

# SENSE AND PUNCTUATION AT TERENCE, ADELPHOE 141–147

MICIO *nec nil neque omnia haec sunt quae dicit: tamen  
non nil molesta haec sunt mihi: sed ostendere  
me aegre pati illi nolui. nam itast homo:  
quom placo, advorsor sedulo et deterreo;  
145 tamen vix humane patitur; verum si augeam  
aut etiam adiutor sim eius iracundiae,  
insaniam profecto cum illo.*

In each of the following two notes attention is focused upon the disputed punctuation associated with a *tamen*. The whole attempts by means of *inter alia* lexicographical considerations to arrive at a correct interpretation of a controversial Terentian passage.

## I

141–142: *ante tamen dist. Umpfenbach, Kauer, Kauer-Lindsay, Prete, Martin, et al.: post tamen Donatus, Dziatzko, Marouzeau, Bianco: ante et post tamen Iov.*

In these words Micio reflects on his displeasure at the alarming news brought to him by his brother Demea that Aeschinus, Micio's son whom Demea had given to him for adoption, has just forced an entry into the house of a free man and abducted a woman with whom he is in love (88–91). The words in the first two lines of Micio's monologue take their meaning from the context to a surprising degree, and yet the precise train of thought underlying *neque nil neque omnia*, a polar expression of the type 'neither a miss nor a bull's eye' / 'a half-truth', has not been satisfactorily explained by the commentators either in antiquity or in modern times.

It is worth noting at the outset that Micio is not reflecting on the truth or otherwise of Demea's report about the abduction. For

Micio is neither in a position to question the truth of Demea's report on the matter nor in fact does he do so. On the contrary, in lines 147–153 where he expresses his disappointment at the new turn of events he basically accepts Demea's report as true – even though, as we learn later, Demea was wrong in one important aspect: Aeschinus had not taken the girl for himself but was acquiring her for his brother Ctesipho, Demea's own son. Micio was not therefore saying that Demea's report was neither 'completely false' (*nil*) nor 'completely true' (*omnia*)<sup>1</sup>.

Nor can *nil* mean 'nothing of importance', an interpretation advocated recently by Martin<sup>2</sup>, who reflects a line of argument pursued by Kauer in his 1903 revision of Dziatzko's 1881 annotated edition of the *Adelphoe*: "‘Weder ohne Bedeutung ist, was er sagt, noch alles’, d. h. es hat schon etwas zu bedeuten und ist mir recht unangenehm (den Grund sagt er selbst V. 147 ff.)<sup>3</sup>." Kauer was purporting to explain 141, but by leaping from *nec nil* directly to the thought in 142 has left *tamen* unexplained, except insofar as his "und" corresponds to it. As Kauer must have realized, it is logically absurd to say: 'it is a matter of importance: nevertheless these things are troublesome to me'. The faulty logic arises from the failure to catch the drift of Micio's meaning and the consequent misinterpretation of *nil* as "ohne Bedeutung" (Kauer) or "nothing of importance" (Martin). What is uppermost in Micio's mind at this juncture is not so much the importance or otherwise of the events ascribed by Demea to Aeschinus at 88–91, which (as we have seen) Micio basically accepts as true, but rather the realization that on this occasion there must unfortunately be some substance to his brother's charges at 84–87, 97, 112, 134 that Aeschinus' behaviour is a disgrace for which Micio must be held responsible. These charges, which Micio with his different attitude to the upbringing of children has repeatedly rejected in the past (cf. 60 ff.), must surely be included in the *haec ... quae dicit* (141) and the sense of *nil* must be understood in this context.

Donatus' explanation of these lines, and in particular of *omnia*, takes us still further afield. The whole line, in his view, is appropriately spoken by Micio *quia indulgentioris est plura scire et*

1) Cf., e. g., O. Bianco in his commentary P. Terenzio Afro: I Due Fratelli, Roma 1966, 45: "Non è completamente falso e neppure completamente vero quello che dice".

