

times it marks a change of speaker;⁹ eight times the words begin a new sentence, and in this case always occur at the end of the line.¹⁰ The feminine expression occurs four times; once it marks a change of speaker (*Mer.* 770); three times it begins a new sentence (*Am.* 1057; *Mer.* 681, 701). All four examples occur at line-end.¹¹ Terence has six examples of the masculine form and two of the feminine.

Four times a new speaker is marked;¹² four times a new sentence.¹³ Again, in the latter case the words always appear at line-end.

In sum, the expressions *ei mihi* and its extended forms, in both Plautus and Terence, always either mark a new speaker, or are placed at the end of the line and mark a new sentence.¹⁴

Penn State University

ALLAN KERSHAW

⁹ *Am.* 726; *Aul.* 200; *Capt.* 945; *Cas.* 661; *Epid.* 50; *Mer.* 217, 759; *Mil.* 180, 1433; *Mos.* 265, 549; *Tru.* 794.

¹⁰ *Cas.* 574, 848; *ante ei pers. spat. A*; *Mer.* 181, 661, 792; *Poen.* 1379: *ante vae pers. spat. AB*; *Trin.* 907; *Truc.* 342.

¹¹ To these should be added *vae miserae mi* (*Mer.* 708); this unusual form of the exclamation, placed mid-line, marks a new speaker. Terence has the form *vae misero mi* (*Hau.* 250) which also, mid-line, marks a new speaker.

¹² *Ad.* 327; *An.* 302; *Hau.* 234; *Hec.* 605.

¹³ *An.* 743; *Hau.* 917; *Ad.* 301, 383.

¹⁴ Or, if used absolutely as (e.g.) *Cas.* 848, *Trin.* 907, the equivalent of a sentence; cf. on *Hec.* 366 (n. 8 above). I thank the anonymous referee of helpful criticisms and suggestions.

INCEST AND RIDICULE IN THE *POENULUS* OF PLAUTUS

Readers of Plautus' *Poenulus* are struck by the generally 'sympathetic' portrayal of the title character Hanno, a portrayal somewhat surprising to us since the play was produced shortly after the Second Punic War.¹ Contrary to what we might expect, Hanno the Carthaginian is neither villain nor scapegoat, and he even exhibits the Roman virtue of *pietas*.² However, Hanno's portrayal is not wholly positive, for Plautus delineates his character principally by endowing him with the negative stereotypes of Punic physiognomy, dress, speech, and behaviour familiar to his Roman audience.³ Hanno's Punic ethnicity is not merely an incidental matter of fact, as it is with his relative Agorastocles, but an essential part of his characterization that serves to isolate him from all the other characters of the *palliata*. While some of Hanno's vices—deceit, licentiousness, and effeminacy—are not exclusive to Carthaginians and are shared by other Greek characters in the *palliata*, there is one vice peculiar to Hanno. In this paper I argue that Plautus ridicules Hanno through a

¹ For criteria for dating, see K. Schutter, *Quibus annis Comoediae Plautinae primum actum sunt quaeritur* (Groningen, 1952), pp. 119–25. For 'sympathetic', see (e.g.) A. S. Gratwick, *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* ii (Cambridge, 1982), p. 94; W. V. Harris, *Cambridge Ancient History*² viii (Cambridge, 1989), p. 154.

² Note the specific mention of *pietas* at 1137, 1190, 1255, 1277; see also J. A. Hanson, 'Plautus as a Sourcebook for Roman Religion', *TAPA* 90 (1959), 48–101, at p. 92.

³ Punic stature mocked at 1309–10, odour at 1313–14, dress at 975–7, 1008, 1121, 1298, 1303; speech parodied at 990–1028; deceit noted at 111–13, 1032–4, 1106–10, 1124–6, licentiousness at 106–8, 1303, effeminacy at 1311. For prevalent stereotypes of Carthaginians, see E. Burck, 'Das Bild der Karthager in der römischen Literatur', *Rom und Karthago*, ed. J. Vogt (Leipzig, 1943), 297–345; M. Dubuisson, 'L'image du Carthaginois dans la littérature latine', *Studia Phoenicia* 2 (1983), 159–67; K. Christ, 'Zum Beurteilung Hannibals', *Historia* 17 (1968), 461–95.

recurrent insinuation of incest. The insinuation of incest has not, to my knowledge, been noted previously, but our text does imply it in three conspicuous places.

In our very first introduction to Hanno, the speaker of the prologue signals his overcharged sexual appetite (104–11):

sed pater illarum Poenus postquam eas perdidit
mari terraque usque quaque quaeritat.
ubi quamque in urbem est ingressus, ilico
omnis meretrices, ubi quisque habitant, invenit;
dat aurum, ducit noctem, rogitat postibi
unde sit, quoiatis, captane an surrepta sit,
quo genere gnata, qui parentes fuerint.
ita docte atque astu filias quaerit suas.⁴

Hanno seeks his lost daughters everywhere (104–5). Adopting a deceitful and prurient method for his search, he immediately (*ilico*) seeks out all (*omnis*) the prostitutes upon arrival in a town. Thereupon he pays for their professional favours (*dat aurum*), spends the night having sex with them (*ducit noctem*),⁵ and only afterwards asks about their parentage (*rogitat postibi*). Thus it is only after having intercourse that he inquires whether the girls could be his daughters (109–10). Whether Hanno merely risks incest or actively seeks it, the audience's first piece of information about him reveals that he is crafty (*docte atque astu*) and so lecherous as to countenance sleeping with his daughters.

