis eorum in indignationem ob tale dictum prolapsus fuisset, ulterius ei in alterum dicere non licebat.</p>	<p>[21] Indeed, those straightforward <i>scommata</i> fill their target with delight: if you were to blame a brave man for being negligent for his own safety and willing to die for others, or if you were to hurl abuse at a generous man because he pours out his wealth, considering his own interest less than those of others. Thus also Diogenes used to praise Antisthenes the Cynic, by blaming him, as it were: ‘He made,’ he said, ‘a beggar out of me, a rich man, and in place of a spacious house, he made me live in a barrel.’ For he put it better this way than if he had said ‘I am grateful to him because he made me a philosopher and a man of consummate virtue.’</p> <p>[22] Therefore, although there is a single name for <i>scommata</i>, the remarks in question have very different effects. For this reason, at Sparta, among the other precepts established for a correct life this sort of training was also established by Lycurgus, for young men to learn both to speak <i>scommata</i> without antagonizing and to put up with the things said about them by others, and if one of them should fall into a rage on account of what was said, it was not permitted for him to say anything further against the other.</p>
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[23] cum ergo videas, mi Aviene – instituenda est enim adulescentia tua, quae ita docilis est ut discenda praecipiat – cum videas, inquam, anceps esse omne scommatum genus, suadeo in conviviis in quibus laetitiae insidiatur ira, ab huius modi dictis facessas et magis quaestiones convivales vel proponas vel ipse dissolvas.

[24] quod genus veteres ita ludicrum non putarunt ut et Aristoteles de ipsis aliqua conscripserit et Plutarchus et vester Apuleius, nec contemnendum sit, quod tot philosophantium curam meruit.

[23] Therefore, since you see, Avienus- for you must be educated in your youth, but you are so teachable that you anticipate that which must be taught- since you see, I say, that every kind of *scommata* is double edged, I suggest at banquets, at which anger lies in wait for our happiness, that you steer clear of words of this sort, and rather that you content yourself with either posing or answering yourself the *quaestiones convivales*. [24] This genre the ancients were so far from considering trifling that Aristotle composed something on the subject, along with Plutarch and your Apuleius, and what deserved the care of so many philosophical minds ought not to be scorned.

## **C. Commentary**

## Chapter 7.1

For his treatment of the place of philosophy at *convivia*, Macrobius adapts the Greek dialogue (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1 = 612E-615C) of Plutarch on the same subject in a form accessible to a Latin reader, with a handful of allusions to the Latin classics, especially to the *Aeneid*. Apparently very familiar with this text of Plutarch, Macrobius is able to thoroughly reorganize it in order to reflect a Neo-Platonic philosophical progression towards unity. He therefore stages the possible objections to philosophy at banquets, which Plutarch had explained in his own voice, as a debate between two characters, Praetextatus and Symmachus, but unifies both the resolution of this question and the treatment of further questions, which Plutarch had assigned to Craton and to himself respectively, under the sole authority of the philosopher Eustathius.

To the same end, Macrobius also makes original use of particular images in Plutarch, offering in *Sat.* 7.1.2-14 a philosophical transposition of music, a competitor with philosophy (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1 = 613A) and means of honouring Dionysus (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.5 = 615A-C) in Plutarch, by shifting the references of his model from melody to harmonics. For harmonics in Macrobius, see *In Somn.* 2.1-4, and the discussions of it in Flamant (1977) 351-381, and in Armisen-Marchetti (2001) LXIV-LXV. For a comparable treatment of comedy, another competitor of philosophy in Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1 = 613A), see the note, below, for *Sat.* 7.3.16. In order to emphasize the admission of philosophy at the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius even has his characters re-enact, with a different result in *Sat.* 7.1.1, 7.1.7, and 7.1.17, the silent reception and trial of Orestes in Athens, by imitation of which philosophical discussion would be excluded entirely (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = 613B).

The structure is chiasmic, and could be described as follows

- (A1) Introduction: philosophical conversation suggested (1)
- (Ba1) Thesis: philosophy to be removed from banquets (2-4)
- (Bb1) Antithesis: philosophy indispensable at banquets (5-7)
- (C) Harmony in the philosophical and unphilosophical banquet (9-14)
- (B2) Moral edification: the art of questioning and of reproving (15-19)
- (A2) Conclusion: philosophical conversation indispensable (25)

Macrobius retains most, but by no means all, of *Quaestio* 1.1 of Plutarch:

<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.1-2	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613B), 1.1.1 (612F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.3-4	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.1 (613A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.5	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.6	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613B-C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.7	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.8	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (613D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.9-10	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (613E)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.11	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3. (613F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.12	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (613E)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.13	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (613D-F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.14	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.15	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.4-5 (614C-D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.16	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.5 (614D), 1.1.3 (613D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.17	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.18	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (614B-C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.19	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.4 (614C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.20	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.5 (615A), 1.1.1 (613A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.21	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.4 (614B-C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.22	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (614A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.23	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.3 (613D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.24	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.1 (629 E-F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.25	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 1.1.2 (613B)

7.1.1. Beginning the last evening of the *Saturnalia*, like the first (*Sat.* 2.1.1-6), with an allusion to the banquet of Dido in the *Aeneid*, Macrobius has the grave Praetextatus take

advantage of a pause in conversation to suggest serious and philosophical discussion. This intervention adapts both an *exemplum* in Plutarch for silence at banquets and the statement, to the contrary, that it is natural to discuss philosophy there, and introduces the reader to the *συμποτικά*, or discussion of proper conduct at banquets (see above, pp. 12-13). Although a serious topic would be unsuited to this lighter section of the *Saturnalia* (see above, n. 100) if discussed directly, nothing prevents the characters from discussing it in the second degree, as they do in chapters 1-3.

- *Primis mensis post epulas iam remotis et discursum variantibus poculis minutioribus*- Macrobius adapts Dido's banquet in Vergil's *Aeneid*: *Postquam prima quies epulis mensaeque remotae; crateras magnos statuunt et vina coronant* (after the first pause in the meal, after tables are cleared, they set out large mixing bowls and fill them to the brim with wine, *Aen.* 1.723-4), an *exemplum* of excess (*Sat.* 2.1.1; 7.1.14), in order to emphasize the moderation of his guests, and thus replaces the *magnae craterae* with *pocula minutiores*.

- *'solet cibus,' inquit, 'cum sumitur, tacitos efficere, potus loquaces'* - Macrobius has Praetextatus cite a maxim unattested elsewhere, but which mirrors the literary context of a *symposium*, which generally places the conversation with the wine rather than with the food. For the principle, and its exceptions, see Wilkins (2000) 26-27.

- *at nos et inter pocula silemus* - Macrobius adapts the silence of the guests from the silence of the hosts of Orestes in Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = 613B), who had cited the anecdote as a potential excuse for a lack of philosophical conversation. For other references to the same anecdote, which helps to structure the chapter, see *Sat.* 7.1.7 and 7.1.17.

**1.2-4.** Thesis: philosophy to be removed from banquets.

Macrobius has Symmachus (see above, pp. 20-21) defend as his own the arguments, which Plutarch summarizes unfavourably, for a fundamental opposition between philosophy and *symposia* (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1 = 612F-613A). He invests these arguments with philosophical, literary and pedagogical authority in order to provide a worthy counterpart of the view of Praetextatus in *Sat.* 7.1.1.

7.1.2. Macrobius heavily adapts the argument in Plutarch that philosophy, like a housewife, would be out of place at a banquet of men, in order to provide a contrast with the rejection of dancing girls in *Sat.* 2.1.7. The argument, anonymous in Plutarch, is here assigned to Symmachus, the host of the day, and Macrobius develops allusions both to the *Aeneid*, the major subject of the *Saturnalia*, and to Neo-platonic philosophy.

*-reverenda materfamilias penetralibus suis continentur, nec misceat se Libero...-*

Macrobius highlights the modesty of philosophy, originally, by contrasting it with the unphilosophical Bacchic frenzy, noted earlier (*Sat.* 5.17.3), of the women of Ardea (*Aen.* 7.373-405), and especially of Queen Amata, *de penetralibus reverentiae matronalis educ[tus]* (led forth from the inner chambers of a revered matron). In a less literary and more scientific context, however, Symmachus himself later affirms that women are unusually resistant to the effects of wine (*Sat.* 7.6.16-18), something which he attributes

to their humid constitution. For the image of feminine modesty in primitive Italy, see the description of Maia in *Sat.* 1.12.27.

*-non modo verborum sed ne cogitationum-* Macrobius attributes to Plutarch's personification of philosophy the Neo-platonic doctrine of the impassibility of the First Principle (see Plotinus *Enn.* 6.7.39-41) and of the soul assimilated to the First Principle (see Porph. *Sent.* 16) to thought. In a more technical context, Macrobius elsewhere speaks of the First Principle and Mind *quae non sermonem tandummodo, sed cogitationem quoque humanam superant* (which surpass not only speech but also human thought, *In Somn.* 1.2.14).

*-quidem in sacrarium suae quietis admittat-* Macrobius houses philosophy in a silent temple, the refuge of the Pythagoreans of Porphyry: οἱ δὲ καὶ τῶν πόλεων τὰ ἱερά καὶ τὰ ἄλση (κατώικουν), ἐξ ὧν ἡ πᾶσα ἀπελήλαται τύρβη (those who, abandoning the cities for the temples and groves, from which all turmoil is eliminated, *Abst.* 1.36.1). See also Plotinus *Enn.* 6.9.11 for the image of philosophy as a temple, and 6.7.39 for its august repose. The image of the temple is a favourite with Macrobius, who uses it here to draw a contrast between the temple of the *Aeneid*, which Symmachus had suggested entering (*Sat.* 1.24.13), and the temple of philosophy, from which he recoils. For the image of the temple of philosophy and its relationship to poetry, see also *Sat.* 1.17.1 and *In Somn.* 1.2.6.

7.1.3. Macrobius continues to develop the image of philosophy as a cloistered *materfamilias* with an example drawn from Persian ethnography, whereby men would dine with their concubines rather than with their wives. Although he seems to rely

exclusively on Plutarch for this anecdote, and follows him in this foreign example even at the expense of the historical character of his speaker, Symmachus, who never mentions anything outside Italy in his own letters (see Paschoud [1967] 105), Macrobius alters the references of the allegory in his model in order to better fit his own hierarchy of disciplines and virtues.

*-doceat nos vel peregrina instituto, et disciplina a Parthis petita* –Macrobius interprets the custom as a counter-educational discipline, and strongly emphasizes the foreignness of the opposition to philosophy at banquets (see also *Sat.* 7.1.10), replacing the Πέρσαι (Persians) of Plutarch with the *Parthi*. Whereas *Persia* is the land of fruit trees in *Sat.* 3.19, the term *Parthia* in the *Saturnalia* is reserved for the ancient foreign power against which Crassus (*Sat.* 3.14.15) and Trajan (*Sat.* 1.23.14) had campaigned; Macrobius appears to be following the terminology of the letters of Cicero for the former war (see especially *Fam.* 15). This distinction does not reflect contemporary usage, however, since Ammianus Marcellinus uses *Parthi* merely as a poetic synonym for his more common *Persae* (see 20.7.5-6, the battle of Bezabde, and 25.1.18, the retreat of Julian from Persia, in which the two are used interchangeably in the same passage).

*-cum concubinis, non cum coniugibus*- Macrobius follows Plutarch for the custom; in Herodotus (5.18), however, the Persians, at the palace of king Amyntas of Macedon and to the horror of their host, explain that their custom at banquets is, on the contrary, to admit concubines and wedded wives together, but this does not appear to be the normal Persian practice: see Legrand (1948) vol. 5, 27. If he accepts the anecdote, however, Macrobius rejects the association between the concubines and music and comedy, using the latter instead as means of describing philosophy and her *alumnae*, the virtues (see

above, p. 52). For the explanation of the concubines adopted by the *Saturnalia*, see *Sat.*

7.1.5.

7.1.4. Macrobius ends the speech of Symmachus in the same place as Plutarch's synopsis of this view, with an anecdote figuring the Attic orator and political thinker Isocrates (436-338 BCE), who refused to speak at a banquet, claiming that his skills were ill-adapted for the occasion. Symmachus effectively refutes his own anecdote, being both a famous orator (*Sat.* 5.1.7) and the master of tact at the gathering (Flamant [1977] 41), so Macrobius, unlike Plutarch, does not need to counter it elsewhere. For the anecdote itself, Macrobius is dependent exclusively on Plutarch, whose own source is uncertain (Fuhrmann [1972] 149 n. 7), but he supplements Plutarch both with general information about Isocrates and with an answer to the later critiques of this anecdote in the *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2.

*-in quo rhetorica venire ars et professio popularis erubuit-* Macrobius answers the critique of irrelevance of this rhetorical example to a discussion of philosophy (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = 613B) by explaining that to exclude such a public profession as oratory from banquets would exclude *a fortiori* the more private practice of philosophy.

*-Graecus orator qui verba prius libera sub numeros ire primus coegit-* Macrobius probably derived the note, directly or indirectly, from Cicero *Orat.* 174: *si Isocratem maxime mirantur hoc in eius summis laudibus ferunt, quod verbis solutis numeros primus adiunxerit* (those who especially admire Isocrates make this his highest accomplishment, that he was the first to join recurrent rhythms to prose). Cicero himself, however, assigns this role to Thrasymachus (*Orat.* 175).

**1.5 -7.** Antithesis: philosophy indispensable at banquets.

Assigning this speech to the philosopher Eustathius (see entry, above), Macrobius adapts the response of Plutarch's Craton (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = 613B-C) into an authoritative synthesis of the arguments both in favour of and against the presence of Philosophy at banquets, eventually deciding in her favour. He adds to his model a qualified approval of the first argument against her presence (7.1.2), while strengthening the refutation of the second argument (7.1.3) and ignoring his critique of the third (7.1.4).

7.1.5. Using allegory, Macrobius greatly elaborates the argument in Plutarch that to reject philosophy would be to reject all the virtues (613B), and replaces the critique of the anecdote of Isocrates with an endorsement of the general view of philosophy set out in paragraph 2, itself favourable to this use of allegory.

*-Ut tantum intra suum penetral aestimes adorandam-* Macrobius adds this approval of the temple worship of philosophy which he had himself added to 7.1.2, emphasizing the quasi-religious status of philosophy in the *Saturnalia*. See. 7.1.2.

*-honestas, modestia, and pietas with sobrietas-* Macrobius translates the σωφροσύνη (prudence, *modestia*) and δικαιοσύνη (righteousness, *honestas*) of Plutarch, and adds sober piety, the necessary corollary of his worship of philosophy. He characterizes these

virtues, allegorically, as the *alumnae* of mother philosophy, and develops them collectively into a musical *chorus* of matrons, a philosophical equivalent for the proposed dancing girl in *Sat.* 2.1.5-6.

*-solis concubinis, id est vitiis et criminibus-* Macrobius starkly contrasts the virtues to corresponding, though undescribed, vices present at a banquet, an aspect of the philosophical banquet which he considered to be represented in Plato's *Symposium* by Alcibiades (*Sat.* 2.1.3). See above, note 3, for the disassociation of the Parthian concubines from music and comedy.

7.1.6. Macrobius adapts the introduction and conclusion of the speech of Craton (613B-C) that philosophy, which teaches moderation at banquets, ought to be able to observe it herself, an argument that he effectively repeats three times.

