

XV. Alcmena and Amphitryon in Ancient and Modern Drama

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Our scene is Thebes; here fair Alcmena dwells:
 Her husband in his warfare thrives abroad,
 And by his chivalry his foes expels.
 He absent, now descends th' Olympian god,
 Enamour'd of Alcmena, and transhapes
 Himself into her husband: Ganimedee
 He makes assistant in his amorous rapes,
 Whilst he prefers the earth 'fore Juno's bed.
 Lend us your wonted patience, without scorn,
 To find how Hercules was got and born.

These lines, which introduced a section of Thomas Heywood's dramatic work *The Silver Age*, may serve as an appropriate preamble to a consideration of the many works for the theater, composed through the centuries, that deal with the story of Hercules' mother and foster father.¹

The story, as it eventually took shape in ancient Greece, went something like this.²

¹ Repeated references will be made in this paper to the following works: *CAF* = T. Kock, *Comicorum Atticorum Fragmenta*, 3 vols. (Leipzig 1880-1888). *TGF* = A. Nauck, *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*² (Leipzig 1889). *Jacobi* = H. Jacobi, *Amphitryon in Frankreich und Deutschland: Ein Beitrag zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte* (Zürich 1952). *Reinh.* = K. v. Reinhardstoettner, *Plautus: Spätere Bearbeitungen Plautinischer Lustspiele* (Leipzig 1886). *Stoessl* = F. Stoessl, "Amphitryon: Wachstum und Wandlung eines poetischen Stoffes," *Trivium* 2.93-117. *Reinh.* includes an admirably accurate and complete account down to the time of its publication of works both in dramatic and in other forms that show the influence of Plautus' *Amphitruo*. *Jacobi* and *Stoessl* deal only with some of the most significant works, but both of them are valuable for their literary judgments and for their analysis of the relationships of these works to one another. An anonymous review article based on *Reinh.* and entitled "Plautus and His Imitators," *Quarterly Rev.* 173 (No. 345, 1891) 37-69 may be mentioned for its general interest; pages 50-3 have to do specifically with the *Amphitruo*. R. Steinhoff, *Das Fortleben des Plautus auf der Bühne* (Programm, Blankenburg 1881) contains almost nothing that was not assimilated into the later, much more extensive study of *Reinh.*

² The details of this story, as of Greek myths generally (cf. Paus. 9.16.7), varied considerably in different accounts. There was lack of agreement, for example, regarding such matters as these: the parentage of both Alcmena and Amphitryon, the manner of Electryon's death at Amphitryon's hands (which is represented as deliberate rather than accidental in Hes. *Sc.* 79-82), the guise in which Zeus visited Alcmena (about

Alcmena, a granddaughter of Perseus and Andromeda and a princess of Mycenae, "who was supreme among women in beauty and stature" (Hes. *Sc.* 4-5), was betrothed to her cousin Amphitryon, a prince of Tiryns. He accidentally killed his prospective father-in-law Electryon and was forced to flee to Thebes, taking Alcmena with him. There he obtained an army from the king for the purpose of making an expedition against the Teleboans and Taphians, who lived on islands off the coast of Acarnania in western Greece and who had made a raid on Mycenae in which several of Alcmena's brothers had been killed. After defeating the Teleboans and killing their king in battle, Amphitryon returned in triumph to Thebes.

Meanwhile, Zeus, seized with a desire for the beautiful Alcmena and aware of her faithful devotion to her husband, had assumed the form of Amphitryon and had visited her on the very night when Amphitryon was getting back to Thebes after the war, a night which he caused to be miraculously prolonged. When the victorious general entered his home, he was astounded that his wife did not give him a more enthusiastic welcome. His bewilderment was intensified when he began to give an account of his successful campaign and was told by Alcmena that she had already heard the full details from his own lips. The seer Tiresias, when asked to resolve the mystery, revealed to Amphitryon the truth concerning his wife's unwitting liaison and foretold that she would give birth to twins, Heracles begotten of Zeus and Iphicles begotten of Amphitryon himself. The irate husband, however, was unwilling to forgive Alcmena and prepared to punish her by burning her to death on a pyre. But Zeus extinguished the flames with a sudden heavy shower, and this direct divine intervention brought about a reconciliation between husband and wife.

When the time for the birth of the twins was approaching, Hera, out of jealousy toward her human rival and exercising her powers as goddess of childbirth, prolonged Alcmena's pregnancy far beyond its natural period. She had a further motive for doing this, an oracle of Zeus which made it possible for her, by the timing of their respective births, to make sure that Heracles, her detested stepchild, would spend a good part of his life in subjection to his cousin Eurystheus. When Alcmena was finally delivered of her twin sons, the babe whose father was Zeus gave precocious evidence of his divine parentage by strangling monstrous serpents in his cradle, either immediately following his birth or, as some would have it, after a period of months.

When Heracles grew to manhood, Amphitryon lost his life, according to a widely accepted version of the story, while fighting with his foster

which Pindar possibly made conflicting statements; see below, note 17), the length of the miraculous night of his union with her, the temporal relationship of that night to the day of his birth, and the later fortunes of both spouses. For full presentation of the divergent details see W. H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, I.i (Leipzig 1884) 246-9 (Alkmene), 321-4 (Amphitryon). For a good account of the myth in its most widely accepted form, with the more important references, see P. Grimal, *Dictionnaire de la mythologie grecque et romaine* (Paris 1951) 26 (Alcmène), 33-4 (Amphitryon).

son against the Minyans of Orchomenus, though he was sometimes believed to have lived to a much more advanced age. After his death Alcmena went to Tiryns, where she was at the time of her divine son's apotheosis. Eurystheus then banished her and those of her grandchildren who were with her, and they, together with others of her descendants, took refuge in Athens. Eurystheus demanded of the Athenians that they drive away the family of Heracles. In the war that followed their refusal Eurystheus was killed and his head was brought to Alcmena, who gouged out his eyes with spindles. She then returned to Thebes, where she lived with Heracles' descendants until her death at an advanced old age. According to another story, after Amphitryon had been killed in battle fighting at Heracles' side, she married Rhadamanthys, the Cretan hero, who was living in exile in Boeotia. Others, however, said that she espoused Rhadamanthys in the Isles of the Blessed, where she was transported after her death by Zeus's orders. Still another story was that she was taken up to Olympus, where she shared in the divine honors of her son.

Few stories of classical mythology have furnished material for as large a number of dramatic works, both ancient and modern, as this. Just to list these works and to suggest something of the great variety of treatment that the story has received in them should be instructive. For some ancient themes are endowed, as Anatole France said ancient masterpieces are, with what he spoke of as *une immortalité mouvante*.³ A study of the way the tale of Alcmena and Amphitryon has been presented through the centuries will illustrate this. For one phase of it is truly "classical" in the sense that succeeding generations have found and still find it fresh and stimulating. It possesses an enduring vitality and a versatile adaptability to changing tastes and social attitudes. Here, then, are those plays and operas and other theater pieces based on this story concerning which I have any knowledge, listed as far as possible in chronological order.

(1) *Alcmena*, by Aeschylus, between 499 and 456 B.C. Our sole knowledge of the existence of this tragedy is derived from the fact that Hesychius quoted a word from it (*TGF* 6). It is not included in the list of Aeschylus' plays in the Medicean manuscript, and doubts have been expressed whether Aeschylus was actually the author of a tragedy bearing this title. The title as found in the text of Hesychius might have been a corruption of some similar name or there may have been a lacuna in his text, so that he was really quoting the

³ See M. Platnauer (ed.), *Fifty Years of Classical Scholarship* (Oxford 1954) xiii.

word from the *Alcmena* of Euripides or of some other author. On the other hand, it is an established fact that the list in the Medicean manuscript is not complete, and it is likely enough that Aeschylus took the plot for one of his plays from some phase of Alcmena's story and that he was the first playwright to do so. It has often been suggested, to be sure, that Epicharmus, whose mythological comedies were so highly regarded in antiquity, may have written one about Alcmena and Amphitryon; and if this were so, it would be doubtful whether his play or that of Aeschylus was the earlier in time of composition. But there is no evidence that Epicharmus did write such a comedy. He may have done so, but the fact that later writers of comedy employed this theme is not a compelling reason for believing that he did.

(2) *Amphitryon*, by Sophocles, between about 468 and 406 B.C. From this tragedy three fragments, of which two are single words, have been preserved (*TGF* 156). What phase of Amphitryon's career provided the plot there is no way of telling. It is likely, though by no means certain, that Accius' tragedy of the same name was based on this one by Sophocles. See (16) below.⁴

(3) *Alcmena*, by Ion of Chios, between about 451 and 422 B.C. From this tragedy three fragments, none of them consisting of more than two words, have been preserved (*TGF* 733). There is no clue as to what phase of the story it dealt with.

(4) *Alcmena*, by Euripides, between 455 and 406 B.C. From this tragedy a considerably larger number of quotations has been preserved than from those mentioned previously. Thirteen come from Stobaeus' *Florilegium* and two from scholia on Aristophanes' *Frogs*, and there are also two others about which there is no question; in addition, one verse not assigned to any particular play is probably to be attributed to this one, and two single words perhaps belonged here that were erroneously assigned elsewhere (*TGF* 386-9). Furthermore, there is good reason for believing that still another quotation preserved by Stobaeus came from this play, though the abbreviation of the title in the manuscripts makes possible its attribution to either the *Alcmaeon* or the *Alcmena* (*TGF* 381 fr. 67).

⁴ For suggestions concerning the theme of Sophocles' tragedy see F. G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien*, I (Bonn 1839) 371-2 and C. Robert, *Die griechische Heldensage* (Berlin 1921) 611.

In 1872 R. Engelmann⁵ combined evidence from two vase paintings in the British Museum, one of them bearing the signature of Python, and from Apollodorus (2.4.6–8) and Hyginus (29) to reconstruct the situation presented in this tragedy. Since that time it has been widely agreed that his reconstruction in its main outlines was a probable one. Briefly, it is this. Amphitryon, convinced of his wife's unfaithfulness, threatened her with death. She fled for refuge to an altar. He then piled wood around the altar and set it ablaze. But Zeus sent a violent rainstorm which extinguished the fire and, by revealing that Alcmena had received him under the delusion that he was Amphitryon, he effected a reconciliation between husband and wife. This reconstruction is supported by Plautus' reference to a particularly violent storm as an "Alcmena Euripidi" (*Rudens* 86–7).⁶

(5) *Heracidae*, by Euripides, about 430–427 B.C. This is the earliest surviving play in which Alcmena is one of the *dramatis personae*, and she appears only in the latter part of it. After the

⁵ In *Annali dell'Inst. Arch.* 44.5–18. See also his *Beiträge zu Euripides, I: Alcmene* (Programm, Berlin 1882).

⁶ For full discussion of what can be inferred concerning this play see L. Séchan, *Études sur la tragédie grecque dans ses rapports avec la céramique* (Paris 1926) 242–8; cf. A. Willem, *Melpomène: histoire de la tragédie grecque* (Liège and Paris 1932) 418 f. Earlier hypotheses regarding the subject of the play are listed in Séchan 242 note 2; suggestions as to how several of the fragments of the play might have fitted into the plot as reconstructed by Engelmann are given *ibid.* 247; the British Museum vases are illustrated *ibid.* plate V (facing p. 242) and fig. 73 (p. 244). There is an excellent reproduction of the scene depicted on the vase that was signed by Python in *JHS* 11 plate VI. A. S. Murray, in *JHS* 11.225–230, indicated his belief that this vase, which exhibits some of the mannerisms of Apulian vases, reflected traits that characterized the revivals of old Athenian tragedies in southern Italy in the third century B.C. — Amphitryon's conviction that his wife had been unfaithful to him might have been the result of her unenthusiastic reception of him because she supposed he had just shortly before been with her, since Zeus had visited her in his form, or the result simply of his discovery that she was pregnant; one feature of the story that was of early origin was the statement that Alcmena had refused sexual intercourse with her newly married husband until he had avenged the death of her brothers (Hes. *Sc.* 14–9), so that if Euripides followed this version of the story, she could not have been with child by Amphitryon when he got back from his Teleboan campaign. — Whenever the bulk of the *Shield of Heracles* may have been written — on which question see E. M. Cook in *CQ* 31.204–14 — there is no reason to doubt the statement in the *hypothesis* of that work that verses 1–56, which comprise the section telling of the engendering of Heracles, were taken from the probably genuine and unquestionably early *Catalogue of Women*; cf. P. Mazon, *Hésiode: Théogonie, Les Travaux et les Jours, Le Bouclier* (Budé series; Paris 1928) 119–20, 130. — On the passage from the *Rudens* (non uentus fuit uerum Alcmena Euripidi, / ita omnia de tecto deturbauit tegulas) see E. A. Sonnenschein in *CR* 28.40–1.

death and apotheosis of Heracles, Eurystheus, his implacable enemy, has pursued his family from city to city until they have taken refuge at Marathon under the protection of Demophon, king of Athens. A herald sent by Eurystheus to seize the suppliants threatens immediate war when Demophon refuses to give them up. Soothsayers demand the sacrifice of a noble maiden to ensure Athenian success, and one of Heracles' daughters, Macaria, heroically offers herself as the victim. At this point the aged Alcmena, who has been taking sanctuary in the temple of Zeus with her granddaughters, is summoned forth to hear the news that Hyllus, Heracles' eldest son, who has gone in search of aid, has returned with a large force of allies. Iolaus, who has accompanied the family in its flight and who, though Heracles' nephew and former comrade, is represented with dramatic license as an elderly man, insists in spite of Alcmena's expostulations on joining in the fight. During the course of the battle he was for a time miraculously restored to his youthful vigor through the favor of Heracles and Hebe, as Alcmena is informed by the attendant who brings the news of victory and of Iolaus' capture of Eurystheus. The vanquished king is then brought in and the vengeful Alcmena gloatingly threatens him with death. She is informed that Athenians do not kill prisoners who are taken alive in battle, and Eurystheus speaks on his own behalf, arguing that he was compelled by Hera to persecute Heracles and his family. But Alcmena is unyielding in her insistence that he must die and, when Eurystheus has prophesied that his spirit will remain friendly to the Athenians who sought to spare his life and in the distant future will aid them when descendants of Heracles invade their land (an obvious reference to the Peloponnesian War, in the early years of which the play was produced), the Chorus finally assents to his execution, free from any feeling of guilt.

