LIGHT AND HEAVY SYLLABLES AS DRAMATIC COLOURING IN PLAUTUS AND OTHERS

Our purpose is protreptic, to broach a subject neglected by researchers and consequently by commentators on Plautus and Terence.[1] We mean the relation of rhythm and dramatic meaning in the ordinary stichic iambo-trochaic metres. It is of course a longstanding convention that a commentator writing *in usum scholarum* will include some account of the basic rules of scansion and prosody and a *conspectus metrorum* of sorts. Ambitious efforts may be made to analyse the polymetric songs in Plautus, if to label *cola* is analysis; but there are notorious difficulties in this, for the songs are astrophic and polymorphous, the colometry is uncertain, and it cannot be said that we fully understand the range or relationship of the elements out of which the songs are constructed, or that the rules of prosody in the *cantica* have been definitively established. Under the circumstances it is understandable that commentators refrain except in the most general terms from relating rhythm to dramatic context in the songs. But it is different with the iambo-trochaic metres. We are on firmer ground here, and there is more of it. Commentators will draw attention to aspects of the playwright's diction such as alliteration, assonance, triadic expression, hyperbaton, and so on, by which emphasis and dramatic 'colouring' may be indicated. But very little attention is given to the dramatic and tonal implications of the texture of the iambo-trochaic metres as used for whole scenes or in particular exchanges. This is a pity, because Plautus and the tragedians and even Terence can be shown to have exploited the latitude of realization allowed by 'the rules' to underpin the sense of a passage or an exchange. The iambo-trochaic verse-forms should not be regarded merely as a conventional analogue for prose, a supervenient aspect of the dramatist's technique which may be disregarded as far as nuance and tone are concerned. As it is, the student is liable to come away with the impression that the scansion of this family of metres is of interest only from the technical point of view as a means of diagnosing textual corruption and as a control in emendation. Cambridge has recently published editions with commentaries on two very different comedies, Plautus' *Casina* and Terence's *Adelphoe*.[2] It is interesting to compare these in general as representing the present positions and emphases in exegesis of Roman drama, and in particular the presentation of the *res metrica*. It was the editors of *Casina* who had the more difficult task, and Willcock (who was responsible for this aspect of the edition) has succeeded admirably in preparing what is easily the most lucid, accurate, and helpful account of Plautine prosody and metric currently available; and it is to that account that we refer the reader for technical terms and details not explained here. Martin's account in his *Adelphoe* is adequate, though his scansions of the actual text are not always clearly right,[3] and he does not always offer explicit help with difficult lines in his notes. But it remains a somewhat disappointing feature of both editions that they adhere to the quite false traditional convention of commentators on Plautus and Terence, that the texture of iambo-trochaic verse can have no bearing on dramatic meaning, and need not be discussed.

[1] See J. D. Hughes, *A Bibliography of Scholarship on Plautus* (Amsterdam, 1975), pp. 127–35; D. Fogazza, *Lustrum* 19 (1979), 198–201; P. W. Harsh, *Lustrum* 3 (1958), 215–50.

[2] Plautus, *Casina*, ed. W. T. MacCary and M. M. Willcock (Cambridge, 1976); Terence, *Adelphoe*, ed. R. H. Martin (Cambridge, 1976).

[3] E.g. 168 (*at enim* necessary), 313 (⟨*meo*⟩ *modo* required for sense and metre).

There are two main variables in this kind of versification that deserve attention. One is the relation of verse-ictus and word-accent or, to put it in less prejudicial terms, the articulation of words and phrases in the line, the patterning of caesurae and diaereses; we only mention it here because it is a complex and controversial subject which deserves its own proper treatment, and because it is to a large extent independent of the other variable, the relative proportions of heavy and light syllables in a passage or exchange. This can be discussed directly without raising the matter of ictus.

