Roman Comedy Gets Back to Basics

SANDER M. GOLDBERG

D.M. Erich Segal (1937–2010)

E. FRAENKEL, *PLAUTINE ELEMENTS IN PLAUTUS*. Trans. T. Drevikovsky and F. Muecke. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xxiv + 459. ISBN 978-0-19924-910-5. £101.00.

W. STOCKERT (ED.), *TITUS MACCIUS PLAUTUS* CISTELLARIA. Sarsina and Urbino: QuattroVenti, 2009. Pp. 89. ISBN 978-8-83920-875-0. €20.00.

C. PANAYOTAKIS (ED.), *DECIMUS LABERIUS: THE FRAGMENTS* (Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries 46). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Pp. xxix + 512. ISBN 978-0-52188-523-2. £80.00.

M. FONTAINE, *FUNNY WORDS IN PLAUTINE COMEDY*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010. Pp. xvi + 311. ISBN 978-0-19534-144-7. £45.00.

> One of the aims of this book is to help in bringing Plautus and Terence into the mainstream of Latin literary studies. Alison Sharrock, *Reading Roman Comedy* (2009), x

Twenty-one plays survive under the name of Plautus. Add the six by Terence and the fragmentary record from Andronicus in the mid-third century to Turpilius late in the second, and the result is a significant corpus with something for nearly everyone: an extensive record of Latin at a key period in its history, a major arena for the Romans' ongoing struggle with Hellenism, a genre more central to later Western drama than anything Greek, and, however well scholarship may sometimes obscure the fact, plays that are genuinely funny and replete with the sights, sounds, and smells of what passes for daily life in the Roman Republic. Small wonder the *comoedia palliata* once attracted some of the great names in Roman studies. What Alison Sharrock was taught to regard as only 'a stereotype-ridden exercise in lamentable literary secondariness' (ix) must from the beginning have meant something quite different to Ritschl and Leo, not to mention Studemund, whose eyesight never recovered from the strain of transcribing the Ambrosian palimpsest of Plautus.[1] How did the study of comedy ever become a literary backwater? And what has happened to it since?

I BACKGROUND

Where we are now is closely tied to where we have been. Experts in the field will say that the seminal work of the twentieth century is Eduard Fraenkel's *Plautinisches im Plautus*

[1] G. Studemund, *T. Macci Plauti fabularum reliquiae Ambrosianae codicis rescripti Ambrosiani Apographum* (1889) thus ended his Prooemium with Catullus: 'Ni te plus oculis meis amarem!' It is no reproach to subsequent scholarship that F. Ritschl, *Parerga zu Plautus und Terenz* (1845) and F. Leo, *Plautinische Forschungen* (1895, 2 edn 1912) continue to command attention.

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(1922), and Anglophone readers have now lost their final excuse for ignoring it. An English translation has at last appeared, which includes both the German original and the essential supplement Fraenkel prepared for the Italian edition of 1960.[2] Even this new version, though, remains a little terrifying. Never easy reading, the book is only a little easier now since the English editors not only preserve Fraenkel's disdain for paragraph divisions but convert his often discursive footnotes to endnotes. Readers faced with the dense mass of Fraenkel's magisterial prose must constantly flip pages to follow the thrust and counter-thrust of his arguments and supplementary arguments.[3] This remains well worth the effort, and not just for the book's enduring insights. Especially for those grown sceptical of German analytic methods, it is good to be reminded of how much Fraenkel genuinely admired and appreciated Plautus. As he says at the very end:[4]

> Though preserved by a succession of favourable circumstances, these comedies owe their real life only to their nature and their merit. Two millennia later they are not curiosities or rubbish but the enduring expression of creative powers. … The indestructible essence within them is not so much the material taken from Attic drama as the spirit of Italic language and humour, but even more than this, the poetic gifts of one man, Plautus of Sarsina.

His emphasis throughout on comedy's Roman qualities was a revolutionary step, inviting readers to treat Plautus as the exploiter of Greek models, not their slave. Besides being disciplined and perceptive, the argument is vigorous, enthusiastic, and sometimes even exciting. There is nothing 'secondary', either in quality or significance, about Fraenkel's Plautus.

The method he employed to such brilliant effect nevertheless kept the Greek models in view, and less imaginative, less bold, or simply more practical successors would not let them go. Fraenkel did not break the *Quellenforscher*'s hold over the scholarly imagination as effectively as Richard Heinze, working from a similar agenda, managed to do for the study of Vergil.[5] Subsequent scholarship on comedy often fixed instead on an ever-tighter definition of originality, which at its most extreme could mean reconstructing the lost 'models' and then judging the surviving Latin texts by what they had failed to duplicate. The tone was set early by Gunther Jachmann's *Plautinisches und Attisches* (1931), whose very title challenged Fraenkel's emphasis.[6] The inevitable result was the bibliography that Alison Sharrock initially found so discouraging: closely reasoned, intricately detailed, but aesthetically challenged and often quite boring essays that only a narrowing cadre of experts could love.

Yet not everything was so very bleak and boring. Important work was still being done, often in conscious resistance to the German approach, and it led to mainstays of the

[2] The original German pagination is supplied, with the addenda to Franco Munari's edition, *Elementi plautini in Plauto* (1960) keyed to the new English pagination. The significance of Fraenkel's work is nicely summarized by the English editors, xi–xxii.

[3] Doing so is no joke. The paragraph beginning on p. 113, for example, does not end until the bottom of p. 119, with the relevant notes found on pp. 336–40 and addenda on pp. 408–9. On the plus side, Greek and Latin quotations are translated, a particular kindness under the circumstances.

[4] To judge the translation, p. 286, compare the original: 'Wenn eine Verkettung günstiger Umstände diese Komödien erhalten hat, so danken sie ihr wahres Leben doch nur ihrem Wesen und ihrem Werte. Noch nach Jahrtausenden sind sie nicht Gerümpel und Kuriosität, sondern fortwirkender Ausdruck schöpferischer Kräfte. … Das Unzerstörbare, das sie in sich bergen, ist nicht so sehr der Stoff der attischen Dramen als der Geist italischer Sprache und italischen Witzes und darüber hinaus das Dichtertum des einen Mannes, des Plautus aus Sarsina' (421–2).

[5] Comparison of the two books from the standpoint of method and reception would be instructive. The first edition of *Vergils epische Technik* appeared in 1903, the third in 1915. A translation by H. and D. Harvey and F. Robertson appeared in 1993 as *Virgil's Epic Technique*.

[6] Fraenkel's book, itself in dialogue with his teacher Leo's *Plautinische Forschungen*, was dedicated to Jachmann and Jachmann's to Fraenkel, but the three scholars brought different values to somewhat different questions. G. Duckworth, *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (1952), 384–5 unfairly conflates them.

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bibliography like W. Beare's *The Roman Stage* (1950) and G. Duckworth's *The Nature of Roman Comedy* (1952). Still bolder works followed, two of which now stand out for their independence of mind and intimation of future developments: Erich Segal's *Roman Laughter, The Comedy of Plautus* (1968) and John Wright's *Dancing in Chains: The Stylistic Unity of the* comoedia palliata (1974). These are still good reads, literate and literary, stylish in their presentation, and manifestly fond of their target texts. Like Fraenkel, these authors emphasize Plautus' Roman qualities, though in different ways and toward different ends. It is a sign of the progress they made possible, not a criticism of their achievement, that their quite distinct styles of argument now seem, each in its own way, curiously inadequate.

