

ACT TO ACTION IN PLAUTUS' *BACCHIDES*

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I^N 1968, E. W. Handley brought new legitimacy to the study of Plautus as an adapter of Greek comedy when he published a coherent papyrus fragment of Menander's *Dis Exapaton*.¹ This play was the original of Plautus' *Bacchides*, and the discovery enabled us for the first time to compare a Plautine text with a genuine, not merely conjectured, bit of its Greek original. The fragment, which was pieced together from thirteen separate scraps, preserves snippets of one column and the better part of two more from a carefully produced book roll that Handley dated to the late third or early fourth century A.D. There is considerable damage, but the eighty-odd lines published in 1968 and subsequently augmented for the Oxford edition of F. H. Sandbach (1972) doubtless correspond to the action of *Bacchides* 494–562. They provide a clear glimpse into Plautine methods of adaptation and lend new solidity to what has long been a somewhat ephemeral exercise. We can now see clearly that the action of the Greek original developed differently from the corresponding sequence in Plautus. That difference, however, remains imperfectly understood, and Plautus' reputation has, as so often, suffered from the imperfection. Text and model are too tightly joined in our thinking: the *comoedia palliata* of Plautus' day had developed a distinct style of its own. We need to recall some of the stylistic features that separate Plautus from his model, and consider their effect on the playwright's craft. By setting each text within the norms of its own tradition, we can begin to see what—besides Menander's script—influenced Plautus as he turned the Greek play into a Latin one. The problem is one of dramatic technique in the strictest sense: what are the dynamics of Menander's scenes as we have them? How has Plautus altered those dynamics—and why?

The act, not the individual scene, has long been recognized as the major structural unit of a Menandrian play. An unobtrusive sequence of

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1. *Menander and Plautus: A Study in Comparison* (London, 1968). Ancient texts are cited from the Oxford editions, except for *Bacchides*, which is quoted from the second edition by C. Questa (Florence, 1975).

entrances and exits enables Menander to move easily and often imperceptibly from scene to scene, while new characters and new turns in the action usually emerge as an act moves to its close.² Acts therefore tend to end not with conclusions, but with beginnings. We thus meet the slave Daos and the set of rustic values he represents just before the first entr'acte of *Dyskolos*, and the new act then opens on him in conversation with his master, Gorgias. The second act of *Aspis* ends with the hatching of plans for a dying Chairestratos, and that plan is launched as the next act opens. In this way, Menander anticipates action to come and bridges the gap created by the choral interlude. The act-break also affords a significant technical advantage. A character can leave the stage on some errand and return to open the very next scene without incongruity. He may exit and return alone (like Kleinias at *Mis.* acts 3–4 and Nikeratos at *Sam.* acts 3–4) or in new company (as at *Dysk.* acts 4–5, *Epit.* acts 2–3, and *Pk.* acts 1–2). The choral performances in each case mark the passage of time. They lend credibility to what might otherwise seem awkward reappearances, and the resumption of action therefore seems more natural than contrived.

The fragment of *Dis Exapaton* also illustrates this practice. As the text begins, Sostratos—he will become Plautus' Mnesilochus—is speaking with his father. Their conversation is consistent with the situation that Plautus' *Bacchides* leads us to expect: Sostratos, acting as his father's agent, has collected a family debt abroad, but his slave, Syros (Plautus' Chrysalus), has told the old man that the money had to be left in Ephesus with a certain Theotimus. They have concocted this lie so that Sostratos may instead spend the money on his mistress. Now, however, Sostratos thinks that this hetaira has betrayed him with his best friend, Moschos. Angry and determined to put further temptation aside, he decides to return the money to his father. The old man is skeptical, but also a bit avaricious. He will not question ready money, and he and Sostratos leave together to fetch it. Their exit looks like this in the text (*DE* 59–63):

