

A Handbook of
CLASSICAL
DRAMA

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difficulties which Terence did not always solve satisfactorily. Since none of the Greek plays has been preserved, comparison in detail is impossible. But Julius Caesar, apparently an excellent literary critic, considered Terence lacking in a certain force and verve. The fact that Terence has toned down Menander is attested also by Cicero.²¹ Finally, the Greek fragments preserved reveal some losses.²² But Caesar and Cicero still hold Terence in high regard.

To consider one who never wrote an original play a great dramatist would of course be a mistake. But Terence made these important advances in dramatic technique at a time when originality was and long had been extremely rare. Indeed, Terence shows more technical originality than any other figure in New Comedy, including Menander himself, and to deny him generous credit for his improvements would be grudging indeed. If he did not invent these himself, he at least recognized them; and the early recognition of an improvement is hardly less important than the invention. Certainly his plays and their dramatic technique have exerted important influence upon Renaissance and modern drama.

1. *WOMAN OF ANDROS (ANDRIA)*

(Festival in honor of Cybele, 166 B.C.)

The *Woman of Andros* tells a charming story and was doubtless successful,²³ but it lacks the technical finish of Terence's later plays.

Interesting adaptations are found in Steele's *The Conscious Lovers* (1722), and in Bellamy's *The Perjured Devotee* (1739). Thornton Wilder's contemporary novel, *The Woman of Andros*, is a sentimental and romantic idealization of the story, especially revealing to the student of literature who wishes to understand the essential difference between ancient classicism and modern romanticism.

Sources and originality.—The *Woman of Andros* is primarily a translation of a play of Menander of the same name (*Andria*), but Terence confesses that he has taken certain features from Menander's very similar *Woman of Perinthos* (*Perinthia*).

In the *Andria* of Menander, as the ancient commentator (on line 14) explains, the old man told his story in a monologue, while in the *Perinthia* he conversed with his wife. Terence has used dialogue instead of monologue, doubtless to make the scene more dramatic. For the wife, however, a freedman, Sosia, has been substituted. This involves one or two minor difficulties. It seems surprising that a household servant should not know the manner of Pamphilus' life better than Simo himself. Again, in the final lines of the scene Sosia is told

to frighten Davus and observe Pamphilus. Although these lines are doubtless designed to stimulate the interest of the audience in the coming events,²⁴ they seem to look forward to Sosia's subsequent appearance, whereas he is actually a protatic character.

Much more important is Terence's addition of a minor plot. The characters Charinus and Byrria were not in Menander, according to the ancient commentator (on line 301), who adds that they were introduced by Terence so that Philumena might not be left pathetically without a husband when Pamphilus marries Glycerium. The romantic tendency to secure an entirely happy ending is observable elsewhere in Terence, as in the *Eunuch*, and in other plays of New Comedy. Especially noteworthy from the modern point of view is the nature of the love affair of Charinus and Philumena: Charinus has sincerely fallen in love with a girl of good family whose virtue is still intact. This is an almost unique example of such a love affair in New Comedy, and it here appears to be a distinctly Roman touch.²⁵

But in adding these characters Terence no doubt was chiefly motivated by a desire to enrich the dramatic action. Significantly the minor plot is made to heighten the suspense and interest of the major plot. Still the fusion of these two elements is not as skillfully carried out as in the later plays of Terence. The exit of Byrria at verse 337 seems abrupt. So does his reappearance soon afterward when he eavesdrops and overhears Pamphilus agree to the marriage—an awkward scene somewhat similar to a passage in the *Phormio* (606–81). The entrance of Charinus near the end of the play also seems poorly motivated. In the final analysis, both Charinus and Byrria appear to be external appendages.

More than any other characters in the play, however, Charinus and Byrria are colorfully individualized, and it is possible that Terence originated these characterizations. Byrria is depicted as a crude, mundane, and skeptically realistic person, thus standing out in sharp contrast to Charinus, who is a romantic and idealistic young gentleman. When Charinus debates with sensitive modesty the advisability of approaching Pamphilus, Byrria shows no hesitation and crudely suggests that if Charinus accomplishes nothing else at least he can give the impression that he will become the bride's paramour if Pamphilus dares marry her. A few lines later, his master breaks down and is quite unable to tell Pamphilus of his love; but Byrria is ready to do so with brutal directness. Later, when Byrria overhears Pamphilus promise to marry, he immediately concludes that Pamphilus has betrayed Charinus, and from his wisdom of the world and its ways, he fully understands, as he thinks, the whole situation: the girl is a very pretty person and

of course Pamphilus would prefer himself to spend nights with her rather than see Charinus have the privilege of doing so.²⁶

Discussion.—The *Woman of Andros* has a plot that is essentially single. A young man is in love with a "foreign" girl, but his father is forcing him to contract an advantageous marriage with an Athenian citizen. Recognition of the "foreign" girl as herself an Athenian of good family brings about the solution. To this situation, all too frequent in New Comedy,²⁷ Terence has happily conceived the idea of adding a second young man.

