

QUINTILIAN'S JUDGEMENT OF AFRANIUS*

Ancient scholarship records the names of three Republican dramatists, Titinius, Afranius and Atta, who wrote *fabulae togatae*, a genre of comedy similar in its domestic focus to the more popular and better-known *fabula palliata*, but with the striking distinction that the *togata* was set in Rome and the Italian cities. While Titinius and, to a lesser extent, Atta were regularly quoted as authoritative sources for rare words and usages by grammarians and lexicographers, it was Afranius who gained the greatest renown and most enduring reputation of the three. Revival performances of plays by Afranius were known to audiences in the days of Cicero and Nero,¹ but such occasions were exceptional. The overwhelming bulk of testimony regarding the genre originated with individuals who knew the plays as written texts rather than full-scale performances. Those readers extracted aphorisms and expressions from the scripts of the plays; divorced from their original dramatic context, those quotations were passed along for centuries by individuals who did not feel compelled to check the quotation against a complete text.² A few scholars did consult scripts of the plays for compilations of Republican words and usages.³ Outside of scholarly circles, however, Afranius and the other *togata* playwrights never retained much of a readership.⁴ They were, for all but a handful of individuals, just names and isolated quotations. Even after direct knowledge of those scripts had become a rarity, however, Afranius' reputation endured among grammarians and other *litterati*, while that of Titinius and Atta languished.⁵

* Fragments of Republican drama are cited from O. Ribbeck, *Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta*³ (Leipzig, 1897–8), by either fragment number (in Roman numerals) or verses (Arabic) as has seemed most expedient. I am grateful to the journal's anonymous reader and to its editor for suggestions and criticisms that much improved this paper.

¹ Cic. *Sest.* 118 with Schol. Bob. ad loc.; Suet. *Ner.* 11.2.

² See e.g. Afranius, *Omen* fr. I, quoted by Nonius (p. 421.12) and Servius auctus (on Verg. *Aen.* 4.194); the two notes are obviously related and derive ultimately from the same lexicographical source that lies somewhere behind Nonius' source that W.M. Lindsay termed 'Gloss. i' (*Nonius Marcellus' Dictionary of Republican Latin* [Oxford, 1901], 7) and Donatus' commentary on Virgil, the source for the longer Servius (see G.P. Goold, 'Servius and the Helen episode', *HSPH* 74 [1970], 101–68). While quoted repeatedly in lexicographical and grammatical writings, this quotation of Afranius also had currency in more popular literary circles, as demonstrated by Apuleius' use of it (*Apol.* 12) in a form that suggests he probably has not taken it from a full script of the play. For a further example of a quotation passed through the hands of several grammarians before being set down as we have it, see Festus p. 492.18 s.v. *tanne* (= Afranius 410–11).

³ Verrius Flaccus consulted a volume of Titinius and two volumes of Afranius (W. v. Strzelecki, *Quaestiones Verrianae* [Warsaw, 1932], 81–92); Nonius Marcellus made use of a volume of Afranius (Lindsay [n. 2], 1–10, esp. 9).

⁴ For a fuller summary of ancient knowledge of and familiarity with written texts of the *togata* up to the time of Priscian, see J.T. Welsh, 'The grammarian C. Iulius Romanus and the *fabula togata*', *HSPH* 105 (2009).

⁵ Isidore draws several quotations of Afranius from sources not employed by other lexicographers; some of those sources date to the Late Republic or Early Empire. Priscian quotes

One ancient notice of Afranius qualifies the playwright's fame with a *caueat lector*. Quintilian's judgement of Afranius, expressed in his canons of recommended reading for budding orators, has been taken to mean that Afranius' plays presented pederastic themes: *togatis excellit Afranius; utinam non inquinasset argumenta puerorum foedis amoribus, mores suos fassus* (*Inst.* 10.1.100). The claim is frequently repeated in modern scholarship.⁶ What remains of Afranius' comedies is problematic for these claims, however, for nothing in the preserved fragments hints of pederasty or even of the slightest bawdiness or lewdness.⁷ Although very little of the *togata* remains, it would nevertheless be a miraculous accomplishment of *bona fortuna* if no traces of pederasty or vulgarity survived to be attributed to Afranius when, to select but two examples, verses such as Pomponius' *ut nullum ciuem pedicauit per dolum, | nisi ipse orans ultro qui oquinisceret* (148–9) and Laberius' *foriolus esse uidere: in coleos cacas* (66) have been preserved through the same grammatical channels.

