

# The Terentian Adaptation of the *Heauton Timorumenos* of Menander

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TERENCE'S SECOND (or possibly third) comedy, the *Heauton timorumenos*, is the least studied of his plays.<sup>1</sup> It is the only one for which the commentary of Donatus does not survive, and the fragments of Menander's play of the same name, of which it is presumed to be largely a translation, are too few and scrappy to give us any opportunity to examine how his version may have differed from Terence's. Scholarly interest has focussed principally on the prologue and especially on the sixth line of this, which is corrupt and unmetrical in the *codex Bezae Cantabrigiae*, our oldest and best manuscript, but is generally agreed to have originally described the play about to be presented as *duplex quae ex argumento facta est simplici*.

The question is: what is this doubling? The obvious answer would seem to be that it is the addition of plot elements taken from another Greek original, the *contaminatio* that Terence a few lines later admits is his common practice and defends by asserting that in this he is only following the example set by excellent poets:

<sup>1</sup> An excellent bibliography for this play is provided by Eckard Lefèvre, *Terenz' und Menanders Heautontimorumenos* (Munich 1994) 191–199. To this may be added the following: O. Knorr, "The Character of Bacchis in Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*," *AJP* 116 (1995) 221–235; J. C. B. Lowe, "The Intrigue of Terence's *Heauton timorumenos*," *RhM* 141 (1998) 163–171; B. Victor, "Ménandre, Térence et Eckard Lefèvre," *LEC* 66 (1998) 53–60; B. Dunsch, "Some Notes on the Understanding of Terence, *Heauton timorumenos* 6," *ClMed* 50 (1999) 97–131. A short bibliography of the most pertinent scholarship is provided by A. J. Brothers, *Terence, The Self-Tormentor* (Warminster 1988) 35–37.

*habet bonorum exemplum quo exemplo sibi  
licere facere quod illi fecerunt putat.* (20–21)

But it is not easy to identify additions that would double the plot or some significant part of it. The love intrigues and difficulties of Clinia and Clitipho, the two young protagonists of the play, run in some sense parallel, but they are so intertwined that it is impossible to disentangle or simplify Clitipho's troubles without so stripping the play of its interest and suspense as to make it virtually no play at all, while Clinia's story is the central mechanism of the plot.

In 1994 Eckard Lefèvre published a detailed study of the play, *Terenz' und Menanders Heautontimorumenos*, that was concerned especially with the question of originality and invention. He analyzes the play meticulously at exhaustive length, the characters, the schemes and subterfuges to extract money from Menedemus and Chremes, the fathers of the protagonists, the structure of the play scene by scene, the language, the philosophy of the two poets. He considers, often line by line, what might be Menander's and what must be Terence's. It seems presumptuous to aspire to improve on so learned and thorough a work, yet the closeness of the examination seems to have distracted the author from certain important considerations. It is with the aim of complementing and enlarging Lefèvre's analysis, and not disagreement, that the following observations are offered. Among these only the second might explain what Terence meant by doubling, the introduction on stage of the meretrix Bacchis to balance the ingenue Antiphila; the others have to do with a point of stagecraft in the first act, the mystery of why the need of a specific sum of ten minas is emphasized, the Terentian embellishment of the character of Chremes, and the act divisions of the play.

1. *Chremes's visit to the house of Phania*

At the close of the lengthy initial scene between Chremes, the wealthy, altruistically inclined father of Clitipho, and Menedemus, the self-tormenting father of Clinia, Chremes invites Menedemus to dinner that evening to celebrate the rural Dionysia (162). This invitation Menedemus refuses; he is too distressed by the injustice he has done his son to consider engaging in any festive activity. He then leaves the stage,

ostensibly to return to his labor in the field. Chremes then, after a brief comment on Menedemus's pathetic state, observes that as the time for dinner is drawing close, he must remind his neighbor Phania of his invitation to the celebration, and he goes to Phania's house. The text does not make it clear that he must then enter the house, but the next line shows that he must have had an exchange with someone inside, perhaps the *ostiarius*, in order to have learned that Phania has already made his way across to Chremes's villa.

This seemingly superfluous bit of stagecraft and the gap in the action it implies have excited considerable interest among editors and literary critics, the majority of whom believe that there was here an act break in Menander's play followed by a choral interlude or a deferred prologue. The Oxford text of Kauer and Lindsay<sup>2</sup> inserts the note (*Saltatio Convivarum*) but retains the traditional break between the first two acts following Chremes's exit to his villa at 212. No editor, so far as I know, makes the observation that it is necessary for Chremes to enter Phania's house and leave the stage simply in order to permit the entrance of Clitipho and Clinia without Chremes's being aware of it. Clitipho and Clinia have met at the harbor as Clinia was disembarking from his return voyage (181–182), and on account of their friendship going back to childhood, Clitipho has invited Clinia to dinner, the obligatory *cena aduenticia*. He has then brought him home with him because Clinia is afraid to face the wrath of his father. Either somewhere along the way, or else from the harbor itself, they have sent off Dromo, Clinia's personal slave, in company with Syrus from Chremes's household to fetch Antiphila, Clinia's beloved, and her "mother" and bring them, too, to Chremes's villa, Dromo to show the way to their lodgings in the city and Syrus to escort them to the villa, since Dromo would not know the way.

<sup>2</sup> R. Kauer and W. M. Lindsay, *P. Terenti Afri Comoediae* (Oxford 1926). In this they were following a suggestion made by O. Skutsch, "XOΠΟΥ bei Terenz," *Hermes* 47 (1912) 141–145. While the more recent discovery of further remains of Menander's plays and the light cast by these on his theatrical practice make the notion of a chorus of revelers at the rural Dionysia attractive and highly probable in his version of the play, this would not be an appropriate point for their entrance.

