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The *Romanitas* of Macrobius' banquets

Tomasz Sapota

University of Silesia in Katowice,
4, ul. Uniwersytecka, 40-007, Katowice, Poland; tomasz.sapota@us.edu.pl

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Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, in his *Saturnalia*, draws upon the Platonic archetype in making overt allusions to the *Symposium* and yet follows Athenaeus, whose work he seems to know thoroughly, albeit does not acknowledge its influence openly. Besides the Greek paradigms, Macrobius used Roman models, i. e., Cicero's dialogues, to infuse his literary banquet with Roman flavour. The author of *Saturnalia* was severely criticised, especially by representatives of the Quellenforschung movement in the second half of the 19th century, for allegedly being a poor plagiarist. His compilatory method is described in this article, and two other plausible Macrobius' sources are proposed: Juvenal's *Satires* and Seneca the Younger's *On Tranquility of the Mind*. In *Roman History* Ammianus Marcellinus depicted the people inhabiting Rome of his times as degenerate parasites hostile to any form of intellectual activity who fritter away time on vulgar entertainment and obsessively overfeed themselves. Many scenes of so-called sober merriment shared by the prominent Roman personages of the IV c. AD were, in all probability, introduced to *Saturnalia* to counterbalance Ammianus Marcellinus' harsh criticism of Roman morals. Macrobius' familiarity with both Juvenal and Seneca manifests itself in the list of similes, yet, as the author of the present article proposes, there are passages in the oeuvre of both writers that may have instilled the vision of frugality typical of Romans in Macrobius's mind, so that he may have used images borrowed from both earlier writers to *Saturnalia*.

Keywords: Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, sympotic literature, Plato, Athenaeus, Cicero, Ammianus Marcellinus, Juvenal, Seneca the Younger.

The preface to *Saturnalia*, together with chapter 1 of the first book, is a metafictional piece that stands apart from the core narration — a detailed seven-book long account of the learned disputes accompanying banquets held at the late Roman Empire elite houses during the Saturnalia festival. The preface's narrator may be identified with the author, i. e.

Macrobius Ambrosius Theodosius, and the foreword covers a whole spectrum of thematic problems. Firstly, it expands a narratological context Macrobius aims to fit his work into. Secondly, it contains an overt explanation of the literary method used. Thirdly, the explanation itself displays the qualities of this method.

Ad 1 — It is construed as a dedicatory letter to the addressee of the dialogue, namely Macrobius's son, Eustathius, which places *Saturnalia* among philosophical handbooks for a son or ward such as Cicero's *On Duties*, Seneca's *On Clemency*. Yet, the opening passage follows closely the introduction to *Attic Nights* by Aulus Gellius (*Sat.* 1. *praef.* 2–3 = Gell. *praef.* 2–3) — to whom Macrobius is heavily indebted, although he never acknowledges his dependence. Gellius' trait implies that the subsequent books will be formed of short essays, which turns out to be a false one — *Saturnalia* being encyclopedic in a form of prolonged symposiac discussions.

Ad 2 — Compiling direct citations or slightly reformulated paraphrases is the method used throughout the book.¹ However, it is worth noting how Thomas Bernabei aptly sums Ambrosius Theodosius' approach: "Even though Macrobius disclaims originality, he never names or alludes to his immediate sources; indeed, he deliberately strives to conceal their identity. It is purely the fortuitous survival of some of his sources that allows us reliably to estimate the measure of his debt to others."²

Ad 3 — In this ostensibly personal letter to the author's son only four sentences cannot be attributed to other writers: *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 1; 10; 12; 16. *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 2–3 is borrowed from Gellius, *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 5–9 from Seneca's *Epistle* 84. 2–10, *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 11 from Gellius' *praef.* 16, *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 13–15 from Gellius' *praef.* 14–15. Moreover, I would suggest that conventional *captationes benevolentiae* in *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 11 and 12 are influenced by Apuleius' *Met.* 1. 1. Macrobius does not reveal the immediate sources, namely Gellius and Seneca, using passages from their works as ready-made components while, at the same time, if necessary, changing their original meaning. Seneca writes about the effects the diverse lecture has on one's mind, comparing the activity of the brain accumulating different ideas and stylistic approaches to the work of bees producing honey with the nectar of various flowers, or the single voice of a chorus made of many singular voices etc. Macrobius applies these images to his compilatory technique — he does not read different texts to invest his imagination and writing skills with words, metaphors, stylistic qualities of other authors, instead he cuts out citations, reshapes them so they fit, and pastes them in his own text, sometimes changing their original sense.

