

INTRODUCTION

1. COMEDY AT ROME

In 240 BCE, following their victory over Carthage in the First Punic War, the Romans expanded a traditional autumn celebration honouring Jupiter, the *ludi Romani*, into an international festival in the Greek style. Since that meant, among other things, adding formal dramatic productions to the scheduled entertainments, the Senate commissioned a Greek from Tarentum named Andronicus to produce a tragedy and a comedy in Latin for the occasion.¹ The experiment proved so successful that by the early second century plays of various kinds had become regular features at three additional festivals, the *ludi plebei* (November), *Apollinares* (July), and *Megalenses* (April), and also began appearing on the bill at votive games, triumphs, and the more elaborate aristocratic funerals. Plays were created on Greek topics and Roman ones, ranging from the serious to the comic, from myth to history to the foibles of daily life, and whether by accident or design, their growing popularity made them a significant medium for popularizing Roman traditions and fostering Roman civic identity.² Yet of the many different types of play performed on these occasions, only Latin comedies performed in Greek dress, the so-called *comoedia palliata*, survive in more than fragments, and of the two hundred or so plays written for the *palliata* stage in the third and second centuries by a dozen or more different playwrights, only the six of Terence and twenty by Plautus survive intact.³ The history of this *palliata* comedy is well treated elsewhere and requires no repetition here,⁴ but three

¹ The tradition regarding this initiative in 240 BCE is reasonably sound: Cic. *Brut.* 72–3, *Sen.* 50, *Tusc.* 1.3, Gell. 17.21.42–3. See Gruen 1990: 80–92, Bernstein: 1998: 234–51. Its significance, however, is far less certain. Though Varro saw in Andronicus’ scripts the true beginning of Latin literature, his predecessors Accius and Porcius Licinus championed rival narratives based on rival chronologies (Welsh 2011). Nor is the history of stage entertainment (*ludi scaenici*) before Andronicus at all clear, e.g. Oakley 1998: 40–72 on the notoriously problematic excursus at Liv. 7.2. See the extensive bibliography in Suerbaum 2002: 51–7, and for a good summary of the problem, Manuwald 2011: 30–40.

² The classic study of the performance schedule is Taylor 1937. Duckworth 1952: 76–9 is also helpful. For drama’s role in the formation of civic identity, see Wiseman 1995: 129–41, 1998: 1–16, controversial in detail but surely correct in outline.

³ Ribbeck 1898: 388–90 provides a list. Gell. 3.3.11 reports that in his day (second century CE) 130 plays still circulated under the name Plautus, though Varro had identified only twenty-one as indisputably authentic. These (including the fragmentary *Vidularia*) are probably the ones that survive. Much less is known of the plays on Roman themes in Roman dress, the so-called *praetextae* and *togatae*. See Wiseman 2008, and for full discussion of the Republican genres, Manuwald 2011: 129–86.

⁴ Gratwick 1982 provides an excellent, brief introduction; a full account is provided by Manuwald 2011. Duckworth 1952 and Hunter 1985 remain valuable. Manuwald 2010 offers a rich assortment of ancient testimonia.

overarching factors in our understanding of Roman comedy do merit special attention because of their particular bearing on the study of *Hecyra*.

1.1. *Conditions of performance*

Large-scale formal support for drama, the kind of institutional support found in the Greek world, was alien to the Roman experience. There was no equivalent in Republican Rome to the Athenians' heavy public investment in theatrical entertainment, which included a formal civic mechanism for selecting plays and funding productions, and an increasingly elaborate permanent home for them in the precinct of Dionysus. Occasions like the Greater Dionysia soon became high points of the liturgical and civic calendar: immense prestige attached to the dramatic competitions at Athens, which even in the fifth century could turn producers, playwrights, and actors into celebrities.⁵ In later times, itinerant professional companies performed their own versions of Athenian plays throughout the Hellenistic world. These companies also enjoyed considerable, though less political, prestige and enjoyed the use of elaborate public facilities in the cities they visited.⁶ The comparative informality of the corresponding Roman arrangements is thus especially striking. Though the Senate authorized the staging of plays and made a financial contribution to their production, it persistently refused to sanction construction of a permanent theatre in the city. Arrangements were left largely to the discretion and personal resources of the junior magistrates responsible for the games, who would contract for a temporary stage to be built on each occasion before the temple of the god being honoured. Limited seating may have been provided immediately before that stage in the area that Greek theatres reserved for choral performances, but most spectators would have had to find their own places on or around the temple or in the adjacent area.⁷ Roman actors, instead of performing in an enclosed structure that by its very nature