After Chremes returns to the stage from Phania's house and makes his way back toward his villa, Clitipho emerges from having settled Clinia in his accommodations and still in conversation with Clinia, who remains hidden inside. He tries to reassure Clinia (175–177), who is worried lest the two women have changed lodgings or left Athens during his absence, or that Antiphila may have suffered a change of heart. Chremes is unaware of the very existence of Clinia before he is told about him by Menedemus and how he has mistreated the boy (93–117), as also of the friendship of Clitipho and Clinia, presumably formed during their schooling (183–184).

Between Chremes's exit into Phania's house and his re-emergence several minutes must elapse. Clitipho and Clinia might enter accompanied by porters carrying Clinia's baggage, but it is clear from later developments in the play that he has remained nearly penniless, so there could be no show of wealth, and such a chorus would seem inappropriate. It is better to suppose that this interval was simply to be filled with dumb show, Clinia appearing in traveler's dress, Clitipho in the accoutrements of a young man-about-town. If they are accompanied, it will be by only a couple of attendants at most. The audience is to be teased by their appearance and their stealth, which we later realise is due to Clinia's fear of facing his father. He may have shown this in pantomime, drawing his cloak close about him and looking furtively in the direction of Menedemus's exit. But it is not until Clitipho reappears from the villa that the audience is assured of their identity. This bit of dramaturgy seems unlikely to have been invented by Terence and equally unlikely to have been transmitted in stage directions. So far as we know, such stage directions were never included in a play's script. The mystery was to whet the spectators' appetite and prepare them for the intrigues that follow.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The notion that Clitipho and Clinia might have entered Chremes's villa by an offstage door (as we must presume Phania has) seems hardly worth arguing against in view of the otherwise otiose and insufficiently motivated visit of Chremes to Phania's house.

2. *The introduction on stage of the meretrix Bacchis*

Toward the end of the second act, after long delay and careful audience preparation, Dromo and Syrus finally appear, shortly in advance of not only Antiphila but also Bacchis, a meretrix of whom Clitipho is enamored. Bacchis is attended by a retinue that includes ten servant girls carrying clothing and jewelry (245–250). Her appearance is unexpected; we learn later that she has been invited by Syrus, acting as Clitipho's envoy but on his own initiative, with the promise of ten minas if she will come. Somehow in the course of the errand to fetch Antiphila and her "mother," Syrus has found an opportunity to visit Bacchis and to invite her to move to Chremes's villa. Clitipho is understandably surprised at this and expresses shock at the idea of introducing Bacchis into Chremes's house (311–313). In reply to his question as to what Syrus has in mind by this move, Syrus nonchalantly answers that he has done it for Clitipho's convenience and in order that he may by this means obtain the money that Clitipho has promised Bacchis (322–330). This important new detail is then not further elaborated. All we are told is that Syrus proposes to represent Bacchis to Chremes as Clinia's beloved, not Clitipho's, while Antiphila will be lodged with Sostrata, Clitipho's mother. Clitipho is alarmed, sure that Syrus's scheme will embroil him in dreadful trouble, and they then engage in a heated exchange that distracts Syrus from further explanation. Finally Clitipho agrees to let Syrus play out this charade, provided that Bacchis is willing to play her part. Syrus assures him that she is already schooled in this, persuaded to do so because he has come to her at an opportune moment, when she was playing cat and mouse with a soldier who had been begging her for a night of her favors (364–368). Then in order to prevent Clitipho from compromising the situation by a display of affection for Bacchis when she enters, Clitipho is sent off and told to keep clear of the action for the present (379–380).

Syrus's scheme, however, is outrageous. The idea of introducing a hetaera into an Athenian household where there was a legitimate wife on any pretext is simply out of the question.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> On this point see, e.g., Dar.-Sag. 3.2 (1904) 1823–34, esp. 1831 (O.

She cannot be disguised as other than she is, and, in fact, no attempt is made to conceal her character. Even if Chremes did not know that Clinia's beloved was a poor waif, as she is described to him by Menedemus (95–98), he is man of the world enough to recognize Bacchis's professional character immediately, as Clitipho well knows (370). The hetaera and the legitimate wife inhabit entirely separate worlds with no contact between them. Breach of this convention by Alcibiades induced Hipparete to leave his house and subsequently sue for divorce.<sup>5</sup> Repeatedly in New Comedy we see the hetaera shamed in the presence of the wife. A good example of this can be found in Terence's *Hecyra*, where the meretrix Bacchis's reluctance to present herself to Pamphilus's wife Philumena and her mother Myrrhina, even though her errand is an act of kindness, is emphasized at some length (754–793). However the Roman audience might have viewed the introduction of Bacchis and her household into the villa of Chremes, in Menander's Athens it would have been simply unacceptable.

In a paper published in 1980 A. J. Brothers proposed that in Menander's play *Bacchis* was a silent character.<sup>6</sup> He notes that her entrance brings a fourth speaking actor to the stage and that her speech on entering (381–395) intolerably delays the reunion of Clinia and Antiphila, which is anxiously anticipated. Moreover it accomplishes little, and it is out of key with her character as she has been described earlier (227–228) and as we see her later. Obviously these objections are not compelling; fourth speakers are not unknown in New Comedy, and by the conventions of the Roman stage an entering character may

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Navarre); *RE* 8 (1912) 1331–72, especially 1361 (K. Schneider); S. B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves* (New York 1975) 86–92, 139–142. The outrageousness of the introduction of Bacchis into Chremes's villa was duly observed as early as 1892 by E. Hermanowski (*Quaestiones Terentianae Selectae* [diss. Halle] 23), but subsequent scholars seem to have accepted it without demur.