The ample texture of *Saturnalia* is actually a collage of unrevealed sources, a cento, in which I could find four types of compilatory approach:

1. Assorted micro borrowings enrich the text locating it in an intertextual universe, such as *Sat.* 1. 2. 1: *Temptanti mihi, Postumiane, aditus tuos et molissima consultandi tempora* ("Just in time, Postumianus — as I try to approach and test the times when you are susceptible to inquiry" — transl. R. A. Kaster). It employs Virgilian: *temptaturum aditus et quae mollissima fandi tempora, quis rebus dexter modus* (Verg. *Aen.* 4. 293–294). Such

¹ On the use of sources in *Saturnalia* see: Bernabei 1970. Also Türk 1962 and 1968; Linke 1880; Wissowa 1880; Lögdberg 1936. Linke and Wissowa were outspoken critics of Macrobius method, cf. Wissowa 1880: 2: "minime enim ille is est scriptor, qui rem aliquam enarraturus complures fontes adeat materiamque inde congestam propriis rationibus disponat et varias singulorum auctorum sententias inter se comparet atque conciliet; immo singulos in singulis rebus enarrandis auctores ceteris neglectis Macrobius secutum esse omnibus nominibus exploratum est."

² Bernabei 1970, VIII.

interpolations serve as evidence not only of the author's erudition, but, once deciphered, complement a reader's intellectual aptitude.

2. Longer passages taken out of immediate unnamed sources and stylistically remodeled are stitched together, forming large tracts of narration. The text gives the impression of being Macrobius' original work. Gellius, Plutarch and Seneca the Philosopher are amongst the most extensively used in this fashion.

3. Extensive identified citations are introduced and sparsely commented upon. In case of books 5 and 6 the body of quotation becomes a poetic anthology.

4. Narrative models are copied. Macrobius declares Plato's *Symposium* to be the general prototype of *Saturnalia*, but most probably he has imitated, without admitting the fact, Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists*.³ In terms of genre pattern, Athenaeus' work could have served Macrobius to a greater extent than Plato's *Symposium*. Topics of varying import discussed in the latter were mainly related to feasting, and included love, sex, wine and food, whereas the works of Athenaeus and Macrobius are antiquarian compendia in the form of a literary symposium. Plato's *Banquet*, despite Macrobius' reverence for it, cannot serve as his moral paradigm, because of the excessively liberal atmosphere of Ariston's house. To find a more adequate example, Macrobius recurses Cicero's dialogues — with their modest and decent mise-en-scène — by invoking in *Sat.* 1. 1. 4 *Cottae, Laelii, Scipiones*, old time heroes playing prominent roles in Cicero's texts. Gaius Aurelius Cotta in *On the Nature of the Gods* and *On the Orator*, Gaius Laelius in *Laelius on Friendship, On the Republic* and *Cato the Elder on Old Age*, Quintus Mucius Scaevola in *On the Republic*.⁴ It is also worth mentioning that, according to Alan Cameron's intriguing, if contentious, hypothesis, the dating of Cicero's *On the Orator* may be treated as a clue to determine the time of the feast of Macrobius:⁵

Nam per omne spatium feriarum meliorem diei partem seriis disputationibus occupantes coenae tempore sermones convivales agitant, ita ut nullum diei tempus docte aliquid vel lepide proferendi vacuum relinquatur: sed erit in mensa sermo iucundior, ut habeat voluptatis amplius, severitatis minus. Nam cum apud alios quibus sunt descripta convivia tum in illo Platonis symposio non austeriore aliqua de re convivarum sermo, sed Cupidinis varia et lepida descriptio est [...]. Oportet enim versari in convivio sermones ut castitate integros ita appetibiles venustate: matutina vero erit robustior disputatio, quae viros et doctos et praeclarissimos deceat. Neque enim Cottae Laelii Scipiones amplissimis de rebus, quoad Romanae litterae erunt, in veterum libris disputabunt: Praetextatos vero Flavianos Albinos Symmachos et Eustathios, quorum splendor similis et non inferior virtus est, eodem modo loqui aliquid licitum non erit. (*Sat.* 1. 1. 2–4)

