

TERENCE, CATO, AND THE RHETORICAL PROLOGUE

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IN 166 B.C., according to the traditional chronology, Terence began his literary career with the production of *Andria*, and he introduced that play with a prologue different in both content and style from any Latin or Greek predecessor. It is neither humorous nor expository, and its diction suggests neither the extravagance of Plautus nor the elegance of Menander. Nor, for that matter, does it share quite the colloquial grace of the play to follow. This prologue, and the six others like it in the Terentian corpus, occupy a special place in the study of drama and in the study of style. What led Terence to create such speeches? What stylistic models did he use, and what did his own achievement contribute to the growing sophistication of literary Latin?

I

Once when Diphilus dined with the hetaira Gnathaena, she served him wine cooled by snow. When the startled dramatist asked what had made his wine so cold, she replied that she had poured some of his prologues into it (Ath. 580). Formal prologues, especially formal prologues of the expository sort, easily grow cold and a little tedious. A touch of Diphilus' *ψυχρότης* survives in the long prologue of Plautus' *Rudens*, and audiences no doubt felt grateful to the speaker in an unidentified comic fragment who promised not to be such a *μακρολόγος θεός*.¹ Menander seems to have avoided tedium in his prologues by restricting their expository content and often by delaying their appearance. When Tyche interrupts the action of *Aspis* to deliver a prologue, for example, she says little that is essential for understanding the plot. We learn nothing from her that we could not learn in a different way or at another time, but her revelations so early in the play shape our attitudes toward the action and its characters. Menander creates a thematic rather than purely expository link between prologue and play. Though sophisticated and effective, however, his prologues are rather bloodless little speeches that deliberately put distance between audience and characters.² Rarely humorous and never fantastic, they do their work with a smooth and calculated precision.

1. P. Argent. 53 = no. 252 in C. Austin, *Comicorum Graecorum fragmenta in papyris reperta* (Berlin, 1973). A heavily restored text was published by D. L. Page as no. 60 in vol. 3 of his *Loeb Select Papyri* (Cambridge and London, 1962). Despite the famous disclaimer, this prologue-speaker still provides ample expository information. See O. Bianco, "Il frammento della *Poiesis* di Antifane ed un prologo anonimo," *RCCM* 3 (1961): 91–98.

2. The technique was perhaps learned from Euripides. Compare R. Hamilton, "Prologue, Prophecy,

The Latin prologues of the Plautine corpus offer a different answer to the problem of expository tedium. Consider the case of *Asinaria*:

Hoc agite sultis, spectatores, nunciam,	
quae quidem mihi atque vobis res vortat bene	
gregique huic et dominis atque conductoribus.	
face nunciam tu, praeco, omnem auritum poplum.	
age nunc, reside, cave modo ne gratiis.	5
nunc quid processerim huc et quid mi voluerim	
dicam: ut sciretis nomen huius fabulae;	
nam quod ad argumentum attinet, sane brevest.	
nunc quod me dixi velle vobis dicere	
dicam: huic nomen graece Onagost fabulae;	10
Demophilus scripsit, Maccus vortit barbare;	
Asinariam volt esse, si per vos licet.	
inest lepos ludusque in hac comoedia,	
ridicula res est. date benigne operam mihi	
ut vos, ut alias, pariter nunc Mars adiuvet.	15

This speech reveals another kind of calculation. Though extravagant and funny, it is no less studied in its effects than the prologues of Menander. Its verbosity is deliberate. The expanded objects of line three form a tricolon of ascending stature in the theatrical hierarchy. *Omnem auritum poplum* is an imaginative locution for the more usual *animum advortere*. The indirect questions of line six are synonymous, and the *dixi . . . dicere dicam* sequence in lines nine and ten makes repetition itself a joke. The stage business with the herald that goes on between lines four and five would further protract the prologue's delivery. Nearly every one of these devices has a parallel elsewhere among the Plautine prologues. *Menaechni* has a similar opening. *Poenulus* has the same play with a herald, another version of the *auritus* locution, and a similar conclusion. The *vortit barbare* joke reappears in *Trinummus* and has echoes in *Mercator* and *Casina*.³ Yet the cumulative effect of these formulae is ease and spontaneity. The short sentences, the seemingly artless repetition of *nunciam* (1, 4) and *nunc* (5, 6, 9, 15), and the frequent imperatives suggest the choppy redundancies of colloquial speech. At the same time the ironic petition of *sultis* and *si per vos licet* reveals the speaker's mastery of his task and his situation. Although an actor himself, he sets himself apart from both audience and *grex*, and his joke on *barbare* plays with the convention of Latin comedies presented with Greek settings and dress. He also knows precisely where his speech is going: nine lines to bring the crowd to order, a four line announcement, and a brief *captatio* whose final words echo the opening.

and Plot in Four Plays of Euripides," *AJP* 99 (1978): 277–302, and S. M. Goldberg, "The Style and Function of Menander's *Dyskolos* Prologue," *SO* 53 (1978): 57–68. For a survey of Menander's prologues, see S. Ireland, "Prologues, Structure, and Sentences in Menander," *Hermes* 109 (1981): 178–88.