<sup>5</sup> Andoc. *Alc.* 14, Plut. *Alc.* 8. Cf. also pseudo-Demosthenes, *Neair.* 21–22, where the impropriety of the intrusion of a hetaera into a respectable woman's house is stressed.

<sup>6</sup> A. J. Brothers, "The Construction of Terence's *Heautontimorumenos*," *CQ* N.S. 30 (1980) 94–119, especially 108–112.

speak at some length, as though still on his way, before encountering actors already on stage, and what Bacchis has to say is not really out of character in the circumstances in which she finds herself. So it is not surprising that Brothers's thesis has not met wide acceptance. But no one, so far as I know, has proposed that the introduction of Bacchis on stage is an invention of Terence. Yet there is a wealth of evidence that this is the case.

Dromo and Syrus were sent to fetch Antiphila and her "mother," not Bacchis. Clitipho did not want his father to find out about his liaison with Bacchis. She evidently had lodgings, if not her own establishment, in town, and he could visit her there, which suited both of them, although he found that his financial resources were insufficient to satisfy her demands. No reason for her bringing her household with her is offered, other than that it will exacerbate the ardor of a soldier (124–127), which is quite insufficient. Her retinue and its accommodation will place an intolerable burden on Chremes's household, as Chremes observes when she later moves to Menedemus's establishment (749–751), yet nothing is said about this, nor provision made for it. Chremes is at this time about to entertain a company of friends and neighbors at a holiday feast celebrating the rural Dionysia, yet when he emerges from his villa at the beginning of the next act he has been at an all-night party offered to Bacchis and her companions and dominated by her imperious demands for better wine (455–461), and where Clitipho has been guilty of making amorous advances to her (562–567).

If Bacchis is removed as a presence on stage, no change in the basic plot of the play is required and little modification of the action. The second half of the play revolves around Clitipho's need for the sum of ten minas to be delivered to Bacchis. He has promised her money earlier, Syrus tells us (329), and from the beginning Syrus is clearly scheming to obtain this from Chremes, although by what means he does not reveal and very likely has not yet thought out in detail (512–513). He may change his mind when Chremes, in the belief that Syrus is in league with Dromo to mulct Menedemus of money for the benefit of Clinia and his beloved, urges him to exert himself on Clinia's behalf, thinking thus to do Menedemus a favor (514–

561), and at the end of the third act he invents the story that Antiphila has been pledged to Bacchis as surety for a loan of a thousand drachmas (ten minas) made to Antiphila's Corinthian "mother" (600–605), and Bacchis is now asking Clinia for this sum, after which she will cede the girl to Clinia.

To obtain the thousand drachmas Syrus is proposing to offer Menedemus a preposterous yarn about Antiphila's being a Carian noblewoman, a war victim or the prey of piracy, sold into slavery and purchased by Bacchis. If Menedemus will buy her from Bacchis and restore her to her family, there will be great profit to be realised from the investment (608–609). Chremes is understandably skeptical about Menedemus's being persuaded by any such invention, and Syrus concurs: there is no need of that. But when he seems about to explain why, they are interrupted by the entrance of Sostrata, Chremes's wife, accompanied by her nurse, bearing a ring, the evidence that Antiphila is their long-lost daughter.

This development, Syrus says subsequently, has brought him close to disaster. It will now come out that Antiphila is Clinia's beloved, and his scheme for obtaining the requisite money is blown sky high. We never find out what it might have been. Instead, after confiding his difficulties to us and pondering briefly, he announces that he has hit upon a new stratagem that he is confident will be successful, and we anxiously await its implementation (668–678). This is delayed in Terence's play, first by Clinia, overjoyed at the recognition of Antiphila's true identity, and then by a brief scene in which Bacchis emerges from Chremes's villa and complains that Syrus has deceived her with the promise of ten minas, money that has then not been forthcoming. Consequently she is determined to leave and wishes her attendant to go to a soldier known to be celebrating the Dionysia in a nearby villa with the story that she is being detained against her will but will somehow elude her captors and come to him (723–735). Since this story is false, there is some threat of violence, an implicit invitation to the soldier to come and rescue her with an assault on Chremes's villa like that of Thraso on the house of Thais in the *Eunuchus* (771–816) and the one that we are told about in the *Adelphoe* (87–93). She is prevented from dispatching her attendant by Syrus, who easily persuades her that the promised sum is



readily available and then induces her to transfer her household from the villa of Chremes to the dwelling of Menedemus for no explicit reason, only the vague suggestion that this is where the money is.

Not only is this whole scene superfluous and a distraction, demanded in the plot only by the necessity of removing Bacchis from the villa of Chremes so that Chremes can subsequently fetch the ten minas from the interior and deliver it to Clitipho to give to Bacchis, but the establishment of Menedemus has miraculously been transformed from a humble farmhouse into a villa capable of accommodating the household of Bacchis. This scene can be excised almost without requiring adjustment of any part of the plot or text.

Syrus's real scheme for obtaining the money is, and always has been, against Chremes. Antiphila has been introduced into his villa as a refugee from the clutches of Bacchis, in need of shelter lest she be enslaved, her "mother" being dead and the debt she had incurred having to be paid. If she was introduced as an interest of Clitipho, as seems to have been Syrus's original thought, it would have been necessary to conceal this from Chremes, who, like Menedemus, would have seen her as a Corinthian and unacceptable as a daughter-in-law. More likely she was introduced simply as a waif in need of protection and lodged in the women's quarters under the care of Sostrata, where Chremes could ignore her existence prior to the discovery of her true identity, and this is implied in what Sostrata relates at her emergence with the telltale ring (652–657). With the discovery of her identity as an Athenian citizen the risk of enslavement for debt is eliminated, and Chremes could, if he chose, repudiate the debt, real or not.

