

THE CHARACTER OF PAEGNIUM IN PLAUTUS'S *PERSA*¹⁾

Since the *Persa* is not the most well-known of Plautus's plays, it may be of help to begin this discussion, which chiefly affects the first two "acts" (as printed in most editions), with a brief description of the main action of the early scenes of the play.

The play opens as Toxilus and Sagaristio, two slaves, enter, the former from the stage-door which represents his house, the latter from a side-entrance, each with a seven-line monody. They notice and greet each other, and fall into conversation, during which Toxilus reveals that while his master is abroad he has been living it up, and that he has been unfortunate in love – the *leno*, Dordalus, who owns Toxilus's *amica*, Lemniselenis, is insisting that Toxilus pay the money to free her that very day. Toxilus asks Sagaristio for a loan, the idea of which is scornfully rejected by the penniless Sagaristio, who nevertheless promises to see if he can raise anything from his friends, and goes off, leaving Toxilus to reenter his house saying he will think up some nasty trick to play on the *leno*.

Next, onto the empty stage comes Saturio, Toxilus's parasite, who in a monologue tells of his lifestyle, with a comical attempt at dignifying it, and criticises the *quadruplatores*, who gain their living by denouncing others, and then moves towards Toxilus's door with the intention of entering and falling upon the *besternae reliquiae*. Before he can knock, however, Toxilus himself comes out of the house, saying he has thought up a scheme by which he may dupe the *leno* out of Lemniselenis, and that for it he needs to enlist the parasite's aid. Pretending he has not noticed Saturio, he shouts back into the house numerous instructions concerning the preparation of a feast, the parasite's reaction on hearing which is predictably favourable. Toxilus then "notices" Saturio, and tells him something of this plan, which is to involve the pretended sale of Saturio's daughter. Saturio, under threat of getting no dinner, eventually agrees to

1) I am very grateful to Mr J.C.B. Lowe for much helpful criticism of this paper in its previous incarnations.

this, and is told to go and prepare his daughter, telling her what to say in front of the *leno* (though in fact neither Saturio nor the audience have much idea what she is to say), and to bring her back with him, both of them disguised as foreigners. When Saturio has left, Toxilus returns to his house, stating his intention of sending a messenger to Lemniselenis, 'ut habeat animum bonum'.

In the first scene many details of imagery and humour are clearly Plautine²⁾, as well as the metrical form (the whole scene

2) To select some of the more notable places:

7ff. Other examples of monologues on the qualities of the good and the bad slave are *Aul.* 587-602, *Bacc.* 657-62, *Men.* 966-85, *Most.* 858-73, *Pseud.* 1103-15, *Rud.* 920-5; cf. also Turpilius fr. 69f. R (?). There are several verbal resemblances between Sagaristio's speech here and one or more of the passages listed - the *absens/praesens* antithesis, the reference to the *pectus* of the slave, the phrase 'ex sententia', general sentiments introduced by 'qui ...'. On the Plautine origin of these formulaic speeches see E. Fraenkel, 'Plautinisches im Plautus' (Berlin, 1922), 243 ff., = 'Elementi Plautini in Plauto' (Florence, 1960), 234 ff. (References to this work are hereafter given as 'Fraenkel, PiP... , EPP...').

13 ff. The tendency of Plautus to inflate the simple process of two characters meeting and recognising each other, often, as here, through an extremely formulaic sequence (see F. Marx, 'Plautus *Rudens*. Text und Commentar' (Leipzig, 1928), 310-312) with a close relationship between metre and sense, has been shown by Fraenkel (PiP. 220 ff., especially 227 ff., EPP. 211 ff., especially 217 ff.). For a vivid example, compare *Men. Dis Exap.* 103f. with Plautus's version, *Bacc.* 534 ff. - see D. Bain, 'Actors and Audience' (Oxford, 1977), 142 f.

21 f. A reference to the *μυλών* could well have been found in the original here (cf. *Men. Aspis* 245, *Heros* 3), but the form of expression, using the vocabulary of Roman public office, is obviously Plautine.