3. Specific parallels are: *Asin.* 1–3 ~ *Men.* 1–2; *Asin.* 4–5 ~ *Poen.* 11–15; *Asin.* 6–12 ~ *Trin.* 16–20 (cf. *Cas.* 30–34, *Merc.* 9–10; *Asin.* 13–15 ~ *Cas.* 21–22, *Poen.* 128).

No Greek parallels for such a prologue exist. Sections of expository material from the Greek originals are no doubt embedded in the longer prologues to such plays as *Aulularia*, *Captivi*, and *Rudens*, but this naming of title and author and this kind of verbal play appear first in Plautus. The Roman dramatist had to win his audience in a way that Greek poets did not have to do, and Plautus responded to the different requirements of his theater with this different emphasis in his prologues. In doing so he drew upon the distinct qualities of the Roman comic style. The prologues share the diction and the humor of the plays as a group, while Plautus tailors the approach of each prologue speaker to the requirements of the individual play.⁴ Thus, while Arcturus speaks with a dignity that befits the exotic romanticism of *Rudens*, the *Amphitruo* prologue casts Mercury as a stand-up comedian, because Plautus must establish his gods as comic characters to prevent his play from becoming a grotesque melodrama. Mercury's singularly long prologue gives Plautus the time he needs to create a comic role for the god, and the result, as in many of these prologues, is a masterpiece of practical writing for the comic stage.

The stylistic unity of introduction and play is the key to its success. Each prologue speaks in a language audiences know and enjoy, thus securing their good will and binding them closer to the play that will follow. Plautus works for his audiences' attention, but he is confident that they will grant it. Because Roman audiences liked his plays, even a later producer can be sure of acceptance.

haec quom primum acta est, vicit omnis fabulas.
 ea tempestate flos poetarum fuit,
 qui nunc abierunt hinc in communem locum.
 sed tamen apsesntes prosunt pro praesentibus.

[Cas. 17–20]

These lines were added to the original prologue for a revival of *Casina* sometime after Plautus' death.⁵ Their alliteration and wordplay reflect familiar mannerisms of Roman comic diction, and the speaker's assurance stems from the knowledge that audience, actor, and playwright share the same tastes and the same dramatic values. A dramatist less willing to exploit traditional devices, and thus less sure of his audience, will not be able to introduce a play this way. Terence was certainly such a dramatist, and this was a problem he had to face.

4. Useful works on the Plautine prologues include F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen*² (Berlin, 1912), pp. 188–247, W. Kraus, "Ad spectatores in der römischen Komödie," *WS* 52 (1934): 66–83, and K. Abel, *Die Plautusprologe* (Frankfurt, 1955). For the similarity of form between Plautine and Greek prologues, see R. B. Lloyd, "Two Prologues: Menander and Plautus," *AJP* 84 (1963): 146–61, and for the unique requirements of the Roman stage, E. W. Handley, "Some Thoughts on New Comedy in Latin," *Dioniso* 46 (1975): 117–32.

5. See Abel, *Die Plautusprologe*, pp. 55–61. The authenticity of other Plautine prologues is also questionable. For example, H. D. Jocelyn, "Imperator histricus," *YCS* 21 (1969): 95–124, argues that the extant *Poenulus* prologue is actually a conflation of three separate acting scripts. Such an argument, if true, would support the view that the surviving texts represent traditional norms for the writing of *palliata* prologues, not just the unique genius of Plautus, and would lend further support to the argument of J. Wright, *Dancing in Chains* (Rome, 1974), for the stylistic unity of this comic genre.

The need to bring an unruly outdoor audience to order was as pressing for Terence as it had been for his predecessors, but he went about the task rather differently. The first prologue to *Hecyra*, uncommonly short but characteristically artful, makes the difference clear:

Hecyra est huic nomen fabulae. haec quom datast
nova, novom intervenit vitium et calamitas
ut neque spectari neque cognosci potuerit:
ita populus studio stupidus in funambulo
animum occuparat. nunc haec planest pro nova,
et is qui scripsit hanc ob eam rem noluit
iterum referre ut iterum possit vendere.
alias cognostis eius: quaeso hanc noscite.

5

This little speech is almost perfectly symmetrical. The short announcement of title, set off by a hiatus rare in Terence, is balanced by the two short sentences of the concluding *captatio*. At the center is a simple core sentence (*ita populus . . . occuparat*) surrounded by two longer sentences which are themselves parallel. They have similar beginnings (*haec quom datast nova* ~ *nunc haec planest pro nova*), and each ends with an *ut*-clause. The central sentence explaining why the first production of the play failed is also the prologue's central idea. Terence's diction is as careful as his structure. The repeated demonstratives are emphatic. He plays quite effectively on *nova*, *novom* and *cognostis*, *noscite*, creates the memorable phrase *populus studio stupidus*, and pairs infinitives (*spectari* and *cognosci*, *referre* and *vendere*). The deliberately grandiose words *vitium* and *calamitas* have overtones of augury and grave misfortune, to suggest that external obstacles, not lack of merit, thwarted the first production.