The weight of an iambo-trochaic line in Old Latin might vary over a much wider range than was possible in Greek. It could be far more ponderous because, subject to certain limitations depending on the articulation of words in the line, the Roman poet could admit heavy syllables in consecutive *theses*.[4] For example, Pacuvius began his *Iliona* with a scene as spooky as the first in *Hamlet*; the ghost of Polydorus addressed his mother thus, with a lugubriously slow and massy iambic octonarius:

<p style="text-align:center">mater t(e) appello, tu quae curam somno suspensam leuas...[5]</p>

Cicero (*Tusc.* 1. 106) remarks on the solemnity of the whole passage with its musical setting: and the fourteen consecutive heavy syllables of this opening line set the tone. This technical resource was not available to Greek poets; for them, consecutive *theses* could never be heavy. On the other hand, even tragic Latin poets had the same kind of freedom as, say, Menander to resolve the *longa* of *arses* within the line; the effect of this, even when the *theses* are heavy, is to generate an altogether different, agitated rhythm: so for example the senarius from Accius' *Athamas* (ap. Non. p. 524):

<p style="text-align:center">*A.* Ah dubit(o)! *B.* Ah quid agis? caue n(e) in turbam t(e) implices!</p>

Similarly in the trochaic septenarius from his *Deiphobus* (ap. Priscian, *G.L.K.* ii. 469. 12)

<p style="text-align:center">nos continuo ferr(um) eripimus, manibus manicas neximus</p>

Each line has three resolved *arses*, and one may guess that the lively rhythms will have been conspicuous in their contexts, for Accius' norm in the matter of resolution is a good deal more staid. This exploitation on the one hand of deliberately ponderous and on the other of light, tripping realizations is present from the start, as can be seen from the iambo-trochaics of Naevius.[6]

But it is Comedy that concerns us primarily. Turning to Plautus, we take the case of his trochaic septenarii, and consider first the overall character of some scenes. That there *are* significant differences is not a new observation. Nearly fifty years ago Drexler remarked *en passant* that 'die metrischen Freiheiten einer Szene wie Stich. v. 4 sind dafür ein sicheres Indiz. Um jedoch den rhythmischen Gesamtcharakter einer Szene zu fassen – der genannten oder etwa der Szene Bacch. i. 1, vielleicht der metrisch elegantesten, die Plautus überhaupt geschrieben hat – dazu fehlt es leider noch völlig an einem wissenschaftlichen Instrument';[7] and in fact virtually no work has been done

---

[4] *Arses* are the places which *must always* count for two *morae* in the metrical scheme (even when occupied by *brevis in longo* at colon or line-end); *theses* are the rest, alternating with *arses*; they may be represented by one or two *morae* according to circumstance. Note that these definitions are purely quantitative and imply nothing about metrical 'beats'.

[5] Here and *passim* the subscript dot marks the *arsis* (more exactly, its first *mora*), i.e. the beginning of the quantitatively definite element. This seems preferable to the bad old convention by which acute accents were used, and does not commit one to the view that a dynamic pulse is intrinsic to these places.

[6] His 'dancing-girl' fragment (*Tarentilla*, fr. 74–9 Warmington) is badly damaged in the transmission, but enough is clear to show that its rhythm was light and elegant; contrast the ponderous severity of the harsh father's *senarii* in *Triphallus* (fr. 94–6 Warmington).

[7] *Plautinische Akzentstudien* (Breslau, 1932), i. 196 n. 1.

on this since Drexler wrote. One component of the *Instrument* envisaged by Drexler would be some sort of index of the proportion of heavy and light syllables in a scene.

Bacchides i. 1 is, it seems, an extreme case; the incidence of light syllables, mainly through the resolution of *arses*, is unusually high over a lengthy passage. We may therefore say that it has the maximum proportion of light syllables that we might reasonably expect to find, and express the proportions present elsewhere as a percentage of this. For this purpose, we have counted as light only those syllables which are unambiguous. Thus we count a final syllable in -s after a short vowel *in thesi* before a consonant as heavy, and where naturally disyllabic words are found to occupy a single place of the verse, we have reckoned them by synizesis as one heavy syllable rather than by iambic shortening as two light (*meās*, *deōs*, etc.), for it seemed better to err (if it is error) in favour of heavy syllables rather than to overestimate the number of light. In practice, these doubtful cases represent only a marginal factor (not more than 1·5 per cent) and it may safely be taken to be constant, so that for the purposes of comparison it may be neglected.