Segal recognized the inherent paradox of the analytic approach 'even when a scholar of Fraenkel's stature sets out to redeem Plautine *vortere*, for this merely aggravates the general tendency to anatomize the playwright, to separate "Plautinisches" and "Attisches". But the real Plautus only exists as the sum of his parts … we must acknowledge that once the play begins, everything becomes "Plautus" just as Plutarch becomes "Shakespeare"' (6). Greek predecessors consequently play only a small part in his study, which quickly moves to a much larger question: why did the Romans find Plautus so funny? For an irrepressible comparatist like Segal, modern theories of comedy promised a more satisfying answer than details of Roman social values and practices. Freud and Bergson therefore loom large (Bakhtin was still over the horizon), and the saturnalian spirit he claimed for the *ludi* owed more to C. L. Barber than to anything Roman.[7] The result is admittedly mixed. We now demand significantly more detail and nuance from contextualizing arguments, but Segal showed beyond doubt that contemporary criticism of Plautus was not yet demanding enough from them. He also awakened interest in literary theory and was among the first to cite examples from later drama as illustrations, not mere descendants of Plautine practice. Though generally supportive of his project, contemporary reviewers tended to find these comparative tendencies pretentious and distracting.[8] We might in hindsight better recognize in them an earnest exuberance and sincere desire to bring the study of Roman comedy into a larger literary conversation.

Wright's book, though more traditional in its philology, reveals an equally keen literary sensibility, which leads to its final insight (195–6):

> Above all, the critic must resist the temptation to judge Plautus by how well or how poorly he appears to *escape* the tradition. …The critic … must train himself to recognize the 'hackneyed stereotypes' of the *palliata* as effects deliberately sought after by the playwright and treasured and enjoyed by the Roman audience. Whether or not the critic can enjoy them too depends on the depth and extent of his own imagination, sympathy, and good will. But he will get as much assistance as is humanly possible from the comic genius of Titus Maccius Plautus.

The allusion here to Fraenkel's own final sentence hints at both his debt and his particular achievement. By using the fragmentary evidence for *palliata* comedy to focus on language as well as form, Wright was able to measure Plautus not only against his Greek predecessors but against his Roman colleagues, revealing much that is generally Roman, not exclusively Plautine. His analysis casts particularly valuable light on Naevius and Caecilius, but it also leads to a strikingly old-fashioned view of Terence, whose more austere language resists Wright's comparative method. In concluding that Terence writes

[7] C. L. Barber, *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy* (1959), which based its own thesis on Shakespeare's 'participation in native saturnalian traditions of the popular theater and the popular holidays' (3), is Segal's explicit model: 'if Barber's premise is at all valid for Elizabethan drama … how much more so would it be for ancient Rome' (9).
[8] So A. S. Gratwick, *CR* 20 (1970), 335: 'they obscure the argument'; L. Richardson, Jr., *AJP* 91 (1970), 371: 'no real purpose other than ornament', but note J. Collart, *Latomus* 28 (1969), 218: 'c'est là un grand attrait de son livre, de montrer comment cet anti-conformisme plautinien se tempère par la suite sous forme de procédés comique chez les descendants de Plaute …'

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'by and large, as if the comic tradition at Rome never existed', Wright clings to an overly narrow definition of style and accepts uncritically the rhetoric of the Terentian prologues and their polemic against reactionary colleagues.[9] He was also uninterested in comedy's musical element, and by looking exclusively at the *palliata* tradition, he does not ask if the 'stylistic unity' he documents is unique to this genre or reflects wider practices of the Roman stage. Despite such limitations, one thing emerges clearly: Segal and Wright together made it increasingly difficult to continue treating Roman comedy largely as a Greek derivative. Their books inspired diversity of approach in a field that outsiders often found remarkable for its conformity, and we are beginning to enjoy the benefits of that widened perspective.

Fresh attention is being paid, for example, to the improvised nature of the venues at which Roman plays were performed. The basic facts are well known, but while historians focus on the state's notorious reluctance to build permanent theatres, a more literary, performance-based criticism now centres instead on the practical consequences of that reluctance. The results can be startling. What Plautus and Terence knew was probably not an enclosed stage and dedicated auditorium but only a purpose-built wooden structure for actors and largely *ad hoc* accommodation for audiences. By 194 B.C.E., seats immediately before the stage were apparently reserved for senators, but most of the crowd would have found places around the temple of the divinity being honoured or at other suitable vantage points in the vicinity.[10] Such fluid and informal conditions meant that 'the theatre' at Rome was more an idea than a structure and that venues and audiences would have been small by the standards of the late Republic. The rough-and-tumble quality of theatrical life also raises questions about text as we become increasingly sensitive to the fact that our modern books began as antiquity's scripts, and in the commercial environment of the mid-Republic, those scripts were unstable commodities, vulnerable to intervention by producer, musician, and players. What eventually emerged were necessarily fragile, occasionally dubious witnesses to the Roman authors' intentions and the Roman audiences' experience.

C. W. Marshall's *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy* (2006) is the first book-length study to work explicitly from these realities. His qualifications as a Latinist are significantly enhanced by his considerable experience as an actor and director, a combination that both informs and gives authority to a long string of significant, practical observations about Roman theatrical life, e.g. that playing in an improvised public space meant only limited rehearsal time on site and, in the case of the Megalensia, an especially tight production schedule, since barely three weeks separated the aediles' inauguration in mid-March from the games in early April. Acting styles and staging conventions would inevitably be affected by the limited time and resources available to the companies once they secured the aediles' contracts. Similarly, Marshall's practical discussion of how a script evolves in rehearsal touches on literary questions of set routines and improvisations and ultimately addresses an important philological concern: what does authenticity mean in an environment where 'performance necessarily precedes text' (260)?[11]

[9] Wright, 151. Segal was equally beside this particular mark: 'Terence, of course, represents an entirely different tradition: drama for an aristocratic coterie' (7). Segal tried to make amends in *The Death of Comedy* (2001), 220–54, but Terence still awaits his due from modern critics. The basics are set out with energy and acumen by E. Lefèvre in W. Suerbaum (ed.), *Handbuch der lateinischen Literatur der Antike. Erster Band: Die archaische Literatur* (2002), 232–54. See too the reliable, if somewhat conservative introduction by P. Kruschwitz, *Terenz* (2004) and the quite progressive essays commissioned for *Ramus* 33 (2004) by A. J. Boyle.

[10] This casual arrangement was first argued in detail by S. M. Goldberg, 'Plautus on the Palatine', *JRS* 88 (1998), 1–20, building on the work of J. A. Hanson, *Roman Theater-Temples* (1959). For reception of this idea, see J. R. Green, 'Theatre production: 1996–2006', *Lustrum* 50 (2008), 275–6. The seating initiative of 194 B.C.E. is discussed below, nn. 36 and 37.

[11] I have put a fuller discussion of Marshall's strengths and limitations on record at *Phoenix* 62 (2008), 370–2.