The prologue's stark announcement of title, its alliteration and word play, and its avoidance of the *argumentum* can easily be paralleled in the Plautine corpus, but its departures from the Plautine norm are even more striking. Consider the matter of verbosity. Both this speech and the *Asinaria* prologue turn simple statements into long ones.

quae quidem mihi atque vobis res vortat bene
gregique huic et dominis atque conductoribus.

[*Asin.* 2-3]

haec quom datast
nova, novom intervenit vitium et calamitas
ut neque spectari neque cognosci potuerit.

[*Hecyra* 1-3]

Plautus' multiplication of datives makes a logical progression but adds nothing significant to his sense. He is marking time, waiting for his audience to settle down and realize that the performance in this curtainless theater has begun. He is even willing to win attention by making the prologue itself a comic routine: thus the herald. Each of Terence's accre-

tions adds nuance to his basic sense. *Vitium* and *calamitas* are not synonyms, and Donatus takes *spectari* closely with the former and *cognosci* with the latter: “vitium quod non spectata est, calamitas quod non cognita” (Donat. ad loc.). Donatus, who had his own schoolman’s notion of elegance, may be reaching a little far here, but Terence has clearly chosen his words with care to unfold the picture of a performance so plagued by bad luck that the audience could neither see the play nor appreciate it. When he does simply repeat words (*neque . . . neque, iterum . . . iterum*), he uses them to clarify his argument, not complicate it (cf. *Asin.* 9–10). Terence wastes no time and makes every line count. At the heart of this stylistic difference is a fundamental difference in attitude toward the audience. *Asinaria* treats the crowd with familiarity, reaching out from the very first line with easy and entertaining banter. Terence is comparatively stiff. His speaker simply states the facts of the case and does not address the audience directly until the last line. Nor does he take their acceptance for granted. The prologue is extraordinarily contentious. In eight lines Terence disparages an earlier audience, defends himself against the charge of reviving a turkey for financial gain, and asks the present audience for better treatment. This is a daring strategy. The composition of his new audience was unlikely to differ much from the one that preferred the tightrope walker, and any defense of *Hecyra* cannot help but recall earlier doubts about its quality.⁶ Why does Terence take this risk? Why does he give his audience not a joke or an *argumentum*, but an argument? This kind of prologue is neither Menandrian nor Plautine. Terence’s model for it is not dramatic.

II

Drama was not the only oral art to develop sophistication in the middle years of the Republic, and not the only available source of literary models. Though later tastes found the oratory of this period a little harsh and uncouth, it had nevertheless developed a style well suited to the requirements of oral argument and oral delivery.⁷ Its methods were comparatively simple. Clarity and emphasis came largely from the repetition of words, syntactic structures, and ideas. The sound patterns of assonance and alliteration, homoioteleuton, the *figura etymologica*, and the like were the predominant aids to delivery, and orators worked pairing, parallelism, and tricola very hard. Word choice too owed much to sound. Thus the

6. The second surviving prologue to *Hecyra* reveals that Terence did not in fact run this risk successfully: after an auspicious beginning, the second production was stopped when the audience abandoned the play for gladiators (*Hecyra* 39–41). The structural integrity of this first prologue, incidentally, tells against the recurring suggestion that it is either fragmentary or late. For discussion of its authenticity, see D. Klose, *Die Didaskalien und Prologe des Terenz* (Bamberg, 1966), pp. 71–78, who argues for its “absolute Vollständigkeit.” There is bibliography in H. Gelhaus, *Die Prologe des Terenz* (Heidelberg, 1972), p. 81, n. 1, but Gelhaus himself does not discuss the text.

7. “Antiquior est huius sermo,” says Cicero of Cato, “et quaedam horridiora verba. Ita enim tum loquebantur.” (*Brut.* 68) This did not stop Cicero from admiring his illustrious predecessor: cf. *Orat.* 20, *Brut.* 65–66. For a fine appraisal of Cato as orator, see F. Leo, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur I* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 284–90.

elder Cato liked the resonance of nouns in *-tudo*, adjectives in *-bundus* and *-osus*, and the short perfect in *-ere*. He preferred *mortalis* to *homo* and *atque* to *et* and *ac*.⁸ Such devices, however obvious, could be extremely effective, as the following example will show.

