

## ***Fides, Aetolia, and Plautus' Captivi* \***

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Plautus' *Captivi* tells how two prisoners trick their captor, how the captor discovers the ruse, and how one prisoner is eventually recognized as the captor's long-lost son. The bonds tying the prisoners to their captor and to each other, however, are not iron chains, but rather the system of Roman moral obligations based upon *fides*. This reliance upon Roman moral values is emphatic and remarkable given the play's Aetolian milieu; although Romano-Aetolian relations were hostile in the era of the play's first production, the Roman audience witnessed a comedy in which Greeks in Aetolia championed Roman moral values. This paper has two goals: first, to indicate the importance of *fides* to the structure of Plautus' *Captivi*; second, to suggest that the Aetolian setting for the play was not insignificant for the Roman audience.

Throughout the *Captivi*, characters appeal to the network of Roman moral and political concepts, with primary emphasis on *fides*.<sup>1</sup> The word and its cognates occur more frequently in this play than in any other play of Plautus except the *Aulularia*, in which a shrine to the goddess Fides figures prominently. The invocations of *fides* itself occur at the four key moments of the play: the initial deception of Hegio (349 and 351); the long farewell of Tyndarus and Philocrates (405, 418, 432, and 439); Ergasilus' revelation that Philocrates has returned (890 and 893); and the meeting of Philocrates and

\* I wish to thank first and foremost the editor, for his exemplary attention and patience in guiding this paper through several drafts. I am grateful to TAPA's referees for some challenging suggestions that have substantially improved the arguments. I also thank the colleagues who have read the manuscript in various stages: J. Zetzel, R. Mondì, A. Laidlaw, J. Leedom. The *Captivi* is quoted from Ernout's Budé edition, but with attention paid to Leo and Lindsay.

<sup>1</sup> *Bene facere*: 416, 424, 843, 941, 1017 (423-*optume*); *beneficium*: 358, 935; *benefactum*: 940; *bene merens*: 315; *benivolus*: 350; *benevolens*: 390; *boni*: 583, 776, 1034; *bonitas*: 245; *bono publico*: 499; *gloria*: 689; *gratia*: 280, 358, 712, 721, 941, 986; *honus*: 247, 279, 356, 392; *honestas*: 247, 356, 392; *honoratissimus*: 278; *nobilitas*: 299; *officium*: 206, 297; *optumus homo*: 333, 391, 836, 946; *virtus*: 324, 410, 690, 997. On these terms, see Hellegouarc'h. The *Captivi* mentions *fides* ten times, *fidelis* and *fideliter* six times, *confido* and *confidentia* ten times; also *infidelis* twice, and *perfidia* once. All but four of these twenty-nine instances are spoken by Hegio or Tyndarus. Also significant are the many occurrences of *credo* (eighteen times, and *concredo* once): for the close connection between *fides* and *credo*, see Meillet; Dumézil. Note also, as Konstan has done (68), the frequent references to Jupiter, "the supreme guarantor of *fides*." Cf. Boyancé 1962: 338-41.

Hegio (927 and 930). While the exigencies of the plot—perfidious Greek slaves bamboozle a credulous old man—could perhaps explain some of the references to *fides*, they cannot explain the recurrent emphasis upon the theme. Plautus wrote many comedies of intrigue, but only the *Captivi* places such weight upon *fides*.

Second, the focus of the play is an Aetolian household and the moral obligations among an Aetolian captor, an Elean captive, and the Elean's slave who, as the audience knows from the beginning, is actually the son of his Aetolian captor. The Roman audience witnessed, and was asked to acclaim, the happy reunion of an Aetolian family accomplished through outstanding displays of *fides*. They saw the leading Aetolian, the captor Hegio, define and uphold rather than subvert Roman moral principles. The ability of Greeks in Aetolia to employ the system of Roman moral obligations will have held special interest for a Roman audience of the 190s BCE, for the Aetolians had a reputation for perfidy and relations between Rome and the Aetolian League were antagonistic. Although the Aetolian setting is not crucial to the enjoyment of the play, it must have held an added attraction for the Roman audience.

The (somewhat convoluted) premise of the *Captivi*, revealed by the speaker of the prologue, concerns a noble Aetolian father, Hegio, who has lost his two sons. One was stolen by a runaway slave years before the play, while the other, Philopolemus, was recently captured in war by the Eleans. In order to recover Philopolemus, Hegio purchases Elean prisoners of war, including the aristocratic Philocrates and his slave Tyndarus. Philocrates is of sufficiently high station to secure the release of Philopolemus. Unknown to Hegio, but known to the audience, Philocrates and Tyndarus agree to switch roles: noble Philocrates acts the slave, and slave Tyndarus acts the noble. By this stratagem it is Philocrates whom Hegio will send as messenger to arrange an exchange of prisoners. The irony is that Tyndarus is Hegio's other son who was kidnapped long ago, and Tyndarus is thus now slave to his own father.

A complex plot such as this promises a hilarious display of Greek cunning and deception typical of the *fabula palliata*. The anonymous speaker of the prologue makes clear to the audience that this will indeed be a comedy of intrigue (35 and 47: *confinxerunt dolum*; 40: *docte fallaciam*; 46: *fallacia*), and the captives themselves reveal the nature and purpose of their ruse to the audience with the usual vocabulary of comic deception (220: *fallacia*; 221: *doli, astu*; 226: *docte, diligenter*). A Roman audience familiar with the genre will have understood these captives to be stereotypical Greek slaves, overly clever and deceitful. As usual, such craft will be necessary to outwit the *senex*, for Hegio himself tells Philocrates of his exceptional care in guarding his prisoners

(255-8). It is to no avail, for the captives have no difficulty in gulling Hegio, thereby fulfilling the promise of the prologue and meeting the comedic expectations of the audience.<sup>2</sup>

The bait that the prisoners use to deceive the old man merits closer attention. When Hegio proposes to send a slave to Elis to arrange the exchange of prisoners, Tyndarus takes the opportunity to suggest sending Philocrates. But how can he dupe his captor into accepting this arrangement? Tyndarus makes an appeal to his captor's good intentions by invoking *fides*. He advises Hegio to send off Philocrates to his father Theodoromedes because:

ne<que> quemquam fideliozem neque cui plus credat potes  
mittere ad eum, ne<que> qui magis sit servus ex sententia,  
neque adeo cui suum concredat filium hodie audacius.  
ne vereare; meo periculo huius ego experiar fidem,  
fretus ingenio eius, quod me esse scit sese erga benivolum.  
HEGIO: mittam equidem istunc aestumatum tua fide, si vis.

you can send to him neither anyone *fidelior* nor anyone whom he would trust more, nor any servant who would be more to his liking, nor even one to whom he would more confidently entrust his own son. Do not fear; I shall make trial of his *fides* at my own risk, relying on his character, because he knows that I am well-disposed toward him.  
HEGIO: All right, I shall send him, taking your *fides* as security, if you wish.  
(346-51)

Of course, the audience knows that Philocrates is in fact the son of Theodoromedes, and the irony of line 348 is amusing. This is also perfidy plain and simple, just as the Roman audience would have expected from a Greek slave, and just as Tyndarus himself explicitly admits later (522-3: “neque deprecatio *perfidii* meis, nec malefactis fuga est, nec confidentiae usquam hospitium est nec deverticulum dolis”). Hegio, trusting in the treacherous *fides* of Tyndarus, is fooled and agrees to send off Philocrates.