24 ff. The extended use of the vocabulary of the *militia Amoris* may well be a feature of Plautine composition, according to P. Flury, 'Liebe und Liebesprache bei Menander, Plautus und Terenz' (Heidelberg, 1968), 92 ff. For this passage in the *Persa* this view may gain strength from the observation that the *militia Amoris* vocabulary is linked with the joke about slave punishment in 28 ('vide modo ulmeae catapultae tuom ne transfigant latus', cf. 25, 'sagitta Cupido cor meum transfixit'), and possibly also with *militia* in 23, which is part of Toxilus's response to the Roman imagery used by Sagaristio to describe his time in the *pistrinum*.

28-32. Here we find several features which with varying degrees of certainty may be attributed to Plautus: an elaborate reference to slave punishment, the words *basilice*, *basilico* (Fraenkel, PiP. 193 ff., EPP. 183 ff., though cf. P. W. Harsh, 'Possible Greek background for the word *rex* as used in Plautus', CP. 31. 1936. 62 ff.), the jingling phrase 'si tui tibi bene esse pote pati veni: vives...' (cf. *Trin.* 352, 'quandoquidem nec tibi bene esse pote pati...'), another reference to slave punishment with a joke on *prurio*. Toxilus's invitation 'veni, vives mecum' is hardly realistic, and the whole passage accords ill with

is a *mutatis modis canticum* until 42, settling into iambic septenarii from 43 to 52, with the exception of 48a in the OCT., which is of uncertain metre). Yet as regards dramatic function and technique the scene would be completely at home in a play of the New Comedy. Menander's *Heros* has a markedly similar opening expository dialogue, as does Plautus's own *Pseudolus*. In the *Heros* Daos is questioned by Getas, whose curiosity has been aroused by his fellow slave's distressed appearance (*Her.* 4ff., cf. *Per.* 24), and soon reveals that the cause of his wretchedness is love. Getas expresses surprise that a slave should consider himself "in love" (*Her.* 15ff., cf. *Per.* 25), and, as in the *Persa*, the two go on to discuss plans for obtaining the object of the lover's desires. Calidorus, the *adulescens* in the *Pseudolus*, similarly shows his lovelorn state in his features and conduct (*Pseud.* 9ff.), and, having revealed his situation – *leno*-trouble much like that of Toxilus – to the curious Pseudolus, bemoans the fact that he has been unable to get a loan (*Pseud.* 80, cf. *Per.* 44), and asks the slave for one, meeting with a similar response to that of Sagaristio (*Pseud.* 85ff., though the request for a loan here has an extra humorous twist, since it is only to buy a rope with which Calidorus may hang himself).

The entry of the parasite with a soliloquy in which he "introduces" himself and his lifestyle to the audience is by no means without parallel in Greek and Roman Comedy (e.g. Antiphanes fr. 195 Kock, Plautus *Capt.* 69ff., *Men.* 77ff.), and the following dialogue between Saturio and Toxilus is also likely to have existed in the original, since it practically never

Toxilus's dejected mood. If we mark off 28–32 as a Plautine addition (or expansion, for the passage may contain a nucleus from the original – note 29a, '*erus peregri est*'), 33ff. would follow well after 27, continuing the theme of Toxilus's love.

There are no such obvious Plautine passages in 33–52, and it seems that Plautus, while quite happy to elaborate his original as regards the simple meeting of two slaves, and the theme of Toxilus's love, did not think it advisable to do the same to a passage upon which the audience's understanding of the whole plot would be based. For the similar possibility of a relationship between the importance of a passage of the original to the plot and the degree of reworking to which it is subjected, see the opinion of B. Gentili with respect to the *Bacc.* – 'Theatrical performances in the Ancient World' (Amsterdam, 1979), 61.

The relationship borne by lines 1–7 to the original has been much debated; see in particular F. Leo, 'Plautinische Forschungen' (2nd ed. Berlin, 1912), 151ff., Fraenkel, *PiP.* 8ff., *EPP.* 7ff., 400, N. Zagagi, 'Tradition and originality in Plautus' (Göttingen, 1980), 27f., 55f., ch. 1 *passim*.

strays from its purpose of furthering the action of the play, and it would be hard to imagine the scene taking a substantially different form from that in the *Persa*: Toxilus needs Saturio's help, so he bribes him with lavish descriptions of food, then commandeers his help while at the same time explaining something of his scheme to dupe the *leno*³).

