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РИМСКАЯ КОМЕДИЯ НА РУССКОЙ  
СЦЕНЕ: КОМЕДИЯ А.Н. ОСТРОВСКОГО  
«НЕ БЫЛО НИ ГРОША ДА ВДРУГ АЛТЫН»  
И «КУБЫШКА» ПЛАВТА

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**Аннотация:** Статья посвящена исследованию литературных источников комедии А.Н. Островского «Не было ни гроша, да вдруг алтын». Текстуальный анализ пьесы на двух уровнях (микро- и макроструктурном), предлагаемый в статье, позволяет оценить степень ассимиляции комедии Плавта «Кубышка» и способы освоения комедийных законов избранного Островским литературного образца. Изучение микроструктурного уровня организации пьесы Островского удостоверяет системность диалога с комедией Плавта «Кубышка» на примере пяти драматических сверхфразовых единиц. Исследование макроструктурного уровня комедии «Не было ни гроша, да вдруг алтын» — композиции, обусловленной развитием двух главных тем; бинарных сюжетных линий с идентичной завязкой, развитием и завершением; системы взаимозависимых персонажей; оригинальной реконструкции утраченного окончания «Кубышки» Плавта — показывает глубину освоения римской комедии в пьесе Островского. Развязка обеих комедий наделяется гармонизирующей функцией, объединяя обе сюжетные линии и достигая относительной стабильности в разрешении романической темы. Хотя Островский использует «Кубышку» Плавта как драматическую модель, следуя ее микро- и макроструктуре, в русской пьесе появляется психологическая убедительность и эмоциональная глубина, нехарактерная для римской комедии.

**Ключевые слова:** комедия, рецепция, адаптация, ассимиляция, реконструкция, структура, сюжет, развязка, персонаж.

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ROMAN COMEDY ON THE RUSSIAN STAGE: ALEXANDER N. OSTROVSKY'S *THERE WAS NOT A PENNY, BUT SUDDENLY ALTYN AND PLAUTUS' AULULARIA*

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the analysis of literary sources of Alexander N. Ostrovsky's comedy *There Was Not a Penny, But Suddenly Altyn*. The two-level approach to the study of Ostrovsky's play has enabled the assessment of both the degree to which it assimilated Plautus' *Aulularia* and the manner in which the Russian playwright reflected the comedic conventions of his literary model. At the micro-structural level of *There Was Not a Penny*, the extent of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia* has been made evident by the analysis of five dramatic supra-phrasal units, which occur in both plays. At the macro-textual level, Ostrovsky's reception of the interconnected system of *dramatis personae*, his assimilation of Plautus' binary plot-line, and his adaptation of the *Aulularia*'s dramatic structure, develop and conclude in a strikingly similar fashion. The similarities of the dénouements of both plays consist in the harmonizing function of the closure, the fusion of both plot-lines, and the achievement of relative stability in the romantic theme. The two-level approach has also served to reveal the boundaries of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia*, restricted to the macro- and micro-structural spheres of his play. Although Ostrovsky inherits the skeletal plot of the *Aulularia* and its system of characters, he endows it with an emotional intensity and psychological depth that is absent in Plautine's comedy.

**Keywords:** comedy, reception, adaptation, assimilation, reconstruction, structure, plot, dénouement, character.

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It is usually considered that the plot of Aleksandr Ostrovsky's play *Ne bylo ni grosha, da vdrug altyn* was taken from Molière's comedy *L'Avare*<sup>1</sup>. However, the playwright's own evidence points in a different direction, as he was especially interested in Plautine comedy and even translated his play *Asinaria* ("The Asses") [5, с. 297–298]. In editions of Plautine comedies, occasionally listing their literary descendants, Ostrovsky's name, as far as is known, appears only once [3, с. 618], though Molière's comedy *L'Avare* is invariably included<sup>2</sup>. The only study of Ostrovsky's comedy in connection with ancient literature was conducted by F.A. Petrovsky who also reflected upon Molière in addition to Greek epic (*Odyssey*), Herodas, Lucian, Ovid's *Heroides*, Terentius, and several Plautine comedies such as *Pseudolus*, *Mostellaria*, *Miles Gloriosus*, *Menaechmi* and *Aulularia* and pointed out a few isolated motifs and characters inherited from Classical sources [7, с. 197–204].

In contrast to previous scholarship, this article attempts to show that Ostrovsky's play inherited its genre, theme, composition, structural organisation and system of characters from the Plautine comedy *Aulularia* ("The Little Pot of Gold", composed around 195 BC), whereas the few superficial similarities between Ostrovsky's and Molière's plays can be accounted by their use of the same source — Plautus' *Aulularia*.

1 «Островский использовал ее [Мольеровскую комедию «Скупой». — К.Н.] характеры и основные ситуации для создания одной из замечательнейших своих пьес — "Не было ни гроша да вдруг алтын"» [4, с. 564]. Ср. также: [10, с. 191–193].

2 Cf. e. g. I.M. Tronsky's "History of Ancient Literature", mentioning Molière, Pushkin and Gogol but not Ostrovsky: «"Кубышка" послужила основой для знаменитой комедии Мольера "Скупой" и тем самым косвенно для классических изображений скупости в русской литературе, у Пушкина и Гоголя» [8, с. 300].

