

THE VIRGO CALLIDA OF PLAUTUS, PERSA

Plautus' predilection for intrigue

That the theme of trickery and deception plays an important part in the comedies of Plautus is obvious.¹ Although by no means absent from the comedies of Menander and Terence, it is not nearly so prominent in them as in Plautus. One reason for this difference may be Plautus' choice of Greek models, but there are good grounds for believing that changes made by Plautus to his models also served to emphasize the theme. E. Fraenkel showed that Plautus elevated the scheming slave into a comic hero in a manner alien to Menander and Terence.² He identified as an important factor in this heroization of the slave certain features of style, notably the recurring use of military metaphors which equate the slave with a victorious general. He also showed that Plautus probably greatly expanded certain slave rôles, this expansion being most evident in elaborate polymetric monodies such as Chrysalus' Troy *canticum*, *Bacch.* 925ff. These stylistic effects and the increased bulk of the rôles give greater emphasis to the Plautine scheming slave and *ipso facto* to the element of intrigue in the plot. The omissions which naturally went together with Plautus' insertions could also distort the emphasis of the Greek play in favour of the element of intrigue; a probable example is the *Casina*, in which it is generally agreed that Plautus cut the original *anagnorisis* ending.³ Recent writers have stressed another aspect of Plautus' style which helps to give a particular prominence to the theme of intrigue in his plays, his liking for metatheatrical effects, which remind the spectators that they are watching a stage performance not real life; these effects are pervasive but particularly cluster around scenes of deception, emphasizing that the deception is in a special sense a performance, a play within a play. The implied comparison of the schemer with a poet/actor, of the intrigue with a play, is at one level another metaphor, but a particularly powerful one, since it directly touches the relationship between actors and audience.⁴

It is probable moreover that Plautus made other more specific changes to his models to emphasize the theme of deception. Fraenkel argued that Plautus was responsible for adding a third deception to the *Bacchides*, and that its Greek model, Menander's *Dis Exapaton*, contained only the two implied by its title.⁵ Fraenkel's theory has been much disputed and he himself came to doubt it.⁶ Recent writers

¹ cf. H. E. Wieand, *Deception in Plautus. A Study in the Technique of Roman Comedy* (Boston, 1920), G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton, 1952), pp. 151–75, A. Dieterle, *Die Strukturelemente der Intrige in der griechisch-römischen Komödie* (Amsterdam, 1980), G. Petrone, *Teatro antico e inganno: finzioni plautine* (Palermo, 1983). On Plautus' rich vocabulary to express the idea of deception see A. O. F. Lorenz, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus*, iv: *Pseudolus* (Berlin, 1876), pp. 47–9, B. Brotherton, *The Vocabulary of Intrigue in Roman Comedy* (Chicago, 1926).

² E. Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Philol. Untersuchungen 28, Berlin, 1922), *Elementi plautini in Plauto* (Florence, 1960), esp. ch. 8.

³ cf. 64–6, 1012–14, W. T. MacCary and M. M. Willcock, *Plautus, Casina* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 36f. with references, G. Chiarini, *La recita. Plauto, la farsa, la festa* (Bologna, 1979), p. 25.

⁴ M. Barchiesi, *Il Verri* 31 (1969), 113–30, Chiarini, op. cit. (n. 3), Petrone, op. cit. (n. 1), N. W. Slater, *Plautus in Performance* (Princeton, 1985), F. Muecke, *CA* 5 (1986), 216–29.

⁵ Fraenkel, *De media et nova comoedia quaestiones selectae* (Diss. Göttingen, 1912), pp. 100–4, *P. im P.*, pp. 61–72 = *El. Pl.*, pp. 57–67. ⁶ *El. Pl.*, p. 403.