*-in scholis suis sollicite tractat de officiis convivalibus-* Macrobius adds the reference to philosophical schools, perhaps alluding to the schools of the philosophers, Aristotle, Plutarch, and Apuleius, whom he cites at in 7.3.24 as sources for the *quaestiones convivales*.

*-servare modum, cuius in omnibus humanae vitas actibus terminos ipsa constituit-* in this point, the centerpiece of this paragraph, Macrobius elaborates Plutarch's τέχνη περι βίον (the art of life), a Stoic idea (Fuhrmann [1972] 149 n. 1) in order to give a more active role to philosophy.

*-cuius disciplina est rerum omnium moderationem docere-* Macrobius provides an original general summary of the two previous points, by which philosophy, excluded at banquets by the foreign *disciplina* of 7.1.3, is here included by her own discipline.

7.1.7. Macrobius has Eustathius settle the contest between Praetextatus and Symmachus in paragraphs 7.1.1-4 by agreeing both to the admission of philosophy, and to a pledge that she act with restraint. This positive counterpart to the rejection of the dancing girl in 2.6-7 is original to the *Saturnalia*.

*-velut arbitrari iudicatione-* parodying the silent meal preceding the trial of Orestes for homicide at Athens (613B), an excuse for not discussing philosophy at dinner, Macrobius makes a mock trial the means by which philosophy is admitted. See *Sat.* 7.1.17 for a more direct allusion to the same passage of Plutarch. Both Praetextatus and Symmachus had had judicial responsibilities as prefects of Rome, whereas Eustathius almost certainly had not. For the relationship between philosophy and civic life, see O'Meara (2003) 73-139.

*-aperio [...] sed spondeo sic interfuturam-* Macrobius indicates that philosophy is both required and strictly circumscribed in the *Saturnalia*, as always in the *quaestiones convivales* genre. Macrobius reserves his full treatment for the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, whose subject is a work praised for containing “every branch of philosophy” (*In Somn.* 2.17.17).

7.1.8. Macrobius loosely adapts the following speech of Sosius Senecio (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.3 = 613C-D) in a speech of Rufius Albinus (see above, pp. 21-22), with an entirely new emphasis on the intimate connection between philosophy and antiquity.

*-Tunc Rufius-* the manuscripts read Furius, but this seems to be an early copyist's error for Rufius; see Flamant, *ibid*, 59. His grandfather Ceionius Rufius Albinus (*PLRE* vol. 1, Albinus 14) may have been the philosopher mentioned by Boethius (*In Arist. Int.* 2.4.5-7; *PLRE* vol. 1, p. 33, Albinus 3), but there is no evidence that the historical Rufius Albinus was personally interested in philosophy. This sudden enthusiasm for the subject is instead the endorsement of philosophy by the foremost lover of antiquity in the *Saturnalia*, who had declared *vetustas quidem nobis semper, si sapimus, adoranda est* (we must certainly always venerate antiquity, if we are wise, *Sat.* 3.14.2), and Macrobius thereby emphasizes the mutual dependence of antiquity and philosophy as fields of study.

*-te unicum...nostra aetas tulit-* Macrobius establishes Eustathius as the modern equal of both Plautus and Cicero, the *duos quos eloquentissimos antiqua aetas tulit* (two most eloquent men whom antiquity has produced, *Sat.* 2.1.10), anticipating his comparison between old and new, philosophical, disciplines in 7.2.1.

**1.9-14.** Harmony in the philosophical and unphilosophical banquet.

Macrobius has Eustathius deliver, albeit in a heavily reorganized form, the speech that Plutarch himself delivers (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.3 = 613D-614A) on the circumstances under which philosophy should and should not be discussed, with the addition of two compared Vergilian and Homeric passages from an independent source in 7.1.14. The structure of this central section of the chapter here is chiasmic:

- (A1) the need of Philosophy to appraise the banquet (opening line of 9)  
 (B1) her course of action when there are many philosophers (rest of 9) and when there are few (10)  
 (C1) philosophy practiced and concord preserved through silence (11)  
 (D) the anecdote of Pisistratus (12)  
 (C2) the importance of concord of sound (first half of 13)  
 (B2) literary illustrations from two banquets of philosophers (second half of 13) and from two banquets without philosophers (14)  
 (A2) the need for Philosophy to appraise the banquet (end of 14)

7.1.9. Like Plutarch, Macrobius explains the measure in which philosophy may be present at banquets by first considering the case in which philosophers are preponderant there. He translates the image of the philosophers as vowels among consonants, but incorporates a particularly Roman personification of philosophy, drawn from Cicero and Seneca and in the same tradition as her well-known appearance in the *Consolation of Philosophy* of Boethius. See Courcelle (1970) 209-252.

*-peritos vel saltem amatores sui-* Macrobius adds this division of the followers of Philosophy into amateurs and experts, in keeping with the Neo-Platonic division between Soul and Intellect (see Porphyry *Sent.* 31). For the parallel division between amateurs and experts of religion, see note 7.2.13, below.

*-sermonem de se patietur agitari-* although he had approved the worship of Philosophy in 7.1.5, Macrobius qualifies the image of her modesty set out in 7.1.2 by allowing the *strepitum verborum* of 7.1.2 when her followers are dominant. For the *strepitum cogitationum* to which these followers of Philosophy are constrained when they are in the minority, see 7.1.10-11.

*-aut consonant siqua possunt, aut rerum talium capiuntur auditu-* Macrobius spells out the image of the few unphilosophical guests as consonants in terms of their speech and silence. For the parallel speech and silence of the philosophical guests when they are in the minority, also described in terms of musical harmony, see *Sat.* 7.1.11-12.

7.1.10. Macrobius begins his treatment of the opposite situation, in which philosophers are in the minority and in which Philosophy must therefore act more discretely, with his own reversal of the images of open speech in *Sat.* 7.1.9. If none of the images of *Sat.* 7.1.2-4 had applied in the previous paragraph, here they all do.

*-ab institutione disciplinae huius alieni-* as in *Sat.* 7.1.3, Macrobius describes unfamiliarity with philosophy in term of foreign-ness. In this situation, in which the majority of the guests are not *amatores* of Philosophy, he uses *amiciorem*, more congenial, to describe not philosophical, but unphilosophical speech.

*-ne rara nobilitas a plebe tumultiosiore turbetur-* Macrobius develops this contrast between *nobilitas* and the *plebs*, from the images of the antipathy of philosophy to the people in *Sen. Ep.* 9.12 and especially from *Ep.* 52.13, in order to emphasize the situation in which the queenly image of philosophy of *Sat.* 7.1.2-4 and her opposition to Dionysus *cui etiam tumultus familiares sunt* (7.1.2) hold true. For a discussion of these passages of Seneca, see Courcelle (1970) 220. For a more positive appraisal of her relationship with Dionysus, see the notes for *Sat.* 7.1.20-23.

7.1.11. Leaving aside his personification of Philosophy and returning to Plutarch, Macrobius explains how philosophers, in contrast to rhetoricians, can practice in silence,

but defers until chapter 7.3 Plutarch's reference to mockery, *scommā*, which philosophers are able to properly inflict and to endure, replacing it with paired images of silent philosophical conversion and of musical harmony.

*-salva et intra se quiescente veri notione migrabunt* – Macrobius explains how philosophers may effectively commune with philosophy in silence by adding this allusion to the inwardly focused Neo-platonic ascent of the soul. For the concept of conversion in Neo-Platonic philosophy, see Goulet Cazé (2005) 52-61. See the conversion of Horus from boxing to philosophy (*Sat.* 1.7.3) for a parallel use of *migro*.

*-ut omnis discordiae suspicio facessat-* Macrobius emphasizes that the real differences between philosophical and unphilosophical guests must not be perceptible at a banquet, as also in 7.1.13.

7.1.12. Backtracking slightly in Plutarch, Macrobius turns from the virtues of silence *pro tempore* to the possibility of denying one's own opinions, illustrated with an anecdote of Pisistratus (d. 528-7 BCE), which may have ultimately derived from a late collection of 'Pisistratean' stories, according to Fuhrmann (1972) 150 n. 7. Macrobius emphasizes the theme of retraction and develops the anecdote at markedly greater length than Plutarch by providing a corresponding negative equivalent for every element of the anecdote, first the difference of opinion between Pisistratus and his sons, then the impression of discord, and finally the hopes of the political enemies of the tyrant.

*-Pisistratus Athenarum tyrannus-* Macrobius, writing for a Latin public, adds *tyrannus*, the standard Latin epithet of his subject, and the reference to the Athenian context. See

Aulus Gellius, who mentions Pisistratus both as the founder of the first public library of Athens (*NA* 7.17.1) and as a contemporary of Servius Tullius (*NA* 17.21.5); see also Phaedrus (1.2) and Valerius Maximus (5.1. ext. 2). The use of *novitas in domo regnantis* alludes to the eventual overthrow of the Pisistratean dynasty (Arist. [*Ath. pol.*] 19; Hdt. 5.55-65; Thuc. 6.54-59).

*-ubi hoc aemulis causam fuisse gaudii comperit-* for the corresponding rivalries of military men, see *Sat.* 7.2.8, where Macrobius balances the joy at the misfortune of an enemy here with a corresponding annoyance at the accomplishments of the enemy.

*-sed hoc sibi postea visum paternae aptius esse pietati-* having specified that Pisistratus had originally proposed a *rectum consilium*, Macrobius adds this paradoxical equation of paternal piety with following one's children, the centerpiece of this paragraph, in order to emphasize the extremity of the measures needed to ensure harmony.

7.1.13. Macrobius applies the ideal of harmony to life in general, before returning to Plutarch and passing to two literary examples of the *concordia* possible at banquets when the guests are all philosophers.

*-ita in omni vitae genere praecipueque in laetitia convivali omne quod videtur absonum in unam concordiam soni [...] redigendum est-* Macrobius restates the literary ideal which he had fixed for himself in the preface of the *Saturnalia*, his own *symposium*: *singulorum illic latent voces, omnium apparent, et fit concertus ex dissonis*. (the voices of individuals are hidden, but the voice of all is heard, and makes harmony out of dissonance, *Sat. praef.* 9). For the emphasis on perceptible concord, see note 7.1.11.

*-Agathonis convivium, quia Socratas Phaedros Pausanias et Erysimachos habuit-*

Macrobius copies the names of the characters of Plato's *Symposium* from Plutarch, retaining their Greek endings. He uses this list, from which Alcibiades and Aristophanes are conspicuously absent, to provide a much more positive impression of that banquet than in *Sat.* 2.1.3, where Avienus recoiled from comparing the guests of Praetextatus to *poetis comicis, et Alcibiadi, qui tantum fuit fortis ad crimina* (to the comic poets or to Alcibiades, who was so ready for vice). For a late opposition to Aristophanes as a poet, see the *Comparison of Aristophanes and of Menander*, of which an anonymous summary survives among the collected works of Plutarch (see Lachenaud's [1981] introduction to the text, p. 93).

*-cena quam Callias doctissimis dedit, Charmadam dico, Antisthenen et Hermogenen-*

Macrobius transliterates from Plutarch a selection of the *Symposium* of Xenophon, citing the two founding texts of the *symposium* genre being used. If the names do not suggest direct acquaintance with Xenophon any more than a direct acquaintance with Plato (see Flamant [1977] 180), they do at least suggest competence in Greek composition, since Macrobius replaces the Greek accusative plural with the more logical accusative singular.

7.1.14. Macrobius closes by balancing the philosophical banquets of Plutarch with the counterexample of the excessive feasts of Alcinous (*Od.* 8.46-586) and Dido (*Aen.* 1.697-752), drawn from another source. He found the parallel between these Homeric and Vergilian passages, presumably, in one of the sources for his catalogue of comparable passages in Book 5 (see Flamant [1977] 278-279), where both passages are conspicuously omitted, the list proceeding directly from the moment when Odysseus and

Aeneas declare their identity (*Sat.* 5.4.13) to their speeches (*Sat.* 5.5.1). In these banquets, where philosophy must make herself more discrete, Macrobius highlights the *συμμεθύσκεσθαι καὶ συνορχεῖσθαι* (getting drunk and dancing together, *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1 = 613A), the two defining marks of the Persian concubines in Plutarch (see note 7.1.3). For the banquet of Dido in Late Antique literature, see Courcelle (1984) 130-139, and for its place in the *Saturnalia*, see note 7.1.1, above.

*-habuit haec Iopam illa Phemium-* Macrobius correctly identifies Iopas (*Aen.* 1. 740-46) as the bard of the banquet of Dido, but confuses Demodocus, who sings at the banquet of Alcinous (*Od.* 8.62-82, 266-366), with Phemius, the poet of Ithaka (*Od.* 1.154-155, 22.330-353), for whom the *Poliphemum* of the *codices* is likely a post-Macrobian corruption; see Willis (1963) *ad loc.* Macrobius does not seem to have known the *Odyssey* directly (see Flamant [1977] 298-301), although he was evidently familiar with the general plot (see note 7.1.16, below), most likely from one of the sources of Book 5.

*-saltatores viri-* Macrobius uses dancing, the second mark of the Plutarch's Persian banquet (613A), as the symbol of excess in the banquet of Alcinous (*Od.* 8.250-265), just as dancing had symbolized the excess of the banquets of Agathon (*Sat.* 2.1.5-6) and of the men of the Republic (*Sat.* 3.14.4-9). The judgment of dancing in the *Saturnalia* is in line with that in Plin. *Ep.* 7.24.4-5, where the practice is associated with lust, and in Sen. *Controv.* 3.10, in which it is a disease.

*-Bitias sic hauriens merum-* Macrobius uses heavy drinking, the mark of Plutarch's Persian banquet (613A), as the symbol of the excess in the banquet of Dido, naming the first man to drink at the banquet of Dido, and in a single draught: *tum Bitiae dedit increpitans; ille impiger hausit/ spumantem pateram et pleno se proluit auro*, (then

calling Bitias she gave it to him, and straightaway he drank down the foaming cup and bathed in its golden depths, *Aen.* 1. 738-9). The preceding libation of Dido led the Christian sources to propose demonic interpretations of these famous verses: see Paulinus of Nola (*Carm.* 19.269), ps.Cyprian (*De spect.* 5), and Gregory of Tours (*Glor. mart.* 86), and the discussion in Courcelle (1984) 134-135.

*-ergo prima eius observatione erit aestimare convivas-* Macrobius closes his treatment of the banquets at which philosophy may be discussed in terms virtually identical to those with which he had started it. See *Sat.* 7.1.9.

**1.15-25.** Moral edification: the art of questioning and of reproof.

Having established the distinction between banquets favourable and unfavourable to Philosophy, Macrobius treats the question of how she must proceed at the former, loosely following Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.4-5 = 614B-D). Although he presents each paragraph as an explanation of the preceding paragraph, however, Macrobius does not follow the sequence of arguments in his model, and creates a largely original argument about the exact relation of Philosophy to the sympotic context.

7.1.15. Proceeding to the means of discussing philosophy towards the end of Plutarch's *Quaestio* 1, Macrobius synthesizes his source and takes its rejection of direct philosophical expositions at banquets even further. By focusing on the treatment of easy questions in his model, Macrobius introduces the *disciplina interrogandi* which he makes the subject of chapter 7.2.