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Not every new line of inquiry, however, is performance-based. Alison Sharrock's distinctly literary project *Reading Roman Comedy* (2009) employs with only minimal apology critical skills and a critical sensibility honed on Augustan poetry and seeks to bring comedy into the critical mainstream largely by ignoring the fact it is drama. Her author-centred perspective frequently proves its worth, as when she reopens the case for Callimachean echoes in comedy and explores the value of repetition as a comic device.[12] Sometimes, though, it leads to trouble. She often calls 'Plautine' what she should call 'traditional' because she knows the text of Plautus better than she knows the comic fragments,[13] and she credits Terence with a bookishness and Plautus with a renown that are probably anachronistic. Her Terence, like Vergil and Ovid over a century later, 'read and closely studied the works of his illustrious predecessor' (68 n. 115), yet Terence himself claimed *not* to know plays by Naevius and Plautus (*Eun.* 25–34), and the pre-eminence of Plautus among writers of *palliatae* was largely a first-century construction.[14] Terence's literary world was not the world that Vergil, Horace, Ovid, and Statius knew. Critical methods (and attendant presumptions) devised to explicate that later world may require modification to work effectively in this earlier one.

Though the full impact of these books, substantively and methodologically, will only emerge over time, the fact that they offer so much of interest certainly speaks to the unexpected richness of the comic texts and the acumen of the critics they now attract. By pointing in new directions, Marshall and Sharrock advance Erich Segal's aim of bringing Roman comedy into the larger literary conversation around us, but they do not in the process abandon philology. Nor has philology abandoned comedy. The current upsurge in interpretive scholarship has not deprived philologists of philological challenges. The traditional methods remain potent and continue to prove their worth, producing not only reliable texts and commentaries, but, as we shall see, also encouraging new interpretive endeavours of their own.

II PHILOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

The oldest of philological endeavours remains high on the scholarly agenda. Gradual emergence of the Editio Plautina Sarsinatis under the supervision of Cesare Questa and Renato Raffaelli has been reminding us for some time that our most widely cited texts, Lindsay's OCT and the Teubner of Goetz and Schoell, can still be improved upon when suitable editors are found.[15] These new editions from Italy, slim, elegant volumes handsomely printed on high quality paper, represent a new standard in the editing of Plautus, and their particularly clear, user-friendly layout encourages old-fashioned

[12] Repetition gets a whole chapter, 163–249. On Callimachus and comedy, see further nn. 33 and 34 below. For more on Sharrock's achievement, see Dorota Dutsch's review elsewhere in this volume.

[13] Wright's demonstration enables us to speak of a specifically *palliata* style: we should no longer be content with vague nods toward 'archaic elements' in Plautus. The essays by J. Blänsdorf in Suerbaum's *Handbuch*, op. cit. (n. 9), 170–82, 229–31, 255–9, greatly facilitate access to the fragmentary poets.

[14] H., *Ep.* 2.1.170–6 made Plautus a benchmark, but he more commonly appears in the kind of 'canon' echoed at 55–9 and recorded for Volcacius Sedigitus (ap. Gell. 15.24), which ranks Plautus second (Terence sixth), and Varro, *Men.* 399 (fr. 50 Funaioli). The effort to define a Plautine corpus described by Gell. 3.3 is post-Terentian. See on all this H. N. Parker, 'Plautus v. Terence; audience and popularity re-examined', *AJPh* 117 (1996), 585–617, esp. 588–90 and M. Deufert, *Textgeschichte und Rezeption der plautinischen Komödien im Altertum* (2002), 25–9.

[15] See too A. S. Gratwick, 'Brauchen wir einen neuen Plautus?' in E. Stärk and G. Vogt-Spira (eds), *Dramatische Wäldchen. Festschrift für Eckard Lefèvre zum 65. Geburtstag* (2000), 321–44. Whether the new Budé Terence being prepared by Benjamin Victor will represent a comparable advance is uncertain. For its prospects, see B. Victor, 'New manuscript sources of the Terence-text', in P. Kruschwitz (ed.), *Terentius poeta* (2007), 1–14 and 'Terentiana', *CQ* 57 (2007), 117–24.

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virtues like consulting the apparatus.[16] This is always a good thing, and the sixth volume to appear, Walter Stockert's *Cistellaria*, takes full advantage of the series' encouragement to rethink text and its capacity for recording new results. Those characteristics are especially important for *Cistellaria*, which presents its editor with some especially significant challenges.

The play itself has risen to new prominence in the bibliography, due in no small part to the strength of its female characters and emphasis on their dilemma, but its text presents more than the usual run of difficulties.[17] The most obvious source of trouble is a series of lacunae. The leaves containing lines 233–491 were lost from P, the archetype of the Palatine family of MSS, leaving the notorious Ambrosian palimpsest (A) as the sole witness for those scenes. As is well known, an early effort to improve the legibility of the palimpsest by chemical means destroyed much of what it had hoped to restore. In transcribing the remains, Wilhelm Studemund was confronted with page after page of seemingly hopeless lacunae that subsequent editors could only indicate in their editions by asterisks in the text and laments in the apparatus. S., however, working with an international team of experts, had the opportunity to apply digital imaging techniques to the palimpsest with much happier results than what the ill-fated experiments of 1815 produced.[18] Enough can now be deciphered in the old lacunae to justify a new siglum (A*) to indicate readings derived from the digitally-enhanced photographs. The despairing asterisks of old are often replaced in the new edition by more precise indications of missing letters, by the letters themselves, and occasionally by meaningful strings of letters. So, for example, at 278–9, where Lindsay could print only,

> mihi numquam quisquam * * *
> (GY.) immo maxumus.

S. offers,

> mi nunquam quisquam creduit . ostilla . . de
> non esse . . a . . . . em . . . . . s :: immo maxumus.

because where A yielded only the hopeless o̩s̩u̩ll (not even reported in Lindsay's apparatus), A* reveals [c]r̩[e̩]d̩[u̩it] . o̩s̩tili . . d̩[e̩]. And so on. That may not in itself be terrific, but the gaps at least start looking like Latin again, and meaningful restoration for the first time becomes imaginable.[19]

A second type of problem poses a different sort of editorial challenge. *Cistellaria* is, like *Poenulus*, a play with 'doublets', blocks of text that on close inspection are clearly either

[16] They also have some quirks, the most obvious being in orthography, which tends to follow the MSS even when this leads to inconsistencies. So *Cist.* gives us *cum* (preposition and conjunction), *maximis* but *maxumus*, *Sicyone* and *Sicioni*. For the operating principles, see C. Questa, 'Per un'edizione di Plauto', *Giornate filologiche 'Francesco della Corte' II* (Genoa 2001), 61–83, orthography on 68–73.

[17] Two volumes of essays dedicated to the play have appeared: R. Raffaelli and A. Tontini (eds), *Cistellaria (Sarsina, 27 settembre 2003), Lecturae Plautinae Sarsinates* (2004) and R. Hartkamp and F. Hurka (eds), *Studien zu Plautus'* Cistellaria (2004).

[18] Initial findings were reported in W. Stockert, 'Die Wiedererweckung eines Codex (Virtuelle Arbeit am Codex Ambrosianus des Plautus)', *RAL* Ser. 9a 19 (2008), 407–34, with excellent illustrations. The multi-spectral techniques employed are similar to those applied with such spectacular results to the Archimedes codex. Full, illustrated explanation of the procedure is available at http://archimedespalimpsest.org.

[19] So here, S. offers 'postilla idem' in the apparatus, a suggestion of Boris Dunsch. Further conjectures and discussion of them is promised in S.'s forthcoming commentary. The Sarsina convention of a double (sometimes triple) apparatus to report details of scene headings, speaker attributions, etc., then sources, then readings and variants is especially well suited to the unusual requirements of this play. There is unfortunately no provision for acknowledging the Greek model (Menander's *Synaristosai*), even when, as at 89–93, a fragment of the original almost certainly survives (*PCG*, fr. 337).