This passage is not simply a funny example of *fides Graeca*; it is a passage of crucial importance because without this invocation of *fides* as a morally

<sup>2</sup> Despite the apparent gravity of the circumstances—war, prisoners, loss of family—and despite the excellent qualities that some of the characters display, we must remember that the *Captivi* is popular comedy. It cannot be singled out as particularly noble or lofty and then dismissed as a special case. The action of the play is in fact standard Plautine fare: the preparation, execution, and discovery of an elaborate ruse fueled by farce, puns, slapstick, and several snappy *cantica*, plus a world-class parasite. See Segal 191-214, forcefully rejecting the overly sentimental approaches of modern critics. No doubt the refusal to treat the *Captivi* as typical springs both from Lessing's famous high praise for the piece and from taking Plautus at his word when he claims that this play is unlike the others (55-58; 1029-34). The interpolation at 1016-22 indicates a revival production and hence a successful play.

binding value there would be no deal, hence no trick, and hence no play. The bonds of trust which link Hegio, Tyndarus, and Philocrates have to be more than financial, and the presence of *credat*, *concredat*, and *fideliorem* indicates that *fides* here means something more than just “bail.” Hegio has demonstrated his caution in managing the slaves he has bought and, since his son is at stake, he probably would not accept terms solely on the monetary pledge of an unknown captured enemy; hence, this arrangement can only be sealed by introducing *fides* with its full moral meaning of “trust.” Tyndarus, too, must rely upon the *fides* of noble Philocrates for his safety, and *fides* for him has to mean “loyalty,” not “bail.” Hegio and Tyndarus could have reached an agreement based upon some principle other than *fides* (e.g., an oath, kindness, pity, or simply bail), but such a deal would not have made the play especially significant to a Roman audience. The play progresses from this point only because the characters acknowledge the binding force of a specifically Roman moral value. Perhaps Plautus introduced this negotiation based upon *fides* for comic effect (imagine: Greeks behaving like Romans!); however, we shall see that the happy resolution of the play does rely upon serious adherence to the bonds of *fides* rather than the insouciant subversion of them.

But why would Hegio ever enter into a moral agreement with foreign slaves, especially since a slave stole his one son years ago? Possibly because he is new to the business of prisoner exchange. Possibly out of good nature. But most likely Hegio believes that the former social standing of his prisoner will ensure good conduct. To maintain some semblance of verisimilitude, Plautus must show that Hegio’s trust is logically motivated and that, although the action takes place in Aetolia, both Hegio and his prisoners do understand and accept the Roman system of moral obligations based upon *fides*. Some attention to the text reveals that Plautus has accomplished this through the appropriate usage of terms from the Roman moral vocabulary (cf. Konstan, esp. 61-63). Hegio has learned that one of his captives is “*genere summo et summis ditiis*” (170; cf. 30-1). After Philocrates confides to Hegio that Tyndarus is the man of noble family, Tyndarus invites Hegio’s trust when he boasts of his own *nobilitas*: “*volui sedulo meam nobilitatem occultare*” (298-9; *nobilitas* is a word rare in Plautus and highly ironic in this context). Having established his standing as a member of the *boni*, Tyndarus deceitfully uses *fides* to lure Hegio into a relationship based upon moral assurances in the passage quoted above; Hegio accepts, and quickly commands the release of Tyndarus from his fetters, thereby rendering Tyndarus *honor* befitting a *bonus*. Tyndarus acknowledges this

act of *honos*: “cum me tanto honore honestas cumque ex vinclis eximis” (356).<sup>3</sup> Hegio clearly expects something in return for this small *beneficium*, and he replies with overt reference to the system of moral obligations: “quod bonis bene fit beneficium, gratia ea gravis est bonis” (358). Hegio, duped, allows a moral aspect to enter into his dealings with Tyndarus and seeks to incorporate him into the society of the *boni* by initiating a relationship based upon *beneficia* and *officia*.

Although Hegio wishes to deal with Tyndarus as a social equal, that is, according to the real Philocrates' former status, the prisoners perceive themselves as slaves and consequently behave as cunningly as slaves in Plautine comedy so often do. The captives knowingly exploit the ambiguity of their status, especially when questions of their moral obligations (*officia*) arise. For example, when Hegio addresses Tyndarus about his supposed Elean father, he begins by saying that Philocrates has told him everything, to which Tyndarus replies, “fecit officium hic suum, cum tibi est confessus verum” (297-8). Tyndarus slyly misleads Hegio into thinking that Philocrates has done his duty as Hegio's slave, that is, fulfilled his *officium* to Hegio; Tyndarus and the audience know this really means that Philocrates has fulfilled his *officium* of playing the slave, referring to the pact between Tyndarus and Philocrates to obtain the latter's freedom. The prisoners have obligations both to each other and to their new master, and they use this ambiguity to their advantage.<sup>4</sup> Again, when we first meet the prisoners, they tell their guards “scimus nos nostrum officium quod est, si solutos sinat” (206a-b). Does this mean they understand their new role as slaves of Hegio, and that if unchained they will not try to escape? Or is it their *officium* to each other to try to escape? Hegio wrongly assumes that the captives will honor their *officium* to him, and his attempt to establish a relationship of moral obligations with slaves leads him into trouble and enables the intrigue to take place.

Thus far we have a play typical of the *palliata*: two *servi callidi* bamboozle a *senex*. The one notable feature to this point is the captives' deceitful employment of the Roman moral vocabulary to execute their trick. The tension

<sup>3</sup> Tyndarus again acknowledges the respect given him by Hegio at 391-2: “servitutum servire huic homini optumo, qui me honore honestiorem semper fecit et facit.” The plays on *honos* and *honestas* recall Philocrates' words to Tyndarus in 247: “ne me secus honore honestes quam quom servibas mihi.”

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Hegio's ironic remark to Philocrates at 362-3: “vult te novus erus operam dare tuo veteri domino, quod is velit, fideliter.” If only Hegio knew the truth! Philocrates does indeed do what Tyndarus wishes, *fideliter*. Hegio realizes this at 716: “illi fuisti quam mihi fidelior.” See also Konstan on these conflicting obligations.

heightens and the irony intensifies when the issue shifts from Hegio's misplaced *fides* in Tyndarus to Tyndarus' potentially misplaced *fides* in Philocrates.

