NAMES AND PLAYERS: THE SYCOPHANT SCENE OF THE "TRINUMMUS" (*TRIN.* 4.2)

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The intrigue of the *Trinummus*[1] is of particular interest for the study of Plautus' methods of adaptation. In his model, Philemon's *Thesaurus*, Plautus found an intrigue that was introduced unusually late in the play, with its action concentrated into one scene. Its dramatic purpose was not to change the course of events, but to complicate the homecoming of the absent father of the play, Charmides, as one of a series of ironic misunderstandings into which he falls. Since it was not a major constitutive element of the plot, this intrigue has not held the attention of those interested primarily in reconstructing Philemon's play. Indeed, one of the points that Fantham set out to prove in her study of Philemon's *Thesaurus* was that "the architecture of the play is related to its moral issues rather than the modest and ineffectual intrigue of the old men."[2]

If the intrigue was only a minor episode in the *Thesaurus*, the case is different in the *Trinummus*, where the sycophant scene is the third longest scene in the play,[3] having received a comic development out of proportion to its contribution to the plot. Generally recognised as the funniest scene in the play,[4] it is also the scene that gave the play its

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[1] Highly thought of in the nineteenth century, the *Trinummus* fell into neglect in the early twentieth. There has been a revival of interest in the last fifteen years. See P. Grimal, "Analis [sic] del *Trinummus* e gli albori della filosofia in Roma," *Dioniso* 43 (1969) 363–75; J. P. Stein, "Morality in Plautus' *Trinummus*" *CB* 47 (1970) 7–13; E. Segal, "The Purpose of the *Trinummus*," *AJP* 95 (1974) 252–64; E. Fantham, "Philemon's *Thesaurus* as a Dramatisation of Peripatetic Ethics," *Hermes* 105 (1977) 406–21; W. S. Anderson "Plautus' *Trinummus*: The Absurdity of Officious Morality," *Traditio* 35 (1979) 335–45; R. L. Hunter, "Philemon, Plautus and the *Trinummus*," *MH* 37 (1980) 216–30; A. S. Gratwick, "Curculio's Last Bow: Plautus *Trinummus* IV.3," *Mnemosyne* 34 (1981) 331–50.

[2] Fantham (above, note 1) 410.

[3] 4.2 has 165 lines. Cf. 1.2 (185), 2.4 (201). On the juxtaposition of "long" scenes with scenes of "normal" length see G. Chiarini, *La recita. Plauto, la farsa, la festa* (Bologna 1979) 165, note 181.

[4] J. Brix-M. Niemeyer, *Ausgewählte Komödien des T. Maccius Plautus: Trinummus* (Leipzig 1888⁴) 27, "die witzigste und ergötzlichste des ganzen Stückes"; J. O. Lofberg, "The

Latin name and may have characterised it for the original audience.[5] In accordance with the prominence of this scene in the *Trinummus*, my purpose is to identify Plautus' selection and shifts of motifs and emphases. In my first section I shall attempt to situate the scene by outlining the role of the intrigue in the development of Philemon's plot. Though it can be shown that massive Plautine intervention in "Act IV,"[6] involving both expansion and truncation,[7] has obscured the original point of

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Sycophant-Parasite," *CP* 15 (1920) 61–72; 65, "One of the best dialogues in all Latin Comedy." Cf. T. B. L. Webster, *Studies in Later Greek Comedy* (Manchester 1970[2]) 135; Gratwick (above, note 1) 332. In contrast, see B. Taladoire, *Essai sur le comique de Plaute* (Monaco 1956) 149, "L'idée de ce retour impromptu est en soi excellente, et la rencontre riche en promesses comiques. Mais ce comique s'avère malheureusement assez laborieux."

[5] It is not certain that the title *Trinummus* is to be attributed to Plautus himself. According to Anderson (above, note 1) 340 the play gained its name from the success of the sycophant scene, while Fantham (above, note 1) 407 maintains that Plautus "changed the title of the *Thesaurus* to advertise the scene of the impostor." The didascalic details of the prologue (18–21, cf. *As.* 10–12) were regarded as Plautine by Leo (*Plaut. Forsch.* [Berlin 1912[2]] 201–3), but a case can be made for their interpolation (Hunter [above, note 1] 223–24). If "Trinummus" is a play on "Thesaurus," it is so rather obliquely. We would have to assume that initially the point lay in the mystification of the audience, their puzzlement only being removed by the arrival of the sycophant (see K. Abel, *Die Plautusprologe* [Diss. Frankfurt 1955] 20; A. S. Gratwick in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* II, ed. E. J. Kenney and W. V. Clausen [Cambridge 1982] 96, cited henceforth as *CHCL*). The change of title reflects the characteristic shift of interest from the theme of friendship (of which the treasure is the emblem) to the intrigue (cf. *Persa*).

[6] The conventional act divisions at 819 and 1114 mark a unified structural unit. If these divisions also indicate the boundaries of Philemon's Act IV, the Latin play presents us with an act length of 297 lines, greater than any attested for a fourth act in Greek New Comedy (where the two longest fourth acts are *Samia* 194 lines and *Dyscolus* 163).

[7] Discussion of Plautine expansion in this "Act" has centered mainly on 4.3. For the convenience of the reader, I will summarize the contributions which have been made to the analysis of 4.3, and then make some points on 4.1 and 4.2. E. Fraenkel, *Elementi Plautini in Plauto* (Firenze 1960) 146–49 suggested that Stasimus' monologue (1008ff.) comprised two independent monologues, the second (1028ff.) being that which derived from Philemon's *Thesaurus*. Gratwick (above, note 1) 335 has modified Fraenkel's analysis. His view is that 1008–23 were not taken from some other Greek comedy, but were composed by Plautus with his own *Curculio* in mind. He also points out (333–34) that there is no structural reason for Stasimus' haste; the slave in the *Thesaurus* would have entered in "a depressed, reflective mood" (cf. Hunter [above, note 1] 227, note 72). Most recently Hunter has drawn attention to the Roman colouring of the second part of the monologue (227–28) and the relationship of its main themes to other parts of the play (227–28, 281–300). It is worth noting that within "Act IV" the scenic pattern "monologue—overheard monologue with bomolochic asides—dialogue" is repeated, being used for the entrances of both the sycophant and Stasimus. It is likely that the formulaic standardisation of these entrances is due to Plautus. Plautine expansion must also be assumed in 4.1. The nature of "Charmides'" entrance monologue in the *Thesaurus* may be gauged by a comparison with *Most.* 2.2 (431–41, cf. *Rud.* 485ff., *Stich.* 402ff.). Charmides' *canticum* echoes that of Lysiteles (2.1). Cf. N. Zagagi, *Tradition and Originality in Plautus* (Göttingen 1980) 100–101, 104. In 4.2 the recognition of Charmides by his slave is unnaturally

these scenes, here I will concentrate less on Plautus' flesh and more on Philemon's bones. In my second section I shall switch my attention to Plautus' handling of the sycophant scene itself.