however have argued powerfully that Fraenkel was right that the third deception, whereby an extra 200 *philippi* are extracted from Nicobulus (*Bacch.* 925–1075), is a Plautine addition, although wrong to suppose that it comes from a second Greek play; they point out that it is a doublet of the second deception, also based on a letter.⁷ The effect was substantially to prolong the deception of Nicobulus and to increase the achievement of Chrysalus. It is probable that Plautus inserted extra tricks into other plays also. It has been persuasively argued that in the *Pseudolus* he in a sense duplicated the original scheme of the Greek play, designed to enable Calidorus to obtain his *amica* from the *leno* Ballio, by the addition of a secondary scheme to extract twenty *minae* from Calidorus' father Simo, thus causing a number of inconsistencies but greatly enhancing the stature of the slave Pseudolus, notably in his triumphant monody 574–91 and in the farcical humiliation of Simo which forms the finale of Plautus' play.⁸ In the *Poenulus* too it seems probable that Plautus added a second trick; A. S. Gratwick has shown that the scheme introduced by Milphio in 1099–1103, whereby Hanno is to pretend that Adelphasium and Anterastilis are his daughters and bring a *liberalis causa* against the *leno* Lycus, could not work under Greek law.⁹ Again Lefèvre has made a strong case for supposing that Plautus invented the first of the two schemes of the *Miles Gloriosus*, that based on the twin-sister motif; this brings about the lengthy duping of Sceledrus and emphasizes both the cleverness of its originator Palaestrio, especially in the mime of 195ff., depicting the conception of the scheme, and the *malitia muliebris* (185–94) displayed by Philocomasium in its execution.¹⁰ The primary scheme of the *Miles Gloriosus*, designed to trick the soldier into releasing Philocomasium, must derive from the *Alazon* but has probably been expanded by Plautus, even if there is room for doubt about the nature of Plautus' changes; it seems likely that at least Milphidippa's contribution to the deception of the soldier in two four-speaker scenes, 1133–96 and 1215–74, should be ascribed to Plautus.¹¹ Substantial Plautine expansion is also

⁷ E. Lefèvre, *Hermes* 106 (1978), 518–38, A. Primmer, *Handlungsgliederung in Nea und Palliata* (öst. Ak. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl., Sitzungsber. 441, Vienna, 1984), pp. 49–52, 65–70, 84–8.

⁸ K. Gaiser, *ANRW* I 2 (1972), 1082, Lefèvre, *Hermes* 105 (1977), 451–3. Some of Plautus' additions had already been recognized by others; cf. Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, p. 62 = *El. Pl.*, p. 58, G. Jachmann, *Philologus* 88 (1933), 443–56 on 574–91, F. Klingner, *Hermes* 64 (1929), 110–39, G. Williams, *Hermes* 84 (1956), 424–46.

⁹ *Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, ed. P. E. Easterling and E. J. Kenney, ii (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 98–101. 'Die Duplizität der Intrige' of the *Poenulus* was the starting point for theories of 'contamination'; according to them it was the first trick which did not derive from the *Karchedonios* (cf. P. Langen, *Plautinische Studien* (Berliner Studien 5, Berlin, 1886), pp. 181–98).

¹⁰ *Hermes* 112 (1984), 32–7. The proponents of 'contamination' had already argued that the Sceledrus deception did not derive from the *Alazon*; cf. L. Schaaf, *Der Miles Gloriosus des Plautus und sein griechisches Original* (Studia et testimonia antiqua 18, Munich, 1977), pp. 22–119. Lefèvre's view that 185b–258 are a Plautine insertion is supported by the repeated phrases 182 *iube transire* ~ 255f. *iube...transire*, 185 *nisi quid aliud vis* ~ 259 *numquid aliud?* (cf. Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, pp. 111f. = *El. Pl.*, pp. 105f.). In all probability the *Alazon* did contain an encounter between Philocomasium and Pleusicles observed by Sceledrus. How did this take place? Lefèvre, art. cit. 46, suggests 'vielleicht durch Zuruf von Balkon zu Balkon', but I would not entirely rule out a hole in the wall, despite the objections that have been raised against this. That the miming of 195ff. is Plautus' invention has been widely recognized, e.g. by A. Thierfelder, *Gnomon* 11 (1935), 145, Williams, *Hermes* 86 (1958), 83, Schaaf, *Miles* 223f. On Philocomasium's *malitia* see Chiarini, *Recita* 41 n. 42.

¹¹ Gaiser in *Die römische Komödie: Plautus und Terenz*, ed. E. Lefèvre (Wege der Forschung 236, Darmstadt, 1973), p. 243, *ANRW* I 2 (1972), 1074, Lefèvre, *Hermes* 112 (1984), 37–41. Milphidippa's rôle in enticing the soldier into Periplectomenus' house (Schaaf, *Miles* 315) could have been performed by Palaestrio. Lefèvre argues persuasively that iv 2 also and the whole rôle

probable in the deception scene of the *Mostellaria*, as I have shown elsewhere;¹² in it various dramatic effects, not merely verbal ones, help to emphasize the ingenuity of the slave Tranio on the one hand and the gullibility of his dupes on the other. Again I argue elsewhere that in the *Poenulus* Plautus expanded the scenes depicting the deception of the *leno* Lycus and gave to the *advocati*, mute witnesses in the Greek play, an active speaking rôle in the deception.¹³ There are certain similarities between the scenes of the *Poenulus* and the deception scenes of *Persa* 543–752, in which the daughter of the parasite Saturio, dressed as an Arabian slave, helps to deceive the *leno* Dordalus. I wish now to argue that this is another case where Plautus has elaborated and expanded a deception scene by introducing as an extra active participant in the intrigue a character who had only a non-speaking rôle in the corresponding scenes of the Greek original.

