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# Verse translation of Plautus into Brazilian Portuguese: iambic senarii and trochaic septenarii in *Poenulus*

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## Abstract

For modern readers and viewers, the theater of ancient Rome is like a puzzle with many missing pieces or pieces that are very difficult to fit together. Even so, against all odds, some crucial pieces have been preserved: the dramatic texts (only a few). These texts were the theatrical scripts for performances that people on holiday in Rome over 2,000 years ago watched at wood stages. And if, on the one hand, philology appears as the science that studies these “pieces” and tries to unravel how to solve the puzzle, on the other hand, translation studies may encourage us to draw a possible image that could fit into that puzzle screen. In this complicated game of creating a new picture, I propose an exercise to reimagine one of these texts. In this paper, I intend to present some outlines of my ongoing verse translation of the comedic play *Poenulus* by Plautus (c. 250–184 BCE) into Brazilian Portuguese. I will talk in particular about the translation of the iambic senarii into Alexandrine lines, arguing that we can follow the 19th-century Portuguese-speaking theatrical tradition of composing and translating comedies into Alexandrine lines. With respect to the trochaic septenarii, I will outline a proposal for translating it as a composed verse, which we can call bi-heptasyllable. To conclude, I will present a translation of *Poen.* 53–54 to address some issues and possibilities that a textual lacuna can bring regarding the title of the play and its translation.

## Keywords

Roman comedy; translation studies; literary translation; Plautus; versification

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## 1. First words<sup>1</sup>

To begin, I would say that for modern readers (as we are) and viewers (as we can be) the theater of ancient Rome is like a puzzle with many missing pieces or pieces that are very difficult to fit together. Sometimes it resembles those Pompeian frescoes or mosaics, very colorful and capably crafted, but full of blank spaces. Even though, with many lacunas and lost pieces, some very important pieces have been preserved: the dramatic texts itself (only a few indeed).

We are acquainted with twenty-six texts by Plautus (c. 250–184 BC) and Terence (c. 195/4–159 BC), which, together with hundreds of fragments, give us a good glimpse into what Romans saw on stage more than two thousand years ago, but these texts don't answer all of our questions.

If, on the one hand, Philology appears as the science that studies these “pieces” and tries to unravel how to solve the puzzle,<sup>2</sup> on the other hand, at the same time, we have Translation Studies, that may encourage us to draw a possible (maybe imaginary) image that could fit into that puzzle screen.

In that complicated game of creating a new picture, I propose reimagining one of these ancient theatrical texts. In particular, I intend to present some outlines of my ongoing translation in verse into Brazilian Portuguese of the comedic play *Poenulus*<sup>3</sup> by Plautus. I do not have space to explore all the features of this translation project,<sup>4</sup> so I will write more specifically about the iambic senarii and the trochaic septenarii.

For this, I will present a brief history of the translations of Plautus into Portuguese to show that Plautus is rarely translated in verse. I will talk about the nineteenth-century Portuguese-speaking theatrical tradition of composing and translating comedies in Alexandrine lines, which were regarded as ordinary lines, to argue – but not exhaustively – that we can follow that tradition to translate the iambic senarii of Plautus.

I will bring forward some passages from my translation to examine how I accomplish this, by highlighting the use of Alexandrine lines, in rhyming couplets for translating the senarii of the prologue, and unrhymed lines throughout the remainder of the play.

With respect to the trochaic septenarii, although very briefly, I will outline my proposal of translating it in a composed verse, which we can call bi-heptasyllable, since it is formed by two juxtaposed heptasyllables.

1 Substantial parts of this paper can be found in Portuguese in Alvarez (2019).

2 The image of Philology as a puzzle-solver appears often, see, for instance, Turner (2015: p. 152).

3 The *Poenulus* plot is complex and twofold. It combines parts of a recognition comedy with elements of a standard intrigue (a smart slave helps a free young man who is in love with a young woman, usually in a captive or slave condition, tricking the pimp who keeps her as property and preventing the union of the couple). In the case of *Poenulus*, our free young man is Agorastocles, who is in love with Adelphasium, a harlot, sister of Anterastilis, both slaves of the pimp Lycus. Milphio is the clever slave who helps his young master and, at the same time, does not miss the opportunity to mock his love affairs. Key comments on *Poenulus* are found in Gratwick (1968) and Moodie (2015).

4 I also supervise postgraduate students who pursue the same translation project. Heloize Moreira works with Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos* and Renan Rodriguez is translating Plautus's *Aulularia*.

To finish the paper, I will present a translation of *Poen.* 53–54 to address some issues and possibilities that a textual lacuna can bring us regarding the title of the play and its translation.