The opening scene is a masterpiece of exposition in beautifully limpid verse.²⁸ Simo's description of Glycerium as a young lady of unusual beauty and modesty prepares for her recognition later in the play. Incidentally Pamphilus is here well characterized as the typical weak and somewhat colorless young man of New Comedy, Davus as the equally typical clever and unscrupulous slave. Simo reveals also that the marriage is a fictitious one but that if his son consents to it, he will attempt to make it genuine. The audience, therefore, later realizes the irony of the situation when Davus is elated to discover that no preparations are actually being made and when he succeeds in inducing Pamphilus to consent to the marriage for this reason.

The scene with Davus and Simo serves mainly to emphasize the comic fear of the slave, which is to increase as the action progresses and which nicely motivates the soliloquy after Simo has departed. In this soliloquy the exposition is continued by giving a picture of the love affair from Pamphilus' point of view. A child is about to be born, Davus relates, and they have madly decided to raise it. They have made up a fiction, he continues, that Glycerium is an Attic citizen. In New Comedy the merest mention of citizenship where such a girl is concerned invariably foreshadows her recognition. The skepticism of Davus over this story, far from blurring the foreshadowing here, makes it unusually deft and effective.

Pamphilus is now introduced, astounded at the news of his immediate marriage. His scene with Mysis is important not so much because it passes on the information of the childbirth to him as because it forces him in person to promise that he will remain faithful to Glycerium. Incidental to this, he relates the story of Chrysis' death—a beautiful and pathetic description.²⁹

Since Charinus is so deeply in love with Chremes' daughter and so anxious to marry her, his introduction at this time seems to offer a possible solution to Pamphilus' difficulties. But the discovery of Davus that no real preparations for a marriage are being made reassures Charinus, and he is dismissed with the vague advice that he should

approach the friends of Chremes in an effort to arrange the match. Pamphilus is then very reluctantly persuaded to consent to his father's plans for his marriage. This consent violently contradicts the promises which he has made to Glycerium. Pamphilus apparently has no intention of deliberately renouncing these former promises; indeed he later repeats them in most solemn language (694-97), as he also repeats his consent to do his father's will (898). Perhaps Pamphilus gives his consent to his father with mental reservations, thinking that he will not be called upon to fulfill this promise. Nevertheless both promises are given and, once given, only the grace of Heaven or the cleverness of the playwright can save Pamphilus.

Now for the first time Simo hears of the childbirth. But ironically enough he considers this a mere farce which Davus is putting on for his benefit. He makes various references to players and the theater, and in particular he criticizes Lesbia's coming out of the house and calling back directions from the street. Although such action is a common device for informing the audience of what has been going on within—indeed this device seems almost inevitable in social comedy that is limited to a street scene—still it is admittedly a little ridiculous. The dramatist himself would have done well to take Simo's criticism more seriously and eliminate such action elsewhere; but in point of fact this device is used again in the *Woman of Andros* (684-85) and in Menander's own *Shearing of Glycera* (176-77). Equally pertinent to good dramaturgy is Simo's later criticism of the pat arrival of Crito (916), but that criticism too—unfortunately—was without effect on New Comedy.

The climax of Pamphilus' dilemma is skillfully accentuated by Terence's own Charinus, who comes on just as Pamphilus is berating Davus for the predicament into which he has been inveigled. The emotional turmoil of this scene is nicely brought out by the use of excited meters and by the nervously rapid shift in meters. Even this turmoil is not enough, however, and Mysis must appear to report Glycerium's trepidation.

The solution of all these complications is very rapidly accomplished. Davus puts on a clever little scene for Chremes, the convenience of whose entrance is adeptly glossed over—the dramatist has Davus imply that he is laying the scene for an entirely different farce when Chremes is suddenly seen approaching. Chremes then no sooner goes in to find Simo and renounce the engagement than Crito appears, with something of the suddenness of a *deus ex machina*, for he has received no preparation except the vaguest passing reference to kinsmen of Chrysis in the opening scene (71).

By these happy events the honor of Pamphilus is saved. But such events are purely external, and this solution has been sharply criticized for that reason. A contrast unfavorable to Terence has been drawn between this solution and that of Menander's *Arbitration*. There is not the slightest justification, however, for thinking that the solution of the *Woman of Andros* is due to Terence rather than to Menander.⁸⁰ The complication of the play is built upon Pamphilus' contradictory promises. External solutions, furthermore, are frequent in New Comedy. Indeed the *Arbitration* itself depends on an external solution though it does have an internal solution as well. Each play, like many another of New Comedy, leans heavily upon the long arm of coincidence.

2. SELF-TORMENTOR (*HEAUTON TIMORUMENOS*)

(Festival in honor of Cybele, 163 B.C.)