*-non de ipsis profunditatis suae [...] secretis-* breaking with Plutarch, who had cited a treatment of profound mysteries in the *Symposium* of Plato, albeit through mythology (614D), Macrobius does not allow any discussion of these mysteries at banquets. In his time, as discussed by O'Meara (2003) 62-63, the *Symposium* was read for the same theological purposes, but as a step of a rigid Platonic Curriculum, such as that of Iamblichus, in which it figured 8<sup>th</sup>, between the *Phaedrus* and the *Philebus*; it would be unsuited to a reader who had not yet begun a philosophical education (see my introduction, p. 9, n. 73).

7.1.16. Macrobius continues with Plutarch and his images for moderation in the treatment of philosophy at banquets, adapting, however, the analogy of dancing and athletics into a purely literary reference. He completes this analogy with a return to an

earlier image in Plutarch for the proper mixture of philosophy with other elements of a *symposium*.

*-illos qui exercitii genus habent in mediis saltare conviviis-* as dancing was no longer current or general at *convivia* in the time of Eustathius and Praetextatus (see *Sat.* 3.14.4), Macrobius transfers the allusion of Plutarch to the dancing of the guests to a specific class of people, apparently the Phaeacians of the *Odyssey*, whose dancing king Alcinous celebrates as famous (*Od.* 8.246-53). For Roman views of dancing, see note 14, above.

*-vel ad cursum vel ad pugilatum-* Macrobius replaces the examples of brandishing arms and throwing the discus in Plutarch with racing and boxing. The reference is apparently to Odysseus, who challenges the Phaeacians in boxing and running, although the latter with some reservations (*Od.* 8.202-233). The source of Macrobius for this allusion may be the same source as for the comparison between the *Aeneid* and the *Odyssey* in 7.1.14, above, which also treats the Phaeacians.

7.1.17. Returning to the exoneration of philosophy at banquets in Plutarch and to his anecdote of the silent reception of Orestes in Athens, Macrobius finds a defense for the combination of wine and philosophy, above, in the very fact that conversation, hence also respectable conversation, is otherwise permitted. He adapts the anecdote, however, making silence in trials the usual practice of the Areopagus which tries Orestes, and uses the same *exemplum* in order to structure the chapter. For the silence of the guests of Symmachus, see *Sat.* 7.1.1, and for the mock trial judgment in which Philosophy is admitted, see *Sat.* 7.1.7.

*-ut apud Athenas Atticas Areopagitae tacentes iudicant-* Macrobius adapts the idea that the Areopagus judged in silence from the εἰ [...] ὥσπερ οἱ τὸν Ὀρέστην ἐστιῶντες ἐν Θεσμοθετείῳ σιωπῇ τρώγειν καὶ πίνειν ἐμέλλομεν (if we must, like those who received Orestes in the *Thesmotheteion*, eat and drink in silence, *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = 613B) of Plutarch. For the hosts, Demophon and Pandion, and a discussion of this incident in Greek literature, see Fuhrmann (1972) 149 n.2. For the confusion of this incident with the better-known trial of Orestes for homicide before the Areopagus, see Bernabei (1970) 97-98. For the Areopagus in Latin literature, see Cic. *Off.* 1.75, in which, according to a different chronology, it is counted as the greatest achievement of Solon.

7.1.18. Macrobius returns to *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.4 (614B-D) in order to adapt its allegorical discussion of the potion which Helen mixes with wine in *Od.* 4.221. The *Saturnalia* modifies its model by discussing the potion not in terms of the edifying effect of timely words, but of the delight which they produce, the precondition for edification.

*-non herba fuit, non ex India sucus-* Macrobius replaces the Egypt of Homer with India, the exemplary far-way country of his own time and a noted source of medical substances, cited again in this regard in *Sat.* 7.5.26. For a complete inventory of Late Roman sources on India with a critical discussion, see André and Filliozat (1986). For allegorical interpretations of Homer, see Lamberton (1992) 115-133.

*-νηπενθέξ τ' ἄχολόν τε κακῶν ἐπίληθον ἀπάντων* (*Od.* 4.221- writing for a readership unable to recall lines from the *Odyssey* at will, Macrobius cites the entire line instead of merely alluding to it, like Plutarch, with the initial word. His own source for

the remainder of the line was most likely a manuscript gloss of Plutarch, as suggested, although admittedly without evidence, by Courcelle (1948) 11.

7.1.19. Macrobius explains the operation of the allegory, taking from Plutarch both the deeds of Ulysses recounted by Helen and their interpretation as examples of virtue. He balances the telling, however, with, a corresponding focus on the listening son of Ulysses, Telemachus, and the inspiring effects of the words on him.

*-filio praesente narrabat-* in order to orient a reader relatively unfamiliar with the *Odyssey*, Macrobius adds the clarification that Helen is speaking to the son of Ulysses, which also allows for a greater focus on the effect of the story on its listener, as described above. Macrobius himself may have drawn this information from a manuscript gloss, or from a mythographical tradition such as that of Hyginus.

*-οἶον καὶ τόδ' ἔρεξε καὶ ἔτλη καρτερὸς ἀνὴρ (Od. 4.271)-* omitting the following line of the *Odyssey*, which Plutarch cites and which describes the well-known sufferings of Ulysses at sea, Macrobius shifts his focus from the specific deeds of Ulysses to the reaction of his son. See *Sat.* 7.2.6 and 7.2.11 for the elimination of references to sufferings at sea in Macrobius.

7.1.20. Juxtaposing anecdotes about rhetoric and about Bacchus at opposite ends of *Quaestio* 1 of Plutarch, Macrobius reverses and adapts them into a justification of the philosophical relevance of the anecdote from the *Odyssey* of the previous two paragraphs, which makes no direct mention of philosophy.

*-Quid hoc, inquis, ad Philosophiam?*- Macrobius reverses the τί ταῦτα πρὸς τὸν Διόνυσον; (what does this have to do with Bacchus?, *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.5 = 615A) of Plutarch, asked of philosophical expositions, and asks instead how conversation over wine relates to Philosophy. For the paradoxical relationship between Philosophy and Bacchus, see also *Sat.* 7.1.21-23.

*-locis et temporibus aptare sermones-* by stressing that Philosophy is able to adapt her words to the time and place, and especially to banquets, Macrobius emphasizes her superiority to rhetoric, whose famous exemplar Isocrates, in the same circumstance (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1 = 613A) admitted that ἐν οἷς ὁ νῦν καιρὸς οὐκ ἐγὼ δεινός (*quae praesens locus et tempus exigit ego non calleo*, *Sat.* 7.1.4). See *Sat.* 7.1.25 for the universal applicability of philosophy.

7.1.21. Macrobius returns to *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.4 (614B-C) for a list of virtues inspired through stories, which he adapts into a list of attributes of Philosophy which can be inculcated by different people. With this passage Macrobius introduces the possibility of philosophical conversion, the ultimate goal of the *disciplina reprehendendi* alluded to in *Sat.* 7.2.1.

*-alios [...] alios [...] non nullos-* Macrobius explains the adaptability of Philosophy to particular circumstances (see 7.1.20) by adding the qualification that the different virtues can each benefit different people.

*-exempla virtutum [...] beneficiorum [...] modestiae-* Macrobius eliminates the distinction in Plutarch between φιλοσοφία and εὐσέβεια (philosophy and religion) in

order to discuss the former exclusively, with whose attributes he replaces Plutarch's πολλά ἀνδρικῶν πράξεων καὶ μεγαλοθύμων (many examples of brave deeds and of magnanimity, 614B). For the virtues in connection with Philosophy, see *Sat.* 7.1.5; for her acts of kindness, see Cic. *Leg.* 1.22.58 and Sen. *Ep.* 90.1, which describes her *bona vita* as *maius beneficium quam vita* (the good life as a greater kindness than life itself), and for her modesty, see 7.1.2 and 6 and Cic. *Tusc.* 1.26.64 for the way in which she imparts this virtue to humanity. For a discussion of these virtues, see Courcelle (1970) 211-213.

7.1.22. Turning from positive incitements to virtue towards negative critiques of vice, Macrobius draws on a slightly earlier section of Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.3 = 614A) for a Bacchic model for tact in criticism. Plutarch is not the only point of reference for this passage, however, and Macrobius modifies his analogy by adding new allusions to Romanize the material and by making use of new sources.

*-feriet Philosophia [...] ut Liber pater [...] ferit-* reinforcing his argument that Philosophy and Bacchus are intimately connected at banquets (contra *Sat.* 7.2.1), Macrobius transforms the comparison between individual philosophers and maenads in Plutarch into a comparison between Philosophy and Bacchus himself.

*-ferit per obliquationem circumfusae hederæ latente mucrone-* Macrobius replaces the note in Plutarch that the Bacchæ are unarmed with the note of Cornutus that some *thyrsi* have ἐπιδορατίδας κρυπτομένας ὑπὸ τοῖς φύλλοις (spear-points hidden under their foliage, *Theol. Graec.* 30.60). The *Saturnalia* draws on the same passage of Cornutus in

its exposition of solar henotheism, for the assimilation of Bacchus to the sun through Mars: *sed et cum thyrsus tenet, quid aliud quam latens telum gerit? Cuius mucro hedera lambente protegitur...*' (but when he is holding a *thyrsus*, what is he carrying if not a hidden spear, whose point is concealed with clinging ivy, *Sat.* 1.19.2).

*-non ita profitebitur in convivio censorem ut palam vitia castiget-* Macrobius explains the subtle activity of Philosophy by adding a contrasting Roman allusion to the office of the censor, the republican guardian of public morality. This comparison draws its force from the public and severe (*Sat.* 3.17.2; *Sat.* 3.13.9) manner in which the censors were supposed to have enforced the sumptuary laws, and also with their general lack of success (*Sat.* 3.15.4). For the *nota* which the censor could affix to the names of offenders on the rolls of their *ordo*, see *Sat.* 7.2.10. For the office of the censor, see Cicero *Leg.* 3.3, Livy 4.8, 24.18, 40.46, 41.27, 42.3, and Suet. *Aug.* 27. For a general introduction to the magistracy, see Suolahti (1963).

7.1.23. Having adapted the ending of Plutarch's chapter 1.1.3, Macrobius turns to its beginning for the Homeric commonplace (*Il.* 2.381) for acrimony at banquets, which he adapts as a cautionary example of the effects of tactlessness. Macrobius supplements the quote with an equivalent passage from the *Aeneid* (9.157), and transposes both so as to refer not to philosophical debate but to the philosophical criticism of moral failings now at issue.

*-talis erit convivii tumultus-* Macrobius adds this reference to the uproar raised by indiscrete criticism in order to complete his comparison of Philosophy to Bacchus, the model for discrete criticism in 7.1.22. He thereby qualifies the relationship between

Philosophy and Bacchus as not so much inimical (7.1.2) as paradoxical, since the latter divinity is at the same time the one *cui etiam tumultus familiares sunt* (7.1.2) and the one by whose discrete example *tumultus* is averted.

*-aut ut Homerus brevius et expressius dixit-* Macrobius thus transforms  $\nu\hat{\upsilon}\nu \delta' \epsilon\grave{\rho}\chi\epsilon\sigma\theta'$   $\epsilon\pi\iota \delta\epsilon\iota\pi\nu\omicron\nu$  from a commonplace citation at banquets, as also in Book 8 of the *Deipnosophistae* of Athenaeus (364A), into a scholarly equivalent for a passage of Vergil. He drew the comparison, presumably, from one of the sources of the fifth book of the *Saturnalia*, perhaps the source of chapter 5.13, which also favours Homer over Vergil (see note 7.1.14, above).

7.1.24. Macrobius closes his first treatment of philosophical questions and criticisms (*Sat.* 7.1.15-23) with a summary of their introduction in Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.1 (629E-F), but alters his original in order to emphasize that questions and criticisms are not so much human disciplines as a manifestation of the force and subtlety of Philosophy herself. It is here that he first introduces the terms *reprehensio* and *interrogatio* used in a second adaptation of the same passage of Plutarch in *Sat.* 7.2.1 to describe the subject matter of chapters 7.2 and 7.3.

*-feriet sapiens, ut dixi, non sentientes-* repeating his earlier *feriet Philosophia non sentientes* (*Sat.* 7.1.22) with a simple change in subject, Macrobius establishes that the sage must first assimilate his action to that of Philosophy herself in order to delight others with the criticism described by Plutarch.

*-ut reprehensus hilaretur-* seeking to use simple and comprehensible vocabulary, Macrobius translates Plutarch's σκώπτω with the vague *reprehendo*, and so must later specify (*Sat.* 7.2.2) that he intends *reprehensio* in the sense of the Greek *somma*, the meaning of which he then proceeds to explain.

7.1.25. Macrobius ends with a return to the defense of Philosophy at banquets in Plutarch *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2, his source for her exoneration in principle (*Sat.* 7.1.5-7), with the remark that no gathering ought to exclude her, and transforms it into a fitting summary and conclusion for his own chapter.

*-nullus honestus actus locusve-* Macrobius adds the requirement that the setting be respectable in order to summarize the distinction which Philosophy makes between favourable and unfavourable banquets in *Sat.* 7.1.9-14.

*-quae ita se aptat-* summarizing the principle virtue of philosophy in 7.1.15-24, Macrobius makes the adaptability of Philosophy the chief reason for including her at banquets, instead of the order and measure that she brings, as in Plutarch.

*-abesse illam nefas fuerit-* Macrobius adds the language of Roman religion in order to re-emphasize the goddess Philosophy with which he began chapter 7.1 (see note 7.1.5), and the contrast between her and the dancing girl proposed in Book 2, whose presence the *penates* of Praetextatus (*Sat.* 2.1.7) had refused to consider.

## Chapter 7.2

Macrobius succinctly adapts and Romanizes Eustathius' discussion of appropriate questions at banquets from *Quaest. conv.* 2.1, achieving his characteristically chiasmic structure with only minor alterations to his model. In this discussion of daily life, professions and pastimes, however, more than anywhere else in the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius must alter or transpose some of the examples in order to avoid stepping outside the strict bounds of scholarly *otium* and to avoid criticizing or incriminating his own senatorial class.

The structure could be represented roughly as follows:

- (A1) Introduction: *novae disciplinae* (1-3)
- (B1) Questions about scholarly *otium* (4-5)
- (C) Questions about *negotium* (6-12)
- (B2) New questions about *otium* (13)
- (A2) Conclusion: application to the relics of the past (14-16)

Macrobius omits none of the major points of Plutarch and rarely changes their order:

<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.1	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.1 (629E-F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.1.2	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.3	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.4	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.5	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.6	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.7	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.8	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.2 (630 D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.9-10	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.3 (630E)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.11	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.3 (630F, 630D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.12-13	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.3 (631A)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.14-15	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.3 (631B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.2.16	

7.2.1. Macrobius loosely adapts the question of Sosius Senecio in Plutarch, on questions and mockeries, adding the description of these as new (philosophical) disciplines.

Fittingly attributing to Avienus, the enthusiast of the old (comic) disciplines in Book 2, this question refers back to the treatment of questions and mockeries in *Sat.* 7.1.14-24, and introduces the general summary of chapters 7.2 and 7.3 provided in the next two paragraphs.

*-novas disciplinas-* Macrobius develops a contrast with the jokes of the ancients in Book 2, the *res et cura et studio digna veteribus visa est* (the matter and concern and study considered as worthy by the ancients, *Sat.* 2.1.10) associated particularly with Plautus the poet and Cicero the orator. The *novae disciplinae* need not be particularly recent, since Caecina spoke of *et veteris et novae auctorum copiae* (authors of ancient and recent literature, *Sat.* 6.4.1) as sources for Vergil, referring to Ennius, and Catullus and Lucretius respectively, but are new because they point towards Neoplatonist philosophy. For a Neo-Platonist sense of *novus*, attached specifically to the school inspired by the *De regressu animae* of Porphyry, see Courcelle (1953) 257-271.