## 2. Brief history of translation of Plautus into Portuguese<sup>5</sup>

The first translation<sup>6</sup> of Plautus into Portuguese was undertaken rather belatedly at the end of the nineteenth century, in 1888, by João Cardoso de Meneses e Sousa (1827–1915), better known as Barão de (Baron of) Paranapiacaba (hereafter just Barão). Curiously, this translation was undertaken and published in Brazil (in Rio de Janeiro), not in Portugal, as one might expect.<sup>7</sup>

We know through Barão’s testimony that it was the first Portuguese translation of Plautus: “It is, I believe, the first trial that has been made of Roman theater. Scarce are its literary virtues, but it represents a patient effort to translate into vernacular language the models of the ancient art.”<sup>8</sup>

Oddly, after that effort, it was only in 1952, 64 years later, that another translation of Plautus appears in Portuguese: the well-known Agostinho da Silva’s prose translation of *Amphitruo*, *Aulularia*, *Captivi* and *Curculio*. After that publication, the twentieth century saw many translations of Plautus in prose, 24 in total, as can be seen with details in Table (1) at the end of this paper.

The “golden age” for the translation of Plautus into Portuguese was actually the beginning of the twenty-first century. In less than 20 years, there has already been 15 new translations, with this number likely to increase in the near future.<sup>9</sup>

Among these, I would like to highlight the translation of *Amphitruo*, undertaken by Leandro Cardoso, in 2012. According to him, it is a translation “in verse that can recreate the metrical structures [of Latin]”.<sup>10</sup>

Cardoso’s translation is the first attempt to resume a practice of translating Plautine comedy in verse, more than 120 years later after Barão’s endeavor.

5 For a more detailed history of Plautine translation in Brazil, see Rodríguez & Alvarez (2020, forthcoming).

6 Naudet made a list of translations of *Plauti comoediae* into many languages from the beginning of the sixteenth century up to about 1830, including Spanish, Belgian and Danish, but did not make any mention of a Portuguese translation (Naudet 1832: pp. 638–641).

7 It is worth remembering that Brazil, since 1822 when it “won” its independence from Portugal, was, at that time, an Empire. Moreover, 1888 was just one year before the military coup which established the Republic of Brazil, a Republic which suffered at least more five coups in less than a century and endured one more in 2016.

8 Barão de Paranapiacaba (1888: p. 4).

9 It is important to draw attention to the fact that it was only in 2014 that we could read, in Portuguese, all the twenty Plautine plays when translations of *Trinummus* and *Mostellaria* were finally published (even today, we still do not have a translation of *Vidularia*).

10 Cardoso’s rhythmic translation, which seeks correspondence between Latin heavy syllables and stressed syllables in Portuguese, is very effective at transposing formal elements of the Latin lines. See Cardoso (2012: pp. 11–21). Using the same procedure, I know that soon will be published a Portuguese translation of Terence’s *Adelphoe*, by Rodrigo Gonçalves.

Here, I suppress a long discussion about literary translation by simply quoting Haroldo de Campos, a prolific and recognized Brazilian poet, translator and theorist of Translation Studies in order to state the importance of pursuing a poetic approach in transposing Plautine text:

What is essential [in translation] is not the reconstitution of the message, but the reconstitution of the sign system in which this message is embedded, of aesthetic information, not merely semantic information. That is why Walter Benjamin sustains that bad translation [...] is characterized by being the simple transmission of the message of the original, that is: 'the inaccurate transmission of an unessential content'.<sup>11</sup>

Trying to do just that, that is, translating Plautus in verse into Portuguese, but, this time, unlike Cardoso, who tried to create a kind of line whose metrical structure could emulate that of Latin, I propose to use our poetical and theatrical tradition to select some line forms as equivalent to those Latin lines. For that, I need to return to Barão's translation.

### 3. The nineteenth-century Portuguese theater tradition

I quote Gonçalves & Flores (2014), who very clearly explain that:

"Barão de Paranapiacaba ... in his translation of *Aulularia*, [...] chose three basic models of rhythmic composition that come from the Portuguese poetic tradition: *dodecassílabos* [Alexandrines], *decassílabos* [decasyllables, equivalent to the iambic pentameter] and *redondilhas maiores* [a seven-syllable line from folk poetry, or an heptasyllable], all of them rhymed and alternating every scene."<sup>12</sup>