This, as all would agree, is one of the weakest of extant Greek tragedies in structure and in characterization. But it has some assets, and one of these is the effective confrontation of Alcmena and Eurystheus at the end of the play. The captured king, in spite of his long record of villainy and ruthlessness toward Heracles and everyone related to him, displays a certain dignity in the face of Alcmena's implacable ferocity and scorching invective. There is no opportunity in the play for giving her a rounded characterization, but the audience can perhaps understand how years of ill-treatment

and of suffering on behalf of loved ones have transformed her into a very embodiment of vindictiveness.

One minor point of interest is the way in which, even though Heracles is once referred to as the son of Zeus and Alcmena,⁷ her one-time relationship to Zeus is kept definitely in the background. Amphitryon, incidentally, is mentioned nowhere in the play.

(6) *Heracles*, by Euripides, between about 424 and 416 B.C. In contrast with the tragedy previously mentioned, this has a good claim to be rated among Euripides' masterpieces. Robert Browning, in the line with which he introduces his translation of it in *Aristophanes' Apology*, refers to it as "the perfect piece." Its basic motif is that of deliverance — first, the deliverance of Heracles' family from cruel destruction by the usurper Lycus when Heracles himself unexpectedly returns from his journey to the lower world; then, after he has been smitten with madness in his hour of success by the malignity of Hera and in his frenzy has killed his just now rescued wife and children, Heracles' own deliverance from the depths of despondency and despair by his friend Theseus whom he himself has but lately delivered from the realm of the dead.

The drama has been called "a trilogy, or at least a triptych, in one play,"⁸ and the aged Amphitryon has a prominent role in all three parts. In the first he speaks the prologue, proffers counsel and encouragement to his daughter-in-law Megara, refutes the slanders of the swashbuckling Lycus against the absent Heracles and upbraids him for his cruel injustice, chides Zeus for his neglect of his grandchildren, and after the miraculously opportune arrival of his foster son advises him as to his course of action, questions him briefly about his recent experiences, and then lures Lycus into the palace where Heracles has gone to lie in wait for him. In the second part the agonized cries heard from inside the palace after Heracles has gone berserk are probably to be assigned to Amphitryon, and from the servant who tells the vivid story of the horrible carnage wrought by the crazed hero we learn how Amphitryon tried to restrain him and how after all the rest of Heracles' family had been

⁷ Verse 210. In one other place (917–8) he is spoken of as the son of Zeus, and there are more than half a dozen references to him as the son of Alcmena.

⁸ L. A. Post, *From Homer to Menander* (Berkeley 1951) 135; cf. 137 ("In fact it is three plays in one . . ."). See also G. M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London 1941) 84–6.

killed by his arrows the aged man himself was rescued by Athena's intervention; to Amphitryon, moreover, is assigned the melancholy task of informing Heracles of the hideous mischief he has done during his fit of insanity. Again, in the third part it is he who explains to Theseus what has happened, and at the end he is charged with the sad duty of burying Heracles' victims, since it is not lawful for the slayer himself to perform it.

Like everything else relating to this tragedy, the role of Amphitryon has been variously evaluated.⁹ No one, however, can question its importance in the drama. Amphitryon is on the scene during much more of the action than anyone else, excepting the Chorus. More lines are assigned to him than to anyone else, again excepting the Chorus. (The length of his part exceeds that of Heracles by some two dozen lines and is twice that of the next longest part, Megara's.) Moreover, there can be no doubt that the dramatist laid great stress on the deep affection existing between Amphitryon and his foster son. They repeatedly address each other as though Amphitryon was the real father and Heracles his very own offspring. Particularly touching are verses 1192, where Amphitryon's pathetic repetition of *ἐμὸς* suggests the depth and tenderness of his feeling for the crushed and tortured hero, and 1408-9, where Heracles in his anguish craves the solace of clasping his father's breast and the aged man complies with equal fervor. Heracles is sometimes spoken of, to be sure, as the son of Zeus, and basic to the whole plot of the play is the conviction that Hera hated Heracles because he was the issue of a union of Zeus with a mortal woman that was an affront to her. The anomaly is emphasized in the curious passage (verses 1258-65) in which Heracles first speaks of himself as the son of Amphitryon, so intimately related to him that he feels, with complete lack of logic, that the bloodguiltiness resulting from Amphitryon's killing of Electryon is part of his own inheritance, and then, while acknowledging that Zeus was his actual begetter, goes on to say that it is Amphitryon and not Zeus whom he really thinks of as his father. It is indeed interesting that in this earliest extant play in which Amphitryon appears he is presented not as the dupe of

⁹ For judicious and valuable discussions of this tragedy see G. L. Hendrickson, "The Heracles Myth and Its Treatment by Euripides," in *Classical Studies in Honor of Charles Forster Smith* (Madison 1919) 11-29; Grube (above, note 8) 244-60; and William Arrowsmith, in *Euripides II: The Cyclops, etc.* ("The Complete Greek Tragedies," Chicago 1956) 44-57.

Zeus but as the devoted and beloved guardian of Heracles' family and as the true object of Heracles' filial affection.¹⁰

(7) *Amphitryon*, by Archippus, late fifth (or very early fourth) century B.C. The quotations that have been preserved from this comedy, two of them by Athenaeus, with five others consisting of only one or two words apiece (*CAF* I 679–80), give no clue as to its theme. It is reasonable to suppose that it dealt with Zeus's impersonation of Amphitryon, for that is the one aspect of the story that seems to lend itself to comic treatment. But beyond this it is idle to speculate.

(8) *Nyx Makra*, by Plato, late fifth or early fourth century B.C. The fragments, three from Athenaeus and two others, one of which is a single word (*CAF* I 624–5), are again of no help. But one of the classes of plays composed by this comic poet was that of mythological burlesques, and the title obviously suggests that it had to do with the miraculously long night of Zeus's visit to Alcmena.¹¹

(9) *Alcmena*, by Dionysius the Elder (tyrant of Syracuse), before 367 B.C. We have one quotation from this tragedy, three lines in length, preserved by Stobaeus (*TGF* 793). What aspect of the story provided the plot we have no way of knowing.

(10) *Alcmena*, by Astydamas the Younger, fourth century B.C. The title is included in a list of Astydamas' tragedies by Suidas, but there are no fragments (*TGF* 777).

¹⁰ It will be recalled that according to the more common version of the story Amphitryon was not still alive at the time of Heracles' madness. But representing him as involved in the episode and as being miraculously rescued from death by Athena's hurling a stone which rendered Heracles unconscious need not have been an original invention of Euripides, for Pausanias reports (9.11.2) that the Thebans had a name for this stone, which apparently was to be seen in Thebes in his time. The name was *Sôphronistêr*. It apparently was an innovation on Euripides' part, however, to represent the madness as occurring at the end of Heracles' successful accomplishment of his mighty labors rather than before them. The dramatic effectiveness of this change is obvious. As for the strange ambiguity in the references to Heracles' paternity, that was nothing new. It went right back to Homer, as is strikingly illustrated in a passage in book 5 of the *Iliad*, where Heracles is referred to as the child of Amphitryon in 392 and as the son of Zeus just five verses further on, in 396.

¹¹ It has been suggested, e.g. by K. A. Dietze, *De Philemone comico* (Göttingen 1901) 22–3, that Philemon's *Nyx* was another handling of the same episode. Here we have only two fragments, one of them a single word (*CAF* II 491), and they are completely uninformative. The title is hardly explicit enough to warrant inferences about the subject of the comedy.

(11) *Amphitryon*, by Aeschylus of Alexandria, of uncertain date. The author wrote an epic dealing with Messenia as well as tragedies. There is a single quotation preserved by Athenaeus, two verses in length (TGF 824).

(12). A Greek play, possibly entitled *Hēraklēs Mainomenos*, by an unidentified author, fourth century B.C. The existence of such a play is attested, with a high degree of probability, by a famous vase painting in Madrid signed by Assteas.¹² The likelihood that this was inspired by an actual scene in the theater is great. The vase painting has sometimes been regarded as a reminiscence of Euripides' *Heracles*. But the differences seem too striking to permit of that assumption. In Euripides' tragedy the hero killed his wife and children with bow and arrow; here he is about to throw one of the children into the flames, and it looks as if his wife was escaping from his fury.¹³ There Amphitryon and Theseus played important roles, and Alcmena was thought of as no longer living; here Alcmena and Iolaus, Heracles' comrade, are shown instead of Amphitryon and Theseus. There the spirit of madness who carried out Hera's fiendish purpose was named Lyssa; here she is Mania. So we are justified in assuming the existence of a dramatic treatment of the madness of Heracles (other than that of Euripides) with which Assteas was acquainted. It is difficult to decide whether this was a tragedy, as Séchan believes, or a *hilarotragôdia* of the sort performed by the *phlyakes* in southern Italy in the late fourth and early third centuries B.C., as maintained by Miss Bieber, who finds humorous touches in the picture — the enormous plumes on Heracles' helmet, the motley collection of household utensils and unburnable metal articles heaped amid the flames of the bonfire, the gestures of the sub-

¹² See M. Bieber, *Die Denkmäler zum Theaterwesen im Altertum* (Berlin 1920) 107–9, number 43, and figs. 107 and 108, and *The History of the Greek and Roman Theater* (Princeton 1939) 259–60 and figs. 351 and 352; Séchan (above, note 6) 524–6 and fig. 155. It should perhaps be stated that B. Graef, *Hermes* 36.85–6, and C. Robert, (above, note 4) 628, deny that the vase painting has any connection with a drama.

¹³ Apollodorus (2.6.12) says that Heracles' children met their death by fire; it is not improbable that this version of the story, which may well have been the earlier one since it is found in Pherecydes (fr. 30), was followed by one or more of the tragic writers. It is also likely that Heracles' wife Megara was more usually thought of as not having met her death along with the children, for Heracles is repeatedly said to have broken off his marriage with her after his killing of the children on the ground that it had been so ill-starred (Paus. 10.29.7) and to have wedded her to his young comrade Iolaus (Apollod. 2.6.1; Diod. Sic. 4.31.1; Plut. *Amatorius* 9, 754D).

ordinate figures, and Alcmena's wrinkles. The vase painting, Miss Bieber suggests, might actually have illustrated a scene from the farce by Rhinthon entitled *Heracles*.¹⁴ But whether the play from which Assteas derived his picture was a tragedy or a burlesque of a tragedy, it seems reasonably certain that Alcmena was one of its cast of characters.

(13) *Amphitryon*, by Rhinthon, late fourth or early third century B.C. This, we may assume, was one of those travesties of tragedy for which the author was famous and which were so popular in southern Italy at the time. The one reference to it is in Athenaeus (3.111c).¹⁵ The scene depicted on a phlyakes vase in the Vatican¹⁶ may possibly have been a scene from this farce. It shows a woman at a window, an elderly Zeus carrying a ladder with his head between two of the rungs, and Hermes lighting the way for his father with a lamp. The woman is not identified, but from the time of Winckelmann it has frequently been supposed that she is Alcmena. It might equally well, of course, be some other object of Zeus's infatuation to whom he is paying this nocturnal visit. If the vase does depict a scene from the *Amphitryon*, Rhinthon obviously did not represent Zeus as impersonating Amphitryon, for then there would be no need for the ladder or the stealthy approach. It is not necessary to suppose that the impersonation was a feature of Rhinthon's travesty. If it was not, the vase may depict a scene from this farce, but we cannot be sure. In fact, we do not know what phase of Amphitryon's story was burlesqued, and the Vatican vase is not really of much help if we try to guess.

(14) *Amphitruo*, by Plautus, between about 214 and 184 B.C. (probably in the last half dozen years of this period). Here for the

¹⁴ It should be noted that there is doubt as to when Assteas' career should be dated and that many consider him earlier than Rhinthon.

¹⁵ See G. Kaibel, *Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta* I.i (Berlin 1899) 185; A. Olivieri, *Frammenti della commedia greca e del mimo nella Sicilia e nella Magna Grecia* II (Napoli [1947]) 8-10. Olivieri suggests that the one or more words in the Messapian dialect, referring to food and repletion, which Athenaeus says Rhinthon used in this farce may have occurred in a gormandizing banquet scene at the end; this is on the supposition that Amphitryon was complaisant rather than enraged as a consequence of Zeus's visiting his wife and that a feast celebrated the happy ending of the whole affair.

¹⁶ See Bieber, *Denkmäler* (above, note 12) 140, number 101, and pl. 76, and *History* (above, note 12) 268-9 and fig. 368; Séchan (above, note 6) 48 and fig. 13; Olivieri (above, note 15) 8-10.

first time in an extant play we are presented with the theme of the divine lover's coming to Alcmena in the guise of her husband. The story of Zeus's impersonation went back at least as far as the time of Pindar¹⁷ and, as we have seen, the impersonation may have been referred to in Euripides' *Alcmena*. There is every reason, indeed, to believe that it had been a component of the plot of many a play before the time of Plautus. But since none of them have been preserved, we can do no more than speculate about who wrote them and when. It is unanimously agreed that Plautus' comedy was an adaptation of one or more Greek models. But there are many theories as to what the model or models may have been.