*-cum dolor semper reprehensionem vel iustam sequatur-* Macrobius adds a commonplace echoed by Salvian's *nulli grata reprehensio est* (censure is pleasing to no one, *De gubern. D.* 8.1), in order to answer it in the next paragraph and in chapter 3.

7.2.2. Macrobius inserts an original first response to the question on mockery, clarifying his use of *reprehensio* in 7.1.24 with more exact Latin terminology, if still preliminary compared to the full exposition of terms in 7.3.2. *Reprehensio*, therefore, is divided into

*accusatio*, which necessarily causes *dolor*, and *vituperatio* (*scommia*), which does not if handled properly, the latter the subject of chapter 3.

*-speciem accusationis [...] vituperationis instar-* Macrobius emphasizes that these terms are approximations and that the Latin language does not precisely express the Greek concepts of Plutarch. For his more detailed discussion of terms, see 7.3.2. See Lausberg (1960) 61.1a, for *accusatio*, and 61.3b for *vituperatio*.

7.2.3. Returning to Plutarch, Macrobius closely adapts his response for questions, but omits the reference to Xenophon (*Cyr.* 4.6-5.2.18) for further information (*Quaest. conv.* 630A), which would be useless for a Latin reader, and building on the similar advice to ask easy questions in *Sat.* 7.1.15-16.

*-sedula exercitatione-* Macrobius presents the corollary of *Sat.* 1.16 (*nam sicut inter illos qui exercitii genus habent in mediis saltare...*), emphasizing not the competitive spirit of those who have philosophical and scholarly training, but the importance of the training as a prerequisite for competition.

**4-5** Questions about scholarly *otium*.

(A1) guests enjoy being asked about what they have learned (4, beginning)

(B1) not wishing to hide the subject of their *labor* (4, middle)

(C) as, for example, about astronomy and dialectic (4, end)

(B2) thus their *labor* is repaid, without incurring a reputation for ostentation (5, beginning)

(A2) on the other hand, guests dislike being asked about what they have not learned difficult questions (5, end)

7.2.4. Macrobius summarizes Plutarch on the gratification that a question about an area of expertise can bring, removing an irrelevant quote from the lost *Antiope* of Euripides, the *Antiope* F184 (see *TrGF* vol. 5.1, p. 286) on the desire to outdo oneself in general. Astronomy and dialectic, the two exemplary subjects of expertise, take on a new meaning in the *Saturnalia*, since both are subjects of the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, and of the speech, now lost, which Eustathius himself gave on the *astrologia totaque philosophia* (astronomy and entire philosophy, *Sat.* 1.24.18) of Vergil at the suggestion of Symmachus.

*-astronomia-* Macrobius adapts Plutarch's ἀστρολογία (astrology, 630B) with no particular difference in sense. His use of the subject is relatively conventional: the *Saturnalia*, elaborating on the curriculum of a *grammaticus* (see above, pp. 9-10), treats the subject through Vergil just as it was traditionally taught through the *Phaenomena* of Aratus at school, while its fuller treatment in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* likewise reflects the relegation of astronomy as such to higher education. As the subject is associated in the *Saturnalia* with religion, most notably in the speech of Praetextatus on solar henotheism (*Sat.* 1.17-23), Macrobius uses this reference to astronomy to anticipate his questions about religion in 7.2.13 (see below). For astronomy in the ancient curriculum, see Marrou (1950) 252-255. For a discussion of the astronomy of Macrobius, see Flamant (1977) 382-482.

*-dialectica-* Macrobius transliterates Plutarch's term, a field of study for which Disarius praises Eustathius in 7.5.33, here anticipating his allegorical treatment of hunting as philosophical inquiry in 7.2.13 (see below).

7.2.5. Macrobius offers the counter point in Plutarch, that it is embarrassing to question a guest on a subject about which they know little and are unable to properly answer, elaborating this point in keeping with the prominent role of theoretical knowledge in this chapter.

*-et omne hoc infortunium pudoris sui imputat consulenti-* Macrobius adds this note, along with the *extremum verecundiae damnum* and *inscitiae proditio* above, describing ignorance as something to be betrayed and the embarrassment which it causes as a misfortune in order to indicate that this embarrassment is the principal misfortune of the chapter. For the literary references of the misfortunes listed in this chapter, see note 7.2.10, below.

**6-12** Questions about *negotium*.

- (A1) questions that the individual enjoys being asked and anecdotes that cannot be mentioned unless solicited for fear of appearing arrogant- travelers and soldiers (7)
- (B1) questions that others try to prevent from being asked- soldiers (8)
- (C1) hardships that people don't mind being asked about afterward, but not during (9)
- (D) dangers escaped (9)
- (C2) hardships that people do not want to be asked about even afterwards. (10)
- (B2) questions that the individual does not want to be asked (10)
- (A2) questions that the individual enjoys being asked and anecdotes that cannot be mentioned until they are solicited for fear of appearing arrogant- politicians and the senatorial class (11)

7.2.6. Adapting Plutarch on the questions to ask travelers, Macrobius omits both the difficulties of sea travel in his model (see also 7.1.19, 7.2.6, and 7.2.11) and the references to Barbarian peoples, in keeping with his conception of the *Saturnalia* as work

of scholarly *otium* exclusively. Referring primarily to the literary genre of geographical description, Macrobius offers a philosophical transposition of certain of the remarks of this paragraph.

*-cum de ignoto multis vel terrarum situ vel sinu maris-* although he includes the description of the extent and of the major rivers demanded by the genre of geographical description, Macrobius pointedly excludes the usual enumeration of the Barbarian nations, Plutarch's ἔθῶν τε βαρβαρικῶν καὶ νόμων (customs and laws of the Barbarians, 630B) and the *multae gentis populos* (clans of the numerous race) of India in Avienius (*Descr. orb.* 132-133, in André and Filliozat [1986]). See the discussion of Barbarians in the appendix, pp. 137-138, and see also the comparison which Disarius makes between wine and the sea (*Sat.* 7.12.29-37). For the theme of foreign exoticism as it applies to India, see André and Filliozat (1986).

*-et describunt modo verbis, modo radio loca-* Macrobius adds this visual detail himself. See the ray theory of vision introduced in *Sat.* 7.14.5-23.

*-gloriosum putantes quae ipsi viderant aliorum oculis obicere-* Macrobius later has Evangelus praise Disarius' exposition of the brain and its relation to the soul in very similar terms (*Sat.* 7.9.26). For *gloria*, see note 8.

7.2.7. Macrobius adapts the remark of Plutarch that more distinguished military men, to whom he adds common soldiers, shrink from inflicting accounts of their deeds on others, and he incorporates the remark that they consider the opportunity to answer questions as their reward, which Plutarch had attached to sailors.

*-quam fortiter a se facta-* Macrobius does not betray any particular interest in military affairs with this generic description; unlike Plutarch, who evoked Ulysses' capture of horses in Homer (*Il.* 10.544-5), Macrobius does not even provide a literary example, still less a direct contemporary allusion.

*-tacent arrogantiae metu-* see note 7.2.12.

7.2.8. Macrobius completes his discussion of military men by transferring to it the examples of jealousy at favourable questions which Plutarch had attached to political men, a device which allows him to eliminate the suggestion of discord within his own class.

*-quendam gloriae saporem-* Macrobius adds the theme of *gloria* here, as also in 7.2.6, as a proper motivation for soldiers and sailors but never the ideal statesman (*In Somn.*

2.10). The *miles gloriosus* is familiar from the comedy of Plautus of the same name.

*-si invidi vel aemuli forte praesentes sint-* Macrobius alludes to a common theme in Late Antique historiography. For the envy of the success of military commanders and its consequences in contemporary literature, see the falls of Ursicinus (*Amm. Marc.* 15.2, 18.4.3), and of Silvanus (*Amm. Marc.* 15.5). For the corollary delight in the weakness of a rival, see *Sat.* 7.1.12.

7.2.9. Adapting the remark of his model that there is a pleasure in telling about dangers and pains, on the condition that they be past, Macrobius pares down the illustrations to the single quote from a lost tragedy of Euripides, the *Andromeda* F133 (see *TrGF* vol. 5.1, p. 250). He retains it over the quote from *Odyssey* (9.12) and from Sophocles'

*Oedipus at Colonus* (510-11) in Plutarch because it lends itself to comparison with the famous line from the *Aeneid* (1.203).

*-forsan et haec-* Macrobius spontaneously cites a particularly famous verse of the *Aeneid*, which he had earlier cited (*Sat.* 5.11.7) as a counterpart to the *Odyssey* 12.212 through a source for Vergilian and Homeric comparisons (see note 7.1.14, above). The same verse is also cited by Ovid (*Met.* 7.797), Valerius Flaccus (*Argon.* 1.248), Statius (*Theb.* 1.472), Seneca (*Ep.* 78.14-15), Pacatus (*Pan. Lat.* 2.24.3), Claudian (*Get.* 205), Orosius (4. *praef.* 1), but Macrobius is unique in insisting on the *olim*. For a full discussion of the numerous post-Vergilian imitations of this verse, see Courcelle (1984) 63-65.

7.2.10. Following his model very loosely, Macrobius describes the pains too traumatic to be mentioned even afterwards, replacing the examples of legal, familiar and commercial losses with a general statement framed by two discrete references to the underworld in the *Aeneid*.

*-qui carnifices expertus est et tormenta membrorum-* Macrobius refers here not to a real situation but to the plight of Deiphobos, the third husband of Helen, who was tortured and killed by Menelaus after the fall of Troy and who is unwilling to directly discuss his experiences with Aeneas in the Underworld. Deiphobos is missing from the summary of the descent in *Sat.* 5.2.14, but is mentioned as an example of *pathos* in *Sat.* 4.1.4: *est inter pathe et pudor, ut circa Deiphobum: pavitantem et dira tegentem/Supplicia* (shame is also mixed in with pathos, as with Deiphobos, ‘trembling and covering his fateful punishments’). For Deiphobos in Late Antiquity, see Servius (6.495), Donatus (525-530),

and Ausonius, who describes *deformato corpore Deiphobus* (Deiphobos with a mangled body, *Epit.* 13). For the '*férolicité maximale*' of Late Antique law, particularly towards slaves, see Grodzynski (1984) 393, 396.

*-Qui infaustas pertulit orbitates-* Macrobius summarizes the funerals of children and the loss of goods on land and sea in Plutarch.

*-cui nota quondam adflicta censoria est-* referring to the traditional power of the censor to remove an offender against public morality from his *ordo* as part of the *regimen morum* (see above, 7.1.22), Macrobius alludes also to Dido, who refuses to speak to Aeneas at all after her disgrace. Elsewhere in the *Saturnalia* Macrobius had compared her to Ajax in the *Odyssey* (*Sat.* 5.2.14) and to Apollonius' Medea (*Sat.* 5.17.4-6), specifying that the story of her disgrace was a fabrication of Vergil.

7.2.11. Returning more closely to the text of Plutarch, Macrobius discusses a series of specific anecdotes which guests enjoy telling in contrast to the traumatic experiences of 7.2.10. Finally turning to the political class, he emphasizes aristocratic privilege over active politics, adding the pursuit of private affairs at public expense, and adapting the first and last examples of Plutarch into literary allusions to frame this discussion.

*-recitando favorabiliter exceptus est-* Macrobius replaces Plutarch's allusion to oratory (εὐημερήσαν ἐπὶ βήματος, passing a successful day on the rostra) with an allusion to literary recitation, fitting given the many literary allusions in the chapter.

*-libere et feliciter legationem peregit-* Macrobius adds this *legatio*, which Davies (1969) 448 n. 4 explains as referring to as the right of senators to travel on the *cursus publicus* for private reasons.

*-ab imperatore comiter affabiliterque susceptus est-* avoiding *ab rege*, by the king, the literal translation of Plutarch's ὑπὸ τοῦ βασιλέως, Macrobius avoids alluding to the Barbarian kingdoms now established within the limits of the Roman empire. *Comiter affabiliterque*, similarly, suggest the collegial tone of the *Dicta Augusti* in *Sat.* 2.4-5 rather than the increasingly formal court protocol since Diocletian, for which the career of Symmachus is a good example. For the well-known failure of Symmachus to receive a reception while pleading for the return of the Altar of Victory, see Sogno (2006) 45-51.

*-a piratis... solus evasit-* Macrobius enhances the comic aspect of this anecdote by adding the aspect of force and cunning and deleting the storm as an alternative cause of disaster in Plutarch. By adding *solus*, Macrobius emphasizes that it is the ultimate individual success, in contrast to the success of another in paragraph 12. For the escape from pirates as a *topos* of Roman comedy, see Ormerod (1924) 260ff.

7.2.12. Macrobius offers an example of the affairs of another person that bring joy to tell, the corollary of the telling of personal achievements in 7.2.7-8. While Plutarch had made the equivalent passages parallel with each other, each in the context of rivalry and competition, Macrobius systematically develops the contrast, opposing the vainglory and jealousy of the earlier passage with the altruism here. He therefore simplifies the examples, omitting the more self-interested examples of the accomplishments of children and the misfortunes of enemies and retaining only the good fortune of a friend.

*-amici sui repentnam felicitatem-* by adding the unexpectedness of the good fortune, Macrobius develops the contrast with the stories of military success that soldier *semper dicturiunt* in 7.2.7.

*-modo iactantiae modo malitiae metu-* adding the fear of appearing boastful to parallel the *arrogantiae metu* in 7.2.7, Macrobius adapts the fear of appearing malicious in Plutarch in the opposite direction from his model, applying the malice to neglecting to celebrate the good fortune of a friend, rather than to rejoicing in the ill fortune of an enemy.

**13** New questions about *otium*.

- (A) hunting, paralleling *dialectica* in 7.2.4
- (B) religion, paralleling *astronomica* in 7.2.4

7.2.13. Macrobius adapts, rather loosely, the examples of personal interests about which guests may be asked in Plutarch, omitting the interests of athletic amateurs and lovers to retain only those of hunters and religious men. These last two are re-interpreted in a philosophical light, and paired with the *astronomia* and *dialectica* in 7.2.4. If in 7.2.12, then, Macrobius had been drawing a contrast between two passages that Plutarch had made parallel, in 13 he draws a parallel between two originally unrelated passages in Plutarch.

*-qui venationibus gaudet-* in contrast to Plutarch, who had merely suggested asking hunters about their dogs, Macrobius alters the details to transpose the example into a philosophical context, referring to a literary tradition found in the letters of Pliny and Symmachus. Pliny (*Ep.* 1.6) reports that he caught three boars with his pen and remarks that the silence of the forest is conducive to thinking; Symmachus, in a letter to Praetextatus (*Ep.* 1.53.2) takes up the same theme when he suggests that the letters of the

latter are too cultured to have been penned by a real hunter. For the letter of Pliny, see Lefèvre (1978) 37-47. For hunting in the *Saturnalia*, see 7.16.15-34. The contribution of Macrobius to the literary image of hunting is to develop its various aspects into a systematic treatment of philosophy: *silva* can translate ὕλη, matter, the lowest of Porphyry's *hypostases*, while *lustrum* could translate φύσις, nature, the next *hypostasis*, both emanations of the One through Soul and Mind (Plotinus *Enn.* 5.2.1; *Enn.* 3.9.7-16). -*observationibus, caerimoniarum fructus*- Macrobius evokes traditional practices, directed towards the *auxilia deorum*, in his treatment of religion, but he uses vague terms, as the specific practices of blood sacrifice, the ἱεροὶ of Plutarch's φιλοθύτης, and divination (φήμῃ) are outlawed (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10-12.4 – 391-2; see below, pp. 139-141, for the religious context). He shifts the emphasis, therefore, from rites towards the recounting of the favours received from the gods, which he makes into a *genus religionis* in its own right.