In (3.1) we can see the first twelve lines from *Aulularia* prologue in Barão's translation and in (3.2) my English translation of it<sup>13</sup> (in 3.3 and 3.4 I present De Melo's Latin text and translation):

| (3.1) Barão de Paranapiacaba's 1888 translation  | (3.2) English translation (of 3.1)  |
|--|---|
| Para que não se estranhe o achar-me aqui presente,<br>Eu vou dizer quem sou sucinta e brevemente.<br>Da casa, cujo umbral acabo de transpor,<br>Eu sou o Deus do lar, o Nume guardador.<br>Muitos anos já faz que em toda esta família<br>Exerço protetora e perenal vigília;<br>Sou Deus familiar de quem hoje ali mora,<br>Como fui de seu pai e avô paterno outrora.      5 | Lest you be surprised to encounter me being here,<br>I tell you who I am in a way that is clear.<br>From the house, whose threshold o'er there I've just came,<br>I'm the Keeper Deity, House God, Lar is my name.<br>Since many, many years over all this family I keep<br>A protective vigil, constantly, with no sleep;<br>I'm the familiar god of who lives there today,<br>And of father and of grandfather the same way.      5 |

11 Campos (1969: p. 100). About Campos and his ideas, in Polish, see Borowski (2012).

12 Gonçalves & Flores (2014: p. 152).

13 I will not discuss the English translation in detail, but I point out that I have tried to use Alexandrine lines, in rhymed couplets, to emulate the translated lines in Portuguese, so that English readers may have a better idea of how it works.

|  |  |
|--|--|
| (3.1) Barão de Paranapiacaba's 1888 translation  | (3.2) English translation (of 3.1)   |
| O avô me confiou a guarda de um tesouro,<br>Que ninguém descobriu – marmitta cheia de ouro.<br>Numa cova a enterrou, no centro do fogão,<br>Entregando-a, em seguida, à minha proteção.<br>E nem quando morreu (tal foi sua avaréza!) 10<br>Disse ao filho onde estava oculta essa riqueza.<br>Achou melhor deixá-lo a braços co'a indigência,<br>Conservando o segredo à estéril opulência. | The grandfather gave me once a treasure to hold,<br>That no one ne'er found out – copper pot full of gold.<br>He buried it inside of the hearth in a grave,<br>Then handed it to my guard so it I could save.<br>And not even when he died (such was his greed!) <sup>10</sup><br>He told his son where the richness had been concealed.<br>He thought it best to leave him with the Indigence,<br>Keeping the secret to the sterile Opulence. |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| (3.3) Latin text (ed. De Melo 2012)  | (3.4) De Melo's translation  |
| ne quis miretur qui sim, paucis eloquar.<br>ego Lar sum familiaris ex hac familia<br>unde exeuntem me aspexistis. hanc domum<br>iam multos annos est quom possideo et colo<br>patri avoque iam huius qui nunc hic habet. 5<br>sed mihi avos huius opsecrans concredidit<br>thensaurum auri clam omnis: in medio foco<br>defodit, venerans me ut id servarem sibi.<br>is quoniam moritur (ita avido ingenio fuit)<br>numquam indicare id filio voluit suo, 10<br>inopemque optavit potius eum relinquere,<br>quam eum thensaurum commonstraret filio; | In case anyone wonders who I am, I'll tell you briefly.<br>I'm the Guardian Spirit of this household which you<br>saw me coming out from. For many years already I've<br>been occupying this house and protecting it for the fa-<br>ther and grandfather of the man who lives here now.<br>Now this man's grandfather entrusted me, on bended<br>[6] knee, behind everyone's back, with a treasure of<br>gold. He buried it in the middle of the hearth, entreat-<br>ing me to guard it for him. When he died, he didn't<br>even want to make this known to his own son—he was<br>so greedy. He wished to leave him penniless rather<br>[11] than show this treasure to his son. |

I would like to comment on the use of Alexandrine lines (the use of rhymes will be addressed later). The presence of the Portuguese *decassílabos* (the iambic pentameter equivalent) and *redondilhas* (the seven-syllable line) was common in poetry and in theater at that time, but the Alexandrine was an innovation.