⁵ Pericles, e.g., first attracted notice as *choregos*, backing productions of Aeschylus that included *Persians*. Sophocles held several important offices, including election as *strategos* at the time of the Samian crisis of 441/0. By 449 BCE there were separate prizes for actors. Dramatists and actors were commonly citizens in the fifth century, and their talents tended to run in families (Sutton 1987). *Choregoi* at the Dionysia were also citizens; the fact that metics might serve at the Lenaia may reflect the secondary status of that festival (Wilson 2000: 27–32, 51–7).

⁶ On the Greek dramatic festivals, see Goldhill 1997 and Rehm 2007, and for the later acting troupes, Lightfoot 2002. Documentary evidence for all these issues is available in Csapo and Slater 1995: 103–206, 239–55.

⁷ This is most clearly the arrangement at the Megalensia, where the space on the Palatine hill before the temple of the Magna Mater was especially restricted (Goldberg 1998). See more generally Marshall 2006: 31–56, Sear 2006: 54–7, Manuwald 2011: 55–68, and for the temporary stages themselves, Beacham 2007. The first set of plays performed at Augustus' *Ludi Saeculares* in 17 BCE deliberately recalled the archaic style by being offered *in scaena quo theatrum adiectum non fuit nullis positis sedilibus* (CIL vi.32323 = ILS 5050, lines 100–1). Cf. the tradition dimly recalled by Tac., *si uetustiora repetas, stantem populum spectauisse* (Ann. 14.20).

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committed actors and spectators to the shared endeavour of creating a play, therefore had to work much harder to attract and hold the attention of their audiences, who were subject to distraction by rival entertainments in the vicinity or by the discomforts of whatever vantage points they had secured. This is the material fact behind T.'s complaint in the *Hecyra* prologues of performances disrupted by the prospect of acrobats and gladiators (Introduction 3.1).

The improvisational quality of the Roman venues had further consequences. The need to erect a new stage for each occasion necessarily limited rehearsal time on site, with an especially narrow window in the case of the Megalensia, since the aediles did not assume office until mid-March and the festival was held at the beginning of April. The resulting time constraints may have encouraged what became some of Roman comedy's most striking features, e.g. its passion for stock scenes and routines, its opportunities for improvisation, and the occasional traces in our texts of places to expand or shorten, elaborate or simplify performances as time and circumstances required.⁸ Such flexibility was facilitated by the high degree of professionalism that characterized Roman drama from the time the Senate first charged Andronicus with the task of producing plays. How he created those first scripts in Latin and recruited actors capable of performing them are among the many mysteries of early Roman theatrical history, but it is clear that by the end of the third century a community of actors and writers was officially established at Rome as a professional guild under the patronage of Minerva.⁹ Contracts for producing plays were awarded to these companies of professional actors, not to individual playwrights, and the heads of the companies assumed responsibility for the success of the shows.

This at least is the role that T.'s impresario, Ambivius Turpio, claims for himself in the prologues to *Hauton timorumenos* and *Hecyra*.¹⁰ Turpio was a *senex* by the 160s and speaks to T.'s audiences with the authority of age: he identifies himself as the young playwright's patron (*Hec.* 52 *in tutelam meam*), as he had been a generation earlier for the great Caecilius (*Hec.* 14–15). A curious anecdote about Turpio in rehearsal tells us a little more about their partnership. Turpio, says Don., played the parasite Phormio while yawning, tipsy, and scratching his ear, and T., though initially annoyed by the actor's apparent inebriation, eventually had to admit that this insouciance was exactly what he had imagined for the

⁸ Plautine texts sometimes contain 'doublets' that may represent alternative ways to play a scene, e.g. with more or less elaborate music (Goldberg 2004), or may preserve the remains of successive variations (Jocelyn 1995). For the role of stock scenes and improvisations, see the essays in Benz et al. 1995 and Marshall 2006: 260–79.