-*volunt et amicos se numinibus aestimari* – Macrobius adds this note in order to define the *religiosus*, as opposed to Praetextatus, the *unum arcanae deorum naturae conscium* (the sole partner in knowledge of the secret nature of the gods, *Sat.* 1.24.1), in relation to Soul, rather than Intellect (see Porphyry *Sent.* 31).

**14-16.** Conclusion: application to the relics of the past.

Eustathius treats the talkativeness of old men, uniting both the unphilosophical banter of the *maior pars* of 7.1.10, and the *veteres disciplinae* which

prepare the reader for the *novae disciplinae* of philosophy in 7.2.1.

7.2.14. Macrobius summarizes the remarks of Plutarch on the fondness of the elderly for answering questions and telling stories.

*-est huic aetati loquacitas familiaris* – Macrobius emphasizes the unphilosophical nature of many of the stories of the elderly, with an echo of the *loquacitas amicior* of 7.1.10, but see 7.2.16 for the philosophical use of these stories. Avienus is able to apply this advice in *Sat.* 7.12 when he poses no less than fourteen questions to Disarius, who is on the verge of old age (*Sat.* 7.10.1).

7.2.15. Macrobius borrows the example from the *Odyssey* of Telemachus asking Nestor about the death of Agamemnon from Plutarch, adding little besides for the note that Homer was the author, since the story appears to have been familiar to the reader.

*-Nestori fecit offerri-* Macrobius presumes that the reader knew that Nestor was a very old man, since he is the example of age. The *Nestoris aevum* (144) and *Nestoris aetas* (154, 737) appear in *Homerus Latinus*, while in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Nestor describes himself as over two hundred years old (*Met.* 12.188).

*-εὐρυκρείων Ἀγαμέμνων* – like Plutarch, on whom he appears to be dependent, Macrobius omits the questions which name Aegisthus directly (*Od.* 3.249, 252); he does, however, name Agamemnon directly, whose name does not appear in Plutarch as the text

survives, although perhaps in the original, since Fuhrmann (1972) 67 n.1 remarks that the text is damaged here. Assuming that the name was not in the original text of Plutarch, Macrobius may have found it in a manuscript gloss, or have read the more complete version in the source that compared this passage of Homer to the passage from the *Aeneid* below. The naming of Agamemnon is evidently helpful, but Agamemnon himself requires no further explanation for a Latin Late Antique reader, since Ausonius composes an epitaph for him (*Epit.* 1), and Macrobius includes Agamemnon as a tragic theatre character in *Sat.* 5.15.15.

-ποῦ Μενέλαος ἔην- The absence of Menelaus at the death of his brother Agamemnon is familiar to Latin literature, and the *Fables* of Hyginus preserves the basic order of the *Odyssey* when it recounts the death of Agamemnon (*Fab.* 117 = *Od.* 3.253-310) immediately before the account of Menelaus in Egypt (*Fab.* 118 = *Od.* 4.351-424). Ausonius composes an epitaph for Menelaus as for his brother (*Epit.* 2).

7.2.16. Macrobius adds the example of Evander from the *Aeneid* (8.312) as a Virgilian counterpart to Nestor in the *Odyssey*, likely taking the comparison from the same source as the Vergilian-Homeric comparisons in Book 5 (see note for paragraph 7.1.14, above). The example of the ancient Evander is particularly well chosen, since, paired with the *nova disciplina interrogandi* in *Sat.* 7.2.1, it suggests the interdependent nature of the different parts of the *paideia*.

-*Evander consultationibus captus scitis quam multa narraverit* – Macrobius implies here, with *scitis*, that the reader would recognize the passage in the *Aeneid* (8.311-365), in which the Arcadian king Evander explains the history of Latium during its Golden Age

and shows Aeneas the sights of the future city. Indeed, *Aen.* 8.358 was evidently familiar enough to the original readership as to not require any introduction in *Sat.* 1.7.23, during the discussion of the cult of Saturn and Janus. Following Aulus Gellius (*NA* 4.1.1), Macrobius makes Evander virtually a symbol for antiquity in the *Saturnalia*, having Avienus accuse the archaizing Servius of speaking like the mother of Evander (*Sat.* 1.5.1). For the tour, see Reed (2007) 3-4.

## Chapter 7.3

Eustathius discusses *scommā*, criticism which for whatever reason is aimed at a different target from that which it explicitly identifies. Macrobius systematizes the rambling examples and counterexamples of Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4-13 = 631C-634F), and omits most of the latter's unusually abundant learned anecdotes. He adds examples from the principal authorities of the *veteres disciplinae* (*Sat.* 2.1.10-14), Cicero and Plautus, who turn out to be exemplars of the *novae disciplinae* as well to the cultured and philosophical reader. The Ciceronian quotes are often recycled from Book 2; the source of the Plautine *topoi* is unclear. This chapter completes the developments begun in chapter 7.3.1 and could be represented as follows:

- (A1) Introduction to *scommā* and final application of the *disciplina interrogandi* (1)
- (B1) Exposition: categories of *reprehensio* and practical application (2-4)
- (C1) *Scommā* as *morsus* (4-9)
- (D) Proportionality in *scommā* (10-13)
- (C2) *Scommā* as *laus* (14-21)
- (B2) Recapitulation: categories of *scommā* and practical application (22)
- (A2) Conclusion to *scommā* and introduction to the *quaestiones convivales* (23-24)

In contrast to his practice in chapter 2, here Macrobius does not respect the order of Plutarch, and omits entire sections. Only 2.1.4 is used in anything like its entirety, and 8, 10, and 13 are not used at all. Macrobius also uses the *Dicta Ciceronis*.

<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.1		
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.2	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631E)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.3	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.1 (629E-F)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.4	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631C)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.5	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631D-E)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.6-7	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631D)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.8		<i>Dicta Cic.</i> (cf. <i>Sat.</i> 2.3.10)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.9	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631C)	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.10		<i>Dicta Cic.</i> (cf. <i>Sat.</i> 2.2.13, 2.3.5-6)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.11-13	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.9 (633B-C)	

<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.13	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.12 (634C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.14	
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.15-16	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.5 (632A-C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.17	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.6 (632D)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.18-19	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.11 (634A-B)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.20	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.12 (634C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.21	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.7 (632E)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.22	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631F)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.23	<i>Quaest. conv.</i> 2.1.4 (631C)
<i>Sat.</i> 7.3.24	

### 7.3.1- Introduction

7.3.1. Eustathius' speech in 7.2 is well received, and Avienus asks Eustathius to expound on *somma*, the branch of the *disciplina reprehendi* provisionally introduced in 7.2.2 (see also 7.1.24 and 7.2.1). By having Avienus request this elaboration, Macrobius here concretely applies and reinforces the principle of asking guests to speak on their area of expertise (*Quaest. conv.* 2.2.1 = 630A-B = *Sat.* 2.3-4).

*-doctorum doctissimi [...] oraverim ut hortatu vestro-* Macrobius illustrates his point that philosophy is to be discussed primarily through its related disciplines (*Sat.* 7.1.15) by having Avienus pose this question to Eustathius only indirectly. In contrast, then, to the first question asked of Eustathius in these three chapters, which emphasized his exceptional learning (*Sat.* 7.1.8), this question emphasizes the learning of all the guests.

**7.3.2-4.** Exposition: categories of *reprehensio* and practical application.

Macrobius defines *scommā*, adapting *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4 (631C-F), but opting for a more leisurely and systematic development.

(A1) all the terms, in Greek or Latin, related to *reprehensio* defined (2)

(B) *scommā* is not always offensive (3, beginning).

(A2) only the inoffensive sort may be used in banquets, on account of anger (3-4).

7.3.2. Macrobius begins his answer with an inventory of the relevant Greek terms in Plutarch and their Latin equivalents, drawing from both the section on *scommā* and the previous section on questions. As Macrobius uses it, however, the vocabulary provides a systematic survey of the public, private, forceful and veiled manifestations of *reprehensio*. An elaboration of the overview in 7.2.2 but with new terms, this presentation of terminology recalls the definition of *dicta* in *Sat.* 2.1.14.

-*categoria*, *quae ψόγος est*- Macrobius uses the Greek *categoria* (from κατ-ἀγορεύω), a public accusation, to translate Plutarch's ψόγος from the conclusion of his treatment of questions (631B). See Lausberg (1960) 61.1a, for *categoria*, and 61.3b for ψόγος.

-*διαβολήν*, *quae delatio est*- Macrobius draws the term διαβολή from the inference of Theophrastus about a famous legacy hunter in 631E, and translates it with *delatio*, suggesting a secret accusation.

-λοιδορία σκῶμμα, *quibus nec vocabula Latina reperio*- Macrobius mentions these terms, which Plutarch had paired in 631C, together; as in *Sat.* 7.2.2, Macrobius is concerned with the inability to find a Latin match for these Greek words. 7.3.2-6 is dedicated to explaining the difference between them.

-*aliud sonet, aliud intellegas*- Macrobius offers this apt definition of *scommā*, not in Plutarch.

7.3.3. Eustathius emphasizes that *scommā* need not be offensive, drawing on Plutarch's general introduction to questions and jokes in 629E-F, then cautions his listeners about the use of *scommā*.

-*dulce est, quod genus maxime vel sapiens vel alius urbanus exercet*- Macrobius systematically and originally highlights the paradoxical relationship between philosophy and classical culture: the *urbani* here, associated with *dulcitus*, contrast with the asceticism of the Cynics and Spartans in 7.3.21-22. The chapter thus provides an expanded discussion of the remarks in *Sat.* 7.1.17 and 7.2.2, where *dulcitus* is said to accompany the work of the philosopher.

-*praecipue inter mensas et pocula*- Macrobius alerts the reader to the Vergilian reference in the next paragraph by recalling the feast of Dido (*Aen.* 1.723), also the opening lines of Book 7 (7.1.1, see note, above).

7.3.4. Eustathius advises his listeners to avoid the most offensive insults whenever wine is present. He is using Plutarch's opening image of a person in danger of falling (631C),

but vividly supplements the picture of anger with references to Vergil and to the medical sources.

*-in praecipiti stantem-* Macrobius alters Plutarch's ἐν ὀλισθηρῷ τόπῳ (in a slippery place), to refer to a precarious position described by Aeneas at the feast of Dido, namely the tower in Troy from which Pyrrhus angrily throws the young Astyanax: *Turrim in praecipiti stantem summisque sub astra eductam tectis, unde omnis Troja videri* (a tower standing on a precipice and raised with a high roof under the stars, from which all Troy could be seen, *Aen.* 2.460-61). Both Servius (*In Verg. Aen.* 2.460) and Donatus (*Int. Verg.* 2.460) comment on the pathos of this passage; for a brief discussion of ancient imitations of this passage, see Courcelle (1984) 193. Macrobius uses this allusion to develop a systematic parallel between this reference to the death of a child and the destruction of Troy and the earlier reference to the elderly Evander discussing the future greatness of Rome in *Sat.* 7.2.15.

*-vino vel infusum vel aspersum-* Macrobius ironically qualifies the aggravating effects of wine in terms of its medicinal use, perhaps referring to Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*, which includes both infusions (*HN* 27.113) and aspersion (*HN* 26.92) of wine. For an explanation of both the harmful and salutary effects of wine, see *HN* 23.19-26.

**7.3.4 (end)– 9. *Scomma* as *morsus*.**

- (A1) injunction to abstain from hurtful *scomma* (4, end)
- (B1) hurtful *scomma* compared to *loedoria* (5-6)
- (C) definition of *scomma* and *loedoria* restated (6)
- (B2) hurtful *scomma* in conversation- illustrated from Cicero (7-8)
- (A2) injunction to abstain from such *scommata* (9)

7.3.5. Macrobius argues that insults are more hurtful when made in public because the laughter of the guests aggravates the pain, and he elaborates the barbed arrows of Plutarch (631D-E) into a gladiatorial image, in keeping with the theme of public entertainment in the passage.

*-hami angulosi [...] mucrones* - Macrobius refers here to the fish hooks of the trident of the *retiarius*, and he has Evangelus and Disarius refer to the net in *Sat.* 7.9.8-10.

Contrasted to it it is the sword of the *secutor*, with whom the *retiarius* is traditionally paired. For the *retiarius* and *secutor* in combat, see Junkelmann (2000) 124-7 and 110-111 respectively, and 153-155 for a discussion of their pairing. For another example of this pairing in the context of humour, see Quintilian (*Inst.* 6.3.61).

7.3.6. Eustathius provides an example of *loedoria*, followed by a parallel example of the wounding sort of *scommā*, both translated almost directly from Plutarch.

*-oblitusne es quia salsamenta vendebas*- Macrobius expands Plutarch's *παριχοπώλην* (631D), a standard insult in Greek literature (Eust. *Il.* 723.9; *Rhet. Her.* 4.54, 67; Diog. Laert. 4.46), without changing the sense, perhaps suggesting real cultural continuity between the Greek and Roman worlds (Curtis [1991] 154-155). For the ancient trade in salt fish and especially its medical use, see Pliny (*HN* 32. 17); see also Curtis (1990) 1-12 and Curtis (1991).

*-illud tamen loedoria, quod aperte obiectum exprobratumque est, hoc scomma, quod figurate-* Macrobius, at the centre of his explanation of the distinction between the two sorts of *scomma*, offers his third definition of the difference between *scomma* and *loedoria*, the first two being in 7.2.2 and in 7.2.3.

7.3.7. Macrobius omits the obscure jab of Melanthios and the joke of Theocritus from which he draws the term *διαβολή* (631D) in order to focus on one of the rare Roman anecdotes of Plutarch, Cicero's mockery of the servile origins of a certain Octavius. As usual, he explains the anecdote thoroughly, and this anecdote provides a prime example of biting *scomma*.

*-Octavius, qui natu nobilis videbatur-* the author explains the class premise of the joke for added clarity and in order to emphasize the connection to its more benign counterpart in the remark of Amphias of Tarsus in *Sat.* 7.3.20 (see below). Marinone (1967) 760 n. 3 is mistaken to identify this Octavius with Augustus, since Plutarch, who retells the joke several times (see also *Reg. et imp. Apophth.* 205B), has only *τις Ὀκταούσιος* in *Cic.* 26.4.

*-Libys oriundo dicebatur, quibus mos est aurem forare-* Macrobius specifies the practice to which the joke refers, again for added clarity. Piercing the ear was a mark of slavery in Greece (Fuhrmann [1972] 171 n. 1) and the contrast with a *natus nobilis* implies that Macrobius was aware of the reference.

7.3.8. Macrobius adds a Ciceronian example of biting *scomma* recycled and abbreviated from *Sat.* 2.3.10, reordering it to have the quip of Cicero and its explanation frame the

sarcastic response of Laberius. Although the words of the two men are repeated almost *verbatim* from 2.3.10, the explanation that remains serves more to structure than to clarify the anecdote, which the reader is presumed to understand already.