Machado de Assis<sup>14</sup> (1839–1908), the most acclaimed Brazilian author, wrote a short satirical play called *Deuses de Casaca* (*The Gods Who Wear Dress-Coats*) in 1866, and through his prologue (3.5 and 3.6) we can understand why the Alexandrine lines were used in a translation of Plautus:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| (3.5) Machado de Assis's text (Assis 1866; my emphasis)  | (3.6) English translation (of 3.5)   |
| Vai começar a peça. É fantástica: um ato,<br>Sem cordas de surpresa ou vistas de aparato. 50   | The play will begin. It is fantastic: one act,<br>No surprising lines of thought or views of great<br>impact. 50   |
| Verão do velho Olimpo o pessoal divino<br>Trajar a prosa chã, falar o alexandrino,<br>E, de princípio a fim, atar e desatar<br>Uma intriga pagã. 55                                | The old Olympian gods thou shall see in the scene<br><i>Attirin' the simple speech, speakin' the Alexandrine.</i><br>From beginning to end, they shall tie and untie<br>A sheer pagan intrigue. 55                 |
| Calo-me. Vão entrar  | I shut up. The divine  |
| Da mundana comédia os divinos atores.<br>Guardem a profusão de palmas e de flores.<br>Vou a um lado observar quem melhor se destaca.<br>A peça tem por nome – Os deuses de casaca. | Actors come here to stage a prosaic comedy.<br>The profusion of palms and flowers thou might keep.<br>I go there to observe and for the best will vote.<br>The play has as a name – The Gods Who Wear Dress-Coats. |

<sup>14</sup> A new and clever overall view of Machado's oeuvre can be seen in Rocha (2015).

Assis also explains that he “made his gods speak in Alexandrine verse” because “it was the most appropriate” which is to say that they were appropriate to evoke the simple speech because they were regarded as ordinary lines.<sup>15</sup>

So, I mostly borrow from here the idea of translating the Plautus’ iambic senarii in Alexandrine lines, since the iambic senarii are normally used in spoken passages without musical accompaniment and are considered to be closer to casual speech.<sup>16</sup>

Translating iambic senarii into Alexandrine lines finds echo in English tradition according to Sonnenschein’s words: “The corresponding English metre [to iambic senarius] is the ‘Alexandrine’ [...] which is spoken of as long and slow in contrast to the five-foot iambic line commonly used in English blank verse.” (Sonnenschein 1902: p. 164).

#### 4. My current procedure: the iambic senarii of the prologue<sup>17</sup>

Below, I present the beginning of the *Poenulus* prologue (lines 1–10) that I have translated in Alexandrine rhymed couplets as Barão and Assis have done before (4.1):

| (4.1) Portuguese translation   | (4.2) English translation (of 4.1)   |
|--|--|
| O Aquiles de Aristarco me apraz relembrar.<br>Daí dessa tragédia, o início vou tomar:<br>“Silenciai, e calai, e prestai toda atenção!<br>Que ouçais vos ordena o General”... Histrião!<br>Sentem-se em seus lugares, todos bem tranquilos, 5 | The tragedy <i>Achilles</i> by Aristarchus I<br>wish to remember here for taking my start by:<br>“Be silent, be quiet and all attention pay!<br>Hear those orders by the commander of”... the play;<br>Sit down e’ery one in your seats so you aren’t<br>beaten, 5       |
| o que veio faminto e o que veio comido:<br>quem comeu fez muitíssimo bem, foi sagaz,<br>quem não comeu se farte de historinha em paz,<br>mas quem tinha comida preparada em casa,<br>é estupidez vir com fome por nossa causa. 10            | those who have come hungry and those who’ve<br>come “eaten”:<br>who ate did very well, you are quite able,<br>who didn’t eat before, feed yourself up with fables,<br>although who already had food ready at home,<br>just because of us, it’s stupidity havin’ come. 10 |

15 Assis (1866: p. viii). The quotation goes on: “This Alexandrine verse has its opponents, even among men of taste, but it is believed that it will eventually be estimated and cultivated by all Brazilian and Portuguese muses. This will be the victory of the efforts of the illustrious author of the ‘Epistles to the Empress’ [‘Epístolas à Imperatriz’, namely António Feliciano de Castilho] who so patiently and clearly has domesticated the Alexandrine verse in the language of Garrett and Gonzaga [i.e. Portuguese language].”

16 As Richlin also reminds us: “We do not really have enough evidence to understand fully how these meters were used, but the evidence suggests that there were three modes of utterance in the plays: speech, recitative, and song.” See Moore (1998, 2012), as well as Beare (1964: pp. 219–32) and Habinek (2005). A comprehensive account on the subject can be found in Moore (2012).