On the basis of the discrepancy between Quintilian's allegation of pederasty and the fragments, there is good reason to be cautious before insisting either that Quintilian was right, or that the accepted interpretation of Quintilian is correct. Distancing the scripts of Afranius from that testimonium casts even more doubt on the reliability of Quintilian's pronouncement, for that distance weakens the argument that it is based on detailed knowledge of what Afranius wrote. Those doubts gain more traction from consideration of what Quintilian might have meant in the context of training an orator; close attention to Quintilian's language suggests that Quintilian meant something else entirely.

Quintilian probably did not invest the time and attention in Afranius that would give his pronouncement the degree of credibility and reliability bestowed upon it in modern times. If Quintilian's comments on Afranius are derivative and his experience of the playwright superficial or worse, then we are justified in at least hesitating over the validity of his judgement, since the fragments offer no traces of the alleged theme. Quintilian has deep familiarity, of course, with many of the authors on whom he expresses judgement. With an author as marginal on imperial reading lists as Afranius was,⁸ however, one may reasonably wonder whether even

several fragments of Afranius, most commonly derived from Flavius Caper. Most of the quotations of Afranius in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* derive from collections of so-called Virgilian *furta* from Republican authors. In each instance, Afranius is quoted more frequently than Titinius and Atta combined.

⁶ *OCD*³ s.v. 'Afranius (1), Lucius.' A selection of scholarly references claiming pederasty in Afranius: W. Beare, 'The *fabula togata*', *Hermathena* 55 (1940) 35–55, at 40; M. Cacciaglia, 'Ricerche sulla *fabula togata*', *RCCM* 14 (1972), 207–45, at 216; G.E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy: A Study in Popular Entertainment* (Princeton, 1952), 69–70; S. Lilja, *Homosexuality in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Helsinki, 1982), 45–6; C.A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (New York, 1999), 26 with n. 55, and 96; S. O'Bryhim, 'Catullus 23 as Roman comedy', *TAPhA* 137 (2007), 133–45, at 137. I offer this list not to single out individual errors (I have in fact found no one who has expressed any doubts about the accepted interpretation of Quintilian), but rather to show the extent to which this notion has permeated scholarship of comedy and of Roman culture in general.

⁷ Cacciaglia (n. 6), 216 n. 28, suggests that Afranius 32 and 388–9 apparently confirm Quintilian's statement, but he seems rather to be grasping for straws. The reference to the first growth of body hair in Afranius 32, *pace* Williams (n. 6), 26, is not necessarily to be connected to pederasty; there are too many possible contexts for this line to take it as sure proof of Quintilian's claim.

⁸ See Welsh (n. 4) for the comparative neglect of the *togata*, even in the 'archaizing movement' of the second century A.D.

such a *littérateur* as Quintilian has not pored over Afranius, but merely included the playwright for the sake of complete coverage of the genres of Latin literature, in his aim to mirror the full breadth of Greek literature.⁹ On this point it is significant that all save one of Quintilian's quotations of Ennius' *Annales* are known from other sources, raising questions about how closely Quintilian read even Ennius for the composition of the *Institutio Oratoria*.¹⁰

