THE *EUNUCHUS*

A. J. BROTHERS (ed.): *Terence*, The Eunuch. Pp. vi + 213. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2000. Paper, £16.50. ISBN: 0-85668-513-5.

The aims and expectations of the Aris & Phillips series require a wide range of expertise from its editors: a thorough understanding of the original text, the production of a translation at once faithful to the original yet fluent and accessible to the reader with little or no knowledge of the ancient language, and the ability to lead users of widely varying experience to an appreciation of both the work's overall structure and its individual nuances. In the case of Terence, this task is further complicated by the controversy that beset his plays from the moment of their composition, and any editor's need to penetrate the smokescreen of justification that the playwright at times seems to inject into his defence. The overall impression in reading B.'s edition of *The Eunuch* is that he has succeeded admirably, with judicious examination of contentious points. If, at times, he reaches no firm conclusion, he has the honesty to suggest that perhaps no conclusion is possible.

The edition follows the predictable series-format: first, an Introduction, four of its seven sections being drawn from B.'s 1988 edition of *The Self-Tormentor*, with updated additions or amplifications. To these are added three new sections germane to *The Eunuch* itself: its relationship to the Menandrian originals (*Eunouchos*, and the *Kolax* from which Terence lifted the characters of the parasite and boastful soldier), the play as Roman comedy, and the composition of the text. The first of these remains, of course, a source of numerous difficulties. The integration into the play of Thraso and Gnatho from *Kolax* is a case in point. To what extent did the boastful soldier and his satellite appear in Menander's *Eunouchos*? Why did Terence substitute the figures we see? Is the extent of their development due to Menander or to Terence? Related questions involve the presence of Antipho in the play, when the ancient commentator Donatus tells us he did not figure in the Greek original (if Donatus is, in fact, correct), and the insertion of other, minor, speaking parts, the presence of which requires more than the three actors available to Menander. Did Terence feel that his original did not have enough action to suit the tastes of his audience, as B. suggests? Then there is the question of exposition. Did the Greek original have a divine prologue to establish that superiority of knowledge in the minds of the audience that was necessary for the development of Greek New Comedy's major effect, dramatic irony, and, if so, how much of this information has Terence smuggled into the opening scenes of his own play? And how far are the inconsistencies seen in the play the result of Terentian tampering rather than factors inherent in the Greek version?

In turning to the play in its Roman context, B. points out the general lack of integration of the Phaedrian and Chaerean plots for much of the action, a contrast to the technique found in some of the playwright's other works, and he seeks to explain the phenomenon by reference to the resulting entertainment value which such contrasts involve. Then there is the unprecedented inclusion of rape during the course of the action and the perpetrator's reaction to it, both of which have received negative responses from commentators ancient and modern. B. attempts to set the event within the *mores* of the comic theatre, but the lack of any parallel is not without its own significance. Following detailed investigation of individual characters, B. rounds off the section by returning to the question of the play's ending, which presents the audience with the curiously unexpected compromise of a *ménage à trois*, with Phaedria agreeing to share the attentions of Thais with the soldier Thraso. B. is careful, as always, to

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point out that the Roman audience's response to this development may not have been identical to our own, but equally he posits the question of whether the situation may not be largely the result of Terence reworking his original material.

The heart of any Aris & Phillips edition, though, is the translation and the commentary based upon it. In the present case, readers will count themselves fortunate in being presented with a version that combines precision with eminent readability—a rare achievement—capturing well the spirit of this, the most popular of Terence's comedies with contemporary audiences. No less skilfully produced are the more than fifty pages of commentary which provide detailed examination of the play, giving greater focus to many of the topics raised in the Introduction. The scope of the present review does not allow for more than a few passing observations. It is clear, however, that B. has judged his intended audience well. Topics are treated with clarity for those new to the genre, but also incorporate observations that established scholars will find of interest. These can range from explanation of purely factual detail, to discussion of Terentian inserts aimed at masking Menandrian Act divisions (e.g. ll. 189–206). Then there is the playwright's general laxity in providing stage directions within the text, which often makes it difficult to determine when a character entered or left the stage, ostensible alterations to the Menandrian time-scale (Pythias' discovery of the rape, for instance), and the very question of whether those alterations laid at Terence's door, and for which he incurred such opprobrium, would not be better examined in a more positive light.

There are doubtless aspects to B.'s treatment of the play that will arouse dispute. This is inevitable wherever points of uncertainty exist in any work of literature. What is important, however, is that B. has produced an edition that in so many ways eminently suits the student of today.

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SENECA'S *MEDEA*

H. M. HINE: *Seneca* Medea. Pp. vi + 218. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 2000. Paper, £16.50. ISBN: 0-85668-692-1.

The revival of interest in Seneca's tragedies seen in the last thirty years continues unabated, so that we now have a choice of more than one edition of the better plays where formerly there were none at all. Professor Hine here offers us a new look at the *Medea* in the familiar Aris & Phillips format of introduction, text, facing translation, select apparatus, and commentary. The text is based with a few changes on Zwierlein's OCT (1986), and the apparatus gives selected variants from the major manuscripts and conjectures relevant to the printed text. The translation is in prose, but printed so as to tally with the lines of the facing Latin text. It is accurate and on the whole readable—no mean achievement for anyone tackling Seneca's prose or verse (*experto credite*). The texts of the plays are notoriously short of signposts to the entrances and exits of the characters, but to help the reader H. gives stage directions which seem to indicate sensibly the actors' likely movements.

There is a substantial introduction that is very helpful towards understanding the play and its background in literature, philosophy, and rhetoric. Here, as in the

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