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redundant or incompatible with their surroundings.[20] The logical response to line 707, for example, where the maid Halisca turns to answer Lampadio and Phanostrata, is line 723 in our printed texts. The intervening lines seem to preserve the remnants of an alternative exchange, not the expansion of a single, continuous dialogue. What should an editor do with this problematic passage? Leo, whose edition of 1895 (reprint 1958) remains in many ways the most useful, bracketed 708–22. The Teubner and Oxford editors print without comment what is in effect a conflated text. S. restores Leo's brackets. This is surely an improvement. Readers need to know that something here is unusual. Brackets, however, not only indicate that a passage is inorganic, which this one almost certainly is, but also imply that it is somehow inauthentic. That further editorial judgement is not so easily demonstrated. Since the language of the bracketed lines is not certainly late, it is not certainly post-Plautine. If, as we now increasingly suspect, the 'scripts' owned by Roman companies were not continuous documents from their inception, the consolidation of actors' parts and directors' notes into what eventually became continuous texts could easily have included incompatible but equally 'authentic' acting versions. A doublet like this is therefore not necessarily a later interpolation.[21] It may be the remnant of alternative 'Plautine' text, a possibility that gets to the very heart of what a text of Plautus represents, what it owes to any historical 'Plautus', and thus what the editor's responsibility is in presenting the paradosis to readers. In this case, parallel columns or italics might better represent the situation without prejudice, but S. at least signals the need for caution and deliberation. Here, as throughout, his edition represents a significant advance in our understanding of the text. All students of Plautus will be in his debt.

Another important debt is now owed in a less obvious quarter. Since the *palliata* was not the only show in town, thinking about Roman comedy should mean thinking about more than 'Roman comedy', but that has never been easy. Among the lost genres that tease and frustrate us, mime is especially problematic and elusive. Its popularity is well documented, but its salient characteristics — moral or immoral? topical or general? scripted or improvised? popular or élite? — remain problematic.[22] Nor does it help that Decimus Laberius, whose forty-four titles and 150+ lines now dominate the record, may be an exceptional figure and that our view of him is often obscured or distorted by tangential problems of literary life in the late Republic. A new edition of Laberius is thus very desirable, and Costas Panayotakis has made the most of the opportunity. Like H. D. Jocelyn before him, he uses the expansive format of the Cambridge Classical Texts and Commentaries series to great advantage: his first thirty-two pages of Introduction offer a reliable, well-annotated guide to the genre as a whole before bringing us to Laberius.[23] The remaining sixty-six pages discuss the testimonia for Laberius' career, analyse his language and prosody, and pay especially close attention to

[20] Identification of such passages goes back to P. Langen, *Plautinische Studien* (1886), with important discussion by A. Thierfelder, *De rationibus interpolationum Plautinarum* (1929). There is general consensus about most of them, though what they represent in the history of transmission and how editors should treat them are not equally clear.

[21] See S. M. Goldberg, 'Plautus and his alternatives', in Hartkamp and Hurka, op. cit. (n. 17), 385–98 and C. W. Marshall, *The Stagecraft and Performance of Roman Comedy* (2006), 266–72. The early history of the Plautine text is discussed most recently by Deufert, op. cit. (n. 14), 18–43, a valuable discussion, though probably too acceptive of 'interpolation' as defined by his teacher, Otto Zwierlein. S.'s explanation *ad* 708–22 'interpolatori debentur ut vid.' will, I hope, be expanded in his commentary to embrace additional possibilities.

[22] Scholarship has long struggled with the challenge of articulating mime's influence, e.g. J. C. McKeown, 'Augustan elegy and mime', *PCPhS* 25 (1979), 71–84; E. Fantham, 'Mime: the missing link in Roman literary history', *CW* 82(1988), 153–63; T. P. Wiseman, 'Ovid and the Stage', *Unwritten Rome* (2008), 210–30. Valuable work was also done by L. Cicu, *Problemi e strutture del mimo a Roma* (1988). For the unreliability of generic labels, see most recently T. P. Wiseman, '*Praetextae*, *Togatae* and other Unhelpful Categories', *Unwritten Rome*, 194–9.

[23] cf. H. D. Jocelyn (ed.), *The Tragedies of Ennius* (1969), which devoted its first forty-three pages to the

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the textual history of the ancient authors, Nonius and Gellius prominent among them, who preserve his fragments, and to anthologists since the sixteenth century who collected them.

This inclusiveness has many virtues. By foregrounding the fragility of the record, P. encourages readers to be wary of clichés while providing the means to think interpretive problems through afresh. His discussion of prosody is a masterpiece of meticulous analysis given the limitations of the evidence and the bias toward senarii created by one disproportionately long passage, the so-called 'prologue' (fr. 90) that may itself be untypical of Laberius' dramatic practice. Interpretive discussions are consistently well balanced. P. is carefully and refreshingly unbiased, for example, in disentangling the evidence for Laberius' notorious stage appearance in 47 B.C.E., which did or did not cost him his equestrian status, and his contest the next year with Publilius Syrus, events often confused and distorted in the telling. Anyone interested in these episodes, which figure prominently in contemporary discussions of the acting profession, will need to begin — as indeed they should — with the source material as P. presents it.[24]

They will also need some patience. P.'s attention to detail can become almost obsessive. He recognizes, for example, that even short fragments must be discussed in the contexts that preserve them, and since he is anxious not to disguise any attendant difficulties, he devotes considerable attention to textual problems. What belongs in the commentary, however, does not necessarily belong in the text. Consider the two fragments preserved by Gellius and Nonius of a mime called *Anna Peranna*. Their testimony looks like this in the respective editions of Marshall and Lindsay:

> Gell. 16.7.10
> Praeterea in *Anna Peranna* 'gubernium' pro 'gubernatore' et 'planum' pro 'sycophanta' et 'nanum' pro 'pumilione' dicit …
>
> Nonius 90.22 M = 129.20 L
> CONLABELLA. Laberius Anna Peranna:
> cónlabélla ósculúm

That seems straightforward, but P.'s eagerness to acknowledge hidden problems leads him to print not that, but this:

> Gell. 16.7.10 [*Fg*(=*OXPN*)*d*(=*QZ*]:
> Praeterea in *Anna Peranna* 'gubernium' [*codd. praeter* F^1: gubernum F^1] pro 'gubernatore' [*codd.*: gubernatione *Falsterus*] et 'planum' pro 'sycophanta' et 'nanum' pro 'pumilione' [FO^1PZ: ponilione O^{2mg}: pomilione *Q*: pumilionem X^2: milionem X^1][*scil.* Laberius] dicit …
>
> Nonius 90.22 M = 129.20 L [*FHLPVEd (=ACXDMO)*]:
> Conlabella [L^1d: Collabella *FHL*^{2}*PVE*: Collabella adiungere labra F^{3mg} H^{mg} P^{mg} H^{mg}: Collabella adiungere labra E^{mg}]. Laberius *Anna* [*Iunius*: annalium *codd.*] *Peranna* [*codd.* Perenna *Iunius*]:
> conlabella osculum <*CD ABCD ABcD* >

The forest of sigla is mapped in the Introduction and the commentary explains the significant cruces, but presenting all the data like this does not encourage a reader's close attention.[25] Nor do some other strategic decisions.

background of Roman tragedy before taking up Ennius. Both editions thus provide service well beyond the ostensibly narrow confines of their mission.