Four-speaker scenes in the Persa deception

The scheme devised by Toxilus to deceive Dordalus is central to the plot of the *Persa*. In the scheme Toxilus' accomplices are his fellow slave Sagaristio, Saturio and Saturio's daughter. Sagaristio, disguised as a Persian and bearing a letter purporting to come from Toxilus' master Timarchides, abroad on a business trip to Persia, persuades Dordalus to purchase the girl as an Arabian slave; Saturio then appears to reclaim his daughter and Dordalus loses his money. The rôle played by Saturio's daughter in impersonating an Arabian is essential to the scheme and there is no reason to doubt that it derives from the Greek original of the *Persa*. There are substantial grounds however for believing that Plautus has expanded the rôle. In the first place the fact that in 543–710 four speaking characters are simultaneously involved points to Plautine intervention. No extant scene of Menander has more than three and it seems probable that this was the norm for New Comedy.¹⁴ In the deception of Dordalus it was essential that Saturio's daughter should be present, but not that she should speak. It is true that 148–53 envisage her having a speaking rôle in the deception; but that may be a Plautine addition, preparing for later changes. It is quite conceivable that in the Greek play Sagaristio should have done all the necessary talking and that the girl should have remained silent; silence would be natural enough for a supposedly barbarian slave. In fact examination of the girl's speaking rôle in this section of the play reveals a number of reasons for attributing it to Plautus.

The interrogation (Pers. 591–661) a Plautine addition

The girl speaks most during her interrogation by Dordalus (615–57) and in lines preparing for and looking back to that interrogation (607f., 610, 674f.). There are several reasons however for regarding the whole passage 591–661, containing the of Milphidippa are Plautine additions. I am not convinced by the arguments of Gaiser and Lefèvre that Acroteleutium is Plautus' creation and that in the *Alazon* the rôle of Periplectomenus' 'wife' was played by Philocomasium (Gaiser) or her mother (Lefèvre), nor in general by their attempts to reconstruct the *Alazon*. If Plautus has altered his model to the extent that they suppose, which is indeed possible, our chances of reconstructing the Greek play are not good. Lefèvre does, however, make a good case for supposing III 3, in which the *mala meretrix* is rehearsed in her rôle in the scheme, largely Plautine.

¹² *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 6–26.

¹³ 'Plautus' choruses' (*Rhein. Mus.* forthcoming).

¹⁴ Gaiser, *ANRW* I 2 (1972), 1037f., F. H. Sandbach in *Le monde grec – hommages à Claire Préaux*, ed. J. Bingen; G. Cambier and G. Nachtergaele (Brussels, 1975), pp. 197–204.

interrogation and its preparation, as a Plautine addition. First, it forms a self-contained, dispensable and unrealistic episode in the negotiations for the girl's sale. It was not necessary for Dordalus to interrogate the girl and it does not at first occur to him to do so. He has already reached the point of asking Sagaristio to name his price (586–90) when Toxilus suddenly stops him and, as an afterthought, suggests the interrogation, unnecessarily putting at risk the success of his scheme; after the interrogation discussion of the price is resumed (660 *vin vendere*...? and 661 *qui datur*... *indica* repeating 587 *vin*... *vendere*? and 590 *indica*... *daturus qui sis*).¹⁵

Secondly, the interrogation implies a different version of Toxilus' fiction from that which is assumed elsewhere in the play.¹⁶ The purpose of asking after the girl's parentage (596) is to persuade Dordalus that she will be a particularly profitable purchase, because she is well-born and will be ransomed (645, 651–5). That is why Toxilus ensures that the interrogation is conducted out of Sagaristio's hearing (609, 611, 659, 711); Dordalus must think he is learning information which enhances the girl's value and which is unknown to the vendor. It is suggested, though not explicitly stated, that the girl is a prisoner-of-war (cf. 644), an idea which is encouraged by the reference in 506–9 to a Persian campaign in Arabia, although the *future* sale of booty from Chrysopolis there mentioned could not have included this girl (cf. 520–2). Elsewhere however the girl is regularly described as 'stolen' (150, 380 *surrecta*, 522, 545, 715 *furtiva*). From the beginning it is stressed that she comes from a remote place (151 *longe ab Athenis*, 522 *abductam ex Arabia penitissuma*); and the point of this detail, as Toxilus makes clear in 541f., is that Dordalus need have no fear of anyone coming *ex Arabia penitissuma* to claim the girl.¹⁷ It seems clear that according to the original version of Toxilus' scheme Dordalus was to buy the girl not in the expectation that she would be ransomed but for use in his profession; that is the profitable use which Toxilus promises him in 564–8¹⁸ and the frequent emphasis on the girl's attractive appearance is in keeping with that (130, 521, 546–8, 564). The ransom motif can then be regarded as a Plautine addition, perhaps also 506–9.¹⁹