In connection with this question it is useful to consider two passages that demonstrate Quintilian's assessments of comedy in general and Roman comedy in particular. His attitudes towards both categories support the idea that his judgement of Afranius is ultimately rooted in scant knowledge of the dramatist. On comedy in general, Quintilian (*Inst.* 1.8) remarks on the value of studying the genre for the benefit it confers on eloquence in speaking, but he cautions against exposing impressionable minds to its potential to corrupt morals. In Quintilian's ideal curriculum, students would read comedy, but not too soon. But which comedians in particular? As often, Quintilian's ideal author is Greek. Menander holds pride of place but, Quintilian somewhat grudgingly admits, there is some benefit to be derived from (unnamed) Roman comedians. Most of that benefit derives in his view from the fact that the comedies were old or, better, that the language of Roman comedy shares much that is admirable with other old Latin authors: rich vocabulary, with dignity of expression in tragic diction, and elegance, even 'atticism', in comic (*multum autem ueteres etiam Latini conferunt ... in primis copiam uerborum: quorum in tragoediis grauitas, in comoediis elegantia et quidam uelut atticismos inueniri potest, Inst.* 1.8.8). Quintilian follows the example set by Cicero's quotations of Republican drama in selecting which *ueteres* are appropriate: Ennius, Accius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Terence, Caecilius and (again unnamed) 'others'.¹¹ One absence from that list, that of Plautus, is immediately apparent; another, albeit perhaps less conspicuous to readers now, is that of the *togata*. Though Cicero certainly knew both Plautus and the *togata*,¹² Quintilian passes over both in drawing up a list of useful authors. Comedy and especially the *togata* are given Quintilian's weakest recommendation.

In his treatment of the canons of literature, Quintilian's specific comments on Roman comedy (*Inst.* 10.1.99–100) show the strong influence of Republican scholarship, which again suggests that Quintilian paid little attention to the genre beyond recognizing in it a source for choice words and expressions. Quintilian, in other words, was not reading for the plot. Among authors of the *palliata*, Quintilian mentions Plautus, Caecilius Statius and Terence by name. The judgements that

⁹ A.S. Hollis, *Fragments of Roman Poetry c. 60 BC – AD 20* (Oxford, 2007), 7 says specifically on the poets of that period: '... it would be too sceptical to deny that Quintilian knew full texts of the poets on whom he passes critical judgement (even if his verdicts are conventional and derivative), and that he expected similar knowledge on the part of many readers'. Having access to a full text and devoting much attention to its contents, however, are two different animals. Quintilian probably could have consulted a volume of Afranius and studied it intensively, had he wanted, but I think he did not. It is noteworthy that somewhat later, Gellius seems not to have spent much, if any, time with a full script of any *togata* play. His six quotations from the genre all seem to derive from intermediate sources rather than from complete texts; see Welsh (n. 4).

¹⁰ O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), 29 is somewhat more generous: 'A man of Quintilian's range must be expected to know the *Annals* ... and yet there is no clear evidence of it.' For the sole fragment preserved by Quintilian alone and its origin, see Skutsch, 273.

¹¹ Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.7–12.

¹² Cic. *Tusc.* 4.45, 4.55; *Att.* 16.2.3; *Sest.* 118.

Quintilian trots out, however, are derivative. He mentions but disagrees with Aelius Stilo, whose glowing review of Plautus' Latin is passed through Varro; the high praises of Caecilius Statius (one thinks of Volcaci Sedigitus' canon of *palliata* authors, preserved by Gellius, *NA* 15.24)¹³; and the story that Scipio Africanus wrote Terence's plays (popular fodder in ancient literary scholarship¹⁴). Gaps in our knowledge of that scholarly tradition do not permit precise identification of the authority on whom Quintilian may have relied for assessment of Afranius; plausible candidates may be found in any of these ancient critics, and there are certainly other options.¹⁵ In any case, Quintilian's treatment of Latin comedy and his reliance on earlier judgements of individual playwrights give reasons for suspecting that most of his attentions were lavished on other genres, and that he was unconcerned with giving a full and reasoned evaluation of Roman comedians. The conflict between the preserved fragments and the traditional interpretation of Quintilian is therefore not necessarily a result of haphazard transmission, and there is little to suggest that Quintilian is the more reliable guide.