\* \* \*

An analysis of the composition of Ostrovsky's *Ne bylo ni grosha* at the macro-structural level (double plot-line, structure, conclusion) reveals the extent to which the Russian playwright deployed Plautus' *Aulularia* to construct the foundation for his play. Firstly, both plays have a distinctive binary plot-line (or, as it was called in relation to Plautus, a 'two-fold plot' [16, p. 21]): that of a miser centred on money, and that of his female relative centred on love. Secondly, both plays have the same structural organisation: both begin with a key episode, exploring the effect of events preceding the start of the dramatic action; in both plays the plot-lines of avarice and love develop in independent but parallel succession; and in both the convergence of the two plot-lines is postponed until the finale. Thirdly, in both comedies a similar role is assigned to the conclusion, in which the two plot-lines of the miser and his female relative are merged.

The first of these elements, a binary plot-line, is introduced at the start of both plays, in Ostrovsky's play through a stichomythic dialogue and in Plautus' comedy with the help of a prologue, delivered by the miser's household deity (1-39). From the beginning of the *Aulularia*, the audience knows that the dramatic action will follow two separate plot-lines, developing "the theme of avarice and the romantic theme" [15, p. 35]. The first theme relates to the miser Euclio and his acquisition of the gold, his persistent greed, the loss of his treasure and finally its recovery, whereas the second theme is determined by his daughter, Phaedria, who has been raped and gives birth before the play's ending. The comedy is thus centred around two disequilibria, which must be resolved by the dénouement [15, p. 17].

An almost identical binary plot can be discerned in Ostrovsky's *Ne bylo ni grosha*, where the same two themes as in the *Aulularia* are used to set up similar disequilibria. The theme of avarice, dominated by Euclio in Plautus, is developed by Ostrovsky in the character of Krutitsky, who undergoes the same narrative metamorphosis as the Roman miser: he conceals his wealth, treasures it, loses it, and finally has it recovered. In the same way the romantic theme (governed by Phaedria in the *Aulularia*) centres on Krutitsky's niece, Nastya. She is assigned the same functional role as Euclio's daughter: she is young, oppressed by her miserly guardian and, most importantly, in love with a man she cannot marry. Both Nastya and Phaedria are subjected to disgrace (Phaedria is raped, pregnant and unmarried: 'neque iam quo pacto celem erilis filiae probrum, propinqua partitudo

cui appetit' (74–75)<sup>3</sup>; Nastya is forced to beg and contemplate becoming a rich man's mistress, thus facing rape and potentially pregnancy (“...сами милостыню просят”<sup>4</sup> (Act II.iv), “А вот в сумерки придет купец... Дело-то ясное” (Act II.ix)). Both Phaedria and Nastya are denied marital happiness: Phaedria is to marry her rich neighbour Megadorus (“filiam despondi ego: hodie huic nuptum Megadoro dabo” (271)<sup>5</sup>), Nastya cannot marry Baklushin, as she is rejected by him (Баклушин: “но жениться было бы безумие с моей стороны. У меня ничего нет...” (Act I.ix)). In both plays the disequilibrium of their position is finally resolved [15, p. 17]: Phaedria and Nastya are reunited with the ‘right’ man. Not only the very presence of a binary plot-line, unusual for Ostrovsky's other plays, but also the striking similarity with which this two-fold plot is developed, prompts the suggestion that this macro-structural compositional constituent of *Ne bylo ni grosha* is inherited directly from Plautus.

The similarity in the development of the two binary plot-lines serves to reveal another striking parallel: both Plautus and Ostrovsky establish, maintain and resolve the theme of love and avarice at exactly the same compositional stages of their comedies. In both plays the causes of the miser's greed and the young woman's plight are shown to have originated long before the beginning of the action. In the prologue to the *Aulularia*, the Lar outlines two different and seemingly unrelated events, which determine the dramatic action: the hoard of gold hidden by Euclio's ancestors many years before his birth (“sed mi avos huius obsecrans concredidit thesaurum auri clam omnis” (6–7<sup>6</sup>)) and the rape of Euclio's daughter, which took place nine months prior to the action (“nam eam compressit de summo adolescens loco” (28<sup>7</sup>)). The span of time separating these events from the start of the play is enough for both characters to have developed reactions to them: Euclio has acquired a morbid fear of losing his hoard (“sed hic senex iam clamat intus ut solet credo aurum inspicere volt, ne subreptum siet” (37–38<sup>8</sup>)), while Phaedria is on the point of giving birth to the child of her rapist [15, p. 35].

3 “How I'm going to hide the young mistress's disgrace now is beyond me, and she with her time so near”. All citations of Plautus are from: [18]; all translations are taken from: [20].

4 All citations from A.N. Ostrovsky's play are from [6].

5 “I have betrothed my daughter: she marries Megadorus here to-day”.

6 “this man's grandsire as a suppliant entrusted to me, in utter secrecy, a hoard of gold”.

7 “For she has been ravished by a young gentleman of very high rank”.

8 “But there is old Euclio, shouting within as usual. I suppose he wishes to look at his gold and see that it is not stolen”.

The same pattern can be observed in the composition of Ostrovsky's play: both Krutitsky's acquisition of his wealth and his niece's romantic inclinations predate the start of the dramatic action, and both have caused the two characters (exactly like Euclio and Phaedria in the *Aulularia*) to display reactions triggered by them. In *Ne bylo ni grosha*, Anna, the wife of Krutitsky, performs the function of Plautus' Lar by informing the audience of the origin of the avarice theme, her husband's acquisition of his wealth: "Всю жизнь.... Бывало, мне со стороны говорят: 'Хорошо твое житье, сколько твой муж грабит'" (Act II.iii) (Migacheva corroborates this information: "Служил он в каком-то суде секлетарем, ну, и отставили его за взятки, что уж очень грабил" (Act II.iii)). The audience is also informed of the temporal distance between Krutitsky's financial manipulations and the action of the play (twenty-five years) during which the miser, like Euclio, has had time to form a response to his wealth (as described by Anna: "Войдет — заперется и выйдет — на два замка запрет" (Act II.iii)).