Thirdly, the hypothesis of Plautine additions provides an explanation of the much discussed inconsistencies in the characterization of Saturio's daughter.²⁰ In this scene the girl performs her play-acting rôle with relish and great skill. She exudes confidence and uses military metaphors in a manner typical of Plautine scheming slaves: 607f. *liquidumst auspiciu, tace. curabo ut praedati pulchre ad castra convortamini*,²¹ 610 *taceas, curabo ut voles*. She shows an ingenuity in answering or evading Dordalus' questions which draws the admiration of Toxilus in aside comments: 622f. *ah, di istam perdant! ita catast et callida, ut sapiens habet cor, quam dicit quod opust!*, 635

¹⁵ Chiarini, *Recita* 164.

¹⁶ cf. E. Woytek, *T. Maccius Plautus Persa* (öst. Ak. Wiss., phil.-hist. Kl., Sitzungsber. 385, Vienna, 1982) on 654. Woytek is willing to attribute the inconsistency to the Greek dramatist, although more inclined to believe that Plautus turned a *furtiva* into a *Kriegsgefangene* than vice versa.

¹⁷ Chiarini, *Recita* 142f.; cf. J. Partsch, *Hermes* 45 (1910), 604–11 on the Greek law underlying 715–18.

¹⁸ cf. 632f., 656. If the nucleus of the idea is to be attributed to the Greek dramatist, Plautus is probably responsible for developing it in 569–73 (see below, p. 397) and 632f. (comment on the girl's preceding remark).

¹⁹ Chiarini, *Recita* 138–41, argues plausibly that the conception of the Orient which lies behind this and other geographical references in the *Persa* is Roman rather than Greek. See Woytek, *Persa*, pp. 12–17, on inferences drawn from 506–9 for the date of the Greek original by Wilamowitz and others.

²⁰ cf. Woytek, *Persa*, pp. 47–53.

²¹ cf. Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, p. 239 n. 1 = *El. Pl.*, p. 231 n. 1.

lepide lusit, 639 *ita me di bene ament, sapienter!* This was foreshadowed by her father's description of her to Toxilus in 153 *ter tanto peior ipsa est quam illam tu esse vis*. Yet on her first appearance in 329–99 she displayed a very different attitude, accepting only with great reluctance the rôle forced on her by her father and arguing that it would damage her reputation and prospects of marriage. Chiarini supposes that in 329–99 the girl is already play-acting, putting on the rôle of virtuous girl, and he sees her character as consistent in a metatheatrical sense, a consummate actress throughout.²² Chiarini admits that the girl's behaviour is not explicable psychologically and hardly to be attributed to a dramatist of the Greek New Comedy. He supposes that the corresponding character in Plautus' Greek model was not a free, nubile girl but a hetaera or music-girl to whom intrigue would come naturally; the confrontation between father and daughter on the other hand he believes to be a Plautine insertion. According to Chiarini then the girl's skill in deception derives from the Greek original (though further emphasized by Plautus), her display of (simulated) modesty is a Plautine addition. I believe this is almost the reverse of the truth. The arguments which Chiarini adduces in support of his hypothesis are not valid. He is probably right that in the Greek play *Saturio* was not a parasite but a *συκοφάντης*; there is no parallel for a parasite with a daughter and the greed which Plautus so much emphasizes is irrelevant to *Saturio*'s essential rôle in the plot, which called for a schemer.²³ There seems no reason however to deny the possibility that in the Greek play the young daughter of a poor and disreputable *συκοφάντης* took part, reluctantly, in the intrigue. The repetition of *sequere hac* in 332 and 399 is perfectly natural and falls far short of proving that the intervening passage is a Plautine insertion. Nor is Chiarini's hypothesis itself plausible. Is it likely that Plautus, having inherited from his Greek model a *mala meretrix*, should have invented a scene in which she gives a display of simulated modesty and reluctance so lifelike as to be indistinguishable from the real thing? It is hard to believe that an audience watching this scene would see the girl as play-acting; there is no indication within the scene that her reluctance is not genuine, nothing to suggest to the spectators that *Saturio*'s assertion in 153 was more than an idle boast, if they remembered it at all. If Plautus had intended here to make a point of the girl's histrionic skill, he would surely have given some clues as to his intention, as he does clearly in the interrogation scene. Rather, as most critics have seen, in this scene the girl is a foil to the cynicism of her father and not herself a comic figure.²⁴ It seems much more likely that Plautus here

²² *RCCM* 18 (1976), 235–41, *Recita* 87–114.