The combining of the supernaturally long night with the birth of the twins and the accompanying miracles into a single continuous train of action is logically absurd, even if theatrically effective; it involves the supposition that Jupiter had visited Alcmena at least once before, seven months ago (as Mercury informs the audience in verses 479-85), and that the miraculous lengthening of the night of his visit, no doubt originally thought of as appropriate for the begetting of such a mighty hero, now serves solely for the prolonging of Jupiter's rapturous delights in company with a lady just on the point of giving birth to twins. There is the further absurdity that the various devices employed for assuring Alcmena regarding Jupiter's assumed identity, such as the gift of the captured goblet and the account of the victorious battle, have little point except on the occasion of a first visit. Some have argued that Plautus was himself responsible for this preposterous telescoping of events originally widely separated and that he brought together material from two different Greek plays in fashioning his own. A more likely view, however, is that some Greek dramatist had already effected

¹⁷ *Nem.* 10.15-7. It should be noted, however, that in *Isth.* 7 (6).5-7 Pindar seems to imply that Zeus visited Alcmena in the form of a shower of gold; he does not, to be sure, explicitly say so, and it is perhaps conceivable that the poet merely meant to represent Zeus as descending to the door of Amphitryon's house in a golden snowfall before going to Alcmena in human form. At any rate, the uncertainty about this permits one to doubt whether the impersonation was a completely established feature of Alcmena's story as early as the first half of the fifth century B.C. In the account of Zeus's visit to her in *Hes. Sc.* 27-38, nothing is actually said about his impersonating Amphitryon, though perhaps it is suggested in the reference to his trickery (*dolos*) in 30. A. Thibaudet's imaginative recital, *Revue de Paris*, 44^{ème} année, tome première, janvier 1937, 23, of what seems to him implicit in the Hesiodic passage (by a slip attributed to the *Theogony* instead of to the *Shield of Heracles*) seems less convincing than the sober account in Jacobi 7, which reads nothing into the passage that is not actually there.

the combination and that Plautus was working from a single model.¹⁸ The impersonation of Amphitryon's servant Sosia by Jupiter's attendant divinity Mercury still further enhances both the implausibility of the plot and the theatrical effectiveness of the comedy; this, too, was presumably derived from the model rather than invented by Plautus.

¹⁸ The following words of Rabelais, quoted by Thibaudet (above, note 17) 25, well express what was presumably the sentiment responsible for introducing the detail of the miraculously long night into the story of the engendering of Heracles: "Jupiter feist durer XLVIII heures la nuyet qu'il coucha avecques Alcène. Car en moins de temps n'eust-il peu forger Hercules, qui nettoia le monde de monstres et tyrans." That this feature of the story was prompted in the first place by the thought of Zeus's high purpose rather than by the thought of craving on his part for the prolongation of carnal enjoyment is not only highly probable in itself but is surely supported by such statements of later writers as are found in Diod. Sic. 4.9.2 ("Zeus . . . indicated by the length of time consumed in procreation the exceeding great strength of the one begotten") and Seneca Ag. 825-6 ("that strenuous hero could not be begotten in one night"). Diodorus' further assertion (*ibid.*) that Zeus's union with Alcmena was not because of erotic passion, as in the case of other women, but primarily for the sake of procreation is additional evidence that the thought of a night prolonged for the purpose of allowing greater opportunity for amorous play was quite foreign to the myth in its earlier stages. Madame Dacier thought that Plautus conceived of two nights as having been supernaturally lengthened ("Il est vray, que le premier jour que Jupiter aima Alcène, fut suivy d'une double nuit, mais Plaute fait que la nuit qui précéda l'accouchement est aussi double"), but there is no hint in the text of the play that the prolongation of the night of the dramatic action is a repetition of a previous occurrence. — The most effective argument in support of the view that Plautus' comedy was created by a process of *contaminatio* was that of F. Leo in *Nachrichten von der Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen* 1911, 254-62; his views were neatly summarized in his *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* I (Berlin 1913) 131-2. H. W. Prescott, however, in "The *Amphitruo* of Plautus," *CP* 8.14-22, presented strong arguments in support of the view that the long night and the birth of the child, which in the myth were separated by a natural interval, had already been combined by some Greek author in a single play; this involved "changing the long night to a night of dalliance, and setting back the generation so that the birth may follow naturally on the morning after the long night." It was this play which Plautus adapted for the Roman stage. For a similar view see E. Fraenkl, *De Media et Nova Comoedia Quaestiones Selectae* (Göttingen 1912) 65-6. There is an interesting but necessarily speculative reconstruction of the various stages of development through which the story passed down to the time of Plautus in Stoessl 93-110; the author assumes, without discussing the question, that Plautus was himself the playwright responsible for combining "zwei verschiedene Grundhandlungen in ein Stück . . . : ein in der wunderbaren Brautnacht gruppiertes Geschehen und ein am Tage der Geburt spielender Ereignisablauf." Cf. Jacobi 12, where the same assumption is made. — The strangling of the serpents by the divinely precocious Heracles on the very day of his birth accords with the account in Pindar (*Nem.* 1.33-50); but Apollodorus (2.4.8), who probably follows another reasonably early version of the tale, says that the babes were eight months old when it happened. Furthermore, two conflicting explanations of the occurrence were given; one was that the serpents were sent by the vindictive Hera in an effort to destroy her hated stepchild (Pindar *ibid.*), the other was that they were placed in the room where the infants were by Amphitryon himself in order to discover which of the twins was of divine parentage and which was his own son (Pherecydes fr. 28).

Our ignorance of the range of themes used for plots at various stages in the development of Greek comedy and of the techniques characteristic of individual playwrights other than Aristophanes and Menander makes a confident allocation of Plautus' model to any particular author or generation impossible.¹⁹ The model may have

¹⁹ References to discussions of Plautus' Greek original are given in Schanz-Hosius, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur*, Erste Teil⁴ (München 1927) 58; one of these, by T. Bergk, would place it in the period of Middle Comedy, the four others listed all conceive of it as an example of New Comedy. Dietze (above, note 11) might be added to this list, for he argued that Philemon was the author of the *exemplar* of the *Amphitryon*; B. Prehn, on the other hand, in *Quaestiones Plautinae* (Breslau 1916) 87-8, which is included in the list, favored Diphilus on the ground that the combining of tragic coloring of style with comic which is characteristic of this particular comedy is closer to the manner of Diphilus than to that of his contemporary playwrights. U. v. Wilamowitz-Moellendorf believed that a *terminus post quem* for Plautus' model was provided by the fact that the tactics of the battle described by Sosia, in particular the cavalry charge on the right flank under the command of Amphitryon himself, recounted in vss. 242-7, reflected military practice of the period of the Diadochi; see his edition of Euripides' *Heracles*² (besorgt von W. Abel, Berlin 1933) 436 (in the note on vs. 1078). This would mean of course that the model was a play of the period of the New Comedy. But the account seems hardly detailed enough to bear the weight of this argument. Furthermore, the characteristically Roman character of the fighting has been stressed by K. M. Westaway, *The Original Element in Plautus* (Cambridge 1917) 15, so that we cannot be sure how much, if any, of the description of the battle was taken over from the model. More general considerations were advanced nearly a century ago by J. Vahlen, *RhM* 16.476 = *Gesammelte Philologische Schriften* I (Leipzig and Berlin 1911) 442, who stated: "Andererseits lässt sich von keinen einzigen Plautinischen Komödie auch nur mit einiger Wahrscheinlichkeit ein ausserhalb des Kreises der neuattischen Komödie liegendes Original nachweisen: und da auch in dieser Parodien mythischer Stoffe jener Art nicht ungewöhnlich sind, so bleibt es doch das Wahrscheinlichste, dass daher mit den übrigen auch der *Amphitruo* geleitet sei." Furthermore, G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton 1952) 24, argues that "the technique and structure of the play, the comic devices, the delineation of character, are all so similar to what we find in other Roman comedies that there seems no reason to deny here the influence of New Comedy." The same writer, however, also says (*ibid.*): "The *Amphitruo* is a play on a mythological theme . . . and may show how Middle Comedy treated such legends." Cogent as the arguments are for believing that Plautus need not necessarily have gone further back than the period of New Comedy for his model, the unique features of the play persistently suggest that he may have. In addition to the mythological theme, there are the occasional passages of impressive solemnity that contrast so strikingly with the predominant tone of low comedy and that to some extent justify Plautus' description of his piece as a *tragicomoedia* (vss. 50-63), there is the characteristically tragic *deus ex machina*, and there is the carelessness with regard to matters of time and place. These features seem to point to earlier forms of comedy. But since there is much that we do not know about the development of Greek comedy and about the amount of leeway Plautus allowed himself in dealing with his sources, the only safe judgment on the question of the most probable date of his model is *non liquet*. For attempts to identify characteristically Roman elements in the play see P. Siewert, *Plautus in Amphitruone Fabula quomodo Exemplar Graecum transtulerit* (Leipzig 1894) and Westaway, referred to earlier in this note, 14-5, 29-30, 81; cf. also Jacobi 13. An eminently sane and helpful discussion of the play as a whole is that of P. W. Harsh, *A Handbook of Classical Drama* (Stanford Univ. 1944) 338-42.

been one of the lost plays listed above, but it need not have been; in spite of the large number of titles of Greek comedies that we have, there must have been a great many other comedies of which not even the names have been preserved. Plautus' model may well have been one of these. What we can say with complete assurance is that even though the antecedents of Plautus' play are obscure and even though we cannot be certain how much of it was original with him and how much close adaptation of a predecessor, its influence in later times has been enormous. All the remaining items on our list, except the next four, show that influence clearly and can be regarded simply as variations, some of them masterly, some of them not, on a theme which, while not invented by Plautus, was transmitted to future generations by him.

(15) *Alcumena*, by an unidentified author, between the late years of the third century and the early years of the first century B.C. Of this tragedy we know only the title, which is quoted by Marius Victorinus (*Gramm.* 6.8) because of the presence of the parasitic vowel in its spelling. In early Latin, according to his statement, *u* was regularly inserted between *c* and *m*, and he quotes three titles of tragedies in illustration, the other two being *Alcumeo* and *Tecumesa*. C. Julius Caesar Strabo (about 130–87 B.C.) initiated the practice of omitting the *u*.²⁰

(16) *Amphitruo*, by Accius, between about 140 and 85 B.C. Although we have more than a dozen fragments of this play, most of them a full line or more in length, its subject matter is far from certain.²¹ Various episodes in Amphitryon's life might have provided material for a writer of tragedies, and some of the existing fragments could be made to fit into more than one reconstructed plot. Ribbeck made three suggestions.²² The first was that the tragedy dealt with Amphitryon's courtship of Alcmena, his accidental killing of his prospective father-in-law, and his banishment by his brother Sthenelus. The second was that it dealt with the

²⁰ The full text of the statement may be found in A. Klotz, *Scaenica Romanorum Fragmenta* I (München [1953]) 304.

²¹ The fragments are assembled in the most convenient form in E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* II (Loeb, 1936) 340–7. They are also to be found in O. Ribbeck, *Tragicorum Romanorum Fragmenta*³ (Leipzig 1897) 169–72 and Klotz (above, note 20) 204–7.

²² O. Ribbeck, *Die römische Tragödie in Zeitalter der Republik* (Leipzig 1875) 553–60.

story of Amphitryon and Comaetho (a doublet of the story of Minos and Scylla): Pterelaus, king of the Teleboans, was invincible because of a lock of golden hair that grew on his head; his daughter Comaetho fell in love with Amphitryon and tried to win his affection by plucking out the magical lock while her father slept; Amphitryon could now easily conquer the Teleboans and kill their king, but disgusted at Comaetho's treachery he repaid her devotion by putting her to death. The third suggestion, already made by others, was that the plot resembled that of Euripides' *Heracles*. Warmington envisages a plot covering the story of Amphitryon all the way from the Teleboan raid on Mycenae, in which Alcmena's brothers were killed, to his victory over the Teleboans with the traitorous aid of Comaetho, and suggests that the play contained three scenes, one at Mycenae, another at Thebes, and a third at Taphos. There would seem, however, to be a superabundance of material here for a single tragedy. In spite of Warmington's ingenious indications of the contexts in which several of the fragments might have occurred, I think we may well agree with Ribbeck's conclusion of many years ago: "Wir müssen es demnach vorläufig aufgeben, die Fabel des Dramas endgültig zu bestimmen."²³

(17) *Hercules Furens*, by L. Annaeus Seneca, between about A.D. 30 and 65. The plot is similar to that of Euripides' *Heracles*, except that Theseus arrives before Hercules goes insane and that Iris and Lyssa do not appear. The prologue is spoken not by Amphitryon but by Juno. The onset of madness occurs while Hercules is on the stage, but whether the appalling massacre that ensues was intended to be visible to the audience or to take place within the

²³ Ribbeck (above, note 22) 317-8, on the basis of his emendation of the meaningless *calefo* to *Cefalo* in a quotation from Pacuvius by Philargyrius (ad Verg. *Georg.* 4.437), postulated the existence of an otherwise unattested *Amphitruo* by Pacuvius. Cf. Warmington (above, note 21) 308 and Klotz (above, note 20) 180. Apart from the fact that the emendation can hardly be considered certain — Grotius proposed the almost equally acceptable *Telepho* — the tragedy from which the quotation came need not have centered around the person of Amphitryon or have had his name as its title. It is true that Cephalus was associated with Amphitryon in ridding the Theban land of the bloodthirsty fox of Teumessus and in the expedition against the Teleboans, and that as a reward for his services the kingship of the Taphian islands was conferred upon him and the island of Cephallenia named after him. But he is the hero of several myths that have little connection with one another, and his getting control over the Taphians, if that is what was actually referred to in the fragment, might have been mentioned in a variety of contexts. We should therefore be unjustified in including an *Amphitruo* by Pacuvius in our list.

palace is not altogether certain. The voices of Hercules and Megara are heard, and Amphitryon vividly describes what is happening. It is possible, though we cannot be sure, that during at least part of the scene the action moved offstage but Amphitryon remained at a vantage point from which he could see what was taking place inside. After Hercules comes to himself it is only Amphitryon's threat to anticipate him in suicide that induces him to go on living. As in Euripides' tragedy Amphitryon's role is an important one, though here the lines he speaks are exceeded in number by those of Hercules.²⁴

(18) *Hercules Oetaeus*, by L. Annaeus Seneca, between about A.D. 30 and 65. The plot, which deals with the agonizing death and the deification of Hercules, resembles that of Sophocles' *Trachiniae*. In the Greek tragedy, when Heracles requested that Alcmena be summoned, he was informed by his son Hyllus (verses 1151-2) that she was living at Tiryns, which of course was far from Trachis, the scene of the action. In Seneca's play, however, she is one of the *dramatis personae*, though she does not appear until two-thirds of the way through this lengthy, disjointed composition. But once having arrived on the scene, she has a considerable part to play. In spite of her distress over the sufferings of her stricken son, which she learns were caused by the poisoned robe sent him, with far other intentions to be sure, by his wife Deianira, Alcmena seeks to soothe him in his anguish, but soon he falls into a swoon. When, later on, he departs to mount his funeral pyre he tells her how much reason she has for pride in being his mother. After Philoctetes' account of the final scene of Hercules' earthly life as his mortal flesh was consumed by the flames on Mount Oeta, Alcmena reappears bearing the urn containing his ashes. She delivers a long lament, briefly interrupted by words of encouragement from her grandson Hyllus, and then turning to song she chants an elaborate threnody in which she calls upon all the regions which benefited from Hercules' famous labors to join in mourning for him and goes on to speculate on the

²⁴ The interesting problems presented by the Senecan tragedies (e.g. whether they were intended for private reading or for some sort of public or semipublic rendition, whether they were composed with some special audience in view, whether they were designed as a systematic presentation of Stoic virtues, whether there is any validity in the arguments against the genuineness of the *Hercules Oetaeus*) need not be discussed here. On Senecan tragedy in general and on the two dramas included in our list there are again eminently sane and helpful discussions in Harsh (above, note 19) 401-13, 432-4.

manner of his reception in the realm of the dead. But the now transfigured hero speaks to her from aloft, taking visible form in the heavens, and after bidding her cease her mourning and promising her that she shall have vengeance upon the persecutor Eurystheus he again vanishes from sight. Alcmena, assured of his triumphant entrance into the realm above, departs to proclaim to the people of Thebes the addition of a new divinity to their pantheon.