The incidents of the *Self-Tormentor* are typical of New Comedy, but the emphasis upon character and the generalization of the particular incidents into a serious theme are extraordinary. The *Self-Tormentor* resembles the *Brothers* in these respects but is somewhat inferior to it. An interesting technical detail is the passage of a night during the action (410).

Terence's play is taken from Menander's play of the same name. It is often assumed that the original action has not been altered in any important respect, although an omniscient prologue has probably been omitted.

Discussion.—The *Self-Tormentor* is based upon a double plot of love affairs, intrigue, and recognition. Chremes' son, Clitipho, is ensnared by a grasping courtesan, Bacchis, for whom his personal slave Syrus defrauds the father of a certain amount of money. In the end, however, Clitipho is forced to break off this affair and to agree to marriage—with a girl of whom we have heard nothing before. Menedemus' son, Clinia, is in love with a very virtuous girl who is discovered to be the daughter of Chremes. The connection between these series of events is hardly more than one of mere juxtaposition. Still, the recognition is made to serve as a complication for the major phase of the plot, since it threatens the exposure of Clitipho's affair, and as a means of defrauding Chremes, since the daughter is said to be indebted to Bacchis. The triteness of these situations is camouflaged by the usual type of minor variation. More important, however, is the focusing of the plot not upon the sons but upon the fathers. Chremes is certainly the main character of the play, and he is delightfully individualized.

That Chremes is interested in all human affairs, especially the affairs

of other people, is clearly brought out in the opening scene. So is his penchant for offering free advice on the most intimate subjects and his smug confidence in the usual moral clichés. Since this play has no omniscient prologue, the irony of all this does not become evident until the third scene, wherein Clitipho, soliloquizing, complains of his father's treatment and reveals his own difficult situation with Bacchis. The reader who is acquainted with Menander need hardly go on in order to discover that in the end Chremes will find that he too has not learned the lesson of the Golden Mean, and that he will have his own advice thrown back at him with interest. He, like Menedemus, must learn the hard way. Every father is to some extent, at least, a self-tormentor.

The opening scene is a very picturesque one and is remarkable in that it apparently begins with a "set": Menedemus swinging his heavy mattock into the earth, while Chremes leans over the fence, so to speak, and addresses him. Here the exposition is given with unusual deftness. Loss of irony at the very beginning can hardly be considered a blemish, for enlightenment follows almost immediately, and this technique, if it is not positively preferable, certainly furnishes a refreshing variation, especially in a play which, even as it stands, thoroughly exploits the usual methods of dramatic irony.

As in the *Brothers*, contrast plays a most important part in the portrayal of the characters. That between the studiously morose Menedemus and the affable, inquisitive Chremes is a main interest throughout the play. The two girls, though distinctly minor roles, are nicely characterized, Bacchis as the hardened courtesan, and Antiphila as the naïve girl so virtuous that we immediately recognize her good birth and anticipate her recognition. Clinia is the typically fearful and rapturous young lover, and Clitipho the typically colorless young blood enamored of a grasping courtesan and terrified at the thought of his father's discovering the affair.

3. *EUNUCH

(Festival in honor of Cybele, 161 B.C.)

The *Eunuch* was Terence's most successful play and is said to have brought a greater price than any previous Roman comedy.⁸¹ Its technical execution is admirable. It has always been held in high respect until recent times, when certain critics, judging the play according to standards which were not those of the authors or those of the society about which New Comedy was written, have roundly condemned it on moral grounds.⁸² If judged without moral prejudice, however, the play appears gay and spirited and amusing—much more so than Terence's

other comedies, with the possible exception of the *Phormio*. But we should not forget that to prefer an author's least characteristic work is to reject the author's own criteria.

The *Eunuch* has exerted considerable influence on modern comedy, and its adaptations include *Ralph Roister Doister* by Nicholas Udall, the earliest English comedy (before 1553, indebted also to the *Braggart Warrior* of Plautus). Lines 74–75 are quoted in part in the *Taming of the Shrew* (I. i. 167).

Sources and originality.—The *Eunuch* is for the most part a translation of the *Eunouchos* of Menander, but the braggart soldier, Thraso, and his parasite, as we are told in the prologue, are taken from Menander's *Toady* (*Kolax*). The plot of the original Greek *Eunouchos* is not known, but it is unnecessary to assume that the addition of these two characters has changed that plot. Certainly a rival of Phaedria for the love of Thais may have existed in the original *Eunouchos* and is essential to Terence's play. Phaedria must presumably be absent when his younger brother assumes the disguise; the confusion caused by Chremes is highly desirable; and the uncertainty of Thais' securing and retaining Pamphila is a main source of dramatic suspense. In Terence's play, therefore, the soldier Thraso plays an essential role from the beginning of the play to the recognition of Pamphila, and if we were not expressly so told, we should never suspect that Thraso is an addition of Terence. Soldier and parasite, it is true, are farcical characters; but the disguise of Chaerea, also, belongs to the realm of farce, and so does the deluding of Parmeno near the end of the play. The additional characters, therefore, are thoroughly at home in this play, and on the whole Terence has done an admirable job of incorporating them.⁸³

Another excellent feature of the play owes its existence to the originality of Terence. In Menander's play, we are told by the ancient commentator, Chaerea's triumphant narration of his conquest was a monologue.⁸⁴ Terence has made this a dialogue by adding Antipho. Though of course this new character should have been worked into the action more intimately, the gain of a dialogue over a monologue here is very great. Nor is Terence's change a mechanical one. He has introduced humor of his own: Chaerea fears that someone will ask the very questions with which Antipho greets him. Further characterization of these naïve adolescents also has been added in their dialogue (e.g., 604).