²³ cf. 'Plautus' parasites and the *Atellana*' (forthcoming); Woytek, *Persa* pp. 53–6.

²⁴ Comparisons with a tragic *agon* have justly been made; cf. J. Blänsdorf, *Archaische Gedankengänge in den Komödien des Plautus* (Hermes Einzelschr. 20, Wiesbaden, 1967), p. 13; Woytek, *Persa*, pp. 50f. E. Rawson in *Homo viator: Classical Essays for John Bramble*, ed. M. Whitby, P. Hardie and M. Whitby (Bristol, 1985), p. 84, rightly arguing that Roman audiences liked to listen to moralizing, serious and comic, seems to me not to distinguish sufficiently between the more serious tone of this scene and the girl's comic sententiousness in 550–60. It is true that in 379–81, after she has promised to obey her father's orders, she uses words which foreshadow her later play-acting rôle (cf. Chiarini, *Recita* 110, Petrone, *Teatro ant. e ing.*, p. 39). In 380 the phrase *docte calleo* does indeed suggest a Plautine *callida* (cf. 305, *Poen.* 578–81). In its context, however, it would hardly lead the audience to suppose that the girl's reluctance to adopt this rôle was itself faked; she goes on to state that she is being forced to *become a mala* (382). Other phrases too are typical of the 'rehearsal' which in several plays precedes a deception scene and the reference to the girl's *parentes* prepares for the interrogation episode. In writing these lines (as also 148–53), Plautus no doubt had the later scene in mind; and I suspect that they are entirely a Plautine addition (~ 333f.). Plautine expansion has been suggested as the explanation of the girl's *pietas* in III 1 by H. W. Prescott, *CP* 11 (1916), 135, who sees her as 'a

preserves traits of the girl's character from the Greek play but elsewhere, with typical disregard for consistency of characterization, transformed her into a *callida*. In the interrogation scene she displays the *malitia* characteristic of a scheming *meretrix* such as Acroteleutium and Milphidippa in the *Miles Gloriosus* or Phronesium in the *Truculentus*.²⁵ Such a transformation can very plausibly be attributed to Plautus; there is little doubt that he similarly transformed Adelphasium and Anterastilis into experienced *meretrices* in the second scene of the *Poenulus*.²⁶

Fourthly, the tendency of the interrogation episode is to prolong the deception scene and enhance its comic effect. It emphasizes the daring of Toxilus and cleverness of the girl on the one hand and the gullibility of Dordalus on the other. As we have seen, this tendency is thoroughly Plautine. The same tendency marks a nearby passage which is probably a Plautine insertion, 694–709a; there Sagaristio's invention of a twin brother (anticipating 830f.) and of a grotesque 'Persian' name unrealistically exaggerates Dordalus' gullibility.²⁷ Certain features of the interrogation episode can be paralleled from other Plautine deception scenes. One prominent feature is the repeated use of *double entendre*; true statements are made about the girl's real situation which Dordalus understands as referring to her fictitious situation (616–18, 628, 636, 644f., 648–50, 653f.). Comparable is the repeated *double entendre* of *Most.* 818–40, which is certainly in part and probably entirely Plautine invention.²⁸ In both cases the audience is in collusion with the schemer(s), being privy to second meanings hidden from the victim(s); the effect is to emphasize how completely the victims are deceived. Another feature of the interrogation episode has a close parallel in the deception scene of the *Poenulus*; as the girl's performance is watched by Sagaristio in the background making admiring aside comments on her cleverness (622f., 635, 639), so the performance of the *advocati* evokes very similar admiring comments from Collybiscus watching in the background: *Poen.* 603 *eu edepol mortalis malos!*, 648 *canes compellunt in plagas lepide lupum*, 653f. *mortalis malos! ut ingrediuntur docte in sycophantiam!*, 666 *nimi' lepide de latrone, de Sparta optume*.²⁹ In both cases the comments of a spectator on stage help to characterize the deception as a play within

staid Roman virgin', and H. Marti, *Untersuchungen zur dramatischen Technik bei Plautus und Terenz* (Diss, Zurich, Winterthur, 1959), p. 69 n. 15; that Plautus may have added something I would not deny, although I do not see anything specifically Roman here, but I do not find it credible that Plautus should have transformed a *mala* into a *bona*.