A second mention of Afranius has been connected with the claim of pederastic themes in Afranius' plays and taken as corroboration of the traditional interpretation of Quintilian's verdict; this notice however can be disregarded, for it offers no independent evidence for the contents of the plays of Afranius. Ausonius, *Epigr.* 75 presents itself as a description of an obscene painting of the unchaste woman Crispa; in that poem Ausonius says that Afranius' drama presented a kind of *uitiosa libido* on stage (*Epigr.* 75.4). Ausonius certainly did not know the works of Afranius at first hand, but instead derived his quotations and references to the playwright from intermediate sources.¹⁶ One of those sources was quite probably Quintilian himself. An example of how Ausonius made use of this kind of secondary material is afforded by the *liber protrepticus* he wrote to his grandson. There Ausonius comments on Terence, borrowing material from earlier authors and scholars who wrote not only on Terence, but on Latin comedy more generally:

tu quoque, qui Latium lecto sermone, Terenti
comis et adstricto percurris pulpita socco,
ad nova uix memorem deuerbia coge senectam. (*Ad nep.* 58–60)

The echoes are thick: the first line repeats with one small change the judgement of Terence that Cicero expressed in the *Limon* (known to Ausonius through Suetonius, *Life of Terence* 5),¹⁷ and the second line redeployes Horace's judgement

¹³ For these judgements of Plautus and Caecilius, cf. also Varro, *Sat. Men.* 399 (*Parmeno*): *in quibus partibus, in argumentis Caecilius poscit palmam, in ethesin Terentius, in sermonibus Plautus.*

¹⁴ Conveniently collected by E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin Poets*² (Oxford, 2003), 90.

¹⁵ J. Cousin, *Études sur Quintilien* (Paris, 1936), 579–83. Porcius Licinus' poem on Latin literary history seems a possible origin, for it at times seems to have adopted a somewhat antagonistic stance; for the extant fragments see Courtney (n. 14), 82–92.

¹⁶ F. Marx, *RE* I i 708–10, at 710; R.P.H. Green, *The Works of Ausonius* (Oxford, 1991), 408. Other mentions of Afranius by Ausonius undeniably descend from the grammatical tradition: see *Cent. nupt.* praef. with Green, 519, which derives from a lexicographical note on the expressions of worthlessness *naucum dare* and *ciccum offerre* found in Afranius and Plautus; and *Technop.* 1.2 (quoting Afranius 334) with Green, 584.

¹⁷ For the influence of Cicero's judgement, cf. *tu quoque* at the start of Caesar's judgement of Terence, reported also at Suet. *Vita Ter.* 5.

of Plautus as a praise of Terence.¹⁸ Furthermore, Moore has recently suggested that Ausonius' comment on *deverbia* echoes and derives from Quintilian's comments on Terentian metres.¹⁹ Even for an author as well known and widely read as Terence, Ausonius relied heavily on earlier assessments to construct his own praise. The connection with Quintilian is significant, for it shows that Ausonius was familiar with Quintilian's judgements of Latin comedy in general, and therefore (we must assume) of Afranius in particular. Quintilian's assessment of Afranius therefore seems to have influenced Ausonius' epigram. In light of such a connection, and with no evidence to the contrary, Ausonius offers no independent evidence for pederasty in Afranius' plays.²⁰

Given those doubts about the reliability of Quintilian as a witness to the content of the plays of Afranius, and since nothing in the fragments of Afranius suggests a pederastic motif or theme, the traditional interpretation of Quintilian's remark seems even more suspicious. The language that Quintilian uses in fact admits of another interpretation. The relevant text again is Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.100: *togatis excellit Afranius: utinam non inquinasset argumenta puerorum foedis amoribus, mores suos fassus*. Three items of diction in this statement call for specific comment: the verb *inquinasset*, and the phrases *puerorum foedis amoribus* and *mores suos fassus*. The first and third are less essential for interpreting Quintilian's tone and implication here, but bear somewhat on the second, which is the decisive point. Here I argue that Quintilian was not thinking of pederasty at all, but rather of the dissipated and expensive type of love affair with disreputable women frequently seen in the *palliata*, affairs that threatened at the outset of those plays to destroy family finances and social standing, and provoked the ire of the older generation. Quintilian's objection was that such behaviour was thoroughly inappropriate for the markedly Roman contexts of the *togata*. In other words, in Quintilian's opinion proper Roman men (both in the *togata* and in the forum) should not behave like the *adulescentes amatores* of the *palliata*; Afranius' plays could plant that corrosive idea in young minds.