Moving on the second "act", we are introduced to two new characters. First Lemniselenis's maid, Sophoclidisca, comes out of the *leno*'s house, indignantly shouting back to her mistress that she does not need to have a message she is to convey to Toxilus repeated so many times. As she stops talking and moves towards Toxilus's door, Toxilus himself comes out with Paegnium, the slave-boy who is to be his messenger to Lemniselenis, in the face of whose irrepressible insolence he is having difficulty maintaining his authority (evidently Toxilus is assuming the rôle of master in the real master's absence). He soon gives up as futile the battle of words with Paegnium, and as Toxilus goes back inside, Paegnium moves towards the *leno*'s door to deliver his message, but encounters Sophoclidisca on

3) Fraenkel (PIP. 131 ff., EPP. 124 ff., 408 ff.) observes that the lists of food which are often found in Plautus where a parasite is involved are generally Roman in character, though here we have an exception, with a predominance of pastry dishes rather than meat dishes. This passage, then, probably existed in the original, and it is relevant to note that this is one of the few lists of food in Plautus to play any important part in the plot.

Plautine elements in this scene may be noted at 99 ff. (on '*mi Iuppiter*' see Fraenkel, PIP. 192, 96 f., EPP. 182, 90 f., but note also the reservations of Harsh, *art. cit.*, 67 f. There is possibly a reference to the *epulum Iovis*, on which see W. Kroll, '*Iovis epulum*', R. E. IX. 2013 f., in *coepulonus*. Note also the Latin pun on '*Saturio*', and the resultant jingling line at 103). I would suggest that the Plautine expansion, presumably a reworking of a much simpler greeting in the original, goes on until 107, after which Toxilus (and Plautus) returns to business with '*sed ecquid meministin...?*'. *Perna* and *hallec* (105, 107), unlike the other dishes mentioned in this scene, have no real equivalent in Greek. *Perna* is often found in company with *sumen* and *glandium* (*Curc.* 323, 366, *Pseud.* 166, *Stich.* 360, Fr. 47), which are large meat dishes more typical of Roman than of Greek cookery, and are not found in the remains of Greek Comedy or in Terence. There is a similar insertion of Roman dishes into a list of Greek foods in *Capt.* 846 ff. (Fraenkel, PIP. 248 n. 2, EPP. 239 n.2), and note the mention of such dishes in passages of Plautine expansion or exaggeration in *Capt.* 903, 908, *Men.* 209 ff. (Fraenkel, PIP. 247 f., EPP. 238 f.). If *Per.* 105 f. is indeed part of a Plautine insertion it parallels, and could well be suggested by, 110 f. The vagueness of the instructions given to Saturio by Toxilus at 147 ff. is probably also the result of Plautine tampering, either in removing material from the original in the region of 135-8, or by adding material at 147 ff.

the way, and the two do not proceed upon their business until they have indulged in a prolonged piece of verbal fencing.

When eventually they do separate, Paegnium entering the *leno's* and Sophoclidisca going into Toxilus's house, the stage is left clear for the reentry of Sagaristio, who enters with a joyous hymn of thanksgiving to Jupiter, who, in causing him to be sent by his master to Eretria to buy cattle, has provided the money with which Toxilus may be helped. As he finishes his monody, he sees Paegnium coming from the *leno's* house, and asks him where Toxilus is to be found. Another bout of repartee ensues, during which Sagaristio is reduced to threatening and striking out wildly at the infuriating but ever-elusive Paegnium, who eventually retreats indoors, leaving Sagaristio on stage alone until Toxilus enters from his house, seeing off Sophoclidisca on her way back to her mistress.