		(a) Verses	(b) Light syllables	(b)/(a)	(%)
(1)	*Bacch.* 35–105	71	687	9·6761	100
(2)	*Bacch.* 526–72	47	252	5·3617	55·4
(3)	*Poen.* 515–77	50[8]	239	4·7800	49·4
(4)	*Poen.* 823–922	100	784	7·8400	81·0
(5)	*Trin.* 602–26	25	154	6·1600	63·6
(6)	*Trin.* 1008–92	85	590	6·9418	71·7
(7)	*Aul.* 178–271	93	560	6·0215	62·2
(8)	*Capt.* 251–360	110	639	5·8091	60·0
(9)	*Cas.* 252–308	57	306	5·3684	55·5
(10)	*Cas.* 353–423	71	439	6·1831	63·9
(11)	*Cas.* 515–62	48	266	5·5417	57·3
(12)	*Cas.* 798–814	15	101	6·7333	69·6
(13)	*Cas.* 963–982 + 991–1018	47	243	5·1702	53·4

The number of septenarii examined represents 9·27 per cent of the total in Plautus, a fair proportion for general inferences to be drawn, but the sample is not offered as genuinely random. On the contrary, passages (1), (3), and (4) were chosen because we intuitively felt that they were unusual, (1) and (4) high and (3) low; (7) and (8), because they were likely to be typical, (7) on the comic side of neutrality and (8) on the serious; and (2), (5), and (6) were taken to show that there can be wide variation in a single play. It was also thought desirable to include all the septenarii of at least one play: *Casina* was chosen because of the recent edition. The range of the figures is wider than would be found in random samples of the same size, and it is also to be noted that at least three of the plays represented (*Poen.*, *Bacch.*, *Cas.*) belong to Plautus' late period, after the Aetolian War (188 B.C. +). On the other hand the scenes chosen provide a good representative mixture of *personae* as to sex, age, status, and sympathy, of tones of voice, and of dramatic tension.

The salient points are the following.

(i) Extreme variation between scenes in different plays is clearly to be related to dramatic mood and pace in cases (1) and (3). In the *Bacchides* scene we have an

---

[8] We discount vv. 543–6, 567–75, which taken together and joined to 507 are an alternative, shorter version of the scene.

exceptionally high incidence of resolved *arses* throughout a quite lengthy passage: the trilling effect well suits, on the one hand, the glamorous *lusciniolae cantio* (cf. *Bacch.* 38) affected by the sisters and, on the other, the inner turmoil of the susceptible Pistoclerus. Set against this passage (3) from *Poenulus* is, as it were, the exact opposite of the common *motif* of the running slave. The *advocati*, greatly to Agorastocles' frustration, insist on a decorous and leisurely gait, and we have in this passage an unusually low proportion of resolved *arses*. Whether in fact these scenes are the most strongly contrasted in Plautus we do not know without comprehensive examination of all his *septenarii*, but they must be near the limits.[9]

(ii) Wide and significant variation is also to be found within single plays. In the second *Bacchides* passage, Mnesilochus is under the false impression that his friend Pistoclerus has deceived him and taken up with the Bacchis whom Mnesilochus had asked Pistoclerus to find on his behalf. He is depressed, truculent, sententious, sarcastic, and ironic, and this is marked by the relative weightiness of his verse. In the second *Poenulus* passage, Plautus wishes to create an atmosphere of bustle and urgency: the patter of the two slaves is cast in lightweight verse with much resolution. In (5) the speakers Stasimus and Callicles discuss some bad news: the general proportion of light syllables is average (in the range 60–68 per cent); but there is a clear contrast between this kind of writing and that which is used to introduce Stasimus later on in (6), which is a classic running-slave scene.

(iii) It is obvious that the overall proportions of heavy and light syllables in each play would offer no guidance at all as to its date. For the variation within plays is evidently such as to render any overall figures unsuitable for ranking, even if there were any *a priori* reason for postulating (and there is not) that Plautus' practice changed over the years; in fact, it would be crude and naïve to suppose that one can trace any 'development' in Plautus' style over the years along a straight-line graph, whatever the criterion (Greek vocabulary, prominence of *cantica*, etc.). For why should such developments if they exist be reducible to a straight-line graph?

(iv) On the scale used here, one might say that Plautus' norm in trochaic septenarii falls in the band 60–68 per cent; scenes scoring below this may be said to have more or less noticeably 'heavy' versification, corresponding to truculence, depression, intransigence, shame, regret on the part of the characters; and perhaps also age and status, though this would require closer investigation. Scenes scoring above this range are blithe, amorous, anxious, urgent, excited; and attractive young ladies are particularly prone to express themselves in strings of light, tripping syllables.