It is appropriate that in the last extant play of antiquity in which Alcmena appears her role should be that of the devoted and respected mother of her hero son. For it was primarily as Hercules' mother that the interest of both the Greeks and the Romans was focused upon her. In later times it was different; her connection with him was often paid little heed to and sometimes lost sight of altogether.

After Seneca there is a long gap in the history of the theater. The next items in our list of dramatic works in which Alcmena and her mortal husband appear are separated from the ones we have just been discussing by close to a millennium and a half.

(19) *Anfitrione*, by Pandolfo Collenuccio, 1487. This was for the most part a reasonably close Italian translation, in *terza rima*, of Plautus' comedy. But near the end of the play there were some slight changes and considerable elaboration. Jupiter was assigned more than a hundred additional lines of prophecy, foretelling in great detail the exploits of his newly born son; and after Jupiter's departure Anfitrione, addressing the audience, confided that he was by no means altogether happy about this honor which had come to him of being cuckolded by the highest of the gods. This piece was sumptuously produced in Ferrara in 1487 and 1491 under the sponsorship of Duke Ercole I.²⁵ It was to honor the duke, of course, that the translator so greatly expanded the prophecies concerning Hercules' achievements. (See Reinh. 161-3.)

(20) *El Nacimiento de Hércules ó Comedia de Amphitríón*, by Fernan Perez de Oliva, about 1525. This is a very free adaptation of the *Amphitruo* in Spanish prose by a rector of the University of Salamanca who had earlier been a professor not only at Salamanca

²⁵ The presentation at Ferrara of an Italian translation of Plautus' *Menaechmi* on January 25, 1486, exactly a year and a day before the first performance of Collenuccio's translation of the *Amphitruo*, marked the actual beginning of modern European drama. Duke Ercole was very active in encouraging the translation and performance of Latin comedies, and this interest of his soon began to make itself felt throughout Italy.

but also at Paris. Omissions from and additions to the Plautine text are numerous, but few of these have anything to recommend them. The additions consist largely of mockery of the pagan divinities or of irrelevant utterances that reflect the author's views, particularly in the field of political philosophy. One variation from the Plautine plot may be mentioned here; Naucrates is allowed to enter Amphitrión's house and it is he, not a serving woman, who brings out word of the birth of the twins. A rather good touch is Amphitrión's remark, when Sosia has told him about his (Sosia's) mysterious double, that if somebody possessed the ability to assume another person's form, he would certainly choose anyone else's rather than Sosia's. But in general the piece is completely lacking in sparkle and vitality, and there is no evidence that it was ever actually performed in a theater. (See further Reinh. 140-5.)²⁶

(21) *Os Enfatriões*, by Luiz de Camões, probably between 1544 and 1549. This short play, written apparently while its author was in his early twenties, is usually assumed to have been composed for performance in connection with an academic function at the University of Coimbra. But it was certainly also performed with great success at Lisbon, where a member of the audience in his enthusiasm improvised a sonnet, claiming that Camões had excelled the comic writers of classical antiquity. It is a work of considerable poetic merit, composed in *redondilhas*, the Portuguese national eight-syllable verse form, with brief interspersed songs in the early scenes, one of them in Spanish. In accordance with a Portuguese stage convention of the period, the servant Sosea regularly speaks in Spanish rather than Portuguese, as does Mercurio most of the time when he is impersonating him.

The plot, except for the ending, is basically that of the *Amphitruo*. The play opens with a scene between Almena and her servant Bromia in which she complains about her husband's long absence. A soliloquy by Bromia, a dialogue between Feliseo and Bromia, a soliloquy by Feliseo, a dialogue between Iupiter and Mercurio, and

²⁶ Plautus' comedy had already been translated into Spanish prose by the court physician Francisco Lopez de Villalobos. This was a very close rendering of the original but contained an interpolated scene. First published in 1515, it has been repeatedly commended as a translation of considerable merit. See Reinh. 138-40. Juan de Timoneda's *Amphitrión*, number (22) below, followed it very closely much of the time, as is pointed out by R. L. Grismer, *The Influence of Plautus in Spain before Lope de Vega* (New York 1944) 188-90.

a dialogue between Feliseo and Calisto follow in succession. Jupiter and Mercurio then enter in their disguises and the action really gets under way, following the main lines of the Plautine plot. Three of the *dramatis personae* are Camões' own invention: Feliseo, who is given to poetizing and who is sent to the harbor early in the play to find out if there is any news and later on to summon Aurelio; Calisto, who appears in a single scene with Feliseo and to whom he displays his lyrical talents; and Aurelio, Alcmena's cousin, who arrives on the scene only after Sosea has fetched the ship-captain Belferrão. Belferrão has been baffled by the close resemblance between the two Anfitriões who confronted each other before him, both of them telling about the victorious battle and displaying identical wounds; but Sosea has decided in favor of the genuineness of Jupiter's claim and Jupiter has reentered the house, accompanied by Belferrão and Sosea and forcing the real Anfitrião to remain outside. It is then that Aurelio enters, accompanied by a servant. Anfitrião, who withdrew before Aurelio's arrival, returns and tells him about the grievous wrong to which he has been subjected. Aurelio, in order to satisfy himself as to the truth of the matter, forces his way into the house and after a brief soliloquy by Anfitrião comes out again with Belferrão and Sosea, telling about a supernatural apparition he has seen. The voice of Jupiter is then heard from inside the house. The god reveals his identity and explains that he has assumed the guise of Anfitrião in order to do honor to his family, foretelling that his wife will give birth to a son begotten by Jupiter himself, who will be called Hercules the most valiant and for whose twelve labors writers have in store twelve million praises. Jupiter's final words are:

Dessa illustre fadiga
colheras muy rico fruto
em fim a razão me obriga,
que tão pouco della diga,
porque o tempo dirá muito.

With these lines, and without a word from any of the human characters, the play ends.²⁷

²⁷ The title of the comedy is often found in the form *Os Amphitriões*, but in the earliest editions (1587 and 1615) it appears as *Os Enfatriões*. In both the stage directions and the text of the play, as they are printed in the 1615 edition, the spelling of the name varies between *Enfatrião* and *Amphitrião*. — On the play as a whole see further Reinh. 146–55.

The comedy is one of three plays by Camões, the other two being *El Rei Seleuco* and *Filodemo*. It is commonly believed that the qualities displayed in these dramatic works are not such as to indicate that their author would have attained as a dramatist, if he had devoted his life to the stage, the distinction which he did achieve as an epic and a lyric poet. But *Os Enfatriões*, though basically derived from Plautus, shows considerable originality and feeling for what would be dramatically effective with the audiences for which the comedy was intended, as well as abundant skill in versification; it was a play of which its young author had no reason to be ashamed.

(22) *Amphitrión*, by Juan de Timoneda, 1559. This play consists of a pastoral prologue (*introito y argumento*) and ten scenes. It is in Spanish prose except for *canciones*, fourteen, twenty, and fifteen lines in length respectively, at the beginning and end of the prologue and at the end of the play. The characters who appear in the prologue and who sing the *canciones* are the old man Bromio, his daughter Pascuala who is a shepherdess, and two shepherds named Morato and Roseno. It is Roseno who in the final portion of the prologue explains what is necessary for an understanding of the action that is to take place in the following scenes and summarizes the plot. The ten scenes follow Plautus reasonably closely. The cast of characters is the same as in the Latin model except that Alcumena's maid is called Tesala (or Thessala) instead of Bromia. In the ninth scene she recounts the marvels attendant upon the birth of the twins, and the final scene opens with the entrance of Jupiter in his own proper person, clothed entirely in gold, winged and with the various emblems of royalty. (Reinh. had no knowledge of the play's existence.)²⁸

(23) An English drama of uncertain title, by Martin Slaughter, 1595. This was a play in two parts, of which Hercules was the subject. There is evidence that it was produced with considerable success, but apparently it never appeared in print, and it has not survived. What aspects of the story of Hercules were dealt with is not known. But since the work was in two parts and since the be-

²⁸ This play is included in the author's *Obras Completas* published in Valencia in 1911. It and two others, *Los Menennos* (an adaptation of Plautus' *Menaechmi*) and *Cornelia*, are also available in a facsimile reproduction, published in Madrid in 1936 by the Academia Española, of the volume entitled *Las Tres Comedias de Juan Timoneda* which was printed in Valencia in 1559.

getting and birth of the hero were popular themes in this period, as is attested by the two following items in our list, it would seem to be a reasonable inference that Alcmena and Amphitryon had a place in the first part.²⁹

(24) *The Silver Age*, by Thomas Heywood, between 1595 and 1605. This curious piece, which was not printed until 1613 but which had apparently been produced a number of years earlier, was the second in a series of four, the first being (as one might assume) *The Golden Age* and the third and fourth *The Bronze Age* and *The Iron Age*. Its full title was *The Silver Age — Including The love of Jupiter to Alcmena, The birth of Hercules, and The rape of Proserpine, Concluding with The Arraignement of the Moone*. I am at a loss to know why episodes like the battle between the Lapiths and the Centaurs and the combusive birth of Bacchus were not also mentioned on the title page. The work consists of a long succession of loosely connected scenes and, needless to say, is devoid of any real unity. There are over thirty main characters, to say nothing of an array of minor personages, ranging from serving-men to Furies and including six centaurs and the seven planets! The various episodes are introduced by Homer, who combines after a fashion the functions of a master of ceremonies and a chorus. A sample of his introductory remarks was given at the beginning of this paper.

The second act follows, in a very compressed form and with some changes, the plot of Plautus' *Amphitruo*; the most striking of the changes is the substitution of Ganymede for Mercury as Jupiter's lackey. At the end of the act Amphitryon and Socia, so cowed that they dare not even claim their own names, fall asleep. Juno appears, consumed with rage, and tells Iris, who accompanies her, that she will cast such a powerful charm on Alcmena "As that her bastard brats should ne'er be born / But make her womb their tombs." Thunder and lightning follow, after which Jupiter "appears in glory under a rainbow" and reveals the truth. The opening scene of the following act shows how Juno's efforts to interfere with Alcmena's parturition were circumvented, after which Iris brings poisonous snakes from Africa, which are promptly strangled by the precocious Hercules. The play goes on to present further exploits of the illustrious hero, including his visit to the underworld.

²⁹ This play is referred to in M. W. Wallace, *The Birth of Hercules* (Chicago 1903) 90.

One further difference between Plautus' handling of the story and Heywood's may be mentioned. In Plautus, Hercules has been begotten months before the action of the comedy takes place. In Heywood, the begetting is an incident of the play itself. We need hardly be surprised that the Jupiter who can make Hercules grow with such rapidity after birth that he almost at once has the strength to strangle fearsome serpents could compress the period of gestation into a matter of hours or minutes.³⁰

(25) *The Birthe of Hercules*, by an unidentified English author, shortly before 1610. This is based in the main on Plautus, though about a third of it is entirely independent of the Latin original. One striking innovation is the introduction of a second servant, Dromio, as a foil to Sosia. The final act begins, as in the *Amphitruo*, with a soliloquy by Bromia, after which, in a conversation with her master, she tells him of the birth of "twoe twynnes." Dromio then narrates to him a strange dream about Alcmena's giving birth to two boys and two serpents. At this point a voice is heard from heaven, and Jupiter explains that he is the father of one of the newly born infants and declares that in recompense for the confusion wrought for his own pleasure in *Amphitruo*'s house he has given him a son who will crown his mortal head with immortality, and he bids him be friends with Alcmena, "for she is true, and nere toucht man but thou." "And soe," he continues, "be happie Alcmena, be happie Amphitruo." The play then comes to an end with *Amphitruo*'s reply, "All rulinge Jupiter, yt shalbe as thou comandest."³¹

³⁰ See Reinh. 193-7, Wallace (above, note 29) 90-2, and A. E. A. K. Roeder, *Menaechmi und Amphitruo in Englischen Drama bis zur Restauration 1661* (Dissertation, Leipzig 1904) 37-49. An anonymous piece entitled *The Escapes of Jupiter*, which is preserved in a manuscript of about the year 1623 in the British Museum (Egerton MSS 1894, pages 74 ff.), was apparently simply an acting version of *The Silver Age*; see Roeder *ibid.* 38, 49.