I

In Philemon's *Thesaurus*, the plot was built on a complex inter-relationship of themes of love and moral obligations.[8] Its focus was distorted by Plautus, but enough loose ends and inconsistencies remain to allow us to excavate Philemon's concerns. Most importantly, Plautus eliminated the love theme, with the result that in his play the moral conflict of the drama appears to be based exclusively on property trans-actions and a preoccupation with *res*.

Charmides (as we are forced to call him), a respectable *père de famille* whose financial standing has been threatened by his son's profli-gacy, has gone overseas to recoup his fortunes. In his absence, he has not only entrusted his friend Callicles with the care of his property, his son Lesbonicus, and his daughter, but also put into his charge a hidden treasure, to be drawn on only to provide a dowry for his daughter, should he not return. When the play opens, Callicles has just bought Charmides' house from Lesbonicus (who needs the money and rapidly spends it). In the first scene, Megaronides, a mutual friend of Charmi-des and Callicles, accuses the latter of exploiting his guardianship of Charmides' interests to his own advantage, so that Callicles is forced to disclose that he has bought the house to prevent the treasure which is hidden in it from falling into alien hands. With the audience in posses-sion of this basic information, Philemon introduces the problem which sets the drama in motion. Lysiteles, a friend of Lesbonicus, wants to marry his sister (in Plautus, at least, less out of passion for the girl than a desire to help his friend out of his difficulties). The problem is the dowry, about which a series of conflicts is constructed. Lysiteles' father is persuaded to let his son marry the girl without a dowry; Lesbonicus will not agree to this. He plans (much to the consternation of the loyal slave Stasimus) to sell some land in the country, all he has left and his only means of support.

delayed by the purely comic verbal skirmishing of 1059–68 (Fraenkel 214–15). See also Brix-Niemeyer-Conrad, *Trinummus* on line 841 with their reference to K. Kunst, *Studien zur griechisch-römischen Komödie* (Wien/Leipzig 1919) 144 and note 1.

   [8] See Anderson's analysis of the first three acts (above, note 1). Anderson follows F. Leo, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (Berlin 1913) 116–17. In contrast, however, E. R. Lehrmann, "Der Verschwender und der Geizige," *Gymnasium* 67 (1960) 73–90, has argued that it was Plautus who introduced the love motif, in order to explain Lesbonicus' extravagance to the Roman audience. Even if this is right with regard to Lesbonicus, it need not apply to the case of Lysiteles (see *Trin.* 1115–19 and Zagagi [above, note 7] 90ff.).

The need for a dowry also provides the motivation for the intrigue,[9] which is concocted at the last moment, in what turns out to be the scene before Charmides' return. Ignorant of Lesbonicus' determination to provide his sister with a dowry, even if it ruins him,[10] Megaronides and Callicles confront the problem of the dowry on their own. Though Callicles has the money in the treasure that he is keeping safe for Charmides, there are considerations which weigh against him bringing it out and using it openly. People may suspect him of embezzling a share of the amount he has been keeping for the dowry (738–43).[11] On the other hand, if Lesbonicus were to be told of the existence of the treasure, or get to know of it by its being dug up to be used, the old men fear that he would inevitably squander this new source of funds (750–55). The dowry must therefore be provided in some other way. Callicles suggests that it could be borrowed, and paid back later by digging up the treasure at a less sensitive time, but Megaronides replies that people are not lending money these days (759–62).

Finally, Megaronides hits upon an acceptable solution. A plausible con-man is to be hired, dressed as a foreigner, and given the part of someone bringing a message from Charmides to his son. He is to be provided with two letters, one to Lesbonicus saying that he has brought money for a dowry from Charmides, the other to be given to Callicles with the implication that it contains the money. Then, when the treasure is dug up to pay the dowry, Lesbonicus, thinking it came from his father, will not suspect the existence of the treasure (763–86). In the immediate prosecution of this plan, Callicles is secretly to dig up the treasure, having removed all witnesses from the house, while Megaronides hires the impostor, provides him with the letters, and coaches him in his role (803–5, 815–18).[12]

The plan made, the stage is left empty. To our amazement Charmides himself appears. The return of Charmides is surprising, but not unexpected. His return has been foreshadowed as the only possible solution to the problems that have arisen in his absence (in the utter-

[9] Fantham (above, note 1) 414.

[10] On the ignorance of the old men see Anderson (above, note 1) 342 and Fantham (above, note 1) 410.

[11] Cf. the charge of Megaronides in 1.1 (98–103) and the suspicions of Stasimus (615ff.); F. Zucker, "Freundschaftsbewährung in der neuen attischen Komödie," *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig*, Phil.-Hist. Klasse 98.1 (1952) 10–11.

[12] See P. Langen, *Plautinische Studien* (Berlin 1886 = Hildesheim/New York 1970) 227–29 on the difficulties in 3.3. The main one is the contradiction between 754–58 and 798–805. Initially the plan required is one that will avoid arousing the suspicions of Lesbonicus by digging up the treasure to provide the dowry. Megaronides' plan provides a covering source for the gold (Charmides), but when he urges Callicles to get on with the digging, the dangers inherent in this exercise seem to have been forgotten.

ances of Lesbonicus [589–90], Stasimus [617–19], and Callicles and Me-
garonides [744–45]; cf. Lysiteles [1115–23]).[13] So it is only natural that
the intrigue the old men devise involves the staging of a "return of
Charmides" in the form of a messenger who is to announce the immi-
nent return of—Charmides (774).[14] What eventuates is a confrontation
between Charmides and the Charmides-substitute that can only muddle
matters further. In the course of the ensuing scenes Charmides is to be
puzzled and put on his guard by the sycophant's story, and devastated
by the information from Stasimus that his house is no longer his own,
his ruined son having sold it to Callicles, who thus appears to have
betrayed his trust twice over. As the culmination of his confusion he as
good as discovers Callicles in the act of digging up the treasure.

In the plot of the *Thesaurus*, then, the intrigue seems to have con-
stituted a complication (the sowing of the seeds of suspicion against
Callicles)[15] which was also one step on the way to the final resolution. It
belongs to that strand of the play which was introduced in the first
scene, where Megaronides[16] officiously rebukes Callicles for betraying
the trust of the absent Charmides by buying his house and evicting his
spend-thrift son,[17] so that Callicles is forced to reveal the existence of
the treasure in order to defend himself against these accusations. Now
again in Acts III to IV it is Megaronides' intervention which leads to
further ironic misunderstanding. This reaches its climax in the con-
frontation between Charmides and the friend he thinks has betrayed
him.