*-mimus ille-* the passage alludes to Laberius' prize at the games in 2.3.10 without, however, re-explaining it.

*-scomma fuit in C. Caesarem, qui in senatum passim multos admittebat* – Macrobius refers to Caesar's expansion of the senate from 600 to 900 members between 45 and 44 BCE (Cass. Dio 43.47.3). For the anti-Caesarian overtones of the lost *Dicta Ciceronis* cited in the *Saturnalia*, see Benjamin (1955) 29-31.

*-ut eos quattuordecim gradus capere non possent-* Macrobius refers obliquely to the seats of the theatre, the first fourteen rows of which were reserved for equestrians like Laberius.

7.3.9. Macrobius ends with a brief warning to avoid the harmful sort of *scomma* illustrated from 6 to 8, a second echo, after 7.3.4, of the advice with which Plutarch opened his discussion of *scomma* (631C). He uses the advice, however, for his own structural purposes.

*-tali ergo genere, quod fetum contumeliae est-* Macrobius uses this advice to avoid the most insulting sort of *scomma* in order to prefigure his advice to avoid the *omne scommatum genus* in 7.3.23.

**7.3.10-13.** Proportionality in *scommas*.

Macrobius provides three anecdotes, each with appropriate comments about the nature of *scommas* in general, each drawn from different places in Plutarch or elsewhere (see the chart for chapter 7.3). He chooses the anecdotes in order to fit into an original numerological framework constructed around the numbers 1 and 3, which highlights the central idea of proportion:

(A1) jokes about the one-day consul (10)

(A2) jokes about physical defects, the last about a one-eyed king (11-12)

(A3) anecdote of the (single) colour of bean potage (13)

7.3.10. Eustathius relates three more innocuous jokes of Cicero, against the one-day consul. As with the exchange with Laberius in 7.3.8, these jokes are recycled from Book 2, and if the explanation in 7.3.8 was inadequate in itself, however, here it is entirely misleading: the three jokes against “the one-day consul,” only two of which are attributed to Cicero in Book 2, in reality target two different individuals, Caninius Revilus in the first two cases and Vatinius in the third. Macrobius notes the phenomenon of misattribution of comic works, using Plautus as an example, in *Sat.* 2.1.11 = Gell. *NA* 3.3. If we are to assume two different sources for the two Books that Macrobius neglected to harmonize, as Benjamin (1955) 44 does, it is not entirely coincidental that in this highly emphatic development Macrobius follows the source that emphasizes effect over accuracy.

*-quasi edentatae beluae morsus-* Macrobius provides his final and notably zoological development of his initial image of *scommma* as a *morsus figuratus* (7.3.2), counterbalancing the unadvisable *mordaciter* in 7.3.8. Cicero is perfectly placed to illustrate *mordacitas*, as it is his defining characteristic in Book 2 (see *Sat.* 2.3.4, 2.3.9, 2.3.12, 2.3.13).

*-qui in uno tantum die consulatum peregit, solent, inquit, esse flamines diales, modo consules diales habemus-* Macrobius has Eustathius recycle, with only minor stylistic changes, and attribute to Cicero the joke which Servius had in turn attributed instead to the obscure Marcus Otacilius Pitholaus (*Sat.* 2.2.13). Servius is presumably correct, since it is more likely that a joke of his would be attributed to Cicero than vice versa.

*-vigilantissimus est consul noster qui in consulatu suo somnum non vidit-* Macrobius recycles and slightly adapts the joke which Symmachus attributes to Cicero (2.3.6), ignoring the two other Ciceronian quotes which do not emphasize the idea of a single day.

*-veniebam, inquit, sed nox me comprehendit-* Macrobius recycles the most appropriate of the three Ciceronian remarks in 2.3.5 against another short-lived consul, Vatinius (*Plut. Caes.* 58). He glosses over the sickness of Vatinius, whose consulship in fact lasted several days (2.3.5), in order to harmonize the remark with the previous two about Caninius Revilus.

7.3.11. Having completed the development of *scommma* as a *morsus* begun in 7.3.2, Macrobius explains the terms *amaritudo* and *urbanitas* evoked in 7.3.3, by emphasizing that bitterness is reduced in proportion to the triviality of the defect criticized, with the

bodily defects in Plutarch (633B-C) as concrete examples. He chooses two defects that apply particularly to Socrates, explaining the eventual comparison between Socrates and Critobulus in 7.3.16.

*-curvam erectionem-* Macrobius adapts Plutarch's passing mention of baldness (633C) to evoke a defining quality of Socrates in visual art. For visual depictions of Socrates, see Zanker (1995).

*-Socraticam depressionem-* Macrobius offers a philosophical summary of the extensive discussion of noses in Plutarch (633B) by evoking the snub nose, a personal defect which Socrates celebrated in Xen. *Symp.* 5.6.

7.3.12. Macrobius recounts the vivid example of the blindness of king Antigonus and of the death of Theocritus of Chios, who joked about it (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.9 = 633C), emphasizing that *urbanitas* is *anceps* and potentially harmful.

*-Antigonus rex-* Antigonus Monophthalmus (c. 382-301) was a successor to Alexander, king of Macedonia 306-301. Macrobius omits that Antigonus was able to joke about his own blindness (633C), leaving the ability to joke about one's own condition purely to the philosophers Socrates (7.3.16) and Diogenes (7.3.21).

*-Theocritum Chium-* Macrobius evokes the political enemy of Theopompus and epigramist who wrote against Aristotle, Anaximenes, and Alexander (*FGrH* 760), and who satirizes a legacy hunter in *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4 (631E). See Fuhrmann (1972) 68 note 5. Macrobius explains the prior legal case of Theocritus in order to clarify the anecdote; for a slightly different account of his death, see Ps. Plutarch *De lib. educ.* 11 A-

C, in which Theocritus is executed after accusing Antigonus' cook of wanting to serve him raw τῶ Κύκλωπι (to the Cyclops), discussed by Teodorsson (1990) 380-382. For the relationship between the tyrant and men of letters, see Billows (1990) 311-313.

7.3.13. Macrobius transforms Plutarch's anecdote of the philosopher Aridices and the wealthy freedman (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.12 = 634C) from an example of an exchange between people of different social situations into an example of the susceptibility of philosophers to the harmful sort of *scommas*, also subtly introducing the *quaestiones convivales*.

*-Aridices philosophus-* Fuhrmann, (1972) 176, 74, n. 2 identifies him as a Rhodian disciple of Archesilaus.

*-cur ex nigra et ex alba faba pulmamentum unius coloris edatur-* Macrobius emphasizes that this inquiry is a parody of the *quaestiones convivales*, and Fuhrmann (1972) 176, 74, n. 2 is probably correct to interpret the question as a veiled comment on the mediocrity of the guests. Macrobius later adapts the question of whether the chicken or the egg came first (*Quaest. conv.* 2.3 = 635E-638A), which he puts in the mouth of the caustic Evangelus, to suggest a similarly malicious intent (7.16). For the generally more positive, serious, and philosophical use of the *quaestiones convivales*, see *Sat.* 7.3.24.

*-cur et de albis et de nigris loris similes maculae gignantur-* in contrast to this insulting answer, Macrobius makes the polite and reasonable answer of the doctor Disarius to the similar question of Evangelus into a positive counter-example.

**7.3.14-21. *Scommata* as *laus*.**

(A+B) summary of the following sections:

(A1) criticisms inoffensive to the listener's conscience because they are false (15-16)

(B) compliments offensive to the listener's conscience because they are false (17)

(A2) criticisms which avoid offending because of the audience or the speaker (18-21)

7.3.14. Expanding on his earlier *aliud sonet, aliud intellegas* (7.3.2), Macrobius explains that insults may be only superficially insulting (15-16, 18-21), just as compliments can be only superficially complimentary (17).

-*Sunt scommata quae in superficie habent speciem contumeliae*- having explained the *directa contumelia* of *loedoria* (7.3.2) and having qualified harmful *scommata* as equally *fetum contumeliae* (7.3.9), Macrobius defines the main branch of harmless *scommata* by the mere appearance of insult.

7.3.15. Macrobius illustrates the concept of superficially insulting remarks with the anecdote of L. Quintus, an honest governor jokingly accused of corruption (see *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.5 = 632A). Ably presenting this personal acquaintance of Plutarch to a reader far removed from the events, Macrobius, who had likely been a governor himself, takes advantage of the setting in *Domitiani temporibus* in order to absolve his own age.

-*L. Quintus praetor*- Macrobius may have followed a manuscript gloss in Plutarch's text for the name, but L. Quintus is manifestly not the (T. Avidius) Quietus of Plutarch (Q50 in *PIR* VII, fasc. 1, p. 31).

*-quod mireris Domitiani temporibus-* Macrobius likely draws his image of corruption in the reign of Domitian from Pliny the younger and his denunciations of the crimes of Regulus: *Vidistine quemquam M. Regulo timidiorem humiliorem post Domitiani mortem? Sub quo non minora flagitia commiserat quam sub Nerone sed tectiora.* (Have you seen anyone more frightened and humble than M. Regulus after the death of Domitian? Under him he committed crimes no smaller than under Nero, but more discrete, *Ep.* 1.5.1; see also *Ep.* 6.2.4). For the other mention of Domitian in the *Saturnalia*, also negative, see *Sat.* 1.12.35, in which he attempts to alter the calendar (see below, p. 137). The negative attention to the reign of Domitian here parallels the transfer of political rivalries from civilian politicians and military men in 7.2.7. For the possible governorship of Macrobius, see Flamant (1977) 102-123. For governorship in Late Antiquity in general, see Sootjes (2006).

7.3.16. Macrobius further illustrates the concept of complimentary accusations with a free selection of the examples of Plutarch in *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.5 (632B-C), which he transforms into an apt introduction for the remaining stock situations of Roman comedy in the chapter. The comparison of Socrates and Critobulus gives philosophical legitimacy to this introduction, while the example of accusing a rich man of debt, to which Macrobius adds the accusation of a chaste man of squandering his wealth on courtesans, summarizes the two stock situations *par excellence* of Roman comedy.

*-Critobulum famosae pulchritudinis adolescentem-* Macrobius alludes to Socrates' mockery of Critobulus in *Xen. Symp.* 4.18-19 (Plutarch 632B), in which Socrates succeeds in proving that he is more handsome than Critobulus (5.8), but has the judges

decide in favour of Critobulus nonetheless (5.10). As with the other reference to Xenophon's *Symposium* in 7.1.13, this anecdote is entirely dependent on Plutarch and does not suggest any direct acquaintance with Xenophon or even, in this case, necessarily a conscious reference to him. Macrobius nonetheless establishes the necessary contrast between Critobulus and Socrates with his allusion to the ugliness of Socrates in 7.3.11, developing the theme of the philosopher able to criticize himself. This context is the only one in which Macrobius allows himself to allude to pederasty in these three chapters, passive homosexuality being a capital crime (*Cod. Theod.* 9.16.1, discussed in Grodzynski [1984] 377-379). See Plutarch 631A, 632B, and 633E-634A for allusions omitted from the *Saturnalia*.

*-tibi excito creditores tuos-* Macrobius chooses this particular anecdote from Plutarch (632C) because creditors are also a stock feature of Roman Comedy; their clamour appears in the *Mostellaria* (560-654) of Plautus. For the right of the creditor to seize a debtor who has not paid 30 days after the original decision, see the *XII Tables* 3.2, cited in Gell. *NA* 20.1.42-45 and in Gai. *Inst.* 4.21, and discussed in Crawford (1996) 625-629.

*-gratae tibi sunt meretrices-* Macrobius adds this reference to a hallmark of Roman Comedy; for love in Roman Comedy, see Gregoris (2000). In the age of Macrobius adultery was a capital crime (*Cod. Theod.* 11.36.4), but not prostitution *per se*.

7.3.17. Macrobius adds the corollary of the previous point, that superficially complimentary remarks can be insulting, with examples that are also the corollary of the previous examples, in a selective adaptation of *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.6 (632D).

*-Achilli vel Herculi comparandus es-* Macrobius adds the familiar Hercules (see *Sat.* 1.20.6-12) to Plutarch's Achilles, in order to provide a (superficially) positive and Roman counterpart for the (superficially) negative comments leveled against his rich and chaste man in 7.3.16.

*-aut famosae iniquitatis viro-* Macrobius creates a direct contrast between the physical excellence of Critobulus, the *famosae pulchritudinis adulescentem* in 7.3.16 and the moral depravity of an unnamed individual, likely Alcibiades, whom Avienus maligns as unworthy of the company of Socrates in *Sat.* 2.1.3, and whom Plutarch mentions immediately after Critobulus (632B).

*-ego te Aristidi in aequitate praepono –* As Critobulus was compared to Socrates, so Alcibiades is compared to Aristides (fl. 490-470), the famous rival of Themistocles in Athens and a recognizable *exemplum* of justice, whose selfless generosity Macrobius develops in 7.3.21. See Plut. *Arist.*, paired with *Cat. Min.*, in which Aristides is called the Just, Nep. *Arist.* 1, and Cic. *Off.* 3.49.

7.3.18. From the effect of the truth or falsehood of the remark on the conscience of its target, Macrobius turns to the effect of the larger audience on the reception of the remark, virtually translating the beginning of *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.11 (634A).

*-sunt enim quae si coram amicis obiciantur nobis, libenter audire possimus-* establishing the informal conditions under which a broad spectrum of true criticism can be accepted, Macrobius uses *libenter*, which he adds, in a natural sense.

*-nisi tale sit quod illorum censura libenter accipiat-* the presence of a wife, parent or teacher in the audience provides the greatest challenge for tactful *scommas* in the chapter,

and Macrobius uses his second *libenter*, strikingly paired with *censura*, in order to emphasize the paradox.

7.3.19. Macrobius resolves the paradox of the previous paragraph by outlining the pseudo-criticisms that can be accepted in the two formal circumstances mentioned in that paragraph, again drawing on Plutarch (634A), but markedly condensing him, reducing the section to a summary of excellence as a son and as a husband.

*-coram parentibus vel magistris... continuas vigiliis lectionesque nocturnes-* Macrobius omits those examples of Plutarch which would suggest an older student or son, and by assimilating parents to teachers (as in the previous paragraph), recreates the respective roles that he had given to himself and his son in his preface (*Sat. praef. 2*).

*-uxorium se praebendo nec ullam elegantiam eligendo formarum-* by emphasizing the theme of physical appearance left untouched by Plutarch, Macrobius creates a female antithesis to the *comparatio formae* between Socrates and Critobulus in 7.3.16, and establishes devotion to one's wife as a philosophical practice.

7.3.20. From the audience, Macrobius turns to the social position of the speaker and its effect on the reception of certain *scommata*, slightly simplifying three brief examples from *Quaest. conv. 2.1.12* (634B-C).

*-si alium de paupertate pauper inrideat, si obscure natum natus obscure-* demonstrating the tactful way in which to approach class reference, Macrobius makes these remarks the positive counterpart to the attacks on low birth and humble professions in *Sat. 7.3.6-7*. He

therefore removes the reference of Plutarch to pederasty (see note for 7.3.16) as unnecessary here.

*-ex hortulano potens-* Macrobius summarizes the two previous examples with a point which Plutarch had used to offset the examples of Aridices and the freedman (634B-C, see *Sat.* 7.3.13) and simplifies the anecdote by emphasizing the power of Amphias and his personal friendship with the target of the remark, where Plutarch had distinguished between Amphias and the governor, whose friend the former mocks in this original version. Amphias is otherwise unknown (see Fuhrmann [1972] 176 n. 3); for the social status of gardeners, see the *pauperculus quidam hortulanus* of Apul. *Met.* 9.3.