2) R. H. Martin, Terence: *Adelphoe*, Cambridge 1976, 123.

3) K. Dziatzko-R. Kauer, Terentius: *Adelphoe*, Leipzig 1903 (repr. Amsterdam 1964), 44.

*supra* (line 54) *dixit 'ea ne me celet consuefecit filium'*; and since he understands the logical order to be *neque tamen*, he takes the line to mean *nec contemnenda sunt quae dicit nec omnia dicit tamen, hoc est: non haec sola sunt quae dicit, sed alia multa sunt*. According to Donatus in other words, when Aeschinus' indulgent father states that 'what Demea says is not *nil* and yet (*tamen*) it is not *omnia*', Micio means that he knows of other *worse* misdeeds he could add to Demea's list against Aeschinus. But Micio, surely, believes that the very opposite is the case, namely that his son's misdeeds are *not as serious* as his brother Demea represents them.

The antithesis in the polar expression, which must be taken as a whole, can be appreciated only if one sees that Micio muses not on the truth or otherwise of Demea's report about the abduction, nor on its importance or otherwise, nor on the question whether worse misdeeds could be added to Demea's list of those committed by Aeschinus, but on whether the charges brought by Demea against Aeschinus have, in the light of this new turn of events, substance or not. Micio's reasoning with himself seems, therefore, to run as follows: 'though I am willing, in the light of this new report, to admit that these charges of Demea's (*haec*, 141) are neither *nil*, "nonsense, nothing to the point", i.e. groundless", nor *omnia*, "the whole story in his defence, i.e. wholly fair" (because, after all, *non est flagitium ... adolescentulum/scortari neque potare ... neque fores / effringere*, 101–103), nevertheless, even though what Aeschinus has done is not fairly represented by Demea, these matters that Demea has just mentioned, the forced entry and so forth (*haec*, 142) quite seriously (*non nil*)<sup>5</sup> distress me – all the more, in fact, since I thought I had discerned in Aeschinus a change for the better'.

In short, Micio clings to his belief that Demea has never represented Aeschinus fairly, though he admits to himself that there is now some real ground for complaint, particularly in view of his son's assurance at 150 ff. that he was intending to settle down.

This interpretation with the punctuation after *dicit* brings out the concession in full, though logically the concession applies only

4) Cf. OLD s. v. *nihil* § 9.

5) For this meaning see OLD s. v. *nihil* § 11 d, where the rendering "to a considerable extent" is given for *non nil* but no passages are cited, the reader being referred instead to the separate entry *nonnihil*; there under § b the *non nil* of *Adelphoe* 142 is specifically quoted, but with a now weakened rendering "to a certain extent, in some measure", which is not the required sense for this passage.

to the *neque omnia ... sunt* clause. Dziatzko had favoured Donatus' punctuation specifically restricting the concession to the *neque* clause, on the ground that Terence's practice was to make *tamen* in the final position of the line coincide with a clause-end<sup>6</sup>). But *tamen* taken with 141 leaves the following line with a distinctly abrupt transition. And that Terence does not invariably follow the practice to which Dziatzko makes reference is sufficiently shown by lines 830 and 950 in the *Adelphoe* (to take this play alone)<sup>7</sup>). Donatus' punctuation is not, therefore, required by Terentian usage; nor is it necessary to restrict the concession to the *neque* clause by punctuation. The fact that the concession strictly applies only to the second part of 141 is not unnatural in a developing thought. There may even be, as our interpretation suggests, a slight shift of meaning in the *haec* from 141 to 142.

### *Textual Note:*

The attribution to Ioviales of punctuation both before and after *tamen* (see the *apparatus criticus*) raises a point from which also to view the history of the text. Writing his signature on several folia of the codex Bembinus, the only MS-witness of a tradition which is independent of the Calliopian tradition. Ioviales corrected the text, in the late fifth or sixth century, evidently from a Calliopian text, at some points helped by access to notes from Donatus' commentary. However, noting irregularity in script and ink as well as the fact that several folia had been gone over more than once, S. Prete, *Il codice Bembino di Terenzio* (Città del Vaticano 1950), 32 ff. raises grounds (but without finally establishing adequate criteria) for doubting that Ioviales was responsible for all the corrections attributed to him by Kauer in the Oxford Terence, and assigns most to a *corrector recens* of the eighth century.