17 It is also important to mention that in my practice I often collate the translations of Gregoris into Spanish (López Gregoris 2010) and Brandão’s into Portuguese (Brandão 2009).

| (4.3) Latin text (ed. De Melo 2012)   | (4.4) De Melo's translation  |
|---|--|
| <p>Achillem Aristarchi mihi commentari lubet:<br/> ind' mihi principium capiam, ex ea tragoedia,<br/> "sileteque et tacete atque animum aduertite,<br/> audire iubet uos imperator" ... histricus,<br/> bonoque ut animo sedeant in subselliis 5<br/> et qui esurientes et qui saturi uenerint:<br/> qui edistis, multo fecistis sapientius,<br/> qui non edistis, saturi fite fabulis;<br/> nam quoi paratum est quod edit, nostra gratia<br/> nimia est stultitia sessum impransum incedere. 10</p> | <p>I wish to rehearse the Achilles by Aristarchus; from<br/> there, from that tragedy, I'll take my beginning:<br/> "be silent and be quiet and pay attention; you are<br/> ordered to listen by the commander of" ... actors;<br/> (5) and both those who've come hungry and those<br/> who've come full should sit on their benches with<br/> goodwill. You who have eaten have behaved far more<br/> wisely. You who haven't eaten, fill yourselves with<br/> tales: it's great folly for a man who has something<br/> that he could eat (10) to come to sit without break-<br/> fast for our sake.</p> |

I have explained why I use Alexandrine lines, but the use of rhyme (especially in couplets) might be controversial, as Amy Richlin (2005: p. 51) recalls:

"The meters are somewhat difficult to translate into English equivalents, though. And the plays were in meter almost throughout – *though not rhymed; rhyme was not part of Roman poetry.*" (my emphasis)

However, I consider that this latter statement is at least debatable.<sup>18</sup> Following Eva Guggenheimer's (1972) *Rhyme effects and rhyming figures: A comparative study of sound repetitions in the classics with emphasis on Latin poetry*, we now know that rhyme effects were part of the conventional repertory of figures of sound repetition in ancient poetry and, moreover, that they occur in regular patterns.

Furthermore, when thinking about translating Plautus for modern readers and viewers who can easily recognize rhymes as a poetical feature, I argue that we can employ rhyme to enhance the poetical *ethos* of the text.

Erich Segal in his well-known English translation of Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus* and *Menaechmi* (in the prologue) uses rhymes as well. He explains: "I added them where they could have been used in analogous situations on the English-speaking stage. The prologues are an obvious example."<sup>19</sup> Janet Burroway has done the same in her translation of the prologue of *The Little Carthaginian*.<sup>20</sup> Burroway's translation dates back to 1970 and is known to have sought a poetic voice.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, following *bonorum exemplum* (as Terence once wrote), I have translated all 128 lines of the *Poenulus* prologue in Alexandrine rhymed couplets.<sup>22</sup>

But iambic senarii occur not only in prologues, they are also used in a number of

18 Richlin herself (2005: p. 51) translated "the songs in Iran Man into rhymed rap". To which she added: "all I can say is that this kind of thing, though it seemed worth a try here, is funnier when you do not also have to translate Latin as closely as possible".

19 Segal (1996: p. xli).

20 Burroway (1995: pp. 7–12).

21 Richlin (2005: p. 9).

22 See Alvarez (2019).

other passages. In *Poenulus*, besides the prologue, many scenes were written in iambic senarii for a total of 715 lines.<sup>23</sup>

I translate these spoken passages throughout the play in Alexandrine lines without rhymes, as we can see an example (4.5 and 4.6) in the next passage, lines 129–137:

| (4.5) Portuguese translation  | (4.6) English translation (of 4.5)   |
|---|--|
| AGO. São muitas, Milfião, as ordens que te dou,<br>incertas, falhas, muitas vezes sem sentido, 130<br>e você, sempre esperto, alerta, tão certo,<br>as executa atento e com tanto esplendor.<br>Por isso mesmo devo dizer que te devo<br>a liberdade e, muito grato, um obrigado. | AGO. Many are, Milphio, the orders I give you,<br>all of them uncertain, flaw'd, often meaningless,<br>and you, always so smart, alert, always so right,<br>perform them mindfully and with such brilliance.<br>That's why I must say for your own good that I owe<br>you your freedom and thankfully thank you very much. |
| MIL. O dito popular vem a calhar agora. 135<br>Essas palavras moles são o que se chama<br>conversinha pra boi dormir, só bla-bla-blá.   | MIL. The popular saying then comes in handy now.<br>These soft words of yours are indeed just what they call<br>monkey talk, lullaby, bullshit, just blah blah blah.   |