At issue first is the tone of *inquinasset*. The verb and related words are occasionally applied in more salacious genres to defilement resulting from sexual intercourse.²¹ That Quintilian would have relied on that connection is less certain, for *inquinare* had early on been co-opted into the language of rhetoric and criticism, for the contamination of style,²² and in higher literary registers had lost almost all trace of its original meaning. A passage from Tacitus illuminates the

¹⁸ Hor. *Epist.* 2.1.174; W. Ferrari, 'Ausonio e il "Limon" di Cicerone', *SIFC* 16 (1939), 189–93; Green (n. 16), 294.

¹⁹ Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.99: *quae (sc. scripta) sunt in hoc genere elegantissima et plus adhuc habitura gratiae, si intra uersus trimetros stetissent*; T.J. Moore, 'When did the *tibicen* play? Meter and musical accompaniment in Roman comedy', *TAPhA* 138 (2008), 3–46, at 31.

²⁰ It is significant that Ausonius' phrase *scaenis agitauit* (*Epigr.* 75.4) is based on Virgil's *scaenis agitato* (*Aen.* 4.471). In any case, the final line of the epigram (*ne quid inexpertum frustra moritura relinquat*, 75.8 = Verg. *Aen.* 4.415) shows that Ausonius has his mind more on *Aeneid* 4 than on the scripts of Afranius.

²¹ J.N. Adams, *The Latin Sexual Vocabulary* (Baltimore, 1982), 198–9, and see especially Petron. *Sat.* 25.4–5: 'ita', inquit Quartilla, 'minor est ista quam ego fui, cum primum uirum passa sum? Iunonem meam iratam habeam, si umquam me meminerim uirginem fuisse. nam et infans cum paribus inquinata sum, et subinde procedentibus annis maioribus me pueris applicui ...'

²² Cic. *Orat.* 163: *uerba, ut supra diximus, legenda sunt potissimum bene sonantia, sed ea non ut poetae exquisita ad sonum, sed sumpta de medio. 'qua pontus Helles, †supera Tmolum*

meaning and tone of Quintilian's judgement. In the *Dialogus* Tacitus puts in the mouth of Aper a speech defending the modern age, including a comment on the poetic impulses of orators: *exigitur enim iam ab oratore etiam poeticus decor; non Acci aut Pacui ueterno inquinatus, sed ex Horati et Vergilii et Lucani sacrario prolatus* (20.5). Aper's tastes are for the more recent classics, and decidedly not for the particular peculiar style of more than two hundred years earlier. The rare sense of *ueternum*, 'filth', indicates the metaphor Aper deploys. Quintilian uses *inquinare* twice elsewhere in the *Institutio Oratoria* with a metaphorical meaning of the verb, making it unlikely that its use here signals any explicitly sexual meaning in the following words.²³ However, the verb does show that Quintilian clearly disapproves of what Afranius did to the plots of his plays by introducing amorous themes. While sexual elements could play a role in the corruption of the plots suggested in either interpretation of this passage, Quintilian's *inquinasset* does not offer evidence for or against either one.