For Tyndarus, the ruse abruptly ceases to be the funny bit of shearing it was in lines 266-9 and 274-6. Tyndarus has been Philocrates' slave, his chattel, and thus he has no hold on Philocrates to make him return, other than the tenuous moral obligation of a master to his slave. He attempts to address this in his thinly-veiled, self-praising speech of 401-13.<sup>5</sup> Philocrates acknowledges that Tyndarus is really praising himself (417-18), but then implies that past good service may not suffice to convince him to return by swearing with heavy irony to be faithful to Philocrates: "id ut scias, Iovem supremum testem laudo, Hegio, me *infidelem* non futurum Philocrati . . . nec me secus umquam ei facturum quicquam quam memet mihi" (426-8). These lines, aimed at Hegio, are certainly a comical bit of overkill since Hegio has already agreed to send off Philocrates and been so convinced of his trustworthiness that he weeps (418-21). But to Tyndarus' ears, this pledge sounds like a death-sentence. One can imagine the impact of this remark upon Hegio and Tyndarus: the former nods approvingly, delighted at the imminent return of his son; the latter suddenly turns from chuckling at the invocation of Jupiter to shock and horror with the realization that Philocrates has just sworn to look after his own interests.<sup>6</sup> While the audience may suspect that Philocrates will return in the end (though this is not stated in the prologue), he has nowhere pledged to Tyndarus that he will come back; the whole point of the ruse was to free the master at his slave's expense, and here that realization comes crashing down upon the slave.

Tyndarus thus has a strong motive for prolonging the farewell scene beyond what is merely necessary to deceive Hegio, for Philocrates has just intimated that he will look to his own self-interest. While Tyndarus deceitfully invoked *fides* and other moral values to convince Hegio to let Philocrates go, in a fine comic turnabout he now must invoke them in earnest to convince Philocrates to come back and save him. His discourse upon obligations (429-45) is the heart of the play and deserves quotation in full:

<sup>5</sup> Note the pointed repetition of *Tyndare* (402, 407) and the intentionally ambiguous syntax of 405-6: "neque med umquam deseruisse te neque factis neque fide rebus in dubiis, egenis" (which accusative is the subject?). Some of this serves to continue the gulling of Hegio, but there is also an element of self-interest for Tyndarus, and Philocrates clearly gets the point.

<sup>6</sup> Philocrates can heighten the effect by pointing to himself rather than Tyndarus when making this oath. This staging is implied by the emphatic *memet mihi* and also the simple *ei* ("him" = Philocrates) rather than a demonstrative ("this man here" = Tyndarus). On the inherent combination of hilarity and pathos in Philocrates' oath and Tyndarus' response, see Leach 278-9 and Harsh 349.

istaec dicta te experiri et opera et factis volo,  
 et, quo minus dixi quam volui de te, animum advortas volo. 430  
 atque horum verborum causa cave tu mi iratus fuas.  
 sed, te quaeso, cogitato hinc mea fide mitti domum  
 te aestumatum, et meam esse vitam hic pro te positam pignori,  
 ne tu me ignores, quom extemplo meo e conspectu abscesseris,  
 quom me servom in servitute pro te<d> hic reliqueris, 435  
 tuque te pro libero esse ducas, pignus deseras,  
 neque des operam pro me ut huius reducem facias filium.  
 [scito te hinc minis viginti aestumatum mittier.]  
 fac fidelis sis fideli, cave fidem fluxam geras.  
 nam pater, scio, faciet quae illum facere oportet omnia. 440  
 serva tibi in perpetuum amicum me, atque hunc inventum inveni.  
 haec per dexteram tuam te dextera retinens manu  
 opsecro, infidelior mihi ne fuas quam ego sum tibi.  
 tu hoc age; tu mihi erus nunc es, tu patronus, tu pater;  
 tibi commendo spes opesque meas. 445

438 secl. Leo 439 cod. fac fidele sis fidelis Non. Lindsay

I want you to prove those words both by service and deeds, and, inasmuch as I said less than I wished about you, I want you to pay attention. And see that you do not be angry at me on account of these words. But, I beg you, consider that you are being sent home from here with my *fides* as security, and that my life is placed here as bond for you: do not forget me as soon as you have left my sight, when you have left me here as a slave, enslaved in your stead, and consider yourself a free man, default on your pledge and neglect to return this man's son in place of me. [Know that you are sent from here at a 20 minae security.] See that you show *fides* to one who has shown *fides*, do not display fickle *fides*. For father, I know, will do all the things which he should do. Keep me as your friend forever, and add this new-found friend [Hegio]. By your right hand, grasping it in my right hand, I beseech these things of you, be not less *fidelis* to me than I am to you. You do this; you are now my master, you the *patronus*, you the *pater*; I commend my hope and welfare to you.

Interpretation of this passage depends upon three important issues, namely, the meaning of *fides* here, the origin of the speech, and the manner in which the lines were delivered and understood.

In the statement "cogitato hinc mea fide mitti domum te aestumatum, et meam esse vitam hic pro te positam pignori" (432-3), *fides* probably means simply a guarantee: Tyndarus has posted bail for his release (cf. 340). The content of lines 439-45 suggests a shift in meaning, with the result that *fides* and *fidelis* in those lines meant something greater to the Roman audience than a simple downpayment; the audience must have understood *fides* in "fac fidelis sis fideli, cave fide fluxam geras" not in the morally neutral sense of "guaran-

tee," but in the morally charged sense of "trust."<sup>7</sup> Tyndarus' invocation of Philocrates' right hand, the solemn witness to pacts of *fides*, further indicates that the term has a moral significance here.<sup>8</sup> Tyndarus even links his appeals to *fides* with the Roman system of patronage when he boldly charges Philocrates with the reciprocal obligations of a patron to his client: "tu mihi erus nunc es, tu patronus, tu pater; tibi commendo spes opesque meas."<sup>9</sup> The normal interaction of patron and client requires two free men of different social strata, and this is not the case here since, on one level, a slave asks his master to reward his loyalty and acknowledge an *officium* and, on another level, two slaves voluntarily assume a relationship of patron and client. Since Tyndarus has assumed the role of master for the ruse, we might understand his entreaty as a variant on the saturnalian pattern of a master calling his slave father and patron. We shall return to this point later. At present, the crucial point is that Tyndarus' allusions to the right hand and patronage leave no doubt that *fides* here connotes a moral relationship based on trust and loyalty, not simply bail.