(Σω.) ἐ[ατέο]ν. μετ' ἐμοῦ δ' ἀκολουθεῖ καὶ λαβὲ
τὸ χρυσίον.
(Σ.π.) παίζεις;
(Σω.) ἀκολουθεῖ καὶ λαβέ.
(Σ.π.) οὐκοῦν ἀκολουθῶ· δὲς μόνον, καλῶς τέ μοι
ὥς [δεῖ] κέχρησαι· πρὶν λαβεῖν μάχομαί τι σοι;
ἐμοὶ δὲ πάντων τοῦτο προὔργιαίτερον.
ΧΟΡΟΥ

2. See E. W. Handley, "The Conventions of the Comic Stage and Their Exploitation by Menander," in *Ménandre*, *Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique*, vol. 16 (Geneva, 1970), pp. 11–18, and id., "Acts and Scenes in the Comedy of Menander," *Dioniso* 57 (1987): 299–312. Detailed discussion in A. Blanchard, *Essai sur la composition des comédies de Ménandre* (Paris, 1983), pp. 33–50. R. L. Hunter, *The New Comedy of Greece and Rome* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 35–42, provides a concise summary of the *communis opinio*.

The twenty-six lines immediately following this interlude are badly damaged, but Sostratos and his father are apparently again on the stage. The transfer has been accomplished during the act-break. Their renewed conversation seems to involve talk of money and some further task, and Sostratos' father leaves him at line 90.

This sequence of action, interlude, and action resumed is an easy and typical pattern within the five-act structure of New Comedy, but it was not easily copied by a Roman dramatist. Roman comedy did not employ a corresponding act structure. The scene, not the act, was the basic structural unit on the Roman stage. There was no regular sequence of act-breaks, and so the pattern of action, as designed by a Roman dramatist for a Roman audience, was necessarily different from what he would have found in a Greek model.³ What then would he do when he came to the notation XOPOY in that model, especially when his Greek counterpart had used the act-break to mark a lapse of time? The corresponding passage of *Bacchides* shows how Plautus handled this problem as presented by *Dis Exapaton*.

Mnesilochus, alone save for his train of baggage porters, abandons the scheme to cheat his father. He will return the money and protect Chrysalus for the lie invented on his behalf (*Bacch.* 524–31):

nam illi aequomst me consulere, qui caussa mea
mendacium ei dixit. vos me sequimini. —

PISTOCLERUS

Rebus aliis antevortar, Bacchis, quae mandas mihi:
Mnesilochum ut requiram atque ut eum mecum ad te adducam simul.
nam illud animus meus miratur, si a me tetigit nuntius,
quid remoretur. ibo ut visam huc ad eum, si forte est domi.

MNESILOCHUS PISTOCLERUS

MN. Reddidi patri omne aurum. nunc ego illam me velim
convenire, postquam inanis sum, contemptricem meam.

Comparison of this text with the relevant section of *Dis Exapaton* reveals the following changes: Plautus has eliminated both scenes between father and son, and all contact over the money now takes place off the stage. Mnesilochus exits at 525 to find his father and hand over the money; he returns at 530 with that mission accomplished. His exit and reappearance are now separated by the short entrance monologue of his friend Pistoclerus (Menander's Moschos), who comes from Bacchis' house in search of him. So much is clear, but these changes have proven easier to recognize than to appreciate.

What Handley originally called Plautus' "plastering over" of the act-break has not met with scholarly approval. F. H. Sandbach put the prevailing opinion well: "In the Roman theatre there was no chorus, and

3. The argument of A. Primmer, *Handlungsgliederung in Nea und Palliata: "Dis Exapaton" und "Bacchides"* (Vienna, 1984), pp. 16–20 and 94–102, for a system of act-divisions in Roman comedy defined by metrical patterns has convinced few. Continuous performance, if not necessarily continuous action, was the Roman norm.