“During the length of the holiday they spend the better part of the day discussing serious topics and hold festive conversations at dinner-time, so that no time of day is left of learned or beguiling contributions. But the conversation at table is of a lighter sort, more pleasurable and less austere. For only in the works of others who have described the banquets, but especially in the great *Symposium* of Plato, the banqueters did not converse about some more serious subject but described Love in various witty ways [...]. At a banquet the conversa-

³ See *Sat.* 1. 1. 3, cf. *Pl. Symp. passim*; *Sat.* 1. 1. 5–6, cf. *Athen.* 216F–218E and *Pl. Parm.* 127B, *Soph.* 217C; *Sat.* 1. 1. 7, cf. *Pl. Symp.* 172A–173B.

⁴ The largest extant part of the latter has been preserved because of Macrobius' *Commentary on The Dream of Scipio* containing extensive citations from the Tullius' dialogue.

⁵ See Cameron 2011, 243.

tion should be as pleasurably beguiling as they are morally unimpeachable; the morning's discussion, on the other hand, will be more vigorous, as befits men both learned and very highly distinguished. In truth, if men like Cotta and Laelius and Scipio are to hold forth on the most substantial topics in the books of the ancients as long as Roman literature exists, there is nothing to prevent men like Praetextatus, Flavianus, the Albini, Symmachus, and Eustathius — whose brilliance is comparable and their excellence not inferior — to say their piece in the same way." (Transl. R. A. Kaster.)

In the above passage, undoubtedly conceived by Macrobius himself, the author of *Saturnalia* declares that the ultimate goal of his work is to give convincing evidence that the hero of his times, *men like Praetextatus, Flavianus, the Albini, Symmachus, and Eustathius* may easily be compared to the republican giants of the past. Being more contemporary and known from family accounts, they can be even better examples to the generation of immediate recipients of Macrobius' text — the generation that included, among others, his son Plotinus Eustathius, the young Symmachi and Nicomachi Flaviani.

As Alan Cameron perceptibly observes, *Saturnalia* is a nostalgic text that may have been intended to mitigate Ammianus Marcellinus' vitriolic opinion (Amm. 14. 6; 28. 4) on the Romans of his time,⁶ so the protagonists of *Saturnalia* are full of dignity, enjoy authority and have the savoir-faire befitting to people of high culture. Let us compare Ammianus's and Macrobius's contrasting visions of life in Rome at the end of the 4th century A. D.

Quod cum ita sit, paucae domus studiorum seriis cultibus antea celebratae, nunc ludibriis ignaviae torpentis exundant, vocabili sonu, perflabili tinnitu fidium resultantes. Denique pro philosopho cantor et in locum oratoris doctor artium ludicarum accitur et bibliothecis sepulchrorum ritu in perpetuum clausis organa fabricantur hydraulica, et lyrae ad speciem carpentorum ingentes tibiaeque et histrionici gestus instrumenta non levia. Postremo ad id indignitatis est ventum, ut cum peregrini ob formidatam haud ita dudum alimentorum inopiam pellerentur ab urbe praecipites, sectatoribus disciplinarum liberalium impendio paucis sine respiratione ulla extrusis tenerentur mimarum asseculae veri, quique id simularunt ad tempus et tria milia saltatricum, ne interpellata quidem, cum choris totidemque remanerent magistris. (Amm. 14. 6. 18–19)

"In consequence of this state of things, the few houses that were formerly famed for devotion to serious pursuits now teem with the sports of sluggish indolence, re-echoing to the sound of singing and the tinkling of flutes and lyres. In short, in place of the philosopher the singer is called in, and in place of the orator the teacher of stagecraft, and while the libraries are shut up forever like tombs, water-organs are manufactured and lyres as large as carriages, and flutes and huge instruments for gesticulating actors. At last we have reached such a state of baseness, that whereas not so very long ago, when there was fear of a scarcity of food, foreigners were driven neck and crop from the city, and those who practiced the liberal arts (very few in number) were thrust out without a breathing space, yet the genuine attendants upon actresses of the mimes, and those who for the time pretended to be such, were kept with us, while three thousand dancing girls, without even being questioned, remained here with their choruses, and an equal number of dancing masters." (Transl. J. C. Rolfe.)

