Introduction

Greeks and Romans

According to distant, heroic tradition, the Trojan prince Aeneas, fleeing from the destruction of Troy by the Greeks, settled in Italy and was the founding father of the Roman people. Rome itself was founded – tradition again – by Romulus on 21 April 753. He was the first of seven kings. In 509, the son of the last king Tarquinius Superbus – ‘Tarquin the Proud’ – raped the noble Roman woman Lucretia, and Rome rose up against and expelled the Tarquins for ever. It was then that Rome became a Republic. This was seen as the beginning of the age of freedom (lībertās). During this period of aristocratic government, Rome extended her power first through Italy and then, after two lengthy conflicts against North African Carthage (the Punic Wars), into the Western Mediterranean itself. As a result, Sicily, Sardinia, Corsica, Spain and North Africa (modern Tunisia) became Rome’s first provinces. After Carthage was finally destroyed in 149, Rome moved into the Eastern Mediterranean (provincialising Greece, Asia (modern Turkey), Syria, Palestine and Egypt).

From the beginning Rome had been in contact with Greek culture, for Greek colonies had been established as early as the eighth century in Italy and Sicily. North of Rome lay another developed culture, that of the Etruscans (whose early kings ruled Rome till they were expelled in 509). Roman culture developed under these joint influences. When the Romans finally conquered Greece in 146, they found themselves in possession of the home of the most prestigious culture in the Mediterranean. Their reaction was very complex, but three main strands may be seen. They were proud of their military and administrative achievement and thus contemptuous of contemporary Greeks whom they had defeated. At the same time, they shared the reverence of contemporary Greeks for the great cultural achievements of earlier Greeks – Homer, Herodotus, Thucydides, the tragedians, comic poets and orators. The result of this ambivalent attitude was a more or less conscious decision to create for themselves a culture worthy of their position as the new dominant power. This culture was modelled on and emulated that of Greece in its heyday. Yet the Romans’ pride in themselves ensured that the culture was Latin and its literature was written in Latin, not Greek. Horace’s famous words illustrate Rome’s debt to Greek culture:

Graecia capta ferum uictorem cēpit, et artīs
intulit agrestī Latiō

Greece captured took as captive its wild foe
And brought the arts to rustic Italy
On the other hand, the poet Propertius, a contemporary of Virgil, describes Virgil’s *Aeneid* in the following terms:

\[ \text{nescioquid maius nascitur Iliade} \]

A greater thing than Homer’s *Iliad*

Is being born

Romans now felt their culture could stand comparison with the very best of the Greeks’. This veneration of the Greeks contrasts strongly with, for example, the Roman satirist Juvenal’s constant attacks on the contemporary *Graeculus esuriens* (‘starving little Greek’), which reflected aristocratic contempt for ‘modern’ Greeks as the decadent descendants of a once great people. Yet at all periods individual Greeks (e.g. Polybius, Posidonius, Parthenius, Philodemus) were held in high esteem at Rome. And by the end of the first century Rome had become the cultural centre of the world, in the eyes not only of Romans but also of Greeks whose poets, scholars and philosophers now flocked there. It is part of the greatness of Rome that, when confronted with Greek culture, she neither yielded
completely nor trampled it under foot, but accepted the challenge, took it over, and transformed and transmitted it to Europe. Without the mediation of Rome, Western culture would be very different, and, arguably, much the poorer.

Here Cicero, one of Rome’s most influential writers, reminds his brother Quintus (who was governor of Asia Minor, a Roman province heavily peopled by Greeks) just who he is in charge of and the debt Rome owes to them:

We are governing a civilised race, in fact the race from which civilisation is believed to have passed to others, and assuredly we ought to give civilisation’s benefits above all to those from whom we have received it. Yes, I say it without shame, especially as my life and record leave no opening for any suspicion of indolence or frivolity: everything that I have attained I owe to those pursuits and disciplines which have been handed down to us in the literature and teachings of Greece. Therefore, we may well be thought to owe a special duty to this people, over and above our common obligation to mankind; schooled by their precepts, we must wish to exhibit what we have learned before the eyes of our instructors.

(Cicero, Ad Quīntum 1.1)
Part One  Plautus’ comedies

Titus Macc(i)us Plautus probably lived from c. 250 to c. 180. He is said to have written about 130 comedies of which nineteen survive. Like almost all Roman writers, he drew the inspiration for his work from earlier Greek models, which he freely translated and adapted to fit the Roman audience for which he was writing. For example, it is almost certain that he based Aululāria, the first play you will read, on a play by the Athenian Menander (c. 340 to c. 290). Plautus wrote comedies for production at Roman festivals (fēriae, lūdī), times devoted to worship of the gods and abstention from work. The originals were written in verse.