This MS (along with some 20 Calliopian MSS) has now been examined by one of us, who reports that all the corrections and diacritical signs on fol. 100<sup>r</sup>, containing the passage under consideration, are uniformly written in blackish ink and by a single hand – very likely but not certainly that of Ioviales. The impor-

6) K. Dziatzko, *Terentius: Adelphoe*, Leipzig 1881, 97 f., quoted also in Dziatzko-Kauer (above, note 3), 151.

7) Because of their suitability Terence has a predilection for placing such pyrrhic words at the end of an iambic line; it is noteworthy that 40% of the occurrences of *tamen* appear in this position, and in the *Adelphoe* the particle is found there more often than elsewhere in the line.

tance of this observation is that (1) it establishes that the corrector copied the punctuation from his Calliopian text into the Bembine at the same time as he inserted the punctuation of Donatus; (2) the correct punctuation at 141 was a matter of dispute in ancient editions; and (3) the punctuation for which we argue was circulating in a Calliopian text three centuries (or according to Prete one century) before our earliest extant Calliopian manuscript. Did the corrector find Donatus' punctuation already marked in his Calliopian model? It is highly unlikely. For it is surely remarkable – all the more so since early texts rarely bother to record punctuation – that of the more than 20 early Calliopian MSS collated all have the punctuation before *tamen* (in D it is there but has been erased), while not one (if we exclude F which marks all line-ends with a stop) includes Donatus' punctuation after it.

## II

144–145: *ante tamen subdist. Conradt, Fleckeisen, Dziatzko-Kauer, Marouzeau, Prete, Bianco, McGlynn: ante tamen dist. edd. plur.*

The purpose of the comma, which was first advocated by Conradt<sup>8)</sup> and subsequently defended by Prete<sup>9)</sup>, is, as stated explicitly by Dziatzko<sup>10)</sup>, to permit *quom* to be taken concessively

8) C. Conradt, *Die metrische Composition der Comödien des Terenz*, Berlin 1876, 62: "Micio meint, er dürfe seinem jähzornigen Bruder nicht zeigen, dass auch er mit dem Betragen des Aeschinus unzufrieden sei. Denn jener [Demea] sei schon ausser sich, wenn sein Bruder ihn zu beruhigen suche; wenn er [Micio] ihn statt dessen noch aufstachele, so würde er [Demea] ganz unsinnig sein. Also die Worte: *tamen vix humane patitur* und *insaniam profecto cum illo* stehen im Gegensatz, und von *quom* ist sowohl *placo*, als auch *advorsor sedulo et deterreo* abhängig."

9) S. Prete, «*Humanus*» nella letteratura arcaica (Milano 1948), 52: "l'emistichio *vix humane patitur* rappresenta la conclusione del pensiero espresso dall'intero senario 145 *quom placo advorsor sedulo et deterreo* ed è quindi con questo strettamente connesso; un nuovo pensiero è invece contenuto nelle parole *verum si augeam ... insaniam profecto cum illo* concluso da quest'ultima espressione che figura in aperto contrasto con la frase *vix humane patitur*." Prete has retained the punctuation in his critical edition P. Terenti Afri Comoediae, Heidelberg 1954, 356 (where he has attached in error his critical note on 144 to 141).