7.3.21. Macrobius closes with examples of the highest praise which can be offered through *somma*, and with the distinguished example of Diogenes (philosophy) who is able to entirely undercut the basis of jokes on status (alleviated in 7.3.20) through his voluntary poverty (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.7 = 632E). Macrobius offers a Latin prose adaptation of Plutarch's Diog. Sinop. F5, a fragment from a tragedy in which Diogenes figured as a character (see *TrGF* vol. 1, p. 257), an arrangement which allows Macrobius greater freedom in explaining the passage with other traditional material about Diogenes.

*-si virum fortem vituperes quasi salutis suae prodigum-* Macrobius adds this note to demonstrate how *somma* can both highlight the courage of someone like Achilles or Hercules and the cowardice of someone with these examples (7.3.17).

*-si obieceris liberali quod res suas profundunt minus sibi quam aliis consulendo-* for the same reason as above, Macrobius adapts the joking characterization of the generous man

as stingy in Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.5 = 632C), to refer to the selfless altruism of an Aristides. See 7.3.17.

-*Cynicum, magister suum*- Macrobius adds this introduction of Antisthenes for clarity, in case his reader has forgotten that Horus is ‘a follower of Antisthenes, Crates, and Diogenes himself’ (*Sat.* 1.7.3).

-*solebat veluti vituperando laudare*- Macrobius reverses the *verba laudem sonantia ad notam vituperationis suae* in the mocking comparisons to Achilles, Hercules and Aristides in 7.3.17.

-*mendicum fecit ex divite*- Macrobius adds this note to contrast with (and resolve) the jokes on poverty earlier, picking up on a real tradition since Diogenes Laertius 6.20 states that Diogenes was the son of a banker in Sinope.

-*pro ampla domo in dolio fecit habitare*- Macrobius adds this reference to the well-known barrel of Diogenes (see Cic. *Tusc.* 5.91-92, Lucian *Hist. conscr.* 3, Diog. Laert. 6.23, Jer. *Adv. Iovinian.* 2.14).

-*philosophum et consummatae virtutis virum*- Macrobius offers a vaguer formulation of Plutarch’s σοφὸν καὶ αὐτάρκη καὶ μακάριον, wise and independent and happy, in order to emphasize not the specifics of Cynic philosophy but the generic philosophical virtues of Diogenes, which also characterize the Cynic Horus in the *Saturnalia* (see above, p. 28).

<p><b>7.3.22-23.</b> Recapitulation: categories of <i>somma</i> and practical application.</p>
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7.3.22. Macrobius synthesizes the use of *scommas* for a young reader by emphasizing its complexity and by citing the training established by the Spartans (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4 = 631F), which he transforms from an introduction to *scommas* into a conclusion.

*-apud Lacedaemonios [...] a Lycurgo est institutum-* Macrobius identifies the lawgiver responsible for the practices of Plutarch's ἡ καλή Λακεδαιμόνων, Sparta the good, suggesting some independence from Plutarch on this point, and a familiarity with Lycurgus from his reading of Cicero's *De Republica*, where the lawgiver is mentioned at 2.2, 2.15, 2.18-19, 2.24, 2.42-43, 2.50, 2.58, 3.16. For Spartan education, see Kennel (1995).

*-ac siquis eorum in indignationem ob tale dictum prolapsus fuisset-* Macrobius adds here the concept of indignation, which he had described as capable of overcoming even the philosopher (see *Sat.* 7.3.13), in order to emphasize *a fortiori* the caution required of offended *adulescentes*.

7.3.23. Following on this didactic example, Macrobius offers his own, more sweeping didactic conclusion to the chapter, explaining that the possibility of anger, which had made *scommas* the preferred form of *reprehensio* for the *sapiens* (7.3.3), makes even *scommas* too risky for the use of the *adulescens*. He therefore advises a turn from *scommas* to the more harmless *quaestiones convivales*, the subject of the remainder of Book 7 (*Sat.* 7.4-16).

*-adulescentia tua, quae ita docilis est ut discenda praecipiat-* Macrobius recalls the knowledgeable questions of Avienus on questioning, blaming, and *scommata*, which anticipated the developments of Eustathius on these questions, as a paradigm for the assimilation of the theory of *scommata*.

*-anceps esse omne scommatum genus-* Macrobius follows this concession to the intelligence of Avienus with compelling grounds for avoiding *scommata* in practice, based on the subtle division between *scommata* with and without *morsus* and the susceptibility of banquets to anger (*Sat.* 7.3.3-4).

*-quaestiones convivales vel proponas vel ipse disolvas-* Macrobius therefore replaces the corollary commands of Lycurgus that youths *et scommata sine morsu dicere et ab aliis in se dicta perpeti discerent* (7.3.22) with the posing and answering of the *quaestiones convivales*. The term *disolvas*, which recall the insulting *absolvas* of the philosopher Aridices in *Sat.* 7.3.13 in response to a question of this genre, require the final justification of the *quaestiones convivales* in the following chapter.

<p><b>7.3.24.</b> Conclusion to <i>scommata</i> and introduction to the <i>quaestiones convivales</i>.</p>
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7.3.24. Macrobius concludes with a defense of the *quaestiones convivales* in the tradition of Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 1. *praef.* = 612D) and of Aulus Gellius (*NA* 7.13), ranging the *quaestiones convivales* firmly with philosophy which has been introduced in *Sat.* 7.1 as opposed to the *ludicrae voluptates* rejected in *Sat.* 2.1.7. Cited in

chronological order, his three ancient philosophical authorities for the genre include Plutarch himself in the prominent central position.

-*veteres [...] ludicrum non putarunt*- Macrobius highlights the seriousness and antiquity of the *quaestiones conviviales* genre as a whole, as against the triviality of some particular questions (see *Sat.* 7.3.13). He thereby justifies the genre in the same terms as the recounting of ancient jokes in 2.1.10, which *digna veteribus visa est* (was seen as worthy by the ancients), but makes the *quaestiones conviviales* markedly superior since the genre merits *tot philosophantium curam*, the conclusion to this paragraph.

-*Aristoteles de ipsis aliqua conscripserit*- the work in question, alluded to by Plutarch as well (612D), is probably the *Problemata* of pseudo-Aristotle, not the philosopher's lost *Symposium* (see Fuhrmann [1972] XIII). For a passage of Aristotle on specifically human pleasures, cited at length through Gell. *NA* 19.2, see *Sat.* 2.8.10-16, and Guittard (1997) 323 n. 7.

-*vester Apuleius*- Macrobius adds the required Roman authority to his list with this introduction of Apuleius, the second century chief priest of Africa (*Flor.* 16), and a philosopher, poet, and rhetorician; for Apuleius as a philosopher, see Hijmans (1987) 395ff. It is evidently as a philosopher that Macrobius considers him, since he is surprised (*In Somn.* 1.2.8) that Apuleius would use fictions in his work without moral purpose. The philosophical influence of Apuleius was particularly strong on African writers in Late Antiquity, among them Augustine (*Ep.* 136. 1; 138), and Martianus Capella (see Grebe [1999] 159-192). His *Quaestiones Conviviales* are now lost and only briefly mentioned by Sidonius Apollinaris (*Ep.* 9.13.2), so the theory of Linke (1880) 52-57 that they were a

major source for Macrobius, although plausible, can neither be confirmed nor denied; see Flamant (1972) 302-303.

## Conclusion: The Originality of Macrobius

The *Saturnalia* is a compilation of passages from different authors, both Greek and Latin, as Macrobius reminds us in his preface (*Sat. praef. 2*), and for ease of finding and excerpting, it would be difficult to rival the respective first chapters of the two initial books of Plutarch's *Quaestiones Convivales*, with their related discussions of proper conduct at *symposia*. As we have seen, however, Macrobius modifies this source in *Sat. 7.1-3*, adding to, subtracting from, and reorganizing it, more thoroughly than any other known source of the *Saturnalia*.<sup>236</sup> How, then, does he modify Plutarch, and, and what is original to this section of the *Saturnalia*?

We see first that while maintaining the advice of Plutarch nearly intact, Macrobius standardizes the presentation of his chapters. This desire for a standard presentation requires him to address the length of Plutarch's chapters, since in the original *Quaest. conv. 2.1* is nearly twice as long as *Quaest. conv. 1.1*, and the two sections into which the former naturally divides are far from even.<sup>237</sup> By judicious editing, however, Macrobius creates two chapters of almost equal length (*Sat. 7.1* and *7.3*), framing the shorter *7.2*; together the three chapters offer virtually all the advice of Plutarch and a broadly representative, though often limited, sample of its illustrations.<sup>238</sup> Macrobius also addresses the dialogue presentation of Plutarch: whereas the opinion of the author emerges through a four-party dialogue in the first part of *Quaest. conv. 1.1* but from an uninterrupted monologue in *2.1*, the *Saturnalia* reassigns several of the speeches

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<sup>236</sup> Bernabei (1970) 95.

<sup>237</sup> Questions are dealt with only from *2.1.1-3* (*Sat. 7.2*), while humour takes up all of *2.1.4-13* (*Sat. 7.3*).

<sup>238</sup> Macrobius omits most of the anecdotes of *Quaest. conv. 2.1.4-13*, and retains only the last two of the original six quotations from the Greek poets in *Quaest. conv. 2.1.1-3* (*Antiop. F184, Il. 10.544-5, Od. 9.12, OC 510-1, Androm. F133, Od. 3.247-51*).

of *Quaest. conv.* 1.1<sup>239</sup> and makes Eustathius the exclusive spokesman for the opinion of Plutarch in each chapter. Finally, Macrobius imposes a similar chiasmic structure on each chapter, which requires extensive reordering of the text of Plutarch: only *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.1-3 is presented in a close approximation of its original order, while 2.1.4-13 is entirely reworked. Although Macrobius maintains the doctrines of the *Quaestiones Convivales*, then, the presentation represents a significant departure from Plutarch.

Secondly, the material that Macrobius does include, in its reordered form, may be altered by the author's search for a natural Roman equivalent to the original. Often enough, it should be noted, the text is faithfully translated, with occasional brief notes to explain elements foreign to a Roman reader. Macrobius therefore, meticulously lists the closest Latin substitutes (*Sat.* 7.2.2 and 7.3.2) for the untranslatable Greek term *somma*, and supplies his own explanations for Isocrates (*Graecus orator*, 7.1.4), Pisistratus (*Athenarum tyrannus*, 7.1.12), and Antisthenes (*Cynicus, magister* of Diogenes, 7.3.21).<sup>240</sup> But for both terminology and characters, this added explanation is exceptional, because most of the key terms can be translated quite adequately, and because most of the characters are either famous enough not to require special explanation,<sup>241</sup> or are identified

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<sup>239</sup> Eustathius delivers not the summary of the opinions of others that Plutarch had assigned to himself in *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1, which goes instead to Symmachus (*Sat.* 7.1.2-4), but the refutation of these opinions that Plutarch had placed in the mouth of Craton (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.2 = *Sat.* 7.1.5-7). See my commentary, *ad loc.* The questions which occasion the speeches of Eustathius are more variously assigned, however: whereas Sossius Senecio had asked both about the extent to which Philosophy could appear at banquets (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.3) and the correct practice in questions and jokes (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.1), Macrobius assigns the first question to Rufius Albinus (*Sat.* 7.1.8) and the second to Avienus (7.2.1, repeated in 7.3.1).

<sup>240</sup> See my commentary, *ad loc.*

<sup>241</sup> Socrates (7.1.13, 7.3.16) and a select list of the other guests of the *Symposia* of Plato and Xenophon (7.1.13), as well as Alcinoos (7.1.14), Homer (7.1.18, 7.1.23, 7.2.15), Euripides (7.2.9), Nestor (7.2.15), Aristides (7.3.17), Diogenes (7.3.21), Lycurgus (7.3.22), Aristotle (7.3.24), and Plutarch himself (7.3.24) would all presumably be familiar to a reader with a working knowledge of Greek literature and philosophy.

by Plutarch himself.<sup>242</sup> For quotes, however, Macrobius allows himself more freedom: he often “translates” Greek poetry by pairing it with parallel Vergilian verses (Homer: *Sat.* 7.1.23, 7.2.15; Euripides: *Sat.* 7.2.9),<sup>243</sup> requiring the addition of new material to his adaptation. In the same way, he does not hesitate to replace the images of Plutarch where Roman literary culture supplies a more vivid counterpart, and so transforms a reference to barbed arrows into a gladiatorial image (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4 [631D] = *Sat.* 7.3.5), and replaces Egypt with India (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.4 [614B-C] = 7.1.18) as the distant source of the potion of Helen in the *Odyssey*. *Sat.* 7.1-3, then, certainly parallels the text of Plutarch, but is hardly a slavish translation.

Finally, Macrobius offers certain independent elaborations on Plutarch, which reinforce both the Roman and literary character of these chapters of the *Saturnalia*. In addition to Romanizing certain Greek anecdotes, as we have seen above, then, Macrobius supplies two entirely new Ciceronian anecdotes in *Sat.* 7.3.8 and 10, inspired by another Ciceronian quote in Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.4 = 631D = *Sat.* 7.3.7). These additions are not meant to reflect contemporary reality, however, and several elements of the original that could bring to mind the immediate present of Macrobius and the professional duties of his social class are on the contrary actually altered or expunged.<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Macrobius follows Plutarch in identifying Antigonus as *rex* (7.3.12), Theocritus as *Chius* (7.3.12), Aridices as *philosophus* (7.3.13), Critobulus as a *famosae pulchritudinis adulescens* (7.3.16), and Amphias as *Tarseus* (7.3.20).

<sup>243</sup> Macrobius seems to rely here on the sources of ready-made comparisons used in *Sat.* 5. These same sources appear to serve Macrobius again when he introduces material from the *Odyssey* independent of Plutarch, comparing the banquets of Alcinoos and of Dido (7.1.14). See my commentary, *ad loc.* It is less common for Macrobius to explain (*Sat.* 7.1.18-19 = *Quaest. conv.* 1.1.4 [614C] = *Od.* 4.242) or replace (*Sat.* 7.3.21 = *Quaest. conv.* 2.1.7 [632E] = Diog. Sinop. F5) Greek verse with Latin prose.

<sup>244</sup> In chapter 2, for example, Macrobius removes the references to barbarians in travel narratives (7.2.6) and replaces boastful politicians with soldiers (7.2.7). This avoidance of contemporary reality and public life is contrary to the practice of Plutarch, who had been willing to discuss the joking charge of corruption against his own friend Quietus (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.5 = 632A). Macrobius includes the anecdote (*Sat.* 7.3.15), but carefully identifies Quietus/Quintus as an official under the emperor Domitian. For a discussion of L. Quintus, see my commentary, *ad loc.*

Significantly, allegory figures prominently: Macrobius greatly develops the image of Philosophy as a woman (*Quaest. conv.* 1.1.1-2 = *Sat.* 7.1.2-5) in the tradition of Cicero and Seneca,<sup>245</sup> and follows Pliny the younger and Symmachus in transposing a simple reference to hunting into the realm of literary allegory (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.3 [631A] = *Sat.* 7.2.13).<sup>246</sup> In so doing, Macrobius begins to alter not only the text of the original, but also its character.