(v) These overall contrasts of scenes are important, but what is not clear from the overall figures quoted is that the real importance of *longa* and *brevia* in Plautus as an affective resource lies in the contrast of lines in their particular contexts. For even in a very heavy passage one will find a strongly contrasted light line which stands out by the very fact of its lightness; and in a light passage there may be isolated heavy lines; while a passage which, regarded overall, is average may involve significant juxtapositions of light and heavy writing. In the remaining part of this paper we offer some particular examples from the scenes reviewed above and from elsewhere in Plautus, and we make the point that Terence too exploited these resources.

[9] Another noticeably 'slow' passage is the lugubrious exit-monologue of Charmides, *Rud.* 584–92, where, in nine verses, there are only 37 light syllables altogether, and the resolutions per verse are 0, 2, 2, 2, 1, 1, 1, 1, 1.

II

At *Rudens* 440 Ampelisca has got rid of the amorous Sceparnio, and in a slow, well-balanced verse reflects:

> quịd sacẹrdotị me dịc(am) hic dẹmorạtam tạm dịụ?

This is nicely contrasted in movement with her next line, the last of this trochaic scene: looking 'out to sea', over our heads, she recalls the frightening experience of shipwreck:

> ụt etiạm nunc mịsera tịme(o) ub(i) ọculis ịntueọr marẹ!

The string of light syllables in mid-line effectively expresses her agitation; in contrast with the lines of Accius quoted above (p. 125), the *theses* here are light too, so that there are eight lights in a row (*misera time(o) ub(i) oculis...*). The effect is repeated in the following line, the first of the next scene, in *senarii*: to her alarm, she spies the villains, Labrax and Charmides:

> sed quịd ego mịsera uịdeo prọcul in lịtorẹ?

The point is sometimes made that Latin, compared with Greek, is somewhat lacking in light syllables; this is true, but Latin is not poor in light syllables in an absolute sense, and it is easier to get 'strings' than is sometimes suggested. There is an effective example in a passage of boisterous iambic septenarii in *Poenulus*, where there is an emotional shock: for Hanno is about to identify himself to his long-lost daughters, who are alarmed and mystified (*Poen.* 1249–50):

> *H.* Quid s(i) ẹloquạmur?   *Ag.* Cẹnse(o) hẹrcle pạtrue.   *Ant.* Mịsera tịmeo
> quid hoc sịt negọti, mẹa sorọr: ita stụpida sịn(e) anim(o) ạsto

Here the latter parts of each verse run out on a stuttering sequence of nine and eight light syllables respectively, contrasting with the more firmly conventional iambic rhythms of the first halves of the lines; Hanno's address begins in the same spirit – *aduọrtite ạnimum mụlierẹs* (1250) – but becomes heavier and less resolved as he reveals the truth.

A somewhat different effect is to be heard when *arses* are resolved with heavy intervening *theses*, as at *Mer.* 744 f.:

> *C.* nam quị amat quọd amat sị habet ịd habet prọ cibọ,
> uider(e), amplecti – osculari – alloqui...

In the first verse the cook rattles off an article of the Plautine catechism, the rhythm of which strongly contrasts with the next. It has been thought that 745 must be corrupt; *alloqui* is oddly bathetic, and there are two strong hiatuses. But this is surely deliberate. The actor is to dwell on *amplecti*; and as that word is weightier than *uidere*, so *osculari* (which has a naturally long *o*) is even more mouth-filling. Having titillated us thus far, the cook lets us down with the bathos of the last word: 'to see, to embrace – to kiss her lovely lips – to say hello'.

The resolutions in 744 split words and two of them involve prosodic hiatus; this is of course perfectly legitimate, and in no way are the rules relating to 'split anapaests' infringed here.[10] For the word-groups are intimate, and very common. But there are other kinds of resolution both *in arsi* and *in thesi* which are as harsh as they are rare, and which are meant to be noticed; and between what is strikingly anomalous and

---

10 See MacCary and Willcock, *Plautus, Casina*, p. 219.

what is perfectly normal there is a gradation, not a clear distinction. This will be illustrated incidentally in some of the passages which follow.

When Stasimus runs on at *Trinummus* 1008 ff. he is in much the same mood as Corporal Jones of *Dad's Army* quelling a panic:

> Stasime, fac te propere celerem, recipe t(e) ad dominum domum,
> ne subito metus exoriatur scapulis stultitia tua –
> adde grad(um), adpropera! iam dudum factumst qu(om) abiisti domo.
> caue sis tibi ne bubul(i) in te cottabi crebri crepent...