So Syrus must find another means of obtaining the ten minas. Syrus's new ruse consists of simply asserting the truth, that Antiphila is the beloved of Clinia and Bacchis of Clitipho, which Chremes will not believe because he has urged Syrus to exert himself to scheme against Menedemus and is convinced that this is what he must be doing. Syrus's further suggestion that Clinia is only pretending to want to marry Antiphila in order to persuade Menedemus to provide money for the wedding, for Antiphila's dress and jewelry and so on (777–778), is absurd, for this would be the responsibility of the father of the

bride, if he could afford it, as Chremes obviously can. But Chremes is so blinded by his conviction that he can penetrate subterfuge that he cannot accept the truth. Antiphila has been introduced into his house as a waif, a figure of pathos. If Chremes is aware of her beauty and charm (and it is doubtful that he has even seen her before she is recognized as his daughter), he has been convinced that Clinia is passionately in love with a hetaera and so is an unsuitable candidate for a son-in-law, however attractive an alliance between the two families might be. The additional suggestion, carefully implanted by Syrus, that the proposed engagement is merely a stratagem to extract a substantial sum from Menedemus completes the picture.

As soon as Bacchis is removed from the stage (and the villa of Chremes), a number of serious difficulties are resolved and breaches of logic disappear. There is no violation of the sanctity of the Athenian household by the intrusion of a hetaera, no unexplained duplication of dinner parties on the same evening, no necessity for the poorly motivated and clumsily staged transference of Bacchis from the villa of Chremes to the house of Menedemus.

In a reconstruction of the plot of the play from which she is omitted Clitipho is still involved in a liaison with Bacchis, a meretrix, but must conceal this from his disapproving and tight-fisted father. His friend and contemporary Clinia is in love with Antiphila, a poor young girl from Corinth who is being groomed for a future as a meretrix by a rapacious "mother." After Clinia's desperate flight from home, driven by the tirades of his father to seek his fortune as a mercenary soldier, and his return after an absence of three months with nothing to show for the venture, Clinia and Clitipho join forces. Clitipho has promised Bacchis a substantial sum of money, which his slave Syrus proposes to obtain somehow from his father. During Clinia's absence Antiphila's "mother" has died, and her situation has become desperate; although she has managed to eke out an existence by weaving, she has almost exhausted what little resources she had and is about to be dispossessed. With the guidance of Syrus they hit upon the idea of pretending that Antiphila owes Bacchis a debt and is threatened with enslavement if it is not paid. They will portray

her as a refugee from Bacchis requiring asylum in the women's quarters of Chremes's villa, and Clinia as the lover of Bacchis but sympathetic to the plight and pleas of Antiphila to rescue her from the clutches of Bacchis. Since neither Menedemus nor Chremes has seen Clinia's beloved, but both are aware of the probability that she was being groomed to become a meretrix, and given the three-month gap in time, this will all be plausible enough. The presentation of the beautiful Antiphila as a free-born woman of noble character whose freedom was threatened could be counted on to win Chremes's sympathy and elicit a loan to assure her freedom. Bacchis would then receive the money she required, but the repayment of Chremes would have somehow to be arranged. At this point the timing of events became important; before Chremes actually transferred money to Clinia for Bacchis, the recognition of Antiphila as Chremes's daughter made the payment unnecessary. As an Athenian citizen she could not be enslaved for debt.<sup>7</sup> So it became necessary for Syrus to invent a new strategy for obtaining the requisite sum, which is what we see as the middle development of Terence's play, lines 595–687.

What is accomplished by producing Bacchis on stage? Very little, certainly nothing in the way of delineating character, as she has very little to say and nothing that contradicts our view of her as the typical shrewd meretrix, and almost nothing in the way of advancing the plot, since the threat of the intervention of the soldier to rescue her from Chremes's villa is a red herring, and the transference of Bacchis's household from Chremes's house to Menedemus's is only a detail that could be circumvented. So we are brought back to seeing her introduction as invented for its value as spectacle. The Roman audience wanted to see the meretrix in person, not simply hear about her, and Terence has embellished the visual picture by including an entourage of servants. It was an opportunity for costuming and dumb show, the *pompa* with which every Roman ceremony and show began, and nothing more.

<sup>7</sup> On the prohibition of enslavement of an Athenian citizen for debt, see A. R. W. Harrison, *The Law of Athens* I (Oxford 1968) 163–180, especially 164–165; D. M. MacDowell, *The Law in Classical Athens* (Ithaca 1978) 79–82.

3. *The sum of ten minas*

The sum of ten minas (one thousand drachmas) is repeatedly invoked as vital in the plotting of Terence's play. Our first awareness of a need for money comes when Syrus is explaining why he has invited Bacchis to come to Chremes's villa (329–330). There it is mentioned only as money, not a specific sum, promised to Bacchis, but Clitipho has been hounding Syrus to invent some way of obtaining it, so it must be a substantial sum. We hear of it next when Syrus is explaining to Chremes how he proposes to deceive Menedemus in order to obtain money for Clinia; it has then become a thousand drachmas lent by Bacchis to the “mother” of Antiphila (600–605), for which Antiphila has been pledged as surety. Bacchis is now begging Clinia to give her this amount, after which she will surrender Antiphila to him. Here it is not clear why she is appealing to Clinia, who is known to be financially strapped, for this amount at this time, nor yet what interest Clinia might have in acquiring rights to Antiphila as a chattel, except as she might make a good servant. It is mentioned again when Bacchis emerges from Chremes's villa as ten minas Syrus has promised Bacchis if she will come to Chremes's villa (723–724) and a bit later again as the sum Antiphila owes Bacchis, a debt which Chremes must now assume, since she has been recognized as his daughter and he is a man of substance and dignity in the eyes of his fellow citizens (790–799). Bedevilled by his sense of social importance, Chremes then capitulates, and the money is delivered to Bacchis.