[24] The equally clear-headed discussion of this problem by W. D. Lebek, 'Moneymaking on the Roman stage', in W. J. Slater (ed.), *Roman Theater and Society* (1996), 45–8 seems to have escaped his notice and should be added to the bibliography.

[25] The letters printed with the fragment are metrical notation, not sigla. A traditional apparatus is also provided

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P. translates all fragments, though not the testimonia in the Introduction, but each translation follows each text, with the commentary then tagging behind. This can be very confusing. In practice, text and translation sometimes face and sometimes follow each other, and it can be hard to match the commentary with the right spot in either text or translation. Additional complexity is created by P.'s tendency to separate different aspects of a single problem. He is rightly wary, for example, of distinctions between 'popular' and 'literary' mime and prefers the ambiguity of the ancient evidence to the modern prejudice toward one type or the other, but one of the most striking illustrations of modern prejudice against mime, the virtual conspiracy of silence surrounding Peter Wiseman's identification of the poet Catullus with Catullus the mimographer, does not appear here, where it belongs, but only much later, tucked away in a tangential footnote, as if P. were embarrassed to acknowledge the controversy.[26] Even more awkward is the 400-page hiatus between his detailed discussion of the testimony for Laberius' stage appearance (45–57) and the quotation and commentary on the sources for this episode (452–82). Admittedly, no one format is ideal for presenting the many complexities of fragmentary evidence, but readers of this edition will need to persevere to reap the full benefit of the editor's scrupulous work.

They will also have to accept a fundamentalist streak in his scholarship that can mistake a philological truth for the whole truth. In the case of *Anna Peranna*, he convincingly defends the title in this alliterative form and carefully discusses its possible plot (the new year divinity as *lena*?) without taking a side in what is necessarily an insolvable problem ('the plot of L.'s mime may not have involved mythological parody at all', p. 119). That is prudent circumspection. Sometimes, though, the focus on evidence is simply too narrow. Gellius' comment about the use of *planus* in this mime, for example, leads P. to the lexicon and then to observe that 'there is no evidence that the word was in circulation before its appearance in *Pro Cluentio*' (121). He therefore suspects that Cicero drew this Grecism, a common term of abuse in Greek comedy, directly from a Greek literary source and that Laberius followed his lead in preferring this Latin rarity to the much more common, though no less Greek, *sycophanta*. P. might have added in support that in calling the corrupt witness Aelius Staienus 'ille planus improbissimus' (*Clu*. 72), Cicero chooses the emphatic adjective to signal the unwary that *planus* was a term of abuse. Yet why at such a colloquial moment would Cicero use a word his jurors would be unlikely to know? It would be easier to deduce from the word's appearance here (and in Laberius) that it, like the idea itself, was already well rooted in the Roman vocabulary.[27] Instead, as happens from time to time, the commentary slips from prudence to timidity. The editor might have been a little bolder, but his caution has, taken as a whole, produced a reliable edition of a difficult author and performed a great service.

Timidity is not a charge anyone will level at Michael Fontaine's *Funny Words in Plautine Comedy*, which applies the philologist's tools to a more wide-ranging interpretive task. That Plautine comedy revelled in puns, innuendo, *double entendre*, and other forms of wordplay is hardly news. The joke is easy to spot when the slave Chrysalus says 'facietque extemplo Crucisalum me ex Chrysalo' (*Ba*. 362) or when we

when required to record variants and conjectures in the actual words of Laberius, a further complication. Users will decide for themselves how much of the data provided is genuinely helpful.

[26] p. 41, n. 73, where it is (rightly) taken seriously. Cic., *ad Fam.* 7.11.1 pairs Laberius and a Valerius as satiric writers for the stage, while Mart. 5.30.1–4, Juv. 8.185–6 and 13.110–11, and Tert., *Valen.* 14.4 mention a mimographer called Catullus. P. Wiseman, *Catullus and his World* (1985), 188–95 draws the obvious conclusion.

[27] The Latin alternative to *planus* is *grassator*, a term of abuse at least as old as Cato, ap. Gell. 11.2, and the words are eventually paired at Petr. 82.2, 'sive ille planus fuit sive nocturnus grassator'. For the *grassator-planus-scurra* complex of words, see J. Préaux, 'Caton et l'*ars poetica*', *Latomus* 25 (1966), 710–25, esp. 717–21.

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hear Toxilus call the pimp Dordalus *pecuniae accipiter* 'a money hawk' when we might expect *acceptor* (*Tri.* 204). F. sniffs out far more subtle plays than these: the 'funny words' of his title are humorous *because* they are peculiar, developing jokes from 'a strange, unattested, or improper use of a word' (4). Many of these jokes, he believes, have long gone unnoticed, lost over time through misunderstanding and sometimes erased through textual corruption. So, for example, he doubts that a parasite at Epidaurus would have had the Latin name Curculio ('weevil') and suggests instead that Plautus actually called him Gorgylio (Γοργυλίων, from γοργός 'furious, agile' + the personal suffix -υλιων, i.e. 'Fast-and-Furious Man'). The joke about finding Curculio *in tritico* (*Curc.* 586–7) that seems to confirm the Latin derivation was originally a bilingual play on the name, but eventually the easier Latin form supplanted the unexpected Greek one in the tradition.[28] Other sorts of verbal play are adduced in other ways. A few representative examples will give a sense of his method.

The famously abusive dialogue between Tranio and Grumio that opens *Mostellaria* includes the following exchange:

> **GR.** sine modo adueniat senex.
> sine modo uenire saluom, quem apsentem comes.
> **TR.** Nec ueri simile loquere nec uerum, frutex,
> comesse quemquam ut quisquam apsentem possiet.
> **GR.** tu urbanus uero scurra, deliciae popli,
> rus mihi tu obiectas? (11–14)

F. argues (49–53) that a 'smooth-talking clown' like Tranio ought to have produced something more clever than this rather literal joke on *comesse apsentem* (i.e. 'to eat an absent person out of house and home'), and it should have something to do with the traditional town-country rivalry it invokes. Since we know that one trait of the *rusticus* was uncouth speech (Gell. 13.6.2), the joke really turns on Grumio's mispronunciation of *comēs* as *comĕs*, which Tranio then hears as if from a verb **comesse* 'to be with'. Only a bumpkin would say he was with someone who is absent, though this bumpkin, unlike generations of later scholars, was quick enough to understand that Tranio has misheard him.[29]

At *Pseudolus* 848–54, Ballio's exchange with a cook plays on the accusation of thievery common to his profession.

> **COC.** fateor equidem esse me coquom carissumum;
> uerum pro pretio facio ut opera appareat
> mea quo conductus uenio. **BAL.** ad furandum quidem.
> **COC.** an tu inuenire postulas quemquam coquom
> nisi miluinis aut aquilinis ungulis?
> **BAL.** an tu coquinatum te ire quoquam postulas,
> quin ibi constrictis ungulis cenam coquas?

[28] Fontaine, 61–8. Thus 'gurguliost exercitor' at *Tri.* 1014 refers not to a windpipe (*gurgulio*) but to this parasite, the equivalent of *Ep.* 592 'Epidicus mihi fuit magister'. If he is right about 'Gorgylio', the correct name was lost before Varro, who clearly knew the play as *Curculio* (*L.* 7.60, 7.71). No Plautine parasite, says F., has a Latin name: Saturio, not from *satur* but Σάτυρος, i.e. Satyrio (70–2), Peniculus = Penicylus (from πηνίκη 'toupee + dim. –υλος', 102–10). Similar arguments lead F. to restore numerous Greek spellings throughout the corpus, e.g. Grymio, Phallio, Pseudylus, Phrynesium.