Plautus was obliged to provide some alternative method of allowing for the necessary passage of time. He did so, rather inadequately, by bringing 'Pistoclerus' on (526) before 'Mnesilochus' reappeared (530)."⁴ This impatience with Plautine dramaturgy, though widespread, is nevertheless too hasty. Scholars misread and then fault the dynamics of Plautus' action either because they too readily expect it to duplicate Menander's or because they do not imagine from the text how his sequence of action appears in performance. Plautus has certainly had to recast what he read in Menander to conform to somewhat different Roman stage conventions, but the alteration has its own dramatic integrity. It is no inadequate makeshift. Pistoclerus' entrance and accompanying monologue is not transposed from the Menandrian sequence simply to cover the time between Mnesilochus' exit and his otherwise immediate reappearance.⁵ There was no such need. Plautus' organization by scenes rather than acts provides a different solution to the problem of exit, reentry, and the passage of time on the stage, and Pistoclerus' entrance speech serves a different purpose.

Roman comedy may indeed employ what we sometimes call "bridge" and "cover monologues" to mark a passage of time that Greek plays often suggest by an act-break.⁶ The old woman Stephanium's speech at *Stichus* 673–81 is a good example of a "bridge monologue." Stichus first gives Sangarinus an exit-line and clears the stage. Then Stephanium enters, and the pace promptly changes.

Mirum videri nemini vestrum volo, spectatores,
quid ego hinc quae illic habito exeam: faciam vos certiores.
domo dudum huc arcessita sum, <nam> quoniam nuntiatum est
istarum venturos viros, ibi festinamus omnes;
lectis sternendis studuimus munditiisque apparandis.
inter illud tamen negotium meis curavi amicis
Sticho et conservo Sagarino meo cena cocta ut esset.
Stichus oponsatust, ceterum ego curam do: id adlegavit.
nunc ibo hinc et amicos meos curabo hic advenientis.—

The two slaves then reappear. Stephanium's monologue thus separates their exit to dinner from their otherwise immediate reappearance, but it is not meant to represent in real terms the amount of time that has elapsed. It marks the passage of time less by its length than by its direct and immediate address to the audience and by its switch from senarii in

4. A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* (Oxford, 1973), p. 120, developing the thought of Handley, *Menander and Plautus*, p. 14. Similar opinions are expressed by D. Bain, "Plautus vortit barbare . . .," in *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature*, ed. D. West and T. Woodman (Cambridge, 1979), pp. 22–23; Hunter, *New Comedy*, p. 38, and C. Questa, "Struttura delle *Bacchides* (e problemi del Δις ἑξατάων)," in *Parerga Plautina* (Urbino, 1985), pp. 39–40.

5. Contrast *Most.* 528–31, where Plautus does seem to have transposed text to cover an exit and return. J. C. B. Lowe, "Plautine Innovation in *Mostellaria* 529–857," *Phoenix* 39 (1985): 6–26 (esp. pp. 6–9), argues the case convincingly, but the passage bears only superficial likeness to the circumstances of *Bacch.* 526–29 (pace Lowe, p. 9).

6. See Hunter, *New Comedy*, pp. 38–40, and J. C. B. Lowe, "Plautus' Choruses," forthcoming in *RhM*. I am grateful to Mr. Lowe for sharing his thoughts with me in advance of their publication.

the dialogue to iambic septenarii. The resulting shift of mood distracts and distorts our sense of passing time. So too at *Curculio* 462–86, where the so-called Choragus employs a longer, more elaborate version of the same device. Curculio himself exits at 461, and this new character promptly enters with a joke about costumes. He then proceeds to entertain the audience with a satiric tour of the forum in trochaic septenarii that ends with the parasite's return at 487. This speech, like the *Stichus* monologue, is inorganic. Each interrupts an otherwise continuous flow of action with a character brought on especially for this purpose.

A "cover monologue" serves a similar function, but without standing so explicitly outside the illusion. It does not interrupt the flow of action. At *Menaechmi* 875, for example, the *senex* leaves to fetch a doctor to handle the raving Menaechmus. The perplexed young man makes a short speech (876–81) before the *senex* returns to announce this doctor's imminent arrival. His words upon reentry make clear that a fair amount of time has passed since his departure only a few lines before (882–83): "lumbi sedendo, oculi spectando dolent,/manendo medicum dum se ex opere recipiat." All the audience has experienced, however, besides this explicit statement of time elapsed, is Menaechmus' five-line speech in the interval. Judging solely by the text—not always a good practice when discussing Plautine dramaturgy—we would have to say that Plautus hardly scruples to collapse dramatic time when the need arises. This is, at any rate, the perception that leads critics of *Bacchides* to treat Pistoclerus' little speech as a cover for the interval that Menander indicated with an act-break. Editors, taking their cue from the manuscript headings, even give it a separate scene number.