Horum domus otiosi quidam garruli frequentant variis assentandi figmentis ad singula ulterioris fortunae verba plaudentes parasitorum in comoediis facetias affectando. [...] Poscuntur etiam in conviviis aliquotiens trutinae, ut appositi pisces et volucres ponderentur et glires,

⁶ Cameron 2011: 262–265.

quorum magnitudo saepius replicata non sine taedio praesentium, ut antehac inusitata, laudatur assidue maxime [...]. Quidam detestantes ut venena doctrinas Iuvenalem et Marium Maximum curatiore studio legunt, nulla volumina praeter haec in profundo otio contrectantes, quam ob causam non iudicium est nostri. [...] Ita autem pauci sunt inter eos severi vindices delictorum, ut si aquam calidam tardius attulerit servus, trecentis affligi verberibus iubeatur [...]. Civilitatis autem hoc apud eos est nunc summum, quod expedit peregrino fratrem interficere cuiuslibet, quam cum rogatus sit ad convivium, excusare [...]. Ubi si inter aurata flabella laciniis sericis insederint muscae vel per foramen umbraculi pensilis radiolus irruperit solis, queruntur, quod non sunt apud Cimmericos nati. [...] Alius cum dignitate licet mediocri, cervice tumida gradiens, notos antea obliquato contuetur aspectu, ut post captas Syracusas existimes reverti Marcellum. [...] In his plerique distentioribus saginis addicti praeunte nidoris indagine acutisque vocibus feminarum a galliciniis ipsis in modum pavorum ieiunitate clangentium humum summis pedum unguibus contingentes aulis assistunt digitos praerodentes, dum patinae defervescent. (Amm. 28. 4, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 23, 34).

“Their houses are frequented by idle chatterboxes, who with various pretences of approval applaud every word of the man of loftier fortune, emulating the witty flatteries of the parasites in the comedies. [...] Sometimes at their banquets the scales are even called for, in order to weigh the fish, birds, and dormice that are served, whose great size they commend again and again, as hitherto unexampled, often repeating it to the weariness of those present [...]. Some of them hate learning as they do poison, and read with attentive care only Juvenal and Marius Maximus, in their boundless idleness handling no other books than these, for what reason it is not for my humble mind to judge. [...] But a few among them are so strict in punishing offences, that if a slave is slow in bringing the hot water, they condemn him to suffer three hundred lashes [...]. But the height of refinement with these men at present is, that it is better for a stranger to kill any man’s brother than to decline his invitation to dinner. [...] And if amid the gilded fans flies have lighted on the silken fringes, or through a rent in the hanging curtain a little ray of sun has broken in, they lament that they were not born in the land of the Cimmericians. [...] Another, who attained some rank, moderate though it be, walking with neck puffed up, looks askance at his former acquaintances, so that you might think that a Marcellus was returning after the taking of Syracuse. [...] The greater number of these gentry, given over to over-stuffing themselves with food, led by the charm of the odour of cooking and by the shrill voices of the women, like a flock of peacocks screaming with hunger, stand even from cockcrow beside the pots on tip-toe and gnaw the ends of their fingers as they wait for the dishes to cool.” (Transl. J. C. Rolfe.)

So much Ammianus. In stark contrast to his denunciation of Roman mores — no scenes involving mimes or flute players or even an overly casual conversation could appropriately appear in Rome of *Saturnalia*. Macrobius provides relaxation after an erudite and serious debate by changing the topic to a lighter one (although still an erudite one). According to his schema, before noon, the conversation concerns serious matters, such as the origins of customs and traditions, the arcana of cults, and the facets of Virgil’s scholasticism; the afternoons, in turn, are devoted to anecdotes and apt sayings of famous people, extravagances of ancestors, categories of desserts, and, last but not least, sympotical issues. Also, entertainment is subject to the rigors of decorum, which somewhat modifies the tradition of the genre⁷ (*Sat.* 2. 1. 3–8):

⁷ Humor in Macrobius was extensively studied by Flamant (1977, 183–194), albeit in an essayist manner.