Why does Bacchis need this sum, and why is that need so pressing just at this juncture? It is a large sum, but not enormous, one-third of a talent.<sup>8</sup> When Chremes has given the ten minas to Clitipho to deliver to Bacchis, he says that he has given another ten to Antiphila for her living expenses (*hortamentis* or *alimentis*, 836) and will give another ten for her wardrobe (*ornamentis*), and although he chafes at the amount, his womenfolk are demanding a dowry for her of two talents

<sup>8</sup> On sums in New Comedy and the Roman adaptations of New Comedy, see L. Casson, “The Athenian Upper Class and New Comedy,” *TAPA* 106 (1976) 29–59, esp. 53–59.

(835–841). Clearly he considers these very generous outlays, but he is also proud to be able to afford them. Bacchis's household and living expenses may be presumed to cost a considerable amount, but she is also presumed to have numerous admirers willing to contribute to her generously, if she is as successful in her profession as most of the meretrices of Roman comedy.

There is, however, a significant discrepancy here that needs to be accounted for: her household is not in reality very large (ten servant girls and perhaps a few men) and travels with her bringing her wardrobe, unless we are to see this as only a fraction of the whole, what she might require for a few days, which seems contradicted by Chremes's protests of the expense of its upkeep, and is without good parallel. It looks rather as though she were homeless at this point. In that case we should be justified in seeing her involvement with a soldier as a development subsequent to her involvement with Clitipho, entered into because he was unable to provide her with adequate financial support, and background for the situation in Menander's play, a household from which she was anxious to escape after having found the soldier boorish and tiresome and the domestic arrangement a prison.<sup>9</sup> Syrus says she was willing to come because he had discovered her at an opportune moment, when she wanted to tease a soldier. The ten minas would then be the sum he had paid her in exchange for her services for an extended period and requiring to be restored to him for her freedom. This subplot Terence would have eliminated as unnecessarily complicating when he wished to bring Bacchis on stage and make the contrast of the love affairs of Clinia and Clitipho the central mechanism of his play. Yet sufficient traces of it survive to alert the attentive reader to the probability and explain the importance of the ten minas.

<sup>9</sup> For similar situations cf., e.g., Plautus *Bacchides* 42–46, Terence *Hecyra* 85–96. In New Comedy the hetairas seem almost always to loathe the soldiers to whom they are obligated or engaged and to ache to escape from the involvement. This is the central element in Plautus's *Miles Gloriosus*.

#### 4. *Chremes's revenge and the denouement*

If I am right that Terence has largely eliminated a preliminary situation in adapting Menander's play, he has accepted and emphasized its less than happy conclusion. Once Chremes is apprised of the true situation and how he has been duped by Syrus, he is furious. The money he has lost is a comparative trifle, but the injury to his *amour propre* is beyond healing. In contrast to the gentle Menedemus, whose remorse and extended suffering has taught him to prize human relationships beyond material wealth, Chremes, whose worldly success and easy domineering have made him manipulative and insensitive to any values other than his own, cannot endure having been victimized, however gently or to good purpose. As he berates his wife for having disobeyed his instructions, however long in the past and however humane in her intentions, he will not countenance his son's independence or see it as anything but flouting of acceptable standards. He may say sententiously: *homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto* (77), but he does not mean it. He is intolerant of everything that in any way conflicts with his interests and his view of the world.

Consequently when he discovers how badly he has misread the evidence, he is angry, not only or primarily with himself, but with everyone else. He sees accession to Clitipho's need in his liaison as the first step on the downward road to ruin (930–931). He accuses Clitipho extravagantly of wallowing in *luxuria ac lasciuia* (945). Consequently when Menedemus brings up the question of a dowry for Antiphila, Chremes at first hesitates, not because he is reluctant to be generous, as Menedemus initially thinks, but because he has suddenly had inspiration of a way to punish Clitipho. The dowry had already been set at two talents (838–839); now he will pretend to be intending to give all his property to Antiphila. This threat will bring his son back into line, make him see the error of his ways, induce him to take a proper wife and settle down. But for Syrus Chremes reserves a punishment that he will never forget. And we see him gloating over consideration of the exquisiteness of his future revenge.

At this point in Menander's play there was probably an act break, for it is necessary for Menedemus to leave the stage and

return to his house to fetch Clitipho, who is already fully informed about his father's intentions when he comes on stage accompanied by Syrus. The interval might have been filled with Chremes's pantomime of self-satisfaction at the prospect of revenge. The last 114 lines of the play are devoted to Clitipho's consternation before the threat of disinheritance by his father. Surely he is not deserving of so severe a punishment, and Menedemus sympathetically agrees. But Chremes defends his decision, reasoning that Clitipho's stupidity and lack of foresight have made it necessary for him to consider provisions for his son's future. By giving all his property to his son's next of kin he will assure that Clitipho will always have a protection against destitution, and Bacchis will be prevented from taking complete possession of his wealth.

The speciousness of his reasoning in this will be obvious; Bacchis is not a great threat, but only a first affair. Not only is Clitipho dumbfounded at the harshness of his father's gesture, but Syrus selflessly protests that judgment is being visited on Clitipho for misdoing that properly belongs to him. Chremes, however, stands firm and dishonestly assures Syrus that he is not angry with him. But Syrus is not so foolish as to believe that. When Chremes abruptly leaves the stage to enter his villa, leaving Clitipho and Syrus to make what they will of the situation, Syrus perceives that he has probably gone to fetch bullies and shackles to take him into custody, but that does not prevent him from joking grimly about his future and then inventing a strategy for Clitipho to use to counter his disinheritance, before departing hastily into Menedemus's house to seek protection and a sympathetic defender. Let Clitipho now advance the argument that the only possible justification for his father's position must be that, in fact, Clitipho is not his son.