Similarly, in the romantic plot-line Nastya's former life with her wealthy god-mother, her love for Baklushin and her broken engagement are stressed as belonging to the past. Temporal indications are present in Migacheva's speech, in which she narrates Nastya's fate using past tenses ('взяла', 'выросла', 'возненавидела', 'прогнала' (Act I.iii)) and adverbial modifiers of time, such as 'теперь', explicitly pointing to the length of time separating the origin of the romantic plot-line from the start of the action. Plautus and Ostrovsky deploy the same technique of bringing forward the origin of the two themes which determine the plays' dénouements outside the span of the dramatic action. Both plays begin after the two back-stories (the acquisition of the miser's wealth and the young woman's romance) have been set up, which increases the tension between them.

In both Plautus and Ostrovsky the two themes of love and money develop as conspicuously unrelated to each other. In the *Aulularia* the theme of Euclio's miserly greed is not connected with the motif of his daughter's rape and consequently has no bearing on her ultimate marriage to Lyconides, the man who violated her during the festival of Ceres [15, p. 40]. Likewise, Ostrovsky does not set up an explicit connection between Krutitsky's crippling avarice and his niece's broken engagement. Indeed, Migacheva reveals that the separation of Nastya and Baklushin was caused by her god-mother's jealousy<sup>9</sup> and took place long

9 "И возненавидела, что на Настеньку все прельщаются, а на ее дочерей нет <...> и прогнала ее без всякого награждения. А прежде обещала замуж ее выдать" (Act I.iii).

before the girl came to live with her uncle. Thus in both the *Aulularia* and *Ne bylo ni grosha* the two main themes originate and co-exist independently until their dramatic closure.

Both plays bring the two unconnected themes together at the end in exactly the same manner. In the lost ending of the *Aulularia*, reconstructed from later sources and surviving summaries, Euclio, delighted that his stolen treasure has been returned to him, willingly ('laetus', *argum.* I) unburdens himself of it and gives it for his daughter's dowry ("illic Euclioni rem refert / ab eo donator auro, uxire et filio") [17, p. 13]<sup>10</sup>. In Ostrovsky's play the theme of avarice is also finally merged with the romantic theme and directly impacts its resolution. The dramatic closure of *Ne bylo ni grosha* involves the suicide of the miser and consequently his release from his wealth and miser-hood, two factors which have direct bearing on the culmination of his niece's romantic plot-line. Krutitsky's money serves the same purpose as Euclio's gold by providing Nastya with a dowry and so enabling her to marry her poor but beloved Baklushin. As in the *Aulularia*, the two themes are connected and resolved in direct dependence on each other. Thus, it is possible to suggest that the second element of the macro-textual level further reveals the extent to which Ostrovsky draws on Plautus' *Aulularia*, by demonstrating that the development of the binary themes of avarice and romance follow the same trajectory: they originate outside the play, they have no 'causal connection' [15, p. 39] and yet are resolved by converging at the end of the play.

The final element of the macro-textual level pertains to the role assigned in both plays to the dramatic closure and permits the most precise evaluation of the extent to which Ostrovsky draws on the *Aulularia* as his literary source. In both plays the endings result in the same dénouement (the treasure is restored and the young woman is free to marry her man), with the main difference lying in their emotional colouring. According to the genre conventions of Classical comedy all the tension built up in the course of the play is resolved in the conclusion of the *Aulularia* [15, p. 17]: Euclio 'has learned his lesson' and can now return to the community, he rejected during his self-imposed isolation [17, p. 13]. Both the miser's reintegration into society and his prior rejection are signalled by the introduction of two mirror references to Roman legislation, the *aquae et ignis interdictio* (lit. 'forbidden water and fire') at the start of the play and the *ius*

<sup>10</sup> "Lyconides gives back the gold to Euclio, who in return gives him the gold, a wife and his son" (*argum.* II.8.f.).

*connubii et commercii* ('the right of wedlock and commerce') at the end [15, p. 36]. In the first scene Euclio signifies his withdrawal from society by bidding his servant Staphyla to deny fire and water to any man who comes to his house in his absence (to prevent the discovery of his treasure): "quod quispiam ignem quaerat, extingui volo... tum aquam aufugisse dicito, si quis petet" (91–94)<sup>11</sup>. These two commands related to fire and water echo, clause for clause, the Roman decree of banishment, according to which a banished man was subjected to *aquae et ignis interdictio* ('forbidden water and fire') [15, p. 34]. Driven by his miserly greed, Euclio strives to banish the entire community of the polis from his house, choosing instead total isolation [15, p. 36]. This isolation leads to a breakdown in social commerce, since by hoarding his treasure the miser is misusing money, whose purpose is to be exchanged within society [15, p. 34]. In Ostrovsky's play the gold is endowed with the same fate: it is first stored by Krutitsky, who is isolated from the community by his inadequate reaction to the loss of his job (he is desperately afraid that without a steady income he might not be able to maintain his family), and then returned to society when the miser's insane hoarding is balanced by Nastya's and Baklushin's intention to spend everything.

The extreme form of the miser's self-isolation was entirely reversed in the lost ending of Plautus' play, as summarised by two later sources. When at last the gold was restored to Euclio and his daughter's shameful pregnancy was revealed, the miser gave up his treasure (the Lar highlights its purpose at the start of the play "eius honoris gratia feci, thesaurum ut hic reperiret Euclio, quo illam facilius nuptum, si vellet, daret" (25–27)<sup>12</sup>). Euclio's treasure, although also beneficial to Phaedria, is employed by Plautus primarily to highlight the extent of the miser's reintegration into society. As was well known to a 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC Roman audience, a dowry had symbolic as well as economic value: it stood for the two clauses of the *ius connubii et commercii* ('the right of wedlock and commerce'), the two fundamental principles upon which Roman citizenship rested [15, p. 36]. Consequently, dowry was regarded as an ideal way of exchanging money, since it contributed doubly to the continuity and cohesion of society: it emblemised both 'the exchange of kin and of propriety' [15, p. 40]. Thus, by giving away his treasure

11 "And in case anyone should be looking for a light, see you put the fire out... And the water – if anyone asks for water, tell him it's all run out".