⁹ Festus 333M, though the details of this so-called *Collegium poetarum* are debated. See Jory 1970, Horsfall 1976, Gruen 1990: 87–90. The theatrical community at Rome consisted largely of freedmen and slaves.

¹⁰ Turpio of course speaks the words and plays the part T. wrote for him, but the part is at least consistent with other testimony regarding Roman actor-managers. See Duckworth 1952: 73–6, Beare 1964: 164–70, Leppin 1992: 49–59, Lebek 1996, Brown 2002, Goldberg 2005: 72–3, and for the importance of the company (*grex*), Marshall 2006: 83–94.

character.¹¹ The playwright's active engagement in the rehearsal is as striking as the actor's condition. Turpio's company produced all six of T.'s plays, and the scripts may well have been tailored to the capabilities of the troupe. That kind of customization has long been suspected for Plautus: among the more obvious signs of a similar process in the Terentian corpus is the variety of musical effects in the recitatives, which may reflect the special talents of Turpio's resident musician, Flaccus.¹² The contributions of people like Turpio and Flaccus remind us that success on the Roman stage required considerably more than just a good script.

1.2. *The audience*

The improvisational quality of Roman venues also facilitated contact, or at least the illusion of contact, between actors and audience. The inevitable commotion as a play gets under way is evoked in various Plautine prologues, such as this moment in *Poenulus*.¹³

scortum exoletum ne quis in proscaenio
 sedeat, neu lictor uerbum aut uirgae muttiant,
 neu dissignator praeter os obambulet
 neu sessum ducat, dum histrio in scaena siet.
 (17–20)

Let's have no worn out tart sitting on the
 stage or lictor bandying words or rods waving
 or an usher getting in someone's face or
 seating anyone while an actor is on the stage.

At *Captivi* 10–14, the prologue-speaker interrupts his own exposition to single out an individual in the crowd for abuse, confirming in the process how indistinct the boundaries of improvised theatrical space can be.

¹¹ Don. ad *Ph.* 315 *quibus auditis exclamauit poeta se talem eum scriberet cogitasse parasitum*. What few details of original performance survived the six centuries between T. and Don. probably entered the scholarly tradition through Varro. The comment on Ambivius' acting style at Cic. *Sen.* 48 may simply be Cicero's own experience of Roscius projected back on an earlier generation.

¹² Flaccus is credited in the didascaliae with the music for each of the six plays, a striking distinction. For T.'s metrical innovations, see Moore 2007, 2012: 182–4. Cf. Fraenkel 2007 (1960): 416, 'In general one must never forget that a writer like Plautus, who wrote all his comedies for performance by a particular company on a particular occasion, had to take account of the aptitudes of the actors who composed the troupe.' Gilula 1989: 104–5 makes a similar point about T. Similarly, the Shakespearean corpus reflects the changing strengths over time of the Chamberlains' and King's Men and the different requirements of the (outdoor) Globe and (indoor) Blackfriars. See Shapiro 2010: 228–31, 245–51.

¹³ Pl. *Poen.* 17–20, though all of 1–45 contributes to the picture. Additional vignettes of the Roman audience appear at *Am.* 64–95 and *As.* 4–5. For the more problematic evidence of the *Hecyra* prologues, see Introduction 3.1.

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iam hoc tenetis? optumest.
 negat hercle illic ultimus. accedito.
 si non ubi sedeas locus est, est ubi ambules,
 quando histrionem cogis mendicari.
 ego me tua caussa, ne erres, non rupturus sum.

Have you got this then? Great.
 That man far in the back says no. Come forward.
 If there's no place to sit, take a hike,
 since you're forcing an actor into beggary.
 I'm not about to rupture myself for you, so you don't miss anything.