That would also seem to be the only legally valid possibility for such disinheritance.<sup>10</sup> While Chremes might make generous

<sup>10</sup> On the illegality of the disinheritance of a son, see Harrison, *Law* I 122–162; MacDowell, *Law* 92–95; S. C. Todd, *The Shape of Athenian Law* (Oxford 1993) 216–227. While in Athens one could not disinherit a legitimate son, in Rome, where *patria potestas* prevailed, one could, which would have made Chremes's threat meaningful to Terence's audience. The

presents to his daughter and other people during his life, at death a legitimate son took precedence over all others in Athenian law. So if Clitipho brings the question of his legitimacy out into the open, rather than accepting Chremes's disposition passively, the matter should be quickly resolved. Syrus's shrewdness in penetrating both Chremes's insincerity in the threat of disinheritance and his intention of making a conspicuous example of Syrus in his punishment is one more proof of his superior intelligence.

How is one to explain Menedemus's behavior during these developments? He has appeared at the beginning of the fifth act as a gentle, good-natured, understanding fellow, chastened by his experience with his son and having grown in wisdom, modest in his reception of the leadership of Chremes, but perceptive of Chremes's shortcomings. In fact, he is the very antithesis of Chremes, whose self-assurance is boundless and will to impose it authoritarian and arbitrary. Menedemus's gentleness of approach in dealing with Chremes's obtuseness is exemplary, and through their scene together the contrast between them is sharply drawn. When Menedemus returns to the stage at line 954 after fetching Clitipho from his house, he has nothing to do but express his dismay and sympathy for Clitipho; the dialogue is entirely between father and son. And after line 960 Menedemus disappears into the background and eventually into his house, to re-emerge only at line 1045 for the final scene of the play.

Yet it is clear that he has been following the action closely. Should he mime embarrassment, or shake his head in reproach and dismay at Chremes's abrupt and patronizing brutality? Why is he not kept on stage, a silent observer of Chremes's intemperate abuse and Clitipho's bewilderment? That, it seems, is where he belongs. Dramatically his withdrawal seems intended to prevent his interference on Clitipho's behalf prematurely, before Sostrata has had an opportunity to plead with her husband, and he to treat her so haughtily and unfeelingly that we begin to see him as driven to dogged self-defense, the

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counter to this that is worked out would have been equally compelling in both settings.



real self-tormentor of Terence's play, although he might not see it in that way. But this poetic symmetry is certainly deliberate. As Menedemus drove his son away unintentionally, Chremes comes close to driving his son away deliberately. If Clitipho will not conform to his standards, Chremes will disown him. Yet his standards are basically materialistic and mercenary; he thinks only of the wealth that he has amassed, how to keep it safe and whole, not how to use it (1035–1043). For him money spent on or given to Bacchis is simply a disgrace and will bring him into disrepute, even though it is Clitipho who would actually do the spending.

So the denouement comes more bitter than sweet. Clitipho must conform. Early in the play Chremes makes the statement: *homo sum: humani nil a me alienum puto* (77) in justification for taking what Menedemus sees as a meddling interest in his affairs. At that time it seemed a kindly interest. But at the end of the play Menedemus observes, and we as spectators agree:

*enimvero Chremes nimi' grauius cruciat adolescentulum  
nimi'que inhumane.* (1045–1046)

It is only with the poorest of grace that Chremes is ultimately persuaded to relent, and only if Clitipho will obediently submit to the hardest of conditions, abandon Bacchis and marry a suitable young woman. Whatever we may think of Bacchis, this resolution of the difficulties can make no one happy, but granted Chremes's determination, it is the best that can be managed.

##### 5. *Act divisions and entr'actes in the play*

Most of the traditional act divisions of the play are arbitrary and seem to have been inserted by someone aware that a play should be divided into five acts but indifferent to the demands of continuous action. That between acts one and two, for example, ignores the fact that Clitipho's soliloquy (213–229) is clearly prompted by and a response to his father's lecture at the end of the preceding scene (200–210). Consequently critics and editors have exerted themselves to find more appropriate divisions. The various proposals have been examined and tabulated by Lefèvre (149–151).

If we may take the single entr'acte preserved in Plautus's *Curculio* (461–486) as indicative, the breaks between acts in Roman

comedy were brief, just enough to indicate a possible passage of some varying amount of time, and filled with a diversion, a change of interest and focus. The audience was not expected to leave their seats, and while the diversion offered broke the dramatic illusion, it might also comment on the action or the characters. The main consideration was that it should clearly interrupt the action. Thus at 170, when Chremes leaves the stage and enters Phania's house and Clinia and Clitipho come on in a stealthy pantomime that piques the curiosity of the spectators, we should be justified in seeing this as fulfilling the functions of an act division and an entr'acte. This would also be a better break than the traditional one at 212, which interrupts continuous action, or the suggested correction of this by moving the break to follow Clitipho's soliloquy, a popular emendation but one that then requires Clitipho to remain on stage through the act break with nothing to do but await the entrance of Clinia.

Everyone is in agreement in respect to the traditional act break between acts two and three at line 409. A night has intervened, and Chremes comments on the breaking of the dawn at his entrance. The question here is rather what might have been offered as a *divertissement* for the audience. The second act ends with the exit of everyone on stage into the villa of Chremes. What has then occurred subsequently has been either, as one reconstructs Menander's play, a feast celebrating the rural Dionysia, or in Terence's play a rowdy dinner party dominated by the meretrix Bacchis. Neither really lends itself to pantomime, and since the passage of several hours must be conveyed, a musical interlude seems most appropriate here.