Discussion.—The *Eunuch* is based upon a double plot of love affairs, disguise and intrigue, and recognition. But the whole is skillfully fused and unified.

The opening scenes are as delightful as they are dramatically adept.

Parmeno, a wiser Aristotelian than his young master, Phaedria, insists that one should not expect any more rationality in an activity than the activity admits, and that the activity of love, like other forms of insanity, admits of none. This self-evident truth is nicely illustrated in the ensuing scene wherein Thais and her way with a man are introduced. Phaedria's consequent promise to retire for two days initiates the dramatic action. Further exposition is here added, especially for that phase of the plot which deals with the virtuous young Pamphila, whose recognition as an Attic citizen is clearly foreshadowed. Especially neat is Thais' anticipation of Chremes' later appearance; for Chremes, though essential only for identifying Pamphila, is thus worked into the exposition. With equal deftness he is later to be worked into the complication.

After Thais has been allowed a monologue at the end of the scene—in order, of course, that we may clearly distinguish between the fact and the fiction which she has told Phaedria—there follows a short farewell scene between Phaedria and Parmeno. Though repetitious, this nicely emphasizes the vain effusiveness of the lover and prepares for his moral collapse and early return. More important is Parmeno's first description of Pamphila at the end of the scene. His praise of her ladylike beauty foreshadows a love affair and along with the earlier information of Thais assures her eventual recognition as a citizen.

The portrayal of Chaerea is masterly. He is the very incarnation of irrepressible adolescent exuberance. Most effective is his excitement at first falling in love, his naïve conceit of being a connoisseur of feminine beauty, his dash and determination, and the virgin innocence of his companion Antipho (604)—this last an addition of Terence that is quite apposite to the picture. A nice subtlety in Chaerea's description of the seduction is found in the use of phrases suggesting the ceremonies of marriage.³⁵ His enthusiasm for possessing Pamphila in the future (613-14), furthermore, is as natural to his character as it is necessary to the plot.

Another effective scene occurs when Thraso ("bold") comes to lay siege to the house of Thais. Here the only brave person proves to be Thais herself. The young Chremes is only less afraid than the braggart Thraso, whose culinary "army" has come equipped with—a sponge! The whole scene is so well done that we forget that the "siege" is a stock motif in plays containing a soldier.³⁶

The poetic justice which Pythias later metes out to Parmeno also is highly amusing. It is well worked into the plot mechanism, however, for it serves to introduce the father of Chaerea and Phaedria, who in turn brings about the very rapid solution.

Noteworthy throughout these later scenes are the rapid shifts in emotional tone. At times these are accompanied by amusing irony. Parmeno enters with great self-satisfaction and is anticipating his rewards, when he is terrified by the false news of the seizure of Chaerea. The father, too, enters in a very bland mood only to join in the same terror. Later Thraso comes on wholly crushed, and he is immediately followed by the ecstatically happy Chaerea.

4. *PHORMIO

(Roman Games, 161 B.C.)

The *Phormio* is an adaptation of a Greek comedy (*Epidikazomenos*) by Apollodorus of Carystus. Few if any important innovations, according to the usual assumption, have been made by Terence except that the original probably had an expository prologue in which the secret marriage of Chremes was explained.

The characters and events of this play are in general typical of New Comedy. Phormio himself and Nausistrata are delightfully portrayed, and the contrast between the two old men is effective. But the real virtues of the play lie elsewhere. Its structure is unusually deft; much of the action, especially in the final scenes, is very delightful farce. It has always been popular and famous; and this reputation, though somewhat exaggerated in modern times because of the total absence of obscenity or suggestiveness, is well deserved.

The *Phormio* has also been of considerable influence in modern literature. The most important adaptation is doubtless Molière's *Les Fourberies de Scapin* (1671).

Discussion.—The *Phormio* is based upon a double plot of two—one might include old Chremes and say three—lovers and their difficulties, which are solved, as usual, one by recognition and one by artfully securing money. The minor phase concerning Phaedria and his girl Pamphila is elaborately and intimately bound with the major phase concerning Antipho and his marriage to a penniless girl. Series of scenes dealing now with one phase now with the other are most skillfully interwoven.