Hic ubi modestus edendi modus cessare fecit castimoniam ferculorum, et convivialis laetitia minusculis poculis oriebatur, Avienus ait, ‘bene ac sapienter Maro noster tumultuosum et sobrium uno eodemque versu descripsit sub paucorum verborum immutatione convivium. Nam ubi sub apparatu regio procedere solet luxus ad strepitum, “postquam prima” inquit “quies epulis”, at cum heroes castigatis dapibus adsidunt, non reducit quietem, quia nec praecessit tumultus, sed “postquam exempta fames epulis”. Nostrum hoc convivium, quod et heroici saeculi pudicitiam et nostri conduxit elegantiam, in quo splendor sobrius et diligens parsimonia, Agathonis convivio vel postmagniloquentiam Platonis non componere tantum sed nec praeferre dubitaverim. Nam ipse rex mensae nec in moribus Socrate minor et in re publica philosopho efficacior; ceteri qui adestis eminentiores estis ad studia virtutum, quam ut poetis comicis et Alcibiadi, qui tantum fuit fortis ad crimina, aliisque quibus frequens illud convivium fuit vos quisquam aestimet comparandos.’ ‘Bona verba quaeso,’ Praetextatus ait, ‘circa reverentiam tantum Socraticae maiestatis. Nam reliquis, qui in illo fuere symposio, haec lumina quis non praeponenda consentiat? Sed quorsum tibi, Aviene, hoc tendit exemplum?’ ‘Quia sub illorum,’ inquit, ‘supercilio non defuit qui psaltriam intromitti peteret, ut puella ex industria supra naturam mollior canora dulcedine et saltationis lubrico exercebat inlecebris philosophantes. Illic hoc fieri temptatum est, ut Agathonis victoria celebraretur, nos honorem dei cuius hoc festum est nullo admixtu voluptatis augemus. Neque ego sum nescius vos nec tristitiam nec nubilum vultum in bonis ducere nec Crassum illum quem Cicero auctore Lucilio semel in vita risisse scribit magnopere mirari. Ad haec cum Praetextatus diceret ludicras voluptates nec suis Penatibus adsuetas nec ante coetum tam serius producendas, excepit Symmachus: ‘Quia “Saturnalibus optimo dierum”,’ ut ait Veronensis poeta, nec voluptas nobis ut Stoicis tamquam hostis repudianda est nec ut Epicureis summum bonum in voluptate ponendum, excogitemus alacritatem lascivia carentem [...].

“When dinner was now over and the diners, having eaten sparingly of a modest number of dishes, were growing merry, though the cups were small, Avienus said: In similar lines and with the change but a few words Vergil has well and shrewdly hit off the difference between a riotous and a sober meal. For of the din which attends the splendor and magnificence of a royal banquet he writes: ‘When first there came a lull in the feast’ [*Aeneid* 1. 723], but, when his heroes sit down to a simple repast, he makes no reference to a lull, because there had been no previous clamor, and says instead: ‘When hunger had been banished by the feast’ [*Aeneid* 1. 216]. This dinner of ours has combined the moderation of the heroic age with the good taste of our own; it is somber yet elegant, carefully planned without being lavish. And for Plato’s eloquence I have no hesitation in comparing it with — nay, in preferring it to — Agathon’s banquet, for our host is no whit inferior to Socrates in character and is at the same time more influential in public life than the philosopher; and, as for rest of you, my friends, your practice of all the virtues is too well known for anyone to regard you as comparable with any comic poet or with Alcibiades (a man whose courage was directed to criminal ends) or with any other in that large company. ‘Hush! said Praetextatus. Respect, I beg you, the honored name of Socrates, although you can say what you like about the rest of the guests at that banquet, for these distinguished friends of ours would by general consent be regarded as superior to them. But tell me, Avienus, what have you in mind in making this comparison?’ ‘Just this, said he, that, in spite of their high brows, one of those people was prepared to call for the admission of a flute player, that a girl artificially made up to enhance her charms might beguile their philosophic conversation with pleasant tunes and suggestive dances. The purpose on that occasion was to celebrate Agathon’s success in the theater; but we, for our part, are failing to introduce any pleasurable relaxation in doing honor to the god whose festival this is. And yet I am well aware that none of you sees any

particular merit in wearing a sad and gloomy countenance, nor do you greatly admire the man Crassus, who (as Cicero tells us, on the authority of Lucilius), laughed but once in all his life.' Praetextatus replied that his household gods were not accustomed to take any pleasure in a cabaret show and that such a show would ill become so serious a gathering. But Symmachus rejoined: 'At the Saturnalia, best of days,' as the poet of Verona says, 'I take it that we should neither imitate the Stoics and repel pleasure as a foe nor follow the Epicureans and make pleasure the highest good. Let us then make humor without impropriety our aim [...].'" (Transl. P. Vaughan Davis.)