In 190 B.C. Cato denounced the high-handed tactics of the consular Q. Minucius Thermus, who was claiming a triumph for campaigns in Liguria.⁹ The surviving fragment of his speech *De falsis pugnis* runs as follows (frag. 58 M.):

dixit a decemviris parum bene sibi cibaria curata esse. iussit vestimenta detrahi atque flagro caedi. decemviros Bruttiani verberavere, videre multi mortales. Quis hanc contumeliam, quis hoc imperium, quis hanc servitatem ferre potest? nemo hoc rex ausus est facere: eane fieri bonis, bono genere gnatis, boni consultis? ubi societas? ubi fides maiorum? insignitas iniurias, plagas, verbera, vibices, eos dolores atque carnificinas per dedecus atque maximam contumeliam, inspectantibus popularibus suis atque multis mortalibus, te facere ausum esse? set quantum luctum, quantum gemitum, quid lacrimarum, quantum fletum factum audiui! servi iniurias nimis aegre ferunt: quid illos, bono genere gnatos, magna virtute praeditos, opinamini animi habuisse atque habituros, dum vivant?

The passage is a famous example of Cato's ferocity in attack and bears familiar hallmarks of early oratorical style. Alliteration and parallelism are exploited from the outset, and Cato's repetitions are as plain as they are effective. Yet the passage also shows features of real sophistication. Most apparent is the careful word order: the resonant chiasmus of *Bruttiani . . . mortales* and the interlocked phrase *nemo hoc rex*, which emphasizes the emotionally charged word by delaying it. *Opinamini animi* is a deliberate jingle caused by the hyperbaton of *quid . . . animi*. The parallelism in *nemo . . . facere* and *te facere ausum esse* emphasizes the sudden shift to the second person and encourages the insidious association of *rex* and *te*. Equally skillful is the use of the tricolon, which amounts to something more than the weighty verbosity of what is sometimes called the "padded style." *Contumelia, imperium, servitus* creates an ascending order of outrage. *Servitus* is the climax, and Cato echoes it in the last line, "servi iniurias nimis aegre ferunt." He is also adept at varying his grammatical subjects. There is the dramatic shift from third to second person in addressing Thermus, and a sense of rising indignation as the indefinite *quis* becomes the personal *audiui* and then shifts to the second plural as Cato shifts his own reaction to the reaction of his audience. Yet, though their mistreatment by Thermus provided the very substance of this passage, only in the last sentence are the *decemviri* themselves a grammatical subject. Attention centers on Thermus' action and our response to that action, not on his victims, and Cato's syntax reflects that emphasis.

8. Full discussions of Cato's diction are M. T. Sblendorio, "Note sullo stile dell'oratoria Catoniana," *AFLC* 34 (1971): 5-32, and R. Till-C. de Meo, *La lingua di Catone* (Rome, 1968). There is also a helpful chapter on Cato's oratory in A. Astin, *Cato the Censor* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 131-56.

9. Livy 37. 46. 1-6. For the background, see Astin, *Cato*, pp. 34, 63, 65. All fragments of Roman oratory are cited from the third edition of E. Malcovati, *Oratorum romanorum fragmenta* (Turin, 1967).

There are suggestive stylistic parallels between this fragment and the first *Hecyra* prologue. We find the same fondness for paired infinitives and for developing an idea by a progression of near synonyms. There are also similar tricks of word order: chiasmus (*decemviros . . . mortales; haec . . . calamitas*) and parallelism for emphasis (*nemo hoc rex ~ te ausum esse; haec quom data nova ~ nunc haec planest pro nova*). And both authors respect the power of the short sentence. The crucial difference is on the syntactic level, and this leads us to some of the limitations of early oratorical style. Consider first the opening sentence of Cato's famous speech in 167 B.C. urging clemency for the Rhodians, who had leaned the wrong way in the Macedonian war.

scio solere plerisque hominibus rebus secundis atque prolixis atque prosperis animum excellere atque superbiam atque ferociam augescere atque crescere.

[frag. 163 M.]

The connective *atque* here is doing triple duty. It links adjectives (*secundis . . . prosperis*) and nouns (*superbiam atque ferociam*). It pairs infinitives (*augescere atque crescere*), and it joins the two parts of the predicate, *animum excellere* and *superbiam . . . crescere*. The sentence rambles before the eye, but the sense comes easily to the ear as the speaker's inflection marks the significant units of meaning.¹⁰ This reliance on voice rather than vocabulary or structure can, however, lead to the kind of syntactic diffuseness we find later in the speech, as Cato seeks to excuse the Rhodians' conduct.

atque ego quidem arbitror Rodienses noluisse nos ita depugnare, uti depugnatum est, neque regem Persen vinci. sed non Rodienses modo id noluere, sed multos populos atque multas nationes idem noluisse arbitror atque haut scio an partim eorum fuerint qui non nostrae contumeliae causa id noluerint evenire: sed enim id metuere, si nemo esset homo quem vereremur, quidquid luberet faceremus, ne sub solo imperio nostro in servitute nostra essent. libertatis suae causa in ea sententia fuisse arbitror. . . .

[frag. 164 M.]

Here the repetition *noluisse . . . noluere . . . noluisse . . . noluerint* requires Cato to limit each negative with a corresponding, but not very graceful, *sed*. Even more striking is the use of *id . . . idem . . . id* first referring back to the events marked by the initial *ita*, and then followed by another *id* that looks ahead to the following *si-* and *ne-*clauses. He wisely follows this rambling sequence with a short sentence, but the vague *in ea sententia* adds neither special power nor point to what has gone before.