The *Phormio*, like the *Woman of Andros*, opens with a "maid-and-butler" scene of exposition. Geta, the confidential slave of Antipho, relates his young master's goings on to friend Davus. But Davus is more colorful than Sosia in the *Woman of Andros*, and Davus' appearance only in the opening scene is more plausibly motivated. Geta's account nicely combines the two phases of the plot: he relates that the young men were waiting to conduct Pamphila home from music school

when they first heard of Phanium. The recognition of Phanium as the daughter of a good Athenian family is clearly foreshadowed in Geta's account. There is not the slightest hint, however, that the supposed fiction by which Phormio has legally "forced" Antipho to marry this penniless girl is not really fiction but fact—that Antipho is in truth obligated to marry this girl.⁸⁷ In regard to Phaedria, also, Geta does not tell the whole story: he fails to mention that Phaedria's friends have promised to lend him money and that a day has already been set for the purchase—information which might well have been used to suggest that his affairs too are soon to reach a climax. Thus the exposition leaves ample room for suspense and surprise. Indeed, perhaps no ancient comedy employs suspense and surprise more effectively than does the *Phormio*.

The two young men are nicely characterized in their first scene. Antipho regrets having embarked upon such a rash course as his marriage proves to be, and he looks forward with dread to the return of his father. He is certainly given no consolation by Phaedria, who is rudely impatient with his cousin, being incapable of sympathy for anyone who actually possesses his love and is still unhappy. The action of the play begins with Demipho's sudden arrival and the flight of Antipho, who can see nothing but suicide ahead if he loses his Phanium. He leaves his fate in the hands of Geta and Phaedria—a nice device for maintaining suspense and for having Phaedria play an important role in this phase of the action which really concerns only Antipho and Phanium.

The first clash between Demipho and the resourceful Phormio is excellent comedy, and not all the amusement is at the expense of the older man. But the best comedy comes with the hopeless equivocation of the *advocati* whom Demipho has so cautiously provided as legal witnesses. Thus Demipho is in the end left angry but undecided, though he has threatened to throw Phanium out of his house.

While the fate of Antipho hangs thus precariously in the balance—the complication of his affairs is arrested at its point of greatest tension—a crisis now arises for Phaedria. Another man will purchase his sweetheart on the morrow unless he can today raise the necessary funds. Demipho has rightly said that these young men are accustomed to lend each other mutual aid (267), for as Phaedria became the advocate of Antipho in a crisis so now Antipho persuades the reluctant Geta to devise a plan for securing the money. This alone, it seems, saves Phaedria in his desperation from a fate only slightly less tragic than the contemplated suicide of Antipho!

At this point Demipho reappears with his brother Chremes, and

now for the first time we are told the story of Chremes' secret polygamy—a refreshingly unusual item in New Comedy—and of his daughter from Lemnos. Up to this point we have assumed that Demipho's only objection to the marriage of Antipho is based, as Geta has suggested (120), on his unwillingness to accept a girl without a dowry; but now it appears that there are even more serious considerations, for if Chremes is forced to marry off his daughter to a stranger he must explain her origin and risk a major scandal. A divorce would ruin him, for his wife has all the money in the family! This complication comes as a complete and effective surprise. Naturally under these circumstances the old men fall easy victims to the machinations of Geta when the prospect of a separation of Antipho and Phanium is held out as bait. These machinations, however well intended by Geta, appear seriously to jeopardize the future of Antipho's marriage. Here both phases of the plot, therefore, are fused at their simultaneous climaxes.

Antipho, whose eavesdropping, though awkward, facilitates rapidity of dramatic action, is terrified when he learns to what desperate means Geta and Phormio have resorted to secure money for Phaedria. This terror comes as the climax of a carefully developed crescendo of comic fear. Indeed, the *Phormio* furnishes a model example of the use of pessimism in comedy, for comedy employs false pessimism as effectively as tragedy employs false optimism. Even in the opening scene of the play Geta has expressed misgivings, and in the succeeding scene Antipho has been characterized by timorous remorse. Misgivings and remorse have grown to terror with the sudden arrival of Demipho. Later Antipho has somewhat recovered when he comes back on stage to learn of Phaedria's difficulties with the slave dealer. But now when he overhears Geta apparently arrange for breaking up his marriage, he is more terrified than ever.

The very pat entrance of Sophrona, like the eavesdropping of Antipho, is somewhat awkward. But the author has more than redeemed himself by the plan of having Nausistrata prepare Phanium for the divorce. This not only furnishes a further link between the two phases of the plot. Nausistrata's introduction here serves to characterize her and to show Demipho's influence with her. Incidentally it furnishes a very amusing scene between these two and husband Chremes.

Before the recognition of Phanium, which solves Antipho's difficulties, an important minor interest has been built up about Chremes. The recognition itself, furthermore, merely heightens the danger of Chremes and apparently that of his son also. Comic fear is one of the chief devices for maintaining suspense, and in place of the fear of

Antipho, which has turned into ecstasy, there now appears the terror of Chremes. Long before, however, ample preparation for this has been made, for at Chremes' first appearance his anxiety was only too evident.