In much of this "act" it is not nearly so easy to find clear New Comedy parallels for the situations and verbal content as it is for the first. Taken alone, of course, this fact does not prove much, but there are also a number of oddities which should lead us at least to consider the possibility of Plautine tampering here. Of these, the most obvious is the large amount of space given in scenes II.ii between Sophoclidisca and Paegnium, and II.iv between Sagaristio and Paegnium, to repartee between slaves which, so far as the development of the plot is concerned, is completely redundant, and by which the progress of the play is held up for long periods: II.ii delays the delivery of the letters by Sophoclidisca and Paegnium, while II.iv delays the progress of the main action, which continues with the meeting of Sagaristio and Toxilus at the beginning of II.v⁴). Also, the letter conveyed by Paegnium to Lemniselenis is rendered superfluous when Sophoclidisca is instructed as she leaves Toxilus's house to convey precisely that same message to her mistress (*'ut habeat animum bonum'* 166, *'iubeto habere animum bonum'* 303). And it is strange that in II.ii, when Toxilus appears on stage at 183, Sophoclidisca does not seem to see him and does not give him her letter immediately, but rather waits awkwardly on stage until Toxilus goes back inside, leaving Paegnium on stage alone.

4) For other scenes where a character enters describing in a monologue the important news he brings, looking for someone to whom he must tell it, who meets up with the person he is seeking before he can knock at the relevant house-door, cf. *Bacc.* 170ff., *Capt.* 768ff.

Both scenes II.ii and II.iv seem very "Plautine" in metre and style. In II.ii there is not infrequently an observable relationship between metrical and verbal units (e.g. 183 *sátin haec tibi sunt plána et cërta? sátin haec méministi ét tenes?* – a *versus quadratus*⁵); 203 *cómpellábo.:cómmodándust*⁶). . . , and note also the symmetry of speeches in this scene, especially from 216 onwards) which would seem to be a feature of Plautus's poetic technique⁷), and may well indicate that he is treating his original with some freedom here. Also, there are elements of style and humour in this scene which are more definitely identifiable as Plautine: there are what would seem to be scurrilous jokes with references to homosexuality at 192 and 229f.⁸); there is glori-

5) Other *versus quadrati* are listed in H. Hafter, 'Untersuchungen zur altlateinischen Dichtersprache' (Berlin, 1934), 60f.

6) There is uncertainty over the text of the rest of this line, but the intended effect of the first part remains clear.

7) Fraenkel, PiP. 227ff., EPP. 217ff.; see also L. Braun, 'Die Cantica des Plautus' (Göttingen, 1970), 13ff.

8) References to homosexuality, frequent in Old Comedy, seem to become less common in Middle Comedy, and are rare in New Comedy and in Terence. For Old Comedy, one need only recall Aristophanes' use of *εὐρύπρωκτος, καταπίγων*, etc.; see also J. Henderson, 'The Maculate Muse' (New Haven/London, 1975), 208ff. For Middle Comedy there are at least four clear examples of this kind of humour, Euboulos fr.s 11, 107, 120 Kock, Alexis fr. 264 Kock, but the fragments do not give the impression that such references are quite so all-pervasive as they are in Old Comedy. As for New Comedy, there are exceptions to the general rule: Archedikos fr. 4 Kock, and the title of Philemon's play *Πιττοκοποῦμενος*, for example. Menander's earliest (?) play, *Orge*, provides one reference to the effeminacy of Ktesippos (fr. 303 K-T), and a fragment of the *Hymnis* reveals the tame *βάκηλος εἶ* (412 K-T). It is perhaps significant that in the *Samia*, a later, if not much later, play than the *Orge* (see A. W. Gomme, F. H. Sandbach, 'Menander. A Commentary' (Oxford, 1973), 542f. on the dating), at 601ff., where individuals are criticised for their particular foibles, no reference is made to an effeminate. Such references are, however, fairly common in Plautus: a slave accuses another of being his master's (or her mistress's) lover at *Cas.* 362, 454f., *Most.* 890ff., *Rud.* 1075, *Truc.* 262; other scurrilous references to homosexuality are *Asin.* 703, *Aul.* 637, *Capt.* 867, 966, *Mil.* 1111ff., *Pseud.* 773f., 1177f. Several of these passages are demonstrably of Plautine origin. *Cas.* 362, *Rud.* 1075, *Truc.* 262 have a Latin pun on *comprimere*. On the likelihood (?) of Plautine authorship for *Cas.* 454f. see E. Lefèvre, 'Plautus-Studien III. Von der Tyche-Herrschaft in Diphilos' Klerumenoi zum Triummatronat der Casina', *Hermes* 107. 1979. 322. *Asin.* 703 is part of the play's finale, which probably includes much Plautine workmanship. *Capt.* 966, *Mil.* 1111ff., *Aul.* 637 are followed by a formula such as '*hoc agamus*', '*hoc age nunc*', which seems to indicate Plautus's return to a close rendering of the original (on *Mil.* 1111ff. see also Fraenkel, PiP. 257f., EPP. 248f., L. Schaaf, 'Der Miles Gloriosus des Plautus und sein

fiction of such qualities as *confidentia* and *malitia* (e.g. at 202, 231f., 237f.)⁹⁾, and *paraprosdokian* jokes at 192 (?) and 205.