Throughout this passage Stasimus' nervous jitteriness is effectively expressed by the stuttering assonance of similar syllables, by the alliteration, by Plautus' bizarre imagery of violence and, what concerns us here, by the rhythm. We have thirteen and eleven light syllables respectively in the first two lines, seven each in the next, rising again in what follows. In 1010 *adde grad(um)* is a jarringly improper resolution of a thesis; and it may be suggested that it is deliberate, for the visual point is that evidently there is to be some change of pace (adpropera! 'extra speed!') in what may be called the choreography of Stasimus' ballet. The overall effect may be contrasted with the exchange in the same metre at 602 ff. between Stasimus and Callicles:

> *C.* Quo modo t(u) istuc Stasime dixti?   *S.* Nostr(um) erilem filium
>   Lesbonicum suam sororem despondiss(e): em hoc modo.
> *C.* Quoi homini despondit?   *S.* Lysiteli Philtonis filio,
>   sine dote.   *C.* Sine dot(e) ill(e) ill(am) in tantas diuitias dabit?...

The proportion of light syllables in this passage and the sequel is about normal for Plautus (see p. 127): there are some twenty-six unambiguously light syllables here against thirty-eight in 1008–11. This is in fact typical of the two scenes, and a rough measure of their contrast. The second *arsis* of 605 appears to be anomalously 'split' across a change of speaker: *sine dote: :sine dot(e)*. Now in Plautus it is well established that the second arsis and the third last of trochaic *septenarii* (and the third last in acatalectic iambic verse) – the *loci Jacobsohniani* – might properly be occupied by a final light syllable as *brevis in longo*; this may be followed by hiatus before an initial vowel. This is to say that these points mark *cola* in the verse, and had the same prerogatives as regular line-end. And indeed it is normal when this licence is observed that the preceding *thesis* be pure, as it always is at line-end. This is not the case here. It is a technically proper and important question whether one is to describe the anomaly observed here simply as a violently split *arsis*, or as an unusual kind of *locus Jacobsohnianus*, involving a 'limping' *thesis*. The answer would bear importantly on the principles of Plautine metric; but, whatever the answer to that question, the dramatically important point is that on any view the anomaly serves metrically to emphasize the word *dote*, which, from its climactic position, and from Callicles' repetition, can be seen to be emphatic: so there is a metrical hint to the producer and the actor. One does not wish to suggest that every metrical anomaly can be explained in production terms. But many do seem explicable by reference to dramatic context; and it would be an insensitive and mechanical fallacy to deduce from the fact that not all irregularities can be satisfactorily explained in this way that therefore none of them should.

It is a weakness of most discussions of the finer points of Plautine metre that the author will very properly collect his examples and compare like with like, but with little or no regard to the dramatic contexts from which the examples are taken. Drexler in the passage quoted above (pp. 125–6) refers to the metrical oddities of the

comastic scene *Stichus* v. 4. One of the most 'ugly' lines in Plautus is *Stich.* 736, Stichus' trochaic invitation to Stephanium:

> mẹa suauịs amabịlis amọena Stẹphani(um) ạd amorẹs tuọs…

Fraenkel, following Kroll, characterizes this as 'kaum erträglich',[11] apparently implying that the verse is corrupt, or just plain bad, but that is surely the dramatic point. The second and third *arses* of the line respectively break both basic rules about legitimate resolution, and Questa is right to hear 'un intento parodico'.[12] Stichus and his fellow comast Sangarinus are already well fuelled with wine; and the proof, which no metrician or commentator draws attention to, is Sangarinus' equally ungainly contribution at 741

> sị amabịlitas tịbi nostrạ placet, sị tib(i) amb(o) ạcceptị sumụs,

a line where the awkward *nostrạ placet* has parallels of sorts elsewhere and where there is a very harsh case of 'iambic shortening': for *amb(o)* is an accented word, yet suffers correption; one may compare for this the very comic effect at *Cas.* 229

> *L.* uxọr mea mẹaqu(e) amọenitạs, quid tụ agis? *M.* ạb(i) ạtqu(e) abstịnē manụm

where the offence is in the necessity to scan *abstĭnĕ* for *abstĭnē* by iambic shortening: Lysidamus' question has an oily smoothness to its rhythm, against which the rat-tat-tat of his wife's reply makes an excellent contrast. Substitute *aufer manum* (which is Plautus' usual expression in these contexts) and hear what a difference it makes to the rhythm. This must be deliberate.