Things are not so simple. Other, nonverbal Plautine techniques also bear on this problem. Plautus does not always "cover" the lapse of time with monologues. *Pseudolus* 573a, the notorious cue for music ("tibicen vos interibi hic delectaverit"), also signals the passing of dramatic time. The piper plays, creating an interval between Pseudolus' exit and his otherwise immediate reappearance. This explicit call for an interlude is unique, but the circumstances surrounding it are not. Consider *Cistellaria* 628–32. The old woman Melaenis is speaking. The Oxford text looks like this:

nunc egomet potius hanc inibo gratiam
ab illis quam illaec me indicet. ibo domum,
atque ad parentes reducam Selenium.—

ACTUS III

ME. Rem elocuta sum tibi omnem; sequeren, mea Selenium,
ut eorum quoiam esse oportet te sis potius quam mea?

Melaenis' exit line announces a task to accomplish. The next line resumes just where she had left off: the tense of *elocuta sum* indicates that time has indeed passed, as does the presence now of Selenium, whom Melaenis had gone to fetch. How does Plautus "cover" the necessary

interval between lines 630 and 631? The clue lies in the fact that whereas Melaenis leaves speaking in iambic senarii, she returns to trochaic septenarii in recitative. A pipe must have begun playing upon Melaenis' exit, just as it did after *Pseudolus* 573a, and it continues to play on her return. We need not posit a lengthy interlude, but *something* has to happen to cue Melaenis' return to music. The dramatic context suggests it. The metrical shift demands it.⁷ This passage provides a necessary, but previously unappreciated, clue to the problem posed by *Bacchides*. Mnesilochus and his party leave the stage after a scene in senarii. That exit must take some time,⁸ and Pistoclerus' recitative at 526 demands the pipe. The tibicen surely began playing to accompany the exit, and he must continue to play into the next scene. Time has thus already elapsed *before* Pistoclerus enters. His monologue is therefore not the cover, which was provided by the music. Nor should Pistoclerus' entrance be considered a scene in itself. It is only the first part of a longer scene with a structure foreign to Menander but quite common in Plautus.

To understand what Plautus is up to here, we must first return to the meeting of Sostratos and Moschos as he found it in Menander. The text is broken in places, but the sense is fairly clear. So is the stylistic point. Once his father leaves, Sostratos launches into a brief monologue denouncing the false hetaira (91–102). He is interrupted at line 102 by the entrance of Moschos, who appears from the girl's house. Moschos' first words are spoken back through the door. Then he will see his friend (102–12):

Mo.	εἴτ' ἀκούσας ἐνθάδε
	εἶναί με, ποῦ γῆς ἐστι; χαῖρε, Σώστρατε.
Σω.	καὶ σύ.
<Μο.>	τί κατηφῆς καὶ σκυθρωπός, εἰπέ μοι;
	καὶ βλέμμα τοῦθ' ὑπόδακρυ' μὴ νεώτερον
	κακὸν κατείληφάς τι τῶν [γ'] ἐνταῦθα;
(Σω.)	ναί.
(Μο.)	εἴτ' οὐ [λέ]γεις;
(Σω.)	ἔνδον γὰρ ἀμέλει, Μόσχε.
(Μο.)	πῶς;
(Σω.)]φιλοῦντα τὸν πρὸ τοῦ χρόνον
]α' τοῦτο πρῶτον ὧν ἐμὲ
]ῆδίκηκας.