[29] F. meets the obvious grammatical objection by noting that Plautus commonly constructs *conloqui* and *conuenire* transitively. He has less to say about the scansion: *comĕs* could be *brevis in longo*, though as my colleague Brent Vine reminds me, *ĕs* (< *ess*) can be scanned long, as at *Amph.* 836, *Ps.* 610. See M. Leumann, *Lateinische Laut- u. Formenlehre* (1977), 220, 522.

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Why does the rare supine *coquinatum* replace the common *coctum*?[30] F. postulates a joke based on another, colloquial verb **coquinare* 'to cheat, to pilfer'. No such verb is attested, but modern French *coquiner* has that meaning, and a Latin noun *coquīnus* 'rogue, petty thief' (cf. Fr. *coquin*) is found in the fourteenth-century life of St Yves. That should suffice: 'A millennium and a half is admittedly a long time for a word to lie dormant in literature. Nonetheless … it does seem possible that *coquinus* circulated in continuous usage for centuries without ever being written down.'[31] And if *coquinus* survived, then why not *conquinare*?

As a final example, consider the scene where Pseudolus evades his master Simo's questions by going into an oracular trance (*Ps.* 481–4).

> **SIM.** aduorte ergo animum et fac sis promissi memor.
> quid ais? ecquam scis filium tibicinam
> meum amare? **PS.** ναὶ γάρ. **SIM.** liberare quam uelit?
> **PS.** καὶ τοῦτο ναὶ γάρ.

The Sibylline trance might itself explain the switch to Greek, but F. goes a step further, pointing out that the αι diphthong had collapsed to |ε|, long or short, by Plautus' day. Pseudolus' ναὶ γάρ might then 'create an equivocation with Latin *negare* "to say no, to refuse"'. Pseudolus is thus saying 'yes' and 'no' simultaneously, the code-switch making possible the ambiguity of his response (130–2).

How much credence such readings command will likely depend on the reader's own orientation. The pun on *comēs/comĕs* is linguistically appealing, though performance-oriented critics may wonder what alerts the audience to the altered quantity, especially when it precedes the hard stop at line end, with a change of speaker to follow. Those of a literary bent may wonder what signals a joke based on a non-existent verb in an unexpected construction. Plautine neologisms like *uirgidemia* and *parenticida* are funny because they recall real words (*uindemia* and *parricida*), not because they are mistaken for real words. Similarly, the exchange between Ballio and the cook is capped not by the commonplace idea of a thieving cook, whether *furandum* or *conquinatum*, but by representing this particular cook as a bird of prey: *ungulis*, not *conquinatum* is the operational word in the insult. On the other hand, the literary critic may well enjoy the code-switching ambiguities of Pseudolus' oracular pose. It is the grammatically inclined reader who might complain that the syllables *ne* and *gar*, quantities undetermined, are not in themselves Latin. Why, since they make immediate sense as Greek, should spectators turn them into Latin by imagining they have heard *negare*, *negatur*, or *nego*?

And so the debate may run. Claims like these are by their very nature difficult to disprove. They gain credibility, though, if we imagine Plautus as a learned poet writing for a small and élite audience of cognoscenti, the sort of people who might well hear a short vowel in a heavy syllable and recognize its import in the middle of a comic dialogue. F. thus proceeds to make precisely that claim: 'I therefore conclude that Plautine comedy was performed for a small and predominately aristocratic audience … If this aristocratic core of the audience did not constitute an absolute majority or plurality, then it certainly served as the focal point and constituency to whom Plautus

[30] So at *Ps.* 845, 'si nusquam is coctum'. Also *Aul.* 325, 429, 457. Plautus much prefers *coquo* to *coquino*, but its supine also appears in the cook's grandiose entrance, *Aul.* 408 'ueni in bacchanal coquinatum'.

[31] Fontaine, 82, but note A. Rey *et al.*, *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française*, vol. 1 (1993), s.v. *coquin*: 'le nom médiéval *coquinus* "mendiant" semble une latinisation du français.' The *Processus de vita … S. Yvonis* is almost certainly the work of a native French speaker. F. adduces a similar sort of evidence for a verb *furtare* 'to steal', not attested in classical Latin (87), and *merdicus* (cf. Fr. *merdique*), 'not attested in Latin before the Humanist period (fifteenth century and later)' (155–7). He does not address the possibility of back formations into neo-Latin.

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would cater and whom he would strive to please' (185). It is an important, if surprising assertion, and runs directly counter to recent analyses of the *ludi* that stress communication across the social orders, whether to promote the interests of the sponsoring aristocrats or the community of the *populus Romanus*.[32] An alternative to this emerging orthodoxy would not be unwelcome, but unfortunately, F.'s supporting arguments for an aristocratic audience are much weaker than the philological evidence for 'funny words'.

Sometimes an argument is simply insufficient. F. has no doubt, for example, that echoes of high Greek literature do not just appear in Plautus but originate with Plautus. Pseudolus' intention to turn himself into a poet is thus taken to be an explicit parody of Callimachus' *Aetia* prologue:

> sed quasi poeta, tabulas quom cepit sibi,
> quaerit quod nusquam gentiumst, reperit tamen,
> facit illud veri simile quod mendacium est,
> nunc ego poeta fiam: viginti minas,
> quae nusquam nunc sunt gentium, inveniam tamen. (*Ps.* 401–5)

The Greek poem is (now) so familiar to Latinists that a connection between the two passages seems hard to deny, but it is not actually so easy to accept.[33] It might be easier to do so had Pseudolus imagined those *tabulae* on the poet's knees or mentioned a voice in his ear. Taken by itself, *tabulas capere* is hardly a unique expression, and if the trope actually derived from Plautus' Greek model, it would almost certainly predate Callimachus.[34] At the least, detailed discussion of the difficulties seems necessary: the Roman reception of Callimachus, the age-old problem of Plautus' relation to his putative models, and the position of comedy in the pecking order of Roman literary culture are all questions of great interest. Given their significance and the problems they entail, F.'s reasoning seems strikingly thin and inadequate.

> The works of Callimachus, who died in Plautus' teenage years, had quickly become part of the standard Greek syllabus throughout the Hellenistic world; they were probably read at more advanced stages of the curriculum. It is well known that Virgil later reworked this passage from the *Aetia* in the beginning of his sixth *Eclogue* (3–5). Moreover, there is direct evidence that Callimachus' *Aetia* was already known in the Rome of Plautus' time: Ennius alludes to the prologue of the poem in the dream sequence in the proem to his own *Annales*, and Ennius was writing a mere seven years or so after *Pseudylus* was staged (191 B.C.). Moreover, as Farrell

[32] F. Bernstein, *Ludi publici. Untersuchungen zur Entstehung und Entwicklung der öffenlichen Spiele im republikanischen Rom* (1998), esp. 234–51 and E. Flaig, 'Entscheidung und Konsens. Zu den Feldern der politischen Kommunikation zwischen Aristokratie und Plebs', in M. Jehne (ed.), *Demokratie in Rom? Die Rolle des Volkes in der Politik der römischen Republik* (1995), 77–127, esp. 100–6 are among those focusing on aristocratic interests. T. P. Wiseman has long championed a more popular view, as in *Roman Drama and Roman History* (1998). Literary critics rarely address the question of audience directly, but see A. Richlin, *Rome and the Mysterious Orient* (2005), 21–30.