If we now look again at the sequence of scenes that begins with
Charmides' return in 4.1, we discern a dramatic development which can
be postulated as that of the Greek play. The centre of interest for Phile-
mon must have been the confrontation between Charmides and Cal-
licles, and the resolution of the misunderstandings which prepare for it.
We have noted above the compounding of misunderstanding through
these scenes. What accompanies it is a series of emotional reversals as
Charmides receives each new piece of information. Arriving home full
of joy and relief at the successful completion of his travels, Charmides

[13] Cf. Hunter (above, note 1) 222–23.
[14] This point is intended only to bear on the construction of the plot, in which there is
an equivalence of function between Charmides and the sycophant (both are providers of a
dowry). See M. Bettini, "Verso un'antropologia dell'intreccio. Le strutture semplici della
trama nelle commedie di Plauto," *MD* 7 (1982) 39–101, esp. 77–78.
[15] J. H. Gray, *Trinummus* (Cambridge 1897) 153.
[16] See Hunter (above, note 1) 219f. on the character of Megaronides. Note that the
intrigue is attributed to him with approval at 1147–48.
[17] On the house problem raised by 1084–85 see Langen (above, note 12) 220–22 with
further discussion in Hunter (above, note 1) 217, 218, note 12. Hunter argues that sepa-
rate doors would have represented the house of Callicles and the *posticulum* where Lesbo-
nicus and Stasimus are now living.

meets a suspicious-looking stranger lurking around his front door. In
the course of conversation this stranger claims to be bringing a message
from Charmides himself, and to be carrying letters and money from
Charmides to his son and Callicles. Alarmed and puzzled by this en-
counter (see 998–1007),[18] Charmides next meets his slave Stasimus,
and his spirits revive when he is told that all is well (1076). But this
relief is short-lived, and counteracted by another reversal when the
"true" state of affairs about the house is broken to him.[19] The action
reaches its climax with Charmides' "tragic" collapse at the end of 4.3.[20]

That this swing of emotions was the thread unifying the sequence of
scenes from 4.1 to 4.3 is confirmed by the correspondences between
Charmides' buoyant opening song (820–39) and his final lament (1087–
91).[21] In his first speech Charmides hymns his escape from the dangers
of the sea in the parodic high style of Plautus' *cantica* with an abun-
dance of repetition and alliteration.[22] The lament, too, is remarkable for
its tone and elevation of style (this time attributable to Philemon),[23] and
in it Charmides recalls and reverses the topic of escape from the dangers
of the sea, thus marking the dramatic change in fortune that seems to
have overtaken him since his return.

Finally (4.4), the uproar caused by Charmides' collapse brings Calli-
cles from the house. In Plautus' version the confrontation and explication
between the two friends is extraordinarily abbreviated,[24] and Charmides,

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[18] Some expression of concern on the part of "Charmides" (cf. 1000–1001) must have
provided the kernel of the typically Plautine link-monologue which makes the transition
between 4.2 and 4.3 (J. N. Hough, *TAPA* 70 [1939] 236–37). On 998–99 see T. Williams,
RhM 105 (1962) 193–207; D. Bain, *Actors and Audience* (Oxford 1977) 186, note 3.

[19] The reversal is nicely prepared by 1077–78. Charmides innocently and prematurely
uses a form of words that in Plautus conventionally signals the abbreviation of the dénoue-
ment (cf. 101–2), and thus he becomes the victim of the playwright's irony.

[20] Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 995ff.; Eur. *Heracl.* 602ff., *Hec.* 438ff., *Andr.* 1076f., *Tro.* 462ff.; Men. *Sic.*
364; Plaut. *Mil.* 1332, *Truc.* 366. See also R. J. Tarrant on Sen. *Ag.* 788, *HSCP* 82 (1978)
250.

[21] Especially between 839 and 1090.

[22] The correspondence of theme that I am suggesting is not incompatible with Plautine
elaboration of the *canticum*.

[23] Fraenkel (above, note 7) 215, note 1. Cf. Plaut. *Mer.* 195–98:

> nequiquam, mare, supterfugi a tuis tempestatibus;
> equidem me iam censebam esse in terra atque in tuto loco,
> uerum uideo med ad saxa ferri saeuis fluctibus.

Cf. Ar. *Vesp.* 309–15 (parody of a threnos). (See further Enk ad loc. and Fantham, *Com-
parative Studies in Republican Latin Imagery* [Toronto 1972] 23.)

[24] Cf. L. Braun, *Scenae Suppositiciae oder Der falsche Plautus* (Göttingen 1980) 64–65,
who argues that Plautus shortened and simplified the action in 5.3 and 5.4 of *Mercator*,
leaving out a step of the resolution. Dr. R. L. Hunter draws my attention to the contrast
with Plautus' handling of the meeting of Mnesilochus and Pistoclerus at *Bacch.* 539ff. in
similar circumstances of misunderstanding. There the element of misunderstanding is

whose distress and sense of injury are expressed in the threefold apostrophe with *O* (1094),[25] is satisfied with no explanation at all. If the Greek dramatist's main interest in his play was the problems of friendship, he would surely have devoted more time here to the expression of Charmides' misunderstanding of Callicles' motives (1094–95) and, correspondingly, to the restoration of the friendship. I conjecture, therefore, that 4.4 must have been longer and of more importance in Philemon's play.[26]

If this thread that we have been able to follow by ignoring all that Plautus has made of the comic opportunities offered by the intrigue in 4.2, and the meeting of master and slave in 4.3, does indeed give us the clue to the function of the intrigue in Philemon's play, we can see that his dramaturgic interest was in the possibilities offered by Charmides' ignorance. For the Greek audience, Charmides was a comic victim of dramatic irony. Secure in their own full knowledge of the state of affairs, the audience could nevertheless identify with the vicissitudes of Charmides' return, and would have experienced a mixture of detached comic pleasure and vicarious emotional involvement, as, on the one hand, the play moved towards its predestined resolution, and, on the other, the episodes which develop Charmides' misapprehensions frustrated this progress. So the exit of Charmides into his house, which we expect to follow his initial monologue, is blocked successively by the presence of the sycophant, the arrival of Stasimus and his warning (1078–84), and Callicles' appearance from the house. Charmides' exit into the house in 4.4 mirrors on the level of action the resolution of the blocking motives.

The point with which we began was that the intrigue and the sycophant scene were given greater prominence in the *Trinummus*, Plautus having elaborated them in keeping with his fondness for intrigue and the comic possibilities of deception. But it should be noted at this stage that the circumstances of the intrigue are unusual in Plautine terms.[27] Here we have old men devising a deception against a young man, their aim being to protect from him the money which, in another plot, he would be attempting to extract from them. One of the ironies of Philemon's plot is that Lesbonicus, unbeknown to the old men, is as keen to provide a dowry for his sister as they are. Another twist is that the chief beneficiary of the intrigue, Charmides, becomes its victim, since it is he,

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much amplified by Plautus. See D. Bain, "Plautus uortit barbare" in *Creative Imitation and Latin Literature,* ed. D. West and A. Woodman (Cambridge 1979) 29–33.

[25] See the comment of Brix-Niemeyer ad loc.

[26] See my appendix.