Let us consider a less blatantly split resolution. At the beginning of the *Aulularia* Plautus uses ordinary normative rhythms for the *senarii* of the *Lar familiaris* speaking the prologue. He departs; in bursts Euclio the miser, driving the aged Staphyla out of the house, and shouting in the same metre as used by the Lar (*Aul.* 40 f.)

> ex(i) ịnqu(am) ag(e) ẹx(i) exẹund(um) herclẹ tib(i) hinc ẹst forạs,
> circụmspectạtrix c(um) ọculis ẹmissịciịs…

The whole effect is *farouche*. The power of the lines lies primarily in the contrast which they make with each other and with what has preceded. The first is a fusillade of ten words cobbled together with jarring elisions and three repetitions of *ex-*; the next is virtually a three-word line, two of which are massive nonce-formations; Plautus is saying not simply 'you spy', but also and absurdly 'you snail' – 'you circumscanner with your eyes extendible'. The heavy theses demand to be given their full weight in delivery. To this generally wild and violent impression the resolved *arsis* in *herclẹ tib(i)* has its contribution to make. For while resolutions of this kind are more defensible than e.g. *nostrạ placet*, because *tibi* is enclitic, they produce an unusual effect, because unusual prominence is thereby given to the second syllable of *hercle*, a syllable which the theatregoer's ear is tuned to expect normally to be elided or to fall unobtrusively *in thesi*.

The 'ballasting' effect of a few well-placed heavy syllables is the more marked when a scene is composed in the rapid, resolved style. The opening scene of *Bacchides* as we have the play (the beginning is lost) is a good example; see above, p. 127. Within that hectic scene, we have effects such as the following exchange between Bacchis and the gulping Pistoclerus (*Bacch.* 83–6)

[11] E. Fraenkel, *Iktus und Akzent im lateinischen Sprechvers* (Berlin, 1928), p. 259 n. 1.
[12] C. Questa, *Introduzione alla metrica di Plauto* (Bologna, 1967). p. 132.

B. Ybi tu lẹpide uọles essẹ tibi, mẹa rosạ, mihi dịcitọ:
   dạto qui bẹne sit, ẹg(o) ubi bẹne sit tịbi locụm lepidụm dabọ.
P. Rạpidus flụuius ẹst hic – nọn hac tẹmere trạnsirị potẹst.
B. Ạtqu(e) ecạstor ạpud hunc flụuium – ạliquid pẹrdundụmst tibị...

Bacchis dresses up her naughty proposition with the trills of a nightingale: 'Ready when you are, dearie; give me something nice, and I'll give you somewhere nice to put it', expressed in two septenarii which have 26 unambiguous light syllables, thirty if *tibi* (83), *mihi*, and *ubi* are pyrrhic and not iambic; and there is a certain exotic syncopation in the middle of 83, where the fourth *arsis* is of the *herclẹ tibi* type of resolution, and the sixth is *brevis in longo* at the *locus Jacobsohnianus*. Pistoclerus' comment begins in the same rapid style, but the heavy monosyllabic *theses* in mid-line slow the pace appropriately to the sense; Bacchis' dry comment aside matches this by inverting the pattern – slow at first and at last, rapid in the middle, with a pause before *aliquid*.

Conversely, in a scene where the norm is less hectic than this, a dash of resolution may mark surprise or fright effectively, as in the interview in *Aulularia* between Euclio and Megaronides on the subject of Euclio's daughter (207 ff.):

Eu. Dị me sẹruant, sạlua rẹs est, sạluom sị quid nọn perịt:
   nịmi' malẹ timuị. priu'qu(am) ịntro rẹdi(i) exạnimatụs fuị.
   rẹde(o) ad tẹ, Megadọre, sị quid mẹ uis.   *M.* Hạbeo grạtiạm.