7. The actual time occupied by the playing of a solo pipe need only be long enough to break the continuity. Cf. Menander's introduction of the pipe at *Dyskolos* 879–80, which changes the mood as the scene slips into recitative for the final ragging of Knemon; here in Plautus, the pipe indicates a change of time. There is a similar case in Ter. *Ad.* 854–55, where Demea enters Micio's house after dialogue in senarii and immediately returns reciting in trochaic septenarii. On the independence of stage time from real time, see J. Andrieu, *Le dialogue antique* (Paris, 1954), pp. 69–74. Blanchard, *Essai*, pp. 299–300, finds a Plautine entr'acte at *Cist.* 630 "très possible."

8. For the stage business necessitated by Mnesilochus' baggage porters, see J. Wright, "Plautus, *Bacchides* 525," *CQ* 21 (1971): 440–41, and id., *Dancing in Chains: The Stylistic Unity of the Comoedia Palliata* (Rome, 1974), pp. 144–45. A pipe trill (or whatever) to accompany an exit and shift the mood does not necessitate an empty stage, though we have one here; contrast *Cist.* 772–73, where Lampadio remains behind for the closing scene recited to the pipe. I am grateful to J. C. B. Lowe for this observation.

- (Mo.) ἡδίκηκα δὲ
 ἐγὼ σε; μὴ γένοιτο τοῦτο, Σώστρατε.
 (Σω.) οὐκ ἡξίουں γοῦν οὐδ' ἐγώ.
 (Mo.) λέγεις δὲ τί;

Menander deftly contrasts the curt, tense Sostratos with a fluent and solicitous Moschos. Sostratos is certainly angry with Moschos for (as he thinks) betraying him, but he is also extremely uneasy in his anger. We have already seen him try to thrust further temptation aside by returning his father's money, and in the agitated little monologue that precedes Moschos' entrance he attempts, like old Demeas of *Samia*, to shift responsibility for the betrayal from the male player to the female (91–102; cf. *Sam.* 328–47). He is not quite sure what to think, since the alternatives are equally unpleasant. He is therefore alternately terse with his friend (καὶ σύ . . . ναί), cryptic (ἔνδον γὰρ ἀμέλει, Μόσχε), and probably on the verge of a nervous loquacity as the papyrus breaks off. The dynamics of this meeting, swiftly paced and subtle in its characterization, is typical of Menander's comic style.

In *Samia*, Moschion's reunion with his father Demeas, also newly returned from abroad, is similar. That young man, like Sostratos of *Dis Exapaton*, is also under considerable stress and has just been soliloquizing about his problem. Then he breaks off (127–31):

- [Mo.] —ἀλλ' Ἀπολλων, οὐτοσί
 ὁ πατήρ. ἀκήκο' ἄρα. χαῖρέ μοι, πάτερ.
 (Δη.) νῆ καὶ σύ γ', ὦ παῖ.
 (Mo.) τί σκυθρωπάζεις;
 (Δη.) τί γάρ;
 γαμετὴν ἐταίραν, ὥς ἔοικ', ἐλάνθανον
 ἔχων.

Moschion's bearing and manner here have, like Sostratos', been established by a previous monologue, and the technique of having a second character enter to meet one already established onstage lends a certain casualness—"naturalism" is not quite the right word—to the scene. The basic structure of their meeting is paralleled in an anonymous fragment from Ghôran. Chairestratos, returning from an errand to the harbor, meets up with the young men Phaidimos and Nikeratos, who, rather like Menander's Sostratos and Moschos, have been arguing at cross-purposes over a girl:⁹

- (Χα.) τίς οὗτος; ὦ, Νικήρατος, (καὶ) Φαίδιμος
 αὐτός γ' ἔοικε. χαῖρε πολλά, Φαίδιμε.
 (Φα.) νῆ καὶ σύ γ' ὦ Χαιρέστρατ' [. . .] σεισφιλ.

9. *PGhôr.* 2, lines 163–67. The papyrus (= Page, *GLP* 3, no. 65) is included among the *incerta* in the OCT Menander, pp. 331–35. Phaidimos' sententious berating of his friend has led some scholars to suspect the influence of this anonymous play on the characterization of Plautus' Mnesilochus; see Questa, "Struttura," pp. 49–51, and further references there. The link, however, is highly conjectural, since the moralistic pose is something of a comic topos; compare the outrage of Charinus at Ter. *An.* 625–81, a situation perhaps imported from Menander's *Perinthia*.