[27] A. Dieterle, *Die Strukturelemente der Intrige in der griechisch-römischen Komödie* (Amsterdam 1980) 18; M. Bettini (above, note 14) 77–78. The apology of an *ingenuus* for taking part in an intrigue (787) has no extant Greek parallel, cf. *As.* 68–72; *Mil.* 611–26 (with G. Williams, *Hermes* 86 [1958] 93); Dieterle (above) 166; Chiarini (above, note 3) 27–28; A. Thierfelder, "Su alcuni generi particolari del comico in Plauto," *Dioniso* 46 (1975) 95.

rather than Lesbonicus, who meets the sycophant. How Charmides behaved in the encounter with the sycophant in Philemon's play we do not know. In Plautus, however, the heart of the scene is his turning the tables on the would-be deceiver. Charmides is given a comic power which, one imagines, is a far cry from the character of respectable old gentleman that he would have had in the Greek play.[28]

II

The feature that most distinguishes the *Trinummus* intrigue from other intrigues in New Comedy is not so much its lack of success as the fact that it is programmed to fail. In blissful ignorance of the fact that Charmides' return has rendered his mission obsolete before it begins, the sycophant comes on stage, approaching the house of Charmides, costumed outlandishly,[29] to meet the one person whom he should not meet if his deception is to get off the ground. The dramatic raison d'être of the scene is the spectacle of the exposure of the sycophant's pretence.[30]

The risk the sycophant's masquerade faces is underlined by what we hear him say in his very first utterance (848–50): "quin ego nunc subigor trium nummum caussa ut hasce epistulas / dicam ab eo homine me accepisse quem ego qui sit homo nescio / neque noui, neque natus necne is fuerit id solide scio." These words, which Charmides himself does not hear, although they are spoken in his presence, prepare the audience for the fun which is to come. At 871, as the sycophant knocks on the door of Charmides' house, Charmides accosts him. In what follows Plautus takes great delight in disappointing our expectations of the standard deception scene.[31] We can take Curculio's deception of Lyco (*Curc.* 3.1) as a convenient model. Curculio, in disguise, is hailed by Lyco, his destined victim, whom he pretends not to know. He tells him that he is looking for Lyco and asks to be directed to him (cf. *Trin.* 871–75). Lyco does not disclose his own identity immediately, but asks Curculio his business and his name (cf. *Trin.* 879, 883). After some scurrilous joking on Curculio's false name (Summanus), Lyco tells

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[28] The depiction of Charmides as an "energetic old rogue" already begins with the verbal dexterity he displays in the *canticum* which precedes his encounter with the sycophant. See Anderson (above, note 1) 334, 339–40.

[29] Presumably Charmides himself is dressed as a traveller, so that the comedy of the confrontation would be highlighted by the parodic mirroring of Charmides in the sycophant. It may only be due to accidents of transmission that we have no other example of a sycophant in such a role (but cf. *Pseud.* 1167ff., 1192). On the sycophant in comedy (and the verb *sycophantari*) see Lofberg (above, note 4).

[30] In this it differs from the other exposure scenes *Capt.* 2.3, 2.4 and *Epid.* 3.4ᵃ, 4.2, for in them a third party comes on the scene to unmask the impostor to a victim who has *already been* deceived.

[31] Dieterle (above, note 27) gives a useful schematic analysis.

"Summanus" who he is and receives the letter from Therapontigonus. He reads the letter, and then asks why the soldier has not come himself. "Summanus'" pretext, which takes its cue from the conventional characterisation of the *miles gloriosus*, is sufficiently extravagant to convince Lyco (452, "credo hercle te esse ab illo, nam ita nugas blatis"). With the deception complete, the scene is brought swiftly to an end.

In our scene the same elements occur, but with somewhat different results. When he is accosted by Charmides, the sycophant tells him his mission and asks for directions. Charmides in reply asks him who he is, and a comic exchange over the matter of the sycophant's false name ensues (884–92). Asked his business by Charmides, the sycophant tells it, but this leads not, as in *Curculio* and elsewhere, to the trickster finding the man he is seeking, but to further questions about the person who sent him, and to a demand to know his name. The sycophant has forgotten it (another conventional element), but even when, with the help of Charmides, the name "Charmides" is retrieved, Charmides does not disclose his identity. Instead he returns to the topic of the whereabouts of "Charmides," a topic which allows the sycophant to try out his tall tales from abroad (cf. *Curc.* 437ff.) simultaneously encouraged and undermined by Charmides, who puts the sycophant through his paces for the benefit of the audience (938, "nisi quia lubet experiri quo euasurust denique"). Having discovered that the sycophant is an impostor, Charmides decides to hoist him with his own petard, and in the last part of the scene, to our amusement, seriously disconcerts him with his counter-claim to be Charmides. The scene ends with the rout of the sycophant, but Charmides, the victor, is left bewildered, little the wiser as to what has really been going on. Most of the conventional elements noted above, if not due to Plautus, have certainly been elaborated by him, as a closer examination of the scene will show.

The dramatic values of the sycophant scene as we have it in Plautus are largely comic. Having said this, it is necessary to attempt a more precise description of what is funny about it. In other deception scenes in Plautus the audience is on the side of the deceiver and the humour comes from the trapping of the victim. But in our scene neither of the characters has the full knowledge which the audience has; both are, to a greater or lesser extent, blundering in the dark. And both are ignorant of the same thing—for neither knows who the other really is. Questions of identity, therefore, form the basis of the comedy of the whole scene, and they come to the surface as two pervasive leitmotifs—role-playing and names.[32] These are, of course, interconnected, both springing from the disjunction between player and role which deception entails.

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[32] Cf. H. R. Jauss, "Poetik und Problematik von Identität und Rolle in der Geschichte des Amphitryon," in *Identität*, ed. O. Marquard and K. Stierle (Munich 1979) 213–53.

The preoccupation with role-playing, manifested in the gap between the player and part, pervades the sycophant's first speeches (843–68). Imagining himself to be alone, the sycophant engages in reflection on the role he has to play, and through this Plautus alerts the audience to the comic premises of the scene. One of these, of which the sycophant himself is ironically unaware, is that he is condemned merely to *playing* his role. In other deception scenes the fact that the victim is deceived means that the gap between the impostor and his role is successfully bridged, and that in the eye of the victim (if not the audience) the deceiver momentarily becomes someone else. Here the sycophant is aware, from the beginning, of the lack of congruence between himself and his role (Plautus goes out of his way to emphasise the distance between the fiction and the "reality" [(845–50]), but is confident of overcoming it. Yet because of the special circumstances of the scene his successive attempts to become the messenger are unveiled as no more than attempts.

The part of the sycophant, therefore, is not to act a role but to try to act a role. It is this that allows us to give a metatheatrical interpretation to his part and to see him as an actor acting.[33] Behind the sycophant's role as a Greek professional deceiver, and his story of himself as a poor wretch driven by necessity to involve himself in lies and deceit, we are enabled to glimpse another reality—that of an out-of-work actor who has come in out of the cold to make the best of a bit part,[34] aiming, in fact, to be so successful in his deception that he will cheat the *choragus* out of the costume, thus proving true to his role as swindler. This equivocation on the roles of *sycophanta* and *histrio* depends on the assumption, widely attested in antiquity, that the actor's business was trickery or deception.[35] Thus it is through a successful deception that the actor/sycophant/messenger will become one (859–60).