As for II.iv, this begins with a sequence which is paralleled several times in Plautus. *Capt.* 833ff., *Cist.* 704ff., *Epid.* 1ff., *Merc.* 866ff., *Most.* 885ff., *Poen.* 851ff., *Pseud.* 243ff., *Trin.* 1059ff., *Truc.* 115ff. are all similar dialogues in which a character about to proceed with his business is called back, and, often with some reluctance, turns to speak with his interlocutor; and there are several common features which reveal the formulaic nature of such passages. The character hailed is nearly always a slave or one who performs the functions of a slave¹⁰⁾, and there are several precise verbal parallels between the passages listed¹¹⁾. For the quip at 273 '*emere oportet, quem tibi oboedire velis*', cf. *Trin.* 1061 '*emere melius quoi imperes*', *Ter. Phorm.* 196 '*satis pro imperio, quisquis es* (both part of a similar situation)¹²⁾. Similar sequences may be found in Terence (e.g. *And.* 344, *Phorm.* 739f., *Ad.* 320f.), but always in a much shorter form, and Fraenkel (PiP. 221ff., EPP. 212ff.) is of the opinion that the Terentian examples reflect their originals fairly closely, while Plautus has expanded on his originals. Two examples from New Comedy of this kind of "self-absorption" on stage, where a character

griechisches Original' [Munich, 1977], 314) *Capt.* 867 is spoken by Ergasilus, whose rôle Fraenkel (PiP. 245ff., EPP. 236ff.) has shown to have been greatly expanded by Plautus.

9) The word *malus* in Plautus frequently has an almost laudatory sense, 'cunning', 'knowing': a few out of many examples are *Amph.* 268, *Poen.* 1108, *Pseud.* 1017ff.; in *Pseud.* 724ff. an attribute of the *malus* is that he is able easily to pick up his part in an intrigue. cf. also Catull. 36. 9, and a few other, often dubious, non-Plautine examples listed in TLL. VIII. 223. 38ff. This usage seems never to be found in Terence, and is rarely given to the Greek *κακός* (see Men. *Epit.* 535, with Gomme-Sandbach *ad loc.* for a few examples, but this is hardly comparable with the frequency with which Plautus uses *malus* with such connotations).

10) e.g. Ergasilus in the *Capt.*: see Fraenkel, PiP. 245ff., EPP. 236ff. The exceptions in the examples listed are Charinus in the *Merc.*, and Ballio in the *Pseud.*

11) The chief of these are:
mane – *Per.* 272, *Cist.* 704, *Most.* 885, *Pseud.* 245, *Truc.* 115.
eisi properas – *Per.* 272, *Pseud.* 244 '*iametsi occupatu*'s.

asta – *Per.* 273, *Merc.* 867, *Trin.* 1059.
etiam respicis – *Per.* 275, *Capt.* 834, 5, *Epid.* 3, *Most.* 886, *Pseud.* 244, *Truc.* 116, 8, (cf. also *Ter. Phorm.* 740).