(ΝΙ.) χειμάζομαι γὰρ οὐ μετρίως ὑπὸ τοῦδ' ἐγώ.

(ΧΑ.) τί δ' ἐστίν; οὐ δῆπουθεν ἠγγνόηχ' ὅτι—

Chairestratos then intervenes to avert further quarreling. The new character's entrance and greeting are again quick and easy. His approach could be elaborated, but it is not. The Greek practice emphasizes the substance of such meetings, not their manner.

There is of course substance to the meeting of Pistoclerus and Mnesilochus at *Bacchides* 526, too, but there is also much manner. Different manner. Plautus has restructured and rewritten Menander's scene, assimilating it to a quite different dramatic style. The formal encounter, not the casual meeting, was (or was in the process of becoming) a hallmark of Plautus' style in the *palliata*, and Plautus introduces that formality here. He does so with care. By eliminating Menander's act-break and having Mnesilochus meet his father off the stage, Plautus alters Menander's pattern of entrances and exits and thus the underlying rhythm of his scene. The stage was cleared at 525. To create an encounter, *both* young men must enter.¹⁰ Each does so with a four-line entrance monologue: Pistoclerus speaks back into Bacchis' house; Mnesilochus speaks to himself. Then there is rapid, parallel self-address as the two catch sight of each other and approach (534–39):

Pi. estne hic meus sodalis? MN. estne hic hostis quem aspicio meus?

Pi. certe is est. MN. is est. Pi. adibo contra. MN. contollam gradum.

Pi. salvos sis, Mnesilochē. MN. salve. Pi. salvos quom peregre advenis, cena detur. MN. non placet mi cena quae bilem movet.

Pi. numquae advenienti aegritudo obiecta est? MN. atque acerruma.

Pi. unde? MN. ab homine quem mi amicum esse arbitratus sum antidhac.

Plautus creates this symmetry by transposing Menander's order of speaking. This is why Pistoclerus' monologue comes first and why we should treat it not as a "cover" but as part of the following scene. Had Plautus kept the Menandrian sequence (and certainly *Bacch.* 526–29 ~ *DE* 102–3), Pistoclerus would have had to move directly to the recognition with "estne hic meus sodalis?" The perfect symmetry would be spoiled. Separating his monologue, and so his entrance, from the rapid exchange of partial lines creates the more formal arrangement of monologue–monologue–parallel asides–dialogue.

This pattern is distinctly Plautine, for his encounters quite often involve dual entrances of this kind. The characters recognize each other from afar, voice that recognition aloud, and then—still independently—declare their determination to approach and greet each other. There are similar instances at *Aulularia* 811–18, *Curculio* 216–35, *Epidicus* 534–49, *Persa* 13–16, and *Rudens* 331–36. Such scenes may be spoken (*Curc.*), sung (*Epid.*), or conducted in recitative (*Aul.*, *Pers.*, *Rud.*). The

10. J. Barsby, ed., *Plautus: "Bacchides"* (Oak Park, Ill., 1986), pp. 139–45, is especially astute on the typology of this scene; see also D. Bain, *Actors and Audience* (Oxford, 1977), pp. 143–44, and Questa, "Struttura," pp. 39–40.

passage in *Curculio* offers a particularly neat inversion of the sequence in *Bacchides*. The preceding scene in trochaic septenarii has cleared the stage with a procession. Then the music stops. The pimp Cappadox enters from the temple of Aesculapius, followed by the slave Palinurus, entering from his master's house. Each speaks a brief monologue. They hear each other, turn, advance, and begin a bantering exchange (229–35):

- CA. quis hic est qui loquitur? PA. quoniam vocem ego audio?
 CA. estne hic Palinurus Phaedromi? PA. quis hic est homo
 cum conlativo ventre atque oculis herbeis?
 de forma novi, de colore non queo
 novisse. iam iam novi: leno est Cappadox.
 congrediar. CA. salve, Palinure. PA. o scelerum caput,
 salveto. quid agis?