The metatheatrical interpretation of the sycophant scene that is suggested by its focus on disguise is supported by the self-conscious use of theatrical language in the sycophant's opening speeches. The step from impersonation to acting is always a small one in the comic theatre, but it is made most explicitly in those scenes which involve deceit, the donning of disguise, and the assumption of a false part.[36] In Plautus disguise is

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[33] Segal (above, note 1) 258 describes the sycophant scene as a "play within a play" and makes briefly some of the points I develop in my analysis.

[34] I owe this formulation to Dr. A. S. Gratwick. Note that there is no evidence for the doubling of roles in Latin comedy (*CHCL* 83).

[35] Gratwick (*CHCL*) 115; L. Salingar, *Shakespeare and the Traditions of Comedy* (Cambridge 1974) 162–63.

[36] A. Righter, *Shakespeare and the Idea of the Play* (Harmondsworth 1967) 129–33 on "the theatrical nature of comic deceit"; F. Muecke, "I Know You—By Your Rags. Costume and Disguise in Fifth-Century Drama," *Antichthon* 16 (1982) 17–34; R. Warning, "Komische Doppelgänger," in *Identität* (above, note 32) 729–34.

often referred to as "costume," using the theatrical technical term *orna-menta*, in accompaniment with other theatrical references.[37] Such are the terms in which the sycophant boasts of his ability to play his part:

> ill' qui me conduxit, ubi conduxit, abduxit domum,
> quae uoluit mihi dixit, docuit et praemostrauit prius
> quo modo quidque agerem; nunc adeo si quid addidero amplius,
> eo conductor melius de me nugas conciliauerit.
> ut ille me exornauit, ita sum ornatus; argentum hac facit.
> ipse ornamenta a chorago haec sumpsit suo periculo.
> nunc ego si potero ornamentis hominem circumducere,
> dabo operam ut me esse ipsum plane sycophantam sentiat.
>   (853–60)

Ladewig regarded lines 857–60 as an interpolation,[38] but Milch has shown that they are a necessary part of the structure of thought of the whole speech.[39] The joke is the same as at *Curc.* 462–64:

> edepol nugatorem lepidum lepide hunc nanctust Phaedromus.
> halophantem an sycophantam magis esse dicam nescio.
> ornamenta quae locaui metuo ut possim recipere.

(Cf. *Amph.* 506, *nimis hic scitust sycophanta* [Mercury commenting on Jupiter in his role as Amphitruo].) The *choragus* steps into the play with these words immediately after the scene in which Curculio has success-fully tricked Lyco. The joke assumes that Curculio's ability to play-act means that he must be a swindler in real life, that the deceiver in the play is a deceiver in reality.

The fact that the joke in lines 857–60 occurs elsewhere in Plautus does not by itself prove that it is not an interpolation here. It may be to the point, however, to suggest that theatrical references are not con-fined to lines 857–60, but pervade the whole speech. It is possible that *conductor* is used here with an allusion to its function as a technical term of the theatre.[40] The evidence for this technical use is *As.* 1–3:

> hoc agite sultis, spectatores, nunciam,
> quae quidem mihi atque uobis res uortat bene
> gregique huic et dominis atque conductoribus.

With reference to this passage, E. J. Jory has explored the meaning of *conductor* in the nexus of relationships that was involved in the staging of

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[37] Cf. *Pers.* 159–60. C. Saunders, *Costume in Roman Comedy* (New York 1909) 17–20; G. E. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (Princeton 1971) 88–89. Even if the *choragus* did hire costumes to the general public, it seems perverse not to take his appear-ance in comedy as a theatrical reference.

[38] "Plautinische Studien," *Philologus* 17 (1861) 255.

[39] "Zum Kapital 'Plautinische Zwischenreden'," *Hermes* 85 (1957) 165–66; on 843–50 see J. Blänsdorf, *Archaische Gedankengänge in den Komödien des Plautus*, Hermes Einzel-schriften 20 (Wiesbaden 1967) 170–71.

[40] *Conducere* etc. is legal terminology; the theatrical reference is secondary.

a play.[41] While affirming that the aediles, as the ultimate source of fi-
nance, were most appropriately called *conductores*, he admits that the
actor and the *choragus* might also have a claim to the title. Hiring of
actors was not the normal practice, of course, but it may have happened
often enough for talk about hiring someone to play a role to be inter-
preted as a theatrical reference. Here the *conductor* (who is distinct from
the *choragus*) appears to do the work of a producer, going over the script
and realisation of the part with the actor, as well as hiring the costume
for him. If we can see the sycophant as a hired actor at lines 853ff., we
may also be able to see him thus in his first, rather puzzling, words:

> huic ego die nomen Trinummo facio: nam operam meam
> tribu' nummis hodie locaui ad artis nugatorias. (843–44)

In the terms of the double vision of the role with which Plautus is oper-
ating, the name of the sycophant's day is the same as that of Plautus'
play, because the play and day coincide for the actor/sycophant, both the
intrigue and the play answering to the description *artes nugatoriae*.

So far we have seen that the role of the sycophant involves two
parts, and that the sycophant in disguise is also an actor acting. Having
alerted us to the nature of his role as messenger, the sycophant plays
his part with confidence at first, but as the scene develops it becomes
clear that something is wrong. What is wrong is Charmides, who should
not, of course, be there. Charmides is a figure of great comic appeal,
whose new Plautine characterisation as a man of resource with the
power to turn the action his way has largely absorbed the "Charmides"
of the Greek play, the father who has endured danger and hardship and
who arrives home to be distressed by puzzling references to his own
family affairs made by a total stranger. In the early stages of the scene
the respectable Greek gentleman can still be detected alongside Plautus'
more exuberant *senex* (851–52, 861–65), the two attitudes being kept
distinct. The situation changes, however, when Charmides gets the idea
of trying to outwit the sycophant, and goes some way to becoming
himself the triumphantly successful deceiver in the mould of Curculio
or Pseudolus.[42] This must be a Plautine addition to the scene, suggested
perhaps by some funny wrangling in the original over Charmides' claim
to be Charmides. In the pursuit of this idea the respectable old gentle-
man of the Greek play is left far behind.

The appeal of Plautus' Charmides is enhanced by another aspect of
his role. Unlike the sycophant he presents himself not as an actor, but
rather as a representative of the audience, who voices the spectators'

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[41] "Dominus Gregis?," *CP* 61 (1966) 104.
[42] Cf. Gratwick (*CHCL*) 101–2 on Hanno in *Poenulus*, "implausibly slave-like in his
willingness to participate in a good wheeze."

sceptical reactions to the "act" of the sycophant.[43] In more conventional deception scenes it is the deceiver who shares the knowledge of the audience, making this complicity explicit by bomolochic comments upon the action in progress. Here, however, in accordance with the reversal of roles it is Charmides who is linked to the audience by his increasing awareness and self-confidence. Thus the audience is, as usual, linked to the character who triumphs,[44] and, consequently, is not discomforted by the eventual exposure of the sycophant.

I now turn to the other manifestation of the theme of identity in the dialogue of our scene, the preoccupation with names.[45] This is displayed in the first line of the scene (843, "huic ego die nomen Trinummo facio") and will surface again and again until as his parting shot the sycophant gives Charmides his name for the first time (997, "qui te di omnes aduenientem peregre perdant, Charmides!").