12) The verbal parallel in Theoc. 15. 90, '*πασάμενος ἐπίτασσε*', does not, I think, affect the significance of the examples cited of the occurrence of this remark in this particular dramatic situation.

fails immediately to get the attention of a soliloquising slave, are found in the "Strobilos" Comedy¹³) and at *Men. Mis.* 276 ff., and are discussed by Bain, *op. cit.* (n. 2), 141 f. The verbal parallels between the *Mis.* passage and the Plautine examples listed (*τίς κέλληκε μέ; | quis me revocat? [Cist. 705 etc.], οὐχ ὄρας με; | etiam respicis?)* seem to support Fraenkel's assertion (*loc. cit.*) that the skeleton of such scenes was to be found in the originals, and it does not seem to me that even the great lengths to which this device is taken in the *Misoumenos* refutes much of Fraenkel's belief that the extended examples in Plautus are most often the result of the Roman's own additions. As Fraenkel points out, the scenes usually involve slaves – favourite characters for Plautine expansion (Fraenkel, *op. cit.*, chapter 8), are always in "recitative" or *canticum* metres, where we might reasonably expect a greater degree of Roman elaboration than with spoken iambs, and are part of a series of entrance and exit devices such as Plautus was particularly prone to develop (Fraenkel, *op. cit.*, chapter 7; see also Bain, *op. cit.*, chapter 10). The „self-absorbed“ monologue of Getas in the *Misoumenos* does, moreover, contain much material which is important to the progress of the play, whereas these Plautine examples merely delay the action for the sake of a humorous interlude.

In addition, there are jokes based on Latin words and concepts in this scene – a possible reference to *flagitatio* in 274 (*'si quid debeam'*¹⁴), and the play on *vades* at 289¹⁵). Also, the

13) Pap. Hibeh 5 = p. 263 Austin 'Comicorum Graecorum Fragmenta', p. 338 OCT. Menander, p. 293 Page 'Greek Literary Papyri'.

14) '*Si quid debeam*' may be merely an extension of the remark, perfectly natural in the context, "You have no call on my attention" (cf. *Mil.* 421, *Pseud.* 1137, *Rud.* 117, *Trin.* 893, *Truc.* 261). But it seems likely that Paegnium means "I'd hate to think of the inconvenience you'd be if I were your debtor, when you're such a nuisance now as it is" – a reference to *flagitatio*, for which see H. Usener, 'Italische Volksjustiz', Rh. M. 56. 1901. 1 ff. (= Kl. Schr. 4. 378 ff.), A. W. Lintott, 'Violence in Republican Rome' (Oxford, 1968), 9 f.; also E. Fraenkel, 'Two poems of Catullus', JRS. 51. 1961. 49 f., A. J. Marshall, 'Cicero, Ad Quintum Fratrem II. 10. 1', CR. 18. 1968. 16 f. *Per.* 406–426 is clearly influenced by *flagitatio*.

15) The exact meaning of *vadari* as used by Sagaristio here is not clear. *Vadari* has the figurative meaning "bind", "put under one's control" at *Bacc.* 181 (cf. also *Curc.* 162) and elsewhere (*Apul. Met.* 11. 6 etc. – LS. s. v. '*vadatus*'), though it is only found thus used in the past participle. In '*vadatur hic me*' this figurative sense may be extended to "ensnare", "trick" (with his repartee): cf. the similar use of *intricare* in *Per.* 457. Or possibly Sagaristio means "he is serving a summons on me" (to appear at home, where *mala res parata est* – 288). Certainly Sagaristio uses the word meta-

accusation of homosexual activity at 284f. could well be Plautine¹⁶). Sagaristio's taunt here is in accord with Sophoclidisca's insinuation at 229f., while Paegnium's defence against this is to adopt an attitude of shameless and open defiance, '*ita sum*', with which one may compare the attitude of Ballio in *Pseud.* 359ff. – part of a passage based around the *flagitatio* and therefore clearly Plautine¹⁷).

Thus it seems that much of the workmanship in II.ii and iv is that of Plautus. This does not prove that nothing in these scenes derives from the original; but if anything does, it is unlikely to be more than the basic skeleton of the action: Toxilus sends Paegnium to reassure Lemniselenis (183–200), Paegnium meets Sophoclidisca, already on stage taking a letter to Toxilus, and both eventually deliver their letters (201–250), Sagaristio enters with his good news (251–271), Paegnium returns home, meeting Sagaristio on the way (272–298). One possibility is that Plautus has simply expanded on this skeleton. This would account for the concentration of Plautine elements and for the delays the two scenes cause to the main action, as well as for the difficulty over Sophoclidisca's waiting on stage during 183–200 instead of delivering her letter straight away – if we postulate that Plautus has substituted a dialogue between Toxilus and Paegnium at 183–200a for a brief "talking-back" entrance monologue by Paegnium in the original.