Still more striking is a similar interaction *during* the performance, as Euclio in *Aulularia* desperately seeks to recover his stolen treasure.¹⁴

obsecro uos ego, mi auxilio,
 oro, obtestor, sitis et hominem demonstretis, quis eam abstulerit.
 quid est? quid ridetis? noui omnes, scio fures esse hic complures,
 qui uestitu et creta occultant sese atque sedent quasi sint frugi.
 quid ais tu? tibi credere certum est, nam esse bonum ex uultu cognosco.
 hem, nemo habet horum? occidisti. dic igitur, quis habet? nescis?

Please help me, all of you!
 I beg, I implore you to point out the man who took it.
 What's that? You laugh? I know you all. I know there are plenty of thieves here,
 who disguise themselves in fancy clothes and sit as if they were honest.
 What do you say? I'll surely believe you, since I can tell from your face you're
 upright.
 What? None of these has it? You've ruined me. Tell me, who has it? You don't
 know?

His first, sweeping appeal seems generic, but the switch to the singular at 719 (*quid ais tu?*) means that Euclio has singled out an individual, and the follow-up (*hem...?*) means he waits for a response and does not immediately let go of his victim. Seating that brought spectators close to the stage platform would have facilitated such immediacy, allowing actors to acknowledge and perhaps even to mingle with them in the course of the performance, especially if the action spilled beyond the confines of the *scaena*.¹⁵ Though T. does nothing quite this bold in

¹⁴ Pl. *Aul.* 715–20. Direct address to the audience in Greek comedy tends to be more generic. See the examples in Bain 1977: 190–4. Dionysus' appeal to his priest at Ar. *Ra.* 297 is a closer, though more fleeting, parallel.

¹⁵ The so-called phryx vases of southern Italy, e.g. the Cheiron vase and New York Goose Play (figs. 12.6 and 10.2 in Taplin 1993), often show action in what would notionally be the audience's space, and while this material predates the *palliata* by as much as two centuries, it is hard to imagine Roman producers ignoring such easy opportunities to enrich their action.

Hecyra, the play is replete with monologues that give its characters, especially its women, opportunities to reach out to spectators and arouse their sympathy (e.g. 274–80n.).

Euclio's address is also striking because those men in their sparkling outfits (*uestitu et creta*) may have included members of the senatorial elite: after 194 BCE, senators in attendance at the shows could claim special places for themselves that later practice suggests were immediately before the stage.¹⁶ If Euclio's jibe reflects the widespread resentment this new privilege generated, it may also suggest greater licence for social comment than is often envisioned in Roman contexts. The fact that senators could claim this right does not necessarily mean, of course, that they ever attended in large numbers or that the shows were staged primarily for their benefit: other sources allude to women, children, slaves and the urban poor among the crowd.¹⁷ What united them all was their passion for *palliata* comedy. The very strength of the tradition and the enthusiasm with which dramatists embraced and exploited its conventions suggest an audience well versed in its devices and deeply appreciative of its effects. Thus John Wright, after documenting the enduring appeal of its traditionality, concludes: 'Widely travelled (many would have seen some of the best Greek theater of the day during military service in Sicily and South Italy), self-confident, sophisticated, thoroughly accustomed, thanks to their experiences in forum, court, and comitium, to every facet of artistic verbal ritual, the Romans clearly made up one of the great theatrical audiences of all time.'¹⁸ The details are probably exaggerated: not all were widely travelled or could claim active experience of forum, court, and comitium, but a significant majority surely knew what they wanted and insisted upon getting it. And they were almost certainly demonstrative in making known their pleasure or disappointment. Notoriously animated in Cicero's day, there is no reason to think Roman audiences were any more restrained a century earlier.¹⁹

¹⁶ So Cic. *Har. resp.* 24 *ante populi consessum senatui locum*. Liv. 34.44 and 54, Val. Max. 2.4.3, Ascon. 70C are less specific. The motives and effects of this development remain unclear, though the resentment it aroused is well attested. See Gruen 1992: 202–5, Gilula 1996. The joke at *Capt.* 15–16 expands to acknowledge wealthier spectators, though not necessarily senators, in their seats. On the whole vexed question of seating by class, see Rawson 1987, and for Roman seating more generally, Moore 1995, Beare 1964: 241–7. The practice is easier to envision – and would have been easier to enforce – in the formal theatres of later times than at the temporary venues of the second century.