10) Dziatzko (above, note 6), 30: "*quom ... deterreo*: konzessiv; ... *deterreo* hängt enger mit *advorsor* zusammen als mit *placo*; daher steht *et* vor dem 3. koordinierten Verbum." Dziatzko's explanation is retained by Kauer in Dziatzko-Kauer (above, note 3), 45.



with all three verbs of 144. This punctuation is assumed to be correct by McGlynn in his *Lexicon Terentianum*<sup>11</sup>), and still enjoys wide circulation in the chief French, German, and Italian critical editions. Martin rightly, in our view, rejects the punctuation<sup>12</sup>), but falls short of giving a convincing refutation.

If, as is supposed by Conradt and Prete, *quom* is taken concessively with the three verbs of 144, then, as these critics further maintain (see notes 8–9), the hemistich *tamen ... patitur* (145) indicates the conclusion of the thought expressed in the whole of the preceding line, just as *insaniam ... illo* (147) represents the conclusion of *verum si ... iracundiae* (145 f.). But while these two balancing conclusions undoubtedly stand in contrast to one another, it does not follow that *quom ... deterreo* and *verum si ... iracundiae* are the main contrasting clauses.

The problem has also been raised by commentators that Micio can hardly be said to be both assuaging and opposing his brother at the same time. Thus Martin<sup>13</sup>) sees in the juxtaposition of *placo* with *advorsor* and *deterreo* “something of a paradox” on the ground that “Micio’s recipe for calming Demea down is to oppose him and dissuade him forcibly.” However, the interpretation of *advorsor* and *deterreo* that immediately follows is intended to dispose of this difficulty.

Within the context of these lines, it is clear that Micio’s aim from the outset is to persuade Demea to accept his point of view, not to engage him in an angry and fruitless exchange. With that in mind Micio conceals from Demea his displeasure on hearing the news of Aeschinus’ escapade at 88–91 and attempts instead to assuage (*placo*) his brother by resolutely (*sedulo*) opposing him with rational arguments (*advorsor*) and discouraging him (*deterreo*) from his opposition to the manner of Aeschinus’ upbringing (Micio, it may be noted, has already at 100–110, 112–124, 129–132 put into practice these principles as enunciated in the monologue). But, as Micio well knows, such is Demea’s disposition – for his irascibility see 60 ff., 79 f., 146 – that he does not calmly submit to reasoned attempts to cool down his anger. Micio is at the same

11) In *Lex.Ter.* 2 (1967) 226, the *tamen* of our passage is classified by P. McGlynn under § I (5) “*quom ... tamen*”, and there only. It is accordingly omitted altogether from § II “*nulla particula praecedente*”, where we would assign it (see further below) in company with editors punctuating with a semicolon or full stop after *deterreo*.

12) Martin (above, note 2), 124, on lines 144–5.

13) *Loc.cit.*

time aware that nothing is to be gained from a heated argument. For he knows that if he shows his own displeasure at Aeschinus' conduct, he will thereby only stimulate Demea's anger and in the ensuing dispute he will end up raving as madly as his brother.

Hence it appears that the true contrast in this group of lines is actually between *quom placo* and *verum si augeam*, the first representing Micio's actual method of dealing with his irascible brother and the second the method which he rejects. *Advorsor* and *deterreo*, far from being coordinate with *placo*, are in fact explanatory of it, since they denote the means by which Micio seeks to soothe Demea, and since they are explanatory, *quom* governs only *placo* and bears the sense of 'when', so that a semicolon is needed after *deterreo* to make clear the subordinate relationship of *quom placo* to the rest of the line.

One suspects that Conradt and Prete fail to discern the subordinate relationship of *quom placo* because they do not see that *tamen* . . . *patitur* need not be the grammatical, if it is the logical, conclusion of 144. At all events by treating *tamen* as the grammatical conclusion which answers to a concessive *quom*, they have destroyed the natural run of the lines and with it the logic of Micio's thought. It is true that *tamen* has the effect retroactively of making the whole preceding thought concessive in force: but this is in conformity with Terence's style. *Tamen* is commonly used, as here, without an introductory particle<sup>14</sup>), just as it was at 141 above.

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14) See in McGlynn, *Lex.Ter.* s. v. *tamen* § II with note 11 above.