Actors in the Greek originals wore masks which covered the whole head (see p. 6). Though it is not absolutely certain that Plautus followed this convention, we have illustrated the Plautine characters in the Introduction with Greek mask-types from around the time of Menander.
Section 1 Plautus’ Aululāria

Aululāria begins with the entry of the family Lar (household god), who sketches the history of the family in brief outline and alerts us to Euclio’s miserliness. For the purposes of adaptation, we have filled out that brief family history with a number of scenes taken from elsewhere in Roman comedy. We start to follow Plautus at Section 1C. At the end of each section from here onwards we note the source we have adapted.

Introduction: familia Euclionis

quis es tū?
ego sum Euclio. senex sum.

quis es tū?
ego sum Phaedra. filia Euclionis sum.

quis es tū?
Staphyla sum, serua Euclionis.

qui estis?
familia Euclionis sumus.

drāmatis persōnae
Euclio: Euclio senex est, pater Phaedrae.
Phaedra: Phaedra filia Euclionis est.
Staphyla: serua Euclionis est.
Euclio senex est. Euclio senex auārus est. Euclio in aedibus habitat cum filiā. filia Euclionis Phaedra est. est et serua in aedibus.
seruae nōmen est Staphyla.
Running vocabulary for Introduction

au¯arus greedy

cum cf¯ıli¯awith (his) daughter
dr¯amatisthe play’s
ego I

estAre you?
est is; he/she/it is; there is
estis? are you?
etalso; and
Eucli¯o Euclio
Eucli¯onis of Euclio
Eucli¯onis’ familia the household of Euclio
familia household
f¯ılia daughter
filiæ Eucli¯onis (the) daughter of Euclio
habit-¯o I dwell
habitant (they) live
in “aedibus in the house
in”familia” Eucli¯onis in Euclio’s household
omn¯es all (pl.)
pater “Phaedrae father of Phaedra
paterfamili¯as (the) head of the family
pers¯onae characters (lit. ‘masks’)
Phaedra Phaedra
qui? who? (s.)
quin? who? (pl.)

Grammar for Introduction

sum ‘I am’

Learning vocabulary for Introduction

Nouns
Eucli¯o Euclio
eucli¯onis of Euclio
familia household
f¯ılia daughter
Phaedra Phaedra
seru-a slave-woman
Seru-a (the) slave of Euclio
Staphyl-a Staphyla
Verbs
habit-¯o I dwell

Others
et and; also, too, even

The Roman family

Our word ‘family’ derives from the Latin familia, and that may lull us into thinking the two ideas are much the same. In fact familia has some significant differences. Strictly, it is a legal term, referring to those under the legal control of the head of household, the paterfamili¯as. The familia covered the slaves of a household, but frequently did not include the wife; so that even if many Romans lived in groupings resembling the modern ‘nuclear family’, that was not what they referred to in talking about the familia. (World of Rome, 302)
Section 1A

The scene moves back in time many years. Euclio’s grandfather, Demaenetus, on the day of his daughter’s wedding, fearful that his gold will be stolen amid the confusion of the preparations, entrusts it to the safe keeping of his household god (the Lar). He puts it in a pot and hides it in a hole near the altar.

dramatis personae

Dëmaenetus: Dëmaenetus senex est, Eucliônís- auus.
seruus: seruí̅- nómen est Däuus.
serua: seruae- nómen est Pamphila.
coquus et tibícina.

(seruus in- scaenam intrat, ante- iânuam- Dëmaenetí̅ stat et clâmat. cûr clâmat? clâmat quod seruam uocat)

servus heus, Pamphila! ego Däuus tē uocō!
serva quis mē uocat? quis clâmat?
servus ego Däuus tē uocō.
serva quid est? cûr mē uocās?