10. Thus Astin, *Cato*, p. 145: "There is a dependence on inflexions of the voice and slight pauses in delivery to make clear relationships which are not fully conveyed, as they would have been in a Ciceronian speech, by more complex grammatical structures." For discussion of *Pro Rodiensibus*, see Gellius, *NA* 6. 3, Astin, *Cato*, pp. 273–81, and especially the new text and detailed commentary of G. Calboli, *M. Porci Catonis Oratio Pro Rhodiensibus* (Bologna, 1978). There are also helpful discussions in A. D. Leeman, *Orationis ratio* (Amsterdam, 1963), pp. 44–47, and M. von Albrecht, *Meister römischer Prosa* (Heidelberg, 1971), pp. 24–37.

Cato's sequence of thought is not always so roughly marked, but a fragment of his *Suasio legis Voconiae*, dated to 169 B.C., offers connectives that are at least as naive.

principio vobis mulier magnam dotem adtulit; tum magnam pecuniam recipit, quam in viri potestatem non committit, eam pecuniam viro mutuam dat; postea, ubi irata facta est, servum recepticium sectari atque flagitare virum iubet.

[frag. 158 M.]

This dependence on redundant pronouns and temporal adverbs to link sentences is characteristic of early prose. We find it, for example, in Ennius' translation of Euhemerus and in the fragments of Cato's *Origines*. Comedy often affects this style when telling stories, as, for instance, at *Andria* 220–24:

et fingunt quandam inter se nunc fallaciam
civem Atticam esse hanc: "fuit olim quidam senex
mercator; navim is fregit apud Andrum insulam;
is obiit mortem." ibi tum hanc eiectam Chrysidis
patrem recepisse orbam parvam. fabulae!

Here the slave Davus is probably mimicking the innocent style of fables and children's stories, and in the next century the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* expressly advises against this kind of repetition in oratorical *narratio*, illustrating the point with lines in comic verse:

Athenis Megaram vesperi advenit Simo;
ubi advenit Megaram, insidias fecit virgini;
insidias postquam fecit, vim in loco adtulit.

[*Rhet. Her.* 1. 9. 14]¹¹

The contrast between the obvious strength of Cato's oratory and the roughness of its syntax and diction is reflected in the ancient opinions of him, which are curiously divided. Early in *Brutus*, for example, Cicero equates Cato with Lysias, praising his acuity, precision, wit, and brevity: "Quis illo gravior in laudando, acerbior in vituperando, in sententiis argutior, in docendo edisserendoque subtilior?" (63). This is primarily a judgment of content, or at most of style as determined by the effectiveness of content, because it suits Cicero's purpose at this point in his dialogue to cite a worthy predecessor for his own goals in oratory. Later, however, Cicero's Atticus makes clear the absurdity of comparing Cato and Lysias in absolute terms: "orationes autem eius ut illis temporibus valde laudo: significant enim formam quandam ingeni, sed admodum impolitam et plane rudem" (*Brut.* 294). This judgment on the purely stylistic level is echoed by Quintilian, who thinks boys should not read too much of Cato

11. The verses are Ribbeck's *Incerta* II but might as easily have been composed by the rhetorician to illustrate his point. This repetitive style can be traced back to Ennius' translation of Euhemerus, for which see E. Fraenkel, "Additional Notes on the Prose of Ennius," *Eranos* 49 (1951): 50–56.

and the Gracchi. Their own style, he fears, will become too harsh and bloodless (*horridus atque ieunus*) if they fail to put the antique *vis* in historic perspective (*Inst.* 2. 5. 21). Yet Cato was certainly a pioneer in the right territory, and his achievement offers some justification for Aulus Gellius' more grandiose claim that "Catonem contentum eloquentia aetatis suae non fuisse et id iam tum facere voluisse quod Cicero postea perfecit" (*NA* 10. 3. 16). Cato's command of rhetorical figures and his powers of structure and argument are evident from the fragments, but when compared to the taut elegance of the Terentian prologues, his diction is undeniably harsh. What kind of model was he for the dramatist? What links the prologues to this antique style of argument?

III

The pairings and parallelism, chiasmus and alliteration of the first *Hecyra* prologue have offered some clues. A closer look now at the content and style of a longer speech will begin to show the extent of Terence's debt to contemporary oratory. It will also show something more. In adapting oratorical techniques to dramatic requirements, Terence worked changes in both drama and oratory, and he created a role for himself not only in the history of drama, but in the evolution of prose style from Cato to Cicero.