²⁵ cf. *Truc.* 451–73, Chiarini, *Recita* 41.

²⁶ *BICS* 35 (1988), 101–10, Gaiser, *ANRW* 12 (1972), 1083, Gratwick, *Camb. Hist. Class. Lit.* ii.110. E. Fantham, *Pap. Liv. Lat. Sem.* 3 (1981), pp. 13f., shows that in *Epid.* 317f. and 372–5 Plautus depicts the lyre-girl as more *dolosa* than is justified by the following action, duplicating the play-acting motif originally attached to Acropolitis. I shall argue elsewhere that inconsistencies in the character of Philaenium in the *Asinaria* result from Plautus' expansion of her rôle.

²⁷ Woytek, *Persa* on 709, and p. 56 on Dordalus' character in general.

²⁸ *Phoenix* 39 (1985), 24f. No doubt Plautus learnt the device from Greek comedy (cf. *Ter. Eun.* 473, 476–8, *Eur. Hel.* 1288ff., 1405ff.), but the important point is that he was capable of using it independently. Repeated use of a motif is characteristic of Plautus. So he likes to duplicate the originally Greek meeting-formula 'Is it x? It is.' (*BICS* 20 [1973], 98); and he multiplies the traditional thieving-cook motif (*CA* 4 [1985], 88, *CQ* 35 [1985], 411–16). Different are cases where a schemer exploits the suspicion of his dupe to deceive him by telling the truth, e.g. *Plaut. Bacch.* 699–701 (cf. Primmer, *Handlungsgl.* pp. 51f.). Different again are cases where the audience's superior knowledge enables it to perceive comic irony when a character unintentionally speaks the truth, e.g. *Plaut. Capt.* 310.

²⁹ cf. the praise for a successfully completed performance in *Poen.* 683 *bonam dedistis mihi operam* ~ *Per.* 673f. *edepol dedisti, virgo, operam adlaudabilem, probam et sapientem et sobriam* ~ *M.G.* 591 *nimiam festivam mulier operam praehibuit*.

a play. As already noted, this metatheatrical effect is characteristic of Plautus.³⁰ Moreover there are other reasons for supposing the speaking rôle of the *advocati* to be Plautus' invention;³¹ they thus provide support for the hypothesis that the speaking rôle of Saturio's daughter is also Plautus' invention.

The eavesdropping episode (Pers. 548–74) created by Plautine expansion

The girl also speaks several times at the beginning of the scene. As she enters in conversation with Sagaristio, Toxilus and Dordalus listen to and comment on their conversation. We have here an eavesdropping scene, brought about because Toxilus and Dordalus deliberately stand back and observe the new entrants instead of at once accosting them: 548 *taciti contemblemus formam*.³² The end of the eavesdropping is clearly marked by the move of Toxilus and Dordalus towards the girl in 575. There are several reasons for believing that Plautine expansion has created this eavesdropping scene, including the utterances of the girl. First, the conversation between Sagaristio and the girl does not convey any information to the eavesdroppers but serves merely to prompt their aside comments. In this respect this eavesdropping scene resembles others which are probably Plautine creations, *Poen.* 210–329 and *Pseud.* 133–242.³³ Secondly, the length of the delay between Toxilus' announcement of the approach of Sagaristio and the girl (543) and the moment when he first addresses Sagaristio (576) is unrealistic. In 561–75 the aside dialogue of Toxilus and Dordalus completely takes over and leaves Sagaristio and the girl unaccountably silent and unoccupied; the convention of the aside is here strained in a way that is characteristic of Plautus but not of Menander or Terence.³⁴ Thirdly, there are signs of Plautine authorship in many details of the passage. Sagaristio's opening reference to the prosperous appearance of Athens (549, 553) has parallels in the entrance lines of other travellers in New Comedy;³⁵ it may derive from the entrance lines of his counterpart in the Greek original. The sententious remarks of the girl which follow, however, are irrelevant to the plot, play on words (550 *speciem/perspexi*, 553f. *muro/morati*) and lead up to a typically Plautine catalogue (555–8); their primary dramatic purpose is clearly to prompt the eavesdroppers' comments, culminating in a joke at the expense of the *peiurus leno* (562).³⁶ The girl's sententious remarks characterize her as *docta, sapiens* (551f., 563). Such qualities in a girl are not of obvious utility to a *leno*; and elsewhere it is the advantages of the girl's *species, facies, forma* that are, more naturally, emphasized (546–8; cf. 564 *contemplo*).³⁷ The emphasis here on the girl's *sapientia* clearly prepares for her rôle in the following scene (cf. 623 *sapiens*, 639 *sapienter*); Toxilus' admiring interjection (557 *eugae!*) resembles

³⁰ cf. Slater, *Plautus*, p. 49 'What can be the dramatic motivation for Toxilus to break off a line of action leading to the conclusion he desires? Only this – his pride as a playwright. Whatever the risks, he cannot forgo the pleasure of manipulating Dordalus and the girl through their scene'.