One might claim that Plautus has simply translated his Greek original here. Perhaps so, but this has no bearing upon the function of *fides* in the Roman play, for the ultimate origin of a scene such as this will have been irrelevant to a Roman audience. Regardless of whether a Greek original emphasized concepts such as πίστις, Plautus ensured that this scene resonated with his Roman audience by emphasizing the concepts of *patronus*, *dextra*, and *fides*, thereby bringing the action into the network of Roman moral and political relations. The claim that Plautus simply translated his Greek original deflects our attention from the important issue, namely, the impact of showing a Greek slave begging for *fides* in front of a Roman audience accustomed to displays of *fides Graeca* in the comic theater.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Presumably the person implied by *fideli* is Tyndarus, though Hegio could be understood (cf. 930). Here and elsewhere in the *Captivi* we see juxtaposed and conflated two important Republican meanings of *fides*. Fraenkel (1916) argued that *fides* originally meant only a "guarantee" without moral overtones and only acquired the reciprocal meaning of "trust" or "confidence" much later; Heinze countered that the word contained a strong moral component from the outset. Whatever its original meaning, the word by Plautus' time clearly had a moral component, belonged to the network of Roman moral and political vocabulary, and was intimately connected with the institution of *clientela*. In general, see Hellegouarc'h, esp. 23-35, and Freyburger.

<sup>8</sup> The connection between *fides* and *dextra* is explicitly attested in the sources from all periods: Boyancé 1964; Monti 1-8.

<sup>9</sup> Tyndarus has previously indicated his knowledge of the institution and obligations of patronage at 335, when he observed that the Elean who holds Philopolemus is a *cliens* of Philocrates. For *clientage* in Plautus, see Rouland.

<sup>10</sup> A number of studies have explored the relationship of *fides* and πίστις with an eye to the role which these concepts played in Roman international policy: (e.g.) Calderone, Dahlheim 25-



A point of compositional technique reveals the hand of Plautus behind lines 429-45 and suggests that he did indeed emphasize *fides* for his Roman audience when he adapted, or invented, this farewell scene. Fraenkel (1960: 105-7) has demonstrated convincingly that Plautus commonly opened and closed his insertions with a nearly identical phrase, such as *Captivi* 152-66. After Hegio tells Ergasilus to take heart, saying *nunc habe bonum animum* (152), there follows a long series of puns based upon Latin homonyms which halts the flow of the drama until Hegio concludes the exchange fifteen lines later with a nearly verbatim repetition: *habe modo bonum animum* (167). Sometimes only the closing marker of an insertion is evident, as at *Captivi* 125, where Hegio jokes with his *lorarius* and cuts short the witty exchange with a brusque *sed satis verborumst* (Fraenkel 1960: 136). In a similar way, Philocrates cuts short this moralizing farewell of Tyndarus with phrases typical of closure (445-6): "mandavisti satis. I satin habes, mandata quae sunt facta si refero?" "satis." Just as Plautus often uses *satis* to cut short a piece of silliness, so too he uses it here to cut short this lecture on obligations. The combination of Roman content—*fides*, *patronus*, and *dextra*—and Plautine form makes a strong case for the Plautine composition of lines 429-45.

How serious are the references to moral obligations here? The matter is not simple, and the importance of this passage will excuse an extended discussion. The serious vocabulary of the script does not guarantee a serious presentation, for while Plautus does invoke ethical themes frequently in his plays, he often does so for the sake of parody. The entire speech could thus be a bathetic joke designed to beguile Hegio.<sup>11</sup> Plautus' intentions are unrecoverable, nor do we have evidence for the ancient director's ideas. The text itself allows the modern director of this scene several options, and one's preference is largely subjective. But if one considers the speech within the larger framework of the play, neither of the two simplest ways of presenting this scene—with both captives acting seriously or farcically—is entirely satisfactory. First, while one could have Tyndarus deliver these lines as a serious speech to an attentive Philocrates, this does not accord well with the general silliness of the play exhibited in the scenes with Ergasilus, the imputed madness of Aristophontes, and elsewhere. A purely serious staging (the sort of production Lessing pro-

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52, Gruen 1982, Ferrary 72-81. In their attention to international matters, these studies have neglected the role of *fides* and πίστις in interpersonal relationships and consequently have given little or no attention to the role of *fides* in Plautus.

<sup>11</sup> For the prevalence of moral and political terms in Plautus, esp. *virtus*, see Earl. For an example of parody of such terms, consider Alcumena's hymn to *virtus* in the *Amphitruo* and see Phillips.

bably envisioned and one perhaps appropriate to the Greek original) seems alien to the spirit of Plautus. Second, one could present both captives hamming it up, deceitfully using terms from the Roman moral vocabulary with bombastic tones and gestures in accordance with the Plautine spirit of intrigue and farce. One could reason that since Tyndarus has already gulled Hegio once by invoking *fides*, he is being facetious here as well. Yet Tyndarus makes this speech not to Hegio, but to Philocrates in response to his oath and his implication that he will leave his slave behind in servitude. Tyndarus rightly declares himself to be in grave danger (esp. 433, 445), and the reality of his danger is later evidenced when Hegio, having discovered the ruse, sentences him to harsh physical punishments which actually commence during the play. A patently farcical speech would not serve his purpose.

An admixture of seriousness and farce offers the most satisfactory staging. The staging envisioned here would have Tyndarus, gravely concerned for his own hide, deliver a sincere speech while Philocrates, at least outwardly, misconstrues his slave's earnestness as part of the ruse to hoodwink Hegio. In his current situation, Tyndarus must continue gulling Hegio, and he can accomplish this with a speech about obligations given either *in serio* or with deceitful bombast. Tyndarus must also convince Philocrates to show *fides* and return, and this can be accomplished only with a speech *in serio*, for one delivered with deceitful bombast would not convey his newfound urgency. Now, if Tyndarus speaks with earnestness, it does not follow that Philocrates will understand him as such. Misapprehension by Philocrates would produce the comic equivalent of the boy who cried wolf, and such a misapprehension, easily conveyed by the appropriate miming and tones of voice, makes for a marvelous combination of seriousness, levity, irony, and tension.

The Roman audience beheld a man with *ingenium liberale* enslaved to his father while portraying the free noble to whom he has been enslaved for twenty years. We simply cannot determine whether they would have taken his words as part of the ruse, as proof of his *ingenium liberale*, or perhaps a little of both.<sup>12</sup> However, plot, stagecraft, and vocabulary all suggest that Tyndarus is serious in his discourse on *fides*. First, there is a lexical argument. Although

<sup>12</sup> Throughout the ruse, the captives acknowledge their theatrical role-playing. With this speech the roles of Tyndarus as loyal slave and Tyndarus as pseudo-Philocrates merge. His dual intention—fool Hegio and persuade Philocrates—can best be served with an earnest appeal to *fides*. Philocrates may outwardly misconstrue Tyndarus' speech as part of the caper, but here too we have a coincidence of role playing and true intent. Philocrates-as-Tyndarus can take the speech as a means of bamboozling the old man; Philocrates-as-patron will be seen to heed the words of Tyndarus. Philocrates may even comment upon his own assumption of two roles here when he states "et tua, et tua huc *ornatus* reveniam ex sententia" (447).