The audience must wait over 1200 lines to reach the emotional climax of the play: Hanno's discovery of his daughters. When Hanno arrives on stage he learns, by a fortuitous meeting with Agorastocles, that his daughters are near at hand; thus, he need no longer follow his normal method of searching among courtesans. Yet when Hanno sees his daughters, he does not immediately hail and approach them as we might expect an elated father would do; rather, he approaches them as a customer soliciting prostitutes (1217–18):

Hanno: gaudio ero vobis. *Adelphasium*: at edepol nos voluptati tibi.
Hanno: libertatique. *Adelphasium*: istoc pretio tuas nos facile feceris.
(‘I’ll bring you joy.’ ‘But we’ll bring you pleasure.’
‘And freedom.’ ‘At that price you’ll easily have your way with us.’)

We have only the script, and thus cannot know how lewdly the Roman actors played this scene, but the sense allows us to envision flirtatious physical contact, and that would imply incest. The erotic tone of these lines has seemed out of place to some readers, including Leo, who athetized them in his influential edition; however, the lines should be retained, for Hanno behaves precisely as the prologue foretold, and he himself makes this explicit with an aside at 1223: ‘sed ut *astu* sum adgressus ad eas’.⁶ Furthermore, this exchange befits not only Hanno's character, but also his

⁴ All quotations of Plautus taken from Ernout's Budé edition.

⁵ Cf. *Truc*.49, where *noctes ducit* clearly means to spend the night with a *scortum*.

⁶ Gratwick correctly notes the fulfilment of the prologue and shows that these lines should be retained (*The Poenulus of Plautus and Its Attic Original*, unpublished Oxford D. Phil., 1969, pp. 212–13). The source for the suspicion of interpolation is the comment of Agorastocles at 1221–2: ‘ut pudice verba fecit, cogitate et commode! ut modeste orationem praebuit!’ Clearly, this remark is ironic, either a tongue-in-cheek joke or else the babbling typical of an *adulescens amans* blinded by love (cf. Gratwick). The jesting nature of Agorastocles' remark is apparent from 1219–20, where he scurrilously compares himself to Jupiter.

daughters', for the girls are prostitutes-in-training returning from a festival of *meretrices* at the temple of Venus. Plautus injects this long-anticipated encounter with tension, humour, and a hint of incest by making Hanno and his daughters persist in their practised roles of customer and prostitutes rather than adopt their new roles of father and daughters.

At last the daughters recognize Hanno and the joyful reunion ensues. As they celebrate, the soldier Antamoenides, paramour of the younger daughter, approaches in a rage. While both daughters hug Hanno in fear, Plautus leaves ambiguous the motivation for Hanno's embrace, for Antamoenides finds them entwined in such a promiscuous way that he mistakes Hanno for a rival lover: 'quid hoc est conduplicationis? quae haec est congemination?' (1297). We should note that Plautus uses *conduplicatio* elsewhere as the equivalent of making the beast with two backs.⁷ Apparently Hanno does not give a paternal hug, but an embrace passionate enough to generate a misunderstanding: '*Antamoenides*: tune hic amator audes esse, hallex viri, / aut contrectare quod mares homines amant?'⁸ Although we cannot know in exactly what manner the actors embraced, they necessarily hugged in such a way that the soldier, and thereby the audience, could have perceived them as lovers; Antamoenides' outburst suggests that Hanno's hands grasped what a father's should not.

We should not be shocked that Plautus insinuates Punic incest on the Roman stage. First, Plautus is generally not shy about sexual matters; in *Bacchides*, for example, sons and fathers share the same courtesans, and such action is permissible because it all takes place in the Greek East. Second, characters in New Comedy often come perilously close to committing incest. However, incest is never consummated, and approached only unwittingly.⁹ Thus, while it is not unusual to raise the spectre of incest in the *palliata*, it is highly unusual to have a character knowingly pursue it. Third, and most significantly, Hanno is not a typical character of New Comedy. Hanno is Punic, an alien to the Greek world depicted in the *palliata*, and his foreign habits are thus targets for ridicule.¹⁰

Hollins College, Virginia

GEORGE F. FRANKO

⁷ *Pseud.* 1259–61: 'nam ubi amans complexust amantem, ubi labra ad labella adiungit, / ubi alter alterum bilingui manifesto inter seprehendunt, / ubi mamma mammicula opprimitur, aut, si lubet, corpora conduplicant...'.
⁸ 1310–11; for *contrectare* ('fondle'), cf. *Poen.* 698; see also 1301, 1303.

⁹ E.g. in *Epidicus*, Stratippocles purchases his half-sister Telestis but then learns her identity (649: 'quid? ego modo amator sum huic frater factus?'); in *Curculio*, the soldier Therapontigonos unknowingly tries to purchase his lost sister Planesium. Note, however, Aristophanes *Wasps* 607–9, where Philokleon enjoys a French kiss from his daughter, who is fishing obols out of his mouth with her tongue. A tension stemming from the possibility of sleeping with long-lost members of the nuclear family is remote for us, and the chances of a father sleeping with his daughter exposed long ago may seem to us impossibly small; however, the recurrence of this theme in New Comedy may indicate a real tension for the Romans; see J. Boswell, *The Kindness of Strangers* (New York, 1988), pp. 95–137.

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