The final scenes with Phormio are the best of the play and indeed among the most lively and amusing scenes in Roman comedy. All the earlier fears of Geta and Antipho, like those of Phaedria and Chremes, serve by contrast to emphasize their relief and happiness in the end.

5. MOTHER-IN-LAW (HECYRA)

(Roman Games [?], 160 B.C.)

Attempts were made to produce the *Mother-in-Law* at the festival in honor of Cybele in 165 B.C. and at the funeral games of Lucius Aemilius Paullus in 160; but on these occasions the audience, excited by rumors of gayer sports, refused to remain for the end of the play.

Dramatically the *Mother-in-Law* is weak. Its main appeal is found in the tender pathos of the story which it tells.

Source.—The *Mother-in-Law* is adapted from a Greek original written probably in the first half of the third century by Apollodorus of Carystus. The original play seems to have derived its basic plot from Menander's *Arbitration*, for in both plays a husband is estranged from his wife over the birth of a child which he thinks not his own. Eventually it turns out that the violator of the wife before her marriage was the husband himself. In both plays this recognition is brought about by a kindly courtesan, but the process is much more subtle and entails much more dramatic action in Menander. Indeed, the borrowings of Apollodorus are for the most part limited to the highly improbable incidents, which of course are the worst features of Menander's play.

Discussion.—Unlike the other plays of Terence, the *Mother-in-Law* presents a very simple plot of one young man and his difficulties in love. The play is almost wholly one of discovery.

The original Greek play doubtless opened with an omniscient prologue in which the coming childbirth was announced and the real identity of the child's father made known. This allowed the original audience from the very first of the play to appreciate the irony of the situation and to understand the various "errors" to which the characters of the play are subject. The omission of the prologue results in a plot in which mystery and suspense play a major role.

Terence's play opens with an expositional scene between two courtesans and the confidential slave Parmeno. The two women do

not reappear in the play, and their use here seems awkward, especially since no significant motivation for the whole scene is given and no vital interest is generated in it. In both these respects the similar expositional scene of the *Phormio* is much superior. Still these two women were certainly employed by Apollodorus.⁸⁸ Incidentally, of course, they serve by contrast to heighten the attractiveness of the character of Bacchis and to suggest her milieu. This preparation softens the abruptness of her entrance near the end of the play where she takes the role of a *deus ex machina*.

If Terence had so chosen he could have presented Parmeno as cognizant of Philumena's pregnancy and skeptical of its legitimacy. Thus Parmeno could have gone far to replace the omniscient prologue. In Menander's *Arbitration*, it will be recalled, the confidential slave Onesimus is already cognizant of the wife's secret, and this very knowledge makes Onesimus' situation more difficult and joins him more intimately with the action. The mystification of Parmeno becomes amusing later in Terence's play; but near the opening, where it is so important to arouse the interest of the audience, the detachment of Parmeno is unfortunate. His laziness and curiosity, both of which he is continually prevented from indulging, form an amusing incidental leitmotif throughout the play.

The first scene with the father and mother of Pamphilus makes the situation as puzzling for the spectator as it is for the characters involved. Nor does this scene arouse any keen interest, as the opening scenes in a play of discovery by Sophocles or Ibsen would do. First of all the friction between Philumena and her mother-in-law seems trivial, as Parmeno himself later states (292, 313). In this scene no hint of graver problems is given, and Laches and Sostrata are not portrayed with the seriousness and depth that might elicit any real sympathy with them. Indeed, they are here the stereotyped ridiculous old married couple of New Comedy, and Laches indulges in the usual jokes on married life (207).

The whole series of misunderstandings among the old people has only a slight connection with the concatenation of events which forms the real plot of the play—Pamphilus' discovery of the birth of the child and his recognition of the child as his own. He makes the discovery of the birth quite independently. But from this point forward the irony of these errors is interesting and amusing. They also motivate the main tension at the climax of the play, because Laches, seeing that the avowed excuses of Pamphilus are so flimsy, is on the point of compelling his son to take back Philumena and recognize the child. The quarrel between Laches and Pamphilus, furthermore, leads to the introduction of

Bacchis, through whom the recognition of the child is accomplished. Thus the series of errors has its functions, but these develop only in the later part of the play and the amusing irony which might have sustained interest earlier has been lost. Terence's use of mystification and surprise in this play, therefore, cannot be considered a success.