This does not, however, explain the duplication of Toxilus's letter of encouragement to Lemniselenis by the oral message given to Sophoclidisca at 303. Of course, this need not disturb us too much – the author of the original may simply make Toxilus repeat his message in his concern for Lemniselenis's peace of mind – but it does point the way to another possibility. This is that both scenes II.ii and II.iv were entirely Plautus's idea, where the Greek original had merely an entrance monologue by Sophoclidisca (162–182), who immediately afterwards enters Toxilus's house. This would be followed straightaway

phorically, and Paegnium plays on the literal meaning (as he does again at 292 '*...quid dederō.: nihil, nam nihil habes*'), and possibly we should not push logical interpretation too far: Plautus may well be willing to introduce this word without a precise meaning in order to facilitate the following pun from Paegnium.

16) See note 8.

17) cf. G. Williams, 'Some problems in the construction of Plautus's *Pseudolus*', *Hermes* 84. 1956. 430.

by the entry of Sagaristio (251–271a), who meets Toxilus coming out of the house with Sophoclidisca (302). This would account for the duplication of Toxilus's message as well as for all the other problems, and is the explanation I prefer. A few further points should account for this preference:

The entry of Sophoclidisca at 168 is a standard New Comedy "talking-back" entry¹⁸) (though probably the monologue of the original is somewhat expanded in Plautus's *canticum*), and the reason for it, the delivery of a letter, presumably a plea for help, is, if not absolutely essential to the plot, at least quite understandable: one might compare the letter from Phoenicium to Calidorus in the *Pseudolus*¹⁹). But it seems in keeping with what little we know of Plautus's creative imagination that, in order to introduce a scene of banter between slaves, he simply doubles up the motif of the letter, and has Toxilus send one to Lemniselenis, taking the theme for his new letter from the hint in the original seen at 303, '*iubeto habere animum bonum*'. (The entry of Sophoclidisca with Toxilus at 302 is thus, naturally, necessitated by the need for Sophoclidisca to return home after crossing the stage to Toxilus's house, both in the original and in Plautus's play).

Passages of conversation between minor characters, doing little to further the action of the play and existing merely for the sake of a humorous interlude, are of course not unknown in New Comedy. One might cite by way of example the cook scenes of Menander, or the final scene of the *Dyskolos*, and the incidence of such scenes in Menander suggests an *a fortiori* case for their occurrence in the work of other New Comedy playwrights. Perhaps an especially relevant parallel for this scene is *Rud.* 414ff., a "chatting-up" scene between the two slaves Ampelisca and Sceparnio (though it is not easy to tell how much of this is from the original and how much from Plautus). Nevertheless the fact that additions by Plautus to his originals, where they can be located, normally lighten the tone of the original by the introduction of comic material needs no demonstration from me, and this is clearly the function that these two scenes in the *Persa* perform – at great length²⁰). We also have

18) For a few of the many examples, see *Stich.* 58ff., *Ter. Hec.* 76ff., *Men. Epit.* 430ff.

19) F. Wehrli, 'Motivstudien zur griechischen Komödie' (Zurich/Leipzig, 1936), 31.

20) It is perhaps noteworthy that at *Perik.* 172ff., where Sosias and

evidence of the Roman dramatists adding such scenes: the dialogue between Parmeno and Sosia in Ter. *Hec.* 415–427 is said by Donatus to be an addition by Terence²¹), and the Lucric scene at *Mil.* 813 ff. is generally recognised as a Plautine addition²²).

Apart from the final scene of the play, II.ii and iv are the only passages in the *Persa* to contain the slave-boy Paegnium, and if we are to mark off these scenes as Plautine (whether they be expansions of the original or pure Plautine invention), it is desirable to look also at the final scene to see if the character of Paegnium there shows any signs of Plautus's hand. Paegnium's character as seen in V.ii is essentially of a piece with that displayed in the earlier scenes, and there is little evidence in the verbal content of the scene to prove either a Plautine or a Greek origin for the slave-boy there. But there are five speaking characters in this final scene – Toxilus, Dordalus, Sagaristio, Lemniselenis, and Paegnium – and if we accept a three-actor rule for the Greek original, as seems necessary²³), we must “dispose of” two speaking characters here. The candidates may be found by a process of elimination. Presumably Toxilus and Dordalus, the two chief characters of the play, may not be re-

Doris enter on their respective masters' business, Menander ignores the opportunity for such a scene as *Per.* II. ii.