12 "Out of regard for her I caused Euclio to discover the treasure, in order that he might more easily find her a husband".

as a dowry, Euclio's initial rejection of society and the withdrawal of money from its proper use were entirely reversed and his character was fully redeemed.

Working with a Latin source, whose ending is lost, Ostrovsky had to provide his own dramatic closure, which he chose to present in darker tones than the reconstructed scenes with which the *Aulularia* supposedly culminated. Whereas by the end of the Roman comedy, Euclio is fully restored to society, in *Ne bylo ni grosha* Krutitsky is isolated from it to the highest degree (he takes his own life). In addition to alienating himself from society both by his actions (Krutitsky is hated by all around him: Мигачева: “Ну, заворчала, гръжа старая!” (Act I.iv), Петрович: “Так я на него зол... Век я ему не забуду” (Act III.ii)) and ultimately by his suicide, Krutitsky also causes the complete withdrawal of his wife from the outside world: the suffering inflicted on Anna by her husband has deprived her of normal life (Анна: “меня теперь никакое богатство не обрадует. Отвыкла я с ним и жить-то по-людски, убил и похоронил он меня заживо” (Act V.viii)). Ostrovsky's stage directions reveal the extent of Anna's psychological trauma: “Анна (тихо плача)... (утирая слезы)... Да, горе; и с ним было горе, и умер — горе...” (Act V.viii), extending her emotional torture beyond her husband's death. Thus, since both during his life and after his death Krutitsky inflicts social disintegration and alienation on himself and those around him, his suicide in effect relieves his suffering family of a domestic tyrant.

Ostrovsky also devises a conclusion for the second romantic plot-line, introducing an element of doubt which darkens the mood. It remains unclear whether Nastya and Baklushin will have their ‘happily ever after’ [1], as Nastya herself playfully acknowledges that her sudden inheritance might soon be squandered (“Да, правда ваша, я знаю, что мы с Модестом Григорьевичем промотаем их скоро” (Act V.viii)), suggesting a potential recurrence of the poverty in which both characters were earlier immersed. Ostrovsky cuts his comedy short before the couple's wedding, denying his characters confirmation of the most fundamental form of stability. Although Nastya (“мы с Модестом Григорьевичем”) and Baklushin hope that they will share their future (“Позвольте за вами снова поволочиться” (Act V.viii)), the tension remains, as neither clarifies when their marriage will take place.

Whereas Ostrovsky's play has a tentative conclusion to the romantic line, in Plautus the second disequilibrium of the binary plot-line, Phaedria's dishonour, caused by her rape and by the possibility of a forced marriage to a man

who had not sired her child, is fully counterbalanced by her union with the baby's real father [12, p. 1]. According to the genre requirements of classical comedy, the *Aulularia* ends with a closure, in which all the disequilibria outlined by the Lar in the prologue are resolved in the best possible way, and every deserving character is happy (save for the cunning slave Strobilus, who stole Euclio's gold). Through its unequivocally happy resolution, the *Aulularia* fully merits the traditional conclusion of comedies, which consisted in all the actors withdrawing and celebrating the joyous closure of the play's action with a banquet [12, p. 1].

However, despite the introduction of darker elements in the conclusion of *Ne bylo ni grosha*, corresponding to the 'hard and cruel life depicted in the play' [9 c. 297], Ostrovsky's ending observes the traditional comedic form [2, c. 5–27]. The death of Krutitsky, although potentially tragic, serves as a liberation for nearly all the characters of the play: Anna, his widow, despite her lamentations, is freed from the bitter poverty to which her husband subjected her ("Вздумать-то, вздумать-то мне страшно! За что только он мучил себя и нас? Сколько лет мы живем нищенски" (Act V.viii)); Baklushin is freed from his crippling debts ("Крутицкий? Да ему-то я и должен" (Act V.viii)); and Nastya is freed from the disgrace of becoming the mistress of a merchant and given the means to marry the man she loves ("А мы теперь богаты с тетенькой. Вот вы и знайте" (Act V.viii)). As compared to the fate of becoming a wealthy merchant's concubine, which she would have suffered had her uncle remained alive, her potential union with Baklushin, despite his 'petty, pale character' [1], is the happiest possible resolution to the romantic theme of the play [9, c. 303]. Indeed her last line, in which she contrasts her past suffering and present happiness, reaffirms her joy at the felicitous turn of events caused by her uncle's death ("Как страшна мне казалась жизнь вчера вечером, и как радостна мне она теперь!" (Act V.viii)). Thus the suicide of Krutitsky is surrounded with such universal joy and sense of freedom that contextually it is presented as a happy rather than a tragic finale.

The death of the miser, presented by Elesya in an almost humorous style ("Михей Михеич ... Гуляли, гуляли да и... зацепились за дерево" (Act V.vi.)), could thus be seen as part of the comedic structure, on analogy with Volpone whose death is 'comic' in the sense that he is the incarnation of evil, so deserves to die and the world to be rid of him. Once Krutitsky's death is harmonised, *Ne bylo ni grosha* concludes on the same note as the *Aulularia*: the treasure is restored and put to the best possible use, as the means of securing a romantic union.