| (4.7) Latin text (ed. De Melo 2012)  | (4.8) De Melo's translation  |
|--|--|
| AGO saepe ego res multas tibi mandavi, Milphio,<br>dubias, egenas, inopiosas consili, 130<br>quas tu sapienter, docte et cordate et cate<br>mihi reddidisti opiparas opera tua.<br>quibus pro benefactis fateor deberi tibi<br>et libertatem et multas gratas gratias. | AGO Milphio, I've often entrusted you with many<br>uncertain (130) and needy affairs which lacked coun-<br>sel and which you have intelligently, cleverly, sen-<br>sibly, and shrewdly made sumptuous for me through<br>your efforts. For these good turns I admit that you're<br>owed freedom and many thankful thanks. |
| MIL scitum est, per tempus si obuiam est, 135<br>uerbum uetus.<br>nam tuae blanditiae mihi sunt, quod dici solet,<br>gerrae germanae, αἱ δὲ κολλῦραι λύραι.  | (135) MIL An old saying is neat if it fits the occasion;<br>yes, your flattery is, as they say, pure poppycock, but<br>loaves are the real lyres.  |

I must point out that most of the time I try to keep or recreate several figures of speech, such as alliterations, repetitions, accumulations, parallelisms and homeoteleutons, and I also attempt to emulate word plays, puns and jokes so they may work without many explanations.

## 5. *Poenulus* lines 359–364: trochaic septenarii

Regarding the trochaic septenarii, I will outline my proposal of translating it in a composed verse, which we can call bi-heptasyllable since it is formed by two juxtaposed heptasyllables.

In Portuguese, one heptasyllable is a verse also known as *redondilha maior*. Each *redondilha* is one hemistichium of this composed bi-heptasyllable. Depending on the type of caesura, or the end of the line, which can be feminine or masculine, each hemistichium can have 7 or 8 syllables, resulting in a long verse that varies between 14 and 16 syllables, as in:

<sup>23</sup> Lines 129–209, 410–503, 615–816, 930–1173, 1304–1397. If we count 1–128 (of the prologue), there are 843 iambic senarii, which means approximately 60% of the lines in *Poenulus*.

*Ai das Rainhas sem corte, das destronadas Rainhas!* (Engénio de Castro)<sup>24</sup>

1 2 3 4 5 6 7(8) 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 (16)

In English, for example, a similar verse, with seven-and-a-half trochaic feet, has already been suggested as the equivalent of the trochaic septenarius by Sonnenschein (1902: p. 166):

*Alma, roll those waters proudly, proudly roll them to the sea.* (Richard Trench)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (8) 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

Using an heptasyllable to translate Plautus's lines is not a complete innovation, since Barão has done it before, but the nineteenth-century translator did not create a real equivalent between the Portuguese seven-foot line and the septenarii as neither has sought isomorphism in terms of the quantity of lines.

In my translation, I have tried to ensure that bi-heptasyllables are only used to translate the trochaic septenarii and in a 1:1 proportion, as we can see in (5.1 and 5.2):

(5.1) Portuguese translation in bi-heptasyllables

AGO. Ok. ADE. Você não é justo | comigo, tudo era só ilusão,  
promete mundos e fundos: | solta palavras aos ventos. 360  
jurou me libertar mil | vezes, não foi uma não:  
te esperando fico aqui, | aumentando os sofrimentos,  
e tuas promessas nada; | sirvo a mesma servidão.

(5.2) English translation (of 5.1) in trochaic septenarii (with spondeus in some feet)

AGO. Ók. ADE. Yóu are nót fáir, néver, | áll was fálsehood át the énd,  
áye you prómise éarth and héaven: | bút it wás just wórd's ín the wínds. 360  
cóuntless tímes yóu've swóre to frée me, | yés, it wás not ónly ónce:  
wáiting fór you Í'm a sérvant, | lónely Í'm incréase my páíns,  
ánd your prómises wóth but nóthing; | hére I sérve still bóund in cháíns.

(5.3) Latin text (ed. De Melo 2012)

AGO non faciam. ADE non aequos in me es, sed morare et male facis.  
bene promittis multa ex multis: omnia in cassum cadunt. 360  
liberare iurauisti me hau semel sed centiens:  
dum te exspecto, neque ego usquam aliam mihi paraui copiam  
neque istuc usquam apparet; ita nunc seruio nihilo minus.

(5.4) De Melo's translation

AGO I won't do so.  
ADE (*to Agorastocles*) You aren't fair towards me, but you waste my time and treat me badly.  
(360) You make a lot of nice promises one after another; they all come to nothing. Not once,

24 This line is quoted by Carvalho (1965). The same line is quoted by Chociay (1974) and Andrade (2014: p. 178). This means that this kind of line is somewhat rare in the Portuguese tradition. It is not within the scope of this paper to present a more detailed study on this observation, but I plan to do so on another occasion in the future.

but a hundred times you've sworn to free me. While I was waiting for you, I didn't acquire any other support for myself anywhere and your promise never materializes. So now I'm just as much a slave as I was before.