In the theatre, false names are to "parts" what disguise is to costume, both vehicles of metatheatre.[46] We meet false names as the primary requirement for an attempted deception (e.g. *Curc.* 413ff., *Miles* 434–38).[47] This may simply mean the usurpation of the name and hence the identity of a character who already "exists" in a play (cf. the tricks in *As.*, *Capt.*, *Cas.*, *Pseud.*, Ter. *Eun.*), or it may involve the creation of a new *persona*. The invented false names have a local, comic significance; their purpose is not really to deceive the victim, but to amuse the audience, and in this they remind us of some of Plautus' other comic "speaking names" (compare *Curc.* 413ff. with *Men.* 77–78).[48] This liberty can be taken with the names of characters in Plautus, since, on the one hand, and in contrast to Menander,[49] he has no serious concern to present his characters as "real people," and, on the other, their identification within the system of the

[43] In what follows I am indebted to suggestions made by Dr. A. S. Gratwick.

[44] I do not wish to exaggerate the extent of Charmides' triumph. As I have said above, he routs the sycophant but is left perplexed by the encounter.

[45] Similarly two Plautine name jokes anticipate the "identity contest" in *Amph.* 339ff., "ne ego hic nomen meum commutem et Quintus fiam e Sosia" (305); "'nescioquem' loqui autumat; mihi certo nomen Sosiaest" (332). See Fraenkel (above, note 7) 21f.

[46] M. Barchiesi's pioneering perception ("Plauto e il 'metateatro' antico," *Il Verri* 30 [1971] 113–30) has had most influence in Italy, e.g., Chiarini (above, note 3), G. Petrone, *Morale e antimorale nelle commedie di Plauto* (Palermo 1977), but see now N. W. Slater, *The Theatre of the Mind: Metatheatre in Plautus* (Diss. Princeton 1981).

[47] Conversely, the confusion of identity in *Bacch.* springs from the identity of name; the girls are not twins (Braun [above, note 24] 52). Likewise C. Questa, "Maschere e funzione nella commedia di Plauto," *MD* 7 (1982) 13 on *Men.*, "sull'identità di nome, oltre che sull'identità di aspetto, si basa il perfetto meccanismo della commedia."

[48] Duckworth (above, note 37) 347–50.

[49] Menander on the whole used names current in Athens, but which also, with a few exceptions, gave a conventional indication of nature or status in comedy (A. W. Gomme and F. H. Sandbach, *Menander: A Commentary* [Oxford 1973] 465–66). Cf. L. Schmidt, "Die griechischen Personennamen bei Plautus," *Hermes* 3 (1902) 623f.

palliata does not rely upon their names alone.[50] A character is given ethos
and status primarily by mask and costume, and in certain cases this is
enough.[51] The difference between Plautus and Menander in this respect is
marked. Though Menander was dealing with named stock-masks, this did
not prevent him from exercising his skill in characterisation. The indi-
vidual character names in Plautus, on the other hand, are not an indica-
tion of naturalistic characterisation.[52]

Yet the symbolic relationship between name and nature seems to
have fascinated Plautus. As a general principle of Plautus' world (cf.
nomen omen [*Persa* 625]) it was identified by Fraenkel, who summed it
up as "das jedes Ding das wäre, was es heisse, und umgekehrt."[53] Nam-
ing then becomes more than merely labelling in that it implies the attri-
bution of characteristics,[54] either temporarily or permanently, the inten-
tion being in either case to distinguish the individual manifestation of a
type character in his role in the particular circumstances of "this" play.
This function of the name, as a temporary identification of a type charac-
ter, could be seen as a reflection of one of the basic elements of theatre,
impersonation, and the relationship between the actor and the character.
While in a particular play the name is fixed to the role, for each perfor-
mance it is the task of the actor to impersonate the character and give a
body to the name.[55] Hence the claiming of names in our scene is a meta-
phor for the actor's impersonation, a point to which I will return below.

If in our scene "Charmides" is a name in search of a character, the
sycophant is a character without a name. The sycophant's failure to play
convincingly any role other than his own is reflected in the omission of
the name proper to his role as messenger. We are led to expect such a
name by the pompous and patronising reply (intended to excite his
interlocutor's curiosity and to raise certain expectations in the audience)
that he gives to Charmides' excited questions (879, "quid eos quaeris?
aut quis es? aut unde es? aut unde aduenis?"). Lines 880–87 play with
the joke about long foreign names familiar from other contexts (*Capt.*
285, *Curc.* 409–10, *Mil.* 14, *Pers.* 700–708), but the "name" that is

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[50] See Questa (above, note 47) 40 on the absence of proper names in the prologues of
both Menander and Plautus. He observes, however, that in prologues Menander, in direct
contrast to Plautus, avoids "placing" his characters in the conventional system of theatrical
"masks" (25).

[51] E.g., "Lysidamus" is named nowhere in *Cas.* and "Antamoenides" only in a spurious
passage of *Poen.* On anonymous characters see Questa (above, note 47) 31ff.

[52] See Gratwick (*CHCL*) 104–5. The whole question has recently been reexamined in an
(as yet) unpublished paper by P. G. McC. Brown, "Masks, Names and Characterisation in
New Comedy."

[53] Fraenkel, *Plautinisches im Plautus* (Berlin 1922) 29. On the *locus classicus* of *Persa*
(700–708) see Chiarini (above, note 3) 171.

[54] Cf. Fantham's analysis of the names of the *Trinummus* (above, note 1) 407, note 5.

[55] M. Goldman, *The Actor's Freedom* (New York 1975) 135ff.

finally produced could hardly be shorter. Moreover, as Charmides' reply makes clear, the name betrays the sycophant's true nature (890ff., "edepol nomen nugatorium! ... hic homo solide sycophantast").[56]

It is important for the development of the scene that the sycophant never asks Charmides who *he* is. Usually in this kind of scene, however, the character on stage reveals himself to be just the person that the stranger is looking for (*Curc.* 412ff., *Epid.* 437ff., *Pseud.* 965ff., 1140ff.). Most comparable to *Trin.* 4.2 is *Most.* 4.2, where Callidamates' slaves tell Theopropides the truth about what has been going on in his absence, without knowing who he is, though his reactions may allow them to guess the truth (980, "patris amicu's uidelicet," cf. 983–86) and certainly point the irony for the audience. Both Theopropides and Charmides are identified as *senes* (*Most.* 940, 944 etc., *Trin.* 871) and addressed with the appellation proper to their social status, *pater* (*Most.* 952, *Trin.* 878, 884).[57] But the humour in both scenes derives from the fact that the generic *senex* is precisely the *pater* of the play, Charmides' role in the *Trinummus* being "pater istius adulescentis ... Lesbonici" (894–95, cf. *Most.* 962). It is this description that enables him to recognise himself in the sycophant's story (896, "me sibi epistulas dedisse dicit"). With this "identification," which enables him also to identify the sycophant securely as a swindler, Charmides can exploit his superior position and begin his game of cat-and-mouse (895f., "teneo hunc manufestarium / ... ludam hominem probe"; cf. 958–61). First he puts the sycophant in an awkward position by asking him to describe the man who gave him the letters (903), then he asks him if he knows him (905, cf. 952) and finally he asks him the man's name (906).