Terence's first effort was the prologue to *Andria*, produced the year after Cato's speech *Pro Rodiensibus*:

Poeta quom primum animum ad scribendum adpultit, id sibi negoti credidit solum dari, populo ut placerent quas fecisset fabulas. verum aliter evenire multo intellegit; nam in prologis scribundis operam abutitur,	5
non qui argumentum narret sed qui malevoli veteris poetae maledictis respondeat. nunc quam rem vitio dent quaeso animum adtendite. Menander fecit Andriam et Perinthiam. qui utramvis recte norit ambas noverit:	10
non ita dissimili sunt argumento [s]et tamen dissimili oratione sunt factae ac stilo. quae convenere in Andriam ex Perinthia fatetur transtulisse atque usum pro suis. id isti vituperant factum atque in eo disputant	15
contaminari non decere fabulas. faciuntne intellegendo ut nil intellegant? qui quom hunc accusant, Naeivium Plautum Ennium accusant quos hic noster auctores habet, quorum aemulari exoptat negligentiam	20
potius quam istorum obscuram diligentiam. de(h)inc ut quiescant porro moneo et desinant male dicere, malefacta ne noscant sua. favete, adeste aequo animo et rem cognoscite, ut pernoscatis equid spei sit relicuom,	25

posthac quas faciet de integro comoedias,
spectandae an exigendae sint vobis prius.

This prologue is the oldest example of Roman rhetorical argument to survive intact.¹² Its diction builds on Cato, not Plautus. Its persona is the courtroom pleader, and its content is shamelessly manipulated. Consider its mode of argument (5–7):

nam in prologis scribundis operam abutitur,
non qui argumentum narret sed qui malevoli
veteris poetae maledictis respondeat.

Terence implies here that there are two kinds of prologues, one of acknowledged dramatic value and the other a veritable waste of effort. His rivals force him to write this second type and are therefore to blame if he is tedious. This artful distinction turns an ostensible excuse into an attack on the opposition and signals at the very outset a writer well skilled in debate.¹³ His ability to turn a phrase, already noted in the first *Hecyra* prologue, is responsible for some famous lines unmistakably colored by rhetoric (13–16):

quae convenere in Andriam ex Perinthia
fatetur transtulisse atque usum pro suis.
id isti vituperant factum atque in eo disputant
contaminari non decere fabulas.

Here Terence says first what he has done, then records the fact of opposition to it, and finally puts his opponents' charge in ringing terms. Why does he make the accusation so memorable, especially since he does not really intend to refute it? The reason is rhetorical, and Cato's use of the same device makes its purpose clear:

Rodiensis superbos esse aiunt id obiectantes quod mihi et liberis meis minime dici vellem. sint sane superbi. quid id ad nos attinet? idne irascimini, si quis superbior est quam nos?

[frag. 169 M.]

Aulus Gellius, who marvels at this "mirifica et prope divina" evasion, explains Cato's strategy: "Absolutely nothing could be said with greater

12. The rhetorical quality of the Terentian prologues was first appreciated in detail by F. Leo, *Analecta plautina: De figuris sermonis II* (Göttingen, 1898) = *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften* (Rome, 1960), pp. 135–49, and *Gesch. röm. Lit.* (above, n. 7), pp. 251–52. I owe much to his analysis. The prologues earn a place in histories of ancient rhetoric, e.g., Leeman, *Orationis ratio*, pp. 24–25, but the ramifications of Leo's work have not yet been developed. See also H. Haffter, *Untersuchungen zur allateinischen Dichtersprache* (Berlin, 1934), pp. 99–101. A. Ronconi, "Analisi del prologo dell'*Andria*," *RCCM* 20 (1978): 1129–48, discusses this prologue in detail.

13. Terence is perhaps adapting here the rhetorical *schema synkritikon* illustrated by Hermogenes, *Progymnasmata* (L. Spengel, *Rhetores Graeci II* [Leipzig, 1854], p. 5): Μήδεια ἡ Αἰήτων θυγάτηρ ἀντί μὲν τοῦ σωφρονεῖν ἠράσθη, ἀντί δὲ τοῦ φυλάττειν τὸ χρυσόμαλλον δέρας προῦδωκεν, ἀντί δὲ τοῦ σώζειν τὸν ἀδελφὸν Ἄψυρτον ἐφόνησε.

force or weight than this apostrophe against men proud of their deed, loving pride in themselves, but condemning it in others" (*NA* 6. 3. 51). The speaker phrases the accusation as extravagantly as possible so its absurdity may fall back with maximum weight upon the accusers. This is precisely what Terence does. *Contaminari* is deliberately chosen to inflate and obscure the nature of his deed. It is as colorful and hyperbolic a verb as Terence can find to mean "spoil," and he uses it to ridicule his opposition.¹⁴ Having inflated their accusation to the point of parody, he then proceeds to evade it. "If I have spoiled plays," he argues, "so have Naevius, Plautus, and Ennius. I would rather imitate their *neglegentia* than my accusers' kind of *diligentia*." It is hardly clear from this passage that interpolation, Terence's own way of "spoiling" plays, was indeed the kind of *neglegentia* to be found in Naevius, Plautus, and Ennius, but Terence does not want to be clear. He has created an antithesis as false as it is artful.