Tyndarus is capable of making jokes in an apparently serious situation (*vide* 662-3), there is no lexical evidence that Tyndarus is being facetious here. Unlike other passages where Plautus leaves clear indications that the speaker knows he is making a parody, these appeals to Roman moral concepts betray no trace of parody; for example, Tyndarus' appeal to the right hand should be contrasted with the parodic flavor of a passage from the *Poenulus* and compared with the solemnity of a passage from Terence's *Andria*.<sup>13</sup>

Second, a serious speech by Tyndarus produces an irony rich with saturnalian and metatheatrical elements worthy of Plautus' best work, for in this speech a conventional saturnalian reversal is reversed (Segal 202). Parallels do exist for a character in Plautus calling another his *patronus* or *pater*, but usually such titles are a saturnalian inversion, with the master begging the assistance of a slave.<sup>14</sup> The scene under discussion toys with saturnalian episodes conventional in the *palliata*: Tyndarus, perhaps in order to convince Hegio that he is indeed the master, apparently assumes the stereotyped role of "master begging for help from his wily slave." But while Philocrates (and Hegio) might apprehend Tyndarus' speech in light of such a comic convention, the audience can see that they are misapprehending. This clearly is not the usual saturnalian inversion because Tyndarus is not a silly master in love pleading for assistance from his crafty slave. Tyndarus is a loyal slave in danger pleading for his very life from his master. Tyndarus' speech confounds the usual saturnalian parody of serious pleas—the reversal is reversed—and the full effect of this only emerges with a serious delivery.

Third, and most importantly, the plot demands that his appeals to *fides* be earnest. The captives may abuse their *fides* with Hegio, but not with each other. The sacrifice of Tyndarus (the beginning of the piece) and the return of Philocrates (the resolution of the piece) both depend upon extraordinary displays of *fides*; were the captives both simply rascally slaves, invoking *fides* only to abuse it, the play would have neither its happy ending nor its amusing beginning. In fact, Philocrates does ultimately acknowledge the bonds of *fides* as presented in Tyndarus' speech, suggesting that the appeals to *fides* were heeded. Since *fides* is treated earnestly in later, less crucial circumstances, it is likely that Tyndarus does so at this crucial juncture.

<sup>13</sup> At *Poen.* 417-23, Agorastocles seeks the help of his slave Milphio to steal his beloved from a pimp; the appeal to Milphio's right hand leads to ridiculous exaggeration, a joke, and a diminutive. In contrast, Pamphilus relates the final words of Chrysis to look after Glycerium at 289-96 (and note the two references to *fides* therein).

<sup>14</sup> Typical are *Cas.* 739; *Rud.* 1266; *As.* 652-3, 689-90; *Mos.* 406-8. See Segal 111-16, who suggests that such Saturnalian pleas are characteristic of Plautus. Note that Philocrates considers calling Tyndarus his father at 238-9.

In short, Tyndarus must intend a serious speech on Roman *fides* with its full moral implications and Philocrates presumably misconstrues them as farcical. If Tyndarus gives a serious speech, that does not mean the scene is not funny. Lines delivered seriously within a comic frame make for good comedy, and if the actor speaks these lines with sincerity to an actor who apparently treats them as a joke he will heighten, rather than diminish, the comic effect.

We have examined the first six occurrences of *fides* in the play. It remains to examine the role of *fides* in the resolution of the drama, where it is integrated with terms such as *beneficium* and *gratia* without any deceit or ironic overtones. The prisoners verbally accepted Hegio's offer as if they were *boni*; hence, when he realizes that they have exploited his confidence by not reciprocating his *beneficium* and that their *fides* has failed him, Hegio feels betrayed and withdraws from society. He consequently vows to pity no one, to trust no one (756, 765). When Ergasilus brings good news of his son's return, Hegio refuses to believe him (e.g. 876, 886). Hegio wants to trust Ergasilus—"dic, bonan fide tu mihi istaec verba dixisti?" (890)—but the latter's sacred oath and his *fides* are not a sufficient pledge: "dubium habebis etiam, sancte quom ego iurem tibi? postremo, Hegio, si parva iuri iurandost *fides*, vise ad portum" (892-4). Perhaps this is because Ergasilus is not a member of the *boni*, and his agreements with Hegio have heretofore been based upon pity. Perhaps this merely represents Hegio's vow to trust no one. Although optimistic, Hegio must see for himself that Philocrates has kept his word and that *fides* is still a viable force in his society.

Hegio soon learns that Philocrates was true to his word and bursts on-stage with a joyful *canticum* of thanks to Jupiter which culminates with: "haec reperta est *fides* firma nobis" (927). He now sings because the prisoner's *fides* was *firma*, not *fluxa*.<sup>15</sup> Philocrates matter-of-factly replies: "tecum servavi fidem" (930) and asks what Hegio will now do for him. Hegio admits that he can never repay him: "numquam referre gratiam possim satis" (932), but his son Philopolemus encourages him simply to acknowledge the bonds of *beneficia* and *officia*: "di eam potestatem dabunt, ut beneficium bene merenti nostro merito muneres" (934-5). Philocrates requests the release of Tyndarus, to which Hegio gladly agrees: "quod bene fecisti referetur gratia" (941). The prisoners may have clowned with *fides* earlier in the play, but the ending reveals that Hegio's (and Tyndarus') trust was not misplaced, and that Roman moral values can be upheld even in an Aetolian context. The heavy-handed emphasis upon

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Enn. *Ann.* 32: "accipe daque fidem foedusque feri bene firmum."

*gratia*, *beneficia*, and *fides* here is serious, not silly, and this emphasis gains greater significance by its location at the resolution of the play.<sup>16</sup>

To summarize: although *fides* is a recurrent theme, its treatment by the characters is not consistent throughout the play. Tyndarus uses it to deceive Hegio at first (349, 351), then probably with misunderstood sincerity in his farewell to Philocrates (405, 432, 439). Hegio's despair for it and his subsequent discovery of its vitality near the resolution of the play (890, 893, 927, 930) are serious. We should not expect consistency in Plautus' handling of ethical themes, for comedy can simultaneously critique and undercut the values it apparently affirms; however, it is crucial to understand that the action of the *Captivi* has its beginning, middle, and end literally marked by invocations of *fides*.

The transferal of Roman moral and political values to Greeks in the *Captivi* is not unique, for we do see characters elsewhere in the *palliata* displaying *pietas*, *virtus*, *fides*, etc. Yet we should underscore that Plautus here presented his Roman audience with a play emphasizing *fides* set in Aetolia, home of a notoriously perfidious bunch of Greeks and quite possibly enemy territory at the time. Surprisingly, the play does not vilify or scapegoat Aetolians for being perfidious. Instead, the audience is directed to hope for the reunion of an Aetolian's family and a happy ending accomplished not by the usual vices of intrigue, but by the exemplary *fides* that unites an Elean, an Aetolian, and an Aetolian-born Elean. The milieu of Plautine plays is sometimes relevant, sometimes not, and were this play set in the most common location (Athens) or some other state (e.g., Messenia), the milieu would not invite attention. But the presentation of Greeks invoking and upholding Roman moral values in an Aetolian context must have been striking, particularly in a play staged in the 190s.<sup>17</sup> To appreciate this point, we need to consider briefly the history of Romano-Aetolian relations, the date of the *Captivi*, and the reputation of the Aetolians in general.