3. aedēs (scaena)
Running vocabulary for 1A

ante "iānuam" Dēmaenetī before Demaenetus' door
clāmat (he/she/it) shouts, is shouting
coquus (nom.) (a/the) cook
cūr why?
Dāuus (nom.) Davus
Dēmaenetus (nom.) Demaenetus
drāmatis the play's
ego I
Eucliōnīs auus (nom.) Euclio’s grandfather
heus hey!
in 'scaenam onto the stage
intrat (he/she/it) enters
mē (acc.) me
Pamphila (nom., voc.) Pamphila, O Pamphila
persōnae characters
quid what?
quis who?
quod because
senex (nom.) an old man
seruae "nomen the slave's name
seruam (acc.) (the slave-woman
seruī "nomen the name of the
slave
seruus (nom.) (a/the) slave
stat (he/she/it) stands
tē (acc.) you (s.)
tībicīna (nom.) (a/the) pipe-girl
uocās (do) you call, are you calling (s.)
uocat (he/she/it) calls, is calling
uocō I call, am calling

4. ego Dāuus tē uocō
Section 1: Plautus’ Aulūlāria

(seruus ad iānuam appropinquat, sed iānuam clausa est. seruus igitur iānuam pulsat)

SERVS heus tū, serua! ego iānuam pulsō, at tū nōn aperīs: iānuam clausa est.

SERVA (iānuam aperīt) cūr clāmās? ego huc et illuc cursitō, tū autem clāmās. ego occupāta sum, tū autem ōtiosus es. seruus nōn es, sed furcifer.

SERVS ego ōtiosus nōn sum, Pamphila. nam hodiē Dēmaenetus, dominus meus, filiam in mātrīmōnium dat: nuptiae filiae sunt!

(Dēmaenetus, dominus serūs et seruae, in scaenam intrat)

DĒMAENETVS cūr clāmātis, Dāue et Pamphila? cūr stātis? cūr ōtiosī estis? nam hodiē nuptiae filiae meae sunt. cūr nōn in aedīs intrātis et nuptiās parātis?

(in aedīs intrant seruus et serua, et nuptiās parant. in scaenam intrant coquus et tībicīna. Dēmaenetus coquum et tībicīnam uidet)

DĒM. heus uōs, quī estis? ego enim uōs nōn cognōui.

COQVVS ET TĪBĪCĪNA coquus et tībicīna sumus. ad nuptiās filiae tuae ueinimus.

DĒM. cūr nōn in aedīs metās intrātis et nuptiās parātis?

(coquus et tībicīna in aedīs Dēmaenetī intrant)

(Dēmaenetus corōnam et unguentum portat. aulam quoque portat. aula aurī plēna est)

DĒM. heu! hodiē nuptiās filiae meae parō. cūncta familia festīnat. huc et illuc cursitānt puerī et puellae, ego coquōs et tībicīnās uocō. nunc aedēs plēnae sunt coquōrum et tībicīnārum, et cūnctī coqui et tībicīnae fūrēs sunt. heu! homō perditus sum,

A father’s power

Stated at its most dramatic, the power of the paterfamilias was absolute: the power of life and death over his familia, that is his legitimate children, his slaves, and his wife if married in a form that transferred paternal control ( manus, lit. ‘hand’) to the husband. The familia could be seen as a state within a state: its members were subject to the judgement and absolute authority of the pater (‘father’) just as citizens were subject to the judgement and absolute authority of the citizen body. In exceptional circumstances sons or wives might be handed over by the state to paternal authority, as happened on the occasion of the scandal of the cult of Bacchus in 186 BC, or again under Augustus. But even if this awesome power was occasionally invoked, and its memory was kept alive, in practical terms it was not the most significant aspect of potestās (‘power’). (World of Rome, 309)
ad iānuam to the door
ad ‘fīlae’ tuae to the marriage-rites of your daughter
aedēs (nom. pl.) (the) house
aperīt(ī) you (s.) are opening (it)
appropiatūn (he/she/it) approaches
at but
aula (nom.) (the) pot
aurem however (nom.) full of gold
clāmās (do) you shout, are you shouting; you are shouting
cloās (do) you shout, are you shouting
clusus (nom.) closed, shut
coqui (nom.) cooks
cōquōrum et tībicīnārum of cooks and pipe-girls
cōquīs (acc.) cooks
cōquum (acc.) (the) cook
cōsum (nom., voc.) Pamphila, O Pamphila
parant (they) prepare
parātis (do) you (pl.) prepare?, you (pl.) prepare
parō I prepare, am preparing
perditus (nom.) lost, done for
plēnae (nom. pl.) full
portat (he/she/it) carries, is carrying
puellae (nom.) girls
puerī (nom.) boys
pulsat (he/she/it) beats on, pounds
pulsō I beat on, am beating on, pound, am pounding
qū who?
quoque also, too
sed but
seruus (nom.) (a/the) slave
stātis (do) you stand, are you standing
stētis (do) you stand, are you standing
stētis (do) you stand, are you standing
uocō I call, am calling
uōs (nom., voc., acc.) you (pl.)