The second phrase that calls for comment, *puerorum foedis amoribus*, is the source for the pederastic interpretation of Quintilian's judgement. That interpretation construes *puerorum* as an objective genitive, taking the phrase in the sense of 'disreputable love for boys.'²⁴ I suggest that *puerorum* should be construed rather as a subjective genitive, 'disreputable love-affairs (conducted by) boys.' The singular *amor* is most commonly used in the *Institutio Oratoria* for strong desires, one's feelings for things like *litterae* (1.praef.6), *grammaticae* (1.8.12), *uerba* (8.praef.12), *laus* (12.1.8) and *opus* (12.11.6). The plural is less frequent, and is regularly used by Quintilian in the sense of 'love affairs': *ueniam petere adulescentiae, defendere amores* (*Inst.* 6.2.15), and, describing Alcaeus, *sed et lusit et in amores descendit, maioribus tamen aptior* (10.1.63).²⁵ Interpretation of the judgement of Afranius ultimately hinges on whether *puerorum* is a subjective or objective genitive, for which there is no sure test. On the basis of the plural *amoribus* and Quintilian's patterns of use for the singular and plural, and the difficulties in construing it with an objective genitive just observed, it seems better to take *puerorum* as a subjective genitive and interpret the passage as I have here proposed.²⁶

That Quintilian calls the characters involved in these intrigues *pueri* might be taken to indicate that they are quite young, and therefore seem to lend support for the traditional interpretation of this phrase as a reference to pederasty rather than

ac Tauricos†: locorum splendidis nominibus inluminatus est uersus, sed proximus inquinatus insauissima littera: 'finis frugifera et efferta arua Asiae tenet.'

²³ See *Inst.* 2.5.24, on the careful selection of material from one's readings, both 'ancient' and 'modern' (*et antiquos legere ... et novos*) to apply to one's oratory: *multa ergo licebit eligere, sed curandum erit, ne iis, quibus permixta sunt, inquinentur*; and *Inst.* 4.2.101–2, on the cautious intermingling of good and bad parts of the *expositio*: *si plura proderunt, etiam coniungere licebit quae obstant, ut in mediis uelut auxiliis nostris posita minus habeant uirium. quae tamen non erunt nuda ponenda, sed ut et nostra aliqua argumentatione firmemus, et diuersa cur credibilia non sint adiciamus, quia, nisi distinxerimus, uerendum est, ne bona nostra permixtis malis inquinentur.*

²⁴ This translation is slightly inaccurate as far as the plural number of *amoribus*, which is somewhat difficult to render in an emotional sense; 'passions' would work in English but obscure the awkwardness in the Latin.

²⁵ The plural at *Inst.* 6.2.17 seems forced by the two objects, *amicorum et necessariorum*.

²⁶ That is not to say that the accepted interpretation of the phrase is impossible, but that in this instance it seems less likely. In a quite different context, Tac. *Ann.* 5.3 (*amores iuuenum et impudicitiam nepoti obiectabat*) shows at least that an objective genitive is possible, but that offers little help in interpreting Quintilian.

young men conducting affairs. Technical definitions make too stark a separation between *puer* and *adulescens*; Isidore for example says a male is a *puer* only between the seventh and fourteenth year, then passes into *adulescentia* until his twenty-eighth year.²⁷ Legal texts could draw a similar divide.²⁸ Socially the terms were far more nuanced and flexible, depending not just on age and puberty, but also on absolute and relative social status, and a variety of other situational factors. While the scripts of Plautus consistently identify the young lovers of those plays as *adulescentes (amatores)*,²⁹ Quintilian was bound by no such constraints. Literary circles in the first century A.D. knew a variety of instances when *puer* was applied, with no trace of insult, to a young adult male well beyond puberty.³⁰ Nothing in contemporary idiom prohibited Quintilian from treating *puer* as an equivalent for the Plautine term *adulescens amator*.³¹

What is more relevant for assessing Quintilian's phrasing is the potential to encode in the designation *pueri* a critique of their behaviour as 'childish' or in some way not up to expected standards, precisely the moral tone that the context of this phrase demands. At *Inst.* 10.1.130, Quintilian passes judgement on Seneca with language that blends these aspects of age and expectations: if Seneca had not been so entirely self-indulgent and had not corrupted weighty matters with insignificant phrasing, Quintilian there remarks, *consensu potius eruditorum quam puerorum amore comprobaretur*.³² For Quintilian and his era, *puer* was a term that could apply equally well to males before and after puberty, respectable or not. The tone of this passage merely demands that *puer* can be used as a term of reproach for males who fail to meet an ideal of behaviour, regardless of their actual age; Quintilian elsewhere uses the word in precisely that sense. The meaning of *puerorum* in this phrase therefore offers no evidence for or against either interpretation, since the word readily admits both; the criterion for judgement reverts to the syntax of *puerorum*.³³