The tone is quite different from *Bacchides*, but the dynamics of the scene are identical. It is typically Plautine, and once again we may contrast the sort of thing we find in Menander.

The characteristically direct style of Menandean comedy tells against this kind of stylization. Plautus found the opportunity for such a scene in *Dis Exapaton*, but not the scene itself. Moschos' ποῦ γῆς ἐστὶ; is a Greek entrance formula that never launches an extensive exchange of this type.¹¹ Consider the action at *Misoumenos* 210–15, where Demeas suddenly spies his lost daughter, Krateia, emerging from the house with her nurse companion:

- Δη. ὦ Ζεῦ, τί ν' ὄψιν οὐδὲ προσδοκωμένην
 ὄρω;
 (Κρ.) τί βούλει, τηθία; τί μοι λαλεῖς;
 πατήρ ἐμός; ποῦ;
 (Δη.) παιδίον Κράτεια.
 (Κρ.) τίς
 καλεῖ με; πάπα· χαῖρε πολλά, φίλτατε.
 (Δη.) ἔχω σε, τέκνον.
 (Κρ.) ὦ ποθοῦμενος φανείς,
 ὄρω σ' ὃν οὐκ ἂν ὠτόμην ἰδεῖν ἔτι.

This is the closest Menander comes to Plautus' type of delayed encounter scene. The mute nurse distracts Krateia and indeed delays the recognition, but only for an instant. The dialogue is rapid, as father and daughter quickly see each other and embrace: no parallel monologues or self-address here. The tragic scansion ἔχω σε, τέκνον of Demeas' formulaic recognition line may briefly heighten the moment, but it does not

11. See K. B. Frost, *Exits and Entrances in Menander* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 8–9. Note, as a point of method, the distinction between verbal parallels and what I have been calling scene dynamics. Thus, "quis hic loquitur" certainly renders τίς ἐστὶν ὁ λαλῶν, but Latin encounter-scenes develop a pattern of exchange quite different from Greek meetings. Attention to individual lines rather than whole scenes leads Bain, *Actors and Audience*, pp. 158–61, to organize and discuss much of this same material rather differently.

affect the pace. Menander prefers to keep his play moving. The individual scene does not develop an independent life.¹²

Turning Menander's sort of brisk meeting into a formal encounter of the Roman type has important consequences for the aesthetics as well as the structure of the new Latin play. Some such consequences may seem negative. The confrontation of Mnesilochus and Pistoclerus, as Plautus writes it, must certainly sacrifice some distinctly Menandrian effects. First, the formality Plautus imposes on their encounter slows the action down, especially since Mnesilochus beats so loquaciously about the bush. Menander's rapid pace therefore goes by the board. The careful contrast in manner between his Sostratos and Moschos must also fall victim to Plautus' orchestrated symmetry. Where Sostratos could be terse, Mnesilochus must match his friend's speeches, and both young men thus become moralistic and melodramatic. A third, more profound consequence of this Plautine stylization is a shift from the illusion of casualness to a deliberate formality. Moschos' sudden meeting with Sostratos is meant to recall a chance meeting on a city street. Its language is simple and direct because Menander's characters and situations are designed to remind us of ordinary people, and they function in a world congruent with our own. The very unobtrusiveness of the meeting in *Dis Exapaton* is itself a Menandrian convention. The Roman scene reflects a different dramatic practice. The encounter of Mnesilochus and Pistoclerus is not casual. Plautus evokes an occurrence not of everyday life, but of the Roman stage. These are not young men struggling, like their Greek counterparts, with reasonable facsimiles of natural jealousy and insecurity. They are Plautine *adulescentes*, whose every pose is designed to recall the more artificial and overtly humorous conventions of their own genre. Menander individualizes his characters because he wants his plots to turn on the traits of personality he so carefully creates for them: Smikrines' avarice in *Aspis* and Knemon's unsociability in *Dyskolos*, Thrasonides' scruples in *Misoumenos* and Moschion's self-importance in *Samia*.¹³ Plautine figures, in *Bacchides* as elsewhere, are not individualized in this sense. Their language and their postures are (like their names) more extravagant.¹⁴ They have distinguishing roles