³¹ For the text of the play see Wallace (above, note 29) 99-166, and for its relation to the *Amphitruo*, *ibid.* 168-71. Reinh. had no knowledge of the play's existence. — In this connection mention may be made of a poetical and fanciful play in Italian verse entitled *Il Natale d'Ercole*, which was published in 1605. Its author was Michelangelo (or, as it appears on the title-page of the play, Michelagnolo) Buonarroti, a nephew of the great sculptor and painter. It is not included in our list because neither Alcmena nor Amphitryon actually appears in the cast of characters. Indeed, Amphitryon is never even mentioned. Alcmena is referred to from time to time as Hercules' mother, but the play is not concerned so much with the actual birth of the hero as with his being surreptitiously brought to Juno while she slept to nurse at her breast and with the effects produced when she awoke and cast the babe from her, the drops of her milk which spurted out in the sky becoming the Milky Way and those which were sprinkled on the

(26) *Amphitryon* (?), by an unidentified (presumably English) author, 1626 or earlier. A series of dramatic performances was given by a troupe of English actors at the court theater in Dresden in 1626. The entry for June 4 in the list of performances is as follows: "Ist eine Comoedia von Amphitrione gespielt worden." The play may, of course, have been *The Birthe of Hercules*, which had been written less than two decades previously. But the wording of the entry seems to me to make it more likely that it was a comedy which had Amphitryon's name in its title; if so, it was presumably an otherwise unknown adaptation of Plautus' *Amphitruo*. (See Reinh. 197, 214.)³²

(27) *Les Sosies*, by Jean de Rotrou, 1638. This French comedy, in Alexandrines, except for the prologue and the final act followed the course of action of Plautus' *Amphitruo* fairly closely, though with certain modifications designed to make it intelligible and acceptable to a refined French audience. The prologue is spoken by the aggrieved and jealous Juno, who foresees that Alcmène's child will be a mighty hero and foretells his glorious exploits but makes clear her own feelings toward him and her intention to put every possible difficulty in his way. In the last of the scenes in which Jupiter consorts with Alcmène in the guise of her husband, he predicts to her, with striking dramatic irony, that the son to whom she is going to give birth will be so illustrious that Jupiter will be believed to have been the author of his being. (Rotrou, like Heywood, assumes and in Jupiter's speech at the end of the play specifically states that what nature normally requires nine months to accomplish could by divine action be compressed into the space of a miraculously long night.) In the next to the last scene of the play, Céphalie, who is substituted for Bromia, tells Amphitryon of Alcmène's almost painless delivery of twins, of the strangling by one

earth becoming the first lilies. The setting is Theban, and Thebes' present happiness is repeatedly contrasted with its former ill fortune. The prologue is spoken by Amphion; another famous Theban, Tiresias, appears later on, accompanied by a Chorus of Priests. The other personages of the drama are a Chorus of Shepherds and Nymphs, a Chorus of Bacchantes, Mercury accompanied by the Graces, the Infernal Furies, Jupiter, a Chorus of Gods, and Apollo. The play is mentioned by Reinh. 173.

³² Reinh.'s suggestion that the play may have been Heywood's *The Silver Age* is highly unlikely in view of the great variety of material dealt with in it and the comparatively small portion of it devoted to the story of Amphitryon. If he had been acquainted with *The Birthe of Hercules*, he would have recognized this as a much more likely candidate for consideration.

of them of two winged serpents with huge crests, and of the supernatural voice which foretold that this child would become a god, that all his deeds would be marvels, that glory would be his aim and the universe his home, and which declared that Jupiter was his father and that his name was to be Hercule. After a graceful speech by Amphitryon of mingled pride and acquiescence, renewed thunder is heard and Jupiter himself appears aloft in the air, and the play's final scene consists of a speech of seven quatrains delivered by him, in which he elaborates on what had already been revealed, and of brief comments thereon by Amphitryon and others. (See further Reinh. 174-7 and Jacobi 21-7).

(28) *La Naissance d'Hercule*, by Jean de Rotrou, 1650. This was a revision of *Les Sosies* prepared by the author himself shortly before his death for performance at the Théâtre du Marais. It was designed to provide a spectacle on a grand scale with much use of stage machinery. Consequently, there was considerable elaboration of the action and of the stage business. For example, a scene was interpolated in the fourth act showing Juno clamorously venting her spleen in the presence of the other divinities on Olympus. Again, the strangling of the serpents was not merely described but apparently also somehow exhibited to the audience, and instead of two serpents there was a whole swarm of them, with Jupiter sending his eagle to help destroy them. (See further Reinh. 177.)

(29) *Amphitryon*, by Isaac de Benserade, 1653. This was one of the sections ("entrées") of the *Ballet de la Nuit*, composed by Benserade and staged by Torelli, that was performed at a victory celebration at the court of Louis XIV on February 23, 1653. The *Amphitryon* is described as a "comédie muette" (pantomime) in four acts. In the first, Amphitryon's going off to war was presented; in the second, Mercury was shown advising Jupiter, who was grieving over his hopeless love for Alcmène, to assume the guise of her husband; and in the third and fourth, the action was derived from Plautus' comedy. (See Reinh. 177-8.)

(30) *Jupiter und Amphitryon*, composer and librettist unknown, seventeenth century. This was a German opera reported to have been performed at Dresden at an unspecified date. (See Reinh. 215.)

(31) *Amphitryon*, by Molière, 1668. This play, in which Molière himself took the part of Sosie when it was first performed early in 1668, is deservedly regarded as one of the most delightful comedies of the French classic theater, abounding as it does in sprightliness and vivacity, deftness and charm. It reveals with great effect its author's sure dramatic touch as well as his masterly skill in versification. The tone and sentiment are characteristic of the France of Louis Quatorze. Jupiter is represented as a court gallant and romantic lover, who even goes so far as to threaten, with delicious dramatic irony, to kill himself in the presence of his beloved and who repeatedly begs Alcmène to think of him as a lover rather than as a husband, contrasting the concentrated ardor felt for the one with the dutiful devotion felt for the other. This antithesis between lover and husband has more than once been compared to a leitmotif running through the play, and it is one of Molière's significant innovations. Another is the introduction of a new character, Cléanthis,³³ the attendant of Alcmène who is Sosie's shrewish and amorous, though strictly virtuous, wife. Even Mercure, when posing as her husband, is no match for her nagging tongue and eager wifely desires. The scenes between Mercure (or Sosie) and Cléanthis provide effective contrasts with those between Jupiter (or Amphitryon) and Alcmène, and a new dimension was thus added to the comic possibilities of the plot.

Molière's most significant innovation is his shifting of the time of the action from immediately before the birth of Hercules to a night shortly after the marriage of Amphitryon and Alcmène. The sole reference to the birth of a child includes no suggestion that it will occur in the near future. After Jupiter, shortly before the end of the play, has revealed his identity to Amphitryon, he tells him that in his house will be born a son who, under the name of Hercule, will fill the vast universe with his exploits. That is all — no reference to twins, crested serpents, the twelve labors, or any of the other details of the Hercules saga. In this way Molière restored unity to

³³ A. Ernout, *Neophilologus* 33.116, suggests a connection between her name and that of Galanthis, Alcmena's servant in Ovid *Met.* 9.306–323, who by a clever trick thwarted Juno's intention to postpone the already delayed birth of Hercules for a still longer time and who was punished for her presumption by being changed into a weasel. Heywood, in *The Silver Age*, gave the name Galanthis to the midwife who reports the birth of the twins. — The idea of saddling Sosie with a demanding wife may have originally come to Molière from the jocular remark in Plautus *Amph.* 659; cf. Stoessl 111.

what from the time of Plautus and presumably even before him had been a double-barreled plot. But he did so, of course, at the expense of depriving Jupiter of such shreds of august dignity and divine concern for a harassed world that still clung to him in earlier plays and of reducing him to the level of a light-hearted libertine. For Plautus' audience Jupiter was still the most exalted of the gods and an object of reverence, however amusing and undignified his carnal weaknesses might be, and he was motivated to some extent at least by his desire to engender a son who would be a destroyer of pests and monsters and the mightiest hero in the world. This dichotomy of divine and all too human in the conception of the father of the gods and men is minimized in Molière, with the result that the comedy gives an impression of heightened unity and consistency.

Two other novelties in this play may be mentioned. One is the clever and amusing prologue, in which Mercure is represented as wearily resting on a cloud engaged in conversation with the goddess of Night. When she reproaches him for grumbling about being tired out, on the ground that it is unbecoming of a god to admit to weariness, he complains that poets assign an appropriate conveyance to each divinity except himself, the illustrious messenger of the sovereign of the gods, who more than anyone else needs to have something to transport him about but who is left to go on foot like a village peddler; to be sure, he has wings attached to his feet, but (he asks) does one get any the less tired for going more quickly? He conveys to the goddess Jupiter's wish that she slacken the pace of the horses that draw her through the air and thus extend this delightful night until it is the longest of nights, and in so doing he acquaints her with all the facts that the audience needs to know in order to understand the action of the play. The other novelty, imitated by some of Molière's successors, is the use Sosie makes of his lantern, having it represent Alcmène as he rehearses the story of the battle that he is to narrate to her. Plautus' Sosia had a lantern to enable him to find his way in the dark and to suggest to the audience in the open-air theater in broad daylight that the action was taking place at night; but Molière's having his Sosie employ the lantern as a surrogate for his mistress adds considerably to the liveliness and dramatic effectiveness of his lengthy monologue.

In spite of the innovations and changes, the author follows Plautus, at times very closely, in much of his play. It is, however,

more than twice the length of what has survived of the *Amphitruo*. Molière also owed not a little to his French predecessor Rotrou.³⁴

(32) *Amphitryo*, by an unidentified author, 1678. A description of this comedy, which was performed in Dresden, was given by Gabriel Tzschimmer. It is otherwise unknown. The plot evidently followed the Plautine tradition for the most part, but Juno, accompanied as usual by Iris, appeared prominently in the latter part of the play seeking to accomplish her vengeful purposes. (See Reinh. 215-6.)

(33) *Amphitrion*, by Pierre Beauchamps, 1680. A French piece with ballet numbers and singing, performed "à l'hôtel de Condé." (See Reinh. 178.)

(34) *Amphitryon*, composer and librettist unknown, 1681. It is recorded that the Dauphin and his consort attended a performance in that year of what is described as "un petit opéra de la comédie d'Amphitryon avec des entr'actes en musique." (See Reinh. 185.)

(35) *Amphitryon, or The Two Socias*, by John Dryden, 1690. Dryden was inspired by Molière's play to write one on the same subject. His comedy, which is one-third as long again as Molière's, is partly in verse and partly in prose and includes three songs, the music for which was composed by Henry Purcell. It is much more rowdy and ribald than its French predecessor. As Sir Walter Scott put it, "He (Dryden) is, in general, coarse and vulgar, where Molière is witty; and where the Frenchman ventures upon a double meaning, the Englishman always contrives to make it a single one."³⁵

³⁴ Two rather trifling instances of Molière's indebtedness to Rotrou, which however are of interest because the lines of Molière are in each case so famous, are the following. In the scene in which the real and the pretended Amphitryon are seen together and the arbiter who has been summoned is unable to decide between them, Rotrou has Sosie volunteer his opinion in the words "Point, point d'Amphitryon où l'on ne dîne point"; this Molière transformed into the well known words, "Le véritable Amphitryon / Est l' Amphitryon où l'on dîne." At the very end of the play Rotrou has Sosie say, "On appelle cela lui sucrer le breuvage"; Molière, with a slight change of metaphor, puts it this way, "Le seigneur Jupiter sait dorer la pilule." — On Molière's comedy see Reinh. 179-85, Jacobi 28-45, Stoessl 110-14, A. L. Bondurant, "The Amphitruo of Plautus, Molière's Amphitryon, and the Amphitryon of Dryden," *Sewanee Rev.* 33.455-68, A. Ernout, "Amphitryon dans Plaute et dans Molière," *Neophilologus* 33.113-20. Note further the bibliography in Jacobi 132-3.

³⁵ *The Collected Works of John Dryden* VIII (Edinburgh 1882) 2. Scott's entire discussion of the play (*ibid.* 1-4) is of interest; it was first published in his 1808 edition of Dryden's works. See also Bondurant (above, note 34) as well as Reinh. 197-203.

Nevertheless, the comedy has very considerable merits. It is marked by an abundance of vigor, it moves along rapidly, and it contains not a few fine lines. Another female character is added to the cast, for Alcmene's servant is here transformed into two persons, her clever lady-in-waiting, Phaedra, who is the embodiment of unscrupulous cupidity, and Socia's scolding and unattractive but devoted wife, Bromia. Gripus, Alcmene's uncle and a judge, whom Dryden introduced in order to satirize the corrupt and venal judges of his time, plays the role of intended arbiter that was played by Blepharo in Plautus and by Naucrates in Molière; as suitor for the hand of the mercenary Phaedra he is bamboozled by her and manhandled by the disguised Mercury, and he is in general the butt of much ridicule. In the opening scene that corresponds to the prologue of Molière's comedy both Mercury and Apollo appear, and they are joined by Jupiter, who reveals to them his intentions, which they have already suspected. Dryden follows Molière in the main outline of the plot and in a number of details as well, though there are some interesting minor innovations in addition to the more significant ones mentioned above. Dryden makes more of Jupiter's purpose in begetting Hercules than Molière did; he has Jupiter speak about it both in the prologue and at the end of the play, where he prophesies eloquently concerning Hercules' achievements.

(36) *Jupiter und Alcmena*, librettist and composer unknown, 1696. This German opera was performed in Dresden in 1696 and again in 1704. (See Reinh. 215.)

(37) A French ballet of uncertain title, by [Venard] de la J[onchère], late seventeenth century. This is described as a "ballet héro-comique" in three acts based on the story of Amphitryon and composed "en vers libres." (See Reinh. 178.)

(38) *Anfitrion*, by Santos Diez Gonzalez, of uncertain date (eighteenth century). I have not seen a copy of this play and have no information about it or its author. It is mentioned by Reinh. 146, but he too did not have access to a copy.

(39) *Anfitrione*, librettist unknown, music composed by Gasparini Francesco, 1707. This Italian opera was performed in Rome. (See Reinh. 174.)

