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TERENCE  
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## PREFACE

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We do not know the name given at birth to the man who wrote *Andria*. We know only the name of the man who once owned him, for Publius Terentius Afer appears to be a freedman's name. If so, our author was a man who entered the Roman world by force as a slave from North Africa. This mattered very little to the Romans, for whom enslavement was no impediment to literary distinction. Terence's great predecessor Caecilius Statius also bore a freedman's name, and Lucius Accius, who would dominate literary life in the later second century, was a freedman's son. The hint of slave origin matters much more to us, especially when combined with the report that Terence was "dark-complexioned" (*colore fusco*). Could one of the first great dramatists in the western tradition have been a black African and his plays a form of slave literature? That intriguing possibility, which has a long and checkered history in the modern discourse of letters, poses a particular challenge to students of the plays, which offer biographical criticism all too little purchase. Almost without exception, the characters, actions, and attitudes found in these six comedies can be traced not to the personal experience of their author but directly to the well-documented themes and conventions of their genre. Did Terence so thoroughly remove himself from his creation that only his name endures in the text? The best a commentary can do is remain alive to the possibility of biographical resonances, taking care neither to ignore nor to invent them.

What about the genre itself? We have made great progress in appreciating its dramatic brilliance, but for those taking the long view, that greater understanding does not make *palliata* comedy any less problematic. Terence's version may lack Plautus' hard-bitten edge, but his plots still turn on violence toward slaves, callousness toward women, and the self-satisfied arrogance of powerful men. What does that inherent brutality say about the genre, about the society that produced it, and about us, who still find ample reason to enjoy it? Plautine scholarship has begun, albeit slowly, to acknowledge these sensibilities and to address these concerns. Terentian scholarship has lagged behind, so that to modern ears, much in the traditional bibliography can sound tedious, pedantic, or somehow beside the point. Yet that work still has things to teach, and a commentary has a duty to profit from and give credit to all its lessons. Grammar and syntax, vocabulary and meter, textual transmission and textual criticism are as much its business as ever, and in commenting on a dramatic text, discussions of dramaturgy and performance naturally join the mix. We

need to see (at least in the mind's eye) what characters do as well as what they say and to imagine how audiences might respond to their actions as well as to their words. After all that, there may nevertheless remain a sense that something is missing, some acknowledgment of an underlying unpleasantness in the drama that neither philological commentary nor literary analysis addresses squarely. That is a legitimate concern, and here too, the best a commentary can do without compromising its primary objectives or distorting its results is to alert users to its own potential shortcomings and empower them to improve upon it.

Commentators invariably accrue debts, and I am no exception. Mine are especially keen and heartfelt: to scholars of the past from Aelius Donatus to Anne Dacier to Peter Brown, who have taught me a great deal and from whom (in the long tradition of commentators everywhere) I have stolen a great deal; to present colleagues unstinting in their advice and generous in their critiques, notably Fred Franko, Toph Marshall, Denise McCoskey, Tim Moore, and especially Amy Richlin, who has compelled me to think about Roman life as well as Roman literature; to the best editors any author could have, Philip Hardie and Stephen Oakley, for so often saving me from myself; and above all to my students over the years, avid Terentians and amused skeptics alike, not just for showing me so earnestly what they wanted to know but for wanting to know such interesting things.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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The abbreviated titles of plays by Plautus (Pl.) and Terence (T.) follow the practice of the *OLD*, those of Menander (Men.) those of *LSJ*. Other works cited by abbreviation are:

- Ashmore S. G. Ashmore, ed. *The Comedies of Terence*. New York: 1908  
 Barsby J. Barsby, ed. *Terence*, 2 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge, MA: 2001  
 Bentley R. Bentley, ed. *Publii Terentii Afri, Comoediae*. Cambridge: 1726  
 Brown P. Brown, ed. *Terence. The Girl from Andros*. Aris and Phillips Classical Texts. Liverpool: 2019  
 Dacier A. Dacier, ed. *Les Comedies de Terence, avec la Traduction et les Remarques de Madame Dacier*, 2 vols. Paris: 1688  
 GLK H. Keil, ed. *Grammatici latini*, 8 vols. Leipzig: 1857–1870  
 J S. Jäkel, ed. *Menandri Sententiae; Comparatio Menandri et Philistionis*. Leipzig: 1964  
 K–T A. Körte and A. Thierfelder, eds. *Menandri, quae supersunt. Pars altera*. Bibliotheca Teubneriana. Leipzig: 1959  
 NLS E. C. Woodcock, *A New Latin Syntax*. Cambridge, MA: 1959  
 OCT R. Kauer and W. M. Lindsay, eds. *P. Terenti Afri Comoedia*, rev. ed. Oxford Classical Texts. Oxford: 1958  
 OLD P. G. W. Glare, ed. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: 1982  
 PA J. Kirchner, ed. *Prosopographica Attica*, 2 ed. Berlin: 1966  
 PCG R. Kassel and C. Austin, eds. *Poetae comici graeci*. Berlin: 1991–  
 R O. Ribbeck, ed. *Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta*, 3 ed. Leipzig: 1897  
 SEL C. E. Bennet, *Syntax of Early Latin*, 2 vols. Boston: 1910, 1914  
 Shipp G. P. Shipp, ed. *P. Terenti Afri, Andria with Introduction and Commentary*. Oxford: 1960