12. Terence, incidentally, seems to follow this Menandrian pattern. The one clear example is in *An.* 800–802, where the old woman Mysis suddenly sees Crito of Andros approaching:

My. obsecro
quem video? estne hic Crito sobrinus Chrysidis?
is est. Cr. o Mysis, salve! My. salvos sis, Crito.

Her two questions recall the Plautine style of self-address in such situations, but Crito sees her almost at once, breaks in upon her deliberation, and thus keeps the scene moving ahead.

13. I thus, for the most part, stand by the readings of these plays in *The Making of Menander's Comedy* (Berkeley, 1980), though pp. 93–95 and 104–6 are perhaps a little hard on this Moschion.

14. "Chrysalus" for Menander's "Syrus" is of course the most striking name change in the play, noteworthy not just for its recurrent puns (240 "opus est chryso Chrysalos"; 362 "faciet Crucisalum me ex Chrysalo"), but also for its joke at the expense of its original: "non mihi isti placent Parmenones, Syri" (649). Yet perhaps as interesting as Plautus' use of Greek tongue twisters for his young men is Menander's choice of quite innocuous names. While we seem to have eight Moschions in extant

rather than personalities, and their world, with its fantastic mores and exotic locale, does not map so easily onto any real place or time.

The opportunity to confront Plautus with his original has thus brought us to a far more serious matter than some minor tinkering with an entrance to cover Menander's act-break. Plautus is not "plastering over" a technical difference but reveling in it, and for good reason. The structural necessities of his Roman plays were not arbitrarily imposed. They reflect, and must be understood in terms of, his quite different dramatic priorities. The new shape Plautus brings to his young men's sudden encounter seeks the appeal characteristic of his own comic idea. The music, the stylization, and the collapse of middle-class personalities that he introduces into *Bacchides* proclaim his different dramatic values. Sostratos' agitated inconsistencies become Mnesilochus' absurd jokes. Irony becomes outright laughter. The emphasis shifts from the pillars of society to the manipulators of society. Chrysalus and Bacchis may thus emerge as the dominant forces in this new world, and a Greek comedy of everyday life becomes a Roman comic fantasy.¹⁵ What the comparison of *Dis Exapaton* and *Bacchides* really shows is ultimately a matter not so much of different techniques, or even of aesthetic gains and losses, as of fundamental changes in the idea of comic theater. It provides one more reminder that the "Menander" performed in Latin at Rome was not trying to be Menander, and neither, of course, was Plautus.

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Menander, this is the only Moschos: the Moschions tend to be rather unpleasant young men, even by the standards of New Comedy; Menander here avoids the diminutive, and thus the connotation. This might provide some support for the thesis of W. T. MacCary, "Menander's Characters: Their Names, Roles and Masks," *TAPA* 101 (1970): 277-90, that certain names were associated with certain characters, though much of that thesis was effectively challenged by P. G. McC. Brown, "Masks, Names and Characters in New Comedy," *Hermes* 115 (1987): 181-202.

15. V. Pöschl, "Die neuen Menanderpapyri und die Originalität des Plautus," *SHAW* 4 (1973): 34-36 = *Kunst und Wirklichkeitserfahrung in der Dichtung: Abhandlungen und Aufsätze zur römischen Poesis: Kleine Schriften*, ed. W.-L. Liebermann, vol. 1 (Heidelberg, 1979), pp. 66-68, tried to find a Menandrian sensibility in Plautus' world, but he was refuted—I think correctly—by Bain, "Plautus," pp. 30-33. For the emergence of the "low" characters as controllers of *Bacch.*, see N. Slater, *Plautus in Performance* (Princeton, 1985), pp. 94-117.