The dowry in the *Aulularia* and the inheritance in *Ne bylo ni grosha* are given the same function of restoring economic (Euclio's gold will provide for the young married couple and their infant child; Nastya does not have to beg and Baklushin is freed from debt) and social ties (Phaedria and Lyconides marry; Nastya and Baklushin reunite).

Thus it can be said that an analysis of all three elements of the macro-structural level of *Ne bylo ni grosha* (the composition involving the binary plot-lines, the structural organisation determined by their parallel independent development and the harmonising function of the conclusion, in which both plot lines are merged) has not only shown that Ostrovsky deployed Plautus as a literary source, but has also revealed the extent to which the Russian poet relied upon his Latin predecessor. It has been proved that on the first two elements of the macro-textual level Ostrovsky's play closely corresponds to Plautus' *Aulularia*: the binary plot-lines and their organisation fully parallel those of the Roman playwright. The third element, namely the conclusion in Ostrovsky's play is developed along the same principles as the reconstructed ending of the Roman original: in the *Aulularia* all tension is settled in the happiest possible way (Euclio is reintegrated into society; Phaedria's honour is restored and she marries Lyconides), the treasure is restored and both binary plots are brought to a condition of stability. However the structure and function of Ostrovsky's conclusion does include a partial deviation: although the disequilibria of the play are similarly resolved, the mood is more ambivalent, which could be accounted for by Ostrovsky's greater interest in the complexities of feelings.

The extent of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia* can also be shown in his reception of the *dramatis personae* inherited from Plautus' play, both as an interconnected system of dramatic characters and as individuals. In both plays there is an old miser who oppresses his family (Euclio and Krutitsky); a young woman who is related to the miser and depends upon him (Phaedria and Nastya); a young man in an amorous relationship with her (Lyconides and Baklushin); a rich pretender to the young girl's attention, who is favoured by one of her relatives (Megadorus and Raznovesov); an old woman who lives in the same household as the miser and is made to guard his treasure (Staphyla and Anna); and a wily low-class youth, who attempts to appropriate the treasure (Strobilus and Elesya). In both plays this set of six characters forms an interconnected complex which drives the action and conditions the resolution of the two main plot-lines of avarice

and romance. In addition to inheriting this interconnected system, Ostrovsky endows each of the six characters with a role and a history similar to that of the Plautine heroes: neither miser earned his wealth honestly (Euclio found his great-grandfather's wealth and appropriated it; Krutitsky gathered his wealth by taking bribes and lending money at high interest rates) and both are subjected to the same disaster of losing it; both young women have endured unhappy love (Phaedria was raped; Nastya parted from Baklushin) which, despite the main events of the play, is resolved in the *dénouement*; both old women perform the double role of preserving the miser's household and supporting the young woman in her unfortunate amorous adventures; both young lovers are inadequate and unworthy of their respective partners; both old pretenders are rich but rejected by the young woman; both wily youths perform various services and exhibit a certain degree of intelligence as compared to the old misers.

Thus Ostrovsky assimilates three separate aspects pertaining to the *Aulularia*'s characters: the interrelated system of six characters (the miser, the young female in distress, her young lover and the old pretender, the old woman and the *calidus servus*) which governs the plot of each play; the individual personality traits and histories of these six characters; and finally even the technique of supplying meaningful names [II, с. III] (cf. Баклушин, Тигрий Львович Лютов vs Euclio, 'well+locked'; Megadorus, 'great'+ 'gifts'), which not only give an insight into each character's personality, but also offer an additional element of comedy. Thus, Ostrovsky's reliance upon Plautus as his dramatic model is expanded to include not only structural and compositional similarities but also the system of *dramatis personae*, indicating the completeness of the Russian playwright's assimilation of his Roman predecessor.

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The extent of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia* is further revealed on the **micro-textual level of the composition** of *Ne bylo ni grosha*, which pertains to the organisation of the supra-phrasal dramatic units of the play, which, when taken together, affirm its close intertextual, dialogic relationship with Plautus' *Aulularia*. In the first of these supra-phrasal dramatic units (Act 1 Scene 4) Krutitsky enters on stage for the first time and delivers a monologue, presumably addressed to his wife Anna, who is out of the audience's view. Although it is not made explicit in the miser's words, Anna is in fact required to stay indoors in order

to guard the house from potential marauders : “Ты, смотри, никуда не смей! ... А с крыльца ни шагу, слышишь ты! Так ты... того... сядь тут! Я ведь скоро, я бером” (Act I.iv). Exactly the same command is given by Plautus’ Euclio to his old house-keeper Staphyla, who performs a role functionally identical to Ostrovsky’s Anna: “redi nunciam intro atque intus serva... abi intro, occlude ianuam. iam ego hic ero. cave quemquam alienum in aedis intro miseris... discrucior animi, quia ab domo abeundum est mihi” (81; 89–90; 105–106)<sup>13</sup>. Both plays, thus, contain the virtually identical supra-phrasal unit of a command given by a miser to his female dependant to guard a seemingly empty house.

In both plays this unit consists of exactly the same structural details: a woman in charge of the household is asked to do the guarding (Anna, Krutitsky’s wife, is the mistress of the house; Staphyla is the house-keeper); only the miser himself knows why the house should be guarded; his command specifies staying inside the boundaries of the house; and the act of guarding is only necessary because the miser himself must leave the house. Even the tone of the miser’s request is identical in both plays: it takes the form of an abrupt command, verging on a threat, expressed by verbs in the imperative mood (*Aulularia*: ‘redi’, ‘occlude ianuam’, ‘tu extinguere extempulo’<sup>14</sup> (93); *Ne bylo ni grosha*: ‘Ты, смотри, никуда не смей!’). Furthermore, the effect created by this unit is the same in both plays: it achieves dramatic irony by making only the audience and Krutitsky aware of why the house must be guarded so carefully, while keeping the other actors on stage ignorant of the hidden message.