The *Mother-in-Law* has other faults. It is sadly lacking in dramatic action. Indeed, the most important scenes of the play are monologues. Pamphilus reports his initial discovery of the birth in a long recitation of fifty-four lines, and this recitation is primarily one of facts and not a true soliloquy; for, except at the very last, Pamphilus shows no inclination to ponder his fate and commune with his soul concerning a future course of action. The plea of Myrrina which he recounts could have been presented much more effectively upon the stage. The author has missed another good scene in connection with Bacchis. In the *Arbitration* of Menander, wife and courtesan effectively meet on stage. Perhaps the recognition might have been managed with Myrrina in Terence's play. Certainly Bacchis' monologue of twenty-five lines is much less effective than a dialogue would have been, especially for the presentation of the solution. Perhaps Terence himself is at fault here.³⁹

Finally, the situation dramatized in the *Mother-in-Law* is proper to serious drama; but the solution—the discovery that Pamphilus unknowingly married the very girl whom he had previously violated—is a fantastic coincidence proper only to light comedy or melodrama. Greek tragedy, it is true, could employ such a coincidence, but only if it was guaranteed by accepted legend or, as in Euripides' *Ion*, hedged about by divine providence. Even so, the real effectiveness of such plays depends largely on dramatic irony, portrayal of character, lyric poetry, and other incidental features. The coincidence in this play of Terence has no external support, the characters are of no great interest in themselves, and the situation is not dramatized in such a manner as to become of great significance. The failure of the play at its first two presentations, therefore, was primarily the fault of the author and not that of the audiences.

6. *BROTHERS (ADELPHOE)

(Funeral games of Aemilius Paullus, 160 B.C.)

The *Brothers* is the most intellectual of the plays of Terence and in a way, therefore, the most interesting. It is a serious consideration of the eternal problem of the proper education of children—and parents. This subject is superficially treated also in the *Self-Tormentor*. Indeed, since the original of that play is thought to have been one of the earliest

plays of Menander,⁴⁰ it may be that the original of the *Brothers* was a later and more serious effort to do justice to this subject. Certainly the *Brothers* is a more successful play.

The *Brothers* has always been well known and has inspired many adaptations in modern literature, such as Molière's *L'École des Maris* (1661) and Fielding's *The Fathers*.

Sources and originality.—For the most part, the *Brothers* is a translation of a similarly named play of Menander (*Adelphoi*), but the scene of Aeschinus' abducting the slave girl is taken from the *Suicide Pact* (*Synapothneskontes*) of Diphilus. This insertion nicely illustrates the action that has been under discussion in the previous scenes. It also characterizes Aeschinus and introduces a lively dramatic scene. But it detracts from the serious problem of Menander's play and throws the emphasis awry. A minor blemish is found in Aeschinus' contention that the girl is really a free woman. In the play of Diphilus this doubtless served as foreshadowing of recognition, as such references invariably do elsewhere in New Comedy. Apparently Terence, frightened by the attacks of his critics, has been too conservative in adapting this scene to the play of Menander. Still we are told that the Roman critic and polymath of Cicero's day, Varro, preferred the opening of Terence's play to that of Menander.⁴¹

Several minor changes made by Terence have been noted in the ancient commentary. Among these are a more abrupt first entrance for Demea, who in the Terentian version does not return the polite greeting of his brother—a bit of apt characterization. Again, in Menander, Ctesipho threatened suicide rather than exile if he lost his sweetheart (see line 275 and the commentary of "Donatus"). Perhaps Terence thought suicide too bold a threat for such a spineless and timid young man.⁴² Finally, in Menander, Hegio (or his equivalent) was the brother of Sostrata (see line 351), and Micio made no protest against marrying her (see line 938). By making Hegio more distant Terence has presented Sostrata as more alone in the world; by making Micio protest he has presented the urban brother as a weaker character who is unable to refuse a request even when he really desires to do so. All of these changes, then, seem to have been made to sharpen and improve the characterizations.

Discussion.—"Every father is a fool." So runs a fragment (144, Kock) of Menander's original of the *Self-Tormentor* (line 440), and this might be taken as the motto of the *Brothers*. But the serious subject of the play, of course, is the role of discipline in education. The play does have a conventional double plot concerning two young men in love; the plot is skillfully unified, and some interest in it is maintained

throughout the play. But in masterly fashion the dramatic action—except the inserted scene of abduction—has been made wholly subservient to the portrayal of Demea and Micio and to the discussion of the intellectual problem. Indeed, the two young men themselves are subservient to these ends. Here more than in any other extant play of New Comedy, not external events but the reactions of characters—especially of Demea—are the main concern of the play, and many scenes have little or nothing to do with the progression of the plot.

Portrayal of character by contrast is elaborately developed in this play. The contrast of the two old brothers is the center of interest, but the young brothers differ as violently. The sons are contrasted with the fathers, also, and in a way the liberally educated Aeschinus resembles Demea more than he does Micio; the country-bred Ctesipho certainly has the urban Micio's love of luxury. Even the slaves are contrasted—the strait-laced Geta and the dissolute Syrus.

It is not inappropriate that such a serious and contemplative play should open with a true soliloquy: Micio reviews his life and his theory of education, pointing out the contrast between his own ideas and those of his older brother. This soliloquy is effectively interrupted by the abrupt entrance of the older brother, and a dramatic illustration of their basic conflict follows. In the absence of an omniscient prologue one might at first miss the irony of Demea's position. But the spectator acquainted with Menander must have smiled when Demea repeatedly praises the son whom he has raised as the very model of a thrifty and assiduous young man, since in Menander young men are never painted in such unadulterated colors without irony. Perhaps the spectator who was an experienced father also smiled when Micio insisted that love and kindness are discipline enough for raising a young man and when both older brothers are presented as quite sure that they know how to be perfect fathers. Certainly the problem of the play is brilliantly set forth in these opening scenes.