Here Euclio returns from his house having abruptly rushed in, mystifying Megadorus, to see if his gold is safe; it is; 207 is the appropriately slow expression of relaxation and relief; 208, with its thirteen light syllables and the mild syncopation inherent in the admission of *brevis in longo* in the second *arsis* (the other kind of *locus Jacobsohnianus*), is the re-living of the panic; in 209, Euclio pulls himself together with a good solid cadence *siquid me uis*. Later on, Euclio, still thinking that Megadorus is after a dowry rather than a bride, drops a broad hint to see whether it will cause Megadorus any embarrassment (240 ff.):

Eu. Ẹo dicọ ne mẹ thensạuros rẹpperịsse cẹnseạs
M. Nọui, nẹ doceạs. despọnde.   *Eu.* Fịat. (*Crash!*) sẹd pro Iụppitẹr,
   n(um) ẹgo dispẹrii?   *M.* Quịd tibịst?   *Eu.* Quid crẹpuit quạsi ferrụm modọ?
M. Hịc apụd m(e) hortụm confọdere iụssi – sẹd ub(i) hic ẹst homọ?

Euclio speaks slowly, dwelling on 'thensauros' no doubt; Megadorus, who has no idea why Euclio should be making so much of this and getting impatient, dismisses the point: then, in five weighty syllables, the *sponsio* – and an almightly clatter off stage. The appeal to Jupiter (as thunder-god) is nicely chosen, and Euclio's horror on behalf of his 'iron' (even in his panic he cannot say 'gold' to Megadorus) is implicit in the rhythmical contrast of 241 and 242: the one has only three light syllables, the other ten; and *exit* Euclio before Megadorus realizes it.

Rhythmical contrast of 'heavy' and 'light' lines and parts of lines is evidently a favourite Plautine ploy, and is often as important an aspect of the dramatist's meaning as, say, assonance and alliteration. This is also true of Terence, to a greater degree in fact than one might suppose. Even less work has been done on the art of Terence's verse-writing than on Plautus'; and one tends to think of him as a prose-writer *manqué*, for whose *scriptura leuis* the iambo-trochaic metres were merely a traditional garment which might profitably have been discarded. This, and the related view expressed by Quintilian, that Terence would have done better to confine himself to 'trimetri' (*Inst.* 10. 1. 99), would certainly have seemed odd to Terence himself, and even odder to his audiences. It is certainly true that Terence will write exchanges and passages which

will only scan 'on paper' and which in performance would involve loss of rhythmical movement or at least seriously strain the regular dynamics of iambo-trochaic rhythm; Plautus sometimes does this too, but Terence goes further in deliberately sounding 'prosaic'. But that is only one side of the matter. On other occasions Terence will actively exploit his verse as verse, and relate it to dramatic meaning. Examples of both techniques may briefly be cited from his last play, the *Adelphoe*.

After the weighty, end-stopped verse of Turpio's prologue, Micio is introduced from his house in a deliberately low-key, 'prosy' manner as follows:

> Storạx! non rẹdiit hạc noct(e) ạ cen(a) Ạeschinụs
> neque quịsquam sẹruolọrum qu(i) ạduors(um) ịerạnt...

Modern editors, including the most recent, acquiesce in the view (which goes back to Donatus) that Micio shouts back into his house at this point. But that is absurd and ridiculous. It is obvious if you think about it that Terence intends Micio to come on stage specifically to look anxiously up and down the street, to call out enquiringly 'Storax', to pause for a reply, and then to explain *non rediit...*, from which we infer that Storax is one of the *seruoli* sent to escort the young man, of whom, as it will turn out, Parmeno is one. Commentators, from not thinking as producers, have allowed themselves to be misled by the well-known linking-convention by which a character may enter saying something to someone still in the house. Terence starts his play rather boldly; in prose, as it were, before sliding into iambic cadences in an unobtrusive manner. For in this passage he does not specially wish to insist on his verse-form as a verse-form, but to use it as an analogue for prose. On the other hand, when towards the end of the play Demea discovers that his paragon Ctesipho has all the while been taking part in the decadent carousal going on in Micio's house, the language and rhythms of his expostulations ape tragic style; and Micio counters his brother's highly rhetorical and weighty (792–3)

> ẹcc(um) adest,
> communis corruptela nostrum liberum!

(meaning Micio of course (792–3)), with the lightweight and ungainly and deliberately prosaic

> tandẹm reprim(e) ịracụndi(am) ạtqu(e) ad tẹ redị.