(40) *Amphitryon*, by François (?) Ragueneau, 1713. A "vaudeville" (a stage piece in which the dialogue was interspersed with verses from popular songs) performed at Lille. This one was a parody in three acts with a prelude in pantomime. (See Reinh. 178-9.)

(41) *Amphitryon*, by l'abbé Pellegrini, 1714. A "vaudeville" in three acts performed at "la foire Saint-Germain." It never appeared in print. (See Reinh. 179.)

(42) A German play of uncertain title, by an unidentified Austrian author, 1716. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, in a letter to Mr. P. (Alexander Pope) dated September 14 (O.S.), [1716],³⁶ described the performance of a play dealing with the story of Amphitryon that she had recently attended in Vienna. It evidently was a hilarious and uninhibited affair, and Lady Mary said she had never laughed so much in her life. Sentimental scenes between Jupiter and Alcmena gave place to a great extent to more comical situations. Very amusing, we are told, were the scenes in which the disguised divinities incurred large debts of various sorts and the wretched Amphitryon and Sosia were dunned by the creditors.

(43) *Anfitrione*, libretto by Pietro Pariati, composer of the music unknown, perhaps between about 1720 and 1725. Operas with librettos by Pariati were performed in Munich and Vienna during this period. There is only a single reference to this piece, which was presumably one of his "tragicommedie per musica." (See Reinh. 173-4.)

(44) *Amphitryão, ou Jupiter, e Alcmena*, by Antonio José da Silva, 1736. The author of this curious Portuguese drama was born of a Jewish family in Rio de Janeiro in 1705 but was taken to Portugal at the age of eight and lived there until his death as a victim of the Inquisition twenty-six years later. The play, which was performed in Lisbon in 1736 and published in the collection entitled *Theatro Comico Portuguez* in 1759, is in prose for the most part; the passages in verse include the songs sung by a Chorus at the beginning and end of the first scene, at Juno's first entrance, and at the end of the

³⁶ See *The Works of the Right Honourable Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* II (London 1803) 42-4 or *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu* I (London 1886) 115-6. Her description is also quoted in full in Reinh. 216-7.

play, a number of arias and duets sung by members of the cast, and a *decima* and a *soneto* in one of the later scenes. There are fifteen scenes, seven in the first part and eight in the second; the setting of the first and last scenes is the "Sala Empyrea" of Jupiter.³⁷ Amphitryão's servant is named Saramago and Alcmena's Cornucopia. The cast includes, in addition to the usual principals, not only Juno and her attendant Iris but also Tiresias, who is described as Ministro de Thebas, and Polidaz, a captain in the Theban army.

Jupiter, impersonating Amphitryão, not only visits Alcmena, with the usual resulting complications, but also takes Amphitryão's place at the magnificent triumph held in celebration of his great victory that brought the war against the Thelebanos to an end. Juno assumes the guise of a woman named Felisarda, but to Tiresias, whom she completely captivates by her charm, she pretends to be a hapless princess of the defeated enemy, Florida, living in Thebes under an assumed name, and she induces him to promise to help her exact vengeance upon Amphitryão and Alcmena. Iris, under the name of Corriola, is no less alluring to Saramago. An amusing scene is the one in which Jupiter and Juno meet in their respective human guises and neither is aware of the other's real identity, though Juno has her suspicions; in fact, Juno is no more able to distinguish between the real and the pretended Amphitryão than are the human characters.

The climax of the play occurs when both Amphitryão, prompted by his consuming jealousy, and Tiresias, with the intention of carrying out his promise to Juno, come forward to kill Alcmena, who is asleep beside a spring, and are prevented by Jupiter, who has been carving her name on tree after tree and who is now aided by the arrival of a large group of persons in response to her cries for help. Tiresias orders Amphitryão off to prison on the charge of being an impostor and Alcmena on the charge of being an adulteress, and Saramago is sent along with them. The next scene takes place inside the prison; Amphitryão, who is there with Saramago and three other prisoners, sings affectinglly of his misfortunes, and after he and Saramago have vainly tried to make some sense out of what

³⁷ When the scene shifts near the end of the play from the Temple of Jupiter to the Sala Empyrea, the beginning of a new scene is not marked in the text of the play. But in the synopsis of scenes at the beginning it is clearly indicated that this was intended to be regarded as a separate scene. This is the explanation of the discrepancy between my statement and that of Reinh. to the effect that the play is in two parts, each consisting of seven scenes.

has happened, they are rescued by Juno and Iris, who come veiled into the prison. The scene changes to Jupiter's temple, where first Tiresias and then Amphitryão in melodramatic fashion are eager to offer up Alcmena as a sacrificial victim. But Jupiter calls a halt to the proceedings, and with a sudden shifting of scenery he is promptly revealed enthroned in divine splendor in his heavenly palace. The real Amphitryão is shown to be no impostor and will be honored with a new triumph to make up for the one out of which he was cheated; and Alcmena will be the mother of the illustrious, valorous, invincible Hercules.

How skilfully the author could deal with traditional material may be observed in the scene in which Saramago encounters Mercurio in his own likeness and is compelled to doubt his own identity. He is often less happy, however, when he departs from tradition. Some rather pointless metamorphoses occur during the course of the play, as for example Cornucopia's temporary transformation into a dwarf and Saramago's into a tree, and there is a fairy tale atmosphere about the whole piece; but it has its clever and effective moments. (See further Reinh. 155-61.)

(45) *Amor es todo invencion: Jupiter, y Amphitryon*, by José de Cañizares, perhaps about 1740. This piece for the theater in Spanish verse was called a "melodrama musical," and it was preceded by a "loa" (a panegyric in the form of a preliminary dramatic scene) honoring "Filipo y Isabela," viz. King Philip V and his second queen, Elisabetta (Isabel) Farnese. Participating in the "loa" were ten personifications (including the Day, the Year, October, and December), two Cupids, a group of twelve Men, and two Choruses. The cast of the "melodrama" proper was enormous, including a considerable number of divinities and personifications. Cupid played an important role, as did Juno, who visited Alcmena in disguise with the intention of obtaining revenge. Included in the piece was a battle scene between Amphitryon and his troops and Thelebo, king of Aetolia, and his troops. Later on, the vanquished Thelebo and his company were brought in to celebrate the triumph of Amphitryon. Music and spectacle were both very important features of the piece. (This is merely mentioned by Reinh. 146.)

(46) *Amphitryon, or The Two Sosias*, adapted by John Hawkesworth, 1756. This might be called a fumigated revision of Dryden's comedy. It was prepared by Dr. Hawkesworth, a one-time friend

of Dr. Johnson. His purpose was to remedy certain minor inconsistencies in Dryden's plot as well as to remove those indecencies which were the accepted thing in the dissolute days of Restoration England but were hardly to be tolerated a couple of generations later. Dryden's actual words were retained wherever feasible, and the new material contributed by Hawkesworth was inconsiderable; but the net result of his omissions and changes was an adaptation of some merit. Originally prepared for performance at Drury Lane, it achieved a fair amount of success and was repeatedly produced both there and at the other Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.³⁸ (See further Reinh. 204-7.)

(47) *Amphitryon*, libretto by Richard Rolt, music by Michael Arne and Jonathan Battishill, 1764. This English opera was first performed at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane early in November of 1764 but was withdrawn after a few performances; this is said to have been because of the dullness of the dialogue rather than of any lack of musical merit. (It is mentioned by Reinh. 204.)

(48) *Amphitryon*, libretto by Charles Sédaine, music by André-Erneste-Modeste Grétry, 1786. A French opera in three acts. The work of both the librettist and the composer seems to have

³⁸ The 1756 edition of the play did not give the name of the adapter. (Its title-page reads as follows: AMPHITRYON: OR, THE TWO SOSIAS. A COMEDY, Altered from DRYDEN. As it is perform'd at the Theatre-Royal in *Drury-Lane*. WITH A New Interlude of MUSIC, an Occasional PROLOGUE, and some Account of the Alterations. LONDON, Printed: And sold by J. PAYNE at *Pope's Head*, in *Pater-noster Row*. M DCC LVI. [Price One Shilling.]) At least four later editions were published. The title-page of the 1777 edition is misleading. (It reads as follows: AMPHITRYON: OR, THE TWO SOSIAS. A COMEDY, Altered from DRYDEN. By Mr. WOODWARD. Marked with the Variations of the MANAGER'S BOOK, at the **Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden**. LONDON: PRINTED FOR T. LOWNDES, T. CASLON, C. CORBETT, AND S. BLADON. M.DCC.LXXVII.) Henry Woodward was an actor who played the role of Sosia, and he is shown in this role in the frontispiece of this edition. It is not an independent adaptation, as one would be led to expect, but is simply Hawkesworth's text with the passages, lines, and phrases that were omitted in the Covent Garden performances printed within inverted commas. The 1780 edition, which carries the name of Dr. Hawkesworth on the title-page, omits entirely the material included within inverted commas in the 1777 edition; it has Dryden's own occasional prologue instead of the one by Hawkesworth contained in the 1756 and 1777 editions, as well as Dryden's rather blasphemous epilogue that was spoken by Phaedra, and its frontispiece shows "Mr. King, in the character of Sosia." Reinh. was evidently not acquainted with any edition earlier than that of 1792, which he describes. He seems also to have believed that the actor Woodward revised Hawkesworth's adaptation more significantly than he actually did by his cutting out of the material referred to above.

fallen well below their usual standards in this opera. (See Reinh. 185-6.)

(49) *Amphitryon*, by Johann Daniel Falk, 1804. This lengthy, prolix, and rather inept play in German verse was published in two parts, the first containing acts 1-3 and the second acts 4 and 5. There is an enormous cast, for the author, as he indicates in the *Vorbericht* to the play, sought to suggest the great variety of types of persons that might have been encountered in the world of Menander and Philemon. Alkmene already has a child, Amyntichus, and her father Electryon is one of the *dramatis personae* as well. Sosia's wife is named Andria. Also belonging to Amphitryon's household are the housekeeper Damokleia and the head cook Doriskus. There are two parasites named Licht and Schatten, a soldier named Thraso, and other characters engaged in a variety of occupations.

One novel feature of the plot deserves mention. Amphitryon, incensed beyond endurance by what he took to be Sosia's outrageous behavior in abusing him and pelting him with bricks when he approached his own house — it was of course Merkur disguised as Sosia who had done all this — ordered Sosia tied up in a sack and carried off by a pair of fishermen to be drowned; but another pair of fishermen hauled the wretched man out of the Asopus in their fishing net, and so he was saved. A scene containing much ironic humor, but marred by being too long drawn out, is the one in which Sosia tells Jupiter, disguised as his master, how he would run things if he could take Jupiter's place as ruler of the world. Mention may also be made of an effective variation on a theme that goes back to Rotrou and Molière. It occurs in the eleventh scene of the fifth act. The two Amphitryons have confronted each other and the actual Amphitryon has rushed with a drawn sword on his impersonator, who with scarcely a touch has caused the sword to fall from his hand. Jupiter, after threats and warnings to Amphitryon, calls to the cook Doriskus asking if the food has been served up for the assembled company and the tables laid with bread and wine and fish. When Doriskus answers in the affirmative, the parasite Licht exclaims, "Thebaner, nun wird's klar! — Ich dächte, / Wer uns zu essen giebt —" and the entire gathering breaks in with "Ja, ja, das ist der rechte!"

In the final scene of the play, the seventeenth of the fifth act,

when Jupiter among the clouds takes his leave of the Thebans and of Alkmene, there is not a word of any issue from their union; this adventure of the greatest of the gods, even though he says he came, he saw, and he found much more than he sought, has been entirely dissociated from the story of Hercules and has been deprived of what had originally been its basic motivation and justification. (See further Reinh. 219–25.)

(50) *Amphitryon*, by Heinrich von Kleist, 1807. This drama, in German verse, is unquestionably one of the most significant treatments of the story of Alcmena and Amphitryon. It is described on its title-page as “Ein Lustspiel nach Molière”; it follows Molière’s plot in the main and there is often a quite close correspondence in details, but its author was less interested than his French predecessor in the comic possibilities of the story and more in its emotional stresses and mystical overtones. In the scenes between Jupiter and Alkmene there is an earnestness of tone, an intensity and urgency that are in marked contrast with the boudoir gallantries of the corresponding scenes of the French comedy. Jupiter is treated more seriously; he is represented as being under the pressure of a consuming desire to be loved as himself, and the distinction between husband and lover is more resolutely insisted upon than by Molière. This is responsible for the major innovation of the play, that Alkmene is filled with doubt concerning her faithfulness to her husband. Jupiter, when he first visited her in Amphitryon’s form, had brought her from the spoils of battle a resplendent diadem.³⁹ This was engraved with an A, the initial letter of Amphitryon’s name. Bewildered by the inexplicable way in which her real husband, who had just left

³⁹ The gift of great value that Amphitryon intended to present to his wife from the spoils of his slain adversary and that was miraculously abstracted by Jupiter from the sealed box in which Sosia was bringing it home and presented to Alcmena by him before the real Amphitryon arrived was a feature of the Plautine plot taken over by most of the dramatists, except the most recent ones, who have dealt with Amphitryon’s story. In Plautus’ comedy the gift was the golden goblet of King Pterelas, and his successors continued to refer to a similar object until Molière, presumably with the intention of providing a gift that would have more of an appeal for a feminine recipient, changed it to a jewelled ornament (a bracelet or armet embellished with five diamonds). Dryden followed Molière in making the gift a jewelled ornament, though in his play it is referred to as a brooch. In Kleist’s play the gift is regularly spoken of as the diadem of Labdakus. According to Kleist, it was the Athenians, not the Teleboans, whom the Thebans under Amphitryon had been fighting, and the Athenian leader was named Labdakus. (This name was a curious choice in view of its association with Theban legend, in which Labdacus was the grandfather of Oedipus.)

her, had talked and by her recollection of the pretended Amphitryon's insistence during their night together on the distinction between husband and lover, Alkmene, in order to reassure herself, looked again at the treasured gift, and the A had miraculously been changed to a J. From that moment her doubts and suspicions could not be allayed, and her conversations with Jupiter were often truly agonizing for the wretched woman. At one point Jupiter, speaking as her husband, suggested that in her prayers and devotions to the most high god she had kept her husband ever in her thoughts and had revered Jupiter in Amphitryon's guise, with the result that she had incurred the god's anger and had been punished by being entrapped into unwitting adultery. Thus in addition to consciousness of her possible unfaithfulness, her own responsibility for it was cruelly suggested to her. So we find in Kleist a subtle probing of the depths of human personality of a sort we have not seen in earlier dramatic treatments of the theme.