Forgetting, or not knowing, the name is a conventional stumbling block in this kind of scene, the danger usually being surmounted by the ingenuity of the intriguer (cf. *Pseud.* 985, *nomen nescit, haeret haec res*; *Pers.* 624–25, 646–47, Ter. *Phorm.* 385–90).[58] The sycophant here at-

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[56] Note that 889–91 have been transposed from after 937. The point of *Pax* remains unclear to me.

[57] Cf. *Epid.* 570ff.; *Rud.* 104–6:

> PL. pater salueto, amboque adeo. DA. saluo' sis.
> SC. sed utrum tu masne an femina es, qui illum patrem
> uoces? PL. uir sum equidem. SC. quaere uir porro patrem.

[58] Ter. *Phorm.* 385–90 contains all the elements, including a theatrical "prompting":

> DE. dic nomen. PH. nomen? maxume. DE. quid nunc taces?
> PH. perii hercle, nomen perdidi. DE. [hem] quid ais? PH. (Geta,
> si meministi id quod olim dictumst subice.) hem
> non dico: quasi non nosses, temptatum aduenis.
> DE. ego autem tempto? GE. (Stilpo.) PH. atque adeo quid mea?
> Stilpost.

Cf. W. G. Arnott, "Phormio Parasitus," *G&R* 17 (1970) 40.

tempts something of the kind (906, *quod edepol homini probo*)[59] but
without success, due to the persistence of Charmides. The search for
the name occupies an extended passage (906–27), with obvious Plau-
tine elaboration at the beginning and end (908–10, 923, 926), where
jokes are introduced which depend on the identification of man and
name, and involve a striking revivification of a metaphorical expres-
sion:

> CH. quid est negoti? SY. deuoraui nomen imprudens modo.
> CH. non placet qui amicos intra dentes conclusos habet.
> SY. atque etiam modo uorsabatur mihi in labris primoribus.
>   (908–10)

Plautus is more interested in the grotesque consequences that can be
drawn from the identification (cf. 926, "satin inter labra atque dentes
latuit uir minimi preti") than in developing his joke logically. In form it
belongs to the "explained later" identifications,[60] but the jump from
deuoraui nomen to *amicos intra dentes conclusos* is not really bridged by a
literal reading of line 910, even allowing the subject to remain ambigu-
ous. The same joke recurs at lines 923ff. Leo postulated a lacuna after
923, and a supplement of the sort he suggests ("malus homo mihi
uorsabatur in labris primoribus") would certainly make the passage
easier. Again the joke is based on the identification of man and name
(where the name is, there is the man). The exchange is brought to an
end by the magnificently unanswerable reply of Charmides (927, "si
appellasses, respondisset, nomine").

    What happened at the crucial moment at which the name of Char-
mides is spoken for the first time (922) is not now clear. Lindsay,
accepting that the *mim* of the manuscripts represents *num*, presents us
with a division of speakers which gives the anxious *num Charmides?* to
Charmides himself. But Charmides already has a good idea that the
name that has escaped the sycophant is his own name (895–96), and
the text from 915 on, when all the names are suggested by Charmides,
shows him playing with the sycophant. For these reasons I prefer Leo's
arrangement of the line: "exemplum est— CH. an Chares? an Charmi-
des? SY. enim Charmides" (*enim* Ribbeck). It seems psychologically
more plausible that the sycophant is able to recognise the name when
he hears it, though he could not remember it himself.[61]

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[59] Cf. Eur. *IT* 499–500; Shakespeare *As You Like It* 3.4.33ff., Rosalind: I met the duke
yesterday and had much question with him: he asked me of what parentage I was; I told
him, of as good as he—so he laughed and let me go. . . .

[60] Fraenkel (above, note 7) 35ff., esp. 32 on *As.* 290ff.

[61] P. Langen, *Beiträge zu Kritik und Erklärung des Plautus* (Leipzig 1880) 266–67 is close
to Leo's view. In this passage the alternative names are all good Greek names (Schmidt
[above, note 49] 613–14), but in Greek they do not all begin with C.

The final part of the scene is devoted to Charmides' revelation of his own identity, handled in such a way that the sycophant has some grounds for believing him to be an impostor too, Charmides being caught in his own device, the very fate that he is trying to impose on the sycophant. After line 947 and the episode of the traveller's tall tale,[62] the conversation seems to revert to an earlier stage of the dialogue (cf. 920), but Charmides' question here, while picking up 905 (*nouistin hominem?*) has a more pointed relevance to the actual situation on stage. The sycophant, unaware that he is indeed looking at Charmides, gives the same sort of reply that he gave to the question the first time, but then he goes on to mention the gold. His claim to have the gold is part of his brief (778–79, "seque aurum ferre uirgini dotem a patre / dicat patremque id iussisse aurum tibi dare"), but in the sycophant scene itself there is no mention of the purpose of bringing the money.[63]

Charmides' reaction to this new revelation is typical of his attitude throughout the scene, and here we have his most explicit statement of his plan to take over the role of impostor himself:

> enim uero ego nunc sycophantae huic sycophantari uolo,
> si hunc possum illo mille nummum Philippum circumducere
>
> (958–59; cf. 859–60)

Paradoxically his method consists of revealing his true identity! In the ensuing dialogue Charmides' disclosure of his identity works in the same way as his discovery at 894–96 that it was being usurped, through the establishing of a link between "Charmides" and "ego" (966–69, "nempe ab ipso id accepisti Charmide? . . . adulescens, cedodum istuc aurum mihi . . . quod a me te accepisse fassu's"). The sycophant, however, refuses to make this identification. The fact that Charmides has mentioned the money puts him on his guard (975, "postquam ego me aurum ferre dixi, post tu factu's Charmides").

Charmides is now in a position in which his assertion of his own identity is ridiculed, and this gives rise to a recognition in reverse. That this is what is going on is shown by the reversals of the formulae with which the returning traveller is usually greeted (cf. 1068ff., *Most.* 448): 991–92, "immo, saluos quandoquidem aduenis— / di te perdant, si te

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[62] See E. Rohde, *Der griechische Roman* (Leipzig 1914) 256, note 1; A. W. Prescott, "Notes and Queries on Utopias in Plautus," *AJP* 29 (1908) 58–73. Whatever the derivation of the episode, it is framed by two asides (929–30, 936–38; 958–63), which by their very similarity as well as by their connection to the theme of "tricking the trickster" indicate Plautine elaboration.

[63] Had this been explained, of course, the mystification of Charmides at the end of the scene would have been less (1004), and it is the question of the money alone that Charmides wants cleared up at 1137ff.

flocci facio an periisses prius" (cf. 989–90, 996–97). Charmides arrives home to find that his identity has been usurped, and similarly, that his house is no longer his own (1080, "non sunt nostrae aedes istae"). As I have already said, it seems to me that this was probably the point of the scene as Plautus found it in the *Thesaurus*. In his adaptation of it Plautus has pushed the comic handling of the question of identity much further in the direction of role-playing and impersonation.