According to surviving sources, which doubtless reflect the Roman viewpoint, the history of Rome and the Aetolian League in the time of Plautus

<sup>16</sup> In a manner unusual for the plays of Plautus, the happy ending of the *Captivi* requires that the moral values of the community be upheld rather than subverted. One might argue that the happy ending for Hegio's story conforms to the typical comic pattern wherein harmony is restored and the social order upheld after a serious threat. On the restoration of harmony as an essential feature of comic resolution, see Frye 163-71, but note that Frye emphasizes the formation of (and integration into) a new order rather than a reassertion of the old.

<sup>17</sup> This is not the only play set in an Aetolian city (*Poenulus* is set in Calydon), but this is the only play set in an unnamed city. Apparently Plautus wished to emphasize the Aetolian context rather than direct attention to any particular city in Aetolia.

is a history of mutual antagonism and *fides* disregarded, culminating with open warfare from 191 to 189.<sup>18</sup> The Aetolians proved themselves untrustworthy allies in two wars with Macedonia. Rome and the Aetolian League struck a treaty in 212 or 211 (Liv. 26.24.8-14; Polyb. 9.39.1-3 and 18.38.5-9) which united both parties against Philip of Macedonia, but in 206 the Aetolians made a separate peace with the king, even though such a peace was a violation of the treaty with Rome (Liv. 29.12.4). Though Rome did make peace with Philip in the following year, the Aetolian betrayal left a lasting negative impression. A few years later, the Aetolians were hardly more helpful in the Second Macedonian War, for they delayed their entry into the war until victory was imminent and then anticipated the Romans in grabbing booty after Cynoscephalae, an act that clearly rankled (Polyb. 18.27.3-4 and 18.34.1). They made excessive demands in the postwar settlement, demands based upon the treaty of 212/211 which their own treachery had rendered void (Polyb. 18.38.7-9; Liv. 33.12-13).

Modern historians can analyze the causes and the responsibilities for the war Rome fought with Antiochus and the Aetolian League from 191 to 189 BCE, but a Roman in Plautus' audience would no doubt subscribe to the view that the Aetolians were duplicitous double-dealers who heedlessly provoked a confrontation between Antiochus and Rome (e.g., Polyb. 3.7.1-2; Liv. 35.12.1-4). The war provided the Romans with ample opportunity to get acquainted with the petulant Aetolians and their treacherous tactics. After the Romans had soundly defeated Antiochus at Thermopylae in April of 191, the Aetolians sought to abandon Antiochus and make peace with Rome. In a famous episode, the Aetolian ambassadors who surrendered themselves to M'. Acilius Glabrio balked at some of his terms, whereupon Glabrio ordered chains and an iron collar to be placed on each of them (Polyb. 20.9-11 and Liv. 36.27-29; Glabrio did not carry out this threat). Significantly, according to Polybius, the Aetolian ambassadors did not understand Roman *fides* ('Ρωμαίων πίστις). Throughout the war the Aetolians repeatedly sought peace with one hand and fought with

<sup>18</sup> Analysis of Romano-Aetolian relations is beyond the scope of this paper, especially since the play cannot be precisely dated. For accounts of Rome and the Aetolian League, see Badian, Ferrary 49-58; Gruen 1984: 456-62 (better on Aetolian aims than Roman attitudes). As for Elis, there is little of relevance here, though it should be mentioned that this longstanding ally of the Aetolian League invited a garrison from Antiochus in order to defend itself against the Achaean League (Polyb. 20.3.5-7; the garrison was soon removed). Roman attitudes towards the Eleans are unrecoverable; Elis was an *amicus* of Rome after the First Macedonian War, but their invitation to Antiochus will not have inspired approval. For references and brief discussion of Romano-Elean relations, see Gruen 1984: 77-8 and 469-70 (correcting p.469 n. 189 to read 36.31.2-3).

the other.<sup>19</sup> Finally, after the crushing defeat of Antiochus at Magnesia and the siege of Ambracia by M. Fulvius Nobilior, the Aetolians submitted to peace in the summer of 189 (Liv. 38.11 and Polyb. 21.32).

Certainly a play set in Aetolia would have had a different impact upon a Roman audience in 210 than it would have had in 190 BCE. Unfortunately, while we can be confident that the *Captivi* dates to the second century BCE, we cannot locate precisely its place in the history of the relations between Rome and Aetolia. Veiled topical allusions are not a safe guide for dating.<sup>20</sup> Stylistic considerations can be of some use, however, and they place *Captivi* among the middle plays of the corpus, i.e. the mid to later 190s (Sedgwick; Hough 1935). This rough dating can be corroborated by some peculiarly Roman allusions, five of which merit attention.

The most compelling Roman allusions for approximating the date of the *Captivi* are three puns in Latin.<sup>21</sup> First, there is Ergasilus' joke in line 888: "at nunc Siculus non est; Boius est, boiam terit." The Boii were a northern Italian people with whom the Romans had fought intermittently during Plautus' lifetime. The reference to a Boian wearing a yoke (*boia*) would have been particularly relevant after Scipio Nasica's triumph in 191 when Boian nobles were paraded through Rome itself.<sup>22</sup> Second, Hegio jokes *opus Placentinis quoque* at line 162. The colony of Placentia, destroyed by the Boii in 200, was resettled in 190 (Liv. 37.46.10). The years around the latter date provide a more suitable climate for such a pun; it would be decidedly unamusing close to 200. Third, Hegio teases Ergasilus in line 163 with the phrase *opus Turdetanis*, a pun on *turdus*. The Turdetani were inhabitants of Spain with whom the Romans went to war in 195, and Cato celebrated a triumph for this campaign

<sup>19</sup> When Glabrio besieged Naupactus, the Aetolians appealed to the Roman senate for peace, but refused the terms. In the spring of 190, after Glabrio had captured Lamia and laid siege to Amphissa, Scipio Africanus arrived and was met by an Aetolian delegation seeking peace; Scipio, after bragging of his previous displays of *fides* (Polyb. 21.4.10; Liv. 37.6.6), offered the same terms the senate had offered, and again the Aetolians refused. After a six month truce expired in the following winter, the Aetolians again appealed unsuccessfully to the Roman senate for peace, even as their troops took the offensive (Liv. 37.49). Livy has M. Fulvius Nobilior wryly observe: "magis saepe quam vere umquam Aetolos pacem petere" (38.8.7). See now Eckstein for more on Glabrio and the Aetolians.