The interpretation advanced here makes Quintilian pass judgement not on ped-
erastic tendencies, but rather a predilection in the comedies of Afranius for love
affairs unbecoming of Quintilian's own notions of proper Roman dignity. In that
sense, Afranius' admiration for and imitation of Latin authors, especially Terence

²⁷ Isid. *Etym.* 11.2.

²⁸ e.g. *Dig.* 3.1.1.3.

²⁹ But cf. Plaut. *Merc.* 976, where Eutychus calls Demipho a *nouos amator, uetus puer*.

³⁰ E. Dickey, *Latin Forms of Address* (Oxford, 2002), 191–4; H.D. Jocelyn, 'The unpretty boy of Plautus' *Pseudolus* (767–89)', in E. Stärk and G. Vogt-Spira (edd.), *Dramatische Wäldchen: Festschrift für Eckard Lefèvre zum 65. Geburtstag* (Hildesheim, 2000), 431–60, at 435, provides a characteristically acute summary: 'The coverage of this word, like that of *παῖς*, extends a long way either side of puberty.'

³¹ Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 12.25.4; the use of *pusio* in Cicero's sexually charged description of Clodius (Cic. *Cael.* 36); Juv. 6.34; and Apul. *Met.* 9.7. The epigram of Papinius (?) quoted by Varro, *Ling.* 7.28 (see Courtney [n. 14], 109) has *pusus* in a context where the difference in age between the lover and his mistress is the main point, but an affair is implicit.

³² The syntax of the genitive, the word order and the obvious difference of meaning in the singular *amore* here against the plural *amoribus* at 10.1.100 all give further cause for hesitating over the traditional interpretation of *puerorum foedis amoribus*.

³³ It is at least worth raising the question, on the basis of these difficulties, of whether *puerorum* is in fact a later interpolation, added by someone who made a guess about what Quintilian meant by *foedis amoribus*. Such an interpolation would have been made by someone in agreement with the traditional interpretation of this passage. Deleting that word would nevertheless leave the text open to both interpretations (although perhaps increasing the probability of the one here advanced), so the possibility seems to have little direct bearing on this argument.

(known, for example, from the *Compitalia* frs. I and II), can be seen to have corrupted Roman *argumenta* with the disreputable love affairs more commonly staged in the *palliata*.³⁴ That corruption would be trouble enough within the Roman *togata*. In attempting to make comedy useful for oratorical training, it is all but unacceptable. Comedy may be granted certain liberties, but in this respect Afranius' plays would offer an even more inappropriate model for the ideal, and ideally Roman, orator who is Quintilian's ultimate goal.

The final phrase to be considered is inextricably connected to what Quintilian meant by *puerorum foedis amoribus*, for with *mores suos fassus* Quintilian claims that Afranius' personal character and habits were in tandem with the intrigues and affairs that were presented in his comedies. The standard interpretation of this passage therefore imputes pederastic tendencies to Afranius himself. On the interpretation proposed here, Quintilian would have thought Afranius himself was not unlike the spendthrift, wanton lovers who loom so large in the *palliata*. In either case, this kind of personal, gossipy information about the lives of ancient authors must of course be regarded with great scepticism. In Quintilian's view, though, Afranius' character was thought to align with the affairs he presented onstage; the stern disapproval he expresses fits either interpretation, for Quintilian, so concerned about the power of comedy to corrupt young minds, would have seen a dangerous mix in the blending of love affairs from the *palliata* with the purer Roman contexts of the *togata*.