The implicit theme of the whole scene comes to the surface again when the sycophant attacks Charmides as if he were an actor who had transgressed in some way:[64]

> enim uero serio, quoniam aduenis—
> uapulabis meo arbitratu et nouorum aedilium. (989–90)

This threat, by unveiling the fact that Charmides is an actor, suddenly throws a new light on his claim to be "Charmides," reminding us that the basic task of the actor is to impersonate the character, in such a way that the audience feels that the character has definition, or an identity. At the meeting point of the identification of the audience and actor, "the character" comes into being. With his performance ruined by Charmides' refusal to accept him as the messenger, the sycophant uses the only weapon he has left—and recognises the actor playing the part of Charmides as an actor.

In conclusion, the most characteristic feature of Plautus' intervention in this scene is the way that Charmides casts himself in the role of trickster to undermine the sycophant. At the same time, the fact that the scene does not have to advance the plot gives Plautus the freedom to develop the theme of disguise and deceit to its metatheatrical conclusion, allowing us to see that the game of concealment and disclosure played by the two *personae* itself embodies the doubleness of the actor in his disguise as character.

Appendix

In comparison with the inflated length of 4.1–3, 4.4 seems disproportionately short. As well, from a total of 22 lines, only 10 are given to the dialogue between Callicles and Charmides. This arouses suspicion that the confrontation between them has been cut, an impression that is confirmed by illogicalities in the dialogue.

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[64] Similar in effect is *Pers.* 783–84:

> qui illum Persam atque omnis Persas atque etiam omnis personas
> male di omnes perdant!

(See M. Fuhrmann, "Persona, ein römischer Rollenbegriff," in *Identität* [above, note 32] 86). Cf. *As.* 946–47, *Cist.* 784–85.

At 1093 Callicles appears from indoors to ask what is going on outside "his" house (*ante aedis meas*), words calculated to confirm the suspicions of Charmides, as his injured outburst attests (1094–95). Callicles replies asserting his *fides* (1096–97), but offering no explanation at all. Charmides' reply "credo, omnia istaec si ita sunt ut praedicas" seems to presuppose some attempt at explanation to which *omnia istaec* could refer.[65] Partially satisfied, then, but without his suspicions having been totally allayed, Charmides next turns to Callicles' dress, and asks the reason for that. Callicles explains that he was digging up the treasure to provide the dowry, an explanation that is necessary for the audience, but which would tell Charmides very little if he has heard nothing of the events leading up to this point. Callicles' promise to explain things further indoors (1101–2) acknowledges Charmides' need for such an explanation, which Plautus has omitted in order to avoid repeating plot details familiar to the audience.[66] The crucial piece of information, necessary for a realistic rapprochement, that is, Callicles' motives for buying the house, is not given to Charmides on stage. It seems to me, therefore, that the reconciliation between Charmides and Callicles has been drastically reduced.

Further, where it stands in 5.2, Callicles' explanation of the intrigue to Charmides is very awkward, and I would suggest that it has been moved there from 4.4, having been cut from that scene with the rest of the explanatory matter (cf. *et hoc et alia*). Considerations both of dramatic logic and of conventional patterns of action support the impression that the content of 1137–48 is out of place. Lysiteles arrives elated by the news that Charmides has returned, for this means that his engagement to Lesbonicus' sister can be confirmed. As he approaches the house he is brought to a halt by the noise of the doors opening:[67]

> eo. sed fores
> hae sonitu suo mihi moram obiciunt incommode. (1123–24)

The reason for his hesitation is not stated: it may be that Charmides is not alone. In any case, it is fully within the conventions of this type of entrance for Lysiteles to hang back for a while, but once he has signalled his intention to approach the old men, we expect him to do so (1135, "quid ego cesso hos conloqui?"). Instead, he changes his mind,

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[65] This point was first made by Ritschl, *Parerga zu Plautus und Terenz* I (Berlin 1845 = Amsterdam 1964) 559–65. I am not sure that Ussing's defence (Charmides would learn the truth from Callicles' expression) is convincing in the context of drama.

[66] Cf. *Cist.* 783, "omnes intus conficient negotium"; *Ep.* 656, "cetera haec posterius faxo scibis ubi erit otium," 663; *Most.* 1039–40; *Poen.* 550–54, 920–23, 1224; *Pseud.* 387–88, 720–21. Gray (above, note 12) on 1097.

[67] *Incommode* is unique. Usually the coincidence is convenient (*Cas.* 593, *Mil.* 1198, *Rud.* 309, *Trin.* 400–401).

prompted by a desire to hear more of their conversation, which he
hopes will continue on a topic of interest to himself (1136, "sed ma-
neam etiam opinor, namque hoc commodum orditur loqui"). Unex-
pectedly, however, the conversation veers away to Charmides' meeting
with the sycophant, which he had "forgotten" to mention indoors (cf.
1101–2). At the conclusion of the explication which follows Lysiteles
finally decides to make his approach:

> quid ego ineptus, dum sermonem uereor interrumpere,
> solus sto nec quod conatus sum agere ago? homines conloquar.
> (1149–50)

Parallels can be found for Lysiteles' change of mind. In *Trin.* 4.3
Charmides is on stage when Stasimus arrives in a state of great agita-
tion. During the second, less frantic part of the slave's monologue
Charmides at first makes a few enthusiastic asides on Stasimus' moralis-
ing, and then says:

> lubet adire atque appellare hunc; uerum ausculto perlubens
> et metuo, si compellabo, ne aliam rem occipiat loqui. (1041–42)

At 1055 he realises that the speaker is Stasimus and accosts him at the
first opportunity (1059). We find something similar at *Aul.* 523–24 (cf.
496), where Euclio overhears with comparable pleasure Megadorus'
tirade against extravagant wives. Both these passages show signs of
Plautine elaboration, and the asides are probably his own invention.[68]

Therefore, it looks very much as if 1137–48 have been inserted
here,[69] and that Lysiteles' change of mind was invented to provide an
opportunity for the insertion. The topic, which concerns only Charmides
and Callicles, could not have been raised after Lysiteles had made
himself known. As a reason for the insertion of the explanation into 5.2
we might suggest a desire to enliven the end of the play by reminding
the audience of this very funny scene (cf. 1142, *sed quid rides?*).[70]

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[68] See Hunter (above, note 1) 228, note 74, and Milch (above, note 39) 162 on
Poen. 841.

[69] Ritschl on 1136 follows Bergk (*Cens.* p. 1148 lines 27ff.) in postulating the loss of
several lines, which might have dealt with the marriage of Lesbonicus to Callicles' daugh-
ter, but he does not go so far as to suggest that the explanation replaced them.

[70] Dr. R. L. Hunter and Dr. A. S. Gratwick were kind enough to read and criticize an
earlier draft of this paper. It has also benefited from the criticisms of the two anonymous
referees and the editor of this journal. For the deficiencies which remain I alone am
responsible.