In sharp contrast with the unusual seriousness that marks the handling of the interrelations of the principals is the low buffoonery in which their opposite numbers indulge below stairs. The name of Amphitryon's servant is here given the form Sosias (accented on the penult), and his wife is Charis. The trio Mercur-Sosias-Charis is treated in such an unrefined fashion that there is a striking disparity both in language and in mood in different parts of the drama.

There is no prologue with divinities explaining the situation. The play opens with a long monologue of Sosias addressed to his lantern, in the tradition of Molière and Dryden. At the end of the drama Alkmene, feeling that her honor has been violated, wishes to flee away to the desert. She like all the others has decided between the two rival Amphitryons in favor of the god. This leads to Jupiter's revealing his true identity. He then promises that Amphitryon's dearest wish shall be fulfilled, and Amphitryon asks the god to do for him what he did for Tyndarus, bestow a great son upon him like the Tyndaridae. Jupiter replies:

Es sei. Dir wird ein Sohn geboren werden,
Dess' Name Herkules; es wird an Ruhm
Kein Heros sich, der Vorwelt, mit ihm messen,
Auch meine ew'gen Dioskuren nicht.

He then goes on to foretell the twelve tremendous labors and Hercules' ultimate reception in Olympus as a god. His final words

express solicitude for Alkmene, and as he disappears into the clouds she utters the name that for her is so charged with varied emotions, "Amphitryon!" After some words from Merkur and Sosias and as his fellow officers are offering congratulations the husband speaks his wife's name and the play ends with Alkmene breathing forth a subdued exclamation that suggests feelings as mixed as they are profound, a simple "Ach!"

Goethe's generally disparaging opinion of Kleist's work militated for decades against this play's being rated at its true worth. More recently the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction. Thomas Mann, to be sure, with his extravagant praise, certainly went too far when he said: "Das ist das witzig-anmutvollste, das geistreichste, das tiefste und schönste Theaterspielwerk der Welt"; and again when he said: "Die Heiterkeit seiner Mystik, die Innigkeit seines Witzes sind unvergleichlich."⁴⁰ A fairer evaluation would give the play full credit for its considerable merits but would recognize that it has its limitations.

(51) *Amphitryon*, with libretto by Beaumont and Nutter, music by Paul-Jean-Jacques Lacome d'Estaleux, 1875. This French opera was brought out in Paris on April 5, 1875. (See Reinh. 186.)

(52) *Amphitryon* 38, by Jean Giraudoux, 1929.⁴¹ This French prose play is a notably original work, characterized by an abundance

⁴⁰ The quotations are from the second paragraph and the final paragraph of the essay entitled "Kleists Amphitryon: Eine Wiedereroberung" in Thomas Mann, *Adel des Geistes* (Stockholm 1945) 56-103. This interesting and original discussion of the play first appeared in 1926 in the *Neue Rundschau* and was reprinted in the author's *Die Forderung des Tages* (Berlin 1930); an English translation is included in Thomas Mann, *Essays of Three Decades*, translated by H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York 1947) 202-40. Characteristic judgments of a less favorable character that are worth quoting are those of Reinh. 229: "Molière hat er freilich, trotz stellenweise engsten Anschlusses, bei weitem nicht erreicht"; Wilamowitz (above, note 19) 53: "Man muss die glänzende und völlig gelungene leistung Molières bewundern, aber auch den misslungenen versuch Heinrichs von Kleist, die ehrwürdige und heilige sage nach ihrem werte verständlich zu machen, würdigen können, damit man die freiheit des sinnes habe, weder blasphemische frivolität in der Amphitryonsage zu finden, noch die romantisch krankhafte gefühlsverwirrung hineinzutragen"; and F. Gundolf, *Heinrich von Kleist* (Berlin 1922) 76-7: "Für eine Komödie [ist es] zu lastend, für eine Tragödie zu lustig." See Reinh. 226-9, Jacobi 46-73, Stoessl 114-7. Note further the bibliography in Jacobi 133-4.

⁴¹ It would be interesting to know whether Giraudoux had worked out, as the result of direct or indirect acquaintance with Reinh.'s researches and other evidence, a list of thirty-seven previous treatments of the theme of Jupiter's visit to Alcmena in the guise of Amphitryon. It has often been supposed that he may have, even apparently by

of subtle wit, appealing humor, and incisive thought. It has diverged quite far from the Plautine tradition, so numerous and so striking are the new twists given the story; but we realize that if the Latin writer's *Amphitruo* had not survived, this comedy would never have been written.

The play opens with Jupiter and Mercure outside Amphitryon's home spying on the amorous exchanges taking place between him and his wife. Since Jupiter yearns to experience the same difficulties and the same delights that mortals do in their love-making and is unwilling to forego the exquisite satisfaction to be derived from Alcmène's yielding to him with complete consent, Mercure suggests that he impersonate her husband and that in order to get the husband out of the way he stir up a war — against a friendly state, since Thebes is at peace with all her enemies. The departure of the divinities is followed by a scene between a Trumpeter and Sosie. Right here we have a good sample of Giraudoux's comic inventiveness. The Trumpeter, who is very much concerned about being in the right emotional state whenever he sounds a trumpet call — he is "a composer on one note" — has been told to give the signal for a proclamation of peace, describing its blessings and invoking curses on war. But he is interrupted by the entrance of a Warrior with word that the Athenians have mobilized and crossed the border. The Warrior then proceeds to deliver a harangue on the advantages of war.

After a parting scene between Amphitryon and Alcmène, Mercure enters disguised as Sosie and informs Alcmène that his master is only pretending to leave with the army and actually means to return, once he has given his orders, and spend the night with her. When Jupiter first knocks at the gate of the palace in the guise of Amphitryon there is an interesting variation on the familiar theme of husband versus lover. When he declares to Alcmène that for once he is coming as her lover, she refuses to admit him. When he returns announcing that he is her husband, she invites him in at once. This is the first of several exchanges in which Jupiter is subjected to discomfiture. One of the conspicuous features of the

Frenchmen; see for example Thibaudet (above, note 17) 22. But it is equally possible that he knew the earlier works had been numerous and that he fixed on a number for his own play at random. A French acquaintance has told me that "trente-huit" is not infrequently used in France to suggest a sizable number. It will be seen, however, from our list that it would not be difficult to enumerate at least thirty-seven precursors of Giraudoux. On the play see Jacobi 74–95. Note further the bibliography, *ibid.* 134.

comedy, indeed, is that the joke is on Jupiter himself as frequently as it is on anyone else.

Two particularly amusing features of the second act, which takes place outside Alcmène's bedroom, may be mentioned. One is the scene in which Jupiter tries to get Alcmène to acknowledge that the night they have just spent together was the most delightful in her experience while she keeps recalling other nights (spent of course in company with her real husband) which were in various ways far superior. The other is the diverting ironical twist in the plot when Alcmène, under the misapprehension that the actual Amphitryon is Jupiter in disguise and thinking to protect her own virtue, sends him to bed with Leda, who is visiting her and with whom she has been conniving.

The setting of the third act is the roof of the palace. The Theban populace is assembling below, for Mercure has taken it upon himself to announce to all the world that Jupiter will visit Alcmène that night, and all the disabled folk are crowding around in the hope that the god in passing by will touch and cure them. There is a scene between Amphitryon and Alcmène in the course of which she realizes, when he speaks of having just come from her arms, that it was he whom she sent to Leda. They discuss what course they shall follow in view of Jupiter's announced visit; when Amphitryon suggests submission in case he fails to dissuade the god, his wife refuses, asking how they could go on living with that between them. In a conversation between her and Jupiter that follows she persuades him that he is more suited to be her friend than her lover! But in order not to disappoint the Thebans she suggests that she appear before them, indeed before the whole world, as his mistress. His ready acceptance of the situation rouses her suspicions and when she asks him point blank whether he has ever taken the form of Amphitryon, he unblushingly asserts that he has not. But her uncertainty persists in spite of his repeated denial. So Jupiter confers upon her the gift of forgetfulness, and after he and she have shown themselves at the parapet to the populace below, he and Mercure make their way towards the low-hanging clouds while Amphitryon and Alcmène embrace. The play ends with the transfigured Alcmène calling out a final farewell to the departed god.

Alcmène's famous son was not forgotten in this highly original treatment of her story. In the course of Jupiter's conversation with her on the morning after their night together he asks her

whether she would not like to have a son less subject to human imperfections than herself, an immortal son who would become the greatest of heroes, who from early childhood would attack lions and monsters, who would slay terrible serpents that came to strangle him in his crib. Alcène acknowledges that it is only human to desire to have an immortal son, but she insists that in his early childhood he will have a tortoise and a spaniel; experiences like the strangling of serpents simply do not happen to sons of ordinary women, and what she wants is a soft, gently cooing baby who will be frightened of flies. Later on, after he has left her, Jupiter tells Mercure that her son, of all his sons, will be his special favorite — a fact which Mercure confesses he has already announced to the entire universe. Then when he adds that he formally proclaimed that Jupiter will visit Alcène that very night, Jupiter is greatly upset for fear she may kill herself and his son Hercule may die also. At the end of the play, just before Jupiter and Mercure take their final departure, Jupiter tells Amphitryon, with a lack of candor that is characteristic of the god in this comedy, that Alcène will bear him (Amphitryon) a son; he requests that the son be named Hercule, promising that he himself will be his godfather(!) — and so destiny will be fulfilled.

(53) *Amphitryon* 38, adapted by S. N. Behrman, 1937. This American adaptation of Giraudoux's comedy followed the French play on the whole quite closely. The chief differences are these. For the opening scene of the French play, in which Jupiter and Mercure converse on a terrace outside Amphitryon's palace where they have been skulking about among the cactus plants and the brambles watching Alcène's window, Behrman substitutes a prologue in which, obviously in reminiscence of Molière, the two divinities are seated on a cloud. Behrman eliminated Alcène's nurse, Eclissé, who in the French play has a scene of some length with her mistress in the second act and who appears briefly elsewhere in the play, and substituted two maids of Alcmena's who scarcely open their mouths at any time. He adds some passages which enhance the impression of Alcmena's placid domesticity, as when she notices a hole in Jupiter's sock and gets her darning materials and proceeds to mend it. Speeches here and there are omitted or added or transposed from one context to another. But taken as a whole it is a commendably faithful and successful adaptation of the original.

(54) *Zweimal Amphitryon*, by Georg Kaiser, 1944.⁴² The première of this drama took place in Zurich in the spring of 1944, but its text was not published until 1948, when it appeared with two other plays, *Pygmalion* and *Bellerophon*, in a posthumous volume entitled *Griechische Dramen*. The author's earlier plays were regularly in prose but here he shifts to verse of a compressed and highly charged nature. This employment of verse may have been one way of avoiding any suggestion of realism. An effort to achieve remoteness from realism is apparent also in the directions for staging and in the fact that only four of the cast of characters are assigned personal names — Jupiter, Amphitryon, Alkmene, and Alkmene's brother Alexandros; all the other characters — the nurse, the maid-servant, the messenger, the elders, the army officers, and the rest — are nameless. It will be observed that Mercury has been eliminated from the cast. There are no humorous scenes; the play is intensely serious throughout. It would not be called a tragedy in the modern sense, though it would qualify as such according to the Greek definition. It can at least be said, however, that the drama has a decided tragic coloring. Both the plot and the way in which the characters are conceived are highly original. Not only is there unrelieved intensity throughout the piece, but the characters often go to extremes in their behavior and utterances.

⁴² The title is reminiscent of that of one of Kaiser's earlier dramas, *Zweimal Oliver* (1926), another play in which impersonation is basic to the plot. In it a professional stage impersonator was hired by a beautiful woman to assume for an hour each day the guise of an absent male friend, and in course of time he fell deeply in love with her; the part he played became so real to him that when the man he was impersonating returned, he was unable to distinguish between the actual person and himself in that role; as a result, he shot the other man under the delusion that he was shooting himself, and he ended up in an asylum where, thinking he had died and gone to heaven, he completely lost his identity in a continuous impersonation, maintaining without interruption the role that had been his favorite one in his act on the stage. — The three posthumous Greek dramas were not the first of Kaiser's plays on Greek themes. As early as 1915 he had looked to Greek mythology for the subject of one of his minor stage pieces, the *Europa*, a strange cross between a fanciful drama and a ballet, and in 1920 he had drawn on the classical period for the subject of a more significant work, *Der gerettete Alkibiades*; in both of these are to be seen the striking and ingenious innovations of the sort that regularly characterize their author's handling of famous stories of history and legend. — In the fifteen years following World War I, Kaiser occupied a position in the German theater second only to that of Gerhart Hauptmann, and his plays were constantly being performed. But in 1933, in the face of the Nazi threat, he fled to Switzerland, where he died in exile in 1945. — On the *Amphitryon* see Jacobi 96–118. Note also the bibliography, *ibid.* 135. The *Nachwort*, by Cäsar von Arx, to Kaiser's above-mentioned posthumous volume, *Griechische Dramen* (Zürich 1948) 377–82, is of interest, too.

Amphitryon is represented as a man consumed with a passion for war. He was presented with a suit of armor on his wedding day, and such was its lure for him that he was compelled to rush right off on a military campaign without waiting to spend his wedding night with his bride. She has been waiting with passionate eagerness for his return, and when a messenger she has sent to him has come back without even obtaining a hearing — so preoccupied was Amphitryon with his siege of Pharsala — she prays to Zeus that her husband may be restored to her, and her devoted love for him is such that she would joyously welcome him even in the humblest possible condition, as a goatherd clad in a shaggy goatskin. Zeus, who is wroth at all mankind for its devotion to war and strife and who is determined to destroy the entire human race, is touched by Alkmene's prayer and descends to earth, assuming her husband's form and coming to her as a goatherd, since she had declared that his being reduced even to that lowest condition would make no difference in her love for him. As Amphitryon Zeus consummates the marriage, and his experience of human love has a transforming effect upon him. He becomes aware of the atoning power of an unselfish devotion and gives up his destructive purpose.