In sum, *Sat.* 7.1-3 remains reflective of *Quaest. conv.* 1.1 and 2.1, and is in some respects scrupulously faithful to its original. Aside from the broad sequence of the questions treated and the prescriptions themselves, however, Macrobius reworks virtually every aspect of the text. The order of the secondary points changes, sometimes drastically, and the anecdotes and illustrations that Macrobius includes are often altered and occasionally supplemented from other sources, as Macrobius integrates the text of Plutarch into a more structured and more Roman work. Ultimately, however, the changes stem not only from this basic desire for consistency within the *Saturnalia*, but also from a vision of the function of the dialogue which is fundamentally different from that of Plutarch: whereas Plutarch offset his antiquarian material with the immediacy of his chosen form and occasional contemporary references,<sup>247</sup> Macrobius exploits the artificiality of the genre and systematically sets aside contemporary reality. The result is both a competent adaptation of Plutarch and a window into the worldview of its own author.

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<sup>245</sup> See my commentary, *ad loc.* The contrast between this image and the image of pleasure as a dancing girl in *Sat.* 2.1.5-7 helps to structure the *Saturnalia*.

<sup>246</sup> See my commentary, *ad loc.*

<sup>247</sup> Fuhrmann (1972) XVII-XIX.

## Appendix 1 Politics in the *Saturnalia*

We look in vain for direct allusions to the troubles of the fifth or fourth centuries in the serene image of the Roman aristocracy in the *Saturnalia*. The *Saturnalia* itself, however, is hardly proof that its characters, or its author, were ‘out of touch’ with the political issues of their period.<sup>248</sup> Though *Saturnalia* is certainly not a political pamphlet like Julian’s *Banquet of the Caesars*, it nevertheless does not, and probably could not, entirely ignore the political dimension. We will examine the position of the *Saturnalia* vis-à-vis the senate, the emperor, and the barbarians.

Although the political class figures prominently in the *Saturnalia*, it is discussed exclusively in terms of its leisure, a fact only highlighted by the absence of Postumianus, who must plead cases for his friends (*Sat.* 1.2.6). The official duties of the senatorial characters are expressly excluded by the Saturnalia festival itself: *togatus certe, vel trabeatus, paludatusque seu praetextatus hac die videatur nullus* (*Sat.* 1.6.2).<sup>249</sup> In contrast to the ‘professionals’ of the gathering, praised for their knowledge of their respective fields, then, the Albinus, Symmachus, Nicomachus and Praetextatus are praised almost exclusively for their private moderation and learning, which is admittedly exemplary.<sup>250</sup> If the senatorial characters cannot be introduced in terms of their official duties, however, they probably do not require it, as their careers would already be familiar to the reader.

No emperor, in contrast, is present as a character and the Valentinians do not appear in the *Saturnalia* even indirectly. Several ancient emperors serve as *exempla*,

<sup>248</sup> Following Flamant (1977) 685-6, *contra* Paschoud (1967) 107-108.

<sup>249</sup> Indeed today no one is seen dressed in a toga or state or military robes, or in the fringed toga. *Sat.* 5.1.7 and *Sat.* 7.5.4 both allude to the oratory of Symmachus, but oratory is treated strictly as an art.

<sup>250</sup> Evangelus is in effect the counterpoint, as an immoderate and boorish senator, but Cameron (1966) 38 argues that the *Saturnalia* could be in effect an apology for the Roman aristocracy of the 380s against the criticisms of luxury and excess leveled by Ammianus Marcellinus and Jerome.

however, notably Domitian as the tyrant who gave his own name to the month of October and Germanicus, his triumphal agnomen, to September (*Sat.* 1.12.36-37), Trajan as a skeptic of the oracle of Baalbek (*Sat.* 1.23.14-16), and Septimius Severus for his frugality (*Sat.* 3.16.7); the latter two are also named respectively as locators for Pliny the Elder (*Sat.* 3.16.6), mistakenly, and for Serenus Sammonicus (*Sat.* 3.16.7). It is Augustus who is mentioned most, however, and most positively. In contrast to Domitian, he is spontaneously honoured with the naming of the month of August (*Sat.* 1.12.35), and is credited for the final alterations to the Roman calendar (*Sat.* 1.14.14). He is also the model of self-restraint and decency in Book 2 (*Sat.* 2.4.1) in the jokes which he is able to make and to endure, and compares favourably to Cicero,<sup>251</sup> to Caesar (*Sat.* 2.3.9-13)<sup>252</sup> and to Julia (*Sat.* 2.5.1),<sup>253</sup> and it is perhaps significant that several of the anecdotes emphasize his magnanimity and tolerance after the Civil War (*Sat.* 2.4.27; 2.4.29).

Barbarians evidently belong to the world of *officium*, and as such are virtually absent from the *Saturnalia*. Macrobius discusses foreign customs extensively, but almost always in connection with traditional religion,<sup>254</sup> and leaves Plutarch's suggestion to ask travelers about the ἔθῶν τε βαρβαρικῶν καὶ νόμων<sup>255</sup> *per se* untranslated in *Sat.* 7.2.6. Ostensibly set in 383/4, the dialogue does not, of course, permit the characters to discuss

<sup>251</sup> Avienus stresses that in contrast to Cicero, Augustus is always decent and mindful of rank (*Sat.* 2.4.1).

<sup>252</sup> Discussed by Benjamin (1955) 29-30. Caesar is the butt of many of the jokes of Cicero, and appears as a tyrant in *Sat.* 2.7, where Laberius remarks *Porro Quirites! Libertatem perdimus* (Alas, Romans, we have lost our liberty, *Sat.* 2.7.4).

<sup>253</sup> Discussed by Benjamin (1955) 31, 37.

<sup>254</sup> Macrobius discusses the customs of the Egyptians, represented in the dialogue by the cynic Horus, extensively; Praetextatus also discusses the customs of the 'Assyrians' in his exposition of solar henotheism (*Sat.* 1.17.66-70 for the Assyrian cult of Apollo, *Sat.* 1.21.2 for their cult of Adonis, and *Sat.* 1.23.10-21 for Jupiter, Hadad and Atargatis). He also mentions the Accitani of Spain for their solar cult (*Sat.* 1.19.5, cf. Plin. *HN* 3.25), and Theron, king of Hispania Citerior for menacing the city of Gades (*Sat.* 1.20.12). These anecdotes are all connected, indirectly in the case of the last, with religion; only the Persian custom in *Sat.* 7.1.3 is unconnected with it.

<sup>255</sup> Laws and customs of the barbarian nations (*Quaest. conv.* 2.1.2 = 630 B-C). See my commentary, *ad loc.*

the sack of Rome in 410,<sup>256</sup> and in fact the *Saturnalia* rarely mentions military engagements after the battle of Actium.<sup>257</sup> The comparable crises of the *Saturnalia* all belong to the distant past and are happily resolved: Hannibal, who boasts during his approach to Rome (*Sat.* 1.4.26),<sup>258</sup> later jokes about the superiority of the Roman army (*Sat.* 2.2.1-3). The praise of slaves in Book 1, however, allows for a full treatment of moments of crisis, and both the Gaulish sack of Rome (*Sat.* 1.11.35-38) and the second Punic War (*Sat.* 1.11.30-31) figure prominently there.

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<sup>256</sup> Flamant (1977) 685 notes this.

<sup>257</sup> The two exceptions would be *Sat.* 1.11.32, in which Macrobius has Augustus enroll slaves in his army for a campaign in Germany and Illyricum, an action not attested elsewhere (Guittard [1997] 286 n. 19), and Trajan's campaign against Parthia in *Sat.* 1.23.14, which marks the high water mark of Roman expansion.

<sup>258</sup> An illustration of the phrase *die quinti*. Symmachus identifies the passage as drawn from Cato's *Origines* (Chassignet [1986] frag. 13, 40).

## Appendix 2 Religion in the *Saturnalia*

If the *Saturnalia* virtually excludes political commentary, it includes an ample though cautious treatment of religion, which accounts for much of the content and form of the work. The *Saturnalia*, first, neatly sums up the development of Roman religion in its *mise-en-scène*, a gathering of the last generation of traditionalist dignitaries celebrating the oldest of Roman religious festivals.<sup>259</sup> It also fills in many of the details of this panorama, as Book 1 explains the gradual and sometimes faulty<sup>260</sup> development of Roman religion up to its perfection in the age of Augustus,<sup>261</sup> to be perfectly expressed by Vergil as described in Book 3. If the development of Roman religion in the *Saturnalia* effectively ends with the Mantuan,<sup>262</sup> its traditionalist sources from the Silver and Antonine ages such as Seneca, Plutarch, and Aulus Gellius<sup>263</sup> tacitly bridge the interval between the first and the fourth centuries, and the Late Antique<sup>264</sup> sources for the speech of Praetextatus on solar henotheism in Book 1, bring up the rear. Meeting shortly before the death of their chief luminary Praetextatus, the traditionalist aristocracy of 383-4

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<sup>259</sup> *Saturnalibus apud Vettium Praetextatum Romanae nobilitatis proceres doctique alii congregantur, et tempus sollemniter feriatum deputant colloquio liberali, convivia quoque sibi mutua comitate praebentes, nec discedentes a se nisi ad nocturnam quietem.* (*Sat.* 1.1) During the Saturnalia the leading figures of nobility of Rome and other learned men gathered at the home of Vettius Praetextatus and solemnly passed the holiday in cultured discussion, also applying themselves to the banquet with mutual affection, and not leaving from it until the hush of night.

<sup>260</sup> In his discussion of the calendar Macrobius is notably critical of the pontiffs under Caesar (1.14.1; 1.14.13).

<sup>261</sup> Particularly evident with respect to the calendar (*Sat.* 1.14.14)

<sup>262</sup> The anecdote of Trajan at the oracle of Baalbek is a notable exception, but does not concern Roman religion as such.

<sup>263</sup> Flamant (1977) 275, 280-283, notes that Vergil, like Cicero, is occasionally, but rarely, cited from memory.

<sup>264</sup> Courcelle (1948) 17-20 favours Porphyry's *Περὶ Θεῶν ὀνομάτων*, while Altheim and Stiehl (1966) vol. 3, 207-217 argues instead for Porphyry's *Περὶ ἡλίου* through Cornelius Labeo, and Flamant (1977) 655-668 suggests a combination of the *Περὶ ἀγαλμάτων*, the *Περὶ Θεῶν ὀνομάτων* and the *Περὶ ἡλίου*. Syska (1993) 214-218 argues that the speech is Macrobius' own original synthesis, and Liebeschuetz (1999) 197-200, who follows Syska, with some reserves, suggests that Macrobius may have used the works of Praetextatus himself to supplement those of Porphyry.

closes this development and make up the latest possible official proponents of traditional religion in the West.

The traditionalist world described in the *Saturnalia* belongs, then, strictly to the past:<sup>265</sup> most traditional religious festivals, including the Saturnalia itself,<sup>266</sup> had long been removed from the Roman calendar by 420, and all aspects of ‘pagan’ practice would be strictly illegal.<sup>267</sup> The present is discussed only vaguely and as reflected in the past, however, through ancient examples of worship without sacrifice<sup>268</sup> and of the loosening of the restrictions around Roman festivals.<sup>269</sup> Christianity itself is excluded completely in the *Saturnalia*, as in the classical *paedeia* to the end of antiquity generally,<sup>270</sup> although Macrobius is presumably familiar with Christian doctrine, and perhaps even with the Christian scriptures.<sup>271</sup> Whether he seeks<sup>272</sup> or avoids<sup>273</sup> conflict with the new religion is unclear, but the lack of evidence on this point only underlines the fact that it is not his focus in the *Saturnalia*.

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<sup>265</sup> *Cod. Theod.* 10.22 (423): *paganos qui supersunt, quamquam iam nullos esse credamus, promulgatarum...iam dudum praescripta conpescant.* (Let the provisions of the laws long since promulgated restrain those pagans who remain, although we do not believe that there are any now left.)

<sup>266</sup> The ostensible setting of the *Saturnalia* is less than a decade before the effective abolition of the ‘pagan’ calendar, in the constitution addressed to Decius Albinus.

<sup>267</sup> Since 392 (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.10-12.4, sent 391-2).

<sup>268</sup> Absent in the perfect Egyptian religion (*Sat.* 1.7.15) and, after an early introduction (*Sat.* 1.7.31), progressively humanized and omitted from Roman cult (*Sat.* 1.7.31-35).

<sup>269</sup> Allowing ultimately for defensive wars (*Sat.* 1.16.20) and for anything that would be harmful to leave undone (*Sat.* 1.16.9).

<sup>270</sup> Marrou (1950) 429-430, Stahl (1952) 8-9.

<sup>271</sup> Van der Horst (1973), 220-232; Granados Fernandez (1981) 361-363; *ibid* (1985) 115-125.

<sup>272</sup> Flamant (1977) 534-540 believes that he has found evidence in the *Commentary*, where Macrobius takes a literal reading of Cicero’s statement that the soul is God (*In Somn.* 2.12.5), deliberately incompatible with Christian doctrine and with standard Neo-Platonist philosophy (in which the soul is well below the divine One or the Intellect). See Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, XIX.

<sup>273</sup> Liebeschuetz (1999) 201-202 argues, somewhat improbably, that Macrobius excludes a creation myth for this reason. The *Saturnalia*, being antiquarian and not metaphysical in interest, does not require a creation myth, and it should be noted that Macrobius does, in fact, refer to the creation myth of the *Timaeus* in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio* (1.6.1-4), although admittedly in terms that do not contradict Christian doctrine.

Finally, the presentation of religion in the *Saturnalia* is propaedeutic to that in the *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*,<sup>274</sup> discussing in exclusively antiquarian and philological terms what the latter work discusses in terms of philosophy. It would seem, then, that the religion of the Neo-Platonist *Commentary*, necessarily supra-national, required a syncretist and orientalizing treatment of religion in the *Saturnalia* as well,<sup>275</sup> ably articulated by Praetextatus and Nicomachus, the main speakers on religious matters<sup>276</sup> and at whose houses religion is discussed.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>274</sup> The *Saturnalia*'s panorama of the gradual development of Roman religion, in contrast to the timeless perfection of Egyptian religion, is explained in the *Commentary*: in an eternal world, Egypt alone escapes periodic destruction by excess of fire or water (*In Somn.* 2.10.14. The doctrine is taken from Plato's *Timaeus*, probably by way of Porphyry's commentary on it (Armisen-Marchetti (2001) vol. 1, 162 n. 217). The presentation of the virtues of the sun as anthropomorphic gods in the *Saturnalia* is also explained in the *Commentary*: realities of their order are appropriately described through the fictions of myth (*In Somn.* 1.2.13).

<sup>275</sup> See note 242.

<sup>276</sup> Flamant (1977) 35-36, 43-44, 63 n. 244, 64. Caecina Albinus is not a non-factor in the religious discussions as Flamant (1977) 63-64 argues, however, since Caecina does describe the origins of the Compitalia festival (*Sat.* 1.7.34-35) in terms very similar to those of Praetextatus. The remarks of Caecina fit perfectly with the general direction of the development of religion in the *Saturnalia*.

<sup>277</sup> We have the speech of Praetextatus on solar henotheism (*Sat.* 1.17-1.23) and his description of the pontifical learning of Vergil (*Sat.* 3.1-9). Nicomachus' description of the augural learning of Vergil, predicted at *Sat.* 1.24.17, is however lost. With Nicomachus, Macrobius evidently shares an interest in divination and oracles (see above, n. 262, for the oracle at Baalbek).

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