A little later, toward the conclusion of his early morning interview with Menedemus at line 502, Chremes leaves the stage, going off in order to postpone having to settle a boundary dispute between two neighbors, and leaves Menedemus to comment in soliloquy on his admiration for the sagacity of Chremes and the blindness of men to the assessment of their own condition and the action it may demand. Chremes returns to the stage after the briefest absence at line 508, saying he has arranged his postponement. Here there would seem to be an admirable point for an act break, an opportunity for Menedemus to expatiate on his theme and possibly break the dramatic

illusion by stepping out of the action but remaining in character. However it would make the third act of Terence's play much too short, not even one hundred lines, and there seems no way to move this break to make the act a more appropriate length. It is better to view this as simply a device to indicate the passage of time within an act. Chremes and Menedemus have met at dawn; when Syrus comes on stage at line 512 the day is well advanced. This would then be a break between scenes in the same act.

The Menandrian break between acts three and four might best have been set at line 667, as proposed by Mette<sup>11</sup> but accepted by no one else. Chremes, Sostrata, and Sostrata's nurse then leave the stage to go into Chremes's villa to question Antiphila about her history and the possibility that she is Chremes's daughter. Syrus is left on stage having been essentially a silent spectator in the scene between Chremes and Sostrata. Time must then elapse for the recognition to be worked out and for Clinia to learn about it before he appears at line 679. The interval is filled by Syrus in soliloquy. He sees that the recognition is a near certainty and that his original plans for obtaining money from one or the other of the two fathers are now no longer viable and must be reshaped. He racks his brain frantically for fresh inspiration, considering first one possibility and then another, seeing that one scheme after another will not succeed. The opportunity for an accomplished pantomimist to display his skill seems too good to pass up.

The break between acts four and five comes at line 873, when Menedemus and Chremes leave the stage after a conversation in which Chremes has persuaded Menedemus that Clinia's professed wish to marry Antiphila is simply a ruse to obtain money from him for Bacchis, but he should go along with the game, agree about the marriage, but dole out money for expenses sparingly. They then part after agreeing to keep one another informed, Menedemus to his house and Chremes to his villa. In the interval before the next scene, again a conversation between the same two, Menedemus has had an

<sup>11</sup> H. J. Mette, "Die περιεργία bei Menander," *Gymnasium* 69 (1962) 398–406.

opportunity to observe the behavior of Clitipho and Bacchis and to realise that Chremes's interpretation of the situation cannot possibly be correct. And Chremes has had an opportunity to have a long talk with his wife. One might estimate that at least an hour must have elapsed. How could this gap between acts have been filled? A great deal of mysterious and suggestive activity has taken place in Menedemus's house under his observation, activity that he then describes to Chremes in some detail. One might suppose that, as in the *Pseudolus* (573), a flautist filled the interval with suggestive music and the audience was invited to speculate about what might be happening off stage.

Divided in this way we have a play of five acts of 170, 239, 258, 206, and 194 lines respectively, the longest third act composed of two scenes of 99 and 150 lines. The intervals are marked by soliloquy and/or pantomime, or else by an unidentified diversion, probably musical. But there are only two clear act breaks requiring an entr'acte, that between acts two and three following line 409 and that between acts four and five following line 873; otherwise the action is continuous and affords no opportunity for interruption.

In Menander's *Dyskolos* the acts are of comparable length, varying from 164 to 232 lines; the intervals are filled by a chorus of worshippers of Pan who come on stage in a procession to his shrine and then are present off stage in the vicinity for the rest of the play, returning at intervals to sing and dance in his honor. Thus the chorus is integrated with the setting of the play, but not with its plot. In the *Aspis* the delayed prologue is delivered by Tyche, and it appears that she must enter from one of the three stage doors, here designated as her temple or shrine.<sup>12</sup> Then when the first act ends, Daos, a

<sup>12</sup> K. B. Frost, *Exits and Entrances in Menander* (Oxford 1988) 23, suggests that Tyche might have appeared on an upper level, if she did not enter from one of the wings. Since a number of Menander's prologues were delivered by personifications that were not recognized as divinities, they could not have had a clear relation to the setting and might have been brought in from any entrance, if they did not emerge from a trapdoor in the stage or on an upper level. But that is not the case with Tyche, and since the setting

middle-aged former tutor of one of the principals, describes the approaching chorus as a crowd of drunken men, and there is again mention of Tyche with the suggestion that they are coming to perform in her honor. In the *Perikeiromene* the delayed prologue is delivered by the personification Agnoia, who, although not recognized as a divinity, asserts that she governs the action. Here the chorus is described by a character on stage, Daos a slave, as a lot of drunken young men, so there is a gesture, even if only a perfunctory one, at integration of the chorus with the setting. In the *Epitrepontes* Chairestratos, a character in the play, comments on the character of the chorus before they make their first entrance as a crowd of drunken youths; so there, too, there was an integration of the chorus with the setting. The remains of the other plays of Menander are too fragmentary in the early scenes to provide useful evidence, but it does seem that Menander always liked to give his chorus a *raison d'être*, even if it had to be an artificial one.