Interestingly enough, from a moral point of view, the era of Symmachus is rated higher in this place than the usually idealized past (*Sat.* 3. 14. 4):

Dic enim, Hore, qui antiquitatem nobis obicis, ante cuius triclinium modo saltatricem vel saltatorem te vidisse meministi? At inter illos saltatio certatim vel ab honestis adpetebatur.

"You compare us unfavorably with the men of old, Horus, but, tell me, at whose dinner party do you remember having seen of late a woman or a man dancing? And yet among our predecessors even persons of distinction vied with one another in their enthusiasm for the dance." (Transl. P. Vaughan Davis).

As we have said above, Macrobius as a writer is first and foremost a compiler, who 'digests', regurgitates and reuses (cf. *Sat.* 1. *praef.* 7: *ut quaecumque hausimus non patiamur integra esse, ne aliena sint, sed in quandam digeriem concoquantur*. "We should not allow what we have taken in to remain intact and alien but should digest and distribute it." Transl. R. A. Kaster) texts composed by others who seem close to the idea of moderation and scholarship characteristic of Athenaeus' banquet. He also draws on Cicero's dialogues with their protagonists being dignified officials of the republic. As these works are not symposiac,⁸ he must have sought literary descriptions of Roman feast, merging merriment and seriousness elsewhere, most probably in the texts by Seneca the Younger or Juvenal. Although the name of Seneca does not appear in the surviving part of *Saturnalia*, Macrobius was familiar with his philosophical writings, as evidenced by numerous (in several instances very extensive) references in the analyzed work:

Macrobius	Seneca the Younger
1. <i>praef.</i> 5	<i>Ep.</i> 84. 2–10
1. 6. 26	<i>Brev.</i> 13. 5
1. 7. 6	<i>Ep.</i> 10. 5
1. 7. 29	<i>QNat.</i> 3. 25. 8–10
1. 10. 24	<i>Ep.</i> 12. 3
1. 11. 7–15	<i>Ep.</i> 47
1. 11. 10	<i>Ep.</i> 80. 9

⁸ There are no extant Roman symptical dialogues. As to the *Symposium* written by Maecenas mentioned by Servius (*ad Aen.* 8. 310), its genre is supposed to have been closer to Plato's *Banquet* with the conversation regarding wine, and Virgil and Horace among the participants. In general, texts that simply comprise feast scenes, such as the satires by Juvenal or Horace, do not belong to symposiac literature in the strict sense; an exception to this may be *Trimalchio's Banquet* because it is a parodistic play with such literary tradition. However, one should remember that this fragment of Petronius' *Satiricon* is not a stand-alone work, but a part of his novel. Flamant 1977, 176, fn. 16, considers *Trimalchio's Banquet* and one of the of Horace's *Satires* (2. 8) as examples of the same genre (in my opinion, erroneously); at the same time, for unknown reasons, he omits Juvenal's 4, 5 and 11.

1. 11. 16	<i>Ben.</i> 3. 25
1. 11. 23–24	<i>Ben.</i> 3. 23
1. 11. 26	<i>Ben.</i> 3. 33
2. 1. 8	<i>Ep.</i> 27. 3
2. 4. 18	<i>Ep.</i> 95
2. 7. 4	<i>Ir.</i> 2. 11. 3
4. 2. 9	<i>Ir.</i> 1. 1. 2
	<i>Ep.</i> 114. 3
7. 14. 20	<i>QNat.</i> 1. 3. 9 ⁹

These similarities, in some cases, may reflect the use of the same source by both authors. Certain passages in *Saturnalia* are undoubtedly analogous to the excerpts from *Natural Questions*. Some, however, were borrowed directly from Seneca, as illustrated by the example of the *Letter to Lucilius* 47 on which a part of the Praetextatus' argument about slaves is based. In Macrobius we also find many parallels with the work of Juvenal:¹⁰