I have suggested that in his assessment of Afranius, Quintilian was thinking not of pederasty, but the typical love affairs that offer so much comic fodder and generational conflict in the *palliata*. There is ultimately little evidence on which to decide in favour of either judgement, apart from the syntax of *puerorum*, which on balance seems to support the interpretation here advanced, and the absence of pederasty from the extant fragments (which is of course merely suggestive). For his judgements on Roman comedy, Quintilian seems to rely heavily on earlier Latin scholarship and literary criticism. It would not be surprising to find such a critique of Afranius deriving from that context, when the *togata* was better known, and its tone and differences from the *palliata* better appreciated.³⁵ To a scholar faced with the scripts of Afranius, the playwright would have seemed to have corrupted the moralizing Roman tone of the *togata* by introducing elements from the *palliata*. Quintilian, so focussed on proper Roman behaviour from the orator, could readily agree with that critic.

In dealing with fragmentary texts, and no less with the testimonia of a genre known now only through fragments, an interpreter is faced with a bewildering array of information plagued with contradictions and omissions.³⁶ Even describing that information is a perilous task. Housman put it best: 'An editor of Lucilius or Ennius or Nonius or the reliquiae scaenicae, unless he is grievously self-deluded,

³⁴ Duckworth (n. 6), 69, recognized Afranius' imitation of the *palliata* but did not hesitate to accept the pederastic interpretation of Quintilian's comment.

³⁵ Fullest exposition of the differences between the *togata* and *palliata* is beyond the limits of this paper. In the interim, Seneca's assessment of the *togata* as an intermediary between comedy (by which he meant the *palliata*) and tragedy, and as being a little severe, offers a serviceable substitute (*habent enim hae* [sc. *togata* plays] *quoque aliquid seueritatis et sunt inter comoedias ac tragoedias mediae*, Ep. 8.8).

³⁶ There is excellent discussion of the problems presented by fragmentary historical texts in P.A. Brunt, 'On historical fragments and epitomes', *CQ* 30 (1980), 477-94.

must know that the greater number of his corrections, and of his explanations also, are false.³⁷ Or, to adapt the words of A.S. Hollis adapting St Augustine, 'let a complete text of Afranius be discovered, but not yet.'³⁸ A frank admission allows that the discovery of a full text of Afranius would radically change our understanding of the genre and probably offer many unforeseen surprises. It is possible that Afranius' plays included pederastic intrigues, but Quintilian would have offered no evidence of that theme. Quintilian rather knew and reported what the fragments also amply demonstrate, namely that Afranius' particular version of the *togata* was deeply influenced by the *palliata*.³⁹

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³⁷ A.E. Housman, 'Luciliana', *CQ* 1 (1907), 53–74, at 53; cf. A.S. Hollis, 'A fragmentary addiction', in G.W. Most (ed.), *Collecting Fragments – Fragmente Sammeln* (Göttingen, 1997), 111–23, at 111: 'After publication, the editor must face the near-certainty that, if a complete text were found, most of his or her ideas (however ingenious and plausible) would be proved wrong.'

³⁸ Hollis (n. 37), 111.

³⁹ Speculation about individual intrigues in the comedies of Afranius that may have inspired this comment seems otiose, given that so much of what Afranius wrote is lost to time. I would, however, at least note the possibility that the traces of cross-dressing in the *Epistula* (fr. XII, XIV; Ribbeck [1897–8: 209] offers a fair if simple summary) and *Consobrini* (fr. III–IV) could have provided the impetus for this ancient criticism. In *Epistula*, cross-dressing is a ploy to gain access to a young woman, unbeknownst to her parents; the reason for cross-dressing in *Consobrini* is less clear. Quintilian's opinions on the orator's body and adornment, which view excessive concern for adornment and style as destructive to eloquence, are worth noting in this context (*Inst.* 8.praef.18–22), especially the phrasing of *sed eadem* (sc. *corpora*, in a comparison to oratory) *si quis uulsa atque fucata muliebriter comat, foedissima sint ipso formae labore* (8.praef.19). I note these connections merely as possibilities, for it goes too far to insist that any of this must bear on the specific judgement of Afranius.