The second supra-phrasal dramatic unit of Ostrovsky’s play, centred on the character of Krutitsky, is likewise closely parallel to Plautus’ original. In one of the most comic scenes of the play, Krutitsky weeps over the price of food and the money which Anna and Nastya have, in his opinion, wasted (“Нынче и хлеб-то дорог, и хлеб-то надо по праздникам есть, а вы чаю да тряпок накупили. Чай пьют! Вы меня с ума сведете! Набрал я тебе липового цвета на бульварах, с полфунта засушил, вот и пейте...” (Act II.i)). Indeed, Krutitsky’s lamentations reach the peak of comic absurdity when he tells his wife, Migacheva and the audience about the lime tea and the raisins, which he had gathered up

13 “Go back in there this instant, you, and keep watch inside... In with you, bolt the door. I shall be back soon. No outsider is to be let in, mind you... It’s agony having to leave the house, downright agony!”

14 ‘Go back’, ‘bolt the door’, ‘I’ll extinguish you instantly!’

from the ground, carefully washed, and brought home to eat: “Чаю захотели! Есть у вас липовый цвет и изюмцу есть немножко, я у бакалейной лавки подобрал. Он чистый, я его перемыл. А то чай! Чего он стоит!” (Act II.i). A parallel dramatic unit can be found in Plautus’ comedy when Euclio, returning from the market, complains to the audience about the cost of food: ‘nunc tusculum emi hoc et coronas floreas’, ‘venio ad macellum, rogito pisces: indicant caros! agniam caram, caram bubulam, vitulinam, cetum, porcinam: cara omnia’ (373–375; 385)<sup>15</sup>. Similarly to the first dramatic unit of guarding a seemingly empty house, the supra-phrasal unit concerning complaints about the cost of food contains exactly the same verbal elements in both the Roman and Russian comedy, including the use of the same adjective meaning ‘dear, expensive’ (‘cara’ in Plautus; ‘дорогой’ in Ostrovsky) and nouns denoting holidays (‘festo die’ in Plautus; ‘праздники’ in Ostrovsky). A whole series of items are claimed to be unaffordable (Krutitsky complains about wasting money on clothes and about the cost of bread and tea; Euclio laments six meats which are too expensive); two items are nonetheless procured for the miser’s family (Euclio buys a little frankincense and some wreaths; Krutitsky procures lime-blossom tea and raisins, albeit for free); the speeches of both misers contain similar verbal details (Ostrovsky: ‘Нынче и хлеб-то дорог!’, Plautus: ‘They named a high price!’, ‘indicant caros’) and are delivered in short, abrupt phrases.

The resemblance of the two dramatic units is made even more striking by the identical arguments with which Euclio and Krutitsky justify their stinginess: ‘Крутицкий: ‘и хлеб-то надо по праздникам есть’; Eucleo: festo die si quid prodegeris, profesto egere liceat’<sup>16</sup>. The two misers propone the same theory, that money should be saved on an everyday basis so that it can then be spent on procuring food for feast-days. Although both arguments are apparently logical, they rest upon an implicit absurdity: Ostrovsky makes Krutitsky refer to bread, the cheapest food, and Plautus has Euclio deliver his maxim just before his daughter’s wedding, a day of great festivities. Thus in this dramatic unit three elements are shared by both Plautus and Ostrovsky: the subject of the unit (lamenting the cost of food), its individual elements including the use of the same verbal detail (the

15 “Off I go to the market – ask for fish! Very dear! And lamb dear... and beef dear... and veal and tunny and pork... everything dear, everything! Now I’ve bought a little frankincense here and some wreaths of flowers”.

16 “Holiday feasting makes everyday fasting” (380–381).

reference to expensive food and holidays) and finally the absurd maxim which summarises the miser's stance. The chance of these parallels, including particular verbal echoes, being a coincidence is vanishingly small.

Ostrovsky's assimilation of Plautus' *Aulularia* is not restricted to episodes centered around the miser but also encompasses units involving minor characters. A parallel between the two plays is found in the scenes where Ostrovsky's Nastya and Plautus' Congrio, the cook, express the need to borrow a kitchen implement from a neighbour. In *Ne bylo ni Groscha* Nastya asks Anna to borrow a samovar from someone ("Попросите поскорей у кого-нибудь самоварчик-то" (Act II.ii)). Anna chooses to ask Migacheva, a woman, who, according to Ostrovsky's introductory stage directions is her neighbour on the right: "С правой стороны... одноэтажный деревянный дом мещанки Мигачевой" (Act II.ii). The second crucial detail of this dramatic unit consists in explaining why Nastya's own samovar is no good: "Наш подать нельзя, он никуда не годится" (Act II.ii). An almost identical dramatic unit can be found in Plautus' *Aulularia*, when the cook Congrio deems his pot inadequate and asks his attendant to fetch another: "Aulam maiorem, si pote, ex vicinia pete: haec est parva, capere non quit" (390–391)<sup>17</sup>. During his speech Congrio is located inside Euclio's house, which according to reconstructions of a Plautine 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD stage, was located on the left hand side of the set [17, p. 21]. As for all Plautine comedies, the setting of the *Aulularia* would have consisted of two houses, one on the left and one on the right, with a precinct between them [17, p. 21]. Consequently, the only house visible to the audience and indeed to the actors themselves, and where Congrio would have sent his attendant was, like Migacheva's house in Ostrovsky's play, on the right hand side of the set. In addition to sharing this staging detail, Ostrovsky and Plautus both make use of the same props: in both plays the implement asked for is round, hollow and used for heating a liquid (a samovar and a pot), it belongs to the sphere of cooking, and it is needed because the item contained in the miser's household is inadequate. Furthermore, in both cases the speakers ask another character to fetch the item from a richer person's house, rather than doing it themselves. As with the first and second dramatic units analysed in this article, the amount of detail which Ostrovsky's third unit shares with Plautus seems too great to have resulted from polygenesis.