¹⁷ Beare 1964: 173–5 assembles the evidence. The arguments of Fontaine 2010: 183–7 for a predominately aristocratic audience are not convincing. The portrait in Richlin 2005: 21–30 is more credible. See also Chalmers 1965, Marshall 2006: 79–81, Manuwald 2011: 98–108.

¹⁸ Wright 1974: 191. So too Chalmers 1965, Moore 1998: 8–23. The old stereotype of the obtuse Roman audience, e.g. Norwood 1923: 2 'the immense majority of Romans did not appreciate good art', has largely vanished from scholarship.

¹⁹ Cic. often notes the animation of audiences for both tragedies and comedies, e.g. *Amic.* 40, *Parad.* 3.26, *Q. Rosc.* 30, and with a specifically political turn, *Att.* 2.19.3, *Sest.* 118–23. Greek audiences were famously demonstrative in all periods: Csapo and Slater 1995: 301–5.

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1.3. Greek models

Roman dramatists did not create *palliata* scripts out of nothing: their characters, plots, and settings all originated in the New Comedy of fourth- and third-century Athens. Our authors freely, even proudly admit as much.

Clerumenoe uocatur haec comoedia
 graece. latine Sortientes. Diphilus
 hanc graece scripsit, postid rursum denuo
 latine Plautus cum latranti nomine.
 (Pl. *Cas.* 31–4)

This comedy is called *Clerumenoi*
 in Greek, in Latin *The Lottery Players*. Diphilus
 wrote it in Greek; the eventual Latin remake
 was done by Plautus, of the barking name.

graece haec uocatur Emporos Philemonis,
 eadem latine Mercator Macci Titi.
 (Pl. *Merc.* 9–10)

This play of Philemon is called *Emporos* in Greek,
 the Latin version is *The Merchant* of Titus Maccius.

adporto nouam
 Epidicazomenon quam uocant comoediam
 Graeci, Latini Phormionem nominant.
 (T. *Ph.* 24–6)

I bring you a new
Epidicazomenos, as Greeks call this
 comedy. Latin-speakers name it *Phormio*.

Fidelity to these models, however, was not a priority. Simply preserving the original Greek dress and settings for characters who then proceeded to speak and act like Romans inevitably turned Athenian comedies of daily life into Roman domestic fantasies. Plautus went even further. His musical extravaganzas may owe nearly as much to native Italian traditions of stage entertainment as to what he found in Diphilus or Menander, and he sometimes stretched his models well beyond the point of recognition.²⁰ T.'s more restrained style of adaptation created plays that are easier to reconcile with scholarly preconceptions

²⁰ At *Cas.* 60–6, 1012–14, Pl. proudly claims responsibility for what must have been a significant change in the action and emphasis of the original, and *Epid.* has been so radically reworked that the contours of its putative model have long defied recognition (Fantham 1981). On the general problem of ‘models’, see Manuwald 2011: 282–92. Fraenkel 2007: 275–86 on how Pl. ‘dismembered’ Greek drama remains basic.

about Greek comic art (Introduction 2), but the difference between the two dramatists does not obviate a central issue in all discussions of Roman comedy: What counts as ‘original’ or ‘creative’ in a tradition so shamelessly derived from another?

That question has a long, problematic history in the study of Roman comedy. By the late nineteenth century, scholars, anxious to see through the Latin plays to the lost Greek ones behind them, were not always kind to the Roman authors whose techniques of adaptation often obscured their view. Even the great Friedrich Leo, a particularly astute and appreciative reader of Plautus, treated him as a stepping-stone to something else.²¹ The subsequent rediscovery of much original New Comedy, which began in earnest with publication of the Cairo codex of Menander in 1907 and continues to the present day, has gradually relieved this pressure on the Latin texts. Hellenists with genuine New Comedy to read increasingly leave the Latin ‘copies’ to Latinists and allow the Roman plays to stand on their own merits. Pl.’s reputation has risen accordingly. His passion for the stock characters and situations of the *palliata*, his mastery of lyric rhythms (rivalled only by Horace nearly two centuries later), and the easy rapport he established with his audience evoke widespread admiration: we have learned to judge his achievement not by how well he escapes, but by how brilliantly he exploits his traditional material.²² With Roman stage practice now a legitimate focus of attention in its own right, the question that so preoccupied Fraenkel’s generation, ‘How did Plautus translate?’, no longer seems so pressing. As Erich Segal noted at the very start of this shift in the scholarly paradigm, ‘once the play begins, everything becomes “Plautus”’.²³