21) *ad Hec.* 415 ‘*nam in hac scena, donec perveniat ad Pamphilum Parmeno, hoc εὐχνοια inducitur, quid mali sit navigatio*’.

22) Fraenkel, *PiP.* 258 ff., EPP. 249 ff., G. Williams, ‘Evidence for Plautus's workmanship in the Miles Gloriosus’, *Hermes* 86. 1958. 96, L. Schaaf, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 296 ff.

23) The case for New Comedy employing only three actors, plus a number of “extras”, is strong, and it is fairly certain that only three actors *speak* in any one scene. Some caution is in order as most of our evidence (and that scanty) comes from Menander, and we should not assume that any conclusions which may emerge may be extended to other New Comedy playwrights. Nevertheless, if a three-actor rule (whether governing the number of speaking actors he could employ, or the number he could use in a single scene) did exist for Menander, there is a good chance that such a fundamental dramatic convention applied also to his contemporaries. See Gomme/Sandbach, *op. cit.* (n. 8), 16 ff., F. H. Sandbach, ‘Menander and the three-actor rule’, in *Le Monde grec. Hommages à Claire Préaux* (Brussels, 1975), 197 ff., K. Gaiser, ‘Zur Eigenart der römischen Komödie: Plautus und Terenz gegenüber ihren griechischen Vorbildern’, in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* I. 2 (Berlin, 1972), 1037 ff., N. C. Hourmouziades, ‘Menander's actors’, *GRBS.* 14. 1973. 179 ff., T. B. L. Webster, ‘Studies in Later Greek Comedy’ (2nd. ed. Manchester, 1970), 186 f., ‘An Introduction to Menander’ (Manchester, 1974), 82 ff.; also the bibliography of Mette, *Lustrum* 10. 1965. 114 f.

moved, though the decision between the other three is not so clear-cut. At first sight there is no pressing reason why any in particular should be present, though Sagaristio, Toxilus's friend and helper (and, presumably, occasional drinking companion) is not inappropriate, while it is quite reasonable that he should have Lemniselenis, the object of all his efforts, with him in his moment of triumph, and Paegnium will be a particularly useful person to have around when there is a spot of *leno*-baiting to be done (although the aspects of his character which recommend him for this job are probably due mainly or entirely to Plautus, as we have seen). But there is a clue at line 830, where it is said of Sagaristio, '*hic eius geminust frater*', which statement, having been prepared for at 695, '*geminum autem fratrem servire audivi hic meum*', would seem to have existed in the original, and to indicate that Sagaristio was present in the final scene there – there is no reason why Plautus himself should introduce this motif. Thus Paegnium and Lemniselenis probably did not appear in the original at this point (or, more likely, were played by *κωφὰ πρόσωπα*, as their presence, at least, seems necessary – note *puere* in 771).

It seems, then, that Plautus is responsible for all the important aspects of Paegnium's character as seen in the *Persa*, and possibly for his very existence as a speaking part. The character he has invented remains fairly consistent throughout the play, but his continuous display of insolence, malice, and vulgarity (together with a certain amount of wit) has a functional, monochrome feel to it – he apparently exists solely as a means for producing jokes – and it is not very surprising that such a character should be the product of Plautus's own invention²⁴). Presumably Plautus knew his audience and produced a figure he knew would go down well – once again the impression we gain of the playwright is that of the skilled, professional entertainer, but there is nothing reprehensible in that.

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24) For a review of the small idea we are able to obtain of "Plautine" characterisation, see Fraenkel, *PiP.*, *EPP.*, chapter 11, especially *PiP.* 401 ff., *EPP.* 379 ff. G. Williams has referred to this character as "the beastly little Paegnium" (*CR.* 10. 1960. 128). Rather similar to Paegnium, though much more sympathetic to modern taste, is the character of "Bailey Junior" in 'Martin Chuzzlewit', though one can hardly presume to criticise Plautus for not being Dickens.