Macrobius	Juvenal
1. 21. 24	6. 1–20
2. 1. 9	5. 157
2. 3. 9	2. 66–68
2. 4. 12	1. 66
2. 4. 22	5. 93–94
3. 10. 2	1. 15
3. 16. 9	4. 15–17
7. 5. 26	12. 34–36

Most of them may just be due to the circular nature of the insights or judgments appearing in the oeuvre of both writers, but when Evangelus says (*Sat.* 3. 10. 2): *Et nos [...] manum ferulae aliquando subduximus [...]* (“And we [...] sometimes pulled our hand from under the cane [...]”), he is no doubt quoting Juvenal (1. 15: *et nos ergo manum ferulae subduximus*) whom Ammianus Marcellinus (28. 4. 14) snidely recognizes as the only author read by Roman senators, apart from the obscure figure of Marius Maximus.¹¹

The writings of Seneca the Younger and Juvenal contain so many similar places that it is often impossible to determine which of them directly inspired the particular passages of Macrobius' work. For instance, in his treatise *To Serenus on Tranquility of Mind* Seneca introduces the following description of a modest lifestyle, in reply to the kind request of Serenus on how to regain and maintain inner balance, 1. 5–7:

Tenet me summus amor parsimoniae, fateor: placet non in ambitionem cubile compositum, non ex arcula prolata vestis, non ponderibus ac mille tormentis splendere cogentibus expressa, sed domestica et vilis, nec servata nec sumenda sollicitè; placet cibus quem nec parent familiae nec spectent, non ante multos imperatus dies nec multorum manibus ministratus, sed parabilis facilisque, nihil habens arcessiti pretiosive, ubilibet non defuturus, nec patrimonio nec corpori gravis, non rediturus qua intraverit; placet minister incultus et rudis vernula, argentum grave rustici patris sine ullo nomine artificis, et mensa non varietate

⁹ I use *indices locorum* built up in consequent editions.

¹⁰ The list after *indices locorum* contained in editions.

¹¹ See: Birley 1995.

macularum conspicua nec per multas dominorum elegantium successiones civitati nota, sed in usum posita, quae nullius convivae oculos nec voluptate moretur nec accendat invidia.

“I have to confess the greatest possible love of thrift: I do not care for a bed with gorgeous hangings, nor for clothes brought out of a chest, or pressed under weights and made glossy by frequent manglings, but for common and cheap ones, that require no care either to keep them or to put them on. For food I do not want what needs whole troops of servants to prepare it and admire it, nor what is ordered many days before and served up by many hands, but something handy and easily come at, with nothing far-fetched or costly about it, to be had in every part of the world, burdensome neither to one’s fortune nor one’s body, not likely to go out of the body by the same path by which it came in. I like a rough and unpolished homebred servant, I like my servant born in my house: I like my country-bred father’s heavy silver plate stamped with no maker’s name: I do not want a table that is beauteous with dappled spots, or known to all the town by the number of fashionable people to whom it has successively belonged, but one which stands merely for use, and which causes no guest’s eye to dwell upon it with pleasure or to kindle at it with envy.” (Transl. A. Stewart.)

Juvenal expands and details this image in his *Satire* 11. The guest, welcomed like Hercules or Aeneas, is received here because of the sincerity of intentions of the host rather than his own position. The food is unpretentious and simple. Moreover, a symbol of a world in which traditional values prevail is introduced since the steward’s wife spins wool or harvests asparagus, as formerly befitting an honest matron¹² (Vv. 60–69). The Roman poet also mentions the uneducated servant, a country boy who can at most steal a little food from the table (141–161), and the modesty of furniture and tableware (90–119; 129–135). In the satirist’s view, the countryside is the mainstay of the values that were held in republican times, and the juxtaposition of a rural meal with the splendor of a city feast serves him as a tool to stigmatize the moral corruption of his contemporary, early imperial, Rome. In Macrobius, the opposite is true, since the criticism of the decline of customs, including the excessive lavishness of the tables (*Sat.* 3. 13–17), concerns the more distant past, and is intended to idealize the time of a few decades ago. On the other hand, both authors speak in one voice when it comes to describing the variety of fruit, because in this case *varietas* is not a manifestation of superfluity. In Juv. 11. 71–76, grapes preserved in bunches, pears (including the Signian pear also mentioned by Macrobius, *Sat.* 3. 19. 6) and apples competing with the Picenian ones are an object of pride for the estate owner and proof of his industriousness and foresight; they also indirectly serve to praise the Roman countryside. In *Saturnalia*, an extensive passage on the varieties of apples, nuts, grapes and olives (probably a reference to Atheneus) concludes Book 3. This particular fragment is devoid of any critical tone, despite the fact that in the same book Macrobius condemns the superfluity prevalent at banquets: fruit was obviously treated as a natural subject of informal conversations at the symposium of the wise men.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that Macrobius and Juvenal share the aforementioned preoccupation with the past. The latter (*Sat.* 1. 151–170) rebukes the transgressions of the dead, as if he were speaking of his own time, and praises the countryside as a bulwark of tradition. The author of *Saturnalia*, following the literary dialogues of Plato and Athenaeus on the one hand, and Cicero on the other, places his banquet in the past, with the participants not referring to times more recent than the Augustan era. The authors