[33] Fontaine, 197–200, building on J. Farrell, *Vergil's* Georgics *and the Tradition of Ancient Epic* (1991), 296–8. R. L. Hunter, *The Shadow of Callimachus* (2006), 81–4 discusses the Hellenistic underpinnings of the Latin passage but doubts any direct link between Plautus and Callimachus (82 n. 6). Fontaine's discussion of *Ps.* is preceded by an analogous claim (192–7) that *Mil.* 1239–74 and *Curc.* 162–3 allude directly to Sappho.

[34] Specifically of writing, *Bac.* 728 'cape stilum propere et tabellas tu has tibi!' and more generally, *Ba.* 753, *Mil.* 130, *Ps.* 20. Leo, op. cit. (n. 1), 87–8 presumed translation here of the Greek model. (A. Traill, 'Acroteleutium's Sapphic infatuation (*Miles* 1216–83)', *CQ* 55 (2005), 518–33 sees 'a Latin adaptation of a Greek comic parody' (525) in the *Miles* passage, not direct parody of Sappho.) For the schemer as *poeta*, cf. *As.* 746–809, with its extended joke on writing and lying. The falsehood of poets is of course a Greek commonplace, though Fontaine specifically evokes Call., *Hymn to Zeus* 65. Sharrock, *Reading Roman Comedy* (2009), 78–83 makes a similar case for allusions to Callimachus in the Terentian prologues, but with a fuller array of literary arguments in support.

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> points out, apart from the correspondence between Pseudylus' *tabulas* and Callimachus' δέλτον, the stress in Plautus' passage is on Pseudylus *becoming* a poet. (199)

Most of this is of limited relevance. The real question is not Callimachus' standing in the Hellenistic world but how soon after his death works studied 'at more advanced stages of the curriculum' circulated at Rome: what Vergil knew two centuries later hardly matters. Nor is Ennius' putative allusion to the *Aetia* prologue helpful. Though he apparently began his epic in the late 180s ('a mere seven years or so after *Pseudylus* was staged'), Ennius did not necessarily write in chronological sequence, beginning with what we know as his proem. If he instead began with what he knew first-hand, the siege of Ambracia, and only gradually let his project grow from a narrowly conceived historical poem to the vast sweep of the eventual *Annales*, the proem created for the whole could well be significantly post-Plautine.[35] The start date of his epic project alone says nothing about Plautus. And, given the élite circles in which Ennius moved, to presume that what Ennius knew is what Plautus knew begs the very question at issue.

A still more important argument is misconceived. F. rightly maintains that the audience for a comic performance was relatively small, at least compared to crowds at the circus, but his inference that it was therefore aristocratic misrepresents the evidence.

> The reason we know that it was *predominately* elite is that in 194 BC, a year that falls in the center of Plautus' heyday, the Roman senate passed legislation that reserved the best seats at performances of the *palliata* for themselves.[69] This extraordinary action — a *law*, no less — reveals that enthusiasm among the ruling classes for the Roman versions of Greek plays was strong.
>
> [69]Livy 34.44 and 54 and Valerius Maximus 2.4.3, from a common source.

What happened in 194 B.C.E. is in fact unclear: while our authorities may indeed derive from a common source, they do not agree on the details.[36] The accounts of Livy and Valerius Maximus are not easily harmonized, and two additional sources that should have been cited, Cicero, *De haruspicum responso* 24 and Asconius 70C on Cicero's fragmentary *Pro Cornelio*, further complicate the picture. Livy says the initiative came as a directive to the aediles from the censors, Sex. Aelius Paetus and C. Cornelius Cethegus, while Valerius Maximus and Cicero attribute it to the consul, Scipio Africanus, who insisted on a privileged place at the *ludi* for senators and paid a price for his élitism.[37] Much more to the point is what our fractious sources do agree upon, viz. that there was no such privilege until 194 B.C.E. and that its institution aroused

[35] The elaborate arrangement of the poem's first fifteen books in triads is largely a scholarly presumption; that Ennius wrote chronologically with such a plan in mind from the beginning is only another one. The orthodox view is summarized by Suerbaum, op. cit. (n. 9), 134–7, but note the bracing scepticism of J. E. G. Zetzel, 'The influence of Cicero on Ennius', in W. Fitzgerald and E. Gowers (eds), *Ennius Perennis* (2007), 1–16, esp. 13–14. As often in the early history of Roman literature, one difficult question is thoroughly enmeshed in another, equally difficult question.

[36] The source is generally thought to be Valerius Antias, but there are problems with that identification. See J. von Ungern-Sternberg, 'Die Einführung spezieller Sitze für die Senatoren bei den Spielen (194 v. Chr.)', *Chiron* 5 (1975), 157–63, which should have been cited. Ascon. 70C comments explicitly on Cicero's inconsistency in reporting this initiative.

[37] The motives and timing of the initiative (no *lex* is attested) of 194 B.C.E. are complex. See E. S. Gruen, *Culture and National Identity in Republican Rome* (1992), 202–5, which should also have been cited. The sources speak only of *loca senatoria*: specific rows of seats in a formal theatre, hardly likely in the improvised venues of the second century, are not mentioned until the *lex Roscia theatralis* of 67 B.C.E. reserved fourteen rows for equestrians, and even that initiative is problematic. Discussion of the issue is invariably coloured by the Augustan preoccupation with status as embodied in the eventual (and almost equally problematic) *lex Iulia theatralis*. See E. Rawson, '*Discrimina ordinum*: the *Lex Julia Theatralis*', *PBSR* 55 (1987), 83–114. How many senators would actually have availed themselves of their privilege is of course unknown, though F. seems to assume they were all present in state.

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considerable resentment ('eaque res avertit vulgi animum et favorem Scipionis magnopere quassavit', Val. Max. 2.4.3). The implication is thus nearly the opposite of what F. asserts: the Roman people liked their shows and did not like having access to them impeded by the senatorial class. That does not sound like public performance dominated by an élite.

The net result of F.'s study is thus mixed. His arguments for 'funny words' merit serious consideration. They can and will be debated with profit for some time to come, and, whether right or wrong, are valuable for the challenge they pose to any complacent reading of Plautus. By putting us on our guard, alerting us to the ever-present possibility of jokes beyond our immediate ken, they destabilize meaning and demand constant attention to how the text and its attendant actions are understood. Plautine criticism will gain from this attention. Acceptance of F.'s broader claims, however, will require better arguments than he provides. Segal's maddeningly vague appeal to the Romans' 'festive feeling' (7–11) can be excused by the force of his enthusiasm, and nobody today will be deeply troubled by Wright's too casual invocation of the *Collegium poetarum* to explain Terence's ostensible struggle with his peers (183–5). Those arguments, bold in their day, now appear inadequate largely because historians and literary critics have since entered into especially productive dialogue, making methodological as well as substantive progress.[38] Literary criticism still has a vital rôle to play — historians using literary evidence do not always use it correctly and occasionally need correction — but literary critics can no longer ignore the complexities of evidence and argument that are the historians' stock in trade.