Terence makes a simple enough contrast between *diligentia* and *neglegentia*, but he reverses the expected value of each term. The addition of *obscura* makes *diligentia* pejorative, while mention of distinguished predecessors gives *neglegentia* an unexpectedly positive sense. In Terence generally, the word simply means "neglect," for example, Chremes' neglect of his Lemnian family (*Phorm.* 571), or the failure of Chrysis' Andrian relatives to provide for her (*An.* 71). Only in the prologues, here and at *Adelphoe* 14 ("locum reprehensum qui praeteritus neglegentia"), does it seem to mean "carelessness." Both of these passages refer specifically to the process of writing a play, and *neglegentia* in the context of composition means the studied ease of the careful writer. Cicero, for example, in discussing the appeal of the plain style, praised the *non ingrata neglegentia* of its diction with a warning against unwise separation of *neglegentia* and *diligentia*: "Illa enim ipsa contracta et minuta non neglegenter tractanda sunt sed quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens" (*Orat.* 77–78).¹⁵ Terence, keenly aware of the relationship between *elocutio* and *inventio*, knows as well as Cicero that literary *neglegentia* is a studied effect. The *Andria* prologue makes a false distinction between *neglegentia* and *diligentia* because Terence wants not to clarify his method of composition or to advance a literary theory, but to abuse his opponents. He attributes to himself the easy grace of a master, not the labored fidelity of a pedantic copyist.

The essentially argumentative quality that runs throughout the prologue finds further confirmation in Terence's vocabulary, which has con-

14. This meaning of *contaminari*, first argued convincingly by W. Beare, "Contaminatio," *CR* 9 (1959): 7–11, now seems beyond question. Cf. M. Simon, "Contaminatio und furtum bei Terenz," *Helikon* 1 (1961): 487–92, and O. Kujore, "A Note on *Contaminatio* in Terence," *CP* 69 (1974): 39–42. Ronconi, "Analisi," pp. 1137–38, nevertheless revives the old notion of a technical sense, "to spoil by mixing" (*sconciare intrecciando; cose malamente unire*), but his arguments are unconvincing.

15. The same sentiment reappears in Quintilian *Inst.* 8. 3. 87: "Nam ipsa illa ἀφέλεια simplex et inadfectata habet quendam purum, qualis etiam in feminis amatur, ornatum, et sunt quaedam velut e tenui diligentia circa proprietatem significationemque munditiae." On *neglegentia* and the plain style, see C. Henderson, Jr., "Cato's Pine Cones and Seneca's Plums," *TAPA* 86 (1955): 256–67.

sistent legal overtones. Such words as *maledicta* and its echoes, *disputare*, *accusare*, *favere*, *cognoscere* and *fateor*, *aequus*, *isti* referring to the opposition, the shortened perfect *convenere*, and the connective *atque* all suggest the law court.¹⁶ The material and structure of the speech are also forensic. Aristotle had observed that the *exordium* of a forensic speech must win the good will of its hearers just as a dramatic prologue does (*Rh.* 1415a), and the author of the *ad Herennium*, following Aristotle closely on this point, sees four ways to do so: "benivolos auditores facere quattuor modis possumus: ab nostra, ab adversariorum nostrorum, ab auditorum persona, et ab rebus ipsis" (1. 4. 8). Terence uses all four. He speaks of his own obligations and literary standards (1–3, 18–21), and he attacks his opponents as spiteful, foolish, and flawed in their own work (6–7, 15–17, 21–23). He addresses the particular point at issue (8–14), and he compliments the audience by alluding to their own power and acumen (24–27). All this is done in a tightly structured speech that is itself no simple *exordium* but, like a full-scale oration, divides neatly along oratorical lines into *exordium* (1–8), *narratio* (9–16), *argumentatio* (17–23), and *conclusio* (24–27).¹⁷

Terence's need to win his audience has led to an oratorical prologue. Plautus had demonstrated time and again that audiences loved to hear the language of contracts, litigation, and politics turned to new and unexpected purposes. The comic incongruity of such Roman elements created a special bond between audience and play, but only at the expense of the dramatic illusion Terence works so hard to maintain.¹⁸ He therefore avoids these allusions in the body of his plays. In the prologues, however, Terence needed a certain closeness with his audience and a new way to create it. The ornately raucous banter of the Plautine prologues did not suit him, and his decision to avoid exposition meant he could find no help in his Greek models. The developing art of Roman oratory offered a convenient alternative. To introduce *Andria* Terence therefore embroiled his audience in a controversy, casting his arguments in rhetorical form using the structure and vocabulary of the court. Prologues to the succeeding plays continue to develop this posture. The *Adelphoe* prologue defends the poet against a charge of favoritism and a new charge of *contaminatio*. The prologues of *Eunuchus* and *Phormio* are fierce attacks on his detractors. For the prologues of *Heauton timorumenos* and the third performance of *Hecyra* Terence explicitly casts his speaker as an *orator* and the audience as *iudices* of his "case." All these argumentative

16. Most of these examples are discussed by G. Focardi, "Linguaggio forense nei prologhi terenziani," *SIFC* 44 (1972): 55–88. A subsequent article, "Lo stile oratorio nei prologhi terenziani," *SIFC* 50 (1978): 70–89, points to the recurrence of certain figures of speech, e.g., alliteration and paranomasia, in the prologues and oratory.