¹² Cf. the famous sepulchral inscription of Claudia (*CIL* 6. 15346).

mentioned in the surviving part of the work who lived later (1st–3rd century CE) are few and include: Pliny the Elder, Pliny The Younger, Plutarch, Apuleius, Serenus Sammonicus, Cornelius Labeo and Porphyrios of Tyre. Although the protagonists of *Saturnalia* are historical figures, their arguments consist of quotes taken from various sources chosen, it seems, for the sake of the overall concept of the dialogue and not to reflect the actual statements or interests of these real people. This would explain why Praetextatus in Macrobius' work is an expert in the Neoplatonic interpretation of religion, while he actually translated a commentary on Aristotle (or an excerpt from Themistios), and why Agorius' argument in Book 1 could possibly have been taken from Cornelius Labeo's summary of Porphyrios; for the same reason, literary Servius expresses opinions contrary to the views of the actual Servius, author of the commentary on Maron's poetry, yet consistent with the hypothetical source of the *Attic Nights*. If we may refer once more to the metaphor of a writer who works like a bee, we can conclude that Macrobius not only reuses micro-citations and larger unidentified quotations and paraphrases as well as identified citations, but also, as in the case of Cicero, Juvenal and Seneca, employs the elements of the represented world gathered from the works of others. He is a compiler, or as modern readers would be inclined to accuse him of — a plagiarist, but an inventive one. He very freely draws on sources because he does not want to publish a selection of carefully labeled quotations, but rather employs a variety of literary and historical material to create a work showing readers the beauty of ancient books and his own belief in the value of the old time tradition.

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Romanitas пиров Макробия

Томаш Сапота

Силезский университет в Катовице,
Польша, 40-007, Катовице, Университетская ул., 4; tomasz.sapota@us.edu.pl

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Амвросий Феодосий Макробий ссылается в своих «Сатурналиях» на платоновский архетип, делая явные намеки на «Пир», но он более подражает Афинейю, чей труд он, кажется, знает досконально, хотя и не признает его влияние открыто. Помимо греческих образцов Макробий использовал и римские, а именно диалоги Цицерона, чтобы придать своему литературному пиру архаический колорит. Автор «Сатурналий» подвергся резкой критике, особенно со стороны представителей *Quellenforschung* второй половины XIX века как бездарный компилятор чужих произведений. В настоящей статье описывается метод компиляции, который Макробий разработал и использовал, и предлагаются два других возможных источника, к которым он обращался, — сборник сатир Ювенала и диалог Сенеки «О безмятежности духа». Аммиан Марцеллин изобразил в Римской истории жителей Рима своего времени как выродившихся тунеядцев, враждебных любой форме интеллектуальной активности, тратящих время на вульгарные развлечения и помешанных на еде. Сцены так называемого трезвого веселья, свойственного выдающимся деятелям Рима IV века н.э., были, по всей вероятности, привнесены в Сатурналии в противовес резкой критике римской морали Аммианом. Знакомство Макробия как с Ювеналом, так и с Сенекой подтверждают списки симилий. При этом, в произведениях обоих писателей есть отрывки, которые могли повлиять на видение Макробием типично римской скромности и бережливости. Итак, Макробий, вероятно, привнес в «Сатурналии» мотивы и образы, заимствованные у обоих названных писателей.

Ключевые слова: Макробий, *Сатурналии*, литература пиров, Платон, Афиней, Цицерон, Аммиан Марцеллин, Ювенал, Сенека Младший.

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