The dramatist's intention is clearly to deflate the magniloquence of Demea with Micio's common sense. Earlier in the play, in the scene where Syrus hoodwinks Demea about Ctesipho and his whereabouts, the poet exploits three kinds of metrical resource already familiar from our consideration of Plautus: Syrus is trying to get rid of the young Ctesipho, who is lingering on the doorstep at just the wrong moment, so that Father will not see him; and in exasperation he says (553)

> ạge, tamẹn eg(o) hunc ạmouẹbo,

this in a stage whisper which is Demea's cue,

> sẹd eccum scẹleratụm Syrụm,

a half-line splendidly venomous because of the *s*-sounds. The succession of five rushed, whispered light syllables at the beginning of the line together with the mild syncopation or irregularity in the formation of the second *arsis* lends emphasis to *tamen*, an effect technically similar to what we have heard in Plautus, *Trin.* 605 and *Aul.* 208. This expresses Syrus' agitation effectively. Next, pretending not to have noticed the Signore's presence, Syrus now delivers, entirely for the Signore's benefit, the heavy and whiningly plangent line

nọn hercl(e) hịc qui uọlt durạre quịsquam sị sic fịt potẹst

and immediately switching to a tone of petulance adds

scịr(e) equidẹm uolọ quot mịhi sint dọmini,[13]

which with its three resolutions makes a strong contrast with the previous line; the
rest of 555 *qu(ae) haec est miseria?* must be given not to Syrus but to Demea,[14] going
with his other two questions *quid ille gannit? quid uolt?* in 556: the volatile peasant
rhetorician is noticeably characterized by triadic utterance, unlike his more analytical
and less emotional brother.

We end with an example of strongly contrasted lines in Plautus. At *Poenulus* 894 f.
important information is passed by one slave to another in a scene which in general
is very rapid in its metrical style:

quị(a) Adelphạsium quạm erus dẹamat tụos ingẹnuast: :quọmodọ?
: :ẹodem quọ sorọr illịus ạlter(a) Ạnterạstilịs...

As Leo observes *ad loc.*, 'non sine consilio v. 894 omnes praeter septimam arsin solutae
sunt, v. 895 nulla', and one may add that the realization of the *theses* in the two lines
is also contrasted – mostly heavy in 894, mostly light in 895. English and German
readers tend to think that because the Roman dramatists admitted heavy or light theses
they and their audiences regarded them as metrically indifferent: it is difficult for us
to avoid the idea that an *arsis* must be accompanied by a crashing ictus which obscures
the quantitative character of the *thesis*. We should not subconsciously attribute this
to the Romans; they could tell the difference between light and heavy syllables *in thesi*.
And if that is true, they could tell the difference between a string of either. For example,
at *Asin.* 864 f. we have one of those moments of enlightenment where a *matrona* realizes
what her husband has really been up to:

họcc(e) ecạstor ẹst quod ịll(e) it ạd cenạm cotịdiẹ:
ạit ses(e) ịr(e) ad Ạrchidẹmum, Chạereạm, Chaerẹstratụm,
Clịniạm, Chremẹm, Cratịnum, Dịniạm, Demọsthenẹm...

We begin with a slow phrase with heavy *theses* requiring slow delivery (*hocc...est*),
and the pace is held back in the latter part of the line too: *ĭt ạd cēnạm* gives a 'limping'
rhythm at a place where the norm is represented by *Chāerĕām* and *Dīnĭām* in the next
two lines. How different in effect are the beginnings of 864 and 865 from e.g. Ter. *Ad.*
553 and Plautus *Aul.* 208 (see above, pp. 132, 131)! There is a steady quickening of
the pace in Artemona's enumeration of the alphabetic directory of friends; and this
is marked not by resolutions, but simply by the preponderance of light theses.

Aulus Gellius in a well-known passage quotes from Varro what passed as Plautus'
epitaph, and everyone knows the allusion in it to Plautus' *numeri innumeri*.[15] This is
usually taken exclusively to mean the dramatist's polymetric songs. But what about
the rest? And, to come back to a point made at the beginning of this paper, we are
hardly in a position yet properly to analyse those songs. Surveying the work which
has been done on Plautine metric in the last fifty years, one must be struck by the
amount of effort which has gone into the *cantica*, with what little objective gain; and
it seems extraordinary how little attention has been given to the iambo-trochaic metres
with their myriad variety as an expressive medium.

University of St Andrews   A. S. GRATWICK
                                                              S. J. LIGHTLEY

[13] *Sic scandendum*, not...*uolo quọt mihị sint*...as Martin.
[14] So editors, following the MSS; but MS evidence on change of speaker is no evidence at
all.
[15] *N.A.* 1. 24. 3.