It is noticeable that there are some rhymes in these lines (even in English). There are almost 450 trochaic septenarii in the *Poenulus*, it would be monotonous and overly artificial if all these lines were rhymed, but for some moments I judged that rhymes could be useful to elevate the emotional tone of certain passages. I do it here and there, but not so often, because mostly what is important are the constraints of the line that impose difficulties that *per se* can enhance poetic expressiveness.

## 6. The title: the little Punic?

Coming to the end of this paper, I would like to present my translation of *Poen.* 53–54, a passage in which some editors see a lacuna (6.1 and the lacunar translation in 6.2).

Using the same puzzle metaphor from the beginning, I would like to highlight that I myself have ventured into the practice of putting a new piece in that game and filled that lacuna in the process (6.3 and 6.4):

| (6.1) Latin text (ed. De Melo 2012)              | (6.2) De Melo's translation  |
|--|--|
| Καρχηδόνιος uocatur haec comoedia; 53<br>*** 53a | This comedy is called Karchedonios; in Latin uncle porridge-eater Plautus ***. |
| latine Plautus patruos multiphagonides. 54       |  |

| (6.3) Portuguese translation  | (6.4) English translation (of 6.3)  |
|---|---|
| Cartaginês, <i>Karchedônios</i> se chama, em grego, 53<br>a comédia: [não é isso nenhum segredo!], 53t<br>mas o titio Plauto Gororoba [quis 54<br>que se chamasse então <i>Poenulus</i> ,] em latim; 54t<br>[não satisfeito, nosso sem-vergonha Alvarez 54t1<br>"Punicozinho" quer chamá-la em português.] 54t2 | The "Carthaginian Guy", " <i>Karchedonios</i> " in Greek, 53<br>is the comedy's name: [and this is no secret!], 53t<br>but uncle "Grub-Eater" Plautus [has been willing, 54<br>by the way, calls that play " <i>Poenulus</i> "] in Latin, 54t<br>[not satisfied with it, our shameless Alvarez 54t1<br>"Punicozinho", yes, calls it in <i>Português</i> .] 54t2 |

[ ] Square brackets and numbered lines with -t denote translator inserts

In Latin, as we know, *Poenulus* is the diminutive of *Poenus*, which is an ethnonym that designates the Western Phoenicians, who are people from Carthage, the biggest rival city of Rome. But unlike *Carthaginiensis*, Carthaginian, the word *Poenus* can carry a defamatory and pejorative meaning.<sup>25</sup>

"Punicozinho" means in Portuguese "the little Punic", or, with no perceptive difference, "the little Carthaginian", but, if instead of saying "*punico-zinho*", as usual pronunciation would require, one said "*puni-cozinho*", it would create a very different possibility of meaning, since "*-cozinho*" sounds in Portuguese like a vulgar word, "little asshole".

25 A good approach on criticism about a possible anti-Punic (or not) attitude in Plautus treatment of the Carthaginian character Hanno is Stamato (2012).

The adjective “*púnico*” (Punic) is not trivial, which should cause some difficulty to a reader less familiar with the history of Roman wars, but I believe that the sound effect caused by this *-cozinho* at the end of the word “*Punicozinho*” is clearly meant as a joke, which in English could sound like “the Little ‘Asshole’ Punic Guy” or, less vulgar and wittier, “The Little but Whole Punic”.<sup>26</sup>

It is not to be imagined that this has recovered any trace of insult or defamatory insinuation (if there was any in the Latin play), neither does it occur to me that any other denomination could achieve that in Brazilian Portuguese; so I prefer the infamous joke to make people laugh, even though I might lose some friends along the way.

## Appendix

**Table (1)**

The table below lists only first editions of each translation. Although it may contain any minor lapse or incompleteness, I believe that it can be a tool of great value for anyone interested in a history of the translation of Plautus. Books and dissertations listed here not necessarily appear in the bibliography section below since they are not quoted throughout the paper. For more details, see Rodriguez & Alvarez (2020, forthcoming).