17. This is the discovery of Gelhaus, *Prologe*, pp. 32–40, who then attempts to find similarly clear divisions in the other prologues as well. The task is unfortunately not so simple: see the review of E. Lefèvre, *Gnomon* 48 (1976): 346–53.

18. For this distinction between Plautus and Terence, see G. Williams, *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry* (Oxford, 1968), pp. 285–94, and H. Haffter, "Terenz und seine künstlerische Eigenart," *MH* 10 (1953): 80–93.

speeches were nevertheless designed as occasional pieces to fulfill the primary purpose of a Roman dramatic prologue. They announce the play to come and secure it a hearing. Yet their singular fusion of rhetoric and drama showed the first signs of a style with influence beyond the occasion.

Terence was free to argue like an orator, but he could not sound too much like Cato. Meter and function prevented it. He had to be more concise and pointed than his prose models, but he did take over tricks of their diction. Alliteration and verbal manipulation work for him much as they did for Cato. Unlike the other comic poets, who made alliteration itself a source of humor with lines like "Perparvam partem postulat Plautus loci . . .," Terence alliterates only for emphasis and to facilitate delivery. His language is strictly controlled, and he frequently imposes a new discipline on the old tricks. Like Cato, Terence may emphasize an idea by repeating key words, but his repetitions are carefully paired. His basic unit of sense is the single line, and words repeated for emphasis usually either share a line or come in adjacent lines. Doublets are the rule, rarely more protracted repetitions, and such pairs give the Terentian sentence a rapid and taut emphasis, not the weighty ramble of Cato. A similar discipline governs the use of pronouns. They are as emphatic as Cato's but not redundant, and they have precise referents: not *id* but *id negoti* in line two of *Andria*, *id* qualified by *factum* in line fifteen. Terence makes a comparable advance in the use of connectives. Temporal adjectives are strictly temporal (1, 8, 18, 26), and logical connectives—*aliter*, *nam*, *non ita* . . . *set tamen*, etc.—are used with new mastery. Terence's command of subordination is also noteworthy. The very first sentence of the *Andria* prologue puts three thoughts in three lines, the main clause in the center balanced by two subordinate ideas. The combination of old and new devices to arrange ideas effectively and concisely is well illustrated by the sentence of *Andria* 18–21:

qui quom hunc accusant, Naevium Plautum Ennium
accusant quos hic noster auctores habet,
quorum aemulari exoptat negligentiam
potius quam istorum obscuram diligentiam.

Terence begins with a parallelism equating himself with illustrious predecessors. The relative pronoun *quos* then allows him to change subjects in the main clause. *Hunc* becomes *hic*, and in the process the accusers stand accused. *They* are now measured against Naevius, Plautus, and Ennius—*quorum* set against *istorum*—and are of course found wanting. This new facility with sentence structure allows Terence to turn the tables, but he drives the point home with the old devices of repetition, homoteleuton, and parallelism. Terence has not invented these figures, these words, or this syntax, but he is the first to show so clearly what they can do.

In recasting the oratorical style to serve his own dramatic needs, he imposed upon it a new discipline that set new standards for concise,

logical expression. The great thing that later Latin stylists as diverse as Cicero and Tacitus share is the ability to put a good deal of information in a short space without sacrificing clarity and point. This kind of precision is what we miss most in Cato and is a crucial difference between early Latin prose and the various manifestations of the later language. We find it first in Terence and most strikingly in the prologues, where the dramatist deliberately assumed the orator's task, took up his favorite tools, and was compelled by dramatic and metrical requirements to fashion speeches with Cato's weight, but without Cato's bulk. Terence left behind the diffuse rambles of early prose and the playful verbosity of his comic predecessors, creating instead the kind of Latin that first showed clearly those features from which the great stylists of later times developed their individual voices. Small wonder his is the *lectus sermo* praised by Cicero, Caesar, and a host of grammarians and teachers, and that his plays lived on in library and schoolroom long after stage comedy at Rome was only a memory. The prologues, unique in their blend of oratorical devices and dramatic necessities, are not the only evidence of Terence's stylistic innovation, but nothing better illustrates his departure from the earlier comic style and his link with the finest prose of his day. "En somme," P. Fabia remarked of them nearly a century ago, "Térence n'a imité personne: il a inventé; il n'a pas trouvé de guide dans le passé; il s'est frayé hardiment son chemin."¹⁹ The prologues plead Terence's case as a dramatist. They prove his greatness as a stylist.²⁰

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19. *Les prologues de Térence* (Paris, 1888), p. 112. Cf. O. Bianco, *Terenzio* (Rome, 1962), pp. 29–44.

20. It is a genuine pleasure to thank the Editor and anonymous referees of *CP* for the detailed and instructive criticism that has improved this essay in many ways.