T. nevertheless speaks of rendering a scene from Diphilus ‘word for word’ (*Ad. 11 uerbum de uerbo expressum extulit*), a suggestion of fidelity only strengthened by the ancient exegetical tradition, which occasionally encourages direct comparison with the Greek models. Don., for example, in commenting on *Hecyra*’s opening, *per pol quam paucos reperias meretricibus | fidelis euenire amatores*, *Syra* (58–9), quotes the corresponding lines of the original by Apollodorus to reveal what any modern reckoning would call an act of translation:

²¹ So in the words of his student Fraenkel 2007 (1922): 2, ‘Leo loved Plautus, but he loved Greek comedy even more, and if he could gain access to the Greek forms through the Roman plays, this gave him complete satisfaction, and sometimes he did not go any further.’ See Goldberg 1986: 61–6, Halporn 1993: 191–6, and Goldberg 2011: 206–10.

²² This is the great lesson of Wright 1974: 195–6. Few today would agree with Norwood 1923: 1 that Pl. ‘wrote like a blacksmith mending a watch’.

²³ Segal 1987: 6. On the earlier question, cf. Fraenkel 2007: 3–4 and the new Preface to the English edition, xi–xxii. By 1960, Fraenkel had acknowledged the futility of reconstructing lost originals: ‘Perhaps it will be necessary to make do, more often than Leo, Jachmann, and I did, with the finding that the course of the action which we find in Plautus could not have been the same in a Greek comedy, and it will be necessary to give up the attempt to reconstruct the action or essential elements of the action of lost Greek plays’ (416).

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δλίγαις ἐραστῆς γέγον' ἐταίραισιν, Σύρα, | βέβαιος ('A steadfast lover, Syra, comes to few hetairai').²⁴ Fidelity on this verbal level, however, is regularly eclipsed by more radical changes. Eliminating an expository prologue, interpolating scenes or characters from a second play, turning dialogue to monologue (or monologue to dialogue), and eliminating act divisions inevitably produce significant alterations in the way a play works on its audience. In the one case where an extant Roman play can now be set against a continuous fragment of its original, Pl.'s *Bacchides* and Menander's *Dis exapaton*, attention to how Pl. adjusted his model to Roman dramatic practice takes us deeper into his creative process than the way he turned Greek words into Latin ones.²⁵ Setting a Latin play against its 'model' reveals only part, and not necessarily the most important part, of a very complex creative process, especially when, as in the case of T., independent knowledge of those models is quite limited (Barsby 2002). If what we really care about is a *Roman* comedy, why should we pay more than token attention to the fact that it was based on a Greek one?

Modern scholarship has increasingly responded to the fact of models by assimilating them, whether known directly or indirectly, into the larger body of 'intertexts' that comprise the literary milieu in which Roman dramatists operated. This approach, which engages not exclusively with dramatic texts but encourages us to extend our analysis to the influence of oratory, polemic, and even to Callimachean poetics, vastly enriches the field of scholarly inquiry while avoiding the old pitfalls of a source criticism too inclined to fault Roman comedy for not being Greek comedy.²⁶ Its potential weakness is that in privileging a meditative, text-based style of analysis, it brushes aside the possibility that scripts created for second-century theatre audiences, who favoured broad strokes, immediate effects, and rapid pace, might require different critical methods from texts created for private enjoyment.²⁷ A more traditional alternative draws analogues and parallels from the Greek material without necessarily positing

²⁴ Don. ad loc., a line he almost certainly derived from one of his scholarly sources (Introduction 6). Such literalism is not unique to T. The correspondence of what is now Men. fr. 111 K-T *ὅν οἱ θεοὶ φιλοῦσιν ἀποθνήσκει νέος* to Pl. *Bac.* 816–17 *quem di diligunt | adulescens moritur* helped Ritschl 1845: 406 identify *Dis exapaton* as Pl.'s model.