³¹ art. cit. (n. 13).

³² Woytek, *Persa* ad loc., Slater, *Plautus*, p. 48.

³³ *BICS* 35 (1988), 105–8, Fraenkel, *P. im P.* pp. 142–50 = *El. Pl.*, pp. 134–42; cf. Duckworth, *N.R.C.*, pp. 113f., Slater, *Plautus*, pp. 162–5.

³⁴ cf. Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, pp. 212–20 = *El. Pl.*, pp. 203–11.

³⁵ cf. *Stich.* 649, A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: a Commentary* (Oxford, 1973) on *Sam.* 101.

³⁶ Chiarini, *Recita* 229f., draws attention to the fact that the catalogue of civic vices would have a particular resonance for Plautus' Roman audience; cf. Rawson, loc. cit. (n. 24) 'of a political and therefore unsuitably masculine cast'.

³⁷ cf. 130 *forma lepida et liberali*, 521. The connection between *forma virginis* and *quaestus meretricius* is obvious enough, but a particularly good parallel is provided by *Rud.* 51–6.

his later aside comments. We have seen reason to believe that her characterization as a *callida* and active participation in the deception of Dordalus are Plautine; it follows that these lines are probably also. In the second part of the passage, 564–74, in which Toxilus depicts with graphic detail the benefits likely to accrue to the *leno* from purchasing the girl, the repetition 563 *eme hanc* ~ 574 *hanc eme* is a formal indication of Plautine expansion. The final lines, absurdly playing with repeated *ferreus* and culminating with an allusion to *crassas compedis* and an exchange of curses, are surely Plautine.³⁸ Since the *exclusus amator* motif introduced in 564f. prepares for the joking with *ferreus*, it is likely that it too is Plautine; so far from being proof of the Greek origin of the passage, as F. Leo thought,³⁹ this is just the sort of Greek motif that Plautus may well have multiplied in order to emphasize the Greekness of Dordalus' milieu.⁴⁰ 564f. are strictly relevant to the plot and may derive from the Greek play, providing Plautus with his starting point; it seems probable that most, at least, of the rest of the passage is Plautine. The whole eavesdropping episode is typical of Plautus in that it delays the progress of the plot and flouts realism for the sake of momentary comic effects. There is no difficulty in believing that Plautus created it to replace a brief entrance monologue by Sagaristio leading directly into a dialogue with Toxilus and Dordalus. We cannot hope to know exactly what was in the Greek text here but it seems likely that the Greek counterparts of Toxilus and Dordalus commented on the girl's attractive appearance as she approached and that Plautus preserved something of these comments (546–8, 564).

Signs of Plautine changes to the end of the deception

The argument so far points to the conclusion that the whole speaking rôle of the girl in the deception scene is Plautus' invention and that in the Greek play, though present, she was mute. In Plautus she remains on stage and takes part in the dialogue for several further scenes until 752. There are again grounds for attributing to Plautus her speaking rôle and in some scenes her presence on stage. Until Dordalus hands over the money the girl will naturally remain with Sagaristio. Her presence on stage in the Greek play can be assumed until the exit of Sagaristio at 710. In this section she speaks only in 674f., lines which refer back to the interrogation episode and can confidently be attributed to Plautus. Her silence in the rest of the passage accords well with the hypothesis that in the Greek play she was played by a mute extra. After the departure of Sagaristio we should expect Dordalus to take his new acquisition into his house.⁴¹ In fact he does not, although he himself goes in at 723, after exchanging a few words with Toxilus. Instead the girl remains on stage and is present for the scene in which her father comes to confront Dordalus. The possibility has to be considered, however, that in the Greek play the girl was not on stage when Saturio arrived, and there are some small clues in the text to support this hypothesis. In Plautus she greets her father on his appearance (739) and confirms his identity (741). As a result Dordalus realizes at once that he has been duped and gives appropriate expression to his feelings: 740 *ei! Persa me pessum dedit*, 741–3 *hem, quid? pater? perii oppido! quid ego igitur cesso infelix lamentarier minas sexaginta?*, 744 *occuldi*. The *leno*'s cries of woe are amusing and they have a Plautine ring; the pun *Persa/pessum* is obviously Plautus' creation and Dordalus' lamentations recall those of other Plautine dupes,

³⁸ Chiarini, *Recita* 148f.; Woytek, *Persa* on 568f.