Roman writers of comedy dispensed with the chorus. In some sense the cantica of Plautus fulfilled some of the functions of the Greek chorus, but the marking of act breaks had to be treated differently. In some cases it is carefully built into the action of the play, as when at the end of the first act of the *Amphitruo* Jupiter dismisses night and orders it to give place to day, or as when at the end of the second act Amphitruo goes off to fetch Alcumena's kinsman Naucrates from his ship to attest to the truth of what he says, and we await his return, our curiosity piqued by knowledge of the confusion that must ensue. In both of these breaks the interval was probably filled with music to keep the train of thought of the audience in focus. At other times an act break may seem arbitrary, or even contrived, as when at the end of the first act of the *Pseudolus* (573) Pseudolus, having sent off Simo and Callipho, breaks the dramatic illusion and addresses the audience directly, admitting that he is a character in a play. Here his soliloquy is, in effect, an *entr'acte*, although at its conclusion Pseudolus must leave the stage to consider possible plans of action and asks the

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of the play requires only two houses, the standard third entrance might have been identified as her shrine.

flautist to entertain the audience while he does so.

In Terence's earliest play, the *Andria*, the breaks between acts indicated in the manuscripts (but not in the *codex Bembinus*) are all arbitrary and artificial; the action is continuous throughout. The traditional break between the first and second acts at line 171 cannot be accepted. At the conclusion of Simo's interview with Sosia in which the situation and antecedent action are explained and Simo's suspicions with respect to his son Pamphilus and his servant Davos aired, Sosia is sent off, but Simo must remain on stage, still pondering, for after only two and a half lines of soliloquy Davos emerges from the house and, after a short soliloquy by Davos overheard by Simo, Simo and Davos then engage in a sparring match in which Simo warns Davos with grim threats against doing anything to interfere with Pamphilus's proposed marriage. He then stalks off at line 205, leaving Davos alone on stage to deliver a lengthy soliloquy (206–227) in which he reflects on the dilemma of his loyalties and completes the exposition by informing the audience of Glycerium's pregnancy and her claim to being an Athenian citizen. This soliloquy, at the end of which Davos goes off to find Pamphilus, is a bridge between episodes and might take the place of a Menandrian choral interlude.

The traditional act break between acts two and three at line 300 is also unacceptable. At line 300 Pamphilus sends off Mysis to fetch the midwife for Glycerium, but he must then remain on stage while Charinus and his slave Byrrhia discuss the news of Pamphilus's forthcoming wedding, then to be caught sight of by Charinus at line 310. Charinus, we must suppose, having first heard about the wedding in the market, has decided to confront Pamphilus immediately, and by the conventions of the Roman stage the conversation of Charinus and Byrrhia takes place on their way to Simo's house. Arriving then before the house Charinus sees Pamphilus and, after a show of hesitation and uncertainty as to how to put his case, Charinus declares his love of Pamphilus's proposed bride. All of this must work in continuity without a break.

A second break suggested between acts two and three after line 458 is also not permissible. Davos has just accused Simo of being outrageously niggardly in the preparations for the wedding feast, and Simo, recognizing the justice of the accusation,

is hesitating about how to respond when Mysis returns with the midwife to deliver Glycerium's baby. And as Simo must then overhear the conversation of the two women as they approach, no one can leave the stage. One might suppose that there was an interval after line 480; the two women enter the house at line 467, and when the midwife comes out again at line 481, the child has been born. Things seem to be happening too fast, but the birth pangs have begun considerably earlier, before line 228, and Simo and Davos clearly do not leave the stage between lines 480 and 489, so it is best to view Glycerium's cry off stage at 473 as the moment of birth.

The break between acts three and four indicated after line 624 is also arbitrary and artificial. Pamphilus and Davos have been in conversation, Pamphilus angrily accusing Davos of responsibility for his troubles and Davos promising to find some way out of them, when Charinus arrives at 625 to expostulate with Pamphilus about his duplicity and self-serving, and they immediately engage in a lively exchange.

The break between acts four and five indicated following line 819 is the only time in this play when the stage might be left empty. Crito has just arrived from Andros and been welcomed by Mysis. He asks to see Glycerium, and Mysis then escorts him into the house, while Davos, who has just been acting out a charade with Mysis for the benefit of Chremes, tags along after them in order to avoid a confrontation with Simo. But Chremes has entered Simo's house shortly before the arrival of Crito, at line 789, to seek out Simo and tell him the wedding of Pamphilus with his daughter is now out of the question, because Glycerium has had a child by Pamphilus. Simo and Chremes now return to the stage at line 820, and it is clear from what follows that they have not yet had an opportunity to do more than greet one another. So the interval between Davos's exit and their entrance must be minimal, with no opportunity for any entr'acte.

When, however, we come to Terence's last play, the *Adelphoe*, not only are all the four act breaks clear, with an empty stage and opportunity for an entr'acte, but even within an act there can be a break in which the stage is briefly empty, as, for example, after line 354. Here the first scene of the third act is envisaged as taking place in the interior of one of the houses,

and by a standard stage convention translated to the street outside. At the close of this three-character scene the slave Geta is dispatched in one direction to fetch Hegio and the nurse Canthara in another direction to fetch the midwife. Sostrata then retires back to the interior after line 354, and almost simultaneously Demea and his slave Syrus come on stage engaged in conversation. There is no need for an entr'acte here; although the actions are separate, almost no time needs to elapse between them, and Geta must return with Hegio at line 446. At other breaks, for example that between acts one and two at line 154, the actions are separate and envisaged as taking place not only at different times but almost in different locations, so that these must be kept clearly distinct. Here an entr'acte would serve a useful purpose in emphasizing this distinction. Throughout the play the breaks are abrupt and almost cinematic; this is not only a different play from the others, but a different sort of dramaturgy. If the *Andria* and *Heauton timorumenos* aim at making their adaptations of Menander's originals tight, swiftly moving narratives, the *Adelphoe* is a sequence of lively incidents around which the narrative develops. It might seem that Terence has moved in playwriting in a reverse direction, from a sophisticated, unified theatrical experience to an episodic one of traditional type, but this is probably to be ascribed rather to the possibilities of the material in hand, what would play best in each case within the frame of the Roman theatre.

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