17 "See if you can't get a bigger pot from one of the neighbours: this here's a little one: it won't hold it".

The most canonically comic of all the dramatic units shared by the *Aulularia* and *Ne bylo ni grosha* is a scene in which an eavesdropper confesses to the audience that he has heard of or seen the miser's gold and would like to steal it. In Ostrovsky's comedy, Petrovich, turned by Krutitsky's machinations into a mere scrivener, confesses to Elesya that he has spied the miser with his money ("Я вчера Михея видел в совете опекуном.... В зале стоит у окошечка. Кладет ли он, вынимает ли, уж не рассмотрел, а в руках у него деньги видел" (Act III.ii)). Plautus' play contains a parallel scene in which Strobilus, the wily slave of Lyconides, eavesdrops on Euclio as he confides in the audience about his gold ("Di immortales, quod ego hunc hominem facinus audivi loqui: se aulam onustam auri abstrusisse hic intus in fano Fide" (616–617))<sup>18</sup>. Both scenes progress to the respective eavesdropper contemplating the theft of the miser's wealth and in both dramatic units the target of the eavesdropping is the miser while he is at his most vulnerable: Krutitsky has dared to take his treasure out of hiding, and Euclio is telling the audience where he has concealed his pot. In both units the miser remains unaware that he is being targeted, whilst the audience is either shown (Strobilus eavesdrops on Euclio on stage) or told (Petrovich narrates his findings) that the miser's secret is out and so is located in 'a position of delightful superiority' [21, p. 199]. Finally, both units conclude with an indication of what the ultimate disequilibrium of each respective play will be: the theft of the gold [21, p. 198]. Although Ostrovsky's rendition of this dramatic unit contains one formal deviation, in that it consists of stichomythic lines (as opposed to Plautus' unit constituting a single soliloquy), its organisation, the information it conveys and its individual structural elements, make it difficult to doubt that it was created by assimilating the virtually identical dramatic unit of Plautus' *Aulularia*.

The final dramatic unit which occurs in both Plautus and Ostrovsky is without doubt the most tragic, since it encompasses the miser's soliloquy after his gold has been stolen. The only difference between the two scenes is their stylistic colouring: comic in Plautus, tragicomic in Ostrovsky. The physical action of Plautus' scene remains intensely funny throughout the miser's speech: Euclio is running around ('quo curram?') and addressing the audience directly ("quid ridetis? novi omnes" (717))<sup>19</sup>. Despite the magnitude of his grief, Euclio still has

18 "O immortal Gods! What's all this I heard the fellow tell of! A pot just crammed with gold hidden in the shrine of Faith here!"

19 "What are you grinning for? I know you the lot of you!"

a connection with the audience [19, p. 44] and hence with the outside world, to whom he addresses his lamentation. Krutitsky's monologue, on the other hand, presupposes an ambivalent response from his audience, as it is not only comic but also pathetic. His active movements in search of his money, crawling and beating his head, are followed by a stupor when he understands the irreversibility of his loss. Consequently during his monologue he is cast as psychologically disturbed: unlike Euclio who is comically running about, he first freezes immobile and senseless by the porch and then takes his cap off in an action which brings to mind the traditional metonymic connotations of this object, as a hat can be contextually equal to a head ("Снимает картуз и кладет его на крыльцо" (Act V.i)). When he begins to move again, he does so in an unsteady fashion with a wobbling gait ('Идет, шатаясь'; 'Идет нетвердыми шагами' (Act V.i)). Although, like Euclio, Krutitsky gestures with his hands, he does not vehemently point into the crowd like the Roman miser ('quid ais tu?' (719)<sup>20</sup>), but uses them to hide a coin in a convulsive manner ('Судорожно') and then lets them helplessly drop ('опускает руки'). Whereas the dramatic unit of Plautus' play is imbued with lively comedy, Ostrovsky's unit is pervaded by a sense of the miser's extreme suffering and emotional inability to cope with his loss.

However, despite this difference, individual elements of both dramatic units are strikingly similar. Both Euclio and Krutitsky express their suffering by professing that their lives are over (Ostrovsky: "Как пережить? Невозможно!" (Act V.i); Plautus: "Perii interii occidi" (713)<sup>21</sup>); both wonder where they should go (Ostrovsky: "Домой пришел. Зачем, зачем? ... Пойду я лучше погуляю" (Act V.i); Plautus: "quo curram?... quo eam aut ubi sim" (713)<sup>22</sup>); both question what else they have left in life (Ostrovsky: "украли деньги, нет денег... Зачем жить-то? Что делать-то на свете?" (Act V.i); Plautus: "nam quid mi orpust vita, qui tantum auri peridi" (722-723)<sup>23</sup>); both recall the difficulties they have endured in order to save their gold (Krutitsky thinks of his wife's suffering: "Бывало, жена больная дрожит от холода, стонет... А мне было жаль гривенника для нее..." (Act IV.vii); Euclio regrets his own self-denial [19, p. 47]: "egomet me defraudavi animumque meum geniumque meum" (724-725)<sup>24</sup>); both find it unbearable to

20 "You, what do you say?"

21 "I'm ruined, I'm killed, I'm murdered!"