²⁵ The papyrus, officially published in 1997 as P. Oxy. 4407, has been known and discussed since 1968. See Handley 2001, and for its relation to Roman dramatic style, Goldberg 1990. The structural comparison is unique in the record, though an extended stylistic comparison is also provided by Gell. 2.23, setting Caecilius' *Plocium* against its Menandrian model. See Wright 1974: 120–6.

²⁶ For these 'intertexts', Sharrock 2009: 75–83, and as applied to *Eu.*, 219–32. The possibility of allusions to Callimachus in Roman drama, still highly controversial, is well argued by Sharrock, less well by Fontaine 2010: 197–200. A more narrowly constructed intertextuality is discussed by Manuwald 2011: 309–20.

²⁷ Sharrock 2009: 79 n. 140 observes in response that 'it is worth remembering that dramatic works also have a textual life outside the performance', though whether second-century scripts enjoyed any 'textual life' among contemporaries is uncertain. It is not even clear that whole scripts existed, much less circulated outside the troupes in the dramatists' lifetime. See Deufert 2002: 44–57, Goldberg 2005: 48–50.

direct relationships as sources or targets of allusion. This can make the critic's task a little easier. Where Athenian audiences, for example, would very likely have recognized an allusion to Euripides' *Electra* in the entrance of Knemon's daughter to fetch water from her well and Diphilus probably parodied such tragic scenes with a water jar in the original of *Rudens*, Romans watching the antics of Pl.'s Sceparnio and Ampelisca were less surely attuned to the full range of their scene's dramatic antecedents.²⁸ By recognizing the tradition's capabilities, which is what parallels represent, we can appreciate the choices Pl. made in writing the scene as he did (and not in some other, equally possible way) without needing first to reconstruct specifically what he found in Diphilus or to consider whether his audience had a comparable grasp of the tradition's history.²⁹ This approach is especially helpful in the case of *Hecyra*, whose immediate Greek source material is extremely problematic, but where the tradition is comparatively rich in analogues.³⁰

2. THE CAREER OF TERENCE

Nothing is known for certain about the life of T., although much was said about it in antiquity. A biography ascribed to Suetonius records that P. Terentius Afer was born at Carthage, came to Rome as the slave of an (otherwise unknown) senator named Terentius Lucanus, and secured his freedom by virtue of intellectual talent and dark good looks. His dramatic career, which consisted of six comedies produced in the course of the 160s, was supported by his great predecessor Caecilius Statius and by leading Romans like Scipio Aemilianus and Gaius Laelius. Then, still in his mid-twenties, he drowned in a shipwreck on his way back from Greece with a fresh collection of Greek plays adapted for the Roman stage, leaving behind a small estate on the Appian Way and sufficient money for his daughter to marry an equestrian. In spinning this tale, Suetonius cites numerous authorities, who all disagree with one another. As so often with literary biography in antiquity, the author's life has largely been deduced – and embellished – from the author's work. Not even a birth at Carthage and early death at sea are necessarily true: Afer 'the African' is not a cognomen restricted to those of North African origin, and the fatal trip to Greece may simply be deduced from

²⁸ Men. *Dys.* 189–217, Pl. *Rud.* 331–457. The correspondences and 'intertexts' of these two scenes are approached in interestingly different ways by Handley 2002: 106–16 and Fontaine 2010: 42–9.

²⁹ Though effect and intention are not the same, dramatists certainly produced the former and began with the latter, and while authorial intention need not be the sole object of critical inquiry, it remains a legitimate one. See Hinds 1998: 47–51.

³⁰ The source-problem for *Hec.* was defined by Schadewaldt 1931, but the reconstruction by Kuiper 1938 is not credible. Lefèvre 1999 is better, but vaguer. For the play's Greek analogues, see Appendix II. Though Greek material claims historical priority, later parallels can be useful for revealing how different dramatists responded to similar opportunities and challenges. See Goldberg 1986: 161–2, Lefèvre 1999: 15–28.