Meanwhile Amphitryon has captured Pharsala by an unworthy stratagem and has ruthlessly given orders that the town be destroyed by fire. His officers wish to return to Thebes to their wives, but Amphitryon will not permit it; the capture of a town by a trick has not been a sufficient achievement to satisfy his lust for warfare and glory, and he is determined to conquer a peaceful and prosperous country that is situated still farther from Thebes. He will first go himself and spy out the land. As he makes this decision a garb of goatskin is miraculously found in his tent, and he sets forth disguised as a goatherd.

Zeus, at a feast in Thebes with Alkmene, since the guests were wondering how it came about that the mighty Amphitryon had returned from the camp alone in such a mean garb, improvised the explanation that the officers, drunk with blood, had condemned him to death when he urged their return home and that he had escaped from them in this disguise. Three of the most influential of the elders were therefore sent to the camp to give orders for the immediate return of the army. Arriving at the camp, the elders found the situation entirely different from what they had expected, especially when Amphitryon got back from his spying expedition with a full

report about the land that was to be the object of his proposed attack. They insisted that they had themselves seen Amphitryon in Thebes and quite understandably accused him of duplicity and demanded that he stand trial for his actions.

The trial was held in the market place of the city in the presence of the assembled populace. Amphitryon was convinced that there was one person who could testify to his continued absence from Thebes, his young wife. But the unhappy Alkmene could only tell the truth, and when she reported what her supposed husband had said to her as he took his departure, this was interpreted as a threat on his part to establish a tyranny in Thebes and he was condemned either to perpetual banishment or to death. As he offers sacrifice to Zeus in his extremity, the god, still disguised as Amphitryon, appears beside him. Then in a magnificent final speech he explains the situation, tells how he descended from Olympus to test the genuineness of Alkmene's prayer that her husband might come to her even in the lowliest guise and, being blessed by experiencing her love, was deflected from his purpose of annihilating belligerent mankind, predicts the birth of his son who, himself free from all malignity, will rid the earth of what is foul and bestial and will inaugurate the Olympic games in which the combative instincts of mankind will find a rational and honorable outlet, and informs Amphitryon that he must do penance for his ferocity by living the life of a despised and mistreated goatherd until Hercules' birth, when he is to assume the responsibility for his upbringing. Zeus then disappears and Amphitryon goes off to begin his period of penance. Alkmene, after a few brief words expressive of wonder and submission and with the gaze of the entire populace centered upon her, as one who by her steadfast, tender, and unselfish love had saved the human race from extinction, sinks to the ground in a swoon.

The abhorrence of war and tyranny reflected in the play gave it a special pertinence at the time it was written and first performed. But it was by no means a merely ephemeral composition. It is an impressive work, with a powerful impact, and as it becomes better known, it is sure to take a high place among modern plays based on ancient myths. It has departed completely from the Plautine tradition, but it is a significant addition to the succession of dramatic treatments of the story of Alcmena and Amphitryon.

(55) *Amphitryon*, libretto and music by Robert Oboussier, 1950. This German opera by a Swiss composer was first performed

in Berlin in March of 1951, though it had been published the previous year. The libretto owes much to both Molière and Kleist but also introduces a good many original features. It is a mixture of the elevated and serious, derived largely from Kleist, and of the frivolous and amusing, derived partly from both of these predecessors and partly from other sources or from the author's own ingenuity.⁴³ It is interesting that this, which as far as I know is the most recent theater piece having to do with Alcmena and Amphitryon, should thus combine the more solemn mood and the lighter touch, for both these approaches to the story were represented, though presumably never in combination, in its dramatic treatments back in Greek and Roman times.

It will be observed that the list I have compiled does not include translations,⁴⁴ treatments of the story in other than dramatic form,⁴⁵

⁴³ For details see Jacobi 119–25. One ingenious touch which is perhaps worth mentioning here is the representation near the end of the opera of the constellation of Gemini in the night sky as the goddess of Night prophesies the birth of Alkmene's twins.

⁴⁴ Data concerning a number of translations of Plautus' *Amphitruo* will be found in Reinh. 138–40 (cf. above, note 26) and 145–6 (Spanish), 174 (Italian), 174 (French), 204 (English), and 229 (German). A German translation of Camões' play is mentioned in Reinh. 147 note 1, and translations of Molière's play in various languages are listed in Reinh. 184 note 4 and in Steinhoff (above, note 1) 13. It is of course often difficult to draw the line between translations and adaptations. I have included in the list above those works which seem to have incorporated a significant amount of original material. There is doubt as to whether the German rendering of Plautus' comedy by Wohlfahrt Spangenberg (1608) was a translation or an adaptation. Steinhoff (above, note 1) 14 note 5, whose knowledge of it was obviously secondhand, asserted that it had been shown to be a translation, but Reinh. 208, writing later, implied that it was probably an adaptation, though he acknowledged that the work was not accessible to him; its title, *Comödia, inhaltend die Empfengknüss vnd Geburt Herculis, aus dem Lateinischen Maccii Accii Plautii*, could hardly be regarded as evidence one way or the other.

⁴⁵ The most influential of these has been the *Geta* of Vitalis Blesensis (Vital de Blois), a narrative poem in Latin elegiacs of the late twelfth or the early thirteenth century. While a large part of the piece consists of dialogue, it is not in any sense of the word a play. The Marquis de Queux de Saint-Hilaire, in the introduction to his edition of the expanded French paraphrase of about 1421 by Eustache Deschamps entitled *Le Traicté de Gelta et d'Amphitryon* (Paris 1872), described the Latin poem as "une sorte de récit dialogué." Not only in its original Latin form, as evidenced by the fact that at least eighteen manuscripts of it are in existence, but also in the French paraphrase mentioned above and in an Italian paraphrase entitled *Geta e Birria*, at one time attributed to Boccaccio but of uncertain authorship, the piece enjoyed wide popularity which did not begin to wane until interest in Plautus himself was revived late in the fifteenth and early in the sixteenth centuries. The poem was a satire on the scholasticism of the period, and Amphitryon was not a military leader but a student of philosophy who had been attending the schools of Athens. Jupiter's attendant divinity is named Archas (i.e., Arkas) throughout, though he is twice called *caducifer*. Interest in Jupiter's visit to Alcmena and in the fortunes of the married couple is very much sub-

or dramas which derive their plots from this story but in which other characters are substituted for Alcmena and Amphitryon.⁴⁶ Even so the list is an impressive one. It would be rash, however, to assume that the list is complete. There must have been plays and other theater pieces both in antiquity and in more recent times of which all traces have disappeared; and a more assiduous search of theatrical records and library catalogues would very probably turn up information about works that are at present unknown.

The story of Alcmena and Amphitryon was of sufficient scope and variety to provide Greek and Roman dramatists with material for several different possible plots. How many of these they actually used we do not know. For although a fair number of ancient tragedies were entitled either *Alcmena* or *Amphitryon*, about the plot of only one of them, that of Euripides, has a reasonably acceptable conjecture been proposed. In the surviving tragedies in which one or other of the illustrious pair appeared, they played important but subordinate roles, and their participation in the action was solely the result of their relationship to Heracles. Yet Amphitryon was a hero of considerable stature in his own right, a prominent figure in both the Argive and the Theban tradition, to whom legend ascribed a variety of dramatic adventures; and Alcmena's life, too, was far

ordinated to the antics of the two slaves Geta (who replaces Sosia) and Byrrhia. See Reinh. 124–38 and Jacobi 16–8.

⁴⁶ The most interesting of these have been the Italian comedy by Ludovico Dolce, *Il Marito* (1545), and the American musical play, with book by Dwight Taylor and Reginald Lawrence and music by Cole Porter, *Out of This World* (1950). In addition, motifs from Plautus' *Amphitruo* were employed, for example, in the anonymous English "Enterlued for Chyldren" *Jacke Jugeler* (about 1550), in Luigi Groto Cieco di Hadria's Italian pastoral play *La Calisto* (1561, revised 1582), and in Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*; on the last named see Roeder (above, note 30) 34–6 and G. Highet, *The Classical Tradition* (New York 1949) 214–5 and 625 note 90. — Reinh. 208 note 2, referring to a play by John Oxenford which he says was alleged to have owed much to Molière and Dryden and which he had himself not been able to identify, suggested the possibility that the play might be *I and My Double*, which was first produced in June 1838. This suggestion was evidently based merely on acquaintance with the title and not on acquaintance with the piece itself. Duckworth, (above, note 19) 430 note 112, presumably misled by Reinh.'s uninformed suggestion, states as a fact that *I and My Double* was based upon Dryden's *Amphitryon*. But I have been unable to discover any connection whatever between this farce and the Amphitryon story. Impersonation, to be sure, plays an important part in its plot, but it is not impersonation of the sort found in that story and it is not employed for any similar purpose. The theatrical device of contiguous houses affording a passage from one to the other and the theme of a young lover impersonating someone else in order to obtain an opportunity of running away with his inamorata are reminiscent of Plautus' *Miles Gloriosus*, not of the *Amphitruo*.

from uneventful. It would not be unreasonable to suppose that if we could recover the plots of all the ancient dramas in which either of them played a part, we should find that several different phases of their story had been presented.

It was suggested above that there was probably only one phase of the story that would have been of much interest to ancient writers of comedy. This is the one which has proved of perennial interest, the high god's impersonation of the absent husband and its effects.⁴⁷ It is a theme fraught with ample possibilities for variety of treatment. Other phases of the story would offer fine dramatic opportunities for those for whom the world of Greek myth was still of vital interest. But for men of other ages they would have little meaning. This one episode, however, possessed a universal appeal. Even it, to be sure, was charged with greater significance for the Greeks and Romans. The visit of Zeus to Alcmena, however intriguing the manner in which it was accomplished, was but incidental to the engendering of the mightiest and most humanitarian of heroes. Later dramatists, not so completely steeped in Hellenic lore, usually slighted Heracles and sometimes completely ignored him. But on the theme of the fantastic marital triangle — husband, wife, and divine impersonator of the husband — they rang an unusual variety of changes. Our list includes comedies, farces, skits, pantomimes, pastoral plays, operas, ballets, and one near-tragedy. It is a theme that is truly "classical" in that it combines perennial interest with susceptibility to ever fresh reinterpretation.

It is hardly necessary to say that it was Plautus who directed the attention of writers of later ages to the dramatic possibilities of the theme. In view of the large number of stage compositions, some of them of enduring significance, that owe their being to his *Amphitruo*, that comedy deserves to be rated among the most in-

⁴⁷ Similar tales have been reported from ancient India by Voltaire, "Fragments historiques sur l'Inde," Article 28, in his *Oeuvres Complètes* XXIX (Paris 1879) 186-7, and from ancient Egypt by J. Capart, "L'Amphitryon de Plaute d'après un thème égyptien," *L'Antiquité classique* 9.65-6. There was also a rarely mentioned Greek doublet of the story: Clement of Rome, *Homiliae* 5.13, states that Zeus visited Cassiopeia in the guise of her husband Phoenix and that Anchinius was the issue of this union. Cassiopeia (Kassiepeia), who is most commonly thought of as the wife of Cepheus and as having a prominent role in the story of Perseus, also appears in two quite different mythological contexts; she had, indeed, a kind of triple personality. The name of her son by Zeus is elsewhere given as Atymnus or Atymnius. It is not surprising, in view of the shadowy personality of the mother and her son's lack of eminence, that this story had little chance of competing in popularity with the story of Alcmena and her mighty son.

fluent plays ever written. The complications and confusions arising out of Jupiter's and Mercury's impersonations and the ironic possibilities provided by Alcmena's mistaken belief that her immortal seducer was her husband still, after twenty-one and a half centuries, have an appeal for writers for the theater. Within our own generation Giraudoux, adopting a fresh approach, handled the tale in a manner at once remarkably clever and remarkably sensitive, and Kaiser, taking an entirely different line, handled it with a seriousness and intensity hitherto unparalleled, except perhaps in parts of Kleist's play, among the extant dramatic treatments. In view of this, it would be unreasonable to assume that the possibilities of the theme have been exhausted. There surely remain abundant opportunities for probing into its psychological subtleties. It would be interesting to know when and where to look for the next addition to the list.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ An answer to these questions was not long delayed. While this article was in the hands of the printer, a playlet in three scenes by the Brazilian dramatist Guilherme Figueiredo, in an English adaptation by Lloyd George and John Fostini entitled *A God Slept Here*, was being produced in New York. In a review of the piece in *The New York Times* of February 21, 1957, it was described as "an often uproariously funny burlesque" on the *Amphitryon* theme in which Alcmena is seduced not by the disguised Jupiter but by her own husband pretending to be Jupiter in disguise. My knowledge of this newest dramatic handling of the story I owe to the kindness of Professor Michael H. Jameson. — Mention should also be made of the fact that there has been at least one motion picture dealing with the story of Alcmena and *Amphitryon*. It was a film in the French language, with French actors in the principal roles, entitled *Amphitryon*, but it was made in Berlin by a Nazi-financed concern. The scenario was by Reinhold Schunzel and Albert Valentin, who were also the directors; the author of the dialogue and songs was Serge Veber and the composer of the music François Doelle. A novel twist was given to the story in this film in that its basic theme was the discomfiture of Jupiter. After being repeatedly frustrated in one way or another, he was in the end unsuccessful in his wooing of Alcèmène because of the interference of Juno, represented as a dowdy old frump with a merciless tongue, at precisely the wrong moment. So complete was his frustration that even Alcèmène had to forgive him. The film was shown in various places in this country in the autumn, winter, and spring of 1936-7; in New York it ran for only a week because of being boycotted and picketed by anti-Nazi groups. It was reviewed in *The New York Times* of March 24, 1937, page 29.