| Ist ed                   | play                   | translator  | pt/br <sup>27</sup> | description                     |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 19 <sup>th</sup> century |                        |   |                     |                                 |
| 1888                     | <i>Aulularia</i>       | Barão de Paranapiacaba                              | br                  | verses in vernacular Portuguese |
| 20 <sup>th</sup> century |                        |   |                     |                                 |
| 1952                     | <i>Amphitruo</i>       | Agostinho da Silva                                  | br                  | prose                           |
| 1952                     | <i>Aulularia</i>       | Agostinho da Silva                                  | br                  | prose                           |
| 1952                     | <i>Captivi</i>         | Agostinho da Silva                                  | br                  | prose                           |
| 1952                     | <i>Curculio</i>        | Agostinho da Silva                                  | br                  | prose                           |
| 1967                     | <i>Aulularia</i>       | Aída Costa  | br                  | prose                           |
| 1968                     | <i>Miles Gloriosus</i> | Carlos Alberto L Fonseca                            | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1975                     | <i>Menaechmi</i>       | Diógenes de Araújo Netto and José Venâncio Ferreira | br                  | have not accessed               |
| 1977                     | <i>Bacchides</i>       | Newton Belleza                                      | br                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Amphitruo</i>       | Carlos Alberto L Fonseca                            | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Captivi</i>         | Jaime Bruna   | br                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Curculio</i>        | Walter de Sousa Medeiros                            | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Curculio</i>        | Jaime Bruna   | br                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Menaechmi</i>       | Jaime Bruna   | br                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Miles Gloriosus</i> | Jaime Bruna   | br                  | prose                           |
| 1978                     | <i>Rudens</i>          | Jaime Bruna   | br                  | prose                           |
| 1980                     | <i>Epidicus</i>        | Walter de Sousa Medeiros                            | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1981                     | <i>Amphitruo</i>       | Otávio T. de Brito                                  | br                  | have not accessed               |

26 I take “Punic Guy” from Richlin (2005: p. 4) and “but Whole” comes from a suggestion from Guilherme Duque, inspired by the title of an Ubisoft 2017 video game called *South Park: The Fractured But Whole*.

27 It denotes where the translation was published: (br) in Brazil and (pt) in Portugal.

| Ist ed                   | play                   | translator                  | pt/br <sup>27</sup> | description                     |
|--------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1983                     | <i>Menaechmi</i>       | Carlos Alberto L Fonseca    | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1985                     | <i>Aulularia</i>       | Walter de Medeiros          | pt                  | prose                           |
| 1995                     | <i>Menaechmi</i>       | José Dejalma Dezotti        | br                  | prose (for dramatic reading)    |
| 1996                     | <i>Aulularia</i>       | José Dejalma Dezotti        | br                  | prose (for dramatic reading)    |
| 1999                     | <i>Miles Gloriosus</i> | José Dejalma Dezotti        | br                  | prose (for dramatic reading)    |
| 1999                     | <i>Miles Gloriosus</i> | ?                           | pt                  | have not accessed               |
| 1999                     | <i>Persa</i>           | Maria Isabel R Gonçalves    | pt                  | prose                           |
| 21 <sup>st</sup> century |                        |                             |                     |                                 |
| 2003                     | <i>Asinaria</i>        | Aires Pereira do Couto      | pt                  | prose                           |
| 2004                     | <i>Cistellaria</i>     | Aires Pereira do Couto      | pt                  | prose (FESTEA)                  |
| 2006                     | <i>Bacchides</i>       | Claudia Teixeira            | pt                  | prose                           |
| 2006                     | <i>Captivi</i>         | Helena Costa Toipa          | pt                  | prose                           |
| 2006                     | <i>Casina</i>          | Aires Pereira do Couto      | pt                  | prose                           |
| 2006                     | <i>Stichus</i>         | Isabella Tardin Cardoso     | br                  | prose (from masters diss.)      |
| 2007                     | <i>Mercator</i>        | Damares Barbosa Correia     | br                  | prose (masters diss.)           |
| 2009                     | <i>Poenulus</i>        | José Luís Brandão           | pt                  | prose (FESTEA)                  |
| 2010                     | <i>Truculentus</i>     | Adriano Milho Cordeiro      | pt/br               | prose (from masters diss.)      |
| 2012                     | <i>Amphitruo</i>       | Leandro Cardoso             | br                  | rhythmic verses (masters diss.) |
| 2013                     | <i>Amphitruo</i>       | Lilian Nunes da Costa       | br                  | prose (from masters diss.)      |
| 2013                     | <i>Casina</i>          | Carol Rocha                 | br                  | prose (from masters diss.)      |
| 2014                     | <i>Mostellaria</i>     | Reina Marisol Troca Pereira | pt/br               | prose                           |
| 2014                     | <i>Trinummus</i>       | Reina Marisol Troca Pereira | pt/br               | prose                           |
| 2017                     | <i>Mercator</i>        | Aires Pereira do Couto      | pt/br               | prose                           |

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