³⁹ *Plautinische Forschungen*² (Berlin, 1912), p. 155.

⁴⁰ His use of the thieving-cook motif is comparable; see above, n. 28.

⁴¹ Woytek, *Persa*, p. 34.

e.g. *M.G.* 1429ff. *ei mihi!* ..., *Most.* 1030ff. *ei mihi, disperii!* ..., *Poen.* 787ff. *nunc pol ego perii certo* Moreover there is a slight inconsistency between Dordalus' realization of the truth in these lines and the remainder of the scene. 745f. *DO. quid me in ius vocas?* *SAT. illi apud praetorem dicam* imply that Dordalus does not yet know why Saturio is taking him to court and, despite the use of Roman legal language,⁴² this may reflect the situation in the Greek play. It would be dramatically effective, in a different way, to present Dordalus as still at this stage unaware that he has been duped, and the Greek dramatist could have done that. It would not be surprising if Plautus inserted 739b–44 to underline the deception of the *leno*, anticipating the *canticum* of lamentation, also containing Plautine expansion,⁴³ uttered by Dordalus at his next entry in 777ff. I argue elsewhere that Plautus similarly introduced a premature outburst of lamentation by the victim of deception in *Poen.* 787–95, as part of some fairly drastic modification of the climax of the deception.⁴⁴ To reconstruct the corresponding scene of the Greek original of the *Persa* is impossible. For the present argument, however, it is sufficient to show that there are some grounds for supposing that Plautus has here tampered with his model, and that the presence of the girl in this scene is not essential (certainly not at the beginning – she could have been fetched later) and may not go back to the Greek play; her brief utterances in 724 and 752 are obviously dispensable. Moreover there is another peculiarity of Plautus' play which lends some support to the hypothesis that in the Greek play the girl was taken into the *leno*'s house at 723 and that Plautus kept her on stage for the following scenes. It was dramatically necessary for Dordalus to leave the stage at 723, in order that Toxilus might summon Saturio. The motivation of Dordalus' exit however, to give some unspecified orders to his slaves, is singularly threadbare, as has long since been observed.⁴⁵ If in the Greek play the *leno* took the girl in with him, that would have motivated his exit much more realistically. It is a plausible hypothesis that Plautus changed the original motivation of Dordalus' exit in order to keep the girl on stage; in *Pseud.* 171 *est quod domi dicere paene fui oblitus* the same motif is used to introduce a Plautine insertion.⁴⁶ The hypothesis is supported by the fact that 723 *adserua hanc* is a doublet of 672 *serua istum* and that Toxilus' reply *salvast haec quidem*, shows the same *double entendre* that was such a feature of the interrogation episode.⁴⁷ Finally, in 683–730 there are four speaking characters on stage, although not more than three speak in any one scene; at least four actors would therefore be required. In the extant corpus of Menander there is no scene which requires more than three speaking actors, and it seems likely that Menander, at least, was bound by a three-actor rule and not merely a three-speaker rule. That New Comedy never used more than three actors cannot be proved, but breaches of the three-actor rule in *palliatae* are sometimes demonstrably due to changes by the Latin adapter and always arouse a suspicion of change.⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

To sum up, there are abundant grounds for believing that the speaking rôle of the girl in the deception scenes of the *Persa* was wholly created by Plautus, who converted a reluctant and silent *virgo* into a *callida*. He thus created a new comic character,

⁴² 747–9, alluding to *antestatio*, are clearly a Plautine addition; cf. Woytek, *Persa* on 747.

⁴³ Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, p. 14 = *El. Pl.*, p. 13; L. Gestri, *SIFC* 17 (1940), 250–60.

⁴⁴ art. cit. (n. 13).

⁴⁵ Langen, *Pl. Stud.*, p. 180.

⁴⁶ Fraenkel, *P. im P.*, pp. 144–50 = *El. Pl.*, pp. 136–42.

⁴⁷ cf. Woytek, *Persa* on 722f.

⁴⁸ See references in n. 14.

another example of the type of the scheming girl, and enhanced the fun derived from the *ludificatio* of the *leno*. There are also indications that Plautus has modified the end of the deception, although the exact nature of his changes is less clear; it seems probable that he altered the staging at 723 to keep the girl on stage for the arrival of Saturio. Such changes attest a talent for dramatic invention greater than Fraenkel was willing to credit to Plautus, but still within the basic framework of the Greek plot.

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