22 "Where shall I run?... where I'm going, where I am".

23 "ah, what is there in life for me when I've lost all that gold?"

24 "I've denied myself, denied my own self comforts and pleasures".

look at other people [19, p. 47] (Ostrovsky: “от людей подальше. Тяжело на людей-то смотреть” (Act V.i); Plautus: “I know you, the whole lot of you! I know there are thieves here...”, “novi omnes, scio fures esse hic complures” (716)<sup>25</sup>); and finally both withdraw from the stage (Ostrovsky: “Осматривается и, махнув рукой, поворачивает в сад Епишкина” (Act V.i); Plautus: “ibo intro, ut quid huius verum sit sciam” (801)<sup>26</sup>). In both dramatic units the miser is transformed into a ‘wailing... broken old man’ [13, p. 68], who has, at least for the time being, lost his desire to live, and who is beginning to develop signs of mental derangement: Ostrovsky: “Ну, и кидай, ну, все и кидай! (Вынимает несколько медных денег и бросает). Нате, подбирайте, кто хочет... Ай! Вот он! (Поднимает пятак и с радостью бежит на прежнее место). Нашел, нашел!” (Act V.i); Plautus: “qui sim... nescio, nil video... caecus eo” (716)<sup>27</sup>. Both misers realise that they are powerless in the face of their present calamity and that any action is fruitless: in Euclio’s case catching the thief: “tene, tene. quem? quis? nescio” (713); and for Krutitsky trying to restore his money: “не надо мне, не надо, я их беречь не умею” (Act V.i)<sup>28</sup>. Although the aftermath of this dramatic unit (and consequently its emotional colouring) differs in each of the two plays, nine elements are shared between them. As in the previous four dramatic units analysed in this article, no coincidence could be so minute and consistent.

Thus at the micro-textual level of *Ne bylo ni grosha*, involving the analysis of supra-phrasal dramatic units, it has been shown that Ostrovsky’s comedy enters into a conscious intertextual relationship with Plautus’ *Aulularia*. The consistency of the Russian poet’s reproduction of the minutest semantic and verbal details of the Plautine dramatic units (studied with the help of six examples) makes a hypothesis of polygenetic development difficult to entertain.

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It can be concluded that the two-level approach introduced in this article has enabled the assessment of both the degree to which Ostrovsky’s play assimilated Plautus’ *Aulularia* and the manner in which the Russian playwright reflected the comedic conventions of his literary model. At the micro-structural level of *Ne bylo*

25 “I know you, the whole lot of you! I know there are thieves here...”

26 “Go in I will, and have the truth of it!”

27 “who I am — oh, I can’t tell, I can’t think!... I can’t see! I’m all in the dark!”

28 “Hold him! Hold him! Who? I don’t know”.

*ni grosha* the extent of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia* has been made evident by the analysis of five dramatic supra-phrasal units, which occur in both plays. When taken together these units serve the function of confirming both the systematic and the deliberate nature of Ostrovsky's dialogue with Plautus.

At the macro-textual level, Ostrovsky's reception of the interconnected system of *dramatis personae*, his assimilation of Plautus' binary plot-line, determined by the characters of a miser and his female relative; his adaptation of the *Aulularia*'s dramatic structure, wherein the two main themes of love and avarice originate, develop and conclude in a strikingly similar fashion; his original reconstruction of the Roman comedy's lost closure demonstrates the extent of the Russian playwright's systematic reliance on his Roman predecessor. The similarities of the dénouements of both plays consist in the harmonising function of the closure, the fusion of both plot-lines, the achievement of relative stability in the romantic theme; thus making only the conclusion of the miser's plot-line differ from the Plautine comedy.

The two-level approach deployed in this article, has also served to reveal the boundaries of Ostrovsky's assimilation of the *Aulularia*, restricted, as has been shown in this article, to the macro and micro structural sphere of his play. Although in his finale, Ostrovsky adheres to the Plautine model by restoring (albeit partly) the lost treasure, making the miser's hoard serve as the young woman's dowry and a means of reuniting her with her beloved, he endows the resolution of one of the two plot-lines with a more tragic colouring than the Roman playwright. Ostrovsky's miser has to end his own life to avoid a psychologically incredible conversion in his character and to follow the convention in comedy of the deceit of evil; but at the same time the playwright wants the audience to understand the suffering that has led to this isolation ending in suicide. Unlike Plautus, Ostrovsky has shown not just the comic deformity of the miser, but the human pain and misery hidden behind it and, to use his own words, 'the warm souls and kind hearts' ("Zapiski zamoskvoretskogo zhitelya") which bring the remaining characters on stage closer to their audience despite some hint of later failings. In contrast to Plautus who mocks his stock-characters and laughs alongside his audience, Ostrovsky sympathises with them by showing not only their Plautine grotesqueness, but also the immense suffering which accompanies them throughout the play (Anna's grief; Nastya's dreadful fate; Krutitsky's incessant fear of losing his treasure). Although Ostrovsky inherits the skeletal

plot of the Plautine comedy and his system of characters, he endows it with a psychological depth and emotional intensity. Plautus' comedy was for Ostrovsky a kind of 'school of art', which not only provided him with a schematic outline of events but also inspired him to investigate his character types by eliciting a mixed reaction from his audience varying from repulsion to commiseration. Thus, although Ostrovsky's comedy *Ne bylo ni grosha, da vdruk altyn* deploys Plautus' *Aulularia* as a dramatic model and so can be added, without doubt, to the ranks of the Roman playwright's descendants, the Russian playwright acts as a striking innovator creating psychologically persuasive, emotionally animate renditions of Plautine character-types for the Russian stage.

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