<sup>20</sup> On the danger of using topical allusions as a method for dating the plays, see Harvey; Gruen 1990: 124-157.

<sup>21</sup> Because they are Latin puns, they cannot have been in a Greek original. It may be significant that these puns occur in scenes with Ergasilus the parasite, whose role Plautus greatly enlarged, if he did not create it outright; see Hough 1942.

<sup>22</sup> Liv. 36.40.11. The joke puns on *boia* as (1) a slave's collar; (2) a Gallic torque; (3) a sexual innuendo (see Adams 183). For a clear, brief account of Roman conflicts with the Boii (224-222 and 203-191), see Toynbee ii, 264-272.

in the following year.<sup>23</sup> The case for awareness of the Turdetani by Plautus or by his audience prior to Cato's triumph is weak, and the pun makes better sense if dated after that time. In addition, two other Roman allusions may suggest a date in the later 190s. In line 90, Ergasilus considers becoming a porter *extra portam Trigeminam*, which has been taken as a reference to the Porticus Aemilia, an emporium which Livy (35.10.12) informs us was built *extra portam Trigeminam* in 193 or 192. Finally, the consignment of Tyndarus the Aetolian to hard labor in the quarries (721-23, 733-36) could recall the real consignment of some noble Aetolian captives to confinement in the quarries of the *arx* early in 190. Scholars have sought to ferret out other topical allusions, but they are less compelling.<sup>24</sup>

Because none of this is conclusive, little emphasis is placed upon the date in this study. However, since no compelling evidence exists for dating the play earlier than the turn of the century, we can posit a date in the 190s, and more likely the later 190s, with reasonable confidence. Whatever the precise date, we should read the play with an awareness that Plautus may have staged a play set in Aetolia with a war against the League imminent, or even in progress.<sup>25</sup>

Regardless of the exact production date of the *Captivi*, the Aetolian people had a bad reputation in antiquity. In general, early Latin literature reviles the Greeks with many negative stereotypes, including perfidy, cunning, frivolity, and effeminacy.<sup>26</sup> The inhabitants of Aetolia, by virtue of their Hellenic heritage, shared in these vices, and surviving references are unfailingly hostile.

<sup>23</sup> Although the sources are unclear on the extent of their territories, the Turdetani certainly dwelt in Baetica, and possibly as far North as the area of Saguntum (Knapp). Livy's allusion to a Roman victory over the Turdetani near Saguntum in 214 BCE is suspect (24.42.11); in 206 the chief of the Turdetani defected to the Roman side after the battle of Ilipa (Liv. 28.15.14). For Cato's campaign, see Astin 41 n. 32, 43-44, 304-5.

<sup>24</sup> On confinement in the quarries, Wellesley; cf. Liv. 37.3.8. The Carcer Tullianum was originally a quarry as well as a prison; see Var. *L.* 5.151; Platner and Ashby 317. For other attempts at dating, see Schutter 39-48, suggesting a date of 191/190; Buck 47-54, suggesting 189. The famous reference to a basilica in line 815 (cf. *Cur.* 472) was long considered a criterion for dating the play to 184, but it is based on the erroneous belief that Cato built the first basilica in Rome in that year. Gaggiotti, however, convincingly argues that there was indeed a basilica in Rome prior to the Porcia, and thus the play can antedate 184.

<sup>25</sup> This point has not gone unnoticed, but has been used to date the play before or after the Syrian War on the unsupported assumption that Plautus cannot have staged the *Captivi* during the conflict; e.g. Wellesley 304: "it would hardly have been tactful on Plautus' part to have laid the scene of a play where almost every character wins our sympathy in a country with which Rome was still at war."

<sup>26</sup> For a collection of prevalent stereotypes, see Petrochilos. For Plautus and his audience, only a Greek could sing the praises of the goddess Perfidia (*As.* 545-57) and the oxymoronic *fides Graeca* means defaulting on a debt (*As.* 199).



Polybius, our most extensive authority, presents an unflattering portrait.<sup>27</sup> Kenneth Sacks (92), drawing almost exclusively on Book 4—more citations could be adduced from other books—summarizes it well:

To Polybius, the Aetolians are violent and aggressive in spirit (4.3.5), cruel (4.18.7-9), impious (4.62.2), haughty (4.64.8), inhuman (4.67.3-4), and cowardly (4.79.1). They are also natural revolutionaries (13.1.2), spendthrifts (13.1.1), and liars (4.29.4-5). Though at times Polybius considers their behavior scandalous (4.27.1-8), he admits that the Greeks have become quite inured to it (4.16.1-2). The most grievous faults of the Aetolians, however, are their desire for aggrandizements and lust for booty. Plundering and raiding are habitual for them (4.3.1, 16.2). Their obsession with booty costs them battles (4.57-8) and friends (4.29.4-7), and they think nothing of plundering sacred objects (4.19.4, 62.2) and even allies (4.79.2-3).

Their greatest vice according to him is a lust for plunder (πλεονεξία); treachery (ἄθεσία) is a secondary vice.<sup>28</sup> Polybius, having grown up as a member of the Achaean League, doubtless brought strong anti-Aetolian prejudices with him to Rome, and his time there apparently did nothing to soften his dislike. His hostility is intense and unmitigated throughout the *Histories*.<sup>29</sup> This must not, however, lead us to dismiss his comments as unrepresentative of Roman feelings.

Livy, our most extensive Latin authority, drew heavily on Polybius for events concerning Aetolia, and most of his criticisms are familiar from Polybius: Aetolians are pirates (34.24.2), liars (34.49.5), *vanissima et ingratisissima* (36.17.8), haughty (35.33.10), brave only in words (35.49.2), mad (41.25.1), but above all, lacking in *fides* (31.1.9; 32.32.14-16; 33.35.9; 35.33.4). Whereas Polybius emphasizes their lust for plunder, Livy emphasizes their treachery; the Latin historian accentuates a vice particularly noxious to the Roman mind. The Aetolian lack of *fides* no doubt accounts for the exceptional irritation that

<sup>27</sup> There is a paucity of references to Aetolians in Greek sources before Polybius, probably because they existed on the periphery of classical Greece and did not organize into their League until the fourth century BCE (Larsen 78-80). Thucydides identifies them as pirates maintaining barbarian customs long abandoned by other Greeks (1.5.3) and states that they speak an unintelligible dialect and are believed to eat raw flesh (3.94.4-5). Antigone in Euripides' *Phoenissae* calls them semi-barbarous (μειξοβάρβαρος, 138), and as late as the Hellenistic era, Philip of Macedon sneered that most Aetolians were not Greeks at all (Polyb. 18.5.7-8).