III PHILOLOGICAL PROSPECTS

One final technical development deserves mention. Students of Roman comedy are especially sensitive to a great paradox of traditional metrics: the more fully its details are mastered, the weaker its explanatory power seems to be. The inadequacy of traditional podic analysis in particular has long been stressed by Adrian Gratwick, who advocates instead an algebraic notation for verse structure to emphasize syllables rather than feet. Under this system, the senarius is schematized as the sequence,

A B C D A / B C D A B c D

where B's and D's are the *longa*, A's and C's the *ancipitia*, lower case letters indicate light syllables (and resolutions), and a forward slash represents a significant word boundary.[39] Since the trochaic septenarius is really the same sequence with three syllables added to the front, i.e.

B C D A B C D A / B C D A B c D

the essential identity of iambic and trochaic sequences thus becomes immediately apparent.[40] This notation is much truer to the nature of quantitative verse than the ictus marks formerly employed to distinguish iambics from trochaics, and it continues to gain favour with editors. Recent editions of *Amphitruo* and *Eunuchus* adopt it, and the new

[38] The complexity of the *Collegium* problem was already revealed by N. Horsfall, 'The Collegium Poetarum', *BICS* 23 (1976), 79–95; further discussion in E. S. Gruen, *Studies in Greek Culture and Roman Policy* (1990), 87–91. What good things can happen when literary critics take historical evidence and historical argument seriously is well represented by M. Leigh, *Comedy and the Rise of Rome* (2004).

[39] *Menaechmi* 1, 'Salutem primum iam a principio propitiam', is thus represented: a B C D A / B C dd A bb c D. The system, introduced by E. W. Handley, *The* Dyskolos *of Menander* (1965), 56–73, was most fully adapted for Latin dramatic verse by Gratwick in his edition of *Menaechmi* (1993), 40–63.

[40] The similarity was noted at least by the time of Caesius Bassus, himself a poet of distinction (GLK 6.250, cf. Quint. 10.1.96). See Gratwick, op. cit. (n. 39), 44–7. Yet podic analysis clearly informs Cicero's own representation of metre a century earlier, e.g. *Orat.* 173, 218; *Tusc.* 2.37.

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Laberius uses it to especially good effect, enabling verse structures to be recognized at a glance and facilitating comparisons with the metrical practice of *palliata* authors.[41] This improvement, however, does not solve all of drama's metrical puzzles.

Since the traditional rules of prosody are still invoked to explain the production of heavy and light syllables, innocent readers may continue to wonder how dramatists could ever have laboured under so elaborate a set of restrictions. The answer, of course, is that they did not articulate the rules of prosody this way: metrical practice was speech-based, not rule-based, and reflected the poets' own linguistic practice.[42] As B. W. Fortson IV, *Language and Rhythm in Plautus* (2008) now observes, in reference to the 'laws' of Luchs, Meyer, and Jacobsohn regarding word-boundaries and line-cadence in iambic and trochaic verse:

> … the statistical distributional tendencies that we call metrical rules or laws have no explanatory power in themselves; that is, they are purely descriptive and do not account for the patterns of word-placement that we see, but are epiphenomenal, reflecting the allowable rhythms of natural speech. (4)

His is the latest in a series of linguistic interventions that recognize in metrical practice evidence for what linguists mean by prosody, viz. the rhythms of natural speech as determined by stress, pitch, and intonation. Apparent manipulations like elision and iambic shortening have long been known — at least by linguists — to be not artificial contrivances for fitting Latin words into Greek metres but echoes of the living language. By extending the inquiry to the linguistic basis for the placement and pronunciation of words in the line, Fortson makes it increasingly clear that as responses to the norms of Latin speech, the dramatic metres constitute yet one more example of the Plautine in Plautus. Yet classicists pleased to see the 'why' of metrical practice now entering the discussion will soon realize that it is no longer *their* discussion. The ultimate goal of Fortson's study is not how metre behaves but how language behaves: metrical phenomena are not the goal of study but only the means to recover prosodic and syntactic features of Plautine Latin. The philologists' traditional problem is thus turned on its head. How actively they can or will join this new and complex conversation remains to be seen.[43]

A second problem, more firmly in our own grasp, springs from an awkward fact of stage history: metricians may rightly say that senarius and septenarius have an identical character, but no Roman spectator would have mistaken the one for the other. Senarii were spoken. Everything else was performed to the double-reed pipe that Latin speakers called the *tibia*. Roman comedy was musical comedy, and the *tibicen* who created that music was sufficiently important to be recorded in what we now, somewhat anachronistically, call the didascalic record.[44] How do we integrate all we know about metre with how little we know about music? One emerging approach is structural. Marshall's *Stagecraft* devotes an entire chapter to 'Music and Metre' (203–44),

[41] Panayotakis, 67–76. Whenever feasible, the metrical scheme is printed with the text. P. does not, however, adopt Gratwick's use of sublinear dots to mark the onset of *longa*. The full system is adopted for *Eunuchus* by J. Barsby (1999), 301–4 and *Amphitruo* by D. Christenson (2000), 56–69.

[42] Cicero notes that audiences knew by ear how verse should behave and did not require metrical training to recognize a false quantity (*Orat.* 173, *De or.* 3.196, *Parad.* 3.26).

[43] As Fortson duly notes, 'if progress is to continue to be made … it is essential that we combine the knowledge and methods of several disciplines in equal measure: Classical philology, Classical linguistics, Indo-European linguistics, and generative syntax and phonology' (269). A tall order: my own limited competence to evaluate his work is itself symptomatic of the larger problem. A better overview from the Classicist's perspective is provided by A. Traill, *BMCR* 2009.08.41.

[44] The Terentian 'didascaliae' record both the name of the *tibicen*, Flaccus, and the kind of *tibia* he played. The *tibicen* Marcipor is named in the production note to Pl., *Stichus*. For what these notes may represent, see S. M. Goldberg, *Constructing Literature in the Roman Republic* (2005), 69–75.

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identifying musical 'arcs', sequences of unaccompanied and accompanied passages, as comedy's main structural units. The specifics of his argument are open to question, but combining metrical, literary, and performative perspectives as he does is clearly an advance. Timothy J. Moore's forthcoming *Music in Roman Comedy* (2011) promises still further progress. In a series of important articles, Moore has already addressed the rôle of metre in creating dramatic structure and established the importance of the *tibicen*'s silences: the distinction between accompanied and unaccompanied turns out to be much more structurally and aesthetically significant than that between singing and recitative.[45] The new book's synoptic view of music's contribution to comic performance — from how the *tibia* was played to how the actors sang and danced to how their artistry shaped the very experience of drama — promises to set further study of these questions on a new foundation. As with Marshall's book, the combination of philological and performative criticism may prove to be as methodologically significant as its results.

This essay began with Eduard Fraenkel and Erich Segal, not an obvious pairing, but scholars joined by their love of Plautus, their willingness to be serious about the comic, and their belief that understanding comedy was central to the larger task of understanding the Romans. In sharing those convictions, the works discussed here attest to the power of their achievement and the strength of their legacy.[46]

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[45] See especially 'Music and structure in Roman comedy', *AJP* 119 (1998), 245–73 and 'When did the *tibicen* play? Meter and accompaniment in Roman comedy', *TAPA* 138 (2008), 3–46.
[46] Completion of this essay in December 2010 coincided with the passing of W. G. Arnott, best known for his work on Alexis and Menander, but no less an admirer of Roman comedy and always a significant voice in the Latinists' discussions. His commitment too lives on in these works.

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