The scenes with Aeschinus and Ctesipho which follow initiate the action of the plot and furnish varied dramatic business. Their real importance, however, is found in the portrayal of the two young men. In this regard the scene from Diphilus makes a real contribution, for it presents Aeschinus as a young man of great self-reliance and force of character. After this Ctesipho appears very much a weakling. Ctesipho's fear that his father may hear of this affair creates some suspense (283). It also gives an external justification for the later scenes where the presence of Demea seems to threaten discovery. Thus it forms a link between the plot action and the characterization of Demea, for characterization is the basic function of these later scenes.

With the exception of minor details, the *Brothers* lacks those conventional improbabilities that are so frequent in New Comedy and that tend so strongly to preclude the development of serious drama. In this respect the *Brothers* is much superior to the *Self-Tormentor*. The day of Pamphila's delivery, however, coincides with the day of the abduction of Ctesipho's sweetheart. Such telescoping of chronology is unavoidable if the unity of time is to be maintained.

A series of scenes is now introduced to show the effect of the news of the abduction upon the family of Pamphila. They misinterpret Aeschinus' motives, of course, as Micio and Demea both have done, and thus the two phases of the plot are fused. The consternation caused by the supposed treachery of Aeschinus greatly complicates matters.

At this point of tension the action of the plot is suspended and the portrayal of Demea is resumed. In the light of the previous events, the irony of his position is now unmistakably plain. This of course is comic irony, for the slave Syrus knows the truth better than anyone, and he makes merciless sport of the old man. Still Demea is far from being a stupid old man of the usual comic type. He is saved from this by his profound sincerity and his great concern for the welfare of the young men. The scene of Demea and Hegio continues this characterization and serves to inform Demea concerning the affair of Aeschinus and Pamphila. Its connection with the action of the plot, however, is only superficial. One of the ironic aspects of Demea's character is that he is continuously busy trying to straighten out affairs but actually never accomplishes anything. Indeed, despite his opinion to the contrary (546), he is usually the last to be correctly informed. So here he undertakes to find Micio and to settle this matter, but he does not succeed in doing either.

The following scenes with Ctesipho, Syrus, and Demea likewise have little to do with the action of the plot. Ctesipho's fear of his father does serve to continue the suspense over his eventual discovery; but far more important is the portrayal of his attitude toward his father—which is one of respectful hatred. Again Syrus amusingly deceives the old man by praising virtues in Ctesipho which do not exist; and again the result carries with it pathos as well as comedy.

Micio now returns with Hegio, and all the difficulties of Aeschinus are solved. But Aeschinus himself does not know this, and hence a delicate irony is thrown over the following scene in which he enters with a true soliloquy expressing his dilemma and his remorse at not having been quite frank with his father. Indeed, the hesitant young man here hardly seems the same person who acted so aggressively in solving the difficulties of his brother Ctesipho; but perhaps his modesty where his

own affairs are concerned is sufficient to account for the difference. Though Aeschinus does not prove as honest in his own affairs as Micio had believed him to be, still the relationship of Aeschinus to Micio as here brought out is touchingly affectionate and is far preferable to that of Ctesipho to Demea, which has been so unattractively portrayed in the immediately preceding scenes.

Now that the two sons have been proved in action and the portrait of the two older brothers has been completed, the basic problem is taken up again with the clash of Micio and Demea. But their first scene here is only sparring. Demea must learn the facts concerning Ctesipho, and it is highly desirable that he should learn these for himself in the course of the dramatic action. It is only poetic justice, furthermore, that Ctesipho and Syrus should give themselves away. The effect of this discovery upon Ctesipho is not portrayed, and this omission is indicative of the comparative unimportance of the young men in the play.

Demea, having the moral wind taken out of him by such a blow, is forced to compromise. He grudgingly submits to allowing Ctesipho his youthful foibles. Thus the last complication of the plot is solved; but the play does not end here—indeed, the real climax is yet to come.

For the third time in the play we now have a true soliloquy. This one of Demea corresponds with that of Micio at the opening of the play. Demea reviews his life and finds that it has been somewhat futile. In a way he summarizes the lessons which the action of the play has taught him. Now he decides to change, and he proceeds to do so with a vengeance. This vengeance falls so squarely and so heavily upon Micio that he too in the end is forced to admit that his theories need rectification. Menander is too enlightened to be satisfied with a compromise from only one side. Indeed, after all, perhaps it is Micio who is forced to make the greater concessions; for in the final arrangement Demea resumes his stern dignity, and all admit the desirability of a certain amount of discipline along with timely complacency.