<sup>28</sup> Πλεονεξία explicitly cited at 2.43.9, 2.45.1, 2.46.3, 2.49.3, 4.3.5, 4.6.12, 18.34.1. ἄθεσία, more commonly applied to the Celts, is named only at 4.29.4. On πλεονεξία as "lust for plunder," see Walbank 237.

<sup>29</sup> Thus correctly Mendels, *contra* Sacks, who attempted to show "that Polybius suspended his conscious vilification of the Aetolians, certainly for the years 191-189 and quite possibly for the years 196-192" (105).

they caused the Romans (e.g. 35.12.1). Some of this is simply Livy's patriotic interpretation of things, which naturally casts the Aetolians in the most evil role possible; however, Livy probably reflects the traditional Roman attitude towards the treacherous Aetolians, and stereotypes need not be true to be believed.<sup>30</sup>

Given this background of negative stereotypes and troubled Romano-Aetolian relations, a Roman audience hearing the parasite Ergasilus proclaim *Aetolia haec est* (94) must have expected a display of stereotypical Aetolian deceit, avarice, and petulance. Yet this is not what they got. The character who grounds the play in Aetolia—Hegio—is a good man, and the perpetrators of deceit are his (Elean) captives. Philocrates is an Elean, and while Tyndarus, age 24, does have an Aetolian ingenium, he has lived in Elis for the past twenty years (980-2). Ergasilus, though an important character, interacts only with Hegio and plays no role in the moral agreements of the captives and their captor. Hegio the *paterfamilias* commands our attention as the most prominent Aetolian because his *familia* is the focal point of the action. He is the central character around whom the others orbit, for everyone in the play is his dependent (slave, child, or parasite). His house stands center stage and is the only one visible to the audience. He himself has more lines and occupies the stage more than any other character. To investigate the Aetolian setting of the play, one must therefore investigate the character of Hegio.

Hegio is not vilified or made a scapegoat like the usual lecherous or stupid *senes decepti* (e.g., *Casina*). He emerges as a rather likeable, even admirable, fellow. He is not a gentleman isolated from his fellow Aetolians, for his very name indicates his influential place in society ("leader," from ἡγέομαι). Several points in his speech at 498-504 suggest that he is an outstanding citizen in his community: throngs congratulate him on obtaining the means for his son's ransom; that ransom qualifies as a public benefaction (*bono publico*); the praetor grants him a *syngraphus* on the spot. Although he currently engages in the sale of slaves, Ergasilus stresses that he does so unwillingly and out of necessity: "nunc hic ocepit quaestum hunc fili gratia inhonestum [et] maxime alienum ingenio suo" (98-99). This activity is *inhonestus* and hence utterly foreign to his nature as a *bonus*. Our first meeting

<sup>30</sup> Cicero probably expressed the prevailing Republican view when he called the Aetolians brigands (*Rep* 3.15). As for Roman sources from the second century BCE, a scant four lines of dubious interpretation survive from Ennius' play *Ambracia*, and nothing revealing about the Aetolian character survives from the *Annales*. Cato, a figure given to anti-Greek rhetoric, only alludes to his presence in Aetolia as a *legatus* to Nobilior (*ORF* 130), but perhaps it is worth noting that, according to Plutarch, Cato scorned the six hundred picked Aetolians guarding Thermopylae (*Cat. Ma.* 13.7).

with Hegio himself (110) confirms that he is not some malevolent pirate, for after he orders lighter chains for his prisoners, he freely jokes at great length—nearly 100 lines—with his *lorarius* and Ergasilus. Throughout the play and despite rapid changes of fortune, Hegio always finds time to jest with the parasite. Even the revelation of the deception comes about through Hegio's kindness when he readily grants the request of Aristophontes to visit his friend Philocrates (511-14). Lines 325-28 present a surprising contradiction to the stereotype of greedy Aetolians, for Hegio states:

non ego omnino lucrum omne esse utile homini existumo;  
 scio ego, multos iam lucrum lutulentos homines reddidit.  
 est etiam ubi profecto damnum praestet facere quam lucrum.  
 odi ego aurum; multa multis saepe suasit perperam.

*I do not think that all profit is advantageous to a man in every case; I know this: profit has made many men corrupt before now. There are even times when certainly it is better to make a loss than a profit. I hate gold; it has often counseled many things to many men crookedly.*

An Aetolian who despises gold is a rare thing indeed, but he should be taken at his word, for nothing in the text suggests a tongue-in-cheek interpretation. We might contrast Hegio's enlightened outlook with the stereotyped avarice and rapacity of Stalagmus (985-6) or the fictitious Thensaurochrysonicochrysidēs (285-92).

Most significantly for a Roman audience, Hegio honors Roman moral values by constantly seeking to define and uphold relations of *beneficia*, *officia*, *gratia* and *fides* with those around him, even if they be foreigners. Though an Aetolian, he understands these Roman concepts, and apparently lives by them because thrice he is called an *optumus homo* (333, 391, 836). He is sorely disappointed when his captives abuse the values to which he adheres, and he punishes violently those who disregard them (Tyndarus and Stalagmus). Hegio may be fooled, but his desire to treat an enslaved enemy noble as a social equal merits some praise. While our sympathies may be drawn to the real heroes of the play—Philocrates, who returns for his slave, and Tyndarus, who sacrifices for his master—we must admit that both these characters do abuse *fides* and other moral values when they revel in the roles of *servi callidi* to deceive Hegio with a trick rendered unnecessary by the latter's good intentions (329-37). Hegio is the only consistently moral character of the bunch. This does not mean that the Romans would have eulogized him as some modern critics have,

for he does have his flaws and is the butt of many jokes.<sup>31</sup> It does imply, however, that they would not have seen him as a one-dimensional stock character, a straw man present only to be the target of a deception. Unlike other old men in Plautus, Hegio is the victim of a deception not because he is miserly, or lecherously competes with his son for a girl, or cruelly prevents his son from attaining his beloved; rather, he is victimized for being too honest in his attempt to recover his son and return the noble son of an enemy.

Despite a war with Aetolia imminent or in progress, Plautus presented his sponsors and audience a play emphasizing Roman values set in an Aetolian household. They beheld a drama that boldly showed the inclusion of Aetolia in the world of Roman moral and political values. The characters of the *Captivi* are among the most admirable in Plautus, and they will have been admirable to the Romans not because of native Greek attributes, but because they adopt and uphold specifically Roman codes of behavior. Plautus offers a story in which characters can achieve a happy ending only when they embrace Roman virtues rather than cling to native Greek vices. The ending, with its affirmation of the values of the *boni* and its expulsion of Stalagmus and all that he represents, invites applause for the Roman *pudicos mores* (1029) which make good men better (1034) rather than Greek cunning or the good fortune of an Aetolian family.

<sup>31</sup> For an example of the tendency to eulogize, see Lindsay 104; for excessively harsh criticism of Hegio's character, see Leach, esp. 285-6, 290.

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